

# How river restorations enhance developments in London

*A strategic, landscape-based approach is needed to fully realise the potentially huge environmental and social benefits of restoring rivers*

Incorporating river restoration into development near rivers can:

- Reduce flood risk
- Improve community cohesion and cut crime
- Increase access to the river for communities
- Boost the local economy
- Help improve water quality
- Connect wildlife corridors
- Help threatened species survive
- Help fish migrate

River restoration can involve:

- Removing barriers and concrete channels
- Creating new wetlands
- Creating new reedbeds
- Allowing rivers to flow more naturally
- Bringing rivers above ground (daylighting)



*Ladywell Fields: crime dropped by 80 per cent after the Ravensbourne river was taken out of its concrete channel to flow naturally through the regenerated park*

# Rivers, people and development

- All too often, riverside developments treat these waterways as 'set aside' spaces rather than integrating them into developments
  - A London Rivers Restoration Group study found that development contributed only 300 metres of river restoration via Section 106, compared with a total of 5.8km achieved through other mechanisms
  - To be effective, rivers must be included in the initial visioning stage of a new development
- Taking a 'catchment-based approach': ie seeing the local patch of river as a piece of a much larger jigsaw, means that much greater benefits can be achieved
  - Best practice guidance can be found here: <https://www.lewisham.gov.uk/myserVICES/planning/policy/LDF/SPDs/Pages/River-corridor-improvement-plan.aspx>
  - Read more about great developments featuring river restorations: <http://www.thames21.org.uk/londonriversweek/where-to-visit/>



*Pictures: Top: Wandle Park; middle: Greenwich Peninsula; bottom: Firs Farm: successful river restorations created in partnership with developers*