

WE ARE  
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# We Are Cally Community Plan 2021-2024



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# Foreword

The Cally is a warm, wonderful, idiosyncratic place where some of Islington and London's biggest extremes not only co-exist side by side but positively thrive. Its problems are well documented, the struggles are real, the intergenerational poverty stark. But those who know the people, the place and know its bones, know it's more complex than that: there are so many deeply good things about the Cally. First and foremost: the quality and solidarity of the people are second to none. So, when it came to thinking about a plan for Cally and where to start, the answer was obvious – it's bloomin' brilliant residents. The ideas, vision, knowledge of our residents, who are front and centre in this plan, are exceptional.

We are blessed with a highly-skilled group of people working in Cally who have helped the Caledonian and the Barnsbury councillors make real a plan for Cally, with residents at the fore, focusing on the strengths of Caledonian Road and its people. We love this place. We love the people. We love its potential. And we are delighted that this plan, speaking to residents, voluntary sector organisations and key partners, is helping us take concrete steps towards realising that potential. No more in the shadows, no more the underdog. It's Cally's time. It's time for Cally's people to shine. This much-maligned road will no longer be hiding its light under a bushel; we can work together to see this place go from strength to strength. It's going to be super-Cally-fragilistic-expialidocious.

Join us on this journey as, alongside its residents, we reimagine, recreate and celebrate all Cally is, can be and will be. Thank you to everyone who has contributed time, energy and ideas to make this plan really sing. We are grateful. This is your plan. Let's make it happen.

## **Cllr Sara Hyde**

On behalf of the Caledonian ward and Barnsbury ward councillors

**Caledonian ward:** Cllr Paul Convery, Cllr Una O'Halloran, Cllr Sara Hyde

**Barnsbury ward:** Cllr Rowena Champion, Cllr Jilani Chowdhury, Cllr Mouna Hamitouche

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# Table of contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
What is the We Are Cally Plan?	5
What area does the plan cover?	6
How was the plan developed?	7
What will enable us to carry out this work?	7
How will we make sure it happens?	8
<b>A strong community with a sense of belonging</b>	<b>10</b>
What have people living and working in Cally said about the current situation?	10
What are people’s aspirations?	11
What are we going to do?	12
<b>Better opportunities for children, young people and families</b>	<b>16</b>
What have people living and working in Cally said about the current situation?	16
What are people’s aspirations?	19
What are we going to do?	20
<b>Attractive well-used public spaces</b>	<b>23</b>
What have people living and working in Cally said about the current situation?	23
What are people’s aspirations?	25
What are we going to do?	26

<b>Improved health and wellbeing</b>	<b>29</b>
What do people living and working in Cally say about the current situation?	29
What are people’s aspirations?	31
What are we going to do?	32
<b>A thriving, connected local economy that works for everyone</b>	<b>35</b>
What have people living and working in Cally said about the current situation?	35
What are people’s aspirations?	37
What are we going to do?	38

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# Introduction

## What is the We Are Cally Plan?

The We Are Cally Plan sets out shared ambitions for the Cally by 2024, and actions that will be taken to help realise these. It has been informed by six months of engagement with Cally residents and people who work in the area, from the local voluntary sector, council, and other public sector agencies.

This process of engagement has helped us to build a better understanding of what is good about life in Cally, what challenges local people face, and what their hopes are for change over the coming years. The Cally is an area with many strengths. The We Are Cally plan identifies ways in which these can be built on to make the Cally a better place to live and spend time.

The We Are Cally Plan has five themes:

- A strong community with a sense of belonging
- Better opportunities for children, young people and families
- Attractive, well-used public spaces
- Improved health and wellbeing
- A thriving, connected local economy that works for everyone

For each of these five themes, we lay out what people living and working in Cally have said about the current situation, and what people want things to be like by 2024. The plan seeks to turn the priorities we heard during the listening process into meaningful action. Each theme has a set of practical actions to be taken over the next three years which will contribute to realising these aspirations. This requires a collective effort, and actions in the plan will be taken by the council, residents, voluntary and community sector organisations and other public sector agencies, and in many cases by people working together.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, we saw an incredible community response in Cally. Neighbours looked out for each other. Many joined the Caledonian and Barnsbury Mutual Aid group, providing help to people who needed it, underpinned by values of mutuality and solidarity. Voluntary sector organisations, faith and community groups, local schools and the council played roles in

helping people through a very difficult period. Existing relationships of trust, and newly-developed ones, enabled people to work together effectively. This response showed what can happen when people have a clear sense of purpose, take the initiative, and are able to use their capabilities. The We Are Cally Plan is not a Covid-19 recovery plan, though it is shaped by being written during the pandemic. Importantly, the creativity and collaboration that marked the response to Covid-19 in Cally provides an inspiring example of how we can, together, address the priorities identified in the plan.

## What area does the plan cover?

The We Are Cally Plan covers the area around the Caledonian Road in south-west Islington, known locally as 'the Cally'. A collection of neighbourhoods with Caledonian Road at its core, the area stretches from Kings Cross in the south west, to Lower Holloway in the north east. We have tried to define an area that local people consider to be 'the Cally', though recognise that there are many different views on this. This is about people's association with place, rather than mapping neatly onto administrative geographies - the area defined here includes all of Caledonian ward and part of Barnsbury ward.

The Cally is a distinctive part of Islington with a strong sense of place, community and local pride. Some local families have lived in the area for generations. Others have moved here more recently: to find work; to join family; to study; to build a better life. Higher percentages of residents define their ethnic identity as Bangladeshi, Chinese or Black African compared with Islington as a whole.

In contrast to the high-growth cluster of Kings Cross Central to the west and the affluent parts of Barnsbury to the east, much of the area consists of publicly-built high-density housing estates. It is a collection of neighbourhoods where people of different cultures and backgrounds live and where extremes of material wealth co-exist. The seven-year difference in the life expectancy of male residents of affluent parts of Barnsbury and those living on estates west of Caledonian Road and in south Barnsbury is a stark measure of local inequality.

The Cally area has a number of active voluntary and community sector organisations; four estate-based community centres; six primary schools, and a secondary school immediately to the south east; parks and adventure playgrounds; a library and a dedicated children's library. There are good transport links, a busy high street, and opportunities for work, learning and leisure on the doorstep. Despite this physical proximity, some people in Cally do not currently benefit from these opportunities: improving access to them is a central goal of the We Are Cally Plan.

## How was the plan developed?

Between September 2020 and March 2021, the council ran a series of 'Cally conversations'. Through these conversations, over 150 people who live or work in Cally shared their views and experiences of what is happening in the area now, and their hopes and ideas for the future. Due to Covid-19, all of this engagement took place virtually.

- We held 30 individual or small-group online and telephone conversations with Cally residents, with connections made by Bemerton Nursery, Help on Your Doorstep, the Parent House, and local residents' organisations
- We engaged Locality, the national membership network for community organisations, to run six workshops for local councillors, council officers, voluntary sector organisations and other public agencies, between September and November 2020
- We heard views from residents and other stakeholders at the Caledonian Ward Partnership meeting in November 2020
- We ran two online roundtable conversations: one with people running health services in Cally, and one for practitioners working with younger children
- We had online meetings with people working in Cally, including school leaders and people working in the voluntary sector

We also drew on published information about the area, such as data from the census, from the council and Greater London Authority, and from health agencies.

Many of the people who took part in a Cally conversation also gave comments and feedback on the draft of the plan.

## What will enable us to carry out this work?

**People:** The people who live and work in the Cally make it what it is. This plan has been developed with residents, community groups, local charities, ward councillors, council officers and other public sector agencies. Everyone involved has committed to working together, utilising their skills, knowledge and expertise to realise its aspirations.

**Space:** Community buildings, including spaces at West Library and Jean Stokes Community Centre which will be improved, will provide space for some of the activities and services outlined in the plan to take place. Cally's community centres will host the resources needed for resident-led action, including computers, printing and cooking facilities.

Outdoor spaces have become even more important sites for recreation as a result of Covid-19. Barnard and Bingfield Park and other public spaces in the area will provide space for outdoor activities, and enable people to connect with others and with nature.

**Money:** Islington Council will be investing an additional £1.25 million to deliver projects in Cally over the next few years, with an additional grant of £350,000 from the Greater London Authority as part of the Good Growth Fund. These include the redesign of Bingfield and Barnard Park, improvements to West Library and Jean Stokes Community Centre, a new service to support young people at risk of long-term unemployment, and initiatives to make it easier to walk or cycle around the area.

In May 2021, the council will launch the We Are Cally Community Fund. Some of the fund will go to established local charities so they can develop projects which address some of the issues identified in the plan. There will also be grants of up to £500 available to groups of residents who have an idea that they want to put into practice.

**Capacity building:** Islington Council has engaged Nurture Development, an organisation providing training in community development, to work with groups of residents and practitioners in Cally. Online courses will help participants to critically reflect on what communities can do best for themselves and what they need outside agencies to do with or for them, and to develop skills and understanding to enable community-driven change.

Islington Council's Communities team and voluntary sector organisations will support emerging and existing groups of residents to develop their ideas and initiatives and play an active role in the community.

**Networks:** Connections and relationships between individuals and organisations are essential to delivering the commitments laid out in the We Are Cally Plan. There are many networks in Cally already. Some of these are informal, such as mutual aid or neighbours' messaging groups. There are also more formal networks which meet regularly to coordinate work in a particular field, such as the Cally Youth Providers' Network. Where needed, Islington Council will support existing networks, and work with voluntary sector groups and residents to establish new networks to help deliver some of the commitments made in the plan.

## How will we make sure it happens?

In order to realise the aspirations of the We Are Cally Plan, and to enable local residents to hold us to account, we will:



- Ensure that the Islington Council Executive and every council directorate signs off this plan, committing to delivering the agreed actions.
- Build on, and where necessary establish, networks and partnerships that enable the council, public sector agencies and voluntary and community sector organisations to collaborate around the commitments made in this plan.
- Establish a We Are Cally Group, consisting of ward councillors, council officers, voluntary sector representatives, resident-led community groups and other public sector agencies. This group will be responsible for ensuring the delivery of the We Are Cally Plan and making decisions about new work that is required to respond to emerging needs. This group will report on the progress of actions laid out in the plan through Ward Partnership meetings.
- Develop the existing Caledonian and Barnsbury Ward Partnerships, to provide opportunities for local residents and key stakeholders to hold each other to account on delivery of the plan and to identify emerging needs that require action.

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# A strong community with a sense of belonging

## What have people living and working in Cally said about the current situation?

- **Sense of place:** 'The Cally' has a clear sense of place and people identify with it. There is however a sense of division between the more affluent areas east of the Cally Road, and the area's social housing estates.
- **Voluntary and community organisations:** There are many voluntary and community organisations working in the Cally, providing services and activities for children, young people, adults and families. The work of these organisations is critical to supporting a strong community and sense of belonging for local people, whatever their age, background and identity.
- **Community activities:** Local voluntary, community and faith organisations and the council provide lots of activities that bring parts of the community together and enable neighbours to get to know each other. These include activities based around food, physical activity, arts and gardening. Some of this work is project based and dependent on short-term funding so lacks continuity. Covid-19 has highlighted both a need and opportunity to develop initiatives around food (such as community meals and community growing) and digital access. There is a council-employed community development officer with a specific focus on Caledonian ward, who can support new initiatives.
- **Cally Festival:** The annual Cally Festival brings residents, schools, businesses and voluntary sector organisations together to put on a celebration of everything the Cally has to offer. Caledonian Road is closed for a day, and thousands of people come onto the streets for a free party featuring music, performance, creative workshops, and a street market.
- **Community spaces:** There are four community centres in Caledonian ward that are under utilised but have great potential to be used for community activities. The largest, Jean Stokes Community Centre, was used by a number of community groups prior to Covid-19, including a Somali women's group, an over 55s art group, and two groups running 'mother-tongue' classes. This centre is not currently open access, and the basement is in a state of disrepair and not occupied. Places of worship in the area also provide space for community activities to run, and King's Cross Church are creating a new community space on Pentonville Road.

- **Voluntary sector premises:** Community centres in Cally could provide affordable accommodation and space for local organisations to work with the local community. The redevelopment of Orkney House will result in organisations based there needing to find new premises.
- **Community action and participation:** There is a historic sense of people in Cally being 'done to' by the state and other organisations. However, many residents are active in their community and use their skills and expertise to make things happen, whether running their local community centre, providing support to neighbours, or improving public spaces. There are active tenant, resident and leaseholder groups in the Cally, although some estates, such as Bemerton Estate, do not currently have one. During the coronavirus pandemic, many people in Cally came forward to help others. Caledonian and Barnsbury Mutual Aid Group have played a significant role in helping the community stay safe during this period, and have been thinking about further action beyond the pandemic.
- **Voluntary sector collaboration:** There are examples of effective collaboration between organisations in the Cally. However, this could be further developed so that there is a really strong, visible and coordinated programme of community activities for residents, and different groups have a clear sense of what support other organisations provide.

## What are people's aspirations?

- **Involvement in community life:** Cally is a place where people have valued relationships with their neighbours, building on the existing strong sense of community. People are actively involved in community and civic life, for example through participation in activities, initiating resident-led action, helping others, and having a say in local decisions.
- **An excellent programme of community services and activities:** An engaging programme of community activities, services and events improve local people's quality of life. The range of activities reflect the diversity of the local population, and provide opportunities for people to both organise around their identities, and for people to connect across difference. People know what is taking place, when and where.
- **A strong voluntary and community sector:** Cally continues to be home to strong, vibrant voluntary and community organisations who work across the diversity of the community.

- **Good-quality, well-managed community facilities:** Cally's community centres are attractive, well-managed spaces that host a wide range of activities, services and events, and provide space for voluntary and community organisations.
- **Collaboration and partnership:** Services, organisations and groups in Cally know each other, trust each other and work effectively together.

## What are we going to do?

### A strong sense of place

We will build on Cally's strong sense of identity, enabling residents to tell the story of the area and celebrate its unique culture and history.

- **Cally Festival:** The Cally Festival will continue as a flagship community event each June, celebrating the vibrant culture of the area. This event will provide opportunities for residents to get involved, for example by performing or leading workshops. The June 2021 festival will enable people to participate in a socially-distanced way, by following a trail through the Cally area with art along the way.
- **Sharing stories of the Cally:** Islington Council's Heritage and Communities teams and voluntary sector organisations will work with residents to develop projects that enable them to document and share stories of Cally and its people, with a particular emphasis on stories which have been hidden from history. This might include arts projects, collaborative writing and oral history projects. There will be a new community mosaic on Freeling Street as part of the Cultivating Cally project. Islington Council's Communications team will feature local stories in a new page on the Islington Life website.

### Improved community centres

We will revitalise community centres in Cally, so that these centres are attractive, well-managed spaces, valued by the local community.

- **Redesign Jean Stokes Community Centre:** Islington Council will work with residents, community groups and voluntary organisations to redesign Jean Stokes Community Centre, to be opened in early 2022. The centre will move from a 'hall for hire' model to a drop-in, multi-purpose centre which is a hub for community life. The hall and meeting rooms on the ground

floor will continue to be available for a range of community events, activities and services. An extension to the front of the building will create a new space, visible from the street, which will function as a 'community living room'. The currently disused basement will be a home for diverse local voluntary sector organisations. Islington Council will support these organisations to play a role in running the centre.

- **Improvements to Nailor Hall, York Way and Westbourne Community Centres:** Between April 2021 and March 2023, Islington Council's Communities team will work with Nailor Hall Community Centre committee to renovate the kitchen and entrance. At the Westbourne Community Centre, improvements will be made to the heating and lighting, introducing a drop ceiling in the hall to improve energy efficiency. York Way Community Centre will have upgraded toilets and kitchen.

### Spaces for community organisations

- Islington Council will provide affordable premises for voluntary and community organisations in the redevelopment of Orkney House, Jean Stokes Community Centre and council-owned buildings adjacent to Bingfield Park. Community centre halls and meeting rooms across the Cally will be available for hire at affordable rates and through improved bookings systems.

### A comprehensive programme of activities in community spaces

Voluntary sector organisations, community groups and Islington Council will work together to coordinate a programme of community activities, designed with resident input, that reflects the needs and interests of Cally's diverse community. These activities will enable residents to come together with a common purpose, inspiring curiosity, improving wellbeing, promoting social connection, and helping people to resolve difficulties.

- **Opportunities to learn and share skills:** Community centres will provide opportunities for people to learn, share skills and develop the capabilities that will enable them to flourish across their lives. Help on Your Doorstep will continue to deliver its Good Neighbours Scheme to provide opportunities for residents to socialise, gain skills and volunteer. This will include enabling local people to share their skills and passions and develop new skills, including arts and crafts, cooking, digital skills and event planning. They will continue to help people gain foundation qualifications like first aid and food hygiene and link them into skills development opportunities.

- **Adult learning:** Islington’s Council’s Adult Community Learning and Communities teams will work together to establish a programme of adult education at Jean Stokes Community Centre that meets the needs and interests of local residents, such as courses in literacy, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), creative writing, sewing, arts, and digital skills.
- **Opportunities to create:** The potential to use a council building to the south of Bingfield Park as a creative space for community arts projects will be assessed in dialogue with local arts organisations, including Central St Martins. Organisations including Phoenix Pottery, ArtBox, and Islington Council’s Communities team will provide arts and creative activities in community facilities across the area.
- **Digital access:** Local community centres will provide free computer and internet access. At Jean Stokes Community Centre, facilities will be provided to enable residents to print and scan documents, with accessible technology for residents who need this.
- **Activities for older people:** Nailor Hall Community Centre and Islington Council’s Communities team will work together to increase the provision of activities for older people following the closure of the Drivers Day Centre. Older people of different backgrounds will feel there is ‘something for them’, with food, games and activities reflecting the diversity of the community.

### Participation in the local community

Residents will have different opportunities to engage in community life, including community-led action, volunteering, setting up resident groups, or influencing local decisions. Across these opportunities, consideration will be made of how to engage and include people who don’t usually have their voices heard.

- **Recognising contributions during Covid-19:** Islington Council, local schools and voluntary and community sector groups will recognise the efforts of people in Cally who supported others during the Covid-19 pandemic, and use this as an opportunity to encourage further community involvement.
- **Community-led action:** Islington Council’s Communities team and voluntary sector organisations will offer support to emerging and existing groups of residents to develop their ideas and initiatives and to play an active leadership role in the community. In addition to the Local Initiatives Fund, grants of up to £500 will be made available to enable groups of Cally residents to put their ideas into practice. Training in community development will be offered to people living and working in

Cally. Community centres will provide space for residents to self-organise and the resources needed for resident-led action including computers, printing and cooking facilities.

- **Volunteering opportunities:** Voluntary sector organisations and community centres will create engaging volunteering opportunities for residents. Through the Good Neighbours Scheme, Help on Your Doorstep will support residents to help run activities, providing support and training where necessary.
- **Tenants and Resident Associations:** Islington Council's Communities team will support residents interested in establishing Tenants and Residents Associations, so that they can work with the council to improve where they live.
- **Ward Partnership meetings:** Local councillors will host regular Ward Partnership meetings so that people living and working in Cally can voice issues, concerns and priorities for the local area.

### **Stronger Collaboration and Improved Communications**

- **Community centre consortium:** Cally's community centre committees and Islington Council's Communities team will work together to review the activities offered in centres across the ward, share resources, and develop a joint approach to hall hire so that community groups and residents can use spaces more easily.
- **Communications:** Islington Council's Communities team will work with community centre committees and voluntary sector partners to develop joint printed and electronic communications so that residents can find out what's happening when, and where. Islington Council's Communications Team will promote community projects through a new Cally section of Islington Life and the We Are Cally e-newsletter.

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# Better opportunities for children, young people and families

## What have people living and working in Cally said about the current situation?

- **Support for children to get the best start in life**

- Bright Start, a partnership between Islington Council and the NHS, provides services for children under 5 at Bemerton Children's Centre, Bingfield Health Centre and other locations in Cally. These include early learning, health visiting, speech and language support, and activities such as storytelling and stay and play.
- Parents and practitioners feel that there are opportunities to develop the offer of creative activities and exploratory play for children under 5, and that this should be a focus as Covid-19 restrictions ease.
- Developmental reviews are offered to all 1 and 2 year-old children. Some families in Cally do not take up this opportunity, and this has been exacerbated by Covid-19.
- Parents and practitioners are concerned about the impact of the pandemic on the socialisation of younger children.

- **Support for parents and carers of younger children**

- Bright Start provides support to parents and carers with a child under 5, including guidance on feeding and routines, ideas to support play at home, and support to move into work. Families with complex needs can get help from the Bright Start Family Support service. Parenting support, including from peers, and courses for parents to support their own development are provided by the Parent House.
- Practitioners working in Cally cite community self-reliance, lack of awareness of what is available locally, and wariness of statutory services as possible reasons why some Cally families do not engage with services they could benefit from. The Bright Start Family Support Service in Cally receives a lower number of referrals compared to similar areas.
- Parents and carers who do not have English as an expert language can access English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes with crèche support through a partnership between the council's Adult and Community



Learning service and the Parent House. More targeted support, including activities run in community languages, could increase engagement of bilingual and multilingual families, acting as a bridge to universal services.

- Bright Start's timetable and webpages are used by families to find out about services, but more outreach work would improve parents' knowledge of the local offer. Parents and schools would find it helpful to have an overview of the range of provision for younger children in the area, including activities run by voluntary sector organisations.

- **Schools:**

- The six primary schools in the Cally area are all graded good by Ofsted. The closest secondary school, Elizabeth Garret Anderson, is graded outstanding.
- At all six primary schools, children's progress in reading, writing and mathematics is in line with or above the national average, although there is considerable variation in the percentage of children at each school who meet the expected standard (57% to 91%). School leaders are concerned about the impact school closures during the pandemic have had on the attainment of disadvantaged children.
- Reflecting the diversity of the area, a considerably higher percentage of children in Cally schools have a first language other than English. Bilingual and multilingual children who speak languages other than English at home have missed exposure to English during Covid-19, which may have a short-term impact on their access to the curriculum.
- Cally schools provide a range of opportunities for children to learn outside of the classroom. For example, children at Copenhagen School attend 'Forest School' sessions at Barnsbury Nature Reserve, supporting exploration and risk-taking.

- **Youth work and after school activities for school-aged children and young people:**

- There is a good range of open-access provision for children and young people in the area, run by organisations including Awesome, Copenhagen Youth Project, Global Generation, Islington Bangladeshi Association, Islington Play Association, Light Project Pro International, Mary's Youth Club, Prospex and XLP. However, there is a need to improve:
  - The youth work offer for young women, where there are gaps at the moment.

- The visibility, communication and coordination of what is available, so people can find out what is happening, when and where.
  - Access to provision, as some children and young people who would benefit from joining after-school or youth work activities don't take part at the moment.
  - Engagement with parents and carers about what is available locally, and to address their questions and concerns
- There is targeted support available for young people affected by or involved in crime, including from the council's Targeted Youth Support team.
- Detached youth work in the area, delivered by Copenhagen Youth Project, Prospex and XLP, involves youth workers going to where young people are.
- **Learning, skills and employment support for young people not in school or work:**
  - There are concerns about youth unemployment, which is increasing as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.
  - Some young people in Cally do not benefit from the learning, skills and employment opportunities in the local area and those more widely available across London.
- **Youth safety:**
  - There have been incidents of serious youth violence and historical issues within the area relating to gangs and organised crime, resulting in a fragile sense of safety amongst many local families.
  - There are several parks, play spaces and adventure playgrounds in the area, but some children, young people and families do not use these or spend time in other public spaces because they don't feel safe.
  - There have been attempts to respond to incidents of youth violence, though this work is often time-limited. Examples of community-driven responses include the Cally Parents group, a council-run parental support project, a project led by Global Generation with Copenhagen Youth Project and the council to create a peace garden in Bingfield Park, and the knife-crime parent ambassador project run by the Parent House.

- The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated concerns felt by some families in Cally, such as fear of the outside and worries about children being out in public space.
- **Collaboration between organisations working with children and young people:**
  - The Early Childhood Area Partnership for South Islington brings together professionals working with children under 5 and community and parent representatives to identify and develop shared local priorities, embed joint working and shape services.
  - There is effective networking between youth providers including through the Cally Youth Providers Forum, but further opportunities for collaboration. This could include mapping and organising provision and shared learning sessions for practitioners.
  - Relationships between and across council services and voluntary sector organisations working with children and young people could be strengthened. Different models of practice and using different language sometimes makes it difficult to work across organisational boundaries. A shared commitment to working collaboratively and flexibly would help to support children, young people and families in transitions between services, and support a 'whole family' approach.

## What are people's aspirations?

- **Children and young people are connected with a city of opportunity:** Children and young people feel that they have a stake in their area and are able to take advantage of the opportunities that Cally, Islington and London have to offer.
- **Children, young people and families using public spaces:** There are safe and welcoming places for children, young people and families to spend time, and they feel comfortable to spend time in outdoor spaces, such as playgrounds and parks.
- **Young people can thrive:** Young people are skilled, informed, confident, and have agency. They are able to pursue a range of opportunities across their lives, including learning, work and recreation.
- **Children and young people are supported through key transitions:** Children and young people are supported in key transitions such as from nursery to school, from primary to secondary school and from school to independence.

## What are we going to do?

### Support for children and families in response to Covid-19

- **Support for younger children:** Bright Start will provide services that help address children's social and emotional needs following Covid-19. This will include activities that help 2 year-olds to develop life skills such as sharing and turn-taking.
- **Pastoral support in schools:** Local schools will support children and parents and carers to access additional help they need as a result of the pandemic. Elizabeth Garrett Anderson School, immediately to the east of the Cally, will engage additional pastoral care staff to provide greater support for pupils.
- **Allowing children to have fun:** Schools will prioritise children enjoying being back in school as they return after lockdown. For example, pupils at Elizabeth Garrett Anderson School will take part in sport and creative activities. Organisations working with children will create opportunities for children to have fun, particularly during holiday periods.
- **Outdoor activities:** Bright Start and local voluntary sector organisations will provide outdoor activities for children and families once Covid-19 restrictions are eased, such as family gardening and outdoor coffee mornings.

### Encouraging engagement with services for children, young people and families

- **Young Cally Calendar:** A Young Cally calendar will lay out the range of activities and services that children, young people and families can access locally. This calendar will be translated into key community languages and available from local schools, voluntary sector organisations working with children and young people, libraries, community centres, GP surgeries, and the children's centre. The calendar will also be available online, with events promoted on social media.
- **Engaging families with young children:** Practitioners delivering Bright Start services will explore flexible ways to engage with the local community and be responsive to what Cally families want. Building confidence and trust in services will be a key consideration once Covid-19 restrictions ease and face-to-face activities resume.
- **Targeted work with bilingual and multilingual families:** Local schools will promote support for bilingual and multilingual families in Cally, with knowledge of each school community used to target information where appropriate. The Bright Start Turkish-speaking link worker will work with Turkish and Kurdish families in Cally to understand and address barriers to accessing services, build trust, and increase engagement with the local offer.

## Collaboration between organisations and services working with young people

- **Cally Youth Providers Network:** Islington Council and voluntary sector youth providers will work together to further develop the Cally Youth Providers Network, in order to strengthen practical collaboration across organisations. Membership of the group will be widened to include local schools.
- **A new youth network for South Islington:** During 2021, Cally youth providers will be invited to join a new youth network for South Islington, co-ordinated by the Young Islington service. Members of the network will work together to build a shared understanding of the needs of young people in South Islington, agree priorities and allocate a commissioning budget to respond to local needs.
- **Shared learning and reflection sessions for practitioners:** Practitioners in community-based organisations working with children and young people will be able to take part in training in trauma-informed practice run by Islington's Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service in partnership with the council, building on work that has already taken place in local schools. This will help practitioners to better recognise and understand the impact of trauma on children and young people, and work in a way that is sensitive to previous traumatic experiences.

## Activities for families with younger children

- **Creative activities:** Bright Start will work with partners including the British Library and the London Symphony Orchestra to enable families in Cally to access engaging creative and cultural activities. Little Angels Theatre will run a regular 'Crafternoon' for children aged 4 to 11 years at Jean Stokes Community Centre once it reopens in early 2022.
- **Parenting courses in community languages:** Bright Start will offer the 'Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities' course for Turkish-speaking parents and carers in Cally, run in Turkish. Providing this course in other community languages, such as Bengali, will be explored.

## Youth work and after-school activities for school-aged children and young people

- **Provision for girls and young women:** The council and local voluntary sector organisations will work together to establish additional provision for girls and young women in Cally. Space at local community centres will be made available to run activities aimed at and/or inclusive of these groups. Global Generation will run activities for girls and young women with a focus on ecology, creativity and personal development when they move back to the area in 2022.

- **Identifying and filling gaps in provision:** From November 2021, the new youth network for South Islington will build an understanding of the engagement of young people from different communities in youth work activities, identify gaps in provision across the locality, and provide funding to local providers to deliver services to fill these gaps.

### Support for those at risk of exclusion or gang activity

- **Help during the transition to secondary school:** Islington Council will provide support to families during the transition from primary to secondary school through two projects: one run by the Targeted Youth Support team and the other funded by the London Violence Reduction Unit. Combined, the two projects will work with thirty young people in year 6 and 7 who have been identified by their school as being at risk of exclusion or of being involved in gangs. Intensive school-based and community-based support during will help children to form safe and supportive peer groups into secondary school and to engage in learning, and support parents and carers to engage more effectively with their child's school.
- **Support for Somali families worried about youth violence:** Minority Matters will deliver a parent champion programme, working with Somali parents and carers to build peer support networks for families concerned about gangs and youth violence.

### Learning and employment support for young people not in education or work

- **A new employability hub:** A new youth employability hub will open at West Library in winter 2021/2022. A range of council services for young people will provide services and activities from this redesigned space, including youth employability support, adult learning, advice and guidance, counselling, and support for those involved in or affected by gang activity. Young people from the area will contribute their ideas for the design of the employability hub, with two young people from Copenhagen Youth Project acting as youth consultants to the project.
- **Youth Employability Progression and Skills Programme:** The council's Youth Employment Progression and Skills Programme will work with 18 to 25 year-olds who are not in education or work. Young people referred by local organisations, leaving care and/or with experience of the youth justice system will be able to access a package of skills tuition, advice and guidance, work experience and therapeutic support. This will be delivered on a one-to-one or small group basis at local venues, including West Library.

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# Attractive well-used public spaces

## What have people living and working in Cally said about the current situation?

- **Access to green spaces:** Smaller areas of green make up an important part of the overall green space in Cally: 98% of residents of Caledonian ward live within 400 metres of some kind of open public space; however, the percentage who live within 400 metres of a park is only 45%, considerably lower than the Islington average of 59%. Larger green spaces in Cally are Bingfield Park, Caledonian Park and Edward Square to the west of Caledonian Road, and Barnard Park and Thornhill Square to the east. There are opportunities to increase the amount of green space in the area by 'greening' smaller areas of open space, including spaces on estates.
- **Design and quality of green space:** The proportion of green space in Islington is the second lowest of any local authority area in the country, so the quality of the space is particularly significant. Covid-19 has increased the importance of local outdoor public spaces where people want to spend time. There are marked differences in the quality of green spaces adjacent to housing estates, in contrast to those in affluent areas of Barnsbury. Bingfield Park and Barnard Park are not very engaging, and need improving. Bingfield Park is regarded as a cut-through, and some families do not use it because of a lack of play facilities and seating.
- **Spaces for play:** Four of Islington's twelve adventure playgrounds are in the Cally area. These offer free, safe, open-access play facilities for children aged 6 and over. Crumble's Castle and Lumpy Hill Adventure Playgrounds are run by Islington Play Association; the adventure playground at Barnard Park is run by Awesome Community Interest Company. The Hayward Playground, run by the charity Kids, caters for children and young people with special needs and disabilities. There are places for residents of all ages to play football or basketball in Bingfield Park, Caledonian Park, Edward Square and Barnard Park. There are spaces for play on some estates, such as play areas, multi-use games areas and open spaces; however, there are examples of 'no ball games' and other signage discouraging play.
- **Places for bio-diversity and for people to connect with nature:** There are two sites of particular importance for biodiversity in Cally. Barnsbury Wood is London's smallest local Nature Reserve which, despite its size, is a good example of mixed deciduous woodland. The Regent's Canal, running east-west along the southern side of the Cally area, provides a

special habitat for animals, including bats and slow worms. In recent years, efforts by the Canal and River Trust and the London Wildlife Trust have improved the biodiversity of the canal, for example by establishing floating ecosystems which create habitats for birds, fish and insects. The canal towpath is an important and well-used public space, but some residents do not access it despite living close by. Some green spaces in Cally, including Bingfield Park, lack diversity of planting and are of low natural value. There are opportunities to improve biodiversity through planting in more places in Cally.

- **Concerns about anti-social behaviour:** Some people are afraid of going to parks because they believe they will come across anti-social or criminal behaviour. Some residents do not feel safe walking around the area at night. The walkways on Bemerton Estate were cited as an example of a place that did not always feel safe. Littering and dog fouling is an issue in some public spaces, including in parks and open spaces on housing estates in Cally.
- **Activities in public spaces:** Islington Council works with partners to deliver programmes that encourage people to use public spaces for activities. A pilot of the Active Spaces programme in 2019-20 enabled residents of Bemerton Estate and surrounding areas to take part in arts, gardening and food growing, sports, and, health and wellbeing activities in outdoor and indoor spaces on estates.
- **Community involvement in looking after public spaces:** There are a number of active friends of parks groups in the Cally area: groups of volunteers who work together to improve their local park, and use it as a place to bring people together. These include Friends of Thornhill Square Gardens, Friends of Caledonian Park, Friends of Barnard Park and Friends of Edward Square. The Friends of Edward Square group have planted a spinney (a small area of trees) with apples, sparking connections between neighbours. There are further opportunities for community adoption of public spaces in the area, including spaces next to the Regent's Canal.
- **Growing and gardening:** There are some keen gardeners in the Cally area, many of whom do not have gardens of their own. The Bloomin' Gardeners Group, run by Age UK and supported by Octopus Community Network, is an inclusive gardening group for older people meeting weekly (prior to Covid-19) in Caledonian Park. Children have opportunities to garden at adventure playgrounds in Cally: Global Generation support food growing at Crumble's Castle, Friends of Barnard Park grow vegetables, herbs and flowers with children at Barnard Adventure Playground, and in 2019 Octopus Community Network created a wildlife garden in front of Hayward Adventure Playground. Some Cally residents would like more opportunities to grow things where they live, including on estates. People involved in gardening projects in public spaces



would benefit from support with initiating projects and with maintaining beds longer-term, and with access to compost and water.

## What are people's aspirations?

- **Community greening and growing:** Small public spaces across the Cally are greened and animated through community-led initiatives, promoting a sense of ownership and pride. Residents have opportunities to grow food.
- **Bio-diversity:** Local bio-diversity is enhanced by initiatives such as urban food-growing using permaculture approaches, and new planting in green spaces and along pedestrian routes. Residents are involved in efforts to protect and increase bio-diversity in the area.
- **Resident involvement in design of public spaces:** Residents, including children and young people, and local community groups have a say in the design of high-quality outdoor public spaces in Cally, and the features and facilities within them.
- **Safe, inviting and inclusive green spaces:** Residents feel welcome in parks and green spaces that are clean and well-maintained. Parks have inclusive facilities, enabling children, young people and adults from all backgrounds, including those with disabilities, to play, connect with others, and experience the many benefits of being in green space. Parks and green spaces are well-used and well-designed, helping to make people feel safer. Greater use of parks, rather than a reliance on physical security measures, helps to minimise anti-social behaviour.
- **Parks and public spaces as places for play and recreation:** Parks and public spaces are active places where residents participate in activities and events.
- **Public spaces enabling social interaction:** Public spaces across the Cally are places of social connection, enabling people to meet their friends and neighbours, and providing opportunities for chance encounters that build a sense of community.

## What are we going to do?

### Greening of public spaces

Residents, voluntary and community sector organisations and Islington Council will all be involved in making and realising plans to create more green spaces in Cally, with planting that encourages biodiversity. This will include currently unused flower beds and planters on estates, and pathways used by local people.

- **Community planting:** Cally residents, particularly those living on estates, will be encouraged to plant things in their area. The Cally Festival and Islington Council will support this through distributing bulbs and seed bombs to residents.
- **'Pocket park' at Freeling Street:** The Cally Festival team will make Freeling Street a 'pocket park' with a mural and planters, making permanent the temporary space created for the 2019 Cally Festival. Residents will be able to share their ideas for the new space and contribute to making it happen. The pocket park will be open from summer 2021.
- **Jean Stokes Community Centre:** Improvements to the nearby Jean Stokes Community Centre will include planting at the new entrance to the centre. This greening initiative will complement the Freeling Street pocket park.
- **'Greening Cally' group:** A group of people interested in making Cally greener, including residents, schools, GPs, tenants and residents groups, voluntary sector organisations and Islington Council, will come together to identify further spaces in the area which can be 'greened' and plan how to make this happen.

### Improve parks in Cally

Islington Council's Parks team will consult with local residents and community organisations to plan and deliver improvements to Barnard Park and Bingfield Park. Friends of parks groups will be involved in consultation about improvements to parks, and supported to make parks attractive, well-used spaces.

- **Barnard Park:** Barnard Park will be re-established as an attractive community space, appealing to a wide range of local people and supporting a variety of activities. A new nine-a-side football pitch will be built and additional sports facilities introduced, including an outdoor gym and running paths. A new building will provide changing rooms, toilets and space for the One O'Clock club.

- **Bingfield Park:** Bingfield Park will be a welcoming green space at the heart of the Cally. Landscaping and planting will make the park a more inviting and interesting space to be in, and enhance biodiversity. The re-designed park will be family-friendly with improved play and sports facilities, particularly for younger children.
- **Friends of parks groups:** Friends of Thornhill Square Gardens, Caledonian Park, Barnard Park and Edward Square will provide opportunities for local residents to be actively involved in improving their local park. Islington Council will support existing friends of parks groups and encourage new ones.

### Ensure parks and other green spaces are kept clean

- Islington Council's Parks and Estate Services teams will work to ensure that parks and green spaces on estates are kept clean and tidy. Bins in the redesigned Barnard Park and Bingfield Park will make it easy for residents to recycle their rubbish, helping to keep parks clean and reducing the amount of waste going to landfill. Signs in parks and on estates will let residents know how to report littering, dog fouling or fly-tipping.

### Activities in public spaces

- Residents' groups, friends of parks groups, voluntary sector organisations and Islington Council will use parks and other public spaces to put on different activities for people to enjoy, encouraging greater use of these spaces. Islington Council's Communities team will work with Arsenal in the Community, Healthy Generations, Access to Sports, and other voluntary sector organisations to run Active Spaces Bemerton: a programme of activities for residents in outdoor and indoor public spaces on and near Bemerton Estate. Residents will be asked to share their views on the activities they would like to take part in.

### Growing and gardening

- **Support for community gardening:** Gardening groups will be supported by Octopus Community Network and Islington Council's Communities team to identify spaces for growing, access compost and water, develop planting plans, and secure funding. Gardening on estates will be particularly encouraged. The Action for Local Food programme run by Octopus Community Network and Global Generation will support gardening groups to locally produce compost and harvest water.

- **Food growing:** The Action for Local Food programme will help address the climate crisis through promoting sustainable and environmentally-friendly local food growing, using a permaculture approach. As part of the programme, Global Generation will train young people and adults as climate action ambassadors. A free year-long training course will cover food production, site planning, and permaculture approaches, and create a network of Islington growers.
- **A new barge garden:** Young people from Global Generation have worked with architects, canal users and local young people to design a new barge garden which will be built in 2021. The barge will be situated close to Cally, and will host a garden space, classroom and kitchen.

### Community involvement in ecological initiatives

- Residents, friends of parks groups, and Islington Council's Parks team will carry out species monitoring at Barnsbury Wood Nature Reserve. Residents of all ages will be able to get involved in initiatives to improve biodiversity on the Regent's Canal, including planting trees and building homes for bees, bats and birds. The Canal and River Trust will work with schools in Cally and local community groups to promote these opportunities to residents.

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# Improved health and wellbeing

## What do people living and working in Cally say about the current situation?

- **Health inequality:** Poverty can affect the health of people of all ages, and indicators such as life expectancy, low birth weight, diet-related problems and prevalence of long-term health conditions suggest a link between income and health conditions in Cally. 7.2% of Cally residents receive a Personal Independence Payment to help with the costs of long-term ill health or disability, compared to 5.6% across Islington. Life expectancy in the area is similar to the Islington average, but there are sharp differences for people living in different parts of Cally. Male residents of the area's social housing estates, west of the Cally Road and in the southern part of Barnsbury, have an average life expectancy of 75, compared to 82 in affluent parts of Barnsbury.
- **Health concerns:** Healthy eating, exercise, smoking and mental wellbeing are particular local health concerns. People living and working in Cally are worried about the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on black and minority ethnic groups, and the ways in which the pandemic has exacerbated existing health issues.
  - **Healthy eating:** Some residents in Cally are concerned about access to and affordability of healthy food. Food projects, including Bags of Taste and Copenhagen Street Food Bank, support residents experiencing food poverty; however, there are opportunities to do more to strengthen access to good-quality, affordable food. More children in the last year of primary school living in Caledonian ward are considered to be obese (41%) than the Islington and London average (both 37%).
  - **Exercise:** There is a leisure centre and swimming pool on Caledonian Road, and opportunities to join exercise classes in local community centres. Some of these classes are aimed at specific groups, such as the Fit Women Group at Jean Stokes Community Centre, run by and for Muslim women. Staying inside as a result of Covid-19 has reduced the amount of exercise that many people do. Residents feel that leisure facilities, particularly the gym and pool, could be improved.

- **Smoking:** The proportion of people in Caledonian ward who smoke is significantly higher than the Islington average. Incidence of lung cancer in Caledonian ward is significantly higher than the Islington and London average.
- **Mental health:** Some Cally residents are concerned about worsening mental health as a result of Covid-19, particularly for children and young people, who have been spending lots of time inside during the pandemic.
- **Health and wellbeing services:** There are a range of services in Cally which help people when they are ill or when they are worried about their health and wellbeing, and that help people stay well.
  - **Medical services:** People in Cally have GPs, hospitals, dentists, sexual health services and pharmacies close to where they live. Residents report that the quality of general practice in the area is variable. Killick Street Health Centre was cited as providing a good service, with the opportunity to see the same doctor being particularly valued. Extensive work between ward councillors and the GP Federation is expected to improve the quality of service for residents at Bingfield Primary Care Centre, with less reliance on locum doctors. Pharmacies on Caledonian Road are well-used and well-regarded, and adapted their services during Covid-19 in order to support local people.
  - **Peer support:** There are groups in Cally where people with concerns about their wellbeing can support one other. For example, London Friend runs a range of social and support groups for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people at their centre on Caledonian Road, the Parent House facilitates peer mentoring for parents, and Cocaine Anonymous offers peer support for people worried about their use of drugs at Jean Stokes Community Centre. Residents would find it useful to have a wider range of peer support groups locally, such as a group for people who are worried about their alcohol consumption.
  - **Social prescribing:** Age UK provide a 'social prescribing' service at Killick Street Health Centre, using a casework approach to support people who need more than medical care to live healthier and more fulfilling lives, helping to unpick things that may be holding them back and to connect them with community activities. The social prescribing link worker has a good knowledge of local organisations, but would benefit from more comprehensive, up-to-date information about community activities, particularly those in community centres. Help on Your Doorstep's Connect Service works with individuals to help them realise their goals and address difficulties they may be facing, including health and wellbeing concerns. They provide a navigator service linking residents into local services that may improve

their health and wellbeing. The council piloted its new Parks for Health programme in Caledonian Park in autumn 2020, using a social prescribing approach to connect people with activities in parks.

- **Environmental health:**

- **Air quality:** Air quality in the Cally is in the worst 10% of that across the UK, and air pollution is a serious concern for residents. Poor air quality is a contributing factor in the onset or exacerbation of health conditions such as lung cancer, chest infections, heart disease and strokes. The air in Cally has high levels of nitrogen oxide, sulphur dioxide, and tiny particles that get into people's lungs. Road traffic is the single most important source of air pollution: Caledonian Road is a major through-route and is often congested, contributing significantly to poor air quality. The use of engines on boats moored on the Regents Canal creates localised air pollution, affecting nearby residents and towpath users.
- **Housing:** Housing conditions are generally good, however overcrowding and poor-quality housing conditions particularly in the private-rented sector have a negative impact on the health of local people.
- **Pedestrian and cyclist safety:** Less than a third of residents in Caledonian ward (32%) have a car, a lower percentage to Islington (35%) and London as a whole (58%). Levels of car ownership varies across the area: for residents of Bemerton Estate it is 27%. Despite Cally residents' relatively low levels of car ownership, too many streets in the area are dominated by traffic, and unsafe or unwelcoming to pedestrians and cyclists. There is a lack of clear walking and cycling routes, particularly going east to west, and opportunities to improve the infrastructure for cycling. In 2019, collisions seriously injured a cyclist on Copenhagen Street and a pedestrian on Hemingford Road. The social and environmental benefits of reduced traffic levels on streets in the Cally was demonstrated during the spring 2020 lockdown. In September 2020, a 'school streets' scheme was introduced at all six primary schools in the area: a pedestrian and cycle zone that operates at school opening and closing times.

## What are people's aspirations?

- **Reduced health inequality:** Improved health outcomes for people living west of the Cally Road and in south Barnsbury; in particular, reductions in preventable diseases associated with smoking, poor diet and physical inactivity.

- **A focus on prevention:** High-quality activities and services in community centres and green spaces, including food projects, physical activity and peer support groups, enable residents to reduce their risk of preventable diseases, improve their physical and mental health, try new things in a supportive environment, and build a sense of community.
- **Connected health and community services:** Stronger connections between GP practices, statutory, voluntary and community-based services enable residents, and people working with them, to know what support is available, where and when.
- **A public realm that enables walking and cycling:** Walking and cycling routes across Cally enable active travel, leisure and recreation. These routes are safe and inviting, and made appealing through the introduction of planting and public art.
- **Improved air quality:** Traffic control measures and increased walking and cycling lead to a reduction in traffic congestion and air pollution in Cally, creating a safer, cleaner environment for all.
- **Opportunities to exercise:** Everyone in Cally who wants to exercise can do so, with a range of opportunities that are inclusive of disabled people and those of different genders, ages and cultural backgrounds. Improved facilities in parks and a renovated gym and swimming pool help enable this.

## What are we going to do?

### A healthier environment

- **Safer streets for pedestrians and cyclists:** Islington Council will put in place measures to reduce traffic, redesign streets to make them safer, improve the public realm, and make walking and cycling easier for everyone in Cally. A new east-west cycle route will link Caledonian Road and York Way, with improved crossing points across Caledonian Road. The Cally Festival will source funding to create a new greenway from Bingfield Park to Thornhill Square. Potential additional east-west links will be explored. Signage will be improved to help residents and visitors find their way around the area easily. Cycle parking will be improved, with more places to park bicycles on Caledonian Road, and outside public buildings such as Jean Stokes Community Centre. The Cally Festival will work with Islington Council to install new cycle hoops at Freeling Street in summer 2021.



- **Eco-mooring zone on the Regent's Canal:** The Canal and River Trust and Islington Council will create a trial eco-mooring zone, covering two stretches of the canal that run through Cally: from Treaty Street to York Way, and Caledonian Road to Muriel Street. The 'eco-mooring' zone will include electric charging points along the towpath to provide an alternative to heating and power sources that cause local air quality issues. During the two-year trial (2021-23), no running of diesel engines or generators will be permitted, and boaters will be encouraged to move from burning solid fuels to using electricity.

### Activities to support healthy lifestyles

- **Community food initiatives:** Copenhagen Street Food Bank and volunteers from Caledonian and Barnsbury Mutual Aid will work together to sustain the local food bank. With support from Islington Council and King's Cross Church, they will explore the idea of establishing a resident-led food cooperative. The redesigned Jean Stokes Community Centre will host a community café, a well-equipped kitchen and provide a space for cooking lessons and community meals. The Parent House will work with residents to create a Cally community cookbook, highlighting the range of culinary traditions in the area.
- **Walking groups:** The Parent House's walking project and the Cally Walkers group will engage residents who want to improve their physical wellbeing through walks in the local area. The Canal and River Trust will arrange guided walks themed around heritage and ecology and will provide recreational on-water activities to engage newcomers and local residents.
- **Parks for Health:** Learning from the pilot of the Parks for Health programme in Caledonian Park, Islington Council's Parks team will work with the community to ensure that parks are used for activities that help reduce health inequalities. The Parks for Health programme will put on a range of activities in parks that improve health and wellbeing, such as meditation, gardening and crafts.

### Community health and wellbeing services

- **Strengthen social prescribing services:** Help on Your Doorstep will continue to deliver its Connect outreach service so that residents, particularly those at risk of poor health outcomes, can navigate local services better. When safe to do so, Help on Your Doorstep will start to knock on doors in the area again to help people connect with the services they need.

Age UK Islington's social prescribing service will continue to link residents with services and activities in the Cally, with a particular focus on early intervention and prevention. Learning from the successful work that is taking place at Killick Street Health Centre, social prescribing approaches will be embedded across the Cally area.

- **Networking events:** Islington Council's Communities team will facilitate twice-yearly networking sessions that enable people working in statutory, voluntary and community sector organisations in Cally to meet and learn about each other's work. These informal sessions will improve practitioners' awareness of activities and services available in the area so that they can work more effectively together and help residents get the support they need.
- **Peer support:** Health workers, council staff and voluntary sector organisations working in Cally will encourage residents who are interested in setting up a peer support group and connect them with help to do so. This might include sharing toolkits and linking them with existing groups for guidance. Islington Council's Public Health team will provide training so that Cally residents can increase their understanding of issues related to mental health, employment and housing. This training will enable residents to have conversations with neighbours, friends and family about their health and wellbeing, and help them get the support they need earlier.

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# A thriving, connected local economy that works for everyone

## What have people living and working in Cally said about the current situation?

- **Diversity of the high street:** Caledonian Road has a range of independent shops and businesses catering for the area's diverse community. Many of the retail units on the high street are rented from a single landlord. The two largest retail groups in the area are food and drink retailers and health and beauty. Although local shops cater to the needs and economic reality of the local community, some residents are concerned about access to and affordability of fresh foods such as fruit and vegetables. Wealth disparity in the area has led to some residents being concerned about gentrification, with a fear that newer shops are targeted at more affluent residents. High business rates and the impact of Covid-19 create a challenging economic context for many businesses on the high street.
- **Sense of place:** Cally has a strong sense of place that provides a good foundation for creating a thriving local economy. However, the high street lacks coherence as a shopping destination, with some residents travelling to neighbouring areas such as Nag's Head for shopping. Some residents, particularly those with mobility issues or using a pushchair, find it hard to navigate Caledonian Road due to street clutter on pavements and the volume of traffic on the road itself. Residents raised concerns about the visual appearance of some retail units and the number of units that are not in use.
- **Income and job security:** A third of residents of Caledonian ward live in neighbourhoods in the most deprived 20% of areas in England, compared to 24% in the whole of Islington. Some households in Cally have experienced multi-generational poverty. Compared to the whole of Islington, residents of Caledonian ward are more likely to be in jobs that pay less than the amount people need to live on. Low paid workers are more likely to be women, young people, black or from a minority ethnic group. Some residents are working in jobs which are insecure, and this has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- **Unemployment:** Overall levels of unemployment benefit claims in Caledonian ward are similar to the whole of Islington. A slightly higher proportion of women in Caledonian ward claim unemployment benefits (6.4%) than the Islington average

(6.0%). Although out-of-work benefit claims for young people aged 18 to 24 are lower in Caledonian ward (4.8%) than the Islington average (5.8%), people living and working in Cally are concerned about youth unemployment. Rates of unemployment, particularly for young people, have increased across the country as a result of Covid-19. In Cally, the proportion of residents claiming unemployment benefits increased from 3% in February 2020 to over 8% in March 2021.

- **Access to high-skilled jobs:** The Cally's proximity to central London and the area's strong transport links should enable residents to access the wealth of employment opportunities that the city has to offer. Very locally, the redevelopment of King's Cross has resulted in a high-skilled 'knowledge economy' emerging within walking distance from the Cally. However, deep-seated structural inequalities mean that many Cally residents do not benefit from these opportunities to the extent that they should.
- **Skills and qualifications:** A higher proportion of residents of Caledonian ward have no qualifications (21%) than the Islington average (17%), and a lower proportion of people living in the ward (39%) have qualifications at or above degree level than the Islington average (48%). The council's Adult Community Learning service provides courses to help adults in Cally improve their skills, including literacy and English language skills. Planned improvements to Jean Stokes Community Centre and West Library will provide opportunities to increase the number and range of courses for adult learners in Cally.
- **Help to find work:** There are a number of services which help residents to find work or a better job, including Islington Council's iWork team. Help on Your Doorstep's Connect service helps people to make plans and take steps to improve their prospects, including steps towards work or better work. Dedicated employment support for local young people includes Copenhagen Youth Project's employment and enterprise service, Light Project International's job search courses, and an employment advice service for young people with disabilities run by Scope. A new youth employability hub in West Library will enable young people in Cally to access a variety of services that will help them to find or sustain work, in a single location.
- **Help for those experiencing financial hardship:** Help on Your Doorstep's Connect service helps residents to access advice relating to debt, welfare benefits and financial hardship. This includes linking residents who need it with independent legal advice provided by Citizen's Advice Islington, Islington People's Rights and Islington Law Centre. The council's Income Maximisation (iMax) team works with residents across the borough to make sure they are receiving their correct welfare benefit entitlement and to help them understand the impact of work on benefit entitlement.

- **A voice for local businesses:** A newly-formed network of independent traders in the area, predominantly from the Caledonian Road, was established in June 2020. This network is supported by Islington Council’s Local Economy officer for Caledonian and Barnsbury. The Trader’s Association convenes on a monthly basis and is co-chaired by two local business owners. This nascent group is developing as a platform for local businesses and a forum to promote constructive dialogue with the council on matters that affect businesses in the area. During the Covid-19 pandemic, Trader’s Association members supported the Copenhagen Street Food Bank by providing surplus food.
- **Business premises and workspace:** Some businesses and organisations based in the Cally area are concerned about high rents and a lack of affordable workspace. The cluster of creative businesses located at Vale Royal and Brewery Road, including artists’ studios, prop hire, production companies and filming spaces, have particular concerns about potential redevelopment proposals that may jeopardise light industrial floor space in the area.

## What are people’s aspirations?

- **A thriving, welcoming high street:** Caledonian Road has a range of shops that appeal to local people, with greater opportunities to get fresh produce locally, such as fruit and vegetables. The experience of local shopping is improved by a more coherent, decluttered high street with improved accessibility and crossing points for pedestrians, including those with mobility impairments.
- **More locally-owned small businesses:** There are more independent shops and businesses, and an increase in the number of employee or community-owned enterprises.
- **Affordable workspace:** Cally has good-quality workspace for a range of businesses and organisations, including appropriate space for creative ventures.
- **A connected business community:** The Cally Trader’s Association is supported to grow and develop as a strong, active, inclusive forum which puts forward the collective voice of local businesses and engages in constructive dialogue with the council on matters that affect its members.
- **Economic security for local people:** Cally residents who are able to work can access secure, well-paid employment in the local area and London’s wider economy, and are able to progress at work. Local people know, understand and can

exercise their rights at work, with access to employment rights advice and trade union support where needed. Those who are unable to work can exercise their right to welfare benefits and be supported to avoid poverty and debt.

- **Improved skills of local people:** There are more opportunities for Cally residents of working age to improve their skills, including targeted support for young people not currently in education, employment and training. A broad adult learning and skills programme supports people to develop their literacy, language, numeracy and digital skills; to gain skills that will help prepare them for particular jobs or careers; and to develop aptitudes to help them flourish across their lives, such as communication skills, confidence and critical thinking.
- **A sharing economy:** A not-for-profit sharing economy enables residents to access a range of a goods, services and experiences that contribute to living a good life, at low or no cost, for example food cooperatives, community kitchens, tool libraries and book swaps.

## What are we going to do?

### Stronger independent businesses

- **Support for local businesses:** A dedicated Local Economy Officer for the Caledonian Road area will support local businesses to become more sustainable, including help to adapt as a result of Covid-19. The council will run online learning sessions for Cally businesses, providing guidance on topics such as accessing business support grants and promoting businesses online. Businesses will be offered a range of options to help them to transition to using cargo bikes. The Local Economy Officer will raise awareness of Adult Community Learning courses to employees of local small businesses who are Islington residents.
- **Cally Trader's Association:** The Cally Trader's Association will continue to meet regularly, creating opportunities for partnerships, sharing knowledge and strengthening local buying. The council will facilitate this new association as it grows in size and influence. Stronger relationships between traders, and between traders and the council, will help to facilitate local businesses buying and selling from each other, including larger businesses being supplied by smaller ones.
- **Shop Local campaign:** Islington Council's Inclusive Economy team will work with the Cally Trader's Association and local businesses to run a 'Shop Local' campaign to boost footfall on the high street. This will include targeted use of social media

platforms to encourage residents from Barnsbury to shop on Caledonian Road. The council's partnership with 'Near Street' will help high street businesses get more trade from online shoppers, allowing people searching for products online to see where they are stocked locally.

- **Cally Market:** Islington Council's Inclusive Economy team will work with the Street Trading and Transport Planning teams to explore the feasibility of establishing a street market for Cally.

### **A more accessible and attractive high street**

- Islington Council will undertake an audit with residents to identify high street improvements that improve accessibility and safety, particularly for those with mobility issues and families with children. This will include looking at pedestrian and cyclist crossing points, the condition of the pavement, drop curbs, obstacles such as signboards, waste management and drainage. Islington Council and Cally Trader's Association will explore ideas for improving the public realm, including improving shop fronts, wayfinding, replacing street furniture and improving cycle parking, and secure funding to make improvements.

### **All-ages employability support**

- The council's iWork, Youth Employment Progression and Skills, Inclusive Economy and Adult Community Learning teams will support residents looking for work or better work, or who want to develop skills valuable for their working lives. Jean Stokes Community Centre and West Library will host a broad range of adult learning courses. The council's three-year LIFT programme will support residents to access training, paid internships, apprenticeships and jobs with tech, science and creative organisations based in the King's Cross 'Knowledge Quarter'. Young people in Cally will be able to access employability support at a new hub at West Library, which will open in winter 2021/22, and other locations in the area. Help on Your Doorstep's Connect service will undertake outreach, including door knocking, to link residents with opportunities to improve their employment prospects.

### **Support for residents on low incomes**

- **A living wage:** The council's iWork and Inclusive Economy teams will broker local employment opportunities, helping Cally residents get secure jobs which pay a wage they can live on. They will work with small businesses in Cally to encourage them to pay at least the London Living Wage.

- **Benefits, debt and other advice:** Help on Your Doorstep and Citizen's Advice Islington will provide navigation and advice services for Cally residents at Jean Stokes Community Centre when the centre reopens in early 2022. This will include advice and support with welfare benefits, debt, gas and electricity payments, and help for those facing difficulties with their employer or landlord. Citizen's Advice Islington will run 'know your rights' sessions for people living and working in Cally.

### Sharing economy initiatives

- The council will support the creation of cooperatives, including around food. King's Cross Church will explore 're-use and recycle' schemes that reduce the cost of living and reduce waste, including for digital devices. Improved spaces at Jean Stokes Community Centre and West Library will host sharing economy initiatives, for example a community kitchen, book swaps, and 'libraries of things' that help residents, businesses and other local organisations to access things they need in an environmentally sustainable and economical way.