



Southwark Nature Action Plan (SNAP)

Consultation Summary Report

12th November 2019

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Introduction

This report is a summary of information and findings from a range of engagement that has taken place across Southwark over the last three months. We had 170 responses to the online consultation. We would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone who took time to participate. Your valuable comments and feedback have helped shape the next version of our Southwark Nature Action Plan and how we deliver nature conservation and make nature more accessible across Southwark.

Background Information

A local Biodiversity Action Plan sets out how Southwark Council will meet its legal duties and council plan targets on protecting biodiversity and making nature accessible for all. A new Southwark Nature Action Plan (SNAP), was drafted in August 2019. The plan aims to ensure the protection of biodiversity and make nature accessible for all.

There have been quite a few policy changes since the last Biodiversity Action Plan was produced. The Council has declared a Climate an Emergency and this is inexorably linked to nature conservation and the pressures wildlife faces.

The Government has pledged to introduce mandatory biodiversity net gain and nature recovery. London became the world's first National Park City in July 2019.

How we engaged with the community and stakeholders?

Workshops with the Southwark Biodiversity Partnership began in late 2018 and have continued with regular meeting through out this year.

The public consultation ran from the 12th September to the 27th October 2019 to gather the public's view on the new plan and engagement with nature, along with feedback from internal departments, stakeholders and local partners. The findings of the consultation and feedback from local organisations are detailed in this report.

The public consultation was advertised widely to residents and partner groups.

The public consultation results

Question 1: Do you live or work in Southwark?

The majority (90%) of respondents lived in the borough.

Question 2: Do you think nature is important to your daily lives?

A clear majority felt that nature was important in their daily lives.

98% felt it was important.

Question 3: Where do you go in Southwark to enjoy/access nature?

The responses show that parks with 98%, are the main destination of choice for residents wanting to enjoy or access nature. Gardens, the Thames and woods were the next most popular choices.

Question 4: Are you taking part in any activity to help wildlife in Southwark?

Just over 56% said they were doing something to help wildlife. Some examples were;

'Created a pond in my garden and was part of a successful bid to increase wildlife planting in Burgess Park Lake'.

'Bird Feeder on balcony for Gold Finches - often visited by at least 16 or more per day and encouraging 3+ sets of chicks per annum per breeding pair. Local Squirrel also enjoys'.

'I manage my garden carefully. I help to record birds in Rotherhithe. I have written a wildlife blog'.

About 20% of respondents said they volunteered with one of our partner organisations.

40% said they were not. Some of the reasons given were;

'I am not aware of many things I can do to improve wildlife in Southwark, and also I am under the impression that these activities take place during core working hours so it would be impossible to commit to if that was the case'.

'Would like to if there were super-local opportunities to get involved, or suggestions as to how I can help wildlife while living in a 4-storey block of flats!'

'Yes, I would like to do it; I sometimes struggle to find the time and not sure to have the skills to do it'

Question 5: How regularly do you visit green spaces in Southwark?

The responses show that the respondents regularly visit green spaces. 43% said they visited a green space every day, 33% said they visit more than once a week.

Question 6: Why do you visit green spaces?

The majority of respondents said they visited green spaces for Nature, exercise and mental health. Nature scored highest with 84%. 43% said they were commuting through and 68% said gave exercise as the reason.

Question 7: One of the Council's aims with the new Southwark Nature Plan is to 'make nature accessible for all'. What does this statement mean to you?

The consultation listed 8 options. The main things respondents thought were important when making nature accessible for all were better facilities in green spaces and improved footpaths and gateways. Volunteering opportunities and training were the 3rd and 4th highest things. Only 36% said events and activities were important. Results for this question are below:

- Better facilities in green spaces 60%
- Volunteering opportunities 53%
- Education & training opportunities 53%
- More events and activities 41%
- Improved footpaths and gateways 60%
- Transport options 21%
- Signage 45%
- Other 14%

Question 8: Some of our nature sites are closed or have areas closed to the public to help protect the wildlife living there. Some of these areas are open to schools and other user groups by appointment. Do you agree that nature sites should be restricted as described above?

This question listed 6 options, results to the options were:

- Open 10%
- Open by appointment 45%
- Have set opening times 40%
- Restricted access 54%
- Closed 10%
- Able to be booked for schools and other user groups 56%

The responses show a clear preference of nature sites not being open all the time with only 10% supporting this

option. Being closed was also unpopular with only 10% opting for this. There was no clear majority on the other options. The most popular choices were for nature areas being able to be booked or schools and other user groups or have restricted access.

Question 9: Do you agree that it is necessary to protect wildlife in Southwark?

The response to this question was 100% or respondents thought it was necessary to protect wildlife in Southwark.

Question 10: Are you doing anything to support nature in your area or a Southwark Community?

68% of respondents said they were doing something to support nature in their area or Southwark Community. Below are examples of things people said they were doing:

*'We are using a community centre garden as an area where people can come socialise, relax, plant, and exercise and so on The Green Community Centre'.
'Providing bird feeders, nesting boxes, wild areas in garden, longer grass, water for birds, no pesticides'
'Volunteering, organic gardening'*

'Volunteer regularly at Galleywall Nature Reserve. Encourage local schools and community groups to use the reserve'.

'I feed birds, and remove rubbish from nature areas to protect wildlife'.

'We have a TRA committee for caring for the pond garden. We plant and weed as needed. We protect it to keep it wild'.

'Local green space growing edible food to tackle food security. Soon to be delivering introduction to horticulture courses for local residents. Planting to beautify existing unused borders or raised beds'.

Question 11: Have you attended any events in Southwark run by any of the following organisations?

Respondents were given 10 options, results to the options were:

London Wildlife Trust 34%
The Conservation Volunteers 16%
Bankside Open Spaces Trust 13 %
Walworth Garden 16%
Bee Urban 14%
Surrey Docks Farm 36%
Better Bankside 7%
Team London Bridge (Potters Field) 12%
Southwark Events Team 21%

Other 11%
Not Answered 24%

Surrey Docks Farm and London Wildlife Trust were the most attended providers of events. 21% have visited events run by Southwark Events Team.

Question 12: We believe engagement with nature is important in Southwark. What would you like to see more of in Southwark?

Consultees were given 7 options, results to the options were:

- Volunteering opportunities 52%
- Nature trails 70%
- Signage about nature 63%
- Events on nature 64%
- Training about nature 58%
- Children's nature clubs 62%
- Other 9%
- Not Answered 3%

Nature Trails were the most popular choice with 70% identifying this as something they would like to see more of. Children's nature clubs, signage, Events and Training were the next most popular choices.

Selected comments under 'Other' included:

'More wild areas - e.g. native tree planting/meadows in parks and public spaces'.

'Changing management plans to place ecology at centre of green spaces. Educating garden management teams on wildlife practices e.g.: not mowing amenity grassland to an mms of its life, increasing wildflower/long grass/meadow areas. Improving health of water bodies, investing in infrastructure to allow these improvements: machinery and people, providing education and training opportunities for general public and community bird feeders'.

'More trees and flowers could be planted - there cannot be too many - and more schools could use nature sites for forest school sessions and ready-made outdoor classrooms to learn about nature's role in the world they live in'.

'Green roofs and walls as part of new developments, which provide habitat, energy saving and also visual delight'.

'More information sent to each household about how to get involved in events, and about the local spaces they can visit on their own if events don't appeal (not everyone wants to be organised into a group)'.

'Engage corporates. Talk with companies to do like 'gardening during lunch time' activities'.

'Celebrity hosted activities on nature in our urban environment. A naturalist who will inspire the next generation by seeing the fascination and importance of nature on our doorsteps, even in London'.

Question 13: How would you like to find out about future nature activities, events and projects?

Consultees were given 7 options. Posters in parks (67%), Southwark Website and Social media were the most popular options selected. The results are below:

- Southwark website 58%
- Social media 63%
- Posters in parks 67%
- E-newsletter 53%
- Local press 43%
- Other websites (please specify below).... 9%
- Other printed materials (please specify below).... 9%

Several respondents noted; 'Advertising via societies such as the Dulwich or Peckham Societies' as an option.

Question 14: What barriers do you think people face to accessing nature?

Consultees were given 7 options, results to the options were:

- Physical accessibility of paths 46%
- Mobility issues 46%
- Ramps 17%
- Toilets 45%
- Awareness of where wild spaces are to visit in the borough 70%
- Awareness of how people can get more actively involved (e.g. through volunteering or taking part in workshops) 62%
- Other 10%

Awareness of where wild spaces are (70%) was considered the biggest obstacle and awareness of how people can get actively involved (62%) was seen as the second largest obstacle. Site access and facilities were seen as obstacles for just under half of all respondents.

Question 15: Please use the box below to make any other comments

This is a selection of comments provided for this question:

'Thank you for this consultation. I'm proud to live in Southwark partly due to its green spaces and libraries'.

'Ponds and Meadows although of great importance for wildlife can be expensive and difficult to maintain. They

should not be created unless there is infrastructure and funding to maintain them'

'I think it's fantastic that Southwark are asking these questions. I hope that something is taken forward - each little step counts and so in terms of wildlife and nature, it's better to start doing anything now'.

'Spend money, invest in nature and reduce the amount you spend combatting poor mental health and obesity. All the evidence is available. Use it'.

'If you are serious about making nature accessible reverse the decision to introduce parking charges - it will stop people using the parks and put-up a barrier to volunteers'.

'I believe dog walkers should be barred from habitats'.

'The BAP is very interesting it needs some short, medium and long-term goals and some specific metrics and more focus on funding'.

'Thank you for offering this survey. I very much something positive does come of it. The watchword for me is AWARENESS. How much are people aware of what they already have and what they could potentially lose'.

'Funding to projects that are greening urban spaces'.

A budget for bio-diversity is needed and it is not enough to have only one ecology officer.

Pesticides and neonicotinoids should be banned throughout the Borough. Spraying with weed killers of any type must be stopped at once.

Contractors hired by the Council such as Quadron Idverde must be compelled to stop unnecessary and excessive strimming of grassy areas.

Light pollution in all areas of Southwark must be drastically reduced.

Planning permission should not be granted to any developer who is not prepared to protect nature and someone must enforce this'.

'A narrow-minded consultation focussing on activities and space - this shows you don't value nature for what it is intrinsically'.

'The council must prevent large developments on the borders of parks to stop them from affecting the wildlife in the park'.

'I think its really important Southwark Council continue to maintain, enhance and protect (with the community) the fantastic array of green space and wildlife we have, not just for local residents and future generations who live in Southwark but for the rest of London and its wildlife. That includes when money is short and the developers flash their cash to build that 6 story block on top of a nature reserve - it needs to be protected or we will loose our city's amazing biodiversity, once its gone we may not get it back again'.

'I would welcome more information about biodiversity in the local area. May be the local TRA would be a good point of contact for information to be disseminated to local people and other groups'.

'I welcome the biodiversity plan and the efforts that Southwark has made in encouraging wildlife. As a resident of Rotherhithe I think there are further steps that it could take. One of the biggest problems in TCV, Stave Hill and Russia Dock Woodland is dogs off leads. These woods are home birds - sometimes on passage that spend much of their time on the ground. Such as Woodcock, Green Woodpecker, Snipe, and Water Rail. I have seen fewer of these birds in Rotherhithe over the last few years. The sign on the entrance to Stave Hill says no more than 6 dogs per person with no more than three off the lead. It beggars belief that Southwark can allow this in a Nature Reserve. Dogs disturb ground nesting birds and should be kept on leads in Nature Reserves. You should insist on this. Perhaps with a dog run in the main field. Also the woods need to be managed better for wildlife. Cutting down trees in Stave Hill to plant hops in the middle of a wood makes no sense at all in terms of nature and biodiversity. Stave Hill holds rare Firecrest. Their main habitat is evergreen laurel. Yet much of this has been hacked away over the last year and Firecrest have declined in number'.

'More attention needs to be given to the species of trees planted in the woodland and roadsides. Fieldfare and Redwing are winter visitors that feed on berries. More attention should be given to planting trees such as Sorbus, rather than replacing London Plane with more London Plane that are ecologically barren and reduce biodiversity'.

'Southwark are doing a good job with the nature - but more needs to be done at Southwark Park Lake which looks awful at the moment. There was a dead duck on one of the lake islands that stayed there until it decomposed, despite the staff being alerted by myself. It is also full of duck weed and looks terrible - it can't be good for the ducks or the fish -and the cormorants went up into the trees. I also have to register my dismay that two of the weeping willows were felled for the new cafe. Last summer there was no shade for the ducks, just for a cup of coffee! You need to do more!'

Demographics

The majority of respondents were aged between 25 – 74 years old none were under 18 years old.

The majority of respondents (61%) were White British. 8% were European.

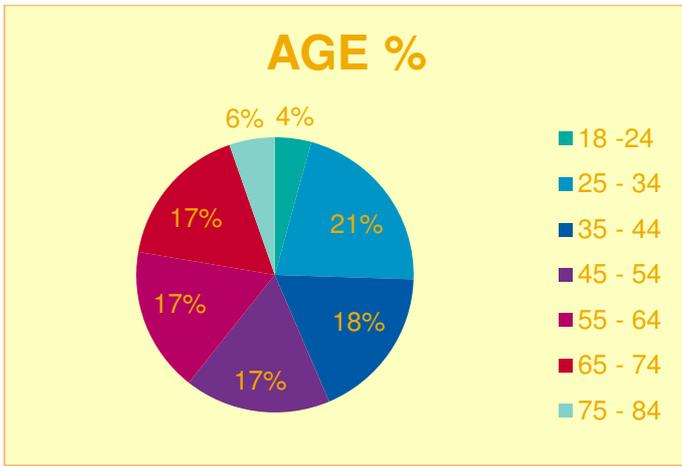


Fig 1, age of respondents

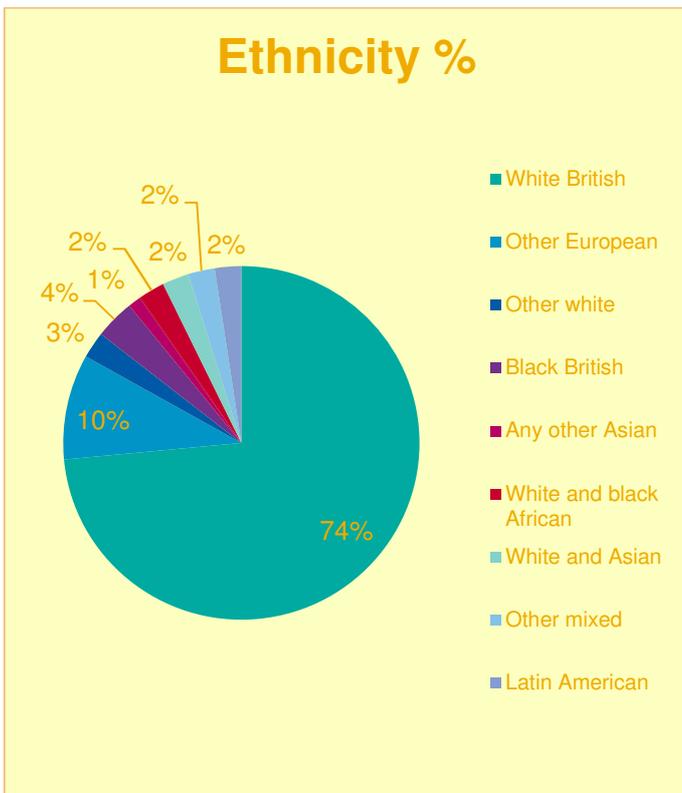


Fig 2, Ethnicity of respondents

Next Steps

The results have been reviewed and incorporated in the Southwark Nature Action Plan. A revision will incorporate the points raised along with comment from within Council departments. This report will be published online.

Where comments fall outside the policy area of the Southwark Nature Action Plan these will be disseminated to the relevant departments and teams. We have incorporated goals with a timeframe into the species action plans.

A funding workshop with the biodiversity partnership will be held once the plan is adopted and we will develop a proactive approach to funding so we are ready to act when new funding streams become available.

Q14 suggests that awareness of where the natural spaces in was an obstacle. We will develop resources to raise awareness of where wildlife sites are and promote the flora and fauna present.

Comments on the role of developers protecting and enhancing biodiversity are addressed in the theme of Biodiversity net gain and through local and regional planning policy.

The Southwark Nature Plan (SNAP) will produce a series of new mini plans and policies. A cultural SNAP and a Young SNAP will be developed.

Guidance on how residents and stakeholders can help nature will be refreshed. The Nature Recovery plan will widen the restoration of biodiversity to all parts of the council.