

# London's parks for people

people sitting in shade park

## Key information

Publication type: Current investigation

Publication status: Adopted

Publication date: Tuesday 8 July 2025

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## Introduction

The London Assembly Environment Committee is investigating the current state of parks and open spaces across London.

## Meeting aims and objectives (Terms of Reference)

In this meeting, the Committee will examine the current state of parks and open spaces across London, five years on from the Mayor's Green Space Commission report (August 2020). It will focus on:

- progress made in implementing its key recommendation to establish and support *Parks for London* as a Centre of Excellence for London's parks.
- the ongoing challenges related to standards, maintenance, and what provision is needed to meet Londoners' needs.
- Implementation and generation of good practice as identified in the *Good Parks for London* report (2024 edition).

## Key issues

- It is five years since the Mayor's [Green Space Commission](#) reported in August 2020. This aimed to understand the common challenges facing London's parks, to assess the economic value of parks, and explore sustainable business models for parks in London Boroughs. One of the inputs into the Commission was the Committee's 2017 report, [Park Life](#). The Commission made two key recommendations: (1) to establish and resource a Centre for Excellence for London's parks, and (2) to develop a skills programme. *Parks for London* was selected to become the Centre for Excellence.
- In October 2024, *Parks for London* published the 8<sup>th</sup> edition of their [Good Parks for London](#) report. This assesses the performance of London's parks services across London and shares examples of good practice. 25 Boroughs participated in the report, which provides benchmarking on ten areas, including public satisfaction, quality standards, events, supporting nature, skills development and strategic planning.
- London's parks are typically the responsibility of individual boroughs or institutions/charities (e.g. City of London Corporation, Royal Parks, Putney Commons, Lee Valley Regional Park, Bankside Open Spaces Trust). Parks are a non-statutory service, and so financial resources from Councils are often constrained. Many parks services have sought to find new ways for parks to generate revenue, such as concessions (e.g. cafes), and festivals. In several parks these decisions have been controversial and raised questions over the role parks should play in a local community.
- In 2019 London became the first National Park City. The National Park City concept aims to connect more people to the outdoors and create more high-quality and accessible green and blue space.
- The Mayor has funded projects which aim to improve access to high quality green spaces, through the Grow Back Greener Fund (2020-23), and Green and Resilient Spaces Fund. The London Plan requires boroughs to identify areas of deficiency in access to both nature and open spaces and take action to address these. In the consultation on the next London Plan, the Mayor stated that he is considering whether to also assess the quality, use and the level of demand, to understand and mitigate areas of open space deficiency.

## Key questions

1. What is the state of London's parks overall?
2. What are the current and future challenges for London's parks?
3. What role should Londoners play in the design and care of parks, so that their needs are met?
4. How can revenue generation, use and protection of green spaces be best balanced?
5. What are the most exciting and innovative things happening in London's parks? What can be learned and shared?

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