

Middle Park Field, The Vista and King John's Playing Fields Interim Management Plan



King Johns Walk

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PART I: WHERE WE ARE NOW

INTRODUCTION

What is a park management plan?

Management Plans are an important aid to the efficient and effective management of a site. A Plan forms part of a process for evaluating performance against agreed standards, consulting and involving people, strategic planning and providing continuity. Individual plans will be specific to each park and will deliver aims and objectives specific to the needs of the local community who will be directly involved in its formulation.

A Park Management Plan also provides an excellent opportunity to collate a wealth of information relating to the park that the management authority possesses, into a single comprehensive document.

Name of Site: King John's Playing Fields, The Vista and Middle Park Field.

Address: Chevening Road
Greenwich
London SE10

If you require any further details about this plan please contact:

Address: Parks & Open Spaces:
Shooters Hill depot
Opposite Eaglesfield Rd
Woolwich
SE18 4LX

Tel. 020 8856 0100
Email parks@greenwich.gov.uk

This park is allocated a technical officer who can be contacted for any further information (using the contact details provided above).

Approach Friends of group to see if they would like to have their contact details on here...

Writing Timescale:
Approved:
Adopted:
Due for Revision:

Purpose of this management plan

As well as developing a Green Space Strategy, the production of individual management plans for each park is good practice and is in accordance with the Council's commitment to providing Best Value. Each management plan will have a duration of five or ten years.

The plan is intended to cover the parks located south of the Eltham Palace grounds called King John's Playing Fields, The Vista and Middle Park Field. (hereafter referred to as the Eltham Estate Parks) These parks once formed a part of the grounds of Eltham Palace, and are only separated by their different titles, current ownership and management regimes.

Currently, English Heritage intend to create a landscape master plan in the near future to cover the entire area of the estate grounds being managed as open space by three different authorities (Greenwich Council, English Heritage and the Ministry of Defence), and this plan is intended to provide an interim plan for the council owned section of the Eltham Estate parks, until English Heritage creates their plan, or in five years time (2012) when this plan will be reviewed, or whichever is sooner.

Full details of the public consultation used to create this plan can be found in Appendix X of this plan. It is hoped that this plan will help to encourage relationships between the Council and the community and provide access to information on the management approach to this site.

It is envisaged that the plan will provide a framework around which any future decisions concerning this site will be taken. In addition, it is hoped that the management plan for these parks will assist with allocating existing and securing additional resources for developments on this site that this management plan specifies.

Future actions/priorities for this site are identified in the action plan to this document. This management plan therefore provides a benchmark against which future progress can be measured.

SITE DESCRIPTIONS AND INFORMATION BASE

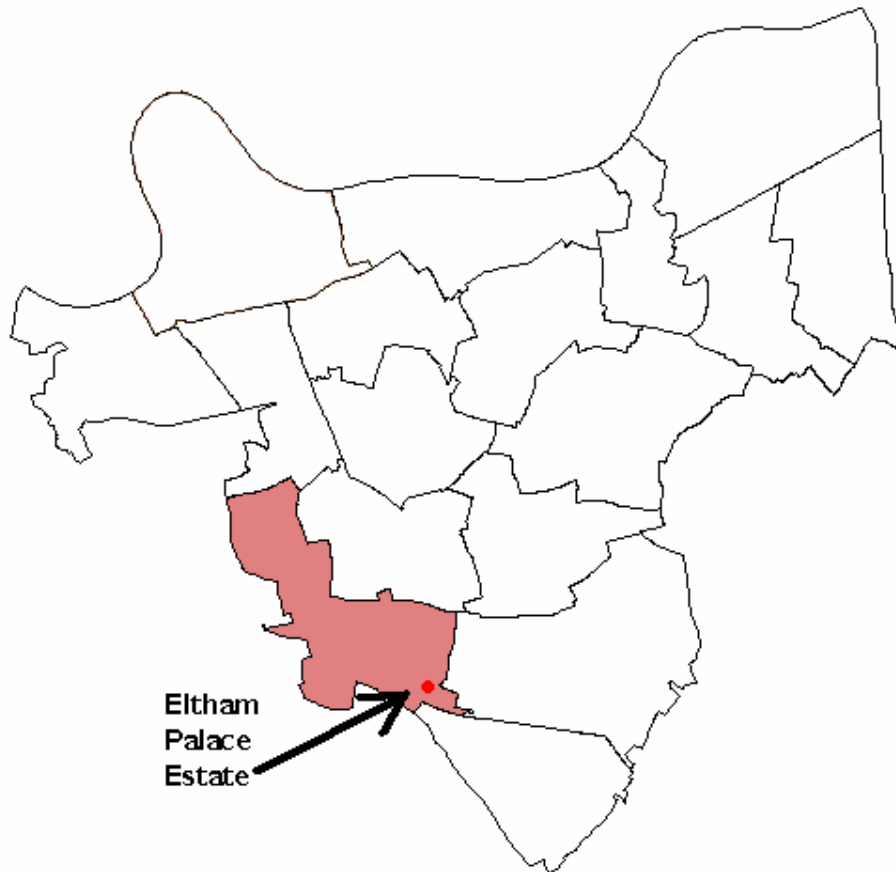
Wider Policy Context

In order to be effective, this plan must take into account all the policies, strategies and legislation that might impinge upon this management plan.

Appendix I contains a list of further policies, strategies and legislation that may affect park management.

Description of the Park

Middle Park Field, The Vista and King John's Playing Fields are all part of the historic Eltham Palace Grounds. The area covered by the grounds is a large area of undulating open space, the average slope of which would seem to be approximately 1 in 15. There are several areas of greater gradient, some of which contain the entrances to the park – making disabled access difficult.



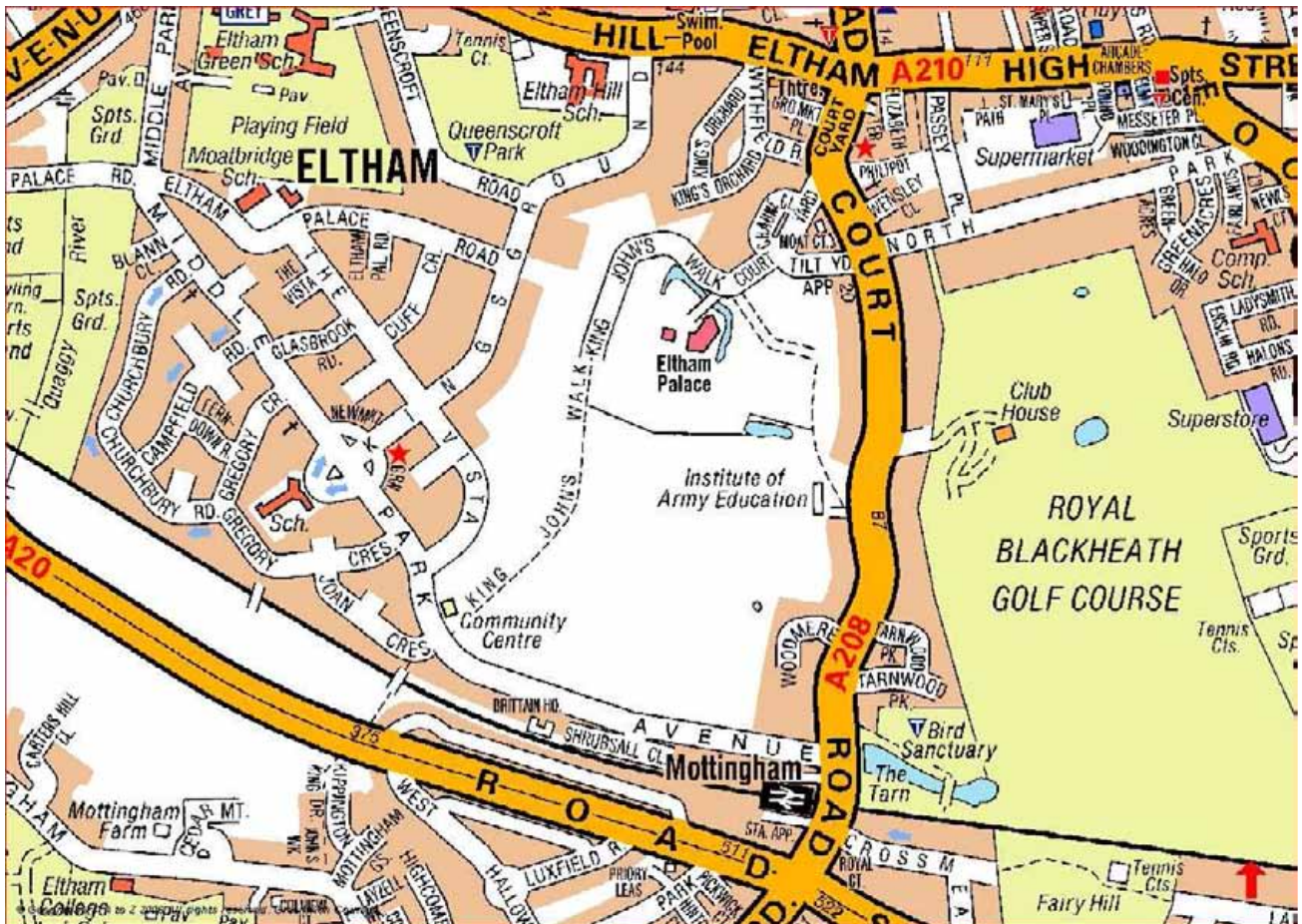
Location of Eltham Palace Estate

The park ranges from around 45 meters above sea level through to approximately 50 meters above sea level. The geology underlying the all of the park is Lambeth Group.

The Park's total area is approximately 11.28 hectares. A plan showing a breakdown of this area is shown in Figure 1. The Vista covers an area of approximately 3.6 ha, King John's Playing Fields covers approximately 2.88 ha, Middle Park Field covers an area of 4.8 ha, of which 1.93 ha is used as allotments and 2.87 ha is parkland.

The Vista field is separated from The Vista (Road) by a railing fence, with the exception of the South West corner where a children's centre has been constructed recently (2006/7). Middle Park Avenue follows the southern border of both The Vista and Middle Park Field. Middle Park Field and King John's Playing Fields both border onto Crown land on their eastern edge, and King John's Playing Fields and The Vista border onto fields owned by English Heritage on their northern edges.

Middle Park Fields, King John's Playing fields
and the Vista Management Plan 2008

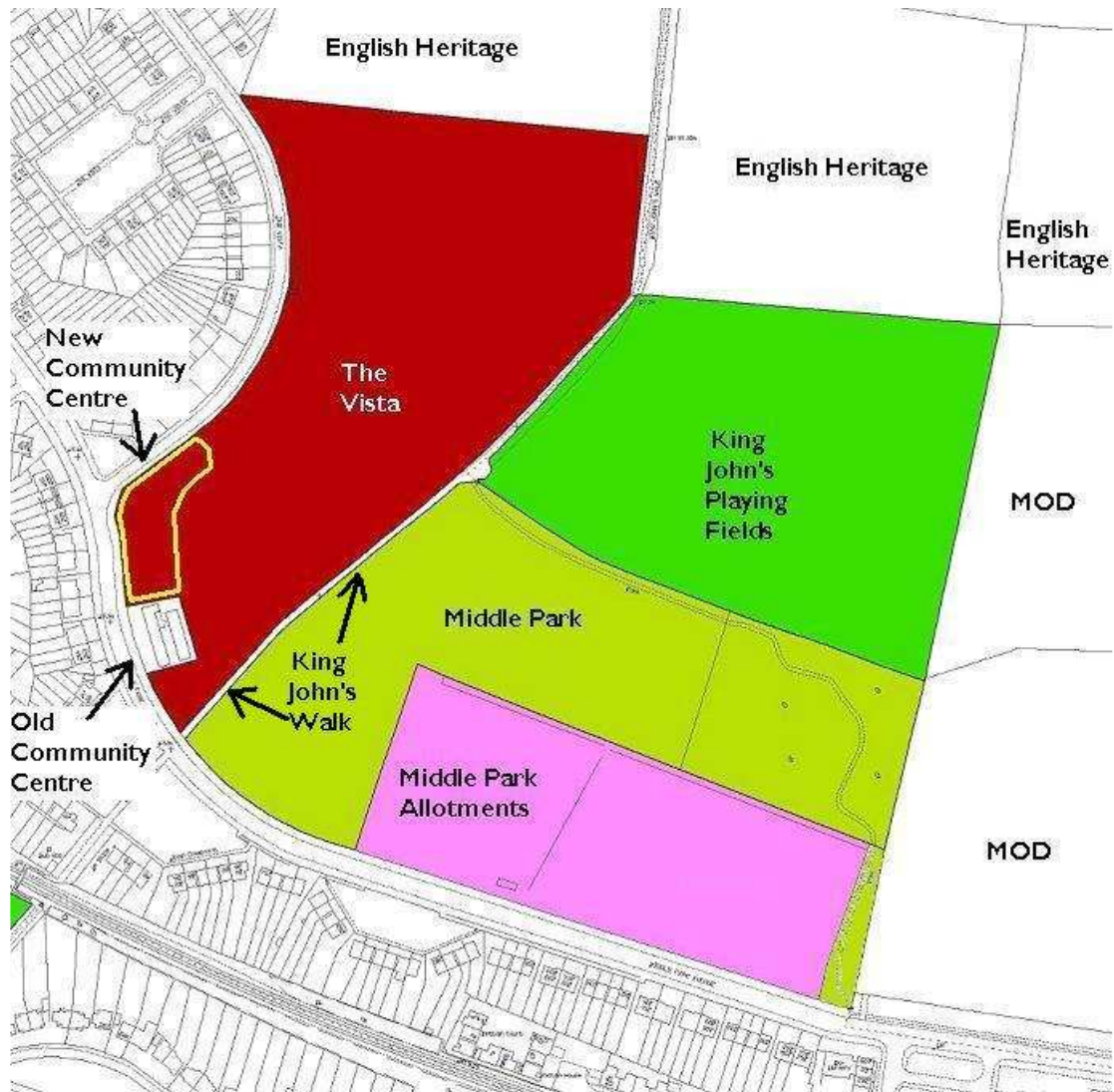


The Vista, King John's Playing Fields and Middle Park Field are owned and operated by Greenwich Council.

The south-western edge of The Vista has recently had a new children's centre construction development undertaken by Greenwich Council

There are currently no leases affecting the park.

The northern area of the park shown on the map below as Middle Park was all used allotments, but has mainly been reverted to parkland. 1.18 ha of this area is still in use as allotments as shown.



Middle Park Field and surrounding area

Access and Circulation

The Green Chain walk runs through the Eltham Palace estate.

King John's Walk is a pathway that runs from north to south through the middle of the parks (see diagram). This forms the main entrances to the park. Other access to the site is from an entrance on the eastern corner of Middle Park Field. The entire perimeter of The Vista where it borders onto The Vista (Road). A concrete stair provides formal access to the road.

Transport for London has identified King John's Walk in their London Cycle Guide map series as being a route signed for cyclists, shared with pedestrians.

King John's Walk forms part of a loop on the Green Chain Walk, as well as being part of the Capital Ring Walk. The previous park on the Green Chain walk is The Tarn, and the next is Harmony Wood.

The only paved pathway within the parks is King John's Walk. At this time, the Highways Department is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the pathway and the bollards.

Access to King John's Playing Fields from King John's Walk is via kissing gates constructed from

40mm box section steel. This is to stop anti-social behaviour – i.e. stolen scooter joyriding and subsequent dumping.

Wheelchair access to the site is good from the northern main entrance, but other entrances are generally greater than 1 in 14 gradients, which makes them unsuitable for disabled access.

Fencing

All the park areas on both sides of King John's Walk are fenced with spiked iron railings at least 1.8 meters high. Gates, bollards and bicycle slowing barriers are installed along all the walkways. In places, the fence is replaced with Hedgerow.

The southern side of Middle Park and the allotment gardens are also fenced with the same iron railings as King John's Walk.

Buildings

There are no council owned buildings within the boundaries of the three parks covered in this management plan. There are the remains of the foundations of a sports pavilion in the southwest corner of King John's Playing Fields and there are a number of privately owned garden sheds within the allotment area in Middle Park Field.

There is a children's centre on the southwest corner of The Vista. The land on which the replacement building is being built is subject to all the planning restrictions and policies specified in the UDP. The use of the new building was judged a sufficient reason to go contrary to the UDP policies.

Signage

Currently the only signage within the parks is the Green Chain walk signage.

Biology

Brief Arboricultural assessment

To Date, there has been no Arboricultural assessments within the park, a site of few trees.

Ecological assessment

To Date, there have been no ecological assessments performed on Middle Park Field, The Vista, or King John's Playing Fields.

Who uses the site, where they come from, patterns of use and behaviour.

The parks within this Management Plan fall within the Wards of Eltham South and Middle Park & Sutcliffe. The information gathered in this section is from a number of sources, including the 2001 Census and the Neighbourhood Statistics website, but summarized on the Greenwich 2002 Ward Profiles page of the Council's intranet site.

The resident population of Eltham South, as measured in the 2001 Census, was 12,832 of which 46 per cent were male and 54 per cent were female. The resident population of Greenwich was 214,403, of which 48 per cent were male and 52 per cent were female.

The 2001 Census indicated that the majority of people living in this Ward were white. People in

the 30 – 59 years age bracket represented the largest proportion of the Ward's population, the average age being 38.1 years. 20.8% of the Ward's population were under the age of 16 years old.

The level of employment was slightly below the Greenwich average and nearly 5% below the national average. 19.2% of the households in this Ward have 2 or more cars or vans, and 35.3% of the population have no access to a car or van.

The resident population of Middle Park Ward as measured in the 2001 census was 5,517 of which 47% were male and 53% were female.

The 2001 census indicated that the majority of people living in this ward are white 91% (6165 people). Ethnic minorities represent a small proportion of this ward 9% (625 people). The age bracket 30-44 represented the highest proportion on the ward population, the average age being 35 years, 28% of the wards population were under the age of 16 years old.

The level of employment was a fraction lower below the Greenwich average approximately 1% lower. 13.6% have 2 or more cars or vans whilst 40% of the wards population had no car or van. Though it is worth noting that there is good access to the park, as a number of buses and a mainline train station Eltham is located closely.

Currently, most of the users of the park seem to be dog walkers and users of the allotments.

Management of the site

The Parks and Open Spaces gardening staff carries out regular maintenance but are not based in any of the sites described in this plan. The mobile Park Keeping staff carry out routine litter clearance on a regular basis and the Parks Security Group (Based at Well Hall Pleasaunce) carry out periodic monitoring of the site.

Budget Information

The budgets used to maintain parks and open spaces are currently split into two areas, Horticulture Operations and Property Services.

Horticulture operations

Currently it is not possible to identify expenditure specifically related to the sites covered in this plan, as finance generally comes from a central fund.

Property Services

The corporate budgets for both planned and responsive maintenance of the Council's property infrastructure are held by Greenwich Property Services in the Directorate of Strategic Planning. Planned works are carried out on a strict basis of corporate priorities and, as a consequence, P&OS has to compete against other service departments for a share of the limited funds available. Responsive repairs are carried out for minor items as and when they arise.

Marketing

The park is not actively marketed by the council. The Green Chain is marketed by several organisations and Eltham Palace Estate indirectly benefits from this marketing

PART II: WHERE DO WE WANT TO GET TO

VISION

The vision for Eltham Palace Estate is to continue to provide a quality local park which meets the needs of the local community

To manage the estate in a manner that continues to ensure that the whole of Eltham Palace Estate is of consistent landscape character by consulting with English Heritage.

- To, where possible, meet the needs of the public and others
- To manage the site within legal parameters
- To work within allocated budgets
- To exercise good health & safety practices and work within the council's policy
- Be available to consider suggestions for changes to the plan
- To ensure day to day management of the site is efficient and effective
- To monitor events and increase public usage of the facilities
- To readily adapt to meet changes in legislation, employment and environment law etc.
- Strive to meet the schedule work as documented in the plan
- To continue maintaining the site as an amenity facility
- To provide adequate facilities to minimise the hazards of dog fouling
- To provide and maintain adequate park furniture (including signage)

ANALYSIS & ASSESSMENT

Ecology

The Ecology within the Eltham Palace Estate is in some cases unique to the area, with the Hedgerows are of a species mix that was typical of the area (hawthorn, Oak, Blackthorn Dog Rose, Field maple, Ash, Cherry – see 'Landscape section below). Overall, the park provides a valuable meadowland habitat, but there has been no assessment to evaluate exactly how important this area is.

The UDP says "Plans need to be based on adequate information about species and habitats... To achieve these goals, baseline data needs to be established where ecologically friendly management is already in place. Therefore, Ecological assessments must be undertaken in order to establish baseline data."

Historically, the area covered by these parks was once woodland used as a deer park.

If it is judged appropriate to plant more trees within the park, it may be beneficial to undertake a study at some stage in order to ascertain whether the parks might be more valuable as partly wooded.

Sport & Recreation

Eltham Palace Estate parks provides plenty of scope for passive recreation, but any development for active recreation would be inappropriate to the conservation designations of the area (see UDP

sections 2.4 and 2.6)

Heritage

The heritage significance of the Eltham Palace Estate parks is mainly limited to association with Eltham Palace. This said, there may be a great deal of "Invisible Heritage" associated with the park (Memories of events, stories, memories of the view from the park and presented by the park etc) One element of heritage which is specifically associated with King John's Walk is that it was walked every day by King John II of France around 1364 when he was a prisoner by conquest being held to ransom by Edward III after his defeat at the Battle of Poitiers in 1356.

Landscape

The landscape within the park provides valuable public amenity space within the area, as the nearest large open space is Blackheath Golf Course, which is privately owned and not accessible by the public. The views presented from the park are exceptional, with views reaching to the heart of London, particularly from the aptly named 'The Vista'.

English Heritage representatives have expressed a desire to see more trees, as this would serve as at least a partial wind break for the palace gardens, which are currently quite exposed. This would return some of the historic landscape of the park, but might lead to an increase in anti social behaviour. English Heritage would also like King John's Walk to be hedged on both sides. However, this could potentially encourage more anti social behaviour and should be explored further.

English Nature has tentatively indicated that they would be willing to use their own staff and resources in order to plant trees and lay hedges within the (council owned) areas.

Any hedges planted within the park should conform to the mix identified below.

Historic Hedge laying Mix specific to Eltham Palace identified by Eltham Palace Head Gardener

Hawthorn	84%
Oak (English)	7%
Blackthorn	3%
Dog Rose	3%
Field maple	2%
Ash	0.5%
Cherry	0.5%

The Park has a lack of signage, both within and outside the park, identifying the names of the parks at the very least. English Heritage should be consulted regarding construction of any Interpretation signage, as they will be more aware of issues and opportunities for interpretation on this particular site.

Management

Management of the park appears to satisfy the wider users of the site. As mentioned above, English Heritage has indicated a preference from more vegetation on the site. Environmental studies in order to assess the quality of the regeneration grassland ecosystem might be appropriate to source in-house.

Trees

To date, there has not been an arboricultural survey performed within Fairy Hill Park. An Arboricultural survey of Fairy Hill Park should be undertaken.

Tree management of the site will:

- Comply with the overall management plan for Fairy Hill Park
- Undertake the work identified within the most current tree survey
- To preserve and enhance the existing landscape by replacing a tree when removed and reviewing capacity for additional planting.

Visitor & Community Needs

Currently there has been no assessment of Visitor and community needs. Community consultation should be undertaken to ascertain these needs, the results of which should be incorporated into this management plan.

STRENGTHS

- Park is a large open space which can be used for many purposes by the general public
- Excellent ecological habitat for mature woodland biome
- Good recreational space
- Easily visible park
- Great view from the park
- Already classified as a SINC
- Protected by a number of planning designations

CHALLENGES

- ASB – Car, Moped and motorcycle riding within the park, goalposts sometimes removed, fly tipping
- No ecological studies performed
- No Arboricultural Assessment

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Undertake consultation with stakeholders in order to assess needs and priorities with reference to this plan and establish interest in the formation of a Friends group
- Undertake an ecological survey to assess both the regeneration grassland/meadowland within the Parks
- Reduce ASB
- Undertake a tree survey

Additional Signage – name of site and emergency numbers, Green Flag signage, possible Interpretation (for example, explaining significant of King John's Walk

Part III: HOW WILL WE GET THERE

ACTION PLAN

Timescales as given in this document are as following;

Short Term – Within one-two years from adoption of this plan

Medium Term – Within three-four years from the adoption of this plan

Long Term – Five years and more from the adoption of this plan

Action required	Detail of Specific action	Objective	Timescale (Long/Medium/Short Term)	Responsibility	Status of Work
Undertake consultation on plan to identify needs/priorities of community and establish interest in the formation of a Friends of group	User surveys with stakeholders and within the park		Short Term		
Reduce ASB	Initiate discussions with local Police/Parks ASB officer		Ongoing		
Undertake tree survey	To be investigated/scheduled by P&OS Tree Arbiculturalist		Medium		

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Upgrade Signage	Possible interpretation panel, Green Flag and name/contact details signage		Medium		
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PART IV: HOW WILL WE KNOW WHEN WE'VE ARRIVED

MONITORING AND REVIEW

This Management Plan will be fully reviewed and updated in 2012 by Parks Management Staff responsible for the site.

A working document copy of the Management Plan will be kept within the parks office so that issues and changes that arise can be documented. The Action Plan will be reviewed as appropriate and updated accordingly.

APPENDIX I: Legislation, policies and strategies affecting park management

Greenwich Council's Parks & Open Spaces department operates within a wide framework of national, regional and local policy statements and strategies.

The main documents impacting on the development of this plan are listed below:

The Greenwich Strategy

The Greenwich Strategy sets out the vision for the Greenwich Borough as being the place to live, work, learn and visit. This vision underpins all of the strategies produced by Greenwich Council and directly impacts on all service plans and service delivery.

The Cultural Strategy

Parks & Open Spaces is one of six 'areas' considered by the Cultural Strategy. The Strategy has five over-arching themes: - Equality and Access, Sustainability, the Cultural Economy, Achievement and Excellence and Partnerships. All of these aims are relevant to this management plan and have been considered in developing the opportunities and priorities for this site.

Green Space Strategy

The Green Spaces Strategy sets out the Council's strategic intentions for its green assets and its vision of the positive contribution that Greenwich's open networks make to our lives.

The thematic objectives (community safety, biodiversity, education and culture, culture & events, tackling inequality, sport, health & well being) are all relevant to the management plan for Eltham Palace Estate.

Parks & Open Spaces Service Plan 2006-7

The Parks & Open Spaces department aims to develop, manage, ensure accessibility and maintain to a high standard the borough's Parks, Open Spaces, Woodlands, Tree Stock, Cemeteries, Playgrounds, Sports Pitches, Allotments and other outdoor facilities. To meet the needs of the community and deliver the Council's core objectives where applicable to the service, and specifically regarding the provision of a clean and well cared for environment and supporting Health and Quality of Life for the local community.

Unitary Development Plan

Local Councils are required by law to produce a Unitary Development Plan (UDP), which provide the land use and transportation planning policy framework for the control of development across the entire Borough

- Eltham Estate is designated by the UDP as being;; -
- Metropolitan Open Land
- Green Chain Park
- Green Chain Walk
- Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI – Zone ncl I)
- Capital Ring Walk
- Area of Special Character of Metropolitan Importance
- Conservation Area

Metropolitan Open Land

The UDP designates Eltham Palace Estate as Metropolitan Open Land (MOL). Policy references O1, O2 and O3 under the section 'Protecting Open Land' set out what the acceptable land uses and allowable developments are within areas designated as MOL. These policy references are too lengthy to reproduce here. The policies are broadly meant to control development or alterations to existing land that would be inappropriate to MOL and has an adverse affect on the character and usage of the open space.

Green Chain Park

The UDP also designates Eltham Palace Estate as Green Chain. Policy reference O4 under the section 'Protecting Open Land' sets out what the objectives of this designation are. The objectives are as follows

- i. To improve and encourage the provision of suitable recreational facilities, with an emphasis on those serving a wide area of South East London and/or requiring open land.
- ii. To safeguard the open land from built development and maintain its positive contribution in providing a visual and physical break in the built-up area of London.
- iii. To conserve and enhance the visual amenity and ecological aspects of the landscape.
- iv. To improve public access to and through the area.
- v. To promote an overall identity for the area in order to increase public awareness of available recreational facilities.
- vi. To encourage the collaboration and co-operation of the various public and private agencies, owners, organisations, clubs, etc. in the area to achieve the above objectives.

Green Chain Walk

The Green Chain Walk is a trail that stretches across the entire extent of the southeast London Green Chain of parks and passes through the boroughs of Lewisham, Greenwich and Bexley. The UDP Maps show that the Green Chain Walk passes through Eltham Palace Estate. The UDP identifies the Green Chain Walk and sets out the following policy which includes the Green Chain Walk.

O14 existing footpaths will be safeguarded and new footpaths created to and through open spaces and places of interest, where they do not adversely affect nature conservation. The Council will endeavour to create a signposted network of continuous and circular routes. In particular the 'Green Chain Walk' footpath network will be improved and extended and new links created wherever possible.

The UDP then says that the Mayor's Transport strategy has identified the Green Chain Walk as being one of six strategic walks in London.

The Capitol Ring walk, which is another of the major walks, also runs through King John's walk

Area of Special Character of Metropolitan Importance

The UDP designates Eltham Palace Estate as part of an Area of Special Character of Metropolitan Importance. It states the following policy regarding Areas of Special Character.

D28 Within Areas of Special Character defined on the Proposals Map, special consideration will be given to the safeguarding, restoration and enhancement of character, scale and quality of open

spaces and associated buildings. Skylines and distant views both to and from the Areas of Special Character will be protected.

Nature Conservation

The UDP identifies Eltham Palace Estate as being a Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SINC) and designates it as being a site of Borough importance and lists it as being SNCI site NCI I. The reason for the designation is given as the following.

A large area of open land with fine old hedgerows, a variety of grasses and wild flowers , wetter areas, (ponds and the moat in the grounds of the palace), add to the habitat diversity of the site.

The UDP refers to SINC'S as following: -

O17 A network of Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) throughout the Borough has been identified for protection. These include Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and sites declared as Local Nature Reserves (LNR). They are defined on the Proposals Map and listed in Table O2 as sites of Metropolitan, Borough or Local importance for nature conservation or geology. There will be a presumption against the development of these sites: the level of protection accorded to a site will be commensurate with its designation. Conservation and enhancement of important scientific features will be sought by appropriate management.

In addition, It says: -

Plans need to be based on adequate information about species and habitats... To achieve these goals, baseline data needs to be established where ecologically friendly management is already in place. Therefore, Ecological assessments must be undertaken in order to establish baseline data.

For the extent of the SNCI Areas, refer to the UDP proposals map and second draft alterations maps.

Areas of Special Character

The Greenwich UDP in part 2.6 designates Eltham Palace Estate as part of a larger area designated as Special Character of Metropolitan Character.

D28 Within Areas of Special Character defined on the Proposals Map, special consideration will be given to the safeguarding, restoration and enhancement of character, scale and quality of open spaces and associated buildings. Skylines and distant views both to and from the Areas of Special Character will be protected.

Conservation Area

Eltham Palace Estate is part of a wider area designated as a Conservation Area. Section 2.6 of the UDP sets out the policies relating to Conservation areas and is too lengthy to reproduce in this document, but the main thrust of the policies is to conserve and enhance historic landscapes by use of Urban Design Principles, Design Statements and ecological surveys to assess and approve any developments.

Please see the UDP part 2.6 for comprehensive details.

ISO 9001:2000 – Quality Management System

Quality Management System ISO 9001: 2000 is used by organisations to manage their activities and resources to guarantee a quality service. This management system is based on eight quality management principles:

- Customer Focus
- Leadership
- Involving People
- Process Approach
- System Approach to management
- Continual Improvement
- Factual Approach to decision making
- Supplier relationship, which benefit both sides.

The Parks & Open Spaces department is currently ISO 9000 accredited.

Legislation

The Parks & Open Spaces department operates within the frameworks set out by the following legislation, and therefore, the legislation may impact upon the delivery of service of the Parks and Open Spaces department both financially, through planning and human resources. This is not a comprehensive list but is indicative of key pieces of legislation relating to P&OS.

- Alcohol Consumption in Public Places Order 2003
- Clean Neighbourhoods Act 2004
- Control of Pesticide Protection Act 1986
- Country Code 1981
- Country side and Rights of Way Act 2000 and increments
- Countryside & Right of Way Act 2000
- Disability Discrimination Act 1998
- Health & Safety at Work Act 1998
- Litter Act 1983
- Ministry of Housing and Local Government Provisional Order Confirmation (Greater London Parks & Open Spaces Act)1967
- Occupiers Liability Act 1957
- Road Traffic Act 1988 (as amended 1991)
- The 2004 Country Code
- The Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 & Dogs Act 1871??
- The National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act 1949
- The Weeds Act 1959
- The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981

In addition there are numerous bye-laws that relate to specific parks.

APPENDIX II: Eltham Palace History

Eltham 'Palace', or Eltham Manor, as it was more accurately named in the Middle Ages and under the Tudors, has been occupied intermittently by elite institutions and families for over 900 years. The attractions of its location were its relative closeness to London, its relatively good communications by river and especially by road, and its rural setting, a factor which was exploited at least between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries with the addition to the manor complex of a large park for hunting. Several developers of the site seem also to have been inspired by the fine views westward towards the city of London: certainly several of the most important buildings were located on the edge of the escarpment to take advantage of this.

The site appears in Domesday book of 1086 as a property of Odo, bishop of Bayeux, half-brother of William I, and was redeveloped in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century by Antony Bek, soldier, statesman and bishop of Durham. Eltham passed into the royal estate in the second quarter of the fourteenth century, and numerous surviving documents in the National Archives attest to the large sums lavished on the site by monarchs including Edward III, Richard II and Henry IV. The itineraries of all of these monarchs indicate that they were prepared to stay at Eltham more than once in an average year, often for long periods, including major feasts such as Christmas and Easter. From Richard I's reign at the latest, the building accounts describing works to the moated site also make reference to the park to the south, including a garden on the counterscarp of the ditch. However, the most substantial rebuilding took place in the early 1480s under Edward IV, and during several phases in the sixteenth century, including important works by Henry VIII, much of whose childhood had been spent at Eltham. However, over the course of the sixteenth century, the manor went into decline, partly eclipsed by the riverside palace at Greenwich nearby, which naturally enjoyed superior connections to the centre of the court at Whitehall or Windsor. Though both Elizabeth I and James I carried out works to the royal apartments at Eltham, its value as a royal property was now minimal, and much of the property was leased out to tenants.

During the Civil War in the mid-seventeenth century, Parliamentary soldiers were garrisoned at Eltham, taking the opportunity to ransack the houses and park: after the war, large numbers of timbers were felled for the use of the navy. More damage was inflicted by Colonel Nathaniel Rich 'the rebel'. Thereafter, the site of the manor was largely occupied by agricultural buildings (the semi-derelict Great Hall was occasionally used as a barn), returning to residential tenancies during the nineteenth century. Debates about the conservation and use of the buildings were settled (controversially) with the decision to incorporate the Great Hall into a new house, designed eclectically by Seely and Paget, for Stephen and Virginia Courtauld, who leased the property from the Crown Commissioners in 1933. The new house was first occupied in 1936. In March 1945, Eltham was occupied by the Army Education Corps (later Royal Army Education Corps), the Courtaulds having left the previous year on account of the war. The house continued in military occupation until 1992. Since 1995, the Palace has been administered by English Heritage.

Eltham Palace once had three deer parks, being: Great Park, Middle Park and Horn Park. During the civil war, these parks were clear felled for shipbuilding timber. Since then, they were used as farmland, until development. Development of Middle Park Estate was commenced in 1931 and finished in 1936.

APPENDIX III: Management structure

Table showing senior management of Greenwich Council Parks and Open Spaces Service

