

Section A: Current Situation

A. 1 Policy Context

National, regional and local policies provide the policy and planning context for the development and realisation of a management plan for Vauxhall Park, Lambeth. This section identifies the principal strategies and policies that potentially impact on the management plan and outlines their relevant aims and objectives. It also states how the management plan will contribute to and support the delivery of these objectives.

A.1.1 National

The quality, use and management of public open space, particularly parks, have been the subject of concern, research, policy development and guidance in recent years. The following documents set the national context. These are:

- The report of the Urban Green Spaces Task Force, 'Green Spaces, Better Places' (May 2002)
- Living Spaces – Cleaner, Safer, Greener, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM October 2002)
- Planning Policy Guidance 17 – Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation 2002
- Planning Policy Statement 9 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation 2005
- Public Service Agreement, number 8: Liveability (June 2005)

In addition to these specific policies the governments cross cutting agenda has produced a number of strategies with objectives that will be supported by the management plan for Vauxhall Park. These include:

- Tackling Health Inequalities: a programme for action 2003
- Every Child Matters: Change for Children – Department for Education and Skills (DfES)
- Education outside the Classroom Manifesto 2005

The findings of two recent reports are also relevant to the management plan

- State of English Cities report, ODPM March 2006
- Enhancing Urban Green Space, National Audit Office (NAO) March 2006

A new system for preparing development plans introduced by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 is resulting in on-going change at a regional and local level that will impact on Vauxhall Park during the life of the management plan. (See section A.1.3)

The report of the Urban Green Spaces Task Force, 'Green Spaces, Better Places'

The report begins by emphasising the diverse value of urban open spaces and their potential to make a major contribution to urban regeneration by enhancing the environment, facilitating social inclusion, contributing to healthy living and providing educational opportunities.

The Task Force recommends:

- The provision of high quality green spaces to meet the need of people in disadvantaged areas
- That green space planning should be put at the heart of urban regeneration,

They also express concern at declining standards of park maintenance arising from the loss of horticultural skills and the declining status of park staff.

They argue that realising the potential of urban parks and open spaces will require increased capital funding, more partnerships, better skilled staff, better planning and more government support.

Due to its location, Vauxhall Park is well placed to contribute to the regeneration of Vauxhall, and through this regeneration to access capital funding and make partnerships that enable improved quality for the diverse local community.

Living Spaces – Cleaner, Safer, Greener

The report identifies four challenges for those responsible for public spaces:

- Adopt a holistic approach
- End the process by which incremental decisions or lack of action lead to a decline in the quality of open spaces
- The importance of open space for disadvantaged neighbourhoods
- The need to respond to changing patterns of demography and development

Leadership, community involvement, quality and innovation and the effective communication of ideas are identified as the components for success.

Section 3 of the report deals specifically with parks and green spaces and a commitment to the establishment of a clearer national framework for urban parks and green spaces and to establish a new unit within the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) supported by the ODPM. The new unit, CABE Space, has been established and is dedicated to excellence in the planning, design, management and maintenance of parks and public space in England's towns and cities.

CABE Space is working with strategic partners – Groundwork, Greenspace¹, the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management - producing good practice client guides, developing and promoting tools and initiatives for assessing quality and setting standards such as the Green Flag Award and undertaking policy and research work.

The management plan recognises the challenges identified in the report as all present to a greater or lesser degree within the park, and seeks to address them through the management plan developed in accordance with CABE Space guidance.

¹ Greenspace, formerly the Urban Parks Forum established in 1999, became a charity in 2005. Greenspace provides information and assistance for the improvement of all parks and green spaces.

Planning Policy Guidance 17 – Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation

The note emphasises that open spaces underpin people's quality of life and are particularly important in assisting urban renaissance, promoting social inclusion and contributing to health and well being.

Planning Policy Guidance (PPG)17 provides guidance to local planning authorities on the sort of planning policies that will be appropriate to protect existing open spaces and ensure provision of high quality spaces. It states that:

' Open spaceswhich are of high quality, or of particular value to a local community, should be recognised and given protection by local authorities through appropriate policies in plans'

The guidance note suggests that local authorities should seek opportunities to improve the quality and value of local facilities through, for example, the use of planning agreements.

PPG 17 provides guidance that has contributed to Lambeth's Open Space Strategy. The suggested use of planning agreements as providing opportunities for improvement has been taken up at Vauxhall Park and is considered a potential source of funding for improvements outlined in the management plan.

Planning Policy Statement 9 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

This policy replaces PPG 9 on Nature Conservation, 1994. The statement includes the broad aim that planning, construction, development and regeneration should have minimal impacts on biodiversity and enhance it wherever possible.

In moving towards this vision, it states the Government's three main objectives for planning as:

- **to promote sustainable development** by ensuring that biological and geological diversity are conserved and enhanced as an integral part of social, environmental and economic development, so that policies and decisions about the development and use of land integrate biodiversity and geological diversity with other considerations.
- **to conserve, enhance and restore the diversity of England's wildlife and geology** by sustaining, and where possible improving, the quality and extent of natural habitat and geological and geomorphological sites; the natural physical processes on which they depend; and the populations of naturally occurring species which they support.
- **to contribute to rural renewal and urban renaissance by:**
 - enhancing biodiversity in green spaces and among developments so that they are used by wildlife and valued by people, recognising that healthy functional ecosystems can contribute to a better quality of life and to people's sense of well-being; and
 - ensuring that developments take account of the role and value of biodiversity in supporting economic diversification and contributing to a high quality environment.

Although Vauxhall Park is relatively small, the management plan can enable change that provides opportunities for increasing and enhancing biodiversity, thereby supporting PPS 9.

Public Service Agreement, number 8: Liveability

The target of PSA 8 is to “Lead the delivery of cleaner, safer and greener public spaces and improvement of the quality of the built environment in deprived areas and across the country, with measurable improvement by 2008.”

“ODPM is responsible for delivering this PSA target, working with other Government departments, Government Offices in the Regions, and local authorities throughout England.

This PSA target (ODPM PSA8) addresses ODPM's contribution to the Government's wider strategy on 'liveability' - improving the quality and safety of public spaces and local environments, and people's enjoyment of them. Through the indicators detailed below, this PSA target covers the following priorities across England:

- *Creating attractive and welcoming parks play areas and public spaces;*
- *Improving the physical fabric and infrastructure of streetscapes;*
- *making places cleaner and maintaining them better; and*
- *improving people's perception of the quality of their local environment.*

Although specific targets identified in PSA 8 are for local authority areas rather than for individual green spaces, the priorities identified will be supported by the management plan through use of Green Flag assessment criteria to identify and target areas for improvement.

Other strategies with objectives that will be supported by the management plan for Vauxhall Park.

Tackling Health Inequalities: a programme for action

The report identifies actions that are likely to have the greatest long term impact on people's health and outlines a programme based around 4 themes. Two of these themes have particular relevance Vauxhall Park. They are:

- Supporting families, mother and children
- Engaging communities and individuals

In delivering change the report identifies what local bodies can do. In supporting families mothers and children this includes:

'Local authorities can provide and fund pedestrian safety and cycle training for children'

In engaging communities and individuals this includes:

'Local authorities can work in partnership with local communities to improve green space so that they can be used for exercise and provide children's play areas'

The management plan can seek to support families by sustaining the One O' Clock Club and through consultation and working with the FOVP improve the park and increase opportunities for play and exercise.

Every Child Matters: Change for Children

Every Child Matters: Change for Children is a new approach to the well-being of children and young people from birth to age 19.

The Government's aim is for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances, to have the support they need to:

*Be healthy
Stay safe
Enjoy and achieve
Make a positive contribution
Achieve economic well-being*

The management plan can support these aims through encouraging children's use of the park by improving and providing new facilities, increasing safety, providing a sense of welcome and valuing the contribution of children to the life of the park.

Education outside the Classroom Manifesto

In January 2005, recognising the importance and value of learning outside the classroom to children and young people, the Education and Skills Select Committee recommended the publication of a Manifesto for Education Outside the Classroom.

The draft vision statement reads:

"We believe every child and young person should experience the world outside the classroom as an integral part of their learning and development, complementing learning in the classroom. High quality education outside the classroom can stimulate and inspire; foster independence; aid personal and social development; and can often motivate reluctant learners. These experiences should be stimulating, safely managed and enjoyable, and contribute to meeting the needs of every child."

Consultation regarding the manifesto concluded on February 14th 2006.

Management plan proposals can encourage use of the park as an outside classroom for local schools.

Other recent reports of relevance to the management plan

State of English Cities

The findings of this report demonstrate the value of investing in and improving parks, and their contribution to the liveability and attractiveness of cities. They provide justification and encouragement for Lambeth and the FOVP in their aspirations for Vauxhall Park to be expressed through the management plan.

Enhancing Urban Green Space

The report looks at why green space is important, improving quality, value for money and targeting of resources. It provides a number of recommendations summarised as follows:

1. *Quality targets need to be better focused to drive up performance where it is needed and to be owned more locally*
2. *More needs to be done to improve the status and skills of green space managers*
3. *More practical help needs to be provided to enhance community engagement in green space projects*
4. *More needs to be done to identify the most efficient and effective ways of sustaining urban green space*
5. *planning for urban green space needs to be strengthened*

The full summary of report recommendations are included in Appendix 2. These identify responsibility for action at a strategic level by ODPM, CABE Space, Local Authorities and others.

The report and its recommendations direct attention to strategic decision making at departmental and executive level of local authorities, which will influence open space strategies. The report findings provide context for the management plan and may result in development of the plan during future reviews.

A1.2 Regional

Two documents, the London Plan 2004 and the Greater London Authority Guide to preparing Open Space Strategies – Best Practice Guide 2004 have provided guidance for Lambeth's Open Space Strategy. In addition to these the following documents provide particular guidance.

- Mayor's Biodiversity Strategy 2002
- A Tree and Woodland Framework for London 2005

Mayor's Biodiversity Strategy 2002

The Mayor's Biodiversity Strategy aims to to protect and enhance the natural habitats of London together with their variety of species. It sets out 14 policies, and 72 proposals for their implementation, and identifies four priority areas:

- *Protection of biodiversity*
- *Positive measure to encourage biodiversity action, promoting the management, enhancement and creation of valuable green space*
- *Incorporating biodiversity into new development; and*
- *Access to nature and environmental education*

Positive measures to encourage biodiversity and provide access to nature and environmental education can be planned through the management plan.

A Tree and Woodland Framework for London

The overall goal of the Framework is to provide a strategic approach to trees and woodlands that delivers the Mayor's vision for London and the relevant Mayoral Strategies within the context of the England Forestry Strategy.

To achieve the Framework's general goals, four key aims have been identified that will act as a focus for the future:

A. To ensure trees and woodlands contribute to a high quality natural environment.

B. To help shape the built environment and new development in a way that strengthens the positive character and diversity of London.

C. Through people's contact with trees and woodlands to help foster community and individual people's well-being and social inclusion.

D. To support the capital's economy.'

The framework will provide guidance for a tree management strategy for Vauxhall Park that supports and develops objectives set out in the management plan.

A.1.3 Local

The local context for Vauxhall Park Management Plan is provided principally by the following documents:

- The Local Development Scheme (Dec 2005)
- The Revised Deposit Draft Unitary Development Plan (2004)
- The Parks and Green Spaces Strategic Plan (2002)
- The Best Value Review of the Parks Service (2001)
- Lambeth Open Space Strategy (2004)

Additional but more general context is provided by:

- Lambeth Community Strategy (2004) which makes no explicit reference to parks and open spaces but includes creating a cleaner and greener environment, safer communities, investing in children and young people and supporting healthy citizens among its six priorities
- Lambeth Sports Facilities Strategy (2002-2007) which identified the need to provide local sporting opportunities
- The Lambeth Sport and Recreation Strategy (2003-2008) which acknowledged the potential role of parks and open spaces in improving opportunities for sport and recreation

The Local Development Scheme (Dec 2005)

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced a new system of preparing development plans known as Local Development Frameworks. As part of this new system all Local Planning Authorities have to prepare a Local Development Scheme (LDS), which sets out their programme for the preparation of planning documents over the coming three years.

Lambeth's LDS, which confirms the intention to complete the Unitary Development Plan under the terms of the new legislation, also confirms the intention to prepare a development framework for Vauxhall. The Secretary of State's decision in March 2005 to overturn the Inspector's decision and

recommendation, and approve a planning application for a 50-storey tower at Vauxhall has highlighted development pressures on the area. The LDS states that it is intended to commission a study which will help deal with proposals for tall buildings.

The development framework for Vauxhall and the proposed study of the development potential and scope for tall buildings are of considerable importance to managers and users of Vauxhall Park. The recommendations of these documents are likely to have a potentially significant impact on the park both in terms of increased use and investment.

London Borough of Lambeth Revised Deposit Draft Unitary Development Plan

In Lambeth proposals for the replacement of the existing Unitary Development Plan (UDP), adopted in 1998, were at an advanced stage when the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 came into effect. In such circumstances the Act allows for the completion of this process under the old provisions for the preparation of development plans. On adoption, planned for November 2006, the replacement UDP will become the statutory plan for Lambeth for a period of 3 years.

The overall aim of the plan is:

“To promote the sustainable development of Lambeth by making it a great place to live, visit and work, based on strong communities, better living conditions, equality and citizenship.”

The Lambeth UDP sets down 80 Strategic and Core Policies that will be used to determine planning applications. Those most relevant to Vauxhall Park are

- Policy 42 Conservation Areas
- Policy 45 Protection and Enhancement of Open Space and Sports Facilities
- Policy 46 Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment

The policies are included in full in Appendix 1.

Policy 42 Conservation Areas

The management plan will support and realise conservation policy through its approach to park management, enhancement and the delivery of improvements. Conservation Area Consent will be required for changes in the park.

Policy 45 Open Space and Sports Facilities

Production of the Vauxhall Park Management Plan supports components of policy for Open Space and Sports Facilities.

Policy 46 Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment

Measures to enhance biodiversity will form an integral part of the management plan and be a consideration in all proposed change.

The management plan for Vauxhall Park seeks to support and carry out this strategic plan at a local level enabling core objectives to be met, involving

local people, and developing a workplan that allows improvements and quality to be monitored.

The Parks and Green Spaces Strategic Plan

The Parks and Green Spaces Strategic Plan outlines a series of draft proposals that aim to set out a way forward to protect and improve green spaces. Its three main proposals are as follows:

- A vision for Lambeth's Parks and greenspaces that included the core objectives of safety, inclusion and quality
- To improve the consultative networks by increasing public participation in the decision making process and monitoring and measuring improvements
- Measuring performance using nationally recognised performance indicators and local performance measurements, developed through consultation with park users.

Proposals for the management of individual parks emphasise the need to recognise the variety of local needs and issues.

The management plan for Vauxhall Park seeks to support and carry out this strategic plan at a local level enabling core objectives to be met, involving local people and developing a workplan that allows improvements and quality to be monitored.

Best Value Review

Under obligations set down by the Government, Local Authorities have a duty to achieve 'best value' in the provision of public services. Best Value Reviews are conducted every 5 years, Lambeth's being completed in November 2001.

The goal is to achieve continuous improvements in service provision by:

- Challenging why and how a service is provided
- Comparing performance with other services in the benchmarking process
- Consulting with all relevant stakeholders
- Embracing competition wherever practicable to ensure service provision
- In addition, Lambeth has included collaboration with partners for greater effectiveness

The Audit Commission appraises the efforts of Local Authorities to achieve 'best value'. In January 2002 the Commission graded the parks service as a 'fair one star service' which 'will probably improve', because senior management staff understood the problems that required attention.

The management plan will seek to improve the process whereby 'best value' is delivered and to be part of that improvement.

Lambeth Open Space Strategy

The strategy has not been formally adopted by the Council. The strategy contains the following vision and recommendations:

'To develop the extent and enhance the quality of open space and increase biodiversity in Lambeth, in order to promote regeneration

and enhance the quality of the urban environment. To encourage its use by all sections of the community to achieve social inclusion, improve health and well being, and provide educational opportunities and enhance the quality of life of those who live, work and visit the Borough.'

Strategy recommendations include:

- Safeguarding existing open spaces
- Increasing the provision of open space
- Identifying opportunities to increase access to open spaces
- A phased programme of quality improvements
- Raise awareness of the value of public open space and sports facilities in Lambeth
- Encourage all members of the community to use public open space
- Encouraging policy makers to see open space planning as a key element in regeneration
- Maximise the effectiveness of capital and revenue expenditure
- Increasing the provision of sports facilities and participation in sport
- Maximising the potential of the database as a management tool

A number of these recommendations including identifying opportunities to increase access, a phased programme of quality improvements, raising awareness, encouraging use by all members of the community and maximising the effectiveness of spending will be supported and realised through the management plan.

A.2 Legal provisions and statutory obligations

The park is subject to the law of England, regulations, codes of practice and byelaws the most pertinent of which are:

- Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996
- Environment Protection Act 1990 containing the Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Lambeth Byelaws for pleasure grounds, public walks and open spaces 2005

Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996

This Act applies “to any land which is open to the air and to which the public are entitled or permitted to have access (with or without payment)” and “*A local authority may by order designate for the purposes of this Act any land in their area which is land to which this Act applies.*”

An offence is committed “*if a dog defecates at any time on designated land and a person who is in charge of the dog at that time fails to remove the faeces from the land forthwith*”

For committing the offence “*an authorised officer of a local authority..... may give that person a notice offering him the opportunity of discharging any liability to conviction for that offence by payment of a fixed penalty.*”

Environment Protection Act 1990

This act concerns the pollution of the environment from any substances and processes and therefore encompasses the use, handling and storage of pesticides, fuel and equipment in the park. It includes the Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse which contains standards of cleanliness and duties. The standard of cleanliness for the park is Grade A – no litter or refuse.

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

The Health and Safety at Work Act states the general duties of employers to employees and members of the public and the duties employees have to themselves and each other with regard to health and safety. It covers the assessment and avoidance of risk, use of equipment and materials, training, supervision and the provision of first aid facilities.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

The regulations contain modifications and extensions to the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 covering specific persons and situations.

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995

This Act introduces new rights for disabled people and places duties on employers and suppliers of goods and services. Disabled people have rights not to be discriminated against in the provision of goods, facilities and services. In terms of the park this means that disabled people should have reasonable access to all facilities, including buildings and play equipment, and access to information about the park.

Lambeth Byelaws for pleasure grounds, public walks and open spaces 2005

The byelaws contain information on the management of Lambeth's parks and open spaces. Those relevant to Vauxhall Park concern opening times, use of children's playgrounds, cycling, sports and recreation activities, public events and damage to fabric.

A copy of the byelaws is appended, Appendix 3.

A.3 Information base

Summary

Location

Vauxhall Park is situated in Oval ward, north Lambeth. The park lies 500m south east of the River Thames at Vauxhall Bridge and within 300m of Vauxhall underground, train station and bus interchange.

Size

Vauxhall Park is 2.82 hectares in extent and is designated as a local park.

Features

The park has a children's play area, rose and lavender gardens, a dog area, two tennis courts and a multi use games court. A One O' Clock Club and a small nursery school are situated in the park.

Uses

Primary uses are walking, walking dogs, visiting the play area, One O' Clock Club and nursery, sitting in the park, meeting others, drinking and playing tennis. People walk and cycle across the park to and from the Vauxhall train and bus stations.

Users

A broad range of local people of all ages and different nationalities uses the park. These include local residents, children, dog owners, tennis players, hostel dwellers, other homeless people and alcoholics, office workers and commuters.

Stakeholders

The principal stakeholders are:

- The Friends of Vauxhall Park
- The One O' Clock Club operated by Lambeth Education and Learning service
- The Montessori Nursery

Heritage and history

The site was saved from development and purchased under the Vauxhall Park Act 1888 with money from public and private sources. The Kyrle Society paid for laying out the park to the design of Fanny Wilkinson, landscape designer to the Kyrle Society and the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association. The park was opened in 1890.

A statue of Henry Fawcett and a children's playground were added in the 1890's. By 1914 the park had a bandstand, tennis court, bowling green, drinking fountain and toilets. A model village and pavilion were added in the 1930's and a nursery developed to supply plants to Lambeth's parks. The One O' Clock Club was established by 1963 and the north of the park was used for construction of the Victoria Underground line in 1967. Late 20th century changes included the introduction of a multi-use games area, creation of a lavender garden alongside the rose garden established on the former bowling greens and the installation of new railings to the Fentiman Road boundary.

In 1998 Vauxhall Conservation Area was extended to encompass Vauxhall Park.

Cultural and aesthetic value

Vauxhall Park is highly valued by local people as

- A local park
- An outdoor room
- A facility that is free to all

It is valued for

- The green space it provides in a densely populated and developed urban area
- Its canopy of trees
- Its flowers
- Opportunities for play and sport and to be outside
- Its historic character
- The One O' Clock Club

Vauxhall Park has significance for its association with

- The Kyrle Society and other societies established in the 19th century to protect open spaces and improve living conditions for the urban poor
- Henry Fawcett, Millicent Fawcett and Octavia Hill – notable Victorian philanthropists
- Fanny Wilkinson, one of the first professionally qualified landscape gardeners. She was landscape gardener to the Kyrle Society and to the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association where her work included laying out numerous disused churchyards and burial grounds as gardens and the creation of small parks and recreation grounds particularly in the east end of London.
- As one of the first parks to be created and opened under the new London County Council.

Management

Lambeth Parks and Green Spaces service manages the park. The local area parks officer is responsible for day-to-day management. The maintenance contractor, Cleanaway, have two site based gardeners (one full time and one part time), visiting teams who undertake grass cutting and a specialist team who undertake minor repairs.

Rangers visit the park daily and the park is regularly patrolled by community police officers.

The Friends of Vauxhall Park are active, organise events and maintain regular contact with park officers

Resources

There is a budget for maintenance of the park by the grounds maintenance contractor. The funding of play area improvements, inspections and tree work comes from other budgets. The One O' Clock Club is funded from Lambeth's Education and Learning budget. Income from the nursery does not contribute to the park.

Rangers, police and community support officers contribute to the security of the park. The Friends organise a number of events and help to raise awareness of the park through their website and activities. They are also active in seeking funding for improvements and notify the area parks officer of matters requiring attention.

Known issues and challenges

- Lack of toilets
- Potential for café development in disused toilet block
- Poor condition of One O' Clock Club building
- Disparate styles of park fabric
- Questionable appropriateness and quality of some planting
- Poor condition of some paths
- Cyclists and dog owners contravening byelaws
- Poor signage
- Local development pressure

Information base

More detailed information about the site, its design history, users and management are provided in the following section.

A.3.1 The Site

A.3.1.1 Site description, facilities and attractions Plan10

The park is clearly defined by railings, walls, fences and hedges and bounded to north, south and west respectively by Lawn Lane, Fentiman Road and South Lambeth Road, and to the east by flats, houses and St Peter's Residence, a religious establishment. The roadside boundaries are characterised by low parapet walls retaining park ground levels slightly above the level of surrounding pavements surmounted by railings, or by angled concrete fence posts support chain link fencing. A high wall forms the boundary between the park and residential properties to the east.

The park has four entrances, all gated and locked at night. The north west and south west pedestrian entrances from South Lambeth Road have original brick and terracotta gate piers and original or replica gates and barriers across the path within the park. From both entrances the ground rises gently to the central space. The narrower entrances on Lawn Lane and Fentiman Road provide vehicular and pedestrian access to the park with no perceptible change in level.

A network of paths, predominantly of tarmac and of varying width and condition, provide access to all areas in the park. The majority of the park is laid to grass. It is well treed with specimens of varying age and species but dominated by a number of large plane trees of considerable stature and canopy spread. Spaces in central and western areas of the park are unenclosed, with the exception of tennis courts near the southern boundary, while to the east spaces are enclosed by low railings defining a dog area, a children's area, an enclosed play space associated with the One O' Clock Club, and garden areas. In the north east corner of the site is a multi-use games area.

The park contains three buildings; a disused toilet block adjacent to the south west entrance, a nursery school on the eastern boundary and a building housing the one o'clock club and gardener's store, situated at the eastern end of the primary east west path through the park. All the buildings are single storey with flat roofs and of brick construction. The One O' Clock Club building has a veranda on the western façade and, together with the nursery, has metal roller shutters.

The children's area is situated on two levels defined by a grassed bank with scattered trees and shrubs. The upper area contains a play area with a range of play equipment for 5 –11 year olds, and a path with seats, sections of low wall and four sections of metal trellis over the path. The lower area contains a brightly coloured toy train for young children, timber animals and picnic benches. The enclosed play space associated with the One O' Clock Club is screened from the rest of the park by the building and vegetation, and comprises a flat, grassed space with scattered benches.

West of the One O' Clock Club is a model village with small paths and bedding overlooking a small fountain and pool at a junction between the main east west path and the path from Fentiman Road. The model village is backed by conifers and lies within the enclosed garden area. The gardens comprise a rose garden with pergola containing a number of rose beds, herbaceous beds and specimen ornamental trees, and a lavender garden. A privet hedge defines the western edge of the lavender garden, separating it from some of the planting beds and trees, and along the eastern boundary of the gardens there are trees, conifers and bedding beside the path from Fentiman Road. The planting beds lie mostly within grass with paved paths only along the eastern boundary and through the pergola. The garden area is flat having been laid out on former bowling greens.

The park has seats, bins, signs and railings in a variety of styles. The seats are situated primarily, along the principal east west path, along the path beside the children's area, around the fountain and within the gardens. A disused drinking fountain is situated in the north west of the park.

Schedules of the park fabric and planting areas are included in Appendices 4 and 5.

A.3.1.2 Historical development

Creation of the park

The area in which the park lies was originally flat and marshy ground, poorly drained by ditches and used for market gardening prior to its development in the mid 18th century. In 1886/7 John Colbeldick, a speculative developer from Stockwell Green, bought the site that was then occupied by the properties of the Lawn and Carroun House and their gardens (Plan 02). His intention to develop housing met with opposition from local people who established a Working Men's Committee. Conscious of the limited open space available to the working classes, the committee expressed the wish to see the site used for 'a public park, playground and place of public recreation.'²

Support came from a number of eminent people, notably Millicent Fawcett, widow of Henry Fawcett MP (1833-1884), education reformer, economist and Postmaster General. The Fawcetts lived at No 8 The Lawn and it had been Henry Fawcett's special wish that a park be formed on the site of his home after his death. Octavia Hill, social reformer, worker for housing improvement, treasurer of the Kyrle Society and a founder of the National Trust also gave her support.

Colbeldick was persuaded to sell eight and a half acres of land for £43,500, purchased under a special Act of Parliament, the Vauxhall Park Act 1888. The Act enabled the Vestry of Lambeth to buy the land with financial support from the Metropolitan Board (taken over by London County Council), the charity commissioners, Mark Beaufoy (MP for Kennington and owner of the vinegar factory south of the park) and other local subscribers. The Act also made provision for the completed park to be covered by byelaws contained within the Metropolitan Board of Works Act 1877.

² The Illustrated London News, January 12th 1889

The Kyrle Society paid £2,000 for the park to be laid out to the design of Fanny Wilkinson, the society's landscape gardener. Named after the philanthropist John Kyrle, the Kyrle Society's principal activity was to plant trees and flowers in urban areas. Fanny Wilkinson, who trained at the Crystal Palace School of Gardening³, was one of the first women landscape gardeners. In addition to her work for the Kyrle Society she was a landscape gardener to the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association (MPGA) and ran her own private practice.

The park was opened on Monday July 7th1890 by the Prince of Wales accompanied by the Princess of Wales, the Duke of Edinburgh and Princess Louise, the latter two being president and vice-president respectfully of the Kyrle Society. Mr Lester welcomed the Royal party on behalf of the Working Men's Committee. Work to drain, fence and lay out the park depleted the Kyrle Society's finances, leading Octavia Hill to write to the Daily Graphic appealing for funds and mentioning the Society's 'plans for a gymnasium, for shelter, for drinking and playing fountains' in Vauxhall Park and for 'important pioneer work in prospect' elsewhere.⁴ Letters from the Vauxhall Working Men's Committee and the Clerk to the Vestry were sent to the MPGA appealing for them to provide seats for the park⁵. The MPGA responded with £50 to purchase ten seats. Mark Beaufoy undertook to pay for three years maintenance and to pay interest on a loan used to purchase the land.

Fanny Wilkinson's design Plans 03 and 04

The Fawcett's House was retained initially, probably with the intention of turning the property into a museum. Fanny Wilkinson retained changes of level and some existing features including the road named The Lawn and another east west drive in the design of the park. To this framework she added a number of gently curving paths providing a circuit around the park and linking the three new entrances, two on South Lambeth Road and one on Fentiman Road. The Kyrle Society's architect and surveyor C. Harrison Townsend designed the entrance gates and railings.

The existing straight paths terminated in stub ends surrounded by planting and a double line of trees was planted south of the east-west path. A shelter was located along the former boundary to Carroun House and a playground area situated north of the almshouses along the east boundary, separated by shrubbery from the main body of the park. Planting was also proposed at park entrances and path junctions in a manner advocated by Kemp⁶, with flowerbeds cut in fancy shapes located in the central portion of the park.

Change and development

³ Edward Milner, became Superintendent of Princes Park, Liverpool after an apprenticeship with Paxton, and later was appointed Principal of the Crystal Palace School of Gardening where his son Henry Ernest succeeded him.

⁴ Letter of 7th July written by Octavia Hill to the Editor of the Daily Graphic

⁵ MPGA Minutes, Guildhall Library, MS11097/9 The Men's Working Committee had already 'from a subscription amongst themselves of sums under and of 1s each, purchased a seat and placed the same as an example to others in the park.' Letter dated 24th June 1890.

⁶ How to Lay Out a Garden, Edward Kemp, 2nd Edition 1858. Kemp supervised the laying out of Birkenhead Park to Paxton's design.

Henry Fawcett's House was demolished in 1891. The contents were sold raising £75.10s which Sir Henry Doulton accepted for a Doulton Ware fountain that was installed centrally within a paved space designed by Fanny Wilkinson. Sir Henry Doulton donated a statue of Henry Fawcett modelled by George Tinworth and made in the Doulton factory. The statue was located on the site of Fawcett's house, set on a pedestal decorated with relief panels.

In 1894 Henry Lloyd of Caterham provided the first children's playground along the park's eastern boundary, completing the Kyrle Society's intentions for the park.

By 1914 a bandstand had replaced the fountain and a bowling green and tennis court had been added to the park along with a urinal and lavatories. The model village was laid out in the 1930's. By 1940 a pavilion had been added in the south west of the park along with new tennis courts. Frames and glasshouses shown on the 1939/40 Ordinance Survey indicate the development of a nursery south of the children's playground.

During the war the boundary railings were removed for the war effort and a V1 flying bomb landed in the bowling green area. Additions during the 1940's included a theatre located in the north east corner of the park.

Considerable change had occurred in the park by 1963. Additions included another building associated with the theatre, the One O' Clock Club building and further development of the nursery area. The statue of Henry Fawcett, the pavilion, bandstand and space surrounding the bandstand had all been removed and the path from Fentiman Road straightened. In 1965 a children's toilet with mosaic decoration was erected in the playground. Construction of the Victoria line extension to Brixton in 1967 resulted in use of the northern part of park for building work.

By 1975 a new toilet block had been added in the south west corner of the park. A path in the north of the park had been re aligned adjacent to the boundary and a path south of the tennis courts had been straightened. Entrance barriers had been added, railings increased and the nursery further developed with large glasshouses.

In 1993 closure of the nursery resulted in removal of the greenhouses, demolition of some boundary buildings associated with the nursery and reconfiguration of the children's play area with new play equipment, boundary planting, a kickabout area, fountain and a curved path with seats, walls and pergolas. A play train and picnic benches were added to the children's area in 2005.

A.3.1.3 Analysis of change

The 1914 Ordnance Survey indicates that Fanny Wilkinson's design was faithfully adopted. Subsequent changes have largely been the result of planned change to meet contemporary needs, standards or fashion, though some change has resulted from the impact of external developments and wider political decision-making. Over time some of these decisions and natural wear and tear on the park together with limited investment have resulted in some degradation of the fabric and loss of the original design.

Losses from the original park

- The Doulton drinking fountain
- The Henry Fawcett statue
- The boundary railings
- Many of the curved paths due to various phases of development associated with sport and construction of the One O' Clock Club and toilet block
- Most shrubbery areas and any flower displays in the centre of the park

Subsequent additions, now also lost

- The pavilion
- Theatre
- Bowling greens
- Shelter

Planned additions

- Various toilets and urinals
- The adaptation and development of play facilities
- The inclusion of sports facilities of which the tennis courts remain
- The development of garden areas on redundant bowling greens
- The development of a building for the One O' Clock Club
- Establishment of a gardeners working area
- Subdivision and enclosure with railings
- Enclosure of the roadside boundaries with hedging

Changes as a result of external developments and wider political decision-making

- Construction of the Vauxhall to Brixton section of the Victoria line
- Closure of the gardeners working area
- Provision of an enclosed play space for the One O' Clock Club
- Re-use of the gardener's bothy for the Montessori nursery school
- Closure of the toilet block

Features retained from the original park design

- The straight paths incorporated from the pre 1890 housing layout
- Sections of curved path – from the south west entrance and in the north east of the park
- The three original entrances, one with its original gates
- The low boundary plinth to the roadside boundaries
- Some of the trees

A.3.1.4 Cultural and aesthetic value

Community value

Vauxhall Park is highly valued by local people as

- A local park
- For the green space it provides in an area of dense urban development
- As an outdoor room
- For its canopy of trees
- For its flowers

- For play and sport
- For the One O' Clock Club
- The opportunity to be outside
- For its historic character

Some people value it for its association with

- The Kyrle Society and other societies established in the 19th century to protect open spaces and improve living conditions for the urban poor
- Henry Fawcett, Millicent Fawcett and Octavia Hill
- As one of the first parks to be designed by Fanny Wilkinson and opened under the new London County Council.

A.3.2 Community

A.3.2.1 Uses

The park is well used by local people both as a destination for recreation, the nursery and One O' Clock Club. It is also used by local people as a through route for commuters crossing from Fentiman Road to the north west to the train and bus stations, and to a lesser extent by people crossing from Lawn Lane to the south west towards Sainsburys. It is used for a limited number of events organised by the Friends of Vauxhall Park but it is not a venue for park events within the borough.

Primary uses are walking, walking dogs, visiting the play area, sitting in the park and meeting others. The tennis courts are well used but the multi use games court is used infrequently. The dog area is used by a limited number of the regular dog owners who visit the park. During fine weather and during the summer months the park is well used for picnicking, relaxing and sunbathing and for informal games. Some cyclists cross or ride round the park. The park is regularly used for drinking and less so for drug taking.

A.3.2.2 Patterns of use

The park is unlocked at 7am by the gardener and closed at dusk by the rangers. Intensity of use varies seasonally but the park is regularly and well used throughout the year.

Between 7 and 9.30 am the park is busy with commuters and school children crossing the park, dog owners exercising pets and parents and children going to the nursery school. During the morning the park is quieter but is still steadily used for dog walking and tennis, by people out shopping, carers with young children and for drinking.

At lunchtime children are collected from the nursery and may stay in the park to play for a while or to have a picnic lunch. Office workers use the park for taking a stroll and eating lunch. On four days of the week the One O' Clock Club opens and carers and children come to meet and use the facility. Early afternoon can be the quietest time in the park with a few casual users and less use of the tennis courts.

After 3pm until dusk the park is busy with children passing through after school and playing with or without carers, people leaving the One O' Clock Club, others enjoying informal games, having tennis coaching, jogging or dog walking; people meeting and chatting, walking and sitting and some using the park as a cut through on their way home.

1.3.2.3 Users

A broad range of local people of all ages and different nationalities uses the park. These include:

- Local residents who use the park as their nearest open green space
- People with young children who come to the park so that the children can play outside

- Those who need or like the support and facility provided by the One O' Clock Club
- Dog owners
- Tennis players
- Hostel dwellers, other homeless people and alcoholics
- Office workers and commuters

People who probably use the park less include:

- Teenagers
- Older people
- Members of the Portuguese community

A.3.2.4 User surveys

A survey of park users was undertaken by MORI for the London Borough of Lambeth between August and September 2003. The purpose of the survey was to inform the Greening Vauxhall Project regeneration strategy by identifying strengths and areas for improvement in local parks. The parks involved in the survey and the number of people interviewed was as follows:

- Kennington Park (121)
- Lambeth High Street Recreation Ground (97)
- Lambeth Walk Open Space (94)
- Pedlar's Park (107)
- Spring Gardens (119)
- Vauxhall Park (102)

The survey indicated that Vauxhall Park had the highest satisfaction rating of all six parks with 86% of interviewees satisfied and only 2% dissatisfied. Other findings were:

- That 45% of those that rate it as their favourite open space give the reason that it is near to home
- Among other things it is used for relaxation and visiting the children's play area
- The park with most satisfaction with specific facilities – especially the general condition of the grounds, signage and play areas.
- Positive attributes most frequently cited are its quiet and peaceful nature and its play areas
- Main concerns voiced focused on perceived 'undesirable' elements such as drunks and drug addicts.

A.3.2.5 The local community around the park

The local community is diverse with a high Afro Caribbean component, established Italian and Portuguese communities and increasing numbers of Russian, Polish, Ukrainian and Lithuanian immigrants.

The indices for deprivation for 2000 indicate that out of the 22 wards in Lambeth, Oval ward is ranked:

- 11th most deprived ward in Lambeth with nearly 32% of residents claiming means tested benefits. This is almost 70% above the national average and 25% above the London average.

- 10th most employment deprived ward in Lambeth with 18% unemployed. This is 80% above the national average and 35% above the London average.
- 9th highest in Lambeth for health deprivation
- 7th highest in Lambeth for education
- 13th highest Child Poverty in Lambeth with 46% of young people 0-16 years living in a household that claim means tested benefits. This is over 70% above the national average and over 30% above the London average.

These figures underline the importance of Vauxhall Park as a resource for local people. It is free, open and accessible daily for those who are unemployed or on low incomes and lack the means to travel elsewhere. It offers opportunities for meeting others, for recreation, exercise, and education.

A.3.2.6 Stakeholder Consultation

Consultation was carried out between October and December 2005 by telephone and through meetings with representatives of the following groups and organisations:

Montessori Nursery School
Metropolitan Police
Friends of Vauxhall Park
Lambeth Park Officers
Park Rangers
Maintenance Contractors - Cleanaway
One O' Clock Club
Ashmole Tenants Association
Wyvil Primary School
Herbert Morrison Primary School
Council of Portuguese Communities
St Mungo's
St Stephen's Primary School
Vauxhall Civic Society
Tennis coach
Graham House, Bondway

Wyvil School Council came to the park with their Headmaster, providing a response during the visit and afterwards by Email.

Consultation questions to user groups

The format of the consultation questions was varied slightly according to the stakeholder but included a question regarding the nature of their organisation, role and numbers represented, followed by questions broadly covering the following areas:

1. Their use of the park
2. Any problems they have using it or concerns and issues they perceive
3. Any improvements they would like to see, things that would assist their use of the park
4. Any aspirations they might have for the park.

A full summary of responses to user consultation is included in Appendix 7.

Issues mentioned by 2 or more people/groups consulted

Positive comments about the park

- Security in the park has improved
- The park is highly valued as greenspace by all age groups
- High levels of support for the proposed café development
- Appreciation of the range of facilities provided in a relatively small space
- Popularity of events organised by the FOVP attracting people who don't often come to the park
- Popularity of garden and play areas

Issues /concerns

- Lack of toilets
- Dog mess
- Lack of information about the park or its promotion as a resource for schools
- Poor condition of the One O' Clock Club building
- Drinkers and drug users of concern, but level of use by these groups generally accepted

Improvements and aspirations

- Provision for older children
- Fitness trail
- More swings
- Toilets – to be provided even if café does not go ahead
- More flowers
- To use park for working with artist in residence/producing art installation for park

A.3.3 Current Management

A.3.3.1 Responsibilities

The Head of Parks and Green Spaces leads a team of 4 Area Parks Officers (covering 5 areas), a Parks Project Development Officer, an Environmental Education Officer, a Greening Vauxhall Project Officer, a Head Ranger, senior ranger and 16 other rangers and an Arboricultural officer. His role is to direct strategy, address policy, secure and control budgets, answer to elected members, liaise with other department heads and address quarterly parks forum meetings attended by local Friends of Parks groups and others.

The Projects Development Officer is responsible for major park improvements, management plans, maintenance contract documentation, annual play area inspections and play area improvements.

The Area Parks Officer for the Northern Area is responsible for all aspects of the management of Vauxhall Park in terms of monitoring maintenance, instructing minor capital expenditure and liaison with the Friends. He visits the park about twice per week, holds a fortnightly meeting with the contractor and can call on the resources of specialist officers such as Projects and Arboriculture. He (or another officer from the parks section) attends the quarterly public meetings held by the FOVP. He and the Chairman, or other representative of the Friends, together carry out a quarterly inspection of the park.

Thus most responsibility for the management of the park falls to the Head of Parks and Green Spaces, the Parks Project Development Officer and the Area Parks Officer. In addition the Environmental Education Officer is responsible within parks and open spaces for the working group on signage and a ranger team of two routinely patrol the park and lock the gates at night.

Division of responsibility for different areas of work between the Parks Project Development Officer and Head of Parks and the Area Parks Officers is not always clear because there is a pragmatic sharing of tasks according to workload to try and ensure delivery of the best service to the public within the resources available.

A.3.3.2 Responsibilities for buildings

It is understood that the One O' Clock Club building as a whole is owned by Lambeth Parks. Education is responsible for maintenance of the part of the building used by the club. The other part is used as a store and mess room by the gardener. The maintenance contractor reports any problems with their area to the Area Parks Officer who reports the need for repairs to the Assets Section. The Assets Section undertook a condition survey of the whole building in November 2005. The survey recorded major issues with rainwater goods, the roof and sanitary services and the need for attention to areas of internal and external decoration. The survey was not asked to address the issues of the life expectancy of the building, the cost effectiveness of repairs nor compliance of the building with current standards. It is not known whether the repairs identified have all been carried out or how they will be funded but the roof and fascia have recently been replaced.

The proprietor of the Montessori Nursery has a 7 year lease and is responsible for routine maintenance but major repairs, such as re-roofing are undertaken by the owner, Lambeth Borough Council.

Responsibility for park buildings is unclear. Although the buildings appear to be owned by Parks and Green Spaces within Environment and Culture, building management seems to be undertaken by a Letting Section and Assets Section situated in either Environment and Culture or Corporate Services. It is unclear who has the authority to take decisions about the buildings, including authorisation of repairs, who decides priorities for action and where budgets for work come from.

A.3.3.4 Contractual arrangements

Throughout the Borough -

- Cleanaway Landscapes, formerly ServiceTeam, are responsible for grounds maintenance. In addition to routine and periodic hard and soft landscape maintenance their contract includes minor hardworks repairs undertaken by the Parks Improvement Team (PIT team) of 4 men and 2 vehicles which operate throughout the Borough on a call-off basis, and water feature maintenance carried out weekly by a specialist subcontractor to Cleanaway.
- CitySuburban are responsible for arboriculture
- RoSpA are responsible for annual inspection of play areas

The grounds maintenance contract is specified by outputs, so decisions about the timing of routine maintenance operations are made by the contractor in order to generate the standard specified. The Area Parks Officer discusses non-routine works, other management items, changes and proposals with Cleanaway at the fortnightly meeting.

A.3.3.4 Number of staff in the park and their functions

Cleanaway have an Area Officer for North Lambeth, based off site, who has overall responsibility for the maintenance of Vauxhall Park. There is one full-time, site-based gardener and one part-time gardener. The gardener opens the park at 7am all year and works until 3pm. He is responsible for the following operations:

- Litter picking and bin (litter and dog) emptying, daily
- Grass cutting the smaller areas, within the rose garden
- Maintenance of all planting beds, including hand-weeding, pruning, mulching and changing seasonal bedding
- Weed control on hard surfaces, beds and borders
- Hedge cutting
- Daily inspection of the play area
- Leaf clearance
- Annual jet-wash and stain of wooden items
- Ensuring graffiti is removed by the PIT team or GrimeBuster team as necessary

Larger grass areas are cut with a gang mower by the mobile North Area team from Cleanaway. Grass cutting continues for most of the year.

The Ranger Service was established in 2004 to serve as the council and community's 'eyes and ears' within parks and green spaces. The four rangers allocated to the northern area are divided into two teams and visit each park once or twice a day, locking park gates at dusk. During their visits to Vauxhall Park they check the children's play area, generally patrol the park, speak to members of the public and caution those infringing byelaws. A contact number for the rangers is displayed on the notice boards at park entrances, so that members of the public may contact them to report incidents, enabling the rangers to respond.

A.3.3.5 Skills

Lambeth Parks officers have skills in park strategy, budget management, the management of parks, green spaces and people, horticulture and environmental education.

The rangers offer people, sport and horticultural skills due to their range of backgrounds. They have received some training in health and safety and mental health issues.

The site-based gardener has a City and Guilds qualification in Amenity Horticulture. He is an experienced gardener and has been based in Vauxhall Park since 1997.

Cleanaway staff can take NVQ training at Lambeth College, up to Level 2. Cleanaway also operate in-house training at Rockwell Park, for matters such as Health & Safety.

A.3.3.6 Skills gaps?

Lambeth Parks and Green Spaces have identified a lack of design qualifications and events management skills among Parks officers. There is a need for increased skills, or access to those with skills, in understanding the historic environment and conservation.

Increased training of the rangers is likely as this is a relatively new service. Rangers interviewed expressed a desire for increased training and development of their role. There is a need for training in child protection issues.

The lack of expertise in repairs to hard landscape has been identified as a constraint, and Cleanaway have set up and trained the PIT Team as a response to this. There is ongoing training of these staff, in plumbing for example. Cleanaway also hope to undertake RoSPA training so that they can carry out the play area maintenance.

A.3.3.7 Financial resources

Income

There is at present no income generation in the Park which is ring fenced for the park. The tennis courts are free, although they have to be booked in advance. This is a deliberate Parks policy to ensure that the courts remain accessible to all not just those that can afford to pay. The Friends Group holds a summer fete that generates a small amount of income used to further the work of the Friends, which includes the sponsorship of benches.

Expenditure – maintenance, soft landscape elements

The grounds maintenance cost for Vauxhall Park is £58,500 per year. Since the contract is output specified exact numbers of operations cannot be tied to the unit costs, although Cleanaway operate to maintenance schedules. It is not known whether there is an allowance in these rates for a percentage of plant replacements/ongoing refurbishment of beds.

Expenditure – maintenance/repairs, hard landscape elements

Of this £2,700 is identified for cleaning the pavilion, £5,300 is for sweeping/inspecting? the play area and £8,200 for the maintenance of furniture, fittings and hard surfaces. Parks provide additional (?) funding for the materials required for repairs and Cleanaway provide the labour. Part of the £8,200 is thought to contribute to the cost of the PIT Team.

Expenditure – capital works

An additional programme of over £2m of repairs, health and safety and DDA works is taking place across Lambeth's Parks and Open Spaces.⁷ Proposed improvements to signage will be funded out of this budget.

The Parks Project Officer is responsible for a Borough wide budget of £200,000 per year for play area improvements, undertaken on a priority basis. The play train recently installed in Vauxhall Park was provided from this budget.

A.3.3.8 Existing partnerships

There is an informal partnership with the FOVP whose members have a concern for the park and therefore keep watch over activities in the park and like to influence and be consulted on any changes. Park officers, contractors and the FOVP know staff at the Montessori Nursery and the One O' Clock Club and communicate with them.

A.3.3.9 Potential sources of funding and projects for capital investment

Sources

Section 106 monies are potentially an important source of additional funding since extensive re-development is taking place in the northern areas of the Borough. The 'Greening Vauxhall' initiative has been set-up to ensure that these funds are obtained and allocated between the various parks in the catchment area, which includes Vauxhall Park, and that schemes are implemented which use them.

Cross River Partnership – a joint initiative with Westminster City Council to improve the environs of the Thames corridor. This has accessed the Single Regeneration Budget, and improved the railway arches area in particular with the 'Light at the end of the Tunnel' scheme.

Projects

The FOVP, park staff and other stakeholders identified a number of projects for which capital investment is needed at the start of the management plan process.

Development of the redundant toilet block as a cafe

⁷ Parks and Green Spaces Update, issue 3 (July – September 2005)

Removal and replacement of the One O' Clock Club building
Improvements to footpath surfaces
Noise dampening in the MUGA
Replacement of entrance signs, tennis court fencing and poor benches
Replacement of railings along South Lambeth Road
Improvements to planting design and display.

A.3.3.10 Policies or procedures enabling or constraining site management

The aims of the Parks and Green Spaces service support the policies outlined in Section 1 of this report and broadly share their aspirations. The aims of the cross cutting agendas produced by government are also broadly supported as many of them relating to healthy living, community safety, education and urban regeneration can be realised in parks. However the plethora of government strategies, policies, reports and agendas could constrain the operation of the Parks and Green Spaces service if officers had to read, respond and document action. Staff resources are already stretched and additional paperwork is not welcome because it would constrain delivery of service on the ground to users.

Lack of clarity regarding responsibility for property within Vauxhall Park constrains site management.

The Lambeth Parks and Greenspaces Forum, a borough wide group incorporating all Friends and Management groups, which meets every 6 weeks or so, enables communication between managers and users and therefore informs and enables good management.

Contract procedures are clear and should enable management of the site.

A.3.3.11 Standards of management

Parks and Green Spaces are aiming for to meet the criteria for the national Green Flag award for Vauxhall Park. The park meets some but not all of the criteria at present. See Green Flag assessment Appendix 8.

The majority of the outputs required in the Grounds Maintenance Specification appear to be met. However these outputs refer only to the technical aspects of grounds maintenance. They do not refer to the visual quality, landscape design, overall attractiveness and function of an area. Therefore the Park can be reasonably maintained but still be of limited horticultural and design quality.

Vauxhall Park is generally considered to be of a better standard than many of the parks in the Borough. This opinion is supported by the findings of the MORI Survey of North Lambeth and was voiced by many of those consulted for the management plan. The view seems to be partly a reality – the park is indeed better than many others – and partly perception, governed by the fact that there is a site-based gardener. The park is perceived as safe and well cared for because the gardener is visible carefully tending the rose garden and beds around the model village but this does not actually equate to quality throughout the park. It seems that many users have relatively low aspirations and these are met by the current standard of the park.

Further enquiry, while acknowledging the value of having a site-based gardener, revealed dissatisfaction with the design and quality of planting and the maintenance of the lavender garden, frustration about the disparate railings, park furniture and lack of consultation concerning the location of the play train. It is acknowledged that because the park has a qualified site-based gardener and because there are generally few problems in the park compared to other areas, the gardener is left to get on with his work with limited attention from Cleanaway's Area Officer or the Parks Area Officer. The result is that the park is maintained but operations and quality are not monitored sufficiently to ensure equal attention to all areas in compliance with the contract.