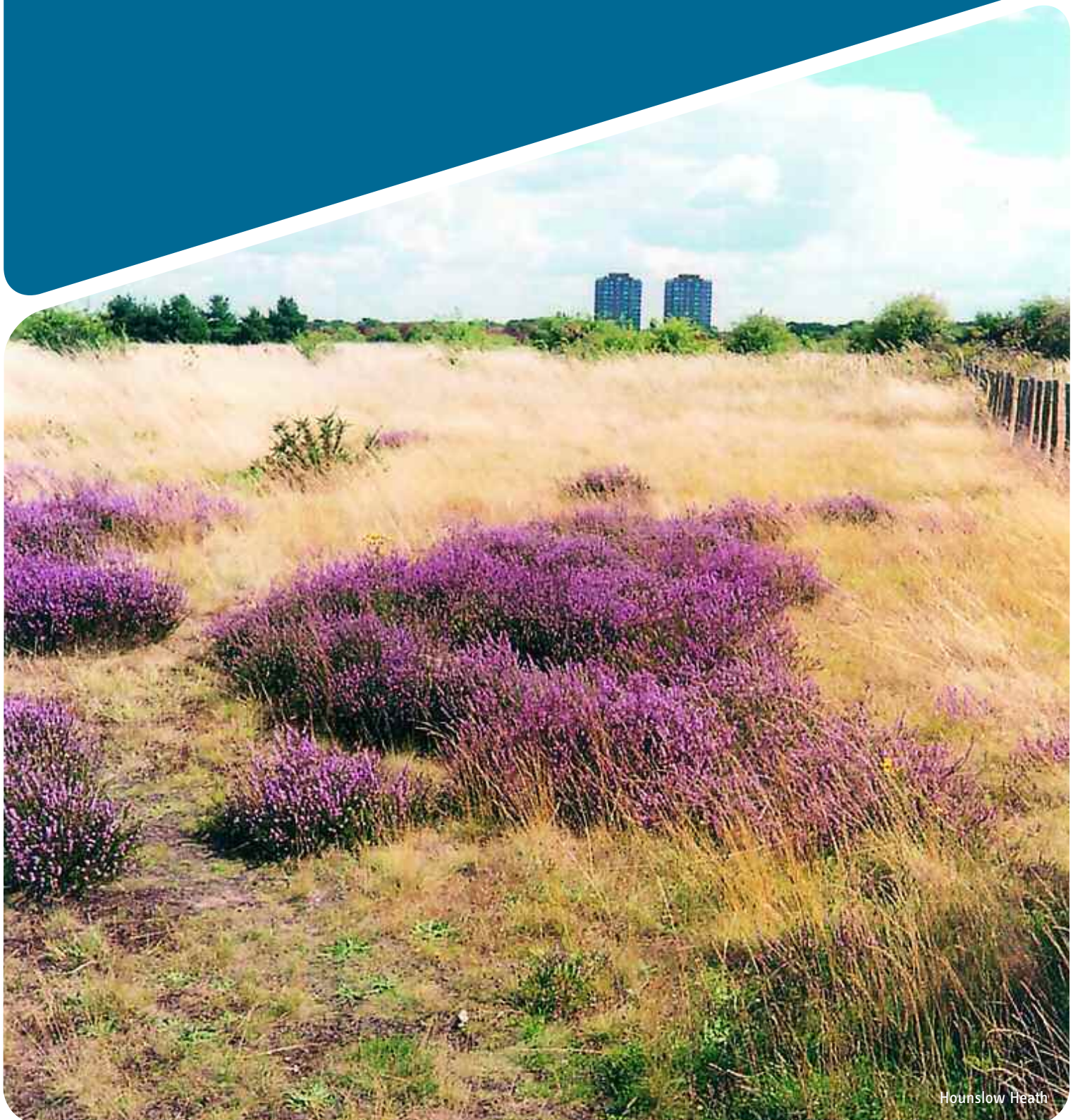


NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

London Borough of Hounslow

Unitary Development Plan Adopted December 2003







NATURAL ENVIRONMENT POLICIES

OBJECTIVE ENV-N.1

To protect, maintain and improve, the open nature, amenity, ecological value, recreational value and the quality of Green Belt, Metropolitan Open Land, Heritage Land, Historic Parks and Gardens, Green Corridors, Green Chains and other open spaces.

POLICY ENV-N.1.1 PURPOSES OF INCLUDING LAND IN AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE USE OF LAND IN THE GREEN BELT

The main aim of the Green Belt in Hounslow is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The four purposes of including land in the Green Belt in Hounslow are:

- (a) to prevent neighbouring built-up areas from merging into one another;
- (b) to check the unrestricted sprawl of Greater London;
- (c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, and
- (d) to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

The Green Belt also offers opportunities to enjoy the open countryside.

The Green Belt in Hounslow, because of its location on the fringe of London, and its fragmented nature is subject to intense development pressure and thus very vulnerable. The Council will therefore safeguard the permanence and integrity of the Green Belt (as defined on the Proposals

Map) by ensuring it is kept permanently open and by measures including land restoration, maintenance and management to fulfil the following objectives for the use of land in the Green Belt: retaining and enhancing land in agricultural, forestry and related uses; retaining and enhancing attractive landscapes; nature conservation interest and ecological value; providing opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; maximising public access to and enjoyment of the open areas.

POLICY ENV-N.1.2 ACCEPTABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE GREEN BELT

There is a general presumption against inappropriate development within the Green Belt (see detailed criteria below). The open low-lying character of Hounslow's Green Belt provides opportunities for a diverse range of land uses including outdoor recreation, landscape amenity and nature conservation. In order to protect and enhance its open character, land within the Green Belt should be retained only as open land and kept free from built development. The visual amenities of the Green Belt should not be injured by proposals for development within the Green Belt which, although they would not prejudice the purposes of including land in Green Belts, might be visually detrimental by reason of their siting, materials or design.

The Council will not permit except in very special circumstances, any development which is not compatible with the principal purposes of the Green Belt.

A. The construction of new buildings inside the Green Belt is inappropriate unless it is for:

- (i) agriculture and forestry;
- (ii) essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, for cemeteries, and for other uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt; or
- (iii) limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings.

B. In addition, Kempton Water Treatment Works is designated as a major existing developed site within the Green Belt. Within the boundary of the site as defined on the Proposals Map, limited infilling for purposes related to the continuance of the existing use of the site will normally be permitted provided such infilling:

- (i) represents the filling of a small gap between existing built development;
- (ii) will have no greater impact on the purposes of including land in the Green Belt than the existing development; and
- (iii) will not exceed the height of the existing buildings on the site or lead to a major increase in the developed proportion of the site.

C. The re-use of buildings inside a Green Belt is not inappropriate development providing:

- (i) it does not have a materially greater impact than the present use on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it;
- (ii) strict control is exercised over the extension of re-used buildings, and over any associated uses of land surrounding the building which might conflict with the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it (e.g. because they involve extensive external storage, or extensive hardstanding, car parking, boundary walling or fencing);

(iii) the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction, and are capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction; and

(iv) the form, bulk and general design of the buildings are in keeping with their surroundings. (Conversion proposals may be more acceptable if they respect local building styles and materials, though the use of equivalent natural materials that are not local should not be ruled out).

Mineral extraction need not necessarily be incompatible with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt, provided that high environmental standards are maintained and that the site is well restored (See also Policy ENV-P.3.1).

Reasons (Applicable to Policies ENV-N.1.1 and ENV-N.1.2)

3.1

The Green Belt plays an important role in the planning of London, providing a definition to the built up area, ensuring the retention of open countryside and encouraging sustainable development by directing development away from the Green Belt and encouraging the reuse of derelict or vacant urban sites. The Green Belt's most important attribute is its openness. The extent to which use of land fulfils the objectives or its quality is not itself a material factor in inclusion of land within a Green Belt or in its continued protection. Purposes of including land in Green Belt are of paramount importance to their continued protection and should take precedence over the land use objectives in Policy ENV-N.1.2.

3.2

The Green Belt needs protection from inappropriate development. In order to retain the open nature of the Green Belt and reaffirm its purposes, only development which is consistent with the criteria in Policy ENV-N.1.2 and, enhances its appearance and has no greater impact on the purposes of including land in the Green Belt is acceptable.

3.3

The Council has designated Kempton Water Treatment Works as a major existing developed site in line with PPG2 and Annex C. Limited

infilling at the site as defined on the Proposals Map would help ensure the continuation of water treatment operations and secure jobs without further prejudicing the Green Belt. The Council has considered identifying other major existing developed sites and concluded that there is no additional scope for designating any other sites.

3.4

Any exceptional case would be treated as a departure from the development plan to be referred to the Secretary of State for the Environment. Any development should have regard to the Council's Green Belt Management Plan and Green Strategy.

POLICY ENV-N.1.3 GREEN BELT IMPROVEMENTS

The Council will pursue ways of improving the positive role of the Green Belt in providing attractive landscape, visual amenity and improvement of land for wildlife, including restoration, maintenance and management of land, enhanced provision of public access and use, on land in its ownership and on land in private ownership when opportunities occur.

Reasons

3.5

The Council is committed to improving and enhancing the appearance and use of the Green Belt. Detailed improvements will be carried out in line with the Council's Green Belt Management Plan.

POLICY ENV-N.1.4 DEVELOPMENT NEAR THE GREEN BELT BOUNDARY

Any development proposal in areas near the Green Belt and conspicuous from within it, must be designed so that it does not detract from the open aspect or visual amenities of the Green Belt. Particular attention needs to be paid to building siting, materials, height, design and landscaping sympathetic to the Green Belt (See also Policy IMP.5.3 Comprehensive Project Areas).

Reasons

3.6

To enhance the appearance of the Green Belt particularly at the margins and to prevent visual intrusion into open views.

POLICY ENV-N.1.5 PROTECTION OF METROPOLITAN OPEN LAND

The Council will safeguard the permanence and integrity of the Metropolitan Open Land within the Borough, with special regard to conserving and enhancing its particular character, appearance, historic and cultural value and its ecological value, whilst increasing access to and enjoyment of these large open spaces. The areas of Metropolitan Open Land in the Borough are:

Osterley Park and Surrounding Areas

The main features of this area are: an historic house and grounds, areas of woodland, agricultural land and grasslands, recreational open space, a golf course, areas of nature conservation value, waterways and a public park.

Chiswick House and Grounds

The main features of this area are an historic house and grounds, an Italian garden, water features, wilderness area and woodland areas of nature conservation value, nature trails and buildings and features of importance.



Chiswick Park

Dukes Meadow

The main features of this area are expansive areas of open space, numerous sports grounds, boat houses and recreational facilities, allotment gardens, burial ground, sites of importance for nature conservation, access to and views of the river and a Thameside path. Specific policies for the future use of this area are included in Policy ENV-N.1.8.

Gunnersbury Park and Carville Hall Park

The main features of this area are an historic house with large formal gardens and lakes, extensive areas of recreational open space, a museum and cemetery.

Syon Park

The main features of this area are an historic house and grounds with significant water features, agricultural and pasture lands, a Site of Special Scientific Interest for nature conservation, a range of renowned tourist, conference and other facilities and excellent views to and from the river (See Syon Park Planning Brief).

Butts Farm

The main features of this area is its contribution to the public open space for the residential area, its value for wildlife and nature conservation, recreational open space and its location as a gateway to the Crane Valley.

Cole Park and the River Crane - Isleworth

This small but important area of Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) forms the northern tip of a much larger area of MOL. Cole Park lies north of an area of MOL in the London Borough of Richmond and creates an open link to the Thames area of MOL. The site is characterised by allotments and the River Crane, which flows through the site up to its confluence with the Thames, and its vegetated banks.

Thames Riverside

The Thames riverside is characterised by its banks, islands, areas of nature conservation

value, its river related features e.g. piers, slipways, wharves, steps, docks etc and its river uses, e.g. boatyards, residential moorings, etc, particularly those uses on Lots Ait and Isleworth Ait which all contribute to the special character of the riverside.

Boston Manor Park

The main features of this area are an historic house, grounds and lake overlooking the wooded terraces of the Brent, recreational open space, areas of nature conservation value and views over the Brent and the Grand Union Canal.



View across Osterley Park

POLICY ENV-N.1.6 METROPOLITAN OPEN LAND : ACCEPTABLE USES

Most of the Metropolitan Open Land in Hounslow comprises relatively large areas of encapsulated countryside within the urban fabric of the Borough frequently the grounds of historic country houses.

Planning permission will not be granted for any development within Metropolitan Open Land which is not compatible with its open character and the defined acceptable uses.

Within the Metropolitan Open Land (as defined on the Proposals Map) permission will not be granted, except in very special circumstances, for other than the following uses with ancillary buildings and structures, where necessary, provided that they do not detract from the open nature and special character of the area:

- (i) public and private open space and playing fields;
- (ii) agriculture, woodland and orchards;
- (iii) open air recreational facilities;
- (iv) nature conservation;
- (v) allotments and nursery gardens;
- (vi) cemeteries;
- (vii) rivers, canals, reservoirs, lakes, docks and other open water.

Development near to Metropolitan Open Land should respect the open nature and special character of that area (See also Policy ENV-N.1.7).

Residential moorings will be considered in accordance with Policies ENV-W.2.5 and ENV-W.2.6 Mineral extraction need not necessarily be incompatible with Metropolitan Open Land objectives, provided that high environment standards are maintained and that the site is well restored and that the special character of the area of MOL is not significantly adversely affected on a temporary or permanent basis (see also Policy ENV-P.3.1).

Reasons (Applicable to Policies ENV-N.1.5 and ENV-N.1.6)

3.7

Metropolitan Open Land comprises substantial areas of open space and landscape, often with an historic and cultural value and particular character, within the built up area which provide important open air facilities for recreation, leisure and sport, contain features worthy of conservation and serve a large catchment area, namely the whole or part of London.

3.8

These valuable areas of land like the Green Belt need to be protected from inappropriate development except in very exceptional cases. The principles of control over development in MOL are of comparable standing to those in the Green Belt.

In Hounslow the areas of MOL are covered by other protective designations in recognition of their historic importance, including Heritage Land, Historic Parks and Gardens, Conservation Areas, and including listed buildings and their settings. In addition there are nature conservation concerns including designated sites of Metropolitan and Borough importance (Grade 1 and 2) and at Syon Park there is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Due to the special character of the historic parks and gardens and nature conservation importance in the vast majority of MOL and its close proximity to built up residential areas the Council will only consider mineral extraction provided that high environmental standards are maintained, the site is well restored and the MOL's special character is not adversely affected on either a temporary or permanent basis. However, none of the Areas of Search identified on the Proposals Map lie within MOL and the Council consider that these identified Areas of Search should meet needs within the life of this Plan. The Council will be developing land management plans for all areas of MOL within the Borough in consultation with interested bodies and the public.

POLICY ENV-N.1.7 DEVELOPMENT NEAR THE METROPOLITAN OPEN LAND BOUNDARY

Any development proposal in areas near the Metropolitan Open Land boundary and conspicuous from within it must be designed so that it does not detract from the open aspect or visual amenities of the Metropolitan Open Land. Particular attention needs to be paid to building, siting, materials, height, design and landscaping sympathetic to Metropolitan Open Land.

Reasons

3.9

To enhance the appearance of Metropolitan Open Land particularly at the margins and to prevent visual intrusion into open views.

POLICY ENV-N.1.8 DUKES MEADOWS/RIVERSIDE LANDS, CHISWICK - SITE SPECIFIC MOL POLICIES

(A) Implementation of Policy ENV-N.1.6. on or immediately adjoining those parts of the University of Westminster Stadium, Riverside Racquet Club, Ibis Sports Ground and the Civil Service Sports Club containing buildings and hard surfaces the following will apply:

1. Subject to all other policies in the Plan, permission will normally be granted for clubhouses, buildings and structures ancillary to open air recreational facilities;

synthetic surfaced sports and associated areas;

floodlights;

associated car parking.

2. Preference will be given to the reuse and renewal of existing built development. (See also Policy IMP.1.2).
3. As a guide any built development should cover no more than 25% of the application site area, planning unit or curtilage, whichever is most appropriate, given the circumstances of the development proposed, synthetic surfaces should cover no more than 40% and 35% or greater should remain as open/grassed soft landscaped areas.
4. Development should normally be restricted to a height of four metres (single storey) or lower if greater harmonisation with the environment would be achieved. It should be of a high quality of design and utilise materials which would enhance the surrounding area (See Policy ENV-B.1.1).
5. Free standing spectator structures will generally not be permitted. Grassed areas, slightly raised or embankments may be considered for use as spectator areas so long as they do not detract from the visual amenity or character of the area.

6. Synthetic surfaces must be of a design, colour and materials so as to be compatible with the surrounding environment and enhance the amenity aspects of the area.
7. Any floodlights permitted must ensure that glare, spillage and the visual impact on the environment is minimal and adhere to the following criteria:
 - The floodlighting columns should not exceed a height of seven metres.
 - The lamps should be directed downwards so as to minimise glare and spillage.
 - The lamps should have hoods of a suitable colour and design.
 - Landscaping should be provided capable of screening the floodlights from neighbouring residents, other users of the area and to decrease the amount of glare and spillage.
 - Reference should be made to Policy ENV-P.1.7 Light Pollution when proposing floodlighting in the area.
8. All development must be designed to create a safe and secure environment able to be utilised by all (See Policies ENV-B.1.8 and ENV-B.1.9). Design criteria must therefore also include public safety aspects such as lighting on public access ways and appropriate paving and landscaping.
9. Any development should comply with adopted car parking standards as set out in Appendix 3 and in particular those for recreation/leisure uses. It should be noted that these standards are maximum. Where a proposed use does not clearly fall within any development category specified in Appendix 3, then a special assessment of parking requirements will be required. Parking areas which are excessive either in terms of traffic generation or loss of open land will not be permitted

(See Policies T.1.2 and T.1.4). High quality surfacing and landscape features/landscape appropriate to the character of the area should be provided with all parking proposals.

10. Any development should include traffic calming measures to ensure that vehicle speeds are restricted and that through traffic is discouraged and that unnecessary road capacity is not created. Measures must be implemented prior to the development becoming operational. The cumulative effect of increased traffic on the surrounding area will be taken into account when considering the appropriateness of a development. Action should be taken to improve the accessibility of the site by sustainable transport modes, such as walking, cycling and public transport (See Policies T.1.2 and T.1.4). Development resulting in additional road capacity and traffic which would adversely affect public safety, particularly that of pedestrians and cyclists or which would intrude into or detract from the open character of the area will not be permitted.

(B) Beyond the areas defined in (A) the following will apply:

1. Planning permission will normally only be granted for the following:
 - Open field/grassed sports use;
 - Pavilions;
 - Allotments;
 - Parkland/public open space.
2. Synthetic surfaces will not normally be permitted.
3. Floodlights will not normally be permitted.
4. Limited car parking may be provided for operational purposes (See Appendix 3).
5. Any pavilion must:
 - Be associated with the open field sports use and therefore utilised primarily for

the purpose of providing facilities such as changing rooms;

- Development shall be restricted to four metres (single storey) or lower if greater harmonisation of the environment would be achieved; and
 - Be of a high quality of design and utilise materials which would enhance the surrounding area.
6. Along the Thames riverside, only the following uses and development will be permitted subject to compliance with all other relevant UDP policies:
- River-related recreational uses, such as a boat-house;
 - Passive recreational facilities such as footpaths, cycle paths, and associated seating and landscape features;
 - Children's playground and picnic area; and
 - Possible cafe/restaurant use on the bandstand site subject to appropriate environmental, design and traffic considerations.
7. The established ecological habitats and wildlife must be conserved and enhanced through appropriate means and protection.
8. All development must be designed to create a safe and secure environment able to be utilised by all. Design criteria must therefore include public safety aspects such as lighting on public access ways and appropriate paving, landscaping and street furniture (See Policies ENV-B.1.8 and ENV-B.1.9)
9. In dealing with traffic in this area, arising from development proposals, priority will be given to pedestrians and cyclists as the primary use of this area is for passive and low key recreation. Measures to ensure this continued emphasis must be implemented prior to the development becoming operational. Increases in road capacity and traffic will

be opposed because of their intrusion into the open character of the area (See Policy T.4.2). Improvements to the safety of pedestrians and cyclists will be sought in connection with relevant development proposals and decreases in through traffic and the speed of traffic by traffic calming measures will be sought where possible.

Reasons (Applicable to Policy ENV-N.1.8)

3.10

Special consideration has been given to Dukes Meadows/Riverside Lands due to their status as MOL and the pressures in the area for intensive forms of recreation and in order to achieve an acceptable balance of uses. The policy allows some intensive recreational uses without prejudicing more informal leisure activities or detracting from the area's important open aspect and riverside location in line with RPG3 and PPG17. The 25% guideline for built development is not intended to be a hard and fast figure but an indication as to the maximum amount of site coverage that is likely to be acceptable within this special area of MOL.



Dukes Meadow

POLICY ENV-N.1.9 METROPOLITAN OPEN LAND IMPROVEMENTS

The Council will pursue ways of improving the positive role of Metropolitan Open Land in providing attractive landscape, visual amenity and improvement of land for wildlife, including restoration, maintenance and management of land, enhanced provision of public access and use, on land in its ownership and on land in private ownership when opportunities occur.

Reasons

3.11

The Council is committed to improving and enhancing the appearance and use of Metropolitan Open Land. Improvements will take into account the provisions of relevant land use management plans prepared for the Metropolitan Open Land, which the Council may prepare in partnership with other agencies.

POLICY ENV-N.1.10 PROVISION OF NEW LOCAL OPEN SPACE

The Council will seek to increase the provision of Local Open Space in the Borough, especially in areas of Open Space Deficiency as shown on Map ENV-N1. The Council will also seek to increase public accessibility to areas of Local Open Space. In order to promote and expand opportunities for active and passive recreation, the provision of new areas of Local Open Space and improvement of public access to Local Open Space will be encouraged by the use of Planning Obligations in conjunction with new developments.

Reasons

3.12

Open space which is publicly accessible is important for the recreation and amenity of all people. The publicly accessible open space definition applies to areas with established and unrestricted public access such as public parks, commons, heaths and woodland and other open spaces which are capable of being classified according to an open space hierarchy (as defined by Strategic Guidance), though not necessarily publicly owned.

3.13

New publicly accessible open space should, depending on the size of the area, include a range of features to ensure that it will be valued by the local community for a range of activities. These activities may include informal and formal recreation, play, ecological and nature conservation. Appendix 4 sets out the NPFA and LPAC standards for formal and informal sport and recreation. Where new open space is created it is important that measures are included to secure the management and maintenance of the open space.

3.14

Many people do not have ready access to publicly accessible open space. The Publicly Accessible Local Open Space Deficiency Map, (Map ENV-N1) identifies areas in the Borough that are more than 400 metres from any publicly accessible open space, taking into account barriers to movement, such as railways and major roads (See Open Space Study Report). The creation of publicly accessible open space is particularly important in areas where there is deficiency or where access to open space is limited particularly by physical barriers, or where there is a lack of private garden space. Consequently, the Council regard it as important to add to the provision of publicly accessible open space where possible in order to improve the quality of the environment for all and will seek to provide open space in development proposals as appropriate.

POLICY ENV-N.1.11 PROTECTION AND IMPROVEMENT OF LOCAL OPEN SPACE

Local Open Spaces are public and private open areas outside the Green Belt and MOL which provide essential visual breaks in built up areas, contribute to local amenity, and meet, or are capable of meeting recreational needs. These Local Open Spaces also often have an important nature conservation role. Planning permission will not, except in very special circumstances, be granted for development on Local Open Spaces, especially where it would lead to a deficiency in publicly accessible open space. It is important not only to protect open space from development, but also to ensure that opportunities are taken to improve the amenity value and to increase public access within areas identified as having an Open Space Deficiency. New buildings, infill development, extensions or the change of use of existing buildings are only acceptable for purposes ancillary to open air sport and recreation activities that preserve the predominately open character of the area and comply with other relevant UDP policies.

Planning permission will not normally be granted for any development or change of use which would result in the loss of,

encroachment upon or form an intrusive element in, the overall open aspects of:

- (i) public open space, including public parks, gardens and nature conservation areas (See also Table ENV-N.2);
- (ii) playing fields, (private, public and those in educational use) and sports grounds, (see also Policy ENV-N.1.12);
- (iii) private open space, particularly where this forms part of a larger open area, and is of benefit to the local community;
- (iv) allotments and leisure gardens (see also Policy ENV-N.1.13).

Reasons

3.15

Local open spaces not designated as Green Belt or Metropolitan Open Land and protected by Policies ENV-N1.1 to ENV-N1.9, still contribute to the image of an area, assist nature conservation, provide breaks in the built up environment and either provide or are capable of providing recreational space for residents. These sites contribute significantly to the amenity and quality of life to those who live and work in the Borough, however they are likely to come under increasing pressure, for development. Therefore, the Authority will seek to protect, maintain and enhance the openness, landscape quality and wildlife habitats of Local Open Spaces in the Borough. These open spaces include private sports grounds, allotments, cemeteries, school fields, covered reservoirs, nature reserves and incidental open spaces found in housing areas. The larger areas are designated on the Proposals Map but the policy also applies to smaller areas not specifically designated.

3.16

Areas which do not have convenient access to public open space are identified on the Publicly Accessible Local Open Space Deficiency Map (Map ENV-N.1) and it is these areas where the Council will particularly seek to ensure that public access to local open space is improved. The publicly accessible open space definition applies to areas with established and unrestricted public access such as public parks, commons, heaths and woodland and other open spaces which are capable of being classified according to an open space hierarchy, though not necessarily publicly owned.

~~POLICY ENV-N.1.12~~ ~~RETENTION OF PLAYING FIELDS~~

~~Playing fields, whether public or private, are assets to be protected for sports and recreation activities and as areas of green space. Planning permission will not be granted, unless there are exceptional circumstances for any development or change of use which would result in the loss of playing fields.~~

~~Reasons~~

~~3.17~~

~~Playing fields should be protected because the loss of playing fields or parts of playing fields reduces the opportunity for participation in pitch sports, which can have adverse implications for the long term health of the local community. Largely as a result of residential development in the Borough some educational facilities are oversubscribed which has resulted in a consequent demand to either provide new or extend existing facilities. There is also similar demand to extend the range of community activities beyond normal school hours both in terms of adult education and use of school sports facilities. As such particularly careful consideration needs to be given to the location and accessibility of new proposals and their impact in terms of car use and on the amenities of the area. It is also recognised that in some areas some facilities are not in the same demand and their appropriate reuse may be of benefit to the local community. In both cases it is important to ensure there is no undue adverse impact through new uses or development or the loss of existing facilities. It is also recognised that schools and other educational establishments currently play an important role in providing built facilities and, in some cases, open space for use by local people which should be retained and where possible, improved.~~

~~3.18~~

~~The Town and Country Planning Playing Fields Direction 1998 makes Sport England a statutory consultee on applications involving existing playing fields and those in use in the last 5 years which are owned by a local authority or used by an educational institution.~~

~~The Council must notify the Secretary of State when there is an outstanding objection from Sport England to such proposals. The Department of Education's consent is required for the disposal of any Local Education Authority owned playing field.~~

POLICY ENV-N.1.13 **ALLOTMENTS**

Planning permission will not normally be granted for a development or change of use which would result in the loss of existing allotments or land last used as allotments. The Council will retain existing allotments and resist their loss. In the event that allotment land is no longer used for such purposes, the feasibility of acceptable alternative open space uses, which allow the site to maintain its openness, such as community gardens, wildlife and nature conservation gardens, sensory gardens and orchards will be given full consideration.

Reasons

3.19

Allotments are a popular leisure activity, particularly for elderly people and people without private gardens and play important landscape and nature conservation functions. It is recognised that the supply of allotments varies within the Borough and that in some areas there may be a surplus.

POLICY ENV-N.1.14 **PROTECTION OF AGRICULTURAL LAND**

The Council will encourage the continuation of agricultural uses and will oppose, bar in exceptional circumstances, the permanent loss of high quality agricultural land by other development, particularly the most significant farms (Rectory Farm, Mayfield Farm, Osterley Park Farm, and after restoration Hatton Farm), and encourage farmers and landowners to conserve and enhance the intrinsic features of the open land, including the landscape quality, historic character and wildlife value of the land.

Reasons
(Applicable to Policy ENV-N.1.14)

3.20

Agriculture is an acceptable use in both the Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land and is therefore encouraged. The three farms are high quality agricultural land and it is considered that these larger holdings can make effective and constructive agricultural use of the Green Belt. It is also important that the landscape, historic and wildlife value of agricultural land is conserved and enhanced.

POLICY ENV-N.1.15
HERITAGE LAND
(PARKS OF HISTORIC INTEREST)

The Council will protect the individual quality and character of and promote suitable public access to, each area of Heritage Land as shown on the Proposals Map.

Reasons

3.21

Heritage Land relates to these areas which are valuable for the visual attractions of the landscape, historical interest of parks and gardens, interest as ancient or traditional countryside, nature conservation value. Following advice from the Countryside Agency the Council has identified Syon Park (See Planning Brief) and Osterley Park as areas of heritage land, in recognition of their strategic importance and will seek to maintain and enhance the specific qualities and character of the heritage land, and provide access to it. The Council will consult the National Trust, particularly on their Management Plan for Osterley, and other interested bodies where appropriate. The Council will be developing a Land Management plan for all areas of MOL within the Borough.

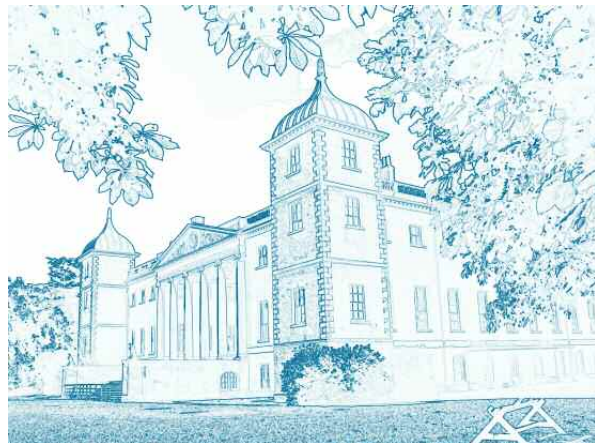
POLICY ENV-N.1.16 HISTORIC
PARKS AND GARDENS

Development will not normally be permitted which would adversely affect the site, setting or views to and from historic parks and gardens.

Reasons

3.22

Hounslow has a number of historic parks and gardens which have been subject to development pressures and care needs to be taken to ensure that these historic gardens are protected from encroaching or adjacent new development. Historic Parks and Gardens in the Borough include, Chiswick House and Grounds, Hogarth House, Osterley Park, Strawberry House, Syon Park, Walpole House and Gunnersbury Park, Hanworth Park and Boston Manor. It is also important that development in this Borough does not have an adverse impact on the setting or views of historic parks and gardens in adjacent boroughs.



Osterley House

POLICY ENV-N.1.17
BURIAL LAND

The Council will seek to ensure that sufficient land is retained to meet demand for burial space in sustainable locations. Existing cemeteries, land reserved for the expansion of cemeteries and proposed new cemeteries should, wherever possible, be protected for use as burial space (See LPAC, 'Planning for Burial Space in London', 1997). This does not necessarily preclude these sites being used for other open space uses which maintain the areas suitability for future use as burial space.

Reasons

3.23

The Borough has sufficient provision to meet its burial needs over the plan period.

However, recognising longer term and London wide requirements, it is prudent to protect existing cemeteries and land reserved for the expansion of cemeteries for burial or other appropriate uses that maintain the open character of the land and its suitability for future use as burial space.

OBJECTIVE ENV- N.2

To protect, provide, enhance and promote Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Nature Reserves and other areas of nature conservation interest with reference to the Hounslow Biodiversity Action Plan.

POLICY ENV-N.2.0 SITES OF INTERNATIONAL NATURE CONSERVATION IMPORTANCE

Proposals for development or land use which may affect a European site, a proposed European site or a Ramsar site will be subject to the most rigorous examination. Development or land use change not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site and which is likely to have significant effects on the site (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects) and which would affect the integrity of the site will not be permitted unless the authority is satisfied that:

- i) there is no alternative solution; and
- ii) there are imperative reasons of over-riding public interest for the development or land use change.

Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species, development or land use change will not be permitted unless the authority is satisfied that it is necessary for reasons of human health or public safety or for beneficial consequences of primary importance for nature conservation.

Reasons

3.24

Kempton Park Reservoirs are included in the South West London Waterbodies Special Protection Area (SPA). Sites designated under the European Birds Directive should be accorded the highest level of protection.

It is important that SPA sites are protected from damage and destruction, with their important scientific features conserved by appropriate management. The South West London Waterbodies SPA has also been listed as a Wetland of International Importance under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitats (the "Ramsar convention"). That part of the SPA/Ramsar site which lies within the London Borough of Hounslow is the decommissioned eastern reservoir called Kempton Nature Reserve, the boundary of which is identical to that which has also been declared a Site of Special Scientific Interest and Local Nature Reserve.

POLICY ENV-N.2.1 SITES OF NATIONAL NATURE CONSERVATION IMPORTANCE

Development will not be permitted within defined Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), (as identified by English Nature and shown on the Proposals Map and listed in Table ENV-N.2) unless it can be shown that it would not be harmful to nature conservation interests at the defined site.

Development adjoining sites of national nature conservation importance will not be permitted unless it can be shown that there would be no damage to the nature conservation interests of the defined site. English Nature will be consulted on planning applications in, around or likely to affect a SSSI.



View across Bedfont Lakes Country Park

Reasons

3.25

These sites have particular importance, both in terms of their intrinsic value, and what they represent to a population which extends beyond the local community. Details of the sites of national nature conservation importance within the Borough are contained within the Former London Ecology Unit handbook 'Nature Conservation in Hounslow' and a list of sites is included in Table ENV-N.2.

POLICY ENV-N.2.2 SITES OF REGIONAL / LOCAL NATURE CONSERVATION

The Council will encourage the protection and sensitive management of these sites for regional, metropolitan and local nature conservation (As depicted on the Proposals Map). Development will only be permitted when it can be shown that it would not be harmful to nature conservation interests at the defined site and should include:

- (i) built facilities for interpretation and nature study together with their ancillary uses;
- (ii) other open air facilities where appropriate such as picnic areas and nature trails.

Reasons

3.26

It is important to conserve the Borough's wildlife resource, some of which is of a regional and metropolitan importance, as well as providing for the local community's enjoyment and understanding of this resource. These sites have been classified as Sites of Metropolitan Importance, Sites of Borough Importance and Sites of Local Importance on the basis of the methodology originally employed in 'Ecology Handbook 3' (Greater London Council, 1985) and further developed in 'Nature Conservation in Hounslow; Ecology Handbook 15' (London Ecology Unit, 1990).

3.27

Six of these sites have also been designated as Local Nature Reserves (LNR) and the Council will designate further Local Nature Reserves where appropriate. Changes to some boundaries or the addition of further sites may arise as further supporting data becomes available. Since the publication of the London Ecology Unit Handbook 'Nature Conservation in Hounslow', two sites (Croft Farm and Church Road, Woodlands of Borough and Local Importance respectively), have been identified in consultation with the London Ecology Unit (now part of the Greater London Authority).

3.28

Table ENV-N.2 lists all the nature conservation sites in the Borough. The sites are shown on the Proposals Map.



View along the River Crane

TABLE ENV- N.2 NATURE CONSERVATION SITES IN THE LONDON BOROUGH OF HOUNSLOW

The criteria used for the selection of these nature conservation sites are those used by the London Ecology Unit (now within the Strategy Directorate of the Greater London Authority) and are explained in detail in their Ecology Handbook Series, notably; No 15 'Nature Conservation in Hounslow', which is available from the GLA or Hounslow Council. The addition of Croft Farm and Church Road Woodlands post-date the publication of the LEU Handbook 15 but were added after consultation with the LEU.

I Sites of International Nature Conservation Importance (Policy ENV-N.2.0)

1. Part of Kempton Waterworks (Part of South West London Waterbodies Special Protection Area) and RAMSAR Site known as Kempton Nature Reserve

II Sites of National Nature Conservation Importance (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) (Policy ENV-N.2.1)

2. Tide Meadow at Syon Park
3. Kempton Nature Reserve

III Sites of Regional and Metropolitan Importance (ENV-N.2.2)

4. Feltham Marshalling Yards
5. River Thames, its Tidal Tributaries and Islands
 - a. The Thames Islands, Lot's Ait and the intertidal mud of the Thames, Isleworth Ait, Chiswick Eyot (Local Nature Reserve), Olivers Island
 - b. The Tidal Crane
6. The Crane Corridor including:
 - a. Dudset Lane to Great South West Road
 - b. Great South West Road to Baber Bridge
 - c. Baber Bridge to Hanworth
 - d. Crane Park and Crane Island (Local Nature Reserve)

7. Bedfont and Princes Lakes (part Local Nature Reserve)
8. Part of Kempton Waterworks
9. Hounslow Heath (Local Nature Reserve)
10. Dukes Hollow (Local Nature Reserve)
11. Gunnersbury Triangle (Local Nature Reserve)
12. London's Canals (the Grand Union Canal in Hounslow)
13. The Duke of Northumberland's River at Bedfont

IV Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance (Borough Grade 1) (Policy ENV-N.2.2)

14. Moat House Covert and the River Crane near Cranford Park
15. Longford Rivers at Bedfont
16. Chiswick House Grounds
17. East Bedfont Lake
18. Lower Feltham Rough
19. Mogden Sewage Works
20. Osterley Park
21. Wyke Green Golf Course
22. River Brent
23. Syon Park

V Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance (Borough Grade II) (Policy ENV-N.2.2)

24. Norwood Fields
25. Osterley Fields
26. Duke of Northumberland's River at Woodlands (Silverhall Park and Mill Plat)
27. Hanworth Park and Longford River
28. Felthamhill Carr (including Croft Farm)
29. Longford River at Feltham
30. River Crane at St Margarets

VI Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance (Local Importance) (Policy ENV-N.2.2)

31. Thorncliffe Waste
32. Gunnersbury Park
33. Church Road Woodlands (Hartlands and Lower Park Farm Woods)

POLICY ENV-N.2.3 PROMOTION OF NATURE CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT

The Council will seek to work with other landowners, including the statutory undertakers and government agencies, who manage land or control development which does not directly fall under the local planning authority powers of development control so that proper regard can be given to nature conservation interests, as highlighted in the Hounslow Local Biodiversity Action Plan, This is particularly important in Green Corridors (See Policy ENV-N.2.9).

Reasons

3.29

The co-operation of local landowners and other land-holding agencies is essential if the fabric of the Borough's wildlife resource is to be maintained and enhanced, and in producing, implementing and monitoring the Hounslow Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

POLICY ENV-N.2.3A SPECIES PROTECTION

Planning permission will not be granted for development or land use changes which would have a significant adverse impact on badgers, or other protected species or Hounslow Local Biodiversity Action Plan species that are uncommon, declining or under threat in London.

Reasons

3.30

Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, sets out the protection which is afforded to wild animals and plants, the schedules of species protected are reviewed every 5 years. Some animals are protected under their own legislation e.g. The Protection of Badgers Act 1992. The presence of a protected species is a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal which if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat.

The Council will consult English Nature before granting planning permission and will where appropriate consider the use of planning conditions or planning obligations to facilitate the survival of individual members of the species; reduce disturbance to a minimum; and provide adequate alternative habitats to sustain at least the current levels of population.

POLICY ENV-N.2.4 HABITAT PROTECTION

The Council will conserve and enhance areas of ancient and established habitats through appropriate means of protection and sympathetic management with reference to the Hounslow Local Biodiversity Action Plan, including where required, through agreed management plans with other landowners.

Reasons

3.31

An established habitat will benefit, in terms of biodiversity, from its period of stability under appropriate management. The longer the duration the more diverse the wildlife could be expected to be.

POLICY ENV-N.2.5 HABITAT RECONSTRUCTION

The Council will promote in the appropriate circumstances, the application of habitat reconstruction techniques to the improvements of previously degraded land, including waterway corridors in the Borough.

Reasons

3.32

Areas of little existing nature conservation value can benefit from the techniques being adopted in the developing field of habitat reconstruction.

POLICY ENV-N.2.6 LANDSCAPE FEATURES

The Council will protect important landscape features both in the built-up area and open land which are affected by development, and will promote conservation of such features, e.g. groups of trees, specimen trees, hedgerows, ponds, ditches and natural river features and will promote nature conservation management on its own land holdings (See Policy IMP.6.1 Planning Obligations).

Reasons

3.33

Landscape features of whatever scale can contribute to a local sense of identity as well as providing local wildlife and amenity interest to people's everyday surroundings.

POLICY ENV-N.2.7 TREES AND COMMUNITY WOODLANDS

The Council will aim to protect all trees in the Borough which contribute to the value of the environment. The Council wants to promote the aesthetic value of trees as part of the landscape and for their value as screening. When considering development proposals the Council will normally require all existing trees of amenity and landscape value to be retained. If a tree is considered worthy of retention then its location and protection will be a constraint to development. The Council will seek to achieve replacement of new tree planting in connection with development proposals where appropriate.

In addition, the Council will aim to increase tree coverage in the Borough, by planting suitable trees in the Borough's highways, including residential streets, parks and other areas of public open space and land occupied by other Council Departments. Tree cover will also be increased by creating new landscape features through new community woodland planting schemes, including shrub planting. Natural regeneration will be encouraged where appropriate and the Council will ensure the retention of woodlands and hedges of wildlife importance, and the replacement of woodland lost through redevelopment.

POLICY ENV-N.2.8 TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS

The Council will continue to make and enforce Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) to protect trees of public amenity and landscape value particularly where they are threatened by development. The LPA's powers are principally contained in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The Council will ensure that adequate provision is made for the preservation, (including proper measures for practical protection) and planting of trees, when granting planning permission, by imposing conditions and making TPOs. During developments the treescape should receive due consideration, attention, and expert advice.

Reasons (Applicable to Policies ENV-N.2.7 and ENV-N.2.8)

3.34

The Council will continue to encourage the provision of new trees throughout the Borough, and new woodland habitats where appropriate as well as the retention of woodlands and hedges of wildlife importance. The Council will also ensure the retention and protection of existing trees which contribute to the quality of the urban environment. The guidance of DOE Circular 36/78, Trees and Forestry, should be noted, "Trees may be worthy of preservation for their intrinsic beauty or for their contribution to the landscape; or because they serve to screen an eyesore or future development; the value of trees may be enhanced by their scarcity; and the value of a group of trees or woodland may be collective only. Other factors (such as importance for wildlife habitat) may be taken into account..."

POLICY ENV-N.2.9 GREEN CORRIDORS

The Council has identified Green Corridors (Map ENV-N2) which form visual and vegetated links, often along transport routes or water courses between open areas. These links may provide opportunities for the dispersal of wildlife and the improvement of landscaping and amenity. The Council will seek co-operation with appropriate landowners (Policy ENV-N.2.3) in such

improvements and will have full regard to their operational requirements. In addition, where the Council has designated public transport routes as Green Corridors, the Council will have due regard to the requirements of public transport operators. New development adjoining the corridors will be expected to enhance this continuity and improve amenity, and the Council will normally oppose the culverting of water courses.

Reasons

3.35

To preserve and enhance visual and functional landscape links between open spaces, and provide valuable green corridors along which wildlife can move. The following areas are not included in the Green Corridors: Hounslow West Station and car park, Hounslow Central Station, Hounslow East Station, Osterley Station, Osterley allotments and Boston Manor Station and land required for operational development for provision of sewerage services at Mogden Sewage Treatment Works in Isleworth.

3.36

The Council will normally oppose culverting in order to ensure that there is no break in the continuity of river corridors and also because culverting may have serious implications for safety, maintenance and flooding.

POLICY ENV- N.2.10 GREEN CHAINS

The Council has identified Green Chains (as shown on Map ENV-N2) which consist of areas of open space linked by way of marked footpaths and other pedestrian routes, often along water courses. These provide a recreational and nature conservation resource, which link across the Borough and beyond. These chains will ideally have public access at present or such access can be readily achieved. The Council, in implementing its Green Strategy intends to enhance the visual and environmental continuity and accessibility of these Green Chains, by promoting planting and landscape schemes incorporating footpaths and where they can be accommodated without undue harm to the environment cycleways.

The Green Chains in the Borough include open land adjacent and near to the River Crane and the Duke of Northumberland River, the Brent River and Grand Union Canal, the M4 Linear Park, and the Thames Riverside. Three of these Green Chains form part of London-wide walking routes; the River Crane is part of the London Loop Orbital route, the Brent River and Grand Union Canal is part of the Capital Ring and the Thames Riverside is part of the Thames Path.

Acceptable new development or redevelopments within or adjoining a chain will be expected where opportunities exist to enhance this continuity and improve access and amenity, and there will be a presumption against any development which would destroy or detract from the open character. Green Chains play a vital role in the urban environment by providing visual, nature conservation and environmental links and extended access routes for the public between open spaces both through and beyond the Borough. The Council will normally oppose the culverting of water courses. The Council's opposition to culverting is to ensure that there is no break in the continuity of the river corridors and also because culverting may have serious implications for safety, maintenance flooding and ecological value.

Reasons

3.37

Green Chains play a vital role in the urban environment by providing visual, and environmental links and extended access routes for the public between open spaces both through and beyond the Borough. The Council will seek to improve access to and the amenity of Green Chains and particularly where there are missing links or urban sections between the open areas.

