

CRANE VALLEY PARK FEASIBILITY STUDY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Crane Valley Park

1. This document provides a summary of the Feasibility Study into the development of a new park, to be known as Crane Valley Park, in the lower part of the Crane valley and within the London Boroughs of Hounslow and Richmond. This has been provided as an Executive Summary to the Final Report and has also been produced as a separate summary document. Further copies of both documents and the associated maps can be found at www.force.org.uk
2. This park incorporates the existing Crane Park (of some 33 hectares) and extends it westwards to include Feltham Marshalling Yards, De Brome Fields and Pevensey Nature Reserve and eastwards to include a matrix of land including Mereway Nature Park, Kneller Gardens and Twickenham Junction Rough. The result would be a new linear Crane Valley Park of some 97 hectares and linking Twickenham Station in the east to Hounslow Heath in the west.
3. This park would have the size and status to be classified as a new Metropolitan Park for London. This park would be deemed to be providing a resource to a population within 3.2 kilometres of its boundaries, which is estimated to contain some 235,000 people, many of them living in areas of deprivation with respect to open space.
4. This Study has been funded by LB Hounslow and LB Richmond upon Thames councils, with additional grant funding from Awards for All and the Wates Foundation. It has been undertaken by a Steering Group with membership from the two councils and London Wildlife Trust and led by Friends of the River Crane Environment (FORCE). The project is linked to the wider management of the Crane Valley through the Crane Valley Partnership, which has representatives from the five boroughs along the Crane and all the other key statutory parties.
5. The development of the park is supported by planning policy at national, regional (London Plan) and local level. Submissions relating to the park have been made to the emerging Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) for both councils. It is intended that both LDFs will explicitly support the development of Crane Valley Park through policy statements.
6. Most of the land within the proposed park is currently in the ownership of the two local authorities. There are two key private ownerships – Feltham Marshalling Yards and Twickenham Junction Rough – at the western and eastern ends of the proposed park respectively.
7. There are three phases envisaged to the park development. Phase One would extend the existing Crane Park to include local authority owned green spaces and result in a

- new park of some 63 hectares. This is considered possible in the near future (see Figure 1).
8. Phase Two would require agreements regarding private land ownerships and other more complex issues and would result in the creation of a new Metropolitan park of 97 hectares (and also shown in Figure 1). It is the delivery of this phase which is the main focus of this report. Delivery of this phase is anticipated in the medium term (of three to five years).
 9. Phase Three would extend the park along the River Crane to include several large and adjacent park and heathland areas and create a new regional park of over 400 hectares. This is a longer term vision for the Crane Valley, and is shown in Figure 2 (main report only). There is also scope for extending the park still further upstream to link with other green spaces upstream in Hillingdon and Harrow in future years.
 10. The proposed metropolitan park runs along the West London Green Chain – a green wildlife corridor of some 30 kilometres in length that extends from Harrow in north London, along Yeading Brook and the Crane, to meet the Thames at Isleworth. This is one of the major green corridors of London and is of great value for wildlife movement as well as a public amenity resource.
 11. The area of the park consists at present of a matrix of green spaces with different designations and levels of protection. The environmental designations within the proposed park are shown on Figure 4 (main report only). These spaces are currently vulnerable to development and are also often neglected and subject to fly tipping, graffiti and other anti-social behaviour. They are however already valued by local people for activities such as walking, jogging, informal sports and fishing. They are not used as much as they could be due to access issues, lack of awareness of their existence, lack of management/facilities and concerns regarding public safety. The current situation with regard to public access is shown on Figure 5 (main report only).

Benefits of delivering the new park

12. Bringing these spaces within the framework of a Metropolitan Park would provide them with an enhanced level of protection from development and be a great opportunity for coherent overall management and improvement of their environmental and public value. It would also provide an opportunity to enhance the linkages eastwards and westwards along the river corridor as well as between the site and the surrounding population, creating a resource of value to a large population of west London
13. The value of this corridor for walking and cycling has already been recognised by local people and the public authorities. The London Loop and Crane Walk already run through the park area and there are advanced proposals for new cycle routes along the river as well as a new Strategic walk for London along the Crane. This project provides an opportunity to co-ordinate these proposals within the context of the wider

objectives for the park. Links to existing walking routes and two potential new routes are shown on Figure 6 (main report only).

14. The proposed area contains two Nature Reserves – Pevensey Road and Crane Park Island – and much of the land is designated at Metropolitan or Borough level for its environmental importance. There is considerable potential for enhancing the biodiversity value of the area through landscape design and management. Crane Park Island in particular is recognised as an “outdoor laboratory” for testing environmental management techniques that can then be rolled out across the wider area. The project is already linked to the Biodiversity Action Plan process at a regional and local level. A new biodiversity officer has recently been appointed for the Crane valley through a new BIFFAward funded project, led by the Crane Valley Partnership, to work for the next three years to deliver environmental improvements to Crane Valley Park and two other sites upstream.
15. Most of the land area is within a flood risk zone. There is the potential to develop parts of the park, using both river restoration and flood plain creation techniques, to enhance its amenity and environmental value whilst also providing an enhanced level of flood protection to the surrounding population.
16. The area has a rich heritage, much of it little known by local people. Features include Hounslow Gunpowder mills; the construction of the Duke of Northumberland’s River in the 1500’s to provide a water supply to Syon Priory; ownership of much of the land by the King of Portugal in the early 20th Century, and its more recent use for market gardens.
17. The proposed park is located near to two colleges and around a dozen schools in the two boroughs. Links have already been developed with some of these schools through projects managed by LWT, FORCE and the Richmond Schools Environment Forum. The LWT at Crane Park Island and the Shot Tower has run education events for children and families for many years. There are many other opportunities to develop educational activities throughout the park.
18. The work to date on this project has been instrumental in raising the profile of this part of the Crane valley. This has already resulted in the award of £150,000 from BIFFAward for environmental improvements and £400,000 from the London Mayor. This latter award was the result of a public vote where, with 6677 votes, Crane Park received more support than any other London park.

Approach to Delivering Crane Valley Park

19. The first requirement to move forward with the project is to gain the agreement of the key parties to the principles of the new park. It is hoped that this document will aid considerably in this process.

20. The principles of the park development will need to be incorporated into the key planning policies for the two boroughs. A start has already been made with the Local Development Framework. Other policy and planning documents regarding specific sites and plans have been identified in this document.
21. The implementation phase of the project will be managed by the same, potentially expanded steering group. This group will manage and/or guide various implementation projects such as the BIFFA project and the Mayor's priority parks project.
22. The steering group will be linked to the public through a network of Friends and Community groups that would liaise with the public about their priorities and bring forward projects. They would also, as FORCE, LWT and other groups already do, aid in the fund raising for these projects and run volunteer work days.

Project funding

23. Two major grant funds (BIFFA and Priority Parks) are in place and a major bid has been submitted by the Crane Valley Partnership to the Heritage Lottery Fund, focussed on improvements to social conditions related to local green spaces. Opportunities for other small scale and larger scale bids have also been identified.
24. Section 106 projects linked to planned developments are a potential means of delivering aspects of the proposed park development. There are a significant number of actual and potential schemes local to the park area that could reasonably contribute to the project by means such as land transfers, access agreements and financial support. These schemes are identified on Figure 3.
25. The project has identified a number of other projects and statutory authorities that may be able to contribute to the aspirations for the park through having shared objectives.
26. Not least would be the contribution, through small grants and the provision of voluntary manpower, of the voluntary environmental and community sectors.

The way forward

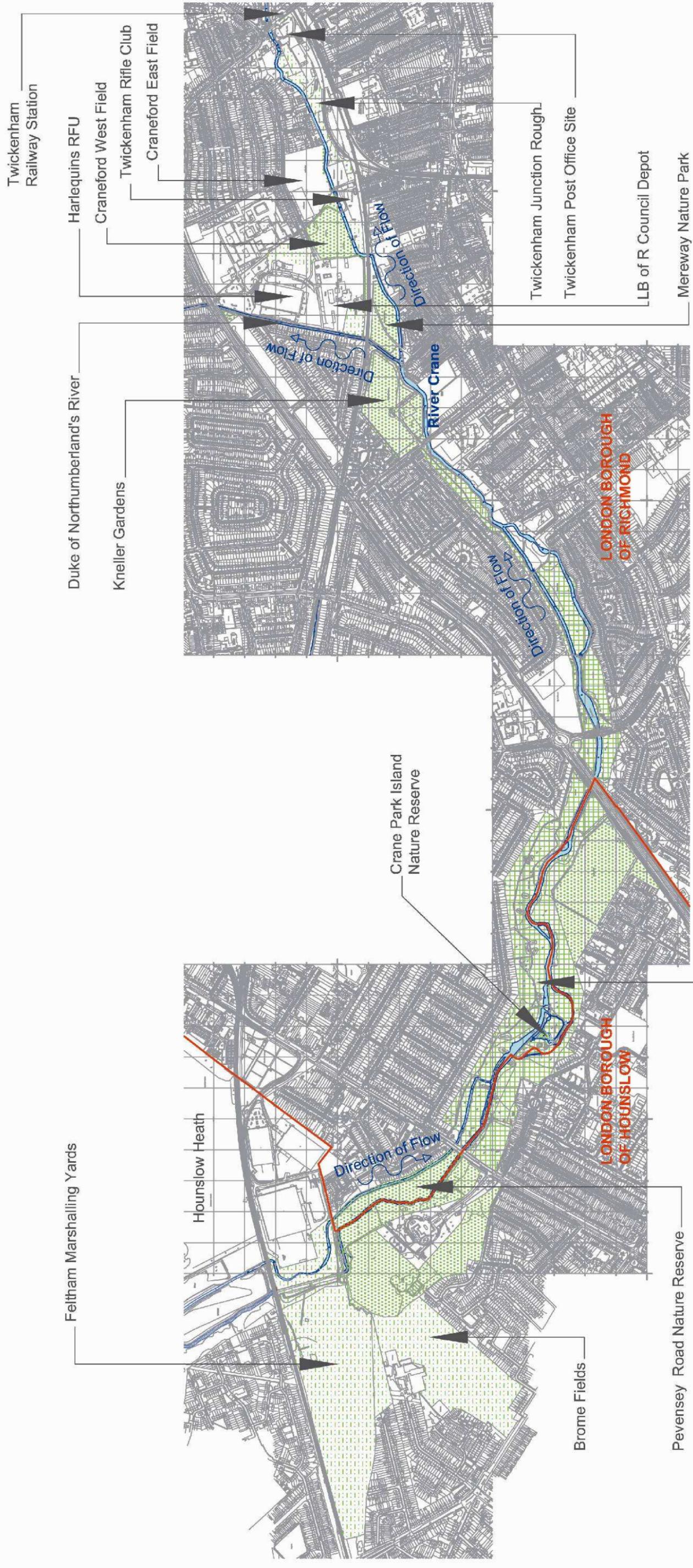
27. The final report will be circulated to key interested parties and presented to the public. A consultation exercise will be carried out to review the findings of this project and inform the future strategy
28. The steering group will move on to supporting the two existing projects and identifying and liaising on other opportunities to deliver aspects of the new park.
29. The aim will be to deliver substantially on the Phase Two Metropolitan Park by 2012, by which time the Priority Parks project will have ended. This would include

having agreed public access for the main sites linking Hounslow Heath and Twickenham Station and a management system in place to maintain and improve the environmental and public value of the park over time.

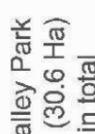
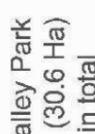
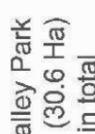
30. The potential for delivering a regional park along the Crane valley will be explored over this same three year period.

In Summary

31. There are a wide range of tangible benefits in developing Crane Valley Park. The means to achieve this new park appear to be available through a network of statutory organisations and with the support of the community and voluntary sector. The recent award of two major grants, alongside the potential for further support through other grants and Section 106 agreements, has encouraged the steering group that this new park is deliverable. Progress on this project is essential to ensure the fragmented areas of the lower Crane Valley do not become overdeveloped and depleted of community, wildlife and a sense of place.



KEY

-  Borough boundary
-  Existing Crane Park (32.8 Ha)
-  Crane Valley Park Phase 1 (30.6 Ha)
-  Crane Valley Park Phase 2 (33.2 Ha)
-  63.4 Ha in total
-  96.6 Ha in total

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FIGURE 1

D	30.06.09	Minor amendments following meeting.	ELG	GB	CHECKED
C	27.04.08	Minor amendments following meeting.	ELG	GB	
B	17.02.08	Crane Park historic role added.	ELG	GB	
A	03.02.08	ARR calculations amended.	ELG	GB	
REV	DATE	DETAILS	DRAWN		



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LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

PROJECT	Crane Valley Park
DRAWING	Site Plan - Metropolitan Park Phase 1 & 2
DRAWN	ELG
CHECKED	GB
DATE	Feb 2009
DWG. No.	745/50 D
SCALE	1:1,250 @ A3