

WEAVERS FIELDS **MANAGEMENT PLAN**

2008 to 2018

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Section 1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Management Plan to 2016

The purpose is to guide the future development and management of Weavers Fields for the next 10 years. The plan will:

- ensure clear objectives for management and design
- promote the highest standards of management
- involve all stakeholders, including the contractor
- promote community involvement in the park
- programme work and allow progress to be checked
- help to resolve conflicts of interest
- record key information about the park

This plan has been prepared with the active involvement of the Green Friends of Weavers Fields and Fountains Supports Services Ltd. We thank them for their assistance.

1.2 Who is the plan for?

The plan is for the practical use and reference of:

- designers, managers, contractors and event organisers working on this site
- the Green Friends of Weavers Fields, Weavers Adventure Playground, sports clubs, voluntary bodies and other local people who use and enjoy the park

1.3 Commitment to Green Flag award system and to the management plan

The Council's Open Space Strategy (adopted 11 January 2006), see <http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/data/planning/data/planning-policy/downloads/evidence/open-space-strategy.pdf> has a number of targets about improving the sustainability of open spaces (Section 8, Action Item 1.5). This sets a target to achieve Green Flag Awards for all major parks and key local parks (10 in total by 2016), with one new award in 2007. The Green Flag award scheme concentrates management attention and recognises effective management on an independent, national basis. This site, a key Parks site first won its Green Flag award for 2004 and has retained it since. We are keen to retain it for the life of this plan.

1.4 Vision for Weavers Fields:

To manage Weavers Fields for the benefit of all local people. Weavers Fields will continue to offer a range of high quality facilities as befits a district park, in a sustainable green landscape that contrasts with the surrounding city.

1.5 Objectives for the management of Weavers Fields:

1. Welcome people to Weavers Fields and help them enjoy their visit.
2. Manage the park to achieve a high quality, safe environment.
3. Improve the personal safety of park users and reduce fear of crime.
4. Support the activities of the Green Friends of Weavers Fields and other relevant community groups for the benefit of the park and its future.
5. Promote biodiversity, sustainable use and management of the site and resolve or minimise the issues and threats identified in this plan.
6. Improve the park's facilities by taking advantage of funding opportunities and enhance the landscape character of the park.
7. Provide a wide range of safe, stimulating play opportunities.
8. Enhance the biodiversity value of the park.
9. Increase the capacity of the park for active use but not to the detriment of other uses.

Section 2 Background

2.1 Introduction to Weavers Fields

Weavers Fields is a relatively large, flat open space within a very densely developed inner city area. Its total area is 6.3 hectares (15.6 acres). Roads, housing, commercial and industrial uses surround the park. The main train lines (from Liverpool Street Station to Norwich and Stansted airport) and Bethnal Green railway station lie on a viaduct immediately to the south of the park. The site is mainly laid out to grass and used for both passive and active pursuits, with straight cross routes for pedestrians and mainly perimeter tree and shrub planting.

The site is the Borough's sixth largest open space. The Borough has about 125 public open spaces. These range in size from Victoria Park at 86 hectares to the smallest at around 300m². About three-quarters of parks sites are one hectare or less in size. On average there are only 1.2 hectares of open space per 1000 population, half the former National Playing Fields Association standard. The provision is even lower in the ward in which Weavers Fields lies, at between 0.8-1.2 ha. / 1000 residents.



Main east west path in Weavers Fields

The Borough's Open Space Strategy was adopted on 11 January 2006. The quality audit was carried out by Scott Wilson Consultants in August 2005. This gave Weavers Fields a score of 90%, one of the highest scores, partly on account of its perceived friendliness. The park was awarded a Green Flag for 2004 and retained since. The judges' feedback has included the view that "Weavers Fields is a really excellent example of an invaluable local park in a high density urban area".

2.2 Location (see location plan in Appendix E)

Weavers Fields are bounded by Derbyshire Street, Dunbridge Street, Chester Street, and Vallance Road in Bethnal Green, E2 on the west side of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH).

2.3 Land tenure

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets, Parks and Open Spaces Services owns the land, under the Open Spaces Act 1906.

The Weavers Adventure Playground Association has a commercial lease for the adventure playground in the north east corner of the park. It has security of tenure pursuant to part 11 Landlord and Tenant Act 1954.

2.4 Site history (See various historic plans in Appendix E)

The 1943 Abercrombie Plan for London following World War 2 designated a much larger area than the present site as public open space. This was land, bounded by Bethnal Green Road, Cambridge Heath Road, Vallance Road and Whitechapel High Street, to be cleared of housing and former industrial uses. The reason for laying out the park was to rectify the over-crowding and lack of local open space of the surrounding population. In 1963 the former London County Council decided to lay out the first 5 acres of the park. The LCC agreed with the Bethnal Green Metropolitan Council that the name of the park should commemorate the historic local silk weaving industry, Weavers' Fields. More land was acquired by compulsory purchase order in 1965, but the former Greater London Council never acquired the intended site area of 18 acres.

The site was laid out simply with grass. This is how a number of Tower Hamlets' parks were created. They share a number of problems, such as incomplete land acquisition, anomalous boundaries, lack of overlooking with houses backing not fronting onto parks, thin top soils, services such as sewers remaining under sites, no tree planting or ground modelling, limited facilities and so on.

2.5 Local population

The population of the Borough was 196,106 in April 2001, although the population has risen with about 16,500 in the local wards. The population is growing rapidly and is already about 236,000¹. The population is forecast to continue to grow at similarly high rates until at least 2016 when the Greater London Authority forecasts it will reach 301,458 (this would be an increase of more than 50% increase in 15 years). There are extremely high proportions of children and young people, with 23% of the local population being 15 or under. In 2001, 51% of the Borough's population was white, 33% Bangladeshi, 3.4% Black African and 2.7% Black Caribbean. There is a substantial population of people of Somali origin. 76 languages are spoken in Tower Hamlets' schools.

Despite the prosperity of some businesses within the borough, it ranks as one of the most deprived in the country, with 20 Tower Hamlets census areas (super output areas) within the top 3% of the most deprived areas in the country. There are marked contrasts within the borough. About 25% of households have an annual income of less than £15,000, but the success of the Canary Wharf business district brings average annual *workplace* earnings to £72,000, the second highest in the country. Tower Hamlets has the second lowest levels of economic activity in the country: 37%, or 51,000, of the working age population were economically inactive in 2004/05.

¹ Most recent Greater London Authority estimate at January 2007

The incidence of major diseases is far higher in Tower Hamlets residents than in most other areas with an average life expectancy for males in 2004 of 73.8 years (76.5 years nationally) and 79.2 years for females (80.9 nationally). 8.9% of the working age people claim Incapacity Benefit or Severe Disability Allowance against 6.2% nationally. Most people in Tower Hamlets live in flats without gardens and the borough has the fifth highest levels nationally of over-crowding.

2.6 Facilities and site description

- 3 full size football pitches
- changing facilities at Mape Street
- play areas for toddlers and under 10s
- adventure playground (run by Weavers Adventure Playground) which includes a youth club
- fitness trail
- trees in grass
- perimeter shrub and tree planting
- woodland walk
- entrance art features
- seats and bins
- lighting and CCTV coverage
- major public art feature around central CCTV mast

In such a built-up area the sense of openness and freedom given by the space itself is very valuable. It is good to be able to feel the fresh air blowing on one's face on a windy day. It is also possible to get long views across green space; this is restful for the eye. Weavers Fields is one of the few spaces locally where doing these simple things is possible.

One of the principal benefits of the park is as a pleasant, green short cut in a busy city area. The park's pedestrian routes provide convenient access to nearby facilities. These paths mainly follow the lines of the former roads upon which the park was laid out.

The sense of local ownership and participation in the development and management of the site are great assets to the park.



Weavers Fields junior playground

The main activities in the park are:

- Walking and sitting
- Pedestrian through routes
- Dog walking
- Fitness training – jogging and using trail
- Football
- Children's play (on equipped area and in adventure playground)
- Youth chilling out
- Schools use for teaching and for physical education
- Attending festivals and other events
- Watching wildlife.

2.7 Park Users

The annual number of users is not known but is high, given the large number of people passing through. No user survey has been carried out to date, though we hope to carry one out over the summer using the ranger service.

Users are mostly local people and footballers. Schools also make use of the site for summer sports, teaching of the national curriculum and participating in arts and other projects connected with the recent improvement programme.

The Council has adopted a residents' satisfaction survey methodology for parks and open spaces developed by the KMC Consultancy. The survey is based on a standardised

questionnaire, which allows some performance comparisons to be made with other authorities and organisations that participate in the scheme.

Face to face interviews were conducted on behalf of the Council by a specialist agency in order to gain responses from a representative sample of residents from across the Borough. 1,000 residents were interviewed in August 2005 and again in summer 2006. Analysis revealed that 84% of all respondents use a park, and of those, about three quarters use a Tower Hamlets Park (74% of all respondents). In the samples, more females than males indicated that they used parks. We will be able to provide more detailed information for the judges but the information below is based on the earlier survey.

Age	Total	%
13-19	37	3.7
20-25	96	9.6
26-34	246	24.6
35-43	197	19.7
44-52	130	13.0
53-59	61	6.1
60-64	47	4.7
65+	164	16.4
No answer	23	2.3
Grand Total	1001	

The peak time for visiting is between 1.00pm and dusk (43%) although 35% of people said they visit parks at no particular time. 20% of visitors say they visit a park every day, to relax (27.5%), to take children to play (23.7%) or for personal exercise (16.1%). These reasons for visiting outweighed all the other reasons put together. Over a third of visitors to parks go for between one and two hours. Most people walk to their park (79% always walk and 81% walk at least sometimes).

Weavers Fields is the sixth most visited park, with 28 residents (3.8% of the sample of Tower Hamlets park users) saying it is the park they use most often. Seven of these users define themselves as white English, 20 as Bangladeshi and one as Indian. Six people said the Fields felt unsafe (making comments about antisocial elements and teenagers) but two never thought about safety and 20 thought safe or very safe. A number of comments were volunteered about what they wanted in the park (see table below):

More or improved facilities for children or things for them to do (with 1 mention for a cycling area),	9
More sitting areas (for adults)	3
More or improved facilities for football	3
More provision or space for wildlife (one saying there is too much space for football), including more flowers	3
Toilets	2
Telephones	1
Catering	1
Overall standard to be improved	1
Total comments made (out of 28 residents who reported using this park)	23

In the coming year we intend to trial different methods of conducting visitor surveys. We expect to assess numbers, reasons for visiting, where they come from (resident or tourist), length of visit, what they like and don't like and so on. We intend to start using GreenSTAT

<http://www.greenstat.org.uk/> which is a web-based tool for collecting data on what people think of parks and which can be used as a good market research technique; it is especially useful for getting the views of children and young people who can be hard to reach through other means. GreenSTAT has been established by GreenSpace, the charity for green spaces.

We work closely with the Council's Community Engagement Unit, Local Area Partnership (LAP8) and the Community Planning Advisory Group (CPAG) for Cleaner, Safer, Greener and Learning Achievement and Leisure to ensure that our objectives and proposals meet with community needs and priorities. We listen and act on the views of local people. As a result we have been successful in accessing sources of funding through the Local Area Agreement and the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund amongst others to support improvements to the park.

Section 3 The Fields

3.1 Welcoming people to Weavers Fields

3.1.1 Hours

The Park is open at all times every day of the year and is not locked.

3.1.2 Accessibility and Disability Discrimination Act 1995

There are no problems for people with mobility problems such as gate widths, changes in level, etc. Although the existing changing rooms are accessible, they are not friendly to people in wheelchairs. The new signs have been designed to assist people with visual impairments or reading problems.

3.1.3 Vehicular access

This can be a problem for contractors, with heavy traffic and parking controls operating around the whole site. There is no parking anywhere in the park. Local residents with parking permits can park next to the park on the streets. The only vehicular access is from Three Colts Street.

3.1.4 Entrances and signs

Colourful "welcome" signs at all three main entrances and subsidiary signs at the other nine entrances were erected in winter 2004. These have proved very successful. They were designed to use as few words as possible and to enable people to locate themselves easily. They are kept clean and graffiti-free.

3.2 Maintaining Weavers Fields

3.2.1 Grounds maintenance

This has been subject to competitive tendering since the 1988 Local Government Act. The Council's current contracted service provider, Fountains Support Services Ltd, delivers both horticultural maintenance and cleansing services for an initial 5 year term from October 2007, with possible further extensions linked to performance.

Fountains Support Services Ltd undertakes maintenance of grass, including edging and shrubs. We check standards of work such as grass cutting, weeding, pruning and edging. These officers also certify due payment to the contracted service provider and issue variation orders for additional work.

3.2.2 Litter clearance and cleanliness

The Borough's parks are all designated at Grade C under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. This means that the contractor must maintain a 24-hour response time to remove particular problems such as fly tipping, and the site is cleaned daily. Cleansing is monitored by parks wardens. Our performance is independently monitored four times a year and forms a key part of our Best Value Performance Indicator, BVPI 199. The Borough's parks generally score above the designated grade. The Borough's parks cleansing contractor, Fountains Supports Services Ltd, picks litter from the grass and shrub beds and empties litter-bins daily.

This is a key issue for the borough and there is a corporate BVPI working group chaired at director level as an indication of how seriously this issue is taken.

There are sometimes (usually in the warmer weather) problems of drug addicts leaving their sharps lying around and even festooning them in trees. A separate contract to remove sharps was let to deal with this problem, conforming with a new risk assessment.

The Borough's grass sports pitches and Green Flag sites (grass and paved areas) are cleaned of dog faeces once a week, using a FIDO (Faeces Intake and Disposal Operation) machine with particular attention being paid to sports pitches prior to matches. (See Appendices for information about this machine). Dog bins are emptied daily.

3.2.3 Repairs and graffiti removal

Repairs and other maintenance works are carried out as and when necessary (making use of measured term contracts where feasible) to make good any health and safety problems on the site. Priority 1 repairs (urgent hazards) are carried out within 24 hours, down to Priority 3 repairs which can take up to one month. Racist graffiti are treated as Priority 1 repairs and are removed by park rangers staff if possible or by contractors.

3.2.4 Grass pitches (See Appendix)

Three senior soccer pitches are marked out weekly in winter and are subject to very heavy use. They are laid out on thin topsoil over a compacted layer rubble substrate. As well as formal bookings, there is a great deal of casual use, winter and summer. Over the season 2007-08 we have been able to rest one of the pitches but all 3 are used casually every week. There is considerable pressure to use the pitches in summer, with many teams playing summer leagues. This, and the timing of the Mela event, makes it difficult to carry out adequate spring renovation work and for the pitches to recover in time for intense autumn and winter use.

A project to develop a Playing Pitch Strategy for the Borough is underway and will be completed in March 2008. The Strategy will seek to rationalise provision and to provide a balance of affordable playing pitches at key locations across Tower Hamlets. Weavers Fields is likely to be considered a key location for outdoor team sports, and actions arising from the Playing Pitch Strategy will be incorporated into this Management Plan as soon as these have been clarified and agreed.

3.2.5 Pitch booking procedure

Pitch bookings are made via the Parks Service administrative team at the beginning of the season. Officers contact known teams that have booked a pitch during the previous or recent seasons in June to invite bookings for the following football season. Most clubs book their pitches for the season. Because there is greater demand for pitches than can be accommodated (Sunday morning games) teams may have to be accommodated away from their first choice of venue. Allocations are made by the end of July. In 2004, we had to refuse 30% of the teams' requested pitches because of insufficient capacity; this is up from 20% a year ago.

A borough pitch strategy is to be developed and will be commissioned in summer 2007; a key component on this is to establish the supply and demand for pitches.

3.2.6 Play equipment

Play equipment is visually checked by trained Community Park Rangers. Our Area Parks Officers carry out operational inspections of all play equipment against a standard monitoring procedure having all been trained and passed an RP11 play inspection course. When equipment is identified for repair or maintenance, they issue and follow up orders to contractors. In addition, play areas are inspected for Health and Safety compliance on an annual basis.

Conserving the heritage of Weavers Fields

3.3.1 Existing wildlife value (see photographs of Woodland Walk below)

Although we have no full survey of local wildlife, the park is known to support blackbird, feral pigeons, wood pigeon, house sparrow, dunnock, blue tit, great tit, green finch, starling, magpie, carrion crow, thrush, with unconfirmed visits from green and greater spotted woodpecker. It is known that there are local squirrel and fox populations nearby. The large areas of close-cut amenity grass have limited wildlife value. The boundary and woodland planting have good value, especially the native trees and shrubs with high associated invertebrate populations. The GLA conducted a habitat survey of the site in summer 2004 and maintained the classification of the site as a Site of Local Importance for Wildlife.

We have commission habitat surveys of all Green Flag sites, together with recommendations on ways we can improve their biodiversity value, which has been by a local ecologist (summer 2007).

3.3.2 Enhancing the wildlife value of Weavers Fields

The woodland walk is the most valuable area of Weavers Fields for wildlife and this area is managed mainly for that purpose and is used principally by dog walkers. We have also taken advice from the GLA's ecologists and intend to create more openings in the woodland and in the hedge to improve views into the site and the make people feel more welcome. We will continue to enrich the open woodland groves. We intend to enhance the wildlife value of the rest of the park by identifying more areas where we can allow the grass to grow longer and establish wildflowers, around the pitch areas, but more particularly to the north of the park. We are gradually adding wildlife-friendly shrubs to the planting around the perimeter of the park and will coppice the willow trees here on a regular rotation for the benefit of wildlife and people. Because of security fears the central hawthorn hedges along the main path cannot be allowed to grow long enough to cut and lay. These hedges had been neglected for years and allowed to grow up tall on long legs. As with the rest of the shrub planting, we are managing them to thicken them up at the base to create shelter for birds and insect life at ground level; they are now a much better shape. We will stop the edging and manual weeding below the hedges to allow grasses and wildflowers to grow up to shelter wildlife. We regularly undertake bulb planting with local schools to help increase the biodiversity and amenity values of the site, as well as engaging children in the park.



The woodland walk before the hedge grew up

We are able to implement here some of the local ecologists key recommendations in conjunction with the local Biodiversity Action Partnership which has a very active group of voluntary sector bodies and individuals who cover most types of wildlife and the Green Friends. As a result of the GLA's assessment of the lack of access to nature and green-space for people in this part of Tower Hamlets, we have been successful in obtaining grant funding from Natural England and the GLA to carry out biodiversity enhancements at Weavers Fields in 2007-08 as part of a pilot project. With these grants we will:

- provide 2 new interpretation signs in the woodland walk
- update and reprint the woodland walk leaflet
- coppice and thin parts of the woodland walk
- Install 10 bird boxes in the woodland walk (for sparrows and other birds)
- begin coppice rotation to the willows and poplars in the shrub borders to Dunbridge and Mape Streets
- supply and plant native shrubs and trees to extend the birch groves being developed in the north of the park along Derbyshire St
- sow and plant wildflower seeds and plug plants to extend meadow areas in the north of the park along Derbyshire St

Further biodiversity enhancements will follow in future years as resources allow and in accordance with overall parks priorities. The site's value for wildlife will improve with management aimed at enhancing biodiversity. This will be fostered through the development of an in-house group that meets regularly to discuss all proposals with the contractor; up to date GIS mapping of areas to be managed for wildlife is being prepared (such as of wildflower meadows and bulb-planted areas). In addition, we are carrying out

staff training in the importance of biodiversity and what parks can contribute; the main contractor's key staff will also attend.

3.3.3 Cultural heritage

The cultural heritage of the area has been celebrated in the provision of recent art works installed in the park.



Entrance sign by Paul Margetts (LBTH)

There are three entrance features created by Paul Margetts (see photo above) in collaboration with local children as a community art project. They celebrate the area's silk weaving history. The tops of these pieces move in the wind and depict elements from the silk weaving industry such as silk moth and mulberry leaves. "Windvanes 11" is at the Derbyshire Street entrance. "Sculptural Sign" is at the Vallance Road entrance and represents a textile weft.

The public art project in the central bed around the CCTV mast is a stainless steel piece by the well-known artist, Peter Dunn. (See photo below) It was completed in autumn 2003 and cost a total of £70,000. This sculpture is entitled "Weaving Identities". It celebrates the sporting life of the park (the figures represented on the main piece are those of local young people) and references to Huguenot silk weavers. It is surrounded by 400 bricks hand carved by local young people to express what the park means to them. This participation of local children and young people means that they "own" a piece of the park.



Sculpture by Peter Dunn (LBTH)

3.4 Marketing Weavers Fields

3.4.1 Recent press coverage

We have improved the process by which we deliver press and web coverage: all parks managers now have regular meetings with marketing staff who work with our PR staff to ensure good press coverage for stories. Particular sites feature in the local press when there are particular events to publicise or stories to tell or promote. Parks winning Green Flag Awards are also promoted every year.

The park is promoted through the park signs at the main gates (which indicate the major facilities within the park), the proposed interpretation signs in the woodland walk, through the Council's web site and press coverage.

This site was included in the last two years' campaigns to get more people into our parks and doing healthy activity. In 2005/06 we published a special walking guide in the free local council paper, on the website and distributed as a leaflet to all houses in the borough as well as libraries and so on. This was an initiative of the Local Area Partnerships, the Parks and Open Spaces Service and our Sports and Healthy Lifestyles teams.

<http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/data/discover/data/parks/downloads/walking-route-Isle-of-dogs.pdf>

Weavers Fields was again included in a borough-wide marketing campaign over the summer 2007 with large banners placed on railings at Vallance Road and within the park to draw attention to the park's sports facilities, under the general strap line of "Amazing Space"

We are currently updating our web content.

<http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/templates/services/services-detail.cfm?sid=2381>

3.4.2 Promotion

There is one promotional leaflet for the park, which is currently being updated.
(See Woodland Walk leaflet)

3.4.3 Direction signs

We are working to install these locally to direct people into the park from nearby centres, such as Bethnal Green Road, as part of the Borough's signage strategy and corporate branding exercise.

3.5 Keeping people and facilities safe and secure

3.5.1 Risk assessments (See Appendix)

These are reviewed and updated annually.

3.5.2 Dog control

All consultation with the public shows that the community identifies dog control as an important issue across gender, age and ethnicity categories. It is an issue that Tower Hamlets takes seriously. Under the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1966, dog owners are required to clean up after their dogs throughout the Borough. We have a team of dog wardens to foster (and when necessary enforce) responsible ownership of dogs and good dog / owner behaviour. The team has doubled its orders for dog waste bags to 1 million p.a. Only about 15% of the complaints about dog fouling are in the Borough's parks; the rest are on estates or the streets. As a result of this activity, dog fouling of parks is much improved compared to a decade ago. There is no problem with stray dogs here. We are currently reviewing the Dog Warden Service in parks to develop a more targeted Service Level

Agreement and where necessary we will create Dog Control Orders under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (2005).

- Dog wardens at present patrol all parks sites on a regular basis and carry out blitz visits where required. They carry out uniformed and covert patrols acting on intelligence about where and when problems occur. They use hidden cameras to obtain evidence.
- Dog owners must clear up after their animals throughout the park.
- Free pooper-scoopers are provided by the dog wardens and parks staff (take up is said to be good) and there are dog waste bins in the park although people can also use the litter bins.
- The Kennel Club awarded the LBTH Animal Wardens a national award in February 2006 for their sympathetic work with dogs and their owners.

3.5.3 Community safety and security

We have carried out a great deal of work in the park to reduce crime and the fear of crime. This included the agreement of an interim master plan with the community, park lighting and CCTV and shrub management. There are two well-lit routes across the park with CCTV surveillance. The park is well used as a short cut at night. In addition all development work is discussed with the Police Crime Prevention Design Advisor.

We have an excellent working relationship with the Council's Community Safety service, through our Crime Reduction Team and with the Bethnal Green Safer Neighbourhood Teams of the Metropolitan Police to reduce anti-social behaviour. Rangers also patrol the site regularly, especially during afternoons and at weekends given the sports usage; they deal with any anti-social behaviour. The local community park rangers are getting to know people within their "patch" and as they develop community links, we expect that local people will feel more directly engaged with their local park and able to report anything they are unhappy with. The rangers have a distinctive royal blue uniform with identification.

The older children's play area tends to be used by local youths, who gather there after school to meet up in large numbers; they are not necessarily doing anything illicit.

3.5.4 Park lighting and CCTV

The Borough's Street Environment department manages the lighting and CCTV (installed March 2003) since they take care of all public lighting and CCTV for the authority. The lighting and CCTV have helped to reduce crime and fear of crime within the park. The local police have indicated that the level of incidents within the park has diminished and independent research has shown that the community report feeling "a whole lot better about using the park". The bright lighting with natural colour rendition has set a new standard for parks lighting within the Borough.

3.5.5 Community Parks Rangers

The Council now employs Community Parks Rangers to help ensure that parks are safe and accessible to users and to provide a proactive, friendly and recognisable presence in the parks. They have a distinctive royal blue uniform.

Rangers patrol Weavers Fields regularly especially during the parks' busy times (i.e. afternoon and evening rather than early in the morning and are present during sports bookings). The rangers carry out routine health and safety visual inspections of play equipment and other infrastructure, they check site conditions and carry out minor maintenance works as well as following up any issues reported by our out of hours service and the Emergency Services. They also supervise and help deliver events and booked sports matches. They engage with the public, giving assistance as required as well as with our many special interest groups.

3.6 Environmental sustainability of Weavers Fields

3.6.1 Climate Change Action Plan

The preparation of a Climate Change Action Plan for Parks and Open Spaces is a corporate priority within the 2008/09 Strategic Plan.

3.6.2 Trees

Our trees are surveyed on a regular basis and the information recorded digitally on the Borough's geographic information system, using "Ezytreev" software. The system provides plenty of detail. The present survey was updated in 2005/ 06. Surveyors undertake risk assessments and provide recommendations for any works needed and the frequency of re-inspection.

Trees are also inspected for any necessary works by the Borough's arboriculture officers on a regular basis and when required (e.g. following storms). Tree works are carried out only as and when necessary using the measured term contract for tree works to maintain their health, safety or good form or in response to justified complaints. Our policy is only to remove living trees when necessary to protect public safety.

Looking to the future, we have just appointed our new Arboriculture and Environment Manager and one of their key priorities for 2008/09 will be to prepare a Tree Management Plan and Strategy.

3.6.3 Procurement

Procurement is one of the 5 key areas being examined through the Borough Environmental Strategy. In the interim the purchase and use of materials and supplies from endangered resources, such as peat and peat-based composts, endangered hard wood and tropical species of timber, rocks from Pennine limestone pavements, bulbs and seeds taken from the wild, or products comprising such items are banned. All timbers are to be supplied from sustainable sources and are to accord with the Forest Stewardship Council's guidelines.

In 2006 Tower Hamlets won the Mayor's Green Procurement Award in the 'best performing public sector organisation' <http://www.greenprocurementcode.co.uk/>
In addition the Fairtrade Foundation awarded Tower Hamlets Borough status in October 2006 and won a London-wide award by achieving the following targets:

- The Council must pass a resolution supporting Fairtrade, and serve Fairtrade coffee and tea at its meetings and in offices and canteens,
- A range of Fairtrade products must be readily available in the area's shops and served in local cafés and catering establishments,
- Fairtrade products must be used by a number of local work places (estate agents, hairdressers etc) and community organisations (churches, schools etc),
- The council must attract popular support for the campaign,
- A local Fairtrade steering group must be convened to ensure continued commitment to Fairtrade Town status.

See. <http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/fairtrade>

The Parks and Open Spaces Service abides by the Council's Environmental Strategy and is developing a number of initiatives to improve its environmental performance.

3.6.4 Recycling of green waste, parks litter and other waste

The Parks and Open Space Service aims to develop a number of small scale compost facilities within its parks with the intention to recycle 30-40% of our green waste within a few years. Relatively few parks are suitable for such facilities as three quarters of our sites are less than one hectare in size. Shrubby green waste is currently separated and taken to the local waste transfer station where it is recycled for use elsewhere.

We will review how parks litter is disposed of from April 2008 in conjunction with the Council's Waste Management Services and with our main contractor, Fountains Support Services. The aim will be to reduce waste being sent to land-fill and to develop recycling; this is a corporate priority as parks' litter counts as domestic waste.

The current contract for the supply of seasonal bedding plants requires that the plant supplier collects and recycles plant pots and trays after each use. The contract specifies that plants are grown in peat-free compost (with the exception of a tiny percentage of feature plants that will not tolerate peat-free composts).

Office and other waste is recycled at our headquarters offices, such as paper, plastic and glass bottles, cans, etc. This has been successfully extended to our satellite offices, children's buildings (such as One O'clock Clubs and adventure play grounds) through the borough's normal recycling processes. This requirement is also included in new commercial operators' leases and licenses.

3.6.5 Water use

The Service has commissioned a water use survey for all major parks with significant water usage, although this does not include Millwall Park as this park is not a heavy user of water; results are due in March 2008. This study includes repair of leaks and minimisation of water use and investigation of more sustainable sources of supply. The programme of repair of underground leaks is expected to reduce total consumption by about 30%.

3.6.6 Energy efficiency and pollution control

The Borough's Transport Service Unit reviews developments in fuel efficiency and alternative fuel sources for three objectives:

- benefits to air quality
- sustainability of energy source
- cost benefits

Our current policy is to operate vehicles that at least comply with the Mayor of London's Low Emission Zone proposals in the most cost effective manner. All the Council's vehicles used by the Parks Service comply with this policy; the latest ranger vehicles exceed these standards. We have trialled electric vehicles as demonstrators in the past but they did not provide our overall service requirements. The Council's target for vehicle emissions within its Environmental Strategy is to reduce emissions by 80% by December 2008 from the levels recorded in 2002. As a Council, we are on target to achieve it.

We, with other local authorities, have investigated the use of bio-fuels but unfortunately there is not yet substantive information to make an informed commercial (as well as ethical and environmental) decision on overall viability. As we would have to invest in new infrastructure for bio-diesel, we have decided to wait until more definitive information is available. Most diesel fuels bought from garages now contain up to 5% bio-diesel already. Serious doubts are being raised as to the overall sustainability of bio-diesel fuels given rising world populations and the likelihood that climate change will reduce the total area of land available for growing food crop.

We have also investigated the use of recycled, cleaned, cooking oil but this has been found to be too expensive an operation for our partners to continue. Our Transport Services Section therefore recommends remaining with competitively priced, modern diesel engine technology which is still the most efficient engine for fuel consumption at present.

The council restructured its car user allowances for staff in 2007. It has reduced the numbers of staff driving to work and around the borough for work to cut energy consumption, emissions and our carbon foot print.

We have undertaken basic energy assessments of parks' satellite buildings with the largest energy bills. The assessment provides options that vary from "no cost" to "low cost" and upwards. We will now undertake a rolling programme to implement the low cost options to improve the energy and water efficiency of these buildings, starting in 2007-08. This programme will include:

- (1) Energy awareness training for staff
- (2) Loft insulation
- (3) Draught proofing of offices and buildings
- (4) Water butts
- (5) PIR lighting sensors where the performance benefits would be worthwhile (depends on scale of daily usage).

3.7 Involving the community in Weavers Fields

3.7.1 Consultation and public participation

This is carried out partly via the user group (see below), with additional public meetings being held to discuss particular projects, such as the redevelopment of the changing rooms. In addition, the public is consulted via the 8 Local Area Partnerships (LAPs) as part of the Local Strategic Partnership. The LAPs are considered by the Borough to be the main means of involving people in their local public services.

The Parks and Open Spaces Service has actively sought to involve community groups in the management of our parks and open spaces. More than 15% of the total area of our parks and open spaces (7 sites) are managed by the Third Sector, either by Friends' groups or by other voluntary groups through Service Level Agreements. The Third Sector manages traditional parks and both our Local Nature Reserves.

A Community Compact has been developed, which sets out guiding principles for our Friends and User Groups (a dozen at the time of writing), so that they know what they can expect from us and we from them. This Compact will be launched in March 2008. The Compact will also deliver staff training to help us improve our working relationships with the Third Sector. The Parks and Open Spaces Service was restructured to create a community park ranger service, whose roles will include working with community groups.

3.7.2 Green Friends of Weavers Fields

This group meets regularly and sets its own agenda. It is recognised as the official user group for the park, has been consulted on this management plan and is the body with which Tower Hamlets carries out official inspections and reviews. Margaret Cox is the current chair of the group. Officers and the contractor's supervisors are in regular telephone and personal contact with Margaret to deal with day to day issues and attend the Friends' meetings when requested.

3.7.3 Oxford House

This is a charitable trust formed originally as a 'settlement' from Oxford University in 1884 – the world's first 'settlement'; it is sited immediately to the north of Weavers Fields. It is a multi-purpose community centre with a performance and visual arts centre, projects for

children and youth, education, language tuition, health promotion and so on. Its facilities are open 7 days a week. There is an extensive outreach programme with an emphasis on refugees and the local Somali community in particular. They base some of their activities in the Fields and support the Green Friends, which holds its meetings there. Their web site is www.oxfordhouse.org.uk

3.7.4 Weavers Adventure Playground

Viaduct Street, Bethnal Green, London E2 0BH weaversad@btconnect.com

This charity provides open access play facilities for children aged 8-16 years and a youth club. There is a large grassed play space and ten large challenging adventure playground structures including a large swing and a tiny ball games area. It is open Tuesday to Friday 3.30 to 7 p.m. and weekends noon to 5 p.m. The playground is open every day during the summer holidays. It is run by 3 workers and a trainee play worker. Over 600 children are registered with the playground and about 30-40 children attend daily. School holiday activities are provided in partnership between Weavers Adventure Playground and Oxford House. Tower Hamlets Parks and Open Spaces Service works with the adventure playground through our partnership with the Play Association Tower Hamlets (www.playtowerhamlets.org.uk)



Weavers Adventure Playground

The play building is to be improved with a new mezzanine level to extend indoor play provision and to widen the play activities available children and young people. This work which cost about £125,000, was completed in March 2006. Fundraising is still needed to replace various structures.

Officers of the Parks and Open Spaces Service would like to work with the Weavers Adventure Playground to undertake a study on whether it is feasible to provide the playground with a new and much bigger ball games area, which could be used by the wider community out of playground hours.

3.7.5 Events

The policy of Cultural Services is to encourage the community to arrange small events and to promote larger, community festivals that celebrate diversity. Tower Hamlets prides itself on being the “Festivals Borough”, with the largest festival and events programme in London. We host about 60 events a year, most of which take place in our parks. The new Parks and Open Spaces staff structure, which comes into place from April 2006 onwards, will help us to create opportunities for small, local events and the Open Space Strategy contains two actions to promote this work. One is the production of a Third Sector Events Toolkit and development of a protocol to manage potential conflict between competing users, (Action Plan Point 4.4).

- Baishakhi Mela – This May festival celebrates the Bengali New Year and is the second largest street / park festival in London after the Notting Hill Carnival and the largest Bangladeshi festival in Britain. Visitors come from all over England and it is broadcast on a Bangladeshi TV station. The 7th Mela returned to Weavers Fields in 2005 as the venue used in 2004 was too small prompting fears over health and safety. Crowds of up to 130,000 people attend the festival. We worked with our Events Team to find a compromise to enable the event to go ahead without major damage to the pitches. We repositioned the stage within Weavers Fields and located the funfair and stalls elsewhere. This meant the heaviest vehicles and biggest turning circles did not access the pitches. www.baishakhimela.com/



Community policing of the Mela Festival (LBTH)

- Buckthorn planting day This community planting day was held to encourage brimstone butterflies to colonise the Gardens
- Shrub and spring bulb planting sessions The Parks and Open Spaces Service worked with the Green Friends of Weavers Fields to hold shrub and spring bulb planting sessions with local schools over several years. Take up is excellent with some dozen schools sending classes along.
- School holiday activities in the park are provided in a partnership between Weavers Adventure Playground and Play Association Tower Hamlets.

3.8 Managing Weavers Fields

3.8.1 Parks and Open Spaces Services Mission Statement:

We will strive to create good quality parks that:

- are accessible to everyone
- provide a wide range of opportunities for sport, play, entertainment and relaxation
- have a diverse, attractive and interesting landscape and ecology

3.8.2 Budget

There is no single budget for any site in the Borough. An individual park budget has to be constructed by summing the contract costs for all the different work types, adding approximated figures for repairs and tree work, management and park rangers costs. It can, therefore, only be approximate.

The revenue budget figure for maintenance, management and park rangers in 2006 / 2007 was about £78,000.00

There is some park income, namely for events and football. The income for events and any filming is ploughed back into the Arts and Events Team's budget. The income from football booking fees is put into the Parks and Open Spaces Service budget as a whole.

3.8.3 Current management (see Appendix)

The Parks and Open Spaces Service manages and maintains the Council's Parks and Open Spaces, including Weavers Fields. Managers report to the Head of the Parks and Open Spaces Service, who has overall responsibility for all Parks and Open Spaces within the Borough.

3.8.4 Recent developments

- 3 entrance features by Paul Margetts
- Public art project in the central bed around CCTV mast by Peter Dunn.
- Re-design and re-equipping of toddler's play area
- Demolition of Ayshford House and road plus laying the area out as part of the park (summer 2005)

3.8.5 Proposed major project - Changing Rooms and incorporation of Mape and Kelsey Streets into site

The original land swap deal based on the acquisition of our changing rooms site for a special needs housing project has been withdrawn. The land has been returned to us. New proposals are needed for the changing rooms, working with the local community and the various interest groups. These proposals will come out of the current Playing Pitch Strategy which will be reported in March 2008. Once development does take place on the foyer site, it should be possible to close Kelsey and Mape Streets and incorporate most of this land into the park. This will remove the opportunity for much of the anti-social and illegal behaviour

on these dead end roads. It will also enable Weavers Café to become the park café and become another focus for activity in the park. However, we are not aware of any progress being made on this scheme by the land owner.

3.8.6 Design principles for Weavers Fields

The key **landscape design aims** developed with the Green Friends of Weavers Fields and the local community are as follows and are expressed in the evolving Site Master Plan:

- Establish a positive site identity that is clear from within and outside the park
- Retain the open, green aspect of the Fields for security and sports use but keep some grass areas available for general non-football use
- Retain and enhance main desire lines but avoid criss-crossing the park with paths
- Enhance the public's feelings of security
- Enhance nature conservation and biodiversity
- Enhance and manage boundary planting
- Provide public art features for visual interest and community involvement
- Enhance the attractiveness of the park

All **design** for the park will be practical and appropriate for its purpose. It should reflect contemporary and reasonably foreseeable needs. It will be sympathetic to the local environment of Victorian and post war housing, and will, over time, seek to lift the quality of the environment locally with appropriate innovations. Layout and detailed design will address issues of security and fear of crime and seek not to create areas in which crime might take place or in which particular groups could develop dominance of particular facilities. The largest feasible areas of grass should be retained and design should avoid breaking them up into small areas divided by paths.

Planting design, including choice of species, will take maintenance into account and seek not to increase the burden of costs overall. It will comprise mostly native species and those that appeal to wildlife (including those providing winter nectar, berries and shelter). Some planting will be provided with more obvious ornamental and / or cultural appeal. The intention will be to create as interesting and attractive an environment as feasible and to provide habitats for wildlife.

Materials will be in keeping with the feel of the park, that is to say, simple, robust, durable and vandal-resistant. All materials shall have a low lifetime environmental impact and shall be specified in accordance with the sustainable purchasing policies within this document. Site furniture and railings will be of classic, contemporary design (i.e. not Victorian or Edwardian) and be made of galvanised mild steel painted black. Play equipment shall be steel (powder coated, painted, galvanised or stainless) and designed not to provide significant roof covering and to give significant play value.

Art will be used to help establish a clear site identity and be developed by community involvement (especially of school children). It shall be mindful of security and the need to minimise maintenance.

Pavings and so on will not be allowed to dominate the landscape, which will remain substantially green in contrast to the surrounding environment. Paths will be aligned to

reflect the routes people want to use and to provide as stimulating an experience for park users as possible.

Any future maintenance and “**backroom**” facilities will be screened from the park users and designed for security.

Signage will incorporate the Borough’s current Visual Identity Guidelines, name the park’s manager, give a contact telephone number, provide guidance on facilities to be found in the park and on behaviour to be expected. Signs must welcome visitors to the Park and avoid lists of dos and don’ts. Signs will be clear for those with sight and language problems, replacing as many words as possible with graphic symbols.

3.8.7 Implementing the management plan

The lead officer responsible for implementing the Plan is the Head of Parks and Open Spaces Service, who must:

- Prepare and co-ordinate future annual work programmes and necessary budgets.
- Develop monitoring procedures.
- Review and develop the management plan.
- Co-ordinate new initiatives and developments identified in the plan.

3.8.8 Monitoring the plan

Monitoring frequency varies according to activity - it can be daily, weekly, or less often, depending on the issue or the activity. General progress on the Plan will be monitored quarterly.

A formal review of the progress of the Plan needs to be undertaken annually flowing from the monitoring processes. The Head of Parks and Open Spaces Service (or delegate) should carry out this review jointly with the Green Friends of Weavers Fields to ensure independent oversight and help build support for the management plan.

3.8.9 Quality management systems

This is achieved through:

- ensuring main contractor accreditation to ISO 9002
- compliance with statutory Performance Indicators such as BV199 and 119
- stretch outcome targets within the Local Area Agreement and Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and the Community Plan which are rigorously monitored through corporate performance management and monitoring system.

3.8.11 ACTION PLAN FOR WEAVERS FIELDS 2008 – 2018

No	Action	Deadline	Lead	Objective targeted	Achieved ?
Regular tasks					
1	Continue to ensure contractors do not drive on grass areas causing damage	All year	LBTH – park rangers	1, 2, 5,	
2	Inspect Adventure Playground to ensure Japanese knotweed has been successfully treated; if not continue to treat	All growing season	LBTH – tree officers	2, 5	

3	Maintain standards of sweeping of paved surfaces to keep them clean and prevent weed growth	All year	LBTH - park rangers	1, 2, 5	
4	Carry out spring renovation to pitches to help sustain wear	Spring	LBTH – area parks manager	1, 2, 5,	
5	Continue to monitor standards of grass cutting and ensure grass not cut short in summer even on football pitches to reduce drought stress	Spring + summer	LBTH – area parks manager	1, 2, 5,	
6	Ensure pitches marked each week and goals erected on time	Annual in season	F/SS	2	
7	Continue to reshape hawthorn hedges along east –west path, keep overall height to max. 1.2 m for security but ensure hedge is furnished with growth to the ground.	Annual	LBTH – area parks manager + F/SS	1, 2, 3, 5, 8	
8	Allow woodland walk hedge to grow up once established so that it can be traditionally cut and laid, involving Tower Habitats (LBAP).	Annual	LBTH – area parks manager + F/SS	3, 5, 8	
9	Maintain improved standards of shrub pruning in accordance with species and good practise. Keep areas near bus stops and entrances below 1 m high for minimum distance of 7 m.	All year	LBTH – area parks manager + F/SS	1, 2, 3, 5, 8	
10	Re-stool a third of willow trees to ground each year on approximately 3 year coppice rotation	Every Autumn / winter	Tree officers	2, 5, 8	
11	Plant up gaps in shrub borders with wildlife-friendly and native plants giving plenty of variety. Include some evergreens.	Winter till task complete (3 years)	LBTH – area parks manager + F/SS	2, 5, 8	
12	Plant up areas within and near to woodland walk for planting with bluebells and woodland edge wildflowers; do not cut grass until seeds are set in July.	On going	LBTH – F/SS + Friends + local kids	2, 4, 5, 8	
13	Liaise with Events Team and ensure events held do not damage pitches or other assets	All year	LBTH – LBTH – area parks manager	1, 4, 5, 7, 9	
14	Encourage more smaller events and ensure all events are well marketed including on websites such as Green Flag website	Ongoing	LBTH – park rangers	1, 4, 5, 9	
15	Foster special activities in park like additional planting through e.g. corporate challenges	Ongoing / as needed	LBTH – park rangers	1, 4, 5, 6, 9	
16	Liaise with Bethnal Green Safe Neighbourhood Unit and get feedback on incidents / action needed	Ongoing	LBTH – Park rangers + area parks manager	1, 2, 3,	
17	Review and update risk assessments for site	Annually	LBTH – area	1, 2, 3, 5	

			parks manager		
18	Liaise with Dog Wardens to ensure any dog nuisance is managed, especially in Woodland Walk	Ongoing	LBTH – Park rangers	1, 2, 3, 5	
19	Keep park in local media with 2 or more positive stories per year	Annually	LBTH - HoPP	1, 3, 4,	
20	Consider what further landscape improvements can be made and raise funds for works	Annually at review	All – landscape team	All	
21	Continue to monitor safety and play value of playground equipment and repair as necessary. Review life expectancy of playground after 5 years and annually thereafter	Weekly and annually	LBTH – area parks officers + landscape	1, 2, 6, 9	
22	Carry out site inspections and meetings to check progress on the plan	Quarterly	All	All	
23	Hold annual formal review of site with Green Friends of Weavers Fields + FSS	Annually by July	LBTH – all	All	
24	Conduct formal review of management plan with everyone including Friends, Continental Landscapes, football clubs, etc.	Annually by Dec.	LBTH – HoPP	All	
25	Carry out annual residents' satisfaction survey and assess performance / results for Weavers Fields	Annually by Dec.	LBTH - HoPP	All	
26	Monitor woodland walk injecting drug problem; co-operate with police in measures to deal with problem; monitor no. of sharps removed and effectiveness of contract. Put further measures in place as necessary short of removing shrubs and trees.	Ongoing and high priority	LBTH – Park rangers	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	
Intermittent and Development tasks					
26	Develop monitoring routes and targets for rangers and monitoring staff	April 07	All	All	
27	Buy into GreenSTAT system	April 08	Parks Strategy & Business Development Manager	1,3,5,9	
28	Provide rangers with training to enable them to conduct face to face interviews and analyse results	Oct. 08	HoPOS + rangers	1,3,5,9	
29	Carry out regular inspection of trees for risk management and health / condition purposes; carry out necessary works	As needed according to risk	LBTH – Tree officer	2, 5	
30	Repaint gates and priority railings followed by rest of railings as resources permit	Ongoing	HoPOS	1, 2, 3, 5, 6,	
31	Carry out habitat survey and begin implementing recommendations via Natural England funding	April 08	Arb. & Environment manager	1,2,4,5,6, 8	
32	Develop green waste composting facility at local park, in conjunction with Waste Management Services	Unknown – see text	LBTH – Enviro. officer	5	
33	Development new project to provide new changing rooms	Unknown – see text	LBTH – HoPOS	1, 2, 3, 5, 9	
34	Close and break out streets around Foyer development and lay them out as green	Unknown – see text	LBTH – HoPOS	1, 2, 3, 5, 9	

	open space in accordance with planning permission				
35	Seek funding and develop project to provide new playable landscape in a natural setting.	Unknown – funding dependent	LBTH – HoPOS	2, 5, 6, 9	
36	Renew some of the large Weavers Adventure Playground structures	Unknown	WAP	2, 5, 6, 9	
37	Develop feasibility study to provide new shared use ball games area at Weavers Adventure Playground	April 2009	LBTH – HoPOS, and WAP	2, 5, 6, 9	
38	Complete playing pitch strategy and develop implementation programme	April 2008	LBTH - HoPOS	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9	
39	Renew building regulations approval for wind vane sculptures	Nov. 2008	LBTH – HoPOS	2	
40	Renew building regulations approval for “Weaving identities” sculpture	Nov. 2008	LBTH - HoPOS	2	
41	Work with Friends to prepare revised masterplan of park to incorporate proposed road closures, etc	Unknown – funding dependent	LBTH + Friends	1, 2, 3, 5, 9	
42	Draft new parks bye-laws and commission	2010	LBTH – HoPOS	1, 2, 3, 5, 9,	

Action Plan Abbreviations

LBTH	London Borough of Tower Hamlets (Parks and Open Spaces Service)
F/SS	Fountains Supports Services Ltd. / Contracted Service Provider
Friends	Green Friends of Weavers Fields
HoPOS	Head of Parks and Open Spaces Service
WAP	Weavers Adventure Playground

APPENDIX A **CORPORATE POLICIES AND STRATEGIES**

B.1 Tower Hamlets Vision and Community Plan

Tower Hamlets Council launched its first Community Plan in May 2001 following extensive consultation, involving residents, the Council and its public service partners, the voluntary and community sector, and businesses. The Council led the process, but involved a working group of key partners from other public services, large and small businesses and the voluntary and community sector.

A number of key priorities were identified through the consultation process and the determination to tackle these underpinned the vision for the Borough's Community Plan to 2010, a vision in which services work in partnership to bring about early benefits to residents. The Community Plan is currently being refreshed and an extensive consultation process is now underway.

To fulfil this vision, key partners have agreed to focus service activities on the priorities identified through the five cross cutting themes set out in Tower Hamlet's Community Plan, which seeks to make Tower Hamlets:

- **A Better Place for Living Safely** – reducing crime and making people feel safer.
- **A Better Place for Living Well** - improving housing, health, social care and the environment, reducing pollution and improving traffic conditions.
- **A Better Place for Creating and Sharing Prosperity** – bringing investment into the Borough and ensuring that all residents and business are in a position to benefit from growing economic prosperity.
- **A Better Place for Learning, Achievement and Leisure** – raising aspirations, expectations and achievement and providing the widest range of arts and leisure opportunities for all.
- **A Better Place for Excellent Public Services** – improving public services for local people to make sure they represent good value for money and are provided in ways that meet local needs.

These themes are developed in the Council's Corporate Strategic Plan and the Directorate three-year action plans. These set out action grids with objectives, key activities, milestones and success criteria detailed and time tabled. Key officers are also identified.

The Parks and Open Spaces Service (part of Cultural Services) works to support these corporate objectives. We have been key contributors to the revised Cultural Services framework document, to update targets and priorities for the next five years. We have taken the joint lead in preparing the Playing Pitch Strategy, which is compliant with Sport England guidance.

B.2 Public consultation

The Borough follows a policy of active consultation and involvement with the community. Its aims and objectives reflect this and details are therefore subject to change. The Borough has set up 8 Local Area Partnerships to increase the participation of the local community in local issues and developments.

From market research and consultation exercises, it is clear that local people are most concerned about basic issues such as dog mess, security, park keeping and cleanliness; a large majority of people think that well-maintained parks promote social responsibility, increased use and reduced vandalism.

B.3 Best Value Review:

The Best Value review of the former Horticulture Services Division was adopted by Cabinet in June 2003. The review findings have been embedded in the Open Space Strategy and the restructure of the Parks Service.

B.4 Open Space Strategy and Play Strategy

The Open Space Strategy for Tower Hamlets was adopted on 11 January 2006.

<http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/data/planning/data/planning-policy/downloads/evidence/open-space-strategy.pdf>

Key objectives of the open space strategy are to:

1. Provide and maintain information on open space in Tower Hamlets (using a Geographic Information System).
2. Establish demand and residents' views
3. Enhance protection of existing open space (given the intense local pressure to develop land for housing, education and other social needs),
4. Identify ways of providing more open space and improving access to open space
5. Improve the quality of the Council's own public open spaces and to prioritise investment.

Objectives 3 and 4 will be delivered through the legal controls that flow from the policies in the Local Development Framework.

The Borough's strategy for play "Play Matters in Tower Hamlets: A Strategic Approach to Play in Tower Hamlets" was adopted by Cabinet on 4/7/07.

[http://modgov.towerhamlets.gov.uk/Published/C00000320/M00002027/\\$ADocPackPublic.pdf](http://modgov.towerhamlets.gov.uk/Published/C00000320/M00002027/$ADocPackPublic.pdf)

This document is intended to raise the profile of play for children and young people, to map provision and to identify deficiencies in play services, play space provision and quality as well as the means to address them. In addition it is used to bid for funds (from such bodies as the BIG Lottery Fund for Play) to improve provision whether for play services or for capital investment.

Both these strategies were prepared in accordance with guidance from the Greater London Authority.

B.5 Planning policies

The current primary land use documents for Tower Hamlets are the 1998 Unitary Development Plan which was adopted as the council's statutory development plan on 2nd December 1998 and some elements of the emerging Local Development Framework. These are strategic documents that establish the land use and planning framework for the borough. Together with the Mayor's Plan for London they are the primary reference for all planning decisions.

The Local Development Framework, which is in the process of being adopted, defines the land use at Millwall Park as public open space. This protects it from development. The LDF was submitted to the Secretary of State in November 2006, but following discussions with the Government Office for London, the Council's Cabinet (September 2007) resolved to withdraw it and recast the plans. Formal confirmation of the withdrawal was provided by Government on 4 October 2007. The protected status of this public open space is not expected to change.

B.6 Tower Hamlets Biodiversity Action Plan: Habitat Action Plan for Parks, Squares and Burial Grounds

“Tower Habitats” is a group of voluntary sector bodies and Council officers co-operating to prepare and deliver the Biodiversity Action Plan for Tower Hamlets. The Plan was adopted on 24 March 2004, following consultation. The group has started work to review and revise the Plan and consultation will begin in February 2008, for adoption in December 2008. The current Parks, Squares and Burial Grounds Habitat Action Plan contains detailed actions and targets to increase the area and value for wildlife of the various types of park in the Borough. For the current plan, see

<http://www.towerhabitats.org/TowerHabitatsLBAP.pdf>

B.7 Health and Safety

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets Corporate Health and Safety Policies apply in all parks. The policies are available on request.

The Borough is committed to promoting the Health, Safety and Welfare of all employees and of the public who come into contact with its premises and services. It is the policy of the Directorate to develop a positive Health and Safety culture throughout the organisation because we believe that good safety is good business. This Health and Safety Policy intends to set the ground rules through which continuous improvement of the standards of Health, Safety and Welfare of all employees and clients can be achieved. The safety policies are in accordance with section 2(3) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and are revised on a regular basis. Their implementation is checked regularly by the Directorate’s H&S officer.

Risk assessments have been carried out for parks’ workers, with an emphasis on those staff who face the most regular risks, namely ranger staff. Risk control measures are in place and are reviewed in the light of changing practice.

All Fountains Support Services Ltd’ staff have induction and basic H&S training. Risk assessments are done and staff must meet the resulting codes of practice. All cleansing staff have manual handling training. Staff have additional training in accordance with their duties and the tools / machinery they are required to use, such as first aid, chainsaw, RoSPA playground checking training and so on.

B.8 Complaints procedure

Tower Hamlets has a three-stage complaints procedure. Stage 1 tries to resolve problems informally face to face and stage 2 is formal (with complaints received in writing or by phone in one of 8 languages or by minicom). Complaints are acknowledged, investigated and responded to in 20 working days. The complainant then has the right of appeal to the chief executive (20 days). If the matter is still not resolved, the individual can thereafter take the matter up with the Local Government Ombudsman to ensure the Council has acted fairly and in accordance with its agreed procedures. See:

<http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/data/your-council/data/complain.cfm>

In addition, officers must respond to enquiries made by councillors or MPs within 10 working days. These are rigorously monitored.

B.9 Equalities

Equalities issues are taken seriously in an area with a high proportion of minority ethnic group residents and the department has a number of initiatives to foster good race relations. All sports clubs that make sports pitch bookings are required to sign and adhere to the Borough’s Anti-Racism in Sport Charter. The department encourages events that celebrate ethnic diversity and racial harmony.

B.10 Park bye-laws

The current byelaws need to be reviewed. The Parks and Open Spaces Service proposes to draw up and adopt new ones in due course but this is not a high priority for the department at present.

B.11 Use of pesticides

The Parks and Open Spaces Service is moving away from chemicals wherever possible, replacing their use with cultural and manual methods.

- No herbicides or pesticides are used in Green Flag sites or play grounds, on either hard surfaces or on planted areas, except for persistent weeds such as Japanese Knotweed are chemically treated with a contact herbicide (Glyphosate) at least twice in a season.
- Browntail moth infestations are pruned out and the arisings disposed of. It is many years since the Borough permitted the use of organophosphate pesticides.
- Rats and other pests are monitored and outbreaks controlled only as and when necessary.

In non-Green Flag sites, there is a weed-killing contract for the control of weeds in selected situations. There is no blanket application of spray. A reactive control methodology is in place; weeds are sprayed out (spot treated) with a contact herbicide (Glyphosate) only where they have germinated. This restricts applications to lightly trafficked paved areas. A maximum of three applications is made each year. In exceptional circumstances a residual herbicide may be used to provide control in known problem areas (now fewer than ten sites), though the emphasis remains on the reduction of usage of this type of herbicide.

B12 Corporate Environment Strategy

The council seeks to efficiently undertake its duties with the minimum of environmental impact. The strategy was adopted by Cabinet on 6th June 2007.

<http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk:80/data/environment/data/strategy/index.cfm>

This deals with the Borough's direct environmental impacts as a council. It identifies the initiatives which need to be undertaken in order to minimise our impact on the environment and what outcomes we can expect to achieve as a result. It covers the following key issues:

- Transport
- Energy management
- Water management
- Waste management
- Procurement

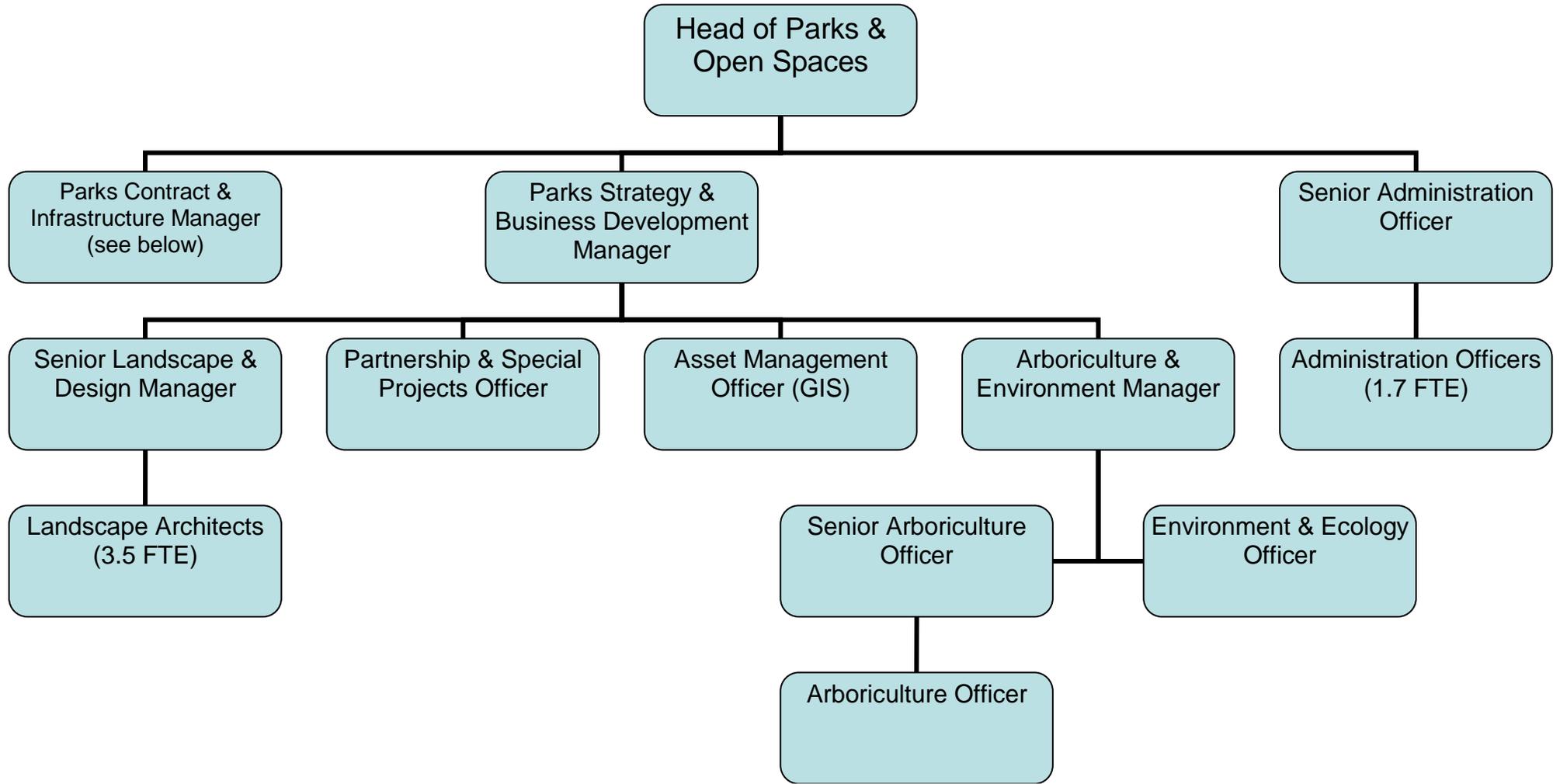
The Parks and Open Spaces Service will abide by this strategy, its priorities and action plan once adopted. We expect to need to make many changes in both thinking and practice, both ourselves and with our contractors and third sector partners.

The Borough has adopted guidelines for sustainable purchasing which are available to staff on <http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk:80/data/environment/data/strategy/index.cfm>

B13 Fountains Support Services Ltd Environmental Policy

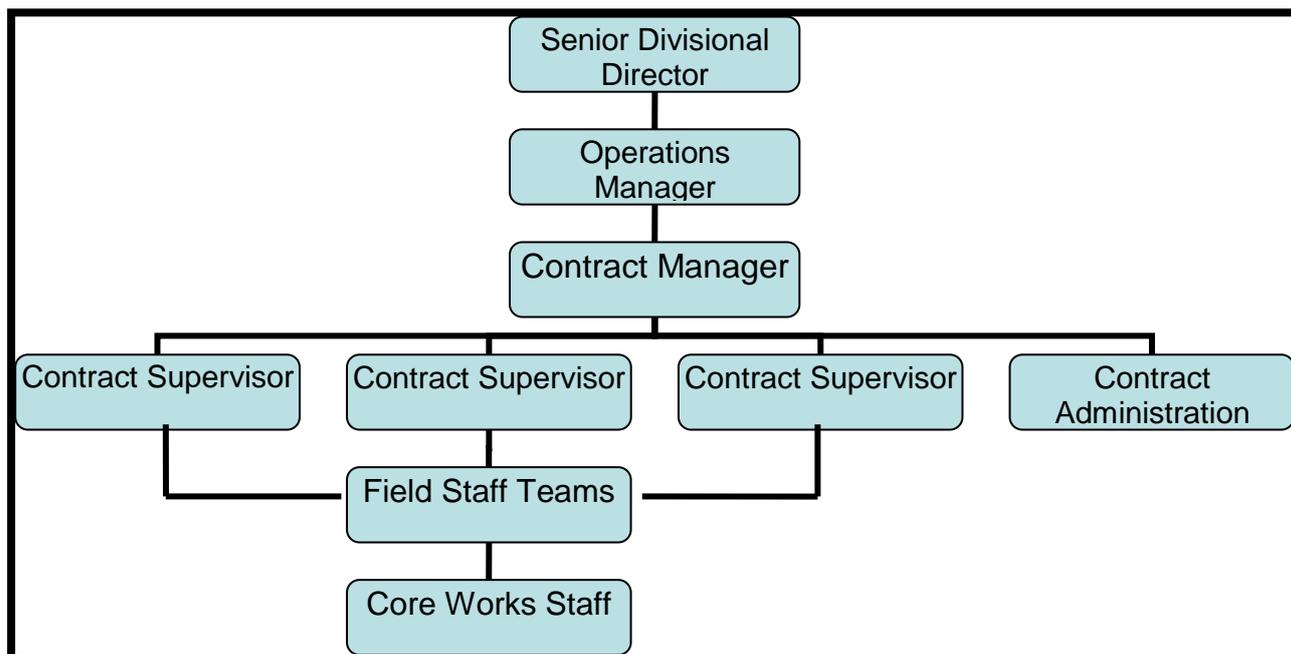
www.fountainsplc.com

APPENDIX B.1 TOWER HAMLETS PARKS AND OPEN SPACES
SERVICE MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES



**APPENDIX B.2 FOUNTAINS SUPPORTS SERVICES LTD.
MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE**

fountains plc. Tower Hamlets Operating Chart



Staff Welfare

fountains plc makes the following provisions to ensure the welfare of its staff:

- Safety training
- Personal Protection Equipment
- Training on job-specific machinery & equipment
- Ensuring machinery is correctly chosen and maintained to provide user safety
- Hand wash facilities in all vehicles
- First Aid kits
- Toolbox talks, including site specific risk assessments
- Incident, Accident and Near-miss Reporting Procedures, including a 24 hour incident reporting line.

Permanent Staff Development

fountains plc aims to invest in and retain staff. The company undertake to train all staff to a minimum NVQ Level 1, up to NVQ Level 4 and 5 to ensure that the next generation of management stays within the Borough.

Image, Uniform & Customer Care

fountains seek to establish good community relations by being a visible and approachable presence. All vehicles are liveried with **fountains** logo, and all staff carry photo ID cards, wear corporate clothing and are issued with appropriate Personal Protection Equipment.

All **fountains** staff are trained to communicate clearly with the public and deal with any queries in a knowledgeable, professional and courteous manner. Part of **fountains** Competence Management procedure includes the assessment of communication abilities where these are required by site circumstances.

APPENDIX B.3 INFORMATION ON FIDO MACHINE

FIDO MACHINE = Faeces Intake and Disposal Operation

FIDO is manufactured on a Kawasaki Mule 550, street legal utility vehicle, which can be fitted with a weather break cab and sides. With low-pressure ground tyres, it can mount kerbs with ease without damaging wheel rims or pavements, and is ideal for travelling across grassed areas and streets collecting dog faeces or litter, without damaging the grass. Being street legal not only enables easy transportation between parks, it also allows removal of dog faeces or litter from paths, grass verges and streets on the way.



The collection unit contains its own engine, which drives a powerful vacuum unit capable of collecting 120 litres of all types of dog faeces. Once collected into a stainless steel container, it is mixed with disinfectant and water, which turns into slurry, leaving it pourable for disposal. A disinfectant spray pump is also fitted, not only to ease removal of stubborn faeces, but also to wash and disinfect the offending areas helping to protect children from toxocara canis.

The above system is used on a weekly basis within all of the Boroughs sites to ensure pathways and grassed areas are kept clear of dog faeces, particular attention is paid to sports surfaces prior to the commencement of matches.

APPENDIX C
RISK ASSESSMENTS

(see next page)

TOWER HAMLETS PARKS: RISK ASSESSMENT

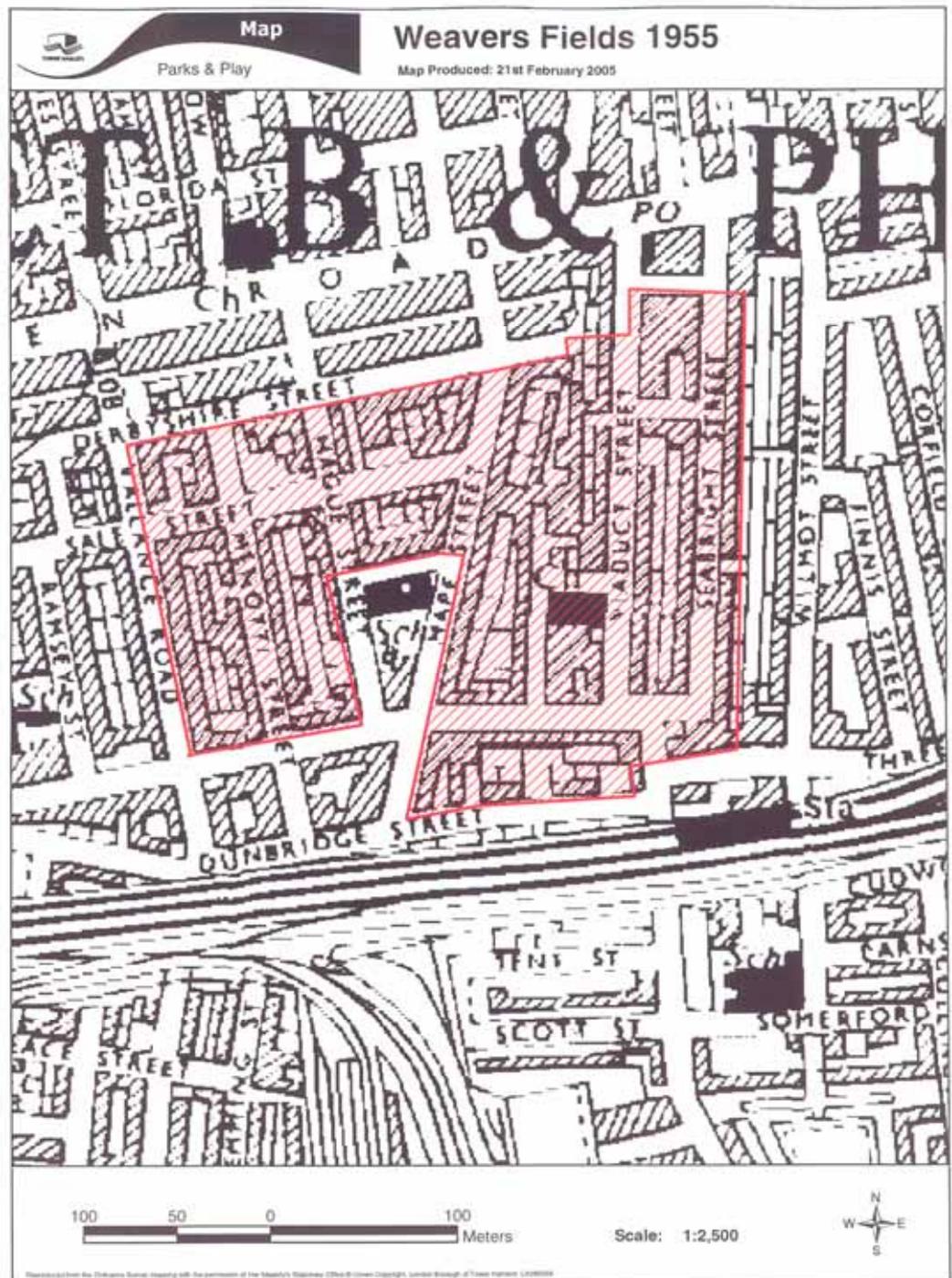
SITE LOCATION	Weaver Fields	DATE	December '07
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SITE ELEMENT OR ACTIVITY	Recreational use
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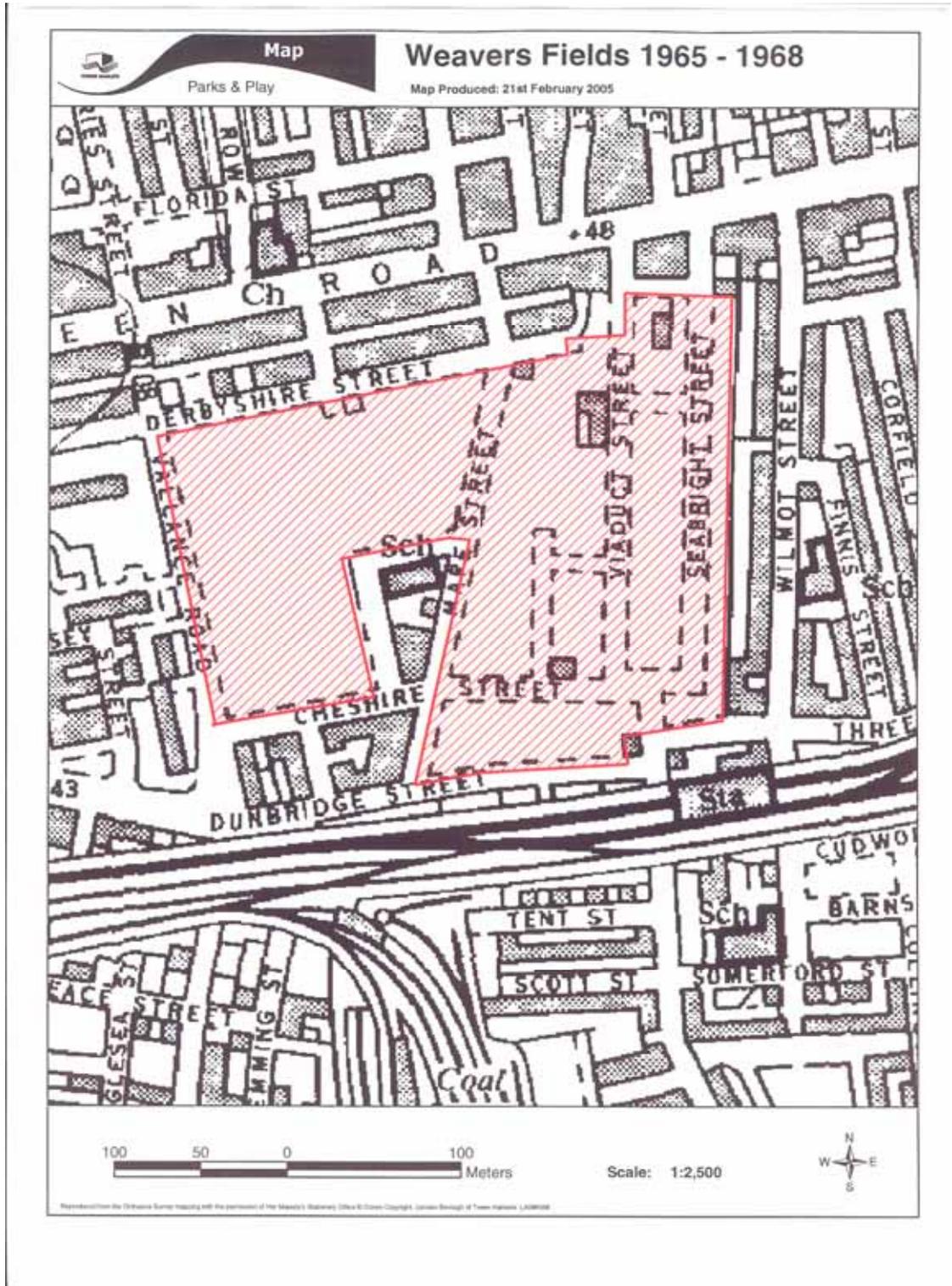
HAZARDS IDENTIFIED	PERSONS AT RISK						LOSS/SEVERITY				LIKELIHOOD			RISK LEVEL	RISK CONTROL		
	E	YP	C O N	PUB	VIS	Other	High Fatal Injury 4	Med Major Injury 3	Low Serious Injury 2	Minor Injury 1	High Certain 5	Med Probe 4	Low Poss 3			Occ'l 2	Remote 1
Note: Any serious and IMMINENT DANGER will need procedures, etc.																	
Glass and other sharps on paths and shrub areas		X		X	X		X							X		8	Daily litter pick Playground in Sharps proced
Presence of Dog Faeces	X		X	X			X						X		6	Twice weekly dog faeces removal. Dog Warden enforcement	
Uncontrolled dogs attacking users and staff	X		X	X				X					X		2	Dog Warden & Park Keeper enforcement	
Pot-holes and uneven surfaces. Damaged drain covers.	X		X	X				X					X		4	Park staff isolate fault. Repairs procedure	
Damaged gates and fences	X		X	X				X					X		2	Park staff isolate fault. Repairs procedure	
Damaged park furniture	X		X	X					X				X		2	Park staff isolate fault. Repairs procedure	
Sharps in woodland area	X		X	X		X							X		8	Specialist contractor: a.m. and p.m. visit to collect and remove sharps.	

Full Assessment required if '**Severity**' multiplied by '**likelihood**' exceeds 3
Key – Employee, Young Person, **CON**tractor, **PUB**lic, **VIS**itors, **Other** (Specify)
High 20 - 8, Medium 6 - 4, Low 3 and below

Priority order is determined by the value of severity **X** likelihood, higher numbers give higher priority. For equal values the more severe outcomes are given priority, then the people at risk.



Weavers Fields – historic map of 1955



Weavers Fields – historic map showing layout between 1965-68