

THE FREEDOM TO WANDER

by John Best BSc, Dip TP, MRTPI and written for LEEVA – Lee Valley Association



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The Lea Valley Federation (re-formed in 2009) is a coalition of environmental and community groups and individuals campaigning to protect the Lee Valley Park as a “green lung” for London.

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FOREWORD

It is twenty years since the Civic Trust formulated the proposals which brought the Lee Valley Regional Park into existence. The concept, and the Authority set up to implement it, were, and remain, unique in Britain. They were hailed on all sides as marking an imaginative breakthrough in the use of the dormant, uncommitted land surrounding so many of our towns and cities.

Since then the drive to realise that concept has faltered. The Lee Valley Regional Park Authority has done much to provide the facilities for sporting and leisure pursuits, and these are well used individually. But the Park still lacks a sense of identity and, as a whole, has little impact on the lives of those who live and work along its length.

The key to this must surely lie developing the north-south links – walks, bridlepaths, the water itself – which could bind the different elements of the Park together and give it continuity. Quiet, leafy corridors are no less necessary for refreshment of the human spirit, than more intensive activities. It is encouraging that the Authority now seems likely to give greater priority to landscape matters.

The Trust wholly welcomes this report prepared for the Lee Valley Association as a stimulating contribution to the public debate about the future of the Park. It is encouraging that, 20 years after our report, there is a new generation with the vision to make the Lee Valley Regional Park a place for public enjoyment in the widest sense.

By Michael Middleton, CBE, Director of the Civic Trust

PREFACE

Over two decades have passed since Local Authorities bordering the River Lee first set in train the studies that were to result in the creation of the Lee Valley Regional Park. Nearly fifteen years have passed since The Park Authority prepared the Park Plan that has since shaped the Lee Valley. We now find ourselves mid-way through the first major review of the Park Plan. Over the next few months many people will be submitting views on how the Lee Valley should develop from now on. The Park Authority will seek to distil these views into a new Park Plan which (unlike its predecessor) will stand the test of time and enable its development team to plan ahead with confidence. Now is assuredly the time therefore for local authorities, sporting and amenity groups and individuals who know and value the Lee Valley to pause and reflect. What are the features which are so special and unique to the Lee Valley? What sort of plan can best nurture its qualities? We urge the readers of this pamphlet: if you feel you don't know the river and its Park well, go out and see what's on your doorstep and imagine, and so help to create a plan which will work permanently to enhance and to preserve its qualities.



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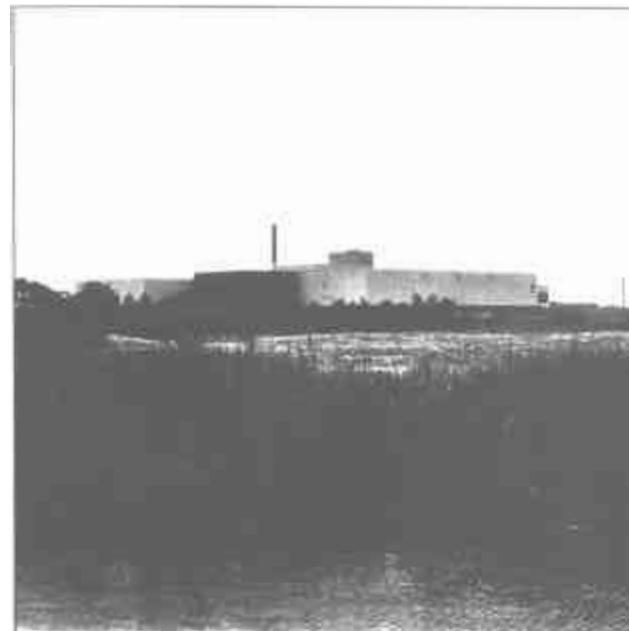
SYNOPSIS

This paper traces the development of the Lee Valley Regional Park concept and finds that the great "green wedge" proposed by Abercrombie has been supplanted by an approach which has emphasised building intensively-used indoor facilities.

It calls for recognition once more that the primary and unique feature of the Lee Valley is a 6,000 acre reservation of open space linking Inner London to the countryside. New building may be acceptable but should not in any case be allowed materially to undermine this landscape potential.

The main objectives for the new Park Plan should be to exploit and to enhance the area's unique environmental potential, to integrate all parts of the Park and to project its landscape into public view. Other objectives should be to maximise public access, to improve the local transport system and to provide a range of regional and local facilities, provided always that they are compatible with the objectives of conserving and improving the natural features and the landscape of the Park. In order to achieve these objectives, the new Park Plan should explicitly include schemes for landscaping, community involvement, a network of paths throughout the Park, sign posting, access to water, nature conservation, public transport and land acquisition.

The paper concludes with suggestions for preparation and implementation of the plan, through effective programming, consultation, involvement of the local communities and more positive land acquisition in and (where practicable) adjoining the Park.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Britain's first Regional Park was established in the Lee Valley in 1967. The Park Authority, set up by the Lee Valley Regional Park Act 1966, was charged with the preparation of a Master Plan. That Master Plan was published in 1969 and since that time a considerable amount has been done in giving effect to its aims.

In recent years, however, increasing interest in the achievements of the Park Authority has rekindled discussion on the future and the purpose of the Regional Park. Moreover, discussions have disclosed that there have been fundamental differences in approach between the various bodies and organisations interested in the Lee Valley. Up until the commencement of the present plan review, it appeared that there were two main schools of thought whose viewpoints were respectively illustrated by the image of the Park as portrayed in two of the key documents which contributed so much to its creation.

The first was the image of the "green wedge" bringing the countryside into the heart of the city, as portrayed in 1944 by the Abercrombie Plan for Greater London.

The second was the image of the "playground for London" characterised by areas of intensive activity at points along the Park. This second image was first introduced by the Civic Trust's 1964 Report "A Lea Valley Regional Park".

Although it was then presented within a comprehensive landscape framework, it is this second image but *without* the landscaping that has shaped the development of the Park during its first decade of existence.

The decision of the Park Authority in 1981 to review the Park Plan recognised the need for reappraisal of this approach. Furthermore the responses of the constituent local authorities to the Park Authority's invitation for comments on objectives contained in the 1969 Master Plan appear to underline the strong tide of opinion that the objectives should be redefined, and that the Lee Valley should emphasise the first of the two historic images.

1.2 The Lee Valley Association has welcomed the decision to carry out the review. We are in broad agreement with Local Authorities' views that greater emphasis should now be placed on the Park as an open space. In our view there will still be a place for intensive building-based activities but they must take second place to the realisation of the Park's potential landscape. In the coming months, the Park Authority will be consulting local authorities and others on how the re-defined objectives will be applied in resolving the major controversial issues for development of the Park and in determining the choice between competing options for the future of specific areas within it.

At the time of writing this pamphlet, the precise form of these further consultations is unknown. This paper suggests some ways in which the principles and objectives which we feel are essential for realising the true value of the Park can be carried through into practical proposals.

2. RETROSPECTIVE REVIEW

2.1 The Abercrombie Plan, 1944

Sir Patrick Abercrombie was charged with preparing a Master Plan for the future development of London. The report, published in 1944, placed great emphasis upon reducing the density of population in the metropolis and improving London's environment. The former was to be achieved by decentralisation to new towns, whilst the latter necessitated bringing the countryside into the centre of the city through "green wedges" and also the creation of the Green Belt. One of these green wedges was the "great proposed Lee Valley reservation"¹ whose open acres were "a great recreational and open air lung to the crowded East End". Abercrombie added that "*no open land, whatever its present use, should be built on*".²

To give practical realisation to his vision Abercrombie proposed that ". . . all those open spaces which are of a regional character should come under the administration of a Board ... (having) the benefit of a central staff for the highly skilled task of looking after these open spaces ... the highest possible advice on afforestation, landscape, design, agriculture, gardening etc. . . .".³

This "magnificent opportunity for landscape treatment and tree planting,"⁴ the visionary oasis within the densely developed North East of London, lay undisturbed and unexploited for two decades.

2.2 The Civic Trust Report, 1964

In the early sixties interest in the Lee Valley awoke again. In 1963 a group of riparian Local Authorities commissioned the Civic Trust to investigate the future planning of open lands around the river, and their possible development for recreation. The Civic Trust Report, published the following year, outlined "a broad conception, no more",⁵ giving a preliminary appreciation of the valley's potential. It modified the earlier "green wedge" by introducing the idea of more intensive activity at certain locations. Its brief to examine "the future planning of open lands in the vicinity of the River Lea and their possible development for leisure and recreation"⁶ was coloured by an assessment of expected growth in economic production, leisure time and spending power. The prospect of 3-4% annual growth during "the new technological revolution" and reduction of the working week from 38/48 hours (in 1964) to a universal 25 hour week, provided the context for the Lee Valley becoming "the playground for Londoners".⁸

The Civic Trust suggestions nevertheless still lay within a landscape framework. "To recapture, the spirit of the valley calls for landscaping in the grand manner... Each of the bewildering number of activities will have its own form of expression in landscape terms.... The

need for a massive programme of tree planting is abundantly evident ...".⁹

The integrity of the park was essential. "The Lea Valley is a linear park. The parkland itself is not continuous, but the river and towpath form an unbroken thread from deep inside London to the outer edge of the Green Belt. Thus the Valley gives a chance, unique in London, to go not only by boat but also on foot, by bicycle and even by horseback from the centre to the countryside without having to suffer from the fumes, congestion, noise and danger of roads thick with traffic".¹⁰ This would be achieved by using the towpath as a spine footpath, by a network of cycleways and by bridleways linking to Epping Forest.

The main departure from the Abercrombie blueprint lay in the development of an imaginative and extensive range of facilities that would be provided in various complexes along the Park. In the Civic Trust's view, access to these from outside the Park would depend upon substantial but practicable improvements to the public transport system, particularly to the bus system.¹¹ Road improvements, and certainly the suggested internal spine road, would not adequately serve the needs for mass transport.

2.3 LVRPA Report and Plan 1969

The Park Authority was formed in 1967 with a general power and duty to: "develop, improve, preserve and manage, or to procure or arrange for the development, improvement, preservation and management of the Park as a place for the enjoyment of leisure, recreation, sport, games or amusements, or any similar activity, for the provision of nature reserves and for the provision and enjoyment of entertainments of any kind."¹²

The objectives of the Plan, however, and more particularly the summary of recreational needs contained in it, though covering almost every conceivable area of recreation, gave overwhelming practical emphasis to provision of sport and entertainment facilities.¹³ In particular, whilst projects for development were laid out in considerable detail with 13 major regional recreation centres and a host of lesser developments, the objectives were stated in such broad terms as to be at best unattainable and at worst devoid of meaning. The failure of the Park either to publish the scheme of landscape proposals commissioned by it or to set out any reasonably comprehensive summary of those proposals in its Master Plan emphasised (although the point was not wholly clear at the time) that the environmental significance of the "green wedge" was reduced to subsidiary status.

The overall pattern of land use, and many of the individual proposals were substantially as those of the Civic Trust Report. Whilst the Civic Trust had envisaged a 10 year programme as sufficient to realise the major part of the project,¹⁴ the LVRPA referred to a 12-15 year period, with the remainder to be implemented within 20 years.¹⁵ The Park Plan, however, contained no programme for implementation of the proposals.

2.4 Implementation of the 1969 Plan

Since the Plan was published, a number of proposals, the majority having a high capital cost, have been completed. Some of these facilities have met with early success in terms of public support. Some others, which have not yielded an immediate return in terms of the level of support or financial return, may yet succeed with the increased leisure of the future. Unfortunately, however, it is difficult to see how the selection of projects has served the creation of an identifiable and integrated regional park.

As the programme of development has gone forward a number of difficulties in implementing the Plan have emerged.

(i) It has not been possible to implement the landscape plan. Partly this has been associated with the emphasis upon providing facilities at intensively developed points in the Park, rather than throughout it. But at the same time the Park Authority's own landscape staff have not been maintained at an effective strength. Furthermore, the uncertainty over what built leisure facilities would be provided and where has created effective blight within which landscape planning has not been attempted.

(ii) Because of the lack of progress on landscape, the existence of the regional park has not been visible. Whilst people and local authorities can appreciate the existence of facilities, they are not aware of the Park as a whole. Apart from the direct loss of potential users of the Park, this has also contributed to the failure on occasions of local authorities to recognise the opportunities which have been lost when they have turned important areas on land adjoining the Park over to other uses such as industry or roads. Nor has there been any corresponding commitment to make available for leisure purposes those parts of the Lee Valley Park now used for other purposes.

2.5 Analysis

We propose therefore that development of the Park should recognise once more that its prime function is as an environmental green wedge. We recognise that developments in leisure and recreation during the 70's have called for more intensive or building-based facilities and better access to them. However, a vastly greater range of intensive leisure facilities is now provided by a variety of Local Authorities than was envisaged when the Master Plan was produced. The Lee Valley has no particular advantages as a location for these leisure facilities over locations closer to existing centres of population. On the other hand the Lee Valley does have a unique amenity potential that should not be diluted by the development of buildings which could equally well (and often preferably) be developed elsewhere.

In the absence of systematic regional recreation and land-use machinery, the designation of the Lee Valley specifically for recreational purposes under the Lee Valley Regional Park Act 1966 continues to attract projects for intensive building-based facilities whose presence is liable to reduce the landscape and environmental potential of the Park. The Park Authority should be especially sensitive to this. The new Park Plan, and the machinery adopted to achieve it, should have regard to the contribution that every section of the park can make to the pattern of landscape in the Park as a whole. This does not mean that there are no instances and no locations where building-based activities are appropriate, but they must be carefully selected. The Park as a playground for Londoners should once more be subsidiary to the Park as a unique environmental oasis.



3. GETTING THE PARK PLAN BACK ON COURSE

3.1 The Potential

The vast resource of the Park comprises some 6,000 acres, over two-thirds of the total open space in LCC area in 1964.¹⁶ The built-up part of the Lee Valley can provide a great Park of 1,000 acres, or the equivalent of Regents Park and Hampstead Heath rolled together. Between Walthamstow and Enfield there are nearly two square miles of contained water. These figures represent an awesome resource which the Regional Park Plan must use to good effect. Unfortunately, whilst the contribution of each one of the buildings providing facilities for London's playground can be quickly and easily measured, isolated components of a comprehensive landscape scheme are not easily appreciated until a great deal of time has elapsed and the larger landscape design is apparent. The Plan must therefore be directed by a series of unequivocal and consistent objectives aimed at achieving the Park's legitimate regional role as a landscaped area of parkland.

We therefore suggest the following eight objectives, the first three of which are of greater importance than the remainder.

3.2 Main Objective 1: To make use of the unique environmental potential of the Lee Valley, unrivalled by any other resource in the Greater London conurbation. Moreover the potential is more likely to be achieved in the Lee Valley than elsewhere since in the Lee Valley the bulk of the land required is already in public ownership, much indeed already in the freehold or leasehold ownership or in the occupation of the Park Authority. The Authority is therefore in a position to draw up and implement the "great piece of constructive, preservative and regenerative planning" envisaged by Abercrombie. Any proposals for development of facilities in the Park, especially where they involve new buildings, must be justified in the light not only of the present but the possible future landscape that they will displace.

3.3 Main Objective 2: To integrate all parts of the Park not only by extensive landscaping and land acquisition, but by linking all parts of the park with each other and with the adjoining areas outside the park, through parkwide networks of footpaths, bridleways, cycleways and waterways. This will require upgrading and extension of existing facilities (such as towpaths), introduction of new public footpaths (by reservoirs and lakes), construction of bridges, removal of fences and improvements to signposting.

3.4 Main Objective 3: To project the Park's unique landscape into public view.

Development of the Park's landscape potential should emphasise those parts, such as main road crossings or railway routes, where passing views will be seen by the greatest number of people. It need not be only sports facilities which make an impact upon the general public.

3.5 Objective 4: To achieve maximum public access to land within the Park. There should, wherever practicable, be freedom to wander throughout the Park, unless restrictions can be justified on grounds of nature conservation. Access should be provided to reservoirs and water areas generally, and to large tracts controlled by public undertakings. Public access should not be restricted to those areas in the ownership of the LVRPA, and a clear statement of the Authority's intent to achieve public rights of way and rights of access would add to the urgency with which the owning bodies will react.

3.6 Objective 5: To work to achieve a reliable and convenient transport system for those wishing to use the Park. Whilst facilities for public car parking must be provided at key locations, the needs of private motorists should not jeopardise other proposals in the park. In particular, the Park Road should not be implemented. The concept is not in tune with the needs for recreation facilities in open land and has in practice blighted many areas that might otherwise have been comprehensively landscaped. More relevant to the 80's and 90's would be policies to introduce, in conjunction with public transport operators, integrated ticket systems, special excursion tickets and so on.

3.7 Objective 6: To provide regional facilities for a wide range of sports, leisure, arts, craft, cultural and entertainment activities, where the facilities serve a regional function and where a location in the Lee Valley has overall advantages having regard to objective 3.2 above. Some of the facilities already provided (for instance the cycle riding track, and the marinas) and some in the Park Authority's development plan, (such as the National Angling Centre at Tottenham and perhaps the ice rink at Lea Bridge) appear to meet these criteria. However, many of the facilities already provided as a regional resource, such as swimming pools and squash courts, are now mostly local in nature and are duplicated by provision in the adjoining Boroughs. Indeed, even in

1969 the "regional" facilities indicated in the Park Plan" included seventeen existing swimming pools in adjoining Boroughs.

In some instances location of a facility in the Lee Valley is distinctly unsuitable, bearing in mind, for example, the limited bus services which serve Picketts Lock and Eastway Centres. Despite the better bus services, it is possible that the location of the new Lea Bridge Ice Rink will also tell against it.

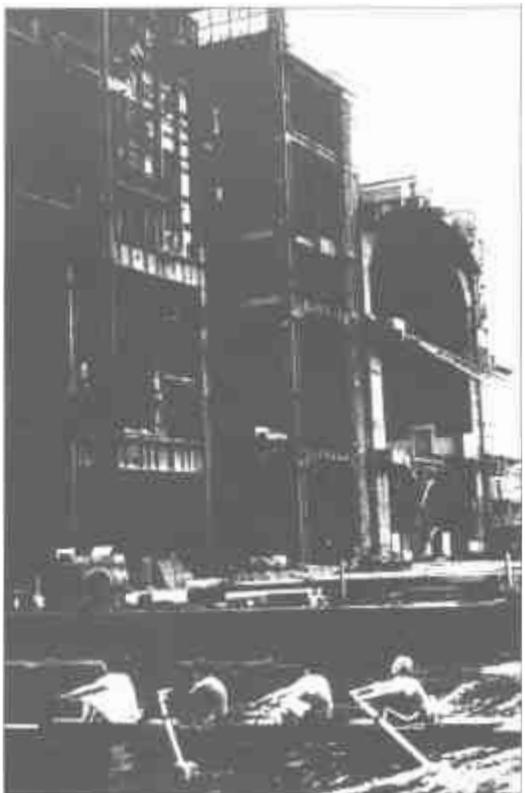
It is a challenge now to the inventiveness of the Park Authority and of the local authorities responding to the Review to emulate the Park planners (who offered new recreational concepts such as horse riding at Lea Bridge, a cycle track on the rubble of Bully Fen) to offer innovative regional facilities for the future: an industrial museum, a boat-building yard, a croquet centre, a botanical garden, a pleasure garden, a cycle hire scheme, all of which may capture the public imagination in the future and build on the present assets of the Lea Valley.

The objective should be to seek a mix of leisure facilities in which sports activities, though not excluded, no longer predominate at the expense of the Park's other functions. The Park Authority would be right to complement the work of local authorities in providing some sports facilities provided that these fit with the landscape concept, and they do not merely duplicate provision which is already or would otherwise be provided by local authorities.

3.8 Objective 7: To provide local facilities where these directly serve the local population and have been evolved in consultation with them, particularly where they help to achieve the Park Authority's landscaping scheme and can be combined with the objective of improving public access. A cricket pitch or bowling green is open to all unlike building-based facilities which by their nature exclude local people who cannot or do not wish to pay to get in!

3.9 Objective 8: To promote multiple and shared use of land and buildings in the park. Several uses of the same piece of land can often be simply achieved, where landscaping serves one amenity purpose whilst the land is being used for another purpose, such as sport.

For example, that area of Hackney Marshes now used only for football pitches could include a tree-lined cycleway from Leyton towards Victoria Park; a landscaped riverside, possibly including a riverside cafe; and a landscaped and planted area for walking, amongst realigned pitches, between Leyton, Millfields, Lea Bridge and Stratford. There are many other examples in the Park.



4. SPECIFIC ELEMENTS IN THE NEW PLAN

4.1 The need for explicit proposals

General statements of intent, in the form of objectives, achieve nothing on their own until given effect in proposals for the Park. On the other hand, the implementation of the 1969 Plan demonstrates that a Master Plan for the Park as a whole is no guarantee that all the essential elements in the Park will be achieved unless cash is explicitly set down in the new plan, with an unequivocal commitment and a programme on the part of the Park Authority to achieve them sooner rather than later.

4.2 A Park Landscape Scheme

A Park landscape scheme, aimed at developing or preserving the potential of all parts of the Park, should be prepared. The objective should be to ensure that once people are in the Park they will be immediately aware that they are in a Regional Park.

The Scheme should be seen not as a one-off design exercise, but as a project whose refinement and implementation is likely to occupy a specialist team for many years, as they become attuned to the needs of the communities along the Park and to the particular character of each part of it. The Park Authority must not shrink from the very substantial financial and technical commitment which will be essential in achieving the landscape scheme. The need for continuity, sensitivity to local needs and the scale of the whole project would justify appointment of the necessary technical staff directly by the Authority rather than with the present emphasis on ad hoc use of outside consultants.

4.3 A Community Landscaping Programme

Developing and contributing to the Park need not be left solely to the Park Authority. A community landscaping programme should explicitly set out how local resources, and particularly the voluntary contributions of local groups, can be harnessed in the design and implementation of schemes, in litter clearance, wardening, tree and hedgerow planting, education, nature trails, schools visits, etc.

It is in the fostering of community involvement and support that we see particular scope for developing the Park Ranger Service. At present they have little function beyond the unrewarding and often ineffective task of "policing" the park. We would like to see wardens going into schools, leading guided walks or conservation projects and based, where possible, in local resource centres. They would act as a two way conduit of ideas between the Park and local people from which both will undoubtedly derive benefit.

Local contributions, albeit supervised by the Park Authority's own technical staff, will be particularly useful in ensuring the satisfactory temporary use of sites where more intensive permanent development is envisaged in the future.

4.4 A Pathway Scheme

The Park must provide more than the sum of its component parts alone. A pathway scheme should separately show proposed networks of footpaths, towpaths, cycleways and bridleways, encouraging people to pass from one part of the Park to another and helping to link up with pathways in the areas surrounding the Park. Provision of waymarked links with bridleways in Epping Forest is just one of many possible examples. The pathway scheme should recognise and seek to minimise conflicts between different users, such as walkers and horse-riders, and should aim for a balance which reflects local circumstances in each case.

4.5 A Signposting Scheme

Closely linked to the pathway scheme, the Plan should include a signposting scheme to ensure that all facilities and amenity areas are used to the full. They should be easily identifiable by the public, easy to locate and convenient to reach. The scheme could include colour marking of ways and the publication of booklets illustrating and explaining features of the Park.

4.6 A Water Access Scheme

The Park includes an area of enclosed water comparable to the Norfolk Broads. The central feature of the Park is water, in the form of the River Lee itself. A water access scheme should identify proposed uses for all areas of water and give a date for implementation. Not all the water areas need be intensively used, but the great majority should be made accessible, opening up the reservoirs and the many disused gravel pits to the general public and introducing new rights of way.

4.7 A Nature Conservation Scheme

Access to the public must be balanced against the need to protect parts of the Park in a nature conservation scheme. This must identify the most important areas where management and controlled public access can encourage the growing popularity of nature studies. Protected areas, interpretative centres, nature trails and dissemination of information on the natural history and wildlife of the Park to schools, enthusiasts and the general public should all be directly encouraged in the Park and programmed in the scheme.

4.8 A Public Transport Scheme

As a corollary to providing access and car parks for the private motorist, the new Plan should include a public transport scheme to exploit, in partnership with other authorities, the full potential of buses, trains, boats and all other potential means of public transport in the Lee Valley. In particular the scheme should cover the marketing and concessionary pricing of particular excursions by bus or train that would enable more people to use the Park.

4.9 A Land Acquisition Programme

A land acquisition programme should show clearly those areas of open land which should be available and accessible for public use. There should be a clear statement of intent by the Park Authority to negotiate for the purchase of land not immediately available and a clear statement of policy in relation to opportunity purchases outside the Park boundary.



5. METHODOLOGY FOR MAKING THE PLAN

5.1 Town and Country Planning Act 1971

The Lee Valley Regional Park Act 1966 set out a procedure whereby proposals generated by the Park Authority within the Park Plan of Proposals would automatically be included within the Development Plan of the Local Planning Authority in whose area they lay. Changes in the procedures whereby local plans, replacing the Development Plans, were to be produced, culminating in the Town and Country Planning Act 1971, meant that it was no longer possible for much of the content of the Park Plan of Proposals to be included as proposals in statutory local plans. Two key elements were missing: firstly the proposals had to be reasonably likely to be implemented within the period of the local plan, and the Park Plan contained no firm programme indications; secondly local plan proposals had to be the subject of extensive publicity with public consultation, and were in any case liable to be varied on the raising of objections to the plan. Such a procedure clearly might call into question any or all of the Park Plan's proposals.

5.2 Programming

In order the better to fit into the statutory planning system, but also to assist the firm implementation of proposals for the Park, which has evidently slipped considerably from the 12-15 year original estimates, the Lee Valley Association suggests that the revised Park Plan should indicate phasing if not programme dates for proposals. Those expected to be implemented in the next four to six years should be clearly identified. Conversely, those which, whilst desirable overall, are unlikely to be implemented for many years, should be so identified and should be a high priority for some form of temporary treatment.

5.3 Consultation

There should be wide consultation not only with national and public bodies but also with the local communities served by the Regional Park, both in the preparation of the new Plan and in its subsequent review. The credibility of the Park proposals requires that the Park Authority is not only sensitive to the wishes of the local community, but is seen to have solicited public involvement in drawing up proposals and to have taken note of views expressed. The success of the Park itself requires that proposals have the full and continuing support of the local communities.

5.4 Community involvement

In recognition of the importance of the Lee Valley for local communities and the extent of work yet to be achieved, the new Plan should seek the express involvement of the communities in devising, putting into effect and thereafter maintaining some of the Park's facilities. The more direct involvement of constituent local authorities could add considerably to the Park Authority's resources. The involvement of small local groups, possibly under the aegis of an umbrella organisation would have a similar benefit.

5.5 Land ownership and control

The more land that can be incorporated into the Regional Park, and the fewer the incursions of other uses, the more effective will the Park be. But opportunities to buy more land are often unpredictable. The Park Authority must therefore follow a very positive land acquisition policy, not only taking advantage of opportunities as they arise, but also actively seeking to make opportunities to buy land. This could extend to freehold or leasehold acquisition, the purchase of options for later acquisition, or the acquisition of rights for public access. Implementation of such a programme is particularly apt at a time when

statutory authorities are required to maintain a register of their vacant land holdings. Designation of land by the main public agencies and utilities as being required for their operational purposes, however, should not go unchallenged. The Plan should leave no doubt that the Park Authority intends to acquire all the land necessary or desirable for the full development of the Regional Park. It may be appropriate for the Park Authority to seek additional powers for acquisition within and adjoining the designated Park boundary and the notification of any such interest which is being offered for sale.

5.6 Park Authority Spending

The Park Authority should not be reluctant to spend more of its possible precept in order to speed up development of the Park. In future a greater proportion of capital spending should be on landscaping, on which subsequent running costs, though still substantial, will be considerably less than those of intensively-used buildings. Moreover, while buildings deteriorate throughout their life, landscaping, once properly established, improves through an indefinite life. Trying to economise by keeping to a modest programme is likely to give less value for money. It would lengthen the time until the grand concept of a Regional Park becomes a reality that can be enjoyed, and it would undermine the effective value as sources of recreation of those elements of the Park that have already been achieved.

Up till now the Park Authority, though they have achieved a great deal, have perhaps erred on the side of caution. We hope that a revised Master Plan, developed along the lines we have proposed, with vision, enthusiasm and the confidence to use the precept endowed upon it by Parliament, will receive the unstinting support of the local authorities in achieving its aims.



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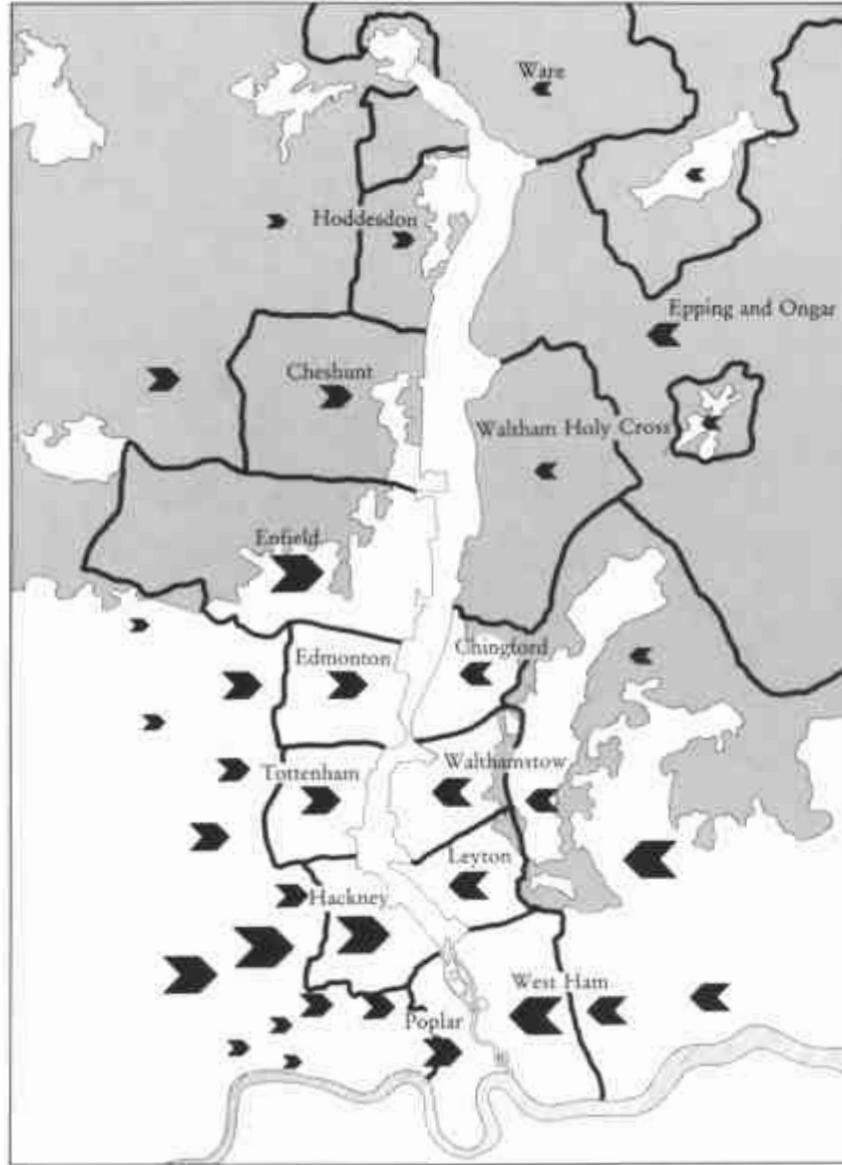
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| 13. | LVRPA | Lee Valley Regional Park Report | p. 14 |
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| 16. | Civic Trust | A Lea Valley Regional Park | p. 13-14 |
| 17. | LVRPA | Lee Valley Regional Park Report | Map 5 |

THE LVA

The Civic Trust Report, "A Lea Valley Regional Park" included the proposal that a Lee Valley Association be formed as part of the constitutional arrangements for the establishment of the Lee Valley Regional Park. It would serve as a meeting-point for organisations and groups in the area, and a forum for their liaison with the authorities.

In the event, the Lee Valley Association was formed on the initiative of a number of individuals and amenity groups in 1980. Its Honorary President, Sir Lou Sherman, was formerly Mayor of Hackney, and instrumental in conceiving the Regional Park during the early 1960's.

The Association draws its membership from the length of the Regional Park and has pressed since its inception for a change in direction for the Park, and a review of the Park Plan. Its comments contributed to the decision of the Park Authority, announced in 1981, to carry out the present Plan Review.



The Lee Valley

THE FREEDOM TO WANDER

This booklet is produced by the Lee Valley Association (with assistance from the GLC) as one of their contributions to the 1983 Lee Valley Master Plan Review

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