
Strategies for Nature Recovery in Southwark

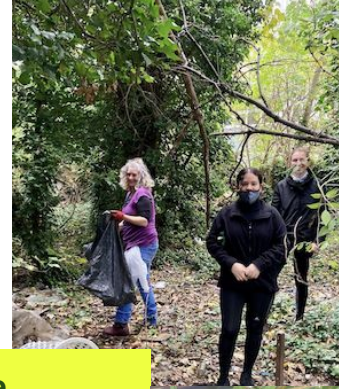
— Southwark Nature
Action Volunteers —

Presentation 27/02/2024 - Environment Scrutiny Commission



- 1. SNAV's Vision for Nature Recovery in Southwark**
- 2. Bigger**
- 3. Better**
- 4. More Joined Up**
- 5. Spotlight Strategy: De-paving**
- 6. Nature Recovery, Corridors, and the Planning Framework**

Vision



For nature
Southwark's many species will more easily find the particular resources they need to survive and thrive

For people
-All residents will easily experience significant nature close to home
-Safe and pleasant active travel

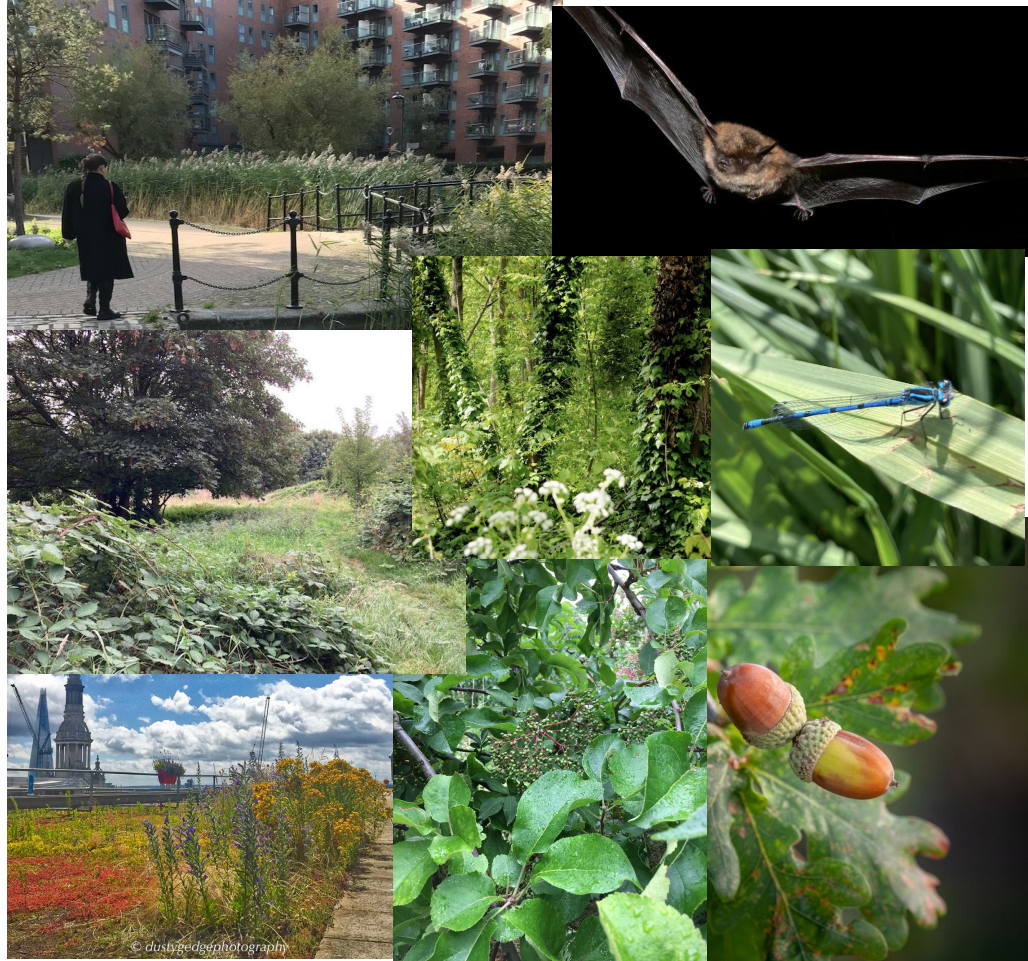


In order to achieve this.. Southwark's places for nature need to be Bigger, Better, and More Joined Up

Bigger

IMAGINE ...

- A nature corridor from the Thames to Sydenham Hill Wood.
- Along the Thames, warblers nest among healthy reedbeds.
- Further south, you encounter woodlands, meadows, thickets, scrub, grassland, rivers, wetlands and ponds.
- The mosaic of connected habitats support a diversity of populations including bats, tawny owls, frogs, toads and slow-worms.



Bigger

Opportunities exist to:

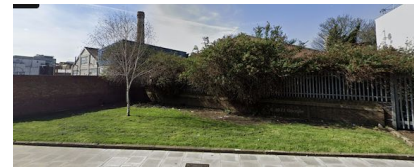
- Further reduce mowing amenity grassland (inc housing land)
- De-pave for pocket parks and habitat (more on de-paving later)
- Create acres of new habitat on rooftops
- Recognise a 60m buffer zones around SINC boundaries
- Recognise more existing wildlife corridors



Lambeth's Myatt's Fields unmown



London Bridge Green Roof



An unused parcel before



...Became the Elmington Wildlife Triangle, part of a corridor



Peckham Rye-mowing could be reduced further

Better

By strategic design ...

- Retain water
- Make the most of street trees
- Reduce artificial lighting
- Reduce hard surfaces
- Planting trees is good but not enough

Don't let rainwater go straight down the drain.
Cherish, harvest, store and use it.

Southwark needs more evenly distributed ponds. to support wildlife

No New Unnecessary Concrete Surfaces
Especially on Council land. Recycle alternative surfaces, and substrates.

Minimise light pollution
Especially near SINC's.
Downlights, movement sensors use less energy

Street trees chosen for their benefits to wildlife.

Nuts, berries or nectar and pollen.

Tree pits large enough for underplanting.

Manage parks and green spaces for more diverse habitats.

A mosaic of different habitats is required to support wildlife.



More Joined Up

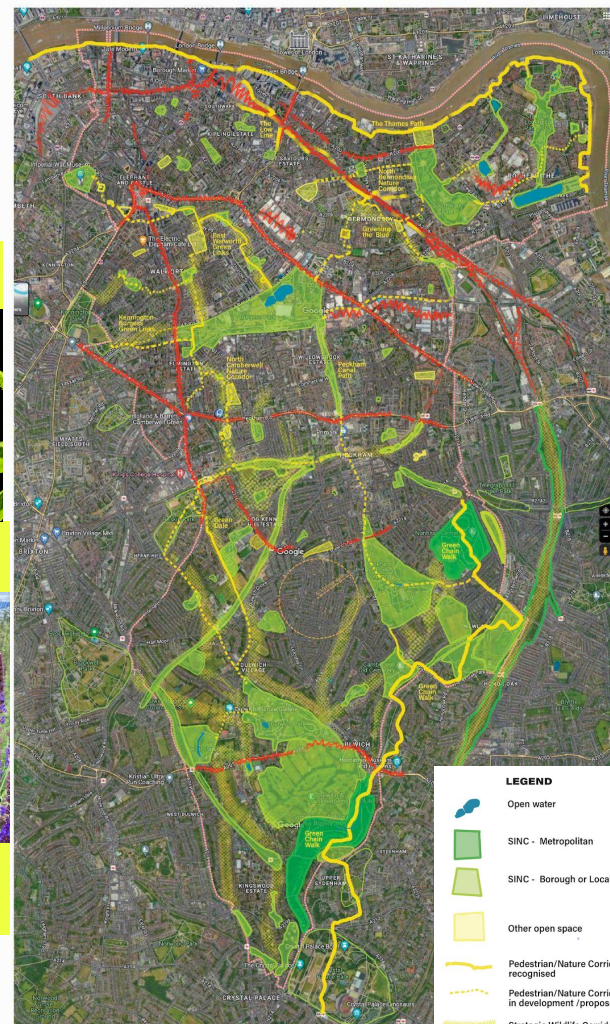
Wildlife populations that have access to more than one SINC have a greater chance of survival and resilience



Per GLA guidance, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy needs to be more geographically specific than biodiversity action plans

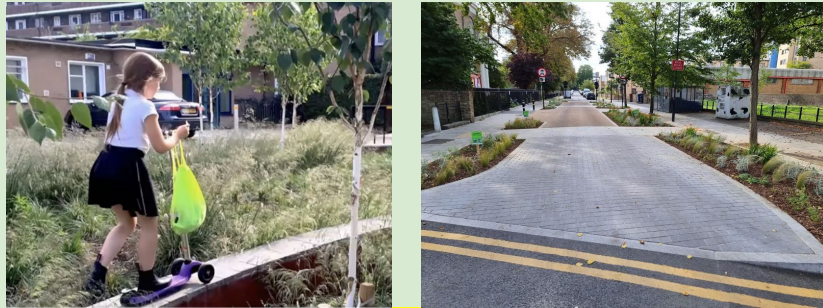


We need to identify and recognise certain locations as critically strategic for wildlife and prioritise these for protection, planning, and retrofitting:



Southwark Nature Connectivity Map

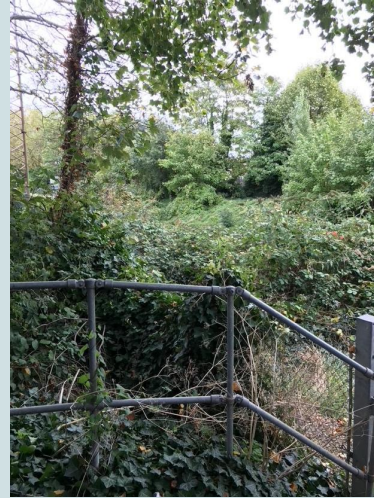
More Joined Up: Planning strategic routes with two types of corridor



1. Pedestrian/Nature Corridor - Connect green spaces

Continuous, or very frequent “biodiversity stepping stones”

railway cuttings



adjoining back gardens



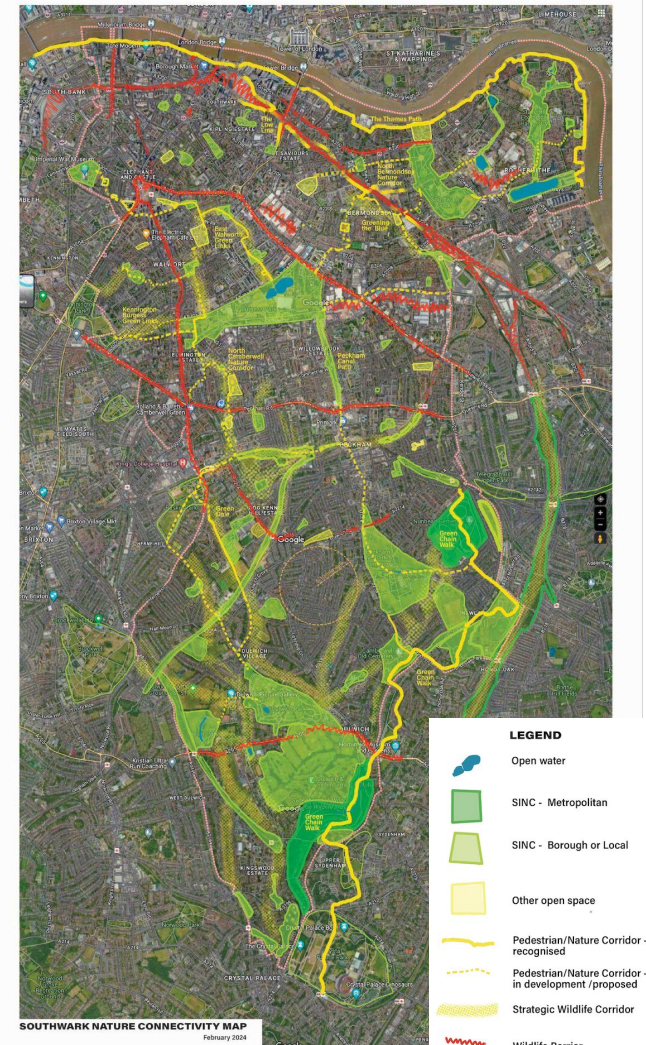
2. Strategic Wildlife Corridor

Wildlife moves through here, but the public may not be able to.

These inaccessible areas are critical for wildlife survival and nature recovery.

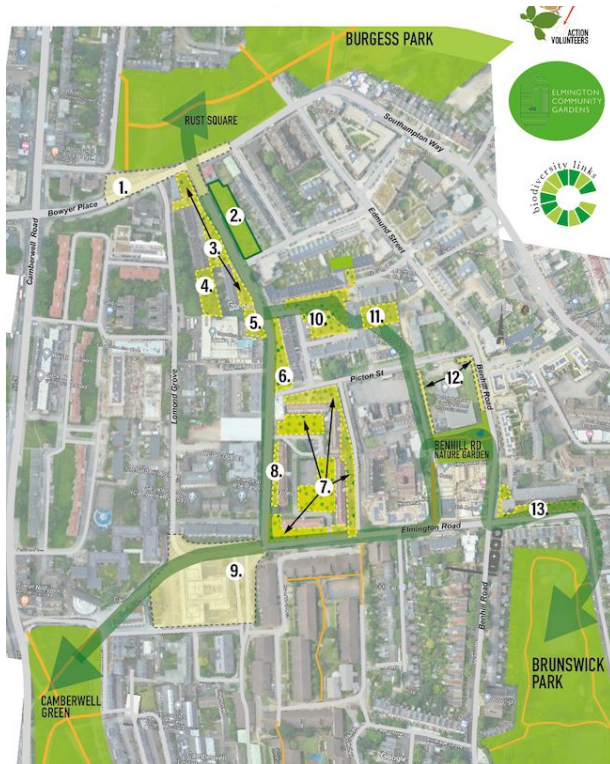
Specific Points to be noted from the SNAV Southwark Nature Connectivity Mapping Exercise

1. **Strategic wildlife corridors** -need more study, protection, and recognition.
2. **Peckham Rye Lane area** -major missing link
3. **Canada Water** - massive opportunity
4. **Old Kent Road Opportunity Area** -reduce barrier
5. Consider **SINC buffer zones** to protect habitats against overshadowing, noise, light, traffic
6. **Work in progress** - more ideas for active travel routes have been collected by Southwark Living Streets group and others.
7. All nature corridors need to link effectively to SINCs **beyond the borough boundary.**



More Joined Up: Corridors in the Community

North Camberwell Nature Corridor



Much of the proposed site has been pedestrianised, but is lacking in greenery and suffers from poor drainage. The neighbourhood is at risk of **contaminated surface water flooding** as well as **river flooding**.

Over-paved conditions create **unnecessarily high peak flows** and do not allow optimum water uptake or carbon capture by existing trees.

This neglected entry to the local park could become an adjacent **mini-catchment woodland**. We propose to add new trees to store existing bins, with **green roofs** cladding to form new woodland, a high-pollute part of the **afternoon cascade**.



The network of greened sites will also form a **strategic nature corridor** linking the local. Site of importance for Nature Conservation, improving conditions for local biodiversity and residents' health.



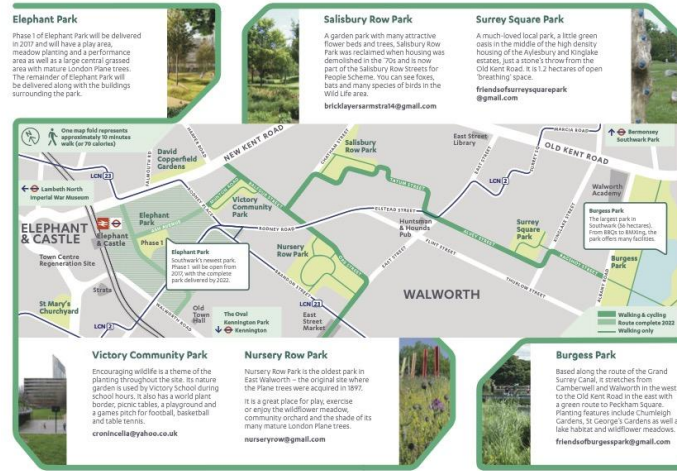
We are proposing a **network of greening projects to improve run-off management** in this densely populated, flood-prone, nature-deprived urban neighbourhood. We will carefully design measures and strategically remove excess hard surface to store floodwater in new vegetated zones, conserving and incorporating existing trees, creating **mini-catchment woodlands** and kerbside **vegetated swales**.

North Bermondsey Nature Corridor

Engagement with local residents in the design is essential for good design, engagement and stewardship
Local residents have best knowledge of how local land is currently used

Establish biodiversity baselines, gather evidence and monitor effectiveness through surveying

Walworth Green Links



Elephant Park
Phase 1 of Elephant Park will be delivered in 2027 and will have a play area, meadow planting and a performance area as well as a central grassed area with mature London Plane trees. The remainder of Elephant Park will be delivered along with the buildings surrounding the park.

Salisbury Row Park
A garden park with many attractive flower beds and trees, Salisbury Row Park was reclaimed when housing was demolished in the 70s and is now part of the Salisbury Row Streets for People Scheme. You can see fountains, bins and many species of birds in the wild life area.
brickdiverarmtr14@gmail.com

Surrey Square Park
A much-loved local park, a little green oasis in the middle of the high density housing of the Aylbury and Kinglake estates, just a stone's throw from the Old Kent Road. It is 1.2 hectares of open breathing space.
friends4surreysquarepark@gmail.com

Victory Community Park
Encouraging wildlife is a theme of the planting throughout the site. Its mature garden is used by Victory School during school hours. It also has a world plant border, picnic tables, a playground and a games pitch for football, basketball and table tennis.
cronnicella@yahoo.co.uk

Nursery Row Park
Nursery Row Park is the oldest park in East Walworth – the original site where the Plane trees were acquired in 1897. It is a great place for play, exercise or enjoy the wildflower meadow, community orchard and the shade of its many mature London Plane trees.
nurseryrow@gmail.com

Burgess Park
Based along the route of the Grand Surrey Canal, it stretches from Camberwell and Walworth in the west to the Old Kent Road in the east with a green route to Rockham Square. Planting features include Chertleigh Gardens, St George's Gardens as well as lake habitat and wildflower meadows.
friends4orpeepsark@gmail.com

Spotlight Strategy: Systematic De-paving

The Octopus Garden



Elmington Estate

Benefits residents' physical and mental health

Increases opportunities for greening and wildlife recovery

Reduces flood risk

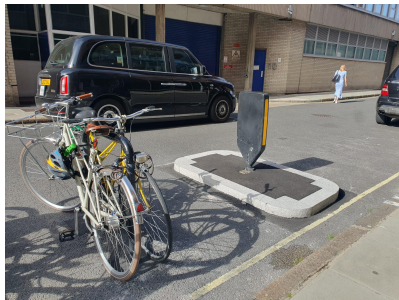
Reduces urban heating (heat island effect)

Increases carbon sequestration

Absorbs and filters pollutants

Facilitates active travel

Solutions for De-paving



Maltby Street

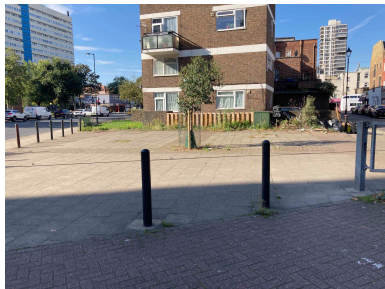
Pedestrianisation without greening is a wasted opportunity



Liverpool Grove

Reduce costs and missed opportunities by increasing coordination and joined-up thinking - Dig Once

Design de-paving projects carefully, in close collaboration with local residents. Investigate increased community and volunteer management.



Bowyer Place

When planting trees, make tree pits as large as possible, rather than the minimum

Underground utilities or poor drainage may affect design of suds or tree planting, but does not prevent most de-paving

Bigger, joined-up areas are more cost-effective per m2

Correct plant selection increases wildlife benefit and reduces maintenance concerns. A robust community of native/adapted plants will out-compete weeds

Inexpensive native/adapted seed mix and whips can provide acceptable aesthetic value and many of the desired benefits, at reduced costs.

Urban Nature Recovery Requires De-paving

What Southwark Can Do Now

More joined-up! Flood Risk, Trees/Ecology, Parks/Nat Env, **Highways, Housing**, Climate Change, community/volunteer groups, internal design review - **Dig Once**

Technical guidance and support from DEFRA, CIRIA, Thames Water, NGOs, insurance

Identify Funding internal and external

Cost effectiveness De-paving larger areas, with low-cost, low-maintenance planting schemes, can deliver important immediate value and create future opportunity

Culture/baseline shift Let de-paved be the default

Nature Recovery, Corridors, and the Planning Framework

Strategy and Policy

- **Urban Greening Factor (UGF)**
- **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)**
- **Southwark Plan: SPD and SPG**
- **Climate Change action plan**
- **Green Infrastructure Plan**
- **And many more**

Better

Policies beyond the minimum must clearly state Council's leadership goals increasing green/nature spaces, green infrastructure

Bigger

Climate change and biodiversity planning policies need to be stronger

Funding/co-ordination of activity across developers

Community action can help deliver on the ground activity
- hundreds of small changes -
local neighbourhood - engaged in consultation and collaboration

More joined-up

Strategic planning of the vision and big goals - to get the "golden thread" across multiple strategies