

DCMS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY: SECTORS

THE ROYAL PARKS

The Royal Parks - Hyde Park, Kensington Gardens & Brompton Park, The Green Park and St James' Park, The Regents' Park, Bushy Park and the Longford River, Greenwich Park, Richmond Park- are (with the exception of Primrose Hill) Grade 1 Listed landscapes, owned by the Crown but managed as free and open public spaces by the Royal Parks Agency.

Introduction

The Royal Parks are: Bushy Park, Greenwich Park, Hyde Park, Kensington Gardens, Regent's Park (with Primrose Hill), Richmond Park, St James's and Green Park. Covering an area of 2023 hectares (5000 acres), The Royal Parks include:

- 280 buildings, statues and memorials (many of which are listed)
- 49 miles of boundary walls and fencing
- 100 miles of roads, footpaths, cycle tracks and horse rides
- 21 lakes and ponds
- A 13-mile river
- Extensive sports facilities, including 16 football pitches, 12 cricket pitches, 34 tennis courts plus provision for softball, rugby hockey and other sports, play and recreation

The Royal Parks Agency is also responsible for Brompton Cemetery, Grosvenor Square Gardens and Victoria Tower Gardens. Additional areas maintained by the Agency include: Nos 10, 11 and 12 Downing Street gardens, Canning Green, Poets Green and the Longford River (except a section in Hampton Court Home Park).

CURRENT POSITION

As part of The Royal Parks commitment to the environment and sustainable development, a Green Housekeeping Policy was introduced in 1997. This policy and subsequent sustainability projects are facilitated by The Royal Parks Green Housekeeping Committee, which consists of Park management, Park environmental representatives, contractors and specialist consultants. Chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Parks Mike Fitt, the committee benefits from senior management commitment. This commitment is demonstrated through the sustainable theme which underpins the current Corporate Plan 2003/4 – 2005/6.

Since its inception, Green Housekeeping has expanded and diversified to the point where formalised management and control were necessary for the various projects being undertaken. As a result, the internationally accepted Environmental Management System ISO 14001 was implemented, and all 8 Royal Parks were independently certified by December 2002.

Environmental Protection:

Through Green Housekeeping, the Royal Parks are currently working on 11 sustainability objectives with a further 4 having been completed. Current achievements include:

- **Energy management:** Through effective energy management The Royal Parks have reduced their carbon dioxide emissions by 1,150 tonnes per annum. This is equivalent to filling the Agencys' head office in Hyde Park, Old Police House, 3 times per week.

Potentially first among UK consumers is The Royal Parks procurement of 100% renewable power. 71% of this electricity is 'Dark Green' being obtained from zero emission sources (hydro and wind power). The remaining 21% is classed as 'Light Green Energy' and is obtained from Landfill Gas and Waste to Energy sources. This means that Royal Parks are exempt from paying the Climate Change Levy tax imposed on fossil fuel and natural gas generated electricity supplies. The additional cost of purchasing renewable electricity is off set by the savings made by not having to pay the tax.

- **Waste management:** Management strategies have been developed and implemented for the minimisation and recycling of waste streams. Data is currently being collated to facilitate the further reduction and recycling of waste streams produced both within Park offices and within the Parks as a whole i.e. waste from public bins.

Green Waste: Composting of green waste takes place in Kensington Gardens, Hyde, St James's, Green, Richmond, Bushy and Greenwich parks. 4 Parks are now able to recycle 100% of their leaf fall and shrub prunings.

- **Transport:** 29 of the 40 vehicles in The Royal Parks vehicle fleet now run on LPG. An independent study undertaken by Motorvate has estimated that this conversion to LPG has produced a 38% or 120.45 tonne reduction in CO2 emissions.

This reduction is in addition to the CO2 reduction achieved through Energy Management.

- **Procurement:** Contractors are asked to adhere to strict procurement policies. These include using LPG or other 'green' fuels; concession holders are obliged to set up recycling schemes and buy organic where available; and, consultants are required to submit reports on recycled paper.

All the cutlery and cups used for in-house catering are recyclable; all water comes from dispensers, thus avoiding plastic bottles, and coffee and tea come from FairTrade sources.

Innovative environmental projects under consideration include:

- Regents Park borehole
- Photovoltaic Cells in existing buildings
- Micro Hydro Systems
- Micro Wind Systems
- Combined Heat and Power System
- Biomass project, to generate gas for electricity production, and a solid fertiliser and liquid soil conditioner for Parks use.
- Trading of Renewable Obligation Certificates
- Zero emission transport; boats, maintenance vehicles and scooters

Economic Development:

Besides directly employing approximately 250 staff, 148 of which are the Royal Parks Constabulary (RPC), The Royal Parks can employ a further 650 (during peak summer periods) through letting a range of contracts and concessions.

Social Equity:

As well as its primary function as a green space for the recreation of the general public, The Royal Parks provide a whole range of activities for various sectors of society. For example:

- Holly Lodge Centre, Richmond Park: provides access to the environment for those with special needs
- The Stockyard, Bushy Park: houses Companion Cycling, and for those less able, Horse Riding for the disabled
- 'Liberty Drives', Hyde Park: free electric buggies run by volunteers which ferry less mobile visitors around the park
- Wildlife for All: a three year partnership with the RSPB and funded by HLF, which is actively seeking to involve minority ethnic groups
- School activities take place in the classroom at the Stockyard in Bushy Park
- Education and Events strategies are being developed for all the Royal Parks, which will take in the need to embrace all sectors of society and link such activities to sustainable development.

The Royal Parks has ambitious plans to expand its education strategy for both children and adults. This includes the promotion and delivery of vocational training in association with the Learning Skills Council, Sector Skills Council and Higher Education institutions. It is The Royal Parks intention to establish a Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) for land based industries and craft skills in Regents Park. There is also scope to establish professional development courses, for teachers, and for adult education.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT VISION

The Royal Parks strive to provide continued leadership and expertise in the sustainable management of the urban park environment and promotion of sustainable development to the wider community.

The Royal Parks have been instrumental in setting up the South Kensington Sustainability Forum in conjunction with the Science Museum. The forum acts to promote sustainable development in the local area and the wider community through the sharing of information and joint sustainability initiatives. The forum now includes: the BBC, The Royal Geographical Society, Crown Estates, DCMS, the Albert Hall and the Natural History Museum.

FUTURE ACTION

To ensure continued certification to the ISO 14001 standard, The Royal Parks must demonstrate continual improvement in their environmental performance. To ensure the latter is achieved, future projects within The Royal Parks include:

- **Energy Management:** If implemented, the 'Stockyard Project' in Bushy Park will involve the installation of renewable and sustainable energy sources. It has been predicted that

this project could generate sufficient electricity to provide 40% of The Royal Parks annual electricity requirements. Such a project could act as a centre of excellence promoting best practice and education on renewable and sustainable energy sources.

- **Biodiversity:** The surveying, monitoring and enhancement of biodiversity within The Royal Parks is ongoing and involves local authorities, biodiversity partnerships and wildlife groups. In the fourth quarter of 2002 The Royal Parks appointed a Community Ecologist to facilitate this process both within the Parks and the wider community.
- **Events:** Working with events organisers and contractors The Royal Parks are striving to implement waste minimisation and recycling initiatives. A pilot scheme is currently being undertaken with Nike and the BBC to research waste minimisation at events within The Royal Parks.
- **Waste Management:** Further work will be undertaken to identify and monitor waste streams. This data will provide the basis for minimisation and recycling initiatives.
- **Contractors and Concessionaires:** Following an initial positive response, work will continue with contractors and concessionaires to ensure that sustainability within The Royal Parks takes a fully holistic approach. Initiatives will focus on waste management, sustainable procurement and continued conversion of contractors' vehicles to LPG where possible.

Summary:

The Royal Parks are unique. Green Housekeeping and its projects play an integral role in moving The Royal Parks forward for the benefit of those visiting the park, the wider community and the environment.