10 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

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What you’ve told us

Green and open spaces are vital to:

- Leisure, health and well being
- Nature and wildlife
- Tackling climate change
- Making town centres other places attractive

More should be done to make the borough greener by:

- Tree planting
- Providing more and better quality pocket parks in built up areas
- Creating new green spaces in large developments

Green and open spaces should be protected from:

- New developments
- Being paved over, especially gardens
What we’ve learned

Lewisham is very green:

Green spaces cover one-fifth of the Borough.

Lewisham was named one of the top boroughs in a recent Good Parks for London report.

15 parks have the Green Flag award for outstanding quality.

Opportunities to improve nature sites:

The Lewisham Biodiversity Action Plan and other key strategies highlight opportunities to improve the natural environment.

Some areas are better served than others:

People lack good access to parks, open space and nature in some areas.

Our Open Space study shows how some spaces are of fair or poorer quality.

Population growth will put extra pressure on parks and open spaces - more are needed to maintain current public access standards.

Did you know?

Lewisham was named in the top 3 of all London boroughs in the latest ‘Good Parks for London Report’. This is based on parks services in categories such as public satisfaction, quality, supporting nature and community involvement.
Main issues

National park city
The draft London Plan aspires for London to be a National Park City, and at least 50 per cent green by 2050 - Lewisham will have to play its part.

Biodiversity and nature
The council is now required to ensure the Local Plan delivers net gains in biodiversity.

Access to open space
More and/or better provision will be needed in some areas to ensure everyone benefits from easy access to good quality parks and open spaces.

Meeting the needs of a growing population
Creating new large open spaces will be challenging as land is needed for homes and jobs.
We’re proposing to...

Protect and enhance spaces and natural sites
- Protect spaces and enhance their quality, for example, with new visitor facilities.
- Enhance the quality of waterways, such as the Rivers Thames, Ravensbourne and Quaggy.
- Review open spaces and nature sites, and where appropriate, update their boundaries and level of protection for nature conservation.

Improve public access to spaces
- Prioritise the creation of new open space in areas that are lacking.
- Enhance routes and entrances to parks and open spaces.
- Improve walking and cycle routes, such as the Green Chain, Thames Path and Waterlink Way.
- Require larger developments to provide new public open space and/or fund improvements to spaces nearby.

Promote urban greening
- Set greening standards for larger developments.
- Promote the use of green roofs and walls.

We’ve also considered
If we should allow some open spaces to be re-shaped to improve their quality (with no overall loss of space) or not provide such flexibility.

Making changes to the boundaries of spaces, or to their status as open spaces/sites of importance for nature conservation, drawing on our studies.
A Lewisham’s network of green and open spaces, waterways and green features (such as parks, street trees and residential gardens) make an important contribution to local character and heritage. They are also integral to supporting sustainable communities and healthy lifestyles, providing a wide range of environmental, social and economic benefits. Green infrastructure should be protected and opportunities taken to enhance provision across the Borough, including by enhancing or creating new links between green infrastructure.

B Development proposals will be expected to investigate and maximise opportunities for enhancing existing green infrastructure and creating new provision on site through the design-led approach. Consideration should be given to the site setting within the wider landscape and the long-term management of green areas and planting. This includes provision of sufficient space where large canopy trees can be retained and new trees established without pressure for their future removal.
1 Sayes Court Park
2 Hilly Fields
3 Sydenham Wells Park
4 Manor House Gardens
5 Beckenham Place Park
Green infrastructure refers to the network of green and open spaces, waterways, street trees, green roofs, public and private residential gardens, allotments and other assets, such as semi-natural and natural drainage features, across the Borough. It includes parks and public spaces as well as private gardens and other spaces with vegetation. Together these elements of the environment help to support strategic objectives across a number of policy areas such as: promoting public health and wellbeing, mitigating against and adapting to the impacts of climate change (including by reducing flood risk), improving air and water quality, and conserving natural habitats and species. A strategic approach to green infrastructure is necessary to ensure that green assets are planned, designed and managed in an integrated way. In London’s metropolitan and heavily urbanised setting, it is important that green infrastructure is not considered in isolation of other features of the built environment.

Whilst the environmental value of green infrastructure is clearly evident its social and economic value is becoming increasingly recognised. Lewisham’s Open Spaces Assessment (2019) includes information on the natural capital account, which considers the economic, social and environmental value of green infrastructure. Research indicates that Lewisham currently enjoys benefits accruing from green infrastructure to a value of up to £2.1 billion, a figure that is comparable to the adjacent inner-London Boroughs. This helps to put into perspective the wider benefits of the local network of green infrastructure.

In addition, the protection and enhancement of green infrastructure in Lewisham is necessary to support the draft London Plan objective to make London at least 50% green by 2050, so that it can achieve National Park City status. Many of the Borough’s trees are located in private gardens especially at the ends of rear gardens where combined garden areas provide the space for large canopy trees to develop and mature. These trees contribute to the Borough’s urban forest providing rear outlook amenity, wildlife habitat, air pollution reduction, improved ground drainage, climate change mitigation and health and wellbeing benefits. Development proposals need to maximise opportunities to retain these trees for their ecosystem services and avoid compromising and encroaching available space for them, for example when considering rear extensions, the location of garden studios, when redeveloping whole sites and subdividing houses and gardens.

The Corporate Natural Capital Accounting (CNCA) is a methodology used to assess the social, economic and environmental value of green infrastructure, and was developed by the Natural Capital Committee in its report to the UK Government. It considers factors such as the costs of public inactivity, the value of recreational visits to green infrastructure, impact of green infrastructure on property values, and the value of the various environmental functions green infrastructure performs. See Lewisham’s Open Space Assessment (2019) for further details.
Figure 10.1: Green Grid Framework
GR2  Open space and Lewisham’s green grid

A  Open spaces are integral components of Lewisham’s network of green infrastructure and will be protected from inappropriate development.

B  Development proposals, particularly those located within areas that are deficient in open space, should maximise opportunities to introduce new publicly accessible open space and improve connections to existing or planned new open spaces. All major developments will be expected to incorporate publicly accessible open space unless it can be clearly demonstrated that this is not feasible.

C  Development proposals involving the loss of open space will be strongly resisted. In exceptional circumstances the loss of open space will be permitted where replacement provision of at least an equivalent amount and better quality is provided within the local area catchment. All replacement open space must be publicly accessible.

D  Development proposals involving the reconfiguration of existing open space will be supported where:
   a. There is no net loss of open space and net gains are achieved wherever possible;
   b. There is no detrimental impact on the environmental function of the open space, including support for nature conservation;
   c. Demonstrable improvements in open space provision will be achieved, particularly in addressing identified deficiencies in the quality and quantity of open space in the locality and public accessibility to it;
   d. The reconfiguration is delivered through comprehensive development, in line with a site wide masterplan, and will ensure a viable future for the open space.

E  Development proposals for ancillary uses on open space (such as outdoor leisure facilities, outdoor play and fitness equipment, refreshment facilities, event space and public toilets) that help to improve the quality of open space and promote access to a wide range of users will be supported where they:
   a. Are demonstrably ancillary to the use of land as open space;
   b. Are necessary to facilitate or support the appropriate use of the open space;
   c. Do not have a detrimental impact on the environmental function of the open space, including support for nature conservation;
   d. Respond positively to local character, including by maintaining or enhancing the visual quality of the open space and its setting;
   e. Are of a scale and function that is proportionate to the nature of the open space; and
   f. Are designed to a high quality standard, are accessible and inclusive to all, and do not detract from the amenity provided by the open space.
F Development proposals will be expected to maintain and enhance Lewisham’s network of open spaces, including by improving access to and connectivity between these spaces. Priority should be given to measures that encourage walking, cycling and other active travel modes along routes that link open spaces such as the South East London Green Chain, Waterlink Way, the Thames Path and other local elements of the All London Green Grid.

G Development proposals located adjacent to open space should respond positively to the character of the open space and seek to protect and enhance the habitat value and visual amenity provided by it.

H Neighbourhood forums are encouraged to undertake detailed assessments to identify appropriate sites to designate as Local Green Space in neighbourhood development plans.
Open spaces form a vital component of Lewisham’s infrastructure and particularly its network of green infrastructure. Open spaces, including waterways and water spaces, make a significant contribution to the character of the Borough. They also play a key role in supporting the physical health and mental wellbeing of the local population by providing opportunities for recreation and supporting active lifestyles. Lewisham benefits from provision of a wide range of good quality open spaces which total around one-fifth of the area of the Borough. They include urban green spaces, green corridors and a variety of public open spaces such as parks, cemeteries, churchyards, allotments and community gardens. There are also areas of Metropolitan Open Land which are designated through the London Plan.

As the Borough’s population increases the pressure on existing parks and open spaces will invariably rise. The Lewisham Open Spaces Assessment (2019) considers the amount of open space that is needed to support the projected future population over the plan period, based on a fixed quantity standard. This suggests that a significant amount of additional provision will be required to maintain the standard over the long-term. Due to the finite availability of land and pressure to accommodate new development, such as for housing and workspace, there will be limited opportunities to create new open space. It is therefore vitally important that open spaces are protected, measures are taken to improve their functional quality, and that public access to open space is enhanced.

The Lewisham Open Spaces Assessment (2019) provides an overview of existing open space provision across the Borough and in neighbouring authorities. It includes an assessment of public access to these open spaces and identifies areas where there are deficiencies in access to certain types of provision. Whilst all development proposals should investigate and maximise opportunities to enhance open space this is particularly important in areas of deficiency. We will expect all applications to engage with the Open Spaces Assessment (2019), or any subsequent update, to inform the planning and design process. Furthermore, applicants should refer the deficiency maps developed by Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL). These are regularly updated taking into account the latest available information on open spaces, and use a method of accurately mapping areas of deficiency in public access based on actual walking distances along roads and paths.
Figure 10.2: Open spaces
10.7 New development can help to enhance provision even where it is not feasible to deliver new public open space on site. Through the design-led approach proposals should seek to create new routes or improve connections to existing or planned new open spaces, including through public realm enhancements, particularly in areas of deficiency. Planning contributions towards open space provision may be sought, particularly where development is likely to increase pressure on existing provision in the local catchment area such through the introduction of more residential units and households. Contributions may include measures that support public access to open space, along with the functional quality and amenity value of it.

10.8 The reconfiguration of open space can be an effective approach to addressing deficiencies in the quantity and quality of provision. It can also help to overcome site constraints where it would otherwise be difficult to deliver new development, such as for housing, workspace or community facilities. We will therefore give consideration to proposals involving the reconfiguration of open space where they provide demonstrable improvements in the functional value of open and public access to it. In order to ensure certainty over the protection of open space and beneficial outcomes for the wider community, all proposals for reconfiguration must be delivered through comprehensive redevelopment and in line with a site-wide masterplan.

10.9 The London Mayor has prepared supplementary planning guidance on the All London Green Grid (ALGG). The ALGG promotes the creation of a high quality and multifunctional green infrastructure network across London with the principal aim of supporting sustainable communities. The ALGG includes different types of open spaces, green corridors and the linkages between these (including wider public realm, corridors along transport routes, footpaths and cycle ways). The ALGG defines a number of Green Grid Areas across the region and Lewisham sits within the ‘South East London Green Chain Plus’ area. The Local Plan helps give effect to the ALGG and some of the key strategic objectives are reflected in the sub-areas section of this Plan. All development proposals will be expected to positively engage with the ALGG guidance in supporting a linked network of green infrastructure locally that improves public access to open spaces.

10.10 The NPPF provides scope for neighbourhood forums to designate Local Green Space through the neighbourhood plan process. National policy provides that Local Green Space is afforded the same level of protection as Green Belt land. Neighbourhood forums are well placed to identify high quality green spaces that are valued by the local community and whose protection could help to support Local Plan objectives. We will therefore encourage forums to undertake detailed assessments to support the designation of Local Green Space. It is recommended that all such assessments apply a robust methodology and are published as part of the technical evidence base. This will assist with public understanding of the proposals and support the plan examination process.

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Figure 10.3: Metropolitan Open Lane (MOL).
Key

- Area of deficiency to open space over 2 hectares (local park size and above)

Figure 10.4: Open space deficiency - local parks

Map displays GiGL data 2020
Figure 10.5: Open space deficiency - district parks
Figure 10.6: Open space deficiency - metropolitan parks

Key
- Area of deficiency to open space over 60 hectares (metropolitan park size and above)
GR3  Biodiversity and access to nature

A  The Council will seek to deliver net gains in biodiversity. Nature conservation sites will be safeguarded and protected in order to preserve or enhance priority habitats and species, as well as to help ensure the public benefits from easy access to green spaces with wildlife value, particularly by walking and cycling.

B  Development proposals will be expected to identify and retain existing habitats and features of biodiversity value. They should also seek positive gains for biodiversity wherever possible, particularly in areas that are deficient in public access to nature conservation. Biodiversity should be fully integrated into the design-led approach with consideration given to the site setting within the wider landscape, as well as the layout, design, construction and management of buildings, spaces and their associated landscaping.

C  Development proposals on sites that are within or adjacent to Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, Local Nature Reserves, Ecological Corridors or other sites of special biodiversity interest must protect and enhance the nature conservation value of the site. Development that has a direct or indirect harmful impact, either individually or in combination with other development, will only be supported where it can be demonstrated through the following approach that:

a. The harm to the special biodiversity interest cannot be reasonably avoided;

b. Where avoidance is not possible, the proposal will minimise and mitigate the impact;

c. Appropriate compensation is provided in exceptional circumstances where the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the harm to the biodiversity interests.

D  Development must not adversely impact on internationally designated nature conservation sites that are located outside of the Borough.

E  All major development and other development proposals likely to impact on sites with special biodiversity interests must be accompanied by an Ecological Assessment carried out by a suitably qualified assessor.

F  The Council will seek to manage positively the nature conservation value of habitats and sites by:

a. Securing management plans, where appropriate, in order to ensure the achievement of conservation objectives; and

b. Positively engaging with stakeholders, including the Lewisham Biodiversity Partnership, to protect and enhance the Borough’s open spaces and sites of conservation value.
Lewisham features a wide variety of important wildlife habitats and sites of biodiversity value. These include Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs), Local Nature Reserves and other areas of habitat value such as parks and open spaces, ecological corridors, waterways and incidental green space. It is imperative that wildlife habitats are protected and appropriately managed so that their special biodiversity value is maintained and, ideally, improved over the long-term. Protection is important not only to support nature conservation objectives but also to maximise the many other benefits associated with green infrastructure including the management of flood risk, air and water quality, and climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Growth and regeneration can be compatible with nature conservation objectives when development is considered in a holistic way. In order to deliver sustainable communities we will require that nature conservation is fully integrated into the site selection, design and development process. All development proposals should seek to protect habitats and species and further maximise opportunities to enhance biodiversity wherever possible. Applicants should refer the local Biodiversity Action Plan, “A Natural Renaissance for Lewisham”, which sets out information on the vision and opportunities for the Borough in this regard along with details on priority habitats and species.

Access to nature is a key component of living in an urban environment as it offers opportunities for respite, relaxation and education. Lewisham residents generally benefit from good access to green and open spaces. However in some parts of the Borough people do not enjoy easy access to green spaces with wildlife value. Localities where people are further than 1 kilometre walking distance from a publicly accessible site of Metropolitan or Borough level significance for nature conservation are defined by the London Plan as ‘areas of deficiency’. Lewisham has 5 such areas covering 14 per cent of the Borough. The largest of these is located in the northwest, spreading from the River Thames in the north to Brockley in the south and the boundary with Southwark in the east. The other four areas, which are smaller and more discrete, are located around Deptford, Forest Hill, Lee and Lewisham town centre. Where new development comes forward opportunities should be taken to introduce additional biodiversity features across the Borough, and particularly in the areas of deficiency. Further information is set out in the Lewisham Re-Survey of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation Study (2016). For development proposals, applicants should refer the deficiency maps developed by Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL). These are regularly updated taking into account the latest available information on nature sites, and use a method of accurately mapping areas of deficiency in public access based on actual walking distances along roads and paths.

All proposals will be expected to clearly identify biodiversity interests both within and in proximity to the site. They should set out how the development will respond positively to these interests whilst also demonstrating how harm will be avoided. In line with national policy, if significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided then mitigation measures will be required. This could include biodiversity offsetting or other measures.
to support implementation of Lewisham’s Biodiversity Action Plan, which will be secured by way of planning obligations or planning conditions. Applications must clearly address why mitigation measures are necessary and any such mitigation must be agreed with the Council in advance of the commencement of development. Mitigation measures should only be considered in exceptional circumstances. Proposals will be resisted where it cannot be suitably demonstrated that all reasonable efforts have been made to avoid harm to biodiversity interests at the outset of the site selection, design and development process.

10.15 Proposals for major development and other development with a potential to impact on the nature conservation value of sites, including designated sites with special biodiversity interests, will be required to submit an up-to-date Ecological Assessment. A suitably qualified ecologist, such as one registered with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEMM) will be expected to undertake this assessment. Surveys should be carried out during an optimal time of the year for observation. They must contain a sufficient amount of detail to identify and consider the relevant biodiversity interests and potential impacts on them. Applicants are expected to make surveys available to Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL) to assist in the collection of information in Lewisham and the region.

10.16 Lewisham does not contain any designated European nature conservation sites. However there are 4 such sites within 15 kilometres of the Borough boundary which, given their proximity, have the potential to be impacted by development. These sites include the Lee Valley Special Protection Area (SPA) and the Richmond Park, Wimbledon Common and Epping Forest Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). Where a development proposal has the potential to impact on a European site by virtue of its location, nature of use or scale, then applicants should consult Natural England to confirm whether a Habitats Regulations Assessment is required. Proposals that are likely to have significant adverse impacts on European sites will be strongly resisted.

10.17 Development proposals may be required to be accompanied by a site management plan. This will normally be secured by way of planning condition. The need for a management plan will be established on a case-by-case basis taking into account the biodiversity interests on or in proximity to the site, as well as the nature and scale of development proposed. Management plans can help to ensure that habitats and species are not harmed during the construction process, and that that site specific interventions and mitigation measures are fulfilling their objectives over the lifetime of the development, including through regular maintenance and monitoring. Applicants are strongly encouraged to liaise with local stakeholders, including the Lewisham Biodiversity Partnership, to discuss opportunities for support in this regard.

Figure 10.7: Designated nature conservation sites
Figure 10.8: Areas deficient in access to nature
GR4  **Urban greening and trees**

**A** Development proposals should incorporate high quality landscaping and optimise opportunities for urban greening measures, including by incorporating high quality and species diverse landscaping, wildlife habitat, green roofs and walls, and sustainable drainage systems. Urban greening should be fully integrated into the design-led approach with consideration given to the site setting within the wider landscape, as well as the layout, design, construction and long-term management of buildings and spaces.

**B** Development must respond positively to landforms including by retaining or enhancing landscape features of historic, ecological and visual amenity value.

**C** Major development proposals will be expected to increase green cover on site to achieve the target Urban Greening Factor (UGF) in the draft London Plan, unless it can be suitably demonstrated that this is not technically feasible. The target UGF score is 0.4 for predominantly residential development and 0.3 for predominantly commercial development. Existing green cover retained on-site will count towards the target score. Planning contributions may be sought where the target UGF is not achieved.

**D** Development proposals should maximise the use of living roofs and walls. Major development proposals will be expected to demonstrate that the feasibility of integrating these features has been fully investigated, and minor development proposals are strongly encouraged to incorporate them. Living roofs and walls will be supported where they are appropriately designed, installed and maintained. Proposals should have regard to the latest industry good practice guidance to help ensure that green roofs and walls are designed to maximise environmental benefits and will function effectively over the lifetime of the development.

**E** Development proposals should seek to retain existing trees, as well as the associated habitat with regard for the urban forest, and maximise opportunities for additional tree planting and green infrastructure, particularly trees in characteristically urban settings such as streets. All proposals must suitably demonstrate that tree retention along with tree and other green infrastructure planting have been considered as part of the design-led approach and the development will:

- **a.** Provide for the sensitive integration of all trees whilst ensuring any new or replacement on-site provision is of a high ecological quality (including appropriate species, stem girth and life expectancy) and positively contributes to the microclimate;
b. Protect veteran trees and ancient woodland;

c. Retain trees of quality and associated habitat, wherever possible, with appropriate arrangements to secure their protection throughout demolition, construction, and external works, to the occupation stage of development;

d. Avoid the loss of, and mitigate against adverse impacts on, trees of significant ecological, amenity and historical value;

e. Ensure building foundations are sufficient to be climate change resilient in proximity to trees; and

f. Ensure adequate replacement tree planting where the retention of trees is not reasonably practical, with replacement provision that meets the requirements of (a) above.

G. Major development proposals, and where appropriate other development proposals, will be required to submit a Landscape Design Strategy and Arboriculture Survey to demonstrate that landscaping and other urban greening measures are appropriate to the site, can be implemented effectively and suitably managed over the lifetime of the development.

F. Proposals involving the removal of protected trees (i.e. those covered by a Tree Protection Order and trees within Conservation Areas), or those that would have a detrimental impact on the health and visual amenity provided by protected trees, will be strongly resisted. The Council may identify and seek to protect trees that are of a significant amenity, heritage, ecological, or other value through the development management process.
Explanation

10.18 Urban greening is a term used to describe a wide range of measures that can be incorporated into buildings and spaces to increase green cover in the Borough. These measures include, but are not limited to, tree planting, naturalised biodiverse landscaping, green roofs and walls, hedges, climbers, plants for pollinators, de-paving, rain gardens and sustainable drainage systems using natural or semi-natural features. Urban greening offers a number of environmental benefits including for biodiversity enhancement and climate change resilience, particularly by helping to reduce the urban heat island effect and flood risk. Greening can also enhance the character of areas and improve the visual amenity of spaces and buildings, and provide green corridors for connecting wildlife habitats, which is particularly important in a highly urbanised setting like Lewisham.

10.19 The draft London Plan introduces the Urban Greening Factor (UGF) requirement for major development proposals. The UGF is a model used to provide a baseline for the amount of green cover that development will be expected to achieve, taking into account various site development factors. We will apply the recommended interim UGF factors for major residential and commercial development as advocated by the draft London Plan. Existing green cover retained on site as part of a development proposal will count towards the target UGF score. Relevant major development proposals should meet and seek to exceed the target score. Some flexibility may be applied on a case-by-case basis where it is suitably demonstrated that the target cannot be achieved for reasons of technical feasibility or financial viability, in which case proposals should show that they have been designed to achieve the highest score possible.

10.20 Living roofs and walls will normally be required as part of the package of urban greening measures delivered on sites. They will be supported where they appropriately respond to local character and comply with other Local Plan policies. This includes consideration for the historic environment, where development must preserve the significance of heritage assets. Green roof assembly should as a minimum consist of a root repellent system, a drainage system, a filtering layer, a growing medium and plants, and be installed on a waterproof membrane on an applicable roof. Buildings should be designed to have sufficient structural capacity and integrity to resist all loads for soil, moistures, plants, rain and wind uplift, safely, effectively and permanently. It is important that living roofs are included in the early planning and design stage and supported by a qualified and accredited installer. Green and living roofs should be designed in with photovoltaic panels. Proposals must demonstrate how the installation and maintenance will comply with the standards in the Green Roof Code of Best Practice for the UK 2014, or any national equivalent.
Trees and the urban forest are an integral part of the Borough’s network of green infrastructure and have many beneficial functions. In addition to enhancing local character and amenity, including air quality, they provide extensive areas of habitat for wildlife, which is particularly important in an urbanised setting like Lewisham. Trees also have an important role in climate change adaptation and mitigation. For example, they reduce strain on drainage systems by absorbing rainfall and enable positive microclimatic effects through cover and shade. Recognising the significant environmental value of trees the draft London Plan sets out the Mayor’s aspirations to increase tree cover in London by 10 per cent by 2050, which this policy provides support for.

10.23 Where it can be suitably demonstrated that the loss of a tree is acceptable, such as when the tree is considered dangerous to the public or where removal is necessary to secure site redevelopment consistent with the spatial strategy, then replacement planting will be required. We will prioritise on-site replacement unless there are exceptional circumstances that necessitate off-site provision, in which case planning contributions may be sought. When a financial obligation is required for replacement trees the value may be calculated using the Capital Asset Value for Amenity Trees (CAVAT) or a similar methodology. Financial contributions will be expected to include on-going maintenance costs where trees are planted in the public realm.

10.24 New or replacement species should be selected to avoid the risk of decline or death arising from increases in non-native pests and diseases. Where new trees are to be planted, the species type should be chosen using the ‘Right Place Right Tree’ approach as advocated by the Mayor’s London Tree and Woodland Framework. When purchasing trees, they should be responsibly sourced ideally from a domestic nursery with UK grown or imported trees appropriately quarantined for a minimum of one year within the UK before sale. This ensures plant health and non-infection by foreign pests or disease.

10.25 The Council makes Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) to protect specific trees or particular areas, groups or woodland with amenity value from deliberate damage and destruction. If a tree is subject to a TPO, consent will be required before any work that might affect the tree can be carried out. It is a criminal offence to prune, fell or damage protected trees without appropriate consent and the Council will enforce breaches in accordance with relevant policy and legislation.
Landscape design strategy

10.26 A site's landscape and its relationship to existing and future development, and immediate surrounds, should be considered comprehensively from the start of the design-led approach. Proposals should have regard to the existing character of the site including landform and features of the natural landscape (such as trees on or in proximity to the site). Where existing landscapes contribute to local distinctiveness, development should respond positively to those features. Applicants are encouraged to refer Lewisham’s Characterisation Study as a useful starting point for understanding landscape features in the Borough.

10.27 A Landscape Design Strategy must be included with all major development proposals and proposals for sites where a Tree Preservation Order is in place. Other applications may also be required to provide this information having regard to individual site circumstances and the biodiversity interests involved. The Landscape Design Strategy will be expected to include an assessment of the relevant site features and nature conservation interests, details of work required to ensure the successful implementation of the strategy, and a management plan. The management plan should address maintenance of hard and soft landscaping features over the lifetime of the development, with specific details covering a minimum 5-year period from occupation. Considerations may include: planting plans with species, frequency of maintenance operations such as weeding, irrigation and the use of hydration bags for trees, checking stakes and ties, plant condition, mowing times for long grass sward areas, materials and minimising hard surfacing, details of building subsidence and other liabilities such as climate change resilient foundations within zone of influence of trees, permeable surfacing and SUDs drainage, wildlife connectivity such as hedges for boundary treatment and hedgehog gaps when fencing is used, underground services and infrastructure in relation to root protection areas of existing trees and new tree planting areas, security and access arrangements to landscaped areas.

10.28 Arboriculture Surveys should be undertaken separately and help to inform the Landscape Design Strategy, where one is required. Surveys should provide details of existing species (with information on spread, roots and position of trees), details of trees affected by the development (including measures to be taken to protect retained trees during the construction process), and other plans for the positive management of trees. Plans and documents will be expected to be submitted in accordance with the British Standards 5837 (2012).
GR5  Food growing

A  Allotments and community gardens will be protected in order to support sustainable food growing locally and to enhance opportunities for leisure, social interaction and education.

B  Major development proposals for housing and proposals for community facilities are encouraged to include provision of space for community gardening and food growing. Where such existing provision exists and a site is to be redeveloped, this should be retained or re-provided.
Explanation

10.29 Allotments and community gardens form part of the Borough’s network of green infrastructure. They are an important resource for local food production, support biodiversity and promote sustainable communities, for example, by providing opportunities for recreation and social interaction. For children and young people food growing offers opportunities for education outside of the traditional classroom setting. Allotments and community gardens are invaluable to those who do not have access to a private garden and therefore help to promote more inclusive communities.

10.30 All major development proposals for residential and community uses are encouraged to incorporate provision for food growing. This should be considered early in the design-led approach, so that provision is of a high quality standard, suitably meets the needs of the intended end users, and is accessible to people of all ages and abilities. Consideration should also be given to the integration of ancillary facilities, such as storage space for equipment and connections to water sources, which are vital to ensuring that provision is convenient and useable.
A  The Council will protect the Borough’s geodiversity assets and seek to promote understanding of them by:

a. Designating a Regionally Important Geological Site at Beckenham Place Park; and

b. Ensuring development proposals make a positive contribution to the protection and enhancement of geodiversity
Explanation

10.31 Geodiversity involves the many components that make up the landscape and its character. This includes physical features, such as rocks and soils, as well as the processes that help shape landforms such as erosion and sedimentation. An awareness of geodiversity helps us to understand our environment and how we can better adapt to it. As geodiversity is a natural resource that cannot be replaced or recreated it is important that geological interests are appropriately managed.

10.32 Informed by research prepared by the Natural England and the London Geodiversity Partnership, the London Plan identifies scope for the designation of a Regionally Important Geological Site at Beckenham Place Park, which the Local Plan takes forward. This RIG consists of a small portion of land near the park’s entrance which is notable for its natural exposures of clay and sands, known as the Harwich Foundation. The exposure benefits from its location at either side of a Green Chain walk within the park where there is good opportunity for public access. We will protect the geodiversity interests at this site and promote appreciation and understanding of them, such as by supporting way finding signs, interpretative boards and public access improvements where appropriate.