



Community Input Summary: Proposed River Restoration – Queensmead Recreation Ground

Project webpage: <https://www.thames21.org.uk/improving-rivers/queensmead-recreation-ground-london-borough-of-bromley/>

Project email: T21Ravensbourne@thames21.org.uk

This report presents public feedback collected from two sources:

Part one:

This feedback reflects verbal conversations held in Queensmead Recreation Ground on 23 January 2025, as well as email submissions received between the project's public announcement in January 2025 until March 2026. To date, 26 members of the public have submitted feedback by email, and a further 150 people have requested to stay informed about the project. The email feedback channel remains open at the time of this report for ongoing comments and questions. The email is T21Ravensbourne@thames21.org.uk.

Part two:

This feedback was in post-it note form used to collect responses during the public engagement events on 17 September 2025, where c.200 of the community attended.

Part one:

This feedback has been summarised under two themes:

1. Concerns – what people are worried about
2. Aspirations & positive ideas – what people would like or support

1. Concerns - what people are worried about:

Flooding & ground conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strong worry that removing concrete banks will increase flood risk to homes on Queensmead Road, Recreation Road and downstream.• Fear that the park will become boggy, muddy or unusable for long periods.• Memories from residents of historic flooding (1960s-1970s) before the culvert was installed; fear flooding will return.• Concern that climate change makes reverting to natural banks even riskier.• Examples cited (e.g. Beckenham Place Park) to show lack of confidence in modelling. <p><i>NB. Beckenham Place Park is designed to incorporate flood storage areas, which demonstrates some public misunderstanding.</i></p>
Loss of usable community space	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anxiety that wetlands or wider river areas would reduce usable open space in an already small recreation ground.• Concern that the space no longer works for jogging, dog walking, sunbathing, picnics, etc.• Worry that important flat, dry areas will be lost or become inaccessible.
Impact on AFC Shortlands (community football club)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fear that the restoration would remove or reduce football pitches, affecting 300+ children.• Concerns that waterlogging could make pitches unplayable for long periods.• Risk that loss of space would force the club to fold, harming children's mental and physical health.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Football is emphasised as a major community asset.
Mosquitoes, wildlife nuisance & proximity to wetlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern that a wetland close to homes will increase mosquitoes, especially in summer. • Worries about unwanted wildlife very close to gardens/homes.
Safety concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of fast-flowing water and open banks without safety measures. • Concern that small children, older people, or dogs could fall in. • Preference for maintaining fenced or contained river sections. • Worries that increased vegetation could reduce visibility and make people feel less safe.
Consultation process & communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frustration that consultation sessions were held during working hours, excluding many residents. • Comments that materials did not clearly explain the pros, cons, or flood impacts of each option. • Requests for better promotion, a mailing list, and clearer updates. • Complaints about a lack of structured presentations or opportunities for discussion.
Distrust of modelling and technical claims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requests for flood risk assessments to be published. • Little faith that mitigation will work as promised. • Feeling that proposals may be influenced by “aesthetics” rather than practicality or safety.
Long-term monitoring, maintenance & funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern about where funding will come from. • Worry that open riverbanks will lead to more litter, pollution and volunteer burden. • Doubt that the council has resources to maintain the space after major changes.
Fear of urban unsuitability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some residents feel wetlands and rewilding are better suited to larger parks. • Concern that Queensmead is too small for major ecological interventions.

2. Aspirations & positive ideas – what people would like or support:

<p>Support for river naturalisation & ecological benefits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many residents support restoring the river, especially supporting the most environmentally ambitious option. • Excitement about improving biodiversity, wildlife habitats and natural beauty. • Belief that rewilding can reduce downstream flood risk. “Everyone is downstream from somewhere” • Interest in making the river an attractive natural feature, similar to Beckenham Place Park. • Project would benefit local wildlife • Increased natural habitats, water surfaces, and shade could help cool the park during hotter summers. • Access will create enjoyable ways for children to interact with the water, explore nature and stay cool as temperatures rise.
<p>Desire for a balanced, compromised solution</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents emphasise the need to protect both nature and football space. • Interest in options that slow the flow but maintain recreation areas. • Desire for designs that keep open space but soften the concrete channel.
<p>Community engagement & volunteering</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers to join mailing lists and help with river clearance/volunteering. • Requests for better ongoing communication and involvement.
<p>Recreation & family use enhancements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideas such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information boards about the river’s route and ecology - Paddling areas (like Eynsford) - Stepping stones • Desire to maintain safe, open spaces for running, walking and family activities. • Recognition of Queensmead as a valuable, small, local park.

Educational opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for improvements that help local children learn about nature, wildlife and climate resilience. • Interest from local schools and youth groups.
General aesthetic improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents who dislike the concrete channel welcome opportunities to make the area more attractive and natural.

Part two:

Public Consultation, 17 September 2026. Attended by circa 200 members of the public and local councillors.

We asked attendees to feedback on three questions:

1. What do you love about Queensmead Recreation Ground?
2. What do you want to see improved at Queensmead Recreation Ground?
3. What are your concerns about the proposed river restoration?

The photographs of the post it notes from the lunch time and evening sessions are included below.

Q1. What do you love about Queensmead Recreation Ground?

A beautiful natural environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The park's natural feel - mix of grass, woods and varied terrain • High quality foraging and nature diversity but could be improved • Mature trees, woods and wildlife • Connects people to nature • Being next to Valley Primary school
Lots of space to relax and explore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide, open areas for walking, running, playing, exploring and relaxing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Picnic areas • Space is one of the biggest strengths
Activities for everyone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boys and girls playing football at AFC Shortlands • Adventure play area • Tennis courts
Good for health and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A valued escape from busy environments • It's a peaceful place to recharge and spend time outdoors • A place to de-stress and improve mental health
A welcoming community space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brings families, children, teens and neighbours together • AFC Shortlands community for 300+ children and families. • Feels friendly, inclusive and socially important • Safe for all ages • A place to build memories with family and friends
Easy to access and great for everyday use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-used paths and routes for daily walking, running or dog-walking • Convenient for travelling to school or through the neighbourhood
Amenities that make visits enjoyable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winston's Coffee van

Transcription:

1. Nature, Landscape & Green Space

- Abundant greenery, mature trees, and woodland atmosphere
- Mix of grass, woods, and varied terrain
- Fresh air and open views
- Beautiful natural landscape that supports wellbeing

- Wildlife, including protected species
- Clean, green environment appreciated by visitors

2. Space, Freedom & Openness

- Large open spaces suitable for walking, running, relaxing, and exploring
- Areas suitable for picnics, meet-ups, and informal gatherings
- A sense of freedom and escape within the city
- Space that feels peaceful, calm, and restorative

3. Activities & Recreation

- Range of activities available for adults, children, and families
- Adventure play area and equipment
- Opportunities for running, walking, cycling, and outdoor exercise
- Sports facilities such as tennis courts and open grass for ball games
- Enjoyment of exploring features like slopes and varied landscapes

4. Wellbeing, Mental Health & Escape

- A place to de-stress and improve mental health
- Space that feels safe and contributes to emotional wellbeing
- A valued escape from busy or urban environments
- Fresh air and calm surroundings that help people recharge

5. Social & Community Value

- A welcoming community space where people can meet

- Opportunities to build memories with family
- A place where children and teens can play and spend time together
- Accessible for people of all ages and backgrounds

6. Walking, Routes & Everyday Use

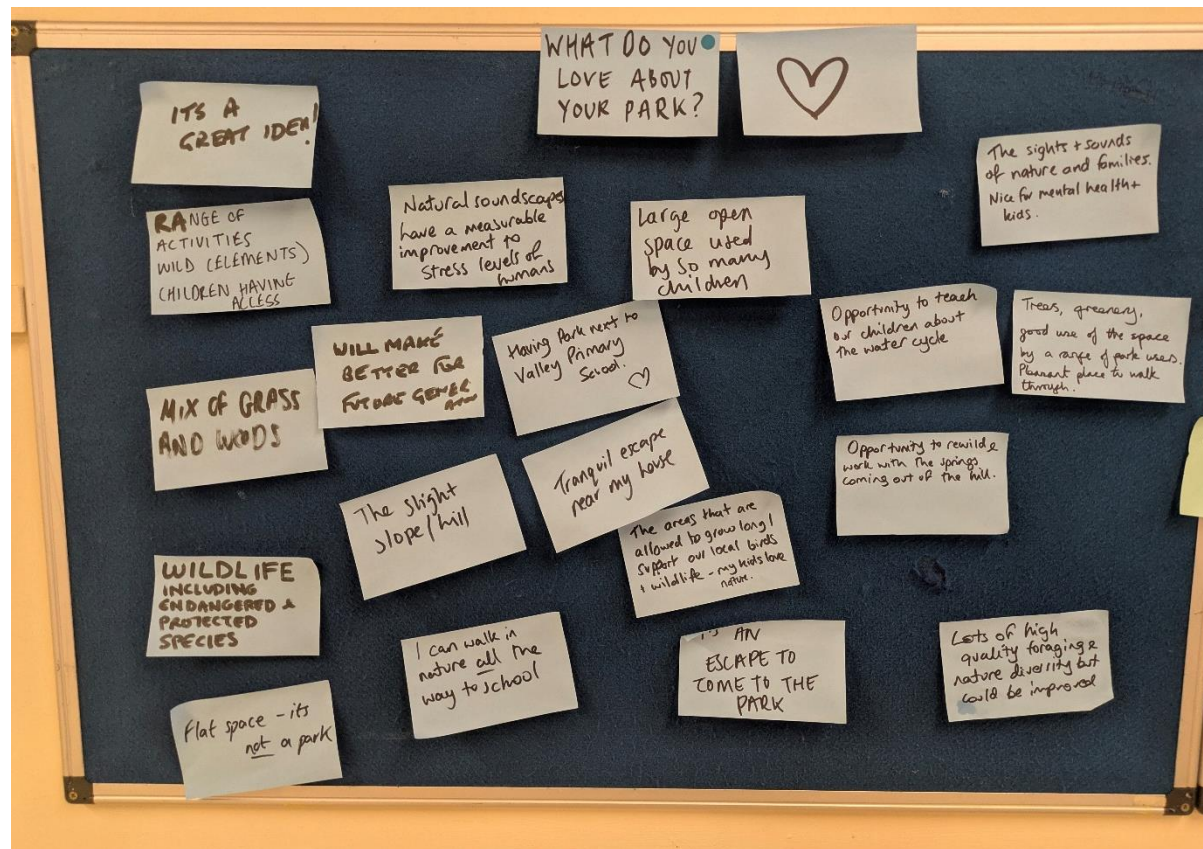
- Good walking routes for commuting, daily exercise, or walking the dog
- Circular paths suitable for running or leisurely strolls
- A pleasant landscape to walk through on the way to school or local areas

7. Local Amenities & Convenience

- Winston's onsite coffee van and refreshments add to the park experience
- Accessibility of paths and entrances appreciated by residents

8. Overall Appreciation

- People value the general atmosphere, friendliness, and quality of the park
- Many simply say they "love" the park or think it's a great idea to invest in it



Q2. What do you want to see improved in Queensmead Recreation Ground?

<p>Nature, wildlife and the river</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the look, health and biodiversity of the river • Provide more information about the river and its wildlife • Add more diversity of plants and habitats • Create more nature-based features • Make the park feel more natural • Introduce more trees, including permanent planting • Restore floodplain habitat and riverbank areas • Better manage water so flooding is reduced but nature still benefits • Create opportunities to be closer to nature
<p>Paths, routes and accessibility</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better, safer footpaths across the park • Improve path quality, especially where it gets muddy or waterlogged • Make more routes so people can spread out • Ensure paths work for wheelchairs, pushchairs and people with mobility needs • Improve signage for paths, rights-of-way and key areas • Create safer entrances and clearer connections • Provide maps or clearer wayfinding
<p>Lighting and safety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add low-level lighting on key routes to improve safety • Improve lighting in darker parts of the park in winter • Better lighting for accessibility and car parks • Improve general safety, including around the river and footpaths
<p>Facilities, seating and social spaces</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add more benches and picnic tables • Provide more places to sit and relax

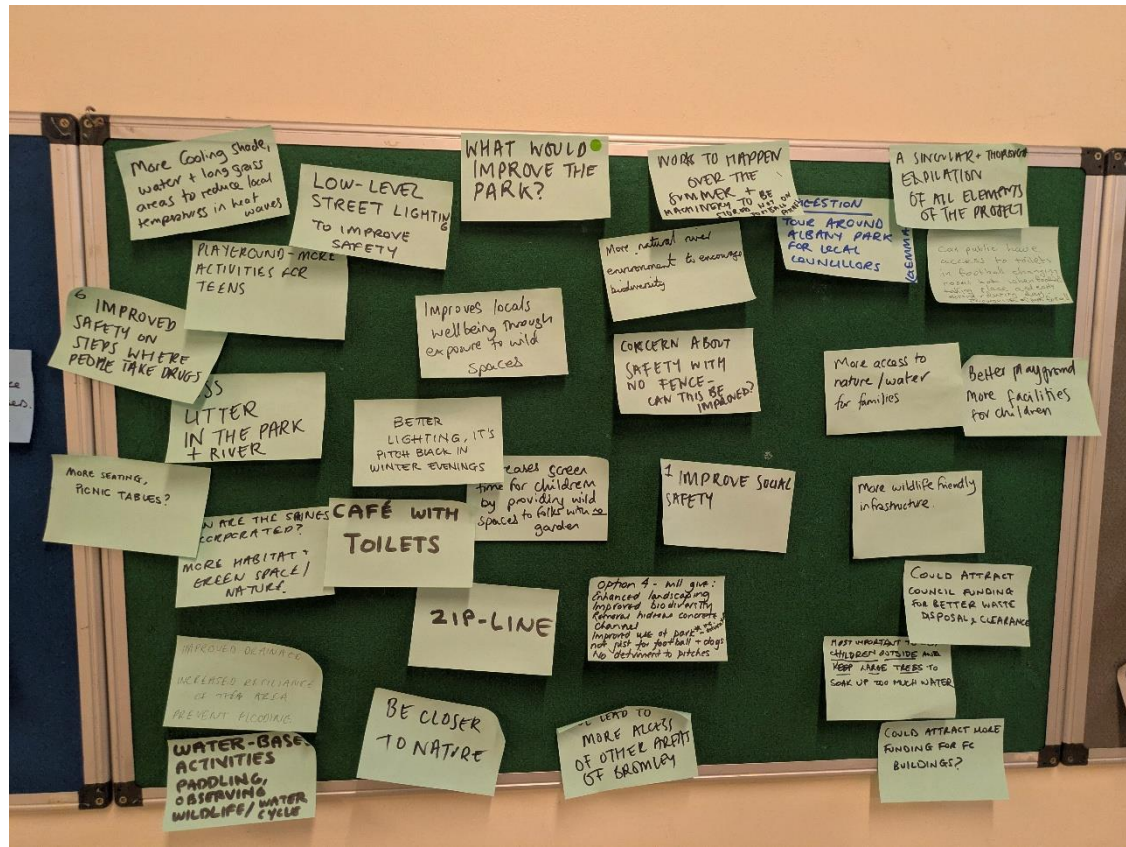
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create comfortable spaces for resting, socialising and enjoying the view • Build a café with toilets
Play and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More activities for teens • A zip-line • Better playground and recreation opportunities • Water-based activities (like paddle-boarding) • More opportunities for creative and nature-focused play • The restored river could strengthen children’s connection with nature through greater access to rewilded areas and water. • Local schools such as Valley Primary and local families would gain educational opportunities.
General improvements and maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve overall ground quality • Better maintenance of muddy or boggy areas • Improve path surfaces to make them safer in all weather • Address litter in the park and river • Ensure improvements happen with minimal disruption
Project clarity and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share more information about all parts of the project in one place • Make consultation materials easier to understand • Keep people updated throughout the process • A plan showing all existing and proposed football pitches. • An illustration of the potential impact of a flood event similar to or more severe than those of the 1960s–70s, for each proposed option. • A clear explanation of how each option works, especially in terms of how the river functions and changes under each proposal.

Transcribed detail:

- A bridge across the river
- Improved drainage for football pitches
- Improve quality of path surfaces, grounds and riverbanks generally
- Be able to sit by a slow flowing river
- Prettier river edge
- Trees that don't impact on football pitches
- Better surfaced path/ walkway to make it safe for all
- Better accessibility for wheelchairs, pushchairs etc.
- Better signage for the area; make it easier to find the river
- Be able to sit by the sun/clouds/river every day
- More information about the river
- More diversity and wildlife – butterfly garden plants and pollinators
- Improve the look and biodiversity of the river
- Flooding pathway that links houses and community
- Water from spring flowing on path
- Make it more natural
- More trees permanently
- More benches/seating
- More accessible entrances and connections
- Reduce waterlogging – the park floods easily
- Lower river for breeding fish and other species
- Better pathways and trees for shade
- Demonstrate inside map of the park

- Make the park safer / less boggy
- Better management and maintenance
- More (seating) shade
- Low-level street lighting to improve safety
- Playground + more activities for teens
- Improved safety on steps where people take walks
- Litter in the park and river
- More seating, picnic tables
- The entire riverbank area to be restored and protected
- Better lighting - it's very dark in winter around pathways
- Better lighting for safety in car park
- Better lighting along accessible paths
- Better rights-of-way signage
- Better pathways to help elderly and toddlers
- Improved locals' wellbeing needs (more spaces to relax)
- Concern about safety with no fence by the river
- Improve street safety
- Work to happen over fewer weekends to minimise disruption
- A single/linear phased exhibition of all elements of the project
- More creative natural-based features
- Better alignment of public footpaths/routes
- More wildlife-friendly information
- Could affect wildlife - need nature-led planning
- More routes so different types of users can spread out
- Could attract more wildlife if designed carefully
- Could manage water better to allow flooding but also access

- Better pathway surfacing - accessible and safe for everyone
- Café with toilets
- Zip-line
- Be closer to nature
- Water-based activities on the river



Q3. What are your concerns with the proposed river restoration?

<p>Flooding, drainage and ground conditions A major concern is how the project might affect water, drainage and soil conditions. People raised worries about:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased flooding in the park or surrounding streets • Flood risk to local properties • Waterlogged or muddy ground becoming worse • AFC Shortlands training pitches not usable • Clay soils and whether they can cope with extra water • Poor drainage affecting how useable the park is • Safety concerns about children playing on very wet ground
<p>Impact on nearby homes People spoke about:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How changes could affect properties close to the park i.e. home insurance • Flooding or damp issues • Noise from increased activity • Loss of privacy
<p>Loss of green space Residents are worried about:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Losing open space • Reduced natural areas and grass • Too much development changing the park's character • Football pitches or features taking up more space than expected
<p>Impact of construction and disruption People expressed concerns about:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disruption during building works • Noise, mess and disturbance • How long works will take • The park being busier or harder to use during the project
<p>The project approach, transparency and decision-making Some people want reassurance about:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How decisions are being made • How transparent the process is • Whether the project will reflect what the community wants

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoiding outcomes that don't work for everyone • Whether the project is necessary or the best use of time
<p>Costs and funding Residents asked questions about:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much the project will cost • Whether it represents good value • If money could be spent better elsewhere • The long-term budget for maintaining parks <p><i>NB. This project has never had funding from Bromley Council. The project was funded from the Environment Agency's Water Environment Improvement Fund, which provides investment for initiatives aimed at improving rivers and their surrounding habitats in response to increasing pressures on local ecosystems and to help improve climate resilience.</i></p>
<p>Safety and use of the space Some concerns relate to safety and how people will use the park:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring children can play safely • More crowded or busy areas • Increased pressure on certain routes or facilities • Changes in how people move through the park
<p>Sports, AFC Shortland pitches and specific facilities Several concerns focused on:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Size and number of existing and proposed AFC Shortland football pitches. • Whether pitches will take over too much space • How new facilities might change the feel of the park • Lighting (e.g., behind pitches) and its impact on neighbours
<p>Environmental impact A few comments raised:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects on habitats and wildlife • The park becoming over-managed or too built-up • Long-term impacts of increased use

Transcribed detail:

- Small use of current ground
- General loss of space
- With more people walking across the park will damage the ground
- Potential increase anti-social behaviour
- Outcome that park works with everyone
- Football dominance
- Homeowners and flooding
- Flood - risk to local floodline
- Loss of space for kids to play
- When not working? (e.g. play equipment not suitable in rain/muddy conditions — safety surface?)
- Keeping the view lines open through the park
- Transparency of process design
- Ground will be more boggy
- More human pressure will drive away wildlife (e.g. carder bee)
- Space for football, sport, and picnic
- Waste of time for aesthetics
- We need more trees which are drought resistant as we may continue to see longer/drier summers or wetter winters. Ideally: slower growing type, will take longer to reach maturity but will have good future and are more resistant.
- Replenish water beds as we have lots of water in park and it's welcomed into our area
- Increased sewage load
- Cost to the taxpayer
- Lighting - “danger behind football area with small path”
- Increased noise levels

- Increased pressure on all resources
- Litter - football + bike riding, louts
- Looking that green area more for football
- Football pitches = loss of space
- Too much football – reclaim beauty of the park
- It will increase flooding in lower areas
- Not worried re flood my house
- There's no drainage - main problem area
- Will this increase litter / dog poo?
- Overload on sewage outflow
- Is there a walking / permanent public route?
- Soil will be too boggy/saturated to walk on
- Safety - children playing - can't run on flood event
- Houses haven't been thought re rainwater - impacts me
- Is there mixing of pedestrian routes?
- Concern about disruption during works
- Return to Dovers Meadow footpath
- Budget for parks
- What is the capacity of the park to take extra water? We are sat on clay which has a specific capacity to take water during flooding.

