

# Open Space and Outdoor Recreation

## Chapter 9

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## SCOPE OF CHAPTER

- 9.1 Open space is a vital component of the environment which is under increasing pressure from urban development. Planning provides the scope for control over its future use in the public interest.
- 9.2 The provision of a network of high quality open spaces and other outdoor leisure and recreation facilities can play an important role in enhancing the environment and can contribute significantly to the quality of life of residents and workers. These facilities can also reflect favourably on the image of the Borough, and play a part in retaining and attracting residents as well as new business investment. They are therefore key to regeneration and the creation of a stronger local economy, important aspects of the Council's Vision for the Borough.
- 9.3 Recreation facilities are also crucial for health and community well-being, and are often a focal point for local civic pride. Increasing leisure time over the next decade will intensify the demand for open space and recreation facilities. People's leisure aspirations are becoming wider and where appropriate the Council will seek opportunities to extend the range of facilities available, either through its own resources or in partnership with the private or voluntary sectors.
- 9.4 This Chapter sets out policies and proposals for open space, outdoor sport, recreation, and children's play areas. Some aspects of this chapter interrelate with topics covered elsewhere in this Plan, in particular provision of footpaths and cycleways in the Transport Chapter; nature conservation and waterways issues in the Environmental Quality Chapter; and indoor sports in the Leisure and Indoor Recreation Chapter.

## VISION FOR THE FUTURE

- 9.5 By the end of the Plan period there will be an increase in the overall amount of publicly accessible and useable open space available to the public for recreation, as well as major improvements to the attractiveness, image, environmental quality and biodiversity of open spaces in the Borough, especially in the town centres and densely populated residential areas. Stratford, the Borough's largest town centre, will be connected by an open space link to the Lee Valley Regional Park, which in turn will be connected southwards with the rest of the Lower Lea Valley, the Bow Creek Ecology Park (in the Limmo Peninsula) and the Royal Docks through a green chain network of river and canal-side walkways.
- 9.6 The Royal Docks will provide magnificent quayside walks connected to Beckton District Park. These will connect with a Thames footpath / cycleway to the 'leisure arc' of landscaped green spaces and woodlands stretching from the former Beckton Gas Works site through to Barking Creek northwards up the Roding Valley, via a green chain network of footpaths and cycleways, eventually linking with Wanstead Flats, Epping Forest and the countryside of Essex and Hertfordshire. The 'Greenway' running east and west across the Borough will provide an alternative footpath and cycle route between the Lea and Roding Valleys.
- 9.7 Small open spaces valued by local residents and workers, especially in areas of local park deficiency, will be protected, and where opportunities arise, new areas created. Communities will be encouraged to be involved in the improvement and care of their local open spaces, particularly through current initiatives such as the Government's New Deal (Environment Task Force), the Local Agenda 21 process and work spearheaded through organisations such as the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, the Lower Lea Project and others.
- 9.8 There will be more choice of outdoor sport and recreational facilities. New family housing schemes will provide children's play facilities that are safe and properly overlooked.
- 9.9 In order to realise this vision, the Council has developed a set of objectives and a strategy which are detailed below. These, together with the assessment of current issues, have guided the formulation of policies contained in this Chapter.

## OBJECTIVES

- 9.10 The Council's objectives for open space and outdoor recreation are as follows:
- a) to safeguard existing open space and recreational buildings;
  - b) to secure the improvement of the quality of these facilities and heavily used public open spaces in town centres, as well as damaged and derelict areas of Metropolitan Open Land in the Roding and Lea valleys;

- c) to seek the optimum use of these resources;
- d) to secure new open space and recreational facilities that will be valued by local people; and
- e) to improve access to a range of open space and recreational facilities for local people.

## STRATEGY

- 9.11 Key structural elements of open space in Newham will be targeted for improvements and new open space provided, i.e. the Lea Valley, including the Stratford Rail Lands, the Roding Valley including the former Beckton Gas Works site and the Greenway.
- 9.12 These areas have an intrinsic value but will also have a crucial part to play in providing linked public open spaces, other more informal green spaces and waterways and more importantly, increasing access and choice for local people.
- 9.13 The Royal Docks and the River Thames will be exploited as recreational resources for active and passive uses
- 9.14 The Council will improve the environmental quality and maximise the use of the public open space it controls, for example its public parks and green spaces in residential areas. Short term uses of vacant and under-utilised land will be encouraged as play areas, temporary woodland and allotments, for example.
- 9.15 New development, particularly housing, will not be expected to increase pressure on the use of existing open space but contribute to overall provision and improved access to open space and recreation across the Borough.

## CURRENT ISSUES

- 9.16 In overall terms, Newham is deficient in open space and some parts of the Borough have a chronic lack of local green space and outdoor activity areas. Newham has a number of high quality public parks, open spaces, play areas, and sports grounds. However, the overall amount of open space is the fifth lowest of all the London boroughs. Many areas in the Borough do not conform to the recommended hierarchy of open space detailed by the former London Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC) in their 'Advice on Strategic Planning Guidance for London' (1994) (Please refer to Appendix OS1). Overall the Borough falls well short of the National Playing Fields Association standard of 2.43 hectares of playing space per 1000 population. The current level of provision is 255 hectares for 236,000 people, the equivalent of 1,1 hectares per 1,000 population.
- 9.17 The Borough is also deficient in educational playing field provision. The majority of schools do not have their own playing fields with many having to share with other schools. Overall, the Borough's schools continue to fall short of the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) requirements contained in the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1996. Local Management of Schools has also generally made educational sports fields less available to the general public.
- 9.18 The need to protect open space has been recognised by the Government in PPG17. Future demand for outdoor sports and recreation is identified in London Sport's 'A Sporting Capital: The Regional Recreation Strategy for London' (1994) and 'A Playing Fields Strategy for London' (1990).
- 9.19 These documents show that sports and health activities are increasing. There is also a rise in wildlife and conservation leisure pursuits such as bird watching and practical conservation work. The provision of a greater range of high quality publicly accessible outdoor leisure facilities will contribute significantly to enhancing Newham's image as an attractive place to live and work.
- 9.20 Outdoor recreation facilities in terms of tennis courts, football pitches and bowling greens are provided mostly by the Council and located in parks around the Borough. The Council also supports a water activities project in the Royal Victoria Dock. The Royal Docks are also home for rowing, canoeing, wet biking and water skiing. The Council has identified an under provision of floodlit, all weather sports surfaces. The quality of the majority of outdoor facilities is good, although some lack adequate changing facilities. Hockey and cricket pitches are in great demand and Sport England has identified the need for further facilities. Wherever possible, the Council will work in partnership with other agencies and the private and voluntary sectors to extend the range and quantity of outdoor recreation facilities.

## POLICIES FOR OPEN SPACE AND OUTDOOR RECREATION

### Open Space

9.21 Open space is an essential component of the urban environment. It enhances the local quality of life, provides a 'sense of place', defines community boundaries and adds to the character and identity of an area. Open space creates green breaks in the built environment, softening and adding colour. Open space can be used for exercise and quiet relaxation; as a meeting place; for children's play; education in a natural setting; for outdoor sports; and as a place where nature can flourish; and a place to preserve cultural or historic features.

### Open Space Standards and Proposed New Public Open Space

9.22 Appendix OS1 shows the standards of public open space recommended by LPAC. These standards are based on distances from open space. Areas with a Local Park deficiency are shown indicatively on Map OS1. These are areas more than 0.4km from a Local Park. The Council will seek to achieve the LPAC standard. This can only be achieved in the longer term in much of the Borough. Considerable new housing provision is proposed south of the A13 and it may be possible to achieve the standard in this area in a shorter time scale for the increased population.

9.23 LPAC in 'Open Space Planning in London' (1992) state that in Newham there are 794 persons per hectare of public open space. However, according to the Council's latest estimate there are only 253 hectares of public open space, that is, one hectare of public open space per 933 persons in the Borough.

**POLICY OS1:** THE COUNCIL IS COMMITTED TO SECURING THE OPEN SPACE STANDARDS SET OUT IN APPENDIX OS1. FOR THE PURPOSE OF INCREASING PROVISION THROUGHOUT THE BOROUGH, PUBLIC OPEN SPACES ARE PROPOSED AT:

- A) BECKTON GAS WORKS LANDS (PROPOSAL MOZ12);
- B) ASHBURTON ANNEXE AND SOPHIA ROAD (PROPOSALS OS4 AND OS5); AND
- C) STRATFORD RAIL LANDS (PROPOSAL MOZ1).

9.24 Within Major Opportunity Zones, the extent and location of new and improved public open space will be determined in consultation with the relevant parties as part of the preparation of Urban Framework Plans, in accordance with Policy S6 in Part 1 of the Plan.

9.25 In the provision of new public open space, existing features of nature conservation importance will be incorporated.

9.26 The Ashburton Annexe and Sophia Road sites are to be provided as a replacement for land likely to be lost due to the widening of the A13. The Sophia Road site should provide a grass sports pitch space. Ashburton Annexe is proposed as a protected site of nature conservation importance, which may include an ecomaze, woodland, study area, and children's play area.

### Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land: Protection and Enhancement

9.27 The purpose of London's Green Belt can be defined as combining a presumption against inappropriate development which would compromise its open character, with a proactive intention to preserve and enhance the landscape and achieve better public access for formal and informal recreation. This principle of control over development in the Green Belt set out in PPG2 also applies to Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) (RPG3 1996). MOL is open space of strategic significance, either because it forms a green chain (see paragraphs 9.32 - 9.35 and Policy OS6) or because it contributes to the physical structure of the area by separating built-up urban parts of the Borough and being clearly distinguishable from them. MOL also provides large-scale opportunities for open space activities such as sport and cultural activities as well as more informal activities such as walking. They can also serve as significant 'green lungs' in dense urban settings providing interesting landscaping and ecological features, urban woodlands, nature reserves and havens for wildlife. A number of criteria for the designation of MOL and appropriate use of such land and the Green Belt are listed in Appendix OS2. Applications for development of uses other than those listed will normally be refused. In accordance with the advice in PPG2 applications for inappropriate development will be refused except where justified by very special circumstances which clearly outweigh the harm caused by its inappropriateness and any other harm. However, MOZ designation is not intended to restrict potential plans of organisations such as Thames Water in carrying

out their statutory functions. While these criteria are based on LPAC's 1994 Advice, they have been modified by the Council to reflect local conditions.

- 9.28 Within the area of MOL which lies within the Lee Valley Regional Park, the general uses, together with associated buildings, which are appropriate in MOL, together with more intensive uses (which may involve built development) and which fall within the remit of the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority, may be permitted, subject to the policies and proposals of the Lee Valley Regional Park Plan. Such uses should be designed and located to improve the environment of the site, to have a minimal impact on surrounding areas, to conserve, enhance or improve the Park's landscape and to safeguard the amenity and future development of the Park. Overall any use should be sympathetic to its MOL setting.
- 9.29 In all cases, development and use of the Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land must complement its open character, nature conservation value and recreational use and seek to improve access to and enjoyment of the designated area. The Council will normally require developers to provide an environmental assessment of any proposed project. Full public access to all areas of water will normally be required. More intensive uses may be permitted within the Lee Valley Regional Park, subject to the development initiatives of the Park Authority.
- 9.30 Parts of the designated area of MOL have potential for environmental improvement and greater public access. Many of the areas of land which make up MOL are not greatly utilised because they are in a poor state of repair or are inaccessible to the general public.

**POLICY OS2:** BY RESTRICTING DEVELOPMENT OR LAND USE TO THOSE INCLUDED IN APPENDIX OS2, THE COUNCIL WILL SAFEGUARD THE OPEN CHARACTER OF GREEN BELT AND METROPOLITAN OPEN LAND IN THE BOROUGH LISTED BELOW AND DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP:

- A) PART OF WANSTEAD FLATS AND THE CITY OF LONDON CEMETERY;
- B) PART OF THE RODING VALLEY;
- C) PART OF THE LEA VALLEY; AND
- D) BECKTON DISTRICT PARK.

**POLICY OS3:** EXCEPT FOR THE POSSIBLE CONSTRUCTION OF A HIGHWAY LINK TO THE STRATFORD RAIL LANDS, WITHIN THE AREA OF THE METROPOLITAN OPEN LAND, WHICH LIES WITHIN THE LEE VALLEY REGIONAL PARK AS INDICATED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, DEVELOPMENT WILL BE LIMITED TO THAT WHICH ACCORDS WITH THE POLICIES AND PROPOSALS OF THE LEE VALLEY REGIONAL PARK PLAN.

**POLICY OS4:** IN ORDER TO ENHANCE THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND INCREASE THE USE AND ENJOYMENT OF METROPOLITAN OPEN LAND, THE COUNCIL WILL ENCOURAGE MEASURES TO:

- A) IMPROVE PUBLIC ACCESS, EXCEPT WHERE THE EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC IS NECESSARY ON SAFETY GROUNDS;
- B) RESTORE DAMAGED OR DERELICT LAND; AND
- C) WHERE APPROPRIATE PROVIDE URBAN WOODLAND AREAS, ECOLOGICAL FEATURES AND DENSE LANDSCAPING.

### **Lee Valley Regional Park Proposals**

- 9.31 The Lee Valley Regional Park Authority (LVRPA) was established in 1966 by an Act of Parliament, with a remit to develop the Lea Valley as a place for the occupation of leisure, recreation, games, amusements or any similar activity, for the provision of nature reserves and enjoyment of entertainment of any kind. The LVRPA is required to prepare a plan of proposals for the future use and development of the Park. The Lee Valley Regional Park Plan has recently been reviewed to ensure its policies and proposals help to promote the future sustainable management and development of the Park and its resources (April 2000). Under the 1966 Park Act, the Council is required to include relevant parts of the Park Plan within its development plan. These are given in Appendix OS4. British Waterways is the navigation authority as well as the owner of the greatest part of the waterway in the Park area, including Bow Back rivers and associated towpaths.

**POLICY OS5:** THE COUNCIL SUPPORTS THE LEE VALLEY REGIONAL PARK AUTHORITY'S PROPOSALS TO INCREASE THE RANGE AND QUALITY OF LEISURE AND AMENITY PROVISIONS WITHIN THE NEWHAM

SECTION OF THE LEE VALLEY REGIONAL PARK. THE COUNCIL SPECIFICALLY SUPPORTS AND WILL ENCOURAGE THE PARK AUTHORITY IN ITS PROPOSALS:

- A) TO IMPROVE ACCESS BOTH TO AND WITHIN THE PARK FOR PEOPLE WITHOUT PRIVATE TRANSPORT;
- B) TO DEVELOP FOOTPATH AND CYCLE NETWORKS THROUGHOUT THE PARK, INCORPORATING A PATH WHICH EXTENDS ALONG THE LENGTH OF THE VALLEY AND GREENWAY;
- C) TO DEVELOP RECREATION AND LEISURE FACILITIES THAT INCREASE THE CHOICE OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS AND VISITORS;
- D) TO CREATE A COHESIVE, SUSTAINABLE AND VALUED GREEN LUNG;
- E) TO CREATE AN AREA OF ENHANCED AND PROTECTED NATURAL BIODIVERSITY; AND
- F) TO ACHIEVE THE UTILISATION OF THE UNIQUE LAND AND WATER ASSETS FOR SPECIALIST LEISURE AND RECREATION FACILITIES DEVELOPED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABILITY AND DESIGN EXCELLENCE.

### **Green Chains: Development and Implementation**

9.32 Green chains comprise a series of elongated undeveloped green spaces, which ideally incorporate footpaths that link what are otherwise separate broader areas of open space such as parks, woodlands, nature reserves and flatlands. The pattern of open land which results helps to define parts of the Borough, especially where the chains follow topographic features, such as the Roding and Lower Lea valleys on the eastern and western fringes of the Borough respectively. Implemented green chains include walking or cycling routes that provide easy access between areas of open land, and provide relief from the urban built-up part of the Borough and the effects of traffic. Green chains can also serve as wildlife corridors, and play an important role in enhancing ecological diversity by providing a range of habitats and interesting landscape features.

9.33 Long distance walking routes in Newham are being implemented by a range of organisations. The London Walking Forum provides a focus for co-ordination and advice in expanding the network, especially across borough boundaries. Such walking routes provide not only a leisure function, but contribute to achieving a more sustainable transport system. While much has already been achieved in implementing the green chain network in the lower Lea valley, and the Greenway which horizontally crosses the Borough, the network has not yet extended to most of the Thames and the Roding Valley.

9.34 In the Borough's Major Opportunity Zones, the location and function of green chains will be defined more precisely in Urban Framework Plans for these areas, which are being prepared in accordance with Policy S8 in Part 1 of the Plan. Development within these areas and adjoining sites will be expected to contribute to the implementation of the green chains identified in these development briefs and framework plans.

9.35 The Council wishes to promote the extension of the proposed green chains and create new ones. Where appropriate, the Council will seek to link open spaces, schools with sports fields, green chains, Metropolitan Open Land and Green Belt. It may be possible to achieve this working together with land owners and developers to include or extend public rights of way and green spaces on existing and future development sites. In addition the Council will seek to prevent developments which would sever green chains or areas of linked open space.

**POLICY OS6:** SUBJECT TO THE PROVISIONS OF POLICIES EQ1 AND EQ2 IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY CHAPTER, THE COUNCIL WILL SEEK TO DEVELOP A 'GREEN CHAIN' AS SHOWN INDICATIVELY ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, ALONG PARTS OF THE RIVER THAMES, THE RODING VALLEY, THE GREENWAY, THE LEA VALLEY, AND THE ROYAL DOCKS. THE CO-OPERATION OF NEIGHBOURING BOROUGHES, DEVELOPERS, LANDOWNERS, AND THE PRIVATE, COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY SECTORS WILL BE SOUGHT IN ESTABLISHING THAT PART OF A NORTH EAST LONDON GREEN CHAIN IN NEWHAM.

### **Green Space: Protection**

9.36 The Government recognises the value of open space and playing fields in urban areas in PPG17 which states: 'use of land as open space is no less important than other uses. Once built on, open space is likely to be lost to the community

forever. Planning decisions resulting in the development of open space should, therefore, take into account the long term impact of the loss of such space.'

- 9.37 Green space is land in both public and private ownership which is worthy of retention for its significant amenity or environmental value, or its potential in these respects. The value of green space lies in the amenity it provides for its users, for surrounding built up areas and for the wider environment. In addition to its leisure, recreational, nature conservation, historic or social role, in every case green space constitutes a break in the urban area, contrasting with the built development.
- 9.38 The Council has considered the current levels of green space provision and deficiencies within the Borough, in accordance with Government guidance contained in PPG17. It has balanced the needs for different land uses and the community's long-term requirements for green space. Given the extent of open space deficiencies (Please refer to Map OS1) and the lack of opportunities for creating new green spaces in many parts of the Borough, there will be a strong presumption in favour of the protection of such sites.
- 9.39 In identifying green space, the Council has excluded brownfield sites which are regarded as suitable for redevelopment and designated for a variety of uses such as housing, employment and built community and leisure facilities on the UDP Proposals Map. Green space comes in two main forms. Firstly, open space used principally for formal and informal recreation such as parks, small open spaces, sports grounds, playing fields and allotments. Secondly, buildings set in substantial grounds or with attached open or landscaped areas, such as religious buildings, hospitals and schools. It includes both public and private open space irrespective of whether it has general public access or not. Existing green space of 0.2 hectares or more is identified on the Proposals Map, while small green spaces are listed in Appendix OS3. Green space will be identified more precisely in Urban Framework Plans for Major Opportunity Zones (MOZs). The function of these green spaces will vary from area to area. In some MOZs the designation will reflect the need to provide green space for recreational needs or to protect and enhance a site of nature conservation importance, whilst in others it will reflect the requirement for development to include a high quality landscape setting that provides an attractive break in the urban environment.
- 9.40 Exceptions to the general rule that green space should be protected will be considered in the following circumstances. Firstly, redevelopment or expansion of existing buildings currently set in open space may be considered where it can be demonstrated that it is in the wider public interest, subject to a proper assessment. Secondly, development of small green spaces outside areas of local park deficiency that are poorly designed, badly located or vandalised may be favourably considered, where retention would deny the opportunity to secure an otherwise acceptable development. In areas of local park deficiency as defined on Map OS1, the loss of green space will be resisted.

**POLICY OS7:** THE COUNCIL WILL SAFEGUARD GREEN SPACE BY PERMITTING ONLY SUITABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR RECREATION, LEISURE OR NATURE CONSERVATION PURPOSES. EXCEPTIONS MAY BE CONSIDERED WHERE:

- A) AN EQUIVALENT OR IMPROVED REPLACEMENT FACILITY CAN BE PROVIDED IN THE LOCALITY; OR
- B) THE REDEVELOPMENT OR EXTENSION OF BUILDINGS CURRENTLY SET IN GREEN SPACE OR OPEN LANDSCAPED GROUNDS WOULD NOT RESULT IN LOSS OF ENVIRONMENTAL AMENITY; OR
- C) SMALL GREEN SPACES OUTSIDE AREAS OF LOCAL PARK DEFICIENCY CONSTITUTE AN ENVIRONMENTAL NUISANCE, CANNOT REASONABLY BE IMPROVED AND DO NOT MEET LOCAL NEED.

DEVELOPMENT OF GREEN SPACE WILL BE RESISTED IN AREAS OF LOCAL PARK DEFICIENCY AS DEFINED ON MAP OS1.

### **Green Space in New Housing Development**

- 9.41 The Government has stated in PPG3 that proposals for substantial new housing will often merit the creation of areas of open space. At present the level of open space in Newham as a whole is neither extensive nor distributed evenly enough to provide adequately for the whole of the existing population. Larger developments provide an opportunity to create significant areas of open space as part of the development. The Council considers that 100 or more dwellings constitutes substantial housing development in the context of Newham's housing market. This scale of development is felt to generate significant new demand for open space. The Council will negotiate with developers to provide an area of communal open space to meet the needs generated by the development. Developments which take place in a number

of phases will be assessed in terms of the overall capacity of the site. Where two separate development sites are adjacent the Council will aim to incorporate open spaces to form parks. Depending on local needs large housing schemes may also require sports and recreation facilities. Where development of 100 or more dwellings includes family housing, this should incorporate a play area if none is readily available in the vicinity (Please refer to Policy OS12: Children's Play Facilities in New Housing Development and Map OS2 (Children's Play Space Deficiency). The Council intends the policy below to be equally applied to development of flats as well as houses.

9.42 The Council accepts that the Borough's public open space deficiency cannot be eliminated easily and the recommended LPAC open space standard can only be achieved in the longer term. The Council will normally favour the creation of public open space in areas of open space deficiency but the provision of private open space will be taken into account as will the development impact on the character and amenity of the area as part of the negotiations with developers. In Major Opportunity Zones open space requirements will be identified through the preparation of Urban Framework Plans.

9.43 If housing development is on the edge of green space or within close walking distance, it may not be appropriate to require new open space as part of the development. However, in recognition of the fact that extra demand will be generated and increased pressure placed on the existing green space, contributions towards improvements to that green space will normally be sought. Improvements may include extensions to the range of facilities provided in green spaces such as public parks, landscaping schemes, play facilities, creation of areas of woodland, wildlife habitats or ecological features.

**POLICY OS8:** THE COUNCIL WILL NEGOTIATE WITH DEVELOPERS OF HOUSING SCHEMES OF 100 DWELLINGS OR MORE TO PROVIDE AN AREA OF OPEN SPACE WITHIN THE SITE TO MEET THE DEMANDS GENERATED BY THE DEVELOPMENT.

### **Management of Open Space**

9.44 The Council welcomes the creation of new open spaces within housing and other developments. However, without suitable management and maintenance arrangements they can become degraded and a nuisance to the community. They should either be adopted by the Council (if the necessary funds are made available) or become the responsibility of an adequately funded Management Company or other appropriate body.

### **Improvements to Parks and Public Open Spaces**

9.45 There may be few opportunities to create new green spaces, especially in densely populated areas and areas of local park deficiency (see Map OS1). In these cases, opportunities to increase access to existing green space should be explored. This might be achieved through pedestrian crossings on busy roads and railway lines, new gates, signposting and other measures.

**POLICY OS9:** IN AREAS OF LOCAL PARK DEFICIENCY (SEE MAP OS1) THE COUNCIL WILL SEEK TO IMPROVE THE RECREATIONAL AMENITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY OF EXISTING GREEN SPACE, BY:

- A) IMPROVING PHYSICAL ACCESS;
- B) EXTENDING THE RANGE OF RECREATIONAL AND PLAY FACILITIES, AND
- C) CREATING ECOLOGICAL AND LANDSCAPE FEATURES, WILDLIFE HABITATS AND WOODLAND AREAS;

THROUGH THE USE OF ITS OWN RESOURCES; AND WHERE APPROPRIATE, BY SEEKING CONTRIBUTIONS FROM DEVELOPERS.

## **OUTDOOR SPORTS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES**

### **Protection of Existing Facilities**

9.46 Newham's existing sports fields are unable to meet current demand. Teams from the Borough play on grounds in other areas and there is considerable demand for additional facilities. In particular, sports such as cricket, hockey and football have excess demand. Clubs and teams also require new synthetic pitches and training areas. The London Regional Sports Council produced 'A Playing Field Strategy for London' (1990) and 'A Sporting Capital: The Regional Recreation

Strategy for London' (1994) in which they indicate that London's playing field requirements are complex and interrelated and therefore cannot be assessed at a local or borough level.

**POLICY OS10:** PLANNING PERMISSION FOR ANY DEVELOPMENT WHICH WOULD RESULT IN THE LOSS OF FACILITIES FOR FORMAL AND INFORMAL OUTDOOR SPORT AND RECREATION WILL ONLY BE GRANTED WHERE THE FACILITIES WERE ORIGINALLY PROVIDED ON A TEMPORARY BASIS OR WHERE A SUITABLE EQUIVALENT FACILITY CAN BE PROVIDED IN THE LOCALITY. EDUCATIONAL PLAYING FIELDS ACCEPTED BY THE COUNCIL AS REDUNDANT WILL BE USED FOR MEETING WIDER SPORTS, LEISURE AND RECREATIONAL NEEDS.

9.47 The Council accepts that shortfalls in playing field provision cannot easily be met. Privately owned sports grounds already provide valuable facilities and successfully complement public provision. Thus Policy OS10 applies equally to both public and private facilities.

### **Water-based Sport and Recreation**

9.48 Opportunities for water-based sport and recreation range from regional facilities for rowing, canoeing and sailing, to locally based leisure, such as fishing and bird watching. The Royal Docks Management Authority (RODMA) holds a 225-year lease on the entire water area of the Royal Docks, together with all marine infrastructure, including locks and bridges. Its principal functions are to impound water and maintain its quality. There is already a range of recreational uses carried out in the docks by community and educational services aided by the Council, RODMA and Sport England. The Council envisages that regional and competition facilities for water-based sports will be mainly based in the Royal Albert and King George V Docks. More local and informal pursuits will be based in the Royal Victoria Dock. The potential exists to combine the needs of local people with regional facilities provided on a commercial basis in all three docks.

9.49 Although the major opportunities for water-based recreation are in the Royal Docks, there are considerable possibilities along waterways in the rest of the Borough. In particular, there is potential for sailing and canoeing on the River Lea and such activities will be encouraged in these areas and strategic facilities in the Royal Docks.

**POLICY OS11:** THE COUNCIL SUPPORTS THE LONDON COUNCIL FOR SPORT AND RECREATION'S OBJECTIVES FOR FURTHERING THE USE OF THE DOCKS FOR RECREATION WHICH STATE THAT:

- A) THERE SHOULD BE CONCURRENT PLANNING FOR LAND AND WATER DEVELOPMENT TO ENSURE APPROPRIATE LAND-BASED FACILITIES ARE PROVIDED TO MAXIMISE THE RECREATIONAL POTENTIAL OF THE WATER;
- B) COMMUNITY OR 'NEIGHBOURHOOD-BASED' WATER SPORTS CENTRES WILL BE SUPPORTED IN THE DOCKS FROM WHICH MORE SPECIALIST TRAINING AND ACTIVITY CAN DEVELOP;

SUBJECT TO THE PROVISIONS OF OTHER POLICIES IN THE PLAN, THE COUNCIL WILL ALSO SUPPORT PROPOSALS FOR SUITABLE WATER-BASED RECREATIONAL FACILITIES ALONG RIVERS, CANALS AND WATERWAYS.

### **Access**

9.50 The Council is committed to an accessible environment. Please refer to Policy EQ25 in the Environmental Quality Chapter and its justification for an introduction to access issues and general policy. The Council's access policy applies to open areas as well as the built environment.

### **Children's Play Facilities in New Housing Development**

9.51 Newham has the highest proportion of children of any local authority area in Britain. 10% of the population is under five years old (ONS 2000). The number of women, particularly those with young children returning to work will grow in the next ten years. Many play areas require improvement. Several open spaces have inappropriate equipment, redundant tarmac areas, grass with no purpose and a lack of safety surfaces. It is important that children's safety is given high priority while designing play facilities.

9.52 It is important that children and their carers should be within easy reach of play areas and that play provision should be safe and exciting. According to standards recommended by the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA), Newham is

deficient in play areas for children. The Council estimates that by the year 2006 a minimum of 12 hectares of additional play space will be required. The NPFA also recommends 200 metres as the maximum distance that ages 0-5 years should have to travel from home to an outdoor play space. The substantial areas of outdoor children's play space deficiency are shown on Map OS2. These are areas of the Borough further than 200 metres from a play space, taking into account barriers such as major roads and railways. Thus Newham is deficient both in terms of overall provision and distribution of children's play space.

9.53 PPG3 states that 'New family housing developments should include adequate provision of suitable areas for children's play, including informal play space, with safe pedestrian access'. PPG17 advises that it may be appropriate for local authorities to enter into planning obligations to secure such provision. Thus, where there is no play space within 200 metres walking distance of a family housing development, such provision will normally be required as part of the development. Outside these play space deficiency areas, a contribution may be sought towards improved facilities or pedestrian links to existing provision. SPG Note 'Residential Planning Guidelines' contains further guidance on the size, design and maintenance of play spaces.

**POLICY OS12:** DEVELOPERS OF HOUSING SITES CONTAINING A MINIMUM OF 25 FAMILY DWELLINGS WILL BE REQUIRED TO MAKE APPROPRIATE PROVISION FOR CHILDREN'S PLAYSPACE.

9.54 This policy is intended to be applied only to developments with dwellings suitable for family accommodation. A child's bedspace is defined as each bedroom in addition to the first double bedroom.

### Allotments

9.55 Cultivation of allotments is a popular activity enjoyed by many residents of the Borough. Newham has approximately 19 hectares of allotments with roughly 410 plots. The majority of plots are in the southern part of the Borough: Folkestone Road, the St. Mary's site, Leyes Road, Cyprus Road, Bridle Path, Connaught Road, Gooseley Lane and Reynolds Avenue. Beckton contains over 70% of the Borough's allotments. The north west and central parts of the Borough are poorly catered for, but opportunities for provision in these areas are limited.

9.56 In 1999 the Borough was short of the Thorpe Committee's recommendation (0.2 hectares of allotments per 1,000 population) by roughly 29 hectares. This shortfall is projected to rise to 31 hectares by 2006 without additional provision. In comparison, the Sports Council's recommendation of 2.75 hectares per 1000 population is considered to be unachievable within Newham. Demand is high with a waiting list in excess of 75 people. The Council believes that this is not a true representation of total demand and that there are many more potential users not on the waiting list.

**POLICY OS13:** THE COUNCIL WILL PROTECT THE LEVEL OF EXISTING ALLOTMENT PROVISION AND SECURE OPPORTUNITIES TO INCREASE SUPPLY, PARTICULARLY IN AREAS OF THE BOROUGH DEFICIENT IN PROVISION BY:

- A) PERMITTING DEVELOPMENT WHICH WOULD RESULT IN THE LOSS OF ALLOTMENTS ONLY WHERE APPROPRIATE REPLACEMENT SITES ARE MADE AVAILABLE OR WHERE IT CAN BE SHOWN THAT DEMAND FOR ALLOTMENTS DOES NOT EXIST; AND
- B) UTILISING POORLY USED OPEN SPACE AND SUITABLE VACANT SITES FOR ALLOTMENTS.

**SCHEDULE OF PROPOSALS : OPEN SPACE AND OUTDOOR RECREATION**

<b>Proposal No.</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Policy Ref. No.</b>	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Comment</b>
os1	Websters Land Grantham Road, E12	OS1	Extension to Ilford Park	Ongoing improvements to be implemented over the Plan period
os2	Roding Valley E6, E12	OS6	Creation of Green Chain	To be implemented over the Plan period
os3	Lea Valley/Royal Docks, E15, E16	OS5 OS6	Creation of Green Chain	To be implemented over the Plan period
os4	Ashburton Annexe, E16	OS1	Proposed environmental area, possibly with play facilities	Exchange land for open space likely to be lost as a result of proposed improvements to the A13. Commencement/completion dates not programmed.
os5	Sophia Road School Playground, E16	OS1	Likely to be used as a built play facility with an ornamental garden	Exchange land for open space likely to be lost as a result of proposed improvements to the A13. Commencement/completion dates not programmed.
MOZ1	Stratford Rail Lands, E15	OS1	New public open space	A element of open space is included in the Urban Framework Plan for the Stratford Rail Lands
MOZ9	Royal Albert Dock North Side, E16	OS6	Creation of Green Chain	As referred to in the Urban Regeneration Chapter Schedule of Proposals
MOZ14	Beckton Gas Works, Jenkins Lane South, E6	OS1	New public open space	As referred to in the Urban Regeneration Chapter Schedule of Proposals

## APPENDIX OS1:

### TYPES OF PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE OPEN SPACE

Type and Main Function	Approximate Size and Distance from Home	Characteristics
Regional Parks and Open Spaces (Linked Metropolitan Open Land and Green Belt corridors). Weekend and occasional visits by car or public transport	400 hectares/3.2-8 km	Large areas and corridors of natural heathland, downland, commons, woodlands and parkland also including areas not publicly accessible but which contribute to the overall environmental amenity. Primarily providing for informal recreation with some non-intensive active recreation uses. Car parking at key locations
Metropolitan Parks. Weekend and occasional visits by car or public transport	60 hectares / 3.2 km or more where the park is appreciably larger	Either (i) natural heathland, downland commons, woodlands, etc. or (ii) formal parks providing for both active and passive recreation. May contain playing fields, but at least 40 hectares for other pursuits. Adequate car parking
District Parks. Weekend and occasional visits by foot, cycle, car and short bus trips	20 hectares/1.2 km	Landscape setting with a variety of natural features providing for a wide range of activities, including outdoor sports facilities and playing fields, children's play for different age groups, and informal recreation pursuits. Should provide some car parking
Local Parks. Pedestrian visitors	2 hectares/0.4 km	Providing for court games, children's play, sitting out areas, nature conservation areas
Small Local Parks and Open Spaces. Pedestrian visits, especially by elders and children; particularly valuable in high density areas	under 2 hectares/less than 0.4 km	Gardens, sitting-out areas, children's playgrounds or other areas of a specialist nature, including nature conservation areas
Linear Open Spaces. Pedestrian visits	Variable/Wherever feasible	The Thames, canals, other waterways and associated open spaces and towpaths, paths, disused railways, nature conservation areas, and other routes which 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

Source: LPAC: 'Advice on Strategic Planning Guidance for London', 1994.

## APPENDIX OS2:

### CRITERIA FOR METROPOLITAN OPEN LAND

Metropolitan Open Land needs to be safeguarded as much as the Metropolitan Green Belt. It is strategically important open space, land or water (including the River Thames) in London, either publicly or privately owned, and with or without public access, which either:

- 1) contributes to establishing London's special identity; or
- 2) helps to separate and/or define London's distinctive communities; or
- 3) creates a positive and significant open space experience when used, passed or crossed by Londoners or visitors; or
- 4) accommodates sites of metropolitan importance in terms of landscape, buildings, structures, natural features and ecology; or special events of importance to London or a sector of London because of their rarity, special quality, historical association, importance to tourism, or attracts large numbers of participants; or
- 5) provides leisure or recreational amenities or facilities with a national, regional or London wide membership or membership covering more than two boroughs; or
- 6) forms a 'Green Chain' of related open spaces and linking footpaths, bridleways, riverside and canalside walks, and towpaths.

Source: LPAC (*Advice on Strategic Planning Guidance for London, 1994*), as modified by Newham Council.

### ACCEPTABLE USES IN METROPOLITAN OPEN LAND AND GREEN BELT

Provided in all cases that any ancillary buildings do not damage the open nature or character of the site, appropriate uses within Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land are:

- 1) Public and private open space and playing fields.
- 2) Agriculture, woodlands and orchards.
- 3) Rivers, canals, reservoirs, lakes, docks and other open water.
- 4) Golf courses.
- 5) Allotments and nursery gardens.
- 6) Cemeteries and associated crematoriums.
- 7) Nature conservation.

Source: LPAC (*Advice on Strategic Planning Guidance for London, 1994*), as modified by Newham Council.

**APPENDIX OS3:****LIST OF GREEN SPACES SMALLER THAN 0.2 HECTARES**

- |   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| 1. BLANEY CRESCENT (2 SITES)                              | 33. QUEENS TERRACE           |
| 2. LANGDON CRESCENT (2 SITES)                             | 34. PRINCESS TERRACE         |
| 3. SANDFORD ROAD  | 35. HYDE CLOSE               |
| 4. BARKING ROAD (OPPOSITE BARKING ROAD RECREATION GROUND) | 36. CLEGG STREET             |
| 5. ROMFORD ROAD (NORTH OF GRANTHAM ROAD)                  | 37. DAVIS STREET             |
| 6. DAINES CLOSE   | 38. SURREY STREET            |
| 7. GLADDING ROAD.   | 39. MORSE CLOSE              |
| 8. HIGH STREET NORTH (EAST OF SNOWSHILL ROAD)             | 40. HERMIT ROAD              |
| 9. ROCHFORD CLOSE   | 41. RICHMOND COURT           |
| 10. DREW ROAD   | 42. BEACONSFIELD ROAD        |
| 11. FIELD ROAD  | 43. CLIFF WALK               |
| 12. WINIFRED STREET                                       | 44. BARON WALK               |
| 13. GLOBE ROAD  | 45. FRANK STREET             |
| 14. FERNHILL STREET                                       | 46. SEATON CLOSE             |
| 15. ALBERT ROAD   | 47. EGHAM ROAD               |
| 16. WADDINGTON STREET                                     | 48. CHALK ROAD               |
| 17. LEYTON ROAD   | 49. BOTHA ROAD (2 SITES)     |
| 18. SILVERLAND STREET                                     | 50. SHEERWATER ROAD          |
| 19. VICARAGE LANE   | 51. YARROW CRESCENT          |
| 20. DENSHAM ROAD  | 52. AMBROSE CLOSE            |
| 21. PORTWAY   | 53. SWAN APPROACH            |
| 22. DIRLETON ROAD   | 54. WILKINSON ROAD           |
| 23. PLAISTOW GROVE  | 55. SHIPMAN ROAD             |
| 24. PIER ROAD   | 56. BRIDGELAND ROAD          |
| 25. MARCUS COURT  | 57. BOREHAM AVENUE           |
| 26. KERRISON ROAD (4 SITES)                               | 58. MUNDAY ROAD              |
| 27. BETTONS PARK (3 SITES)                                | 59. BURRARD ROAD             |
| 28. WORTHING CLOSE  | 60. ASHBURTON ROAD (3 SITES) |
| 29. BAKERS ROW  | 61. BRENT ROAD               |
| 30. CARPENTERS ROAD                                       | 62. FORDS PARK ROAD          |
| 31. LEGGAT ROAD   | 63. FORMUNT CLOSE            |
| 32. BISSON ROAD   | 64. TANT AVENUE              |
|   | 65. BURK STREET              |

## APPENDIX OS4:

### EXTRACT FROM THE LEE VALLEY PARK PLAN 2000

Extract of relevant proposals for that area of the Park within the London Borough of Newham. Please refer to the Park Plan for the full set of Proposals and Policies.

#### **7.6 AREA FOR LEISURE, REGIONAL SPORTING EXCELLENCE AND RECREATION WITH ENHANCED GREEN LINKS AND OPEN SPACE AVAILABLE FOR OUTDOOR SPORT, INFORMAL RECREATION AND NATURE CONSERVATION**

- b) Facilities at the Lee Valley Cycle Circuit to be improved to support a range of cycling disciplines from performance to excellence levels. Safe public access to the site, especially from adjoining residential areas to be defined clearly through the provision of marked paths and identifiable entrance points.
- c) Elevated land to be used to create significant landmarks to assist in the orientation and the perceptual linking of facilities.
- d) The wildlife habitat at Bully Point Nature Reserve to be managed, especially the existing wet woodland resource and public access into the area clearly defined. An alternative entrance into the area, through the adjoining allotment site, to be considered.
- e) Major improvements to public transport and to public access via footpath and cycle routes to be undertaken to link together adjoining leisure sites, especially as part of new leisure and recreational development. In particular, a safe segregated, pedestrian route into the Regional Park from Hackney Wick station to be provided.
- f) The environmental quality of this area to be raised through:
  - maintaining and extending existing green space;
  - strengthening the continuity of green links, especially those adjacent to the waterways; and
  - comprehensive improvements to the visual appearance and environment of major roads such as Waterden Road.
- h) The wildlife value of open space to be protected and managed as part of the urban habitat within the Regional Park. Pockets and verges of green space and small but highly visible sites which appear unused and have a negative impact on the Regional Park to be managed and maintained as green open space for wildlife and informal recreation.

#### **7.7 WATERSIDE GREEN SPACE FOR INFORMAL RECREATION WITH LINEAR ROUTES FORMING PART OF THE REGIONAL CYCLE AND FOOTPATH NETWORK AND WITH ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS TO INDUSTRIAL SITES AND WATER CORRIDORS**

In addition to Section-wide Proposals:

- a) Existing green open space on the eastern side of Stratford Marsh and along the waterside embankments to be protected, kept open, and brought into informal recreational use as part of the linear cycle and footpath network. Nature conservation interest within these spaces to be safeguarded.
- b) Environmental enhancement of routes along the waterways to be continued with the retention and interpretation of the special waterway character and identity of the area and the opening up of pedestrian and cycle access.
- c) Industrial sites and buildings to be brought into Regional Park – compatible use in the longer term.
- d) Major land use changes and development within the adjoining Stratford Rail Lands to complement the informal, open and waterside recreational spaces within the Regional Park, and provide opportunities for the provision of new leisure facilities, green spaces, habitat creation and activities involving the waterways.

**PW7 Lee Valley Pathway Corridor**

- b) The route of the Lee Valley Pathway to be secured and provided as part of new development on land within and adjoining the Regional Park.
- c) Connecting paths to be established, especially from the residential and industrial areas in the east and from the Low Hall area. Key entrance points onto the route to be created at Coppermill Lane, Lea Bridge Road, Eastway and Carpenters Road.

**8.1 REGIONAL VISITOR ATTRACTION BASED AROUND THE INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE OF THE THREE MILLS SITE, ITS OPEN SPACES AND WATERWAYS, PROVIDING FOR PERFORMANCE ARTS, FAMILY EVENTS, EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND FILM MAKING**

In addition to Section-wide Proposals:

- a) Visitor attractions to be centred in and around the core of the Three Mills Island along Three Mill Lane, with the House Mill and Miller's House providing the main focus of activity. Refurbishment of buildings on the southern part of the Island, consistent with its heritage conservation status, to be supported where these further the existing film studio, events and entertainment activities or introduce other leisure uses. Use of the Clock Mill for leisure purposes with visitor access to be achieved.
- b) The openness of Three Mills Green to be protected and its informal recreational use retained. Its development as a major focus for performance arts, events and cultural activities, for both a regional and local audience to continue.
- c) The remaining green space on Mill Meads to be retained and a footpath created through to the residential areas to the east. Landscaping to enhance views of the Abbey Mills Pumping Station and improve the waterside areas adjoining the Prescott channel to be undertaken.
- d) The green pedestrian and cycle links to be safeguarded and improved as recreational, wildlife and heritage trails. Increased public access into and through the southern part of the Three Mills Island to be encouraged and links to the Abbey Mills Pumping Station and provision for visitor access explored.
- e) The use of the waterways as a means of access to the area and for more general recreational facilities and events to be developed further, provided there is no harm to their ecological value and potential.
- f) Pedestrian access between Bromley by Bow station and Three Mills Island to be enhanced to create a safe, attractive entrance and route into the Regional Park.

**8.2 BOW CREEK WATERSIDE GATEWAY WITH GOOD PUBLIC TRANSPORT CONNECTIONS AND PATHWAY LINKS. ECOLOGICAL RESOURCES AND HERITAGE FEATURES PROTECTED AND DEVELOPED AS PART OF AN INTEGRATED VISITOR ATTRACTION**

In addition to Section-wide Proposals:

- a) Bow Creek Ecology Park to be managed and developed as a demonstration centre for nature conservation projects, habitat creation and alternative energy projects with emphasis on recreational use. Public access to be managed and extended when appropriate.
- c) Water based trips and themed trails to be developed in conjunction with other sites in the Regional Park and along the Thames.
- e) Pedestrian and cycle links between Bow Creek Ecology Park and the East India Dock Basin to be maintained and enhanced with the addition of safe, attractive crossing points of the A13 highway that divides the two sites.
- f) Pedestrian routes between this area and the local DLR stations and other public transport nodes to be clearly identified and waymarked.

**PR8 Lee Valley Pathway and Lee/Thames Link**

In addition to Park-wide Proposal PW7:

- a) The route along Greenway and the towpath of Three Mills Wall River to be improved and missing links or bridging points completed.
- b) An extension to the Lee Valley Pathway, the Lee/Thames Link, to be created alongside the River Lea, from Three Mills South to the Thames. Redevelopment of the British Gas site to include the provision of the Lee / Thames Link along the western boundary of the site with links through to residential areas to the east. Important wildlife habitats alongside this section of the route such as the reed beds and scrub vegetation to be protected.
- c) Connecting links into Bow Creek and the East India Dock Basin to be implemented and routes from Canning Town station to the Lee Valley Pathway to be signposted and promoted.