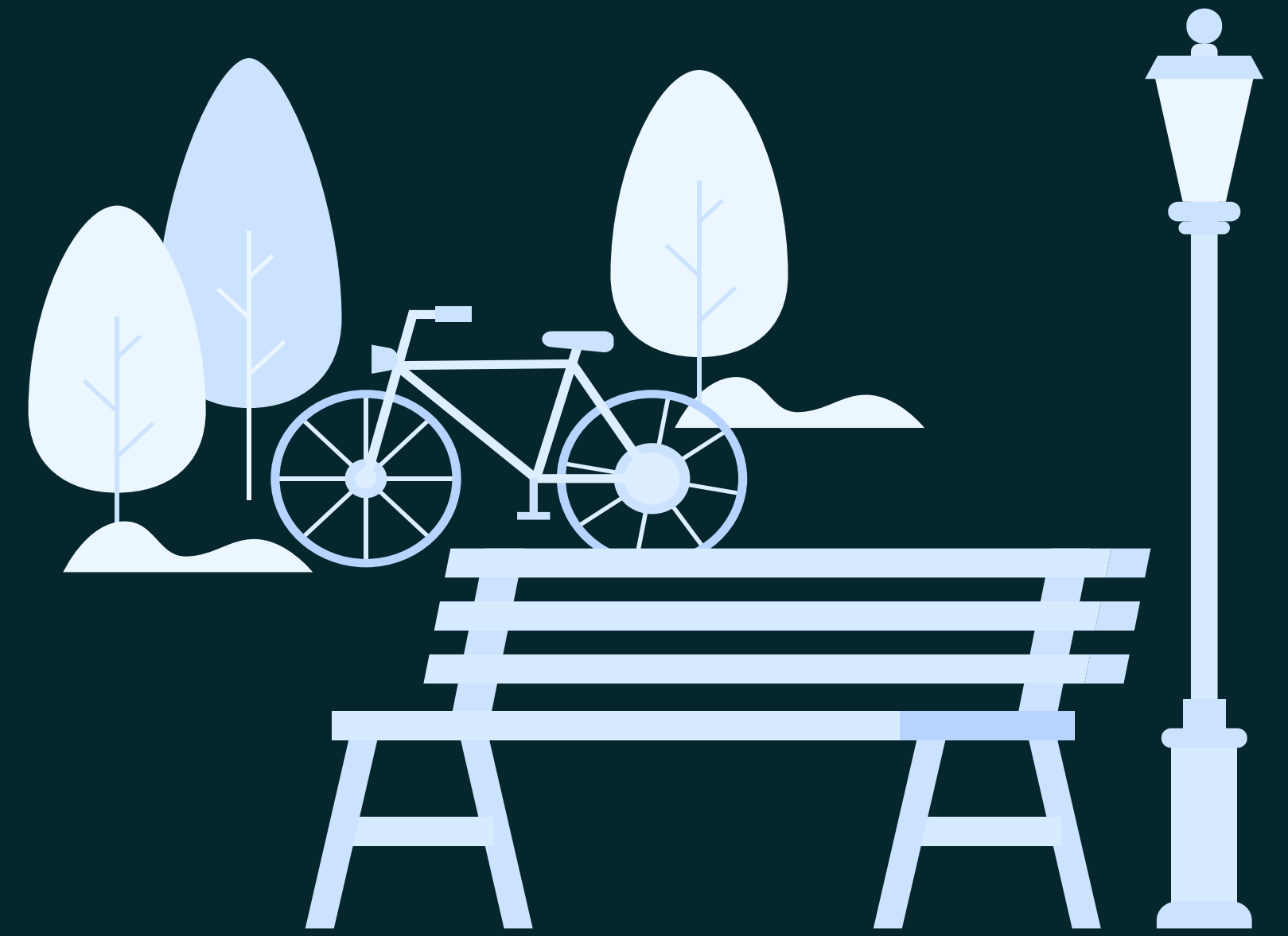


Community Engagement Learning Stoneyfield Park



What has been happening?

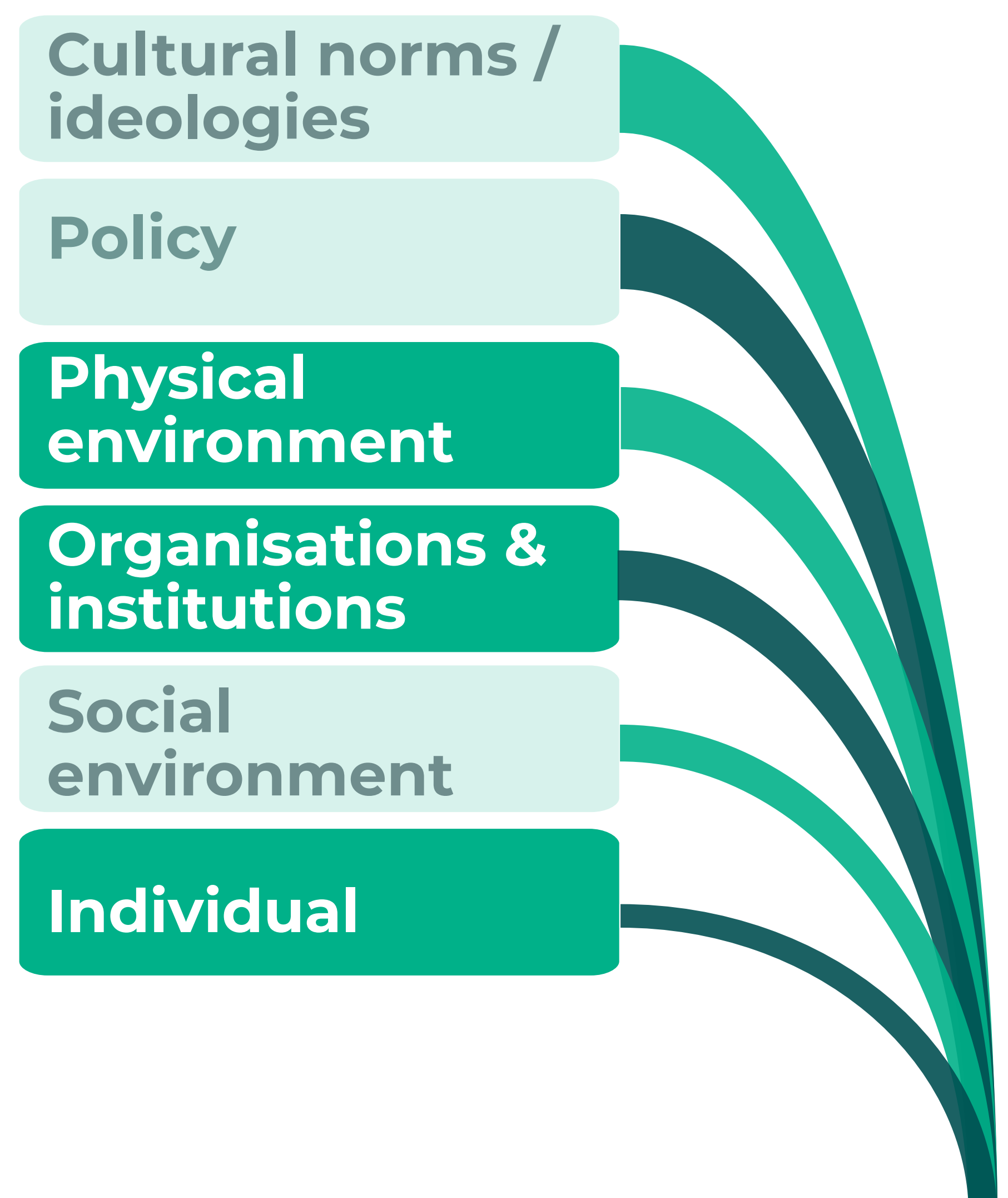
Stoneyfield Park is located in Rochdale. There have been some longstanding problems with drainage in the park, making some areas of the ground unable to be used. The local community had been consulted numerous times in the past about what they felt would improve the park and encourage them to use it more, and the drainage issues had been raised as a particular issue that the community would like resolving. However, the community had become frustrated at a lack of action in improving the drainage after these consultations, which led to a decline in trust in the local council. There were delays in this work due to many reasons including the restrictions of the pandemic, planning and contractor delays. The new drainage system to Stoneyfield Park was finally implemented in Summer 2021.

An event was held in August 2021 to promote and celebrate the work taken place already to develop the park, and to speak with local residents and gather thoughts and feedback from them on what would encourage them to use the park more / what further developments were needed. Approximately 100 people turned up for the event, including a mixture of children, adults, families living in the local area. It was attended by Councillor Sameena Zaheer and Councillor Mohammed Zaman, who spoke with local residents and showed their support. Partners to support the event were Your Trust, Living Well, Sustrans, Nature Ed, Talk English team and Awakening Minds.

What changes have we seen?

Physical environment:

- The event provided opportunities for community engagement with local residents.
- New partnerships have been developed between organisations including local voluntary groups.
- Individuals have been signposted to different organisations to offer them particular support (e.g. 30 people attended the Nature Ed Stall which was popular as many families don't have their own garden. Two residents were signposted to the Talk English programme and two were signposted to upcoming Learn 2 Ride adult cycling sessions)



Organisations and institutions:

- Engaging in discussions with local residents has enabled the organisers and local councillors to understand the issues which remain important to the community.
- The community has seen some action and had their concerns and feedback listened to – trust is beginning to be regained, although this takes time. Having local Councillors there made the community feel that their concerns were being taken seriously.

Individual:

- Decision makers, administrators and professionals have gained in experience in engaging in listening and reflective practice.
- Community members have had opportunities to express their ideas, thoughts and feedback.

Context

Residents have a lack of trust in organisations to improve their environment

Intervention

Invest time and energy to engage residents and celebrate positive actions

Then

Community members readily engage in wider CE opportunities

Because

Community members have the capability, opportunity, and motivation to engage

The residents are very pleased that the new drainage system had been put in place and when the work was taking place, many were watching through their windows, telling other residents, and posting photos on social media to show what was happening. Community champions have been told by local residents that they are really pleased and are awaiting to hear of the next developments of the park. This has been a big step in regaining the trust of the community.

There was a lack of confidence at first in some local residents to come and join in the event.

One boy took a plant back to his Mum which he made on the Nature Ed stall. She said that it looked so good, she came to the event with him so that she could believe him. Many people were previously unaware of the developments.



Next Steps

The next steps will be working with Environmental Management to design a visual image of how the park will look, and costing for a path, benches, bins, flowerbeds. There is a plan to submit a township bid to help towards this.

It is predicted that some of the future developments will also take quite a while, so instead of residents having a long wait for the next steps, a short-term approach is being implemented to make smaller changes, which should ensure that residents can visually see that things are progressing step by step.

Regaining the trust of residents will take time, but it is hoped that being able to see continual progress will help.

In addition, a newsletter is to be sent out to all residents in the area so that everybody is aware of the plans, including those who did not attend the event or those who might be excluded from receiving information. The newsletter will be in the appropriate languages. It is hoped that this will bring more awareness of the park, the work that is taking place, and increase confidence in the community to engage with the park and future events