Ecosystems Knowledge Network

Mayesbrook Park: Britain's first climate change park

ekn.defra.gov.uk

Partnership formed

- An innovative public, private and voluntary sector partnership, initiated by the Thames Rivers Restoration Trust (TRRT), the London Borough of Barking Dagenham (LBBD) and Environment Agency, the best urban centre to use as an exemplar of urban river restoration.

Aims agreed

- To restore the Mayes Brook and its associated floodplain in Mayesbrook Park, East London, in terms of the benefits this will bring to ecosystem services in the area.
- To create an ecological and community focal point within a broader environmental regeneration project, which is designed to produce the UK's first climate change adaptation public park.

Community engagement

- Local people consulted in 2009. Main concerns included security, provision of play facilities and good park maintenance.
- Community engagement has included working with primary schools and carrying out volunteering activities and opportunity to join the Friends of Mayesbrook Park.

Masterplan produced

- A Masterplan, allowing for a phased programme of works, produced for a whole-park restoration plan.
- Carried out Ecosystem Services report to evaluate the projected outcomes and benefits of the proposals in terms of their impact on ecosystem services.

Funding sought

- Projected spend of £3.8 million including estimated £0.5 million for river restoration and revenue funding for 3 years.
- Calculated the lifetime benefit-to-cost ratio of £7 of benefits for every £1 invested.
- The project received funding from both the public and private sector.

Implementation

Physical Works – Phase 1

- First phase of works began in 2011.
- This work has helped the Mayes brook to get closer to the new higher standard for rivers set by the European Union (EU) Water Framework Directive.

Projects/outputs:

- Meandering **river channel widened,** creating an attractive river landscape.
- **Newly created floodplain** allows the river to rise in a controlled and natural way during heavy rainfall.
- **Tackled pollution** at sources to improve water quality.
- **Surface water drainage** from the adjacent Olympic training facility has been 'plumbed in' to the restored river to help the area cope with high rainfall.
- 5,000 **trees planted** to provide shade in hotter drier summers, and to filter airborne pollution.
- In many places the **grass has been left longer** to give it more chance of surviving hot, dry summers.
- **New signage and footpaths** to make the entrances more welcoming.
- Rolling parkscape area of **meadow and trees** forms a relaxing heart of the park.
- **New natural play area** complete with zip wires, mounds, and climbing nets.
- **New seats and picnic benches** make a more restful place to enjoy the outdoors.
- New, **free to use 'outdoor gym'** to promote active lifestyles.
- **Sports pitches and facilities** create a vibrant sports zone.
- **SportHouse,** along with **Mayesbrook Athletics Arena,** is being used as a training venue for the Olympic Games.
- Mayes brook released from its metal fence and concrete channel making it a **haven for wildlife** and extendeding the Site of Interest for Nature Conservation.
- **Aquatic plants such as reeds and rushes planted** in ponds and backwaters, creating a rich habitat for wetland species.
- A **dedicated nature reserve** with limited public access creates a quiet space for nesting birds and small vertebrates.

Physical Works – Phase 2

- A second phase of improvements, dependant on further funding.

Projects/ outputs:

- **New visitor centre, a café and a garden** with plants suited to a changing climate.
- **Restoration of two lakes** to ensure cleaner water so that angling and boating facilities can once again be provided.

Physical Works – Phase 3

- To be funded by Transport for London and Sustrans.

Projects/ outputs:

- **Cycle connections** to Goodmayes and Barking Riverside.

The future...

- Whole park restoration, including 15 km river, by 2015

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