

Environment Scrutiny Commission

Tuesday 27 February 2024
7.00 pm
160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

Membership

Councillor Margy Newens (Chair)
Councillor Graham Neale (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Cassandra Brown
Councillor Youcef Hassaine
Councillor Leo Pollak
Councillor Reginald Popoola
Councillor David Watson
Anna Colligan
Simon Saville

Reserves

Councillor John Batteson
Councillor Rachel Bentley
Councillor Gavin Edwards
Councillor Renata Hamvas
Councillor Adam Hood
Councillor Kimberly McIntosh

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Contact Julie Timbrell on 020 7525 0514 or email: julie.timbrell@southwark.gov.uk

Members of the committee are summoned to attend this meeting

Althea Loderick

Chief Executive

Date: 19 February 2024



Environment Scrutiny Commission

Tuesday 27 February 2024
7.00 pm
160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

Order of Business

Item No.	Title	Page No.
1.	APOLOGIES	
	To receive any apologies for absence.	
2.	NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT	
	In special circumstances, an item of business may be added to an agenda within five clear working days of the meeting.	
3.	DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS	
	Members to declare any interests and dispensations in respect of any item of business to be considered at this meeting.	
4.	MINUTES	1 - 9
	To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2023.	
5.	SITOPIA	
	Carolyn Steel, author, video on her recent book Sitopia will be shown. https://www.carolynsteel.com/	
6.	INCREDIBLE EDIBLE	
	Victoria Sherwin, a director of Incredible Edible, will present on their work in Lambeth.	
7.	INSECTINSIDE	

Penny Frith will present on her work documenting life in the bushes of a small Peckham park.

<https://insectinside.me/page/2/>

8. MERISTEM

Meristem will be providing information on their rain gardens and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).

<https://www.meristemdesign.co.uk/>

9. IMPROVING BIODIVERSITY IN SOUTHWARK : SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE SYSTEMS (SUDS) DE-PAVING, POCKET PARKS, AND OTHER MEASURES 10 - 18

Simon Saville, Chair of Surrey & SW London Butterfly, and co-optee , will present the enclosed report.

10. SOUTHWARK NATURE ACTION VOLUNTEERS: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NATURE RECOVERY IN SOUTHWARK 19 - 28

Southwark Nature Action Volunteers (SNAV) will present the enclosed report outlining recommendations for nature recovery. In addition a report on Depaving is enclosed.

11. OFFICER REPORT ON ENVIRONMENT ACT INCLUDING BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN & LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY PLAN

12. OFFICER REPORT ON SUPPORTING COMMUNITY FOOD GROWING AND GARDENING 29 - 34

13. SUSTAINABLE FREIGHT SCRUTINY REPORT

James Trimmer , Director of Planning and Development , Port of London Authority has provided the enclosed email to inform the review.

14. WORK PROGRAMME

DISCUSSION OF ANY OTHER OPEN ITEMS AS NOTIFIED AT THE START OF THE MEETING.

Item No.

Title

Page No.

Date: 19 February 2024

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The following motion should be moved, seconded and approved if the sub-committee wishes to exclude the press and public to deal with reports revealing exempt information:

“That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1-7, Access to Information Procedure rules of the Constitution.”



Environment Scrutiny Commission

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Environment Scrutiny Commission held on Monday 27 November 2023 at 7.00 pm at 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT:

Councillor Margy Newens (Chair)
Councillor Graham Neale
Councillor Cassandra Brown
Councillor Leo Pollak
Councillor Reginald Popoola
Councillor David Watson
Anna Colligan
Simon Saville

PARTNERS

Dr Ian Mudway, Imperial University

Dr Polyvios Polyviou : Transport Strategy & Policy, TfL

Jonathan Baggs : Community Partnerships Lead – South, TfL

Ian Mach, Founder & CEO and Chartered Civil Engineer (CEng MICE), Charge Gully

Christopher Bibb, CEO , Electrica, Pavcross

OFFICER SUPPORT:

Dale Foden, Head of Highways, Highways Division, Environment, Neighbourhoods and Growth Department

Michael Tsoukaris, Head of Design Conservation and Transport Planning Division

Tom Sharland, Head of Climate Change & Sustainability

Tim Cutts, Senior Regeneration Manager

Julie Timbrell, Project Manager , Scrutiny

1. APOLOGIES

Councillor Youcef Hassaine gave apologies.

2. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

There were none.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There were none.

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

5. VEHICLE FOOTWAY CROSSOVERS

The chair introduced the item by explaining that the officer report had been requested to address the installation of dropped kerbs (Vehicle Footway Crossovers) and associated paving over of front gardens to create parking. Officers have been asked to explore what can be done to prevent this, or if that is not possible, how it can be mitigated.

The reports from Royal Horticultural Society, National Park City Foundation & Ealing Front Gardens Project have been provided as background information. As these lay out that by 2010 approximately 12 square miles of front gardens – equivalent to 22 Hyde Parks - had been paved over. By 2015, 50% of all of London's front gardens had been paved over – a 36% increase through the decade. With the growth in EVs, there is now an additional catalyst driving applications for dropped kerbs. Loss of front gardens is having a significant impact on biodiversity, it also increases risks of flooding and is leading to rising temperatures in the urban environment.

There are ways to reduce the impact by insisting on the use of permeable materials and retaining planting.

Later in the agenda, we will explore pavement channels as a potential solution for charging Electrical Vehicles. The growth in EVs is one of the drivers for both the installation of paving and of Vehicle Footway Crossovers.

Dale Foden, Head of Highways, Highways Division, Environment, Neighbourhoods and Growth Department was then invited to present the enclosed report on Vehicle Footway Crossovers. Michael Tsoukaris, Head of Design Conservation and Transport Planning Division is also joined the meeting to answer questions.

The chair then invited questions and the following points were made:

- Officers said that an Article IV Direction has to be agreed by the Secretary of State. These are usually employed for areas of particular concern rather than widespread over a large geographical area. There is a consequence risk of appeal with residents seeking redress based in loss of value of parking. This is roughly estimated at £20k based on letting for garages.
- Dropped kerbs are only allowed where there is sufficient space for parking and no over-hanging of the pavement. Preventing this is through enforcement, but this has not been undertaken to date.
- Officers said that there has been no equalities audit of the implementation of dropped kerbs. It was noted by members that generally these are installed in wealthier areas with larger properties with front gardens.
- CPZs are used as a condition for refusal of dropped kerbs in the London Boroughs of Haringey and Camden. The justification is that dropped kerbs reduce access to parking on the highway. Officers were asked if there have been any legal challenges and they said that they have requested information on this from Camden. Members noted that this sets a precedent. Officers said this does come down to legal opinion and they would seek more advice before seeking to implement an Article IV Direction in Southwark.
- Members asked if more can be done with the material used creating a hard standing and planting. Officers said there is some leverage in Conservation areas to follow the RHS advice. However in a situation where there is no demolition in a Conservation area, or under 5 squares metres is laid down as a Permitted Development right, then options are limited.
- Members asked if it would be possible to increase the charge for the installation of dropped kerbs to nudge people away from this. Officers said the table comparing charging with other boroughs is provided to show by how much the council could reasonably increase fees.
- The chair said that the Commission will consider what can be done, including looking to give advice to residents on mitigation, as set out in the RHS report, and alternatives, such as allowing pavement channels.

6. SUSTAINABLE FREIGHT REVIEW - HIGHWAYS UPDATE

Dale Foden, Head of Highways, Highways Division, Environment, Neighbourhoods and Growth Department gave a short summary of the Highways report provided.

7. AIR QUALITY PARTICULATES - TYRE AND BRAKE

The chair invited Dr Ian Mudway, Imperial University, to present and explained that he has been invited here tonight to present on Air Quality and the health impacts of particulates from tyre, brakes and road dust, given the increasing numbers of Electric Vehicles (EV).

Dr Ian Mudway said there has been a shift of late to move from studying the health impact of tailgate emissions to also now look at particulates. He explained this is a verbal presentation but he will provide further information on emerging research underway.

He is explained he is presently working with colleagues to collate information arising from the implementation of ULEZ, which has been contentious. ULEZ has reduced tailpipe emissions and this will have a positive impact on Air Quality and health.

Particulates from braking will fall as EVs have regenerative braking.

He explained for tyres the evidence base is not considerable, and still quite sparse. It is quite difficult to identify tyre wear health impacts as tyres differ in composition and commercial propriety mean the composition is not transparent.

The largest study on particulates is funded by US in London, in the Westway, Marylebone and in parks. The first data is emerging soon.

He said that scientists are starting to think long and hard about the impact of particulates, however research is still in the early stages. He advised the Commission to keep an eye on this, not to discount particulates and to adopt a precautionary principle. Gaps and uncertainties about the impact of particulates do not mean these are safe.

The chair then invited questions and the following points were made:

- a) Dr Ian Mudway said the recent focus on tailpipe emissions makes sense as the harms of diesel, and other emissions, are established. The scientific community are now catching up on particulates.
- b) Members asked if there is a way to address tyre composition proprietary

confidentiality. Dr Ian Mudway said there is a study in Cambridge that is doing an analysis of composition and toxicology.

- c) Dr Ian Mudway said that the health impacts of particulates will be different than tailpipe emissions. There are different types of particulates released, including micro plastics and thermoplastics. At the moment, while there is limited evidence they are harmful, the precautionary principles applies. Public concern is ahead of the science.
- d) There was a discussion on road surface dust as vehicle weight increases in EVs, and the resultant increase in tyre wear.
- e) Dr Ian Mudway was asked about opportunities to work together to lobby for better regulation and what can Southwark can do. He suggested the following policy and regulatory approaches:
 - Less journeys
 - Fewer vehicles
 - Consolidation - one journey
 - Modal shift
 - Better research on the type of journeys and deliveries to inform reductions (e.g. the work of Price Waterhouse Coopers on deliveries).

8. PAVEMENT CHANNEL PROVIDERS

The chair welcomed the following pavement channel provider CEOs to the meeting remotely to answer questions:

- Ian Mach, Founder & CEO and Chartered Civil Engineer (CEng MICE), Charge Gully.
- Christopher Bibb, CEO , Electrica, Pavecross.

The following videos were then shown:

Charge Gully Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sht-HLIKKLE>

Pavecross Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xVru4AtRA2E>

The chair also drew members' attention to a paper provided by Ian Mach, Charge Gully.

Members were then invited to ask questions and the following points were made:

- Lamp-post EV charging comes with a higher price tariff than home charging.
- Pavement channels prevent the loss of planted front gardens, on bigger properties, and open up cheaper EV charging to people in smaller street properties.
- It is estimated that around 40% more people would switch to EV with more reliable charging.
- The government paper 'Plan for Drivers' is consulting on measures to increase charge point solutions, supporting pavement channel pilots and developing planning guidance for local authorities.
- Planning Permission is currently required, and this can make it unfeasible, however guidance is in development by the government looking at this being Permitted Development.
- Pavecross said the material used in their design is environmentally sustainable and uses recycled rubber and steel for durability. Charge Gully said their design uses a particular type of aluminium that uses less carbon to produce and is easily recycled, which links to the circular economy.
- Pavecross said their design can be installed by a statutory undertaker and the maintenance is through a subscription.
- There are ongoing pavement channel trials with East Lothian, Bath and with other local authorities. The results can be shared with the Commission early next year.
- A member commented that they would like to receive feedback on the issue of planning permission, and impact on the highway, from Planning and Highway officers. A member noted a concern that the process of resolving barriers to installation could be administratively time consuming.
- The pavement channel CEOs said the technology for installation is not complicated. They would like to see greater leadership from central government to enable local authorities to allow installation, and suggested that authorisation could be simplified and concerns addressed through a meeting with officers. Both CEOs indicated their willingness to discuss this further.

9. EV PLAN

Tom Sharland, Head of Climate Change & Sustainability, presented a summary of the enclosed Electrical Vehicle (EV) plan, which is presently out for consultation.

The chair then invited questions and the following points were made:

- Members praised the opening statement that the most environmental journey is the car journey not taken.
- Members asked about installation of pavement channels and the Head of Climate Change & Sustainability referred to health & safety concerns with the installation of electrical cables and offered to discuss this with relevant officers, as it was not his area of expertise, and come back to the commission.
- Members asked about the commercial opportunities and officers said they had commissioned 'City Side' to explore opportunities, especially on rapid charging. There is an intention to recruit a dedicated EV project manager with technical and commercial experience.
- Officers said there are actions to support car sharing.
- Officers were asked about the risk of over- provision given the desire to reduce car journeys over time, and they said there is modelling behind the scenes to prevent this.

RESOLVED

A letter will be draft by the Chair and Commission to respond to the draft EV plan , drawing on the evidence received this evening.

Officers will be asked to comment on pavement channels, and health and safety concerns, in particular.

10. SUSTAINABLE FREIGHT REVIEW - TFL

The chair welcomed Transport for London representatives:

- Dr Polyvios Polyviou : Transport Strategy & Policy
- Jonathan Baggs : Community Partnerships Lead – South

TfL representatives gave a presentation on decarbonisation of deliveries and the London Freight Lab.

The chair then invited questions and the following points were made:

- A member referred to the Freight Service Plan, circulated in advance, and actions related to reducing serious accidents and deaths from HGVs. She

asked if reducing the amount of HGV journeys would reduce these further and about the 'Direct Vision Standard'. In response TfL said that the aim to move 80-90% of road journeys to other modes -rail / river / cargo bikes - will positively impact on road safety. In addition the implementation of the 'Direct Vision Standard' is estimated to have helped to reduce, by around 45% , those accidents attributed to poor sightlines. TfL is now aiming to enhance the safety standard from one star to three star .

- A member welcomed the references to River Freight in the TfL plan and commented that Southwark Council has been looking at four places for floating docks, and added that the Port of London Authority (PLA) have been exploring this, and there is huge scope. TfL were asked how closely they are looking at this and they responded that there are capability and feasibility studies . TfL now need to look at integrating these into their plans and consider matters such as the safety impacts. Currently TfL said while there is not much delivery detail at present, there is lots to draw upon, and the potential is recognised .
- TfL has a plan for zero carbon deliveries by 2025 and then they will be moving toward a higher standard . TfL procurement powers are limited to an extent but they are also working with the GLA.

11. SUSTAINABLE FREIGHT REVIEW - PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

The chair invited Tim Cutts, Senior Regeneration Manager, to present the report circulated in advance. The chair then invited questions and the following points were made:

- A member asked if the large logistical hubs in development would use green roofs and manage the water sustainably and the officer provided assurances that they would.
- Members asked about the size of the logistical hubs and the officer said these are very big as major jumping off places for London deliveries.
- Members asked if it is right to concentrate many of these hubs on the Old Kent Road, and noted the Cross River Partnerships (CRP) presentations (see item 13) , which emphasised the need for these sites to come with electrification to support EVs. The officer said that the hubs do come with electrification to support EV. The hubs are also serving Westminster.
- The officer was asked about reliance on the road network and asked if there is a risk of baking in the road network rather than the rail network, which is lower carbon. The officer said that they are working with the CRP to explore rail freight distribution networks and associated hubs at stations, however

there is a massive need for distribution with the growth of online deliveries.

12. SUSTAINABLE FREIGHT REVIEW - FREIGHT SERVICE UPDATE

The chair said that in October Cabinet approved a strategy for Commercial Fleet Procurement and the documents for this item have been provided by Mick Lucas, Head of Traded Services, Environment and Leisure, to note, as an update on work Fleet services is undertaking to reduce emissions, following a briefing provided last year.

13. SUSTAINABLE FREIGHT REVIEW - CROSS RIVER PARTNERSHIP

The chair drew members attention to the presentations enclosed, to note, and explained that these came from an event she attended on 23 October 2023. This event emphasised the importance of freight linking in with rail and the river, not just major roads.

14. WORK PROGRAMME

The chair invited comment on the work-plan and members requested more female speakers. The co-opted members suggested commenting on the walking and cycling plan, and there was a brief discussion on exploring how this would fit in with the work- plan.



Improving biodiversity in Southwark - SuDs, de-paving, pocket parks, and other measures

By Simon Saville
Chair of Surrey & SW London Butterfly Conservation

Introduction

This paper discusses the opportunity to improve Southwark's biodiversity by creating new green spaces (SuDs, de-paving, pocket parks) and improving existing spaces (roadsides, small patches of grass, estates).

Within the Lawton Principles¹ of "bigger, better, more joined up", this focuses on joining up the larger green spaces in the borough (mainly parks), to provide stepping stones and nature corridors.

An overview of the strategic opportunity for Southwark is presented in a separate paper from Southwark Nature Action Volunteers (SNAV). This paper describes some important considerations when creating nature corridors.

Important considerations

1. London - even inner London - is good for wildlife².

It has a warm and sheltered climate, accentuated by a significant Urban Heat Island effect. About 47% of the area is classified as green space³. Unlike in the countryside, the green spaces in London are (generally) not being built on, as they are mainly parks, cemeteries and other managed areas.

However, it could be significantly improved if green spaces were managed more sensitively for wildlife, and were more joined up (by nature corridors). The elimination of pesticide use by boroughs across London would be another important improvement (see earlier inputs to the Commission).

2. In creating or improving green spaces, it is important to cater for the whole life cycle of wildlife, not just adult insects. Planting pollinator plants (flowers) provides food for adult insects, but they also need plants for their immature stages (caterpillars) and places to shelter overnight and through the winter. Many insects and other invertebrates in London are limited by the availability of food plants for caterpillars, or places to nest, rather than the availability of nectar.

Butterfly Conservation have a programme called *Wild Spaces*⁴, which encourages people to create places where butterflies and moths can complete their life cycles - enabling them to feed, breed and shelter. Wild Spaces can be big or small, but they should be free from pesticides, permanent, and avoid using peat-based compost.

¹ The Lawton Review - see <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/media/43641/the-lawton-review-factsheet.pdf>

² The Disappearance of Butterflies (p171), <https://www.atroposbooks.co.uk/the-disappearance-of-butterflies>

³ See <https://www.gigl.org.uk/our-data-holdings/keyfigures/>

⁴ See <https://butterfly-conservation.org/wild-spaces>

Lists of plants that support butterfly and moth caterpillars are given in an Appendix. Most of these are commonly available. Their selection need not add to the costs of a planting scheme.

3. If the SuDS / de-paved areas, pocket parks (etc) are intended to act as wildlife corridors linking larger areas of green space (eg. parks), the habitats created should try to match those in the larger areas. These are mainly flower-rich grassy areas, hedges/shrubs, and trees.
4. When green spaces are managed to encourage insects, this will also attract spiders, other insects, birds, and even bats - which use the insects as part of the food chain. This creates a thriving ecosystem.
5. Flower-rich grasslands require low-fertility soils, which also need less maintenance (usually 1 or max 2 cuts per year). There is extensive experience to back this up, for example in Butterfly Conservation's *Building Sites for Butterflies* project⁵, which has been running for several years.

In Nov 2021, National Highways issued a Major Project Instruction on the use of low nutrient substrates across all their larger schemes, drastically restricting the incorporation of topsoil into open landscapes and instructing instead the establishment of species-rich grasslands on infertile substrates as the new landscape standard⁶. This quantified the biodiversity benefits of the low-fertility approach to landscape creation on road verges, and although this was in Dorset, the results are more generally applicable. TfL adopted this approach for the Silvertown Tunnel.

Lambeth's bee-roads⁷ project shows how this can be done in a London context. The photograph shows an area near Cowley Estate (off Brixton Road) where a seeded turf-roll was used to create a flower-rich area. This is just six months after the turf was applied.



6. Much of this can be done at little or no incremental cost. For example, combining SuDS and depaving with already-planned Streetspace schemes. In addition, low fertility flower-rich grassland does not need much maintenance: typically one cut per year (maybe two) - less than the 'standard' amenity grassland or typical road verges. And it's often about choosing different plants and trees - using ones that are better for wildlife - instead of other selections.

⁵ See <https://butterfly-conservation.org/our-work/conservation-projects/building-sites-for-butterflies>

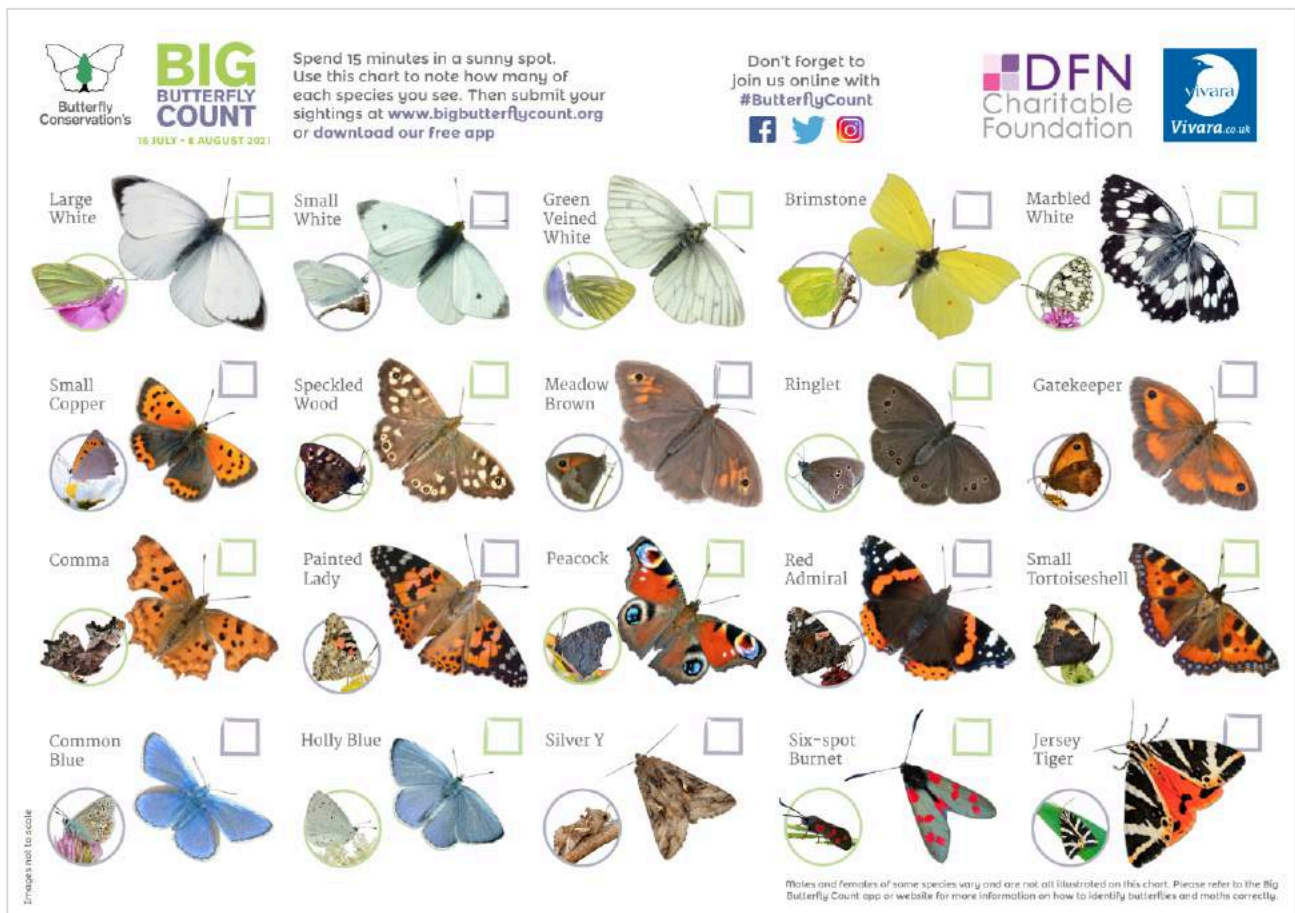
⁶ See <https://butterfly-conservation.org/news-and-blog/documenting-the-biodiversity-benefits-of-habitat-creation-on-a-road-scheme>

⁷ See <https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/parks-sports-leisure/parks/lambeth-bee-roads>

7. Build it and they will come

We know from experience that if you provide space for nature, that biodiversity will increase. Butterfly counts in Burgess Park (by the author) show that the species richness has increased significantly since the Park has been managed better for wildlife (now 24 species of butterfly).

We also have data for Sydenham Hill Woods, Belair Park, Dulwich Park, One Tree Hill and Brenchley Gardens, and Stave Hill Ecology Park to show the same effects.



All these 17 species of butterfly and 3 species of moth can now be seen in Burgess Park (plus some others).

Source: Big Butterfly Count <https://bigbutterflycount.butterfly-conservation.org/>

Butterfly Conservation's *Big City Butterflies* project⁸ has for the past three years been working across inner London to provide advice on habitat management, for example in Burgess Park, Rouel Gardens, Clapham Common and Brockwell Park. We have found that, with appropriate management, most of London's parks (over about 4ha) could support 20-25 species of butterfly.

Elsewhere, the Commission will learn about Penny Metal's study of Warwick Gardens⁹, where she found a remarkable tally of 555+ insects and spiders in this small park in the middle of Peckham.

⁸ See <https://butterfly-conservation.org/our-work/conservation-projects/england/big-city-butterflies>

⁹ See www.insectinside.me

8. There are lots of potential partners working in this area, including Southwark Nature Action Volunteers (SNAV), Butterfly Conservation (*Wild Spaces* and *Big City Butterflies*), Buglife, Bumblebee Conservation Trust, Plantlife, Trees for Bermondsey, “Friends of” groups, Residents’ groups, and London Wildlife Trust.




Currently, these various groups are only loosely connected. The Council could play a role - as part of its Local Nature Recovery Strategy - to try to align and coordinate activities in the borough.







Notes


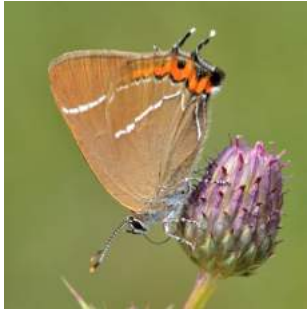


- **Butterfly Conservation** is the UK charity dedicated to saving butterflies and moths, which are key indicators of the health of our environment. Butterfly Conservation improves landscapes for butterflies and moths, creating a better environment for us all.
- See www.butterfly-conservation.org.

Appendix - some caterpillar food plants for butterflies seen in London

All these 25 species are found in Southwark and/or neighbouring boroughs.

Food plant	Butterfly	
Grasses: Cock’s foot, Red fescue, bents, Yorkshire fog, etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Marbled White (right) ● Meadow Brown ● Gatekeeper ● Ringlet ● Speckled Wood ● Large Skipper ● Small Skipper ● Essex Skipper 	
Nettles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Comma (right) ● Peacock ● Red Admiral ● Small Tortoiseshell 	
Nasturtium and other brassicas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Large White (“Cabbage White”) ● Small White (right) ● Green-veined White 	

<p>Bird's foot trefoil, vetches, lucerne</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common Blue (right) • Holly Blue • Some moths, eg. Burnet Companion, Latticed Heath 	
<p>Garlic mustard, Cuckoo flower</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orange Tip (right) • Green-veined White 	
<p>Sorrel, dock</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Copper 	
<p>Dove's foot cranesbill and geranium spp.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brown Argus 	
<p>Thistles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Painted Lady 	
<p>Ivy, Holly</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holly Blue 	

Buckthorn	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brimstone	
Elms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• White-letter Hairstreak	
Blackthorn	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brown Hairstreak	
Oak	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purple Hairstreak	

Larval food plants for Butterflies and Moths - Greater London area

Trees and shrubs	Latin name	Butterfly association	Comment	Moth association	Importance for invertebrates in UK
Dogwood	<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	Green Hairstreak	Larvae feed on the new shoots. Foodplants also include herbaceous species such as Bird's-foot-trefoil, Dyer's Greenweed, and vetches	Micromoths in the genus <i>Antispila</i> . Note: <i>A. treitschkiella</i> has recently been discovered new to Britain in London, feeding on Cornelian Cherry <i>Cornus mas</i>	Flowers are an important nectar source for pollinators in mid-summer
Broom	<i>Cytisus scoparius</i>	Green Hairstreak	Larvae feed on the new shoots. Foodplants also include herbaceous species such as Bird's-foot-trefoil, Dyer's Greenweed, and vetches	Streak, Broom-tip	Flowers are an important nectar source for pollinators in early summer
Alder Buckthorn	<i>Frangula alnus</i>	Brimstone	Eggs are laid on the shoots and larvae feed on young foliage. <i>Frangula</i> should be planted on sandy soils	Tissue	Flowers are an important nectar source for pollinators in mid-summer
Ivy	<i>Hedera helix</i>	Holly Blue	Commonest food plant in spring is Holly, and in the summer the flowers of Ivy. Foodplants also include Spindle, Dogwood, Snowberry and Heather	Swallow-tailed Moth, Yellow-barred Brindle, Least Carpet, & several micromoths including <i>Clepsis dumecolana</i> and <i>Lozotaenia forsterana</i>	Ivy blossom is a vitally important nectar source for pollinators in late autumn
		Brimstone, Red Admiral	Adult butterfly hibernates in ivy-clad structures and trees		
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Holly Blue	Commonest food plant in spring is Holly, and in the summer the flowers of Ivy. Foodplants also include Spindle, Dogwood, Snowberry and Heather	Yellow-barred Brindle, Holly Tortrix	7 insect species. Flowers are an important nectar source for pollinators in spring and early summer
Blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Brown Hairstreak	Now breeding in inner London. Eggs are laid on the bark of young plants usually beneath a spine and no more than 1m from the ground.	Old Lady, Green-brindled Crescent, Oak Eggar, Lackey, Sloe Pug. Old records of Pale Eggar & Lappet. Many other species of macro and micromoth	109 insect species. Flowers are important nectar source in early spring

			Occasionally eggs are laid on <i>Bullace Prunus domestica</i> , the wild variety of Plum		
English Oak & Pedunculate Oak	<i>Quercus robur</i> & <i>Quercus petraea</i>	Purple Hairstreak	Larvae bore into buds in spring and then feed on the young leaves	August Thorn, Maiden's Blush, Frosted Green, Oak Hook-tip, Yellow-legged Clearwing, and many other species of macro and micro moth. Old records of Heart Moth	284 insect species associated with <i>Quercus</i> spp.
Purging Buckthorn	<i>Rhamnus catharticus</i>	Brimstone	Eggs are laid on the shoots and larvae feed on young foliage. <i>Rhamnus</i> should be planted on chalky and clay soils	Tissue, Brown Scallop, Dark Umber	Flowers are an important nectar source for pollinators in mid-summer
		Green Hairstreak	Larvae feed on the new shoots. Foodplants also include herbaceous species such as Bird's-foot-trefoil, Dyer's Greenweed, and vetches		
Goat Willow & Grey Willow	<i>Salix caprea</i> & <i>Salix cinerea</i>	Purple Emperor	A few populations in London but populations in counties to north and south	White Satin, Herald, Chocolate-tip, Pale Prominent, Swallow Prominent, Pebble Prominent, Sallow Kitten, Puss, Poplar Hawk-moth, Eyed Hawk-moth. Many other species of macro and micromoth	284 insect species associated with <i>Salix</i> spp. Sallow catkins are an important nectar source for pollinators in spring
Gorse	<i>Ulex europaeus</i>	Green Hairstreak	Larvae feed on the soft shoots. Foodplants also include herbaceous species such as Bird's-foot-trefoil, Dyer's Greenweed, and vetches	Yellow-barred Brindle, Grass Emerald, July Belle	Gorse flowers are an important nectar source for pollinators from late winter to early summer
Wych Elm	<i>Ulmus glabra</i>	White-letter Hairstreak	Larvae feed on expanding buds and then on young leaves	Lesser-spotted Pinion, Lunar-spotted Pinion, Brick, Clouded Magpie, Lime Hawk-moth and several micromoths	82 insect species associated with <i>Ulmus</i> spp.
		Comma	Also feeds on Hop and Common Nettle		
		Large Tortoiseshell	Not known to breed in the UK, but seen regularly in southern England and could establish temporarily. Large Tortoiseshell also lays eggs of		

			sallows		
Elms - disease resistant (DREs)	<i>Ulmus spp.</i>	White-letter Hairstreak	Butterfly Conservation supports the planting of a limited selection of DREs under specific circumstances, as part of a wider strategy to conserve native and naturalised elm such as Wych Elm, Field Elm and their associated hybrids collectively named Dutch Elm - see NOTE below		

NOTE

- Native and naturalised elms, even when suckering after succumbing to Dutch Elm Disease (DED), support a complex ecological community including several threatened moth species and a wealth of other wildlife. These ecological relationships are not easily replaced by planting Disease Resistant Elms (DRE's) alone, which should only be considered as part of the mix.
- DRE cultivars known to host the White-letter Hairstreak are currently Sapporo Autumn Gold, Lutece, and New Horizon.
- DRE cultivars can only be imported from abroad. The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) must be notified of any elm imports and all imports should meet the latest required biosecurity monitoring standards to prevent the spread of Elm Yellows, Zig-zag Sawfly and other non-native threats.



SNAV's Recommendations for Nature Recovery In Southwark

27 February 2024

One thing we have learned painfully through the development of the ecological crisis is that we cannot take for granted the richness of existing biodiversity. Once-common species, such as sparrows, starlings, dunnock and song thrushes, are now in severe decline in the UK and are considered priority species for conservation, on the IUCN red list. Even those species not on the list, such as various tits, blackbirds and robins, seemingly highly adaptable and resilient species, need us to protect or provide their natural nesting habitat and food resources in order to thrive.

The case for enhancing biodiversity has been comprehensively made at a global, national and local level. This paper sets out a vision local to Southwark and a summary of the actions that Southwark could take to play its part in stopping biodiversity declines and restoring wildlife in the heart of London.

SNAV's vision for Southwark is that a person, living anywhere in the borough, should be able to walk or wheel safely to anywhere else in the borough -- amid a chorus of birdsong increasing through the winter and spring, past fluttering butterflies and buzzing grasshoppers in the summer, and picking edible fruits along the way in the autumn. And for some of Southwark's many non-human residents:

- A dragonfly, damselfly, frog or toad should be able to safely and easily travel from one healthy pond to another to another, with grassy verges and safe hiding places along the way.
- A sparrow, dunnock, or blue tit should be able to find plentiful insect, fruit, and seed forage to feed her family within an easy 50m of her family nest.¹
- Southwark's more specialised invertebrates should be able to find their native partner plants, survive and thrive. A brimstone butterfly should be able to find a healthy buckthorn shrub on which to lay her eggs, and a common blue should be able to find birdsfoot trefoil, etc.
- Bats, of all nine different species known to be living in Southwark, should be able to navigate treelines and waterways easily, forage on plentiful insects, and have safe, undisturbed summer and winter roosting places².

¹ <https://bou.org.uk/blog-havlicek-house-sparrows/>

² Bats can live in manmade structures, under the right conditions. More information about bat roosting needs:

<https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/buildings-planning-and-development/bats-in-buildings#:~:text=Hibernation%20roosts%20are%20often%20a,of%206%20%2D%2010%C2%B0C>

In 2010, Professor Sir John Lawton reported to government on wildlife sites in Making Space for Nature³. Its central recommendation was that we needed space for nature that was “bigger, better and more joined-up”. This applies to urban areas as much as rural areas, and we propose actions for Southwark under each theme below, with an added theme of “more exciting” to reflect the importance of engaging urban society in nature and wildlife.

Bigger

To increase the small areas of habitats available to biodiversity in the borough, Southwark should:

- Increase our greenspaces by de-paving⁴ the many unused areas of existing hardstanding to make room for ‘pocket parks’, new street trees, new hedgerows (which can contribute to air quality improvements), and other forms of new planting.⁵
- Look to use development and redevelopment opportunities to extend and link existing greenspaces and parks.
- Consider the full range of semi-natural habitats needed by wildlife, identify gaps (e.g. ponds, in many areas of Southwark) and develop plans to address these gaps.
- Recognise that, whilst some play important amenity roles, many green spaces such as heavily-managed grass areas and amenity-planted bark chip beds do not support biodiversity. More space could be made for the semi-natural habitats and native vegetation that do support a wide array of our wildlife species.
- Reconsider other open space, such as estate lands, schools, and sports field borders, as places for wildlife.
- Encourage the installation (including retrofitting) of well-designed, wildlife-friendly green roof systems on structures less than 4 stories in height, especially along strategic SINC connection routes. Projects vary, but on average green roof systems have many of the ecological benefits of de-paving, at approximately half the cost per m²-- sometimes less.
- Recognise a buffer zone around SINC boundaries, with attention to reducing lighting, noise, height limits (overshadowing), and traffic.

Better

To ensure that they contribute to enhancing biodiversity, Southwark’s green spaces should be:

- Landscaped and managed to incorporate more native vegetation in mosaics (see Box 1) with other habitats and, where appropriate amenity planting, that supports a wider range of species

³

https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20130402154501mp_/http://archive.defra.gov.uk/environment/biodiversity/documents/201009space-for-nature.pdf

⁴ See SNAV’s Statement on De-paving

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1lqJScnXcYRkK9-dfOSGFQH5zJS05Xaq4/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=103269452666436198703&rtpof=true&sd=true>

⁵ SNAV would like to encourage the council in developing more grassroots car-share schemes that are more attractive and affordable than individual private car ownership. Reduced car ownership will free up valuable land for de-paving, SuDS and nature.

- Free from herbicide use (unless necessary for spot removal of noxious invasives, employing an integrated invasive weed management scheme)
- Managed to mimic the variation found in nature (e.g. areas of reduced mowing to provide seedheads for birds, flowers for pollinators, and cover for insect lifecycles, allowing bare soil patches (in untrampled areas), or small pools and banks/bunds in grasslands)
- As protected from artificial light as is possible whilst being compatible with safety needs.^{6,7} General recommendations for wildlife-friendly lighting include positioning lights lower and closer together, using motion sensors and the lowest wattage or lumen output necessary, using longer wavelengths (eg red or amber LEDs) that are less disruptive to wildlife, and shielded, with no light above the 90-degree plane from the fixture. Modern technologies can enable motion sensors to shift lumen output or wavelength according to time of night or if pedestrians are detected⁸.
- Taken into community and volunteer management, wherever there is interest, to reduce costs and increase social benefits. There is increasing evidence of the benefits of being actively engaged in nature as well as benefits for being in natural surroundings.

Box 1: Delivering new greenspaces that support biodiversity

Many butterflies and moths rely on a single plant species for larval food plants. For example, the Brimstone butterfly relies on buckthorn bushes. A thick hedge of native species will provide food, shelter, and nesting sites for a wide range of wildlife.

Insects need hibernation sites. Many spend the winter feeding on grass roots or sheltering in leaf litter-- a tidy park with mown grass and clean flower bed is death to them. Leaving some uncut grass, and confining leaf-blowing to footpaths, will allow their survival. Leaf litter is also vital for earthworms, and also for fungi which, in turn, support plants.

Woodland birds such as Nuthatch, Tree creeper, and Woodpecker depend on trees with deeply fissured bark to find spiders and insects to feed on. They also depend on cavities in tree trunks for nesting sites. Standing deadwood is important and can be made a safe feature if surrounded by bramble thickets. Cavities in dead wood are also used by bats and owls.

Water is essential for plants and wildlife, but we divert it straight into drains. Harvesting rainwater to supply rain gardens and for the use of community gardens would benefit wildlife in more ways than one; excessive nutrients that flow into waterbodies increase algae which de-oxygenate the water, killing fish. Evaporation of locally infiltrated water cools the soil . Across London there is an urgent need to better manage surface and ground water to divert out of the sewer system.

⁶ See,

https://cdn.buglife.org.uk/2019/08/A-Review-of-the-Impact-of-Artificial-Light-on-Invertebrates-docx_0.pdf for impacts of light and for solutions:

<https://cdn.buglife.org.uk/2023/06/Buglife-Nurture-the-Night-Shift-Bug-friendly-Lighting.pdf>

⁷ <https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/>

⁸<https://www.schreder.com/en/blogs/schreder-designs-lighting-solutions-protect-people-and-wildlife-during-night>

Sadly, The Peck, Earl's Sluice & Neckinger run mostly underground apart from the pond in Ruskin Park and lake in Peckham Rye park. It may be possible to create **Scrape Ponds** in Peckham Rye Park. Scrape or temporary ponds are important as they do not support fish, so other species are able to thrive without being eaten.

Southwark needs more, and more evenly distributed, ponds. Even very small ponds, if well designed and well managed, can support wildlife such as toads, frogs, dragonflies, and provide a place to grow our incredibly beautiful native wetland plants. [Here is a good design guide for wildlife ponds.](#) Southwark's few existing waterbodies all need to increase their associated marginal and emergent vegetation, to improve water quality and provide more and better habitat.

Along the banks of the Thames, we need to work with PLA & Thames 21 to explore possibilities for improvements to biodiversity. It may be possible to create sandbanks to encourage birds that feed on mudflats, e.g. black-tailed godwits, or to create reedbeds which support a multitude of invertebrates as well as avian specialists such as reed warblers.

Here is a good London Biodiversity Partnership [report on urban animals in small parks and squares](#) (from 2004). Tits, wrens, dunnock, greenfinches, and robins all show increased frequency when more tall and dense shrubbery, undergrowth, and dead wood are present. Blue tits and great tits benefit most from nest boxes.

Here is a 2006 report from the Government's Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, which you could cite when explaining that to better support biodiversity, [green space must be designed and managed as a more complex "layered mosaic"](#) of

1. long grass w seeds, flowers (herbaceous layer)
2. hedgerows and dense native shrubbery of varying heights, providing cover
3. understory trees
4. large canopy trees
5. leaf litter allowed to remain, providing cover for insects
6. significant amounts of deadwood (chips, sticks, logs, stumps) allowed to remain - very important for insect habitat at different stages of life cycle
7. aquatic zones (w sloping natural banks, and area of associated vegetation ideally equal to area of open water, or as much as can be managed).

This report provides lots of suggestions and case studies for how management contracts can be written to be more wildlife-friendly.

More joined up

Although the long term vision is for complete nature connectivity throughout the borough, the strategic starting point is to focus on connecting SINCS. To ensure that wildlife is able to move around to access habitats, Southwark should:

- Map and enhance existing and new potential green routes/corridors (see Box 2) that can connect our parks for wildlife. The Borough should maintain a list of key corridors

and a list of candidate routes for consideration when new highways or streetscape works are planned. A list or inventory of corridors would facilitate consideration for early integration into new (large) development proposals and when reviewing planning applications and developing Local Nature Recovery Strategy proposals. “Strategic” locations for wildlife affect Biodiversity Net Gain calculations and compliance.

- Avoid adding any new barriers or ‘sinks’ for wildlife populations such as large expanses of paved areas and adopting a preference for ground-level planting (rather than raised planting) that is more accessible to terrestrial species
- Continue and strengthen efforts to reduce vehicular traffic that contributes to wildlife mortality⁹ and impedes movement due to noise and pollution.
- More important points for connectivity are outlined in Simon Saville’s paper for Butterfly Conservation, “Improving biodiversity in Southwark - SuDs, de-paving, pocket parks, and other measures.”

Box 2: Nature corridors

SNAV has developed a map showing locations of SINCs in the borough, and also the currently proposed or existing walking routes. We propose that the Council recognise two main types of nature corridor - “Pedestrian/Nature Corridors”, to support the movement of both pedestrians and wildlife, and “Strategic Wildlife Corridors”, which may only support the movement of wildlife.

Pedestrian/Nature Corridor Definition and Recommendations

A Pedestrian/Nature Corridor is designed to support the easy movement of both pedestrians and wildlife. In addition to wildlife-friendly tree planting, it should include:

1. Areas of complex, wildlife-friendly areas of planting with multiple layers generally including shrubs, mixed grass/ herbaceous plants, and healthy soil,
 - a. of at least 10m² or more in area,
 - b. spaced every 50m maximum along the corridor.
 - c. These areas should be managed in a manner friendly to wildlife (less frequent mowing or pruning),
 - d. ideally with some dense evergreen or semi-evergreen shrubs at least 2.5m in height and 1.5m in width
 - e. The plant species should be at least 50% UK native and 80% wildlife-friendly
2. The focus is to provide resources to species which are most able to safely cross roads, such as birds, bats, and flying insects. Support for all phases of the full life cycle at all times of year and stages of maturity should be considered.
3. Adjacency of proposed “biodiversity stepping stone” areas to any existing green areas along the way should be prioritised where possible.
4. Not only providing resources for habitat, but also removing stresses, such as chemical sprays and unnecessarily bright or consolidated lighting, and vehicular traffic, should be considered.

⁹ Kent et al. 2021 <https://doi.org/10.1093/jue/juaa039>

5. Street trees chosen for their benefits to wildlife. Trees do not always have to be native trees, but should supply fruit or berries, or nectar and pollen attractive to native wildlife. New tree pits should be large enough to accommodate more than one tree, and undergrowth. Introduce an 'Adopt a Tree Pit' scheme to allow residents to plant up tree pits.
6. Engagement with local residents in the design is essential to get spaces which benefit people and wildlife.

Strategic Wildlife Corridor Definition and Recommendations

A Strategic Wildlife Corridor is a vector along which flying as well as non-flying wildlife such as foxes, hedgehogs, and amphibians can move, but the public may not be able to - for example, steep railway cuttings that are rich with sycamores and other wild plants, or long rows of adjoining back gardens. These connections can be very important resources for the health and resilience of wildlife populations.

1. The focus is to protect nature areas with limited human access, to allow fuller development of denser undergrowth, brush and cover, and less disturbance.
2. In the case where a Wildlife Corridor is formed through long rows of adjoining back gardens, it would be worth asking private landowners to maintain their land in a way that contributes to the needs of wildlife using the corridor.
3. Otherwise same considerations as for Pedestrian/Nature Corridors.

Specific Points to be noted from the Mapping Exercise

1. Peckham's Rye Lane area is a strategic missing connection point for wildlife. Additional resources there might have more positive impact for biodiversity than elsewhere.
2. Strategic wildlife corridors need more study, protection, and recognition. For example, Grove Park Cuttings (borough SINC) from Queens Road Peckham to Denmark Hill Station forms an important connection and resource. Warwick Gardens is along this vector --that may be why there are over 500 species of insects recorded living there.¹⁰ Network Rail employs a dedicated ecologist, [Aline Gomes](#), who may be able to share useful information such as species surveys along cuttings.
3. In the re-development of Canada Water, wildlife-friendly design is critical and highly strategic to connect and optimise the benefits of several major SINC's in the area.
4. Old Kent Road Opportunity Area redevelopment zone needs to reduce traffic and increase greenery, including green roofs, to reduce barriers to wildlife between north and south of the borough. The planned green route needs to include sufficient green space suitable planted and managed to be a nature corridor.
5. More ideas for active travel routes have been collected by Southwark Living Streets group [here](#).
6. All nature corridors need to link effectively to SINC's beyond the borough boundary.

¹⁰ <https://insectinside.me/category/penny-metal/>



SOUTHWARK NATURE CONNECTIVITY MAP
February 2024

LEGEND

- Open water
- SINC - Metropolitan
- SINC - Borough or Local
- Other open space
- Pedestrian/Nature Corridor - recognised
- Pedestrian/Nature Corridor - in development / proposed
- Strategic Wildlife Corridor
- Significant Wildlife Barrier

Having a comprehensive nature strategy for a local area, if well refined by and collaborated on with local residents, can help to reduce conflict between housing development and biodiversity. Importantly, it can also align and inspire local volunteer efforts with a clear vision and common purpose.

While Southwark works to make its nature areas more strategically joined up, it will also be improving conditions for residents by meeting recognised human needs for green space (see Box 3).

Box 3: The social importance of green spaces

It is in all of our best interests to make Southwark safe and hospitable for its multiple species. Hearing birds singing outside our windows¹¹, enjoying a variety of seasonal blooms and fruits, watching pollinators forage, and bats hunt, and maintaining peaceful, landscape-based solutions for coexistence with scavengers and land predators - these are all essential parts of a healthy, shared urban experience.

The World Health Organization recommends the availability of a minimum of 9 m² of green space per individual with an ideal UGS value of 50 m² per capita.

The World Health Organization recommends that all people reside within 300m of green space.

The GLA's goal is that all Londoners should live within a 10 minute walk of green space.

<https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-and-strategies/environment-and-climate-change/parks-green-spaces-and-biodiversity/green-infrastructure-maps-and-tools/10-minute-walk-map>

https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2024/jan/13/children-living-near-green-spaces-t-ronger-bones-study?CMP=share_btn_wa

Nature led solutions are increasingly recognised as central to the response to climate change. The climate crises will widen inequalities, and increasing green spaces are central to the solution: reducing flood risk and heat, and benefiting communities.¹²

More exciting

Increasing wildlife protections in the city should not only be considered a statutory obligation or a maintenance concern. Improving conditions for biodiversity can be an effective and wonderful means to benefit the daily lives and mental health of Southwark residents -- and it can create a really exciting opportunities for Southwark to show exemplary urban design and cultural leadership. For example, to engage and educate residents and visitors on the benefits and importance of greenspace (see Box 3) and of biodiversity, Southwark could:

¹¹ "Smartphone-based ecological momentary assessment reveals mental health benefits of birdlife" https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-022-20207-6?itid=ik_inline_enhanced-template

¹² London Climate Resilience Review (Interim Report 2024) [London Climate Resilience Review Interim Report](#)

- Restore ancient rivers in the Borough by exploring options to de-culvert long lost waterways. This has been achieved to great local benefit and international acclaim in places as diverse as Seoul and Los Angeles. There have also been smaller successful urban river restoration projects in UK cities.^{13,14}
- Develop plans to make room for previously lost species such as water voles¹⁵, or publicise work to support particular species like the white-letter hairstreak butterfly recorded in Burgess Park, or the Jersey cudweed, which is a nationally rare species that has recently turned up as a London pavement plant after reduction in herbicide use.
- Explore the scope for high-profile, ecologically functional new greenspaces in its redevelopment proposals, bringing together the urban and natural worlds as New York's High Line.¹⁶ Consider a Mile End-style habitat-based overpass from Southwark Park to new boardwalks and reedbeds in King's Stairs Gardens. Or could the two parks be joined and remodelled as a controlled, urban version of species-rich floodplains, allowing an easier, nature-based pedestrian connection to the River Thames?¹⁷
- Consider de-paving unsightly, polluted roads around some of Southwark's beautiful historic architecture, and replacing with lush original habitat and protected accessible footpaths, incorporating sustainable drainage (SuDS) and opportunities for community gardening.
- Work with SNAV and local organisations such as the Garden Museum and South London Botanical Institute to develop information boards or QR codes to help engage local people in the wildlife and plants they can find around them
- Introduce live webcast wildlife data collection such as bioacoustic surveying and webcams, so people can engage with and track local "wildlives" without risk or disturbance.

¹³ A great urban river restoration image gallery including integration with SuDS flood risk management:

<https://www.harvestingrainwater.com/gallery/daylighting-buried-waterways-show-the-flow-image-gallery/#:~:text=Daylighting%20the%20Cheong%20Gye%20Cheon,in%20Seoul%2C%20South%20Korea&text=The%20river%20is%20buried%20underneath,along%20the%20now%20daylighted%20river.>

¹⁴ More practical advice for daylighting urban rivers and some UK examples:

https://www.therrc.co.uk/sites/default/files/general/Training/esmee/river_restoration_in_urban_areas.pdf

¹⁵ See the London Water Vole Project

<https://www.lbp.org.uk/07library/water%20vole%20proof%204%20amended%20-%20small.pdf>

¹⁶ More information: <https://www.thehighline.org/>

¹⁷ More on the value of restoring a river's connection to its vegetated floodplains:

<https://www.fensforthefuture.org.uk/admin/resources/downloads/vnp09-natcapsynthesisreport-floodplains-a4-16pp-144dpi.pdf>

Box 4: The policy framework

The Southwark Plan is the strategic spatial plan for shaping the physical environment. Within this document a clear vision and direction for a network of nature corridors and strategic connectivity between SINC's could make clear to all landowners and developers the Council's biodiversity vision and intentions.

The planning policy on Green Infrastructure P59 and Biodiversity P60 both need to take a more strategic view on the value and impact of nature to the boroughs environment and the benefit for residents. Policies should be amended to:

- Set a strategic direction to link SINC's through strategic wildlife corridors and the expectation that new developments will contribute to this through green infrastructure and include as an ambition (with maps) for the revised Southwark Nature Action Plan.
- Identify and map the nature corridors which should be considered and incorporated into relevant site developments. Supporting P59 with specific expectations and policy.
- Set out and map the green infrastructure network in relevant strategic policies. There needs to be a clear vision and policy that operates across a number of policy areas including council strategies e.g. Streets for People, Climate Change Climate Resilience and Adaptation, Surface Flooding Mitigation, any new policies to tackle heat, public health and health equalities.
- The rationale for this needs to include the justifications as set out in above policies.
- Areas of Southwark are in deficit of green space and significant variation of tree canopy cover. The council needs to set a clear ambition to address this and minimise tree removal in and around new developments, taking a stronger stance on tree removal e.g. in the public realm on pavements; Policy P61 Trees.
- Other planning policy levers available to the council could also be explored for example: the London Plan Urban Greening Factor minimum score could be increased; the surface water greenfield run-off rate could be reduced and SuDs increased; finance/legal mechanisms to deliver offsite Biodiversity Net Gain on Council-owned land could be explored¹⁸ (SNAV would want to see BNG credits used in the borough); explore increasing the percentage and types of schemes UGF applies to; a blue ribbon approach for waterways (as in the London Plan) with benefits for nature and biodiversity, the impact of tall buildings on green spaces and hours of sunshine.
- The planned Climate Change early review and the SPD to support policies P59, P60 and P61 of the Southwark Plan could incorporate these proposals. The SPD is scheduled for Cabinet in June 2024.

¹⁸ Currently the council have ruled out registering for BNG credits - as stated in the Scrutiny Report: February 2024 Biodiversity: Progress, Delivery and Requirements arising from the Environment Act (2021)

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 13/02/2024	Meeting Name: Environment and Community Engagement Scrutiny Commission
Report title:		Community Gardening Service Update 2023/24	
Wards affected:		All	
Cabinet Member:		Councillor Catherine Rose Cabinet Member for Leisure, Parks, Streets and Clean Air	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Scrutiny Committee notes the content of this report.

BACKGROUND

2. The Community Gardening service was created in June 2020 with the establishment of 2 fixed-term part-time Community Gardening Coordinator (CGC) posts with the mission to:
 - Be the main point of contact within the council for community gardening and food growing enquiries
 - Increase opportunities for residents to access community gardening
 - Support a Southwark community gardening network
 - Champion community gardening across the council
3. Following the creation of this service, in April 2021, the council launched the Allotment Expansion Guarantee (AEG) under the aegis of the Great Estates initiative. From 1 April 2023, the service was incorporated into the council structure and the Community Gardening Coordinator posts made permanent. From 1 September 2023 the service was transferred from Communities to Parks and Natural Environment following a restructure.
4. There are also 18 longstanding formal allotments in the borough on LBS land. These allotments are managed by local allotment groups, which are responsible for managing and maintaining the site and managing their waiting list. It is believed that that waiting times for place on an allotment are significant, which underlines the importance of creating new growing plots through the AEG. The council's only relationship with these allotments are the leases to use the land, which are managed by the Property Division and the allotment holder's inclusion in the community garden network. The Community Garden Coordinators have no other involvement with formal allotments.

ALLOTMENT EXPANSION GUARANTEE (AEG)

5. The Community Gardening team supports residents to set up new community gardens and food growing plots (raised beds) on HRA land through the AEG. The service has created an AEG Commonplace link that gives information about the process for residents to create new community allotments and maps proposals. The team commissioned a Southwark portal on the national Good to Grow map identifying community gardens across the borough with links to the AEG page. This allows community gardens to advertise plots available and call out for volunteers or advertising events, as well as being a search engine for those looking for nearby growing spaces and community gardens.
6. The team developed the AEG process including site checks, governance agreements, maintenance agreements and plot holder agreements for gardening groups to run these

new spaces. The team works closely with colleagues in Resident Services, Public Health, Climate Change, Cleaner Greener Safer, Grounds Maintenance, the Trees and Ecology team and administrators of community funds to increase opportunities for and promote the benefits of community gardening and food growing.

7. Over the last three years, the service has helped create 17 new community gardens with 220 growing plots. Each project is resident-led with the CGCs working in partnership with local gardening groups to:
 - Establish a self-governing gardening group with appropriate governance processes and structures
 - Identify a feasible site
 - Co-design the garden
 - Identify resources
 - Run a consultation
 - Communicate with residents, TRA, RSO, Grounds Maintenance
 - Project manage the build
 - Provide training
 - Ensure there is a sustainable management plan
 - Help the gardening group become part of the Southwark network, joining the Good to Grow map and receive the e-newsletter sent out by the team
8. The AEG also allows the council to deliver the manifesto commitment to provide residents with a right to grow on council estates.
9. In addition to the quantitative success of increasing new gardens/plots, a survey of growers carried out in December 2022 highlighted the following quality of life benefits;
 - 92% said working in the garden improved their mood
 - 92% said it had increased their engagement with neighbours
 - 90% said they felt more positive about their estate
 - 56% said it had helped them get more involved in their community
 - 60% said it led to them to eat more vegetables
 - 33% said the garden had helped them save money

BUDGET AND CAPACITY

10. While becoming permanent members of staff is a positive development, moving out of the Great Estates programme means there is now no dedicated capital budget that the AEG can draw on to build new gardens. Instead, there is an agreed revenue budget of £35k plus £70k from HRA for salary and on costs following the transfer to Parks and Natural Environment.
11. This budget is used to support new and established AEG estate-based gardens, developing the network with events and training. It funds consultations for new groups coming through the AEG process. However, the main capital costs of new AEG gardens and growing plots will now be funded through fundraising by each gardening group, supported by the Community Gardening Coordinators. This is done through CGS and other external funds but slows down the process of new gardens being built. The team is currently exploring internal and external funding options to build new gardens.

COMMUNITY GARDENING NETWORK

12. A core task of the Community Gardening service is to develop the borough-wide Community Gardening network. The network comprises of all those involved in AEG projects, other existing community gardens, community gardening in parks, schools, housing associations and other communal spaces and larger organisations offering community gardening (including formal allotment holders). Currently there are 205 recipients of our e- newsletter; however, it is shared to wider groups by key contacts.

13. The network promotes peer-to-peer support to enable residents to share experience and good practice, promote mutual support and advocate for more greening and gardening opportunities in the borough. It also connects gardeners with council and external initiatives related to climate change, mental and physical wellbeing.
14. In July 2023 the service held the first of a series of listening events with community gardeners across the borough to hear directly about the challenges facing community gardening, discuss opportunities for future projects and develop a 2030 ambition for the sector. 26 people attended. There is considerable scope for developing the network as a proactive resident-led partner for the council. One of the outcomes was the ask for council support for a community gardening working group to focus on relevant topics. As a follow-on event, in October the team organised the first borough wide Community Gardening Working Party at the Paper Garden in Surrey Quays. 40 people attended the event. The working group focus was on solutions to dealing with green waste and increasing composting and made several interesting recommendations.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED FROM NETWORK EVENTS

15. The key challenges identified at the July event related to issues with the council and wider context. These included access to funding. Community gardeners reported difficulties for larger sites with project workers accessing funding for ongoing project costs. Gardeners from smaller sites feel that the council's community funding processes were too complicated and make an unhelpful distinction between capital and revenue funding. Gardeners wanted more information about the council's use of pesticides. Those who community garden in parks find access to and charging for water in parks to be a challenge. Difficulties in renewing leases for larger community gardens such as Glengall Wharf was also highlighted. The group identified opportunities such as working together and sharing best practice which could be done by the network with some administrative support from the council Community Gardening team. Gardeners are keen to develop a community plant nursery/ larger educational community garden centre.
16. At the October event the working group focussed on solutions for improving composting and dealing with green waste at community gardens (one of the issues identified in July). Key challenges are lack of training, resource and volunteer time. Community composting hubs based at existing food growing gardens on estates were suggested. This would focus on increasing composting skills and infrastructure, together with partnership working with Grounds Maintenance and Trees teams who could deliver compost materials from the estate to compost on site. These hubs could act as demonstration sites for others to visit and learn from.

BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE PARTNERSHIP WORKING

17. Gardening groups are key greening activists as growing food often acts as a gateway to wider greening activities. Through working in partnership with ecology and climate change officers community gardening contributes in tackling the biodiversity crisis and climate change mitigation in the following ways:
 - Behavioural change; community based adaptation to climate change, gardening groups start other greening activities around their garden (meadows, orchards, pollinator planting, wildlife ponds, green roofs, SUDS)
 - Transforming monoculture grass to increased habitat and forage for biodiversity e.g. meadow creation
 - Contribute to reducing the effects of urban heat islands
 - Increasing storm water retention
 - Composting and green waste management on site, retaining carbon
 - Increased connection of urban population to nature, link to increased interest in low

carbon lifestyle choices

18. Climate aware garden design and growing techniques are employed by:

- The Circular economy - upcycling and using sustainable materials
- Rainwater harvesting wherever possible. Planting designed to reduce water run-off (i.e. mulch and ground cover plants) and soil erosion (winter crops or green manures).
- Including trees, reducing hard landscaping (planting trees in garden reduces temperature, creating shade)
- Growing food all year round, not just spring and summer, perennial veg and fruit, successional planting
- Increasing biodiversity through design planting to provide breeding space, food and habitat for different species, include native species
- Soil health – organic techniques improving and maintaining soil health for carbon sequestration.
- Peat-free compost use (if buying in) and using garden and estate waste to make compost

19. The Community Gardening Co-ordinators will continue to increase number of growing projects and keep building the skills of groups to empower communities through the development of a Sustainable Community Project Guide and Estate Ecology Plans in close association with Cleaner Greener Safer colleagues.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

20. Another important role of the service is to champion the benefits of community gardening across the council, as well as -represent the council in relevant external forums. The Community Gardening Coordinators contribute and review project plans/strategies and provide advice to colleagues on a wide variety of policy areas, including:

- Sustainable Food Strategy
- Climate Change
- Land use
- Resident Participation
- Planning and New Homes
- Mental and physical wellbeing
- Public health research

21. The Coordinators also attend meetings and engage with external groups and organisations, including the bi-monthly intra-council network meetings facilitated by Sustain, the pan-London Capital Growth Working Party meetings, Natural England London Happier Outdoors Network, the Food Insecurity Network and the Southwark Biodiversity Partnership meetings.

COMMUNITY GARDENING PLAN & ACHIEVEMENTS/TARGETS 2023/24

22. The Plan achievements and targets are for the Service for 2023/24 seek to maintain continuity and to build on successes while allowing for new initiatives that takes account of resource availability and the views of stakeholders. The Plan focusses on 4 areas of work:

- The Allotment Expansion Guarantee (AEG)
- The Community Gardening Network
- Policy development
- A new Community Composting initiative
- The above to be taken forward to form the basis of the 2024/25 plan.

23. Achieved to date:

- The AEG process has established a right for residents to set up and run food growing on estates
- 51 plots have been achieved in 23/24 to date with 9 scheduled for completion in March 2024
- Two networking events including first working group
- Support Public Health and Climate Change Team in strategy review
- Food growing training at AEG projects in their first year

24. Ongoing:

- Supporting residents in setting up new AEG projects (5 projects are in development this year, approximately 35 new plots).
- Developing the brief for community composting pilot

25. NEXT STEPS:

Project	Timeframe
Events Training Funding for composting pilot project	Delivery by March 2024
Community Organising training	Delivery by March 2024
Sustainable Community Project Guide and Estate Ecology Plans	2024/25
Further delivery of community gardens and growing plots in association with the AEG	2024/25
Continuing to support The Community Gardening Network	2024/25

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Southwark Nature Action Plan 2020	Ecology - Southwark Council	J Fowgies 07925 637218

Climate Change Action Plan	Our climate strategy - Southwark Council	
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Environment Scrutiny Commission

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2023-24

AGENDA DISTRIBUTION LIST (OPEN)

NOTE: Original held by Scrutiny Team; all amendments/queries to Julie Timbrell Tel: 020 7525 0514

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