

**LAND-BASED AND RELATED GREEN SKILLS
THE 2012 GAMES AND
THE THAMES GATEWAY LEGACY**

On behalf of:
**LSC Thames Gateway Directorate,
Lantra and Natural England**

by
STEP AHEAD RESEARCH Ltd

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LAND-BASED AND RELATED GREEN SKILLS: THE 2012 GAMES AND THE THAMES GATEWAY LEGACY

Prepared for:

LSC Thames Gateway Directorate, Lantra and Natural England

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The views expressed in this report are the views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of LSC Thames Gateway Directorate, Lantra and Natural England

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Executive Summary

- The scale of LARG employment in Thames Gateway is small but significant, accounting for around 2% of the workforce, with employment created through green space development and maintenance, on the one hand, and the growth of domestic and private gardens, on the other. Employers' greatest recruitment difficulties are for managers and supervisors, people with intermediate level technical skills, and work ready new entrants. Generic skills, such as customer care, are considered to be a growing requirement across LARG occupations.
- There has been an overall decrease in the supply of LSC-funded training, focused mainly on part-time landscape and production horticulture, with provision consolidating around specialist landbased colleges, Capel Manor in London, Hadlow in Kent and Writtle in Essex.
- Demand for LARG skills in Thames Gateway reflects the mainly urban nature of London, North Kent and South Essex, relative to the more agricultural and rural South East and Eastern regions, with green space development providing opportunities to promote sustainable communities and social inclusion. Key drivers of demand are the quality and complexity of landscape specifications, the range of uses and the degree of community involvement.
- Relative to other sectors contributing to the Games, the employment impact of the Olympic Park will be relatively low but offers potential to provide a significant local employment and skills legacy, with around 250 staff engaged at the peak of the construction phase, and of the order of 100 required for its ongoing management and maintenance post-2012.
- The employment impact of Thames Gateway green space developments is difficult to assess, but may require at least of the order of 2,000 staff for green space development, and a sustained need for up to 1,000 people for ongoing management. This would represent a significant growth in ongoing LARG employment for parks and green spaces of around 10% across Thames Gateway.
- The LARG employment and skills legacy of 2012 will be maximised if:
 - High standards and complex specifications are set for new green spaces,
 - Procurement methods encourage local employment and there is a commitment to sustained high levels of revenue funding for the new sites,
 - Existing best practice and existing or planned systems for engaging and supporting people into learning and employment embrace LARG opportunities as one of many possible career options for the local population,
 - Skills supply better matches employer requirements, with greater flexibility around mainstream funding and support for a more industry-led approach to publicly funded training and workforce development.
- The analysis of employment and skills suggests that, LARG skills are important to 2012 and the wider Thames Gateway regeneration context, contributing relatively modest but significant volumes of new jobs, with higher numbers and more sophisticated roles required if a "high funding, high standards, high skills" approach is taken to the Thames Gateway Parklands. The sector can also make a significant contribution to the combating social exclusion by engaging disadvantaged groups in skills and work, and enable the realisation of Thames

Gateway as a model of best practice in creating and maintaining sustainable communities.

- It is, therefore, proposed that:
 1. LSC revenue funding for Capel Manor, Hadlow and Writtle Colleges be increased modestly in the short term to accommodate the anticipated initial growth in demand for skills related to 2012 and Thames Gateway parklands.
 2. Consideration be given to proportionate capital support for new / extended centres or outreach activities planned or under consideration by these colleges in East London, North Kent and South Essex.
 3. Stakeholders lobby to ensure that procurement, standards, specifications and long-term revenue funding maximise the LARG employment and skills legacy of 2012 and the Thames Gateway Parklands.
 4. Stakeholders work together to deliver the LARG Sector Skills Agreement and local implementation of qualifications reform to improve the responsiveness of supply to sector needs.
 5. LARG skills and employment opportunities should be embedded within the wider range of IAG, skills and employment offer and job brokerage services emerging for 2012, and, ideally, being extended to the broader Thames Gateway. This should include the 2012 Pre-Volunteer Programme.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

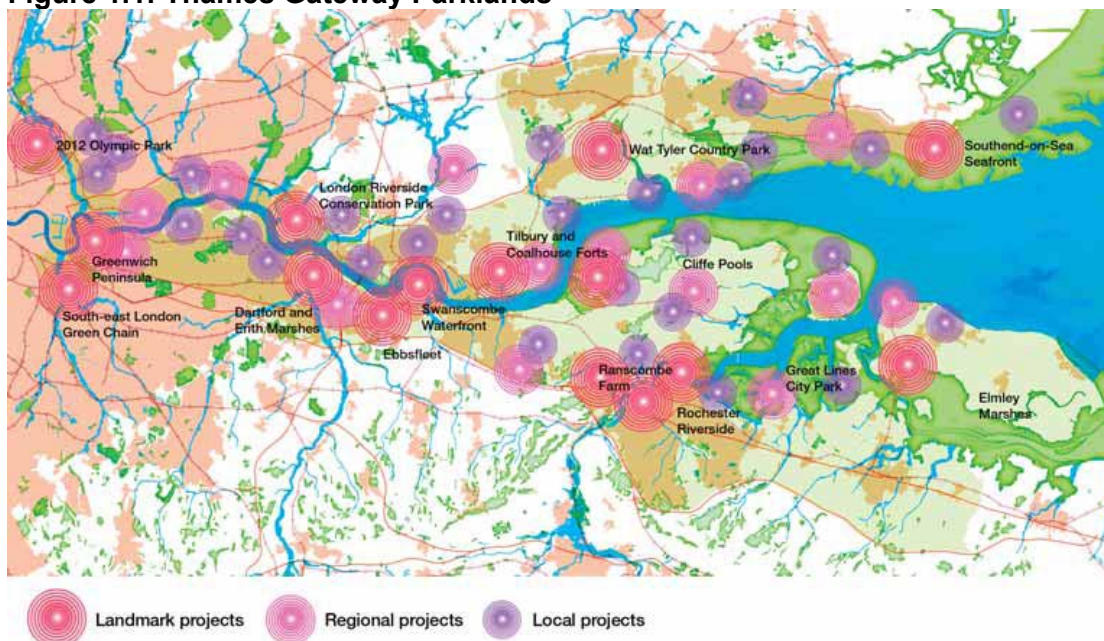
This study was commissioned by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), Lantra and Natural England to provide a strategic assessment of the implications of the Olympic Park development for the supply of and demand for Landbased and Related Green (LARG) skills in the Thames Gateway.

The report aims to address three research objectives for key LARG occupations:

1. Review the current supply of and demand for employment, skills and training within the Thames Gateway.
2. Assess the likely nature and timing of demand for skills associated with the 2012 Games and the development of the Olympic Park.
3. Identify opportunities to maximise the skills and training legacy from 2012 for the benefit of the Thames Gateway Region as a whole.

The Olympic Park will be the largest green space development in Western Europe in recent memory, covering 213 hectares, of which around half is expected to be green space. The Olympic Park is also now being seen as a potential “landmark site” of the proposed “Thames Gateway Parklands” (see Figure 1.1 below), a network of green spaces across Thames Gateway to support sustainable communities.

Figure 1.1: Thames Gateway Parklands



Source: Thames Gateway Interim Plan: Policy Framework, Department for Communities and Local Government, November 2006.

Against this background of ambitious plans for green space developments, stakeholders with an interest in LARG skills and employment need to understand what the Olympic Park and Thames Gateway Parklands will mean for communities and how the legacy of these key initiatives can be maximised.

1.2 Outline of the Report

Based on consultation with the project sponsors, a review of published sources and semi-structured depth interviews with key stakeholders and industry respondents (for details see Annex 1), the report begins with a review of employment and skills in the Thames Gateway, with an assessment of supply of and demand for LARG skills¹.

Next, the report focuses on the scale, nature and timing of employment and skills demand for the Olympic Park, and an initial assessment of requirements for the Thames Gateway Parklands initiative.

Attention then turns to factors that will influence the scale and nature of LARG employment and skills legacy from 2012 and Thames Gateway, with consideration of green space standards and specifications, procurement and funding, ways to maximise the legacy, and how skills supply might be optimised. The section concludes with a brief description of possible scenarios for LARG skills and employment.

Finally, the report sets out conclusions on the scale and value of LARG employment and skills opportunities arising from 2012 and Thames Gateway, and proposes how the emerging opportunities might best be prepared for in the short term. Five specific recommendations are then made to ensure pragmatic and proportionate growth of LARG skills provision to support the employment legacy.

¹ This study refers to those sub-sectors of the Lantra sector footprint which are most closely linked to parks and green spaces, ie: environmental conservation, equine, fencing, game and wildlife management, landscape, production horticulture, and trees and timber.

2.0 Supply and Demand: LARG Employment and Skills in Thames Gateway

This section reviews and analyses published sources, and takes evidence from interviews conducted for this project, to assess the scale and nature of LARG employment, and skills supply and demand in the Thames Gateway.

Key Messages:

- **The scale of LARG employment is relatively small but significant**, with around 10,000 employees, 1,000 businesses² in the sub-sectors which are the focus of this study. This accounts for less than 2% of Thames Gateway's workforce.
- **Employment demand is primary** (arising from specific projects like the Olympic Park) and **secondary** (arising from stronger demand for services in the Thames Gateway expanding economy).
- Landscape companies face the greatest challenges in **recruiting** staff with **intermediate level technical skills** and skilled **managers and supervisors**. With sufficient lead time they are able to fulfil the staffing requirements of landscape contracts, often by recruiting **work ready** people and training them up.
- **Supply of skills has declined** steadily in respect of the overall volume of LSC-funded courses delivered in Thames Gateway, concentrated mainly on part-time landscape and production horticulture courses.
- **Supply of skills has consolidated**, with specialist landbased colleges extending their reach and general FE colleges largely exiting or reducing landbased provision.
- **Demand for skills** reflects the more **urban nature** of Thames Gateway, with North Kent and South Essex having as much in common with East London, as with the more rural regions of which they are a part. This suggests that Thames Gateway green spaces will develop in an urban / semi-urban context, focused on skills such as landscaping, horticulture and environmental conservation, providing opportunities to link skills and employment to social inclusion, and reflecting the need for new approaches to land management to support sustainable communities.
- **Demand for skills** is also a function of **landscape specification, range of uses** and **degree of community involvement**, the higher the ambition for a given site, the higher the range and level of skills that is required.
- The strongest demand for skills is for **work readiness** (for entry to the sector, typically at operative level), **manager / supervisor** (handling a range of contract management, people management, financial and community engagement skills) and **intermediate level technical** skills. Generic skills, like customer care, are considered to be a growing need across occupations.

² Figures based on modelling of the sub-sectors of the Lantra footprint which are the focus of this study, using the definition of Thames Gateway set out in the DCLG's Thames Gateway Interim Plan, which draws on earlier Planning Guidance (RPG9) and largely coterminous ward boundaries within Thames Gateway Boroughs / Districts. It should be noted that LSC planning tends to focus on a broader interpretation of Thames Gateway comprising all wards in 19 Districts and Boroughs across London East, North Kent / Medway, and South Essex. This wider interpretation would involve much higher numbers of employers and employees, as well as higher volumes of growth in jobs and skills requirements.

2.1 Employment and Recruitment

Scale of LARG employment

Precise measures of the total number of businesses and people employed in the overall LARG sector and its various sub-sectors are problematic for the Thames Gateway Region. This is because many sub-sectors within the Lantra footprint are “hidden” within other sectors and national statistics have little validity at local level. A further problem is that Thames Gateway is rarely treated as a single entity, data instead being gathered and presented on a regional basis.

In developing the Sector Skills Agreement (SSA) Lantra have produced their own estimates for the scale of LARG employment. In London, for example, Lantra’s employer research suggests that 34,000 people are employed in the Region across the different sub-sectors (see Figure 2.1 below). It is possible that this underestimates the total number of people employed in the sector, when those employed in London by companies based outside the capital, along with a potentially significant number of hard-to-track self-employed, migrant workers and volunteers³.

Across the fifteen sub-sectors that make up the LARG sector in London, those which predominate, in terms of numbers employed and numbers of businesses, are Landscape, Production Horticulture, Animal Care and Floristry (see Figure 2.1 below).

Figure 2.1: Distribution of businesses and employees in the land-based and environmental sector in London (sub-sectors prioritised for this study highlighted)

	Businesses		Employees	
Agricultural Crops	39	0.8	0	0.0%
Agricultural Livestock	65	1.3	0	0.0%
Animal Care	1067	21.0	4279	12.6%
Aquaculture	10	0.2	35	0.1%
Environmental Conservation	441	8.7	2244	6.6%
Equine	480	9.4	2500	7.3%
Farriery	149	2.9	149	0.4%
Fencing	120	2.4	750	2.2%
Floristry	1066	20.9	3406	10.0%
Game and Wildlife Management	24	0.5	60	0.2%
Landscape	960	18.9	13916	40.8%
Land-based Engineering	116	2.3	150	0.4%
Production Horticulture	252	5.0	6595	19.4%
Trees and Timber	300	5.9	0	0.0%
	5089	100	34084	100%

Source: *Sector Skills Agreement for the Landbased and Related Greenskills Industry Strategy London*, Lantra, November 2006 (based on Lantra estimates).

Those sub-sectors considered within the scope of this study as being relevant to the Olympic Park and Thames Gateway Parklands therefore account for over 76% of the sector in London, over 26,000 people and over 2,500 businesses. According to the

³ *Sector Skills Agreement for the Landbased and Related Greenskills Industry Strategy London*, Lantra, November 2006.

Thames Gateway Interim Plan, Thames Gateway London has 242,000 employees⁴, or 6% of the London total (3.9 million) and a population of 500,000 or 7% of the London total (7.2 million).

Taking population as a guide to the scale of sector employment, Thames Gateway London (7% of the population of London) would account for 2,400 of the 34,000 LARG sector employees in London. Applying this 7% figure across sub-sectors focused on for this study, gives the Thames Gateway London estimates of employment set out in Figure 2.2 below.

This suggests that current employment in those sectors relevant to the Olympic Park and Thames Gateway Parklands is of the order of 1% of total employment in London Thames Gateway, representing around 2000 employees⁵. Even if this figure were doubled to account for self-employed and those employed in London by companies outside the Region, total employment in the target sub-sectors would account for around 4,000 jobs and 2% of the working population.

Figure 2.2: Estimated distribution of businesses and employees in the land-based and environmental sector in London Thames Gateway (sub-sectors prioritised for this study)

	Businesses	Employees		
Environmental Conservation	31	8.7	157	6.6%
Equine	34	9.4	175	7.3%
Fencing	8	2.4	53	2.2%
Game and Wildlife Management	2	0.5	4	0.2%
Landscape	67	18.9	974	40.8%
Production Horticulture	18	5.0	462	19.4%
Trees and Timber	21	5.9	0	0.0%
	181		1825	
Total Thames Gateway London			242,780	

Source: *Sector Skills Agreement for the Landbased and Related Greenskills Industry Strategy London*, Lantra, November 2006 (based on Lantra estimates), scales down to 7% as an indicative.

The LARG sector in the Eastern and South East Regions is much larger in absolute terms than in London, with total employment standing at 92,805 and 112,551 respectively (16011 and 17781 employers)⁶. Modelling sector employment using population as a guide (Thames Gateway Essex population 454,000 represents 6% of East Region total population of 5.4 million, and Thames Gateway Kent population is 496,000, 8% of the total South East Region population of 8 million) gives the rough estimates of employment by target sub-sector set out below in Figure 2.3.

⁴ *The State of the Gateway: a baseline for evaluating the Thames Gateway programme*, Department for Communities and Local Government, November 2006.

⁵ Figures based on modelling of the sub-sectors of the Lantra footprint which are the focus of this study, using the definition of Thames Gateway set out in the DCLG's Thames Gateway Interim Plan, which draws on earlier Planning Guidance (RPG9) and largely coterminous ward boundaries within Thames Gateway Boroughs / Districts. It should be noted that LSC planning tends to focus on a broader interpretation of Thames Gateway comprising all wards in 19 Districts and Boroughs across London East, North Kent / Medway, and South Essex. This wider interpretation would involve much higher numbers of employers and employees, as well as higher volumes of growth in jobs and skills requirements.

⁶ *The Environment and Land-based Sector, Sector Skills Agreement. Sector Skills Issues: Spatial Considerations*, Lantra, September 2005.

Figure 2.3: Estimated distribution of businesses and employees in the land-based and environmental sector in Thames Gateway sub-regions (sub-sectors prioritised for this study)

	Employees				Businesses			
	TGL	TGE	TGK	Total	TGL	TGE	TGK	Total
Environmental Conservation	157	302	449	908	31	32	43	106
Equine	175	630	920	1725	34	67	122	223
Fencing	53	180	560	793	8	26	80	114
Game & Wildlife Management	4	29	38	71	2	14	19	35
Landscape	974	668	2004	3646	67	53	115	235
Production Horticulture	462	565	1281	2308	18	71	125	214
Trees and Timber	0	72	192	264	21	36	72	129
Total	1825	2446	5444	9715	181	299	576	1056

Source: *The Environment and Land-based Sector, Sector Skills Agreement. Sector Skills Issues: Spatial Considerations*, Lantra, September 2005, scaled down by the sub-region's population relative to RDA region.

Following this rationale to estimate employment in the specified LARG sub-sectors across the Thames Gateway (defined narrowly as per the DCLG Implementation Plan, November 2006), we can conclude that:

- There are of the order of **10,000 employees and 1,000 businesses**, accounting for **around 2%** of the total Thames Gateway employed workforce of 613,000.
- Employment is concentrated primarily in **landscape and production horticulture**, with the fencing and equine sub-sectors also significant, especially in Kent and Essex.

Nature of LARG Employment

Respondents interviewed for this study generally took the view that the LARG labour market was fragmented, with a small number of large contractors, and many self-employed and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The British Association of Landscape Industries (BALI), the main trade body, estimates that there are 17,000 landscaping companies in Britain, of which only about 750 are members of BALI: "one man, one van" operations predominate.

The Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) take the view that there are only one or two "big players" and many more SMEs, some of which are quite specialised. The predominance of SMEs, along with the ODA's concern to allow local small companies and social enterprises a fair opportunity to bid for 2012 contracts, highlights the importance of engaging smaller employers in sector skills strategies and the importance of self-employment as a key part of the LARG labour market.

Several respondents, including London Parks and Green Spaces Forum and Capel Manor College, felt that the large number of SMEs indicated a strong and growing demand for private garden services in the domestic market, which may be considered to be a more attractive option to working for a landscape contractor. Within the larger employers, there is a significant amount of casual working and transfers of undertakings are common when maintenance contracts change hands. One of the "big five" contractors consulted, for example, employs only 900 staff in winter, rising to 1500 in summer.

This suggests that employment demand in the Thames Gateway will be one of two types:

- **Primary demand**, due to LARG work directly created by major developments, like landscaping and maintaining the Olympic Park. Primary demand is more visible and easier to identify, the preserve of systematically procured services from public and private sector bodies, and involving major landscaping and facilities management companies.
- **Secondary demand**, where evidence appears to be more anecdotal and relates to the growth in services – among which LARG services are just one – arising from economic growth in the Gateway. Into this category would fall the suggested increase in freelance gardeners servicing the domestic market. Another example might be Hadlow College's provision of training for refuse collectors in Greenwich Borough to help them reduce damage to roadside flora and planting on verges.

Recruiting staff in areas of primary demand involves significant challenges in the Thames Gateway. One major contractor and a key parks authority noted, for example, that staff recruitment and retention can be especially problematic in London given the high cost of living, transport (including the congestion charge) and staff safety issues in some areas. A college principal felt that the growth of the domestic gardening sector (secondary demand), which offers a well-paid, flexible opportunities to qualified people, was making recruitment by landscape companies more difficult.

In addition, London contracts can also be more challenging, given that active user groups are very common and these can set specific requirements of the contractor in terms of, for example, staff qualifications and require site managers to engage in this form of community engagement at unsocial hours. From the employer's perspective Thames Gateway is an expensive labour market to operate in. The same contractor noted the difference in wages compared with other parts of the country, with the example of a machine driving operative, who might cost between £5.50 and £7 per hour on the Wirral, and between £8 and £10 in London, suggesting that many people felt that there was, "better pay in McDonalds".

Other sectors are therefore often considered by potential entrants to be more attractive or better paid, and to have better prospects. Many respondents highlighted that the sector had an "image problem", a low profile and few people aspiring to work in the sector, perhaps due to the inaccurate perceptions of careers advisers. Wage levels in the primary demand part of the sector also could make serving secondary demand in domestic and private gardens more attractive: one of the landbased colleges interviewed suggesting, for example, that recent completers of NVQs in subjects like horticulture and garden design could opt to work for themselves, charging themselves out at £10 to £15 an hour in the domestic gardens market.

LARG Labour Market

Respondents generally took the view that the LARG labour market was fragmented, with a small number of large contractors, and many self-employed and SMEs. BALI estimates that there are 17,000 landscaping companies in Britain, of which only about 750 are members of BALI, the key trade organisation: "one man, one van" operations predominate. The ODA takes the view that there are only one or two "big players" and many more SMEs, some of which are quite specialised, in contrast with construction, for example, where there are many major companies.

The predominance of SMEs, along with the stakeholder's concern to allow local small companies and social enterprises a fair opportunity to bid for 2012 contracts, highlights the importance of engaging smaller employers in sector skills strategies and the importance of self-employment as a key part of the LARG labour market.

Recruitment

For employers **recruitment is generally easier at lower levels and in less skilled occupations**. The Horticultural Trade Association (HTA) and landscape contractors interviewed indicated that **recruiting work ready people without hard skills and then, “training them up” is often the employer’s preferred option**, given declining numbers of skilled people and some concern about the practical skills or work readiness of people who have recently obtained LARG skills qualifications from mainstream providers.

This trend may be further reinforced by a progressive de-skilling of green space maintenance work, which some would link to the introduction of Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT), often associated with less demanding and so lower-cost maintenance specifications and the demise of in-house local authority parks departments. On the other hand, some maintenance specifications reflect a given site’s particular requirements, which can also drive demand for skilled labour, as in the case of the Royal Parks, where very specialist skills may be required across a range of different sites.

Industry representatives consulted generally felt that staff **recruitment was more problematic for managers and people with specialist technical skills**. The most commonly mentioned methods of recruitment were:

- Local press
- Specialist magazines and websites
- Word of mouth
- “Poaching”
- Job Centres
- Company website

The problem of recruiting managers is further exacerbated by the additional complexity of managing modern green spaces, with requirements now including good communication skills (with colleagues and stakeholders), quality, Health and Safety, contract management, community engagement and events management.

While operatives were easier to recruit, people at lower levels with the following skills tend to pose more of a challenge:

- Machinery use (eg: chain saws and grass cutters)
- Use of chemicals
- Fine turf

The recruitment environment may also vary by local area. Barking and Dagenham Council, for example, finds it easier to recruit because low skilled and low paid employment is relatively common in its area, making LARG employment more attractive to local people. Recruitment of family members of existing staff, such as sons and daughters, is more common. In the Royal Parks central location poses a challenge, given high accommodation and travel costs. Once recruited, however, much of a local workforce will stay at the same location, often transferring to another contractor when a management contract changes hands.

Some industry respondents noted that more skilled and management roles would often be filled by people from outside the local area, and felt that such intermediate and higher level roles would be more difficult to fill from the available local workforce.

Overall, though, for the development and maintenance of a site like the Olympic Park, **landscape contractors are generally able to find the staff they need for a given job, provided they had lead time they had to recruit and train staff.** The greatest recruitment challenges are to recruit:

- **Technical specialists with intermediate level skills** in areas such as use of machinery, chemicals and fine turf.
- **Managers and supervisors**, with a range of people management, task management, quality and contract management skills, coupled with good communication skills.

There will also be entry-level employment opportunities for **work ready people** able to perform operative roles.

Voluntary groups consulted agreed that staff recruitment was getting more difficult, exacerbated by the cost of living in Thames Gateway and that short-term working was significant. One Wildlife Trust, for example, noted that a given role in their organisation ten years ago would have attracted hundreds of applicants; now there would be far fewer people applying for the same job.

Volunteering can be an effective route to employment for a range of people, including those at a particular disadvantage in labour market terms. Groundwork has found that unpaid grounds maintenance work has been especially effective in enabling ex-offenders and white males into work, although less effective for women and BAME groups. Essex Wildlife Trust felt that an “overlooked need” was for wildlife skills, including field identification and “hands-on” ecology. Kent Wildlife Trust argued that there was also a need for training in the creation and maintenance of habitats.

2.2 Supply of Skills

Supply of skills from publicly funded providers has declined overall across London in recent years at all levels, except Level 3, where there has been a small increase. There has been a reduction in provision and take up, despite growth of provision to London learners by providers outside the Region (see Figure 2.4 below), volumes delivered by London-based colleges have fallen for both London-based learners and those learning in London but based outside.

Figure 2.4: Learner FE and WBL participation trends (FTEs)* 2002 – 2005

Summary of FE supply and take-up			
Take up of provision : FTEs	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
Landbased course provision accessed by those living in Greater London	2,348	1,968	1,873
Breakdown of supply: FTEs			
serviced by London providers	1,817	1,436	1,256
serviced by non London providers	530	532	617
Demand: for non London residents met by London providers	495	390	377
Net outflow of FTEs to non London providers	36	142	240

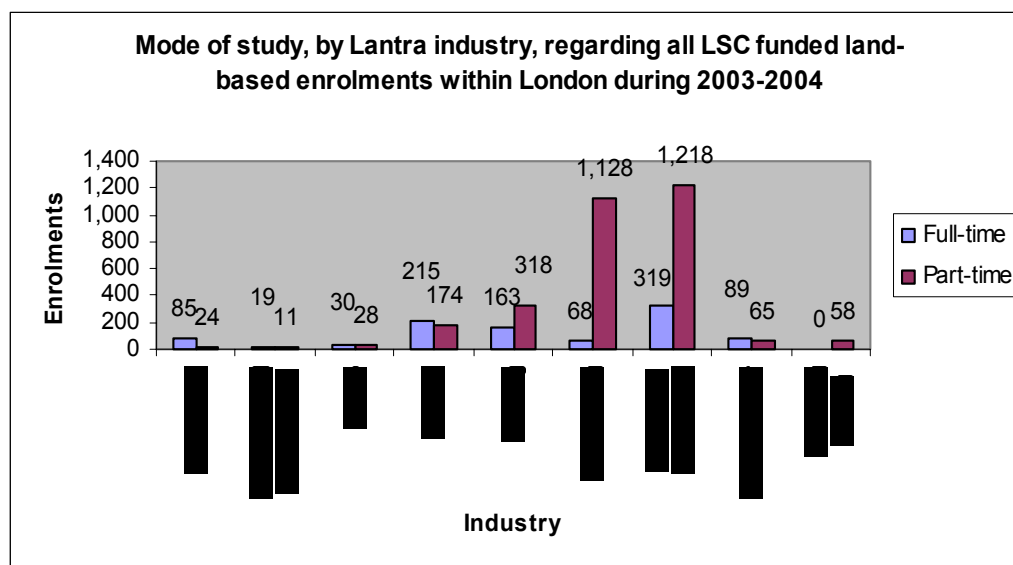
Source: Pan London FE ILR data 2002/03, 2003/04 and 2004/05

Note: London provision excludes Workers Education Association (WEA) numbers, which although registered as a London provider, does not make LARG skills provision within London.
 * FTE Full Time Equivalent, based on Guided Learning Hours (GLH) /450 hours

Source: *London Landbased and Related Green (LARG) Skills Review*, Bentley Jennison, March 2006.

As regards subject areas, publicly funded training provision in London is heavily focused on landscaping and production horticulture (see Figure 2.5 below), where part-time courses are especially popular.

Figure 2.5: Mode of study, by industry, for LSC funded enrolments during 2003-2004



Source: Individualised Learner Record, Learning and Skills Council 2003/04, cited in *Sector Skills Agreement for the Landbased and Related Greenskills Industry Strategy London*, Lantra, November 2006.

Another key trend identified is that provision in London is tending to consolidate and specialise, with Capel Manor, a College for Vocational Excellence (CoVE)⁷, growing its provision at all of its sites and accounting for over half of all provision in the Region, as smaller providers and general FE colleges reduce or exit landbased courses, leading to a decline in take up of landbased courses by Londoners overall has declined by 20% from 2002/2003 to 2004/2005. While Capel Manor is now being recognised as the main London Region Landbased College, general FE colleges like Merton College are exiting landbased provision. Similarly, Hadlow College reported that general FE colleges in North Kent, such as Mid-Kent College and North Kent College appear to have very little landbased provision, while Hadlow's own growth has seen a dramatic increase over the last 3 years. Writtle College is working to extend its local LARG skills delivery through local partnerships and "out centres", placing the College's vocational provision within a broader local vocational offering for 14-19 and 19+ groups, for example, as at the Malden Centre.

An alternative interpretation of this trend is, of course, that demand for LARG skills is declining. Providers like Capel Manor feel that there is unmet demand under the current funding levels, evidenced by their ability, for example, to fill extra places when additional funds became available to 2006/2007 from the LSC and LDA for RHS Certificates, NVQ Level 2s in horticulture, garden design and floristry. Similarly, Hadlow College is proposing growth based on its own projections and forecasts for North Kent made by a local authority, and is planning for increased Level 2 and Level 3 courses in 16 – 18, more unfunded part-time courses and an increase in HE provision through Foundation Degrees. Writtle College feels that there is significant demand for NPTC Certificates of Competence to make people site ready, 16-19 funded courses (with Certificates of Confidence included and subsidised by the College) and full-cost recovery provision for adults and employers.

⁷ Capel Manor is a CoVE for horticulture, landscape, garden design, floristry and business enterprise.

Although data on supply and funding of courses for Thames Gateway as a whole was not available for this study, it would seem that:

- Supply is has **declined slightly** in volume terms across Thames Gateway.
- Supply is **consolidating within specialised providers** like Capel Manor College, Hadlow College and Writtle College.

This picture of consolidation and decline in volume may not be consistent across regional boundaries, with Hadlow active in South London through its Mottingham centre. In addition, within London Region, some non-specialist providers in the form of Richmond Adult Education and Southwark College (both located outside Thames Gateway) are expected to maintain their LARG skills provision into the future. This suggests that careful consideration of issues relating to competition, planning and borders is required within LSC regions and across regional borders for Thames Gateway.

2.3 Demand for skills

Drivers of Demand

Lantra's Sector Skills Agreement (SSA) for England⁸ identifies nine key drivers of change in the sector. The SSA for England is complemented by regional Agreements, which include key drivers of change for the three Regions straddled by Thames Gateway, set out in Figure 2.6 below. This comparison of regional drivers suggests the following key conclusions for an inner-city area like the Olympic Park and the wider Thames Gateway Region, making the assumption that the "city fringe", more urbanised areas of North Kent and South Essex will more closely resemble urban London than more the rural areas of their regions:

- The development of green spaces in Thames Gateway is an opportunity to **engage disadvantaged groups** in LARG skills and employment. In many areas, especially in East London, this will relate to BAME groups. The voluntary sector and social enterprises play a key role in combating exclusion.
- **Urban / domestic horticulture expanding** across Thames Gateway, especially in London, increasing employment and self-employment.
- Skills to deliver **modern approaches to land management**, which support sustainable communities, will be needed across the Gateway.
- **Regeneration** – especially in urban or semi-urban settings - will provide an opportunity to expand LARG skills and employment across the Gateway.
- Demographic changes suggest that **older workers and BAME groups** need to be well represented among those engaged in skills and employment in Thames Gateway.
- **Health and safety legislation** will drive the need for training and continuous professional development everywhere.
- **Modernisation of rural delivery** will create skills needs in rural areas of Thames Gateway, but have less of an impact in urban areas like East London.

⁸ <http://www.lantra.co.uk/documents/EnglandAnnexStage5.pdf>.

Figure 2.6: Drivers of change for LARG skills identified in Lantra’s sector skills agreement

Drivers of Change			
England	London	East	South East
	2012 is singled out as a major change factor, given that this should create long-term career opportunities for all ethnic groups and will require specific skills linked to the Olympic development		Seen as a source of opportunity for landbased businesses in the region. Skills needs specific to the Olympic Park. Work and career opportunities for people in the North of the region.
	Urban / domestic horticulture is expected to grow and become more sophisticated from a horticultural and environmental perspective, implying a growing need for skills for domestic garden and arboriculture services		
New approaches to land management and rural stewardship, creating a need for skills for sustainable development	New approaches to land management are felt to be increasing demand for skills relating to environmental sensitivity and sustainable development, along with better technical skills in landscape development	New approaches to land management and rural stewardship, creating a need for skills for sustainable development	New approaches to land management and rural stewardship, creating a need for skills for sustainable development, increased provision of CPD, higher level technical skills, and improved business advice.
Changes in business practice, including increased use of ICT and other technologies	Changes in business practice, due to pressures such as globalisation, quality and traceability, are seen to be driving a need for use of ICT, new technologies and better management and leadership skills	Changes in business practice, including increased use of ICT and other technologies	Changes in business practice, due to pressures such as globalisation, quality and traceability, are seen to be driving a need for use of ICT, new technologies and better management and leadership skills
Rural and urban regeneration, implying a need for cross-sector working and integrated approaches to major developments like the Olympics	Urban regeneration is considered to be a key driver of change, requiring an integrated approach with partners to meet developing skills needs and more cross-sector working	Rural and urban regeneration, implying a need for cross-sector working and integrated approaches to major developments like the Olympics	Rural and urban regeneration, implying a need for cross-sector working and integrated approaches to major developments like the Olympics to address skills needs created by major green space developments

LARG Skills: 2012 and Thames Gateway

Impact of new Animal Health and Welfare legislation	New animal welfare and health legislation, accompanied by increased public demand for a wider range of companion animals, is likely to extend the growth and diversification of service industries relating to animal care	Impact of new Animal Health and Welfare legislation	High standards required in the handling of all animals, implying a need for CPD and recognition of competence
Demographic trends, suggesting that new entrants of all ages need to be attracted through, for example, better careers advice and guidance	The demographics of London, with a 30% Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) population requires effective marketing of LARG careers, better careers advice and guidance, proper recognition of competence for all, support for migrants and addressing the specific needs of ethnic groups	Demographic trends, suggesting that new entrants of all ages need to be attracted through, for example, better careers advice and guidance	Demographic trends, suggesting that new entrants of all ages need to be attracted through, for example, better careers advice and guidance. Importance of supporting migrants.
Importance of voluntary organisations and social enterprises, with a key role in supporting regeneration and inclusion and a need for access to skills	The importance of voluntary organisations and social enterprises, given their role in supporting regeneration and ethnic inclusion, is expected to increase the need for access to mainstream skills support agencies, funding and mechanisms for management and development of volunteers	Importance of voluntary organisations and social enterprises, with a key role in supporting regeneration and inclusion and a need for access to skills	Importance of voluntary organisations and social enterprises, with a key role in supporting regeneration and inclusion and a need for access to skills
Health and Safety legislation will result in a requirement for improved continuous professional development, awareness raising activities and recognition of Health and Safety competence	Health and Safety legislation will result in a requirement for improved continuous professional development, awareness raising activities and recognition of Health and Safety competence	Health and Safety legislation will result in a requirement for improved continuous professional development, awareness raising activities and recognition of Health and Safety competence	Health and Safety legislation will result in a requirement for improved continuous professional development, awareness raising activities and recognition of Health and Safety competence
Modernisation of rural delivery, involving devolution of decision making to regional bodies		Modernisation of rural delivery, involving devolution of decision making to regional bodies	Modernisation of rural delivery, involving devolution of decision making to regional bodies
Regionalisation, with an increased role for regional funding to deliver, for example, regeneration and economic improvement			Need to ensure that regional funding agencies (eg: skills and business support) respond to sector needs

Source: Landbased Sector Skills Agreement, various documents www.lantra.org.uk.

Demand for Skills: the “What”

There are a number of published sources of intelligence on LARG skills demand in Thames Gateway, often with specific references to 2012. In this section these are reviewed and supplemented with the views of those interviewed for this study to propose a typology of LARG skills demand for Thames Gateway green spaces.

The SSA⁹ for London and the Eastern regions (South East still awaited) provide an overview of factors which will have the most significant impact on patterns of employment in the regions which contain Thames Gateway. In the case of London factors expected to have a major impact on patterns of employment include¹⁰:

- Increased demand for rangers and parks staff due to regeneration.
- Growth in landscaping, fencing and green space management due to the “Olympic effect” and urban regeneration.
- An emphasis on diversity and inclusion programmes.
- Demographic changes and an ageing workforce will require smarter working and use of migrant labour.

Specific skills needs for London as a whole identified with industry and through research for the SSA include:

- Skills to support business development and diversification (eg: management and leadership, and contract management).
- Skills for the workforce, providing enhanced / updated technical skills to ensure flexible, multi-skilled individuals (eg: coaching skills, customer service, high level specific technical skills such as machinery operations, plant and animal husbandry, and design skills).
- Skills for those entering the workforce (eg: employability skills such as problem solving, willingness to learn and flexibility, and specific learning to meet changing business needs).
- Skills for life (eg: high level communications, literacy and numeracy, intermediate ICT and high-level financial planning).
- Skills for volunteers and voluntary organisations (including management, team working, fundraising, ICT and customer service).

An earlier detailed review of supply and demand for LARG skills undertaken in the London Region¹¹ also highlighted the importance of investing in the LARG skills base to improve the potential of London’s green spaces, with particular needs identified at Level 3 and higher level specific and generic skills. Specific skills needs identified, of particular interest to the Olympic Park and Thames Gateway Parklands, included:

- Landscaping, production horticulture and sports turf.
- Contract management and occupational craft skills in landscaping, given the use of Best Value and increasing sophistication of client requirements.
- Amenity horticulture and grounds maintenance.

⁹ *Sector Skills Agreement for the Landbased and Related Greenskills Industry Strategy London*, Lantra, November 2006.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *London Landbased and Related Green (LARG) Skills Review*, Bentley Jennison, March 2006.

- High quality specialised skills in areas such as historic gardens, plant identification, plant knowledge, pest and disease recognition, restoration, environmental conservation and management, and green tourism.

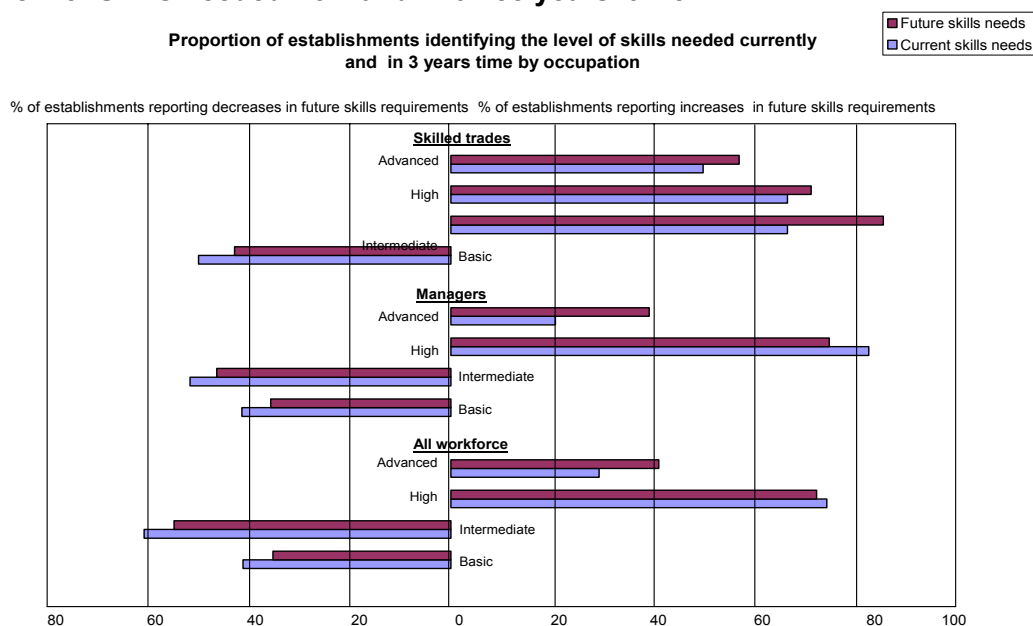
Skills requirements are changing, with a growing need for higher level and more technical skills for all workforce groups (see Figures 2.7 and 2.8), while the required level of skill across six key skill areas will rise to “high” or “high / advanced” over the next three years.

Figure 2.7: Current and future skill requirements: London

Skill currently required	% of businesses citing as current requirement	Current level required	Level required in 3 years
Customer relations	92.7%	High	High
Literacy	80%	Intermediate	High
Numeracy	80%	High	High
Communication	80%	High	High
Computing/IT	63.6%	Intermediate	High
Technical	49.1%	High	High/Advanced

Source: Lantra Business Survey, 2005, cited in *Sector Skills Agreement for the Landbased and Related Greenskills Industry Strategy London*, Lantra, November 2006.

Figure 2.8: Skills needed now and in three years' time



Source: *Sector Skills Agreement for the Landbased and Related Greenskills Industry Strategy London*, Lantra, November 2006.

Planning by the LSC aims to reflect a range of priorities in each Region, including those for sectors. The London Learning and Skills Plan for 2007-2008¹² sets as a Regional Priority (Priority 4) the aim to integrated skills within economic development and local and regional regeneration, highlighting the success of projects like the Heathrow academy in combining recruitment and training opportunities. Priority 5 is to equip Londoners with the skills to benefit from investment in the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games, with specific measures to support employment and skills development, additional funding (£5m) for adult Level 2 places, and the new Pre-volunteer Programme.

¹²

http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/London/The_London_Learning_and_Skills_Plan_Our_regional_commissioning_plan_for_London_2007-08.pdf

The London Plan also includes a strategic analysis of sectors, identifying key challenges and actions. Land-based is identified as a “comparatively small” sector requiring a managed approach to skills provision, with only one action (construction has 4 and public services 5) identified, to, “move towards a regional approach for land-based activity, focusing on growth on higher-level skills as well as qualifications to support workless people move into jobs.” Sector-specific commissioning for LARG skills will focus on Level 3 / 4 specific technical skills including specialist machinery operations, plant and animal husbandry skills and design skills; Level 3 Environmental Management; and Level 2 / 3 Animal Welfare skills. The 2012 Pre-volunteer Programme, by providing lower level skills and progression opportunities for disadvantaged groups engaged in a community context across London, could be a valuable legacy tool in recruiting people onto LARG skills courses and into employment.

The LSC’s South East Plan¹³ identifies six priority sectors for the South East region, and does not include land-based among these. In respect of 2012 the Plan signals the Region’s interest in capitalising on 2012 through plans being developed by the South East Skills and Employment Group for 2012, which will aim to maximise the education, engagement and employment opportunities of the Games. While work in key sectors is mentioned, there is no specific reference to LARG skills at this stage.

Land-based industries are identified as one of seven key sectors in the LSC’s East of England Plan, with ESF funding earmarked for Level 2 provision in the key sectors. There is no specific reference to 2012.

All three Regions’ Plans also highlight key future changes that will influence sector skills in the coming years:

- 14-19: commissioning of specialist provision, targeted, for example, at young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), a commitment to work with local authorities to secure provision to deliver the 14-19 entitlement, and gearing up for trials the first Specialised Diplomas.
- Qualification reform: from 2008 the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) will be the preferred regulatory framework for provision, approved by the SSCs for funding by the LSC, with trialling of the new mechanism by July 2008. Clear evidence of demand from learners and employers will be required.

When asked for their views on skills needs for the sector generally, industry respondents saw a wide range of needs in the following areas, largely consistent with the categories of skills identified in the SSA and regional research:

- Literacy, numeracy and ESOL
- Landscaping
- Horticulture
- Equine (especially in Kent and Essex)¹⁴
- Supervisory and management skills

¹³ http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/South_East/LSC_South_East_Regional_Commissioning_Plan_2007-08.pdf.

¹⁴ Equine skills may merit further review if it is found that competing Olympic Teams do not bring their own horse care staff with them. Another factor will be the final location of teams and horse-related events, which may involve Greenwich as the location for events and sites in London, North Kent and South Essex to host teams.

- Apprenticeships
- “Practical skills” (as opposed to underpinning knowledge) and broader awareness of horticulture
- Skills in community work, sport and working with children (especially appropriate to Ranger roles)
- Working with and managing volunteers
- Machine work
- Fine turf

While some employers have apprentice schemes, these may be tailored and including recognised qualifications (as in the case of Royal Parks) or in-house and not formally accredited and comprising a set of specific skills required to do the job. The HTA noted that, although some employers use NVQs, the quality of delivery is variable and use has declined.

The link between specifications, standards and skills is also important in determining skills requirements for a given site or project, with higher quality green spaces requiring higher levels and more varied sets of skills. Specifications can also include requirements for specific staff skills and qualifications.

2012 and Thames Gateway stakeholders took the view that management and supervisory skills were also important, especially as modern green spaces required managers to be able to work in partnerships and manage sites flexibly for a variety of uses, applying effective project management and financial management skills at the same time. Stakeholders also noted that skills relating to sustainable development were growing in importance, as green spaces now commonly require environmental conservation skills and a possible shift to, for example, sustainable fuel, would change the nature of woodland management.

Some of the lobby and special interest groups consulted echoed this theme, suggesting that arboriculture skills (looking after trees) may be in over-supply relative to the emerging need for woodland management skills (managing spaces with trees in a wider context) which reflects wooded areas’ leisure amenity, biodiversity and fuel productivity potential. A new scheme being piloted through the Capital Woodlands Programme, for example, was developing green skills linked to Forest Stewardship Council standards. These respondents also raised the issue of the specialist knowledge that would be required by planners and landscapers in specifying the type of trees that should be planted in a given space, in order to plant trees with the right “personality and character” and for particular effects (eg: planting larger trees to aid climate adaptation by creating a cooling effect. Lobby groups consulted also noted that demand for specialist landscaping skills had strengthened following the introduction of CCT, which reduced the pool of suitably skilled landscapers and the number of vocational training schemes.

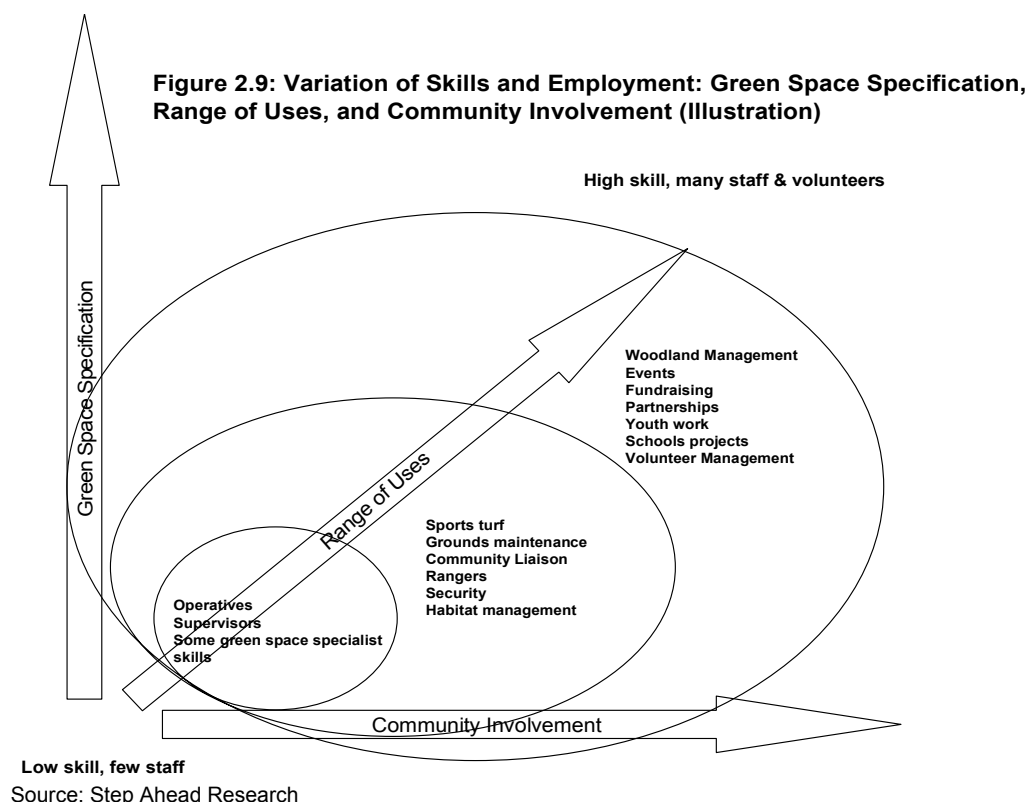
The introduction of Specialised Diplomas could also lead to a significant increase in FE landbased provision linked to parks and green spaces. Writtle College, for example, based on initial discussions with those schools that already work with the College, anticipates that there will be around 4 or 5 students for the Landbased Specialised Diploma from each year cohort. For the number of schools currently working with the college, this suggests a requirement for 60 to 100 students attending a landbased facility one or two days per week, further strengthening the case for additional local LARG facilities.

Typology of LARG Skills for Green Space Developments

Interviews conducted with employers, stakeholders and other interest groups suggest that the range, type and level of skills required for green space development, management and maintenance is driven by three features:

- **Green space specification:** more elaborate horticultural specifications, with more landscape features, a wider range of plants, more varieties of trees, and more frequent changes to planting demand higher levels of skill across a wider range of skill sets.
- **Range of uses:** sites designed for a range of uses require more skills. A green space might have a general amenity value (for walks, playing, picnicking, etc), specialist uses (sports, school group facilities, visitor centres), and contribute to sustainable communities by providing local wood fuel, biodiversity, and protect particular species of flora and fauna.
- **Community involvement:** sites with a higher level of community involvement will require more sophisticated management (user liaison, partnership working, managing volunteers) and specialist skills to support events and interpretation.

As a general rule, the less ambitious the specification, the lower the range of uses, and the less community involvement, the less demand there will be for skilled labour, and vice versa.



Similarly, the higher the specification, the wider the range of uses, and the greater the degree of community involvement, the higher will be the cost of creating and maintaining the site. Figure 2.9 (above), provides an illustration of the range of skills and roles required for a green space may vary with these three factors.

Each skill area does not necessarily imply a separate role or post. Evidence from secondary sources and interviews suggests that multi-skilled individuals may be required, that peripatetic specialists might support specific activities, that operatives can become multi-skilled through “bite-sized” courses and continuous professional development, that managers, in particular, need an ever increasing range of skills to handle high specification and multi-use sites with significant community involvement. Figure 2.10 (below) attempts to collate examples of the wide range of skills relevant to green space development and management into a matrix framework, applicable to a range of contexts. The matrix reflects the following key features of demand:

- Work readiness is key to entry at the Operative level, with specific short training required for staff to be “site ready” in areas such as Health and Safety, and Use of Chemicals.
- Technical Specialists may be required in a wide range of areas, depending on the complexity of the specification and range of purposes the site aims to serve. “Traditional” landscape and horticulture skills therefore appear alongside technical skills required for developing and maintaining natural spaces, as they may do within or across individual green spaces.
- Rangers and wardens are singled out for specific attention, although this role may also be taken on by the site manager. Here the emphasis is on a range of community uses, interpretation and community engagement.
- Supervisors and managers may now require a very diverse skill set, reflecting the increasing complexity of managing green spaces for a range of purposes and across a spread of circumstances.

Given the wide range of approaches taken to managing and developing green spaces, many of the roles and skills described could apply to volunteers.

The issue of work readiness may require further probing at local level with prospective employers. Writtle College, for example, feel that NPTC Certificates of Competence are often key to ensuring LARG work readiness, by providing certificated skills in subjects such as Tractor Handling, Lift Truck Operation, Manual Handling, Pesticide Application and Chainsaw use. Further probing of work readiness / site readiness for individual green space projects in the Thames Gateway could also provide further insights into the type of skills required to help local residents secure work or work with training at green space developments. For a site such as the Olympic Park, in addition, to “hard skills” like those listed above, site readiness might also refer to:

- Health and Safety requirements particular to the site.
- Security requirements, which might be especially stringent for a site like the Olympic Park, perhaps involving Criminal Records Bureau checks and special arrangements for ex-offenders.
- Customer care principles embodying a site’s brand values, which might apply to staff across a range of sectors who would have contact with customers and the general public.
- Knowledge relating to the site’s uniqueness (eg: as a model of sustainable development) or history (regeneration of the area).

Figure 2.10: LARG skills matrix for green space development and management

	Low Skill / Work Ready	Intermediate	High
Operatives			
	Literacy Numeracy ESOL Problem solving Willingness to learn Flexibility Communication Customer Care		
	Health & Safety		
	Planting		
	Equine		
	Security		
	Amenity Horticulture		
	Apprenticeships		
	Hard landscaping		
	Soft landscaping		
	Machinery Use		
	Use of chemicals		
Specialists			
		Hard landscaping	
		Soft landscaping	
		Fine turf	
		Arboriculture	
		Machinery Use	
		Nature Conservation	
		Environmental Conservation / Management	
		Habitat Management	
		Woodland Management	
Rangers / Wardens			
	Working with children		
	Working with Volunteers		
	Working with Young People		
	Interpretation		
	Community Liaison		
Managers / Supervisors			
		Landscape Management	
		Project Management	
		People Management	
		Contract Management	
		Financial Management	
		Nature Conservation	
		Sports Facility Management	
		Community Liaison	
		Environmental Conservation / Management	
		Habitat Management	
		Woodland Management	
		Managing Volunteers	
		Event Management	
		Fundraising	
		Partnership Working	
		Information & Communications Technology	
		Communication Skills	

Source: Step Ahead Research, based on a range of published sources and qualitative interviews.

The 2012 Pre-volunteer Programme, given the flexibility to provide a range of Entry and low level skills, could play an important role of developing the work readiness of potential recruits, especially if linked to a guaranteed interview for work, training or employment with training.

Demand for Skills: the “How”

Interviews with landscape contractors and parks departments and authorities indicated a degree of caution on the part of employers about the work readiness and practical skills of people with college-based NVQs. This may be further compounded when employers have to control costs and so limit wages for more junior staff, at the same time that, particularly in London, the cost of living, accommodation and travel is so high. Many employers also take the view that they have particular requirements that their staff's skills should reflect. As a result, employers often show a preference for more “in house” approaches to sourcing the staff and skills they require, for example:

- Recruiting work ready staff and “training them up”, often in specific skills which will make them “site ready” (eg: Health and Safety, Chemicals Use and basic Machinery Use). This may also be linked to skills portfolio approaches exemplified by the Skills Passport or ROLO Card.
- Devising in-house Apprentice schemes, either linked to LSC-funded programmes or independent of them (as in the case of the Royal Parks Apprentice scheme, run in partnership with Capel manor College, but rotating trainees across a range of Royal Parks sites to broaden their skills and experience).

The implementation of the Qualifications and Credit Framework, with significant input from Sector Skill Councils (SSCs) on which programmes should be publicly funded, is likely to improve the employer responsiveness of the current offer of colleges and other providers.

However, closer linkage of the skills offer to employer requirements is likely to involve matching the way training is delivered to operational needs, implying a need for flexibility of delivery (eg: part-time, on-site, workbased and day release), and more “bite-sized” provision and short courses. If LSC funding is unable to accommodate all of these needs, it may be that other sources of funding will be required, especially if engagement of disadvantaged groups with low levels of achievement, aspiration and qualifications is the goal.

Programme-led apprenticeships could also offer a suitable means for accommodating both employer requirements and provider constraints by delivering a college-based programme with work experience at the end. This could be an effective way of increasing the numbers of what Capel Manor College refer to as “work aware” people. “Work aware” people are competent in performing tasks, but may not perform “at commercial” speed, requiring more time to complete tasks than more experienced workers, who employers might consider to be “work ready”.

3.0 Skills Demand for the Olympic Park and Thames Gateway Parklands

This section considers current planning assumptions and the experiences of parks and green spaces elsewhere to assess the likely scale, nature and timing of skills requirements for the Olympic Park. There is also an early assessment of needs that may be generated by the Thames Gateway Parklands.

Key Messages:

- In terms of scale, **demand for LARG skills by the Olympic Park will be low**, relative to other sectors contributing to 2012, with of the order of **250 staff** required at the peak of the park construction phase, and **around 100 staff** for ongoing management and maintenance post-2012.
- **Demand for LARG skills will peak in 2010**, when most Olympic Park landscaping will take place, and then be steady at relatively low levels in the legacy phase.
- The nature of LARG skills demand will be determined by the eventual specifications for the build phase and maintenance phases, but is likely to cover a range of **operative, technical specialist and management roles**, with scope for **interpretation, nature conservation and community engagement** roles post-2012. Generic skills, such as customer care, may be a key requirement across occupations.
- Demand for LARG skills requirements across the Thames Gateway Parklands is more difficult to predict, but a range of **landscape management, nature conservation, habitat management**, and possibly **sustainable development** roles can be expected, either in paid employment or for volunteers.
- The scale of Thames Gateway skills and employment needs are very difficult to predict at this early stage, but, based on a simple extrapolation of Olympic Park requirements for eleven possible “land mark” sites alone, as an order of magnitude, there may be a need for around **2,000 staff for development or construction** of possible “landmark sites”, and sustained employment for up to **1,000 people** for subsequent **management and maintenance**, an **increase of around 10% in the current workforce**.

3.1 Scale, Timing and Nature of LARG Skills and Employment Demand for the Olympic Park

Scale

The Olympic Park site will cover over 200 hectares, half of which will be green space, a quarter venues and the remaining quarter retail. Modelling for the labour requirements of the Olympic Park is currently in progress through work involving the ODA, the LSC and the London Development Agency (LDA).

This work will eventually specify the specific job roles and anticipated numbers of people required on a quarter by quarter basis from Q4 (Quarter 4) 2006 through to

Q1 2012. This work identifies thirty-four trade groups associated with the construction of the Park, with the highest levels of activity appearing around the period 2009 – 2011. Figure 3.1 sets out the initial findings of this labour modelling work, contrasting “landscapers/pitch/track contractors” with other high-volume (in labour terms) activities.

Figure 3.1: Project labour volumes by quarter for the Olympic Park construction (selected labour groups, selected quarters)

Trade	Q3 2008	Q3 2009	Q3 2010	Q3 2011	Q1 2012
Groundworkers (civils) incl. piling	1361	833	1116	296	208
Precast erectors	15	155	514	77	62
Steel erectors (incl Decking)	16	162	525	74	65
Brick / block layers	6	60	198	28	24
Electricians	25	256	838	120	102
Mechanical	13	133	437	63	64
Landscapers/Pitch/Track Contractors	152	202	285	65	37

Source: preliminary data provided by the Olympic Delivery Authority (definitive results anticipated for June 2007).

This modelling of labour needs for the Olympic Park establishes landscaping as being in the top 50% of trades which will have the highest requirement during the construction phase. The largest labour requirement will be for construction groundworkers (peaking at 1388 in Q4 2008), while the lowest is for carpet layers (peaking at 4 in Q3 2010).

Estimates for the number of staff that will be required to maintain the Olympic Park after 2012 vary, and will depend on factors such as the standard of maintenance adopted, the complexity of the green space and its range of uses, and the level of funding available for maintenance. Insights into the likely scale of employment can be gleaned from some of the comments made by industry respondents interviewed:

- Mile End Park employs 4 staff to manage 30 hectares, but the management feel that the number of staff should be around 12. If similar staffing were required for the Olympic Park, given that the Olympic Park green space will be of the order of 100 hectares, the required number would be between 13 and 40.
- One landscape contractor interviewed suggested that a site like the Olympic Park would require up to 25 staff for landscaping and maintenance.
- Another landscape contractor estimated that 100 staff would be needed, if interpretation and wider functions were required, with jobs for operatives, fine turf workers, grounds people, tree specialists, park rangers, static security, managers of sports facilities and community liaison.
- Lea Valley Regional Park Authority owns or manages over 4,000 hectares and employs around 200 people, including senior management and other staff across a range of green space and leisure service management.
- Barking and Dagenham Borough Council manages 400 hectares and employs 900¹⁵ staff, with an annual budget of £4m.
- Essex Wildlife Trust manages around 3,000 hectares, with a total of 80 staff and 150 volunteers in local centres in a range of roles such as education. Across all sites 12 staff wardens (supported by 87 volunteers) manage the Trust’s 99 reserves.

¹⁵ Note: this number of staff is being checked, given that the number of staff (900) may apply to other Council services outside the narrow remit of parks.

- One of the landbased colleges interviewed estimated that of the order of first 200 hard landscapers and then 200 soft landscapers would be needed for the Olympic Park, followed by 50 to 100 staff in the construction phase, and finally around 100 staff for the maintenance phase, the latter comprising a core team of 50 or so staff plus additional seasonal staff when required.

While caution is required, given uncertainty about the specification and management arrangements for the Olympic Park, and the difficulty of benchmarking with green space operations which may not be comparable, these views, taken with ODA projections suggest that:

- At the peak of the landscape construction phase the Olympic Park will require around **250 staff**. This will be a short-term requirement and not form part of the direct legacy.
- Post-2012, ongoing maintenance and management of the park will sustain between up to around **100 posts**, including a core team and additional seasonal workers at peak times.

These estimates highlight the relatively small but significant scale of LARG employment generation and, hence, skills needs that the Olympic Park will generate. The volume of jobs created, although significant and essential to the success of 2012, is relatively modest when compared with other sectors, as indicated by research commissioned by the LSC and the LDA¹⁶, which predicted the main areas of 2012-related employment generation as follows:

- 60,000 person years of employment in construction
- 30,000 jobs in staging the Games
- 6,700 jobs in showcasing London
- Up to 70,000 volunteer positions

So, while employment generation across all sectors will be vital in securing a lasting legacy for 2012, the role of LARG employment should be seen as a small, but significant “niche” generator of jobs, especially suited to appropriately skilled local people in the long term. Olympic Park jobs and skills could take on added significance if the Olympic Park is to become, as many hope, a model of best practice for green space development and management across the Thames Gateway.

Timing

The ODA expects to be letting contracts for construction and landscaping to create the park and facilities management contracts to run the site likely to be for the period 2011 – 2014. By this time, much of the public realm aspects of the Park will be completed, with green areas planted, a new retail development in place and 3,600 accommodation units created in the Olympic Village. By the time of decommissioning (removal, replacement and downsizing of Olympic facilities) after 2012, 90 to 95% of the legacy site will be completed.

Phasing of demand for LARG workers will follow plans created by the ODA and LDA over four phases:

¹⁶ *Employment and skills for the 2012 Games: research and evidence*, Experian, May 2006

1. Land reclamation, clearing and the installation of underground power lines (in progress at the time of writing), started by the LDA and now managed by the ODA.
2. Developing the site for the 2012 Games, managed by the ODA, starting with the “hard stuff” (drainage, utilities, etc) and followed by major building and most landscaping.
3. De-commissioning of the site (removal, replacement and downsizing of Olympic facilities), managed by the ODA.
4. Development and management of the permanent legacy, once the ODA hands the site over to the LDA around 2013.

Most landscaping is expected by the ODA to take place towards 2010 in Stage 2, once the “hard stuff” is done. After 2012, maintenance and management of the site will be the main requirement in respect of LARG skills, but there may also be LARG employment opportunities arising from further capitalised works relating to housing developments and physical changes caused by de-commissioning activities. This highlights that demand for LARG skills may be significant beyond the construction and ongoing management phases of the project.

The ODA anticipate that some workers employed during the landscaping phase may move into employment in ongoing maintenance. One of the landbased colleges consulted suggested that between 3% and 10% of workers employed in a landscape construction phase might go on to work in maintenance on the same site, the higher figure applying to “high grade sites” in terms of the quality and specification required.

The timing of demand for landscape and related workers is forecast to be as follows: activity starts in Q2 2003, increasing thereafter by around 30 in successive quarters, reaching an initial peak of 220 in Q1 2009. After a slight drop in the following two quarters, numbers are at their highest during the period Q4 2009 to Q4 2010, with a peak in Q3 2010. Numbers gradually trail off thereafter, falling to 37 in Q1 2012.

Nature

The precise nature of demand, however, for LARG skills for the Olympic Park is difficult to assess from existing sources, and will be subject in large part to the specified programme of works and standards to which work must be completed, applying to the construction phase and post-2012 maintenance phase. The ODA anticipates that there may be a skills shortage “across the board” for the Olympic Park, with requirements likely to be more sophisticated than many other green space developments, which can sometimes take an “anyone can cut the grass” approach.

People consulted for this study gave a range of views on the type of skills that would be required for the Olympic Park, which, along with information from secondary sources, have been collated into the skills matrix proposed above in Figure 2.10 in Section 2.3.

3.2 LARG Skills and Employment Demand Across the Thames Gateway Parklands

The regeneration of Thames Gateway will involve the development of green spaces (in addition to homes and business sites) across East London, North Kent and South Essex. The precise scale and scope of the “Thames Gateway Parklands” is expected to emerge over time. Department for Local Government and Communities (DCLG) officials interviewed indicated that, subject to planned consultation and feasibility work, the Parklands is likely to link to the Green Grid strategies and may include identification of “landmark projects” and themes or standards applying across the region.

The Thames Gateway Interim Plan Policy Framework¹⁷ identifies 11 potential “land mark” projects, along with a number of Regional Projects and Local Projects. Grouped by likely type of green space, with an indication of their possible skills requirements, these “landmark sites” are summarised in Figure 3.2 below:

Figure 3.2: Potential Thames Gateway Parklands “landmark sites” grouped by type

Type of Green Space	Site	Indicative Skills Requirements
Landscaped / Amenity Parkland	South East London Green Chain	Landscape operatives, specialists and managers. Interpretation. Wardens.
	Southend Seafront	
	Swanscombe Waterfront	
	Rochester Riverside	
	Great Lines City Park	
Nature Reserve	London Riverside Conservation Park	Environmental conservation, habitat management (eg: wetlands and woodlands), sustainable development. Rangers. Interpretation.
	Wat Tyler regional Park	
	Cliff Pools	
	Elmley Marshes	
Mixed	Ranscombe Farm	Landscape operatives, specialists and managers. Environmental conservation, habitat management (eg: wetlands and woodlands), sustainable development. Rangers. Interpretation.
	Thames Path City to Sea	

Taking these sites as an example of what kind of network of green spaces the Thames Gateway Parklands might become highlights the complexity of anticipating the scale and nature of skills and employment requirements. Given the varying size,

¹⁷ *Thames Gateway Interim Plan Policy Framework*, Department for Communities and Local Government, November 2006.

nature and management approach that may apply to each location, it is extremely difficult to forecast the numbers of jobs and types of skills that may be required for the Parklands initiative or for green spaces more generally across the Gateway. However, the LARG employment impact of such developments may be small relative to that in other sectors across the Gateway.

A simple extrapolation of the numbers arrived at for the Olympic Park, a formal space requiring significant landscaping during the construction phase, suggests that, based on these possible landmark projects, Thames Gateway Parklands would involve, as an order of magnitude:

- Around **2,000 staff for development or construction of landmark sites**. This will be a short-term requirement and not necessarily involve concurrent employment across all sites.
- Up to **1000 staff maintaining and managing sites**, including core staff and seasonal workers.

While these figures should be treated with extreme caution, they give an indication of the likely volume of labour requirements. If correct, bearing in mind estimates of the current LARG workforce for the sub-sectors which are the focus of this study, an ongoing need for 1,000 extra LARG-skilled staff would represent a **10% increase on current workforce levels** across Thames Gateway.

Nature reserve sites may require lower numbers of staff and will commonly involve the use of volunteers. Essex Wildlife Trust, for example, finds that its nature reserve sites typically require three posts:

- 1) A warden / ranger to oversee the running and upkeep of the area,
- 2) An education officer, and
- 3) A centre manager, responsible for local retail activities and merchandise.

On this basis, 11 Thames Gateway Parklands landmark sites, if nature reserves managed along similar lines to Essex Wildlife Trust sites, would employ around 33 staff on an ongoing basis.

The potential Thames Gateway Parklands sites vary in size and already exist in some cases, and so would involve enhancement or extension. If 11 such “landmark” sites (these or others yet to be identified) did form a key part of the Thames Gateway Parklands, there is no reason why other green spaces should not also be incorporated into the overall framework through existing initiatives such as:

- London’s “Green Arc” (north East London’s greenbelt).
- Thames Chase Community Forest (extending woodland cover) .
- The East London, North Kent Thameside and Thames Gateway South Essex Green Grids (interlinked networks of green spaces and natural features).
- Kent Medway Regional Park (rivers, wetlands and countryside).

Taking the Thames Gateway Parklands concept more broadly, then, the skills requirements and employment or volunteering potential could be significantly higher than the 1,000 “legacy jobs” estimated above, although difficult to estimate at this early stage.

4.0 Maximising the LARG Employment and Skills Legacy of 2012 and Thames Gateway Parklands

This section explores the LARG employment and skills legacy that can arise from the Olympic Park and Thames Gateway Parklands, focusing on the importance of standards and specifications for green spaces, the role of funding and procurement, approaches that will maximise the legacy, and steps that will optimise the LARG skills supply.

Key Messages:

- **Standards and specifications** will shape the volume, level and sophistication of LARG jobs created by the Olympic Park and Thames Gateway Parklands: the more ambitious these are, the greater the employment and skills legacy.
- The way in which green space development and management is procured and funded will also drive the nature and scale of demand for LARG skills. An approach to **procurement which emphasises local employment** and a **high level of capital and revenue funding** will create more and higher quality local jobs on a sustainable basis.
- **Best practice and existing / planned systems** for engaging and supporting people into learning and employment, providing clear pathways, should be used to stimulate local take up of skills and employment opportunity: the LARG sector is one of the many options for career development open to local people.
- Skills supply – in its content, form and mode of delivery – should accurately reflect **employer requirements** and meet real **employer needs**. This may involve a degree of flexibility around the way that mainstream provision is currently funded and provided, but should be consistent with the emerging sector-led approach to learning and skills provision.

4.1 Green Space Standards and Specifications

All groups of people consulted highlighted the importance of green space standards and specifications in driving demand for LARG skills. It was widely reported that lower standards and service specifications had led to a decline in “hard skills”, a general de-skilling of landscape work and increased casualisation of the workforce.

There was general agreement that higher quality green spaces, with more ambitious specifications would drive demand for skills and encourage a wider range of staff knowledge and capabilities. For one industry respondent, park maintenance specifications tended to be “very run-of-the-mill”, with more affluent areas often having “sweeter” ones. For the Olympic Park, another industry body agreed that standards and specifications would drive demand for skills and employment, but also be integral to the wider ambition for 2012 and the subsequent legacy:

“While budget will be a key issue, it is important first to get the Vision right and make it suitably ambitious, establishing the Olympic Park as a showcase park, an international gateway to the future, a model of sustainable development.”

Industry Respondent

A number of interviewees highlighted the importance of standards and specifications, exemplified by a stakeholder with an interest in standards in green space developments:

“The Olympic Park provides a real opportunity for bodies such as the ODA, LDA and GLA to make a significant contribution to the sustainability agenda, establish best practice for sustainable management of green spaces.”

Key Agency / Stakeholder

Applied more widely across the Thames Gateway, such an approach would create green spaces which underpin the sustainability of local communities by creating a multi-functional working landscape, involving food production, horticulture, landscape management, conservation and renewable energy.

Another key stakeholder highlighted the importance of creating a high-quality green space at the Olympic Park, and was mindful of the challenge this might create in terms of skills, noting that a high quality approach might be more expensive than a lower-specification one:

“There may be a skills shortage problem across the board, with requirements that are likely to be more sophisticated than many other green space developments, which can sometimes take an “anyone can cut the grass” approach. There is growing recognition that a more sophisticated approach will cost money, but need not necessarily be vastly more expensive.”

Key Agency / Stakeholder

In a similar vein, a volunteer-related body was concerned that, for key developments like the Olympic Park and sites within the Thames Gateway Parklands, traditional land management skills would not be enough to ensure that sites were maintained properly and achieved their intended environmental impact. “Environmentally conscious” landscaping and wildlife protection would be required. Standards would drive demand for skills and employment for the Olympic Park and Thames Gateway Parklands:

“Asking how many jobs are likely to be created is like asking, “how long is a piece of string?”. It depends on how serious the Government is about this. For example, will they create new green spaces? Will they work to raise the quality of existing space, etc? The more they decided to do, the greater the number of people that will be needed. There could be huge demand, but it’s a “watch this space” kind of thing.”

Volunteer-related Organisation

Lobby and special interest groups also agreed that standards and specifications would play an important role, with an industry-related group, for example, arguing that employment and skills requirements for the Olympic Park would be driven by standards:

“A lot will come down to the specification put forward by the ODA and CLM. A lot will also depend on how committed they are to providing training and support alongside contracts.”

Lobby / Special Interest Group

The British Association of Landscape Industries has provided input on the emerging Olympic Park specification, advising on the most suitable types of landscape features and habitats, and recommending that skills are appropriately emphasised in the specification. Given that in large projects overruns can lead to landscaping

specifications being downgraded to keep a project on budget, BALI has also suggested that the landscaping budget is ring-fenced in order to reduce the risk of a less ambitious specification being adopted in response to any future funding problems. Plans for WorldSkills 2011¹⁸ may also support the idea that the Olympic Park and the wider Thames Gateway Parklands initiative are promoting excellence in LARG skills and green space development, perhaps linked to BALI's own regional and national landscaping skills competitions. WorldSkills 2011 aims to deliver five key benefits for the UK:

- Move from competence to excellence
- Reduce skills gaps
- Minimise skills shortages
- Re-engage the disaffected
- Prepare for the 2012 Olympics

Standards and the development of best practice also play a growing role in the joint work of green space managers through the London Parks and Green Spaces Forum (LPGSF). The Forum is auditing Borough open space strategies with reference to GLA best practice guidance and the Green Grid Initiative, which, it is expected, will play a key role in informing the development of the Thames Gateway Parklands concept and development. In a related development LPGSF is also undertaking a benchmarking study of skills and raining across London's parks.

4.2 Green Space Service Procurement and Funding

A historical perspective on procurement and funding provides valuable insights into the role of procurement and funding in shaping demand for LARG skills and employment. The introduction of Compulsory Competitive Tendering in the 1980s, in the view of many industry respondents, has seen a decline in training in contracted-out local authority services. One contractor attributed to this to the trend under CCT or contractors not being able to cost for training and development in tenders. Another highlighted that funding of green space maintenance is under significant and increasing pressure, with year-on-year reductions in park budgets being commonplace and even impromptu reductions when a council needs to respond to another short-term funding requirement elsewhere.

A key London-wide stakeholder, the LGSPF, was concerned that outsourcing of park management often took place with reference to standards and outputs measures which tend not to refer to usage by people. Procurement arrangements also suffer from being led by non-parks specialists as green space management has been subsumed into wider Council remits, such as leisure or public realm. In local authorities, changes of administration can lead to a change in the relative priority, or otherwise, of green space management. LGSPF feel that the way services are procured and funded is leading to cuts in training budgets, given that price can be considered a more important criterion than quality.

Funding is a key driver of the quality of park management services and appears to be a particular issue in local authorities. The Royal Parks are funded directly by the Department of Culture Media and Sport. The Lee Valley Regional Park Authority is funded by a specific strand of Council Tax funding from London, Hertfordshire and Essex. The London Borough of Tower Hamlets, at its Mile End Park site, for example, has developed shops and restaurants to create a new revenue stream, to

¹⁸ <http://www.worldskillslondon2011.com/>.

complement Council expenditure. Sustaining high levels of revenue funding will be a key issue for a major site like the Olympic Park:

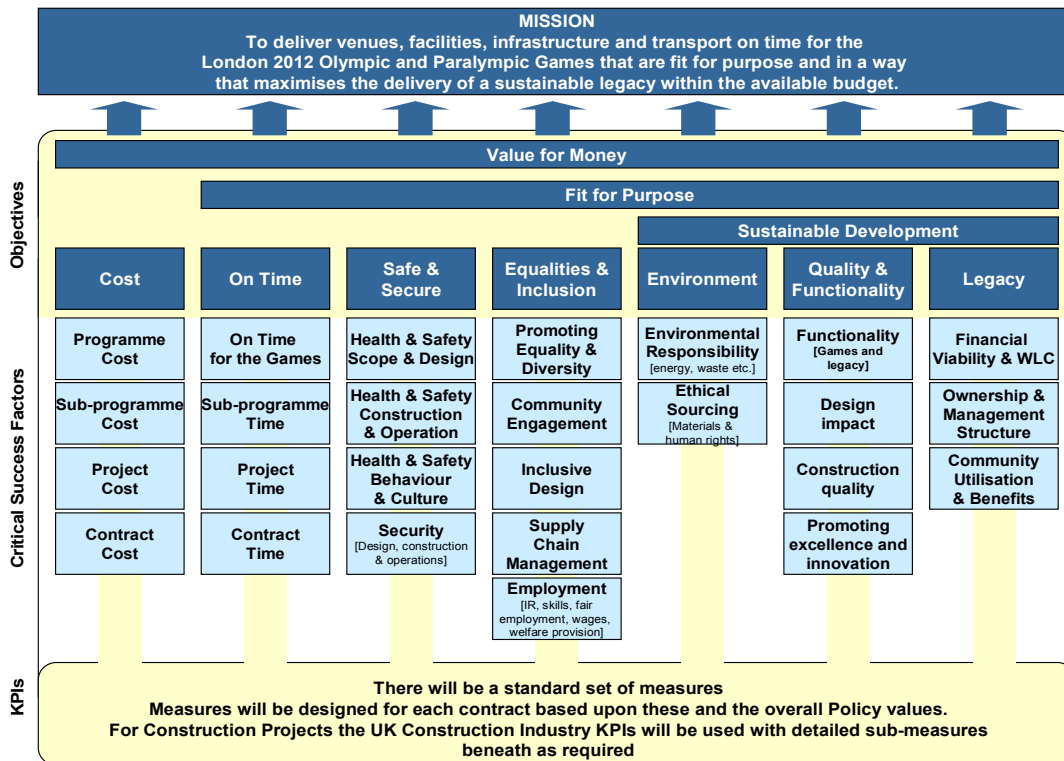
“It will be vital to ensure that there is enough ongoing revenue for maintenance of the park. Keeping the park looking attractive in the first five years will be easy, as everything will be brand new. The real challenge will come over the next ten years. It’s like maintaining an old house or a new house.”

Industry Respondent

Since the introduction of CCT, approaches to procurement have continued to evolve. Glendale, for example, has started using new financial mechanisms for contracts in Lewisham, where the company is investing in park infrastructure, and Liverpool, where the company and the Council have set up a special joint venture vehicle, with investment and service provision combined. The Royal Parks take a highly sophisticated approach to procuring park management services, producing very detailed specifications tailored to each site and issuing contracts which have standards for key areas such as sustainability and equal opportunities, which are monitored and acted upon through the Parks’ contract management process.

The timing of procurement is also important: one contractor pointed out that, with sufficient time to recruit and train staff, including locally, a reasonable contractor would be able to find and recruit staff for a development like the Olympic Park, suggesting that contracts should be let two to three years before work should begin, allowing contractors time to “gear up”. Finally, the length of contracts, typically three years under CCT, is now getting longer, some lasting as long as ten years. BALI felt that this trend would reduce the need for seasonal workers and, coupled with local employment requirements, could increase the local employment impact of the Olympic Park, although with some concerns that subsuming landscape into a wider Facilities Management contract would risk reducing the LARG skills and employment legacy.

Figure 4.1: ODA balanced scorecard procurement strategy



Source: Olympics Delivery Authority.

The ODA's approach to procuring LARG-related services will involve use of a "Balanced Scorecard" approach, with seven "pillars", Critical Success Factors and Key Performance Indicators (see Figure 4.1 above). This system has specific Critical Success Factors and Key Performance Indicators for "Equalities and Inclusion", which includes promoting equalities and diversity, community engagement and employment (including skills), which will be monitored and enforced down the supply chain, which, it is hoped, will be diverse and offer fairness for local firms, including social enterprises. The ODA is likely to let both the construction phase landscaping contract(s) and the first maintenance / facilities management contract, which is expected to run from 2010 to 2014.

A further example of an "inclusive" good practice new developments is the Crystal Palace project, where stakeholders like Capel Manor College were actively involved in the Master planning process led by a German consulting firm. Local Authorities in the Olympic Boroughs stress the importance of encouraging local business (as well as local employment) through contracts let as part of the Olympic development.

4.3 Maximising the 2012 and Thames Gateway Legacy

Respondents provided insight into steps that would help to maximise the LARG skills and employment legacy from the Olympic Park and Thames Gateway Parklands. Interviewees from all groups highlighted the importance of effective community engagement through building extensive community links and effective communications and involvement of local people, on the assumption that successful parks are those which people use. Many suggestions were also made for specific actions which would help maximise the legacy, summarised in Figure 4.2 below:

Figure 4.2: Respondent suggestions to maximise the legacy

Community engagement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering voluntary work and job tasters • Creating a Volunteer Strategy and appointing a Volunteers Manager • Providing a base for volunteers, where information, operations and coordination can take place • accrediting voluntary work would provide a route to qualifications for local people • organising a "volunteering conference" would help show people the skills that can be gained through volunteering • establishing partnerships between learning establishments and voluntary bodies who can provide practical, hands-on training
Local employment and job brokerage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building into contracts requirements for Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG), marketing of job opportunities, involvement in brokerage and local employment initiatives • An Apprentice scheme with a job guarantee scheme and providing a range of access routes for local young people • Targeting recruitment on "local people with skills but not used to working" and "people used to working but without skills" • Providing clear career pathways for potential entrants • Targeting older careers changers • Presenting LARG skills and employment ops as one of many opportunities associated with 2012 through a coherent single channel • Overcoming negative perceptions of LARG employment

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noting that people employed in the landscaping phase would be most likely to migrate into maintenance • Using the 2012 Volunteer programme as a route to employment • Targeting BAME and other under-represented groups (the current workforce is predominantly white, male and middle-aged) • Recognising that training in LARG skills may not lead to an Olympic Park job, but maybe one elsewhere
<p>Learning and Skills Delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a local LARG skills offer & centre, including links to 14-19 Specialised Diplomas and Apprenticeships • Giving people “stepping stones” from operative to more specialised / higher level role through training and work experience • Placing the Park within wider Apprentice scheme • Setting up a green space managers training centre, focusing on higher level skills and non-technical areas, like community engagement (UEL might be a good partner for this) • Include schools through 14-19 Land-based Specialist Diplomas • Putting a new horticulture awareness and training centre in Newham (given distance from main providers) • Creating shorter Apprentice programmes, with more intensive training to address specific skills needs • Establishing best practice for sustainable management of green spaces through local employment and a dedicated academy. Demand across TGP might justify this
<p>Specification and standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopting a design and built form should require continuous renewal, with a mixture of different types of landscape • Coordinating Olympic Park developments within a wider London framework (eg LPGSF) for skills and employment • Ensuring that efforts to support LARG skills and employment support other policy requirements, including diversity, 14-19, IAG, SMEs, Train to Gain,
<p>Procurement and funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committing to long-term park maintenance funding (at least 10, not just 5 years) • Recognising the importance of parks to tourism (which 2012 will increase)

Although in volume terms, LARG skills may offer relatively few employment opportunities, they are believed by Lantra to play an especially valuable role in promoting diversity and inclusion¹⁹:

“Horticulture and landscaping in particular are seen as important routes into work for those people with learning difficulties and other disabilities as well as the long term workless. It is important for these groups to have opportunities to gain skills and qualifications that will allow them to better integrate and re-enter the work market. The availability of funded Level 1 qualifications for these groups will be of importance in London.”

This suggests that LARG skills and employment could make a qualitatively significant contribution to the “lasting legacy” for 2012, and that a similar approach applied to other Thames Gateway green space developments could have a similar impact in other parts of East London, North Kent and South Essex. Experian’s study for the LSC and LDA²⁰, suggests that 2012 can create opportunities for local people and for

¹⁹ Ibid, page 24.

²⁰ *Employment and skills for the 2012 Games: research and evidence*, Experian, May 2006.

others with low labour market participation rates, and leaving London with a legacy of higher-skilled jobs for better skilled people. Specific steps recommended to achieve such a general employment and skills legacy include:

- Implementation of training and recruitment schemes two years before needed.
- Creation of a 2012 job brokerage service (with all employers obliged at least to report vacancies).
- Securing the involvement of key players (such as the main contractors).
- Providing recruitment programmes that are flexible and employer-led.
- Encouraging employers to provide case study evidence of the positive outcomes of the programmes offered.
- Encouraging employers to partner with local schools.
- Developing vocational pathways for the Games and also the wider labour market.
- Focusing on segments of employment opportunities where local people have a realistic chance of gaining work, including upskilling those already in the sector.
- Helping job-seekers out of the labour market for some time through volunteering, pre-employment schemes, work trials, interview training and in-work mentoring.
- Including requirements for Apprenticeships in landscaping and maintenance contracts²¹.
- Integrating games-specific initiatives are integrated into, or are at least complementary to regional schemes, such as Train to gain, so as to avoid conflict and duplication.

Beyond employment and skills, a successful broader legacy, it is suggested will also involve:

- Engaging local communities, taking account of diversity in terms of, for example, ethnicity, gender and disability.
- Effective coordination and governance of a range of 2012-specific projects and wider initiatives, avoiding duplication and incoherence.

Initiatives to ensure a LARG dimension to the 2012 legacy will take place within the broader context of existing and planned initiatives for 2012 and the wider Thames Gateway, which are typified by an absence of specific reference to LARG-related skills and employment. These include:

Thames Gateway Interim Plan Policy Framework²²

The Policy Framework notes the progress made in improving learning and skills across the Gateway and highlights the importance of further progress in addressing continued skills gaps (especially at intermediate and higher levels), providing relevant

²¹ At the Stakeholder Workshop it was suggested that such an approach would help address the decline in Apprenticeships in the capital, which had fallen from 200 in 1982 to 34 in 2007.

²² *Thames Gateway Interim Plan Policy Framework*, Department for Communities and Local Government, November 2006

progression routes, raising aspirations and addressing poverty and worklessness. Through the Thames Gateway Further and Higher Education Advisory Group, which represents all key stakeholders, there is a commitment to focus resources to:

- Extend the Train to Gain offer of both Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications in the workplace.
- Developing a “Guarantee of Assured Progression”, enabling all Level 3 achievers to progress to an appropriate Level 4 qualification within the Gateway.
- Improve and integrate Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) services for young people and adults.
- Expand further and higher education provision when there is evidence of learner and employer demand.

The Framework also considers the importance of 2012 within the context of the wider regeneration of Thames Gateway, highlighting a range of employment, skills, cultural, environmental, transport and confidence benefits. There is also an indication of the type of high standards and specification that will apply to the Olympic Park:

“The Park will be an exemplar of the approach proposed for the Thames Gateway Parklands encouraging outdoor leisure activity, as well as conserving biodiversity. Another part of the legacy of the 2012 Games will be the lessons we can learn about how to manage development sustainably, how to make best use of innovation and new technologies, and how to manage transport more effectively.”²³

While this clear policy statement points to a high-specification capital funding commitment for the construction of the Olympic Park, in line with broader aspirations for the Thames Gateway Parklands, commitments to adequate revenue funding are equally important, if equally high standards are to apply to the Park’s ongoing management and maintenance post-2012, as highlighted in the East London Green Grid Framework:

“It is important that long-term revenue funding be secured at the outset of any project...so that it is perceived to be clean, green, safe and therefore, usable and valued. If the management and maintenance requirements cannot be adequately funded in perpetuity, then the project’s high-quality objectives may not be achieved.”²⁴

The issue of standards and funding, both for the capital and revenue phases of the Olympic Park, will, therefore, be a key driver of the 2012 legacy, in terms of skills, employment and wider benefits to the local community.

The Local Employment and Skills Taskforce (LEST) Action Plan

The Local Employment and Skills Taskforce Action Plan²⁵ identifies, “linking people, work and training more effectively” as one of three pillars (along with employer leadership and communications and engagement with individuals) to maximise the employment and skills benefits of 2012, proposing four areas of focus for key agencies: pre-volunteer programme, other pre-work support, games-related sector training, brokerage infrastructure and transnational links. “Those furthest away from the labour market” are identified as a priority audience for interventions.

²³ Ibid, page 8.

²⁴ *Consultation Draft East London Green Grid Framework. The London Plan (Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London). Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance*, Mayor of London, November 2006.

²⁵ *The Local Employment and Skills Taskforce Action Plan*, Learning and Skills Council and London Development Agency, October 2006.

The LEST also considers sectoral dimensions of 2012, highlighting the importance of construction, transport, creative industries, and retail, all linked appropriate to ESOL and Skills for Life learning. LARG skills, per se, are singled out as a key sector, but reference is made to good practice in social enterprises in landscape design and gardening in the context of the pre-work support. While there are also no specific references to LARG skills in proposals for the Pre-volunteer Programme, this will also have direct relevance to enabling local people from disadvantaged groups develop their skills and experience and then be guaranteed an interview for actual jobs at the Olympic Park.

Despite the absence of specific proposals relating to LARG skills and employment, the proposals set out in the LEST do offer opportunities to link local people, including those furthest away from the labour market, to access training, volunteering and employment opportunities relating to 2012.

A key development, which may be of particular relevance to engaging disadvantaged groups in LARG skills and employment opportunities for the Olympic Park, is the Pre-volunteer Programme, which will offer disadvantaged Londoners to develop lower level skills in anticipation of volunteer work, training or employment related to 2012.

The Local Employment and Training Framework (LETF)

The LETF was announced in November 2005 by the LDA, with an initial commitment of £9m to help local people and businesses in the five Olympic Boroughs access 2012 access employment and contracts. Among the initiatives included are a job-matching service, commissioning of training specific to 2012 opportunities, outreach to engage those furthest from the labour market, and vocational skills training for specified sectors, including reference to maintenance and landscaping (as part of “Business Services”) and “Green Industries”²⁶.

This range of stakeholder views, evidence from earlier studies and review of the policy context suggests that the LARG skills and employment legacy will be maximised when:

1. LARG employment opportunities are promoted – through community outreach, the voluntary sector, job brokerage and IAG services - alongside a broader 2012 and Thames Gateway range of opportunities, identifying both immediate job prospects and longer term career opportunities, which could be significant if high standards and substantial capital and revenue funding is available for green spaces. This would raise the profile of LARG skills and enable those most interested or most suited to choose LARG employment from a range of available options. The 2012 Pre-volunteer Programme could be a key tool in engaging disadvantaged people in 2012-related learning and employment opportunities.
2. Learning and skills focuses on both LARG employability (through general work readiness and entry level qualifications) and workforce development, targeting people already or recently employed, or even volunteering, with intermediate and higher level skills, for which there is identified strong demand. Intermediate and higher level skills might also be targeted on older career changers, indicating a possible need for post-19 part-time funding. Workforce development should also match employer expectations, by being

²⁶ <http://www.lda.gov.uk/server/show/ConWebDoc.1666>.

bite-sized, flexibly delivered, linked to regulatory regimes and industry standards, and providing practical skills needed on site. The introduction of the QCF should assist with this process.

3. Community engagement is effective and underpins the success of local skills and employment initiatives linked to green spaces. Local communities who feel ownership of the Olympic Park or any other Thames Gateway Parklands site will be more aware of the opportunities available and more motivated to be a part of it.

4.4 Optimising LARG Skills Supply

Respondents also gave their views on how the supply of LARG skills could be improved and optimised to meet the needs of major developments like the Olympic Park. Several of the London-based industry respondents singled out Capel Manor College as a key partner in developing LARG skills.

A more disaggregated approach to training, using, for example, the Skills Passport or BALI's Registration of Land-based Operatives (ROLO) system, rather than "full fat" NVQs may be more suited to the more "bite-sized" training requirements of employers. When used, Apprenticeship schemes tailored to employers' own needs were often preferred (as in the case of Royal Parks and Glendale), even if that can limit the public funding potential.

The creation of a LARG skills centre was mentioned by a number of industry contacts, although the business case for such a centre could be problematic given the likely low volumes from the Olympic Park alone and the lack of hard information on demand from Thames Gateway Parklands. If linked to creating capacity for Landbased Specialist Diplomas, such a centre could prove to be more valuable, although a number of employers consulted expressed concern about the viability of Diplomas from the employer's perspective.

Some industry respondents also questioned the relevance of FE provision to their needs, identifying that students once qualified sometimes lacked hands-on practical skills, a wider background knowledge or general work readiness.

4.5 Future Scenarios: LARG Skills in the Thames Gateway

This section sets out, for illustrative purposes, the impact of different approaches to procuring, specifying and funding green space developments. From a skills and employment perspective, Scenario 2 provides the best outcomes in terms of skills and employment.

Scenario 1: Low funding, low standards, low skills

This scenario is characterised by low demand for skills, given that greater use can be made of unskilled workers, who are work ready. Most staff would be recruited from other employers or would be new to the LARG sector. While there may be a general shortage of staff with specialist and management skills, most contractors would be able to address this through "poaching", training up existing staff and the use of peripatetic specialists who would work at more than one site.

The LARG skills and employment legacy of this scenario is low. This scenario is also relatively low cost during the development and ongoing maintenance phase

Scenario 2: High funding, high standards, high skills

This scenario is characterised by high demand for skills, given a wider range of skills is required to construct the green space and maintain it subsequently. Local employment requirements built into contracts and better engagement with the local community would lead to an increased local employment legacy.

The LARG skills and employment legacy of this scenario is high, creating higher numbers of higher quality jobs, which local people would be provided with opportunities to progress to. The scenario is also high cost, both in its development phase and from an ongoing revenue perspective.

Scenario 3: Mixed economy

This scenario most closely resembles the current status quo across the Gateway, with a variety of approaches to and levels of funding and managing green spaces taken. At individual site level, this scenario effectively involves something approaching either Scenario 1 or Scenario 2.

While this reflects the diversity of local approaches taken, it may also represent a missed opportunity in terms of the LARG legacy, given that consistent application of Scenario 2 would create a much greater skills and employment opportunity and higher quality environment.

5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions: Modest but Significant Demand for LARG Skills

This analysis of LARG skills and employment suggests that:

- Employment opportunities for the Olympic Park are numerically relatively modest but significant, offering a valuable opportunity to engage disadvantaged local people in employment and skills. Post-2012 up to around 100 people maximum could be employed at the Park.
- Employment opportunities for Thames Gateway Parklands are more uncertain. What is known is that, the LARG sector in Thames Gateway is small in comparison with other sectors but growth arising from Thames Gateway Parklands could create significant numbers of additional jobs at potential landmark sites, perhaps involving an increase of around 10% in the current workforce for the sub-sectors concerned.
- Standards and funding could drive a stronger demand for LARG skills and employment, but it is not clear at this stage whether this is likely to be secured in the long term and away from prestige projects like the Olympic Park. Standards can also determine the level and type of training and development activity contractors undertake, as well as their likely support for local employment.
- Employers do not yet appear to be totally convinced by the publicly funded offer of LARG and related skills, in terms of content, form of delivery and flexibility. Developments under the QCF and success in the trialling of landbased 14-19 Specialist Diplomas could change these perceptions. Employment with landscape contractors, however, may not be the preferred destination of FE LARG skills course completers, who may opt to enter the growing market for freelance gardeners. The best route to employment with a landscape contractor may be by starting as an unskilled, but work ready new entrant.

While the volume of demand for LARG skills and employment appears to be modest relative to the growth forecast in other sectors, across Thames Gateway this might involve significant growth – perhaps around 10% - of the workforce. In addition, demand for skills in “secondary” demand areas like private / domestic gardens is expected to rise and LARG skills has the potential to engage and provide viable employment routes for a range of people, including hard-to-reach groups.

This suggests that there is a case for increased funding, based on modest, staged growth expectations, matched to local circumstances. A degree of caution is appropriate if investment is being considered in a dedicated LARG Skills Academy at the Olympic Park. Instead, a more measured approach to expanding capacity through specialised providers, offering local geographical access for learners in London East for the Olympic Park and sites in South Essex and North Kent, but minimising the risk of future revenue shortfalls, would appear to be sensible, especially if this also creates capacity to support the new Specialised Diplomas.

5.2 Recommendations: Pragmatic and Proportionate Growth of Skills Provision

It is therefore proposed that:

- 1. Revenue funding of Capel Manor, Hadlow College and Writtle College is increased modestly to accommodate initial growth in local demand related to 2012 / Thames Gateway developments.**

This would involve provision by Capel Manor in East London, by Hadlow College in North Kent and Writtle College in South Essex. Individual allocations would be agreed by the college and the relevant LSC Partnership Director, based on each college's agreed Development Plan objectives. Consideration should be given to funding Level 2 qualifications which may not be "full fat" NVQs or the learner's first Level 2 qualification.

This would allow a cautious and pragmatic approach to anticipated growth to be taken forward, testing employer and individual response, building local links to employers, IAG services and key initiatives like the 2012 Pre-volunteer Programme, learning more about the emerging pattern of actual demand.

- 2. Consideration should be given to proportionate capital support for potential new / extended local centres operated by Capel Manor in East London, Hadlow College in North Kent and Writtle College in South Essex.**

This would involve marginal investment on the back of either existing developments (Capel Manor's East London Centre), or a low-risk, low-cost, staged development of the centre which Hadlow College have been invited to establish at a location in North Kent, with the support of the Local Authority.

This would help the colleges meet an anticipated increase local demand in post-16 provision linked to identified local employment opportunities, and to create extra capacity to support the introduction of the new 14-19 Specialised Diplomas.

- 3. Key stakeholders should work together to ensure that procurement, standards, specifications and long-term funding are used to maximise the local LARG employment and skills legacy from the Olympic Park and eventual Thames Gateway parklands sites.**

This would involve making the environmental, social and economic case for high standards and sustained funding in green spaces, and may require innovative funding methodologies.

This would create the climate needed to drive demand for high volumes of LARG skills and jobs, and encourage the development of intermediate and higher level skills.

- 4. Key stakeholders should work together to implement the LARG Sector Skills Agreement and local implementation of qualifications reform to improve responsiveness of supply to sector needs.**

This would involve adjustments to curricula and modes of delivery, and possibly require greater flexibility in the use of LSC funds or the identification of other funding sources to complement mainstream budgets.

This would make it easier for providers to engage with LARG employers, and vice versa, improving the employment prospects of new entrants to the sector and the careers of people already employed in the sector through workforce development.

Assessments of local demand should also seek to balance identified employer demand with individual demand for skills, matched to the career aspirations and community interests of local residents.

5. LARG skills and employment opportunities should be embedded within the wider local IAG, skills and employment offer and job brokerage services emerging for 2012, ideally being expanded to the broader Thames Gateway.

This would involve LARG skills and employment being presented as a small and significant set of opportunities for potential new entrants, with particular relevance to those furthest away from the labour market and experiencing exclusion or disadvantage and initiatives like the Five-Borough Local Employment and Training Framework and 2012 Pre-Volunteer Programme.

Although numbers may be small, this could make a significant contribution to the aspiration to engage all sections of the local community in opportunities arising from 2012, and subsequently for other green space developments across the Thames Gateway.

Annex 1: List of Interview Respondents

Industry

Sandra Loton-Jones	British Association of Landscape Architects
Tony Leach	London Parks and Green Spaces Forum
Michael Rowan	Mile End Park, Tower Hamlets
David Anstey	Lee Valley Regional Park Authority
Jonathan Hazell	Glendale Managed Services Ltd
Simon Farrow	Barking and Dagenham Borough Council
Tim Briercliffe	Horticultural Trades Association
Toni Assirati	The Royal Parks
Barry Joyce	Continental Landscapes

Key Agencies and Stakeholders

Paul Bradley and Liam Jarnecki	Department for Communities and Local Government
Graham Hastings-Evans	Olympic delivery Authority
Mark Waterman and Nadine Collins	London Development Agency
Ed Fox	British Waterways
Peter Neal	CABE Space
Rob McCarthy	Environment Agency
Guy Nicholson	Hackney Council

Volunteer-related Organisations

Sharon Nestor	Groundworks UK
Claire Cadman	Essex Wildlife Trust
Sue Young	Kent Wildlife Trust

Lobby and Special Interest Groups

Ron Melville Forestry Commission

Mark Glover Greening the Games (Bellenden Public Affairs)

Skills Stakeholders

Sue Rossiter Constructing London 2012

Learning and Skills Providers

Paul Hannan and Hadlow College
Howard Lee

Steve Dowbiggin Capel Manor College

Sandra Nicholson and Writtle College
Steve Warr