

Deptford Park Masterplan

A vision for future development

One

February 2008

Groundwork London and associates have worked together on this Masterplan document and have been gratefully assisted in numerous ways by the following council departments, stakeholders and local tenants and residents.

- **LB Lewisham Greenscene department.**
- **LB Lewisham Regeneration department.**
- **LB Lewisham Early Years department and Sure Start.**
- **Glendales and the Deptford Park Keeper.**
- **LBL Community involvement team.**
- **Cllrs Susan Wise and Heidi Alexander.**
- **Friends of Deptford Park.**
- **Local residents adjacent to the park.**
- **Pepys Community Forum.**
- **LB Lewisham Local History Library.**
- **Chris Elder – Farmers Market.**

Groundwork London

Groundwork London is part of a wider network of charitable trusts which form a federation of approximately 50 trusts around the UK. Groundwork's vision is of a society made up of sustainable communities which are vibrant, healthy and safe, which respect the local and global environment and where individuals and enterprise prosper. Groundwork's mission is to build sustainable communities in areas of need through joint environmental action.

With this aim, Groundwork London has positioned itself to be a key partner at planning and delivery levels for significant environmental and social regeneration initiatives. In the past five-years this positioning has led us to contribute to the Greater London Authority and Government policy thinking on relevant central issues.

Groundwork London builds partnerships that inform policy and strategy. These partnerships generate ideas which are then tested through practical projects delivered at a local level. The experience gained from these projects feeds back into the concepts, refining them further, and this shared learning helps to inform future policy. In this way, Groundwork influences the evolving shape of the city region.

Around the Block Ltd

Around the Block Ltd, is an independent multidisciplinary consultancy firm, specialising in greenspace and public realm development projects and research. Founded in 2007, building on the foundations and previous client work of, 'Sue Morgan Consulting', Around the Block and associates work with local authorities, voluntary sector and other consultancies to offer the following services: consultancy services for the promotion, development and management of public realm projects. Around the Block associates include Urbed, Parklife, Lark Designs Ltd and MTW Associates.

Shape. Landscape-Regeneration

Shape is an urban design, landscape architecture and regeneration company. Shape combines high standards of design with meaningful participation to involve people in the process of change, helping them to shape their own environment and economy for a sustainable future. Working with communities, local government and the private sector, Shape brings together project stakeholders to find common ground and build consensus. We work to secure funds, and work to foster participation, creating spaces that are safe, attractive and fit their purpose.

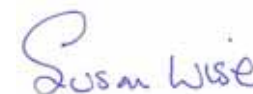
Shape was founded in 2003 by Landscape Architects Bridget Snaith and Richard Peckham, building on more than 20 years of combined practice in urban and community based environmental improvements in the North West and North America. They were joined in 2006 by Anne Stevenson, a fellow graduate of the LSE Cities programme, who brings to the practice skills in grant writing and urban policy research.

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Lewisham Council is proud of its parks and wants to work with residents to provide a more attractive, safe and friendly park in this part of the borough. For a number of years we have held a particular interest in the development and management of our local green spaces, and have long recognised their vital importance to the development and well being of the local community. Parks serve the community in many ways; through play, sport, socialising and enjoying events and Deptford Park is no exception.

Deptford Park, being one of our largest green spaces has the potential to serve the existing and any new communities well into the future. It is with an eye to this future that we welcome the development of a Masterplan for Deptford Park. The document has given stakeholders an opportunity to set down ideas, plans and aspirations for the park and offers a framework for management and investment.



CLlr Susan Wise
Cabinet Member for Customer Services



CLlr Heidi Alexander
Cabinet Member for Regeneration

This document lays out a vision of improvements for Deptford Park set in a Masterplan framework. Defining and illustrating areas of improvement that have been highlighted through consultation with local stakeholders and the community.

It is envisaged that the Masterplan will be a dynamic document and may in the future be subject to amendment and refinement. It has also been realised that the Masterplan should be seen as part of a process to change the physical fabric of the park, whilst understanding that there must be room for the development of a community engagement strategy to support the changes in the park, and to include stakeholders and the local community fully in the parks regeneration and to afford them the option of fundraising for the park and contributing to its long term upkeep.

The Masterplan will in time be accompanied by a 10 Year Management Plan (to be prepared by London Borough of Lewisham) for the park and both of these documents will provide the means to secure long term investment in the park both physically and socially.

The production of this document is timely as plans for the development of a number of key sites in North Lewisham adjacent to the park are planned and this Masterplan will help position the park into a strategic context of planned improvements for the area.

It is hoped that the Masterplan will:

- provide an accepted vision for the park which will raise the overall quality of the park.
- improve its biodiversity.
- extend the influence of the park by upgrading links to other green spaces and associated public realm.
- afford community and stakeholder engagement.
- provide the opportunity for regular activities and events by maximising the potential usage of the facilities in the park.
- attract and secure additional resources to implement the improvement proposals.

This document sets out through survey and analysis, consultation and a description of proposals, the vision and opportunities for the rejuvenation of the park. It also sets out to align itself with National, Regional and Local strategies that are necessary to demonstrate to external and internal funders.

Liveability and Green Flag

The Department of Communities and Local Government's (CLG) vision is of prosperous and cohesive communities, offering a safe, healthy and sustainable environment for all. The Government recognises that good quality public space including parks and green spaces have an essential role to play in building sustainable communities, and enhancing people's quality of life in towns and cities.

CLG has responsibility for urban parks and public spaces, as well as leading cross-Government work on 'Cleaner, Safer, Greener Communities'. CLG has a new Public Service Agreement Target (PSA 8) on Liveability to 'Lead the delivery of cleaner, safer, greener public spaces and improving the quality of the built environment in deprived areas and across the country, with measurable improvements by 2008'.

The target reflects the government wide commitment to improve the quality of public spaces through the Cleaner, Safer, Greener Communities programme. Indicators for success in PSA8 include:

- Achieving Green Flag awards for parks and green spaces.
- Improving satisfaction with parks and open spaces.
- Improving satisfaction with the neighbourhoods in which we live.

Criteria for achieving a Green Flag are marked under the following headings and this document has used these headings as themes as a basis for the survey and analysis and design proposals.

- A Welcoming Place.
- Healthy, Safe and Secure.
- Clean and Well Maintained.
- Sustainability.
- Conservation and Heritage.
- Community Involvement.
- Marketing.
- Management.

The Document

The structure of this document examines the parks history, its strategic context in a local and national setting and uses the above Green Flag criteria for the Survey and Analysis sections as well as the Masterplan / design sections. The document also sets out the current funding available, costs for the realisation of the masterplan and identifies funding opportunities. The final section illustrates the need for an accompanying Community Engagement Strategy to allow for sustainable development and community involvement in the park

Deptford Park Vision

Deptford Park is a significant open space in North Lewisham, well regarded and used by the local community.

A park that has in the past been a destination park for surrounding neighbourhoods providing a number of activities and resources. Currently the park has suffered from a lack of investment and needs significant capital to upgrade the existing infrastructure. The park enjoys a rich heritage and is patronised by a diverse community, some new to the area and some long term residents.

The park with its stately plane trees forming a strong framework and boundary finds itself amidst a number of regeneration and development schemes. This activity in the area offers a window of opportunity to place the park at the centre of the community again.

Our Vision for the park has a number of strands – which involve straight forward upgrading of infrastructure, to creating new areas and opportunities for community engagement activities through better play and sports provision, the creation of sociable and event space, coupled with the provision of quiet contemplation, colour, art and interest.

We aim for the park to become a hub of activity and afford event opportunities for the new residents as well as the old.

To provide opportunities for young people and children to enjoy nature, play and participate in formal and informal sport and to allow current users to get more out of the park and new users to discover it's potential.

Current funding

Funding has been made available this financial year (07 – 08) to develop some small pilot projects – Phase one, from LB Lewisham's Greenscene department. This funding has also enabled the masterplan to be developed which has served as a catalyst to securing further funding from other council departments. At the time of writing this document efforts are being made to secure capital funding through LB Lewisham's Regeneration departments North Lewisham Links Project. If successful this funding will enable 'The Avenue' element of the Masterplan to be implemented.

This potential funding and the opportunity to secure funding through future planning agreements from adjacent developments gives the Masterplan document an opportunity to become more than an aspirational document, but one that could be realised through sustainable partnerships with local stakeholders, the council and the private sector.

1.0 Introduction



Deptford Park, some 7.07 hectares in size is situated in Deptford, North Lewisham, close to the borough boundary of Southwark.

It is bounded by the busy A200 Evelyn Street to the North and relatively quiet residential streets of Scawen and Grinstead Road to the East, West and South. At 7.07 hectares the park represents a significant green space in an area deficient of quality greenspace and sports provision and is well used and regarded by local residents and user groups.

North Lewisham is presently at a pivotal point in its development. A number of key development sites close to the park have been designated for mixed use development that has the potential to deliver sustainable regeneration to the area.

By producing a Masterplan for Deptford Park it has been possible to develop a vision for the parks development that can fulfil aspirations from the local community and long term strategic development goals of the London Borough of Lewisham.

This vision has been represented in the report by showing plans and costs for the parks development, identifying key community engagement opportunities and long term management solutions.

The opportunities for development are centred around the following seven themes which align themselves to the Civic Trusts, Green Flag award criteria and aim to assist in the development of a 10 year management plan for the park.

- I. A welcoming Place.
- II. A place to be active in.
- III. A place to be involved in.
- IV. A safe and secure place.
- V. An interesting place.
- VI. A clean and well maintained park.
- VII. A sustainable park.

1.1 Project aims & objectives

Groundwork London were commissioned by London Borough of Lewisham (LBL), Parks department in October 2007 to prepare a strategic Masterplan document for the improvement of Deptford Park, informed by a period of consultation with park stakeholders. This followed an initial meeting with the Friends of Deptford Park, the Residents Association, Ward Councillors and Parks managers.

The aim of the Masterplan was to produce a vision document for Deptford Park which would assist in attracting future funding for the park and identify opportunities for some small scale improvement projects before the end of March 2008.

The objectives for the Masterplan are:

- To develop a strategic Masterplan for Deptford Park which will take on board the constraints & opportunities of the existing site and conclusions from a targeted consultation process with key stakeholders and neighbouring tenants and residents.
- To undertake analysis of Deptford Park in its current use & format.
- To undertake agreed consultation activities with identified key stakeholders to inform the Masterplan.
- To create a Masterplan document of improvements to the Park, with prioritisation of all improvements identified and a costed implementation programme.
- To communicate project progress through meetings with partners & stakeholders.
- To identify one improvement, or a series of improvements to be delivered before the end of the current financial year (2007/8) and within a budget of circa £50k.
- To identify current funding streams available for phased implementation of the Masterplan.

This document aligns itself with LBL's Open Space Strategy, Community Strategy, and LBL's emerging Local Development Framework for North Lewisham, giving Deptford Park the opportunity to take full advantage of any potential development and growth in the immediate area.

1.2 Project method

The development of the Masterplan for Deptford Park has been completed using the following processes:

- Thorough survey, analysis and appraisal of the park in its current context (Section 4).
- Research into its history and background (Section 2).
- Site visits (Section 4).
- Analysis of current stakeholders, user groups and potential new users (Section 4 & 5).
- Consultation with key stakeholders using a range of consultation techniques (Section 5).
- Identification of Phase One projects for 07/08 (Section 7).
- Completion of draft and final versions of the Masterplan document with funding and management recommendations (Section 7).

1.3 Project team

Area Manger – Irene Seijo – Groundwork London.

Project Manager – Sue Morgan – Director Around the Block Ltd – Sub Consultant to Groundwork.

Principal Landscape Architect – Sioned Williams – Groundwork London.

Principal Landscape Architect – Richard Peckham – Shape consultancy – Sub consultant to Groundwork.

Community Projects assistant – Caroline Birchall – Groundwork London.

Landscape Assistant – Tania Ruthven – Groundwork London.

Landscape Volunteer – Jamie Vincent – Groundwork London.

2.0 Deptford Park history



2.0 Deptford Park history

2.1 Development of Deptford Park

The land currently used as Deptford Park began life as market gardens and had a hundred year tradition of famous market gardens in Deptford. In the late 1700's some 500 acres in the Deptford area were given over to market gardens and the production of fruit and vegetables. Deptford being most famous for its production of asparagus.

The land, on which Deptford Park was built, was formerly a part of the Deptford Estate of Mr Evelyn whose family had owned land in this area since John Evelyn 1620 – 1706. **(Figs 2 & 3)**

The 17 acres were offered by the Evelyn family to the London County Council (LCC) in 1893 following the expiry of the market garden lease. The land was offered below the market rate and an additional sum of funding was offered to the LCC from the Evelyn family. (Appendix 3)

This area of Deptford had seen considerable change during the 1800's with the proliferation of railway lines, the building of the Surrey Canal and continued activity in the dockyards until 1869 when it closed, only to be replaced with a foreign cattle market. The railways enabled more mobility and with them the rapid spread of house building and population growth.

LCC, noting that if the land was not acquired and turned into a public park it was likely to be developed for buildings, secured the funding to purchase the land and developed the park.

It was opened in 1897, its layout comprising boundary walls, fencing, gates, paths, planting, mess shed, public conveniences, store shed and other buildings and a drinking fountain adjacent to the entrance in Evelyn Street (or Lower Road as it was known then) and another near Grinstead Road.

(Figs 1 & 4)

2.2 Development since 1897

An Ordinance survey plan from 1916 shows a bandstand in the park, but it has been removed by the OS plan of 1949. The OS of 1949 **(Fig 5)** shows bomb damage to houses adjacent to the park, a pond and a day nursery present. **(Fig 6)**

During the war the park had a number of allotment sites supporting the 'Dig for Victory' campaign by the government of the time in addition the park was used for bomb shelters. **(Fig 9)**

The OS 1952 – 1970's shows two playgrounds, putting green, running track, pond, collections of buildings and a layout of formal gardens in the bomb damaged infill area – now known as the secret garden. **(Fig 7)**

A photograph taken in the 1960's demonstrated the use of the park by the adjacent St Francis and Deptford Park primary schools for sports day. This practice continues today. **(Fig 8)**



Fig 1. 1910 – Deptford Park

2.3 1970's – Present

The proliferation of facilities and services offered in the park during the 1950's to the 1980's are still remembered by local residents adjacent to the park. However the park suffered like most parks in the country from the onset of the Compulsory Competitive Tendering process to demonstrate value for money and made it impossible to maintain the number of staff and expertise to maintain the park to high quality standards. This has meant that Deptford Park like numerous other parks in the country has reduced its facilities and opportunities in the park to a minimum and is now suffering from a lack of investment.

2.4 Investment in the park

The Deptford City Challenge, during 1992 – 1993 invested in the park in two phases. Funding provided:

New railings, brick pillars, gates, new play area, paved area, formal area and seating.

More recently the development of the London and Quadrant Housing Association flats provided S106 monies to part fund the new toilets, changing rooms and Early Years Centre. The match funding was provided by the Football Foundation.

2.0 Deptford Park history



Fig 6. 1949 – bomb damage shown



Fig 8. Sports day at Deptford Park

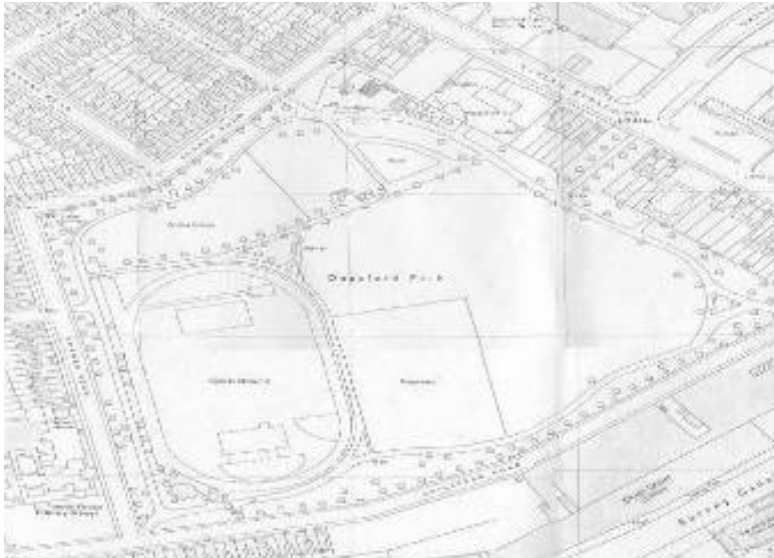


Fig 7. 1952 – 1970's



Fig 9. Air raid shelters

3.0 Context



3.1 Introduction

Key to developing the Masterplan for Deptford Park is the need to identify its context / setting in the local community and examine how the development plans align themselves to national, regional and local planning contexts.

Relevant national and regional context issues are recorded in detail in **Section 2 of LBL Open Space Strategy document 2005 – 2010. (Appendix 1)** The section details the background of the renaissance of parks policy in National Government since 2003, highlighting documents such as , ‘Green Spaces, Better Places’, DTLR 2002, the emergence of Cabe Space as a leading policy organisation on parks and green space and the development of Planning Policy Guidance (PPG 17), Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation. The section also illustrates Regional context in the Greater London Council, ‘London Plan’, Thames Gateways Green Grid and The Green Chain Network. All policies and strategies that have relevance to Deptford Park.

3.2 Local context

Deptford Park sits in Evelyn Ward a distinctly diverse ward. LBL Community Strategy and central government have described Evelyn and New Cross wards as being deprived. Evelyn has a population of approximately 14,500 making it the fourth largest ward in the borough. It has the highest proportion of black and ethnic (BME) residents at 55% compared with 34% across the borough, the lowest level of household tenure, the highest rate of unemployment in the borough and significantly the highest number of young people under 16.

(Source: Figures from LBL Ward Profiles 2004)

Deptford Park is characterised as a Local Park and a Public Open Space in the LBL Open Space Strategy 2005 – 2010 (OSS) and in the Councils Unitary Development Plan (UDP). The Open Spaces Strategy also demonstrates that in the Deptford Park/ North Lewisham area, there are no discernable deficiencies in Local Parks (0.3ha – 20ha). Within easy walking distance of Deptford Park are, Fordham Park, Folkestone Gardens, Pepys Park and Sayes Court. The quality and accessibility of these spaces however is poor and have been identified in the OSS as in need of capital investment. In addition the strategy reveals deficiencies in nature conservation areas and access to good quality sporting facilities in this area of Deptford. (Appendix 2).

Open Space Strategy

The Open Spaces Strategy lists in its Action Plan a number of key recommendations for the improvement of open spaces in the borough. There are listed approximately seven recommendations that directly concern Deptford Park and its improvements. These recommendations are relevant and aligned to the findings of the consultation and proposal in Masterplan.

Recommendation 10.

“Capital funding bids to be prioritised in order to improve the overall quality of the following parks with a view to applying for Green Flag status in the next 5 years”.

- Telegraph Hill Park.
- Eckington Gardens.
- Brookmill Park.
- Ladywell Fields.
- Deptford Park.
- Blackheath.

Recommendation 12.

“Capital and revenue funding be prioritised in order to increase the number of key parks by providing on-site park keepers at Ladywell Fields and Deptford Park”.

Recommendation 14.

“Particular attention is given to the management and maintenance of the parks in the Evelyn, New Cross, Downham and Bellingham wards”.

Recommendation 15.

“The Council undertakes a base line quality audit of nature reserves, allotment sites and sports grounds to allow costed priorities to be made for future years”.

The typology maps in the OSS indicate that there is a deficiency of sports grounds in the north of the borough, which puts pressure on the grass pitches made available in the public parks. Funding should be prioritised to improving the standard and quality of grass pitches and associated changing facilities in the following parks:

- Deptford Park.
- Blackheath.
- Forster Memorial Park.
- Fordham Park.

Recommendation 19.

“The Council continues to work with the Thames Gateway London Partnership to develop the Green Grid linkages with neighbouring boroughs along the Thames Gateway”.

This aligns itself with the location of Deptford Park and its potential green links with Folkestone Gardens – Fordham Park, and from Deptford to Pepys Gardens and then onto the river.

Recommendation 20.

“The Council identifies open spaces that require improved signage within their boundaries and identify sites that merit directional signposting from busy thoroughfares”.

Directional Signage:

The Sport and Leisure service, including parks and green spaces, was inspected by Best Value inspectors in August 2002. The inspectors recommended that the Council improve signage in parks and work with other council departments to improve signposting within the locality.

Recommendation 24.

“The Council to give greater consideration to the social, economic, and environmental benefits of quality open space when facilitating urban regeneration”.

This specifically relates to the development sites flanking the park, Oxestalls Road, and Grinstead Road. But also the wider regeneration of the Pepys Estate where mixed development is due to take place. Deptford Park has a huge part to play in the regeneration of these sites and its long term impact and offer to new and existing communities in the area.

Community Strategy 2003 – 2013 and relating Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy.

The Lewisham Community Strategy is intended to act as an overarching framework to improve community well-being, within which other local plans can link together and sets out a long term vision for the borough. The Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy sets out the strategy direction for improving poor neighbourhoods and aligns closely with the Community Strategy.

Key areas aligned with the development of improvements for Deptford Park are:

Improve and protect open space provision in terms of quality, quantity and accessibility as well as ensuring that open spaces meet the needs of all local people.

Increase the public satisfaction with the visual appearance of the borough and open spaces.

3.3 Emerging policies and local development

Local development

LBL Regeneration Department. North Lewisham Links Strategy.

North Lewisham Links is a 3 – 6 year project funded in the first instance by the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) and supported by S106 monies secured from developers in the locality of North Lewisham. The project aims to develop a spatial strategic framework, for places, connections, and selected mixed use development sites, for sustainable development in North Lewisham.

Pepys Community Forum

The Pepys Community Forum is an independent community led project based in Evelyn Ward. Their mission is to create an empowered multicultural community, leading to the local community influencing the design, delivery and management of their own resources.

In 2002 Pepys Community Forum commissioned CPP Architects to develop, 'The Common Ground Masterplan'.

This document sets out plans and aspirations for the development of the Pepys Estate green and play space.

Sustrans Connect 2

Sustrans the national charity for bicycle and sustainable networks have recently succeeded in securing Lottery funding for the creation and revitalisation of cycling and walking routes in 79 communities across the UK. One of the 79 projects benefiting from the project will be Southwark and Lewisham.

The scheme lies in the heart of a densely populated area of Bermondsey and North Lewisham, characterised by major roads and railway lines. Pedestrian and cycle movement is currently difficult and a high accident record on the area's roads is testament to the poor conditions.

This scheme will make use of a disused rail bridge and former track beds. When complete, the local community will enjoy a largely traffic-free connection between Rotherhithe New Road in Southwark and Surrey Canal Road in Lewisham. It will give people pleasant access to South Bermondsey Station and will make possible numerous north-south and east-west journeys by foot or bike. The scheme skirts Deptford Park on Grinstead Road and into Folkestone Gardens and onto Fordham Park.

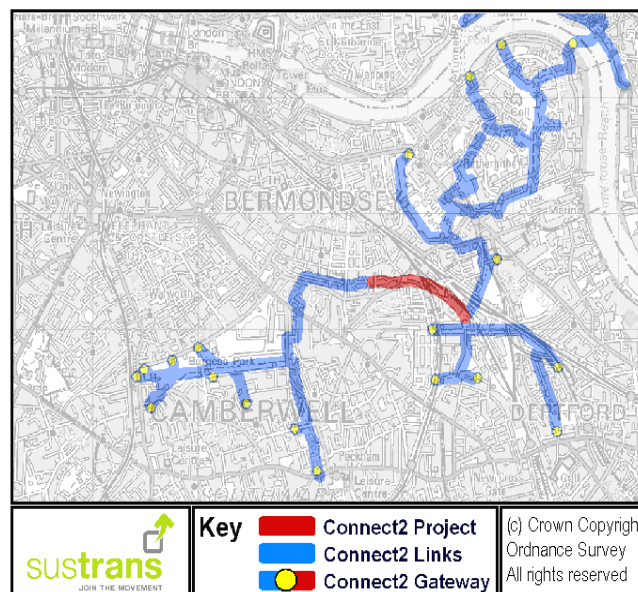
Grinstead Road development site

Grinstead Road is a 0.8 hectare site on the southern edge of Deptford Park. It is boarded by Grinstead Road to the north and by the tow-path of the disused Surrey Canal to the south. A Masterplan has indicated a proposal for a mixed use development that will open up a new strategic link between Grinstead Road and Folkestone Gardens.

The development is attractive as it offers a better defined pedestrian and cycle links between the two parks, and gives the opportunities for pavement widening, traffic calming and generally safer access to the two parks.

Oxestalls Road

The Oxestalls site is 4.6 hectares and lies directly in front of Deptford Park. The plan is for a mixed use development with a high quality landscape along the route of the old Surrey Canal. Influence on Deptford Park will be significant as it proposes to develop a new public space with shops and will create better links to Deptford Park and Pepys Park.



3.0 Context

Play

The following outlines current government and NGO thinking with regards to play, its importance in the development of the child and emergence of policy to support alternatives to fixed play equipment.

A partial survey of local authorities in England in 2001 found that less than 40 per cent had any kind of plan for play and that, on average, councils were spending less than 8p per child per week on outdoor play.

In 2004, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) published the report of a review of children's play in England, chaired by Frank Dobson MP. This report, *Getting Serious About Play*, made recommendations on the use of National Lottery funding for 'improving children's play opportunities' through a new, dedicated children's play programme.

The need to improve the provision that is made for children to play is acknowledged in a range of national policy areas: from planning, open spaces and transport to health, education and childcare. Local authorities in England have a statutory duty, under the Children Act (2004), to co-operate in their provision for the enjoyment of play and recreation.

New funding streams made available to local authorities for the provision of new and improved play spaces through BIG Lottery have created opportunities for the implementation of quality play spaces and guidance into the development of Play Strategies. However, despite the guidance and documented evidence available for the creation of play strategies and the needs of the child, there is still a lack of exemplars demonstrating successful play spaces in this country.

Play spaces put together using a catalogue approach, have more often than not, resulted in the design of poor spaces, robbing children of vital opportunities to learn and be healthy and ultimately have wasted public money.

A new report by Greenspace, the first public satisfaction survey, held with young people, 'The Park Life Report', interviewed a number of children under 16 across the country.

27% stated that they only visit a park 4 times a year.

41% rated their play areas as poor.

36% had to travel more than 10 minutes to a park.

85% had never been asked to comment on their park before.

Whilst this is worrying in itself, a recent UNICEF report put Britain bottom of the league in how we deal with children (along side U.S.A) and praised countries like Scandinavia and the Netherlands.

Innovative, creative design should embrace a whole spectrum of play opportunities. By providing a wider range of play environments, we can create inclusive play, opening up spaces to whole communities.

- *Children's right to play*
The right to play and informal recreation, for all children and young people up to 18 years of age, is enshrined Article 31 of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, ratified by the UK government in 1991. Therefore the UK government has a duty to protect and promote play opportunities for children and young people of all ages, interest and abilities.
- *"Letting children go out to play is one of the best things that parents can do for their children's health".*
Centre for Transport Studies, UCL, 2004 Planning for Play
- *"The inclusion of the work of craftspeople and environmental artists in a play area design/construction, can contribute strongly to: the achievement of a special place that reflects local uniqueness... the participation of local people in its creation".*
Judi Legg, Play landscape designer
- *"Play is equal to formal education in terms of its fundamental role in enabling children and young people to engage positively with the complexities of the world around them".*
PLAYLINK Play Policy
- *"Professor Ball found that the scientific evidence of the effectiveness of IAS [safety surfacing] as a risk reduction measure is mixed and he raises doubts as to whether the costs of IAS are proportional to the resulting reduction in injuries to children. It's ugly too".*
Health & Safety Executive Press Release

4.0 Survey & Analysis



4.1 Introduction

Prior to the development of the Masterplan for Deptford Park a thorough survey and analysis of the site has taken place. This has included site visits, desk based research and a walkabout with stakeholders.

Findings have been brought together under the following headings:

- A welcoming park.
- A place to be active in.
- A place to be involved in.
- A safe and secure place.
- An interesting place.
- A clean and well maintained park.
- A sustainable park.

These themes are aligned with the Green Flag award themes and will be revisited in the Masterplan proposals section and in due course the Management plan for the park.

The aim of the survey and analysis has been to identify issues, areas of concern and opportunities for the site whilst at the same time undergoing Stakeholder consultation, which has served to enhance our knowledge of the park.

4.2 Description of the park

Deptford Park is strongly defined by mature plane trees around its perimeter and is further enclosed by a recently built low wall and railings. Victorian terrace housing front the park along Scawen Road on the north and west boundaries and back on to the park along the Evelyn Street boundary to the east. Towards the junction with Scawen Road a previous gap in the terrace has recently been developed with a modern style low rise apartment block. To the south along the Grinstead Road boundary are apartment blocks built in the 1990's.

Most of the park is open parkland with large areas of mown grass broken only by a play area, about 3000 metres square in size with traditional play equipment - and a circular paved area bounded by a low box hedge and Rose planting. Two areas of grass are used regularly and marked out as football pitches. Informal football in adjacent areas also takes place regularly. A tarmac path circulates the boundary of the park, connecting all entrances, with two paths crossing the park and connecting in the middle.

There are five entrances, with the main entrance off Evelyn Street, being a well-defined avenue of plane trees running through the terraced housing and into the park. The four other entrances have identical brick gate pillars and steel gates.

Grinstead Road and Evelyn Street.

Proposed development is due to take place on both these sites. This affords an opportunity to extend the parks influence with the public realm to the surrounding streets, increase the parks strategic importance, and improve 'gateways' to Evelyn Street. In addition to link Folkestone Gardens and Deptford Park along the railway arches.

4.3 How does the park currently serve the community?

The main activities taking place in the park are football and children's play. Footballer's are served by the new changing room facilities provided by the Football Foundation. The pitches are marked during the season but are in uneven and in poor repair. The play area is relatively large and of a traditional design and fenced. The play area is very popular in the summer months and is used frequently by older siblings whose carers attend the Early Years building, toddler drop in sessions. The equipment is of varying age and state of repair, with poor provision for seating/ picnic tables and provides limited play value.

Informal activities such as Tai Chi, dog walking, running along the perimeter paths also take place in the park and would benefit from upgraded facilities and information.

Seating and furniture is in a poor state of repair generally. Although entrances are relatively well defined the paths are in a very poor state and this, along with redundant fencing and tired and mismatched seats and furniture, gives the park a feeling of neglect. Despite this there is very little litter or vandalism evident in the park and a general feeling of security is helped by the presence of a newly appointed full time park keeper. There is however reported anti-social behaviour e.g. drug use, street drinking and the use of quad and monkey bikes have been reported, mainly occurring in the garden area adjacent to Evelyn Street.

The existing trees, grass and planting in the park provide some green interlude in the urban fabric of the area. However the park does not fulfil the full potential it offers in an area of high-density housing where there is little opportunity to connect with an open green space.

4.4 Survey of neighbouring open spaces

The Open Space Strategy and UDP state that there are no deficiencies in Local Parks in Evelyn Ward. The parks highlighted overleaf have a number of facilities attached to them and are within relatively easy walking distance to Deptford Park. The closest space being Folkestone Gardens, a Site of Importance in Nature Conservation (SINC) which has a large play area, a multi use games area (MUGA) and an area of natural water. However the quality of these spaces is not of a high standard and accessibility is poor. This is especially true in the case of Sayes Court and Pepys Park and play area.

Strategic links could be made to strengthen the relationship between the spaces and allow wider community access to the spaces, which are currently underused considering the large population of under 16's in the area without gardens.

Opportunities – Links and Gateways

- Create stronger links between Folkestone Gardens and Pepys Park by creating visual and physical links.
- Create a linked system of green areas to afford greater access to facilities to the local community.
- Create opportunities for signing links to other green spaces and facilities.
- Create better accessibility and safety to the park by creating 20mph zones around the park and improving the pedestrian crossings on Evelyn Street to the park.



4.0 Survey & Analysis



Southwark Park



Southwark Park



Surrey Quays Adventure Playground



Folkestone Gardens Play Area



Folkestone Gardens Play Area



- Older Children's Play Area
- Younger Children's Play Area
- Formal Gardens
- Open grass area
- MUGA



Pepys Park



Pepys Park Play Area



Pepys Estate Temporary Play Area



Sayes Court Park Play Area



Fordham Park

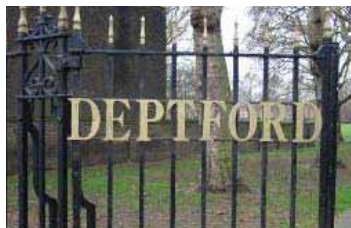
Deptford Park : survey of neighbouring open spaces

4.5 Survey themes

i. A welcoming park

Main Entrance

The main entrance off Evelyn Street offers a relatively narrow park frontage onto Evelyn Street bounded as it is with terraced housing on either side. You are not aware there is a park unless directly in front of the entrance. The entrance way is lined with an avenue of mature plane trees leading the eye into the park but with no focal point at the end of the avenue. The possibly original cast iron railings and gates line the frontage although the street clutter of Evelyn Street junction and pedestrian crossing immediately in front of the entrance lessens their impact.



Opportunities – A welcoming park: Main Entrance

- Strong vista with avenue of plane trees.
- Long entrance avenue provides enough transition space between the streetscape and the park.
- Evelyn Street is a busy route for through traffic and affords the opportunity to highlight & upgrade the park entrance.

General Entrances

The other four entrances have brick piers and steel gates and railings, which are of an appropriate scale and style providing clear thresholds into the park. The path layout immediately behind the entrances is often untidy and the paths themselves in bad repair. This can be confusing and it can be unclear which direction you should take on entering the park.



Opportunities – A welcoming park: Entrances

- Good boundary railing and gates.
- Mature plane trees around boundary provide good visual framework.
- Enough space to re-align path layout within entrances.
- Need to strengthen Grinstead Road and Evelyn Street entrances to make connections to other green spaces and link with proposed development.

4.0 Survey & Analysis

Signage

Existing signage at each entrance is very functional, small and could be more welcoming. There is one noticeboard which is underused and could be better positioned. Other signs - such as signage with information on dog walking areas - are confusing and possibly redundant. There are no signs indicating presence of public toilets, changing rooms or purpose of the Early Years building.



Opportunities – A welcoming park: Signage

- New welcoming signs at entrances that provide clear directions and information.
- Re-position / new noticeboard which could be maintained by park keeper and used by existing user group.
- Develop signage for the park as a strategic open space in developing a series of linking green spaces through North Lewisham.
- Provide signs for toilets, changing rooms and Early Years building.

Furniture and paths

The state of repair and style of the park furniture, broken surfacing and scattering of redundant features can be dispiriting, adding to a general feeling of neglect and lack of investment in the park.



Opportunities – A welcoming park: Furniture and paths

- New and more seating & removal of any redundant features is a relatively 'quick win' project.
- Perimeter path network is good and does not need re-alignment except at junction points.
- The park is clean and tidy & presence of park keeper is a positive influence.

Building facilities

Existing facilities – changing rooms, toilets and Early Years Centre - do not have an open, welcoming aspect and do not relate with the park that they sit in. Although there is a sign with information about the provision of the changing room, many people do not know that this and the other facilities exist and are open to park users.



Opportunities – A welcoming park: Buildings

- The play area is located close to the buildings giving an opportunity to link in with the Early Years Centre particularly.
- Clean and modern toilet facilities are a key factor in making the park visit more comfortable.
- The presence of the park keeper situated on site is a very positive factor in providing information and a welcome to visitors.
- Removal of some of the fencing will make the interface to the park more pleasant.

ii. A place to be active in

Play Area

The play area is a large space, bounded by dog proof fencing with some seating. The equipment is traditional and lacking in excitement. There is only one small tree providing shade within the play area and much of the area is empty in between pieces of equipment making it look rather forlorn. Apart from the trees there is no planting and little of interest beyond the play equipment itself. Surfacing is mainly grass with tarmac and black rubber safety surfacing.



Football

The football pitches are well used at the weekend, especially given the changing room facilities recently built. The pitches however are very uneven, suffer from waterlogging and wear to the grass.



Informal Activity

The boundary path is well used by runners and dog walkers but is badly in need of repair. Signs for a dog walking area, no longer existing, are confusing although there is the provision of dog bins. Path junctions are awkward and need rationalising. Local people also use spaces in the park for Tai Chi – particularly the play area.



Opportunities – A place to be active in

- The large space of the play area offers opportunity to introduce better facilities with more play value.
- The presence of the Early Years Centre within the park affords further development of play opportunities.
- Both the football pitches and the play area is very well used with potential to draw in more park users and provide exemplar facilities in the local area.
- The new changing rooms and toilets are a valuable resource.
- More facilities and information could be provided for informal activity which could be more actively encouraged.

iii. A place to be involved in

Although there are community facilities on the site specifically in the new buildings their use is not currently being maximised. Most social activity is probably through football at weekends. Apart from the Farmers Market, recently held in the park, little other formal activity takes place.



Opportunities – A place to be involved in

- The garden area is a semi- enclosed space which could be used for engaging the local community in e.g. growing food, schools garden, art installations, wildlife habitat or in planning and creating a garden space.
- The recent Farmers Market proved popular and enlivened park life. There is space in the park to encourage more events such as this & develop an events calendar.
- A strong sense of community and active local stakeholders allow the potential for the park to become a focus for activities.

iv. A safe and secure place

The park has a very open aspect with little shrub planting. Most areas are visible from anywhere within the park increasing the sense of security for park users, especially runners in the park.



The secluded garden area, enclosed on three sides is the only hidden area of the park. It can feel unsafe and is therefore underused. The park is locked at dusk and again the presence of the park keeper helps maintain the feeling of safety and security.



Opportunities – A safe and secure place

- Existing feelings of safety and security that already exist will ensure successful involvement in and use of the park.
- Strong involvement of local community and increased usage will discourage anti-social behaviour.
- Development of a calendar of events will increase usage and help self police the park.
- Clear functions for different areas of the park, whether formal or informal, and clear delineation for more 'private' or sensitive areas can help reduce abuse.

v. An interesting place

The play area provides interest and the mature trees with some planting – rose planting in the circle area and spring bulbs on the boundary - to provide a little seasonal interest. Otherwise there is little to break the monotony of close mown grass and tarmac paths. Much of the interesting history of the park and the local area is not available and remains in documents or in the memory of local residents.



Opportunities – An interesting place

- There is plenty of space to introduce more interesting planting especially at entrances and key sociable spaces.
- New planting is also an opportunity to engage with and reflect the culture of the local community.
- More information about the history of the park.
- More clearly defined areas e.g. seating areas, areas for picnics or informal play and sport will make the park more engaging.

vi. A clean and well maintained park

The park is generally clean with little litter or graffiti. However this is let down by the shabbiness of e.g. seats and paths which add to a feeling of neglect.

A number of trees need pruning attention and some of the old cherries need replacing with new more vigorous trees.



Opportunities – A clean and well maintained park

- Build on existing cleanliness of park by upgrading furniture and surfacing to improve the image of the park.
- New furniture, surfacing and planting should be appropriate to resources available for maintenance.
- Involve local people in ongoing maintenance of community planted areas by developing User groups & Stakeholder groups.
- Aim to raise quality of management through application for e.g. Green Flag status.

vii. A sustainable park

Under this definition the development of good management routines as well as creating opportunities for sustained community engagement are crucial. Lower maintenance regimes and erosion of facilities have governed the way the park functions and looks in recent years and this has led to the erosion of the quality of experience and value to the local community. Sustained improvements to the park have to be supported by Stakeholders and the local community to assist in fundraising and the management of the park.

Biodiversity within the park is narrow and falls in the deficient category for accessible nature conservation areas. (Appendix 2).



Opportunities – A sustainable park

- As the principal open space in the area there is plenty of opportunity to establish the park as a key community space linking strategically to current and future development of North Lewisham.
- Sustainable open space design and management through use of sustainable methods and materials, surface water containment and increased biodiversity.
- Sustained community/stakeholder engagement through the development of an engagement strategy.
- Investment by LBL in developing the site for regular events and maximised use of buildings and sports pitches.

‘Sustainable communities are places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment, and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run, and offer equality of opportunity and good services for all.’

N.B. This definition is used by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and forms the basis of the Deputy Prime Minister's Five Year Plan for Sustainable Communities.