

Waltham Forest Council  
Open Space Strategy



September 2010



# Open Space Strategy: 2010 to 2020

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## **Scope, vision, aims and context**

### *1.1 Why have an Open Space Strategy?*

The London Borough of Waltham Forest owns, manages and protects open space on behalf of the community. It needs to fully understand these valuable assets so that it can develop strategies, carry out actions and make decisions about how they are protected, managed and improved to meet the needs of residents and visitors.

This Open Space Strategy will result in actions that provide good quality open space in accordance with the borough's Sustainable Community Strategy and enable cross-departmental and partnership working towards common aims.

Without a strategy it will be difficult for the Council to prioritise resources across the borough and, crucially, to make the case to funders for increased resources.

With a strategy in place the Council and its partners will be able to respond to opportunities, such as the 2012 Olympics, Paralympics and their subsequent legacy, in a way that meets the borough's strategic objectives.

The need for open space strategies has been recognised by both national and regional government. In particular, the Mayor of London has stated that he will consider a borough open space strategy when assessing development plan documents for general conformity with the London Plan.

It is intended that this strategy will have a ten-year lifespan and will be delivered through a series of shorter three-year action plans.

### *1.2 Purpose of the strategy*

The strategy aims to set out a shared vision for Waltham Forest's open spaces in order that they may provide cross-cutting benefits to the community. The strategy allows the Council to understand supply and demand for open spaces and to identify ways of protecting, creating and enhancing them, and improving their quality through good management. The spatial elements of the strategy will feed into the Council's Local Development Framework (LDF) and will be a material consideration in determining planning applications. The LDF will take the findings of the strategy into account and the Council will use it to inform the Site Allocation process, which could see the designation of new open spaces in deficient areas.

### *1.3 The value of open space*

Open space is not only essential to the quality of life of local inhabitants but it also defines the character, setting and appearance of the urban landscape. It helps provide opportunities for exercise, relaxation, social inclusion, children's play, nature conservation, arts and education. The wide range of social, economic, cultural, environmental and health benefits that are derived from urban green spaces is recognised but not always valued consistently. The borough's open spaces have a particularly important role to play in adapting to the effects of climate change.

The amount of open space within the borough may come under increasing development pressures as population densities increase. As this pressure increases so does the desire to protect open space. However, it is not just protection that is demanded by urban populations; they are also interested in quality. Public open

space needs to meet local needs and expectations if they are to be successful and well used.

#### 1.4 Open space definition and function: Typology

Open space can mean different things to different people. Although the majority would agree that it includes public parks and recreation grounds, there may be less agreement with regard to other areas. Open spaces included in this strategy have been classified according to their main function. Further explanation of this typology is given in Appendix A. In summary, this includes:

- Parks and gardens
- Natural and semi-natural green spaces, including urban woodland
- Green corridors
- Outdoor sports facilities
- Amenity greenspaces
- Play provision for children and young people
- Allotments, community gardens and urban farms
- Cemeteries, disused churchyards and other burial grounds
- Civic and market squares and other hard surfaced areas designed for pedestrians

#### 1.5 Open space size: London's Public Open Space Hierarchy

The London Plan sets out a hierarchy of public open spaces. All London boroughs producing an open space strategy should use this to ensure a consistent approach across London to identify broad areas of deficiency in provision.

The London Plan Open Space Hierarchy categorises publicly accessible open space in terms of size; it also places distance thresholds for the likely catchment area served. The hierarchy recognises that people will be prepared to travel further to visit larger open space, either walking further or using other forms of transport. However, for local parks, the expectation is that people should be able to walk there; consequently, the hierarchy sets a catchment of 400 metres which is intended to represent a reasonable walking distance. Where barriers to walking such as major roads, railways, rivers or canals are encountered, the hierarchy recommends the catchment distance is reduced to 280 metres.

**Table 1.1 The London Plan Open Space Hierarchy**

Open space categorisation	Size guidelines Hectares (ha)	Distances from homes to open spaces	Distances refined to take into account barriers to access
Regional Parks	Over 400 ha	8km	-
Metropolitan Parks	60 – 400 ha	3.2km	-
District Parks	20 – 60 ha	1.2km	-
Local Parks	2 – 20 ha	400m	280m
Small Local Parks	0.4 – 2 ha	400m	280m
Pocket Parks	Less than 0.4 ha	400m	280m
Linear Open Spaces	Variable	Where feasible	-

## 1.6 Mapping Waltham Forest's open spaces

All open spaces that are greater than 0.4ha have been mapped across the borough. In addition, where smaller sites such as pocket parks or stand-alone play areas have a recognised recreational use these have also been included.

Mapping has been undertaken using a Geographic Information System (GIS). This is a computerised system that facilitates analysis and interrogation of the data held. It can also be readily updated.

## 1.7 Vision and aspirations

The development of the Open Space Strategy presents an opportunity for a strategic approach to providing, managing and improving Waltham Forest's open space. The strategy will enable both the protection of the current open space network and the improvement of its quality to meet the current and future needs and expectations of the local community.

Our vision is of a borough that is well served for open space where **everyone has a good quality open space within easy reach of their home**. Within this we would aim to provide a diverse range of spaces that not only cater for regular local use but also attract people from further a field.

## 1.8 Strategy aims

The strategy aims to maximise the benefit that Waltham Forest's open spaces provide to its residents. In particular the strategy:

- Maps the open spaces and categorise them according type, hierarchy and whether they have public access
- Assesses and evaluates the quantity, quality and accessibility of the open spaces
- Sets local standards for provision of open space
- Estimates and maps catchment areas for open spaces so that these may be used as a planning tool for future provision
- Identifies areas of deficiency and forecast future needs for open space
- Provides a strategic overview of the borough's open spaces which need to be protected in the Local Development Framework
- Provides a document as an evidence base for the Core Strategy Development Plan Document
- Identifies areas requiring enhancement or areas where opportunities might exist for new or relocated provision in the future
- Provides the Council with information to help securing planning obligations for residential and other development that will contribute towards new or enhanced open space

## 1.9 Policy context

The Open Space Strategy is set within the context of national, regional and local policies and strategies, which have been reviewed and are presented in Appendix B. Key documents include:

**National**

- Planning Policy Guidance – PPG17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (2002)

**Regional**

- The London Plan (2004)
- Lee Valley Regional Park - Park Development Framework (PDF)

**Local**

- Sustainable Community Strategy – Waltham Forest: Our Place in London (2008)
- Waltham Forest Unitary Development Plan (2006)
- Culture Strategy (2009)
- Playing Pitch Strategy (2004)
- Biodiversity Action Plan (2001; to be reviewed 2009/10)
- Climate Change Strategy (2008)

## **2 Understanding the supply of open space**

### *2.1 Introduction*

With 31% of the land area consisting of open space, Waltham Forest is a very green borough. It is in a unique position of being surrounded by the open land and countryside of Epping Forest and the Lea Valley which run the length of the eastern and western boundaries respectively. These areas are managed as Regional Parks by the City of London (Epping Forest) and Lee Valley Regional Park Authority. Both extend beyond Waltham Forest, however, significant portions of each lie within the borough boundary.

Large proportions of the borough are designated as either Green Belt or Metropolitan Open Land, affording them a high degree of protection.

Other open spaces within the borough are also given varying degrees of protection through planning policies contained within the Unitary Development Plan.

### *2.2 Identifying and categorising open spaces*

In all, a total of 223 sites were identified as part of the audit of open spaces and these have been categorised according to their typology (primary function), hierarchy (size) and whether or not they have public access. This has been mapped for the whole borough as Figure 1.1 and is presented in more detail for each of the Community Council areas and their constituent wards in Figures 1.2 to 1.6

An analysis of the borough's open space show it to be dominated by the Natural and Semi-natural Green Spaces of the two Regional Parks: Epping Forest and the Lee Valley Regional Park. It also has a series of smaller local open spaces, including outdoor sports facilities, parks and gardens, and allotments which together occupy significant areas, further emphasising the open character of the borough and the availability of land for recreational uses. The borough is unusual in that it has no Metropolitan or District Parks; however, it is recognised that Regional Parks also serve metropolitan, district and local functions to residents of the borough and beyond.

Of the 223 open spaces, 117 were identified as having "unrestricted" public access (either all the time or during daylight hours), while 74 had "limited" public access (eg allotments or council sports grounds), and 32 were "restricted" access sites (eg private sports grounds).

Further information on typology, hierarchy and access etc is given in Appendix C.

### *2.3 Premier Parks*

Although, it is acknowledged that all of the open spaces managed by the Council fall into the Local Parks typology, the Council has decided that six of its parks should be managed as Premier Parks. These parks differ from other open spaces in that they have park keepers based on site during opening hours, as part of the Street Care and Associated Services contract. These park keepers undertake security and cleansing roles as well as helping with grounds maintenance. Security, cleansing and grounds maintenance at the other open spaces are provided by mobile teams. The six Premier Parks are:

- Abbots Park
- Coronation Gardens

- Langthorne Park
- Lloyd & Aveling Park
- Memorial Park
- Ridgeway Park

Each of the above sites has a park keeper on site during opening hours with the exception of Lloyd & Aveling Park which has two. In addition to these staffing differences, the Council has declared its aim to achieve a Green Flag award for all six sites (see section 4.2).

#### 2.4 *Distribution of open space*

Pictorially, the distribution of open space can be seen in Figures 1.1 to 1.6. However, guidance recommends that the total amount of publicly accessible open spaces is expressed as the area per thousand population (ha per 1000 residents) for the local authority as a whole and that this is then subdivided for individual local areas.

In broad terms this shows a general deficiency of public open space associated with the dense built-up areas in the south (Leytonstone Community Council area) and the centre of the borough (Walthamstow West Community Council area), and a sufficiency of open space across the remainder of the borough (see Figure 2.2). At ward level the picture is more complex and starts to reflect the pattern of land use with the smaller, more urban wards such as Cann Hall, Cathall, Grove Green, Leyton, Leytonstone, Hoe Street and William Morris showing as deficient (see Figure 2.1). In addition to this, the less densely populated wards of Chapel End, Valley and Endlebury also have a deficiency of publicly accessible open space partly caused by the presence of open space with limited or restricted access such as allotments and private sports grounds. However, at this level of analysis, the picture can be heavily influenced by the geography of ward boundaries and individual open spaces.

#### 2.5 *Quality Audit*

In order to understand the general condition of the sites over which the Council has influence, during the summer of 2008, a quality audit was undertaken of the sites with unrestricted access that are owned and managed by the authority.

The Green Flag standard assessment methodology was applied to each site that was audited. The standard uses a 70% field assessment and 30% desktop element to gain a total score. For this strategy, only the field assessment criteria were utilised. This is because the desktop element was not applicable as it assessed the quality of a site's management plan rather than the site itself.

The open space audit consisted of a site visit and a visual assessment of 21 Green Flag criteria grouped under five key headings:

- A Welcoming Place
- Clean & Well Maintained
- Conservation & Heritage
- Healthy, Safe and Secure
- Sustainability

The detailed criteria are set out in Appendix C.

**Table 2.1 Highest quality open spaces**

Site name	Ward	Typology	Score	Ownership	Size Ha.
Coronation Gardens	Leyton	Parks & Gardens	46.33	LBWF	1.65
Langthorne Park	Cathall	Parks & Gardens	46.00	LBWF	1.74
Chingford Mount Cemetery	Larkwood	Cemeteries and Churchyards	43.67	LBWF	16.50
St Peters & St Paul Churchyard	Chingford Green	Cemeteries and Churchyards	43.33	Other	0.67
Ridgeway Park	Endlebury	Parks & Gardens	40.67	LBWF	5.34
Chingford Green	Chingford Green	Amenity Green Space	40.67	City of London	0.62
All Saints Churchyard	Endlebury	Cemeteries and Churchyards	39.00	Other	0.27
Lloyd Park	William Morris	Parks & Gardens	38.33	LBWF	3.86
Memorial Park	Larkwood	Parks & Gardens	36.67	LBWF	3.79
Aveling Park	Chapel End	Parks & Gardens	36.33	LBWF	8.98
Queens Road Cemetery	Markhouse	Cemeteries and Churchyards		LBWF	4.47

Quality scores varied between 12.6 and 46.33, giving a mean of 30.87 for the borough as a whole. Figure 3.1 provides a summary of the quality scores across the borough in map form. Figures 3.2 to 3.6 show this in more detail for each of the Community Council areas. The eleven highest scoring sites are shown in table 2.1 and the ten lowest scoring are shown in Table 2.2.

**Table 2.2 Lowest quality open spaces**

Site name	Ward	Typology	Score	Ownership	Size Ha.
Cheney Row Open Space	Higham Hill	Natural & Semi-Natural Urban Green Space	12.60	LBWF	3.05
Folly Lane Community Woodland	Higham Hill	Natural & Semi-Natural Urban Green Space	13.65	LBWF	4.15
Greenway Avenue Nature Reserve	Wood Street	Natural & Semi-Natural Urban Green Space	16.80	LBWF	0.52
Wadham Avenue Open Space	Chapel End	Amenity Green Space	19.89	LBWF	0.79
Higham Hill Recreation Ground	Higham Hill	Parks & Gardens	20.67	LBWF	3.00
Low Hall Conservation Area	Markhouse	Natural & Semi-Natural Urban Green Space	21.00	LBWF	0.92
Ainslie Wood	Larkwood	Natural & Semi-Natural Urban Green Space	22.75	LBWF	2.04
Thomas Gamuel Park	Markhouse	Parks & Gardens	24.00	LBWF	0.97
Good Memorial Gardens	Valley	Parks & Gardens	24.32	LBWF	0.12
Vincent Road Playground	Hale End & Highams Park	Provision for Children and Teenagers	24.50	LBWF	0.07

For a site to attain Green Flag status it must achieve a minimum 42 points or 60% on the field assessment: Coronation Gardens and Langthorne Park, the Council's two Green Flag parks, score the highest for quality. The only other sites that would currently meet the Green Flag standard are Chingford Mount Cemetery and St Peters & St Paul Churchyard in Chingford. Included in the list are five of the Council's six Premier Parks (Lloyd & Aveling Park is managed as one site). The sixth Premier Park, Abbotts Park, had a quality score of 33.33. It is an aspiration of the Council to receive Green Flag awards for all six.

Five of the ten lowest quality sites are designated as Natural & Semi-Natural Urban Green Space, indicating that a focus is needed to make these sites more welcoming, cleaner, safer and secure as well as focusing on their environmental and sustainability benefits. Of particular concern should be the four sites that have scored below 20.

It should be noted that the quality audit was undertaken in summer 2008. Since then improvements have taken place to Low Hall Conservation Area, Thomas Gamuel Park and Higham Hill Recreation Ground

The quality audit was only undertaken for sites that the Council own and manage; however, it is worth noting that the whole of Epping Forest and two sites in the borough that are owned and managed by the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority (Walthamstow Marshes and Waterworks Nature Reserve) have reached a quality standard that have resulted in Green Flag awards. The total number of Green Flag sites in the borough is therefore five.

## *2.6 Accessibility of open space*

The Mayor of London's Best Practice Guidance requires Open Spaces Strategies to define accessibility standards for open space. The London Plan sets standards for each category of open space (see Table 1.1). It requires that every Londoner should have a Small or Local Park within 400m of their home – this equates to a reasonable walking distance, a District Park within 1.2km and a Metropolitan Park within 3.2km. All parts of Waltham Forest borough are within 1.2km of either Epping Forest or Lee Valley Regional Park and, considering that these Regional Parks also have District and Metropolitan Park functions, this satisfies accessibility standards to Regional, Metropolitan and District Parks for all residents. The key issue therefore for Waltham Forest residents is access to small or local open spaces.

Access to small or local open spaces has been mapped across the borough using the guideline of 400m. This has been mapped "as the crow flies" from the access points or gateways to the open spaces, or from the edge of the open space where they have no fenced boundary, to form catchment areas for each open space. As recommended in the guidelines, where this catchment crosses a significant barrier, the 400m measurement is reduced to 280m (see Table 1.1). For the purpose of this strategy the significant barriers are waterways (ie the River Lea and associated canals), railways and major roads (the A12 and North Circular). These are mapped on Figure 4, together with the catchment areas for the small, local open spaces, which have unrestricted access.

While many of the river and canal banks within the Lea Valley have public access, the main reservoirs are largely inaccessible. Increasing access to the Walthamstow Reservoirs would be beneficial to the borough's residents and is being explored by the Regional Park Authority under its Walthamstow Wetlands project.

## 2.7 Access deficiency

The purpose of mapping these catchment areas is to define areas of the borough that are likely to have deficiencies in access to local parks and open space and where possible to develop strategies to reduce such deficiencies. Figure 4 shows areas of the borough that are beyond 400m/280m from all open spaces and, as such, are deficient in access to local open space: these areas of access deficiency are shown in pink. Fortunately this represents a relatively small proportion, just over 7%, of the borough.

There are two larger areas of deficiency in access to local open space. The first crossing Higham Hill, William Morris and High Street Wards (Blackhorse Lane and Palmerston Road area); and the second in Forest, Leytonstone and Grove Green Wards (near Essex Road, Wallwood Road and Murchison Road).

There are 16 other smaller deficiency areas distributed across the borough. However, it should be noted that if, for example, the catchment area for local parks and open spaces were extended by another 100m these smaller deficiency areas would largely be eliminated.

## 2.8 Access to play

Two types of children's play areas have been mapped and are shown in Figure 5. The first group are those that are available to all children and those who are accompanying children. The majority of these are in public parks and open spaces; however some are stand-alone play areas: catchment areas for these have been shown on Figure 5. The second category is estate play areas that are provided for estate tenants and residents only. In this case no catchment areas are included as they are not available to the general public; they do however provide valuable facilities for tenants and residents. As with Figure 4 the areas that are beyond 400m/280m of the public facilities are shown in pink. In this case the areas of the borough that are beyond a reasonable walking distance of a play area are much greater than they are for local open space generally.

## 2.9 Access to nature

Four sites have been identified in conjunction with the Mayor of London where improvements to biodiversity will improve access to nature in the borough, the sites are:

- Lloyd Park
- Chingford Mount Cemetery
- St Mary's Churchyard, Leyton
- Dagenham Brook & land either side of Marsh Lane

Further detail is given in Appendix C.11.

### **3 Understanding the demand and needs**

#### *3.1 The Residents' panel*

In the summer of 2008, the Council consulted with its Residents Panel; four questions were asked about parks and open spaces. Three asked for residents' views about the key lines of enquiry in the strategy: Quantity, Quality and Accessibility of open space. The fourth question was a more general one about the role of parks and open spaces in people's quality of life.

These results are strongly positive showing that in general terms residents feel that they have enough open space, that it is easy to get to and that it improves their quality of life. Although still positive, the least strong response is to the question about quality, which suggests that residents' primary concern is about the condition of the borough's parks and open spaces.

A detailed analysis is provided in Appendix D.

#### *3.2 Residents' views about the amount of open space*

The main factor that affected residents' views on the amount of open spaces was where in the borough they live. This is represented graphically in Figure 2.3 and, in order to gain a picture of people's perceptions against the actual situation, it should be compared with Figure 2.2. In general terms, people's perceptions are largely borne out in reality. An exception to this, however, is in the Leytonstone Community Council area where the majority feel they have enough open space, while in fact at 0.51 ha/1000 people, it is deficient. The reason for this is not clear; it may be that residents in this area have low expectations about the amount of open space that is provided locally; or it may be because a large open space – Wanstead Flats, which is part of Epping Forest – lies just beyond the borough and the Community Council boundary.

#### *3.3 Residents' views about the quality of open space*

Those with children in the household and those in the 35-44 age group were the least satisfied, suggesting that there are concerns about the quality of facilities used by families with children.

Residents who are relatively new to the borough felt more strongly that the quality is improving than those who have lived longer in the borough – perhaps indicating a recent improvement in quality set against a general decline in standards over the last two decades or more.

Figure 3.1, and in more detail Figures 3.2 to 3.6, show little spatial relationship between location and quality with the highest and the lowest quality sites being distributed across the borough. However, residents' particular concerns about open space quality in the Chingford & Highams Park Community Council area may be accounted for by the fact that the three wards: Larkswood, Hale End & Highams Park, and Valley each contain one of the ten poorest quality sites (see Table 2.2).

Higham Hill Ward, which contains three of the ten lowest quality sites, has relatively high satisfaction levels.

### 3.4 *Residents' views about accessibility of open space*

The majority of residents felt that their local park was easily accessible, however, those with a disability and those with poor health indicated that they had more difficulty getting to parks & open spaces from their home.

### 3.5 *Residents' views about the impact of parks and open spaces on their quality of life*

Generally residents agreed that parks improve their quality of life and there is little geographic variation across the borough: the most positive being residents of Chapel End Ward and the least positive from Cathall Ward. But, as with the question about accessibility, those with a disability and those with poor health tended to indicate that open space has a lesser impact on their quality of life than it does for others, and this was also true amongst those who participate in exercise the least. However, even amongst these three groups of residents, open space is felt to have a positive impact on their quality of life.

Those who have lived in the borough for less than five years were most likely to feel that parks and open spaces in their local area improved their quality of life.

### 3.6 *The demographics of park users*

The best comparison between the demographics of park users and the borough's population can be drawn from household surveys of 3,537 residents undertaken over three years (2003 to 2005). Comparison with the 2001 census indicates:

- A greater number of women users than men;
- A user age profile close to that of the population;
- A good degree of use by people with disabilities;
- Under-representation amongst users from African, Caribbean and Asian communities.

However, these results should be regarded as indicative only as: although the questionnaires were sent to random households, whether or not they were completed was up to the individual. Also, as the survey was addressed to the householder, it was less likely to be completed by children and young people.

### 3.7 *Non-park users*

The 2003-05 household survey captured information about those who said they didn't use their local park. A variety of reasons were given for this, but of all these, concerns about personal safety featured most highly (3.65% of respondents). Further analysis was undertaken to identify who these people might be and it was found that women and those over 50 years old had most concerns about safety. Other concerns that people said were stopping them using their local park were: Cleanliness (2.77% of respondents), Lack of general facilities (2.43%), Play areas (2.21%).

### 3.8 *What causes user dissatisfaction?*

The household survey also asked respondents how satisfied they were about aspects of their local park or open space and it was found that the main reasons for dissatisfaction were:

- Lack of toilets (net satisfaction -16%);
- Lack of catering (net satisfaction -10%);
- Poor or lack of facilities generally (net satisfaction -3%);
- Poor or lack of disabled facilities (net satisfaction -4%);

- Dogs (net satisfaction -5%).

Net satisfaction is the percentage of people who said they were satisfied/very satisfied less those who said they were dissatisfied/very dissatisfied. A negative figure means more people were dissatisfied than satisfied.

Dissatisfaction was greater for women users than for men.

Further analysis identified that there were particular issues with regard to general facilities at Larkswood and Selbourne Walk and disabled facilities at Larkswood, Mansfield Park, Pimp Hall Park, The Highams Park and Wingfield Park. Lack of toilets and catering were an area of dissatisfaction across a large number of parks, however, dissatisfaction rates were low where these facilities are provided with the exception of catering at Ridgeway Park. Here, a mobile van visits the park during busy periods but catering remained an area of dissatisfaction.

### 3.9 Which are the most popular parks?

The 2003-05 survey identified the following parks to have the highest number of residents using them:

1. Lloyd & Aveling Park #
2. Ridgeway Park #
3. The Highams Park
4. Memorial Park #
5. Abbots Park #
6. Coronation Gardens #
7. St James Park
8. Mansfield Park
9. Chase Lane Park
10. Larkswood
11. Stoneydown Park
12. Langthorne Park #

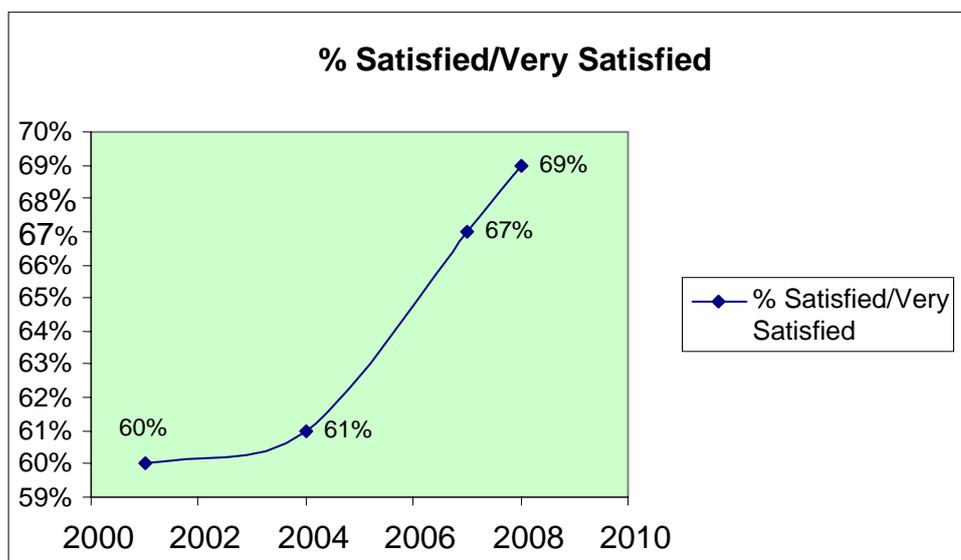
It should be noted that all six Premier Parks (marked #) appear in a list of the twelve most popular. The largest of the twelve, Lloyd & Aveling Park is the most popular by far with more than double the number of residents using it than the next most popular, Ridgeway Park, and 15 times more than those that use Langthorne Park.

### 3.10 User satisfaction

Until 2007, the Audit Commission required that Councils reported on a Best Value performance indicators to measure public satisfaction with parks and open spaces (BVPI 119e). Using this indicator, from 2001 to 2007, those who said they were satisfied or very satisfied with Waltham Forest's parks and open spaces rose from 60% to 67%. Although this indicator is no longer used by the Audit Commission, an identical question was asked in the 2008 Residents Survey and this indicated that satisfaction has continued to rise to 69% (Table 3.1). The target is to reach 72% by 2010/11.

Since 2008, there has been further investment in parks and play areas, for example approximately £550,000 has been spent under the previous government's Playbuilder scheme.

**Table 3.1 Percentage satisfaction with parks and open spaces**



From 2006, the Council has subscribed to GreenSTAT, an on-line parks and open spaces survey run by the charity GreenSpace. Data gathered on line has been supplemented with paper questionnaires and, where sufficient responses have been received, gives a picture of people’s satisfaction with individual parks and open spaces in the borough. Respondents were asked to give their overall impression of a particular park or open space: across all open spaces those that said they were satisfied or very satisfied came to 64% but as shown in Table 3.2, the answers for individual open spaces vary considerably.

**Table 3.2 Satisfaction with parks and open spaces (GreenSTAT survey)**

Site	Satisfied or very satisfied	Total responses
Coronation Gardens #	87%	156
Ridgeway Park #	82%	179
Larkswood	77%	40
Lloyd & Aveling Park #	70%	888
Memorial Park #	66% (better than average)	127
<b>All Parks and Open Spaces</b>	<b>64% (average)</b>	<b>2153</b>
Sidmouth Park	54% (worse than average)	153
Abbotts Park #	53%	178
Leyton Manor Park	46%	58
Skeltons Lane Park	45%	73
Thomas Gamuel Park	36%	123

Note

# indicates Premier Park (insufficient data was available for Langthorne Park)

These results, based on people’s perceptions, can be compared with those from the quality survey shown in Table 2.1; here too Coronation Gardens features as the best park in the borough while Ridgeway Park, Lloyd & Aveling Park and Memorial Park are also amongst the better regarded sites.

The majority of responses for Sidmouth, Abbotts, Leyton Manor, Skeltons Lane and Thomas Gamuel Parks were received as part of the consultation on the Council’s Cleaner Safer Greener programme. Since then, there have been significant physical improvements to all five parks and, although not statistically significant, survey work undertaken since completion of these improvements in March 2008 indicate a higher level of satisfaction with all five. Leyton Manor Park and Skeltons Lane Park have won national awards for the improvements made.

## **4 Analysis and identification of objectives**

### *4.1 Quantity standards and demand for open space*

Based on the current population estimate there is 2.85 hectares of public open space per 1000 Waltham Forest residents. This figure is well above both of the above pre-existing standards of either 1.6 or 2.4 ha/1000 (see Appendix E) and it is clear that Waltham Forest is well endowed with open space. However, this figure masks the variation that is seen when the data is looked at on a ward or Community Council level (see Figures 2.1 and 2.2).

While there is less open space in the south than the north, given that in general terms there is a majority view among residents that there is enough open space across the borough, standards should be set broadly in line with existing provision. It is recommended that the standard for the borough should be 1.6 ha/1000 people; this is largely met through current provision even when analysed at a ward scale; however, a number of the more built-up wards are below this figure and are, as such, deficient in public open space.

While it is acknowledged that it would be almost impossible to achieve this standard across the board, taking it into account will indicate where long-term planning could seek to increase the amount of public open space in the wards that fall below this threshold: Cann Hall, Cathall, Grove Green, Leyton, Leytonstone, Hoe Street, William Morris, Chapel End, Valley and Endlebury.

Increases in population will have an effect on the ratio of open space to population and, with Waltham Forest currently expected to accommodate up to 11,649 additional housing units over the next 10-15 years, this will need to be taken into account to assess which parts of the borough will meet the recommended open space standards in a decade's time. Further work is needed to fully understand the implications of this additional housing based on the housing type and expected locations. This work may identify the need to designate new open spaces in areas that become deficient as a result of the new housing.

Analysis of the amount of public open space against areas of deprivation – using the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) – shows some relationship between deprivation and provision of open space. Cann Hall, Cathall, Leyton, Hoe Street and Valley wards, each of which contains areas identified using the IMD as ranked amongst the 10% most deprived in the country, have low amounts of public open space. However, the remainder of the 10% most deprived areas occur in Lea Bridge, Markhouse, High Street, Wood Street and Higham Hill wards which are well provided with public open space.

### *4.2 Quality standards and demand for better quality open space*

People's concerns with open space mainly seem to be about its quality. Although the majority felt that the quality of open space was improving, there remain substantial proportions who do not agree. Residents who live in Larkwood, Hale End & Highams Park, Valley and Hatch Lane Wards have particular issues around open space quality.

There is little relationship between the quality of open space and deprivation – measured using the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) – with some parks of the best quality, such as Langthorne Park and Abbots Park being in or adjacent to some of the 10% most deprived areas in the country. However, it is notable that three of the poorest quality sites: Cheney Row Open Space, Folly Lane Community Woodland,

and Higham Hill Recreation Ground lie in areas ranked amongst the 10% most deprived; all three are in Higham Hill Ward.

There should be a focus on improving the sites identified as being of lowest quality, particularly where they occur in the above wards. Table 4.1 should be seen as a priority list for action. Some improvements have already taken place as set out in 2.5.

**Table 4.1 Priority list to address the poorest quality sites**

Site name	Ward
Ainslie Wood	Larkswood
Good Memorial Gardens	Valley
Vincent Road Playground	Hale End & Highams Park
Cheney Row Open Space	Higham Hill
Folly Lane Community Woodland	Higham Hill
Higham Hill Recreation Ground	Higham Hill
Greenway Avenue Nature Reserve	Wood Street
Wadham Avenue Open Space	Chapel End
Low Hall Conservation Area	Markhouse
Thomas Gamuel Park	Markhouse

While it is desirable to improve quality levels across all public open spaces it is highly unlikely that available resources would allow all of these to meet the premium quality standard set via the Green Flag award. However, as set out in section 2.3, the Council currently manages six of its sites as Premier Parks and it is felt that, as a priority, the Council should aim to achieve a Green Flag award for each of these while not diverting resources from the remainder of the Council's open spaces. Two sites, Coronation Gardens and Langthorne Park secured a Green Flag for the first time in 2007/08 and this was retained for both sites in 2008/09 and 2009/10. Currently the remaining four Premier Parks fall short of the 42 points required to achieve a Green Flag and these should remain a priority for improvements in quality.

**Table 4.2 Priority list to achieve Green Flag status**

Site name	Ward
Ridgeway Park	Endlebury
Abbotts Park	Forest
Memorial Park	Larkswood
Lloyd & Aveling Park	Chapel End/William Morris

Detailed analysis of survey data has identified particular reasons why some residents do not use parks and open spaces and why a proportion of those that are users are dissatisfied with the service provided. Improvements in quality should therefore focus on:

- Making open spaces safer and appear safer
- Improving cleanliness
- Increasing the facilities on offer
- Improving play provision
- Improving toilet provision
- Improving the catering offer
- Making open spaces accessible for those with a disability
- Ensuring dogs are under control and that owners clean up after their dogs

While it is essential that improvements to safety, cleanliness, disabled access and the way dog owners use open spaces is a focus for all sites, improvements to toilets, catering, play and other facilities will need to be targeted at those sites with the greatest potential for realising the benefits of investment.

Concerns over safety can often be reduced through the provision of a regular on-site presence, a key method of ensuring this is to provide park keepers. Such staff are provided in the six Premier Parks (see section 2.3), however there is often a public demand for park keepers in other local parks primarily to make people feel safer and to discourage anti-social behaviour.

#### *4.3 Accessibility standards and demand for access to open space*

While the residents survey shows there is little unfulfilled demand for better access to open spaces, Figure 4 identifies two larger areas of access deficiency and 16 smaller ones.

Different approaches are appropriate to resolve these deficiencies. While improvements in access eg creating new park entrances or more attractive routes can help address or reduce the smaller access deficiency areas, it is unlikely that the two larger ones can be reduced without creating new areas of public open space. It should be a medium to long term aim of the Council to reduce or eliminate the following deficiency areas:

- Blackhorse Lane and Palmerston Road area;
- near Essex Road, Wallwood Road and Murchison Road;

The first Action Plan will suggest specific measures that could be taken for both of these (see section 5).

#### *4.4 Access to play areas*

Areas deficient in access to children's play facilities are substantially larger and occur throughout the borough. However it is recognised that it would be expensive to create and maintain a series of new play areas and at the moment the Council's focus is one of improving the quality and range of current facilities. However now that the pattern of provision and access deficiency is better understood, opportunities to create new play areas should be considered where they eliminate or reduce these areas of deficiency.

#### *4.5 Access to nature*

Areas deficient in access to nature have been mapped by the Mayor of London and this has resulted in a recommended to improve biodiversity in four key sites in the borough (see section 2.9), in addition to this all open space sites should be a focus for biodiversity improvements whenever possible.

#### *4.6 Outcomes of the strategy*

The following key outcomes are expected from the Open Spaces Strategy. These have been derived from the analysis of data and consultation results in the light of the Council's strategic objectives:

##### **Increasing use**

- Increased use by those from African, Caribbean and Asian communities
- Improved safety, and consequent increased use, by women and those over 50 years old
- Make it easier for people with disabilities to access open spaces

- Cleaner and greener/sustainable parks and open spaces
- Areas of access deficiency reduced or eliminated
- Existing open spaces and playing pitches protected
- New public open spaces provided in areas of deficiency

#### **Increasing public satisfaction**

- Higher quality open spaces
- Green Flag awards for all Six Premier Parks
- Better and more park facilities particularly for people with disabilities and for children and families (eg play areas)
- Better and more toilets and catering facilities
- Dogs that are well controlled and owners who clean up after their dogs
- More dedicated staff/park keepers in key parks

#### **Involving the community and working with partners**

- More Friends Groups with a membership that reflects the diversity of the local community
- Members of Friends Groups and the wider community who want to get involved in doing practical things in parks and open spaces
- Close working with key partners particularly City of London (Epping Forest) and Lee Valley Regional Park Authority

#### **Keeping the strategies up to date**

- Biodiversity Action Plan reviewed and updated
- Tree Strategy produced
- Playing Pitch Strategy reviewed and updated
- Open Spaces Strategy reviewed and updated

These outcomes will be achieved through implementing a series of Action Plans over the life of the Open Space Strategy. The first of these will include a number of short term actions to be undertaken before the end of 2013. The first Action Plan should be reviewed in 2013 and a new set of actions developed. The Open Spaces Strategy itself should be reviewed at the end of 2018 with the view to developing a new strategy over the subsequent twelve months.

## 5 Action Plan

### 5.1 Introduction

It is anticipated that a series of Action Plans will be needed to deliver the outcomes of the Open Space Strategy. The first of these will form part of the final strategy but, in summary the actions proposed are to:

- Make open spaces cleaner
- Make open spaces greener/sustainable
- Improve the poorest quality open spaces
- Retain the two existing Green Flag awards and bring the four other Premier Parks up to the Green Flag standard by securing investment in these key parks including continuing with the Lottery bid for a major improvement programme to restore and renew Lloyd & Aveling Park
- Protect existing open spaces and playing pitches from development
- Improve biodiversity and access to nature, particularly at the four key sites identified by the mayor of London
- Help reduce or eliminate access deficiency areas for both open space and play areas
- Seek opportunities for new open spaces in the Blackhorse Lane and Palmerston Road area and in the area near Essex Road, Wallwood Road and Murchison Road
- Improve access to open spaces for people with disabilities
- Improve toilets and catering facilities and let people know where the nearest facilities are
- Improve facilities particularly for people with disabilities and for children and families
- Undertake outreach work with women and over 50s to address safety and other issues
- Undertake outreach work with African, Caribbean and Asian communities to understand the reasons why they don't use open spaces and to encourage use
- Encourage dog owners to act responsibly and to clean up after their dogs
- Bid for resources to increase the number of parks with park keepers
- Bid for funding from external sources to improve parks and open spaces
- Continue to encourage more Friends Groups with a membership that reflects the diversity of the local community
- Review and update the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)
- Produce a borough Tree Strategy
- Review and update the Playing Pitch Strategy
- Monitor this Open Spaces Strategy and review it at appropriate intervals

### 5.2 Measuring performance

A number of national and local performance indicators will be used to measure progress towards the delivery of the Open Spaces Strategy these are set out in Table 5.1. However, the Government is currently reviewing the National Indicator set with Ministers therefore these are subject to change.

**Table 5.1 Open Space Strategy performance indicators**

PI	Description	Type*	Current (10/11) Performance	Target		
				10/11	11/12	12/13
NI 8	Adult participation in sport	LAA	17.7% (2009/10 data)	23%	25.4%	NA
NI 11	Engagement in the arts	LAA	41.54% (2009/10 data)	43.7%	44.54%	NA
NI 188	Planning to adapt to climate change	NI	Level 1 (2009/10 data)	Level 2	Level 3	NA
NI 195	Improved street & environmental cleanliness (inc open space) – <i>Lower is better</i>					
	a) Levels of Litter	LAA	2%	9%	9%	NA
	b) Levels of Detritus		8%	12%	12%	NA
	c) Levels of Graffiti		6%	5%	5%	NA
	d) Levels of Flyposting		0%	1%	1%	NA
NI 196	Improved street & environmental cleanliness (includes open space) – Fly tipping	LAA	1.Very effective	1.Very effective	1.Very effective	1.Very effective
NI 197	Improved local biodiversity – active management of local sites	NI	86% (2009/10 data)	88%	89%	NA
NI 199	Children and young people’s satisfaction with parks & play areas	NI	53.4% (2009/10 data)	The data for this indicator comes from the “Tellus survey” which has been discontinued.		
-	Public satisfaction with parks & open spaces	LI	69% (2008 data)	72%	NA	NA
-	No. of Council parks & Open spaces which meet the Green Flag standard	LI	2 (2009/10 data)	2	4	5

Type\*

LAA National Indicator (NI) contained in the Local Area Agreement

NI National Indicator

LI Local Indicator

## A. Appendix A: Definition and typology

### A.1 Open space definition

Sites included in the Open Space Strategy have been guided by the following two definitions:

The government's Planning Policy Guidance Note for planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (PPG 17):

#### **Definition of Open Space in PPG17**

Open Space is defined in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as land laid out as a public garden, or used for the public purposes of public recreation, or land which is a disused burial ground. However, in applying the policies in this guidance, open space should be taken to mean all open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can also act as a visual amenity

The Mayor's London Plan:

#### **Definition of Open Space in the London Plan**

All land use in London that is predominantly undeveloped other than by buildings or structures that are ancillary to the open space use. The definition covers the broad range of open space types within London, whether in public or private ownership and whether public access is unrestricted, limited or restricted

Although an important part of the overall public realm, small incidental open areas and the streetscape in general have not been included.

### A.2 Open space definition and function: Typology

The Open Space Strategy covers the following forms of open space. The typology is taken from the companion guide to PPG17. Many open spaces provide more than one function so for this strategy the primary purpose of the space is used.

**Table A.1 The PPG17 Typology**

<b>PPG 17 Typology</b>	<b>Primary Purpose</b>
Parks and gardens	Accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events
Natural and semi-natural green spaces, including urban woodland	Wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education and awareness
Green corridors	Walking, cycling or horse riding, whether for leisure purposes or travel, and opportunities for wildlife migration
Outdoor sports facilities	Participation in outdoor sports, such as pitch sports, tennis, bowls, athletics or countryside and water sports
Amenity greenspaces	Opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas
Provision for children and young people	Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people, such as equipped play areas, ball courts, skateboard areas and teenage shelters
Allotments, community gardens and urban farms	Opportunities for those people who wish to do so to grow their own produce as part of the long term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion
Cemeteries, disused churchyards and other burial grounds	Quiet contemplation and burial of the dead, often linked to the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity
Civic and market squares and other hard surfaced areas designed for pedestrians	Providing a setting for civic buildings, public demonstrations and community events

## **B. Appendix B: Context review**

### *B.1 Introduction*

This appendix outlines the national, regional and local open space related policies and guidance that relate to the development and implementation of an Open Space Strategy for Waltham Forest.

#### **National context**

### *B.2 Urban White Paper, Our Towns and Cities: the Future (2000)*

This urban white paper recognises the role that public open spaces plays in urban areas. Well-managed open spaces not only improve the attractiveness of an urban area but also promote a healthier lifestyle. It highlights improvements that need to be made within the management and maintenance of public open space and outlines actions that the government would take to promote these objectives. New sources of funding, the introduction of the Best Value regime and increased support for voluntary groups were introduced to deliver the objectives.

### *B.3 Urban Green Spaces Taskforce: Green Spaces, Better Places (2002)*

To halt the ongoing decline of urban green spaces, the Urban Green Space Task Force was established in 2001 to develop proposals for improving the quality of urban parks, play areas and green spaces. The Task Force produced the 'Green Spaces, Better Places' report in 2002, which recognised the value of good quality urban green spaces. It highlighted the contribution made by parks and open spaces to urban regeneration, healthy living, social inclusion, educational opportunities, heritage and culture and the associated environmental and ecological benefits.

The report argued that to realise the potential offered within urban green spaces and reverse the cycle of decline, strategic policy frameworks for open spaces and partnerships were required to be established alongside increased funding and greater community involvement.

### *B.4 Living Places, Cleaner, Safer, Greener (2002)*

In response to the Urban Green Space Task Force the government produced this report to outline the approach that would be taken to deliver a cleaner, safer, greener public realm. It outlined the challenges for the various bodies responsible for public spaces and the measures that the government will take to deliver this agenda. This introduced a range of new funding streams which became available to local authorities and local communities for improvements to the public realm including existing and new green spaces.

### *B.5 Commission for Architecture & the Built Environment*

As part of the 'Living Places, Cleaner, Safer, Greener' report, a commitment was outlined to establish a new unit within the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment with responsibility for urban spaces. Thus CABE Space was set up to champion urban parks and green spaces steered by its five strategic partners, Groundwork, GreenSpace, Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management (ILAM), the Landscape Institute and the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA). The organisation developed enabling schemes to help local authorities and the community to deliver better green spaces.

## B.6 National planning policy

Following the enactment of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the government has updated planning policy: superceding planning policy guidance (PPG) with planning policy statements (PPS). However the key national planning document remains as PPG17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation, which is yet to be superceded by a PPS. PPG17 itself was revised in 2002 and emphasizes that open spaces can underpin people's quality of life and are important in supporting the urban renaissance, promoting social inclusion and community cohesion, contributing to health and well being and promoting sustainable development.

PPG17 requires Local Authorities to undertake audits of provision and assessments of need and opportunities for open spaces. This information is then to be used to set standards for local provision of open spaces, sports and recreational facilities within their areas. The standards set will need to include quantitative, qualitative and accessibility components to ensure the identification of open spaces that need to be protected and identifying where there is a need for additional, or improvements to, open spaces.

A Companion Guide to PPG17 "Assessing Needs and Opportunities" recommends a strategy approach and sets out ways that local authorities can undertake assessments and audits of open space

## B.7 European Landscape Convention

Open Space Strategies should also be considered in the light of the European Landscape Convention, ratified by government in March 2007. This encourages public authorities to adopt policies and measures at local, regional, national and international level for protecting, managing and planning all landscapes throughout Europe. A framework for implementation in England, produced by Natural England with Defra and English Heritage, can be viewed at [www.landscapecharacter.org.uk](http://www.landscapecharacter.org.uk)

### **Regional context**

## B.8 The London Plan (<http://www.london.gov.uk/thelondonplan>)

The London Plan sets the spatial planning framework for London for the next 15-20 years and is prepared by the Mayor of London. In regional terms, the London Plan provides a London-wide context for the London boroughs to align their local planning policies. With regard to open space, the plan includes policies to:

- Realise the value of open spaces
- Protect the Green Belt, Metropolitan Open Land and locally important open space including green corridors and important wildlife habitats
- Support for the creation of networks of strategic open spaces such as green chains and improved access to and connections between spaces
- Create new open spaces in areas where there is inadequate provision and promote improvements in existing provision
- Ensure that everyone has equal access to and can use London's open spaces
- Manage open spaces and encourage boroughs to prepare open space strategies to identify priorities and opportunities based on local needs.

The London Plan indicates that London boroughs should, in consultation with local communities, the Mayor and other partners, produce open space strategies to protect, create and enhance all types of open space in their area.

The London Plan encourages the use of the PPG17 typology and sets out the hierarchy of open spaces to be used by boroughs in their open space strategies. The Mayor also provides specific guidance on best practice in the preparation of open space strategies.

#### *B.9 The Mayor's Biodiversity Strategy*

(<http://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/environment/urban-space/biodiversity>)

The Mayor's Biodiversity Strategy published in 2002 sets out the Mayor's policies for the protection, management, enhancement and creation of open space for wildlife habitats and biodiversity. It also encourages the promotion of public access to and the appreciation of nature.

#### *B.10 London Plan Implementation Report: Improving Londoners' Access to Nature*

This February 2008 Implementation Report identifies areas of London that are deficient in access to nature, including a significant portion of Waltham Forest. It puts forward a priority sites list where action should be taken to improve Londoners' access to nature. Two sites in the borough: Lloyd Park; and Chingford Mount Cemetery are identified as sites where improvements in biodiversity would reduce an Area of Deficiency and two sites: Dagenham Brook & land either side of Marsh Lane; and St Mary's Churchyard, Leyton where biodiversity should be improved in an Area of Deficiency. Further information is given in Appendix C.11)

#### *B.11 The Mayor's Cultural Strategy*

(<http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/strategies/culture/index.jsp>)

The Mayor's Cultural Strategy promotes the cultural benefits of open space as an important resource for providing a range of opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds. The strategy argues that open space contributes to London's cultural identity and can provide good locations for events that bring people together in formal and informal activities and can provide quiet space for the benefit of both people and wildlife.

#### *B.12 The Mayor's Children and Young People's Strategy*

(<http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/strategies/children/index.jsp>)

The Mayor's Children and Young People's Strategy promotes access to a range of play, recreational and leisure opportunities and highlights issues of importance to these groups such as the lack of safe areas for play and the safety of the wider public realm. The strategy encourages London Boroughs to produce Children's Play Strategies to introduce standards of play within local planning systems.

#### *B.13 Lee Valley Regional Park - Park Development Framework (PDF)*

(<http://www.leevalleypark.org.uk/pdfconsultation>)

The Lee Valley Regional Park Authority is developing proposals for the future of the Regional Park through the Park Development Framework (PDF). This framework will develop the Authority's emerging vision with a clear statement of proposals and policies to inform the development of the Regional Park for the next 5-10 years. The PDF will replace the existing Park Plan (adopted 2000).

The Framework will provide a clear statement of what the Authority wants the Park to become and will provide the basis for the Authority's efforts to attract new investors and partners. It will be supported by the integration of a Delivery Plan, opportunity area development plans, and topic-based strategies.

As the Authority acts as statutory planning consultees for any planning application that has an impact on the Park, the Framework will provide the basis on which it will respond to such consultations.

## Local context

### B.14 Sustainable Community Strategy - Waltham Forest: Our Place in London (<http://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/index/community/ourplace.htm>)

The Sustainable Community Strategy, published in 2008, was developed by the Council and its partner organisations which form the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). The strategy sets out the vision for the future of Waltham Forest following extensive consultation with residents and other stakeholders. The strategy centers around three guiding principles: manage population growth and change; create wealth and opportunity for all residents; and retain more wealth in the borough. While parks and open spaces have a role to play in meeting all three principles, they are vital to retaining more wealth in the borough. Residents have told the Council that a high quality environment and opportunities for leisure are two important factors that would encourage them to stay in the Borough.

A key target in relation to the Open Space Strategy is the LSP's ambition to transform the design and quality of public space and a variety of relevant commitments flow from this and the LSP's other priorities including the need to: enforce and promote quality and innovation in the design of buildings and public spaces; secure investment and involve residents in improving parks and playgrounds; and tackle fear of crime by ensuring that public spaces and transport infrastructure are well designed, maintained, and used.

Which SCS commitments are supported by this plan?	
Ref.	Commitment Title
8	Promoting active citizenship and civic pride, for example by encouraging volunteering, and given residents a greater say over priorities and the allocation of resources
11	Promote equality, cohesion and integration in our community
24	Tackle childhood obesity by focusing on diet and exercise
28	Encourage people to participate in active leisure to keep them mentally and physically fit.
34	Promote the development of a vibrant cultural offer and promote public art to give public spaces identity and interest
35	Enforce and promote quality and innovation in the design of buildings and public spaces
38	Secure investment and involve residents in improving parks and playgrounds
41	Tackle fear of crime by ensuring that public spaces and transport infrastructure are well designed, maintained, and used

While there will need to be a focus on the above commitments, open space is relevant to a wide range of other services and opportunities should not be missed to address additional priorities and commitments that will help the LSP partners deliver the Sustainable Community Strategy. These include: tackling childhood obesity, improving health and fitness, increasing social cohesion, improving the cultural offer and creating civic pride.

**B.15 Local Area Agreement (LAA)** (<http://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/laa-full-list.pdf>)

The Local Area Agreement (LAA) is a three-year agreement (2008-11) between the Council, its LSP partners and central government. It sets out the key performance indicators that will be used to measure progress towards delivering the Sustainable Community Strategy. The indicators that are relevant to the Open Spaces Strategy are set out in section 6.2 together with other relevant national and local indicators.

<b>Which LAA indicators are supported by this plan?</b>	
<b>Ref.</b>	<b>NI Description</b>
NI 8	Adult participation in sport
NI 11	Engagement in the arts
NI 56	Obesity in school children in Year 6
NI 195	Improved street & environmental cleanliness (includes open space)
NI 196	Improved street & environmental cleanliness (includes open space) – Fly tipping

**B.16 Unitary Development Plan (UDP)**

The UDP which was adopted in 2006 identifies and includes policies for open spaces such as Green Belt, Metropolitan Open Land, recreational open space, playing fields and allotments, and for sites of nature conservation importance. With regard to biodiversity, the UDP ensures that the protection and enhancement of natural habitats and species is properly taken into account as part of all future significant development in the borough.

The demand from competing land uses continues to put increased development pressure on all of the borough’s open areas. The policies in the UDP act as the main source of protection for these areas. The current UDP however will be superseded after three years by the Local Development Framework (LDF), which will continue to include policies for the protection and enhancement of open space and biodiversity in the borough.

**B.17 Culture Strategy**

Taking Our Place in London, Waltham Forest’s Culture Strategy 2010 - 2030 is one of the key strategies for the Council to support the realisation of the principles and priorities of its Sustainable Community Strategy. It was approved by Cabinet in October 2009.

The strategy has a wide remit encompassing; visual and performing arts and film, libraries, tourism, museums, galleries and exhibition space, sport and leisure, events

and event space, creative industries and arts and culture based learning. Although not covered within the remit specifically, open spaces are integral to the delivery of Waltham Forest's cultural offer.

The focus of the strategy is on creating an attractive and high quality offer, increasing participation, generating wealth through culture and developing the capacity required to deliver the strategy. It will include a 3 year action plan.

### *B.18 Playing Pitch Strategy*

In 2004 the Council produced a Playing Pitch Strategy. The document was produced in accordance with Sport England guidelines and looked at the provision and demand based around voluntary participation in the four main pitch sports: football, rugby, cricket and hockey. In general terms the strategy found that the level of provision in the borough satisfies demand. However there was some over and undersupply and a geographic variation for particular sports across the borough.

The Playing Pitch Strategy made a number of detailed recommendations and actions, however, its key recommendation with respect to the Open Spaces Strategy is that it found no large surpluses of playing pitches, so it is important that no further pitches are lost.

The Playing Pitch Strategy was published at a time when London was bidding for the 2012 Olympics and it looked at provision and population projections up to this point. During 2009/10 the provision of facilities in legacy for the Olympics and Paralympic games, and the associated opportunities that may arise eg. in the Northern Olympic Fringe will be come clear, it is therefore recommended that the Playing Pitch Strategy is reviewed in 2010/11.

### *B.19 Biodiversity Action Plan*

The Council produced its first Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) in 2001, the plan which comprises a series of 11 habitat action plans is currently being reviewed and will be published in 2010/11. Particular key issues that will be looked at will be the potential effects of climate change on natural and semi-natural habitats in the borough and how sites of local biodiversity – many of which are local open spaces – are actively managed to improve biodiversity and access to nature.

### *B.20 Climate Change Strategy*

<http://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/index/environment/climate-change/climate-change-strategy.htm>

The borough Climate Change Strategy was produced and adopted by the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) in 2008. The strategy looks at ways that the Council and LSP partners can work to mitigate against climate change by reducing CO2 emissions in the borough and adapt to the likely effects of climate change. The borough's open spaces can play a role in both these areas, for example the trees and vegetation in parks and open spaces help remove CO2 from the atmosphere. However, the largest contribution open space can make with regard to climate change is through adaptation, for example, reducing surface runoff or providing natural shade and cooling.

A key area for action with regard to Climate Change is to look at adapting parks and open spaces, and the way they are managed, to be much more tolerant of periods of drought, for example, through using drought resistant species and reducing the need for watering.

## **C. Appendix C: Analysis**

### *C.1 Introduction*

The London Borough of Waltham Forest covers an area of 3,868 ha with 1,211 ha or 31% of this area consisting of open space. The open land and countryside of Epping Forest and the Lea Valley runs the length of the eastern and western boundaries respectively.

### *C.2 Lee Valley Regional Park & Epping Forest*

Epping Forest covers 429 ha of the borough and contains woodlands of various types and ages as well as scrub, grassland and heath; the majority is owned and managed by the City of London as a Regional Park of importance to London and the surrounding areas. Of equal significance is the 470 ha of the borough's open space that falls within the boundary of the Lee Valley Regional Park, comprising rough grazing, marshland, grassland and the internationally important wildlife habitats of the Lea Valley reservoirs; it is administered by the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority, which owns and manages the majority of land within the park. Significant portions of each Regional Park lie within the borough.

### *C.3 Metropolitan Open Land & Metropolitan Green Belt*

A total of 211 ha of open space is designated as Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) mainly in the south-west of the borough. Larkswood, Walthamstow Marshes, Lea Bridge South, Leyton Marshes, Quartermile Lane and Temple Mills are all designated as MOL – open land within the urban area which is important to London as a whole or to a part of London stretching across more than one borough.

Four times this area, ie 842 ha of the borough, is designated as part of the Metropolitan Green Belt which surrounds London. The Green Belt acts as a means to control London's outward growth and to preserve the open nature of the countryside around London. Most of Epping Forest and the open spaces of Lee Valley Regional Park are designated as Green Belt land.

### *C.4 Identifying and categorising open spaces*

The guidance recommends that an audit of open spaces should include open spaces over 0.4 ha. The Open Space Strategy aimed to identify all of the open spaces of this size within the borough through the use of aerial photographs and Geographical Information Systems. In addition smaller public open and recreational spaces have been included, for example, small stand-alone play areas. In all, a total of 223 sites were identified as part of the audit.

Open spaces identified as part of this strategy have been categorised in a number of ways.

### *C.5 Typology – primary function*

The primary function of each open space has been defined according to the PPG17 typology. The number of sites and the total area for each category is shown in Table C.1.

**Table C.1 Primary function of the open spaces in Waltham Forest**

PPG17 Typology	Sites	Total Hectares
Parks and Gardens	32	67.94 ha
Natural and Semi-natural Green Spaces	40 <sup>1</sup>	795.12ha
Green Corridors	5	2.46 ha
Outdoor Sports Facilities	53	234.76ha
Amenity Green Spaces	19	6.07 ha
Provision for Children and Young People	22	2.87 ha
Allotments, Community Gardens & Urban Farms	38 <sup>2</sup>	50.85 ha
Cemeteries, disused Churchyards & other Burial Grounds	10	35.91 ha
Civic and Market Squares and other hard surfaced areas designed for pedestrians	1	0.46 ha
Brownfield Sites	3	14.72 ha
<b>Total</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>1211.15ha</b>

Notes

<sup>1</sup> Includes 19 sites which are part of Lee Valley Regional Park and 6 which are part of Epping Forest

<sup>2</sup> Brookfield Allotments is shown as 2 sites where it crosses a ward boundary

**C.6 Hierarchy – size**

Each open spaces has also been categorised according to the London Plan Open Space Hierarchy. The results, presented in Table C.2, show that the two Regional Parks – Epping Forest and the Lee Valley Regional Park – are the biggest open space provider in the borough, together accounting for 763 ha, or nearly two-thirds, of the open space within the borough. Local Parks and Open Spaces are the second largest category with a total of 188 ha.

The borough has no Metropolitan or District Parks; however, it is important to recognise that while Epping Forest and the Lee Valley Regional Park are large to enough to qualify as Regional Parks. The smaller, interlinked sites which make up these Regional Parks also serve metropolitan, district and local functions to residents of the borough and beyond.

**Table C.2 Hierarchy of open spaces in Waltham Forest**

London Plan Open Space Hierarchy	Sites	Total Hectares
Regional Parks	28 <sup>1</sup>	763.44ha
Metropolitan Parks	-	-
District Parks	-	-
Local Parks and Open Spaces	38	187.86 ha
Small Open Spaces	32	17.29 ha
Pocket Parks	31	4.17 ha
Linear Parks	6	3.74 ha
Inaccessible Open Spaces	87	234.66 ha
<b>Total</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>1211.15</b>

Note

<sup>1</sup> Includes 19 Natural and Semi-natural Green Spaces sites and 3 outdoor sports facilities which are part of Lee Valley Regional Park and 6 Semi-natural Green Spaces sites which are part of Epping Forest

## C.7 Public access

As well as classifying sites by their size and function, it is important for the Open Space Strategy to identify which sites have public access. The London Plan has defined public and private open space as follows:

<b>Public Open Space</b>
Defined as public parks, commons, heaths and woodlands and other open spaces with established and unrestricted public access and capable of being classified according to the open space hierarchy which meets recreational and non-recreational needs
<b>Private Open Space</b>
Defined as open space to which public access is restricted or not formally established but which contributes to local amenity or wildlife habitat or meets or is capable of meeting recreational needs or non-recreational needs, including school and private playing fields. Private residential gardens are not included for the purposes of producing an open space strategy

However, a number of sites within Waltham Forest and across the country as a whole have varying degrees of public access. For example an allotment site or a public sports ground may be used by members of the public under certain conditions eg as a tenant, visitor, player or spectator – for the purpose of the strategy these are classified as having “Limited” public access. A park or open space that is either open all the time or is generally available to the public during daylight hours is categorised as “Unrestricted”, while private sports grounds and other sites to which the public are normally excluded are classified as “Restricted” access; a number of such sites are owned and managed by Waltham Forest Council. Definitions are set out in Table C.3.

Whether each open space has Unrestricted, Limited or Restricted access has been mapped for the whole borough in Figure 1.1 and is presented in more detail for each of the Community Council areas in Figures 1.2 to 1.6.

**Table C.3 Access definitions**

	Sites	Total Hectares
<b>Unrestricted:</b> Sites are available to the public either at all time or during daylight hours	117 <sup>1</sup>	692.81
<b>Limited:</b> Sites are available to the public with prior appointment or arrangement	74 <sup>2</sup>	447.25
<b>Restricted:</b> Sites are out of bounds to the public but small groups might be able to gain arranged access	32 <sup>3</sup>	71.07
<b>Total</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>1211.15</b>

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Includes 10 sites which are part of Lee Valley Regional Park and 6 which are part of Epping Forest

<sup>2</sup> Includes 7 sites which are part of Lee Valley Regional Park and Brookfield Allotments which is shown as 2 sites where it crosses a ward boundary

<sup>3</sup> Includes 6 sites which are part of Lee Valley Regional Park

## C.8 Ownership

Wherever possible the owner or managing agent of each site has been identified and recorded. This data, summarised in Table C.4, clearly shows the importance to the borough of open spaces owned and managed by the City of London (Epping Forest) and the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority. The Council does, however, provide a

key role in the management of a large number of smaller open spaces which together total nearly 300 hectares.

**Table C.4 Ownership**

<b>Ownership/managing agent</b>	<b>Sites</b>	<b>Total Hectares</b>
Waltham Forest Council (inc. Ascham Homes)	149	297.54 ha
City of London	10	429.08 ha
Lee Valley Regional Park Authority	21	377.57 ha
Private	8	18.37 ha
London Playing Fields	2	24.75 ha
Other	19	40.96 ha
Unknown	14	22.86 ha
<b>Total</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>1211.15ha</b>

### *C.9 Distribution of open space*

Guidance recommends that the total amount of publicly accessible open spaces is expressed as the area per thousand population (ha per 1000 residents). The quantity of open spaces with unrestricted access per 1000 residents has been analysed for each ward (Figure 2.1) and for each Community Council area (Figure 2.2). The results are presented in Table C.5.

When analysed by Community Council area, there is a general deficiency of public open space associated with the dense built-up areas in the south (Leytonstone) and the centre of the borough (Walthamstow West), and a sufficiency of open space across the remainder of the borough. The Community Council areas of South Chingford & Highams Park, and North Chingford are very well provided for. At ward level the picture is more complex and starts to reflect the pattern of land use with the smaller, more urban wards such as Cann Hall, Cathall, Grove Green, Leyton, Leytonstone, Hoe Street and William Morris showing as deficient. In addition to this, the less densely populated wards of Chapel End, Valley and Endlebury also have a deficiency of publicly accessible open space partly caused by the presence of open space with restricted or only limited access such as allotments and private sports grounds. At this level of analysis, the picture is also heavily influenced by the geography of ward boundaries and individual open spaces.

The number of housing units in the borough is expected to increase by 16,000 over the next ten years. Further work is needed to fully understand what effect this will have on the population for each ward or Community Council area and the subsequent impact on the ratio of open space (ha/1000 residents). This will depend on the Council's Site Allocations Policy which is being developed as part of the LDF (see Appendix B.14).

**Table C.5 Amount of open space per ward and Community Council area**

Ward	Ward Area (Ha)	2008 Population Projection	Unrestricted Access Open Space (Ha)	Unrestricted Access Open Space per 1000 People
Cann Hall	85.991	12166	1.01	0.08
Cathall	105.657	11398	12.02	1.05
Chapel End	184.395	12911	17.54	1.36
Chingford Green	372.789	10424	136.85	13.13
Endlebury	195.866	11102	15.00	1.35
Forest	198.503	11794	73.70	6.25
Grove Green	89.876	12263	1.27	0.10
Hale End and Highams Park	234.982	11432	76.84	6.72
Hatch Lane	241.836	11299	66.77	5.91
High Street	306.122	12877	33.13	2.57
Higham Hill	321.970	12493	25.18	2.02
Hoe Street	109.739	12546	1.72	0.14
Larkswood	206.889	11686	53.46	4.58
Lea Bridge	264.375	14809	60.35	4.08
Leyton	203.586	13149	11.09	0.84
Leytonstone	130.963	11149	4.59	0.41
Markhouse	145.513	12796	31.38	2.45
Valley	198.224	12040	15.51	1.29
William Morris	99.794	12081	3.88	0.32
Wood Street	184.439	12747	51.23	4.02
Community Council Area (CCA)	CCA Area (Ha)	2008 Population Projection	Unrestricted Access Open Space (Ha)	Unrestricted Access Open Space per 1000 People
Leyton & Whipps Cross	491.38	37206	86.06	2.31
Leytonstone	322.12	34713	17.64	0.51
North Chingford	809.2	32825	218.37	6.65
South Chingford & Highams Park	639.74	35158	146.12	4.16
Walthamstow & Lea Bridge	705.41	52898	144.68	2.74
Walthamstow West	912.95	50362	79.69	1.58
<b>Totals (whole borough)</b>	<b>3880.8</b>	<b>243162</b>	<b>692.56</b>	<b>2.85</b>

### C.10 Quality Audit

A quality audit of the sites with unrestricted access that are owned and managed by the authority was undertaken in summer 2008.

A key issue when undertaking a quality audit is to ensure consistency between sites this is because a number of assessments made are subjective. The following measures were employed to achieve this consistency:

- Use of Green Flag criteria to set benchmarks for quality
- Audit undertaken by a single person
- Undertaken by a professional experienced in assessing sites to Green Flag criteria
- Testing and cross checking assessments with know scores for sites in the borough which have achieved Green Flag standards ie Coronation Gardens and Langthorne Park, and as such have external verification

- Cross checking results with colleagues also experienced in assessing sites to Green Flag criteria

The Civic Trust's Green Flag standard assessment methodology was applied to each site that was audited. The standard uses a 70% field assessment and 30% desktop element to gain a total score. For this strategy, only the field assessment criteria were utilised. This is because the desktop element was not applicable as it assessed the quality of a site's management plan rather than the site itself.

The open space audit consisted of a site visit and a visual assessment of 21 Green Flag criteria. The quality criteria, grouped under five key headings, are shown in Table C.6

**Table C.6 Green Flag Quality Audit criteria**

<b>A Welcoming Place</b>	<b>Healthy, Safe and Secure</b>
Welcoming	Safe, equipment & facilities
Good & safe access	Personal security in open space
Signage	Dog Fouling
Equal access for all	Appropriate provision of facilities
<b>Clean &amp; Well Maintained</b>	Quality of facilities
Litter & waste management	<b>Sustainability</b>
Grounds maintenance and horticulture	Environmental sustainability
Building & infrastructure maintenance	Peat use
Equipment maintenance	Pesticide use
<b>Conservation &amp; Heritage</b>	Waste minimisation
Conservation of natural features	Arboriculture & woodland management
Conservation of landscape features	
Conservation of buildings & structures	

Each of the criteria was assigned a score between 0 and 10, based on the Green Flag standard scoring system. Not all of the criteria were applicable to the different open space types. The standard attributes the scores to the following rating:

- 0-1 Very Poor
- 2-4 Poor
- 5-6 Fair
- 7 Good
- 8 Very Good
- 9 Excellent
- 10 Exceptional

For a site to attain Green Flag status it must achieve a minimum 42 points or 60% on the field assessment. This score is derived by taking 27 field elements, calculating the average and multiplying by 7 to arrive at the score out of a possible 70 points. For this strategy the quality score was calculated by taking the 21 available field elements, shown in Table C.6, calculating the average and multiplying by 7 to arrive at a figure which indicates the overall quality of the park or green space. Because the Green Flag criteria are principally aimed at parks and open spaces that have a high degree of public use, small sites such as large grass verges and sports grounds that have low use by the general public were not included in the quality audit.

### *C.11 Access to Nature*

The London Plan Implementation Report: Improving Londoners' Access to Nature identifies areas of Waltham Forest that the Mayor considers to be deficient in access to nature. This has been done by mapping 1km catchment areas from the best wildlife sites in London (those sites of at least borough importance ie. Not including local sites). The report identifies four local biodiversity sites in the borough where improvements are recommended:

- Lloyd Park
- Chingford Mount Cemetery
- St Mary's Churchyard, Leyton
- Dagenham Brook & land either side of Marsh Lane

In the case of Lloyd Park and Chingford Mount Cemetery improvements in biodiversity would reduce the borough's Area of Deficiency in Access to Nature and these have been highlighted as the most important sites for action, the approach recommended would be to upgrade these sites from local to borough importance for biodiversity.

Although, unlikely to be upgraded to a site of borough importance, St Mary's Churchyard, Leyton is a key local wildlife site in an Area of Deficiency in Access to Nature and, as such, is also a priority for the Mayor and therefore for the borough. Similarly, biodiversity at Dagenham Brook & land either side of Marsh Lane should be improved along with access in to this area.

Improvements to these sites will be guided by the borough Biodiversity Action Plan and site management plans.

## D. Appendix D: Residents' views

### D.1 Residents' Panel

In the summer of 2008, the Council consulted with its Residents Panel via a Health Questionnaire. Four questions were asked about parks and open spaces. Three questions had a specific role in the Open Space Strategy as they asked for residents' views about the three key lines of enquiry in the strategy: Quantity, Quality and Accessibility of open space. The fourth question was a more general one about the role of parks and open spaces in people's quality of life. The questions were phrased as a series of statements and the residents were asked to state, on a five-point scale, whether they strongly agreed, tended to agree, neither agreed nor disagreed, tended to disagree or strongly disagreed. The statements and general results for the borough are shown in Table D.1. As well as the responses on the five-point scale, the "net agreement" has been calculated by taking the percentage who tend to/strongly disagreed from those who tend to/strongly agree. This is a useful single measure as it takes account of those who disagree as well as those who agree with the statements.

**Table D.1 Results from summer 2008 Residents' Survey**

	1	2	3	4	5	
	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Net agreement (1+2) - (4+5)
<b>Quantity:</b> There are enough parks and open spaces close to where I live	19%	42%	14%	14%	10%	+38%
<b>Quality:</b> The quality of parks in Waltham Forest is improving	12%	36%	26%	18%	8%	+22%
<b>Accessibility:</b> I can easily get to parks and open spaces from my home	39%	43%	8%	6%	4%	+72%
<b>Quality of Life:</b> Parks in my local area improve my quality of life	36%	34%	21%	6%	3%	+61%

These results are strongly positive showing that in general terms residents feel that they have enough open space, that it is easy to get to and that it improves their quality of life. The least strong response is to the question about quality, which suggests that residents are most concerned about the condition of parks and open spaces in the borough.

The way the Residents Panel is structured allows further analysis based on information respondents gave about themselves (eg. age, gender, ethnicity, disability, health; whether they have children, access to a car; where and how long they have lived in the area). This is summarised in sections 4.3 to 4.6. It has not been possible to analyse the results in terms of sexuality as the small sample sizes are not statistically reliable.

## D.2 Comparison with another London Borough

In 2001 and 2002, the same four questions were asked in London Borough of Southwark. Although direct comparisons are difficult to draw, it is interesting to note the similarity in terms of responses to each of the questions indicating that the views of residents about their open spaces in either borough are not unusual or unique.

**Table D.2 Comparison with London Borough of Southwark**

	Net Agreement		
	Southwark 2001	Southwark 2002	Waltham Forest 2008
<b>Quantity:</b> There are enough parks and open spaces close to where I live	+37%	+37%	+38%
<b>Quality:</b> The quality of parks in Waltham Forest is improving	+21%	+22%	+22%
<b>Accessibility:</b> I can easily get to parks and open spaces from my home	+66%	+68%	+72%
<b>Quality of Life:</b> Parks in my local area improve my quality of life	+64%	+61%	+61%

## D.3 Residents' views about the amount of open space

The main factor that affected this answer was where in the borough people live. Although, across all Community Council areas, the general feeling was that there was enough open space this was felt most strongly in Chingford & Highams Park (net agreement +59%) and North Chingford (net agreement +52%). Fewer agreed with this statement in Walthamstow & Lea Bridge (net agreement +17%). The response to this statement is represented graphically in Figure 2.3 and, in order to gain a picture of people's perceptions against the actual situation, it should be compared with Figure 2.2. In general terms people's perceptions about the amount of open space is largely borne out in reality. An exception to this, however, is in the Leytonstone Community Council where at +48% net agreement about there being enough open space was strongly positive while the amount of open space in this particular Community Council area is the lowest in the borough at 0.51 ha/1000 people. The reason for this is not clear, however, one possible explanation could be the relative proximity of large parts of Epping Forest to the east of Leytonstone – just beyond the borough and the Community Council boundary.

## D.4 Residents' views about the quality of open space

Those with children in the household returned the lowest net satisfaction (+6%), compared to +28% from those without; similarly the lowest net satisfaction (+10%) came from the 35-44 age group suggesting that there are concerns about the quality of facilities used by families with children. Interestingly people from Black (+50%) and Asian (+27%) community felt more strongly that the quality of parks in Waltham Forest is improving than those from White (+18%) backgrounds.

Residents who are relatively new to the borough (resident for 0-5 years) felt more strongly that the quality is improving (+31%) than those who have lived longer in the

borough – perhaps indicating a recent improvement in quality set against a general decline in standards in the borough over the last two decades or more.

From a geographic perspective, Figure 3.1, and in more detail Figures 3.2 to 3.6, show little spatial relationship between location and quality with the highest and the lowest quality sites being distributed across the borough. However, residents' concerns about open space quality in the Chingford & Highams Park Community Council area with poor net satisfactions rates for the three wards: Larkswood (-17%); Hale End & Highams Park (-5%); and Valley (0%), may be accounted for by the fact that each ward contains one of the ten poorest quality sites.

Another ward with negative net satisfaction is Hatch Lane (-5%). The results for all other wards were more strongly positive (+15 to +54%), with the exception of Lea Bridge (+5%) and Chingford Green (+10%). Higham Hill Ward, which contains three of the ten lowest quality sites, has a net satisfactions rate for quality of +50%.

#### *D.5 Residents' views about accessibility of open space*

Although net agreement is generally strongly positive to this statement (+72% for all residents), those with disability (+51%) and poor health (+29%) indicated that they had more difficulty getting to parks & open spaces from their home.

Amongst the wards, only Hoe Street (+50%) and Markhouse (+48%) show a significant lower net agreement than the general pattern across the borough. However, neither ward contains an access deficiency area (see Figure 4).

#### *D.6 Residents' views about the impact of parks and open spaces on their quality of life*

At +66% net agreement with this statement is strongly positive and there is little geographic variation across the borough: the most positive being residents of Chapel End Ward (+85%) and the least positive those from Cathall Ward (47%). But, as with the question about accessibility, those with disability (+45%) and poor health (+29%) tended to indicate that open space has a lesser impact on their quality of life than it does for others. Similarly those that participate in exercise the least also showed a lower net agreement (+43%). However, even amongst these residents, open space is felt to have a positive impact on their quality of life.

At +88%, those who have lived in the borough for less than five years were most likely to feel that parks and open spaces in their local area improved their quality of life.

## **E. Appendix E: Setting a standard for the amount of open space**

### *E.1 Quantity Standard and demand for open space*

Both PPG 17 and the Mayor of London's guidance states that local authorities should set local standards for open space provision which should be incorporated in development plans. A key issue for the Strategy is therefore what standard is appropriate for Waltham Forest? The sufficiency of open space has traditionally been assessed by comparing the area of open space to the total population within a given geographic area. To gain an initial impression, current provision has been compared with two pre-existing standards. The first standard adopted was 4 acres (1.6ha) per 1000 population which was set in the Abercrombie Plan of 1943 and was specifically designed to reflect the circumstances in inner London. The second standard was 6 acres (2.4ha) which was formerly used nationally (sometimes referred to as the Six Acre Standard).

Based on the current population estimate of 243,162 and a total area of 692.56 ha of unrestricted access open space, there is 2.85 hectares per 1000 Waltham Forest residents. This figure is well above both of the above pre-existing standards, however, it masks the variation that is seen when the data is looked at a ward or Community Council level (see Figures 2.1 and 2.2). While there is less open space in the south than the north, given that in general terms there is a majority view among residents that there is enough open space across the borough, standards should be set broadly in line with existing provision. It is recommended that the standard for the whole borough be set at 1.6 ha/1000 people, however, it is recognised that the higher standard of 2.4 ha/1000 people would be met across large parts of Waltham Forest.

When analysed by Community Council, this would mean that Leytonstone Community Council area, with 0.51 ha/1000 residents falls well below this standard while Walthamstow West at 1.58 ha/1000 is very close to meeting the 1.6 ha target.

When looked at by ward more local variation becomes apparent with Cann Hall (0.08 ha), Cathall (1.05 ha), Grove Green (0.1 ha), Leyton (0.84 ha), Leytonstone (0.41 ha), Hoe Street (0.14 ha), William Morris (0.32 ha), Chapel End (1.36 ha), Valley (1.29 ha) and Endlebury (1.35 ha) wards all having less than 1.6 ha of publicly accessible open space per 1000 residents. However, it must be recognised that at this level of analysis, the picture can be heavily influenced by the geography of ward boundaries and individual open spaces.

Nevertheless, while it is acknowledged that, because of their built up nature, it would be almost impossible to achieve the 1.6ha/1000 residents in all these wards, taking the standard into account will indicate where long-term planning could seek to increase the amount of public open space where it is most needed.

# ACTION PLAN FOR 2010-13: OPEN SPACE STRATEGY

Outcome	Actions / Milestones	Lead Officer / Agency	Deadline for completion	Additional resources required?
Cleaner parks and open spaces	Incorporate park cleansing into the same monitoring regime as street cleansing	Andy Lyon/Public Realm	Jan 2011	No
	Introduce "last cleaned" log in Premier Parks	Andy Lyon/Public Realm	Apr 2011	No
	Introduce joint inspections with park friends groups	Andy Lyon/Public Realm	Apr 2011	No
Greener/sustainable parks and open spaces  Improve biodiversity and access to nature	Develop a set of guidelines to start to drought-proof parks and open spaces and reduce water use	Kathryn Cassidy/Climate Change	Apr 2011	No
	Works to Lloyd Park moat and associated areas to improve biodiversity	Sarah Reid/Green Spaces	Jun 2012	Yes
	Habitat improvements at Chingford Mount Cemetery	Mike Punchard & John Billson/Green Spaces	Mar 2011	Yes
	Habitat improvements to St Mary's Churchyard, Leyton	Mike Punchard & Liza Sumpter/Green Spaces	Mar 2013	No
	Create biodiversity habitats in other parks and open spaces and provide interpretation	Chris Moran/Green Spaces	Mar 2013	No
Higher quality open spaces	Improvement programme for Ainsley Wood	Chris Moran/Green Spaces	Mar 2013	No
	Maintenance improvements to Good Memorial Gardens	Andy Lyon/Public Realm	March 2011	No
	Improvement programme for Greenway Avenue Nature Reserve	Chris Moran/Green Spaces	Mar 2013	No
	Improvement programme for Wadham Avenue Open Space	Chris Moran/Green Spaces	Mar 2013	No
	Improvement programme for Low Hall Conservation Area	Chris Moran/Green Spaces	Mar 2013	No

Outcome	Actions / Milestones	Lead Officer / Agency	Deadline for completion	Additional resources required?
Green Flag awards for all Premier Parks	Restoration & Development programme for Lloyd & Aveling Park completed.	Sarah Reid/Green Spaces	Jun 2012	No
	Green Flag award for Lloyd & Aveling Park	Sarah Reid/Green Spaces	Jul 2012	No
	Improvement programme for Ridgeway Park	Ben Frearson/Green Spaces	May 2011	No
	Green Flag award for Ridgeway Park	Ben Frearson/Green Spaces	Jul 2011	No
	Improvement programme for Abbots Park	Chris Moran/Green Spaces	May 2011	Yes
	Green Flag award for Abbots Park	Chris Moran/Green Spaces	Jul 2011	Yes
	Improvement programme for Memorial Park	Chris Moran/Green Spaces	May 2013	Yes
	Green Flag award for Memorial Park	Chris Moran/Green Spaces	Jul 2013	Yes
Existing open spaces and playing pitches protected	Measures to protect open spaces and playing pitches adopted in Local Development Framework Core Strategy	Gordon Glenday/Planning	Dec 2011	No
Areas of access deficiency reduced or eliminated	Deficiency areas adopted in Local Development Framework Core Strategy	Gordon Glenday/Planning	Dec 2011	No
	Seek opportunities for new public open space to reduce deficiency area in Blackhorse Lane and Palmeston Road area	Gordon Glenday & David Scourfield/Planning	Dec 2013	Yes
	Seek opportunities for new public open space to reduce deficiency area near Essex Road, Wallwood Road and Murchison Road	Gordon Glenday & David Scourfield/Planning	Dec 2013	Yes
	Secure access to existing open spaces where it will reduce deficiency areas	Nick Burton/Green Spaces	Dec 2013	Yes
Improve access to open spaces for people with disabilities	Work with highways to identify areas where improvements are needed	Vala Valavan/Highways	Dec 2013	No

Outcome	Actions / Milestones	Lead Officer / Agency	Deadline for completion	Additional resources required?
Better and more toilets and catering facilities	Improvements to toilet and catering provision as part of Lloyd & Aveling Park Lottery works	Sarah Reid/Green Spaces	Jun 2012	No
	Improve signposting to local toilet and catering facilities both on- and off-site including those who are members of the Community Toilet Scheme	Chris Moran/Green Spaces	Mar 2013	Yes
Better facilities particularly for people with disabilities and for children and families	Continued implementation of £200k growth, agreed in 2010/11, for planned maintenance and replacement programme for play areas	Chris Moran/Green Spaces	Mar 2011	No
	Improve disabled facilities at Larkwood, Mansfield Park, Pimp Hall Park, The Highams Park and Wingfield Park.	Chris Moran/Green Spaces	Dec 2013	Yes
Improved safety and consequent increased use by women and those over 50 years old	Specific project developed for Lloyd & Aveling Park	Ellie Mortimer /Green Spaces	Jun 2012	No
	Projects developed for other key parks	Liza Sumpter/Green Spaces	Mar 2013	No
Increased use by those from African, Caribbean and Asian communities	Specific project developed for Lloyd & Aveling Park	Ellie Mortimer /Green Spaces	Jun 2012	No
	Projects developed for other key parks	Liza Sumpter/Green Spaces	Mar 2013	No
Dogs well controlled and owners who clean up after their dogs	Develop community outreach project in problem parks to encourage responsible dog ownership	Liza Sumpter/Green Spaces	Mar 2013	No
	Marketing and communications as part of Wipe it Out campaign	Nichola Mansfield/Comms	Mar 2012	No
	Enforcement of dog byelaws and work with dangerous dogs team	Gavin Douglas & Gareth Jones/Enforcement	Mar 2013	No
More dedicated staff/park keepers in key parks	Seek to retain park keeping at least at current levels	Andy Lyon/Public Realm	Apr 2011	No
	Re-align park keeping hours with peak visitor times	Andy Lyon/Public Realm and Kier	Apr 2012	No
	Work with park Friends Groups to identify indicators for well-cared for parks	Andy Lyon/Public Realm and Kier	Sep 2011	No

Outcome	Actions / Milestones	Lead Officer / Agency	Deadline for completion	Additional resources required?
Bid for funding from external sources to improve parks and open spaces	External funding secured	Nick Burton/Green Spaces	Dec 2013	No
More Friends Groups with a membership that reflects the diversity of the local community	Work with Friends Groups to review membership	Liza Sumpter & Ellie Mortimer/Green Spaces	Mar 2011	No
Biodiversity Action Plan reviewed and updated	Updated Biodiversity Action Plan produced and adopted	Mike Punchard/Green Spaces	Dec 2010	No
Tree Strategy prepared	Tree Strategy Plan produced and adopted	Usha Parmar/Public Realm	Mar 2011	No
Playing Pitch Strategy reviewed and updated	Updated Playing Pitch Strategy produced and adopted	Chris Moran/Green Spaces	Mar 2011	Yes
Open Spaces Strategy reviewed and updated	Quarterly and annual monitoring of progress and performance indicators	Nick Burton/Green Spaces	Mar 2011 Mar 2012 Mar 2013	No
	Annual update of GIS information	Andy Ford/GIS Resources	Dec 2011 Dec 2012 Dec 2013	No
	Review Open Space Strategy Action Plan	Nick Burton/Green Spaces	Sep 2013 Sep 2016	No
	Produce new Action Plan	Nick Burton/Green Spaces	Dec 2013	No
	Commence review of Open Space Strategy	Nick Burton/Green Spaces	Apr 2019	No
	Produce new Open Space Strategy	Nick Burton/Green Spaces	Dec 2019	No

## ANNEX A: RISK LOG

Risk Description (inc. trigger for risk occurring and likely consequences)	Likelihood (1-4)*	Impact (1-4)*	Mitigating Action(s)	Lead Officer / Agency	Deadline for completion	Additional resources required?
<b>Unable to secure land or funding for the creation of new public open spaces in areas of deficiency:</b> deficiencies will remain	3	2	Build aspirations into long term plans such as the LDF Seek external funding/S106 agreements associated with redevelopment	Nick Burton/Green Spaces Gordon Glenday and David Scourfield Planning	Dec 2013	Yes
<b>Unable to secure funds to make quality, habit and facilities improvements to open spaces:</b> public satisfaction less likely to improve; less likely to secure Green Flag awards; poorer access to nature	3	2	Seek external funding/S106 agreements associated with redevelopment Work with partners and voluntary organisations to secure added value	Chris Moran/Green Spaces Gordon Glenday and David Scourfield Planning	Mar 2013	Yes
<b>Need for budget savings reduces the number of dedicated staff/park keepers in key parks:</b> public satisfaction less likely to improve	3	3	Re-align park keeping hours with peak visitor times	Nick Burton/Green Spaces Andy Lyon/Public Realm	Apr 2012	No
<b>Unable to secure funds to review and update Playing Pitch Strategy:</b> current strategy becomes obsolete and unable to inform future planning and provision decisions; challenge from Sport England, NPF and governing bodies	2	2	Seek partnership funding from Strategic Planning, 2012 Team, Culture & Leisure and external sources	Nick Burton/Green Spaces Gordon Glenday/Planning Symon Sentain/2012 Team Joyce Guthrie/ Culture & Leisure	Mar 2011	yes

\* Impact and likelihood assessments to be completed in accordance with the Council's agreed criteria, available at <http://forestnet.lbwf.gov.uk/fin-doc-c-risk-management-criteria.doc> .

Likelihood: 1= remote; 2= possible; 3= probable; 4= likely

Impact: 1= minor; 2= moderate; 3= significant; 4= severe

## ANNEX B: CONTRIBUTION TO OTHER PARTNERSHIP PRIORITIES

Which other LAA indicators are supported by this plan?	
Ref.	NI Description
NI 8	Adult participation in sport
NI 56	Obesity in school children in Year 6
NI 195	Improved street & environmental cleanliness (includes open space)

Which SCS commitments are supported by this plan?	
Ref.	Commitment Title
35	Enforce and promote quality and innovation in the design of buildings and public spaces
38	Secure investment and involve residents in improving parks and playgrounds
41	Tackle fear of crime by ensuring that public spaces and transport infrastructure are well designed, maintained, and used
24	Tackle childhood obesity by focusing on diet and exercise
28	Encourage people to participate in active leisure to keep them mentally and physically fit.
11	Promote equality, cohesion and integration in our community
34	Promote the development of a vibrant cultural offer and promote public art to give public spaces identity and interest
8	Promoting active citizenship and civic pride, for example by encouraging volunteering, and given residents a greater say over priorities and the allocation of resources