

AN OPEN SPACES STRATEGY FOR BARNET

2016-26

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Foreword

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Barnet has a great collection of parks and open spaces and these are an important part of what makes Barnet a green borough. People who live and work in Barnet enjoy access to formal parks and gardens, wild landscapes, extensive areas of greenbelt and leafy river valleys. Barnet's parks are places where people can take part in formal sport, visit a park cafés, take the kids to the playground or just walk the dog.

This strategy will provide the council with a review of the quality of its parks and open spaces. It will also suggest a range of opportunities that green spaces offer to enhance the quality of life and economic success of the borough. The overall aim of the strategy is to support the council's objectives for parks and open spaces as set out in its Corporate Plan: *'Barnet's parks and green spaces will be amongst the best in London'*. The strategy links to a number of other pieces of work including health, wellbeing, sports provision and waste and re-cycling. All of these strategies are aimed at making Barnet a better place to live and work.

World cities such as London have come to realise the importance of public parks in enhancing the environmental qualities that residents and businesses place highly in assessing the merits of city as a place to live and work. All of the world's major cities now have a range of outstanding parks and open spaces. Within major city economies, districts and boroughs (such as Barnet) also compete with each other to attract businesses and skilled workforces. The quality of the regional environment is a major determinant in how successful these city areas are. Parks in Barnet will have to fulfil a new function in supporting the development of sustainable communities and attractive neighbourhoods and in bringing businesses and employment to town centres.

Currently Barnet has a unique blend of parks, open spaces, Green Belt and access to the countryside beyond London. This provision complements an extensive pattern of housing with many residents having access to private green space. This has helped to reinforce the impression of Barnet as a leafy suburban borough with parks forming part of this fabric.

But Barnet is set to change significantly over the next 25 years. The borough will have one of the fastest rates of population growth across the capital and this growth will have to be accommodated in new housing. This housing provision will be much more dense than is currently typical for the borough with considerably more medium and high rise accommodation being built on smaller footprints. Parts of Barnet (particularly the south and west of the borough) will look much more like inner London. Much of this new accommodation will not offer individual residents or families with children access to private green space. This will place new demands on the parks and open spaces in these parts of the borough. Our parks will have to adapt from being green spaces between buildings to being greenspace facilities delivering a range of opportunities and benefits to residents.

The capacity of Barnet's parks to deliver a range of outcomes for people living and working in the borough now and those who will also be here in the future, needs to be considered. This strategy sets out why a change is necessary and ways which we will make our parks fit for the future of our changing borough.

Benefits of good quality parks and open spaces

The UK has enjoyed a parks renaissance over the past 20 years with new thinking evolving about the role that greenspace plays in developing successful cities. Today many recognise that good quality parks and greenspaces are not just 'nice to have' but are in fact essential to the creation of sustainable communities.

It is now accepted that urban parks deliver a huge range of benefits for cities and the people that live and work in them. These benefits reflect many of the objectives that we have established for the economic success of the borough, the health of its citizens and the quality of the environment with which they interact on a daily basis. These benefits are both tangible i.e. they have direct and economically valuable effects and intangible i.e. they have effects that are socially beneficial and deliver benefits for communities, families and individuals.

These benefits can be broadly grouped into three categories

- economic benefits,
- social benefits
- environmental benefits.

Economic benefits include businesses operating in parks, the beneficial effects of parks on property and rental values and the role that parks play in supporting regeneration and encouraging businesses to locate in the borough. Our 'Entrepreneurial Barnet' strategy suggests that quality of environment will play an important part in the borough's future economic success.

Parks offer important social benefits. We have to address an obesity epidemic and combat diabetes and coronary heart disease and going to the park on a regular basis can help people to adopt active lifestyles and to stay healthy. The council's emerging 'Sports and Physical Activity' and 'Health and Wellbeing' strategies both identify parks as key to addressing significant health issues.

Research has established that people regard their local park as an important part of their neighbourhood. Unfortunately, many parks in Barnet do not currently express the sense of locality or distinctiveness that we would like. Parks can also support significantly enhanced educational attainment and there is much potential for a greater level of engagement between schools and greenspaces.

Environmental benefits are fundamentally linked with good quality parks and open spaces. As recent flood episodes have demonstrated, we will need to adapt to the impacts of climate change and parks should play a significant role in limiting the impacts of extreme weather, urban warming and air pollution. The borough's trees if protected, will continue to absorb CO₂ from the atmosphere. This strategy considers how Barnet's parks can deliver all of these benefits and section five considers these benefits in greater detail.

Survey of Barnet's parks and open spaces

So that we can make well-informed decisions about how our parks and open spaces can deliver these outcomes, we need to understand their current condition. The last audit of our greenspaces was in 2009, so a key element of the strategy has been to survey all of the borough's parks assets. Sections six of the strategy sets out in detail the methodology employed to survey Barnet's parks and open spaces and the data that was collected as a consequence.

The survey process has delivered two key outcomes. In the first instance, the survey included an assessment of the quality of each greenspace against a set of criteria based on the Green Flag standard (the recognised excellence standard for parks in the UK). This was combined with an assessment of value based on a range of economic, environmental and social indicators outlined above. Through combining the quality and value scores, we will be able to determine which sites could potentially deliver most positive outcomes both now and in the decades to come. Section seven of the strategy sets out how the quality and value assessments been carried out.

Community's aspirations for parks

Parks are for people and we would like residents and businesses to play an even greater role in determining how parks are managed and how they should function in future. As well as assessing quality and value, it is important for us to understand how local communities value parks and how they would like to see them change.

To develop this strategy, we carried out an extensive engagement with local residents and key stakeholders to find out what their priorities for the future are. Section eight of the strategy lists the people and organisations we contacted, the methods used to engage with them and our key findings.

This process of engagement will continue in a formal consultation that will be conducted in the winter and spring of 2016. The findings of this consultation will be incorporated into the final strategy. Further on-going dialogue with residents and stakeholders will take place as the strategy is rolled out in the months and years to come.

Future investment in Barnet's parks and open spaces

The engagement process and the quality and value assessment have established a broad range of priorities that will guide a future investment programme to improve the condition of borough's parks and greenspaces. We have already committed to delivering a number of new parks and open spaces through our regeneration programme and we'll add to this by will investing in the whole of the parks portfolio over the next 10 years. This investment will be focused on delivering the beneficial outcomes that the strategy identifies.

Barnet has a relatively modest record in attracting inwards investment into parks and open spaces but this presents the borough with a strong opportunity to secure significant funding from external funding bodies for projects focused on sport and heritage. Section nine of the strategy sets out these opportunities in greater detail.

The Parks and Open Spaces Strategy has uncovered a number of significant issues facing the service. For example, the quality assessment has established that there has been a steady decline in quality of parks and open spaces over the past six years. The decline in quality can be addressed through capital investment but this investment must be sustainable.

New approaches to managing parks and green spaces

In common with all other local authorities, we are facing very difficult decisions in terms of the level of resources we can apply to deliver services. Much work has been undertaken in the Parks sector over the past five years because of an awareness of the need to assess how restrictions on the amount of money available to manage parks might affect investment and the quality of parks services generally. This strategy suggests that we should consider other options for the future management and funding of parks and open spaces. This will ensure that any investment the borough makes in its parks and open spaces and the positive outcomes that this investment can deliver are protected in future. Section ten of the strategy sets out a number of case studies that could be a starting point for a debate around this issue.

These are exciting times for parks and open spaces in Barnet and this strategy establishes a road map for future investment, discussions around future funding and governance and an on-going dialogue between the council, residents, stakeholders and partners. This road map is expressed in a number of draft policies that will inform the ways in which the council will think about parks provision, the enhancement of place, the preservation of heritage and the creation of a network of green links across the borough. New policies will also consider matters of community safety, enhanced facilities in parks, the creation of new and better playgrounds, better engagement around health and educational targets and stronger relationships between park users and the council.

Through committing to these policies and implementing this strategy, the council will ensure that these key assets are enhanced and continue to tell a positive story about Barnet as a place to live and work.

1.0 Why do we need an Open Spaces Strategy?

The council has commissioned the development of a Parks and Open Spaces Strategy because it recognises the need for a new 'joined-up' approach to the management of parks and open spaces because *'Barnet does not have a clear vision or an adopted open space agenda and hence parks are not delivering tangible and important outcomes'*¹. These outcomes include:

- Helping to define and reinforce a sense of place across the Borough and the identity of Barnet as a whole;
- Enhancing the physical and mental health and wellbeing of residents by providing them with free access to nature and opportunities for active and passive leisure within easy reach of the doorstep;
- Contributing to the economic success of Barnet by making Barnet an attractive place to live, work, learn and play;
- Acting as a cohesive element that will bind together the many and varied communities within Barnet;
- Supporting cultural life in Barnet and preserving and celebrating its heritage;
- Integrating Barnet into the green infrastructure of London and supporting a re-definition of the relationship between city and countryside;
- Supporting Barnet's adaptation to the impacts of climate change; and
- Preserving Barnet's natural heritage by promoting habitat diversity and bio-diversity.

This Open Spaces Strategy is being prepared at a critical moment for parks. Central government funding of local government is being significantly curtailed and the capacity of local authorities to deliver key services such as parks and open spaces is under increasing pressure. Parks and open spaces budgets will have to contribute to savings targets and the council has stated an aspiration to move towards the provision of a 'zero subsidy' service.

At the same time, the strategy will demonstrate the capacity of parks and open spaces to deliver important cashable benefits across a range of economic, social and environmental indicators and will demonstrate how these benefits can be accrued across Barnet by the borough securing inwards capital investment and re-thinking funding and governance.

The brief for this Open Spaces Strategy has focused on a number of distinct elements of work.

- An asset survey of Barnet's parks and open spaces. The council has not carried out a detailed assessment of its parks assets since 2009 when an assessment under Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PPG17) was undertaken. This assessment was used to inform the development of the council's Core Strategy (2012) in respect of open space and sport and recreation. The population for the borough has increased significantly since then and this growth will continue over the next 25 years. The parks and open spaces portfolio needs to respond to this increased level of demand.

¹ Re: Parks and Open spaces Strategy Brief, October 2014

A complete asset survey of a portfolio of 199 park and open space sites across the borough has been completed. The survey mapped all parks assets into a GIS-based mapped data set. The survey process will deliver a number of benefits:

- The provision of a data set that will allow the Parks service to manage parks assets more effectively through the commissioning of an open space asset management tool linking front and back office functions.
- The provision of a data set to allow for a comparative assessment of quality in comparison with the 2009 PPG17 assessment
- The provision of a data set that can inform a capital investment strategy for the borough's parks and open spaces.

Section 5 of this strategy describes the process of quality and value assessment with reference to the data collection process. Section 6 of the strategy describes the survey process in detail.

- Greenspace development and management resourcing

The Open Space Strategy scoping study identified potential for a significant investment in public open space over the next 10 years. This strategy will suggest potential sources of external funding and how a capital programme might be delivered using these external resources, S106 planning gain funds, the Barnet Infrastructure Reserve and borrowing.

The strategy will consider in detail how this investment programme should be supported. A major capital investment programme will require expertise in project management. This strategy details how this expertise will be resourced and managed to ensure the successful delivery of the investment programme. The strategy proposes that this investment should be design-led and suggests how this principal will be embedded into delivery.

Section 9 of the strategy describes the capital investment strategy in detail and Section 11 describes how this investment will be effected locally across the borough.

The capital investment programme will imply a need for enhanced management and maintenance and the strategy will consider how this need can be addressed through new approaches to funding and governance. Section 10 of the strategy includes a number of case studies describing new approaches to governance that could be developed in Barnet.

- Engagement

Barnet's parks are very important to local communities and consistently achieve a high level of satisfaction. But investment in parks and open spaces in Barnet has been relatively modest and the assessment of the quality of sites across the borough undertaken as part of this strategy suggests that some sites have deteriorated since 2009.

A significant outcome of the strategy has been to raise the profile of the service and initiate a discussion around current service performance and the council's effectiveness in engaging with stakeholders in matters of community involvement in the design, use and future management of Barnet's parks and open spaces. The research base has included both users and non-users of parks and a broad range of current stakeholders, current and potential partners and key decision-makers. A number of important themes have emerged from this engagement process that will inform the capital investment strategy and future options for funding governance and community engagement.

Section 7 of the strategy sets out the engagement methodology, provides an account of the organisations and individuals who have participated in the engagement process and the key themes that have emerged.

Proposals set out in the Strategy will be based upon current research and best practice across the UK and overseas. A considerable quantum of research is currently being undertaken into the future funding and governance of parks and this research has been drawn upon in developing possible models for Barnet. This research effort has encompassed public, private and voluntary sectors

2.0 Policy Context

Introduction

This Open Spaces Strategy has been developed in the context of a number of local, regional and national policies and strategies developed and adopted by the London Borough of Barnet. This section of the strategy details these policies and strategies and explains the ways in which they influence and affect the development of the Open Spaces Strategy.

2.1 Strategic planning context

2.1.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF (2012) supersedes a number of planning policy statements and guidance, including PPG17 and its companion guide. It sets out the government's planning policies for England in support of the government's objective to achieve sustainable development. The NPPF also provides a *'framework within which local people and their accountable councils can produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities.'*

Considerable emphasis is placed within the NPPF upon the design of the built environment, stressing the importance of *'high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes'*.

The NPPF proposes that in order to deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities, planning policies should *'plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments'*.

Further emphasis is placed upon the delivery of health outcomes with developments required to be *'safe and accessible, containing clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas'*.

The framework continues:

'Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and

opportunities for new provision. The assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local area. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sports and recreational provision is required’.

‘Planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access. Local authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails’.

‘Local Plans should take account of climate change over the longer term, including factors such as flood risk, coastal change, water supply and changes to biodiversity and landscape. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure’.

Specifically in respect of Green Belt, the NPPF proposes that *‘The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.’*

This Open Spaces Strategy will discuss all of the strategic planning objectives set out in the NPPF.

2.1.2 The London Plan

The London Plan (2015) is the Mayor’s spatial development strategy for London. Barnet is identified within the Plan as an area for intensification where planning decisions should *‘seek to optimise residential and non-residential output and densities, provide necessary social and other infrastructure to sustain growth, and where appropriate, contain a mix of uses’.*

Colindale/Burnt Oak is an opportunity area where a minimum 12,500 new homes will be provided through mainly residential-led mixed use development

Policy 7.18 of the London Plan addresses the need for *‘protecting local open space and addressing local deficiency’.* The policy sets out the requirement for LDFs to: *‘ensure that future open space needs are planned for in areas with the potential for substantial change such as opportunity areas, regeneration areas, intensification areas and other local areas’* and to *‘ensure that open space needs are planned in accordance with green infrastructure strategies to deliver multiple benefits’.*

Policy 2.18 focuses on green infrastructure and the need to protect, promote, expand and manage the extent and quality of and access to London’s network of green infrastructure.

Green infrastructure is considered as a multifunctional network that will *‘secure benefits including, but not limited to: biodiversity; natural and historic landscapes; culture; building a sense of place; the economy; sport; recreation;*

local food production; mitigating and adapting to climate change; water management; and the social benefits that promote individual and community health and well-being’.

The London Plan requires London Boroughs to develop open space strategies to guide the protection, promotion, enhancement and effective management of London’s network of open spaces.

The Mayor has published (jointly with CABE) best practice guidance on the preparation of open space strategies: ‘Open Space Strategies: Best Practice Guidance’ (2009).

The London Plan also establishes a hierarchy for public open space which includes a distance threshold to be used to assess areas of the capital that have deficiency in respect open space provision.

2.1.3 Green Infrastructure and Open Environments: The All London Green Grid

The All London Green Grid Supplementary Planning Guidance (2012) identifies deficiencies and opportunities in respect of London’s network of green, natural and cultural spaces and provides guidance on future funding and management.

The SPG focuses on 11 Green Grid sub-regions within which the policies and range of projects set out in the guidance can be executed. Areas of Barnet are covered by the Brent Valley and Barnet Plateau Green Grid area. The SPG identifies 10 specific green infrastructure opportunities for this area of London:

- 1) To create the River Brent Greenway
- 2) To develop a framework for the creation of the new ‘Brent Valley Regional Park’
- 3) To improve the ecological and environmental value of water courses in the Brent Valley catchment
- 4) To enhance the accessibility and use of the Green Belt
- 5) To develop the Capital Ring as an accessible green corridor
- 6) To enhance links from the Grand Union canal to nearby open spaces
- 7) To increase access for walking and cycling to cultural destinations, to the Green Belt, Capital Ring, Brent and Colne Valleys from Harrow on the Hill and Wealdstone centre
- 8) Increase access to Silk Stream and Edgware open spaces and nature, promote walking and cycling, reduce flood risk, improve water quality and enhance habitat
- 9) To address issues of fragmentation and deficiency of green infrastructure in eastern Ealing / south-east Brent
- 10) Increase native tree cover, using street trees to improve air quality, absorb surface water run-off, and provide urban cooling along Edgware Road, in central Brent, at Brentford and across Harrow.

2.2 Barnet's Local Plan

2.2.1 Barnet's Core Strategy

The Barnet Local Plan supersedes Barnet's Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (2006). The Core Strategy provides an overarching local policy framework for delivering sustainable development in Barnet through a number of separate documents. The Core Strategy sets out the vision, objectives and related strategic policies.

The Local Plan includes a suite of Development Plan Documents (DPD's) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's)

Part of the vision set out in the Core Strategy is for established and new residents have "easy access to green open spaces" (Core Strategy page 24).

Specifically to 'To enhance and protect our green and natural open spaces' the Core Strategy proposes the priority 'to improve access to, and enhance the quality of the Green Belt, Metropolitan Open Land and other open spaces as places for recreation and biodiversity' and 'to create new and enhanced public open spaces to support of Barnet's growing population, including at least 18 ha in Brent Cross – Cricklewood, Colindale and Mill Hill East.'

The Core Strategy includes a place-shaping policy based upon a 'Three Strands' approach:

'Protection' - absolute protection for the Green Belt and open spaces

'Enhancement' - enhancing and conserving the best of Barnet suburbia and Barnet's 20 town centres' and

'Consolidated growth' in areas in need of renewal and investment.

The Core Strategy emphasises the importance of protecting the boroughs parks and open spaces through Policy CS7. This promotes the idea of a greener Barnet through:

- *protecting open spaces,*
- *enhancing open spaces, ...*
- *meeting increased demand for access to open space and opportunities for physical activity, by tackling deficiencies and under provision through:*
- *securing additional on-site open space or other open space improvements in the identified growth areas including 8 ha of new provision at Brent Cross – Cricklewood, 5.5 ha of new provision at Mill Hill East and 5 ha at Colindale*
- *improving access to open spaces particularly in North and East Finchley and other areas of public open space deficiency. We will seek to improve provision in these areas of deficiency with the objective of increasing the area of the borough that has access to district and local parks in accordance with the London Plan criteria*
- *securing improvements to open spaces including provision for children's play, sports facilities and better access arrangements, where opportunities arise, from all developments that create an additional demand for open*

space. Standards for new provision are set out in DM 15 –Green Belt and Open Spaces.

- *maintaining and improving the greening of the environment through the protection of incidental greenspace, trees, hedgerows and watercourses enabling green corridors to link Barnet’s rural, urban fringe and urban green spaces*
- *protecting existing Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation and working with our partners including the London Wildlife Trust to improve protection and enhancement of biodiversity in Barnet*
- *ensuring that development protects existing site ecology and makes the fullest contributions to enhancing biodiversity, both through on-site measures and by contributing to local bio-diversity improvements; and*
- *enhancing local food production through the protection of allotments and support for community food growing including the Mayor’s Capital Growth Initiative.’*

Policy CS11 of the Core Strategy seeks to promote the enhancement of health and wellbeing in Barnet by *‘... ensuring increased access to Barnet’s green spaces and opportunities for higher levels of physical activity ...’*

The Local Plan Development Management Policies (DMP) DPD sets out the borough-wide planning policies that implement the Core Strategy and the policy basis for delivering the long-term spatial vision and strategic place-shaping objectives in Barnet which are set out in the Core Strategy.

The DMP includes a section on play space that suggests that *‘less than half of the parks in Barnet have play areas and, only 46% of Barnet residents are within 600m of a formal equipped play area. In the future, the need for play space will increase as Barnet’s population is getting younger.’* The DMP proposes that *‘Improvements to existing facilities are necessary, given the priority for family housing in the borough’.*

With regard to open space, the DMP proposes that *‘where a development is in an area of deficiency for publicly accessible open space new open space should be provided in line with these standards:*

- *Parks (1.63 hectares per 1,000 residents)*
- *Children’s play (0.09 hectares per 1,000 residents)*
- *Sports pitches (0.75 hectares per 1,000 residents)*
- *Natural green spaces (2.05 hectares per 1,000 residents).’*

In respect of Green Belt, the DMP proposes that *‘appropriate development in Green Belt or MOL includes limited extensions to dwellings, replacement dwellings, development for agriculture, horticulture, woodland, nature conservation, wildlife and essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation and uses which complement and improve access to, and which preserve the openness and do not conflict with the objectives of the Green Belt or MOL.’*

In parallel with the development of the Core Strategy, Barnet Council has developed Area Action Plans for Mill Hill East and Colindale that set out the frameworks for future development and change in these areas of the borough.

2.2.2 The Barnet Infrastructure Delivery Plan

The Barnet Infrastructure Delivery Plan forms part of the Local Development Framework and responds to demographic change in Barnet up to 2026, setting out the infrastructure required to support this growth and the funding sources that will enable the delivery of this infrastructure.

The Infrastructure Delivery Plan informed the development of the Barnet Surface Water Management Plan (2011) which identifies the neighbourhoods and individual planning units that are at risk of flooding and proposes mitigation measures (aside from simply avoiding all potential development of those areas).

2.2.3 Barnet Open Space, Sport and Recreational Needs Assessment

The Barnet Open Space, Sport and Recreational Needs Assessment (2009) was an assessment of current and future requirements in respect of parks, open spaces, sports grounds, play areas and other open space. The study consisted of:

- An audit of parks and open spaces in the borough
- An assessment of the quality, accessibility and value of parks and open spaces across the borough
- Consultation with residents and stakeholders

This study provided an evidence base for the development of standards for the provision and quality of parks and open spaces across the borough that will deliver the principles set out in the local plan.

This study will also provide a dataset against which the findings of the 2015 survey of parks and open spaces can be benchmarked.

The study developed the following summary of quantity, quality and accessibility standards.

In the context of new developments, the study suggests that 'Policies could therefore require new developments to incorporate proposals to improve open space provision to meet these standards. Barnet may wish to consider on-site or off-site provision of open space, guided by the maps identifying areas of open space deficiency produced as part of this study. Barnet will need to decide upon the threshold of new development to deliver these standards whilst ensuring viable development'.

The study identifies a number of issues:

- The borough has an increasing population
- The distribution of parks across the borough is not even and certain parts of the borough suffer from poor access,
- To meet London Plan standards in terms of accessibility, 4 new district parks and 29 local parks would have to be created

- Large areas of the borough are not currently within walking distance of a LEAP or NEAP playground and a significant increase in the number of new sites with play facilities would be needed to achieve complete coverage
- Barnet has a large number and wide variety of nature conservation sites. The northern areas of the borough are particularly well provided for while the more urban parts of the borough have fewer sites (this conclusion is qualified by the fact that cemeteries - several of which have significant nature conservation value- were excluded from the study).

Table 2.1 - Barnet Open Space, Sport and Recreational Needs Assessment 2009: levels of provision

Open Space Typology	Current provision	Quality standard	Additional area required to meet needs to 2026	Accessibility standard	Quality Standard
Parks	1.55Ha/1,000 HoP	1.63 Ha /1,000 HoP	138 HA (as 4 district and 29 local parks)	All residents within the Borough should have access to a district park within 1.2km of their home and all residents of the Borough should have access to a local park within 400m of their home	Parks within Barnet should strive to meet the 'good' standard of the Arup quality criteria. These standards reflect the quality required by Green Flag
Children's Play	0.05 Ha/1,000 children	0.09 Ha /1,000 HoP	3.8 Ha (as 35 LEAP's and 24NEAP's)	All residents within the Borough should be within 240m of a LEAP or 600m of a NEAP	Children's Play provision within the borough should be of adequate quality and provide the range of facilities associated with the size of the facility. Guidelines set out in the NPFA '6 Acre Standard' should be used to assess levels of adequacy in terms of the quality and range of provision
Playing pitches and outdoor sports	0.51 Ha /1,000 HoP	0.75 Ha /1,000 HoP	129 Ha	All residents within the borough should be within 1.2km of a playing pitch	Playing pitches within Barnet should strive to meet the 'good' standard of the Arup quality criteria
Natural green space	2.36 Ha /1,000 HoP	2.05 Ha /1,000 HoP	48 Ha	All residents within the borough should have access to a Metropolitan or Borough Grade site of Nature Conservation Importance within 1Km of their home and all residents within the borough should have access to a Local Site of Nature Conservation Importance within 500m of their home	Natural Green Space within Barnet should strive to meet the 'good' standard of the Arup quality criteria for parks

2.3 Barnet’s wider policies and strategies

2.3.1 Barnet Corporate Plan 2015-20

Barnet’s Corporate Plan sets out a vision for the way in which the council intends to deliver services by 2020. The council’s intends to re-design service delivery to provide services that are integrated, intuitive and efficient.

The Plan proposes that *‘Barnet’s parks and green spaces will be amongst the best in London’* and that the council will *‘develop more innovative ways of maintaining its parks and green spaces, including through greater partnerships with community groups and focus on using parks to achieve wider public health priorities for the borough’*

The Plan proposes that *‘Barnet’s exceptional parks and open spaces will be well used for leisure, enjoyment and sport. Over 75% of residents will be satisfied with Barnet’s parks and open spaces.’*

The Plan suggests that *‘Public Health will be integrated as a priority theme across all services’* and that it will be *‘central to future regeneration schemes, with the borough’s ‘built environment’ designed to help people keep fit and active’.*

2.3.2 Barnet Council Sport and Physical Activity (SPA) Strategy

Barnet Council’s Sport and Physical Activity (SPA) Strategy is considering:

- What evidence and measures are required to support public health and well-being in Barnet to inform a new ambition and strategy for sport and physical activity in Barnet
- How all sport and physical activity opportunities could be extended far beyond leisure centres in Barnet
- How to deliver improved opportunities for traditional sport and physical activity services in Barnet
- Working across the council and with partners to achieve positive outcomes for all residents

The objective of the strategy is to secure:

- Improved levels of physical activity across Barnet for all communities
- Improved health outcomes and general well-being
- Improved opportunities to access sport and physical activities for all ages, abilities and disabilities
- Improved joined-up working with partners including schools, local businesses, major employers, community organisations and commercial and amateur sports clubs to ensure availability of a broad range of sports and physical activities to give residents the greatest opportunity to get fit and healthy
- Better intelligence to identify needs, supply and demand for sport and physical activity provision
- Identify barriers to participation.

Consultation carried out in respect of the SPA revealed that parks and green spaces are used as a location for over 50% of exercise activities in the borough.

2.3.3 Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-20

The Joint Strategic Needs assessment (2011) identified marked differences in health and wellbeing outcomes between places and different demographic groups within Barnet. The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy aims to '*align and combine the council's efforts on a focused list of priorities where we can have the largest impact to reduce health inequalities*'. The strategy focuses on six key priorities:

- Continuing the emphasis on prevention and early intervention including secondary prevention (slowing the progression of disease)
- Making health and wellbeing a personal agenda as well as increasing individual responsibility and building resilience
- Joining up services so residents have a better experience
- Developing greater community capacity; increasing community responsibility and opportunities for residents to design services with health service providers
- Strengthening partnerships to effect change and improvement
- Emphasising working holistically to reduce health inequalities

This strategy is currently at consultation stage.

2.3.4 Entrepreneurial Barnet

The Entrepreneurial Barnet Strategy (2015-20) considers way in which the success of the Barnet economy can be supported by concerted action by the council and its partners. This involves '*stewardship of place*'; '*The council is responsible for maintaining much of the built and natural environment in the Borough including many aspects of our town centres and so has a big influence on whether Barnet is a pleasant place for businesses and their staff to locate and an efficient place to move around. The strategy proposes that 'The economic success of an area is associated with its attractiveness as a place to work and invest, but also whether it's a good place to live and to visit.'*

2.3.5 London Borough of Barnet Playing Pitch Strategy

The London Borough of Barnet has commissioned a playing pitch strategy conforming to Sport England guidelines. The strategy will assess current levels of supply and demand for playing pitches across the borough and will include an action plan for the future provision and management of outdoor playing pitches across Barnet.

The Playing Pitch Strategy will be delivered in the Spring of 2016.

2.3.6 Barnet Waste Strategy

The Municipal Recycling and Waste Strategy (2016 to 2030) is currently being developed and will be considered in draft by the council's Environment Committee in January 2016.

2.3.7 Barnet Community Asset Strategy

This strategy sets out the council’s strategy for making best use of its land and property portfolio to support community and voluntary sector organisations whilst ensuring that financial and community benefits are maximised for the benefit of residents and to help deliver objectives in the council’s Corporate Plan.

The strategy is currently in its consultation phase and will be considered for adoption in the summer of 2016.

2.4 Benchmarks and standards

The Open Space Strategy will be informed by national, regional and local standards in respect of the provision of parks and open spaces.

2.4.1. London Open Space Hierarchy

The London Plan (2015) establishes a hierarchy for open space provision across the Borough, establishing a typology for open space and standards in respect of accessibility.

2.4.2 English Nature - Accessible Green (ANGSt)

The ANGSt standard proposes minimum standards for access to natural greenspace for the whole of the UK.

Table 2.2 London Open Space Hierarchy

Source: London Plan (2015)

Size Guideline	Distances from home
at least 2 hectares	300 metres (5 minutes’ walk)
20 hectare	2 kilometres
100 hectare	5 kilometres
500 hectare	10 kilometres
A minimum of one hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population	

2.4.3 National Playing Fields Association

The NPFA’s Six Acre Standard is the principal point of reference for play provision and sets minimum provision of 2.4 hectares of outdoor playing space per 1,000 head of population, made up of:

- 1.2ha for pitch playing spaces (e.g. football, cricket etc.)
- 0.43ha for non-pitch playing spaces (including tennis, athletics etc.)
- 0.8ha for children’s playing spaces

The NPFA standard for children’s play is set out in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3 - NPFA Six Acre standard

Source: Fields in Trust: Guidance for Outdoor sport and play 2015

Facility Minimum	Time	Walking distance	Radial Distance	Size	Age group	Characteristics
LAP	1 min	100m	60m	100 m2	0-6 years	Small low key games area
LEAP Local Equipped Area of Play	5 min	400m	240m	400 m2	4-8 years	5 types of equipment + adequate hard surface space for games such as 'chase' and 'tag'.
NEAP Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play	15 min	1,000m	600m	1,000 m2	Older children	5 types of equipment + adequate hard surface space for games (at least 465 m2, the minimum area for five a side football).

Table 2.4 - London Open Space Hierarchy

Source: London Plan (2015)

Open Space categorisation	Size Guideline	Distances from home	Equivalent Barnet open spaces
<p>Regional Parks Large areas, corridors or networks of open space, the majority of which will be publicly accessible and provide a range of facilities and features offering recreational, ecological, landscape, cultural or green infrastructure benefits. Offer a combination of facilities and features that are unique within London, are readily accessible by public transport and are managed to meet best practice quality standards.</p>	400 hectares	3.2 to 8 kilometres	None of this scale
<p>Metropolitan Parks Large areas of open space that provide a similar range of benefits to Regional Parks and offer a combination of facilities at a sub-regional level, are readily accessible by public transport and are managed to meet best practice quality standards.</p>	60 hectares	3.2 kilometres	None of this scale
<p>District Parks Large areas of open space that provide a landscape setting with a variety of natural features providing a wide range of activities, including outdoor sports facilities and playing fields, children’s play for different age groups and informal recreation pursuits.</p>	20 hectares	1.2 kilometres	Oak Hill Park, Hampstead Heath Extension, Sunny Hill Park, Copthall
<p>Local Parks and Open Spaces Providing for court games, children’s play, sitting out areas and nature conservation areas.</p>	2 hectares	400 metres	Edgwarebury Park, Hendon Park, Golders Hill Park, Friary Park
<p>Small Open Spaces Gardens, sitting out areas, children’s play spaces or other areas of a specialist nature, including nature conservation areas.</p>	Under 2 hectares	Less than 400 metres	Princes Park, Ravenscroft Gardens, Malcolm Park, Brunswick Woods
<p>Pocket Parks Small areas of open space that provide natural surfaces and shaded areas for informal play and passive recreation that sometimes have seating and play equipment.</p>	Under 0.4	Less than 400 metres	Deacons Green, Jubilee Gardens, Elm Park, Church Lane Open Space
<p>Linear Open Spaces Open spaces and towpaths alongside the Thames, canals and other waterways; paths, disused railways; nature conservation areas; and other routes that provide opportunities for informal recreation. Often characterised by features or attractive areas which are not fully accessible to the public but contribute to the enjoyment of the space.</p>	Variable	Wherever feasible	Brookside Walk, Everleigh Walk, Lime Grove Footpath, Riverside Walk

2.5 Best practice guidance

The development of the Open Spaces Strategy has been informed by a number of best practice guidance documents developed over the past 15 years.

2.5.1 Green Spaces, Better Places – the report of the Urban Greenspaces Taskforce (2002)

The 'Green Spaces Better Places' report was the work of the Urban Greenspaces Taskforce, commissioned by HM Government to consider the role of parks and open spaces in defining the quality of urban life. The report considered the functions performed by parks in creating liveable cities and sustainable communities and the challenges facing the sector in terms of quality and management. The report proposed the central role that good quality parks and open spaces play in the urban renaissance.

2.5.2 CABE Space publications

CABE Space was created in 2003 as a direct consequence of the 'Green Spaces Better Places' report and functioned as a research and best practice development organisation through its 'enabling' and 'design review' programmes. CABE Space produced a number of key publications that are pertinent to the development of this strategy:

- 'Open Space Strategies – Best Practice and Guidance' (2008 - produced jointly with the Mayor of London). This document set out a standard for the preparation of open space strategies by local authorities
- 'Does Money Grow on Trees' (2005). This guidance set out new approaches to assessing the economic value contributed by parks and open spaces
- 'Making the invisible visible – the true value of parks assets' (2009) focused on providing *'an improved understanding of the current value of park and green space assets as an important first step in better strategic management and in assisting local authorities in using their assets to make a positive difference to communities'*.

2.5.3 Green Flag

Since 1996 the 'Green Flag' award has been the national standard for greenspace excellence across the UK. 'Green Flag - raising the standard' (2004) is the manual that provides guidance to local authorities and other land managers on the award criteria and judging process.

Although Barnet does not have any 'Green Flag' parks, 'Green Flag' assessment methodologies have been used in developing quality assessment criteria for Barnet's parks.

2.5.4 'Re-thinking Parks - exploring new business models for parks in the 21st century'. This study by Peter Neal was commissioned by NESTA, the Heritage Lottery Fund and Big Lottery to consider new funding and governance models for parks in the light of the financial constraints under which local authorities are operating in the austerity economy. The report considered new approaches to management and finance based on examples from across the UK and overseas.

2.5.5 NESTA 'Re-thinking Parks' pilot projects

As part of the Re-thinking Parks project, NESTA has commissioned 11 pilot projects looking at new approaches to the management and funding of parks and open spaces:

- 'Bloomsbury Squared'; a project in the London Borough of Camden to work with local residents and businesses to fund Bloomsbury's squares
- 'Endowing parks for the 21st century'; a project led by the National Trust that is considering how to build endowments for public parks based around health and ecosystem benefits, public giving and 21st century philanthropy
- 'Park Hack' – Hackney; a project to look at income generation in parks through engagement with the digital economy
- 'Coastal Parks and Gardens Foundation'; a project in Bournemouth to use public giving to support future management of parks in the city
- 'Everton Park, Liverpool'; a joint venture between the Land Trust and Liverpool City Council to transfer the park to Land Trust management
- 'Go to the park', Burnley; a joint venture between Burnley Council and a local social enterprise looking at new ways of generating revenue directly from parks
- 'My Park', Scotland; this project is looking at the use of digital technologies to facilitate private giving to local parks
- 'Eastbrookend Rekindled'; a project to pilot the re-location of public service offers to parks as a means of generating revenue and diversifying use
- 'Darlington Re-thinking parks'; Groundwork are working with Darlington Council and others to assess the potential of corporate giving to sustain local parks
- 'Park work' Bristol; a project to consider the capacity of parks to provide training into work opportunities for local people living in difficult circumstances while improving overall management and maintenance
- 'Heeley Park Subscription Society', Sheffield; a project to attract private giving by offering additional leisure opportunities at Heeley Park over and above the free facilities

These projects are running over 18 months from the summer of 2014.

2.5.6 Third Report of the Natural Capital Committee

The Natural Capital Committee was appointed by government in 2011 with a broad objective that this generation should *'be the first generation to leave the natural environment in a better state than it inherited.'*²

The work of the Committee has been focused on the production of three reports. The first two reports set out the methodological, measurement and reporting frameworks, the accounting principles and their application to national and corporate accounts, the incorporation of natural capital into project appraisals, and the research agenda. Included within these reports is a proposed

² NCC Final Advice to government: September 2015

methodology for assessing the value of natural assets and releasing this value to sustain these assets over time.

The third report proposes what government will need to do if it is to fulfil its ambitious objective of improving the environment. A principal element of the report is a call for the establishment of a clear plan to enhance natural capital, focussing on those areas with the highest economic benefits.

2.5.7 Design for Play

This guide prepared by Play England in 2008 is intended to inform the creation of outdoor play space to *'support children's capacity for adventure and imagination, their fundamental need for exercise and social interaction and their innate sense of fun'*³. It is also aimed at those responsible for the wider public realm, demonstrating that well-used and well-loved places to play will often be integrated within the cohesive design of wider community space.

2.6 Other studies

A number of other best-practice documents have also informed the strategy:

'The State of UK Parks' (HLF: 2014) examines the overall conditions of parks in the UK with a particular focus on parks and open spaces in which the HLF has invested over the past 25 years.

'Green Society – policies to improve the UK's urban green spaces' (Policy Exchange; 2014) considers current and future approaches to the funding of parks and open spaces

'Cities Alive- re-thinking green infrastructure' (Arup; 2014) considers the importance of eco-systems and proposes green infrastructure-led design for cities

'Places to be - green spaces for active citizenship' (Fabian Society; 2015) considers how government and communities can influence the evolution of thinking on the future management of parks and green spaces

³ Play England: Making Space for Play (2008): page 8

3.0 Baseline characteristics

Introduction

This section sets out the physical context for the open spaces strategy and describes how this will inform current and future provision. It addresses aspects of the natural environment, townscape and socio-economic characteristics and provides a summary of the existing park and green space assets across the borough.

Barnet is an outer London borough with boundaries with the London Boroughs of Enfield (to the north-east), Camden, Haringey (to the south-east), Harrow and Brent (to the south-west). The administrative area of Hertfordshire lies to the north and marks the boundary of Greater London. Appendix 1 Figure AI.10 shows the borough in its sub-regional context.

The physical, social and economic geography of Barnet exerts a considerable influence on the quantity, type and distribution of open space across the borough. Located towards the edge of London, Barnet's character becomes increasingly suburban northwards with a greater proportion of green and open space enhanced further by the presence of the green belt. The townscape is increasingly dense towards the south with a more fragmented distribution of open spaces.

3.1 Parks and open spaces assessment areas

In assessing the level of provision, quality and value of parks and open spaces in Barnet and in preparing Action Plans, this strategy depends upon analysis at three different geographical levels:

- Borough-wide assessment; the strategy assesses the borough's current portfolio and the resourcing of current service provision on a borough-wide basis, allowing for comparison with other London Boroughs
- Regional assessment; Barnet is sub-divided into three sub-regions (Chipping Barnet, Finchley and Golders Green and Hendon) which reflect Parliamentary constituency boundaries. Neighbourhood Forums are in place for each of these areas. This strategy considers levels of provision and assessments of quality, value and accessibility at this level, allowing for comparison between regions within the borough.
- Ward assessment: The Ward is the constituency unit for local government and this strategy considers levels of provision and assessments of quality, value allowing for comparison between Wards.

3.2 Topography

Barnet lies on the northern edge of the Thames Basin and the topography of the area is characterised by gentle undulations shelving steadily to the south and the valley of the Thames. The valleys of the Silk Stream and Dollis Brook cut through the western part of the borough converging in the Brent valley to the south-west. The Pymmes Brook flows through the eastern segment into Southgate and eventually into the River Lea.

A line of rounded hills dominates the north and north-west parts of the borough connecting Moat Mount, Mill Hill and Highwood Hill in the north-west with High Barnet and Monken Hadley in the north-east. Woodcock Hill is the highest point of this chain of hills at 137 metres.

In the southern section of the borough, the hilly landscape of Hampstead Garden Suburb leads to Kenwood and Hampstead Heath.

3.3 Geology

In common with much of the Thames Basin, the topography of Barnet is strongly influenced by the underlying geology. Much of the borough lies on London Clay laid down in the Eocene era over chalk bedrock. London Clay weathers to slightly acidic heavy clay soils of poor agricultural value.

Towards the end of the Eocene, London Clay gave way to Claygate Beds, alternating layers of sand and gravel which overlie several areas of higher ground including Mill Hill, Highwood Hill, Moat Mount and Rowley Green. Where these levels meet the London Clay layer, springs emerge such as those found along the Dollis Valley and Folly Brook Valley. In the north of the borough, a different sand and gravel formation (the Stanmore Gravels) contains more rounded pebbles characteristic of Hadley Green.

About 400,000 years ago, glaciation deposited the first layers of Boulder Clay in what is now the Finchley area, characterised by fertile clays mixed with erratic rocks and stones. At the edge of the Boulder Clay layers lies a narrow band of sands and gravels, possibly of Pleistocene origin. Where London Clay, Boulder Clay and sands and gravels meet, this combination of pervious and impermeable strata give rise to spring lines and local variations in plant communities and an alternating pattern of wet and better drained soils.

The most recent geological formations are more fertile alluvial soils, laid down along the valleys of the Silkstream, Dollis and Pymmes Brooks.

Appendix 1 Figure AI.11 illustrates the geology and hydrology of the borough.

3.4 Habitats

3.4.1 Grassland of one type or another is the dominant habitat in Barnet. They include a variety of habitat characteristics that are largely determined by soil type (and particularly, soil pH) and current and past management practises. Current management practices influencing grassland type include mowing regimes, grazing regimes and agricultural improvement (i.e. the use of herbicides and fertilizers). In general terms, grasslands within Barnet fall into four distinct categories:

- Amenity grassland; commonly associated with public parks and common across the Borough, amenity grassland consists typically of short mown hard-wearing swards containing a limited number of grass species.
- Neutral grassland; the most common grassland across the borough, neutral grasslands in the form of meadows and pastures dominate the borough's countryside. Many have been agriculturally improved and they often damp areas supporting distinctive mix of plants. Some hay meadows

such as Islip Manor Meadows and Little Commons Harrow Weald have a large diversity of wild flowers which are amongst Barnet's most important ecological assets.

- Tall rough grassland; this habitat type is generally found in places where disturbed ground has been abandoned such as brownfield sites, unmanaged cemeteries and allotments.
- Acid grassland; this habitat type occurs where nutrient-poor, free-draining acidic spoils occur over sandy gravel substrates and supports distinctive plant communities. The preservation of acid grassland is a priority for the London Bio-diversity Action Plan.

3.4.2 Woodlands and scrub

A considerable surface area within the borough is devoted to woodland. This includes Watling Chase Community Forest covers 190 km², extending north and west from Totteridge into south Hertfordshire.

Although Barnet would once have been covered by broadleaved deciduous woodland, the majority of the borough's woodlands are of recent origin having established in fields, and commons or planted in open spaces over the past 150 years. Some areas of Ancient Woodland do persist in Scratchwood, Oak Hill, Big Wood, Lytle Wood and Barnet Gate Wood. Smaller pockets of old woodland have persisted in built up areas in Turner's Wood, Hampstead Garden Suburb and Cherry Tree Wood in East Finchley.

Most of Barnet's woodland is described as 'secondary' having established or having been planted in areas previously developed for agriculture. Secondary woodland tends to have lower diversity and conservation value, especially in more urban districts where ash and sycamore dominate and herb layers include non-native species that have escaped from surrounding gardens.

3.4.3 Rivers and wetlands

Barnet is fortunate in that the three small rivers draining the borough remain at the surface and this gives rise to distinctive riparian habitats both with and beside the watercourses. These habitats are valuable green corridors connecting the borough with the countryside beyond London.

In several places, rivers have been widened to form artificial lakes such as Beech Hill Lake, Darland's Lake and Stoneyfields Lake. These provide additional capacity during periods of drought or flood and offer valuable habitat in their own right.

A number of historic ponds, which originally provided for the watering of stock on farms, have survived across the borough. Most now perform a different amenity-based function but most support a range of species, although their effectiveness as habitat has been compromised by poor management.

The most significant open water habitat in the borough is the Welsh Harp Reservoir which straddles the border between Barnet and Brent. The reservoir is now designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, supports a wide variety of wildfowl and is a significant wildfowl breeding site.

3.5 Settlement patterns

Land use and settlement patterns are relatively diverse and reflect the absorption of former villages into London as the capital expanded in the latter half of the 19th century. In the north of the borough, this pattern of absorption usually followed connecting transport corridors and particularly the Midland Railway line (connecting Edgware and Mill Hill in the north-west of the borough), the High Barnet branch of the Northern Line (connecting High Barnet, Totteridge and Whetstone in the north-east). The central northern area of the borough between these two population centres is semi-rural in character and contains a significant area of Green Belt (2,466 hectares, equivalent to 28% of the borough). Across these northern edges of the borough, housing is relatively low density and typical of suburban settlement patterns prevalent elsewhere in London.

Over time, settlement patterns have become more dense around the suburbs of Cricklewood, Colindale, Hendon, Finchley and Golders Green but individual town centres with distinctive character still remain legible in these parts of the borough, albeit with a less suburban grain when compared with areas to the north.

3.6 Demographics

Barnet’s population has been steadily increasing since 1991 and is now projected to increase by 21% as compared with its 2011 level by 2041.⁴

Table 3.1 Barnet project population

Source; GLA: London Population Projections 2013

Year	Total population
2011	357,653
2021	391,472
2031	418,589
2041	431,814

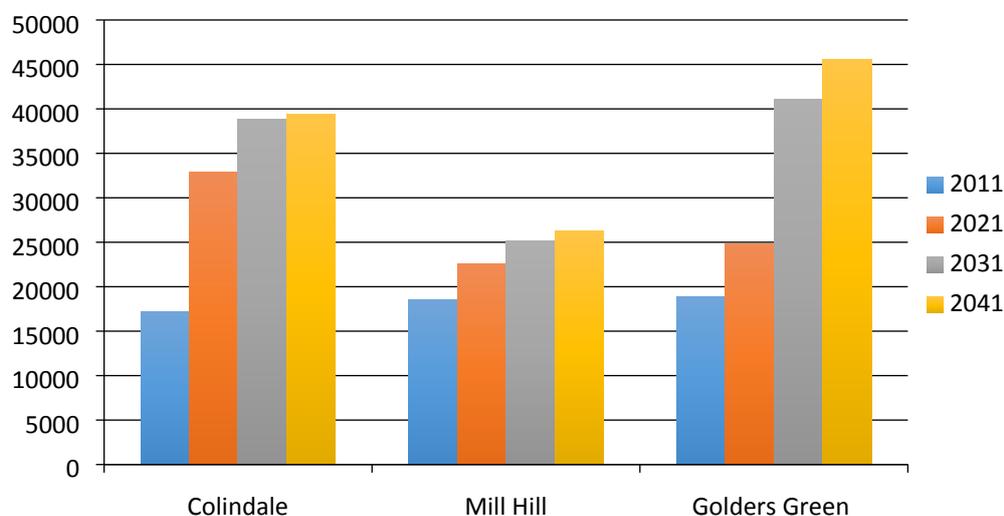
The distribution of this population growth will vary across the borough. In 2011, Burnt Oak was the most populous ward. By 2021, Colindale will have become the most heavily populated ward in Barnet, having seen a 50% increase in population between 2014 and 2021. Over the same period, the populations of Golders Green and Mill Hill will have increased by 30% and 10% respectively.

This rise in population implies an increasing level of demand for public services, including public parks. Much of this population growth will be delivered through higher density housing where private space for individuals and families will be limited or absent, implying a further dependence upon public space for outdoor recreation and access to the natural environment.

Figure 3.1- Projected population growth in Colindale, Golders Green and Mill Hill wards

⁴ See: <https://open.barnet.gov.uk/dataset/population-projections-barnet-2013>

Source: GLA: London Population Projections 2013



Population growth will also vary across particular age groups and geographically across the borough.

Between 2014 and 2021, the population of children (up to the age of 16) across the entire borough is projected to increase by 15.4%. The most significant increases in the proportion of children are projected in Colindale, Hendon, and West Hendon. There will be a proportionate decrease in children in Golders Green, because although there will be an increase in the number of children, the increase in working age residents will be much larger.

Across the borough, the population of working age residents will remain stable over the period 2014 to 2025. Golders Green is the only ward in which the working age population is set to increase.

Between 2014 and 2021, the number of residents of retirement age and over will increase by 6,400 (12.6%)⁵. Much of this segment of the population will be concentrated in Totteridge, Hampstead Garden Suburb and High Barnet. It is projected that there will be growth in the retirement age population in every ward except Colindale and Golders Green.

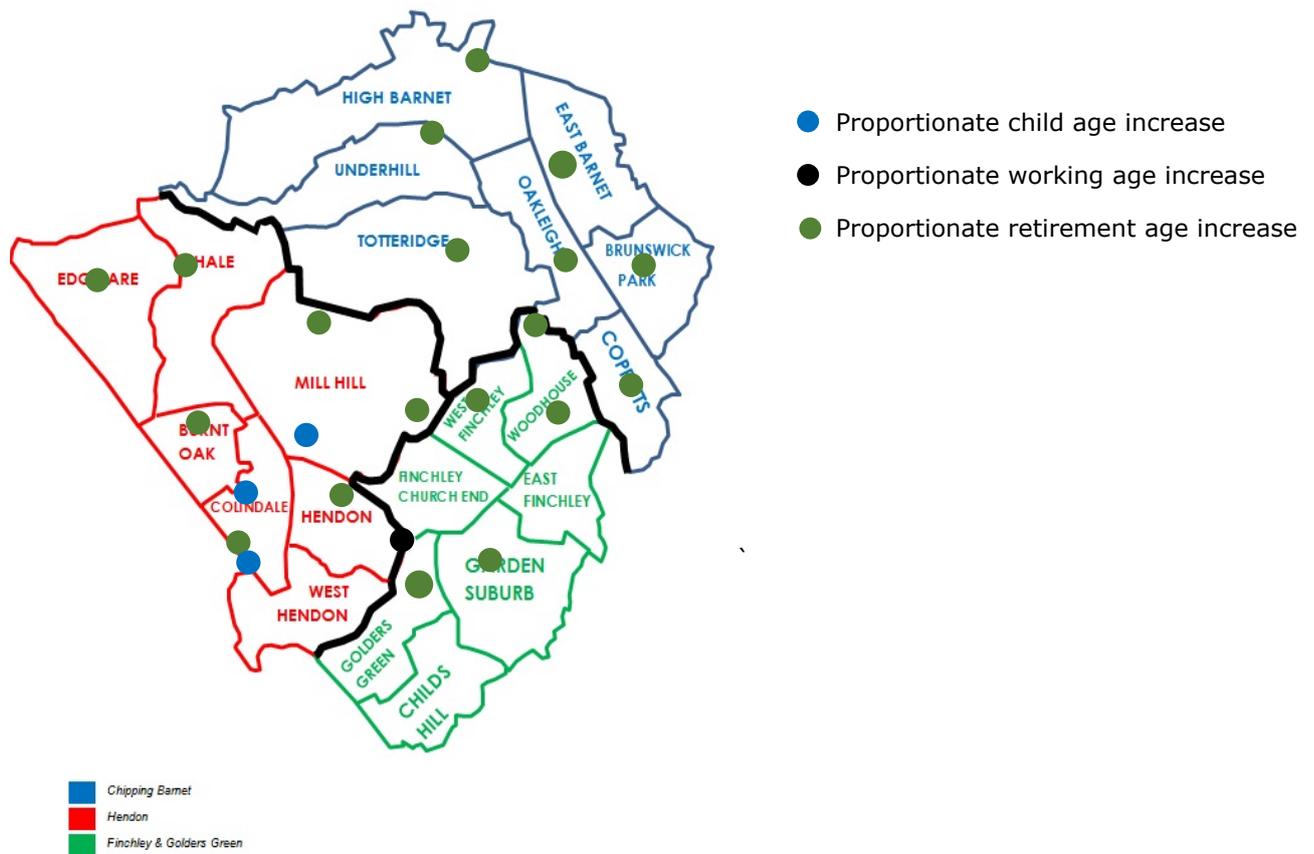
Demographic projections suggest the need for the Parks service to respond to changes in population over the next twenty years. Increases in the child population in some parts of the borough (Colindale, Hendon and West Hendon) suggest an emphasis on play provision, educational initiatives and a range of family-based interventions to encourage use of public open space.

This Open Spaces Strategy has used the projected 2015 population of 367,266 in assessing the current level of parks and open space provision across Barnet.

Figure 3.2 - Projected growth in proportions by age group

⁵ See: <https://open.barnet.gov.uk/dataset/population-projections-barnet-2013>

Source: GLA: London Population Projections 2013



3.7 Ethnicity

Residents classifying themselves as 'White British' constitute the largest ethnic group in Barnet. This percentage is close to the average for London. There is a slightly higher percentage of Indian residents and a lower proportion of Pakistani and Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean residents compared to London as a whole.

Research does not suggest that the uptake of parks services is closely linked to ethnicity nationally.

Table 3.2 - Barnet ethnicity analysis

Source: GLA 2014 Round of Demographic Projections, Local authority population projections
Trend-based ethnic group projections, long-term migration scenario October 2015

Ethnicity	London (%)	Barnet (%)
White	57.9	61.9
Asian or Asian British - Indian	6.9	7.6
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	3	1.6
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	2.8	0.6
Asian or Asian British - Other	6.6	8.8
Chinese	1.7	2.5
Black or Black British - Black Caribbean	4	1.2
Black or Black British - Black African	7.2	5.7
Black other	4.6	2.9
Other	5.4	7
BAME	42.1	38.1

3.8 Housing provision

The relative proportion of dwellings that are terraced houses, flats and apartments is an indicator of current and future demand for parks and open spaces as these accommodation types will often not include the provision of private open space. Accommodation for much of Barnet's population growth will be through high density housing with minimal private space, implying a further dependence upon public space for access to the natural environment and places for active and passive recreation.

In 2011, 57% of the Borough's housing stock consisted of individual houses, (detached, semi-detached and terraced).

Figure 3.3 - Dwelling types in Barnet

Source: ONS 2011 statistics: Dwelling Type

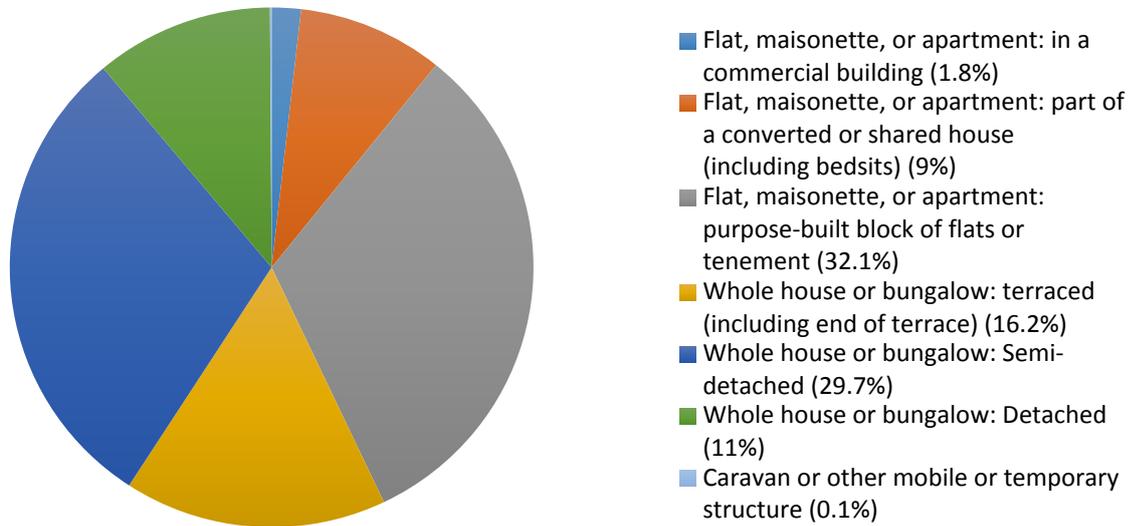
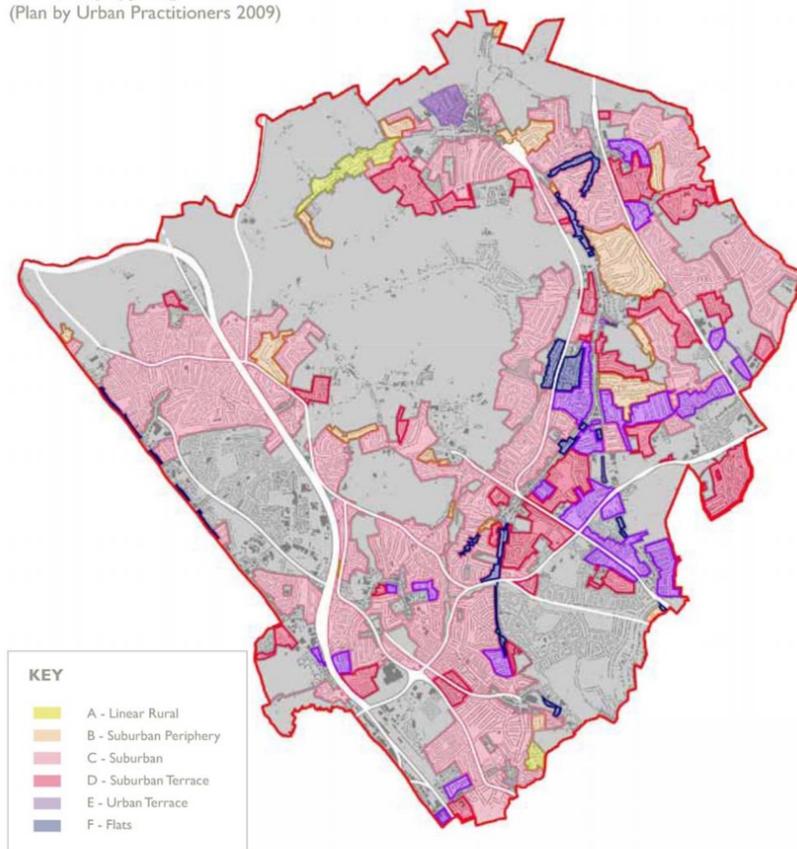


Figure 3.4 Distribution of dwelling types across Barnet

Source: Barnet Local Plan DMP September 2012

Secondary Typologies
(Plan by Urban Practitioners 2009)

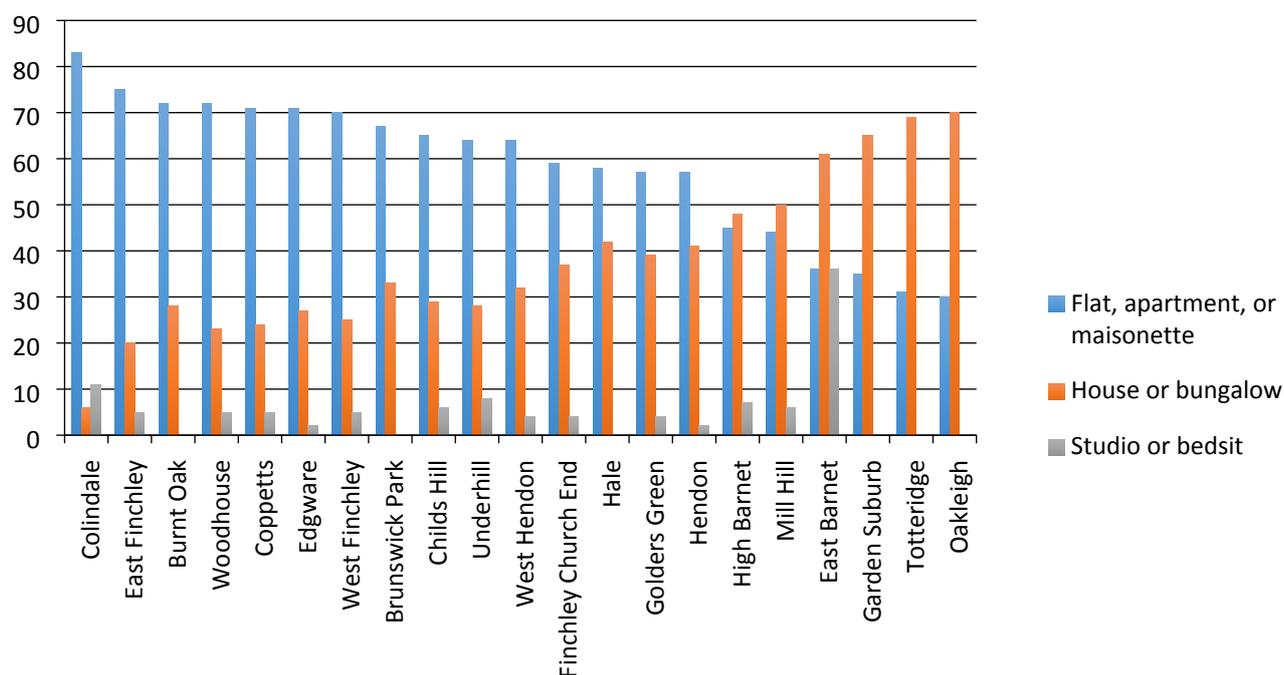


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Housing completions between 2011 and 2014 indicate the construction of significantly larger proportion of flats, apartments and maisonettes. These completions are concentrated in the parts of the borough where the greatest population growth over the next 20 years is projected.

Figure 3.5 - Projected housing completions by Ward: January 2010 to November 2014

Source: GLA database- housing completions report



3.9 Crime and anti-social behaviour

Levels of crime and anti-social behaviour in Barnet’s parks are relatively low compared with other parts of the public realm.

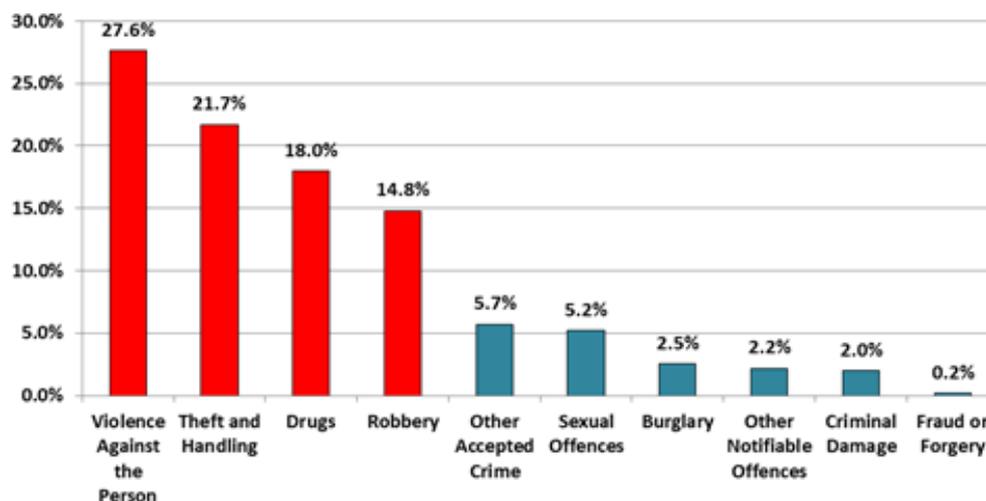
Between October 2013 and September 2015, there were 520 crimes were recorded as taking place in parks, equating to an average annual rate of 260 per year. This compares to the total borough crime rate during that period of approximately 25,500 per year. Reported crimes in parks thus accounted for only 1% of recorded crime in the borough during that period.

There are discernible trends in terms of crime and antisocial behaviour that focus on specific parks, on specific forms of activity, specific times of year and times of day.

Figure 3.6 shows the percentages of reported crime in Barnet’s parks by type

Figure 3.6 Barnet Parks and Open Spaces – crime type

Source: Barnet Community Safety 2015



Crime and anti-social behaviour is concentrated in a number of specific sites, with 80% of reported crime in parks taking place in 25 parks.

Table 3.3 Top 25 parks in Barnet for reported crime

Source: Barnet Community Safety 2015

Park	Percentage of incidents
Hendon Park	7.7
Mill Hill Park	6.9
Old Courthouse Rec Ground	6
Watling Park	6
Victoria Park	5.8
Oak Hill Park	5.2
Sunny Hill Park	4
Clitterhouse Playing Field	3.3
Silkstream Park	3.3
Childs Hill Park	3.1
Friary Park	3.1
Golders Hill Park	3.1
Brook Farm Open Space	2.7
Dollis Valley Green Walk	2.5
Montrose Playing Field	2.3
Woodfield Park	2.1
Hampstead Heath Extension	1.9
Hadley Green	1.7
Victoria Rec Ground	1.7
Brent Park	1.3
Cherry Tree Wood	1.3
Barnet Playing Field	1.2
Bethune Park	1.2
Colindale Park	1.2
Glebelands	1.2

In respect of statistical patterning, crimes occur fairly evenly across the week and weekend but Friday is the peak day.

Most crimes in parks occur between 12 midday and 11pm, with a peak between 4pm and 6pm.

There is a strong seasonal pattern with reported crime in parks at its highest level during June, July, August (July is the peak month). Reported crime is at its lowest level in January and February.

3.10 Greenspaces provision - Barnet parks assets

This Open Space Strategy will consider the level of current provision of parks and open spaces in Barnet against current and likely future demand.

The Parks service provided the borough's portfolio of parks and open spaces for the purpose of this strategy.

Table 3.4 - Barnet's open space asset portfolio – 2015 survey

Open Space by typology	Number of sites	Area (Ha)
Public Parks	40	89.59
Playgrounds	9	2.05
Sports sites	5	64.17
Natural/semi-natural greenspace	39	249.25
Combination sites	68	477.64
Other miscellaneous greenspaces	42	5.97
TOTALS	208	888.7

The 2015 Parks service portfolio suggests that the combined area of parks provision in Barnet is 465.2 Hectares (approximately 5.4% of the total area of the Borough). Based on the 2105 population of Barnet (367,266), this represents parks provision of 1.26 Hectares per 1,000 head of population.

With regard to open space, the Local Plan Development Management Policies (DMP) DPD proposes that *'where a development is in an area of deficiency for publicly accessible open space new open space should be provided in line with these standards:*

- *Parks (1.63 hectares per 1,000 residents)*

Open space provision across all types of green space, (parks, playgrounds, sports sites, natural and semi-natural greenspaces) is 888.76 Hectares (approximately 10% of the area of the Borough). This represents 2.41 Hectares per 1,000 head of population.

The assessment of open space provision across the borough excludes schools, private sports clubs and cemeteries, SLOAP (sites left over after planning) sites, verges, private gardens and private areas of Green Belt and Metropolitan Open

Land. If these areas are factored into an assessment, the level of greenspace provision across the Borough is considerably higher.

Table 3.8 sets out the hierarchy of open spaces described in the London Plan (2015).

Table 3.5 - London Public Open Space Hierarchy

Source: Mayor of London: Open Space Strategies, Best Practice Guidance (2008)

Open Space categorisation	Size guideline
Regional Parks	400 Hectares
Metropolitan Parks	60 Hectares
District Parks	20 Hectares
Local parks and open spaces	2 Hectares
Small open spaces	Under 2 Hectares
Pocket Parks	Under 0.4 Hectares
Linear Open Spaces	Variable

As defined by this hierarchy, Barnet does not have any Metropolitan parks but does have 10 district parks and 77 local parks. Barnet’s parks are not evenly distributed across the borough and there is a distinct concentration of larger parks in the northern, more rural parts of the borough. High Barnet, Underhill and Totteridge contain 3 district parks and 12 local parks. In comparison, the East Finchley, Finchley Church End, West Finchley and Woodhouse Wards do not have a district park and have only 9 local parks.

Table 3.6 Assessment of parks provision by area: Chipping Barnet, Hendon, Finchley and Golders Green

Barnet Region	Parks Provision
Chipping Barnet	244.03 Hectares
Finchley and Golders Green	80.07 Hectares
Hendon	141.1 Hectares

Provision of parks in the following Wards falls below the current borough average in terms of parks provision per 1,000 head of population:

- Brunswick Park, Burnt Oak, Childs Hill, Colindale, East Finchley, Edgware, Golders Green, Hale, Hendon, Oakleigh, West Finchley, West Hendon and Woodhouse

High Barnet, Totteridge, East Barnet, Coppetts, Garden Suburb and Mill Hill all have levels of provision above the Borough average

3.11 Accessibility

Accessibility is an important determinant of the supply of public open space and will help to determine any deficiencies in public open space provision. Accessibility is also significant in defining the value of an open space. A high quality open space can be of limited value if access to it is restricted by major barriers such as transport corridors and rivers.

The Open Space Strategy Guidance (2008) developed by the Mayor of London and CABE proposes a set of accessibility criteria that is related to the London Public Open Space Hierarchy defined in the London Plan (2012).

Table 3.7 - Accessibility thresholds

Source: Mayor of London: Open Space Strategies, Best Practice Guidance (2008)

Open Space categorisation	Distance from homes
Regional Parks	3.2 to 8 kilometres
Metropolitan Parks	3.2 kilometres
District Parks	1.2 kilometres
Local parks and open spaces	400 metres
Small open spaces	Less than 400 metres
Pocket Parks	Less than 400 metres
Linear Open Spaces	Wherever feasible

Figures AI.3, AI.4 in Appendix I show levels of deficiency for each level of provision described within the London Parks Hierarchy. Figure AI5 shows levels of deficiency when proximities to District and Local parks are combined.

North and East Finchley and Brent Cross/Cricklewood have a particular deficiency in District Park provision. Policy CS7 of Barnet Council's Core Strategy (2012) proposes 'improving access to open spaces particularly in North and East Finchley and other areas of public open space deficiency.'

Local parks are more evenly spread across the borough and overall most areas of the borough are well served, however a section of the borough from New Barnet to Oakleigh Park and parts of North Finchley, East Finchley and an area to the North East of Hendon do not lie within 400m of a local park.

Access to natural and semi-natural greenspace has been assessed with reference to the Mayor's Bio-diversity Strategy (2002) which proposes that everybody should be within 1km of a site of Metropolitan or Borough Interest for Nature Conservation. For sites of Local Interest for Nature Conservation, the distance criterion is 500m.

Figure AI.5 in Appendix I show areas of deficiency in terms of access to these two types of provision.

Most of Barnet lies within 1km of a site of Metropolitan Interest or Borough Interest for Nature Conservation. East Finchley, Cricklewood and parts of Hendon lie outside this catchment. Much of the borough also lies within 500m of a site of local interest for nature conservation. Parts of Colindale, Cricklewood, Finchley, Chipping Barnet, New Barnet, Oakleigh Park and Hendon lie outside this catchment.

Distance standards are based on an assumption that users can walk to most forms of provision. Given the nature of provision in Barnet and the size of the Borough, the 2009 PPG17 assessment of parks and open spaces included a further based upon standards used by Transport for London when assessing Public Transport Access Levels (PTAL) for different parts of London:

- Whether the park is on or adjacent to the Public Rights of Way Network
- Whether the park has an above average number of London Cycle Routes within 100m compared to the rest of the sites in the parks category
- Whether the park has an above average number of bus routes within 640m compared to the rest of the sites in the parks category.
- Whether the site has an underground station or national rail station within 940m.

This strategy has assessed changes in the public rights of way network, designated London cycle routes, bus routes and bus stops within Barnet and the distribution of underground and national rail stations across the Borough.

Figures AI.7 and AI.8 in Appendix I details the changes to these transport networks since 2009. These changes have had minimal impact on levels of accessibility and the findings of the 2009 study are thus still applicable:

Table 3.8 - Parks accessibility assessment, 2015

Parks accessibility assessment	
Parks with a high accessibility score	Brook Farm/Wyatt’s Farm
	Brunswick Park
	Childs Hill
	Hendon Park
	Hampstead Heath Extension
	Oakdene Park
	Whetstone Strays
	York Park
Parks with a low accessibility score	Bounds Green/Fairview Open Space
	Boysland Open Space
	Edgwarebury Park
	Elm Park
	Hadley Cricket Outfield
	Hamilton Road Playground
	Jubilee Gardens
	Oak Lane Open Space
	Princes Park
	Rushgrove Park

3.12 Barnet parks – future provision

Paragraph 3.1 describes the anticipated rise in the population of Barnet between 2011 and 2041. From a base population of 367,266 in 2015, the population of the borough will rise to 431,814 over this period.

The current parks portfolio in Barnet consists of 10 district parks and 77 local parks. In 2015, Barnet has one district park for every 36,726 residents and one local park for every 4,769 residents.

In order to sustain this level of parks provision, 12 district parks and 90 local parks will be required by 2041. However, it should be noted that the current level of parks provision across the borough equates to 1.26 Hectares per 1,000 head of population, whereas the Local Plan Development Management Policies (DMP) DPD proposes the provision of 1.63 Hectares per 1,000 head of population. To achieve this level of provision in 2015 will require the creation of 136 Hectares of additional park space. To support a population of 431,814, 240 Hectares of park space over and above current levels of provision would be required.

4.0 The value of parks and open spaces

Introduction

In common with many urban centres across the world, cities in the UK have witnessed a revival in parks provision over the past two decades. Following a period of long-term decline, a recognition arose in the early years of this century that good quality parks and open spaces make a significant contribution to the quality of urban life across a range of indicators.

The report of the Urban Taskforce (Towards and Urban Renaissance – 1999) prepared by Lord Rogers report on the future of the UK's cities and the subsequent report of the Greenspaces Task Force (Green Spaces, Better Places, 2002), contributed significantly to current urban policy and the creation of CABE Space in 2003. A subsequent considerable capital investment in public open space and public realm by the Heritage Lottery Fund and other public sector funders has demonstrated the importance of parks and green spaces and the wider public realm at the centre of a discussion around urban place making, development and regeneration.

The emergence of 'world cities' has brought this thinking into sharper focus; world cities such as London are competing for resources in skilled and talented workers, capital investment and in the economy of international tourism. The quality of the environment is considered a key element in determining the competitiveness of one city against another. London regularly asserts its credentials as a 'green city' and parks figure significantly in this assertion. Within London, different Boroughs (including Barnet) promote the qualities of their environment and the extent of their green spaces as contributing factors to their economic success and their attractiveness as a place to live, work and visit.

The park in the 21st century is no longer seen as an isolated green space within an urban context but part of an integrated and mixed-use economic, social and environmental structure that binds a city together, making individual places distinctive and supporting the future sustainability of urban life.

A considerable amount of research has been undertaken over the past decade into the value of parks and greenspaces and the contribution that they make to the success of cities, suburbs, urban environments and the quality of life for communities. This section of the strategy will consider how good quality parks and open spaces can contribute actual value to cities and how this value can be measured across a number of different indicators. In subsequent sections of this strategy, these indicators will be used to assess the value of Barnet's parks and open spaces, providing a rationale for future management and funding.

4.1 The economic value of greenspace

Whilst parks and green spaces are often highly valued by local communities in terms of a calculation of their formal asset value, public parks have been largely assessed as having negligible value, principally because planning designations rule out the possibility of the use of park land for development. A designated greenspace cannot be built upon and the added value of developable land cannot thus be attributed to the park. As a consequence, the provision of parks services are characterised as a negative budget activity with no identifiable cost benefits.

While this approach has been challenged (CABE: Making the invisible visible: the real value of park assets, CABE Space - 2009) it remains the approach of most local authorities, including Barnet. This ignores the value that parks contribute to urban economies, the city communities and to city environments. This section of the strategy considers an approach to value based on two sets of value characteristics:

Tangible value – the land, topsoil, trees, ecology and bio-diversity, hard landscape infrastructure and buildings

Intangible value – the benefits accruing to users across a range of indicators including economic, health-related, social, educational and cultural criteria.

All of these benefits have cash value but hitherto have not been assessed in the context of the balance sheet for parks. Section 4.3 discusses new ways of assessing the value of parks in the context of green infrastructure.

Research in the UK and elsewhere has demonstrated conclusively that a number of economic benefits can be derived from good quality urban parks.

4.1.1 Property values

Parks have a positive impact on land and property value. Proximity to a good quality public park will add up to 20% to the value of property, depending on proximity and accessibility⁶. Research has shown that this uplift will apply to properties located 100-1000 metres from a park and uplift is maximised where the parks is perceived to be of high quality.

Commercial property values are similarly positively impacted upon by good quality parks and greenspace. Rental values are sustained at higher values where good quality greenspace is either immediately available or integral to the

⁶ Neill Dunse. (2007). Urban parks, open space and residential property values, RICS

working environment⁷. Good quality environments support companies in the competitive recruitment and retention of skilled and productive workers. The contribution that parks make to local and city wide economies in turn supports the tax yield accruing to authorities with this yield supporting the delivery of local services.

4.1.2 Tourist economy

Global cities are important destinations for visitors and the tourist economy is a vital part of London's economy, contributing £15.9 billion annually⁸. Most world cities (including London) have signature public open spaces that are key elements in that city's tourist economy. New York's Highline is situated in a hitherto relatively isolated mid-town area of Manhattan but is now one of the top five tourist attractions in the city, with over 5 million visitors since it opened in 2009. As a consequence, the number of construction projects in the area has doubled with some thirty large projects progressing with a value of over \$2 billion⁹. While London's Royal Parks are the centrepiece of the capital's greenspace offer, both inner and outer London Boroughs are developing distinctive parks. Thames Barrier Park and Queen Elizabeth II Olympic Park are seen as significant contributors to their visitor and tourist economy.

4.1.3 Park economies

These signature parks and the neighbourhoods around them are economic entities in their own right, supporting a range of commercial activities including park cafes, events, galleries and active lifestyle businesses. Parks and the businesses around them contribute directly to the number of local jobs and employment levels. Over 10,000 people are directly employed in parks across the UK and tens of thousands more in ancillary businesses attached to or in the vicinity of parks¹⁰. This direct employment is complemented by the activity of a large number of volunteers in parks, who contribute and estimated £17-35 million of value to open space across the UK every year¹¹.

4.2 Social and Community value

A considerable focus for research over the past decade has evidenced many positive benefits for individuals and communities as a consequence of access to good quality parks and open spaces. These benefits can translate into direct positive monetary impacts on the cost of service provision (especially in terms of personal and public health). Some of these benefits cannot be directly

⁷ Gensler Institute and Urban Land Institute (2011)

⁸ London and Partners (2013): London Tourism Report 2012/13

⁹ Park for the Future: A Best Practice Guide for the 21st Century: 2012)

¹⁰ GreenSpace (2011) Understanding the Contribution Parks and Green Spaces can make to Improving People's Lives.

¹¹ GreenSpace. (2003). Community Networking Project: Final Report

monetised but are nevertheless, understood to have value in the broadest sense.

4.2.1 Health

Britain's cities are principally Victorian creations and the provision of city parks was significantly influenced by a perceived need to offer a counter-balance to the negative impact of city life on personal health. Today, many of our urban communities are facing similar significant health issues, largely as a consequence of an ageing population and the adoption of a more sedentary lifestyle.

DEFRA has calculated that the NHS could save £2.1 billion per annum if parks and open space infrastructure encouraged people into more active lifestyles¹². Good quality parks and open spaces can have a significant impact on some of the most prevalent disease groups – coronary heart disease, Type 2 diabetes and mental health. Barnet's emerging Sport and Physical Activity and Health and Wellbeing Strategies identify parks as providing a primary opportunity for people to adopt and sustain a healthier lifestyle. Current and future parks investment (through 'green gym provision' and targeted participatory management) should seek to maximise these benefits.

These initiatives are supported by empirical research. Public health studies in Holland have suggested that the greening of the environment can reduce annual healthcare costs across the Netherlands by over €100 million. This is achieved in part through a 15% reduction in obesity (contributing €8 million) a 10% reduction in the use of anti-depressants (contributing €2 million) and a 10% reduction in the use of drugs to control ADHD in children.¹³

The overall capacity of parks to support health outcomes will reinforce outcomes that are delivered through conventional clinical approaches. This Open Space Strategy will demonstrate how parks can develop as places where physical activity can be promoted through the principles of 'active design' and by the creation of local partnerships to deliver specific health outcomes. This approach will support the delivery of health outcomes developed in the Sports and Physical Activity and Health and Wellbeing strategies.

4.2.2 Food growing

There has been a considerable growth in urban food growing over the past decade. The Resource Centre on Urban Agriculture and Food Security identifies

¹² DEFRA (2010)

¹³ BADE et al (2010)

three urban agricultural systems, defined by the level of economic activity that is carried out:¹⁴

- Non-commercial urban agriculture – allotments, micro farming and institutional gardens
- Market-orientated urban agriculture – small scale commercial arable, horticultural and livestock farming in an urban context, specialised urban agriculture
- Multi-functional urban agriculture – food growing plus education, tourism, agri-tourism.

Urban parks can support a variety of urban agricultural activities.

4.2.3 Education

UK children are spending less and less time outdoors. The likelihood of children visiting any green space at all has halved in a generation, and much of this now happens only under adult supervision. Similarly, use of the open spaces around their homes which they know has fallen by 90% in 20 years¹⁵.

Parks and open spaces are proving less attractive for children and young people when compared with other age groups. Young people aged between 16 and 24 report lower quality across all indicators analysed for the study: 15% thought their local parks and open spaces were the aspect of their areas that needed most improvement, compared with 8 per cent of 55-74 year olds.¹⁶

By contrast, the benefits accruing to children from regular use of open spaces and interaction with nature are well-established. Children's cognitive and social-emotional skill development also benefit from regular and varied access to nature. Safe and familiar open spaces close to home contribute to personal development, allow children to explore and to test motor skills and support the development of interpretive sensory skills. There is considerable evidence that children living in socio-economically deprived area have better levels of concentration when they regularly enjoy the use of greenspace and these enhanced concentration levels translate into higher levels of educational attainment and support the development of self- esteem.¹⁷

Children suffering from Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) benefit from activity in public spaces, especially green spaces. When parents of children with ADD were asked to nominate the activities that they had found made their children more

¹⁴ RUAF (2011); Cities and Agriculture – developing resilient urban food systems

¹⁵ Natural England. (2010). Childhood and Nature: A Survey on Changing Relationships with Nature Across Generations.

¹⁶ CABE Space. (2010). Urban Green Nation

¹⁷ Health Council of the Netherlands(2004)

manageable, 85% of green-space activities (such as fishing and soccer) were said to improve the children's behaviour, while only 43% of non-green activities (such as video games and watching television) were regarded as beneficial. Indeed, 57% of non-green activities were said to result in worse behaviour.¹⁸

4.2.4 Place and Neighbourhood

Numerous studies have identified the capacity of parks to reinforce a sense of place and residents' affinity with neighbourhood. People will identify strongly with their local park as part of the fabric of their neighbourhood. Where a park is of high quality, this will foster a sense of pride in the places where people live and work. These feelings are particularly strongly expressed when parks have direct heritage value or contain cultural assets or activities of significance, providing opportunities for learning and cultural enrichment. Conversely, a poor quality or neglected park can have a negative impact on perceptions of neighbourhood quality¹⁹. Parks are by their very nature diverse, encouraging people of all ages, cultural, ethnic and social backgrounds to meet and interact. This is particularly the case where communities participate in the planning and management of public spaces or where they contribute to cultural and sporting activities.

This complex interaction of economic, environmental and social influences represents the significant contribution good quality parks and open spaces can make to the development of sustainable communities and to community cohesion. In turn a large number of social and economic benefits can flow from these

4.3 Green Infrastructure

Parks form part of a green infrastructure that underpins the functioning of urban environment and forms an important part of city-wide infrastructure planning. The green infrastructure approach proposes that each piece of land can provide a variety of ecosystem services and that operate at a variety of scales including neighbourhoods, districts, cities and regions. This dynamic approach contrasts with a more traditional mono-functional approach to land and this improves the ability of places to address issues of climate change resilience, pollution, flood risk and ecological degradation.

Climate change is likely to affect all of the world's cities over the next 50 years and beyond and this will particularly be the case where emission levels produce localised greenhouse effects. Parks make significant contribution to mitigate against the impact of climate change on Barnet.

¹⁸ National Recreation and Park Association. (2008). No Child Left Inside

¹⁹ GreenSpace. (2010). GreenSTAT visitor survey system

Climate change is expected to increase flood risk with increased rainfall and more extreme weather patterns. Urban environments are often poorly equipped to cope with intense periods of rainfall that can result in economically and socially costly flood events. Parks and greenspaces can absorb up to 25% of precipitation directly into the soil and ground water, alleviating pressure on built drainage systems²⁰. Parks and green spaces can also make a positive contribution to this problem by absorbing and retaining large volumes of precipitation and releasing this more slowly into drainage systems and networks.

Urban warming is a direct consequence of both climate change and localised greenhouse effects. These temperature rises can have a direct effect on public health. Open spaces (and particularly trees) have a significant moderating effect on temperatures. Research suggests that a 10% increase in tree volume can reduce ambient temperature rises by 30-50% on hot summer days. Where greenspace occupies more than 50% of land surface area, temperatures are approximately 7° centigrade lower than elsewhere in a neighbourhood²¹. This cooling effect can be experienced up to 100m from the park edge.²²

Green infrastructure is a system that can impact at many different levels to affect environmental management. Figures 4.1 and 4.2 illustrate how these might impact at local level in Barnet.

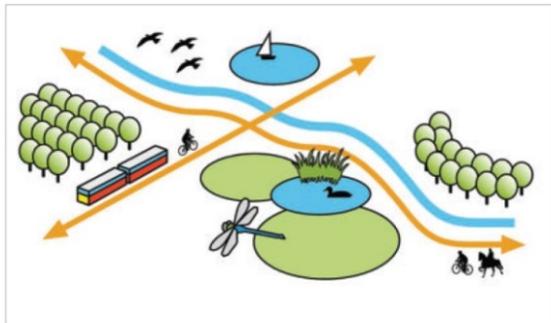
²⁰ Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions. (2002). Green Spaces, Better Places: Final report of The Urban Green Space Task Force

²¹ Whitford, V., Ennos, A. R. and Handley, J. F. (2001). City form and natural process – indicators for the ecological performance of urban areas and their application to Merseyside, UK. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, Vol. 57(2), pp.91-103

²² Shashua-Bar, L. and Hoffman, M. E. (2000). 'Vegetation as a climatic component in the design of an urban street: an empirical model for predicting the cooling effect of urban green areas with trees'. *Energy and Buildings* Vol. 31, pp.221-235

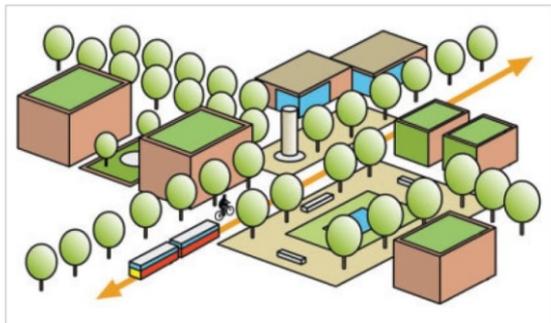
Figure 4.1 Local Green Infrastructure options and impacts

Source: Landscape Institute (2001): Local Green Infrastructure

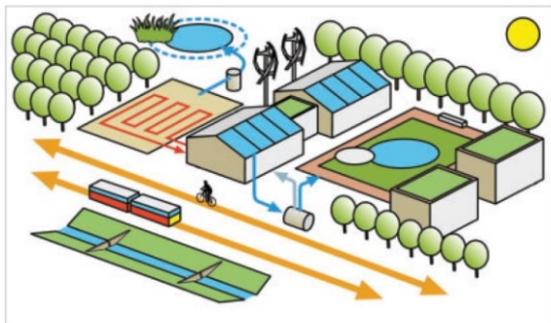


Key to illustration

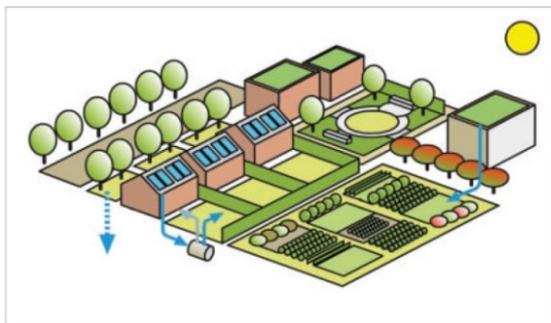
A
Main green spine
 Trees, green spaces, river valleys and waterways, pedestrian and cycle routes connecting places, reflecting local character, enabling wildlife to flourish, offering sustainable transport routes and reducing the impact of climate change.



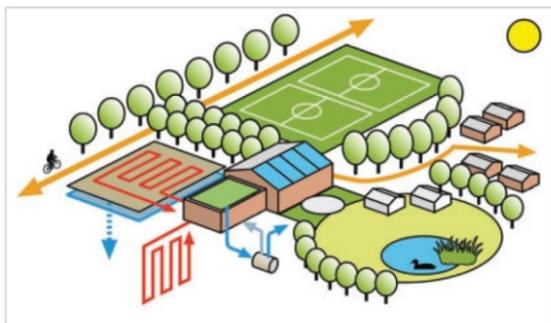
B
Urban areas
 Boulevards, plazas, green roofs and walls making attractive settings for shopping and leisure, improving the vibrancy of local economy. Street trees and green space making our settlements more liveable, providing cooling, shade and cleaner air, giving us spaces for relaxation and healthy living, creating distinctive places and delivering multiple economic benefits.



C
Business park
 Attractive settings encouraging inward investment, incorporating sustainable transport, sustainable urban drainage, rainwater collection and waste water cleansing. Creating attractive and distinctive workplaces, contributing to a vibrant local economy and economic benefits, reducing flood risk and climate change impacts and creating space for nature.

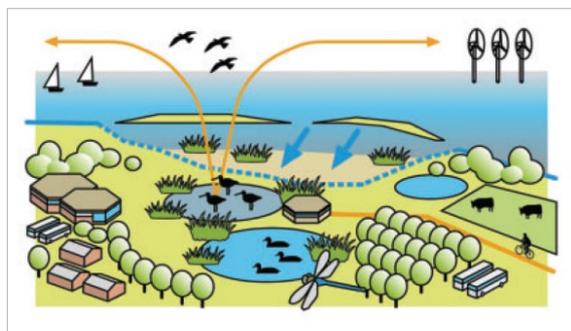


D
Suburban housing
 Spaces for relaxation and healthy living, encouraging social interaction, neighbourhood events and food growing, building community cohesion, making the settlement comfortable and liveable. Improving property values and reducing effects of climate change through natural drainage, renewable energy use and building orientation which maximise solar gain and daylight.

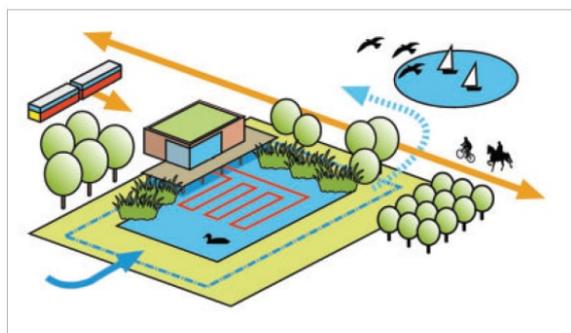


E
Community centre
 Sustainable building with green roof, geothermal heating and cooling and rainwater collection helping reduce climate change impacts and acting as a neighbourhood hub. Associated green space caters for healthy living activities including sports and opportunities for learning through connecting with nature and food growing, and employment in green space management.

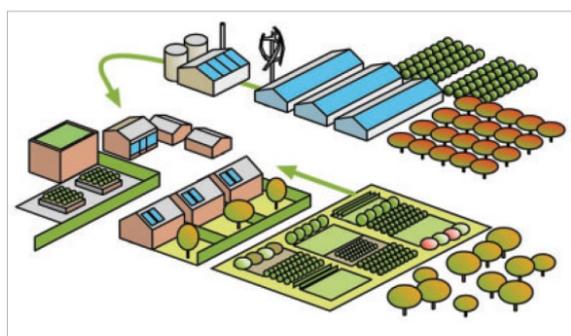
Figure 4.2 Local Green Infrastructure options and impacts



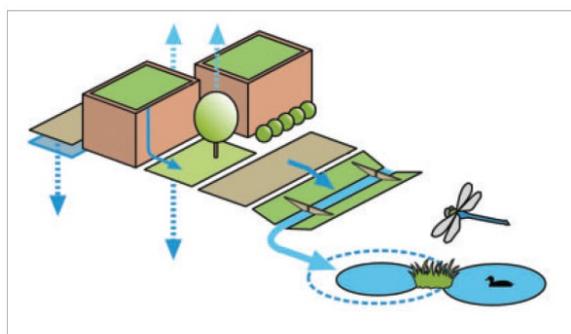
F Coastal zones
 Managed coastal realignment reducing risk of flooding, providing potential sites for renewable energy and creating connected habitats for wildlife. Coastal areas provide opportunities for learning and leisure and deliver economic benefits through the creation of distinctive places for tourism.



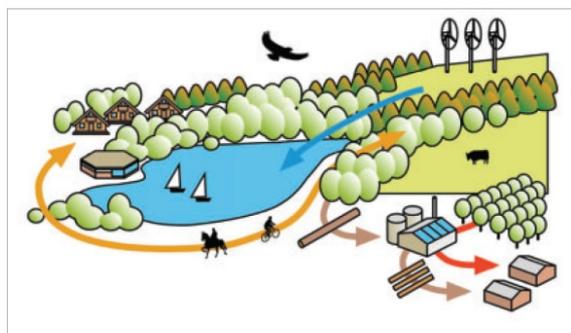
G Country park
 Range of accessible habitats and green spaces managed for wildlife to flourish and people to enjoy, also giving spaces for relaxation and active recreation. Learning and employment opportunities via interpretation and events and jobs as rangers, green space managers and education outreach.



H Allotments, smallholdings and orchards
 Providing space to restore locally sourced and distinctive food production and to connect urban populations with the rural economy. Opportunities to learn about and gain apprenticeships in gardening, vegetable and fruit growing, bee-keeping and horticulture, as well as providing for outdoor places and activities that help bring communities together and provide an active lifestyle.



I Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)
 Attenuation ponds, swales and reed beds, providing natural ways to reduce flood risk, provide temporary storage and improve water quality, while creating wetland habitats for wildlife in an attractive aquatic setting with additional potential for accessible leisure facilities.



J Upland areas
 Agriculture, pasture, timber production and timber products, including biomass for local CHP plant and renewable power generation all providing multiple economic benefits and contributing to reducing climate change impact. Areas set aside for extreme sports, relaxation and activities that contribute to a healthy lifestyle whilst protecting vulnerable wildlife habitats and retaining the essential natural character of the landscape.

4.3.1 Bio-diversity

Urban parks are often more diverse than surrounding areas of countryside and often have the potential to support significant numbers of species. Further opportunities to develop the habitat and bio-diversity potential of parks can be supported within green blue corridors along which animal and plant communities can migrate and where genetic exchange can take place. Further opportunities exist along the urban rural fringe which are often the most diverse habitats in terms of species.

4.3.2 Re-defining the city/countryside relationship

As an outer London Borough, Barnet has the opportunity to re-define the artificial separation of city and countryside. The borough's geography and ecology (including areas of Green Belt, patterns of river valleys and areas of woodland) provide an important, distinctive and environmentally rich edge to Greater London. The recreational use of parks and greenspaces can be further encouraged by providing better connections between urban parks and open spaces and more natural landscapes on the edge of the city.

4.3.3 Green Infrastructure and value

New methodologies are being developed to assess and calculate the multiple benefits that green infrastructure can deliver for urban environments. These in turn can achieve a number of positive outcomes across a range of indicators.

The Total Impact Measurement Methodology (TIMM), developed by Price Waterhouse Cooper takes a holistic view of the social, environmental fiscal and economic dimensions of green infrastructure to quantify and monetise these impacts, helping to evaluate options and to optimise trade-offs to support improved decision making.

Corporate Natural Capital Accounting (CNCA) developed by the Natural Capital Committee is an accounting methodology designed to help the owners of capital assets make more informed decisions around the management of their assets. The methodology establishes a financially expressed causality between capital assets and the benefits that they deliver to people, to communities and to businesses.

Both of these methodologies could be used to assess the monetary value of the positive can provide for urban environments. These in turn can achieve a number of economic social and environmental indicators to construct a rationale for new approaches to funding parks (See Section 10).

4.4 Barnet Indicators

Based on the range of outcome indicators set out in the first part of this section, the Open Spaces Strategy proposes a set of value indicators to drive the assessment of individual parks and open spaces and further decisions around investment, funding and governance discussed in subsequent sections.

4.4.1 Barnet indicators – provision

Section 3.10 identifies those Wards which have levels of parks provision below the borough average:

- Brunswick Park, Burnt Oak, Childs Hill, Colindale, East Finchley, Edgware, Golders Green, Hale, Hendon, Oakleigh, West Finchley, West Hendon and Woodhouse

Parks within these Wards are of significant value to local residents because of a lack of overall provision or a lack of alternative forms of provision in the context of the London Parks Hierarchy.

4.4.1 Barnet Indicators - Deprivation

The most deprived neighbourhoods have difficulty in accessing life chances relative to less deprived areas. The research detailed above suggests that parks and open spaces can offer opportunities to improve physical and mental health and to enhance educational outcomes and offer more extensive facilities for active and passive recreation and social interaction.

Given this, a particular focus should fall on those areas of the borough that fall within the 30% most deprived nationally. In 2007, Barnet had 44 Lower Super Output Areas (the government-defined measure socio-economic characteristics of neighbourhoods) that fell within the 30% most deprived neighbourhoods nationally, an increase from 2004 (31 LSOAs). Of those 44, six were among the 10% most deprived nationally, compared to none in 2004²³.

The 2010 figures broadly represent a return to 2004 levels of deprivation, with 30 LSOAs among the 30% most deprived nationally, with Barnet containing no LSOAs within the 10% most deprived nationally.²⁴

The 30 LSOA's in Barnet are concentrated in Colindale, Burnt Oak and West Hendon with outlying pockets of deprivation in East Finchley, Edgware and Underhill.

²³ Barnet Insight Unit (2012): Deprivation in Barnet

²⁴ Ibid

Figure 4.3 shows those areas of Barnet with the most deprived neighbourhoods in 2012.²⁵

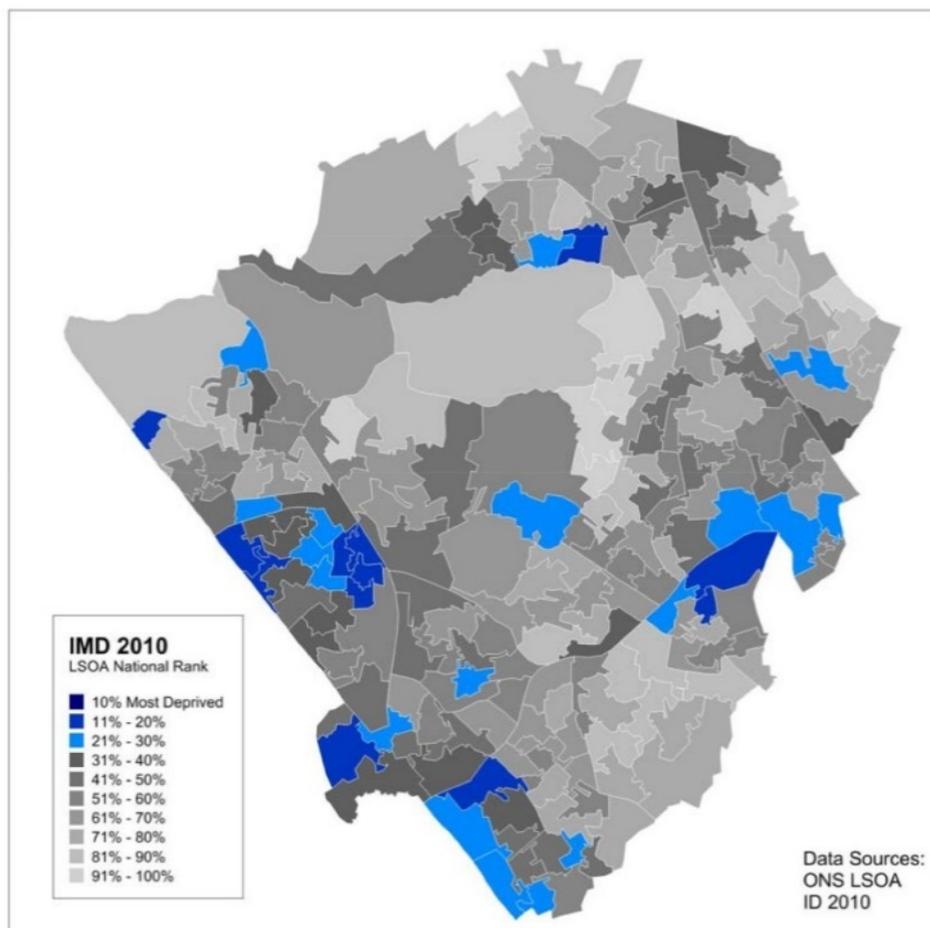


Figure 4.3 - Areas of Barnet with the most deprived neighbourhoods, in 2012.

Source: Barnet Insight Unit (2012)

4.4.2 Barnet indicators - environment

4.4.2.1 Flood risk

As discussed, parks and green spaces have the capacity to absorb surface water and alleviate flood risk as part of sustainable urban drainage systems. Surface water flood risk in Barnet is identified principally with the valleys of the Silk Stream, Dollis Brook, Pymmes Brook and River Brent. Several parks and open spaces are located within these river valleys and can make a significant contribution to managing flood risk. This benefit will become increasingly important in the future as the impacts of climate change become more apparent.

²⁵Ibid

Figure AI 9 in Appendix 1 shows currently assessed flood risk areas across Barnet.

4.4.2.2 Air quality

Poor air quality in Barnet is concentrated on the Borough’s main arterial roads, where there are there are high concentrations of Nitrous dioxide (NO₂) which are above the recommended limits for human health.

Figure 4.4 illustrates that poorer air quality is to be found in the south and west of the borough and that this improves as you move northwards. This is likely to reflect in part the lower density of major roads and the high proportion of parks and green spaces in the north.

Overall, air quality improves from south to north across the Borough.

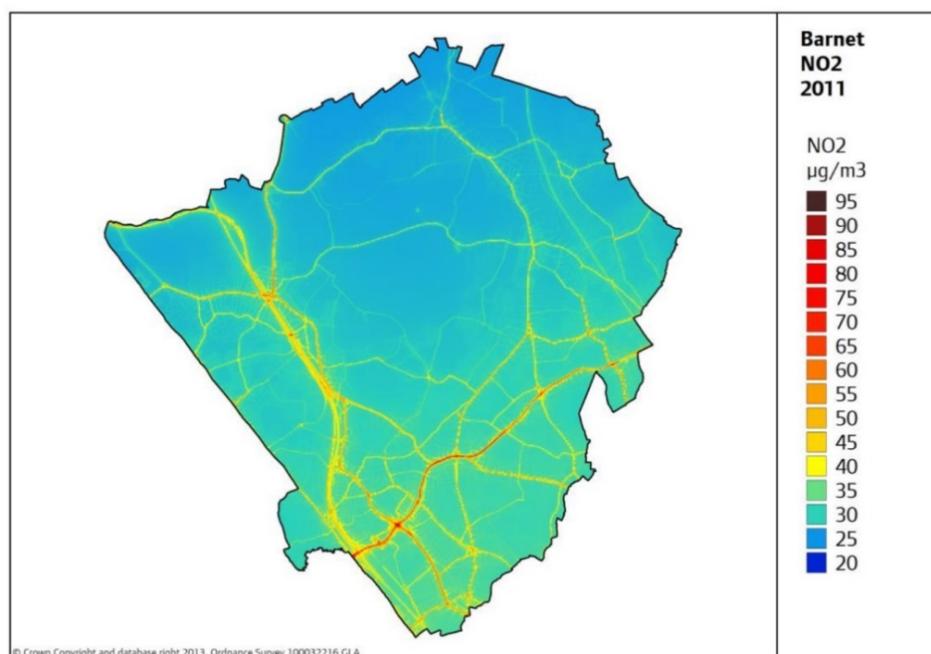


Figure 4.4 – Air quality in Barnet, 2011.

Source: Environmental Research Group, Kings College London 2015

4.4.2.3 Urban Heating

Urban heating, particularly during summer months, can have a significant effect upon human health and especially young children and older people. This effect can be reduced by the cooling effect of parks and green spaces. Figure 4.5

illustrates that the southern and western sections of the borough record higher average temperatures in mid-summer. Significantly these are also areas that have a lower density of parks and green spaces.

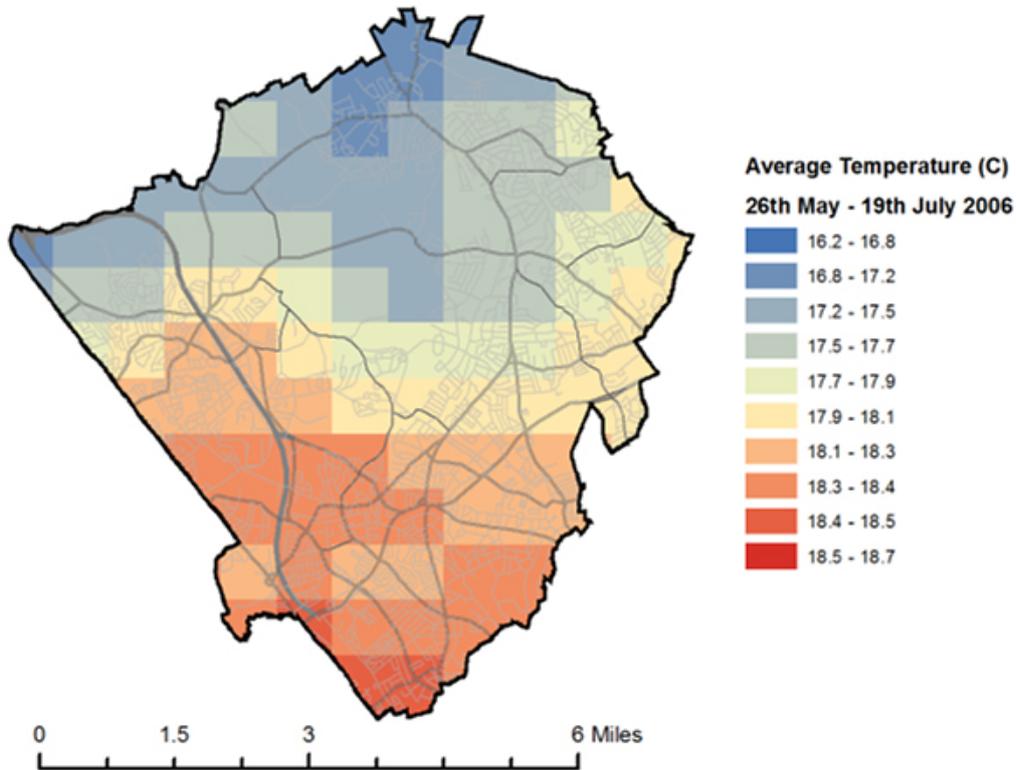


Figure 4.5 – Urban heating in Barnet, 2006.

Source: Mayor of London (2015) London Heat Map

4.4.3 Barnet indicators - resident satisfaction analysis

The overall level of resident satisfaction with parks in Barnet is generally high (70%), but levels of satisfaction vary across the Borough. Resident satisfaction with parks is lowest on the western side of the Borough.

Table 4.1: Wards with lower than average satisfaction with parks

Source: Residents Perception Survey 2015

Ward	Satisfaction %
Burnt Oak	55
East Finchley	56
West Hendon	58
Edgware	58
Hale	60
Colindale	61
Hendon	65
Childs Hill	67
Golders Green	68
West Finchley	68

However, overall satisfaction figures mask individual satisfaction issues in different parts of the Borough.

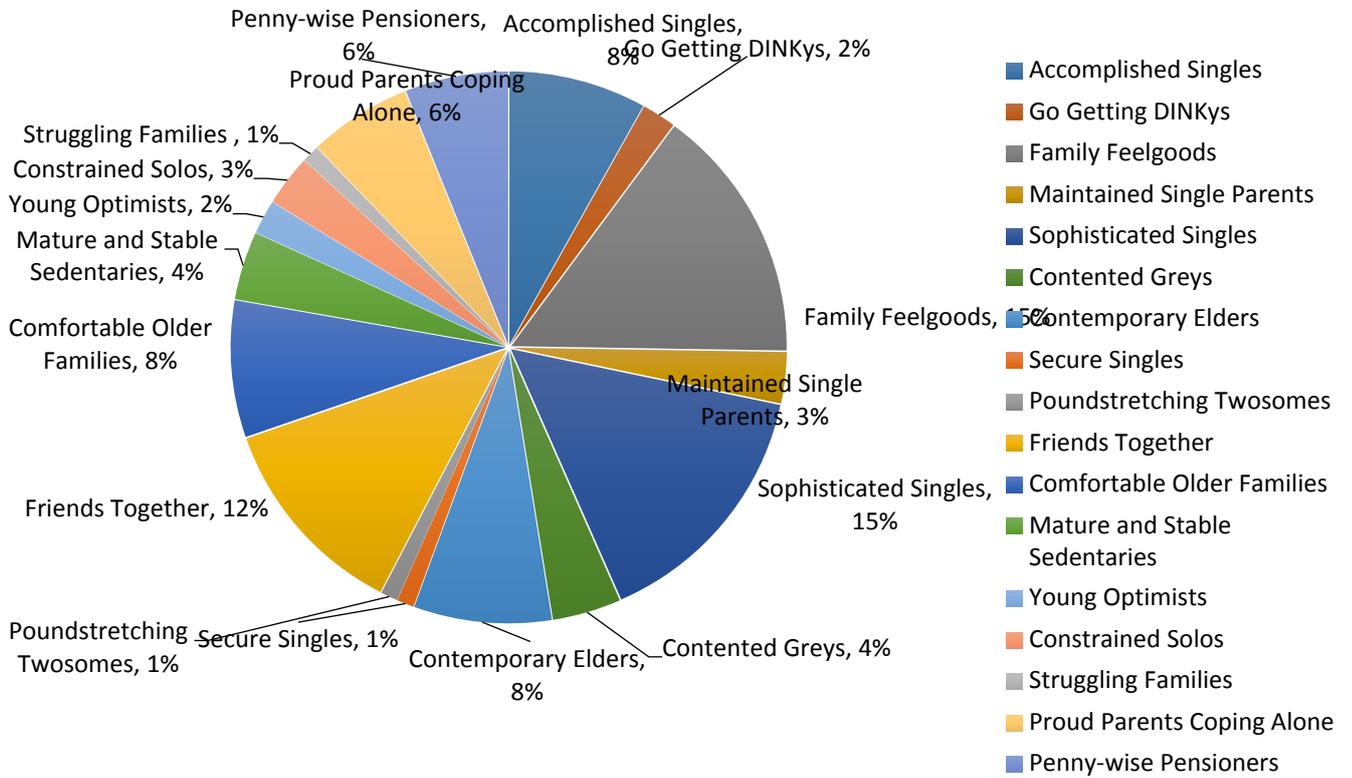
4.4.4 Barnet indicators - Customer Segment analysis

Customer Segments are the council's tool for insight and are based on national Callcredit data applied to Barnet. The statistics are drawn from a range of individual level datasets including census data for 223,000 output areas, 45 million council tax band records, 7 million consumer credit records, 7.5 million income records, 11 million shareholder registers, and 12 million transactional and lifestyle records (Capita Insight).

This allows the population of the Borough to be divided up into different segments and for key characteristics to be identified that represent the majority of those that fall into a given segment. There are 17 customer segments in total, and 7 of these are identified as financially disadvantaged. Figure 5.4 shows how these sectors are distributed across the Borough's population.

Figure 4.6: Customer Segments and their Proportion of Barnet population

Source: Barnet Information Dashboard (2015: Customer segments)



The uptake of parks services varies across Barnet’s community segments. Customer segment analysis also suggests that groups who do not engage in park activities tend to be concentrated in specific Wards. Figure 5.5 shows Wards where specific customer segments demonstrate low uptake of parks services.

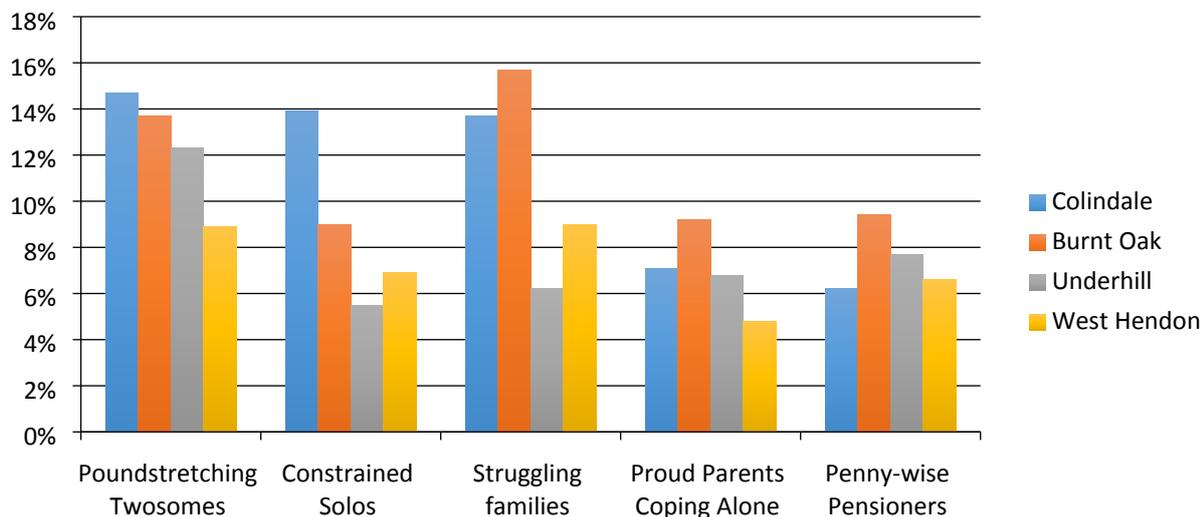


Figure 4.7 - Barnet Wards where specific customer segments demonstrate low uptake of parks services.

Source: Capita Insight 2014

'Poundstretching Twosomes', 'Constrained Solos', and 'Proud Parents Coping Alone' are concentrated in Burnt Oak, Childs Hill, Colindale, Underhill, West Hendon, Edgware, and Hale.

The Sport and Physical Activity Needs Assessment (2012) notes that parks provide an affordable alternative to leisure facilities. It is therefore increasingly important that the benefits of parks are promoted amongst these financially constrained customer segments.

The Leisure Services Survey (2013) identified that better safety and security and a better range of amenities emerged as factors that would encourage a greater use of parks and open spaces.

4.4.5 Volunteering

The parks sector across the UK has a strong tradition of volunteering.

There are approximately 4,000 community groups with an average membership of 134 involved with urban green space. Total membership thus approaches 500,000 across the UK.²⁶

The annual economic value of the work of community groups in parks and green spaces across the UK ranges somewhere between £17 million and £35 million.²⁷

It is now commonly accepted that volunteers can play an increasing role in the management of parks and open spaces and that direct benefits will accrue from this involvement. Volunteering empowers local people to take more control of their environment and gives them an opportunity to become more active in their communities.

In 2014 Barnet Council's Customer and support group undertook an assessment of the Barnet customer segments that are most likely to volunteer. The study also assessed the areas of the borough where it would be most likely that volunteering would take place, the sorts of volunteering activities that might be most readily encouraged and the parks that would be most likely to support volunteering activity.

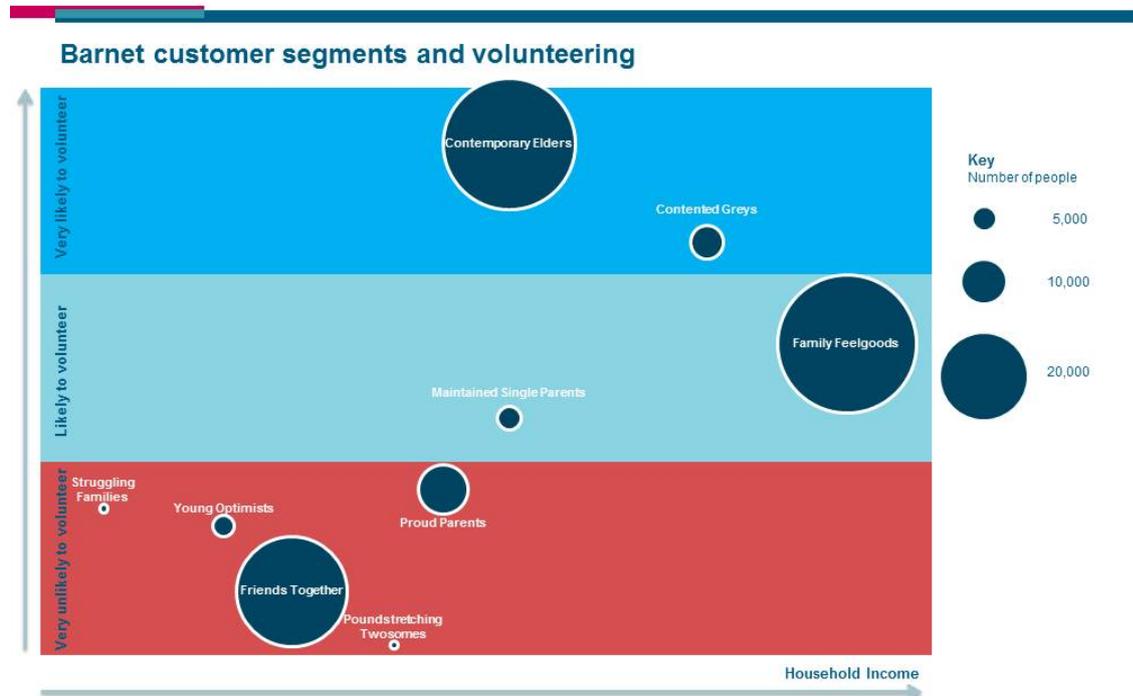
Figure 5.6 shows that 'contemporary elders', 'contented greys' and 'family feelgoods' would be the most likely segments to volunteer. In numerical terms, 'contemporary elders' and 'family feelgoods' are the largest of these customer segments and could generate the largest number of volunteers. In general terms, the study found that residents were less likely to volunteer to manage a council asset or deliver a council service as opposed to an alternative volunteering activity.

²⁶ GreenSpace. (2003). Community Networking Project: Final Report

²⁷ GreenSpace. (2003). Community Networking Project: Final Report

Figure 4.8 - Volunteering potential by customer segment

Source: Customer and Support group (2014): Greenspaces Community Engagement

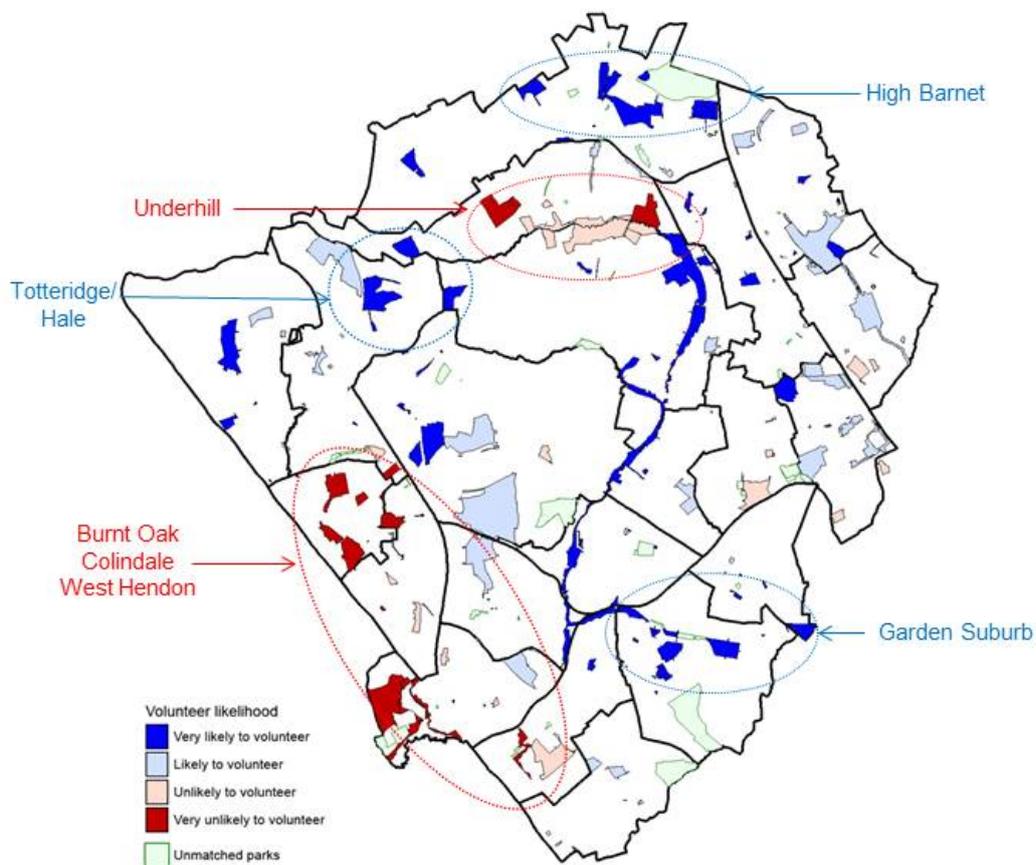


When analysing areas of the borough where people are most likely to volunteer, the study identified High Barnet and Garden Suburb as the two areas of the borough showing greatest potential for generating volunteering activity.

Conversely, the study found that Underhill and Burnt Oak/Colindale/West Hendon were the areas of the borough where volunteering is least likely to occur. There is strong correlation between areas that are unlikely to support volunteering and Lower Super Output Areas which fall within the 30% most deprived nationally.

Figure 4.9 - Areas of the Borough most and least likely to support volunteering

Source: Customer and Support group (2014): Greenspaces Community Engagement

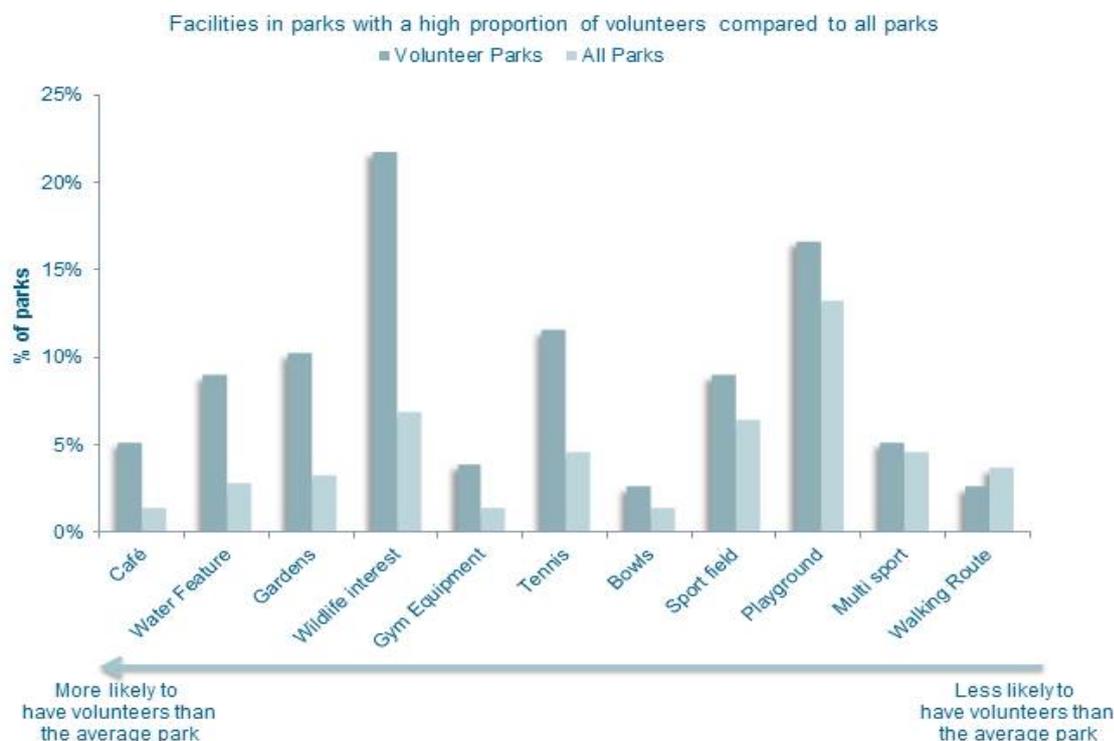


The study identified that the number of facilities in a park is a determining factor influencing the development of volunteering activity. People in Barnet are more likely to volunteer if they live close to parks with more facilities. In general terms, larger parks offer more facilities and are thus more likely to attract volunteers. This complexity of offer makes larger parks the most complex spaces to manage.

The study goes on to assess the likelihood that volunteering activity will occur in a number of parks across the borough (Old Courthouse Recreation Ground, Friary Park, Victoria Park, Lyttleton Playing Fields, Copthall Playing fields and Watling Park). Potential participation rates varied between 30% (Old Courthouse Recreation ground) to 4% (Watling Park). The study suggests, potential volunteering activity was closely linked to the size of the park and the affluence of the area in which it was situated.

Figure 4.10 - Facilities in parks influencing likelihood of volunteering

Source: Customer and Support group (2014): Greenspaces Community Engagement



4.4.6 Volunteers participation in the management of parks and open spaces

As the Customer Support Group study suggests, the potential for Barnet residents to volunteer in parks and open spaces varies considerably across the borough. The study does not assess the degree to which volunteering activity can evolve into direct participation by volunteers in the management of parks and open spaces.

Section 10 of this strategy considers the strengths and weaknesses of an approach to management emerging from volunteering in the context of social enterprise management models. Most significantly, it suggests that the establishment of a social enterprise requires a very long gestation period that requires extensive consultation and the participation of a variety of partners. This gestation period usually requires the investment of resources. Barnet does not have a well-developed social enterprise sector and the borough does not currently invest significantly in this sector either as a whole or specifically in the parks sector.

Given the findings of the Customer and Support Group into volunteering and the level of support for volunteering currently provided by the borough, it does not seem likely that volunteering will be a viable option in terms of the future management of parks and open spaces. However, this strategy suggests that

where existing social enterprise activity and volunteering coalesce (e.g. in Childs Hill Park), a pilot project could be developed that could assess the potential for volunteering activity to evolve into management of individual parks and open spaces.

5.0 Assessing quality and value

Introduction

The development of a new open spaces strategy for Barnet has been based upon an assessment of the quality of the borough's parks and open spaces. The assessment of quality has been factored into the survey and data capture process undertaken across the borough's greenspace portfolio during the development phase of the strategy. Section 6.0 describes out this data capture process in detail.

The assessment of quality informs a number of key conclusions developed in the strategy:

- An assessment of current quality will allow for a comparison of this with previous assessments, giving a picture of the 'quality trend'
- An assessment of quality will provide the basis for decisions on the enhancement of existing facilities through investment
- In combination with an assessment of value, a quality assessment will inform decision about supply of greenspace in the context of current and future demand and a range of other indicators.

5.1 Quality assessment criteria

The assessment of quality is based on a number of factors, including fitness for purpose, good quality design and robust management and maintenance.

These factors are captured in the 2004 Green Flag standard, which is accepted as the benchmark for judging the quality of open space. In the context of the Green Flag Standard, the criteria by which the quality of an individual open space is assessed are grouped under eight main headings:

- Welcoming - how to create a sense that people are positively welcomed into a space;
- Healthy, Safe and Secure – how best to ensure that the site is a safe and healthy environment;
- Well Maintained and Clean – what people can expect to find in the way of standards of cleanliness, facilities and maintenance;
- Sustainability – how a green space can be managed in environmentally sensitive ways;
- Conservation and Heritage – the value of conservation and care of historic heritage;
- Community Involvement – ways of encouraging community involvement;

- Marketing – methods of promoting or marketing a site; and
- Management – how to reflect all the above in a coherent and accessible management plan, statement or strategy.

The assessment of quality for the Open Space Strategy should strongly reference Green Flag criteria in order to benchmark quality against accepted national standards. But the Green Flag approach to quality assessment is targeted at the assessment of individual sites and not at the assessment of a portfolio of sites for an entire local authority area.

Bristol's Parks and Green Spaces Strategy is acknowledged as best practice within the 2009 CABE and Mayor of London best practice guidance for Open Space Strategies. This guidance acknowledges that quality standards should relate to information collected through on-site audit survey, benchmarked to an appropriate standard such as Green Flag.

The 2009 PPG17 assessment of Barnet's open space and recreational facilities developed a bespoke set of criteria for assessing the quality of Barnet's parks and open spaces, comprising of five strands of assessment. These strands were based upon the synthesis of Green Flag criteria and data collected during field assessments.

Facilities: for sports facilities one point was awarded for each of the potential eight sports facilities which may be present at the site: outdoor swimming pool, artificial turf, all weather pitch, children's play facility, golf, outdoor tennis, grass playing pitches and basketball / netball courts. For non-sports facilities, scores were awarded for the following: bins, seats, toilets, parking and café/restaurant. During the site visit each of these facilities was scored out of 5 meaning a maximum score of 25 was awarded to each site. A value of excellent, good, fair or poor was awarded for each site for both sports facilities and non-sports facilities using the method set out below.

Welcoming: this was scored by totalling the four relevant pro-forma questions - noise, safety and security, lighting and disabled access. These were scored as 1 to 5 during the site visit meaning a total of 20. This score was converted into a value of excellent, good, fair or poor.

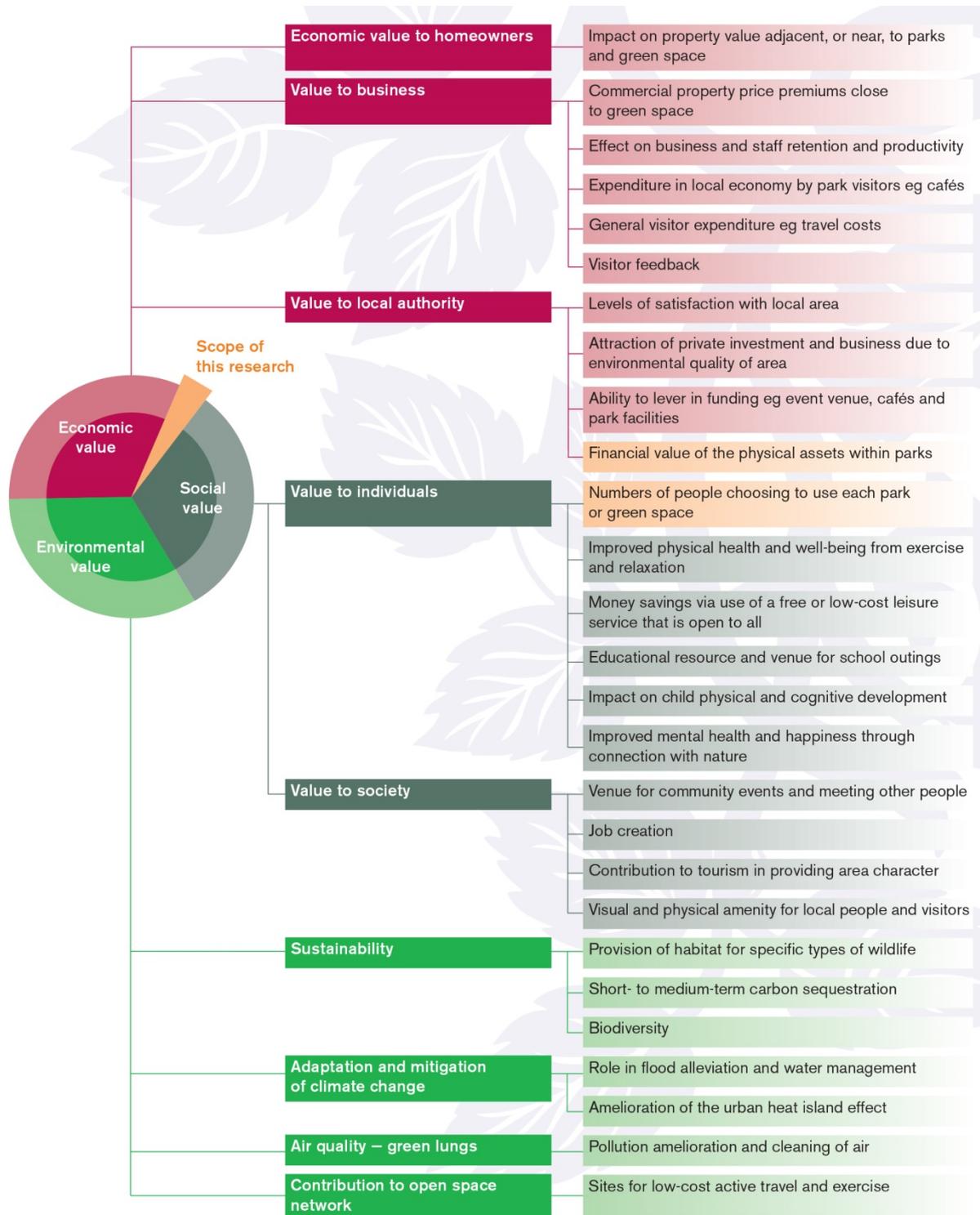
Cleanliness: this was scored by totalling the three relevant pro-forma questions vandalism, litter and dog fouling. A maximum score of 15 was awarded to each site and converted into a value of excellent, good, fair or poor.

Information: the information question on the pro-forma was scored out of 5 and this was converted into a value of excellent, good, fair or poor.

Natural Features: this was scored in respect of variety of natural facilities and quality. A point was awarded for each of the potential nine natural features which may be present at the site. These were forest/woodland, natural heath, common, grassed areas, scrubland, wetland, open/running water, formal landscape and farmland. The score from 0 – 9 was then converted into a value

Figure 5.1 - Bristol Open Spaces Strategy quality and value assessment diagram.

Source: CABE (2009): Making the Invisible visible – the real value of park assets



of excellent, good, fair or poor. For quality of natural features all sites which were either a site of Metropolitan Nature Conservation Importance or SSSI were awarded a value of excellent; sites classified as either Borough Grade I or II was awarded a value of good; local nature conservation sites were awarded a value of fair and all sites which do not have a classification in the GLA hierarchy were recorded as poor. The scores for each component of the assessment were translated into scores of excellent, good, fair or poor. Sites which achieved over 75% of the maximum points available were awarded 'excellent', sites in the 50% - 75% bracket awarded 'good', 25% - 50% were awarded 'fair' and those sites scoring below 25% of the maximum points available scored 'poor'. All the scores for each quality standard elements above were then totalled for each open space to produce an overall score by awarding three points for every 'excellent' two points for every 'good', one point for every 'poor' and zero points for every 'fair'.

Quality was assessed in the context of the typology of each site as defined in the Parks and Open Spaces Hierarchy for London.

For the purposes of the emerging Open Spaces Strategy for Barnet, it was agreed that the bespoke criteria developed for the 2009 PPG17 assessment should be adopted to assess quality in 2015. The rationale for this approach was that:

- This approach is based upon Green Flag criteria and accepted national best practice in assessing greenspace quality
- In common with the 2009 study, the assessment of greenspace quality would be based on field assessment
- The adoption of this approach would allow for a comparison of quality as assessed in 2009 and as assessed in 2015. Quality assessment would thus support the identification of 'quality trends' that would support future decision-making around enhancement, investment and management.

By contrast with the 2009 process, the 2015 survey did not include the assessment of dedicated sports grounds. The quality of sports grounds will be assessed in the emerging 'Outdoor Playing Pitch Strategy' currently being commissioned by the council. The assessment of quality for this strategy will be determined by Sport England guidance.

Appendix II contains tables of quality assessment scores for each surveyed open space site across the Borough.

The assessment of quality was reviewed in a workshop with the Parks service in November 2015 to ensure that field-based quality assessments did not diverge anomalously with management assessments developed by the Parks service.

5.2 Barnet quality assessments

5.2.1 Parks

All of the parks in the Borough have been assessed using the methodology set out above. As in 2009, the quality of parks across the borough varies considerably. Table 5.1 shows a summary of quality assessments of parks by area.

Table 5.1: Quality Scores for Parks

Score	Number of Parks	Names of Parks
Area 1: Chipping Barnet		
Excellent	0	
Good	2	Oakhill Park, Old Court House Recreational Ground
Fair	22	Brook Farm/Wyatts Farm, Brunswick Park/ Waterfall Walk, Coppets Wood, Friary Park, Friern Bridge Retail Park, Friern Village Park, Greenhill Gardens, Hadley Cricket Outfield, Halliwick Recreational Ground, Highlands Gardens, Hollickwood Park, Jubilee Gardens, King George V Playing Field, King George's Fields, Meadway OS, Monken Hadley Common, Quinta OS, Ravenscroft Gardens, Stanhope Road OS, Swan Lane OS, Whetstone Stray, Whitings Hill OS
Poor	4	Belmont OS, Bounds Green/Fairview OS, Church Farm OS, Kennard Road OS
Area 2: Golders Green and Finchley		
Excellent	1	Golders Hill Park
Good	3	Childs Hill Park, Hampstead Heath Extension, Victoria Park
Fair	13	Basing Hill Park, Central Square, Charter Green, Cherry Tree Wood, Clarefield Park, Claremont Road OS, elm Park, Hamilton Road PG, Meadway Gate OS, Oakdene Park, Princes Park, Willifield Green, Woodhouse OS
Poor	4	Claremont OS, Finchley Way OS, Oaklane OS, Willifield Way OS
Area 3: Hendon		
Excellent	0	
Good	4	Edgwarebury Park, Hendon Park, Malcolm Park, Mill Hill Park
Fair	14	Arrandene OS, Bittacy Hill Park, Boysland OS, Colindale Park, Deacons Green, Lyndhurst Park, Rushgrove Park, Stonegrove Park, Stoneyfields Park, Sunny Hill Park, The Meads OS, Watling Park, West Way OS, Woodcroft Park
Poor	4	Harcourt Avenue OS, Grahame Park, Sturgess Park, York Park

In contrast with the 2009 assessment, the number of parks achieving scores of 'excellent' and 'good' has declined. More parks across the borough are now classified as 'fair'.

Table 5.2: Parks - Quality trend 2009 - 2015

	2009	%	2015	%
Number of Excellent Parks	5	7	1	1
Number of Good Parks	15	21	9	13
Number of Fair Parks	38	52	49	69
Number of Poor Parks	15	21	12	17
Parks awaiting data	-	-	2	3
Total number of Parks	73	100	73	100

Across the entire portfolio, parks tend to score worst in terms of quality of natural features and sports provisions and best in terms of how welcoming they are and their cleanliness.

5.2.2 Natural greenspace

In common with the 2009 assessment, natural greenspaces show less variability in terms of quality when compared with parks.

Table 5.3 shows a summary of quality assessments of natural greenspaces by area.

Table 5.3: Quality Scores for Natural Green Spaces

Score	Number of Sites	Names of Sites
Area 1: Chipping Barnet		
Excellent	0	
Good	0	
Fair	12	Barnet Gate Wood, Castlewood Road/ Baring Road, Coppetts Wood, Darlands Lake Nature Reserve, Everleigh Walk, Hadley Green, Laurel Way OS, Riverside Walk North, Totteridge Common, Totteridge Fields Nature Reserve, Totteridge Green, Duck Island
Poor	4	Brunswick Wood, Rowley Green Common, Woodridge Nature Reserve, Woodside Park
Area 1: Golders Green and Finchley		
Excellent	0	

Good	0	
Fair	9	Bigwood, Brookside Walk, Flethchers Garden, Littlewood, Northway Gardens, Northway Gardens Extensions, Riverside Gardens, Riverside Walk South, Windsor OS
Poor	1	The Bowls
Area 1: Hendon		
Excellent	0	
Good	0	
Fair	11	Brent Park, Brookside Walk, Copthall Railway Walk, Copthall South Fields, Moat Mount OS, Scratchwood OS, Welsh Harp Marginal Land (Site A, B, C, D, E)
Poor	2	Deansbrook, Mill Hill Old Railway

Table 5.4: Natural and Semi-Natural Green Spaces – quality trend 2009 - 2015

	2009	%	2015	%
Number of Excellent sites	0	0	0	0
Number of Good sites	23	47	0	0
Number of Fair sites	25	51	32	65
Number of Poor sites	1	2	7	14
Not surveyed on client instruction	-	-	10	20
Total number of sites	49	100	49	100

In contrast with 2009, the number of natural greenspaces classified as ‘good’ has declined. The majority of natural greenspaces are now classified as ‘fair’.

5.2.3 Conclusions

In common with the 2009 study, the quality of Barnet’s parks and open spaces varies considerably across the borough. The majority of parks are either of ‘good’ or ‘fair’ quality.

Only 1 park is currently scored as excellent, in comparison to 5 parks in 2009. Between 2009 and 2015, the number of parks scored as good fell from 15 to 9. The number of parks scored as fair increased from 38 to 49.

There is a concentration of fair or poor quality parks spread over the Borough. Chipping Barnet and Hendon do not have any excellent parks, but all three regions have poor parks.

There is now even less variability of quality within natural green spaces than in 2009. In common with the 2009 study, no sites were assessed as being of ‘excellent’ quality. The number of ‘good’ green spaces fell from 23 to 0. All the

sites fall under the 'fair' or 'poor' categories. Chipping Barnet and Hendon have the highest provision of natural and semi-natural green spaces.

5.3 Value assessment

The assessment of the value of parks and open spaces will emerge from the complex interplay of a number of inter-related criteria. But the assessment of value is also an important driver for the development of an Open Spaces Strategy for the borough because:

- An assessment of value will provide the basis for decisions on the enhancement of existing facilities through investment
- In combination with an assessment of quality the assessment of value will inform decision about supply of greenspace in the context of current and future demand and a range of other indicators.
- The assessment of 'value' can be used to demonstrate the cash value of outcomes through Natural Capital Accounting, the TIMM methodology and other new approaches to value assessment.

5.3.1 Assessment criteria

The relationship between quality and value is in itself complicated. If inaccessible, a high quality space can be of low value, whereas a poor quality space in an area of open space under-provision can be extremely valuable.

The PPG17 Companion Guide sets out the broad components of a methodology for assessing value:

- Context: including assessments of accessibility, overall level of provision and cultural/historical factors
- Level and type of use
- Wider benefits generated for people, bio-diversity and the wider environment

The PPG17 Companion Guide proposes that the assessment of context and levels of use should take account of the following:

- Structural and landscape benefits
- Ecological benefits
- Educational benefits
- Social inclusion and health benefits
- Cultural and heritage benefits
- Amenity benefits and sense of place

- Economic benefits

The CABI 2009 study 'Making the invisible visible: the real value of park assets' and the 2008 Bristol Parks and Green Spaces Strategy offer further guidance.

The CABI document recognises and describes the many value indicators that can be applied to the assessment of open space quality and acknowledges that the interplay between these factors is complex. The document sets out a methodology for assessing both the 'tangible value' (the actual cost of replacing the asset) and the 'intangible value' of a space (based on annualised park user numbers). In the absence of data on visitor numbers for parks and open spaces in Barnet or the cost-based value of individual greenspaces across the borough, this methodology cannot be supported in Barnet.

The Bristol Strategy recognises that some aspects of value are already protected through planning policy (e.g. archaeology, bio-diversity, historic landscapes) while others are socially determined and could be defined through extensive consultation. Given this, the strategy determined that the assessment of value was unachievable in Bristol.

Based on these two contrasting approaches, the 2009 PPG17 assessment developed a set of bespoke value indicators for the assessment of the value of parks and open spaces across the borough, based on the following components:

- Context
- Function/roles
- Landscape and bio-diversity
- Demographic
- Events and education
- Levels of usage

Table 5.5 sets out the full suite of criteria used to determine value in the 2009 study.

Table 5.5: Criteria used to determine ‘value’ in the 2009 study

Source: Barnet Open Space, Sports and Recreational Facilities Assessment (2009)

Component	Indicator	Description
Context	Proximity to flats	Is the space close to housing, especially flats, since it increases usage and flats represent higher density?
	Area of deficiency	Is the space located in an area of open space deficiency within the UDP?
	Not backland site	Is the space located in a backland area, which may be difficult to access and find not be visible?
	Setting/Townscape	Is its setting attractive?
	Visibility	Is the space visible from a road or public area?
	Central location	Is the space located peripherally or centrally?
Function/Role	Structural/Spatial	Is the space important in linking surrounding spaces or spatially significant in a wider area?
	Cultural/Heritage	Is the space important for cultural/heritage reasons?
	Ecological	Is the space important for ecological reasons?
	Community	Is the space important for community reasons and does it perform a community function?
	Sports	Is the space important for sports reasons and does it contain sports facilities?
Landscape and Biodiversity	Landscape character/trees	Does the space have trees and an attractive landscape character?
	Views	Is the space part of an important view or is it the origin for a view?
	Water body/feature	Does the space contain a water body or feature?
	Habitat/Wildlife Corridor	Is there an important wildlife corridor or habitat within or near the space?
Demographic	Future population needs/growth areas	Is the space within or near a proposed growth area?
	Deprivation (10%)	Is the space located in an area with an IMD rating of within the top 10%?
	Deprivation (20%)	Is the space located in an area with an IMD rating of within the top 20%?
	Population density	Is the space located in an area of high population density?

Events and Education	Current events	Does the space host any current events?
	Future events	Does the space have the potential to host any future events?
	Existing School Use	Is the space used by schools?
	Potential Outdoor Classroom	Is there any potential to use the space for outdoor classroom use?
Usage	Overall usage	LB Barnet assigned a value of 1 – 4 for each site, with sites that are known to be well used being awarded 4 and poorly used sites a score of 1.

Section 4.0 of this Strategy sets out a number of positive outcomes delivered by parks and open spaces across a variety of broad indicators. These include positive outcomes for the local economy, for health for social cohesion, sense of place, education and a range of Green Infrastructure benefits where parks and open spaces form part of a natural asset system.

Barnet Council has already recognised the significance of some of the outcomes and has expressed this through adopted strategy and policy. The role that parks can play in promoting public health and limiting the impact of specific disease groups has been rehearsed in the emerging Sport and Physical Activity Strategy and the combined Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The Borough’s Infrastructure Plan of 2011 identifies the role that green/blue spaces play in controlling flood risk across the Borough.

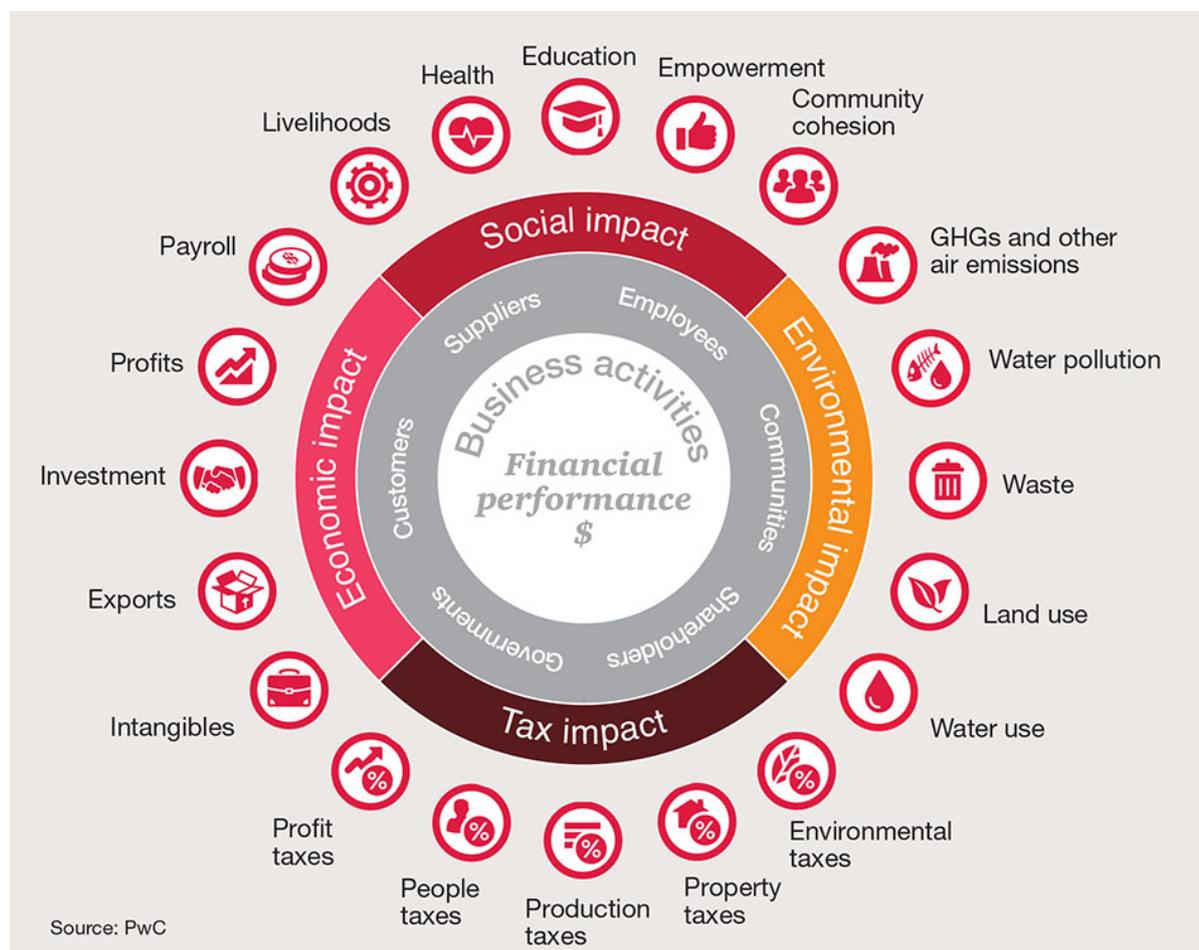
Section 4.0 identifies new approaches to modelling the value of parks and open spaces. These expand upon the work undertaken by CABI in its 2009 document to develop new approaches to assessing the value of greenspace.

Total Impact Measurement Methodology (TIMM), developed by Price Waterhouse Cooper, takes a holistic view of the social, environmental fiscal and economic dimensions of green infrastructure to quantify and monetise these impacts, helping to evaluate options and to optimise trade-offs to support improved decision making. Figure 5.2 shows the range of indicators used by the TIMM methodology to assess the value of greenspace.

Corporate Natural Capital Accounting (CNCA) developed by the Natural Capital Committee is an accounting methodology designed to help the owners of capital asserts make more informed decision around the management of their assets. The methodology establishes a financially expressed causality between capital assets and the benefits that they deliver to people, to communities and to businesses.

Figure 5.2 - TIMM methodology measuring value in 20 areas across 4 dimensions of impact.

Source: PWC (2015): Measuring the total impact benefits of green infrastructure



Given these new approaches to assessing the value of individual parks and opens spaces across the borough, a new bespoke set of assessment criteria were developed based on the outcomes identified in Section 4 and the value assessment outcomes identified in paragraph 4.4

Table 5.6 shows the range of indicators used to assess value in the 2015 study. All of these indicators are applicable to all types of open space that are within scope for this strategy.

In common with the quality assessment, the survey did not include the assessment of dedicated sports grounds. The value of sports grounds will be assessed in the emerging 'Outdoor Playing Pitch Strategy' currently being commissioned by the council. The assessment of value for this strategy will be determined by Sport England guidance.

It should be noted that as the Bristol Open Space Strategy identifies, many value criteria are embedded in social factors which are beyond the scope of this strategy to establish. In common with the 2009 study, the approach to value

assessment is pragmatic and 'light touch' because assessment is partly factual but also significantly subjective. To counteract this, a workshop with Barnet Council Parks Department reviewed the value assessments completed by the project team against perceptions within officers managing greenspace sites on a day to day basis.

The value of each site was assessed using a variety of methods including field survey, map assessment, aerial and site photographs. Table 5.6 sets out the scoring methodology for each criterion.

Table 5.6: 2015 'Value' assessment criteria

Source	Component		Indicator	Scoring
OSS	Usage	U1	Open space provision	In Ward with below average open space provision Y = 1, N = 0
	Demographics	D1	Future population growth area	Y = 1, N = 0
		D2	Deprivation	In 30% most deprived neighbourhoods by Ward IMD 2012 Y = 1 N = 0
		D3	Currently or future proximity to area with higher housing density (GLA distance criteria)	Within 400m/1.2km of high density housing Y = 1, N = 0
	Health	H1	Area of incidence of coronary heart disease	In Ward with highest incidence: Y = 1, N = 0
		H2	Area of incidence of obesity	In Ward with highest incidence: Y = 1, N = 0
		H3	Area of incidence of clinical depression	In Ward with highest incidence: Y = 1, N = 0
	Education	E1	Existing school use?	Y = 1, N = 0
		E2	Potential school use?	Within 400m/1.2km of primary or secondary school Y = 1, N = 0
	Green Infrastructure	G1	High flood risk area	Within 400m/1.2km of EA defined high flood risk area
		G2	In urban warming area	Above 17.7 ^o May to July mean temperature. Y = 1, N = 0 Within area
		G3	Habitat /wildlife corridor	Designated site
		G4	In high pollution area	Within 400m/1.2km of area with over 40mg/m3 NO pollution Y = 1, N = 0
	Place	P1	Close to/within town centre (GLA distance criteria)	Within 400m/1.2km of town centre
		P2	Resident satisfaction by ward	From 2015 survey
		P3	Heritage significance	London Gardens Online list

	P4	Events - existing	Based on current council dataset
	P6	Established Friends group	From LBB list

In common with the 2009 methodology, all of the scores were combined to give a total score for each site and this was then assigned a value of one of four gradations – high value, high-medium value, medium value and low value.

Sites which achieved over 75% of the maximum points available were classified as 'high value', sites in the 50% - 75% bracket 'high-medium value', 25% - 50% were a 'medium value' and those sites scoring below 25% of the maximum points available were classified as 'low value'.

Appendix II sets out the full assessment of 'value' of the portfolio that is within scope for this strategy.

5.3.2 Parks

The majority of parks across the Borough have been assessed as being of 'fair' value.

Table 5.7: Parks – value trend 2009 – 2015

	2009	%	2015	%
Number of high value parks	8	11	4	5
Number of high-medium value parks	19	26	20	27
Number of medium value parks	38	52	48	66
Number of low value parks	8	11	1	1
Total number of Parks	73	100	73	100

Table 5.8 shows a summary of value assessments of parks by area.

Table 5.8: Value Scores for Parks

Score	Number of Parks	Names of Parks
Area 1: Chipping Barnet		
High	0	
Medium high	5	Coppetts Wood, Friary Park, King George's Field, Oak Hill Park, Old Court House Recreation Ground
Medium	23	Brook Farm, Brunswick Park/ Waterfall Walk, Quinta OS, Stanhope Road OS, Swan Lane OS, Whitings Hill OS, Bounds Green/ Fairview OS, Church Farm OS, Friern Bridge Retail Park, Friern Village Park, Greenhill Gardens, Hadley Cricket Outfield, Halliwick Recreational Ground, Highland Gardens, Hollickwood Park, Jubilee Gardens, Kennard Road OS, King George V Playing Fields, Meadway OS, Monken Hadley Common, Ravenscroft Gardens, Whetstone Stray, Belmont OS
Low	0	
Area 2: Golders Green and Finchley		
High		
High medium	4	Cherry Tree Wood, Clarefield Park, Princes Park, Victoria Park
Medium	17	Childs Hill Park, Claremont OS, Golders Hill Park, Avenue House, Basing Hill Park, Central Square, Charter Green, Claremont Road OS, Elm Park, Finchley Way OS, Hamilton Road Playground, Hampstead Heath Extension, Oak Lane OS, Oakdene Park, Willifield Green OS, Willifield Way OS, Woodhouse OS
Low	1	Meadway Gate OS
Area 3: Hendon		
High	4	Edwarebury Park, Rushgrove Park, Silkstream Park, Watling Park
High medium	11	Arrandene OS, Colindale Park, Hendon Park, Lyndurst Park, Malcolm Park, Mill Hill Park, Grahame Park, Stoneyfields Park, Sturgess Park, Sunny Hill Park, The Meads OS
Medium	8	Stonegrove Park, Woodcroft Park, Bittacy Hill Park, Boysland OS, Deacons Green, Harcourt Ave OS, West Way OS, York Park
Low	0	

48 % of parks are classified as High value
52 % of parks are classified as Low value

Commentary on other findings:

13.7% of parks are in high population growth areas
34.25% of parks are in low resident satisfaction areas
19% of parks are currently holding events
8.2% of parks are in town centres
66% of parks are in a deprived area.
70% of parks are in higher housing density areas or near future developments.
44% of parks are in areas where there is a significant incidence of Chronic Heart Disease, obesity or mental health issues.
63% of parks are in high flood risk areas.
79% of parks are in urban warming areas.

5.3.3 Natural greenspace

The majority of sites have been classified as being 'high medium' (27%) or 'medium' value (49%)

Table 5.9: Natural and Semi-Natural Green Spaces – value trend 2009 – 2015

	2009	%	2015	%
Number of high value sites	1	2	0	0
Number of high medium value sites	15	31	13	27
Number of medium value sites	29	59	24	49
Number of low value sites	4	8	2	4
n/a (not surveyed)	-	-	10	20
Total number of sites	49	100	49	100

Table 5.10 shows a summary of 'value' assessments of natural greenspaces by area.

Table 5.10: Value Scores for Natural and Semi-Natural Green Spaces

Score	Number of sites	Names of sites
Area 1: Chipping Barnet		
High	0	
High medium	2	Coppetts Wood, Duck Island
Medium	13	Barnet Gate Wood, Brunswick Wood, Castlewood Road/ Baring Road OS, Darlands Lake Nature Reserve, Everleigh Walk, Hadley Green, Laurel Way OS, Riverside Walk North, Rowley Green Common, Totteridge Common, Totteridge Fields Nature Reserve, Woodridge Nature Reserve, Woodside Park
Low	1	Totteridge Green
Area 1: Golders Green and Finchley		
High	0	
High medium	1	Brookside Walk
Medium	8	Bigwood, Littlewood, Northway Gardens, Northway Gardens Extension, Riverside Gardens, Riverside Walk South, The Bowls, Windsor OS
Low	1	Fletchers Gardens
Area 1: Hendon		
High	0	
High medium	9	Brookside Walk, Copthall Railway Walk, Copthall South Fields, Moat Mount OS, Welsh Harp Marginal Land (Site A, B, C, D, E), Deansbrook
Medium	3	Brent Park, Scratchwood OS, Mill Hill Old Railway
Low	0	

None of the natural greenspaces were identified as being used by schools.

5% of sites are within areas of future population growth

85% of sites in high flood risk areas

5.3.4 Summary and conclusions

The majority of parks in the Borough have been classified as having 'medium' value. Only 5% of parks have been classified as having 'high' value, 27% are 'high medium' value, 66% are 'medium' and 1% are 'low' value.

The majority of Natural/ Semi-Natural Greenspace sites were classified as 'medium' (49%), 27% of the sites were classified as 'high medium' value. By contrast with the 2009 assessment, none of the Natural and Semi-Natural Green Spaces has achieved 'high' value. Two sites achieved a 'low' value scores- Fletchers Gardens (in Garden Suburb) and Totteridge Green (in Totteridge).

5.4 Combining quality and value

Key decisions within the Open Space Strategy, its actions plans and investment proposals are based upon the combined assessments of quality and value. As set out above, these assessments will inform:

- Which sites should be prioritised through enhancement and capital investment
- Which sites should be prioritised in terms of future management and maintenance resources

To support this combined assessment, 'high' and 'low' values were assigned to each park for both quality and value, this easily identifies the parks that have potential for future investment. For the quality assessment 'high' values were assigned to parks with 'excellent' and 'good' scores; and 'low' values to parks that were scored 'fair' and 'poor'. For the value assessment an average was calculated with parks that were assessed as below average classified as 'low' value and parks that were assessed as above average as 'high' value.

Results from the combined assessment of quality and value have been grouped into 4 categories. Table 5.11 identifies these categories and the implied action to be delivered through the open space strategy as a consequence of this classification.

Table 5.11

Category	Action
High quality, low value	Enhance value of primary purpose
High quality, high value	No intervention required
Low quality low value	Enhance quality and value or consider delivering outcomes through an alternative use
Low quality, high value	Enhance quality to an equivalence with value

5.4.1 Parks

Table 5.12 shows the combined quality/value scores for Barnet’s parks

Table 5.12: Combined Quality and Value Scores for Parks

Quality/ Value Combined	Park Name
High quality/High value	Childs Hill Park, Edgwarebury Park, Golders Hill Park, Hendon Park, Malcolm Park, Mill Hill Park, Oak Hill Park, Old Court House Recreation Ground, Victoria Park
High quality /Low value	Hampstead Heath extension
Low quality /High value	Arrandene Open Space, Brook Farm/ Wyatts Farm, Brunswick Park/Waterfall Walk, Cherry Tree Wood, Clarefield Park, Claremont Open Space, Colindale Park, Coppetts Wood, Friary Park, King George's Fields, Lyndhurst Park, Princes Park, Public paths Grahame Park, Quinta Open Space, Rushgrove Park, Stanhope Road Open Space, Stonegrove Park, Stoneyfields park, Sturgess Park, Sunny Hill Park, Swan Lane Open Space, The Meads Open Space, Watling Park, Whitings Hill Open Space, Woodcroft Park
Low quality/Low value	Basing Hill Park, Belmont OS, Bittacy Hill Park, Bounds Green/Fairview OS, Boysland OS, Central Square (Tennis Courts), Charter Green, Church Farm Open Space, Deacons Green, Elm Park, Finchley Way Open Space, Friern Bridge Retail Park, Friern Village Park, Greenhill Gardens, Hadley Cricket Outfield, Halliwick Recreational Ground, Hamilton Road Playground, Harcourt Avenue Open Space, Highlands Gardens, Hollickwood Park, Jubilee Gardens, Kennard Road OS, King George V P.F, Meadway Gate Open Space, Meadway OS, Monken Hadley Common, Oak Lane Open Space, Oakdene Park, Ravenscroft Gardens, West Way OS, Whetstone Stray, Willifield Green Open Space, Willifield Way Open Space, Woodhouse Open Space, York Park, Claremont Road Open Space

5.4.2 Natural and semi-natural greenspaces

Table 5.13 shows the combined quality/value scores for Barnet’s natural and semi-natural greenspaces.

Table 5.13: Combined Quality and Value Scores for Natural and Semi-Natural Green Spaces

Quality/ Value Combined	Site Name
High quality/High value	Moat Mount OS, Brookside Walk, Coppets Wood, Duck Island, Welsh Harp Marginal land SITE B, Copthall Railway Walk, Deansbrook
High quality/Low value	0
Low quality/High value	Littlewood, Riverside Gardens, Scratchwood, Totteridge Green, Windsor Open Space, Woodridge Nature Reserve, Barnet Gate Wood, Brent Park, Everleigh Walk, Northway Gardens
Low quality/Low value	Fletchers Garden, Rowley Green Common, Hadley Green, Laurel Way Open Space, Northway Gardens Extension, Totteridge Fields NR, Bigwood, Brunswick Woods, Castlewood Road/Baring Road, Darlands Lake NR, Mill Hill Old Railway, Riverside Walk North, The Bowls, Totteridge Common, Woodside Park Club Entrance

5.4.3 Conclusions

The combined quality and value assessment is useful in suggesting ways in which the value of the borough's parks and open spaces assets might be realised to protect the outcomes delivered by the portfolio. Section 4 of this strategy suggests many ways in which these positive outcomes can be delivered by parks and open spaces.

Parks and open spaces present only one means by which these positive outcomes can be delivered. A considerable investment increase would be required to significantly alter the extent to which parks and open spaces that have been categorised as of low value and low quality can deliver these outcomes. In the context of the value assessment, it might not be feasible to change a site's value (because the factors influencing that value score cannot be readily altered).

6.0 Asset data collection

Introduction

As the brief for the Open Spaces Strategy developed the council became aware that it does not hold an up to date set of data in respect of assets in its parks and open spaces.

The Open Spaces Strategy provided an opportunity for the council to procure this important data set to support future management and decision-making. This section of the strategy sets out the brief for this work, the methodology employed, the data captured and the outcomes that the data capture process can support.

6.1 Survey brief

6.1.1 Survey portfolio

The outline brief for the second stage of the Open Spaces Strategy included a brief to capture parks data through on-site survey. The brief included the capture of data in the following sites:

- Public parks
- Children's play areas
- Natural and semi-natural green spaces
- Cemeteries
- Regeneration greenspaces
- Green/blue corridors.
- Housing land
- Smaller pieces of land – (the brief allowed for the collection of data from 10 pocket parks)

The brief development process confirmed that the following elements were not 'in scope' for the Open Spaces Strategy:

- Privately owned open spaces, outdoor sports and recreational facilities
- Allotments
- Incidental areas of greenspace (verges, SLOAP)
- Agricultural land
- Private sites with public access
- Civic greyspaces

For the purposes of the emerging strategy, a list of sites to be surveyed was agreed with the Parks service.

The survey team proceeded to survey the list of sites detailed on Table 6.2

Table 6.1: 2015 Open Space Strategy Asset Survey

Open Space by typology	Number of sites	Area (Ha)
District parks	10	303.13
Local parks	76	521.74
Pocket parks	76	12.77
Small open spaces	37	39.64
TOTAL	199	877.28

6.1.2 Survey details

The survey process including capturing data on the following assets across the borough's portfolio of sites.

Hard landscape

- Bin
- Bench
- Picnics table
- Fencing – metal
- Fencing – timber
- Fencing – other
- Wall
- Gates – single
- Gates – double
- Surfaces – bound
- Surfaces – unit paving
- Surfaces – unbound
- Bridge
- Pergola
- Signage – wayfinding
- Signage – interpretation
- Water feature
- Multi-use games area
- Tennis court
- Basketball court
- Cricket net
- Skateboard facility
- Fixed play equipment
- Outdoor gym equipment
- Car park
- Cycle stand
- Bollards
- Building

Soft landscape

Grass – amenity

Grass – wildflower/seasonally mown

Grass – artificial turf/specialist sports surface

Shrub/herbaceous planting

Data on trees was not collected as the Parks service holds a full set of mapped data on these assets.

6.2 Survey methodology

A survey team of two landscape architects visited each site listed in Table AII.1 and collected data using the ArcGIS platform. Each site was cross-referenced, confirmed, located and prepared as a basemap in advance of site visits and data collection. During site visits, staff recorded a GIS co-ordinate for each asset and photographed each one individually. For individual assets (e.g. bins and benches) this co-ordinate was accurate to within 5m. For area-based assets (e.g. areas of grass and hard paving) a single co-ordinate was recorded.

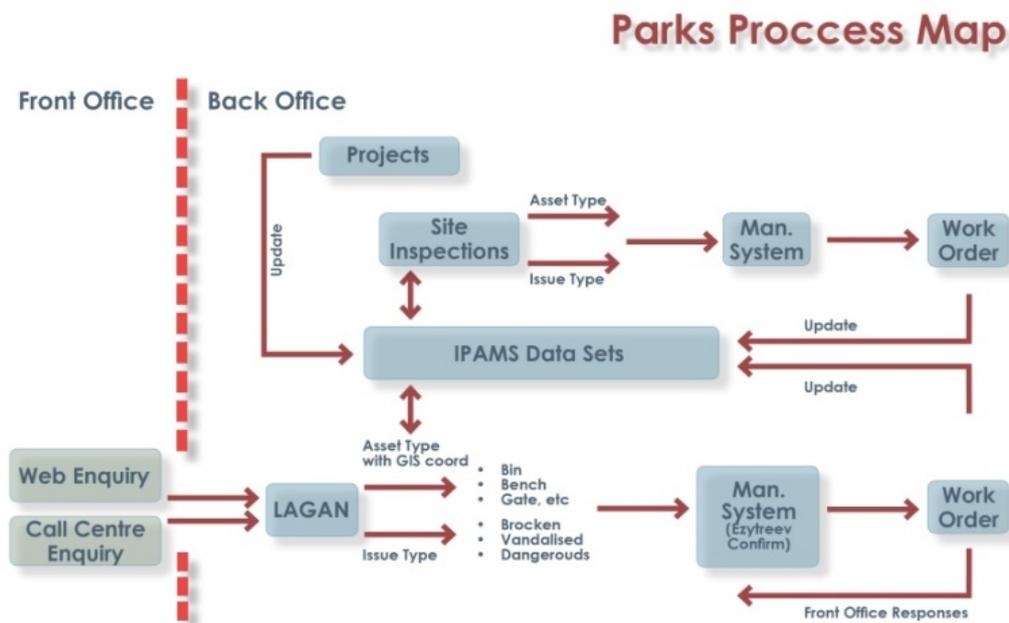
Data was also collected on type and condition. Where necessary, this was supplemented with a brief description of the asset.

Following the completion of the asset data capture process, a desktop review of asset data was undertaken to eliminate any inconsistencies in the data set. The final dataset is structured in accordance with the asset typology described in paragraph 6.1.2. The asset database has been converted into shapefiles (.shp) and file-geodatabases (.fgdb). The FGDB file format will allow the client to access the attachments (photos) that accompany the data.

6.2.1 Compatibility with London Borough of Barnet systems

One of the objectives of gathering parks and open spaces assets is to introduce efficiencies into the process of parks contract management. Figure 6.1 shows a possible process map that could underpin the future management of front and back office functions and works orders with reference to an asset data set. Many local authorities use similar mapping systems to regulate these functions.

Figure 6.1 - Draft Barnet Parks contract management process map



Discussions were held with the council to discuss how survey data could be integrated into systems already in operation. The Parks service currently uses the Ezytreev system to manage its arboricultural asserts.

In order to future-proof the asset data collection process, the project team discussed the structure of the data capture process with Ezytreev and it was agreed that the proposed structure was compatible with its systems.

As paragraph 6.2 describes, parks data assets were gathered as 'Shape' files which are commonly exportable between GIS-based systems, ensuring that the data collected will be compatible with the system that the client resolves to deploy.

7.0 Engagement

Introduction

Barnet's parks and open spaces are well regarded by local residents. 70% of respondents to the resident survey of 2015 felt that the Boroughs parks and open spaces are either good or excellent. This score contributes to an overall score of 87% when respondents are asked to comment on their overall satisfaction with Barnet as a place to live. 78% of Barnet residents reported that they strongly believe that they belong to their neighbourhood. Research by Greenspace suggests that in a survey of 5686 respondents, only 3% disagreed with the statement "parks and open spaces are a focal point for local communities".²⁸

Barnet Council does not assess the use of its parks and open spaces in numerical terms but research by Keep Britain Tidy (2010) suggests that over 50% of the population of the UK uses parks and open spaces at least once a week.²⁹ Given this high level of use, the role that parks and open spaces play in supporting sense of place and cohesion and the range of outcomes that parks and open spaces can support, the Open Spaces Strategy needs to respond to the needs and aspirations of variety of users, stakeholders and partners in order to define future policy for service provision. An engagement programme was implemented over the summer and autumn of 2015 to capture these views and aspirations.

Barnet Council is committed to involving local people in shaping their area and the services they receive. Engagement is one of the key ways the council interacts with and involves local communities and residents, providing them with opportunities to:

- gain greater awareness and understanding of what the council does
- to voice their views and know how they can get involved
- to have their views fed into the democratic decision making process

The Barnet Open Spaces Strategy engagement aligns to the standards and key guiding principles set out in the Council's Consultation and Engagement Strategy and supports the Council's Corporate Plan priority *'to improve the satisfaction of residents and businesses with the London Borough of Barnet as a place to live, work and study; promote responsible growth, development and success across the borough'*³⁰

7.1 Aims and Objectives of Barnet Open Spaces Strategy engagement programme

As part of the Barnet Open Spaces Strategy an engagement programme across the borough was conducted between July and September 2015

The engagement programme sought to:

²⁸ GreenSpace. (2010). GreenSTAT visitor survey system

²⁹ Keep Britain Tidy. (2010). People, Places and their Green Spaces

³⁰ Barnet Corporate Plan 2015-2020

- gather views from key stakeholders about Barnet parks and open spaces, their current and future use, building on the work done during stage 1 of the strategy development process

In support of this a range of key stakeholders, partners and consultees was identified and agreed.

- Parks 'Friends of' groups
- Key officers and departments of London Borough of Barnet
- Partner organisations such as Police and enforcement and schools
- Community organisations including Neighbourhood Panels and Tenants and Residents Associations
- Special interest groups such as those representing local residents with disabilities and those from black and minority ethnic groups and refugees
- Barnet residents whether they be park users or not

7.2 Engagement Methodologies

To ensure that data capture was as comprehensive as possible, a variety of engagement and survey methods were agreed and deployed. These methods gathered both quantitative and qualitative data on use of and aspirations for parks and open spaces. The engagement methodology consisted of

- On-line questionnaire
- Citizens panel questionnaire
- Face to face interviews, opinion gathering and questionnaire completion at park events
- Face to face interviews, opinion gathering and questionnaire completion at Town centre sessions
- Face to face interviews with key stakeholders and organisations
- Focus groups
- Presentations and Q & A at Neighbourhood Fora
- Presentations and Q & A at Resident Association meetings
- Use of social media – Facebook page and Twitter
- Strategy development workshop

7.2.1 On-line Questionnaire

The online questionnaire "A New Strategy for Parks and Open Spaces in Barnet" was used as a key engagement strategy tool. The questionnaire was made available on-line between July 1st and 30th September 2015 and was offered in 'Face to Face' interviews in parks throughout the summer of 2015. The questionnaire was 26 questions long, with 13 questions addressing attitudes to parks and open spaces and project and 13 relating to socio-economic monitoring.

The questionnaire (excluding monitoring questions) used a methodology combining both quantitative and qualitative methods for information gathering. The quantitative elements consisted of eight closed, un-ordered categorical (nominal-polytomous) questions where respondents had a number of fixed categories to choose answers from, three closed ordered questions, where respondents rank a series of choices in order of priority (ordinal-polytomous) and two qualitative open questions, where respondents gave their comments in response to a question. The completion time was assessed at 15 minutes.

The questionnaire sought to:

- establish what users value about Barnet’s parks and open spaces, how they use them and why
- establish why non-users don't use the parks
- establish whether or not users and non-users would be interested in playing a part in parks through volunteering.

A total of 260 questionnaires were either fully or partially completed. An analysis of questionnaire results appears as Appendix AIII.1.

7.2.2 Citizens panel questionnaire

The on-line questionnaire was sent to Barnet Citizens’ Panel. The panel is made up of 2,000 Barnet residents and is statistically representative of the population of Barnet. The panel's membership is continually refreshed.

706 responses were received from the Citizens Panel.

An analysis of questionnaire returns from the Citizens Panel appears as Appendix AIII.2.

7.2.3 Parks events

Engagement was undertaken at a number of local community events and festivals across the borough throughout the engagement period to raise awareness about the Barnet Open Spaces Strategy. The objectives of this form of engagement were to:

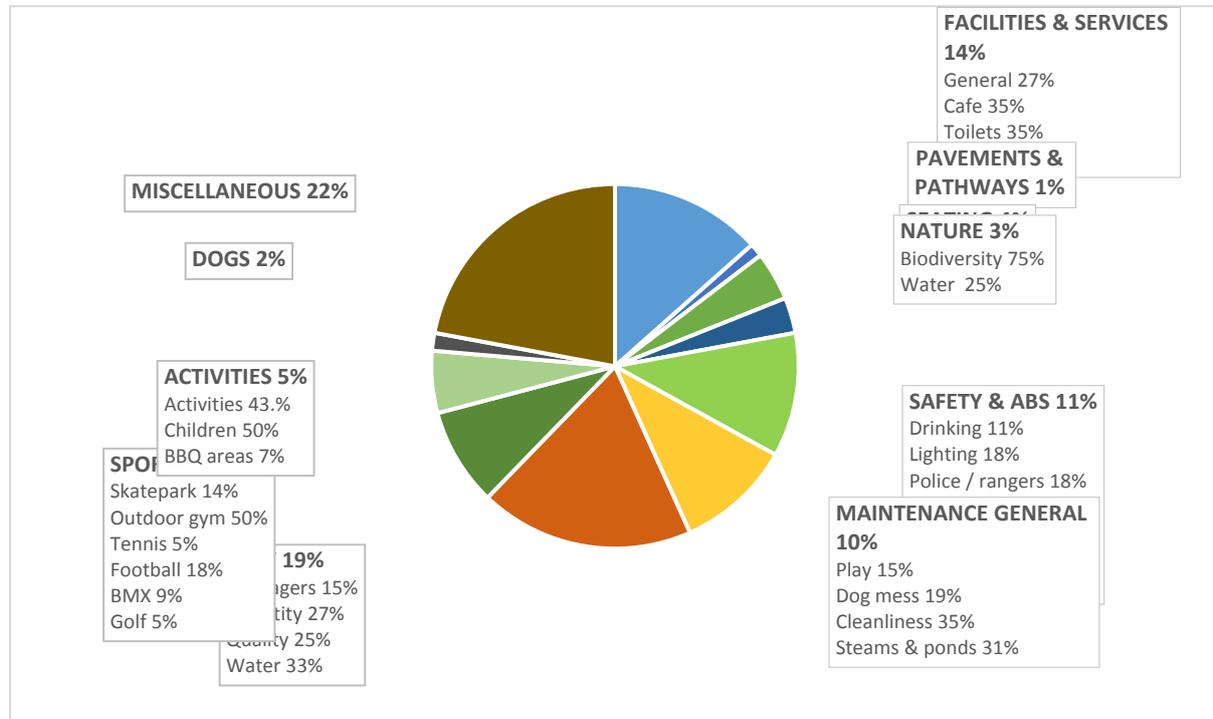
- Engage with and record the views of residents and park users in respect of Barnet's parks and open spaces
- To completing the questionnaire 'off-line'
- To provide advice on how to complete the questionnaire 'on-line'
- To provide details of the how to engage with the project via social media
- To engage with individuals and community organisations to raise awareness about the Barnet Open Spaces Strategy

The events attended were as follows:-

- Burnt Oak Multi Cultural Festival - September 19th
- East Barnet Festival – July 4th and 5th
- Garden Fete – Avenue House, Finchley July 9th

A number of key themes emerged from individual comments recorded by respondents at parks events and comments have been grouped in these key themes. The diagram below describes the key themes that emerged through the use of this engagement technique.

Figure 7:1 Open Spaces Strategy Engagement: park events comments



An analysis by key themes of individual comments received at parks events appears as Appendix AIII.3.



Figure 7.2 - Park Event engagement



Figure 7.3 - Comments Wall

7.2.4 Town centre engagement

Engagement was undertaken in a number of town centres across the Borough

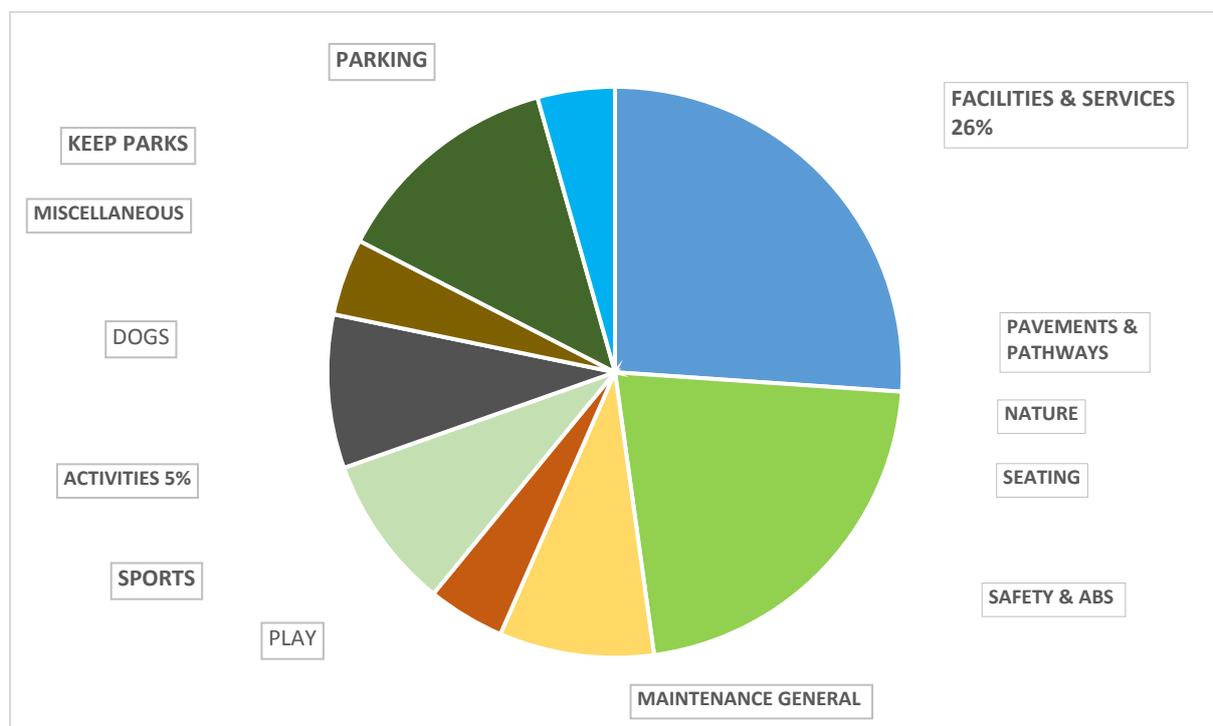
- Mill Hill – the Broadway: September 3rd 11.30 -1.30 pm
- Edgware – Hale Lane: September 10th 11.30 -1.30 pm

- Chipping Barnet – High Street: September 17th 11.30 -1.30 pm
- Golders Green – Golders Green Road: September 24th 11.30 -1.30 pm

Town centres were selected to complement parks events to ensure that views and opinions were gathered comprehensively across the Borough geographically. This method facilitated contact with members of the community who, because of family, work and other commitments, are less likely to attend more formal events and to contact a greater proportion of non-users.

A number of key themes emerged from individual comments recorded by respondents at parks events and comments have been grouped in these key themes. The diagram below shows the key themes that emerged through the use of this engagement technique.

Figure 7.4: Open Spaces Strategy Engagement: town centre events comments



The table below shows the number of comments regarding key themes from both the park events and the town centre events.

Table 7.1 - Park and town centre events' key themes

Key themes – parks events	Number of comments
Facilities and Services	34
Pavements & Pathways	3
Seating	11
Nature	8
Safety & Anti-social behaviour	28
Maintenance general	26
Play	48
Sports	22
Activities` `	14
Dogs	4
Miscellaneous	56
TOTAL	254
Key themes – town centres	Number of comments
Facilities and Services	6
Safety & ABS	5
Maintenance General	2
Play	1
Sports	2
Dogs	2
Miscellaneous	1
TOTAL	19

A full analysis by key themes off individual comments received at town centre events appears as Appendix AIII.4.

7.2.5 Residents Forums

As part of the Barnet Open Spaces Strategy Engagement short briefings were given to the following Neighbourhood Fora meetings on July 2nd 2015:

- Chipping Barnet
- Finchley and Golders Green
- Hendon

The aim of these briefings was to raise awareness about the Barnet Open Spaces Strategy and to encourage residents to participate and engage with the process.

Questions from audiences attend in these events focused on the following issues:

- The Council's overall intention in respect of the future management of Barnet's parks and open spaces.
- Issues with the care and management of individual parks and open spaces (specific sites in each of the Community Forum areas)
- The Open Space Strategy engagement process – several invitations were issued to the consultant team to attend individual meetings

7.2.6 Friends Groups

A database of Friends Groups was provided by Barnet Parks Department. All 23 Barnet Parks Friends Groups on this list were contacted by email in May 2015 to inform them about the Barnet Open Spaces Strategy, to seek their views and allow them to participate in the process. On-line links to the questionnaire were circulated to all of the groups contacted.

Table 7.2 - Schedule of contacts made with parks 'Friends of' groups

Site Address	Type of Organisation	Type of Group/Named Individual
n/a	Love Burnt Oak	Charity
n/a	BORA Burnt Oak resident association	Residents Association
Grahame Park Way	Heybourne Park Residents Association	Residents Association
Friary Lane	Friends of Friary Park	Friends of Park Group
Granville Road, London, NW2 2AT	Friends of Childs Hill Park	Friends of Park Group
Parkside Gardens, East Barnet		Friends of Park Group
Summerlee Avenue, East Finchley	Friends of Cherry Tree Woods	Friends of Group
Garden Suburb		Friends of Park Group
Princes Park Manor, New Southgate, London N11		Named Individual
Watford Way, Hendon		Named Individual
Abbotts Road		Named Individual
Great North Road A1000 Hadley Highstone		Named Individual
Daws Lane Mill Hill		Friends of Park Group
Hadley Road		Friends of Park Group
Wood Street High Barnet Underhill		Friends of Park Group
Ballards Lane, Finchley		Friends of Park Group
Queens Road, NW4	Friends of Hendon Park	Friends of Park Group
Edgeworth Crescent, Hendon, West Hendon	Friends of Malcolm Park	Friends of Park Group
Tyrrel Way		Named Individual
Sturgess Avenue, Brent Cross		Friends of Park Group

Individual responses were received from the following Friends of organisations:

- Friends of Mill Hill Park
- Friends of Childs Hill Park
- Burnt Oak Residents Association
- Friends of Friary Park
- Friends of Oakhill Park

As a consequence of these contacts, 'Friends of' meetings were attended at Childs Hill Park and Oakhill Park. The consultant team attended the Burnt Oak Multicultural Festival event organised by the Burnt Oak Residents Association

7.2.7 Special Interest Groups

In total, eleven special interest groups were contacted including organisations supporting people with disabilities (e.g. Barnet Sight Impaired, Barnet Disability Forum and Age UK Barnet), organisations who support people at different stages of life (e.g. Barnet Seniors Forum, 'Nutmeg' and the Barnet Youth Board) and organisations working with people from BAMER groups (e.g. Barnet Asian Womens' Network and Barnet Refugee and Migrant forum).

The purpose of this engagement was to capture the views of this cohort of residents and to capture any barriers to their use and enjoyment of parks and open spaces in Barnet.

Table 7.3 - Schedule of contacts made with special interest groups

Group Name	Type of Group
Disability Action in London Borough of Barnet	Voluntary Sector
Age UK Barnet	Voluntary Sector
Afghan Association Paiwand	Voluntary Sector
Barnet Seniors Assembly	Community Group
Barnet Mencap	Voluntary Sector
Community Barnet	Voluntary Sector
Barnet Asian Womens' Association (BAWA)	Voluntary Sector
Barnet Cyclists	Community Group
Barnet Refugee Service	Voluntary Sector
Michael Sobel Jewish Community Centre	Community Centre
Nutmeg Young People Group	Community Group
Richmond Fellowship	Voluntary Sector
Sight Impaired Barnet	Voluntary Sector

Groups were all contacted by phone and email and offered workshops and focus groups to facilitate discussion around the Barnet Open Spaces Strategy. Where groups were not in a position to participate in a workshop or focus group, telephone interviews were offered to key personnel within the organisation.

Failing this copies of the telephone interview questions were sent for organisations to complete themselves.

Of those organisations that were able to participate, focus groups were held with:

- Barnet Youth Board
- Sight Impaired Barnet

Telephone interviews were held with:

- Barnet Asian Womens' Network
- Nutmeg.

Details of focus group and telephone interview findings appear as Appendix AIII.5

A number of key themes emerged from these discussions. Table 7.4 identifies these themes.

Table 7.4 – Key themes

Special interest group	Key theme
Barnet Youth Board Discussion (30 July 2015)	Larger parks should have a 'feature' whether it's a lake or lido or specialist sports facility
	More should be done to encourage festivals, events and community facilities in Barnet parks
	Every park should have, as a minimum, a good playground and outdoor gym, toilets, parking, refreshments and available drinking water, free WiFi in at least some areas, and be safe and clean
	Parks can be the places which change how you feel about an area. Using parks to change perceptions and reputations is important
Barnet Asian Womens' Network	Parks allow community workers to take their message (e.g. health promotion) too hard to reach groups
	Parks are an important community resource and can form a nucleus for community activities
	Parks should have reasonably spaces for the community to meet
	The council should have officers to facilitate community activities in parks in co-ordination with groups
	The council are often an obstructive rather than positive force when trying to arrange activities and events in parks
Nutmeg Young Peoples' Group	Safety is a big concern for young people as young people are often the victims of crime and anti-social behaviour
	Better lighting is crucial to helping young people feel safe

7.2.8 Schools

As part of the engagement programme for the Barnet Open Spaces Strategy 25 schools were contacted with an offer of a pupil workshop focusing on Barnet’s parks and open spaces. Two schools responded positively and 45 minute workshops were held at:

- Brunswick Park Primary School (primary)
- St Mary’s High School (secondary)

A workshop was also held for the Barnet Youth Forum. The Barnet Youth Board The Barnet Youth Board is made up of representatives aged 13-19 (up to 25 with disabilities) across all Barnet’s state schools as well as community groups/clubs aiming to give young people a voice.

The Board designs campaigns and projects, consults young people to find out their views and engages with decision makers to ensure young people in Barnet are heard. The group works closely with Barnet members of the Youth Parliament and together they work to ensure the meaningful engagement of young people in Barnet.

The objective of the workshop process was to allow pupils and young people the opportunity to discuss:

- Their assessment of the quality of the spaces and facilities in local parks
- Their views on what would make parks and open spaces more attractive to young people
- Their priorities for the future

Full accounts of the workshop processes for Brunswick Park School appear as Appendix AIII.6.

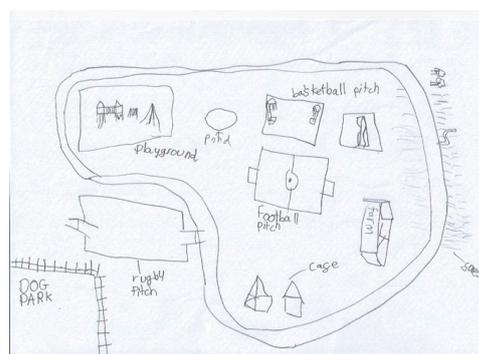




Figure 7.5 - Brunswick Park School workshop images

7.2.8.1 School Workshop Conclusion

The pupils expressed a variety of ideas about what would make a park work for children. These included a range of activities and spaces for children of all ages, and for adults. High on the priority list were high quality sports facilities that had good equipment and proper markings giving a 'professional' feel. Also important were play spaces including open areas to run around and well defined paths for cycling and walking, as well as more formal children's playgrounds.

Nature featured heavily in the discussions with ponds, animals, trees and flowers all mentioned. The children were also concerned about conservation and expressed a wish for their parks to be places where wildlife was protected and looked after.

Creative opportunities were also discussed with art gallery spaces and fairy gardens being proposed – places to let your imagination run wild and discover new things.

7.2.9 Barnet Parks Facebook page

Facebook is a popular free social networking website that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and video, send messages and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues. The site includes public features such as:

- Groups - allows members who have common interests to find each other and interact.
- Events - allows members to publicize an event, invite guests and track who plans to attend.
- Pages - allows members to create and promote a public page built around a specific topic.

A project Facebook page address was widely publicised on leaflet, posters and display banners distributed at all of the engagement opportunities and attached to email communication with stakeholder organisations and special interest groups. Visitors to the page were invited to 'like' the pictures and post comments.

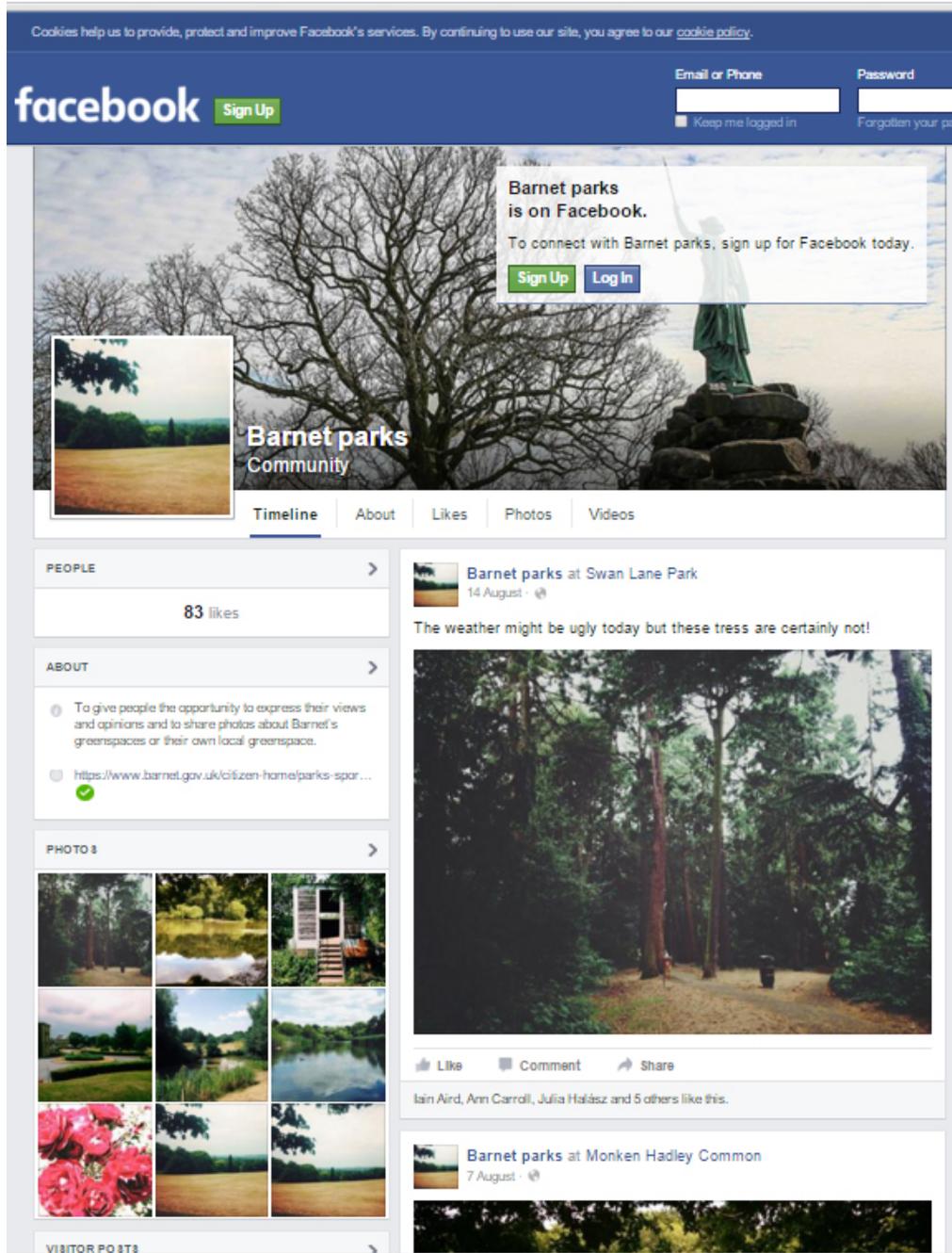


Figure 7.6 – Barnet parks’ Facebook wall.

By the close of the engagement process, 83 people had 'liked' the page and six people had left comments which have been incorporated into the engagement results. These comments appear as Appendix AIII.7.

7.3 Key stakeholder discussions

Section 2 of the strategy sets out the policy context within which the Open Spaces Strategy is being developed.

The strategy is one element in a range of policy initiatives being developed by Barnet Council to deliver the Council's overall objective of improving the *'satisfaction of residents and businesses with the London Borough of Barnet as a place to live, work and study.'*³¹

A number of face to face interviews with key internal stakeholders have been held to ensure that this strategy complements and reinforces the other strategic initiatives that the Council is initiating. These discussions included:

- The Sport and Physical Activity strategy (SPA) and forthcoming leisure management contract. This will include a number of key performance indicators in respect of health outcomes. Barnet residents have identified parks as a key offer in term of adopting active lifestyles and these discussions focused upon how the Open Spaces Strategy and the SPA should be complementary. A number of value assessment criteria around significant disease groups have emerged from these discussions and have been used in assessing the value of individual open spaces.
- The emerging Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy will seek to address the marked differences in health and wellbeing outcomes, between places and different demographic groups within Barnet. The strategy will continue the emphasis on prevention and early intervention including secondary prevention, (slowing the progression of disease), aims to join up services so residents have a better experience and to strengthen partnerships to effect change and improvement. Discussions with the Health and Wellbeing Strategy team have focused on the role that parks and open spaces can play in delivering these policy objectives.
- Education: the role that increased access to parks can open spaces can support enhanced educational outcomes was discussed. Currently, the Parks service derives income from schools offering access to parks and open spaces. The extent to which this acts as impediment to further schools use of open spaces should be evaluated. It was recognised that there are opportunities for schools close to parks and open spaces to make greater use of these spaces for 'forest school' and outdoor learning and that this Strategy and any operational and investment decisions that follow should develop these opportunities.
- Community Safety: the degree to which residents feel safe in using parks and open spaces can vary significantly across the Borough. Perception of personal safety can significantly affect the degree to which parks services are taken up by residents. Discussions with the Community Safety team and the Metropolitan Police 'Secure by Design' officer have highlighted individual spaces with high incidences of anti-social behaviour and/or crimes against the person. An additional list of sites has been identified in areas with high burglary rates (where parks have been used to gain

³¹ Barnet Corporate Plan 2015-20

access to homes). Having identified these sites, the capital investment strategy forming part of this strategy can address these issues by 'designing out' specific crime and anti-social behaviour risks.

- **Entrepreneurial Barnet:** Entrepreneurial Barnet is an initiative by the Council and its partners to consider ways in which their concerted actions can enhance Barnet's economy. The strategy recognises that *'the economic success of an area is associated with its attractiveness as a place to work and invest, but also whether it's a good place to live and to visit.'*³²

This strategy is concerned with improving the current parks and open spaces offer across the borough. Section 5 of the strategy demonstrates the positive effect that this can have upon office rental values and attracting and retaining staff. The capital investment strategy will identify opportunities for a range of physical interventions to improve both the quality and distinctiveness of Barnet's parks and open spaces and some of these will be focused on town centres as parts of the borough that are significant to the borough's economy.

The strategy will also focus on options for governance models based on town centres and these have been discussed in the context of the Entrepreneurial Barnet strategy.

- **Planning:** The Barnet Core Strategy provides an overarching local policy framework for delivering sustainable development in Barnet through a number of separate documents and policies. These include a suite of policies around Green Belt, Metropolitan Open Land, children's play, sports pitches and natural green spaces all of which provide the strategic context for this strategy. The core strategy also establishes minimum levels of provision for each of these types of open space in the context of proposed development.

Discussions have focused on current and future designations, the potential for the creation of a regional park in Barnet (as proposed in the All London Green Grid Supplementary Planning Guidance) and the use of Section 106 funds for parks capital projects.

- **Environment:** Section 4 of this Strategy identifies ways in which parks and open spaces can benefit Barnet's communities by protecting bio-diversity and mitigating the effects of climate change. The borough's Infrastructure Plan identifies flood risk as a major green infrastructural impact on the borough. Discussions have focused on the value of parks and open spaces in mitigating against flood risk impacts and this potential is expressed as a value indicator in the assessment of individual spaces. The Mayor's Green Infrastructure Taskforce will be reporting in the autumn of 2015 and the further recommendations of this report in respect of the incorporation of green infrastructure management systems into infrastructure planning in Barnet may follow.

³² Entrepreneurial Barnet: The public sector contribution to Barnet's economy 2015-20

7.4 Engagement – key themes and findings

- Improvements to Facilities and Services

From the Barnet park events engagement, improvements to facilities and services were one of the key themes identified with 14% of people engaged with raising this as an issue. The main improvements that people wanted to see were improvements to toilets (35% of those who discussed improvements to facilities) and new cafe facilities (also 35% of those who discussed improvements to facilities).

- Improvements to play and sports facilities

27% of people at the Barnet parks events wanted to see an improvement to sports and play facilities. 15% of those who spoke about play facilities wanted to see improvements for facilities for teenagers, 27% wanted to see improvements in the quantity of play provision and 25% wanted improvements in the overall quality of the play offer. The desire for water play facilities was mentioned by one third of the respondents who discussed play. These findings were echoed in the engagements with local schools. Green gyms were also a sports improvement that many people would like to see in the parks.

- Anti-social behaviour

At the Barnet town centre events 22% spoke about the negative impact of antisocial behaviour (ASB). 11% wanted to see improvements in anti-social behaviour statistics. However stakeholder interviews show that the degree to which residents feel safe in using parks and open spaces can vary significantly across the Borough.

- Improvements in maintenance

At both the town centre and the park events, approximately 10% of people wanted to see improvements in park maintenance. However comments from both the park and town centre events and the questionnaire show that respondents feel that maintenance of the parks across the borough is highly variable.

Flooding was also raised as an issue and 31% of people at town centre events who discussed maintenance referred specifically to improved maintenance of ponds and streams. A number of people also commented on excessive levels of litter in parks following formal sports club sessions.

- Partnerships with voluntary sector groups

From key stakeholder interviews, voluntary sector groups highlighted the importance of parks within their outreach programmes. They however highlighted the lack of affordable space for rent within the parks and noted that they often found difficulty in liaising with the parks department concerning joint activities such as arranging events and volunteering.

Section 8.0 Future Challenges

Introduction

In common with other local authorities across the UK, Barnet Council is facing a number significant challenges that will affect the composition and scope of parks and open spaces services that it can deliver. Some of these challenges are applicable to all local authorities while others are specific to the borough. This section identifies the challenges that the Council faces and ways in which these might be addressed.

8.1 Future funding

Since the advent of the 'austerity economy' central government grant support for local authorities has been consistently reduced. The total Council budget for 2015/16 is £293 million.³³ Between 2015 and 2020, further savings of £69 million will be identified. The Parks service will make a contribution to this savings target by reducing revenue spend on the delivery of front-line services and by introducing further efficiencies.

8.1.1. Income from parks.

The income generated by the parks service is currently derived from a number of sources:

Table 8.1: Parks income 2015/16 by source

Source: Greenspaces and Streets Departmental Budget 2015

Charging for services	£250,000
Income from concessions	£585,505
Contributions from other services (e.g. Health)	£498,000
Grants from Agencies, the National Lottery, etc.	£280,000

The service has an income target for each of the years 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19. Further income generation is an obvious way to offset the impact of significant reductions in revenue funding.

Many parks in the UK now generate income from events and concessions. As the NESTA 'Re-thinking Parks' report suggests, *'it is acknowledged that income generating activities have become an increasingly contentious issue in some areas'*.³⁴ Residents can be significantly impacted upon by large events and infrastructural damage to parks can result from events attracting significant numbers of people and involving large vehicles and machinery. The day to day enjoyment of spaces by every day visitors can be disrupted for a long enough period of time for this become a reputation management issue for councils. The organisational cost of setting up and running events and 'making good' after they have finished can be more considerable than anticipated.

Barnet's Events in Parks Policy (2012) proposes that the policy should:

³³ Barnet Corporate Plan 2015-20

³⁴ NESTA/HLF/Big Lottery (2013);Re-thinking parks, page 21

- Enable local events for local people.
- Make better use of parks and open spaces.
- Generate income which will contribute to the overall budget for improvement to parks.
- Look at introducing private events which will also contribute towards the income targets for greenspaces.

In Barnet, there are conditions that limit the extent to which parks can be developed for large-scale events. Barnet is an outer London Borough and in the absence of a well-established major event, it might be difficult to attract an audience to the borough. Despite its size and overall level of provision, Barnet has no metropolitan scale parks (i.e. parks over 60 hectares). Most well-known park events in London take place in Metropolitan-sized parks such as Hyde Park, Finsbury Park, Victoria Park and Crystal Palace Park. As a consequence, it is likely that parks events in Barnet will be more locally focused, delivering community outcomes rather than revenue to support service delivery.

Barnet also generates income from concessions such as café's, ice cream vans and a variety of other professional users. While an investment programme in parks might generate a further appetite for concessions, it is not anticipated that income generated will significantly exceed current levels and the capacity of parks to support these types of commercial activity is limited.

The 'Re-thinking Parks' report identifies a number of other income-generating activities, including:

- Income generation through investment
- Income generation through taxation
- Income generation through ecosystem services

These income generation options are considered in more detail in the context of future funding and governance in Section 10 of this strategy.

8.2 Current and future demographics

Sections 3.6 of this strategy describe the current demographics of Barnet and identify future population growth across the borough. This population growth is significant for open space provision because population growth will be concentrated in specific areas of the borough and will consist of higher density housing where people will have limited access to private space of their own. As a consequence, it is likely that demand for parks and open spaces will be increased in these parts of the borough.

In this strategy, the demand placed upon parks by an increasing population has been used as one of the criteria by which the value of an individual open space is assessed.

8.3 Climate change and green infrastructure

Barnet needs to be climate change resilient and parks and open spaces will play a significant role in supporting this resilience through mitigating against flood risk, moderating temperatures, absorbing atmospheric pollution and CO₂. Barnet also needs to conserve and protect its natural greenspaces and bio-diversity across the borough from impacts of development and from the effects of climate change.

A green infrastructure-based approach will strengthen the effectiveness of the borough's approach to climate change resilience.

The borough's Infrastructure Plan (updated 2011) addresses green infrastructure from a mono-cultural perspective in the context of flood risk mitigation. The Mayor's Green Infrastructure Task Force will report in the autumn of 2015 with recommendations incorporated into the London Infrastructure Plan 2050. Borough infrastructure plans will follow the lead established through the overarching plan for London.

Emerging policy on green infrastructure includes the assessment of the value of outputs that high quality parks and open spaces can deliver for the economy, communities and for the environment. Section 4 of this strategy describes two approaches to calculating this value (TIMM and Natural Capital Accounting). Although these methodologies have not been used in this strategy to calculate the value of parks and open spaces, they could be used to calculate these values in future in the context of emerging policy around future funding and governance. Section 10 of this strategy discusses ways in which these accounting methods could be used in future to support decision making around future funding.

8.4 Barnet's service delivery model for parks and open spaces

Barnet currently manages its parks and open spaces through a direct service organisation embedded within the Greenspaces and Streets Department. The department delivers parks and open spaces services in accordance with the principles set out in the Streetscene Management Agreement 2015-20. Specifically with regard to parks and open spaces, the agreement cites the Environment Committee's Commissioning Plan: *'Barnet is seen as a national leader in developing attractive suburban parks with its communities that promote health and wellbeing, conserve the natural character of the area, and encourage economic growth.'*³⁵

The Commissioning Plan sets out a number of additional targets for 2019/20 including increasing resident satisfaction for parks to 80%, working with partners to secure investment in new public spaces and building stronger local communities by promoting volunteering and other forms of community engagement.

³⁵ Barnet Council Environment Committee Commissioning Plan 2015-20; Page 9

The commissioning plan also proposes the development of an alternative delivery model for parks and open spaces delivering significant savings by 2019/20 while whilst improving performance and overall quality.

Section 6 of this strategy describes the process by which parks asset data has been captured through a survey process. This section also suggests ways in which this data could be used by the parks service to enhance efficiency of service delivery with the objective of improving performance and overall quality.

Asset data has also been used to develop a quality and value assessment of the borough's parks and open spaces assets. This data has been used to inform the principles of a capital investment strategy for the borough that is described in Section 9 of this strategy.

For this investment to be future-proofed and given revenue savings targets for the parks services between 2015 and 2020, consideration must be given to funding and governance models that can deliver a revenue stream that can sustain the enhancement in quality delivered by a capital investment programme. Section 10 of this report considers these models in detail.

Continuing management by Greenspaces and Streets is one of the six options considered in Section 10. Whichever of these options are developed and implemented, a number of principles should underpin any alternative delivery model to ensure that the objectives of the Commissioning Plan are met:

- The service needs to be design-led in order to deliver the positive outcomes that parks can deliver for communities and individuals
- The service needs to be performance focused, using technology to increase efficiency and manage delivery and assessing performance against defined indicators, related to outcomes
- The service needs to be community-focused in order to capture and develop the participation of communities in decision-making around the management and development of parks and open spaces
- The service needs to be pro-active and responsive, grasping opportunities to improve service delivery and infrastructural quality whenever possible
- The service needs to be excellence-focused, working actively to deliver the aspiration to make Barnet a national leader in developing attractive suburban parks

8.5 Emerging policies

Through the development of this strategy, a number of emerging policies have been developed that will support the delivery of the objectives set out in the strategy and the benefits that the strategy identifies. These policies are grouped into categories that correspond to the generic benefits delivered by parks and open spaces that have been identified in Section 4.

8.5.1 Provision

This strategy identifies that there is a deficit of open space provision in certain areas of the borough. The Council should thus:

- Seek to create 13 new local parks, 1 district parks by 2041
- The All London Green Grid Supplementary Planning Guidance (2012) identifies an opportunity to create a new regional park in Barnet. The Council should thus:
- Develop a framework for the creation of a new “Brent Valley” Regional Park – connecting to Watling Chase Community Forest as a vehicle to improve the quality, connectivity, management, funding and identity of open space within the GGA (Green Grid Area).

8.5.2 Place

The development of a design-led service deliver model for Barnet’s parks service will help to deliver community cohesion outcomes. As a consequence, the council should commit to:

- Developing distinctive places that reinforce the identity of individual parts of the borough
- Recording the borough’s natural and cultural heritage through the preservation and restoration of the borough’s heritage assets
- Enhancing destination parks and city centre spaces to support the attractiveness and economic success of Barnet’s town centres
- Establishing connected green networks to build a parks system – aligned in part with the All London Green Grid Supplementary Planning Guidance
- Designing an inclusive public realm conforming to principles established in Accessible London Supplementary Planning Guidance

8.5.3 Community safety

Parks and open spaces should be safe places so that they can deliver a greater range of positive outcomes for Barents’s communities. The Council should commit to:

- Developing safe spaces that people want to visit, eliminating crime hotspots through design interventions

8.5.4 Play

Good quality play facilities offers supports quality of life and enhances educational attainment for children. The Council should commit to:

- Creating more numerous , better play spaces with a variety of play offers including natural play and more diverse spaces for young people including MUGA’ skate parks etc..

8.5.5. Sports

Barnet's residents have identified parks and open spaces as offering good places to adopt an active lifestyle. The Council should commit to:

- Creating new sports hubs across the borough as centres of excellence for sports
- Implementing the recommendations of the Barnet Playing Pitch Strategy in respect of future sports provision

8.5.6 Facilities

The Open Space Strategy engagement process has identified an aspiration for an enhancement of facilities across parks and open spaces. The Council should commit to:

- Providing good quality accessible toilets at main traditional parks and sports grounds, meeting the British Toilet Association standard
- Improving the quality of facilities to promote greater commercial use through concessions, cafés, events etc.

8.5.7 Maintenance

The Open Space Strategy engagement process has identified an aspiration for an enhancement of standards of maintenance across the borough's parks and open spaces. The Council should commit to:

- Improving grounds maintenance focusing on the basics of grass cutting, litter, fly tipping and dog fouling
- Enhancing efficiency of maintenance operation through adoption of asset-based performance assessment
- Tackling anti-social behavior, focusing on prevention and greater responsiveness to incidents, access and visibility.
- Instituting a robust set of KPIs and annual programme of reporting for maintenance operations

8.5.8 Green Infrastructure

Successful green infrastructure management will be a key element in the borough's infrastructure delivery plan, in managing the public realm and preparing the borough for the impacts of climate change. The Council should commit to:

- Building in green space planning measures to adapt to and mitigate, the effects of climate change including flood attenuation, trees for cooling and drought resistant planting
- Planting and actively managing trees to improve distribution across Barnet

- Safeguarding and enhancing habitats and species within Barnet's parks and open spaces by conforming to the guidelines set out in the Bio-diversity Action Plan for London
- Improving the quality of green corridors, riverside routes and cycle/walkways for recreation, biodiversity and commuting

8.5.9 Health

Parks and open spaces can play a key part in preventing the impacts and subsequent costs of key disease groups. The Council should commit to:

- Developing partnerships to reinforce the potential of parks and open spaces to deliver successful health outcomes particularly in respect of coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity and mental health.

8.5.10 Education

Access to nature enhances educational attainment. The Council should commit to:

- Developing stronger partnerships with Barnet's schools to support the potential of parks to deliver positive outcomes for education
- Work with partners to develop forest school learning programmes in Barnet
- Investing in skills, staff training and apprenticeships

8.5.11 Engagement

Local communities will lay an increasingly important role in determining the future development and management of parks and open spaces in Barnet, The Council should commit to:

- Developing a stronger community base of friends and user groups
- Actively encouraging volunteering in Barnet

9.0 Capital investment strategy

Introduction

The past twenty years has witnessed a significant influx of capital funds into parks and open spaces in many areas of the UK. Section 4 has described the effects of Lord Rogers' Urban Task Force report into the future of cities and the subsequent Greenspaces Task Force on parks and open spaces. Cities (and subdivisions of cities such as the London boroughs) have come to recognise the positive benefits that good quality greenspace generates for economic performance, health, education, a sense of community and green infrastructure. Significant investment in parks and open spaces is increasingly being driven by a desire to capture these benefits and in many places, a parks renaissance has followed this investment.

The Heritage Lottery Fund and Big Lottery has been a major funder of parks and greenspace restoration, investing over £800 million in historic parks across the UK. In London alone, the HLF has spent over £50 million in the sector. In parallel, investments in sports facilities has similarly accelerated, with monies from both the National Lottery and the Football Foundation transforming the quality of sports facilities in public open spaces.

Barnet has a relatively modest record in attracting investment into its parks and open spaces sector, but this now presents the Council with an opportunity to significantly improve its greenspace infrastructure through a targeted investment programme over a 10-year period.

9.1 Investment opportunities

9.1.1 Heritage Lottery Fund

The HLF, in partnership with Big Lottery, remains the single most important contributor of capital funding to parks investment projects across the UK through its 'Parks for People' programme.

Table 9.1 shows the level of HLF investment in Barnet and neighbouring authorities since the inception of the 'Parks for People' programme. Barnet's modest record of engagement with the HLF offers an opportunity to develop a significant programme of historic park restoration across the borough.

Table 9.1 - HLF investment in Barnet and neighbouring authorities, since the inception of the 'Parks for People' programme.

Source: Heritage Lottery Fund

Authority	HLF Parks investment (£m)	Number of projects
Haringey	11.9	8
Camden	8.05	12
Enfield	6.94	7
Waltham Forest	4.55	4
Harrow	1.03	2
Brent	0.75	2
BARNET	0.047	2

In order to qualify for a 'Parks for People' grant, applicants must be able to demonstrate that a park, cemetery or open space has a heritage dimension. In the context of outer London, this is usually manifested by an association between an historic house and the landscape surrounding it but areas of land with other historical significance that can be recorded, preserved and interpreted and could also qualify for funding.

Through an assessment of Barnet's parks portfolio, four sites have been identified that could potentially attract HLF funding:

- Friary Park
- Oak Hill Park
- Hadley Green
- Hendon Park

A match funding of a minimum of 10% of project costs is required to be contributed by applicants, but a 25% match funding requirement is generally expected. The HLF also requires applicants to commit to increasing levels of management and maintenance over a 5 year period post completion of capital works. These additional revenue costs can be met through converting part of the capital match funding contribution to revenue over this period.

HLF projects deliver a range of outcomes, the most important of which is the physical restoration of landscapes and buildings. A parallel 'activities' programme will include community engagement, training and skills related opportunities and volunteering.

Table 9.2 shows the potential levels of HLF investment in Barnet over a 10 year period.

Table 9.2 - Potential levels of HLF investment, in Barnet, over a 10 year period

Site	HLF investment (£m)	Barnet capital match (£m)	Total budget (£m)
Friary Park	3	0.75	3.75
Oak Hill Park	2	0.5	2.5
Hadley Green	1.75	0.45	2.2
Hendon Park	1.5	0.375	1.875
TOTALS	8.25	2.075	10.325

The HLF also funds the restoration of natural heritage sites (e.g. nature reserves and semi-natural greenspaces) through its 'Heritage Grants' programme. Match funding and future management and maintenance requirements are broadly similar to those required by the 'Park for People' programme. The strategy has not modelled this opportunity as many of these sites are under third party management, but the potential exists for further investment in these areas, with applications made by partner organisations.

Projects of this scale can attract further external match funding from other trusts and foundations. Sources for potential additional inwards investment include the Landfill Communities Fund (most significantly, the Veolia Trust and Biffaward) and the larger charitable trusts such as the City Bridge Trust and the Clore Duffield Foundation.

9.1.2 Sports funding

In parallel with HLF funding, major capital investment opportunities are offered by a number of sports funders. Barnet has not been as active as neighbouring boroughs in securing this investment in recent years and there is a considerable future opportunity to transform the outdoor sports offer across the borough as a consequence.

The Football Foundation has invested considerable sums from the Premier League in developing 3G football centres with state of the art changing facilities across the UK. The provision of these facilities is symptomatic of a move away from the provision of full-sized grass pitches because smaller all-weather and lit facilities are more flexible than traditional pitches are not generating the required high level of engagement, especially in the context of youth sport.

The Football Foundation currently offers grants of up to £500,000 per scheme through its Premier League and FA Facilities Scheme. There is a minimum match funding requirement of 50% for each scheme approved by the Foundation.

Table 9.3 details Investment by the Football Foundation in outdoor sports facilities in central and north-west London

Table 9.3: Investment in outdoor sports facilities by the Football Foundation: 2009-14

Source: Football Foundation

Authority	Project cost (£m)	Football Foundation investment (£m)
Enfield	7.89	1.85
Brent	2.61	1.38
Harrow	2.65	1.26
BARNET	1.87	0.85
Haringey	1.85	0.6
Waltham Forest	1.31	0.49
Camden	1.12	0.33

The Football Foundation also offers a number of other smaller grant funding opportunities to support the development of grass roots sports, including

- Grow the Game
- Build the Game

- Premier League Community Facility Fund
- Barclays Spaces for Sports
- Mayor of London: Sports Facilities Fund

Football Foundation funding can be augmented with resources from other funders (e.g. the London Marathon Trust, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), the Rugby Football Union (RFU) and the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA)) to develop multi-sports hubs that can support a variety of facilities.

A number of 'sports hub' sites have been identified, potentially providing a geographical spread of elite sports facilities across the borough to augment the current focus on grass pitch provision.

Table 9.4 details the sports development opportunities identified for each site and the potential funders for these.

Table 9.4: Sports hub investment in Barnet

Site	Sports development opportunity	Funder
Cophthall	Cricket pavilion	ECB
	BMX	Sport England
	Rugby facilities	RFU
Barnet Playing Fields	Changing facilities	Football Foundation or private investment
	3G pitch	Football Foundation or private investment
	Cricket squares	ECB
West Hendon Playing Fields	Changing facilities	Football Foundation or private investment
	3G pitch	Football Foundation or private investment
	Cricket squares	ECB

Table 9.5 outlines capital costs for the creation of three new sports hubs in Barnet

Table 9.5: Capital costs for the creation of three new sports hubs in Barnet.

Site	Football Foundation investment (£m)	Other funders (£m)	Barnet capital match funding (£m)	Total budget (£m)
Cophthall	0.5	0.5	2	3
Barnet Playing Fields	0.5	0.5	1.5	2.5
West Hendon Playing Fields	0.5	0.5	1.5	2.5
TOTALS	1.5	1.5	5	8

Barnet Council's emerging Outdoor Playing Pitch Strategy will assess current and future supply and demand of sports facilities. This will provide the basis for an investment strategy for outdoor sports pitch provision that will complement the Open Space Strategy.

9.1.3 Regeneration areas

Barnet Council has identified eight regeneration and intensification areas across the borough:

- Dollis Valley
- Mill Hill East
- Granville Road
- Brent Cross/Cricklewood
- West Hendon
- Colindale
- Grahame Park
- Stonegrove/Spur Road

The focus for these areas will be the provision of new housing to accommodate the borough's significant rise in population. But as Section 3 of the strategy suggests, the provision of high quality greenspace should be a core element of these development and regeneration programmes. This will enable these areas to fully capture the many benefits that a good provision of parks and green spaces can provide. This is particularly important where regeneration will result in a greater 'densification' of the urban fabric, with fewer residents having access to their own private space.

Seven out of the eight regeneration areas within Barnet have placed the creation of good quality greenspace at the heart of the master planning process. Table 9.6 identifies the greenspaces to be created within each regeneration area and the budgets currently allocated to the creation of these greenspaces.

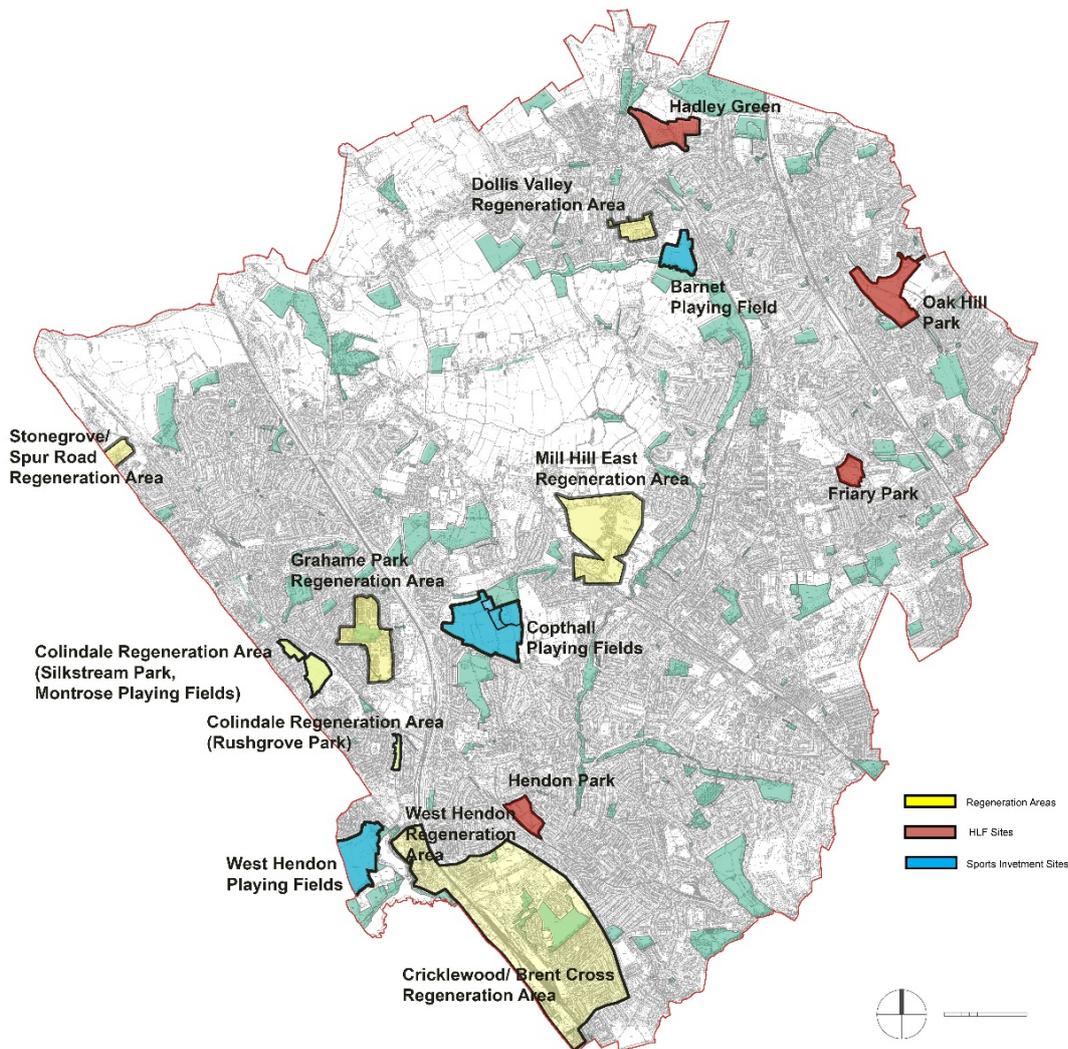
Table 9.6: Greenspaces to be created within each regeneration area and their allocated budgets.

Regeneration Area	New/enhanced greenspace	Identified/projected budget
Dollis Valley	West entrance square	£0.75m
	East entrance square	£0.75m
	Central square	£1m
Mill Hill East	Panoramic Park	£1.5m
	Eastern Park	£0.75m
	Central Community Park	£0.75m
	Public gardens	£0.5m
Brent Cross/Cricklewood	Clitterhouse Fields	£3.5m
	Brent Riverside	£1.5m
	Claremont Park	£1m
West Hendon	Central spine and waterfront	£1m
Colindale	Silkstream Park/	£2m
	Montrose Playing Fields	£3m
	Rushgrove Park	£1m
Grahame Park	Grahame Park open space/circus	£1m
Stonegrove/Spur Road	Community squares	£0.75m
TOTALS		£20.25

The inward investment from additional sources that these projects will generate will form a significant element in the borough’s parks investment programme over the next 15 years.

Figure 9.1 shows how these major investment initiatives detailed above are distributed geographically across the borough.

Figure 9.1 – Major Investments map.



9.2 Barnet Council capital investment

The investment opportunities set out above will have a significant impact on the quality of Barnet’s greenspaces. This investment programme focuses on the borough’s largest and most important sites and these are distributed evenly across the borough. These sites will generate the most significant outcomes for residents across the borough.

However, these major investment projects are largely ‘opportunity driven’ (to criteria set out by funders and developers rather than by Barnet Council). A key purpose of the Open Spaces Strategy (including the capital investment strategy) is to identify and address supply and demand issues and secure greenspace-delivered positive outcomes for people living and working in Barnet. The quality and value assessments set out in Section 5 have established a number of underlying principles that should inform the emerging capital investment strategy and result in tangible outcomes in individual parks and open spaces.

Local spaces are just as significant in delivering positive outcomes for the borough and are just as important for stakeholders and local residents as major sites. This is emphasised in the London Plan that promotes standards of access to all types of parks and green spaces of varying size.

A number of other key themes have emerged through the Open Spaces Strategy engagement process and many of these can be addressed through locally-based interventions in local parks as well as through major projects. Table 9.7 details the Engagement process key themes.

As a consequence, a future capital investment strategy could be informed by a thematically-based investment programme for parks and open spaces based on these key emerging themes. The value of this tool in terms of delivering outcomes through parks would have to be assessed as the capital investment strategy is developed.

Table 9.7: Engagement process key themes

Strategic Theme	Engagement theme	Investment opportunity
Health		Green gym programme
		Trim trail programme
		Cycle route programme
		Greenways and green routes
Education	Better playgrounds	Playground investment
		Forest school learning centres
		School partnerships to develop facilities for nature and ecology study
Community safety	Personal safety in parks	Designing out crime hotspots
		Improving visibility, lighting and patrolling
Economy	Better facilities in parks	Bringing park buildings back into use
		Promoting new café and concession outlets

Demographics	More investment in the more densely populated parts of the borough	Focus on investment in the south and west of Barnet
Place	Signage and interpretation	Parks signage project
	Toilet provision	Better entrances
		Refurbish and repair buildings and facilities
Green Infrastructure	Better access to nature	Tree planting programme
		Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems and flood plain enhancement

10.0 Funding and governance

This section provides a summary of the current scope, management structure and resourcing of Barnet's parks and green spaces and the corporate vision for parks services in the future. In response to the continuing reduction in public funding a range of potential alternative income streams is described along with case studies relating to governance structures that have been used to manage green spaces elsewhere in the UK.

10.1 Current park management and resourcing

Compiling robust and detailed financial and management information for parks services can be a difficult task. Budgets are often split in complex ways across different cost-centres and over a number of financial years. It can be hard to clearly separate out the difference between some capital and revenue expenditures whilst some operational costs and a range of managerial overheads may not always be clearly accounted for.

Such difficulties in calculating the full cost of parks services has been highlighted in a number of research reports including *Urban Parks, Do you know what you're getting for your money?* published by CABI Space (2006) and a recent study into the *State of UK Public Parks* undertaken by the Heritage Lottery Fund (2014). Further complexity can occur when looking to compare and benchmark management and maintenance costs across different local authorities as individual councils often adopt different public accounting systems making data harder to analyse.

This study has compiled a set of headline figures for Barnet's parks and green space service. With this it is possible to undertake an indicative benchmarking exercise using data from the London Parks benchmarking group (available through the London Parks and Green Spaces Forum) and the Parks, Open Spaces and Horticultural Services benchmarking service (available through the Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) Performance Networks).

Whilst Barnet has the largest portfolio of parks and open spaces across London councils it has one of the lowest per hectare spends of any local authority, either within central London or the outer boroughs.

The London Parks and Greenspaces Forum compiles annual figures for spend on greenspace services across London. The last figures made available by Barnet Council were for 2009. Table 10.1 shows a comparison of spend per hectare across four authorities for 2009.

Table 10.1: Annual Parks Revenue Spend

Source: London Parks and Greenspaces Forum Benchmarking Group, 2008-09

Authority	Annual spend /Ha	Spend /Head Of Population
Haringey	£9,654	£10.89
Enfield	£9,238	£24.65
Brent	£5,375	£12.05
Barnet	£3,292	£8.87

Through an internal assessment the current parks service records high levels of satisfaction. Barnet's Residents' Perception Survey for Spring of 2015 records that 70% of residents consider Barnet's parks and open spaces to be either 'good' or 'excellent'. This compares with an average for London as a whole of 71.6% and an average for outer London 72.1%.³⁶

Table 10.2 shows the headline parameters and statistic for the current parks and green space service.

Table 10.2: Headline parameters and statistic for the current parks and green space service.

Total number of district parks (20 Ha+)	10
Total number of local parks (less than 20Ha)	77
Total area of parks managed by LBB	888 Ha
TOTAL	208 (Inc. 8 not LBB)
Total managerial staff	1 x Head of Service
	1 x Grounds Ops Manager
	2 x Grounds supervisors
	1 x Trees and woodlands Officer
	3 x Tree Officers
	1 x Partnership and Development Manager
	2 x Area Officers
1 x Project and Community Officer	
Total operational staff	68
Total seasonal staff	None
Total annual revenue budget (2014-15)	£4,584,842
Total annual capital budget (2014-15)	£513,000
Total annual income secured by the service (2014-15)	£1,333, 505
Charging for services	£250,000
Income from concessions	£585,505
Planning gain through Section 106 / CIL	£325,000
Contributions from other services (e.g. Health)	£498,000
Grants from Agencies, the National Lottery, etc.	£280,000
Commercial sponsorship	£0

³⁶ London Parks and Greenspaces Forum Benchmarking (2011)

Barnet Council delivers services in partnership with a number of other organisations, most notably in the context of nature conservation sites across the borough.

Golders Hill Park resides wholly within the London Borough of Barnet but is essentially a westerly extension of Hampstead Heath. The park is wholly managed by the City of Corporation.

The London Wildlife Trust (LWT) manages a number of sites through license or lease agreements including Mill Hill Old Railway, Totteridge Fields and Oakhill Woods. The Watling Chase Community Forest (WCCF) was set up in 1991 to assist regeneration of the countryside and greenspaces in and around urban areas. A number of projects have been initiated in Barnet under WCCF auspices.

Barnet Council has a list of 32 registered 'Friends of' organisations, all of which have been contacted in the course of the development of the strategy. Research seems to suggest that only 6 of these organisations are active in working in partnership with the Council.

10.2 Future vision and objectives

Barnet's corporate plan acknowledges that the borough's parks and green spaces are amongst its biggest assets and have a strong influence on why people decide to live in Barnet. In recognition the Council will continue to ensure that parks and green spaces are looked after and it has set a clear ambition for the service in the future.

*'Barnet's parks and green spaces will be amongst the best in London' and to achieve this 'The Council will develop more innovative ways of maintaining its parks and green spaces, including through greater partnerships with community groups and focus on using parks to achieve wider public health priorities for the borough.'*³⁷

At the same time a key outcome for parks and green spaces set by the committee is to ensure:

*'Barnet is seen as a national leader in developing attractive suburban parks with its communities that promote health and wellbeing, conserve the natural character of the area, and encourage economic growth.'*³⁸

This implies that as Barnet improves and increases its parks and green space resource there will be a growing need for effective management and maintenance following the completion of the capital works. Some sources of external funding, such as the Heritage Lottery Fund's Parks for People programme, require an ongoing commitment to enhanced standards of management and maintenance. This can be capitalised in the short to medium term (i.e. the revenue costs of delivering the capital programme can be incorporated into capital budgets).

³⁷ LBB Corporate Plan 2015-2020, p10

³⁸ Environment Committee Commissioning Plan 2015-2020, p9

In common with all local authorities, Barnet is having to address significant issues around the future funding of discretionary services. The Council has an aspiration to move towards a 'low subsidy service'. An initial capital investment in greenspace will have to be protected through enhanced management and maintenance (for some major external funders, this will be a requirement of funding).

This represents a clear and considerable challenge for funding and resourcing Barnet's parks and green spaces in the future. Whilst the Council has set some ambitious objectives for the performance of the service and is undertaking a parks investment programme there is likely to be considerably less funding for the parks and green spaces through this decade and beyond. Approaches to squaring this particularly challenging circle will now be considered in the following sections.

10.3 Potential funding streams for parks

Traditionally the majority of parks and green spaces are considered the exclusive responsibility of local authorities. Within the non-statutory services that councils deliver green space management and maintenance is generally funded through council taxes and direct charges. There are a relatively small number of exceptions to this system that include the Royal Parks in central London, funded primarily by central government, and various parks trusts across the UK that have been publically or independently funded through a mix of endowments, levies and private donations.

There is an increasing move nationally to diversify the funding of parks and particularly council run parks and green spaces. '*Paying for Parks*', published by CABI Space (2006) described eight models for funding urban green spaces. More recent research, including the '*Rethinking Parks*' research report from Nesta (2013) and a number of studies published abroad have explored a variety of options in addition to those identified by CABI. At least a dozen alternative, and potentially complimentary, funding sources could be considered for sustaining Barnet's parks into the future.

Direct local authority contributions - have provided the cornerstone of resourcing parks and green spaces and whilst the quantum of funding may change over time many councils still consider parks to be a strategic priority to support the health and wellbeing of local communities.

Public sector grants and contributions - have commonly been considered as an important source of additional funding to supplement local council contributions. For Barnet this may come from the GLA, the Environment Agency, Natural England (for nature conservation) or the Heritage Lottery Fund (for the restoration of historic parks). One example has been the £400K grant from the GLA's Priority Parks programme for the extension of the Dollis Valley Green Walk.

Charging for services – increasingly councils are looking to raise additional funding through introducing or increasing charges, subscriptions and rents for

the use of parks and green spaces. This traditionally includes car parking, sports pitches and courts, allotments, cemeteries and crematoria. Charging for the use of parks for private activities such as personal training, filming, wedding photography and corporate events is becoming increasingly common.

Concessions and public events – can provide a popular mechanism to improve park based facilities and activities through cafes, seasonal concessions and other paid-for events. In Barnet examples include the summer Theatre in the Park, run at Oak Hill Park, and the London Carnival funfair at Montrose Playing Fields. In using public facilities for larger events a balance needs to be struck between the regular use of parks for personal enjoyment and the potential disruption and restricted access that larger public events can bring.

Sponsorship and fundraising – is often undertaken in an ad-hoc and opportunistic manner. Increasingly however parks departments and organisations are adopting a more structured and planned approach to fundraising and engaging corporate sponsorship. Some are setting up dedicated fundraising teams whilst others have established parallel charitable and not-for-profit trusts or foundations that are better positioned to secure funding from sponsorship and charitable activities.

Voluntary and community partnerships – provide a means to share or contribute to the financial burden of managing parks by drawing on the resources of community, user and friends of parks groups. Support may be directly financial or in-kind providing a more diverse and locally based source of expertise and resources.

Planning gain – section 106 (s106) funding arrangements have been an important source of income for investing in new parks and refurbishing existing green spaces for many years. For example, in addition to support from the Mayor of London's pocket parks programme, s106 funding has contributed to the creation of a new pocket park for Barnet in Cricklewood at Kara Way. Going forwards the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is replacing s106 as the mechanism to secure planning gain from development. For Barnet this will provide more focused and restricted funding for parks, open spaces and green chain projects. This will particularly be targeted towards the Upper Dollis Brook and the Silk Stream (as set out in Barnet's CIL Regulation 123 list, 2013).

Bonds and commercial financing – can provide a means to raise additional capital for parks and public space projects. The argument to support this approach is that the repayment of municipal bonds or long-term loans is achieved through the value-uplift or income generated by the improvements. Whilst less common in the UK, tax-increment financing (TIF) is increasingly being used to fund park investment in the United States and this mechanism is explored in further detail in *Paying for Parks*³⁹

Taxation – has historically been used to fund or supplement the management of parks and green spaces. Many of the London squares and gardens, that are now publically accessible, were originally maintained through a direct levy on

³⁹ CABE Space, 2006, p36-37 and p54

frontages – those properties facing the open space. Currently in London a precept or levy is charged across all boroughs to fund the Lea Valley Regional Park and in Wimbledon, properties adjacent to the common are charged a supplement to their council tax to fund the management of the common. This source of funding is explored further in the following section on future management options.

Ecosystem services and products – there is growing interest in the ability to capture the value of the environmental services that parks and green spaces provide. This is described as Payments for Ecosystems Services (PES) and can include surface water management and the reduction of flood risk; the production of biomass and renewable energy and the capture and storage of carbon using a system of carbon credits. The work of the Natural Capital Committee, described in Section 3, is developing this through a system of Corporate Natural Capital Accounting (CNCA).

Trust and endowments – provide a funding model that has generally proved more resilient than traditional local authority funding in recent years. If structured correctly and of adequate size, a portfolio of capital and income generating assets can provide the necessary resources to maintain parks and green spaces in perpetuity. The Milton Keynes Parks Trust and the Nene Park Trust provide good examples of the funding model and it is a system that is also used by the Land Trust to manage its growing national portfolio of green spaces. This approach is explored further in the following section on future management options.

Reallocation or sale of assets and land – although politically sensitive and likely to generate local opposition it can be appropriate in some cases to sell areas of open space to generate capital to create and revenue – generating an endowment fund that can fund future management. A robust planning case supported by extensive consultation needs to be undertaken to ensure the long-term environmental performance and amenity of a district is not compromised and the benefits clearly outweigh the costs.

10.4 Potential future management and funding models

Existing and alternative parks and green space management arrangements and governance structures should be assessed to identify the most appropriate, cost effective and efficient arrangements in the future. There is a close association between this section on potential management structures and the previous section on alternative income streams and these should be assessed in parallel. A set of six different management options may be considered for maintaining parks and greenspace services in the future. These are:

- Option 1 – Retaining and improving the status quo
- Option 2 – Shared public services
- Option 3 – Third party contract management
- Option 4 – Social enterprises and partnerships
- Option 5 – Trusts and foundations
- Option 6 – Area based precepts and levies

10.5 Option 1 – Retaining and improving the status quo

Paragraph 10.1 describes the current service structure for the parks and open space service currently delivered by the London Borough of Barnet.

The Council currently delivers grounds maintenance for parks and open spaces through a direct service organisation with 83 staff. Service delivery is divided between two area teams with 38 staff in the East Team and 43 staff in the West Team, each reporting to an area supervisor. Four posts will be deleted from the West Team from 1 March 2016.

The Area Supervisors in turn report to the Greenspace Operations Manager who reports to the Head of Parks Streets and Grounds. This option would entail the continuing delivery of the parks service by Barnet Council’s Direct Service Organisation (DSO).

Option 1 – Retain the status quo
Advantages
(1) Barnet’s DSO currently achieves a satisfaction score of 70% for the service, demonstrating its ability to deliver adequate parks services across the borough.
(2) The current system could become more effective with further investment and modernisation such as adopting more efficient front office/back office contract management systems; maintaining up-to-date asset information compiled by this study; and, establishing a series of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure and improve performance.
(3) There will be no immediate requirements for additional management posts and costs as this option would use existing support services.
Disadvantages
(1) Currently this only manages parks to a basic level and does not necessarily provide an incentive or additional resources to enhance existing maintenance standards and facilities.
(2) This structure for the service is likely to be subject to ongoing cuts, so it is expected that it will continue to deteriorate over time.
(3) It is unlikely that the current service will have the necessary skills base or revenue to manage enhancement projects after their completion.
(4) At present there are low levels of community engagement with a limited incentive or motive to improve this.
(5) The current system will remain vulnerable to political intervention and susceptible to the uncertainties of the four-year political cycle.

10.6 Option 2 – Shared public services

Case Study 1: Hammersmith and Fulham/Kensington and Chelsea/Westminster Tri-Borough agreement

In 2011, the London Boroughs of Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster proposed the Tri-Borough shared services agreement. The objective of this initiative was to accrue significant savings from sharing service delivery across borough boundaries, with an initial target of a £43 million saving by 2015/16. This saving was to be engineered by reducing the number of middle and senior managers in combined services by 50% and to reduce overall 'the overheads' on direct services to the public by 50%.

The provision of Children's services, libraries and adult social care have been combined across all three boroughs while environment and leisure services (including parks services) have been combined across the two boroughs of Hammersmith and Fulham and Kensington and Chelsea.

The Tri-Borough agreement originally proposed that a single chief executive should be shared between Hammersmith and Fulham and Kensington and Chelsea but the former authority now has its own chief executive undermining this original aspiration. Operational incompatibilities between the boroughs have perhaps been accentuated by a change of political control leadership from Conservative to Labour in Hammersmith and Fulham in 2012.

Parks across both boroughs are managed centrally and by the same externally sourced contract (Quadron Services Ltd), although contracts are delivered to different standards across the two boroughs (to an output-based specification in Kensington and Chelsea and to an annual work schedule in Hammersmith and Fulham). Support service amalgamation has also not proceeded as fully as originally intended, with separate IT systems and login details required by each authority.

In response to savings requirements, both authorities have cut budgets for parks and open spaces significantly (£700,000 and £500,000 have been cut from the respective parks budgets for Hammersmith and Fulham's and Kensington and Chelsea, with further cuts to come).

Hammersmith and Fulham is now considering the transfer of all of its parks assets into an independent Trust as a means of protecting the portfolio putting further strain on the current management arrangement.

These difficulties are not dissuading other authorities from considering this approach with Sutton and Merton and Kingston and Richmond actively considering a shared service approach.

Most public services have already had to find considerable savings and Barnet is no exception. Across the authority the annual budget has been reduced by more than a quarter over the past five years. This suggests that most of the easiest and immediate in-house and cross-council savings and efficiencies have been made. There is now growing interest in further efficiencies that could be secured through a more strategic approach to sharing services across authorities and organisations.

The Local Government Association (LGA) has been analysing this developing trend and published their early findings in *Services shared: costs spared* (2012). It has been found that as shared services mature and evolve they can benefit from wider business transformations. Significantly set up and integration costs for merging services are generally modest and often achieve less than a two year payback. However baseline financial and performance information is essential to make the case for change and to track the benefits of efficiencies and improvements once new systems are implemented. So in exploring alternative options for delivering parks services it is important to have robust

and up to date data on both finance and performance of the service at the outset.

Shared services may help to reduce staffing costs particularly as around 56% of costs associated with open space management relate to labour. Going forward there may be clear advantage to look beyond Barnet’s current geographic and administrative boundaries and consider the potential to restructure particular services across neighbouring boundaries. It is likely that the combined assets of public sector direct service teams alongside resources owned by private contractors operating nearby could be better utilised to both maintain existing standards and secure greater outcomes.

The West London Alliance is a partnership of seven West London councils - Barnet, Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon, and Hounslow. The Alliance is currently delivering programmes in Health and social care, housing, children’s services and enterprise. To date, no joint working on public open spaces has been developed by the Alliance.

Option 2 – Shared public services
Advantages
(1) There are potential economies of scale and sharing of resources that can be captured by working across larger organisational structures.
(2) Greater efficiencies may be gained from pooling resources and activities across local authority boundaries.
(3) With reducing skills and expertise within the service there is clear advantage to share or co-locate particular staff and skills between local authorities.
(4) There is the ability to develop more standardised and streamlined operations and systems, such as contract management or running income generating events, within a partnership of local councils.
Disadvantages
(1) There is the risk that local accountability and direct responsibilities could become lost or made more complex within a wider organisational structure.
(2) The extent to which parks and opens spaces are a political priority for council’s can vary from authority to authority
(3) Individual councils may have different performance indicators and standards of operation that could add additional cost to some activities.
(4) Changes in political control across partner councils could fracture existing partnership arrangements and agreements.
(5) The terms and conditions of operational and managerial staff may need to be unified, and may be likely to incur additional costs in the short-term.

10.7 Option 3 – Third party contract management

Case Study
<p>1. London Borough of Lewisham/ Glendale</p> <p>Lewisham Council entered into a 10 year contract with Glendale for the management of the borough’s parks and open spaces in 2010. The contract covers standard grounds maintenance, building and infrastructure maintenance, security, events and support for and liaison with the borough’s ‘Friends of’ organisations. The current contract does not carry an investment requirement for the contractor. The current value of the contract is £2.5 million.</p> <p>This agreement superseded a 10-year Public Finance Initiative (pfi) agreement with Glendale concluded in 2001 that brought a capital investment of £1.5m in the borough’s parks and open spaces. Glendale assumed substantive responsibility for the management of the borough’s open space assets including grounds maintenance, repairs, attendance and inspection. The contract included a commitment to secure a number of Green Flag awards within the contract period.</p> <p>The Council has imposed a series of cuts to the service and these have been agreed with Glendale deliver through an annual efficiency target. This is partly offset by income generation.</p> <p>There is no impetus in the borough to move to a Trust management model and social enterprise initiatives within the sector have been limited to libraries and leisure centre management (through 1Life Management Solutions).</p>
<p>2. Case Study: Trafford Council/ Amey</p> <p>Trafford council has entered into a 23 year contract with Amey for the provision of a number of services across the local authority area including property and estates management, waste, highways maintenance, public realm management and grounds maintenance. A flexible contract has been agreed that will allow the contract to evolve over time from a defined financial and legal starting point and an agreed apportionment of risk with the objective of growing the business as a joint venture between the authority and the company. This contractual evolution could include a transition to Trust-based ownership and management models for public assets and the expansion of the partnership to include other neighbouring local authorities.</p> <p>The partnership includes a social outcomes partner (Thrive) that delivers a range of inclusion initiatives including volunteering and supporting the development of social infrastructure capacity within Trafford.</p>

There has long been a split between those councils that have kept operational services in-house and delivered by DSO teams and those that have contracted-out these services. Current research in to the division between these approaches and emerging trends in out-sourcing parks and green space services is being undertaken by the University of Sheffield. This national survey has invited all UK authorities to participate and preliminary findings will be published early in 2016.

Barnet could consider moving to a third party model of managing the parks service and there are a number of authorities across London who have adopted this model for many years. Contracts may focus on specific maintenance activities or be bundled into larger ‘super-contracts’ that include street scene operations and in some cases wider waste management and cleansing services. Contracts can run for five years or longer through extension and performance clauses.

In some cases, councils have included the proviso of parks and open space services in Public Private Partnership (PPP) contracts with the private sector. These contracts are usually of 20-25 years’ duration and fund the provision of public services through bonds or private debt provided by the banking sector as part of a special purpose vehicle.

Option 3 – Third party contract management
Advantages
(1) Management of the parks and green space portfolio is outsourced over a protracted period, so the Council can divest itself of annual responsibility, taking the service costs off annual budgeting and balance sheets.
(2) Over time this can be an evolutionary approach once the legal and commercial principles have been established and agreed, allowing a management and maintenance contract to adapt to changing conditions and needs.
(3) This approach provides the opportunity to bring further resources in to the service through Public Finance Initiative (PFI) contract agreements and arrangements.
(4) Private sector efficiencies and entrepreneurial practices may more easily be secured through private contracting arrangements.
Disadvantages
(1) PPP contracts are funded through bonds or senior debt, postponing debt and protecting service provision from budget cuts.
(2) Such arrangements can be seen to be undemocratic if they are not set up correctly with appropriate of public accountability.
(3) Performance is closely linked to how the project is financed rather than to actual key performance indicators.
(4) Such an approach still requires regular and thorough council oversight, management and control

10.8 Option 4 – Social enterprises and partnerships

Case Study: Green Estate, Sheffield

Green Estate is a Sheffield-based social enterprise managing a number of public open spaces in the Manor and Castle area of the city. Green Estate was established in 1998 as a partnership between the Manor and Castle Development Trust, Sheffield Wildlife Trust, Sheffield City Council and other organisations through a £1 million grant from the European Regional Development Fund and Single Regeneration Budget. This initial funding award levered in a further £4 million in capital monies to regenerate a number of derelict open space sites. The organisation now employs 38 staff, a volunteer cohort of 70 and has an annual budget of £1.3 million, with £140,000 allocated to the management and maintenance of parks.

Green Estate is locally-based with strong connections to the local community for which to provide a number of services including education, training staff and team development.

The organisation has no core funding and works to an annually renewed 5-year business plan. Key to its financial sustainability is an entrepreneurial approach to business opportunities. At any one time, it will operate a number of micro-businesses, each with its own independent life cycle based upon a specific funding or market opportunity.

Green Estate is a strongly socially focused organisation, providing a range of opportunities and developing aspirations for local communities.

The social remit and communal value of parks and green spaces provide a clear rationale for establishing community based management organisations which are commonly referred to as social enterprises. Structured as charitable non-profit distributing organisations (NPDOs) they can take a variety of legal forms including a traditional Company Limited by Guarantee, a Community Interest Company (CIC) or a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

Often they are set up to manage individual parks, such as the Heeley Development Trust that runs Heeley Millennium Park in Sheffield, or a network of green spaces within a specific district or neighbourhood, such as The Green Estate, which is also based in Sheffield. The principle objective of a social enterprise is to provide a range of locally based services and activities that are generally run on a charitable basis. For Barnet this could provide a potential option for managing either an individual park or green space or a network of spaces within a specific neighbourhood.

To date there are no examples of borough-wide social enterprises that have been specifically set up to manage parks. However in London Greenwich Leisure Ltd. was established as a charitable social enterprise by Greenwich Council to initially run its leisure centres. It now operates across the UK through a variety of partnerships including one with Barnet. GLL manages a number of public services that now comprise libraries and playgrounds and it recently took on responsibility for two venues in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.

Option 4 – Social enterprises and partnerships
Advantages
(1) Social enterprises are by nature socially inclusive, they bring direct local benefit and meet specific needs of communities.
(2) Can deliver far more effective social outcomes and social return on investment when compared to private sector models.
(3) Provides the ability to coordinate participation from a variety of partners for mutual benefit
Disadvantages
(1) For success the model must be entrepreneurially agile and requires energetic and ambitious leadership.
(2) It is usually most effective when locally based and small scale so may be less applicable as an authority-wide model.
(3) Establishing a social enterprise can have a very long gestation period that requires extensive consultation and the participation of a variety of partners.
(4) Often there may be an unrealistic emphasis on 'social' need and benefit at the expense of 'enterprise' and economic return.
(5) The model can be financially vulnerable because of the traditionally low levels of capitalisation secured at the outset.

10.9 Option 5 – Trusts and foundations

Case Study
1. Potters Fields Park, Southwark
<p>Potters Fields Park Trust was established in 2008 to manage the eponymous site between Tower Bridge and the GLA building. The park had benefitted from a £2.5 million regeneration of the More London re-development but there was a considerable disconnect between the annual maintenance budget allocated by Southwark Council for the management of the park (£24,000 per annum) and the financial requirement a site in such a unique position in central London (in excess of £80,000 per annum). Given the site's proximity to one of London's iconic photo opportunities, a business case was established for transferring the management of the site to an independent Trust so that all of the revenue that the site generated could be ring-fenced to its maintenance.</p> <p>The Trust is a partnership between Southwark Council, the Greater London Authority, More London, Team London Bridge, Fair Street Community Housing Association and Shad Thames Residents Association.</p> <p>The Trust currently generates £360,000 per annum from events on Potters Fields and allocates £160,000 to the maintenance of the site with the surplus being allocated to salaries and staff costs, overheads and free community events. Under the terms of the lease for the site, any surplus is given back to Southwark Council for the maintenance of other parks across the borough.</p> <p>The Trust is now planning to use part of its surplus to adopt the management of another local public open space (St John's Churchyard).</p>

2. Milton Keynes Parks Trust

The Milton Keynes Parks Trust was established in 1992 to care for cost of the city's green space and was endowed with an extensive and varied property. The Trust is entirely self-financing with the income from this portfolio funding the management and enhancement of the landscape and a number of other services including events, an education programme for local schools and the support of a volunteer cohort of over 160 residents.

The Trust employs a staff cohort of 40 reporting to a Chief Executive and in turn to a board of Trustees.

The commercial performance of the Milton Keynes Parks Trust is closely linked to the commercial property market and thus to the broader performance of the economy as a whole but its independence from central government funding has protected it from the most significant effects of the austerity economy. As a result, it is regarded as the gold standard in terms of the funding of public parks in the UK.

3. Vision Redbridge

Redbridge Council created 'Vision Redbridge' in 2007 as a social enterprise with charitable status to manage its sports and leisure services. The management of the borough's sports and leisure services was transferred to Vision Redbridge and a management fee negotiated with Redbridge Council for the delivery of these services. At the outset, 80% of the Trust's income was derived from customer receipts.

In 2011, the scope of services delivered by Vision Redbridge expanded to encompass libraries, museums and parks, expanding the operating income of the company to £18m. Given the nature of these new businesses, the quantum of income derived from customer receipts has declined to approximately 40%.

Vision Redbridge operates under specific trust objects that are a condition of its charitable status. The trading arm is able and has ambitions to deliver grounds maintenance services for the borough and to compete for business beyond the borough boundary.

The principal advantages that have accrued as a consequence of the adoption of this model have been in the form of savings as a consequence of exemption from business rates for the core business. The independent status of the company has implied greater flexibility in terms of procurement and support services.

There are a number of trusts that have been specifically set up to manage parks and greens spaces. These include trusts for individual spaces, such as the Potters Fields Park Trust in Southwark, or a large number of separate spaces within a local authority district, such as the Milton Keynes Parks Trust. Whilst operating to some degree as social enterprises for the surrounding community, parks trusts can either be directly responsible for managing parks and green spaces or can commission maintenance and park based services that are undertaken by others.

Trusts may take a variety of different legal and financial forms with many operating as limited companies and registered as charities. Some of the most successful and resilient trusts fund their operations through an endowment that generally includes property and capital assets. The income generated by these assets provides the annual revenue needed for management. This is generally supplemented by other fundraising, charges and concessions. There may be scope to fund some operations through a service charge or ground rent on adjacent properties, which the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park is considering, but this generally requires wider land ownership. This is the case for the historic London estates although many of the green spaces are private. In the United

States area-wide property taxes provide the primary source of funding for the larger and more successful park management organisations.

Some local authorities are considering transferring some public services to mutual ownership models which may be considered as a form of trust. Such mutuals operating outside the control of local authorities offer greater autonomy yet still retain a good level of democratic control. To date parks departments have yet to take this route, partly as they need to ensure a reliable revenue stream to fund the operation of the mutual.

A small number of park organisations have established parallel foundations, such as the Royal Parks Foundation, to provide a charitable arm to coordinate wider outreach and fundraising activities. The separate and not-for-profit status of foundations can offer a more community-facing structure for certain operations and activities and wider potential for revenue generation through sponsorship and gifting.

The Milton Keynes model is considered to be the most effective trust model because it was established with a revenue-generating property endowment that has funded the management of Milton Keynes parks and open spaces for the past 23 years. The adoption of an endowment-funded management trust approach could constitute a sustainable approach for the Council. In pursuit of this, the Council could create a special purpose trust (similar to Milton Keynes or Potters Fields) or enter into an agreement with a third party organisation such as the Land Trust or Groundwork.

It is a generally accepted principle that a 14:1 multiplier should be applied when calculating the size of an endowment fund relative to the income it needs to generate. Barnet's current revenue expenditure of £2.8 million would thus require an endowment fund of £39 million. Given the need to apply additional resources needed to protect capital investment and to bring the borough's spend per hectare into line with neighbouring boroughs, a fund of £50-55 million might be a more realistic target.

Endowment funds can be created through a variety of means:

- Disposal of land where a quality and value assessment suggests levels of over-provision
- Creation of property portfolios
- Capturing natural capital values through the use of TIMM or Natural Capital accounting methods to assess the true value of public open space (see Section 4).

Option 5 – Trusts and foundations
<i>Advantages</i>
(1) Trusts can be financially independent, if funded through an endowment and the council can divests itself from the responsibility for regular management and maintenance.
(2) Strategically organisations are independent and able to develop long-term plans and programmes.
(3) Trusts can be reasonably adaptive and flexible in decision-making terms although this will be dependent on the structure of the board or decision making body.
(4) Trusts are outside the traditional political cycle so able to operate in a more bi-partisan and collegiate manner.
(5) Trusts are generally seen as operating for the common good and can be more appealing for sponsorship and fundraising.
<i>Disadvantages</i>
(1) If funded through an endowment this needs to be managed carefully to work effectively.
(2) The model may be considered undemocratic as it operates outside traditional council systems of accountability.
(3) The start-up costs, including TUPE of staff, legal and financial advice, can be costly and may take considerable time to negotiate.
(4) Loss of economies of scale in terms of support services may lead to a higher ratio of administration costs to spend.
(5) Trusts and foundations can only operate successfully if they are truly independent of external political and financial controls

10.10 Option 6 – Area based precepts and levies

Case Study: Bloomsbury Squared

Camden Council successfully applied to NESTA to operate a pilot project under the 'Re-thinking Parks' programme. The pilot has considered the possibility of establishing both voluntary and compulsory levies on businesses surrounding Camden's urban parks and squares, working with friends groups, academic institutions and resident and business associations to give money to maintaining their local parks. The model tested is most similar to the Bryant Park model that has been successful in Manhattan.

The project aims to establish an annual maintenance budget of £500,000 through a combination of a business levy, voluntary local residents' precepts, events, donations and sponsorship. Any additional monies levies would be used to establish an endowment for the future management of the spaces.

The development of the project has been hampered by an unenthusiastic response from businesses to additional taxation and a low level of interest from residents in spaces other than those on their doorstep. Restrictions in the legislation on Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) in respect of the use to which levies can be put have Further restricted options for the project.

As a consequence, the pilot has established an independent strategic partnership board comprised of residents, local businesses, the University of London and cultural institutions to investigate and develop alternative funding models. These are likely to include the broader public realm improvements delivered through traditional BID's and partnerships with the local Fitzrovia and Mid-Town local BID's.

Crucially, the pilot has established that a new funding model will be easier to establish through an external partnership board that is independent of the Council.

There is growing interest in the potential to supplement the funding for parks and green spaces through local levies and precepts. This is particularly applicable for larger parks and green spaces that serve a wider catchment beyond individual local authority boundaries. For London the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority is part-funded through a precept charged to all London Councils. This statutory arrangement was established through government and therefore the model has some complexity in its formation.

More localised and area based levies are charged through the establishment of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) that are formed to provide additional benefit to local companies. Part of the improvement strategy commonly includes enhanced levels of upkeep and maintenance of surrounding public spaces. There is an emerging proposition to develop park improvement districts (PIDs) through this mechanism and Camden Council is exploring the feasibility of establishing a PID in Bloomsbury as one of the Nesta '*Rethinking Parks*' pilot projects.

Part of the principle behind raising income through local precepts and levies is to provide a mechanism to capture part of the value that parks generate for adjacent properties and land owners. Barnet could consider establishing PIDs in appropriate districts and neighbourhoods that directly benefit from their adjacency to local parks and green spaces. This could be for either existing green spaces or recently created ones, however this generally needs to demonstrate that additional funding contributes to enhanced levels of upkeep and facilities rather than simply subsidising existing services.

Option 6 – Area based precepts and levies
<i>Advantages</i>
(1) There is a clear and transparent link between the charging of the precept or levy and expected outcomes.
(2) Provides a good level of independence in funding.
(3) Ability to generate greater levels of local ownership and community decision making and participation.
(4) Can provide further bolt-on services around environmental performance for adjacent households and businesses.
<i>Disadvantages</i>
(1) It's a tax, likely to be unpopular and requires a clear rationale and case for charging.
(2) Potentially it is inefficient if it has limited financial or geographical spread where the costs for management may outweigh the benefits.
(3) Creates a multiple tier service which is likely to establish disproportionate standards of service across local authority areas.
(4) There are limited statutory mechanisms for charging levies and therefore can be open to legal challenge.

10.11 Discussion

Barnet Council should adopt an approach to the future funding and governance for parks and open spaces that responds to both the aspirations set out in the Corporate Strategy and the Council's aspiration to deliver significant savings through its medium term financial strategy.

Section 4 of the strategy also sets out some of the benefits accruing from the successful management of parks and open spaces and approaches to future funding and governance should support the realisation of these economic, social and environmental benefits.

This section of the Open Spaces Strategy has set out a number of options for the future management of the service. Whatever the adopted approach (or approaches) there should be a coherent structure of service provision across the borough, driven by consistency of standards and including democratic accountability.

Several of the funding and governance models could be investigated and developed through the deployment of a programme of pilots, specifically, Business Improvement Districts (centred on Finchley), social enterprise (centred on Childs Hill Park) and private management (centred on regeneration areas). These pilots would have to be thoroughly planned and adequately funded to generate sustainable and instructive outcomes.

The adoption of a programme of pilots would leave unaffected the substantive portfolio of parks and open spaces across the borough. For this remainder of

sites, Barnet should adopt a long-term approach based on a number of core principles:

- An assessment of the degree to which parks and open spaces that have been assessed as of low quality and low value deliver positive outcomes for the borough as opposed to alternative uses.
- Management of the portfolio based around a reformed in-house service, an independent external special purpose vehicle or an established external partner organisation (either commercial or third sector). Democratic accountability would have to be built into the latter two options but these would have the added benefit of being politically independent.
- A set of set of KPI's around future maintenance and key outcomes for health, education, green infrastructure (linked to value assessment criteria)
- A mechanism for creating an endowment. The most sustainable approach for future funding will be to create a revenue-generating endowment to fund future management and maintenance. The Council should establish this as a core principal informing discussions around future management and construct management structures of sufficient flexibility to accommodate this aspiration.