



Open Space Strategy

Equalities Impact Assessment

No.	Title
Appendix A	Open Space Strategy (available with the agenda pack)
Appendix B	Open Space Strategy consultation plan (available on the website)
Appendix C	Open Space Strategy equalities impact assessment (available on the website)
Appendix D	Open Space Strategy sustainability appraisal (available on the website)

January 2012

Stage One: Scoping

1. What policy, strategy or plan is this assessment addressing?

The Open Space Strategy

The London Borough of Southwark is preparing an Open Space Strategy for the borough. The aim of the project is to prepare a strategy that balances land supply for regeneration with the protection and creation of open space.

The final Open Space Strategy is intended to provide a clear framework for the provision of open space in the borough. This will make up an important part of the evidence base needed in the preparation of Local Development Framework (LDF) documents.

With a population increase of 19% over the next fifteen years, there are limited opportunities for the creation of new open space in the borough. The strategy therefore focuses on recommendations for maintaining and improving the existing network of high quality open spaces.

The strategy sets out a vision and objectives for the borough and identifies key needs and priorities for different types of open space. The strategy sets standards of open space for each type of open space and highlights the key priorities for investment and improvement.

The Open Space Strategy supports the approach to protecting and improving open spaces set out in the Core Strategy and saved Southwark Plan policies. The strategy will also be used to inform future LDF documents including area based documents which will set out further policies to help us achieve the visions set out in the Core Strategy for the different areas in the borough.

2. Is this a new or an existing policy/strategy?

The strategy updates and replaces the existing evidence base, including the Open Space Study for the borough carried out in 2003 and the subsequent Open Space Audit (carried out in 2005). The strategy will also complete the work previously undertaken on an Open Spaces Study in 2010.

Our approach to open spaces is set out in the Core Strategy, strategic policy 11 which states that;

We will improve, protect and maintain a network of open spaces and green corridors that will make places attractive and provide sport, leisure and food growing opportunities for a growing population. We will protect and improve habitats for a variety of wildlife.

This approach is supported by our saved Southwark Plan Policies 3.25, 3.26 and 3.27. These policies set out how we will protect our open spaces from inappropriate development. Our open spaces have been designated as Metropolitan Open Land, Borough Open Land and Other Open Space and these are shown on our proposals map which is available to view on our website at; http://www.southwark.gov.uk/info/856/planning_policy/1249/proposals_map

3. If existing, has the policy/strategy already been reviewed under the previous EqlA programme? If so, what were the findings to come out of this and has the agreed action plan been implemented? What has changed since the last assessment was undertaken (in terms of context, nature of the policy/strategy or the type of people affected by the policy/strategy).

No previous EqlA has been carried out for the Open Space Strategy.

However, an EqlA has been carried out for the Core Strategy which included an assessment of the impact of the policies that relate to open space. The Core Strategy EQIA did not identify any significant

impact on the groups with protected characteristics as a result of our policies on open spaces. The policies were found to be beneficial for all groups with protected characteristics as well as the wider community as a whole.

4. What do you think are the main issues for your policy or strategy in relation to equality, diversity and social cohesion?

The Equality Act 2010 establishes a number of groups with protected characteristics. The Act requires that when a new policy or strategy is proposed, the potential impacts on these groups are considered and that the outcomes of this assessment inform the policy or strategy. We are consulting on a stage one scoping assessment (this document) alongside the draft Open Space Strategy. We will undertake a stage two assessment after this stage of consultation alongside preparation of the final strategy for adoption.

In accordance with the Equality Act (2010), the Equality Impact Assessment identifies potential impacts on different groups according to the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

In addition we have considered the potential impacts on Gypsies, Travellers, refugees and asylum seekers and the results are outlined below.

This scoping stage highlights the main impacts on equality, diversity and social cohesion. We have also identified potential barriers that could prevent our nine protected characteristic groups from benefitting fully from the Open Space Strategy.

We have identified how the strategy may have positive impacts on these groups and how it may improve social cohesion. Following consultation on the strategy we will consider whether there is anything further we can do within the strategy to maximise positive impacts and minimise negative impacts.

These impacts can be split into two categories:

1. Impacts created through the production of the strategy in terms of public consultation.
2. Impacts associated with the implementation of the strategy and the detailed information.

4.1 Impacts associated with consultation on the Open Space Strategy

There are a number of barriers associated with consultation on all our planning policy documents which may create problems for social cohesion. It is important that everyone is offered the ability to be involved in the preparation of the strategy and that the final document reflects the views of our diverse community.

Whilst the strategy is not itself part of the LDF, because it forms a significant part of the evidence base used to inform our planning policies we have decided to develop the strategy in accordance with the council's Statement of Community Involvement.

There are a number of issues that need to be considered to ensure an effective consultation involving all members of the community:

Appendix C

- Certain groups may not be able to access the information and consultation documents as easily as others, for example those who do not have English as their first language, young people, people who are unable to attend consultation meetings due to caring responsibilities, older people and disabled people.
- Certain groups may not feel safe attending community consultation events at certain times of the day, such as women and older people.
- Certain groups such as the lesbian, gay, Trans and bisexual communities, faith groups, young people, asylum seekers, BME communities including Gypsies and Travellers, may be afraid to express their views in public meetings for fear of discrimination.
- People may perceive that some groups have more of an influence on council policies and that the council does not take the views of all the groups into consideration. This could create tension between different groups.
- Frequently it is the same groups of people involved in consultation exercises. This may discourage other groups of people from becoming involved in consultation due to lack of knowledge of how to get involved or the feeling that their views will not be taken into consideration.
- Information may be delivered in a way that engages some groups more effectively than others. For example consultation material as written documents may not engage young people as effectively as older people.
- The time or date of consultation meetings could conflict with school holidays or religious events, thus creating a problem for families with young children or people with particular religious beliefs. The timing and the variety of consultation also needs to take into account people's daily lifestyles and working commitments.
- People may misunderstand the purpose of the Open Space Strategy and what can be achieved which may result in tensions between groups if it does not deliver what they expect. This could particularly be the case where groups feel that they cannot easily access information at an early stage.

We have prepared a consultation plan for the strategy which aims to do this. The plan sets out how we plan to consult the local community, Greater London Authority, businesses including local traders, land owners, Transport for London, neighbouring boroughs, English Heritage, NHS Southwark and developers. After the consultation period we will prepare a consultation statement which will set out the findings of our consultation including a summary of the comments received. We will provide officer comments on all the responses we receive explaining why we have/have not amended the strategy to reflect the comments. We will also provide information on the methods of consultation we used and how these were effective in consulting with our diverse community. This will help us to continually monitor and adapt our consultation methods and techniques to try and be as effective as possible and reach as many different groups as possible.

This is in accordance with our Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). Our SCI sets out how and when we will involve the community in the development of planning documents and applications for planning permission. Within the SCI, we have identified barriers to involving equalities target groups and ways to overcome them. These include English not being someone's first language, problems accessing information, people not feeling safe attending evening meetings and the documents using too much jargon. We have tried to tailor our consultation to try and overcome as many of these barriers as possible. This includes writing the strategy in plain English, offering translation services where required, and attending community meetings when requested. Please refer to [Appendix A](#) of this document for the full list of barriers to consultation. We have considered this comprehensive list as part of the preparation of the strategy.

Our Annual Monitoring Report also looks at the effectiveness of our consultation and whether we need to change how we consult on our policy documents. As part of the preparation of the Annual Monitoring Report we carry out a survey asking everyone on our mailing list what they think of our consultation and how we could make it more effective. The results of this are reported in our Annual Monitoring Report, and help inform us how to improve our consultation on future planning documents.

4.2 Impacts associated with the objectives and implementation of the Open Space Strategy

The possible impacts and issues of the strategy:

Open spaces

Through the development and implementation of the Open Space Strategy, the borough's open spaces will be protected and improved. As development intensifies, the value of the open space increases, especially in areas which are already deficient in open space. This is why we need a strategy which sets out how we can improve our existing open spaces and look at opportunities for providing new open space through development. Improvements to the public realm and open spaces are likely to have a positive impact on all groups with protected characteristics, however in addition to the overall quantity of the open space, the quality and value of the space is also important to ensure that open spaces are well used and accessible to all members of the community. The provision on new and improved open spaces can bring positive benefits, especially for younger people and those on lower incomes who may not be able to afford more organised physical activity, helping to encourage sport and recreation which can lead to health improvements and a better quality of life.

The following considerations have been taken into account during the preparation of the Open Space Strategy:

Considerations;

- It is important that new open spaces and public spaces are safe and well used in order to ensure more vulnerable groups feel able to visit these spaces without fear of crime and victimisation. The needs of different user groups may not be properly considered which will result in certain groups not feeling that they are able to use the space. This may occur where there are conflicting priorities of how the spaces should be used, e.g. elderly people and women may wish to use the space for informal recreation such as a meeting place whereas other groups, such as young people, may wish to use the space for more formal and active recreation such as sports.
- It is important to ensure that open spaces are accessible to everyone and that different types of open spaces are provided. It may cause tensions between groups if it is perceived that one groups needs are being prioritised above others. The strategy sets out a standard for the amount of new open space that should be provided by new developments.
- The poor design of open spaces may make people feel unsafe and result in the mis-use of the space. This may exclude certain groups from using open spaces as they may fear for their personal safety, such as women, members of the BME community, the LGBT community, different faith groups, and older people. Poor design may also result in poor access and limit the use of these spaces for disabled people and mothers with children.
- A lack of open spaces in a particular area may restrict the ability for people to benefit from the health benefits of participating in active recreation. The strategy sets out standards for the provision of space for food growing and adequate play facilities for children and young people.
- Open spaces can act as a social meeting place and a deficit of open space could have a detrimental effect on inclusion and social cohesion.
- A lack of play space for children can have detrimental effects on their physical and mental development.
- The quality of open spaces and range of activities that can take place there offers considerable educational benefits of learning about sporting activities or ecology, depending on the functionality of the open space. The strategy sets out how we will continue to maintain and improve a network of open spaces that have a range of functions
- The strategy should seek to ensure that future development does not negatively impact on the open spaces and historic environment and instead encourages improvements to linkages between spaces and enhanced levels of local distinctiveness. Improving access to open spaces will have a positive impact for all protected characteristic groups but especially for those with disabilities, those with poor health or who may not speak English as their first language.

Housing

Southwark is a borough in significant housing need. The Mayor of London has set us a target of providing 24,450 homes by 2026. We need to ensure that the protection of open space still allows us to meet our housing target as set out in the Core Strategy up until 2026.

Considerations;

- The impact of protecting open space on the supply of land for new housing so that we ensure we have enough dwellings to house everyone. If we do not allocate enough sites for housing, we may find we do not have enough space to build housing to meet local need. This may result in the building of more one and two bedroom dwellings which may have a negative impact on some groups, such as some groups and some ethnic groups which are more likely to have larger families.
- We need to ensure that we can successfully create mixed communities with a range of housing types and tenures. This should help to improve social cohesion.
- Improving areas through access to and improved quality of open spaces may result in a rise in house prices which may cause conflict between groups. For example new people may move into the area and be able to afford the new housing whilst existing groups may have to continue to live in less desirable housing.
- Protection of open space can prevent back-land and in-fill development, which could potentially lead to problems in terms of accessing properties. The creation of irregular or secluded access points could be particularly troublesome for disabled people or families with young children. Back-land and in-fill development can also affect the amenity of existing residents and detract from local character.
- Back-land and in-fill development can also create problems by increasing the level of car parking, which can have a negative impact on older people, disabled people or families with young children.

Community Facilities, Health & Education

Community facilities are important for many groups and individuals. They can be particularly important for some of the groups identified as having protected characteristics, providing important meeting places and opportunities to interact. Several community facilities within Southwark are located within or close to parks. Open spaces can also provide an important tool for learning. The open space strategy should identify opportunities for educational use of open space. The Open Space Strategy can help to identify opportunities for sport and physical recreation will can lead improvements in health. Open spaces have also been linked with improvement to mental health.

Considerations;

- Encouraging more use of open spaces for educational purposes may help to improve levels of education across the borough which will have a positive impact on all the equality target groups.
- Some equality target groups achieve a lot better than others in the education system. By improving access to and provision of schools, we will hopefully benefit all the equality groups.
- Where we choose to locate health facilities can have an impact on different groups. For example, if we allocate land for a large health facility, other GP surgeries may close down, and some groups may find it difficult to get to the polyclinic. For example those groups which are least likely to have access to a car.
- The strategy needs to identify existing community facilities and identify ways to improve links and routes through open spaces to ensure these facilities are as accessible as possible for the broadest range of people.
- Identifying open spaces where increasing the provision of facilities for young people is a priority will benefit children and young families directly.
- Identifying open spaces where we should improve sports facilities/put in new sports facilities may have a differential impact on different groups. For example, a sports centre catering for football

may have more of a positive impact on boys than girls. It may also have differential impacts on people with disabilities.

- Improving sports facilities may have a differential impact as they may become more expensive and not affordable to everyone. This can harm social cohesion.

Transport

Our Core Strategy sets out our approach to promoting sustainable transport choices. In general, this means prioritising cycling and walking in the layout and design of new development, discouraging car use by improving access to public transport and restricting the amount of parking where appropriate.

Considerations;

- The Open Space strategy should help to promote walking and cycling, creating routes which are safe and which also maximises opportunities to use public transport. This should benefit the young and elderly in particular, promoting inclusivity and equality of access to jobs, services etc.
- If walking and cycling routes are poorly lit and secluded, this may discourage people from using open spaces and make people feel more isolated. This could particularly apply to vulnerable groups such as the elderly and young, disabled people, women and LGBT groups.
- The Open Space Strategy should promote new routes through open spaces where these are needed and seek to ensure that all spaces are overlooked to increase natural surveillance and increase safety.
- Disabled access may be provided but sometimes it may be segregated from other access routes causing more isolation from the rest of the community.

Design and safety

Parts of Southwark are expected to undergo significant change over the next 15 years. This will see increased investment and development activity, which provides significant opportunities to improve the built environment in the area. This can have implications for open spaces as more people move into the area and links with the built environment change.

Considerations;

- If the public realm and the environmental quality of the area remain poorly designed, certain groups may continue to feel threatened walking through the area such as members of certain faith groups, members of the BME community, young people, older people and women.
- The needs of certain groups may not be properly considered which may mean that they are unable to use the services and facilities in and around an open space. For instance, older people may not be provided with basic facilities such as accessible and safe places to meet, public toilets and street furniture, such as benches, which provide a respite.
- The built environment and the public realm may continue to ignore the needs of disabled people which results in creating barriers to inclusion in the wider community and opportunities to decent housing, jobs and access to leisure and community facilities. In contrast, the needs of disabled people may be considered but results in the public realm being designed in a way that segregates and separates disabled people from the wider community.
- Different groups may have different priorities for how open spaces are designed to meet their needs. Tensions could arise if there is the perception that one groups needs are being prioritised over others i.e. older people and young people.
- Some open spaces in Southwark can have significant issues with safety and security and design measure should be incorporate to help reduce crime and fear of crime.

Sustainability

Sustainability is largely covered by policies in the Core Strategy, saved Southwark Plan and linked Supplementary Planning Documents. However, Open Spaces play an important role in making up the green infrastructure network that can help to mitigate the impacts on new development on climate change as well as improving the environmental quality of an area. The open space strategy should

demonstrate how green infrastructure in Southwark has a significant role to play in helping to combat climate change.

Considerations;

- Recommendations to protect and improve our existing green infrastructure by protecting our open spaces, levels of biodiversity and trees will help to improve quality of life. This can bring benefits especially for those on lower incomes and with those with disabilities who may not be able to travel far for recreational opportunities.

Cultural and tourist facilities

Providing high quality open spaces can act as tourist attractions in their own right which help to encourage visitors and investment to the borough.

Considerations;

- Meeting needs of different groups in the borough. Tourist and cultural attractions should also meet the needs of local people. If they are too expensive, certain groups such as young people may not be able to enjoy the facility.
- Locating tourist attractions may cause frictions between groups as it means less land available for local needs such as housing, sports facilities or community facilities. This causes friction between groups who do use the facility and those who don't.

Annex 1: Open Space Strategy vision and objectives

Vision

“To encourage a diverse network of sustainable open space of high quality which meets the needs of those living and working within the borough and encourages the development of more inclusive communities, safeguards natural resources and cultural heritage, improves access to natural greenspace, provides recreational and educational opportunities and helps to promote sustainable development.”

Objectives

Enhance Provision to Meet the Needs of an Increasing and Changing Population

Public open space is becoming increasingly important as residential densities have increased in order to make more efficient use of land and private open space has become scarcer in new housing developments. Southwark is experiencing rapid change with the development of new communities in areas such as Bankside, Elephant and Castle, Canada Water and Peckham. Large scale development poses interesting challenges and opportunities. New residents should be adequately catered for in terms of open space, cultural and recreation provision. It is crucial to ensure that the new development provides opportunities to meet this need and needs in the wider community.

Objectives

- Continue to protect open space from development recognising the contribution open space makes to sustainable communities.
- Ensure that where appropriate, new development includes adequate provision of a range of high quality public spaces to meet the needs of new residents.
- Provide additional open space within major development opportunities at Elephant and Castle and Aylesbury Estate to address the issue of low levels of quantity of open space and to improve accessibility to open space.
- Maintain high quality open spaces at Dulwich Park, Southwark Park, Peckham Rye Park and Peckham Rye Common and prioritise investment in Burgess Park so that the borough has a network of accessible, high quality Metropolitan Parks.
- Enhance the quality and value of natural and semi - natural greenspace provision within the urban environment.
- Ensure that open space is well utilised, has a range of functions and is of high quality, especially in areas where the potential for additional quantitative provision of open space is limited. There is particular potential for enhancing the quality and value of smaller spaces, especially in the Peckham sub-area.

Health and Well Being

Good quality open spaces can make a significant contribution towards healthy living. Green spaces have a positive effect on the health of the population helping to reduce stress, provide formal and informal opportunities for physical activity, sport and play and provide environments for relaxation.

Although some parts of Southwark perform well against national figures in terms of general health, there are pockets of the borough with a significant proportion of residents suffering from ill health. Providing open space and recreation opportunities in these areas to improve the health will be a priority for future investment.

Ill health can be an issue in preventing open space use and participating in active recreation. Our resident's survey shows that poor health is one of the most commonly stated reasons for non-use of parks. Levels of non use vary within Southwark with people in the Camberwell sub-area less likely to use open space due to ill health.

To tackle these issues and achieve better health and well being for Southwark it will be important to develop ways of making access to open spaces easier in these areas, and for those groups that find it difficult to access or use open space.

Objectives

- Ensure that all residents have access to open space within a reasonable distance to their home (as set out in open space standards).
- Increase the range and provision of recreation types available within open spaces.
- Increase the number of people participating in active recreation / active life styles.

Regeneration

Some of the borough's housing estates built during the 1960s and 1970s are reaching the end of their life and are in the process of major redevelopment or refurbishment. The open space within these areas lacks quality and value in its current state. Regeneration of housing estates, including that underway at the Heygate Estate and the Aylesbury Estate, provides an opportunity to create open spaces that make a better contribution to quality of life and assists in the creation of sustainable neighbourhoods through both physical and social regeneration.

Involving local communities in the planning and design of regeneration schemes can foster a sense of ownership in local open space that is created, and can have long-term benefits in terms of building the capacity of the community and community cohesion.

Objectives

- When regenerating housing estates, town centres and employment areas ensure that quality public open space and public realm are integral to the overall design.
- Encourage local communities to be involved in the planning, designing and management of local open spaces.
- Create a high quality network of open space and sports facilities, where necessary improving the quality of existing open spaces and ensuring new spaces are of the highest quality.

Biodiversity

Southwark has a wealth of flora and fauna. The Thames is important for nature conservation given its aquatic biodiversity. Southwark is also home to larger spaces in the south, such as Sydenham Hill and Dulwich Woods, as well as a number of small community gardens in the north that provide a range of habitats for biodiversity. Retaining areas of natural habitat is important to enable the protection of rare and at risk species of plants and animals. Protecting natural greenspace not only provides valuable habitat for a fragile species, when managed appropriately it can enable people to access these areas without harming species. Allowing access to wildlife areas provides an experience of nature and an opportunity to learn about the natural environment and wildlife.

As new development gathers pace in the borough it will be important to ensure that we protect the existing important habitats that we have, but also to ensure that where possible we include an element of biodiversity within new development. There are many ways that this can be achieved and developers will be encouraged to think imaginatively about how they go about doing this.

Objectives

- Ensure the protection, management and enhancement of areas of importance for nature conservation and biodiversity and the linkages between them.
- Encourage innovative ways of incorporating new areas of natural habitat within new and existing open space, natural play environments and developments.

Community Cohesion

Parks and open spaces are an important resource that everyone should be able to take advantage of. In some cases anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime puts people off using spaces. Crime and anti-social behaviour has been identified as an issue during our consultation process. When we asked residents what improvements we could make to open spaces the second most common answer was 'improved safety'.

When parks are well maintained and well used there is a sense that they are cared for and people feel safer using them. Encouraging greater use of open space, and fostering a sense of community ownership, as well as ensuring a high standard of maintenance will be important in achieving a greater sense of community safety.

In designing new open space or redesigning existing open spaces, it is desirable to introduce elements of design that reduce the possibility for anti-social behaviour to occur. This could be introducing elements of natural surveillance, designing facilities that are difficult to vandalise, clearly defining the uses of space, providing appropriate landscaping and lighting to name a few. It is important to recognise that different groups use open space in different ways, providing an appropriate area for different activities to take place can often resolve some of the conflicts that arise.

We recognise that people would like to see a more visible official presence in parks, either through an increased ranger service, park wardens or mobile play rangers and community sports coaches, this was one of the most commonly stated improvements that people would like to see in open spaces. We will work with the police and community to establish the best methods for achieving community safety in parks.

Objectives

- Encourage greater use of open space in order to improve natural surveillance.
- Ensure that all our open spaces are safe to use.
- Encourage a greater sense of ownership.

Tackling inequality

People living in disadvantaged areas of the borough are likely to rely on the open space close to home for their physical activity as they are less likely to have access to a car, and low incomes may prohibit use of other leisure facilities. Providing a range of good quality open spaces and recreation facilities within easy reach of the borough's most deprived neighbourhoods will have a significant positive effect on tackling inequality.

There is a need to meet the specific needs of other disadvantaged groups within the borough. Research has shown that black and minority ethnic groups are less likely to participate in some sports activities than the white population. Our residents survey has shown that elderly residents are less likely to use open space than other age groups, and in certain areas young people can find it difficult to access play opportunities close to home.

To address inequality issues we need to ensure that all Southwark residents can use our parks and open spaces. It is therefore vitally important that as much as possible of our green space network and recreation facilities, is accessible to those with disabilities.

Objectives

- Ensure that Southwark provides a range of open space, sport and recreation opportunities that meet the differing needs of Southwark's diverse community.
- Encourage greater use of open spaces by non users and infrequent users by improving the range of recreational opportunities within spaces close to employment areas.
- Make open spaces feel safer to use by all sections of the population, through improving usage and movement through spaces, making open space environments less intimidating, addressing anti-social behaviour through design and addressing policing. Graffiti found on park buildings and equipment should be removed promptly.
- Improve the accessibility of spaces. Larger parks should be accessible by public transport. Cycle parking should be provided at all parks as well as other spaces with sports provision. All open space facilities should be DDA compliant.
- Provide a greater range of facilities for teenagers and young people, including a greater range of recreation opportunities and designated areas for hanging out.
- Ensure that open space in the south of the borough, notably around Dulwich, can be used by other borough residents by opening up spaces to public use and improving routes to these spaces

Education and Culture

Open spaces can provide both a valuable educational and cultural resource for children and adults alike.

Educational use of open space can be on an organised basis as part of the school curriculum for sports or for environmental studies, or can be on a more informal basis through the provision of nature walks or interpretation of natural or historical features.

43% of Southwark's open spaces have an existing educational role of some sort. Existing educational use includes spaces for organised school sports, as well as several open spaces that are used for environmental study such as Surrey Docks Farm, and several that include historical interpretation such as Geraldine Mary Harmsworth Park. The potential for more of our open spaces to be used in this way has been identified and will be pursued through this strategy.

Open spaces can also represent a source of wider social benefits and cultural value providing the setting for sport, community meetings, fairs, firework displays, picnics etc. Open spaces which host small and large events can help create a sense of community; open space can provide opportunities for social interaction and the development of social capital through family and group outings, community events and activities.

Southwark already has a number of open spaces that provide dedicated venues and facilities to support cultural events. The challenge will be to identify other open spaces that have the potential to accommodate cultural events and to provide a broader programme of events in future.

Objectives

- Improve the provision of educational information within open spaces, particularly that relate to ecological and heritage issues. This could take the form of portable media such as pamphlets or even tours or simple display boards.
- Improve the provision of spaces for cultural events such as bandstands, amphitheatres.
- Improve the provision of spaces for meeting and congregation to promote social interaction such as picnic areas and youth shelters and seating areas and built facilities where appropriate.
- Promote and support the use of Southwark's open space as an interesting outdoor learning arena for schools and the general public.

Ensure that parks and open spaces are used to their full potential as venues for a range of cultural and community events, in a range of locations throughout the borough.

APPENDIX A: Barriers to community involvement with different equalities target groups and how to overcome them
(extract from Southwark Statement of Community Involvement (January 2008))

1. Voluntary groups and organisations – Equalities Target Group – all

Description	Barriers to involvement	Measures to overcome barriers to consultation
The voluntary sector in Southwark is made up of around 18,000 individuals delivering services through 1,600 organisations, groups and projects. In 2001-2 Southwark Council supported around 300 voluntary and community groups with an investment of around £10m in grant-aid, service agreements and contracts.	<p>These barriers are generic barriers faced by many voluntary groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for prior knowledge and experience; • Jargon and legal terms; • Other funding commitments and priorities than planning; • Lack of time; and • Knowledge of how and where to access information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of information and training about planning focused on these groups; • Ensure that a range of community involvement methods are used that are accessible to these groups; • Make sure that groups are added on to relevant mailing lists; and • Hold/attend meetings at appropriate times that are accessible to these groups. • Translators and interpreters to be used where appropriate.

2. Community groups and organisations – Equalities Target Group – all

Description	Barriers to involvement	Measures to overcome barriers to consultation
Southwark is lucky in having a large number of community groups that are involved with a diverse range of issues.	<p>These barriers are generic barriers faced by many community groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for prior knowledge and experience; • Jargon and legal terms; • Lack of time; • Other priorities than planning; • Accessing information barriers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of information and training in planning focused on these groups; • Ensure that a range of community involvement methods are used that are accessible to these groups; • Make sure that groups are added on to relevant mailing lists; and • Hold/attend meetings at times that are accessible to these groups. • Translators and interpreters to be used where appropriate.

3. Business – Equalities Target Group – all

Description	Barriers to involvement	Measures to overcome barriers to consultation
<p>There are 11 000 businesses in Southwark. These range from large international and national organisations to small family owned businesses. Approximately 96% of the total businesses in Southwark comprise less than 50 employees of which, approximately 20% are Black and Minority Ethnic businesses. Many businesses are members of Southwark Chamber of Commerce and other local groupings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessing information outside of business hours (this is particularly a problem for small businesses); • Attending community meetings that do not address their needs; • Not understanding planning influences on their issues; • Other priorities than planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that information is available at places which are open outside of normal office hours; • Hold/attend meetings at times that are accessible; and • Provide information and training focused at businesses. • Translators and interpreters to be used where appropriate.

4. Environmentalist and amenity groups – Equalities Target Group - all

Description	Barriers to involvement	Measures to overcome barriers to consultation
<p>A wide range of people express their concern for their environment through membership groups such as Friends of the Earth or Greenpeace. Some of these larger organisations have active local branches. Some people get involved in local groups with the aim of protecting or improving a particular area or amenity such as the Friends of Burgess Park or the Dulwich Society.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other priorities than planning; • Attending community meetings that do not address their issues; • Jargon and legalistic terms; and • May not be aware of how other planning issues may affect their area of interest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information to ensure these groups are aware of how planning influences their area; • Use plain English; and • Translators and interpreters to be used where appropriate. .

5. Neighbourhood, tenants and residents groups – Equalities Target Group - all

Description	Barriers to involvement	Measures to overcome barriers to consultation
<p>There are approximately 232 neighbourhood, tenants and residents groups in Southwark. Many are formally consulted by us to provide residents views about social and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other priorities than planning; • Suffer from ‘consultation fatigue’ as they get consulted on a number of our initiatives and programmes; • Need prior understanding and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate consultation between different parts of the council to ensure that groups are not overwhelmed with consultations; • Make sure that groups are added on to relevant mailing lists;

private housing. These groups meet, many of them very regularly, to discuss matters affecting the local area including estate improvements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> knowledge of planning issues; and Finding the time to get involved in planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide focused information; and Hold/attend meetings at accessible times. Translators and interpreters to be used where appropriate.
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6. Health organisations – Equalities Target Group - all

Description	Barriers to involvement	Measures to overcome barriers to consultation
Health service organisations provide important services to the community. Formal structures can be used to consult and gain feedback from local health organisations on how healthy living issues and requirements might influence or affect planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited time to access and absorb detailed planning information; Other priorities than planning; and May not understand how planning impacts on health. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold/attend meetings at appropriate times; and Ensure that information is easily accessible, relevant and understandable. Translators and interpreters to be used where appropriate.

7. Transport organisations – Equalities Target Group - all

Description	Barriers to involvement	Measures to overcome barriers to consultation
Transport for London and the public transport providers are statutory consultees. There are smaller local groups that are interested in the improvement of cycling, walking and public transport infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other priorities than planning; and May not be aware of how other planning issues may affect their area of interest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide information to ensure these groups are aware of how planning affects them. Translators and interpreters to be used where appropriate.

8. Refugee and Asylum seekers – Equalities Target Group - all

Description	Barriers to involvement	Measures to overcome barriers to consultation
The Southwark Refugee Communities Forum (SRCF) was established by Refugee Community Organisations (RCO) in 2003 to enable the voices of refugees themselves to be heard. The membership of SRCF currently includes 28 Southwark-based Refugee Community Organisations. An estimated 7,000 people from	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need for prior knowledge and experience English may not be their first language Other priorities than planning Discrimination Lack of knowledge of how and where to access information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid jargon and ensure that all information is given in plain English Ensure that all written information is available in different languages Provide information and training that is focused on these groups Use a range of community involvement methods to ensure that they are

refugee backgrounds across Southwark are in direct contact with SRCF members and participate in their activities on a regular basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to gain access to these groups, as they may not be recognised local community groups on our database 	<p>accessible to all.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source local knowledge about how to engage groups and those for our mailing lists. • Translators and interpreters to be used where appropriate.
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9. Individuals and groups from other boroughs – Equalities Target Group - all

Description	Barriers to involvement	Measures to overcome barriers to consultation
A number of issues in Southwark have an impact on our neighbouring boroughs such as Lambeth and Lewisham. Groups and residents that are on the borders of Southwark should be included in matters that affect them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for prior knowledge and experience; • Other priorities in their own borough and other than planning; • English as a first language; and • Lack of knowledge of how and where to access information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of information in appropriate locations; • Hold/attend meetings/events at appropriate locations that are accessible and appropriate to these groups. • Translators and interpreters to be used where appropriate.

10. Residents and individuals (including newcomers to the borough) – Equalities Target Group - all

Description	Barriers to involvement	Measures to overcome barriers to consultation
Residents and individuals in the borough may not belong to a specific group, but it is important that they are able to engage and get involved with issues and decisions that impact on them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for prior knowledge and experience; • Jargon and legal terms; • English may not be their first language; • Discrimination; • Problems accessing information; • Other priorities than planning; and • Lack of knowledge of how and where to access information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of information and training in planning focused on these groups; • Ensure that a range of community involvement methods are used that are accessible; • Source local knowledge about how to engage individuals; and • Add onto our mailing lists. • Translators and interpreters to be used where appropriate.

11. Black and minority ethnic groups (including travellers and gypsies) - Equalities Target Group – Race

Description	Barriers to involvement	Measures to overcome barriers to consultation
Southwark is a very ethnically diverse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jargon and legal terms; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid jargon; Use plain English;

<p>borough. As a result there are many established and new groups and organisations that address issues relevant to each different community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for prior knowledge; • English may not be the first language; • Other priorities than planning; • Discrimination; • Problems accessing information; • We may not be aware of their existence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translators and interpreters to be used where appropriate. • Training groups in planning and council officers in understanding equality and diversity issues; • Coordinate council consultations; • Range of involvement methods; and • Gain local knowledge about how to engage groups; and • Add to mailing lists.
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12. Religious groups - Equalities Target Group –Faith/Belief

Description	Barriers to involvement	Measures to overcome barriers to consultation
<p>organisations are a valuable consultation link due to their very strong links to local communities. groups have a contribution to make to social inclusion and community cohesion that is separate from promoting religion. As they are involved in running community services, community development and leadership representing community interests.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs not being understood; • Need for prior knowledge and experience; • English may not be their first language; • Other priorities than planning; • Discrimination; • Accessing information; and • May not understand how planning affects their group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid jargon; Use plain English; • Translators and interpreters to be used where appropriate. • Training groups and individuals in planning and • Training council officers to understand and belief issues; • Coordinate our consultations; • Range of involvement methods; and • Gain local knowledge about how to engage groups; and • Add to mailing lists.

13. Older people Forum's Equalities Target Group – Age

Description	Barriers to involvement	Measures to overcome barriers to consultation
<p>Pensioner forums help represent older people's views and are able to represent many local people over particular issues that are affected by planning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older people may not feel safe attending meetings in the evenings; • A lack of respect for their views; and • Lack of knowledge of how and where to access information; • Other priorities than planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of information in appropriate locations; • Hold/attend meetings/events at accessible times; • We listen to the views and feedback ; and • Make information relevant. • Translators and interpreters to be used where appropriate.

14. Education and young people - Equalities Target Group – Age

Description	Barriers to involvement	Measures to overcome barriers to consultation
Schools, colleges, learning institutions and youth agencies are important aspects of the community, particularly as finding ways of involving young people have been identified as a priority by a large number of people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May not be aware of the impact planning can have on them and/or how they can have an input; • English may not be a first language; and • May not be able to attend meetings in the evenings or during the day in term time. • Other priorities than planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information that is focused at young people; • Attend schools and after-school centres and local youth forums to consult them on planning issues; • Translators and interpreters to be used where appropriate; and • Hold/attend meetings/events at accessible times.

15. Disability Forum - Equalities Target Group – Disability

Description	Barriers to involvement	Measures to overcome barriers to consultation
This forum helps to identify planning issues including safety, access and housing from the perspective of disabled people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Venues for meetings may not be accessible; and • Written or verbal material is not always appropriate. • Other priorities than planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold/attend meetings/events at accessible locations; and • Ensure that all written information is available in different formats such as Braille, large print and audio. • Translators and interpreters to be used where appropriate.

16. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender - Equalities Target Group – Sexuality

Description	Barriers to involvement	Measures to overcome barriers to consultation
The Southwark Anti Homophobic Forum (SAHF) is the longest established LGBT Forum of its kind and works to meet the needs of the LGBT community in key areas including education, safety in the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not feel secure in raising LGBT issues at open events; • Other priorities than planning; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold specific LGBT consultation events; • Avoid jargon and use plain English; • Hold/attend meetings/events at convenient times and ensure that the venue is accessible and a safe environment.

<p>home, the streets and housing. The Southwark LGBT Network is a social support group for LGBT people and their friends who live and work in Southwark.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Translators and interpreters to be used where appropriate.
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