Biodiversity Action Plan 2022–2027

THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA

Foreword

We know that making Kensington and Chelsea a great place to live starts with our environment. That's why protecting and enhancing biodiversity was identified as one of the five environmental priorities in the Council's Green Plan in 2021, alongside improving air quality, reducing carbon emissions, tackling fuel poverty, and minimising waste. This Biodiversity Action Plan sets out, over 84 actions, how we will meet this goal to achieve an accessible natural environment rich in wildlife that everyone can feel connected to and will benefit from.

Our borough's biodiversity is an invaluable asset. Stretches of the Thames and Union Canal support strategic wildlife corridors across central London, while our parks, open spaces, and green infrastructure provide a patchwork of habitats that are home to a wide array of wildlife, including many species that are considered rare in London. The Action Plan shows how we will protect, restore, and enhance the natural environment and the important habitats and species found there, from creating new Bee Superhighway sites to using data from monitoring programmes to inform how we manage green spaces. This in turn will help make our borough more resilient to the impacts of climate change.

Biodiversity conservation is vital for Kensington and Chelsea's residents as well as wildlife. Access to nature, whether for exercise, recreation, or education helps support our physical and mental health and wellbeing. These benefits have been most keenly felt during the Covid-19 pandemic, with increased use of public green spaces also serving to highlight the inequalities in access to nature that exist in the borough. We want to address these disparities by providing more opportunities for all residents to connect with and enjoy nature in meaningful ways to improve their health and wellbeing, whether through our schools and community gardening programmes, or activities such as talks, walks and conservation volunteering.

We must build on the progress of past biodiversity action plans, but we must also recognise that supporting nature cannot be a token gesture. This includes ensuring that all Council decision-making is informed by robust consideration of biodiversity to meet legislative requirements and borough targets.

Conserving Kensington and Chelsea's biodiversity is a huge task, and one we know we can't do alone. We'll work with community groups, residents, institutions, schools, universities, and businesses, and seek funding and legislative support to protect and enhance our local environment.

I am committed to delivering this Action Plan, and I hope you will join us on this journey.

Councillor Emma Will
Lead Member for Culture, Leisure and Community Safety

Table Of Contents

1. Executive summary

The world is facing a climatic crisis, and biodiversity is being lost at an alarming rate. Competition for resources between a growing population and urban wildlife has resulted in a decline in the quantity and quality of habitats. We must respond by delivering resilient, sustainable plans that protect and enhance biodiversity in Kensington and Chelsea now, to safeguard our future quality of life.

The Council's Green Plan has five environmental priorities, of which one is 'Protecting and enhancing biodiversity'. The new Biodiversity Action Plan 2022–2027 (BAP) has been produced to deliver this priority. The BAP sets out how we will protect, restore and enhance biodiversity for the next five years, helping to secure the borough's natural environment and green infrastructure for future generations.

The BAP covers priorities at local, regional and national levels and turns them into actions. The BAP will contribute towards the Council Plan and other strategic ambitions, including those set out in the revised Local Plan, revised Air Quality and Climate Emergency Action Plans, and the challenges identified by the climate emergency. It also covers how the Council will meet its statutory duties with regard to wildlife set out in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC) and incorporates new legislative requirements as set out in the Environment Act 2021.

The BAP sets out the borough's vision for biodiversity with four objectives, which will be achieved by the delivery of 84 actions, grouped into the following four themes:

The BAP is a working document that will be reviewed annually. A local Biodiversity Partnership comprising internal and external stakeholders will be established to monitor and champion the delivery of the BAP and provide more opportunities for wider community engagement.

Through robust consideration of the biodiversity crisis, the Council can boost environmental quality and improve access to nature for all, contributing to a healthy, clean, and safe borough that supports residents' health and wellbeing.

If you have any suggestions or comments at any stage of the Action Plan delivery, please contact us at:

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2. Our vision for biodiversity in Kensington and Chelsea

Vision

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

Objectives

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 as part of a Nature Recovery Network.
- Protect our most valuable habitats, ensuring that our designated Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) are managed positively to maximise their biodiversity value.
- Ensure our policies are robust around biodiversity, with biodiversity net gain an integral part of our planning process, and that opportunities to enhance, extend or create new habitats are delivered.
- Work with our residents, partners, landowners, volunteers, and visitors to help nature to thrive and receive its educational, health and wellbeing benefits.

3. Introduction

Our borough

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea is one of London's smallest boroughs, covering an area of only 4.7 square miles. Despite this, it has over 160,000 residents and approximately 56,000 daily visitors, making it one of the most densely populated areas in the country. With only 17 percent of the borough designated as open space, access to green space and nature is a challenge.

Despite this, the borough has a surprisingly rich biodiversity resource, with award-winning parks, gardens and open spaces accommodating important habitats like woodland, grassland, scrub and orchard. The course of the Thames in Kensington and Chelsea forms one of London's richest wildlife habitats, supporting a wide range of birds, fish and invertebrates. The borough is home to many nationally and internationally scarce species, including types of wild plant, bat, bird and reptile.

The built environment also provides a valuable home to wildlife: street trees create an 'urban forest' supporting cleaner air quality, the Grand Union Canal provides an important corridor for wildlife, while living roofs and green walls provide new habitats and green stepping stones for nature.

The world is facing a climatic crisis, and biodiversity is being lost at an alarming rate. Competition for resources between a growing population and urban wildlife has resulted in a decline in the quantity and quality of habitats. We must respond by delivering resilient, sustainable plans to protect and enhance biodiversity across the borough.

The State of Nature Report 2019 indicates that 15 percent of species in the UK are threatened with extinction and 41 percent of species are in decline. Climate change, pollution and habitat loss are the main threats to biodiversity in urban areas.[1]

1. State of Nature 2019 (2019). National Environmental Research Council. State-of-Nature-2019-UK-full-report.pdf

What is biodiversity?

Biodiversity (biological diversity) is the term used to describe the variety of all life on Earth (animals, plants, fungi and micro-organisms).

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

Key Terms

- **Habitat** – the natural environment (see Figure 1) where a particular animal, plant, fungus or micro-organism lives. The term is often used in a wider sense, to refer to groups of organisms found together, such as woodlands, wetlands or grasslands.
- **Ecosystem** – a community of interdependent organisms and the environment in which they live and interact.
- **Ecosystem services** – the components of nature that are directly and indirectly enjoyed, consumed or used in order to maintain or enhance human wellbeing.

Why is biodiversity important?

Humanity depends on the survival of the natural world. The intrinsic benefits provided by biodiversity (otherwise known as ecosystem services) impact our everyday lives and are vital to the health and wellbeing of the borough's residents and communities. This includes pollinators that help to produce the food we eat, plants that contribute to clean air and urban cooling, and healthy soils that absorb rainfall, preventing local flooding.

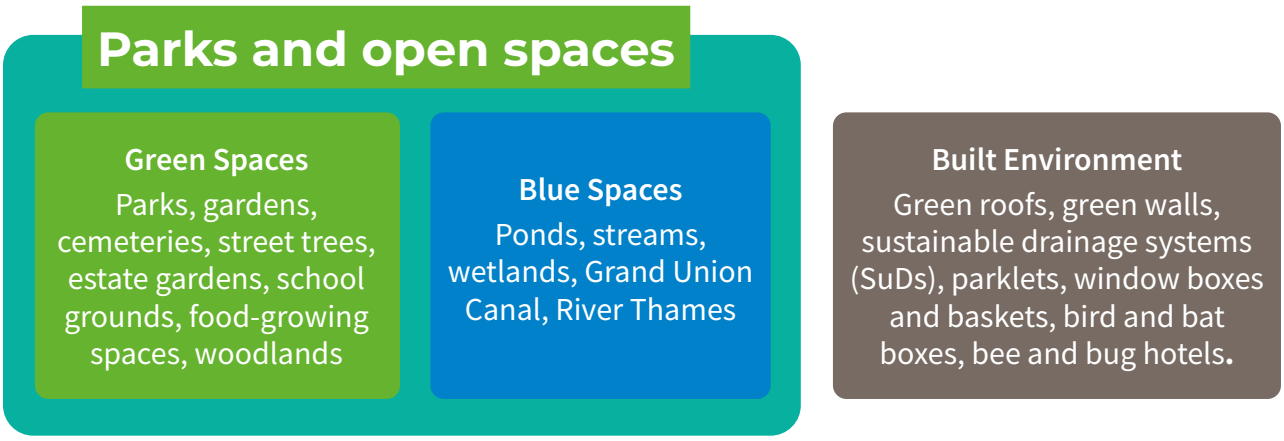


Figure 1. The Natural Environment

Health and wellbeing

There is strong evidence that increased access to and contact with nature can significantly improve both physical and mental health and wellbeing. Access to nature encourages physical activity through outdoor recreation and exercise, and promotes relaxation, which can improve some health conditions (such as obesity) and reduce the risk of diseases (such as heart disease, diabetes and cancer).

The impact of green spaces can also improve mental health. Spending time in nature can help reduce depression and anxiety, decrease stress levels, increase community cohesion and social connection, help tackle social isolation and instil a deeper sense of place.

Recent evidence identifies a number of mental and physical health needs in Kensington and Chelsea, including an increase in anxiety over the past four years and higher rates of depression than in other London boroughs. Even though the borough has some of the highest life expectancy figures in the UK, there is significant variation over different wards, suggesting evidence of health inequalities experienced by residents. Evidence also shows that 31 percent of residents are inactive.

The Wildlife Trust's 2015[2] report emphasised that 'environments rich in wildlife are also associated with improved wellbeing' and that spaces which have lost natural environments can have a negative result on human health and wellbeing. It is therefore a priority to conserve biodiversity in our borough's parks and open spaces and to ensure that residents experience the health and wellbeing benefits of accessing nature.

Case study

Groundwork UK Eco.Fitter Sessions, Holland Park

An ongoing partnership with Groundwork UK supports the delivery of an annual six-week programme of basic conservation and horticulture for people with learning difficulties, mental health issues and physical disabilities.

The programme includes conservation, planting and other horticulture works around the park, with participants gaining an Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) qualification that supports ongoing career development and volunteering opportunities. In addition to gaining new skills, working outdoors benefits participants' physical and mental health and wellbeing.

"Thank you so much – this programme will help me apply for an apprenticeship at Kew."

"I'm really happy with my mental health management. [This course] was an achievement for me."

2. Wellbeing benefits from natural environments rich in wildlife (2015). The Wildlife Trusts, University of Essex.

Engagement and education

Urban living limits access to nature and can increase exposure to certain environmental hazards, such as air and noise pollution. Many urban areas face increasing pressure from expanding populations, limited green spaces and growing impacts of climate change. These challenges must be addressed to provide a healthy, sustainable living environment.

To achieve the enhancement of biodiversity in the borough, it is essential for the public to be aware of the importance of biodiversity and to understand and support conservation efforts.

Connecting children with nature is important in nurturing a lifelong interest in wildlife and its protection. It also has many social and health benefits: for example, it helps to combat 'nature deficit disorder' (a link has been established between a lack of exposure to green space in young people and negative consequences, such as antisocial behaviour and poor mental health).

There are 27 primary schools, six secondary schools, two special schools and two sixth forms in Kensington and Chelsea, many with little in the way of natural green spaces in their grounds, all situated where space is at a premium. Therefore, providing opportunities to access and engage with nature in the borough is very important.

The Holland Park Ecology Centre has been running outdoor education activities in the borough for over 30 years. In addition to forest school and environmental education programmes, the Ecology Centre runs a programme of events, workshops and holiday activities for all ages to help people appreciate the value of the habitats and species found in the borough. Similarly, the Natural History Museum Garden and Chelsea Physic Garden provide excellent opportunities for local children and adults to learn about and experience nature in the borough.

Conservation volunteering activities are run at Holland Park and other primary parks in the borough, including Little Wormwood Scrubs. Sessions support essential habitat management activities but also provide physical and mental health benefits to participants, helping to tackle issues such as social isolation and supporting the development of skills and capabilities for employment.

The 67 community kitchen gardens spread across the borough provide over 700 residents with plots for food growing, building community hubs, and contributing to local greening. The Community Gardeners help and advise plot holders and deliver workshops to engage groups in food growing and horticulture, providing a space to learn new skills, connect with nature, and develop meaningful connections with others.

Case study

Nature Champions Programme at Holland Park Ecology Centre

Funded by the Department for Education, the Nature Champions Programme was delivered in 2021 in partnership with the borough's Ecology Service and Change For Life programme. It aimed to provide outdoor nature connection activities for children in receipt of receipt of free school meals (FSM) and those who had not previously engaged with nature activities in the borough.

The programme's overall aim was to increase access to nature, linking the importance of this to development and mental wellbeing as well as focusing on healthy eating and active play.

The programme ran over the Easter and summer holidays. It included a range of outdoor activities, including campfire cooking, exploring where food comes from, healthy eating, nature exploration, den building, playing wide games and mindfulness activities.

All participants enjoyed a healthy lunch and reported feeling more positive after the sessions, with parents also appreciating the experience of the woodlands in Holland Park.

Air quality

Air pollution is currently the biggest environmental risk to health in urban areas. It is estimated that almost 9,500 people in London die early each year because of long-term exposure to poor air quality. The whole of Kensington and Chelsea is designated an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) due to exceedances of the statutory National Air Quality Objectives (NAQOs) for nitrogen dioxide (NO2) and particulate matter (PM10). As a Council, we have a statutory duty to meet the government's NAQOs, and by 2030 we also want to meet internationally recognised and ambitious air quality guidelines set by the World Health Organization. Exposure can be substantially reduced through carefully positioned green infrastructure that incorporates the right type of vegetation, separates people from pollution by introducing barriers, and extends the distance between people and the pollution source.

Climate change and resilience

Climate change is one of the biggest challenges we face, and biodiversity plays an integral role in both our response to mitigate its effects and our ability to adapt. In October 2019 the Council declared a climate emergency and adopted ambitious targets to reduce the borough's carbon emissions. The climate is already changing, and London is vulnerable to extreme weather patterns such as heavy, prolonged rainfall, causing floods, and hotter, drier weather, causing heatwaves and droughts, both of which are expected to become more frequent and intense. The urban heat island effect also exacerbates many impacts of climate change in London.

As the climate changes, so will the borough's biodiversity. New species will make Kensington and Chelsea their home, including some unwelcome pests and diseases. Conversely, other habitats and species may find it harder to survive. These changes create risks and opportunities, and our ability to manage wildlife habitats in a way that is sustainable and resilient to climate change will determine how well we can protect and enhance biodiversity in the borough. Healthy ecosystems are more resilient to climate change, and so will be better able to maintain the supply of ecosystem services necessary for our survival.

Why do we need a biodiversity action plan?

- This is the third BAP for Kensington and Chelsea, and covers the period 2022 to 2027.
- The BAP is a priority of the borough's Green Plan (see Appendix 1), which sets out how the Council will deliver on plans to transition to a truly sustainable borough in response to the climate emergency.
- We have a statutory duty to conserve priority species and habitats. The BAP addresses priorities at local, regional and national levels and turns them into local actions.
- The BAP guides how we will protect and support wildlife in the borough. It provides a strategic sense of direction for all stakeholders in Kensington and Chelsea to instigate action, ensure monitoring, and be accountable for delivering positive management for biodiversity.
- It is concerned with all wildlife in the borough, not just the rare or threatened.
- The BAP identifies actions where 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.
- It helps secure the borough's natural environment and green infrastructure for future generations.

This BAP is a partnership document, put together following consultation with many stakeholders across the borough, including businesses, big institutions, land managers, Friends groups, schools and residents. Details of the public consultations can be found in Appendix 2 and Annexes 1, 2 and 3.

4. Biodiversity in Kensington and Chelsea

Our biodiversity resource

- Approximately **17 percent of the borough is open space.**
- 388 open spaces in the borough, accounting for over **78 hectares of green space**, including **28 parks** plus **two out-of-borough cemeteries.**
- **24 designated Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation.**
- Over **35,000 species records** for the borough, including **96 priority species** have been recorded in the borough. **33 are protected** under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- **Nine of London's priority habitats.**
- Over **100 private garden squares.**
- Over **8,000 street trees** and over **3,200 trees in our parks and open spaces,** comprising approximately **180 different species.**
- **67 kitchen gardens.**
- **Four identified green corridors.**

Designated sites of importance for nature conservation (SINCs)

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs), known nationally as Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs), are locally designated areas of land with 'substantive nature conservation value'. SINCs are identified and selected locally using criteria and procedures set out by the London Wildlife Sites Board (LWSB). There are over 1,500 SINCs in London, covering nearly 20 percent of the capital.

There are currently 24 designated SINCs in Kensington and Chelsea (see map in Appendix 3), including woodlands, parks and wildlife gardens. These are sites that have been designated as either important wildlife habitats, places where rare species are found, or places where the local community can have contact with the natural world: they are some of our most valuable wildlife areas in the borough. Some SINCs are Council-owned and managed while others are privately owned and governed, such as railway lines and private garden squares.

Hierarchy of SINC designations in the borough

- ***Sites of Metropolitan Importance*** – Contain the best examples of London's habitats and species and opportunities to have contact with nature.
- ***Sites of Borough Importance*** – These sites make a significant contribution to the ecology of the borough. Damage to these sites means a significant loss to the borough's biodiversity. Borough sites are divided into Grade 1 or Grade 2 categories, with Grade 1 being of greater importance.
- ***Sites of Local Importance*** – These sites are of particular value to people who live nearby. Sites are designated in recognition of their role in the community and nature locally.

All sites are a priority for protection and provide opportunities for people to have contact with the natural environment.

Our urban forest

The thousands of trees in our gardens, parks, open spaces, estates and streets form our urban forest. Avenues and individual trees not only provide a cultural link to our past and provide a sense of place in the borough, but they also support a plethora of wildlife and provide important green corridors, allowing species to migrate between areas.

Included in this are several areas of structurally complex woodland: these support an array of wildlife, providing food and shelter for many species. The most significant area of woodland in the borough is in Holland Park, covering approximately 12 hectares.

Important sites for wildlife

Brompton Cemetery – Noted for its areas of semi-improved neutral and acid grasslands and scrub. Cemeteries often contain grassland habitat, a home for birds, insects and mammals. A large proportion of Brompton Cemetery has been left unmown: it is a good example of a cemetery where the needs of the site are balanced with encouraging wildlife. **Kensal Green Cemetery** is of similar conservation and green space value due to its size, character, use and accessibility.

Biodiversity-enhancing green roofs in the borough – such as the **Avondale Park** Pavilion, the play hut in **Meanwhile Gardens** and the brown roof at **Little Wormwood Scrubs** – create a habitat-rich alternative to hard standing cover.

Holland Park – The largest area of woodland in the borough, extremely important for mammals, birds and invertebrates. Over 57 species of butterfly and moth have been found here, some internationally rare.

Carmelite Monastery – A prime example of a biodiversity-rich private garden, including habitats rare in London such as allotments, an orchard, a wildlife pond, meadow and a release site for hedgehogs.

Little Wormwood Scrubs – A large area (eight hectares) of grassland and scrub that supports a high diversity of species and habitats. A rare example of a dynamic ecosystem of reasonable size and low-intervention management.

Natural History Museum – With a variety of habitats such as ponds, meadow, chalk downland and fen, this wildlife garden is home to a wide range of species. It has a good example of a thriving wildlife hedge. The Museum's five-acre site is currently being transformed into an accessible, biologically diverse green space as part of the Urban Nature Project. Other wildlife gardens in the borough with a variety of habitats are **Westway Wildlife Garden, Kensington Memorial Gardens** and **Meanwhile Gardens.**

Cremorne Gardens – A prime example of a successfully introduced wildflower meadow. Not only is it beautiful to look at, but it also provides shelter, pollen and nectar for invertebrates; specialist plants for caterpillars as food or for egg laying; food and nesting material for birds; a foraging and hiding space for amphibians; and food, shelter and nesting material for small mammals. Other examples of wildflower meadows in the borough are **Kensington Gardens, Westway Wildlife Garden, Avondale Park** and **Carmelite Monastery.**

Green infrastructure

Green corridors are a sequence of connected green spaces, allowing species to migrate between areas. Examples include rivers, canals (including their banks), road verges and rail embankments, cycle routes, parks and SINC sites. Four main green corridors have been identified in the borough and along its boundaries.

Priority species and habitats

Priority species for the borough are determined by the London Priority Species List. London's priority species are also national priorities for conservation, and those that are believed to be declining in London or beyond.

Species from the London Priority Species List that have been recorded in Kensington and Chelsea are listed in Appendix 4. They will be given specific consideration in planning matters and when looking at biodiversity projects in the borough. There are over 35,000 species records for the borough, including 96 priority species. Linked to this are a number of priority habitats that are considered of specific importance to enhance, restore and recover nature in London (Appendix 5).

Surveying and monitoring changes to habitats and species in the borough is essential to ensure that we can make informed decisions about how we manage our ecological assets to protect biodiversity. The last full survey of habitats in the borough was undertaken in 2002; the BAP will update this to provide a solid baseline against which to assess future plans and policies.

5. The policy context

The Council has a duty and a responsibility to nature conservation. As a local planning authority and major land manager, the Council is well placed to ensure that biodiversity is supported across the borough now and in the future.

This BAP has been informed by policy requirements at a national, regional and local level, as set out in the table below.

National	Section 40 of the 2006 Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act (the NERC Act) sets out how public authorities, such as Kensington and Chelsea Council, have a legal duty to conserve biodiversity. 'A Green Future: Our 25-Year Plan to Improve the Environment' (Defra, 2018), the UK's overarching environmental strategy, sets goals and targets for improving the environment. The Environment Act 2021 puts the government's 25-year plan on a statutory footing and places a legal duty on local authorities to ensure that all developments provide a positive net gain for biodiversity and that spatial nature recovery strategies are put in place. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Updated states that planning should contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment, habitats and biodiversity, and sets out new requirements for biodiversity net gains. Biodiversity 2020 sets out a strategy to deliver international and EU biodiversity commitments. Species Recovery Plans: the National Pollinator Strategy seeks to protect pollinating insects.
Regional	The London Plan 2021 identifies the need to protect biodiversity and to provide opportunities for people to access nature through local green spaces. The London Environment Strategy 2018 includes actions to make London cleaner, greener, and ready for the future. The strategy includes policies to protect nature conservation sites, create priority habitats, conserve priority species and to ensure a net gain in biodiversity.

Local

The RBKC Council Plan 2019 sets out the Council's priorities and commitments, reflecting what is important to its communities. The BAP supports many of these priority themes, including supporting vulnerable residents and creating a healthy, clean and safe borough.

The Green Plan sets out how the Council is going to meet the ambitious goals and transition to a truly sustainable borough, which is essential to ensure our ongoing quality of life. The Green Plan identifies five environmental priorities, of which one is 'Protecting and enhancing biodiversity'. The BAP sets out how this priority will be delivered.

The Climate Emergency Action Plan (2022)

The Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) (2022)

Parks Strategy 2016 to 2025

Housing Strategy 2019 to 2022

Tree Strategy 2022 onwards

The Local Plan includes a policy on biodiversity and the metrics used to assess net gain on developments (Policy G16).

Greening Supplementary Planning Document, 2021

Trees and Development Supplementary Planning Document, 2010

6. Delivering the plan

The actions

Section 7 includes all the actions that we need to take to improve biodiversity in the borough. The actions map directly onto our priority themes, which have been gathered from various strategic Council documents, including the Local Plan, Green Plan, and Greening Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The Action Plan has been designed to be a working document, able to respond to changing priorities, concerns and developments in policy and legislation. The Action Plan covers the following themes:

Biodiversity Partnership

To enhance and improve biodiversity, we need to work in collaboration with residents, landowners and the community, maintaining and developing strong and effective partnerships to help reach our targets.

A Biodiversity Partnership will be established, comprising key stakeholders, subject experts, partners, community groups and the wider public. The partnership will initially form part of the consultation process, but will become a driving force in ensuring that the aims and objectives set out in the BAP are delivered and that the borough's biodiversity thrives in the long term. A 'terms of reference' will be developed for the group.

Implementing and monitoring the plan

This is an ambitious suite of actions that will require a co-ordinated approach within the Council and with its stakeholders. The Action Plan will remain a live document – in that actions set out in this document can be reviewed and updated to meet changing priorities and legislation or those linked to funding streams.

There is no longer a national biodiversity action reporting system to record action delivery from Biodiversity Action Plans. However, there are a number of statutory indicators that the Council has to report on, such as Biodiversity Net Gain and Single Data 160 (which measures the percentage of designated SINC sites that are being positively managed for nature conservation). These indicators will be reported against each year as part of the Council's Green Plan.

The implementation of the specific action targets will be monitored as follows:

- All actions will be added to a monitoring spreadsheet and a performance dashboard will be developed to track progress.
- An annual report on progress against the Action Plan targets will be produced and presented to the Environment Select Committee. This report will also set out priorities for the forthcoming year.
- The Biodiversity Partnership will monitor progress of the plan as part of their role stewarding its implementation. They will also discuss and agree priorities for annual programmes and any changes that are required.
- Quarterly updates on progress will be given at lead member briefings.
- Statutory indicators such as Biodiversity Net Gain and Single Data 160 will be reported against in annual Green Plan updates.

Communicating the plan

- The BAP will be available to everyone via the Council website. A summary document will be produced to aid accessibility and engage residents further.
- Printed versions of the BAP will be available from public libraries and the Holland Park Ecology Centre.
- The Council will organise regular meetings of the Biodiversity Partnership, community groups and internal stakeholder groups to provide updates on progress.
- The Council will develop and follow a biodiversity communication plan for engagement, which will be revised annually.
- Where education or awareness is required, biodiversity workshops and events will be held to communicate plans to internal stakeholders, such as parks staff, park contractors, planning officers, housing and highways staff, and tree experts.

Challenges in delivering the plan

Barriers to access to nature

Evidence suggests that people in the most deprived areas usually have the poorest health and less access to green spaces, and this is also true of Kensington and Chelsea.

Even when people have green space on their doorstep, not everyone accesses it. A Natural England report (2011)[3] explored some of the reasons people do not access green space:

- Safety concerns
- Poorly maintained green spaces
- Lack of time
- Not having transport to get to green spaces
- Lack of knowledge about where green spaces are
- Uncertainty over whether the spaces are private
- Poor health
- Not wanting to go on their own
- Not knowing what activities could be done in green spaces
- Poor weather

Meaningful consultation with community groups across the borough will provide insight into what is most needed to initiate engagement with the natural environment, and will guide our work to reduce these inequalities, helping residents to connect with nature to improve their health and wellbeing.

Areas of deficiency in access to nature

Areas of Deficiency in Access to Nature are places where people have to walk more than a kilometre to reach an accessible Site of Metropolitan or Borough Importance to Nature Conservation. Just under 10 percent (9.3 percent) of Kensington and Chelsea is designated an Area of Deficiency in Access to Nature: a disproportionate amount of this land is in the north of the borough, with a small area in the south of the borough north of King's Road (see Appendix 6). It is therefore vital that SINCs in the borough are protected and enhanced, and that more SINCs are created, for both people and wildlife.

Covid-19 impact and recovery

The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted how important our parks and open spaces are: they provide numerous benefits, such as contact with nature, improving physical and mental health, and opportunities for social interaction. During lockdowns, parks were some of the only places people could visit, and this put enormous pressure on these spaces and their infrastructure.

Covid-19 highlighted the importance of green spaces, but also the need for green spaces and associated habitats to be more resilient to increased usage.

The pandemic further showed that not everyone has equal access to a quality local park or green space.

A survey conducted by the RSPB in June 2020 highlighted that 76 percent of its respondents agreed that nature was a source of comfort for them during the Covid-19 crisis.[4]

3. Green space access, green space use, physical activity and overweight (2011). Natural England Commissioned Report NECR067. Green space access, green space use, physical activity and overweight - NECR067
4. The Impact of Children's Connection to Nature (2015). Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), University of Derby.

Planning and development

Land for new parks or areas of green space is very rare in the borough, and our existing green spaces are impacted directly by the increasing population, including a higher number of park users, and through the physical impact of new developments. This BAP aims to create opportunities for further greening in the borough, both in parks and open spaces and the built environment.

The conservation and enhancement of biodiversity is a material consideration in, and an integral part of, the planning system. Both major and minor developments can have a negative impact on biodiversity, through disturbance, loss of nesting sites, habitat fragmentation or habitat loss. Developments adjacent to designated SINCs may have indirect impacts – for example, via increased light pollution. There are very few major development sites left in Kensington and Chelsea. Those that remain include brownfield and designated SINC sites. Any development of these would need to be carefully considered to balance the need for development with the need for biodiversity.

Where possible, we will look to connect open spaces and green infrastructure across the borough, creating a Nature Recovery Network to give nature room to thrive. This allows plants, animals, seeds, nutrients and water to move from place to place and improves resilience to climate change.

Implementing biodiversity net gain

Under the Environment Act 2021, new developments must provide at least a 10 percent net gain in improved biodiversity as a result of the development taking place. These net gains will need to be retained for at least 30 years and must be listed on a public register. Defra has produced a biodiversity metric to calculate these impacts. A key consideration for the Council will be the approach to offsetting biodiversity losses, as opportunities for this in the borough may be limited.

Urban Greening Factor

The London Plan 2021 states that major development proposals should include urban greening from the outset of the development design process, using the Urban Greening Factor (UGF). The UGF is a tool to quantify the amount and quality of urban greening that can be provided by a new development: its use provides an opportunity to enhance and increase biodiversity. Kensington and Chelsea is required to create its own UGF for developments in the borough.

Funding the plan

Increased pressure on local government budgets is affecting how parks and open spaces are managed, potentially compromising the quality of sites and the ability to implement improvements. There is an increasing challenge to achieve more and continue to be ambitious with reduced funding.

Capital programme

A sustained programme of regular investment in our biodiversity projects and actions for the borough is essential if we are to fulfil our objectives and realise the vision we have declared in this plan. All actions should be clearly linked to the biodiversity objectives set out under our priorities, to benefit from the Council's available capital budget.

External funding

Officers will seek additional funding from large funding bodies and external partners to help fund specific projects. Where necessary, officers will work closely with internal departments and partnering organisations to meet application requirements.

Community infrastructure levy and section 106

The Council receives Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) monies that can be spent on parks and open space infrastructure projects. Funding from CIL and existing Section 106 (S106, Town and Country Planning Act 1990) contributions may be sought to fund capital project work that provides improved or increased community or social infrastructure, the need for which has arisen, at least in part, because of a new development taking place.

Sponsorship

Officers will build relationships with organisations, businesses and residents to explore new sponsorship contracts where a body will look after some local infrastructure or an area immediately connected to them, e.g. an adjacent street flower basket or bat box.

7. The action plan

Access to nature

Aims

- To provide a comprehensive environmental education and engagement service for schools, community groups, visitors and residents, raising awareness and promoting an understanding of the importance of biodiversity.
- To provide skills and development opportunities for a range of stakeholders, including promoting best practice in managing land for biodiversity.
- To help address inequalities in access to nature and increase opportunities for people to connect with nature across the borough, with a focus on improving health and wellbeing.
- To develop new and existing collaborations with institutions, community groups and residents to support the delivery of biodiversity projects across the borough.

Priority theme	Action code	Action	Target/Measure of success	Timeframe
Continue to develop and deliver education and engagement activities, including outdoor environmental education and forest schools.	A1.1	Secure funding to expand education and nature wellbeing provision.	Additional funding secured by end of 2023.	2023
	A1.2	Maintain and develop the Ecology Centre as a centre of environmental education excellence for all local children.	Retain Learning Outside of the Classroom Quality Badge, audited biennially.	Every two years
	A1.3	Expand and diversify the Ecology Education Service to include secondary school, adult and higher education students.	Deliver 10 sessions per year for KS3, KS4 and adults.	2023–27 annually

Priority theme	Action code	Action	Target/Measure of success	Timeframe
Continue to develop and deliver education and engagement activities, including outdoor environmental education and forest schools.	A1.4	Continue to build and develop the forest school programme to encompass more schools with special educational needs and disability (SEND) provision.	Engage one new SEND group per year. Offer five free sessions per year for SEND groups.	2022–27 annually
	A1.5	Develop and deliver a programme of ecology and biodiversity events to encourage residents to engage with biodiversity.	24 events per year.	2022–27 annually
	A1.6	Develop a delivery plan for Phase 2 of the Bee Superhighway project (engagement).	Develop plan (2022) and deliver Phase 2.	2022–27 ongoing
Provide opportunities to encourage best practice, both internally in the Council and externally with stakeholders, to enhance privately owned habitat.	A2.1	Deliver biodiversity workshops to encourage best practice within the Council.	One biodiversity workshop to be held annually.	2022–27 annually
	A2.2	Engage land managers in the borough and deliver an ecology-related training programme, raising awareness of and improving management of SINCs.	Develop a training programme with a target of one workshop per year.	2023–27 annually

Priority theme	Action code	Action	Target/Measure of success	Timeframe
Provide opportunities to encourage best practice, both internally in the Council and externally with stakeholders, to enhance privately owned habitat.	A2.3	Develop an engagement programme for private garden squares and private garden owners, promoting best practice for gardening for wildlife.	Develop an annual engagement programme.	2023–27 annually
	A2.4	Engage residents involved in community kitchen gardens to improve these spaces for wildlife; provide expertise and guidance to promote sustainable gardening practices; and share funding opportunities.	Deliver three workshops per year. Develop biodiversity toolkit for wildlife-friendly gardening.	2022–27 annually 2024
Provide guidance to education facilities to improve and enhance their external spaces for biodiversity.	A3.1	Support a Community Gardeners' Forum to share best practice, funding opportunities and networking with local organisations that deliver community gardening initiatives.	Maintain an active community gardeners' forum.	2022–27 ongoing
	A3.2	Develop guidance notes for education facilities to help identify and enhance external spaces for biodiversity.	Promote resources via Council communications channels.	2024

Priority theme	Action code	Action	Target/Measure of success	Timeframe
Provide skills and development opportunities for educators in the borough.	A4.1	Develop a local network of environmental educators in the borough to share information on training, funding opportunities and skills.	Education partnership established (2022) and maintained.	2022–27 ongoing
Increase access to and connections with nature by identifying and addressing the barriers faced by people living and working in the borough.	A5.1	Survey residents to find out the barriers to them accessing their local park or green space. Use this information in a new Action Plan to increase access to green space and nature.	New Action Plan developed.	2024
	A5.2	Deliver engagement on biodiversity issues with the RBKC Youth Council.	One event per year.	2022–27 annually
Reduce inequalities in access to green space.	A6.1	Develop food-growing projects for hard-to-reach groups.	Deliver ten projects in total.	2027
	A6.2	Develop partnerships with local communities to promote biodiversity and the benefits of nature to harder to reach/ unrepresented audiences through one-off visits, holiday activities and short programmes.	One active partnership set up and activity programme delivered.	2024

Priority theme	Action code	Action	Target/Measure of success	Timeframe
Reduce inequalities in access to green space.	A6.3	Offer holiday activities through schemes like Nature Champions targeting children who receive free school meals (FSM) and families on a low income.	One week of school holiday activities dedicated to this per year.	2022–27 annually
Improve the borough's parks and green spaces for wildlife and people in line with the Parks Strategy.	A7.1	Install nature interpretation signs in parks and open spaces.	Eight signs to be installed around parks in the borough.	2027
	A7.2	Work with SINC site managers to install interpretation signs at SINC sites to increase public awareness of their biodiversity value.	Eight signs to be installed around parks in the borough.	2027
Provide opportunities for residents to connect with and enjoy nature on their 'doorstep'.	A8.1	Increase the number of volunteering opportunities for residents.	Deliver 24 volunteer days per year.	2022–27 annually
	A8.2	Develop and support volunteer biodiversity monitoring projects.	Establish one volunteer monitoring project per year.	2022–27 annually
	A8.3	Encourage residents to get involved in national campaigns, such as the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch.	Deliver two campaigns per year.	2023-2027

Priority theme	Action code	Action	Target/Measure of success	Timeframe
Provide opportunities for residents to connect with and enjoy nature on their 'doorstep'.	A8.4	Support estate participation in community gardening events such as London in Bloom.	Provide support for participation.	2022–27 annually
Increase the community's connection to nature, thereby improving physical and mental health and wellbeing.	A9.1	Design and promote self-guided wellbeing walks in parks and green spaces.	Develop pilot self-led walks at two sites.	2025
	A9.2	Develop and deliver a biodiversity communication strategy to promote engagement with, and awareness of, activities across the borough.	Develop and deliver a communication plan for engagement, to be updated annually.	2022–27 annually
Develop targeted Nature, Health and Wellbeing programme to improve physical and mental health.	A10.1	Develop and deliver a Nature, Health and Wellbeing programme targeted at priority groups identified in partnership with RBKC Public Health teams.	Deliver two targeted programmes per year.	2022–25 annually
Develop opportunities to deliver against biodiversity actions through collaborating with new and existing partners.	A11.1	Establish a Biodiversity Partnership to drive delivery of actions.	Establish and maintain an active partnership, with steering group meetings every six months.	2022–27 ongoing

Priority theme	Action code	Action	Target/Measure of success	Timeframe
Develop opportunities to deliver against biodiversity actions through collaborating with new and existing partners.	A11.2	Support the internal Green Champions Network; develop new roles that champion biodiversity.	Develop the role and recruit three Champions.	2022–27 ongoing

Parks and open spaces

Aims

- To diversify and increase the extent and quality of wildlife habitats in parks and open spaces, implementing good conservation practice.
- To enhance green spaces around housing estates to support biodiversity.
- To develop suitable habitats that support the Bee Superhighway.
- To protect and enhance biodiversity at SINCs in the borough.
- To achieve better-connected habitats by finding opportunities to create new green corridors.
- To ensure that biodiversity is given robust consideration in all planning and decision-making.
- To develop new greening opportunities that support wildlife and people.
- To encourage habitat connection through extension of the borough's tree canopy.

Priority theme	Action code	Action	Target/Measure of success	Timeframe
Work with land managers to manage habitats positively for biodiversity.	P1.1	Ensure the inclusion of biodiversity statements in the updated Parks Strategy and Cemeteries Strategy and individual site management plans.	Clear, sustainable biodiversity commitments in the updated Parks and Cemeteries Strategies. Update nine Park Management Plans.	2023
	P1.2	Review grounds maintenance approaches, such as amending mowing regimes and reducing the use of pesticides and herbicides, to support biodiversity.	Annual review of grounds maintenance approaches undertaken, and outcomes reported via the BAP.	2022–27 annually

Priority theme	Action code	Action	Target/Measure of success	Timeframe
Work with land managers to manage habitats positively for biodiversity.	P1.3	Produce a series of habitat management guidance documents for land managers to encourage a consistent approach to management across parks, open and private spaces.	To include: • Ornamental/ pollinator planting to support the Bee Superhighway. • Woodland, orchard and scrub management. • Grassland restoration and management. • Soil management. • Water/wetland management. • Ancient/veteran tree management.	2024
	P1.4	Engage with private landowners and managers to encourage them to manage sites for wildlife.	Share habitat guidance notes and promote training workshops through Council communication channels.	2023–27
	P1.5	Work with partners and managers to help control invasive species.	Develop pest control and biosecurity policies.	2022–27 ongoing
	P1.6	Develop and implement a sustainable Woodland Management Plan for Holland Park.	Update management plan (2022). Produce annual programme of woodland management work.	2022–27 annually
	P1.7	Engage with owners of SINC sites not managed by the Council, providing advice and guidance to encourage them to manage the designated SINC positively and sustainably for biodiversity.	Ensure 80 percent of SINCs are positively managed for biodiversity.	2027

Priority theme	Action code	Action	Target/Measure of success	Timeframe
Develop and deliver Phase 2 of the Bee Superhighway pollinator network.	P2.1	Deliver the Bee Superhighway project, involving internal and external partners (habitats).	Deliver five sustainable Bee Superhighway sites per year.	2023–27 annually
Support increases in species diversity and richness in parks and open spaces by enhancing/creating habitat.	P3.1	Identify opportunities for sustainable habitat creation or enhancement of parks and open spaces to increase their biodiversity value.	Develop and deliver the biodiversity project list.	2023–27 ongoing
	P3.2	Work with key stakeholders to identify opportunities to create new sustainable green spaces across the borough, engaging the community in their planting and maintenance.	Create and support a delivery of biodiversity project list.	2023–27 ongoing
	P3.3	Ensure that biodiversity is considered in any new landscaping.	At least 30 percent of all new planting schemes should comprise pollinator-friendly plants.	2022–27 ongoing
Aim to restore important SINC sites to provide an improved ecological network.	P4.1	Identify and prioritise SINC sites in need of restoration.	Update priorities list annually. Support one funding bid per year for SINC improvements to a non-Council SINC site.	2022–27 annually
Increase the number of designated SINCs that are in positive conservation management from 66 percent to 80 percent by 2027.	P5.1	Update planning policies to ensure protection of the borough's SINCs and biodiversity resource through the Local Plan Review.	Any updates to policies adopted in the New Local Plan.	2022–27 ongoing

Priority theme	Action code	Action	Target/Measure of success	Timeframe
Achieve better-connected habitats to provide green corridors though which mammals, insects, amphibians, reptiles and birds can move.	P6.1	Work with partners to create and enhance sustainable green corridors that connect green spaces across the borough.	Identify opportunities to create green stepping stones and corridors.	2022–27 ongoing
Ensure the Local Plan has robust biodiversity policies to protect and enhance existing green spaces, habitats and biodiversity features.	P7.1	Ensure that protection of parks and public open spaces is included in Local Development Plans, Neighbourhood Plans and other relevant strategies.	Any updates to policies adopted in the New Local Plan and updated in other relevant strategies.	2022–27 ongoing
Create new environmental policies to protect and enhance existing green spaces.	P8.1	Implement introduction of Biodiversity Net Gain requirements. Ensure that all decision-making is informed by robust consideration of biodiversity, with particular focus on resilience to climate change.	Prepare Council for Biodiversity Net Gain requirements (2023).	2023–27 ongoing
Create opportunities for greening in the borough, for the health and wellbeing of residents and to improve wildlife habitats.	P9.1	Design wildlife-friendly sustainable habitats in all new parks, to occupy at least 30 percent of the area.	Any new park and open space must have 30 percent of its area designed for wildlife.	2027
	P9.2	Manage and expand existing community kitchen gardens across the borough.	Develop, refurbish or expand one site per year.	2022–27 annually

Priority theme	Action code	Action	Target/Measure of success	Timeframe
Encourage native, wildlife-attracting tree species and further planting to better connect tree canopies.	P10.1	Identify funding opportunities for woodland management and tree planting across the borough.	Map out opportunity areas. Deliver improvement programme.	2023–27
	P10.2	Ensure that tree selection and planting prioritises resilience and sustainability.	Produce guidance note on climate-resilient and wildlife-supporting trees as a reference guide for tree-planting schemes.	2023

The built environment

Aims

- To identify opportunities to enhance or create habitat in the built environment that is connected and promotes the movement of wildlife.
- To provide new, good-quality green space that is inclusive and equitable.
- To implement Biodiversity Net Gain.

Priority theme	Action code	Action	Target/Measure of success	Timeframe
Support the creation of green infrastructure, such as green roofs, walls, spaces and sustainable urban drainage.	B1.1	Develop a Green Infrastructure guidance document for planners and land managers, to encourage a consistent approach to implementation of sustainable green infrastructure.	Produce a Green Infrastructure guidance document to support the Greening Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).	2025
	B1.2	Promote the Greening SPD to highlight the benefits of increased green infrastructure and opportunities for improvement.	Share opportunities for sustainable biodiversity initiatives that support the Greening SPD with Council teams.	2022–27 ongoing

Priority theme	Action code	Action	Target/Measure of success	Timeframe
Support the creation of green infrastructure, such as green roofs, walls, spaces and sustainable urban drainage.	B1.3	Ensure the Greening SPD is implemented through the planning process.	Support colleagues in ensuring that biodiversity concerns are integrated into the planning process.	2022–27 ongoing
	B1.4	Support feasibility studies for green infrastructure in new build programmes and retrofit works.	Provide guidance for planning teams on suitable options.	2022–27 ongoing
	B1.5	Review the resilience of estate drainage systems and investigate opportunities to install green infrastructure for drainage in planned works to hard landscapes on estates.	Share opportunities for sustainable drainage systems (SuDs) with Council teams, particularly those highlighted in biodiversity survey reports, and support colleagues to review plans for SuDs schemes.	2023–27 ongoing
	B1.6	Provide a timely response to planning applications, informed by robust evidence.	Support colleagues and external developers by reviewing and providing feedback on planning applications.	2022–27 ongoing

Priority theme	Action code	Action	Target/Measure of success	Timeframe
Enhance biodiversity in existing and new developments by increasing priority habitat and habitat creation.	B2.1	Work with groups of residents to encourage biodiversity and greening projects on estates, sharing expertise and funding opportunities, and include biodiversity concerns in the criteria for Environmental Improvement Budgets. Ensure that new designs capitalise on opportunities to create new wildlife habitats and an integrated sense of community to encourage the use of outdoor spaces, as a joint initiative with Greener Neighbourhoods.	Three estates engaged with each year and three wildlife enhancement projects delivered.	2023–27 annually
	B2.2	Support Highways colleagues with the installation of sustainable parklets and street greening initiatives that support biodiversity.	Wildlife-supporting plants should form at least 50 percent of any street greening initiatives.	2022–27 ongoing
All development is expected to follow the London Plan mitigation hierarchy, to help achieve no overall negative impact on biodiversity or achieve a measurable net gain.	B3.1	Support the Council's commitment to ensure that biodiversity is improved, not damaged, by new builds and refurbished works, by specifying appropriate protection measures during future construction works.	Ensure ongoing awareness of UGF and BAP requirements and resources. Share priority species/ habitat data with planning teams to ensure consideration in future developments.	2022–27 ongoing

Priority theme	Action code	Action	Target/Measure of success	Timeframe
Identify opportunity areas for improving and increasing biodiversity in the borough to support implementing Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).	B4.1	Link with Tree Strategy revision to ensure biodiversity is included as a priority.	Biodiversity statement developed for Tree Strategy revision.	2023
Ensure that all new developments (as specified in regulations to follow the Environment Act) in the borough provide at least a 10 percent net gain in biodiversity from 2022 onwards.	B5.1	Develop a new Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for BNG, including how this will be achieved and monitored by the Council.	Deliver RBKC BNG SPD and share on website for external stakeholders.	2023
Increase awareness and understanding around BNG principles and encourage best practice both internally and externally.	B6.1	Provide access and guidance to using the BNG metric for Council teams and external developers.	Develop online resources to provide guidance on BNG.	2023
		Develop and deliver workshops to encourage the adoption of BNG within the Council and external stakeholders.	Deliver one workshop annually.	2023–27 annually
Consolidate the borough's Urban Greening Factor (UGF), based on London's UGF.	B7.1	Confirm the UGF policy for small-scale planning applications requiring an UGF net gain.	Develop the borough UGF policy in the New Local Plan.	2023
Develop a borough standard for BNG and exemplar greening initiatives.	B8.1	Establish a portfolio of biodiversity initiatives that meet BNG requirements, for future planning projects.	Share portfolio with Council teams and key stakeholders and collaborators.	2023–27 ongoing

Surveying and monitoring

Aims

- To establish an ecological baseline for the borough's habitats, for subsequent reporting and analysis.
- To maintain up-to-date, accurate ecological records for the borough, including designation of SINCs.
- To develop a spatial plan for biodiversity in the form of a Nature Recovery Network.
- To establish a survey and monitoring programme of important ecological features in the borough.
- To use robust evidence to identify the role that parks and open spaces play in mitigating the impact of climate change on the borough.

Priority theme	Action code	Action	Target/Measure of success	Timeframe
Undertake a borough-wide assessment of the condition of existing habitats, creating an updated ecological baseline.	S1.1	Commission a full-borough UKHab habitat survey, with associated report including updated GIS data layers, to provide a fixed baseline for subsequent reporting and analysis.	UKHab habitat survey commissioned, undertaken, and updated habitats reported on.	2022
	S1.2	From the habitat survey, identify biodiversity priorities for sites across the borough to assist in prioritisation of resources and decision-making.	Produce priority list from habitat survey report to share with relevant teams.	2022
	S1.3	Develop a Local Climate Impacts Profile to identify the vulnerabilities the borough is facing as a result of climate change.	Use survey data to produce Local Climate Impacts Profile to share with other teams.	2023

Priority theme	Action code	Action	Target/Measure of success	Timeframe
Carry out a full review of the borough's designated Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs), adopting an updated list of SINCs.	S2.1	Complete a review of existing SINCs. Ensure the updated list of SINC sites is adopted as part of the New Local Plan (2022).	Update suite of SINCs adopted through Local Plan review in 2022.	2022
Develop and deliver a spatial plan for biodiversity in the form of a coherent urban Nature Recovery Network.	S3.1	Produce a spatial plan identifying the borough's biodiverse resources, and opportunities to create new or better-connected habitats.	Spatial plan produced and adopted.	2024
	S3.2	Submit funding application to develop a pilot Nature Recovery Network based on the spatial plan blueprint.	One bid submitted by 2024. Implement scheme by 2026.	2024–27 2026
	S3.3	Establish a multi-departmental working group to develop guidance on managing historic walls, memorials and structures for biodiversity.	Maintain working group across Council teams.	2023–27 ongoing
	S3.4	Produce a pilot streetscape refurbishment project in small geographical areas within the borough.	Deliver projects in five areas across the borough.	2024–27 ongoing

Priority theme	Action code	Action	Target/Measure of success	Timeframe
Update and prioritise the ongoing cycle of specific habitat and species monitoring surveys, to inform ongoing management plans, new biodiversity works and planning applications.	S4.1	Identify and establish funding streams to undertake ecological monitoring surveys.	Funding plan developed.	2022–27 ongoing
	S4.2	Ensure that designated SINCs are visited once a year to ensure they have not been adversely impacted by developments.	Report annually against Single Data S160.	2022–27 annually
	S4.3	Regularly survey, designate and de-designate SINCs in accordance with London Wildlife Sites Board's (LWSB) selection criteria.	Complete full review of designated sites and update list following 2022 habitat survey.	2022-2027 ongoing
	S4.4	Develop an ecological survey and monitoring programme for the borough's major parks, covering mammals, birds, invertebrates, fungi, species-rich wildlife hedges, non-vascular plants, grasslands, amphibians and reptiles.	Survey schedule produced and adopted by the Ecology and Park services; implementation started by 2023.	2023–27 ongoing

Priority theme	Action code	Action	Target/Measure of success	Timeframe
Update and prioritise the ongoing cycle of specific habitat and species monitoring surveys, to inform ongoing management plans, new biodiversity works and planning applications.	S4.5	Update and maintain a database of artificial nest boxes that have been erected on Council-owned or managed sites. Review opportunities for additional nesting boxes, including swift bricks.	Ensure records are updated annually. Add three new nesting provisions per year.	2023–27 annually
	S4.6	Undertake a valuation of the borough's tree resource and identify areas in the borough suitable for tree planting.	Investigate opportunities to commission i-Tree survey.	2023–25
	S4.7	Undertake an orchard survey of the borough.	Orchards recorded and mapped.	2024
	S4.8	Work with partners to establish Community Science monitoring programmes.	Establish an annual public monitoring programme for the public to take part in.	2023–27 ongoing
Ensure that biodiversity data records are updated and publicly accessible.	S5.1	Maintain an active Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Biological Records Centre for London – Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL) to ensure that the London Records Centre holds accurate, up-to-date data on the borough's biodiversity.	Active SLA signed annually.	2022–27 annually

Priority theme	Action code	Action	Target/Measure of success	Timeframe
Ensure that biodiversity data records are updated and publicly accessible.	S5.2	Ensure that all ecological records from RBKC-commissioned surveys of the borough's parks and open spaces are submitted to GiGL.	100 percent of records submitted in a timely manner.	2022–27 ongoing
	S5.3	Update planning policy to require ecological survey data to be submitted as part of planning applications.	Policy adopted via New Local Plan.	2022
	S5.4	Maintain updated interactive map of the Bee Superhighway.	Update every six months.	2022–27 bi-annually
Identify the role played by parks and open spaces in mitigating the impact of climate change on the borough, and develop evidence-based interventions to increase resilience to climate change.	S6.1	Work with other Council teams to scope the development of a Natural Capital Accounting framework to record environmental assets across the borough.	Develop a framework for use within the Council. Include environmental monitoring such as air and water quality, light and noise pollution and soil health, and a green infrastructure audit.	2023–27 ongoing

8. Appendices

Appendix 1: The Green Plan commitment to biodiversity

The Council's Green Plan focuses on five environmental priorities to help the borough become more sustainable in response to the climate emergency. The Biodiversity Action Plan sets out the Council's vision for protecting and enhancing biodiversity.

The Green Plan Vision

Appendix 2: Consultation and stakeholder engagement

Consultation for this document has been run concurrently alongside that for the Climate Emergency Action Plan and Air Quality Action Plan, as the three core strands of the Green Plan.

Pre-engagement activities

A number of pre-engagement activities were undertaken in spring/summer 2021:

Residents' Engagement Meeting (March 2021)

97 attendees

Big Institutions and Business Engagement Meeting (May 2021)

29 attendees

Schools Engagement Meeting (July 2021)

7 school representatives

The Citizens' Panel

The Kensington and Chelsea Citizens' Panel is a large, demographically representative group of residents from across the borough who are regularly invited to give their opinions on various topics to inform Council decision-making.

In July 2021, the Citizens' Panel were asked their views on 'Making the Borough Greener', focusing on the environmental and sustainability priorities set out in the Council's Green Plan. Biodiversity was one of the topics covered as part of the survey; results from the survey have been used to inform this Biodiversity Action Plan. Priority actions the panel thought should be taken to protect and enhance biodiversity and green spaces in Kensington and Chelsea, and to increase access to nature and better support people's enjoyment of it are set out below:

81 percent support from panel

Action

Create more wildflower areas in parks and housing estates to improve biodiversity

What we did

Several ways to increase wildflowers across the borough have been identified. This will also help to grow the Bee Superhighway.

72 percent support from panel

Action

Provide opportunities for the community to get involved in supporting biodiversity

What we did

Actions around Access to Nature should increase opportunities for people to engage with and learn about nature, through education and events. This also promotes increased hands-on opportunities via conservation volunteering and new nature, health and wellbeing programmes.

64 percent support from panel

Action

Create more designated local sites for wildlife

What we did

We will undertake an updated audit of the borough's ecological assets to assess the condition of existing Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) and to designate new ones. These proposals will be adopted as part of the Local Plan review.

63 percent support from panel

Action

Explore where additional street trees can be planted in parking bays

What we did

Actions for Parks and Open Spaces and The Built Environment support increasing tree planting across the borough, and improving the biodiversity of housing estates.

60 percent support from panel

Action

More investment in existing parks and an increase of green spaces in the borough

What we did

Actions for Parks and Open Spaces and The Built Environment will identify opportunities to increase biodiversity in parks and 'green the grey' across the borough, working with community groups and other partners.

The New Local Plan Review

During the consultation process for the New Local Plan Review: Issues and Options, we found that green space and biodiversity were the environmental issues, along with air quality, that mattered most to people in the borough. In this review, access to open space and more green space were highlighted as community needs.

Public consultation

A public consultation was held between 16 December 2021 and 13 February 2022. This included an online survey, three public workshops, an online workshop for large businesses and institutions, an online workshop for residents, and meetings with the Citizens' Panel and Youth Council. The consultation was also promoted to Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) forums, a faith communities partnership forum, residents' associations, local businesses and other stakeholder groups. A summary of attendance and numbers responding is set out below:

Online survey

71 answered questions related to the BAP (out of 110 survey responses in total)

In-person events in the north (27 January), south (25 January) and centre (29 January) of the borough

28 attendees

Online attendance of the Youth Council, 31 January 2022

Seven attendees aged 15–18

Online event for big institutions and businesses, 1 February 2022

19 attendees

Online event for residents, 7 February 2022

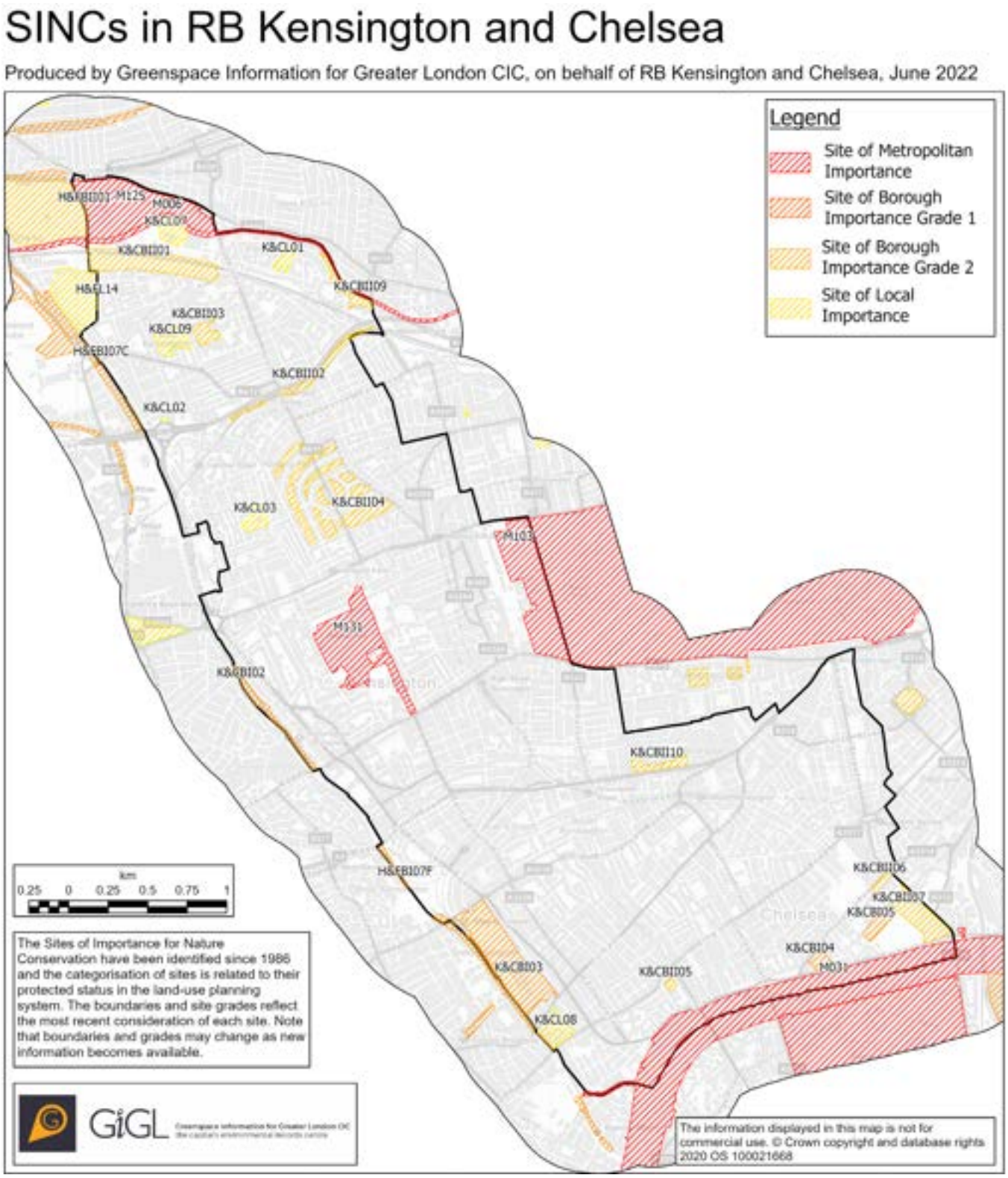
15 attendees

Additional feedback submitted by email

Eight responses received

Further analysis of the online survey is included in the attached report (Annex 1). Survey consultees were also invited to provide additional comment as free text. All feedback and comments were collated, and responses have been reviewed and discussed with internal stakeholders. Consultation comments and the Council responses to each are included in Annex 2. Minor changes and suggested future actions applied to the final draft BAP are listed in Annex 3.

Appendix 3: Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs)



Appendix 4: Priority species for the borough

Species on this list meet one criterion or more to indicate their conservation status as a species that requires conservation action:

- species with native or long-term naturalised populations in London that are listed in Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006
- species that have been assessed as of conservation concern in the UK using the IUCN Red List criteria, or birds listed on the UK list of Birds of Conservation Concern
- species that are not recognised as of conservation concern nationally but are characteristic of London and under threat locally, e.g. Black Poplar.

Species	Common Name
Birds	
Acanthis cabaret	Lesser Redpoll
Apus apus	Swift
Aythya ferina	Pochard
Cuculus canorus	Cuckoo
Delichon urbicum	House Martin
Dendrocopos minor	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker
Falco peregrinus	Peregrine
Larus fuscus	Lesser Black-backed Gull
Limosa limosa	Black-tailed Godwit
Linaria cannabina	Linnet
Locustella naevia	Grasshopper Warbler
Mareca stepera	Gadwall
Passer domesticus	House Sparrow
Phoenicurus ochruros	Black Redstart
Prunella modularis	Dunnock
Strix aluco	Tawny Owl
Sturnus vulgaris	Starling
Sylvia curruca	Lesser Whitethroat
Turdus philomelos	Song Thrush
Turdus viscivorus	Mistle Thrush
Vanellus vanellus	Lapwing

This data comes from the London Priority Species List. It has been filtered to only show species that have been recorded in the borough. The full London Priority Species List, as updated in 2019, can be downloaded from the GLA website.

Species	Common Name
Mammals	
Erinaceus europaeus	Hedgehog
Myotis nattereri	Natterer's Bat
Nyctalus leisleri	Leisler's Bat
Nyctalus noctula	Noctule
Pipistrellus nathusii	Nathusius' Pipistrelle
Pipistrellus pipistrellus	Common Pipistrelle
Pipistrellus pygmaeus	Soprano Pipistrelle
Plecotus auritus	Brown Long-eared Bat
Amphibians	
Bufo bufo	Common Toad
Rana temporaria	Common Frog
Reptiles	
Zootoca vivipara	Common Lizard
Butterflies	
Coenonympha pamphilus	Small Heath
Lycaena phlaeas	Small Copper
Ochlodes sylvanus	Large Skipper
Satyrium w-album	White-letter Hairstreak
Thymelicus sylvestris	Small Skipper
Moths	
Cirrhia gilvago	Dusky-lemon Sallow
Diloba caeruleocephala	Figure of Eight
Ennomos quercinaria	August Thorn
Idaea dilutaria	Silky Wave
Beetles	
Lucanus cervus	Stag Beetle
Vascular plants	
Ajuga chamaepitys	Ground pine
Carex depauperata	Starved Wood-sedge
Centaurea cyanus	Cornflower
Chamaemelum nobile	Chamomile
Juniperus communis	Juniper
Pulsatilla vulgaris	Pasqueflower
Silene gallica	Small-flowered Catchfly
Stellaria palustris	Marsh Stitchwort

Appendix 5: Priority habitats for the borough

Priority habitats for RBKC

1. Acid grassland
2. Parks and urban green spaces
3. Private gardens
4. Standing water
5. Tidal Thames
6. Wasteland
7. Woodland/orchard

Other important habitats

1. The built environment
2. Meadows/pastures

List based on London's Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitats. More information can be found from the London Biodiversity Partnership

Appendix 6: Areas of Deficiency in access to Nature