

# Southwark Plan Biodiversity policies

## Update to the Environment Commission (Scrutiny)

April 2024

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### Overview

- 1.1 The February 2024 Biodiversity report to the Environment Scrutiny Commission included reference to three biodiversity policies in the current Southwark Plan (2022). It stated that the Planning Policy team will be updating the policies in the next Southwark Plan review. The Planning Policy team have subsequently been asked for further detail on the timeframe for the policy updates.

### Timeframe for Biodiversity Policy updates

- 1.2 The biodiversity policies referenced in the February 2024 Scrutiny report are P59 Green Infrastructure, P60 Biodiversity and P61 Trees. In addition, policies P57 Open Space and P58 Open water space are relevant to biodiversity in terms of the linkages between the blue and green infrastructure within the borough.
- 1.3 Work on the Southwark Plan full review will commence in late 2024. The Regulation 19 Submission version of the Southwark Plan, with the updated biodiversity policies, will be completed in 2027.
- 1.4 It should be noted that, prior to the full Southwark Plan review, the Policy team are undertaking an Early Review of the Southwark Plan. This concerns Southwark Plan energy policies P69 and P70 - biodiversity policies are not within the scope of this review. The Regulation 19 Submission version of the Southwark Plan Early Review will be finalised in 2025.

### Process

- 1.5 The production of the new Southwark Plan must proceed in a structured and evidenced way. Specific, mandatory stages must be followed. Revised or new policies must be based on robust evidence, analysis and consultation.
- 1.6 The update to the biodiversity policies will therefore be dependent on a range of new evidence and actions. This will include;
  - The ongoing monitoring of Biodiversity Net Gain (mandatory since February and April 2024 for major and small sites respectively).
  - The production of the pan-London Local Nature Recovery Strategy by the GLA, which Southwark will feed into.

- The commissioning of a new evidence base strategies by Planning and Environment and Leisure. These strategies will include an Open Space Needs Assessment, an updated Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and an updated SINC review.
  - The need to meet new London Plan (2021) requirements concerning green infrastructure. This will include the development of a new Green Infrastructure Strategy for Southwark. This will be informed by the above documents and will be undertaken by Planning officers.
  - Partnership working with a range of stakeholder groups and organisations.
- 1.6 The development of the strategies and the iterative policy development process will occur in dialogue with other departments and teams, including Environment and Leisure and Southwark’s Flood Risk teams. Synergies with other Council strategies, such as the Climate Risk and Adaptation Strategy, will also be considered. Councillors will be kept updated throughout. Based on the procurement and assembly of this evidence, the Regulation 18 Southwark Plan consultation document, containing updated policies, will be prepared by 2026.
- 1.7 In terms of work planning, the Planning Policy team are currently finalising five Supplementary Planning Documents and the Early Plan review of energy and carbon policies (P69 and P70). Resources will then pivot to starting work on the Southwark Plan full review.

### Summary of key dates

- 1.8 The biodiversity policies will be updated as part of the Southwark Plan review. Summary dates are provided below.

Workstream	Milestone	Date
<b>Southwark Plan Early Review</b> ( <i>energy policies only – not biodiversity</i> )	Regulation 18 Consultation version	End 2024
	Regulation 19 Submission version	2025
<b>Southwark Plan review</b> ( <i>biodiversity policies to be updated</i> )	Work starts Q3 2024.	
	Strategies procured and developed internally.	2025
	Regulation 18 Consultation version	2026
	Regulation 19 Submission version of updated Southwark Plan	2027

