



Sustainable Development Select Committee

This report was not available for the original dispatch because it was awaiting final sign off. The report is urgent and cannot wait until the next meeting of the Committee as it is on the schedule to go to Mayor and Cabinet on the 25th and it needs to be properly scrutinised by SDSC prior to adoption

Report title: Parks and Open Space Strategy 2020-2025 - Adoption

Date: (Mayor and Cabinet) 25 March 2020

Key decision: Yes/No.

Class: Part 1.

Ward(s) affected: All

Contributors: Regeneration & Customer Services

Executive Director of Housing, Regeneration and the Environment

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Outline and recommendations

This report seeks the adoption of a new Parks and Open Space Strategy 2020-2025 for parks and gardens, allotments, nature reserves, churchyards and highways enclosures owned or maintained by the London Borough of Lewisham.

It is recommended that Mayor & Cabinet:

- Adopt the Parks and Open Space Strategy 2020-2025 into Council Policy

1. Summary

- 1.1. This report sets out the context, vision, and themes contained within the Parks and Open Space Strategy 2020-2025. The strategy has been developed as a tool to identify, communicate, map out and monitor a series of actions to protect, maintain, and enhance parks and gardens, allotments, nature reserves, churchyards and highways enclosures owned or maintained by the London Borough of Lewisham.
- 1.2. The strategy seeks to protect our existing parks and open space and to ensure the quality of provision meets the needs of Lewisham's growing population.
- 1.3. At the core of the strategy is the ambition that our parks and open spaces become: "the heart and lungs for Lewisham, connecting active, healthy, and vibrant local communities."

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that Mayor & Cabinet:
Adopt the Parks and Open Space Strategy 2020-2025 into Council Policy.

3. Policy Context

- 3.1. Revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019, promotes the protection and improvement of green open spaces. It encourages the strategic protection of green infrastructure to create high quality environments, enhance local landscape character and contribute to a sense of place. Policy also recognises the role of green spaces in promoting healthy communities by reducing air pollution and noise as well as easing the impacts of extreme heat and extreme rainfall events. Furthermore, parks are recognised for the important role they play in encouraging ecology and biodiversity.
- 3.2. Although there is no national or regional requirement to produce a Parks and Open Space Strategy there is: "Open Space Strategies Best Practice Guidance" produced by the Mayor of London and CABI Space in 2009. This document sets out the benefit of preparing a strategy as a management tool to prioritising spending and plan resources. Crucially, it shows how much open spaces are valued and makes the case to funders for increased resources.
- 3.3. The Lewisham's Corporate Strategy sets out seven corporate priorities and the adoption of this strategy contributes to six of these in particular:
 - **Open Lewisham** – to preserve and enhance parks and open spaces that provide welcoming and safe spaces which support events that bring our communities together
 - **Giving children and young people the best start in life** – by consulting with young people about parks improvements and by facilitating a program of outdoor environmental education in our parks and open spaces
 - **Building an inclusive local economy** – through the 'insourcing' of the current parks management service
 - **Delivering and defending health, social care and support** – by creating opportunities for people to develop and sustain healthy lifestyles through the provision of activities and opportunities that support physical and mental wellbeing
 - **Making Lewisham greener** – to preserve and enhance the borough's award winning green spaces, increase the use of environmentally friendly transport options, and lead by example to promote better care for our local environment and the planet

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- **Building safer communities** – by working in partnership with communities and the police to explore opportunities to provide and act on better intelligence led data about antisocial behaviour and explore opportunities to provide a greater formal presence in parks

4. Background

- 4.1. This strategy has been developed to follow on from the previous Parks and Open Space Strategy 2012-2017 [Appendix 4]. It should be read in conjunction with the Lewisham “Open Space Assessment (OSA)” report, May 2019. This study carried out by Jon Sheaff and Associates assessed the current provision and quality of public parks and spaces across the borough and proposed a future level of provision. [Appendix 2]
- 4.2. Forecasts indicate that Lewisham’s population will increase to 318,000 people by 2021 and it is anticipated the population will reach 344,500 people by 2031. To accommodate this growth the draft London Plan indicates the need for between 20 to 30 thousand new homes in Lewisham over the next ten years.
- 4.3. The purpose of the Parks and Open Space Strategy is to plan how the borough’s parks and open spaces can support the health and wellbeing of this growing population, adapt to climate change, and support biodiversity and conserve nature.
- 4.4. In developing both this strategy and the OSA the study team consulted local key stakeholders through an online questionnaire, at a public meeting and at the Lewisham Parks Forum, (the umbrella group for the borough’s 25 formalised parks user friend groups).
- 4.5. The online consultation had 806 responses and the summary report of November 2018 is included as Appendix 3 in the strategy.

5. Parks and Open Space Strategy 2020-2025

- 5.1. This Parks and Open Space Strategy has been developed as a tool to identify, map out, communicate and monitor courses of actions to reflect the shared vision: “to be the heart and lungs for Lewisham, connecting active, healthy, and vibrant local communities.”
- 5.2. The strategy provides the framework for the management and development of open spaces within the borough that seeks to protect, create, enhance, and connect spaces and people. It is intended to maximise the benefit of every £ spent and to 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.
- 5.3. The strategy builds on the previous Open Space Strategy 2012-2017 and the recent OSA, 2019. It is, however taking a new approach by presenting the baseline, vision, priorities, goals and delivery plan in a readily accessible way. Themes, priorities, and goals are at the beginning of the strategy document. This format is more user friendly, easily accessed and understood. All the evidence that supports the strategy is contained in the Appendices. This is a new approach intended to promote and present the core message, values and deliverables up front so the reader does not have to search through pages of background evidence before discovering what the plan actually says.
- 5.4. The online consultation identified that good quality parks deliver benefits under three themes:
 - Social

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- Economic
 - Environmental
- 5.5. The strategy uses these as headings and provides: “Priority Statements,” “Goals,” and a “Delivery Plan” for each theme.
- 5.6. The ‘Priority Statements,’ provide the direction of travel that if achieved, will deliver positive social, economic and environmental aims and benefits.
- 5.7. The ‘Goals,’ identify actions and provide the finer detail of what this strategy is seeking to achieve. These goals will then be monitored and tracked to demonstrate progress or identify where further work is required so our parks and open spaces meet future needs.
- 5.8. The ‘Delivery Plan,’ sets out the goals, measures and work required. It provides milestones and a time scale for achieving goals. Monitoring will be conducted annually and presented in an, ‘Annual Review Monitoring Report,’ that will track progress.
- 5.9. The option to significantly change this Parks and Open Space Strategy 2020-2025 will delay the adoption of this strategy and any associated delivery plan.
- 5.10. The option of not adopting the Parks and Open Space Strategy 2020-2025 will mean the Council will miss an opportunity to endorse a strategy that supports six of the Council’s Corporate Priorities. Additionally, the plan to prioritise spending and resources based on the OSA and public consultation, will not be achieved. This will have a negative impact on the delivery of an improved network of high quality parks and open spaces.
6. Financial implications
- 6.1. This report recommends that Mayor & Cabinet adopt the Parks and Open Space Strategy 2020-2025 into Council Policy.
- 6.2. It sets out the benefit of the strategy as a management tool to prioritise spending and plan resources. Crucially, it shows how much open spaces are valued and makes the case to funders for increased resources.
- 6.3. Online consultation with key local stakeholders identified that good quality parks deliver benefits under three themes:
- Social
 - Economic
 - Environmental
- 6.4. The ‘Delivery Plan,’ sets out the goals, measures and work required. It provides milestones and a time scale for achieving goals. Monitoring will be conducted annually and presented in an, ‘Annual Review Monitoring Report,’ that will track progress and facilitate management of risk.
- 6.5. A key output under the social aims theme will be the delivery of £1m of additional facilities and improvements to parks and open spaces over the five year strategy via the “Greening Fund”. This is funding provided by developers under s106 agreements, and £360k has been allocated under the corporate priority of “making Lewisham greener”. Under the economic theme, a key deliverable will be securing £300k external investment from non-Development Control sources over the five year period.
- 6.6. The Green Scene service sits within the Environment Division and is currently forecasting an overspend of £157k against its revenue budgets.

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Legal implications

7. There is no statutory requirement for the Council to have a Parks and Open Space Strategy in place but this is considered to be a matter of best practice. The Council has a wide general power of competence under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to do anything that individuals generally may do. The existence of the general power is not limited by the existence of any other power of the Council which (to any extent) overlaps the general power.
 - 7.1. The Council has a range of powers and duties in relation to those parks and open spaces identified in the Strategy, specific legal implications will be provided in respect of any proposals for implementing the Strategy's aims in the future
 - 7.2. The Parks and Open Space Strategy does not fall within the range of plans or strategies whose introduction needs to be approved by Full Council. Therefore the decision as to whether to adopt it is an executive function for Mayor and Cabinet.
 - 7.3. The report at paragraph 6.5 identifies that £360k has been allocated to the "Greening Fund" from S106 agreements. Whether or not money from that fund can be applied to any of the projects brought forward to fulfill the aims set out in the Strategy will depend upon whether or not they meet the legal tests set out in the S106 Agreement that secured the money.
 - 7.4. The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) introduced a public sector equality duty (the equality duty or the duty). It covers the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
 - 7.5. In summary, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
 - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - 7.6. It is not an absolute requirement to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct, or to promote equality of opportunity or foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. It is a duty to have due regard to the need to achieve the goals listed above.
 - 7.7. The weight to be attached to the duty will be dependent on the nature of the decision and the circumstances in which it is made. This is a matter for the Mayor, bearing in mind the issues of relevance and proportionality. The Mayor must understand the impact or likely impact of the decision on those with protected characteristics who are potentially affected by the decision. The extent of the duty will necessarily vary from case to case and due regard is such regard as is appropriate in all the circumstances.
 - 7.8. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has issued Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty and statutory guidance entitled "Equality Act 2010 Services, Public Functions & Associations Statutory Code of Practice". The Council must have regard to the statutory code in so far as it relates to the duty and attention is drawn to Chapter 11 which deals particularly with the equality duty. The Technical Guidance also covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty. This includes steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The guidance does not have statutory

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force but nonetheless regard should be had to it, as failure to do so without compelling reason would be of evidential value. The statutory code and the technical guidance can be found at: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-act-codes-practice>

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-act-technical-guidance>

7.9 The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has previously issued five guides for public authorities in England giving advice on the equality duty:

- The essential guide to the public sector equality duty
- Meeting the equality duty in policy and decision-making
- Engagement and the equality duty: A guide for public authorities
- Objectives and the equality duty. A guide for public authorities
- Equality Information and the Equality Duty: A Guide for Public Authorities

7.10 The essential guide provides an overview of the equality duty requirements including the general equality duty, the specific duties and who they apply to. It covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty including steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The other four documents provide more detailed guidance on key areas and advice on good practice. Further information and resources are available at:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-equality-duty-guidance#h1>

8. Equalities implications

8.1. The Parks and Open Space Strategy has positive equalities implications as it aims to preserve and enhance parks and open spaces so that they provide welcoming and safe spaces for the whole community. The strategy will promote and support events that bring our communities together and provide outdoor activities and healthy lifestyles for all. A priority for park managers will be to weigh up local needs so that parks serve the broadest diversity of people whilst balancing their value as a place to relax and enjoy being in nature.

9. Climate change and environmental implications

9.1. The Parks and Open Space strategy has positive climate change and environmental implications. At its core is the principle to protect, preserve and enhance the quality of our parks so they can deliver 'eco-system services' and a range of public benefits, including play, habitat creation, landscape improvements and flood storage. A series of priorities and goals can contribute to the councils plans to address climate change, such as:

- To 'green the grey' by developing partnerships to deliver active green travel links through highways infrastructure projects so both people and wildlife benefit

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- To commit to exploring the value of commissioning a Corporate Natural Capital Account (CNCA) for the borough to assess the value of economic, social and environmental benefits that investment in green infrastructure will deliver
- To manage the spaces sustainably and recycle wherever viable and as close to the source as possible
- To explore a reduction in the use of herbicides where economically viable and practical
- To reduce carbon emissions and the reliance on fossil fuels by using electric machinery where reasonably viable
- 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

10. Crime and disorder implications

- 10.1. The Parks and Open Space Strategy has positive crime and disorder implications because at its core is the principle to protect, preserve and enhance the quality of our parks.
- 10.2. A key element of this is to provide clean, welcoming and safe parks that can appeal to everyone. Over 95% of respondents to the online consultation said that quality parks and open spaces made neighbourhoods good places to live in. Feeling safe, providing good sports areas and quality facilities such as toilets, cafés; and good infrastructure (e.g. bins and benches) and good play provision for children were all highly important and encouraged greater use by the whole community.
- 10.3. It is widely recognised that well-kept and maintained areas attract greater use and that this is the key ingredient to enable the broadest appeal for users and for these spaces to be successfully self-policed. This will be achieved by:
- Seeking investment prioritising neglected and rundown areas
 - The promotion and support of active citizens and the ethos, “My space, my responsibility” by promoting more public involvement and engagement with the formal user ‘friends’ groups
 - Achieving a cost effective high quality parks service that delivers continuous improvement by winning 15 Green Flag Awards and continue to rank highly in the ‘Good Parks for London’ benchmarking exercise
 - Responding to anti-social behaviour (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

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11. Health and wellbeing implications

11.1. The Parks and Open Space Strategy has positive health and wellbeing implications because it aspires to deliver 'wellbeing' by putting parks and open spaces at the heart of outdoor activities and healthy lifestyles for all. A goal is 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.

11.2. A priority is to get nature to people and people to nature. The delivery plan sets out how the Council intends to:

- Develop and enhance the nature conservation and wildlife habitats, 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 support the partnerships and work to support Highway colleagues on, 'Cycleways,' 'Legible London' and 'Healthy Neighbourhood' transport programmes to promote 'pathways to parks' and 'greening the grey' by developing sustainable travel links that use planting and greening as a tool to reduce carbon emissions
- 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
- 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

12. Social Value implications

12.1. The Parks and Open Space Strategy has positive social value implications as detailed in the approved Mayor and Cabinet report "The Future Management and Maintenance of Parks and Open Spaces."

12.2. The Parks and Open Space Strategy also will deliver on the corporate priorities to create a greener and healthier Lewisham as already detailed in sections 9 and 11.

13. Background papers

13.1. Mayor and Cabinet report "The Future Management and Maintenance of Parks and Open Spaces."

<http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?AllId=23753>

14. Report author and contact

14.1. Nicholas Pond – Service Development Manager, Greenscene - 020 8314 2007

15. Glossary

15.1. 'Anti-social behaviour (ASB)' - Is defined as 'behaviour by a person which causes, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to persons not of the same household as the person' (Antisocial Behaviour Act 2003 and Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011).

15.2. 'CABE' – Is the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment.' This was an executive non-departmental public body of the UK government, established in 1999. It

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was funded by both the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Department for Communities and Local Government. It was merged into the Design Council on 1 April 2011. CABE was the government's advisor on architecture, urban design and public space in England. Its job was to influence and inspire the people making decisions about the built environment. It championed well-designed buildings, spaces and places, ran public campaigns and provided expert, practical advice. It worked directly with architects, planners, designers and clients.

- 15.3. 'Corporate Natural Capital Account (CNCA)' - Is a method of accounting a monetary value to green infrastructure. Capital assets have the important capacity to produce various goods and services. Nature, or 'natural capital', can be thought of in the same way. In fact, natural capital can be regarded as the source of all other types of capital: whether manufactured, financial, human or social. Natural capital can be defined as, "The elements of nature that directly and indirectly produce value or benefits to people, including ecosystems, species, freshwater, land, minerals, the air and oceans, as well as natural processes and functions." Natural capital comprises of individual assets, which include ecological communities, species, soils, land, freshwaters, minerals, sub-soil resources, oceans, the atmosphere, and the natural processes that underpin their functioning. Typically natural capital needs to be combined with other capital inputs (i.e. manufactured, human capital) to produce 'goods' and 'services', which can be either consumptive (e.g. timber, drinking water) or non-consumptive/'experienced' (e.g. recreation). The value of these goods and services represent the benefits that are derived by individual organisations or wider society in general.
- 15.4. 'Cycleways' - Is a Transport for London initiative to develop routes that link communities, businesses and destinations across London in one cycle network.
- 15.5. 'Eco-system services' - These services come from ecosystems that are made up of a combination of soil, animals, plants, water and air. They include production of food and medicines, regulation of climate and disease, provision of productive soils and clean air and water, and landscape opportunities for recreation and spiritual benefits.
- 15.6. 'Delivery Plan' – Is a document that sets out priorities for spending funds and outlines the activities that need to be delivered over a specified period of time.
- 15.7. 'Good Parks for London' - Is an annual report. This report is intended to support and give recognition to the work that London Boroughs and other land managers do to maintain London's parks and green spaces. The initiative is administered by 'Parks for London' an independent charity that promotes London's parks and green spaces.
- 15.8. 'Insourcing' - The practice of using an organisation's own personnel or other resources to accomplish a task that was previously delivered by a contractor on behalf of the organisation outsourced.
- 15.9. 'Open Space Assessment (OSA) 2019' - Is a report commissioned by the London Borough of Lewisham as part its Local Plan review process. The report assessed the quality of 349 public parks and green spaces across the borough and conducted a needs assessment of current levels of provision of greenspace and proposes a future level of provision.
- 15.10. 'Revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)' - The revised National Planning Policy Framework was updated on 19 February 2019 and sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. This revised Framework replaces the previous National Planning Policy Framework published in March 2012, and revised in July 2018.

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