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Executive Summary

The London Borough of Merton is one of the greenest in Greater London with over 18% of it’s land in a variety of open space uses. These open spaces define the historic character of Merton and provide a venue for social interaction and active and passive recreation. The rich and varied cultural and sporting heritage of the Borough is celebrated through Merton’s open spaces.

The Merton Open Space Strategy (MOSS) has been developed from a number of studies, assessments and readings of the public mood through surveys and consultation exercises. It is an integrated document that combines the Council’s corporate vision with the objectives of the Unitary Development Plan. The MOSS provides a vision, outcomes sought, principles and action plans that integrate the objectives of sound urban planning and the effective provision of quality leisure services. The MOSS and supporting documents have been subject to public consultation and will form supplementary planning guidance to policies within the UDP.

Our Vision is for a linked and integrated open space network that not only enhances Merton residents’ quality of life and provides them with opportunities to experience a diverse range of accessible open spaces, but also protects and enhances natural ecosystems and the cultural heritage features that contribute to the Borough’s unique identity.

Key to the implementation of the MOSS are partnerships with open space, heritage, conservation and sporting agencies and, most importantly, Merton’s local communities. The MOSS envisages an open space network where people are actively involved in the planning, design and management of their open spaces.

A number of projects are set out in the various action plans including specific Parks Improvement Measures, Partnerships, Community Engagement, Playing Pitches, Policy and Guidelines and Research and Monitoring. The MOSS is the central document for improving the provision and quality of Merton’s open spaces. It will be reviewed every five years.
Introduction

1.1 Challenges Facing Open Space

Open space helps define the character of Merton and contributes significantly to its unique identity, quality of life and social and economic well being. The wide range of social, economic, cultural and environmental benefits that the Borough derives from its open space areas are recognised but not valued consistently.

Open space is consistently raised by the public during conversation and consultation processes. It is viewed by many as a priority concern for the prudent future development of the Borough.

Questions of “How much do we have?” and “How much is enough?” are often raised. The issue is not just about the quantity of open space but also its quality. People’s perception and use of open space depends not only on it being available, but about whether it meets their needs and expectations. Well designed and accessible open space areas that offer a variety of experiences are a finite resource. These will come under increasing pressure from development. There will always be a demand for open space. The challenge is to make it relevant to peoples’ needs.

The Merton Open Space Strategy (MOSS) presents a significant opportunity to promote these benefits and highlights the importance of a strategic approach to providing and managing the open space resource effectively and efficiently.

The focus of the MOSS is to protect and secure the existing open space network and its intrinsic values, while improving the quality and potential uses of open spaces to cater for increasing demands and the changing needs of the community. An integrated and strategic approach to open space planning is essential to safeguard the quality of life and economic well being of Merton’s residents. The MOSS presents a vision for the future open space network. It will outline a series of Action Plans to achieve this vision within a 5 year timeframe.

1.2 Open Space Definition

The term ‘open space’ has a variety of meanings. It could include those spaces that are used for recreation and amenity purposes such as parks, public and private gardens, and sports fields. It is equally valid to include spaces that have a specific function such as allotments or church yards. In a broader sense ‘open space’ could include unconventional spaces such as transportation corridors, public squares and streetscapes. These areas of hard landscape are equally important to resident’s quality of life as parkland. In an urban environment they provide relief from buildings and define the townscape where more conventional open space may be scarce.

Any definition of open space must reflect the variety of open spaces in our urban environment. However, the focus of the MOSS is primarily ‘green spaces’ used for recreation and amenity purposes and for their role in protecting natural and cultural heritage.

An important issue to consider when defining open spaces is ownership and the level of public access. While open spaces are either publicly or privately owned, private ownership does not necessarily indicate decreased public access. Private open spaces often facilitate public access through various formal and informal arrangements (e.g. Morden Hall Park owned by the National Trust), whereas some publicly owned open spaces will have limited or restricted access (e.g. school playing fields).
“Visual accessibility” is also an important aspect of access to open spaces. Although access to some open spaces may be physically restricted, views of and through open space are equally as important as physical access. Open spaces also play an important nature conservation role. In these cases restricted public access may be necessary to achieve conservation objectives.

For the purposes of the MOSS, Open space has been defined as:

All land and water in Merton (excluding public squares, streetscapes and transport corridors) both publicly and privately owned, in a predominantly undeveloped state that offers public enjoyment through varying degrees of physical or visual access.

The Strategy therefore addresses the following types of open space:

- parks;
- sports pitches;
- commons;
- allotments;
- cemeteries and church yards;
- school playing fields; and
- waterways and streams.

It does not include:

- privately owned gardens;
- grass verges along transport corridors; or
- hard landscaped areas such as public squares and streetscapes.

Important community spaces such public squares will be included within the scope of a future revised version of the Strategy.

1.3 Importance of Open Space

Society and individuals derive benefits from open space in a number of direct and indirect ways. People primarily use open spaces for exercise, socialising and relaxing. They also derive a sense of well being from viewing the resource and from merely knowing it is there to be used and that it is contributing to protecting the natural, cultural and recreational settings of the Borough. Open space can be a venue for learning about nature and cultural heritage. It also provides the “green infrastructure” improving air and water quality. Table 1.1 below describes some of the uses and benefits of open spaces.
Merton is a borough with a rich and varied history that should be recognised and celebrated. Open spaces are central to resident’s identification with Merton, their personal and social well being, and directly support both tourism and recreation. It thereby underpins the economic wealth and quality of life in the Borough.

Table 1.1 Benefits of open space that contribute to Merton residents’ quality of life

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Recreation</th>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Amenity</th>
<th>Environmental</th>
<th>Cultural</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Economic</th>
<th>Education</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Places for:</td>
<td>Physical;</td>
<td>• Improves “liveability” of the urban environment</td>
<td>Enables:</td>
<td>Creates opportunities to:</td>
<td>Places to:</td>
<td>• Improves economic competitiveness</td>
<td>Creates opportunities to:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Active engagement and sports;</td>
<td>Psychological</td>
<td>• Awareness of nature</td>
<td>• Awareness of nature</td>
<td>• Express cultural diversity and identity</td>
<td>• Escape pressure</td>
<td>• Adds value to properties and localities</td>
<td>• Learn to socialise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Passive enjoyment;</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Understanding of nature</td>
<td>• Understanding of nature</td>
<td>• Connect with nature and heritage</td>
<td>• Socialise</td>
<td>• Asset for tourism</td>
<td>• Learn to be healthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Participation in conservation</td>
<td>• Participation in conservation</td>
<td>• Protect with nature and heritage</td>
<td>• Participate in community events and gatherings</td>
<td>• Asset for tourism</td>
<td>• Learn about nature</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Contributes to:</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Clean air and water, and flood management</td>
<td>• Clean air and water, and flood management</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Protection of flora and fauna</td>
<td>• Protection of flora and fauna</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Protection of significant natural features and landscapes</td>
<td>• Protection of significant natural features and landscapes</td>
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Photo: Cannizaro Theatre (2002)
1.4 Reasons for Producing This Strategy

*Merton Context*

The London Borough of Merton is committed to a proactive approach to improving the quality of life of its residents. It acts in response to sound assessments of community needs and aspirations. This strategy is an example of this ongoing commitment.

Expectations of the role open spaces play in the lives of Merton residents are being challenged by trends in urban design, environmental awareness and the needs of sports and recreation users. In terms of the Borough’s open space provision and management this means:

- There will be different needs for, and expectations of, the nature of open space in living, working and recreational environments.
- As well as its recreational, cultural heritage and ecological benefits, there will be greater awareness of the value of open space to the overall quality of life in the borough.
- The quality of open space will become as important as the quantity when assessing its provision.

The MOSS focuses on a range of outcomes such as: the protection and enhancement of natural habitats and ecosystems; the enhancements of physical and visual linkages; the provision of access to a range of recreational experiences; and the opportunities to express community diversity and identity. During the development of the MOSS an audit of open space attributes and their distribution across the Borough has been completed, and standards for the provision and quality of parks and playing pitches across the Borough have been developed. These comprehensive assessments provide the basis for both the development and implementation of the action plans and the monitoring and review of the Strategy.

The implementation of the Strategy objectives will resolve pressures on Merton’s open spaces that have become evident in recent years including:

1. Pressure for inappropriate developments. Particularly on or adjacent to private open spaces.

Recent developments in the education sector and issues around sports provision on privately owned land present a significant challenge to open space planning. Private open space is a significant community resource. Any development proposals that will alter its amenity and utility must be evaluated carefully against the objectives of the MOSS.

2. Incomplete and fragmented information regarding the provision and quality of open spaces and the needs of various users.

The Strategy development process has utilised a wide variety of information sources including: audits, quality assessments, public and user surveys, and statistical data. The integration and organisation of this information has allowed the development of responsive evaluation and monitoring techniques. (See Standards, Evaluation and Prioritisation Matrix Appendix 4)
3. Encouraging further integration of planning and recreation roles.

While links between Planning and Cultural Services are well established, coordination of objectives has suffered through lack of a defined vision and agreed outcomes for Merton's open spaces.

4. Funding gaps – provision and quality.

The proportion of council funding for open space provision and facilities management has decreased significantly in recent years. The MOSS provides a clearly articulated, realisable vision for Merton's open spaces providing a solid foundation for increased funding and directed expenditure.

Wider Context

Complementing the local pressures and issues surrounding open space are wider initiatives being implemented at the national and regional levels. The MOSS reflects, in part, Merton’s response to the wider trends in urban renaissance, sports and recreation and environmental conservation. Key policy requirements include:

- Compliance with Government Planning Policy Guidance PPG17 (2002). This guidance requires planning policies for sport and recreation and open space to be based upon up to date assessments of local needs and aspirations;
- Enabling Council compliance with the GLA (Guide to preparing Open Space Strategies) that Local Planning Authorities produce Open Space Strategies;
- The requirements of funding bodies, now expect Boroughs to have an open space strategy in place before funds will be released for open space improvements. Having a clear strategy in place with associate Action Plans is vital if the Council is to be able to successfully bid for funds from external bodies to improve its open spaces.

1.5 How Was This Strategy Developed?

The MOSS has been developed from analysis of information from a number of detailed studies. Assessments have been undertaken of Merton's open spaces, their facilities and park users in the Borough. These studies and public consultations have included:

The Merton Open Space Study (2002)

The Merton Open Space Study was undertaken in 2001/2 by planning consultants WS Atkins. The study included:

- A survey of open spaces to assess facilities, landscape and visual quality, and their ecological, cultural and educational value;
- Focus groups to ascertain the needs and views of different open space users;
- A playing pitch assessment, to assess existing and future supply and demand of playing pitches. This involved a survey of sports clubs/teams that play within the Borough;
- Based on their findings the consultants developed some objectives and recommendations for developing Merton’s open space strategy.
The final consultant’s report was published in April 2002 in three separate volumes:

- Volume One – Strategic Open Space Assessment;
- Volume Two – Landscape Strategy;
- Volume Three – Playing Pitch Assessment.

The Council consulted on the Study in October-November 2002, inviting views from a variety of local groups including residents associations, ethnic minority groups, sports clubs, disabilities groups, and the general public.

The consultation set out key findings from the study, and sought feedback on ideas for the strategy that were put forward by the Consultants. The feedback has been used to develop the open space strategy for the Borough. The findings from the consultation can be viewed in Appendix 3.

**Merton Open Space Needs Survey 2003**

The Merton Open Space Study identified some local needs but further research was necessary to fully assess local needs for open space. A phone survey of a sample of residents was prepared and undertaken by Makrotest Limited in May 2003.

The objectives of the research were to:

- Understand the current use/demand for open space within Merton;
- Assess residents’ perceptions about Merton's open space;
- Ascertain if residents’ needs were currently being met;
- Assess reasons why ‘non-users’ don’t use open space;
- Identify any features or actions that would improve residents’ enjoyment of parks and encourage increased park usage.

**East Mitcham Open Space Strategy – EMOSS (2003)**

EMOSS is a local area strategy for open space and recreation in the East Mitcham area based on the findings within the Merton Open Space Study. It provides guidance upon which to base decisions about the future use of open spaces in that area. The strategy identifies a number of opportunities to improve the provision of open space within East Mitcham. The key objectives of the Strategy are:

- To apply the findings of MOSS and provide a 5-10 year local strategy for provision of open space within East Mitcham;
- To progress the opportunities for cross Boundary links with the adjoining Boroughs to reduce deficiency of open space within East Mitcham;
- To advise on the future development opportunities for other sites within East Mitcham. In particular, the options for the future use of the former Rowan High School and Brenley Playing Field Sites.

An update of WS Atkins Playing Pitch Assessment (MOSS Volume 3 April 2002) has been carried out taking account of the latest guidance from Sport England. The assessment update was needed to carry out further work recommended in MOSS Vol 3, and to enable a playing pitch action plan and policies to be developed, which form part of this strategy.

Additional Work has included:

- Collection of additional information from sports teams (Sports User Survey 2003);
- Using Sport England Toolkit Spreadsheets to carry out Pitch and Pavilion Quality Assessments;
- Area based analysis of sports pitch demand.

The Assessment update is attached as Appendix 1.

1.6 Issues Overview

From examination of the results of the research detailed above the key open space issues in the London Borough of Merton are perceived to be:

- Improving the range and quality of open spaces;
- Providing a variety of open space experiences and facilities equitably across the Borough;
- Protecting existing open space from inappropriate development (including development adjacent to open space);
- Ensuring open space experiences are relevant to all members of the community – especially youth, ethnic minorities and disabled users;
- Increasing the accessibility of open space to pedestrians, cyclists and disabled users;
- Integrating open spaces into their urban setting improving amenity and regeneration opportunities;
- Improving safety and security in open spaces.

The issues above are discussed in further detail in Section 4 of the Strategy.
1.7 Benefits of This Strategy

An integrated, Borough-wide, long term strategic approach to open space planning, provision and management will result in:

- A consistent approach to the protection and management of the Borough’s significant landscapes, ecosystems, habitats and cultural heritage areas across the open space network;
- Coordinated structuring of open space provision to further the objectives of the UDP and the MOSS through integrated planning processes;
- Positive planning based on robust assessment of open space needs. This will ensure adequate provision of accessible high quality green spaces, civic spaces and sports and recreation facilities meeting the needs and expectations of local communities;
- A consistent and strategic approach for assessing applications to develop open spaces. The strategy provides a framework for assessing whether particular development applications are complementary to the vision and the outcomes of the MOSS;
- Enable integrated management of resources and open spaces to meet current and future needs; Strategic planning of improvements to open spaces and associated facilities;
- A framework for prioritising investments according to identified open space deficiencies;
- Consistency of development control decisions. Planning applications related to open spaces e.g. developing on open space or developments that might lead to pressure for new facilities will be assessed strategically;
- Support existing open space standards (e.g. accessibility standards) and UDP policies. These will be refined where justified by assessment. Quality standards will be developed according to guidance and need;
- Assist in negotiations for funding through Planning Agreements (Section 106 funding);
- Identification of opportunities for MOSS partners to share resources and solutions for improving and managing the open space network, and a framework of engagement through the MOSS implementation action areas (research / monitoring; policy; partnerships; and community engagement and parks improvement); and
- Alignment of funding priorities between LB Merton and MOSS partners.
1.8 Partnerships – Key Players, Stakeholders and Relationships

The implementation of MOSS will require commitment, co-ordination and co-operation among a wide variety of organisations and groups responsible for open space provision, policy and management.

This will include further development and implementation of the MOSS as a collaborative venture involving a range of non-governmental organisations, friends and residents groups, sports and leisure agencies, Government departments, environmental interest groups and the wider Borough community.

The current roles and open spaces managed by the key players are described below. Potential partners are also identified.

Table 1.2 Potential Merton Open Space Strategy Partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Responsibility for Open Space</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>National Agencies</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>CABE Space</td>
<td>CABE Space was established in 2003 as a national champion for urban parks and green spaces. It has a number of responsibilities which include: improving co-ordination between relevant departments, agencies, local authorities, voluntary organisations and funding providers involved with green space; influence funding decisions at national, regional and local levels; strengthen and promote partnerships for improving green spaces; promote and develop skills training needs; carry out research and develop information, quality standards and good practice; and raise public awareness of, expectations of and commitment to urban public space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countryside Agency</td>
<td>The Countryside Agency believes that the countryside should be managed to conserve and enhance its rich landscape, biodiversity, heritage and local customs, while recognising the changing needs of those who live there. The Agency is also responsible for ensuring that everybody should be able to enjoy the countryside for recreation and relaxation, and to benefit from high quality foods and the other products it creates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment Agency</td>
<td>The Environment Agency liases and communicates with recreation groups and other organisations with a responsibility or interest in recreation. They use their contacts with recreation groups as a way of understanding their needs and concerns, and to discuss their work and plans with them. Given limited resources and the fact that other organisations have complementary interests, they will seek to work in partnership where this is mutually beneficial. The Agency is a member and funding partner for the Countryside Recreation Network (CRN) and supports the work of the network as it provides an effective way of exchanging information and research and discussing policy with other organisations and Government agencies with an interest in countryside and water recreation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency</td>
<td>Responsibility for Open Space</td>
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| Sport England  | Sport England's role is:  
- To be the strategic lead for sport in England  
- To make focused investments through partners  
- To provide advice, support and knowledge to partners and customers  
- To influence the decision makers and public opinion on sport

The organisation no longer develops its own programmes, products and services. |
| English Heritage| English Heritage ensures that the historic environment of England is properly maintained and cared for. Through the advice of some of the country's very best architects, archaeologists and historians, they aim to help people understand and appreciate why the historic buildings and landscapes around them matter. From the first traces of civilisation, to the most significant buildings of the 20th century, English Heritage promotes the education, understanding and conservation of every important historic site. |
| National Trust | The National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty was established to secure the acquisition and ownership of land and buildings worthy of permanent preservation. The National Trust cares for around 250,000 hectares of land and 600 miles of coastal property in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and opens in excess of 600 properties to the public. The majority of these properties are held 'inalienably' so that they cannot be sold or mortgaged. Such land is thus held in perpetuity for the benefit of the nation. The National Trust is a charity independent of Government with a principal source of income derived from membership (in excess of 3 million) subscriptions, legacies, admission fees, donations, sponsorship and rental income from tenancies. Annually some 13 million people visit and pay for entry to Trust properties and an estimated 50 million visit 'open access' land and coast. Such 'open access' property in London includes sections of Metropolitan Open Land at Morden Hall Park and Osterley Park. |
| English Nature | English Nature champions the conservation of wildlife, geology and wild places in England. It is a Government agency set up by the Environment Protection Act 1990 and is funded by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

English Nature has many responsibilities and works with a wide range of people in a variety of ways and tries to enable others by giving advice, grants and licenses. |
### Agency Responsibility for Open Space

#### Regional Agencies

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<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
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<tr>
<td>Greater London Authority</td>
<td>The GLA is the strategic authority for London. The GLA has responsibilities for strategic planning in London, which includes preparing the 'London Plan' (the spatial development strategy for London). The London Plan sets out strategic policies for the protection and enhancement of open space. The GLA has the power to direct Local Planning Authorities to refuse planning permission for strategic planning applications if they are considered to be contrary to the spatial development strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London Wildlife Trust</td>
<td>London Wildlife Trust is a charity working throughout the Greater London area. As well as caring for over 60 nature reserves, the Trust campaigns to save green spaces from harmful development, provides information about nature to Londoners, and works with local communities and schools to ensure that London is a better place, not only for wildlife, but for people too. 47 Wildlife Trusts form a nationwide network of local nature conservation charities. Together they take action to protect the UK’s natural world in town and country. The Wildlife Trusts care for almost 2,500 nature reserves. The partnership campaigns for the protection of wildlife and invests in the future by helping people of all ages to gain a greater appreciation and understanding of nature. With the support of over 400,000 members across the country, the Wildlife Trusts are helping it to flourish again.</td>
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#### Local Agencies

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<th>Agency</th>
<th>Responsibility for Open Space</th>
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<tr>
<td>Groundwork Trust (Groundwork Merton)</td>
<td>Groundwork’s purpose is &quot;to build sustainable communities through joint environmental action&quot;. This is achieved by getting residents, businesses and other local organisations involved in practical projects that improve the quality of life, bring about regeneration and lay the foundations for sustainable development. Groundwork Trust believes a ‘sustainable community’ is one that is vibrant, healthy and safe, which respects the local and global environment and where individuals and enterprise prosper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community and Stakeholder Groups</td>
<td>The London Borough of Merton has a variety of community and stakeholder groups that may be interested in developing partnerships or involvement in consultation processes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sports Clubs</td>
<td>There are a variety of football, rugby, cricket, bowls and other clubs in Merton. Working with these clubs to improve the quality of their recreational experience will help increase participation in residents playing organised sport.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends Groups</td>
<td>Friends Groups are an important community resource. They are involved in the planning, management and maintenance of their adopted open space.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.9 How the Strategy will Work

The MOSS sets out a Vision, Outcomes sought, Guiding Principles and Action and Implementation Plans for the consistent and integrated management of the Merton open space network.

Detailed appendices provide additional background material and explanations behind the Parks Standards and the MOSS strategic direction including:

- Playing Pitch Assessment Update;
- Open Space Issues Summary;
- Public Consultation Findings; and
- Standards, Prioritisation and Monitoring Evaluation.

Section One outlines the background to the MOSS – the definition of open space; the challenges facing the provision and management of open space; an overview of key open space issues; the importance of open space as a resource; the advantages of having a MOSS; and key players and relationships in implementing the MOSS.

Section Two outlines the legislative and policy framework to MOSS and the relationship to national and regional policies and strategies influencing open space provision and management.

Section Three discusses the Merton Open Space Resource, the Merton context, Merton’s open spaces; the implications of demographic trends to open space provision and management; and challenges and opportunities likely to be encountered during implementation of the MOSS.

Section Four provides a discussion of the key issues derived from the open space research and assessments.

Section Five explains the strategic direction for the Merton open space network. The MOSS vision and visual interpretation of open space potential and opportunities for the Borough; the outcomes sought through implementing the MOSS; and guiding principles for the MOSS action and implementation plan are all outlined.

Section Six presents the Action and Implementation Plans. Detailed descriptions of the Action Plan projects are listed in order of implementation. Individual projects are displayed with their associated outcome areas, current or proposed central, regional or local government initiatives that have potential for integration individual Action Plan Projects; the funding options for open space provision and a monitoring programme are also outlined.
Legislative and Policy Context

2.1 Introduction

Parks and open spaces are planned for, managed and maintained by a variety of agencies operating in a complex legislative and policy context. This section of the MOSS describes the National, Greater London and Merton's open space policies and guidance and how they relate to the development and implementation of the MOSS.

2.2 National Policy and Strategies

Urban Green Spaces Task Force

Government concern over the decline of urban parks over the past 20 years led to the establishment of the Urban Green Spaces Task Force (UGSTF) in 2001. The UGSTF advises on proposals for improving the quality of urban parks, play areas and green spaces.

The UGSTF report ‘Green Spaces, Better Places’ (2002) recognised the increasing awareness of the value of good quality parks, and the benefits that parks and green spaces provide. These included:

- **Urban renaissance** – good quality parks contribute to regeneration and create a sense of place, which is vital to community spirit and attract visitors;
- **Health and Well being** – green spaces can play a role in promoting healthy lifestyles and preventing illness;
- **Social Inclusion, community development** – green spaces give people the chance to participate in design, management and care of local spaces, fostering local pride. They are places to socialise, and because access is free, provide an affordable alternative to other leisure activities;
- **Education and Lifelong Learning** – green spaces provide an outdoor classroom for schools, and provide work experience and learning opportunities in environmental management;
- **Environment and Ecology** – green spaces help counter pollution, provide wildlife corridors, serve as ‘lungs’ for towns and cities, absorb noise, and provide sustainable urban drainage solutions;
- **Heritage & Culture** – green spaces are part of the heritage and culture of local communities. They provide venues for local festivals and civic celebrations.

Green Spaces, Better Places recognised the serious challenges facing open spaces. Generally there has been a decline in quality, due to a lack of funding, loss of political support and status and a failure to meet the needs and expectations of communities.

The Report looked at ways of reversing the decline through methods such as establishing a strategic policy framework for open spaces, increasing funding (securing funding external to local authorities), establishing partnerships, and greater community involvement in parks and green spaces.
The UGSTF recommended that a typology of green space be adopted by the Government and its use promoted amongst local authorities. This would provide a consistent approach to assessing and strategically planning green space provision. The Report recognises that some green spaces may also be subject to various national or local policy designations and local green space hierarchies. The Government has accepted this recommendation and included this typology in the PPG17 companion guide (see below).

To assist the development of local green space networks local authorities should produce integrated green space strategies that can provide a vision and clear objectives for green spaces. Strategies should be used to enhance and protect existing green spaces; enhance design, improve management and care, and encourage higher standards and continuous review.

Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (2002)

The Government produced a revised PPG17 in 2002 building on the work of the UGSTF. The Government reasons that open space can underpin people’s quality of life, and assists in delivering broader Government objectives, including:

- **Supporting urban renaissance** – networks of high quality open spaces, sports and recreational facilities help create urban environments that are attractive, clean and safe;
- **Promoting social inclusion and community cohesion** – well planned and maintained open spaces and good quality sports and recreational facilities play a major part in improving people’s sense of well being in the place they live. They act as a focal point for community activities;
- **Health and well being** – open spaces, sports and recreational facilities have a vital role to play in promoting healthy living and preventing illness;
- **Promoting sustainable development** – through ensuring that open space, sports and recreational facilities are easily accessible by walking and cycling and ensuring more intensive sports and recreational facilities are planned for locations well served by public transport.

PPG17 states that local authorities should:

- Carry out assessments of existing and future needs of the community for open space, sports and recreational facilities. Local Authorities need to cover differing needs of the population for open space and built sports and recreational facilities;
- Undertake audits of existing open space and facilities, use of existing facilities, access in terms of location and cost, and opportunities for new open space and facilities. Audits should consider quantitative and qualitative elements of open space, sports and recreational facilities;
- Standards should be set locally. Local authorities should use the information gained to set standards for the provision of open spaces and sports and recreational facilities in their areas. These standards should include quantitative elements, a qualitative component and accessibility. These standards will help redress deficiencies through the planning process, standards should be included in the local authority’s Development Plan;
- Adopt a strategic approach and plan positively for provision, enhancement and maintenance of open space.
The Government expects all local authorities to carry out needs assessments and audits of open space and recreational facilities in accordance with PPG17. To assist local authorities the Government has published a companion guide to PPG17 Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17 which sets out an approach that Local Authorities can adopt to meet this requirement.


The Guide provides one way in which local assessments of need and audits of provision can be undertaken, it recognises that other approaches may be possible. Merton’s approach has been developed to be consistent with this approach.

The Guide includes a 5 Step process for accessing local needs. It provides a suggested framework for the implementation of policies and provision standards through the Development Control process.

Comprehensive local assessments will result in better planning policies, facilitate better evidence based decision-making as part of the development control process, make it easier to negotiate planning obligations and provide essential evidence to use at appeals. They could also identify areas of land that could be sold for development (if the assessment shows they are not needed). They will help identify priorities for enhancement of existing open spaces or sport and recreation facilities or provision of new ones, promote ‘joined up thinking’ in planning, design and management, and provide a means of monitoring progress. They are also important for funding applications.

The guide identifies 5 key attributes of open space these are:

1. Accessibility (if a particular open space is inaccessible it will be of limited value to those who may want to use it);
2. Quality (depends on the needs and expectations of users, and design management and maintenance);
3. Multi-functionality (many open spaces are used for a variety of purposes);
4. Primary Purpose (by identifying the open space’s primary purpose it is possible to take account of the variety of uses a site might have and brings clarity and consistency to planning, design and management policies);
5. Quantity (open space is often measured by amount of provision, but this doesn’t take account of other key factors).

Of the key attributes generally accessibility and quantity are delivered through planning, because they relate to location and use of land, but can be sustained through good management and maintenance. Quality, multi-functionality and primary purpose are delivered initially through design, but are sustained through good management and maintenance. The planning system can sometimes help by generating resources through planning conditions or legal agreements for developments.

The Guide and PPG17 recommend authorities use the typology of open space proposed by the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce, or a variation of it.

One of main reasons for carrying out a local assessment is to plan positively to ensure adequate provision of accessible, high quality green spaces, civic spaces and sports and recreation facilities that meet the needs of local communities.

Carrying out a local assessment enables planning authorities to consistently assess planning applications involving the redevelopment of an existing open space.
The guide includes a clear 5 step methodology (diagram 2 p.16) which is as follows:

1. **Identify Local Needs:** Review existing strategies, policies and provision standards, consult local communities and prepare a vision;

2. **Audit Local Provision:** Identify existing information, undertake audit, analyse audit;

3. **Set Provision Standards:** Quantity standards, Quality Standards, Accessibility standards, minimum acceptable size standards, site area multipliers, normalised costs, design standards;

4. **Apply Provision Standards:** Identify deficiencies in accessibility and quality, ascertain surpluses and deficiencies in quantity;

5. **Draft Policies:** Identify strategic options, evaluate strategic options, draft policy, and consult relevant stakeholders.


This Sport England Guide was developed to assist local authorities, consultants and others in producing robust local playing pitch strategies.

The Guide replaces earlier publications and is designed to simplify the production of a playing pitch strategy. It contains a revised methodology, which is an eight stage Playing Pitch Model (PPM - set out below).

- Stage 1 – Identifying teams/team equivalents;
- Stage 2 – Calculating home games per team per week;
- Stage 3 – Assessing total home games per week;
- Stage 4 – Establishing temporal demand for games;
- Stage 5 – Defining Pitches Used/required on each day;
- Stage 6 – Establishing pitches available;
- Stage 7 – Assessing the findings;
- Stage 8 – Identifying policy options and solutions.

Merton followed this revised methodology while carrying out the Playing Pitch Assessment Update. The results are presented in Appendix 1.
The Guide identifies some of the key benefits of producing a playing pitch strategy, which includes:

- Ensures a strategic approach to playing pitch provision;
- Evidence for capital funding;
- Basis to respond to new pitch requirements arising from new housing developments;
- A tool to protect sports pitches and facilities;
- Improve local authority asset management;
- Highlight where quality improvements are needed;
- Promote sports development.

There are number of resources designed to simplify the production of a strategy including:

- Spreadsheets to assist with the analysis of data from the assessment (PPM calculation spreadsheet & Team Generation Rate Calculator);
- Model survey forms (for clubs, schools, pitch providers);
- Site and pitch quality assessment questionnaires;
- Standard brief to engage specialist consultants.

2.3 Greater London Policy and Strategies

The Greater London Authority (GLA) London Plan (Feb 2004) sets out an integrated social, economic and environmental framework to develop London as a sustainable world city over the next 15 – 20 years. This plan will provide a London wide context for London boroughs to align their local planning policies.

The London Plan seeks to protect and promote open spaces and recognises that the value of these spaces will increase as London becomes more compact and intensive in its built form. The Plan includes policies to:

- **Encourage boroughs to prepare open space strategies.** Policy 3D.11: London boroughs should prepare Open Space Strategies to understand the supply and demand of open spaces and identify ways of protecting, creating and enhancing them;

- **Protecting strategically important open spaces such as Green Belt and MOL.** Policy 3D9: The Mayor and London boroughs should resist development on MOL unless it is clearly ancillary to the enjoyment of the open space;

- **Supporting the creation of networks of open spaces such as green chains.** Policy 3D10: Boroughs should identify, protect and develop Green Corridors and chains and protect local open spaces that are of value or have potential to be of value;

- **Ensuring everyone has equal access to facilities in open spaces.** Policy 3D10: In reviewing UDPs boroughs should use standards, as set out in the Open Space Hierarchy, to identify public open space deficiency. Assessments of local need should be used to refine the identification of priorities.

The draft London Plan sets out an Open Space Hierarchy (see below), to ensure that a range of open spaces of different size, type and function are accessible to all.
Table 2.1  London Open Space Hierarchy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open Space Categorisation</th>
<th>Size Guidelines</th>
<th>Distance from homes to open spaces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regional Parks</td>
<td>400 hectares</td>
<td>3.2 to 8 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan Parks</td>
<td>60 hectares</td>
<td>3.2 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Parks</td>
<td>20 hectares</td>
<td>1.2 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Parks, Open Spaces</td>
<td>2 hectares</td>
<td>400 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Open Spaces</td>
<td>Under 2 hectares</td>
<td>Less than 400 m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Table 3D1 London Plan pg 146

Connecting with London’s Nature: The Mayor’s Biodiversity Strategy (July 2002) is linked closely to the London plan and aims to provide a London wide framework for maintaining London’s diversity of wildlife. It has two overall targets: no overall loss of wildlife habitats in London; and secondly, more open spaces are created and made accessible, so that all Londoners are within walking distance of a quality natural space. The Mayor’s Strategy has taken account of the local Biodiversity Action Plans, which have been published by local authorities in London. Merton is currently in the process of producing such an Action Plan.

Guide to Preparing Open Space Strategies (March 2004)

A previous version of the GLA Guide was used when WS Atkins undertook the Merton Open Space Study in 2002. Since that time Merton Council officers have provided input to GLA as the Draft Guide was developed. Merton’s strategy development approach has been consistent with that of the GLA.

The GLA Guide describes best practice for producing open space strategies, and provides a framework of what should be included in a strategy. This includes:

- An audit of all open space (including playing pitches);
- Assessments of local needs and value of existing open space;
- Protection by appropriate designation on UDP maps;
- Prioritisation of investment to address identified needs and deficiencies;
- Identification of opportunities for improving access to open spaces;
- Identification of opportunities for improving linkages between open spaces and the wider public realm.

Boroughs should set out a vision, aims and objectives and broad open space policies. The vision should be based on an understanding of the supply, distribution, quality, level of use, needs of communities and the wider borough, sub regional and the greater London context. The strategy should include an action plan, and should be subject to regular monitoring and review.
The GLA Guide defines open space as;

```
All land use in London that is predominantly undeveloped other than by buildings or structures that are ancillary to the open space use. The definition covers the broad range of open space types in London whether in public or private ownership and whether public access is unrestricted, limited or restricted.' (Pg 4).
```

The Guide requires an Open Space Strategy to reflect the corporate aims of the Local authority. The GLA recognise that to be effective, the relationship between the open space strategy and other strategies be clearly defined. The link to the borough's UDP is crucial as it provides the policy framework needed for implementing the land use aims and objectives of the Strategy and policies for protecting biodiversity, enhancing nature conservation, and the provision of open spaces and leisure and recreation facilities.

The Guide sets out a six stage approach to preparing a strategy which includes:

1. Preparation of Brief/scoping study;
2. Review and objectives setting;
3. Understanding the supply;
4. Understanding demands/needs;
5. Analysis and identification of objectives;

The Guide advises categorisation of open spaces according to the Draft London Plan Open Space Hierarchy (see above). This will enable a consistent approach across London to identifying open space deficiencies. The use of an open space typology to indicate the primary purpose of an open space is also suggested. This refers to the PPG17 typology (see table 3.1), but recommends that this be refined to reflect local circumstances.

User and non-user surveys are suggested to understand open space demand and needs. Standards of provision are described as useful tools for measuring existing provision and comparing provision both within individual boroughs and across local authority boundaries.

Stage 5 of the suggested approach 'analysis and identification of objectives' involves a number of essential tasks. These are: analysis of supply and demand; identification of themes; aims and objectives; identification of open spaces to be protected; identification of priority areas of deficiency; identification of opportunities for addressing deficiencies; and identification of priority open spaces for improvement.

**Mayor's Biodiversity Strategy**

The Mayor's Biodiversity Strategy sets out how London's biodiversity can be protected and looked after. It also aims to make sure everyone can enjoy and learn about the natural world. The Biodiversity Strategy relies heavily on partnership working between many organisations to help carry out the proposals, including borough councils, community groups, businesses and conservation organisations, as well as the support of individual Londoners.
The Biodiversity Strategy sets out 14 policies, and 72 proposals to implement these policies, listing the main partners who are asked to take each proposal forward. It also provides an overview of London’s wildlife and the places where it is to be found. The Mayor and his associated bodies, such as Transport for London, have a crucial role to play. The Greater London Authority is well placed to provide strategic advice and act as a catalyst on issues relating to biodiversity in London. The other major partners in the implementation of the Strategy are the London borough councils, English Nature, the Environment Agency, and the London Wildlife Trust.

Another vital player is the London Biodiversity Partnership, a consortium of all the most important organisations working in biodiversity in London. The Partnership is drawing up a Biodiversity Action Plan for London which, when complete, will cover all important wildlife habitats and a number of priority species. The Mayor currently chairs the Partnership, and is leading on several habitats and species.

Policy 3D.12 Biodiversity and nature conservation (pg 148 London Plan):

The Mayor will work with partners to ensure a proactive approach to the protection, promotion and management of biodiversity in support of the Mayor’s Biodiversity Strategy.

The planning of new development and regeneration should have regard to nature conservation and biodiversity, and opportunities should be taken to achieve positive gains for conservation through the form and design of development. Where appropriate, measures may include creating, enhancing and managing wildlife habitat and natural landscape.

Priority for habitat creation should be given to sites which assist in achieving the targets in Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) and sites within or near to areas deficient in accessible wildlife sites.

Boroughs, in reviewing UDPs and in considering proposals for development should accord the highest protection to internationally designated and proposed sites (SSSIs) in accordance with government guidance and the Habitat Regulations 1994.

The Mayor will identify Sites of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation (SMIs), which, in addition to internationally and nationally designated sites, includes land of strategic importance for nature conservation and biodiversity across London. Boroughs should give strong protection to these sites in their UDPs. Boroughs should use the procedures adopted by the Mayor in his Biodiversity Strategy to identify sites of Borough or Local Importance for nature conservation and should accord them a level of protection commensurate with their borough or local significance.

The Mayor will and boroughs should resist development that would have a significant adverse impact on the population or conservation status of protected species or priority species identified in the London Biodiversity Action Plan and borough BAPs. Appropriate policies for their protection and enhancement and to achieve the targets set out in BAPs, should be included in UDPs.

Where development is proposed which would affect a site of importance for nature conservation, the approach should be to seek to avoid adverse impact on the nature conservation value of the site, and if that is not possible, to minimise such impact and seek mitigation of any residual impacts. Where exceptionally, development is to be permitted because the reasons for it are judged to outweigh significant harm to nature conservation, appropriate compensation should be sought.
2.4 L B Merton Policy and Strategic Framework

Merton Council’s Corporate Objectives

The London Borough of Merton’s vision is the overall strategic framework for the future of the Borough. The MOSS has taken a lead from these high level objectives during the development process. Table 2.2 below outlines the Vision.

Table 2.2 Merton Council’s Vision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education Merton</td>
<td>The achievement of standards of excellence in our schools and colleges and inclusive access to learning, the arts and sport.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe clean and green Merton</td>
<td>A safe and clean environment in our streets and open spaces to improve sustainability and provide a high quality of life for residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring Merton</td>
<td>Support for vulnerable children that provides positive life chances and support for vulnerable adults that meets their needs while maximising their independence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thriving Merton</td>
<td>Regeneration of town centres and neighbourhoods to provide an attractive environment in which to live, visit and work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equalities Merton</td>
<td>Full and equal access to learning, employment, services and cultural life and the celebration of diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Merton</td>
<td>Strong corporate governance to deliver and sustain service improvements, and provide community leadership.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Merton’s Community Plan 2002 – 2004

Merton’s Community Plan presents the ‘top twenty’ issues as defined by the residents of Merton and defines the actions needed to address them. The Community Plan relies on the Council and key partners to implement the key priorities and argue for a greater share of resources.

The Top 20 issues are encompassed by four main themes illustrated in the table 2.3 below.
Table 2.3  Merton Community Plan Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Safe and Green</td>
<td>• More police on the street to reduce fear of crime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Improve public transport services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reduce graffiti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Protect Merton’s parks and open spaces from built development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Keep Merton's streets clean by regular sweeping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifelong learning</td>
<td>• Invest in young people by developing their skills and talents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Encourage all sections of the community to participate in lifelong learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide low cost training / learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Increase the choice of learning / training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide more nursery / pre-school services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Local Business</td>
<td>• Reduce traffic congestion / improve public transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Regenerate Merton’s town centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Encourage job creation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Encourage new companies to come to Merton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Improve the skills of local people to take opportunities for better jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Caring Community</td>
<td>• Tackle alcohol related crime in town centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Protect vulnerable people, especially older people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Tackle poverty / social deprivation / most deprived neighbourhoods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Restore a sense of civic pride in Merton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Promote the development of local communities’ sense of neighbourhood.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the heart of Merton’s Community Plan is the desire to improve the economic, social and environmental well being of Merton and its communities. In addition it is important to recognise and support Merton’s diverse communities.

Merton’s Local Biodiversity Action Plan

The Merton Local Biodiversity Action Plan Partnership was established in 1998 and now consists of representatives from the London Borough of Merton, Greater London Authority, Groundwork Merton, London Wildlife Trust, Merton Heritage and Ecology Action Group, Merton Tree Wardens, Mitcham Common Conservators, National Trust, and Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators.

The aim of the Partnership is to draft a Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) that will identify habitats that merit particular protection and enhancement, and to establish targets and monitoring procedures. The LBAP will take into account habitats that have been selected as national and London priorities occurring in Merton, but it will also identify local priority sites.
To date the Partnership has adopted the following habitats:

- Acid and Neutral
- Grasslands
- Ponds, Lakes and Wetlands
- Private Gardens and Allotments
- Favourite Trees

Eventually each of the selected habitats will have a Habitat Action Plan (HAP) that will contain a series of aims, objectives, actions and targets. Together these HAPs will form Merton’s LBAP. Additional habitats, or possibly species, can be added to the LBAP on the recommendation of the Partnership.

Overall, concern about the need for greater civic pride in Merton, a sense of neighbourhood, tackling poverty and protecting vulnerable people underlie many of the issues. In addition; crime reduction, public transport improvements and environmental concerns are highlighted and skills, training and learning feature very strongly.

The Community Plan is committed to long term aspirations. The Plan addresses sustainability through actions that safeguard the Borough and its resources and promotes the health and well being of future generations, existing residents and businesses as well as the environment in which they live and work.

Specifically relating to the MOSS objectives, the Plan seeks to protect and develop Merton’s natural environment, open spaces, wildlife habitats and the biodiversity associated with them. Consistent with the MOSS, implementation through education initiatives and constructive partnerships with residents, schools, public agencies, community based organisations and local business, makes the Community Plan a vital companion document for realising the MOSS Vision.

**Merton Unitary Development Plan**

The Merton Unitary Development Plan (UDP) was adopted in October 2003, and sets the planning framework for the Borough through to 2016. The UDP sets a framework of policies and proposals against which planning decisions are made.

The UDP sets the policy framework for addressing current open space deficiencies and for the protection and enhancement of open spaces and sports facilities. The UDP currently reflects the Draft London Plan Hierarchy to assess the adequacy of open space provision in terms of pedestrian access and enables open space deficiencies to be identified.

Planning policies for open space are included within the Natural Environment and Leisure and Recreation sections of the UDP.

The existing policies include:

**Natural Environment:** Metropolitan Open Land, Development in proximity to Metropolitan Open Land, Green Chains, Wandle Valley Country Park, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Nature Reserves and Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, Species Protection, Green Corridors, Nature Conservation in “backland” areas, Trees protection, Hedges and Landscape Features;

The Government are currently in the process of reviewing planning legislation. Anticipated changes to the planning system will mean that Development Plans will be set out in a new format known as Local Development Frameworks (LDF). This Strategy provides a key resource for reviewing Merton’s current UDP open space policies (set out above). These policies will be reviewed through the implementation of MOSS to ensure that the Strategy’s Vision and Outcomes are achieved. The Information gathered as part of the assessment of local need will be used to support policy and to assist in planning decision making.

Merton Local Open Space Management Framework – Cultural Services

The Council undertakes grounds maintenance activities in a number of areas including parks and open spaces, cemeteries, housing amenity areas, highway amenity areas, some schools grounds and landscaped areas attached to a number of premises such as the Civic Centre, some libraries and other Council buildings. The Council is an active partner in the maintenance of Mitcham Common on behalf of Mitcham Common Conservators.

The work on open spaces involves grounds maintenance, sports pitch preparation, and staffing attendance. At Mitcham Common the maintenance activities of the Common are undertaken together with stewardship and a considerable educational programme targeted at schools in Merton, Croydon and Sutton. These are the three authorities nominating representatives to the Mitcham Common Conservators.

The Council has become increasingly concerned with the need to respond to a range of demands and circumstances such as vandalism, graffiti and community safety. There is a growing willingness amongst some resident groups to be involved in the management of local amenities, parks and open spaces and develop them cooperatively for local health and well being.

In order to meet community expectations and enable flexible working partnerships with residents and amenity groups, the leisure management framework has been developed. This arrangement, described in Table 2.4 below, organises maintenance arrangements into manageable localities and services.
### Table 2.4  Leisure Management Organisation Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open Space</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Flagship parks</strong></td>
<td>This includes the listed sites, those for which there are heritage management plans and those which are locally listed or of landscape or historical significance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elite Sports Fields</strong></td>
<td>This includes those sites currently providing mainly for organised sports and games, together with those parks for which the current management plans suggest continuing development and improvement of the formal sports facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Open Spaces, Highway amenity land and Housing Amenity areas</strong></td>
<td>There are small open spaces across the Borough which do not fall into either of the above categories. Most of them do not justify dedicated staffing and are maintained largely on a mobile basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Sites</strong></td>
<td>This principally comprises the cemeteries, which are a specialised and sensitive area of work and also combines the maintenance work required from time to time on the allotment sites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conservation and Nature Reserves</strong></td>
<td>This is a highly specialised area of work requiring particular knowledge and skills. A considerable number of these activities in the Borough are also undertaken by or with local groups of the London Wildlife Trust, schools projects and in partnership with other local and London-wide groups. Nature reserves are contained in a single management contract arrangement rather than being adjuncts to the nearest open space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ranger Service</strong></td>
<td>A separate ranger service across all of the Borough’s open spaces will allow for consistency. The principle demand is for a service in the evenings and at weekends. The ranger responsibilities will involve safety inspections, duties related to buildings and other sports facilities together with customer care and matters related to personal safety in parks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dog Waste Collection</strong></td>
<td>There will be a single arrangement for dog waste collection across the Borough.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Litter Collection</strong></td>
<td>Litter Collection is carried out throughout the Borough and ways of integrating the requirement with other existing services is being investigated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Resources

The costs of maintaining parks and open spaces in Merton are already low when compared with Boroughs across London. The published data for 1998/9 shows that Merton spends £4,745 per hectare on parks and open spaces, against a London average of £20,978. It is not believed that this comparison has altered significantly in the intervening period. Merton’s relative costs will probably have reduced further as a consequence of successive budget rounds.
Merton’s Open Spaces

3.1 LB Merton Context

Open space within the London Borough of Merton makes up part of the extensive Greater London open space network. The London network provides a range of different types of open space to meet a variety of needs across London. Within London there are complex patterns of use of the open space, and sport and recreation facilities, reflecting the fact that residents don’t recognise borough boundaries when choosing which open space to use, particularly if the closest open space is across the borough boundary.

Merton has a high proportion of open space in relation to other London boroughs. 18% of the Borough area is taken up by open space compared to the London average of 10%. Merton also compares favourably with its surrounding Boroughs in South West London with regards the number of people per hectare (ha) of public open space, with 251 per ha, compared to Lambeth 954 per ha, Sutton 368 per ha, Wandsworth 364 per ha, and Croydon 265 per ha.

When assessing the Borough’s open spaces and the needs of the local community, it is important to recognise their contribution to the wider London context, and the additional pressures this puts on Merton’s open spaces.

LB Merton Open Spaces

An audit of Merton’s open spaces was carried out by WS Atkins as part of the Merton Open Space Study (MOSS 2002). The MOSS Volumes 1-3 provide detailed analysis of Merton open spaces. In order to present a context for the Merton Open Space Strategy some key facts about Merton open spaces are discussed in this section.

Figure 3.1 Map of Merton’s Open Spaces


1 Wards are those that existed pre 2001 boundary changes. These are used throughout the strategy. This is due to census projections being only available on old ward boundaries.
Merton has a lot of open space (see Figure 3.1 above, a full size version is available as Appendix 5). In total approximately 677 ha of public open space. This equals 4 ha per 1000 population, which easily meets the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) standard of 2.43 ha per 1000.

Open spaces within Merton vary considerably. The network consists of a variety of public open spaces that includes 2 Metropolitan Parks, 4 District Parks, 33 Local Parks, and 28 Small Local Parks. These spaces are within the Open Space Hierarchy (as set out in the London Plan).

Along with those spaces within the Hierarchy, there are a variety of other open spaces within Merton. These include allotments, cemeteries, school playing fields, private sports grounds, and unique sites of wildlife value.

There a variety of landscapes across the Borough. Many are represented within public open spaces, protected from future development. The two Metropolitan Parks, Wimbledon Common and Mitcham Common, consist of natural landscape of heath land and woodland, whereas District Parks tend to provide a wider variety of landscapes. Wimbledon Park, for example, includes large areas of recreational grassland, as well as planted parkland, informal grassland, woodland, a lake and hard surface play areas. Local Parks have some variety in landscape but tend to be mainly recreational or informal grassland.

**Open Space Deficiency**

Merton Open Space Study (2002) assessments of open spaces used the UDP Open Space Hierarchy (based on the London Plan Hierarchy). This provides a measure of accessibility to the range of public open spaces that are within the Hierarchy. By mapping each of the open spaces within the Hierarchy and showing the assumed pedestrian catchments of the spaces it is possible to identify open space deficiency. The open space deficiencies are identified in MOSS Volume 1, Figures 4.1 – 4.4.

The analysis of deficiency in MOSS Volume 1 has shown that despite the large amount and variety of open space within Merton, it is unevenly distributed across the Borough. Accessibility is a key issue resulting in deficiencies in provision for certain communities in the Borough. Although deficiency in terms of accessibility is seen as a key issue, the quality of open space and range of facilities available is equally as important.

**Priority Wards**

Merton’s parks offer a range of facilities including: sports pitches (rugby, football, cricket, hockey and lacrosse); tennis courts; walking trails; paths; sitting out areas children’s play facilities; toilets; lighting, and seating.

The quality and range of facilities available in parks varies according to park type and location. District parks and larger local parks provide the widest range of facilities, and often include the better quality facilities.

It is clear that that some wards are considered deficient in open spaces and facilities when compared with other parts of the Borough (See MOSS Volume 1, Table 5.5). It is important to take account of deficiencies in quality and range of facilities as well as deficiency in accessibility to open space. An evaluation matrix has been developed to enable a comparison of Wards on the basis of a number of factors including; open space deficiency, range of facilities, quality of open space, population per hectare of open space, deprivation, ethnicity, and accessibility. The development and design of this evaluation process is described in Appendix 4.
The evaluation matrix enables the Council to prioritise Wards for investment. Through application of the evaluation criteria, priority wards for open space investment have been identified:

- Graveney;
- Figge's Marsh;
- Hillside;
- Longthornton;
- Colliers Wood.

**Park Evaluation**

The variation in quality of parks across the Borough means that there is a need to prioritise investment in particular parks. To do this it was considered necessary to develop a park Evaluation Matrix. The development and design of this evaluation process is described in Appendix 4. The Parks Evaluation Matrix enables parks to be assessed against a number of criteria (e.g. safety & security, range of facilities, amenity).

For planning purposes and to define deficiencies in accessibility parks are defined by using the Open Space Hierarchy, however to enable an evaluation of the quality of parks for prioritisation of investment there was a need to develop a way of categorising different parks to enable parks of a similar ‘type’ to be compared.

Therefore a new typology of open spaces has been developed for the purposes of this Strategy. The new typology is based on the PPG17 typology, however the categories within the PPG17 typology have been subdivided and refined to reflect local circumstances. The typology classifies parks and open spaces according to function and the size of the open space (see figure 3.1 above).

The new typology allows the quality of open spaces to be judged against similar open spaces and allow prioritisation of investment and implementation of the Actions Plans (detailed in Section 6) to reflect local circumstances. The development of the new Open Space Typology and prioritisation framework is detailed in Appendix 4. The new typology and examples of the open spaces within the typology is set out in Table 3.1 below.
### Table 3.1 Open Space Resource Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PPG17 Typology</th>
<th>Merton Typology</th>
<th>Hierarchy classification</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parks &amp; Gardens</td>
<td>Metropolitan Park</td>
<td>Metro Park</td>
<td>60 ha</td>
<td>Mitcham Common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Park</td>
<td>District Park</td>
<td>20 – 60 ha</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wimbledon Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Sports Facility</td>
<td>Local Park</td>
<td>2 – 20 ha</td>
<td></td>
<td>Raynes Park Sports Ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Multi Use</td>
<td>Local Park</td>
<td>2 – 20 ha</td>
<td></td>
<td>Three Kings Piece Open Space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Passive Recreation</td>
<td>Local Park</td>
<td>2 – 20 ha</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cannizaro Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Open Space</td>
<td>Local Park</td>
<td>2 – 20 ha</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wandle Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Children’s Play</td>
<td>Small Local Park</td>
<td>&lt; 2 ha</td>
<td></td>
<td>All Saints Recreation Ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Passive Recreation</td>
<td>Small Local Park</td>
<td>&lt; 2 ha</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lynmouth Gardens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Multi Use</td>
<td>Small Local Park</td>
<td>&lt; 2 ha</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tamworth Farm Rec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Open Space</td>
<td>Small Local Park</td>
<td>&lt; 2 ha</td>
<td></td>
<td>Police Green Cricket Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Facilities</td>
<td>School Playing Field</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Cricket Green School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision for children and teenagers</td>
<td>Youth Facilities</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Figges Marsh Youth Shelters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allotments, community gardens and city farms</td>
<td>Allotments</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Cottenham Park Allotments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>City Farm</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Deen City Farm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cemeteries and Churchyards</td>
<td>Churchyard and Cemetery</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>St Mary’s Merton Park</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2 Demographic Trends

The population of Merton currently stands at 188,907\(^2\). This is split fairly evenly between male and females with females making up a slightly larger proportion of the population (51%).

Merton’s population is ethnically diverse, with 25% coming from ethnic minority groups. The largest single ethnic group within the Borough is the White population (White British), which makes up 64% of the population. The largest ethnic minority groups are: Asian/Asian British; Indian; and Black/Black British; Caribbean; which each account for about 4% of the population.

Ethnic minority groups are resident throughout the Borough, but there is a significant concentration of ethnic minority groups in wards in the East of the Borough. The wards of Graveney and Longthornton have large ethnic minority populations (53%, 43% respectively).

Overall the population of Merton is set to increase between now and 2011 by approximately 10,000 from its current level to 198,409\(^3\). Population will grow in all wards (except Hillside) with the largest amount of growth in the eastern wards of Lavender, Figge’s Marsh and Pollards Hill. The growth in population will continue but slow down to 2016 with a further increase of 4,142, taking the total population to 202,551. This growth is largely in the East of Borough with Phipps Bridge the largest area of growth.

The Sport England playing pitch assessment model, assumes that those over the age of six and below 55 are part of the ‘active population’. Merton’s ‘active population’ currently stands at 136,640\(^2\). This has been used to calculate likely future pitch demand and Team Generation Rates (See Appendix 1). The active population will increase to 145,860 by 2011, the largest areas of growth in active population is within the eastern wards of Phipps Bridge, Lavender, Figge’s Marsh, Pollards Hill. The wards of Hillside, Dundonald, and Colliers wood will see a slight decrease in the Active Population at this time.

Demographics are important to the provision of open space because different sections of the community have very different needs. The methodology of Open Space Needs Survey (2003) was designed to ensure that a representative sample of the Borough’s population in terms of age, sex, and ethnic group was collected. The sample of residents was drawn from across the Borough.

The information collected has shown variation in how people use open spaces depending on age and ethnic group. Trends in parks usage, and factors in the enjoyment of parks amongst groups are discussed below.

Level of Park Use

The level of park use in Merton is reasonably high with 76% of those interviewed using parks. There is no real difference in level of use between sexes; but there is some variation in levels of use for different age groups:

- The 12-15 age group has the highest percentage of users followed by 30-44;
- Over 75 years old less users but still over 50% (possibly due to accessibility difficulties);
- Levels of use of open space do vary by ethnic group with largest level of users coming from the white population. Despite the level of use amongst ethnic minorities being lower than the white population the levels are also reasonably high (61% - for all ethnic groups combined). The survey found no clear reason why park use amongst ethnic minority groups is lower than other ethnic groups.

\(^2\) Based on ONS release of Key Statistics for 2001 © ONS
\(^3\) Based on 2002 Round Based Ward Projections
Reasons for Use

People generally use parks for informal activities. The most popular reason for using a park is for exercise (e.g. jogging, walking, cycling), followed by taking the children to the playground, and using the park as a pleasant route to walk through. Enjoying nature/wildlife, walking the dog and taking part in informal sports activities are also popular park attractions. The reasons for visiting parks vary by age:

- The young (12 – 19) tend to visit for exercise, meeting friends, informal sports and some using the playground;
- In the 20 – 29 age group over half are using parks for exercise (jogging, walking, and cycling). Some are using the parks because they are a pleasant route, and some to meet friends;
- Around 40% of 30 – 44 year olds visit parks to exercise with a 1/3 of these visitors taking children to the park. Some use parks as a pleasant route;
- Over 45s still enjoy exercising in parks but numbers are decreasing. More use as a pleasant walk, for dog walking or to enjoy nature and wildlife;
- For the over 60s exercise remains the most popular attraction to parks but using it as a pleasant access route, or to enjoy nature and wildlife are also popular.

Exercise is the most popular reason for visiting a park amongst all age groups. It is highest amongst 12 – 15 but decreases in popularity amongst the 16 – 19 year olds and peaks in the 20 – 29 age group. Its popularity decreases with age. Informal sports ranks highest amongst 12 – 15 year olds. This activity decreases with age. Formal sports are most popular amongst 16 – 19 year olds. More relaxing pursuits, such as enjoyment of nature and walking through a pleasant route tend to increase with age.

The most popular reason for visiting a park across all ethnic groups is for exercise. However Black and Chinese populations cite this reason for visiting parks less than other ethnic groups.

The white British population are most likely to take part in formal sports, with the Asian community second. The Black and Chinese populations tend not to cite this as a reason for visiting parks. The Black population cite visiting parks to meet friends more than other ethnic groups.

Most people walk to open spaces, some use a car to get to open space. Those between 30 to 74 are more likely to drive than other ages. Therefore providing a range of good quality facilities throughout the Borough is important. Those under 20 almost exclusively walk to parks, some use bikes. Bus is important for those over 75 and the 20 – 29 year olds have the broadest ranges of transport modes. Few use the train.
Enjoyment of Parks

Most people enjoy the open space that they use. When asked to score (1 – 10) their level enjoyment, most respondents score over 7. However, levels of enjoyment are lower amongst the black population than all the other groups. The reasons that the black population give for scoring under three are similar to those for the population in general, lack of facilities, lack of maintenance, and dogs are a nuisance.

89% agree or strongly agree that open spaces meet their needs. There are slight variations with age, with 16 – 19 year olds least likely to agree that the open space meets their needs.

When examining the satisfaction of minority ethnic groups levels are generally the same, apart from the black population. 24% disagree that their needs are met compared to 4% for White British, 2% White Irish, 0% for Asian and 8% for the Chinese population.

What Do Users Like About Open Spaces?

When park users were asked to state what they liked about parks the most popular response was simply the fact that it is an open space. People enjoy getting out in fresh air and or connecting with nature. In terms of facilities children’s play areas were most popular, followed by various sports facilities.

People of all ages enjoy the intrinsic nature of open spaces. Those over 75 and people with disabilities particularly like them because they can get out in the fresh air. Parents with young children are attracted to play areas. Youth of 12 – 15 are more likely to refer to specific activities/facilities within a park than other age groups. 16 – 19 year olds are likely to refer to sports facilities.

Dislikes

As a whole, park users were satisfied with their open spaces. When queried 1/3 of park users couldn’t identify anything they specifically disliked.

Those park users with specific dislikes identified: nuisance from dogs; vandalism; litter; lack of facilities; youths hanging around. 14% of 12 – 15 year olds are unimpressed with the facilities in parks complaining there is nothing to do in them.

Improvements

Respondents suggested a wide range of improvements to enhance their enjoyment of Merton’s parks. Many are improvements in maintenance and management practices including:

- Clean / clear up litter;
- Clean up / prevent dog fouling;
- Control of vandalism;
- Better maintenance.

Some suggested new and improved facilities:

- More bins;
- Better play areas;
- Providing refreshments;
- More seating;
There are some variations with age 12 – 15 year olds seeking general improvements and more facilities for young people. 16 – 19 year olds would like to see improved sports facilities. Over 20s believe keeping the parks clean and better maintained are the main improvements needed.

**Encouraging use**

Park Users cited that provision of a café or restaurant, improved security, improved seating, toilet improvements/provision and new or improved play areas would encourage them to use parks more.

For all ages a café and improved security and would encourage use. 12 – 15 year olds would also be encouraged by skate area, sports facilities and play facilities. 16 – 19 year olds would also be encouraged by sports facilities. For 20 – 29 year olds Sports facilities and play facilities would encourage greater use and 30 – 44 year olds would be encouraged by play facilities. For the over 45s Café, security, seating and toilets would encourage use.

High rating for parks – Satisfaction is highest in the over 75s and lowest amongst 12 – 15 year olds, who tend to seek more formal activities or facilities (e.g. skate roller park, improved sports facilities, things for children/young.

**Non-Users of Open Space**

There are a variety of reasons why some residents do not use open spaces. Apart from various lifestyle issues respondents noted the following as why they do not use open spaces:

- No green space near (10%);
- Youths hanging about (6%);
- Poor quality facilities (4%);
- Problems with dogs (4%);
- Nothing to do in the park (4%);
- Fear of crime (4%).

Younger age groups (16 – 59) tend to cite not having time to visit parks, Those over 60 are the main group citing being housebound. 16 – 19 year olds are the main group citing having other interests (33%). The over 45 age groups refer to the fact that they have children that now grown up.

### 3.3 Future Trends

The current levels of open space use are expected to continue in the short term. The Needs Survey found that the majority of users will maintain the same level of park use over the next 6 months.

The popularity of informal activities such as walking, cycling and jogging identified in the Needs Survey, was also identified in MOSS Volume 1 (para 6.17). MOSS predicted that these activities will continue to rise in popularity in the future. Participation in these activities is expected to increase by 3 – 5% between 2001 and 2016.

MOSS Volume 3 (Para 6.23) stated existing national trends show an approximate 2% increase in sports participation (MOSS Volume 3 para 6.23). The predicted growth in participation has been used in the PPM calculations for predicting the number of future
teams (Appendix 1). Many factors influence future participation making it difficult to predict. New facilities, sports development campaigns, media coverage and national team success can all raise the popularity of pitch sports.

Participation in sport is also influenced by age, decreasing as participant's age. Life stage and family status is also important. An ageing population will tend to increase levels of non-participation, whilst delaying marriage and starting a family will have the opposite effect. Generally, with more demands on people's time due to other commitments, leisure time decreases. "Not having enough time" was a common explanation offered by survey participants for not visiting open spaces. However, time pressure could be a factor in the shift toward more informal forms of team sports like five a side football and touch rugby.

Some future trends likely to have an impact on sports pitch policy and maintenance in Merton include:

- Growth in the Borough’s ‘active population’;
- Potential growth in youth sport (currently high latent demand);
- The development of girl’s football could follow through into the women’s game.

### 3.4 Challenges and Opportunities (Facing Merton’s Open Space Network)

Many challenges and opportunities for improving the provision and management of open spaces and playing pitches will arise from the trends in open space use and evolving nature of communities. Over the next 5 years the Strategy will address these.

The popularity of open spaces and their varied use by Merton residents provides an important opportunity to raise the awareness of the contribution quality open spaces play in improving quality of life. The amount and variety of open spaces and facilities in the Borough should be promoted as important to the character of the Borough.

Satisfaction with open spaces is currently reasonably high. This approval is not universal with lower levels of satisfaction amongst young and ethnic minority groups. The challenge of meeting the open space needs of specific groups is likely to increase in future as these sections of the community expand.

Exercising is a popular informal activity in Merton’s parks. This trend is expected to continue and increase, creating pressure to ensure this activity remains attractive and accessible. Ensuring all sections of the community have access to open spaces suitable for these activities particularly to those who may find access challenging. People with disabilities or parents with young children or those without private transport must be considered when evaluating open space investment.

Although informal activities could potentially take place in most of Merton’s open spaces, if the quality of the space is poor, people will not use it. Improving the quality of grounds and facilities and addressing security concerns are therefore major future challenges.

A large proportion of people walk to parks. Therefore if the Council are to continue to meet people’s open space needs it will be important to ensure the equitable distribution of quality parks and facilities throughout the Borough.
Merton’s population is growing increasing pressure on existing open spaces. With increased demand for spaces that support informal activities and an expected increase in sports participation could result in conflict between users. Without careful planning of open space improvements residents will compete for more space to engage in the activity of their choice.

Merton’s ethnic population is increasing as a proportion of the Borough population. Increasing use and satisfaction with open spaces by ethnic minorities will require the involvement of these communities in the planning and management of open spaces.

There will be a need to provide for the potential growth in women’s and youth pitch sports. The growth of the female sport will depend largely on the actions that are within the MOSS. For example introduction of more female changing facilities may increase female participation. However at present women are less likely to participate in formal sports, and there is growing female participation in ‘indoor recreational’ activities such as going to the gym, ‘keep fit’ classes and yoga. There will be a need to ensure that women’s recreational needs are properly addressed.

There will be an increasing need for more sports pitches, as the active population grows and participation increase (approx 2%). In terms of how much pressure and where this pressure will be, this is set out in Appendix 1. The current demographic trends will have an effect on planning open space and sports and recreation provision. It will be crucial to take account of these trends and continue to monitor these trends in the future.
Issues

4.1 Introduction

The following issues are derived from surveys of the open space resource and consultation with users and Merton residents.

4.2 Key Issues

Improving the Range and Quality of Open Spaces

The London Borough of Merton is one of the greenest boroughs in Greater London. Sixty-seven parks cover 677 hectares representing 18% of Merton’s total area. Given the large amount of green space Merton residents also enjoy a high ratio of open space to population compared to other boroughs with 251 people per hectare of open space.

Merton’s wide variety of parks offers an abundance of recreation experiences. Metropolitan and District Parks offer a range of open spaces, sports pitches and pavilions, and natural and cultural heritage features. Local parks are smaller and more accessible but provide a similar range of facilities across a number of different parks. Small parks can feature nature conservation areas or neighbourhood parks with space to walk the dog or kick a ball.

The challenge for open space provision in Merton is to improve the range and quality of open spaces equitably across the Borough. While it is impossible to transplant historical or cultural features or hold events and celebrations on unsuitable open spaces it is a realistic aim of the strategy to improve community access to certain facilities.

Quality improvements to the grounds and facilities will have a significant impact on residents’ enjoyment of any park. The open space strategy provides tools to enable the prioritisation of investment and improved management directing improvements to where they will best meet the MOSS vision and outcomes. The strategy also provides a solid framework for integrating with the aims of partner agencies and accessing new funding opportunities.

Providing a Variety of Open Space Experiences and Facilities Equitably Across the Borough

While the Borough enjoys the third highest population to open space ratio in Greater London, the distribution of and access to these spaces varies widely across the Borough. To provide every resident of the Borough with a choice of quality open spaces and associated facilities, Merton’s open spaces must be accessible and responsive to the needs of the residents who use them.

Realities of funding and staffing dictate that decisions regarding the provision of facilities across the Borough must be assessed against detailed assessments of need and potential use.
Resident Surveys have concluded that residents generally visit their closest open space most often. Therefore investment in the small and local parks to improve the availability of facilities for active and passive recreation will have a significant impact on residents’ quality of life.

**Protecting Open Space from Inappropriate Development (Including Development Adjacent to Open Space).**

Open spaces, while protected from development in the UDP, have recently come under pressure for development for non-open space uses. The UDP provides the basis for consideration of such developments, and the Open Space Strategy that provides supplementary advice to the UDP will seek to resist the loss of open space. Where an open space is no longer required for its existing open space use, there will be a need to assess whether it is required for another open space use. Any loss of the open space resource is permanent and sets precedent for further fragmentation of the resource. Planning policies and their implementation must be reviewed to ensure their effectiveness in protecting open spaces from development. However policies should enable changes to the open space network where this will meet identified needs of the community.

It is important to ensure that development adjacent to open spaces does not adversely affect the amenity, quality or utility of the park. It is also important to ensure future opportunities are not foreclosed by short-sighted developments.

**Ensuring Open Space Experiences are Relevant to All Members of the Community – Especially Youth, Ethnic Minorities and Disabled Users.**

Open spaces provide an essential setting for social interaction and public life. Care must be taken in their planning, design and management to ensure that they are relevant to the needs and aspirations of all members of the community. All members of the community must be able to enjoy access and use of these public spaces. By planning for the needs of particular groups (for example youth, ethnic minorities and the disabled) in the community and anticipating potential conflicts LB Merton can maximise the enjoyment of all park users.

**Young People**

Young people are often blamed for reducing the quality of others’ park visits. They are held responsible for damage to public property through graffiti and vandalism and they sometimes intimidate (either by action or perception) other park users. Lacking a voice in community life and council decision making, young people are often marginalized when planning for open space facilities and management.

Through these observations it may be assumed that young people are expressing a desire for appropriate facilities responsive to their needs. They have a desire to be included in decision making processes and perhaps the management and maintenance of specific open spaces. Without investment in safe spaces to congregate and interact with their peers, young people will continue to utilise (and abuse) open spaces and facilities to the detriment of all park users.

The Merton Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (MNRS), currently under development, aims to narrow the deprivation gap between East and West Merton. Consultation on the MNRS has acknowledged the shortage of facilities for youth and the links with anti-social behaviour.
**Ethnic Minorities**

Merton is an ethically diverse Borough. However, the Merton Open Space Needs Survey identified that there was a higher usage of parks amongst the white population than other ethnic groups. This was not attributed to any single factor and there was no evidence to suggest that it is due to a fear of crime or racial harassment.

While any disparity between ethnic and white participation statistics for parks visits or sport participation is small, it is important to acknowledge cultural differences and needs in the types of open space experiences the council is providing.

**Disabled Users**

People with disabilities themselves or those with a family member with a disability are one of the groups most likely to use parks and open spaces. While this is encouraging, disabled users represent a challenge for open space planning and design to make them more enjoyable. Facilities that are responsive to the needs of those with mobility and visual and mental disabilities greatly benefit not only disabled people but also their family members and the wider community.

**Increasing the Accessibility of Parks to Pedestrians, Cyclists and Disabled Users.**

Getting to, and around, Merton’s open spaces, is perhaps the most important factor determining people’s choice, use and enjoyment of parks. Given the dominance of the motor vehicle in everyday life, parks offer an important opportunity to escape the noise, degraded air quality and the visual intrusion of cars and roads.

Merton’s largest and most well equipped and resourced parks are all accessible by car and offer plenty of parking. It is important that car parking facilities are provided at the larger parks especially where public transport alternatives are insufficient to meet current or expected demand. However, access to local parks by walking and cycling will promote a better distribution of facilities across the Borough’s wards and encourage people to use alternatives to private cars.

Encouraging people to access parks on foot and by bicycle will require investment in appropriate facilities (improved paths and signage, bike stands, shelters, security) and ensuring safe access points and paths that do not adversely affect the safety and enjoyment of the park by pedestrians.

People with disabilities who are park users should be able to access and enjoy all open spaces in the Borough. Removing obstacles to the mobility and sight impaired would encourage more use of the particular park.
Integrating Open Spaces into Their Urban Setting Improving Amenity and Regeneration Opportunities.

Open spaces provide relief from the built environment. Trees, landscaping, gardens, paths and formal sitting areas all provide an attractive backdrop to living and working areas where people can congregate, escape the urban environment, appreciate nature and engage in active recreation.

The unique identity of the Borough is defined by the communal spaces that provide distinctive settings for events and social interactions. Historical and cultural heritage features, unique landscaping and nature conservation areas all represent opportunities to structure and integrate urban planning and design.

Valuing open spaces as an essential element in the design of the urban area will help make Merton a great place to live, work and learn. Development control policies must reflect a desire to protect and improve the amenity of open spaces and prevent their loss and degradation through incremental and unimaginative (re)development projects.

Improving Safety and Security in Parks.

Users’ perception of the safety and security of a park is greatly influenced by, but not limited to, observations of design, the appearance and behaviour of other users and evidence of damage and graffiti. For a park to attract and retain visitors it is essential that open spaces are welcoming and friendly spaces where people can relax and enjoy themselves.

Perceived threats to personal safety are greatly reduced by improvements in lighting, paths, increased staffing and surveillance, and better quality facilities that are actively managed and maintained.

Threatening behaviour from young people using the park as a gathering place creates a significant deterrent to some members of the public from using the parks. The issue will not disappear by simply removing the young people and enforcing their permanent exile. It remains that young people are disenfranchised from their society and have a need for places for social interaction and recreation just like everybody else. Working with young people and relevant agencies to assess their open space needs may improve their mischievous stereotype and improve their respect for open spaces and their facilities.
4.3 **Key Playing Pitch Issues**

The Playing Pitch Assessment revealed a number of issues around the provision and quality of pitches in Merton. Playing pitches are a vital community resource facing significant challenges to their effective and efficient management. Pressures range from a growing and evolving population, the shifting popularity of different pitch sports, ongoing maintenance of associated equipment and facilities and consistent enforcement of access and charging policies.

Investment decisions in sports pitches must consider the future needs of Merton’s residents. Growth and changes in the population and the popularity of various sports manipulate the demand for additional pitches, courts and associated facilities. Demand for pitches and facilities is also driven by trends in female and ethnic sports participation. When responding to the requirements of female sports participants, issues of design, safety and security become very important in encouraging healthy lifestyles for all Merton residents.

While a full range of facilities are available across the Borough, their quality varies considerably depending on their location. The Strategy aims to improve the provision and standard of sporting facilities equitably across the Borough. The Council believes that all Merton residents should have access to a variety of quality sports facilities that meet their recreation requirements.

Frontline park staff are essential to the successful implementation of the Strategy objectives. Currently parks are understaffed. Staff in the parks are the “human face” of the Council, engaging directly with the community to respond to complaints and vandalism, provide security, enforce charging and access policies and maintain and manage pitch surfaces and facilities. Any additional pressure on parks staff from new facilities or responsibilities should be addressed in the planning stage. Including maintenance plans in the approval of any capital projects would address this issue.

4.4 **Demand Implications of Issues**

- More quality open spaces
- More accessible spaces
- More pitch sports
- Youth facilities
- Improved security
- Increased staffing
- Equitable distribution of quality facilities according to need (both by space and ward).
Open Space Vision, Outcomes and Principles

5.1 Purpose of the Vision

The purpose of the MOSS vision is to provide a framework to achieve a “Safe, Clean and Green” open space network (both public & private) through developing a common understanding of the open space needs and demands, issues, problems and solutions and a collective commitment to achieving this vision within a 5 year timeframe.

5.2 Vision for the Merton Open Space Network

The vision has been developed through extensive consultation and assessment of current and future open space needs.

The vision incorporates LB Merton’s vision “to make Merton a great place to live work and learn” and its strategic objectives encompassing education, environment, social inclusion, regeneration and equity.

Figure 5.1 The Open Space Vision For Merton Is:

- Provides a range of open spaces and recreational experiences
- Protects and enhances natural conservation areas
- Enhances people's quality of life through contributing to attractive and healthy living
- Protects valued elements of Merton’s unique identity
- Is representative of Merton’s natural and cultural heritage features and landscapes
- Offers opportunities to learn about the natural environment
- Maximises public access
- Provides a diversity of accessible natural areas

A Safe Clean and Green Merton Open Space Network that is sustainable and...
5.3 Outcomes Sought from the Vision

To ensure a successful Merton Open Space Strategy, the vision needs to be translated into an agreed set of Outcomes to be recognised when developing Guiding Principles for developing the Action Plans.

The following Outcomes sought were developed from the Merton Open Space Study, refined as a result of public consultation responses (see WS Atkins (2002) Merton Open Space Study Volumes 1-3 and Appendix 3).

They outline what will be achieved through developing a linked and integrated open space network. The eight outcomes integrate the key themes of the Council’s strategic vision and apply them to the vision for the open space network.

These outcomes are not prioritised and their individual relevance will depend on the context and nature of their application within the MOSS Action Plan.

Table 5.1 Open Space Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Outcome Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Ensure public access for all Merton residents to a full range of open spaces including natural conservation areas, sports pitches, recreation facilities and heritage sites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>A commitment to community involvement in the design, planning and management of the full range of open spaces that are relevant to the values of different communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Provide opportunities for learning about the natural environment and the value of recreation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Protection and restoration of significant and representative natural habitats and ecosystems including the promotion of biodiversity throughout the Borough.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity</td>
<td>The distribution of open space funding across the Borough relevant to the needs and aspirations of local communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Lifestyle</td>
<td>Provision of a range of recreational and leisure opportunities within the open space network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage and Culture</td>
<td>Protection and enhancement of natural and cultural heritage features and landscapes which are representative of Merton’s unique sense of place, history, setting and identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regeneration</td>
<td>Enhancement and protection of open space which increases both the amenity and the quality of life in both working and living environments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.4 Guiding Principles for implementation

Guiding principles have been developed to translate the objectives, vision and outcomes sought into statements that will assist in planning, developing and managing open space opportunities across the Borough.

Table 5.2 Guiding Principles for Implementation

| Principle 1 | Open spaces will be managed in an integrated way to achieve equitable open space opportunities |
| Principle 2 | Use and provision of open space will be managed on a sustainable basis |
| Principle 3 | Communities will be engaged in the planning for and design of open space |
| Principle 4 | Open space will be of primary importance in the design of urban areas and the management of regeneration schemes |
| Principle 5 | Innovative solutions will be encouraged at all levels of the planning for and design of open space. |
| Principle 6 | Efficient use of resources will be encouraged through the awareness and adoption of new management and maintenance techniques and technologies. |
| Principle 7 | Integrate lifecycle management and maintenance planning into open space capital projects. |

Photo: Cannon Hill Common
Action and Implementation Plans

6.1 Introduction

The Action Plans in Section 6.3 set out what is required to achieve the Vision and Outcomes of the MOSS. There are 6 key action types:

1. Policy and Guidelines;
2. Community Engagement;
3. Partnerships;
4. Parks Improvements;
5. Playing Pitches;
6. Research and Monitoring.

The Action Plans have been integrated into a logical sequence for implementation in Section 6.3. This implementation plan is also presented schematically, showing relationships between projects, in Appendix 6.

6.2 Implementing the MOSS Action Plans

Successful implementation of the MOSS is dependent both on adherence to the framework provided in the MOSS document and on the establishment of a dedicated team to administer the action plans. It is envisaged that the implementation team would have two levels.

First, a Coordinating Executive Group (CEG) should be established. The CEG will be led by a political champion from the Environment and Regeneration portfolios and will include in its membership senior management of Planning and Cultural Services. A time and resource commitment from partnership agencies would be desirable. It is expected that this group would meet quarterly.

Reporting to the CEG would be the Open Space Steering Group. This group would be staffed by officers responsible for the implementation and administration of the MOSS. This group would build upon established links between the Planning and Cultural Services and provide a forum for project planning, implementation and review. Where necessary, staff from other departments and agencies may be invited to join or report to this group. It is expected that this group would meet monthly.

It is intended that the Merton Open Space Strategy will remain the central document for advancing Merton’s Open Space Vision. Completed action plan projects will, where appropriate, become supplementary documents to the Strategy. Upon review of the document in 5 years time the objectives, outcomes and action plans will reflect implementation progress and evolving pressures on open spaces.

Section 6.7 presents a number of funding options available for open space protection and provision and acquisition of new facilities.

The final section of Part Five sets out how the Coordinating Executive Group (CEG) proposes to monitor progress on the Implementation Plan.
## 6.3 Action Plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.</th>
<th>Establish the Community Forum</th>
<th>Community Engagement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcomes</strong></td>
<td>Community, Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Planning and Leisure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project Description</strong></td>
<td>Establish a community forum to raise awareness of the issues facing Merton’s open spaces and to encourage community involvement in addressing open space issues. With the number of representative groups in the MOSS, an annual forum would be a valuable tool for getting diverse groups together to network and discuss the issues.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Forum will be administered by Leisure Services</td>
<td>The meetings will be held Quarterly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Priorities</strong></td>
<td>We are establishing the Community Forum to ensure our open spaces reflect the community’s diverse needs and provide them with an opportunity to play a greater role in the ongoing planning design and management. The following are some of the groups we intend to engage through the Friends Forum and other specific projects.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Friends groups</strong></td>
<td>Work will continue on encouraging the establishment of new Friends groups and the agreement of expectations between the Cultural Services team and individual Friends groups. The Friends groups are acknowledged as a vital resource connecting the Council with the Community. However, in order to be effective and contribute constructively to the quality of the park experience for all Merton residents, there must be an understanding of the needs of particular parks. Capital projects and fundraising must be assessed alongside the funding and resources required to ensure maintained community investment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnic Communities</strong></td>
<td>We will work with ethnic communities and Joint Consultative Council (JCC) to ensure all Merton residents have equitable access to open space and sporting facilities that meet their expectations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local Residents</strong></td>
<td>We will ensure open space reflects the community's diverse needs and provides them with an opportunity to play a greater role in the ongoing planning and management of open space.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Engaging young people in Planning, design and management of parks.</strong></td>
<td>Engaging youth is key to the future of Merton’s parks. If young people are aware of the importance of this vital public asset and have an active part in the decision making process they will take care of parks now and in the future. The community forum will integrate with youth projects in LB Merton or other agencies to engage young people in the planning, design and management of parks to better provide for their needs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Integration</strong></td>
<td>Connects Partnership and Community Engagement Actions and will provide a consultative forum for implementing action plan projects.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 6.3.1 Monitoring Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.</th>
<th><strong>Review Playing Pitch and Pavilion Quality Audit Annually</strong></th>
<th>Playing Pitches Research and Monitoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcomes</strong></td>
<td>ALL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Leisure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Project Description**

Review of the playing pitch and pavilion quality assessments will provide a useful benchmark for measuring progress toward the development of this strategy. This needs to be completed to update the MOSS evaluation matrix and to monitor specific improvements in parks and sports facilities.

Review of the Playing Pitch Assessment will acknowledge the variation in sports team numbers and evolving trends of popularity amongst the different sports.

**Priorities**

Playing Pitch and Pavilion assessments to be undertaken at the discretion of the Parks Manager.

**Integration**

Ensure data is entered into the Quality Spread Sheets.

Refer to Quality Assessment instructions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3.</th>
<th><strong>Evaluation, Standards, Prioritisation and Monitoring Matrix</strong></th>
<th>Research and Monitoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcomes:</strong></td>
<td>ALL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Leisure and Planning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Project Description**

Improve the functionality, application and review of the Open Space Evaluation, Standards, Prioritisation and Monitoring Matrix.

The evaluation matrix amalgamates information from a variety open space information sources. Parks and wards are scored against a variety of criteria including amenity, range of facilities, population pressure on the open space accessibility etc.

The matrix is an effective tool for examining options for investment or maintenance within parks or wards and for evaluating planning proposals against the outcomes of the MOSS.

The project would focus on making the Evaluation matrix easy to use for all planning and leisure staff.

**Priorities**

Establish the link with the spatial information contained in the GIS database from the Merton Open Spaces Study.

**Integration**

Atkins MOSS database

GIS database

Use to plan funding for Parks Improvement Actions.
4. **Develop the existing Open Space GIS database to improve implementation and monitoring of the strategy.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>ALL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Planning and Leisure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Project Description**

This project will integrate the existing MOSS database (developed by WS Atkins) with the Evaluation Matrix to improve place based open space queries and to monitor the supply of open space and provision of facilities.

Again, the front end functionality of the system is key to its widespread use by staff in both the Planning and Cultural Services. A user interface should be developed with input from all potential users and data vendors.

**Priorities**

Proposed system architecture is included as Appendix 5.

**Integration**

- Evaluation, Standards and Prioritisation Matrix
- MOSS Study
- Pitch and Pavilion Assessments
- GLA – new LDD monitoring system has come into place this includes monitoring of open space information.
- GLA – developing a London GIS database of open space.

5. **Develop performance indicators for evaluating Open Space and Facilities Performance and Quality.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>ALL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Leisure and Planning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Project Description**

Performance indicators are an excellent tool for evaluating the Council’s progress toward implementing the vision and outcomes of the strategy.

Performance indicators should be easily measurable and any improvements or reductions in performance should be easily communicated.

**Priorities**

In the Evaluation Matrix the following quality indicators could be further developed to provide more accurate quality monitoring:

- Community
- Amenity
- Overall Quality
- Pitch
- Pavilion
- Range of Facilities
- Safety and Security
- Vandalism

**Integration**

A lot of this work has been completed as part of the development of the Evaluation Matrix. At the project manager’s discretion, certain elements of the Evaluation Matrix may be used in their current state or developed to increase their effectiveness in monitoring progress toward the vision of the MOSS.
### Action and Implementation Plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6.</th>
<th><strong>Set Provision Standards for inclusion in Parks Management Plans.</strong></th>
<th>Policy and Guidelines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td><strong>ALL</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Planning and Leisure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Project Description**

To ensure that open space needs are met there is a need to develop local open space standards, for accessibility, quantity and quality. Merton already has some open space provision standards (see appendix 4) including those for accessibility, however there is a need to set the following open space standards:

1. Set quality standard for each type of park within the new Merton Open Space Typology (see appendix 4)
2. Playing pitch standards – quantity, quality and accessibility. Appendix 1 paragraph 3.9 sets out some recommended standards
4. Cemeteries (quantity standard) following completion of research Action 21.
5. Play facilities standards based on LEAP and NEAP criteria.

Standards should be set out in the LDF, and they would be adopted through the LDF process.

**Integration opportunities**

Should be integrated into the prioritisation and monitoring functions of the GIS / Prioritisation.


Performance Indicators.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7.</th>
<th><strong>Develop individual management plans for parks</strong></th>
<th>Parks Improvements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td><strong>ALL</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High ~ Year 3</td>
<td>Leisure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Project Description**

It is envisaged that the integration of the results of actions above will be merged into practical management plans based on individual park functions and community aspirations.

**Priorities**

The following park groups are priorities for management plan development.

1. Flagship Parks
2. Elite Sports Grounds
3. Amenity Parks

**Integration**

This project will integrate the experiences of Leisure Management parks improvement over the first 3 years of implementing the Merton Open Space Strategy.
6.3.2 Funding Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8.</th>
<th>Review funding policies, sources and priorities for park maintenance</th>
<th>Parks Improvements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>Equity, Accessibility, Regeneration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Leisure and Planning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Project Description**

Existing funding policies will be reviewed to determine:

- Sources of funding (including s106);
- Collection of revenue and its associated costs;
- Destination of parks revenue reinvestment;
- Capital funding sources.

**Priorities**

Maximise opportunities for non council tax funding for capital and revenue expenditure. A number of potential partnership organisations to be targeted to provide additional funding for sports, heritage and nature conservation facilities and initiatives.

**Integration**

Related to projects:
- Development of Revenue and funding strategy.
- Development of Local Development Framework.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9.</th>
<th>Revenue and Funding Strategy</th>
<th>Playing Pitches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>Access, Equity, Community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Leisure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Project Description**

Develop a revenue and funding strategy for the management of playing pitches and pavilions.

**Integration**

- Review the charging policies
- Develop service level agreements with clubs
- Set standards for playing pitches
- Review of funding policies and sources.
### 6.3.3 Parks Improvements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10.</th>
<th><strong>Increase frontline staffing in parks</strong></th>
<th>Parks Improvements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcomes</strong></td>
<td>ALL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Leisure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Project Description**
Staffing levels in the parks have fallen consistently over time. This has led to decreased quality of parks grounds and amenity features, poorly managed facilities, and a declining standard of playing pitch surfaces. Low staffing levels removes the “public face” of the council and reduces the public perception of safety and security in the parks.

The lack of human resources to maintain the parks to high quality standard has reduced staff morale significantly.

Investment in human resources is fundamental to the implementation of the MOSS. Options for increasing the staffing levels will need to be investigated thoroughly against the objectives and outcomes of the MOSS.

**Priorities**
Provide a “public face” of Merton Council through our parks.

**Integration**
Related to all parks improvement projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>11.</th>
<th><strong>Upgrade Pitch and Pavilion Facilities and Develop Relationships with Sports Clubs.</strong></th>
<th>Parks Improvements Partnerships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcomes</strong></td>
<td>Community, Education, Healthy Lifestyle, Access.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Leisure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Project Description**
The Open Space Study and Playing Pitch Assessment provide substantial detail on specific facilities needing improvement.

The upgrading of facilities should be prioritised using the Parks Evaluation Matrix and the Ward Assessments. This will ensure that works programmes can implement the desired outcomes of the MOSS equitably across the borough.

Develop Memoranda of Understanding between Merton and sports clubs who are keen to get involved in the management of their pavilion and open space.

- Encourage a sense of ownership
- Establish better relationship between the Council and sports teams
- Create stakeholders with an interest in the ground and Merton’s policies to improve it.

Set clear expectations of conduct from the Council and teams.
**Priorities**
This action will initially aim to increase the quality scores of all Sports Pitches and Pavilions to “Good” over the 5 years.

The detailed prioritisation of these projects is at the discretion of the Parks Manager.

1. Upgrade these pitches to “Good” quality:
   (see Appendix 1 of the Strategy detail on pitch quality criteria).

2. Drainage Improvement Projects:
   *Abbey Recreation Ground, Colliers Wood, Dundonald Recreation Ground, Morden Park*  
   (priorities derived from Playing Pitch Assessment Summary – Cancellation Score)

3. Upgrade these pavilions to excellent overall quality:
   *Abbey Recreation Ground; Colliers Wood; Cottenham Park; Drax Playing Fields; Dundonald Recreation Ground; Haydons Road Recreation Ground; John Innes; Joseph Hood; Morden Recreation Ground.*
   (see Appendix 1 of the Strategy for detail on pavilion quality criteria).

4. Upgrade these court facilities:
   *Drax Playing Fields, John Innes Recreation Ground, Joseph Hood, Sir Joseph Hood Memorial Playing Fields, King Georges Field.*

**Integration**
Related to overall park grounds and facilities improvements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>12. Upgrade Parks Facilities</th>
<th>Parks Improvements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes: Equity, Healthy Lifestyle, Accessibility</td>
<td>Medium Leisure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Project Description**
The Open Space Study and Playing Pitch Assessment provide significant detail on specific facilities that need improvement.

The upgrading of facilities should be prioritised using the Parks Evaluation Matrix and the Ward Assessments. This will ensure that works programmes can implement the desired outcomes of the MOSS equitably across the borough.

**Priorities**
These parks have been identified as needing specific facilities upgraded.

See Appendix 1, Evaluation Matrix and the MOSS database for detail on specific facilities improvement needs.

**Integration**
Playing pitch and pavilion facilities upgrades.
### 6.3.4 Other Improvements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>13.</th>
<th>Historic Landscape Restoration Projects</th>
<th>Parks Improvements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcomes</strong></td>
<td>ALL</td>
<td>Leisure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Project Description</strong></td>
<td>There are currently four Historic Parks Restoration Plans. These are produced with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Priorities</strong></td>
<td>John Innes Park</td>
<td>The John Innes Society has recently been awarded £18,000 from the Living Spaces fund to carry out some replanting in Morden Park.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Morden Park</td>
<td>Improvements to the “mound” in Morden Park. A £20,000 grant from English Heritage through the National Monuments Scheme. Other Historic Parks Restoration Projects are planned for Ravensbury Park and Wimbledon Park.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>14.</th>
<th>Vandalism and Security</th>
<th>Parks Improvements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcomes</strong></td>
<td>Community, Healthy Lifestyle, Equity</td>
<td>Leisure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Project Description</strong></td>
<td>The problem of graffiti and vandalism is complex. It is related to a number of social, economic and environmental factors that each need to be tackled in concert to reduce its occurrence. While enforcement is absolutely essential to deter the perpetrators, improvements in park design etc may be effective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Develop service level agreements for responding to vandalism and security concerns.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Vandalism to park facilities must be followed up quickly to prevent a slip into disrepair.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Service level agreements should detail the expected procedure and response time for repairing damaged facilities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Priorities</strong></td>
<td>Vandalism and Safety and Security improvements aim to improve all open spaces to an evaluation score of at least 3 (good) in the Evaluation Matrix by 2010.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Priority Parks and Open Spaces (scoring less than 3 in the Evaluation Matrix) for addressing Vandalism include:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pavilion Vandalism is a serious problem at:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Haydons Road Recreation Ground, John Innes Rec, Morden Playing Fields, Morden Rec, Raynes Park, Wimbledon Park (see Playing Pitch Quality Assessments, Vandalism score) for more information.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Priority Parks for improving Safety and Security (scoring less than 3 in the Evaluation Matrix) include:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wandle Meadow, Moreton Green, Drax Playing Fields, Mitcham Sports, Long Bolsted Rec, Tamworth Farm, Lynmouth Gardens.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Vandalism and Security continued**

**Integration**
Integrate with Parks Improvements Projects. Ensure vandalism prevention and security enhancement measures are included in project design and

Work with Police, Merton Partnership Against Crime (MPAC), and other enforcement agencies to target graffiti and vandalism in parks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>15. + Habitat Creation</th>
<th>Partnerships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcomes:</strong> Environment</td>
<td>Medium Planning and Leisure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Project Description**
Investigate with the Environment Agency the potential for habitat creation along river corridors, and potential for river restoration.

Rivers provide a valuable nature conservation and leisure resource. However in many urban areas they have been neglected or artificially channelled, which has led to increased risk of flooding.

**Priorities**
Identify key partners and the variety of information, skills, funding opportunities and management techniques.

Strengthen relationship with the GLA.

**Integration**
The Environment Agency has identified areas of ‘Immediate Opportunity for River Restoration’, within Merton. The Council and other partners will work with the Environment Agency to investigate and prioritise potential projects, to improve habitat or restore river environments to a more natural state.

Mayor’s 100 spaces programme.
### 16. Unofficial Use, Revenue Collection and Enforcement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Playing Pitches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equity, Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Ongoing</td>
<td>Leisure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Project Description**

Investigate measures to deter unofficial use of playing pitches.

Unofficial use is a significant problem in both Merton’s parks and private facilities. This contributes to pitch surface damage, abuse of facilities and undermining of the pitch charging structure.

A staff presence in parks to deter unofficial use and to enforce the booking and payment for playing pitches may deter unofficial use. However, other measures such as education and greater cooperation with sports clubs could provide some benefit.

**Improve revenue collection and enforcement**

To maintain the integrity of the charging policies for Merton’s playing pitches and court facilities etc, it is essential that revenue collection is strictly enforced.

This will require staff to monitor playing pitches to ensure staff presence and cooperation with teams and individuals.

**Priorities**

- Link to unofficial score on pitch quality assessment summary spreadsheet.
- Unofficial use is currently identified as a problem at Abbey Recreation Ground, Beverley Meads, Drax Playing Fields, Haydon’s Road Recreation Ground, Dundonald Recreation Ground, King Georges Field, Morden Park, Raynes Park and Three Kings Piece.
  - Procedural
  - Staff Training
  - Systems in place in enforce bylaws

**Integration**

Sports team partnerships through action

### 17. Improve Accessibility of Sports Grounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Playing Pitches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access and Equity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Planning and Leisure with Transport</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Project Description**

- Dialogue with public transport operators in needed to determine flexibility of routes for matches and practice.
- Improvements to entrances, signposting and pedestrian access
- Provision of cycling facilities (racks, ramps, etc)
- Identity grounds for improvement through the evaluation matrix.

**Priorities**

Bus routes liaise with transport.
6.3.5 *Planning, Research and Policy*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>18.</th>
<th>Develop Open Spaces Component of the Merton Local Development Framework.</th>
<th>Policy and Guidelines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Outcomes**  
ALL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High</th>
<th>Plans and Projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Project Description**  
The Local Development Framework is Merton’s new land use planning tool. Incorporating policies to protect and improve open spaces.

**Review UDP policies**  
Land use planning is crucial for the implementation of the Strategy. Open space policies in the UDP will be reviewed as the council moves toward producing an LDF to ensure that they reflect the MOSS vision, objectives and principles.

The review of UDP policies will also investigate how our planning policies can secure the public use of Private Sports Pitches for the future.

**Provision in New Developments**  
New development places additional pressure on existing open space. The aim of seeking open space or contributions towards open space provision or enhancement is to ensure that there is sufficient open space to meet needs within a defined area.

The policy will define:
1. Open space provision standards and distance thresholds;
2. Circumstances for providing open space ‘on site’ as part of new development;
3. Calculations for developer contributions;
4. Minimum acceptable size of provision.

The outcome of this project will be greater certainty to developers and the council on expectations for the provision of new open spaces or the improvement of existing spaces.

**Design Guidelines for Open Spaces**  
Well designed open spaces can improve the quality of urban environments. LB Merton has produced design guidelines that will assist developers in understanding the Council’s aims in terms of design quality of open spaces and creating a sense of place. The documents include:
1. Design SPG (September 2004)

**Integration**  
Engage property developers in the development of Provision Standards and Design Guidelines.

Planning and Leisure to collaborate on the Development of Park Management Plans.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>19</th>
<th><strong>Green Corridors</strong></th>
<th>Research and Monitoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcomes</strong></td>
<td>Environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Medium</strong></td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project Description</strong></td>
<td>Investigate the potential to create a green corridor in the east of the borough including sites at:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Streatham Park Cemetery;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Long Bolstead Rec;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Rowan Road Rec;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Westminster School;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Rowan and Brenley Playing Fields.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Priorities</strong></td>
<td>Link to Westminster Sports Ground / Rowan and Brenley</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Integration</strong></td>
<td>Related to Habitat Creation (16).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>20.</th>
<th><strong>Research the value of cemeteries and the need for future cemetery provision</strong></th>
<th>Research and Monitoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcomes</strong></td>
<td>Access</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ongoing</strong></td>
<td>Leisure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project Description</strong></td>
<td>Cemeteries are part of the open space resource of the Borough and therefore the MOSS vision is applicable to them.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cemeteries have a fundamental societal role providing burial space. They also have significant amenity, nature conservation, recreation and cultural heritage values.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment whether there are sufficient cemeteries to meet demand, the value of cemeteries, and the role they play in the open space network is required to innovatively plan for future facilities in the borough. It is envisaged that a revised version of the MOSS will include cemetery provision and management.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Priorities</strong></td>
<td>Capacity calculation, landscaping, maintenance and quality.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Integration</strong></td>
<td>Local Development Framework development.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>20b.</th>
<th><strong>Research existing provision of allotment space and assess local need</strong></th>
<th>Research and Monitoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcomes</strong></td>
<td>Access</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ongoing</strong></td>
<td>Leisure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project Description</strong></td>
<td>Allotments are part of the open space resource of the Borough, and as such the MOSS vision is applicable to them. However, it is recognised that information on the quality, accessibility and value of allotments are limited. There is also a lack of information about the demand / need for allotments. It is envisaged that a revised version of the MOSS will include allotments.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Integration</strong></td>
<td>Local Development Framework</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.3.6 Marketing and Partnerships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Develop Relationships and Monitor open space provision and planning in adjacent boroughs.</th>
<th>Research and Monitoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outcomes Equity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Planning and Leisure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Project Description**

Open space provision and policies in neighbouring boroughs have a significant impact on Merton’s parks and open spaces. If adjacent boroughs are reducing the amount of open space or specific facilities within their borough, residents will travel to other areas to continue with their activities.

Further engagement with adjacent boroughs at officer level to encourage cross boundary partnerships and strategic planning.

This project is closely related to the collection of information regarding cross boundary pressure on Merton’s open space resource. By building on existing working relationships with adjacent boroughs the flow of information and ideas will encourage goodwill and a shared vision with other boroughs. There may also be potential for joint projects.

Take account of supply and demand issues in adjacent boroughs and participate in their consultation processes. Also form partnerships with adjacent boroughs to plan effectively for new and improved facilities.

**Priorities**

- Identify open space planners in other boroughs
- Provide feedback to adjacent borough consultation exercises.

**Integration**

- Local development framework planning
- Sports Facilities

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Schools programme</th>
<th>Partnerships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outcomes Environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Leisure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Project Description**

Develop a partnership programme for schools to encourage appreciation of the value of open space.

Schools represent a significant asset for protecting parks, their facilities and features. By encouraging children to appreciate nature through tree planting programmes and other similar schemes, a generation of children will have a special connection and appreciation of their local parks and their flora and fauna.

**Priorities**

To be defined

**Integration**

To be defined
### Local Business Partnership

**Outcomes**  Community and Regeneration  
Medium 2-3  Leisure and Planning  

**Project Description**  
Develop partnerships with local businesses  
Merton’s first community plan outlines actions to support local business including: Reducing traffic congestion and improving public transport; Regenerating Merton’s town centres; Encouraging job creation; Encouraging new companies to come to Merton; Improving the skills of local people to take opportunities for better jobs.  
Developing partnerships with local businesses would encourage businesses to value the importance of open spaces to the Merton Economy.  

**Priorities**  
To be defined  

**Integration**  
To be defined  

### Work with Private Sports Facilities Owners

**Outcomes**  Access, Community, Healthy Lifestyle, Regeneration  
Ongoing  Planning and Leisure  

**Project Description**  
Work with open space landowners to achieve quality improvements to open space and meet the open space needs of the community.  
Ensure that pitches currently ‘secured for public use’ but privately owned are secured for community use for the foreseeable future.  
Table 2.1 in Appendix 1 sets out pitches in secured public use (unrestricted public access). Many are in private ownership. If current access arrangements change this could lead to a shortfall in pitch supply. It is therefore crucial to seek ways of securing public access through legal arrangements / partnership arrangements. This issue will be explored through the development of the Merton Local Development Framework.  
There are some open spaces within the Borough that are currently either not used for their existing purpose or have come under pressure for redevelopment. The Council will seek to establish partnerships with owners to plan how the future use of the open space can best meet the needs of the community and the aims of the MOSS.  

**Priorities**  
The sites that are a high priority with regards this action include:  
- LESSA Playing Field  
- Merton College Playing Field  
- Sun Alliance Sports Ground  
And following the approach outlined in EMOSS, the following sites:  
- Rowan High School (Council Owned – need to work with future owner)  
- Bushey Playing Field (Council Owned – need to work with future owner)  
- Westminster School Sports Ground  

**Integration**  
Increasing participation in Pitch Sports  
Vandalism and security
### 25. SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

**Increasing Participation in Pitch Sports**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Healthy Lifestyle, Access, Equity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Timeframe</td>
<td>Leisure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Project Description**

- Investigate and integrate other agencies to increase participation in pitch sports in the Borough amongst all groups.
- Increase participation in under represented groups through:
  - Sports development initiatives to increase participation. Set out in a Sports Development Plan. Sports development initiatives to provide centres of excellence in preparation for the 2012 Olympics.
  - Continue to develop and promote junior coaching
  - Support the development of female participation
  - Remarking some adult pitches for junior football and cricket.
  - Develop a marketing strategy for playing pitches

The declining popularity of pitch sports is due to a number of factors. Effective marketing of the playing pitch resource could be a useful tool for enhancing public awareness of Merton’s facilities. The purpose of this project is engage the wider community informing them of the availability of playing pitches and how to go about utilising them.

- Implement internet enabled pitch booking service.

**Priorities**

To be defined

**Integration**

Pitch Marketing, Open Space Marketing, Internet Resource Development.

### 26. Merton Open Spaces Marketing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Healthy Lifestyle, Community, Education.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Leisure Services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Project Description**

Using existing experience, develop marketing strategies and community initiatives to promote awareness, benefits and use of open spaces in Merton.

This project will raise the profile of open space and the MOSS and assist in mobilising community participation in open space management. Specialised communication campaigns could be designed to promote spaces, visitor attractions and heritage areas and trails.

**Priorities**

Integrate with existing press office marketing programme

**Integration**

Internet Resources Development

Pitch Marketing Strategy
27. **Merton Open Spaces Internet Resource**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Healthy Lifestyle, Access, Community.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Leisure Services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Project Description**

Develop an Open Space web resource on the Merton Internet site to facilitate community engagement and to provide interactive booking and cancellation announcements for Merton’s sports pitches and park facilities.

- A dedicated open space web page will act as a clearinghouse for important information regarding the MOSS. Also can be used for consultation on relevant MOSS projects and proposals.
- Ensure consistency with the requirements of national E Government initiatives for online services.
- This should be done early on to engage the community in the development of the action plans.

**Priorities**

- Allow query of Sports Pitches and Facilities, Sports Bookings

**Integration**

- Open Spaces Marketing.
6.4 Mechanisms to Implement the Strategy

Planning

Unitary Development Plan – Adopted in October 2003, the UDP is the statutory plan for the Borough. As the Council moves towards developing a Local Development Framework, the MOSS will provide a mechanism for reviewing the UDP policies related to open space. LDF policies will in turn assist in delivering MOSS outcomes.

In assessing and making decisions on planning applications, Merton Council makes its decisions in line with the policies set out within the UDP, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The MOSS will be a material consideration for various applications.

The following are examples of development proposals where MOSS would be a material consideration, and how Development Control can be guided by MOSS tools to achieve the MOSS outcomes:

1. Development proposed on Open Space – assess if the open space is required for its existing use – Depending on the type of open space different MOSS tools can be used. For Applications to develop sports pitches the PPM (see Appendix 1) provides useful information, for other types of open space the ward and park matrix can be used to assess the needs in the particular area.

In this case where park is shown to be required through the MOSS tools the application should be refused. There could be circumstances where MOSS outcomes could be achieved through partial development, with S106 Agreement enabling the needs of the community to be met.

2. Development proposed that is likely to lead to additional pressure on open space in an area – Certain types of development could lead to additional pressure for open space, for example a new housing development in an area where open space provision standards are not being met (either existing standards or those developed through Action Plan 5). The parks and ward matrix can assist in prioritising improvements to open space. In this case MOSS tools can be used to secure S106 funding for park improvements.

3. Development adjacent to an open space – Assess the value of the open space using the park evaluation tool. Assess whether the development would enhance these values.

Community and Cultural Services Implementation Mechanisms

The Community Cultural Services Division encompasses:

• Community Education;
• Library and Heritage Services;
• The Youth Service;
• Leisure Development; and
• Arts Development.

Each of these Cultural Service functions has an important role in the co-ordinated implementation of the MOSS. Where necessary, cultural service functions and individual projects will be aligned to achieve the MOSS objectives. The following key functions of the various Cultural Services teams are considered key to the implementation of the MOSS.
Economic regeneration and community development are key platforms for action by the Library and Heritage Services team. One valuable contribution to Merton residents’ quality of life is through developing an awareness of Merton’s rich past and present through the Merton Heritage Centre and Local Studies resources.

The Youth Service works with a variety of partners to contribute toward the goal of lifelong learning for all through social education. Through its work combating social exclusion and ensuring the provision of youth facilities and services, the Youth Service is a vital partner in achieving open spaces that are attractive and relevant to young people’s distinct requirements. Existing and potential relationships between external youth agencies will be a vital resource for communicating the MOSS objectives and encouraging inclusive working relationships between partners.

Leisure Development has direct responsibility for the implementation of the MOSS Action Plans. The department is primarily responsible for:

- Managing and developing the Council’s programmes in sport and children’s play;
- Project management of Leisure Developments including major externally funded projects;
- Negotiating and management of leases, licences etc;
- Managing events;
- Administration of commercial lettings including filming in parks;
- Managing Wimbledon Park Sailing Base, Athletics, Sports and Play development;
- Planning, staging and managing holiday programmes, play schemes and sports development programmes;
- Facilitate representative sports teams for inter-borough competitions;
- Organise Council events such as the Horticultural Show, Fireworks Displays, Merton in Bloom, London in Bloom, Allotment Competitions etc;
- Liaison and partnerships with voluntary organisations, statutory bodies, external agencies and the public from within and outside of the Borough in order to progress leisure developments.
- Service the sports consultative forum
- Develop policy and review publications
- Seek and advise on external funding for Leisure projects
- Work in partnership with indoor centres and others to provide a coordinated approach to leisure

The Leisure Services Open Spaces Management Framework is presented in Section 2.3. This describes the key responsibilities for park staffing, management and maintenance.
6.5 Strategy Process

To ensure the effective implementation of the MOSS, achieving high quality results in Merton’s open spaces, there are a number of priority actions that need to be completed first. A detailed Implementation Plan is illustrated below. The full size version is appended to the MOSS as Appendix 6. The Implementation plan highlights the linkages and sequence of strategy projects over the first 3 years of Strategy Implementation. The Implementation plan also highlights non-MOSS projects that are integrated with the MOSS work programme.

Figure 6.1 Implementation Plan

See Appendix 6 for full size version.
6.6 Funding Options for Open Space Provision and Enhancement

This section provides an overview of some of the funding options currently available for the provision, protection and acquisition of open space. It is intended that a more comprehensive investigation of funding options, as well as alternative methods of providing and protecting open space will be undertaken as part of review of funding options (see Action Plan 3 Community Engagement, Action 4).

Funding streams sought should be led by the needs of the projects and actions the Strategy is aiming to achieve, and should not be driven by funding criteria. Therefore the possible funding sources will not be relevant to all the projects that the Council is aiming to achieve.

It will be crucial to work in partnership with other organisations, and community groups to tap into their expertise, information, and experience to secure funding.

There are two types of funding - Capital and Revenue. Capital funding tends to be for set projects over a short term for the development of new facilities or restoration of existing facilities. Revenue funding is required longer term, and can be used to fund training, administration costs, and salaries for employees. Often funding schemes provide capital funding only, so it is important to ensure that sources of funding that are sought for a particular project will provide the correct type of funding, and for those projects that require capital funding, sufficient resources must be available for the ongoing revenue costs.

External Funding Sources

The following are some of the possible funding sources that can be secured for improving open space and sport and recreation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Lottery Fund</td>
<td>Lottery Distributor grants funds for heritage projects anywhere in the United Kingdom. The aim is to conserve and enhance natural and cultural heritage and ensure that people can learn about and have access to heritage sites. Grants can be made for historic parks, gardens and other urban green spaces to restore, regenerate and improve access to these historic sites. The HLF is particularly interested in awarding grants to parks that contribute significantly to urban regeneration projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Opportunities Fund (NOF)</td>
<td>(NOF) is a Lottery Distributor created in 1998 to award grants to education, health and environment projects throughout the UK.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Spaces and Sustainable Communities</td>
<td>This programme supports disadvantaged urban and rural communities throughout the UK understand, improve or care for their natural environment, focusing on disadvantage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living Spaces</td>
<td>Grant programmes run by Office of the Deputy Prime minister, Groundwork and the Urban Parks Forum. It provides grants to any existing neighbourhood groups helping to improve open space in their neighbourhood and create valuable community spaces. Living Spaces aims to create a variety of space including: play areas; community gardens; local parks; village greens; nature areas; kick about areas; ponds; courts; squares; city farms. The only requirements are that the space is open to the public, within 2 mile of a residential area and not a formal sports pitch. Grants range from £1000 - £100,000.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport England</td>
<td>Sport England’s new vision is “Making England and Active and Successful Sporting Nation”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The body is funded from National Lottery proceeds. Funding grants are now organised into two streams – Community and National.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community projects aim to increase and widen participation in sport achieving sustainable benefits in health, education, community cohesion and social inclusion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sport England is leading the development of a new framework for sport, with a clear set of priorities for action, supported in each region by a regional plan for sport.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football Association (FA)</td>
<td>The FA invests in facility improvement through the Football Foundation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grants include:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Grass roots</strong> – aims to provide opportunities for anyone of any age background or ability to participate. Primarily for building, developing or refurbishing facilities in order to sustain or increase participation (temporary suspension of some grass roots funding at time of writing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Community and Education</strong> – which aims increase participation amongst certain sections of the community (people with disabilities, black and ethnic communities, people of low incomes, and women and girls) create inclusive communities and promote healthy lifestyles. The grant has funded community coaching and social inclusion projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Schools</strong> – Funding support schools who wish to build, develop or modernise / upgrade facilities in order to sustain and / or increase participation. Funding is targeted towards schools in deprived wards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rugby Football Union</td>
<td>The RFU, through the Rugby Football Foundation runs the Community Rugby Capital Fund Scheme. The scheme allows community Rugby teams to apply for grants of £1,500 to £5,000 which clubs have to match 50:50. They are also interest free loans of up to £100,000 available. The aim of the scheme is to finance capital projects to improve facilities that contribute to the recruitment and retention of players. Projects that have been funded include pitch improvements, clubhouse facilities (e.g. showers and changing rooms) and equipment used for playing and coaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developers Contributions</td>
<td>The Town and Country Planning Act (1990) enable Planning Obligations (often known Section 106 obligations) to be entered into between a developer and a local planning authority. Planning obligations, if properly used, can enhance the quality of a development and enable proposals to go ahead that might otherwise be refused. They should however be relevant to planning and directly related to the proposed development. Section 106 obligations can be used to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Restrict development or use of land;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Require specific operations to be carried out in, on, under or over land;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Agency Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Require land to be used in a specified way;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Require payments to be made to the local Authority either in a single sum or periodically.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Council, in carrying out its land use planning duties, may secure developer contributions to open space, sport and recreation facilities. However, to ensure accountability, planning obligations should be:

- Necessary – without it the proposal would be unacceptable in land use planning terms;
- Relevant to planning – they shouldn’t require actions outside of the planning system;
- Directly related to proposed developments – there should be a link between the obligation and the planning permission;
- Fairly and Reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development – obligations should not be used as a means of extracting excessive sums from developers;
- Reasonable in all other respects.

Where the assessments have identified a need for open space or better quality open space and adopted provision standards are not being met developer contributions (in terms of on site open space, or sums for off site improvements), will be sought, and are seen as a valuable resource for implementing MOSS.

### 6.7 Monitoring Programme

This section sets out how the CEG proposes to monitor progress on the Implementation Plan.

The monitoring programme is issue based and has been adapted from the “Pressure State Response” indicator framework. The programme is linked back to the key outcomes of the strategy. The three categories of indicators are:

1. Pressure (Issues)
2. State (Condition)
3. Response (Actions to address the issues)

The Outcomes Sought for the Merton Open Space Network (refer section 5.3) are central to the monitoring programme. The monitoring indicators identified will be used as a gauge for assessing whether the outcomes are being achieved.

It is recognised that the list of indicators within each category is representative rather than comprehensive. It is also recognised that much of the work completed as part of the MOSS Action Plans will assist with the monitoring programme.
### Monitoring Programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open Space Outcome</th>
<th>Pressure</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Access</strong>&lt;br&gt;Ensure public access for all Merton residents to a full range of open spaces including natural conservation areas, sports pitches, facilities and heritage sites.</td>
<td>1. Uneven distribution of certain types of open spaces across the borough forcing more car journeys.&lt;br&gt;2. Increasing demand for car parking facilities&lt;br&gt;3. Safety issues with cycling and walking networks&lt;br&gt;4. More park visitors new to parks need to access facilities&lt;br&gt;5. Safety and security concerns restricting access and enjoyment of some residents</td>
<td>* Ward Accessibility score&lt;br&gt;• Nature conservation access score&lt;br&gt;• Poor signage&lt;br&gt;• Lack of facilities for cyclists and or poor quality pedestrian links&lt;br&gt;• Uneven distribution of facilities across the borough.&lt;br&gt;• Car parking facilities inadequate&lt;br&gt;• Complaints about safety</td>
<td>* Upgrade Existing Facilities&lt;br&gt;• Review of funding policies and priorities for park maintenance&lt;br&gt;• Life cycle maintenance and management planning.&lt;br&gt;• Working with open space landowners to achieve quality improvements.&lt;br&gt;• Partnerships with Sports Clubs.&lt;br&gt;• Funding opportunities for parks&lt;br&gt;• Increasing participation in pitch sports.&lt;br&gt;• Secure pitches for public uses&lt;br&gt;• Upgrade facilities and access for all groups.&lt;br&gt;• Revenue and funding strategy for management of playing pitches and pavilions&lt;br&gt;• Improve accessibility to sports grounds.&lt;br&gt;• Research ethnic community needs.&lt;br&gt;• Provision of allotment space&lt;br&gt;• Produce SPD to ensure planning decisions enable provision of sufficient facilities/open space as part of new developments&lt;br&gt;• Adopt open space provision standards, and apply them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Community**<br>A commitment to community involvement in the design, planning and management of the full range of open spaces that are relevant to the value of different communities. | Demographic changes which result in changes to the communities recreational and open space needs. | * Open spaces that are over or under utilised.<br>• Facilities that are irrelevant to communities they are located in.<br>• Specific groups (ethnicity, age sex) underrepresented<br>• Community potential score (number of friends groups established.) | * Improve revenue collection processes and development<br>• Service level agreements for responding to vandalism and security concerns<br>• Develop role of Friends Groups in parks management<br>• Increase frontline staffing<br>• Work with police and other enforcement agencies to target graffiti and vandalism in parks.<br>• Partnerships with Sports Clubs<br>• Marketing strategies<br>• Open space web page<br>• Involve local communities<br>• Community forum<br>• Integration with youth projects<br>• Engage ethnic communities. |
**Monitoring Programme continued.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open Space Outcome</th>
<th>Pressure</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Education**      | Provide opportunities for learning about the natural environment and the value of recreation | 1. Informal use by schools  
2. Loss of school grounds to development | • Number of formal use agreements  
• Level of graffiti in adjacent open spaces | • Revenue collection processes and enforcement  
• Strategic partnerships  
• Work with Police and other enforcement agencies to target graffiti and vandalism in parks  
• Marketing strategies  
• Community Forum |
| **Environment**    | Protection and restoration of significant and representative natural habitats and ecosystems | 1. Loss of natural habitats due to cumulative effects of use and development. | • Percentage area of land in nature conservation areas  
• Number of groups working on projects and initiatives to conserve nature conservation areas | • Develop partnerships with key environmental, heritage and open space agencies.  
• Develop strategic partnerships with relevant organisations.  
• Develop partnership programme for schools to encourage appreciation of the value of open space.  
• Investigate, with the Environment Agency the potential of habitat creation and river restoration.  
• Involvement of local communities in planning, design and management of open spaces  
• Green Corridors  
• Ensure adequate protection through UDP |
| **Equity**         | Fair distribution of open space funding across the borough relevant to the needs and aspirations of the community. | 1. Funding cuts causing centralisation of open space investment in facilities and maintenance.  
2. Disparity of provision of certain facilities in certain areas of the borough. | Analysis of the ward evaluation matrix will provide details on  
• Range of facilities  
• Population per hectare of open space  
• Deprivation  
• Accessibility  
• Ethnicity  
• Etc | • Upgrade existing facilities.  
• Review funding policies and priorities.  
• Service level agreements for responding to vandalism and security concerns.  
• Cross boundary engagement.  
• Engagement of ethnic communities.  
• Increase participation in sports.  
• Upgrade facilities.  
• Deter unofficial use of playing pitches.  
• Revenue and funding strategy  
• Improve accessibility of sports grounds.  
• Monitor cross boundary playing pitch supply and demand.  
• Improve use and enjoyment of open spaces by ethnic communities.  
• Adopt open space provision standards, and apply them |
## Monitoring Programme continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open Space Outcome</th>
<th>Pressure</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Lifestyle</td>
<td>1. Changing recreation needs in the community</td>
<td>• Open space areas that are over or under – utilised</td>
<td>• Upgrade existing facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Conflict between recreational activities that co-exist in relatively constrained open space areas: E.g. Fishing and boating at Wimbledon Park.</td>
<td>• Number of complaints on the amount and quality of open space provision for specific recreational and leisure activities (through surveys and general complaints)</td>
<td>• Integrate lifecycle management for facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Pressure to provide open spaces and facilities for new emerging recreation and sport activities.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Service level agreements for vandalism response.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Work with private open space providers to achieve quality improvements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Develop partnerships with Sports Clubs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Marketing strategies for open spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Open space web page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Integrate with other organisations to increase sports participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Upgrade facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Adopt open space provision standards, and apply them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage and Culture</td>
<td>1. Forestry Stewardship Council Certification of Woodland</td>
<td>• Number of permits granted for cultural events on open space and feedback from the cultural event organisers.</td>
<td>• Develop partnerships with key Environmental, Heritage and Open Space Agencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Number of listed heritage features</td>
<td>• Number of cultural heritage sites damaged through recreational or visitor activities</td>
<td>• Strategic partnerships with relevant recreational, educational, environmental organisations etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Heritage and Uniqueness score in Evaluation Matrix</td>
<td>• Provide adequate protection for heritage and culture in UDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Ensure planning decisions protect and enhance heritage and culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regeneration</td>
<td>1. Community expectations for improved quality of public open space.</td>
<td>• Low quality design of open space (i.e. lack of park furniture, inadequate shelter, or inappropriate planting)</td>
<td>• Review funding policies and priorities for park maintenance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Loss of open space through unimaginative development</td>
<td>• Poor connectivity between open space areas and living and working environments.</td>
<td>• Work with developers to incorporate innovative open space provision into development projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Number of open space areas either over or under utilised</td>
<td>• Work with open space landowners to achieve quality improvements to open space and meet the open space needs of the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Number of open space areas that are not well maintained.</td>
<td>• Involve local communities in the planning and design and management of open spaces.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 6.8 Review of MOSS

The MOSS will be reviewed every 5 years.

The first review should be completed by March 2010.
Supporting Documents to the Open Space Strategy

7.1 Introduction
This section identifies the resources that have guided the development of the MOSS and will be vital for its implementation.

The Appendices provide vital background information to the issues that have driven the development of the MOSS and the methodology for identifying the location of potential open space deficiencies and prioritising the implementation of the action plans.

London Borough of Merton Documents include the Unitary Development Plan and the results of various studies and consultation exercises.

Also included are World Wide Web addresses for partnership agencies.

A glossary is included in Section 7.6.

7.2 Appendices
Appendices 1 – 4 for the MOSS document are available to download from the Merton website or in other formats by contacting the council. They include:

1. Playing Pitch Assessment Update 2005 (including Pitch Assessment Maps);
2. Issues Summary;
3. Results of Consultation Processes;
4. Evaluation Standards, Prioritisation, Monitoring Matrix;

The following are appended to the MOSS 2005 Document:

5. Map of Merton’s Open Spaces 2005;

7.3 London Borough of Merton Documents
London Borough of Merton (2003) Adopted Unitary Development Plan

WS Atkins Ltd (2002) Merton Open Space Study Volumes 1-3 including:
1. Strategic Open Space Assessment
2. Landscape Strategy
3. Playing Pitch Assessment


7.4 Publications

Highlighting the opportunities in South London


London Ecology Unit Handbook No.29 ‘Nature Conservation in Merton’

7.5 Partner Websites

National Agencies
www.odpm.gov.uk
www.npfa.co.uk
www.cabespace.org.uk
www.groundwork.org.uk
www.countryside.org.uk
www.english-nature.org.uk
www.nationaltrust.org.uk

Sports Organisations
www.sportengland.org
www.thefa.com
www.rfu.com
www.footballfoundation.org.uk

Funding
www.nof.org.uk
www.hlf.org.uk
www.lotterygoodcauses.org.uk
www.living-spaces.org.uk

Regional Agencies/organisations
www.london.gov.uk
www.lpfs.org.uk
www.green-space.org.uk
### Glossary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERM</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active engagement</td>
<td>Organised or casual sporting or cultural activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Park</td>
<td>Defined in the Open Space Hierarchy as approx 20-60 hectares in size, landscape setting with a variety of natural features providing a range of activities including outdoor sports facilities, playing fields, children’s play and informal recreation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Corridor</td>
<td>Relatively continuous areas of open space leading through the built environment which link to each other, larger green spaces, or Metropolitan Open Land. They can assist in the movement of some plant and animal species through the Borough.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Infrastructure</td>
<td>The contribution that natural systems play in the urban (built) environment. Trees and open spaces help to improve air quality by removing pollutants and producing oxygen, rivers and streams provide drainage, and low lying open spaces provide valuable flood mitigation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLA</td>
<td>Greater London Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Cycle Management</td>
<td>Providing for the costs involved in the continued upkeep of open spaces and facilities through out their expected lifespan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Park</td>
<td>Defined in the Open Space Hierarchy as approx 2-20 hectares in size, providing for court games, children’s play, sitting out areas, nature conservation, landscaped environment, and playing fields if the parks are large enough.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memoranda of Understanding</td>
<td>An formal agreement between two or more parties outlining expectations of service, management, and the conduct of both parties. MOUs are essential for building relationships based on mutual trust and understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan Park</td>
<td>Defined in the Open Space Hierarchy as over 60 hectares in size, areas of either natural heathland, woodlands, commons etc. or formal parks providing for active and passive recreation. They may contain playing field, but have at least 40 hectares set aside for other pursuits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merton Open Space Resource</td>
<td>The land, buildings, facilities, staff and management regimes that are Merton’s Parks and Open Spaces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merton Open Space Typology</td>
<td>Defines open spaces by size and function of the open space (see Appendix 4 for further detail).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOL</td>
<td>Metropolitan Open Land – Open Spaces that meet specific criteria can be designated as MOL in the Borough’s UDP, the designation protects the open space from inappropriate development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Space Deficiency</td>
<td>Areas that are identified as being outside the catchment area of open spaces within the Open Space Hierarchy. These areas are identified in the UDP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Space Hierarchy</td>
<td>An open space hierarchy categorises open spaces by size and characteristics. It provides guidance on what facilities might be found in each type of open space. Merton has adopted an Open space hierarchy within its UDP for planning purposes. This includes Metropolitan Parks, District Parks, Local Parks, Small Local Parks, and Linear Open Spaces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TERM</td>
<td>DEFINITION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Space Network</td>
<td>A series of open spaces that are linked together by paths, rivers, railways etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive enjoyment</td>
<td>Unstructured leisure activities in parks and open spaces including walking, sight seeing, picnics, informal gathering, relaxing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Open Space</td>
<td>As defined in the UDP, Open spaces with established or unrestricted public access and capable of being classified in an open space hierarchy, not necessarily publicly owned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 106 funding/agreement/obligations (S106)</td>
<td>Legal agreement entered into by a developer and the Local Planning setting out any restrictions on a development or any financial contributions that a developer would need to provide to ensure that the development can go ahead.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Local Park</td>
<td>Defined in the Open Space Hierarchy as under 2 hectares, gardens, sitting out areas, children’s play, and nature conservation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder</td>
<td>Individual, Group or organisation with an interest in open space or sports and recreation issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unitary Development Plan (UDP)</td>
<td>Statutory Document setting out the land use planning policies for the Borough over a 10-15 year timescale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Accessibility</td>
<td>Views of, into, across and through open spaces. Visual access to an open space is as important as the physical access arrangements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 7.7 Alphabetical Key to Merton Open Space Map (Appendix 5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open Space Name</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Open Space Name</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Open Space Name</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abbey Recreation Ground</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Haydons Rd Rec Grd</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Prince Georges Fields</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abcatherbury School</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>Hillcrest Middle School</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>Priory C.E.</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allied Macc School</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>Holland Gardens Open Space</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Ravensbury Park</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All England Lawn Tennis Club</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>Holy Trinity Primary School</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>Raynes Park High School</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Saints Rec Grd</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>Imperial Club sports ground</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>Raynes Park Playing Fields</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anerley Park</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>John Innes Park</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Raynes Park Sports Ground</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archbishop Tenison's S.G.</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>John Innes Recreation Ground</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>Raynes Park, Lawn Tennis Club</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allensmore Malley's Hospital Sports</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>Joseph Hood Recreation Ground</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Richmond Bridge</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground and Playing Fields</td>
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<td>Kewlarden Gardens</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>Richmond Sports Club</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beacon Circuit</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>Kingston Gardens</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benedict College</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>King George Field</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Rock Terrace Rec Grd</td>
<td>56</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beverley Vale</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>Kings College School PF</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>Rowan Road Rec</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beverley Meads</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Kings College Sports Ground</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>Rowan Road School</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beverley Park Golf Range</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Lavendar Park</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Royal Wimbledon Golf Club</td>
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<td>Bishopsgate School</td>
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<td>LEISSA</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Ruthless High School</td>
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<td>Bishopsgate Community School</td>
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<td>Lewis Road Rec. Grd</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>Sacred Heart High School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bond Primary School</td>
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<td>Liberty MSchool</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>Shenstone Park Road o/s</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brangyn Crescent Open Space</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>Luton / Victoria Road Cemetery</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>Sir Joseph Hood Memorial Pf</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brenchley Playing Fields</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>Luton Road Playing Fields</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Budhapedipa Temple Ground</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>Luton FIS</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>Southay Bowling Club</td>
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<td>Bushy Playing Fields</td>
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<td>Long Bolestead Rec. Grd</td>
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<td>St Catherine's School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Camberwell Park</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Lower Green Grd</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>St John Fisher School</td>
<td>105</td>
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<tr>
<td>Camberwell Park Allotments</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>Lower Pyl Brook</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>St Mary's Church</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canon Hill Common</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lower Wandle</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>St Mary's Catholic Primary School</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canon Street Common Allotments</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>Lyndhurst Rd. Grd</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>St Mary's Church, Wimbledon</td>
<td>171</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cherry Tree Estate Open Space</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>Lynnhurst Gardens</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>St Mary's Church</td>
<td>168</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cherrywood Open Space</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>Medmen Golf Course</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>St Peter's &amp; St Paul School</td>
<td>145</td>
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<tr>
<td>Church Lane Playing Fields</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>Malmesbury School</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>St Teresa's Primary School</td>
<td>157</td>
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<tr>
<td>City Centre Sports Ground</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Martin Way Allotments</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>St Thomas of Canterbury School</td>
<td>141</td>
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<td>Colliers Wood Playing Fields</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Merrow School</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>Stamford Middle School</td>
<td>73</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commonside East Open Space</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>Merton &amp; Sutton Joint Cemetery</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>Streatham Park Cemetery</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cottenham Park</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Merton Abbey School</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>Sun Alliance Sports Ground</td>
<td>47</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cottenham Park Allotments</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Merton College Playing Fields</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>Tamworth Farm Allotments</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cranleigh Lawn Tennis Club</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Merton Hall Bowling Green</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>Tamworth Farm Rec</td>
<td>76</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cranleigh Green</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Merton Park Green Walk</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>Tamworth Mead School</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
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<td>Cranleigh School</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>Messines</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>The Common</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cricklade Green School</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>Miles Road Open Space</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>The Old Richmond Sports Club</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cricket Green School</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>Mitcham Common</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Three Kings Place Open Space</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dear Park Gardens</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>Mitcham Parish Church</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>Throston Avenue Allotments</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denton Road</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>Mitcham Sports Ground</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Ursuline High School</td>
<td>115</td>
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<td>Donnelly Green a/s</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Morten Cemetery</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>Wandle Meadow Nature Park</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Downe Place</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>Morten Farm Middle School</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>Wandle Park</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drake Playing Fields</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Morten Hall Park</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Water meads a/s</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunmock Recreation Ground</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Morten Park</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>West of Messines</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunsmore Road &quot;B&quot; Allotments</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>Morten Playing Fields</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Wight Side Tennis Club</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunsmore Road Rec Grd</td>
<td>36</td>
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