

Programme for the commissioning of community environmental services from the voluntary sector

The Environment & Ecology Programme

The overall objectives of the Environment & Ecology programme are to:

- Improve the lives of people in Southwark through opportunities to experience parks, open spaces and the natural environment whether for leisure or for learning.
- Provide services that deliver environmental education and life-long learning, social inclusion and community cohesion outcomes.
- Sustainably develop the environment sector for the benefit of the people of Southwark, recognising the importance of the natural environment in regeneration and neighbourhood renewal, and improving the life chances of young people in the borough.

The Needs

The 2001 Census information shows that our community is changing. More than half of children live in poverty, 8% of the population of the borough is without a job and a third are dependent on means tested benefit. The percentage of the borough population with a disability has risen from 13.1 in 1991, to 15.6 in 2001. The profile of the ethnicity has also changed in Southwark with 37.1% of the population now made up of people from black and minority ethnic communities, this compares with 34.3% across inner London. The largest ethnic group is of African Origin (16.1%). The Refugee Council estimates about 11,000 refugees and asylum seekers live in the borough.

In terms of faith, Christian communities comprise 61.6% of the borough's residents, against an inner London average of 54.6%. Muslim communities form the second largest faith group, making up 6.9% of the borough's residents, against an inner London average of 11.7%.

In primary schools 42% of pupils are White, with the largest other groups being Black African and Black Caribbean (which together total 42%). In secondary schools 36% of children are White, with Black African and Black Caribbean totaling 49%. There is also an increasingly younger population: with the percentage of people aged 16-64 up from 65.5% to 69.4% whilst those aged between 65-84 has dropped from 13% to 9.32%.

Geographically, the borough is very diverse. Within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Indices of Deprivation 2004, Southwark features as the seventeenth most deprived local authority out of 354 in England, based on average Super Output Areas (SOAs). Approximately 55% of the population of the borough lives within the most deprived SOAs within the country, which is a rank of thirteenth for this domain. The location of deprivation is in a broad band across north and central Southwark, from south of the riverside developments to the borders of Dulwich (A map of deprivation is attached as Appendix 1).

Only 24% of dwellings in the borough have gardens and 60% of the borough live in purpose built flats. Southwark has a population density of 84.9 people per hectare.

In total Southwark has 3.58 hectares of open space per 1,000 population. This is higher than the standard for Inner London of 1.6 hectares which was set out in the Abercrombie Plan of 1943. The amount of open space per 1,000 population varies across the borough with the greatest being around the major parks and in the south. Sixteen out of twenty-five of the old wards have less than the Abercrombie standard.

The dynamic feature of Southwark's population presents the Council with fresh opportunities and challenges, as we seek to meet the needs and expectations of all our residents. To help us focus at local level, 16 priority neighbourhoods have been identified which take account of the wards that are within the 10% most deprived in the country under the 2000 DETR Index of Deprivation (A map of these neighbourhoods is attached as Appendix Map 4).

National policy that influences the Council's programme

a) Duty to promote the well-being of communities

Councils have a duty to promote the economic, social and environmental well being of their areas and to work in partnership with others in order to achieve this. At the highest level, the Council is a partner in the Southwark Alliance - the local strategic partnership, and supports the development and implementation of the community strategy.

b) Partnership working

Effective work to address local need is increasingly based on statutory and non-statutory agencies working in partnership arrangements. The government has made some of these arrangements mandatory. Others are discretionary. Partnerships exist across many areas. These partnerships are based on the development and implementation of a range of strategies, which contribute to the community strategy.

c) Issues promoted at a national level include the following:

- Living Places: "Cleaner, Safer, Greener" and "Caring for Quality"
- The Urban Parks Task Force
- Neighbourhood Renewal
- The development of the National Compact & Codes of Practice
- Modernising Local Government Agenda and Shared Priorities
- The Government's promotion of the third sector and volunteering
- The Government's Programme on Public Health Improvement

d) London-wide policy:

- Connecting with London's nature: The Mayor's Biodiversity Strategy
- Green Capital: The Mayor's State of the Environment Report for London
- The Draft London Plan

Council Policy

The Council also has defined a range of priorities to which it is committed. These are:

- Tackling Poverty

- Making Southwark Cleaner & Greener
- Cutting crime and the fear of crime
- Raising standards in our schools
- Improving the health of the borough

Both national and local policy is defined in more detail through the Council's service plans and commitments. The following are of particular relevance to the Environment & Ecology Programme:

- The Draft Environment Strategy
- The Draft Environmental Education Strategy
- The Draft Open Spaces Strategy
- The Parks Best Value Review
- The Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy
- The Cultural Strategy (in development)
- The Parks and Sport Business Plan 2004-2007

The Environment and Leisure department has the following priorities which are relevant to the programme:

- A clean borough and less crime through less grime
- Reduce, recycle, re-use efficiently waste collected
- Investment in environment and leisure infrastructure
- Sustainable practice, sustainable services
- Community pride in place and resident responsibility

The department seeks to achieve these priorities through the following:

- Cross-cutting, sustainable neighbourhood solutions
- Partnerships with contractors and suppliers to ensure joint and collaborative working
- Customer focus
- Good design and creativity in all we do
- Engagement and community involvement

The Environment & Ecology Programme Priorities

Working at a neighbourhood level is prioritised nationally, locally and departmentally. Applications from projects working at the neighbourhood level are encouraged.

1. A Greener Borough

One of the Council's major priorities is to deliver a cleaner, greener and safer Southwark. The voluntary sector is a key partner in the delivery of this priority and the environment and ecology programme contributes to the greener element. The Council will fund projects that:

- Promote sustainable practices
- Improve the borough's biodiversity
- Provide specialist services to Local Nature Reserves and nature parks.
- Encourage wildlife gardening and the reduction of pesticide use.

2. Community Management of Parks and Increasing Usage

The Council aims to increase the involvement of the community in parks and open spaces. The Parks Best Value Review, the Sport & Parks Business Plan and the Corporate Equalities Action Plan include the target to increase the use of parks and open spaces by disadvantaged groups. The Council's Corporate Equalities Action Plan identifies the following communities of interest in Southwark:

- Ethnicity/cultural background
- Faith
- Refugees/asylum seekers
- Travellers
- Disability
- Women
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT)
- Age – young people, older people

The Council will support initiatives that seek to:

- Increase the involvement of all sections of the community in parks and open spaces.
- Develop 'Friends of' groups.
- Raise the community's capacity for involvement in the management of local parks and open spaces.
- Build the capacity of voluntary sector organisations to undertake whole-site management.

Funding will be directed to areas of greatest need.

3. Green Learning

Two of the Council's top priorities are Making Southwark Cleaner and Greener and Raising Standards in our Schools. We aim to improve the teaching of environmental issues in Southwark's schools and to promote life-long learning for all of Southwark's communities. The Council aims to support projects that:

- Provide curriculum support at the appropriate levels – pre-school, primary, secondary, special needs and post-16.
- Provide opportunities for children and young people to interact with the environment in a structured manner.
- Provide life-long learning opportunities for all in relevant subjects.

Outcomes

Organisations will be expected to achieve the following outcomes and proposals will need to demonstrate how these will be measured.

1. A Greener Borough

- i) An increase in the amount of publically owned and/or community managed green space.
- ii) An increase in the use of sustainable practices within parks and open spaces within Southwark.
- iii) An increase in local biodiversity.

- iv) An increase in the number of individuals gardening sustainably and for wildlife.

2. Community Management of Parks and Increasing Usage

- i) Increased involvement of minority communities in parks and open spaces
- ii) An increase in the numbers involved in 'Friends of' groups.
- iii) An increase in community involvement in the management of parks and open spaces.
- iv) An increase in local community organisations' capacity to undertake whole-site management of parks and open spaces.
- v) Increased use of parks and open spaces especially by priority groups.

3. Green Learning

- i) An increase in the number of children and young people taking part in environmental education initiatives.
- ii) Improved environmental learning, evidenced by the gain of specific skills and accreditation.
- iii) An increase in the opportunities for structured interaction with the natural environment.
- iv) An increase in life-long learning opportunities.

Annex:

The Sports Development grant aid programme will **NOT** consider applications for funding for organisations whose main activities fall within the following theme/service-based programmes:

- Advice Services (Strategic Services Department)
- Children's Services – Early Years (Education Department)
- Mother tongue & Supplementary Education (Education Department)
- After-school, Play & Holiday Playschemes (Education Department)
- Arts and Culture (Environment & Leisure Department)
- Community Safety (Strategic Services)
- Economic Development (Regeneration Department)
- Sports Development (Environment and Leisure Department)
- Community Support (Social Inclusion Division)
- Social care (Social Services Department/PCT)
- Youth provision (Education Department).

Each of these Council programmes has its own arrangements and timetables for commissioning from voluntary sector providers, including through formal tendering.

For more information on these programmes contact:

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ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY PROGRAMME	
Community Management	Funding Mechanism
Groundwork Southwark	Grant
Trust for Urban Ecology	Grant
Bankside Open Spaces Trust	Grant
Uganda AIDS Action Fund	Grant
Green Learning	
Centre for Wildlife Gardening	Grant
Surrey Docks Farm	Grant
Groundwork Southwark	Grant
Trust for Urban Ecology	Grant
Walworth Garden Farm	Grant
Uganda AIDS Action Fund	Grant
A Greener Borough	
Centre for Wildlife Gardening	Grant
Trust for Urban Ecology	Grant
Walworth Garden Farm	Grant

All elements of support expire at the end of March 2006 and the programme will be re-commissioned. The resources available for allocation in 2005/06 totalled £226,360; due to the Council's budget setting processes we are unable at this stage to state what the budget for 2006/7 will be. It is proposed that these resources be allocated as a mixture of grants and two service level agreements.

Existing providers are invited to apply for funding in relation to the 3 areas of activity and will need to submit new applications for funding for 2006/7. All applications will be considered on the basis of the quality of the application and the total value brought by the organisation.