

Biodiversity report recommendations

No.	Recommendation	Priority Actions
	<p>Vision: Adopt 30x30 and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).</p>	
1	<p>Adopt the Biodiversity COP 15 commitment known as 30x30, which calls for the effective protection and management of 30% of the world's land, fresh waters and oceans by the year 2030, as a strategic local aim. Adopt also, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) which aims to “catalyse, enable and galvanize urgent and transformative action”. This calls for action at an international, national and local level and, as such, will align local ambition and pride to national and global ambition. This is a proven way to increase commitment to pro-environmental behaviour changes¹.</p>	<p>Develop the statutory Biodiversity Report (due January 2026) with the GBF and 30x30 aims.</p> <p>Build the 30x30 aim into the development of Ecological Networks and the Green Infrastructure Strategy.</p> <p>Include a commitment to 30x30 and the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) in the Climate Strategy and Action Plan.</p> <p>Update the Thriving Nature theme referred to in the Climate Change Resilience and Adaptation Strategy and Climate Change Strategy, to ensure the Climate Change Action Plan includes sufficient provision for biodiversity, including a delivery plan for Ecological Networks, measurable objectives for habitat protection, habitat creation, and de-paving as default, wherever possible.</p> <p>Incorporate a commitment for the Council to see all areas of</p>

¹ See section 5

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fenvs.2023.1103635/full#:~:text=In%20particular%2C%20the%20present%20study,national%20pride%20have%20higher%20PET>

		<p>council policy not only through the prism of a Climate Emergency but also through the prism of a Biodiversity Emergency.</p> <p>Communicate the 30x30 and GBD as a global and local ambition to stakeholders and residents, and encourage civil society to adopt the GDF and 30x30 alongside Net Zero by 2030.</p> <p>Review Southwark SINC's with view to increasing size and number.</p> <p>Identify other ways to protect habitat by working with communities, landowners, householders and other stakeholders.</p>
Strategy: Ecological Networks		
2	<p>Prioritise development of a Green Infrastructure Strategy to map out a coherent Ecological Network for Southwark, which</p> <p>(i) Maps current SINC's and green and blue spaces</p> <p>(ii) Identifies opportunities to increase the size of current SINC's.</p> <p>(iii) Joins up or enhances connections between wildlife SINC's, either through physical corridors, or through 'stepping stones'.</p> <p>(iv) Aids the creation of new wildlife SINC's</p> <p>(v) Reduces the pressures on wildlife by improving the wider environment, including through buffer-zones around wildlife SINC's (amended from Lawton, 2010)</p>	<p>Account must be taken of the full range of semi-natural habitats needed by wildlife. Gaps must be identified (e.g. ponds, absent in many areas of Southwark) and plans developed to address these gaps.</p> <p>Consider designing nature-friendly crossings of major barriers to nature, such as Jamaica Road at Southwark Park/King's Stairs and Old Kent Road. Consideration should be given to reducing traffic, noise and artificial light, and to increasing vegetation at key locations, including overhead "canopy bridges".</p> <p>Several of Southwark's existing major wildlife corridors end just short of Peckham's Rye Lane area. Consider designating Peckham as a Missing Link / Biodiversity Connectivity Zone, and</p>

		<p>implementing special measures to encourage the development of wildlife affordances in this area.</p> <p>The Ecological Network, and Green Infrastructure Strategy, should be co-designed and monitored in conjunction with the Southwark Biodiversity Partnership (the Southwark Nature Action Plan (SNAP) reference group), and other local groups/stakeholders, recognizing and building on existing greening efforts by community groups and landowners.</p> <p>The Green Infrastructure Strategy should be led by the council's Planning department, as part of a cross departmental initiative that recognises the interrelationships between Planning, Climate Change, Parks, Housing, Flood Management, Highways, Air Quality and other departments, while maintaining a co-design approach with the Southwark Biodiversity Partnership.</p> <p>Link the development of Southwark's Green Infrastructure Strategy and local Ecological Network with the development of the citywide LGIF and LNRS, working with the GLA as an active and informed partner.</p> <p>The Green Infrastructure Strategy should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">I. identify geographically specific opportunities for cross-borough collaboration, ensure existing green infrastructure is optimised and existing barriers to wildlife movement are reduced, and consider green infrastructure in an integrated way as part of a wider network connecting to neighbouring boroughs.
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3	<p>Improve the engagement, governance and oversight of the SNAP by agreeing a Terms of Reference document. Ensure that the Southwark Biodiversity Partnership has a clear remit to report on delivery of the SNAP through the agreed Terms of Reference, including by contributing to an annual report to Cabinet on Biodiversity.</p>	
	Planning and Construction	
4	<p>Explore methods of delivering biodiversity improvements through the Planning process,</p>	<p>Having adopted the London Plan guidance on UGF of 0.3 for predominantly commercial and 0.4 for predominantly residential</p>

	<p>beyond the minimum 10% BNG specified in the Environment Act 2021 when undertaking the 2027 review of the Southwark Plan. This should be combined with more ambitious Urban Greening Factor (UGF) targets. Improvements to both, taken together, are most likely to deliver better outcomes for biodiversity.</p>	<p>developments, the council must ensure that, in accordance with the guidance, these targets are treated as the minimum benchmark rather than the maximum required.</p> <p>Monitor BNG and UGF for compliance, with a view to achieving at least the required 10% BNG on-site as well as the UGF floor targets.</p> <p>Ensure continued monitoring and spot auditing of BNG delivery throughout the 30 year period.</p> <p>Explore the following in the review of the Southwark Plan;:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing the BNG to above the present 10% improvement on baseline; • Applying a minimum 0.4 UGF to all major commercial as well as residential projects; • Applying UGF targets to smaller projects as well as major sites; • Adopting higher targets for BNG and UGF at strategic locations, as defined by the Green Infrastructure Strategy/ Ecological Network, such as SINC buffer zones or in areas with poor existing wildlife connections.
5	<p>Wherever possible new major residential developments should be conditioned to include</p>	

	grey water recycling and rainwater harvesting, including providing for storage of rainwater in water butts or similar to support community gardening and food growing.	
6	<p>Explore how domestic planning applications could be conditioned or, at least, applicants could be encouraged to include wildlife friendly features such as green roofs, flow-through planters, rain gardens, swift bricks (for example in cases of loft conversions) and water butts, and to minimise impermeable hard surfacing</p>	<p>The council should develop and make available on its website a mini-guide for homeowners and developers applying for planning permission for minor developments or home improvements, with information on the benefits of these nature-friendly features.</p> <p>The council's climate change team should engage with Thames Water to explore how more residents can be encouraged to install water butts at their homes, for example, by Thames Water managing the subsidised delivery of water butts to residents. (This could be modelled on the existing composting scheme, where residents can buy compost bins at a subsidised rate and community groups, places of worship and schools are able to claim 2 free bins each.)</p>
More and Bigger		
7	<p>Conduct an ecological audit of our parks, estates, verges, schools, sports fields, and pockets of land in order to increase habitat for wildlife, and adopt wildlife friendly practices.</p> <p>Conduct this in conjunction with the development of Ecological Networks.</p>	
8	Undertake a mapping exercise with ward	

	<p>councillors and community stakeholders (as recommended by Southwark Land Commission) to identify further land that is currently or can potentially be enhanced for biodiversity. Consider how undesignated open space, such as land currently used for parked vehicles, estate lands, schools, sports field borders, and rooftops, could be transformed and/or managed as places for nature as well as people.</p>	
9	<p>Depaving has the potential to be a powerful tool against the biodiversity and climate crises. In recognition of this, the Commission recommends the following:</p> <p>a) Adopt de-paved as default, wherever possible, in all new Streetscape or housing schemes.</p> <p>b) Increase our greenspace by de-paving the many unused areas of existing hardstanding to make room for ‘pocket parks’, new street trees, hedgerows, rain gardens, food growing spaces and other forms of new planting.</p>	<p>Integrate de-paved as default with the BNG and UGF approach</p> <p>Employ an internal design review process to ensure that any new streetscape or housing projects incorporate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • green wildlife habitat • SuDS and other permeable spaces to facilitate water attenuation to the maximum extent possible; <p>All projects to redesign our Streetscape and other public realm must be treated as opportunities to improve the borough’s biodiversity and flood risk management, rather than purely as functional and/or traffic engineering solutions. Proposals should be flagged as a matter of course with the Southwark Biodiversity Partnership, to ensure that they benefit at the design phase from a wide range of input from landscape architects, horticulturalists, ecologists, urban food growers and community leaders</p> <p>As part of this, ensure that the Streetscape design, Climate Emergency Action plan, SNAP, Streets for People strategy, Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, Southwark Plan and the Tree Management Policy 2020 are updated to provide a coherent</p>

		<p>approach to adopting de-paving as the default, wherever possible. Ensure that teams engaged in design and execution of the above, as well as the teams handling the design and execution of Cleaner Greener Safer projects across the borough, are updated and working in accordance with the ambition to de-pave.</p> <p>Highways department should routinely consider applications from utility companies involving excavation of public space in the light of possible green infrastructure projects. Where possible, any scheduled infrastructure projects which involve digging or de-paving to access underground utilities should be coordinated with permanent improvements to improve permeability, increase public green space and improve bio. Where possible, de-paving should be designed to be integrated with stormwater management at area drains, to “slow the flow.”</p> <p>The council should explore all possible sources of funding for the various depaving initiatives described, including DEFRA, Thames Water, GLA, insurance companies and environmental NGOs like the London Wildlife Trust.</p> <p>Establish a strategic approach to de-paving linked to the Ecological Networks and Green Infrastructure Strategy recommended above.</p> <p>Aim for 30% minimum planting for streetscape schemes. Encourage and enable interested local residents to adopt de-paved sites and contribute to management and maintenance. Work closely with local community to sensibly design de-paved areas in keeping with local needs, and form maintenance agreements for planted areas.</p> <p>Make a program of technical guidance and support available to any</p>
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		<p>residents wishing to de-pave their own private land.</p> <p>Where the budget is limited, deliver green spaces with high biodiversity value, and acceptable aesthetic value, by providing an initial seeding of wildflowers, encouraging tolerance of volunteer plants, delivering annual mowing, and ongoing litter picking.</p> <p>Where hard-standing is required and de-paving is considered inappropriate, consideration should be given to whether permeable materials could be used instead of impermeable ones.</p>
10	<p>The Council should adopt a default position that recognises installation of Vehicle Footway Crossovers (VFCs) and associated hard standings as an environmental and social ill which stands at odds with council policies including the Climate Emergency Action Plan, the Climate Emergency Resilience and Adaptation Plan, the Streets for People strategy and the Equal Pavements Pledge (as the repetitive undulation of pavements due to installation of VFCs can be an obstacle to disabled pedestrians and wheelchair users). For these reasons, the council should actively discourage and take steps to reduce the rate and extent of this loss of front gardens and installation of new VFCs wherever possible, publicise its reasons for doing so and ensure that legal obligations relating to hard standings are enforced.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. There should be a presumption against the installation of VFCs where there is a CPZ in place and/or high parking stress. b. The minimum depth of front garden required for a property to be granted a VFC should be immediately increased to 6m, to ensure that it is large enough to accommodate a modern vehicle without obstruction to the public footway. c. Council tenancy agreements should specifically prohibit tenants from paving over front gardens and there should be a presumption against the granting of a VFC. This could be reviewed in exceptional individual circumstances. d. In an effort to inform the public and discourage further loss of front gardens, details of the adverse environmental impacts of loss of planting and permeability from front gardens should be posted on

		<p>the council's website under the section where residents apply for a VFC, and sent to residents in response to their application. (This could be done by setting up a dedicated email address for applications with an automatic response.) Residents should be asked to confirm that they read and understood the information provided before confirming that they wish to go ahead with their application.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">e. In the event that an application for a VFCs is granted, applicants should be routinely provided with guidance on minimising the adverse environmental impact of the associated front garden conversion, including advice on paving the minimum area required and maximising permeability and planting based on best practice as described by organisations such as the RHS and National Park City Foundation. Applicants should also be informed of their legal obligations in respect of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (No. 2) (England) Order 2008 which requires front garden hard surfacing of more than five square metres in area "to either be made of porous material or, if an impermeable surface, to direct runoff to a soakaway area or rainwater storage within the property's boundary"f. Increase the application fee and installation charge for VFCs. The increased charge for installation of the VFC will include all existing costs associated with planning, maintenance and implementation, as well
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		<p>as the cost of 2 mandatory checks – 6 months and 1 year after installation – to determine that any associated hard standing conforms as a minimum with the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (No. 2) (England) Order 2008. The upfront charge should also include a deposit sufficient to cover the costs of remedial action should this be necessary to render any installed hard standings compliant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> g. The council should enforce against vehicles crossing the public footway where a VFC has been refused. h. The council should speed up the process for delivering disabled bays outside homes of disabled residents to respond to the need for adjacent parking. i. Explore becoming an early adopter of Pavement Channels to facilitate home charging of EVs parked on the kerbside and join a pilot if there is an opportunity to do so or if the government provides the appropriate assurances and planning guidance.
	Better	
11	Make Southwark a pesticide free borough, to protect biodiversity and to protect our residents from the inherent harms of pesticides. Take a staged approach to eliminating pesticide use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Draw upon the Pesticide Action Network’s (PAN) Toolkit for Local Authorities to smooth this transition and, in particular, to understand the alternatives to pesticide use, the relative costs and the challenges;

	<p>from our streets and estates, following on from the elimination of pesticide use from our parks several years ago.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> II. Consider replicating Lambeth Council’s Community Weeding Scheme . III. To best understand and manage the challenges involved in this change of practice, including obtaining value for money and stakeholder buy in the Cabinet Member and officers should actively engage with counterparts in Lambeth and other councils that have already undertaken this change and gone pesticide free IV. Publicise to residents and landowners the reasons that Southwark is taking this approach, explaining the harms associated with the spraying of pesticides, and use this position to discourage residents and landowners from private use of pesticides.
<p>12</p>	<p>Proactively encourage and enable the installation (including retrofitting) of well-designed, wildlife-friendly green roof systems on buildings and structures. 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.</p>	<p>Recognize the significant biodiversity benefits of well designed green roofs can deliver, and particularly encourage their use through Planning in priority locations identified through the Green Infrastructure Strategy.</p> <p>Promote the use of green roofs for agroecological urban farming.</p>
<p>13</p>	<p>New trees should be located in a broader landscape habitat , and more priority given to their contribution to local ecology and the wider Ecological Network. Where possible, trees should be co-located with other trees and planting, in larger pits or schemes, and in</p>	<p>Amend the existing criteria for choosing trees to include the following :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) benefit to the wider ecology, with a preference for trees that feed pollinators, other invertebrates, and birds, and which takes account of the advantages of native trees to the ecosystem

	<p>conjunction with SuDs, wherever possible.</p>	<p>b) placement within the wider Ecological Network, including wildlife corridors and proximity to SINC's (to be set out in the forthcoming Green Infrastructure Strategy and London LNRS)</p> <p>Planting should be in as large tree pits as possible within the constraints of the site, preferably with at least two trees to support a mosaic habitat designed to sustain the whole life cycle of insects. Where as possible, trees should be integrated with in SuDS,</p> <p>Encourage and support community trees groups such as Herne Hill Tree Watch and Trees for Bermondsey.</p>
14	<p>Mandate biodiverse-friendly planting and maintenance in all new schemes including pocket parks, larger park planting schemes and SuDS.</p> <p>All new contracts approved through Trees, Housing, Parks, Planning or Highways should be chosen to explicitly enhance and maintain biodiversity.</p>	<p>All planting must be managed to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That herbaceous planting is with wildlife-friendly species, with due consideration given to all phases of invertebrate lifecycles, and majority UK native, • that Trees are selected according to the amended biodiversity focused criteria (above) • resilience in case of drought and excess rainfall and the extremes of UK temperatures. <p>Council officers including those managing Cleaning Greener Safer and Devolved Highway Budget projects should be made aware of these criteria.</p> <p>Where contractors/sub-contractors are responsible for the choice of plant species, these criteria should specified in contracts.</p> <p>This is a useful resource</p>

		https://www.lbp.org.uk/downloads/Publications/Management/making-contracts-work-for-wildlife.pdf
15	Improve the active management of SINCS.	<p>Ensure the SINC and management plan for each habitat type is in place and well-communicated to all relevant staff.</p> <p>Explicitly include sections for biodiversity-appropriate first response to Anti Social Behaviour (such as community policing, community engagement in activities such as litter picking, CCTV, fencing off sensitive habitat).</p>
16	Conduct systematic and periodic ecological audits of our parks, estates, verges pockets of land and SINCS, using targeted trial applications of AI-based bioacoustic monitoring devices. Use the information collected to increase wildlife.	
17	<p>Increase blue habitat, especially in areas where there are gaps by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. expanding the areas of marginal habitat around the borough's rivers and ponds; ii. increasing the number of ponds and wetlands, including temporary ponds. 	Explore whether and how existing underground rivers could be used in some areas of the borough to achieve this ambition.

18	Southwark should pursue the Water Framework Directive “Good Ecological Status” for all remaining above ground waterways, such as the Peck.	
Joined Up		
19	Provide, recognise, and protect routes for use by wildlife only, as well as for use for active travel, with reference to the work SNAV have done on wildlife corridors for nature and people, as part of the broader piece of work on Ecological Networks.	
20	Southwark should work with the GLA to adopt clearer definitions and requirements for nature-friendly “green” corridors, for example including guidelines for minimum widths, sizes, spacing, target species, and types of soil and planting.	
More animated		
21	Encourage, enable and support community and volunteer management of nature, wherever there is interest. As well as reducing costs, this will increase social benefit, educate and enhance the sustainability of wildlife friendly habitat.	Encourage, define and develop Public-Common Partnerships, as suggested in the Southwark Land Commission Report, where local community organisations share responsibility for land management with Southwark as the landowner
22	Develop a training programme on biodiversity and wildlife friendly management of green and blue space, targeted at officers and contractors	Ensure that all teams, including Planning, Climate Change, Parks, Housing, Flood Management, Highways, Air Quality and other departments are aware of our ambitions to address the Biodiversity

	<p>across all relevant roles and grades, suited to their job roles.</p> <p>This should be an integral part of the staff training already required to ensure that all areas of council policy are seen through the prism of the Climate Emergency and extended to include the Biodiversity Emergency.</p>	<p>Emergency.</p> <p>Managers and operational staff alike, including staff managing delivery of projects under the Cleaner Greener Safer and Devolved Highways Budget funding streams, must receive training and be properly managed to ensure that wildlife friendly practices are embedded into operations. Training should be repeated at regular intervals for existing staff and embedded in any induction training for new staff.</p> <p>Contractors and sub-contractors should be obliged to adopt the same commitments to biodiversity across their areas of responsibility, including in respect of training their staff.</p>
23	<p>Proactively promote Southwark’s ambition to address the biodiversity emergency and explain steps that the council is taking and plans to take to achieve that end. This will include information explaining decisions taken in response to the recommendations contained in this document, such going pesticide free and other changes in management of green and blue spaces across the borough.</p> <p>Develop a programme to engage residents in the appreciation of and connection to nature.</p>	<p>Use social media and publications such as Southwark Life to explain highlight our ambitions and paths to achieving them. These should include recommendations as to how residents, schools, places of worship and other stakeholders can help to protect and improve biodiversity in their own gardens and local green spaces.</p> <p>Facilitate an exhibition in the Tooley Street Atrium of Insectinside.me and encourage links to Southwark schools.</p> <p>Consider developing livestream wildlife webcams to increase resident involvement in and awareness of Southwark’s wildlife.</p>
24	<p>Actively promote wildlife gardening to residents.</p>	<p>Promote water butts to households including as recommended above.</p> <p>Deliver this in partnership with the Centre for Wild Life Gardening and other members of Southwark Biodiversity Partnership</p>

	Bolder	
25	Develop ambitious cross borough Ecological Networks , and particularly consider the ecological and social potential of daylighting more of Southwark’s Rivers (eg. the River Peck in Peckham Rye Park and River Effra in the south of the borough) and increasing marginal habitat.	
	Food and biodiversity	
26	Make Southwark a “Right to Grow” borough, taking a motion to Southwark Council Assembly adopting ‘The Right to Grow’.	<p>A ‘The Right to Grow’ motion along the lines below would be appropriate:</p> <p>This Council notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that the cost-of-living crisis and the continued efforts to • recover from the pandemic bring a new focus on ensuring that residents have access to enough fresh food for day to day living;The increasing need to put the health and well-being of residents at the heart of our corporate strategies; • The powerful evidence which demonstrates the link between people’s health and wellbeing and the availability of fresh locally produced food. • That the cost-of-living crisis is creating real hunger, reinforcing the need for healthy fresh food at an affordable price. • That communities coming together to grow food can radically reduce costs to NHS and social care budgets by reducing loneliness and providing healthy food. • That there is plenty of under used publicly owned land which could be used for community food growing while also

		<p>improving the public realm.</p> <p>This Council agrees (<i>or to the extent that the below concern executive functions, recommends to the executive</i>) to adopt a Right to Grow on council owned land which is suitable for cultivation.</p> <p>As a result, this Council will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and produce a map of all council owned land suitable for community cultivation. • Make this land available for cultivation by a simple license to community organisations at no cost. • Consider community food growing on sites awaiting development for other uses on a fixed term basis. • Write to Southwark’s MPs and ask them to support the Incredible Edible campaign and national right to grow. <p><i>In addition the Council will work with partners through the Land for Good delivery process and encourage anchor institutions and civil society to join the council in the above endeavor .</i></p>
27	Map food growing plots	<p>Undertake this mapping as part of a larger piece of engagement work with community stakeholders to release more land for community good (see recommendation X).</p> <p>Commission this mapping work internally or externally.</p> <p>Include as a minimum a public facing element that helps residents to discover ownership of land that could be used to grow food, and also invites local landowners to submit potential food growing plots for community use under license, for a minimum of 5 years.</p>
28	Update the SNAP to include a community garden plan, which includes the right for residents to	

	have a garden, orchard, or food growing plots on their estate. Include details on how Southwark can support urban agriculture to increase biodiversity.	
29	Include a Food Policy in the next update of the Southwark Plan that requires developers to include spaces for urban agriculture, allotments and community gardening.	
30	Undertake to support Agroecology through all urban agriculture initiatives and in future iterations of the Southwark Plan and food procurement.	
31	Work with the Capital Growth network to monitor and measure how food growing projects in Southwark are improving biodiversity and helping to tackle the ecological emergency.	
32	Create new urban farming and community food growing zones alongside new developments (roof tops, schools and new parks and green land).	Old Kent Road would be a good test site for an integrated and inclusive food growing system.
33	Support local market initiatives, such as cooperative grocery stores, farmers' markets and other community hubs, in collaboration with food growing projects in the area and initiatives such as the Walworth Neighbourhood Food Model.	

