1966, Giving birth to a dream
“London’s second river is an ignoble stream, from source to oily confluence with the Thames, the river runs a mere 58 miles. A trickle through Luton, its real life begins at Luton Sewage Works.”

From Ware, the River Lee flows through water meadows to its meeting with the Stort ....

Then meanders and divides on its way to Broxbourne, where houseboats lie ....

And so south past the great stretch of glasshouses between Broxbourne and Cheshunt ....

... and through the wilderness of gravel digging and its legacy of pits and derelict machinery.

South of Enfield Lock the Valley becomes a great service area for the Metropolis ....

taking its sewage and its rubbish .... providing its water and electric power.

..... To the edge of Greater London.
The Valley is shut off by fences, crossed by traffic and fringed by built-up city.

The river is harnessed, an industrial waterway, but still buildings stand derelict ... and weeds flourish on deserted land.

Land unkempt, unclean, but uncommitted, lies waiting on the river bank ....

Beside the railway, against the houses and gasometers along the creeks and gulleys.

Then buildings and factories close in again as the Lea swings into the Limehouse Cut ...

and through the tidal lock to run its oily finish to the Thames.

"Thus the Valley is London’s kitchen garden, its well, its privy and its workshop – and it is treated as London’s backyard, because it lies at everyone’s boundary.”
Anticipate

Lea Bridge Gardens (370 acres)

Centred upon Lea Bridge Road is one of the most dramatic proposals in the whole park system—a new Riverside Pleasure Garden. Here, on ground already used by travelling fairs, could be established a permanent dens and fairground, with large roller-coasters, a Ferris wheel and other features. Reflected in a bend of the river would be a large circular restaurant and dance hall; and northwards from this, an Arts Centre on the river bank, with pavilions for music, drama, cinema and painting. The whole complex could rival the Tivoli Gardens at Copenhagen.

Lea Bridge Road itself would be made a main area and visual link with the land south given up in five years’ time: if so, the formal lake and water gardens. An ice rink, could be built at one end. At the Victorian pump-houses, could be cross-outdoor working models of London’s water works. On the opposite bank of the river would...
LEE VALLEY REGIONAL PARK

“A green wedge”
Sir Patrick Abercrombie
THE FUNCTIONS AND THE DEMANDS MADE OF A WORKADAY WATERCOURSE
Biodiversity
Fisheries
Tourism
Heritage
Riparian Community
Riparian Industry
Domestic Water Supply
Irrigation
Navigation
Recruitment
Angling
Habitat
Sport
Leisure
Residential Boating
Water Quality
Industrial Water Extraction
SEWAGE TREATMENT
MARINE INDUSTRY
FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT
BIODIVERSITY
WASTE WATER MANAGEMENT
NAVIGATION
HABITAT
FISHERIES
RECREATION
TOURISM
ANGLING
HERITAGE
SPORT
RICSARIAN COMMUNITY
RESIDENTIAL BOATING
WATER QUALITY
AGRICULTURE
DOMESTIC WATER SUPPLY
IRRIGATION
DOMESTIC DRAINAGE
TRANSPORT/ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE
STATUTORY PROTECTION
MARINE INDUSTRY
FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT
BIODIVERSITY
WASTE WATER MANAGEMENT
NAVIGATION
HABITAT
FISHERIES
RECREATION
TOURISM
ANGLING
HERITAGE
SPORT
RICSARIAN COMMUNITY
RESIDENTIAL BOATING
WATER QUALITY
AGRICULTURE
DOMESTIC WATER SUPPLY
IRRIGATION
DOMESTIC DRAINAGE
TRANSPORT/ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE
STATUTORY PROTECTION
DOMESTIC WATER SUPPLY
Non Public Right of Way, but the owner allows the public to use it at their own risk for the time being.
Non Public Right of Way, but the owner allows the public to use it at their own risk for the time being.
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FLOOD RISK
BIODIVERSITY
INVASIVE SPECIES
FISH HABITAT
URBAN HABITAT
NAVIGATION
HERITAGE
LEISURE
RESIDENTIAL BOATING
SPORT
EXERCISE
RECREATION
ACCESS
INFRASTRUCTURE
RAIL
ROAD
ENERGY
GARDENING

GARDENING
ROAD
ENERGY
RAIL
FLOOD RISK

BIODIVERSITY

INVASIVE SPECIES

FISH HABITAT

URBAN HABITAT

NAVIGATION

HERITAGE

LEISURE

RESIDENTIAL BOATING

SPORT

EXERCISE

RECREATION

ACCESS

INFRASTRUCTURE

RAIL

ROAD

ENERGY

GARDENING

ALLOTMENTS

RIPARIAN

PUBLIC PARK

FLOTSAM

ALLOTMENTS

PUBLIC PARK

RIPARIAN
FLOOD RISK

FLOTSAM

WARING

IMPEMTRETRABLE

MANAGEMENT

BIODIVERSITY

URBAN HABITAT

NAVIGATION

HERITAGE

LEISURE

RESIDENTIAL BOATING

SPORT

EXERCISE

RECREATION

ACCESS

INFRASTRUCTURE

RAIL

ROAD

ENERGY

GARDENING

ALLOTMENTS

RIPARIAN

PUBLIC PARK

FLOTSAM

WARNING

IMPEMTRABLE

MANAGEMENT
SOME ART IN THE LEA VALLEY

DNA DL90
Abigail Fallis

Queen Elizabeth II Olympic Park

Isabella Lockett/John Hegley