



# City of Westminster Open Space Strategy



## Westminster City Council

Departments of Environment and Leisure  
and Planning and City Development

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City of Westminster

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# FOREWORD

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The City of Westminster Open Space Strategy is designed to improve the quality, management, accessibility and usage of parks and other open spaces in the city, and provide new facilities where there are deficits in provision. The Open Space Strategy will be important in delivering the aims of the Westminster City Plan, in particular, to improve the environment by becoming a more sustainable, greener city; improve wellbeing and health; and make the city a better place for older people, children and young people.

The Strategy responds to the unique circumstances of the city, and also follows government advice and the Mayor's best practice guidance. It has several functions:

- it sets out a planning policy framework for protecting and improving Westminster's open space network
- it will inform future decision making, especially the funding review of capital expenditure programmes, Neighbourhood Renewal Area projects, Local area Agreements, and the Groundwork programme
- it supports the council's S106 planning obligation policy and guidance, by providing the necessary information as to where new or improved facilities are needed, and what should be requested from private developments
- it provides a framework for all those involved in raising standards of open space management in the City of Westminster

It does this by:

- 1) Identifying open space issues in Westminster by examining existing provision of open spaces, assessing need for open spaces, and identifying the key issues which need to be addressed to improve the quality, quantity, and usage of open space; and setting out relative priorities;
- 2) Setting out the council's existing UDP policies that protect existing open space and biodiversity, and seek new and improved spaces in the city;
- 3) Identifying further work and research which needs to be undertaken in order to support future improvements to the open space network, and emerging policy goals;
- 4) Including an Action Plan that will be updated annually, which lists schemes and projects that are expected to be implemented in the coming year. Other future schemes and projects will be included in future years' Action Plans as and when funding becomes available.
- 5) Co-ordinating with related council strategies for play, sport, and public realm.

Westminster City Council has prepared this Open Space Strategy using data and findings from an Open Space Study carried out in 2004/5. This study included an audit of all parks and open spaces in the city, and extensive community consultation

and park user surveys. A further round of consultation on the content of the Strategy was held during summer 2006. The Strategy has been agreed by Cabinet for adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document in the City of Westminster Local Development Framework.



# CONTENTS

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Foreword	
Introduction	5
MAP WR 0 - Westminster's Open Space Network and Forum Areas	
Vision Statement	11
<b><u>PART A: PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK</u></b>	
1. Legislative and Policy Context	14
2. Responding to Needs and Deficiency	18
MAP WR 2: Public Open Space Deficiency	
MAP WR 5: Play Space – Provision and Demand	
<b><u>PART B: STRATEGY, PRIORITIES AND DELIVERY</u></b>	
1. Introduction	30
2. Public Consultation	31
3. Priorities for the Improvement of the Open space Network	33
4. Addressing the Priorities	36
5. Delivery of the Strategy : The Action Plan	42
The Action Plan	43
Further Work/Research	47
6. Monitoring and Review	51

## **LIST OF APPENDICES**

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**APPENDIX 1: MAPS WR1 – WR10**

**APPENDIX 2: NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT**

**APPENDIX 3: LIST OF PROTECTED SPACES**

**APPENDIX 4: CITY OF WESTMINSTER CHARACTERISTICS AND OPEN SPACE  
PROVISION**

**APPENDIX 5: THEMES AND ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED**

**APPENDIX 6: POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

**APPENDIX 7: LIST OF COMMUNITY GROUPS CONSULTED**

**APPENDIX 8: LIST OF INFORMATION RESOURCES AND REFERENCES**

# 1. INTRODUCTION

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This Introduction explains why and how the Open Space Strategy has been prepared; its function, and structure.

## Structure and content of the Open Space Strategy

- 1.1 The content reflects the format and guidance in the London Plan Best Practice Guidance for the preparation of open space strategies. The Strategy is in two parts: Part A: The Planning Framework, and Part B: Strategy Priorities and Delivery.

**Introduction** - the Introduction explains why the strategy has been prepared, how it was prepared, its function, and structure.

**The Vision** – sets out Westminster’s long term vision for the open space network in the city, which received overwhelming support from residents. It consists of nine overarching principles which guide the Strategy and set out its aims.

### 1.2 Part A : The Planning Framework

**1. Legislative and Policy context** summarises national, regional, and local policy context, and policy issues which will need to be addressed in the LDF and other corporate strategies. A fuller account is provided in **Appendix 2: National, Regional and Local Policy Context** and **Appendix 6: Policy Development**.

**2. Responding to needs and deficiency** describes the open space network in Westminster and sets out what current and future needs for open space are, reflecting the GLA standards and hierarchy. It then sets out how these needs and deficiencies will be addressed by tackling the deficiency of open space in the north west and southern parts of the city; and improving access to existing spaces. This section should be read alongside **Appendix 1: Maps WR1 – WR10**. **Appendix 4: City of Westminster Characteristics and Open Space Provision** provides a fuller account of current provision and need, and **Appendix 5: Themes and Issues to be Addressed** describes the issues related to needs and deficiency in greater detail and sets out solutions and priorities.

### 1.3 Part B: Strategy, Priorities and Delivery

#### 1. Introduction

**2. Public Consultation** summarises the results of the public consultation

**3. Priorities for the Improvement of the Open Space Network** uses the results of the consultation exercises, and national and Mayoral and council priorities for open space, to establish a list of priorities for the Strategy

**4. Addressing the Priorities** sets out how the City Council intends to address the priorities

**5. Delivery of the Strategy :The Action Plan** contains the delivery mechanisms for addressing the priorities; the Action Plan and the table of Further Work/Research. **The Action Plan** lists those actions, schemes and projects which are already included in the Capital Programme for the coming year, or for which funding can reasonably be anticipated within the same period. Other future schemes and projects not currently included in this Action Plan can be included in next or future years' Action Plans as and when funding becomes available. The Action Plan will be updated annually and reported to relevant Cabinet members.

**6. Monitoring and Review** sets out how the objectives and actions in this strategy will be monitored and reviewed.

#### 1.4 The Appendices

App. 1 - Maps WR1 – WR10 showing distribution and deficiency of: open space, sites of importance for nature conservation, and facilities such as play areas.

App. 2 - National, Regional, and Local Policy Context

App. 3 - List of protected open spaces

App. 4 - City of Westminster characteristics and open space provision

App. 5 - Themes and issues to be addressed

App. 6 - Policy Development

App. 7 - List of Community Groups consulted

App. 8 - List of Information Resources and References

#### The Sustainability Appraisal

1.5 Reflecting government guidance, a Sustainability Appraisal of the Open Space Strategy was prepared to accompany the Strategy at draft consultation stage and was used to make some minor amendments to the Strategy and include some additional monitoring indicators.

## Purpose of the Strategy

- 1.6. Well maintained, quality open spaces that are safe and attractive to all, will contribute to Westminster's ambition to be the best place in the UK to live, for quality of life and the quality of public services. A successful Open Space Strategy will contribute to Westminster City Plan's ambition to *'ensure that everyone can enjoy clean streets, open and greenspaces and clean air, and that people and organisations work together to actively improve the environment for future generations.'*
- 1.7 The City of Westminster Open Space Strategy is the first comprehensive review of open space across the city for over 25 years. It covers all public and private open spaces in the city, including the Royal Parks, Housing Estate open space, and civic spaces. It is based on full audits, surveys, and consultation and follows new and emerging Government and Mayoral policies and best practice.
- 1.8. The Open Space Strategy is a strategy to improve the quality, management, accessibility and usage of parks and other open spaces in the city, and provide new facilities where there are deficits in provision. It has been prepared in response to government guidance and in accordance with the London Plan by officers in Planning and City Development (P&CD) and Environment and Leisure (E&L), in consultation with other departments. It reflects the findings of the Westminster Open Space Study carried out by consultants in 2004/5, and a further round of public consultation carried out in summer 2006.
- 1.9 This Open Space Strategy is a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) of the Local Development Framework (LDF) and will supplement future Development Plan Documents. It also supplements saved UDP policies regarding open space. These are: policies STRA 16, 29, 31, 36, and 37, ENV 14, 15, 17, DES 12, and SOC 6 and H 10.
- 1.10 The Strategy will be important in realising some of the aims of the Westminster City Plan and as a vehicle for delivering some of the components of 'One City' related to open space, quality of life, and delivering quality services at a local level. The Open Space Strategy will also link into other strategies such as those for the public realm, play and sport. It will be a prerequisite for attracting Government funding, and other sources of funding such as S106 contributions, for future schemes to improve the open space network in the city.
- 1.11 The Open Space Strategy will serve as a Corporate Strategy for 10 –15 years, with some components e.g. the further work/research required and Action Plan needing to be updated annually as projects and actions are completed, and new ones come on stream. It provides a framework for the delivery of council services and future action by the council, its partners and others involved in creating, managing, and using open spaces across the city. It stresses the importance of partnership working both within the council and with partners and other key stakeholders, including local communities

themselves. The success of the strategy in achieving its aims will be monitored and reviewed annually.

## Definition of Open Space

- 1.12 In compiling this Strategy, officers have followed the guidance in the London Plan Best Practice Guidance. The Study included as open spaces: all parks and gardens, regardless of size (whether public or privately owned); the Thames; the Canal; civic spaces; children's playgrounds; ball courts; open spaces in housing estates; and churchyards within the city's boundary. These included open spaces with private or restricted access. The study also took into account public indoor sports provision, public indoor play areas, and linkages between open spaces. The Study did not include as open spaces: streets; private residential gardens (although private communal gardens were included); school playgrounds; or purely landscaped areas such as road verges, or strips of perimeter planting around housing estates.

## The Open Space Study

- 1.13 A study of open space in Westminster was carried out in 2004/5. A comprehensive audit of open space in the city was carried out by the Departments of Planning & City Development and Environment & Leisure, and consultants (Land Use Consultants and Groundwork Camden & Islington) carried out the surveys and reviews, and managed the consultation.
- 1.14. The views of residents and users of open spaces were important in the formulation of the Strategy, and were based on two comprehensive consultation exercises. The first was undertaken in 2004 to inform the Study. This exercise took two forms:
- a **community consultation** to identify what the community values most in terms of open space and recreation provision. Questionnaires were sent out to over 600 community groups across the city, and 16 focus group meetings were held with a wide range of community groups (see Appendix 7);
  - extensive **user surveys** to ascertain in detail how specific open spaces are used, by interviewing users 'on site' on a range of questions (for example how they got there, and what they like about the space).
- 1.15 A second round of consultation took place between July and September 2006 on the draft Strategy. This exercise followed the procedures set out in Westminster City Council's Statement of Community Involvement. It included community consultation with 17 focus groups (see Appendix 7), and all 6 area forums. A comprehensive mail out to all key stakeholders, and a summary document which was placed on the council website and at local one-stops and libraries.

- 1.16. The study concluded that the majority of spaces would benefit from some type of enhancement, but priority should be given to:
- areas of open space deficiency
  - housing estate open spaces
  - those that would contribute to regeneration.
- 1.17. It identified several priorities for investment and action, including:
- addressing access issues
  - provision for older children and teenagers
  - maintaining biodiversity and addressing areas of wildlife deficiency
  - increased partnership working and community involvement; and
  - designating and extending green routes to create a more integrated and accessible network of open spaces.

## **The Open Space Strategy**

- 1.18. Westminster's built up central location means that its parks and open spaces play an essential role in the quality of life for residents. They also act as 'green lungs' in the city for residents, workers and visitors, and also bring wildlife into the city. Most wards in Westminster are characterised by very high residential densities with high numbers of flats, which means that few residents have access to private gardens. There are a few areas (such as St. John's Wood) that are characterised, predominantly, by lower residential densities, and houses with gardens. The Strategy takes into account these differing characteristics and needs. Appendix 4: City of Westminster Characteristics, sets out the demographic, economic, physical and environmental characteristics of the city.
- 1.19. The Strategy will help deliver some of the aims of the Westminster City Plan and One City Programme by highlighting the need to work with residents and other partners to improve the open space network in the city.
- 1.20 The Strategy will be important in:
- providing a framework for protecting and improving Westminster's open space network
  - raising standards of open space management
  - informing future decision making, especially the funding review of capital expenditure programmes, Neighbourhood Renewal Area projects, Local area Agreements, and the Groundwork programme

- supporting the council's S106 planning obligation policy and guidance, by providing the necessary information as to where new or improved facilities are needed, and what should be requested from private developments.

# Map WR0: Westminster Forum Areas\* and Parks and Open Spaces

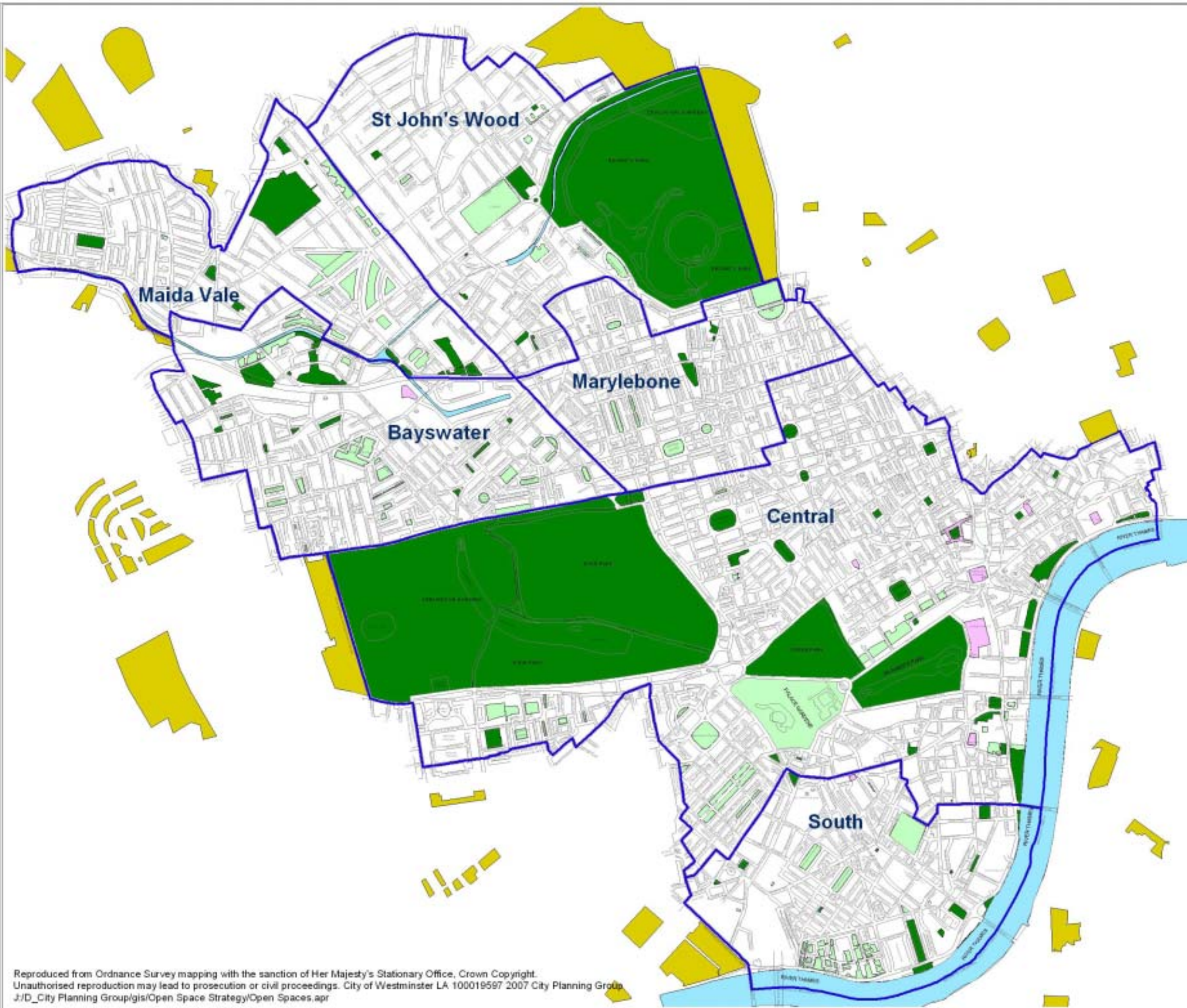
## Key

-  Area Forum Boundary\*
-  Publicly Accessible Open Spaces
-  Open Spaces with Private Access
-  Civic Spaces
-  Waterways
-  Areas of Open Space outside the city

\* As at 2005



0 0.5 1 Km



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## City of Westminster Vision for Open Space

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**To improve our environment by becoming a more sustainable, greener city, to improve wellbeing and health, and make the city a better place for children and young people, by:**

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- 1. Protecting all Westminster's open spaces, natural and built heritage features and landscapes**  
-for their recreation, health, and quality of life value, and their contribution to the heritage and built and natural environment of the city.
  - 2. Enhancing the quality and attractiveness of our open spaces by ensuring that they are interesting, well maintained, provide tranquillity, and are clean and safe.**
    - greening
    - landscape renewal and increasing plant diversity
    - incorporating environmentally sustainable management practices
    - opportunities to learn about the natural environment
    - protecting quiet spaces/tackling noise
  - 3. Improving access to open spaces**
    - **physical access** i.e. address areas of deficiency, maximise public access, improve safety and security, safe crossings, DDA compliance
    - **intellectual access** eg increase awareness – green information leaflet and information on wildlife, heritage, facilities
    - **more attractive walking routes** – including enhanced tree planting and greening, and general public realm improvements
  - 4. Ensuring that new developments contribute to Westminster's open space network, by**
    - providing new open spaces – both public and private
    - enhancing existing spaces, including greening of small urban spaces where appropriate, and improving links to and between open spaces
  - 5. Working with communities to create safe, secure, and inclusive places for children's play**
  - 6. Maintaining and increasing the amount of wildlife habitat and biodiversity in the city**
  - 7. Strengthen connections between communities and spaces, enabling local people to use, value and care for the city's open spaces**
  - 8. Providing more sporting, cultural and formal and informal educational opportunities for young people**
  - 9. Work together with our local communities and partners to achieve the aims of this Open Space Strategy**

*These will include:* Westminster City Partnership, Local Area Renewal Partnerships, Area forums, resident/ tenant assoc., Friends Groups

    - CityWest Homes, Royal Parks, British Waterways and other private open space owners; and developers and landowners
    - Health Authority, NHS Trusts and bodies
    - London Biodiversity Partnership; London Parks and Green Spaces Forum
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## **PART A:**

### **Planning Policy Framework**

# 1. LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT

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This section summarises the policy context for the Open Space Strategy at a national and regional level, then sets out local policies i.e. policies that come from Westminster policy documents, such as the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) adopted January 2007, the City Plan - November 2006), and the One City Programme. A fuller account of national, regional and City of Westminster policies affecting open space is given in **Appendix 2 – Policy Context**. A list of priorities for future policy development is provided **Appendix 6: Policy Development**.

## **Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 17: Planning for open space, sport and recreation**

- 1.1 At a national level, PPG 17 needs to be considered by local authorities in the development of their Plans/Local Development Frameworks. The main role of the planning system in this context is to ensure there is a sufficient supply of open spaces and that they are in the right places. There is a need also to ensure they are of high quality, attractive to users and well managed and maintained. PPG 17 outlines the role of open space in supporting urban renaissance, promoting social inclusion, enhancing health and well-being and promoting sustainable development.

## **Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 3: Housing**

- 1.2 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.*

## **London Plan**

- 1.3 The London Plan considers that open spaces provide a valuable resource and focus for local communities, can have a positive effect on the image and vitality of areas, and can encourage investment. They provide a respite from the built environment, an opportunity for recreation, and promote health, well-being and quality of life.
- 1.4 Policy 3D.10 states that Unitary Development Plan policies should identify broad areas of public open space deficiency and priorities for addressing them. The Plan also places emphasis on individual Local Authorities to develop open space strategies.

1.5 The Good Practice Guidance <sup>1</sup>accompanying the London Plan highlights the following aims with respect to London's open space:

- realise the value of open space;
- protect the Green Belt, Metropolitan Open Land and locally important open space, including green corridors and important wildlife habitats;
- give support to the creation of networks of strategic open spaces such as green chains and access to, and connections between spaces;
- create new open spaces in areas where there is inadequate provision, and promotion of improvements in existing provision;
- ensure that everyone has equal access to, and can use London's open spaces;
- manage open space and encourage Boroughs to prepare open space strategies to identify priorities and opportunities based on local needs.

### **The City Plan (November 2006)**

1.6. The City Plan is the City of Westminster's Community Strategy. It seeks to ensure that our public spaces are attractive, well designed and accessible. It aims to increase access to open spaces, and this is considered to have particular benefits for regeneration and quality of life.

1.7 'One City' (November 2005) is Westminster City Council's five year vision for the city and outlines where resources will be focused. The One City Vision is of a city characterised by shared values, vibrant neighbourhoods and active citizens where government puts the customer first. The open space strategy will be important as a vehicle for delivering the programme for 'Better Open Spaces'.

### **Unitary Development Plan (adopted January 2007)**

1.8 This Open Space Strategy is a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and will supplement future Development Plan Documents. It also supplements saved UDP policies regarding open space. These are: policies STRA 16, 29, 31, 36, and 37, ENV 14, 15, 17, DES 12, and SOC 6 and H 10. Appendix 2 contains a more comprehensive list of UDP policies that are related to open space, which may also be supported by the SPD. The City Council's strategic UDP policy STRA 36, sets out the council's general aims for open space. These are: *to protect and encourage the enhancement of, public access to and enjoyment of, Metropolitan Open Land; and to protect and enhance the existing provision of open space and to promote its additional provision.* These aims are reflected in this Strategy.

#### **(a) The protection of all open spaces in the city**

1.9 UDP policy (ENV 14 and 15) does not permit development on or under public or private parks, landscaped spaces, or gardens (including open spaces on housing estates). Protection is extended to any open space of amenity, recreational or nature conservation value (unless the development is essential and ancillary to maintaining or enhancing that land as valuable open space). Other matters such as

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<sup>1</sup> Greater London Authority (2004) *Guide to preparing Open Space Strategies. Best practice guidance of the London Plan*

protection of historic parks and gardens, protection of green corridors, views, nature conservation and biodiversity, sustainability, and trees are also the subject of UDP policy. There are also policies to 'protect and enhance the character, appearance, biodiversity and environmental quality of the River Thames and its setting'

### ***List of Protected Open Spaces***

- 1.10. All open spaces are protected from development by the council's UDP policies. As part of this Open Space Strategy the City Council has compiled a list of open spaces in the city that were included in the analysis. This list is contained in **Appendix 3**. These spaces will be protected because of their value or potential value to amenity, townscape, recreation and/or nature conservation. Other open spaces not on this list will also be protected, unless it can be shown that they are surplus to meeting open space needs. The list also indicates which spaces are protected under the London Squares Act and which are included in English Heritage's Historic Parks and Gardens Register.

### **b) Increasing provision and improving existing open space**

- 1.11 UDP policies encourage the provision of new and enhanced open space, and may require new open space in developments in 'Priority Areas for Additional Public Open Space' (ENV 15). In new developments in or near 'Priority Areas for Additional Play Space' the City Council will seek new play space and improvements to existing facilities (SOC 6). Play space and facilities must be provided in new housing developments with over 24 family units. All extensive new developments, including commercial, must include provision of new open spaces. The SPG on Planning Obligations (awaiting adoption at the time of publication) sets out when and how the City Council will seek new open spaces and or funding for improvements to existing spaces, or access to them.

### **(c) Increasing access to open space**

- 1.12 UDP policy encourages greater public access to the Thames and the Grand Union and Regents Canals.

## **Way Forward**

- 1.13 Some policies will need to be developed further to address the issues outlined in this Strategy, and to comply with agreed alterations to the London Plan and latest government guidance.
1. Protect existing open spaces in the UDP/LDF – open spaces need to be listed and mapped. Further work on open spaces on housing estates may lead to additional spaces being included in the list of protected spaces (Appendix 3) which can then be brought forward into the LDF. **Review UDP policy ENV 15.**
  2. Increase the provision of open space, including new civic spaces, and play/youth spaces by a variety of means, including S106, planning briefs, and Area Action Plans in order to increase access to open space and meet the projected growth in population (both residents and workers). **Review UDP policy H 10 and SOC 6.**
  3. Redress the existing deficiencies in open space and playspace identified in Maps WR 2 and WR 5 by requesting public open space in appropriate

developments in and near these areas. **Review UDP maps 9.1 and 6.2** showing areas of deficiency of open space and playspace, and priority areas for new spaces in LDF.

4. Improve the accessibility of open spaces, ensure **DDA compliance**; and improve routes to and between open spaces. Removing barriers to access can also contribute to alleviating open space deficiency. **Prepare a Public Realm Strategy.**
5. Protect, maintain, enhance and create sites of value for nature conservation, and improve access to these areas. In Areas of Wildlife Deficiency, UDP/LDF policy should require the retention of, and improvements to, the nature conservation value of existing open spaces. Policy should also require the creation of new sites of value for wildlife through the innovative management of the built environment. **Review UDP policy ENV 17 to strengthen the protection of wildlife habitats and creation of new or improved habitats.** Consider preparing an SPD on nature conservation and biodiversity.
6. **Protect natural and built heritage features and landscapes** which contribute to the townscape, character, or nature conservation value of areas in the city in the LDF, and by supplementary planning documents where appropriate, for example, consider SPD to protect private gardens and other landscape features which contribute to townscape character or nature conservation value.
7. Develop a formula for S106 contributions for open space provision, enhancements, access improvements, and studies, as part of **SPG on S106 agreements**
8. **Identify, designate, protect and map Green Chains in the LDF**
9. Develop policy proposals to enable improved protection of open spaces from **noise**.
10. Prepare a policy document to provide guidelines as to the use of London Squares and other historic parks and gardens for the purposes of events, temporary structures etc.

## 2. RESPONDING TO NEEDS AND DEFICIENCY

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Using the audit undertaken in the open space study, this section describes current supply of open space in (and around) the city. Firstly, it documents the number and types of open spaces with reference to London's Public Open Space Hierarchy. The assessment of need is firstly addressed in terms of general provision in the city, then goes on to describe provision (both in terms of quantity and quality) and need, in the 6 Forum areas. This section should be read alongside **Appendix 1: Maps WR1 – WR10**

This is followed by a description of the level of provision of different types of open spaces in the Public Open Space Hierarchy, in the context of their indicative catchment areas, which provides an assessment of deficiency. Areas of Open Space Deficiency and Priority Areas for Additional Open Space and Playspace are shown on **Maps WR 2 and WR 5**. It also describes the provision of sites of importance for nature conservation, play and youth facilities, sports provision, and space on housing land in the city. **Appendix 4** gives a fuller account of open space provision and need in the city.

The section concludes by setting out how the City Council intends to address existing deficiency and future needs, by protecting existing space, increasing the amount of open space, and improving access. **Appendix 5** describes the issues related to addressing needs and deficiency in greater detail and sets out solutions and priorities.

### General open space provision and need

- 2.1 Westminster has a total of 172 Open Spaces (excluding 10 civic spaces), which cover an area of 527 hectares, of which 454 hectares (86% and 87 in number) have public access and 73 hectares (85 in number) are private spaces, these include the majority of open spaces on housing estates. For a residential population of 244,000 (mid 2005 estimate, UDP ONS), this equates to 1.86 hectares of publicly accessible open space per 1,000 head of population. This compares with a generally accepted standard of 1.6 ha per 1000.
- 2.2 However, two major factors need to be taken into account when applying a standard to Westminster.
  - Firstly, recognition that Westminster's daytime population numbers approximately 1 million and therefore reduces the level of provision to well below the accepted standard - about 0.45 ha per 1,000 (compared to 1.6 ha per 1000 standard).
  - Secondly, the majority of Westminster's open space lies within the Royal Parks, which are generally distant from the main residential areas. Many areas of Westminster are therefore deficient in nearby accessible space.
- 2.3 It is therefore considered more useful to apply the 1.6 ha per 1000 population standard to the individual Area Forum areas when assessing open space provision

and need. The audit used the Westminster Area Forum boundaries when examining provision. These have since been changed; a map showing the Forum Areas used in this Strategy is provided as Map WR 0, which follows the Introduction. In terms of the forum areas used for the study, provision ranges as follows:

**Table 4.4: Open Space by Forum Area**

Area Forum Area	Public Open Space		Housing Estate Land		Total and Assessment (POS + HEL)	
	No	Hectares	No	Hectares	Total hectares	Hectare per 1000 population
<b>Central</b>	27	291.0	0	0	291.0	11.6
<b>South</b>	15	4.5	1	0.03	4.54	0.13
<b>Bayswater</b>	13	6.3	2	1.33	7.64	0.2
<b>Maida Vale</b>	13	16.2	0	0	16.2	0.46
<b>Marylebone</b>	4	1.4	0	0	1.4	1.07
<b>St John's Wood</b>	9	134.8	2	0.13	134.94	5

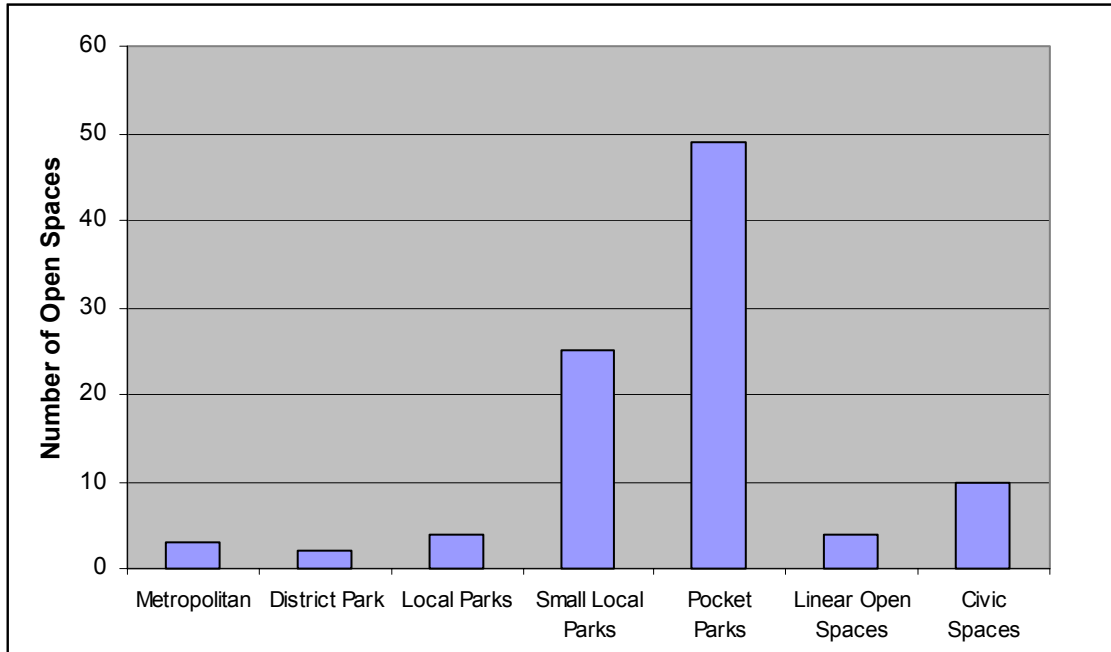
It should be noted that the ratio of open space to population is likely to be lower in reality, as they are based on data from the 2001 census, which is considered to be an underestimate of Westminster's residential population. Even using these figures, it is apparent that the South, Bayswater, and Maida Vale Forum Areas are significantly below the 1.6 ha per 1000 standard.

## Westminster's Public Open Space Hierarchy

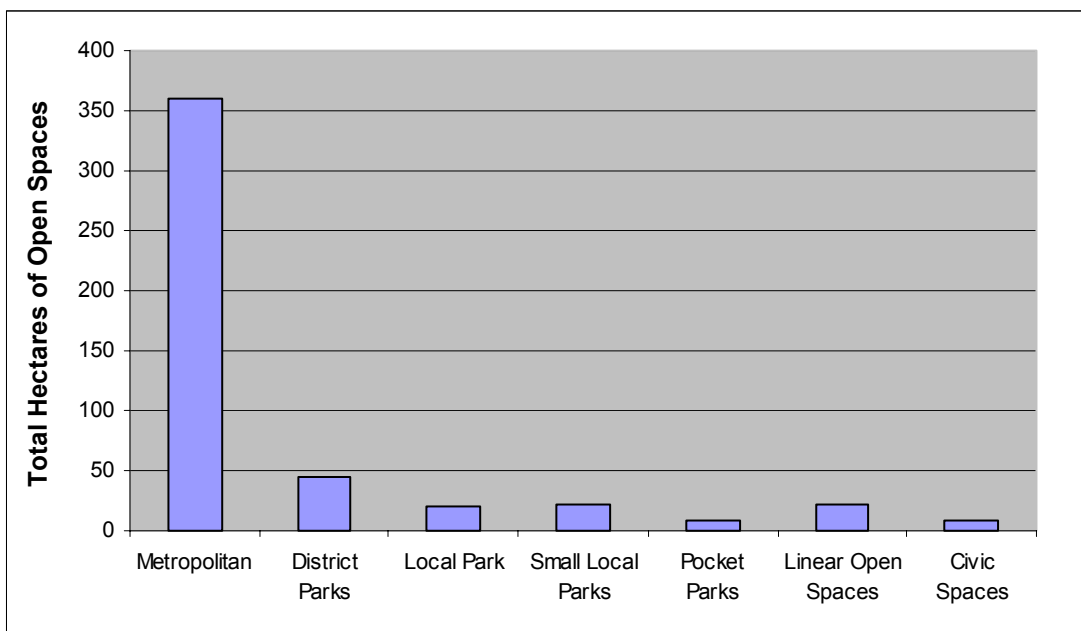
- 2.4 The hierarchy of open spaces in Westminster generally follows the description in Annex 3 of the London Plan '*Guide to preparing Open Space Strategies*' (March 2004), with the main exception being that the City of Westminster does not have any Regional Parks.
- 2.5 Table 4.1 is Westminster's Open Space Hierarchy. Figure 4.1 illustrates the number of spaces in each of the hierarchy categories. Table 4.2 categorises the typologies in terms of their size category from the hierarchy. Table 4.3 categorises all Westminster's open spaces (both public and private) according to their typology.

**Table 4.1: Westminster Public Open Space Hierarchy**

Type	Number present	Size guideline (ha)	Examples	Comments
Metropolitan	3	60 – 400	Hyde Park, Kensington Gardens, Regents Park	regional / national in their importance
District	2	20 – 60	St. James's Park, Green Park	
Local Parks	4	2 – 20	Paddington Rec., Victoria Tower Gardens (north)	
Small Local Parks	25	0.4 – 2	Bessborough Gardens	includes London Squares
Pocket Parks	49	<0.4	Rembrandt Gardens	includes London Squares and playgrounds
Linear open Space	4	Variable	Thames Walk Grand Union Canal path	Footpaths along River Thames and Canals
Civic Spaces	10	Variable	Trafalgar Square	hard landscaped areas
<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>			



**Figure 4.1: Number of Public Open spaces by hierarchy category**



**Figure 4.1a: Amount of Public Open Spaces by hierarchy category**

**Table 4.2: Typology of public spaces by hierarchy**

Typology	Cemeteries and churchyards	Green corridors	Civic spaces	Housing Estate open spaces	Outdoor sports facilities	Parks and gardens	Playgrounds	Total
Metropolitan						3		3
District						2		2
Local				1	1	2		4
Small Local	1			3	1	20		25
Pocket	3		10	1		39	6	59
Linear		4						4
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>97</b>

**Table 4.3: Westminster Open Space Typology**

<b>Westminster Typology</b>	<b>PPG17 Typology</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>No. of spaces total/publicly accessible</b>
Parks and gardens  - London Squares	Parks and gardens	Urban parks and formal gardens, incl. traditionally designed urban squares designated under the London Squares Act	110 /66  [69 / 25]
Housing estate open spaces	Amenity green space	Green spaces/Play areas around housing blocks owned and/or managed by WCC Housing.	21 / 5
Residential gardens/estates	Amenity green space	Private residential gardens not forming part of WCC housing estates or designated as a London Square.	10 / 0
Amenity green space	Amenity green space	Informal recreation spaces	4 / 0
Cemeteries and churchyards	Cemeteries and churchyards	Green space around churches, often including headstones and other monuments.	7 / 4
Playgrounds	Provision for children and teenagers	Spaces dominated by play areas	9/ 6
Outdoor sports facilities	Outdoor sports facilities	Outdoor sports areas including tennis courts, sports pitches, school/ institutional playing fields	4 / 2
Green Corridors	Green corridors	Routes along river and canals	4 / 4
Civic Spaces	Civic spaces	Public hard surfaced areas	10 / 10
Private hard spaces	n/a	Hard surfaced areas	3 / 0
<b>Total</b>			<b>182/97</b>

2.6. The key points to note from Tables 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 and Figures 4.1 and 4.1a above regarding the quantity of open space in Westminster at the city-wide scale, are:

- (i) Nearly half the open spaces in the city are not publicly accessible ; 85 out of 182 spaces;
- (ii) the very high proportion of open space which falls within the Royal Parks, 89% (by area) of public open space ;

- (iii) The public open space network in the city is characterised by a very large number of Small Local Parks and Pocket Parks. 87% of public spaces are less than 2 hectares;
- (iv) Though 87% of public open spaces are small or pocket sized they collectively only account for about 8% of open space in the city;
- (v) 69 of the 110 parks and gardens in the city are London Squares, although only 25 of the London Squares are publicly accessible;
- (vi) Housing Estate open space makes an important contribution to the open space network in the city, but most housing spaces are not considered to be publicly accessible.
- (vii) The Green Corridors are Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, as are one third of the Parks and Gardens. The Royal Parks, Thames and Grand Union Canal are the most important habitats of nature conservation value.

## **Specific Provision**

### **Nature Conservation**

- 2.7. There are 32 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) in the city and 24% of open spaces in are covered by the designation. This equates to some 86% of the total area of open space in the city, largely because the Royal Parks are all designated as SINCs. Map WR 3 shows Areas of Deficiency in access to SINCs.

### **Play Space**

- 2.8. Outdoor play facilities in Westminster are generally located within public parks and spaces, within housing estates, and in private garden squares. A total of 56 playgrounds were identified in the audit, but 28 of these had private access only.
- 2.9. At the time of the audit only two of the 57 play spaces were accessible to, and provide play facilities specifically designed for, disabled people (as opposed to inclusive play equipment, which was not specifically taken account of in the audit). These were in Paddington Recreation Ground and Broadley Street Gardens (both in the northern part of the city).

### **Sport Facilities**

- 2.10. There are 9 indoor sports facilities and 18 sites within Westminster which have sports provision in the form of sports courts or pitches. In addition, there are also 30 kickabout / multi-sports courts on Housing Estate Land.
- 2.11. The eight public sports centres in Westminster supplement outdoor facilities located in the parks, and provide for a variety of sporting activities through facilities such as swimming pools and sports halls. Four of the centres are located in the Maida Vale Forum Area, and two are in Bayswater. The latter two centres are particularly important in supplementing the relatively low number of sports pitches found in this area. There are three sports centres located within open spaces; Paddington

Recreation Ground Sports Centre, Westbourne Green Sports Complex, and the Hub at Regent's Park. In addition, Hyde Park provides space for informal sports.

### **Facilities for Young People**

- 2.12. Whilst play grounds provide opportunities for young children, there are comparatively few facilities which cater specifically for older children and teenagers.
- 2.13. Provision for sports activities are also important for young people. This can take the form of both formal (in the form of sports centres and pitches) and informal provision ('kick-about' areas). The Fourth Feathers Youth Club in NW1 provides sports facilities in addition to other activities.

### **Housing Estate Land**

- 2.14 Table 4.4 shows the spatial distribution across the city of housing estate open space. As would be expected given the variation in resident population (i.e. higher population densities outside the central parts of Westminster), housing estate open space occurs in the South, Bayswater, Maida Vale and St. John's Wood Forum Areas. The majority of housing estate open space is found in Bayswater Area Forum, where a group of housing estates are located. The South Forum Area also includes a significant amount of housing estate open space, primarily associated with the Churchill Gardens Estate.

### **Assessment of Deficiency**

- 2.15 The Study analysis shows that open space is present throughout Westminster at all levels of the hierarchy, with the exception of the Regional Park level. The nearest **Regional Parks** lie well outside the city (Map 4D.1 of the Central Sub-Regional Development Framework (May 2006) shows that the majority of the city falls within a deficiency for regional parks). However this is not considered a significant issue as Westminster possesses 5 Royal Parks, designated as Metropolitan or District Parks, which offer excellent facilities and are of national importance.
- 2.16 There are no Areas of Deficiency for **Metropolitan Parks** and relatively small Areas of Deficiency (in the north-west and south of the city) for **District Parks**.
- 2.17 There are only 4 Local Parks in the city and access to **Local Parks** is the least available category of open space in the hierarchy, with those that do exist being located in two separate groups of spaces in the south-east and north-west of the city. **There are, therefore, significant Areas of Deficiency for access to Local Parks throughout the city** and in all of the Forum Areas,
- 2.18 On the other hand, Westminster is well-provided with **Small Local Parks** and **Pocket Parks**, though there are some areas in the city which are not within 280m of a small local park or 120m from a pocket park. These smaller spaces are distributed relatively evenly throughout the city.
- 2.19 **Linear Open Space** makes a significant contribution to the open space network in Westminster and is concentrated along accessible watercourses – the Thames and the Canal. However, connections with the surrounding urban areas and other green spaces are limited, with few green links. The Canal towpath in particular, has potential for greater use.

- 2.20 Map WR 2 shows the **areas of deficiency** in terms of access to local parks, small local parks, and pocket parks as being in the south of the city, the north west and in a central swathe south of the Westway and Marylebone Road. This map also, and more importantly, shows **'Priority Areas for additional public open space'**. These are areas which are in or very close to 'areas of deficiency' but which also have populations with high numbers of children, low car ownership and low levels of private gardens. Priority Areas have been identified in East Marylebone, Covent Garden, a large part of SW1, Bayswater, Great Western Road, and Shirland Road.
- 2.21 There is a comparative lack of **play space** in the central and southern parts of Westminster. As the higher densities of resident children are found in Maida Vale, Bayswater, and the South Forum Areas, one would expect the play provision in these Areas to be the greatest and indeed Bayswater and Maida Vale have the greatest number of playgrounds. Based on child density figures, Map WR 5 shows 10 Priority Areas for Additional Playspace distributed around the city. In addition four areas in the city have been identified as Priority Areas for Informal Play. Areas These are areas of high child densities that have a lack of space locally for children (especially older children) to run around and play games. The largest of these priority areas is in the South Forum Area.
- 2.22 Maps WR1 – WR10 (Appendix 1) show where there are deficiencies in provision, and where enhancements might be directed.
- 2.23 As stated in para. 4.1 above, the amount of open space per 1,000 head of residents is above the normal standard applied -1.86 ha compared to a standard of 1.6ha but the daytime population of workers and visitors reduces the level of provision to below the standard (just 0.45 ha per 1000); and the space is concentrated in the Royal Parks and is therefore not evenly distributed around the city, leaving several areas deficient in provision.

## **Future Needs**

- 2.24 Demand for open space will rise as residential population rises. Predictions based on the ONS MYE for 2016, projects 300,000 residents in Westminster, The ratio would then be reduced from 1.86 ha public open space per 1 000, to 1.51 ha. It is considered important to maintain the existing ratio of 1.86 ha per 1000, despite it being in excess of the normal 1.6 ha standard, because the majority of space in terms of area is shared with visitors and workers. This will only be possible by creating more open spaces in the city. The implication for play space will also be an issue that needs addressing as the number of children is likely to increase, as well as the number of households without gardens.

## **Way Forward: Addressing deficiency and future needs**

### **a) Securing new open space**

- 1 Protect existing open spaces in the UDP/LDF – protected spaces need to be listed and mapped. **Review UDP policy ENV 15.**
- 2 Increase the provision of open space, including new civic spaces, and play/youth spaces by a variety of means, including S106, planning briefs, and Area Action Plans in order to increase access to open space and meet the

projected growth in population (both residents and workers). **Review UDP policy H 10 and SOC 6.**

- 3 Redress the existing deficiencies in open space and playspace identified in Maps WR 2 and WR 5 by requesting public open space in appropriate developments in and near these areas. **Review UDP maps 9.1 and 6.2** showing areas of deficiency of open space and playspace, and priority areas for new spaces in LDF.

2.25. The built up nature of the city means that most new developments are infill with limited scope for creating new open spaces. Where it is not possible to create new open space, improvements to existing open spaces or improvements to access can be the most effective way of improving the open space network. Refurbishment and improvement of open spaces and access improvement is addressed in **Part B Section 4: Addressing the Priorities.**

**b) Improving access to open space (using the planning system)**


- 4 Develop a formula for S106 contributions for open space, open space improvements, access improvements, and studies, as part of **SPG on S106 agreements**
- 5 **Use of S106 agreements to gain public access to private space.**
- 6 Identify opportunities for designating and extending green routes to create a more integrated and accessible network of open spaces.




# Map WR2: Public Open Space Deficiency

## Key


-  Publicly Accessible Open Spaces
-  Open Spaces with Private Access
-  Open Spaces outside the city boundary

 Areas of Public Open Space Deficiency (measured by distance from homes following Mayor's guidelines)

 Revised Priority Areas for Additional Public Open Space

Density of Households without gardens or cars and highest proportion of children per hectare

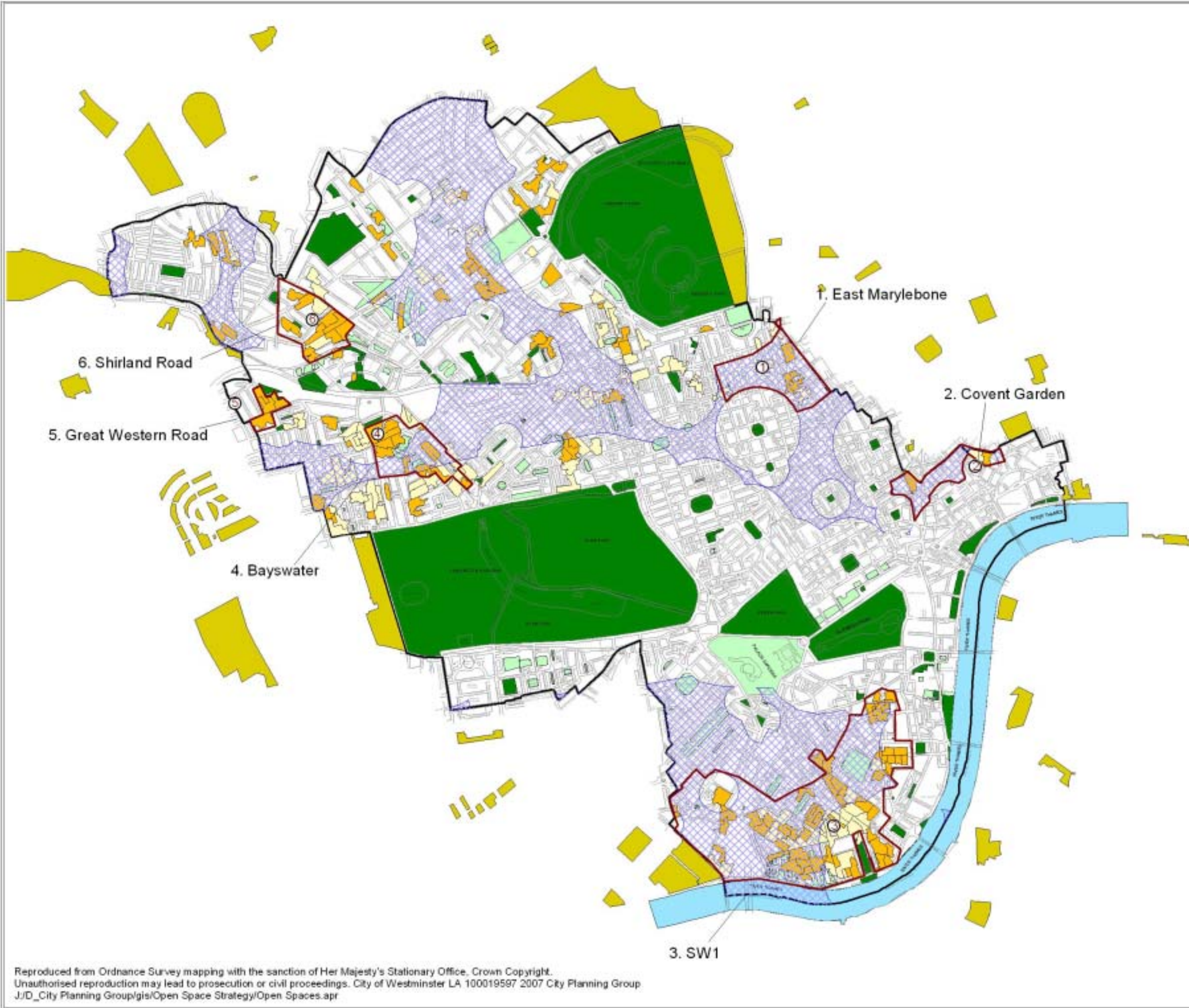
-  Highest
-  Medium
-  Lowest

 city boundary

Areas of Public Open Space Deficiency were derived from the following criteria:  
 Public Open Space > 2ha = 400m buffer  
 Public Open Space > 0.4 ha and < 2ha = 200m buffer  
 Public Open Space > 0.1 ha and < 0.39ha = 120m buffer



0 0.5 1 KiKm





## **PART B:**

### **Strategy Priorities and Delivery**

# 1. INTRODUCTION

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- 1.1 **Part A** set out the planning policy framework for this Strategy, including how the planning system will respond to identified needs and deficiency in open space provision. This second part of the Strategy, **Part B** sets out the Strategy's seven priorities, then describes how the City Council intends to address these issues, and the delivery of projects and schemes.
- 1.2 **Section 2: Public Consultation** summarises the results of the public consultation. **Section 3: Priorities for the Improvement of the Open Space Network** uses the results of the consultation exercises, and national and Mayoral and council priorities for open space, to establish a list of 7 priorities for the Strategy.
- 1.3 **Section 4: Addressing Priorities** then sets out how the City Council intends to address these seven priorities. **Section 5: Delivery of the Strategy** contains the **Action Plan** and a table of **Further work/research** which are essentially the delivery mechanisms for addressing the priorities.
- 1.4 **Section 6: Monitoring and Review** sets out how the performance of Strategy will be monitored and reviewed to ensure that it delivers on its stated aims and makes a positive contribution to the open space network and quality of life in Westminster.
- 1.5 **Appendix 5: Themes and Issues to be Addressed** expands on Section 4 by providing a gives a fuller explanation of how themes and issues raised in the Strategy will be addressed.

## 2. PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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### The process

- 2.1. The views of residents and users of open spaces were key to the formulation of this Strategy and its priorities. The first comprehensive consultation exercise was undertaken in 2004 to inform the Study, which underpins this Strategy. This exercise took two forms:
- a **community consultation** to identify what the community values most in terms of open space and recreation provision. Questionnaires were sent out to over 600 community groups across the city, and 16 focus group meetings were held with a wide range of community groups (see Appendix 7);
  - extensive **user surveys** to ascertain in detail how specific open spaces are used, by interviewing users 'on site' on a range of questions (for example how they got there, and what they like about the space).
- 2.2. Following preparation and approval of the draft Strategy, a second round of consultation took place, inviting comment on the document. It followed the procedures set out in the City Council's Statement of Community Involvement, as follows:
- A summary leaflet sent to approximately 1000 community groups and placed on the council's website, in libraries etc.
  - Statutory and relevant consultees, for example GLA, Royal Parks, were sent the full draft strategy
  - 12 workshop sessions were held with the 6 Area Fora
  - 17 focus group meetings with a comprehensive range of community groups covering older people, young people, BME groups, and special needs groups were held (see Appendix 7)
- 2.3. The purpose of the consultation was to:
- confirm support for the council's vision for open spaces in the city
  - ascertain what was considered most important in terms of open space provision
  - seek views on likes and dislikes of people's local spaces
  - ascertain the public's priorities for spending S106 and other funding
  - ascertain views on the future use of open spaces on housing estate land.

## **The results**

- 2.4 Open spaces were shown to be very important to people and a highly valued resource. Communities requested greater involvement in the refurbishment and management of open spaces. People wanted the council to protect open spaces, improve them and provide additional facilities, and create new spaces. They want well-maintained and safe local spaces, with provision for both quiet, tranquil areas and active recreation, particularly for children and teenagers. More wildlife and natural areas in spaces were also requested. Better access in general was requested, in particular for those with disabilities.
- 2.5 The results of all public consultation are amalgamated into main priorities listed in para. 3.5 below.

### 3. PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT OF THE OPEN SPACE NETWORK

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- 3.1 Assessment of priorities for open space improvement must take into account both resident and park user views together with council and regional policy and priorities. Appendix 5, “Themes and Issues” starts to do this by outlining 16 main themes that were identified in the Study and the initial round of public consultation.
- 3.2 The second round of public consultation on the draft strategy added to the information already collected on views, needs and wants. A large number of views in a variety of different formats (including user surveys with individuals, focus group and community group meeting notes, and feedback from interested organisations and authorities) have therefore been collated to produce the following list of priorities (in no particular order of importance):
- More open spaces for local people and access to private space
  - More attractive, better maintained spaces, displaying a variety of plants and trees
  - More information about parks and open spaces
  - Parks and open spaces to better serve the needs of older people
  - Better play facilities for children with the need for more facilities for older children and teenagers a priority
  - More community involvement
  - Protecting open spaces from development
  - High value of tranquillity that open spaces provide
  - More wildlife and natural areas in parks
  - Opposition to large scale events in Royal Parks
  - Safer, more pleasant canalside areas
  - More opportunities for active recreation, formal and informal sport and physical activity
  - more activities, walks and talks (especially on wildlife/biodiversity), and community events in local parks
  - Improved safety and security in open spaces - better patrolling service
  - Keeping dogs under control and tackling dog mess
  - Better recognition of needs for those with disabilities (and not just wheelchair users)

- Community gardens on housing estate land
  - Better access to toilet and refreshment facilities in or near to open spaces
- 3.3 Regional and national policies that affect open space are outlined in the Part A of this Strategy and addressed in greater detail in Appendix 2. The major national and Mayoral priorities are:
- Protecting open space
  - Overcoming deficiencies in open space, play space, and wildlife
  - Conserving and preserving historic spaces
  - Increasing opportunities for biodiversity and conservation roles, including sustainability
  - Access and opportunities for all to enjoy open space, including people with disabilities, children and young people, and older people.
- 3.4 In addition, priorities for the council for the coming years are outlined in the City Plan, Westminster City Partnership's Focus document, and other service level strategies and plans. Broad priorities with direct relevance to open space include:
- Safety and tackling anti-social behaviour
  - Health and well-being
  - Access for all
  - Facilities and opportunities for children, young people and older people
  - Community engagement
- 3.5 The following seven priorities for the Strategy have been compiled from the information above and will be taken forward in delivery (numbering does not indicate ranking of importance):
- 1. Protection of existing open space**
  - 2. Actively work towards overcoming deficiencies in open space, play space and wildlife**
  - 3. Improved access to open space for all (including physical access, information on open space, and opportunities for accessing private space)**
  - 4. Improved management and maintenance, including tackling safety and sustainability issues**
  - 5. Increase opportunities for community engagement and involvement**
  - 6. Increase opportunities for activities in open spaces, including active recreation, formal and informal sport, organised walks, talks and community events**

- 7. Improve experience of open spaces, including better facilities, particularly for children, young people, older people and those with disabilities**

## 4. ADDRESSING PRIORITIES

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This section sets out how the council intends to address each of these seven emerging priorities. The themes and issues in this section are dealt with in greater detail in Appendix 5.

### 4.1 Protection of existing open space

The City Council will:

- (i) Protect all open spaces through the mechanisms already in place, ie adopted planning policy
- (ii) In partnership with CityWest Homes and other housing providers, carry out a comprehensive study of open space on Housing Land, including a full audit of space on estates, including its condition and function; and working with residents to explore ways of improving the quality of housing open spaces, and addressing conflicts of interests on the usage and function of housing space.
- (iii) Prepare design guidance for new and existing open space on housing land.

### 4.2 Actively work towards overcoming deficiencies in open space, play space and wildlife

The City Council will:

- (i) Redress the existing deficiencies in open space and playspace identified in Maps WR 2 and WR 5 by requesting public open space in appropriate new developments in or near these areas. The City Council will also review relevant UDP policies.
- (ii) Identify appropriate opportunities to make spaces 'multifunctional' (incl. school playgrounds)
- (iii) Ensure new housing developments with 25 or more family sized units, include a play area.
- (iv) Aim to have at least one feature benefiting wildlife in every open space. Even the smallest space can, for instance, contain a group of native trees or introduce vertical planting on walls, both of which will attract birds.
- (v) Use Section 106 funds to achieve either new open spaces of wildlife value in Areas of Wildlife Deficiency, or to improve the habitat of any existing open space.

- (vi) Tackle the areas which are considered to be deficient in access to wildlife sites by improving the habitat of those spaces which are currently SINC's of local importance in order to upgrade them to Borough importance eg. Paddington Recreation Ground and St George's Square Gardens.
- (vii) The City Council will work in partnership with members of the Westminster Biodiversity Partnership to maintain and enhance the biodiversity value of Sites of Nature Conservation Importance

#### **4.3 Improved access to open space for all (including physical access, information on open space, and opportunities for accessing private space)**

The City Council will:

- (i) Prepare and publish a map showing the location of green and blue spaces, including their facilities and historical or wildlife value, to be distributed to all residents and available at One Stop Shops.
- (ii) Investigate opportunities for public access to private open space by investigating feasibility, financial implications and opportunities for the City Council to assume maintenance responsibilities of private spaces, in return for public access.
- (iii) Assess impact of barriers to access to open spaces. Where there is evidence of impaired access, develop a programme to reduce the impact of barriers.
- (IV) Review signage in open spaces as part of the forthcoming Public Realm Strategy, and improving signage and interpretation material, prioritising those spaces with historical or wildlife interest of educational benefit
- (v) Improve the accessibility of open spaces, in the widest sense, including safe, pleasant routes and crossings. Investigate how to deliver enhancements to landscape links and walking routes to provide 'green routes' to create a more integrated and accessible network of open spaces.
- (vi) Ensure all spaces, including playgrounds, are DDA compliant.
- (vii) Implement all improvements identified in the access audit action plan (2004)
- (viii) In partnership with the Royal Parks Agency, investigate the feasibility of introducing disabled parking facilities as drop off points close to cafes, toilets, and places with a view.

#### **4.4 Improved management and maintenance, including tackling safety and sustainability issues**

The City Council will:

- (i) Review management resources to deliver and develop initiatives and themes raised in the Strategy
- (ii) Enhance and improve existing open spaces (including space on housing estates), their facilities, and their maintenance (where feasible with partners/S106 contribution). Priority should be given to those spaces which were judged in the Study to be 'unattractive', in areas deficient in attractive open space, and where improvement would lead to regeneration benefits. See Map WR 1, and Appendix 5.
- (iii) Ensure partnership with all relevant stakeholders when planning and implementing work on improvement and management projects
- (iv) Work with the Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships to achieve their aims in regard to open space in their areas.
- (V) In partnership with British Waterways, LARPs etc. devise a programme for enhancing the biodiversity, attraction, accessibility, and safety of the Canal as a place to enjoy wildlife, relax, learn, and provide traffic-free routes for pedestrians and cyclists.
- (VI) Increase the diversity and structure of planting of flowering plants, shrubs and trees in open spaces where this is lacking
- (vii) Improve maintenance standards where there is evidence that this is needed, including smaller parks and gardens, and housing estate open spaces
- (VIII) Investigate standards of grounds maintenance, both in spaces maintained by the Parks Service and CityWest Homes.
- (ix) Review dog access to public open spaces
- (x) Ensure that the training of grounds maintenance staff is exemplary and incorporates the latest best practice in terms of horticultural skills, sustainable park management, and customer service.
- (xi) Include a patrolling element in most sites under the new Grounds Maintenance contract. Links will be encouraged with City Guardians and Area Neighbourhood Police Teams to exchange information and resolve operational concerns.
- (xii) Work with British waterways to improve the safety/safety perception of the Canal.

#### **4.5 Increase opportunities for community engagement and involvement**

The City Council will:

- (i) Increase community involvement in the refurbishment and management of open spaces, ensuring that it (and its agents, such as CityWest Homes) works with local communities when planning changes to open spaces
- (ii) Explore potential sites for Community Gardens, particularly on housing estate land.
- (iii) Provide easier access to advice for people wishing to hold community events in local spaces

#### **4.6 Increase opportunities for activities in open spaces, including active recreation, formal and informal sport, organised walks, talks and community events**

The City Council will:

- (i) Develop partnerships between Westminster PCT, the Community Health Development Team, and the Sports Unit in order to pursue such initiatives as walking groups in different parts of the city.
- (ii) Explore ways in which spaces could be used for adult learning purposes, especially on issues such as sustainability and wildlife, also for physical exercise classes etc.
- (iii) Explore opportunities for additional facilities in Paddington Recreation Ground
- (iv) Facilitate public use of existing school facilities
- (v) Ensure that new or redeveloped school sports facilities can have community access out of school hours
- (vi) Develop new sports and leisure facilities at Marshall Street, W1 and Crompton St, W2
- (vii) Ensure that the new Academies planned for Westminster have good sports facilities that can be used by the wider community
- (viii) Incorporate new sports facilities in planning briefs where appropriate, and using S106 monies to enhance existing facilities.

- (ix) Increase the activity programming in parks and open spaces such as exercise classes and walking groups.
- (X) Increase awareness of the 'trim trail' in Paddington Recreation Ground and develop others as appropriate
- (XI) Investigate ways of increasing opportunities for informal play and recreation
- (xii) Consider introducing programmes of events and activities in open spaces, particularly aimed at older park users, and at young children.

**4.7 Improve experience of open spaces, including better facilities, particularly for children, young people, older people and those with disabilities**

The City Council will:

- (i) Increase the provision of both private and public open space, including new civic spaces, and play/youth spaces by a variety of means, including S106, planning briefs and Area Action Plans, and a review of relevant UDP policy.
- (ii) Explore funding opportunities for capital investment schemes in open spaces, including lottery and heritage funding.
- (III) Use the play area audits and areas of deficiency/need to feed into the Play Area Improvement Programme to set future priorities.
- (iv) Ensure that the needs of children with disabilities are met
- (v) Ensure the Youth Team work with partners to improve facilities and provide activities for older children and teenagers.
- (VI) Review the potential for improvements to, and multi-use of, school grounds particularly to provide out of hours facilities and activities for older children and teenagers
- (VII) Investigate ways of increasing opportunities for informal play and recreation
- (VIII) Investigate opportunities to improve the safety and ease of access to open spaces, particularly those with play or sporting facilities
- (ix) Investigate opportunities for the provision of refreshments in selected open spaces
- (x) Investigate ways to provide and maintain toilet facilities in or close to popular open spaces

- (xi) Investigate opportunities for increasing the amount of seating. Reappraise the type of seating provided in parks to make it more useable by those less mobile.
- (xii) Consider opportunities for a sensory garden
- (xiii) Use play area audits and areas of deficiency/need to feed into play area improvement programme to reappraise priorities
- (xiv) Develop a set of measures to limit and control the intrusion of noise into open spaces with the aim of protecting existing quiet spaces and prepare a draft policy through which this could be applied
- (xv) Identify spaces where enhancements to reduce noise intrusion would be beneficial.
- (xvi) Explore good practice in dealing with conflict of use in open spaces between those seeking active recreation and those seeking peace and tranquillity.
- (xvii) Inform the Royal Parks Agency of the level of opposition to the frequency and duration of special events in the Royal Parks. The City Council will work with the Royal Parks Agency to minimise public concerns.
- (xviii) Develop new revenue streams for open spaces and open space related projects
- (xix) Provide more wildlife habitats in parks and other spaces, in accordance with the Biodiversity Action Plan
- (xx) Explore the potential for introducing public art into parks, review Public Art policy and connect with Culture Strategy.

## **5. DELIVERY OF THE STRATEGY: THE ACTION PLAN**

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### **The Action Plan**

- 5.1 The Action Plan is the key delivery agent for this strategy. It aims to document all the work happening across the council in the coming year in open spaces across all departments. It will be updated annually to take account of work completed and new works coming on-stream.
- 5.2 Projects identified in the Action Plan will contribute to addressing the priorities set out in the previous section. Each project has a timescale, and a performance indicator (usually the target date for completion).
- 5.3 Delivery will be through existing channels such as: the council's Capital Programme, Westminster's One City programme, the Local Area Renewal Partnership's Liveability Network, the City Council's partnership with Groundwork Trust, and planning briefs.
- 5.4 Council officers will also continue to keep a close working relationship with other organisations that own, manage and maintain open space in Westminster, such as the Royal Parks Agency and CityWest Homes, to champion the public's priorities for open space improvements where these fall outside the control of the City Council.

### **Further Work and Research**

- 5.5 There are areas of work and issues raised in the Strategy where further work or research is required before a project can be taken forward to the Action Plan. The table 'Further Work/Research' which follows the Action Plan lists the pieces of work currently identified which need to be progressed to address the issues raised in the Strategy. Most of this work will require revenue funding. This table will be updated annually in line with the Action Plan annual review.

**CITY OF WESTMINSTER OPEN SPACE STRATEGY ACTION PLAN 2006/7 – 2007/8**

<b>Projects</b>						
<b>ID:</b>	<b>Priority Number (1-7)</b>	<b>Action:</b>	<b>Timescale:</b>	<b>Section Responsible for Delivery:</b>	<b>Funding Secured:</b>	<b>Performance Indicators:</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>2, 3, 4, 7</b>	<b>Enhance and improve facilities in existing open spaces, and improve access to them (incl. using S106 contributions, and implementing DDA works where necessary)</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>	<b>P&amp;L*, CWH, P&amp;CD*</b>		<b>No. of improvement projects</b>
1a	7	▪ Refurbish playground at Paddington Street Gardens	June 2007	P&L	Y S106	Completion June 2007
1b	2, 7	▪ Ensure developers of Westbourne Academy fulfil their obligations to create high quality public open space, relocate and refurbish playground	Sept 2007	P&L	Y within existing staff resource	Completion Sept 2007
1c	3	▪ Increase accessibility to Marble Arch following infilling of TfL subways and introduction of overground crossings and implement an interim landscape scheme to accommodate change in pedestrian flows and upgrade infrastructure	March 2008	P&L	N (external funding being sought with partners)	Completion March 2008
1d	7	▪ Refurbish St Stephen's Gardens playground	March 2007	P&L	Y capital programme	Completion March 2007
1e	3	▪ Secure funding and carry out works identified and agreed on open spaces as necessary as part of the preparation for the 2012 Olympics	2012	All	N	Completion 2012
1f	2, 5, 7	▪ Develop open spaces masterplan for Westbourne Green	Jan 2007	P&L	Y within existing staff resource	Completion Dec 2006
1g	4	▪ Restoration of footpaths at St. Georges Square	March 2008	P&L	Y capital programme	Completion March 2008
1h	4	▪ Landscape improvements at St Mary's Church Grounds, taking account of boundary treatment with new Crompton Street Children's Centre	March 2008	P&L	Y capital programme & external	Completion March 2008
1i	4	▪ Stone Wharf landscape improvements	March 2008	P&L	Y capital programme & external	Completion March 2008
1j	4	▪ Talbot Square railing replacement and landscape improvements	March 2008	P&L	Y capital programme & external	Completion March 2008
1k	7	▪ Toilet refurbishment at Violet Hill Gardens	March 2008	P&L	Y capital programme & external	Completion March 2008
1l	7	▪ Refurbish skatepark at Westbourne Green	December 2007	P&L	Y external	Completion Dec 2007
1m	2, 7	▪ Install new free-use ballcourt at Westbourne Green under the Westway	December 2007	P&L	Y external	Completion Dec 2007
1n	3, 4	▪ Landscape improvements along canalside open space at Westbourne Green and improvements to tow path	March 2008	P&L	Y capital programme & external	Completion March 2008
<b>2</b>	<b>5, 7</b>	<b>Enhancements to open space on housing land</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>	<b>CWH*</b>		<b>No. of enhanced housing spaces at end of March 2008</b>
2a	5, 7	▪ Improvement of sports pitch at Lillington Gardens Estate	2008	CWH	Y external grant	Completion of scheme
2b	3, 5, 7	▪ Improvements and new facilities for Lisson Street Community Garden	March 2008	HD	Y external funding	Completion of scheme
2c	5, 7	▪ Create a children's play area and community garden in Mozart Estate	2008	CWH	Y	Completion of scheme

<b>Partnership Issues</b>						
<b>ID:</b>	<b>Priority Number (1-7)</b>	<b>Action:</b>	<b>Timescale:</b>	<b>Section Responsible for Delivery:</b>	<b>Funding Secured:</b>	<b>Performance Indicators:</b>
3	3, 7	Improve access to and experience of the Canal and River Thames	M/L	EP, P&CD, P&L	N	No. of improvement projects
4	4, 5, 7	Engage in funding partnerships to enable improvement work wherever possible, including applications for grant, working with Groundwork Trust, private owners, or developers.	Ongoing	HD*, P&L	Y within existing staff resource	No. of partnership funded projects
5	4	Actively pursue partnerships with forums and other bodies with an emphasis on open space, including its management and use	Ongoing	All		No. of partnerships established
5a	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Participate in the London Parks and Green Spaces Forum steering group, and other sub-groups as appropriate</li> </ul>	Ongoing	P&L	Y within existing staff resource	No. of partnerships established
5b	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liase with CABE Space and support initiatives where appropriate</li> </ul>	Ongoing	P&L, EP	Y within existing staff resource	No. of new initiatives
6	2, 3	Increase the quality and biodiversity of existing 'green corridors' and work with the Westminster Biodiversity Partnership to enhance Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation and improve access	Ongoing	EP	Y within existing staff resource	Increase in Habitat Survey between 1995 and 2009 and Green Space Information for Greater London Implementation of Westminster BAP
6b	2, 3, 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promote widely the action taken for wildlife in Westminster through partnership working.</li> <li>▪ Co-ordinate the update of the 2000 Westminster Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) by establishing and facilitating working groups for individual Habitat and Species Action Plans. Identify action required in partnership to enhance the nature conservation value of existing sites/green corridors.</li> </ul>	July 2007	EP	Y within existing staff resource	Review of Westminster BAP completed, the action achieved collated and promoted widely.
6c	2		July 2007	EP	N	Draft Westminster BAP available for consultation
7	5	Develop a partnership to take the 'Walking for Health' project forward	M	WSU*	Y external funding	Partnership formed and working effectively
<b>Community Focus</b>						
<b>ID:</b>	<b>Priority Number (1-7)</b>	<b>Action:</b>	<b>Timescale:</b>	<b>Section Responsible for Delivery:</b>	<b>Funding Secured:</b>	<b>Performance Indicators:</b>
8	4, 5, 7	Encourage partnership working with local communities and community groups on improvement to open spaces	Ongoing	CWH, P&L		No. of projects delivered through local community Partnership Working
8a	5, 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Manage and monitor the partnership arrangement with Groundwork Trust to assist in project delivery and bring in additional funding</li> </ul>	On going	P&L	Y within existing staff resource	No of projects completed and amount of additional funding brought in
8b	5, 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work with Soho Green on development, creation and installation of 'toilet pod/artshed' at St Anne's Gardens</li> </ul>	March 2007	P&L	Y external funding	Completion March 2007
8c	5, 6, 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work with Friends of Queen's Park Gardens to establish their constitution and help to facilitate events and improvements at the park</li> </ul>	Ongoing	P&L	Y within existing staff resource	Constitution established and partnership working established

8d	5, 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consult residents and youth club on improvement of the sports pitch at Lillington Gardens Estate</li> </ul>	Ongoing	CWH	Y external grant	Completion of scheme
8e	3, 5, 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with residents to identify improvements that could be made to Lisson Street Community Garden, including poor access and lack of youth facilities</li> </ul>	March 2008	HD	Y external funding	Completion of scheme
8f	5, 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a children's play area and community garden in Mozart Estate</li> </ul>	2008	CWH	Y	Completion of scheme
8g	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programme to support local groups wanting to create and maintain new or existing community gardens</li> </ul>	March 2007	HD	Y	Completion of scheme
<b>9</b>	<b>5, 6, 7</b>	<b>Encourage sport and leisure use of open spaces and other suitable facilities or areas for all age groups</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>P&amp;L, WSU</b>		<b>No. of initiatives and projects undertaken to encourage sport and leisure use of open spaces</b>
9a	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refurbish outdoor sport facilities at Paddington Recreation Ground to include and enlarge and improve changing facilities</li> </ul>	April 2008	P&L, WSU	Y external grant & capital programme	Completion April 2008
9b	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refurbish outdoor sports facilities at Westbourne Green as part of the Westbourne Academy development, incorporating 'shared use' scheme</li> </ul>	Sept 2007	P&L, WSU	Y external grant & capital programme	Completion Sept 2007
<b>Management</b>						
<b>ID:</b>	<b>Priority Number (1-7)</b>	<b>Action:</b>	<b>Timescale:</b>	<b>Section Responsible for Delivery:</b>	<b>Funding Secured:</b>	<b>Performance Indicators:</b>
10	4	<b>Ensure the highest possible standards of maintenance and cleanliness in all parks, gardens, and other open spaces, appropriate to use and function, especially where there is evidence that this is needed</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>	<b>P&amp;L, HD</b>		<b>Improved BVPI</b>
10a	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Re-let the new Grounds Maintenance term contract</li> </ul>	April 2007	P&L	Y within existing staff resource	Completion April 2007
11	4, 5, 6, 7	<b>Review management resources (both E&amp;L and Housing) to deliver and develop initiatives and themes raised in the Study</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>City Council</b>		<b>Review completed</b>
12	4, 7	<b>Increase the diversity and structure of planting of flowering plants, shrubs and trees in open spaces</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>	<b>P&amp;L, CWH</b>		<b>No. of projects to increase planting diversity</b>
12a	4, 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver the Tree Planting Programme to increase the diversity of trees across the city</li> </ul>	Ongoing	P&L	Y revenue, external & capital programme	This year's programme completed March 2007
12b	2, 4, 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review planting across parks and open spaces, taking account of sustainability and increased diversity and structure</li> </ul>	ongoing	P&L	Y revenue	No of open spaces replanted
13	4, 7	<b>Review dog access in those spaces where users cited it as a problem</b>	<b>S/M</b>	<b>P&amp;L, CWH</b>		<b>Review completed</b>
14	1, 2, 7	<b>Ensure that the management and development of open spaces takes account of Westminster and London Biodiversity Action Plan, including protecting and enhancing the extent and quality of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, and introduce new sites into existing parks and spaces, particularly in areas of deficiency</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>P&amp;L, EP</b>		<b>No. of sites where wildlife friendly management is being practised</b>
14a	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focusing on Areas of Wildlife Deficiency, identify opportunities to enhance wildlife within Westminster City</li> </ul>	March 2007	P&L, EP	Y revenue, external & capital programme	Parks contract specification encompassing site-

		Council's parks, squares and open spaces with a view to introducing new management regimes to the park's management contract specification				management for wildlife
14b	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focusing on Areas of Wildlife Deficiency, identify resources and initiatives to green the predominantly built environment, increasing opportunities for wildlife</li> </ul>	March 2007	EP, P&CD	Y within existing staff resource	Proposals to green Westminster developed and potential funding identified
14c	2, 5, 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create an Environmental Area at Paddington Recreation Ground, including an educational demonstration area</li> </ul>	Dec 2007	P&L	Y (add. external funding sought)	Completion April 2007 ?????
14d	2, 5, 7	Create a wildlife area at Queen's Park Gardens	March 2008	P&L, ESPD	Y (add external funding sought)	Completion March 2008
<b>15</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Prepare guidelines to govern the use of historic parks and gardens and London Squares for events</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>P&amp;CD, P&amp;L</b>	<b>Y within existing staff resource</b>	<b>Guidance prepared</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Achieve more sustainable park management, taking into account climate changes</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>	<b>P&amp;L</b>		<b>No. of new sustainable management practices introduced</b>
16a	4	Introduce recycling for co-mingled waste	Dec 2007	P&L	N (considered as part of Grounds Maintenance contract re-let)	Recycling introduced by December 2007
<b>17</b>	<b>4, 5, 7</b>	<b>Enable additional Green Flag Award Submissions for key open spaces</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>	<b>P&amp;L</b>		<b>No. of new Green Flag submissions</b>
17a		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submit 4 further Green Flag applications for 2007 Awards (to make a total of 8)</li> </ul>	April 2007	P&L	Y within existing staff resource	Completion April 2007
<b>18</b>	<b>4, 5, 7</b>	<b>Review training requirements of grounds maintenance staff and widen if necessary</b>	<b>S/M</b>	<b>P&amp;L</b>		<b>Review completed</b>

## FURTHER WORK/RESEARCH REQUIRED

Most of this work will require revenue funding, but will need to be progressed to address the issues raised in the Strategy.

	<b>Projects</b>	<b>Strategy Priority</b>	<b>Priority Rating<sup>2</sup></b>
i	Develop new revenue streams for open spaces and open space related projects	3, 4, 7	A
ii	Explore funding opportunities for capital investment schemes in open spaces, including Lottery and Heritage Funding	3, 6, 7	A
iii	Explore ways of providing improved facilities for older children and teenagers with the YouthTeam	7	A
iv	Investigate opportunities to improve the safety and ease of access to open spaces, particularly those with play or sporting facilities. Consider feasibility of extending City Guardians Scheme to some identified open spaces	3, 4	A
v	Investigate the opportunities for widening the programme of events, activities, talks and walks in open spaces, particularly for older park users, including exploring ways in which spaces could be used for adult learning purposes	5, 6	A
vi	Explore good practice in dealing with conflicts of use in open spaces, including: widening access and the need to protect tranquillity, intergenerational conflicts in use, and dog access	5, 7	A
vii	Investigate ways of providing and maintaining toilets in open spaces	7	A
viii	Assess the potential for creating new sites of wildlife value in parts of the city that lack accessible wildlife areas, especially on Housing Land and in public open spaces close to schools (incl. via S106) – need UDP/LDF policy	2, 5, 6, 7	A
ix	Work with CityWest Homes and other housing providers to carry out a study of open space on housing estates, including investigating alternative funding; how best to utilise and improve housing land, and residents' views.	4, 5, 7	A
x	Use play area audits and areas of deficiency/need to feed into play area improvement programme to reappraise priorities	2	B
xi	Explore opportunities for provision of refreshments in selective open spaces	7	B

<sup>2</sup> Each project proposal has been allocated a priority rating A-C (1 being the highest priority) reflecting the community consultation results. Projects (i) and (ii) were allocated priority rating A as most other projects will depend on funding.

<b>Projects</b>		<b>Strategy Priority</b>	<b>Priority Rating<sup>2</sup></b>
xii	Investigate ways of increasing opportunities for informal play and recreation	2, 7	B
xiii	Explore ways of improving the experience of visiting parks and open spaces for people with disabilities, by addressing concerns raised in consultation and improving facilities in consultation with disabled users.	3, 7	B
xiv	Produce 'green map' and information leaflet showing open spaces and walking routes, their facilities, wildlife and heritage value by a 'green guide', improved signing to Canal and Thames Path, and more information about events.	3, 5	B
xv	Investigate how to deliver enhancements to landscape links and walking routes	2, 3	B
xvi	In partnership with British Waterways, LARPs etc. devise a programme for enhancing the biodiversity, attraction, accessibility, and safety of the Canal as a place to enjoy wildlife, relax, learn, and provide traffic-free routes for pedestrians and cyclists.	3, 4, 5, 6, 7	B
xvii	Develop a set of measures to limit and control the intrusion of noise into open spaces with the aim of protecting existing quiet spaces and identifying spaces where enhancements to reduce noise intrusion would be beneficial. Prepare a draft policy through which this could be applied	1, 7	C
xviii	Review signage, including any possible conflict between complying with DDA and protecting the heritage and townscape value of open spaces and their surrounds	3, 7	C
xix	Assess impact of barriers to access of open spaces. Where there is evidence of impaired access develop a programme to reduce impact of identified barriers to access.	3	C
xx	Identify appropriate opportunities to make spaces 'multifunctional' (incl. school playgrounds)	2, 7	C
xxi	Prepare design guidance for new and existing open space on housing land	4, 7	C
xxii	Investigate opportunities for public access to private open space by investigating feasibility, financial implications and opportunities for the City Council to assume maintenance responsibilities of private spaces, in return for public access	2, 3	C
xxiii	Determine the need for resources to support developers and planners in taking forward the council's policies for nature conservation (including consideration of an SPD on Nature Conservation and Biodiversity)	2	C

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<b>Projects</b>	<b>Strategy Priority</b>	<b>Priority Rating<sup>2</sup></b>
xxiv Explore the potential for introducing public art into parks, review Public Art policy and connect with Culture Strategy	5, 7	C

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## 6. MONITORING AND REVIEW

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6.1. The progress and delivery of the aims set out in this strategy will be measured in relation to a range of indicators:

Item to be reviewed	Indicator	Frequency
Action Plan	Number of actions/projects achieved and achieved by stated date	Annually
Effectiveness of UDP policies and emerging LDF policies	<p>The performance of UDP/LDF policies are monitored in the AMR (Annual Monitoring Report) and submitted annually to Cabinet Members and GoL</p> <p>Will also measure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increases/decreases in open space deficiency</li> <li>• Increases/decreases in playspace deficiency</li> </ul>	<p>Annually</p> <p>Annually</p>
Further work/research required	Number of projects achieved and number of projects translated into actions in the Action Plan.	Annually

Biodiversity	Monitoring of Westminster Biodiversity Action Plan : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• status of priority habitats and species</li> <li>• change in status of SINC's</li> <li>• reduction / increase in Areas of Wildlife Deficiency (AoDs)</li> </ul>	Annually
	Monitoring of Mayor's Biodiversity Strategy targets	Annually
	The following will be also be measured indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of sites where wildlife friendly management is being practised</li> <li>• Number of projects to increase planting diversity</li> <li>• Increase in Habitat survey between 1995 and 2009 and Green Space information for Greater London</li> </ul>	Annually
Over-use of open space	Through data collected throughout the year by Parks & Leisure team: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of people using open space</li> </ul>	Annually
Waste generation	Through information collected by the Waste Management Team: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BPVI indicators</li> <li>• Amount of black bag waste generated by parks</li> </ul> Through the Action Plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of composting bays created</li> </ul>	Annually

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of projects completed connected with improving sustainability credentials</li> </ul>	
Impact on local population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• number of open spaces that are credited with a Green Flag</li> <li>• increases in the number of playgrounds and play areas</li> <li>• increases in the number of green spaces</li> <li>• increases in the number of civic spaces</li> </ul>	Annually
	<p>From the Parks &amp; Leisure Team's records:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of complaints/complements regarding parks and open spaces</li> </ul>	Annually
	<p>Through the Action Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of open space projects delivered through community partnerships</li> <li>• Number of improvement projects on housing estates</li> </ul>	Annually

6.2 The Action Plan and Table of Further Work/Research required will be reviewed annually in the following way:

- Completed projects/actions can be removed
- new projects/actions added as appropriate and as funding permits
- review of target dates.

- 6.3 A database will be set up to keep a record of completed projects including monitoring details that can be cross referenced back to the strategy priorities and other useful indicators for council monitoring systems.
- 6.4 As a Supplementary Planning Document the strategy itself will have a medium to long lifespan. During that time it will be necessary to assess whether the direction and focus of the strategy requires modification. The Strategy already reflects the Westminster City Plan (November 2006), the council's Community Strategy, but new government guidance or Mayoral advice or new demographic data may necessitate a review of direction and focus.