PARKS AND GREEN SPACES STRATEGY

LONDON BOROUGH OF BARKING AND DAGENHAM

MAY 2003

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The following reports were prepared as background to this Parks and Green Space Strategy:


Parks, People and Place - A Legacy for Life; London Borough of Barking and Dagenham and Landscape Design Associates; January 2002.

Barking and Dagenham Parks Evaluation:

Part 1: Summary Report and Recommendations, and


Funding and Management Options; London Borough of Barking and Dagenham and Landscape Design Associates; April 2002.


Best Value Review; London Borough of Barking and Dagenham; April 2001-July 2002.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We need stronger local communities and an improved local quality of life. Streets where parents feel safe to let their children walk to school. Where people want to use the parks. Where graffiti, vandalism, litter and dereliction is not tolerated. Where the environment in which we live fosters rather than alienates a sense of local community and mutual responsibility.

Tony Blair, Prime Minister, Croydon, April 2001

The best of our parks and green spaces remain popular. From Barking Park - a Victorian vision - to Eastbrookend Country Park - a more recent Millennium vision - we can appreciate the benefits that parks and green spaces can bring to our communities.

In a recent survey seeking residents views on Council services and future spending priorities, parks and open spaces was the second most important service provided. Additionally, residents of the Borough said that, of all the services that the Council provides, they had benefited the most from using parks and open spaces during the previous year. Parks and open spaces is the most used service that the Council provides.

Despite their popularity, there has been a marked decline in our parks and green spaces over the past two decades - a decline that is mirrored nationally.

This Parks and Green Spaces Strategy (the Strategy) sets out a programme for the renaissance of all of our parks and green spaces over the next 20 years. It is a programme based on establishing partnerships and collaborations with central government, national and regional agencies, the Mayor for London, local communities, businesses, voluntary organisations, and indeed within the Council.

The Strategy summarises our consideration of the issues affecting parks and green spaces in the Borough including the extent and condition of our parks; the profile of our communities; health, education and welfare; nature conservation; sports and recreation; heritage, the arts and culture.

It sets out conclusions and recommendations for revitalising existing parks and green spaces, creating new ones, and for connecting them all in a cohesive network across the whole of the Borough. It sets out an implementation plan, funding mechanisms, and monitoring and review procedures.

Methodology and timetable

The preparation of the parks and green spaces strategy commenced in May 2001 and implementation will commence in March 2003. The following timetable outlines the steps that have led to the publication of this Strategy.

During the course of the preparation of this Strategy, the Greater London Assembly drafted a Guide on Producing Open Space Strategies. This Strategy has both been prepared in accordance with that Guidance, and influenced its preparation. As recommended in the draft Guidance, it has addressed:

- Preparation of brief and scoping study
- Understanding of the strategic and local context
- Understanding the supply
- Understanding demand and needs
- Identifying aims and objectives; and
- Preparation of strategy/action plan.

Figure 1. The Millennium Centre, Eastbrookend Country Park
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Secure feasibility funding to appoint consultants to implement Stages 1 – 3.</td>
<td>September 2001</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Stage 1 - Review of National, Regional, Metropolitan and Borough policies to identify “best practice” and draft priorities for adoption.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Stage 2 - Landscape evaluation of the Borough’s key parks and green spaces to identify key recommendations for improvement.</td>
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<td>December - February 2002</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Stage 3 - Identify management and funding options for the delivery of Parks and Green Spaces Strategy.</td>
<td></td>
<td>January – March 2002</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secure feasibility funding to appoint consultants to implement Stages 4-6.</td>
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<td>March 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Progress Report</td>
<td>Progress Report to Executive on development of Parks and Green Spaces Strategy.</td>
<td>May 2002</td>
</tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Stage 4 - Draft Strategy</td>
<td>Produce Parks and Green Spaces Strategy (Draft)</td>
<td>June 2002</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Stage 5 - Consultation and Assessment</td>
<td>Identify consultation methods and present key issues to “test audience”.</td>
<td>July – November 2002</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Stage 6 - Analysis and Final Draft</td>
<td>Analysis of “test audience” results and revision of the Strategy</td>
<td>November 2002 – March 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Stage 7 – Strategy Adoption</td>
<td>Formal adoption of the Strategy by Executive and Assembly. Public, Professional and Media Launch</td>
<td>May - June 2003 July 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Stage 9 – Implementation</td>
<td>Implement Year 1 of the Strategy</td>
<td>June 2003 – March 2004</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The Strategy is in four parts.

**PARKS AND GREEN SPACES AND URBAN LIVING**

PART ONE provides the background to the Strategy. It explains why parks and green spaces are important - the social, economic and environmental benefits that they bring to our neighbourhoods and communities. It describes how and why parks and green spaces have deteriorated across the nation, summarises the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce report *Green Spaces, Better Places*, and the government’s response *Living Places - Cleaner, Safer, Greener*.

It stresses the themes and the linkages that should be made between all of the services that the Council provides, and why those delivering these services need to consider parks and green spaces should be at the heart of their policies and action plans.

These themes include:

- Improving the quality of developments and neighbourhood renewal projects and the attractiveness of locations for communities and businesses
- Promoting physical and mental health - particularly through walking and cycling, and enjoying the natural environment
- Fostering social inclusion and community development, citizenship and local pride by engaging people in their parks and green spaces
- Encouraging education and life-long learning by using the resource for learning about the natural world and the local environment
- Supporting sustainability through reducing pollution, providing good walking and cycling routes, and enhancing habitats for wildlife; and
- Contributing to heritage and culture through local festivals, civic celebrations, and arts events.

It concludes by illustrating how parks and green spaces contribute to each of the Borough’s seven agreed Community Priorities:

- Promoting equal opportunities and celebrating diversity
- Better education and learning for all
- Developing rights and responsibilities with the local community
- Improving health, housing and social care
- Making Barking and Dagenham cleaner, greener and safer
- Raising pride in the Borough; and
- Regenerating the local economy.

**PARKS AND GREEN SPACES NOW**

PART TWO describes the current condition, type, distribution, and quality of the parks and green spaces throughout the Borough, and documents the concerns of the community expressed through various surveys.

The Borough is well endowed with parks and green spaces which account for 480.8 hectares of land under council ownership, and additional areas in private ownership.

There are twenty-five designated parks and green spaces distributed fairly evenly throughout the Borough and they blend well with those within adjacent Boroughs. There is a good distribution of Metropolitan, District, Local and Small Local Parks within the recommended walking distance of most residences based on the London Plan’s designations and recommendations (the London Planning Advisory Committee’s - ‘LPAC’ - Hierarchy). There is, however, a need to develop new Local and Small Local Parks within certain residential neighbourhoods.

There is also a need to develop better access and connections to and from parks and green spaces, particularly across barriers such as rivers, railway lines and roads.

There are larger areas of Green Belt land to the north and east which should be considered as connected parts of the green space estate. However, there is poor woodland cover within the Borough which should be addressed.

Each of the Borough’s twenty-five parks and green spaces were assessed in terms of:

- Landscape character and quality
- General facilities
- Repairs, maintenance and cleanliness
- Security
- Management, ecology, education and health; and
- Children and young people’s use of the parks.
Executive Summary

recommendations that apply to the majority of our parks and
in Barking and Dagenham. It provides a summary of general
PARKS AND GREEN SPACES IN THE FUTURE

fear of crime.

• 42% of residents are satisfied with the provision of
Key findings of the various consultations were that:

These assessments found that the worst parks are usually
the recreation grounds and playing fields - dominated by
sports pitches; and the smaller parks within residential
estates such as King George’s Field, Heath Park, and
Kingston Hill Avenue.

This is reinforced by the general lack of landscape quality
and diversity of the parks and green spaces. The majority of
the Borough’s parks and green spaces are predominantly
landscapes comprising grass and trees.

There is also a general lack of facilities within the parks and
green spaces - particularly toilets and refreshments. In
general, the children, the young and elderly are poorly
catered for, management and maintenance is below average,
as is consideration of ecology, education and health issues.

Key findings of the various consultations were that:

• 42% of residents are satisfied with the provision of
parks, open spaces, play areas and other community
facilities, compared with a London average of 52%; and

• 43% of residents rated parks and open spaces the most
used service provided by the Council.

Residents also want parks that:

• Have staff in attendance
• Are free of dog mess
• Have clean toilets
• Have good playgrounds; and
• Are safe.

49% of respondents felt that parks and green spaces were
unsafe, and that park caretakers/wardens would help reduce
fear of crime.

PARKS AND GREEN SPACES IN THE FUTURE

PART THREE describes the future of parks and green spaces
in Barking and Dagenham. It provides a summary of general
recommendations that apply to the majority of our parks and
green spaces; and a short summary of the potential of each
of the twenty-five designated parks and green spaces within
the Borough; and briefly notes developments which should
deliver parks and open space networks connected to the
wider Borough in accordance with all the principles and
guidance set out in this strategy.

It delineates an outline Landscape Framework Plan which
would create a connected network of parks, green spaces,
river corridors and tree-lined streets, closely associated with
a comprehensive footpath and cycle network. It proposes
new Local Parks in deficient areas, new areas of woodland,
pedestrian and cycle only bridge links across roads, railways
and rivers, and new wildlife corridors. Many of the new Local
Parks in deficient areas will be achieved through
redesignation and redesign of amenity green space in
housing areas.

The Landscape Framework is intended to be developed
further and be adopted as Supplementary Planning
Guidance in the Unitary Development Plan. It would
incorporate a Parks and Green Spaces Development
Strategy, and the Local Biodiversity Action Plan. The
Framework is intended to encourage a transformation of the
overall environmental quality - the Greening - of the Borough.

PARKS AND GREEN SPACES: DELIVERING THE VISION

PART FOUR describes our vision for parks and green spaces
and how it will be delivered.

The reports, studies, evaluations, consultations and
strategies analysed and summarised in this Strategy
coalesce in our Vision statement:

By 2020 we will provide a well-connected system of attractive
parks and green spaces that are managed and maintained
to satisfy the diverse needs of all members of our
communities, provide the context for continuing
development, and contribute to our social, environmental and
economic well-being.

Four Primary Principles underpin our Vision, and will be a
constant reference point in its delivery:

• Diversity in all its facets must be a focus in parks and
green spaces - community needs, facilities, landscape
and environmental quality, and use must be addressed

• There must be a consistent focus on increasing quality
in the development, management and maintenance of
parks and green spaces

• The role of planning and design is crucial; and

• There must be co-ordinated, cross-departmental
working to achieve the full contribution parks and green
spaces can make to the Borough’s seven Community
Priorities.
We have agreed Eleven Primary Goals to focus the delivery of our Vision:

1. Adopt a Parks and Green Spaces Strategy that will deliver the Community Priorities through the Balanced Scorecard management framework
2. Prepare a Landscape Framework Plan that is adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance and which incorporates a Spatial Parks and Green Spaces Development Strategy
3. Secure a long-term capital and revenue investment programme through partnerships and grant aid bodies to deliver the Parks and Green Space Strategy goals
4. Establish a Parks and Green Spaces Regeneration Unit to deliver an integrated management and development approach
5. Prepare and implement a Local Biodiversity Plan for the Borough
6. Produce management plans for all parks and green spaces that reflect Community Priorities and incorporate strategies to deliver long-term improvements
7. Adopt management practices that increase levels of satisfaction, reduce barriers to participation and address community safety issues
8. Promote the concept of “Active Parks” through the adoption of an Events and Marketing Strategy that promotes greater and more inclusive use
9. Promote community involvement and ownership of Parks and Green Spaces through the development of user groups and delegated management agreements
10. Secure nationally accredited systems and procedures for delivering excellent Parks and Green Space services
11. Facilitate and contribute to partnerships that promote lifelong learning through the concept of “outdoor classrooms” and “healthy living”.

This strategy identifies a timetable to deliver the Eleven Primary Goals (table 5) and an Implementation Plan (tables 8-10) which prioritize the delivery of:

- Improvements to existing parks and green spaces based on their condition and location; and
- New parks and green spaces, new local parks, new woodland, new bridges and tree lined streets as detailed in the Landscape Framework.

The Implementation Plan also supplies estimated budgets, potential funding sources and target dates for delivery of the Strategy.
PART ONE - PARKS AND GREEN SPACES AND URBAN LIVING

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Figure 4. Parsloes Park

1.1 Background

The best of our parks and green spaces remain popular. From Barking Park - a Victorian vision - to Eastbrookend Country Park - a more recent Millennium vision - we can appreciate the benefits that parks and green spaces can bring to our communities.

In a recent survey seeking residents views on Council services and future spending priorities, parks and open spaces was the second most important service provided.

Additionally, residents of the Borough said that, of all the services that the Council provides, they had benefited the most from using parks and open spaces during the previous year. Parks and open spaces is the most used service that the Council provides.

Despite their popularity, there has been a marked decline in our parks and green spaces over the past two decades - a decline that is mirrored nationally.

It is now accepted at the highest level, that parks and green spaces, and the public realm in general, have suffered severe decline and neglect over the last two to three decades. In response to this, the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce (UGT) was established in January 2001 to advise the Government on its policies on parks and green spaces.

The Final Report of the UGT Green Spaces, Better Places was published in May 2002 and made several recommendations, in addition to a number of policy directions to central government. The Government’s response to both Green Spaces, Better Places, and the inter-departmental review of policies, funding streams and targets that have an impact on the public realm (as part of Spending Review 2002) were published in October 2002 in Living Places - Cleaner, Safer; Greener, and Living Places - Rights and Responsibilities - rationalising the legislative framework.

**PPG17 Typology**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greenspaces</th>
<th>Primary purpose</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parks and gardens</td>
<td>Accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural and semi-natural greenspaces, including urban woodland</td>
<td>Wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education and awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green corridors</td>
<td>Walking, cycling or horse riding, whether for leisure purposes or travel, and opportunities for wildlife migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor sports facilities</td>
<td>Participation in outdoor sports, such as pitch sports, tennis, bowls, athletics or countryside and water sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amenity greenspace</td>
<td>Opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision for children and young people</td>
<td>Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people, such as equipped play areas, ball courts, skateboard areas and teenage shelters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allotments, community gardens and urban farms</td>
<td>Opportunities for those people who wish to do so to grow their own produce as part of the long term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cemeteries, disused churchyards and other burial grounds</td>
<td>Quiet contemplation and burial of the dead, often linked to the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic and market squares and other hard surfaced areas designed for pedestrians</td>
<td>Providing a setting for civic buildings, public demonstrations and community events</td>
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</table>

Table 2. PPG17 Typology
This Parks and Green Space Strategy (the Strategy) follows many of these recommendations and policy directions.

We have used the Government's typology for parks and green spaces shown in table 2, page 9. We have used the Urban Park Forum's typology for land cover and the LPA hierarchy for distribution. Sports provision is excluded, but it is recommended that a Borough-wide Playing Field Audit be carried out. Parks, green spaces and the public realm in general are crucial to the Government's agenda for promoting an urban renaissance, and improving Liveability.

The department providing parks and green space services have been undergoing a Best Value Review. This Strategy has been prepared in parallel to that Review and each has informed the other. This Strategy is, therefore, complementary to the overall strategy for the renewal of parks and green space services.

1.2 Scope

The Strategy summarises our consideration of the cross-cutting issues affecting parks and green spaces in the Borough including the extent and condition of our parks; the profile of our communities; health, education and welfare; planning and development; nature conservation; sports and recreation; heritage, the arts and culture.

It sets out our conclusions and recommendations for revitalising existing parks and green spaces and creating new ones.

It delineates an Outline Landscape Framework and Parks and Green Space Development Strategy which sets the context for protecting and enhancing the landscape and townscape quality of the Borough, and for creating a connected network of parks, green spaces, river corridors and tree-lined streets, closely associated with a comprehensive footpath and cycle network.

The Landscape Framework also proposes new local parks in deficit areas - particularly within existing housing areas, new areas of woodland, pedestrian and cycle only bridge links across roads, railways and rivers, and new wildlife corridors. It also takes into account open space in private ownership that contributes to the visual and ecological amenity of the Borough.

The Strategy defines how we intend to improve our parks and green spaces to achieve the consulted priorities of the community. It sets out an agenda for all Council departments to work together to develop the full potential of parks and green spaces in health, education and welfare; nature conservation; sports and recreation; heritage, the arts and culture. It recommends that a Borough-wide playing field audit be carried out.

It sets out a programme for the renaissance of all of our parks and green spaces by 2020. It is a programme based on establishing partnerships and collaborations with central government, national and regional agencies, the Mayor for London, local communities, businesses, voluntary organisations, and within the Council itself.

It sets out an Implementation Plan, funding mechanisms, and monitoring and review procedures.

The scope of the Strategy, therefore, aims to be as broad ranging as possible to ensure that the full benefits of our parks and green spaces are achieved.

As noted above, the departments providing parks and green space services have been undergoing a Best Value Review. This Strategy has been prepared in parallel with that Review and each has informed the other. It does not, therefore, describe detailed changes to the delivery of parks and green space services coming out of the Best Value Review.

1.3 Background studies

The following four studies were prepared and published as reports in the preparation of this Strategy.

Green Spaces Strategy Framework Report

This study published in August 2001 set the framework for the preparation of this Strategy. It provided an overview of current green space provision, identified the issues that needed to be addressed, presented a rationale for the adoption of a Parks and Green Space Strategy, established the baseline value of green space against our seven Community Priorities, and established a methodology and timetable for its delivery.

It noted that the preparation of this Strategy would run in parallel with the Best Value Review of parks, open spaces and grounds maintenance, and sought to ensure a synergy between the two.

Parks, People and Place - A Legacy for Life

This study, published in 2002, reviewed the current status of parks and green spaces policy and directions at National, Regional, Metropolitan and Borough levels. It reviewed examples of good practice in the preparation of parks and green space strategies, and in the development, management and maintenance of parks and green spaces.

It assessed best practice that had emerged and was emerging, and provided the basis for a radical top to bottom rethink of the provision of parks and green space services.

It reviewed the Parks Strategies prepared by Sheffield, Newham, Bexley and others. It concluded that Parks and Green Space Strategies provide a framework for: assessing community needs; a rationale for framing cross-cutting corporate objectives so that they are mutually supportive; a methodology for monitoring progress and achievements; justification for targeted increases in expenditure and resources, and for attracting external funding; and for
establishing working partnerships with the communities served by each park and green space, and with other organisations. The Report concluded that the experience of these Authorities in getting their Parks and Green Spaces Strategies right, had proven their value.

The Report proposed Ten Primary Recommendations for action by the Council arising out of the findings of the Review. These Primary Recommendations have informed the primary principles and 11 primary goals of this Strategy.

It proposed a Draft Vision statement which drew together all the findings and recommendations of the review which has been refined through the preparation of this Strategy.

The Report also proposed Draft Performance Targets linked to the Borough’s Community Priorities for the delivery of the strategy.

These have informed the preparation of the Implementation Plan for the Borough’s twenty-five parks and green spaces, the proposed new local parks and connections over the next 20 years, and the performance targets and performance indicators measured against the seven Community Priorities that are detailed in this Strategy.

Barking and Dagenham Parks Evaluation

This report, published in February 2002, documented the evaluation of each of the Borough’s designated parks and green spaces. It documented the strategic context in terms of size, location, distribution, proximity to town and local centres, transport, and, ecology and nature conservation; the social context in terms of population profile, affluence and deprivation, ethnicity, and, young, elderly and disabled people.

The evaluations of each park took the form of fifty-four questions divided into the following criteria:

- Context and General Description
- Entrances
- General Facilities
- Landscape Character and Quality
- Security and Vandalism
- Children and ‘The Young’
- Disabled People
- Elderly People
- Repairs, Maintenance and Cleanliness
- Ecology, Education and Health; and
- Management

Each park was scored against these criteria on a scale of 1-5 (bad to very good) and the results tabulated and described graphically as bar charts.

The report identified Borough-wide key issues and made seventy-four Key Recommendations which have informed the preparation of this Strategy. It concluded with Key Recommendations for each of the borough’s twenty-five parks and green spaces.

Funding and Management Options

This report published in March 2002 documented research firstly into funding, and secondly management options.

Funding Options

This part of the study identified capital and revenue funding options for the delivery of a Parks and Green Space Strategy. The funding options were identified under the following broad categories:

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<th>Example</th>
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<tr>
<td>Council</td>
<td>Revenue funding and Capital Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grant Aid</td>
<td>Heritage Lottery Fund, New Opportunities Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>Target Funding</td>
<td>Single Regeneration Budget (SRB), London Development Agency (LDA) and Local Public Service Agreements (LPSA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partnership</td>
<td>Groundwork Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European</td>
<td>Objective 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Section 106</td>
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</table>

For each funding option a synopsis of the criteria for funding was produced, examples of best practice identified, and a baseline assessment of the Borough’s potential to secure funding also identified.

Management Options

This part of the study identified the management and procurement options for the delivery of a Parks and Green Spaces Strategy. The management options were identified under the following broad models which derive from those potentially suitable to the procurement of parks and green space services, or that have been established elsewhere:
### Parks and Green Spaces Spatial Strategy

This study, published in July 2002, comprised a series of plans with descriptions which illustrate the spatial aspects of parks and green spaces within the Borough. The plans include a spatial analysis of the parks distribution and type, and Borough-wide deficiencies based on the London Planning Advisory Committee’s (LPAC) hierarchy; identification of the parks and green spaces with poor accessibility and connectivity; a Borough-wide analysis of land cover utilising the Urban Park Forum’s typology of different categories of parks and green space; and an Outline Landscape Framework and Parks and Green Space Development Strategy.

The plans are intended to commence a process of rigorous recording and monitoring of the spatial aspects of parks and green spaces within an over-arching Landscape Framework plan for the whole of the Borough which sets the structure around which all development can take place in the future. It is recommended that the plans be established as part of the Borough-wide Geographic Information System which will enable parks and green space issues to be handled strategically at the planning level, through to monitoring of management and maintenance of individual parks and green spaces, and even individual street and park trees. They are also intended to form a rational basis for including parks and green spaces in the revised Unitary Development Plan 2003. These plans, several of which are included in this report as Supplementary Planning Guidance, have informed the preparation of the Strategy.

### 1.4 Borough profile

Successful parks must clearly relate and respond to the potential users within their catchment areas. This is further emphasised by the observation that parks are most likely to be used by people living within walking distance, and certainly very few users will have travelled from beyond the Borough boundary. Meeting needs requires an appreciation of social context and in Barking and Dagenham’s case this has some notable characteristics.

According to the 2001 census, approximately 164,000 people live in Barking and Dagenham. Most of the borough profile figures described below are taken from the 1991 census as the 2001 census data is not yet fully available.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key findings from the 1991 census:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Third lowest income levels in London</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Higher than average mortality rate</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key findings from the 2001 census:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• High proportion of young people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A high proportion of pensioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Low average educational attainment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• High rates of long-term illness and disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Relatively low car ownership and a consequent reliance on public transport</td>
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</table>

This element of the strategy will be updated when the 2001 census results are fully available.

### 1.4.1 Deprivation

Barking and Dagenham ranks as one of the most deprived Boroughs in the country with high levels of unemployment, low income and dependence on benefits. In the 2001 census it was rated as the twenty-fourth most deprived Local Authority in the country and the seventh in London.

The Borough had the fourth highest proportion of lone parents in Outer London (5% compared to the Outer London average of 4%). Over a quarter of the children living in Gascoigne, Thames, Marks Gate and Heath wards lived in lone parent households (35.6%, 26.4%, 25.4% and 25% respectively).

The Parks Evaluations report noted that good quality parks and green spaces are particularly important in low income areas where there is little private garden space and where the public park represents an important non-fee paying recreational resource.
1.4.2 Ethnic minorities

According to the Labour Force Survey LADB, the minority ethnic proportion of the population resident in Barking and Dagenham was 13.1% in March 2000 to February 2001. This compares with 24.7% in London and 6.1% in the UK; and the working-age employment rate for the minority ethnic population resident in Barking and Dagenham was 58.6%. This compares with 56.7% in London and 56.3% in the UK. Barking and Dagenham has one of the smallest ethnic group populations in London. An important aspect of this non-white population, however, is its sheer diversity, comprising a large number of ethnic origins and cultural identities.

Issues relating to ethnic minority use of parks focus on confidence, security, safety and the ability to use parks free from the threat of racism. The simple presence of significant numbers of ethnic minority users in areas of high ethnic population goes a long way to meeting these needs. It is noted in the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce report that in areas of low ethnic minority population there is a need to enhance people’s confidence to use parks.

1.4.3 Young people

According to the 2001 census, the Borough had a higher proportion of under fives and school age children (23%) than the London average (20%).

According to the 1991 census, the age structure differed markedly between wards. Areas with high proportions of flatted accommodation had higher than average percentages in the 20 to 30 age group and higher proportions of the under fives. The wards with the highest proportion of under fives in the Borough were Gascoigne (14.7%), Thames (10.9%), Marks Gate (10.9%) and Abbey (10.2%).

The wards with the highest proportion of school age children (5 - 15) were Abbey, Parsloes, Campbell and Goresbrook. Good playground provision is especially important in these wards with high numbers of children. Play areas have recently enjoyed substantial investment in Barking and Dagenham. The Fair Play strategy aims to upgrade all play areas in the Borough.

The Borough has also invested in a range of facilities for teenagers. These include basketball courts, skateboard and mountain bike obstacle courses and teen shelters which have recently been introduced in a number of parks to provide legitimate places for teenagers to congregate.

1.4.4 Elderly people

According to the 1991 census, Barking and Dagenham had the highest proportion of people of pensionable age in London (20.5%) and the highest proportion of pensioner households in London (37.6%), compared with the Outer London average of 32.1%.

Manor (26.9%), Valence (26.6%), Eastbury (25.3%), Fanshawe (24.3%), and Triptons (24.1%), had the highest proportions of people of pensionable age. All of these wards, except for Fanshawe had a very elderly (i.e. over 85 years) population of over 2%. In Manor and Valence wards there were over 45% of households with a pensioner.

Elderly people are clearly an important park user group in the Borough. General facilities such as good seating provision, toilets and refreshments, a sense of security, ornamental horticulture and quiet spaces are especially important for this sector of the community. Parks and green spaces offer important health benefits to elderly people. They are free and accessible and provide a peaceful place to walk and meet people.

The issue of safety is being addressed by the Borough in the Crime and Disorder Strategy, Safer Communities, published in March 2002. The strategy encourages the establishment of Park Watch schemes and reviews the feasibility of expanding the existing Parks Constabulary.

1.4.5 Long-term sick and disabled people

According to the 2001 census, Barking and Dagenham had the highest proportion of residents with limiting long term sickness in London (19.9%).

According to the 1991 census, the Borough had the joint second highest proportion of long-term sick/disabled in London and the highest proportion in Outer London. The percentage of people with limiting long-term illness was 14.4% for Barking and Dagenham, compared with 11.2% in Outer London.

The wards with the highest percentage of people with long-term illness (over 16.9) were Valence, Fanshawe, Manor and Parsloes, which are wards with a high proportion of elderly people. Parks and green spaces can provide many health benefits to people with disabilities and long-term illness. They can provide a place to exercise and experience nature close to home and provide opportunities to become involved.
SECTION 2: THE VALUE OF PARKS AND GREEN SPACES

2.1 The value of parks and green spaces

Parks and green spaces are important. They bring social, economic and environmental benefits to our neighbourhoods and communities. They are major contributors to our goal of achieving sustainable living.

They are an essential element of communities where people enjoy living. They contribute to all forms of development helping to rejuvenate areas in decline, create the context for development in the future, enhance economic performance of areas, enhance and support the ecology and biodiversity of the built environment, enable lifelong learning opportunities, and foster local pride, community cohesion, and sense of belonging.

They are places that are truly accessible to all because they are in the main free, and are usually within close walking distance of homes. People of all ages value and enjoy parks and green spaces as places to find peace and quiet or to be active and sociable.

They are particularly important in deprived urban areas where gardens are small or non-existent and where people to a greater extent depend on local facilities. The Borough has high levels of deprivation and for many of our residents the local parks and green spaces are the only places where people can enjoy contact with nature.

We sit at the heart of the Thames Gateway. This is London’s and central government’s designated area for substantial growth and investment for the future. It will require huge investment in the public realm to turn around years of neglect and industrial decline and decay. The value of an integrated Landscape Framework, and a parks and green spaces strategy to set the context for this huge development area cannot be underestimated. This Strategy is our contribution to establishing that Landscape Framework.

This section of the Strategy defines the value and significance of parks and green spaces, relevant Borough policies and strategies, and the contributions they can make to:

- Urban renaissance and regeneration
- Health and well-being
- Social inclusion, community development and citizenship
- Education and lifelong learning
- Environment and ecology; and
- Heritage, culture and the arts.

Relevant Council policies and strategies are listed under each of these categories.

2.2 Contribution to our policies

Parks and green spaces can and should make a full contribution to all the services that we provide, and vice versa. They should directly support all our Community Priorities. However, there is a sense the opportunities provided by parks and green spaces are not being fully exploited and developed by all the services that we provide. Consequently, those delivering these services need to consider how parks and green spaces can and should be at the heart of their policies and action plans.

Here we describe and define the value and significance of parks and green spaces, relevant Borough policies and strategies, and the contributions they can make to:

- Urban renaissance and regeneration
- Health and well-being
- Social inclusion, community development and citizenship
- Education and lifelong learning
- Environment and ecology; and
- Heritage, culture and the arts.

Relevant Council policies and strategies are listed under each of these categories.

2.3 Urban renaissance and regeneration

Parks and green spaces improve the quality of developments and neighbourhood renewal projects and the attractiveness of locations for communities and businesses.

Good quality parks and open spaces have proven economic benefits. They help to raise property values, create attractive living environments and, therefore, build business and community confidence. The potential of parks and green spaces in contributing to the economic development of towns and cities should be driving urban renaissance and regeneration.

The quality of parks and green spaces provides a quick and highly visible indicator of whether an area is an attractive place for people to live and for business to locate. The potential of parks and green spaces in enhancing and contributing to the changing economies of towns and cities should therefore underpin regeneration programmes.

Many towns and cities are already realising the regenerative and economic benefits of good quality parks and green spaces. Internationally, the success of Barcelona as a major growth centre is to a large extent attributed to its commitment to creating quality parks and open spaces.

A commitment to develop networks of new plazas, parks and buildings was the cause of our success.

Pasqual Maragall, former Mayor of Barcelona, Towards an Urban Renaissance, 1999
Nationally, Manchester, Sheffield, Bristol, Leeds, and Glasgow have proved the success of investing in a high quality public realm of parks, squares and plazas.

The restoration of London’s green spaces to full health, the protection of the best parks, an end to neglect of the worst, and high standards of management and maintenance as vital to the capital’s economic, social and cultural success.

Green Space Investigative Committee: Scrutiny of Green Spaces in London 2001; Greater London Authority

The Heritage Lottery Fund’s Urban Parks Programme has invested £250 million in historic parks since its inception. The programme has been very successful in rejuvenating communities.

The New Opportunities Fund which distributes National Lottery money, has allocated £100 million in England to help communities understand, improve or care for their local environment, with a particular focus on disadvantage.

Urban renaissance and regeneration: good practice example

Barking Town Centre: we are planning a regeneration and renewal project with a linked network of high quality streets, squares and other spaces linking with the Central Area open spaces.

Barking Reach: in conjunction with Bellway Homes, we are planning an extensive network of new parks, river walks, squares, boulevards, wildlife areas, and cycle ways that will connect the Borough directly to our riverside.

South Dagenham: we are similarly planning a landscape framework that will connect to the river, and provide the context for redevelopment.

2.3.1 Strategies and policies that support parks and green spaces as part of urban renaissance and regeneration

Thames Gateway

In June 1995 the Government published the Thames Gateway Planning Framework (RPG9a) as a supplement to the Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9a). As sub-Regional Planning Guidance, along with RPG9 and Planning Policy Guidance Notes, the Planning Framework provides the context for revision of statutory development plans, and will be reflected in decisions on planning matters by the Secretary of State. Among other objectives, encouraging sustainable development patterns, safeguarding and enhancing the natural and man-made environmental assets and raising the quality of the local environment all support this Strategy.

The Draft London Plan

The Mayor’s Spatial Development Strategy - The Draft London Plan - contains various policies and initiatives that support, and are in turn supported by, this Strategy. Protection of the environment is one of three underlying strands of the Plan. The Plan is supported by strategies on Biodiversity, Air Quality, Economic Development, Noise, Transport and Waste - all of which must be integrated and consistent with each other. The Plan promotes ‘the protection, enhancement and management of London’s biodiversity and the protection of green spaces’. It also promotes regeneration within the Thames Gateway, and the reuse of brownfield land.

Strategic open spaces, parks, play spaces, recreational grounds and allotments are vital to local communities. They form part of a wider network of open spaces, which contributes to the distinctive attraction of London. These areas of open space, together with the water spaces of the Blue Ribbon Network, form the environmental and ecological heart of London. London’s development must be pursued parallel with vigorous action to protect this open space network and to look for opportunities to develop it further.


The Mayor’s Biodiversity Strategy

The Mayor’s Biodiversity Strategy - Connecting with London’s Nature, was published in July 2002. It commits the Mayor to work with partners to ‘protect, manage and enhance London’s biodiversity’. It recommends that all Boroughs prepare parks and green space strategies. The Mayor has also established the Blue Ribbon Network for the River Thames and London’s other waterways which will ‘establish principles for the use and management of the water and land beside it’. The fourteen policies commit the Mayor to:

- work with partners to protect, manage and enhance London’s biodiversity
- set up a Blue Ribbon Network for the river Thames and London’s other waterways. This will establish principles for the use and management of the water and land beside it
• encourage the management, enhancement and creation of green space for biodiversity, and promote public access and appreciation of nature
• promote the conservation and enhancement of farmland biodiversity
• encourage greening of the built environment and the use of open spaces in ecologically sensitive ways
• encourage experience of the natural world
• promote environmental education
• celebrate and promote London’s many species, and the landscapes where they are found
• support partnerships at London-wide and local levels to produce and implement Biodiversity Action Plans
• promote London as a world centre for biodiversity conservation, working with London’s world-class organisations for greater influence globally and to learn from experience at home and abroad
• encourage the business community to play a major role in implementing the programme for conserving London’s biodiversity
• encourage practices, and support existing initiatives, that reduce London’s impact on biodiversity elsewhere
• commit to increasing the funding for biodiversity projects in London, and wishes to ensure that major new development projects include provision for biodiversity
• measure progress in conserving London’s biodiversity.

The protection of wildlife habitats and important species will be a priority, the London Plan will be the main vehicle for delivering this and Borough Unitary Development Plans will be expected to follow its guidance. The Mayor will urge the Government to expand his powers to ‘call in’ planning applications to those that affect the top tier of wildlife sites. The Mayor intends to survey all London’s open spaces on a ten-year rolling programme, identifying the best sites.

Green Gateway Strategy

The Green Gateway - An Urban Forestry Strategy for Thames Gateway London, published in Draft in July 2001 provides the case for a sub-regional strategy for an urban community forest. It documents the key aims which are to:

• develop an integrated and co-ordinated approach to protecting, planting and management of trees and woodlands
• identify opportunities to increase tree cover where appropriate

• agree priority areas, themes for action and the delivery mechanisms for taking forward the vision
• provide a framework for co-ordinating the work of partners
• maximise resources and funding to maintain and enhance the urban forest.

It was prepared by the National Urban Forestry Unit and Thames Chase Community Forest on behalf of the Green Gateway steering group, and it includes the Barking and Dagenham area.

Thames Chase Community Forest

The Thames Chase Community Forest is an important sub-regional endeavour in which the Borough is a key player. The Forest was established in 1990 and its plan approved in 1993. It is one of twelve Community Forests throughout the country, established by the Countryside Agency and the Forestry Commission in partnership with a wide range of local partners. The aim of Community Forests is to achieve major environmental improvements around towns and cities, supporting natural biodiversity, with associated provision for access, leisure and education, thereby making them more attractive places in which to live, do business and enjoy leisure time.

The Thames Chase Community Forest comprises the Countryside Agency, the Forestry Commission and five local authority partners - Barking and Dagenham, Brentwood Borough Council, Essex County Council, the London Borough of Havering and Thurrock Council.

The current Thames Chase Plan retains the core policies and vision whilst critically assessing achievements, and developing the policies and vision. The Borough is committed to:

• continue with appropriate development and management of Eastbrookend Country Park, parks and open spaces in the Thames Chase
• continue to implement the Beam Valley Project
• encourage schools to include the environmental objectives into the development and management of school grounds
• encourage community outreach in the Dagenham Corridor based at Eastbrookend
• balance the needs of road users with those using the corridor for recreation.

One of the major successes has been the establishment of Eastbrookend Country Park and the Millennium Centre within the Borough. Eastbrookend Country Park is an excellent example of what can be achieved with vision, commitment, and long-term funding. With the successful SRB funded
Beam Valley Project, the Borough will eventually realise the concept of a linear park. This should be the start of a series of linked new and old parks and open spaces which should provide the context for all existing and future development within the Borough.

**Unitary Development Plan**

The Borough’s Unitary Development Plan (UDP) was adopted by the Council in October 1995. The Plan includes a series of Strategic Policies as well as chapters on Green Issues, Design and Environment. The Plan is currently under review and the first Deposit Draft of the UDP is likely to be published for consultation early in 2003. It is intended that this Strategy will inform the next Deposit Draft.

It recognises that the Green Belt performs a strategic role within the Borough forming the ‘Dagenham Corridor’. It recognises that ‘a pleasant environment enhances the quality of life and can have economic benefits with businesses more easily attracted to and retained in the Borough’.

It recognises that ‘the provision of open space for leisure and recreation is important to provide areas of greenery and tranquillity in urban areas, enhancing the quality of life of people living in, working in and visiting towns and cities’.

It commits to maintain and improve the quality of the urban landscape, subject to the availability of resources, and to seek a high standard of design and layout and landscape features in all new developments.

It commits to protect and improve the Green Belt, areas of urban space as shown on the proposals map, areas of metropolitan open land, and to refuse inappropriate development.

When considering proposals for new residential developments, it commits the Council to seek to secure by negotiation the provision of amenity open space, particularly in areas of open space deficiency, by entering into agreements or attaching such planning conditions as necessary. Guidelines for the provision of amenity open space are outlined in Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 17. The Companion Guide to PPG 17: Assessing Needs and Opportunities details how needs should be addressed in addition to requirements for capital and revenue funding.

The Unitary Development Plan is a key Council document. By embedding this Strategy and the Landscape Framework within it, we will be able to ensure that all development contributes to our vision for a cleaner, greener and more attractive Borough.

**Park and green space planning: good practice example**

**Beam Valley, Barking and Dagenham:** the Beam Valley consists of approximately 74 hectares of land that is being developed as a new country park. A masterplan for the park is currently being implemented with phase 1 now complete. The whole site is due to be completed at the end of 2004. Along with being an important site for nature conservation and informal recreation the site is also a gateway to the Thames Chase Community Forest.

**2020 Vision**

The 2020 Vision document is built around the Community Priorities, and Economy, Environment, and Equity. It contains many aspirations and commitments that would be supported directly and indirectly by significant investment in parks and green spaces.

There is a separate section on Parks and Green Spaces which confirms that economic regeneration requires environmental regeneration - good quality parks and green spaces provide the context for attracting investment, and for people to live.

It accepts that ‘in any urban area, green space is a key factor for people’s quality of life’. But it is not just the amount but the quality of that space that is critical. The Vision seeks to ensure that:

- all our parks are renovated, safe, stimulating and providing for everyone; and
- high quality landscape is included in all large new developments.

**The Community Strategy**

The Community Strategy is based on the 2020 Vision for the Borough and is structured around the seven Community Priorities, under which have been identified key issues, targets and actions. Under the Community Priority of Cleaner, Greener, Safer a number of targets have been identified that relate to the Parks and Green Spaces Strategy. These include target increases for woodland cover (15% by 2020), Local Nature Reserve designation for those sites that meet criteria, and refurbishment of parks and green spaces through the adoption of a parks and green spaces strategy. Delivery of the Community Strategy is through the Local Strategic Partnership, which is made up of representatives from statutory bodies, agencies, community groups and local businesses.
Barking and Dagenham - An Urban Renaissance

This Strategy draws together the 2020 Vision and Community Priorities, and includes a specific section on A Distinct Environment, which commits us to:

- renovate all parks so that they are safe, stimulating and provide for everyone; and continue improving quality of parks and open spaces.
- adoption of a parks and green spaces strategy.

Cultural Strategy

Barking and Dagenham's Cultural Strategy was published in April 2003. It examines the current levels of cultural provision, and sets priorities for the cultural development and life of the Borough over the next 5 years.

Parks and open spaces are identified as important cultural resources within the strategy, offering free-to-all facilities, which make a significant contribution to the aim of improving the well-being of local people through culture and cultural activities. Barking Park is also identified as a key heritage development site to be developed as part of the strategic aim of supporting and encouraging cultural growth.

The implementation of the Parks and Green Spaces Strategy is recognised as an important driver for delivering the overarching aims of the Borough's Cultural Strategy, placing it firmly in the centre of the cultural agenda.

Economic benefits of parks and green spaces

They:
- Add value to surrounding property, both commercial and residential
- Encourage employment and inward investment to an area
- Help to create a favourable image of a place; and
- Attract visitors.

2.4 Health and well-being

The potential of quality parks and green spaces to promote good health and well-being is perhaps one of the most important benefits. The Victorians were among the first to recognise the importance of urban parks to the health of urban workers. Parks were established with the specific aim of improving the health of city and town dwellers.

The 'Green Space and Healthy Living' conference, May 2002, was organised by the National Urban Forestry Unit. It looked specifically at the potential of trees and green spaces in urban areas to improve the health of urban populations and create a more liveable environment for people.

From a medical perspective, prevention of illness is better than having to treat it. Strokes and coronary heart disease are the leading cause of death in England, and stress is a serious, pervasive problem affecting public health in all urbanised societies.

Stress has many negative effects on health and is the biggest cause of lost days at work. Green space in cities can help keep people physically and mentally healthy by encouraging activity and by providing calm places to relax away from noise and pollution. Research has demonstrated that even passive use of green space (viewing nature) can provide relief from stress, and promote psychological and physiological well-being.

The idea that prevention is better than cure also makes good economic sense. It is estimated that lack of physical activity costs the National Health Service about 2-3 per cent of the total health budget.

Health benefits of good quality parks and green spaces

Obesity is now a major public health concern for which there are no easy or short-term solutions. The trend is rising rapidly - over 20% of men and 25% women could be obese by 2005, with important consequences for the NHS and the economy.

Obese children are more likely to become obese adults. Obese children become susceptible to Type 2 diabetes.

Free access to good quality parks and green space enables people to take exercise. 30 minutes a day of gentle exercise can significantly reduce the risk of strokes, coronary heart disease - currently the leading cause of death in England - as well as reducing stress which is the biggest cause of lost days at work.

Green Spaces, Better Places - Final Report of the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce, May 2002

2.4.1 Strategies and policies that support parks and green spaces and their contribution to health and well-being

Unitary Development Plan

The Borough’s UDP commits the Council to ‘endeavour to co-ordinate the work of all the agencies in the locality which have an interest in sport and recreation, with a view to developing a local strategy for leisure and recreation, in accordance with existing facilities and resources within the Borough’.
It also commits the Council to encouraging cycling and where appropriate improve conditions for cycle traffic; to improve leisure and recreation facilities, including informal recreation, to meet the needs of local people and to contribute to London’s leisure and recreation needs.

The UDP is undergoing a review process which is due for completion by 2003. This Strategy will feed into the review.

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**Sports Development Plan**

The Sports Development Plan aims and objectives are to:

- Reach every part of the community not only to look at increasing opportunities, but also to encourage participation by breaking down the barriers that exist for individuals and groups.
- Ensure equality of access to sport and active recreational pathways and opportunities to the whole community.
- Ensure activities maximise user choice through enabling local agencies and targeted communities to have a greater say in the planning, implementation, and evaluation process.
- Work in partnership with community associations, other Borough departments, other Boroughs, voluntary and sporting agencies to provide a well co-ordinated, well-managed high performing quality service.
- Invest in the training of sports volunteers and coaches to enable life long learning opportunities where appropriate; and
- Promote a healthy lifestyle for everyone in our community.

The Plan delivery is through five areas of work:

- Active sports
- Youth Sports Initiative
- Community Sports Programme
- Interborough representation; and
- Generic Sports Development issues.

It is very much an active sports plan and does not address passive recreation. Because of this, there is inadequate recognition of the huge potential role that parks and open spaces Borough-wide can play. The Sports Development Plan, and the Parks and Green Space Strategy should be mutually supportive. There is also a need to carry out an audit of sports recreation facilities and playing fields provision within the Borough. This sports audit should be carried out in accordance with Sport England guidelines.

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**Health benefits of parks and green spaces: good practice example**

The London Borough of Barnet and the Health Authority run a Fitness for Life programme providing a GP referral service. Local people in need of healthy exercise are supervised in physical activities in local parks to help address their ailments.

**THERAPI (Tackling Health through Environmental Regeneration and Public Involvement),** a three-year funded project by the Countryside Agency. THERAPI project will be making links between health and the environment through community based environmental improvements in areas of high deprivation and activity programmes designed for specific health needs. The project is specifically targeting two London Boroughs, Havering and Barking & Dagenham, and is managed through the Thames Chase Community Forest.

**Green Spaces, Better Places - Final Report of the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce, May 2002**

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**2.5 Social inclusion, community development and citizenship**

Engaging people in their parks and green spaces fosters social inclusion and community development, citizenship and local pride.

Parks and green spaces can help build community cohesion by getting people to engage with each other in partnerships and ‘friends’ groups, and by bringing together communities in shared spaces - especially in towns where the residential areas can be very segregated.

In terms of equality for all sectors of society, free-access green spaces offer a uniquely affordable alternative to commercial leisure activities. Universal access to all ability groups encourages engagement and inclusion.

Parks and green spaces can also offer opportunities for voluntary and community activities.

Children’s play areas within parks can become focal points for carers, family, friends, and others. They become places where children learn the rules of engagement of civilised, community oriented behaviour.
Social inclusion, community development and citizenship benefits of parks and green spaces

- Opportunities to become engaged in the design, management and maintenance of local parks
- Opportunities for community events, voluntary activity and charitable fund raising; and
- Safe, freely accessible to all, places to meet, talk and play.

2.5.1 Strategies and policies that support parks and green spaces and their contribution to social inclusion, community development and citizenship

Fair Play - A strategy on children’s play for Barking and Dagenham

The Borough’s vision for Children’s Play is that:

- All children in the Borough should be given the chance to enjoy a rich play experience and should also be given a higher profile as individuals.

The strategy defines the following priorities:

- Assessment of need for play provision
- Development of partnerships and co-ordination of multi-agency approach to meeting needs, including assessment of best provider in each case
- Development of a bidding strategy and expertise, with support for the not-for-profit sector to access funding; and
- To review its own fixed play equipment policy and spending, to target these at most needy areas and to ensure that budgets are sufficient to cover maintenance and renewal.

Social inclusion, community development and citizenship benefits of parks and green spaces: good practice example

Trunkwell Park Garden Project, Berkshire. Thrive, a national organisation concentrating on horticultural therapy and training for the disabled, runs this project with volunteers. The project combines horticultural therapy and skill training to build the confidence of and contribute to the social inclusion of disabled people.

Culpeper Garden Project, Islington Gardens and Allotment Plots. These gardens were created and maintained by volunteers to provide an outdoor educational activity and play resource for underprivileged children, in particular problems of excluded children.

Mudchute City Farm, Isle of Dogs. Local businesses provide funding support and corporate volunteering. Volunteers assist with environmental work such as fencing, tree planting and litter clearance. Includes park, education, youth work, healthy living centre, creche, riding centre and café.

Urban Green Spaces Taskforce, Working Group 2: Good Practice for Improving Urban Green Spaces, May 2002

From 1999 - 2002 we have invested £500,000 in the refurbishment and improvement of our playgrounds. Other investment from external sources has resulted in improvements to Newlands Park, and on-going investment over four phases in Goresbrook Park.

2020 Vision

The 2020 Vision statement seeks to ensure that:

- There is community involvement in the management of parks and open spaces; and
- There is a programme of community gardens and allotments linked to community local enterprises.

2.6 Education and life-long learning

Parks and green spaces are increasingly being used as ‘Outdoor classrooms’ in delivering the National Curriculum. They are ideal places for learning about the natural world, the local environment, and community activities and citizenship. They can also provide work experience and learning opportunities in environmental management. There are lots of opportunities for links across the whole National Curriculum, and across all Key Stages. In history, parks can...
act as a general introduction to Victorian life, aid an understanding of local history and historical enquiry and interpretation. Landscape features such as flood meadows and landform can help give an understanding of geographical patterns and processes. Natural sciences can be taught hands on in green spaces - children can study the biodiversity of different habitats, look at plant growth and geographical patterns and processes. Natural sciences can be taught hands on in green spaces - children can study the biodiversity of different habitats, look at plant growth and animal life, and learn about the water and nutrient cycles. Taking part in school and community projects can also contribute to personal and social development such as being responsible for one’s own actions and learning to work as part of a team. In terms of lifelong learning and ‘University of the Third Age’, parks and green spaces can provide the setting for themed walks and talks and provide opportunities to develop practical horticultural and environmental management skills through involvement in friends groups, voluntary organisations and community led initiatives.

There needs to be a concerted effort by the Parks Service, the Education Service and individual schools, to build links with their local parks and fully exploit their potential as ‘Outdoor Classrooms’.

The establishment of well-managed training schemes, work experience, job tasting for the unemployed, career changers and those wishing to add to their skills or qualifications, can directly benefit parks and green spaces, and also lead to job opportunities in land-based industries.

Schools should also be encouraged and assisted to develop their grounds. The Learning Through Landscapes Trust provides excellent advice and resources to achieve this.

2.7 Environment and ecology

The environmental benefits of parks and green spaces are well documented and range from supporting biodiversity, reducing flood risk, countering air pollution, and ameliorating the urban micro-climatic effects of heat, wind, insolation, and humidity.

Biodiversity in towns and cities is dependant on the quality and contiguity of parks and green spaces networks. They are important wildlife havens and places where people can have contact with nature and learn to understand the natural world. Thousands of species of wild plants and animals live in urban areas, and are greatly appreciated by people. Networks of parks and green spaces provide essential wildlife corridors.

Green spaces play a key role in sustainable urban drainage systems. They act like sponges to soak up rainwater, reduce the volume and rate of run-off, recharge groundwater supplies and provide a level of water treatment.

Woodlands and trees can help stabilise urban climate by emitting moisture in to the air, cooling it and helping to make towns and cities more comfortable places in which to live and work. Daytime temperatures have been found to be about 2-3 ºC lower in a large urban park than the surrounding streets.

Establishing green spaces on derelict and degraded land is an inexpensive way of reclaiming land, improving their appearance, enhancing their ecological value, and making them available for recreation.

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**Educational benefits of parks and green space: good practice example**

**Parsons Cross and Longley Parks Urban Regeneration Sheffield City Council.** Sheffield City Council is the lead partner in the regeneration of these parks. They form part of a wider social and economic regeneration of the area. Volunteering, work experience and using the parks as training ground for a nearby college’s horticultural courses are all part of the programme. A group of local health walkers has led them to design a series of waymarkers that reflect the agricultural history of the parks and to complete a basic computer skills course.

**Urban Green Spaces Taskforce, Working Group 2: Good Practice for Improving Urban Green Spaces, May 2002**

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**Environmental and ecological benefits of parks and green spaces**

- Provide habitats for wildlife, aiding biodiversity
- Help to ameliorate the urban micro-climate
- Absorb pollutants in air and ground water
- Provide opportunities for the recycling of organic materials
- Slow storm water run off, reduce drainage infrastructure and reduce risk of flooding; and
- Provide a sense of the seasons and links with the natural world within the urban environment.

**Urban Green Spaces Taskforce, Working Group 2: Good Practice for Improving Urban Green Spaces, May 2002**
2.7.1 Strategies and policies that support parks and green spaces and their contribution to the environment and ecology

Unitary Development Plan

The Unitary Development Plan recognises ‘the social, recreational, educational and environmental benefits which accessible natural areas can bring to the local community’. Strategic Policies commit the Council to protect areas of ecological value in the Borough and will endeavour to improve the quantity and quality of wildlife habitats, by creating and enhancing sites of ecological value for their own biological merit, as important assets in the urban environment of London and, as important social, educational and recreational resources for local people.

Chapter six of the UDP addresses Green Issues. It recognises that the Green Belt performs a strategic role within the Borough forming the ‘Dagenham Corridor’. With regard to environmental protection, it recognises that ‘a pleasant environment enhances the quality of life and can have economic benefits with businesses more easily attracted to and retained in the Borough’.

In addition to the above policies the Council expands on a number of themes through Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes, a number of which have a bearing on parks and open spaces issues.

There are many good policies relating to parks and green spaces incorporated in the UDP. However, what is missing is a Landscape Framework and Parks and Green Spaces Development Strategy that links all Corporate Policies, Strategies and Objectives in a coherent way. Additionally, to ensure that the policies ‘join up’, they need to be supported by and revolve around a Spatial Strategy. The Landscape Framework and this Strategy are intended to fulfil this need.

Nature Conservation in Barking and Dagenham, London Ecology Unit

This report documents nature conservation habitats found in the Borough, and the initiatives of the Borough and others to protect and enhance habitats. The Borough is currently preparing its Local Biodiversity Action Plan. This plan will form a central element in the development and implementation of this Strategy over the coming years with regard to nature conservation.

2020 Vision

The ‘Vision for the Environment’ is specific with regard to parks and green space stating that the Borough should be at the leading edge of local solutions for quality parkland and open space; and that green areas and the river are attractive places for people and wildlife to which everyone in the Borough has access to enjoy.

It notes that parks and green spaces will make a significant contribution to the desired actions on all forms of pollution:

- Improving air quality
- Significantly reducing the amount of contaminated land in the Borough and bringing the land back into use; and
- Improving water quality in the Borough’s rivers and lakes.

It seeks to ensure that:

- There are more wildlife and plant species present in our parks, open spaces and new wildlife areas; and
- There is substantial planting of trees in the Borough.

Barking and Dagenham - An Urban Renaissance

This policy document commits the Borough to:

- Increase the percentage of woodland cover; and
- Establish Local Nature Reserve Status for all sites that meet criteria.

Environmental and ecological benefits of parks and green spaces: good practice examples

Eastbrookend Country Park: one of the major successes has been the establishment of Eastbrookend Country Park and the Millennium Centre within the Borough. Eastbrookend Country Park is an excellent example of what can be achieved with vision, commitment, and long-term funding. Eastbrookend Country Park has successfully secured four national green flag awards. It forms part of the Thames Chase Community Forest.

Green Gateway, London. This sub-regional strategic urban forestry programme covers 700 sq km. We are one of the London Borough partners with the National Urban Forestry Unit as the lead partner. It is a good example of cross-boundary working, and information exchange through the EU funded LOTUS programme.

Kenworthy Wood, Manchester. This 39 ha wood is an important wildlife reservoir at the heart of the Mersey Valley and contributes to the City of Manchester meeting English Nature’s 20 ha standard. The wood is mapped on a Geographic Information System, detailed ecological surveys were undertaken, and local census data mapped to understand community profiles. There is a strong partnership of local community groups, voluntary sector organisations and the Cooperative Bank and the project is supported by the Environment Agency, Red Rose Forest plan, the Unitary Development Plan, and the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. There is a nationally recognised Warden Service, training of conservation volunteers in hedge laying techniques, and demonstrations of the use of biomass generated on site. It involves a range of agencies and demonstrates sustainability to the public.
2.8 Heritage, culture and the arts

Parks should be at the heart of community activities. It is where the community can gather on common ground, to celebrate their uniqueness through festivals, civic celebrations, and arts events.

The benefits of parks and green spaces to heritage, culture and the arts:

- Some of our parks and green space have heritage merit in themselves
- Parks and green spaces provide cultural links with the past, a sense of place and identity
- They provide locations for civic celebrations, community festivals, and arts events; and
- They bring communities together on common ground.

2.8.1 Strategies and policies that support parks and green spaces and their contribution to heritage, culture and the arts

Heritage Strategy

This strategy sets out the Borough's approach to heritage listing eight heritage strands:

- The Barking Abbey Site
- Eastbury Manor House
- Valence House and its collection
- The maritime and fishing heritage
- The Industrial Heritage
- The Becontree Housing Estate
- Oral, family and social history; and
- Old Dagenham Village and its church.

Five of these heritage strands relate to parks and green spaces, and settings for historic buildings. Natural and cultural heritage are closely bound together here. Individual and community memories are often located in parks, generation follows generation in growing up, maturing, and growing old using parks in different ways at each stage. There are tremendous opportunities to exploit these connections between heritage, community and place, both in celebrating tradition and history, and in creating new and memorable rituals, events, and features. There is common ground regarding environmental issues, for example, formal links with the Millennium Centre and the Ranger Service.

Arts Strategy

This document sets out a new strategy for the improvement and development of the arts, and sets out to develop, sustain and promote the arts across the whole community in accordance with the seven Community Priorities. There are four key principles which underlie the strategy:

- Participation, progression and achievement
- Celebrating diversity
- Access - adding value to the equalities agenda; and
- Excellence.

The Arts Strategy has many cross-linking purposes with this Strategy. They must be mutually supportive.

Parks and green spaces are part of the heritage and culture of local people and communities. They provide venues for local festivals, civic celebrations and performances. They also provide reservoirs of collective memory, containing burial places, monuments, memorials, and exotic pavilions, and act as showcases for contemporary sculptures.

Green Spaces, Better Places - Final report of the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce, May 2002

The benefits of parks and green spaces to heritage, culture and the arts: good practice example

Manor House Gardens, Lewisham. This was a run-down local park set in the grounds of an historic house dating to the 18th century. The local community formed a Park User Group and worked with the Council to successfully apply for a £1 million Heritage Lottery Fund Urban Parks Programme funded regeneration. The restored park is now at the heart of community activities with new tennis courts and sports area with regular skills sessions, a refurbished historic ice-house open twice a month by volunteers, a new café used for local exhibitions, and a monthly farmers market. Park keepers are in attendance all the time the park is open, management and maintenance is being carried out to high standards, use has increased, vandalism and abuse been minimised, and enjoyment enhanced.
Cemeteries Strategy

Cemeteries are a much under-used and little recognised resource as green spaces, and as places of cultural, heritage significance. The strategy concludes with three options and their implications:

- Better management of existing sites
- Cemetery extension to Eastbrookend Cemetery and Chadwell Heath Cemetery and,
- Developing a new cemetery.

There are clearly significant overlaps in the Cemeteries Strategy and the Parks and Green Spaces Strategy. It is recognised that cemeteries should form an integral part of any Parks and Green Spaces Strategy. The potential contribution that cemeteries make in historic, cultural, community, and environmental terms, is often not recognised.

2.9 How parks and green spaces support our Community Priorities

It is clear from the above description of the value of parks and green space, and the analysis of how parks and green spaces contribute to the many policies and services provided by us, that they have a crucial role to play in the life of our communities.

Our Community Priorities were adopted in August 2001. They set out how we intend to shape policies that will improve the Borough for everyone who lives, works, learns and plays here, or visits us. They result from a survey of local residents and consultation with residents, businesses, groups and organisations.

Every one of the Community Priorities is supported by this Strategy. The Community Priorities are listed below with a short commentary on the contribution that parks and green spaces can make.
1. **Promoting equal opportunities and celebrating diversity**

Parks and green spaces promote social inclusion, offering access without restriction or barriers to use. They provide opportunities for all, encouraging social cohesion and interaction through formal and informal activities. Parks and green spaces can also evolve to reflect the cultural diversity of their communities and become important centres of cultural heritage.

2. **Better education and learning for all**

Parks and green spaces provide "Outdoor Classrooms" useful for educational and citizenship studies. They are an ideal vehicle for the delivery of many aspects of the National Curriculum. In addition, they are important places for play through which children learn valuable social skills.

3. **Developing rights and responsibilities with the local community**

Through the establishment of Friends Groups and through Placechecks, parks and green spaces provide opportunities for individual and group involvement. This can range from acquiring vocational skills and experiences through volunteer work to participation in the planning and development of parks and green space.

4. **Improving health, housing and social care**

Prevention of illness is better than having to treat it. The potential of good quality parks and green spaces to promote good health and well-being is perhaps one of the most important benefits. They provide the space to relax, to be active, and to come into contact with nature - all essential to good physical and psychological health.

5. **Making Barking and Dagenham cleaner, greener and safer**

Good quality, safe parks are essential to making the Borough ‘more attractive’ and ‘more environmentally friendly’. Our parks and green spaces provide the oxygen we breathe, reduce pollution, enhance biodiversity, ameliorate the urban micro-climate and storm water drainage. A thriving community park can also provide the context for reduction of crime, litter, and graffiti through community engagement. They can provide the backbone for cycleways and walkways thus promoting sustainable movement patterns.

6. **Raising pride in the Borough**

Investment in parks and green spaces is one of the most effective ways of raising pride, promoting a better image, and gaining valued publicity. Manchester, Bristol, Leeds and Sheffield have proven the value of investing in high quality parks, squares and plazas in their regeneration programmes.

7. **Regenerating the local economy**

Good quality parks and green spaces have proven economic benefits. They help to raise property values, create attractive living environments and, therefore, build business and community confidence. The potential of parks and green spaces in contributing to the economic development of towns and cities should be driving urban renaissance and regeneration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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Table 3. How parks and green spaces support our Community Priorities
SECTION 3: THE CHALLENGE

3.1 Defining the challenge

There has been a severe decline in the quality of parks and green spaces, their development, management and maintenance over the last twenty years or more. This decline has happened within our Borough, but it is a decline that is mirrored nationally. This section charts the decline and gives some of the contributory reasons. It sets out the challenges that we face and must respond to.

3.2 Decline of parks and green spaces

In spite of the importance of parks and green spaces to the livability of towns and cities, many have suffered neglect and decline especially during the last 30 years. This was confirmed by the Public Park Needs Assessment carried out in May 2001 to assess the condition of Local Authority owned public parks and green spaces throughout the United Kingdom. The survey was based on 405 responding authorities and nearly 3000 urban parks accounting for one-third of all urban green space. Only 18% of these parks were described as being in ‘good’ condition, compared to 69% in ‘fair’ condition and 13% in ‘poor’ condition. The assessment of trends in condition over the last 10 years is particularly worrying. Authorities noted that 29% of parks were considered to be ‘improving’, 33% ‘stable’ and 37% ‘declining’. Combining these two sets of data has given overwhelming evidence that parks in ‘good’ condition are steadily improving whilst parks assessed as ‘poor’ are steadily declining.

This decline has occurred due to a range of factors which have combined to produce an environment where years of decline and under-investment in parks and green spaces have been tolerated at both national and local levels. The Public Park Needs Assessment suggested that introduction of Compulsory Competitive Tendering exacerbated the decline in standards of management and maintenance of parks and green spaces. Furthermore, the lack of a statutory duty on Local Authorities to develop, manage and maintain their parks and green spaces, and consequent year on year reductions in funding, has led to a national crisis. Local Authorities’ total capital spend has declined from 25% of overall budget in the mid-1970s to 8.3% in 2000/2001.

In the final report of the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce the causes of decline are summarised as:

- Loss of political support and leadership, and ‘civic pride’ at all levels. Because parks and green spaces are not statutory functions they are often low priorities for local authorities. Because access to them is free, they often become invisible to residents and policy makers alike, taken for granted and ultimately neglected.
- Loss of status of parks services compared with other council services, particularly formal recreation and leisure services, and a lack of a national champion to fight the case for parks. All other cultural services have a specific national agency to help do this.
- Weak policy frameworks for green space provision. Policy frameworks have not evolved enough to respond to the major backlogs and problems of maintenance and up-keep of existing parks and green spaces.
- Ineffective use of planning policies have added to problems by encouraging increases in the total amount of green space at a time when local authorities have struggled to manage and maintain existing stocks.
- The skills base in green space management has wasted away resulting in low skilled and poorly motivated staff, and difficulties in recruiting. This has been accompanied by a loss of confidence, vision and focus from professions and a culture of blame; and
- Lack of reliable data about urban parks and green space, to inform and help to respond to all the above.

3.3 The return of political and community support for parks and green spaces

Since the early 1990s there has been a concerted effort on the part of all those involved in parks and green spaces to reverse the decline in their quality and quantity, and to raise their political profile.

A number of discussion papers and conferences have focused attention on the state of urban parks and green spaces. The Future of Urban Parks Conference, held in 1994, identified two main problems. Firstly, lack of political support and policies for the development of parks and open spaces was a recurrent theme. The proposed solution was to create a national agency, a top down organisation like the Countryside Agency as well as initiating a bottom up approach of community involvement.

Figure 5. St. Chad’s Park
Secondly a lack of both capital and revenue funding was identified as a persistent problem, partly due to the non-statutory nature of parks and open spaces. There is no obligation for local authorities to provide, develop, manage or maintain them. Even where there is a will, funding in many localities is difficult to justify when judged against the political and fiscal realities of social services, education, healthcare, roads, housing and even street cleansing. And yet, parks and open spaces should be seen as part of all those realities, as part of the solution instead of a problem.

The most notable and successful response to the various initiatives of the 1990s was the establishment of the Heritage Lottery Fund’s Urban Parks Programme which, to May 2002, has awarded £250 million to numerous historic parks throughout the country.

The lack of available funds for the renewal of the many non-historic parks and green spaces has begun to be addressed through the New Opportunities Fund which distributes National Lottery money. It has allocated £100 million in England to ‘help communities understand, improve or care for their local environment, with a particular focus on disadvantage.’ The Government in its response to the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce report has committed to review lottery funding at the next opportunity.

3.4 Now is the time for an urban renaissance: start with the park

Parks and green spaces was put firmly on the political agenda by the Urban Taskforce Report Towards an Urban Renaissance, published in 1999. It argued that parks and open spaces are a prerequisite to sustainable urban living and for crosscutting policies to achieve an urban renaissance. It provided the basis for the Government’s Urban White Paper, and argued that Local Authorities should be empowered by Government to provide parks and open spaces for their communities based on quantified, justified needs.

The Urban White Paper (UWP) was the government’s response to the Urban Taskforce Report. It defined the Government’s holistic vision for the future of urban living based on:

- People shaping the future
- Attractive well kept towns and cities
- Good design and planning which makes it practical to live in a more environmentally sustainable way
- The creation and sharing of prosperity; and
- Good quality public services.

The Government’s ‘guiding principle’ was that ‘people must come first’.

The Urban White Paper set out Government thinking and policy on parks and open spaces, recognised the dearth of information and the need for an in-depth, co-ordinated response to the House of Commons Select Committee report on Town and Country Parks. The Urban Green Spaces Taskforce was therefore established to address these issues.

3.4.1 The Urban Green Spaces Taskforce

The Urban Green Spaces Taskforce was established in January 2001 to advise the Government on its proposals for improving the quality of urban parks, play areas and green spaces.

The final report, Green Spaces, Better Places, published in May 2002 is a very significant report which will form the basis of the Government’s policy statement on urban parks, play areas and green spaces. It sets out the current thinking of the Government that will feed into its various policy initiatives under the general heading of liveability.

The overarching message of the report is: ‘now is the time for a sustainable urban renaissance with parks and green spaces.’ The report sets out a programme for national and local government to work in partnership with local communities, business, voluntary organisations and others to revitalise parks and green spaces. It summarises the issues facing parks and green spaces and sets out conclusions and recommendations for reversing their well-documented decline. The Urban Green Spaces Taskforce recommended a capital works programme of £500 million over the next five years to begin to address the decline of parks nationally.

The Government is also supporting:

- The Urban Parks Forum to develop networks for collecting and disseminating good practice and advice on managing and maintaining urban green spaces and play areas - the nascent London Parks and Green Spaces Forum will perform this role specifically for the Greater London Authority and the London Boroughs.
- The Green Flag Awards scheme
- A new Beacon Council theme of Improving Urban Green Spaces which will be an important source of information that will help to inform quality standards and good practice in all aspects of parks’ services
- Enhanced protection and encouragement to consider parks and green spaces in Local Plans in Planning Policy Guidance note 17 (PPG17) published July 2002; and
- The Children’s Play Council in producing good practice guidance for providers and policy makers for developing play areas.

3.5 Our challenge

Whilst we have been successful in achieving external funding
from a variety of sources, it is recognised that the funding is almost wholly for capital projects, and does not provide any additional revenue funding. This is a serious issue - whilst we will benefit from additional parks and green spaces, we will have to allocate revenue funding to enable us to manage and maintain our expanded estate.

The £5 million we have allocated for a three-year (2005-2008) capital projects programme will, through the implementation of this Strategy, see the renovation of many of our parks and green spaces. With matched funding from external sources, this programme will see a significant change to parks and green spaces within the Borough. However, again, revenue funding will have to be found to enable us to manage and maintain our improving estate.

In common with the majority of local authorities, we have seen our year on year budget for parks and green spaces decline since 1979. To restore levels of funding to 1979 levels will require a minimum budget increase of 20% across the board - and this would not account for the substantial areas of new parks and green space since 1979.

The Urban Green Space Taskforce Report recommended substantial increases in capital and revenue allocations to Local Authorities specifically targeted at parks and green spaces. The Government, in its response ‘Living Places - Cleaner, Greener, Safer’, stated:

‘Overall resources available to parks and green space services has increased significantly over the last 5 years, and should continue to do so. In addition to direct funding to local authorities, a wider variety of funding sources are available, including direct spending by government departments and agencies, and renewal and regeneration programmes.’

and,

‘The Government will take further steps to focus more resources to improve the quality of local environments especially in disadvantaged areas. It will also consider the issues and conclusions of this report in deciding how to make best use of Lottery funds to support sustainable improvements to local environments, including the particular funding calls of local parks and green spaces as part of its review of the Lottery.’

and,

‘As a result of the spending review the Standard Spending Assessment (SSA) allocation to the EPCS will further increase by £1 billion in the review period . . . The Government has introduced the ‘Gateway Process’ to consider proposals for special and specific grants in light of commitments in the White Paper to restrict ring-fencing of grants. The results of the Gateway Process will be available in autumn 2002.’

Finally, as part of the Government’s commitment to take the lead in ‘developing an effective national framework for urban parks and green spaces’, it has invited the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) to establish a new unit - CABE Space. The role of CABE Space is to encourage a ‘new, integrated approach ... one that unites thinking about the open and built environments’. It will act as a champion for parks and promote research, skills and training. CABE Space will ‘advocate the need for higher priority and resources for parks and green spaces at national, regional and local levels, and provide advice on funding issues’.

Consequently, in order to achieve the objectives set out in this Strategy, we will be looking closely at our budget provisions and priorities, encouraging cross-cutting programmes between our directorates, and working with the Government, CABE Space, the Lottery and other potential public and private funders and agencies. Our mandate to reorient expenditure towards parks and green spaces comes from the MORI Budget survey: 57% of all residents surveyed said that of all the services provided by the Council, ‘parks and green spaces’ were the ‘most used’; and that 43% of all residents surveyed wanted to see an increase in expenditure on parks and green spaces.

Key Documents:

National
Urban Taskforce Report Towards an Urban Renaissance, 1999
The Urban White Paper, Our towns and cities: the future - delivering the urban renaissance, Nov 2000
Public Park Needs Assessment, May 2001
Green Spaces, Better Places - Final Report of the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce, May 2002

Regional
Thames Chase Community Forest, 1993
Thames Gateway Planning Framework (RPG9a), June 1995

Metropolitan
The Draft London Plan, June 2002

London Borough of Barking and Dagenham
London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Unitary Development Plan, October 1995
Fair Play - A strategy on children's play for Barking and Dagenham, 1999
2020 Vision for the Environment, 2000
Heritage Strategy, 2000
Arts Strategy, 2001
Sports Development Plan, 2002-03
PART TWO - PARKS AND GREEN SPACES NOW

SECTION 4: THE PLANNING DIMENSION

4.1 Current provision

The Borough is well endowed with parks and green spaces. Council owned urban parks, country parks, nature reserves, sports grounds and allotments account for approximately 16 percent of the land area of the Borough, a total of 525 hectares. There are also substantial areas of privately owned open space, especially in the Marks Gate area, and to the north of the Borough.

Eastbrookend Country Park is the flagship park within the Borough. It was completed as a Millennium project and it has achieved a Green Flag Award in four of the past five years. Additionally, Newlands Park, through the A13 Artscape Programme, has been redesigned and renovated, Beam Valley Park has received Single Regeneration Budget funding and is under construction, our playground refurbishment programme has seen £500,000 invested in renewing many of our play areas and we have received funding for a Restoration Plan from the Heritage Lottery Fund for Barking Park.

Most of the parks and green spaces are, however, in poor condition. In an evaluation carried out in January and February 2002 the average score for all the parks was 2.2 out of 5, interpreted as ‘poor’.

This section of the Strategy:

- Documents the type and distribution of parks and green spaces within the Borough, their accessibility, the connections between them, and deficiencies in provision
- Documents the consultation undertaken and the proposed consultation programme for the strategy
- Presents the key findings of the parks and green spaces evaluation; and
- Presents the key recommendations of the parks and green spaces evaluation.

4.2 Distribution of parks and green spaces

Our parks and green spaces are distributed throughout the Borough but with a degree of clustering in some areas and under-provision in others as shown in figure 6, page 30. Broadly speaking, the greater number of the medium and large parks are found in the central part of the Borough immediately north and south of the District Line. In the eastern part of the Borough Eastbrookend Country Park, the Chase Nature Reserve, Central Park and the Beam Valley form an extensive network of open space known as the Dagenham Corridor. The northern part of the Borough is poorly provided with parks (only St Chad’s Park and Valence Park) but is bordered by Greenbelt land.

The majority of the parks are located in residential neighbourhoods often close to neighbourhood facilities, such as schools, but rarely coincident with neighbourhood or town centres. Many parks are also bound by back gardens with very little street frontage. For this reason parks tend to be relatively ‘secluded’, e.g. St Chad’s Park, Valence Park, Goresbrook Park and King George’s Field. A general observation is that few of the parks are geographically located at the heart of the communities in which they are set. Parks located adjacent to town centres and shops include the Central Area adjacent to Barking Town centre, St Chad’s Park and Barking Park. Few of the parks, therefore, gain activity and use through proximity to centres.

Few of the parks are located immediately adjacent to major transport nodes. Only Barking Park, Mayesbrook Park, Parsloes Park, Goresbrook Park and Pondfield Park are located within 300m of a tube station.

The majority of the parks are serviced, at least along one edge, by bus routes although they tend to be places on route rather than major nodes or destination. This further emphasises the point that the parks are not located at the hearts of neighbourhoods, nor in conjunction with high activity areas and services.

4.3 Existing Landscape Framework: designated parks and green spaces

This plan (figure 7, page 31) is based on information from our Unitary Development Plan (UDP), October 1995. It shows all the existing designations relating to parks and green space. The plan illustrates the existing landscape framework and is a base-line of the spatial distribution of our parks and green spaces.

4.4 Land Cover

This plan (figure 8, page 32) identifies all areas of open land and linear green space. It is based on the Urban Park Forum’s land use typology. It illustrates the entire open space resource and how it is utilised. This information informs decisions to extend woodland cover and can help identify areas deficient in any type of green space.

The plan shows that while most of the Borough is built up, it contains some impressive areas of wildlife habitat, particularly on its southern and eastern edges besides the Thames and the Beam Rivers respectively. There are also some large areas of recreational green space distributed throughout the Borough. The green space resource is, therefore, substantial.

The plan also shows that there are several undeveloped sites classified as ‘Other Habitat’. Large parts of the Dagenham Corridor are characterised by rough grassland, many areas could potentially be developed as parks or links in a larger network. A large part of the Barking Levels is post-industrial
disturbed ground, much of this land is within the Barking Reach master plan boundary and is being remediated, and will be redeveloped with a cohesive network of parks, open spaces, and a river walk.

4.5 Provision and deficiencies based on walking distances from homes

These two plans Existing Parks and Green Spaces: Walking Distances (figure 9, page 33), and Existing Parks and Green Spaces - Deficiency (figure 10, page 34) analyse the distribution of parks within the Borough, and to one kilometre beyond the Borough boundary, and those areas that are deficient in parks and green spaces. The analysis is based on the categories of parks and walking distances from homes recommended by the London Planning Advisory Committee - the ‘LPAC hierarchy’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Size (ha)</th>
<th>Walking distance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small Local Park</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 minutes (200 m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Park</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5 minutes (400 m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Park</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15 minutes (1.2 km)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan Park</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40 minutes (3.2 km)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The distance people are willing to travel to a park is dependent on the size of the park and the facilities it offers. A small park with few facilities is most likely to attract people living within five minutes walking distance, whereas as larger district park may attract people living up to around 15 minutes walk away, and a metropolitan park may attract people living within a 3.2 km radius.

Ideally all residences should have access to all categories of parks and green spaces within the walking distances specified for each category. This means that there should be a small local park within two minutes walk, a local park within five minutes walk, a district park within 15 minutes walk and a metropolitan park within 40 minutes walk. Ease of access by bicycle and public transport to metropolitan parks is important.

The Existing Parks and Green Spaces: Walking Distances (figure 9, page 33) shows that most residential areas of the Borough are served by a district and metropolitan park, but that there is a general lack of local parks within five minutes walk. However, it should be noted that district and metropolitan parks also function as parks for residents living within five minutes walk.

The majority of parks are located within established medium density, residential neighbourhoods, away from town centres and regeneration areas. Their role in the future, therefore, is most likely to be as local parks, which support and enhance sustainable neighbourhood communities, rather than as high profile, borough-wide, visitor destinations.

Eastbrookend Country Park, Barking Park, Parsloes Park and Mayesbrook Park are exceptions as these parks do, or have the potential to, function as borough-wide and beyond visitor destinations. Also, the network of spaces to be delivered as part of the Barking Reach master plan area will provide a river walk, and other spaces that will, potentially, be destinations of borough-wide and beyond significance.

The Existing Parks and Green Spaces - Deficiency (figure 10, page 34) plan illustrates the inverse of the walking distances plan showing those areas outside the catchment areas, i.e. those areas that are deficient in each category of open space.

Most residential areas of the Borough are served by metropolitan and district parks but there is poor provision of local parks within five minutes walking distance of homes. Although the plan shows areas deficient in district parks, some of these areas are within fifteen minutes walking distance of a metropolitan park which functions as both a metropolitan and district park. Similarly, areas within five minutes walking distance of a district or metropolitan park may use these as local parks. The plan highlights areas where there is a deficiency and these are addressed in the Proposed Outline Landscape Framework and Parks and Green Spaces Development Strategy plan (figure 48, page 66).

4.6 Accessibility of our parks and green spaces and how they connect

These two plans Existing Parks and Green Spaces: Access and Connectivity (figure 11, page 35), and Existing Parks and Green Spaces: Poor Access and Connectivity (figure 12, page 36) illustrate how accessible our parks and green spaces are by showing the relationship between entrances, bus stops, tube and train stations, cycle paths and rights of way; and the natural and human barriers such as rivers, railway tracks and major roads, links across barriers (road bridges, foot bridges and underpasses) and park boundaries where the physical and visual connection to the surrounding area is poor.

Access to parks and green spaces within the Borough by walking, cycling, bus, tube and train is satisfactory. The existing cycle network is fragmented, however, by 2005 a comprehensive network of cycle routes should be in place. Most parks and green spaces have an adequate distribution of entrances. Many parks are, however, located behind houses and are therefore not visible from many of the surrounding streets. For this reason it is important that entrances are highly visible and attractive.
There are several human barriers which dissect the Borough: three railway lines and two major roads, the A12 and A13 which run east-west through the Borough. There are many links across the District Line which lessen the impact of this barrier. There are fewer links across the A13 dual carriageway, mainly in the form of footbridges and underpasses, and across the railway line through Dagenham Docks. Access to the area south of the A13 and railway line is therefore restricted and connections to the rest of the Borough are poor.

The Borough is bound by rivers on three sides which act as natural barriers. There are no crossings over the River Thames and the river therefore acts as a major barrier within the Borough. There are only few links across the Beam River on the eastern boundary which together with the Dagenham Corridor effectively separates Barking and Dagenham from Havering. On the western boundary of the Borough the River Roding and A405 separate Barking and Dagenham from Redbridge.

Many of the parks within the Borough are visually and physically poorly connected with their surroundings. This is because many of the parks border onto back gardens and are effectively hidden behind housing. Some parks and open spaces such as Mayesbrook Park, St Chad’s Park, Valence Park, Goresbrook Park and King George’s Field are almost completely enclosed by housing with only few views into the parks from surrounding streets. In these parks it is particularly important to enhance the entrances and to make them highly visible and inviting. These issues are addressed in the Proposed Outline Landscape Framework and Parks and Green Spaces Development Strategy plan (figure 48, page 66).
Figure 6. Distribution of Parks, Green Spaces and Cemeteries
Figure 7. Existing Landscape Framework: Designated Parks and Green Spaces
Figure 8. Land Cover
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2 minutes walking distance (200m) to small local park
40 minutes walking distance (3.2km) to metropolitan park
5 minutes walking distance (400m) to local park
Existing Parks and Green Spaces
15 minutes walking distance (1.2km) to district park
London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Boundary

Figure 9. Existing Parks and Green Spaces: Walking Distances
Figure 10. Existing Parks and Green Spaces Deficiency
Figure 11. Existing Parks and Green Spaces: Access and Connectivity
Edges of Parks and Green Spaces Lacking Access and/or Visual Connectivity

Links Across Barriers (Bridges, Subways)

Existing Parks and Green Spaces

London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Boundary

Human Barriers (Railway Lines, Roads)

Natural Barriers (Rivers)

Figure 12. Existing Parks and Green Spaces: Poor Access and Connectivity
SECTION 5: THE CONDITION OF OUR PARKS AND GREEN SPACES

5.1 Park and green space evaluation

An evaluation of our twenty-five public parks was carried out during January and February 2002. Each park was evaluated using a standard evaluation form comprising of fifty four questions divided into the following eleven subject areas:

- Context and General Description
- Entrances
- General Facilities
- Landscape Character and Quality
- Security and Vandalism
- Children and ‘The Young’
- Disabled People
- Elderly People
- Repairs Maintenance and Cleanliness
- Ecology, Education and Health; and
- Management.

To ensure a consistency in assessing the quality of parks and as an external comparator, we used West Ham Park (a Corporation of London park in the London Borough of Newham) as a bench mark. With the exception of questions related to Context and General Description, each park was awarded a score based on the remaining 48 questions, in response to agreed criteria and supported by notes in bullet point format. The scores awarded indicate the degree to which the park met these criteria, as follows:

- 0 points Absent
- 1 point Bad
- 2 points Poor
- 3 points Average
- 4 points Good; and
- 5 points Very Good.

The results of the Parks and Green Space evaluations were published in two parts in February 2002: Part 1: Summary report and recommendations; and Part 2: Evaluation tables.

The summary report identified general Borough-wide issues and made 74 general recommendations applicable to all 25 parks which are detailed at 5.3 General summary of the park evaluations: what we need to address to improve our parks and green spaces.

The general and detailed recommendations will form the basis for the production of management plans for each of the parks. These management plans will identify future development and detailed capital investment in the parks as well as detailing the design, development, enhancement, refurbishment, maintenance, and day to day management of existing features and facilities.

Figure 13. Total average scores
5.2 Statistical summary of the park evaluations

Figure 13 provides a statistical summary of all of the scores awarded for each of the parks. To assist analysis and to highlight strengths and weaknesses in each park, as well as over the system as a whole, average scores of between 0.0 and 5.0 have been calculated and included in the table for each category for each park, and illustrated as comparative bar charts.

For each park, therefore, there is:

- An average score for each of the ten subject areas; and
- An overall average for all 48 questions.

For the park system - all twenty-five sites - there is:

- An average score for each individual question
- An average score for each of the ten subject areas; and
- A single comprehensive average score for the entire park system over all 48 questions.

The average scores for the twenty-five parks range very widely from 3.9 for Eastbrookend Country Park, to 0.8 for Kingston Hill Avenue Recreation Ground. Most of the parks have scored between 1 and 3 which, using the score definition, can be interpreted as no better than ‘bad’ to ‘average’. The average score for all the parks is 2.2, interpreted as ‘poor’.

The sections that received the lowest average score for all parks were Ecology, Education and Health (1.3); Elderly People (1.5) and General Facilities (1.8).

- Few parks cater adequately for the elderly
- Repairs, maintenance and cleanliness are in general below average
- Ecology, education and health issues score very poorly; and
- Management is generally below average.

In the course of the evaluation it also became clear that there were general issues that were common to several, and sometimes all of the parks. These general issues are addressed below.
Landscape quality and character

- The quality of the landscape is frequently poor, recreation grounds especially have poor structure
- The structure of the historic parks, Barking Park, Greatfields Park and St Chad’s Park have deteriorated and many of the recently introduced facilities have been unsympathetically located
- Quality of planting and detailing of hard materials lacks interest and historic features have been lost; and
- A number of the parks contain lakes and streams, most of which have been neglected and poorly managed.

General facilities

- Many of the parks contain a good range of facilities but of variable quality.
- Sports, seating and other facilities have been provided, but there has been a general lack of design input to ensure visual integration into individual parks
- Park furniture is standard throughout most of the parks and is generally poor both in quality and condition
- Most of the parks lack refreshment facilities; and
- In the majority of cases, toilet facilities were frequently locked, appeared to be permanently out of use, or unhygienic, and did not have opening times displayed.

Repairs, maintenance and cleanliness

- Routine day-to-day maintenance is generally good with low levels of litter in most parks
- Most park buildings and built structures are covered in graffiti and require repair or refurbishment
- Little new planting appears to be taking place resulting in slow depletion in the richness of the vegetation; and
- Pruning of shrubs is crude and belies a lack of horticultural knowledge and training.
Security
- In general the parks scored well because they are frequently flat and open;
- The high levels of vandalism, graffiti and lack of use do, however, instill a sense of insecurity;
- Most of the pedestrian gates to parks are no longer locked at night; and
- There is little evidence of active patrolling of parks.

Management, ecology, education and health
- The quality of water bodies and courses within our parks is generally poor.
- The general diversity of habitats is poor as are connections between them.
- There are very few examples of interpretation or publicity which relates specifically to individual parks or for specific site-based events or activities
- Health, education and ecological benefits are implicit in a number of the parks but rarely explicitly promoted.
- The Eastbrookend Country Park and The Chase Nature Reserve were the limited exception to this general rule. Most initiatives relating to education and health are based in the Millennium Centre in Eastbrookend Country Park; and
- Larger dog-free areas for general use are entirely lacking and entrance signs do not specify 'codes of conduct' relating to dogs.

Children and young people's use of the park
- Newly improved play areas are in inappropriate locations, away from other facilities and are poorly integrated in the structure of the park; and
- Formal play areas are generally good, but the general landscape quality of children's spaces within the parks is poor.

Other specific categories of park users (elderly and disabled people, women and ethnic minorities)
- Few parks cater adequately for the elderly and disabled people. Lack of clean toilets, seating and refreshment facilities discourage these groups from using parks; and
- Many of the parks and green spaces may be perceived as unsafe, especially by vulnerable user groups, due to the high levels of vandalism and lack of formal surveillance.

5.3 General summary of the park evaluations: what we need to address to improve our parks and green spaces

A closer examination of the scores achieved within each of the subject areas reveals that:
- in general, the best parks scored highly over the full range of subject areas and the worst poorly;
- that quality was broadly defined rather than being the product of a specific set of issues or subject areas.

Other key findings were:
- The worst parks are frequently the 'recreation grounds' or 'playing fields' dominated by football and rugby pitches such as Castle Green and The Leys, and small open spaces within residential estates with no content such as King George's Field, Heath Park and Kingston Hill Avenue Recreation Ground.
- There is a general lack of parks with average and above landscape character and quality
- Many parks lack general facilities
- Many parks do not adequately cater for children and 'the young', or elderly people
- The majority of parks do not address their potential to contribute to ecology, health and education
- Management and maintenance is generally average or below.
SECTION 6: WHAT OUR RESIDENTS SAY - COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

A number of MORI surveys have been undertaken to establish satisfaction ratings for various services and the relative importance of parks services to other Council services in the eyes of our residents.


MORI compared the Performance Indicators of all London Boroughs, and established satisfaction ratings for various services. In Barking and Dagenham, 42% of those surveyed said they were satisfied with the provision of parks/open spaces/play areas/and other community facilities, as compared with a London average of 52%.

6.2 MORI Budget Survey, Sept/Oct 2001

This report sets out the findings of a research study conducted by MORI during September and October 2001. The purpose of the research was to find out residents views regarding the importance of Local Authority services and facilities, and the way the Local Authority spends its money on these services and facilities. This survey information fed into the budget-setting process for 2002/3. 2000 residents were selected at random from the electoral register and mailed a questionnaire, of which 582 responded (29.1% response rate). The data was weighted to the known profile of the Borough.

There is overwhelming support (74%) for the Borough’s community priority of Making Barking and Dagenham cleaner, greener and safer - parks and open spaces form an important element of this priority. 43% of residents, the second highest of all categories, believe that parks and open spaces are the most important priority for council expenditure after rubbish collection and street cleaning (57%).

The most used service that the Borough provides is parks and open spaces (57%). Residents that live in households with a child or children under the age of 18 years are significantly most likely to have used or benefited from parks and open spaces in the past year (77%). In contrast, elderly households where at least one resident is over the age of 60 years, less than half have used them. This suggests that more should be done to encourage older people into parks and open spaces - it may be that perceptions of a lack of safety, and facilities for the elderly are the reasons for this.

25% of residents would like to see an increase in expenditure to see an improvement in the service for parks and open spaces. Only 6% would like to see less expenditure on parks and open spaces services. 60% of residents supported ‘improving the general appearance of the Borough’ as a priority - parks and open spaces have a significant role to play in this. Additionally, 29% of residents would like to see more park patrols in local parks.

Parks and open spaces are perceived as one of the top priorities important to residents. However, primarily, they want parks that:

- Have council staff in attendance
- Are free of dog mess
- Have clean toilets; and
- Have good playgrounds.

Investment in parks and open spaces to ensure that they are safe, attractive, well-maintained, managed and staffed would benefit the vast majority of residents. It would undoubtedly have their support.

6.3 Best Value Survey, Oct/Nov 2001

Research was conducted by MORI on behalf of the Council to inform Best Value Reviews. Local residents were consulted about the following issues in the Borough:

- Street safe services, including traffic management, road safety and parking
- Parks and open spaces
- Cemeteries
- Libraries.

1,100 members of the Barking and Dagenham Citizen’s Panel - a representative sample of the Borough’s residents - were mailed a questionnaire. Results are based on a total of 479 questionnaires, which represents a 44% response rate. The data was weighted to the known profile of the Borough.

The principal findings for parks and open spaces were:

- Over two in five respondents were satisfied with local parks and open spaces, although one in three expressed dissatisfaction
- Seven in ten visit local parks and open spaces on at least a monthly basis, half once a week or more often. The main reasons are to pass through on the way to somewhere else, for pleasure/exercise or to use playground facilities
- The main factors that would encourage greater park usage are related to feelings of personal safety are the introduction of a permanent and regular presence in parks and reduction of vandalism in parks. MORI has found in other work that the presence of park caretakers/wardens helps to decrease the fear of crime
• Unsightly vandalism also makes people feel uneasy or less comfortable as this also perpetrates fear of crime
• While trees and floral displays are the most popular current aspects of parks in the Borough, residents prioritise more equipped play areas for the future; and
• Information about parks tends not to be rated highly, with the majority citing it as “poor”. In particular there is scope for improving ratings of leaflets and information about numbers of staff.

6.4 Community Safety Survey Nov/Dec 2001

Towards the end of 2001, as a precursor to preparing its Crime & Disorder Strategy, the Council engaged MORI to carry out a Community Safety Survey using the Citizen’s Panel of 1240 people, of whom 873 responded. Questions covered a wide range of subjects such as safer streets, safer homes, vehicle crime, drugs and alcohol, and young people.

In response to the question Which of the following places and activities do you think are unsafe? the following were the five most frequently highlighted:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place/Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parks</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Railway stations</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whilst shopping</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiting at bus stops</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On buses</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The four crime prevention priorities wanted by survey respondents were:

• More police patrols (84%) (in Parks this would mean more Parks Constabulary patrols/attendants/rangers)
• Initiatives to stop youths congregating in the street (69%) (Parks are also popular places where young people congregate, and facilities aimed at young people, e.g. ball courts, skate areas and shelters, have begun to be provided)
• More CCTV (56%); and
• Improved street lighting (51%) (Parks are not generally lit, which in combination with the distances involved, mitigates against the use of CCTV, especially after dark).

6.5 Summary and conclusions

At this strategic level, there is clear evidence from this series of consultations of the community’s concerns about parks and green spaces. The consultations have highlighted those aspects of the service which are particularly important to the community, and where action for the future should be concentrated.

Most significantly, residents believe that parks and green spaces services are the second most important service provided by the Council. Additionally, residents said that, of all the services that the Council provides, they had benefited the most from using parks and open spaces during the previous year. Parks and open spaces is the most used service that the Council provides.

Key findings of the various consultations were that:

42% of residents are satisfied with the provision of parks, open spaces, play areas and other community facilities, compared with a London average of 52%; and

43% of residents rated parks and open spaces the most used service provided by the Council.

Residents also want parks that have Council staff in attendance, are free of dog mess, have clean toilets, good playgrounds, and are safe.

In short, the community want clean, safe and attractive parks with keepers/rangers in attendance.

The key issues that came out of the Best Value Review of Parks and Open Spaces and Grounds Maintenance challenge phase were:

• Raise the profile of the service within the Borough, with a view to increasing its share of budget and resources
• Continue to seek sponsorship/external funding/inward investment for improvement/regeneration of parks; the public wish to see improvements happening
• Emphasise successes and achievements to raise satisfaction levels with the service
• Find ways to achieve a staff presence in parks during normal opening hours
• Instil confidence in the minds of visitors, thereby increasing visits
• Reduce the incidence and cost of vandalism, which will also encourage visits
• Emphasise the responsibility of communities for the actions of those of their members who cause vandalism
• Continue the upgrading and refurbishment of equipped children’s play areas in parks
• Market the availability of services provided by the Parks and Countryside Group to schools, whilst maintaining
standards of the core grounds maintenance service

- Continue to consult communities prior to refurbishment /improvement schemes, and seek to develop and expand these into User Groups; and
- Expand the role of the Parks and Countryside Ranger Service.

These findings echo the results of the community consultations and surveys. They indicate that service delivery objectives are responding to community concerns.

However, it is recognised that hard-to-reach groups in the community have not been fully consulted and that this requires more consultation. It is also recognised that, in preparing Management Plans for each park, detailed local community consultations must take place.

We propose to use the Placecheck methodology in focusing our consultation efforts. The Placecheck methodology is a simple and effective way of discovering what people like about a place, what they don't like, and what they would like to see improved. It is an approved methodology endorsed by the Government, English Partnerships, Civic Trust and the Urban Design Alliance. It has been used successfully for consulting communities on several park projects.
Figure 6. Distribution of Parks, Green Spaces and Cemeteries
PART THREE - PARKS AND GREEN SPACES IN THE FUTURE

SECTION 7: IMPROVING OUR EXISTING PARKS AND GREEN SPACES, DEVELOPING NEW ONES, AND ACHIEVING A CONNECTED NETWORK

7.1 Part Three of the Strategy describes our vision for the future of our existing parks and green spaces

Section 5 of this Strategy - The condition of our parks and green spaces - documented the statistical results of the evaluation of our parks and green spaces, and summarised the key issues to be addressed in improving them. In the course of the evaluations, it became apparent that many observations were common to many, and sometimes all of the parks. As a result many recommendations to develop and enhance the quality of the parks can be stated generally. The seventy-four key general recommendations for improving all our parks and green spaces identified in the Parks and Green Space Evaluation report published in February 2002 are summarised here under the following four Key Concepts.

- Creating local community parks
- Encouraging diversity
- Emphasising quality; and
- The role of design.

7.1.1 Creating local community parks

The principal role of our parks is to provide attractive amenity landscapes which contain a wide range of facilities for people living in their immediate neighbourhood. Creating diversity between the twenty-five parks and green spaces, for the sake of difference or specialisation, is not generally desirable as few people use any other than their closest park. This approach is informed by the observation that most of the sites lie in established residential neighbourhoods, and do not in general strategically support town centres and regeneration areas.

With the exception of four parks of Borough-wide significance (Eastbrookend Country Park, Barking Park, Parsloes Park and potentially Mayesbrook Park through its water attractions) it is recommended that the future development of the parks is locally driven, as part of the Agenda 21 initiatives aimed at achieving sustainable urban communities, and with high levels of community involvement. For the four parks of Borough-wide significance, these links to local communities are equally important but must be balanced with Borough-wide strategic aims, and the desirability of flagship sites with added prestige.

It is recommended that a detailed management plan be drawn up for each of the twenty-five parks. These should be broad in scope, with a strong developmental emphasis, and be produced in close consultation and partnership with people in each of the twenty-five catchment areas. Whilst it will be necessary to maintain an appropriate Borough-wide

strategic perspective, the character and management of each individual site should be independently and locally defined.

The recommendations which have evolved out of the evaluation of the parks have been divided into the general (applicable to all or most of the parks) and the site specific. Responses to the general recommendations should be addressed within the framework of each independently and locally defined management plan. A corporate, Borough-wide response should generally be avoided.

7.1.2 Encouraging diversity

A principal finding of the evaluations is that the parks generally have poor provision of facilities and very poor attractiveness and richness in their landscape and environmental quality. Facilities are often seen to either lack well designed landscape settings or to intrude upon the established landscape structure.

Furthermore there is a significant emphasis on active participatory sports throughout the parks. The place of serious, competitive sport in public parks requires careful consideration. Many sports facilities, especially football pitches, do not contribute to general landscape quality and exclude many park users. The emphasis on sports facilities has been to the cost of the informal recreational qualities of parks.

In line with the strategy to develop local community parks, it is recommended that less emphasis is placed on formal sports facilities and more emphasis on providing attractive landscapes for less formal recreation. This emphasis will achieve diversity of park users and activities. An improved balance, between active participation and passive enjoyment, will help to encourage less confident park users, fully reflect the diversity of Barking and Dagenham’s communities, and allow for increased shared use and empathy between different user groups, ages and activities. This inclusive approach to the design of parks and green spaces will encourage more use by disabled people, children, the elderly, and ethnic minority groups. It is recommended that a playing field audit is undertaken.

7.1.3 Emphasising quality

In the course of the evaluation, parks scored poorly for the range of facilities, and poorly for their quality. Furthermore the quality and richness of both hard and soft landscape is poor. Most of Barking and Dagenham’s parks do not attain above what might be described as a ‘basic’ level of quality. Environmental quality is the purpose of the urban public park and, as such, a certain threshold must be achieved before the park is likely to enjoy healthy levels of use.

It is recommended that the concept of a quality threshold be adopted in the future development and enhancement of the
parks. In many of the parks a dramatic enhancement in quality is required rather than the implementation of minor piecemeal improvements. It is therefore also recommended that capital investment in the parks is prioritised on a park by park basis. **Transformation of a single park will reap a greater dividend than minor changes to each.**

### 7.1.4 The role of design

A general lack of design input can be identified in the layout of most of the parks and green spaces (especially the recreation grounds), and the integration of introduced features and facilities in others (especially the historic parks). In the case of the former, structural deficiencies in the response to particular site constraints or issues are unlikely to be successfully tackled by piecemeal initiatives. As such, a radical redesign of these parks, virtually from scratch, is more likely to achieve desired effects.

The recommendations for each of the twenty-five parks give broad direction to their future development. Should the opportunity arise, it is recommended that the following parks address this broad direction through a thorough and radical redesign process which re-thinks their entire layout and content. These are:

- Castle Green Park
- Central Area
- Central Park
- Essex Road Gardens
- Heath Park
- King George’s Field
- Kingston Hill Avenue
- Marks Gate Recreation Ground
- Mayesbrook Park
- Old Dagenham Park
- Pondfield Park
- Quaker Burial Ground, and
- Valence Park

An inclusive approach to design will also encourage diversity of use.

### 7.1.5 General recommendations for improving each of our parks

The following pages detail general recommendations for the improvement of each of our twenty-five parks and green spaces. They address the future enhancement, development and management of our individual parks. They respond to specific attributes of the park or its setting and, other than in exceptional cases, do not re-visit the general recommendations relating to all our parks and green spaces summarised above. These recommendations, therefore, highlight the principal opportunities which are unique to the individual parks. They derive from the Park and Green Space evaluations documented in Section 5 of this Strategy, and address entrances, general facilities, landscape character and quality, security and vandalism, disabled people, children and the ‘young’, elderly people, repairs, maintenance and cleanliness, ecology, education and health, and management. Their purpose is to give broad direction to the preparation of detailed management plans for each park.
Barking Park

Despite the addition of poorly integrated recreational facilities, some of which are now disused, and general poor maintenance, Barking Park still retains its historic structure and character and is one of the most well used parks in the Borough. Barking Park has special significance as one of the oldest parks in the Borough. The future strategy for the park should therefore seek to restore and enhance the historic features while considering ways to incorporate modern planting design and aesthetics. A stage 1 application for a scheme in the park was put forward to the Heritage Lottery Fund in November 2002.

Recommendations

An ambitious and comprehensive restoration and management plan should be undertaken for this historic park to conserve and enhance historic features and radically improve its landscape quality.

1. Rationalise and upgrade buildings and built structures.
   a. Consider combining facilities such as changing rooms, café and toilets in one new, high quality building located centrally which would define the ‘heart of the park’.
   b. Relocate the changing facility. The existing building is inappropriately located and visually prominent.

2. Determine future use of the redundant paddling pool. The paddling pool could be transformed into a high quality water play area with water jets but with no standing water.

3. Replace unattractive concrete post and panel fencing around the maintenance compound and screen fencing with ornamental shrub planting.

4. Abolish vehicular access to the park and remove car parks. If car parking is essential, relocate to the periphery and screen with shrub planting.

5. Improve the Park Avenue entrance and address safety issues behind the boathouse.

6. Relocate the play area to a location adjacent to the heart of the park to maximise informal surveillance and improve access.

7. Conserve and enhance the vegetation structure of the park:
   a. Provide new woodland structure planting along the boundary to Longbridge Road and Fair Cross School to soften the hard urban edge, to create a sense of enclosure and to enhance the landscape quality of the park.
   b. Ensure that the historic tree structure is preserved by replanting avenues, boundary and specimen trees; and develop an arboretum.

8. Enhance the appearance, ecological value and river character of the boating lake by:
   a. Ensuring that desilting and clearing of litter takes place regularly.
   b. Removing detracting features in the lake such as ‘no entry signs’ and barriers.
   c. Establishing marginal vegetation, including reed beds, to filtrate water and provide cover for wildlife along the northern bank and improving planting on the islands.
   d. Improving the planting and tree structure on the northern side of the lake to screen adjacent housing and enhance the sense of seclusion.

9. Refurbishment of redundant lido site to enclosed family garden area.
CASTLE GREEN RECREATION GROUND

Currently the site is a predominantly grassed open space with woodland planting along the A13 boundary. Usage levels are low due to the lack of any facilities other than that of sports pitches.

Subject to planning consent the Jo Richardson Community Secondary School with associated community and recreational facilities is to be located on Castle Green Recreation Ground. This combined with the A13 Artscape programme for Castle Green will result in the creation of a new multi-purpose recreation ground.

Recommendations

1. Further woodland planting to screen and reduce noise from the A13 and provide a sense of enclosure
2. Re-design the space through structured planting and key features to create a more enclosed space (as part of A13 Artscape programme)
3. Introduce ornamental planting at strategic locations and upgrade railings
4. Ensure strong design relationship with the new Community School.
The Chase Nature Reserve is a 48 ha large area of woodland, scrub, marsh and grassland managed by the London Wildlife Trust and funded by LBBD through an annual Service Level Agreement. The Chase combined with Eastbrookend Country Park attracts visitors from a wide area, especially birdwatchers and is a designated local nature reserve.

The Chase has a characteristic lumpy topography due to the site’s history as a landfill site for rubble. The reserve attracts a significant number of birds due to the presence of the River Rom and a wildfowl sanctuary comprising several water bodies called The Slack, with no public access. There are also six rare native black poplars within the site.

The Chase provides a rich environment with a range of habitats valuable for wildlife and exciting for visitors to experience and explore. The lack of formal park features, such as furniture and formal paths emphasises the countryside character of the site. The lack of maintained paths and seating does, however, exclude certain user groups such as disabled people and the elderly.

Recommendations

1. Reduce the number of horses grazing in the nature reserve to improve the biodiversity of the site.
2. Establish a woodland belt between the River Rom and Upper Rainham Road to screen views of the road and housing from the nature reserve to promote a sense of escape and remoteness.
3. Improve the eastern boundary treatment towards Upper Rainham Road by replacing chain link fencing with wooden post and rail fencing similar to that between the nature reserve and Eastbrookend Country Park and provide formal access points.
4. Enable access by disabled and elderly people by providing a maintained bound gravel pathway through the nature reserve linking with the path network in Eastbrookend Country Park.
5. Consider providing informal seating of tree trunks and blocks, which are in keeping with the countryside character of the nature reserve.
CENTRAL AREA

The Central Area is the most central open space and should be a prestige town park, clearly associated with Barking Town Centre, with the church and abbey ruins as key features. The park should be a vibrant, colourful garden and could provide a welcoming gateway feature to the town centre from the North Circular Road. At present the town centre turns its back onto the space, and it seems to have little meaning or function. It could become Barking’s “Town Gardens” or “Park”.

Recommendations

1. Transform the Central Area into a vibrant, prestige town centre park with St Margaret’s Church and Barking Abbey ruins at the core. The park should contain:
   a. a high quality play area serving both primary schools
   b. herbaceous flower gardens and seating areas;
   c. shrub planting
   d. events space
   e. top quality park furniture
   f. clearly defined entrances and footpaths through and around it.

2. Enclose with high quality ornamental railings to provide spatial definition, a sense of enclosure, and protection from the surrounding traffic, and, perhaps, a locked garden at night.

3. Promote screening of the retail warehouses and adjoining car parks with dense shrub and tree planting along the western boundary of the park, and within the areas of the warehouses. In the long term seek to establish stronger links with the River Roding by extending the parkland to the river.

4. Improve pedestrian, visual and functional links with the town centre by narrowing Broadway and North Street to minimise traffic and improve pedestrian links.

5. Improve the link between East Street and the Curfew Tower by reducing the number of trees and bollards and repositioning benches.

6. Promote the Central Area as a primary outdoor events space.
CENTRAL PARK

The main assets of the park are the relatively high number of mature trees, predominantly lime, sycamore, horse chestnut and poplar, and its role as the venue for the Dagenham Town Show, circus and fairs. The park should remain the venue for large-scale events.

Recommendations

1. The park needs radical restructuring to create a coherent structure and to enhance its landscape quality. This would include a new path system, relocation of certain facilities and extensive tree and shrub planting.

2. Facilities should be clustered together to form an active, vibrant heart in the park. The location could be around the rugby pavilion.

3. There is scope to create a stronger link between the park and the Civic Centre. Formal gardens located by the Civic Centre could be used for receptions and community events.

4. The path system should be extended and redesigned to include wide grand avenues and informal meandering paths through woodland areas and shrub planting. There should be a path that leads from the main entrance by the Civic Centre to the centre of the park.

5. Establish extensive woodland structure planting along the boundaries to back gardens and Barking College.

6. Consider reintegrating the pitch and putt course with the park, as this area is only used by relatively few people and is closed to the largest proportion of park users. The area could, as in St Chad’s Park become a wildlife area.

7. Remove chain link fencing running through the park. Temporary fencing should be used to separate the Town Show and the fair if required.

8. Establish a stronger link between Central Park and Eastbrookend Country Park.

9. Remove the formal boundary between Fels Field and Central Park, and expand woodland along the boundary.

10. Remove rose beds by Rainham Road North and Rush Green Road, where they cannot be appreciated by park users.

11. Remove fencing between the tennis courts and car park by Wood Lane.
EASTBROOKEND COUNTRY PARK

The park is a successful flagship scheme that has been awarded with the Green Flag four times and attracts visitors from a wide area. The Millennium Centre is an excellent educational facility and a whole range of events are organised in the park. Vegetation in the park is still in early stages of establishment and the landscape is therefore not fully developed. This lack of mature vegetation gives the park a raw, bare and open character. The success of Eastbrookend Country Park shows what can be achieved with adequate funding, vision and determination.

Recommendations

1. Continue promoting the Country Park as a key visitor attraction with a wide range of community and educational events.
2. Ensure sustained investment for continued development and high standard of management.
3. Improve sustainability rates of planting blocks and improve the overall vegetation structure of the park.
4. Improve boundary treatment along the roads by ensuring continued maintenance of boundary fences and screen boundaries to the Aventis factory and The Farmhouse Tavern.
5. Apply for Local Nature Reserve designation.
6. Creation of a sensory garden.

ESSEX ROAD GARDENS

This is a very small triangular space (0.08 ha) located close to Barking Town Centre where the two railway lines join in a residential area. The space is formed where Suffolk and Essex Road meet in a dead end.

The space comprises grass with mounding and mature lime and horse chestnut trees along the perimeter. As a result of public consultation the site has been enclosed to enable it to be used for informal play. This has resulted in the site aesthetic value being diminished and it is recommended that further consultation is undertaken for this site.

The functional value of the space is limited due to its small size and location. The large trees are the greatest assets of the space and give a sense of greenery in an area where there are few large trees.

Recommendations

1. Improve boundary treatment by replacing steel mesh fencing with low ornamental metal railings to enhance views into the space from the street.
2. The functional use of the space should be further addressed through community consultation. The space could for example be developed as a community garden and meeting place with seating, or as a local play area.
3. Whether developed as a seating area or play area, emphasis should be placed on improving the landscape quality of the space through imaginative planting with flowers and shrubs to create a lush green ‘oasis’.
GORESBROOK PARK

The park has recently received funding from the Arts Council, East Thameside Partnership and SRB 6 to implement a master plan as part of the A13 Artscape Project. A bid has also been submitted for New Opportunities Fund - Transforming Space fund for £100,000. Phase 1 has now started on site and funding options to complete the phases 2-4 of the project are in the process of being identified. The masterplan, which has been developed over the last two and a half years, provides a coherent structure and addresses issues such as the path network, harsh boundaries, increasing planting and highlighting the brook.

Recommendations

1. The comprehensive redevelopment of the park should introduce a coherent structure.
2. Investigate opportunities to create a stronger pedestrian and cycle link between Goresbrook and Parsloes Park across the railway line.
3. Enclose the central section of the park with fencing and lock at night to enhance security. All facilities should be grouped together in this secure area to form a vibrant heart of the park. Facilities should include a refurbished play area, toilets, seating area and sports facilities.
4. Develop the Gores Brook as a key landscape feature. Improve the condition of the brook by regrading the banks, establishing marginal vegetation, wetland areas and ponds, planting willow alder and birch along the banks and ensuring regular litter collection. Create opportunities for water play.

GREATFIELDS PARK

No major restructuring is necessary although the park would benefit from regeneration of shrub and flower borders. Focus should be on improving the horticultural and ornamental value of this small community park rather than providing a wide range of recreational facilities.

Recommendations

1. Refurbishment of shrub borders.
2. Promote the central rose garden as the focus of the park. Extend and redesign the rose garden and incorporate a variety of flowering herbaceous plants, shrubs and climbers, and hedges to define, enclose and protect. Provide high quality seating.
3. Improve overgrown and unwelcoming shrub beds opposite the two northern entrances.
4. The redundant paddling pool could be transformed into a high quality water play area with water jets and sand play but with no standing water.
5. Investigate the need and demand for the tennis courts. If retained the facility should be upgraded and properly maintained.
6. Ensure that maintenance vehicles do not damage edges of grass.

HEATH PARK

Heath Park consists of a small area of open grass with a poorly maintained play area and a community building. The space lacks planting and furniture and the presence of litter and broken glass adds to the sense of neglect.

The space could potentially become the heart and meeting point for the immediate local community in Heath Park Estate. The space could be transformed with tree and shrub planting and become a community garden linked with the community centre.

Recommendations
1. Complete redevelopment of the space in close association with the community is needed to ensure that the needs of the community are addressed and to promote a sense of ownership.
2. Extend the boundaries of Heath Park to include the adjoining area to the north.

KING GEORGE’S FIELD

This space is very problematic due to its complete enclosure by back gardens and lack of informal surveillance. Security and personal safety issues are therefore top priorities. At present the area has no content and only has value as a kick-about area. Council capital funding has been secured for the provision of a new playground.

Recommendations
1. Introduce tree planting and shrub planting, especially along the boundaries of the park.
2. Ensure range of new play equipment reflect user group needs.
3. Introduce seating areas.
KINGSTON HILL AVENUE RECREATION GROUND

It is unlikely that the area can be redeveloped into a well used park, due to its peripheral location. The main community park with facilities in the area is Marks Gate Recreation Ground (Tantony Green).

Recommendations
1. The future use of the space should be determined in consultation with the local community.
2. Consider establishing woodland on the site as an extension of the roadside planting.

MARKS GATE RECREATION GROUND (TANTONY GREEN)

Marks Gate Recreation Ground is a small, flat, square open space located in the northern part of the Borough close to the green belt.

The recreation ground consists of a square of open grass with two enclosed play areas, mountain bike obstacle course, basketball court and a teen shelter grouped together in the southern part of the open space. There is no planting within the open space, but there are some street trees outside the boundary.

The park has the potential to become a fully functioning community park with ornamental planting, seating and other facilities. The park has the advantage of being close to community facilities and is overlooked by house frontages on all sides. It is included in the Groundwork Trusts Neighbourhood Renewal Plan and public consultation has been carried out.

Recommendations
1. Comprehensive redevelopment of the space is recommended in order to create a valued local park for the community.
2. The park should incorporate:
   a) Substantial tree and shrub planting to provide enclosure and create a visually stimulating space.
   b) High quality park furniture.
3. Remove concrete posts surrounding the open space and replace with park fencing or low trip rail.
MAYESBROOK PARK

The park is severely degraded and neglected and needs fundamental restructuring. The park could be redeveloped as the premier sports park in the Borough with top quality facilities while simultaneously enhancing the landscape character and quality of the park.

Recommendations

1. Improve the vegetation structure through extensive woodland planting along the park boundaries and within the park to break up the central open space. This would create a "new landscape".
2. Include the Mayesbrook within the park, and enhance the ecological and landscape quality of the watercourse through regrading of banks and planting.
3. Improve the water quality of the Mayesbrook and the lakes.
4. Regrade the banks of the sailing lake to reduce steepness and improve planting on the banks and on the islands. Adopt a habitat management programme to control Canada Geese numbers.
5. Provide screen planting around the football ground and athletics track.
6. Improve the path system providing a circulatory pathway and paths of different scales and character.
7. Relocate the play area to a more sheltered location, close to other facilities and at the heart of the park.
8. Establish a heart of the park where facilities are grouped. This could be near the lakes and associated

with a new yacht club/café/changing rooms/rangers office/toilets etc.
9. Create a quiet, enclosed seating area with ornamental planting to cater for the elderly and disabled adjacent to the new heart of the park.

NEWLANDS PARK

This park has recently received funding from the Arts Council, East Thameside Partnership and Sure Start through the Council’s A13 Artscape Programme.

The park is well designed with good seating provision, a good path system and imaginative play areas and was awarded an Open Spaces Management Award by ILAM in 2002. The Emphasis has, however, been placed on the hard elements in the park rather than planting, which is quite sparse. Planting is due to be undertaken this financial year to improve the landscape quality of this park.

Recommendations

1. Improve pathways to secondary entrances to the park by improving boundary treatment and improving sight lines to enhance personal safety.
2. Provide more planting, especially along the boundaries of the park.
OLD DAGENHAM PARK

The park has the potential of becoming an 'outdoor class room' due to the proximity of three schools. Using the park as an educational resource and involving children in the management of the park may also help reduce vandalism. Facilities are already grouped together but need to be reorganised to create a dynamic 'heart of the park'.

Recommendations

1. Focus on creating an exciting and stimulating environment for children and involve surrounding schools and residents of the Ibstock Estate in the future development of the park. Consider building a skate park, cycle track, adventure play area or other facilities that would cater for children and teenagers.

2. Enhance the vegetation structure by:
   a) Planting stimulating vegetation, including extensive woodland areas along the boundary.
   b) Subdivide the large open space with structure planting and groups of trees.

3. Upgrade the bowling and football pavilion and improve the surrounding area with planting, seating and picnic areas, and expand the opening times of the kiosk so that it functions as a focal point in the park.

4. Improve the general path system ensuring that:
   a) All facilities are linked;
   b) There are opportunities for a circulatory walk;
   c) Links between Old Dagenham Park and the Leys are improved by aligning entrances and creating safe pedestrian crossings.

5. Improve the main thoroughfare by creating a proper formal avenue lined with London plane trees. Widen and improve the pathway and remove the existing trip rail.

6. Consider creating direct access from the schools and library to the park to encourage the use of the park as an educational resource.

7. Improve the sense of security along the pathway leading from School Road past Dagenham Comprehensive Secondary School to the park.

8. Improve the quality of the ornamental garden. The ornamental gardens should be a peaceful, highly maintained landscape with sheltered seating and rich planting. Specific changes include:
   a) Removal of the circular rose garden by the main entrance.
   b) Shrub and tree planting to screen the boundary fence and surrounding buildings.
   c) Regeneration of shrub beds with new shrub and herbaceous planting.

9. Improve views into the parks from Ballard Road by removing the existing low quality fencing and replace with more discrete, visually permeable railing.

10. Identify a design solution for the redundant running track.

11. Upgrade the fencing surrounding the basketball and five-a-side court.

12. Remove the rose garden adjacent to the basketball and five-a-side court and replace with a large ornamental shrub bed.
PARSLOES PARK

Parsloes Park plays a prominent role as the largest park in the Borough. The park should offer a range of high quality facilities and provide a rich and diverse landscape experience. In particular, there is great scope to enhance the landscape quality of the common. A bid has been submitted to the New Opportunities Fund - Transforming Space Fund for £100,000 to provide informal play facilities.

Recommendations

1. Aim to gather facilities together to create a dynamic ‘heart of the park’. Investigate opportunities to introduce new facilities such as an adventure play area into the park.

2. Upgrade the play area and incorporate planting and locate the one o’clock club adjacent to the play area.

3. Improve the landscape screening of the maintenance depot adjacent to the children’s play area.

4. Improve opportunities to enjoy the lake by:
   a) Creating a viewing platform with seating overlooking the lake.
   b) Creating a new ‘adventure’ pathway at the foot of the lake bank to enable closer contact with the water and lake side vegetation.

5. Adopt a habitat management programme for the common.

6. Improve the amenity value and landscape quality of the common by:
   a) Establishing a variety of habitats on the common including woodland, rough grassland and wetland.
   b) Establish a wide woodland belt around the perimeter of the common to block views to the surrounding housing.
   c) Relocate the changing facility and car park to a location at the perimeter of the park where the visual impact is reduced and where vandalism of the building may be reduced due to increased informal surveillance and to eliminate the need to drive through the common.

7. Redesign the rose garden, reducing the number of roses and instead promoting herbaceous planting with longer seasonal interest.

8. Many shrubs are over-mature and shrub beds would benefit from phased replanting.

9. There are large areas of bare soil in the shrub beds which should be filled in by groundcover planting and bulbs.

10. Replant the cherry avenue.

11. Improve the appearance of all park buildings and upgrade facilities.

12. Improve the condition of paths and path edging. Ensure maintenance vehicles do not cut path corners and drive over the edges of paths.
PONDFIELD PARK

The park is generally in poor condition with deteriorating paths, lack of seating, redundant paddling pool, dated play equipment and very poor and inconsistent boundary treatment. There is no thoroughfare through the park and it receives low levels of use. The adjoining recreation ground is bland with virtually no planting and very poor boundary treatment.

Although the park is quite isolated it should function successfully as a local community park.

Recommendations

1. Improve the landscape quality of the recreation ground north of Reede Road by:
   a) Improving boundary treatment and entrances. Screen views to the warehouse building to the north of the recreation ground with hedge and tree planting. Replace the deteriorating concrete fencing on the eastern boundary of the recreation ground with a new fence, hedge and tree planting.
   b) Establishing a foot and cycle path running through the centre of the area parallel with Pondfield Road.
   c) Planting trees and shrubs on either side of the path to create a rich and stimulating environment.

2. Open the vehicle entrance on Reede Road for pedestrians, and open a new entrance by the south western corner, by the footbridge across the railway line. Create an alternative foot and cycle path through the park.

3. Replace the galvanised steel security fencing on both sides of the footpath running along the western boundary of the park with ornamental park railing.

4. Redesign and rationalise the path network.

5. Plant a wide woodland belt along the southern boundary towards the railway and eastern boundary of the park.

6. Improve and extend the ornamental garden and provide high quality seating.

7. Plant climbers against the concrete post and panel fencing on the eastern boundary.

8. Determine future use of the redundant paddling pool. The paddling pool could be transformed into a high quality water play area with water jets but with no standing water.

QUAKER BURIAL GROUND

The park is quite noisy due to the proximity of the Relief Road and is unlikely to attract much use. The area could be turned into a small enclosed wildlife area managed by the local community or by the Gurdwara (Sikh Temple).

Recommendations

1. The Quaker Burial Ground could be redeveloped as a small enclosed wildlife garden.

2. Consider rebuilding the boundary wall with recycled brick of the same size and type as the existing wall.
ST CHAD’S PARK

The park has a clear structure and good facilities, but improvements should be made to the vegetation structure, especially along the boundaries, and to the path system. There are a number of detracting features including the derelict kiosk building, the locked toilet block, and the container used by the cricket club in the play area which should be removed.

Relatively minor improvements need to be made to transform this park into a successful, vibrant local community park.

Recommendations
1. Redundant and detracting features such as the derelict kiosk, toilet block, cricket club container in the play area, railings by the circular rose garden and hard standing should be removed.
2. The paths should be upgraded and the path system extended to include a circular walk.
3. Establish woodland planting along the boundary of the park, apart from the ornamental garden, to provide a sense of enclosure.
4. Allow the hedge surrounding the bowling greens to grow through the fencing, to create a softer edge.
5. Establish ornamental shrub and perennial flower borders along the boundary of the ornamental garden.
6. Plant new shrub beds within the ornamental garden to create a more coherent vegetation structure.
7. Improve seating within the park, especially within the ornamental garden.
8. Gap up the hedge surrounding the children’s play area.

ST MARGARET’S CHURCHYARD AND REMAINS OF ST MARY’S ABBEY

The site of the abbey ruins is enclosed by a stone wall. The terrain slopes down to the abbey ruins giving the site a strong sense of enclosure. Mature London Plane and Lime trees surround the site. From the top of the slope by the eastern side of the ruins there is a clear view west to the retail warehouses on Abbey Road. These buildings are highly intrusive and disrupt the tranquillity of the abbey ruins. The site of the abbey ruins has been subject to serious vandalism including damage to the walls, and chipping and removal of stone slabs on the steps. The site is generally poorly maintained with poor quality furniture, paths, patchy grass and scattered litter. As this is an area of historic significance in Barking and Dagenham, conserving and enhancing the site and its setting is of utmost importance. An HLF bid to improve the Abbey site was made in 1998 but this was unsuccessful.

Recommendations
1. As part of the comprehensive redevelopment of the Central Area into the “Town Gardens”, refurbish the abbey ruins and transform into a top quality landscape. Investigate opportunities for HLF funding. Seek to provide:
a) Quality surfacing  
b) High quality furnishing  
c) Highly maintained grass  
d) Interpretive material to explain the history of the site

2. Promote the site as an educational resource and promote musical events and performances.

3. Remove the container located close to the southern entrance to the churchyard.

4. Plant new trees to retain the wooded character of the churchyard.

5. Consider replacing tarmac with bound gravel paths to match the historic character of the churchyard.

6. Screen views to the retail warehouses to the west with dense planting.

7. Consider installing CCTV to discourage further vandalism of a site of considerable cultural heritage value.

ST PETER AND ST PAUL’S CHURCHYARD

The historic churchyard is intensively managed close to the church but becomes progressively wilder and more overgrown further away. Some parts of the churchyard are becoming slightly too overgrown with invasive species such as bramble and ivy. The churchyard provides an important wildlife habitat and is managed by the London Wildlife Trust and funded by LBBD through an annual service level agreement.

Recommendations

1. Achieve Local Nature Reserve Status for the site.

2. Remove large bin placed by the northern entrance.

3. Improve boundary vegetation to enhance sense of remoteness.

4. Replant lime tree avenue along the central axis.

5. Encourage species diversity and control invasive species such as brambles and ivy.

6. Provide seating, in keeping with the character of the churchyard, for quiet contemplation.
THE LEYS

The recreation ground is open and featureless, but there are good views across to the River Wantz and the Beam Valley. The Leys should build on the naturalistic character of the Beam Valley which would complement and contrast with the traditional park land character of Old Dagenham Park.

Recommendations
1. Replace the existing fencing along Ballards Road. Enhance views and links between The Leys and Old Dagenham Park.
2. Establish woodland planting along the boundaries of the recreation ground.
3. Establish a cycleway and footpath through The Leys, connecting to Old Dagenham Park.
4. Emphasise the River Wantz as a landscape resource and experience.

TOWN QUAY

The Town Quay has recently been refurbished with high quality planting, paving, furnishing, ornamental lighting columns and sculpture. The area is, however, fragmented by a through road and despite the considerable investment does not function successfully. This is due to the lack of activity around the quay, unattractive views to industry across the mill pool and ‘dead end’ feel. The area lacks a cohesive structure and pedestrian access should be prioritised. The seating area overlooking the mill pool is over-engineered with bulky railings.

Recommendations
1. Create a more coherent structure by creating a stronger link between the viewing area and sculpture garden and plant bold lines of trees to create spatial definition.
2. Promote stronger links to the Central Area by improving pedestrian crossings and creating direct path links.
3. Promote links with the river by regenerating the riverside uses, and creating an attractive river walk.
VALENCE PARK AND HOUSE

The rich and distinct character of the area around the moat should be extended to the whole park. The character of the park could be an enclosed woodland garden. A thick belt of trees and shrubs could be planted along the boundaries so that the open space in the middle seems like a woodland clearing. The aim would be to enhance the sense of seclusion and enclosure through woodland planting and the screening of views to houses. In this way the emphasis in this park would shift from sports provision to providing a visually stimulating landscape experience. A Stage 1 HLF application for Valence House and the park is in the process of being prepared.

Recommendations

1. The park should undergo comprehensive redevelopment to provide the park with a clear structure and enhanced planting.
2. Remove the access road through the park from Becontree Avenue to re-establish the link between the area around the moat and main area of the park.
3. Remove the redundant path along the line of lime trees.
4. Establish structure planting along the boundaries of the park to screen boundary fencing and houses.
5. Remove the central car park and screen the remaining car park.
6. Remove rose beds and replace with bold herbaceous planting near the heart of the park.
7. Refurbish the changing facility and plant climbers to cover the walls to discourage graffiti.
7.2 Strategic Development Opportunities

There are several strategic development sites within the Borough that have the potential to make significant contributions in terms of parks and green spaces, including Barking Town Centre, Barking Reach, Dagenham Docks and South Dagenham.

These sites will be covered by Masterplan/Framework plans and detailed implementation plans, which will be adopted as SPG in the UDP. These plans should all be drawn up in accordance with the principles of this Strategy and, in particular, ensure a connected system of parks and green spaces within an over-arching Landscape Framework proposed in this Strategy.

Barking Reach

Barking Reach is a classic example of a brownfield development involving land remediation, site clearance, diversion of services and overhead power lines. It is one of the largest development sites in London. Over the next twenty years a new community will form with around 5,000 - 6,000 dwellings and a population of between 12,000 and 15,000. The development will also include new schools, shops and a wide range of social, community and recreational facilities to serve the new population and other opportunities for employment.

South Dagenham

South Dagenham is a key location within London and the Thames Gateway. The available development land in the Thames Gateway represents one of the largest opportunities for urban renewal anywhere in Europe. Further substantial tracts of land will become available over the next few years as a result of Ford’s restructuring. It is destined to make a major contribution to the economic, social, and environmental improvements of the Borough and also London. This is an opportunity to create a new heart for Dagenham based on 21st Century principles of sustainable development. It will also be a catalyst for investment within the existing housing areas directly to the north.

Dagenham Dock

As part of advanced CTLR works, a new link road, Choats Manor Way is being constructed to link the centre of Dagenham Dock to the new A13. Development interest is starting to grow due to the new link road.

The Council and the London Development Agency have a vision for Dagenham Dock as a best practice example of green industrial/commercial business park providing a model for how businesses can work together in a more environmentally friendly way building on other initiatives in the area. The Strategy will assist in attracting inward investment and jobs to the area, raise the Dock’s profile, help in the bidding for funding and help to improve the visual appearance of the area.

Barking Town Centre / Barking Roding Valley

The Town Centre Strategy was produced by LBBD in 1998 and has three main areas, which are to enhance and improve the social, economic, and environmental vitality and viability of the town centre.

The aim is to create a town centre that matches the Urban White Paper’s Vision of urban renaissance. A vibrant town centre with more people living within the town centre and much more night activity with bars, cafes and restaurants, music, dance and drama. A more thriving centre with new shops, offices, library, learning centre and one-stop-shop, all served by the second most important transport interchange in East London. Residents on the surrounding estates would live in genuine mixed communities with Neighbourhood Management being prominent. This is an opportunity to create real sustainable living where local people can access good facilities without having to drive and can easily get to other destinations via good transport links.

SECTION 8.0 THE NEED FOR AN OUTLINE LANDSCAPE FRAMEWORK AND PARKS AND GREEN SPACE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The proposed Outline Landscape Framework and Parks and Green Space Development Strategy, Figure 48, page 68 (the Landscape Framework) derives from the evaluation of parks and green spaces, and the spatial analysis of parks distribution and type detailed in Section 4 of this Strategy. It is very much in outline only, and intended to commence a process of rigorous recording and monitoring of the spatial aspects of parks and green spaces within an over-arching Landscape Framework for the whole of our Borough. This process will include and incorporate the Local Biodiversity Action Plan which will be prepared based on updated habitat surveys currently being undertaken. Landscape Framework sets a structure around which all development can take place in the future.

It is intended that the Landscape Framework will be developed into a final plan and incorporated into the Unitary Development Plan as Supplementary Planning Guidance. This will establish a rigorous basis for the negotiation of contributions from developers under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act. It is intended that it be an integral part of our Geographic Information System. This will enable park and green space issues to be handled strategically at the planning level, through to the detailed level of
management and maintenance of individual parks and green spaces, and even individual trees and benches. The Landscape Framework is intended to encourage a transformation of the overall environmental quality - the "greening" - of the Borough.

The European Landscape Convention, Planning Policy Guidance note 17 (PPG17), the Urban Green Spaces Task Force, the Greater London Authority, and many Best Value inspection reports recommend the adoption of a more strategic approach to landscape, park and green space planning.

8.1 Proposed Outline Landscape Framework and Parks and Green Spaces Development Strategy

This Landscape Framework aims to create a connected network of parks, green spaces, river corridors, woodland and tree-lined streets closely associated with a comprehensive footpath and cycle network. It proposes new local parks in deficient areas. It provides a strategic overview and should be read in conjunction with the following explanations.

1. **Existing parks and green spaces:** The Landscape Framework shows that the Borough is well served by parks and open green spaces, both within the Borough and adjacent to the Borough, including large areas of greenbelt land to the north and east. Although park and green space provision is good, the quality of most of these spaces is poor. There is also a lack of Local Parks in certain residential neighbourhoods.

2. **Existing woodland:** The analysis of tree cover in the borough, shows that the Borough has very low tree coverage.

3. **Proposed woodland:** Promoting urban tree planting along streets, in parks and green spaces and particularly along the Dagenham Corridor is therefore a priority. The Landscape Framework indicates where urban tree planting would be appropriate.

4. **Existing tree lined streets:** There are some existing tree-lined streets, but they do not connect to form a network.

5. **Proposed tree lined streets:** The Landscape Framework proposes extensive tree planting along streets to form a network of "green streets". These should connect existing tree lined streets, link parks and provide green routes for pedestrians and cyclists. Tree planting along trunk roads will have to be agreed with the Traffic Director for London.

6. **Cycle routes:** The existing cycle network is very fragmented. There are, however, plans to significantly improve the network by 2005. The additional recommended cycle routes in the Landscape Framework are predominantly routes proposed through parks and green spaces, in particular a proposed route through the Dagenham Corridor from the Thames to the Greenbelt to the north.

7. **Existing wildlife corridors:** Wildlife corridors are usually linear landscape corridors such as railway lines, water courses and roads with verge planting which allow the dispersal of plant and animal species. These corridors are especially important in the urban context. The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham has a number of significant existing wildlife corridors comprising the east-west railway lines, The River Thames, Barking Creek and the Beam River through the Dagenham Corridor.

8. **Proposed wildlife corridors:** New wildlife corridors are proposed through the proposed Barking Reach development, Mayesbrook Park and Barking Park. The existing Dagenham Corridor is currently severed at several points by roads and built development. The strategy proposes that the corridor is reconnected to allow movement of wildlife.

9. **Proposed foot and cycle bridges:** Two new foot and cycle bridges are proposed across the District line to allow access through the Dagenham Corridor and along the River Roding. A third bridge is proposed where the A12 severs the Dagenham Corridor.

10. **Proposed Local Parks:** The Landscape Framework identifies locations for new local parks based on the Existing Parks and Green Spaces Deficiency plan (figure 10). The proposed parks are located adjacent to existing or proposed cycle routes and tree lined streets to ensure that they become part of the overall landscape framework. Many of the new Local Parks in deficient areas could be achieved through redesignation and redesign of amenity green space in housing areas. The Countryside Agency's 'Doorstep Greens Programme' would be an appropriate funding source for some of these local open spaces.
Figure 48. Proposed Outline Landscape Framework and Parks and Green Spaces Development Strategy
### Location of proposed local parks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref. No</th>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>Existing open space</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>Abbey</td>
<td>Quaker Burial Ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>Gascoigne</td>
<td>Existing housing greenspace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>Thames</td>
<td>See Barking Reach Masterplan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>Thames</td>
<td>See Barking Reach Masterplan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>Longbridge</td>
<td>School Grounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>Longbridge</td>
<td>Incidental Green Space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P7</td>
<td>Eastbury</td>
<td>Derelict Site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P8</td>
<td>Mayesbrook</td>
<td>Incidental/Recreational Space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P9</td>
<td>Goresbrook</td>
<td>Allotments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P10</td>
<td>River</td>
<td>No existing space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P11</td>
<td>River</td>
<td>No existing space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P12</td>
<td>Alibon</td>
<td>No existing space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P13</td>
<td>Alibon</td>
<td>Incidental Green Space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P14</td>
<td>Heath</td>
<td>Incidental Green Space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P15</td>
<td>Valence</td>
<td>School Grounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P16</td>
<td>Whalebone</td>
<td>Recreational Space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P17</td>
<td>Valence</td>
<td>School Grounds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Location of proposed woodland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref. no</th>
<th>Park / Green Space</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W1</td>
<td>Barking Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W2</td>
<td>Mayesbrook Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W3</td>
<td>Castle Green Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W4</td>
<td>Parsloes Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W5</td>
<td>Goresbrook Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W6</td>
<td>Old Dagenham Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W7</td>
<td>The Leys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W8</td>
<td>Beam Valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W9</td>
<td>Beam Valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W10</td>
<td>Pondfield Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W11</td>
<td>Central Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W12</td>
<td>Barking College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W13</td>
<td>All Saints’ School and Robert Clack School Playing Fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W14</td>
<td>Open Space behind industry by Whalebone Lane South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W15</td>
<td>St Chad’s Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W16</td>
<td>Greenbelt land opposite Chadwell Heath Cemetery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Location of proposed foot/cycle bridges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref. no</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>Across the District Line by River Rom corridor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>Across the District Line by Eastbrookend Country Park joining the Beam Valley and the country park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3</td>
<td>Across the railway line providing a link through the Dagenham Corridor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Proposed tree lined streets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref. No</th>
<th>Street Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T1</td>
<td>Gascoigne Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2</td>
<td>Alfreys Way A13 (Trunk road)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T3</td>
<td>Alfreys Way A13 (Trunk road)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T4</td>
<td>River Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T5</td>
<td>Renwick Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T6</td>
<td>Bastable Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T7</td>
<td>Alfreys Way A13 (Trunk road)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T8</td>
<td>Lodge Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T9</td>
<td>Ripple Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T10</td>
<td>Rossilyn Road &amp; Levett Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T11</td>
<td>Upney Lane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T12</td>
<td>Woodward Road &amp; Hedgemans Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T13</td>
<td>Heathway A1240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T14</td>
<td>A1306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T15</td>
<td>A13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T16</td>
<td>Ballards Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T17</td>
<td>Ballards Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T18</td>
<td>Rainham Road South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T19</td>
<td>Rainham Road South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T20</td>
<td>Dagenham Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T21</td>
<td>Parsloes Avenue &amp; Reede Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T22</td>
<td>Porters Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T23</td>
<td>Wood Lane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T24</td>
<td>Beverley Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T25</td>
<td>Heathway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T26</td>
<td>Green Lane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T27</td>
<td>Whalebone Lane North</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T28</td>
<td>Eastern Avenue (Trunk road)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Proposed wildlife corridors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref. no</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Barking Reach – see Barking Reach Masterplan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>Brook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>Brook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4</td>
<td>Loxford Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C5</td>
<td>Mayes Brook</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PART FOUR - VISION, GOALS AND MAKING IT HAPPEN

PART FOUR of the Strategy describes our Vision for our parks and green spaces. The Vision is supported by ten Goals that will drive the delivery of the Parks and Green Spaces Strategy (Table 5 page 74).

The focus for this Strategy will be securing capital funding for physical improvements to our existing parks and green space estate. The Landscape Framework Plan will be funded through Section 106 agreements and external grant applications. Revenue funding to sustain the Strategy will be met through reprioritisation of existing budgets and annual growth bids.

9.1 Our Vision

The reports, studies, evaluations, consultations and strategies analysed and summarised in this Strategy coalesce in this statement of our Vision:

By 2002 we will provide a well-connected system of attractive parks and green spaces that are managed and maintained to satisfy the diverse needs of all members of our communities, provide the context for continuing development and contribute to our social, environmental and economic well-being.

This is a challenging vision. Establishing partnerships and collaborations with central government, national and regional agencies, the Mayor for London, local communities, businesses and voluntary organisations, will be essential to its delivery. It will also require continuing capital and revenue commitments on our part and commitments to renew the way we delivery parks and green space management and maintenance.

9.2 Our Goals

We have agreed ten Goals to drive our vision forward and against which we will measure our performance. They derive from the national, regional and local priorities outlined in Parts One, Two and Three of this Strategy. They are also influenced by: The Urban Green Spaces Taskforce Report Green Spaces, Better Places and the Government’s response Living Places - Cleaner, Safer, Greener, and Living Places - Powers, Rights, Responsibilities; and the Mayor’s Draft London Plan and Biodiversity Strategy.

The Goals establish the basis for placing parks and green spaces at the heart of strategic planning for the Borough. These Goals lay the foundation for a coherent bottom-up and top-down approach to design, development, management and maintenance of our parks and green spaces.

The numbered Goals are listed below accompanied by a commentary on why they are needed and their primary purpose.

Goal Number 1: To adopt a Landscape Framework Plan

The Outline Landscape Framework addresses the development of new woodland, tree-lined streets, cycle routes, wildlife corridors, foot and cycle bridges and local parks in order to achieve a renaissance in the overall environmental quality of the whole of the Borough.

The adoption of a Landscape Framework as Supplementary Planning Guidance will provide a rigorous basis for negotiating S.106 Agreements to fund improvements.

However, we have to be realistic and recognise that our priorities lie with our existing estate. The value of the Landscape Framework lies in defining where we want to be so that, as and when planning applications for developments are received, connections can be made and the landscape resource can be protected and enhanced through the development process.

Consequently, we have not prepared a detailed delivery plan for the local parks, woodland, bridges and tree-lined streets proposed in the Landscape Framework, but fully expect that, through the first implementation period of this Strategy, some of them will be achieved.

Additionally, we need to carry out a playing field audit in accordance with Sport England guidelines.

Goal Number 2: To secure long-term capital and revenue investments

Adequate capital and revenue funding is crucial to the success of this Strategy. We have been very successful in achieving external capital funding for park and green space projects. It is, however, more difficult to attract revenue funding. The two elements are related. We need to ensure the allocation of adequate internal funds to match capital external funding.

Table 6, Sources of Funding for Parks and Green Spaces on page 75 identifies the main funding programmes that will be targeted.

We have begun to back our commitment to our parks and green spaces by approving a capital programme of £5 million for expenditure between 2005 and 2008. Details on priorities for expenditure are dealt with under Goal 8 below.

Revenue funding for parks and green spaces will need to increase over and above existing provision through the lifecycle of the strategy. The amount of increased revenue funding will be dependent on the type of capital improvements that are delivered through the Strategy and will vary on a site-by-site basis.
Projected increased revenue will be between £500,000 to £750,000 based on a 20% increase of funding for existing parks and green spaces (Urban Parks Forum Public Needs Assessment recommendation) plus an allowance for new parks and green spaces created through the implementation of the Landscape Framework Plan.

Adequate revenue provision will be met through:

- Efficiency savings from existing parks and green spaces management
- Annual revenue growth bids
- Increased income through targeted sponsorship and commercial events; and
- Section 106 Agreements.

As part of Year 1 of the Parks and Green Spaces Action Plan, a Revenue Strategy will be identified for each of the three phases of the Parks and Green Spaces Strategy.

**Goal Number 3: To renew and revitalise the management and maintenance of our parks and green spaces**

We must manage our parks and green spaces better. The prerequisites for any efficient and effective management structure are clearly defined objectives, a defined strategy for achieving those objectives, and a clearly defined organisational structure aligned to that strategy.

The Best Value Review completed and approved in April 2003 will lead to new and revitalised management structure enabled to deliver this Strategy. We must also maintain our parks and green spaces better - they must be clean, safe and attractive to all.

**Action Plan**

A three-year Action Plan sets out in more detail the steps to be taken in realigning the service to achieve the renewal and revitalisation of the management and maintenance of our parks and green spaces.

The main points of the Action Plan are:

- Carry out regular surveys of parks users
- Produce a quarterly Events and Activities programme
- Establish and support one additional ‘Friends of the Park’ Group within the Borough year on year
- Achieve Green Flag Awards for three more parks
- Progress the Heritage Lottery Fund application, and implementation of the scheme in Barking Park
- Produce annual training plans for staff
- Selective market testing of parts of the operational service
- Securing a Charter Mark for the Ranger Service
- Remodelling of the management structure of the Parks and Countryside Section.

**Goal Number 4: To establish a Parks and Green Spaces Steering Group**

We recognise that we are embarking on fundamental change. In order to deliver our envisaged 20-year programme of renewal for our Parks and Green Spaces, we propose adoption of the successful A13 Artscape Management Model. This will see the establishment of an inter-departmental Parks and Green Spaces Steering Group. This Steering Group will comprise representatives from all departments within the Council, and outside partners to ensure that the cross-cutting themes of this Strategy are successfully delivered.

The Steering Group will be lead by the Head of Leisure and Community Services and be supported by a dedicated Project Manager.

**Priorities for the Steering Group will be:**

- Cross-departmental working
- Capacity building with community groups and stakeholders
- Achieving external funding
- Preparation of park and green space management plans in consultation with communities
- Implementation of physical improvements; and
- Project management of implementation.

As it can easily take up to two years to secure external funding, it is proposed to establish the Steering Group and agree procurement arrangements during 2003-4, i.e.: Year 1 of the Parks and Green Spaces Strategy.

**Goal Number 5: To prepare and implement a Local Biodiversity Action Plan**

Protecting and enhancing the wildlife and nature conservation value of our Borough is fundamental to a good quality of life for all.

The Borough’s Local Biodiversity Action Plan links with the Mayor’s Biodiversity Strategy for London and identifies improvement action plans for a number of habitats and species. Improvement action plans will be delivered through the Local Biodiversity Partnership a sub-working group of the Borough’s Community Strategy.

The Local Biodiversity Action Plan is a key element of the
Landscape Framework Plan and Parks and Green Spaces Strategy.

**Goal Number 6: To enhance and promote community involvement in and satisfaction with parks and green spaces**

Parks and green spaces are for people as well as wildlife. Communities often know best what is most appropriate for their local park or green space. We must work with them to achieve the right kind of space in the right place. This will be done through working through existing community partnerships such as the Area Community Forums and Local Strategic Partnerships, through establishing Park Friends Groups, and through delegated management agreements where appropriate. Satisfaction with Parks and Green Spaces will be measured through using the Placecheck methodology and MORI surveys carried out every three years.

**Goal Number 7: To adopt management plans for each park and green space.**

Management Plans for each park will be broad in scope with a strong developmental emphasis, and will be produced in close consultation with park and green space users.

Management Plans will be used to:

- Set targets for improvements
- Establish maintenance standards to sustain improvements
- Support external funding applications; and
- Develop community engagement programmes.

**Goal Number 8: Promote life-long learning and healthy lifestyles within and through our parks and green spaces**

Parks and green spaces are increasingly being used as "Outdoor Classrooms" for the delivery of the National Curriculum. They are ideal places for learning about the environment and natural and cultural history, and provide practical opportunities for community involvement and the development of citizenship.

Parks and Green Spaces provide many opportunities for the development of healthy lifestyles through the provision of formal facilities such as sports pitches to walking trails. A focus of this Strategy will be on promoting the benefits that parks and green spaces can play in the development of healthy lifestyles in partnership with other providers.

**Goal Number 9: Adopt an events and marketing strategy**

The establishment of an events and marketing strategy will promote the value that parks and open spaces can bring to the Borough via community events and activities. It will also raise the profile of parks and green spaces, and develop a strong feeling of ownership.

An events programme that draws together all representative groups within the Borough will be a major factor in encouraging a cohesive community in Barking and Dagenham. Events will recognise the richness of our cultural diversity and celebrate it.

The events and marketing strategy will be delivered in partnership with other providers and will form one of the main performance targets against which the Parks and Green Spaces Strategy will be measured.

**Goal Number 10: Achieve recognised accreditations**

National awards and accreditations for parks and green spaces will be important in confirming our success, or otherwise, in implementing this Strategy.

Targets will be set for securing:

- Green Flag Awards
- Green Pennant Awards
- London-in-Bloom Awards
- Chartermark status
- Investors in People status; and
- Beacon Council Status.

### 9.3 Delivery of improvements to our existing parks and green spaces

The Council has made a capital programme commitment of £5 million for expenditure between 2005 and 2008 to commence delivery of this Strategy. While this is a significant commitment, it will not deliver all of the improvements that are required. Consequently, in order to maximise this capital investment programme, the funding will be prioritised to:

- Match externally funded bids
- Support partnership improvement programmes; and
- Directly fund improvements.

Additionally, we have prioritised improvements to our twenty-five existing parks and green spaces as follows:

- Existing parks and green spaces that are partially funded and at various stages of implementation
- Parks and green spaces that have the potential to meet externally funded criteria or achieve partnership funding; and
- Parks and green spaces that do not require capital funding for improvements.

The rationale for these priorities is to:

- Optimise the capital programme by securing external matching funds; and
- Complete existing park improvement programmes that...
the Council has already committed to. We will, of course, consistently look to secure S.106 funding to deliver the connected parks and green space system envisaged in the Landscape Framework Plan.

The Implementation Plan (Tables 8-10 on pages 77-80) identifies a framework for capital improvements to the Borough’s existing parks and green spaces. It also includes capital funding provision for the delivery of new parks and green spaces through the Landscape Framework plan, and implementation of specific improvement programmes for sports facilities.

Estimated budgets have been calculated using two formulas:

- £60,000 per hectare for non-heritage based improvements; and
- £100,000 per hectare for heritage based improvements.

Actual costs will be calculated through the production of management plans, public consultation and the ability to secure external funding.

The implementation plan identifies:

- Funding that has already been secured for specific park improvement programmes; and
- External funding that would also need to be secured to deliver park improvement programmes based on a twenty-five per cent matched funding commitment from the Borough.

The Implementation Plan is broken down into three phases:

**Phase 1 (Table 8. Implementation Plan - Phase 1)**
Park projects with part or fully secured funding and at various stages of completion.

**Phase 2 (Table 9. Implementation Plan - Phase 2)**
Park projects that meet external funding criteria or could qualify for external partnership funding.

**Phase 3 (Table 10. Implementation Plan - Phase 3)**
Park projects that do not require capital funding.

The three phases will be reviewed on an annual basis through the Parks and Green Spaces Action Plan to reflect:

- Funding allocations secured; and
- New funding opportunities that can be bid for.

Additional capital matched funding will need to be secured from the Council’s capital programme from 2008 onwards to deliver Phase 2 of this Strategy.

**9.4 Monitoring and Review**

Delivery of the Strategy will be through an Action Plan that will be produced annually by the Parks and Green Spaces Steering Group. The Action Plan will list all the targets that have been identified in this Strategy, and the milestones that will need to be reached at each stage.

Monitoring and review of the Action Plan will be through the Balanced Scorecard and this will be undertaken at three levels:

1. Internally, the Leisure and Community Services Division will monitor progress against the Action Plan targets on a monthly basis and collate base data where required for Performance Indicators.
2. Externally, the Leisure and Environmental Services Performance Monitoring Unit will review the Balanced Scorecard on a quarterly basis; and
3. Publication of an Annual Report, available to the public, that details progress measured against the Action Plan targets.

**9.5 Conclusion**

It is predicted that London’s population will grow by 700,000 people by 2016. Our Borough, within the Thames Gateway and with a number of strategic development sites, will absorb some of that growth. This Strategy marks our determination to be at the forefront of creating an environment that will be attractive, clean and safe for all our current and future residents. It also marks our determination to invest in a high quality environment, creating places where people with choices, choose to live.

The Government’s agenda - supported by many policy initiatives - is to encourage an urban renaissance. The Government’s support for urban parks and green spaces and the quality of the public realm generally, was stated unequivocally in its responses to the Urban Task Force and the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce reports. The Government is backing its commitment by establishing a specialist unit of the Commission for Architecture and Built Environment - CABE Space - with parks and the public realm as its specific remit. CABE Space will become a key player in promoting parks and the public realm, and we look forward to working with them in achieving our objectives.

We also look forward to working with many partners to achieve the Strategy objectives. We will need to work with, among others, central Government departments and agencies such as the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, the Department of Culture, Media and Sports and the Department for Education and Employment; national organisations such as English Partnerships, the Environment Agency, the Countryside Agency, English Nature, Sport England and the Lottery funding bodies; regional agencies such as the Mayor’s office
including the London Development Agency; and local businesses, the primary care trust, schools and other organisations and agencies.

In order to deliver the Strategy, we will establish a cross-departmental Parks and Green Spaces Steering Group. This will ensure representation from all departments within the Council to ensure that the cross-cutting themes of the Strategy are addressed. The Steering Group will be lead by the Head of Leisure and Community Services and be supported by a dedicated Project Manager.

As important will be working with the local communities that our parks and green spaces serve. We have the MORI Budget survey that tells us what their priorities are, in summary: clean, safe, attractive parks with keepers/rangers in attendance. However, we will be consulting with residents through User Groups to develop management plans for each park and green space. In this way, it is hoped that community ownership, responsibility and pride will emerge - parks and green spaces that satisfy specific community needs.

This Strategy promotes nothing less than a renaissance in the design, development, management and maintenance of our existing parks and green spaces. The Outline Landscape Framework starts off the process of delineating a connected, landscape infrastructure of parks, green spaces, wildlife habitats and corridors, tree-lined streets, river corridors, footpaths, cycleways, etc. Together, this renaissance of our existing parks and the phased implementation of the Landscape Framework, will provide both the context for built development and the development of a landscape and townscape resource for all our communities.

In *Living Places - Cleaner, Safer, Greener* the Government stated:

“The quality of public spaces affects all of us wherever we live and work. Safe, well-maintained and attractive public spaces have a critical role in creating pride in the places where we live, which in turn, is essential to building community cohesion and successful communities. That is why the Government is committed to make public spaces cleaner, safer, greener places that enhance quality of life in our neighbourhoods, towns and cities”.

And that is why we have prepared this Strategy: to deliver cleaner, safer, greener places that enhance quality of life in our Borough.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Community Priority</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Key Outputs</th>
<th>Delivery Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Adopt a Landscape Framework Plan | Making Barking and Dagenham cleaner, greener, safer | Project Manager | • Appoint consultants  
• Consultation Draft  
• Final Draft  
• Executive approval | April 2004  
November 2004  
January 2005  
April 2005 |
| 2. Secure long-term capital and revenue investment programme | Making Barking & Dagenham cleaner, greener, safer; and Regenerating the Local Economy. | Project Manager | **Phase 1** | April 2006  
April 2008  
April 2005 – April 2008 |
|  |  |  | Phase 2 | April 2008  
April 2010  
April 2012  
April 2010 – April 2012 |
|  |  |  | Section 106 Agreements | April 2005 – April 2020. |
| 3. Adopt new practises for the management and maintenance of our parks and green spaces | Making Barking and Dagenham cleaner, greener, safer; and Raising Pride in the Borough. | Group Manager Parks and Countryside | • Adoption of new management arrangements  
• Expansion of the Ranger and Park Constabulary Units. | April 2003 – April 2006  
April 2003 – April 2006 |
| 4. Establish a Parks and Green Spaces Steering Group | Making Barking and Dagenham cleaner, greener, safer | Head of Leisure and Community Services | • Steering Group established | June 2003 |
| 5. Prepare and implement Local Biodiversity Action Plan | Making Barking and Dagenham cleaner, greener, safer; and Raising pride in the Borough | Park Development Officer | • Biodiversity Action Plan adopted  
• Monitoring of Biodiversity Action Plan targets. | December 2003  
April 2004 – April 2009 |
| 6. Enhance and promote community involvement | Raising Pride in the Borough; and Developing rights and responsibilities | Park Development Officer; and Club Liaison Officer | • Establish Park Friends Groups  
Delegated Management Agreements for Park User Groups. | April 2003 – April 2012  
April 2003 – April 2012 |
| 7. Adopt Park Management Plans for all parks and green spaces | Making Barking and Dagenham cleaner, greener, safer | Park Development Officer | • Management Plans adopted for all sites | April 2003 – April 2012 |
| 8. Promote life-long learning and healthy lifestyles in parks and green spaces | Better education and learning for all; and improving health, housing and social care. | Ranger Services Manager | • Provision of park education programme.  
• Provision of healthy lifestyles programme | Annually  
Annually |
| 9. Adopt an Events and Marketing Strategy | Raising pride in the Borough | Head of Leisure and Community Services | • Adoption of an Events and Marketing Strategy. | April 2003 – April 2005 |
| 10. Achieve recognised accreditations | Raising pride in the Borough | Park Development Support Officer | • Secured Green Flag and Green Pennant Awards | Annually |

Table 5. Strategy Delivery Plan
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fun ing Type</th>
<th>Fun ing Source</th>
<th>ecription</th>
<th>un ing O jec ives</th>
<th>Who they fund</th>
<th>Size of Gra ts / un</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Fund (Formerly National Lottery Charities Board)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.community-fund.org.uk">www.community-fund.org.uk</a></td>
<td>Lottery distribution body set up to support charitable, benevolent and philanthropic organisations throughout the UK</td>
<td>Main aim is to &quot;meet the needs of those at greatest disadvantage in society and to improve the quality of life in the community&quot;</td>
<td>Charities, community and voluntary groups - not Local Authorities or private sector</td>
<td>No upper limit given, will consider 100% funding projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Lottery Fund - Urban Parks Initiative Scheme</td>
<td><a href="http://www.hlf.org.uk">www.hlf.org.uk</a></td>
<td>Lottery distribution body which launched the Urban Parks Programme in March 1996 - HLF’s aim is &quot;to safeguard and enhance the heritage of the United Kingdom&quot;</td>
<td>The restoration of historic parks, landscapes and gardens - preferably listed parks with named designers but others considered</td>
<td>Local Authorities mainly but some partnerships with voluntary bodies and some privately owned sites with public access</td>
<td>Entire park bids have exceeded £4.0 m, grant is usually 75% of total cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Opportunities Fund - Green Spaces and Sustainable Communities</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nof.org.uk">www.nof.org.uk</a></td>
<td>A Lottery distributor created to award grants to health, education and environment projects throughout the UK. Many of their grant programmes focus particularly on those in society who are most disadvantaged.</td>
<td>Funding areas are split into three broad themes: health, education and environment.</td>
<td>Award partners were announced 26.9.00 - includes: Barnados (Better Play) £3m, BTCV (People's Places) £6.5m, Sport England (Playing fields and community green spaces)£31.6m</td>
<td>Various</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Opportunities Fund - Transforming Communities</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nof.org.uk">www.nof.org.uk</a></td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>Was launched Easter 2002</td>
<td>£99m by 2004 of which £77.5m in England Transforming your space: £49.5m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Opportunities Fund Community Fair Share</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nof.org.uk">www.nof.org.uk</a></td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>To deliver funding to disadvantaged communities in 77 local areas that have not had a fair share of Lottery funds</td>
<td>Projects must include involvement of local communities</td>
<td>£169m over 3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awards For All</td>
<td><a href="http://www.awardsforall.org.uk">www.awardsforall.org.uk</a></td>
<td>Small awards scheme of HLF / Arts Council / Sport England / NOF / Community Fund</td>
<td>To help small groups fund programmes that involve people in their community.</td>
<td>Voluntary and community groups</td>
<td>£500 to £5000, spent £12.5m in 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport England Community Projects Fund</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sport-england.gov.uk">www.sport-england.gov.uk</a></td>
<td>Set up to address the needs of England's most deprived communities. It funds local projects that everyone can access (£150 m)</td>
<td>Small projects awards</td>
<td>Schools, voluntary groups for capital and short term revenue schemes</td>
<td>£15m - grants up to £5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Regeneration Budget</td>
<td><a href="http://www.dtlr.gov.uk">www.dtlr.gov.uk</a></td>
<td>A competitively bid for regeneration fund targeted on deprived, mostly urban areas. Main aims are economic, environmental and social regeneration.</td>
<td>Output driven measures, job creation, hectares of land improved, community capacity building</td>
<td>Usually run by a partnership group, mostly led by Local Authorities but may include private, voluntary and community sectors</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sure Start</td>
<td><a href="http://www.dfhe.gov.uk/sstart">www.dfhe.gov.uk/sstart</a></td>
<td>Launched in January 1999, the Sure Start aims to &quot;improve the health and well being of families and children... so children are ready to thrive when they go to school&quot;</td>
<td>Child poverty, social exclusion, improving access to family support, health services, early learning</td>
<td>60 trailblazer areas running since 1999, 69 more areas asked to apply in 2000, 63 more in the third wave; target of 250 by 2002 - bids coordinated by Local Authorities</td>
<td>£25m - grants over £5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood Renewal Fund</td>
<td><a href="http://www.neighbourhood.dtlr.gov.uk/fund/index.htm">www.neighbourhood.dtlr.gov.uk/fund/index.htm</a></td>
<td>Established by Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU) - central government follow on to SRB</td>
<td>Tackling deprivation in the poorest neighbourhoods</td>
<td>88 Local Authorities within the poorest areas in England</td>
<td>£200m - £300m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Chest (Neighbourhood Renewal Fund)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.neighbourhood.dtlr.gov.uk/commchest/indexeh.htm">www.neighbourhood.dtlr.gov.uk/commchest/indexeh.htm</a></td>
<td>Part of the above but administered through Government Offices for the Regions</td>
<td>To support community groups and social enterprises</td>
<td>Voluntary sector organisations in the 88 poorest areas of England</td>
<td>£10m - £25m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Deal for Communities</td>
<td><a href="http://www.neighbourhood.dtlr.gov.uk/newdeal/index.htm">www.neighbourhood.dtlr.gov.uk/newdeal/index.htm</a></td>
<td>Administered through regional government offices, targeted at deprived neighbourhoods</td>
<td>Tackling social exclusion in deprived neighbourhoods in England</td>
<td>Local Authorities</td>
<td>Local authorities participate in the New Deal, but funding is committed and no further grants are available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countryside Agency</td>
<td><a href="http://www.countryside.gov.uk">www.countryside.gov.uk</a></td>
<td>The Countryside Agency together with the New Opportunities Fund aim to help 200 communities improve their quality of life</td>
<td>To help communities create their own green spaces. Aim is to create 200 doorstep greens.</td>
<td>Local voluntary and community groups</td>
<td>Average project preparation grant: £3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agrees Levy Sustainability Fund</td>
<td><a href="http://www.countryside.gov.uk">www.countryside.gov.uk</a></td>
<td>The Countryside Agency in partnership with English Nature, English Heritage, the aggregates industry and other organisations will distribute the fund which is being made available by DEFRA</td>
<td>Set up to address the environmental cost associated with aggregate extraction.</td>
<td>Mainly large official bodies such as Local Authorities and Regional Development Agencies</td>
<td>Revenue approx £305m in first year. Up to £75m per annum thereafter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London Development Agency</td>
<td><a href="http://www.lida.gov.uk">www.lida.gov.uk</a></td>
<td>The Regional Development Agency for London</td>
<td>Key priorities are: Economic Growth, Knowledge learning, Diversity, inclusion renewal sustainable development</td>
<td>Local Authorities, private sector, voluntary community sector</td>
<td>2000/01 £300 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LLPAPA</td>
<td><a href="http://www.local.gov.uk/lppapa.deer.gov.uk/psa/help1.htm">www.local.gov.uk/lppapa.deer.gov.uk/psa/help1.htm</a></td>
<td>Agreement between an individual local authority and the Government. It sets out the authority's commitment to deliver specific improvements in performance, and the Government's commitment to reward these improvements</td>
<td>Funding access to additional borrowing conditional on linking with existing scenes such as BV / NNF and meeting specific targets</td>
<td>Local Authorities, Piloted with 20 Local Authorities in 2000/01.</td>
<td>Full reward grant of £2/22% of a year’s net budget is given for achieving the &quot;stretching&quot; targets in full. A scaled-down grant is given for achieving a large part of the improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landfill Tax Credit Scheme</td>
<td><a href="http://www.entrust.org.uk">www.entrust.org.uk</a></td>
<td>Permits Landfill Operators to make voluntary contributions to enrolled Environmental Bodies for a range of specified purposes. HM Customs and Excise appointed the Environmental Trust Scheme</td>
<td>The main aims of the Scheme are to help reduce reliance on landfill and to compensate by &quot;environmental improvements&quot; those living in the vicinity of landfill sites. There are also 6 approved objectives (see what they fund section)</td>
<td>Money is distributed through registered environmental bodies e.g. Wildlife Trusts, Groundwork etc funding often to community and voluntary groups, plus Local Authorities</td>
<td>Land reclamation, waste recycling and minimisation, pollution reduction, education, restoration of parks and buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment Agency</td>
<td>National Agency responsible for the focus on the role of the Environment Agency with respect to the natural environment.</td>
<td>To promote restoration of rivers</td>
<td>Private and public bodies</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site</td>
<td>Size (ha)</td>
<td>Cost Per Hectare</td>
<td>Capital Budget</td>
<td>Project Fees (@10%)</td>
<td>Total Capital Budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbey Green</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>£60,000</td>
<td>£282,000</td>
<td>£28,200</td>
<td>£310,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barking Park</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Masterplan cost</td>
<td>£2,305,940</td>
<td>Allocated</td>
<td>£2,305,940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beam Valley Country Park</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>Masterplan cost</td>
<td>£1,783,107</td>
<td>Allocated</td>
<td>£1,783,107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castle Green</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>£480,000</td>
<td>£48,000</td>
<td>£528,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Park</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>£60,000</td>
<td>£3,000,000</td>
<td>£300,000</td>
<td>£3,300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chase Nature Reserve</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastbrookend Country Park</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dagenham Park</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>£60,000</td>
<td>£798,000</td>
<td>£79,800</td>
<td>£877,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essex Road Gardens</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goresbrook Park</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Masterplan cost</td>
<td>£1,300,000</td>
<td>£130,000</td>
<td>£1,430,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greatfields Park</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>£100,000</td>
<td>£580,000</td>
<td>£58,000</td>
<td>£638,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heath Park</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>£60,000</td>
<td>£160,000</td>
<td>£16,000</td>
<td>£176,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King George's Field</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>£260,000</td>
<td>£26,000</td>
<td>£286,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingston Hill Avenue</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>£60,000</td>
<td>£90,000</td>
<td>£9,000</td>
<td>£99,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marks Gate Recreation Ground</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>£60,000</td>
<td>£100,000</td>
<td>£10,000</td>
<td>£110,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayesbrook Park</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>£60,000</td>
<td>£2,700,000</td>
<td>£270,000</td>
<td>£2,970,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newlands Park</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parsloe Park</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>£60,000</td>
<td>£3,480,000</td>
<td>£348,000</td>
<td>£3,828,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pondfield Park</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>£60,000</td>
<td>£180,000</td>
<td>£18,000</td>
<td>£198,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quaker Burial Ground</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Chad's Park</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>£100,000</td>
<td>£1,400,000</td>
<td>£140,000</td>
<td>£1,540,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Margaret's Churchyard</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>£100,000</td>
<td>£120,000</td>
<td>£12,000</td>
<td>£132,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Peter's &amp; St Paul's Churchyard</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Green Space</td>
<td></td>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>£500,000</td>
<td>£50,000</td>
<td>£550,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Framework Plan</td>
<td></td>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>£25,000</td>
<td>Allocated</td>
<td>£25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing Field Improvement Programme</td>
<td></td>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>£300,000</td>
<td>Allocated</td>
<td>£300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yate Leys</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Quay</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valence Park</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>£100,000</td>
<td>£1,160,000</td>
<td>£116,000</td>
<td>£1,276,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Officer Costs (2005/12)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>£315,000</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£315,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingency Funding (Phase 1 only)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>£700,000</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£700,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>480.8</td>
<td>£22,019,047</td>
<td>£1,659,000</td>
<td>£23,678,047</td>
<td>£3,603,910</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Estimated budgets have been calculated using two formulae - non-heritage based improvements at £60K per hectare and heritage based improvements at £100,000 per hectare. The capital budget allocation has been increased by £100,000 for Heath Park to reflect additional funding for playground improvements. The capital allocation for King George’s Field includes £200,000 allocation from the capital park playground improvements programme. Fees are shown allocated at 10% and are costed from the LBBD capital allocation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Park Name</th>
<th>Capital</th>
<th>Project Fees (10%)</th>
<th>Total Budget</th>
<th>Capital Funding Secured</th>
<th>Revised masterplan required</th>
<th>Position Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abbey Green</td>
<td>£282,000</td>
<td>£28,200</td>
<td>£310,200</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£70,500</td>
<td>2003 - 2007 This project is currently being prepared for HLF funding. Capital costs will be subject to revision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barking Park</td>
<td>£2,305,940</td>
<td>Allocated</td>
<td>£2,305,940</td>
<td>£576,485</td>
<td>£1,729,455</td>
<td>2004 - 2007 This project has been submitted for Stage 1 HLF funding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beam Valley Country Park</td>
<td>£1,783,107</td>
<td>Allocated</td>
<td>£1,783,107</td>
<td>£1,697,425</td>
<td>£85,682</td>
<td>2003 - 2004 Phase 1 completed. Phase 2-4 to be completed 2003/04.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castle Green</td>
<td>£480,000</td>
<td>£48,000</td>
<td>£528,000</td>
<td>£130,000</td>
<td>£350,000</td>
<td>2003 - 2006 Funding secured for provision of new playground (LBBD Capital) and £80,000 A13 funding. Revised masterplan required for the site due to Jo Richardson School project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Park</td>
<td>£3,000,000</td>
<td>£300,000</td>
<td>£3,300,000</td>
<td>£50,000</td>
<td>£737,500</td>
<td>2004 - 2008 Capital funding secured through the LBBD park playground programme. External funding bids to be determined by outcome of consultation exercise for the park.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dagenham Park</td>
<td>£798,000</td>
<td>£79,800</td>
<td>£877,800</td>
<td>£50,000</td>
<td>£187,000</td>
<td>2003 - 2008 Funding secured from LBBD Capital Tennis Courts programme (£50,000) and HOTG (£50,000). External funding bids to be determined by the outcome of masterplan exercise for the park.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goresbrook Park</td>
<td>£1,300,000</td>
<td>£130,000</td>
<td>£1,430,000</td>
<td>£800,000</td>
<td>£500,000</td>
<td>2003 - 2006 Goresbrook Park is being implemented over four phases. Phase 1 is complete and Phase 2 is currently on site, both Phases 1 &amp; 2 have been delivered through external funding. £15,000 of the funding secured relates to the capital programme for park playground improvements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King George's Field</td>
<td>£260,000</td>
<td>£26,000</td>
<td>£286,000</td>
<td>£200,000</td>
<td>£80,000</td>
<td>2003 - 2006 Capital funding of £100,000 secured for provision of new playground. Additional funding of £60,000 required for landscape and infrastructure improvements. External funding bids to Doorstep Greens (Countryside Agency) and National Playing Field Association (NPFA) to be investigated subject to outcome of consultation programme for site improvements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8: Implementation Plan - Phase 1. Park projects with part or fully secured funding and at various stages of completion.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Total Budget (£)</th>
<th>Allocated (£)</th>
<th>Balance (£)</th>
<th>Funding (£)</th>
<th>Contingency (£)</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parsloes Park</td>
<td>£3,480,000</td>
<td>£348,000</td>
<td>£3,828,000</td>
<td>£100,000</td>
<td>£845,000</td>
<td>2004 - 2008</td>
<td>Funding of £100,000 secured from Transforming Your Space programme. External funding bids to be determined by outcome of masterplan exercise for the park.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Framework Plan</td>
<td>£25,000</td>
<td>Allocated</td>
<td>£25,000</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£25,000</td>
<td>2004 - 2006</td>
<td>Initial £25,000 funding is for the development of the Landscape Framework Plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing Field Improvement</td>
<td>£34,000</td>
<td>Allocated</td>
<td>£34,000</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£34,000</td>
<td>2005 - 2006</td>
<td>Funding to complete playing field audit and undertake pitch improvement programmes. Matched funding bids to be made to Sport England.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valence Park</td>
<td>£1,160,000</td>
<td>£116,000</td>
<td>£1,276,000</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£290,000</td>
<td>2003 - 2008</td>
<td>As part of the Council’s adopted Heritage Strategy, consultants have been appointed to prepare a Stage 1 Application for Valence House and Gardens. It is proposed to extend this application to include Valence Park.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Officer Costs (2005/08)</td>
<td>£135,000</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£135,000</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£135,000</td>
<td>2005 - 2008</td>
<td>Project Officer costs of £45,000 per annum for a fixed term contract of 3 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingency Fund (Phase 1 only)</td>
<td>£700,000</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£700,000</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£700,000</td>
<td>2005 - 2008</td>
<td>LBBD capital contingency funding is to be allocated to projects on a priority basis, when external funding bids are unsuccessful or implementation costs exceed the capital budget provision. Contingency allocation based on 14% of LBBD capital allocation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes - LBBD capital matched funding allocation is based on 25% of the total project cost.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Capital Budget</th>
<th>Project Fees (@10%)</th>
<th>Total Budget</th>
<th>Capital Funding Secured</th>
<th>Timetable</th>
<th>Funding Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greatfields Park</td>
<td>£580,000</td>
<td>£58,000</td>
<td>£638,000</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>2008 - 2012</td>
<td>Heritage Lottery Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heath Park</td>
<td>£160,000</td>
<td>£16,000</td>
<td>£176,000</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>2008 - 2012</td>
<td>Doorstep Greens (Countryside Agency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingston Hill Avenue</td>
<td>£90,000</td>
<td>£9,000</td>
<td>£99,000</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>2008 - 2012</td>
<td>Allocation for this site needs to be reviewed dependent upon progress with the new cemetery site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marks Gate Recreation Ground</td>
<td>£100,000</td>
<td>£10,000</td>
<td>£110,000</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>2008 - 2012</td>
<td>Land Fill Tax Credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayesbrook Park</td>
<td>£2,700,000</td>
<td>£270,000</td>
<td>£2,970,000</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>2008 - 2012</td>
<td>New Opportunities Fund/Environment Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pondfield Park</td>
<td>£180,000</td>
<td>£18,000</td>
<td>£198,000</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>2008 - 2020</td>
<td>Doorstep Greens (Countryside Agency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Chad's Park</td>
<td>£1,400,000</td>
<td>£140,000</td>
<td>£1,540,000</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>2008 - 2012</td>
<td>Heritage Lottery Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Margaret's Churchyard</td>
<td>£120,000</td>
<td>£12,000</td>
<td>£132,000</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>2002 - 2012</td>
<td>This project may be brought forward as part of Abbey Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Green Space</td>
<td>£500,000</td>
<td>£50,000</td>
<td>£550,000</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>2008 - 2012</td>
<td>Section 106 Agreements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing Field Improvement Programme</td>
<td>£266,000</td>
<td>Allocated</td>
<td>£266,000</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>2008 - 2012</td>
<td>Sport England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Officer Costs (2008/12)</td>
<td>£180,000</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£180,000</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>£6,276,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>£583,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>£6,859,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>£0</strong></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on the Parks Evaluation, these sites have been identified as not requiring capital funding. Small scale improvements will be made by re-prioritising existing revenue funding to park improvements on an annual basis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Position Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chase Nature Reserve</td>
<td>Based on the Parks Evaluation, these sites have been identified as not requiring capital funding. Small scale improvements will be made by re-prioritising existing revenue funding to park improvements on an annual basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastbrookend Country Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essex Road Gardens</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newlands Park</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Town Quay</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quaker Burial Ground</td>
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<tr>
<td>St Peter and St Paul's Churchyard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Leys</td>
<td>To be developed as part of the Beam Valley Country Park.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>