

# Strategy for the Wandle Valley Regional Park Trust

Strategy – 2016 to 2021

November 2016

LDĀ DESIGN

**( SHARED ASSETS )**



Wandle Valley

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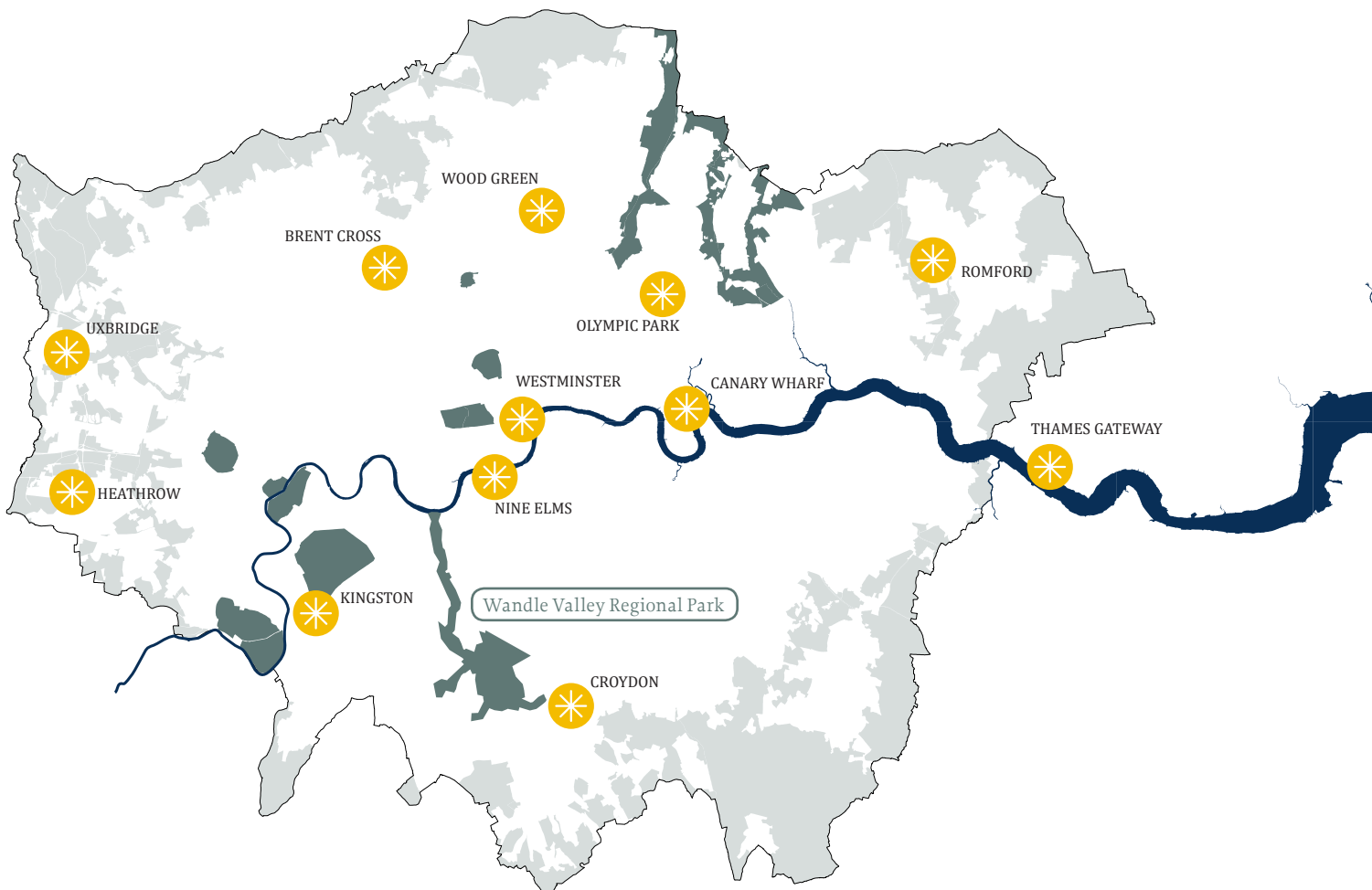
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Charity Number:1152818

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## Wandle Valley in the London Context



# Preface

The funding of the creation and management of green space is rapidly changing and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. Given continuing pressure on budgets, regular and predictable funding from public sector bodies cannot be relied on to ensure that investment in some of our most cherished assets will be coordinated and sustained. Increasingly, investments in all types of infrastructure are expected to deliver a clear 'return' in social, environmental or economic terms. Across the country, organisations coordinating such investments are expected to pay their way and become increasingly self-financing.

This is a difficult funding and investment environment for green space, environmental and heritage assets. It also offers opportunities for spirited, entrepreneurial, and nimble organisations to align funding and investments from diverse parties to deliver coordinated social, environmental and economic benefits.

The Wandle Valley Regional Park Trust already has a strong, four-year track record of leading change and coordinating activity in the Wandle Valley. However, the Trust recognises that to succeed in the future it must respond positively to the challenges it currently faces; it must seize the opportunity to become an entrepreneurial organisation delivering high quality and sustainable investment in the assets of the Wandle Valley for the long term. By doing this we can ensure the Wandle Valley achieves its potential, and in the process, create a model for investment in green infrastructure which can be applied to areas facing similar challenges across the whole of London and the UK.

This document, the Wandle Valley Regional Park Trust Strategy 2016-2021, sets out how we will achieve this goal, and has been developed through funding from Big Lottery's Awards for All programme. The Trust has worked over the last 12 months to consult with our varied stakeholders and the wider community to refresh the Regional Park Vision and to clarify the purpose of the Trust. Work has included a needs analysis study, an online survey and six workshops. Further detail on this, and on all our work can be found at:

<http://wandlevalleypark.co.uk/wandle-valley-regional-park/strategy/>



*Sue Morgan*

Sue Morgan - CEO

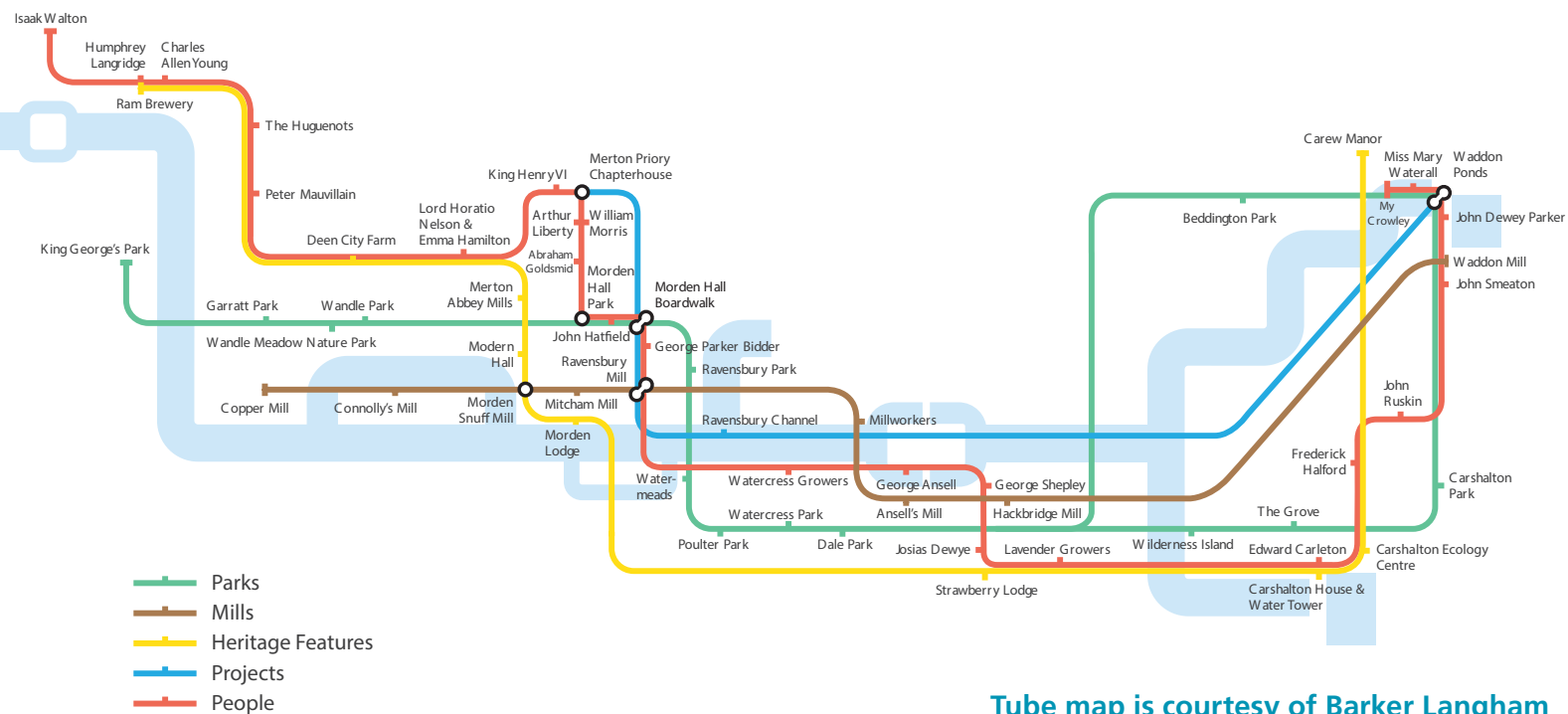
# The Wandle Valley Regional Park

## The Wandle Valley in context

The Wandle Valley Regional Park is a vibrant but fragmented network of over 40 green spaces, and 12 nature reserves, linked by the riverside Wandle Trail, covering some 900 hectares. It is a strategically important asset for London, which can provide significant environmental benefits, support sustainable economic growth, and build enduring social capital and resilience for its growing communities.

The river Wandle itself is a tributary of the Thames to the south west of London. 15 miles of it is rare chalk stream habitat in good condition.

The Wandle Valley has a remarkable industrial and cultural heritage, described as “Europe’s hardest working river” in the 19th Century. It has inspired artists and makers from William Morris to the growing creative designer-maker movement making the Wandle Valley their home.



Tube map is courtesy of Barker Langham

(Find out more about the History of the Wandle Valley by going to the Wandle Valley Park web page)



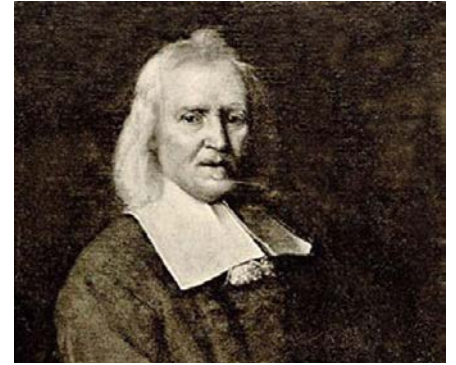
**Henry VI**

Crowned King of England in 1437 at Merton Priory



**Elizabeth I**

Queen stays at Croydon Palace in 1573



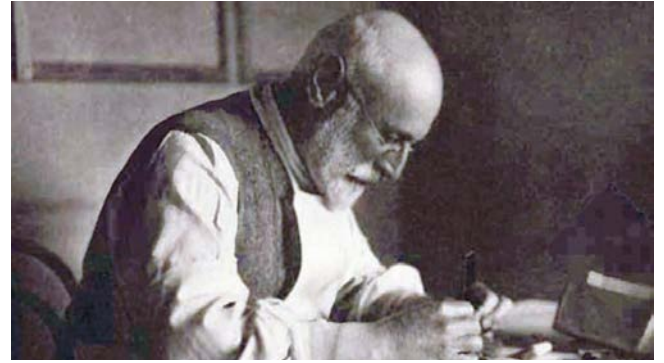
**Izaak Walton**

Wandle trout are mentioned in 'The Compleat Angler' (1833-35 editions)



**Horatio Nelson and Lady Hamilton**

Purchased 'Paradise Merton' in 1801 - Nelson is said to have fished the Wandle before leaving for Trafalgar in 1805



**Frederick Halford**

The 'father of modern dry fly fishing' learned this art from Carshalton fishermen between 1868 and 1881



**Ram Brewery Workers**

A commercial brewery existed on this site since 1581, taken over in 1831 by Charles Young and Anthony Bainbridge



**Watercress Growers**

Commercial watercress beds along the Wandle were recorded in the late 1860s above Goat Green and Hackbridge

### **The Wandle Valley today**

The river links diverse communities, stretching from Carshalton in Sutton and Waddon in Croydon, to Wandsworth to the north.

The Wandle Valley area encompasses four London Boroughs: Wandsworth, Merton, Sutton and Croydon. The proposed Regional Park is identified in the Mayor's London Plan, Supplementary Planning Guidance in the form of the All London Green Grid Area Framework 8, and the four local authorities' Local Plans. Part of the purpose of this strategy is to ensure the potential of the Regional Park is achieved. There are other significant stakeholders, including the National Trust, private developers and housing associations, and a vibrant and active community and voluntary sector.

This is an area rich in natural and social capital with opportunities and challenges. The four boroughs in the valley are currently home to a resident population of 1.1 million people (13% of London's population). The area is highly productive, with approximately 387,000 jobs (8% of London's total), more than 46,000 businesses (10% of London's total) and an annual contribution of approximately £25.7 million in Gross Value Added (GVA) in 2015.

At the same time, however, there are pockets of significant deprivation in each of the boroughs and considerable variations in the health of residents, with high proportions of people experiencing poorer physical and mental health. 21% of children in the Wandle Valley live in poverty, and some parts of the Valley suffer from deprivation of access to green space.

### **The future context for the Valley**

Looking forward, the resident population of the four boroughs is forecast to grow significantly faster than London as a whole. GLA forecasts indicate that between 2016 and 2036 the resident population will grow by an estimated 11%, significantly greater than London-wide projections (8%). Over the same period the GLA forecasts that total jobs across the four boroughs will increase by 10% (compared to 17% across London as whole).

### **Key strategic challenges**

There are a number of key strategic challenges in the Wandle Valley. Chief among these is the sheer size and scope of the valley and its multiple landowners. There are numerous Wandle Valley stakeholders, but no single body that has a remit for the entire valley, leading to a fragmentation of strategic purpose.

The case for investment in the Wandle Valley has not been made decisively at the London-wide and Local Authority scale and investment activities are not aligned towards the delivery of a shared vision and quantifiable social, environmental and economic benefits.

The Trust was set up in 2013 with these challenges in mind to provide the leadership and coordination needed to develop the strategic coherence needed for a successful Regional Park.





# Key Recent Achievements of the Wandle Valley Regional Park Trust

**The Trust's track record of raising investment, coordinating projects and creating substantial added value is seen through its key recent achievements:**

## **The Wandle Valley Big Green Fund Project**

The Trust led and managed this 19-partner project, which attracted **£1.2m** of investment into capital improvements to Poulter Park in Sutton. It also opened a new stretch of the Wandle Trail and allowed access to Watermeads Nature Reserve for the first time since 1914. This was completed in May 2015.

## **Gateways Projects**

Opening up "gateways" to the river is a key priority. In 2015/16 alone, the Trust secured **£283,000** of investment and are in the process of delivering three Gateway projects in Wandsworth (Trewint Street), Merton (Colliers Wood) and Croydon (Waddon Ponds), with a fourth completed in Sutton (Poulter Park).

## **Get Active Wandle Valley Project**

The Trust attracted **£236,000** of funding for a three-year coordinator post to deliver the Get Active Wandle Valley programme. This consisted of funding from Sport England, together with match funding from local authority partners in sport development and public health as well as from the National Trust.

## **Web pages for the Regional Park –**

**[www.wandlevalleypark.org.uk](http://www.wandlevalleypark.org.uk)**

Creating an identity for the Park is a key part of the Trust's role. **£44,000** of investment from the Living Wandle Partnership Heritage Lottery Fund project, allowed the creation of new web pages, supported by voluntary contributions amounting to a further **£5,000**.

## **AGM and Photographic Competition**

The Trust has good relationships with the private sector in the Wandle Valley. The recent successful photo competition and AGM was supported by First Base developers and Big Kid creative agency to the value of **£10,000**.

## **GLA Seminar**

On March 2nd 2016, the Trust held a seminar at City Hall to discuss the importance of Sub Regional Partnerships in delivering Green Infrastructure. The event was attended by over 150 delegates, hosted by the GLA and sponsored by the Lee Valley Regional Park.

## **Business and organisational development**

The Trust raised **£10,000** from Awards for All to develop this strategy for the Regional Park and Trust

The Trust raised **£9,600** from Heritage Lottery Fund for a feasibility study and business plan for the repurpose of Culvers Lodge in Sutton.



# Vision for the Wandle Valley the next five years

*Our vision is for the Wandle Valley to be a coherent and vital part of London's green space network, creating a place, rich in heritage, where people are proud to live, work and play, that contributes to the economic vibrancy of South London.*



# Strategic Aims for the Wandle Valley Regional Park

A number of key strategic aims support this vision for the Wandle Valley. It requires that the social, economic and environmental case for investment is made, and the actions of the Trust and other organisations and partnerships are focussed and coordinated.

The diagram below shows what we believe to be the key attributes of the Wandle Valley, from which the following aims for the Valley flow:





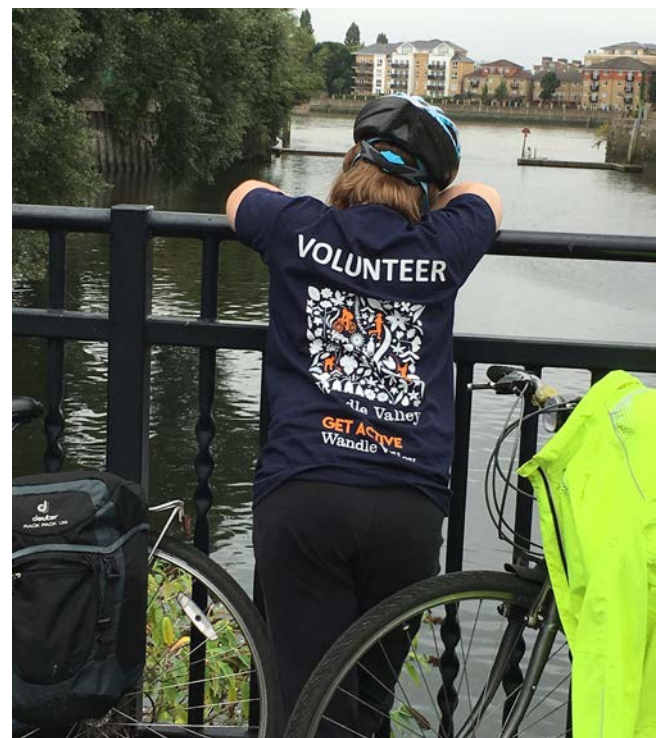
	Strategic Aims
Landscape	The Wandle Valley is a clean, safe, sustainable and attractive natural environment. Its river valley character is protected and enhanced, and its biodiversity, heritage and archaeology are celebrated.
Heritage & Culture	<p>The Wandle Valley's rich heritage and culture (current as well as past and future) is celebrated, preserved and developed, making it accessible to the diverse local community and attractive to visitors.</p> <p>The Living Wandle Partnership's heritage legacy is enhanced.</p>
Health & Well Being	The Wandle Valley is a place for healthy living. It enhances physical and mental health, by improving access and quantity of good quality public realm and greenspace.
Natural Systems & Resilience	The natural capital of the Wandle Valley and the River Wandle, with its network of green and blue spaces, is maintained and enhanced and its resilience to climate change increased.
People & communication	<p>Diverse communities along the Wandle Valley feel a shared ownership of the park, and are actively engaged in its development, management and enjoyment.</p> <p>Local communities, partners, stakeholders, businesses &amp; visitors recognise the regional park and support it through advocacy, volunteering, fundraising &amp; partnership working.</p>
Economic Growth	<p>The Wandle Valley and the Regional Park becomes a driver of economic growth, and a strong business case develops for investment in heritage and the environment.</p> <p>A collaborative economy develops in the Wandle Valley, that uses the environment to encourage employment, training, apprenticeships and enterprise.</p>

# From Vision to Delivery

*The purpose of the Wandle Valley Regional Park Trust will be to provide the leadership and coordination of an effective sub regional partnership that will improve the effectiveness, coherence, resilience and quality of the Wandle Valley.*

In order to achieve the vision and aims for the Wandle Valley, multiple organisations will need to work together and in parallel, aligning their projects and resources where necessary. It will require an agile, well networked, energetic and entrepreneurial organisation to work across administrative boundaries to unlock and create synergies between projects, secure best value out of investments, inspire and align stakeholders, communities and partners, and make the case for investment in economic terms, and at the highest levels.

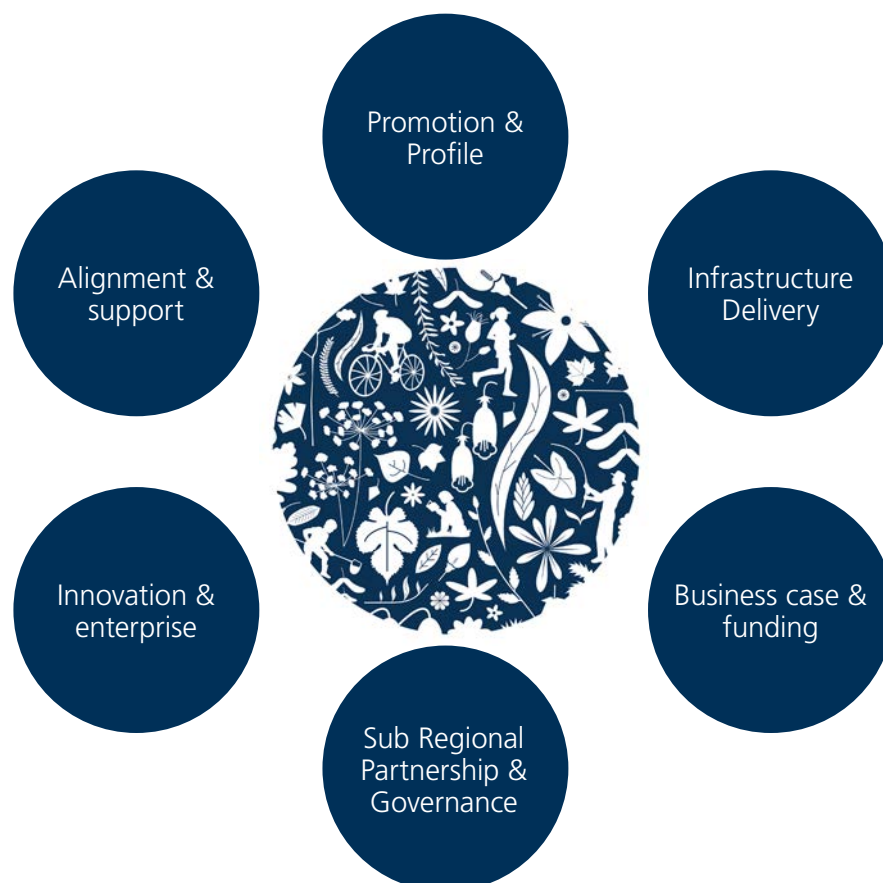
While many people and organisations can play a role in achieving this vision and these aims for the Wandle Valley, the Wandle Valley Regional Park Trust is the Wandle-wide key strategic body. The Wandle Valley needs an organisation designed to succeed, taking the opportunities that emerge as we enter a new era for investment in green space environmental and heritage assets. We believe the Wandle Valley Regional Park Trust should be that organisation.



# The Trust in Action

To ensure that the Wandle Valley achieves its potential the Wandle Valley Regional Park Trust will work strategically in six key areas to achieve the aims set out above:

- Business case & funding: Making the case for the Valley as vital environmental, social, heritage and economic infrastructure for south west London
- Promotion & Profile: Promoting the Valley and the Regional Park in a coherent manner to raise its profile
- Infrastructure delivery: Investing to improve the physical links along the valley and to adjacent communities and build its identity, quality and heritage value
- Alignment and support: Working closely with partners and stakeholders to secure funding and deliver our shared vision by ensuring projects and investments are working towards the delivery of a common goal
- Innovation and enterprise: Leading and piloting enterprising projects that contribute to the vision
- Subregional partnership & governance: continually working to ensure the organisation and its partners are working in the most effective way to achieve the vision and aims



	What this means:
Promotion & Profile	<p>Selling the brand and potential of the Wandle Valley to visitors, residents, and businesses locally and across London.</p> <p>Promoting the Wandle Valley as essential green network infrastructure for social, environmental and economic growth in London.</p> <p>Establishing the case for investment at the highest political levels and commercial levels.</p> <p>Building on the work of the Living Wandle Partnership to promote and enhance the heritage of the Valley.</p>
Infrastructure Delivery	<p>Directly investing in and bringing forward projects essential to the coherence, identity and quality of the Wandle Valley.</p> <p>Securing new revenue and capital funding streams.</p> <p>Working with the Local Authorities to bring forward regeneration and economic development projects which simultaneously create jobs and homes and lever investment into the valley through s106, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).</p> <p>Establishing a revolving investment fund by creating a cycle of investment.</p> <p>Maximising the value of investments made by others, aligning design standards with the vision for the Valley.</p> <p>Investing to improve the physical links along the valley, and to adjacent communities and build its identity, quality, heritage value.</p> <p>Investing to enhance social and natural capital to improve both use and function and increase value and resilience.</p>
Business case & funding	<p>Demonstrating the economic case for investment.</p> <p>Demonstrating the social and environmental benefits for investment.</p> <p>Demonstrating that investment in the Valley can directly improve quality of life for residents and workers along its length.</p> <p>Encourage LAs in local commissioning of the Trust and partners.</p>
Sub Regional Partnership & Governance	<p>Responding to the needs and ambitions of community organisations and local people as well as statutory &amp; non statutory organisations.</p> <p>Creating a Wandle Valley Park that has effective and inclusive governance structures.</p> <p>Developing creative and innovative approaches to the Park's long-term resourcing and management.</p>
Innovation & enterprise	<p>Becoming a green infrastructure investment pathfinder with an all-London and UK profile.</p> <p>Finding innovative ways to unlock development, regeneration and infrastructure projects linked to the Wandle Valley to deliver the vision, creating the case for investment through s106 and CIL.</p> <p>Creating an open and entrepreneurial culture.</p>
Alignment & support	<p>Developing criteria and standards to align third party projects towards delivery of a coherent vision.</p> <p>Establishing an 'infrastructure fund' to support partner projects.</p> <p>Providing expertise and assistance.</p>





# Management and Governance

In order to achieve the vision for the regional park, and fulfil the purpose set out above, the Trust will need to evolve its current structure.

The Trust needs a structure that enables it to:

- Become more entrepreneurial and able to make quick decisions
- Increase its staff capacity
- Invest in marketing, promotion, business and project development
- Develop and implement a delivery plan for the regional park
- Attract, pool, channel, and manage large scale investment and funding from new and innovative sources, in order to act as a funding body
- Assess the benefits and risks of holding and managing land and building assets
- Take risks – pilot and incubate enterprising ideas and projects

The Trust will seek investment to support the development of this strategy, and in particular:

- Undertake a governance review and develop a new structure that enables the Trust to deliver its purpose and to achieve the vision for the Regional Park
- Ensure strategic integration with key projects and initiatives, most notably ensuring the legacy of the Living Wandle Partnership, but also assessing opportunities to align with other local organisations
- A new business plan for the Trust, to include operational priorities
- The development and testing of a number of pilot projects, in collaboration with key stakeholders
- A renewed Delivery Plan for the Regional Park, with clear roles and responsibilities, and strategies for securing and pooling funds for investment
- The development of core principles to ensure that partner projects are aligned towards the delivery of the vision







# Summary

London is a rapidly changing city. Its continued growth and development makes many asks of its network of green spaces, its rich and diverse natural and built heritage, and of people, neighbourhoods and communities. The Wandle Valley (and the Regional Park) provides us with an incredible opportunity to deliver economic, social and environmental benefits across South West London, for all. This will require a coordinated approach to investment, planning, engagement and delivery, and a strong partnership ethos. This is the role of the Wandle Valley Regional Park Trust, and we look forward to working with you to realise our shared vision.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nic Durston'.

Nic Durston - Chair

