



Newham London

NHS
Newham

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2010

The London Borough of Newham

18th January 2011

9.0 Cleaner Greener Newham

9.1 The local environment

It is well documented that the local environment can both positively and negatively impact on the health and wellbeing of a population. The World Health Organisation (WHO) states that, worldwide, there are 13,000,000 deaths annually that are preventable due to environmental factors. Examples of environmental impact on health include:

- Asthma: the health impact of pollution is well documented, particularly in areas such as child asthma
- TB: in the UK there are estimated to be 9,300 new incidences of TB annually¹, many of these could be preventable.

More details on TB, asthma and other diseases and conditions preventable by environmental management can be found in chapter 7.

Rubbish in public areas can also have an adverse affect on health. Key areas of concern include rat infestations and hazardous waste from drug use. Newham has the lowest household recycling and composting rate in London with just 15% of household waste sent for recycling or composting (2008-09) compared with the London average of 29%.

During 2009-10, Newham collected 68,540 tonnes of waste from residential households and 6,820 tonnes from cleaning the streets. An additional 20,100 tonnes was collected from fly tips. There were 5,240 tonnes recycled last year and 9,350 tonnes of green waste composted.

Electrical energy consumption in Newham in 2007 was 1,242 GWh (69% from commercial and industrial use) and gas energy consumption was 2,677 GWh (41% from commercial and industrial use)². During 2008-09 12 out of the 22 major developments in Newham that were granted planning permission incorporated renewable energy schemes.

Newham's carbon emissions estimate for 2007 is 1,470 thousand tonnes of CO₂³. 49% of carbon emissions come from industry and commercial activities, 31% from domestic activities and 20% from road transport within the borough. A map of the major roads and green spaces in the borough can be seen above.

9.2 Green spaces

Research has shown that green spaces can reduce the impact of deprivation and deliver better health and wellbeing⁴. Living close to green spaces can reduce mortality and contribute to narrowing the gap in life expectancy⁵ and access to the natural environment helps people recover from illness and reduce stress⁶. More detail on the use of parks for physical activities and in maintaining a healthy lifestyle can be found in chapter 12.

A recent study (CABE, 2010) found that:

- Where people perceive green spaces to be good, they are more likely to be satisfied in general with their neighbourhood and more likely to report better health
- When people feel safe in their local green space they are more physically active
- Almost half of respondents stated that better facilities would make them use their local green space more
- Less than 1% of those in social housing used the green spaces on their own estate due to fears of personal safety or lack of facilities
- Local parks accounted for 90% of the green spaces used
- All participants in the study expressed a desire for high quality green spaces with better facilities.

¹ WHO *TB Country Profile: United Kingdom*; WHO, 2010

² Department of Energy and Climate Change, November 2007

³ Provided by the AEA for the Department of Energy and Climate Change – National Indicator 186

⁴ CABE: *Community green: using local spaces to tackle inequality and improve health*; CABE (2010)

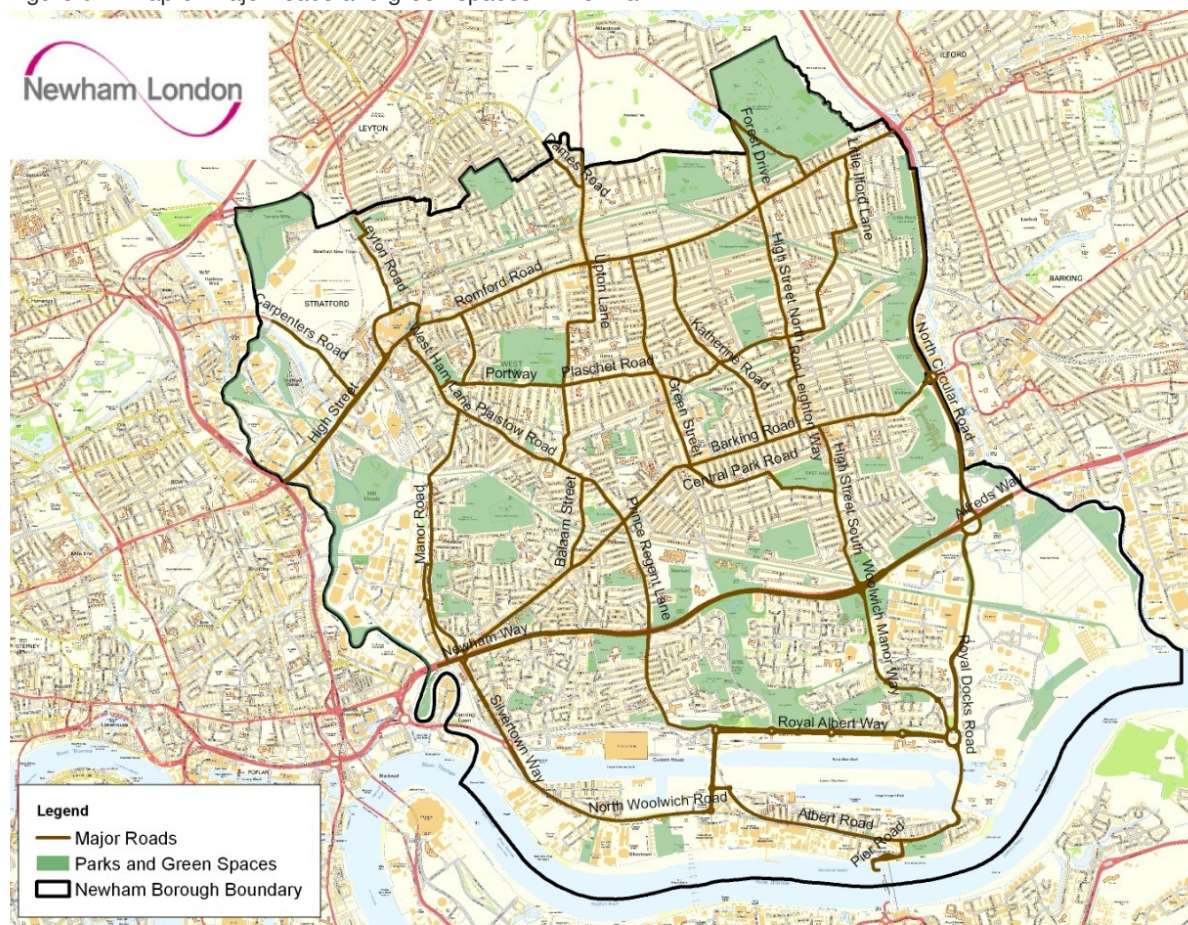
⁵ Mitchell, R & Popham, F; *Effect of exposure to natural environment on health inequalities: an observational population study*; The Lancet: 372,2008

⁶ Natural England, Health and the Natural Environment: <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/enjoying/health/default.aspx>

Other national research on the impact of parks on quality of life and well being has shown:

- Those people with access to green open space have a lower prevalence of mental disorder than those who do not⁷
- Walking is the most popular sporting activity (in parks) with over a third of men and women in the UK participating regularly.⁸
- Going for a walk was the most popular leisure activity of visitors to parks (75%), followed by taking children to a play area (43%) and sitting and enjoying the surroundings (28%)⁹
- Established links between access to green spaces and physical activity¹⁰
- Links between public green spaces and social cohesion¹¹

Figure 9.1: Map of major roads and green spaces in Newham



Source: London Borough of Newham

Newham currently has 24 parks and gardens, and an additional 3 parks are not under Newham's control¹². The map of major roads and green spaces (above) shows these parks and other large areas of green space within Newham. Newham now has a total of 7 green flags for parks. This nationally recognised award acknowledges high quality service provision against a range of criteria including 'a welcoming place', 'clean and well maintained', 'healthy, safe and secure' and 'community involvement'.

⁷ Lewis G and Booth M (1994), *Are cities bad for your mental health?*, *Psychological Medicine* 24:913-915

⁸ DCMS (2006) *Taking Part: The National Survey of Culture, Leisure and Sport*, National Statistics.

⁹ Sport England (2003) *The Use of Public Parks in England*.

¹⁰ CABI: *Physical activity and the built environment*, CABI (2006)

¹¹ CABI: *The value of public space*, CABI (2004)

¹² These are Thames Barrier Park, Three Mills Green and West Ham Park.

Local research from the 2009 Liveability Survey, on residents' use of parks, showed that a quarter of all residents had never visited a park in Newham. Amongst those who had visited a park or green space in the borough West Ham Park (24%) and Central Park (21%) were the most popular parks. While 79% of all respondents said they felt very or fairly safe in Newham's parks during the day, only 52% of those who had visited a Newham park rated the security as good or excellent and 13% rated it as poor or very poor. When visiting Newham's parks at night, only 32% said they felt very or fairly safe.

Just under half of all residents (49%) have attended an event in a Newham park. Residents said that the following events and activities in parks would interest them:

- Music festivals (54%)
- Fireworks displays (39%)
- Sports competitions (15%)

The most important things aspects of Newham's parks for residents were overall cleanliness, play areas and seating provision.

9.3 Key issues and gaps

Further work could be done to expand knowledge of environmentally preventable illness in Newham and on park usage, including exploring how far people travel to use parks, i.e. what is the penetration into the community of Newham's green spaces.

Improving the perception of safety in Newham's parks and open spaces will increase the number of people who access them. While there is no data available currently, data on the perception of the improvement to parks from the capital investment programme will be available from 2011.

Newham's investments into environmental management and the improvement and safety of parks in the borough will have a preventative impact on health and social care need in Newham.

