

Parks and open spaces strategy 2020–2025



‘To be the heart and lungs for Lewisham, connecting
active, healthy and vibrant local communities’



'It is important that the parks belong to everyone in the community and where there are no social barriers'

'The creation of spaces for outdoor education – forest schools, school visits - is important'

'When I was recovering from post-natal depression I found the Park invaluable, the playground gave me a non-threatening place to meet other local families and make friends, the community that meets round the café is incredibly supportive and friendly'

'Biodiversity is really fundamental – knowing that bees and other species can thrive and breed. Provision of shade on hot days – and trees to help 'cleanse' the air – is a real respite from the crowded and polluted road of Lewisham'

'Use fewer pesticides'

'Not all parks need to be the same'

'Zero tolerance to dog fouling but not dogs'

'Provide closed picnic areas'

'Better dog facilities, accessible water fountains, park attendants would improve my park'

'Make it easy to report problems'

'I am now a pensioner and have been going to my local park for 45 years – in the seventies to relax after work, in the eighties to play in the park with my children, in the nineties finding a natural space with my teenager and since then for relaxation, exercise and sheer enjoyment of the open space, the lack of pollution, the friendliness of the other park users. If anything, I value the open space more now than I ever did when I was younger'

'Don't neglect micro open spaces'

'Areas that provide the opportunity for off-lead exercise for dogs have fewer problems with dogs due to dogs being able to learn correct social behaviour off the lead'

'Improve connections linking green spaces'

'I love the variety of parks in Lewisham. Each is different and unique. As I get older, feeling safe is also important, and access to well-run public toilets; seating for those unable to walk far; and being close to public transport'

'I like to be able to watch wildlife, especially birds, and see the seasons changing in the park'

'Parks are for everybody and should be versatile. Sport one day, relaxing the next...'

'The best parks have a good café, they are clean and safe and community focused'

'A diversity of areas will attract a diversity of people'

'Invest in parks and you'll probably have a healthier community'

'I love exercise, running on my own but also group activities like park run'

Contents

Scope and limitations of the parks and open space strategy.....	7
Key themes: social, economic, environmental	9
Strategic social aims	10
Strategic economic aims	12
Strategic environmental aims.....	14
Delivery plan.....	16
Open Space distance standards	22
Responding to open space deficits.....	23
Open Space overview borough wide.....	25
Sub-area strategies.....	41
Heritage.....	59
Rivers.....	63
Appendix: 1	64–78
Supporting evidence	
Strategic context: National, regional and local	
National and regional planning policy	
Regional policy context	
Local policy context	
Open space needs	
Appendix: 2	
Open space assessment May 2019	
Appendix: 3	
A new strategy for parks and open spaces In Lewisham report Nov 2018 – Your chance to have your say	
Appendix: 4	
Parks and open space strategy 2012–2107	

Introduction and forward by Councillor Sophie McGeevor, Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport



This parks and open spaces strategy has been developed as a tool to identify, communicate, map out and monitor a course of actions to reflect the shared vision: ‘to be the heart and lungs for Lewisham, connecting active, healthy, and vibrant local communities.’

The network, number, size and quality of parks and open spaces provide an essential ecosystem service that regulates our immediate environment and helps protect us from the effects of the climate emergency.

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

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

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

This document provides the strategic framework for the management and development of open spaces within the borough that seeks to protect, create, enhance, and connect spaces and people. It intends to maximise

the benefit of every £ spent, taking into account the future anticipated population growth in the Borough and the areas of the Borough where population increases are likely to be greatest. This will enable the whole community - residents, community organisations, voluntary and statutory agencies and businesses – to work in partnership to obtain the maximum benefit from our open spaces.

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

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

Our Baseline

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

15 Green Flag Parks and 3 Community Green Flag Award Spaces

1st Place 'Good Parks for London' benchmarking in 2017, 2018 and 3rd in 2019

Support 25 formalised park user 'Friends' groups

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

In the last 4 years delivered 2,951 nature conservation events, with 24,437 volunteers who've achieved 73,311 hours of work, worth £773,431

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

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

The Vision

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

Scope and limitations of the parks and open space strategy

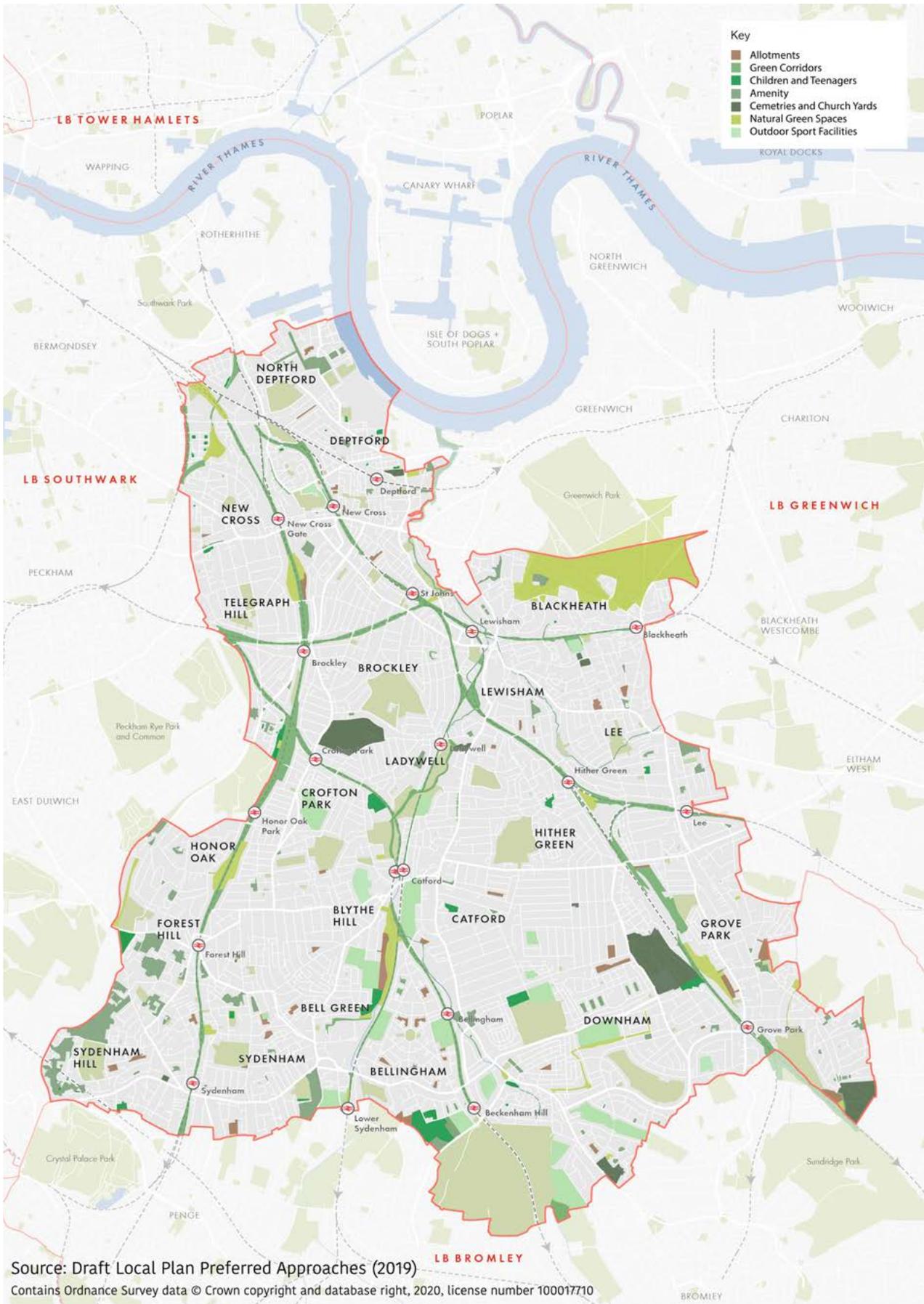
This parks and open space strategy focuses on areas that fall within the current Parks Team’s management responsibility. This includes publicly owned parks and gardens, council-owned allotments, ‘maintained’ churchyards, and numerous highway enclosures.

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

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



Open spaces in Lewisham



Key themes: social, economic, environmental

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

- Social
- Economic
- Environmental.

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

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

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

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

Delivery plan – this sets out the goals, measures and undertakings required. It also provides an anticipated time scale and/or milestone for the undertaking identified.

The word cloud below represents what Lewisham residents think are the most important features that should be maintained and enhanced in our parks, according to the Parks and Open Space survey in November 2018.



Strategic social aims

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

Priorities

- To preserve and increase the number of Green Flag Award Parks
- To improve, protect and provide clean and safe parks, allotments and nature reserves by seeking inward investment prioritising neglected and rundown areas
- To deliver 'wellbeing' by putting parks and open spaces at the heart of outdoor activities and healthy lifestyles for all
- To promote and support active citizens and the ethos, 'My space, my responsibility'
- To get nature to people and people to nature

Goals

- To work in partnership with park user ‘friends’ groups, Local Assemblies, Neighbourhood Forums, the Lewisham Biodiversity Partnership and Allotment Committees to deliver the ‘Greening Fund’ and other grants and initiatives to provide additional facilities and make improvements to parks and open spaces
- To promote more public involvement and engagement with the formal user ‘friends’ groups so that they can broaden their appeal and capacity
- To target and deliver investment for parks, pocket parks and small open spaces that are classified as fair or poor in the Open Space Assessment (OSA) 2019
- To improve and maintain the highest feasible standards of grounds maintenance for formal sports areas to maximise their use and appeal
- To develop a park events strategy that supports active, cultural or artistic events that take account of environmental sustainability using the ‘right time, right place and right space’ principles
- To work with colleagues in Public Health and community services to support and encourage walking, cycling and other active travel modes that link open spaces, such as the South East London Green Chain, Waterlink Way, the Thames Path and other local elements of the All London Green Grid
- To protect, develop and enhance the nature conservation, wildlife habitats and species – where appropriate – in parks by supporting nature conservation volunteering initiatives and environmental education
- To support and encourage the cultural, physical and mental health benefits and opportunities that our Parks and Open Spaces offer
- To consult with and seek the views of young people via available networks and the Young Mayor’s forum to ensure that park improvements deliver safe, well-used and respected spaces
- To seek advice through the new Disabled People’s Commission and identify the best way to engage with disabled young people, their parents and carers to ensure that our parks and open spaces are designed to enable children of all abilities, to access and enjoy
- To respond to antisocial behavioural (ASB) issues in parks by exploring opportunities to provide a greater formal presence in parks and by working in partnership with formal user groups, the Safer Neighbourhoods Team and Lewisham enforcement officers to promote the bye laws and encourage respectful use

Strategic economic aims

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

Priorities

- To protect parks and open space
- To preserve and, where possible, enhance the quality of existing green and open spaces, to deliver eco-system services and a range of public benefits – including play, habitat creation, landscape improvements and flood storage
- To achieve a cost-effective, high-quality parks service that delivers continuous improvement
- To promote the concept of Corporate Natural Capital Accounting (CNCA) as a methodology used to assess the value of economic, social and environmental benefits accruing from green infrastructure
- To ‘green the grey’ by developing partnerships to deliver active green travel links through highways infrastructure projects

Goals

- Parks and Open Space Officers to recommend the refusal of planning permission for all insensitive development, on site or on surrounding land that significantly erodes the biodiversity value, quality, use, access or enjoyment of designated green and open spaces
- To support sustainable development and urban regeneration that delivers enhancements to the quality of existing open spaces to deliver a range of benefits and uses, that embrace its long-term maintenance
- To successfully in-source the current park management service, and maintain standards by winning 15 Green Flag Awards and continue to rank highly in the 'Good Parks for London' benchmarking exercise
- To explore the value of commissioning a Corporate Natural Capital Account (CNCA) for the borough so that decision- and policy-makers are better apprised of the collective value of decisions that relate to the natural environment
- To support the partnerships by working with Highways colleagues on 'Cycleways,' 'Legible London' and 'Healthy Neighbourhood' transport programmes, to promote 'pathways to parks' and 'greening the grey' by developing sustainable travel links that use planting and greening as a tool to reduce carbon emissions
- To actively support and encourage partnerships that seek to deliver important green infrastructure/eco-system services, such as: appropriate Environment Agency flood alleviation schemes; the All London Green Grid; the London Environment Strategy 2018; National Park City and the Grove Park Urban National Park initiative

Strategic environmental aims

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

Priorities

- To balance functionality and local needs for parks and open space to serve the broadest diversity of people without compromising their value as a place to relax and enjoy being in nature
- To manage the spaces sustainably and recycle wherever reasonably practical and as close to the source as possible
- To explore a reduction in the use of herbicides where economically viable and practical
- To develop, with user groups, management and improvement plans that seek to enhance nature and people's connection with it
- To reduce carbon emissions and the reliance on fossil fuels by using electric machinery where reasonably practical
- To plant more trees and hedgerows where appropriate, and where this does not conflict with balancing environmental and social uses/needs
- To support existing and new greening of active travel links so both people and wildlife benefit
- To contribute to regional partnerships that are working to maintain and enhance the environment such as the Ravensbourne Catchment Improvement Group, and the Green Chain Walk
- To facilitate and support the work of the Lewisham Biodiversity Partnership so that it can continue to develop strategies and projects that enhance the borough for people and wildlife

Goals

- To promote the different features and facilities available in Lewisham's parks, including via the Council's website
- To encourage recycling, promote home recycling and discourage single-use plastic
- Where new planting is implemented, these will be designed – where appropriate – to be sustainable planting schemes e.g. hardy and drought-tolerant
- To compost green waste in the park it was generated in, leave fallen trees and standing dead wood in situ, where appropriate and safe to do so
- To develop and trial an integrated weed control policy to avoid, explore alternatives to, and reduce the use of herbicide
- To work with 'Friends of' user groups to support the implementation of projects designed to benefit locally appropriate biodiversity and engagement
- To trial electric machinery to understand its performance and cost-benefits
- To prohibit ice cream van idling and work towards installing electric points to improve air quality in and around parks
- To increase the parks' tree stock and linear metres of hedgerow
- To achieve new green linkages and work with neighbouring boroughs to address regional environmental issues
- To improve water quality in the Ravensbourne, Pool and Quaggy rivers so that they can achieve 'Good ecological potential'
- To continue to partner the 'Street Trees for Living' initiative to plant and care for more street trees

Delivery plan

Social aims	Delivery plan measures and undertakings	Timescales/ milestones																																								
Goal – To work in partnership with park user ‘friends’ groups, Local Assemblies, Neighbourhood Forums, the Lewisham Biodiversity Partnership and Allotment Committees to deliver the ‘Greening Fund’ and other grants and initiatives to provide additional facilities and make improvements to parks and open spaces	Greening Fund successfully delivers £360k of improvements by April 2021	April 2021																																								
	Greening Fund successfully delivers £0.5m	May 2022																																								
	Three completed rounds of the Greening Fund	May 2022																																								
	Successful delivery of the Greening Fund leading to its adoption post-2022	June 2022																																								
	Number of successful applicants + 70	January 2025																																								
	£250k additional match funding delivered	January 2025																																								
	Greening Fund successfully delivers £1m	May 2025																																								
Goal – To promote more public involvement and engagement with the formal user ‘friends’ groups, broadening their appeal and capacity	Explore and, if feasible, provide umbrella PLI insurance for running events	March 2021																																								
	Develop a memorandum of understanding, for the functioning of Park User Groups and a model constitution for new groups	March 2021																																								
	Maintain updated information on the Lewisham website for all groups so that contact details, web links and other information can be provided	Every 6 months																																								
	Explore and, if feasible, facilitate training and/or advice sheets on topics such as: ‘Effective methods of communication, consultation and social media use’ ‘Promotion of the “Lewisham Way” ethos of collaboration’	One training/ seminar every year																																								
Goal – To target and deliver investment for parks, pocket parks and small open spaces that are classified as fair or poor in the Open Space Assessment (OSA) 2019	Deliver investment to: <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">1. Durham Hill</td> <td style="width: 50%;">21. Margaret McMillan Park</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Southend Park</td> <td>22. Sayes Court Park</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Forster Memorial Park</td> <td>23. Lewisham War Memorial Gardens</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4. Riverview Walk</td> <td>24. The Common and Summerhouse Field</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5. Folkestone Gardens</td> <td>25. Deptford Memorial Gardens</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6. Home Park</td> <td>26. Westbourne Drive Enclosure</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7. Lewisham Park</td> <td>27. Grove Park Library Gardens</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8. Blythe Hill Fields</td> <td>28. Laywell Green/ Slagrove Place</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9. Riverdale Sculpture Park</td> <td>29. Wickham Gardens</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10. Lewisham Way</td> <td>30. Beachborough Gardens</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11. Hatcham Gardens</td> <td>31. Beaulieu Avenue Green</td> </tr> <tr> <td>12. Ferranti Park</td> <td>32. Kirkdale Green</td> </tr> <tr> <td>13. Friendly Gardens</td> <td>33. St Norbert Green</td> </tr> <tr> <td>14. Luxmore Gardens</td> <td>34. Turnham Road green</td> </tr> <tr> <td>15. Broadway Fields</td> <td>35. Culverley Green</td> </tr> <tr> <td>16. Evelyn Green</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>17. Baxter’s Fields</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>18. Ravensbourne Park Gardens</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>19. Edith Nesbitt Gardens</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>20. Eckington Gardens</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	1. Durham Hill	21. Margaret McMillan Park	2. Southend Park	22. Sayes Court Park	3. Forster Memorial Park	23. Lewisham War Memorial Gardens	4. Riverview Walk	24. The Common and Summerhouse Field	5. Folkestone Gardens	25. Deptford Memorial Gardens	6. Home Park	26. Westbourne Drive Enclosure	7. Lewisham Park	27. Grove Park Library Gardens	8. Blythe Hill Fields	28. Laywell Green/ Slagrove Place	9. Riverdale Sculpture Park	29. Wickham Gardens	10. Lewisham Way	30. Beachborough Gardens	11. Hatcham Gardens	31. Beaulieu Avenue Green	12. Ferranti Park	32. Kirkdale Green	13. Friendly Gardens	33. St Norbert Green	14. Luxmore Gardens	34. Turnham Road green	15. Broadway Fields	35. Culverley Green	16. Evelyn Green		17. Baxter’s Fields		18. Ravensbourne Park Gardens		19. Edith Nesbitt Gardens		20. Eckington Gardens		Annual review monitoring report x5 March 2022 x15 March 2023 x25 March 2025 x35 March 2027
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	Target and spend the £54k grant from the Office Communities and Local Government in Lewisham’s parks and open spaces that are outside the identified growth area where there is less Section 106 availability	March 2021
	Next Open Space Assessment to validate the upgrade in the status of all the listed sites above	March 2025
Goal – To improve and maintain the highest feasible standards of grounds maintenance for formal sports areas to maximise their use and appeal	To support Lewisham’s Playing Pitch Strategy (June 2019) and its action plan where funds are available and do not conflict with the varying requirements to provide a broad range of activity and appeal for our park users	Annual review monitoring report
	Number of new facilities and external grants achieved	Annual review monitoring report
Goal – To develop a park events strategy that supports active, cultural or artistic events that take account of environmental sustainability using the ‘right time, right place and right space’ principles	To achieve an endorsed and adopted strategy	March 2023
Goal – To work with colleagues in Public Health and Community Services to support and encourage walking, cycling and other active travel modes that link open spaces, such as the South East London Green Chain, Waterlink Way, the Thames Path and other local elements of the All London Green Grid	Ensure that all new interpretative initiatives and appropriate infrastructure promote the linking of parks and open spaces across the borough	Annual review monitoring report
	Provide interpretation and way marking to link River Pool Linear Park and Ladywell Fields Park with: 1. Manor House Gardens 3. Mountsfield Park 2. Manor Park 4. Lewisham Park	All by March 2025
	The Greening Fund will finance improvements to parks. This will include new bike locking points, new water drinking fountains, new signs and way-finding posts, new benches and bins. The implementation of these improvements will improve and refresh parks, and increase use	Annual review monitoring report
Goal – To protect, develop and enhance the nature conservation, wildlife habitats and species - where appropriate - in parks by supporting nature conservation volunteering initiatives and environmental education	Deliver 52 Natures Gym sessions engaging 550 volunteers per year	Annual review monitoring report
	To facilitate and support 10 forest schools	
	Nature Conservation Team to deliver x10 sessions per year (300 children)	
	Lead the 3 Rivers Clean Up initiative in June/July each year	
Goal – To support and encourage the cultural, physical and mental health benefits and opportunities that our Parks and Open Spaces offer	Install new outdoor gym equipment	x4 March 2022
	Install new outdoor gym equipment	x8 March 2025
	Install new table tennis tables	x2 March 2022
	Install new table tennis tables	x4 March 2025
	Maintain and update the Lewisham website so that the information on parks remains current Monitor and maintain the Natures Gym and Rivers and People websites	Annual review monitoring report
	Increase the number of licensed boot camps from 25	30 by March 2022 35 by March 2025
	Increase the number of community events facilitated in parks from 694	714 by March 2022 734 by March 2025

<p>Goal – To consult with, and seek the views of, young people via available networks and the Young Mayor’s forum to ensure that park improvements deliver safe, well-used and respected spaces</p>	<p>Where major park projects take place, monitor the number and outcome of any young people consulted</p>	<p>Annual review monitoring report</p>
<p>Goal – To seek advice through the new Disabled People’s Commission, and identify the best way to engage with disabled young people, their parents and carers to ensure that our parks and open spaces are designed to enable children of all abilities, to access and enjoy</p>	<p>Where major park playground projects take place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● monitor the number and outcome of consultation with disabled stakeholders and the application of inclusive play principles in their design, layout and equipment choices ● develop a play strategy that balances inclusive play for children of all abilities and age ranges ● ensure that the design brief builds on best practice in terms of intergenerational design 	<p>Annual review monitoring report</p> <p>By March 2023</p>
<p>Goal – To respond to antisocial behavioural (ASB) issues in parks by exploring opportunities to provide a greater formal presence in parks and by working in partnership with formal user groups, the Safer Neighbourhoods Team and Lewisham enforcement officers to promote the bye-laws and encourage respectful use.</p>	<p>Seek to maximise the static presence in major parks through the process of in-sourcing the parks’ Grounds Maintenance Service</p>	<p>November 2021</p>
	<p>Provide customer care training to all new and transferring staff so they can perform frontline duties as the face of the Park Service</p>	<p>November 2022</p>
	<p>Develop a reporting process/protocol to train staff to capture essential information on ASB occurrence & patterns</p>	<p>November 2022</p>
	<p>Develop a database of antisocial behaviour patterns, and deliver joint enforcement events where feasible and appropriate</p>	<p>November 2022 Annual review monitoring report</p>
	<p>Address all antisocial casework issues within the 10-day timescale</p>	<p>Annual review monitoring report</p>
	<p>Record any metrics/improvements in perception of safety</p>	<p>Annual review monitoring report</p>

Economic aims	Delivery plan measures and undertakings	Timescales/ milestones
Goal – Parks and Open Space Officers to recommend the refusal of planning permission for all insensitive development, on site or on surrounding land, that significantly erodes the biodiversity value, quality, use, access or enjoyment of designated green and open spaces	Number of planning applications refused from 2019-2025	Annual review monitoring report
	Amount in hectares and/or number of parks and open spaces lost to development	No net loss by 2025
Goal – To support sustainable development and urban regeneration that deliver enhancements to the quality of existing open spaces to deliver a range of benefits and uses, that embrace their long-term maintenance	Number and monetary value of park enhancements that derive from S106 agreements or Community Infrastructure Levy receipts	Annual review monitoring report
	£1m of investment from Development Control sources	March 2025
	£300k of external investment target for non-Development Control sources	March 2025
Goal – To in-source the current park management service successfully, and maintain standards by winning 15 Green Flag Awards and continuing to rank highly in the Good Parks for London benchmarking exercise	15 Green Flag Awards	July 2022
	17 Green Flag Awards	July 2025
Goal – To explore the value of commissioning a Corporate Natural Capital Account (CNCA) for the borough so that decision- and policy-makers are better apprised of the collective value of decisions that relate to the natural environment	Present a briefing paper and potential business case to the Sustainable Development Select Committee to seek political support and steer so that policy-makers are better apprised of the collective value of decisions that relate to the natural environment	March 2023
Goal – To support the partnerships by working with Highways colleagues on, ‘Cycleways’, ‘Legible London’ and ‘Healthy Neighbourhood’ transport programmes, to promote ‘pathways to parks’ and ‘greening the grey’ by developing sustainable travel links that use planting and greening as a tool to reduce carbon emissions	<p>The Healthy Neighbourhood programme is part of Lewisham’s transport strategy. It will create streets that encourage more people to walk and cycle. An element of the program is to make areas greener and to reduce air pollution. We are delivering the first tranche of Healthy Neighbourhoods in the Lewisham Lee Green, East Sydenham, Telegraph Hill and Bellingham areas.</p> <p>The Cycleways program is designed to encourage and promote safe cycling routes not dominated by vehicles. A key element of this is promoting our green spaces to provide a well-designed network of neighbourhoods. An important element of this is more street planting and sensitive grounds maintenance throughout the routes.</p>	<p>x3 Healthy neighbourhoods by April 2021 x2 Healthy neighbourhoods per FY thereafter</p> <p>2 Cycleways by April 2021 4 Cycleways by April 2022</p>
	<p>Provide interpretation and way-marking to link River Pool Linear Park and Ladywell Fields Park with:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Manor House Gardens 2. Manor Park 3. Mountsfield Park 4. Lewisham Park 	All by March 2025

<p>Goal – To actively support and encourage partnerships that seek to deliver important green infrastructure/eco-system services, such as: appropriate Environment Agency flood alleviation schemes; the All London Green Grid; the London Environment Strategy 2018; National Park City and the Grove Park Urban National Park initiative</p>	<p>Play an active role in all appropriate forums and partnerships, such as the Lewisham Biodiversity Partnership, Ravensbourne Catchment Improvement Group, Environment Agency Flood Alleviation consultations, Thames Tideway, All London Green Grid, London Parks and Open Spaces benchmarking group, Allotment Officers Association, and the London Tree Officers forum.</p>	<p>Annual review monitoring report</p>
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Environmental aims	Delivery plan measures and undertakings	Timescales/ milestones
<p>Goal – To promote the different features and facilities available in Lewisham’s parks so that the characteristics of each park are fully promoted via the LBL website</p>	<p>Update and review all web-based information</p>	<p>Complete overhaul by 2021</p>
	<p>Explore with the web team some interactive search element or map that the public can access to illustrate park features and facilities, such as: toilets; cafes; sports (field, tennis, table tennis, bowls, rugby, cricket, kite-ing and frisby); horticultural features e.g. trees and bedding; play provision including water play; relaxation; walking for health; events; linkages; formal and historic elements, memorials and monuments</p>	<p>Annual review monitoring report</p>
<p>Goal – To encourage recycling, promote home recycling and discourage single use plastic</p>	<p>To install H2O drinking water fountains</p>	<p>3 per year, 15 by 2025</p>
	<p>Install signs on all newly installed bins and on noticeboards to encourage and promote home recycling</p>	<p>Annual review monitoring report</p>
	<p>Monitor amount of green waste disposed of offsite and reduce quantity every year</p>	<p>Annual review monitoring report</p>
<p>Goal – Where new planting is implemented these will be designed, where appropriate, to be sustainable planting schemes e.g. hardy and drought tolerant</p>	<p>Monitor the number of new planting schemes that deliver an integrated approach to fertiliser, weed control and watering by using drought-tolerant plants, recycled mulches and that minimise the need for all chemical applications</p>	<p>Annual review monitoring report</p>
<p>Goal – To compost green waste in the parks it was generated in, leave fallen trees and standing dead wood in situ, where appropriate and safe to do so</p>	<p>Monitor the amount of mulch imported from suppliers and reduce quantity every year</p>	<p>Annual review monitoring report</p>
	<p>Actively work with tree contractors to co-ordinate the use of chipped bark for local parks and open spaces when contractors are working in the vicinity</p>	<p>Annual review monitoring report</p>
<p>Goal – To develop and trial an integrated weed control policy to avoid, explore alternatives and reduce the use of herbicide</p>	<p>Target specific locations within key parks where alternative methods would have the greatest benefit and monitor effectiveness and cost.</p>	<p>Interim report by May 2023 Final report by May 2025</p>
<p>Goal – To work with ‘Friends of’ user groups to support the implementation of projects designed to benefit locally appropriate biodiversity and engagement</p>	<p>Measure the number of distinct biodiversity projects Measure the number of volunteers</p>	<p>Annual review monitoring report</p>

Goal – To trial electric machinery to understand its performance and cost benefits	Measure the area/features managed with electric machinery, and monitor the effectiveness and cost	Interim report by May 2023 Final report by May 2025
Goal – To prohibit ice cream van idling and work towards installing electric points to improve air quality in and around parks	Monitor the number of ice cream concessions and the installation of electric points	Annual review monitoring report
Goal – To increase the parks tree stock and linear metres of hedgerow	Record the number of newly planted trees and tree losses. Achieve a greater than 2:1 ratio. Record the establishment of 150 metres of hedgerow per year.	Annual review monitoring report
Goal – To achieve new green linkages and work with neighbouring boroughs to address regional environmental issues	Deptford Parks Liveable Neighbourhood (DPLN) – new greening areas on Rolt Street, Scawen Road and Woodpecker Road following community engagement	April 2021
Goal – To improve water quality in the Ravensbourne, Pool and Quaggy rivers so that they can achieve ‘Good ecological potential’	Deliver over 40 river-related volunteer sessions Lead the 3 Rivers Clean Up initiative in June/July each year Work in partnership with the Ravensbourne Catchment Improvement Group to identify projects that will enhance the biological quality of the rivers and river corridors	Annual review monitoring report
Goal – To continue to partner the ‘Street trees for Living’ initiative to plant and care for more street trees	Deliver the £48k Street Trees for Schools project in partnership	Plant 100 trees by 2022
	Plant an additional 200 street trees per year in partnership	Annual review monitoring report

Open Space distance standards

Distance standards for the provision of different sizes of publicly accessible greenspace, types of playspace and types of natural greenspace that are set out in The London Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance. These standards provide guidelines for what the types of open spaces that should be provided at maximum walking distances from the location of any home in London.

Publicly accessible Greenspace		
Minimum size of greenspace (guide)	Maximum walking distance from homes	Open Space Categorisation
2 hectares	400m / approximately 10 minutes	Local park and open spaces
20 hectares	1.2km / approximately 30 minutes	District parks
60 hectares	3.2km / approximately 1 hour and 10 minutes	Metropolitan parks

Playspace			
Type of playspace	Walking distance and approximate time	Minimum size	Description
Local Area for Play Play area for ages 0–6	100m / 3 minutes	0.01 hectare	A stimulating landscape that encourages play, but won't necessarily include play equipment.
Local Equipped Area for Play Playground for ages 0–8	400m / 10 minutes	0.04 hectare	A stimulating landscape that encourages play and includes play equipment.
Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play Playground for ages 0–12+	1,000m / 20 minutes	0.1 hectare	A stimulating landscape that encourages play and includes play equipment with some equipment for teenagers.

Natural Greenspace

Natural Greenspaces are also known as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs). They are designated as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation for their nature and biodiversity value.

There are three different categories of Sites for Importance for Nature Conservation – Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation, Sites of Borough Importance for Nature Conservation and Sites of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation.

Natural Greenspace	
Types of publicly accessible Natural Greenspace	Walking distance and approximate time
Borough or Metropolitan Site of Importance for Nature Conservation	1,000m / 20 minutes

Access to Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation do not have a distance standard in the London Plan.

Mapping Open Space distance standards

Maps illustrating which areas of the Borough meet the distance standards and where there are areas of deficiency are provided on page 36.

Distance standards do not currently exist for the provision of other types of open spaces such as allotments, community gardens and outdoor sports facilities.

Responding to open space deficits

Where deficits of open space provision are identified there will most often not be the land availability to create new open spaces, given the need for land for housing. Therefore it will be necessary to consider the following mitigation strategies for the areas of deficit:

- Improving the quality of the nearest open spaces
- Improving walking and cycling routes to the nearest open spaces
- Introducing ‘pocket parks’ on streets where small sections of roads are closed and replaced with public amenity space. (See precedents on the next page).
- Securing planning contributions from strategic sites to contribute to the continued improvements of open spaces.

New developments in Areas of Deficiency in Access to Open Space

For new developments in areas of deficiency to open space the Council will strongly resist the location of communal amenity spaces and playspaces on rooftops instead of on the ground. In addition very high quality soft landscaping including tree planting will be required.

Occasionally, the Council will seek to negotiate the provision of publicly accessible open space on a development site taking into account the following factors:

- The size of the site and the practicality of making on-site provision of open space
- The additional open space users which the development of the site will generate
- The accessibility of the site to existing publicly accessible open space
- The need for open space, taking into account factors including child population density and the health and deprivation levels of the local population
- Ensuring that there is a sustainable mechanism for maintaining the space after it has been provided
- The Local Plan will identify sites on which on-site provision of open space will be required.

Precedents of new open spaces

Charlottenburg Park, Deptford



Mulalley

Charlottenburg Park was opened in 2016 as part of a wider regeneration scheme.

Temporary Pocket Park, Prince Street, Deptford



Source: Lewisham Council

This pocket park scheme was implemented in August 2019 as part of Transport for London's 'Liveable Neighbourhoods' project, to test the impact of removing traffic from the street and creating more pedestrian-friendly amenity spaces.

Pocket Park, Northcote Road, Waltham Forest



This pocket park was delivered in 2017 and has reduced vehicular use of residential streets and increased public space.

Credit: Simon Turner, commissioned by Waltham Forest Council.

Surrey Canal Linear Park



The Surrey Canal Linear Park is located along the route of the former Surrey Canal that was filled-in in the 1970s. The park was first opened in 2016 as part of a wider regeneration scheme for the area and is due to be extended as part of the regeneration of the Deptford Wharves site.

Open Space overview borough wide

This document assesses publicly accessible open space and does not include assessment of private housing land, private sports pitches and private allotments. An audit of current open space provision and the quality of this provision was carried out in the summer of 2018. A total of 349 sites were surveyed, and categorised in accordance with the following typologies.

Typology (PPG17)	Area (ha)
Parks and Gardens	47
Children and Teenagers (play)	43
Natural and Semi-natural Urban Greenspace	26
Outdoor Sports facilities	25
Amenity	88
Allotments and Community Gardens	47
Green Corridors	62
Cemeteries and Churchyards	11
Total	349

Parks and Gardens

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

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

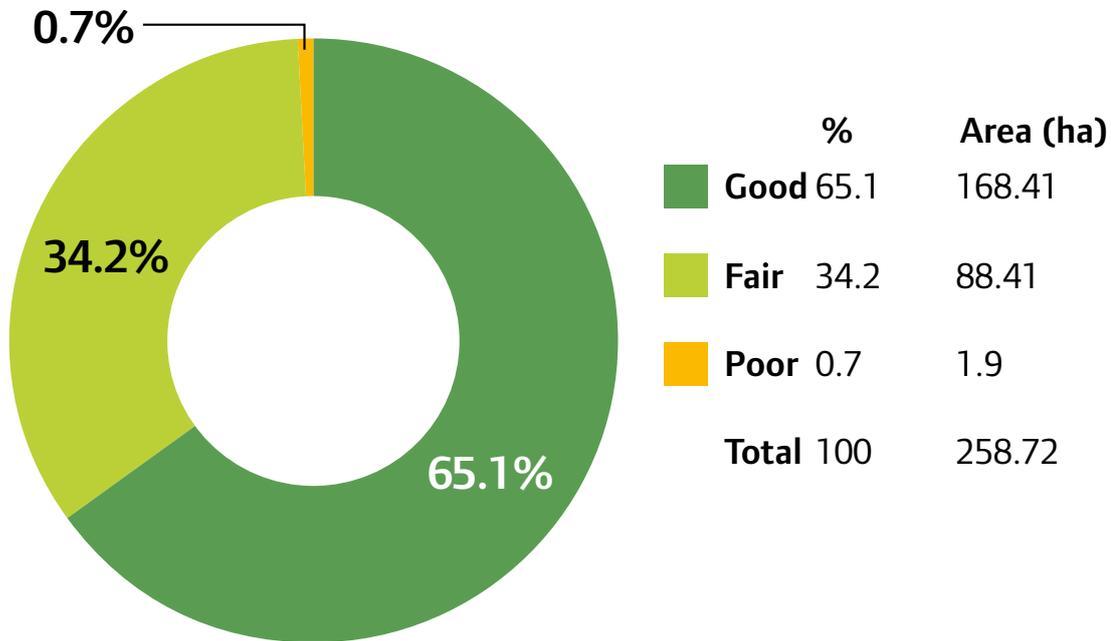
Parks and gardens cover 273ha, 7.8% of the borough. Whilst the borough is fortunate to have a good geographic spread of parks and gardens, certain areas are found to be deficient.

Lewisham is well-served with open spaces of ‘Metropolitan’ scale. There are small areas of deficiency to the west of Forest Hill and to the south-east of Grove Park. Lewisham has a significant deficit in ‘District’ parks. Only Beckenham Place Park Common and Summerhouse Fields in the extreme south of the borough lie within this definition. ‘District’ parks in neighbouring boroughs create some provision on the western fringes of the borough.

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

Quality assessment

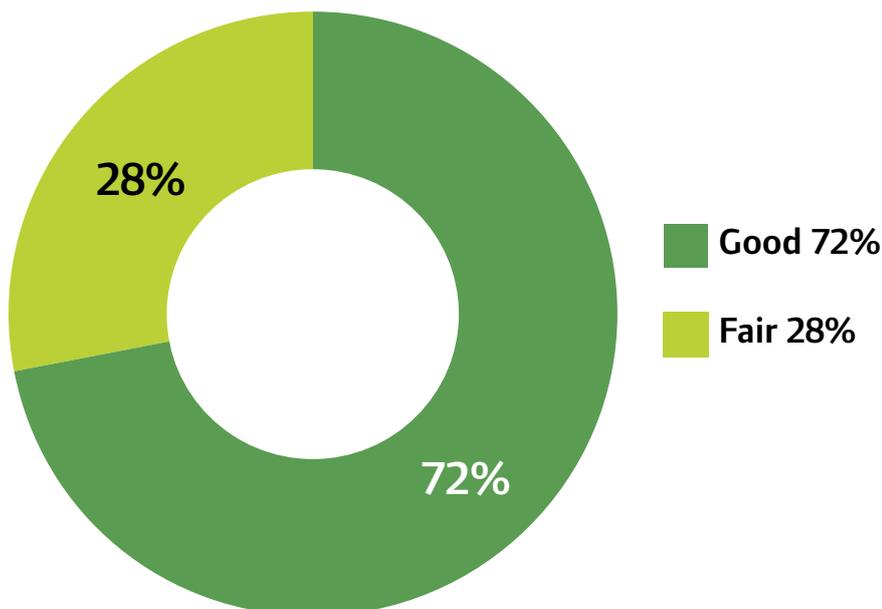
Quality by area



The Quality Assessment for Lewisham’s parks and gardens based on area shows 65% is of ‘good’ quality, 34% is of ‘fair’ quality and just under 1% of the area is of poor quality.

The assessment suggests, in the context of the London Plan typology, there are no local parks judged as being ‘poor.’ 45% are assessed as ‘good’ and 55% as ‘fair’.

London Plan



‘Good’ quality sites are mostly local parks with only 17% being ‘small’ open spaces.

‘Fair’ quality parks are evenly distributed between ‘local’ and ‘small open space.’

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

Summary of quality assessment findings

Local park typology

Poor

None listed

Fair

Durham Hill, Home Park, Folkestone Gardens, Southend Park, Lewisham Park, Forster Memorial Park, Riverview Walk, Blythe Hill Fields and Beckenham Place Park – The Common and Summerhouse Field



Beckenham Place Park

Small open space typology

Poor

Friendly Gardens (Lewisham), Lewisham War Memorial Gardens and Luxmore Gardens

Fair

Baxter's Fields, Edith Nesbitt Gardens, Grove Park Library Gardens, Evelyn Green, Eckington Gardens, Ladywell Green/Slagrove Place, Broadway Fields, Sayes Court Park, Ravensbourne Park Gardens and Margaret McMillan Park



Margaret McMillan Park

Pocket park typology

Poor

Riverdale Sculpture Park, Deptford Memorial Gardens, Westbourne Drive Enclosure, Wickham Gardens, Beachborough Gardens, Beaulieu Avenue Green, Kirkdale Green, St Norbert Green, Turnham Road Green

Fair

Lewisham Way, Hatcham Gardens, Ferranti Park, Culverley Green



Horniman Triangle



Far left: Ladywell Fields
Left: Pepys Park

Children's Play

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

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

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

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

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



The lake at Beckenham Place Park

Natural and Semi-natural Urban Greenspace

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

In 2015–16 Lewisham Planning Policy commissioned a borough wide ‘Habitat and Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) survey’. The survey was required to inform the preparation of a new integrated Local Plan to replace the Lewisham Core Strategy.

For the full report see: <https://lewisham.gov.uk/myservices/planning/policy/ldf/evidence-base/ldf-evidence-base--environment>

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

- the identification of six new proposed SINCs
- upgrading of four sites from Sites of Local Importance to Sites of Borough Importance
- boundary changes to 28 SINC sites that increase the area by 12.8ha.

If adopted by the new Local Plan there will be new additions to existing SINCs: six new proposed SINCs. This will increase the SINC area from 595ha to 614ha. This represents a 3% increase in ten years.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Five SINC's were assessed as meeting their current level of designation, but are in decline. These are Grove Park Cemetery; Hillcrest Estate Woodland; Hither Green Cemetery, Lewisham Crematorium and Reigate Road Open Space; Mayow Park; and St Paul's Churchyard and Crossfield Street Open Space. Since the publication of this study, Crossfield Street Open Space has been lost to development to facilitate the Tideway Tunnel.



Outdoor sports facilities

This category includes stand-alone sports facilities such as public, private, leisure and educational sports grounds and playing fields. They also include sports facilities listed under other typologies, for example public parks. A dedicated ‘Playing Pitch Strategy’ (PPS) and needs assessment has been prepared (June 2019), that provides a robust evidence base and identifies if the supply and demand of playing pitches within the Local Authority is sufficient to meet the current and future needs for sport.

Amenity Green Space

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

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



There are 37 allotment sites in the borough



Allotments

There are currently 37 allotments sites within the borough catering for more than 1,100 plot-holders, including schools and community groups. This is an increase of 200 plot-holders over a three-year period. The increase reflects our encouragement of smaller, more manageable plots, to provide better opportunities for families and for those with less time to manage a traditional full-sized plot.

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

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

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

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

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

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

- **Health** – access to locally grown nutritious food, regular outdoor exercise and fostering of physical and mental well-being
- **Education** – all ages learning how to plan, grow, maintain and harvest crops; learning about organic, sustainable methods of land management as well as encouraging co-operative, social skills
- **Environmental sustainability** – provides a forum for, and encouraging, prudent use of resources (water/composting), reduces food miles and encourages wildlife habitats.

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



The Waterlink Way runs along the rivers Ravensbourne and Pool

Green Corridors – networks, chains and grids

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

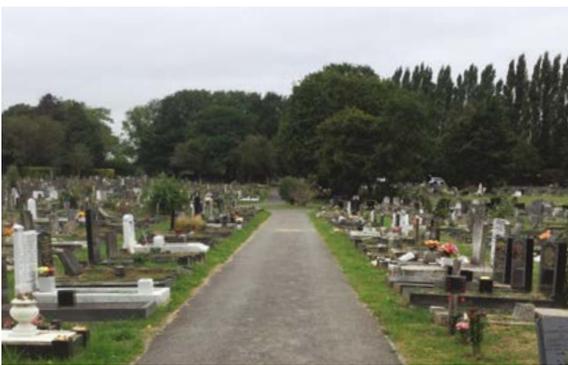
The Waterlink Way is a shared route for cyclists and pedestrians that runs from the River Thames at Deptford Creek southwards to the Green Chain Walk at Beckenham Place Park. It follows the route of Sustrans Route 21 as it passes through Inner London on its way to the south coast at Eastbourne. The Waterlink Way takes users north-south through the centre of the borough along the rivers Ravensbourne and Pool. It serves as a valuable blue-green artery connecting many of the borough's green spaces with the green chain walk network and has been a driving force for restoring the river corridor and its associated habitats.

Both the Green Chain and Waterlink Way forms part of the South East London Green Chain Plus Area which is a component of the All London Green Grid (ALGG). The ALGG aims to create a regional network of interlinked and multi-purpose open and green spaces with good connections to the places where people live and work, and to public transport, the capital's rivers - especially the Thames, the countryside and urban fringe.

The railway embankments and neighbouring soft landscaping in Lewisham include long stretches of valuable natural greenspaces with high levels of biodiversity. However, large parts of these areas are currently not publicly accessible. Introducing pedestrian and cycling routes along them represents a key strategic opportunity for significantly improving pedestrian and cycling accessibility through the Borough.



St Mary's Churchyard



Far left: Grove Park Cemetery
Left: Brockley and Ladywell Cemeteries

Cemeteries and churchyards

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

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

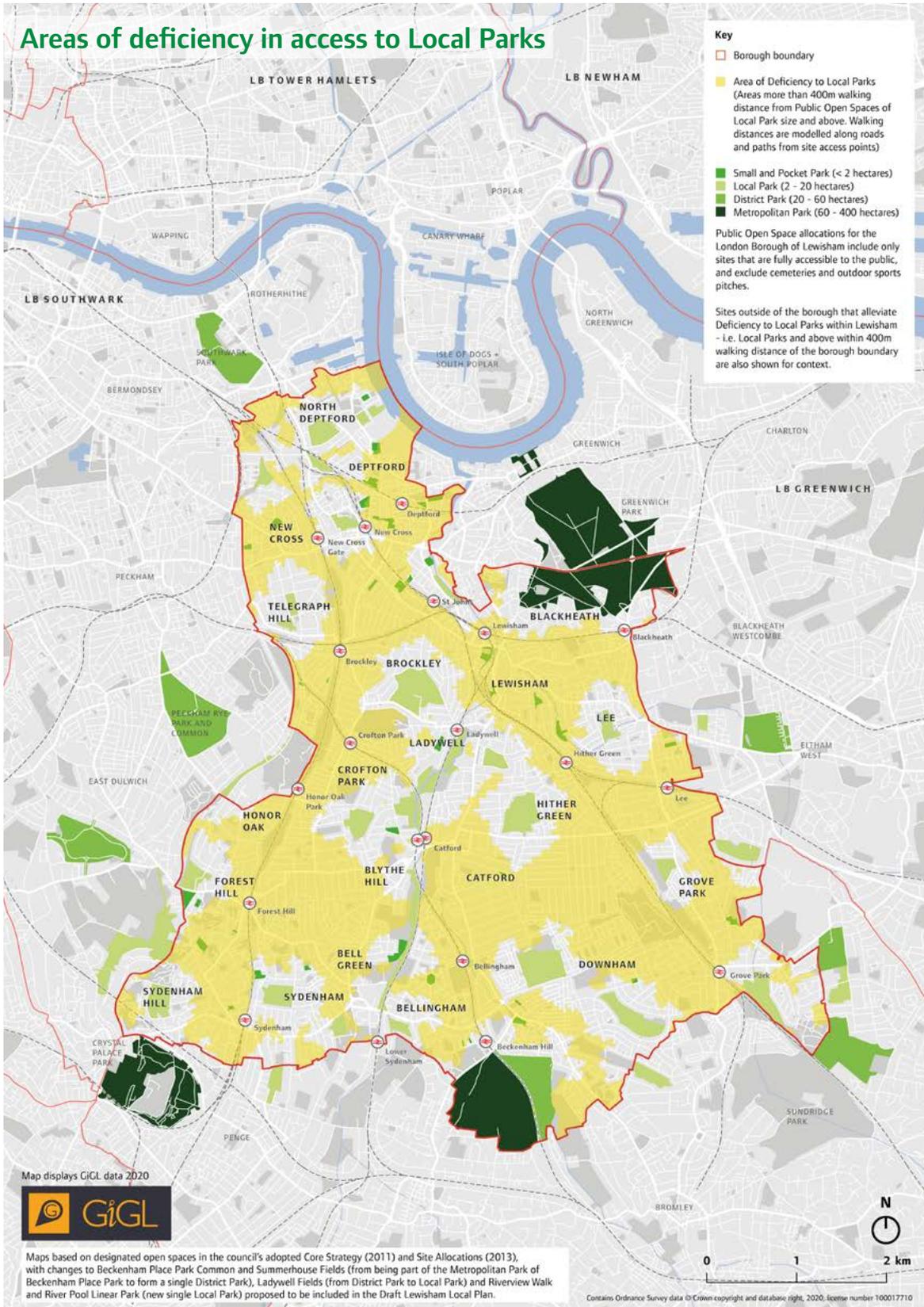
The Council maintains five churchyards: St Mary's, St Margaret's, St Pauls, St Bartholomew's and St Andrew's under the 1906 Open Spaces Act, where deeds of grant were signed agreeing that the churchyards should be used by the public as open space and that the Council would maintain them in a 'good and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

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

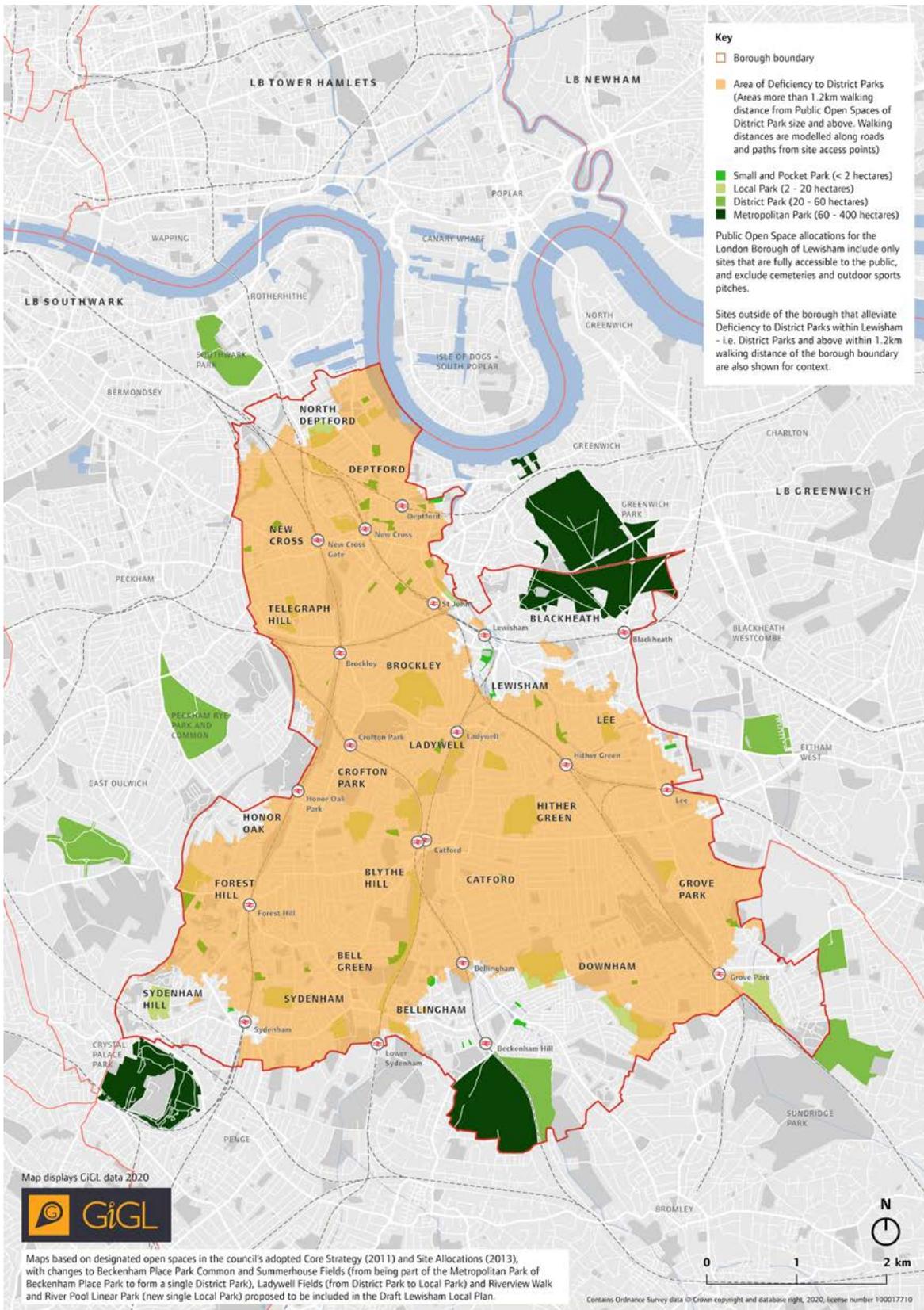
'The opportunity to study the flora and birds is not to be underestimated' – Friends of Brockley and Ladywell Cemetery.

Open Space provision

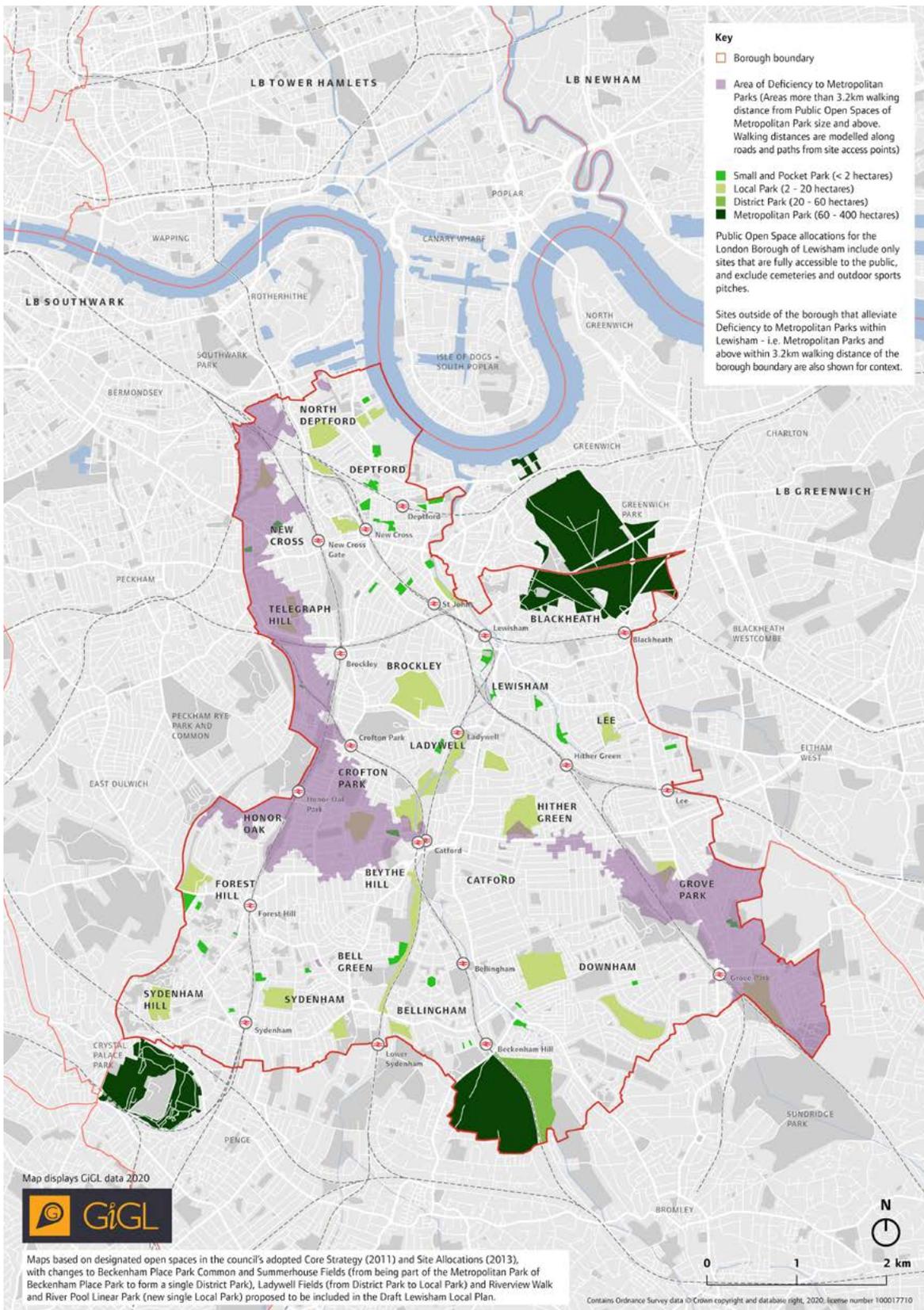
The below maps show Open Space provision of different sizes of parks, playspace and sites of nature conservation in accordance with the London Plan distance standards described on page 22.



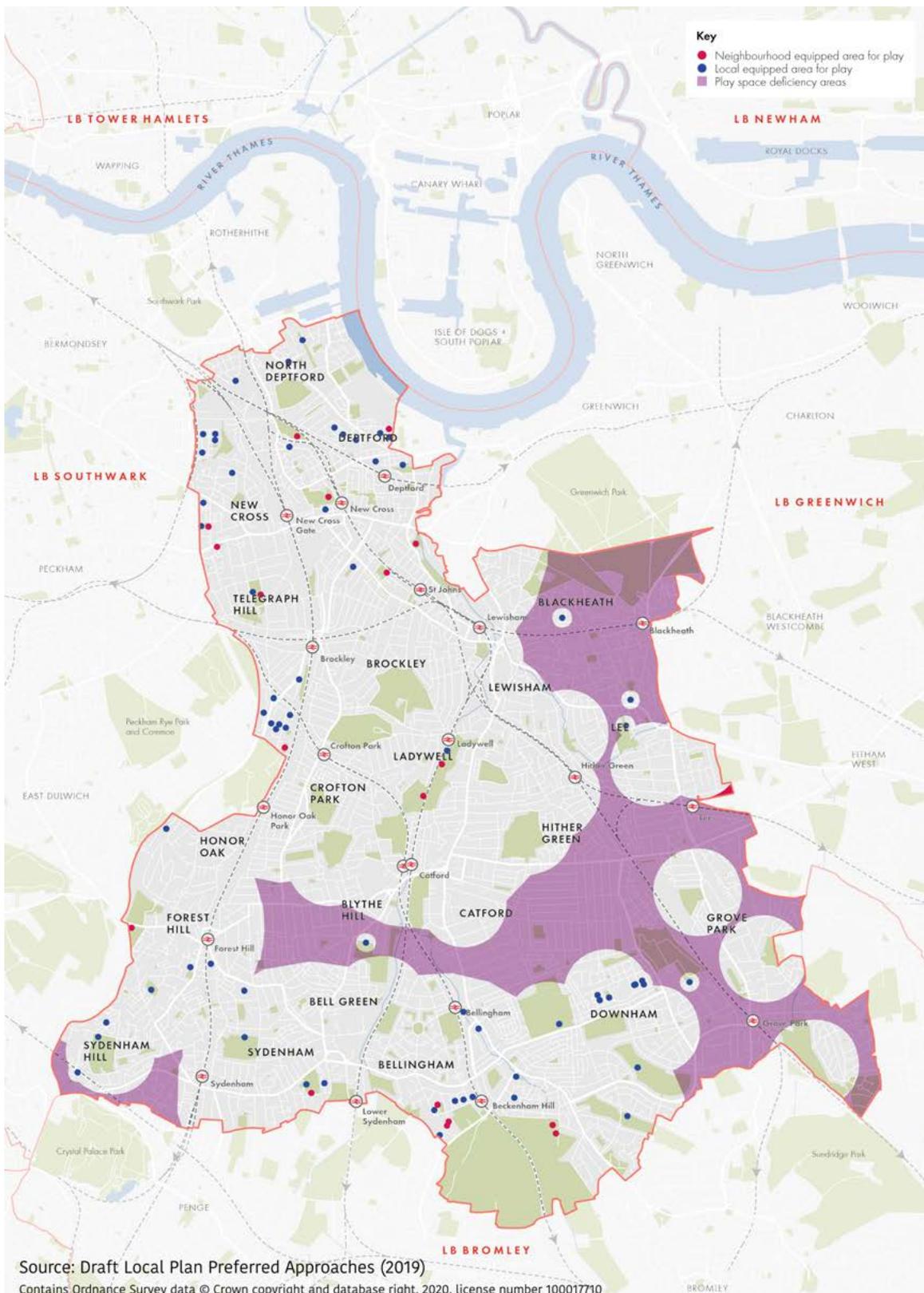
Areas of deficiency in access to District Parks



Areas of deficiency in access to Metropolitan Parks

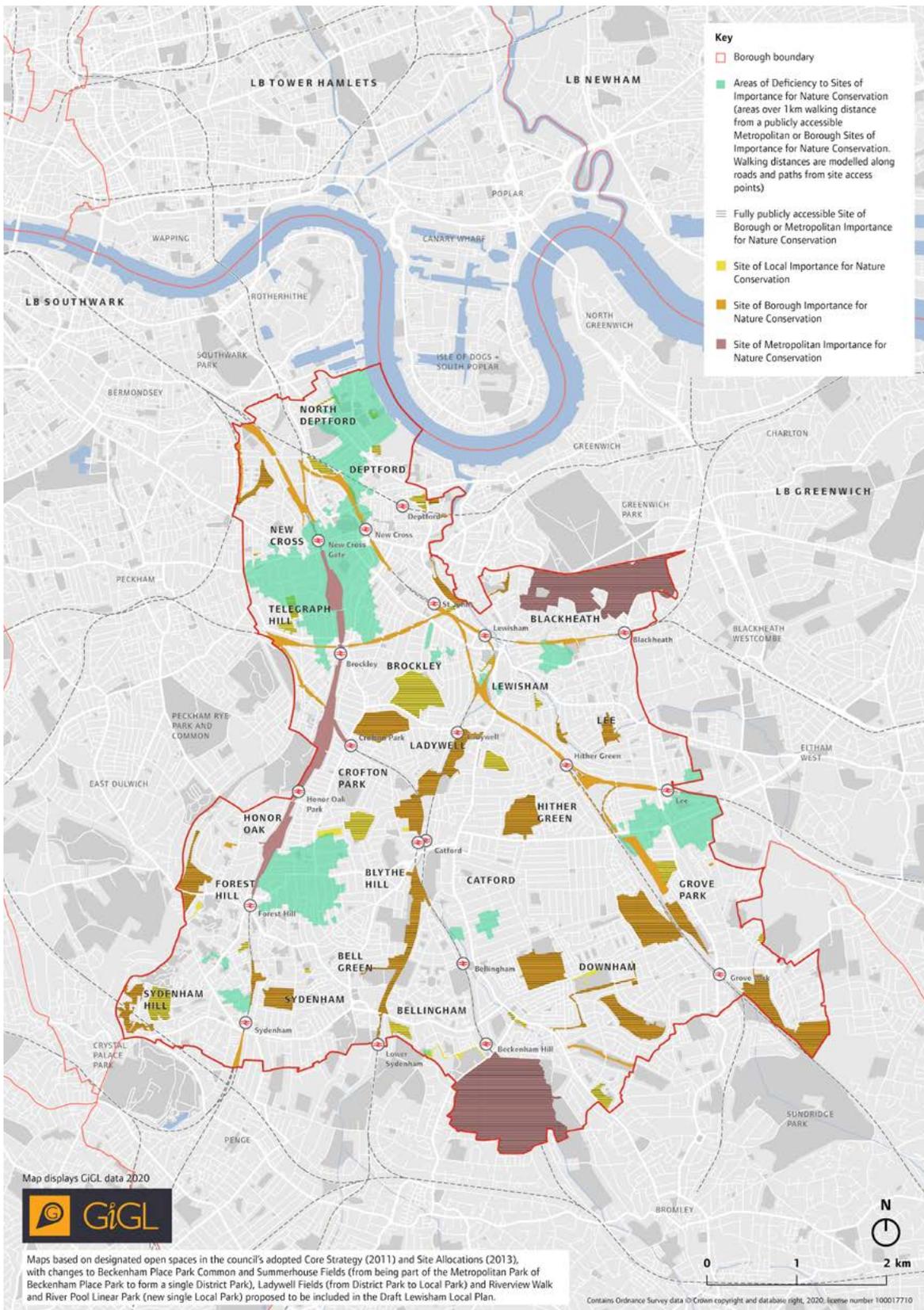


Areas of deficiency in access to playspace



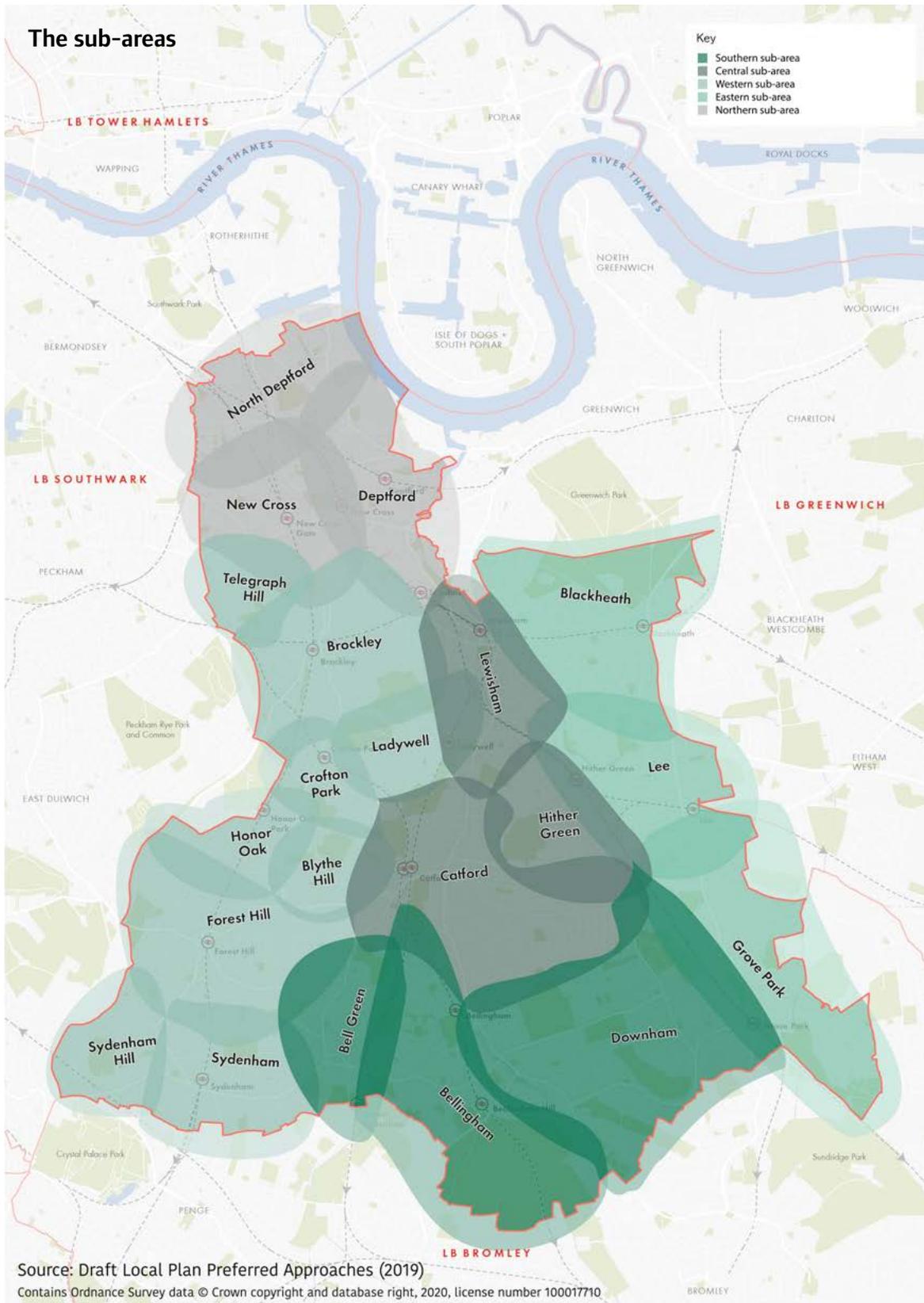
It should be noted that above map uses straight-line distances from playspaces to determine areas of deficiency rather than walking distances as walking distance data is not available.

Areas of deficiency in access to Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation

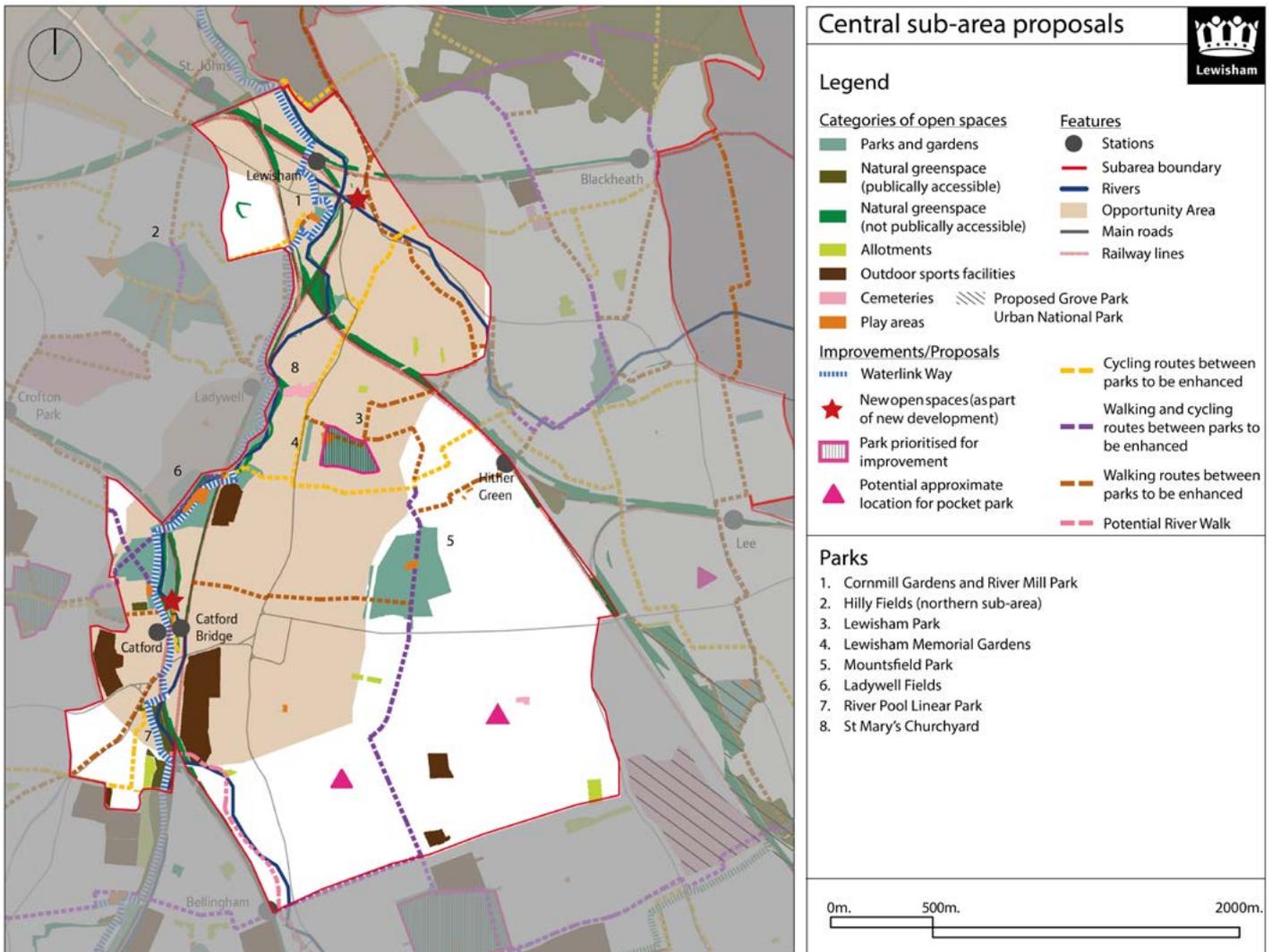


Sub-area strategies

The open space assets and needs of five different sub-areas of the borough are summarised below. Please see the draft Lewisham Characterisation Study (2020) for further analysis of the different sub-areas.



Central sub-area



Source: London Borough of Lewisham (2020)
Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right, 2020, license number 100017710

Current and future area profile

Lewisham Central includes the borough's two principal centres: Lewisham Town Centre and Catford Town Centre. Located centrally, the area is bounded to the north by Deptford, to the east by Blackheath and Lee, to the south by the southern suburbs and to the west by Crofton Park and Brockley. The Central sub-area has four distinct places: Lewisham Town Centre, Ladywell, Hither Green and Catford.

The Central sub-area currently has the highest density of all the sub-areas in Lewisham, with Lewisham Town Centre being of a very high density, where there is a predominance of tall buildings of between 10 and 25 storeys, many of which have been delivered over the last 15 years. There are some tall buildings also located around the A21 and the South Circular in the area between Lewisham Town Centre and Catford. The rest of the sub-area is of a typically lower-density with two-storey housing being the predominant typology. The density of the Central sub-area is set to rise further over the next 20 years, particularly within the Lewisham and Catford regeneration and growth area, which is one of the most significant areas of growth

within the borough; and the sub-area has the potential to provide approximately 7,000 new homes. Population increases will correspond with increased demand on existing open space and new open spaces will be required as is recognised in The Lewisham Town Centre Local Plan (2014). As part of the redevelopment of Lewisham Town Centre one new open space has already been delivered as part of the redevelopment of Lewisham Town Centre – Cornmill Gardens and River Mill Park (2007), and further new spaces are planned.

Provision

Greenspace

The largest parks serving the Central sub-area are Mountsfield Park (13 hectares), Ladywell Fields (16 hectares) and Lewisham Park (4 hectares). The River Ravensbourne is a key feature of several parks in the area and runs through Ladywell Fields and the River Pool Linear Park.

There are two substantial Areas of Deficiency in Access to Local Parks in the Central sub-area: an area surrounding Lewisham Town Centre and another area covering Catford Town centre, south Catford and much of Hither Green. Both of these Areas of Deficiency in Access to Local Parks are characterised by extensive grids of Victorian and Inter-War low-rise housing and there is no undeveloped land available to accommodate new open spaces. There are two large private sports fields within walking distance from Catford Town Centre, which provide visual amenity from the street.

There are no parks above District Park size (20 hectares or more) in the Central sub-area, Lewisham Town Centre benefits greatly from being within 10 minutes' walking distance of Blackheath – a Metropolitan Park (83 hectares) and the south of the sub-area benefits from being a short bus-ride away from Beckenham Place Park (70 hectares).

Playspace

The Areas of Deficiency in Access to Playspace in the Central sub-area broadly correspond to the Areas of Deficiency to Local Parks. There is an area to the east of Lewisham Town Centre and another area that includes Catford Town Centre, South Catford and much of Hither Green. There are only two Local Equipped Areas for Play in the area which are both located at Ladywell Fields.

Natural Greenspace

There are no Areas of Deficiency to Accessible Natural Greenspace in the Central sub-area.

Quality

The two largest parks in the sub-area – Mountsfield Park and Ladywell Fields – are of a good quality. However, Lewisham Park – which serves the Town Centre – is only of fair quality.

Walking and cycling access

The two north-south railway lines, as well as the north-south A21 road, create east-west severance within the area and compromise access between Ladywell Fields in the west of the sub-area and Mountsfield Park and Lewisham Park in the east of the sub-area.

The Waterlink Way provides a generally good quality north-south walking and cycling route through the River Pool Linear Park and Ladywell Fields. However, the section of the route that

links the River Pool Linear Park and Ladywell Fields through Catford is of low quality. In addition, the walking and cycling routes from Catford Town Centre to the Waterlink Way could be enhanced with safer and more attractive pedestrian and cycling crossings of the South Circular (A205) and surrounding roads.

Improvement strategies

Addressing Open Space deficiencies

Within Lewisham Town Centre, the second and final part of the redevelopment of Lewisham Gateway will create new high quality public space and re-naturalise a section of the culverted River Ravensbourne. The redevelopment of other sites within the town centre, such as Lewisham shopping centre, the Tesco site and Connington Road, will also provide enhanced public spaces and offer the opportunity to further enhance and re-naturalise the river and provide a more comprehensive network of green links and open spaces.

As part of the the Council-led Catford Framework, a new civic square fronting the Broadway Theatre at the heart of the town centre is being proposed through the realignment of the South Circular (A205).

Local parks and playspace deficiency around South Catford and Hither Green could be alleviated through the closure of some sections of streets to vehicles and the creation of pocket parks. (See precedent on page 24).

Existing and future projects

The improvement of Lewisham Park should be prioritised, given the high-density development proposed for the nearby Lewisham Town Centre and the park's current 'fair rating.

Improving walking and cycling access

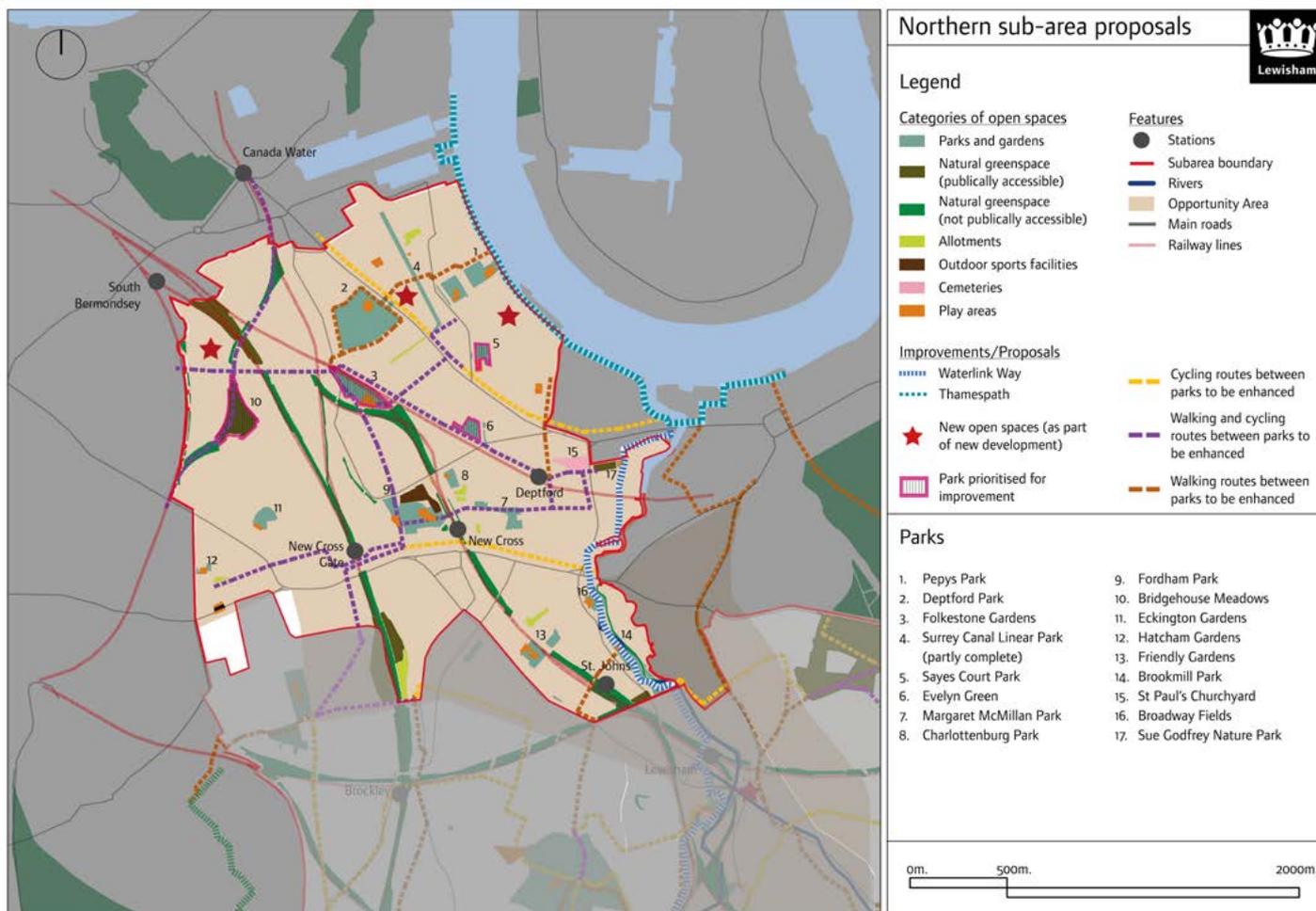
Pedestrian and cycling access between the River Pool Linear Park and Ladywell Fields (The Waterlink Way) should be improved through providing a clear cycle route along Catford Hill between River Pool Linear Park and the South Circular Road, and widening the opening through the Catford Bridge arch to improve visibility of the Waterlink Way route and reduce the risk of antisocial behaviour.

Attractive and safe east-west walking and cycling routes should be provided to improve links to Ladywell Fields from both Mountsfield Park and Lewisham Park and reduce the severance impacts of the A21 and north-south railway lines.

Green walking and cycling links should be created through the redevelopment of Lewisham Town Centre to help improve connections to the Waterlink Way, Blackheath, other parks in the north of the borough and the River Thames.

An east-west cycle link should be implemented that runs parallel to the South Circular (A205). This should include a link from Elm Lane to the Waterlink Way that goes via Vineyard Close.

Northern sub-area



Source: London Borough of Lewisham (2020)
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Current and future area profile

The Northern sub-area is bounded by the river Thames to the north, Deptford Creek and the London Borough of Greenwich to the east, Telegraph Hill to the South and the London Borough of Southwark to the west. The sub area corresponds to the Deptford and New Cross regeneration and growth area and comprises three distinct places – New Cross, Deptford, and North Deptford.

The Northern sub-area already has a much higher density than the Southern, Western and Eastern sub-areas. A large proportion of the housing in the Northern sub-area is flatted and without private gardens which means that often residents are dependent on parks and open spaces for external amenity space and access to nature.

Several railway corridors run through the area which create severance and divide the sub-area into three zones.

The Northern sub-area is one of the most significant areas of growth within the borough, with the potential for the provision of approximately 10,000 new homes over the next twenty years. Most of the sub-area is located within the Lewisham, Catford and New Cross, Opportunity

Area, and there are a number of strategic development sites identified through the existing Core Strategy and emerging Local Plan that either have been or will be delivered in the near future. Significant growth in Southwark will also influence the area's future role and character, notably within the Old Kent Road Opportunity Area to the west and at Canada Water to the north.

Provision

Greenspace

There is a good level of overall provision of Local Parks in the Northern sub-area, but most of the sub-area lies in an Area of Deficiency to District and Metropolitan Parks. There is a small area in the north-west of the sub-area which benefits from Southwark Park (in Southwark) being within walking distance. The largest parks in the sub-area are Fordham Park (7 hectares) and Deptford Park (3.5 hectares).

There are significant Areas of Deficiency to Local Parks in the north-east, the south-west and along the edge of the Northern sub-area. However the following small parks provide some mitigation for the deficiency of Local Parks – Charlottenburg Park, Sue Godfrey Nature Park, St Paul's Churchyard, Twinkle Park (Greenwich), Charlotte Turner Gardens (Greenwich), and Brimington Park (Southwark). Two Areas of Deficit to greenspace in the borough are mitigated by open spaces in Southwark.



Charlottenburg Park

The rivers in the Northern sub-area provide some mitigation for the deficiency of greenspace. The sub-area enjoys adjacency to the River Thames for a short stretch of approximately 700m, and the River Ravensbourne – a tributary of the Thames – runs through it, joining the Thames at Deptford Creek.

Playspace

The Northern sub-area has no Areas of Deficiency in Access to Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play. However, there are a few pockets of deficiency in Access to Local Equipped Areas for Play and much of the northern area lies in an area of deficit to Local Areas for Play, as does most of the borough.

Natural Greenspace

There are Areas of Deficiency in Access to Natural Greenspace around New Cross and at the most northern point of the sub-area.

The embankments of the two north-south railway corridors in the sub-area provide green corridors which include substantially-sized Natural Greenspaces (Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation). However, these are mostly inaccessible.

Quality

The two largest parks in the Northern sub-area – Fordham Park and Deptford Park are rated as being of a good quality. However, over 50% of the open spaces are rated as either fair or poor.

Walking and cycling access

The railway corridors that run through the sub-area create severance and compromise walking and cycling accessibility to open spaces. To address this issue the 'North Lewisham Links' programme of greenspace improvements was created and the delivery of improvements is ongoing. As part of this programme 'Route 1' – an east-west walking and cycling route that runs between Deptford and New Cross had already been provided and is very well used.

Improvement strategies

Addressing open space deficiencies

To provide future mitigation for deficiency in access to open space and meet the needs of the growing population, new open spaces are being planned as part of several very large development sites, including New Bermondsey; and the Surrey Canal Linear Park will link the developments of Marine Wharf, Cannon Wharf and development at the Deptford Timberyard site. Opportunities will also be sought to create new open space on other strategic sites, including Hatcham Works and Creekside.

Despite the provision of some additional open spaces, it is recognised that in the context of Lewisham facing significant housing need, there is limited scope to provide major additional open space and it is therefore essential that the quality of existing greenspaces and access to them be improved to meet the needs of the growing population.

Existing and future projects

All open spaces in this sub-area should receive investment to ensure that they can meet the demands of the existing and greatly increased future population.

Evelyn Green is one of the few publicly accessible open spaces that is rated as 'poor' in the sub-area and it is a priority for enhancement.

The Council is currently working with park user groups and other key stakeholders to improve a number of Local Parks within the area with a 'fair' rating, including Folkestone Gardens and Sayes Court Park.

Bridgehouse Meadows should be prioritised for improvement to help provide some mitigation for the Area of Deficit in Access to Local Parks to its south, and serve the needs of the future expanded population and the Council has secured a significant financial contribution from the Surrey Canal Triangle application to achieve this.

The New Cross Nature Reserve and Sue Godfrey Nature Reserve should be prioritised for improvement as the two accessible nature reserves in the Northern sub-area that are rated as 'fair'.

The Council will work with key local stakeholders in the area including Goldsmiths University to improve the quality and range of activities at open spaces in the New Cross area.

High quality access to the rivers in the sub-area should be maximised. Through the Convoys Wharf development the Thames Path should be implemented along the Thames River frontage, and public access, Rights of Way and views of the river along Deptford Creek should be improved through planning applications for schemes located adjacent to Deptford Creek.

Improving walking and cycling access

Walking and cycling access will continue to be improved through The North Lewisham Links project (described above). [The North Lewisham Links](#) webpage and [New Cross Area Framework](#) provide further details on the key links across the area which include: the Thames Path, the Waterlink Way, Surrey Canal Road, the Surrey Canal Linear Park, Woodpecker Walk, the Childer Street-to-Deptford route and the New Cross Nature Reserve Link.

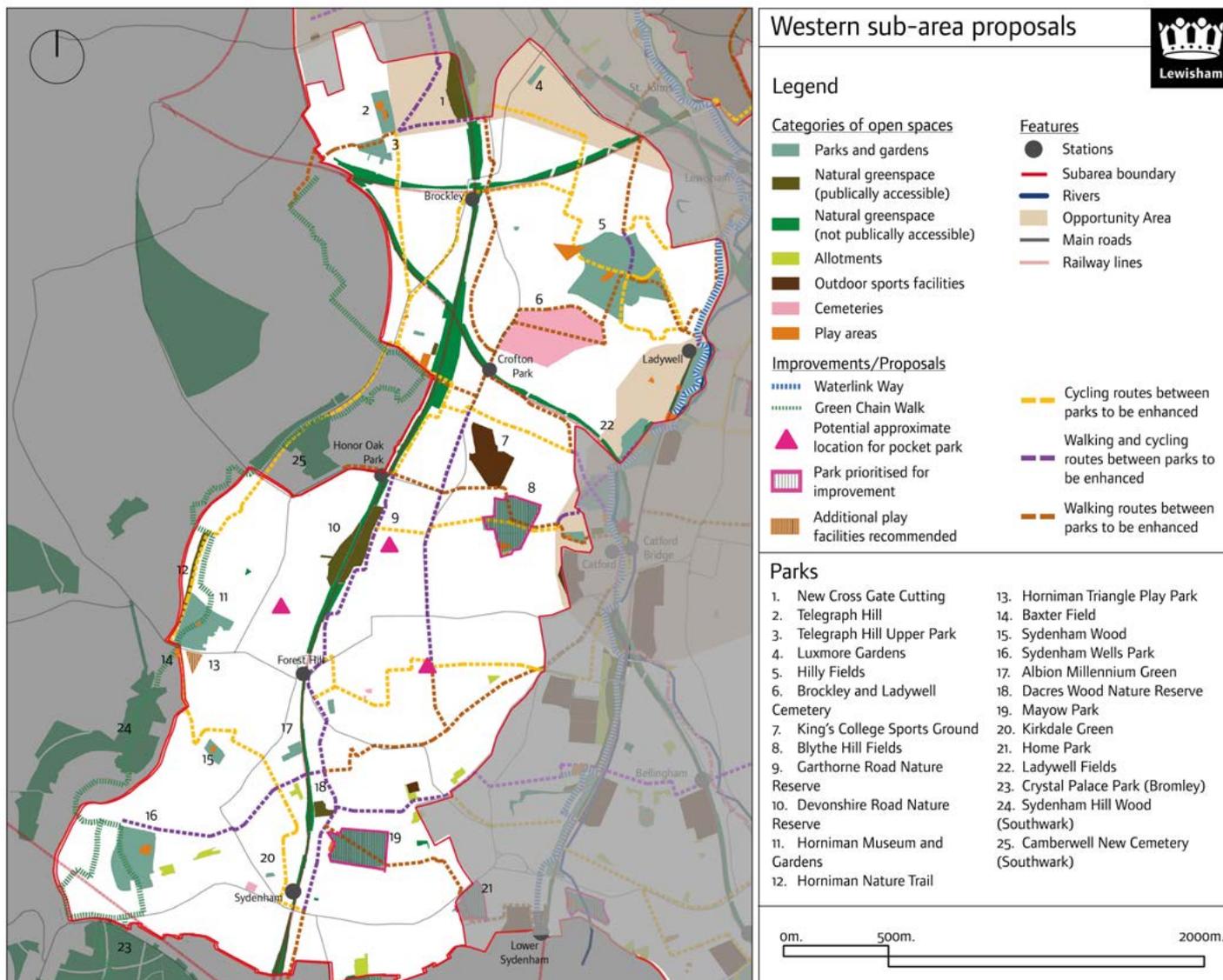
Improvements will also be made through the Healthy Neighbourhoods project, where traffic is being removed from sections of residential streets to improve the public realm and facilities for walking and cycling.

Links between the Convoys Wharf site and the neighbouring Pepys Parks should be improved as part of the redevelopment of Convoys Wharf.

In addition, cleansing and lighting strategies should be developed for underpasses and railway viaducts to improve their safety and attractiveness for pedestrians and cyclists.

Pedestrian and cycling priority should be strengthened on 'Route 1' at junctions with the highway, with the inclusion of zebra crossings where possible and traffic calming measures.

Western sub-area



Source: London Borough of Lewisham (2020)
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Current and future area profile

The Western sub-area is made up of a series of older villages located along a north-south spine which developed intensely in the Victorian period around railway stations. It comprises Telegraph Hill, Brockley, Ladywell, Crofton Park, Honor Oak, Blythe Hill, Forest Hill, Sydenham and Sydenham Hill. Although the area has a predominantly suburban character it includes a considerable number of flatted developments without private gardens, where residents are more dependent on parks and open spaces to provide their open space needs. The substantial number of flatted developments and terraced housing results in the Western sub-area being of a significant density. Large-scale redevelopment is not anticipated in the western area, however, there are opportunities for sensitive infill development, particularly in Sydenham and Forest Hill. It is estimated that approximately 1,000 homes could be delivered in the Western sub-area which would result in some increased demand on open space.

Provision

Greenspace

Greenspace provision is relatively fragmented. There are two large local open spaces in the northern part of the sub-area: Brockley and Ladywell Cemeteries (15 hectares) and Hilly Fields (19 hectares) and a concentration of open space sites in Sydenham and Upper Sydenham in the south-west corner of the borough, including the following large parks: Mayow Park (7 hectares) and the Horniman Museum and Gardens (6 hectares).

There is a significant Area of Deficiency to Local Parks in the relatively dense area of gridded residential streets between Forest Hill Station and Catford that straddles the South Circular (A205).

The southern part of the Western sub-area benefits from the nearby Crystal Palace Park in neighbouring Bromley – a large Metropolitan Park.

The Western sub-area also benefits from proximity to Sydenham Hill Wood, adjacent to the western border of the sub-area on Sydenham Hill in Southwark.

Playspace

There is an Area of Deficiency in Access to Playspace, which is similar in location but smaller in size to the Area of Deficiency in Access to Local Parks described above, which straddles the South Circular to the east of Forest Hill Station.

There is a long Area of deficiency in Access to Locally Equipped Areas to the east of the railway line from Roundhay Close to the northern edge of the sub-area.

As is the case throughout Lewisham, most of the Western sub-area lies within an Area of Deficiency in access to Local Play.

Natural Greenspace

There are no Areas of Deficiency in Access to Natural Greenspace in the Western sub-area.

The Devonshire Road Nature Reserve is a Site of Metropolitan Importance to Nature Conservation. However, public access is limited to a few hours each month.

Quality

The largest parks in the Western sub-area are of good quality. They include Hilly Fields, Mayow Park, Sydenham Wells and The Horniman Museum and Gardens.

The Horniman Triangle Play Park occupies an important strategic location but is only rated as 'fair'.

Walking and cycling access

The north-south railway line between Sydenham and New Cross (The Brighton Main Line) is a barrier to access between the east and the west of the sub-area. This issue is partially alleviated by a footbridge with a wheeling channel for bikes which crosses the railway between Sydenham Park and Dacres Road and an underpass at Forest Hill Station. However, the gradient of the wheeling channel does not meet current Cycle Standards.

Improvement strategies

Addressing Open Space Deficiencies

The creation of pocket parks on current small sections of residential streets should be considered within the Area of Deficiency to Local Parks and Play that straddles the South Circular to the east of Forest Hill Station (see example on page 24).

Existing and future projects

Blythe Hill Fields should be prioritised for improvement as it is the one larger park in the Western sub-area that is currently rated as fair.

Increasing the hours of public access to the Devonshire Road Nature Reserve will be considered.

To mitigate for the Areas of Deficiency of Play Facilities in the sub-area, enhancing play facilities at Blythe Hill Fields, Mayow Park and the Horniman Triangle Play Park is recommended.

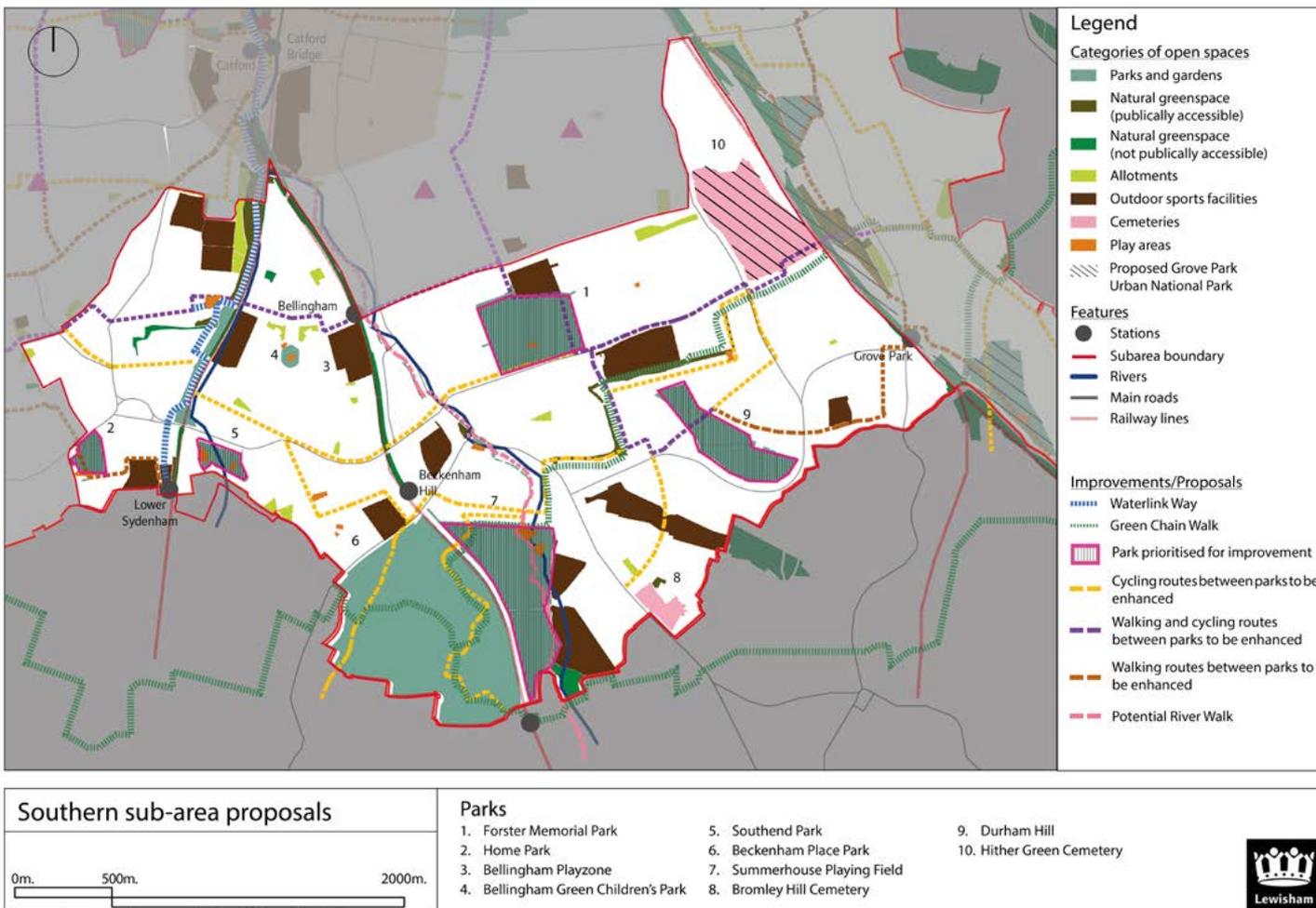
Improving walking and cycling access

To improve walking and cycling access across the Brighton Main Line, it is recommended that step-free access is provided at Forest Hill Station to the subway, and ramps are provided on the footbridge between Sydenham and Forest Hill Stations.

To mitigate for the deficits of local space and play in the area straddling the South Circular (A205), walking and cycling access should be improved to the following parks nearest to the areas of deficit: Blythe Hill Fields to the north, Mayow Park to the south, and The Horniman Museum and Gardens and The Horniman Triangle Play Park to the east.

An east-west cycle link should be implemented that runs parallel to the South Circular (A205).

Southern sub-area



Current and future area profile

The Southern sub-area comprises the neighbourhoods of Bellingham, Downham and Bell Green and is characterised by suburban development with spacious gardens. It is the sub-area with the lowest density in the borough and was largely developed after World War I. There is some growth expected in this area, with the potential provision for between 2,000 and 6,000 new homes being constructed, depending on delivery of the Bakerloo Line Extension.

Provision

Greenspace

The Southern sub-area has a large amount of greenspace and the total combined size of Areas of Deficiency in Access to Local Parks in the sub-area is the lowest of all the sub-areas. The area includes Beckenham Place Park (70 hectares) – a very large Metropolitan Park as well as other large sized parks such as The Common and Summerhouse Fields (25 hectares – and located directly adjacent to Beckenham Place Park), Durham Hill (13 hectares), Forster Memorial Park (17 hectares) and Hither Green Cemetery (18 hectares).



Forster Memorial Park

The southern sub-area also includes a number of smaller open spaces. A succession of interconnected open spaces lie along the valley of the Pool River, which forms the southern section of the Waterlink Way. The River Ravensbourne runs through Summerhouse Fields and then along the Catford Loop Railway line until it merges with the River Pool at River Pool Linear Park, just to the north of the Southern sub-area.

Playspace

The southern sub-area is generally well covered by Local Equipped Areas for Play and Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play. However, there is a small Area of Deficiency in Access to Playspace to the north-east of Downham District Centre.

Much of the sub-area lies within an Area of Deficiency in Access to Local Areas for Play, as is the case across the Borough.

Natural Greenspace

There are no Areas of Deficiency in Access to Natural Greenspace in the Southern sub-area.

Quality

The recently regenerated Beckenham Place Park is rated as a 'good' park. However, a large proportion of the parks in the Southern sub-area are only of a 'fair' quality and should be prioritised for improvement. These include Durham Hill, Forster Memorial Park, Southend Park, Home Park, Riverview walk and The Common and Summerhouse Fields.

Walking and cycling access

The Southern sub-area benefits from the regional north-south walking and cycling route of the Waterlink Way. The route runs through the sub-area alongside the River Pool from Lower Sydenham up to the River Pool Linear Park near Catford, and beyond the southern sub-area boundaries it extends up to Deptford Creek and the River Thames in the north, and down to Cator Park in Beckenham in the south. The Waterlink Way is connected to Beckenham Place Park through a spur but this is not currently signposted or supported by walking and cycling infrastructure.

The Southern sub-area benefits from another strategic walking route – the South-East London Green Chain – an east-west route which runs through Beckenham Place Park and beyond the borough boundaries to Crystal Palace to the west and Mottingham to the north-east.

Access between the adjoining Beckenham Place Park and The Common and Summerhouse Fields is difficult due to the Catford Loop Railway Line that separates the two open spaces and there is an approximate 850m distance between the existing bridges crossing the railway line. Additional severance within The Common and Summerhouse Fields is created by the River Ravensbourne.

Improvement Strategies

Existing and future projects

The parks of a 'fair' quality, named above, should be prioritised for improvement.

To improve play provision for residents within the Area of Deficiency in Access to Playspace, a 'pocket park' should be considered for inclusion within the area of deficiency. In addition facilities within the nearest park – Durham Hill – should be improved.

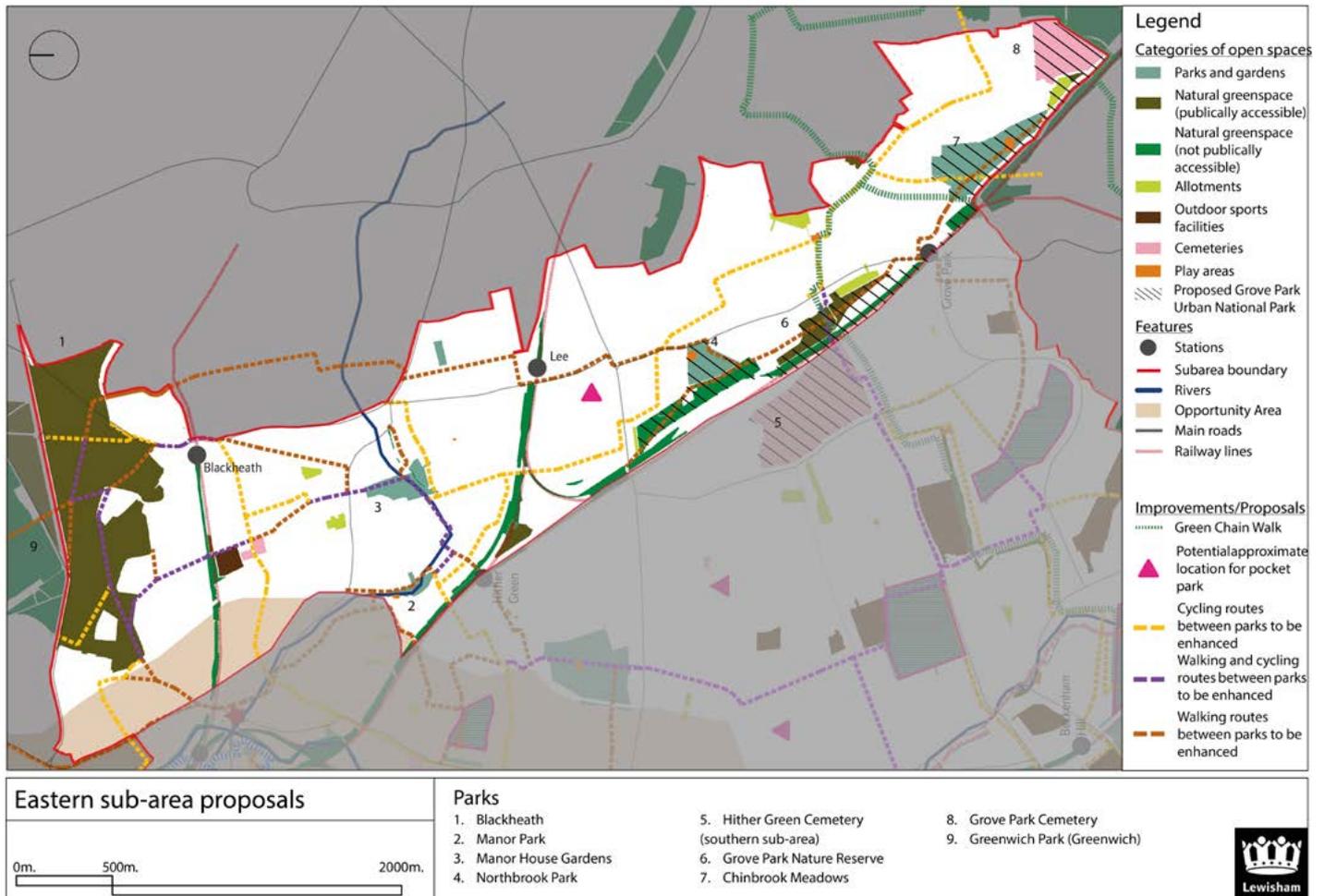
Improving walking and cycling access

Signage and other walking and cycling infrastructure are recommended for the spur of The Waterlink Way connecting The Waterlink Way to Beckenham Place Park.

An additional bridge across the Catford Loop Railway Line between Beckenham Place Park and Summerhouse Fields should be considered.

Access from the Areas of Deficiency in Access to Play in the east of the Southern sub-area to the nearest play facilities at Durham Hill should be improved.

Eastern sub-area



Current and future area profile

The Eastern sub-area comprises three distinct places – Blackheath, Lee, and Grove Park – which historically were three centres on the road to Greenwich. It is bounded by Lewisham Town Centre, Hither Green and Downham to the West, the London Borough of Greenwich to the East and the London Borough of Bromley to the South. Generally, development is of a low scale and density with a suburban feel and the character of the Eastern sub-area transitions from north to south from a discernible village at Blackheath with a mixture of sizes of housing, to Victorian terraces in Lee and then 20th century suburbs in Grove Park in the South.

Over the next 20 years it is anticipated that growth will be relatively moderate, with the potential to provide approximately 1,000 new homes. There are likely to be concentrations of growth around town centres – particularly within Lee Green and Grove Park – that offer the opportunity to provide new and improved public spaces as part of any future development.



Manor House Gardens

Provision

Greenspace

The Eastern sub-area enjoys Lewisham’s largest greenspace – The Metropolitan Park of Blackheath (83 hectares) – as well as proximity to Greenwich Park, another large Metropolitan Park that adjoins Blackheath, and is located just beyond the sub-area and borough boundary in the London Borough of Greenwich.

There are three other Local Parks in the area of a significant size – Manor House Gardens (4 hectares), Northbrook Park (4 hectares) and Chinbrook Meadows (11 hectares) – as well as the accessible Grove Park Nature Reserve (5 hectares). All four of these spaces are of a ‘good’ quality. Manor House Gardens is a site with particular significance as an island of provision in an otherwise under-provided part of the borough, serving the south-east of Lewisham Town Centre. Manor Park, located directly South of Lewisham Town Centre, is small (1.3 hectares) but also plays an important strategic role for the Town Centre.

The Eastern sub-area also benefits from two parks located just beyond the Eastern sub-area and borough boundary in Greenwich, namely Blackheath Park and Horn Park.

The River Quaggy flows through the Eastern-sub area, through the open spaces of Manor House Gardens and Manor House.

There is an Area of Deficiency in Access to Local Parks in the Eastern sub-area between Manor House Gardens and Northbrook Park, to the south of the A20 and the east-west Dartford Loop Railway Line that runs between Lewisham Town Centre and through Lee. There is another Area of Deficiency to Local Parks to the north-east of Manor House Gardens.

The central part of the Eastern sub-area lies within an Area of Deficiency to District Parks.

All of the main local parks in the Eastern sub-area have a 'good' quality.

Playspace

There is a significant Area of Deficiency in Access to all types of playspace in the north of the Eastern sub-area. This is partly caused by Blackheath – the largest greenspace – not including a play area.

The Grove Park Library Park playground plays an important strategic role in the Grove Park Area.

As is the case throughout the borough, much of the sub-area lies within an Area of Deficiency of Access to Local Areas for Play.

Natural Greenspace

There is a moderately sized Area of Deficiency in Access to Natural Greenspace that straddles the A205 around Lee District Centre.

Quality

The key accessible open spaces in this area are of a 'good' quality – namely Chinbrook Meadows, Manor House Gardens, Manor House, Grove Park Nature Reserve and Northbrook Park.

Walking and cycling access

The A20 lies between Blackheath and Greenwich Park, which creates severance between the two open spaces.

The three railways within the Eastern sub-area – The South Eastern Mainline, The Dartford Loop Line and The North Kent Line (Blackheath) – as well as the Hither Green Traction Maintenance Depot, create severance and hinder access between open spaces and to the west of the eastern sub-area.

Access between Blackheath District Centre and Blackheath (the open space) is compromised by the presence of the east-west North Kent Railway Line that runs between Blackheath and Lewisham Railway Stations.

Improvement strategies

Existing and future projects

It will be important to ensure the delivery of new, publicly accessible open spaces on development sites including Lee Gate and Grove Park Centre, and the Council will continue to secure planning contributions from strategic sites to contribute to the continued improvements of open spaces within the area.

New play provision should be considered on Blackheath or nearby to address the deficiency in access to playspace in this area.



Children enjoying the greenspace and views of the trains
©The Baring Trust

The Metropolitan Open Land from the South Circular to Grove Park offers a unique linear expanse of natural parkland along the railway cutting to its west and has the potential to drive green-infrastructure-led regeneration in Grove Park, not only providing wildlife habitat but also as a significant amenity for leisure and recreation and providing a number of ecosystem services, where nature-based solutions are embedded into future proposals to ensure issues of climate change and resource management are addressed. The Council is supportive of the emerging proposals from the Grove Park Neighbourhood Forum to promote these linked greenspaces as the 'Grove Park Urban National Park'. The park includes the railway cutting which is thought to have inspired Edith Nesbitt's famous children's novel – *The Railway Children* (1906) – that she wrote when she lived nearby between 1894–1899.

Improving walking and cycling access

Additional bridges across the River Quaggy should be considered in parks through which the river runs.

Heritage



An historic photo of the Mayow Park drinking fountain, date unknown but estimated to be late 19th Century.

Lewisham Local History and Archives Centre

The historic origins of Lewisham’s parks and open spaces have influenced their character to this day. A few of the borough’s parks and open spaces were created in the 19th century, and came hand-in-hand with rapid urban growth and an expanding population, at a time when politicians began to recognise the health and well-being benefits of providing space for recreation within the urban environment. Examples of these are Mayow Park (1878) and Telegraph Hill Lower Park (1894). Many others were formerly the gardens of old private estates which were opened as public parks in the 20th century, such as Sydenham Wells Park (1901), Mountsfield Park (1905) and Beckenham Place Park (1927). Some parks in Lewisham have been created more recently on previously residential sites that became derelict in the post-war period. These include Fordham Park (1975) and Eckington Gardens Park (1981). Elsewhere, fields through which the Borough’s rivers flowed were left undeveloped due to regular flooding, as in the case of Ladywell Fields and River Pool Linear Park.

Three of the borough's open spaces, Manor House Gardens, Grove Park Cemetery and Horniman Gardens, are of particularly special architectural and historic interest, and are on Historic England's Register of Parks and Gardens at grade II. Manor House Gardens formed the garden and landscaped pleasure grounds of the listed 18th century Manor House on Old Road, Lee; and an oval lake and an ice house survive from its original layout. Grove Park Cemetery is an unusual example of 1930s municipal cemetery design which combines formal and informal elements with Moderne and Art Deco influences. The cemetery retains most of its original buildings and structures, along with much of its structural planting. More information on both can be found at www.historicengland.org.uk and at www.thegardenstrust.org which is dedicated to protecting and conserving the heritage of designed landscapes, also offers more information.

Several of the borough's parks and open spaces are located within Conservation Areas and contribute towards their special character (see map page 61). Conservation Area Appraisal Supplementary Planning Documents outline recommendations for the preservation and enhancement of the special character of historic parks within their areas and are available to view at www.lewisham.gov.uk/planning.

In Lewisham there are also historic open spaces protected for use as 'ornamental garden, pleasure ground or ground for play rest or recreation' under the 1931 London Squares Preservation Act. One such example is the grassed enclosures at Rushey Green, which serve as a reminder of the area's rural past and mark the path of a stream lined with mature trees that rose at Catford and flowed northwards.

The Council promotes the preservation, restoration and reinstatement of historic features of value in parks and open spaces. It also seeks to increase the provision of interpretation facilities within parks that explain the origins and historic features of parks. These are greatly valued by visitors and they add interest and opportunities for greater understanding of places.

Heritage Lottery Fund grants are available for the restoration of historic parks and in 2016 Beckenham Place Park was awarded £4.7m Heritage Lottery Funding combined with Big Lottery Funding. The works undertaken included the reinstatement of an 18th century lake for wild-swimming, and the restoration of a Grade II Listed stable block to include educational facilities.



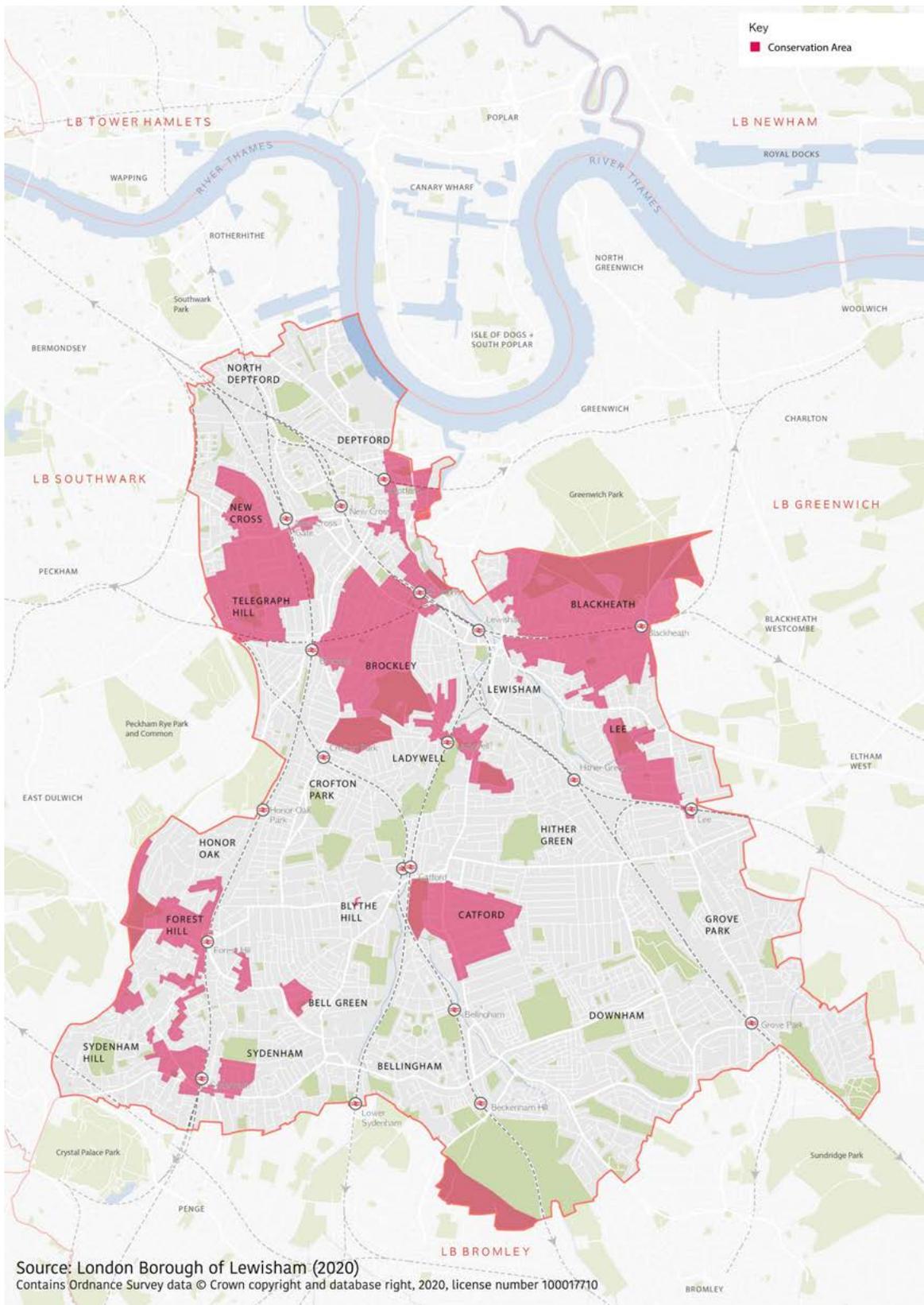
The reinstated lake in Beckenham Place Park



The restored Grade II Listed stable block in Beckenham Place Park

Credit: Nick Haselaine of Thomas Ford and Partners

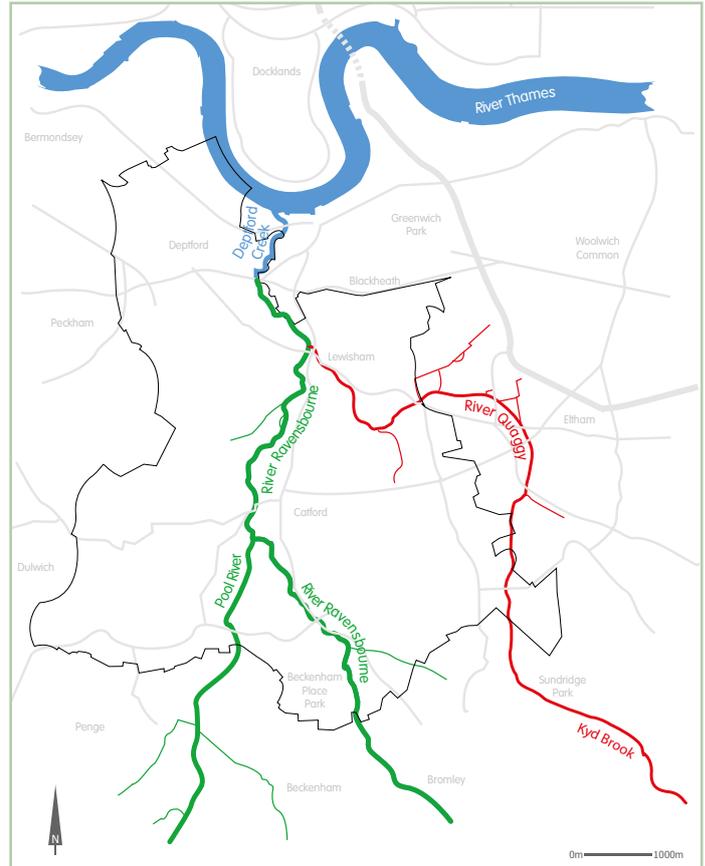
Conservation areas



Rivers

The tributaries of the River Thames that are located in Lewisham – The Ravensbourne, The River Pool and The River Quaggy which to the north of their merging points become Deptford Creek, contribute significantly to the character of the Borough. They provide attractive amenity space, walking and cycling corridors and biodiversity. As described earlier in this strategy, award winning river restoration schemes have already been implemented in the Borough and there are more proposed in Lewisham Town Centre as part of future developments. Along the north-eastern tip of the Borough there is also a short stretch of the River Thames which is a highly valuable amenity feature.

The Council supports improving access to and along rivers, river restoration and naturalisation of river surfaces to maximise the environmental and social benefits of rivers and The River Corridor Improvement Plan SPD (2015) provides further detail on its river improvement strategies.



Source: London Borough of Lewisham River Corridor Improvement Plan SPD (2015), available on the Council's planning webpages



School children river dipping in Deptford Creek for flounder, eels and other water life, observed by their class mates on the Ha'Penny Hatch footbridge.

Appendix: Supporting evidence

Strategic context: National, London Plan and local

National and London Plan planning policy:

- Revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2018, MHCLG
- National Planning Guidance, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG), including Guidance for the Natural environment, Climate change, Design, Health and Wellbeing and Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space
- The London Plan, Mayor of London, 2016, and The Draft London Plan, 2017
- The London Environment Strategy 7, Mayor of London, May 2018
- The All London Green Grid Supplementary Planning Guidance including the ALGG Area Framework 6 that focuses on the South East London Green Chain
- Shaping Neighbourhoods: Play And Informal Recreation, Supplementary Planning Guidance to the London Plan , September 2012
- Open Space Strategies Best Practice Guidance, Mayor of London and CABI Space, 2009



Pepys park

National Policy Context

The revised NPPF (2018) provides the principal national planning policy for open space and green infrastructure. It places particular emphasis on its role in promoting healthy and safe communities, and conserving and enhancing the natural environment. In response, open space policies for Lewisham should:

- provide good and equitable access to high quality open spaces to support the health and wellbeing of communities
- proactively plan for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of green infrastructure to improve physical and ecological connectivity, and promote biodiversity and nature conservation
- be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities, including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses, as well as providing opportunities for new provision
- identify the potential for designating specific sites as Local Green Spaces through Local and Neighbourhood plans.

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

Regional Policy Context

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ALGG Area 6 strategic opportunities

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

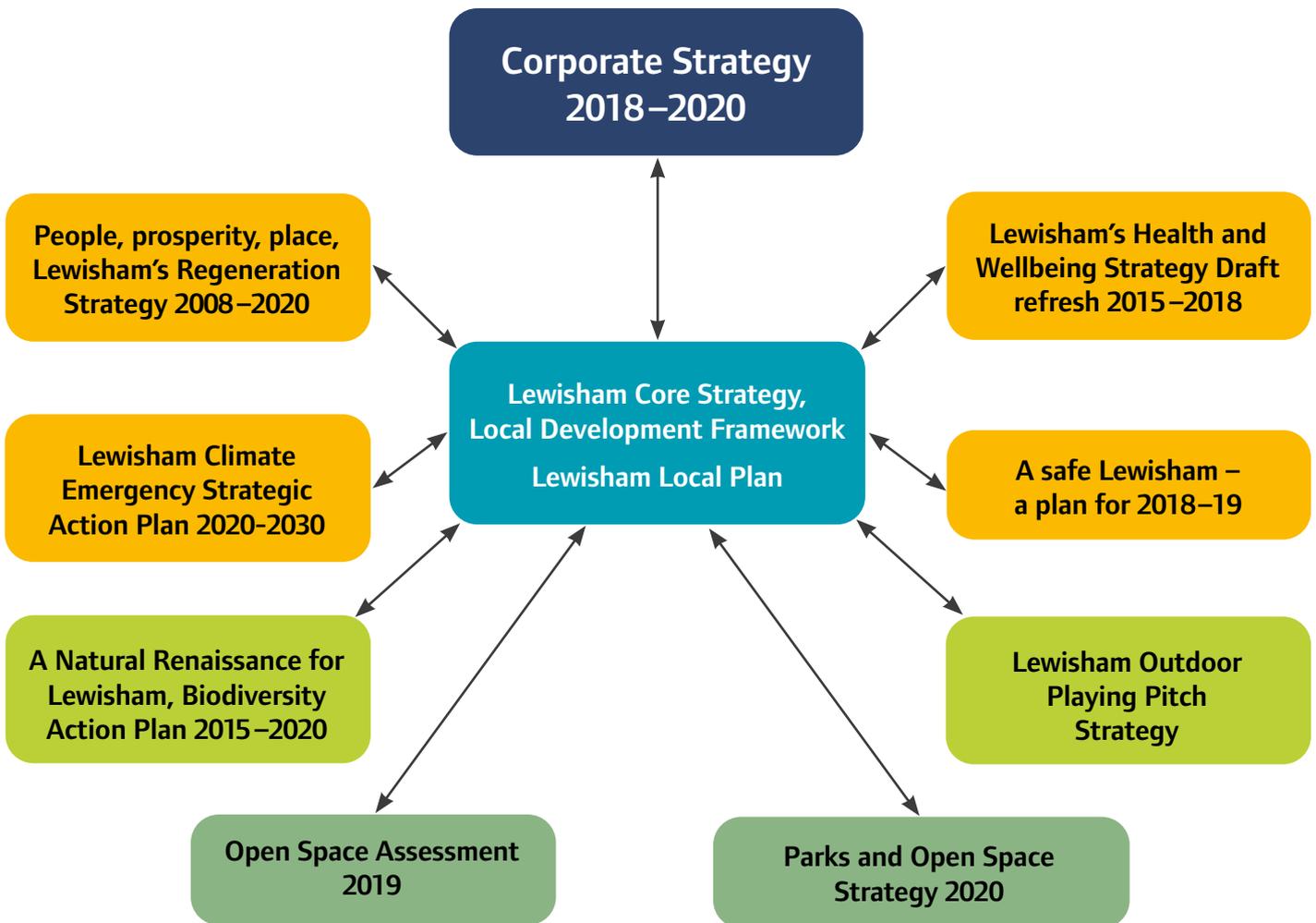
Shaping Neighbourhoods: Play and Informal Recreation, Supplementary Planning Guidance, September 2012

Local policy context

In recognising the strategic importance of the natural environment to accommodate growth, promote public health and well-being, build resilience and help mitigate the impacts of climate change, the London Borough of Lewisham will adopt a Parks and Open Space Strategy that will articulate the Council’s specific aims for parks and open spaces.

This strategy has involved wide ranging consultation with other services and sectors, service users and the general public. The strategy will address the key issues and opportunities facing the borough and will help protect, enhance, guide and manage open spaces and green infrastructure. It has been shaped by Lewisham’s local policies that align with national and regional policy and guidance.

Figure: Policy hierarchy



London Borough of Lewisham planning policy and strategies:

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

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

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

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

The seven corporate priorities are:

1. **Open Lewisham** Lewisham is a welcoming place of safety for all where we celebrate the diversity that strengthens us.
2. **Tackling the housing crisis** Everyone has a decent home that is secure and affordable.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

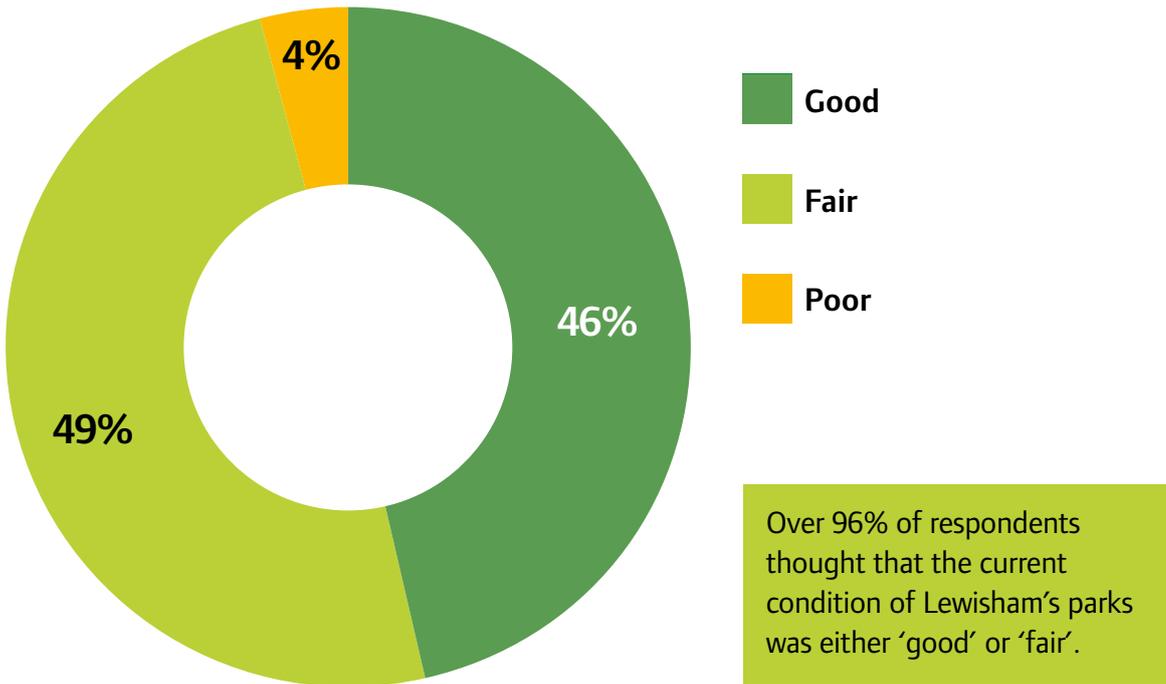


Blythe Hill Fields

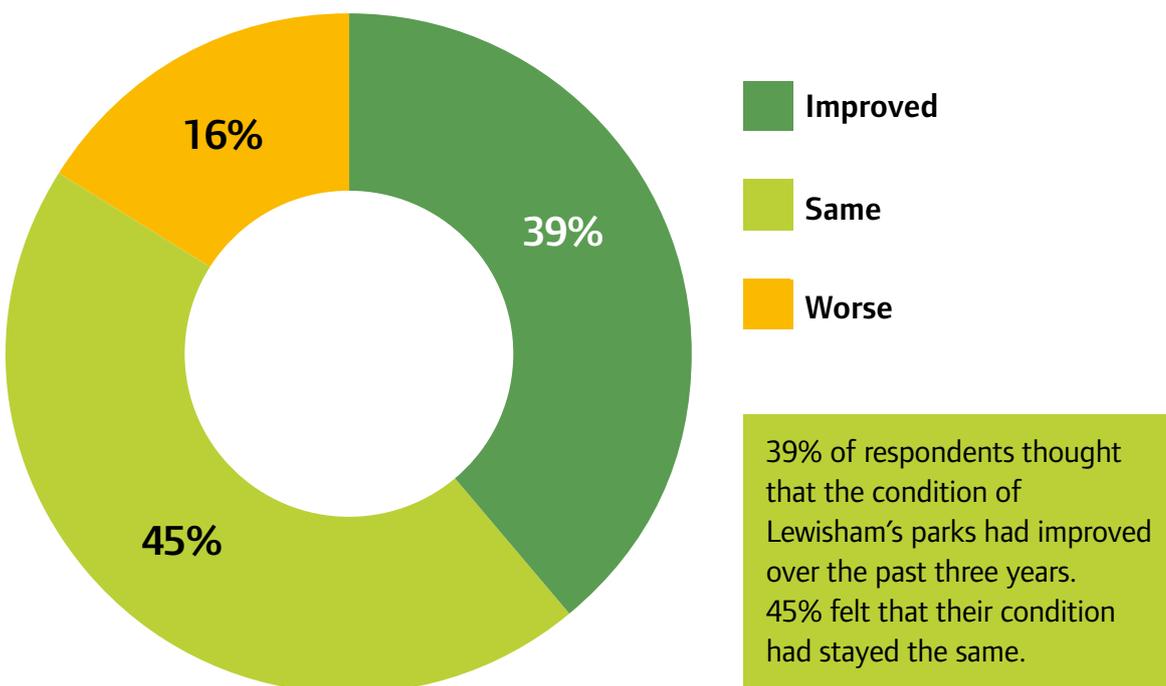
Open space needs

An online web-based parks and open space consultation survey was undertaken in October and November 2018. A total of 806 residents/respondents participated in the survey. The survey asked respondents' views on current levels of provision, the quality of this provision and the specific focus for the future development and management of open space across the borough. (Full survey summary Appendix 3)

What is the current condition of Lewisham's parks?



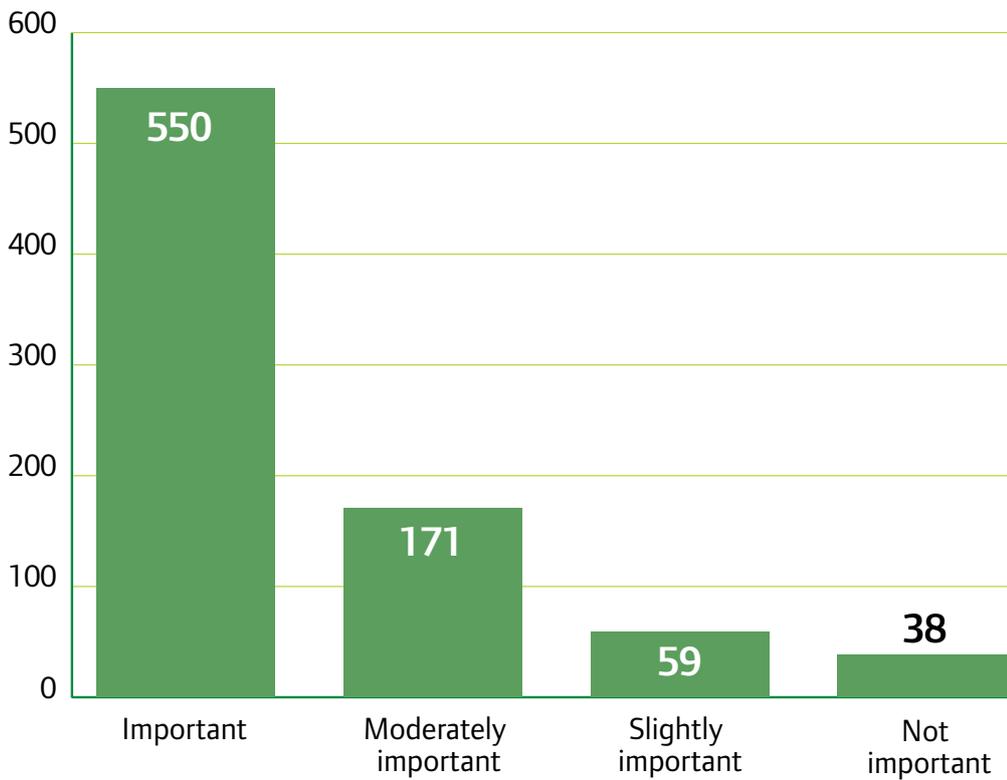
Condition trend over the last three years



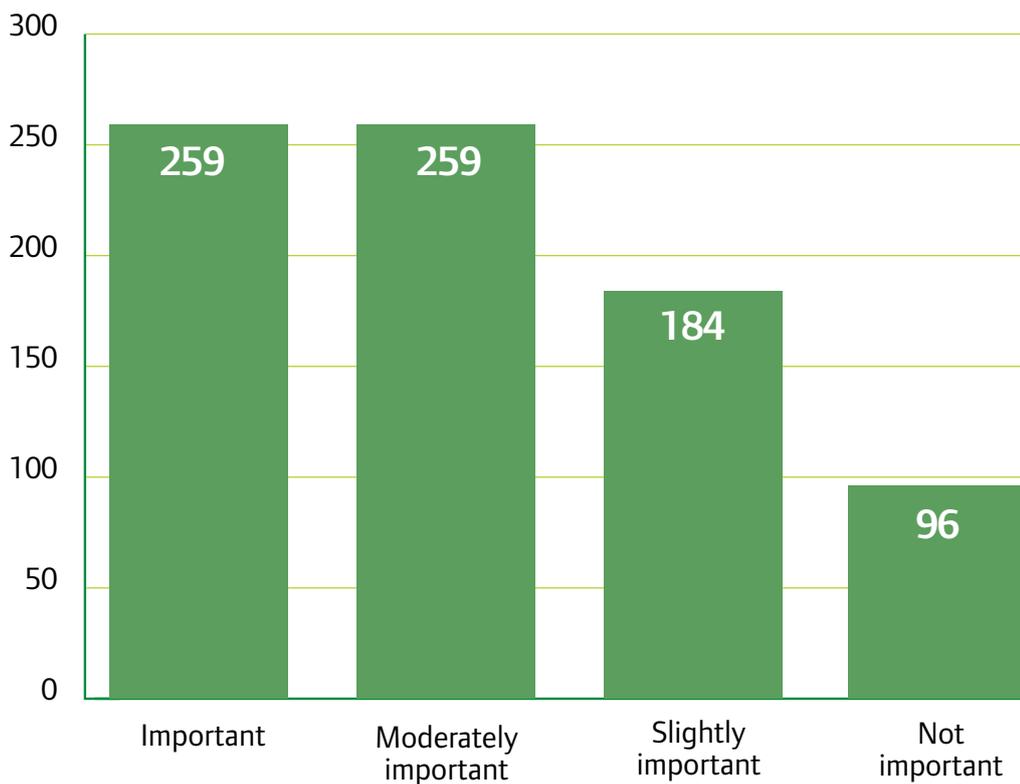
The vast majority of respondents who participated in the survey hold their local parks in high regard and value the contribution that they make to their neighbourhood. Respondents' experience of the condition of parks in Lewisham is very positive and 39% feel that condition has improved in the last three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

- 66% of respondents were in the 30–56 age range. 62% of respondents were female.
- Over 83% of respondents walked to their local park and over 63% felt that it was important to have a park within five minutes' walk of home, emphasising the importance of local open space provision.
- Over 95% felt that parks and open spaces made neighbourhoods good places to live.
- Around 95% of respondents felt that parks should provide access to nature and help to reduce air pollution.
- High percentages of respondents felt that safety, security, good facilities - such as toilets, café and equipment (e.g. bins and benches)- and good play provision for children were all highly important.
- The value of, and need for, good quality maintenance, cleanliness, and safety attracted the most written comments. Formally protecting parks and the enforcement of by-laws and public space protection orders was considered important, as well as trying to provide a visible presence in parks to combat antisocial behaviour.
- Overall the value of the parks as places for quiet relaxation and access to nature and wildlife was the fourth most significant comment from respondents, who rank spending to support nature conservation as the highest priority.

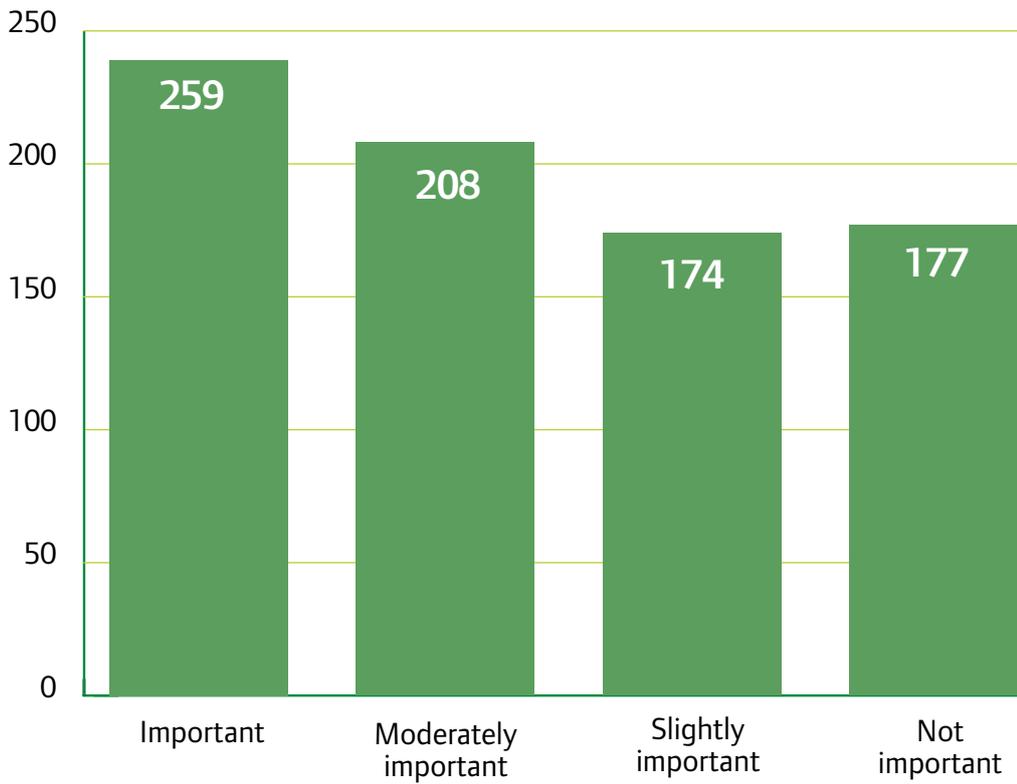
Areas for quiet relaxation



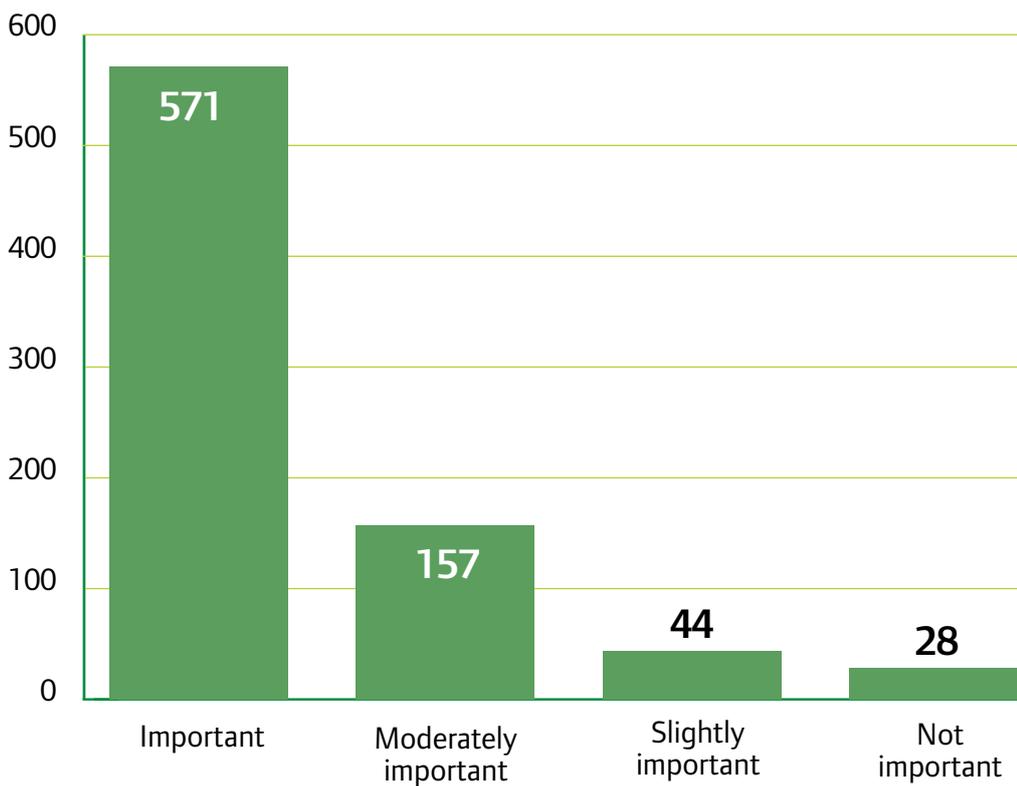
Promotion of educational engagement e.g. nature walks and school groups



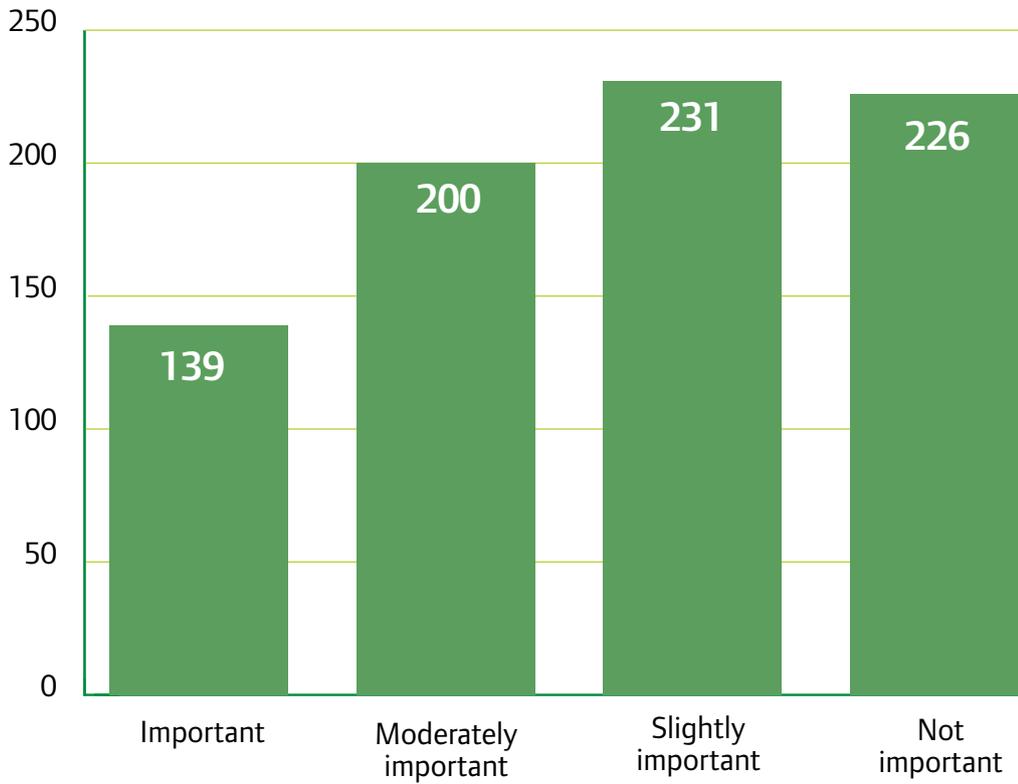
Promotion of organised physical activity



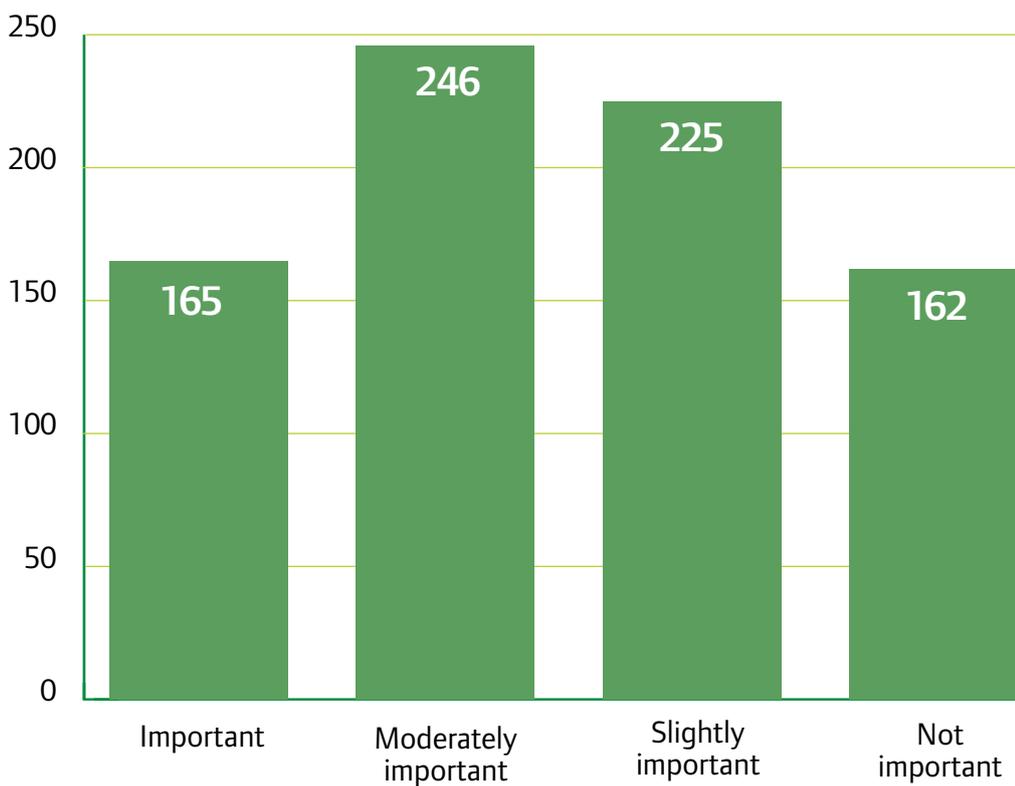
Used by all members of the local community



Used for growing food



Used for hosting events



What to prioritise spending on

