



Beckenham
Place Park

Lewisham Council seeks
Expressions of Interest in lake operations

Lewisham Council is seeking Expressions of Interest from leisure and water sports organisations to shape future activities and operations on Beckenham Place Park's new lake.

All those responding to the Expressions of Interest will be invited to bid to provide services on the lake from spring 2020 onwards. This will be a competitive process open to all potential providers and will run from Dec 2019 to Feb 2020.

Over summer 2019 swimming, paddleboarding, and Canadian canoes have been offered on the lake. The operation has been run by PTP coaching.

Lessons have been learned from this first summer of operation, and Lewisham Council are aware that both the experience of the past few months, and the voices of experienced organisations should be heeded as future plans for the lake's medium term are developed.

We value your feedback. Thank you for participating.

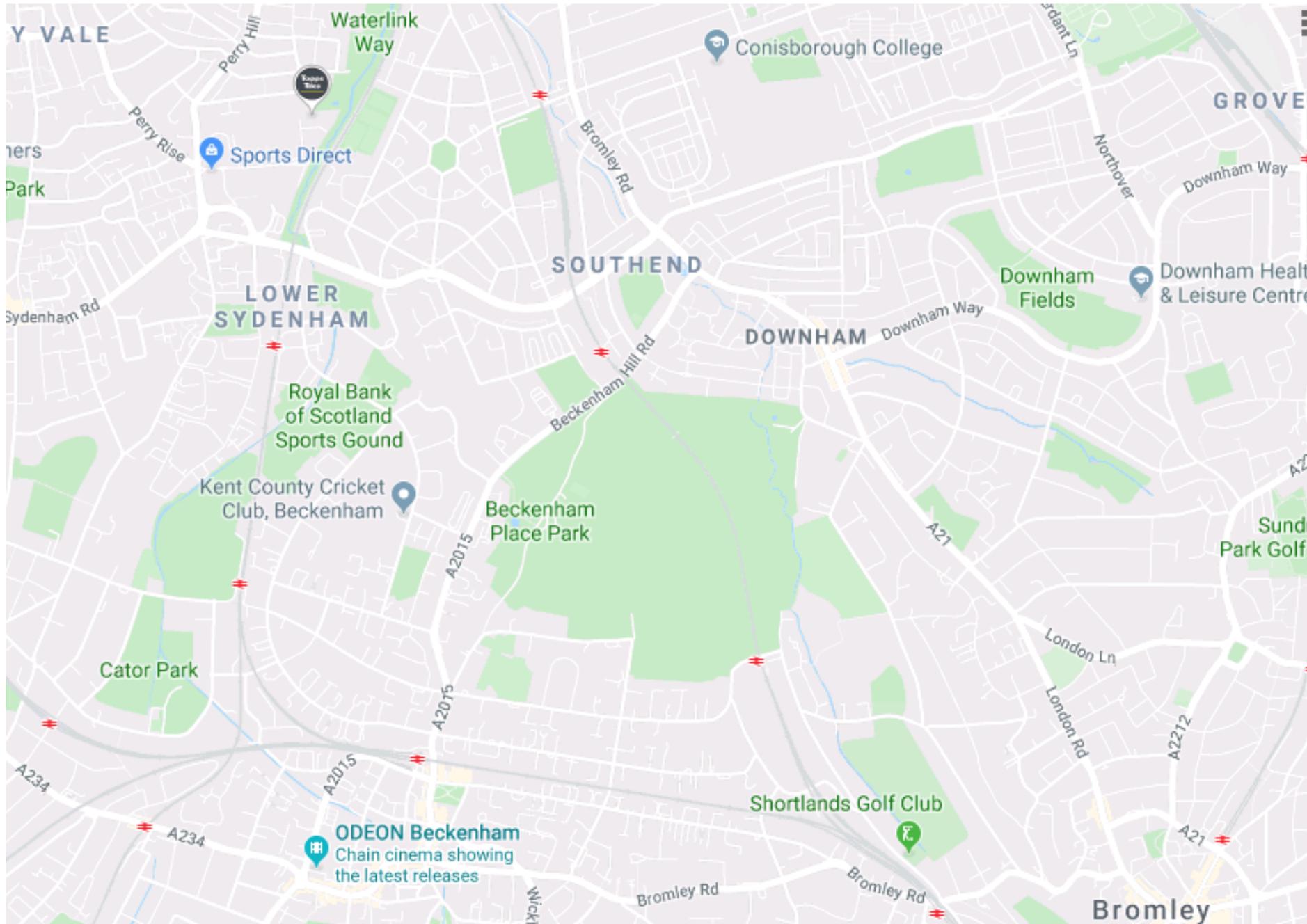


The lake sits in the heart of South east London's largest park.

It sits in an urban area, at the southern tip of Lewisham borough, on the border with Bromley.

The large and mixed residential areas of Bellingham, Downham, Catford and Beckenham surround the park.





Beckenham Place Park is well served by bus and train routes, and can be reached on foot and by bicycle, by many thousands of local residents.

There is also metered parking for 108 cars within the park and some ability to park on nearby residential roads.

Over the past couple of years Beckenham Place Park has seen significant investment and has been transformed from a little known and little used open space, to a thriving hub supporting all kinds of activities.

A new café, new playground, environmental education centre, volunteering hub, and the mansion itself offering classes and events – all serve to bring thousands of local people to this wonderful open space each week.

The new lake is at the heart of this attraction too – both for the activities it can offer, and for the beauty it adds to the landscape.





Beckenham Place Park

Beckenham Place Park is the largest park in south east London at around 1km squared.

It was originally the parkland associated with John Cator's mansion, which was built in 1762 and still dominates the park today. It was then used as a golf course for over a century.

Since then, the park has been restored thanks to a Heritage Lottery Fund grant. The regeneration, completed in 2019, has recreated and reimagined the park's Georgian origins to serve local communities in the 21st century. The Georgian lake has been reinstated, and the original stable yard and its buildings have been fully restored to house the park café and an environmental education centre.

The park is also a key site for wildlife, boasting a range of diverse habitats. From ancient woodland to hay meadow, natural river to pond, this is a great place to be up-close to nature.



Key

Mansion House	Pond
Parking	Lake
Stableyard	Wild swimming
Café	Barbeque area
Education centre	Skate park
Toilets	BMX track
Formal gardens	Foxgrove
Gardener's Cottage	Woodland
Community gardens	River
Playground	



GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

Summer 2019

Beckenham Place Park lake opened as the regenerated park was launched, on 20th July. This coincided with the beginning of the summer holidays, extraordinary publicity in national press and television, and a heat wave.

In these circumstances, the numbers of people flocking to the lake to swim, paddle and play far exceeded any previous estimates. The crowds of people present on the lakeshore particularly led to safety concerns and it was decided the operation should be closed for a period whilst new safety measures were put in place.

A temporary heras fence was erected around the lake as a means to control numbers in and around the lake, making effective lifeguarding possible, and preventing the overcrowding previously experienced.

From August Bank Holiday weekend to the end of October, the lake area has been open for activity again. Open water swimming has been offered with tow floats for all, and paddle boards and Canadian canoes have been available for hire in a separate section of the lake. However, there has been no provision for under 8s to swim or paddle, and under 12s wishing to swim have to had to pass a swimming test before being allowed to do so. All under 16s have had to be accompanied by an adult.

Demand for swimming particularly has been high, with over 4000 swims taking place between the end of August and beginning of October. A group of keen open water swimmers have made it clear they would like to continue to swim through the winter, and many of these object to wearing a wetsuit even in colder temperatures.



The lake's size, structure and water quality

Beckenham Place Park's lake is a recreation of the Georgian lake John Cator created as the centrepiece for his Georgian parkland. It is 283m long and 50m wide at its widest point, and curves gently as it narrows to its eastern end.

The lake is up to 3.5m deep, to ensure water quality remains high throughout the year, and despite supporting significant activities. The lake is filled both up natural run off and through-flow from the park, (no road run off flows into it) and from a borehole which reaches deep into the chalk aquifer below. The resultant water quality is excellent. A balancing chamber ensures that if the water dips below the desired level, further water is pumped up from the aquifer to top up the lake.

Water flowing into the lake from the park flows in through a reedbed to aid natural filtration. Water also flows out of the lake in wetter conditions, into the wet woodland to the east of the lake. This flow not only ensures the lake water is kept fresh, but also increases the oxygen content of the water, thus supporting more aquatic life. This natural aeration system is supported by a further engineered system of aeration through which air is released at the lake bed and bubbles up through the water at several points in the lake.

Native marginal planting on the lake's planting shelves also acts as a filter, keeping the water quality high.





Intended parameters of operation

- 3-5 year concessions contract (probably lease)
- The operation must not cost the Council anything, and would preferably make a modest income for the Council
- Swimming must be included and amount to at least 50% of the activity on the lake. Other activities may or may not be offered.
- Operators should provide for all ages. The inclusion of a paddle zone is preferred.
- The operator will be responsible for security during hours of operation and for any necessary control of access to the lake, with particular regard to hot weather and holiday periods.
- All activity within the lake zone would be managed by the operator. It is assumed a charge would be levied for everyone entering the lake area.
- Maximum hours of operation – 7am to 30mins before park closing times
- (These are seasonal and vary between 4pm in Dec and 9pm in June. Please see <https://lewisham.gov.uk/inmyarea/openspaces/parks/park-opening-hours>)
- The operation must be safe, and covered by the operator's insurance
- The operation must offer social value, draw in local people and fit within the historic park.
- Organisations may partner up to provide activities within the lake area.
- The area of operation would be limited to a relatively small footprint around the lake – indicative area shown overleaf.

Lewisham Council undertakes to provide the following:

- Vehicle access to the lake
 - A limited electricity supply close to the lake, sufficient for lighting, kettle and fridge
- Additional electrical supply could be made available from the homestead area. If this was required, the operator may need to pay for the new cabling run to the lake.
- Please note there is no mains water supply to the area. Again, this could be obtained, at the operator's cost.

Area for lake operations



Railing with planting around secure area

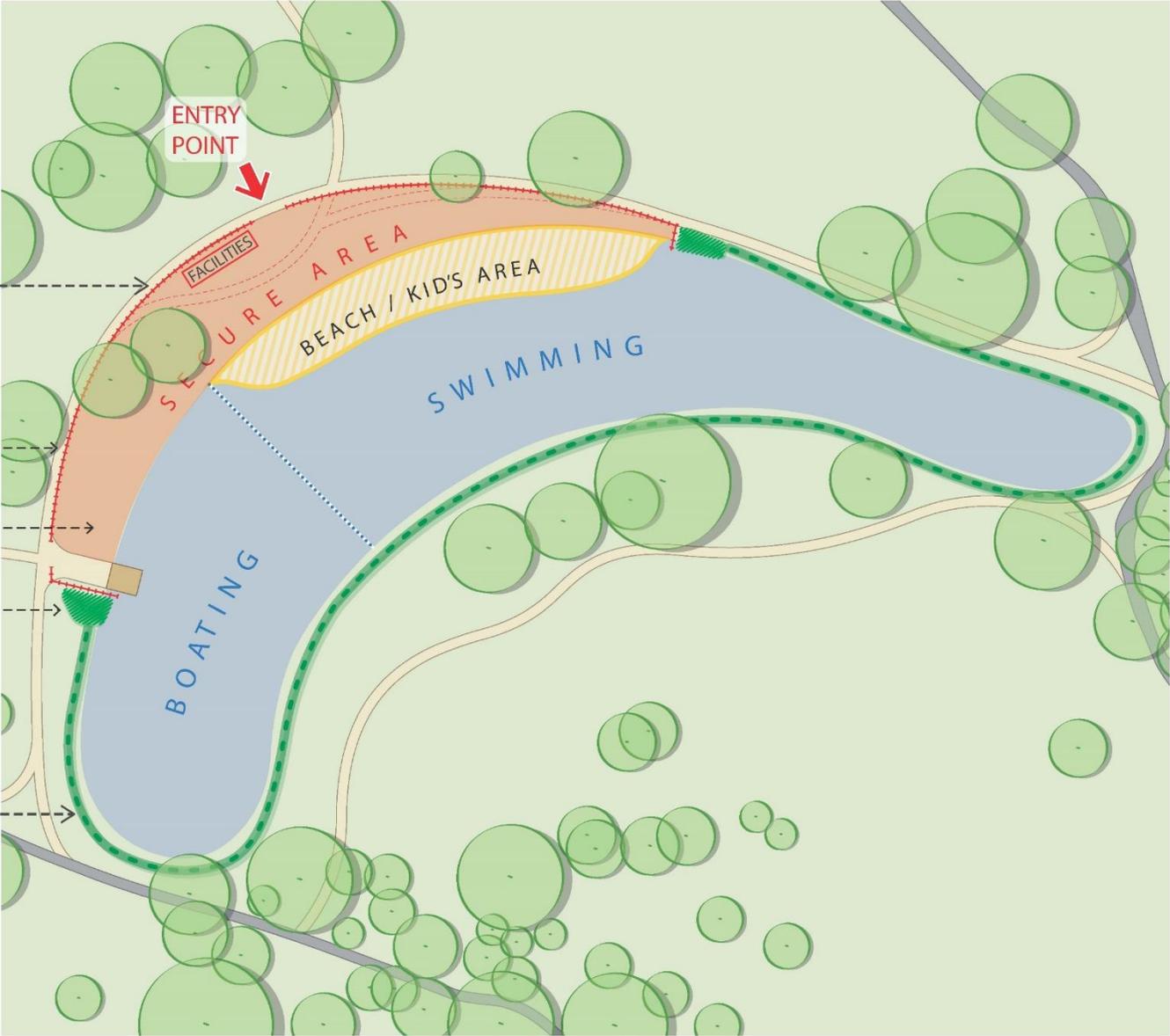
Railing & hedge fence around controlled area over 214 linear meters

Secure area with controlled access at entry point. Area: 2400 m²

'Light' Fence: Vegetation barrier over 435 linear meters



Light fencing with planting around parameter of lake





Beckenham Place Park

Questions for response

In order to shape the offer of activities on the lake for the future, Lewisham Council seeks your views on the best means of operation.

1. Would you want to run a seasonal or year round operation? If seasonal, what period would you want to be open for?
If year round, please specify what hours of operation would you wish to run during the winter.
NB the Council do not want the summer operation to significantly subsidise any winter operation.
2. Do you have comments on the proposed area of operation set out in slide 9, or comments about the boundary treatment?
What do you perceive to be the best solution with regards to maintenance of the lakeside area?
3. Would you be prepared to offer a paddling area for children? What issues do you perceive here? Would you define the paddling area with a physical boundary? If so, how?
4. The Council is keen that during non peak season (perhaps October – April) park users who are not swimming might gain access to the secure area, (to walk through and to enjoy the lake side. This would be by means of self closing gates in the railings. Do you perceive any difficulties with this proposal?
5. What length of contract would you be looking for?



Beckenham Place Park

Questions for response (continued)

6. The Council is keen to encourage local people to use the facility, and to ensure that it is affordable for all.
What prices would you want to charge the public? What concessions would you offer?
7. What % turnover rent could you offer to the Council with these charges?
8. What staff welfare facilities would you require? Existing cottages in the park could be used for these facilities, but rent would be required. Please note there will be planning issues to overcome for any new built structure. Please provide examples of any built structures you would wish to use.
9. What set up costs would you face and how do you anticipate these costs would be met?
10. Is there anything else you think should be addressed in this process? Please make any further comments you feel are relevant at this stage.

If you have further questions or would like to discuss an aspect of the lake and potential future operations in Beckenham Place Park, please contact vince.buchanan@lewisham.gov.uk 02083142024 and alison.taylor@lewisham.gov.uk

Please send written responses to these questions, together with a brief summary of your organisation's experience, to Vince and Alison on the email addresses above by 8th December 2019. Please limit your responses to a maximum of 10 pages.
Thank you for participating in this Expressions of Interest.