

### Strategic context

- 3.1 This strategic review summarises the strategic context for open space, sport and recreation facilities on a national, regional and local scale. It is essential to ensure that local provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities in Bexley contributes to the wider national, regional and local agendas.
- 3.2 As indicated, Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 and its Companion Guide, Assessing Needs and Opportunities are the key overarching documents (see Section 1) to shape this study. They reflect a recognition from the Government of the wider benefits derived from the provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities, including:
- supporting an urban renaissance
  - supporting a rural renewal
  - promotion of social inclusion and community cohesion
  - health and well being
  - promoting sustainable development.
- 3.3 In addition to PPG17, there are numerous other national documents and agencies that shape the strategic context to open spaces, sport and recreation facilities across the country and as such influence the provision of facilities and the findings of this report.
- 3.4 **Appendix D** sets out the national strategic context, including Living Spaces: Cleaner, Safer Greener which was produced by the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) in 2002. This led to the creation of CABI Space<sup>1</sup>, a national government agency which has the overall aim *“to bring excellence to the design, management and maintenance of parks and public space in towns and cities”*.
- 3.5 The following sets out the regional and local strategic context for the London Borough of Bexley, considering overarching documents and their relationship to this study. Documents specific to one type of open space will be reviewed within the typology-specific **Sections 4-11**.

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<sup>1</sup> CABI: the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment; CABI Space website: <http://www.cabe.org.uk/default.aspx?contentitemid=41>

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### Regional context

Document Reviewed	Summary	Links to Open Space Strategy and PPG17 Assessment
<p>Mayor of London - London Plan - Consolidated with Alterations since 2004 (February 2008)</p>	<p>The London Plan identifies the importance of realising the value of open spaces and green infrastructure in achieving sustainable development and includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy 3D.8 states that “the Mayor will work with strategic partners to protect, promote and improve access to London’s network of open spaces, to realise the current and potential value of open space to communities, and to protect the many benefits of open space, including those associated with health, sport and recreation, children’s play, regeneration, the economy, culture, biodiversity and the environment.”</li> <li>• Policy 3D.11 of the London Plan reinforces the importance of the development of an open space strategy, suggesting that Boroughs should, in consultation with local communities, the Mayor and other partners, produce open space strategies to protect, create and enhance all types of open space in their area.</li> <li>• Policy 4C.4 focuses on the contribution the Blue Ribbon Network makes to the open space network of London and suggests that authorities identify opportunities alongside waterways for the creation and enhancement of open spaces. The importance of the protection of green chains is also referenced within the London Plan.</li> <li>• A key objective of the London Plan is to accommodate London’s growth within its boundaries without encroaching on open spaces. The production of this strategy has followed the Major of London’s Guide for the production of open space strategies which sets five key objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to protect and improve open space provision in terms of quality/ quantity/ accessibility and safety,</li> <li>- to improve linkages within and between the open space network,</li> <li>- to ensure open spaces meet the needs of all local people and promote greater social inclusion,</li> <li>- to ensure open spaces enhance the quality of the local environment and</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>The study will guide the protection and enhancement of open space in the Borough.</p> <p>The study will analyse the impact of five growth scenarios on demand for open space in Bexley.</p> <p>The study will guide the protection and enhancement of the green belt, MOL and other designated open spaces, which includes the River Thames.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to provide a clear framework for investment priorities and action.</li> <li>• There are a number of policies for the Mayor and boroughs to maintain the protection of green spaces including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy 3D.9 Metropolitan Green Belt</li> <li>• Policy 3D.10 Metropolitan Open Land, which includes green corridors and Green Chains.</li> <li>• Policy 3D.11 Open Space in DPD's, to support Regional and Metropolitan Park opportunities.</li> <li>• Table 3D.1 sets out London's public open space hierarchy with the various types of open space, sizes and distances from home.</li> <li>• Policy 3D.12 supports Open Space Strategies being produced.</li> <li>• Policy 3D.13 supports Children and Young People's play and informal recreation strategies.</li> <li>• Policy 3D.14 supports the protection, promotion and management of biodiversity.</li> <li>• Policy 3D.15 for Trees and Woodland and 3D.16 for Geological conservation, which includes Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's). In Bexley, we have two sites at Abbey Wood and Wansunt Pit.</li> <li>• Policy 3D.19 deals with adequate provision of Burial space.</li> <li>• Policies in section 4C deals with the Blue Ribbon Network, which includes the River Thames and River Cray.</li> <li>• Policy 4C.4 focuses specifically on how the Blue Ribbon Network can contribute to the open space network of London. Where appropriate natural landscapes should be protected and enhanced. As part of Open Space Strategies, boroughs should identify potential opportunities alongside waterways for the creation and enhancement of open spaces.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

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<p>Mayor of London – Biodiversity Strategy (2002) Connecting with London’s Nature</p>	<p>The objective of the strategy is to ensure that all Londoners have access to wildlife and natural green spaces. An aim of the strategy is to maintain and increase access to open space. The strategy recognises biodiversity conservation as an essential part of sustainable development. Policies particularly relating to this open space and PPG17 assessment include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy 1 of the strategy indicates that the Mayor will work with partners to protect, manage and enhance London’s biodiversity</li> <li>• Proposals 1 and 2 suggest that Boroughs should give strong protection to Sites of Metropolitan Borough and Local Importance for Nature Conservation</li> <li>• Proposal 3 recommends that Boroughs resist development that will have an adverse effect on protected species</li> <li>• Proposal 4 states that when development is permitted the Borough should seek compensation to reduce the effects</li> <li>• Proposal 5 suggests Boroughs take into account wildlife habitats and biodiversity when considering planning applications</li> <li>• Proposal 6 suggests that the Borough should identify opportunities to create, manage and enhance wildlife habitats and the natural environment</li> <li>• Proposal 19 states Boroughs should protect and enhance the Blue Ribbon Network</li> <li>• Proposal 27 states The Mayor will work with strategic partners to manage and enhance biodiversity value in parks and green spaces</li> <li>• Proposal 28 encourages the management of cemeteries and churchyards for the enjoyment of nature</li> <li>• Proposal 30 states The Mayor will work with Boroughs to encourage greater use of allotments.</li> </ul>	<p>Accessibility mapping will identify areas that do not have access to natural and semi natural open space and highlight opportunities to improve access.</p> <p>The study will guide the protection and enhancement of natural areas, MOL and Sites of Metropolitan Borough and Local Importance for Nature Conservation.</p> <p>The study will provide the Council with a tool and evidence base for calculating developer contributions.</p>

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<p>Providing for Children and Young People's Play and Informal Recreation – Supplementary Planning Guidance of the London Plan (2008)</p>	<p>The plan focuses on delivering a child and young person friendly environment and raising expectations for play. Policies of specific relevance to this study include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy 3D.13 states that The Mayor, boroughs and other partners will ensure that children have safe access to good quality, well designed, secure and stimulating play and informal recreation provision</li> <li>• Paragraph 3.310 states that in densely developed areas, safe and stimulating play facilities are essential for a child's welfare and future development.</li> <li>• Paragraph 3.311 states that play strategies should provide comprehensive guidance on play provision and consideration needs to be given to consulting with Children and Young People.</li> </ul>	<p>The application of the quantity, quality and accessibility standards will guide the provision of and access to safe, high quality and stimulating play and informal recreation provision. The needs of young people and children should be sought by consulting with them.</p>
<p>The London Trees and Woodland Framework – Connecting Londoners with Trees and Woodlands (Mayor of London 2005)</p>	<p>The strategy recognizes that trees and woodlands are an essential part of London's character and identity. The Framework aims to provide a strategic approach to trees and woodlands and seek to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the existing stock of trees and woodlands is managed and maintained to safeguard its value to London both now and in the future.</li> <li>- there is an increased awareness of the value of trees and woodlands to the health and well being of all Londoners</li> <li>- the contribution of trees and woodlands to London's sustainability and quality of life is maximised.</li> <li>- natural regeneration and new planting in appropriate locations is encouraged to further enhance the contribution of trees and woodlands to London life.</li> </ul>	<p>The appropriate management of trees and woodlands links with the effective provision of open spaces. The achievement of the objectives of the tree and woodlands strategy will have a positive impact on the quality and value of open spaces in the Borough.</p>
<p>East London Green Grid Framework: Supplementary Planning Guidance to the London Plan (February 2008)</p>	<p>The vision for the East London Green Grid is <i>"to create a network of open spaces, river and other corridors connecting urban areas to the river Thames, the Green Belt and beyond to provide attractive, diverse landscapes and green infrastructure managed to the highest standards fore people and wildlife."</i></p> <p>Green Infrastructure refers to open environment within urban areas, including corridors and links that provide multiple links for people and wildlife.</p> <p>The framework identifies integration of the Green Grid into planning Local Development Documents, Area Action Plans and Open Space Strategies. The</p>	<p>The study supports the vision for the East London Green Grid. Improving the accessibility to open spaces is a key aim of the study and regional priorities will contribute to the achievement of the key aims and objectives of this study.</p> <p>The study will identify areas deficient in open space and aim to reduce these deficiencies.</p>

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	<p>implementation of this vision will be expected to positively contribute to the Green Grid through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing new and/or enhancing existing public open spaces, reducing areas of deficiency,</li> <li>• Providing public access along watercourse and green areas, linking to the wider path and cycle route network,</li> <li>• Providing a range of formal and informal recreational uses and landscapes, promoting healthy living,</li> <li>• Providing new and/or enhancing existing wildlife sites, reducing areas of deficiency,</li> <li>• Managing water collection, cleansing and flood risk with multi-functional spaces and</li> <li>• Mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change.</li> </ul> <p>The framework also identifies opportunities to improve the strategic path network, including new routes to the Thames Path and how Local Development Frameworks and Transport Local Implementation Plans can help to improve and create local linkages.</p>	<p>The study will improve access to natural and semi natural open space through the application of the accessibility standards.</p>
<p>Thames Gateway – Creating Sustainable Communities (2005).</p>	<p>London Borough is located within the Thames Gateway, an area of significant regeneration and opportunity.</p> <p>The project will provide the transport infrastructure, schools and hospitals, required to create communities and will improve existing towns and cities and create better quality new development and open space.</p>	<p>This open space assessment will provide impetus for the creation of improved open spaces. The Thames Gateway Project will be a key delivery vehicle for the improvement of open spaces in Bexley.</p>
<p>Thames Gateway Cycling Strategy (2008)</p>	<p>The vision of the Thames Gateway strategy is to:</p> <p><i>“ensure that cycling forms an integral part of everyday lives of those living, working and visiting the sub-region whilst • fully exploiting the potential growth within the Thames Gateway London sub-region for the benefit of cyclists and allowing cycling to contribute to the creation of new sustainable communities. “</i></p> <p>The key priorities of the strategy include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reducing the perceived barriers to cycling to the individual, by creating high</li> </ul>	<p>This green space strategy promotes linkages between different types of open space and promotes the development of cycle routes.</p>

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	<p>quality infrastructure, training and information;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• investing in schemes that reflect desire lines, now and into the future; and</li> <li>• ensuring that cycling is fully reflected in complementary policies and strategies, for land use, other transport modes, economic regeneration and redevelopment.</li> </ul>	
<p>South East London Green Chain Strategy (Established 1977)</p>	<p>An integral part of the green corridor network within the London Borough of Bexley is the South East London Green Chain. Established in 1977, the South East London Green Chain links the Boroughs of Bexley, Bromley, Greenwich and Lewisham with a 40 mile network of walkways and footpaths incorporating nearly 300 Green Chain open spaces which include sites such as Lesnes Abbey. This Green Chain provides opportunities for recreational walks for residents, encourages the use of travel on foot and also creates wildlife corridors across the Borough. A total of 33 sites in London Borough of Bexley are included within the South East London Green Chain.</p> <p>The vision of the green chain strategy is to improve connectivity to the Thames from the Southern Ridge green spaces and river corridors to create a joined up, attractive network of green spaces and walks. The key priorities of the green chain strategy are linked strongly with the recommendations of this document and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• nature - to conserve and enhance the character, biodiversity and ecological linkage of open spaces</li> <li>• use - to improve the use of Green Chain Plus, which focuses on strengthening development in a wider sub-region by increasing links to other London Boroughs and the River Thames.</li> <li>• climate change – to improve the resilience of the local environment to climate change</li> <li>• access – to improve physical and cultural access for communities, enhance linkages with public and sustainable transport and create connections with London’s wider green space network and the River Thames</li> </ul>	<p>This document considers the existing provision of green space in the borough and the potential implications of population growth. The green chain strategy will be of significant importance in the achievement of objectives set out in this document.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• connect – to enhance access and movement within public open spaces in the Green Chain Plus area</li> <li>• safety – to enhance the safety of open spaces in the Green Chain area.</li> <li>• quality – to achieve sustainable and resource efficient design excellence in the restoration and enhancement of Green Chain Plus spaces</li> <li>• regeneration – to realise the potential of the green infrastructure in securing sustainable development and to increase the cycling capacity of the green environment</li> <li>• to provide new areas of public open space and nature conservation sites in areas of deficiency</li> <li>• heritage – to ensure the protection, enhancement and promotion of the historic character and built heritage of the Green Chain.</li> </ul>	



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### Local context

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<p>Bexley Unitary Development Plan (adopted 2004 with saved policies September 2007)</p>	<p>The UDP provides a framework for development in Bexley. Specific policies included within this document relating to this Open Space Strategy and PPG17 Assessment include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy G3 of the plan states the Council will seek appropriate commitments or benefits as part of any development, including social and community facilities</li> <li>• Policies ENV2 and ENV3 state developments inside the Metropolitan Green Belt will not be permitted unless essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation, cemeteries and any other use of land which preserve the openness of Green Belt land</li> <li>• Policy ENV10 states the Council will encourage recreational use of open nature in suitable parts of the Metropolitan Green Belt, for open-air recreational proposals</li> <li>• Policy ENV15 states that within Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) the construction of new buildings or change of use of land will not be permitted unless for the purpose of: agriculture and forestry, open air recreation, nature conservation, educational grounds, cemeteries or other uses that would maintain the character of the land</li> <li>• Policy ENV16 states the Council will enhance recreational activities and take action in areas such as MOL to conserve and enhance the landscape, promote nature conservation and provide suitable screening from built development</li> <li>• Policy ENV17 protects land that forms part of the South East London Green Chain and promotes it as a recreational source and visual amenity</li> <li>• Policy ENV18 states the Council will take action in the Green Chain to conserve and enhance the landscape, promote nature conservation and provide visual screening</li> <li>• Policy ENV19 states the Council will aim to retain all urban open space on the proposals map except where there is adequate provision of open</li> </ul>	<p>The study will focus upon the protection of open space, the Green Belt and MOL.</p> <p>The study will protect and enhance the natural landscape.</p> <p>The assessment of all open space in the Borough will identify areas that are deficient in open space and evaluate the value of open space through the site assessments and local consultation.</p> <p>The study will consider the provision of all grass pitches regardless of ownership and make recommendations for future provision.</p> <p>The study will inform the future development of policies for open space, sport and recreation.</p> <p>The study recognises the importance of nature conservation and will seek to protect sites of nature conservation from development.</p> <p>The importance of green corridors in linking open spaces is recognised in the study. The enhancement of linear routes will be considered in improving access to open space.</p> <p>The study will provide the Council with information on all open spaces in the Borough. This will allow the Council to make informed decisions when seeking developer contributions.</p>

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	<p>space within the area, there is no need for additional appropriate use of the land, the land is not valued, distinctive features of the land are preserved and that there are no conflicts with other policies in the plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy ENV20 states the future use of land designated as educational use or playing fields on the proposals map that becomes surplus will be assessed on the following criteria: the need to relieve any deficiencies in the provision of open space, requirements for its use during the plan period for recreation, leisure, sport or other appropriate use should be considered and land safeguarded where a need is identified, the need to meet other land use requirements, the need to preserve landscape feature of open land, providing future use does not conflict with policies for MOL or Metropolitan Green Belt</li> <li>• Policy ENV21 covers allotments and states the Council will review the supply and demand of allotments and rationalise the use of sites where there is a continuing lack of demand or replace them in more suitable locations. If a site becomes surplus to use the Council will assess proposals for alternative use</li> <li>• Policy ENV23 states the Council will resist developments that will damage or destroy habitats in nature reserves or areas of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation as shown in the proposals map</li> <li>• Policy ENV24 protects Sites of Borough Importance for Nature Conservation from development</li> <li>• Policy ENV25 states the Council will conserve, protect and enhance Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation</li> <li>• Policy ENV26 states the Council will seek to enhance linear routes in the Borough</li> <li>• Policy ENV27 encourages the creation of sites for nature conservation</li> <li>• Policy ENV28 forbids development in Local Nature Reserves that will damage the preservation of the area</li> <li>• Policies ENV32 and ENV33 protects Sites of Special Scientific Interest</li> </ul>	

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	<p>(SSSI's) and adjoining land from development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy H13 states residential developments over 25 dwellings should, where appropriate, provide recreational open space or contribute towards the cost of off-site provision (as policies TAL6 and TAL7, below)</li> <li>• Policy TAL6 states in areas of open space or recreational deficiency the Council will seek to provide open space in all new residential developments and through land no longer required for use</li> <li>• Policy TAL7 states all new developments will need to provide sufficient recreational open space including informal open space and children's play space to a nationally accepted design. However, contributions to support this policy would now be calculated with reference to the adopted LDF Planning Obligations Guidance SPD.</li> </ul>	
Local Development Scheme (2007)	The Local Development Scheme (LDS) informs the Local Development Framework (LDF) with the timetable for new Development Plan Documents (DPD's) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's). The purpose of the LDS is to inform the community and stakeholders in Bexley about changes to the development plan and establish the Council's priorities for plan preparation.	This Open Space Strategy and PPG17 Assessment will provide a key evidence base for many of the documents outlined within the LDS.
Local Development Framework – Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper	<p>The Core Strategy Issues and Options paper identifies the key issues that need to be addressed in the future development of Bexley. The relevant key objectives and issues of the strategy are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promote development that assists the regeneration of the Borough and improves the quality of life</li> <li>• take account of the impacts of climate change</li> <li>• protect and improve the natural environment</li> <li>• make Bexley a healthier place</li> <li>• encourage the creation of sustainable communities</li> <li>• maintain and develop leisure and entertainment facilities</li> <li>• sustain and enhance vibrant and visible town centres</li> <li>• protect the Borough's open space.</li> </ul> <p>The key challenges are:</p>	<p>The study will guide the future direction of open space in London Borough of Bexley and contribute to the development of policies.</p> <p>The study will ensure open space has a key role in the regeneration of the Borough.</p> <p>The study will protect and enhance the natural environment.</p> <p>The correct provision of high quality open space, sport and recreation facilities will promote a healthy lifestyle.</p> <p>The study will aim to protect the Borough's open space.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• relevant working to minimise climate change</li> <li>• strengthening and revitalising town centres</li> <li>• improving poor public transport and promoting sustainable transport</li> <li>• improving equality of access to services and opportunities.</li> </ul>	
<p>Bexley Sustainable Design and Construction Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (adopted October 2007)</p>	<p>Chapter three of the SPD ensures access to and the protection of the natural environment.</p> <p>Guidance five of the SPD states the design of new developments should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improve access to open space</li> <li>• improve linkages between open space and the wider public realm</li> <li>• ensure that open space can be used and owned by the community</li> <li>• ensure convenient and enjoyable access to nature</li> </ul> <p>Guidance six states residential developments should make a contribution for open space, amenity space and children’s play space.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the safety of open spaces should be increased by using design that addresses safety, anti-social behaviour and reduces the fear of crime.</li> </ul> <p>Guidance six states where new developments occur in areas of deficiency, new open space should be created or improvements made to existing open space.</p> <p>Guidance seven covers biodiversity and states at all new developments the Design for Biodiversity sequential tests should be applied to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• retain, enhance or create features of nature conservation value and avoid harm</li> <li>• mitigate for impacts to features of nature conservation value</li> <li>• compensation for the loss of features of nature conservation value.</li> </ul>	<p>The Open Space Strategy and PPG17 Assessment will consider necessary improvements in access to all open space in the Borough.</p> <p>The importance of linking open space as a way of improving accessibility will be recognised within the study.</p> <p>The quality assessment of open spaces will identify poor quality sites that are in need of enhancement. The Council can use this information to gain developer contributions to the improvement of existing open space in the Borough.</p> <p>The study recognises the importance of biodiversity and will seek to encourage the protection, enhancement and creation of areas of nature conservation.</p>

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Design for Living – Bexley’s Residential Design Guide SPD (2006)	<p>The SPD has a number of relevant aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• connecting places – making sure new residential developments integrate into the existing network</li> <li>• creating mixed use – providing a range of services alongside housing eg open space</li> <li>• achieving appropriate density</li> <li>• respecting the environment – new developments should be built in a sustainable way</li> <li>• good design and innovation – the style of new developments should create an imaginative and robust streetscape and space for residents to enjoy</li> <li>• amenity space – the provision of outdoor amenity space is important in achieving a successful and attractive environment</li> <li>• communal amenity space – the provision of communal amenity space is an integral part of new residential development</li> <li>• a safe environment – streets should feel safe and pleasant to be in.</li> </ul>	<p>The study will facilitate a strategic approach to the future development of open space in the Borough.</p> <p>The provision of amenity green space is particularly important in areas where there is a lack of open space.</p> <p>The study will identify areas deficient in amenity green space and provide evidence of the need for new amenity green space, helping the Council to make informed decisions.</p>
Planning Obligations Guidance Supplementary Planning Document.	<p>This SPD provides a formulaic approach to capture various planning obligations to offset negative impacts caused by development growth to contribute towards the provision of local infrastructure, services and facilities.</p> <p>Public realm and access improvements are included as part of Annex B – transport. Annex F – open space, sports and leisure facilities captures contributions for open space and children’s play areas. This document is supported by work programmes across the Council that will be subject to annual review and reported to Planning Control Committee.</p> <p>The SPD supports Circular 05/05 Planning Obligations and saved policies in the Unitary Development Plan (UDP).</p>	<p>This SPD provides clarity for planning obligations and aims to secure the provision of a range of parks and open spaces distributed so as to maximise accessibility for residents and provide the range of benefits they seek.</p> <p>Contributions will be required towards the provision of new, or enlargement or improvement, leisure facilities and services in the Borough.</p>
Statement of Community Involvement (2006)	<p>The Statement of Community Involvement provides information on how to get involved in the development of Local Development Documents and sets out the key stakeholders for London Borough of Bexley.</p>	<p>Consultation will be undertaken with key stakeholders detailed in the Statement of Community Involvement.</p>

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<p>Erith Area Action Plan Issues and Options Paper (2007)</p>	<p>The action plan focuses on the actions required to ensure that change or conservation are achieved in line with the draft Core Strategy. The document considers each key spatial objective from the draft Core Strategy and its relevance to Erith.</p> <p>The vision for Erith is “ <i>A revitalised riverside town that has a strong focal point, a complementary mix of uses and built form, high quality buildings and public space and improved links in and between the town centre, the riverside and railway station. It will act as a focus for housing, employment and leisure.</i>”</p> <p>The key challenges for Erith of relevance to this study are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accommodate housing growth and ensure local facilities and services are provided</li> <li>• address climate change and renewable energy</li> <li>• ensure regeneration and growth progresses</li> <li>• ensure the full potential of the River Thames is secured</li> <li>• successfully integrate family housing into higher density development and provide appropriate open space</li> <li>• ensure the transport network is sustainable and able to deal with growth in the area.</li> </ul> <p>The action plan has 20 issues. The first 11 issues relate to the key challenges Erith faces. The remaining issues of particular importance to this study are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the provision of green open spaces</li> <li>• developing public spaces in Erith town centre</li> <li>• setting the priorities for transport infrastructure improvement</li> <li>• a number of issues and options for identified sites are set out in the plan.</li> </ul>	<p>The provision of high quality open space can contribute to achieving the vision for Erith.</p> <p>This study will provide an understanding of existing provision and local aspirations.</p> <p>Sustainable transport links, such as cycle routes, will be promoted in the study.</p> <p>The study will provide a tool for calculating developer contributions.</p>
<p>Bexley Annual Monitoring Report (2007/08)</p>	<p>Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) makes up 12% of the Borough’s land coverage. No inappropriate development on MOL approved during 2007/08 (UDP target &lt;5%). Open spaces maintained to Green Flag standard make up 47% of publicly-accessible open space in Bexley.</p>	<p>The study will guide the Council in providing sufficient open space within housing developments.</p>

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<p>Bexley Parks Strategy (1999)</p>	<p>The aims for parks and open spaces are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• plan develop and promote diverse and balanced leisure use</li> <li>• achieve best use and maximum benefit for park and open space users within resources available</li> <li>• take account of the sustainable needs of the environment and wider community.</li> </ul> <p>Public consultation identified a number of issues. The parks strategy has a clear commitment to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• keeping heritage landscapes</li> <li>• sports provision</li> <li>• open consultation about development and change</li> <li>• wildlife protection</li> <li>• community involvement in planning and managing our parks and open spaces</li> <li>• dealing with issues such as litter, dog fouling and vandalism</li> <li>• improving attractions, visitor events and information.</li> </ul> <p>The eight key aims of the parks strategy are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improve the quality of parks</li> <li>• increase and broaden the community use of parks</li> <li>• encourage community involvement in planning and managing parks</li> <li>• understand and respond to the present day user requirements of parks</li> <li>• understand and respond to issues of public safety and community concern that relate to parks</li> <li>• significantly increase public awareness of the value of parks</li> <li>• conserve and enhance the natural environment and ecological balance in parks</li> <li>• maximise support for parks development and maintenance through external funding opportunities and ensure that new resources are directed to benefit users of parks.</li> </ul>	<p>Evidence contained within this document will inform a review and update of the existing parks strategy.</p> <p>Consultation undertaken as part of this study will identify local needs and help achieve maximum benefit for current and potential open space users from the parks stock.</p> <p>Local consultation will ensure community involvement in the development and change and planning and management of open spaces in the Borough.</p> <p>Assessments of quality, quantity and access will target improvements in areas where they are most needed.</p>

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Bexley Parks Survey (1998)	<p>The Bexley parks survey assessed public opinion on existing parks in Bexley. Key findings included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 95% of respondents visit parks and open spaces in Bexley</li> <li>• the most frequently used sites were Danson Park (31%) and Hall Place (29%)</li> <li>• of those who do not visit parks (5%) the main reasons were lack of transport and parks being too far away</li> <li>• 49% use the car or motorcycle and 48% walk to parks</li> <li>• the most popular reasons for visiting parks and open spaces in Bexley were walking (45%), relaxation (43%) and children’s play (30%)</li> <li>• 22% of respondents visit parks once a week and 20% over three times a week</li> <li>• 84% of respondents feel safe at parks. Of those who do not the main reasons are a lack of park staff (65%) and fear of crime (42%)</li> <li>• the essential features for a park are grassy open space (79%), toilets (73%) and seating (64%)</li> <li>• high satisfaction was shown with the provision of open grass, ornamental planting and access for families at parks</li> <li>• the lowest levels of satisfaction were shown with the provision of toilets, on site supervision and cleanliness of toilets.</li> </ul>	<p>The findings of the Bexley Parks Survey will be considered when setting standards and making recommendations. The findings of consultations undertaken as part of this study will provide an updated assessment of local need.</p>
Children and Youth Play Policy and Strategy (1997)	<p>The vision of the strategy is “ <i>every child has an equal right to play in a safe and stimulating environment through a range of good quality formal and informal play opportunities</i>”.</p> <p>The key priorities for the Borough are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• challenge current provision</li> <li>• raise the profile of play</li> <li>• increase funding opportunities</li> <li>• reduce duplication of services</li> <li>• promote a more co-ordinated approach to the provision of services</li> <li>• enable a more strategic approach to the provision of play in the Borough</li> <li>• contribute to enhancing protective factors and reducing risk factors</li> </ul>	<p>The study will support the development of young people by targeting the correct provision of high quality, accessible facilities.</p> <p>The findings of the study are based on an assessment of local need which included specific consultation with young people and children. The study will therefore ensure that a service is provided that is inclusive and responsive to local need.</p> <p>The local quantity standard will challenge current play provision and the audit will provide an overview</p>



## SECTION 3 – STRATEGIC CONTEXT

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	<p>associated with social exclusion.</p> <p>The primary aim of the play policy is to increase the quantity and enhance the quality of play opportunities in Bexley.</p> <p>The objectives of the play policy of relevance to this study are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• raise the awareness of the importance of play</li> <li>• ensure the involvement of children and young people in the design and delivery of the play strategy</li> <li>• provide a service that is inclusive and responsive to local needs</li> <li>• promote good quality play services</li> <li>• foster the child's well being, healthy growth and development.</li> </ul> <p>The play strategy supports the development of play for all children and young people. Recommendations for action of the strategy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strategic development of service</li> <li>• children and young people's participation</li> <li>• access to quality play</li> <li>• freedom to play and play for its own sake.</li> </ul>	<p>to promote a more strategic and co-ordinated approach to provision for young people. Good quality play facilities will be promoted through the local quality standard.</p> <p>The provision of open space provides opportunities for social interaction, therefore reducing social exclusion.</p>
<p>Developing Communities through Sport - A Sports Strategy for the London Borough of Bexley 2003 - 2008</p>	<p>The strategy sets out a strategic framework for sport across the Borough.</p> <p>The vision for sport in Bexley is to achieve an improved quality of life for everyone in the Borough, specifically:</p> <p><i>"Bexley Council will seek to maximise the range and quality of sports activities available to provide safe, enjoyable and accessible sporting opportunities for all residents and visitors to Bexley. The Council aims to develop, in partnership with other sports providers, a sustainable and cost effective range of activities and events that combine to provide for the needs of the local community."</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a primary aim of the strategy is to support equal access, providing accessible and affordable facilities and services that will increase participation in sport.</li> </ul>	<p>The study will identify areas deficient in the provision of sports facilities and ensure residents have access to the correct range of high quality indoor and outdoor sports facilities.</p> <p>By improving the quantity, quality and accessibility of sports facilities, the study can contribute to raising participation levels in the Borough.</p> <p>The application of the local standards will identify areas deficient in the provision of sports facilities and ensure a strategic planning process for the future provision of this typology.</p>

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	<p>The Sports Strategy has five key policy statements for sport:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strategic planning of sports facilities</li> <li>• sports development</li> <li>• target groups – promoting equality of access</li> <li>• community development – to use projects to support the Council's key policy objectives</li> <li>• voluntary sports clubs – developing partnerships and extended networks.</li> </ul>	<p>The correct provision of sports facilities will promote sports development. The study will also identify where community use of school pitches is required and provide information to residents on the location of sports facilities within the Borough.</p>
<p>Let's Get Moving! Increasing Physical Activity in Bexley A Joint Strategy (2004)</p>	<p>The strategy has been developed in partnership with Bexley Care Trust to provide opportunities and encourage people in Bexley to become more physically active. The objectives of the strategy are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increase awareness of the benefits of physical activity</li> <li>• reduce barriers to participation in physical activity</li> <li>• provide accessible and equitably distributed resources and facilities for physical activity</li> <li>• produce up to date information on safe and appropriate levels of physical activity</li> <li>• raise awareness of the importance of infrastructure changes.</li> </ul>	<p>By identifying deficiencies in the provision of sports facilities in the Borough and encouraging the provision in these areas, the study can facilitate local residents participation.</p> <p>Local consultation will identify the main barriers to participation in physical activity.</p> <p>Accessibility mapping will illustrate the distribution of open space, sport and recreation facilities in the Borough.</p> <p>Recommendations for improving the distribution and therefore access to facilities will be made.</p>
<p>Bexley Playing Pitch Strategy</p>	<p>The key findings of the strategy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there are sufficient pitches to meet demand, with the exception of rugby</li> <li>• there is a high level of demand for pitches and this needs to be monitored on a season by season basis</li> <li>• the high level of demand requires the need for an ongoing robust maintenance program</li> <li>• the poor quality of ancillary facilities has an impact on usage and sports development.</li> </ul> <p>The three key objectives of the strategy are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sustain and improve existing playing pitch provision</li> </ul>	<p>The findings of this strategy have been used to inform the development of this open space, sport and recreation assessment and the subsequent local standards.</p> <p>Updated consultation findings have been used to inform local standards and to guide the future delivery of pitches.</p> <p>The study will provide an update for the Playing Pitch Strategy, recalculating the supply and demand of playing pitches in the Borough.</p> <p>The study will protect and enhance the current provision of sports facilities in the Borough and</p>

## SECTION 3 – STRATEGIC CONTEXT

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• monitor usage levels to enable identification of changes in demand</li> <li>• release underused facilities or develop new sites as required.</li> </ul>	identify changes in demand from the Playing Pitch Strategy.
Sports Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (2006)	<p>The strategy aims to address issues raised by ethnic minority groups across Bexley. The vision of the strategy is split into three areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• participation – to increase participation in sport and physical activity across all ethnic minority groups</li> <li>• awareness – to promote awareness of sport and physical activity through the media and different languages</li> <li>• equity - to be committed to the equity principles described in Sport England Policy.</li> </ul> <p>The vision of the strategy will be achieved through facilities, cost/funding, time and manpower, distribution of information and language.</p>	The study will facilitate an increase in participation by providing high quality, locally accessible open space and sports facilities for all communities and provide an overview of local need.
Bexley Health Inequalities Strategy (2005)	<p>The overall aim of the strategy is “<i>to reduce inequalities in health in Bexley using targeted evidence-based interventions to improve health</i>”.</p> <p>The objectives of the strategy of relevance to this study are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify and assist in the coordination of interventions to improve health and reduce health inequalities</li> <li>• promote the commitment to reducing health inequalities amongst organisations and communities.</li> </ul>	Improving access to high quality open space can contribute to reducing health inequalities by providing residents with improved opportunities to participate in physical activity.
Bexley Biodiversity Action Plan (2002)	<p>The action plan focuses on the conservation of biodiversity in Bexley.</p> <p>The plan builds upon the UDP and Local Agenda 21 to improve the quality of life in Bexley.</p> <p>The plan supports the Council’s six key aims and has a number of habitat action plans relating to open spaces included within this document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• allotments – the aims of the plan are to make Bexley’s allotments sustainable, increase the uptake of allotments and encourage the keeping of biodiversity records</li> <li>• parks and open spaces – the plan aims to encourage the public to get involved in their local park, encourage a greater diversity and abundance</li> </ul>	The study will provide evidence for the conservation, enhancement and protection of biodiversity.

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	<p>of flora and fauna within parks and to provide local people and schools with regular contact with nature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• school playing fields – the plan has three key aims with regards school playing fields, specifically to increase the number of schools actively managing their school grounds to encourage biodiversity, to increase the number of schools surveying biodiversity within their grounds and to increase the number of Bexley schools achieving ECO School status.</li> <li>• woodland – to protect existing woodland and increase the amount of woodland in the borough, and to protect and increase the biodiversity in this woodland.</li> </ul>	
Bexley Trees and Woodland Strategy (1997)	<p>The strategy provides a framework for the maintenance and enhancement of trees in Bexley. The objectives of the strategy are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide for and encourage the sustainable management of trees and woodland in the Borough</li> <li>• manage the existing provision through best practice for the objectives of nature conservation, landscape and environmental benefits</li> <li>• promote a greater interest, awareness and enjoyment of trees and woodland by the public</li> <li>• promote the economic and amenity value of trees and woodland in the Borough</li> <li>• provide or encourage the expansion of tree cover in the Borough</li> <li>• protect trees and woodland that provide amenity, landscape, nature conservation or historical value.</li> </ul>	Effective provision of trees can contribute to the landscape of the area in addition to contributing towards climate change.
Managing the Marshes Vision and Strategy Summary Report (2006)	<p>The aims of the strategy are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• outline a 10 year vision and strategic plan</li> <li>• prepare framework plans for Erith and Crayford/Dartford Marshes</li> <li>• inform the next phases of implementation.</li> </ul> <p>The three core values of the Marshes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Marshes should be a place for biodiversity to flourish</li> <li>• the Marshes should contribute to the area's prosperity in terms of</li> </ul>	The Marshes play a key role in the provision of open space for recreation and biodiversity purposes. This study will support the aims and objectives of the marshes management programme, furthermore, the marshes will benefit residents in Bexley in line with the priorities of this study.

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	<p>economy as well as people's health and wellbeing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the Marshes should be a place for existing communities and future generations to use.</li> </ul> <p>There are eight visionary objectives of the strategy, those of importance to this study are that the Marshes can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>be a place where communities feel linked</li> <li>be provide and protect a setting for economic and community growth</li> <li>be a place where natural and cultural heritage is protected</li> <li>deliver high quality design standards with environmental focus.</li> </ul>	
<p>The River Cray Environmental Regeneration Programme 2004 – 2006</p>	<p>The programme will contribute to the wider regeneration of the Thames Gateway. The vision of the programme is <i>"for a river corridor which is ecologically rich, well managed and an attractive area for people to visit and enjoy. The connection of urban areas with greenspace will provide an accessible, safe place which is understood and valued by local communities"</i>.</p> <p>The six key objectives of the strategy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>biodiversity</li> <li>access</li> <li>flood alleviation</li> <li>education</li> <li>enviro-crime</li> <li>community participation.</li> </ul> <p>A number of challenges were identified as part of implementing the programme including poor access, anti social behaviour and safety issues. The regeneration programme has an action plan to implement the six objectives of the strategy.</p>	<p>Green corridors are included within the study. Their importance in linking urban areas and open space and increasing accessibility is acknowledged within the study.</p> <p>Enhanced access to green corridors will facilitate links between open spaces and urban areas; improving the open space network across the Borough. The objectives of the River Cray are central to the objectives of this study.</p>
<p>Bexley Regeneration Framework 2007 – 2016</p>	<p>Bexley's location at the heart of the Thames Gateway, Europe's largest regeneration initiative, is helping secure significant new investment in housing, jobs, community infrastructure and the environment. This is changing people's lives and contributing to thriving, cohesive and balanced communities.</p>	<p>The strategy acknowledges that Bexley has a major role to play in delivering the Parklands agenda and has already undertaken significant preparatory work as part of the East London Green Grid.</p> <p>Several priority projects cross referenced to the</p>

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	<p>The regeneration priorities for Bexley are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• secure new public transport links</li> <li>• promote desirable housing for mixed communities</li> <li>• develop quality community infrastructure</li> <li>• improve local skills levels</li> <li>• encourage high value jobs</li> <li>• enhance Green Space</li> <li>• ensure effective project delivery.</li> </ul> <p>The geographical focus is on Erith, Crayford, Thamesmead, Belvedere Employment Area and Slade Green.</p>	<p>Bexley, River Cray and Southern Marshes Green Grid sub-area framework are highlighted as priority projects;</p> <p>Erith Marshes, Lesnes Abbey Visitor centre, Erith Saltings, Darent cycle and pedestrian bridge, the river Cray, and the river Shuttle.</p> <p>Green corridors can play a role in ensuring Bexley is better connected with the Thames Gateway.</p> <p>The provision of open space, particularly sports facilities can contribute to regeneration.</p> <p>Open spaces can contribute to social and community regeneration by encouraging community involvement, increasing community safety and promoting social inclusion.</p> <p>Locally accessible open space, particularly in areas of deprivation, can help tackle health inequalities.</p>
<p>Bexley Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2018 (June 2008)</p>	<p>Bexley's Local Strategic Partnership, <i>the Partnership for Bexley</i>, adopted the Sustainable Community Strategy, <i>Bexley Together</i>.</p> <p>This outlines the long term vision to build a strong, sustainable and cohesive community to enable everyone within the Borough to enjoy a better quality of life, now and in the future</p>	<p>The provision of high quality, accessible open space can help Bexley achieve its vision.</p> <p>By improving opportunities for physical activity, the study can encourage individual well being and development.</p> <p>Open space is an important feature of a safe, secure and attractive environment.</p>
<p>Bexley Local Area Agreement 2008 – 2011 (April 2008)</p>	<p>The Sustainable Community Strategy builds on the four building blocks of the Local Area Agreement (LAA) and plans to develop strong, sustainable and cohesive community through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- building safer and stronger communities;</li> <li>- developing healthier communities for adults – including vulnerable adults and older people;</li> <li>- developing services for children and young people; and</li> </ul>	<p>Local consultation will identify priorities for improvement in the Borough and contribute to the achievement of the targets within the LAA.</p> <p>The borough is seeking to include, as one of the 35 Local Area Agreement targets NI8 "Adult participation in sport", in order to raise participation levels. The provision of an appropriate level and</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- promoting economic development and the environment.</li> </ul>	<p>standard of indoor and outdoor sports facilities will help the Council meet this target.</p> <p>This Local Area Agreement sets out a range of indicators to measure our success in achieving the objectives set out in our Sustainable Community Strategy and open spaces will play a key role.</p>
<p>Cultural Strategy 2003 - 2008</p>	<p>The strategy promotes a strategic approach to culture. The aims of the strategy are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• maximise the impact of contribution and culture</li> <li>• maintain and develop the culture infrastructure</li> <li>• promote the culture of Bexley.</li> </ul> <p>For each aim the Council has identified key priorities. The key priorities for maximizing the impact of contribution and culture are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promoting education for life</li> <li>• improving health and well being</li> <li>• extending opportunity</li> <li>• making the community safer</li> <li>• caring for the environment.</li> </ul> <p>To achieve the above priorities, the Council needs to improve the quality and maintenance of facilities, increase awareness and opportunities, improve access and increase participation.</p> <p>The key priorities for maintaining and developing the cultural infrastructure are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• supporting the voluntary sector</li> <li>• social inclusion.</li> </ul> <p>The key priorities for promoting the culture of Bexley of relevance to this study are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• encouraging excellence</li> <li>• celebrating diversity.</li> </ul>	<p>This study can contribute to the achievement of the targets set out in the Cultural Strategy.</p> <p>A range of skills and attributes can be developed through sport and therefore by providing sufficient open space and sports facilities, lifelong learning can be promoted.</p> <p>Providing locally accessible open space can increase opportunities for physical activity, thus contributing to the improvement of the health and wellbeing of residents.</p> <p>The provision of sport and young people's facilities can keep young people engaged and provide a challenge and sense of purpose. This can keep young people away from crime and make the community safer.</p> <p>The study will facilitate the enhancement of the quality of open space in the Borough through the application of the quality standard, increase awareness and opportunities through local consultation and promote improvements to the accessibility of open space.</p>

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<p>East London Green Grid (ELGG) Area 5 Framework - Bexley, River Cray and Southern Marshes. (2006)</p>	<p>The area framework builds upon the ELGG Framework Supplementary Planning Guidance with the vision to strengthen green links including those to the South London Green Chain and to Dartford and North Kent.</p> <p>The strategic objectives of the area framework of relevance to this study are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enhance Green Infrastructure</li> <li>• support regeneration</li> <li>• reduce flood risk</li> <li>• enhance biodiversity</li> <li>• provide for recreation and leisure.</li> <li>• engage communities</li> <li>• reduce open space deficiency</li> <li>• integrate with relevant strategies</li> <li>• develop a vision for the inner Thames marshes conservation park.</li> </ul>	<p>This study is an integral component of the ELGG and will facilitate the delivery of some of the targets within the plan. It provides an overview of existing open spaces and green corridors in Bexley. The vision is for a quality environment made up of a green grid infrastructure that is cohesive, comprising a wide variety of open spaces, well connected by attractive green corridors. The Green Grid will support regeneration, reduce flood risk and enhance biodiversity. It will provide opportunities for recreation, leisure and education and will exploit heritage features to provide a sense of identity and focus for community pride</p>
<p>Bexley Council Transport Implementation Plan – Cycling Strategy (2004)</p>	<p>The strategy aims to increase the use of bicycles for all journeys. A target of the strategy is to quadruple the number of trips made by bicycle by 2012.</p> <p>The Council will seek to provide for and promote cycling in development proposals by requiring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the provision of safe and attractive cycle routes both within major developments and linking to existing or planned cycle networks</li> <li>• the provision of convenient and secure cycle parking</li> <li>• the Council will encourage the use of cycling and support the creation of a strategic cycle network in London.</li> </ul>	<p>The study will promote accessible green space and encourage the use of sustainable transport.</p> <p>The study will highlight where linkages between open spaces (including cycle routes) could be beneficial.</p>



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Bexley's Climate Change Strategy 2008	<p>The strategy indicates that the change in the climate will affect many aspects of life for people living and working in Bexley. Key issues that may result include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• heat stroke and damage to the natural environment and buildings.</li> <li>• flooding from increased rainfall and flash storms due to the proximity of the Thames.</li> </ul> <p>The strategy focuses on eight key areas which includes the management of natural habitats and planting. While parks and open spaces will be at significant risk from flood risk, they will also be key to the mitigation of climate change. Key actions relating to open spaces include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• protect and create green spaces and corridors between them</li> <li>• seek to increase tree cover</li> <li>• use sustainable urban drainage to provide habitats for wildlife</li> </ul>	While parks and open spaces will be at significant risk from flooding, they will also be key to the mitigation of climate change. The implementation of the priorities of this assessment can therefore help the Council to mitigate the impact of climate change.
Bexley's Traffic and Transport Implementation Plan (2005 – 2011)	<p>The traffic and transport plan promotes eight key objectives. Those of specific relevance to this open space assessment include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improving accessibility and social inclusion on the transport network</li> <li>• encouraging walking by improving the street environment, conditions for pedestrians and through the use of travel demand measures</li> <li>• encouraging cycling by improving the street environment, conditions for cyclists and through the use of travel demand measures</li> <li>• bringing transport infrastructure to a state of good repair</li> </ul>	Improvements to the green infrastructure advocated in this strategy will support the achievement of these key objectives.

### Summary and conclusions

- 3.6 The provision of open spaces, sport and recreation facilities contributes to the achievement of wider governmental objectives such as social and community cohesion, urban renaissance and promoting a healthy and enjoyable life.
- 3.7 Many organisations are willing to work in partnership together to manage and develop existing open spaces and share similar aims and objectives, for example, protecting, enhancing and maximising usage and nature conservation value of open spaces.
- 3.8 Points emerging from the strategic review that are integral to the development of this open space assessment in the London Borough of Bexley include:
- increasing participation in sport and active recreation is a key component of national policies. This is highlighted through the regional delivery plan and is also a focal point of the Sustainable Community Strategy, Corporate Strategy and Health Inequalities Strategy. This assessment will enable future priorities to achieve this objective
  - improvements to the perception of the safety and quality of open spaces will ensure that the community continue to value the spaces provided and that they contribute positively to the culture of the London Borough of Bexley as a whole. This study will guide future improvements and ensure that open space sites effectively meet local need
  - increasing access to local open space, sport and recreation sites is inherent in the achievement of the objectives of the local transport plan where there is a focus on increasing walking and cycling. Increased access will also ensure that residents are able to lead healthier lifestyles. This study will provide a detailed insight into areas outside of acceptable distance thresholds to different open spaces
  - the importance of green space in the urban environment is recognised, with many strategies highlighting the impact that an effective open space can have on health, recreation, landscape and the environment. The opportunities that open space can bring are recognised.
- 3.9 In summary, this review of strategic documents highlights the regional and local importance of open space within Bexley and how the delivery of open space, sport and recreation facilities can meet wider aims and objectives. This local needs study and resulting strategy will also contribute to the delivery of aims and objectives of national and regional agencies and will aid the regeneration process across the Borough.
- 3.10 The context of specific local documents, policies and strategies will be highlighted within the individual typology sections where the relevant policies apply.