



London Borough of Sutton
Parks and Open Spaces Strategy
2019-2026

DRAFT

Draft for consultation V1 - 29.7.2019
Summary of Vision, Objectives, Policies and Actions.

Vision and Objectives

The following vision statement and objectives have been developed to assist in delivering the Council's Corporate Plan and the planning requirements set out in the Local Plan. The research summarised above was used to inform the process.

Vision

The borough's parks and open spaces and trees will be well-maintained; support good public health, local culture, social activities and biodiversity and where possible opportunities will be taken to improve access to open spaces, facilities and activities.

Parks and open space objectives:

1. Promote the use of parks for public health, by working with GPs and clinical commissioning groups to develop a social prescribing offer and to provide residents with a range of sports, leisure and social activities.
2. Develop effective working relationships with sports and leisure partners to support residents as physically active citizens.
3. Work with friends groups, the voluntary sector, sports bodies and the wider community to develop volunteering opportunities in parks and open spaces.
4. Develop a commercial approach to the use of parks assets to generate revenue to support the service and the local economy, including through leasing facilities, hosting and providing events and where appropriate developing paid for community facilities and licensing businesses to deliver services for parks visitors.
5. Manage the council's trees in line with good practice and inspections to enhance the character and appearance of the borough and promote public safety, by maintaining a healthy, diverse and resilient tree population, and encourage tree planting.
6. Look for opportunities to improve the appearance of open spaces and enhance the local character of the borough through appropriate landscaping as funding allows.
7. Enable plant and animal biodiversity to thrive and promote an understanding of nature through careful management of open spaces and delivery of the Biodiversity Strategy.
8. Improve access to open space and facilities throughout the borough by removing barriers to access, providing enhanced facilities and where possible creating new open space.

Tree objectives

1. To manage the council's trees to maximise their lifespan and protect them from

- indiscriminate removal.
2. To enhance the character and appearance of the borough's streets and parks through choice of appropriate species through the principle of "right tree, right place".
 3. To increase and encourage tree planting throughout the borough by planting tree species that ensure a diverse and resilient tree population that can respond to climate change, environmental factors and urban expansion.
 4. To ensure that trees on council land are inspected and managed in line with good practice and records kept for the work completed, so that they do not pose an unreasonable threat to people and/or property, and to promote good tree health.
 5. To improve the legal and technical framework in relation to insurance issues and reduce the costs of existing, and new claims for damages against the Council.
 6. To continue to provide a cost effective tree service.
 7. To raise awareness of the social and environmental benefits that trees provide through promoting education and partnership working and to develop community involvement in tree related issues.
 8. To ensure that trees and woodlands contribute to a high quality natural environment, protecting and enhancing biodiversity.

Biodiversity objectives:

1. deliver robust, targeted actions to maximise biodiversity and natural habitats within the borough,
2. conserve and protect those areas identified as having the highest biodiversity value
3. deliver on the targets of the agri-environment Higher Level Stewardship and Basic Payment Schemes
4. deliver on the Environment Strategy targets for wildlife and natural habitats
5. work with key partners to deliver valuable outcomes for biodiversity
6. link with the Local Plan in maximising opportunities for wildlife within the built environment through Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Accounting

Policies

Policy P1

The Council will support cafe operators through offering economically viable leases to operators that still provide a return to the Council to assist in funding essential investment in parks services.

Policy P2

The Council will support cafes by ensuring that activities in parks benefit or do not undermine their business and wherever possible facilities and landscaping will be developed and maintained to make the cafes attractive community spaces and meeting points.

Policy P3

The Council will identify opportunities to repurpose buildings within open spaces. Priority will be given to economically viable leisure or parks related activities, but if such an activity cannot be identified alternative commercial uses should be sought and planning permission sought for change of use.

Actions

1. Work with cafe operators to review the facilities and landscaping around the cafes and prepare an action plan to improve each location, subject to funding.
2. Consult with cafe operators about the type of events or activities that would help their businesses to thrive.
3. Identify and record all property assets within open spaces.
4. Prepare properties for leasing by ensuring the property has a current Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) at level E or better;
5. Lease properties at market rents for commercial purposes when appropriate.

Policy P4

Bookings will be taken for the sites listed below provided the event organisers can demonstrate that they can meet the pre-agreed criteria. The list of sites should be reviewed and amended at least every three years. Events must meet the following criteria:

1. There must be appropriate arrangements for visitor access including car parking, public transport, gates and paths.
2. Public protection arrangements to meet legal duties with regard to health, safety and welfare must be detailed.
3. Community safety and security must not be compromised by the event and suitable risk assessments and insurance must be provided.
4. Welfare arrangements must be appropriate for the type of event planned, including adequate toilet provision, food safety, noise control and waste disposal.
5. Licencing permissions must be addressed.
6. Any site specific requirement or limits need to be met, for example the size of event must be able to be accommodated on the site and it must be an appropriate type of event for the park.

This arrangement applies to the following sites:

Site	Funfairs	Large community events - up to 5000 people	Small community events - up to 1000 people	Music and theatre events	Boot fairs - Up to 6 a year per site
Beddington Park	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Carshalton Park	Yes (as part of fireworks display)	yes	yes	no	no
Cheam Park (Recreation Ground)	yes	yes	yes	Daytime only	no
Grove Park	no	no	yes	yes	no

Manor Park	no	Yes - depending on the type of event	yes	Daytime only	no
Mellows Park	Yes -only smaller specialist types	no	yes	no	yes
Oaks Park	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Overton Park	no	Yes- depending on the type of event	Yes- depending on the type of event	yes	no
Poulter Park	no	yes	yes	yes	no
Rosehill Park West	yes	yes	yes	Daytime only	no
Roundshaw Playing Fields	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
St Helier open Space	Yes -only smaller	yes	yes	Daytime only	yes

When events requested meet the agreed criteria, ward councillors will be informed of the request but will not be asked to approve the booking.

For other local or small sites the Ward Councillors will be consulted on proposed new events in their ward and only where the majority are in favour will the booking be accepted.

Policy P5

Income generated from events in parks and open spaces will be used in the first instance to cover the costs of managing events and meet the budget requirements. Any surplus income will be used to maintain parks .

Policy P6

The Council's fees and charges will be benchmarked against prices charged by other similar London Boroughs to ensure both market competitiveness and maximisation of potential income to Council. The applicable fees and charges will be advertised on the Council's website.

Flexibility will be retained to permit Council officers to negotiate fees if an event is considered to be particularly advantageous for the borough. In addition, the Council reserves

the right to vary the charge for major events where the proposed entrance fees are considered to be high.

Actions

1. The Council will undertake an annual review of fees and publish them on its website.
2. The Council will rigorously enforce against events that have not been granted permission.

Policy P7

Friends groups will not be charged for events they organise provided they are free to enter or take part in, raise funds only for the friends group and the parks and do not include commercial organisations or businesses.

Policy P8

The Council will ensure there is sufficient capacity for organised outdoor sports to meet community needs.

Actions

1. Prepare a Playing Pitch Strategy to assess the Borough's demand for playing pitches and the capacity available to provide for that demand.
2. Prepare an action plan to improve facilities to meet demand, establishing costs, funding sources and timescales for improvement works.
3. Work with Idverde to introduce a recommended and licensed personal trainer scheme for Sutton's open spaces.
4. Work with Idverde to promote the use of existing parks facilities for sport and prepare a business plan for sports and activities to inform provision of facilities to meet the demand for new sports and activities.

Policy P9

The Council will maintain a network of playgrounds to ensure children can access safe playspace close to their homes.

Actions

1. Review playground provision working with Sutton Housing Partnership and other play providers and produce a plan to ensure provision and renewal of facilities within the budget available.

Policy P10

The Council will develop a menu of activities to offer to residents through GPs for social prescription.

Actions

1. Parks, Leisure, Libraries and other services to consider their service offer and develop a joint menu of activities that can be offered to residents through GPs for social prescribing.

2. Identify partner organisations who can help deliver activities in open spaces including sports clubs, external not for profit organisations and businesses.
3. Identify funding sources that will help pay for activity sessions in open spaces
4. Research the barriers to activities for target groups identified in the Corporate Plan and develop ways to include these groups in activities.

Policy P11

The Council will work with sports bodies and commercial partners to provide for a range of sports and activities in open spaces that meet community needs and generate income to offset the cost of parks maintenance and improvements.

Policy P12

Fees and charges for activities, sports and events will be maintained at a level that enables the service to cover the costs of provision.

Policy P13

The Council will support the formation of new parks friends groups and facilitate a good working relationship with groups, involving them as much as is practicable in decision making about their park.

Policy P14

The Council will develop a broad volunteering programme of opportunities to ensure that local people can contribute to the development and maintenance of open spaces, including parks, sports facilities and conservation land.

Actions

1. Develop a programme of volunteering opportunities.
2. Run pilot sessions in selected parks to determine demand in specific parks and types of roles volunteers are interested in undertaking.
3. Evaluate pilot to inform the development of a varied programme across key sites in the borough.

Policy P15

To offer support to volunteers through staff time, inductions and training.

Actions

1. To seek funding for staff member(s) to cover a coordinator role that oversees recruitment, training, delivery and volunteer communications.
2. Develop a volunteer strategy to ensure a consistent and effective approach to delivery.

3. Work with Idverde to ensure volunteers are working in conjunction with the current maintenance efforts and to explore opportunities for volunteers to learn from grounds staff.
4. Ensure written risk assessments and insurance are provided by self-supported volunteer groups
5. Write appropriate risk assessments to cover Council supported volunteer activity.

Policy P16

Parks Management Plans will be prepared or updated for open spaces giving priority to the large and most visited parks. The management plans will include action plans that will be updated every two years.

Policy P17

An inspection programme of facilities will be carried out at an appropriate frequency to ensure compliance with best practice and legislation.

Actions

1. Prepare or update Management Plans for the most visited open spaces: Beddington Park; Carshalton Park; Carshalton Place; Cheam Park and Rec; Collingwood Rec; Fairlands Park; Grove Park; Manor Park; Mellows Park; Oaks Park; Overton Park; River Wandle Walkways.
2. Prepare management plans for other large parks or groups of parks: Corrigan recreation Ground; Rosehill Park; Queen Mary's Park; St Helier Open Space/Middleton Open Space/ Revesby Woods/and Poulter Park; Roundshaw Playing Fields/Roundshaw Park and associated lands.
3. Publish service standards
4. Ensure a programme of facilities inspections is carried out to meet legal and best practice standards to identify issues and programme rectifications, ensuring records are maintained as required.

Policy P18

When it is agreed by the Council and the Safer Sutton Partnership that locking is required, locking will be provided as follows:

- Only locking for a short period to establish if the issue problem is temporary
- Only locking at times the issues occur e.g weekends only, summer only
- Reviewing arrangement regularly to establish if issues remain or if locking can be withdrawn.

Policy P19

The Council will ensure that the byelaws are promoted widely.

Actions

1. Ensure the byelaws are displayed as widely as possible in parks and open spaces
2. Display the byelaws on the Council's website.

Policy P20

The Council will work with partners including the Metropolitan police to ensure that parks and open spaces remain free from encampments and flytipping that might otherwise detract from visitors enjoyment.

Action

Ensure the enforcement notices are inspected and replaced as required.

Policy P21

All allotment plot holders are expected to maintain their plots as set out in their allotment agreement and follow the guidelines as set out in the 'London Borough of Sutton Allotment Gardeners Guidelines'.

Policy P22

From 1st January 2020 fires of any kind will no longer be allowed on the council's allotment sites. Failure to abide by this policy will result in termination of the allotment agreement of any plot holder found having a fire on the site. This Policy supersedes the guidance in Version 6 - 2018 of the Allotment Gardeners Guidelines.

Policy P23

A rent free period on a newly tenanted plot may be allowed for a period of up to two years at the discretion of the Allotment Officer if the plot is particularly overgrown or if it has large amounts of rubbish or green waste deposited on it.

Policy P24

The Council will maintain verges to enhance the appearance of suburban streets and where appropriate in more rural places and on wider verges and greens encourage wildlife through a more relaxed regime that encourages wild flowers and provides habitat for wildlife.

Policy T1

The Council will carry out a visual tree assessment of trees as a minimum every four-years record and evaluate data from inspections on a dedicated database and plot locations on a linked mapping system

Policy T2

The Council will offer an annual tree inspection service for schools that opt into the scheme

Policy T3

The Council will ensure that footways and highways are clear of obstructing growth from its trees

Policy T4

The Council will inform ward councillors when undertaking cyclical tree works in their wards

Policy T5

The Council will aim to promote a better understanding of the management, care and value of trees, to increase public awareness of their importance

Policy T6

The Council will ensure the Tree Officers carrying out inspections are qualified to minimum level 2 NVQ and be experienced.

Policy T7

The Council will adhere to the guidance and procedures on tree removal as set out in section 5 of the Strategy and Action Plan for Council Owned Trees

Policy T8

The Council will replace tree losses wherever practicable, and affordable and choose trees with reference to biodiversity, location, the potential environmental factors, and amenity considerations using the right tree right place checklist. Newly planted trees will be maintained so that they have the best chance of establishment.

Policy T9

The Council will seek to involve the community and stakeholders in raising funds for, planting and maintaining trees in the borough, including encouraging residents to use waste water to help new trees establish.

Policy T10

The Council will continue to provide a sponsored tree scheme

Policy T11 The Council will maintain a tree planting list for planting from November to February each year and establish priority locations for tree planting, taking into account the following factors:

- Transport corridors
- Biodiversity objectives
- Areas of regeneration and community forests/woodlands
- Corporate plans

Policy T12

Plaques on trees are not allowed as they detract from the look of the park. They are also vulnerable to damage, which can be upsetting for the family. Commemorative trees with plaques can only be planted within cemeteries. Planting of bulbs or bedding around sponsored trees is only allowed when agreed by the parks management. Floral tributes or other items attached to trees will be removed, again these items detract from the overall look of the park.

Policy T13

No human remains will be allowed to be placed under, around, or near trees or anywhere on Council land other than by agreement in a cemetery or churchyard.

Policy T14

The Council will fulfil its duty of care by ensuring that Council trees are managed in such a way as to minimise the potential for damage

Policy T15

The Council will establish areas of higher risk in terms of shrinkable clay soils and

subsidence potential to properties due to the actions of roots from Council owned trees and take appropriate action

Policy T16

The Council will follow the London Tree Officers Association's Risk Limitation Strategy for Tree Root Claims (3rd edition May 2007) and the Joint Mitigation Protocol with regard to claim investigation procedure

Both of these documents can be found at <http://www.ltoa.org.uk/> or copies can be obtained from the Tree Team at 24 Denmark road, Carshalton, SM5 2JG)

Policy T17

Provide a 24hr 365 days per year call out service to deal with tree emergencies

Policy T18

The Council will work towards mitigating the effects of identified pests and diseases on its trees and continue to liaise with the Forestry Commission on issues affecting trees such as Oak Processionary Moth.

Policy T19

The Council will ensure that, privately owned tree(s) likely to cause an immediate danger to persons or property using the highway, will be dealt with in a reasonable manner as set out in Section 23 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. The Council's powers under the Act are discretionary and the Council will only use these powers as a last resort.

Policy T20

The Council may seek to prosecute any person(s) (under Section 1 of the Criminal Damage Act 1971 and Section 132 of the Highways Act 1980) carrying out unauthorized work or causing damage to a Council owned tree(s). The Council will also seek to reclaim any such costs as the courts may award.

Policy T21

The Council will remove any sign or poster attached to a Council owned tree that has been attached without the permission of the Council.

Policy Bd1

The Council through this Biodiversity Strategy will fulfil all agri-environmental scheme targets

Policy Bd2

The Council will deliver Planning Policy 26 on Biodiversity to maintain protection and up-to-date information for designated sites.

Policy Bd3

The Council will adopt Biodiversity Net Gain and seek defined compensation costs towards delivering aspirational habitat restoration as set out in Appendix B5.

Policy Bd4

The Council will engage and enthuse people of all ages in valuing wildlife and nature,

through education and active participation.

Policy Bd5

The Council will protect, maintain and enhance habitat important for biodiversity by delivering the plans for high priority habitats as set out in Appendices B1, B2, B3 and B4.