

Parks and Open Spaces

Our Strategy for Barnet 2016-2026



Contents

<u>Executive summary</u>	4
<u>Why do we need a Parks and Open Spaces Strategy?</u>	6
<u>Barnet’s parks and open spaces in context</u>	8
<u>The value of parks and open spaces</u>	11
<u>Assessing quality and value</u>	13
<u>Asset data collection</u>	15
<u>Engagement and consultation</u>	17
<u>Future challenges</u>	19
<u>Capital investment strategy</u>	21
<u>Future funding and governance</u>	25
<u>Action plan outcomes</u>	28
<u>Action plans</u>	29

Executive summary

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

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

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

But Barnet is set to change significantly and over the next 25 years the borough will have one of the fastest rates of population growth across the capital and this growth will have to be accommodated in new housing. This housing provision will be much more dense than is currently typical for the borough.

Parks in Barnet will have to fulfil a new function in supporting the development of sustainable communities and attractive neighbourhoods and in bringing businesses and employment to town centres.

It is now accepted that urban parks deliver a huge range of benefits for cities and the people that live and work in them. These benefits reflect many of the objectives that we have established for the economic success of the borough, the health of its citizens and the quality of the environment with which they interact on a daily basis.

These benefits can be broadly grouped into three categories:

- economic benefits
- social benefits
- environmental benefits.

So that we can make well-informed decisions about how our parks and open spaces can deliver these outcomes, we need to understand their current condition. The last audit of our greenspaces was in 2009, so a key element of the strategy has been to survey all of the borough's parks.

Parks are for people and we would like residents and businesses to play an even greater role in determining how parks are managed and how they should function in future.

To develop this strategy, we carried out an extensive engagement with local residents and key stakeholders to find out how they use Barnet's parks and open spaces and what their priorities for the future are.

The engagement process and the quality and value assessment have established a broad range of priorities that will guide a future investment programme to improve the condition of the borough's parks and greenspaces.

Barnet has a relatively modest record in attracting inwards investment into parks and open spaces but this presents the borough with a strong opportunity to secure significant inwards investment from external funding bodies for projects focused on sport and heritage.

In common with all other local authorities, we are facing very difficult decisions in terms of the level of resources we can apply to deliver services. So it's important that we can sustain any improvement that we make to parks and open spaces over time.

This strategy suggests that we should consider other options for the future management and funding of parks and open spaces. This will ensure that any investment the borough makes in its parks and open spaces and the positive outcomes that this investment can deliver are protected in future.

These are exciting times for parks and open spaces in Barnet and this strategy establishes a road map for future investment, discussions around future funding and governance and an on-going dialogue between the council, residents, stakeholders and partners.

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



Why do we need a Parks and Open Spaces Strategy?

Barnet has a great portfolio of parks and open spaces and greenspaces are integral to the cultural life of the borough.



The council recognises that a clear vision is needed to deliver a whole range of benefits for people who live and work in the borough. These benefits include:

- enhancing the physical and mental health of residents
- making Barnet a better place to live, work, learn and play
- joining communities together by creating new green links between different parts of the borough
- preparing the borough for the impacts of climate change by controlling flooding, reducing pollution and moderating temperatures
- protecting and enhancing the borough's cultural and natural heritage.

The council is facing significant funding issues over the next five years and the Parks service will have to make a contribution to the savings that the council has committed to finding. The Parks and Open Spaces Strategy will help the council to consider options for alternative ways in which parks and open spaces services can be managed and paid for so that people living and working in the borough can continue to enjoy the benefits of good quality parks over time.



In order to deliver these outcomes the council needs to understand what it has in its parks. The council last undertook a survey of this kind in 2009.

Over the past six months, a survey of 199 parks and open spaces has been undertaken. This survey has recorded everything that each park contains – every bin, bench, gate, railing and every tree and area of planting.

During the survey, each asset has been photographed and its quality recorded. We have also assessed the overall quality of each park and open space against 'Green Flag' criteria ('Green Flag' is the national standard for parks excellence).

The Council will use this survey information to:

- make the management of parks and open spaces more efficient so that we can raise standards of maintenance
- compare the condition of the borough's parks now with their condition in 2009 so that we understand how things have changed.

Barnet is traditionally a green and leafy borough. The borough's parks and open spaces are extremely important to residents and the council needs to understand how people use the parks and the aspirations of residents in terms of the future of the service. The council also wants residents to have a greater say in how parks are managed and developed in future.

In preparing the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy, the council has engaged with a broad cross-section of people who live and work in the borough to collect their opinion of the borough's parks today and to understand how they would like parks to be.

As the strategy evolves, the council will continue this discussion so that the plans for the service as a whole and for individual parks across the borough have been thoroughly discussed and are agreed upon.



Barnet's parks and open spaces in context

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

Topography and habitats

Barnet lies on the edge of the Thames Basin and its land form is characterised by gentle undulations shelving to the south. Much of the borough lies on London Clay with more fertile alluvial soils laid down along the river valleys of the Silkstream, Dollis and Pymmes Brooks. Grassland of one type or another is the dominant habitat in Barnet. Considerable areas within the borough are devoted to woodland including Watling Chase Community Forest which covers 190 km².

Rivers and wetlands

Three rivers within the borough remain at the surface and form distinctive habitats and valuable green corridors. The most significant open water habitat in the borough is the Welsh Harp Reservoir, a SSSI that supports a significant variety of wildfowl.

Settlement patterns and land use

Settlement patterns reflect the absorption of former villages as the capital has expanded and follow the transport corridors of the A5, the Midland Railway line and the High Barnet branch of the Northern Line. The centre of the borough is semi-rural and contains significant

areas of Green Belt. Across the northern edges of the borough, housing is relatively low density and typically suburban.

Around Cricklewood, Colindale, Hendon, Finchley and Golders Green settlement patterns have become denser but individual distinctive town centres remain.

Demographics

Demographic projections suggest the need for the Parks service to respond to changes in population over the next 20 years.

- Barnet's population has been steadily increasing and is now projected to increase by 21% from 2011 to 2041
- between 2014 and 2021, the population of children (up to the age of 16) across the entire borough is projected to increase by 15.4%
- between 2014 and 2021, the number of residents of retirement age and over will increase by 6,400 (12.6%)
- by 2021, Colindale will have become the most heavily populated ward, having a 50% increase in population between 2014 and 2021. Over the same period, the populations of Golders Green and Mill Hill will have increased by 30% and 10% respectively.

Ethnicity

Residents classifying themselves as ‘White British’ constitute the largest ethnic group in Barnet. There is a slightly higher percentage of Indian residents and a lower proportion of Pakistani and Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean residents compared to London as a whole. Research across the UK does not suggest that the uptake of parks services is closely linked to ethnicity.

Crime

While some parks do have greater reported crime than others, crime within the borough’s parks remains low.

Housing provision

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

Greenspaces provision – Barnet parks assets

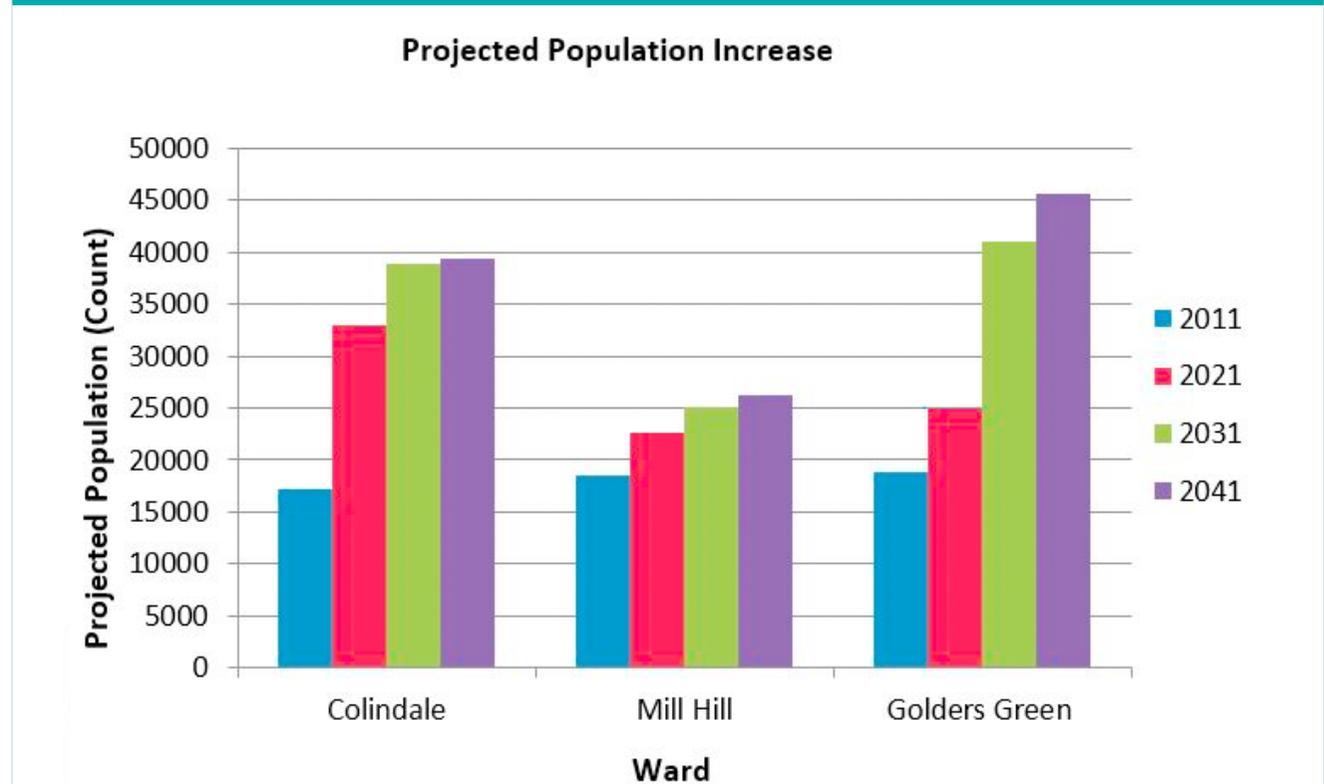
The Local Plan Development Management Policies (DMP) proposes that ‘where a development is in an area of deficiency for publicly accessible open space new open space should be provided in line with these standards:

- Parks (1.63 hectares per 1,000 residents)

In 2015, the total area of parks in Barnet is 465.2 hectares (approximately 5.4% of the total area of the Borough). Based on the 2105 population of Barnet (367,266), this represents parks provision of 1.26 hectares per 1,000 head of population.

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

Source: GLA: London Population Projections 2013



This level of provision of parks falls below the standard set for parks in the Local Plan.

However, it should be noted that Barnet has total greenspace provision of 888 hectares. The ‘greenspace’ definition includes parks, playgrounds, sports sites, natural and semi-natural greenspaces and other miscellaneous sites. This equates to nearly 10% of the area of the borough and 2.41 hectares per head of population.

Assessment of parks provision by area	
Chipping Barnet	244.03 hectares
Finchley and Golders Green	80.07 hectares
Hendon	141.1 hectares

This assessment of open space provision across the borough excludes schools, private sports clubs and cemeteries, SLOAP (sites left over after planning) sites, verges, private gardens and private areas of Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land. If these areas are factored into an assessment, the level of greenspace provision across the borough is considerably higher.

There are significant variations of provision across the borough.

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

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

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

Accessibility

Accessibility is an important factor to be considered when assessing the provision of parks and open spaces. A high quality open space can be of limited value if access to it is restricted by major barriers such as transport corridors and rivers.

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

North and East Finchley and Brent Cross/Cricklewood have a particular deficiency in District Park provision.



The value of parks and open spaces

Cities in the UK have witnessed a revival in parks provision over the past two decades. Following a period of long-term decline, a recognition arose that good quality parks and open spaces can make a significant contribution to the quality of urban life.



This section of the strategy will consider how good quality parks and open spaces can contribute actual value to cities and how this value can be measured.

While parks and green spaces are often highly valued by local communities, public parks have been largely assessed as having limited cash value because park land can't be used for development.

In reality, parks contribute to economies, to communities and to the environment. These contributions are both tangible (because they are based on buildings, land and infrastructure that have financial value) and intangible (because they are benefits related to health, educational, environmental and social outcomes).

Benefits accruing from good quality parks and open spaces can be grouped into three main categories.

Economic benefits:

- These include the positive effect that good quality parks have on property prices
- the contribution that good quality parks make to town centres as places to work

- parks as places where businesses operate, where people are employed and acquire skills
- the contribution that parks can make to the tourist economy.



The social benefits:

- There are many varied benefits and they are: parks are free and many people are already using greenspace for sports and exercise. This can help to promote better health and to reduce the cost of treating physical and mental health problems
- parks can be used for food growing to encourage people to further enhance their life chances by eating well and exercising regularly

- parks can enhance educational performance because children who have regular contact with the natural world have higher self-esteem and enhanced educational attainment
- people strongly identify with their local park as an essential part of the fabric of their neighbourhood
- parks are diverse, encouraging people of all ages, cultural, ethnic and social backgrounds to meet and interact.

Parks are places where people can access nature but are also an important part of natural systems.

Environmental benefits:

These include:

- limiting flood risk caused by extreme weather events
- moderating temperatures (parks are cooler than streets)
- absorbing pollutants from the atmosphere
- sustaining bio-diversity and enhancing the connection between the city and the countryside.



In developing the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy, we have undertaken an assessment of the value of each park and open space in Barnet. We have based this assessment on the positive benefits that have been outlined above.

Having considered these benefits, we've developed a way of assessing the value of parks and open spaces in Barnet.



Assessing quality and value

To help us to develop our thinking about how to improve the borough’s parks and open spaces, we need to understand their current quality and value. This section describes how we have done this.

Quality assessment

In developing the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy, we have assessed all of the borough’s parks and open spaces in terms of quality and value. We have assessed quality because:

- it will help us to understand whether the borough’s parks have got better, stayed the same or deteriorated in quality
- it will help us to decide where we should invest money to improve the quality of Barnet’s parks

- a combined assessment of quality and value will help us make decisions about which of the borough’s parks are most important.

When assessing quality, we’ve used a set of measures based on ‘Green Flag’ standards.

We have used the following criteria to assess quality:

- what facilities does the park or open space have?
- how welcoming is the park (for example, we assessed noise, safety and security, lighting and access)?
- how clean was the park?
- how good was the information in the park?

Using these criteria, we awarded each park a score of Excellent, Good, Fair or Poor.

The same criteria were used when quality was last assessed in 2009, so we can compare whether parks have improved, deteriorated or stayed the same.

Overall we have found that parks have deteriorated since 2009. Five parks were classified as Excellent in 2009 but in 2015, only one park achieves this rating (Golders Hill Park).

Similarly, fewer parks are classified as Good in 2015 compared with 2009 while more parks are classified as Fair.

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

Value assessment

We have also developed a set of criteria to assess the value of parks and open spaces. These are based on the ‘positive outcomes’ that have been discussed in section four of the strategy.



We've used the following criteria to assess value:

- is the park in an area with a lower level of parks provision?
- is the park in an area which will have high population growth?
- is the park in a deprived part of the borough?
- is the park in an area of high housing density?
- is the park in an area with high incidence of coronary heart disease?
- is the park in an area with high levels of obesity?
- is the park in an area with high incidence of clinical depression?
- do schools already use the park?
- is the park close to a school?
- is the park in a high flood risk area?
- is the park in an area with poor air quality?
- is the park in an area with higher than average temperatures?
- is the park a designated wildlife site or corridor?
- is the park close to a town centre?
- is the park in an area of lower than average resident satisfaction?
- is the park of historical or heritage significance?
- does the park support events?
- does the park have an established 'Friends Of' group?

We have also compared the scores for value in 2015 with those in 2009. In common with the quality assessment, we have found that there are fewer high value parks in 2015 and that most parks are now of medium value.

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

We have combined the scores for quality and value to give us four values: high quality, high value; high quality, low value; low quality, high value and low quality, low value.

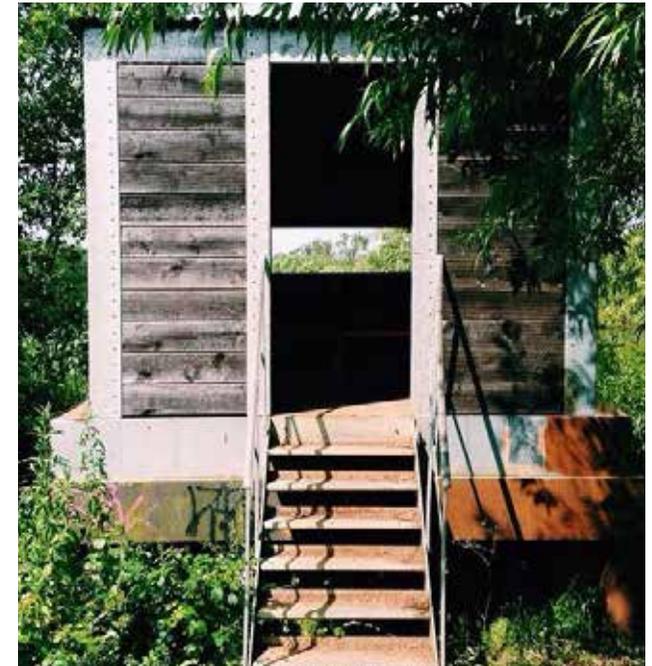
By assessing parks using these criteria we can make better decisions about where investment should be focused and which parks should be prioritised in terms of future management and maintenance.

Asset data collection

In order for us to make better decisions about how to manage the borough's parks and open spaces and so that we can become more efficient, we need up to date data on exactly what we have in our parks. This section describes how we've collected this data.

In developing the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy, we have gathered a comprehensive set of data about what we have in our parks. We have recorded the position and condition of the following in 199 of the borough's parks:

- bin
- bench
- picnics table
- fencing – metal
- fencing (timber)
- fencing – other
- wall
- gates – single
- gates – double
- surfaces – bound
- surfaces – unit paving
- surfaces – unbound
- bridge
- pergola
- signage – wayfinding
- signage – interpretation
- water feature
- multi-use games area
- tennis court
- basketball court
- cricket net
- skateboard facility
- fixed play equipment
- outdoor gym equipment
- car park
- cycle stand
- bollards
- building.



This data was collected from the following:

- public parks
- children’s play areas
- natural and semi-natural green spaces
- green/blue corridors.
- smaller pieces of land – (the brief allowed for the collection of data from 10 pocket parks).

Section eight of the strategy describes how we will use new technology and the data we have collected to improve how we manage parks and open spaces, making it easier for parks users to report issues and for us to address these issues more quickly.

Example of the asset collection process (Clitterhouse Playing Field and Clarefield Park):

- each dot represents the location of an asset
- each colour represents a different asset type (e.g. yellow/ bin, green/ play equipment etc.)



Engagement and consultation

In order to develop the strategy, we've talked to people who live and work in the borough about how they use our parks, why parks are important to them and how they would like to see them develop in future.

This section describes this engagement process.

The council is committed to involving local people in shaping their area and the services they use.

By engaging with local communities, the council aims to provide them with opportunities to:

- understand what the Council does
- express their views and find out how they can get influence how the council makes decisions.

Parks are highly regarded in Barnet. In 2015, 70% of those asked thought the borough's parks and open spaces were either good or excellent.

Given this, in developing a new strategy for parks and open spaces, it's important for us to understand how people use parks and how they would like them to change in future.

While developing the strategy, the council has discussed these questions with people who live and work in the borough. This engagement has included discussions with:

- people who use parks regularly
- people who don't use parks
- parks 'Friends' groups
- Neighbourhood Forums
- Residents' Associations
- schools and young people
- older residents

- people from black, asian, minority ethnic and refugee organisations
- faith groups
- people with disabilities.



We've used a variety of methods to contact people and to have discussions.

These have included:

- on line questionnaires
- a Facebook page
- park events
- town centre consultations on the street
- presentations and Q and A sessions at meetings

- focus groups
- workshops
- face to face interviews
- telephone interviews.

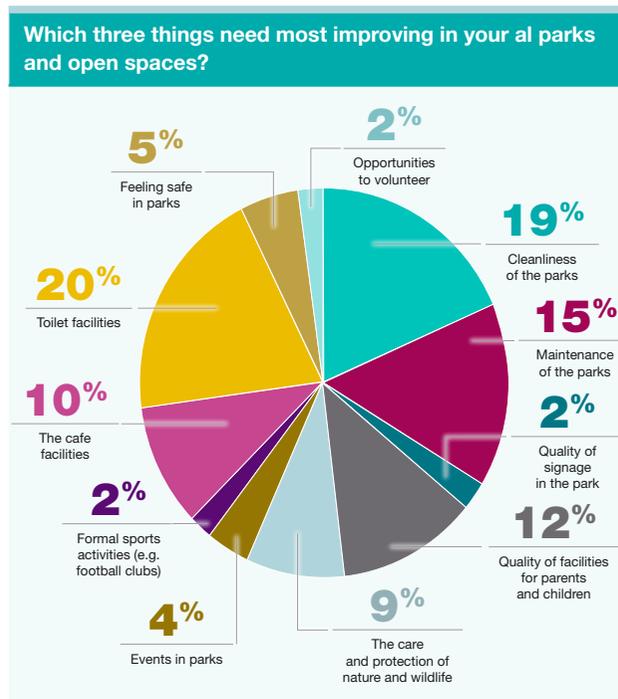
We have received and processed nearly 1,000 completed questionnaires and over 600 hundred individual comments.

This process has given the council a significant set of information about how residents currently use the borough’s parks and open spaces and how they would like them to develop in future. We will use this information when we consider how the council should invest in parks and open spaces.

Following the publication of the draft strategy, we undertook a formal consultation process to gather responses to the draft strategy. We used the following methods to gather these responses:

- an online questionnaire
- individual meetings with local residents associations and other stakeholder groups
- a workshop with ‘Friends of Parks’ groups from across Barnet

- workshops and focus groups for organisations with protected characteristics
- a workshop with Barnet Youth Board.



	Issues identified through consultation and engagement	How the strategy addresses these
1	Cleanliness and maintenance	The data collected on Barnet’s parks assets will help the council to manage greenspaces more efficiently and effectively
2	Better toilet facilities	The investment programme will bring as many park buildings back into use as possible with toilet provision being given priority
3	Better play facilities	The capital investment programme will include upgrades to park playgrounds on a cyclical basis
4	Parks are important to the environment	Parks will be managed to enhance bio-diversity, absorb pollution and prevent flooding. New tree planting in parks will absorb CO ₂ and limit urban temperatures
5	Parks are important to neighbourhoods	The strategy has helped to identify where money can be invested so that local distinctiveness is enhanced

Future challenges

Barnet is facing significant challenges in terms of the services it provides to residents. Some of these challenges are faced by all local authorities, other are specific to Barnet. This section discusses some of these challenges.

Resources for parks

Barnet will reduce council spending between 2015 and 2020 and the Parks Service will have to make a contribution to this saving and make further efficiency savings.

Although the borough's parks do generate money (through events, concessions and hires), this can't be significantly increased without there being an impact on day to day uses of greenspace. We need to make sure that we can sustain any improvements that we make in parks over time.

Population growth

The population of Barnet will increase significantly over the next 20 years and much of this population growth will be accommodated in higher density housing where people will have little or no access to private garden space. This will place additional pressure on the borough's parks and open spaces (especially in the south and west of the borough where the greatest population growth is forecast).

Climate change

Barnet needs to prepare itself for the impacts of climate change and parks can play a major role in limiting these impacts. Barnet's river valleys can absorb more rainfall, limiting the risk of flooding. Barnet's parks can absorb pollution and CO₂ and have a cooling effect on the borough generally.

Barnet's Parks Service

In order to deliver our aspirations for an improved parks service (including achieving 80% resident satisfaction with the borough's parks) and in order to meet savings targets, we need to make the delivery of parks services more effective. Section ten of the strategy looks at alternative ways in which the parks service might be delivered.

If the Parks Service continues to be delivered by the council, it needs to be:

- design-led, so that parks can deliver the range of positive outcomes described in section four
- performance focused, using technology to increase efficiency and assesses performance
- community-focused, working with residents and getting communities involved
- pro-active and responsive, always looking to improve
- excellence-focused, aspiring to make Barnet a national leader in parks.



Emerging policies

The Parks and Open Spaces Strategy has assessed the quality and value of the borough's parks and the positive contribution that parks can make to the quality of life in Barnet. A number of new policies will be developed to deliver these positive benefits:

Parks provision

- create new parks to address deficits in provision
- consider creating a 'Regional Park' in Barnet
- develop distinctive parks that reinforce the identity of neighbourhoods
- make town centre parks more attractive to help make the borough's economy more successful
- establish new green networks to link parks together
- make parks safer by designing out crime hotspots
- make better and more varied playgrounds
- create new sports hubs with good quality facilities
- provide more toilets in parks
- improve parks facilities and encourage more park cafes and other businesses.

Parks maintenance

- improve maintenance and get the basics right (litter, grass cutting, bin emptying and dog fouling)
- measure maintenance performance through the use of modern technology.

Parks and the environment

- using parks to limit the impact of climate change – flooding risk control, control of pollution and cooling
- safeguarding bio-diversity across Barnet.

Parks and health

- using parks to promote healthy lifestyles and wellbeing, including better mental health.

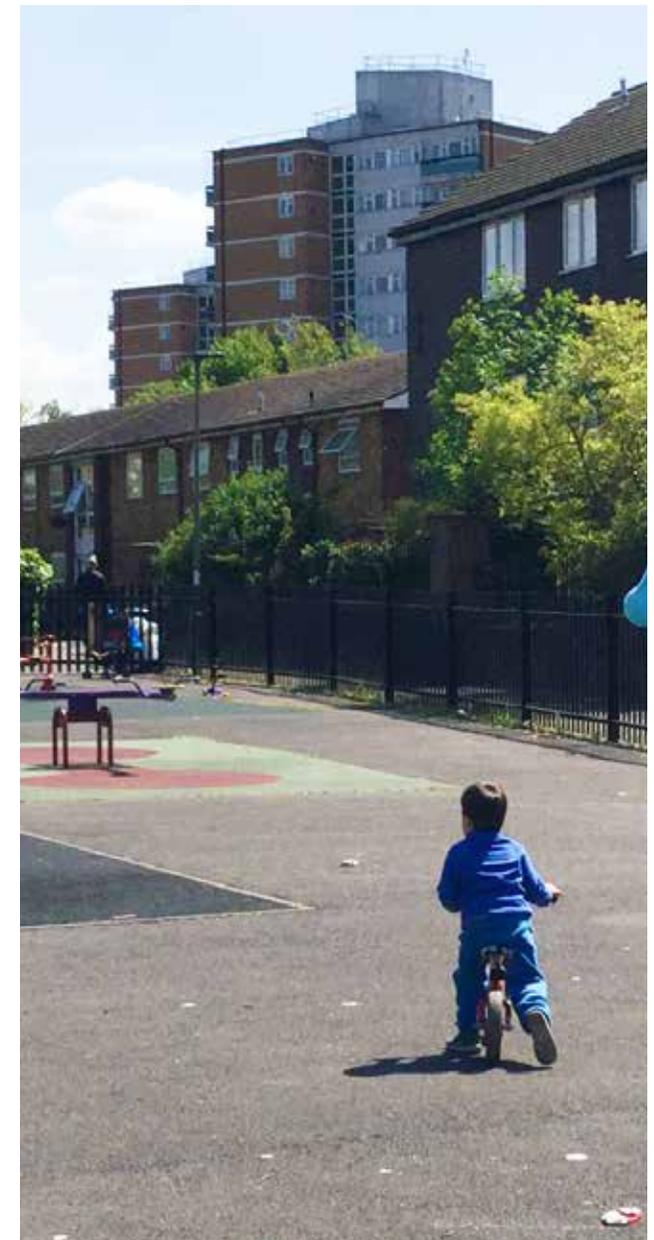
Parks and learning

- make parks more accessible for schools
- develop Forest School Learning across the borough
- invest in training and skills for staff, apprentices and volunteers.

Parks and the community

- support stronger Friends groups
- actively encourage volunteering and community involvement in parks

- encourage more community events.



Capital investment strategy

The past 20 years have witnessed a significant influx of capital funds into parks and open spaces in many areas of the UK. There are major opportunities for the council to invest in parks and this section describes possible sources of funding and how we might invest this funding.

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

Heritage park investment

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

Through an assessment of Barnet's parks portfolio, four sites have been identified that could potentially attract HLF funding over a 10-year period:

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



Sports facilities investment

In parallel with HLF funding, major capital investment opportunities are offered by a number of sports funders.

Barnet has not been as active as neighbouring boroughs in securing this investment in recent years and there is a considerable future opportunity to transform the outdoor sports offer across the borough as a consequence.

Potential level of HLF investment in Barnet over a 10-year period			
Site	HLF investment (£m)	Barnet capital match	Total budget (£m)
Friary Park	3	.75	3.75
Oak Hill Park	2	0.5	2.5
Hadley Green	1.75	0.45	2.2
Hendon Park	1.5	0.375	1.875
Totals	8.25	2.075	10.325

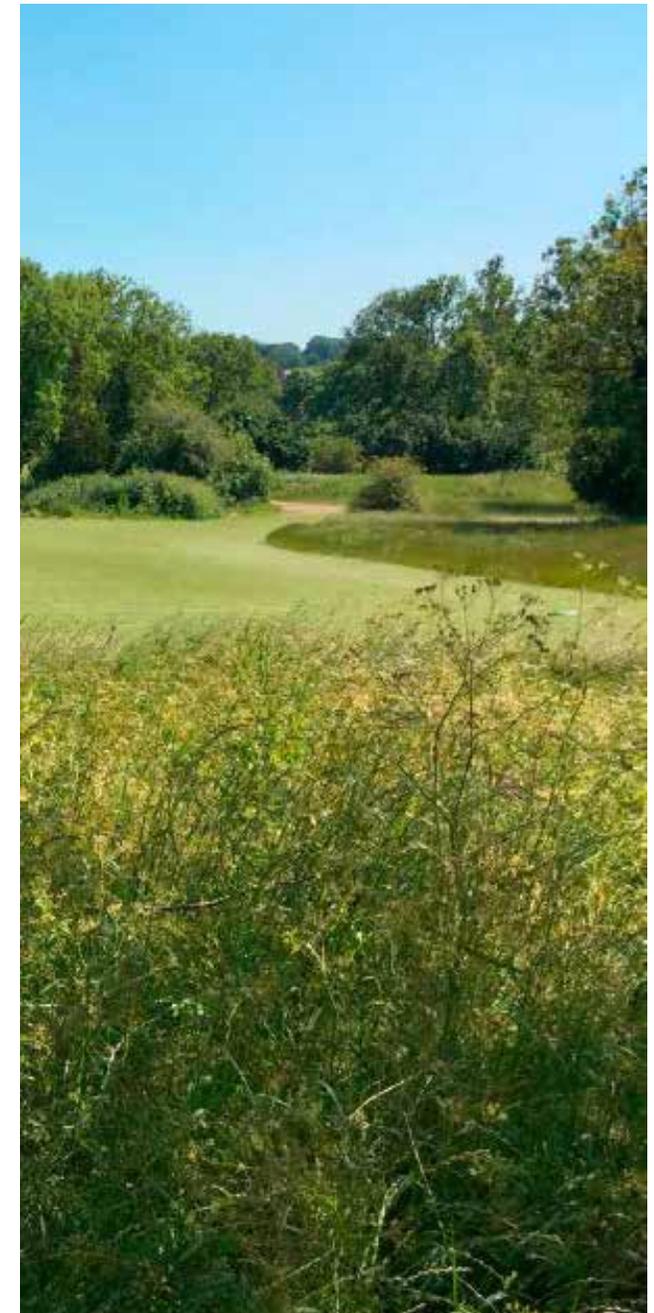
Sports hub investment in Barnet		
Site	Sports development opportunity	Funder
Cophthall	Cricket pavilion	ECB
	BMX	Sport England
	Rugby facilities	RFU
Barnet Playing Fields	Changing facilities	Football Foundation
	Cricket squares	ECB
West Hendon Playing Fields	Changing facilities	Football Foundation
	3G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



The Football Foundation currently offers grants of up to £500,000 per scheme through its Premier League and FA Facilities Scheme.

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

A number of ‘sports hub’ sites have been identified, potentially providing a geographical spread of elite sports facilities across the borough to augment the current focus on grass pitch provision. The council will review proposals for ‘sports hubs’ when a new Outdoor Playing Pitch strategy has been adopted.



Regeneration area investment

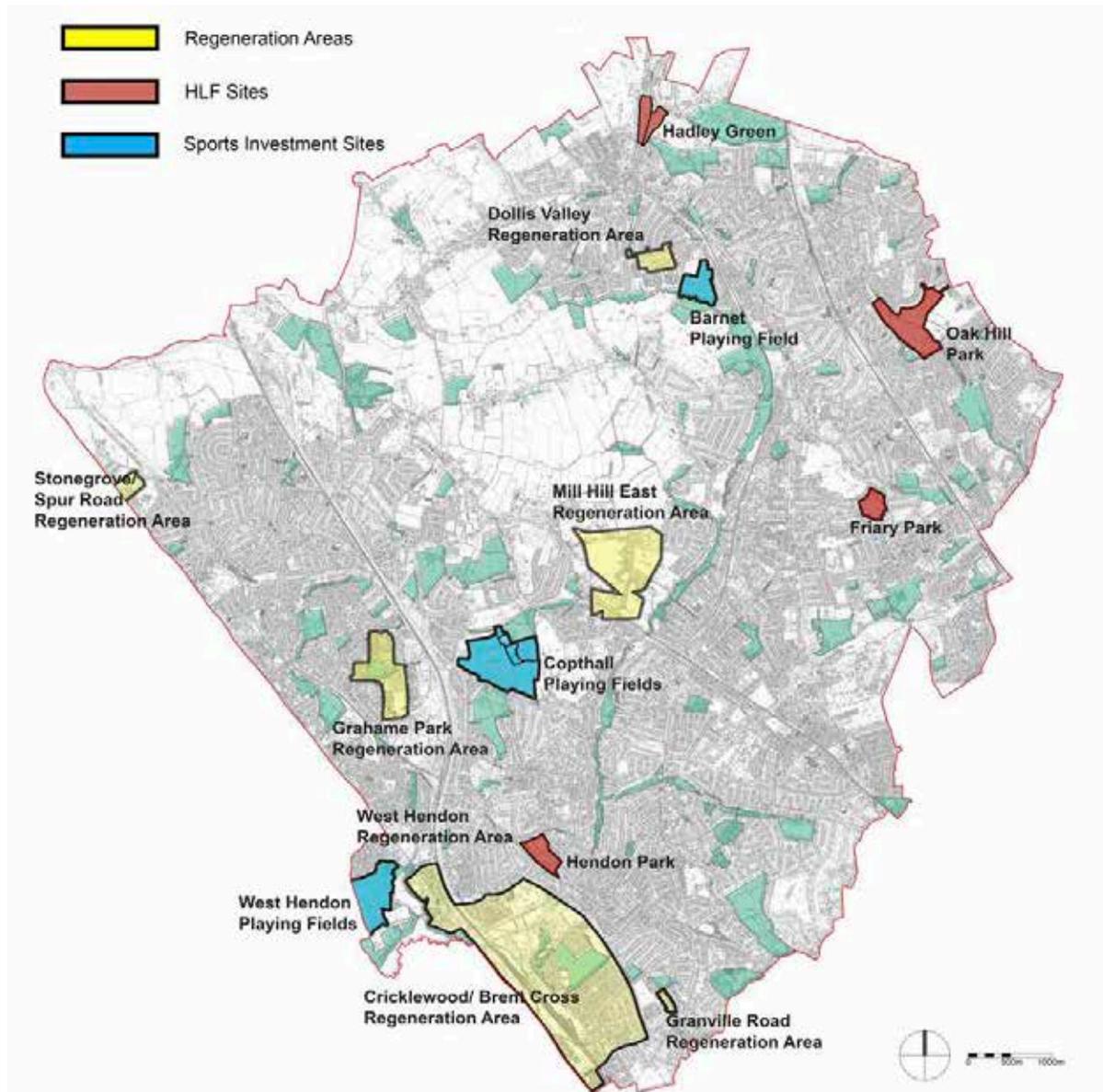
Barnet Council has identified eight regeneration and intensification areas across the borough:

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

Seven of these regeneration areas within Barnet will include new high quality greenspace.

This will result in an investment of approximately £20 million in new parks across the borough.

Investment from all of these sources will be evenly distributed across the borough, but more will be spent in the south and west of the borough because this is where population growth will be greatest over the new 20 years.



© Crown copyright [and database rights] 2014 OS 100017674 EUL. You are permitted to use this data solely to enable you to respond to, or interact with, the organisation that provided you with the data. You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form.

Barnet's own capital investment

We also intend to use some of the council's own resources to improve parks across the borough.

We are proposing to invest to support the delivery of the positive benefits described in section four and to respond to the themes that residents have identified during the engagement process.



Engagement process key themes		
Strategic theme	Engagement theme	Investment opportunity
Health	Improved personal fitness	Green gym programme Trim trail programme Cycle route programme Green ways and green routes
Education	Better playgrounds	Playground investment Forest school learning centres School partnerships to develop facilities for nature and ecology study
Community safety	Personal safety in parks	Designing out crime hotspots Improving visibility, lighting and patrolling
Economy	Better facilities in parks	Bringing park buildings back into use Promoting new café and concession outlets
Demographics	More investment in the more densely populated parts of the borough	Focus on investment in the south and west of Barnet
Place	Signage and interpretation	Parks signage project Better entrances
	Toilet provision	Refurbish and repair buildings and facilities
Green infrastructure	Better access to nature	Tree planting programme Sustainable Urban Drainage System and flood plain enhancement

Future funding and governance

Barnet is having to reduce the amount of money that it spends on delivering services and parks will have to make a contribution to this saving.



This is an issue for many local authorities across the UK. In response to this, a considerable amount of research has been undertaken to look at new ways in which parks might be funded and managed in future so that they can continue to provide benefits for communities across the UK. This section considers some of the options for future funding and management that the council might consider so that Barnet's parks continue to deliver these benefits.

The council has a clear vision for the future of the parks service:

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

and to sustain the investment we plan to make in parks and open spaces, we will have to look at alternative ways to raise funds for parks and consider new ways of managing them which may include some or all of the borough's parks and open spaces not being managed by the Council. When implementing the strategy, we will consider in detail new approaches to managing

parks and open spaces in Barnet and will pilot some of the approaches set out below. We will also use the information we've gathered around current and future needs to consider managing some green spaces less intensively.

New sources of income could include:

- charging for some services
- increasing the number of events and concessions in parks
- increasing levels of sponsorship in parks
- increasing the amount of community resources being drawn on for parks
- increasing the financial contribution made by planning gain funds
- issuing bonds and increasing commercial financing
- increasing local taxation
- capturing the value of environmental contributions made by parks
- securing more money from funds and trusts.

Future management and funding options

In developing the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy, we have considered a number of options for new approaches to the funding and future management of parks in Barnet. We will consult residents and stakeholders on all of these options as part of the process of adopting the strategy.

Option 1 – retaining the status quo

Section nine of the strategy suggests ways in which the current service might be reformed to deliver to higher standards.

Option 2 – shared public services

This option involves working with other local authorities to manage parks services (possibly in combination with other environmental services such as waste) across a larger part of London. This can generate savings but can lead to a loss of local control.

Option 3 – Third part contract management

Some local authorities have entered into long term contracts with the private sector to deliver parks services. These arrangements can deliver considerable efficiencies and a range of community outcomes but can be undemocratic if not properly set up.

Option 4 – Social enterprises and partnership

This option would involve creating social enterprises to manage parks and open spaces. This option would give local residents a considerable say in how parks are managed. There is not a well-developed social enterprise sector in Barnet so this option would require funding and support for it to be successful.

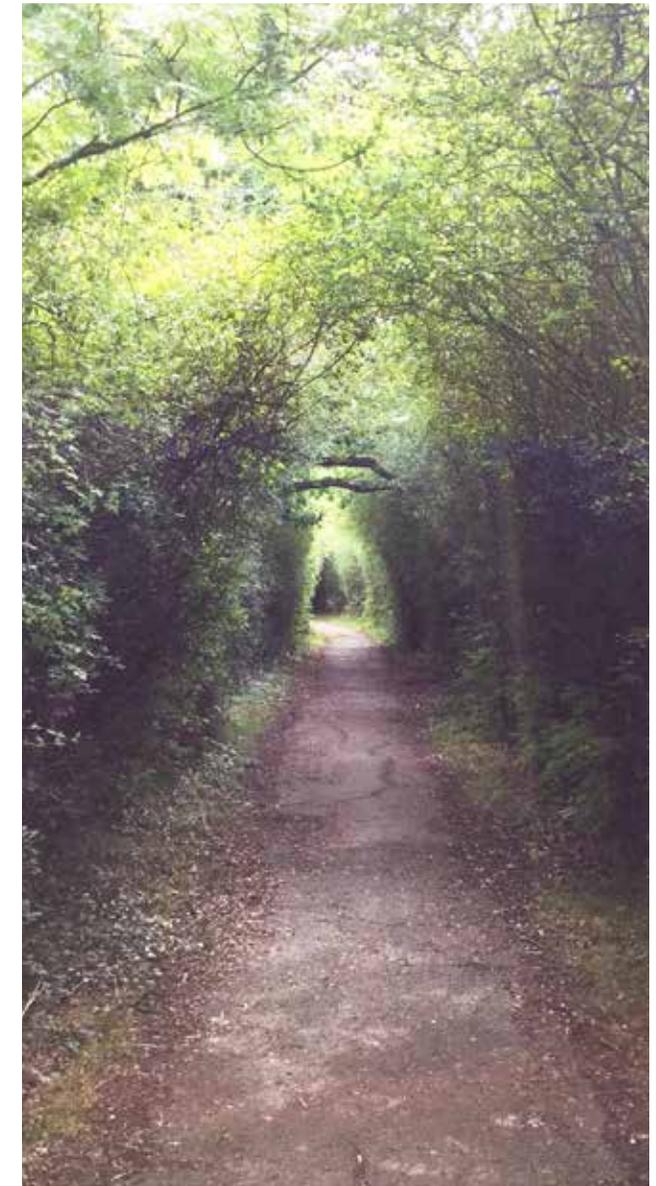
Option 5 – trusts and foundations

This option would involve transferring some or all of the borough's parks assets into a trust that would manage these parks in future. The advantage of this approach would be that a trust would be able to make long term plans for the borough's parks. Start-up and administration costs can be high and longer-term funding is best achieved through a large capital endowment.

Option 6 – precepts and levies

This option would involve asking local residents and businesses to contribute to the cost of managing parks and open spaces. Many Business Improvement Districts across London raise similar levies to pay for better streets and greenspaces. This would give residents and businesses the opportunity to directly influence the quality of services being

provided but a clear rationale would have to be provided to justify a local tax.



Discussion

The objective of the strategy is to deliver our aspiration for a better parks service.

Some of these options might deliver this aspiration and could be assessed through a series of pilot projects.

The strategy will propose a way forward based on a number of principles:

- we make the best use of the parks and open space assets in the borough to deliver the best range of benefits
- we consider how best to manage the service in future to make these benefits sustainable
- we measure performance in terms of how well these benefits (for health, education the environment and economy) are being delivered
- we consider how we might create and develop an endowment to pay for and sustain a high quality service in future
- we consider managing some green spaces in different ways as a means of saving resources.



Action plan outcomes

Our actions have been grouped into three outcomes.

A better place to live, work and play...

Social Outcomes



- play and learning
- community safety
- community cohesion
- health and wellbeing
- funding, governance and investment

Environmental Outcomes



- river corridors and flood risk management
- sustainable travel – facilitating the growth of walking and cycling
- quality of the environment and its management

Economic Outcomes



- Local Plan Policy
- growth and regeneration
- facilitating entrepreneurship
- commercial opportunities
- employment and skills

Action plans

To help achieve the vision of the strategy we need to engage and build relationships across Barnet to ensure our greenspaces are places deliver economic, social and environmental benefits. Delivering this strategy will not be simple or straight forward, but the action plan below sets out some of the steps we will take to achieve our vision.

 Economic Outcomes				
Action	Resources Needed	Milestones	Lead	
Local Plan Policy: To ensure that the level of open space provision in Barnet is sufficient to meet the needs of an expanding population and that future need around provision of open space is described in the local plan				
1	To investigate the potential to meet the All London Green Grid aspiration for a new Regional Park within Barnet by 2026	●●●●	2021	Commissioning Group
2	To plan the development and investment in the borough for the creation of at least 1 new district park and 13 new local parks utilising planning and other services by 2040	●●●●○	2026	Commissioning Group
3	To support the Develop Green Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Guidance by 2018	●●●●	2016	Commissioning Group
4	Align Playing Pitch strategy with the Parks and Open Spaces strategy by 2017	●●○	2016	Commissioning Group
5	To ensure that the 2017 Local Plan review considers and supports the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy by 2017	●●	2017	Commissioning Group
● Project Lead ● Planning Input ● Consultation ● Communication ● Development Partners ● Finance ● Legal Support ○ Internal Partners ○ Estates team ○ Stakeholder management and liaison ○ External Partners ○ Technical knowledge ○ Town Centre Managers				

 Economic Outcomes			
Action	Resources Needed	Milestones	Lead
Growth and regeneration: To ensure that the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy reinforces the objectives of Barnet’s regeneration area policies			
6	To deliver the approved parks and open spaces improvements planned for Brent Cross, including re-naturalisation of the river corridor, transformation of Clitterhouse Playing Fields, delivery of new town squares and re-landscaping of existing local parks by 2026		Planning permission granted for Clitterhouse and Claremont open space June 2015 Commissioning Group and Delivery Unit
7	To deliver new investment in the parks and open spaces of Colindale and Burnt Oak associated with the Regeneration Programme, including improvements to Montrose Playing Fields, Silk Stream Park, Heybourne Park and, Colindale Park by 2021		First draft design summer 2016 Contractors on site 2018 Commissioning Group and Delivery Unit
8	To deliver improvements to the Brent Reservoir Site of Special Scientific Interest associated with the West Hendon Regeneration Scheme, and improvements to the West Hendon Playing Fields by 2018		2018 Commissioning Group and Delivery Unit
Facilitating entrepreneurship: To ensure that the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy supports the economic success of Barnet and the objectives of the Council’s ‘Entrepreneurial Barnet’ strategy			
9	To identify pilot sites for Business Improvement Districts or Neighbourhood Improvement Districts in order to identify partnership and funding opportunities for local parks by 2018		2018 Commissioning Group
10	Develop design guides for parks and open spaces to ensure identity of local area and promote entrepreneurial activity by 2020		2020 Commissioning Group
11	To create, facilitate and promote locations for meanwhile activities (incidental uses) and uses for those in local areas by 2025		2025 Delivery Unit
12	To work with partners to create a framework to promote a or Barnet’s night time economy in appropriate public spaces such as pocket parks within/adjacent to town centres by 2017		Feed into events strategy in 2016 Commissioning Group
13	To review future funding and governance options pilots to explore feasibility of the viability by 2018		1. Identify pilots by 2017 2. Review income from licences/leases 2017 Commissioning Group
Employment and skills: To ensure that the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy supports the development of work and training opportunities for Barnet’s residents			
14	To create opportunities for structured career progression through contract partners, delivery partners, graduate schemes and apprentices by 2017		Options for apprentices schemes in 2016 Delivery Unit
● Project Lead ● Planning Input ● Consultation ● Communication ● Development Partners ● Finance ● Legal Support ○ Internal Partners ○ Estates team ○ Stakeholder management and liaison ○ External Partners ○ Technical knowledge ○ Town Centre Managers			

 Environmental Outcomes				
Action		Resources Needed	Milestones	Lead
River corridors and flood risk management: To adapt the borough’s river valleys to limit the impact of flooding and to enhance access to river valleys for educational and leisure activities				
15	To work with partners to assess opportunities for flood risk management in Barnet’s river valleys by 2017		Start assessment in Colindale in 2016	Delivery Unit
16	To work with partners to identify opportunities to address water quality in Barnet’s river valleys and develop a programme of targeted activities and investments by 2019		Identify partners by 2016	Delivery Unit
17	To work with partners to enhance bio-diversity in river valleys as well as other parks and open spaces to improve awareness, education and recreation by 2022		2022	Commissioning Group and Delivery Unit
18	Pursue opportunities to complete the delivery of the All London Green Grid Dollis Valley project, by 2025		1. Upstream – the quality of the river corridor and footpath network in the Upper Dollis Valley particularly linked to the Dollis Valley Regeneration Scheme. By 2020 2. Downstream – improving the quality of the river corridor to Brent Reservoir by 2020	Commissioning Group and Delivery Unit
Sustainable travel – facilitating the growth of walking and cycling: To promote the inter-connectedness of the borough’s parks and open spaces and the adoption of alternatives to private car use				
19	To identify opportunities to develop and promote the borough’s walking and cycling network, including school travel plans by 2017		Identify the east west links that need improving by 2017	Commissioning Group
● Project Lead ● Planning Input ● Consultation ● Communication ● Development Partners ● Finance ● Legal Support ○ Internal Partners ○ Estates team ○ Stakeholder management and liaison ○ External Partners ○ Technical knowledge ○ Town Centre Managers				

 Environmental Outcomes			
Action	Resources Needed	Milestones	Lead
Quality of the environment and its management: To ensure that the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy enhances the borough’s rich mix of habitats and protects the borough’s green infrastructure from the impacts of climate change			
20	To ensure measures to promote biodiversity and enhance the ecological quality and inter-connectedness of the borough’s greenspaces are included within all capital investment projects from 2016		Bio-diversity initiatives developed in Colindale parks from 2016 Delivery Unit
21	To develop proposals with partners to protect and enhance the habitat types and values in parks and open spaces by 2018		School engagement by 2017 London wildlife trust engagement in 2017 Delivery Unit
22	To Identify locations for tree planting across the borough with a focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> committing to a programme that involves a net gain in trees across the borough strengthening the quality of the landscape (through planting avenues, tree groups, park boundaries and woodlands) addressing urban warming (tree planting concentrated in the south of the borough) addressing NO2 (tree planting next to major roads) from 2016 		Identify locations by 2018 Delivery Unit
23	To Commit to recycle 25% of waste produced within parks and open spaces by 2017 and recycle 50% of waste by 2020		2017 – 2020 Delivery Unit
● Project Lead ● Planning Input ● Consultation ● Communication ● Development Partners ● Finance ● Legal Support ○ Internal Partners ○ Estates team ○ Stakeholder management and liaison ○ External Partners ○ Technical knowledge ○ Town Centre Managers			

 Social outcomes				
Action	Resources Needed	Milestones	Lead	
Play and learning: To secure the educational and health benefits from the use of parks and open spaces by children and young people through innovative play design and enhanced access for schools				
24	To create a high quality distinctive local programme to upgrade the borough's park playgrounds and ensure the inclusion of all schools and parks by 2019.		Programme developed by 2019	Commissioning Group
25	To Identify educational establishments in close proximity to parks and open spaces and selectively pilot school use of these spaces, in particular focus on forest School learning by 2017		2017	Delivery Unit
26	To Identify funding for the development of local parks and open spaces by 2018		2018	Commissioning Group & Delivery Unit
Community Safety: To ensure that open spaces are distinctive, safe, attractive and popular places by designing out crime and anti-social behaviour				
27	From crime statistics identify opportunities to address community safety issues by 2017		2017	Commissioning Group
28	To identify sites with the potential for tranquil 'dog-free' areas or special needs to meet with a wide range of mental health requirements. Trial implementation by 2018		Identify sites by 2018	Delivery Unit
Community cohesion: To promote the involvement of residents in the management of open spaces to develop a sense of local ownership				
29	To create a framework to encourage communities to feel ownership for and activate their local open spaces, by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removing barriers to the planning of local events in parks Removing barriers to and enhancing recognition for volunteering by 2020. 		2020	Commissioning Group
30	To Support the development of a 'Barnet Parks Friends Forum' to create a broader community, a network for sharing learning and ideas around parks and open spaces in the borough by 2016		2016	Delivery Unit
31	To assess parks and open spaces against accessibility standards set out in the Accessible London Supplementary Planning Guidance by 2017		2017	Commissioning Group and Delivery Unit
● Project Lead ● Planning Input ● Consultation ● Communication ● Development Partners ● Finance ● Legal Support ○ Internal Partners ○ Estates team ○ Stakeholder management and liaison ○ External Partners ○ Technical knowledge ○ Town Centre Managers				

 Social outcomes			
Action	Resources Needed	Milestones	Lead
Community cohesion: To promote the involvement of residents in the management of open spaces to develop a sense of local ownership			
32	To Develop a stronger volunteering culture associated with local open spaces, from 2017	<p>Working with local businesses and public sector partners to develop Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) agreement? /Action plan? in 2018</p> <p>Opportunities and models for encouraging volunteering in parks and open spaces in 2017</p> <p>Identify pilot sites for Barnet's emerging Community Participation Strategy (CPS) and work with partners (Community Barnet and Groundwork) to deliver CPS outcomes</p>	Commissioning Group
Health and wellbeing: To promote the use of parks for physical activity and address major public health issues across the borough			
33	To identify specific parks and open spaces opportunities that can help tackle priority public health issues, such as obesity, diabetes and smoking from 2016	Explore smoke free policies in 2016	Commissioning Group
34	To pilot social impact bonds for parks targeted at securing the investment for improvements to parks facilities/services that will achieve health outcomes by 2020	Explore the impact of social impact band trials in 2017	Commissioning Group
35	To identify Sites and partnerships where health outcomes and informal and formal physical activities can work in tandem to enhance and promote health and wellbeing by 2020	Initiate project 2017	Commissioning Group
<p> ● Project Lead ● Planning Input ● Consultation ● Communication ● Development Partners ● Finance ● Legal Support Internal Partners Estates team Stakeholder management and liaison External Partners Technical knowledge Town Centre Managers </p>			

For more information:

tel: 020 8359 2000 email: first.contact@barnet.gov.uk

or visit www.barnet.gov.uk/citizen-home/parks-sport-and-leisure