



Biodiversity  
**Action Plan** 2022–2027  
in Summary



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF  
KENSINGTON  
AND CHELSEA

## **Foreword**

This document serves as an introduction to the Royal Borough's Biodiversity Action Plan. The Biodiversity Action Plan is a guide for how we will protect and support wildlife in the borough, and the resources needed to do this. This document sits alongside the Green Plan and is interlinked with our commitments to climate change and air quality. The full Biodiversity Action Plan considers local, regional and national policy, scientific data on species and habitats, and planning policies on protecting and supporting biodiversity. Also, for the first time, this document will focus on the health and wellbeing benefits of access to nature and how wildlife and resident needs are intertwined.

With this plan we commit to:

- protect and conserve existing habitats, biodiversity features and species,
- enhance and improve the condition of existing areas of habitat including a review of Local Sites,
- create a better, more joined up network of green space and habitats which supports biodiversity in our built environment,
- increase the extent of existing habitats or range of species through restoration or expansion of habitats, green corridors, and blue space networks,
- improve understanding, enjoyment, and connection with nature, making it accessible for all, benefitting health and wellbeing, and reducing inequalities.

The natural world is something on which we all depend. Protecting biodiversity will benefit all of us, now and in the future.

**Councillor Emma Will**

**Lead Member for Culture, Leisure and Community Safety**

## **Our Vision for Biodiversity in Kensington and Chelsea**

By 2027, the Borough will have an accessible natural environment rich in wildlife that everyone can feel connected to and will benefit from.

We must:

- Protect, restore and enhance biodiversity by creating a resilient and well-connected green infrastructure, that helps to tackle the impacts of climate change and support the movement of species to aid recovery as part of a nature recovery network.
- Protect our most valuable habitats and sites ensuring that our designated Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) are managed positively to maximise their biodiversity value.
- Ensure our policies are robust around biodiversity, ensuring that biodiversity net gain is an integral part of our planning process and that opportunities to extend or create new habitats are delivered.
- Work with our residents, partners, landowners, volunteers, and visitors to support the thriving of nature and receive its educational, health and wellbeing benefits.

## **What is Biodiversity?**

Biodiversity (Biological Diversity) is the term used to describe the variety of all life on earth. It covers the whole range of living things including animals, trees, plants, insects, fungi and even bacteria.

Biodiversity is concerned with the interactions within and between species and the communities, habitats and ecosystems in which they occur.

### **Our Biodiversity Resource**

- **24 designated Sites of Nature Conservation Importance**
- Over **35,000 species records** including **96 priority species, 33 of which are protected** under the Wildlife and Countryside act 1981 (as amended).
- **9 of London's Priority Habitats**
- 388 open spaces in the Borough, over, **78 hectares of green space** including **28 parks** and **two out of borough cemeteries**
- Approx. **17% of the Borough is open space**
- Over **100 Private Garden squares**
- Over **8,000 street trees** and over **3,200 trees in our parks and open spaces**, of **180+ different species**

## What is a Biodiversity Action Plan?

- A Biodiversity Action Plan guides how we will protect and support wildlife in the borough.
- It covers priorities on local, regional, and national levels and turns them into actions.
- Is concerned with all wildlife in the borough, not just the rare or threatened.
- Shows how supporting wildlife links to wider Council Plan priorities including making our environment a healthier, greener and cleaner place and improving the quality of life for all residents.
- Helps secure the borough's natural environment and green infrastructure for future generations.

## What is included in the Biodiversity Action Plan?

### The Natural Environment

#### Green Spaces

Parks, gardens, street trees, estate gardens, school grounds, food growing spaces, woodlands

#### Blue Spaces

Ponds, wetlands, Grand Union Canal, River Thames

#### Built Environment

Green roofs, green walls, SuDs, parklets, planters, window boxes and baskets, bird and bat boxes

### Statutory Duties

- Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, ensures we give regards to biodiversity in the exercising of our functions, to conserving biodiversity.
- The Environment Act introduces a ten per cent biodiversity net gain requirement for new developments.

The Biodiversity Action Plan is used to deliver policy and statutory requirements for biodiversity at a local level.

**The Biodiversity Action Plan will help provide direction to all stakeholders in the Royal Borough to action, monitor and be accountable for positive management for biodiversity.**

## **Priority Themes in the Biodiversity Action Plan**

### Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity Net Gain means leaving biodiversity in a better condition than before.

It is expected that developments must provide at least a 10% net gain in improved biodiversity as a result of the development actually taking place. These net gains will need to be retained for at least 30 years and must be held on a public register.

The Biodiversity Action Plan will develop a standard for Biodiversity Net Gain, support net gain initiatives and ensure our policies protect and enhance habitats.

### Nature, Health and Wellbeing

Increased access and contact with nature can significantly improve both physical and mental health.

With the Biodiversity Action Plan, we aim to reduce inequalities in access to green natural spaces in the borough and provide more opportunities for residents to connect with and enjoy nature in meaningful ways.

### Education and Awareness

Awareness raising within the Borough should be tied to ongoing biodiversity initiatives to maximise the message that all wildlife is important.

It is widely recognised that increased knowledge leads to favourable attitudes which in turn leads to action promoting better environmental quality.

The Biodiversity Action Plan will expand the scope of our existing education and awareness opportunities and support other landowners and educators in raising awareness of environmental matters.

The Ecology Service will continue and expand its school, education and health and wellbeing programmes

### Nature Recovery

A nature recovery network is where wildlife sites, habitats and green spaces across the landscape are connected to give nature room to thrive. It allows plants, animals, seeds, nutrients and water to move from place to place and enables the natural world to adapt to change.

Linking to the Biodiversity Action Plan we will set up a nature recovery network, working with other land managers and organisations to ensure sites are managed positively for biodiversity and expand the Bee Superhighway.

## Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure is a network of parks, green spaces, gardens, woodlands, rivers and wetlands, as well as urban greening features such as street trees and green roofs, and green walls. Green infrastructure provides habitat and food source for wildlife as well as creating green corridors, allowing wildlife to move freely and safely between different spaces.

The Biodiversity Action Plan will support greening opportunities across the borough including the creation of biodiverse green infrastructure to support climate resilience.

## **Working Together: A Collaborative Approach**

To enhance and improve biodiversity we need to work in partnership with residents, landowners, and the community.

To support this, we have produced an action plan which will include the following targets:

- Set up a Biodiversity Partnership. The partnership will become a driving force to ensuring the aims and objectives set out in the action plan are delivered and that the borough's biodiversity thrives.
- Engage with landowners and provide support to encourage positive management of their spaces for biodiversity.
- Increase our existing environmental education offer to include more sessions on current wildlife issues.
- Provide advice and support for residents looking to help wildlife in their own spaces, be it window boxes, gardens, or balconies.
- Expand our current conservation volunteering offer across the borough.
- Develop a nature, health and wellbeing offer to promote the benefits of being in nature for mental and physical health.
- Establish citizen science monitoring programmes through the Bee Superhighway, creating opportunities for individuals and community groups to take part in surveys and data collection.



## The Action Plan

Linked to the Biodiversity Action Plan is a series of action plans detailing how the vision set out in this plan will be achieved. The action plans have been designed to be working documents, able to respond to changing priorities, concerns, and developments in policy and legislation. The action plan is split into different themes as summarised below.

| <b>Education, Engagement and Access to Nature</b>  |
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| Maintain and develop the Ecology Centre as a centre for environmental education excellence to all local children   |
| Expand and diversify the Ecology Education Service to encompass secondary school, adult, and higher education students   |
| Continue to build and develop the existing Forest School programme to encompass more schools with SEND provision   |
| Use the Forest School model to offer holiday activities through schemes like Nature Champions targeting children on FSM or low incomes   |
| Develop partnerships with local groups and organisations to promote biodiversity and the benefits of nature to harder to reach/ unrepresented audiences through one-off visits, holiday activities and short programmes                      |
| Develop a local network of environmental educators in the borough, supporting training and skills sharing.   |
| Develop an annual programme of ecology and biodiversity themed events via the Holland Park Ecology Centre covering a variety of ecological and conservation to encourage residents to learn more about biodiversity.                         |
| Promote and advertise self-guided wellbeing walks of parks and green spaces to residents.  |
| Support and develop resident biodiversity monitoring projects through initiatives like the Bee Superhighway  |
| Deliver engagement on biodiversity issues with the RBKC Youth Council  |
| Install wildlife interpretation in parks and open spaces and work with SINC site managers to install interpretative information at all SINC sites to increase awareness of their biodiversity value.   |
| Develop engaging biodiversity content for use on the Council website and social media tools as a method to promote ways local people can improve their local area, find out more about the Boroughs biodiversity and where to access nature. |
| Deliver biodiversity workshops for parks staff, planning officers, SINC managers, housing and highways teams to encourage best practice internally within the Council.   |

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| Develop and deliver a nature health and wellbeing programme in the Boroughs Parks and Green Spaces  |
| Develop food growing projects for hard-to-reach groups  |
| Undertake a survey and research of the barriers for residents to access their local park or green space to inform a new action plan to increase access to green space and nature. |
| Increase the number of conservation volunteering opportunities for local residents  |
| Develop and run a programme of nature and wellbeing walks and events to promote the benefits of being in nature for mental and physical health                                    |
| Secure funding to expand education and nature wellbeing provision   |

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| <b>Surveying and Monitoring</b>   |
| Commission a full Borough habitat survey, ensuring all green spaces are surveyed and associated report produced including updated GIS data layers.  |
| Maintain an active Service Level Agreement with the Biological records centre for London - Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL) to ensure the London Records centre holds accurate and up to date data on the Boroughs biodiversity                                     |
| Ensure all ecological records from the Boroughs parks and open spaces, are submitted to GiGL  |
| Update planning policy to require ecological survey data submitted as part of planning applications to be submitted to GiGL to contribute to the Boroughs ecological information.   |
| Identify and establish funding streams to undertake monitoring ecological surveys.  |
| Work with partners such as the Natural History Museum and Royal Parks to establish Citizen science monitoring programmes such as those through the Bee Superhighway project to encourage individuals and local community groups to take part in surveys and submit records to GiGL. |
| Ensure designated Local Wildlife Sites are visited once a year to ensure they have not been adversely impacted by developments  |
| To regularly survey, designate and de-designate Local Wildlife Sites in accordance with LWS's selection criteria  |
| Develop an ecological survey and monitoring programme for the Royal Borough's Primary Parks including Little Wormwood Scrubs covering bats, birds, invertebrates, fungi, mammals, species rich wildlife hedges, non-vascular plants, amphibian and reptiles.                        |

Update and maintain a database of artificial nest boxes that have been erected on Council owned or managed sites.

### **Parks and Urban Green Spaces**

Ensure the inclusion of biodiversity statements within the updated Parks Strategy and Cemeteries Strategy and associated site management Plans including Holland Park woodland Management Plan and Little Wormwood Scrubs habitat management plans

Identify opportunities for habitat creation or enhancement of parks to increase their biodiversity value

Ensure that the protection of parks and public open spaces is included in Local Development Plans, Neighbourhood Plans and any other relevant strategies

Design in wildlife friendly habitats within all new parks, occupying at least 30% of the area.

Manage and expand existing community kitchen gardens across the Borough

Develop a new kitchen garden at Kings North House for residents to grow food

Expand and refurbish the existing gardens at Nottingwood House, Portland Road and Allom and Barlow Estate.

Look into options for increasing and improving public open space within our estates to help encourage use of outdoor space, as a joint initiative with Greener Neighbourhoods.

Identify opportunities for tree planting and creating new habitats on housing estates, such as hedges and meadows.

Review the land use options across estates to increase access to greenspace as well as ensuring design capitalises on opportunities to create an integrated sense of community.

Review the grounds maintenance approaches such as amending mowing regimes to support biodiversity

Work with residents to promote the importance of biodiversity, by joining up with national campaigns, such as the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch, and to support estate participation in community gardening events, such as London in Bloom.

Work with resident groups to encourage biodiversity and greening projects on estates, and including biodiversity concerns in the criteria for Environmental Improvement Budgets. Relevant initiatives may include the creation of new habitats, linkages to adjoining green spaces, and providing nesting sites.

### **Trees and Woodlands**

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| To develop and implement a Woodland Management Plan for Holland Park   |
| Update Management plan for Little Wormwood Scrubs for the woodland and scrub habitats to reflect habitat survey results.   |
| To identify funding opportunities for woodland management and tree planting across the borough such as through the Forestry Commission or Urban Tree Challenge Fund  |
| To engage with private woodland owners and to encourage them to manage their woodland for wildlife   |
| Increase the dead wood and purpose built loggeries across woodland sites across the borough  |
| Identify sites that require scrub management and implement targeted scrub management regimes, ensuring management plans are in place to provide guidance and advice. |
| To manage existing hedges to maximise their wildlife benefit, and plant new hedges where possible.   |
| Undertake a valuation of the borough's tree resource and identify areas in the public realm suitable for tree planting   |
| Input into Tree Strategy revision to ensure biodiversity is included as a priority.  |
| Produce a guidance note on climate resilient and wildlife supporting trees as a reference guide for any tree planting schemes.                                       |
| Undertake an orchard survey to establish the number and extent of orchards in the Borough and ensure these are accurately recorded                                   |
| Work with the Orchard Project to restore and support existing orchard sites  |
| Work with key stakeholders to identify opportunities to create 8 community Orchards across the borough engaging the community in their planting and maintenance.     |

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| <b>Grassland and Wildflower Meadows</b>  |
| To provide advice and support for the management of the Acid Grassland to improve the condition of this habitat.                                       |
| To produce guidance on the creation and management of wildflower meadows to support new meadow installations across the borough.                       |
| Update the habitat management plan for Little Wormwood Scrubs to ensure the grasslands are managed effectively increasing floral diversity             |
| Commission floral survey of grasslands in Park sites and monitor diversity   |
| Identify grass areas across the Council's parks and green space portfolio which could be sustainably managed as longer grass and/or pollinator strips. |

## The Built Environment

Develop a policy for Biodiversity Net Gain, how this will be achieved and monitored.

Produce a Green Infrastructure Strategy to guide how green infrastructure can be implemented and improved to support biodiversity.

Promote the new Greening Supplementary Planning Guidance to all residents and businesses in the borough to highlight the benefits of increased green infrastructure and opportunities for improvement here

Ensure the Greening SPD is implemented through the planning process and support this through developing detailed biodiversity guidance for new Green space, streetscape planting, suds, Living roofs and living walls, artificial nesting sites

To ensure that development schemes put more emphasis on creating and enhancing green infrastructure.

To ensure all opportunities for green/blue roofs are maximised

Support housing to Investigate the feasibility of installing green roofs and walls as part of new build programmes and retrofit works

Review the resilience of estate drainage systems to extreme weather events and investigate opportunities to install sustainable urban drainage systems and rain gardens as part of any planned works to hard landscapes on estates.

Support the Council's commitment to ensure that biodiversity is improved, and not damaged by new build and refurbishment works, by facilitating the delivery of the Council's upcoming Biodiversity Action Plan, and by specifying appropriate protection measures during future construction works, including consideration of the nesting season for tree works.

Support highways colleagues with installation of Parklets and street greening initiatives that support biodiversity

Introduce a target for increasing the amount of green space and/or the extent of the tree canopy in the borough.

A Local Climate Impacts Profile is developed, and it will identify the vulnerabilities the borough is facing as a result of climate change. This will be used to develop a comprehensive climate resilience action plan.

Create an Urban Greening Factor policy for small scale planning applications requiring a UGF net gain (so existing GI does not count towards the UGF. Require a before and after assessment and ensure criteria for natural SuDS.

### **Nature Recovery Network**

Submit funding application to develop a pilot Nature Recovery Network in the Borough, implement plans to set a blue print for a Borough wide Nature Recovery Network.

Set up of a multi-departmental working group to develop guidance on managing historic walls, memorials and structures for biodiversity.

Produce a pilot streetscape refurbishment project in small geographical areas within the borough. This will demonstrate what an environment that favours walkers and cyclists, including through increased green spaces, can look like and help to build support for these sorts of changes

### **Blue Spaces**

To assess the Council's riverside lighting schemes, to define excessive light pollution, and to identify areas where such pollution occurs and where improvements can be made

Engage with Landowners and managers in and around Lots Road and Chelsea Creek to manage bankside vegetation sympathetically for wildlife

To ensure that new development maximises the opportunities to conserve and enhance the biodiversity of rivers

To ensure that any new landscaping adjacent to watercourses is predominantly native and wildlife friendly

Restore the pond area in Avondale Park as part of the parks Masterplan improvement works.

To work with partners to manage invasive species such as floating pennywort

Produce a guidance note on pond and water habitat management to support contractors and other landowners.

### **Pollinator Action Plan**

Develop the bee superhighway project, involving internal and external partners

Create a bee superhighway guidance note to support planting for pollinators across the borough; including windowbox, garden and pot plant ideas.

Create an interactive map for the bee superhighway to record all contributions to the project and support new initiatives

Introduce planters at the SUEZ depots plant with pollinator friendly plants

Work with TFL to improve pollinator friendly planting at stations in the Borough

A minimum of 30% of all new planting schemes should be pollinator-friendly plants.

Deliver best practice habitat management workshops to Grounds Maintenance contractors and staff working in Parks and Urban Green spaces as part of the Big Cities Butterflies Project

To reduce or eliminate the use of pesticides and herbicides on parks and highways land, where possible, to protect pollinator species

### **Private Gardens, Garden Squares and School Grounds**

Survey Schools Grounds and identify opportunities to improve sites for biodiversity, education and access to nature

Engage residents involved in the community kitchen gardens to improve these spaces for wildlife, provide expertise and guidance to promote sustainable gardening practices.

Develop an engagement programme for private Garden Squares and private garden owners, promoting best practice for gardening for wildlife and reducing environmental impacts of chemical usage

Support a Community Gardeners Forum to share best practice and networking with local organisations delivering community gardening initiatives.

Engage land managers in the Borough and deliver ecological related training programme, raising awareness and improved management of Local Wildlife Sites

### **SINCS and Local Wildlife Sites**

Complete a review of existing SINCS. Identify any proposed new sites, boundary changes or upgrades to be included as part of the review. Ensure new updated list of SINC sites adopted as part of the new Local Plan (2022).

Produce a spatial plan identifying the borough's biodiverse resource, and opportunities to create new or better-connected habitats.

To engage with the owners of SINC sites not managed by the council, providing advice and guidance to encourage them to manage the designated SINC positively for wildlife.

Update planning policies to protect the borough's Local Wildlife Sites and biodiversity resource through the Local Plan Review.