



Parks and open spaces strategy 2008-2018



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Parks and Open Spaces Strategy
2008-2018

London Borough of
Hammersmith and Fulham

Contents

1.	INTRODUCTION	5
1.1	STRATEGIC BACKGROUND	5
1.2	DEFINITION OF OPEN SPACE	6
1.3	OPEN SPACE STUDY 2006	6
1.4	RESIDENT’S OPEN SPACE NEEDS	6
1.5	THE PARKS & OPEN SPACES STRATEGY 2008 -2018	7
1.6	THE VISION FOR PARKS AND OPEN SPACES IN HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM	7
2.	LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT FOR PARKS AND OPEN SPACES.....	9
2.1	THE NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK	9
2.2	THE LONDON PLAN (GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY).....	9
2.3	THE MAYOR OF LONDON’S BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY	10
2.4	LONDON PLAN GUIDANCE – PROVIDING FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S PLAY SPG	10
2.5	HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM COMMUNITY STRATEGY 2007 - 2014	10
2.6	UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN (<i>SEE APPENDIX 2 FOR MORE DETAIL</i>).....	11
2.8	LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK	11
3.	PARKS AND OPEN SPACES IN HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM	13
3.1	INTRODUCTION	13
3.2	GENERAL OPEN SPACE PROVISION AND NEED	13
3.3	HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM OPEN SPACES BY SIZE.....	13
3.4	HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM OPEN SPACES BY TYPE.....	13
3.5	SPECIFIC PROVISION	15
3.7	FUTURE NEEDS	17
3.8	ADDRESSING DEFICIENCY AND FUTURE NEEDS.....	17
4.	PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND SURVEYS	19
4.1	METHODOLOGY	19
4.2	HIGHLIGHTS FROM CONSULTATION	20
5.	STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM	21
5.1	PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT	21
5.2	STRATEGIC VISION FOR PARKS AND OPEN SPACES	22
6.	PARKS & OPEN SPACES STRATEGY ACTIONS	23
6.1	PROTECTING EXISTING OPEN SPACE	23
6.2	ADDRESSING DEFICIENCIES IN OPEN SPACE, PLAY SPACE AND ACCESS TO LOCAL BIODIVERSITY	23
6.3	CREATING ATTRACTIVE, ACCESSIBLE SPACES FOR ALL	23
6.4	IMPROVING THE STANDARD OF MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE.....	24
6.5	ACTIVELY INVOLVING THE COMMUNITY IN THEIR LOCAL OPEN SPACES.....	25
6.6	INCREASING PARTICPATION IN OPEN SPACES	25
7	IMPLEMENTING THE PARKS AND OPEN SPACES STRATEGY	26
7.1	THE PARKS & OPEN SPACES STEERING GROUP	26
7.2	THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.....	26
7.3	FURTHER WORK AND RESEARCH.....	27
7.4	MONITORING AND REVIEW	27
APPENDIX 1	UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN.....	29

Parks & Open Spaces Strategy 2008-2018

1. Introduction

Hammersmith and Fulham is small, densely populated West London Borough where parks and open spaces are fundamental to residents' quality of life. People who live, work and play in Hammersmith and Fulham use the borough's parks and open spaces extensively to escape city life, enjoy peaceful relaxation, play with their children, spend time with each other, appreciate nature and enjoy games and physical activity.

It is a borough of contrasts: with some of the wealthiest households in the country and some of the poorest in significant pockets of deprivation, where reducing crime and improving the environment are key to improving residents' quality of life. According to the 1998 survey of residents regarding parks and open spaces, whilst 56% of people in the borough had access to a private garden, this accessibility to private open space decreases the further residents live from public open space. With high density living increasing, a commitment to improving the borough's parks and open spaces for all will make the most of what the borough has to offer.

Clean, green and award winning parks and open spaces where residents can relax and enjoy a variety of activities and events in an attractive and safe setting are key to delivering the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham's vision of a 'Borough of Opportunity' for all residents. In particular to delivering on the Community Plan priority of a cleaner, greener borough.

1.1 Strategic background

The Parks and Open Spaces Strategy is an informative document for the emerging Local Development Framework (which determines the borough's planning framework) and will form part of the evidence base for future development plans. The content and structure of the Strategy is based on guidance in the London Plan Best Practice Guidance for the preparation of Open Space Strategies.

The Strategy will also be important for delivering 'The Borough of Opportunity' envisaged in the Borough's Community Strategy (2007-14), in particular the following key objectives:

- *Tackling Crime and Antisocial Behaviour,*
- *Delivering a Cleaner Greener Borough,*
- *Setting the framework for a healthy borough,*
- *Delivering high quality, value for money public services and*
- *Regenerating the most deprived parts of the borough.*

The Parks and Open Spaces Strategy has links to other Council strategies, including those for the local environment, sport and recreation, culture and children's play. The document will be essential for attracting external funding to improve the open space network of the borough and for providing supporting evidence for the development of the Community Infrastructure Levy and negotiated planning (Section 106) contributions linked to open space.

1.2 Definition of Open Space

Though a wider definition of open space would encompass all accessible open space (such as town squares etc), the focus of this Strategy will be on green open spaces and will include the following:

- Parks;
- Playing Fields and Sports Pitches;
- Allotments;
- Nature Conservation Sites;
- Cemeteries and Churchyards;
- Ecological Corridors (River Thames, Grand Union Canal and Railway corridors);
- Public Squares and Streetscapes;
- Play areas;
- Housing Open Spaces.

1.3 Open Space Study 2006

A comprehensive study of the **supply** of open space in Hammersmith and Fulham was undertaken in 2006 by the Environment Services Department of the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. This study concluded that all Hammersmith and Fulham's open spaces would benefit from improvements to the provision of facilities and management. Parks projects and regeneration schemes should address as a priority:

- Deficiencies in the amount of open space;
- Improvements to key parks within identified deficiency areas (including Furnivall Gardens, Frank Banfield Park, Cathnor Park and Wendell Park);
- Improving signage and landscaping along the Thames Path;
- Balancing conflicting community uses of open spaces;
- Improving accessibility of existing sites: through improvements to access for disabled people, provision of cycle parking and safer street crossings around open spaces.
- Improve the linkages between open spaces for people and wildlife;
- Raise awareness of open spaces and recreational opportunities through promotion and directional signage;
- Enabling community access to sports facilities at school sites
- Investigating alternative forms of provision – such as indoor facilities to supplement outdoor facilities.

1.4 Resident's Open Space Needs

The last major survey of borough residents' open space **needs** was undertaken in 1996 and a report published in 1998. The survey sought opinions and information from a cross section of residents and examined whether these varied across different sectors of the local community. The Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2008 – 2018 outlines actions to undertake an update of the 1998 survey and to implement an extensive programme of user surveys to understand how open spaces are used, what people like and dislike about their parks, 10 years on from the original survey.

1.5 The Parks & Open Spaces Strategy 2008 - 2018

Hammersmith and Fulham's Parks & Open Spaces Strategy encompasses all public and private open spaces across the borough including parks, open spaces, housing open land and civic spaces. It is based on the results of audits, surveys and ongoing consultation and is aligned with key national and regional guidance on open space.

The purpose of the Strategy is to coordinate improvements in provision, quality, management, and accessibility and to promote the use and enjoyment of parks and open spaces to more individuals and groups in the community. Facilities will be improved in response to areas of deficiency identified in the 2006 Open Space Study (Supply) and the Residents Survey (2008).

The Parks and Open Spaces Strategy will provide a framework for the delivery of services and future improvement actions for the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, and our community partners and stakeholders involved in providing, managing and enjoying open spaces across the borough. This will involve working in partnership both within the council and with external partners and stakeholders, including local residents' and friends' groups. The Strategy will be monitored and reviewed annually to ensure we are working towards the Parks and Open Spaces vision.

The Strategy will be essential in:

- Presenting a framework for protecting and improving Hammersmith and Fulham's parks and open spaces network;
- Raising standards of open space management and maintenance;
- Informing decision-making for the future of parks and open spaces;
- Supporting policy development for open space in the borough's Local Development Framework and when negotiating planning obligations;
- Determining capital expenditure on parks and open spaces;
- Linking into borough wide programmes such as Building Schools for the Future, the Play Builders project; Neighbourhood Renewal Areas and the Local Area Agreements;
- Working with partners such as Groundwork West London, and the Thames Strategy(Kew to Chelsea).

1.6 The Vision for Parks and Open Spaces in Hammersmith and Fulham

A vision and six key priorities have been developed from the results of consultation, the Open Space Study and the Council's wider priorities. These are outlined below:

To improve the quality of life for all people in Hammersmith and Fulham through the provision of award winning parks and open spaces that are clean, green, safe and sustainable, by:

- **Protecting existing open space.**
- **Providing open spaces, play spaces and access to local biodiversity.**
- **Creating safe, attractive and accessible spaces for all**
- **Improving the standard of management and maintenance.**
- **Actively involving the community in their local open spaces.**
- **Increasing participation in open spaces.**

2. Legislative and Policy Context for Parks and Open Spaces

Parks and open spaces are planned for, managed and maintained by a variety of agencies operating in a complex legislative and policy context. This section of the Strategy summarises the National, Greater London and local open space policies and guidance and how they relate to the development and implementation of the Strategy.

2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework

Planning Policy Guidance 17 – Planning for open space, sport and recreation

PPG17 states that local authorities should:

- Carry out assessments of existing and future needs of the community for open space, sports and recreational facilities. Local Authorities need to cover differing needs of the population for open space and sports and recreational facilities;
- Undertake audits of existing open space and facilities, use of existing facilities, access in terms of location and cost, and opportunities for new open space and facilities. Audits should consider quantitative and qualitative elements of open space, sports and recreational facilities;
- Standards should be set locally. Local authorities should use the information gained to set standards for the provision of open spaces and sports and recreational facilities in their areas. These standards should include quantitative elements, a qualitative component and accessibility. These will help redress deficiencies through the planning process, and should be included in the local authority's Development Plan;
- Adopt a strategic approach and plan positively for provision, enhancement and maintenance of open space.

Planning Policy Statement 3 – Housing

PPS 3 states that new residential environments should provide or enable good access to, community and green and open amenity and recreational space (including play space). The needs of children are given new emphasis: *Particularly where family housing is proposed, it will be important to ensure that the needs of children are taken into account and that there is good provision of recreational areas, including private gardens, play areas and informal play space. These should be well-designed safe, secure and stimulating areas with safe pedestrian access.*

2.2 The London Plan (Greater London Authority)

The London Plan sets out an integrated social, economic and environmental framework to develop London as a sustainable world city over the next 15-20 years. It provides a London wide context for boroughs to align their local planning policies.

The London Plan seeks to protect and promote open spaces and recognises that the value of these spaces will increase as London becomes more compact and intensive in its built form. The Plan encourages boroughs to prepare open spaces strategies and ensure everyone has equal access to facilities, supporting the creation of networks such as green chains.

The London Plan (with amendments since 2004) sets out an Open Space Hierarchy to ensure that a range of open spaces of different size, type and function are accessible to all.

Table 2.1 London Open Space Hierarchy

Open Space Categorisation	Size Guidelines	Distance from homes to open spaces
Regional Parks	400 hectares	3.2 to 8 km
Metropolitan Parks	60 hectares	3.2 km
District Parks	20 hectares	1.2 km
Local Parks and Open Spaces	2 hectares	400 m
Small Open Spaces	Under 2 hectares	Less than 400 m

Source: Table 3D1 from London Plan pg 146

2.3 The Mayor of London's Biodiversity Strategy

Connecting with London's Nature: The Mayor's Biodiversity Strategy (GLA, July 2002) is linked closely to the London Plan and aims to provide a London wide framework for maintaining London's diversity of wildlife. It has two overall targets; no overall loss of wildlife habitats in London, and secondly that more open spaces are created and made accessible, so that all Londoners are within walking distance of a quality natural space. The Mayor's Strategy has taken account of the local Biodiversity Action Plans, which have been published by local authorities in London. Guidance is provided by *Parks, People and Nature (GLA March 2008)*.

2.4 London Plan Guidance – Providing for Children and Young People's Play SPG

This document sets out a recommended benchmark standard of a minimum of 10m² of dedicated play space per child as a basis for assessing existing provision. It also sets out how to assess deficiencies in play spaces.

2.5 Hammersmith and Fulham Community Strategy 2007 - 2014

The Hammersmith and Fulham Community Strategy focuses on making improvements that matter to the local community. Developed in partnership with residents, local businesses, voluntary and community groups and the public sector, the Community Strategy puts residents first and provides a vision and framework for the future of the borough: to work with the Borough Partnership to **create a borough of opportunity for all**.

The key priorities are to:

- Provide a top quality education for all;
- Tackle crime and antisocial behaviour;
- Deliver a cleaner, greener borough;
- Promote home ownership;
- Set the framework for a healthy borough;
- Deliver high quality value for money public services;
- Regenerate the most deprived part of the borough.

2.6 Unitary Development Plan (See Appendix 2 for more detail)

The Council's existing Unitary Development Plan outlines specific policies around the provision of parks and open spaces in the borough including:

Protection of open spaces.

Open spaces in the borough are protected from development and from competing land uses through specific UDP policies. The policies and proposals of the plan also promote the provision of additional, as well as the enhancement of existing, open space in all development proposals so as to meet borough needs;

Schedule of protected open spaces.

A schedule of protected open spaces of borough-wide importance is included in the UDP;

Increasing provision, access and improving existing open space.

The borough's UDP policies encourage the provision of new and enhanced open spaces in new developments with detailed standards on amenity and play space as well as addressing deficiencies and biodiversity protection.

2.8 Local Development Framework

The LDF will replace the UDP and will:

- Include policies that address the issues outlined in this Strategy, London Plan policies and government guidance on open spaces. In particular the LDF will identify a hierarchy of open spaces, including Metropolitan Open Land and open space of borough wide importance;
- Set out criteria for protecting existing open spaces and seek an increase in the provision of open space including children's play space;
- Include policy to implement the Government's proposed Community Infrastructure Levy and policy on S106 contributions which will include open space provision and enhancements and access arrangements;
- Seek new open space provision in site proposals;
- Seek improved accessibility to open spaces for all residents, together with improved linkages between open spaces;
- Protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity in all parks, including designation of nature conservation areas.

3. Parks and Open Spaces in Hammersmith and Fulham

3.1 Introduction

A comprehensive study of the *supply* of open space in Hammersmith and Fulham was undertaken in 2006 by the Environment Services Department of the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham and this identified provision, including quality and deficiency of space, is outlined below.

3.2 General open space provision and need

Hammersmith and Fulham has a total of 386 hectares of open space (excluding the area of the River Thames and the Grand Union Canal). 231 hectares (60% of the total) are publicly accessible open spaces (53 spaces in total). The remainder (155 ha) is within housing estates, sports clubs, school grounds or areas such as railway sidings. The National Playing Field Association standard for the provision of accessible open space is **1.6ha per 1000** population. For a residential population of 171,400 people (ONS Mid Year Estimate 2006), Hammersmith and Fulham has **1.35ha per 1000** head of population.

However, the amount of open space available to individuals will vary across the borough. Map 1 illustrates how provision varies across the borough.

The borough has a mix of open spaces with much of the area (159ha) within parks. However, only 34 sites are parks. By contrast 188 sites are amenity green spaces (including spaces around housing estates), totalling 60.5ha. A large proportion of open space is also within cemeteries and churchyards (52.5ha).

3.3 Hammersmith and Fulham Open Spaces by size

The London Plan presents an Open Space Hierarchy that forms the basis of estimates of open space deficiency. Additional categories of "Small Local Parks" and "Pocket Parks" have been added to create Hammersmith and Fulham's Open Space Hierarchy, reflecting the fact that many public open spaces in the borough are small.

Table 3.1 Hierarchy of Open Spaces in Hammersmith and Fulham

Public Open Space Category	No.	Size Guide	Examples
Regional	0	> 400	n/a
Metropolitan	1	60-400	Wormwood Scrubs
District	1	20-60	Ravenscourt, Bishops Parks
Local Parks	17	2-20	Normand Park
Small Local Parks	18	0.4-2	Frank Banfield Park
Pocket Parks	56	<0.4	Rowberry Mead
Linear Open Spaces	2	Variable	Thames Path

3.4 Hammersmith and Fulham Open Spaces by type

The borough's open spaces take on a variety of different forms. Table 3.2 gives a breakdown of the different open space typologies within the borough, based on those defined in PPG17, with refinements to take into account local circumstances, and grouped into 11 main categories. The distribution of the different types of open spaces within the borough is illustrated on Maps 1, 1A, 1B and 1C.

Table 3.2 Hammersmith and Fulham Open Space Typology

Category	Type	No.	Area
1 Parks	Public Park	27	70.1
	Common Land	7	88.9
	Total	34	159
2 Gardens and Squares	Formal Garden	2	6.0
	Garden Square	6	1.7
	Community Garden	2	0.2
Total	10	7.9	
3 Amenity Greenspace	Greenspace Around Premises	144	45.0
	Greenspace in educational grounds	23	11.4
	Greenspace in hospitals	3	1.7
	Back Garden Land	7	1.1
	Mid-Block Greenspace	2	0.3
	Pocket Greenspace	9	1.0
Total	188	60.5	
4 Cemeteries and Churchyards	Cemeteries	4	50.8
	Churchyard	8	1.8
Total	12	52.6	
5 Outdoor Recreation Facilities	Outdoor Sports Facility (not in a park)	20	34.0
	Children/Teenagers Space	22	2.4
Total	42	36.4	
6 Allotments	Allotments	Total 3	6.6
7 Nature Reserve Green Links	Nature Reserve	Total 2	1.0
	Canalside Green Corridor	1	1.7
	Railway Embankment	6	23.8
	Riverside Green Corridor	0	
	Road Island/Verge	15	2.7
Walking/cycling Green Corridor	0		
Total	22	29.2	
8 Waterspace	Waterspace	Total 4	
9 Civic Spaces	Civic Space / Square	3	0.4
	Other hard surfaced Civic Space	33	6.1
Total	36	6.5	
10 School Yards	School Yards (hard surface)	Total 46	13.6
11 Vacant Land/Construction Sites	Vacant Land	12	9.6
	Construction Site	5	3.8
Total	17	13.4	

Notes:

The new park at Imperial Wharf and public spaces within the BBC Media Village at White City have been included. The Thames Path is included within the "Other hard Surfaced Civic Space typology. Each section of path is recorded as a separate file.

School playing fields not within main school grounds are included within the "Outdoor Recreation Facilities" category.

Hammersmith and Fulham's 159ha of parks account for the largest area of open space in the borough. However, there are relatively few parks sites compared to other types of open space. Amenity green space accounts for more than half the open spaces in the borough. However, in terms of area this accounts less than 10% of all open land surveyed. Most sites in this category are green space in housing estates and schools which tend to be fragmented and smaller in size.

3.5 Specific Provision

3.5.1 Nature Conservation

There are 28 sites currently recognised (and designated within the UDP) as Nature Conservation Areas. Such areas are recognised as particularly valuable both as habitat and a community resource and need specific protection. Within the borough, there are 13 sites of Metropolitan or Borough importance that are accessible by the general public (excluding waterways). Map 5 shows the location of these sites and areas of the borough deficient in nature conservation areas.

3.5.2 Cultural Heritage

Most of the borough's parks are located within the 45 designated conservation areas in the borough which vary greatly in their nature and character. They range from centers of historic settlement, examples of industrial and commercial heritage, 18th- and 19th-century suburbs, model housing estates, and houses set in their historic grounds, to historic transport links and their environs, such as stretches of canal.

The special character of these areas does not just come from the quality of their buildings. The historic layout of roads, paths and boundaries; characteristic building and paving materials; a particular 'mix' of building uses; public and private spaces, such as gardens, parks and greens; and trees and street furniture, which contribute to particular views - all these and more make up the familiar local scene.

3.5.2 Play Areas

There are 114 children's play spaces in the borough, across 84 sites. These play spaces include equipped playgrounds, supervised facilities and unequipped / kick-about areas (usually on housing estates). Most parks in the borough have equipped playgrounds but most of the play spaces in the borough are unsupervised equipped playgrounds on housing estates. Housing estate playgrounds tend to be smaller in size than those in parks.

Most of the playgrounds in the borough cater for children under 8 years old. However a number provide equipment suitable for older children. Some playgrounds were assessed as catering for a mix of age groups; actual use by different age groups is currently unknown.

The majority of play spaces across the borough were assessed as being in satisfactory condition.

Maps 9, 10, 11 and 12 show the location of and access to play grounds across the borough.

3.5.3 Sports Facilities

Within the borough, there are more than 315 outdoor sport facilities across 69 sites:

20 Parks	20 school sites
4 playcentres/community centres	6 sports clubs
16 housing estates	3 stadia for professional football teams

There are two large private clubs in the borough providing outdoor sports facilities: the Queens Club and the Hurlingham Club.

Most sports are provided for across the borough. The most common facilities available are tennis courts, followed by sports pitches and basketball/netball courts and Multi-use games areas (MUGAs).

Residents have unrestricted access to approximately 40% of the outdoor sports facilities in the borough (sometimes a booking fee applies). Limited public access is provided to a further 49 facilities, including those within sports clubs or schools which allow public access at certain times. 16 facilities are located in housing estates, for use by estate residents.

The location of outdoor recreation facilities both inside and outside the borough are displayed on Map 13.

3.5.4 *Facilities for Young People*

Whilst play areas provide opportunities for young children, there are comparatively few facilities that cater specifically for older children and teenagers. Provision for sports activities is also important for these age groups. This can take the form of both formal (in the form of pitches and sports centres) and informal provision (kick about areas and Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs)).

3.5.5 *Housing Land*

There are over 70 housing estates in the borough with substantial areas of open space within their grounds. This open space is often only accessible by residents, but provides an important communal resource, particularly in areas where there are few public spaces. The distribution of housing open space can be seen in Maps 1, 1A, 1B and 1C.

3.6 Assessment of Deficiency – Priority Areas

The London Plan sets out a hierarchy of public open spaces, largely based on size. Each of these is assigned a catchment – the likely distance a person would be willing to travel to an open space of that size. The Open Space Study 2006 shows that open space is present throughout Hammersmith and Fulham at all levels of the hierarchy, apart from regional parks.

A study by the Greater London Authority found that 68% of the population of the borough is not within the indicative catchment of a **District Park**. There is no deficiency of access to **Regional or Metropolitan** sized parks.

There are 17 **local parks** (2-20ha) and 18 **small local parks** (0.4-2ha) in the borough. Access to these spaces is very good. There are only small areas of the borough where residents are more than 400m from publicly accessible **Local Parks** (2-20ha) and **Small Local Parks** (0.4-2ha) when using the London Plan Hierarchy based on the size of an open space.

However, additional analysis reveals that many areas in the borough are more than 400m from local parks with a good range of facilities (play areas, pitches and court, seating etc). Maps 2, 3, 3A and 3B display priority areas for addressing open space deficiency through the provision of new open space and improving facilities across the network.

Pocket Parks, (spaces smaller than 2ha) could address some deficiency in the priority areas by increasing the provision of facilities in Furnivall Gardens, Frank Banfield Park, Cathnor Park, Wendell Park, William Parnell Park and Brompton Park as well as within housing estates in areas of deficiency.

The Thames Path is Hammersmith and Fulham's most important **Linear Open Space**. With a large proportion of the borough "10 minutes from the Thames" establishing a network of green links to this space is very important to increase use and enjoyment of this space. Removing barriers to access will also address identified deficiency areas.

There is a comparative lack of **play spaces** for children aged 0-12 in many areas of the borough. This is illustrated in Maps 10 and 11. Priority areas for improving access to children's playspace have been defined according to levels of deprivation and number of children. The main priority areas for children under 8 are around White City (north of Wormholt Park) and in Fulham (around Parsons Green). However, much of the borough between Wormwood Scrubs and the Great West Road is within a priority area. Deficiency areas for children over 8 are similar to under 8s but with greater concentrations in the Hammersmith / Shepherd's Bush and White City areas.

3.7 Future Needs

The demand for open space will rise as the borough population rises. The ONS Mid Year Estimate for 2018 predicts 190,000 residents in Hammersmith and Fulham. This would reduce the ratio of Public Open Space from an already low **1.35ha per 1000** people to **1.22ha per 1000**. It is considered important to continue to protect open spaces while creating more publicly accessible open spaces. The implication for play space will also be an issue that needs addressing as the number of children is likely to rise.

3.8 Addressing Deficiency and Future Needs

Map 4 shows priority areas for addressing deficiency in terms of access to local parks, small local parks and pocket parks. Priority areas have been identified along the Westway corridor, through central Hammersmith from Uxbridge Road to the Thames and along the boundary between Fulham and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

Hammersmith and Fulham residents also have access to public open spaces outside the borough (which they share with residents from neighbouring boroughs). If publicly accessible open spaces within 400m of the borough boundary are added to the total supply, the level of provision increases to approximately 1.7ha /1000 population.

3.8.1 Protecting existing open space

The Local Development Framework needs to set out criteria that will provide protection to open space at a level appropriate to its level of designation.

3.8.2 Securing new open space where possible

The Council should consider the possibility of providing new open space in the borough to meet the projected growth in population and improve the current ratio of public open space through planning policy frameworks and briefs, LDF site policies and Section 106 planning obligation agreements. This will be reflected within the Local Development Framework .

A formula for seeking S106 contributions should be developed which includes provision for negotiating open space provision, open space improvements, access improvements and studies. In addition open space needs should be included as part of the proposed Community Infrastructure Levy.

3.8.3 Improving access to existing open space

Where it is not possible to create new open space in the borough, improvements to existing open spaces or improvements to access will be the most effective way of improving Hammersmith and Fulham's open space network.

This will be addressed by the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy priorities and actions. It may also be possible to use Section 106 Agreements to gain public access to new developments' open spaces. Opportunities should be identified for designating and

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

extending green routes (chains and corridors) to create a more integrated and accessible network of open spaces.

Improvements to the riverside walk will be required in new riverside developments.

4. Public Consultation and Surveys

A comprehensive residents' survey of the use of parks and open spaces was conducted in 1998. The results of this study have been used to inform the development of this Strategy. This survey will be reviewed and re-commissioned in the summer of 2008 as a priority action for this Strategy to ensure that Hammersmith and Fulham's open space priorities are based on the current views and needs of residents and open space users.

4.1 Methodology

Resident Survey (1998)

A postal questionnaire was distributed to 17% of borough households and a 42% response was achieved. The objectives of the survey were to:

- Measure current levels of usage of parks and open space within the borough;
- Determine a profile of visitors using the open spaces;
- Identify current travel patterns
- Gauge current opinion of and level of satisfaction with, park provision and facilities;
- Identify needs and expectations of park-users and potential park users;
- Identify the reasons some residents don't use parks
- Identify potential changes or introductions that users feel could be made to improve the parks service.

Resident Satisfaction Survey (MORI)

This triennial survey measures residents' satisfaction with a range of council services including satisfaction with parks. In 2003, 61% of residents were satisfied with Hammersmith and Fulham's parks and open spaces. In 2006, this had improved to 67% - but the top quartile of London councils had 78% of residents satisfied with parks in 2006. Hammersmith and Fulham must improve significantly to meet those standards.

Stakeholder Consultation

In preparing this Parks and Open Space Strategy, a second round of consultation took place, inviting comment from partners and stakeholders on the Strategy document. A summary leaflet was distributed to community and volunteer groups, and stakeholders (including members of the Cleaner Greener and Local Neighbourhood Committees) were provided with a copy of the Strategy and offered the opportunity to participate in consultation events. Statutory and relevant consultees (for example the Greater London Authority, Port of London Authority, Ministry of Defence) were sent the full draft Strategy.

The purpose of the consultation was to:

- Confirm support for the open space vision for Hammersmith and Fulham;
- Find out priority open space issues important to community and volunteer Groups;
- Understand what residents and visitors like or dislike about Hammersmith and Fulham's parks and open spaces;
- Establish residents' priorities for expenditure on open space improvements.

4.2 Highlights from Consultation

Park Location, Catchment Area and Frequency of Visits

- There are approximately 5 million visits made to parks by around 120,000 residents
- 83% of respondents use a park at least once in the past year;
- The proportion of respondents not using parks increases significantly the further they live from certain parks and open spaces;
- Bishops Park and Ravenscourt are the most popular open spaces in the borough
- Smaller open spaces are very important with 30% of users visiting these most frequently;

Reasons for Visiting, Likes, Dislikes and Suggestions for New Facilities

- Most common reasons for visiting open space are to walk or sit quietly, to take the children and use the play area or to take a short cut;
- 20% of all trips to parks are by dog walkers;
- Close to home, peace and quiet, appearance and layout are the main reasons people like a particular space;
- Dog mess and behaviour, litter / glass and street drinking are the main dislikes;
- The highest rated facilities are bowling greens, tennis courts and children's play areas.
- Top suggestions for new or improved facilities are toilets, cafes, seating and children's play areas;
- Satisfaction with facilities varies considerably from park to park.
- Across the borough the maintenance and appearance of trees, shrubs, lawns and grassed areas are regarded as good or excellent by between 74% - 90% of respondents.

Getting to the park

- People who don't use parks state that it is difficulty reaching the park that make it inaccessible rather than the environment of the park itself.
- Most people (76%) walk to parks, taking 10 minutes to reach their main park;
- 9% drive, 8% regularly cycle and 5% take public transport.

The 1998 survey revealed that some spaces were used more than others. 24.3% of residents use Bishops Park as their main park whilst 23.8% use Ravenscourt Park, the boroughs two district parks. Residents also typically travel further to visit these parks.

Four other parks are used by more than 5% of Borough residents as their main park. These parks are termed **Flagship Parks** to reflect their importance and catchment, and consequently the need to develop a range of enhanced facilities and staffing.

5. Strategy Priorities for Hammersmith and Fulham

5.1 Priorities for Improvement

Aligning the needs and aspirations of residents and open space users with wider council, London and national policies and priorities is a major challenge when improving open space. Feedback from surveys, project development, consultation with partner agencies, Friends and Resident Groups and officers across the council has produced a variety of priorities for improving the open spaces in the borough.

Suggestions from the 1998 survey included:

- Provision of better facilities including toilets, cafés, bench seating, and drinking fountains;
- Better, more exciting play opportunities for younger and older children including adventure play, sandpits, water play etc;
- Providing imaginative facilities, equipment and activities for teenagers and young adults;
- Improving visitor safety in parks through increased staffing, better design and enforcement against anti-social behaviour;
- Developing new wildlife nature areas (including aquatic environments) while managing and promoting existing sites;
- Improving sporting facilities (cricket, tennis, football, basketball, artificial surfaces, floodlighting etc) and clarifying access and charging policies;
- Providing informal exercise opportunities with quality equipment and useful information;
- Improving horticultural standards and creating attractive spaces with imaginative flower beds, well maintained lawns, shrubs and tree planting;
- More organised entertainment and community events and providing the facilities (eg bandstands) to host them;
- Opportunities to get involved through Friends Groups and organised volunteering;
- Controlling dogs (educating their owners) and sustainably managing dog waste;
- Actively promoting parks and open spaces, their features, facilities and heritage;
- Understanding and addressing the needs of all ages and people living with illness and disabilities;
- Improving access to parks by providing directional signage, cycle racks, safe walking routes and developing green corridors;

Regional and national policies that affect open space are outlined in Section 2 of this Strategy. The major national and London priorities are:

- Protecting open space from inappropriate development;
- Overcoming deficiencies in open space, play space and biodiversity;
- Conserving and enhancing historic spaces;
- Increasing opportunities for access to the natural world;
- Enhancing opportunities for all to access open space including children and young people, older people, and people with disabilities.

The Council's Community Strategy and a number of other Strategies and Plans outline the wider priorities for the council for future years. Objectives relevant to Open Space include:

- Health, wellbeing and tackling obesity;
- Improving access for all;
- Creating a borough of opportunity;
- Listening to residents;
- Improving safety and proactively addressing anti-social behaviour.

5.2 Strategic Vision for Parks and Open Spaces

As a result, a vision for the future of Hammersmith and Fulham's Parks and Open Spaces and six key priorities have been developed:

To improve the quality of life for all people in Hammersmith and Fulham through the provision of award winning parks and open spaces that are clean, green, safe and sustainable, by:

1. Protecting Hammersmith and Fulham's existing parks and open spaces.

- Contributing to the social, environmental, health, recreation, and economic value of the borough.
- Encouraging awareness of the borough's unique and rich natural and cultural heritage

2. Providing open spaces, play spaces and access to local biodiversity.

- Improving provision of open spaces where possible.
- Enhancing existing parks and open spaces and the links between them.
- Promoting awareness of local nature conservation sites.

3. Creating safe, attractive and accessible spaces for all.

- Creating inspirational spaces.
- Reducing physical and other barriers to using parks and open spaces.
- Reducing the incidence and perception of crime and anti-social behaviour in open spaces.
- Improving local information about parks and open spaces.
- Opening up private spaces.

4. Improving the standard of management and maintenance

- Creating award winning spaces that are safe and sustainable
- Renewing soft landscaping.
- Increasing diversity with species adaptable to climate change.
- Reducing pesticide use and incorporating environmentally sustainable management.

5. Actively involving the community in their local open spaces.

- Supporting existing Friends groups to increase and diversify their membership.
- Encouraging and support the establishment of new Friends of Parks groups
- Promoting the sharing of ideas and experiences between community and amenity groups.

6. Increasing participation in open spaces.

- Encouraging active recreation, formal and informal sport
- Opening up parks and open spaces for formal and informal education
- Encouraging community and other events

6. Parks & Open Spaces Strategy Actions

This section describes how the Hammersmith and Fulham Council will address the open space priorities.

6.1 Protecting existing open space.

The London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham will:

- a. Protect all open spaces through policies included within the London Plan, the Unitary Development Plan and the Local Development Framework;
- b. Work with H&F Homes to improve the quality, management and use of housing open spaces.
- c. Develop an informative map of parks, open spaces and green corridors in the borough that links with the borough walking maps to provide information about the heritage, conservation value, features and facilities and proposals for enhancement across the network.

6.2 Providing open spaces, play spaces and access to local biodiversity.

The London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham will:

- a. Seek further provision and enhancement of, and increased accessibility to, open space and other facilities, such as children's play areas through the application of policies with development plans.
- b. Address identified areas of deficiencies (Map 4) by negotiating accessible public open space in, or near, new developments where possible.
- c. Where practical, negotiate public access to private open spaces in schools, housing estates etc.
- d. Improve the protection, management, and promotion of nature conservation sites throughout the borough.
- e. Improve the wildlife habitat of Margravine Cemetery with the assistance of the Friends of Margravine and promote the space to a wider audience.
- f. Work in partnership with the Hammersmith and Fulham Biodiversity Partnership to implement the Biodiversity Action Plan and maintain and enhance all Sites of Nature Conservation Importance.
- g. Ensure that parks development schemes include elements that protect, promote or enhance wildlife habitats.
- h. Establish priorities for refurbishing play areas across the borough's parks
- i. Redevelop at least two park play areas to be fully accessible for disabled children responding to the 3 year Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) Action Plan.

6.3 Creating safe, attractive, and accessible spaces for all.

The London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham will:

- a. Promote the Borough's parks and open spaces through a variety of media, including the internet, brochures, posters and signs, to make residents aware of opportunities for recreation in the borough.
- b. Survey access to open space across the borough and, where barriers to open spaces exist, develop an improvement programme to remove these barriers.

- c. Improve informational, interpretive and directional signage across the borough's parks and open spaces with an attractive and consistent format
- d. Investigate opportunities for public access to private open spaces.
- e. Identify potential green corridors and implement an improvement programme to improve accessibility between open spaces working closely with the Thames Strategy Kew to Chelsea and Street Scene enhancements.
- f. Ensure all open spaces, especially play areas are compliant in terms of access for those with disabilities (DDA compliance).
- g. Design parks and play improvements to take into account the needs of residents with disabilities and their carers.
- h. Establish a disabled user task group lead by disabled stakeholders (including young people, older people and carers) with staff support to co-ordinate meetings, visit exemplar sites and record and action group findings.
- i. Coordinate the provision of disabled parking facilities with the availability of accessible facilities including good paths, a mix of seating, play facilities, toilets and cafes.
- j. Review the quality of paving and the limited provision of seating through the 2008 Open Space Resident Survey and individual parks user surveys.
- k. Work with the Thames Strategy Kew to Chelsea to resolve pedestrian cyclist conflict along the Thames Path, providing safe bypasses especially at Upper Mall, Furnivall Gardens, Rowberry Mead, Stevenage Park and Bishops Park.
- l. Provide good quality, safe cycle parking at key sites.

6.4 Improving the standard of management and maintenance.

The London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham will:

- a. Establish an officer steering group (including Parks Operations, Parks Development, Sports Development, Parks Constabulary) to develop enhancement proposals, deliver improvements and share information.
- b. Work closely with Quadron (grounds maintenance contractor) to raise the standards of maintenance across the network.
- c. Enhance and improve open spaces across the network particularly where there is an identified deficiency of provision or quality.
- d. Attain Green Flag awards for 6 Flagship Parks including Normand Park, Bishops Parks, South Park, Ravenscourt Park, Wormholt Park and Hammersmith Park.
- e. Enhance the attractiveness of the borough's commons and key open spaces (Shepherds Bush Common, Brook Green, Eel Brook Common, Margravine Cemetery, Furnivall Gardens and Parsons Green) to create *Inspirational Spaces* that celebrate the borough's rich natural and cultural heritage.
- f. Collaborate with community partners to undertake open space improvement projects that will contribute to the regeneration of the borough.
- g. In partnership with the Thames Strategy (Kew to Chelsea), coordinate a programme of open space and green corridor improvements to improve Stevenage Park, Rowberry Mead, Furnivall Gardens and Upper Mall.

- h. Work with the Thames Strategy Kew to Chelsea, Ports of London Authority, Borough Highways, and the Environment Agency to enhance and promote the biodiversity, amenity, accessibility and safety of the River Thames.
- i. Review the provision and effectiveness of dog exercise areas in parks and open spaces
- j. Liaise with community groups, the Parks Constabulary, Neighbourhood Area Police Teams and Council officers to address safety and security issues.
- k. Develop a Service Level Agreement with Parks Constabulary for parks patrols and security.

6.5 Actively involving the community in their local open spaces.

The London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham will:

- a. Establish partnership agreements between the Council and new or existing Friends Groups to align priorities, attract funding, share information and resources and encourage volunteering.
- b. Hold a bi-annual Friends Forum where Friends Groups can share experiences, attract new members and promote their activities.
- c. Continue to develop involvement in community gardens at Ravenscourt Park, Godolphin Road Open Space, Loris Gardens and Normand Park and explore opportunities for additional community garden space.

6.6 Increasing participation in open spaces.

The London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham will:

- a. Increase participation in sports by improving the standards of sports pitches and facilities and streamline booking and charging procedures.
- b. Coordinate work with the PCT, Sports Development, and community health organisations to tackle childhood and adult obesity and other health problems through the provision of facilities and structured activities and events in Parks and Open Spaces.
- c. Investigate the provision of group fitness classes in parks.
- d. Provide outdoor exercise equipment, running surfaces and information about availability to promote a healthier borough.
- e. Develop policy and advice for residents wishing to hold community events in their local park.
- f. Identify (through the review of the Sports Strategy and School Sports Zones) required access to outdoor sports provision for the proposed Hammersmith Academy and develop a Memorandum of Understanding for capital improvement and ongoing maintenance.
- g. Work in partnership with the Building Schools for the Future team to improve PE and sports provision for all with structured access for schools at Ravenscourt, Hurlingham, South Park, Wormwood Scrubs and Linford Christie Stadium.
- h. Provide dedicated Playing Fields for a whole year group in the North and South of the Borough to help meet the PE and School Sport Public Service Agreement target and assist with the transformation required in secondary education.
- i. Where possible, allow structured community access to school sports facilities outside of hours.

7 Implementing the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy

Successful implementation of this Strategy is dependent both on adherence to the framework outlined in the document and the establishment of a dedicated team to administer the implementation plans and monitor progress against the priorities outlined above.

7.1 Work to date

Work has already begun on the process of implementing improvements across the borough:

- The Parks and Recreation Service unit has been established bringing together services in parks and other open spaces such as cemeteries alongside sports development and leisure centres to ensure coordination of provision across the borough and achieve efficiencies through joint contract monitoring, sports and pitch booking, etc;
- A new Grounds Maintenance Contract with Quadron Ltd commenced in mid 2008 and will deliver improved grounds maintenance across the borough;
- A design masterplan has been developed for Bishops Park and submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund outlining substantial improvement plans for the park and the grounds of Fulham Palace
- Normand Park has been completely redesigned and refurbished in partnership with the people of North Fulham and funded by the North Fulham New Deal for Communities;
- Responsibility for Little Wormwood Scrubs has been passed to the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea as it is very close to the borough boundaries and serves a high proportion of RBKC residents in that area. Kensington & Chelsea have undertaken to make improvements to the facilities and maintenance of the park
- Shepherds Bush Common is undergoing complete redesign and refurbishment in consultation with local communities and funded by development gain monies to provide an oasis of green and calm in the middle of this busy area, with enhanced play and café areas.

7.2 Key Actions 2008- 2009 (Year 1)

7.2.1 Establish a Parks & Open Spaces Steering Group

This group will be established in 2008 and will meet regularly to review, develop, implement and monitor actions against the priorities and actions in section 6. Where necessary, staff from other departments and agencies will be invited to join or report to this group.

7.2.2 Develop an Annual Implementation Plan

This will be the key tool for taking forward the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy actions and to allocate existing and future capital funding for improvement actions. The annual implementation plan will be in place by November 2008. All projects across the council that have an open space element will be included and progress against key actions monitored. The implementation plan will be updated annually to reflect completed projects and emerging priorities. Each project will outline specific timescales, milestones, resource implications and completion targets.

7.2.3 Ensure that two major parks are maintained and managed to Green Flag standards

Work will commence to ensure that two of Hammersmith & Fulham's major parks will be judged against Green Flag Award standards of maintenance and management in the first year of the strategy with a further four parks in years 2 to 4.

7.2.4 Ensure that the Bishops Park Master Plan reaches Stage 2 of the Heritage Lottery Fund process

Officers will work closely with the Heritage Lottery fund, designers and the community to maximise the opportunity to achieve significant grant funding for this major project. This will entail ensuring that the Master Plan application is approved at Stage 1 by the Heritage Lottery Fund in September 2008 (subject to HLF timescales) and is submitted for Stage 2 consideration within the following year.

7.2.5 Develop a Master Plan for South Park

Officers will develop a Master Plan for South Park in consultation with key stakeholders and residents by September 2008 to identify key improvements, action existing funds for the Park and prepare for external funding applications. A number of key improvements will be made to the park in 2008-09 including renovation of the tennis court area and further conservation works to the perimeter wall.

7.2.6 Resident Survey update.

The 1998 Parks and Open Spaces Resident Survey will be updated with a random survey of 10,000 households in 2008. The results of the survey will inform future improvements and the overall implementation of the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy.

7.2.7 Increase users satisfaction with parks

Improvements will be undertaken to ensure that users' and residents' satisfaction with parks increases within the first year of the strategy from the baseline figure of 67% in 2006 and this will be measured annually to achieve the target of the top London quartile (78% plus).

7.3 Further Work and Research

There are number of projects that need further work before they can be advanced into implementation plans for the future, such as background research, ongoing consultation and partnership working. These projects will be identified as a work programme by the Steering Group with designated responsibilities and resources.

7.4 Monitoring and Review

Ongoing monitoring of the implementation of the Strategy is key to its success as a focused and responsive tool for improving the borough's environment and the lives of local residents. The monitoring framework will identify Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) including those negotiated as part of the Grounds Maintenance contract (2008), national, regional and local targets; the results of surveys and consultations; and those identified as part of the implementation plans. These KPIs will be reported back to the Parks and Open Space Steering Group at regular intervals.

The Strategy Action Plan and Implementation plans will be reviewed annually.

- Completed projects and actions will be removed;
- New projects and actions costed and added as appropriate.

The Strategy will be fully reviewed every 10 years.

APPENDIX 1 Unitary Development Plan

Protection of Open spaces

Open spaces in the borough are protected from development through policies in the council's UDP. The policies seek to protect existing open space from the pressures of competing land uses. The policies and proposals of the plan also promote the provision of additional, as well as the enhancement of existing, open space in all development proposals so as to meet borough needs.

The Borough's UDP policy EN22 emphasizes the council's aims for open space. It seeks to protect open space by only permitting development, on identified public open space and other green space of borough-wide importance, where it can be shown that it would preserve or enhance open character, its function as a sport, leisure or recreation resource and for biodiversity and visual amenity.

In addition, policy EN22X seeks to protect public and private open space of local importance subject to the same criteria as EN22, but development proposals may be permitted where open space to the equivalent amount is provided elsewhere or where proposals would release a development site needed to realise a qualitative gain for the community.

Open spaces in the borough are further protected by specific UDP policies on Childrens' Play Areas (Policy EN23B), Metropolitan Open Land (Policy EN24), Nature Conservation Areas (Policy EN27), Green Corridors (Policy EN28), and Nature Conservation on Development Sites (Policy EN29).

List of protected open spaces

A schedule of protected open spaces of borough wide importance is included in the UDP. Also included are sites protected under the London Squares Preservation Act (1931) those included in English Heritage's Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. Nature conservation areas are listed separately.

Increasing provision, access and improving existing open space

The borough's UDP policies encourage the provision of new and enhanced open spaces in new developments.

Policy **EN23** requires all new development to make provision for open space to meet the needs of occupiers and users. This should be on site or where not practical contribution to a new open space or enhancement of nearby open space. Proposals should include open land provision beyond that that required to meet the needs of the development itself, particularly where:

- The locality is identified as an area of general open space deficiency;
- New open space would contribute to the improvement of town centres, employment zones and regeneration areas;
- There is potential to enhance nature features of strategic importance such as the riverside;
- The open space would create, or contribute to, provision of pedestrian links between existing open space, town centres, entertainment venues or other, established pedestrian routes;

- There is potential to enhance the biodiversity value of an area, including the creation of new habitats for wildlife.

Policy **EN23B** requires new development that provides family dwellings to provide, or contribute towards, new or enhanced children's play facilities in the neighbourhood. There are also detailed standards on amenity space and childrens play space which provide details of the amount of open space to be provided in new developments, namely:

- S5A Residential Amenity Space in New Developments
- S7.1 Children's Play Space Development on sites over 0.2 Hectares.