

# **Appendix 2**

## **City of London Open Space Strategy**

**Supplementary Planning Document**

**Final Draft**

**December 2014**

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# Executive Summary

The vision for open space in the City of London is:

**The creation of a network of high quality and inspiring open spaces which helps ensure an attractive, healthy, sustainable and socially cohesive place for all the City's communities and visitors.**

This Strategy examines the supply and demand of open space in the City. In summary:

- The existing level of public open space is low in both absolute and relative terms;
- The quality of public open space is generally high, but there are a number of challenges to maintaining these high standards;
- The whole of the City can be described as deficient in open space and there is the need for all types of open space throughout the City;
- There is a particular need for public open space in the Eastern Cluster and Aldgate Key City Places.
- In the context of a growing week-day population it is considered that the most appropriate local standard is the maintenance of the existing City-wide ratio of 0.06 hectares public open space per 1,000 week day day-time population .

In terms of open space supply, the main findings are:

- There are 376 open spaces within the City; including 4 Historic Parks and Gardens and many churchyards;
- This totals approximately 32.09 hectares, of which 25.66 hectares is public open space;
- Approximately 80% of the sites are less than 0.2 hectares in size;
- The existing ratio of public open space to the weekday day-time population (workers, students, visitors and residents) is approximately 0.06 hectares per 1000;
- As of 2014 there are approximately 1,323 trees in the City that are owned by the City Corporation. This figure does not include Bunhill Fields which although managed by the City Corporation, is situated within the London Borough of Islington. The original City Corporation tree survey undertaken in February 2004 recorded that at the time 1,106 trees were in private ownership. These trees have not been recorded since this time due to budgetary reasons.
- There are a variety of public and commercial sports and health and fitness facilities and play areas in the City; and
- 10 of the open spaces are Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation.

In terms of demand for open space, the main findings are:

- The existing weekday day-time population is approximately 428,000;
- The worker population (which accounts for about 92% of the day-time population) is mainly male, relatively young and largely white;
- The resident population is varied in its characteristics, being generally relatively affluent, but with Golden Lane and Portsoken Wards falling within areas that are amongst the 25% most deprived areas in England;
- This weekday day-time population is expected to grow by around 52,000 by 2019;
- The City's communities are generally satisfied with the City's public gardens and spaces, but want more 'green' areas and trees, an increase in benches, more natural planting to help biodiversity, more play space and activities for young people and better links between spaces.

**The Strategy comprises the following 10 Strategic Objectives:**

1. Maintain and increase public access to existing open spaces and enhance the quality of these spaces, in terms of both design and management.
2. Increase the amount of high quality public open space in order to maintain the existing City-wide ratio of 0.06 ha per 1000 week day day-time population and focus efforts on creating additional public open space in the east of the City, particularly in the Eastern Cluster and the Aldgate area.
3. Ensure that all open spaces are designed and managed to be safe and accessible to all and, where appropriate, enable opportunities for different activities at different times of the day and year, including as outdoor work spaces.
4. Provide, where appropriate, additional play opportunities that are accessible to all in existing and new spaces.
5. Ensure that existing and new spaces make a positive contribution to the biodiversity value of the City through appropriate plant choice and habitat creation.
6. Ensure that enhanced and additional open spaces accord with high standards of sustainable and inclusive design, construction and management and take account of the potential changes to the City's climate, particularly the urban heat island effect.
7. Increase the provision of private and communal residential amenity space (balconies and roof terraces) and communal amenity green space for office workers (including indoor and outdoor gardens) in appropriate locations.
8. Effectively manage the temporary loss of any open space during construction projects and ensure that high quality open space of equivalent or greater size is established as soon as possible following the necessary works.
9. Promote the potential contribution open spaces can make to the improved health and well-being of City and wider communities.

- 10 Increase public awareness and understanding of the different types of open space in and around the City and encourage the City's communities to make the most of open spaces and to help maintain and improve them.

**The delivery of this strategy is to be achieved by:**

- Enhancing existing open spaces – developing a delivery strategy setting out priorities for different parts of the City;
- Enhancing the street scene – continuing to use the Public Realm Enhancement Programme to deliver enhanced and additional open spaces (informed by area-based Public Realm Enhancement Strategies);
- Securing public access to private spaces through Access Agreements;
- Developing planning policy and using the development management process to secure additional open space as part of new developments and using monies from the City Corporation's Community Infrastructure Levy.
- Continuing to work in partnership with others;
- Increasing volunteering;
- Implementing a Marketing/Promotion Strategy;
- Promoting and implementing the Tree Strategy and;
- Promoting and implementing the Biodiversity Action Plan.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 The City of London Today

- 1.1.1 The City of London is an area like no other in the United Kingdom. Although it is little more than one square mile in size it is very densely developed, is the historic and civic centre of London, and is the heart of London's international financial, maritime and business centre. It is a leading driver of the London and national economies and provides employment for 400,000 workers who occupy approximately 9 million square metres of office floor space. It has a distinct, international, business character and it makes a major contribution to London's position as a 'world city'.
- 1.1.2 At the same time the City has many other roles and is an area of great cultural richness. It is home to around 9,000 residents. It is a major cultural centre, which includes the Barbican Centre, the Museum of London and other arts venues and facilities. It is a visitor destination with approximately 10 million visitors a year and is a centre of learning, containing schools and higher education institutions with around 29,000 students. It also contains shops and leisure facilities and is at the hub of a regional public transport network. Despite its prosperity, the City lies close to some of the poorest and most deprived neighbourhoods in the UK, notably near its eastern borders.
- 1.1.3 The City is the historic core from which the rest of London developed, which is evident in the many historic monuments, churches, buildings and spaces. These include buildings and areas of national and international significance, such as St Paul's Cathedral and churchyard, Guildhall and Mansion House which symbolise its distinct character, and open spaces such as Finsbury Circus (public open space since 1606).

## 1.2 The City Corporation

- 1.2.1 The City is a unique and atypical place; as is the local authority that manages it. Older than Parliament, the City Corporation governs the smallest local authority area in the United Kingdom. The Lord Mayor of the City of London, Aldermen of the Court of Common Council and the elected Members who govern and administer the City do so on a non-party-political basis. The City Corporation is the local authority responsible for the financial and commercial heart of Britain and provides businesses and residents with local government services, including planning, housing, education, social services, environmental health and waste management and maintains most open spaces in the City, including many former churchyards. It is also responsible for the City of London's own Police Service, is a Market Authority, managing the major London meat and fish markets at Smithfield and Billingsgate, and is a Port Health Authority. The City Corporation built and manages the Barbican Complex which is recognised by the Mayor of London as one of a number of internationally important cultural institutions.
- 1.2.2 The City Corporation's activities extend beyond its administrative boundary of the 'Square Mile', managing over 4,434 hectares of open spaces for the benefit of London as a whole. These spaces are Epping Forest, the City Commons (commons within other boroughs that the City manages), the City



of London Cemetery and Crematorium, Burnham Beeches, Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queens Park, West Ham Park and Bunhill Fields. Hampstead Heath alone has an estimated 10 million visitors a year. In 2014 the City Corporation had received fifteen green flags and nine green heritage site accreditations

- 1.2.3 The City Corporation governs a small area; however, its activities extend beyond its administrative boundary managing over 4,000 hectares of open spaces for the benefit of London as a whole. These spaces are Epping Forest, the City Commons (commons within other boroughs that the City manages), Burnham Beeches, Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queens Park, West Ham Park and Bunhill Fields. Hampstead Heath alone has an estimated 10 million visitors a year. In 2012 the City Corporation had received fifteen green flags and nine green heritage site accreditations.

### **1.3 Open Space Management**

- 1.3.1 The City Corporation's commitment to open space management dates back to the 1870s when it campaigned to retain public open spaces and common land that were being threatened by the expansion of London and house-building.
- 1.3.2 Two Acts of Parliament were passed in the 1870s that granted the City Corporation the right to acquire and protect land within 25 miles of the City for the recreation and enjoyment of the public. This far-sighted policy was the inspiration behind the later Green Belt movement, designed to protect the countryside around British cities from urban sprawl.

### **1.4 Open Spaces Department**

- 1.4.1 All management of City owned parks and open spaces is carried out by the City Corporation's Open Spaces Department, which is divided into five Divisions:
- Parks and Gardens (including City Gardens and West Ham Park);
  - Epping Forest;
  - North London Open Spaces - Hampstead Heath, Queens Park and Highgate Wood;
  - City Commons and Burnham Beeches
  - City of London Cemetery and Crematorium.
- 1.4.2 All of the sites managed by the Department that lie outside the City are legally protected as permanent open spaces, which prevent them ever being developed. With the exception of the City Gardens, City of London Cemetery, Woodredon and Warlies Farm estate (Buffer Lands), all are funded from the City's own resources at no cost to the public.

- 1.4.3 The Director of Open Spaces is responsible for overseeing the overall management of the Department and agreeing objectives for each site with the individual Divisional Superintendents.
- 1.4.4 The City Corporation's Department of the Built Environment and City Surveyor's Department also have a role in managing the City Corporation maintained open spaces. The current split in responsibilities is as follows:
- City Gardens Section – tree and green space management, and hard landscape maintenance within enclosed gardens only;
  - Department of the Built Environment– maintenance of hard landscape on the highway and unenclosed public spaces; and
  - City Surveyor's Department – maintenance of landscape infrastructure, e.g. railings, gates, walls, monuments and memorials, etc.

## **1.5 Open Space in the City**

- 1.5.1 The range of gardens, churchyards and former burial grounds that make up a large proportion of the City's open space mostly result from two significant historical events that affected the townscape and geography of the City: the Great Fire of 1666 and bomb damage caused during World War II. The devastation caused by both events created pockets of land that were not redeveloped and were retained as open spaces for the City's communities.
- 1.5.2 After the Second World War, some damaged churches were not rebuilt, they went out of ecclesiastical use and their ruins and churchyards were kept and landscaped as public gardens. Christ Church Greyfriars, rebuilt by Wren after the Great Fire and the 19th century church of St Dunstan-in-the-East are two such examples.
- 1.5.3 The Disused Burial Grounds Act 1884 prohibits building on disused burial grounds except for enlarging the church. Subsequently, although remaining in ecclesiastical ownership, many were landscaped for public use as gardens, and many retain gravestones and monuments. These areas are valuable open spaces and important in demonstrating the history of the City. Most churchyards are relatively small and provide secluded, intimate spaces and form essential foils to the hard urban landscape. Many have mature planting with a variety of trees, shrubs and plants. Bomb damage also revealed stretches of the Roman and medieval City wall and Roman fort, which have been kept and gardens created. These areas are valuable open spaces and important in demonstrating the history of the City. Many old walls also support rare plants such as bryophytes and ferns. Any work to these structures needs to be sensitive to these locally significant species to ensure they are not destroyed or disturbed.
- 1.5.4 Disused churchyards, including the churchyard of St Paul's Cathedral, make up approximately a third of the total open space in the City. The high number of medieval churches, numbering 110 prior to the Great Fire, and their churchyards means that these spaces form an integral part of the total open space in the City.
- 1.5.5 Many of the open spaces in the City have great historic interest and amenity value and gardens and cultivated areas have long been part of the City's

history and character. Many Livery Companies have gardens, some dating from the medieval period.

- 1.5.6 Finsbury Circus is considered to be the oldest public space in London, dating from 1606. Its oval plot is complemented by the surrounding buildings. The gardens of the Inner and Middle Temples have a 19th and 20th century layout and are medieval in origin, possibly dating from the 12th century when the Knights Templar established their base there. The Barbican landscaping is a group of public, communal and domestic gardens at different levels which are an integral part of the design of the Barbican Estate. All four gardens are designated assets and are on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest.
- 1.5.7 Historic green spaces are augmented by a growing number of hard 'civic spaces'. The large day time population of the City places pressure on the limited amount of open space and the City Corporation is actively working with private landowners and developers to enhance highways and existing spaces and create additional spaces.
- 1.5.8 One of the key characteristics of the City of London is the unique and high quality of its open spaces. The numerous gardens, churchyards and areas of highway planting within the Square Mile are often smaller than 0.2 hectare, but are intensively used. For example, Finsbury Circus garden (approximately 0.51 hectares) received almost 1.5 million visits each year, prior to partial and temporary closure for Crossrail works. The garden will be reinstated and landscaped and opened to the public in 2018.
- 1.5.9 The current level and quality of open space in the City of London needs to be considered in context. Open spaces within the Square Mile have increased significantly over the last 70 years. In 1927, there were just three surviving public open spaces, each of which had passed into the Corporation's care some years before, plus a number of churchyards and disused burial grounds. Today, there are more than 376 open spaces in the City, not counting private gardens.

## **1.6 Need and Purpose**

- 1.6.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 expects all local planning authorities to prepare planning policies based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. In addition to this expectation the City Corporation wishes to promote a strategy that focuses on open space provision, sets overarching priorities and provides a framework for joint working within and across the following departments: Open Spaces, Built Environment, City Surveyor's and Community and Children's Services.
- 1.6.2 This document sets out an integrated medium term open space strategy for the City of London for the 5 year period from 2014 to 2019. Its aims are to provide:
  - A consistent approach to protecting and managing the City's open spaces;

- A framework for prioritising investments according to identified open space deficiencies; investment may come from the City's Community Infrastructure Levy on retained Section 106 Planning Obligations.
- The evidence and direction for the policies on open spaces in the City of London's Local Plan and associated documents;
- A consistent and strategic approach to determining planning applications related to open space or those that may impact on open space provision;
- The delivery of better quality, easily accessible and increased open space which keeps pace with the expected growth in workers, residents, visitors and students and meets the expectations of all the City communities.

## **1.7 Benefits of Open Space**

1.7.1 The City Corporation commissioned a report 'Green Spaces: The Benefits for London (2013)' which identifies the following benefits that open spaces deliver:

- Economic Benefits – green spaces result in cost savings for government related to health expenditure, can attract businesses to locate and can encourage tourism;
- Health and Wellbeing – green spaces can play a role in promoting healthy lifestyles, reducing stress 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 as well as allowing children to develop socialisation and motor skills through play;
- 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, cool the air, increase biodiversity and provide wildlife corridors, serve as 'lungs' for towns and cities, absorb noise, and lessen rainwater runoff;
- Heritage & Culture – green spaces are part of the heritage and culture of local communities. They provide venues for local festivals and civic celebrations.

## 1.8 Key Issues

- 1.8.1 There are a number of recurring core issues that must be addressed in all future open space creation and improvement schemes, in order to ensure long-term sustainable open spaces. These include:
- Maximising opportunities to address deficiencies of open space where possible, consistent with other City Corporation objectives;
  - Ensuring that all existing and new open spaces are varied, of high quality, and relevant to the needs of the local area including, where appropriate, access to play for all;
  - Ensuring all open spaces are designed to be safe and inclusive, giving equal access and enjoyment to the sites and activities that take place;
  - Considering the implications of increased demand for open space through new developments and increases in the day time population in the City;
  - Ensuring that any inappropriate use of sites is 'designed out';
  - Considering the long term maintenance costs of new open space, and identifying sources of funding at the design and negotiation stages;
  - Ensuring that, where appropriate, all new schemes incorporate automatic irrigation and that where possible, simple irrigation systems are 'retro-fitted' into existing open spaces areas;
  - Ensuring the careful choice of plants tolerant to drought and extremes of climate but balancing this with the requirement for native species in order to encourage diversity of wildlife;
  - Ensuring that when planting street trees in new schemes, both species and size are appropriate to the location, resistant to disease, maximise biodiversity of stock and are in accordance with the aims and objectives of the City of London Tree Strategy SPD;
  - Developing and agreeing formal maintenance agreements for churchyards maintained by the City Gardens team;
  - Improving the planned maintenance and refurbishment of hard landscape features within City Corporation maintained open spaces, including liaising with the City Corporation's Access Officer to satisfactorily address accessibility issues and;
  - Encouraging community engagement through events, activities and volunteering.

## 1.9 How was the Strategy developed?

- 1.9.1 Definition of Open Space. A consistent definition for the term 'open space' has been used since the City of London Open Spaces Audit 2002 defined the term "open space" as:

**"Land which is not built on and which has some amenity value or potential for amenity value. Amenity value is derived from the visual or other enjoyment which the open space can provide, such as historic and cultural interest and value".**

- 1.9.2 This definition has been adopted for the purposes of this Strategy. It includes land in public or private ownership (regardless of whether there is public access) but excludes green roofs and walls, private residential gardens belonging to individuals, sky gardens, balconies and atria. It also excludes the River Thames.
- 1.9.3 For the sake of completeness a list of green roofs and walls is also included in this document.

## 1.10 Scope of Strategy

- 1.10.1 This Strategy relates to open space within the City of London only and does not address open spaces that the City Corporation manages elsewhere. It utilises data on open spaces from the City of London Open Space Audit (2013), which was undertaken by the Department of the Built Environment between June and August 2012 as well as Census data from 2011. Figures from other sources are referenced.
- 1.10.2 In accordance with the NPPF, the Strategy has addressed all open space and outdoor sports and play facilities, including those at the Sir John Cass Primary School, which is run by a Trust with assistance from the City Corporation, and the two privately run secondary schools (City of London School and the City of London School for Girls).
- 1.10.3 Green roofs, green walls, sky gardens, balconies and atria have not been included as open spaces for the purposes of this document as they have not been recognised as protected open spaces in the planning process. The significance of these types of spaces continues to increase, however, as the City's population and visitor numbers increase so does the requirement to maximise opportunities for increased biodiversity and green corridors.
- 1.10.4 The lack of playing fields means there was no need to undertake a playing fields assessment. However, open space strategies for adjoining boroughs are expected to do so and take account of demand from the City.

## 1.11 Overall Approach

1.11.1 The overall approach to preparing this Strategy can be summarised as follows.

- **Supply:** the City of London Open Space Audit (2013) established the existing supply of open space by identifying the amount of different types of spaces that exist using the typologies set out in the City's 2008 Open Space Strategy. Those additional open spaces which are approved and financially committed were then taken into account, to give a more thorough picture of the supply of open space in the City.
- **Demand:** the demand for open space was established by quantifying the existing day-time population and identifying, as far as possible, its characteristics and distribution across the Key City Places (defined in Section 3). The forecast growth in the City's day-time population was then identified. The other part of demand relates to local opinion, expressed as community expectations and preferences, and these were identified from a series of consultation exercises. Please see Appendix 2 for further details.
- **Assessment:** the assessment of need was based on the above supply and demand factors and was undertaken on the basis of quantitative, qualitative and spatial need (areas of deficiency and future spatial priorities).
- **Vision, Strategy and Delivery;** a vision for open space in the City is proposed, drawing on supply and demand and the assessment of need. This has informed the development of this Strategy, based on 10 key strategic themes. Delivery mechanisms were then identified in order to implement the Strategy and a five year Delivery Plan, which does not form part of this SPD.

## 1.12 Structure of Document

1.12.1 The remainder of this document is organised as follows:

- Section 2 identifies the Policy Framework and sets out the key relevant policy and guidance;
- Section 3 reports on an Assessment of Need, considering supply and demand factors and setting out an analysis of quantitative, qualitative and spatial need; and
- Section 4 outlines a vision for open space in the City, together with a Strategy and delivery mechanisms for realising this vision.

## 2. Policy Framework

### 2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The Strategy must take account of the policy framework at national, regional and local levels.

### 2.2 National Policy and Strategies

- 2.2.1 Government Planning Policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Paragraph 73 of the NPPF advises that "Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. The assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local area. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sports and recreational provision is required".
- 2.2.2 Enhancing Urban Green Space was published by the National Audit Office in 2006. The report 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.
- 2.2.3 The National Pollinator Strategy was published in 2014 by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and includes proposals for developing diverse and flower-rich habitats to support pollinators and raising awareness of their importance to biodiversity in England.

### 2.3 Regional Policies and Strategies

- 2.3.1 **The London Plan:** The Mayor's London Plan is the overall strategic plan for London, and it sets out a fully integrated economic, environmental, transport and social framework for the development of the capital to 2031. 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 following policies are particularly relevant:

**Policy 2.18** Green infrastructure: The Multi-functional Network of Greenspaces

**Policy 3.6** Children and Young People's Play and Informal Recreation

**Policy 5.10** Urban Greening

**Policy 5.13** Sustainable Drainage



## **Policy 7.18** Protecting Local Natural Space & Addressing Local Deficiencies

Table 1: London Plan: Table 7.2 Public Open Space categorisation

| <b>Open Space Categorisation</b> | <b>Size Guideline</b> | <b>Distance from homes</b> |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| Regional Parks                   | 400 hectares          | 3.2 to 8 km                |
| Metropolitan Parks               | 60 hectares           | 3.2 km                     |
| District Parks                   | 20 hectares           | 1.2 km                     |
| Local Parks and Open Spaces      | 2 hectares            | 400 m                      |
| Small Open Spaces                | Under 2 hectares      | Less than 400 m            |
| Pocket Parks                     | Under 0.4 hectares    | Less than 400 m            |
| Linear Open Spaces               | Variable              | Wherever feasible          |

### **2.3.6 Other Mayoral Strategies and Guidance**

The London Plan sits alongside and is informed by a number of other relevant Mayoral strategies and is supported by various relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance and Best Practice Guidance notes;

- Improving Londoners' Access to Nature (Implementation Report, February 2008)
- Open Space Strategies (Best Practice Guidance, 2009)
- All London Green Grid (Supplementary Planning Guidance, 2012)
- Shaping Neighbourhoods: Play and Informal Recreation (Supplementary Planning Guidance, 2012)
- Cultural Metropolis (Strategy, 2014)

## **2.4 Local Policies and Strategies**

### **2.4.1 City of London Local Plan (2014)**

The City of London Local Plan was adopted in January 2015. The following policies relevant to open spaces in the City are outlined below:

- **Policy CS9**      **Thames and the Riverside**
- **Policy CS10**    **Design**
- **Policy DM10.2** **Design of green roofs and walls**
- **Policy DM10.3** **Roof gardens and terraces**
- **Policy DM10.4** **Environmental Enhancement**
- **Policy DM10.8** **Access and inclusive design**
- **Policy DM18.2** **Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)**
- **Policy CS12**    **Historic Environment**
- **Policy DM12.1** **Managing change affecting all heritage assets and spaces**
- **Policy DM12.5** **Historic parks and gardens**
- **Policy CS19**    **Open spaces and recreation**

- **Policy DM19.2 Biodiversity and urban greening**
- **Policy DM19.3 Sport and recreation**
- **Policy DM19.4 Play areas and facilities**

**2.4.2 City of London Biodiversity Action Plan 2010-2015 (2009)**

The Plan identifies three different habitat types in the City; Vertical Habitats, City Gardens and Churchyards and the Thames Foreshore. Each area has been explored to identify the constraints and opportunities that they hold for biodiversity and Habitat Action Plans have been written for each.

**2.4.3 Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (January 2007) and Update (2010)**

The Strategy aims to identify the priority risks associated with climate change and proposes adaptation measures which are designed to ensure that the City's infrastructure and services cope under a changing climate.

**2.4.4 City of London Tree Strategy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 2012**

The City of London Tree Strategy aims to increase City Corporation owned trees by 5% by 2019 and ensure that all trees in the City are managed, preserved and planted in accordance with sound arboricultural practices whilst taking account of their contribution to amenity and the urban landscape for both current and future generations. The Tree Strategy sets out 11 objectives dealing with existing trees, the removal of trees, unauthorised works, tree planting and information sharing with an emphasis on planting large-canopied species wherever possible.

**2.4.5 City of London Streetscene Manual (April 2005)**

Part 1 of this manual summarises the City Corporation's vision for the streetscene, including the principles for controlling change and informing street enhancement schemes. Part 2 contains a summary of the historical evolution of the City's streets. Part 3 sets out detailed guidance on specific elements, including street furniture, ground surfaces and planting. Further updates are available on the City of London Corporation Website.

#### 2.4.6 **City of London Communications Strategy (2014/17)**

One of the three key aims of this strategy is to focus efforts and resources to contribute to London's culture, heritage and green spaces. This includes increasing public awareness and understanding of the different types of open space in and around the City and encouraging the City's communities to make the most of open spaces.

#### 2.4.7 **City of London Visitor Strategy (2013/17)**

This strategy provides a framework for the delivery of the City Corporation's visitor services and supports animations of public spaces and improvements to the public realm for the enjoyment and leisure of all of the City's communities, including visitors.

#### 2.4.8 **City of London Cultural Strategy (2012/17)**

This strategy recognises the City as an internationally recognised cultural destination renowned for its history and heritage, which includes its open spaces. The strategy seeks to ensure that the City continues to flourish as a cultural centre and enables all communities to have the opportunity to participate in the cultural offer.

## 3. Assessment of Need

### 3.1 City Characteristics

- 3.1.1 The nature of the City, with its relatively small residential population and large workforce, means that it is not particularly helpful to place too much reliance on the Census data that is available at ward or super-output area levels as a basis for considering need at a sub-City level. Therefore for the purposes of this strategy, the City has been divided into the Local Plan's 5 Key City Place areas and the Rest of the City as shown in Figure 1 below.

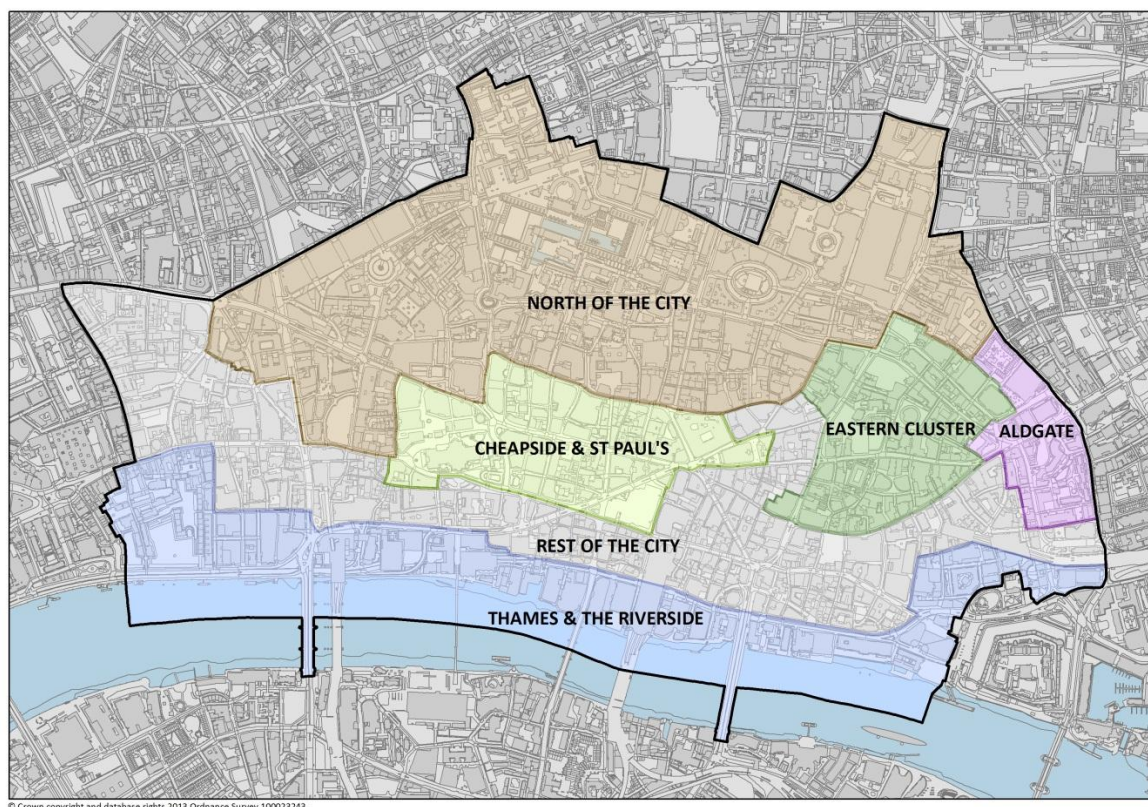


Figure 1: Key City Places

- 3.1.2 **The North of the City**- includes residential estates at the Barbican and Golden Lane that include a large amount of open space, plus additional large spaces at the Broadgate office development. This area is the largest of the Key City Places and contains approximately half of the total open space in the City of London. Research will be undertaken to measure the anticipated changes to pedestrian flows in and around the Barbican area as a result of Crossrail infrastructure works and the development of the Barbican Centre as a Cultural Hub.
- 3.1.3 **Cheapside and St. Paul's** – reasonable levels of open space in and around the Cathedral and Paternoster, otherwise, the area is densely built up and primarily forms a mixed retail and office area, but there is some open space provision at the Royal Exchange. Also, some smaller churchyard sites are present.

- 3.1.4 **Eastern Cluster**- primarily a business district, and therefore densely built up with a lot of high-rise development, but some of the recent construction schemes have included open space provision on privately owned land.
- 3.1.5 **Aldgate** – most open space is located within the residential estates of Middlesex Street and Mansell Street. The closure of the Aldgate Gyratory will result in a large new open space plaza being developed.
- 3.1.6 **Thames and the Riverside**- a linear open spaces framework (including the riverside walk) along the River Thames Embankment and large open spaces in the Temples precinct.
- 3.1.7 **Rest of the City** – There are no significant open spaces outside the Key City Places, but the area contains a number of smaller open spaces and private spaces.

## 3.2 The City of London Open Spaces Audit (2013) - Supply

- 3.2.1 A comprehensive audit of open spaces was carried out in the summer of 2012 by the Department of the Built Environment and published in 2013. This was completed in general accordance with the Mayor of London's Best Practice Guidance, taking into account the particular characteristics of the City. For example, the City does not have any team sports pitches, obviating the need to carry out a playing fields assessment, and the predominance of Small Open Spaces (as defined in the London Plan's 'Public Open Space Hierarchy') means that the Audit focused on these types of space. The full findings of the Audit are set out in the City of London Open Spaces Audit 2013.
- 3.2.2 The Audit sets out information relating to the distribution and characteristics of open spaces within the City of London and builds upon a historical Audit series developed in 2002, and then reviewed in 2007. The 2007 Audit was undertaken in the context of the Mayor of London's best practice guidance to preparing Open Spaces Strategies 2004, which is considered to continue to provide a sound framework for the 2013 Audit.
- 3.2.3 The City of London Open Space Audit assessed each space and collected the following information:
  - Size
  - Spatial distribution
  - Typology
  - Restrictions on use
  - Access for disabled people
  - Seating
  - Use of Sites
  - Soft landscape features
  - Hard landscape features
  - Sports and play facilities
  - Nature Conservation



### 3.3 Key Findings

3.3.1 The City of London Open Spaces Audit 2013 was carried out to fully understand the existing supply of open space in the City and a summary of the main findings is set out below.

#### 3.3.2 Distribution of Open Space

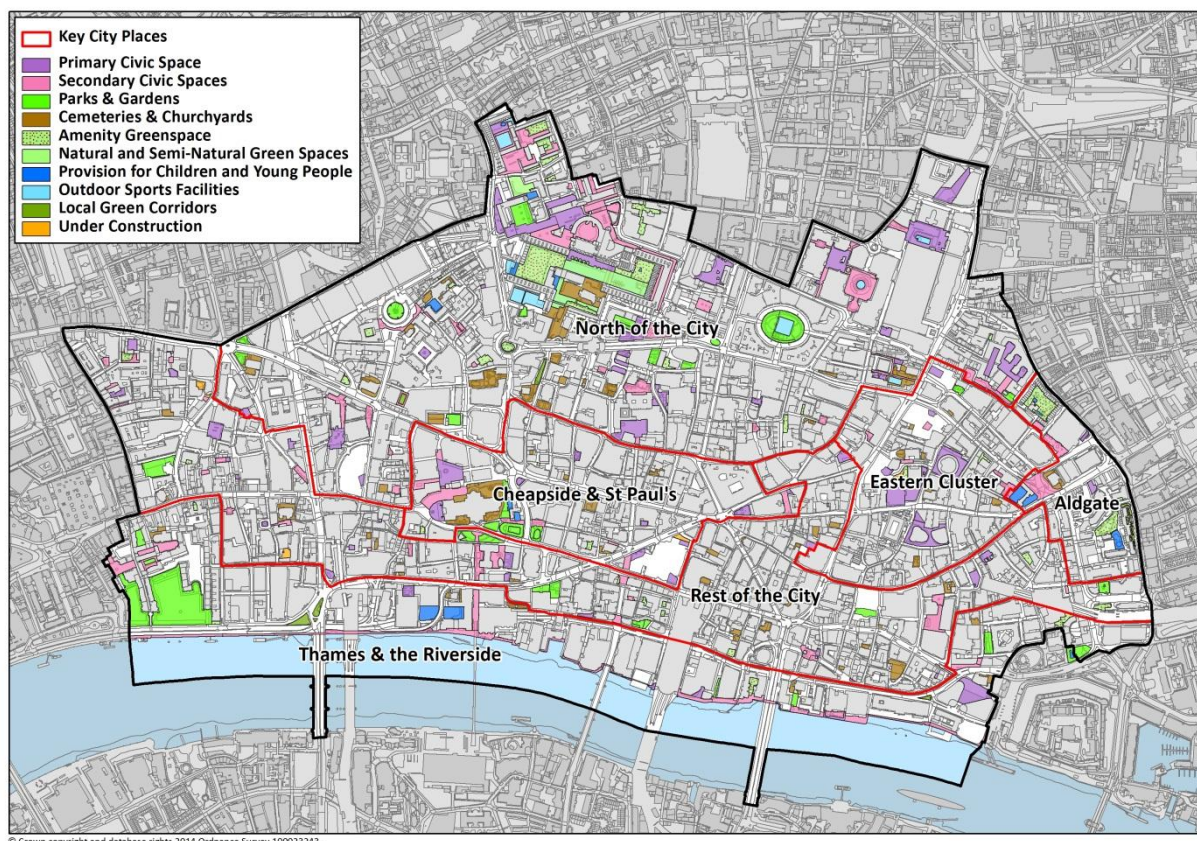


Figure 2: Existing Open Space (by type) within the City

3.3.3 **Size of Open Spaces** - There are 376 sites of open space within the City of London. Overall there is approximately 32.09 hectares of open space of which 25.66 hectares is public open space. As Figure 2 shows, approximately 80% of the open space sites within the City are less than 0.2 hectares in size and only 1% over half a hectare in size. The size band distribution reflects the densely built-up nature of the City. The four sites within the City that are greater than 1 hectare in size are the Middle Temple Gardens, Barbican Walkway System, Barbican Lakeside Terrace and the Riverside Walk along the Thames; these contribute 6.14 hectares of open space between them. The average size of open space sites is 0.12 hectares.

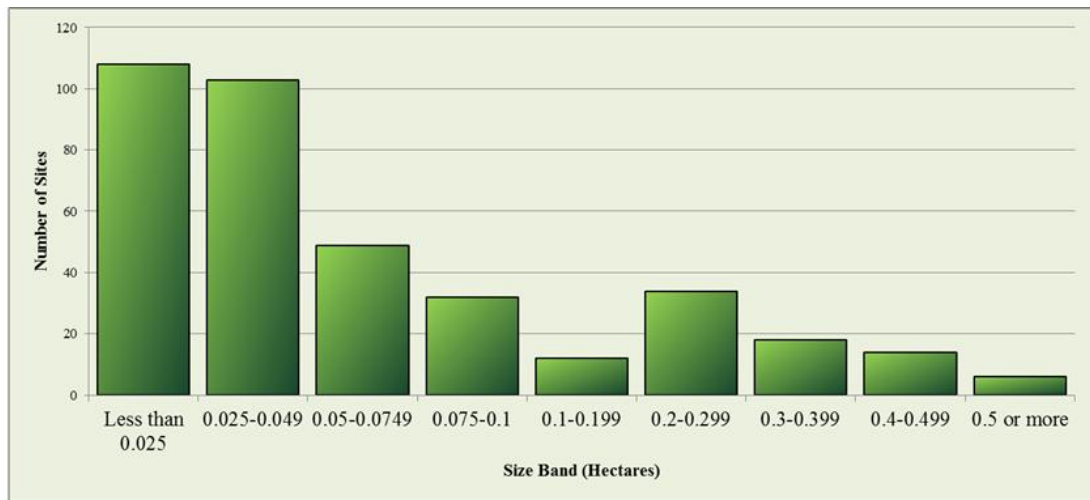


Figure 3: Size of Open Space sites

- 3.3.4 The open spaces in the City are distributed within the Key City Place and Rest of the City areas as shown in Table 2 below. The North of the City contains just over half of all the open spaces in the City, due to the large amounts of space in the Barbican and Golden Lane estates and the Broadgate commercial estate. The Thames and the Riverside area has a significant amount of open space as it encompasses the Riverside Walk and the Temples legal precinct. The Aldgate and Eastern Cluster areas have the lowest percentages of open space but face pressure from increasing employment growth.
- 3.3.5 Figure 2 is an indicative representation of existing open spaces in the City and should not be used to ascertain exact sizes and locations of spaces. The Department of the Built Environment maintain detailed and definitive maps of the City's open spaces which are available to view.

|                          | Percentage of Open Space | Total Size (Hectares) | Public Open Space (Hectares) |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| North of the City        | 51                       | 16.53                 | 12.02                        |
| Cheapside and St. Paul's | 9                        | 2.84                  | 2.73                         |
| Eastern Cluster          | 4                        | 1.18                  | 1.06                         |
| Aldgate                  | 4                        | 1.33                  | 1.09                         |
| Thames and the Riverside | 19                       | 6.17                  | 5.32                         |
| Rest of the City         | 13                       | 4.04                  | 3.44                         |
| <b>Total</b>             | <b>100</b>               | <b>32.09</b>          | <b>25.66</b>                 |

*Table 2: Distribution of Open Space*

- 3.3.6 Table 3 below illustrates that the majority of open spaces within the City are civic, squares and other hard-surfaced areas designed for pedestrians, with churchyards and cemeteries the second largest and amenity green space third. However, when assessing actual coverage, parks and gardens are the second largest category of open spaces within the City. In terms of public access, civic spaces and churchyards and cemeteries are the most public.



|   | North of the City | Cheapside & St. Paul's | Eastern Cluster | Aldgate     | Thames & the Riverside | Rest of the City | Total        |
|---|-------------------|------------------------|-----------------|-------------|------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| Primary Civic Space                         | 4.29              | 0.65                   | 0.78            | 0.41        | 0.55                   | 0.86             | 7.54         |
| Secondary Civic                             | 4.52              | 0.76                   | 0.08            | 0.23        | 2.22                   | 1.28             | 9.09         |
| Parks and Gardens                           | 1.19              | 0.49                   | 0.05            | -           | 2.13                   | 0.72             | 4.58         |
| Cemeteries and Churchyards                  | 1.89              | 0.83                   | 0.14            | 0.03        | 0.22                   | 0.52             | 3.64         |
| Amenity Green Space                         | 0.08              | -                      | -               | 0.24        | -                      | 0.06             | 0.38         |
| Natural and Semi-Natural Urban Green Spaces | -                 | -                      | -               | -           | -                      | -                | -            |
| Provision for Children and Teenagers        | 0.01              | -                      | -               | 0.1         | 0.02                   | -                | 0.14         |
| Outdoor Sports Facilities                   | 0.04              | -                      | -               | -           | -                      | -                | 0.04         |
| Green Corridors                             | -                 | -                      | -               | 0.08        | 0.18                   | -                | 0.26         |
| <b>Total</b>                                | <b>12.02</b>      | <b>2.73</b>            | <b>1.06</b>     | <b>1.09</b> | <b>5.32</b>            | <b>3.44</b>      | <b>25.66</b> |

Table 3: Existing Public Open Space (POS) provision by Key City Place (ha)

- 3.3.7 The Audit demonstrates that the level of overall provision of public open space within the City itself is low at just 0.06 hectares per 1000 week day day-time population. This is an insignificant change compared to the ratio in the 2008 City of London Open Space Strategy of 0.062 hectares per 1000. There has been an increase in the number of open spaces, but no change in the proportion of space available to the City's communities due to the increase in the City's day-time population.
- 3.3.8 The ratio of existing public open space to 1,000 people varies considerably across the City. Figure 4 demonstrates that the Eastern Cluster is most deficient in open space, due to the high concentration of office workers in the tall buildings in a small geographic area. In contrast Figure 5 illustrates that the Aldgate Key City Place is most deficient in open space in terms of the City's residential population.

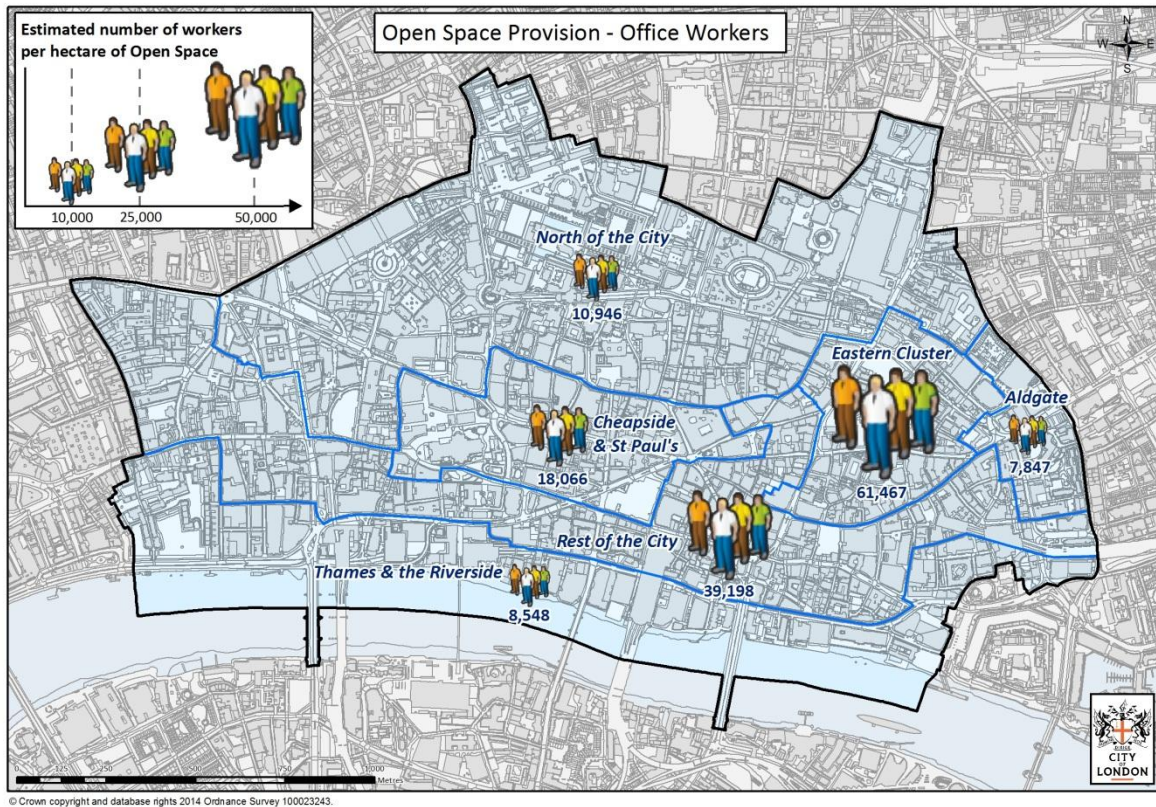


Figure 4: Open Space provision - Office workers

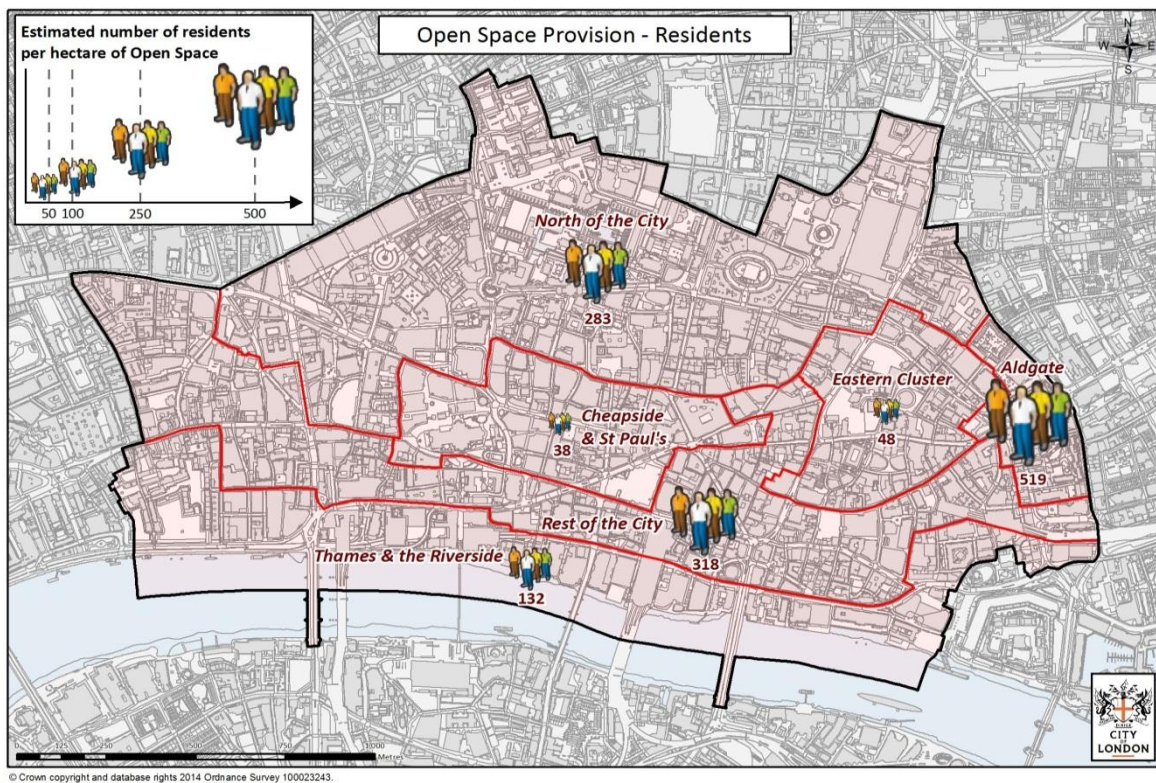


Figure 5: Open Space provision - Residents

### 3.3.9 **Disabled Access**

3.3.10 The legibility and predictability of spaces, together with accessible signage and clarity of information (including visual contrast and tactile finishes), contribute to making spaces easy to find, navigate and enjoy by everyone, including people with a range of mobility, physical, sensory and/or cognitive impairments. Step-free access should be achieved where practicable, and the suitability of materials and finishes should meet diverse user needs, including ergonomic design of seating, visibility and means of appropriate handrail support for steps and ramps, and ensuring there are even light levels across principal walkways and circulation areas after dusk.

3.3.11 There is a continuing programme of auditing City Corporation-owned sites to identify and address open space accessibility issues, in line with the requirements and duties of the Equality Act 2010. These audits remain living documents to be reviewed regularly. At each enhancement or planned refurbishment, the opportunity is taken to review the current level of accessibility to see if any further improvement is possible or desirable.

3.3.12 Access for disabled people on all new developments is expected to meet exemplary access standards. Existing environments will be generally measured on the following minimum criteria:

- Footways are generally at least 1500mm wide (where this is not possible, at least 900mm is provided with regular widening to 1500mm for wheelchair users to turn)
- Surfaces should be level or gently sloping (>1:21) with no upstands exceeding 15mm;
- Where sites cannot provide the above, ramps with handrails on both sides are provided or, in exceptional circumstances, a lift is provided;
- Any steps or level changes are clearly defined with handrail support wherever possible;
- Seating caters for a wide range of user needs.

3.3.13 Information on the proportion of open space that provides wheelchair access is provided in the City of London's open spaces Audit Report 2013 and shows that the majority of spaces in the City provide step free access. Our review criteria now include access for many other disabilities including sensory and ambulant impairments.

3.3.14 All open spaces currently in the City of London development pipeline (including planning permissions and potential works carried out by the City Corporation) are expected to provide inclusive access and are reviewed by the City's in-house access team.

### 3.3.15 **Green Roofs and Roof Spaces**

3.3.16 In recent years there have been significant numbers of green roofs developed on top of buildings in the City of London. Green roofs have the potential to contribute to climate change adaptation by reducing surface water run-off and by improving building insulation, urban greening and biodiversity as well as providing amenity space. Extensive green roofs

provide a more natural biodiverse environment and have environmental benefits while intensive roofs provide planting and can be used to provide landscaped amenity space for workers and visitors. Both types of roof contribute to the reduction of water run-off which assists in minimising local flooding.

- 3.3.17 There are approximately 33 green roofs and 4 green walls in the City, as listed in Table 4. There are approximately 28 green roofs in the development pipeline which are expected to be built in the next few years. Green roofs provide opportunities for leisure and relaxation and it is important that the public is allowed access to them wherever possible. In addition to green roofs there are various external green plantings which provide greenery, such as the stepped terraces on the Lloyd's Banking Group Headquarters building on the corner of Gresham and Noble Streets.
- 3.3.18 There is also a growing recognition that roof space can meet the need for not only green roofs but also amenity (seating, viewing points, catering) and sports and recreation facilities (covered ball courts, running tracks, exercise equipment). Although these 'recreation' roofs have less potential for biodiversity and sustainable drainage, they are an important element in the City where open space is at a premium.

| <b>Green Roofs as of 2014</b>                   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| 120-122 Cheapside                               | Office                |
| 5 Fleet Place                                   | Office                |
| 201 Bishopsgate                                 | Office                |
| 107 Cheapside                                   | Office                |
| Bow Bells House, 1 Bread Street                 | Office                |
| 125 Old Broad Street                            | Office                |
| 22 Chancery Lane                                | Office                |
| Riverbank House 2 Swan Lane                     | Office                |
| 1 New Change                                    | Retail                |
| Guildhall North Block, Basinghall Street        | Office                |
| Faraday Building, 136-144 Queen Victoria Street | Office                |
| King House, 2 Copthall Avenue                   | Office                |
| New Court, 7-9 St. Swithin's Lane               | Office                |
| 7 Copthall Avenue                               | Office                |
| 125 Old Broad Street                            | Office                |
| 200 Aldersgate Street                           | Office                |
| 1 Basinghall Street                             | Office                |
| Drapers Gardens, 12 Throgmorton Street          | Office                |
| 7 Pepys Street                                  | Hotel                 |
| Museum of London, 150 London Wall               | Leisure               |
| 52-56 Minories                                  | Student Housing       |
| Finsbury Circus House, 12-15 Finsbury Circus    | Office                |
| Milton Court, Barbican                          | Residential/education |
| 24 Monument Street                              | Office                |
| 1 Poultry                                       | Restaurant            |

|                                       |                 |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 10 Queen Street Place                 | Office          |
| 150 Cheapside                         | Office          |
| 201 Bishopsgate                       | Office          |
| St. Bartholomew's Hospital            | Hospital        |
| Cannon Bridge House, 78 Cannon Street | Office          |
| 2 King Edward Street                  | Office          |
| Unilever House, Victoria Embankment   | Office          |
| 1 Angel Lane                          | Office          |
| <b>Green Walls</b>                    |                 |
| 4 New Street Square                   | Office          |
| 52-56 Minories                        | Student Housing |
| 7 Pepys Street                        | Hotel           |
| 20 Fenchurch Street                   | Office          |

\* There may be more green roofs and walls in the City which we have no record of or which have been completed since publication.

Table 4: Green roofs and walls

- 3.3.19 The City Corporation supports the installation of green walls which provide habitats for invertebrates on which birds feed, contributes to the reduction in air temperature and improvements to the appearance of locations where there is limited opportunity for planting. To be successful they require careful design and installation and regular maintenance. There are 4 green walls in the City.

### 3.3.20 **Trees**

The City of London Tree Strategy states that there are approximately 2,400 trees in the City on both public and private land, many of which are important in terms of visual amenity and biodiversity. Whilst there are about seventy different genera present, six of these account for about half of all the City trees. These include Platanus (Plane), Tilia (Lime), Prunus (cherry), Acer (Maple), Carpinus (Hornbeam) and Betula (Birch). One in seven of all trees is a London Plane, mostly Platanus x hispanica. 'The right tree in the right place' is crucial to ensuring that trees of appropriate species are planted.

### 3.3.21 **Historic Parks and Gardens**

- 3.3.22 The City contains numerous open spaces, gardens and churchyards which are of historic importance. Four parks and gardens are included on English Heritage's Register of Parks and Gardens of special interest: Barbican; Finsbury Circus; Inner Temple and Middle Temple. These gardens are protected from any development that would adversely affect their special historic interest.
- 3.3.23 The Department of the Built Environment produces a range of Conservation Area Appraisals which provide useful information about the setting and context of the City's historic parks, gardens and open spaces.



- 3.3.24 Many of the City's open spaces and trees make a significant contribution to the historic character of the City's conservation areas and listed buildings. Open space, trees and planting are often of historic value in the contribution made to a special sense of place – reflecting its evolution and the degree of enclosure or openness associated with the townscape.
- 3.3.25 Development proposals that may affect the City's historic parks and gardens will be assessed to avoid overshadowing, maintain their historic character, and seek to ensure that the setting, enjoyment, and views into and from these gardens is respected.
- 3.3.26 Many open spaces in the City have planting which reflects their history e.g. the intricate knot garden in the former churchyard of St. Mary Aldermanbury which commemorates Shakespeare's contemporaries who first published his works after his death and who are buried here. Schemes that include gardens of special historic interest or historic spaces within the development site should include proposals for their interpretation and presentation. An example of this type of interpretation is the black slate used to mark the inner boundary of the Roman amphitheatre in Guildhall Yard.

### 3.3.27 **Nature Conservation**

Ten of the City's open spaces have been identified (as of 2014) as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation using the criteria and procedures set out in the Mayor of London's Biodiversity Strategy. Of the ten sites listed below, the Thames Foreshore is a Site of Metropolitan Importance, the Middle Temple and Inner Temple Gardens, the Barbican and St. Alphage Garden are identified as Sites of Borough Importance (Grade II), while the remaining sites are identified as being of local importance. The Open Spaces Department plan to designate a further three Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation.

#### **Sites of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation**

- 1 River Thames and its tidal tributaries (area within the City of London)

#### **Sites of Borough Importance for Nature Conservation**

- 2 Middle Temple Garden and Inner Temple Garden (Grade II)
- 3 The Barbican and St Alphage Gardens (Grade II)

#### **Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation**

- 4 Pepys Garden, Seething Lane and St Olave's churchyard
- 5 St. Paul's Cathedral Garden
- 6 Cleary Garden
- 7 St. Botolph-without-Bishopsgate Churchyard
- 8 Aldermanbury Gardens
- 9 Roman Wall Noble Street
- 10 Finsbury Circus

### 3.3.28 **Sports Facilities**

The City has the following sports facilities:

- Golden Lane Leisure Centre (owned by the City Corporation but managed by a commissioned sports and leisure provider) incorporating a 20m x 8m swimming pool, 1 court sports hall, gym and club rooms offering various uses and 2x outdoor tennis/netball courts;
- Numerous private gym facilities, some with swimming pools;
- Sir John Cass Primary School providing playgrounds with limited markings and a small sports hall. (These facilities are currently used for sports development work, including coaching, but are not suitable for wider community use);
- City of London School (limited use by local schools and available to external hirers) providing a 25m x 10m swimming pool, 2x court indoor facility and a large outdoor playground area;
- City of London School for Girls (limited use by external hirers) providing a 25m x 10m swimming pool, diving pit, 2x court indoor facility and outdoor courts for tennis and netball;
- St Botolph's Churchyard (available for public use) providing 1 x tennis/netball court;
- Barbican (resident only) multi-use area with lining for netball and tennis court, plus a cricket net;
- Ice rink and croquet lawn in the Broadgate office development (seasonal).

3.3.29 A recent review of public sports facilities by the City Corporation's Community and Children's Services Department revealed that most sites are well used and are operating at near capacity levels.

### 3.3.30 **Play Provision**

In terms of children and young peoples' play facilities, the City of London Open Spaces Audit (2013) considered the qualitative, quantitative and accessibility elements of play and informal recreation facilities in the City. The Audit found that there is 0.8 hectares (7,840 square metres) of open space provision for children and young people. As the focus is on provision of amenities for residents and schools, 75% of this open space is closed to the public.

3.3.31 To recognise that children approach play in different ways, the City Corporation has included a variety of play features in the City; permanent fixed equipment which is designed just for children's play activities (e.g. swings and slides), permanent installations which can be used for a variety of purposes (e.g. seating that can be used for sitting on, for stretching after jogging, and for children to climb and play on) and informal non-fixed equipment which is brought out on a particular day in the presence of play workers (balls, hoops, giant building blocks etc.)

- 3.3.32 Most of the equipped play areas with permanent fixed equipment are on the City's housing estates and are not intended for use by the general public. Provision on the City's four residential estates is as follows:
- Barbican Estate – equipped playground in Thomas More Garden (multi-use play unit with slide, cradle seat swings, flat seat swings, roundabout, hopscotch, two spring animals, boat themed multi-play unit, see-saw and a ball court);
  - Barbican Estate – equipped play area in Speed Garden (cradle seat swing and multi-use play unit with slide);
  - Golden Lane Estate – small equipped play provision adjacent to Cullum Welch House (1 x multi-use play unit and spring bike within a 'play pit'), and a designated ball games area.
  - Mansell Street Estate – equipped play area next to estate car parking (multi-use play unit with slide, cradle seat swings, flat seat swings, seated roundabout, hopscotch, two spring animals) plus an outdoor ball court, which is used by Millwall Football Club for coaching sessions; and
  - Middlesex Street Estate – small equipped play area (multi-use play unit and 'play mushrooms') plus outdoor ball court.
- 3.3.33 Play areas in open spaces open to the public can be found at West Smithfield Rotunda, Tower Hill and Portsoken Street Gardens.
- 3.3.34 The reinstatement of Finsbury Circus offers an opportunity to incorporate play into the landscape by encouraging informal temporary play facilities rather than static play equipment. Across the City, stakeholders and partners will be encouraged to offer play opportunities in the form of organised play sessions and activities. For example, activity and sports days paid for by external funding and delivered by professional play leaders.
- 3.3.35 **Tranquil Areas**
- The City's many open spaces provide an opportunity for rest and relaxation for workers, visitors and residents and the City Corporation is keen that the City's open spaces offer a tranquil environment for users. Opportunities will be identified for improving and enhancing the tranquillity and soundscape of open spaces during the planning or enhancements of new spaces.
- 3.3.36 The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends that noise levels in gardens and recreation areas, which would include the City's open spaces, should be less than 55 dBAeq (sound level measurement) during day time. Noise monitoring at selected locations in the City has revealed that only a few areas of the City fall below this level. These include Thames Walk, the centre of the Barbican and inside the boundary of the Mansell Street estate. The open space along the City's riverside, despite increased activities and vibrancy, is still relatively quiet due to it being traffic free.
- 3.3.37 When considering what makes an open space tranquil, people's perception of the space, as well as noise levels can have an impact. Research by the City of Amsterdam has revealed that an area can be considered to be



'quiet' when it is around 6dBA lower than its surroundings. The absolute noise level seems less important. St Dunstan's in the East, has a noise level during the day of 63.7dB LAeqT. This is almost 9dB LAeq higher than the WHO recommended level yet the space scored very highly for tranquillity during monitoring.

- 3.3.38 In September 2010, Environmental Protection UK published a report for the City of London called Quietening Open Spaces, Towards Sustainable Soundscapes for the City of London. The document details many suggestions for improving the tranquillity of a selection of open spaces in the Square Mile. The report details that the tranquillity of an area can be improved in a number of ways:

### **1. Reducing the noise at source**

Examples include using quiet vehicles and machinery, encouraging non-motorised transport such as walking and cycling, smoothing traffic flow, redesigning street layout, traffic calming measures, quieter road surfacing and restricting traffic at sensitive times of day.

### **2. Modifying the sound pathway**

This can be achieved in a variety of ways such as altering openings and entrances to block or attenuate sound pathways, enclosing noise sources, installing physical noise barriers, earth bunds, or very dense (low) vegetation.

### **3. Mitigation at the receiver**

Mitigation at the receiver could be achieved by reducing the area of acoustically reflective surfaces using materials that create sound, e.g. gravel paths that emphasise footfall, planting to attract insects and birds, the installation of water features and the installation of sculpture with sound reducing properties.

### **3.3.39 Atria and Sky Gardens**

Tall buildings have led to an increase in urban densities. Due to their size and scale, the impacts of tall buildings on their surroundings are greater than those of more conventionally sized buildings. The lack of public space in densely built areas can be counteracted in tall buildings through the use of sky gardens, atrium spaces and terraces. These structures can successfully extend high quality public amenity space. Every effort should be made to secure full public access to these spaces through legal agreement both during the week as well as weekends. Given the projected rise in London's population and increasing moves to mixed use tall buildings, the use of these spaces is pertinent.

### **3.3.40 Smart working in Open spaces**

Technological advances in recent years have resulted in different ways of working, including working on laptops and tablets out of the office environment utilising WiFi connections in cafes and open spaces. The City provides a free WiFi network and increased use of 3G and 4G mobile networks, which make working outdoors feasible.

- 3.3.41 Open spaces in the City could embrace these changes and allow for comfortable seating arrangements which would assist in “out of office” working practices. Open spaces in the City could be designed with features to maximise the ability for people to work on mobile devices such as high speed wireless connection, space to rest laptops and touch screen information boards.

## **3.4 Supply of Proposed Open Space**

- 3.4.1 The City Corporation has established the Public Realm Enhancement Programme to enhance the street environment and create additional public civic spaces. This initiative is discussed in some detail in Section 4 (Vision, Strategy and Delivery). Suffice to say here that it has a number of schemes under construction and others where funding and other pre-requisites have been secured and new civic spaces are due to be created.

## **3.5 Demand for Open Space: The City’s Existing Population**

- 3.5.1 The characteristics of the City mean that it has a very large influx of workers, visitors and students during the working week (Monday to Friday), and a relatively small resident population. This is an unusual situation which presents a number of unique challenges to assessing need and strategy development.
- 3.5.2 During the working week, workers, students, visitors and residents compete for access to and use of open space and sports and recreation facilities. Competition is at its peak at lunchtimes and after work during the summer months. For the purposes of this strategy, the week-day day-time population has been used to identify the existing situation and assess need as this represents the ‘busiest’ scenario in terms of demand for open space.
- 3.5.3 The existing weekday day-time population has been estimated at around 428,000. The basis for this estimate is set out in Appendix 1: Methodology. In summary, this figure comprises:
- 370,000 workers
  - 29,000 students
  - 27,000 visitors; and
  - 2,000 day-time residents not in employment.
- 3.5.4 Information on visitor numbers to the City are derived from the City of London Visitor Strategy 2013/17. There are no official figures for student numbers in the City. Assessment of the 2011 Census reveals the following characteristics of the City’s workforce and total resident population (City of London Residential Population Census 2011, Published May 2013).

**City Workers:**

- There are significantly more male than female workers;
- The workforce is biased towards younger workers (20-29 and 30-39 age groups), especially amongst women;
- The workforce is overwhelmingly white;
- There is a very high proportion of workers in managerial or professional occupations.

**Resident Population:**

- There are slightly more males than females living in the City;
- There are relatively few families and children in the City. The majority of households are small and many comprise single persons;
- The City has a relatively old resident population which is expected to increase rapidly in the next decade;
- Life expectancy is expected to remain high amongst City residents;
- The City's population comprises a relatively large number of white people with low proportions of Asian or Asian British people and Black or Black British people;
- Unemployment levels are relatively low;
- A relatively high percentage of dwellings are not the household's main residence. Many view their City property as a second home, living there 5 days a week and at their family home at the weekend.

- 3.5.5 The City of London is a relatively affluent area ranking as the 88th least deprived area in the country and 6th least deprived in London in terms of the Index of Multiple Deprivation. In contrast, all seven boroughs bordering the City (the City Fringe) are within the 10% most deprived boroughs in England. However, within the City boundaries, the distinct residential populations show a marked disparity in deprivation levels. According to the Government's Index of Multiple Deprivation (2010) both districts of Barbican (East and West) are in the 15% least deprived areas in England. Golden Lane (comprising the Golden Lane local authority estate) is in the middle of the index and Portsoken (comprising the Middlesex and Mansell Street housing estates) is amongst the 25% most deprived areas.

**3.6 Demand for Open Space: The City's Future Population**

- 3.6.1 The City's week day day-time population is projected to increase by approximately 52,000 to around 480,000 by 2019. The basis of this projection is set out in Appendix 2: Methodology. In summary, the projected population will comprise:
- 414,000 workers (+44,000);
  - 29,000 students (no change);
  - 30,000 visitors (+3,000); and
  - 3,400 residents not in employment (+1,400).

- 3.6.2 No information is available on the likely changes in the profile of workers, students and visitors. However, the projected increase in the overall resident population suggests an ageing population.

|                      | <b>Projected daytime population figures rounded to nearest thousand</b> |
|----------------------|---|
| Existing Population  | 428,000   |
| Projected growth     | 52,000  |
| Projected Population | 476,000   |

*Table 5: Projected weekday daytime population by 2019*

### **3.7 Demand for Open Space: Local Opinion**

#### **3.7.1 Overall Approach**

The City Corporation has sought to use and interpret the results of a number of recent consultation exercises; most linked with the preparation of other strategies, rather than duplicate effort and run the risk of causing consultation fatigue. Local opinion from the following community engagement events has been captured and has helped inform this strategy:

- Local Plan Consultation (2013);
- City Gardens (November 2012); and
- Residents Events (annually).

- 3.7.2 A summary of the results of this consultation is set out in Appendix 2.

#### **Conclusions**

The key conclusions that can be drawn from consultation are that the City's communities are generally satisfied with the City's public gardens and spaces but would like to see:

- More 'green' areas and trees;
- An increase in lawn areas for sitting;
- More natural planting to help biodiversity;
- More children's play equipment and opportunities for natural play;
- More sports equipment;
- More opportunities for volunteering including 'green gym' biodiversity and gardening activities.

- 3.7.3 This SPD has been the subject of consultation with a range of local people and other stakeholders. Consultation ensured that all sections of the City's communities had the opportunity to comment. An Equalities Impact Assessment and a Health Impact Assessment were carried out to measure the impact of this strategy on the City's communities.

### **3.8 Assessment Findings**

#### **3.8.1 Quantitative**

As outlined above, the level of overall provision of public open space is just 0.06 hectares per 1000 week day day-time population. This is low in both absolute and relative terms. The best comparison in London is the City of Westminster, which has a ratio of approximately 0.54ha per 1,000 week day day-time population (Westminster City Council Open Space Strategy, February 2007). However, this is in part due to the large royal parks that are a feature of the West End.

#### **3.8.2 Qualitative**

The quality of public open space in the City is generally high. The City Gardens Team are regular gold winners in both the London and Britain in Bloom Royal Horticultural Society awards.

3.8.3 Whilst the standards of horticulture are good, the audit also flags up present and future problems with garden infrastructure. Reduced revenue budgets and wear and tear over time mean that paths, steps and railings at some sites are beginning to show their age. Ongoing changes within the nature and population of the City in recent years have also highlighted a lack of play provision suitable for children of varied ages. Finally, the ongoing maintenance costs of open space coupled with the need to meet continuously changing legislation has also had a further impact on green space provision.

#### **3.8.4 Areas of Deficiency**

The dense but scattered pattern of existing open spaces in just one Square Mile means that traditional techniques such as sieve maps and catchment areas do not help in identifying particular areas of quantitative open space deficiency. Therefore analysis of need has concentrated on the City as a whole, the 5 Key City Place areas and the Rest of the City.

3.8.5 The Mayor of London's SPG All London Green Grid Framework (2012) identifies the whole of the City as being in the indicative deficiency areas in relation to District Parks, Local Parks and access to nature.

3.8.6 Appendix 1: Background Information sets out the amount of open space for the City as a whole, its 5 Key City Place areas and the Rest of the City. This demonstrates that the Eastern part of the City is relatively poorly provided for in terms of workers in the Eastern Cluster and residents in Aldgate. The projected growth in employment and residential growth shown in Appendix 1 means that the Eastern Cluster will be under more pressure for open space provision, as much of the increased employment will be located in the Eastern Cluster.

### **3.9 Future Spatial Priorities**

3.9.1 The key spatial messages that emerge from this assessment are as follows:

- The need for all types of public open space throughout the City;
- The particular need for public open space in the eastern part of the City.

### 3.9.2 **Standards**

It would clearly be inappropriate to seek to apply nationally recognised residential standards such as the National Playing Fields Association standard of 1.6 hectares per thousand people in the City context. However, there are benefits in setting an overall standard for public open space in terms of (a) providing a quantitative standard for open space provision for new development, (b) providing a target for overall provision across the City, and (c) monitoring progress in meeting the target.

### 3.9.3

London Plan policy 2.18 is clear that that open space standards are best set locally. The City is perhaps the clearest example of the need for a locally derived standard. The expected growth in workers, visitors and residents will increase the demand for open space in a place which has some of the highest land values anywhere in the UK. In this context, the most appropriate standard is considered to be the maintenance of the existing City-wide ratio of public open space per 1,000 week day day-time population at 0.06 hectares. In the context of a growing week-day population this is considered to be a challenging yet achievable local standard.

## 4. Vision, Strategy and Delivery

### 4.1 Vision

- 4.1.1 The vision for open space in the City is as follows:

"The creation of a network of high quality and inspiring open spaces which helps ensure an attractive, healthy, sustainable and socially cohesive place for all the City's communities and visitors."

### 4.2 Strategy

- 4.2.1 The vision is to be delivered by the following 10 strategic objectives:

**1. Maintain and increase public access to existing open spaces and enhance the quality of these spaces, in terms of both design and management.**

- 4.2.2 The first priority is to maintain and make the most of existing open space in the City, which is such a scarce and valuable resource. The City is the subject of intense development pressure and the City Corporation needs to use its powers as Local Planning Authority to manage change in ways that ensure open spaces are maintained and enhanced or provided in a better way.

- 4.2.3 Some of the Square Mile's open spaces are either not open to the general public or are open only at certain times due to private ownership. For example, Temple Gardens provides a fantastic visual amenity for people working in, living in or visiting the area, but the gardens are only able to be used during the lunchtime period. Where the opportunity allows the City Corporation will seek to secure public access, on agreed terms, to more private open spaces.

- 4.2.4 Opportunities should continue to be taken to improve the quality of existing open space in the City by way of imaginative design solutions, the use of high quality and robust materials, the incorporation of public art, play and other features of interest and careful management. There is still considerable scope to rationalise the design and use of public and private open spaces by working with users and owners to re-design and consolidate spaces to create more useful and attractive places.

- 4.2.5 Works to and the management of existing spaces need to be informed by a clear analysis of their context and an understanding of their historic value and historic associations. This will be particularly important for Gardens of Special Historic Interest and open spaces in conservation areas, but is an important consideration for all existing open spaces.

**2. Increase the amount of high quality public open space in order to maintain the existing City-wide ratio of 0.06 ha per 1000 week day day-time population and focus efforts on creating additional public open space in the east of the City, particularly in the Eastern Cluster and the Aldgate area.**

- 4.2.6 Established national and London-wide standards relating to open space and play provision are not appropriate for the particular circumstances of the City. The most realistic target in terms of the amount of public open space is to use the existing level of provision as a benchmark and to aim to maintain the existing ratio of space to the day-time population. This is a challenging target given that the growth in employment anticipated in the City will require the creation of additional public open space if the current ratio of 0.06 ha per 1000 week day day-time population is to be maintained up to 2019.
- 4.2.7 There are two main sources of increasing the amount of public open space; securing public access to existing private space and securing additional public open space as part of new development. The first will entail a licence or access agreement between the City Corporation and a private owner and may involve the need to carry out enhancement works and ensure suitable liability insurance cover against any future claims. The second will involve ensuring that, where appropriate, development schemes incorporate additional areas of public open space and/or make a financial contribution through the Community Infrastructure Levy or s106 Planning Obligations towards the creation of new civic spaces as part of the City Corporation's Public Realm Enhancement Programme. There is a potential synergy between growth and open space provision; since taller buildings with small footprints provide opportunities for additional open space – helping to ensure that it is provided in locations where it is most needed.
- 4.2.8 The design and management of new public open spaces need to be informed by a clear analysis of their current context, both physical and social, and the area's historical value and associations.
- 4.2.9 There may be cases where the provision of temporary open space is possible, for example in larger phased developments where there is the opportunity to lay out part of the site as temporary open space pending its redevelopment. This would be welcomed.
- 4.2.10 The existing distribution of public open space and predicted distribution of growth in the week day day-time population (as set out in Section 3) demonstrate the need to concentrate efforts on increasing the amount of public open space in the Eastern part of the City.



**3. Ensure that all open spaces are designed and managed to be safe and accessible to all and, where appropriate, enable opportunities for different activities at different times of the day and year, including as outdoor work spaces.**

- 4.2.11 In 2003, an accessibility audit was undertaken at all open space sites to address issues of compliance with the (then) forthcoming Disability Discrimination Act (2005). Whilst the audit praised good practice on many issues, it also highlighted a number of simple but key improvements that need to be made to many of the everyday items that form part of open space in the City. These include the height of seating, clarity of path/step edges, the addition of well-designed handrails and the installation of additional lighting. Although these issues are now being addressed at existing sites, each enhancement and new open space scheme will need to incorporate the principles of 'inclusive design' to ensure that spaces can be enjoyed by everyone, whatever their access needs. The principles of 'inclusive design' require open spaces to take account of all access needs by, for example, incorporating features that enable independent wheelchair users to access the space and incorporating tactile surfaces, scented plants and water features for blind and partially sighted users, i.e. diverse planting schemes. A recent example of where inclusive design principles have been adopted is the refurbishment of Cleary Gardens, which has been transformed into a sensory experience with the planting of scented flowers, shrubs and climbers to evoke the bouquets of wines from the Loire Valley in France.
- 4.2.12 All types of open space are in demand in the City and it is important that, where appropriate and viable, open spaces are designed and managed in ways which maximise the use of this scarce resource and facilitate different activities at different times for example volunteering, relaxation and informal play. An additional consideration is the need to raise the quality of certain existing open spaces by refurbishing hard landscape infrastructure and replacing over mature planting.
- 4.2.13 The City Corporation recognises the importance of both formal and informal play opportunities. The greatest pressure on City open spaces is during the working week, particularly at lunch time and early evening. Outside of these times, many public open spaces are relatively underused and provide an opportunity for children to make use of them for informal play. This is particularly important for spaces in or near the City's residential areas.
- 4.2.14 The potential inclusion of publicly accessible open space within new developments needs to be considered alongside other factors such as security implications affecting new developments and surrounding users and occupiers. Open spaces should feel comfortable, safe and secure for all users, and contribute to a wider sense of safety and security at all times of the day and night. Misuse of, and damage to, open spaces can be mitigated by crime prevention through environmental design. Close joint working with the City of London Police Architectural Liaison Officer, and the application of the Association of Chief Police Officers' "Secured by Design" principles at the concept and design stages of all new open spaces, and early in the redesign of existing ones, will make for high quality, easier to

manage open spaces for the City and the community. Continued cooperation with the police in the management of these spaces will only enhance this.

- 4.2.15 Opportunities should be taken to incorporate features that encourage workers and residents to adopt a healthy lifestyle. In addition to spaces being conducive to children's play, opportunities should be taken to include facilities that help adults stay healthy. Wider promotion of self-guided and organised walks and volunteering activities would assist health and well-being benefits.
- 4.2.16 The incorporation of sculptures, lighting and street furniture can help raise the quality of spaces and make them more distinctive and special. These features will be encouraged wherever practicable. Functional art work can also provide play-sensory (i.e. sight, touch, sound) equipment, offering alternative play where traditional play equipment may be inappropriate.
- 4.2.17 All new public open spaces need to be 'fit for purpose'; that is to comprise suitably robust features and materials whilst maintaining comfort for the user, to benefit from acceptable levels of sunlight and a comfortable pedestrian wind environment, be physically accessible to all and to have appropriate management arrangements.
- 4.2.18 The high levels of use of spaces place a heavy demand on their maintenance. The long-term maintenance costs (including soft and hard landscaping and infrastructure services) of new open space must be considered at the design stage and sources of funding need to be identified and secured at this stage. Planning applications for proposals that involve the creation of additional open space should be accompanied by a 'Quality and Management Statement', demonstrating how these prerequisites are to be delivered for the particular spaces that are proposed to be provided.
- 4.2.19 The City Corporation's on-going Public Realm Enhancement Programme, and other initiatives to increase the amount of public open spaces will add to the maintenance responsibilities of the City Corporation. Following completion of each project, the City Corporation's Open Spaces Department takes on responsibility for maintaining the soft landscaping aspects of each scheme. Whilst every effort is made to reduce the eventual maintenance cost of new schemes at the design stage by, for example, introducing irrigation systems and ensuring the careful choice of more drought-resistant plants to maximise water efficiency, this increases the burden of the maintenance budget and there is presently no additional budget provision for this following the initial five year establishment period. The City Corporation will consider the use of appropriate s106 Planning Obligation or CIL receipts to part fund longer term maintenance of these spaces following the initial five year establishment period.
- 4.2.20 Ensuring a consistent and planned approach to hard landscape and infrastructure maintenance throughout the City of London's open spaces is a key issue. It is therefore essential that the City of London City Surveyors Department identifies at the earliest opportunity a realistic and prioritised

plan to address the planned maintenance and refurbishment of hard landscape features within open spaces including the need to address accessibility issues.

**4. Provide, where appropriate, additional play opportunities that are accessible to all in existing and new spaces.**

- 4.2.21 In addition to ensuring that, where appropriate, new open spaces provide a safe and stimulating environment and informal opportunities for children to enjoy imaginative play, there is the need to improve play opportunities. The needs of disabled children need to be taken into account when designing equipment and offering play opportunities. The City Corporation's seeks to improve the provision of public play areas for children and young people. A number of opportunities exist for new or enhanced provision of equipped play areas on private (housing estate) land and in public open spaces close to residential areas. The potential sites that are identified are as follows:
- The Aldgate Plaza will provide play in the form of water features.
  - Finsbury Circus will provide informal play in the form of sculpture and trails.
- 4.2.22 Play areas and facilities should not be located where they would cause undue disturbance to neighbouring occupiers.

**5. Ensure that existing and new spaces make a positive contribution to the biodiversity value of the City through appropriate plant choice and habitat creation.**

- 4.2.23 When asked for their opinion, workers and residents consistently prioritise the provision of green space (as opposed to 'hard' landscaping). Evidence shows that green infrastructure reduces stress and supports a sense of well-being. The City Corporation will prioritise the provision of green public open space and protect and promote the provision of green private open space where practicable.
- 4.2.24 Likewise, trees can help 'lift' the quality of spaces and will be incorporated into the design of schemes wherever practicable, taking account of the difficulties in planting trees when above utilities infrastructure. There is a need to ensure that when planting street trees, both species and size are appropriate to the location, and that species choice is informed by the City of London Tree Strategy SPD, particularly with regards to deficiencies of certain species or a lack of succession in certain areas of the City.
- 4.2.25 Around 40% of trees in the City are in private gardens or other privately owned and managed land and the City Corporation will encourage owners to maintain and care for these trees. The City Corporation has powers as a Local Planning Authority to control works to trees covered by a Tree Preservation Order and trees in Conservation Areas. Trees may also be the subject of planning conditions.
- 4.2.26 Enhancing biodiversity will be a key consideration for the City Corporation when improving existing open spaces that it manages and in approving the

design and management of additional spaces, including the specification for additional trees. The City Corporation will be guided by its Biodiversity Action Plan (2010-15) for habitats (City Gardens, Vertical Habitats – walls, balconies, terraces and roofs - and the Thames foreshore) and species (black redstart, peregrine and sparrow) which set out practical measures for improving wildlife in the Square Mile. It is also important to enhance and create linkages (i.e. 'green corridors') between open spaces in the City and with open spaces in neighbouring boroughs to facilitate the movement of plants and animals between these spaces. This is relevant to Strategic Objectives 1 and 2. Key to the delivery and monitoring of these objectives will be the use and support of volunteers and expert organisations, in order to advise on, and implement, regular survey work.

- 4.2.27 Around 25% of existing open space is private or has restrictive use. Individual private residents and businesses can make a big contribution to enhancing the biodiversity value of the City by improving the way they manage their gardens and roof spaces.
- 4.2.28 Wherever possible the City Corporation will favour the use of tree species which help to sustain wildlife. All trees support insect life which provides food for birds and some species of bat. Native tree species are of most value as they will have evolved together with animals which depend on them, but some non-native species are also successful in attracting insects. For birds, trees provide places to nest and staging posts for migrant species.

**6. Ensure that enhanced and additional open spaces accord with high standards of sustainable and inclusive design, construction and management and take account of the potential changes to the City's climate, particularly the urban heat island effect.**

- 4.2.29 The City Corporation's Sustainability Policy (2006, updated 2012) and Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (2007, updated 2010) provide important guidance for existing and proposed open spaces. The design, construction and management of all open spaces need to ensure that high standards are achieved in terms of environmental sustainability. To ensure a robust approach, a Sustainability Audit should be undertaken for all major projects. This will help take into consideration the following:
- Specifying hard landscaping materials (such as paving) that is both sustainably sourced, and permeable;
  - Ensuring the careful choice of more drought-resistant plants to maximise water efficiency, but balancing this with the requirement for native species in order to encourage diversity of wildlife;
  - Ensuring that all new 'enclosed garden' schemes incorporate automatic irrigation and where possible, simple irrigation systems are 'retro-fitted' into existing open spaces areas, utilising harvested water where feasible;
  - Continue to replace all free-standing wooden planters with more long-lived materials in order to cut down on the use of timber preservatives;

- Ensuring that new planters include reservoir tank irrigation systems and water retentive granules to cut down on watering;
- Incorporating porous paving and other forms of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) where appropriate; SuDS should be designed, where possible, to maximise contributions to water resource efficiency, biodiversity enhancement and the provision of multifunctional open spaces.
- Creating areas of shade to maximise cooling through planting; and
- The use of materials from renewable sources.

**7. Increase the provision of private and communal residential amenity space (balconies and roof terraces) and communal amenity green space for office workers (including indoor and outdoor gardens) in appropriate locations.**

- 4.2.30 The clear priority is to provide more and better quality public open space. Such space provides an important place for people to meet and socialise, helps social cohesion and should be encouraged. However, the provision of private and communal residential amenity space and communal amenity space for office workers would help take the pressure off the limited amount of public open space and should be increased, subject to amenity and security considerations.

**8. Effectively manage the temporary loss of any open space during construction projects and ensure that high quality open space of equivalent or greater size is established as soon as possible following the necessary works.**

- 4.2.31 The constant redevelopment of buildings within the City creates sites which are temporarily vacant. The use of land for temporary open space and recreational use is encouraged, where it would not prejudice the eventual return to office (or other) use. Where temporary green spaces are provided, it may be appropriate for trees and plants to be planted within moveable containers, so as not to prevent or deter future development on site, and so that green infrastructure can be utilised elsewhere.
- 4.2.32 The Crossrail Project, which commenced in 2010, will bring much benefit to the City and is strongly supported by the City Corporation. However, the proposals have resulted in the partial and temporary closure of Finsbury Circus for at least five years whilst it is being used as a works site. Finsbury Circus is an Historic Park and Garden and is located within the Finsbury Circus Conservation Area. The City Corporation will continue to work closely with local stakeholders and the Crossrail Project to minimise the adverse effects of works on existing trees and to agree with the Crossrail Project an appropriate detailed design and specification for a replacement open space and an appropriate timescale for the reinstatement of the facilities.

**9. Promote the potential contribution open spaces can make to the improved health and well-being of City and wider communities.**

- 4.2.33 There are several ways in which open spaces can help improve the health of the City's communities. These include allowing people to relax and exercise, enabling cultural events where space and funding are available and providing opportunities for community cohesion through volunteering activities.
- 4.2.34 Equipment in open spaces that can be used for play and/or exercise can encourage people to improve their health and fitness. Such equipment may be appropriate in spaces where the long-term maintenance of the equipment can be paid for through developer contributions.
- 4.2.35 The main source of air pollution in the City is road vehicles. The following issues should be considered when designing open space schemes to improve the health of the City's communities:
- The use and siting of trees and shrubs and other vegetation that has a positive benefit on air quality. Deciduous trees are preferable because of their ability to capture pollution;
  - Designs that encourage people to spend time away from the busiest, most polluted roads. This will help to reduce exposure to the highest levels of pollution in the City;
  - Designs that protect the people most vulnerable to poor air quality such as children and the elderly.

**10. Increase public awareness and understanding of the different types of open space in and around the City and encourage the City's communities to make the most of open spaces and to help maintain and improve them.**

- 4.2.36 Open spaces in the City are the focus of a number of events during the year and the City Corporation already supports programmes to encourage communities to make use of these spaces and sports facilities and to adopt a healthy lifestyle.
- 4.2.37 The location and variety of open space available in the City will continue to be promoted extensively. This will include explaining the value of the growing number of civic spaces to help people appreciate the role such spaces have in the City's network of spaces and the opportunity there is for them to help increase the overall amount of open space. At present, this is achieved through the City of London website, information signs at each City Corporation-maintained open space, a bi-monthly newsletter, the provision of free site leaflets and self-guided walks leaflets. The City Corporation will continue to work with its partners to do this and will look to further support volunteering projects so that City workers and residents can take an active role in maintaining and improving their own environment.

- 4.2.38 It is important that open spaces are adequately sign posted wherever feasible, particularly those not visible from the street e.g roof gardens and terraces.
- 4.2.39 Ongoing consultation and engagement with both users and non-users of open space in the City is also an essential element in understanding demand for certain types of open space and the perception of its quality. In addition to the City-wide residents, workers and City executive surveys undertaken by the City Corporation, it is important that the Open Spaces Department continues with its existing engagement programme through on-site comments cards, dedicated site surveys and its annual satisfaction questionnaire.
- 4.2.40 The City Corporation seeks to continue to raise public awareness and challenge standards through entry into regional and national competitions such as In Bloom, London Garden Squares and Green Flag. There are approximately 26 open spaces within 400m of the City in neighbouring Boroughs. The City Corporation is currently working in partnership with neighbouring Boroughs and Transport for London at:

**Aldgate:** The reconfiguration of the current Aldgate Gyratory to include a new landscaped green space and additional tree planting has come about as a result of wide consultation and partnership working with Transport for London and the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

**Bunhill Fields:** This site is located in the London Borough of Islington and requires additional funding to restore areas of the burial ground as well as extending and enhancing amenity opportunities for users of the site. Consultation and partnership working with local residents and the London Borough of Islington will take place to seek external funds.

### 4.3 Delivery

- 4.3.1 This part of the section looks in detail at issues relating to implementing the Strategy.
- 4.3.2 **Enhancing Existing City Gardens**  
The Open Spaces Department maintains a rolling work programme for the refurbishment and improvement of their open spaces throughout the City, subject to available funding. Although this includes a wide spread of sites throughout all areas of the City, phasing will be reviewed to ensure the plan reflects the spatial priorities outlined in this strategy. Typically, the refurbishment of at least two open spaces is achieved each year through the work plan.
- 4.3.3 The Open Spaces Department (City Gardens Team) is to develop its work plan into a delivery strategy, setting out priorities for different parts of the City and identifying sources of funding to deliver these priorities.

#### 4.3.4 **Enhancing the street scene**

This initiative was introduced briefly in Section 3, when outlining proposed additional open space. Originally established with £1 million funding from the City Fund (see below), the Public Realm Enhancement Programme will be funded from financial contributions secured by way of the Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 planning obligations.

4.3.5 Working in partnership with businesses, developers and other agencies, the Environmental Enhancement Team in the City Corporation's Department of the Built Environment manages the delivery of enhanced streets and spaces and the creation of additional 'civic spaces'. The Team is proactive in its delivery and maintenance of high quality, challenging and contemporary new public space projects ensuring the highest quality public realm for the City's communities. To date, over 95 schemes have been successfully implemented.

4.3.6 The Environmental Enhancement Team has divided the City into 16 sub-areas and is developing Public Realm Enhancement Strategies for each of these areas. To date, ten Strategies have been prepared and the intention is to develop a Strategy for all of the sub-areas.

#### 4.3.7 **Securing Public Access to Private Spaces through Access Agreements**

Public open space of all types are heavily utilised in the City. It is important, therefore, that the City Corporation continues to negotiate public access to existing and proposed new private spaces. Access to new private spaces should be secured as part of granting planning permission for new development and the negotiation of formal maintenance agreements for all churchyards maintained by the City Gardens team provides the opportunity to increase public access.

#### 4.3.8 **Developing Planning Policy and Managing Development**

Section 2 sets out the existing and emerging planning policy framework for protecting and creating open space and leisure facilities in the City.

4.3.9 The City Corporation, as local planning authority, will use the development management process to protect existing spaces from inappropriate development and facilitate the creation of additional open spaces. This will include entering into agreements with developers when granting planning permission for new development to:

- Secure improvements to existing open spaces as part of new development;
- Secure the provision of new open space as part of new development;
- Ensure public access to new open space where appropriate;
- The Community Infrastructure Levy or s106 Planning Obligations will be used to provide financial contributions towards the improvement of existing open spaces and/or the creation of new public open spaces 'off-site' and the maintenance of soft landscaping of new on-site public spaces.



#### 4.3.10 **Continuing to work in Partnership with others**

The City Corporation will continue to use its funding to best effect and work in partnership with specific businesses and developers, regional, national and international organisations, to lever in additional funding and expertise to deliver this Strategy. Key partnership organisations include:

- City of London Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership;
- City of London Play Partnership;
- Safer City Partnership;
- City Fringe Partnership;
- City of London Police;
- Proactive East London;
- London Marathon Charitable Trust;
- Bridge House Estates Trust;
- The Mayor of London's agencies (Greater London Authority and Transport for London);
- Department for Communities and Local Government;
- European Union.

#### 4.3.11 **Increasing Volunteering**

The City Corporation currently works closely with and supports the work of the Friends of City Gardens whose core aim is to promote and enhance the City's gardens and open spaces in line with the City Corporation's own aims and objectives. Since the groups inception in 2013 the friends have successfully secured external funds from small grant schemes and sponsorship as well as engaging a variety of different user groups to take part in a range of activities and events in the City's gardens. 2014 will be the first year the group will lead on the City in Bloom campaign, (part of the wider Royal Horticultural Society in Bloom Campaign) which encourages schools, businesses and the wider community to actively take part in enhancing and celebrating the green spaces within the 'Square Mile'. The City Corporation continues to assist the Barbican Wildlife Group to carry out enhancement projects in Fann Street Garden and supports corporate volunteering organisations, on an ad hoc basis, particularly in relation to biodiversity enhancement projects. The only restriction that now applies lies in the very nature of the sites themselves; not having the large scale parks projects enjoyed by neighbouring boroughs, volunteering opportunities are limited to small scale projects and garden maintenance.

#### 4.3.12 **Implementation with other policy areas**

Figure 6 below illustrates how this Strategy relates to other policy and implementation mechanisms to help secure enhancements to existing open spaces and the creation of additional open space.

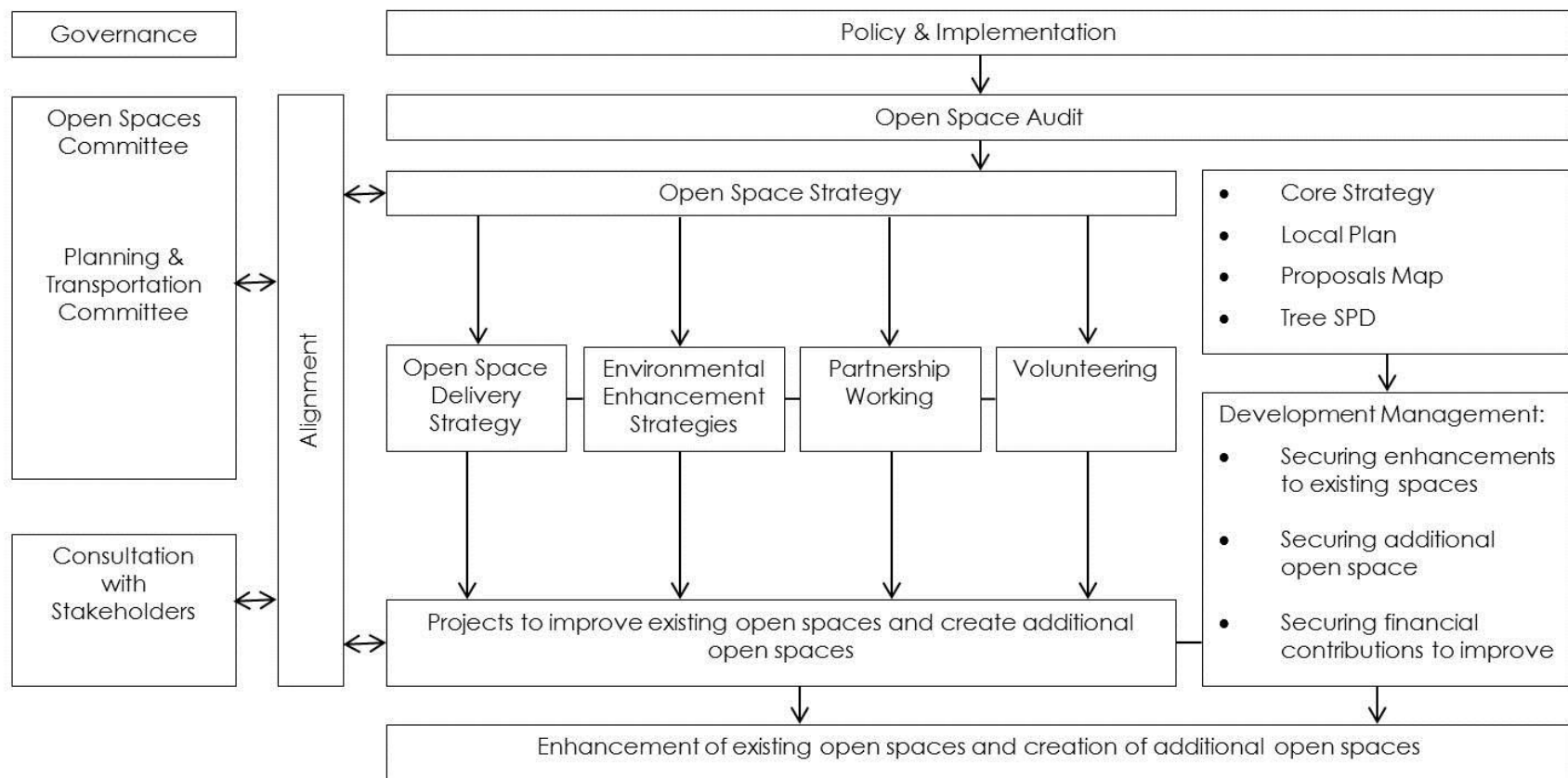


Figure 6: Organisational Chart

#### **4.4 Action Plan**

- 4.4.1 A five year action plan has been prepared separately to develop the commitments set out in the 10 Strategic Objectives into identified actions over the medium term.

#### **4.5 Implementation, Monitoring and Review**

- 4.5.1 The Open Spaces Department will be responsible for driving forward the Strategy and its Action Plan, monitoring progress against identified milestones and targets and reporting to the Open Spaces Committee annually. Appropriate mechanisms and checks need to be put in place to ensure that the work of the group is reflected positively in delivery of projects on the ground.
- 4.5.2 The supply of open spaces is monitored by the Department of the Built Environment through the monitoring of planning permissions and subsequent losses and gains of open space. An update to this Strategy will be carried out in 2018/19 and the Open Spaces Audit will be updated annually.

# Appendix 1: Background Information

## 1. Open Space Typologies

Open space typologies are set out in Table A1 below and are contained in the City of London Open Spaces Audit 2013.

Table A1: Open Space typologies

|                           | Typology                                | Primary Purpose   |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Greenspaces</b>        | Parks and Gardens                       | Accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events   |
|                           | Natural and semi-natural greenspaces,   | Wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education and activities  |
|                           | Local Green corridors                   | Walking, cycling or horse riding, whether for leisure purposes or travel and opportunities for wildlife migration   |
|                           | Outdoor Sports Facilities               | Participation in outdoor sports, such as pitch sports, tennis, bowls, athletics or countryside or water sports  |
|                           | Amenity Greenspace                      | Opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas  |
|                           | Provision for children and young people | Areas designated primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people, such as equipped play areas, ball courts, skateboard areas and teenage shelters |
|                           | Cemeteries and churchyards              | Quiet contemplation and burial of the dead, often linked to the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity   |
| <b>Civic Spaces</b>       | Primary civic spaces                    | Provides open space amenity. Includes civic and market squares and other hard surfaces designed for pedestrians   |
|                           | Secondary civic spaces                  | Provides both open space amenity and facilitates pedestrian movement  |
| <b>Under construction</b> | Sites awaiting development              |   |

Source: City of London Open Spaces Audit (2013)

## 2. Key Relevant Statistics and Population Figures

Table A2-1: Existing estimated weekday daytime population

| Source  | Populations                 | 2011           |
|---|-----------------------------|----------------|
| <b>2011 Census Office for National Statistics</b> | Workers                     | 370,000        |
| <b>City of London Student Estimate</b>            | Students                    | 29,000         |
| <b>City of London Visitor Estimate</b>            | Visitors                    | 27,000         |
| <b>2011 Census</b>                                | Residents not in employment | 2,000          |
| <b>Total</b>                                      |                             | <b>428,000</b> |

Notes: (1) Total figures rounded to nearest thousand (2) only residents 'not in employment' were used to avoid double counting.

Table A2-2: Projected weekday daytime population

|                             | City    |
|-----------------------------|---------|
| <b>Existing Population</b>  | 428,000 |
| <b>Predicted growth</b>     | 52,000  |
| <b>Predicted Population</b> | 480,000 |

Note: Predicted Population figures rounded to nearest thousand

This is broken down as follows:

Table A2-3: Projected weekday daytime population

| Source  | Populations                 | 2011           | 2019           |
|---|-----------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>2011 Census Office for National Statistics</b> | Workers                     | 370,000        | 414,000        |
| <b>City of London Student Estimates</b>           | Students                    | 29,000         | 29,000         |
| <b>City of London Visitor Estimates</b>           | Visitors                    | 27,000         | 30,000         |
| <b>2011 Census Office for National Statistics</b> | Residents not in employment | 2,000          | 3,400          |
| <b>Total</b>                                      |                             | <b>428,000</b> | <b>476,000</b> |

Note: (1) Total figures rounded to nearest thousand (2) No new Higher Education facilities expected (3) 'Residents not in employment' increased by 70% from existing, in line with predicted growth of the overall resident population.

### 3. Employment and Residential Growth

The data below shows that both office and residential floor space will increase during the medium term.

Table A2-4: Office growth 2014-2019

|                                     | Office floor space |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>2014</b>                         | 8,600,000          |
| <b>Growth between 2014-2019</b>     | 980,000            |
| <b>Projected Office floor space</b> | <b>9,580,000</b>   |

Table A2-5: Housing growth 2014-2019

|   | Residential units |
|---|-------------------|
| <b>2014</b>                             | 1,107             |
| <b>Additional units between 2014-19</b> | 781               |
| <b>Projected residential units</b>      | <b>1,888</b>      |

### 4. Summary of Results of Consultation

The following is a summary of the consultation that has helped inform this draft Strategy.

**Local Plan Consultation 2013/14.** The following comments were made as a result of the consultation.

- Respondents felt there is a need to encourage enhancement of space within the public realm and green spaces need to be actively managed to encourage biodiversity and promote the health and well-being of residents, workers and visitors. There was also large support for securing public access to private open spaces. There was support for green roofs and walls as well as balconies which enhanced green space.
- While green spaces and recreational facilities were encouraged there was also concern that care should be taken when siting these uses near residential areas to minimise disturbance to residents.
- There was support for the creation of green corridors throughout the City, making it more pleasant to travel on foot and creating more green areas in which to sit during the summer with more amenity and recreational uses and to increase biodiversity.
- There was concern about the lack of facilities for children and teenagers in the City. However there is a need to balance these uses with quiet areas.

- There was recognition of the high demand for use of open spaces throughout the City, therefore the potential for spaces to be multi-purpose should be fully explored. It was felt that there is an unfulfilled demand for sports areas in the City, also office developments should provide cycling parking with shower and changing facilities and also explore the opportunities for multi-use as sports facilities for inter-firm provision.

### **City Gardens Customer Survey (2012)**

The City Gardens section also conducts its own site specific research. For example, over 1015 face-to-face interviews were carried out at most of the City Garden sites during 2012 in order to help inform the design and provision of green space.

### **Resident Events (twice annually)**

Residents meetings are conducted twice a year. There is a central meeting held at Guildhall in January and June, as well as meetings on each of the four estates held in May and November. In addition there is also a resident meeting held in the West of the City to reflect the growing population in that part of the City. The Open Spaces Department always have a stand at each event so that residents can feed any concerns or raise any issues.

Although residents sometimes use these forums as an opportunity to enquire about ongoing works, they rarely raise maintenance or other garden issues. Of more importance to residents is the overall lack of open space in general and opportunities to provide more, as well as the climate change and sustainability issues associated with open space.

## **5. Types of Existing Open Space by Key City Place**

Table A2-6 (below) sets out the amount of open space (by open space typology) for the City as a whole, the 5 Key City Places and the Rest of the City.

Table A2-6: Types of Open Space by Key City Place (All figures in hectares)

| Type of Open Space                         | North of the City | Cheapside & St. Paul's | Eastern Cluster | Aldgate     | Thames & the Riverside | Rest of the City | Total        |
|--|-------------------|------------------------|-----------------|-------------|------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| Primary Civic Space                        | 4.29              | 0.6                    | 0.8             | 0.4         | 0.5                    | 0.9              | 7.5          |
| Secondary Civic Space                      | 4.57              | 0.76                   | 0.08            | 0.23        | 2.22                   | 1.28             | 9.14         |
| Parks and Gardens                          | 1.19              | 0.52                   | 0.05            | -           | 2.63                   | 0.8              | 5.18         |
| Cemeteries and Churchyards                 | 2.19              | 0.83                   | 0.17            | 0.09        | 0.26                   | 0.8              | 4.35         |
| Amenity Green Space                        | 2.07              | 0.06                   | 0.07            | 0.24        | 0.18                   | 0.27             | 2.88         |
| Natural and Semi-Natural Urban Greenspaces | 1.24              | -                      | -               | -           | -                      | -                | 1.24         |
| Provision for children and Teenagers       | 0.22              | 0.07                   | -               | 0.29        | 0.19                   | -                | 0.78         |
| Outdoor Sports Facilities                  | 0.62              | -                      | -               | -           | -                      | -                | 0.62         |
| Green Corridors                            | 0.14              | -                      | -               | 0.08        | 0.18                   | -                | 0.4          |
| <b>Total Space</b>                         | <b>16.53</b>      | <b>2.84</b>            | <b>1.18</b>     | <b>1.33</b> | <b>6.17</b>            | <b>4.04</b>      | <b>32.09</b> |