

## 8. Delivery toolkit

8.1. In previous sections, we have identified the need for good quality green and water infrastructure across Newham to meet the challenge of a rapidly increasing population. We have also identified that the provision of green and water infrastructure is relatively low (compared with neighbouring boroughs) and that the quality of the Borough's parks and playgrounds is variable. The Strategy identifies a need for change in response to these findings. A number of mechanisms are available to affect the changes that will be required to meet the challenges that the Borough is facing. These can be categorised as:

- policy mechanisms – principally, planning policy but also a coherent approach driven by cross departmental working
- revenue and capital funding mechanisms that fund investment in green and water infrastructure to deliver the quality uplift needed to meet the Borough's demographic challenge

### Planning policy

#### The emerging Local Plan

8.2. The emerging Local Plan has been influenced by the findings of this Strategy. The Strategy will form part of its evidence base and identifies the need to protect and enhance existing assets and to provide new capacity where possible.

8.3. The current draft Local Plan includes the following provisions:

Development should provide or help to deliver easy access to a network of high quality green spaces. This will be achieved through:

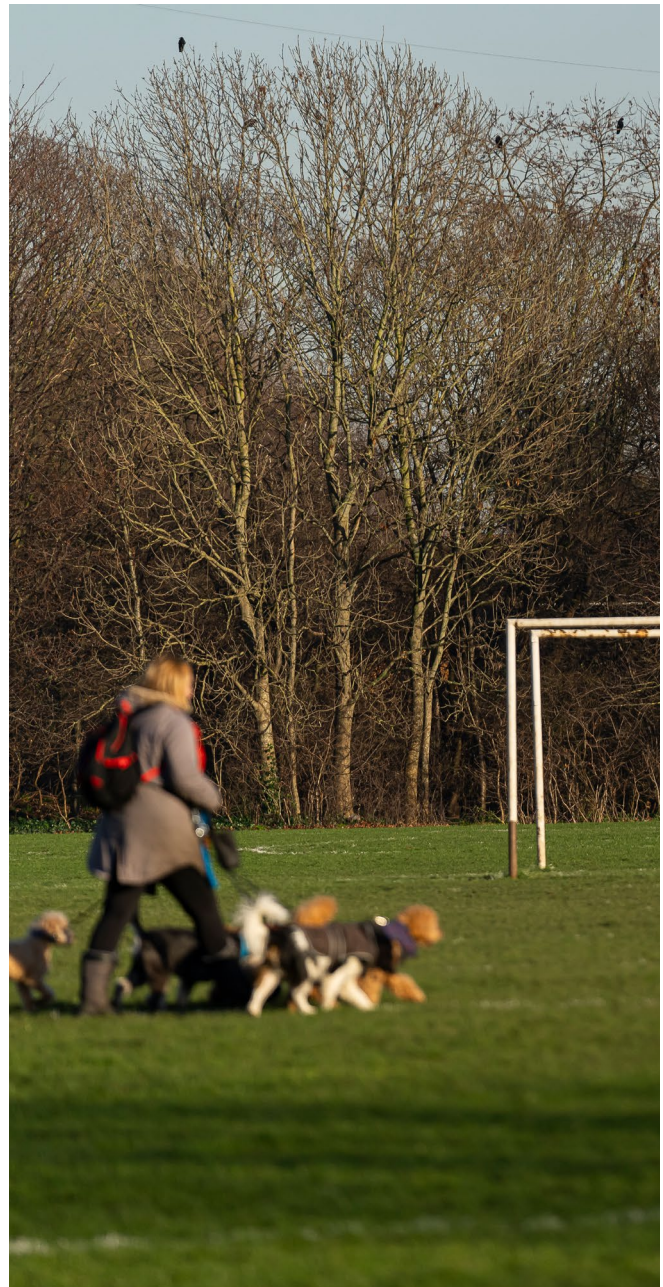
- Protecting existing green space to ensure there is no net loss, except where it meets the criteria set out in part three of Policy GWS1
- Maintaining the open character of Metropolitan Open Land and Green Belt in accordance with the London Plan (2021) and national Green Belt policy
- Maximising opportunities for improving the functionality, connectivity, quality, and accessibility of existing green space
- Ensuring development next to green space does not negatively impact its functionality, connectivity, quality and accessibility
- Maximising opportunities to deliver new and improved green space (including playing fields and ancillary sporting facilities), with particular focus on the locations which will experience the highest level of need over the plan period as set out in the Green and Water Infrastructure Strategy (2024) and the Playing Pitch Strategy (2024); including the requirements of the neighbourhood policies, site allocations and Local Plan Policies H11 and D2
- Requiring all development to consider at the earliest opportunity the form, function, and extent of green infrastructure opportunities, to maximise urban greening and improvements to Newham's network of green links as part of schemes
- Requiring major development to demonstrate an integrated approach to green infrastructure in a Design and Access Statement

Development referable to the Mayor of London, or where a specific green or water space need has been identified by the Council, is required to provide on-site publicly accessible green space.

## Functionality

- 8.4. Section 6.25 describes the objective of making green and water spaces in Newham as multi-functional as possible so that public space can provide as many different benefits as possible, whether they are direct benefits to people (e.g. leisure and recreational spaces) or indirect benefits (e.g. carbon sequestration and biodiversity connectivity). In this section we will consider how multi-functionality will work in practice.
- 8.5. Both the NPPF (2023) and the London Plan (2021) describe the multiple functions of green space. These include promoting mental and physical health and wellbeing, improving resilience in the face of climate change (including carbon sequestration and urban warming mitigation), improving air and water quality, enhancing biodiversity and ecological resilience, encouraging the adoption of active travel modes (walking and cycling), supporting landscape and heritage conservation, encouraging learning about the environment and supporting food growing.
- 8.6. These functions could be characterised as ecosystem services that green space provides. This G&W Strategy proposes sustaining the flow of ecosystem services and the social, environmental and economic benefits that they provide for people living and working in Newham. This is particularly significant in a Borough that will experience a 25% increase in population by 2038.
- 8.7. Development pressure on land across the Borough over this period will impact on the capacity of green and water infrastructure to continue to deliver ecosystem services. Where existing spaces are re-purposed for development, additional capacity needs to be created to compensate for this loss or the flow of ecosystem services increased by improving the quality of existing spaces.

- 8.8. Whether creating new green infrastructure or improving to the quality of existing infrastructure, a balance needs to be struck between the different functions of green and water space to provide the maximum benefit to people living and working in Newham.
- 8.9. For some green infrastructure assets (e.g. SINC's and natural/semi-natural landscapes), the emphasis will be mainly on enhancing biodiversity and ecological resilience and planning for climate change. Parks support a greater variety of functions and the extent of 'offers' to users is usually a function of the size of the park.



Beckton District Park

8.10. Table 8.1 sets out the Parks hierarchy described in the London Plan (and used in this Strategy to categorise Newham’s Parks). For each typology, it is possible to propose a set of requirements that will deliver the multiple functions listed above.

8.11. Some aspects of green space function are determined by other strategic considerations. (See Table 8.2)

8.12. Other factors affecting the balance of functional elements could include:

- Is the green space in a growth Ward?
- Does the green space catchment contain Lower Super Output Areas in the 10% most deprived in England?
- Does the green space lie in an area of high health inequality?

Table 8.2 Other strategic considerations affecting green space function

Multi-functionality criteria	Strategic control
Play provision	Is the park provision deficit area?
Formal sports provision	Is the park identified as a priority in the Playing Pitch Strategy?
Flood attenuation	Is the park in a flood contributor or receptor area

Table 8.1 Typical components of a multi-functional park for different London plan typologies

Open space category	Size guideline (Ha)	Potential multi-functional component
Regional Parks	400	‘Good’ quality (Green Flag) A minimum of two NEAP facilities Formal sports provision (including changing facilities) A minimum of 20% of woodland A minimum of 10% set aside for biodiversity management Flood storage/attenuation Public toilets
Metropolitan Parks	60	‘Good’ quality (Green Flag) A minimum of one NEAP facility Formal sports provision (including changing facilities) A minimum of 20% of woodland A minimum of 10% set aside for biodiversity management Flood storage/attenuation Public toilets
District Parks	20	‘Good’ quality (Green Flag) A LEAP facility Formal sports provision (including changing facilities) A minimum of 20% of woodland A minimum of 10% set aside for biodiversity management
Local Parks	2	‘Good’ quality (Green Flag) A LAP facility A minimum of 20% of woodland A minimum of 10% set aside for biodiversity management Flood attenuation
Small Open Spaces	Under 2	‘Good’ quality (Green Flag) Play facilities A minimum of 10% of woodland Biodiversity connectivity (to adjoining GI assets)

**A toolkit for reconciling competing demands on sites and achieving coherent development**

8.13. Figure 8.1 is a toolkit for evaluating and improving green spaces. The basis of this approach is about connectivity - for people of all ages and abilities, and for every mode of travel a network is integrated into the Strategy. For both biodiversity and climate resilience the addition of connected network of new trees and plantings increases the natural capital of the site and provides linkages for a wide variety of animals to connect to and through the green space.

Continuing a street tree strategy beyond the park further connects the urban areas and allows the next connection to take place, creating a snowball effect where green corridors merge to form the green grid. This toolkit provides a logical process for evaluating sites and determining the best course of action with either a new or an existing green space. This method, also known as a framework plan, starts with a base map and analysis of the site in terms of levels, condition, flooding, trees and other vegetation, aspect and proximity to other key features

Figure 8.1

**A toolkit for evaluating green spaces**



**1 Base map & analysis**



STEP 1 Create a map of the site that shows surrounding context

STEP 2 Identify site green spaces, watercourses and floodplain, path network, habitat features

STEP 3 Identify nearby educational and civic centres, shopping areas, points of interest, transit, residential areas, paths, green spaces

**2 Opportunities & constraints**



STEP 4 Identify barriers to connectivity, other constraints of site such as steep gradients

STEP 5 Look for opportunities for active travel corridors, green corridors, pedestrian crossings

- 8.14. In proximity to the example green space there is a school, museum, railway station and shopping arcade, as well as a green link to the south that offers connectivity for both people and wildlife. A University located nearby can be better connected to the green space with the addition of a bicycle path. Bike parking is also offered on the site. A bus stop located further away is relocated, or a new one is added, adjacent to an entrance with levels that increase accessibility to the park. Rain gardens are implemented to mitigate flooding. A path network and pedestrian crossings make it easier for anyone living or working near the park to easily and safely access it. Trees and plantings extend the green corridor from the adjacent green space into the park. Street trees further support this green grid approach. Finally, one of the by products of this method is often creation of a sense of place - because the space is easy to access and has natural characteristics, and particularly if well designed and well cared for, such a park becomes the jewel in a community that achieves pride of place.
- 8.15. The National Planning Policy Framework (paras. 179b and 180d) indicates that new development should aim to secure “measurable net gains for biodiversity”. This is amplified by Policy G6 ‘Biodiversity and Access to Nature’ in the London Plan which states that development proposals should “aim to secure net biodiversity gain”.
- 8.16. More recently, the Environment Act 2021 introduced a legal requirement for all new development to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state by ensuring that it delivers BNG through habitat creation or enhancement on the development site, or elsewhere through offsetting, after avoiding or mitigating harm.
- 8.17. The Act stipulates that a minimum 10% BNG must be achieved. This became mandatory in 2023.
- 8.18. BNG is calculated using the approved Defra Biodiversity Metric (currently Biodiversity Metric 3.1). This uses a spreadsheet-based process to determine the total number of habitat units present on a site prior to development and the total number of habitat units retained, enhanced or created as a result of the development proposal. The BNG score results from subtracting the habitat unit value of the existing habitats from the habitat unit value of the proposed habitats and presenting this as a percentage change.
- 8.19. A key tenet of the BNG approach is that the score provided by the calculator should not be the only factor determining whether a proposal has achieved a better outcome for biodiversity. In urban areas in particular, the context of the proposal should also be considered, especially the other environmental benefits that can be achieved. Delivery of green infrastructure and/or nature-based solutions can address, for example, the impacts of climate change.
- 8.20. Where BNG is not achievable within a proposed development, the Act includes the provision of an ‘offsetting’ process where BNG is delivered in an alternative location and where net gain can be demonstrated through the same Metric-based calculation.

## Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

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## Urban Greening Factor

- 8.21. Urban greening is a term used to describe the act of integrating vegetation into the built environment through features such as green roofs, street trees, landscaping and rain gardens to provide a range of benefits such as mitigating the impacts of climate change, improving health and conserving biodiversity.
- 8.22. There are no legislative or national policy requirements relating specifically to urban greening, although the NPPF emphasises the importance of green infrastructure for addressing health inequalities and combating climate change, especially in urban areas. However, London Plan Policy

- G4 Urban Greening states that development “should contribute to the greening of London by including urban greening as a fundamental element of site and building design, and by incorporating measures such as high-quality landscaping (including trees), green roofs, green walls and nature-based sustainable drainage.”
- 8.23. Because London Plan policy on urban greening does not relate to any specific national policy requirements it also indicates that London Boroughs should “develop an Urban Greening Factor (UGF) to identify the appropriate amount of urban greening required in new developments.”
- 8.24. The UGF score is determined by a UGF calculator which measures the area of different urban greening interventions (green roofs, street trees, semi-natural habitat, etc.) and multiplies it to a pre-determined factor that ranks the intervention in terms of its quality and function. The sum of the area of urban greening is then divided by the total area of the site.
- 8.25. Unlike the forthcoming mandatory BNG requirement, the UGF policy in the London Plan does not currently allow for offsetting. The policy requires the applicant to demonstrate how they have tried to achieve the target score and to provide a reasoned justification for failing to achieve the score if other factors and other policy requirements limit the incorporation of sufficient urban greening.
- 8.26. Parts of Newham are deficient in open space, biodiversity and access to nature. BNG and UGF provide new mechanisms to address these deficiencies, and national and regional policies allow local authorities to set higher targets or scores where this can be justified.
- 8.27. There are a handful of allocated sites in the Borough which will be required to provide a significant package of BNG when or if developed. These are sites which have been identified as Strategic Sites for development that have not yet been assessed for their existing nature conservation value.
- 8.28. Parts of Newham, especially those areas identified for most new development, are deficient in overall green and water infrastructure. Developers could be required to provide urban greening offsetting outside the boundary of their site if they are unable to meet the current target scores set out in the London Plan.
- 8.29. This will require the opportunities for offsetting to be identified. Most of these opportunities will likely be in the public realm within the vicinity of the proposed development. The Council would need to identify specific opportunities (e.g. locations for street tree-planting and rain gardens) and to develop a mechanism for implementation.
- ### Epping Forest Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANG)
- 8.30. Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) identifies one European Site within a 10km radius of the Borough which is Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The Council has a duty to ensure that all the activities it regulates have no adverse effects on the integrity of this area.
- 8.31. Natural England has issued formal advice concerning the handling of Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) in the vicinity of Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation and the impacts on the integrity of the conservation that may arise from new residential development.
- 8.32. Natural England’s advice has great weight and the Council has a duty to follow it. At present, in order to comply with the 2017 regulations and March 2019 advice, all residential development that falls within the 6.2km ‘zone of influence’ will be subject to a project-level HRA screening and where necessary, appropriate assessment.
- 8.33. Since 1st April 2019, the Council has carried out screening and any required appropriate assessment at the planning application stage.

- 8.34. The starting point for assessment is that any residential development within the 6.2 km zone is likely to have a significant effect on the integrity of the Epping Forest SAC as a result of increased recreational pressure. Suitable mitigation will be required so that no adverse effects on the integrity of the SAC will arise.
- 8.35. 'Suitable mitigation' may be in the form of financial contributions to management of the SAC and/or contributions to Suitable Alternative Natural Green space (SANGs) that can alleviate recreational pressures on the SAC. SANGs offer the opportunity for an uplift in the quality of green and water infrastructure that can act as an alternative recreational opportunity to the Epping Forest SAC. In partnership with Natural England, the Council will assess how specific contributions can be calculated and identified for each development that falls within the scope of the regulations.
- 8.38. Over the last two years, the Council's 'People Powered Places' programme has allocated £1.6 million of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding to the Community Assembly programme<sup>21</sup>. Through two cycles of Community Assemblies, these funds were allocated to a total of 157 projects that were voted on by Newham residents through the participatory budgeting process. Of these, 68 (43%) were focussed on delivering green outcomes for local communities. The most recent CIL funding statement states that 14,377,651 in CIL demand notices were issued in 2020-21 while the total of CIL funds received was £5,518,389. £3,240,190 in CIL funding was allocated in this year.
- 8.39. In the same period, the total amount of money to be provided under planning obligations was £11,069,911. Of this total, only £7,156 was secured for green infrastructure (Air Quality, Tree Planting, Ecology Biodiversity, Tree Planting, and District Heating). The council should explore options for further developer contributions to be used to support the improvement of green and water infrastructure. This should be in addition to securing new green space in development sites, as outlined in paragraph 5.55.

## Investment opportunities

- 8.36. This report suggests (mainly through its assessment of quality) that Newham's green and water infrastructure has not enjoyed significant levels of investment. The Strategy also concludes that a continued flow of ecosystem services will require investment in the Borough's Natural Capital assets, given the projected significant increase in population. There are a number of potential sources for capital funding to address the immediate issue of poor quality green and water space.

## Community infrastructure Levy and Section 106

- 8.37. Newham's population increase will be a function of intensive development over Newham's Local Plan period (to 2038). New developments generate both Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 payments from developers.

## Central Government funding

- 8.40. Newham Council has secured nearly £40 million from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities 'Levelling Up' fund. The Council's 'well-connected neighbourhoods' initiative will be funded from this grant, creating places for community and enterprise, shared spaces and supporting the connection of neighbourhoods. These are all principles that are described in Section 6 of this Strategy. Funding will be targeted at high streets located in the North of the Borough and off Romford Road, stretching from Stratford to Little Ilford, including Forest Gate, Green Street, Plaistow and Manor Park.

<sup>21</sup> will be updated

8.41. Although future government funding initiatives cannot be anticipated, given Newham's status as one of London's most deprived boroughs and its low level of green and water infrastructure provision, funding from central government initiatives is likely to be secured in order to address inequality and the climate change and biodiversity emergencies.

walk from green space and that are at high climate risk.

8.47. Although future Mayoral funding initiatives cannot be anticipated, it is likely that these will focus on increasing resilience to the climate change and biodiversity emergencies and Newham will be well-placed to secure funding for projects of this nature.

## Regional funding

8.42. As part of his Green New Deal the Mayor of London is investing in projects that create and improve green and water spaces across the capital and that enhance the city's resilience to the impacts of climate change.

8.43. These programmes are supporting a wide range of projects, from community-led action to create new gardens, food growing spaces and wildlife havens to major innovative schemes that green the grey and transform our parks. Current and recent programmes include:

8.44. The Green and Resilient Spaces Fund – a £3 million fund that will support large-scale, innovative enhancements to green and water spaces, and the wider public realm that will strengthen climate resilience, increase biodiversity, improve accessibility, build green skills and help reduce health inequalities.

8.45. The Re-wild London fund supports the owners of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) with improvements to these key sites to ensure that the network is resilient in the face of the climate and ecological emergencies.

8.46. The Grow Back Greener fund supports London's communities with tree planting to provide shade, create and enhance green space and increase climate resilience. The fund prioritises projects in areas of the city with low tree canopy cover, where Londoners live further than a 10-minute

## External funding

### The National Lottery Heritage Fund

8.48. Newham is a priority Borough for the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), having received little grant funding relative to other London Boroughs. NLHF funding can be significant and could provide a quality uplift for some of the Borough's most important historic parks. Although NLHF requires match funding, this is only 5% of the total project value with 95% of funding coming from the funder. The Council is already pursuing a funding opportunity for Forest Lane Park. Other funding applications for parks could follow.

### Funding for sports facilities

8.49. The UK government has announced an investment of £168 million in England by 2025 to improve and upgrade sports facilities and pitches. The funding will be delivered via the Football Foundation.

8.50. Grassroots football clubs, local authorities, and schools with a relevant project that could benefit from this investment in the next two financial years are encouraged to contact their relevant delivery partner (the Football Foundation in England).

8.51. Projects in all four home nations will continue to be selected for their ability to deliver improved facilities in deprived areas, support multi-sport use, and increase participation among currently under-represented groups, including women, girls, and those with a disability. To ensure that



as many people as possible from under-represented groups are able to access quality sports facilities, 40 percent of the investment will fund sites that support regular use of a sport other than football.

- 8.52. The Football Foundation has committed £92 million over three years (2022-25) to multi-sports projects that support football and other sports including rugby, cricket, netball and basketball.
- 8.53. Sport England directs more than £250 million of National Lottery funds to investment in sport and physical activity through a variety of funding streams.
- 8.54. Other sports governing bodies (e.g. ECB, RFU, LTA) offer grants for the development of grassroots sporting activity and for the improvement of facilities, often in association with Sport England and the Department for Digital, Culture Media and Sport.
- 8.55. The London Marathon Trust distributes the income generated by the London Marathon through three funds – Active Spaces, Active Communities and the Partnerships fund.

### Environmental grants

- 8.56. Capital grants are available from sources to fund environmental works, including grants from statutory undertakers. The most significant provider of funds in this context is the Landfill Communities Fund, which diverts funds from landfill charges to organisations across England registered as environmental bodies in order to support environmental enhancements.

### Trust and foundations

- 8.57. Capital and revenue funding for projects related to green and water infrastructure, climate change resilience, and the biodiversity emergency is often available from independent grants and foundations. These funds are often not open to local authority applications but will welcome applications from community and third sector organisations.

## Revenue funding

- 8.58. In common with most local authorities, revenue funding for the provision of green and water infrastructure services has declined significantly since 2010. To an extent, the capacity of local authorities to sustain the benefits of capital investment has been undermined by a lack of revenue funding.
- 8.59. A number of operational models have been piloted through the ‘Rethinking Parks’ and ‘Future Parks Accelerator’ programmes funded by the NLHF, the National Trust and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. This programme has considered alternative approaches to revenue funding to address this issue.
- 8.60. Some local authorities have adopted an endowment model to generate revenue for green and water infrastructure, based on the endowment model administered by the Milton Keynes Parks Trust.

## Partnership working

### Community engagement and co-design

- 8.61. There are several opportunities to promote partnership working across Newham to enhance the capacity of the Borough’s green infrastructure to deliver ecosystem services to people living and working in the Borough.
- 8.62. In January 2024 Newham Council Cabinet approved the Beckton Parks Masterplan, one of the most ambitious urban green space projects in London. Beckton Parks are the largest area of publically accessible connected green space managed by

Newham Council, covering two council Wards: Beckton and Custom House. The masterplan was co-designed with over 1500 residents, the process began with an in-depth engagement exercise to create the Community Vision for Beckton Parks. The Community Vision brings together local ideas, aspirations and values gathered through a wide range of engagement initiatives, field research, interviews and workshops in order to agree on six principles for the design and implementation of the masterplan. The design of the masterplan was undertaken through a series of stakeholder workshops that tested design proposals and agreed solutions. A final consultation was undertaken before the full masterplan was concluded and adopted

by cabinet. The Beckton Parks Masterplan includes the adoption of an inclusivity and environmental charter for Beckton Parks.

8.63. Newham’s People Powered Places programme is one of the largest participatory budgeting programmes in the country and is recognised as a best practice example of community engagement and participation. Formerly known as Community Assemblies, since its launch, the programme has created a total of 16,552 resident engagements. Over the last two years, the programme has allocated £1.6 million of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding to publicly selected projects, many of which relate to green infrastructure enhancements.



Figure 8.2 Beckton Park diagram

- 8.64. Newham's permanent Citizens Assembly was created in 2021 to discuss initiatives to improve life for residents of the Borough. The Assembly selected 'Greening the Borough' as an area that it wanted to investigate in detail through an online poll. The Assembly delivered its report to the Council for consideration in August 2021. A second Assembly considered 'the 15-minute Neighbourhood' in 2022.
- 8.65. Newham Volunteers Service can support local volunteers to increase their skills to enable more participation in green projects, this could include working with existing volunteer groups such as Newham Conservation Volunteers, East Ham Nature Reserve Green Gym, Greenway Orchard, Beckton Corridor Pond and local volunteers from the London National Park City Rangers programme.

## Summary

- 8.66. A number of tools are available to the Council, to partners and to residents to deliver the recommendations of this Strategy. These include Local Plan policy levers, revenue and capital investment opportunities and opportunities for partnership working.