

CED039 – Council update on St Swithin’s Farm

During day 7 of the Redbridge Local Plan hearing, the Inspector enquired about the status of St Swithin’s Farm.

Through the submission Local Plan, the site has been de-designated from Green Belt, on the basis of the findings of the Green Belt Addendum (LBR2.41.1). However, areas not occupied by buildings have been re-designated as open space as shown on the Policies Map. As such, the site has not been included as an opportunity site in Appendix 1 of the Local Plan.

Figure 3.1 of the Open Space Study (LBR2.42.3) identifies the site as agricultural land. Shading of the site corresponds with that labelled as “agricultural land” on the key, although it is acknowledged that the base layers to the map undermine the clarity of this. In addition, the site is listed as site number 145, which is named on Figure 3.1 as “Agricultural land adj. to PDSA Cemetery for Animals”.

As “agricultural land”, the site does not strictly fall within the open space typologies listed in table 2.1 of the Open Space Study (LBR2.42). Nevertheless, the site is considered to perform open space functions, and meet NPPF and London Plan definitions of open space, as outlined in the appended report. As such, the Council is of the view that its designation as open space is justified.



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Open Space Site Assessment

Site 145: Agricultural land adjacent to PDSA cemetery for animals

Site report
Prepared by LUC
July 2017

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Project Title: Site assessment: Agricultural land adjacent to PDSA cemetery for animals

Client: London Borough of Redbridge

Version	Date	Version Details	Prepared by	Checked by	Approved by
1	05/07/17	Draft report	Diana Manson Seb West	Diana Manson	Diana Manson
2	07/07/17	Updated report	Diana Manson Seb West	Diana Manson	Diana Manson
3	10/07/17	Updated report incorporating client comments	Diana Manson	Diana Manson	Diana Manson
4	12/07/17	Final report	Diana Manson	Diana Manson	Diana Manson

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1 Introduction and context

Context

- 1.1 London Borough of Redbridge (LBR) commissioned LUC to undertake an assessment of the Borough's open space in 2016. The study assessed the quantity, accessibility, quality and value of open spaces within the Borough.. An audit form based around the Green Flag Award Assessment criteria was used.
- 1.2 The audit covered all open spaces in Redbridge with the exception of golf courses and sports fields, agricultural land and selected sites that were not accessible.
- 1.3 As a result of the agreed scope of the original assessment, the site known as Land adjacent to PDSA Pet Cemetery for Animals (site ID 145) was not audited, although its site area was included in a total calculation of current provision of all open space in Redbridge given the contribution all open space makes to the wider green infrastructure network regardless of public accessibility or use.
- 1.4 LUC has been commissioned to undertake a site assessment for Site 145: Land adjacent to PDSA Pet Cemetery for Animals in July 2017 in order to provide a better understanding of the current use and nature of the site as it was not audited in 2016. A site visit was completed using the same audit form used throughout the 2016 Open Space Study for consistency.
- 1.5 This short report sets out the site audit findings and brief commentary on the nature of the site.

Definitions of open space

- 1.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) defines open space as: **All open space of public value**, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a **visual amenity** [emphasis added].¹
- 1.7 Open space is a component of the Borough's green infrastructure network. The NPPF defines green infrastructure as: A network of **multi-functional green space**, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide **range of environmental** and quality of life **benefits** for local communities [emphasis added].²
- 1.8 The London Plan definition of open space is: All land in London that is **predominantly undeveloped** other than by buildings or structures that are ancillary to the open space use. The definition covers the broad range of types of open space within London, **whether in public or private ownership and whether public access is unrestricted, limited or restricted** [emphasis added].³
- 1.9 The London plan definition of green infrastructure is: The **multifunctional, interdependent network of open and green spaces** and green features (e.g. green roofs). It includes the Blue Ribbon Network but excludes the hard-surfaced public realm. This network lies within the urban environment and the urban fringe, connecting to the surrounding countryside. It provides multiple benefits for people and wildlife including: flood management; urban cooling; improving physical and mental health; green transport links (walking and cycling routes); **ecological connectivity**;

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/annex-2-glossary>

² <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/annex-2-glossary>

³ <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning/london-plan/current-london-plan/london-plan-annexes/annex-six-glossary>

and food growing. Green and open spaces of all sizes can be part of green infrastructure provided they contribute to the functioning of the network as a whole [emphasis added].⁴

Redbridge Open Space Study typologies

- 1.10 Whilst many spaces serve a variety of functions, it was helpful to categorise open spaces by their 'primary' typology, to enable assessment and analysis. The results of the open space audit were used to develop provision standards by typology for Redbridge.
- 1.11 The open space categories used in the Open Space Study are set out in **Table 1.1** below. These reflect the Mayor of London's guidance on Open Space Strategies⁵. Within these typologies, there is potential for secondary typologies to exist. For example, many Parks and Gardens will contain play areas for children, or outdoor sports pitches. These secondary typologies were identified and taken into account when analysing each of the primary typologies.

Table 1.1: Open space typologies

Type of open space	Primary purpose
A. Parks and gardens	Accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events. More multi-functional than other open space, offering space for quiet relaxation as well as a range of amenities and activities for visitors. In particular parks and gardens often include children's play, youth and/or outdoor sports facilities.
B. Natural and semi-natural green space	Wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education awareness.
C. Green corridor	Walking, cycling or horse riding, whether for leisure purposes or travel, and opportunities for wildlife migration.
D. Amenity Green Space	Opportunities for informal activities close to home or work. Amenity Green Spaces provide a less formal green space experience than parks and gardens, and generally provides fewer habitats
E. Allotments	Opportunities for those people who wish to do so to grow their own produce as part of the long term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion.
F. Cemeteries and Churchyards	Quiet contemplation and burial of the dead, often linked to the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity.
G. Civic Space	Providing a setting for civic buildings and community events.
H. Provision for Children/ Young People	Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people, such as equipped play areas, ball courts, skateboard areas and teenage shelters.
I. Outdoor Sports Provision	Participation in outdoor sports, such as pitch sports, tennis, bowls, athletics, or countryside and water sports.

- 1.12 Similarly, it is helpful to categorise open space by size, as this influences the functions it can provide to a community, as well as the distance that people are likely to travel to use it. Having reviewed the size and features of the open spaces in Redbridge, it was considered that hierarchical levels identified in the London Mayor's Guidance for open space strategies were

⁴ <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning/london-plan/current-london-plan/london-plan-annexes/annex-six-glossary>

⁵ CABE Space/Mayor of London (2009) Open Space Strategies – Best Practice Guidance

appropriate for the Borough. Small sites and Pocket parks were combined into a 'small local' level as shown below:






- 1 Metropolitan sites (60-400ha)
- 2 District sites (20-60ha)
- 3 Local sites (2-20ha)
- 4 Small local sites (<2ha)

2 Site assessment

- 2.1 A site audit was undertaken on 05/07/2017 by a Landscape Manager, a Green Flag Award judge, who undertook some of the original site audits in 2016. **Figure 1** shows the location of the site and the surrounding context, and a full site audit form can be found on the pages that follow.
- 2.2 Access to the site was restricted with partial access and visibility from its perimeter looking north along Woodford Bridge Road, north from the PDSA Pet Clinic car park and east from the pet cemetery.
- 2.3 It is worth noting that whilst the site has received a score of 3 in the desk-based assessment based on its location within the Green Belt, it has been proposed that this designation be removed. Scoring it positively based on its current Green Belt designation is consistent with the approach taken in the original Open Space Study.

Redbridge Open Space Study

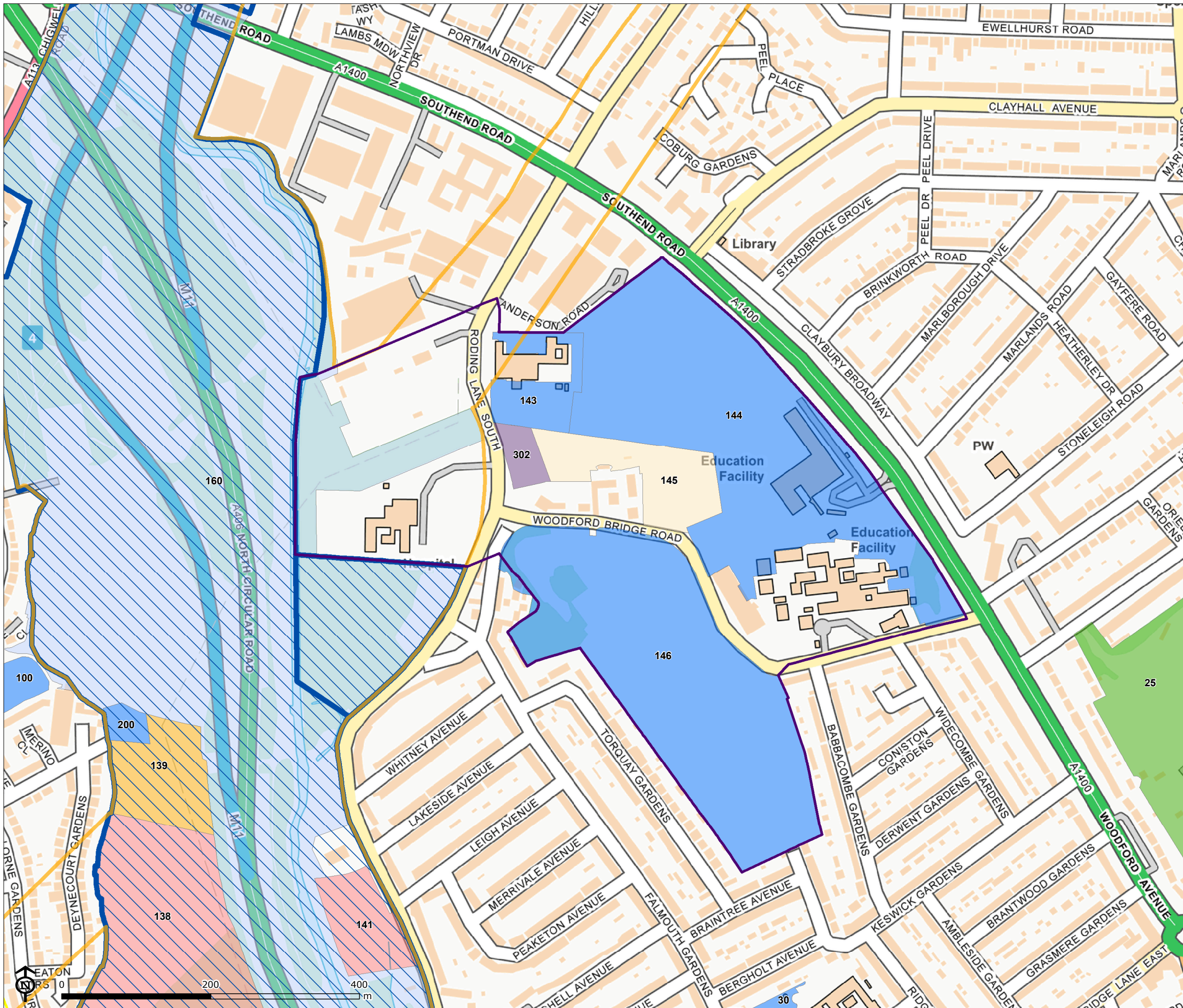
Figure 1: Site context and designations

-  Redbridge
-  Conservation Areas
-  Archaeological Priority Zones
-  Retained Green Belt
-  Green Belt proposed release

Primary typology

-  Parks and gardens
-  Green corridor
-  Amenity greenspace
-  Allotments
-  Cemeteries and churchyards
-  Outdoor sports facilities
-  Agricultural land

- 25: Clayhall Park
- 30: Redbridge Junior & Infants School Playing Field
- 100: Nightingale Infants & Junior School Playing Field
- 138: Allotment Gardens
- 139: Youth Centre Playing Field
- 141: Allotments, Roding Lane South
- 143: Hatton Special Needs School Playing Field
- 144: Beal High School Playing Field
- 145: Agricultural land adj. to PSDA Cemetery for Animals
- 146: Redbridge Recreation Ground
- 160: Roding Valley
- 200: Wanstead Youth Centre Games Court
- 302: PSDA Cemetery for Animals



Map Scale @ A3: 1:5,000



Site ID: 145

Site Name: Agricultural land adjacent to PDSA Cemetery for Animals

Primary Typology: Agricultural land

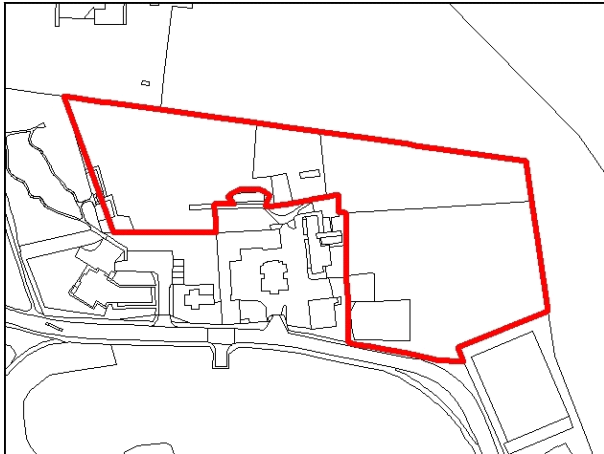
Section A - Survey Information

Date of audit: 05/07/2017

Time spent surveying: 50

Surveyor: SW

Survey site access: Part site



Questions that contribute to the Quality score are in green

Questions that contribute to the Value score are in Yellow

Baseline Assessment - Site Information

Site ID: 145

Typology: Agricultural land

Site name: Agricultural land adjacent to PDSA Cemetery for Animals

Analysis Area: South Woodford

Easting: 541931

Area (Ha): 1.75

Northing: 189621

Baseline Assessment - Planning Designation

National (Statutory) - Score of 3 if present

- Listed building
- Scheduled Monument
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- National Nature Reserve (NNR)
- Green Belt
- Public Footpath
- AONB
- SPA
- SAC
- Ramsar
- World Heritage Site (and buffer)

Regional - Score of 2 if present

- Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)
- MOL
- Green Chain
- Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Site

Local - Score of 1 if present

- Conservation Area
- Local Nature Reserve
- Locally Listed Building
- Historic Landscape Archaeological Priority Zone

National (Non-statutory) - Score of 3 if present

Site ID: 145

Site Name: Agricultural land adjacent to PDSA Cemetery for Animals

Primary Typology: Agricultural land

- EH Register of Historic Parks and Gardens
- Sustrans Cycle Routes
- Within a Flood Risk Zone

Community Involvement

Is there a 'Friends of' group for this site +1

Name of group:

Is there a programme of activities / events that +1

If so, score the quality of the events programme:

Management

Is there a full-time staff presence on site? +1

Has the site achieved a Green Flag award? +3

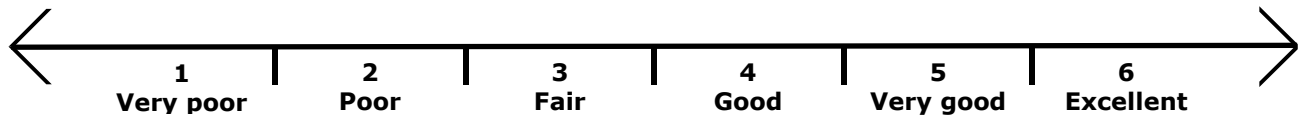
Has the site achieved a Green Pennant award? +3

Has the site achieved a Green Heritage award? +3

Site ID: 145

Site Name: Agricultural land adjacent to PDSA Cemetery for Animals

Primary Typology: Agricultural land

Section B - Field Assessment**A: Welcoming place**

1. Welcoming:
2. Good and safe access:
3. Signage:
4. Equal access for all:
5. Site access:

C: Clean and well maintained

11. Litter and waste management:
12. Grounds maintenance and horticulture:
13. Building and infrastructure maintenance:

E: Conservation and heritage

17. Conservation of natural features, wild fauna and flora:
18. Conservation of landscape features:
19. Conservation of buildings and structures:
20. Structural townscape role:

G: Marketing

23. Marketing and promotion:
24. Provision of appropriate information:
25. Provision of appropriate educational / information:

B: Healthy, safe and secure

6. Safe equipment and facilities:
7. Personal security in open space:
8. Dog fouling:
9. Appropriate provision of facilities:
10. Quality of facilities:

D: Sustainability

14. Environmental sustainability:
15. Waste minimisation:
16. Arboriculture and woodland management:

F: Community involvement

21. Community involvement in management and development:
22. Appropriate provision for community:

H: Comments

Predominantly pasture and paddocks for horses with pockets of native scrub/tree planting and hedgerows. An equestrian manege is located to the south-east. Invasive Japanese Knotweed identified to south-east of site adjacent highway (TQ 42019 89543).

Site ID: 145

Site Name: Agricultural land adjacent to PDSA Cemetery for Animals

Primary Typology: Agricultural land

Section C - Play Provision

1. If a play area is within site, please note type (if known):

2. Is there play equipment on site?

If so;

3. How many separate items of equipment? +1 for each item

4. Which age groups are catered for? (+1 each)

A. Under 5 years B. 5 to 11 years C. Over 11 years

5. Which play activities are provided for? (+1 each)

A. Balancing D. Sliding G. Rotating J. Counting
 B. Rocking E. Social Play H. Jumping K. Touching
 C. Climbing / Agility F. Swinging I. Viewing

6. Is there impact absorbant surfacing around the equipment? +1

7. Is the play area fenced off from the rest of the open space? +1

If so;

8. Are there benches within the enclosure? +1

9. Are there litter bins within the enclosure? +1

10. Are gates outward opening? +1

11. Are gates self closing? +1

12. Is there a play area notice at the entrance stating dog free, children only and emergencycontacts? +1

13. Is there space within the enclosure, separate from the equipped area, for informal play/ general? +1

14. Overall condition of play equipment (Score 1-3)

15. Is there other provision for play on site +1

16. If so, what? (Note condition for each feature, score 1-5)

A. MUGA

B. Interactive water play feature

C. Rebound wall

D. Skateboarding ramps

E. Youth shelter

F. Other

G. Overall condition of other play provision

17. Tick if scope for enhancement?

Site ID: 145

Site Name: Agricultural land adjacent to PDSA Cemetery for Animals

Primary Typology: Agricultural land

Section D - Active recreation / sport provision

Is this part of the site accessible?

Note - the number and condition score for each type of facility present on the site (score 1 - 3)

	No.	Score	Details (e.g. pitch surface)
1. Athletics track	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
2. Football pitch (full size)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
3. Football pitch (junior)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
4. Rugby pitch	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
5. Cricket pitch	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
6. Outdoor bowls	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
7. Other pitch	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
8. Golf	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
9. Other facilities	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Tick if scope for enhancement

Evidence of informal recreational use

10. What evidence of informal recreation was apparent at the time of the audit? **+1 each**

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a. Walking / dog walking | <input type="checkbox"/> e. Desire lines |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b. Children's play | <input type="checkbox"/> f. Horse riding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> c. Teenagers 'hanging out' | <input type="checkbox"/> g. Skateboarding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> d. Sitting / relaxing | <input type="checkbox"/> h. Cycling |

i. Other:

j: Overall provision for informal recreation (score 1-3):

Tick if scope for enhancement

Basic amenities / site furniture provision

+1 each	Score (1-3)	+1 each	Score (1-3)
<input type="checkbox"/> 27. Operational toilets	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> 35. Dog bins	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 28. Disabled toilets	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> 36. Seating	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 29. Staff office	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> 37. Nature trail	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 30. Onsite car parking	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> 38. Trim trail	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 31. Offsite car parking	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> 39. Drinking water fountain	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 32. Cafe	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> 40. Lifebelts	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 33. Community centre	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> 41. Public telephone	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 34. Litter bins	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> 42. Cycle parking	<input type="text"/>

43. Other basic amenities:

Tick if scope for enhancement

Site ID: 145

Site Name: Agricultural land adjacent to PDSA Cemetery for Animals

Primary Typology: Agricultural land

Section E - Multi-Functionality

Functions	Existing	Potential
1. Water attenuation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Reduce air pollution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Reduce noise pollution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Biodiversity/wildlife enhancement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5. Cultural heritage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Visual enhancement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7. Space for people/informal recreation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Play	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Food growing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Separation function	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Site ID: 145 Site Name: Agricultural land adjacent to PDSA Cemetery for Animals

Primary Typology: Agricultural land

Quality and Value Summary

Quality Scores

Section A - Baseline Assessment

Section B - Field Assessment

Section C - Play Provision:

Section D - Active Recreation/
Sports Provision

Overall Quality Score:

Value Scores

Section A - Baseline Assessment

Section B - Field Assessment

Section C - Play Provision:

Section D - Active Recreation/
Sports Provision

Overall Value Score:

3 Findings and considerations

Site visit commentary: General comments

- 3.1 The area surrounding St Swithin's Farm grounds comprises predominantly pasture and paddocks for horses with pockets of native scrub/tree planting and hedgerows. An equestrian manege is located to the south-east and appears to be used by the tenants.
- 3.2 At 1.75ha in size, Site 145 falls into the small local level of the open space hierarchy. It does not strictly fall into the typologies assessed in the original Open Space Study set out in **Table 1.1** (given its primary use for horse paddocks and pasture), but there is evidence of the site contributing to some of their identified primary purposes such as wildlife conservation and migration. Additionally, the site visit established that the site performs a role in terms of visual amenity, a key function listed in the NPPF definition of open space. The site is predominantly undeveloped as per the London Plan definition of open space.
- 3.3 Currently, this site is not accessible to the public for recreation, but it does form part of a wider network of open space linking the outdoor sports facilities to the north and south, and the pet cemetery and to some extent the green corridor, to the west.
- 3.4 The overall value and quality scores are relatively low compared with sites of similar sizes in other typologies. This is unsurprising given its current access restrictions and therefore lack of facilities associated with more traditional open space typologies used by the public.
- 3.5 The site falls within the South Woodford Investment and Growth Area. Whilst the Open Space Study found that the South Woodford Analysis Area was relatively well catered for in terms of publicly accessible open space, improving accessibility to the site and enhancing its recreational potential could serve the Opportunity Site to the north.

Site visit commentary: Multi-Functionality

- 3.6 The site provides a break between existing buildings and school grounds. There are existing wildlife corridor connections with surrounding open spaces which could be further strengthened. For example grassed pitches could be surrounded by less used margins and hedgerows/habitats. The surrounding open spaces include Redbridge Recreation Ground, the pet cemetery and school grounds to the north of the residential areas. These are all designated as open space in the submitted Local Plan, and Redbridge Recreation Ground also forms part of a SINC designation. The paddocks and naturalised scrub areas of land surrounding St Swithin's Farm provide some wildlife value which could be further enhanced through further habitat creation. The c19 farm and surrounding lands could be better conserved, enhanced and interpreted with improvements to visual amenity and landscape management. There are occasional glimpsed views of the land from the pet cemetery, surrounding school grounds and roadside.
- 3.7 Open space can perform multiple functions. These include:
 - strategic functions: defining and separating urban areas; better linking of urban areas and country; and providing for recreational needs over a wide area (note that these functions are different from para 80 of the NPPF regarding Green Belt purposes);
 - urban quality: helping to support regeneration and improving quality of life for communities by providing visually attractive green spaces close to where people live;
 - promoting health and well-being: providing opportunities to people of all ages for informal recreation, or to walk, cycle or ride within parks and open spaces or along paths and bridleways;




- havens and habitats for flora and fauna: sites may also have potential to be corridors or stepping stones from one habitat to another and may contribute towards achieving objectives set out in local biodiversity action plans;
- as a community resource: as a place for congregating and for holding community events, religious festivals, fetes and travelling fairs; and,
- as a visual amenity: even without public access, people enjoy having open space near to them to provide an outlook, variety in the urban scene, or as a positive element in the landscape.







3.8 Whilst the majority of open spaces make a contribution towards reducing air pollution and water attenuation, to be consistent with the original audit approach, the tick boxes on the audit form relating to existing functions have been checked only where there is a particularly clear benefit visible as a result of the sites' location i.e. if the site is next to an especially busy road or performing an obvious run-off/sustainable drainage function based on topography.

3.9 **Table 3.1** summarises the site findings through collated photographic viewpoints. As illustrated in the photos and associated descriptions, the site is currently performing the following functions:

- Strategic functions
- Havens and habitats for flora and fauna (plus potential for enhancement)
- Visual amenity (plus potential for enhancement)

Table 3.1: Photographic viewpoints

Viewpoint location	Description	Image
1) View looking north from Woodford Bridge Road	Invasive Japanese Knotweed identified adjacent highway verge and south-east of St Swithin's Farm boundary. Grid ref of image: TQ 42016 89534 (looking north)	
2) View looking north into St Swithin's Farm paddocks from verge.	Horse paddock with longer grass beyond highway verge and south-east of St Swithin's Farm boundary. Grid ref of image: TQ 42016 89539 (looking north)	
3) View looking north into St Swithin's Farm equestrian manege from verge.	Equestrian manege beyond highway verge and south-east of St Swithin's Farm boundary. Grid ref of image: TQ 41979 89548 (looking north)	

Viewpoint location	Description	Image
4) View looking east into St Swithin's Farm fields from pet cemetery	Grazed land with pockets of native scrub/trees. Grid ref of image: TQ 41841 89621 (looking east)	
5) View looking north into St Swithin's Farm fields from pet cemetery	Margins with pet cemetery and school grounds beyond. Grazed land with pockets of native scrub/trees. Grid ref of image: TQ 41839 89623 (looking north)	
6) View looking east into St Swithin's Farm fields from pet cemetery	Looking towards school structures. Grazed land with pockets of native scrub/trees. Grid ref of image: TQ 41834 89635 (looking east)	
7) View looking east into St Swithin's Farm fields from within pet cemetery	Open timber fenced boundary line at pet cemetery. Grazed land with pockets of native scrub/trees. Grid ref of image: TQ 41822 89641 (looking east)	
8) View looking east into St Swithin's Farm fields from pet cemetery	Margins with pet cemetery and school grounds to the north. Grazed land with pockets of native scrub/trees. Grid ref of image: TQ 41816 89672 (looking east)	
View looking north into St Swithin's Farm fields from over walled area near pet cemetery car park	Grazed land with pockets of native scrub/trees. Grid ref of image: TQ 41865 89606 (looking north)	

Conclusions

- 3.10 Whilst not strictly falling into one of the open space typologies assessed as part of the 2016 Open Space Study, the site accords with the definition of open space in the London Plan “*All land in London that is **predominantly undeveloped** other than by buildings or structures that are ancillary to the open space use.*” Historic maps support the view that the area has been undeveloped and used for agriculture for many years.
- 3.11 This site forms part of ‘*The multifunctional, interdependent network of open and green spaces and green features*’ in the vicinity, forming part of the Borough’s wider green infrastructure network.
- 3.12 Similarly, the site is currently performing a number of functions for biodiversity and **visual amenity** – the latter function specifically mentioned in the NPPF definition of open space. As such, it is of public value, regardless of the current lack of public access.
- 3.13 Evidence of the following open space functions provide supporting evidence for the Council’s approach of protecting the site as Open Space:
- Strategic functions
 - Havens and habitats for flora and fauna (plus potential for enhancement)
 - Visual amenity (plus potential for enhancement)