

"The measure of any great civilisation is in its cities, and the measure of a city's greatness is to be found in the quality of its public spaces, it's parks and squares."

John Ruskin

GOOD PARKS FOR LONDON 2018

Improving London's parks for all



Sponsored by

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Foreword

As a Biophilic Design consultant, I am aware of the many benefits that access to nature can have in all the spaces that surround us at every scale; from individual rooms, to buildings, to the many varied spaces in our cities. A human centred approach to the design of space seeks to improve the connection to nature to reduce stress and aid recuperation, by demonstrating the business case delivered through valuing natural capital. Reconnecting with nature helps us understand our sense of place within the wider environment, and I believe it is essential that we gain a deeper understanding of its value and realise the need to protect the natural spaces that are freely accessible and important to us all – London’s wonderful parks.

It is accepted that urban parks deliver economic, social, wellbeing and environmental benefits for cities and the people that live and work in them. Parks are not just ‘nice to have’, but an essential part of the urban landscape that deliver in so many ways – physical and mental health, community cohesion, biodiversity, and learning.

This report demonstrates the enormous importance that parks play within London for people and planet, by connecting us with the natural world. But whilst our parks are under financial threat, it showcases the many ways that parks are being improved, managed and made more accessible to both the human and natural world inhabiting our city. In doing this, it showcases best case practice that can inspire others to follow.



Oliver Heath



Introduction

Good parks are important to all of us – environmentally, socially, economically and we want to keep them thriving, accessible, safe and attractive for London’s residents, workers and visitors. This second edition of Good Parks for London builds on last year’s report to make the capital’s parks policies and practices more visible, open to scrutiny and to support London’s organisations and citizens that seek to make our city greener, healthier and sustainable.

Good Parks for London is an annual report, compiled by Parks for London. It brings together in one report information about London’s parks so that Boroughs can gain recognition for their good work and improve their position in the benchmarking exercise.

Part one of the report shows how London Boroughs compare in the Good Parks criteria.

Since last year criteria 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9 & 10 have been reviewed and refined by a working group of local authority parks officers. This review process will continue every year through collaboration with stakeholders. Data has been collected from Boroughs and partner organisations. The results are presented through maps and a benchmarking table, clearly showing the top performing Boroughs and those that can improve, along with examples of Boroughs that are performing well in each criterion. **Part two of the report features examples of good practice and useful information from land managers and other organisations with an interest in London’s parks.**

The first report was well received by both senior officers and Members in many Boroughs; even making its way into a local election manifesto. Ward Councillors and local stakeholder groups also commented positively on the content of the

report and found the case studies of particular interest. The report raised interest amongst Councillors and friends' groups on Twitter, and we expect more conversations to take place this year.

We aim to make the Good Parks for London report an effective mechanism to promote good practice and raise quality standards across London. We want to promote and celebrate the many good things that are being delivered by Boroughs and other organisations that manage London's valuable assets.

Support for our initiative has grown since last year's report and it is endorsed by all London Boroughs, London Councils, the GLA and partner organisations. We are grateful to GL Hearn, part of Capita Real Estate, for sponsoring the production and launch of this report.

We hope that you enjoy reading this edition.

Tony Leach
Chief Executive, Parks for London

Definitions: for the purpose of this report, **parks** mean all parks and green spaces that are owned and managed by the local authority *except* allotments, cemeteries and housing green space.

Notes for scoring the criteria

1. PUBLIC SATISFACTION with parks is taken from Borough public satisfaction surveys, where undertaken.

2. AWARDS FOR QUALITY are assessed by two independently run award schemes: Green Flag and London in Bloom. The score is made up of the percentage of directly managed parks that have gained Green Flag Awards (excluding parks owned and managed by The Royal Parks, City of London, Lee Valley Regional Park Authority and other landowners) combined with London in Bloom silver gilt, gold or winner awards given for a city, town, small and large parks.

3. COLLABORATION is assessed by evidence of cross boundary management and delivery of parks services, through partnerships and alliances with other Boroughs, the voluntary sector and other bodies; support and involvement with the London Tree Officers Association, London Parks Benchmarking Group and Parks for London.

4. EVENTS are assessed by Boroughs having an events policy and providing a range and number of different types of events in parks across their Borough.

5. HEALTH, FITNESS AND WELL-BEING are assessed by the Borough having: health outcomes incorporated in their parks strategy; whether parks are used for social prescribing, e.g. Green Gym, Healthy Walks, etc.; provision of outdoor gyms; health funding in parks, such as health campaigns, etc.; community food growing areas in parks, e.g., where Capital Growth or other initiatives are supported; and provision of free drinking water (fountains, cafes and public buildings).

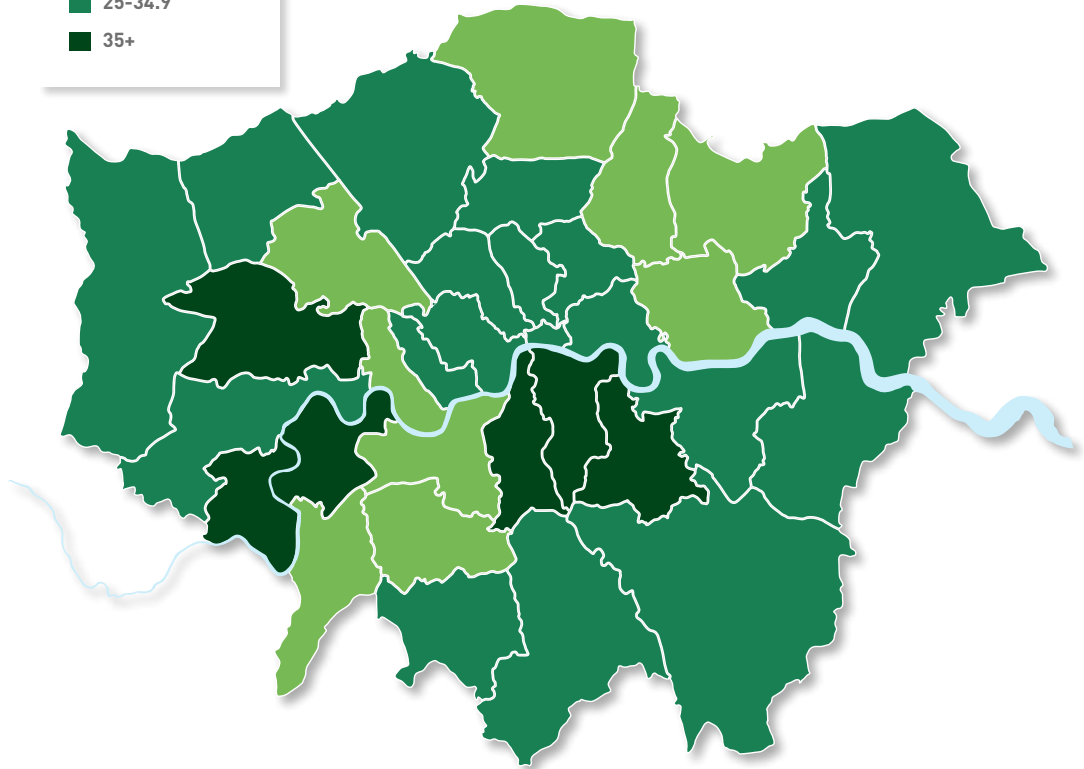
6. SUPPORTING NATURE is assessed by a combination of having an up to date Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) in place; the percentage of parks that have a management plan that includes BAP objectives (as a percentage of total parks); and percentage of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in positive conservation management.

7. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT is assessed by a combination of Community Green Flag and 'Our Community' London in Bloom awards gained, number of Park Friends Groups and if the Borough has a Borough-wide Friends Forum.

8. SKILLS DEVELOPMENT is the number of park apprentices as a percentage of total workforce.

Overall Scores

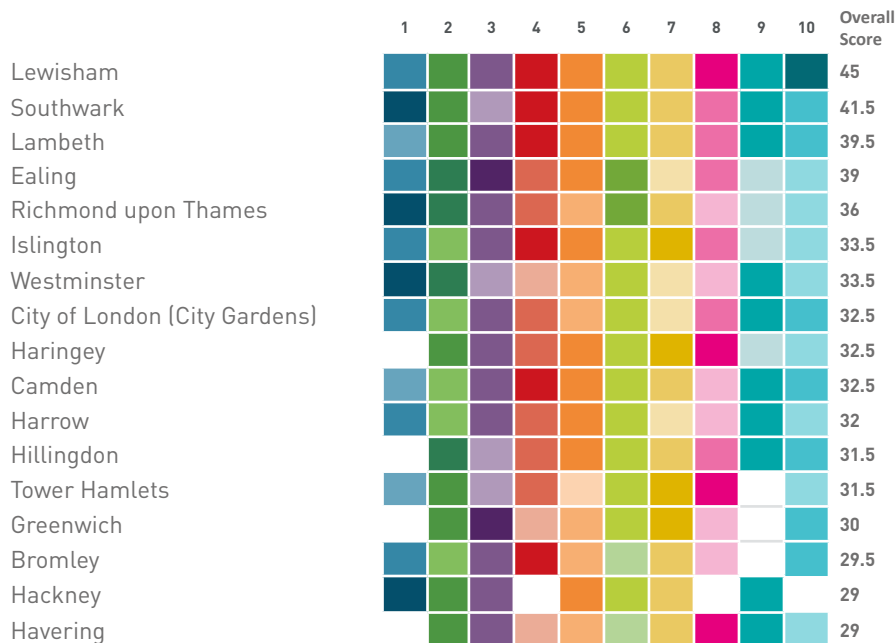
- 11-24.9
- 25-34.9
- 35+



9. SUSTAINABILITY is assessed by a combination of green fleet as a percentage of total fleet; battery-operated equipment as a percentage of total hand-held equipment; recycling paper/plastic as a percentage of all parks waste and whether an integrated pest management policy is in place.

10. STRATEGIC PLANNING is assessed by the Borough having an up to date green/open or infrastructure space strategy, with a current action plan and an asset management system in place.

Overall scores



Scoring criteria

1. PUBLIC SATISFACTION



2. AWARDS FOR QUALITY



3. COLLABORATION



6. SUPPORTING NATURE

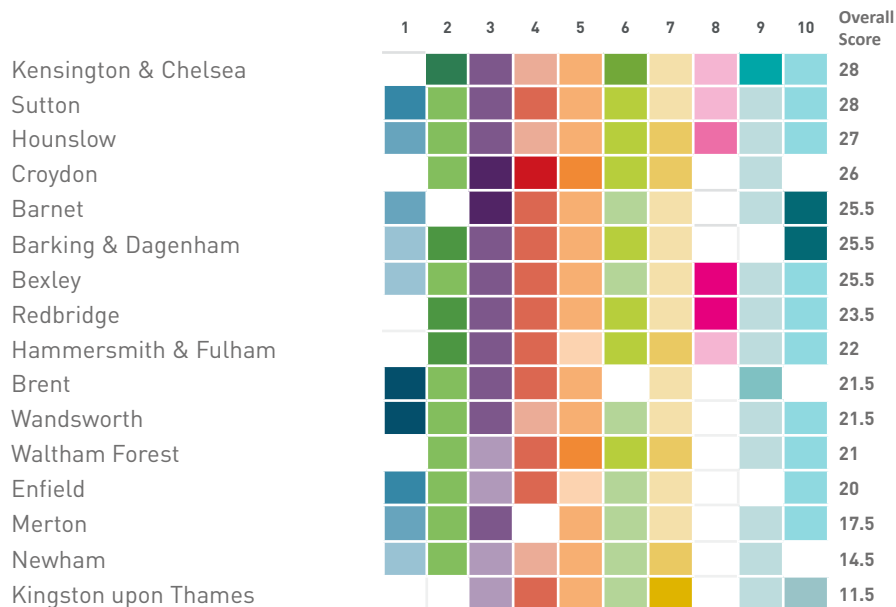


7. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT



8. SKILLS DEVELOPMENT





A blank square indicates that a Borough has not submitted data for a particular area or the data is not available or has not achieved a score.

4. EVENTS



5. HEALTH, FITNESS AND WELL-BEING



9. SUSTAINABILITY



10. STRATEGIC PLANNING



1. Public satisfaction with parks

Good quality parks should meet local demand as they are essential for healthy living conditions and thriving communities. Councils that respond to local residents' needs are essential for achieving continuous improvement. Public satisfaction with parks is taken from Borough-wide residents' satisfaction surveys scoring satisfied or above, where data are available.

Richmond did particularly well in this criterion, scoring 96%.

"Our most recent Parks Satisfaction Survey show that 96% of residents are satisfied with the borough's parks and green spaces. We continue to engage and consult with our residents and over 60 Friends Groups to ensure we are delivering projects and services that our users want in their local parks."



Yvonne Kelleher

Service Manager, Serving Richmond and Wandsworth Councils



"Richmond residents value their many parks and spaces above all as calm green spaces in a busy world where they can refresh their spirits amid trees, plants and nature."

Cllr Martin Elengorn

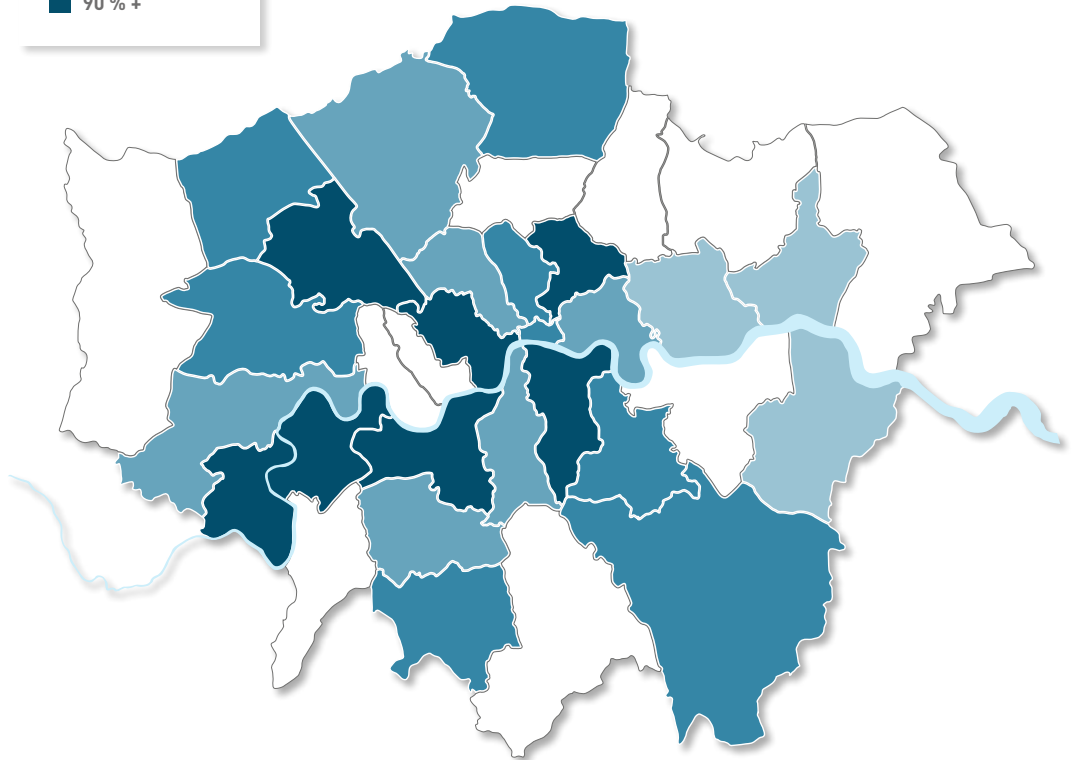
Cabinet Member for Environment, Planning and Sustainability



Volunteers planting a hedge

Public Satisfaction

- No data / score
- 59 - 69%
- 70 - 79%
- 80 - 89%
- 90% +



2. Awards for quality

Local authorities are increasingly challenged to maintain the quality of their public parks during times of austerity as there are so many pressures on the public purse. Although the provision of parks is not a statutory service, Boroughs that protect their parks budgets, better understand the multiple benefits that are derived from parks, such as health & well-being, climate change mitigation and social cohesion.

Awards for quality are assessed by two independently run award schemes: Green Flag and London in Bloom. The score is made up of the percentage of directly managed parks that have gained Green Flag Awards (excluding parks owned and managed by The Royal Parks, City of London, Lee Valley Regional Park Authority and other landowners), combined with London in Bloom silver gilt, gold or winner awards given for a city, town, small and large parks.

See p 53 for information about London in Bloom

Green Flag Awards set a benchmark for environmental excellence, judging against twenty-seven criteria, divided into eight main sections¹:

1. A welcoming place
2. Healthy, safe and secure
3. Well-maintained and clean
4. Environmental management
5. Biodiversity, landscape and heritage
6. Community Involvement
7. Marketing and communications
8. Management



<http://www.greenflagaward.org.uk/about-us/>

¹The Green Flag Award guidance manual (2016)

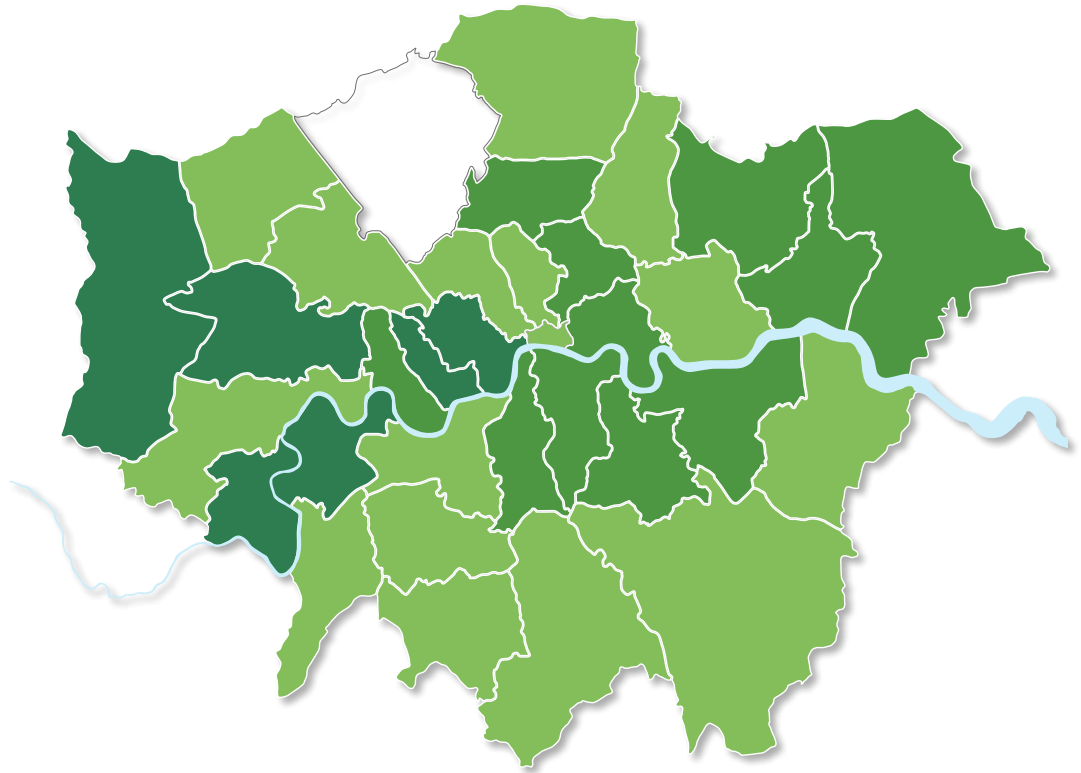
**Awards for
quality**

□ No data / score

■ 1-2.9

■ 3-4.9

■ 5+



3. Collaboration

Sharing good practice and joint problem-solving significantly improve outcomes within and across Borough boundaries. A joint approach leads to increased awareness, opportunities for maximising resources and addressing issues such as waste, flooding and accessibility.

Collaboration is assessed by evidence of cross boundary management (such as river catchment areas) and delivery of parks services, through partnerships and alliances with other Boroughs, the voluntary sector and other bodies; support and involvement with the London Tree Officers Association, London Parks Benchmarking Group and Parks for London.

Ealing performed very well in this criterion.

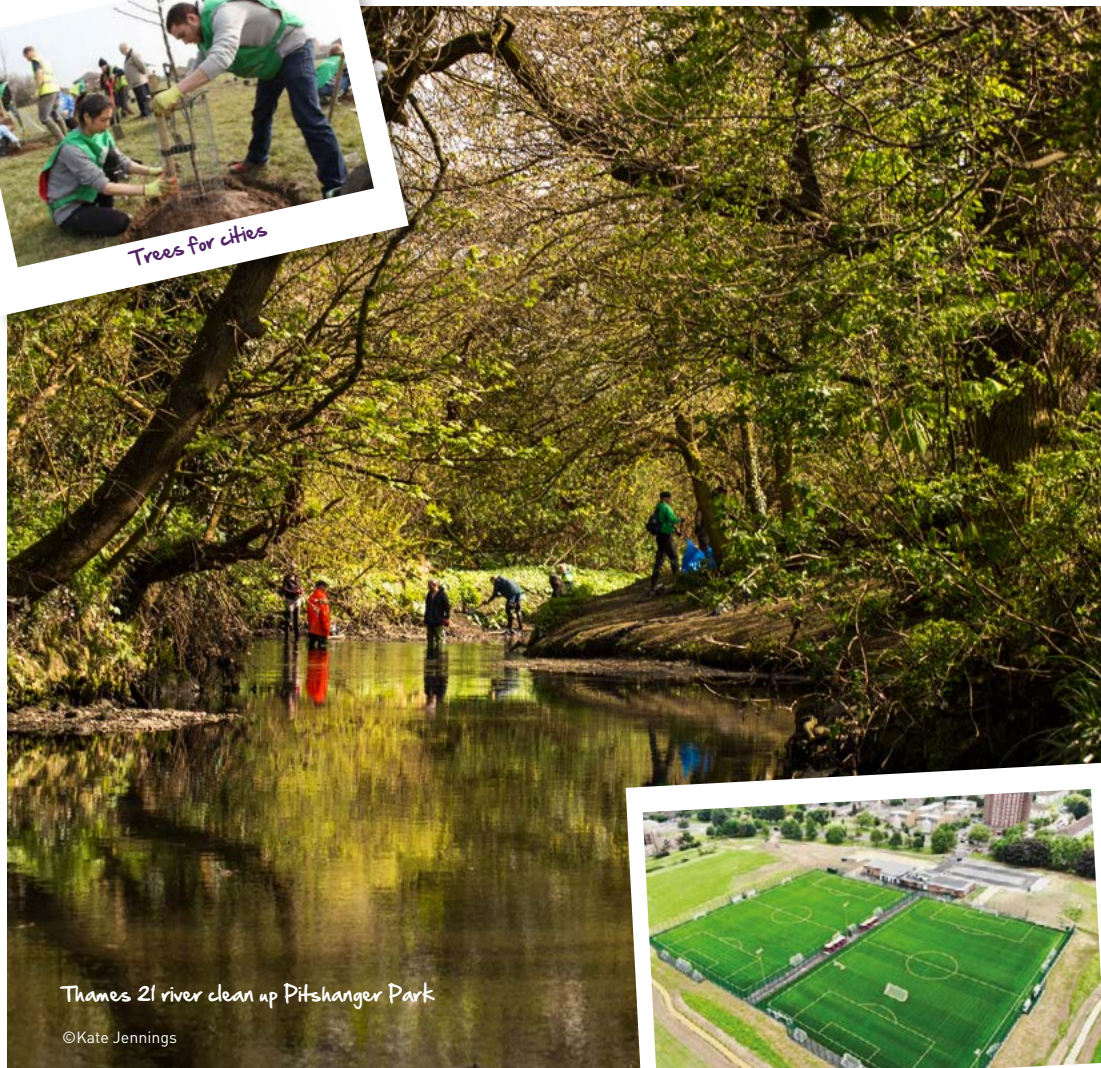
Ealing has a long list of successful collaborations which include its celebrated strategic partnership with Trees For Cities about to enter its fourth year; the ground-breaking Ealing i-tree Eco project; its joint £36m redevelopment of Gunnersbury Park with the London Borough of Hounslow at the Gunnersbury 2026 CIC; and the major



collaboration with the Football Association's, Football Foundation and

Middlesex Football Association to deliver the first London Parklife football development. Collaboration was at the core of a successful application for the Mayor of London's Green Capital Fund which will transform an underused and disconnected green space along the River Brent into a beautiful and ecologically valuable riverside greenway.

Ealing has taken the lead on pan London and regional networks such as the North West London Leisure Officers Network and they are active participants of the London Parks Benchmarking Group.



Thames 21 river clean up Pitshanger Park

©Kate Jennings

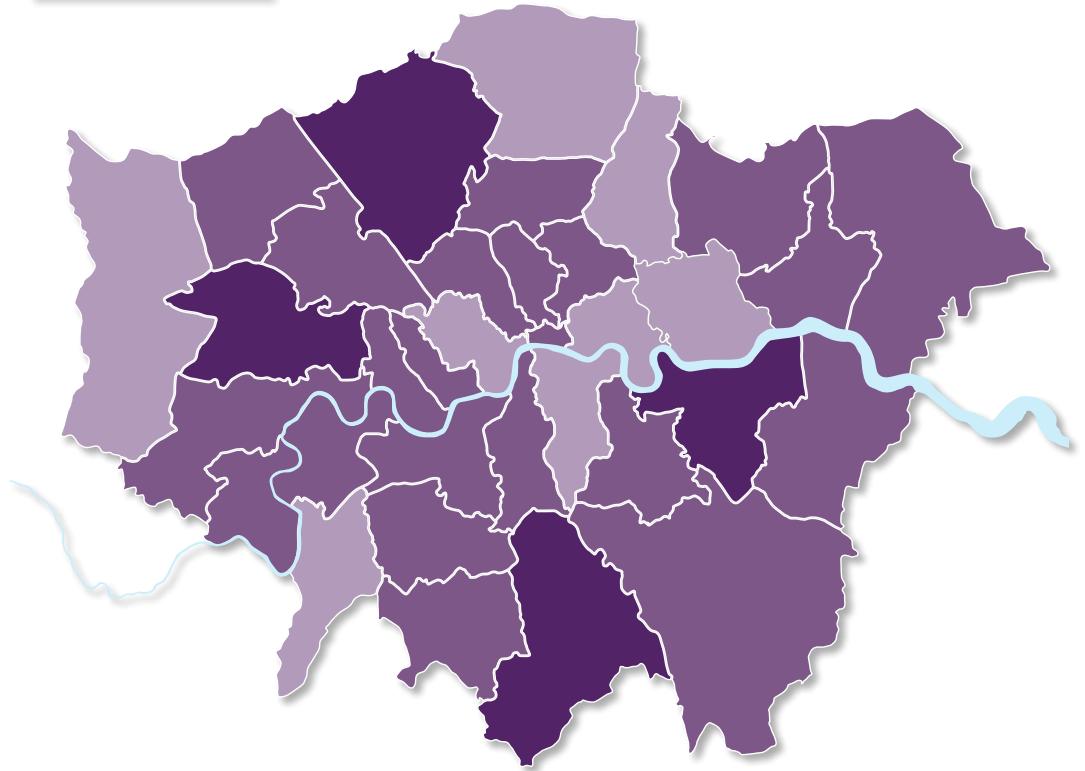
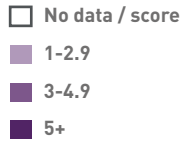




Ealing's leisure service has long been at the forefront of collaboration with other west London authorities with the award-winning tri-borough leisure contract entering its sixth year. This contract contributed savings in the region of £30m across the leisure provision in Ealing, the collaboration between Brent and Harrow remains one of the largest of this type in the UK.

Ealing has worked hard on a collaborative approach to deal with illegal encampments in west London for the last few years as the scale of the problem has escalated to unprecedented levels. Working as part of the West London Alliance, sharing information and solutions has helped reduce the impact on Boroughs and residents.

Collaboration



4. Events

Events are assessed by Boroughs having an events policy in place and providing a range and number of different types of events in parks across their Borough. **Lewisham excelled in this criterion.**

Lewisham's parks currently offer one of the most diverse range of community, sporting, arts and cultural events in London. They provide a mixture of charity and commercial events that increase public use of parks and promote greater social inclusion and cohesion. A successful annual events schedule is a product of regular, effective communication and engagement with local community and parks user groups. This enables Lewisham to support and offer events and activities that residents are genuinely engaged in and which are tailored appropriately to each park.

"My park is much appreciated by local people with its facilities for young and old, spaces for socialising, for exercise, competitive sports and for community events."

Alona Sheridan
Chair Friends of Mayor Park

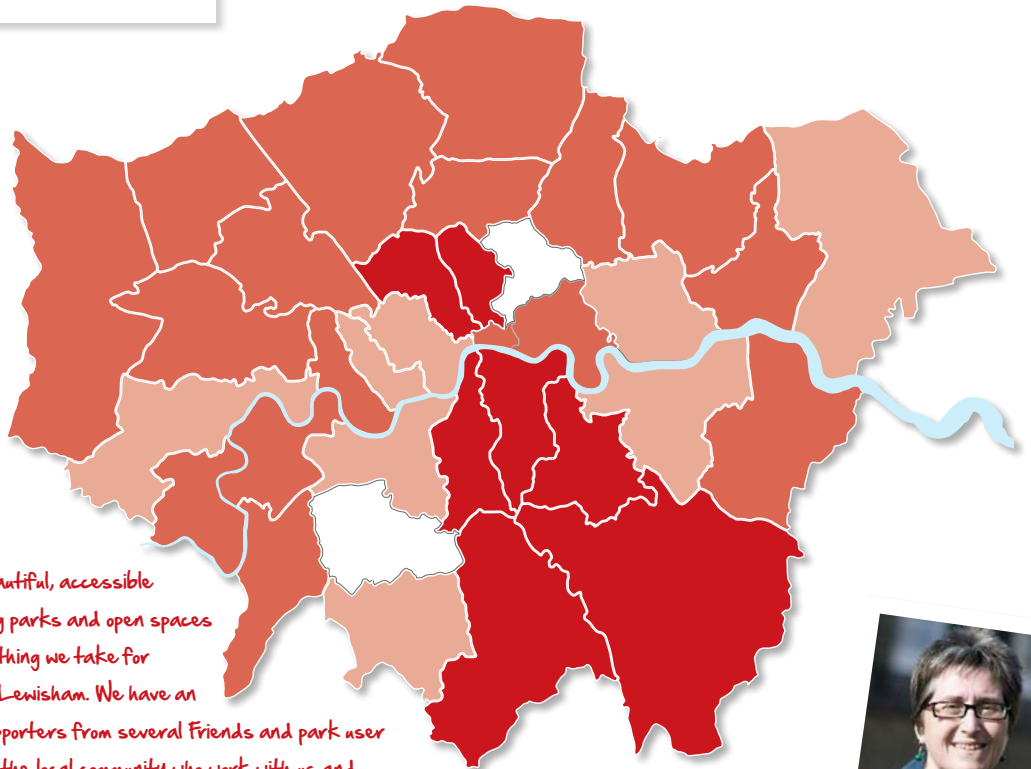
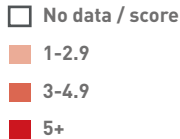


Forster Memorial Park

Lewisham's small scale events provide opportunities for residents and community groups to connect to their neighbourhood parks and include creative art workshops, youth outreach picnics and church fun days. Larger parks have hosted dog shows, box car racing and farmers markets. Even larger numbers are drawn from across the Borough to attend events such as Eid celebrations, fun fairs and firework displays. Large scale commercial events such as music festivals not only add to the entertainment opportunities in the Borough but also generate much needed income to support parks.

Lewisham's events are backed up by the council's parks events policy which provides clear and detailed guidance to organisations wanting to hold events. The policy ensures that they are managed safely, causing minimal disruption to local residents and with due sensitivity to the environment. Their assorted event calendar provides positive occasions to bring people of all ages and backgrounds together to enjoy Lewisham's high-quality parks.

Events



"Having beautiful, accessible and thriving parks and open spaces is not something we take for granted in Lewisham. We have an army of supporters from several Friends and park user groups and the local community who work with us and Glendale (who manage the parks on our behalf). We are delighted that so many residents use our parks to improve their health and well-being from our daily healthy walks to our annual cultural festivals. This demonstrates the strong partnership working has enabled us to provide excellent quality parks."



Councillor Chris Best
Deputy Mayor of Lewisham

5. Health, fitness and well-being

Health, fitness and well-being are closely linked with parks. Numerous studies point to health benefits from contact with nature, indicating a reduction in mental illness, lower risk of early mortality and reduced rates of non-communicable diseases and improvement of overall general health and a person's immune system.

Health, fitness and well-being scores are assessed by the Borough having: health outcomes incorporated in their parks strategy; whether parks are used for social prescribing, e.g., Green Gym, Healthy Walks, etc.; provision of outdoor gyms; health funding in parks, such as health campaigns, etc.; community food growing areas in parks, e.g., where Capital Growth or other initiatives are supported; and provision of free drinking water (fountains, cafes and public buildings). **Lewisham scored well in this criterion.**

Lewisham helps promote healthy lifestyles and well-being by offering a programme of sporting

and fitness activities, with the aim of encouraging more residents to use their parks to improve their health and wellbeing. Delivery of activities for health and exercise include, Lewisham Health Fayre, orchard tree planting, fun runs, sponsored walks and outdoor cinema powered by pedal powered screening!

In 2016 Lewisham Council was awarded National Pilot status for a whole system approach to tackling obesity; one of only four local authorities in the country and the only London Borough. A whole system approach not only supports individual behaviour change, but it brings about healthy eating and increased physical activity, which creates a less 'obesogenic' environment in which people live. This involves and engages stakeholders across society and includes schools, the NHS, food retailers, food manufacturers and suppliers, town planning, transport, sport and leisure, the voluntary sector, and many other sectors.

"Lewisham is still in the grip of an obesity epidemic that stubbornly refuses to subside. The latest statistics show that in reception year, over 22% of our children are overweight or obese. By year 6, this figure has increased to 39%. This obesity epidemic is a normal response of people to an abnormal environment"

Dr Danny Ruta

Lewisham Council's Director of Public Health

To engage the wider Lewisham partnership in the whole systems approach, a Lewisham Obesity Alliance was formed. The Alliance now comprises of almost 100 members, and over the last year the focus of the Alliance has been on aligning actions to create healthy environments. The main area of focus has been supporting one of the three key actions of their whole systems approach to encourage more of residents to use their parks.

Whether it's to participate in a range of organised sporting activities, get involved in volunteering events, walking, cycling or simply to enjoy just being in the open air then Lewisham's parks have a wealth of options which contribute to improving the health and well-being of residents.

Three key areas Lewisham has particularly focussed on this year:

OUTDOOR GYMS

Exercise in the open air is connected to greater benefits for health and mental well-being than exercise taken indoors. Lewisham has six outdoor gyms, two of which were installed in 2018 and five trim trails in parks across the Borough.

The natural outdoor environment provides a more casual setting where no experience is required and is suitable for people of all ages and fitness levels. This interaction with natural surroundings helps reduce stress and anxiety as well as provide a forum for social participation, all of which contributes to a better quality of life.

The benefits are also felt by those with less income, being free to use and are suited to individuals who normally struggle to find the time or money to attend a regular gym.

"using the indoor gym puts me under pressure and can sometimes be intimidating, and sometime too noisy. However, the outdoor gym in my local park is close to where I live, making it accessible and flexible for me to use"

Lewisham outdoor gym



NATURE CONSERVATION VOLUNTEERING AND NATURES GYM

Nature conservation volunteering and Natures Gym is a great way to improve fitness and help the environment by taking part in conservation activities. It is free of charge and all equipment is provided. It is a joint initiative run by Lewisham Council and Glendale. Nature's Gym helps people get closer to nature and benefits mental wellbeing as well as physical health. It provides a great opportunity to meet people, find out about the local area, learn new practical skills and make a positive contribution to the local environment.

Lewisham has undertaken a survey that shows many volunteers come to get fit in an outdoor environment. Earlier this year, volunteers were asked why they come to Nature's Gym with responses such as 'wanting to get some exercise' and 'keeping fit by working in the outdoors'.

'Working with Nature's Gym and being in the outdoors is great. It keeps me fit and I have met some lovely new people. It has also given me a sense of ownership of Lewisham's green spaces. Walking around the parks and nature reserves and seeing the results of our hard work gives me a sense of enormous wellbeing.'

Donna Davis, Nature's Gym Volunteer

DRINKING WATER FOUNTAINS

Lewisham Council has committed to installing new drinking fountains in as many of its parks as possible. This commitment forms part of the Mayor of London's Drinking Fountain fund which aims to put in place 20 new drinking water fountains across London in 2018.

Lewisham has contributed to this with a successful bid for two new drinking water fountains, recently installed in Ladywell Fields and Beckenham Place Park. This is in addition to ten existing fountains already present in other parks within the borough. This scheme is aimed to both encourage residents to drink water rather than unhealthy beverages, as well as reduce the use of single use plastic drinking bottles.

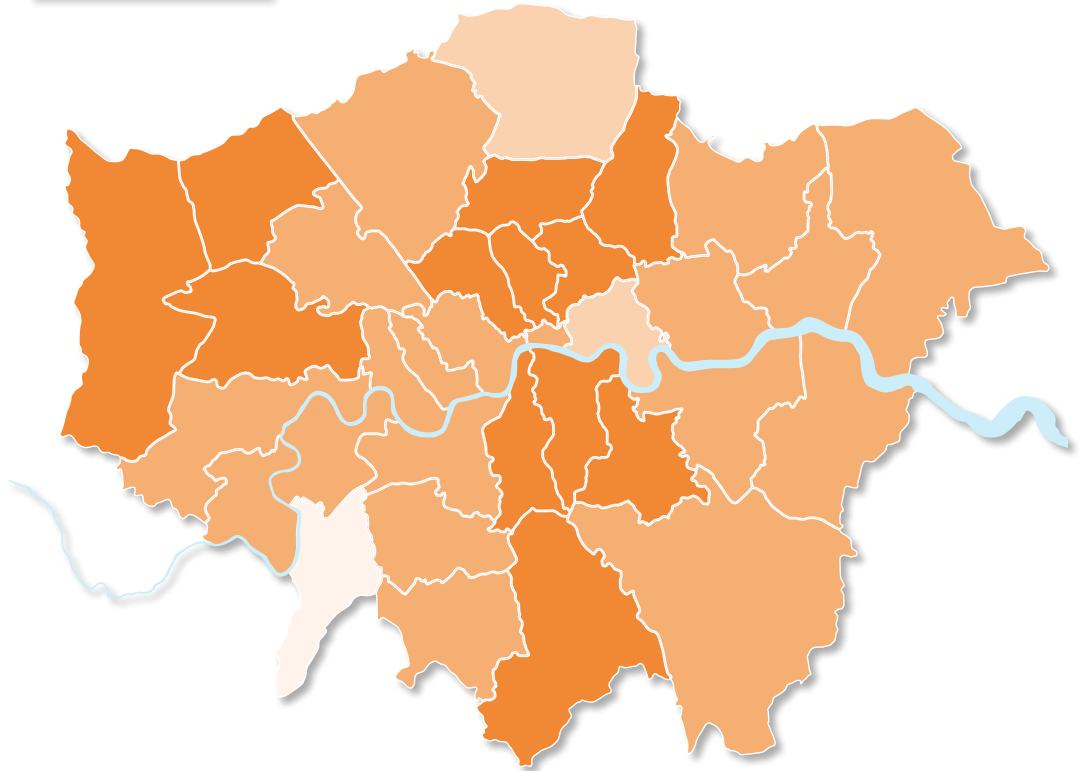
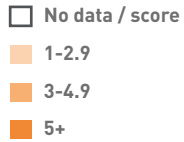
For more information see p 56

"The installation of the new water fountains will keep all our parks users hydrated and help reduce the temptation to resort to sugary drinks, contributing towards the council's overarching aim of the Whole System Approach to tackling obesity."

Jordan Ihama

Services Improvement Manager Parks and Open Spaces

Health, fitness
& well-being



6. Supporting nature

Maintaining and supporting the natural environment is something recognised at a national and international level. Allocating and protecting land for natural and wildlife habitats helps to preserve biodiversity within our cities, contributing to a balanced and sustainable environment. In an increasingly urbanised environment it is difficult for some species to survive. Therefore, it is essential for land managers to adopt measures and provide spaces where local wildlife can thrive. Not only does this help balance the local ecological life, but it also contributes to developing learning experiences for children from schools that visit such sites as part of their school curriculum.

Supporting nature is assessed by a combination of having an up to date Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) in place; the percentage of parks that have a management plan that includes BAP objectives; and percentage of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs), in positive conservation management.

The current London Plan has identified the need to protect biodiversity and to provide opportunities for access to nature. There are various sites of importance which are considered significant for wildlife and biodiversity in London; at a Metropolitan, Borough and Local level, which need to be protected. The London Wildlife Sites Board has identified a process of selection for such sites. London's most important wildlife sites are recognised by the Mayor of London and London Borough's as SINCs. There are over 1,400 SINCs in London, covering nearly 20% of London.



For SINC's which are under positive management, the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs publishes an historic list which identifies local sites which are being managed to preserve their nature conservation interest.

A BAP is an internationally recognised plan addressing threatened species and habitats and is designed to protect and restore biological systems.

Richmond's high scores in this criterion shows its commitment towards preserving local wildlife and biodiversity, which is an integral step to providing a balanced natural environment which will benefit both wildlife and local communities.

"Friends of the River Crane Environment (FORCE) is one of over 60 community-based friends groups working with Richmond Council parks department to maintain and improve local parks and open spaces. Over the last 15 years our volunteer works with the council, The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) and other public and private sector partners have resulted in major cumulative improvements to the open spaces along the Crane valley".

Rob Gray
Chair of FORCE



Local people on one of the regular FORCE walks and talks admiring new maps and signage installed in Crane Park.

Volunteers with Richmond TCV Green Gym on one of their regular works days in the lower Crane. Groups of volunteers are engaged several days per week maintaining and improving the community and environmental value of the open spaces along the River Crane which runs through the London Borough of Richmond.

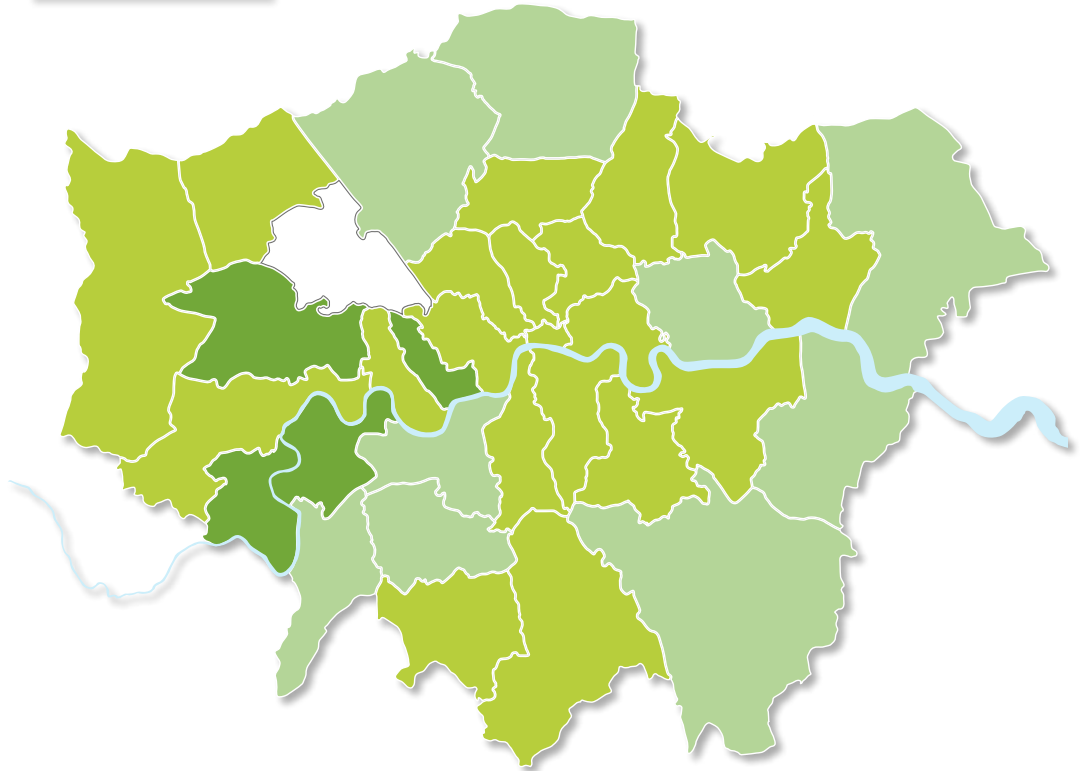
Supporting nature

□ No data / score

■ 1-2.9

■ 3-4.9

■ 5+



7. Community involvement

Getting the community involved in their local park is a fantastic way to bring people and communities together, reduce crime and improve the environment where people live and work. It also offers great benefits for health and wellbeing, by providing exercise, reducing feelings of isolation and by bringing people into closer contact with nature.

Community involvement is assessed by a combination of Community Green Flag and 'Our Community' London in Bloom awards gained, number of Park Friends Groups and if the Borough has a Borough-wide Friends Forum.

Whilst Councils like Islington are committed to maintaining their parks, with budgets reducing, it is the work of gardening groups, Parks Friends Groups, and other partners that can add that extra bit of value to their spaces.

Islington has a proud record of supporting the development of community groups and actively encourages them to take on increasingly larger roles in the maintenance and running of their local parks. This year we are happy to report that Islington have now 35 formally recognised Friends Groups who have signed up to the Friends Charter.



Apple Day Gillespie Park
The fourth annual Apple Day in Gillespie Park. It is organised by the Friends of Gillespie Park group.

These groups along with informal gardening groups and volunteers have brought real benefits to parks through hosting community events, running gardening days and at a basic level acting as the eyes and ears and letting the Council know about issues that need resolving. The work and dedication of four groups in particular has resulted in four of their parks being awarded Community Green Flags.

Islington Gardeners is a community gardening group with over 170 members and last year, the Council supported their application for London in Bloom which resulted in Gold in the City category being awarded to the borough. A Gold was also awarded to Arlington Square in the Small Park of the Year category which is almost entirely maintained by a Friends Group.

Not all involvement has to be formal. The Islington in Bloom competition in 2017 attracted 200 entries from school children, gardening groups, individuals and businesses who have worked to improve their public realm by greening their local areas to be enjoyed by everyone.



"We are very proud of the range and diversity of the community involvement we have in Islington's parks and open spaces. Our residents get involved in everything from tending a small flower bed, arranging community events or carrying out the horticultural maintenance of a whole park. Community involvement helps to bring people of all backgrounds together which aids social cohesion, improves and maintains the standards of our parks, reduces social isolation and loneliness and brings a range of other health and wellbeing benefits to all those involved."

Cllr Claudia Webbe
Executive Member for Environment & Transport

Islington has its first “word garden”, where the benches are covered in poetry and the plants are designed for people with sensory impairments to enjoy. Designed by older people at St Luke’s Centre, working with All Change, the garden is inspired by memories and stories of the park and area.



Word Garden in Kings Square



Paradise Park
Community Garden

Community garden planted and maintained by local Friends Group.



Culpepper Community Garden

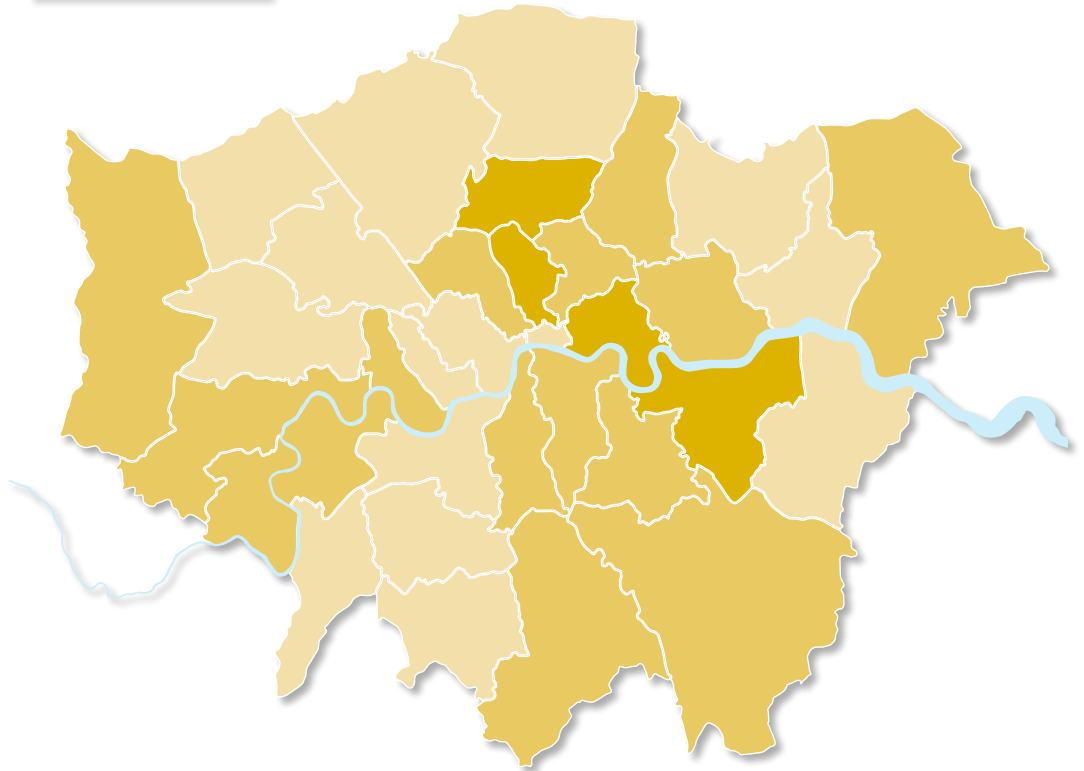
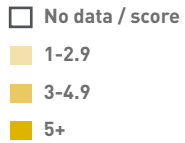
Community Garden completely managed and maintained by a community group



Gillespie Park

Volunteers helping maintain a pond in Gillespie Park

Community involvement



8. Skills development

Parks staff deal with developing and maintaining good quality parks and sports grounds. Apprentices are trained in various fields of expertise including horticulture, arboriculture, design, landscape management, soil science and pest control. Such training can provide young people and career changers with invaluable skills with which they can progress, ultimately providing opportunities for a successful future career in the diverse world of parks management.

Increasing the number of apprentices will inevitably help to overcome some of the skills shortage in this sector, leading to better quality parks within Boroughs.

Recent changes to the way apprenticeships are funded and developed is creating new opportunities for Boroughs to rebuild their skill sets for land management at every level. Skills development is measured by the number of park apprentices as a percentage of total workforce.



Tower Hamlets Green Team

Tower Hamlets is supporting four apprentices at levels 2 and 3. Their apprenticeship programme is aimed at meeting skills gaps such as horticultural machinery fitters.

"In a densely populated area like Tower Hamlets our parks and open spaces are essential for everyone. Whatever outside activity you want to do they are always inviting. Whether you want to play, see nature, relax or feel good they are the place for you, Our Green Team are the ones that achieve all this for us by keeping our spaces welcoming, interesting, well maintained, safe and clean."

Margaret Cox

Chair of Weavers Fields Friends Group

Parks for London supports employers to advertise job vacancies that occur in their park services through its website and email network. We have noticed that over the last year some vacancies have been difficult to fill, which combined with an aging workforce is a cause for concern. We are working with Heads of Parks Service to explore ways to improve career progression and succession for staff.



Victoria Park Summer Bedding



Mile End Park naturalised daffodils

Havering has employed apprentices since 2010 working for their ground-maintenance and park ranger teams. This is a rewarding experience for both parties with the students receiving on the job training to compliment what they learn at college. Managers work with apprentice tutors to ensure that the course content is reinforced by varied work experience. This can range from helping to look after an ornamental garden to monitoring livestock in a country park.

Havering provides opportunities to work with enthusiastic individuals who are either starting out or who are career changers that are willing to learn and bring new ideas to the team. Many of their apprentices obtain full-time employment either with Havering or for other organisations on completion of their training.

"It is particularly pleasing to be able to help train and enthuse staff in the horticultural industry, giving them a good foundation to start their career working in green spaces."

James Rose

Parks Development Manager

Havering's next step is to employ parks management apprentices who would study a level 4 course and work with the park's management team. The candidates could be those who have taken an interest in this work during their level 2 training.

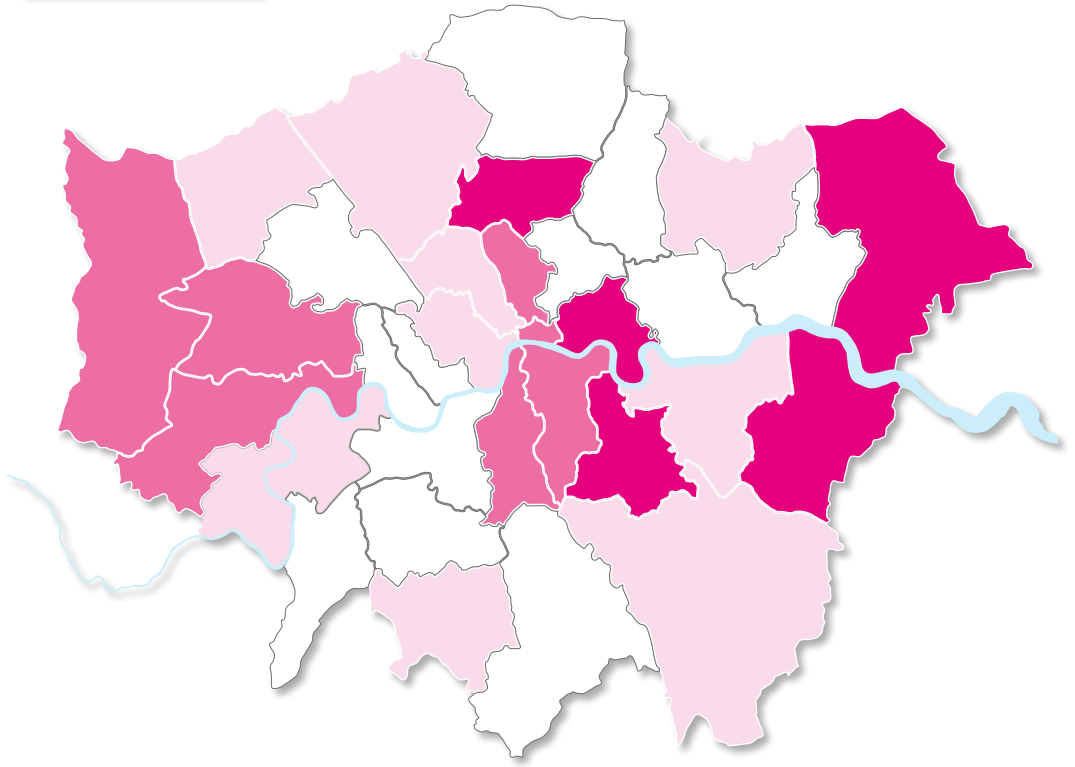
Skills development

□ No data / score

■ 1-2.9

■ 3-4.9

■ 5+



9. Sustainability

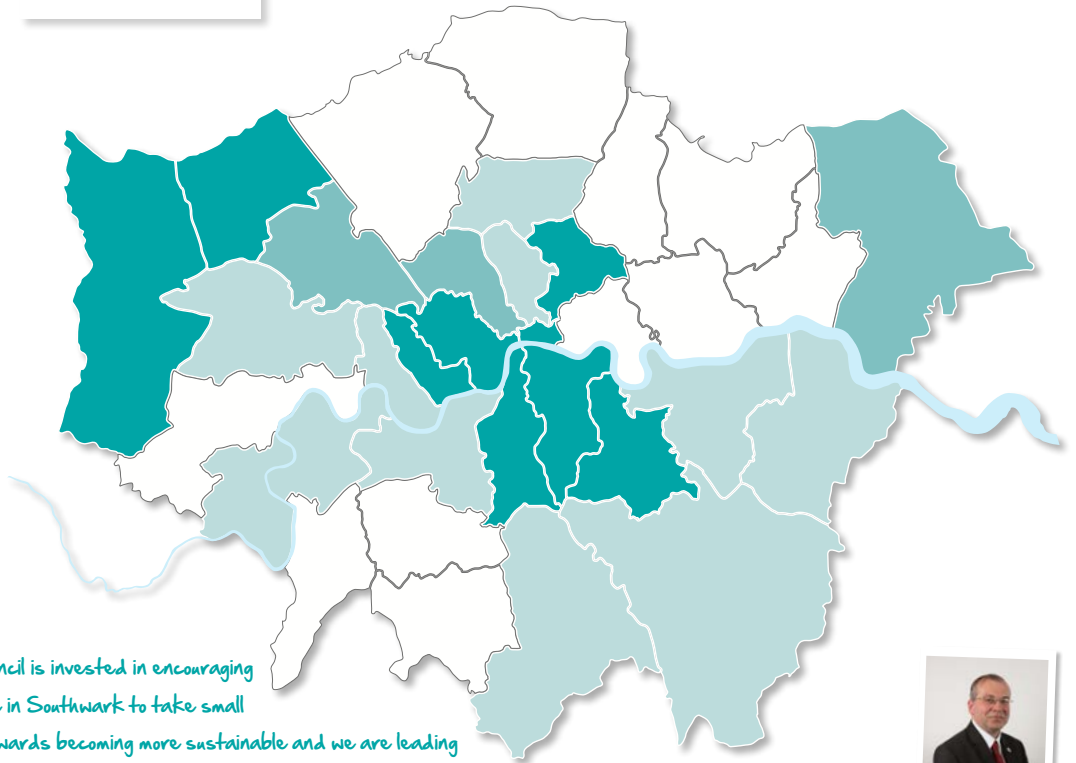
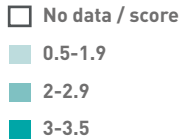
Sustainability is a key agenda item not only for local authorities, but for the nation and the world. Climate change is increasingly pressing us all to adopt more measures to combat future negative consequences. Parks significantly contribute towards climate change mitigation, often described as the lungs and shade of our cities. However, diesel vehicles and oil-based machinery can lead to an increase in air pollution and excessive noise, so using electric kit will help to improve these problems.

This criterion is assessed by a combination of green fleet as a percentage of total fleet; battery-operated equipment as a percentage of total hand-held equipment; recycling paper/plastic as a percentage of all parks waste and whether the Borough has an integrated pest management policy. In preparing this report we were surprised to find that currently no Borough has an integrated pest management policy. Therefore Parks for London will produce a template policy to help boroughs.

Southwark Council, which has scored well in this criterion, includes sustainability at the heart of its operational management and has done so for many years. They removed the scheduled use of pesticides from the parks ground maintenance contract decades ago and have been maintaining this commitment ever since. For the most recent contract awarded to idverde, Southwark purchased the fleet ensuring all were euro 6 compliant or cleaner, this included 17 electric only vehicles. Battery operated smaller equipment was trialled in some parks where noise was an issue. This has been very successful, and its use is being extended, allowing maintenance work to start earlier in the morning without causing a disturbance to residents. All park waste is taken to the council's integrated waste management facility for recycling or for energy recovery except for any green waste, which is recycled in the park depots to be reused as mulch.



Sustainability



"The council is invested in encouraging everyone in Southwark to take small steps towards becoming more sustainable and we are leading by example in our parks. Our vehicles are green, we recycle all of our park waste and we have found innovative means of clearing weeds with hot potato starch in place of pesticides, to name but a few. Maintaining our green spaces to the highest standard, while using the most environmentally sound methods, is a priority for Southwark Council."



Cllr Richard Livingston

Cabinet Member for environment, transport management and air quality

10. Strategic planning

Strategic planning is assessed by a Borough having an up to date green/open or infrastructure space strategy with a current action plan and an asset management system in place.

Strategic planning is a key criterion as it demonstrates the Borough's commitment to strategic long-term management and improvement of its parks. Crucial to its success is the need to have an up to date action plan, which provides a framework for decision-making and delivery of resources to improve provision and quality. This type of strategy looks at a Borough's current supply of parks, and it aims to ensure that their infrastructure reflects the shared vision of the authority and its partners. The action plan shows the steps which are needed to ensure the provision of parks is achieved and maintained in the long-term and details how their sustainability will be accomplished to serve future generations. An asset management system helps Boroughs to make the most their assets, which may include buildings, car parks, public monuments and green infrastructure; all of which require investment.

"We are extremely fortunate in Barnet to lay claim to a fantastic collection of parks and open spaces. This is one of the many reasons that so many families choose Barnet as a place to live. The overriding objective of our Open Spaces Strategy is for Barnet's green parks and open spaces to be amongst the best in London.

The strategy has also identified the location of three Sports Hubs across the borough, which are already being designed. Our strategy is clearly starting to have the desired impact. We will continue to implement this with the aim of making Barnet a better place to live and work in."

Cllr Dean Cohen

Chairman of Barnet Council's Environment Committee



Sunny Hill Park

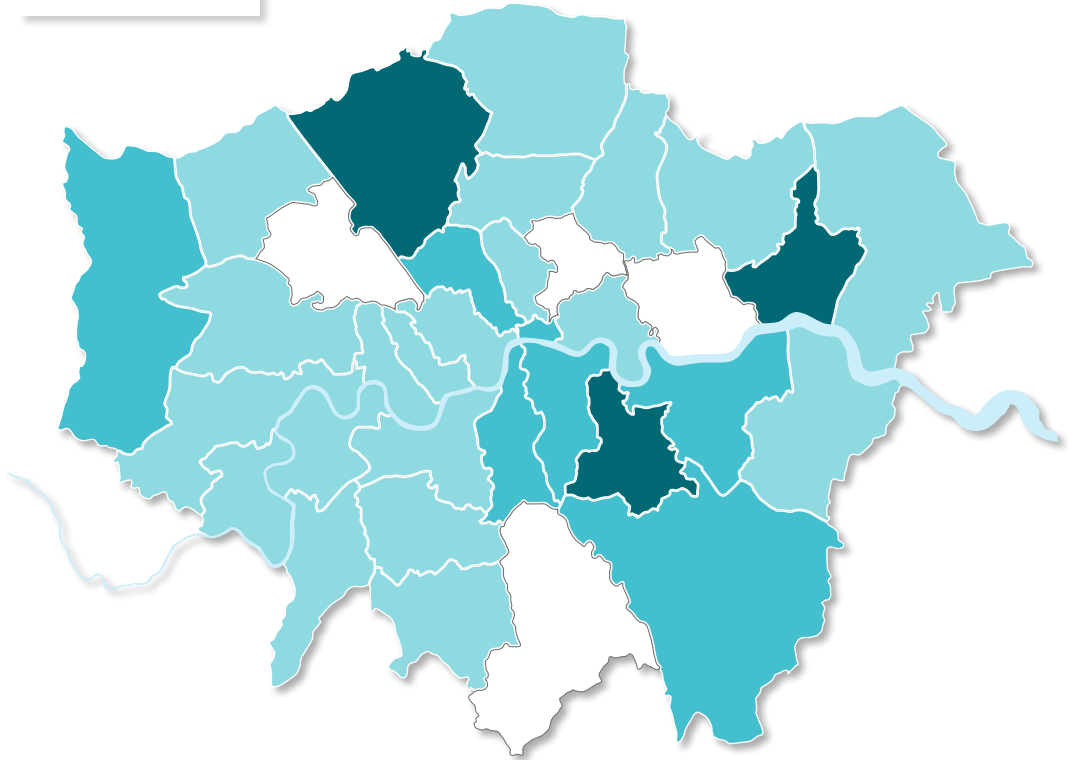
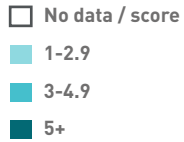
Old Courthouse tree planting

Barnet has produced a robust strategy that provides a review of the quality of its parks and suggests a range of opportunities that parks offer to enhance the quality of life and economic success of the Borough. The strategy is the result of a successful collaboration between the Borough planning and parks services. The overall objective of the strategy is to support the council's objectives for parks as set out in the Corporate Plan: 'Barnet's parks and green spaces will be amongst the best in London'. The strategy incorporates Natural Capital Accounting principles and links to several other pieces of work that consider health, wellbeing, sports provision and waste. All these strategies are aimed at making Barnet a better place to live and work.

It is now accepted that urban parks deliver economic, social and environmental benefits for cities and the people that live and work in them. These benefits reflect many of the objectives that Barnet has established for the economic success of the Borough, the health of its citizens and the quality of the environment with which they interact daily. Barnet's action plan sets out a road map for future investment, discussions around future funding and governance and an on-going dialogue between the council, residents, stakeholders and partners.



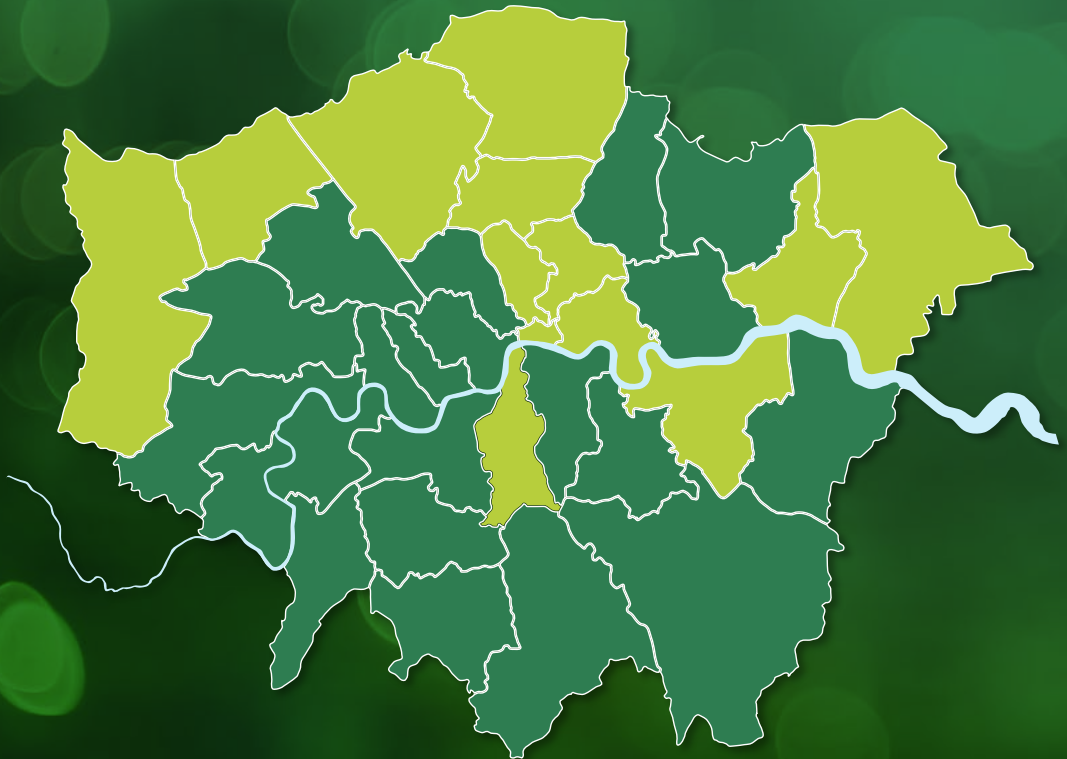
Strategic
planning



**Park
maintenance
providers**

- Internal
- External

Parks in london are either managed in-house or outsourced to contractors



Part two

Local authorities are not the only organisations that manage or have an interest in London's parks. Read on to find out more about:

- 1. Signature parks**
- 2. Landscape contractors**
- 3. Capel Manor College**
- 4. London in Bloom**
- 5. London Parks & Gardens Trust**
- 6. Good practice examples**

Signature parks

Alexandra Park

Alexandra Park is a 155-year-old designed landscape and provides the setting for the iconic Alexandra Palace in Haringey. In addition to providing vital open and green space for 3.5 million visitors each year, it also plays host to an exciting programme of activities and events. The site is managed by a charity, the Alexandra Park and Palace Charitable Trust, which was established by Act of Parliament in 1900. Partnerships are vital to help carry out the work of the Trust and help improve the Park and its natural habitats. 2018 has been a fruitful year with several successful projects completed.

Corporate volunteer groups have undertaken vital habitat management work. Organised in partnership with Trees for Cities (the only UK charity working at a national and international scale to improve lives by creating greener cities) and The Conservation Volunteers (TCV), this work is a crucial part of increasing the habitat value of the site and to mitigate the impacts of its many park visitors, as well as temporary event infrastructure.



Arboriculture students from Capel Manor College have been 'cutting their teeth' on trees in the Park. This has the benefits of providing real world training experience for students, their projects include felling poplar trees and devising management recommendations for trees in the Park. Horticulture students from Capel Manor College have been carrying out work experience days, with the Grounds Maintenance team from John O'Conner to gain valuable employability skills. They have carried out various seasonal maintenance tasks including planting a hedge, removing plants from bedding displays and rotavating the beds.

"We are most proud of our partnership with the Friends of Alexandra Park, this group have adopted a south facing area of acidic grassland and gradually rescued it from invasive vegetation. Their work parties together with the grounds team and volunteers have carefully cut back and dug out bramble and saplings over several years. They were rewarded this summer with a good run of butterfly sightings amongst the anthills. All this partnership work is vital for helping us maintain the site and provides opportunities for people to get active in this historic park. Ensuring that, as visitor numbers increase, wildlife is protected, and the park is maintained to the standard people expect."

The tasks included:

- Building wildlife-friendly 'dead-hedges' which provide barriers for sensitive ecological areas and makes use of existing cut material that is otherwise considered as waste.
- Creating beetle hotels by sinking logs into the ground, providing homes for insects like the iconic stag beetle.

Mark Evison
Park Manager



Photo Credit: Lloyd Winters

Signature parks

Lee Valley Regional Park

New Biodiversity Action Plan

Managing the diverse habitats and wildlife, within the 26-mile-long Lee Valley Regional Park, is a complex and intricate process that requires careful planning and close partnership working.

As part of its on-going commitment to the conservation of the Park's biodiversity, the Authority is launching the revised Lee Valley Regional Park Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). The plan identifies priority habitats and species found in the Lee Valley. It will draw together partners, strengthening existing and forging new working relationships with organisations and individuals from across the region to help protect and enhance these key features.

A consultation period finished in February, with responses received from organisations including local authorities, statutory agencies, charities, local community groups and individuals. These are currently being reviewed and it is hoped that the new BAP will be formally adopted in late 2018.

Wetlands are a key feature of the Lee Valley and provide important habitat for some of the park's most vulnerable species. The Water Vole, a Lee Valley BAP species, is one of the UK's most threatened mammals with habitat loss. Fragmentation and predation are key factors in their decline. Walthamstow Marshes, is a Site of Special Scientific Interest, is a relic floodplain grassland habitat, reminiscent of how the Lower Lee Valley would have once looked, and is still home to a population of Water Vole. On-going management takes place to maintain their habitat in good condition and the Authority is working with partners including Thames Water and London Wildlife Trust to try and increase their range through enhancements to habitats linking Walthamstow Marshes to the adjacent Walthamstow Wetlands.



water vole
copyright North East Images

Signature parks

Wandle Valley Regional Park

The Wandle Valley Regional Park is a vibrant but fragmented network of over 40 green spaces, and 12 nature reserves, linked by the riverside Wandle Trail, covering some 900 hectares across four South west London Boroughs of Croydon, Sutton, Merton and Wandsworth. The River Wandle has global ecological significance as a chalk stream habitat, whilst the valley has a rich industrial heritage having once been a major centre for textile manufacturing.

The Wandle Valley Regional Park Trust was set up in 2013 to provide the leadership and co-ordination needed to develop the Regional Park concept. The Trust works with a variety of public and private sector organisations to deliver its ambitious vision and has had many successes to date.

The Wandle Valley Big Green Fund project delivered capital improvements at Poulter Park in Sutton, opened a new stretch of the Wandle Trail and provided access to Watermeads Nature Reserve for the first time since 1914. The

'Gateways' project has improved access to the Wandle Trail at four key locations along the river and identified many other key sites for future attention. The Get Active Wandle Valley Project, supported by Sport England and others, has provided a coordinator to promote health and well-being activity across the valley. And the heritage of the valley has been captured, documented and recognised through the Living Wandle Partnership, the first Urban Landscape Partnership funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). Above all the Trust has championed the Wandle Valley as a major green infrastructure asset, actively pursuing the objectives set out in the All London Green Grid Area Framework 8 Supplementary Planning Guidance.

The Trust has ambitious plans for the future of the Regional Park and is seeking to position itself as a multi-value organisation focusing on a variety of outcomes such as economic growth, health and well-being, and social cohesion, as well as of course landscape enhancements. With help from the HLF's Resilient Heritage fund it is currently revising its governance, management and funding arrangements so that it has the capability and capacity to help create sustainable and vibrant neighbourhoods and thriving local economies within the Wandle Valley Regional Park.



Signature parks

Wimbledon and Putney Commons

A model of best practice

Wimbledon and Putney Commons is one of the most important natural open spaces within south west London, providing a priceless resource of eco-systems, landscapes, history and recreational and sporting facilities. The Commons are enjoyed and used by people from all over London. In total the Commons comprise 1,140 acres of publicly accessible open space.

The Commons will celebrate its 150th anniversary in 2021. The model of governance and finance is unique in London. Created by an Act of Parliament in 1871, a board of eight Conservators (more commonly referred to as trustees) are responsible for the custodianship of the Commons. They are supported by a team of 22 staff, including mounted keepers and maintenance staff.

The lands are held in trust and the Charity's fundamental purpose is to protect and preserve the Commons and make it available for the purposes of exercise and recreation.

The principle source of funding is from a special levy derived from local residences that are situated within three quarters of a mile from Wimbledon Common and the old Parish of Putney. In 2018/19 the levy will generate nearly £1.2M. The remaining operational funding is generated from rental income including concessions, events, way-leaves and investments.

Recognised as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Special Area of Conservation, the Commons are home to abundant flowers and wildlife. The acidic soils on the Commons upper reaches support large areas of heathland, with woodland and glades thriving on the lower London clay soils.

At its heart is the iconic Grade II* Listed Wimbledon Windmill that hosts the country's only Windmill Museum. In 2017 the Windmill celebrated its bicentenary and the museum which is free attracted over 16,000 visitors.



Putney Lower Common



Wimbledon Common Windmill

Landscape Contractors

idverde

Chemical-free weed control

idverde has been providing grounds maintenance services to Hammersmith & Fulham Council since 2008, at sites including parks, sports pitches, and over 190 housing sites.

In light of the uncertainty surrounding the chemical weed killer - glyphosate and with its goal of being the greenest Borough in the country, in June 2016, Hammersmith & Fulham Council banned the use of products containing glyphosate in grounds maintenance operations (with the exception of the treatment of non-native invasive species, such as Japanese Knotweed).

As glyphosate is found in almost all chemical-based weed treatments, finding an effective alternative weed control solution was initially challenging. Hammersmith & Fulham Council and idverde trialed various alternative weed control solutions, including flame burners, acetic acid and weeding by hand, before settling on the Foamstream system from Weedingtech. Foamstream kills weeds using an application of hot water and foam made from natural, non-toxic

ingredients including plant oils and sugars. When the solution is applied to a weed, the hot solution acts as a thermal blanket, keeping the heat on the weed long enough to kill it. The system also has the advantages that it can be used in all weathers, and hence, all year round, and can be safely used in environmentally sensitive areas, such as close to water courses.

In the spring of 2017 following training for staff delivered by Foamstream's manufacturer, idverde deployed five van-mounted Foamstream machines on its operations in Hammersmith and Fulham. Three Foamstream machines are now used in their operations at the Borough's housing sites, and two in the Borough's parks.

As with the introduction of any new system, there were some small initial problems, but working in partnership with Foamstream's manufacturer and their client, these were soon overcome with minimum disruption. They have also revised



schedules to co-ordinate operations with the council's other cleansing providers, who sweep the dead weeds from the hard surfaces once the treatment has taken affect. This has produced a more 'joined-up' method of working which minimises inconvenience for residents.

The Foamstream system is now fully operational across the Borough, with idverde currently delivering between five and eight treatments per year at 176 of Hammersmith and Fulham's housing sites.

"To be the most environmentally positive Borough in the country we have to be bold and innovative in what we do. That's why we were the first London borough to halt the standardised spraying of potentially harmful glyphosate weedkillers. We're really excited about pioneering the use of chemical-free weed control that is better for people, pets, and the environment."

Cllr Wesley Harcourt

Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport and Residents' Services (Hammersmith and Fulham)

"We are very excited about being able to implement the option of chemical-free weed control in Hammersmith and Fulham. We believe that this is an important factor in our goal of being the most environmentally friendly Borough in the country, and we intend on working further greening measures to reduce our environmental impact wherever possible."

Ben Binnell

idverde Contact Director



Foamstream weeding

Landscape Contractors

Glendale Lewisham

Effective community involvement

Community involvement is crucial in contemporary contract delivery, ensuring public parks remain relevant. Glendale's award-winning partnership with Lewisham Council is a prime example, facilitating 800 events per annum, 240 volunteer conservation hours a month and introducing 12 extra classrooms-worth of children to football through its sports outreach programme between September 2016 and February 2018.

COMMUNICATION IS KEY

Two-way communication is vital for engagement. Glendale responds to 40 enquiries a week via Twitter and has satisfactorily handled 100 percent of 250 service requests made in the last 12-months through the microsite.

A SOURCE OF INCOME

Community involvement generates income for the betterment of parks. In the last 18-months Glendale's resident bid writer secured over £20,000 of funding for community projects such as fitting trim trail equipment in Mountsfield Park. Plus, OnBlackheath Festival has generated £45,000 for improvements to the heath since it launched in 2014.



LOCALISED INVESTMENT

Local investment is also a factor in community involvement, strengthening the economy, targeting unemployment and environmental improvements.

Glendale spends 85 percent of the annual contract value locally and engages start-up businesses, keeping its supply-chain diverse and promoting growth. For example, the company uses a family-run business in the borough called, We Fix Any Car Ltd, for van repairs.

Fifty-five percent of the company's workforce reside in Lewisham and will benefit from 3,700 hours of training this year. Ten percent are employed on formal apprenticeships with Capel Manor College.

Glendale's staff volunteer at least one day each year in support of community events. For example, in June 2018, they marked-out cricket squares for a "Quick Cricket" event encouraging 40 disadvantaged children to try the sport.



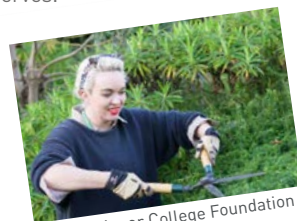
Capel Manor College

Capel Manor, London's leading land-based college, offers outstanding and inspirational land-based learning opportunities to Londoners and those living further afield. Capel has study centres at Enfield; Brooks Farm, Leyton; Crystal Palace Park, Bromley; Gunnersbury Park, Acton; and Regents Park in central London.

Its Foundation Degree in Urban Green Space management, wide-ranging apprenticeships and full and part time study provides Londoners with the essential knowledge and skills needed to enhance and conserve wildlife habitats, improve accessibility to green space and widen participation in outdoor activities and enjoyment of the outdoors.

London's green infrastructure needs to be planned, managed, funded and shared by an increasingly diverse population. The Urban Green Space Management Foundation Degree was devised in collaboration between the College and the green space industry and is supported by employers. The programme embeds employability with key skills such as finance,

people management and events. An integrated approach to study combines advanced horticultural knowledge and green space management skills with practical projects and work experience. Students graduate equipped with wide-ranging and up-to-date skills, practical experience of working in the green space arena and with transferrable skills needed to be employable. This makes them highly effective and well-placed to meet the future challenges of delivering the green spaces that London both needs and deserves.



Capel Manor College Foundation Degree student

"The Mayor's vision of a green metropolis, fit to live in, is going to require a lot of people with 'green' and 'nature' skills of every kind, and in abundance. Skills to maintain and develop the stock of trees, the vast expanses of grass and flowers, to design and renew the planting of gardens, to carry out research on the best ways forward and on new techniques, for example in curbing pollution and growing food in London, to look after the capital's animals whether at home, in special reserves, in breeding or in veterinary practices."

Roger McClure

Capel Manor College's Chair of Governors

London in Bloom



Parks have been part of London in Bloom's annual assessments as far back as 1967 and they are not just about hanging baskets and window boxes. Since 2005

London in Bloom has run an annual competition to find the best London parks across several categories.

Despite the parks funding crisis and the continuing reduction in resources, parks for the most part (or at least those judged) are holding up relatively well and very many are still excelling in providing high-quality areas for recreation, sport and horticulture.

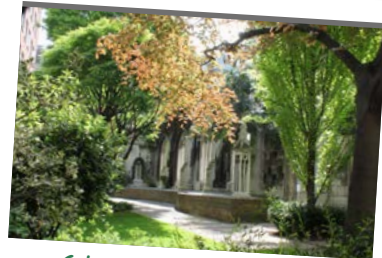
Differing from Green Flag, London in Bloom makes awards that are based on standard achieved, identifying the facilities available, the quality of the maintenance and efforts to make the park or garden sustainable & viable. Awards are presented at an annual awards ceremony and are awarded at either Bronze, Silver, Silver Gilt and Gold with Silver being considered an above average park. The awards given are published each year so that Londoners can see the quality of parks in their area.

London in Bloom is looking for parks, conservation and community judges to assist us with their growing number of entries, they are also looking to increase their committee strength and are seeking competent individuals with relevant experience who can help them grow the London in Bloom charity.

Follow the link in appendix 2 for more information.



Eastcote House
Chris Williams medicinal
herbaceous bed, Hillingdon



*City of London, St Dunstan
in the East Church Garden*



Kennington Park, Lambeth

London Parks and Gardens Trust

London is a green city with hidden spaces – Helen Monger asks: "How can we all work together to cherish them?"

The London Parks and Gardens Trust is the County Gardens Trust for London affiliated to the Gardens Trust. Belonging to the Gardens Trust family means that we are a statutory consultee regarding planning applications that may impact on historic landscapes all across London, but we don't always hear in time. We are a small volunteer-led organization and we want to become a trusted voice for all London's green space, celebrating, cultivating networks and championing the importance of historic landscapes and parks.

We celebrate the wonders of human horticultural ingenuity, in one special weekend known as Open Garden Squares Weekend. This event brings together commercial gardens on roofs, community allotments, guerrilla gardeners in skips and so much more. We are always told that London is a green city but so often these spaces are hidden, and one of the key aims of this event is to provide access and appreciation of these important spaces that are not as easily visited or as visible as our great public parks.

Yet, these green spaces, which are in a multitude of ownerships involving private and commercial landlords, Community Investment Companies, charities, churches, as well as local authorities, hold the key to keeping London's air clean, providing spaces for communities to gather and share plant knowledge, and mitigation from flooding and heat effects as a result of our changing weather patterns.

An example of this is the Wild Cat Wilderness, which is a community green space and food-growing garden, coordinated by the Rushey Green Time Bank. Volunteers have transformed a neglected, overgrown, rubbish-strewn space into a thriving community space for events and Forest Schools. The entrance is on a rather un-prepossessing suburban road in South East London but once beyond the gate this six-acre site, which backs onto the Pool River features a tree house, climbing tree, veteran fruit trees, a beehive and pond. It is a haven for wildlife. This wonderful space opened its gates for Open Garden Squares Weekend with plenty of activities for children to inspire the next generation to get involved.

Yet this garden and others are under threat from new adjacent development that may overshadow and impinge on the tranquility. As a statutory consultee we will provide expert commentary based on our in-depth research into the history of a site which is publicly available through our Inventory – London Gardens Online.

"Our research, campaigning, activities and events – as well as Open Garden Squares Weekend, summer walks and winter lectures – are all reliant on volunteer effort and self-generated funds. We ask you to consider joining us as either an active volunteer or a member to help us cultivate our networks of knowledgeable people, champion the cause of parks, and celebrate the importance of parks and gardens for all Londoners. But most of all, we ask you to cherish those local green spaces that make London the green city it is and share them!"

Helen Monger
Director



Wildcat Wilderness Overview

Good practice

Drinking fountains

Why drinking fountains?

Public drinking fountains, made popular by the Victorians to give access to safe clean drinking water in the capital, have seen a notable revival in the last two years. The increased consumption of bottled water has gone hand in hand with increased public attention to plastic waste and the damage it causes, particularly to the marine environment. Another factor has been the calls to provide alternatives to sugary drinks, which have been singled out as a major contributor to excess sugar in our diets. They are a large and avoidable contributor to diet-related disease, and linked with child obesity, early onset diabetes and tooth decay. With public drinking fountains potentially providing both environmental and health wins, support for these has spread across the capital and beyond.

What is the state of London's drinking fountains?

At the end of the 2017, it was estimated that only 111 public fountains were maintained by London Boroughs, as reported by The Guardian. Alongside interest in fountains in schools and transport hubs, park fountains are also seeing a new lease of life, with widespread installation throughout the Borough of Hillingdon (*see box*), and meriting inclusion in the 2018 edition of the Good Food for London report. Perhaps the highest profile commitment has come from the Mayor of London, who has plans to expand on his 20 pilot fountains in 2018, to rollout further in 2019, including support for park fountains.



Ladywell Fields, Lewisham

What can London Boroughs do?

Some Boroughs, such as Lewisham, are developing a long-term vision for widespread fountain installation. The Lewisham Labour manifesto has committed to banning single-use plastics from council buildings and providing water fountains in parks and public spaces to reduce plastic waste.

With the charity Sustain and other partners, including local landowners, they have started to explore the potential in different sectors – schools, parks and transport hubs, and also other areas including council properties, new developments, shopping centres and sites identified by the local community– in order to find locations where fountains could be installed, year by year, through small pots of funding or inclusion in redevelopments. The Council were successful in their bid to the London Drinking Fountain Fund for two water fountains now installed in two of their busiest parks, Ladywell Fields and Beckenham Place Park.

Hillingdon's new fountains tackle plastic pollution

The London Borough of Hillingdon has overseen the installation of 15 drinking fountains at 14 of the Borough's parks in 2018 to help reduce the number of single-use plastic bottles and cups being thrown away.

Each fountain includes a main bottle filler and two mixed-level bubbler taps dispense water to fill bottles or catch in the mouth. One of the taps is at an accessible height for people with disabilities and young people, and the other is at ground level for pets.

The first of the fountains was installed at Ruislip Lido in March with the rest completed by May. An additional 17 drinking fountains were installed over the summer.

"Residents using the park for recreational activities, such as walking, jogging, playing sport or using our playgrounds will easily be able to use these fountains to fill reusable drinks bottles, reducing the amount of plastic waste going to landfill."

Paul Richards

Head of Green Spaces,

Sport and Culture. London Borough of Hillingdon

Good practice

Penge community green gym

The Conservation Volunteer's (TCV) Green Gym™ is an evidence-based approach to outdoor activity, using group based gardening and environmental conservation to improve volunteers' health, fitness and wellbeing while transforming local parks for the wider community.

Green Gym reduces anxiety while improving a range of health markers. During weekly three-hour sessions, a leader will guide volunteers through a warm up and cool down and varied practical activities. Penge Green Gym was developed in 2011 by TCV in partnership with Intu Bromley and the London Borough of Bromley. TCV delivered weekly Green Gym sessions with the aim to transform Winsford Gardens which suffered from neglect and was plagued by antisocial behaviour, littering and dog faeces. Over two years 143 volunteers dedicated over 4,900 work hours to transforming Winsford Gardens into a vibrant community garden. The group-built structures including a green house and raised bed to enable them to grow food and have plant sales to raise funds for the project. They enhanced the site for

wildlife by planting a native hedge, a bog garden and wildflower meadows. All this was accompanied by measures to make the garden more inviting to visitors with a natural play area, seating, informal signage and restoring the rose and flower beds. At the same time, general garden maintenance and conservation work was undertaken on a weekly basis.

In 2013 Penge Green Gym successfully became an independent constituted community Green Gym. The group is now a member of the TCV Community Network and over five years later they are proud to say that Penge Green Gym are still running their fun and action-packed weekly sessions in Winsford Gardens, with up to 20 volunteers attending per week. They are a truly inspiration group and have had numerous recognitions of all their work including a Community Green Flag Award.



Good practice

Preventing abandoned picnics

This project piloted a new behavioural intervention to address litter arising from picnicking in parks, or 'abandoned picnics' litter. The intervention aimed to illustrate the cost of cleaning up litter in parks to those using them. It communicated to park-users how much had been spent to date in each park and what could otherwise have been purchased for the park if this resource had not been spent on cleaning up litter (new trees, a hedgehog habitat, a public barbeque, etc.). This was communicated to park-users through the design and installation of a thermometer style litter gauge and supporting posters.

Keep Britain Tidy partnered with Parks for London to trial this intervention in four London parks:

- Oak Hill Park, Barnet
- Hampstead Heath, City of London
- Northala Fields, Ealing
- Finsbury Park, Haringey

The litter gauge intervention reduced litter across four London parks by an average of 18%. Northala Fields had a 48% reduction, Finsbury Park had a 32% reduction Oak Hill Park had a 16% reduction; however, Hampstead Heath saw an increase in litter of 24%. Clearly, there is a need to further investigate the results from Hampstead Heath to better understand why the intervention appears not to have been affective despite good results across the other three sites.

Of those observed littering during the baseline phase of the intervention, the most prevalent litterers across the four sites were those aged between 16 and 24; male park-users; groups consisting of three to four people, followed by groups of five to ten; friend groups and; adults who were picnicking, socialising or partying, followed by families picnicking.

During the intervention phase, the observed littering of food related packaging reduced by 61% and there were several observed engagements which suggest the intervention was successful in attracting attention and sparking debate about the cost of removing litter.

The intervention received positive engagement from park-users of all age groups across all the pilot sites. Looking specifically at picnic related litter, the observations research found that the intervention was successful in reducing observed instances of food related litter, as well as paper litter, cigarette related litter, plastic bag litter and drinks packaging.

Overall the responses to the gauge were positive, with more than half of the sample agreeing that the intervention has made them more aware that money spent clearing litter could be spent on other items for the park and over half of the sample agreeing that the intervention should be used in other parks to discourage littering.



Appendix 1

We would like to thank the following London Boroughs and other organisations that supported Parks for London during 2017-18

London and Royal London Boroughs

Barking & Dagenham
Barnet
Bexley
Brent
Camden
City of London Corporation
Croydon
Ealing
Greenwich
Hackney
Hammersmith & Fulham
Haringey
Harrow
Havering
Hounslow
Islington
Kensington & Chelsea
Kingston upon Thames
Lambeth
Merton
Redbridge (Vision Redbridge)

Richmond upon Thames
Southwark
Sutton
Waltham Forest
Westminster City Council

Other organisations (click to find out more)

Alexandra Palace and Park Charitable Trust
Capel Manor College
Commonwealth War Graves Commission
Glendale Lewisham
idverde (for Bromley)
Lee Valley Region Park Authority
London Legacy Development Corporation (QE Olympic Park)
The Peabody Trust
Potters Fields Park and Management Trust
South West London Environment Network
The Royal Parks
Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators

Appendix 2

Parks for London would like to thank GL Hearn for kindly sponsoring and supporting the production of this edition of Good Parks for London.

We would like to thank all London/Royal London Boroughs, the City of London Corporation and other organisations for providing data and case studies for this report.

(click to find out more)

Alexandra Palance and Park Charitable Trust
Capel Manor College
Glendale Lewisham
idverde
Keep Britain Tidy
Lee Valley Regional Park Authority
London in Bloom
London Parks and Gardens Trust
London Wildlife Trust
Penge Green Gym
Sustain
Wandle Valley Regional Park Trust
Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators

Parks for London is an independent charity that loves London's parks.

We work with the people that manage, maintain and enjoy them, keeping them thriving, accessible, safe and beautiful places.

Our vision is a London that is a healthy and sustainable world city. A place where parks and green spaces make a major contribution to the health and wellbeing of Londoners and to the environment they live and work in.

Find out more about us:

www.parksforlondon.org.uk

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Errors and omissions

This second edition of Good Parks for London covers the financial year 2017/18. Considerable time and effort have gone into consultation, data collection and verification. If you think you have found any errors or omissions, please let us know.

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Safeguarding our green spaces