

London's 'regional parks': Connecting people and nature?

Two people cycling through a park

Key information

Publication type: Current investigation

Publication status: Adopted

Publication date: Tuesday 19 May 2026

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<https://youtu.be/bXqNFFqD68U>

Meeting aims and objectives (Terms of Reference)

This one-off meeting will explore how London's parks, rivers and green spaces can be connected to improve biodiversity and enable better access to nature for Londoners. The meeting has a particular focus on London's larger green spaces and green corridors – what the current London Plan defines as 'regional parks' – in the context of the new 500 hectare 'West London Regional Park' announced in March 2026.

Key issues

- The Mayor has asked the GLA to deliver programmes that mean “Londoners can enjoy green and wild spaces across the capital”. The Mayor published the London Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and Green Infrastructure Framework in March 2026 to inform regional improvements for people and nature. The Mayor has also been developing a 'Clean and Healthy Waterways plan' which aims to support improved access to waterway corridors as well as improvements to water quality.

- The Mayor has established a ‘Green Roots Fund’ – worth £12 million over 3 years to give “communities active ways to transform their local spaces”. The Mayor has committed £1.5 million to help establish the West London Regional Park.
- The Government’s Accessible Greenspace standard is for there to be at least 500 hectares of greenspace within 10km of home. The London Plan 2021 includes a focus on access to nature, green space and open space, as part of wider Green Infrastructure. One of the categorisations it uses is ‘regional parks’, which it defines as around 400 hectares, and ‘3.2 to 8km from homes.’ The London Plan also states that Boroughs should look to identify areas of deficiency to nature and seek opportunities to address them.
- The 2016 London Plan included a map of regional parks, which was not included in the 2021 London Plan. This listed six existing regional parks as part of London’s strategic open space network– including the Lee Valley, Richmond Park, and Wandle Valley Regional Park. The Mayor does not have any direct influence over the West London Regional Park, but has a role in deciding the Trustees of the Royal Parks Trust, which oversees the eight Royal Parks. Londoners also pay a levy to support the Lee Valley Regional Park. The levy is paid by households in London, Essex and Hertfordshire – and is approximately worth 90p per person per year.
- 585,000 people live within 30-minutes’ walk of the new regional park. The Mayor provides financial support through TfL to the Walk London network, which advertises 8 walking trails around the city, such as the Capital Chain – which passes through the West London Regional Park along the River Brent.

Key questions

1. What role do regional parks have in improving access to green and wild spaces for all Londoners, and what (if anything) should the London Plan say about how they are created and managed?
2. What are the main barriers and opportunities for improving access to nature through regional parks – particularly for those that lack high-quality local green spaces (or do not currently use them), lower-income Londoners, and those without private green spaces?
3. How are the London Local Nature Recovery Strategy and other related strategies, such as the Clean and Healthy Waterways Plan, informing how the Mayor is prioritising funding for green space improvements?
4. What will the Mayor’s funding for the new West London Regional Park support, and how will it ensure that improvements are sustainable and improve access for wide range of Londoners – including diverse communities and demographics?
5. What lessons can be drawn from existing regional parks and the Walk London network, to inform the approach to the West London regional park?

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