

# The Canons, Mitcham



Management  
and  
Maintenance Plan  
954/SG  
February 2017



MERTON COUNCIL



**southern**green  
chartered landscape architects



## 10 year Management and Maintenance Plan

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## **Foreword**

I am pleased to introduce the management and maintenance plan for The Canons, one of the finest examples of Merton's cherished green spaces.

In straitened times, Merton is striving to protect and enhance its open spaces in a number of ways. Of greatest relevance to The Canons is our new and developing externalisation contract with *idverde* (formerly The Landscape Group), an organisation of considerable experience and expertise; and our strong, active relationship with the local community and with the parks friends and heritage groups in particular.

Central Government, the Greater London Authority and partner agencies are placing an increasing emphasis on the role of open spaces in creating safe, healthy and sustainable communities in the 21st century. The London Borough of Merton has been committed to investing in our open spaces and related facilities through the implementation of our Merton Open Space Strategy. We are working to ensure we are responsive to our communities and provide the highest quality of service. The Green Flag Award is recognised as the quality benchmark for our open spaces.

The Members of Merton Council and The Canons partners are pleased to submit this application. The Canons is an excellent example of co-operation between the Council and the community. This application is submitted with the full support of the Council and the Friends Group plus other community groups working within The Canons Partnership.

Should you require any further information with regards to this application please contact Doug Napier our Greenspaces Manager on 020 8545 3657 or [doug.napier@merton.gov.uk](mailto:doug.napier@merton.gov.uk)

**Councillor Nick Draper**  
**Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration**



## 1.1 Author

Simon Green, Director of Southern Green, prepared this Interim Management and Maintenance Plan (MMP) in close consultation with London Borough of Merton Parks and Greenspaces Manager, Doug Napier. The specialist grounds and property maintenance, nature conservation, arboriculture and horticulture skills of the Greenspaces team have been drawn upon in the preparation of the plan together with strategic and operational planning input from the Environment and Regeneration Directorate's Support and Development Department and other specialist input from across the council.

## 1.2 When and why the Plan was Developed

The interim MMP was prepared in 2016-17 as part of the Heritage Lottery Fund / BIG Lottery Parks for People Round 2 bid for The Canons.

The MMP is an important supporting document for the bid to demonstrate that good management and maintenance proposals are adopted:

- to safeguard The Lottery's investment to ensure the works are kept in good condition
- to ensure that the right skills and procedures are put in place to reduce future risk to heritage
- to ensure that adequate financial resources are put in place to implement the plan for 10 years after project completion
- to secure the Green Flag Award once the project is completed and to retain it for a total of 7 consecutive years - a requirement of the The Lottery

Significantly, two of the 10 The Lottery Parks for People outcomes link directly into management planning, emphasising the importance of this document in demonstrating how these outcomes will be sustained in the future beyond the end of the project. The Lottery outcomes are outlined below together with The Lottery's commentary included within their publication *Management and maintenance plan guidance - 2012*.

***The park or cemetery and its heritage will be better managed***

*With our investment, there will be clear improvements*

*in the way that you manage your park or cemetery and its heritage including the implementation of a new management and maintenance plan. Improvements could include securing additional staff such as a dedicated site manager, head gardener or park ranger, or other resources that you need, or the more effective use of existing resources. As a result of these improvements, such as opening a new café to generate income for the site, you will be able to show that the park or cemetery has a secure future for the long-term including a stronger financial position. These improvements to managing your park or cemetery will mean that you can annually apply and attain a Green Flag Award with a high level pass mark.*

***The park or cemetery and its heritage will be in better condition***

*With our investment, there will be improvements to the physical state of your park or cemetery and its heritage. The improvements might be the result of repair, renovation or work to prevent further deterioration, such as bringing a historic building back in to use, replanting an avenue, clearing the silt from a lake or repairing the entrance gates. They might also result from new work, for example increasing the size of an existing habitat to benefit priority species. The improvements will be recognised through standards used by professional and heritage specialists, and/or by people more generally, for example in surveys of visitors or local residents.*

The Canons Park MMP has been developed to satisfy both The Lottery and the Green Flag Award.

The MMP is called an interim MMP as it is being drawn up at a time of change, both in terms of the grounds maintenance and on the eve of the implementation of a major Lottery project that will make changes to the layout and the use of the site. It is proposed to develop the Plan further during the Delivery Stage of the project, anticipating adoption by LBM in December 19, before completion of the main contract, so The Canons can be entered into the 2020 Green Flag Awards.

## 1.3 Consultation

The Canons Partnership – consisting of London Borough of Merton officers and Community Partners – Mitcham

Cricket Green Community and Heritage, Mitcham Society and Friends of The Canons has been closely involved in developing this MMP.

## 1.4 Links to other planning work

This plan was prepared following the preparation of a Conservation Plan for The Canons. The MMP has strong links to the Conservation Plan as well as to the emerging Business Plan (See Appendix 01) and Activity Plan, all of which are key supporting documents for the Round 2 Parks for People bid. The MMP refers to these other documents throughout. In some cases, such as the inclusion of signs, there is a potential conflict between the Green Flag criteria and the policies within the Conservation Plan.

A draft MMP was initially prepared for The Canons in 2015 as part of a 'dummy' Green Flag application. This was prepared with the purpose of receiving useful feedback on the draft plan and the current state of The Canons informed the development of the Heritage Lottery Fund bid and this MMP. The draft MMP was a starting point for developing the MMP.

## 1.5 Scope of the Plan

The MMP covers the entire area of The Canons owned by the London Borough of Merton, which is the same area covered by the Parks for People bid, with the exception of the Leisure Centre and Madeira Hall which are subject to a long term lease with Better. The MMP does however include the proposed new café / public toilets which are to be funded through The Lottery proposed project.

The MMP does not cover Park Place and its curtilage, including the car park, which is owned by Mitchells and Butler who operate the Toby Carvery Restaurant.

The primary aim for developing this plan is as a working document designed to aid the efficient and effective management of The Canons. The MMP should be read by anyone with an interest in The Canons, including the stakeholders and users.

The background documents that have guided its development are:

- The Lottery Management and Maintenance Plan Guidance (October 2012)
- 'A Guide to Producing Park and Green Space Management Plans', Cabe Space 2004
- 'Raising the Standard –The Green Flag Award Guidance Manual' (Updated 2009)

In line with The Lottery guidelines, this MMP addresses four key questions:

- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to get to?
- How will we get there?
- How will we know when we have arrived?

## 1.6 London Borough of Merton's Vision for The Canons

The Canons forms a valuable part of Merton's network of parks and open spaces. Green space covers nearly one fifth of the Borough's land use making Merton, while generally suburban in character, one of the greenest boroughs in Greater London.

Merton's vision is for a linked and integrated open space network that enhances Merton residents' quality of life and provides them with opportunities to experience a diverse range of accessible open spaces it will also protect and enhance natural ecosystems and the cultural heritage features that contribute to the Borough's unique identity.

In addition to enhancing the quality of life, Merton recognises that parks and open spaces are an asset to the community which provide physical and intellectual learning opportunities and contribute to healthier lifestyles, social cohesion and safer communities, regeneration and improvement of the environment and which contribute to the local economy and prosperity of the Borough.

The London Borough of Merton is developing management plans for each of its flagship parks, elite sports grounds and amenity parks and open spaces. The main purpose of this MMP is to guide the development, improvement, maintenance and management of The Canons by the London Borough of Merton in consultation with the community and partners.

In doing so this management plan seeks to:

- Reflect Merton's Open Space Study, 2012 to achieve Merton's vision and outcomes for parks and open spaces and meet the needs of all sectors of the local community
- Meet Merton's standards for the equitable provision of high quality parks and open spaces
- Outline plans for the development, improvement and maintenance of The Canons which give due consideration to capital and revenue implications
- Inform funding decisions on the development, improvement and maintenance of The Canons to ensure effective and efficient use of resources and to provide the basis for securing additional internal and external resources
- Provide information to The Canon's stakeholders including those who live, work and learn in the

Borough and those who visit to encourage further engagement in the development, improvement, maintenance and management of The Canons.

- Recognise the contribution made to The Canons by the active involvement of the very active Local Friends Group (the Friends of The Canons – FroC) and other community groups operating within The Canons Partnership.

London Borough of Merton has undergone a substantial restructure of its environmental services and has outsourced ground maintenance across the Borough including The Canons. The appointed contractor is *idverde* and their work is being managed by the Greenspaces Manager and a team of three Neighbourhood Client Officers. In addition, the existing contract with the operator of the Leisure Centre, Better, is managed by the council's Leisure and Culture Manager. Guided by the issues in the MMP and by strong Council leadership, the current management structures will be robust and appropriate to the management needs of this historic park.

## 1.7 Objectives of the Plan

The specific objectives that should be fulfilled by the MMP in the first few years of development and implementation are listed below. These are based upon management priorities currently prevailing on the site and may change with time as specific objectives are successfully fulfilled and new priorities emerge as part of the MMP monitoring process.

Generally the MMP will:

- Set out policies and direction for the future of the whole park
- Bring together all issues that affect management and maintenance
- Encourage a growing sense of ownership by staff and the community creating pride in The Canons
- Act as a basis for identifying priorities for future action and ongoing improvements
- Support the improvement works carried out as part of the The Lottery funded restoration
- Support a future Green Flag application

Specifically for 2020-30 the MMP will:

- Provide a management framework for The Canons and guide the allocation of the appropriate staffing resources and structures
- Integrate the activities from the The Lottery Activity Plan into the park events programme and maintenance structures
- Support the development of the café and toilets and its integration within the Park management
- Support the further development of The Canons

Partnership and the 'Friends of The Canons'

- Promote the improvement of operative skills and high quality of maintenance through the delivery of a Training Plan and performance management criteria
- provide a cost plan for the short and long term maintenance and an assessment of the risks to the long term management following completion of the The Lottery restoration works

In order to be a useful and user-friendly reference, the MMP will:

- Include a workable (SMART) Action Plan - to be developed later
- Evolve with time as project and proposals are developed
- Include timescales to allow monitoring of progress and be subject to ongoing review and updates

## 1.8 Gaps in the Plan

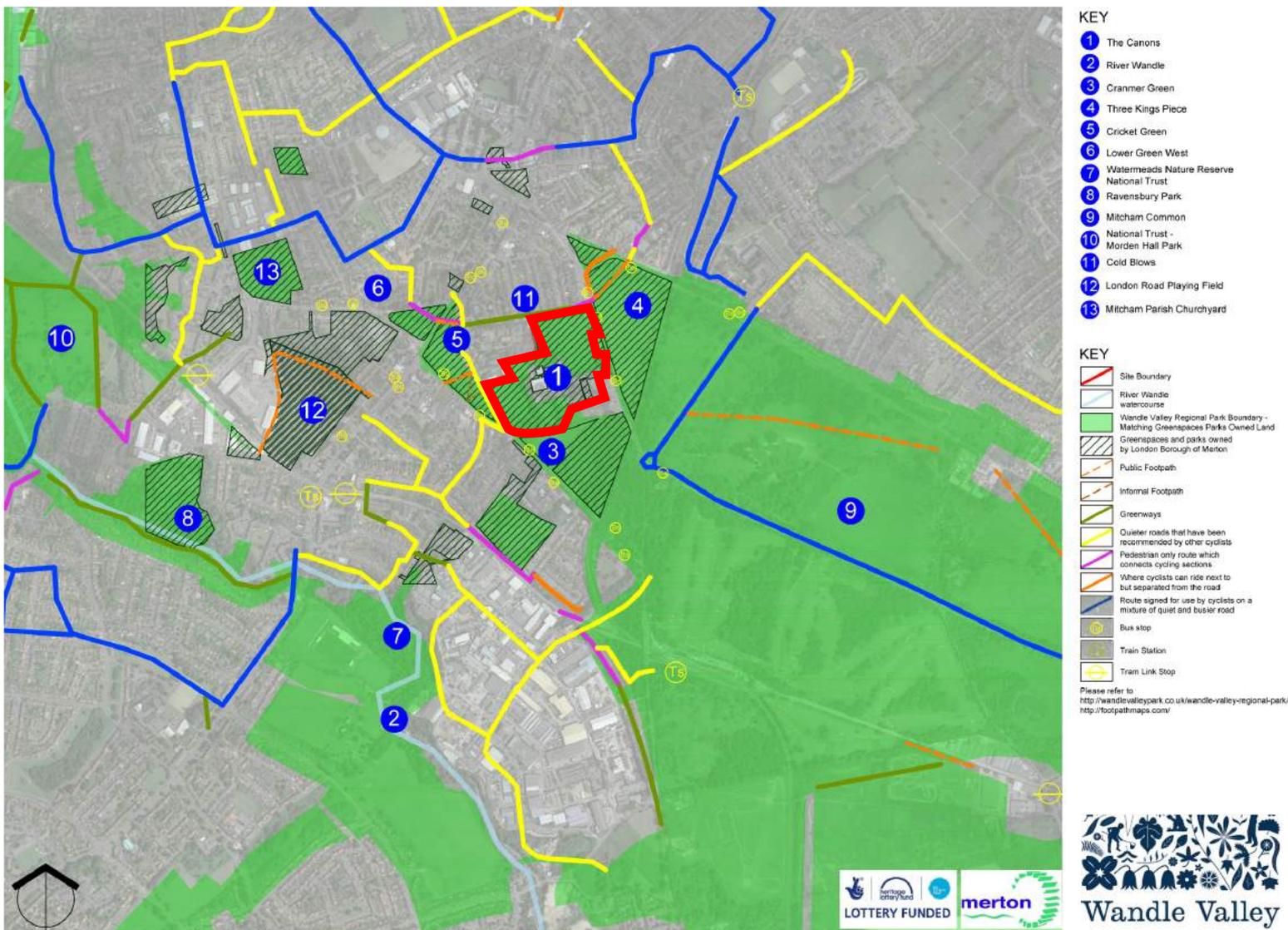
At the time of writing the draft Interim MMP, the detail of how The Canons house and the new café and public toilets will be managed is fully not resolved, so budget estimates have been applied based on costs included within the Business Plan (See Appendix 01). Once the lease is agreed with the future operators, the MMP will be updated. Any other changes that take place during the delivery stage of the project will also be taken account in the revised document which will be issued in December 2019 towards the end of the implementation works.



## Current Situation (‘where we are now’)

### 2.1 The Site

#### 2.1.1 Site, location and links with other green spaces



954/01\_Context Plan

The Canons, listed as Canons Recreation Ground, is one of London Borough of Merton's 67 Parks and Nature Conservation Areas. The grounds are visited by a wide range of local people and Canons Leisure Centre and Park Place attracts visitors from across the Borough.

The Canons covers an area of 8.4 hectares, located 2km south of Mitcham town centre lying between Madeira Road, Cricket Green, Cold Blows and Commonsides West. Mitcham is one of the least affluent parts of the Borough, the site lies within the Cricket Green Conservation Area which is less populated and includes the core of the former Mitcham village consisting of a large number of historic buildings and significant open spaces.

The Canons is one of several council owned green spaces in Cricket Green ward, including three registered town greens, Mitcham Parish churchyard and London Road Playing Field. The Canons is bounded to the east and south by extensive common land including informal green spaces of Cranmer Green and Mitcham Common. Drawing 954/01 – Site Context illustrates the context of the site, in particular how it relates to the mosaic of green spaces in the area that together form part of the Wandle Valley Regional Park.

The Canons sits on the edge of Mitcham Common, an ancient common land and a Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation. Although reduced over the years the common occupies a significant area,

182 hectares (460 acres) and that includes The Canons and other parks and greens in the area, many of which are physically connected. The plan also shows The Canons related to other elements of the green infrastructure that link the spaces together including:

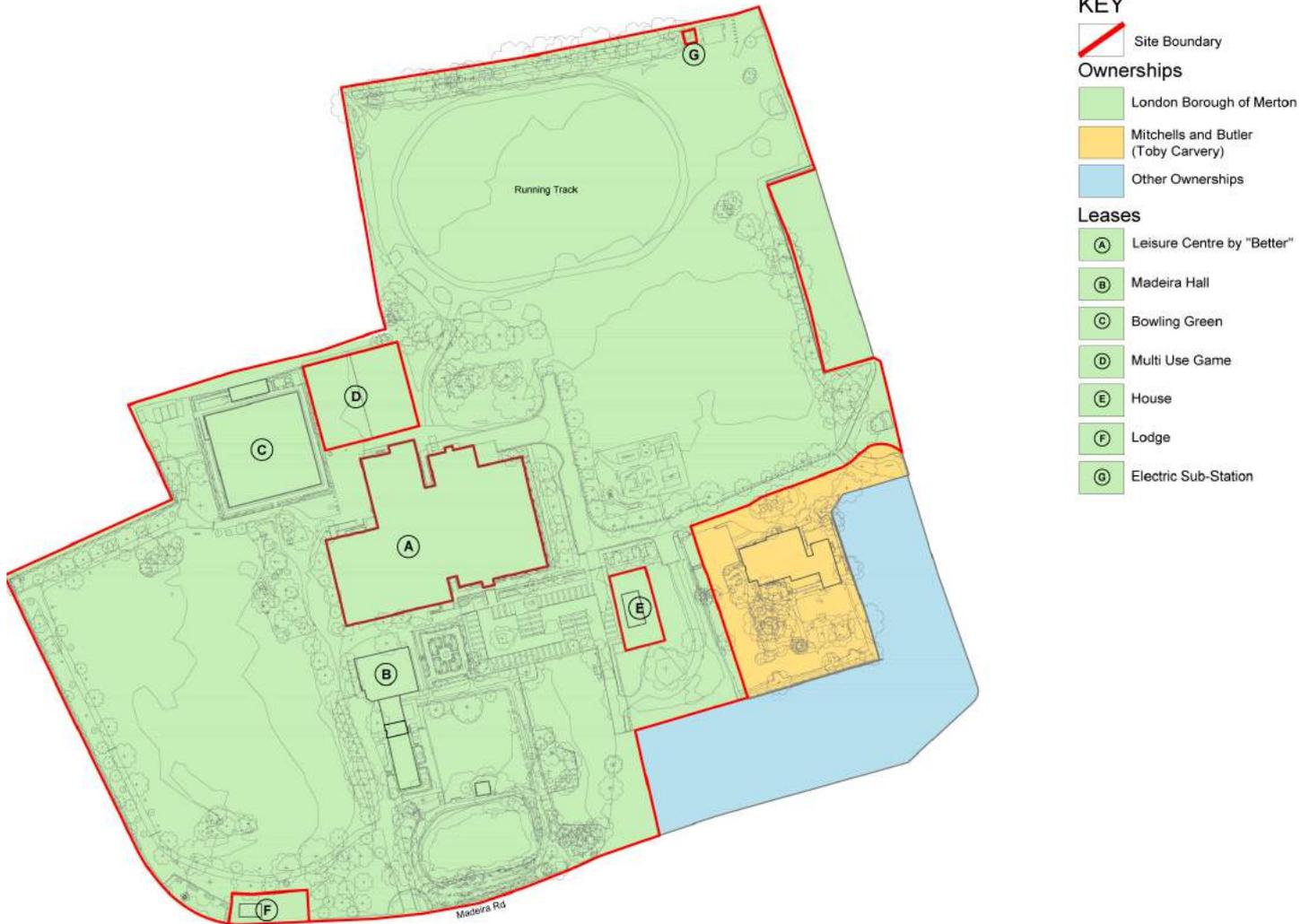
- greenways such as Cold Blows
- public footpaths
- cycle routes
- quieter roads that have been recommended by other cyclists
- pedestrian only route which connects cycling sections
- routes where cyclists can ride next to but separated from the road
- route signed for use by cyclists on a mixture of quiet and busier road

The plan also shows public transport provision - bus stops and train stations.

The importance of Mitcham's extensive open spaces and green infrastructure and in particular the interplay between The Canons and the strategic Wandle Valley Regional Park open space network is critical to the understanding of the importance of the site. There are significant opportunities for promotion of The Canons via the Regional Park initiative and to improve signposting to and interpretation of the site.



## 2.1.2 Legal and planning Ownerships and Leases



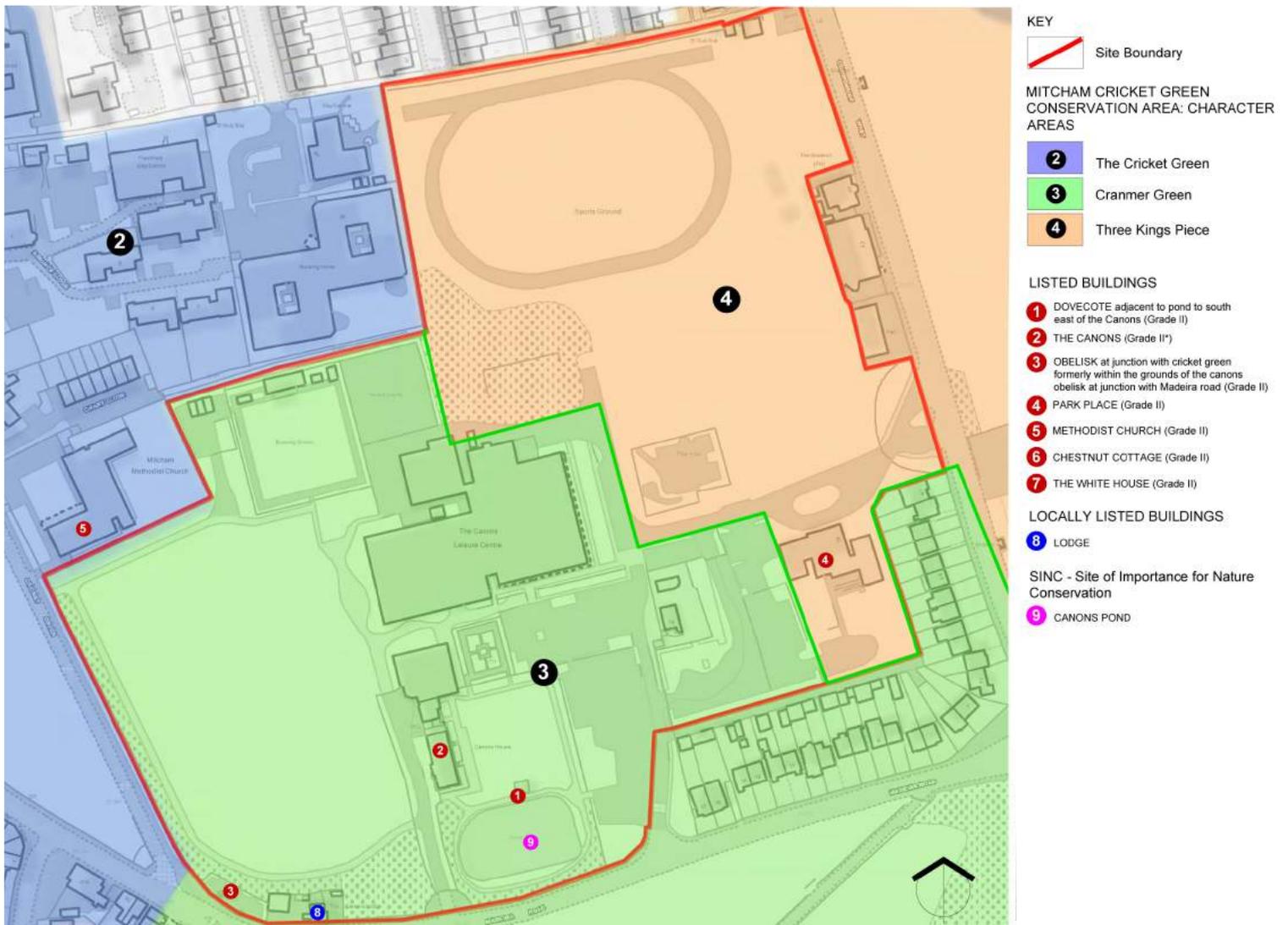
### 954\_12 Ownerships and Leases

The Canons, including Canons house, the Leisure Centre and the grounds is owned by London Borough of Merton.

The following tenancy agreements exist within The Canons:

- The Leisure Centre is leased to Better
- Madeira Hall is leased to Better
- The multi-use games area is leased to Better
- The bowling green is leased to Mitcham Bowling Club
- The lodge is rented out to a member of staff
- The upstairs flat in Canons house is rented out to a member of London Borough of Merton staff

Park Place and its curtilage including the car park are owned by Mitchells and Butler who operate the Toby Carvery Restaurant. The access road from Commonsides West is owned by Merton Council with a wayleave agreement to allow access to Park Place and its car park.



## 954\_10 Designations

### Listed Buildings

Canons house is listed at Grade II\* and the Obelisk and dovecote at Grade II. Park Place is listed at Grade II. None of the other buildings or structures on the site are listed. Historic England states the following regarding buildings and structures listed at these grades:

- Grade II\* buildings are particularly important

buildings of more than special interest; 5.5% of listed buildings are Grade II\*

- Grade II buildings are of special interest; 92% of all listed buildings are in this class and it is the most likely grade of listing

The Grade II\* listing of Canons house goes some way to showing how important it is considered in statute.

**Table 1 Buildings, structures and features and their statutory and non-statutory designations.**

Building, structure, or other element		Designation if applicable
S1	Canons house	Listed Grade II* (1358036)
S12	Canons house north extension with WCs	
S13	Madeira Hall	
S4	Dovecote	Listed Grade II (1080904)
S8	Obelisk	Listed Grade II (1193483)
S10	Former gate lodge	Locally listed
S20	Park Place	Listed Grade II (1358020)
L2	Pond	Site of Importance of Nature Conservation

### **Scheduled Monuments**

There are no Scheduled Monuments within the site boundary.

### **Conservation Area**

With reference to the Mitcham Cricket Green Conservation Area, The Canons is within 'Character area 3: Cranmer Green' and Park Place largely falls within 'Character area 4: Three Kings Piece'.

### **Locally-listed buildings**

The former entrance lodge to Canons house was designated by London Borough of Merton as a locally-listed building in December 1992. There is a short description in the local list (p.140). This is not a statutory listing, but the lodge is considered to make a positive contribution to character of the local area and enrich the sense of place because of its heritage values.

### **Historic Environment Record**

The site is located within the Mitcham Archaeological Priority Zone.

### **Registered Park and Garden of Historic Interest**

The site is not included in Historic England's 'Register of Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England.

### **Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)**

The Merton Open Space Study MOSS, 2010-11 records the following Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC):

- *Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation*  
Canons Pond, Cranmer Green Pond, located nearby
- *Sites of Metropolitan Importance*, Mitcham Common, located nearby

## **2.1.3 Brief History**

The Canons includes two Georgian villas, Canons house (1680) and Park Place (c.1780), as well as remnants from designed landscape of these periods when the properties in the area were developed by wealthy London business men and figures of genteel society, often used as weekend retreats. These mini country estates included extensive grounds, including lawns, ornamental gardens, specimen trees and walled gardens with 'borrowed' views over adjacent common land. Canons house and Park Place represent two of the few surviving examples of Georgian houses of this period and although there are remains of both Georgian grounds, The Canons is especially important as it retains a relationship between house and features of the designed landscape including the pond, dovecote, lawns, specimen trees and the walled garden as well as adjacent common land and greens.

The fish pond and dovecote (believed to be the oldest surviving building in Mitcham) pre-date Canons house perhaps dating back to before the Dissolution of the

Monasteries when a moated farmhouse thought to have been associated with Southwark Priory was established on the site. The name of the house is believed to have derived from an association with the canons of Southwark Priory as the land was surrendered by them at the Dissolution. After the Dissolution in the 1530s, the land became the property of the Cranmer family, who let the estate to tenants. In around 1680, John Odway was granted a lease to rebuild the house, which is that remaining at the centre of the estate today, listed at Grade II\*. Extensions and multiple alterations to the interior of the building were made by tenants and by the Cranmer family, who took the lease back between the 1760s and the 1840s. In this period three monuments were erected, all of them emphasising the Cranmer ownership. There are two stone plaques, set in boundary walls, and the Obelisk, listed at Grade II, the latter built to mark the successful sinking of a new well in a time of drought in 1822. The landscape setting of the house was also updated around 1800, with a drive constructed from Madeira Road, though the lodge was not built until after the 1870s. Between the 1840s and 1939, the estate was let again, with descendants from the Cranmer, the Simpson family, residing at the adjacent Park Place estate, listed at Grade II.

Park Place was built by Francis Gregg in c.1780, possibly replacing an Elizabethan house that may have been shown on the Rocque map published in 1745. The property was also developed as a small mansion with pleasure gardens and extensive walled gardens where the Simpson family lived for some time.

The Canons estate was sold to the Mitcham Corporation in 1939 for community use and for sporting facilities. This was possibly followed the example of the News of the World newspaper, who had purchased Park Place in 1922 and turned it into a sports ground. Canons house was used by Air Raid Precautions (ARP) and the Home Guard in the Second World War. In the 1960s the Council invested heavily. The house was altered internally, extended to the north with the WCs and Madeira Hall, and many associated changes were made to the landscape.

The News of the World sold the Park Place estate to Mitcham Corporation in 1963, who continued to use the land for sports while the house itself was used as council offices. Mitcham Corporation was one of three local authorities that became the London Borough of Merton in 1965. The final stage was the opening of The Canons Leisure Centre in the mid-1980s. By then, the majority of the Park Place estate had been united with the grounds of The Canons. However, Park Place was severely damaged by fire in 1989 and was eventually sold in 1995 and converted to its present use as a pub/restaurant.

## Chronology

- 1680** The estate went through several ownerships before the Dissolution. Afterwards a lease was granted for the building of a house on the site by the son of Robert Cranmer. John Odway (later Otway) built a house in 1681 having been granted a lease on a 'parcel of Ground called Canons (heretofore 'The Grove') with the orchard gardens, fishpond, dovehouse and appurtenances containing together 12 acres.' by John Cranmer in 1680
- 1702** John Odway died and the house passed to other lessees, but remained in the ownership of the Cranmer family. The present Grade II\* listed Canons house was extended in the 18th century and remained in the ownership of the Cranmer family
- 1761** Date stone in garden wall for James Cranmer
- 1808** Revd William Herbert lived at The Almonds (Park Place) and was a noted botanist whose interests included breeding narcissi and crocuses.
- 1816** Date stone in boundary wall for Mrs E M Cranmer
- 1822** Obelisk to commemorate rising of new spring
- 1922** 'News of the World' sports ground created. Became training venue for Mitcham Athletics Club during the 1920s and 1930s.
- 1939** Descendants of the Cranmers, the Simpsons, sold it for £25,093 to Mitcham Urban District Council. During the war it became an air raid wardens' control centre and a Home Guard post. The grounds between the house and Cricket Green were used as allotments.  
The house is built in brick with later coursed stucco, under a hipped tiled roof.
- c.1945** The Council carried out many improvements after WWII including building nurseries.
- 1946** Korfball was first played in the UK (by visiting Dutch teams) on the site
- 1947** Canons House was listed under the Town and Country Planning Act in 1947 (Grade II\*). The dovecote was listed as Grade II.
- 1963** The area passed into public authority ownership in 1963. Tradition of formal and informal sport and recreation continues today with the bowls club, leisure centre and host of informal uses of the open space.
- 1965** Merger of three local authorities to form the London Borough of Merton. Works included dredging carp pond and restocking. Walk made round pond and a new yew walk linked with the walled garden. Entrance to walled garden changed to provide access from the back, lily pond installed in the walled garden.
- 1983** After various plans and schemes, new swimming pool and teaching pool were opened.
- 1984** Sports hall adjoining the baths opened, since then, further improvements such as a 'fitness suite' (gym), squash courts and a dance studio were added.
- 1993** Lily pond removed

## 2.1.4 Summary of Site's Heritage and Significance

### 2.1.4.1 Archaeology

*Please refer to The Canons - Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (DBA) - Addyman Archaeology, 2016*

Through the analysis of the available historical records, historic and current aerial images, and a detailed cartographic regression, the DBA and associated research identified 65 known sites within the boundaries of the Conservation Area.

Analysis of the Greater London Historic Environment Record data has shown the area around The Canons to have had a long history of land-use and occupation spanning more than 10,000 years. Prehistoric settlers from the Mesolithic onwards were attracted by the fertile river terraces and hunting grounds of the Wandle River basin, while the location of what is now Mitcham along the road from Londinium to Chichester ensured a strong Roman presence in the area during the 1st to 5th centuries AD. The Saxon period covers the end of the Roman period in the 5th century, up the Medieval period at the start of the 12th century. The earliest historical reference to Mitcham comes from an eighth century document, a charter of 727, confirming the grant by Erkenwald of lands at Mitcham to Chertsey Abbey.

The name Mitcham is derived from the Saxon place name 'Mic' and 'ham' referring to a large settlement in the area from at least the 7th century onwards. The Domesday Book records 250 people living in two hamlets, Mitcham (modern Upper Mitcham) and Whitford (Lower Mitcham). A moated farmhouse associated with the Southwark Priory is thought to have been built during the Medaevil period. It underlies the grounds of Cannons House, established in the 17th century.

Overall, the desk-based assessment has shown the possibility for the survival of unknown buried heritage assets within the proposed conservation area to be high, with a potential for significant remains relating to the Medieval complex. The assessment of aerial photos has also revealed the potential for buried archaeology to survive below the ground surface, with many field boundaries, and potential structures noted including a potential sub-rectangular structure immediately north of the Dovecote. There are no Scheduled Monuments at a local level, the site is in the Mitcham Archaeological Priority Zone.

### 2.1.4.2 Buildings

*Please refer to The Canons – Conservation Management Plan Buildings and Structures - Simpson and Brown 2016*

The Canons is a small mansion in a designed landscape setting, one of six character areas in the Mitcham Cricket Green Conservation Area. It is formed of a group of heritage assets, including Canons house, dovecote, obelisk, estate walls and lodge.

There is evidence of pre-historic activity in the vicinity of the site of The Canons, though the earliest material relating to the site itself is from the medieval period, when the estate was owned by the Priory of St. Mary Overy, Southwark. It is possible that the dovecote, listed at Grade II by Historic England was built for the Priory, or incorporates re-used masonry from another building of that period.

In around 1680, John Odway, was granted a lease to rebuild the house, which remains at the centre of the estate today, listed at Grade II\*. Extensions and multiple alterations to the interior of the building were made by tenants and by the Cranmer family, who took the lease back between the 1760s and the 1840s. The Canons remained in the ownership of the Cranmer family and their descendants the Simpsons until 1939. In this period three monuments were erected, all of them emphasising the Cranmer ownership. There are two stone plaques, set in the extensive walled garden boundary walls, and the Obelisk, built to mark the successful sinking of a new well in a time of drought in 1822. The landscape setting of the house was further enhanced around 1800 and a drive constructed from Madeira Road, though the lodge was not built until after the 1870s.

Park Place was built by Francis Gregg in c.1780, possibly replacing an Elizabethan house that may have been shown on the Rocque map published in 1745. The property was also developed as a small mansion with pleasure gardens and extensive walled gardens where the Simpson family resided for some time.

Many of the buildings and structures are protected by statute: Canons house (Grade II\*), Park Place (Grade II), Obelisk (Grade II), and Dovecote (Grade II) are all listed by Historic England.

### 2.1.4.3 Designed Landscape

*Please refer to Appraisal of historic designed landscape at The Canons, Mitcham - Fiona Green, 2016*

The site consists of two medium sized estates, The Canons and Park Place which had significant landscaped grounds. Both estates remained as separate parcels, although at times linked by paths due to shared family ownerships, until they were unified when the Mitcham Borough Council bought Park Place in 1965 to add to their ownership of The Canons previously purchased in 1939.

The former Medieval complex including the dovecote and fish pond were incorporated into the grounds of Odway's new at The Canons, both of which remain today. There are no plans of the gardens during this period. A gardenesque layout as depicted in the gardens to the east of the Hall is shown on the estate map of c.1840. This includes a serpentine circuit walk with dense shrub planting and a feature at the south east corner of the pond, possibly a summer, but not labelled in the references. This is in contrast to today's simpler gardens with lawn and yew hedges which were laid out in 1965 by the council.

The extensive walled gardens in both The Canons and Park Place were developed throughout the 18th and early 19th centuries and were probably utilitarian in design. The small square-shaped walled garden to the north of the lawn remains today as do several of the walls of the former larger walled gardens remain, albeit in fragments between the car parking areas of the leisure centre which was developed in the 1980s.

Park Place was built over a century later than The Canons house in 1800. The house was built at right angles to The Canons house, probably to emphasise its individual status and separation. The main designed view from the Park Place was northwards over pasture and southwards over the pleasure gardens and extending over common land, as indicated on the c.1800s engraving Mitcham Common Cranmer Green. However there was no obvious attempt to provide a designed parkland with the typology of clumps of trees, lake, ha-ha, etc. The drive, from Commonsides West, was planted with shrubberies and arrived at a turning circle located at the north front of the mansion. Ornamental gardens were developed to the south of the house and extensive walled gardens and extensive glasshouses were laid out to the west. It is possible that the glasshouses were used to grow a range of produce, but also flowers, especially since Rev. William Herbert lived at Park Place, a botanist, who was well known for his cultivation of bulbous plants and experiments with hybridisation.

Park Place and The Canons shared a similar role as small country house or villa through the 18th and 19th centuries. Park Place estate went through a major change in the 1920s and 1930s when the News of the World developed their company sports ground in the gardens, with the Georgian house acting as a Sports Club. Fields and walled gardens were lost and in their place, a range of sports facilities were laid out including a running track, a cricket ground and football pitches, bowling greens, tennis courts. In addition, houses were built around the southern edge of the estate on Madeira Road.

Significant elements of the designed landscapes remain, reflecting the character of the two estates. With regard to Park Place, the drive and turning area largely survives

as well as the open space to the north and part of the shared garden boundary wall. In relation to The Canons, the garden continues to illustrate the layout of typical eighteenth century grounds to a mansion. There remains a strong relationship between the mansion and the gardens, particularly in respect of the east lawn, pond, dovecote, specimen trees, the west pasture (field), and the walled garden as well as maintaining the strong relationship with adjacent commons and greens.

#### 2.1.4.4 Trees

*Please refer to The Canons, Mitcham - Tree Survey - London Borough of Merton, 2016*

The Canons grounds include a significant collection of trees that have been well managed over the years by the London Borough of Merton. The recently planted Bellamy's Copse not only screens the leisure centre but also provides a rare area of woodland within the Conservation Area.

The grounds retain a large number of veteran and mature exotic trees that reflect the fashion for collecting tree species from across the world. Specimens of 200 years old and more include the Cedar of Lebanon, London Plane, Holm Oak, and Swamp Cypress within the gardens of The Canons and a fine Sophora tree that was originally planted in the pleasure gardens of Park Place. In addition there are some fine old English Oak trees on the border of Cold Blows, and lime and yew trees adjacent to Park Place drive.

The tree survey indicates a very wide range of tree species, many of which have been planted in the last twenty years by the council with the ambition of making The Canons the London Borough of Merton main arboretum. The list includes young unusual tree species such as *Maclura pomifera* (Osage orange), *Broussonetia papyrifera* (Paper mulberry), *Feijoa sellowiana* (Pineapple guava), *Zizyphus jujube* (Jujube), *Pterocarya fraxinifolia* (Caucasian wingnut), *Gymnocladus dioica* (Kentucky coffeetree) *Trachycarpus fortunei* (Chinese windmill palm), *Tilia henryana* (Henry Lime) as well as good specimens of Olive and a Common Medlar.

The trees are not covered by Tree Preservation Orders but are protected by the Conservation Area status of the site. The London Borough of Merton Arboricultural Manager has carried out a survey of the trees on site and has valued them in accordance with CAVAT, the system developed by London Tree Officer Association. The total value of the 703 trees is £5,960,387 with the highest values attributed to London Plane adjacent to the drive (£292,353), the Swamp Cypress on the East Lawn (£208,867), the Cedar of Lebanon, close to Canons house

(£104,211), and the Holm Oak near the Dovecote (£146,177), the Atlas Cedar near the depot (£91,682) and the horse chestnut tree close to the Obelisk (£90,559).

#### **2.1.4.5 Natural Heritage**

*Please refer to:*

*Drawing Nr. 954/01\_Context Plan (page 11)*

*The Canons – Preliminary Ecological Appraisal - JBA Consulting, 2016*

*The Canons, Mitcham - Hydrology Study of Canons Pond - JBA Consulting, 2016*

The Canons form a valuable part of Merton's open space network of parks and open spaces. Green open space covers nearly one fifth of the Borough's land use making Merton, while generally suburban in character, one of the greenest boroughs in Greater London. The network of green spaces provides green corridors running through Mitcham which combine to form the River Wandle Regional Park.

Habitats with ecological value include small areas of tall ruderal vegetation (growing on waste land), scrub, a pond, a small area of woodland and a large number of mature trees. Tall ruderal vegetation and scrub provide suitable habitat for reptiles and terrestrial habitat for amphibians. The woodland and mature trees provide roosting opportunities and foraging habitat for bats as well as nesting opportunities for birds. The pond provides habitat for a variety of aquatic invertebrates and amphibians as well as a foraging resource for bats. Canons house and the Dovecote have bat roosting potential.

The pond is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC).

#### **2.1.4.6 Sporting Heritage**

Between 1922 and 1963 the Park Place site became the News of the World's sports ground and clubhouse and provided a wide range of facilities including football pitches, cricket field, running track, two bowling greens and hard and grass tennis courts. The Club's reputation grew and achieved a nationwide reputation, becoming a training venue for Mitcham Athletics Club during the 1920s and 1930s. Several notable sporting figures were associated with the training ground. Dorothy Tyler, who won a silver medal for the High Jump at the 1936 Berlin Olympics and competed at the 1948 London Olympics. The sports ground is reputedly where the first women's road race in the world took place (in 1934) and The London to Brighton Road Race, the world's longest standing ultra-marathon, also used to start here. Although the track is derelict, the grass areas today host the Little (football) League.

It is thought that when The Canons was purchased by

Mitcham Corporation in 1939, their intention was to develop the grounds as a sporting venue, taking the lead from the News of the World. The war intervened and this ambition took some decades to realize. Korfball was first played in the UK (by visiting Dutch teams in 1946) on the grass area just to the west of where Madeira Hall is located today. The hall, itself, which opened in the 1960s, was originally a gymnasium and Canons house was the base for the Belgrave Harriers Athletic Club in the 1950s. Tennis courts were laid on the site of former orchard and Mitcham Bowling Club (MBC), established in 1930, moved to The Canons in 1965.

A new-build sports centre at The Canons was mooted in the early 1970s, but beset by funding and prioritisation problems. Canons Leisure Centre was finally built in 1984. The Leisure Centre, operated on behalf of London Borough of Merton by Better is the main leisure centre for Mitcham and includes a fitness centre, dance studio, low impact studio, 25 metre pool, teaching pool, sports hall, squash courts, crèche, and a sauna suite. A multi-use games area was built in 2014 on the site of the former tennis courts.

In addition to the site's heritage in sport, the adjacent Mitcham Cricket Green is of exceptional sporting interest. Cricket has been played on the Green from as early as 1685 and has been played continuously ever since, longer than anywhere else in the world. Some residents of The Canons were prominent players and supporters of the cricket club, perhaps none more so than Charles Hugh Hoare, descendant of the banking family whose grandfather laid out Stourhead in Wiltshire. Hoare was the first captain of Surrey County Cricket Club while resident at The Canons, leading them 1846-1850. Mitcham Cricket Club has provided three members of the men's England team as well as Molly Hide women's England captain. The cricket ground regularly hosted matches with touring Test teams and many famous cricketers, including W G Grace, have played on the ground. During the inter war years, crowds watching the cricket reached 6,000 and the ground is still a very popular venue today.

#### **2.1.4.7 The Canons and Community Value and Use**

In 2012 Mitcham Cricket Green Community and Heritage secured Heritage Lottery funding to raise awareness of the area's history and plan conservation work, including the production of an audio trail and a photo exhibition. A workshop was held in 2013, 'Tune in Cricket Green', organized by Mitcham Cricket Green Community and Heritage working in partnership with London Borough of Merton especially local ward councillors. This led to the development of the Cricket Green Charter in 2013 designed to inform policies and decisions about the future of the Cricket Green including Canons house and Park Place.

Mitcham Cricket Green Community and Heritage,

Friends of The Canons (FRoC), Mitcham Society have combined with London Borough of Merton to form The Canons Partnership. The voluntary groups are extremely supportive of The Lottery bid in principle and summarise their key objective as:

Canons house, Park Place and their ground should be restored, given greater unity and become a thriving centre of cultural and leisure activity which appeals beyond the local area

The voluntary groups summarise the characteristics of The Canons that they value most:

- Complex micro-landscapes, mosaic of open spaces and historic footpaths
- Richness of heritage
- Assemblage of historic buildings which tell a continuous story from the early 16th century dovecote to the present
- Strong sporting and recreational heritage and associations
- Sense of discovery

The relationship between The Canons and the wider heritage of Mitcham is important. This includes the historic significance of the Mitcham Cricket Club and the heritage of the production locally of medicinal flowers and herbs which was prevalent throughout Mitcham.

The site has been used by the public since the 1930s, so a significant number of today's local residents have memories of both The Canons and Park Place and how they used the buildings or the grounds, perhaps as an ARP warden, or as allotment holders in the 1940s and 1950s in the field to the west of Canons house, or participating in sports or events at both Canons and Park Place.

From the 1960s alterations onwards, The Canons was used by clubs and local groups as accommodation for meetings. A few photos in the Merton Heritage and Local Studies collection that show these activities. In more recent decades, these included use as a Merton Heritage Centre, nature interpretation centre and a local radio station, as well as for masonic meetings, local history talks, dance classes, exhibitions, and day trips for people with special needs being cared for by the nearby Jan Malinowski Centre. It is likely that many of these types of activities were being held in the house from perhaps after the wartime use onwards.

The Canons provides a green oasis, just minutes walk from the bustle of Fair Green. The Canons is popular with parents and young children as it provides large flat areas of amenity grass and a well-used playground, often used by children before and after swimming sessions. The Little League used to use the recreation area for football for school age children between October and April every year. Other informal uses include dog walking, running, picnicking, and visiting the site during lunch hours.

Although there has not been any detailed survey data on use, it is expected that the majority of visitors, come to the leisure centre, which attracts use at all times of the day and in the evenings.

#### 2.1.4.8 Heritage Significance

Significance is a specific heritage term defined in the National Planning Policy Framework:

*The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. (35)*

Historic England defines significance as:

*The sum of the cultural and natural heritage values of a place. (36)*

In this summary statement, the sections above are evaluated and compared, and a conclusion drawn on the overall cultural heritage significance of The Canons in national and international terms as a heritage asset.

The Canons embodies important cultural heritage values for society today. It has evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal heritage values (as defined by Historic England). All the values have the potential to be sustained, revealed and enhanced if change is carefully considered, planned and managed.

There is strong evidential value in the fabric of Canons house and the dovecote, listed at Grade II\* and Grade II respectively. As designated and important heritage assets, they have potential to yield evidence of past human activity which would enhance understanding.

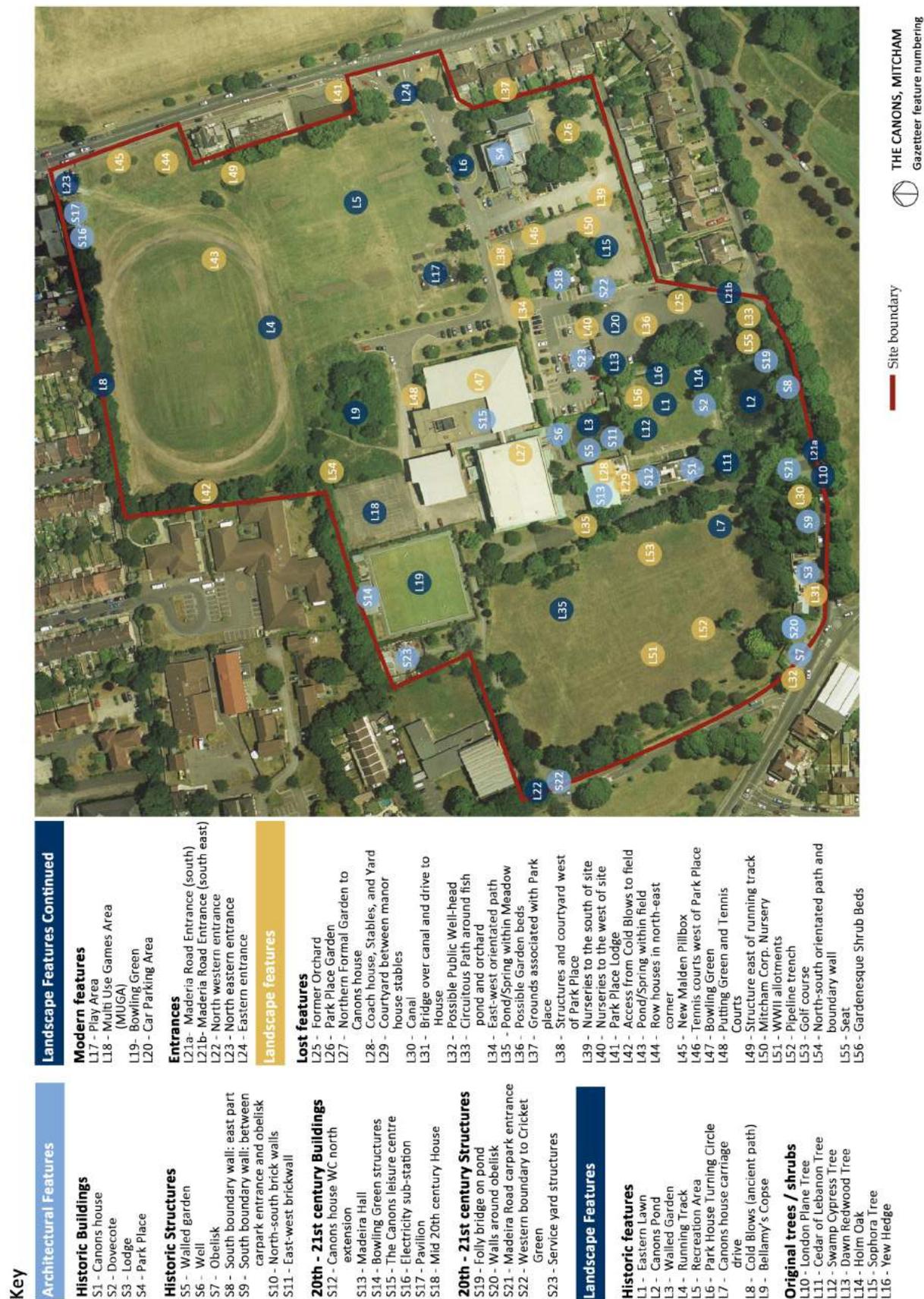
There is strong historical value in illustrating a once-typical suburban estate type of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the way that as a group the heritage assets have survived in relation to each other to make a coherent small estate. There is also strong associative historical value in the derivation of the estate from ecclesiastical property confiscated at the Reformation, the long history of the Cranmer dynasty, including strong resonances from the various inscribed plaques on the site.

There is some aesthetic value derived from the design of the exteriors of Canons house, its surviving historic interior panelling, and the Obelisk. However aesthetic fortuitous value is limited.

There is strong social value derived from The Canons being in public hands from 1939 onwards; The Canons remains in the collective experience of many of the people who organised events, meetings, clubs, societies and etc. in the house. Formal commemorative, symbolic and spiritual value are not present.

Though it can be problematic to attempt to place

a structure in a category of significance relative to other sites and buildings, it is important to give these buildings structures a context, to allow its significance to be compared to others in the region, and the United Kingdom.



954\_21 Site feature (location plan for Gazetteer Items to accompany Table 2)

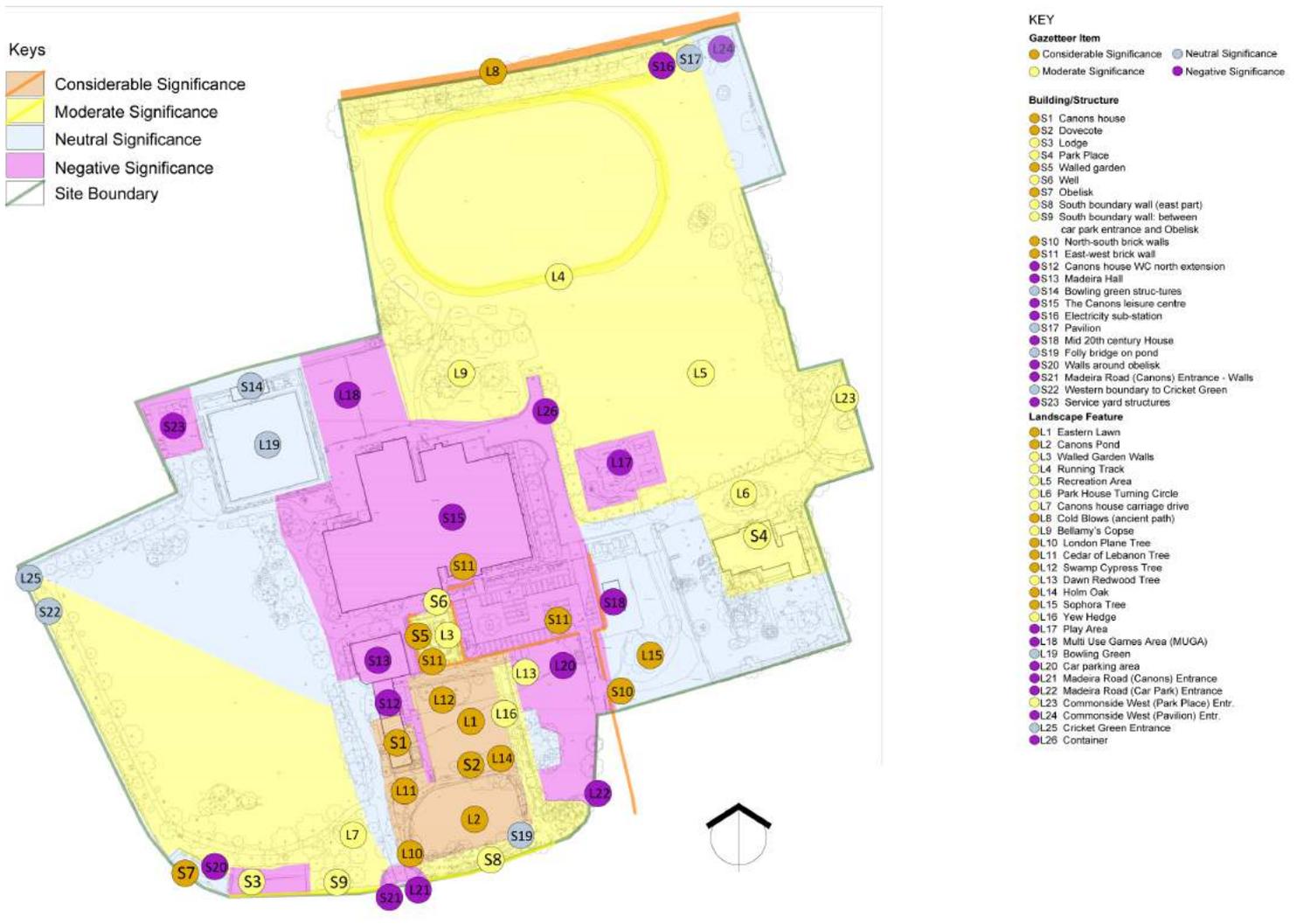
<b>Outstanding significance</b>	A building, landscape or other element of international or national importance, or a fine, intact or little-altered example of a particular period, style or type, that embodies the importance of a place or an element to which it is a part
<b>Considerable significance</b>	A building, landscape or other element of national or regional importance (London and south east of England), or a good example of a particular period, style or type with a high degree of intact original fabric that contributes substantially to the importance of a place or an element to which it is a part, that may have been altered
<b>Moderate significance</b>	A building, landscape or other element of local importance (London Borough of Merton), or that contributes but is not key to the importance of a place overall, or an element to which it is a part, that may have been altered
<b>Neutral significance</b>	A building, landscape or other element that neither contributes nor detracts from the importance of a place overall
<b>Negative significance</b>	A building, landscape or other element that detracts from the importance of place overall

**Table 2 - Gazetteer Table**

Recom. Ref No.	Building, structure, or other element being assessed	Designation if applicable	Cultural-heritage significance grading
S1	Canons house	Listed Grade II* (1358036)	Considerable
S2	Dovecote	Listed Grade II (1080904)	Considerable
S3	Lodge	Locally listed	Moderate
S4	Park Place	Listed Grade II (1358020)	Moderate
S5	Walled garden	N/A	Considerable
S6	Well	N/A	Moderate
S7	Obelisk	Listed Grade II (1193483)	Considerable
S8	South boundary wall (east part)	N/A	Moderate
S9	South boundary wall: between car park entrance and obelisk	N/A	Moderate
S10	North-south brick walls	N/A	Moderate
S11	East-west brick wall	N/A	Moderate
S12	Canons house WC north extension	N/A	Negative
S13	Madeira Hall	N/A	Neutral
S14	Bowling green structures	N/A	Neutral
S15	The Canons Leisure Centre	N/A	Negative
S16	Electricity sub-station	N/A	Negative
S17	Pavilion	N/A	Neutral
S18	Mid 20th century House	N/A	Negative
S19	Folly bridge on pond	N/A	Neutral
S20	Walls around obelisk	N/A	Negative
S21	Madeira Road (Canons) Entrance Walls	N/A	Negative
S22	Western boundary to Cricket Green	N/A	Neutral
S23	Service yard structures	N/A	Negative

Recom. Ref No.	Landscape feature being assessed	Designation if applicable	Cultural-heritage significance grading
L1	Eastern Lawn	N/A	Considerable
L2	Canons Pond	N/A	Considerable
L3	Walled Garden	N/A	Moderate
L4	Running Track	N/A	Moderate
L5	Recreation Area	N/A	Moderate
L6	Park Place Turning Circle	N/A	Moderate
L7	Canons house carriage drive	N/A	Moderate
L8	Cold Blows (ancient path)	N/A	Considerable
L9	Bellamy's Copse	N/A	Moderate
L10	London Plane Tree	N/A	Considerable
L11	Cedar of Lebanon Tree	N/A	Considerable
L12	Swamp Cypress Tree	N/A	Considerable
L13	Dawn Redwood Tree	N/A	Moderate
L14	Holm Oak	N/A	Considerable
L15	Sophora Tree	N/A	Considerable
L16	Yew Hedge	N/A	Moderate
L17	Play Area	N/A	Negative
L18	Multi Use Games Area (MUGA)	N/A	Negative
L19	Bowling Green	N/A	Neutral
L20	Car parking area	N/A	Negative
L21	Madeira Road (Canons) Entrance	N/A	Neutral
L22	Madeira Road (Car Park) Entrance	N/A	Negative
L23	Commonside West (Park Place) Entrance	N/A	Moderate
L24	Commonside West (Pavilion) Entrance	N/A	Negative
L25	Cricket Green Entrance	N/A	Neutral
L26	Container	N/A	Negative
L27	Northern Formal Garden to Canons house	N/A	Lost Feature (N/A)
L28	Coach house, stables and yard	N/A	Lost Feature (N/A)
L29	Courtyard between manor house stables	N/A	Lost Feature (N/A)
L30	Canal	N/A	Lost Feature (N/A)
L31	Bridge over canal and drive to manor	N/A	Lost Feature (N/A)
L32	Possible public well-head	N/A	Lost Feature (N/A)
L33	Circuitous path around fish pond and orchard	N/A	Lost Feature (N/A)
L34	East-west orientated path	N/A	Lost Feature (N/A)
L35	Pond/spring within meadow	N/A	Lost Feature (N/A)
L36	Possible garden beds	N/A	Lost Feature (N/A)

L37	Grounds associated with Park Place	N/A	Lost Feature (N/A)
L38	Structures and courtyard west of Park Place	N/A	Lost Feature (N/A)
L39	Nurseries to the south of site	N/A	Lost Feature (N/A)
L40	Nurseries to the west of site	N/A	Lost Feature (N/A)
L41	Park Place Lodge	N/A	Lost Feature (N/A)
L42	Access from Cold Blows to field	N/A	Lost Feature (N/A)
L43	Pond/Spring within field	N/A	Lost Feature (N/A)
L44	Row of houses in north-east corner	N/A	Lost Feature (N/A)
L45	New Malden Pillbox	N/A	Lost Feature (N/A)
L46	Tennis courts west of Park Place	N/A	Lost Feature (N/A)
L47	Bowling Green	N/A	Lost Feature (N/A)
L48	Putting Green and Tennis Courts	N/A	Lost Feature (N/A)
L49	Structure east of running track	N/A	Lost Feature (N/A)
L50	Mitcham Corp. Nursery	N/A	Lost Feature (N/A)
L51	WWII era allotment gardens	N/A	Lost Feature (N/A)
L52	Pipeline trench	N/A	Lost Feature (N/A)
L53	Golf course	N/A	Lost Feature (N/A)
L54	North-south orientated path and boundary wall	N/A	Lost Feature (N/A)
L55	Seat	N/A	Lost Feature (N/A)
L56	Gardenesque shrub beds	N/A	Lost Feature (N/A)
L57	Former Orchard	N/A	Lost Feature (N/A)
L58	Park Place Garden	N/A	Lost Feature (N/A)



## 954/11 Significance and Gazetteer Items

### 2.1.4.9 Natural Heritage Significance

Although there are no nationally designated sites (e.g., NNR, SSSI) within 2km of the site there are seven Local Nature Reserves in the vicinity. In addition there are 20 non- statutory designated Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) within 2km of the site including Canons Pond. This underlines the complex and rich network of green spaces and the contribution of The Canons to the green infrastructure of the area.

Canons Pond is one of few remaining ponds in London as many have been lost through development and safety concerns. Canons Pond and its ongoing conservation has assumed increasing significance as a result. The pond has a good diversity of water plants, supports amphibians, especially frogs, and an array of aquatic insects, including four species of dragonfly. There is anecdotal evidence that the pond historically supported newts but the species of newt is unknown.

The Canons includes a small area of semi-natural broadleaved woodland, Bellamy's Copse which is an unusual element of woodland in the area supporting diverse wildlife. A bat survey in August 2016 found very

little evidence of bats, but the dovecote is categorized as having high bat roosting potential Canons house and some of the older trees have moderate bat roosting.

### 2.1.4.10 Geology, hydrology and soil type

The underlying geology of The Canons is London clay. Topsoil above the clay is up to 5 cm deep with an acidity level of PH 5. The site is relatively flat with good drainage. This geology is fairly common to most of the Borough.



Please refer to Drawing 954\_23\_Listed Buildings Curtilages

### 2.1.4.11 Listed Buildings and Curtilages

Some of the other structures in the study area are likely to be considered as curtilage by the local authority. Historic England guidance on curtilage states that it is defined as an area of land around a listed building within which there are other buildings, pre-dating 1948. Whether these buildings/structures should be considered as listed, is made by the local planning authority (LPA). LPA decisions-makers consider physical layout, past and present ownership, past and present use/function specifically whether a building was ancillary to the listed building at the date of listing. The LPA needs to be consulted, to see whether they require a listed building consent application in all cases.

At The Canons, the curtilage area extends to boundary of the historic grounds of the mansion. The curtilage therefore includes the other listed structures (dovecote and obelisk). It also includes structures which are associated with the mansion house; all walls, boundary walls and other built structures constructed before 1948, including the lodge. The WCs and the Madeira Hall are connected to the mansion and therefore are considered as part of the listing.

The curtilage area of the dovecot extends to the boundary of historic grounds of The Canons. There are no structures which are associated with it.

The curtilage area of the obelisk again extends to the boundary of the historic grounds of The Canons, the only other structures associated with it, are listed. It could be argued that all walls and other built structures constructed before 1948, including the lodge are in its curtilage, but the listing of the mansion is a better fit.

The curtilage area of Park Place is hard to define; it should extend to boundary of its historic grounds, but these have become blurred and hard to identify with certainty. The south boundary wall to the post 1900 houses on Madeira Road technically falls into the pre-1948 curtilage criteria, but it seems unlikely that the LPA would consider it listed. The only structure that might be considered in the curtilage, is the north-south brick wall, with the plaque; however the plaque states that the wall was the property of Esther Maria Cranmer, owner of The Canons, and therefore is more likely to be considered curtilage to The Canons.



Please refer to Drawing 954\_14 Site Facilities, Use and Access

### 2.1.5 Built Features and Facilities

Drawing 954\_14 outlines the key site features, facilities, entrances and circulation as well as land use or activity zones. The site includes a wide range of features and facilities including a major Leisure Centre, who also hires out Madeira Hall for functions. Canons house has no current public use and the adjacent toilet block is closed.

Outdoor sporting facilities have changed since the News of the World sports club era. Today’s facilities include the Bowling Club and MUGA, as well as the running track, which is used for all sorts of activities, such as learning to ride a bike, jogging, powerwalking, etc. The west lawn is used occasionally for events such as the Mitcham Fair.

There is free access to the grounds including the walled garden, pond and east lawn areas. Visitor numbers are thought to be low. Many visitors to the site are probably

unaware of the existence of Canons house and gardens.

**Zones**

The site has been divided up into land use and activity zones as follows:

- Open Space – informal recreation zone
- Sports – formal recreation zones
- Play zone
- Historic Garden – quiet zone
- Parking and Servicing zone

Some of the facilities conflict with their neighbours in terms of fabric and setting as outlined in Section 4.0 and some also conflict in terms of land use or character zones. For example, the quiet garden areas, walled garden and east lawn are located adjacent to car parks, albeit with good existing screening between them.

## 2.1.6 Landscape Character and Inventory

### Character Areas

The grounds at The Canons have been split since at least the early 18th century when they belonged to two private properties, Canons house and Park Place. Mitcham UDC took over ownership of The Canons in 1939 and subsequently took over the News of the World Sports Ground on the Park Place site in 1963 when the two sites were joined. The site today lacks a clear identity and name. The Council refer to the area as Canons Recreation Ground, rather than a park. The local community refer to the site as The Canons or the grounds of The Canons, reinforcing the site's historic origins.

Drawing 954\_02\_Historic Character Areas shows the estates at the time of the 1860 OS map and defines the boundary between The Canons and Park Place as delineated by the brick boundary walls. The plan shows that Park Place was significantly larger in size – 6.5 hectares compared to The Canons which covered 4.7 hectares. The plan outlines character areas within the two estates, 20 areas in all. *The appraisal of historic designed landscape at The Canons, Mitcham* by Fiona Green provides a description of these areas.

Although there have been significant changes over the years including the recent development of the Leisure Centre, the original layout of the two estates, Park Place and The Canons can still be traced today as well as including features of early phases of development, principally the dovecote and stew pond.

The following character areas have been defined for The Canons and Park Place estates and overlaid onto the 1st edition OS map. Each area has been described overleaf in terms of their historical development.



- Key
- Division between Park Place and The Canons: 18th century wall
  - Canons Estate (47013 sqm)
  - Park Place Estate (65542 sqm)
  - Site Boundary
- CANONS**
- 1 East Lawn
  - 2 Pond
  - 3 Entrance Drive
  - 4 Formal Walled Garden
  - 5 North Walled Garden
  - 6 Courtyard
  - 7 West Meadow
  - 8 North Meadow
  - 9 Orchard
- PARK PLACE**
- 10 Glasshouses
  - 11 Drive
  - 12 Gardens
  - 13 Service yards/buildings
  - 14 Glasshouses
  - 15 Walled Garden
  - 16 Orchard
  - 17 Meadow
  - 18 North Meadow
  - 19 Cottages
  - 20 South Meadow

954/02\_Historic Character Areas

## The Canons

1. East Lawn
2. Pond
3. Entrance Drive
4. Formal Walled Garden
5. North Walled Garden
6. Courtyard
7. West Lawn
8. North Meadow
9. Orchard

## Park Place

10. Glasshouses
11. Drive
12. Gardens
13. Service yards/buildings
14. Glasshouses
15. Walled Gardens
16. Orchard
17. Meadow
18. North Meadow
19. Houses
20. South Meadow



## Park Place Character Area Historical development

### 1. East Lawn

- Location of former building that predates the foundation of the manor and maybe contemporaneous with or predate the Dovecote and Fish Pond
- Possible formal garden related to the manor house
- c.1840s estate plan shows a 'gardenesque' layout with lawn broken up by amorphous shaped shrub beds and shrub planting screening dovecote
- Subsequent OS maps show little change following removal of shaped shrub beds by 1867.
- In 1960s yew hedging was planted around the lawn and the alley by the car park formed

### 2. Pond

- The fishpond was first mentioned in a lease of 1681 relating to a 'parcel of ground' known as The Canons
- The extract from plan of Mitcham Common 1703 (Surrey Heritage Centre 470 /1) shows a pond and dovecote on the site of The Canons
- By the mid 18th century the grounds to the east of the house were made into gardens by James Cranmer II and the pond is likely to have been incorporated as a feature in the garden
- An estate plan of The Canons of c.1840 (Surrey Heritage Centre 298/6/3) shows the pond linked to a culvert from the west where a spring rose in 1822 (site of Obelisk).
- The c. 1840 estate plan shows a feature at the south east corner of the pond, possibly a summerhouse but not labelled in the references. The seat would have given excellent diagonal views across the pond to the house (same view as the footbridge today)
- The 1897 OS shows the profile of the pond had changed with the removal of the north west corner and generally rounding of the original rectangular shape
- The former footbridge at west end was removed in mid-20th century
- The brick bridge in south-east corner is likely to be a 1970s addition
- During the 1960s the pond was cleaned out and restocked with carp and former circuit path recreated

### 3. Entrance Drive

- The carriage drive is first shown on the estate plan of The Canons of c.1840 (Surrey Heritage Centre 298/6/3). The drive was sheltered on either side by trees and shrubbery
- The drive crossed a bridge over the culvert which fed the pond
- The lodge and gates were added in the 1870s or 1880s
- The drive was re-routed during the 1960s, allowing access to a gymnasium built to the north of The Canons. The sycamore avenue was also created at this time

### 4. Formal Walled Garden

- The first reference to the garden wall is in 1761 when James Cranmer built, or rebuilt, a garden wall and inserted a date-stone.
- An estate plan of The Canons of c.1840 (Surrey Heritage Centre 298/6/3) shows the location of the formal walled garden
- Sections of the 3m high walls may be contemporary with house, some possibly adapted from rear of buildings, some added in 20th century.
- The 1953 OS shows glass houses in the walled garden.
- In 1969 the garden was altered to a formal design with new paving and planting, the glasshouses were removed, a central pool was added (removed 1993) and the 1761 date-stone was reset in the east wall.
- The northern wall of the garden was also built at this time, probably using salvaged bricks.

### 5. North Walled Garden

- The North Walled Garden is shown separated by a wall from the Formal Walled Garden on a plan of The Canons c.1840 (Surrey Heritage Centre 298/6/3)
- The 1871 OS shows a building extruding into the north walled garden from the coach house and stables.
- The dividing wall and buildings to the west of the North Walled Garden were removed by the time of the 1914 OS.

### 6. Courtyard

- An estate plan of The Canons of c.1840 (Surrey Heritage Centre 298/6/3) shows the courtyard between the coach house and stables
- The courtyard area is opened up following the removal of the service buildings on the west side by the time of the 1953 OS

## **7. West Lawn**

- This area of pasture was shown separated by shrubbery and possibly a shelter belt from the mansion on the estate plan showing The Canons of c.1840 (Surrey Heritage Centre 298/6/3) A small pond is also shown on the map
- The 1867 OS shows it was planted with individual parkland trees, suggesting it was part of the outlook from the mansion by then
- A line of trees, largely conifers, borders the drive to the house
- The 1953 OS shows the west and north meadows were amalgamated. This probably occurred when both fields were used for allotments during World War II

## **8. North Meadow**

- The North Meadow was shown divided from the west lawn on the estate plan of The Canons of c.1840 (Surrey Heritage Centre 298/6/3).
- The North Meadow was left as pasture until allotments were created during World War II.

## **9. Orchard**

- An orchard at The Canons was mentioned in a lease of 1681, but it is not known where it was located.
- The plan of The Canons c.1840 (Surrey Heritage Centre 298/6/3) shows an area of orchard on the east side of the mansion garden.
- The 1897 OS shows the orchard was reduced in area by this time, occupying only the north end of the garden.
- Orchard trees are clearly evident in this area in a 1937 aerial photograph of the gardens.
- A nursery, including glasshouses is shown in the orchard by the time of the 1953 OS and again on the 1971 OS
- The brick boundary wall with Park Place is still evident bordering the access road to the car park. A stone plaque is set in the wall.

## **Park Place**

### **10. Glasshouses**

- The glasshouses are first shown east of The Canons on the 1867 OS.

### **11. Drive**

- The carriage drive to Park Place is first shown on the 1867 OS, sheltered by trees and shrubs and opening to a large turning circle north of the house.

### **12. Gardens**

- The pleasure gardens lay to the south of Park Place and are shown on the 1867OS.
- The area defined by a boundary with a field to the south remains unchanged until the extension of Nursery adjacent to Park Place and housing to the south. Car parking for the Toby Carvery was added west of the building during the late 20th century. Gardens remain on the east side.

### **13. Service Yards/ Buildings**

- The buildings shown on the 1867 OS map are likely to have included stables and coach house as well as barns
- By 1956 OS the majority of the buildings were removed
- The 1971 OS shows the remaining buildings removed

### **14. Glasshouses**

- 4 linear glasshouses are shown on the 1867 OS
- The 1937 aerials show a pair of long narrow linear structures (possibly cold frames) where the glasshouses were previously located

### **15. Walled Garden**

- The Park Place walled garden is marked on the 1867 OS and was defined in that location until the advent of the Sports Ground in the 1920s
- The walled boundary of the garden was an irregular shape with an angled corners at the north end
- A small glass house is shown in the centre of the area
- A recess is visible in the north east corner but this had been removed by the time of the 1897 OS

- The walled garden was subsequently overlaid by a bowling green which is evident in an aerial photograph taken in 1937
- 16. Orchard**
- Park Place orchard is shown on the 1867 OS
  - The orchard was removed when the sports ground was built and is shown overlaid by a bowling green on the 1936 OS
- 17. Meadow**
- The meadow was located north of Park Place. The 1867 OS shows trees planted along the southern edge and a block of trees adjacent to the west boundary
  - Interestingly there are three trees shown backing each side of the recess in the north east corner of the walled garden
  - The meadow remains unchanged until the sports ground was built in 1920s
- 18. North Meadow**
- This area of pasture is shown on the 1867 OS with trees along each boundary. A stock pond is shown near the south east corner. A building and small enclosure are shown in the north east corner
  - This meadow was also overlaid by the News of the World Sports ground in the 1922 and Mitcham Athletics Club – facilities included a cinder running track, tennis courts, putting green and a bowling green. A pavilion was built in the north east corner
  - The bowling green and tennis courts were removed in the 1980s when the Leisure Centre was built and Bellamy’s Copse was planted to assist in screening the building
  - A play area was also built in 1990s, eating further into the adjacent grassland
- 19. Cottages**
- The cottages were built along Commonsides West probably during the early 19th century
- 20. South Meadow**
- South Meadow was overlooked by the south front of Park Place and was planted with parkland trees which appear to have directed views further south across the common.
  - Houses were built during the 1930s across the majority of South Meadow which originally allowed views across of the commonland towards the North Downs, an area that Gregg leased for this purpose.

## Today’s Character Areas

Please refer to:

- *954/03 Today’s Character Areas (next page)*
- *Landscape Appraisal*

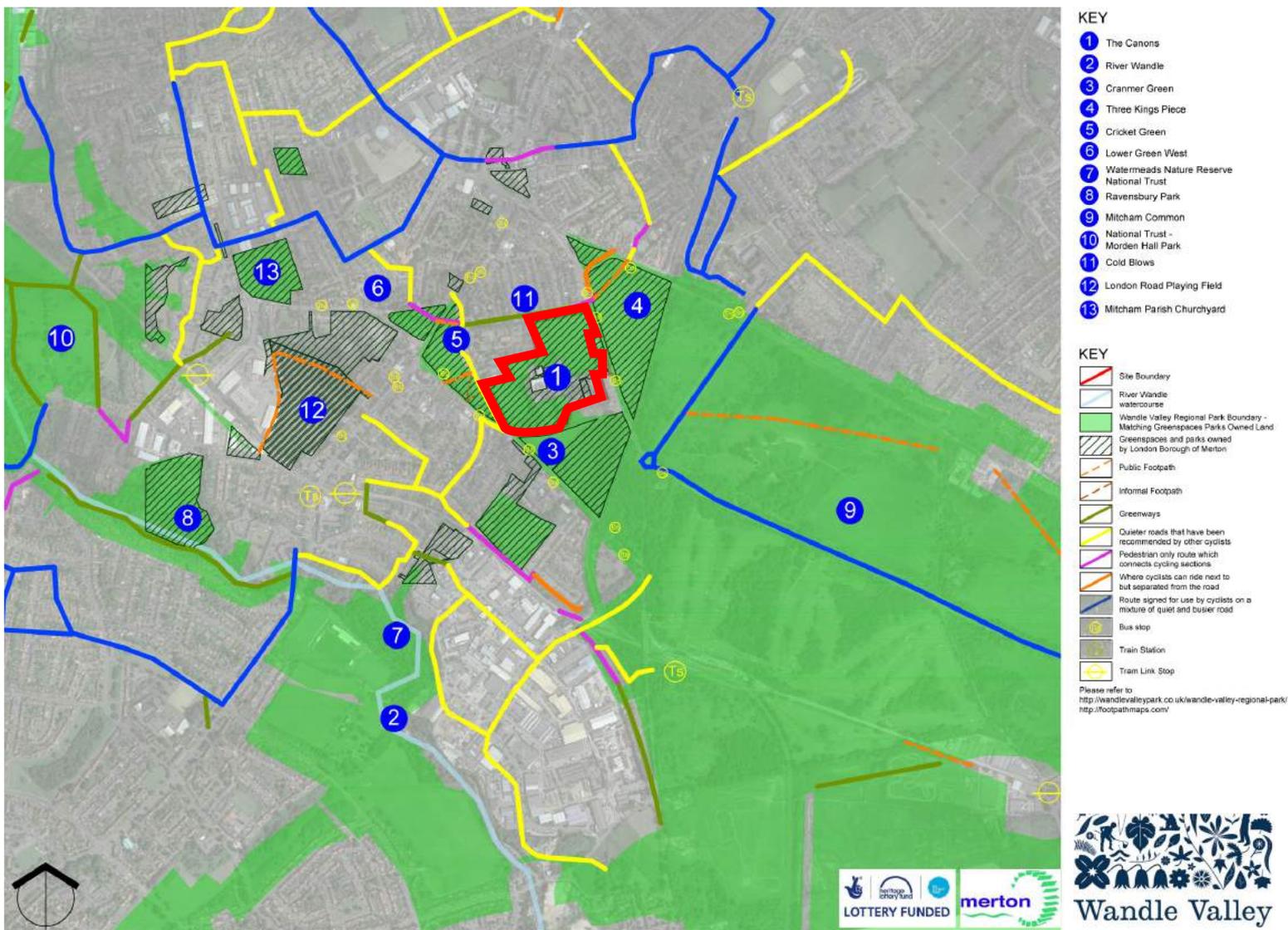
A Landscape Appraisal was undertaken of the site’s existing character areas in a separate report.

It demonstrates that of the twenty character areas identified in relation to the 1867 OS map, four of the areas related to The Canons estate remain largely unchanged in terms of basic layout and character, underlining its importance as an historic designed landscape These areas are:

- East Lawn
- Pond
- Walled garden

Although important elements survive from other character areas such as the walls of Park Place the extensive walled gardens and the Lodge, the setting and use of the original character areas has changed over time. In summary, while Park Place has lost most of its setting, Canons house has to a large extent retained its setting and has a high potential to reveal and enhance further this historical context.

## 2.1.7 Boundaries and Neighbours



954/01\_Context Plan

The Canons is bounded by roads on three sides. Commonsie West and Madeira Road are busy roads that edge the eastern and southern sides and the quieter Cricket Green bounds the western side with the old Mitcham village overlooking the Cricket Green to the west. The northern side of the site is partly bounded by Cold Blows, a medieval path, and partly by more recent health care developments including Alzheimer’s Society and Cumberland Care Home as well as the Mitcham Methodist Church. Further to the north is Mitcham’s main shopping area whilst areas to the west beyond Commonsie West and to the south of Maderia Road is dominated by a network of green spaces including Three Kings Piece, Mitcham Common and Cranmer Green as shown on Drawing Nr. 954/01.

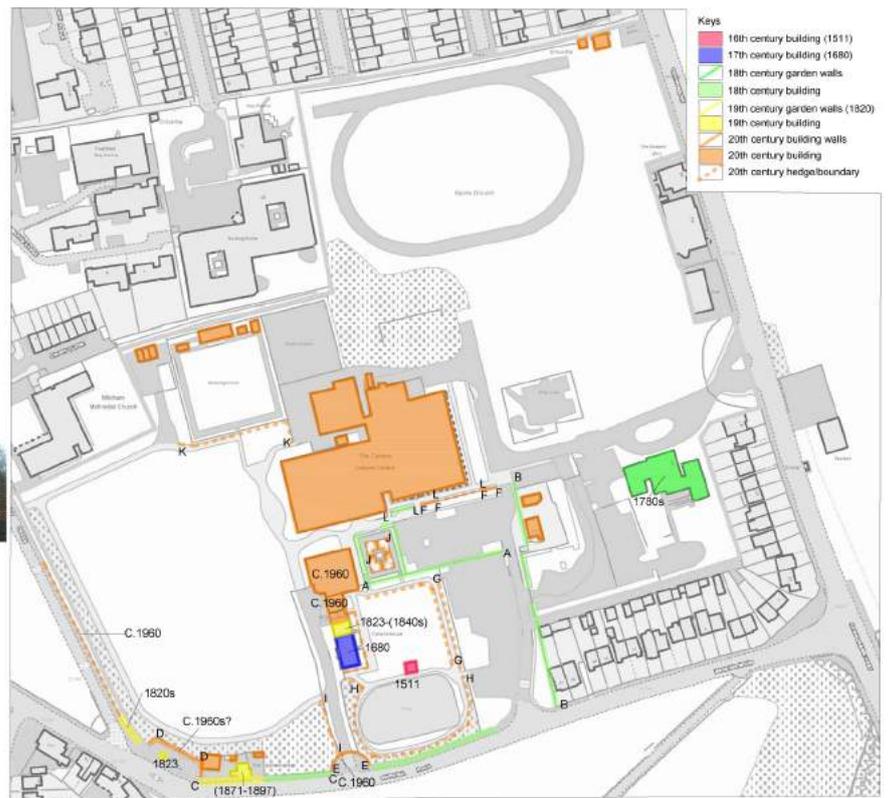


## Historic Features

Drawing Nr. 954\_09\_Historic Features Plan notes the approximate dates of existing historic features. The plan shows a pattern of development:

- the pond and dovecote - 16th century or earlier
- Canons house - 17th century
- Park Place and the boundary and garden walls - 18th century
- Only the obelisk and lodge - 19th century
- the Leisure Centre, Madeira Hall and various small buildings - 20th century

A striking feature of the site is that Canons house and the walled garden and the 18th century garden and boundary walls have been retained, despite the introduction of the Leisure Centre, Madeira Hall and toilet block within such close proximity.



954\_09\_Historic Features Plans



**KEY**  
Survey - Boundaries

- Site Boundary
- Existing Buildings within Project Area
- Existing Brick Wall 0.6m - 3.5m High in fair-poor condition
- Sheet Horizontal 0.8-0.9m High Approx of varied quality and condition
- Existing Close Board Fence 2m High in poor quality and condition
- Existing Metal Railing, 0.5 - 1.9m High in varied quality and condition
- Existing Metal Railing, 4.5m High in good quality and condition
- Existing Wire Mesh Fences, 1.2m High Approx in poor quality and condition
- Existing Palisade Fence, 2m High Approx in reasonable condition
- Existing Electric Fence, 2m High Approx
- Planting Protection Fence, 0.5m High Approx in poor condition
- Existing Bollards in reasonable condition but poor quality
- Existing Gates/Overhead Barrier in reasonable condition but poor quality



954\_19 Survey – Boundaries

**2.1.8 Access, entrances and Parking**



- KEY**
- Site Boundary
  - Existing buildings within project area
- Zones**
- Open Space – Informal recreation zone
  - Sports – Formal recreation zones
  - Play Zone
  - Historic Garden – Quiet zone
  - Parking and Servicing zone
- Connectivity**
- Shared Vehicle and pedestrian use
  - Primary Footpath
  - Secondary Footpath
  - Closure Line
  - Entrance to Key Building
- Site Features / Facilities Plan**
- Canons house
  - Leisure Centre
  - Madeira Hall
  - Bowling Green
  - Multi Use Games Area
  - Play Area
  - Walled Garden
  - Pond
  - Lawn
  - West Lawn
  - Recreation Area
  - Running Track
  - Car Park
  - Park Place (Toby Carvery)

954\_14 Site Facilities, Use and Access

The access, entrance and parking plan highlight the fragmented circulation system across the site. There are two vehicular access points, the main entrance being from Commonsides West which provides access to car parks and caters for buses and servicing for the Leisure Centre. The entrance also provides access to the Toby Carvery at Park Place. The entrance from Madeira Road is also used for visitors to the Leisure Centre and the grounds and as a recycling area. A further vehicular access is provided for Canons house via the new drive, but the gates are usually kept locked.

There are two main car parks located adjacent to each other but which are separated by the historic walls and connected by a short stretch of road. The one nearest to the Leisure Centre is well used as are additional parking spaces adjacent to the building and along the access road from Commonsides West. The car park nearest Madeira Road is not well used and includes a recycling area and a small area of woodland. There appears to be ample car parking for the current use of the site.

Pedestrian and wheelchair circulation across the site is fragmented and generally very poor. The only pedestrian access that leads on to a footway is from Cricket Green. The other pedestrian entrances either lead to a shared vehicular/ pedestrian route, as in the case of the Park Place entrance at Commonsides West and Madeira Road, or merely lead onto open space as in the case of Commonsides West, the northern eastern entrance. This means that either people are forced to walk along roads or walk across grass verges or across open spaces, something that can prove challenging, especially for wheelchair users and impossible in wet weather. Cars occasionally appear on the northern and western sides of the Leisure Centre where one would not expect to see vehicles.

Within the site, the primary footway from Cricket Green provides a pleasant walk around the west lawn area. The other primary footpaths lead from shared access roads and generally lead to the Leisure Centre and Madeira Hall. Secondary footpaths surfaced in rolled gravel are laid out around the lawn and the pond. The site is flat and therefore there are no strategic layout issues related to DDA access.

Drawing 954\_14 shows the various types of surfacing and edging as well as noting their overall condition, although this will be subject to further investigation. Generally the paths and roads are surfaced in low quality materials and are in poor condition.

The primary footpath from Cricket Green around West Lawn is surfaced in bitmac and is in poor condition. The north-east entrance from Commonsides West is surfaced in bitmac and shows signs of cracking. The surfacing around the Leisure Centre is reasonable, but the condition of the

grasscrete and bitmac surfacing across the two main car parks is varied.

The highest quality paved areas include the original stone staircase to Canons house, brick paving within the walled garden laid in the 1960s, which is in poor condition and the recently laid granite sett rumble strips at the crossing point on Park Place drive. Generally the paving around Canons house is poor quality. The drive is surfaced in bitmac, the terrace and path around the southern façade of the house are surfaced in concrete flags and the steps to the pond are surfaced in concrete block paving.

The yew walk, the paths around east lawn and the path around the pond are surfaced in rolled gravel, which is appropriate for its current light use. The running track is also surfaced in gravel or cinder. The informal path through Bellamy's Copse is surfaced in Woodchip.

## 2.1.9 Existing Conditions

### Summary

Over the last twenty years or so, the grounds have seen very little capital investment due to financial constraints. The dovecote has been repaired, minor works have been carried out to Canons house to enhance - its use as an education centre, a programme of tree planting carried out and a multi-use games area (MUGA) installed on the former tennis courts. Most significantly Canons house has not had a use for several years, the adjacent toilet block is closed and the grounds are under-used, with few events, despite the thriving adjacent Leisure Centre. Partly as a result of this relative inactivity across the site, key historic features have not been subject to adverse proposals, but neither have they been under a programme of management and maintenance to secure their future or feature as part of an overall masterplan.

Surveys have shown that all built features and hard landscaping are deteriorating and require repairs. Although tree management is good some areas of the soft landscaping require improvement, the play area is outdated and parts of the park are a focus of antisocial behaviour. If major works are not carried out shortly, key features such as Canons house and the Obelisk will become 'at risk', particularly if a new compatible use is not found for Canons house. There is a real danger that there will be a general backlog of items requiring restoration and repair works which will contribute to the grounds getting into a downward spiral of decline which will discourage visitors and events and may also create health and safety issues.

The Canons Partnership has been formed to arrest this decline and is working to develop a shared vision to

create a sustainable future for this historic site as part of this Heritage Lottery Fund bid. This momentum will be risked if it is not fuelled by further funding in the near future.

## Hard Surfacing

The drawing shows the various types of surfacing and edging as well as noting their overall condition, although this will be subject to further investigation. Generally the paths and roads are surfaced in low quality materials and are in poor condition.

As discussed in section 5.0, there are few footpaths and limited paving. Much of it is in only fair or poor condition. The primary footpath from Cricket Green around West Meadow is surfaced in bitmac and is in poor condition. The north-east entrance from Commonside West is surfaced in bitmac and shows signs of cracking. The surfacing around the Leisure Centre is reasonable, but the condition of the grasscrete and bitmac surfacing across the two main car parks is varied.

The highest quality paved areas include the original stone staircase to Canons house, brick paving within the walled garden laid in the 1960s, which is in fair condition, and the recently laid granite sett rumble strips at the crossing point on Park Place drive.

Generally the paving around Canons house is poor quality. The drive is surfaced in bitmac, the terrace and path around the southern façade of the house are surfaced in concrete flags and the steps to the pond are surfaced in concrete block paving.

Yew walk, the paths around east lawn and the path around the pond are surfaced in rolled gravel, which is appropriate for its current light use. The running track is also surfaced in gravel or cinder. Informal paths through Bellamy's Copse is surfaced in Woodchip.

## Street Furniture

The drawing records park benches, bins, bollards, lighting columns.

No historic street furniture remain from the time when the land was in private ownership, from the original estates or from the News of the World era. Existing street furniture was introduced over the last twenty years or so in an ad-hoc way and various styles are present. The quality and condition of the street furniture is generally poor.

Park benches are concentrated around the Bowling Green and the walled garden with only 3 or 4 others located across the site. The seats are 10+ years old and made of timber, the exception being two metal benches recently introduced near the Obelisk. A large number of picnic benches are located in the Park Place Toby Carvery garden and at the front of the building, under the trees. Litter bins are sparse, with a handful dotted around the site in strategic locations.

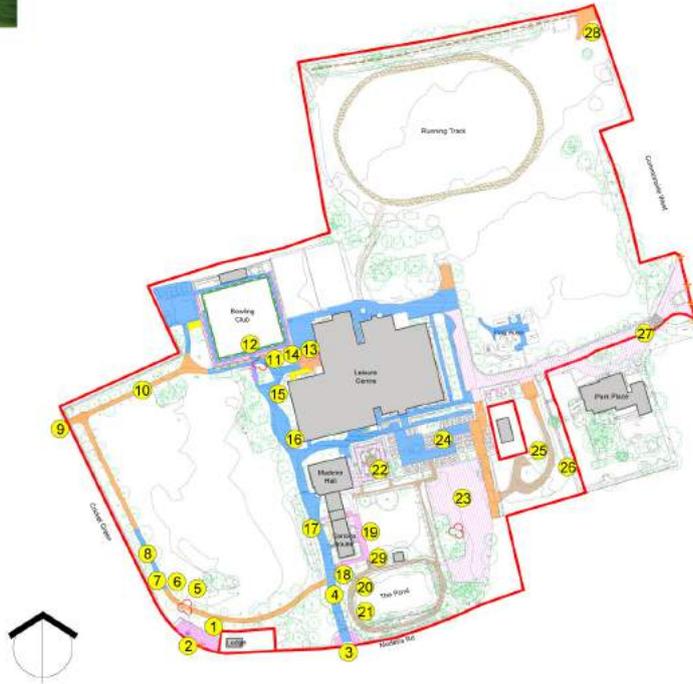
A line of steel bollards edge the grass area to the north of Park Place designed to prevent cars and vans parking on the grass. In addition there are concrete bollards at the entrance to the Leisure Centre and adjacent to the Obelisk. A row of steel cycle stands are located next to the concrete bollards at the Leisure Centre entrance.

A welcome / information board is located at the entrance from Cricket Green. Apart from this there are a few banner signs at entrances. The signs are all different in size and design, none sharing a similar typology.

Lighting is provided on the primary footpath from Cricket Green, the shared surface road from Madeira Road and Commonside West and the area around the Leisure Centre is well lit. Floodlighting has also been provided for the recently constructed multi-use games area. The lighting is utilitarian and some columns appear to be powered by solar panels. The community groups are keen to minimise intrusive lighting throughout The Canons and the need to retain the mansion house grounds character. They also value the dark skies in the area, a characteristic made possible by the extensive green space.



- KEY**
- Site Boundary
  - Existing Buildings
- SURFACING**
- Existing Bitmac Footpath in Reasonable Condition
  - Existing Bitmac Footpath Poor/Cracking
  - Existing Gravel Path in Poor Condition
  - Existing Concrete Ramp in Fair Condition
  - Existing Informal Earth Track
  - Existing Concrete Flag in Poor Condition
  - Existing Vehicular Road in Varied Condition
  - Existing Bark Mulch in Poor Condition
  - Existing Tactile Paving in Good Condition
  - Existing Bricks in Fair Condition
  - Existing Grasscrete Concrete in Varied Condition
  - Existing Granite Setts in Good Condition
  - Existing Concrete Slab
- EDGING**
- Existing Pin Kerb Edging
  - Existing Wide Concrete Kerb
  - Area with Drainage Problems
  - Existing Concrete Retaining Structure Adjacent to Bowling Green
  - Uphave of Path due to Root Growth
- STEPS**
- Existing Block Paved Steps in Poor Condition
  - Existing Stone Steps
  - Existing Concrete Steps



### 954\_17\_Survey - Hard Surfacing

#### Benches and Picnic Tables



#### Bins



#### Signage



#### Cycle stands



#### Bollards



#### Lighting

#### CCTV



### KEY

- Analysis - Street Furniture**
- Site Boundary
  - Existing Buildings
  - Lighting Columns
  - Existing Litter Bins
  - Existing Recycling Refuse
  - Existing Bollards
  - Existing Road Signage
  - Existing CCTV
  - Existing Picnic Tables
  - Existing Bench
  - Existing Cycle Stand
  - Existing Bus Stop

### 954\_18\_Survey - Street Furniture

## Survey – Boundary Treatments

Please refer to:

*The Canons – Conservation Management Plan Buildings and Structures - Simpson and Brown, 2016*

There are a wide range of boundary treatments across the site including walls, railings, timber fencing and different types of bollards. With the exception of the handrails to Canons house, the gates to the Lodge and historic garden and the new walling adjacent to the Leisure Centre, the quality of the boundary treatment is generally utilitarian and in many cases detrimental to the setting of the site and the historic buildings.

The historic garden and estate boundary walls are a significant feature of the site and it is fortunate that they have survived despite the building of the Leisure Centre in the 1980s. The walls are generally in fair condition but poor in places, requiring various levels of repair work, as

detailed in Simpson and Brown's report. Other historic features are the handrails to the steps to The Canons which may date back to 17th century and the gates to the Lodge which are Regency in style.

There is an assortment of railings of different heights and nature. The gates on the new drive to Canons house and the railings either side of the drive are utilitarian but serviceable. The same railing detail also provides the boundary on Cricket Green although this is well hidden by a dense beech hedge. Railings edge the lake and basic handrail leads up the steps, impacting badly on the setting of the house and pond. The access roads are lined with railings, some 1.8m high, and overhead car park barriers and numerous bollards bordering the playing field combine to prevent access by travellers, which is an issue in the area. In addition, other intrusive boundary treatments include the timber close boarded fence to the Lodge garden and untidy chain link fencing which edges the bowling green and Cold Blows, the latter creating an unnecessary boundary.



954\_19 Survey – Boundaries

## Soft Landscaping

### Summary

The site includes a small woodland, a few copses, a large collection of ancient and rare specimen trees, areas of well-maintained ornamental planting and hedging, a formal lawn and large areas of amenity grass and playing fields.

### Woodland and Trees

*Please refer to The Canons, Mitcham - Tree Survey - London Borough of Mitcham, 2016.*

The Canons grounds include a significant collection of trees that have been well managed over the years.

The recently planted Bellamy's Copse not only screens the Leisure Centre but also provides a rare area of woodland within the Conservation Area. The open space to the west of Canons house also includes small groups of trees with shrub understorey. There is also a developing small area of woodland in the car park to the east of Canons house which includes birch and willow trees and a young copse of trees on the site of the old carriage drive to Canons house.

The grounds retain a large number of veteran and mature exotic trees that reflect the fashion for collecting tree species from across the world. Specimens of more than 200 years old include the Cedar of Lebanon, London Plane, Holm Oak, and Swamp Cypress within the gardens of The Canons and a fine Sophora tree that was probably originally planted in the pleasure gardens of Park Place. In addition there are some fine old English Oak trees on the border of Cold Blows, and lime and yew trees adjacent to Park Place drive.

The tree survey indicates a very wide range of tree species across the site, many of which have been planted in the last twenty years by the council with the ambition of making The Canons the London Borough of Merton's main arboretum. The list includes young unusual tree species such as *Maclura pomifera* (Osage orange), *Broussonetia papyrifera* (Paper mulberry), *Feijoa sellowiana* (Pineapple guava), *Zizyphus jujube* (Jujube), *Pterocarya fraxinifolia* (Caucasian wingnut), *Gymnocladus dioica* (Kentucky coffeetree) *Trachycarpus fortunei* (Chinese windmill palm), *Tilia henryana* (Henry Lime) as well as good specimens of Olive and a Common Medlar.

The trees are not covered by Tree Preservation Orders but are protected by the Conservation Area status of the site. The London Borough of Merton's arborist has carried out a survey of the trees on site and has valued them in accordance with CAVAT, the system developed by London Tree Officer's Association. The total value of the 703 trees is £5,960,387 with the highest values attributed

to London Plane adjacent to the drive (£292,353), the Swamp Cypress on the East Lawn (£208,867), the Cedar of Lebanon, close to Canons house (£104,211), and the Holm Oak near the Dovecote (£146,177), the Atlas Cedar near the depot (£91,682) and the horse chestnut tree close to the Obelisk (£90,559).

### Ornamental Shrubs and Herbaceous Planting

Ornamental shrubs and herbaceous planting are limited to beds around Canons house, the Leisure Centre, the walled garden, the area to the south of the pond bordering Madeira Road and miscellaneous areas related to car parking. The few existing areas of shrubs and herbaceous planting are generally well maintained. The Friends of Canons assist with the maintenance of the walled garden.

### Hedges

There are no old hedges on site, with the majority of hedges having been planted in the 1960s. The most distinctive hedge is the trained yew hedges bordering the east lawn. This hedge also forms one side of the yew walk linking to the pond, the other forming the boundary to the car park. A further yew hedge borders the northern side of the lawn. Box hedges edge the ornamental beds around Canons house, the walled garden and the path around the southern side of the pond. A beech hedge combined with a railing provides the boundary with Cricket Green. An attractive holly hedge also surrounds the bowling green. All the hedges are well maintained.

### Grass

The east lawn, bordered by yew hedging and garden walls, provides a spectacular setting for Canons house. The west meadow and the playing fields are well maintained large grass areas and the bowling green is kept to competition standard. There are no significant informal wildflower areas within the site.

### Pond

Please refer to:

*The Canons, Mitcham - Hydrology Study of Canons Pond - JBA Consulting, 2016*

*The Canons, Mitcham - Hydrology Study of Canons Pond - JBA Consulting, 2016*

The old fish pond was incorporated as a key feature of the 18th century designed landscape grounds of The Canons estate. Although the original rectangular shape of the pond has become rounded particularly on the north east corner with the addition of a wall, the feature retains its character and is the foreground to the classic view of Canons house. The thinning of some vegetation would enhance this view further and the reopening of the pedestrian gate and reinstatement of the seat would reinforce the importance of this view which is probably missed by most visitors.

The condition of the pond is a concern. The water level drops in the summer, the quality of the water is poor, the bed is silted and the ecology of the pond has deteriorated. Canons Pond is recorded in the Merton Open Space Study as a Site of Local Importance Site of Importance of Nature Conservation (SINC).

Hedges



Woodland / Dense Undergrowth



Significant trees



Ornamental Shrubs and Herbaceous Plants



KEY

Analysis - Soft Landscaping

- Site Boundary
- Existing Buildings
- Existing Trees
- Existing Hedge
- Existing Young Plantation
- Ornamental Shrubs and Herbaceous Plants
- Woodland / Dense Undergrowth
- Existing Amenity Grass Areas
- Existing Bowling Green

954\_20\_Survey – Softworks

## 2.1.10 The Lottery Restoration Project Works and Further Possible Works

The Round 1 bid provided a sound platform for developing the Round 2 masterplan with a good range of works that would potentially combine to make significant improvements to The Canons.

Following detailed research and survey work undertaken as part of the Conservation Plan as well as the development of the Activity Plan and Business Plan, the developed Round 2 masterplan has been guided by adopting the following principles:

- a conservation led approach to key features and areas
- a 'whole park approach' to create an integrated and joined up masterplan
- a sustainable approach, ensuring the proposals have long lasting benefits
- Encouraging community engagement and volunteering
- The Lottery outcomes in terms of heritage, people and community

We have identified the following initial masterplan objectives:

- **improving entrances** into the site, enhancing existing ones such as at Commonsides West and considering new access points such as at the Obelisk or restoring the former drive past the Lodge
- **improving visibility** into and throughout the site and considering tree works in key areas
- **improving access and movement patterns** into and across the site, such as providing new paths along desire lines, without changing the character of the space
- **encouraging more and new users** by including a variety of elements to the masterplan that are valued by the entire community
- **linking spaces better**, for example around the Leisure Centre and Canons house
- **ensuring all character areas of the park have a role**, with some areas having potential for new uses such as to the space to the south of the multi-use games area being suitable as a climbing wall / skate park
- **improving the green infrastructure** of the park by enhancing the condition of the planting, reinforcing and creating different character areas and ensuring the pond has a sustainable future
- **restoring historic features** and using them to tie the masterplan together such as the old walls of the walled garden and the restoration of the orchard
- **understanding historic features and enhancing their settings**, particularly The Canons and the pond
- **reflecting the rich historical links**, such as the Cranmer family, the Obelisk and the spring, the walled gardens and horticulture and former resident and botanist William Herbert
- **encouraging visitors** to the use the grounds in new ways, for example visitors to the Leisure Centre using

the new cafe and the restored gardens

- **improving the car park** arrangement which is haphazard and includes unsightly clutter
- **integrating new opportunities** that are sympathetic to character and link existing uses together
- **encouraging activities** such as volunteering, by reinforcing the excellent work in walled garden and creating spaces for events
- **developing a comprehensive management and maintenance plan** that is sustainable involving the community as well as the council and including volunteering

Essentially **Five key projects** have been developed within the coordinated masterplan:

1. Canons house
2. Madeira Hall
3. Café extension
4. The new hub
5. Other overall works

1. Canons house – a key building that requires repairs and conservation and a future use.
2. Madeira Hall – a 1960s building of little heritage merit that could have been demolished – The works proposed would improve the look of the building and help ensure its future use but are likely to be low priority for The Lottery. London Borough of Merton are therefore considering a soft play area in the hall as a separate project with works to the exterior and fabric of the building could be carried out as a later phase.
3. Café/Toilet extension – this proposal is fundamental to increasing use of the Canons.
4. The new hub – fundamental to the masterplan and creates a vibrant core to site
5. Overall works - a blend of architectural and landscape works across the entire site – which will enhance the objectives of the Parks for People scheme,

## 2.2 Community

### 2.2.1 Users and Visitor Profile

The Canons provides a green oasis, just minutes' walk from the bustle of Fair Green, Mitcham's team centre. It is well used by a wide range of people throughout the day.

The Canons is popular with parents and young children during summer week days as it provides large flat areas of amenity grass and a well-used playground. Many visitors use the Leisure Centre at all times of the day. The playground is often used by children before and after swimming sessions. During the weekends, the majority of users are parents and young children who use The Canons for informal play. The recreation area is used for junior soccer. Other uses of The Canons include dog walking, picnicking, and visiting the site during lunch hours.

The usage of The Canons has remained steady since the 1990s. The additional investment provided by the Heritage Lottery Fund will enhance the many attractive features at The Canons and it is expected that there will be an increase in visitors. The investment will enable the exciting programme planned by The Canons Partnership as part of the project. Income will be earned through the fitness classes and by a new café which will sell coffee, tea, soft drinks and ice cream.

#### ***Demographic information about the area in which The Canons is situated***

The Canons is situated in Cricket Green ward, close by the boundary with Figges Marsh and Pollards Hill ward in Mitcham.

The Canons is bounded on three sides by other green open space – Three Kings Piece, Cranmer Green and Cricket Green. The fourth side (beyond Cold Blows) is a residential comprising Langdale Avenue, Albert Road and, Whitford Gardens. The boundary on Madeira Road from the vehicular entrance around to the Park Place entrance is also bounded by residential properties (typically three bed semis) facing onto Madeira Road/Commonside West.

It is close by Mitcham town centre to the north which is currently receiving investment from a range of sources including Transport for London.

According to the 2011 Census, the two wards (Cricket Green – CG and Figges Marsh – FM) are characterised by:

#### ***Cricket Green Ward***

- A population of 11,474.
- An increase of 11% since the previous census.
- Average age has decreased from 35 to 34.7.
- BAME population is 47% (has increased by 47%).

- Top countries of birth: England 59%, Sri Lanka 5%, Poland 4%, Ghana 4%, Pakistan 2%.
- 42% home ownership; 37% social housing; 18% private rented.
- 70% economically active; 30% economically inactive (decrease of 16%).
- 38.3 people per 10,000m<sup>2</sup> (increase from 34.6).
- 24% population has no qualifications.

#### ***Figges Marsh Ward***

- A population of 11,240.
- An increase of 11% since the previous census.
- Average age has decreased from 34.8 to 33.9.
- BAME population is 57% (has increased by 61%).
- Top countries of birth: England 54%, Sri Lanka 7%, Poland 5%, Ghana 4%, Jamaica 3%.
- 47% home ownership; 28% social housing; 23% private rented.
- 71% economically active; 29% economically inactive (decrease of 9%).
- 98.4 people per 10,000m<sup>2</sup> (increase from 86.6).
- 21% population has no qualifications.

The average density of population in LB Merton is 53 per 10,000m<sup>2</sup>. In Cricket Green the number is 38 (reflecting the large amount of green space, including a significant area of Mitcham Common), in Figges Marsh it is 98.

#### **Measurement of deprivation in Merton**

The English Indices of Deprivation have been refreshed for 2015 and provide statistics on relative deprivation in small areas in England termed Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs). The indices measure different aspects of deprivation such as health or employment and combine these into an Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) which is the most widely used measure. Children's services most often refer to supplementary indices called 'Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index' (IDACI) which measures the proportion of all children aged 0 to 15 living in income deprived families.

All Indices provide a measure of relative deprivation: they measure the position of areas against each other providing an overall score for the relative level of multiple deprivations. An area itself is not deprived: it is the circumstances and lifestyles of the people living there that affect its deprivation score.

- The 2015 Indices – offer the following headlines for the borough and the area, which show that though Merton as a whole is less deprived, residents in the two wards do experience significant relative deprivation:
- Merton ranks 118th nationally for overall deprivation IMD (out of 152 upper tier local authorities, where 1

is the most deprived);

- Merton ranks 103rd nationally for overall deprivation IDACI (out of 152 upper tier local authorities, where 1 is the most deprived);
- By both IMD and IDACI measures, where data is aggregated to ward level, the six most deprived wards in Merton are Cricket Green, Figges Marsh, Pollards Hill, Ravensbury, Lavender Fields, and St Helier.
- Merton's wards demonstrate greater levels of deprivation when viewed through the IDACI score ranking deprivation for children.
- By the IDACI measure Merton has 6 of the top 10% most deprived LSOAs of England in Pollards Hill, Figges March, Cricket Green and Abbey wards. By 2020 around a 20% population growth in children aged 11-15 is anticipated in Abbey, Cricket Green and Figges Marsh wards.

## 2.2.2 Who uses The Canons currently

### Gathering information on the users of The Canons

The development phase of this project has seen credible work carried out to establish both a reliable, and reflective representation of the use and usage of The Canons. An observational survey, delivered by partner organisations and volunteers. Feedback has been collected following a series of partner and officer led events, meetings, presentations and workshops.

These activities have been supported by a comprehensive, online survey (completed by Arkenford Market Research), which adopted an in-depth panel based approach to gathering data, The survey further informed the project with qualitative information that could provide a baseline position for the project to further develop during the delivery phase of the project.

The Canons Partnership fully appreciates the importance of gathering accurate and useful data regarding the use of the site and the impact of the proposed investments and design-led interventions. We look forward to further enhancing this crucial element of the project, and improving The Canons Partnerships' knowledge of the dynamics of The Canons green spaces and historical assets, building on the (monitoring) work carried out thus far. We shall:

- continue to work with, and upskill our project volunteers to build their capacity to carry out surveys and site usage assessments;
- commission specialist agencies to gather more defined data on the demography of the users of The Canons;
- collate seasonal comparative figures; and take into account the impact of school curriculum and other key factors which traditionally affect visitor numbers and engagement with public parks and historical buildings.

We are committed to continue to capture and improve the qualitative data on the use and users of The Canons,

and these interventions will improve as the project continues to evolve.

### Stage 1 data

Data collected at stage 1 about how people currently use The Canons is summarised in chart 1 below. This was drawn from an online survey, supplemented by questionnaires collected at community events. 105 people accessed the on line survey, 30 hard copies were completed at a picnic. 28 children completed a children's questionnaire and some added their drawings. 37 map responses were received (22 on line, 15 in hard copy). Finally, we received a further 4 letters or comments via the questionnaire collection boxes. This data was collected in the context of a wider review of the community's use of the surrounding area, designed to support not only the stage 1 bid for The Canons, but also the unsuccessful Mitcham Townscape and Heritage bid submitted at the same time. For this reason the table below includes some information not directly relevant to The Canons. Two of the uses listed (informal sport and informal play with children) were not indicated by any of the respondents, and so are shown as 0% entries below, with no segment on the chart.

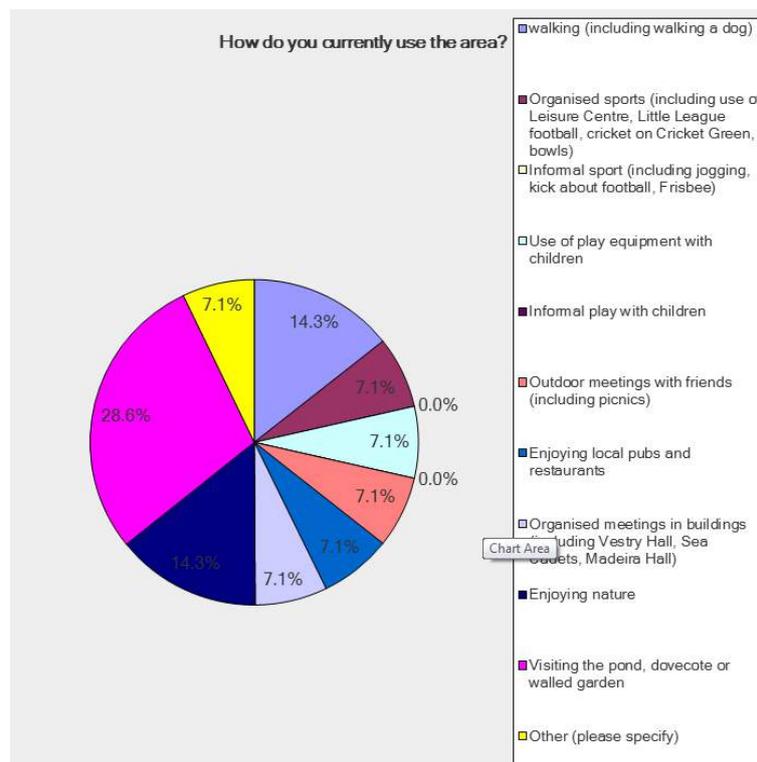


Chart 1

This suggested the top three uses of The Canons as visiting the pond, dovecote or walled garden, walking (with or without a dog) and enjoying nature. This survey did not include visits to the Leisure Centre and to Park Place as separate activities.

## Stage 2 data

To build on the data collected at stage 1 two additional user surveys were carried out during the development phase; an observational survey carried out by volunteers from the community groups, and an online survey commissioned from Arkenford, consultants. An additional 57 paper surveys were completed at Mitcham Carnival in 2016, the results of which were added to the Arkenford report. The outcomes of these user surveys are summarised in more detail below and the reports based on them are attached at annexes 1 and 2.

In relation to current use of The Canons, the observational survey carried out by volunteers (see annex 1) identified a range of formal and informal activities, with walking and using the Leisure Centre coming out top.

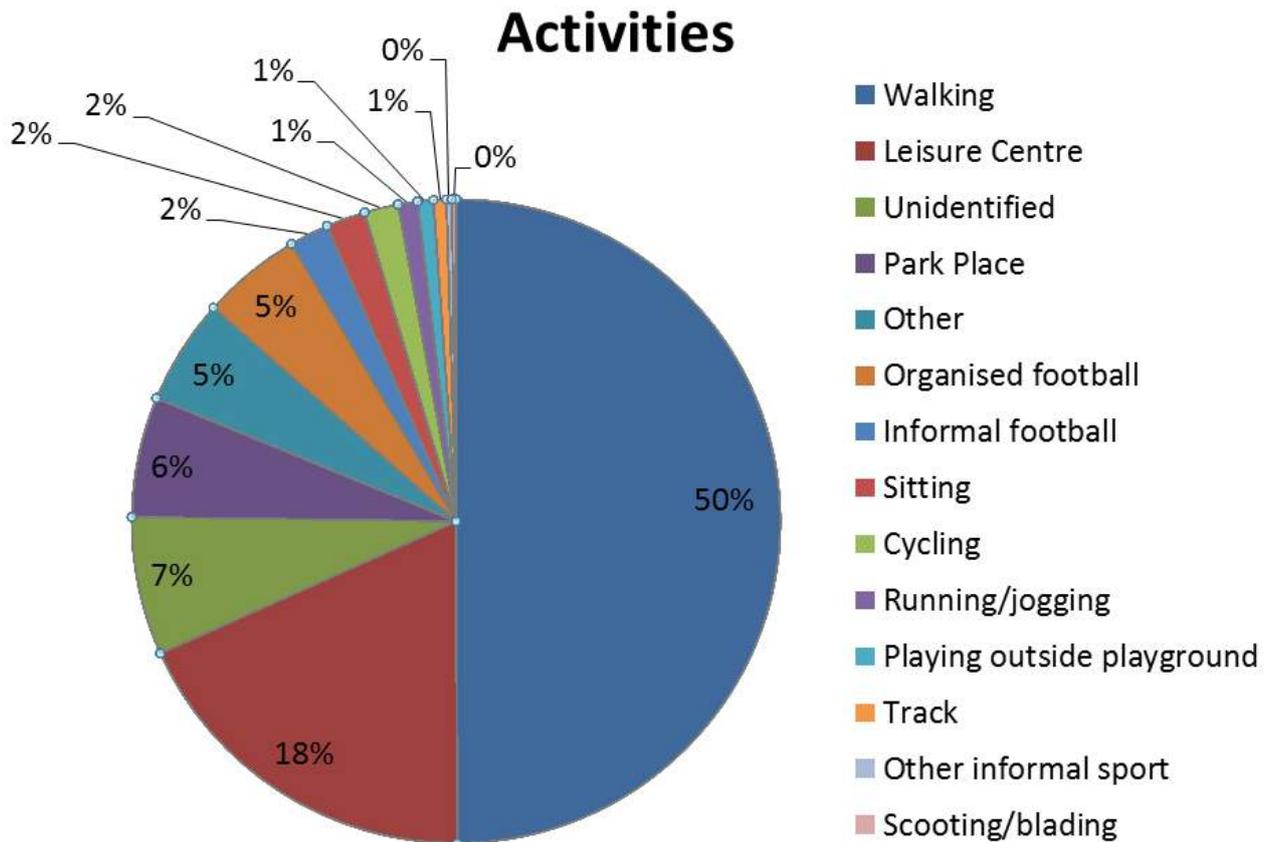
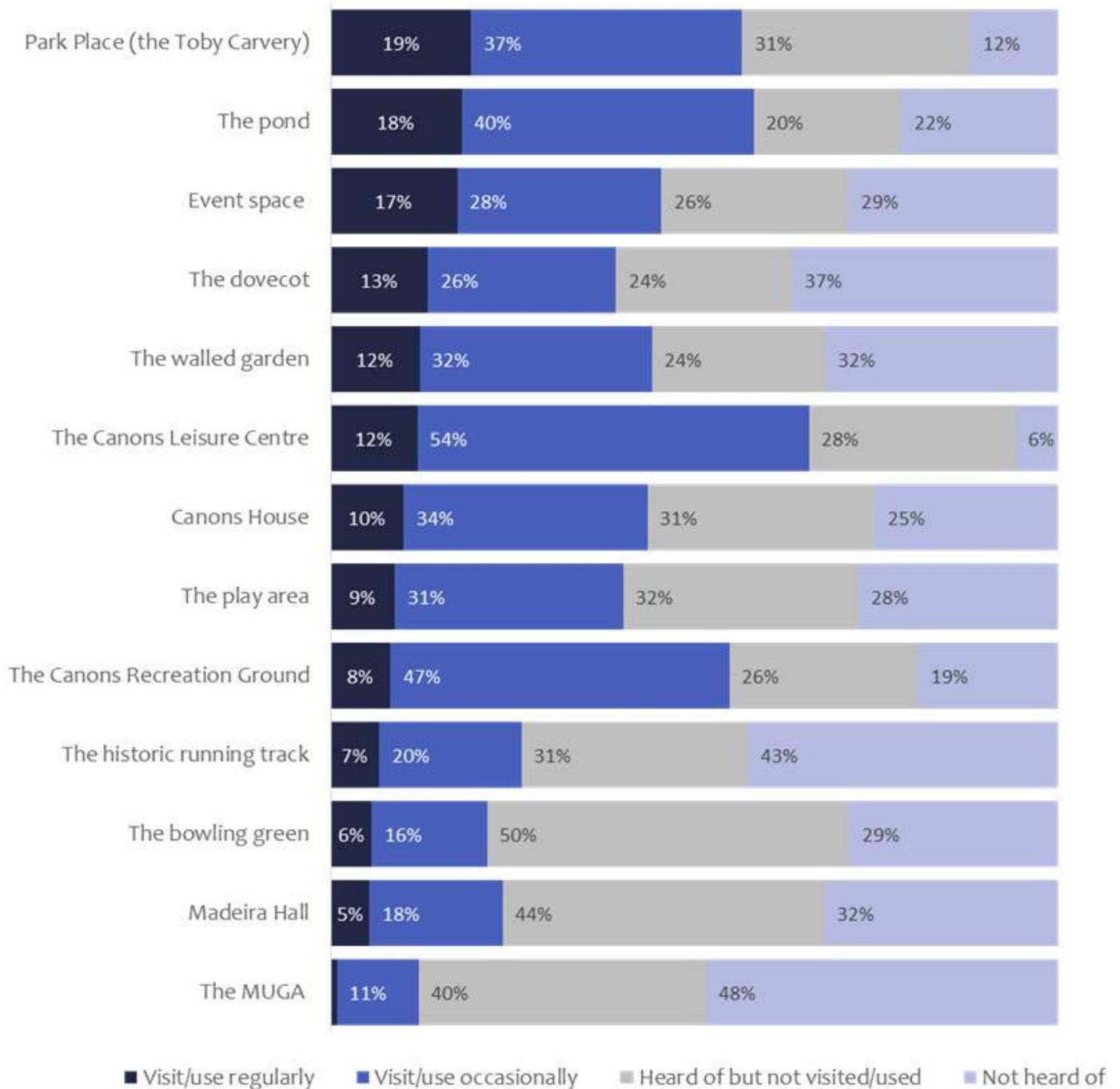


Chart 3

The Arkenford survey included several questions about what people did when visiting The Canons, which parts of The Canons they visited, and what they associated with The Canons. The responses to these questions are summarised in the charts below:



**Chart 4**

The Arkenford report concluded that the Leisure Centre is the most used part of The Canons, closely followed by the pond and Park Place – which had the highest number of respondents saying that they visited frequently. The recreation ground had a high proportion of occasional visitors at 47%.

The Arkenford survey, which was administered to a panel and circulated to a range of community groups, also found that across almost all areas of The Canons, the community groups were more likely than panel respondents to say that they have visited or used them. This particularly applied to the pond, dovecote, event space and walled garden.

## Which of the following would you typically do during your visit to The Canons?

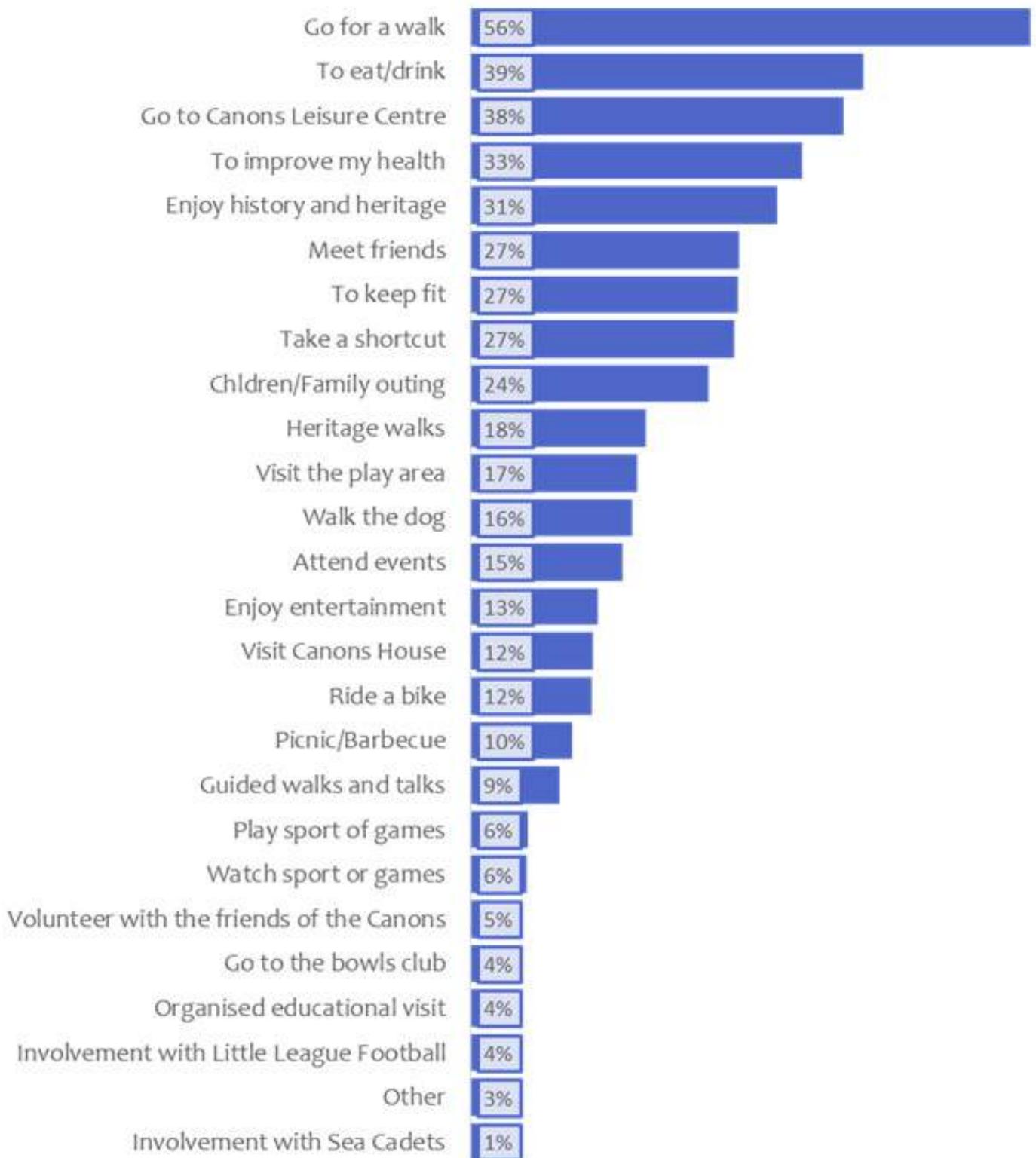


Chart 5

*This survey also concluded that going for a walk was the most popular activity of visitors to The Canons, followed by having food/ drink, and visiting the Leisure Centre.*

### 2.2.2.1 Associations and perceptions

The Arkenford survey also explored the respondents' associations with, and perceptions of The Canons with the following questions:

#### Which of the following do you associate with The Canons?

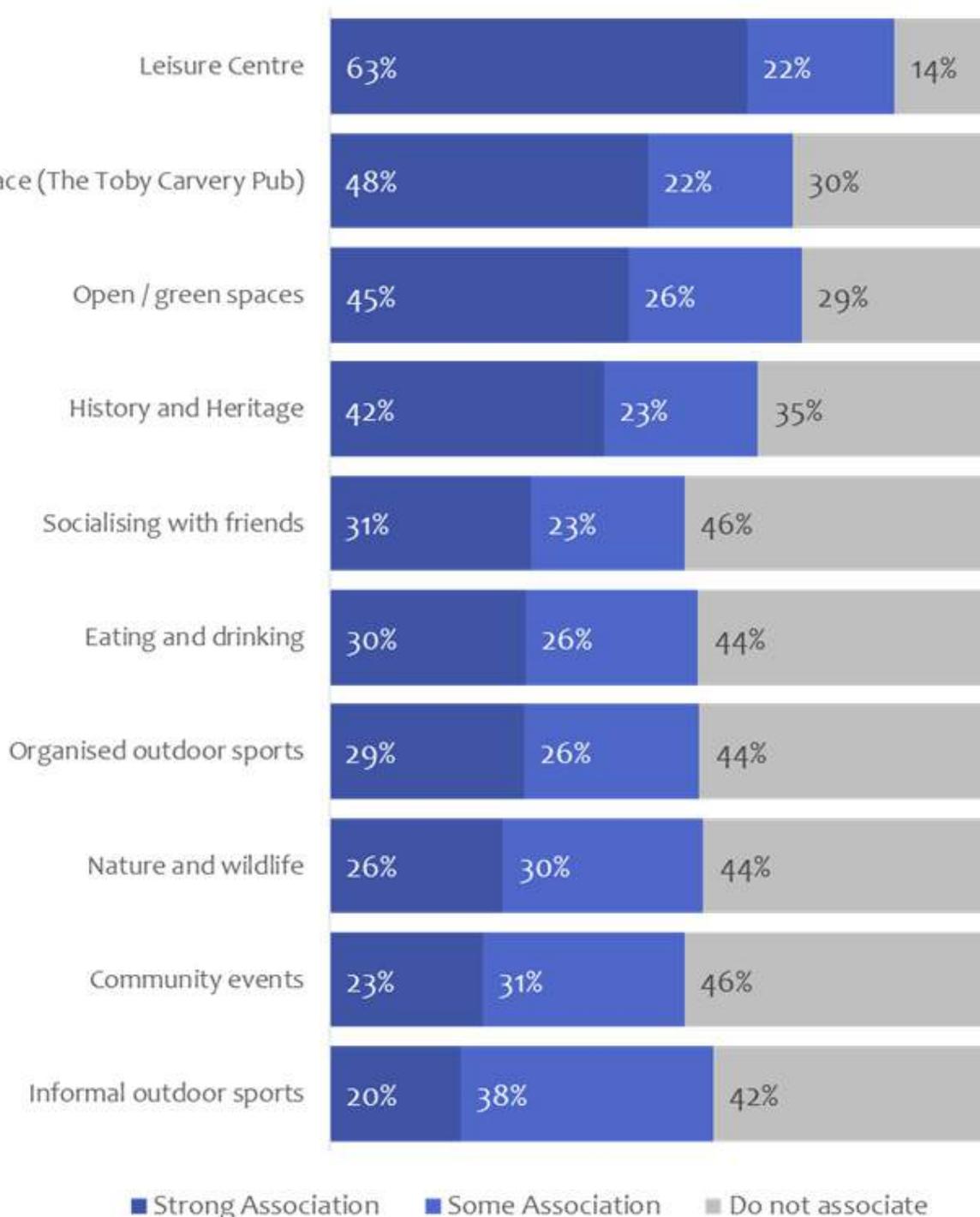


Chart 6

85% of respondents either strongly associate or have some association of the leisure centre with The Canons. 71% associate open / green spaces with The Canons, and 70% associate Park Place – The Toby Carvery Pub. A good awareness of the history and heritage of The Canons can be seen too, 65% have some or a strong association. When asked about how well they felt they understood the history and heritage of The Canons, 42% felt that they had a very good understanding and 33% felt that they had some understanding.

The Arkenford survey tested perceptions of The Canons in the following question:

**To what extent do you agree with the following statements?**

- There is good community spirit where I live
- The Canons feels safe
- The Canons is open for everyone
- The Canons is a community space
- The Canons is accessible
- The story of The Canons needs to be told

Responses are summarised in the table below which suggest that generally people feel positive towards The Canons. The Canons scored very highly on being open for everyone. Safety of The Canons was where it scored lowest, with 15% of people saying that it did not feel safe. However, more than half still agreed that it did feel safe. The statement with the poorest score relates to the community spirit in the area – this is not directly related to The Canons.

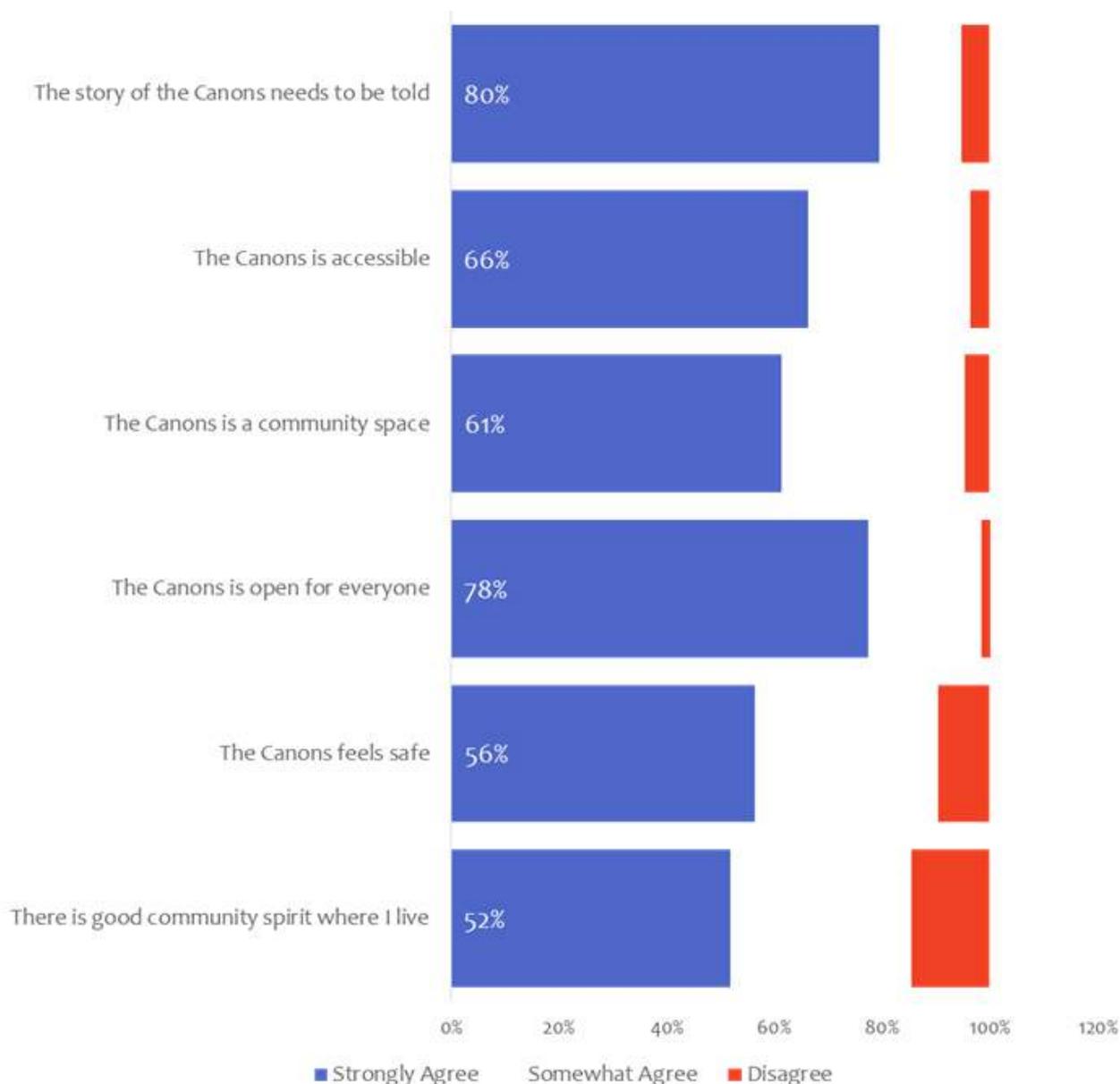


Chart 7

Respondents particularly felt that it was important that the story of The Canons was told - this was reflected in the positive response to the idea of history walks and talks (see section 3.3.1 on proposed activities).

## How do people learn about the heritage of the park now?

Information about the heritage of The Canons is available in the Heritage and Local Studies Centre, which is located in Morden Library, in Merton Civic Centre. Since the Heritage Centre moved from the basement of The Canons in May 2008, opportunities to engage with the heritage of The Canons have been provided primarily by events put on by the community partner organisations of The Canons Partnership, Mitcham Cricket Green community and Heritage, The Mitcham Society and Friends of the Canons. These include:

- Providing guided walks and talks as part of locally organised community events e.g. Community on the Green;
- Lobbying for Canons house to be open as part of wider heritage events such as Open House London and Mitcham Heritage Day (organised by Mitcham Cricket Green Community and Heritage);
- Mitcham Cricket Green Community and Heritage obtaining funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for a downloadable audio trail about the history and heritage of Cricket Green, which includes The Canons on its route.

### 2.2.2.2 The environment in which the project is taking place

#### The Merton context - Merton's Heritage Strategy 2015-2020

The Merton Heritage Strategy 2015-2020 (annex 3) was developed with a view to giving an accurate picture of current heritage activity and establishing a collaborative framework between the Council and the community. As members of Merton Council's Heritage Forum, the three community partners were closely involved with the development of the Heritage Strategy. Strategic objectives focus on the need to increase participation and public engagement with local heritage. The associated action plan will be community-led and has been compiled following consultation with heritage providers and external stakeholders, with responsibility for delivery shared between council services, heritage partners and the wider community.

The Canons features in the Heritage Strategy Action Plan under the following objectives:

**Objective 1: Raise Merton's profile by increasing public access to the borough's unique and diverse cultural heritage.**

**Objective 2: Safeguard the borough's varied heritage sites and resources, protecting and conserving them for the benefit of future generations.**

Activity	Expected Benefit	Start Date	Completion date	Where will the activity take?	Responsible group/officer
To realise the full heritage potential of The Canons and its surroundings, creating a key cultural destination.	Restoration of an important listed building, historic grounds and associated sites for the benefit of future generations. Creation of a multi-functional facility to host cultural and educational activities.	January 2015	February 2018	The Canons, Mitcham	Canons Partnership (London Borough of Merton, Mitcham Cricket Green Community and Heritage, Friends of the Canons and Mitcham Society)
Secure and deliver investment in The Canons and its open spaces which increases its heritage value	Enhanced conservation value, increase public engagement and understanding, sound future for listed building.	2015	2020	The Canons, Mitcham	Canons partners (London Borough of Merton, Friends of the Canons, Mitcham Cricket Green Community and Heritage, Mitcham Society)

The Lottery Parks for People project at The Canons also has the potential to contribute to other objectives in Merton’s Heritage Strategy, for example:

- To contribute to the development of the Merton Memories website (obj. 1);
- To contribute material to the Heritage and Local Studies Centre’s programme of exhibitions and events including Heritage Discovery Day (obj. 1 and 3);
- To contribute to the interpretation and celebration of heritage in the Cricket Green area (obj. 1);
- To contribute to the Wandle Valley Regional Park Digital Archive (obj 2);
- To contribute to the “Sharing Space” initiative (obj. 3);
- To contribute to the improvement of connections and collaboration between businesses, schools, faith and other organisations in the celebration and care of Mitcham Cricket Green Conservation Area and its environs (obj. 3).

## 2.2.2 Potential Audience

The Arkenford survey estimated annual visitor numbers by the following method. The total population for Merton, Sutton, Croydon and Wandsworth combined is recorded at 1,695,828. From the sample of residents from these boroughs, 24.4% said that they had visited the Canons. This reached an estimated figure of 223,700 annual visitors.

We have benchmarked these results against data for other Merton parks, where more qualitative data which capturing visitor figures are available, and have taken the view that a credible estimate would approximate 150,000 annual visits. These figures take into account the likely impact of the location of the busy Leisure Centre situated within The Canons ( 66% of respondents to our survey strongly associated The Canons with the Leisure Centre).

The Arkenford report (annex 2), based on the survey described in section 2.3 below, suggested the following breakdown of visitors by age, gender, ethnicity and disability:

### Breakdown of visitors by gender, age, ethnicity and disability

**Table 1: estimated visitor numbers and breakdown by gender, age, ethnicity and disability**

<b>Total visitor number estimate</b>	<b>223,700</b>
Males	102,825 (52%)
Females	121,378 (46%)
16-24	29,385 (13%)
25-34	32,423 (14%)
35-44	33,196 (15%)
45-54	53,964 (24%)
55-64	22,039 (10%)
65+	52,694(24%)
White British	170,012 (76%)
BAME	54,451 (23%)
Disabled*	16,330 (7%)

\*This only includes people with a physical/mobility impairment

(These figures are based on panel data only, and may differ slightly from figures quoted elsewhere which are based on data from both the panel and community groups. It should be noted that the sample underrepresents known BAME profile of residents).

The survey suggests there is considerable scope to increase engagement with the project from local BAME groups, and from residents with disabilities.

Based on the information gathered during the project so far the project steering group has identified the target audiences set out below, and the activity plan has been developed to appeal to them.

It is recognised that further consultation work is needed in the early stages of delivery to ensure that these initial decisions about target audiences are supported by evidence, and to test whether the activity proposals will be effective to draw them in (see proposals in section 1.7). The aim is that the activity proposals should be sufficiently flexible to respond to changing priorities emerging from this further consultation, as the project progresses.



#### • **Audiences**

The project steering group has identified the following target audiences, and the activity plan has been developed to appeal to them:

#### • **Families with children**

Families with children are an obvious target audience for green spaces, and The Canons is no exception. The plans to build a new play area and to provide a café and toilets will provide a significantly enhanced offer. The development by Better Leisure of a soft play centre in Madeira Hall will attract families from a wider area, as well as providing improved facilities for local families.

As new families are attracted into The Canons by these facilities the aim is to engage them with the historical and natural heritage of The Canons through readily accessible interpretation and an appealing programme of activities.

#### **Schools**

There are eight primary schools, a secondary school and a special school with primary and secondary provision within easy reach of The Canons (the majority within walking distance).

By engaging children from primary schools the aim is also to raise awareness of The Canons as a destination for their families. As primary school students represent a good cross-section of the local community this is likely to also provide a route to engage BAME groups with the wider heritage of The Canons.

#### **Local residents**

The residential market is important for green space and cultural providers for a number of reasons:

- Residents are a sustainable source of visitors
- Residents can be reached easily and economically
- There is good potential for repeat visits and the opportunity for local involvement through volunteering
- Residents will influence the decisions of family and friends often accompanying them on visits.

The Arkenford online survey recruited a panel of respondents by postcode, all within a 3 mile radius of The Canons, so all lived in Merton, Sutton, Croydon or Wandsworth. The survey suggested that the highest usage of The Canons was among Merton respondents, with 39% saying they visited regularly or occasionally.

It is clear from feedback during the project that many Mitcham residents, especially those who live close to The Canons, have a strong personal connection with The Canons and value its heritage; it contributes positively, and has a significant relationship, to their sense of place. The Activity and Interpretation Plan proposes to concentrate on building on the relationships with those

already engaged with The Canons and reaching out and engaging new users locally, for example by:

- Interpreting the heritage of the house and the green space;
- Involving those already engaged with The Canons in the development of the project, the interpretation and the activities;
- Taking information about the project out to residents not already engaged with it (see 1.8.4);
- Developing activities to appeal to all ages and backgrounds.

### ***BAME communities currently under-represented in visitor numbers***

The Canons is situated in an area of great diversity, with neighbouring wards showing 47% and 57% BAME residents in the last census, in comparison with 37% across Merton as a whole. The user survey carried out by Arkenford showed only 24% of users of The Canons coming from BAME backgrounds.

There is clearly scope to increase the appeal of The Canons to local BAME communities. So far this section of the local community has not been reached by the steps taken to gather people's views about the objectives of the project. This will be a priority for the project team in the early stages of delivery. Plans to take the project out to groups who have not yet been reached are set out below in section 1.8.4 *Broadening engagement in the project*.

Some thought has already gone into developing a programme of activities appealing to as wide a cross-section of the community as possible. The details of this have been kept flexible, and the aim is to partner with organisations with experience of working in Mitcham, and a track record in engaging with all sections of the community. The project aspires to engage people from these wider communities in linking activities to themes from the history of The Canons which link to their experience, and the briefs for developing arts and cultural activities will include a requirement to set out how those delivering activities will achieve this.

### ***Older people***

The Arkenford user survey showed more than half of those surveyed who had visited The Canons were aged over 45, with 24% aged 65 or over.

From the responses to the user survey and evaluation of events during the development period there is strong evidence that older people are engaged with the project. However, age and disability are closely linked and, whilst many older people would not describe themselves as having a disability, many older people do have mobility and sensory impairments which can limit their use of the green spaces; such as the lack of seating and condition of the paths.

Therefore, rather than seeking to increase the number of older people using The Canons, the focus is on ensuring

the infrastructure, facilities and services provided by the project allow the fullest possible participation and engagement with this group for example by:

- Improving access
- Building on existing opportunities for participation in the project
- Providing organised activities appealing and accessible to older people

### **People with mental and physical health issues and disabilities (potentially through social prescribing)**

The project offers an excellent opportunity to improve the health and well-being of local residents through activities that improve physical health through being active, and mental wellbeing through a range of activities that give people the opportunity to socialise, learn new skills and build confidence.

The beginning of the project coincides with a pilot project set up by the Merton Health and Wellbeing Board, which aims to develop and evaluate a service model for social prescribing in Merton, aiming to improve the health and wellbeing of patients through providing access to non-medical support that increases self-help, self-management, social engagement and healthy behaviours, and prevents ill health.

The pilot includes steps to support small community groups to demonstrate quality assurance and be ready to receive referrals from local GP practices.

The Canons project aims to work closely with the social prescribing pilot project, offering activities that meet the criteria for social prescribing, and will have a real impact on the health and well-being of local people.

If the social prescribing pilot is successful and demonstrates savings to the NHS, there is potential to continue activities with support with health-related funding streams such as the local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

### **Wider audiences with an interest in the historical significance of The Canons**

The appeal of the heritage of The Canons already extends beyond the bounds of Mitcham, through the activities of the Merton Heritage Forum. As set out in section 1.5.1 The Canons features in the Merton Heritage Strategy, and information about the heritage of The Canons is regularly reflected in Merton-wide exhibitions and events such as Merton Discover Heritage Day, and the Merton Memories project, co-ordinated by the Merton Heritage and Local Studies Centre, based at Morden library.

In addition to this link, there is scope to link The Canons more overtly to the organisations promoting the wider Wandle Valley Regional Park.

## 2.2.3 Current Community Engagement and Volunteering

### Volunteering at The Canons

#### Current volunteering at The Canons

The following groups are partners in The Lottery bid and have made substantial contributions to its development by attending meetings, putting forward ideas, assisting in the drafting of documents, promoting the project locally, and putting on events.

The Canons benefits from additional volunteering within these groups, in pursuit of their organisational aims.

#### Friends of The Canons

The Friends of The Canons (FRoC) was formed in 2008, in part as a response to Council cutbacks in staff, to give a hand with the maintenance and upkeep of The Canons. The group grew from the Merton Tree Wardens group, and includes a number of retired landscape architects. The group meets monthly, and covers not only The Canons but also adjoining green spaces such as Three Kings Piece. At each monthly session the group spend 3 hours carrying out practical tasks to contribute to the upkeep of The Canons.

The group is not large, but is very dedicated. They have 67 members with an interest in The Canons with a much smaller core of active members. The group do not currently actively recruit, but attract new members primarily from those observing them at work.

FRoC work closely with the Borough Arboricultural Manager and the Area Grounds Supervisor with whom they plan where FRoC can add value through their activities. They work in collaboration with Greenspaces staff, for example in the walled garden and planting trees between the running track and the outdoor football courts, and also organise litter-picking sessions.

#### Mitcham Cricket Green Community and Heritage

Mitcham Cricket Green Community and Heritage is the civic society for the Mitcham Cricket Green Conservation Area and its environs, and is a registered charity. It is part of the wider civic movement through membership of the national charity Civic Voice. The organisation has five trustees and over 100 members. It meets monthly.

The organisation has undertaken a number of practical projects, including a £20,000 Your Heritage funded project whose outputs included a free audio tour downloadable from its web site, and refurbishing of three heritage structures. It publishes a bulletin three times a year, distributed to more than 3,000 local households. It runs Mitcham Heritage Day every September – which brings local organisations together for a day of free activities and events, and runs other activities which are aimed at bringing the local community together throughout the year. Many of its members volunteer to support the various activities.

### The Mitcham Society

The Mitcham Society is an unincorporated association which meets around six times a year. It focuses on what is happening currently in the wider Mitcham area. Invited guests bring local residents in touch with people they might not be able to engage with easily. It is concerned with improving the quality of the local area for those who live and work there. The Society has a membership of around 30, and its meetings are open to all.

It gets involved in local projects run by volunettes and is currently undertaking air quality monitoring in the Fair Green area.

### Strategic background

Merton's Volunteering and Community Action Strategy is delivered by Merton Voluntary Services Council (MVSC) who are funded by the Merton Partnership for this purpose.

Objective 5 of the Volunteering and Community Action Strategy 2012-2014, was to "design and undertake a bi-annual 'snapshot' of volunteering and community action" in Merton. Two surveys contributed to carrying out this objective:

- The 2012 Merton Annual Residents survey, which included 3 questions relating to volunteering;
- An online survey carried out between Tuesday 22nd January and Tuesday 12th February 2013, 'Help shape the future of volunteering'.

The results of these surveys were summarised in a "Snapshot of volunteering" report dated September 2013 (annex 7) which made the following recommendations:

**Recommendation 1** - volunteer-involving organisations are supported to change how they involve people.

Focused projects are developed which will give organisations the opportunity to trial working with individuals differently, including:

Micro-volunteering – individuals giving short bursts of time

Flexible time – individuals being able to volunteer outside of a set time

Online volunteering – individuals being able to give time via email/website

**Recommendation 2** – continue and increase the development of roles which are supporting people directly. A significant proportion want to "help people" in a range of ways including healthy eating, getting back into paid work or supporting new mothers.

**Recommendation 3** - targeted recruitment campaigns  
Noting recommendation 2, volunteering recruitment months can be planned, possibly to tie in with national weeks/months.

**Recommendation 4** - Ongoing focus on communications

Co-ordinated and ongoing communications, led by a more engaged Volunteering Communications Group (in line with recommendations 8 and 9 of the Review of Volunteer Recognition Report)

#### **Recommendation 5 - one-stop shop into volunteering**

These recommendations were carried forward in the Volunteering and Community Action Strategy Action Plan 2015-16 update which included:

- The introduction of an online platform for Merton residents seeking volunteering opportunities;
- Supported volunteering opportunities and access to volunteering for those who need it e.g. those with disabilities, mental health issues, vulnerable young people;
- Increasing opportunities for micro-volunteering e.g. one-off community events.
- MVSC offers support and development for organisations offering volunteering opportunities, as well as opportunities to advertise through the online platform, and through newsletters etc.

Both the voluntary sector and volunteering strategies were reviewed in March 2016, when the Merton Partnership Compact Board agreed that a combined strategy would offer a coherent and effective approach given the interrelated nature of the subjects. To oversee the development of the new strategy a steering group was drawn from the Merton Partnership and representatives from the voluntary and community sector.

To provide further evidence to underpin the strategy MVSC, supported by members of the Merton Partnership, commissioned an in-depth study of the voluntary sector and volunteering in the borough.

The study reviewed the impact of funding cuts on the sector, and summarized the needs of voluntary and community for support. These findings are very relevant to the development of volunteering at The Canons, and will also shape the support available to support and develop groups over the period of the project.

In relation to volunteering in the borough this State of the Sector report found that:

“Larger organisations with dedicated volunteer management capacity, seem more able to recruit, support and train the volunteers they require. Smaller organisations are struggling with defining the tasks volunteers could do, recruiting, supporting and retaining volunteers. Targeted support to increase the capacity and ability of smaller groups to maximise volunteering is required.”

The report concluded:

“There was a very real sense that small groups in particular would benefit from free, readily available help in all matters relating to volunteers. The sense we got was that this is about much more than offering short training or information sessions, or help with recruitment. More

hands on, ongoing mentoring support, could go a long way to helping meet small groups’ needs.”

New volunteering at The Canons will be developing in the context described by this report. The CEVO will provide a link, where needed, between the community groups and the services offered by MVSC, who will be a key partner in supporting volunteering at The Canons.

#### **Opportunities for volunteering offered by The Canons Parks for People project**

Current volunteering at The Canons through the groups involved as community partners in the project is summarised at section 2.10 above.

As the project develops there will increasing scope for volunteers to contribute to the planning and management of the project’s activities, through participation and involvement in the delivery of activities. The aim is to develop an approach whereby volunteers are invited to be involved in planning, staging, running and follow up of events and activities. So, taking the archaeological dig as an example, volunteers would:

- work with the archaeologists before the event to understand their needs,
- stage / organise the layout of the area and schedule/ manage what happens on the day
- Design pre-publicity,
- write up events afterwards including being involved in interpretation of any findings and how they play into the story of The Canons.

It is recognised that not all volunteer will wish to be involved to this degree, or on an ongoing basis, so the project will also seek to cater for volunteers who wish to participate on a one-off basis in practical activities such as gardening.

The project aims to build on the valuable work already being done by offering a wider range of volunteering opportunities, which the community partners have actively shaped and developed. The project will also provide support through the CEVO to attract, manage and co-ordinate new volunteers, whether for one-off opportunities or ongoing activities. Some of these may become members of community groups, while others will engage directly with The Canons project through the CEVO and HO.

Volunteering opportunities will be advertised via The Canons Partnership website and via the platforms offered by MVSC. The CEVO will work with their specialist staff working with young volunteers and volunteers with mental health conditions.

The CEVO will provide a link to the Social Prescribing Co-ordinator (based at MVSC) whose role includes identifying suitable opportunities for people referred

via their GPs, and both the CEVO and the HO will, where necessary, support community groups to develop their skills, confidence and capacity in engaging vulnerable volunteers.

The individual activity plan identifies potential volunteering opportunities, which offer a wide range of chances for individuals to learn new skills, gain new

experiences and get involved in the design and delivery of activities.

The table below gives examples. It is anticipated that new and different opportunities will emerge as the project progresses, offering chances to involve a wide variety of individuals from the local community.

Activity	Volunteering opportunities
Publicity and promotion (Website, Facebook, newsletters, leaflets etc.)	Maintaining and updating website and social media for the project. Writing and taking photographs for newsletters, FB, website etc
Community archaeology event	Specialist volunteering opportunity for archaeologists. Participating in digging, washing and cataloguing finds. Invite volunteers to be involved in planning, staging, running and follow up eg. working with the archaeologists before the event to understand their needs, staging / organising the layout of the area and scheduling / managing what happens on the day, designing pre publicity, doing post event write ups including being involved in interpretation of any findings and how they play into the story of The Canons.
Mitcham Heritage Day	Preparing exhibition. Guided tours and walks of house, Dovecote and grounds. Welcoming visitors to The Canons house. Running activities for children. Supporting organisation, refreshments etc.
Researching people stories for interpretation.	Researching and presenting stories for interpretation. Contributing to development of new exhibitions/interpretation.
Reminiscence projects	Recording reminiscences. Presenting material in a variety of formats. Contributing to development of new exhibitions/interpretation.
FRoC gardening and maintenance sessions	One-off planting projects. Regular monthly volunteering at maintenance sessions.
Community orchard	One-off planting sessions. Ongoing maintenance. Organising and supporting community activities e.g. harvesting, cider-making, cooking etc.
Annual picnic	Organising and promoting of event.
Developing a sharing space	Develop and administer a sharing space scheme for The Canons, using display space as it becomes available. (This will make display space will be available to local community groups for promotion of groups and initiatives, and exhibitions.) Promote the space to local people and groups, contributing to drawing new people into The Canons.
Creating a photographic record of the project	Taking photographs to record the activities and progress of the capital works. Contribute to website, FB and exhibitions about the project e.g. to be used in a mobile exhibit taken out to community groups not yet involved, and at events e.g. MHD.
Annual walks programme	Contribute to the development of the programme of walks. Lead walks on an occasional or regular basis
Self-guided walks programme	Contribute to developing walks leaflets for hard copy and downloading from website.
Schools programme	Support and deliver educational activities at The Canons for schools groups.

Cultural activities programme	Contribute to the planning and organisation of the activities programme. Scope to develop and deliver volunteer-led activities at The Canons within the programme.
Mitcham Arts Festival	Contribute to the planning, organisation and delivery of the festival.
Young people's festival	Contribute to the planning, organisation and delivery of the festival.

## 2.2.4 Current Role of Park User Groups and Volunteers

Merton Council has a long history of working with Friends Groups in parks in Merton. There are around 35 different Friends groups which are very diverse, and vary in their interests and the focus of their activities, with some being very practical in their approach, others functioning as campaigning groups, and others taking a watching brief, and being the eyes and ears of the park. The make-up, identity and focus of individual groups can change from year to year. The independent Merton Green Spaces Forum has recently been established for Friends and like minded groups and the community partners in The Canons Partnership all participate in this

Volunteer groups are not carrying out work which falls within the remit of Council staff or contractors, but activities that add value over and above the routine maintenance of Merton's green spaces.

Friends of The Canons has been involved in the development, improvement, maintenance and management of The Canons in consultation with Merton since its formation in 2008. (See section 2.3 below)



## 2.3 Existing Management and Maintenance

The visions, plans and targets of public and volunteer organisations will be affected by the political, economic and social environment. These factors influence the decisions and direction of Merton Council and its partners

### 2.3.1 Policy Context

#### Economic environment

The UK is experiencing an uncertain economic future; with opinions divided about whether it is still suffering from a recession, or whether it is now in recovery; it is also feeling the effects of a general global economic downturn. This overall economic context informs much of our national and local decision-making. Generally, budgets are being cut and austerity measures are being adopted.

The London Borough of Merton has a legal responsibility to set a fiscally prudent budget, ensuring managers operate within those constraints and that it balances its books while maintaining an appropriate level of reserves. It also needs to ensure that effective procedures for financial management. It needs to make further budget savings on its medium term fiscal strategy which will inform the Council's overall targets and objectives.

#### National Political Context

The UK government elected in May 2015 has yet to announce detailed strategies and plans for parks and green spaces. However current public policy Direct.gov.uk website states:

*Good quality parks enhance the quality of life in towns and cities. Parks provide a focal point for communities, a place for relaxation or recreation, and the opportunity to experience nature in an urban environment.*

Previous governments had a range of initiatives in support of parks and green spaces, including six Urban Green Space Taskforces, Living Places: Cleaner, Safer, Greener', 2002, and a Community Plan, 'Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future', 2003. A regional programme of action for London included: ensuring communities are prosperous, safeguarding green and open space and well designed, accessible and pleasant living and working environments. However all these policies are now under active review.

#### Regional Political Context

The Greater London Authority (GLA) is a strategic authority with a London wide role to design a better future for the capital. While the Mayor and the London Assembly are elected by Londoners, the staff of the GLA is

a permanent body that provides continuity in the ongoing development and delivery of strategies for London. Sadiq Khan was elected Mayor of London in May 2016.

The Mayor's London Plan is the overall strategic plan for London. It sets out an integrated economic, environmental, transport and social framework for the development of the capital over the next 20 to 25 years. It has 6 main objectives including:

*A city that delights the senses and takes care over its buildings and streets, having the best of modern architecture while making the most of London's built heritage and which makes the most of and extends its wealth of open and green spaces and waterways, realising its potential for improving Londoners' health, welfare and development.*

The Mayor's Help a London Park scheme was one of the original initiatives established under the London's Great Outdoors programme. It provided a £6million funding pot to improve eleven parks throughout the capital, making them cleaner, safer, greener and better places to visit and enjoy including £400,000 on Wandle Park in Croydon. In addition the Mayor is providing funding of £700,000 for tree planting across Greater London during 2016-2017.

Pocket parks are also part of the Mayor's London's Great Outdoors - the programme to improve streets, squares, parks, and canal and riverside spaces across London with £2 million of pocket park funding being allocated to over 100 parks in 26 London boroughs.

#### Local Political Context

London Borough of Merton has been under majority Labour control since May 2014. Previously it was under no overall control with Labour undertaking a minority administration. The seats held are as follows: Labour: 36; Conservative: 20; Merton Park residents (Independent): 3; Liberal Democrat: 1.

#### Merton's Community and Business Plans

The objectives for all of the Management Plans for LB Merton's open spaces have been developed with the wider strategic objectives across the borough in mind. These objectives are defined in the Merton Community and Business Plans.

**Merton's Community Plan 2009-2019**, has been developed and implemented by the Merton Partnership. It sets out the overall direction and vision for the borough until 2019 plus a set of commitments and activities to achieve this vision. The Community Plan was refreshed in 2013 to take into account demographic, legislative

and policy changes, and now sets out a vision, pledges to deliver the vision and details of achievements to date under the following headings:

- Merton: A place to work
- A healthy and fulfilling life
- Better opportunities for youngsters
- Keeping Merton moving
- Being safe and strong
- Contributing to your community

It covers a range of issues about living and working in Merton, such as housing, the environment, the economy, transport, safety, health, culture and the needs of particular groups like carers, disabled people, older people, children and young people. The key themes of the community plan are:

- Children's Trust
- Health and Wellbeing
- Safer and Stronger Communities
- Sustainable Communities and Transport

The Community Plan sets out Merton's aspirations for the local area, and is based on a wide range of evidence, data and consultation that has identified the key concerns for residents, and the big issues that the Partnership needs to focus upon to ensure it improves the quality of life for everyone who lives in Merton. The Council itself has undertaken a significant consultation exercise with local people. The results of this have contributed to the vision and priorities contained within this Plan. The Plan also sets out the key actions the Partnership will be taking to ensure we achieve our vision and priorities.

The summary of the Community Plan states: By 2015 Merton Council will be smaller, reducing in size. Our top priority will continue to be to provide safe services of the best possible quality. Providing value for money services to our residents is at the heart of our business and we must be able to demonstrate that all of our services represent best value for money. We will do this by finding innovative solutions to maximise future efficiency. We will deliver services that customers want and need and, where possible, involve our customers in service specification and design.

Delivering quality and value services in an era of significantly reduced resources will require strong and determined leadership. A single business view is essential to ensure a 'One Council' approach is followed in everything we do. Leaders at all levels will be visible and lead by example.

A key action point from the Community Plan is to 'Manage parks and gardens to protect and enhance local biodiversity by integrating biodiversity management methods into parks management plans.' Some 2,500 new

trees have been planted in local open spaces and along the borough's highways. Biodiversity enhancements have focused upon heathland re-creation and pond restoration works.

The Community Plan 2009-19 includes such relevant actions as E10: Manage parks and green spaces to protect and enhance local biodiversity by integrating biodiversity management methods into parks management regimes.

For further information go to: <http://www.merton.gov.uk/community/communityplan>

**The Merton Business Plan 2014 - 2018**, developed following consultation with residents, aims to make "Merton - a great place to live, work and learn" by directing the overall improvement of local services. The Council's broad ambition is: "To be excellent in the delivery of the services that matter most to our residents, and to provide leadership to the community through effective citizen engagement and partnership working". The 5 key priorities for the business plan reflect the themes of the Community Plan. The day-to-day work of the Council and the key targets for services are addressed in the separate service plans of each service division. The current corporate business theme is "service transformation" and is being developed and refined through a 'Target Operating Model' process at the time of writing. The current transformation exercise in Greenspaces focuses on achieving a reduction in operating costs of some £700k over the period to the financial year 2017/18.

For further information go to <http://www.merton.gov.uk/community/businessplan>

### **Merton's Heritage Strategy**

The strategy describes the current heritage activity within the Borough and establishes a collaborative framework between the Council and the community.

The local authority plays a key part in safeguarding and raising awareness of the rich heritage of Merton. Roles and responsibilities can be divided into three areas:

- a) protection of the built and natural environment including policy development;
- b) collecting and recording material associated with Merton's past and provision of a skilled information service;
- c) promoting and increasing access to Merton's diverse cultural heritage through exhibitions, publications, the arts and education.

The strategy records local history societies, Heritage Trusts and organisations with heritage responsibilities and advocacy roles in the borough, several of which are

based in Mitcham:

- Mitcham Cricket Green Community and Heritage
- Mitcham Society
- Mitcham Common Conservators
- John Innes Society
- Merton Historical Society
- Merton Priory Trust
- Wandle Heritage Ltd
- Wimbledon Society
- Wimbledon and Putney Common Conservators

The strategy sets out the following objectives for the period 2015 – 20

*Objective 1:* Raise Merton's profile by increasing public access to the borough's unique and diverse cultural heritage

*Objective 2:* Safeguard the borough's varied heritage sites and resources, protecting and conserving them for the benefit of future generations

*Objective 3:* Ensure that Merton's heritage provision is inclusive by working collaboratively to widen public engagement and participation

*Objective 4:* To recognise the important contribution of social enterprise and secure ongoing funding and investment in Merton's heritage through partnership work, external funding and sponsorship

The work plan indicates the following specific reference related to the Canons:

**Activity** - To realise the full heritage potential of The Canons and its surroundings, creating a key cultural destination.

**Expected Benefit** - Restoration of an important listed building, historic grounds and associated sites for the benefit of future generations. Creation of a multi-functional facility to host cultural and educational activities

**Responsible group / officer** - Canons Partnership (London Borough of Merton, Mitcham Cricket Green Community and heritage, Friends of the Canons and Mitcham Society)

For further information go to - [https://www.merton.gov.uk/merton\\_heritage\\_strategy\\_2015\\_-\\_2020.pdf](https://www.merton.gov.uk/merton_heritage_strategy_2015_-_2020.pdf)

### **Merton Open Space Strategy (MOSS) 2010/11**

The Merton Open Space Study (MOSS) is an assessment of current open space provision based on 'Planning Policy Guidance 17: Open space, Sport and Recreation' (PPG17) typologies of open spaces. It is a spatial study concerned

with place shaping and delivery, an audit of the existing facilities and sets out the likely demand and need for future facilities. It is a refresh of research undertaken for Merton's Open Space Study 2005, developed to support the delivery of Merton's Core Planning Strategy.

The aim of the study is to present Merton Councils vision for the future of the open space network and set out an action plan which will enable the Council to provide a network of accessible open spaces and high quality recreational facilities to meet the needs of future Merton residents as well as enhancing current provision by recognising if there are any specific space or service deficiencies that need to be addressed.

The conclusions from the study inform the council's approach to a variety of strategies and projects, including Merton's Local Development Framework, the Green Grid, the Wandle Valley Regional Park, Climate Change Action Plan and others, all of which will help to deliver different elements of the MOSS conclusions.

The Merton Open Space Strategy offers some suggestions to the adoption of different working practices such as more creative approaches to financing and maintaining urban parks, multi-disciplinary team working, consultation with local communities, and partnership working.

The study has been developed in the National Policy Context of Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (PPG17), the Regional Policy Context of The Consolidated Draft Replacement London Plan 2010 and the Local context of Merton Council Community Plan, Local Development Framework, Merton Open Space Strategy 2005, Merton's Free Play Strategy (2007-2012), Merton's Children and Young People Plan (C&YPP) 2006-09, Merton's Healthier Communities Strategy 2008-2012 and Merton's Cultural Strategy 2007-2010.

### **Culture and Sports Framework**

The value of arts and culture contributing to a fairer, better, and healthier society is a matter of constant debate, yet there is ample academic and empirical evidence that demonstrates this intrinsic value. Our parks and open spaces are central to the variety of cultural activities offered by the Council.

The Council has produced a new Culture and Sports framework which sets out how the Council will support a wide range of sporting, leisure and cultural activities to enhance the lives of its residents.

The services provided include: arts, sports, leisure, parks and open spaces, children's playgrounds, activities for all ages and heritage.

These services have the potential to deliver and contribute to Merton's priorities and wider social outcomes; in particular, programmes to improve health and wellbeing; learning, skills and employability, economic resilience, positive behaviour and community cohesion. Furthermore, Culture and Sports services have the ability to develop innovative programmes to deliver against a range of outcomes and are an effective tool in promoting and facilitating behaviour change and empowering people, leading to improved life chances. For further information go to:  
[http://www.merton.gov.uk/leisure/arts/culture\\_and\\_sports\\_framework.htm](http://www.merton.gov.uk/leisure/arts/culture_and_sports_framework.htm)

### **Merton Sports Pitch Strategy**

In 2011 the Council recognised the need to obtain an in-depth sports pitch analysis to enable it to deliver services and facilities in a strategic manner giving a more balanced service provision borough-wide. This will enable the Council to provide facilities where they are most useful both to the local authority and the local community. This was achieved by commissioning specialist consultants to survey local outdoor sports service provision and facilities and draw up some key recommendations, The Sports Pitch Strategy gives an insight into the key improvements in terms of the type and location of facilities that will best benefit local communities within Merton.

### **Environmental Policies**

Merton Council is committed to the principles of 'sustainable development' and Local Agenda 21. The Merton Environmental Action Plan stems from these commitments.

Achieving sustainable development requires making decisions that take into account relevant environmental, social and economic factors. Merton is committed to integrating these three areas across Council policy in all departments.

Merton Council recognises the need for urgent action to address environmental problems. The Merton Environmental Action Plan complements and links with other Merton strategies and plans which address sustainable development issues, such as the Economic Development Strategy, the Community Plan and the Crime and Disorder Strategy, amongst others.

The aim of Merton's Environmental Action Plan is to:

*Encourage and facilitate the involvement of residents, businesses and other organization in helping to create an environmentally sustainable Merton, in accordance with the wider principles of sustainable development.*

To achieve this aim the plan needs to:

- Encourage, inspire and support willingness, across the different communities in Merton, to take action to help the environment;
- Highlight opportunities for actions that can be taken by different sectors of the community to enhance the environment;
- Provide information and celebrate achievement in supporting the environment.

For further information about the practical steps Merton Council is making to improve our environment go to:  
<http://www.merton.gov.uk/la21>  
[https://www.merton.gov.uk/env\\_and\\_regen\\_1\\_foreward\\_contents\\_introduction.doc](https://www.merton.gov.uk/env_and_regen_1_foreward_contents_introduction.doc)

### **The Canons and Merton's strategic objectives**

The Canons is an important feature of the overall Merton Open Space network and has an essential and individual role in meeting the Council's wider strategic objectives. Merton's Community and Business Plans articulate the key social, environmental and economic themes around which Merton Council is trying to improve the quality of life for our residents.

The table below illustrates how The Canons relates to Merton's wider strategic objectives.

Sustainable Communities	Safer, Stronger Merton	Healthier Communities	Older People	Children and Young People
Protecting local urban amenity	Accessible facilities for people living with disabilities.	Sports facilities including: football, bowls, swimming and gym.	Plan to upgrade all paths for safe access	Photographic project to engage with local schools
Protecting, enhancing and promoting local biodiversity (including Bellamy's Copse)	Engagement with the local community.	Café offering healthy eating choices	Good quality site furniture to be installed	Organised education activities
Minimal chemical treatments on bowling green	Good policies and facilities for safe dog walking	Good pedestrian access to all parts of the site.	High quality, accessible bowls facilities	Children's activities organized by the community
Good green links to adjacent Cricket Green	Staff members on site	Merton Healthy Walks	Café on site with good quality toilets	Annual Picnic and range of other activities
Active, enthusiastic friends group and other stakeholders	Community base for Canons Partners in basement of house	Outdoor gym on site	Clear interpretation signs and guided heritage walks	Wildlife pond with facilities for pond dipping
Over 80% recycling of green waste on site	Inspected and well-maintained facilities	Engagement with the local community.	Outdoor gym designed for ease of use by older people	New natural play area
	Good links with local police	Good quality toilets	Opportunities for community engagement	Restored running track
		Restored running track		

### 2.3.2 Current Management and Maintenance

Merton's Greenspaces team, whose head office is located in the Civic Centre in Morden, is responsible for the day-to-day operational management of The Canons. The service manages over 115 separate open spaces, including The Canons, which is one of the major sites in the Merton parks portfolio.

From Wednesday 1 February 2017, horticultural specialist *idverde* is responsible for providing ground maintenance services across all of Merton's parks, green spaces and cemeteries. *idverde* is an award-winning horticultural specialist with 100 years of experience under its belt.

The main duties of the ground-based staff include litter picking, sports pitch preparations, pavilion cleaning and parks security, amongst other tasks. Large-scale grass cutting operations are carried out by a small dedicated team operating across the borough. Technical staff (2 play technicians and one mechanical fitter) are similarly

deployed to service borough-wide needs.

Staffing of The Canons has been estimated as equivalent to one full time post. A member of staff based at The Canons has historically also covered Cricket Green, Cranmer Green and Three Kings Piece, open spaces immediately adjacent to The Canons. Time spent by this member of staff other than at The Canons is offset by mobile cross-borough services to achieve the equivalent of 1 FTE.

The majority of staff have transferred across to their new employer *idverde* from 1 February under TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations). Alongside this a new Public Realm Contract and Commissioning division has been created to manage Merton's relationship with *idverde* and deliver those functions that did not transfer. The division will be responsible for the infrastructure of Merton's parks and open spaces, for issues of open space policy and strategy, and some retained services, outlined below.

The Greenspaces Manager line manages the client function and relationship with *idverde*. Two parks development officers who are primarily involved in the delivery of the parks capital investment programme and for the replacement of the parks infrastructure: footpaths, gates, signs, bins, fences, etc. also report to the Greenspaces Manager. The team includes an events officer and two arboricultural officers for the borough's parks whose duties and responsibilities include the support of activities and conditions in The Canons and all other open spaces.

Both the development and repair works and the arboricultural works are mainly undertaken by specialist contractors commissioned by, and reporting to, the relevant professional officers within the London Borough

of Merton client team.

The events role is mainly concerned with providing support and advice, especially in relation to safety, for small-scale outdoor events produced by the local community groups. Capacity for larger events (fun fairs, circuses, faith group festivals and the like) is more limited at The Canons. Two officers in the team have considerable practical experience of ecological issues and the Manager of Mitcham Common, also employed within the team, is an additional biodiversity knowledge resource employed across the service.

### 2.3.3 Canons Basic Information

Address	Madeira Road, Mitcham, CR4 4HD	
Contacts	General enquiries: 020 8545 3677 or <a href="mailto:leisure@merton.gov.uk">leisure@merton.gov.uk</a>	
Web:	Friends Group: <a href="http://www.canonspartnership.org.uk/">http://www.canonspartnership.org.uk/</a> <a href="http://www.merton.gov.uk/leisure/parks">www.merton.gov.uk/leisure/parks</a>	
Grid Reference	Easting and Northing	
Designation	Potential flagship Green Flag green space	
Ownership	London Borough of Merton	
Size	8.6 hectares	
Type	Recreation Ground	
Legal Interest	Acquired 1939/1963	
Access	From Commonsides West, Madeira Road (vehicular) and Madeira Road, by Canons house (pedestrian); Cricket Green and Cold Blows.	
Opening hours: dusk	Monday to Friday: 08.00 hrs until dusk; Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holidays 09.00 hrs until dusk (although The Canons is not locked)	
Local Facilities	Children's playground 3 Junior Soccer pitches 2 Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs) Running track Restored carp pond and new wildlife pond Canons house	Madeira Hall Canons Leisure Centre Walled garden (also called the Peace Garden) Play area Bellamy's Copse
Transport	Tram: Mitcham and Mitcham Junction; Train: Eastfields Station and Mitcham Junction –10/15 minutes walk Buses: 118, 127, 200, 201, 264, 270, 280, 355, S1	
Parking	Parking on site for 103 cars	
Park type	Heritage site	

### 2.3.4 Relationship with other Parks and Open Spaces in Merton

The Canons is one of several council owned green spaces in Cricket Green ward, including three registered town greens, Mitcham Parish churchyard and London Road Playing Field. The Canons is bounded to the east and south by extensive common land including informal green spaces of Cranmer Green and Mitcham Common.

Drawing 954\_01\_Site Context illustrates the context of the site, in particular how it relates to the mosaic of green spaces in the area that together form part of the Wandle Valley Regional Park. The Canons sits on the edge of Mitcham Common, an ancient common land and a Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation. Although reduced over the years the common occupies a significant area, 182 hectare (460 acres) and that includes The Canons and other parks and greens in the area, many of which are physically connected.

The plan also shows The Canons related to other elements of the green infrastructure that link the spaces together including:

- greenways such as Cold Blows
- public footpaths
- cycle routes
- quieter roads that have been recommended by other cyclists
- pedestrian only route which connects cycling sections
- routes where cyclists can ride next to but separated from the road
- route signed for use by cyclists on a mixture of quiet and busier road.

The plan also shows public transport provision - bus stops and train stations.

The importance of Mitcham's extensive open spaces and green infrastructure and in particular the interplay between The Canons and the strategic Wandle Valley Regional Park open space network is critical to the understanding of the importance of the site. There are significant opportunities for promotion of The Canons via the Regional Park initiative and to improve signposting to and interpretation of the site.

The Canons is listed as 'Canons Recreation Ground' on London Borough of Merton list of parks which consists of 54 parks which 20 are within the Mitcham area. The Greenspaces Service manages over 115 separate open spaces in total. There are four parks included within English Heritage's Register of Parks and Gardens of Historic Interest:

- Wimbledon Park - Grade II\*

- Cannizaro Park - Grade II\*
- South Park Gardens - Grade II which was restored in 2009 through The Lottery funding
- and Morden Hall Park - Grade II which is owned and managed by the National Trust

### 2.3.5 Vision for Future Management

The vision for The Canons fits with the broader vision for Merton's parks as a whole:

*"To provide an attractive, high quality space with facilities that are modern, safe, clean, sustainable and accessible to all and that encourages healthier lifestyles, strong inclusive communities and an appreciation of nature".*

The Canons is an important space for the local community. It encourages local people to engage in physical activity, social interactions and enjoy a relationship to the natural world all within their local neighbourhood and is especially important in these respects given the park's strong urban context.

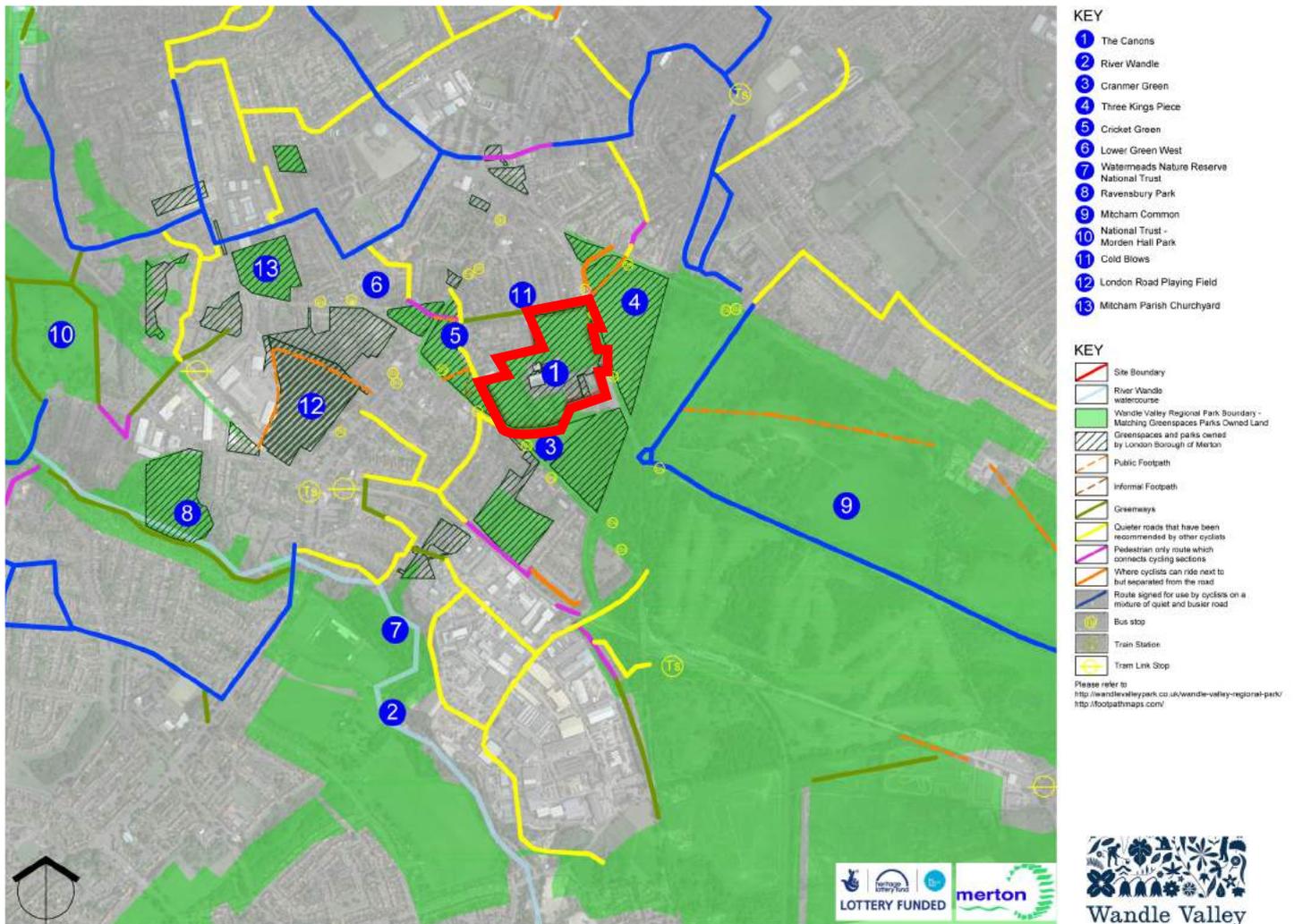
The existing management and planning arrangements encourage an active interest and involvement from the local community. Working relationships with stakeholders including The Canons Partnership ensures enthusiastic participation in fundraising, management, and restoration of local features. Community partners have been involved in horticulture, species protection and heritage restoration projects and been directly involved in promoting this unique place to other members of the community.

The Canons is an excellent example of a potentially high quality space that balances relaxation and recreation through innovative design and offers a mixture of facilities and activities for all ages. The Canons also contributes to the wider London green space network and represents a green stepping stone between the heavily built-up Mitcham town centre, and its transport nodes, and the green spaces of Cranmer Green and Mitcham Common to the south and Cricket Green to the east.

The vision and objectives for The Canons are aligned with the Merton Partnership's Community Plan, the Mitcham Cricket Green Charter, the Council's corporate business objectives, the Greenspaces' Service Plan and the Merton Open Space Strategy and The Canons Conservation Plan.

The overall vision for The Canons is to:

- Provide an attractive, peaceful, well-managed green space for the local community, which is accessible to all, safe, clean and fun.
- Manage The Canons in ways which are sympathetic to the needs of wildlife and still fulfil the obligation of



954/01\_Context Plan

providing a flexible resource for all to enjoy.

- Manage The Canons in a sustainable way, which takes account of bio-diversity and environmental concerns.
- Provide a wide range of community events, designed to appeal to a variety of audiences, and developed in a way to encourage more community cohesion and engagement.
- Recognise the importance and value of the heritage of The Canons and provide a variety of ways for visitors to understand it.

The objectives to achieve this vision for the area,

- To work closely with stakeholders and partners, both existing and new to find out about local people's needs, aspirations and concerns about The Canons.
- To develop plans for the Stage 2 bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the development, improvement and maintenance of The Canons based on local people's needs, aspirations and concerns, which are in keeping with the heritage value of the site.

- To encourage and support the Friends of The Canons to continue in their role of volunteering with a range of gardening and landscape projects within the site.
- To ensure that there is a reduction in the costs of maintaining The Canons but at the same time provide a range of high quality, accessible facilities.
- To manage The Canons according to the Conservation Management Plan for this site and to continue to promote its educational value.
- To ensure that known concerns and issues are kept under consideration, including reducing vandalism and graffiti, managing volunteers and generally ensuring members of the public can feel safe when using The Canons.

This information will be reviewed regularly and will be expected to evolve as funding and other opportunities arise and the service is transformed during the course of the next 4-5 years.

### 2.3.6 Green Flag Feedback - 2016

A draft Management and Maintenance Plan was initially prepared for The Canons in 2015/16 as part of a 'dummy' Green Flag application. This was prepared with the purpose of receiving useful feedback on the draft plan and the current state of The Canons in order to inform the development of the Heritage Lottery Fund bid and the development of this MMP.



The Green Flag application is scored under two categories:

- Desk assessment
- Field Assessment

For a site to achieve Green Flag Award status it must gain a minimum of 15 marks on the desk assessment and 42 on the field assessment as well as an overall score of 66.

The result of the Green Flag assessment of The Canons was:

1. Desk assessment - 20-24 - (pass)
2. Field Assessment - 30-39 - (fail)
3. Overall Score - 55-59 - (fail)

Please see the detailed report in Appendix 02 which discusses the strengths and recommendations as well as the scoring.





## Analysis, Aims and Objectives ("where do we want to be")

## 3.0 Analysis, Aims and Objectives ('where do we want to be')

### 3.1 Management Issues

The Canons is classified as one of the Borough's 25 "Key Parks" whose maintenance inputs have been protected from the resource reductions that have affected the service as a whole since April 2011. The number of Green Flag Awards secured is one of the Environment and Regenerations Department's current Key Performance Indicators; currently there are five parks with Green Flag status. User feedback since the service restructure was fully embedded has been good and the revised operational approach has coincided with a reassuring increase in the user satisfaction levels as revealed in the annual Residents' Survey: satisfaction with parks rose 4% to 70% in the 2011 survey returns and to 72% in 2012, ahead of the London average.

This section presents the aims and objectives for The Canons from 2017 to 2027. The format of this section of the management and maintenance plan has been closely aligned to the key criteria used to assess parks and open spaces as part of the Green Flag Award, which the Council aspires to achieve to add to its five existing Green Flag Awards. The plan and covers the current status and assets/features of the open space and is also based on the implementation of the Round 2 The Lottery proposals.

This section has been completed following the preparation of the Conservation Plan, Business Plan and the Activity Plan, prepared as part of the Round 2 The Lottery application. These plans are referred to throughout this management and maintenance plan. The management actions that follow the objectives describe how we will allocate funding and resources and monitor our progress toward achieving our vision.

Providing quality parks and open spaces remains a high priority for the Council despite the difficult financial climate. Up until February 2017, London Borough of Merton managed and maintained The Canons using around 2FTE staff, comprising largely of mobile workers. However, from February 2017, waste collection/ street cleaning (Contract A) and grounds maintenance of parks, verges and cemeteries (Contract B) across the Borough has been outsourced to idverde. The current Greenspaces team structure and its relationship to the idverde Contract B is shown in Appendix 02.

Green Flag Award criteria have been taken as crucial guidance in the management vision.

The eight key Green Flag criteria are:

- Creating a Welcoming Space
- Ensuring the Park is Healthy, Safe and Secure
- Keeping the Park Clean and Well Maintained
- Sustainable Management of Resources
- Appropriate Management of Conservation and Heritage Features
- Encouraging Community Involvement
- Marketing the Facility Effectively
- Implementation of Effective Management Strategies

The informal Green Flag feedback received following the dummy 2016 application is provided for each of these sections with added commentary.

The management actions described in the following section include likely time frames, responsibility for implementation, cost estimates and funding sources. Most of the management plan objectives have specific actions against them. In some cases the objective relates to how the council works. This information will be reviewed regularly and is expected to evolve as funding and other opportunities arise and the service is transformed during the course of the next 10 years.

### 3.1.1 A welcoming place

#### Green Flag Criteria - Welcoming Space

##### Feedback 2016

**Strengths:** Once in the green space the site has some nice features.

**Recommendations:** Site is currently very confusing and disjointed with no main entrance.

Consideration should be given to a new pedestrian entrance (somewhere near obelisk) to link with the historic cricket pitch.

Consider removal of the 3 sycamores which block the view of the house from the main Mitcham village.

There is no separate footpath by the Toby grill forcing pedestrians onto the road.

The Leisure Centre signage is in the middle of the footpath outside the site and should be in a better location.

The Leisure Centre dominates the site with different car parking arrangements depending on which entrance you use.

##### Green Flag criteria:

The overall impression for someone approaching and entering the site should be positive and inviting.

Features of particular importance are:

- Good and Safe Access;
- Effective signage to and in the park; and
- Equal access for all members of the community

#### Aim: Good Safe Access

##### Current Situation

The Canons is well served by footways, and public transport.

The Canons can be reached by:

- *footways*
  - south via Cranmer Road
  - from across Mitcham Common
  - west from Cricket Green and Mitcham village
  - north from Mitcham town centre via Commonsides West and Cold Blows
- *cycling*
  - no formal cycle routes but several quiet roads which approach site, but it is a disjointed system
- *train*
  - Southern Trains from Mitcham Eastfields or Mitcham Junction Stations after a 10-minute walk
- *bus*
  - numerous stops are on Commonsides West, London Road, Cranmer Road and Cricket Green (road)
- *tram*
  - Mitcham and Mitcham Junction tram stop is about 5 minutes' walk along Bramcote Avenue, or via London Road.
- *car*
  - Madeira Road and Commonsides West

##### Access

Drawing Nr. 954\_14 highlights the fragmented circulation system across the site.

There are two main vehicular access points:

- Commonsides West entrance which provides access to the car park adjacent to the Leisure Centre, as well as access for coaches and servicing for the Leisure Centre. The entrance also provides access to the Toby Carvery at Park Place.
- Madeira Road entrance is also used for visitors to the Leisure Centre and the grounds.

A further vehicular/pedestrian access is provided for Canons house via the 'new' drive, but the gates are usually kept locked. In addition the Cricket Green entrance is used by maintenance vehicles accessing the depot and also by council vehicles collecting voting slips on election day.

##### Car Parking

There are two main car parks located adjacent to each other but which are separated by the historic walls and connected by a short stretch of road.

- The one nearest to the Leisure Centre is well used as are the additional parking spaces adjacent to the building and along the access road from Commonsides West.
- The car park nearest Madeira Road is not as well used and includes a recycling area and a small area of woodland.
- There appears to be ample car parking for the current use of the site. The car parks are generally not lined, and it is estimated that there are 103 existing spaces of which 3 are disabled spaces.

##### Visibility / Perception

Visibility issues compound physical access issues. Tree cover screens Canons house from Cricket Green and Mitcham village and although the old walls of the walled garden help to screen the impact of the Leisure Centre and provide natural compartments to the site, they make it difficult to understand the layout of the space and can confuse visitors in getting around the site.

##### Hardsurfacing

Please refer to: 954\_17\_Survey - Hard Surfacing

The drawing shows the various types of surfacing and edging as well as noting their overall condition. Generally the paths and roads are surfaced in low quality materials and are in reasonable/poor condition.

- The primary footpath from Cricket Green around West Lawn is surfaced in bitmac and is in poor condition, although the section closest to Canons house is in better condition.
- The north-east entrance from Commonsides West is surfaced in bitmac and shows signs of cracking.
- The surfacing around the Leisure Centre is reasonable, but the condition of the grasscrete and bitmac surfacing across the two main car parks is varied.

##### Other hard surface areas include:

- main stone staircase to Canons house
- brick paving within the walled garden laid in the 1960s, although most of this used brick slips and is now in poor condition
- recently laid granite sett rumble strips at the crossing point on Park Place drive
- generally the paving around Canons house is poor quality - the drive is surfaced in bitmac, the terrace and path around the southern façade of the house are surfaced in concrete flags and the steps to the pond are surfaced in concrete block paving
- Yew walk, the paths around east lawn and the path around the pond are surfaced in rolled gravel, which is appropriate for its current light use.
- The running track is surfaced cinder.
- Informal paths through Bellamy's Copse are surfaced in woodchip.
- the roads are surfaced in bitmac

- the car parking bays closest to the Leisure Centre is surfaced grasscrete and are generally in poor condition, with the bitmac access roads reasonable condition
- the car park closest to Madeira Road is surfaced in bitmac and is reasonable condition

#### Key Issues to Address

- A lack entrances into the site
- A lack of accessible footpaths throughout the site
- Confused and disjointed circulation system
- No main site entrance or focus for the site
- A layout dominated by car parks at its centre
- Canons house is screened by existing trees from Mitcham village
- Some 'nice' features are present in the site

#### Proposals under The Lottery Bid

The overarching objective developed as part of the Round 2 proposals is to develop a new masterplan to create a more unified and accessible site with new facilities located sensitively within the historic layout and reducing the dominance of car parking at the heart of the park.

Key access improvements as part of The Lottery project include:

- Remodelling the central area of the site to make it more pedestrian friendly
- Provide opportunities for events to take place within a layout based on the historic walled gardens
- Upgrading existing paths within the site
- Allow for good access to the new cafe kiosk
- Increase visibility of key features such as Canons house to aid accessibility and understanding of heritage

Objectives
1. Meet the accessibility requirements of all users, ensuring paths are in good order and wherever possible, suitable for wheel chairs and buggies
2. Objective 2. Improve signage both within the site and in the surrounding neighbourhood to The Canons
3. Objective 3. Provide everybody with a range of high quality, well-maintained and relevant facilities that are accessible, safe and clean

#### Management actions

#	Description	When	Who	Budget (£000s)	Source	Secured
<b>Objective 1. Meet the accessibility requirements of all users, ensuring paths are in good order and wherever possible, suitable for wheel chairs and buggies</b>						
1A	Review all routes and paths across the site possibly with access consultant/group to ensure that they meet the requirements of all users whilst taking into account Conservation Plan policies	Annual	Green spaces	Minimal staff costs	LBM Revenue	Yes
1B	Improve pedestrian access across The Canons – e.g. from the Park Place entrance including a separate footway or traffic calming taking into account Conservation Plan policies	Annual	Green spaces	50K	LBM Capital	No
1C	Introduce raised new crossing points proposals across road from Park Place entrance as part of traffic calming	Annual	Green spaces	50K	LBM Capital	No
1D	Ensure paths and entrances are kept free of obstacles from litter and overgrown trees/shrubs	Annual	Green spaces	idverde contract	LBM Revenue	Yes

#### Aim: Effective signage to and in the park

##### Current Situation

There is currently only 1 main information panel and this is located on the boundary of The Canons with Cricket Green, by the entrance next to the Methodist church. The sign provides a map of the site with facilities and features of interest, policies on litter, dogs, and motorcycles in the park and contact details. The information is however generally out of date.

##### Visibility

Visibility issues compound physical access issues. Tree cover screens Canons house from Cricket Green and Mitcham village and although the old walls of the walled garden help to screen the impact of the Leisure Centre and provide natural compartments to the site, they make it difficult to understand the layout of the space and can confuse visitors in getting around the site.

#### Proposals under The Lottery Bid

- Key destinations are clearly signed both inside and outside of the park compartmental nature of the layout
- Revision of the location and content brown 'destination' sign to reflect the site's new multi-purpose nature is clearly signed outside of the park, especially important due to the change in car park layout and the new facilities at Canons house, cafe kiosk as well as Canons Leisure Centre
- Key facilities are clearly signed inside the site, especially important due to the compartmental nature of the layout and tree cover
- Provide up to date information regarding The Canons at key entrances. Provide directional signs in the surrounding vicinity
- Provide more interpretation about the heritage of The Canons

#	Description	When	Who	Budget (£000s)	Source	Secured
<b>Objective 2. Improve signage both within the site and in the surrounding neighbourhood to The Canons</b>						
2A	Provide up to date information about The Canons at entrances	Annual	Green spaces	Minimal staff costs	LBM Revenue	Yes
2B	Review and provide signing inside the park so visitors can find their destination	Annual	Green spaces	Minimal staff costs	LBM Capital	Yes
2C	Liaise with Highways to revised brown tourism signs to The Canons and to show the site as a multi-purpose visitor attraction	Annual	Green spaces	5K	LBM Revenue	No
2D	Raise the profile of The Canons through other media such as websites, e-newsletters, and leaflets	Annual	Green spaces	5K	LBM Revenue	No

## Aim: Equal access for all members of the community

### Current Situation

We outline below:

- Pedestrian access into The Canons
- Pedestrian and wheelchair access across The Canons
- Visibility
- Hardsurfacing

### Pedestrian Access into The Canons

Pedestrian and wheelchair access into the site is poor and access across the site is fragmented.

- The only pedestrian access that leads on to a footway is from the Cricket Green road from Mitcham village.
- The other pedestrian entrances either lead to a shared vehicular and pedestrian route, as in the case of the Park Place entrance at Commonsides West and Madeira Road, or merely lead onto open space as in the case of the northern eastern entrance from Commonsides West. This means that either people are forced to walk along roads or walk across grass, something that can prove challenging and impossible all year round, especially for wheelchair users.
- There is also no access from the south-west corner of the site where the obelisk, a former garden feature, is sited, screened from Canons house by high walls.
- There is also an issue with occasional cars being driven around the northern and western sides of the Leisure Centre in an area where one would not expect to see vehicles.
- A pedestrian crossing on Commonsides West links to the Three Kings Piece and Mitcham Common as well as providing a pathway to the town centre.

### Pedestrian and wheelchair access across The Canons

- There are no footpaths from Commonsides West which runs along the eastern side boundary
- There are two footpaths from Madeira Road, one which leads into the car park and secondly along the drive to Canons house through the 'new' entrance gates
- The primary footway from Cricket Green road provides access to the Leisure Centre and Madeira Hall as well as a walk around the West Lawn.
- The other primary footpaths lead from shared access roads.
- Secondary footpaths surfaced in rolled gravel are laid out around the lawn and the pond.
- The walled garden is brick paved
- The site is flat and therefore there are no strategic layout issues related to gradients apart from access to the pond which is currently via steps

#	Description	When	Who	Budget (£000s)	Source	Secured
<b>Objective 3. Provide everybody with a range of high quality, well-maintained and relevant facilities that are accessible, safe and clean</b>						
3A	Review facilities across the park in terms of appearance, function and visitor offer and develop action plan for remedial works and further development work.	Annual	Green Spaces / idverde	Minimal staff costs	LBM Revenue	Yes
3B	Encourage positive use of the park, discourage negative use of the park and ensure a high level of cleanliness	Annual	Green Spaces / idverde	Minimal staff costs	LBM Revenue	Yes
3C	React to negative behaviour, graffiti and vandalism in a quick and effective manner	Annual	Green Spaces / idverde	Minimal staff costs	LBM Revenue	Yes
3D	Continue close working relationship with Police and other agencies through the multiagency problem solving meetings	Annual	All	Minimal staff costs	LBM Revenue	Yes
3E	Daily checks for vandalism/graffiti, ensure damage from vandalism is 'made good' as soon as possible	Daily	idverde	idverde contract	LBM Revenue	Yes
3F	Encourage the public to report negative behaviour to the police, report any ASB and criminal behaviour immediately to police, share information with partners	Annual	All	Minimal staff costs	LBM Revenue	Yes
3G	Encourage the use of the park for non-users, increase user numbers	Annual	Green spaces	Minimal staff costs	LBM Revenue	Yes

## 3.1.2 Health, Safety and Security

### Green Flag Criteria - Health, Safety and Security

#### Feedback 2016

**Strengths:** The site feels predominantly safe, although the disjointed nature around the Leisure Centre creates 'dead areas' which could attract ASB.

Little evidence of dog fouling.

The site has a range of facilities including a play area, old running track, bowling green, pond and walled garden.

**Recommendations:** Improvement works are needed via the The Lottery project to ensure facilities are fit for purpose in the future.

**Green Flag criteria:** The park or green space must be a healthy, safe and secure place for all members of the community to use.

Relevant issues must be addressed in management plans and implemented on the ground. New issues which arise must be addressed promptly and appropriately. Particularly important issues include:

- Equipment and facilities must be safe to use;
- The park must be a secure place for all members of the community to use or traverse;
- Dog fouling must be adequately dealt with;
- Health and safety policies should be in place, in practice and reviewed; and
- Toilets, drinking water, first aid, public telephones and emergency equipment where relevant (e.g. lifebelts by water) should be available on or near the site and clearly signposted.

### Aim: Equipment and facilities must be safe to use

#### Current Situation

Health and safety is a top priority for both Greenspaces and *idverde* staff. Under the new contract, daily visits will be undertaken by *idverde* staff to ensure that any concerns are raised with the park management immediately. *idverde* staff will be encouraged to develop a dialogue with the public and report any concerns to management. *idverde* staff are trained in aspects of health and safety as well as assessing and implementing risk management.

All parks infrastructure and equipment (seats, litter bins, footpaths, fencing, etc.) will be visually inspected on a daily basis by *idverde* staff and assessed more thoroughly for its condition on a quarterly basis. Unsafe facilities are repaired or replaced immediately, or failing that, cordoned off as appropriate to ensure user safety and discourage vandalism. (see Inspection and Maintenance Regime – Appendices 1 and 2).

Shrub beds, hedges and trees are managed to open up sight lines, reducing areas where inappropriate activities might occur and creating a greater feeling of safety for users and a more welcoming experience. Those issues that require more significant financial investment or technical support beyond the *idverde* contract to remediate are reported up the line to Greenspaces Manager for action as an ad hoc additional work under the *idverde* contract or by another contractor. Benches, waste bins and dog bins are located around the site. Many of the benches and bins need repairs and/or replacement.

Some areas are inspected on a regular basis by other sections within the council, these include;

1. **Play Area:** The play area meets with the European standards EN1176 and 1177. *idverde* visits the site daily carrying out a routine visual inspection to identify any hazards. Quarterly operational inspections are also carried out checking the operational stability of the equipment. The play area is then subject to an annual risk assessment carried out by an RoSPA approved inspector. *idverde* staff provide additional safety checks during the week as well as a more detailed check during the weekend.
2. **Trees:** Trees undergo an annual tree inspection by a Council Arborist and are routinely checked by *idverde* staff to identify any risks from damaged limbs.
3. **Hard Landscaping:** An annual inspection of footpaths is carried out by Greenspaces
4. **Buildings:** The dovecote, obelisk, walls, bowls pavilion, depot and sports pavilion are checked for all aspects of safety on an annual basis by Greenspaces
5. **External Lighting:** Faulty lights are reported to London Borough of Merton by the public and *idverde* staff
6. **Street Furniture:** Inspected on a daily basis as part of the *idverde*'s general duties

### Aim: The park must be a secure place for all members of the community to use or traverse

#### Current Situation

Security is the top priority to ensure that The Canons is a successful and well used community facility.

- *idverde* staff - A small team of 4 cover the Mitcham area including The Canons. The team is based in the depot at The Canons and provide daily security checks of the site.
- *idverde* Contract Manager oversees the team and works closely with the Greenspaces team reporting any security concerns immediately.
- The two CCTV are managed by the operator of the Leisure Centre, Better. The cameras are not monitored but provide a recording function that allows incidents to be re-played within 30 days.
- The Park is regularly patrolled by the Mitcham, Community Beat Managers (CBMs) and Community Support Officers. These teams have excellent links with the park staff and attend meetings to discuss the park events. The CBMs have very good local knowledge, links with the community and awareness of local issues and problems.

### Aim: Dog fouling must be adequately dealt with

#### Current Situation

Littering and dog fouling enforcement by Kingdom Security Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) for littering, dog fouling and graffiti, as well as other matters, are issued by enforcement officers from Kingdom Security, as well as Merton Council staff. All Kingdom Security enforcement officers wear CCTV body cameras, which can be used to record audio and video when an offence is committed and while details are taken down. Ref. <https://beta.merton.gov.uk/rubbish-and-recycling/litter-fly.../fixed-penalty-notice>

### Aim: Health and safety policies should be in place, in practice and reviewed;

#### Current Situation

As part of London Borough of Merton displays its Health and Safety Policy and its Risk Assessments at its offices in the Civic Centre. *idverde*'s Health and Safety Policy and Risk Assessments are kept in a file at The Canons depot for their daily reference.

Within both the council and *idverde* service there is a programme of staff induction and training that includes:

- Chainsaw use

- Pesticides use
- First aid
- Safe operation of machinery
- Water safety
- Customer care
- Manual handling
- Dispute resolution
- The inspection programme

These policies are reviewed by the Greenspaces Manager / idverde on an annual basis.

Within the Greenspaces Service, there is a training budget covers CPD including attendance at conferences covering park management.

Please refer to Section 4.6.

**Aim: Toilets, drinking water, first aid, public telephones and emergency equipment where relevant (e.g. lifebelts by water) should be available on or near the site and clearly signposted.**

**Current Situation**

Currently the male and female toilets located adjacent to Canons house are disused and locked up. Toilets are also located in the Leisure Centre, the Bowling Clubhouse and in Canons house, but only for visitors to these facilities, the latter two being open infrequently. Information for emergency contact, public telephones, hospital, and local services is provided on the single main park signage at the Cricket Green entrance. A lifebelt is located adjacent to the Pond. First aid and a public telephone is available at the Leisure Centre. Information about emergency contacts is shown on the signboard at the Cricket Green entrance.

**Aim: A park where bylaws are respected and adhered to by all.**

**Current Situation**

The Canons is included in Schedule 1 Grounds Regulated under Section 164 of the Public Health Act 1875. The existing Bylaws for London Borough of Merton were revised in 1992.

The park also is governed by London Borough of Merton’s Park Code. Both are available online.

Ref. <http://www.merton.gov.uk/environment/openspaces/parks/parkbylaws.htm>

Ref. <http://www.merton.gov.uk/environment/openspaces/parks/parkcode.htm>

**The Lottery Round 2 Bid Proposals**

The following works are proposed as part of the Round 2 bid:

- The overarching objective is to develop a new masterplan to create a more unified and safer site to visit with attractive new facilities
- New facilities are proposed including a café, toilets, Canons house interpretation/education centre - the checking / monitoring of these facilities will be incorporated into the management regimes of the park to ensure that the park safe
- The new play area and outdoor gym will make the place a healthier place to visit



## Objectives

4. All park facilities and features to be maintained providing a safe, secure and inclusive space
5. Enforce safe working practices to protect all staff and visitors
6. Objective 6. Implement the Health and Safety Policy

## Management actions

#	Description	When	Who	Budget (£000s)	Source	Secured
<b>Objective 4. All park facilities and features to be maintained providing a safe, secure and inclusive space</b>						
4A	Carry out a health and safety on all park facilities and features	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / idverde	idverde contract	LBM Revenue	Yes
4B	idverde to inspect the playgrounds and leisure facilities on a daily basis, including weekends but excluding public holidays and that defects and dangers are made safe as a priority in accordance with the rectification period for playground equipment as set out; if this is not possible dangers should be reported to management and the equipment or facility is closed from the public with appropriate notices and barriers	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / idverde	idverde contract	LBM Revenue	Yes
4C	Litter pick and remove broken glass and any other items in the playground enclosure; hazardous items including sharps and broken glass shall be removed as soon as possible, and no later than 24 hours, after being reported	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / idverde	idverde contract	LBM Revenue	Yes
4D	Ensure tree health and safety surveys are carried out every 5 years (min) and works identified are carried out as necessary	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / idverde	Green spaces	LBM Revenue	Yes
4E	Ensure that pond safety signs exist and life-saving equipment is present and in working order	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / idverde	idverde contract	LBM Revenue	Yes
4F	Encourage users to report negative activities in the park, ensure efficient and swift reporting systems	Ongoing	All	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
4G	Park users are to be aware of bylaws of relevance to their use of the park.	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / idverde	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
4H	Ensure facilities are provided and are accessible and in good working condition	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / idverde / Better/ café and Canons house operator	Various	Different Budgets	Yes
<b>Objective 5. Enforce safe working practices to protect all staff and visitors</b>						
5A	Ensure idverde perform to health and safety and CHAS policies review and update relevant operational risk assessments and practices annually	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / idverde	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
5B	Ensure dverde staff receive adequate training in the use and maintenance of their equipment which will involve the preparation and maintenance of manageable risk assessments	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / idverde	idverde contract	LBM Revenue	Yes
5C	All dverde wear appropriate safety equipment and approved uniform	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / idverde	idverde contract	LBM Revenue	Yes
5D	Ensure cutting machinery is only operated by trained staff, with cutting edges being maintained to the required specification and with safety guards in place	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / idverde	idverde contract	LBM Revenue	Yes

5E	Vehicles and machinery should be maintained at a high standard in order to prevent their running inefficiently and to prevent leaks of potentially polluting substances	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / idverde	idverde contract	LBM Revenue	Yes
5F	Vehicles and machinery should be maintained at a high standard in order to prevent their running inefficiently and to prevent leaks of potentially polluting substances	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / idverde	idverde contract	LBM Revenue	Yes
5G	Maintenance of vehicles and machinery should only take place within dedicated work areas well away from surface water and foul water drains	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / idverde	idverde contract	LBM Revenue	Yes
5H	Surface and foul water drains should be appropriately marked and maintained	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / idverde	idverde contract	LBM Revenue	Yes

**Objective 6. Implement the Health and Safety Policy**

6A	idverde to record and review all health and safety incidents and near misses; provide feedback to corporate health and safety team; provide necessary training/re-training	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / idverde	idverde contract	LBM Revenue	Yes
6B	idverde risk assessments are to be kept up to date	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / idverde	idverde contract	LBM Revenue	Yes
6C	Provide relevant Greenspaces staff health and safety training	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / idverde	TBC	idverde	TBC
6D	idverde to record and review all health and safety incidents and near misses; provide feedback to corporate health and safety team; provide necessary training/re-training	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / idverde	idverde contract	LBM Revenue	Yes
6E	Monitor the occurrence of nuisance dogs, monitor and control the incidents of dog fouling and report to Kingdom Security	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / idverde	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes



### 3.1.3 Clean and Well Maintained

#### Green Flag Criteria - Clean and Well Maintained

##### Feedback 2016

**Strengths:** The main park areas were clean but there was a lot of litter around the Leisure Centre.

Trees were generally in good condition.

The historic Dovecote looked in good condition. The Walled garden is a great asset along with the clipped yew hedging.

**Recommendations:** There are clearly some challenges to overcome in terms of the future make up and use of the main building.

**Green Flag criteria:** For aesthetic as well as health and safety reasons issues of cleanliness and maintenance must be addressed, in particular:

- Litter and other waste management issues must be adequately dealt with;
- Grounds, buildings, equipment and other features must be well maintained; and
- A policy on litter, vandalism and maintenance should be in place, in practice and regularly reviewed.

#### Aim: Litter and other waste management issues must be adequately dealt with

##### Current Situation

The Canons is classified as one of the Borough's 25 "Key Parks". Providing quality parks and open spaces remains a high priority for the Council despite the difficult financial climate. The number of Green Flag Awards secured is one of the Environment and Regenerations Department's current Key Performance Indicators. User feedback since the service restructure was fully embedded has been good and the revised operational approach has coincided with a reassuring increase in the user satisfaction levels as revealed in the annual Residents' Survey: satisfaction with parks being at 72% in 2016, ahead of the London average.

##### Dogs

Dog walking is a popular activity in The Canons and the Council wishes to encourage responsible dog ownership across the Borough. Dogs must be kept under control at all times at The Canons; existing children's play area and the bowling green at The Canons are designated dog-free areas.

Although not fenced, the proposed play area will also continue to be dog-free. The Dogs Fouling of Land act 1996 requires owners to clear up after their dog and to place the bagged waste in a bin. The policy of London Borough of Merton is now to integrate dog waste into general waste, allowing dog owners to use any of the park bins for their (bagged) dog waste. There are dog fouling fine notices on the two brick piers at the Cricket Green entrance. Currently there are dog free and poop scoop Control Orders that apply to all parks and open spaces across the borough. If a dog walker is found to persistently offend by not cleaning up after their dog, additional support is available from the Council Dog Wardens who issue spot fines.

##### Litter

The park is used extensively by a variety of groups and individuals and litter is a significant management issue and challenge. To support specific events and lettings and in periods of good weather during the summer, *idverde* has now responsibility for this operation. There are eleven litter bins, plus one provided by Better to serve the MUGA. Although the emptying of all these bins are part of the *idverde* contract, Better has emptied the ones nearest to Leisure Centre. In the past there have been problems with them regularly overflowing causing more wind-blown litter. The *idverde* specification (Appendix 15) ensures that the bins do not overflow at any time. Litter bins also now contain dog waste. Information regarding the Council's dog policies is displayed in the park on the main sign at Cricket Green entrance. There is an issue with litter at the rear of the Leisure Centre where litter is blown from skips across the site and accumulates in Bellamy's Copse.

The Canons has a problem with fly tipping and access by travellers which has required the green spaces to be secured by bollards and fencing. The recycling site in the car park is unsightly.

##### Green waste management

Sustainable waste management is a high priority for the London Borough of Merton and The Canons has a role in demonstrating its feasibility across the parks network.

There is a small green waste collection bay on site in the depot which will enable *idverde* to recycle the waste in accordance with *idverde*'s environmental policies - see Section 4.7. Leaf litter in the past has been spread on the planted islands on West Lawn and in Bellamy's Copse. However this has suppressed the development of ground cover flora and should be stopped under the new *idverde* regime. Green waste material that cannot be utilised on site will continue to be taken to a local composting facility at Nursery Road Playing Field or to the sub-regional waste processing centre in Beddington.

##### Maintenance

The Canons is regularly maintained. After routine inspections have ensured that the park is safe, secure and reasonably tidy, *idverde* staff carry out a wide range of maintenance and horticultural operations. These activities are described in more detail on the Maintenance Schedule outlined in Appendix 2.

Local park members of staff work regularly with the borough-wide grounds maintenance teams and our other partners and contractors to undertake specific maintenance and refurbishment tasks.

#### Aim: Grounds, buildings, equipment and other features must be well maintained

##### Soft Landscape Maintenance

##### Current Situation

The following list the soft landscape maintenance tasks which formally carried out by council staff is being undertaken by *idverde*. Refer to Appendix 9

- Grass Cutting (E and W of Leisure Centre)
- Pitch markings for tournaments etc
- Pitch Maintenance (fertilizer, herbicide, drainage etc)
- Canons House (Lawns, shrub beds and hedges)
- Hedges generally (pond, Leisure Centre, carparks, Park Place boundary, Cricket Green boundary)
- Walled garden shrubs and box hedges
- Tree works
- Woodland groups (Bellamy's Copse, lakeside trees, native shrub groups)
- Bowling Green Lawn (1482m<sup>2</sup>) and holly hedges (202m)
- Pond maintenance

## Hard Landscape and Buildings Maintenance

### Current Situation

#### Hard landscaping

All areas of hard landscape are kept clean and safe to help maintain the overall positive impression of the park

The following list the hard landscape maintenance tasks which formally carried out by council staff is being undertaken by idverde. Refer to Table 2:

- MUGA
- Railings, walls, fences and gates
- Existing drainage
- Play Area - Grounds Maintenance ( litter picks etc, visual checks)
- Graffiti removal
- Litter and debris removal
- Bin maintenance
- Seats, picnic sets, benches
- Maintenance of hard surfacing - paths, steps, car park

#### Canons house

- designation - Grade II\*
- managed - by Facilities Management
- use - the basement, ground floor and first floor has had very little use in recent years, mainly in relation to The Lottery project events. The top floor is rented by a tenant.
- maintenance - very little recent maintenance work has been carried out in recent years
- surveys - regular condition surveys are undertaken for this building and any urgent items are carried out but there is no maintenance programme. Simpson and Brown has carried out a survey as part of Conservation Plan
- condition - requiring comprehensive repairs and conservation work
- The Lottery proposals – full restoration of Canons house is proposed, enhancement of heritage rooms and conversion of most of ground floor and first floor for office use and basement for community use

#### Dovecote

- designation - Grade II building
- managed - by Facilities Management
- use - opened up for public access on heritage days
- maintenance - repairs over the years including works in reroofing and stonework repairs
- surveys - regular condition surveys are undertaken for this and any urgent items are carried out but there is no maintenance programme. Simpson and Brown has carried out a survey as part of Conservation Plan
- condition - requiring minor repairs and conservation work
- The Lottery proposals – minor repairs and new

#### Obelisk

- designation - Grade II building
- managed - by Greenspaces
- use - no maintenance programme
- maintenance - no repairs in the last 5 years
- surveys – no regular condition surveys. Simpson and Brown has carried out a survey as part of Conservation Plan
- condition - requiring major repairs and conservation work
- The Lottery proposals – repair of structure

#### Sports Pavilion

- designation - none
- managed - by Greenspaces
- use - the building was used by the Little League football teams for refreshments but this has not happened for some time and there is no current use
- maintenance - any urgent items are carried out but there is no maintenance programme
- surveys – no regular condition surveys
- condition – looks unattractive
- The Lottery proposals – no work, as there is no proposed use

#### Lodge

- designation - none
- managed - by Facilities Management
- use - building is rented out as a house
- maintenance - any urgent items are carried out but there is no maintenance programme
- surveys – no regular condition surveys
- condition – reasonable but garden fencing, caravans and cars in curtilage are unattractive and impact badly on setting
- The Lottery proposals – no work

#### Bowling Pavilion

- designation - none
- managed - by Facilities Management
- use - building is used by the bowling club
- maintenance - any urgent items are carried out but there is no maintenance programme
- surveys – no regular condition surveys
- condition – reasonable in an attractive setting
- The Lottery proposals – no work

#### The Leisure Centre

- designation - none
- managed - by Facilities Management, facility is run by Better under a contract managed by Leisure Services
- use - is a popular facility in Mitcham, with around 400,000 visits a year

- maintenance - there is a maintenance programme
- condition – good state of repair, untidy area at rear where skips are located
- The Lottery proposals – no work

#### *Madeira Hall*

- designation - Grade II\* listed in relation to Canons house
- managed - by Facilities Management, facility is run by Better under a contract managed by Leisure Services
- use - building is under used
- maintenance - any urgent items are carried out but there is no maintenance programme
- condition – reasonable
- The Lottery proposals – no work

#### *Existing toilets*

- designation - Grade II\* listed in relation to Canons house
- managed - by Facilities Management
- The toilets are closed
- maintenance - any urgent items are carried out but there is no maintenance programme
- condition - Poor state of repair
- The Lottery proposals – proposed to be demolished as part of the The Lottery project

#### *The new café and toilets*

- The building is proposed to be managed by Facilities Management
- The building will be used by all park users
- There will be a routine maintenance programme
- It is a major element of the The Lottery project

### **Aim: Equipment (Operational) Maintenance**

#### **Current Situation**

- idverde site staff are fully qualified in the use of their everyday machinery
- when special skills are required idverde bring in suitable qualified staff such as tree surgeons
- all equipment is to run safely and efficiently and be tested / serviced at the appropriate times.
- only recognised park equipment known to have been appropriately checked is to be used in the park.

### **Aim: A policy on litter, vandalism and maintenance should be in place, in practice and regularly reviewed**

#### **Current Situation**

The new grounds maintenance contract includes specification for the above which will be reviewed with idverde on a regular basis.

#### **Proposals under The Lottery Bid**

The following works are proposed as part of the Round 2 bid:

- The grounds will be enhanced by restoring planting and paths and removing clutter and making the place look tidier
- More bins will be provided at strategic locations to make The Canons easier to maintain and keep clean
- Remove recycling area from car park

Objectives
7. Ensure high standards of maintenance for play areas, bowling green, lawns, trees and shrubs, user facilities and park and water feature
8. Provide adequate facilities for the disposal of visitor's rubbish and dog waste
9. Discourage vandalism and graffiti through education, innovative design of facilities, building community alliances and prompt remedial action
10. Monitor the maintenance programme to ensure improvements can be celebrated and weaknesses addressed
11. Implement policy on waste – prevention, preparing for re-use, recycle, other recovery, disposal
12. Ensure that the site is kept clean in accordance with relevant standards / specification

## Management actions

#	Description	When	Who	Budget (£000s)	Source	Secured
<b>Objective 7. Ensure high standards of maintenance for play areas, bowling green, lawns, trees and shrubs, user facilities and park and water feature</b>						
7A	<i>idverde</i> to carry out maintenance and inspection procedures at least to the specification within their contract and to the detailed Schedule of Maintenance operations, which summarises the tasks, their frequency, and timings	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / <i>idverde</i>	<i>idverde</i> contract	<i>idverde</i>	Yes
7B	<i>idverde</i> to ensure all play equipment meets the European Environmental Standard and report to the Authorised Officer if this standard is not met. Ensure accurate records of inspection are kept up to date, and that play equipment is maintained in accordance with supplier's recommendations	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / <i>idverde</i>	<i>idverde</i> contract	<i>idverde</i>	Yes
7C	<i>idverde</i> to clear leaves from hard surfaces, grass and planted areas including tree pits, planters, borders, hedge bases, sports and leisure facilities and fence lines to the standards set out in specification	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / <i>idverde</i>	<i>idverde</i> contract	LBM Revenue	Yes
7D	<i>idverde</i> to ensure soft landscaped areas are kept well stocked, weed free, and pruned as required for species	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / <i>idverde</i>	<i>idverde</i> contract	LBM Revenue	Yes
7E	<i>idverde</i> to ensure hard areas are free from leaf litter, mud, and grass cuttings and ensure paths and hard areas are safe and free of trip hazards	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / <i>idverde</i>	<i>idverde</i> contract	LBM Revenue	Yes
7F	<i>idverde</i> to maintain street furniture, fences, and railings, painting, treating and removal of graffiti, dirt, etc	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / <i>idverde</i>	<i>idverde</i> contract	LBM Revenue	No
7G	Upgrade and refurbish pavilion as required	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO	£50k	LBM Capital	No
<b>Objective 8. Provide adequate facilities for the disposal of visitor's rubbish and dog waste</b>						
8A	Review usage levels and condition of all bins and replace or relocate as required	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / <i>idverde</i>	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	TBC
8B	Provide regular liaison and feedback to Waste Recycling team on condition/utilisation of recycling bins	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / <i>idverde</i>	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
8C	Where items are damaged through vandalism or wear and tear and are beyond repair or not fit for purpose, the <i>idverde</i> shall inform the Authorised Officer and he shall instruct remedial works	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / <i>idverde</i>	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	TBC
<b>Objective 9. Discourage vandalism and graffiti through education, innovative design of facilities, building community alliances and prompt remedial action</b>						
9A	Liaise with Metropolitan Police, Safe Neighbourhood Team and London Borough of Merton Graffiti Team and local area management team	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / <i>idverde</i>	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes

Objective 10. Monitor the maintenance programme to ensure improvements can be celebrated and weaknesses addressed						
10A	Hold regular meetings to review maintenance standards and improvement works	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO/ idverde / Friends	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
10B	Review all formal monitoring and inspection returns	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / idverde	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
Objective 11. Implement policy on waste – prevention, preparing for re-use, recycle, other recovery, disposal						
11A	idverde to ensure that policy is carried out including recycling of green waste	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO/ idverde	idverde contract	LBM Revenue	Yes
Objective 12. Ensure that the site is kept clean in accordance with relevant standards / specification						
12A	Ensure that following cleansing all areas meet the COPL&R standard for Grade A. Sites will not fall below a Grade B standard before corrective action is taken to return them to Grade A standard specification within half a Working Day	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO/ idverde	idverde contract	LBM Revenue	Yes
12B	idverde shall ensure that removal of graffiti is carried out within 5 working days of notification. Offensive and/or racist graffiti shall be removed within 24 hours of notification	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO/ idverde	idverde contract	LBM Revenue	Yes
12C	idverde shall empty litter bins such that they do not overflow at any time and wash them with water and suitable cleanser to remove all residues and detritus	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO/ idverde	idverde contract	LBM Revenue	Yes
12D	idverde shall clear fly tipped material within 2 working days of notification and shall record fly tipping incidents on the relevant government database e.g. Waste Data Flow. The Contractor shall help identify sources of fly tipped material and gather evidence in support of the authorities' enforcement actions	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO/ idverde	idverde contract	LBM Revenue	Yes

### 3.1.4 Sustainability

Green Flag Criteria - Sustainability
<p>Feedback 2016</p> <p><b>Strengths:</b> Use of mulch on the shrub borders.</p> <p><b>Recommendations:</b> Consideration should be given on how this is to be reflected in the The Lottery proposals.</p> <p><b>Green Flag criteria:</b> Methods used in maintaining the green space and its facilities should be environmentally sound, relying on best practice according to current knowledge. Management should be aware of the range of techniques available to them, and demonstrate that informed choices have been made and are regularly reviewed. Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● An environmental policy or charter and management strategy should be in place, in practice, and regularly reviewed;</li> <li>● Pesticide use should be minimised and justified;</li> <li>● Horticultural peat use should be eliminated;</li> <li>● Waste plant material generated in the park should be recycled;</li> <li>● High horticultural and arboricultural standards should be demonstrated;</li> <li>● Energy conservation, pollution reduction, waste recycling and resource conservation measures should be used.</li> </ul>

**Aim: An environmental policy or charter and management strategy should be in place, in practice, and regularly reviewed;**

#### Current Situation

Many of the London Borough of Merton's environmental policies with regard to protecting local biodiversity, amenity, air, soil and water quality are contained within Merton's Local Development Framework. Ref. <http://www.merton.gov.uk/environment/planning/planningpolicy/localplan.htm>

Over and above this, Merton's corporate vision and objectives underline the importance of environmental sustainability in the achievement of the Council's wider objectives.

In line with London Borough of Merton's commitment to sustainability through its Climate Change, Strategy and Action Plan 2012 - 2017 methods used in maintaining the park and its facilities should wherever possible should be environmentally sustainable. Although not a mandatory requirement for achieving Green Flag status, the following principles of environmental management from the Environment

Agency would be good practice to work to:

- Adopt and work to an environmental policy
- Nominate a person with overall responsibility for environmental management
- Train staff in environmental management
- Ensure contractors and suppliers are aware of the environmental policy and contribute in a positive way to environmental improvement
- Set objectives and targets for environmental improvement
- Establish operational procedures for achieving the objectives and targets
- Measure, record and evaluate environmental performance
- Review and seek to improve environmental performance, and then repeat the cycle by reviewing policy

Within 3 months of taking over the grounds maintenance, *idverde* have pledged to produce an Environmental Impact Assessment, identifying the impact that their services will have on the environment. Their Environmental Policy will minimise *idverde*'s impact as well as increase efficiencies and effectiveness in the business.

In summary they will:

- minimise carbon dioxide emissions
- reduce waste by efficient, recycling and re-using of materials
- source socially and environmentally-friendly materials
- minimise use of primary resources
- minimise water consumption
- protect biodiversity and local ecosystems
- use the quietest and cleanest methods of operations
- work with local communities to provide training and employment
- provide fair and open opportunities for local people and suppliers *idverde* have pledged that particular emphasis will be given to:
- biodiversity management, habitat conservation and habitat creation with the assistance of *idverde*'s team of ecologists/countryside managers under their Conservation Manager
- waste management in priority order - through prevention, preparation for re-use, recycling such as composting, other (energy) recovery, disposal at landfill
- delivering a carbon neutral service through measurement, mitigation measures and offset mitigation

### **Aim: Pesticide use should be minimised and justified;**

#### **Current Situation**

The Greenspaces team has adopted a general policy to reduce the use of pesticides in the maintenance of all of the parks and open spaces within its portfolio to a minimum. The use of pesticides has been eliminated from all areas of The Canons.

### **Aim: Horticultural peat use should be eliminated;**

#### **Current Situation**

*idverde* only use peat free compost. Peat-based composts are not used at The Canons and the Greenspaces team no longer procures peat-based horticultural materials as a matter of policy.

### **Aim: Waste plant material generated in the park should be recycled;**

#### **Current Situation**

- *idverde* will consider recycling waste plants.
- Friends of the Canons have requested a six bay composting area in the depot

### **Aim: High horticultural and arboricultural standards should be demonstrated;**

#### **Current Situation**

*idverde* has a very strong horticultural and arboricultural standards and have gained over 100 Green Flag Awards for their work. *idverde* specialists will be brought into assist the site team.

### **Aim: Energy conservation, pollution reduction, waste recycling and resource conservation measures should be used.**

#### **Current Situation**

Sustainable waste management is a high priority for the London Borough of Merton and The Canons has a role in demonstrating its feasibility across the parks network. There is a small green waste collection bay on site. All green waste material that cannot be utilised on site will be taken to a local composting facility at Nursery Road Playing Field or to the sub-regional waste processing centre in Beddington.

Vehicle use in the park and on the playing field is kept to a minimum. The service utilises some electric vehicles within its fleet as these provide a cleaner and quieter alternative to diesel. All park machinery is used correctly and is maintained to a very high standard. Any hazardous chemicals are safely stored in a lock up on site. Replacement park furniture and fixtures are made from sustainable and recycled resources where available. The emphasis is on maintaining existing facilities to a high standard to avoid waste. Water, electricity and gas bills are closely monitored to ensure leaks and efficiencies are addressed promptly.

#### **The Lottery Round 2 Bid Proposals**

The following works are proposed as part of the Round 2 bid:

- A new efficient plant room is to be installed in a building attached to the north elevation of Canons house. This will serve Madeira Hall, Café and Canons house with separate supplies to each
- New efficient energy saving LED lights are proposed that will not provide light spill
- The detailed specification for the building and landscape contract works will include conservations measures throughout including recycling materials and using materials from sustainable sources

## Objectives

13. Ensure environmental policies are in place, implemented and reviewed annually  
 14. Reduce on site herbicide and pesticide use  
 15. Recycle green waste  
 16. Review the use of energy, water and other materials on site

## Management actions

#	Description	When	Who	Budget (£000s)	Source	Secured
<b>Objective 13. Ensure environmental policies are in place, implemented and reviewed annually</b>						
13A	<i>idverde</i> is to undertake maintenance in accordance with their environmental policies and those of London Borough of Merton	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / <i>idverde</i>	<i>idverde</i> contract	LBM Revenue	Yes
13B	Works on site shall comply with all Council environmental policies and priorities	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / <i>idverde</i>	<i>idverde</i> contract	LBM Revenue	Yes
<b>Objective 14. Reduce on site herbicide and pesticide use</b>						
14A	<i>idverde</i> shall adopt a policy of minimal use of herbicides. Herbicides should only be applied under exceptional circumstances where manual weed control is impractical, and only after the consent of the Authorised Officer has been given. Herbicides are generally only be used to control notifiable weeds and where other means of vegetation control have failed	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / <i>idverde</i>	<i>idverde</i> contract	LBM Revenue	Yes
14B	Alternative techniques of weed control will be adopted i.e. mulches, flame guns and manual control	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / <i>idverde</i>	<i>idverde</i> contract	LBM Revenue	Yes
14C	<i>idverde</i> shall manage and control all horticultural pests, diseases, and invasive species, including but not limited to; mildew, aphids, blackspot and Japanese knotweed	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / <i>idverde</i>	<i>idverde</i> contract	LBM Revenue	Yes
14D	Apply team pesticides policy: Insecticides will not be used unless directed by the appropriate government department for the control of a notifiable pest Any pesticide used would be applied strictly in accordance with CoSHH and the Control of Pesticides Regulations.	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / <i>idverde</i>	<i>idverde</i> contract	LBM Revenue	Yes
14E	<i>idverde</i> shall maintain records of all known infestations and the control treatment carried out and report this monthly to the Authorised Officer	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / <i>idverde</i>	<i>idverde</i> contract	LBM Revenue	Yes
<b>Objective 15. Recycle green waste</b>						
15A	<i>idverde</i> shall recycle green waste generated on site and aim to reuse on site or on neighbouring site	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / <i>idverde</i>	<i>idverde</i> contract	LBM Revenue	Yes
<b>Objective 16. Review the use of energy, water and other materials on site</b>						
16A	Undertake formal review of all utilities on site and their usage	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / <i>idverde</i>	<i>idverde</i> contract	LBM Revenue	Yes
16B	Implement energy efficiency and waste reduction measures building on green measures adopted within the Parks for People project.	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / <i>idverde</i>	<i>idverde</i> contract	LBM Revenue	Yes
16C	Reduce vehicle use where possible across The Canons and adopt environmentally friendly power sources for vehicles	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / <i>idverde</i>	<i>idverde</i> contract	LBM Revenue	Yes
16D	Work to the overarching philosophy “reduce, reuse, recycle” and lead by example	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / <i>idverde</i>	<i>idverde</i> contract	LBM Revenue	Yes

16E	Wherever possible procure materials from sustainable sources	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / idverde	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
16F	idverde to ensure peat and peat-containing products are reduced in the park, and not used at all if suitable alternatives are available	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / idverde	idverde contract	LBM Revenue	Yes
16G	Develop strategy for improving energy efficiency and waste reduction measures across the Borough	Ongoing	Green spaces/ NCO / idverde	idverde contract	LBM Revenue	Yes

### 3.1.5 Conservation and Heritage

#### Green Flag Criteria - Conservation and Heritage

##### Feedback 2016

**Strengths:** The Dovecote is a great asset and clearly pre-dates the current house on the site.

There are some nice landscape features to be highlighted as part of the The Lottery project including the pond, walled garden, old dirt track, clipped yew and some nice old trees.

**Recommendations:** The rationalisation and interpretation of The Canons is key to its future.

The main house must be the main focus of the site and would suggest the following for consideration;

Removal of the old toilet block that is attached to the house.

Removal of the 1970's sports hall (Madeira hall) – this action will bring much needed definition to the site which clearly separates the park from the Leisure Centre activity.

This space could be redesigned into a modern walled garden area / café area.

A new pedestrian entrance by the Obelisk, and closing of those entrances that have been added over the years.

Removal of the 3 sycamore trees that block the view of the house from Mitcham village.

Rationalise all the different car parking arrangements and create a strategic footpath network across the site.

Identify a sustainable use for the main building following its restoration.

**Green Flag criteria:** Particular attention should be paid to the conservation and appropriate management of:

- Natural features, wildlife and flora
- Landscape features; and buildings and structural features.

These features should serve their function well without placing undue pressure on the surrounding environment.

#### Aim: Particular attention should be paid to the conservation and appropriate management of Natural features, wildlife and flora

##### Current Situation

The Canons form a valuable part of Merton's open space network of parks and open spaces. There is some junior football on the field, although the main use is for informal sport and recreation. Green open space covers nearly one fifth of the Borough's land use making Merton, while generally suburban in character, one of the greenest boroughs in Greater London. The network of green spaces provides green corridors running through Mitcham which combine to form the Wandle Valley Regional Park.

Habitats with ecological value include small areas of tall ruderal vegetation, scrub, a pond, a small area of woodland and a large number of mature trees. Several of the mature trees were identified as having bat roosting potential. Tall ruderal vegetation and scrub provide suitable habitat for reptiles and terrestrial habitat for amphibians. Bellamy's Copse is a rare piece of young woodland in the area and this and mature trees scattered around the site provide roosting opportunities and foraging habitat for bats as well as nesting opportunities for birds. The pond provides habitat for a variety of aquatic invertebrates and amphibians as well as a foraging resource for bats. Canons house and the Dovecote were found to have bat roosting potential.

The pond is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC).

#### Aim: Particular attention should be paid to the conservation and appropriate management of Landscape features; and buildings and structural features

##### Current Situation

The Conservation Plan has highlighted that The Canons has a rich history spanning at least five centuries with fragments from 16th century including the dovecote and pond, a main strand of Georgian elements including Canons house, Park Place, remnants of the walled gardens and some fine trees, a number of enhancements during the 19th century including the Obelisk and Lodge and followed by a significant overlay of sporting heritage in the mid-20th century as well as remnants from the World War II.

Overall the site is classified of moderate significance and of local importance with some assets of considerable significance of national or regional importance, including Canons house, dovecote, walled garden, obelisk sections of the garden walls, East Lawn, the Pond, Cold Blows as well as five outstanding trees.

The built features and their phases of development can be summarised:

- Pond and Dovecote - 16th century or earlier
- Canons house - 17th century
- Park Place and the boundary and garden walls - 18th century
- The Obelisk and Lodge - 19th century
- Leisure Centre, Madeira Hall and various small buildings - 20th century

The most striking feature of the development of the site is that Canons house and the walled garden and the 18th century garden and boundary walls have been retained, despite the introduction of the Leisure Centre, Madeira Hall and toilet block within such close proximity.

## The Lottery Round 2 Bid Proposals

Restoration and Conservation items proposed as part of the Round 2 bid include:

- Canons house: refurbishment of the house to provide a mix workspace and community uses.
- Canons back lawn: the lawn will continue to provide an area for outdoor screenings/ performances
- Dovecote: the dovecote will be cleaned internally and minor repair works carried out
- Pond: the pond will be de-silted, a liner installed and appropriate planting added. The sustainability of the pond will be improved by surface water being directed from the new car park and Canons house roof.
- Running track: the existing historic cinder running track will be uncovered and restored for informal use
- Park Place: not included in the project, remaining as a popular restaurant and bar
- Walled garden: the garden will be repaved and replanted using a range of fragrant plants and physic plants which will be maintained by the Friends

Objectives
17. Protection and enhancement of the significance of the site and the reduction of risk to fabric, character and setting
18. Conserve the archaeological interest in the site
19. Conserve the landscape character, features and designed views
20. Protect and enhance the biodiversity of the site which has great wildlife potential
21. Continue to manage, maintain and refresh interpretation signs and digital information across the site

## Management actions

#	Description	When	Who	Budget (£000s)	Source	Secured
<b>Objective 17. Protection and enhancement of the significance of the site and the reduction of risk to fabric, character and setting</b>						
17A	Adopt the policies set out in the Conservation Plan – key policies are noted below	Ongoing	Green spaces	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
17B	These levels of significance should be sustained, revealed and enhanced for future generations through the implementation of appropriate conservation policies based on recognised good practice	Ongoing	Green spaces	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
17C	Adopt a conservation-led approach to future repair, conservation and management by all parties from the outset, based on a sound understanding of the significance of the buildings, structures and landscape as outlined in the Conservation Plan	Ongoing	Green spaces	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
17D	Establish a clear strategy for use, conservation and management of the buildings and structures. Appropriate balances must be considered as a framework for making individual decisions	Ongoing	Green spaces	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
17E	The impact of potential changes should be considered by carrying out a Heritage Impact Assessment, either informal or formal through the planning process	Ongoing	Green spaces	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
17F	All work to buildings and structures should be carried out in accordance with the British Standard Guide BS 7913:2013 Guide to the conservation of historic buildings	Ongoing	Green spaces	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
17G	No proposed repairs, conservation or alteration works shall be carried out to Listed buildings at The Canons (including Canons house, Obelisk, dovecote, Park Place) without first seeking Listed Building Consent from London Borough of Merton	Ongoing	Green spaces	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
17H	Liase with the London Borough of Merton conservation officers in proposing any change at The Canons	Ongoing	Green spaces	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
17I	Carry out a programme of repairs to the historic garden and boundary walls or repointing as required	Ongoing	Green spaces/ specialist contractor	£?	LBM Revenue	TBC
<b>Objective 18. Conserve the archaeological interest in the site</b>						
18A	Archaeological assessment should be made well in advance of developing proposals, and the results of the assessment, should inform changes in the mansion and landscape setting, both below the ground surface and above it	Ongoing	Green spaces	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes

Objective 19. Conserve the landscape character, features and designed views						
19A	Greenspaces and idverde teams to familiarise themselves with the Conservation Plan and adopt its policies in maintaining the site to ensure the conservation of the historic design	Ongoing	Green Spaces / idverde	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
Objective 20. Protect and enhance the biodiversity of the site which has great wildlife potential						
20A	Introduce ways of improving biodiversity by extending the wildflower meadows, increasing the range of shrub and herbaceous planting and providing bat and bird boxes	Ongoing	Green spaces	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
Objective 21. Continue to manage, maintain and refresh interpretation signs and digital information across the site						
21A	Review interpretation proposals and develop new proposals as appropriate	After 5 years	Green spaces	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	TBC

### 3.1.6 Community Involvement

Green Flag Criteria - Community Involvement	
<p>Feedback 2016</p> <p><b>Strengths:</b> The site benefits from a small friends group and a number of stakeholders. The Lottery project has also enabled a more wider involvement in the site.</p> <p><b>Recommendations:</b> Continue to work with these stakeholders to ensure that whatever the future use of the building is, it has public support. Engage with locals schools to ensure the site become a focal point for outdoor educational opportunities.</p> <p><b>Green Flag criteria:</b> Park management authorities should actively pursue the involvement of members of the community, with representation of as many park user groups as possible. Management should be able to demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Knowledge of the user community and levels and pattern of use;</li> <li>● Evidence of community involvement in park management and/or development and results achieved; and</li> <li>● That there are appropriate levels of provision or recreational facilities for all sectors of the community.</li> </ul>	

#### Aim: Management should be able to demonstrate knowledge of the user community and levels and pattern of use

##### Current Situation

- The Arkenford user survey report estimated The Canons total visitor number to be 223,700 per annum, using the following approach:
- The total population for Merton, Sutton, Croydon and Wandsworth combined is recorded at 1,695,828. From the sample of residents from these boroughs, 24.4% said that they have visited The Canons. To calculate the estimated visitor numbers, the total population for this area was multiplied by 0.244 (24.4%), leading to the figure of 223,700.
- To split this by gender and age, the estimated visitors figure was multiplied by the proportions of males/females and age groups in the sample – e.g. 223,700 was multiplied by 0.52 (52%) to estimate how many visitors would be male. To prevent skewing the data, only the panel data was used to calculate visitor number estimates. This was because 90% of respondents who came from the community groups had visited The Canons compared to 24% of the panel respondents.
- The numbers include people who visit The Canons regularly, and those who have only visited occasionally. Regular visitor numbers are estimated to be 25,289. Remaining visitors have only visited occasionally (this could be as little as just once).

#### Aim: Management should be able to demonstrate evidence of community involvement in park management and/or development and results achieved

##### Current Situation

The Canons is a community space that provides opportunities for local people to take part in a number of open space activities. The support of local people, user groups, partners and other stakeholders is recognised by the Council as fundamental to the success of the facility as a safe, healthy, clean and sustainably managed open space.

There are several stakeholder groups at The Canons:

- The Friends of The Canons (FroC)
- Mitcham Cricket Green Community and Heritage
- The Mitcham Society
- Sports teams (principally Little League football)
- Mitcham Cricket Club
- Mitcham Bowls Club

The first three groups listed are working with the Council in The Canons Partnership on the Parks for People project.

Merton Council will also, with the assistance of the Friends of The Canons, engage proactively with adjoining landowners and local residents and users of the area.

The Friends have been involved with:

- Consultation with the LB Merton on Open Space Strategy and future improvement priorities
- Developing funding applications for improvements with LB Merton;
- Local fund raising
- Assisting with maintenance including painting, clearing graffiti and updating notice boards
- Regular workdays including tree and bulb planting

##### Working with other partners

There are also other stakeholders and volunteers in the local area who are involved in the use, management and promotion of the site. Merton Council is seeking to develop or further develop its partnering with groups including:

- National, regional and local parks, environmental and heritage agencies
- Development organisations and agencies

- Funding agencies
- Friends groups
- Councillors
- Recreational and sports organisations
- Private sports facility providers (in this case the Leisure Centre at The Canons)
- Health organisations
- Educational establishments, including schools
- Local businesses
- Community and voluntary groups, particularly those representing children and young people, older people, people with disabilities and ethnic minority groups;
- Neighbouring local authorities
- Police and community safety agencies
- Park Place ( a privately run restaurant on the site)

Merton Council works closely with the police to discourage anti-social behaviour and protect the users and facilities of the park. Improving the coordination, communication and cooperation between different stakeholders in the park is vital to the success of this management plan. The Greenspaces team recognises the importance of tapping into existing community networks to achieve this.

Data on users and non-users of the Council's services is collected annually via its Residents' Survey, the most recent statistics being published in February 2014. Currently, the Greenspaces service satisfaction level scores are: Residents' satisfaction (users and non-users) with parks, open spaces and playgrounds - 72%. Park users reporting the service as excellent/very good/good - 76%.

The detailed information gleaned from this exercise is used to inform future planning and investment across the parks portfolio as a whole.

**Aim: Management should be able to demonstrate That there are appropriate levels of provision or recreational facilities for all sectors of the community.**

**Current Situation**

It is recognized that the existing facilities could be improved especially with regard to young people. A key issue to be addressed by managers and stakeholders is the need for additional, appropriate, facilities for young people within the park.

In order to develop a sustainable and respected facility, young people should be consulted and involved in the process. The proposed new play area and outdoor gym will , based upon experiences elsewhere in the borough, be of great appeal and benefit to this age group.

**The Lottery Round 2 Bid Proposals**

The following new works are proposed as part of the Round 2 bid:

- Café: the southern facade of Madeira Hall will be extended to provide a cafe, play/community room and public toilets.
- Canons house terrace: the existing terrace will be repaved to provide a suitable setting for Canons house, forming a stage for events.
- Entrance drive: the driveway to the house will be resurfaced to improve the setting of Canons house and three sycamore trees will be felled to open up views of the house
- Natural play area: will be provided within the new play area. This will include mounding, natural logs and stones to form climbing and balancing elements
- Outdoor gym: equipment will be installed near the Commons side West entrance, designed to be used
- Playground will be relocated to the site of the existing car park in the core of the site. The playground will reflect some of the themes of the local area and create a more organic layout
- Parking areas: the northern car park will be replaced by Canons Place and the play area, whilst the southern car park will be reconfigured to accommodate the same number of spaces that the two car parks currently provide
- New entrance: a new pedestrian entrance will be created at the obelisk providing two accesses
- West lawn: the lawn will be available for community events
- Opening up Cold Blows: the chain link fencing and low shrubs alongside Cold Blows will be removed and a birdsmouth fence added along its length and a new entrance provided in the western corner
- Avenue: a new gravel path will improve access for all from Commons side West entrance taking people to the centre of The Canons grounds
- Physic garden planting will be carried out in the walled garden. It will have a Potter and Moore theme (a company which produced toiletries and medicines in Mitcham from 1749 to 1937), and will be maintained by local volunteers
- Orchard: a small orchard will be on the site of the former playground. Merton variety apples will be planted and visitors encouraged to pick and eat the fruit. The Friends will assist with the maintenance and management of the orchard
- Paths, gateways, wayfinding and identity: Paths will be restored throughout the site, way finding will be designed to be unobtrusive and a discreet navigation aid using digital apps and trail leaflets
- Street furniture - a new range of timber bins, seats and signs will be provided
- Boundary treatments - unattractive boundaries will be removed where possible and new fencing included
- Wall repairs - the 18th century boundary and garden walls will be repaired
- Tree management and softworks - the garden walls will be planted, a new border planted along the enhanced east-west path, tree planting will be carried out in the new car park. Tree works is required to open up views and to allow for the southern car park to be remodelled
- Canons Place: A new civic space is proposed at the entrance to the Leisure Centre and adjacent to the play area. The space will be a meeting space, an attractive sitting area and place where flower markets and craft markets and performances can be held
- In addition basement of Canons house will be for community use

Objectives
22. Work closely with existing stakeholders and partners to address local residents' needs, aspirations and concerns and encourage a sense of ownership
23. Identify users needs and encourage them to participate in the development and management of the park
24. Consult the wider Merton community about future plans and current projects in the park
25. Provide support to Friends of Dundonald Park to ensure successful grant applications for improvements
26. Foster closer relationships with local schools, the local colleges and other institutions
27. Encourage a complementary working relationship between the Council and community

## Management actions

#	Description	When	Who	Budget (£000s)	Source	Secured
<b>Objective 22. Work closely with existing stakeholders and partners to address local residents' needs, aspirations and concerns and encourage a sense of ownership</b>						
22A	The local community groups shall continue to act as collaborative and co-creators partners throughout after the HLF process and thereafter.	Ongoing	Green Spaces / Friends	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
22B	Organisation of Friends Forum events and workshops	Ongoing	Green Spaces / Friends	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
22C	Carry out user surveys as part of the evaluation of the Parks for People project	Ongoing	Green Spaces / Friends	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
22D	Ensure that events continue following completion of the Parks for People project	Ongoing	Green Spaces / Friends	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
22E	Proposed new uses at The Canons should be complementary to those at the adjacent Park Place and leisure centre sites, so these facilities support one another.	Ongoing	Green Spaces / Friends	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
<b>Objective 23. Identify users needs and encourage them to participate in the development and management of the park</b>						
23A	Review Canons Partnership Board and expand to include a wider range of stakeholders and users from the wider community	Ongoing	Green spaces / Board	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
23B	Support Friends Group and aim to expand to membership and participation in developing and managing the park	Ongoing	Green Spaces/ Friends	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
23C	Explore the potential to involve local community groups in developing the gardens and to gain additional funds	Ongoing	Green Spaces/ Friends	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
<b>Objective 24. Consult the wider Merton community about future plans and current projects in the park</b>						
24A	Promote The Canons to the wider community through newsletters, website etc, seeking feedback on existing facilities, current projects and future plans	Ongoing	Green Spaces/ Friends	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
<b>Objective 25. Provide support to Friends of Dundonald Park to ensure successful grant applications for improvements</b>						
25A	Liaison with parks friends groups to raise awareness of current capital and revenue funding opportunities, both within and outside of the Council	Ongoing	Green Spaces / idverde	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
25B	Support individual groups with advice and any information required to complete grant applications	Ongoing	Green Spaces / idverde	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
<b>Objective 26. Foster closer relationships with local schools, the local colleges and other institutions</b>						
26A	Build on the links with schools and institutions achieved through the Parks for the People project	Ongoing	Green spaces	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
26B	The Canons Partnership should strengthen links between The Canons and the Wandle Valley Regional Park	Ongoing	Green spaces	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
<b>Objective 27. Encourage a complementary working relationship between the Council and community</b>						
27A	Build on the community engagement achieved and activities through the Parks for the People project , developing the Friends Group and a strong volunteering base	Ongoing	Green Spaces / Friends / Community Groups	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
27B	Develop The Canons Partnership to include a wider range of stakeholders and users from the wider community	Ongoing	Green Spaces / Friends / Community Groups	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes

## 3.1.7 Marketing

### Green Flag Criteria - Marketing

Feedback 2016

**Strengths:** The site has some signage and information attached to the neighbouring Leisure Centre.

**Recommendations:** The Lottery bid will be opportunities to interpret the historic aspects of the site and reconnect it to local schools and 3 sector organisations.

The site lends itself to be a cultural arts venue and could home to a number of outdoor theatre and music events.

Effective communication and educational channels to enable the park to become sustainable following the The Lottery refurbishment.

**Green Flag criteria:** Is there:

- A marketing strategy in place? Is it in practice and regularly reviewed?;
- Good provision of information to users e.g. about management strategies, activities, features, ways to get involved?; and
- Effective promotion of the park as a community resource.

### Aim:

Is there:

- A marketing strategy in place? Is it in practice and regularly reviewed?;
- Good provision of information to users e.g. about management strategies, activities, features, ways to get involved?; and
- Effective promotion of the park as a community resource?

### Current Situation

The marketing and promotion of The Canons as a local facility and destination will be a key component of the new strategy developed as part of the Parks for People project.

The Council's corporate communications team instigated a "Love Your Parks" promotional campaign in the summer of 2013 to raise awareness of the borough's open spaces and their benefits and facilities in the local press. Parks and leisure issues feature in almost every edition of the Council magazine "My Merton" that is distributed to every household in the borough three times per annum.

The Council's current practices have been co-ordinated with new strategies adopted as part of the project.

Marketing of the park currently concentrates on effective signage leading potential users to the park and on the promotion of specific events and sports facilities; and on improving and developing the relevant pages of the Council's website.

### The Lottery Round 2 Bid Proposals

The following works are proposed as part of the Round 2 bid:

- The masterplan outlines some exciting new uses for the site which will need to form part of a future marketing strategy.



## Objectives

28. Develop and implement a Borough-wide parks marketing strategy  
 29. Raise awareness of the park and its facilities and services via a variety of media both on and off site

## Management actions

#	Description	When	Who	Budget (£000s)	Source	Secured
<b>Objective 28. Develop and implement a Borough-wide parks marketing strategy</b>						
28A	Green Flag status should be sought for The Canons following its restoration, which will help raise the profile of the site and ensure it remains a source of pride for the local community	Ongoing	Green spaces	TBC	LBM Revenue	No
28B	Develop a coordinated marketing strategy for the parks and open spaces across Merton, and setting The Canons in context as one of the council's Key Park	Ongoing	Green spaces	TBC	LBM Revenue	No
<b>Objective 29. Raise awareness of the park and its facilities and services via a variety of media both on and off site</b>						
29A	Green Flag status should be sought for The Canons following its restoration, which will help raise the profile of the site and ensure it remains a source of pride for the local community	Ongoing	Green spaces	TBC	LBM Revenue	No
29B	Promote successes (e.g. Green Flag Award) and community events in local media and Council publications such as "My Merton"	Ongoing	Green spaces	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
29C	Continue to update notice board and other information boards in and around the park	Ongoing	Green spaces	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
29D	Continue to develop the Friends website and relevant pages of Council website	Ongoing	Green spaces	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
29E	Use the programme of events outlined in the activity plan to raise a profile of the site	Ongoing	Green spaces	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes

Use the programme of events outlined in the activity plan to raise a profile of the site



### 3.1.8 Management

#### Green Flag Criteria - Management

Feedback 2016

**Strengths:** The management team clearly have a vision for the park.

**Recommendations:** Don't be constrained in your thinking. Whilst the removal of the 60/70's buildings and trees may be radical I think they will bring huge benefits to the site helping to bring about a sustainable future for The Cannons.

**Green Flag criteria:** A Green Flag site must have a management plan. It must set out the balance between all the priorities, policies and partners that apply to a particular green space. It should establish a timescale for putting the objectives into practice. It should also identify the contribution the site is making towards an area's wider strategic aims. It must be actively implemented and regularly reviewed.

#### Current Situation

The Canons is owned and managed by the London Borough of Merton and is accessible to the general public year-round. This management plan has been prepared together with a Conservation Plan, Activity Plan and Business Plan for The Canons to advance the aspirations of the London Borough of Merton and those of our local communities.

The management and maintenance plan has been developed around our commitment to the objectives of Green Flag Award and is key to the implementation of our open space strategy. It provides a clear and coordinated management strategy based on the characteristics of the site and the communities that use it. It will be a living document, updated annually to reflect new knowledge, successes and failures. This revised version is the 2017 annual edition of a 10 year plan that covers the period 2017 - 2027

#### Parks Management

Merton's Greenspaces team, whose head office is located in the Civic Centre in Morden, are responsible for the day-to-day operational management of The Canons with contractors *idverde* now carrying out the day to day maintenance of The Canons, as well as maintaining all the parks and open spaces in the London Borough of Merton.

A substantial element of this MMP reflects the commitments of *idverde*, who began their contract on 1 February 2017. The commitments in that contract represent a thorough review of management expectations and delivery which will have significant benefits for The Canons.



## Objectives

30. Review and update a comprehensive management plan for the park  
 31. Ensure sufficient budget is allocated to maintain the park to the standards of this management plan  
 32. Continue to bid for corporate revenue, capital and other funding for priority

## Management actions

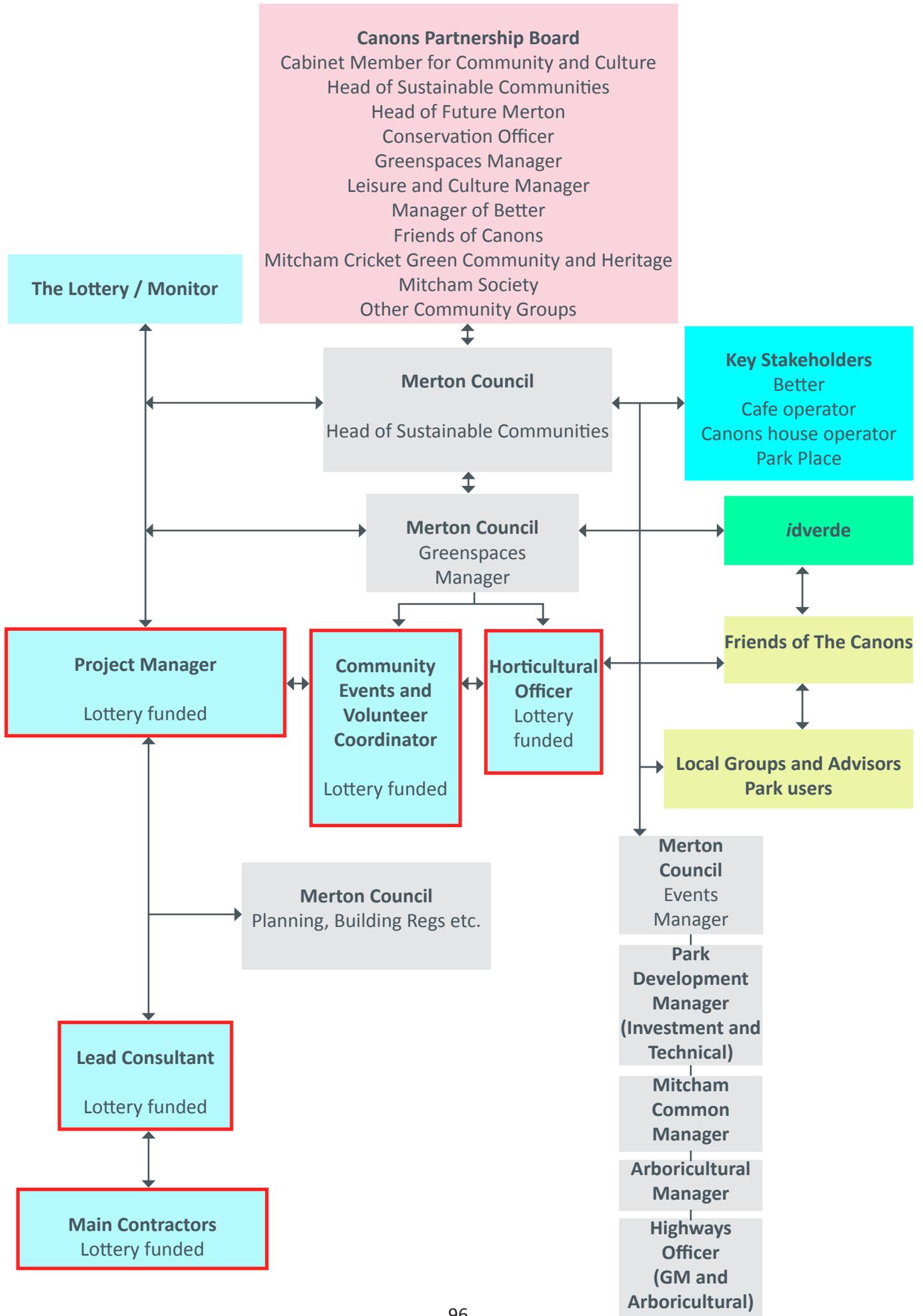
#	Description	When	Who	Budget (£000s)	Source	Secured
<b>Objective 30. Review and update a comprehensive management plan for the park</b>						
30A	Produce, consult on and review this management plan for The Canons that sets out management actions and development priorities	Ongoing	Green spaces	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
30B	Ensure there are clear links to other areas of council policy that have a bearing on the management of The Canons	Ongoing	Green spaces	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
30C	Ensure Quality Systems are in place to monitor and review progress	Ongoing	Green Spaces / idverde	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
30D	Provide office and site staff at all levels with a clear sense of direction and the appropriate information to respond knowledgeably to all enquiries from park users	Ongoing	Green spaces	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
<b>Objective 31. Ensure sufficient budget is allocated to maintain the park to the standards of this management plan</b>						
31A	Monitor and report on Greenspaces revenue and capital budgets and specifically The Canons revenue cost centre	Ongoing	Green spaces	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
31B	Ensure there is forward planning of the budget	Ongoing	Green spaces	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
<b>Objective 32. Continue to bid for corporate revenue, capital and other funding for priority</b>						
32A	Ongoing liaison with London Borough of Merton S106 Manager to identify existing funds and future opportunities and make bids from S106 schemes	Ongoing	Green spaces	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
32B	Continue to keep abreast of developments and opportunities within external funding agencies	Ongoing	Green spaces	Minimal - staff time	London Borough of Merton Revenue	Yes



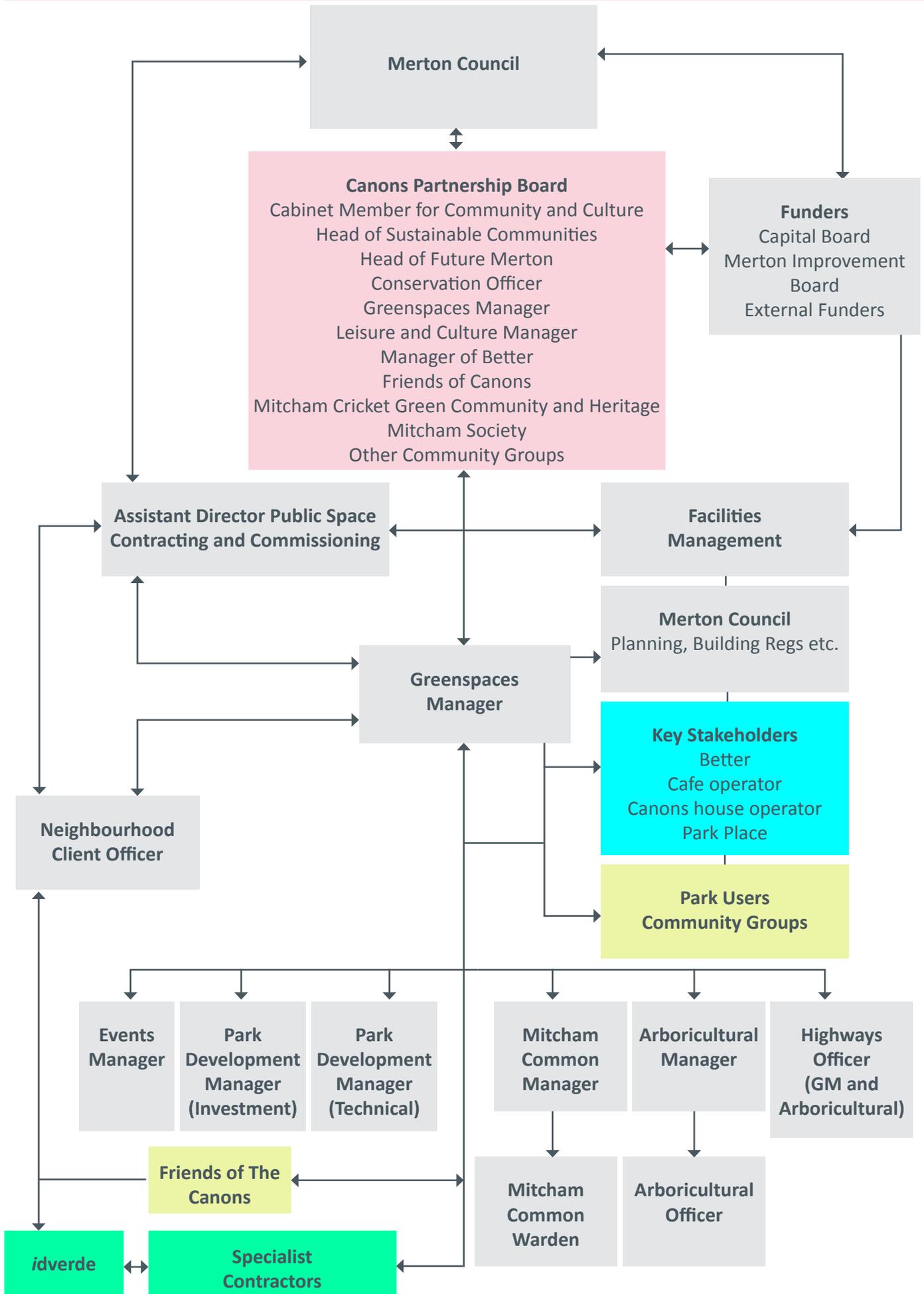
## Proposed Future Management and Maintenance

## 4.1 Management Structure and Team Organogram

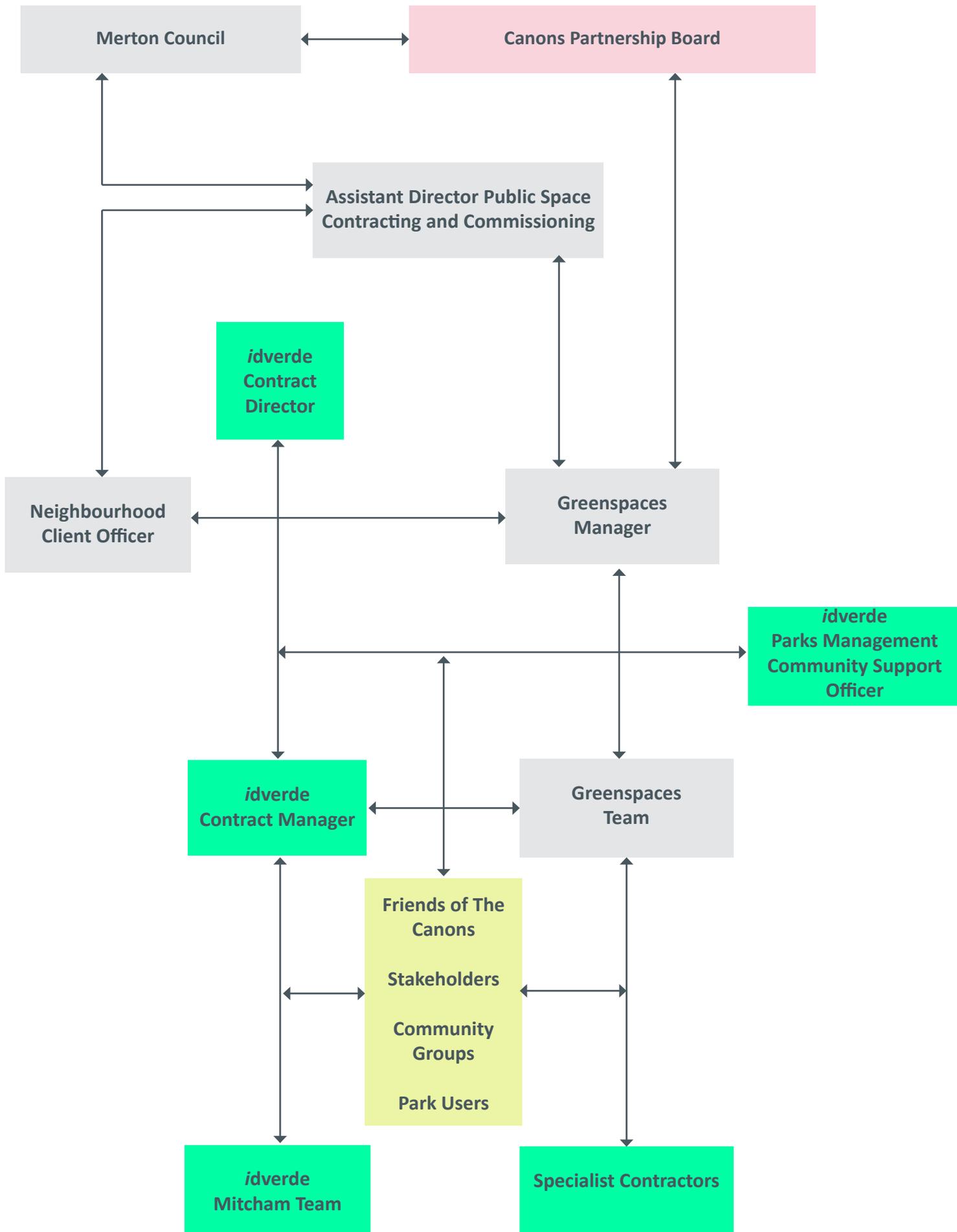
# Canons - Delivery Stage - Organogram 1



# Canons - Post Delivery Stage - Organogram 2



# Canons - Grounds Maintenance - Organogram 3



Three organograms have been developed for the project:

- Organogram 1: Canons - The Lottery Delivery Stage
- Organogram 2: Canons - Post Delivery Stage
- Organogram 3: Canons - Grounds Maintenance

#### *Organogram 1*

Organogram 1 is related to the delivery of The Lottery project. It shows the key role of the Greenspaces Manager as the client representative answering to the Board with the Project Manager and Community Events Volunteer Officer reporting to him and the Lead Consultant administering the Contractors responsible for the implementation works. The Project Manager reports to The Lottery with the assistance of the whole team. The day to day management continues with the Greenspaces Manager responsible for his team and the new post of the Horticultural Officer. Key stakeholders, Merton Council specialists such as planning and local groups, advisors, members of the public also relate to the overall tree.

#### *Organogram 2*

Organogram 2 shows the broad everyday responsibilities for the site post Lottery project. The main difference between Organogram 2 and Organogram 1 is the loss of the The Lottery funded posts and contractors to be replaced with the bodies responsible for the management and maintenance of the site.

The works are basically delivered by three main bodies, *idverde*, specialist contractors and the Friends of The Canons and it shows how these organisations link together to provide a coordinated team with the Greenspaces team. The Neighbourhood Client Officers report monitor the *idverde* contract with the Greenspaces team and report to the Assistant Director Public Spaces Contracting and Commissioning with The Canons Partnership Board overseeing the management.

Key stakeholders, park users and community groups link directly to the Greenspaces Manager who has a budget of £250k for park development across the Borough. The Facilities Management section of the council respond to requests for works to buildings; they would seek funding from internal sources such as the council Capital Board and Merton Improvement Board as well as external funders.

#### *Organogram 3*

Organogram 3 outlines the grounds maintenance system and in particular how the *idverde* team relates to the Friends of The Canons and park users. The Mitcham team is managed by *idverde* Contract Manager with the Contract Director responsible for their overall performance. The *idverde* Parks Management and Community Support Officers will assist the Friends of The Canons through training and advice with the *idverde* Mitcham team assisting with their ground works. The other relationships are as shown on Organogram 2.

## 4.2 Management Team

We outline below the key organisations and posts and their roles in managing and maintaining The Canons following completion of The Lottery project within the council's Grounds Maintenance arrangements as outlined in Organograms 2 and 3.

### 4.2.1 Canons Partnership Board

The Board will oversee The Lottery project as well as the long term future of The Canons. The Board consists of the following roles, with current postholders identified:

- Cabinet Member for Community and Culture (Nick Draper)
- Head of Sustainable Communities (James McGinlay)
- Greenspaces Manager (Doug Napier)
- Leisure and Culture Manager (Christine Parsloe)
- Friends of The Canons (John Davis)
- Mitcham Cricket Green Community and Heritage (Tony Burton)
- Mitcham Society (Sandra Vogel)
- Other Community Groups

It is anticipated that the Board would meet on a quarterly basis to review management of maintenance of The Canons as well as to discuss events and activities and possible future projects.

### 4.2.2 Assistant Director of Public Space Contracting and Commissioning

This post is responsible for the managing the new grounds maintenance contract. He would report any issues regarding *idverde*'s contract to The Canons Partnership Board.

### 4.2.3 Neighbourhood Client Officer (NCO)

This post is responsible for reporting to the Assistant Director of Public Space Contracting and Commissioning reporting on *idverde*'s performance against the specification and key performance indicators with the power of being able to apply penalties should standards not be met. He will also liaise closely with the Greenspaces Manager.

### 4.2.4 Greenspaces Manager

The Greenspaces Manager (Doug Napier) is responsible for the management of all parks and green spaces in Merton. He has been thoroughly involved with the The Lottery project as well as the drawing up the specification of the Borough's new grounds maintenance contract. He will continue to be responsible for the overall management of the site, managing his own staff including the Events

Manager, Park Development Officers (Investment and Technical), Mitcham Common Manager, Arboricultural Manager and the Highways Officer. He will liaise with key stakeholders and park users/community groups as well as liaising with the NCO regarding *idverde's* performance and attending monthly contract meetings with *idverde*.

#### **4.2.5 Corporate Services - Facilities Management**

The Facilities Management team is responsible for management services including building services and security, management, maintenance, refurbishment, remodelling and development of the council's buildings as well as energy management. This role therefore includes all the buildings on the site as well as services.

### **4.3 Friends of The Canons, Users, Community Groups and Stakeholders**

The Friends of The Canons (FRoC), stakeholders, community groups and park users have strong links with the Greenspaces Manager and his team. The community groups are part of The Canons Partnership and have been key to the development of Round 2 Lottery Bid.

#### **4.3.1 Friends of The Canons**

The Friends of The Canons was established by current Chair, John Davis, in 2008, emerging from the Mitcham Cricket Green Community and Heritage and the Tree Council. The Friends have 67 members, having doubled their numbers in recent years due to The Lottery Parks for People project. The Friends carry out works throughout the year at The Canons and around the cricket green and across the Commons. At The Canons they carry out valuable work that would otherwise not be done including work in areas such as the walled garden, Bellamy's Copse. At the pond 13 people were involved with clearing invasive pondweed in November 2016. For insurance reasons, the Friends only use hand tools, which are stored in a container in the depot adjacent to the bowling green. They notify Greenspaces what work they intend to do and when and seek assistance with materials as appropriate. A similar arrangement has been agreed with *idverde* whom they met in January 2017.

*Please refer to Appendix 04 and 05 for the Friends of The Canons 2016 Programme of Works and January 2017 newsletter.*

#### **4.3.2 Park Users and Community Groups**

All members of the public are invited to monitor the maintenance standards of the contract as well as providing feedback on litter and dog fouling via the council

complaint service. It is envisaged that Community Groups will be represented on The Canons Partnership Board and have direct links with the Greenspaces Manager.

#### **4.3.3 Better Leisure**

Canons Leisure Centre, Madeira Hall and MUGA is run by Better through a contract with London Borough of Merton managed by the Leisure and Culture Manager.

#### **4.3.4 Cafe**

It is envisaged that the operator of the proposed new cafe will also manage the community room and party room as well as managing the public toilets. It is also anticipated, that the operator will manage and maintain the outdoor cafe area and be responsible for emptying bins and keeping the curtilage tidy.

#### **4.3.5 Canons House**

The workspace of Canons house will be managed by a private operator with the community space in the basement managed initially by Vestry Hall, the council run centre closeby in Mitcham; it is hoped that a community organisation will take over this role in the future.

#### **4.3.6 Supporting Council Services**

Several London Borough of Merton sections will have an interest in The Canons apart from Greenspaces and Leisure Services, and Facilities Management included specifically in the organogram. These include the planning team and highways team in respect of roads, lighting and flooding issues.

#### **4.3.7 External Organisations**

The key consultee regarding works to The Canons is Historic England regarding the listed buildings, especially Canons house which is Grade II\* listed. Natural England would have an interest in the site if it is found to include protected species such as bats and great crested newts.

### **4.4 Operations on Site - The Grounds Maintenance Contract**

#### **4.4.1 The Contract**

*idverde* have been responsible for maintaining London Borough of Merton's waste/street cleaning and parks/green spaces since 1 February 2017, as part of a combined contract with the London Borough of Sutton. This contract lasts for 8 years with a possible extension of a further 8 years and a further optional extension of 8

years, potentially a contract running until 2041.

#### 4.4.2 idverde Company Experience

*idverde* is an Anglo-French company that specialises in the maintenance of parks and green spaces. The company's clients including the Royal Parks, English Heritage and local authorities include many London Boroughs. Their parks have won 100 Green Flag Awards, include 29 Green Flag judges on their staff and they sponsored the Ceremonies in 2016. They are also represented on the BALI Board and were Founder Members of the Parks Alliance.

Please refer to Appendix 03 - The future of parks maintenance in Merton - *idverde*

#### 4.4.3 Staff Roles

*idverde* key staff responsible for The Canons are Contract Director (Russ Kirk) and Contract Manager (Dennis Codd). In addition *idverde* has taken on all council staff through TUPE process including the team of 3 or 4 staff that make up the dedicated Mitcham Team responsible for maintaining all parks and green spaces in Mitcham area.

Although the *idverde* contract involves maintaining the status quo in terms of maintenance standards, there is an opportunity for *idverde* to bring additional expertise to The Canons from the *idverde* wider team including Director of Park Management Strategy, Patrick Phillips), Community Support / Education Officers.

*idverde* is also expected to assist the council in preparing Green Flag Award submissions and development work.

#### 4.4.4 Scope of works

The contract Specification and Service Delivery Plan set out two sections of work - core works paid through lump sum costs and secondly ad hoc costs covering additional works to be carried out in accordance with a schedule rates or other agreed terms.

The core works include all grounds maintenance including all grass, planting, paths, litter/debris collection and play area. Ad hoc works paid via a schedule of rates include all repairs to hard works including path and street furniture, tree works, drainage and pond maintenance.

No buildings or structures such as the garden walls are included in the contract. These remain the responsibility of Facilities Management and require council or external funding for maintenance or works.

Please refer to the Appendix 09 - 10 which outlines the existing maintenance operations, who undertakes them and when.

#### 4.4.5 Additional Consultancy Service/ Funding

As part of the contract *idverde* is providing 13 days support for Merton on individual projects/training/ specialist course from its officers as well as a grant of £5k to assist Friends and volunteers for their specific projects.

#### 4.4.6 Depot

*idverde* have taken the existing depot at The Canons will use this as their depot for Mitcham. This site presence should ensure that any problems and issues at The Canons can be responded to fast. The depot will contain a welfare unit, storage of their machines and equipment and will also continue to house the Friends gardening equipment. Access to the depot in the past has been from Cricket Green for small vehicles only.

#### 4.4.7 Uniform/Branding

Site staff now wear *idverde* uniform and the team have new vehicles with *idverde* livery with London Borough of Merton and Sutton logos and acknowledging procurement through the South London Waste Partnership.

#### 4.4.8 Monitoring of Contract - Compliance against service performance indicators

The contract includes the following requirements:

*The Contractor is expected to monitor its performance against the Service Performance Indicators, and report back on such performance as part of the Weekly Report and Monthly Report (in accordance with Schedule 6 (Reporting Requirements)).*

*The Council may also monitor the Contractor's performance against the Service Performance Indicators by way of a review of customer complaints or by undertaking inspections of the Contractor's work, Staff, stock and records from time to time.*

The *idverde* contract is monitored against these service indicators by the following ways:

- *idverde* management inspections
- random inspections across the borough
- volunteer surveys
- customer complaints
- monthly joint meetings with the London Borough of Sutton

#### *idverde management inspections*

The *idverde* Contract Manager carries out regular visits to site to ensure compliance to the specification.

*Random Inspections across the Borough* Inspections are carried out by Neighbourhood Client Officers on a random basis, checking compliance to the specification and reporting to Assistant Director of Public Space Contracting and Commissioning.

#### *Volunteer Surveys*

Volunteer are requested to complete *idverde* feedback forms following initial training by *idverde*. A pictorial guide to specification is provided and a tick list provided against a random selection of features to inspect.

#### *Customer Complaints*

In addition, members of the public can complete council E4 forms which can be sent to the local Councillors, Neighbourhood Client Officer, Greenspaces Manager to be fed back to *idverde* with potential financial penalties applied to the monthly payment. An initial complaint regarding issues, such as litter, is viewed as an informal complaint/notification. If the initial complaint has not been dealt with, it can become an official complaint, which could potentially be reported to the ombudsman.

#### *Monthly review meetings*

Monthly review meetings take place with *idverde* involving Neighbourhood Client Officers and Greenspaces Managers where performance is reviewed across the boroughs. Additional interim meetings are also taking place at the outset of the contract to ensure that necessary actions are taking place to ensure a smooth transfer.

#### *Penalties*

*idverde's* monthly payment is subject to their charges for core services, plus any ad hoc works agreed in the period but minus any penalties that have been imposed where service performance indicators have not been met. These include:

- maintaining or improving Resident's Satisfaction Survey score for Merton at 72%
- responding to a service request, complaint, enquiry or Request for Information as set out within Schedule 15 (Service User Procedure)
- In the event of an emergency the Contractor shall redeploy all necessary resources as directed by the Authorised Officer in accordance with paragraphs 3.3.16 and 3.3.17 of the Specification
- The Contractor shall carry out a risk assessment in accordance with the Contractor's working procedures as set out in Schedule 4 (Services Delivery Plan)
- The Contractor shall use only those fertilisers, products and materials as set out in Schedule 4 (Services Delivery Plan) or as agreed with Authorised Officer
- The Contractor shall ensure that a pitch or facility is available for use by a Service User by the agreed time (or the pre-booked time, in the event of booked pitches or facilities)
- The Contractor shall ensure that all gates at a Site

which is to be locked overnight are Open by the Allocated Opening Time.

- The Contractor shall close a Site which is to be locked overnight within two (2) hours of the agreed time.

#### *Rectification Period*

The rectification period is a period during which the Contractor has an opportunity to rectify the failure in service indicators before a deduction applies in accordance with the appropriate service performance indicator within the contract. In addition there are potentially additional penalties if the works are not carried out within reduction refresh periods. For example, if a playground is not available for use a penalty of £1000 may be imposed after 1 day and the same penalty figure applies for everyday following this.

## 4.5 New Posts

### 4.5.1 Summary

In addition to the Project Manager (see Appendix 12 for job description), the following new posts are proposed in relation to the management of the site and delivery of the activity plan as part of the Round 2 bid to The Lottery.

- Community Events Volunteer Coordinator
- Horticultural Officer

Please refer to Organogram 1 which shows the management structure of the park, to include the new posts in the delivery of The Lottery project. The posts start at different times according to the wider parks programme which allows for an overlap of 2 years when both staff are employed, although the duties of each are proposed to be continued with existing staff and therefore a sense of continuity will be achieved.

The 3 day/week Community Events Volunteer Coordinator will commence work from the Permission to Start and will be responsible for a programme of activities throughout the main contract period, running for a period of 4 years.

The 3 day/week Horticultural Officer commences at Practical Completion of the Main Contract and runs for 3 years from 2018. This is timed to ensure that the post provides the most opportunity for the volunteers to become involved with The Canons once the main contractor leaves the site, although limited volunteering is proposed during the contract period outside the main works.

Please refer to Appendices 13 and 14 which provides full Job Description for the posts.

The two posts will work closely together and with *idverde* and Greenspaces to provide a coordinated service to raise the understanding of the heritage of the site and quality

of horticulture through a programme of activities.

## 4.5.2 Community Events Volunteer Coordinator

### Job Purpose

- This is a 4 year contract post with the intention to build capacity in the local community to ensure that The Canons The Lottery funded project is sustainable with regard to ongoing volunteering and training opportunities into the future.
- The post will work alongside the Project Manager to complete monitoring and evaluation in order to measure the success of the project, and provide reports that inform of progress, issues and solutions relating to the project and activities.
- The post will lead on the people aspects of the delivery stage of the project, supporting the Project Manager, and working with the wider project team, community group partners, stakeholders, specialist consultants, existing voluntary groups, *idverde* and the Events Officer to deliver the Activity Plan.

### Responsibilities

- Working with local community groups and schools, to lead the delivery of a programme of high quality volunteer and learning opportunities that increase engagement with the heritage of The Canons, develop skills and empower volunteer groups to organise and deliver future projects themselves with minimal support, including commissioning events and activities within the scope of the Activity Plan.
- To design and plan a series of activities for local schools interpreting the heritage of The Canons, with expert input where necessary.
- Deliver a range of opportunities specifically targeted at engaging with underrepresented user groups.
- To work closely with The Canons Horticultural Officer to develop and deliver training programmes for volunteers wishing to help cultivate and maintain the walled garden and any other elements within The Canons and to organise horticultural events with and for the community (including schools), such as 'planting days', 'discovery days', 'heritage gardening'.
- To work closely with event organisers and the Council's Events Officer to provide a point of contact for access and to provide partnership working with other event providers to encourage use of the park as an event venue for third parties.
- To manage the budget for activities.
- To work with the community and other professionals to develop a training programme for volunteers, including capacity building, events management and organisation, front line skills, promotion and marketing.
- To maintain a website for The Canons
- To research and write material to be used for marketing and promotion of the project.
- To explore sponsorship and other funding

opportunities, with the aim of ensuring the sustainability of the project beyond the period of Lottery funding.

- To lead on community consultation and engagement throughout the delivery stage of the project.
- Attend and/or lead and support (including administrative) meetings and events inside and outside of normal working hours, and to attend and support both the project team and steering group meetings.
- To deputise for the Project Manager as required and perform any other duties that may be required commensurate with the salary and grade.
- To organise with volunteers regular surveys – user, satisfaction etc – and analyse and disseminate results.
- To ensure that corporate and departmental health and safety policies and procedures are understood and implemented by the staff managed/supervised and that staff are given training in implementing the procedures as necessary. To monitor the implementation of health and safety policies and to report any shortfalls identified through experience of the operation to the section head.
- To be responsible for ensuring that the Council's equal opportunities policy is adhered to in relation to staff and the general public ensuring staff are fully aware of the policy and to put it into practice.

## 4.5.3 Horticultural Officer

The Horticultural Officer would be employed by London Borough of Merton and report to the Greenspaces Manager and will be integrated into the Greenspaces service. The officer would be based in the *idverde* depot on site and he/she will work closely with *idverde* in carrying out maintenance operations and link with *idverde* over materials and equipment required in order for the Friends and volunteers to carry out their activities.

He/she will in addition work closely with the Friends of The Canons as well as other community groups currently involved in with The Canons but will also and forge links with new organisations to encourage new user groups. The officer would work with the Community Events Volunteer Officer in liaising with local schools and groups, other stakeholder groups and prepare suitable educational packs for a range of ages, web material to help show wider audiences that The Canons has great opportunities, produce leaflets and ensure the notice boards in are up to date with forthcoming events, contact details etc. The officer will also be responsible for Liaising with Community Events Volunteer Officer Greenspaces and *idverde* in managing events and promotion of Canons as a resource.

It is envisaged that following the The Lottery project, this role will be continued by a combination of *idverde* and the Greenspaces team.

### Job Purpose

- To manage the horticultural aspects of The Canons to implement the programme of activities developed under The Canons Lottery Fund Parks for People project.
- To develop management programmes for the wild areas of the park, including biodiversity plans and wildlife management.
- To act as the main point of contact between the project and the Council's maintenance contractor, *idverde*.
- To develop training programmes for volunteers wishing to help with the cultivation and maintenance of The Canons gardens and green space.
- To liaise with local community groups, in particular, Friends of The Canons (FroC), who will be involved in the long-term management of The Canons gardens and green space.

### Responsibilities

The following responsibilities are intended to be a guide to the range and level of work expected of the post holder. This is not an exhaustive list of all tasks and the post holder will be expected to carry out such other reasonable duties that may be required:

- To develop management plans for The Canons for all of the different horticultural elements, in conjunction with the *idverde*.
- To create a biodiversity strategy in conjunction with the Manager of Mitcham Common and community groups, with particular regard to 'wild areas' such as Bellamy's Copse and the area around pond.
- Working with the Community Events and Volunteer Co-ordinator, to develop training programmes for volunteers wishing to help cultivate and maintain walled garden and any other elements within The Canons.
- Working with the Community Events and Volunteer Co-ordinator to organise horticultural events with and for the community (including schools), such as 'planting days', 'discovery days', 'heritage gardening' etc.
- To liaise with *idverde* and the Council's Greenspaces team on management and maintenance of The Canons, in particular to ensure that the lawns are cut in advance of community events and as appropriate for sporting uses of The Canons.
- To maintain and store tools required for the job; including advising on safe use of tools by volunteers and school groups.
- To manage the budget for garden expenses, other than salaries, included in the The Lottery funded project.
- To ensure that corporate and departmental health and safety policies and procedures are understood and implemented by the staff managed/supervised

and that staff are given training in implementing the procedures as necessary. To monitor the implementation of health and safety policies and to report any shortfalls identified through experience of the operation to the section head.

- To be responsible for ensuring that the Council's equal opportunities policy is adhered to in relation to staff and the general public ensuring staff are fully aware of the policy and to put it into practice.

## 4.6 Training

Training is required for three different groups of people involved with The Canons to ensure that the site is managed and maintained to the highest standards:

- *idverde*
- Greenspaces and other council staff
- Friends of The Canons, volunteers and members of the public

### *idverde*

*idverde* has a strong record in training and have experience of transferring Council Staff under TUPE legislation.

*idverde* has carried out the following consultation to date as part of the TUPE process:

- Pre-transfer to *idverde* – presentations one to one meetings
- Development of consultation plan for the first two years
- Senior Management staff are regularly on site during first year

### Training Programme

The programme includes:

- Induction training by *idverde* HR, Fleet, QHSE and Operations during first week which is refreshed annually
- Individual Training Plan – a skills gap analysis took place during week one and
- Individual training plans are being developed which will be reviewed at individual's annual Performance Development Review
- Further training and development – *idverde*'s training partner SLIC offer all permanent staff opportunity to undertake Level 2 and 3 Diplomas as well as apprenticeships as well as pre-employment training aimed at local people. In addition Managers and Supervisors are encouraged to undertake CPD
- Aspiring Training Programme offers staff training to become Team Leaders and Supervisors
- The project budget also provides for staff training e.g. in community engagement and working with volunteers with additional needs, and in practical skills to support the delivery of the activities programme.

## Greenspaces and other council staff

Merton Council is committed to high standards of corporate governance and has adopted a Local Code of Corporate Governance as part of the Council's Constitution. This includes in Section 4 Structures and Processes:

Part 4.3 Merton Council also takes active steps to improve corporate capacity, through other structures and processes which includes:

- develop the capacity and capability of officers through induction, training, and appraisal, so as to ensure delivery of services by suitably trained and experienced people; and
- provide appropriate training and support for Members in the discharge of their functions

There are certain aspects of Corporate Training that are mandatory for all staff and others that are specifically for managers, examples include:

- Customer service Training
- Equality Training
- Health and safety Training
- Managers - Programme

In addition to the mandatory training, the Council offers a number of training courses throughout the year to meet the needs of individual services – many of which can be tailored to a specific service e.g. finance and other systems

### Friends of The Canons, volunteers and members of the public.

The Friends of The Canons in the past have been given training in three matters, courtesy of the Tree Council, or through guidance from LBM Arboricultural Manager, David Lofthouse.

The HLF project includes opportunities to learn new skills. Much of this will be learning through doing the activities described with the support of skilled staff, contractors and experienced volunteers. There is also provision for more formal training to support volunteer activities e.g.

- Website maintenance
- Social media training
- Walk leader training
- Reminiscence training
- Recruiting and managing volunteers
- Training for volunteers supporting the schools programme

## 4.7 Activity Plan

The comprehensive Activity Plan includes a range of activities and interpretation proposals within the

basement at Canons house, the café and within the grounds.

As well as normal maintenance for cleaning signs etc, there will also be a need for the following ongoing work to support the activities in the future.

- Refreshing the exhibition graphics in the basement of Canons house after 3 years
- Refreshing the digital app / mobile enable website after 5 years

To enable this to happen there is a requirement for training for staff and volunteers after the project has finished through engaging specialists to run training workshops to coincide with the refreshing programme as outlined above – after 3 and 5 years.

The sink fund for interpretation of £2000/year allows for this to take place.

## 4.8 Environmental Management

### Current condition and issues

Many of the London Borough of Merton's environmental policies with regard to protecting local biodiversity, amenity, air, soil and water quality are contained within Merton's Local Development Framework. Over and above this, Merton's corporate vision and objectives underline the importance of environmental sustainability in the achievement of the Council's wider objectives.

### Environmental plans and policies

Merton Council's current environmental policies on sustainable resources, energy efficiency, and waste management are in various stages of development or revision.

In order to protect the health of park users, staff and the biodiversity of the park, the Greenspaces team has adopted a general policy to reduce the use of pesticides in the maintenance of all of the parks and open spaces within its portfolio to a minimum. The use of pesticides has been eliminated from all areas of The Canons. Weed growth is suppressed with hand weeding, hoeing and mulching. Peat-based composts are not used at The Canons and the Greenspaces team no longer procures peat-based horticultural materials as a matter of policy.

The small volume of green waste from horticultural works (shrub beds and occasional woodland work) is transported to the Greenspaces team's green waste facility at Nursery Road for composting and reuse at other sites if it cannot be reused at The Canons.

Vehicle use in the park and on the playing field is kept to a minimum. The service utilises some electric vehicles within its fleet as these provide a cleaner and quieter

alternative to diesel. All park machinery is used correctly and is maintained to a very high standard. Any hazardous chemicals are safely stored in a lock up on site.

Replacement park furniture and fixtures are made from sustainable and recycled resources where available. The emphasis is on maintaining existing facilities to a high standard to avoid waste. Water, electricity and gas bills are closely monitored to ensure leaks and efficiencies are addressed promptly.

These policies are reflected in The Canons Conservation Plan and will generally be adopted by *idverde* who bring their expertise to The Canons and across the Borough. *idverde's* quality management system is certified to ISO-9001 and audited by NVQ and six of their senior management team are Green Flag judges

Within 3 months of taking over the grounds maintenance, they have pledged to produce an Environmental Impact Assessment, identifying the impact that their services will have on the environment. Their Environmental Policy will minimise *idverde's* impact as well as increase efficiencies and effectiveness in the business. In summary they will:

- minimise carbon dioxide emissions
- reduce waste by efficient, recycling and re-using of materials
- source socially and environmentally-friendly materials
- minimise use of primary resources
- minimise water consumption
- protect biodiversity and local ecosystems
- use the quietest and cleanest methods of operations
- work with local communities to provide training and employment
- provide fair and open opportunities for local people and suppliers

*idverde* have pledged that particular emphasis will be given to:

- biodiversity management, habitat conservation and habitat creation with the assistance of *idverde's* team of ecologists/countryside managers under their Conservation Manager
- waste management in priority order - through prevention, preparation for re-use, recycling such as composting, other (energy) recovery, disposal at landfill
- delivering a carbon neutral service through measurement, mitigation measures and offset mitigation

## 4.9 Risks

Canons is a complex mix of assets, facilities and users with a range of management and maintenance responsibilities. There are therefore a wide range of risk associated with the heritage assets and the sustainability of its facilities.

We outline below the key risks within the following categories:

- Lack of Community Involvement
- Inadequate Grounds Maintenance
- New Facilities proving unsustainable or inadequate
- Items excluded from The Lottery project

### *Lack of Community Involvement*

Risks are in relation to community groups and individuals include:

- Individual members and community groups changing and falling off of enthusiasm for The Canons, resulting in the loss of key Project Board members and community led activities
- Lack of interest by community groups and schools in hiring the community space at Canons house resulting in loss of activities
- Volunteer involvement in future maintenance of the gardens is not as high as expected with the result that key works are not carried out and the areas deteriorate

### *Inadequate Grounds and Building Maintenance*

Risks in relation to grounds maintenance include:

- Maintenance of The Lottery funded work is not undertaken to a high standard as this was not included in the *idverde* contract
- Grass is allowed to grow back across the running track once more resulting in loss of heritage
- Volunteer involvement in future maintenance of the gardens is not as high as expected with the result that key works are not carried out and the areas deteriorate
- Reduction in council funding and staff resulting in reduction in monitoring of grounds maintenance contract, development work with Friends and loss of expertise, particularly in relation to the maintenance of the building
- The policies and recommendations of the Conservation Plan and Management and Maintenance Plan are not followed

### *New Facilities proving unsustainable or inadequate*

Risks are in relation to the sustainability of new facilities proposed include:

- Operator for cafe cannot be found or the facility does not prove to be sustainable and closes
- Operator for Canons house cannot be found or the facility does not prove to be commercial resulting in the ground and first floor of building remaining empty
- The separate soft play project does not progress resulting in lack of income for cafe
- Play area becomes too popular resulting in over use and the need for additional play facilities
- Car park allocation is proved to be insufficient discouraging visitors to The Canons

*Items excluded from The Lottery project*

Risks are in relation to the items excluded from the The Lottery project

- The changing room requires a new use otherwise it will become an increasing eyesore within the historic landscape
- Lack of teenage activities on site resulting in increased vandalism and misuse of facilities such as the Junior Play Area

Please refer to table included within The Lottery Form which showing risks, likelihood, impact, mitigation and risk owner.



Action Plan -  
'How will we get there'

## 5.1 Schedule of Proposed Maintenance over 5 years

A schedule of proposed management and maintenance of The Canons including buildings has been prepared which outlines the existing range of work undertaken as well as the proposed maintenance required as a result of project related work such as the new play area and gym, Canons Place, new paths and new planting across the site. It also includes an allowance for the upkeep of the buildings as well as insurance identified by the Business Plan.

Please refer to Table 1, the full schedule of management and maintenance operations in Appendix 9.

The schedule outlines the following:

- The type of operation
- Objective of work
- Who will be responsible for the work and who will support the work
- The timing and frequency of the work
- Arrangements for annual inspections of the asset
- The resources needed for maintenance
- Need for training
- Arrangements for keeping an ongoing maintenance log

## 5.2 Financial Plan

### 5.2.1 Income – Council budget and any other income

Initially The Lottery and Big Lottery funding will provide funding the capital and revenue funding for the capital works and activities including new staff.

The existing council income from The Canons, ignoring the income from the contract with Better (who run the Leisure Centre, Madeira Hall and the MUGA, is negligible, restricted to income from the occasional event on West Lawn.

The Lottery project will transform this, providing two new major income streams - Canons house and the Cafe as well as an increase in events. In addition, should the council implement car parking charges, this could provide a significant additional income.

Fourth Street's Business Plan outlines the anticipated income from The Canons as set out below

### 5.2.2 Proposed Management and Maintenance Costs over 10 years

A financial plan showing the income and expenditure for The Canons can be seen as Table 2 (Appendix 10).

Table 2 details the implications of the current and future management and maintenance within the park, and expenditure arising from the capital works and activities.

For clarity the existing situation is shown Year -1, The Lottery funding is shown in Year 0 and the enhanced maintenance items and costs commence from Year 1 following completion of the project and run through to Year 10. The new or enhanced items of work are shown in blue. The enhanced maintenance costs are shown in the orange row along the bottom of the sheet.

### 5.2.3 Reduced Existing and Proposed Enhanced Maintenance

Within the proposals, a number of features across the park currently requiring high levels of maintenance are being either revised such as the replacement of significant mown grass areas with wildflower meadows and bulb planting. In addition, it is envisaged that the role of the Friends of The Canons will increase as they will take on a greater amount of maintenance work including the walled garden, new herbaceous and shrub borders, the orchard, Bellamy's Copse and the Pond.

As a result of the bid, new features are being created across The Canons which will require further maintenance and running costs.

These items include:

- The new outdoor gym at the Commonside West entrance
- New paths including links from Cold Blows and Commonside West entrance
- Canons Place with resin bound surfacing and brick edging
- Extended play area with reinforced grass surfacing
- Enhanced planting including new specimen trees, the orchard, shrub and herbaceous Planting
- Canons Yard - small courtyard between Canons house and the cafe including the community wall
- Café – external repairs and insurance
- Canons house - external repairs and insurance

In addition the Business Plan includes a sink fund equivalent to 1% of the construction costs for the buildings.

Please refer to Table 1. Five Year Schedule of Management and Maintenance Operations and Table 2. Schedule of Management and Maintenance Costs, Appendices 9 and 10 respectively. Also please refer to Table 3. H4 Measurements and Frequency Table (Appendix 11) included in the Ground Maintenance Contract.

The financial plan justifies the request for additional funding to support the enhanced maintenance regimes required as a result of the project.

This covers the following:

- enhanced grounds maintenance costs
- increased costs due to activities

A sum of £20,000 per year over five years is proposed as part of the Round 2 The Lottery bid.

## 5.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

5.3.1 The Management and Maintenance Plan, which has been drawn up in liaison with the Greenspaces Manager and The Canons Partnership, will be consulted on by *idverde* and stakeholders.

5.3.2 However, it is recognised that this version of the Intern Management and Maintenance Plan is being drawn up at a time of change, both in terms of the outsourcing of grounds maintenance and also on the eve of the implementation of a major The Lottery project that will make changes to the layout and the use of the site. For this reason it is proposed to develop the Plan further during the Delivery Stage of the project and ask the London Borough of Merton to adopt it in December 2019, before completion of the main contract and so that The Canons can be entered into the 2020 Green Flag Awards.

5.3.2 The adopted plan will be reviewed annually with a formal five yearly review will take place in 2025. The day-to-day management of the site and the progress of individual development projects will be monitored regularly by Greenspaces staff, *idverde*, the Friends of The Canons and other stakeholders and. Any significant feedback from these sources will be incorporated into the next revision of the management plan.

