

Appendix 2.

Mile End Park Management Plan 2018-2019

Revised January 2018



**London Borough of Tower Hamlets
Parks & Open Spaces
Arts, Parks & Events Services
Communities, Localities & Culture Directorate**

Contents

1	Introduction	
	1.1 How the Management Plan is organised	4
	Political and Strategic Context	
	2.1 Demography of the Borough	5
	2.2 Democracy	5
	2.3 Council Departments	5
2	2.4 Open Space Strategy	6
	2.5 Community Plan	6
	2.6 Parks Management	6
	2.7 Organogram of Parks & Open Spaces Team	7
	2.8 Organogram of Mile End Park Structure	8
	2.9 Organogram of Green Team	9
3	Fact Sheet	10
	History and Context	
4	4.1 Summary	12
	4.2 Stretching back in time	12
	4.3 A park for people	12-13
	4.4 Constructing the dream	13
	Site Overview	
5	5.1 The Park deconstructed	14
	5.2 Amenities	14
	5.2.1 Amenities south to north (to Green Bridge)	14
	5.2.2 Amenities Green Bridge to north of Park	15
	5.3 Wennington Green	15
	5.4 The Ecology Park	15-16
	5.5 The Art Park	16-17
	5.6 The Green Bridge and Terrace Garden	17-18
	5.7 Adventure Park	19-20
	5.8 The Sport Park	20
	5.9 The Children's Play Park	20-21
	5.10 Interlinking Elements	21-23
	5.11 Map showing segmentation (red) and amenities within Park	24
	A Welcoming Place	
6	6.1 Objectives	25
	6.2 Accessibility	25
	6.3 A visible presence	25
	6.4 Community Park Rangers	25
	6.5 Signage	25
	A Healthy, Safe and Secure Place	
7	7.1 Objectives	26
	7.2 Play Equipment	26
	7.3 Security	26
	7.4 Tower Hamlets Police and Community Safety	27
	7.5 Tower Hamlets Parks & Open Spaces Byelaws	27
	7.6 Dog Control	27-28
	7.7 Risk Reduction and Management	28
	Well Maintained and Clean	
8	8.1 Objectives	29
	8.2 Grounds Maintenance	29
	8.3 Litter clearance	29
	8.4 Repairs and graffiti removal	29-30
	8.5 Park furniture	30
	8.6 Cleanliness	30
	8.7 Park lighting and CCTV	30

	8.8	Financial Allocation	30
		A Sustainable Park	
	9.1	Objectives	31
	9.2	Quality Audit – Green Flag Awards	31
	9.3	Carbon Management Plan	31-32
	9.4	Grass maintenance	32
	9.5	Planting	32
9	9.6	Tree Strategy	33
	9.7	Green Procurement	33
	9.8	Recycling of green waste, and other waste	34
	9.9	Pesticides and Fertilisers	34
	9.10	Water Conservation	34
	9.11	Building Management	34-35
		Mar Conservation and Heritage	
10	10.1	Objectives	36
	10.2	Background	36-37
	10.3	LBTH Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2014-2019	38
		Community Involvement	
	11.1	Objectives	39
	11.2	Community Involvement	39
11	11.3	The Friends	39
	11.4	Volunteering	40-41
	11.5	Events	41
	11.6	Summer Programme	41-43
		Marketing and Publicity	
	12.1	Objectives	44
	12.2.1	Press coverage	44
12	12.2.2	Interpretation	44
	12.4	Signage	45
	12.5	Publicity in literature	47
	12.6	Publicity with local organisations	47
		Implementing of Management Plan	
	13.1	Objectives	48
	13.2	Strategic Context	48
13	13.3	Monitoring and reviewing the plan	48
	13.4	Performance Management	48
	13.5	Service Standards	49
	13.6	Design principles for Tower Hamlets Parks and Open Spaces	49
14		14.1 Previous Year's Action Plan & Progress 2017-18	52-56
		14.2 MEP 5 Year Aspiration Plan (2015-2020)	57-59
		Appendix A	
	A1		60-62
	A2		63-66
	A3		67-73
15		Appendix B	74
		Appendix C1	75-76
		Appendix C2	77-78
		Contact details	79

1 Introduction

Mile End Park is a unique and dynamic environment bisecting one of London's most deprived inner city areas – the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. Made up of a string of zones offering everything from peace and quiet, space for activities and a place to relax and enjoy nature, Mile End Park follows the Regent's Canal from close to the Thames to Victoria Park in the north where Tower Hamlets meets the neighbouring Borough of Hackney.

The Park meanders through the rich industrial and social history of the area, offers local residents a breath of the country and is managed to promote sustainability and good practice. This Management Plan is a document that captures both the history of the Park as well as the values and methods used in managing and maintaining it.

Specifically, this Management Plan aims to show:

- ***The history of the Park and how these features are maintained.***
- ***How the Park is promoted to both the local and wider community.***
- ***How sustainable methods are introduced to manage the Park using a range of best horticultural practice.***
- ***How the Park provides a safe, healthy and secure environment that meets the needs of its users.***
- ***How the local community are consulted and engaged to work towards a shared vision.***

1.1 How the Management Plan is organised

The Management Plan has a contents list to guide the reader. It is laid out to show the history and development of the Park and offers a description of the various zones within the Park. The main focus of the Management Plan has been organised to fit with the objectives of the Green Flag which set the quality standards for this Park:

- ***A Welcoming Place***
- ***Health, Safe and Secure***
- ***Well Maintained and Clean***
- ***Environmental Management***
- ***Biodiversity, Landscape and Management***
- ***Community Involvement***
- ***Marketing and Communication***
- ***Management***

Annual and longer term objectives will be drawn up according to the Green Flag criteria's where necessary. These action plans will be appended in each section of the plan and updating as a live document with progress

2 Political and Strategic Context

2.1 Demography of the Borough

According to the Census ONS 2011 mid-year population projection, the borough's population was 304,900 in June 2017, with a projected rise to 364,500 by 2026. The 2016 figure is the first time the area's population has exceeded 300,000 since before the Second World War.

The borough's population is projected to grow more than 2x as fast as London and 3x as fast as England between 2016 and 2026.

Tower Hamlets has seen drastic population change in recent decades, growing faster than any other local authority in the country. Over the last 30 years, the borough population more than doubled, rising from 144,800 in 1985 to 295,200 in 2015.¹ This briefing will examine how the population is expected to change over the next ten years using population projections, primarily those produced by the Greater London Authority (GLA).

This briefing presents the Greater London Authority's population projections for the borough and breakdowns by MSOA, age group and ethnic group. The projections expect Tower Hamlets to be the fastest growing borough in London over the next ten years, reaching a population of 364,500 in 2026.

The borough includes one of the highest Muslim populations in the country and has an established British Bangladeshi and Pakistani business and residential community.

2.2 Democracy

The council operates an elected Mayor and Cabinet form of executive decision-making, with an overview and scrutiny committee, a standards committee and various other decision-making and regulatory committees. As of 2017, the councilors are: 22 Labour, 9 Independent Group, 5 Conservative, 5 People's Alliance, 3 independent, 1 Liberal Democrat.

2.3 Council Departments

The council employs around 10,500 staff in six directorates around 4,800 of whom are based in schools. The corporate structure is designed to support the council's objective of ensuring the provision of services that are responsive to the needs of individuals and communities and integrated at the point of delivery.

The council management structure consists of five directorates:

- **Governance** directorate comprises Democratic Services, Legal Services, including Electoral Services, Communications and the Strategy and Performance Team.
- **Resources** directorate comprises of the financial, human and ICT resources functions.
- **Place** directorate
- **Health, Adults and Community** directorate
- **Childrens Services** directorate is committed to further improving outcomes for children and young people.

The Parks and Open Spaces Team are a part of the Arts, Parks and Events Services who sit within the Childrens Service Directorate.

2.4 Open Space Strategy

The Tower Hamlets parks and open spaces strategy aims to ensure that the borough's parks and open spaces reflect the shared vision of the council and its partners: to improve the quality of life for everyone living and working in Tower Hamlets. Parks and open spaces are important elements of all the borough's community plan themes: living safely; living well; creating and sharing prosperity; learning achievement, leisure and excellent public services.

The strategy details how the council and its partners plan to achieve and maintain the highest quality parks and open spaces that are safe and accessible to all of the borough's residents and visitors. The strategy also focuses on sustainability. It outlines the council's plan to cater for the future needs of the community and the environment in the design and use of open spaces.

The strategy has been developed in consultation with local people, residents groups, community groups and public bodies with an interest in open space issues. Each year, the council carries out improvements to parks and open spaces, as identified in the open spaces strategy. This includes refurbishment to play areas, park furniture, planting and signage.

https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/leisure_and_culture/parks_and_open_spaces/open_space_strategy.aspx

2.5 Community Plan

The Community Plan provides the Tower Hamlets Partnership's long-term vision for the borough, articulating local aspirations, needs and priorities. It informs all other strategies and delivery plans of the partnership, including the council's Strategic Plan.

The plan was developed in consultation with local residents and service users, community and voluntary sector organisations, and a range of representative groups and forums, as well as members of the council. It outlines how the partnership will work together to improve the lives of all those who live and work in the borough, and continues the existing focus on tackling poverty and social exclusion in Tower Hamlets, though with a new emphasis on fairness, as suggested by our local Fairness Commission. It also continues to prioritise equality, cohesion and community leadership through the theme of "One Tower Hamlets".

https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/community_and_living/community_plan/community_plan.aspx

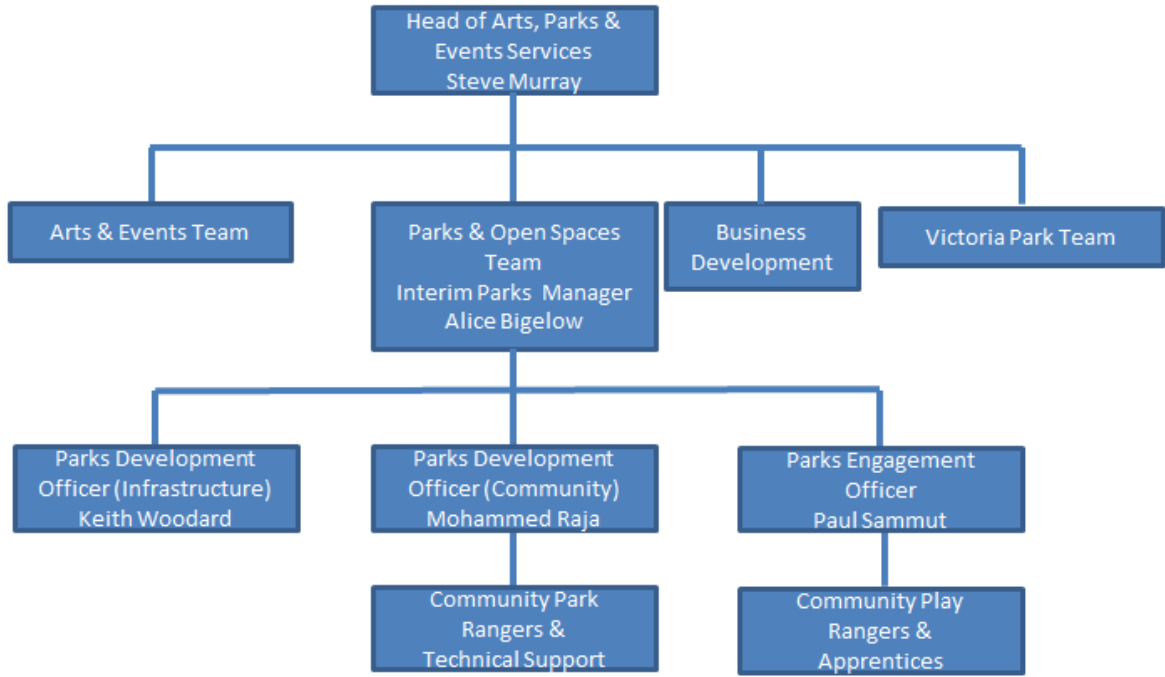
2.6 Parks Management

The Mile End Parks Management falls within the Tower Hamlets Directorate of Children's Services, Division of Sports, Leisure and Culture, Arts, Parks and Events Section. The Mile End Park Management Team is managed by the Tower Hamlets Parks Manager, and includes a number of officers and Park Rangers. This team works alongside the Victoria Park team which is under separate management.

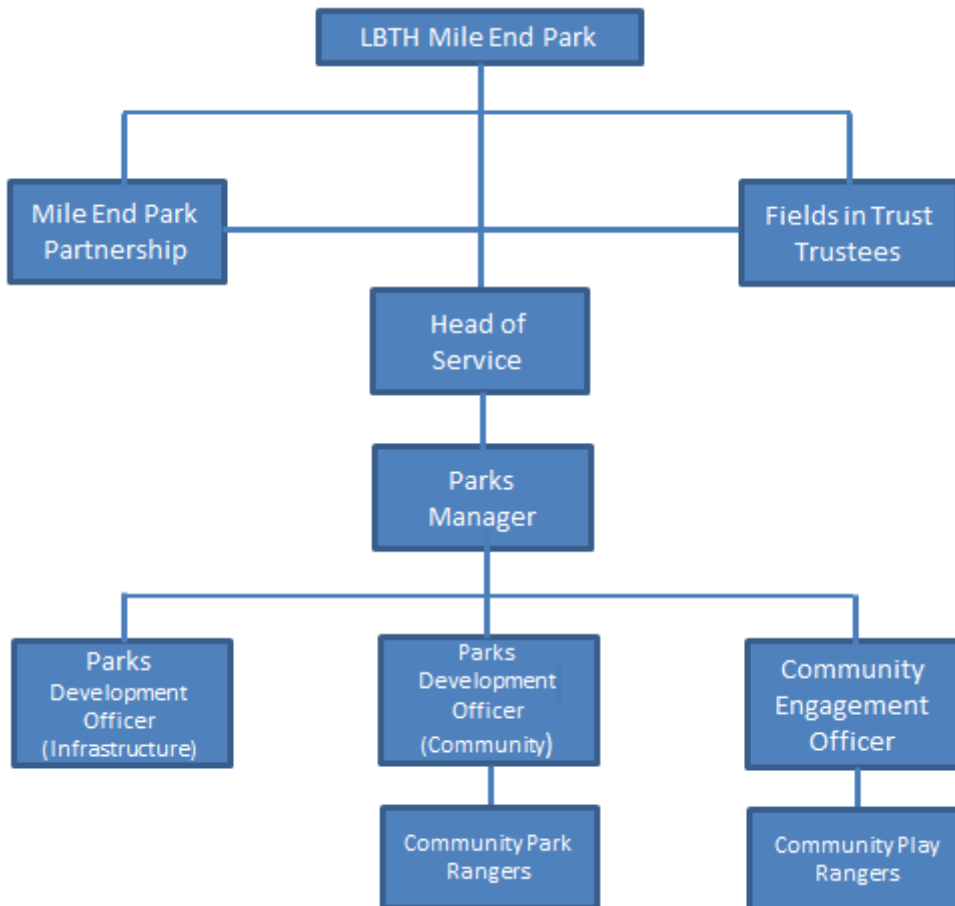
The horticultural and grounds maintenance is carried out by The Green Team falling under the Tower Hamlets Place Directorate, Public Realm Division.

The Mile End Park management falls within the purview of the Fields in Trust, an independent charitable trust working alongside Tower Hamlets council. The site is dual owned by the two organisations.

2.7 Organogram of Parks & Open Spaces Team

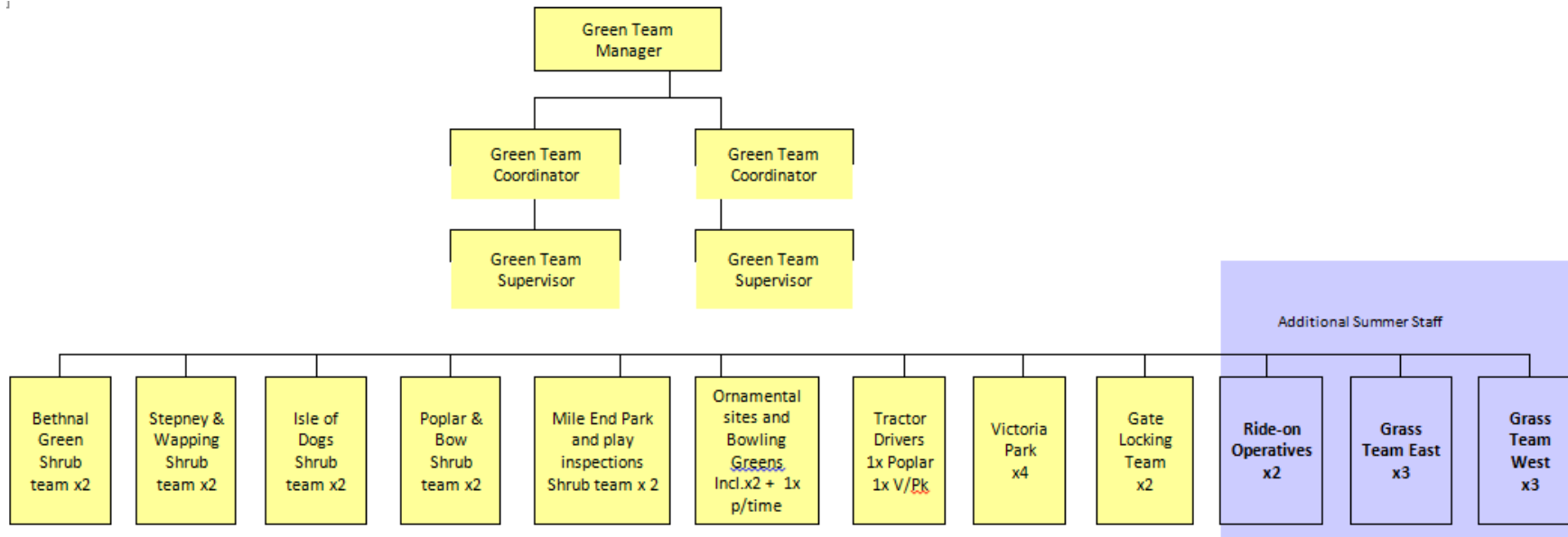


2.8 Organogram of Mile End Park Structure



The Head of Service reports to the Fields in Trust Charity board which comprises of the entire cabinet of Tower Hamlets and chaired by the Executive Mayor. The Head of Service also reports to the Mile End Park Partnership board. This was formed to oversee the construction phases of the park and continues to cover the outstanding items. The board consists of two senior councillors from the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, the East London Business Alliance and trustees of what was the Environment Trust and are joined by the Friends of the park in the capacity of observer who enjoy speaking rights but do not have voting status.

2.9 Organogram of Green Team



This has been subject to competitive tendering since the 1988 Local Government Act with contracted service providers delivering both horticultural maintenance and cleansing services. The Council has recently reviewed this arrangement and since 2013 the horticultural maintenance has been directly undertaken by the in-house team 'LBTH Green Team'. Cleansing operations will be undertaken by the Councils Cleansing contractor Veolia. This arrangement has been developed to ensure that high quality, efficient and effective services are delivered.

Council monitoring officers check standards of work such as grass cutting, weeding, pruning and litter picking and any failure is brought to the attention of the relevant service provider to remedy. The monitoring officers also certify due payment to the contracted service provider and issue variation orders for additional work. All cleansing functions are monitored in line with NI 195 standards and horticultural activities on an A-C scale.

3 Fact Sheet

Physical & Geographical Details

The Park is situated within the Mile End and Bow area, and is best described to be as a vertical column down the centre of Tower Hamlets.

Area of Site

The total area of Mile End Park is some 32 hectares (79 acres).

Land Tenure

There is dual ownership of the Park; Fields in Trust and the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. The Council owns Brickfield Gardens, Agnes Green, Kirks Place and the Locksley Street Children's Playground. All of these are located in the south of the Park. Fields in Trust own the rest.

Public Rights of Way

No public rights of way are known to exist across the site; all paths are permissive.

Grid Reference

The Ordnance Survey Grid Reference for Mile End Park:

TQ 362827

X: 536201

Y: 182701

Latitude: 51.526808

Longitude: 0.038022995

Due to the size of the Park, the grid reference of the Art Park has been used.

Planning Authority

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets is the Local Planning Authority.

Electoral Information

Mile End Park is located in the Bow West and Mile End wards.

Transport Links

Bus: There are numerous buses which pass through the Mile End Road junction which are close to the Park. These are 25, 277, D6, D7, 205, 323, 339, 425 and N25.

Tube: The nearest station is Mile End. This station is in Zone 2 and is on the Hammersmith and City Line, the District Line and the Central Line.

Access

With the exception of the Children's Play Park in Locksley Street (locked every day at dusk), the Park is open throughout the year. The layout of the Park does not make it suitable for closure, and the Park's 24 hour access is useful for local users who access many of the Park's amenities through day and night.

The Park has numerous entrances. Vehicle access is for Council services and contractors; all other vehicles are prohibited from entering without prior consent from the Council, unless for emergency access by police or ambulance.

With the exception of a handful of stairway entrances via Regent's Canal, all entrances are accessible to people with limited mobility. Despite its' gradients it is accessible for people with buggies or wheelchairs as well as others with limited mobility. The entrances are well lit, spacious, and some are covered by CCTV.

Amenities

- Three pavilions (Arts, Ecology and Play), two with ponds
- Picnic areas at Kirk's Place, King George's Field, the Events Field and Wennington Green
- Playgrounds (at Brickfield Gardens, the Locksley Street Children's area and the Adventure Park)
- Conservation areas at Kirk's Place and the Arts pavilion
- Sports facilities: climbing wall at the Ecology park, full size astro turf football pitch at King George's Field, 5 a side football pitches, Mile End Stadium and Leisure Centre, BMX track, Multi Use Games Area at the Adventure Park
- Dog Gym at the Adventure Park
- Outdoor gym at Wennington Green

- Retail units under the Green Bridge and adjacent to the Adventure Park
- Across the Park – cycle and walking path, 3 woodland walks, central reservation planting and canal bridges at Meath and Solebay



Map of Tower Hamlets illustrating location of Mile End Park (North and South)

4 History and Context

4.1 Summary

The Park was constructed from several pieces of land and was originally designed to become an almost continuous green strip less than half a mile from Victoria Park in the north and reaching to within 0.75 mile of Limehouse Basin in the south. Although the Park doesn't quite reach Limehouse Basin and there remain three roads that divide it, the presence of the towpath along the Regent's Canal allows for an unbroken walk through the Park.

4.2 Stretching back in time

The site has a rich history, dating as far back as the Peasants' Revolt, as Mile End Green was the place that Watt Tyler, Leader of the Peasant Army met King Richard II and his assembled army in 1381.

In 1820-1838 it was the site of a famous pleasure garden or tea garden, known as the New Globe Inn Gardens. These pleasure gardens were slightly less fashionable than Vauxhall and Raneleigh Gardens, but at sixpence entry fee, still considered itself genteel. The New Globe Inn can still be seen today with its characteristic globe on the roof to the north west of the Green Bridge.

In 1936, following the death of King George V, a charity was formed to improve playing fields and recreation grounds across the country in commemoration of the late King. Mile End Park received the single largest grant of any park in the country and the commemorative plaques can be seen embedded in the gate piers adjacent to Copperfield Road.

In 1944 Lord Abercrombie developed the most ambitious plan for the establishment of parks in London. Amongst the proposals was the establishment of parkland linking Victoria Park to Limehouse Basin which would effectively elongate Mile End Park, however it would be more than 50 years before Lord Abercrombie's vision would be put into effect.

The first V2 bomb dropped on the railway bridge adjacent to Mile End Park in 1944 and the blitz continued to devastate the East End. Such devastation made possible the potential implementation of the Abercrombie Plan and in 1950 Mile End Park was created out of the devastation of the Second World War and marked the beginning of compulsory purchasing of houses and factories to allow for future park expansion.

In the 1980s the GLC (Greater London Council), who managed the original park, resurrected the plans first formulated by Patrick Abercrombie MP and drew up extensive plans. The GLC was abolished by central Government before the plans could be fully implemented. It was not until 1994 when the newly established Millennium Commission sought suitable projects to mark the new millennium that the opportunity arose for the expanded Mile End Park to become a reality. The London Borough of Tower Hamlets joined forces with the Environment Trust and the East London Business Alliance to form the Mile End Park Partnership.

4.3 A park for people

The concept of a park for the 21st century sprang from the local community following a "planning for real" weekend where local people were invited to meet and discuss what they would like to see in the Park. In September 1995, 300 people attended the Mile End Park planning weekend in a local school. Participants were given blank

copies of the Park out line and the Borough's strategic plan and asked to write down what they would like to see in their park and to list their priorities for the site.

It was this public consultation that set the framework for the creation of Mile End Park as we would recognise it today. Once the results of the September consultation event had been assessed, landscape designers were brought in to make the Park a reality.

4.4 Constructing the dream

In January 1998, building work began on the new Mile End Park, and by September the first major construction started with work on the Terrace Garden and the centrepiece of the scheme, "the Green Bridge" that would span the busy Mile End Road.

Work on the Green Bridge was completed by July 1999, followed in October by the start of phase two: the construction of the Art Park and the Ecology Park.

Late 2001 saw the construction of phase three, the Children's Park and the Children's Pavilion. The Children's Park became fully operational in 2003.

A new bridge was opened on October 20th 2009 effectively joining a piece of land on the other side of the canal to Mile End Park and encouraging wider use of the Park to a greater number of people. This was the final piece of outstanding work that was promised to the Millennium Commission.

The Park's urban adventure amenities expanded further with the official opening of the Skate Park in the summer of 2011. The Skate Park is managed by the Council's Sports Services, who also manage the BMX track adjacent to their office.

Like anything organic, the Park continues to develop, but it has at its core the dreams and aspirations of the people drawn from the local community who made their views known at that first consultation meeting. Although the realities of development resulted in some changes to the scheme as it evolved, virtually all elements of the scheme as originally envisioned have been successfully implemented with the exception of the proposed completion of the solar canopy above the go kart track.

5 Site Overview

5.1 The Park deconstructed

The Park can be divided into segments and whilst these have their own individual characteristics they blend to make the whole Park. The Park is bisected by two busy roads and two railway lines and the design of the Park has intentionally incorporated this to make a truly urban park of the 21st century.

The Park has a number of main sections (running north to south): Wennington Green, the Ecology Park, the Art Park, the Green Bridge and Terrace Garden, the Adventure Park, the Sports Park and the Children's Park. In addition to these there are some less distinctly defined areas of the Park that act as transitions for the Park visitor.

5.2 Amenities

All sections of the Park are very well utilised and serve well for recreational, community, adventure, ecology, play, heritage and conservation which helps attract and retain users. Below is a brief summary of the Park's amenities.

5.2.1 Amenities south to north (to Green Bridge)

<i>Brickfield Gardens</i>	<i>Agnes Green</i>	<i>Locksley Street Playground</i>	<i>Kirks Place</i>	<i>King George's Field</i>	<i>Adventure Park</i>	<i>South Park / Events Field</i>	<i>Green Bridge</i>
<i>Play area Picnic area</i>	<i>Picnic area</i>	<i>-Enclosed Playground -Growing Zone -Play Pavilion -Public Toilets -Wildlife pond</i>	<i>-Enclosed Conservation Area -Picnic Area</i>	<i>-Picnic Area -Meadow Area -11 aside Astro Turf</i>	<i>-Skate Park -Graffiti Arch -Revolution Karting -Unit Arches include service: Somali Integration Team, Skate Shop, Indoor Skate Area, Concordia Community Centre, Dog Warden -Five aside Football Pitches -Mile End Stadium -Mile End GLL Leisure Centre -Short Breaks Gym -Urban Adventure Base -BMX Track -Play equipment for elder children -Multi Use Games Area -Dog Gym Copperfield Woodland Walk</i>	<i>-Picnic / Recreation Area -Terrace Gardens -Cascade Fountain -meadow and conservation areas</i>	<i>Units include: -Restaurants -Baristas -Supermarket -Estate Agent -Car park (pay & display)</i>

5.2.2 Amenities Green Bridge to north of Park

Art Park	Ecology Park	Wennington Green	Overall Park
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Older People's Community Garden -Woodland Walk -Arts Mound -Arts Pavilion -Arts Lake -Dedicated Conservation Area -Bee Hive -Meadow areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Haverfield Open Space -Haverfield Woodland Walk -Haverfield Road Public -Car Park -Climbing Wall -Meath Bridge -Ecology Park -Ecology Lakes x3 -Ecology Pavilion -Compost Bin Area -Meadow area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Adizone Outdoor Gym -Picnic / Recreation Area -Children's Playground 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Dedicated cycle path throughout the Park -Walking path throughout the path -3 Woodland Walk -Central Reservation Planting -2 Canal Bridges: Meath Bridge and Solebay Bridge

5.3 Wennington Green Concept

This area is designed to allow outdoor entertainment to take place, particularly, though not exclusively, for children.



The Adizone in Wennington Green

Description

The arena comprises a large grass area with some mounding to form a partial amphitheatre. Within the mounding is an outdoor gym (the Adizone) which is brightly coloured and can easily be seen from the road. Fencing defines the area on three sides and the Regent's Canal marks the other boundary. Trees have been planted around the periphery, but the area is easily visible from the road.

A small playground exists across the road that divides the grass area from the Bow Wharf development. The play area is designed for the 1 to 8 year old age group.

5.4 The Ecology Park

Concept

Offering the casual visitor an insight into ecology and biodiversity that may lead to seeking out further information on the subject elsewhere in the Park. Although these themes are present throughout the Park, it is intended for this area to be the core focus area and to build on levels of knowledge and involvement.

Description

The area has three ponds that have attracted damselflies and dragonflies, both new species to the Park. The ponds are designed to give the impression of being linked to the canal, but they are in fact fed from a borehole. The area is visually dominated by

a redundant wind turbine that formerly powered the pump circulating water in the lakes and is an example of wind energy in action. The earth insulated Ecology Pavilion is used as a public building for exhibitions, conferences, seminars and private hire, and acts as a valuable source of revenue.

Work continues here and elsewhere in the Park to undertake some trapping of invertebrates to compare the findings with the previous year in order to monitor the success of the ecology strategy.



The Ecology Park

5.5 The Art Park

Concept

The Art Park is to provide a complementary backdrop for art in all its many forms both indoors and outside in the Park. This ranges from temporary to permanent pieces of sculpture and includes a range of exhibitions held in the earth insulated Art Pavilion.

Description

A large pond with cascades, islands, bridges and the Art Pavilion itself dominates the Arts Park. Further south is a partially planted small hill known as the Art Mound, affording views across the Park. A set of giant grass steps provides an energetic method of reaching the top, but a path around the mound allows for a far gentler ascent. There are beds of imaginative planting that afford interest throughout the year to the front of the Pavilion. To the rear of the Art Pavilion, the globular line of willows has been removed and replaced with a series of new beds planted to provide year round interest.



The Art Park

5.6 The Green Bridge and Terrace Garden

Concept

The Green Bridge is the iconic statement of the Park, making it clear that traffic filled roads will have no dominion over a 21st century park. It unites the two halves of the Park and allows one to walk through the Park oblivious to the four lanes of traffic below on the busy Mile End Road. The Bridge also unites the two communities of Bow and Poplar, no longer separated by the busy road.

The Terrace Garden is designed for year-round interest and was laid out with older people in mind. Each level can be reached by a sloped access and there are many seats offering rest and a place to watch the fountain play in the more formal water feature. The aesthetic interest of this area makes it a popular meeting place for both young and old alike, and in many ways it is the centre piece of the Park.



Bird eye view of the Cascade Garden

Description

The Green Bridge, designed by Piers Gough, spans the Mile End Road and can be easily identified from Mile End Tube station. The original planting scheme was for Silver Birch and Black Pines to be set in grass with a footpath and cycle path running through the centre. The trees are effectively planted in large containers that are plunged into the polystyrene that fill the bridge, and as such must be treated as containerised plants.



The Green Bridge

The Terrace Garden is a series of terraces leading down from the bridge on the southern side to the pool and fountain. Each terrace is planted to maintain year-round interest and is supplied with formal seats. The water feature has a fountain at one end and five burbling jets at the other. Water travels from one end to the other down a cascade, providing the sound of running water. The far side of the feature is less formal and reeds and other natural aquatics have been allowed to establish. In 2012, whips of *Alnus incana*, *Ulex europeas* and *Betula* were planted thickly and are thinned as they grow, governed by the degree of rainfall and the depth of soil.



The Terrace Garden

In 2012, whips of *Alnus incana*, *Ulex europeas* and *Betula* were planted thickly and are thinned as they grow, governed by the degree of rainfall and the depth of soil.

Fencing off the viewing platform has deterred antisocial behaviour, which was a problem with the original bridge design.

Natural play pieces have been installed on the approaches to the bridge. This is part of a strategy to promote play throughout the length of the Park using pieces giving play cues to children, rather than formal play equipment.

The removal of the central reservation from the Bridge has enhanced the visual aspect of the Green Bridge and this will improve as the tree seedlings continue to grow.

5.7 Adventure Park

Concept

The area is designed to appeal to those between the age of 11 and 17. It takes as its starting point that it is impossible to provide a single piece of equipment that would be of interest to both ends of this age range, so one core item has been provided as a bigger and more challenging version of that in the Children's Play Park for the under 11s. From this the younger children can observe the etiquette of this play space and gain confidence before venturing onto the less familiar equipment. The other basis of the design is that most young people in this age group tend to want places that they can sit and chat, away from adults.



The Skate Park



The BMX track

Description

The Urban Adventure Base (UAB) building is a large two floored sea container that has been adapted to make office accommodation to house UAB staff and its users.

Adjacent to the UAB unit is the newly developed Short Breaks Gym, which provides various sports and health related exercise and training sessions specifically for young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Both areas are managed as part of the Council's Youth and Community Services.

The BMX track was constructed in 2012 to coincide with the first Olympic Games at which BMX was a recognised Olympic sport. The area is maintained by LBTH and the UAB runs activities for 13-19 year olds.

5.8 The Sport Park

Concept

This is to provide a wide range of sporting activities within the Park, building on the already successful athletic track and all-weather sports pitch. The activities are designed to be accessible to a wide cross section of the community, and have the promotion of healthy lifestyles as a core objective.



GLL Sports Stadium and Leisure Centre

Description

The area contains two all-weather surface sports pitches, a full size athletics track and stadium with changing room complex. These facilities are widely used both by local athletes, local schools and the local community. The associated £15.3 million leisure centre opened in 2006, incorporating two swimming pools, two gyms, a steam room, fitness studios, sauna and physiotherapy and massage surgeries together with 10 outdoor football pitches and changing facilities.

5.9 The Children's Play Park

Concept

This facility provides a range of child-based activities for children aged between 1 and 11 years of age and offers support for the parents and carers of children in this age range.

Description

The outdoor area comprises of a number of pieces of fixed play equipment, a water jet feature, an area for imaginative play based around a make believe dry river bed, a small ruined castle and a variety of interactive play equipment. In addition there is an area for ball games and various ground games markings.

To the rear of the pavilion is the Growing Zone, an area used to offer children the experience of growing fruit and vegetables. Elsewhere is an area of grass, which is managed as wild meadow for younger children to gain a first understanding of nature.

Due to the lack of use of the small catering kiosk, a permanent solution for the use of this space is currently being explored.



Bird's eye view of the children's playground during a summer event in 2013

From January 2017, the playground has been fully open to the public after a series of improvement and renovation works.

All Park and Play Rangers are trained to carry out daily visual inspections and all Officers are trained and qualified to carry out monthly operational play inspections throughout the Park.

The Play Pavilion building is fully equipped with a soft play area, toilets, office and storage space and provides a large indoor play space. The groups using the centre share a range of equipment, but they may also bring their own age or ability appropriate equipment to enhance their sessions.

There is also a fully operational kitchen which allows for both healthy eating activities and cooking sessions to take place so that children get the opportunity to understand how food is prepared. It is linked with the outdoor growing zone.

5.10 Interlinking Elements

Within Mile End Park there are several spaces that connect the segmented areas, and whilst not necessarily featuring so prominently on plans or in accompanying text, they are no less clearly defined and make a significant contribution to the overall success of the Park. Sometimes these are fully developed and with a clear purpose and at other times they are flexible spaces without any defined role. This section includes brief descriptions of these links and minor features.

“**Fishy places**” is a piece of artwork designed by local children to interact with the local anglers that fish the canal. It is situated within the Park at the point that the canal flows under Roman Road at the entrance to the Ecology Park.

The Meath Bridge dominates the area in front of the Climbing Wall. The bridge crosses the canal connecting the Park to Meath Gardens. This was a requirement of the Millennium Commission and was a part of the original scheme. The bridge opened on October 20th 2009 and has proved very popular with people on the Meath Gardens side of the canal and continues to bring new audiences into the Park.

The Climbing Wall is commercially let and managed and is situated adjacent to the canal and in the area that separates the Ecology Park from the Art Park. Behind the Climbing Wall premises, and bound on its western border by Grove Road, is an area of open grass. This space, known locally as **Haverfield Green**, is used for informal games of football and as a space that can be used for larger Park Events for example, ‘Park Life’ that is organised by the Friends of Mile End Park.

Woodland walk areas have been introduced to three areas of scrub on the periphery of the Park. The first woodland walk is sited just off Copperfield Road, adjacent to the dog exercise areas. This area provides a junction of natural walks providing access to different directions within the south of the Park. The second is along Chris’s Wood and the third is the largest, known as the Haverfield Woodland Walk. These areas provide play space taking over a natural area of scrub and insert a series natural play features making them very popular amongst children and schools.

The older people’s garden is sited at the southern end of Clinton Road and was a remnant of an older park design. It was an area of traditional shrubs and grass fenced off from public access and so served no purpose to the Park and has consequently been used to create a garden for older visitors.

Shops and restaurants are built into underside of the Green Bridge, and the rent derived from these units is part of the revenue stream for the Park. The units were initially leased as empty shells, and in return for six months free rental, the tenants were expected to fit out the units using high quality design and materials.

The South Park links the Terrace Garden area to the Adventure Park and is an area of short grass and trees. Like the area behind the Climbing Wall, open areas of grass are useful to balance the more developed areas. However, there are some important areas of scrub and these are managed in the interests of biodiversity to form mixed woodland areas.

The borehole, by its nature, cannot be seen, but its effect on the Park cannot be underestimated. The Park has a licence to remove water directly from the water table beneath the Park. Water from the borehole is pumped into the lake and also feeds the automatic irrigation system to water the trees on the Green Bridge and along the spinal path.

At the north end of Copperfield Road on a space that had no obvious purpose, even for informal recreation, a **Dog Gym** / Dog Agility course has been introduced.

The Railway Arches are situated beneath a busy mainline railway and act as a visual as well as physical barrier. They had acted as a blot on the Park landscape as they were filled with examples of “dirty industry”, for example garages and breakers yards. A policy decision was taken by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets to lease the arches on a 99-year lease from Rail Track and to re-let them to selected

sub-tenants. This has had the effect of cleaning up an untidy area and the tenants include the Animal Wardens' operational headquarters with an animal operating theatre and holding pens as well as Venture, "Concordia" boasting a recording studio and mixing suite and is used by young people from the Somalian, Bangladeshi and English communities. In addition, English as a Second Language and IT skills are taught in classrooms within the centre.

One arch has walls housing official **graffiti boards**, where local artists are able to create graffiti art and which fellow artists wipe out in time to allow new art to be displayed. This central archway leads through to the go-karts and Skateboard Park, the latter offering more graffiti boards. The central arch remains as a linking space between the 5-a-side football facilities and the path leading to the children's Play Park. The two remaining arches are used to house a half pipe to allow skateboarding in wet weather and a skateboard outlet which offers supervision of the site and youth meeting area/cafe.

The **Skate Park** has a polished concrete floor and is designed to provide an experience for all abilities from the absolute beginner to the advanced practitioner of the sport. It attracts a wide variety of age groups and although the predominant use is skateboarding it is also used for BMX and in line skating. Revolution Go-Karting is another tenant of the Park and rental from the track is another important source of revenue to the Park.

Kirk's Place is a piece of grass flanking the Regent's Canal and visually does not connect with the Park. Linking the Sport Park via the brick gate pierced entrance/exit, (which still includes the plaque commemorating King George V Playing Fields) and crossing the busy Rhodeswell Road accesses the site. A listed vented brick sewer chimney dominates the area, belonging to Thames Water, whilst the Canal and River Trust is responsible for the canal and towpath. Kirk's Place is also thought to provide a habitat to the rare Bombardier beetle, only the second such habitat in the country.

The Spinal Path is the main path that travels north/ south through the centre of the Park. It is divided into two sections to separate cyclists and pedestrians and is constructed of two surfacing materials a tarmac and a hot tar resin bound surface. A narrow linear shrub border containing mixed shrub and tree planting that is protected by temporary fencing separates the two paths. The cycle path has periodically placed rumble strips to slow down cyclists as they traverse the Park in order to protect the health and safety of all Park users. An application for funding in the region of £60,000 was successful in 2013 to remove the top soil and replant the area. The planting was completed in autumn of 2014 and additional planting is being added during the spring/summer 2017 with the anticipation that the fencing will be removed in 2018.

