

# Parks and Open Spaces

Our Strategy for Barnet 2016-26

Appendixes to Strategy Document - Appendix B



# Appendix B

## Baseline characteristics

Barnet is an outer London borough with boundaries with the London Borough of Enfield (to the north-east), Camden, Haringey (to the south-east), Harrow and Brent (to the south-west). The administrative area of Hertfordshire lies to the north and marks the boundary of Greater London. Appendix J Figure J.10 shows the borough in its sub-regional context.

The physical, social and economic geography of Barnet exerts a considerable influence on the quantity, type and distribution of open space across the borough. Located towards the edge of London, Barnet's character becomes increasingly suburban northwards with a greater proportion of green and open space enhanced further by the presence of the green belt. The townscape is increasingly dense towards the south with a more fragmented distribution of open spaces.

### B.1 Parks and open spaces assessment areas

In assessing the level of provision, quality and value of parks and open spaces in Barnet and in preparing Action Plans, this strategy depends upon analysis at three different geographical levels:

- borough-wide assessment; the strategy assesses the borough's current portfolio and the resourcing of current service provision

on a borough-wide basis, allowing for comparison with other London boroughs

- regional assessment; Barnet is sub-divided into three sub-regions (Chipping Barnet, Finchley and Golders Green and Hendon) which reflect Parliamentary constituency boundaries. Neighbourhood Forums are in place for each of these areas. This strategy considers levels of provision and assessments of quality, value and accessibility at this level, allowing for comparison between regions within the borough.
- ward assessment: The Ward is the constituency unit for local government and this strategy considers levels of provision and assessments of quality, value allowing for comparison between Wards.

### B.2 Topography

Barnet lies on the northern edge of the Thames Basin and the topography of the area is characterised by gentle undulations shelving steadily to the south and the valley of the Thames. The valleys of the Silk Stream and Dollis Brook cut through the western part of the borough converging in the Brent valley to the south-west. The Pymmes Brook flows through the eastern

segment into Southgate and eventually into the River Lea.

A line of rounded hills dominates the north and north-west parts of the borough connecting Moat Mount, Mill Hill and Highwood Hill in the north-west with High Barnet and Monken Hadley in the north-east. Woodcock Hill is the highest point of this chain of hills at 137 metres.

In the southern section of the borough, the hilly landscape of Hampstead Garden Suburb leads to Kenwood and Hampstead Heath.

### B.3 Geology

In common with much of the Thames Basin, the topography of Barnet is strongly influenced by the underlying geology. Much of the borough lies on London Clay laid down in the Eocene era over chalk bedrock. London Clay weathers to slightly acidic heavy clay soils of poor agricultural value.

Towards the end of the Eocene, London Clay gave way to Claygate Beds, alternating layers of sand and gravel which overlie several areas of higher ground including Mill Hill, Highwood Hill, Moat Mount and Rowley Green. Where these levels meet the London Clay layer, springs emerge such as those found along the Dollis Valley and Folly Brook Valley. In the north of the borough, a different

sand and gravel formation (the Stanmore Gravels) contains more rounded pebbles characteristic of Hadley Green.

About 400,000 years ago, glaciation deposited the first layers of Boulder Clay in what is now the Finchley area, characterised by fertile clays mixed with erratic rocks and stones. At the edge of the Boulder Clay layers lies a narrow band of sands and gravels, possibly of Pleistocene origin. Where London Clay, Boulder Clay and sands and gravels meet, this combination of pervious and impermeable strata give rise to spring lines and local variations in plant communities and an alternating pattern of wet and better drained soils.

The most recent geological formations are more fertile alluvial soils, laid down along the valleys of the Silkstream, Dollis and Pymmes Brooks.

Appendix J Figure J.11 illustrates the geology and hydrology of the borough.

### B.4 Habitats

#### B.4.1 Grassland

Grassland of one type or another is the dominant habitat in Barnet. They include a variety of habitat characteristics that are largely determined by soil type (and particularly, soil pH) and current and past management practises. Current management

practices influencing grassland type include mowing regimes, grazing regimes and agricultural improvement (i.e. the use of herbicides and fertilizers). In general terms, grasslands within Barnet fall into four distinct categories:

- amenity grassland; commonly associated with public parks and common across the borough, amenity grassland consists typically of short mown hard-wearing swards containing a limited number of grass species.
- neutral grassland; the most common grassland across the borough, neutral grasslands in the form of meadows and pastures dominate the borough's countryside. Many have been agriculturally improved and they often damp areas supporting distinctive mix of plants. Some hay meadows such as Arrandene Open Space, King George's Field and Monken Hadley' have a large diversity of wild flowers which are amongst Barnet's most important ecological assets.
- tall rough grassland; this habitat type is generally found in places where disturbed ground has been abandoned such as brownfield sites, unmanaged cemeteries and allotments.

- acid grassland; this habitat type occurs where nutrient-poor, free-draining acidic spoils occur over sandy gravel substrates and supports distinctive plant communities. The preservation of acid grassland is a priority for the London Bio-diversity Action Plan.

#### B.4.2 Woodlands and scrub

A considerable surface area within the borough is devoted to woodland. This includes Watling Chase Community Forest covers 190 km<sup>2</sup>, extending north and west from Totteridge into south Hertfordshire.

Although Barnet would once have been covered by broadleaved deciduous woodland, the majority of the borough's woodlands are of recent origin having established in fields, and commons or planted in open spaces over the past 150 years. Some areas of Ancient Woodland do persist in Scratchwood, Oak Hill, Big Wood, Lytle Wood and Barnet Gate Wood. Smaller pockets of old woodland have persisted in built up areas in Turner's Wood, Hampstead Garden Suburb and Cherry Tree Wood in East Finchley.

Most of Barnet's woodland is described as 'secondary' having established or having been planted in areas previously developed for agriculture. Secondary woodland tends to have

lower diversity and conservation value, especially in more urban districts where ash and sycamore dominate and herb layers include non-native species that have escaped from surrounding gardens.

#### B.4.3 Rivers and wetlands

Barnet is fortunate in that the three small rivers draining the borough remain at the surface and this gives rise to distinctive riparian habitats both with and beside the watercourses. These habitats are valuable green corridors connecting the borough with the countryside beyond London.

In several places, rivers have been widened to form artificial lakes such as Beech Hill Lake, Darland's Lake and Stoneyfields Lake. These provide additional capacity during periods of drought or flood and offer valuable habitat in their own right.

A number of historic ponds, which originally provided for the watering of stock on farms, have survived across the borough. Most now perform a different amenity-based function but most support a range of species, although their effectiveness as habitat has been compromised by poor management.

The most significant open water habitat in the borough is the Welsh Harp Reservoir which

straddles the border between Barnet and Brent. The reservoir is now designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, supports a wide variety of wildfowl and is a significant wildfowl breeding site.

### B.5 Settlement patterns

Land use and settlement patterns are relatively diverse and reflect the absorption of former villages into London as the capital expanded in the latter half of the 19th century. In the north of the borough, this pattern of absorption usually followed connecting transport corridors and particularly the Midland Railway line (connecting Edgware and Mill Hill in the north-west of the borough), the High Barnet branch of the Northern Line (connecting High Barnet, Totteridge and Whetstone in the north-east). The central northern area of the borough between these two population centres is semi-rural in character and contains a significant area of Green Belt (2,466 hectares, equivalent to 28% of the borough). Across these northern edges of the borough, housing is relatively low density and typical of suburban settlement patterns prevalent elsewhere in London.

Over time, settlement patterns have become more dense around the suburbs of Cricklewood, Colindale, Hendon, Finchley and Golders Green but

individual town centres with distinctive character still remain legible in these parts of the borough, albeit with a less suburban grain when compared with areas to the north.

### B.6 Demographics

Barnet’s population has been steadily increasing since 1991 and is now projected to increase by 21% as compared with its 2011 level by 2041. <sup>4</sup>

Table B.1 - Barnet project population	
Source: GLA London Population Projections 2013	
Year	Total population
2011	357,653
2021	391,472
2031	418,589
2041	431,814

The distribution of this population growth will vary across the borough. In 2011, Burnt Oak was the most populous ward. By 2021, Colindale will have become the most heavily populated ward in Barnet, having seen a 50% increase in population between 2014 and 2021. Over the same period, the

<sup>4</sup> See: <https://open.barnet.gov.uk/dataset/population-projections-barnet-2013>

populations of Golders Green and Mill Hill will have increased by 30% and 10% respectively.

This rise in population implies an increasing level of demand for public services, including public parks. Much of this population growth will be delivered through higher density housing where private space for individuals and families will be limited or absent, implying a further dependence upon

public space for outdoor recreation and access to the natural environment.

Population growth will also vary across particular age groups and geographically across the borough.

Figure B.1 - Projected population growth in Colindale, Golders Green and Mill Hill wards

Source: GLA: London Population Projections 2013

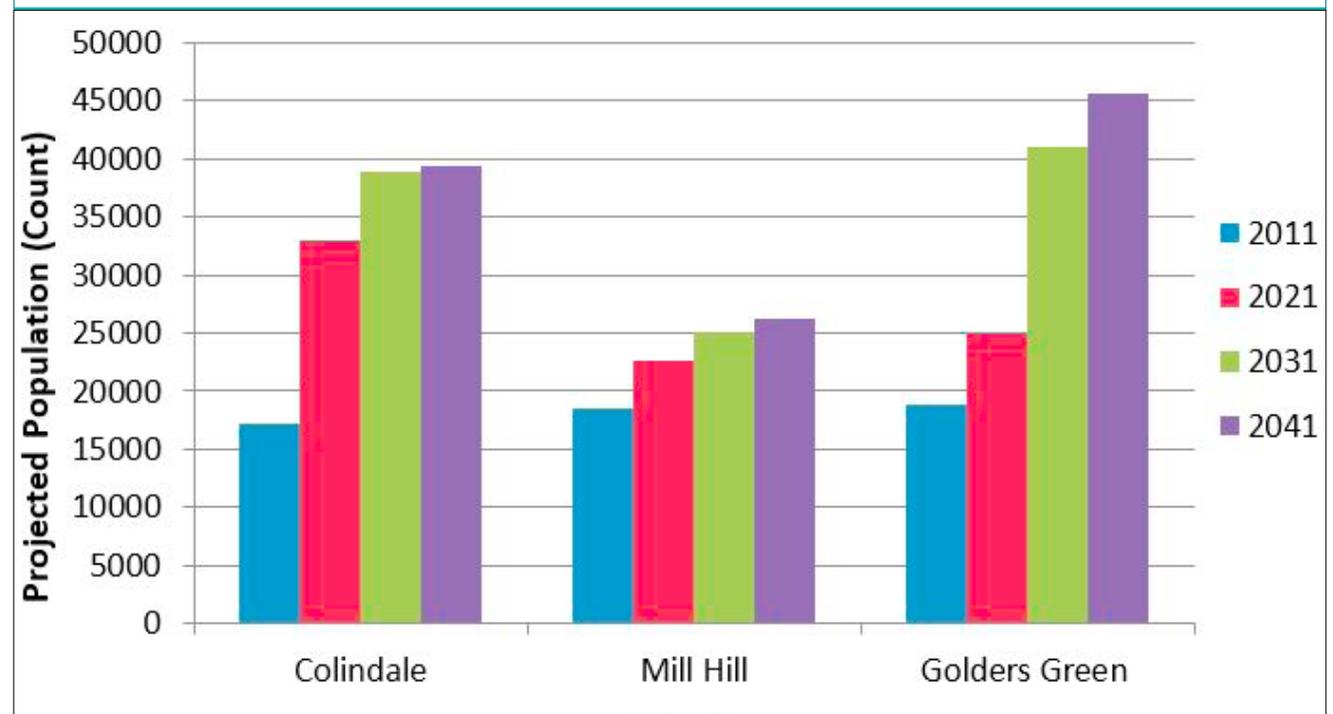
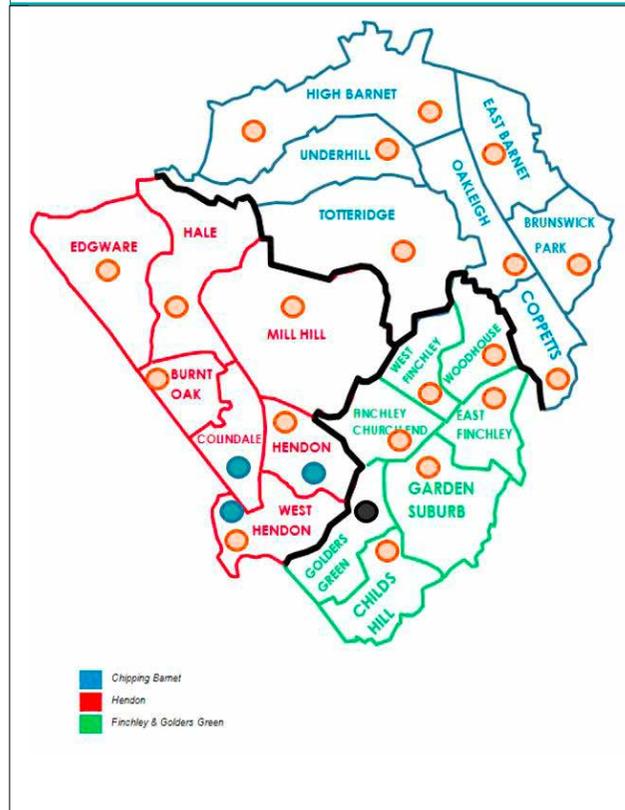


Figure B.2 - Projected growth in proportions by age group

Source: GLA: London Population Projections 2013



Between 2014 and 2021, the population of children (up to the age of 16) across the entire borough is projected to increase by 15.4%. The most significant increases in the proportion of children are projected in Colindale, Hendon, and West Hendon. There will be a proportionate decrease in children in Golders Green, because although there will be an increase in the number of children, the increase in working age residents will be much larger.

Across the borough, the population of working age residents will remain stable over the period 2014 to 2025. Golders Green is the only ward in which the working age population is set to increase.

Between 2014 and 2021, the number of residents of retirement age and over will increase by 6,400 (12.6%)<sup>5</sup>. Much of this segment of the population will be concentrated in Totteridge, Hampstead Garden Suburb and High Barnet. It is projected that there will be growth in the retirement age population in every ward except Colindale and Golders Green.

Demographic projections suggest the need for the Parks service to respond to changes in population over the next twenty years. Increases in the child population in some parts of the borough (Colindale, Hendon and West Hendon) suggest an

emphasis on play provision, educational initiatives and a range of family-based interventions to encourage use of public open space.

This Open Spaces Strategy has used the projected 2015 population of 367,266 in assessing the current level of parks and open space provision across Barnet.

### B.7 Ethnicity

Residents classifying themselves as 'White British' constitute the largest ethnic group in Barnet. This percentage is close to the average for London. There is a slightly higher percentage of Indian residents and a lower proportion of Pakistani and Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean residents compared to London as a whole.

Research does not suggest that the uptake of parks services is closely linked to ethnicity nationally.

- Proportionate child age increase
- Proportionate working age increase
- Proportionate retirement age increase

## B.8 Housing provision

The relative proportion of dwellings that are terraced houses, flats and apartments is an indicator of current and future demand for parks and open spaces as these accommodation types will often not include the provision of private open space. Accommodation for much of Barnet's population growth will be through high density housing with minimal private space, implying a further dependence upon public space for access to the natural environment and places for active and passive recreation.

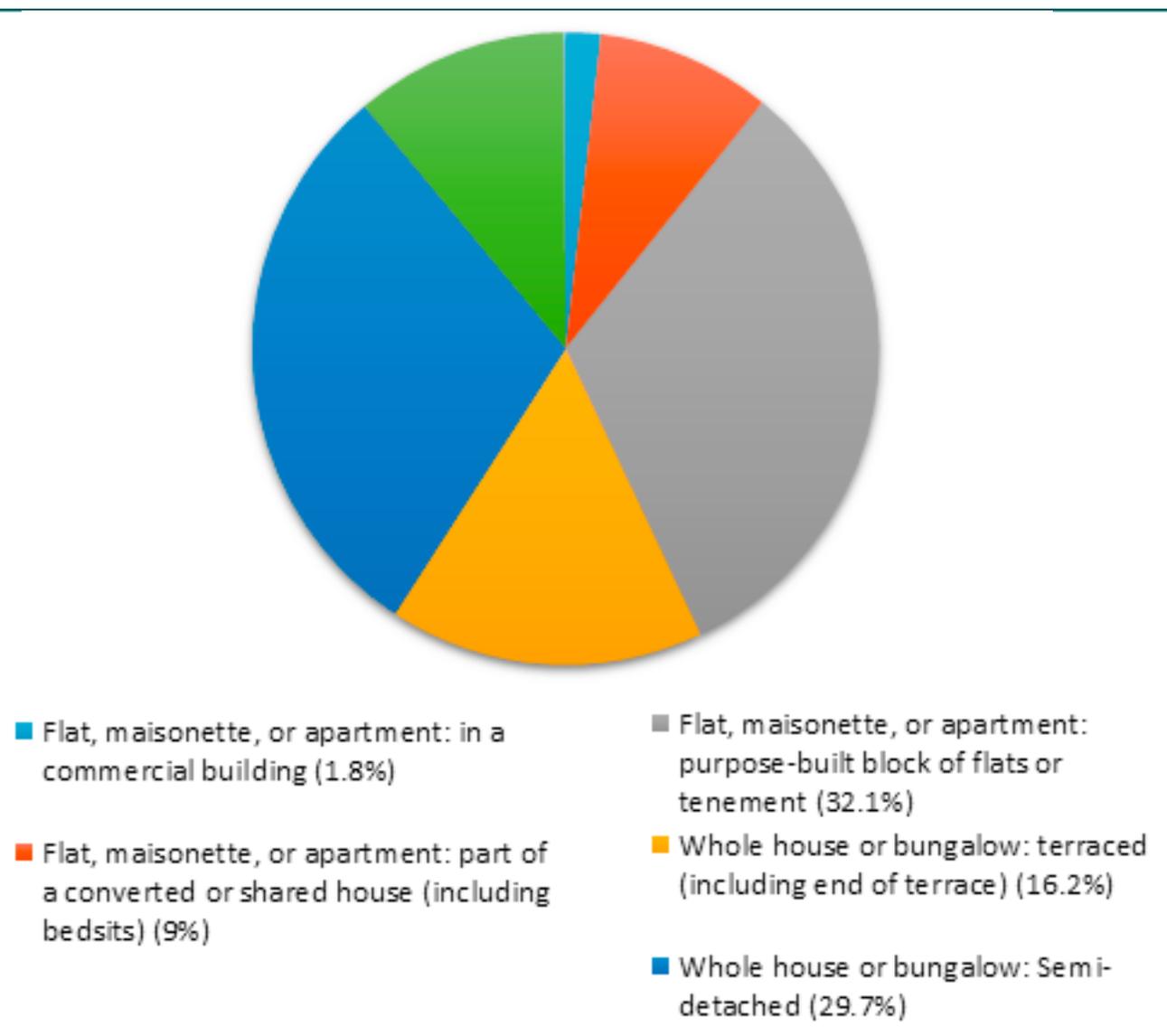
In 2011, 57% of the borough's housing stock consisted of individual houses, (detached, semi-detached and terraced).

Housing completions between 2011 and 2014 indicate the construction of significantly larger proportion of flats, apartments and maisonettes. These completions are concentrated in the parts of the borough where the greatest population growth over the next 20 years is projected.

<sup>5</sup> See: <https://open.barnet.gov.uk/dataset/population-projections-barnet-2013>

Figure B.3 - Dwelling types in Barnet

Source: ONS 2011 statistics: Dwelling Type



## B.9 Crime and anti-social behaviour

Levels of crime and anti-social behaviour in Barnet's parks are relatively low compared with other parts of the public realm.

Between October 2013 and September 2015, there were 520 crimes recorded as taking place in parks, equating to an average annual rate of 260 per year. This compares to the total borough crime rate during that period of approximately 25,500 per year. Reported crimes in parks thus accounted for only 1% of recorded crime in the borough during that period.

There are discernible trends in terms of crime and antisocial behaviour that focus on specific parks, on specific forms of activity, specific times of year and times of day.

Crime and anti-social behaviour is concentrated in a number of specific sites, with 80% of reported crime in parks taking place in 25 parks.

In respect of statistical patterning, crimes occur fairly evenly across the week and weekend but Friday is the peak day.

Most crimes in parks occur between 12 midday and 11pm, with a peak between 4pm and 6pm.

There is a strong seasonal pattern with reported crime in parks at its highest level during June, July,

Figure B.4 - Distribution of dwelling types across Barnet

Source: Barnet Local Plan DMP September 2012

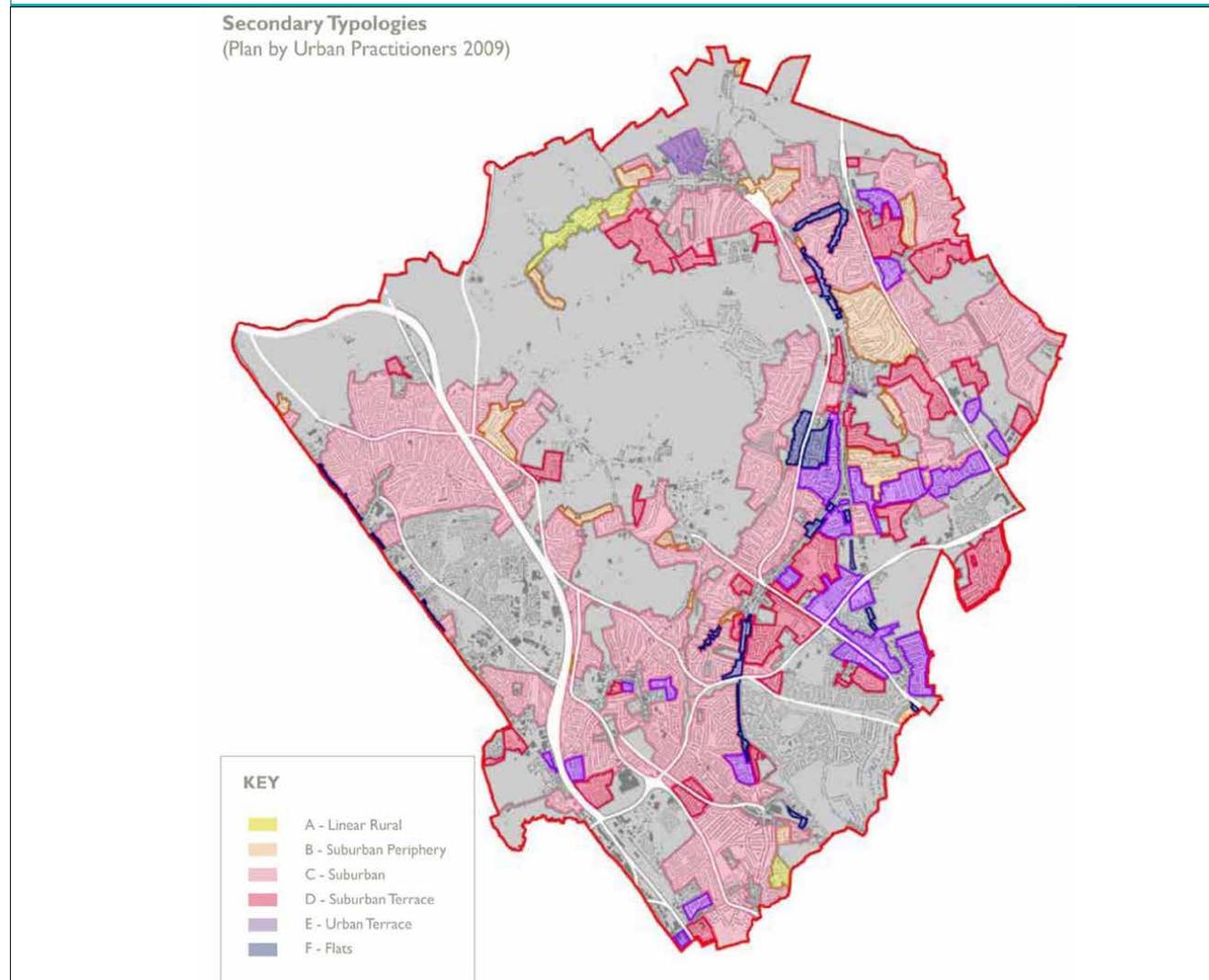
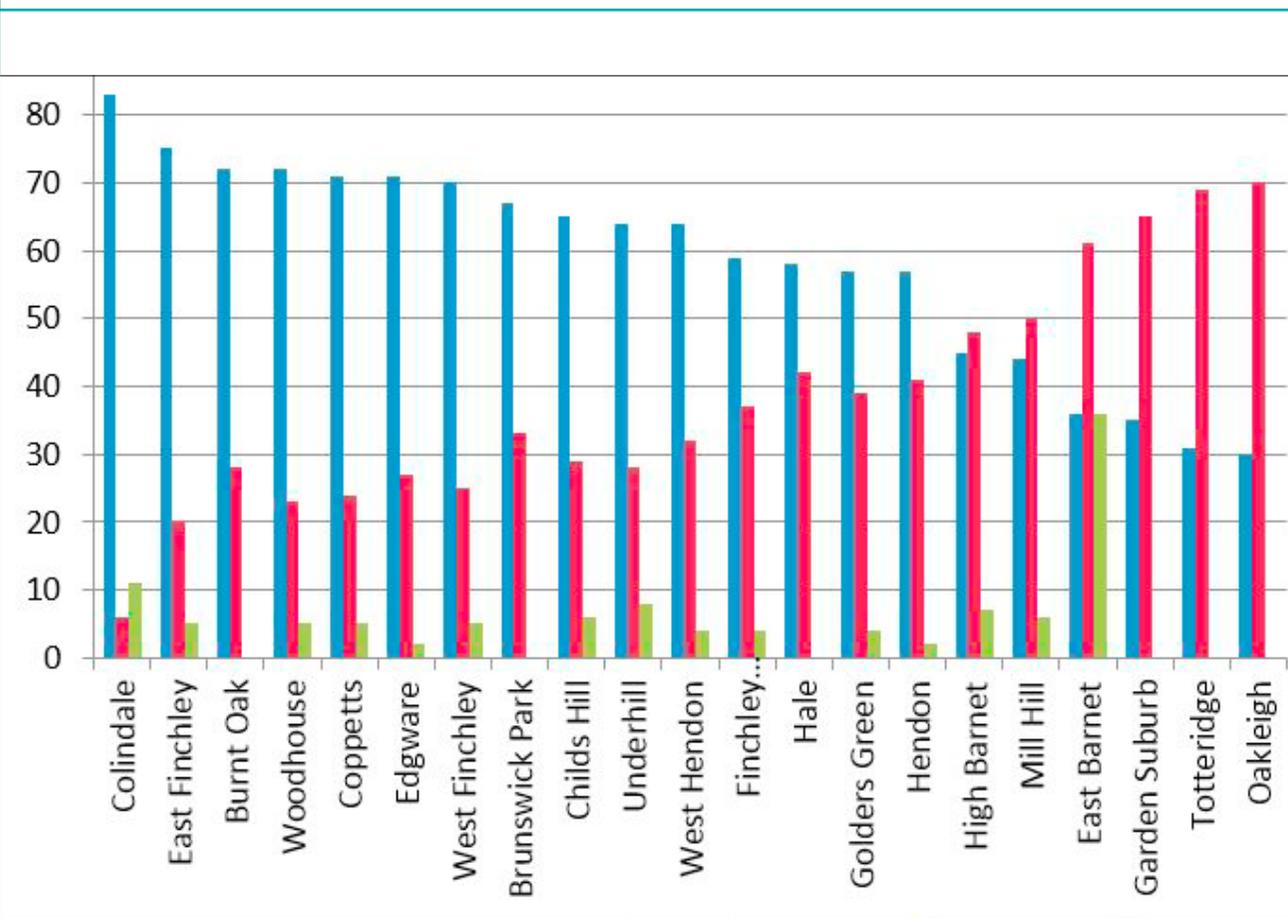


Figure B.5 - Projected housing completions by ward: January 2010 to November 2014

Source: GLA database- housing completions report



- Flat, apartment, or maisonette
- House or bungalow
- Studio or bedsit

August (July is the peak month). Reported crime is at its lowest level in January and February.

### B.10 Greenspaces provision - Barnet parks assets

This Open Spaces Strategy will consider the level of current provision of parks and open spaces in Barnet against current and likely future demand.

The Parks service provided the borough's portfolio of parks and open spaces for the purpose of this strategy.

The 2015 Parks service portfolio suggests that the combined area of parks provision in Barnet is 465.2 Hectares (approximately 5.4% of the total area of the borough). Based on the 2015 population of Barnet (367,266), this represents parks provision of 1.26 Hectares per 1,000 head of population.

With regard to open space, the Local Plan Development Management Policies (DMP) DPD proposes that 'where a development is in an area of deficiency for publicly accessible open space new open space should be provided in line with these standards:

- Parks (1.63 hectares per 1,000 residents)

Table B.3 - Top 25 parks in Barnet for reported crime

Source: Barnet Community Safety 2015

Park	Percentage of incidents	Park	Percentage of incidents
Hendon Park	7.7	Dollis Valley Green Walk	2.5
Mill Hill Park	6.9	Montrose Playing Field	2.3
Old Courthouse Rec Ground	6	Woodfield Park	2.1
Watling Park	6	Hampstead Heath Extension	1.9
Victoria Park	5.8	Hadley Green	1.7
Oak Hill Park	5.2	Victoria Rec Ground	1.7
Sunny Hill Park	4	Brent Park	1.3
Clitterhouse Playing Field	3.3	Cherry Tree Wood	1.3
Silkstream Park	3.3	Barnet Playing Field	1.2
Childs Hill Park	3.1	Bethune Park	1.2
Friary Park	3.1	Colindale Park	1.2
Golders Hill Park	3.1	Glebelands	1.2
Brook Farm Open Space	2.7		

Open space provision across all types of green space, (parks, playgrounds, sports sites, natural and semi-natural greenspaces) is 888.76 Hectares (approximately 10% of the area of the borough). This represents 2.41 Hectares per 1,000 head of population.

The assessment of open space provision across the borough excludes schools, private sports clubs and cemeteries, SLOAP (sites left over after planning) sites, verges, private gardens and private areas of Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land. If these areas are factored into an assessment, the level of greenspace provision across the borough is considerably higher.

Figure B.6 - Barnet Parks and Open Spaces – crime type

Source: Barnet Community Safety 2015

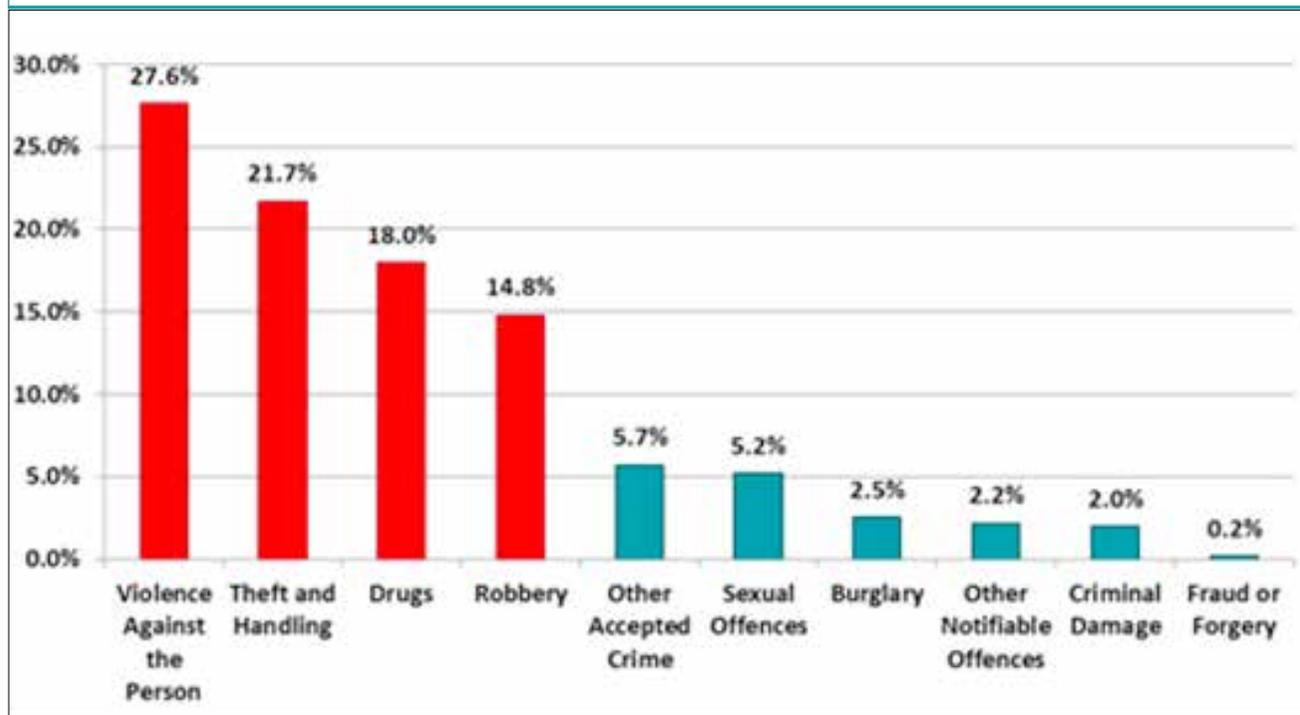


Table B.5 sets out the hierarchy of open spaces described in the London Plan (2015).

As defined by this hierarchy, Barnet does not have any Metropolitan parks but does have 10 district parks and 77 local parks. Barnet's parks are not evenly distributed across the borough and there is a distinct concentration of larger parks in the northern, more rural parts of the borough. High Barnet, Underhill and Totteridge contain 3 district parks and 12 local parks. In comparison, the East Finchley, Finchley Church End, West Finchley and Woodhouse Wards do not have a district park and have only 9 local parks.

Provision of parks in the following Wards falls below the current borough average in terms of parks provision per 1,000 head of population:

- Brunswick Park, Burnt Oak, Childs Hill, Colindale, East Finchley, Edgware, Golders Green, Hale, Hendon, Oakleigh, West Finchley, West Hendon and Woodhouse

High Barnet, Totteridge, East Barnet, Coppetts, Garden Suburb and Mill Hill all have levels of provision above the borough average.

### B.11 Accessibility

Accessibility is an important determinant of the supply of public open space and will help

Table B.4 - Barnet's open space asset portfolio – 2015 survey

Open space by typology	Number of sites	Area (Ha)
Public parks	40	89.59
Playgrounds	9	2.05
Sports sites	5	64.17
Natural/ semi-natural greenspace	39	249.25
Combination sites	68	477.64
Other miscellaneous greenspaces	42	5.97
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>888.7</b>

Table B.5 - London Public Open Space Hierarchy.  
Source: Mayor of London: Open Space Strategies, Best Practice Guidance (2008)

Open space categorisation	Size guidelines
Regional parks	400 Ha
Metropolitan parks	60 Ha
District parks	20 Ha
Local parks and open spaces	2 Ha
Small open spaces	Under 2 Ha
Pocket parks	Under 0.4 Ha
Linear open spaces	Variable

Table B.6 - Assessment of parks provision by area: Chipping Barnet, Hendon, Finchley and Golders Green

Barnet region	Park provision
Chipping Barnet	244.03 Hectares
Finchley and Golders Green	80.07 Hectares
Hendon	141.1 Hectares

to determine any deficiencies in public open space provision. Accessibility is also significant in defining the value of an open space. A high quality open space can be of limited value if access to it is restricted by major barriers such as transport corridors and rivers.

The Open Spaces Strategy Guidance (2008) developed by the Mayor of London and CABI proposes a set of accessibility criteria that is related to the London Public Open Space Hierarchy defined in the London Plan (2012).

Figures J.3, J.4 in Appendix J show levels of deficiency for each level of provision described within the London Parks Hierarchy. Figure J.5 shows levels of deficiency when proximities to District and Local parks are combined.

North and East Finchley and Brent Cross/ Cricklewood have a particular deficiency in District Park provision. Policy CS7 of Barnet Council's Core Strategy (2012) proposes 'improving access to open spaces particularly in North and East Finchley and other areas of public open space deficiency.'

Local parks are more evenly spread across the borough and overall most areas of the borough are well served, however a section of the borough from New Barnet to Oakleigh Park and parts of North Finchley, East Finchley and an area to the

North East of Hendon do not lie within 400m of a local park.

Access to natural and semi-natural greenspace has been assessed with reference to the Mayor’s Bio-diversity Strategy (2002) which proposes that everybody should be within 1km of a site of Metropolitan or Borough Interest for Nature

Table B.7 - Accessibility thresholds	
Source: Mayor of London: Open Space Strategies, Best Practice Guidance (2008)	
Open space categorisation	Distance from homes
Regional parks	3.2 to 8 km
Metropolitan parks	3.2 km
District parks	1.2 km
Local parks and open spaces	400 m
Small open spaces	Less than 400 m
Pocket parks	Less than 400 m
Linear open spaces	Wherever feasible

Conservation. For sites of Local Interest for Nature Conservation, the distance criterion is 500m.

Figure J.5 in Appendix J show areas of deficiency in terms of access to these two types of provision.

Most of Barnet lies within 1km of a site of Metropolitan Interest or Borough Interest for Nature Conservation. East Finchley, Cricklewood and parts of Hendon lie outside this catchment. Much of the borough also lies within 500m of a site of local interest for nature conservation. Parts of Colindale, Cricklewood, Finchley, Chipping Barnet, New Barnet, Oakleigh Park and Hendon lie outside this catchment.

Distance standards are based on an assumption that users can walk to most forms of provision. Given the nature of provision in Barnet and the size of the borough, the 2009 PPG17 assessment of parks and open spaces included a further based upon standards used by Transport for London when assessing Public Transport Access Levels (PTAL) for different parts of London:

- whether the park is on or adjacent to the Public Rights of Way Network
- whether the park has an above average number of London Cycle Routes within 100m compared to the rest of the sites in the parks category

- whether the park has an above average number of bus routes within 640m compared to the rest of the sites in the parks category.
- whether the site has an underground station or national rail station within 940m.

This strategy has assessed changes in the public rights of way network, designated London cycle routes, bus routes and bus stops within Barnet and the distribution of underground and national rail stations across the borough.

Figures J.7 and J.8 in Appendix J details the changes to these transport networks since 2009. These changes have had minimal impact on levels of accessibility and the findings of the 2009 study are thus still applicable:

Table B.8 - Accessibility thresholds

Source: Mayor of London: Open Space Strategies, Best Practice Guidance (2008)

Parks accessibility assessment

<p>Parks with a high accessibility score</p>	<p>Brook Farm/ Wyatt's Farm                  Brunswick Park                  Childs Hill                  Hendon Park                  Hampstead Heath Extension                  Oakdene Park                  Whetstone Strays                  York Park</p>
<p>Parks with a low accessibility score</p>	<p>Bounds Green Fairview Open Space                  Boysland Open Space                  Edgwarebury Park                  Elm Park                  Hadley Cricket Outfield                  Hamilton Road Playground                  Jubilee Gardens                  Oak Lane Open Space                  Princes Park                  Rushgrove Park</p>

B.12 Barnet parks – future provision

Paragraph B.6 describes the anticipated rise in the population of Barnet between 2011 and 2041. From a base population of 367,266 in 2015, the population of the borough will rise to 431,814 over this period.

The current parks portfolio in Barnet consists of 10 district parks and 77 local parks. In 2015, Barnet has one district park for every 36,726 residents and one local park for every 4,769 residents.

In order to sustain this level of parks provision, 12 district parks and 90 local parks will be required by 2041. However, it should be noted that the current level of parks provision across the borough equates to 1.26 Hectares per 1,000 head of population, whereas the Local Plan Development Management Policies (DMP) DPD proposes the provision of 1.63 Hectares per 1,000 head of population. To achieve this level of provision in 2015 will require the creation of 136 Hectares of additional park space. To support a population of 431,814, 240 Hectares of park space over and above current levels of provision would be required.

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For more information please visit: <http://engage.barnet.gov.uk>.

If you would like to request this consultation in an alternative format please e-mail [@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:@barnet.gov.uk)  
or phone 020 8359