“To be the heart and lungs for Lewisham, connecting active, healthy and vibrant local communities”

Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2020-2025
Introduction & forward by Councillor Sophie McGeevor, Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport

This Parks and Open Space strategy has been developed as a tool to identify, communicate, map out and monitor a course of actions to reflect the shared vision: “to be the heart and lungs for Lewisham, connecting active, healthy, and vibrant local communities.”

The network, number, size and quality of parks and open spaces provides an essential ecosystem service that helps protect and regulate our immediate environment.

They give clean air, regulate temperature and provide flood storage. They are an important home for wildlife and biodiversity, and have direct social value providing health and wellbeing for local residents. They do this by encouraging recreational opportunities and supporting active lifestyles.

They can connect and shape an area and improve the visual attractiveness of where we live and work. Our parks and open spaces define the character of our neighbourhoods and their unique identity. They improve the economic performance of the borough by supporting town centres, retaining employment, attracting new businesses and skills, and by increasing the value of domestic and commercial properties.

The benefit from this green infrastructure has been calculated to a value of up to £2.1 billion. This equates to an annual value per resident of the borough of £393. The value of these benefits across Lewisham outstrip the cost of maintaining these assets by a factor of 25:1. (Mayor of London/HLF/National Trust (2017): Natural Capital Accounts for public greenspace in London)

This document provides the strategic framework for the management and development of open spaces within the borough that seeks to protect, create, enhance, and connect spaces and people. It intends to maximise the benefit of every £ spent. This will enable the whole community - residents, community organisations, voluntary and statutory agencies and businesses - to work in partnership to obtain the maximum benefit from our open spaces.

The strategy builds on the previous Open Space Strategy 2012-2017 and the recent Open Space Assessment 2019 (OSA). It is, however, taking a new approach by presenting the vision, priorities, goals and delivery plan in a readily accessible way. Themes, priorities, and goals are presented so that they can be easily understood and more widely used. The objective evidence base strategy is presented in the Appendix.

In setting out the strategy, we are stressing the importance we place on our desire to involve both partners and the whole community in shaping the future of our open space. We recognise that open space affects the lives of almost everyone that lives and works in the borough and believe that sustainable management and community involvement of our open spaces offers considerable potential for helping to make Lewisham the best place to live, work, and learn.

Our Baseline

47 Parks, 18 Nature Reserves, 6 designated Local Nature Reserves, 5 Churchyards, 37 Allotments

15 Green Flag Parks and 3 Community Green Flag Award Spaces

1st Place “Good Parks for London” benchmarking in 2017, 2018 & 3rd in 2019

Support 25 formalised park user ‘Friends’ groups

In the last 4 years delivered 2951 nature conservation events, with 24,437 volunteers who’ve achieved 73,311 hours of work, worth £773,431

Won Heritage Lottery Grant to invest £5m in Beckenham Place Park

Over 96% of respondents to the 2018 Parks and Open Space consultation thought that the current condition of Lewisham’s parks was either ‘good’ or ‘fair’

74% felt that the standard had improved or stayed the same over the last 3 years
The Vision

“To be the heart and lungs for Lewisham, connecting active, healthy and vibrant local communities”
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Appendix: 4 Parks & Open Space Strategy 2012-2107
Scope and Limitations of the Parks and Open Space Strategy

This Parks and Open Space Strategy focuses on areas that fall within the current Parks Team’s management responsibility. This includes publically owned parks and gardens, council owned allotments, ‘maintained’ churchyards, and numerous highway enclosures.

This strategy is not intended to strategically deliver policy recommendations for amenity green spaces, housing land, private sports grounds, private allotments, green corridors, natural or semi-natural urban greenspace or Lewisham cemeteries, although some of the same evidence base has been used and is discussed in the following sections. Policy recommendations for these open space types can be found in other studies, such as, the Strategic Open Space Assessment 2019 or the Lewisham habitat surveys 2015-16.

The strategy has a number of themes and certain priorities are cross cutting as they can deliver on more than one theme.
Key themes: Social, Economic, Environmental

Public responses to the ‘Parks and Open Space survey’ (November 2018) identified three broad themes or areas of benefit that our parks deliver for our residents and visitors,

- Social
- Economic
- Environmental

This strategy therefore acknowledges the three themes as areas where we aim to deliver positive benefits.

Following from evaluation of the survey and further consultation the strategy sets out:

- **Priority Statements** - these statements provide the direction of travel that if achieved will deliver the positive social, economic and environmental aims and benefits

- **Goals** – these are identified actions that provide the finer details of what this strategy aspires to achieve. These goals or outputs will then be monitored and tracked to demonstrate progress or identify where further work is required to ensure our parks meet our future needs

- **Delivery Plan** – this sets out the goals, measures and undertakings required. It also provides an anticipated time scale and/or milestone for the undertaking identified
The word cloud below represents what Lewisham resident’s value and think are the most important features that should be maintained and enhanced in our parks, according to Parks and Open Space survey in November 2018.
Strategic Social Aims

Over 95% of respondents expressed the view that quality parks and open spaces made neighbourhoods good places to live in. Feeling safe, providing good sports areas and facilities such as toilets, cafés and good infrastructure (e.g. bins and benches) and good play provision for children were all highly important and encouraged greater use by the whole community. The value of, and need for, good quality maintenance, cleanliness, and safety attracted the most written comments. Formally protecting parks and the enforcement of Bye-laws and Public Space Protection Orders was considered important as was providing a visible presence in parks to combat antisocial behaviour. It is widely recognised that well-kept and maintained areas attract greater use and that this is the key ingredient to enable the broadest appeal for users and for these spaces be successfully self-policited. Overall the value of the parks as places for quite relaxation and access to nature and wildlife was the fourth most significant comment from respondents who ranked spending to support nature conservation as the highest priority.

**Priority** – To preserve and increase the number of Green Flag Award Parks

**Priority** – To improve, protect and provide clean and safe parks, allotments and nature reserves by seeking inward investment prioritising neglected and rundown areas

**Priority** – To deliver ‘wellbeing’ by putting parks and open spaces at the heart of outdoor activities and healthy lifestyles for all

**Priority** – To promote and support active citizens and the ethos, “My space, my responsibility”

**Priority** – To get nature to people and people to nature

**Goal** – To work in partnership with park user ‘friends’ groups, Local Assemblies, Neighbourhood Forums, the Lewisham Biodiversity Partnership and Allotment Committees to deliver the ‘Greening Fund’ and other grants and initiatives to provide additional facilities and make improvements to parks and open spaces

**Goal** – To promote more public involvement and engagement with the formal user ‘friends’ groups so that they can broaden their appeal and capacity

**Goal** – To target and deliver investment for parks, pocket parks and small open spaces that are classified as fair or poor in the Open Space Assessment (OSA) 2019

**Goal** – To improve and maintain the highest feasible standards of grounds maintenance for formal sports areas to maximise their use and appeal

**Goal** – To develop a park events strategy that supports active, cultural or artistic events that take account of environmental sustainability using the “right time, right place and right space,” principles

**Goal** – To work with colleagues in Public Health and community services to support and encourage walking, cycling and other active travel modes that link open spaces such as, the South East London Green Chain, Waterlink Way, the Thames Path and other local elements of the All London Green Grid
Goal – To protect, develop and enhance the nature conservation and wildlife habitats, where appropriate, in parks by supporting nature conservation volunteering initiatives and environmental education.

Goal – To support and encourage the cultural, physical and mental health benefits and opportunities that our Parks and Open Spaces offer.

Goal – To consult with and seek the views of young people via available networks and the Young Mayor’s forum to ensure that park improvements deliver safe, well used and respected spaces.

Goal – To consult and seek advice through the new Disability Commission to ensure that our parks and open spaces are designed to enable children and adults, of all abilities, to access and enjoy our open spaces.

Goal – To respond to anti-social behavioural (ASB) issues in parks by exploring opportunities to provide a greater formal presence in parks and by working in partnership with formal user groups, the Safer Neighbourhoods Team and Lewisham enforcement officers to promote the bye laws and encourage respectful use.
Strategic Economic Aims

Catford, Lewisham town centre, New Cross and south west Deptford will be the principle regeneration area for the borough over the next 20 years. As a consequence, existing greenspace within this part of the borough will come under increasing pressure from intensified use. Improving the quality of parks and open spaces and providing robust, diverse spaces that can deliver a range of economic, social and environmental outcomes will be essential as will adopting measures to enhance the multifunctionality of greenspaces. New developments within this area are required to include adequate provision of green and open spaces, based on the needs from the residents and occupiers of the development and the particular deficiencies identified in the local area.

Priority – To protect parks and open space

Priority – To preserve and where possible, enhance the quality of existing green and open spaces, to deliver eco-system services and a range of public benefits, including play, habitat creation, landscape improvements and flood storage

Priority – To achieve a cost effective high quality parks service that delivers continuous improvement

Priority – To promote the concept of Corporate Natural Capital Accounting (CNCA) as a methodology used to assess the value of economic, social and environmental benefits accruing from green infrastructure

Priority – To ‘green the grey’ by developing partnerships to deliver active green travel links through highways infrastructure projects

Goal – To recommend the refusal of planning permission for all insensitive development, on site or on surrounding land, that significantly erodes the quality, use, access or enjoyment of designated green and open spaces

Goal – To support sustainable development and urban regeneration that delivers enhancements to the quality of existing open spaces to deliver a range of benefits and uses, that embrace its long term maintenance

Goal – To successfully insourced the current park management service and maintain standards by winning 15 Green Flag Awards and continue to rank highly in the ‘Good Parks for London’ benchmarking exercise

Goal – To explore the value of commissioning a Corporate Natural Capital Account (CNCA) for the borough so that decision and policy makers are better apprised of the collective value of decisions that relate to the natural environment

Goal – To support the partnerships and work with Highway colleagues on, ‘Cycleways,’ ‘Legible London’ and ‘Healthy neighbourhood’ transport programmes to promote ‘pathways to parks’ and ‘greening the grey’ by developing sustainable travel links that use planting and greening as a tool to reduce carbon emissions

Goal – To actively support and encourage partnerships that seek to deliver important green infrastructure/eco-system services, such as: appropriate Environment Agency flood alleviation schemes; the All London Green Grid; the London Environment Strategy 2018 and National Park City initiative
Strategic Environmental Aims

Action to conserve and enhance Lewisham’s natural environment has a long tradition and much of what Lewisham has now is the result of the endeavours of a number of committed local residents and voluntary organisations who have given their support for over 25 years. Along with organisations like the Environment Agency and the Lottery Fund, ecological restoration work has taken place on many of our greenspaces such as at Chinbrook meadows, Beckenham Place Park, Brookmill Park, Cornmill Gardens, Ladywell Fields and along the River Pool Linear Park and Riverview walk. The 2016 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) habitat assessment, (the evidence base that underpins the SINC designations,) demonstrated a 35% reduction in Areas of Deficiency for access to nature over the last 10 years. Spending more money on managing sites for wildlife and nature conservation has been endorsed by consultation and it is clear that supporting biodiversity is a principle function of our parks and is important for many people, for our collective understanding and for the guardianship of the environment.

Goal – To promote the different features and facilities available in Lewisham’s Parks so that the characteristics of each park are fully promoted via the LBL website

Goal – To encourage recycling, promote home recycling and discourage single use plastic

Goal – Where new planting is implemented these will be designed to be sustainable planting schemes and require minimum ongoing maintenance

Goal – To compost green waste in the parks it was generated in, leave fallen trees and standing dead wood in situ, where appropriate and safe to do so

Goal – To develop and trial an integrated weed control policy to reduce the use of herbicide

Goal – To work with 'Friends of' user groups to support the implementation of projects designed to benefit locally appropriate biodiversity and engagement

Goal – To trial electric machinery to understand its performance and cost benefits

Goal – To prohibit ice cream van idling and work towards installing electric points to improve air quality in and around parks

Goal – To increase the parks tree stock and linear metres of hedgerow

Goal – To achieve new green linkages and work with neighbouring boroughs to address regional environmental issues
Priority – To support existing and new greening of active travel links so both people and wildlife benefit

Priority – To contribute to regional partnerships that are working to maintain and enhance the environment such as the Ravensbourne Catchment Improvement Group, and the Green Chain Walk

Priority – To facilitate and support the work of the Lewisham Biodiversity Partnership so that it can continue to develop strategies and projects that enhance the borough for people and wildlife

Goal – To improve water quality in the Ravensbourne, Pool and Quaggy rivers so that they can achieve ‘Good ecological potential’

Goal – To continue to partner the ‘Street trees for Living’ initiative to plant and care for more street trees
## Delivery Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Aims</th>
<th>Delivery plan measures and undertakings</th>
<th>Timescales/milestones</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal – To work in partnership with park user ‘friends’ groups, Local Assemblies, Neighbourhood Forums, the Lewisham Biodiversity Partnership and Allotment Committees to deliver the ‘Greening Fund’ and other grants and initiatives to provide additional facilities and make improvements to parks and open spaces</strong></td>
<td>Greening fund successfully delivers £360k of improvements by April 2021.</td>
<td>April 2021</td>
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<td>Greening fund successfully delivers £0.5m</td>
<td>May 2022</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Three completed rounds of the Greening Fund</td>
<td>May 2022</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Successful delivery of the Greening Fund leading to its adoption post 2022</td>
<td>June 2022</td>
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<td>No successful applicants + 70</td>
<td>January 2025</td>
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<td></td>
<td>£250k additional match funding delivered</td>
<td>January 2025</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Greening fund successfully delivers £1</td>
<td>May 2025</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Goal – To promote more public involvement and engagement with the formal user ‘friends’ groups, broadening their appeal and capacity</strong></td>
<td>Explore and, if feasible, provide umbrella PLI insurance for running events</td>
<td>March 2021</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Develop a memorandum of understanding, for the functioning of Park User Groups and a model constitution for new groups</td>
<td>March 2021</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Maintain updated information on the Lewisham website for all groups so contact details, web links and other information can be provided</td>
<td>Every 6 months</td>
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<td>Explore and, if feasible, facilitate training and/or advice sheets on topics such as: “Effective methods of communication, consultation and social media use” “Promotion of the ‘Lewisham Way’ ethos of collaboration”</td>
<td>x1 training/seminar every year</td>
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<td>Target and spend the £54k grant from the Office Communities and Local Government in Lewisham’s parks and open spaces that are outside the identified growth area where there is less Section 106 availability</td>
<td>March 2021</td>
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<td>Next Open Space Assessment to validate the upgrade in the status of all the listed sites above</td>
<td>March 2025</td>
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<td><strong>Goal</strong> – To improve and maintain the highest feasible standards of grounds maintenance for formal sports areas to maximise their use and appeal</td>
<td>To support Lewisham’s Playing Pitch Strategy (June 2019) and its Action plan where funds are available and do not conflict with the varying requirements to provide a broad range of activity and appeal for our park users</td>
<td>Annual review monitoring report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To support Lewisham’s Playing Pitch Strategy (June 2019) and its Action plan where funds are available and do not conflict with the varying requirements to provide a broad range of activity and appeal for our park users</td>
<td><strong>Goal</strong> – To develop a park events strategy that supports active, cultural or artistic events that take account of environmental sustainability using the “right time, right place and right space,” principles</td>
<td>Annual review monitoring report</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of new facilities and external grants achieved</td>
<td>To achieve an endorsed and adopted strategy</td>
<td>March 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Goal</strong> – To develop a park events strategy that supports active, cultural or artistic events that take account of environmental sustainability using the “right time, right place and right space,” principles</td>
<td>Ensure that all new interpretative initiatives and appropriate infrastructure promote the linking of parks and open spaces across the borough.</td>
<td>Annual review monitoring report</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Provide interpretation and way marking to link River Pool Linear Park and Ladywell Fields Park with:  
1) Manor House Gardens  
2) Manor Park  
3) Mountsfield Park  
4) Lewisham Park | The Greening Fund will finance improvements to parks. This will include new bike locking points, new water drinking fountains, new signs and way-finding | All by March 2025 |
| The Greening Fund will finance improvements to parks. This will include new bike locking points, new water drinking fountains, new signs and way-finding | | Annual review monitoring report |
| Goal – To protect, develop and enhance the nature conservation and wildlife habitats, where appropriate, in parks by supporting nature conservation volunteering initiatives and environmental education | Deliver 52 Natures Gym sessions engaging 550 volunteers per year | Annual review monitoring report |
| | To facilitate and support 10 forest schools | |
| | Nature Conservation Team to deliver x10 sessions per year (300 children) | |
| | Lead the 3 Rivers Clean Up initiative in June/July each year | |
| Goal – To support and encourage the cultural, physical and mental health benefits and opportunities that our Parks and Open Spaces offer | Install new outdoor gym equipment | x4 March 2022 |
| | Install new outdoor gym equipment | x8 March 2025 |
| | Install new table tennis tables | x2 March 2022 |
| | Install new table tennis tables | x4 March 2025 |
| | Maintain and updated the Lewisham website so that the information on parks remains current | |
| | Monitor and maintain the Natures Gym and Rivers and People web sites | Annual review monitoring report |
| | Increase the number of licenced boot camps from 25 | 30 by March 2022 |
| | Increase the number of community events facilitated in parks from 694 | 35 by March 2025 |
| | 714 by March 2022 | |
| | 734 by March 2025 | |
| Goal – To consult with and seek the views of young people via available networks and the Young Mayor’s forum to ensure that park improvements deliver safe well used and respected spaces | Where major park projects take place, monitor the number and outcome of any young people consulted | Annual review monitoring report |
| Goal – To consult and seek advice through the new Disability Commission to ensure that our parks and open spaces are designed to enable children and adults, of all abilities, to access and enjoy our open spaces | Where major park playground projects take place monitor the number and outcome of consultation with disabled stakeholders and the application of inclusive play principles in their design, layout and equipment choices | Annual review monitoring report |
| Goal – To respond to anti-social behaviour (ASB) issues in parks by exploring | Seek to maximise the static presence in major parks through the process of insourcing the parks Grounds Maintenance Service | November 2021 |
opportunities to provide a greater formal presence in parks and by working in partnership with formal user groups, the Safer Neighbourhoods Team and Lewisham enforcement officers to promote the bye laws and encourage respectful use.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Aims</th>
<th>Delivery plan measures and undertakings</th>
<th>Timescales/milestones</th>
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<tr>
<td>Goal – To recommend the refusal of planning permission for all insensitive development, on site or on surrounding land, that significantly erodes the quality, use, access or enjoyment of designated green and open spaces</td>
<td>Number of planning applications refused from 2019-2025.</td>
<td>Annual review monitoring report</td>
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<td>Amount in hectares and/or number of parks and open spaces lost to development.</td>
<td>No net loss by 2025</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal – To support sustainable development and urban regeneration that delivers enhancements to the quality of existing open spaces to deliver a range of benefits and uses, that embrace its long term maintenance</td>
<td>Number and monetary value of park enhancements that derive from S106 agreements or Community Infrastructure Levy receipts.</td>
<td>Annual review monitoring report</td>
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<td>£1m of investment from Development Control sources.</td>
<td>March 2025</td>
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<td>£300k external investment target for non-Development Control sources.</td>
<td>March 2025</td>
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<td>Goal – To successfully insourced the current park management service and maintain standards by winning 15 Green Flag Awards and continue to rank highly in the Good Parks for London benchmarking exercise</td>
<td>15 Green Flag Awards</td>
<td>July 2022</td>
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<td>17 Green Flag Awards</td>
<td>July 2025</td>
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<td>Goal – To explore the value of commissioning a Corporate Natural Capital Account (CNCA) for the borough so that decision and policy makers are better apprised of the collective value of decisions that relate to the natural environment</td>
<td>Present a briefing paper and potential business case to the Sustainable Development Select Committee to seek political support and steer so that policy makers are better appraised of the collective value of decisions that relate to the natural environment</td>
<td>March 2023</td>
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<td>Goal – To support the partnerships and work with Highway colleagues on, ‘Cycleways,’ ‘Legible London’ and ‘Healthy neighbourhood’ transport programmes to promote ‘pathways to parks’ and ‘greening the grey’ by developing sustainable travel links that use planting and greening as a tool to reduce carbon emissions</td>
<td>The Healthy neighbourhood programme – is part of Lewisham’s transport strategy, it will create streets that encourage more people to walk and cycle. An element of the program is to make areas greener and to reduce air pollution. We are delivering the Lewisham Lee Green, East Sydenham, Telegraph Hill The Cycleways program is designed to encourage and promote safe cycling routes not dominated by vehicles. A key element of this is promoting our green spaces to provide a well-designed network of neighbourhoods. An important element of this is more street planting and sensitive grounds maintenance throughout the routes.</td>
<td>x3 Healthy neighbourhoods by April 2021 x2 Healthy neighbourhoods per FY thereafter 2 Cycleways by April 2021 4 Cycleways by April 2022</td>
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<td>Provide interpretation and way marking to link River Pool Linear Park and Ladywell Fields Park with: 1) Manor House Gardens 2) Manor Park 3) Mountsfield Park 4) Lewisham Park</td>
<td>All by March 2025</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal – To actively support and encourage partnerships that seek to deliver important green infrastructure/eco-system services, such as: appropriate Environment Agency flood alleviation schemes; the All London Green Grid; the London Environment Strategy 2018 and National Park City initiative</td>
<td>Play an active role in all appropriate forums &amp; partnerships, such as, the Lewisham Biodiversity Partnership, Ravensbourne Catchment Improvement Group, Environment Agency- Flood Alleviation consultations, Thames Tideway, All London Green Grid, London Parks and Open Spaces benchmarking group, Allotment Officers Association, and the London Tree Officers forum.</td>
<td>Annual review monitoring report</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental Aims</td>
<td>Delivery plan measures and undertakings</td>
<td>Timescales/milestones</td>
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<td>Goal – To promote the different features and facilities available in Lewisham’s parks so that the characteristics of each park are fully promoted via the LBL website</td>
<td>Update and review all web based information</td>
<td>Complete overhaul by 2021, Annual review monitoring report</td>
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<td>Explore with the web team some interactive search element or map that the public can access to illustrate park features and facilities, such as: -toilets; -cafes; -sports (field, tennis, table tennis, bowls, rugby, cricket, kite-ing, frisby); -horticultural features e.g. trees and bedding; - play provision including water play; - relaxation; - walking for health; - events; - linkages</td>
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<td>Goal – To encourage recycling, promote home recycling and discourage single use plastic</td>
<td>To install H2O drinking water fountains</td>
<td>3 per year, 15 by 2025 Annual review monitoring report</td>
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<td>Install signs on all newly installed bins and on noticeboards to encourage and promote home recycling</td>
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<td>Monitor amount of green waste disposed of offsite and reduce quantity every year</td>
<td>Annual review monitoring report</td>
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<td>Goal – Where new planting is implemented these will be designed to be sustainable planting schemes and require minimum ongoing maintenance</td>
<td>Monitor the number of new planting schemes that deliver an integrated approach to fertiliser, weed control and watering by using drought tolerant plants, recycled mulches and that minimise the need for all chemical applications</td>
<td>Annual review monitoring report</td>
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<td>Goal – To compost green waste in the parks it was generated in, leave fallen trees and standing dead wood in situ, where appropriate and safe to do so</td>
<td>Monitor the amount of mulch imported from suppliers and reduce quantity every year</td>
<td>Annual review monitoring report</td>
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<td>Actively work with tree contractors to co-ordinate the use of chipped bark for local parks and open spaces when contractors are working in the vicinity</td>
<td>Annual review monitoring report</td>
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<td>Goal – To develop and trial an integrated weed control policy to reduce the use of herbicide</td>
<td>Target specific locations within key parks where alternative methods would have the greatest benefit and monitor effectiveness and cost.</td>
<td>Interim report by May 2023 Final report by May 2025</td>
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<td>Measure the number of distinct biodiversity projects</td>
<td>Annual review monitoring report</td>
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<td>Measure the number of volunteers</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Goal – To work with ‘Friends of’ user groups to support the implementation of projects designed to benefit locally appropriate biodiversity and engagement</td>
<td>Measure the area/features managed with electric machinery, and monitor the effectiveness and cost.</td>
<td>Interim report by May 2023</td>
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<td>Goal – To trial electric machinery to understand its performance and cost benefits</td>
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<td>Goal – To prohibit ice cream van idling and work towards installing electric points to improve air quality in and around parks</td>
<td>Monitor the number of ice cream concessions and the installation of electric points</td>
<td>Final report by May 2025</td>
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<td>Goal – To increase the parks tree stock and linear metres of hedgerow</td>
<td>Record the number of newly planted trees and tree losses. Achieve a greater than 2:1 ratio. Record the establishment of 150 metres of hedgerow per year.</td>
<td>Annual review monitoring report</td>
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<td>Goal – To achieve new green linkages and work with neighbouring boroughs to address regional environmental issues</td>
<td>Deptford Parks Liveable Neighbourhood (DPLN) – new greening areas on Rolt Street, Scawen Road and Woodpecker Road following community engagement</td>
<td>April 2021</td>
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<td>Goal – To improve water quality in the Ravensbourne, Pool and Quaggy rivers so that they can achieve ‘Good ecological potential’</td>
<td>Deliver over 40 river related volunteer sessions Lead the 3 Rivers Clean Up initiative in June/July each year Work in partnership with the Ravensbourne Catchment Improvement Group to identify projects that will enhance the biological quality of the rivers</td>
<td>Annual review monitoring report</td>
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<td>Goal – To continue to partner the ‘Street trees for Living’ initiative to plant and care for more street trees</td>
<td>Deliver the £48k Street Tress for Schools project in partnership Plant an additional 200 street trees per year in partnership</td>
<td>Plant 100 trees by 2022</td>
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<td>Annual review monitoring report</td>
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</table>
Appendix: Supporting evidence

Strategic Context: National, Regional and local

National and Regional Planning Policy:
- Revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2018, MHCLG
- National Planning Guidance, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG), including Guidance for the Natural environment, Climate change, Design, Health and Wellbeing and Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space
- The London Environment Strategy 7, Mayor of London, May 2018
- The All London Green Grid Supplementary Planning Guidance including the ALGG Area Framework 6 that focuses on the South East London Green Chain
- Open Space Strategies Best Practice Guidance, Mayor of London and CABE Space, 2009

National Policy Context

The revised NPPF (2018) provides the principal national planning policy and for open space and green infrastructure which places particular emphasis on its role in promoting healthy and safe communities and conserving and enhancing the natural environment. In response, open space policies for Lewisham should:
- provide good and equitable access to high quality open spaces to support the health and wellbeing of communities
- proactively plan for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of green infrastructure to improve physical and ecological connectivity and promote biodiversity and nature conservation
- be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities, including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses, as well as providing opportunities for new provision
- identify the potential for designating specific sites as Local Green Spaces through Local and Neighbourhood plans

The revised NPPF (2018) provides further emphasis on the role of open space planning to support the communities’ health, social and cultural well-being and particularly where this is able to address identified local health and wellbeing needs. This can be through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure including networks that encourage walking and cycling. More effective use should be made of sites that provide community services, such as schools and hospitals, and offer access to open spaces. Green infrastructure should also be proactively planned to mitigate the impacts of climate change, improve air quality and reduce the risk of flooding.
Regional Policy Context

Regional policy set out in the London Plan (2016). The Mayor of London’s vision is for the capital to excel among global cities – expanding opportunities for all its people and enterprises, achieving the highest environmental standards and quality of life and leading the world in its approach to tackling the urban challenges of the 21st century, particularly that of climate change.

A city of diverse, strong, secure and accessible neighbourhoods to which Londoners feel attached, which provides all of its residents, workers, visitors and students – whatever their origin, background, age or status – with opportunities to realise and express their potential, and a high quality environment for individuals to enjoy, live together and thrive.

A city that delights the senses and takes care of its buildings and streets, having the best of modern architecture while also making the most of London’s built heritage, and which makes the most of and extends its wealth of open and green spaces, natural environment and waterways, improving Londoners’ health and welfare.

The London plan deals with London’s living places and spaces and there are policies for ‘place shaping’, protecting open space, the natural environment, and landscape.

The plan also provides strategic regional open space and green infrastructure planning policy. Particularly Policy 2.18 Green Infrastructure: the multi-functional network of green and open spaces. This policy seeks to protect, promote, expand and manage the extent and quality of and access to London’s network of green infrastructure to secure a wide range of social, environmental and economic benefits.

In response, open space policies for Lewisham should align with the planning and investment objectives of the All London Green Grid (ALGG) with specific priorities set out in ALGG Area Framework 6 for South East London and the Green Chain. It should be noted that the strategic objectives for Area 6 are:

- enhance distinctive visitor destinations and boosting the visitor economy
- promote healthy living and sustainable food production
- promote green skills and sustainable design, management and maintenance
- increase access to open space, the Green Belt and the urban fringe
- conserve the landscape and the natural environment and increasing access to nature
- adapt to climate change and making sustainable travel connections
- ensure new development proposals provide additional green infrastructure that both contributes to and is connected to Lewisham’s existing open space networks, including the Green Chain and particularly where these open spaces are publicly accessible
- incorporate all forms of green infrastructure and open spaces assets and carefully consider aspects of design, funding and long-term management
take account of local biodiversity action plans and avoid adverse impacts on biodiversity and the natural environment through the development process.

ALGG Area 6 Strategic Opportunities

The All London Green Grid (ALGG) is a policy framework to promote the design and delivery of ‘green infrastructure’ across London. A review of the All London Green Grid is currently under way. A review of the conclusions and recommendations contained within the Lewisham Open Space Assessment report might be required once the review of the All London Green Grid has been completed.

The ALGG Area 6 identifies a number of strategic projects that influence the provision of and access to greenspace across Lewisham.

Opportunity 1 - The Waterlink Way; proposes the creation of a connected park system along the valley of the Ravensbourne and Pool rivers. Proposals include the reinstatement of natural channels, improving habitats, creating an exemplary green transport route and creating a link southwards into the London Borough of Bromley.

Opportunity 2 - The Quaggy River route; would reinstate a natural river along the river valley with natural banks and meanders, creating additional flood storage capacity.

Opportunity 3 – The South East London Green Chain; would promote and enhance the South East London Green Chain route, improving extensions and linkages into Lewisham’s green spaces.

Opportunity 11 – Deptford Links; would improve connections and open space quality in Deptford, Deptford Creek, New Cross and New Cross Gate through establishing new connections with the Thames and the Surrey Canal.

The ALGG proposes a number of projects, the execution of which would help to deliver these strategic objectives.

- Green Chain Walk ‘Making the Links’: a network of footpaths linking greenspaces with the SE London Green Chain across boroughs in south-east London. This project has not received any funding to date and there is currently no arrangement in place to co-ordinate or support its delivery.
- Quaggy corridor: works to the river channel at Mottingham Farm, Sydenham Cottages Nature Reserve and Sydenham Cottages. There is currently no identified funding source to deliver this project.
- Waterlink Way and Deptford Links: improvements to signage and walking and cycling infrastructure between Deptford Creek, Greenwich Park, Blackheath, Lewisham and Lower Sydenham and adjoining green spaces, including Beckenham Place Park, Hilly Fields, Ladywell Fields and Mountsfield Park; flood risk management within the River Ravensbourne between Lewisham and Catford; connections to green spaces in Deptford and the Surrey...
Canal. Much of this original project has been delivered - it will continue to be delivered along the Lewisham Links project that is planned for the south of the borough.

A number of other publicly inaccessible greenspace linkages can be identified along transport corridors across the borough. The main railway lines between London Bridge, New Cross and Forest Hill and between London Bridge, Lewisham and Grove Park do not have public access but all act as significant wildlife corridors and include a number of linked Sites of Importance to Nature Conservation (SINC). Further railway line corridors between Nunhead, Catford Bridge and Bellingham include a number of un-designated sites with less well-established connectivity.

The London Environment Strategy (2018) is the first integrated strategy to combine specific policies for air quality, green infrastructure, climate change mitigation and energy; waste, adapting to climate change, ambient noise and the low carbon circular economy. Lewisham’s open space network and environmental assets can make a significant contribution to delivering these policies for which the GLA will provide a variety of grants and resources. In particular this should take account of areas of known deficiency in access to local and district public open space provision.

The Mayor of London has committed to make the capital the world’s first National Park City and Lewisham can proactively seek to support this initiative by aligning open space planning policy and provision across the borough that will contribute to making London a city which:

- is greener in the long-term than it is today, and where people and nature are better connected
- protects the core network of parks and green spaces, and where buildings and public spaces aren’t defined only by stone, brick, concrete, glass and steel
- is rich with wildlife, where every child benefits from exploring, playing and learning outdoors. Where everyone can enjoy high-quality green spaces, clean air and clean waterways, and where more people choose to walk and cycle

Policies should encourage greater participation and involvement by Londoners in the protection and enhancement of the natural environment at the neighbourhood level. Recent research published in the State of UK Public Parks reports (2014, 2016) indicate that the management and resourcing of parks and open spaces will become increasingly mixed and varied. Community groups, charitable organisations and the private sector are expected to take greater responsibility in funding and managing open spaces in the future. This is particularly evident for formal sports sites and clubs, community gardens and small neighbourhood spaces, nature conservation sites and allotments.

**Local Policy Context**

In recognising the strategic importance of the natural environment to accommodate growth, promote public health and wellbeing, build resilience and help mitigate the impacts of climate change, the London Borough of Lewisham will adopt a Parks and Open Space Strategy that will articulate the Councils specific aims for parks and open spaces.
This strategy has involved wide ranging consultation with other services and sectors, service users and the general public. The strategy will address the key issues and opportunities facing the borough and will help protect, enhance, guide and manage open spaces and green infrastructure. It has been shaped by Lewisham’s local policies that align with national and regional policy and guidance.

Figure: Policy hierarchy
London Borough of Lewisham Planning Policy and Strategies:

- Lewisham Corporate Strategy 2018-2022
- Lewisham Core Strategy, Local Development Framework, adopted June 2011
- Lewisham Local Plan, draft for public consultation, October 2015
- People, Prosperity, Place, Lewisham’s Regeneration Strategy 2008-2020
- Lewisham Health and Wellbeing Strategy Draft Refresh 2015-18
- Lewisham Leisure and Open Space Study, May 2010
- Lewisham Open Space Strategy 2012-2017
- A Natural Renaissance for Lewisham 2015-2020 (Borough endorsed Biodiversity Action Plan)
- Lewisham Outdoor Playing Pitch Strategy (June 2019)

The Corporate Strategy 2018 – 2022 sets out how the Council plans to deliver for residents over the next four years. The policies have been chosen to show how in a time of austerity the Council can still make a positive change to people’s lives and to protect the identities of neighbourhoods so that Lewisham can continue to be a place where people love to live.

Lewisham Council will build on its historic values, of fairness, equality and putting the communities at the heart of decision making. The Council’s vision is to develop its inclusive tradition of working alongside residents and community, voluntary and faith groups and to call this partnership approach the ‘Lewisham Way.’

The strategy aspires to deliver for people and place by joining up green spaces with ecological recreational routes, as well as creating a mix of low traffic, cycle and pedestrian-friendly ‘healthy streets’ and neighbourhoods.

The seven corporate priorities are:

1. **Open Lewisham** Lewisham is a welcoming place of safety for all where we celebrate the diversity that strengthens us.
2. **Tackling the housing crisis** Everyone has a decent home that is secure and affordable.
3. **Giving children and young people the best start in life** Every child has access to an outstanding and inspiring education and is given the support they need to keep them safe, well and able to achieve their full potential.
4. **Building an inclusive local economy** Everyone can access high-quality job opportunities, with decent pay and security in our thriving and inclusive local economy.
5. **Delivering and defending: health, social care and support** Ensuring everyone receives the health, mental health, social care and support services they need.
6. **Making Lewisham greener** Everyone enjoys our green spaces and benefits from a healthy environment as we work to protect and improve our local environment.
7. **Building safer communities** Every resident feels safe and secure living here as we work together towards a borough free from the fear of crime.

The sixth priority is to make Lewisham greener, “Everyone can enjoy and benefit from a healthy environment”. This policy commits the Council to the preservation of award-winning green spaces, increasing the use of environmentally friendly transport options and promotes better care for the local environment and the planet.

In recognition of the efforts of local community groups who have worked to protect and enhancing the borough’s parks and open spaces, the Council has established a new Greening Fund.

This acknowledges that Lewisham benefits from a number of Green Flag Award winning parks and open spaces, and the strategy emphasises the importance of attractive, liveable, accessible and safe neighbourhoods.

The Greening Fund is resourced by Section 106, which is a financial contribution negotiated from developers to make civic improvements that are needed as a result of their development. This fund provides a structured approach for park groups to apply for S106 money so they can focus on local priorities, build their capacity and work with the Parks Team in a collaborative and responsive way. It will speed up investment in parks and open spaces and will help deliver the Local Democracy Review that aims to:

- Enhance openness and transparency
- Further develop public involvement in Council decisions
- Promote effective decision-making

The Regeneration Strategy for Lewisham is structured around a set of specific objectives for ‘People, Prosperity and Place’.

Following significant investment and improvements to Beckenham Park, and taking account of established aims including two separate Open Space Strategies (2005-2010) and (2012-2017), the regeneration strategy emphasises the need to:

- protect open space in Lewisham from inappropriate development
- enhance and improve the level of quality of open space in Lewisham
- improve accessibility of open spaces to promote greater social inclusion
- build on the role of open spaces in sustaining the health and well-being of residents
- reduce the fear of crime in open spaces, making Lewisham a safer place
Open Space Overview Borough Wide

An audit of current open space provision and the quality of this provision was carried out in the summer of 2018. A total of 349 sites were surveyed, categorised in accordance with the following typologies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typology (PPG17)</th>
<th>Area (ha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parks and Gardens</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children and Teenagers (play)</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural and Semi-natural Urban Greenspace</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Sports facilities</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amenity</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allotments and Community Gardens</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Corridors</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cemeteries and Churchyards</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>349</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parks and Gardens

In the hustle and bustle of modern inner city life the significance of local parks and gardens cannot be underestimated. They provide an essential ecosystem service. By moderating the ambient temperature of our inner city, providing clean air, attenuating rainfall to preventing flooding, and supporting important biodiversity and wildlife. For many residents they have a crucial impact on both quality of life and the perception of the area where they live and work. Good quality parks are what make an area attractive and this in turn supports the local economy. Parks and gardens provide accessible opportunities for a range of informal recreation, formal sporting opportunities and a place for peace and relaxation. They provide space to walk the dog, look at the flowers, meet friends, and opportunities for children of all ages to play.

The Parks and Open Space Assessment (OSA) identified 50 sites ranging from Metropolitan Parks (Beckenham Place Park and Blackheath), District Parks, and Local Parks.

Parks and gardens cover 273ha, 7.8% of the borough. Whilst the borough is fortunate to have a good geographic spread of parks and gardens certain areas are found to be deficient.
Lewisham is well-served with open spaces of ‘Metropolitan’ scale. There are small areas of deficiency to the west of Forest Hill and to the south-east of Grove Park. Lewisham has a significant deficit in ‘District’ parks. Only Beckenham Place Park Common and Summerhouse Fields in the extreme south of the borough lie within this definition. ‘District’ parks in neighbouring boroughs create some provision on the western fringes of the borough.

Local park provision is good but there are corridors of under provision between New Cross and Forest Hill and between Lewisham, Grove Park and Bellingham. Given these gaps in provision, the retention and enhancement of several individual sites is of particular significance. These include Forster Memorial Park, Blythe Hill Fields, Mayow Park and Manor House Gardens.

### Quality Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ha</th>
<th>%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>good</td>
<td>168.41</td>
<td>65.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fair</td>
<td>88.41</td>
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<tr>
<td>poor</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>258.72</td>
<td>100</td>
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</table>
The Quality Assessment for Lewisham’s parks and gardens based on area shows 65% is ‘good’ quality 34% is of ‘fair’ quality and just under 1% of the area is of poor quality.

The assessment suggests, in the context of the London Plan typology, there are no local parks judged as being ‘poor.’ 45% are assessed as ‘good’ and 55% as ‘fair’.
‘Good’ quality sites are mostly local parks with only 17% being ‘small’ open spaces. ‘Fair’ quality parks are evenly distributed between ‘local’ and ‘small open space.’

‘Poor’ quality open spaces are evenly distributed between ‘small’ open spaces and ‘pocket’ parks and.

Summary of quality assessment findings

Local Park Typology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Fair</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Durham Hill</td>
<td>Home Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southend Park</td>
<td>Lewisham Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forster Memorial Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverview Walk</td>
<td>Blythe Hill Fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beckenham Place Park – The Common &amp; Summerhouse Field</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Small Open Space Typology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Fair</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friendly Gardens (Lewisham)</td>
<td>Baxter's Fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edith Nesbitt Gardens</td>
<td>Edith Nesbitt Gardens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grove Park Library Gardens</td>
<td>Grove Park Library Gardens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evelyn Green</td>
<td>Eckington Gardens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ladywell Green/Slagrove Place</td>
<td>Ladywell Green/Slagrove Place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadway Fields</td>
<td>Sayes Court Park, Ravensbourne Park Gardens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret McMillan Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pocket Park Typology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Fair</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Riverdale Sculpture Park</td>
<td>Lewisham Way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deptford Memorial Gardens</td>
<td>Hatcham gardens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferranti Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westbourne Drive Enclosure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wickham Gardens</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beachborough Gardens</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culverley Green</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Norbert Green</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnham Road Green</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Children’s Play

Providing facilities for children and young people is important because it offers opportunities for play and physical activity and this helps with the development of movement and social skills. Provision for children consists of equipped play areas and specialised provision for young people, including skate parks, multi-use games areas (MUGAs) and teen shelters.

The OSA audit of facilities identified 78 areas. Lewisham has good levels of provision of ‘Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play’ (NEAP) but there is a swathe of under-provision along the eastern edge of the borough. The potential influence of NEAPs outside the borough on provision in this area was not assessed.

‘Local Equipped Areas for Play’ (LEAP) are evenly distributed across the borough but there are areas of relative under-provision in a corridor between New Cross and Forest Hill and between Catford and Grove Park. Local Areas for Play are also broadly distributed but there are similar geographical gaps in provision to those affecting access to LEAP sites.

Overall, play site provision across the borough is satisfactory apart from the area to the south-east of Catford where there is a lack of provision.

The upgrading of Northbrook Park and Mountsfield Park to achieve NEAP status would help alleviate some of the lack of provision in an area of deficiency.

Natural and Semi-natural Urban Greenspace

Natural green spaces are open spaces that include woodland and scrub, grassland, wetlands, open and running water and wastelands. They provide valuable habitat for wildlife and biodiversity but also opportunities for environmental education and nature conservation volunteering.

In 2015-16 Lewisham Planning Policy commissioned a borough wide ‘Habitat and Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) survey’. The survey was required to inform the preparation of a new integrated Local Plan to replace the Lewisham Core Strategy. For the full report see: https://lewisham.gov.uk/myservices/planning/policy/ldf/evidence-base/ldf-evidence-base--environment

The report found that all 64 SINCs maintained their ecological interest for which they were designated and made a number of recommendations including:

- the identification of six new proposed SINCs
- upgrading of four sites from Sites of Local Importance to Sites of Borough Importance
- boundary changes to 28 SINC sites that increase the area by 12.8ha
If adopted by the new Local Plan there will be new additions to existing SINCs, six new proposed SINCs. This will increase the SINC area from 595ha to 614ha. This represents a 3% increase in ten years.

Access to nature is a key component of living in an urban environment. Although Lewisham has good access to green spaces, in some parts of the borough people do not enjoy easy access to green spaces with wildlife value. Localities where people are further than 1km walking distance from a publicly accessible site of Metropolitan or Borough level significance for nature conservation are defined by the GLA as ‘Areas of Deficiency’ (AoD).

Previously Lewisham had five AoD covering 14% of the Borough. The largest of these was located in the north-west, spreading from the River Thames in the north to Brockley in the south and the boundary with Southwark in the east. The other four are smaller and discrete. Their broad location and extent are listed below:

- A large area in the north-west around Deptford – 319ha
- Central, around Lewisham town centre – 55ha
- East, around Lee – 48ha
- South west, Forest Hill – 77ha

Following the 2015-16 study the AoD in nature has reduced from 520ha to 337.4ha, a fall or drop of 182.6ha or 35%. This is the result of improvements at Bridgehouse Meadows and Ladywell Fields, creating wildlife rich habitats valued at the borough level. Improved access into the River Quaggy and Manor Park Site of Borough Importance has also helped to reduce the AoD.

A proposed boundary extension to Beckenham Place Park has alleviated the AoD by 28.5ha in the London Borough of Bromley to the south. A further 45.5ha of AoD is also alleviated in Southwark as a result of Bridgehouse Meadows recommendations.

Of strategic ecological importance to Lewisham are the railway lines and naturalised stretches of the River Ravensbourne, River Pool and River Quaggy. These form habitat corridors and are contiguous with a large number of other SINCs of borough importance. The size, maturity and variety of habitats are integral to the sustainability of populations of bats, birds and invertebrates.

Five SINCs were assessed as meeting their current level of designation, but are in decline. These are Grove Park Cemetery; Hillcrest Estate Woodland; Hither Green Cemetery, Lewisham Crematorium and Reigate Road Open Space; Mayow Park; St Paul’s Churchyard and Crossfield Street Open Space. Since the publication of this study Crossfield Street Open Space has been lost to development to facilitate the Tideway Tunnel.
Outdoor Sports facilities
This category includes stand-alone sports facilities such as public, private, leisure and educational sports grounds and playing fields. They also include sports facilities listed under other typologies, for example public parks. A dedicated ‘Playing Pitch Strategy’ (PPS) and needs assessment has been prepared (June 2019), that provides a robust evidence base and identifies if the supply and demand of playing pitches within the Local Authority is sufficient to meet the current and future needs and demands for sport.

Amenity Green space
Amenity green space is classified as housing area green space, roadside enclosures and verges and other sites usually near to people’s homes and may include facilities such as play areas. Many of these sites are simple and less formal but in their own way they provide valuable and aesthetic spaces.

The housing amenity sites are managed by a number of housing providers in the borough and many sites are currently being improved, recognising the importance quality green space can play, alongside improvements to the housing stock.

Allotments
There are currently 37 allotments sites within the borough catering for more than 1,100 plot holders, including schools and community groups. This is an increase of 200 plotholders over a 3 year period. The number of plots has increased as we encourage smaller, more manageable plots to provide better opportunities for families and those with less time to manage a traditional full sized plot.

We have also centralised the allotment waiting list system ensuring the process is clear and accountable. As a result of this, in the year 2018-19, we have reduced the average waiting time by 4 years.

Lewisham has an above average number of allotment sites compared to other London Boroughs and whilst waiting lists are lengthy in certain areas of the borough, demand is significantly less in others. The key to managing waiting lists lies in supporting local allotment committees to effectively manage their sites, ensuring regular maintenance of plots and promoting those allotments in areas of less demand. All allotment applicants are sign-posted to online information resources regarding community gardens and a neighbouring local authority that has vacant plots so there is the option of taking part in food growing until an allotment plot becomes available in their area.

Lewisham’s Allotments and Community Gardens have an intrinsic role in the health and well-being of the borough’s residents, offering multiple benefits –

• **Personal** – individuals actively involved in managing their own space, producing their own food and engaging in their local environment
• **Community Building** – engaging groups of all ages and cultures in taking responsibility and ownership for their local Open Spaces; shared decision making and shared skills input

Self-managed committees are offered annual training sessions which focus on site management processes and current themes. These sessions promote good practice along with fair and transparent processes in allotment management. This is also an opportunity for committees to network and share experiences.

The spirit of allotmenteering in Lewisham is exemplified by the popular and well attended annual allotment awards event organised by our valued volunteers, the Lewisham Self-Managed Allotments Association (LSMAA)

• **Health** – access to locally grown nutritious food, regular outdoor exercise and fostering of physical and mental well-being.

• **Education** – all ages learning how to plan, grow, maintain and harvest crops; learn about organic, sustainable methods of land management as well as encouraging co-operative, social skills.

• **Environmental sustainability** – provides the forum for and encourages the prudent use of resources (water/composting), reduces food miles and encourages wildlife habitats.

Lewisham has recently installed a compost toilet offering environmentally friendly and sustainable facilities for allotment users. We will be supporting the installation of more compost toilets across the borough’s sites using the Mayor’s Greening Fund.

**Green Corridors – networks, chains and grids**

Greenspaces are important in their own right but there are also benefits in creating and enhancing links between sites to form a connected green infrastructure for both wildlife and people. The South East London Green Chain is a linked system of over 300 open spaces connected by a network of footpaths that stretch 50 miles (80km) from the riverside at Beckenham Place Park and through to Crystal Palace Park. The South East London Green Chain was extended in 2011 to include Sydenham Well Park, Sydenham Hill Woods, Dulwich Park and Nunhead Cemetery.

The Waterlink Way is a shared route for cyclists and pedestrians that runs from the River Thames at Deptford Creek southwards to the Green Chain Walk at Beckenham Place Park. It follows the route of Sustrans Route 21 as it passes through Inner London on its way to the south coast at Eastbourne. The Waterlink Way takes users north-south through the centre of the borough along the rivers Ravensbourne and Pool. It serves as a valuable blue-green artery connecting many of the borough’s green spaces with the green chain walk network and has been a driving force for restoring the river corridor and its associated habitats.
Both the Green Chain and Waterlink Way forms part of the South East London Green Chain Plus Area which is a component of the All London Green Grid (ALGG). The ALGG aims to create a regional network of interlinked and multi-purpose open and green spaces with good connections to the places where people live and work, and to public transport, the capital’s rivers especially the Thames, the countryside and urban fringe.

**Cemeteries and Churchyards**

Cemeteries and churchyards can provide a valuable contribution to the portfolio of open space provision. They provide a place for peaceful contemplation and often have wildlife conservation and biodiversity value.

The borough has three cemeteries: Grove Park, Hither Green and Ladywell and Brockley Cemetery. In addition, the Bromley Hill Cemetery falls within the Lewisham borough boundary but is managed by the London Borough of Bromley.

The Council maintains five churchyards: St Mary’s, St Margaret’s, St Pauls, St Bartholomew’s, and St Andrew’s under the 1906 Open Spaces Act where deeds of grant were signed agreeing that the churchyards are to be used by the public as open space and that the Council would maintain them in a ‘good and decent’ state.

Cemeteries and churchyards can make a significant contribution to the provision of urban green spaces often providing a sanctuary for wildlife. A wide variety of habitats can be found supporting the natural and semi-natural space typologies.

"The opportunity to study the flora and birds is not to be underestimated” Friends of Brockley and Ladywell Cemetery.
Summary of Open Space Accessibility by Area
Northern sub-area

Good level of overall provision of parks and open space. Railway corridors dissect the area and limit the accessibility of open space sites that restricts their influence on local catchments.

West sub-area

Greenspace provision is relatively fragmented, with two good-sized local open spaces (Brockley and Ladywell Cemetery and Hilly Fields Park) in the northern section of this sub-area and a concentration of open space sites in Sydenham and Upper Sydenham in the south-west corner of the borough. There is a shortage of open space sites in the relatively dense area of housing between Forest Hill station and Blythe Hill Fields. Housing land in this area is such that the potential to develop enhanced connectivity between greenspace sites is limited.

South sub-area

This area is dominated by a number of large sites such as Beckenham Place Park, Downham Fields, Forster Memorial Park and Hither Green Cemetery. These are interspersed with smaller open spaces. The South-East London Green Chain runs through Beckenham Place Park, joining the site to Crystal Palace to the west and Mottingham to the North East. The Waterway Link running from Lower Sydenham to the Thames at Deptford Creek is connected to Beckenham Place Park through a spur but this is not currently signposted or supported by walking and cycling infrastructure. A succession of inter-connected open space sites lies along the valley of the Pool River which forms the southern section of the Waterlink Way.

East sub-area

Suburban housing in this area becomes increasingly dense near to Lewisham and Catford town centres. Fairly significant areas of greenspace lie to the east of the borough boundary but access to these is partially interrupted by the A20 road corridor. Land to the south of the A20 and to the north of the Lewisham to Bexley railway line is relatively underprovided with greenspace. Manor House Gardens is a site with particular significance as an island of provision in an otherwise under-provided part of the borough. The northern section of the sub-area is dominated by Blackheath but its influence is also partially interrupted by the Lewisham to Blackheath railway line.
Central sub-area

Open space within the Central sub area is dominated by the Waterlink Way between Lower Sydenham and Ladywell. To the north, the Waterlink Way adopts a more urban route as it traverses the borough before joining River Quaggy at Lewisham town centre. Connections to the Waterlink Way from open space sites to the east, such as Mountsfield Park and Lewisham Park are poorly defined and interrupted by the north-south A21 road corridor. Suburban housing to the south-east of Catford town centre offer very little green space provision.

Opportunity area (geographically cross-cutting)

Lewisham’s ‘Opportunity Area’ connects Catford, Lewisham town centre, New Cross and south-west Deptford and is the principal regeneration area for the borough. This area will accommodate most of the additional housing over the next twenty years. As a consequence, existing greenspace within this part of the borough will come under increasing pressure from intensified use. Improving the quality of parks and open spaces and providing robust, diverse spaces that can deliver a range of economic, social and environmental outcomes will be essential as will adopting measures to enhance the multifunctionality of greenspaces. The Draft London Plan (2017) also makes reference to an Urban Greening Factor that encourages the provision and amount of other Urban Greening measures.

The Ravensbourne Valley Waterlink Way includes a range of inter-connected sites, and linkages between these sites and outlying local parks such as Lewisham Park, Manor Park, Manor House Gardens and Mountsfield Park could be better developed and connections enhanced.

Open space needs

An online web-based parks and open space consultation survey was undertaken in October and November 2018. A total of 806 residents/respondents participated in the survey. The survey asked respondents’ views on current levels of provision, the quality of this provision and the specific focus for the future development and management of open space across the borough. [Full survey summary appendix…]
Over 96% of respondents thought that the current condition of Lewisham’s parks was either ‘good’ or ‘fair’.
Condition trend over the last 3 years?

- Improved: 314
- Same: 126
- Worse: 362
39% of respondents thought that the condition of Lewisham’s parks had improved over the past three years. 45% felt that their condition had stayed the same.

The vast majority of respondents who participated in the survey hold their local parks in high regard and value the contribution that they make to their neighbourhood. Respondents’ experience of the condition of parks in Lewisham is very positive and 39% feel that condition has improved in the last three years. Respondents have a range of views in respect of the function of parks but the majority feel that they should be inclusive, provide a range of offers and support a variety of functions and activities.

66% of respondents were in the 30-56 age range. 62% of respondents were female.

Over 83% of respondents walked to their local park and over 63% felt that it was important to have a park within 5 minutes’ walk of home, emphasising the importance of local open space provision.

Over 95% felt that parks and open spaces made neighbourhoods good places to live.

Around 95% of respondents felt that parks should provide access to nature and help to reduce air pollution.

High percentages of respondents felt that safety, security, good facilities such as toilets and café and good equipment (e.g. bins and benches) and good play provision for children were all highly important.

The value of, and need for, good quality maintenance, cleanliness, and safety attracted the most written comments. Formally protecting parks and the enforcement of bye laws and public space protection orders was considered important as well as trying to provide a visible presence in parks to combat antisocial behaviour.

Overall the value of the parks as places for quite relaxation and access to nature and wildlife was the fourth most significant comment from respondents who rank spending to support nature conservation as the highest priority.
Areas for quiet relaxation

- Important
- Moderately important
- Slightly important
- Not important
Promotion of educational engagement e.g. nature walks and school groups
Promotion of organised physical activity
Promotion of educational engagement e.g. nature walks and school groups
Used by all members of the local community
Used for growing food

- Important
- Moderately important
- Slightly important
- Not important
Used for hosting events

- Important
- Moderately important
- Slightly important
- Not important
What to prioritise spending on

- Improve safety
- More new cafes
- Run more events
- Managing sites for wildlife and nature conservation
- Improve and build more play facilities
- Improve and build more toilet facilities
- Improve signs and information
- Improve landscape gardening
- Protect historically important parks
- Developing more opportunities to be involved i.e. volunteering
- Improve and build more outdoor gyms and other sports facilities

Y-axis: Number of votes
X-axis: Proposed spending priorities

Votes range from 0 to 400.