

## Draft Local Plan Policy - GR 2 (Open Space)

- A. Open spaces are integral components of Lewisham's network of green infrastructure and will be protected from inappropriate development, in accordance with Lewisham's open space hierarchy.

Lewisham's open space hierarchy		
Classification	Description	Primary function
Metropolitan Open Land and Local Green Space	MOL and LGS are the highest order of open space in the Borough. As set out in the NPPF, they are afforded the same level of protection as Green Belt. MOL are designated on the Policies Map. LGS are designated in Neighbourhood Plans.	MOL are extensive areas of land bounded by urban development around London that fulfil a similar function to Green Belt.  LGS are demonstrably special to local communities and hold a particular local significance because of their beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity and/or richness of wildlife or biodiversity.
Strategic Open Space	Open spaces that are significant to the Borough's open space and wider green infrastructure network. Strategic Open Spaces are designated on the Policies Map.	Green spaces including: Parks and gardens, natural and semi-natural green space, green corridors, allotments and community gardens, outdoor sports facilities and playing fields and formal amenity green space.
Neighbourhood Open Space	Open spaces that make an important contribution to the liveability of neighbourhoods. These can include but are not limited to green spaces. Neighbourhood Open spaces are not designated on the Policies Map.	Provision for children and young people, informal amenity space and civic and market squares and hard-surfaced areas designed for pedestrians.

## **Designated Open Space**

- B. Metropolitan Open Land is afforded the same status and level protection as Green Belt. Development proposals on MOL will be considered in accordance with the London Plan and national planning policy tests that apply to the Green Belt.
- C. Development proposals involving the loss of Strategic Open Space will be strongly resisted and only permitted in the following exceptional circumstances:
  - a. Replacement provision of at least an equivalent amount (i.e. no net loss) and better quality will be provided. The replacement provision must:
    - i. Be located within the Borough and in reasonable proximity to the existing open space, with equivalent or better access by walking, cycling and public transport;
    - ii. Not result in an increase in public open space deficiency;
    - iii. Be publicly accessible;
  - b. The development will provide a wider public benefit which clearly outweighs the loss of the existing open space;
  - c. There will be no adverse impact on biodiversity, with reference to Policy GR3 (Biodiversity and access to nature);
  - d. Suitable replacement provision will be made for outdoor sports facilities or playing fields, with reference to London Plan policy S5 (Sports and recreation facilities) as well as allotments and community gardens where appropriate; and
  - e. Where the development involves part of an area of open space the quality of any remaining open space will not be eroded by the development.
- D. Where development proposals satisfy the requirements of GR3.C above, the full quantity of replacement open space must be secured prior to the commencement of the development. Planning conditions or legal agreements will be used to ensure the open space is appropriately secured.
- E. Neighbourhood forums are encouraged to undertake detailed assessments to identify appropriate sites to designate as Local Green Space in neighbourhood development plans.

## **Neighbourhood Open Space**

- F. Development proposals involving the reconfiguration of Neighbourhood Open Space will only be supported where:
  - a. There is no net loss of open space, including play space, and net gains are achieved wherever possible;
  - b. There will be demonstrable improvements in the quality of open space and public access to it;
  - c. There is no detrimental impact on the environmental function of the open space, including support for nature conservation;
  - d. The reconfiguration is delivered through comprehensive development, in line with a site wide masterplan, and will ensure a viable future for the open space.

- G. Development proposals resulting in the net loss of Neighbourhood Open Space will be only be permitted where it is demonstrated that:
- a. The development will provide a wider public benefit which clearly outweighs the loss of the open space;
  - b. The development cannot feasibly be delivered without the loss of part or all of the open space;
  - c. A design options appraisal has been used to ensure the minimal amount of open space will be lost and that any remaining open space is of a higher quality, with greater multifunctional use (for example play space, habitat creation or climate change adaptation measures);
  - d. There will be improvements to the quality of the remaining open space; and
  - e. Appropriate provision is made for existing play space and market space with reference to CI 3 (Play and informal recreation) and EC 20 (Markets).

#### **Ancillary uses**

- H. Development proposals for ancillary uses on open space that help to improve the quality of open space and promote access to a wide range of users will be supported where they:
- a. Are demonstrably ancillary to the use of land as open space;
  - b. Are necessary to facilitate or support the appropriate use of the open space;
  - c. Do not have a detrimental impact on the environmental function of the open space, including support for nature conservation;
  - d. Respond positively to local character, including by maintaining or enhancing the visual quality of the open space and its setting;
  - e. Are of a scale and function that is proportionate to the nature of the open space; and
  - f. Are designed to a high quality standard, are accessible and inclusive to all, and do not detract from the amenity provided by the open space.

#### **Enhancing the quality and function of open spaces**

- I. Development proposals should maximise opportunities to introduce new publicly accessible open space, giving priority to green space, as well as improve connections to existing or planned new open space, particularly in areas of public open space deficiency. Major developments must incorporate new publicly accessible open space unless it can be demonstrated that this is not feasible, in which case off-site contributions will be required.
- J. Development proposals located adjacent to open space should respond positively to the character of the open space and seek to protect and enhance the habitat value and visual amenity provided by it.
- K. With reference to GR4 (Lewisham Links), development proposals must maintain and wherever possible enhance access to and connections between the network of open spaces within and outside the borough. Priority should be given to measures that encourage walking and cycling along routes that link open spaces such as the South East London Green Chain Walk, Waterlink Way, the Thames Path and other local elements of the All London Green Grid.

*The following is an informative and does not form part of Policy GR2*

### **Note on the primary functions of open space**

The primary functions of open space referenced in the third column Lewisham's Open Space Hierarchy have been informed by the Government's Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation, as set out below. These are typologies recognised throughout the London and England as understanding the primary function of an open space.

<b>Type of Open Space</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Parks and gardens	Urban parks, country parks and formal gardens. More multi-functional than other open space, offering space for quiet relaxation as well as a range of amenities and activities for visitors. Parks often include children's play, youth and/or outdoor sports facilities.
Natural and semi-natural green space	Wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education awareness.
Green corridor	Walking, cycling or horse riding, whether for leisure purposes or travel, and opportunities for wildlife migration.
Allotments and community gardens	Opportunities for those people who wish to do so to grow their own produce as part of the long term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion.
Cemeteries and church yards	Quiet contemplation and burial of the dead, often linked to the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity.
Outdoor sports facilities and playing fields	Participation in outdoor sports, such as pitch sports, tennis, bowls, athletics, or countryside and water sports.
Formal Amenity Greenspace (LBL definition)	Green spaces which provide opportunities for informal activities close to home or work whilst also contributing to the character and morphology of the area.
Informal Amenity Space (LBL definition)	Informal recreation spaces and green spaces in and around residential blocks most common but not exclusively relating to estate amenity space.
Provision for children and young people	Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people, such as equipped play areas, ball courts, skateboard areas, teenage shelters and adventure playgrounds.
Civic and market squares, and other hard-surfaced areas designed for pedestrians.	Providing a setting for civic buildings public demonstrations and community events.