

# Islington Council Biodiversity Action Plan 2020 to 2025





# Contents

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Foreword	4
1. Why do we need a Biodiversity Action Plan?	6
2. Vision 2030: Building a Net Zero Carbon Islington by 2030	14
3. The Ecology of Islington	16
4. The Policy Context	20
5. 2010-2013 Biodiversity Action Plan Review	26
6. The Action Plans	28
The Built Environment Action Plan	31
Parks, Housing Estates and Urban Green Spaces Action Plan	35
Designated Sites Action Plan	42
Access to Nature Action Plan	45
References	52
Appendix A: List of Islington SINCs	55
Appendix B: Map of Islington SINCs	60
Appendix C: Map of Areas of Deficiency in Access to Nature	61
Appendix D: List of partner organisations	62

# Foreword

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In 2019 the UN launched the Global Assessment study of biodiversity, announcing that its findings put the world “on notice”. Highlighting the universal importance of biodiversity, the report brings to light the unprecedented loss of species over the past 50 years and warns that human activities “threaten more species now than ever before”.

Set in the context of this global crisis, Islington’s new Biodiversity Action Plan outlines how we in Islington will contribute to the national and world-wide effort to protect biodiversity for future generations. There is lots that we can achieve at a local level to safeguard our existing wildlife and to make the places where we live greener, cleaner and healthier.

At a time when concerns about climate change are growing stronger, we need to remember the important role that biodiversity plays in climate control. Environmental sustainability is fundamental to our work as a council, and the importance of protecting wildlife is a key part of that message.

Islington is one of the most densely populated London boroughs, and yet it supports an amazing range of wildlife. From house sparrows to rare orchids, there is a surprising diversity of animals and plants on our doorsteps. This Biodiversity Action Plan sets out the principles by which Islington will ensure that wildlife is protected and enhanced, and how everyone in the borough will have access to a high quality natural environment.

A Biodiversity Action Plan is not an end in itself, but a collaborative and ongoing piece of work, involving not only the Council but the wider community in working towards its goals. I believe that everyone in Islington should be able to make a contribution towards protecting and enhancing our natural environment.



**Councillor Rowena Champion  
Executive Member for  
Environment and Transport**



# **1. Why do we need a Biodiversity Action Plan?**

# 1. Why do we need a Biodiversity Action Plan?

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## 1.1 What is Biodiversity?

The word 'biodiversity' is used to describe the abundance and variety of life on earth. It covers the whole range of living things: animals and birds, trees and flowers, insects and fungi. It is concerned with the interactions within and between species and

the communities, habitats and ecosystems in which they occur. It is not just about the rare and the threatened. As important, is the wildlife we see and experience every day and which contributes to our quality of life and enhances the environment in which we live.

Figure 1. Family pond-dipping in a wildlife pond



## 1.2 What is a Biodiversity Action Plan?

This plan is the third Biodiversity Action Plan for Islington and covers the period 2020 to 2025. The Islington BAP draws on UK biodiversity strategies and the London BAP to produce a plan that is relevant on a local level. The purpose of a BAP is to identify actions needed to safeguard and enhance biodiversity, and to enable people to benefit from it.

Since Islington is a very urban borough, the habitats and species that are significant on a national scale, are often not present here. Following consultation with stakeholders, it was decided that this BAP would break away from the traditional BAP structure of Habitat and Species Action Plans and instead focus on the following key areas:

- The built environment
- Designated sites
- Parks, housing estates and urban green spaces
- Access to nature

This BAP is a partnership document, put together in consultation with interested parties from a wide range of groups such as Friends of Parks, third sector organisations and community groups. The success of any BAP depends upon the Council working in partnership with the wider community and we welcome continued support and involvement from people who wish to contribute to this important work.

## 1.3 Why is biodiversity important?

We rely on the natural environment for our health, well-being, economic stability and social development. Whether we are aware of it or not, our everyday needs are intrinsically linked to the important ‘ecological services’ biodiversity provides and which we cannot afford to lose. Extinctions and changes to biological systems have always occurred naturally, but it is the rate at which these losses and changes are now occurring that is of serious concern. The loss of biodiversity already occurring is staggering, and so are the future predictions. This decline is acutely experienced in urban areas such as London where the competition between development, people and wildlife is often at its greatest. It is vital that we protect and maintain the Earth’s biodiversity on a global scale, but equally important that we take action at a local level.

### 1.3.1 The links between biodiversity, health and social well-being

We depend greatly on biodiversity for our well-being and quality of life. Biodiversity plays an important role in enhancing and encouraging outdoor recreation, exercise and relaxation and can help tackle health issues such as obesity and mental health problems.

Islington is the 24th most deprived local authority in England (out of 326). The borough has the third highest level of child poverty in England (36%) and it ranks fourth nationally for income deprivation affecting older people. Every ward in Islington has at least one area that ranks among the 20% most deprived

Figure 2. Local residents volunteering at Gillespie Park nature reserve



areas of England. The gap in healthy life expectancy between the least and most deprived areas of Islington is 7.7 years for women and 10 years for men. It is estimated that 20% of Islington adults are obese and 36% of children in Year 6 (aged 10 to 11 years) are classified as overweight or obese, which is worse than the average for England.

There is a growing body of evidence that access to nature can help improve people's physical and mental health. In 2017, DEFRA produced an "Evidence statement on the links between natural environments and human

health"<sup>1</sup> which reported strong evidence for the link between contact with the natural environment and mental health and well-being.

A study by the Centre for Research on Environment, Society and Health (2012)<sup>2</sup> found that regular exercise in a natural environment can cut the risk of suffering from poor mental health by 50%. Exercising indoors was found to yield no significant benefits for mental health when compared with the outdoor environment.

Studies have shown that the likelihood of participating in physical activity at recommended levels was 22% lower in participants who perceived access to green space as difficult as opposed to very easy (NERC, 2011)<sup>3</sup>.

In both adults and children there is evidence that learning in natural environments is associated with the accumulation of social capital and fostering pride, belonging and involvement in the community (Links between natural environments and learning, Natural England. July 2016)<sup>4</sup>.

‘Areas of Deficiency in Access to Nature’ are defined as being more than one kilometre walking distance from a publicly accessible Borough or Metropolitan Site of Importance for Nature Conservation. **17% of Islington is deficient in access to nature**, meaning that there is inequality in opportunity for Islington residents in accessing natural green space. At the time of the last BAP (published in 2010) one third of the borough was deficient in access to nature. This figure has been successfully reduced through the designation of new Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) but more needs to be done through the improvement of other green spaces and also the targeting of individuals from Areas of Deficiency who could benefit from activities in the natural environment. Appendix C shows Islington’s Areas of Deficiency.

### 1.3.2 Biodiversity benefits for young people

Exposure to the natural environment has a beneficial impact on young people’s physical, mental and social development. Contact with nature has been shown to improve children’s concentration, confidence and behaviour. In 2016, Natural England published a report containing evidence that a greater amount of natural spaces in or around the learning environment (e.g. the school) is associated with better emotional, behavioural and learning processes and outcomes<sup>5</sup>. Research from the University of Derby has found that children who feel connected to nature achieve better results in their key stage 2 tests than those who do not<sup>6</sup>.

The value of maintaining high quality natural green space close to people’s homes is more important than ever in an inner city borough like Islington where many children grow up in homes without gardens, or where garden space is very limited. A study by Childwise (2013) found that by the age of seven, children will on average have spent a full year of their lives on screens<sup>7</sup>. This sedentary lifestyle increases the likelihood of obesity and related health problems. Access to green space can play a vital role in addressing these complex issues.



Figure 3. Child enjoying natural play

### 1.3.3 Ecosystem services

Ecosystem services are the benefits that people obtain from the natural environment. They are integral to the provision of clean water and air, the production of food, the regulation of climate and disease and the decomposition of waste. They also include cultural services such as the provision of spaces for recreation and education. Pollination is an ecosystem service that is under threat directly due to declining biodiversity. Around 80 percent of all flowering plant species world-wide are pollinated by animals, mainly insects. Through the pollination of commercial crops such as tomatoes, peas, apples and strawberries, insects are estimated to contribute over £600

million per annum to the UK economy (2015)<sup>8</sup>. The State of Nature 2013 report showed that in the UK more than half of the bee, butterfly and moth species studied have declined in the past 50 years<sup>9</sup>.

Locally, Islington's green infrastructure, including our parks and open spaces, gardens, allotments, railway corridors and street trees, provides a valuable function. It not only makes the borough a greener and more visually attractive place to live but reduces the risk of flooding, improves air quality, provides us with locally grown food, improves health and well-being, and helps to cool urban areas in summer. In all it plays an essential role in the everyday lives of every Islington resident.

Figure 4. Bees are essential pollinators



### 1.3.4 Biodiversity and economics

Ecosystem services have historically been viewed as public goods with no markets and no prices, so they have often been left out of economic calculations. Yet two-thirds of the world's ecosystem services are in decline as a result of loss of biodiversity from human induced pressures including population growth, changing diets, urbanisation and climate change. In 2017 a ground-breaking study published by the Mayor of London looked for the first time at the economic value of health benefits that Londoners get from the capital's public parks and green spaces. The Natural Capital Account for London<sup>10</sup> concluded that:

- London's public green spaces have a gross asset value of more than £91 billion, providing services valued at £5 billion per year.
- For each £1 spent by local authorities and their partners on public green space, Londoners enjoy at least £27 in value.
- Londoners avoid £950 million per year in health costs due to public green space.

### 1.3.5 Our Biodiversity Duty

The "Biodiversity Duty" of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 requires that "every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity". This Biodiversity Action Plan is the mechanism by which Islington Council aims to fulfil its 'Biodiversity Duty' by highlighting priorities and opportunities for protecting and enhancing the borough's biodiversity.

Figure 5. A rare Green Winged Orchid found on the green roof of a council building in Islington



## **2. Vision 2030: Building a Net Zero Carbon Islington by 2030**

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Climate change is arguably the greatest threat to biodiversity on a global level. The United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reported in October 2018 that the world has until 2030 to avoid an increase in global temperatures above 1.5°C, which would have devastating impacts on the planet and people's lives.

Islington Council has declared a climate and environment emergency and pledged to work towards making Islington net zero carbon by 2030. The Council has produced a new action plan: Vision 2030: Building a Net Zero Carbon Islington by 2030 which sets out how this will be achieved. This, along with other environmental policies such as the Islington Transport Strategy 2019-2041 and the Air Quality Strategy (2019- 2023) all work to complement the work of the BAP to improve the quality of Islington's environment.

At a time when concerns about climate change are growing stronger, we need to remember the important role that biodiversity and the natural environment plays in climate control. Islington's green infrastructure contributes to reducing the impacts of climate change in the following ways:

- Green spaces, trees and water bodies have a cooling effect in summer, reducing the effects of raised urban temperatures
- In winter, green roofs and walls can reduce the heat lost by buildings by providing better insulation and thus lowering energy use.
- Street trees and green spaces make a major contribution to the capture and storage of CO<sub>2</sub> and improvement of air quality. Since about 50% of wood by dry weight is comprised of carbon, tree stems and roots can store up to several tonnes of carbon for decades or even centuries. Research carried

out by UCL in 2018 suggests that the urban forest can store almost as much carbon as an equivalent area of tropical forest.

- Soils play a major role in storing carbon. The amount depends on the management as most carbon is stored in root systems. So management that leaves the roots undisturbed and allows a long growing period followed by cut and lift (i.e. meadow management) sequesters most carbon.
- Green spaces provide natural drainage which help prevent flooding incidents and filter pollutants before they reach water courses.

This BAP will play a key role in contributing to Islington's net zero carbon plan through the following actions:

- Protecting Islington's network of green spaces and SINCS.
- Increasing the number of street trees planted.
- Increasing the number of green roofs created on new developments.
- Converting some areas of amenity grass in parks and housing estates into meadows.
- Creating more areas of planting in parks, housing estates, and the built environment.
- Creating more sustainable urban drainage schemes (SUDS).
- Encouraging wildlife gardening and community action in greening the environment.
- Raising awareness through events and education of the importance of taking action against climate change.

# 3. The Ecology of Islington

# The Ecology of Islington

## 3.1 Introduction to Islington's ecology

Urban areas are becoming increasingly important as refuges for wildlife. Many plants and animals have adapted to these environments and made them their home. From swifts which use cracks and crevices in buildings to nest, to the colonisation by many wildflowers, such as London rocket, wildlife has learned to flourish in the inner city.

Islington is the third smallest, but most built up of all London boroughs covering 14.86 km squared. It is the most densely populated local authority area in England and Wales, with 15, 517 people per square km, meaning that it has the smallest amount of green space per head of population. Only 13% of the borough's land is green space, the second lowest proportion of any local authority in the country. As explained in section 1.3.1, 17% of

Islington (249 hectares) is defined as being deficient in access to nature.

Despite the limited amount of green space in Islington, the borough supports a huge diversity of wildlife, from bee orchids and bats to great spotted woodpeckers. Our parks and green spaces are supported by a network of gardens, allotments and food growing areas, rail side lands, waterways and street trees.

Islington's biodiversity includes a number of rarities and nationally important species. Examples include the native black poplar, one of Britain's rarest native timber trees; the first recorded sighting in Britain of *Lasius emarginatus*, an ant species usually found in Europe and the red data book species *Nomada lathburiana*, a cuckoo bee which is a species of conservation concern.

Figure 7. Barnsbury Wood Local Nature Reserve

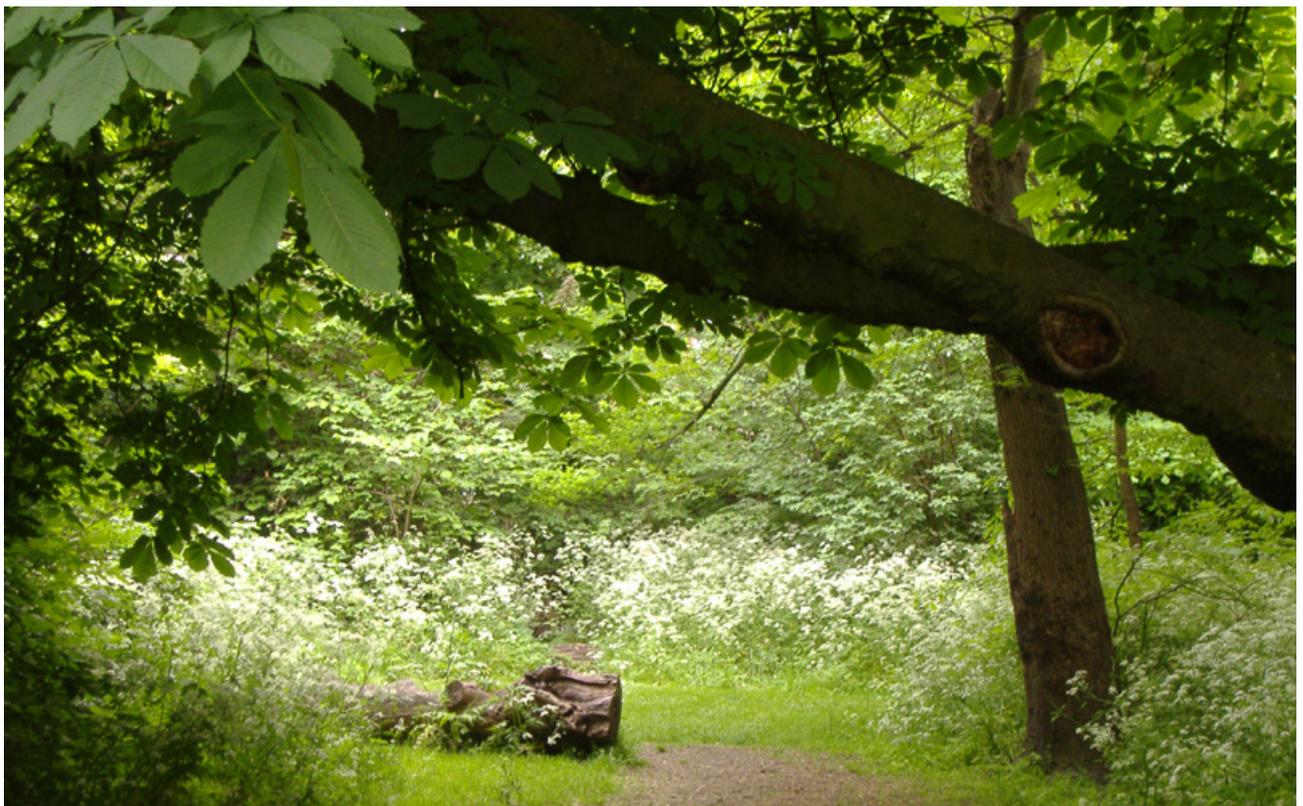


Figure 8. A wildflower meadow on a new housing development in Islington



### 3.2 Designated sites

Islington has two types of site designation that are relevant to nature conservation: Local Nature Reserves and Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs).

The borough's three statutory Local Nature Reserves are Gillespie Park, Barnsbury Wood and Parkland Walk. Gillespie Park consists of a mosaic of habitats, including ponds, woodland and grassland. Several wildflower species occur here that are rare in central London, including narrow-leaved bird's foot-trefoil, grass vetchling, and bee orchid. There is also a breeding population of slow worm, which is a nationally protected species. The Parkland Walk is home to Islington's largest area of woodland and has several nationally important species and habitats, including five different species of bat and a diverse acid grassland. Barnsbury Wood is London's smallest Local Nature Reserve which, despite its size, is a good example of mixed deciduous woodland. In addition to their valuable biodiversity interest, these sites also provide a great community resource, allowing people

in Islington to experience contact with nature. Gillespie Park is home to the borough's Ecology Centre which provides a curriculum-linked environmental education programme for schools and a broad programme of community events including volunteering opportunities.

In total there are 64 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) in Islington. Many of these are public parks, but they also include cemeteries, churchyards, school grounds, the Regents Canal, housing estates, railside lands and reservoirs (see Appendix A for a full list of designated sites). These non-statutory designated sites are afforded additional protection through the planning process.

Among these, the borough has three Sites of Metropolitan Importance, meaning that not only are they important to Islington but also to London on a regional level because of the nature they support. These sites are Gillespie Park, the Parkland Walk and the Regent's Canal.

### 3.3 Monitoring

Islington's Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation are required under National Indicator 197 (Improved Local Biodiversity – the active management of local sites) to receive active conservation management. All Local Authorities are required to provide an annual assessment of SINC within their area, reporting on number of sites and whether they are in positive conservation management. The resources and effort required to maintain and enhance these sites as biodiverse habitats should not be underestimated and presents a real challenge. For example, not all the sites are owned by the Council. Engaging landowners, such as Network Rail, to consider the biodiversity value of their sites and actively manage them for biodiversity can present problems.

Monitoring the condition of Islington's SINC is vital to ensuring their future protection. Developers can challenge the designation of a site as a SINC and if they can show that it has degraded and lost the original value for which it was designated, then the site cannot be properly protected by the planning system. This type of occurrence can undermine the value of the SINC network and so it is important that SINC are monitored and accurate records maintained. However, this has significant cost implications and is difficult to achieve.

The last full ecological survey of Islington's SINC and green spaces was carried out in

2010. The survey was carried out by Land Use Consultants and included 560 green spaces across the borough. The survey did not result in a list of all plants or animals found at the various locations; rather it was a broad-brush attempt to capture the main habitat types present at each site. The results of this survey led to the designation of several new SINC as well as some other changes, for example alterations to some existing SINC boundaries. With the review of Islington's Local Plan in 2018, a smaller scale survey of around twenty sites was carried out, with the intention of identifying any changes in SINC status. This survey resulted in the proposal to designate three new SINC (Grenville Road Gardens, Wray Crescent and Bevin Court) which will be undertaken as part of the development of Islington's new Local Plan.

The role of monitoring is central in ensuring that Islington's habitats and species are not being lost and to understanding any environmental changes that may be occurring. The information we collect is fed into the London-wide picture to help make assessments about the state of biodiversity in the capital as a whole. London's biological records centre (Greenspace Information for Greater London – GiGL) plays a central role in holding and analysing this data, as well as making it accessible for developers and policy makers. Like most other London boroughs, Islington has a service level agreement with GiGL to enable us to work in partnership.

## **4. The Policy Context**

# The Policy Context

## 4.1 London policies

In 2017, the Mayor of London produced the London Environment Strategy, which covers a wide range of environmental issues, including biodiversity under the banner of Green Infrastructure. Conserving and enhancing wildlife and natural habitats is a key element of the strategy, which recognises that important social, health and economic benefits result from greening the city.

The London BAP contains targets to improve the condition and increase the extent of a selected number of habitats and species found in the capital. The plan identifies 214 priority species that are under particular threat in London.

Figure 9. Swift and swift boxes



## 4.2 Planning and development

There is significant pressure on biodiversity through the loss of green space and brownfield sites to development and also through the renovation or demolition of existing buildings which can support species such as bats and swifts. The protection and enhancement of biodiversity habitats is important given pressure from development, climate change and deficiencies in access to nature within the borough.

Planning policies exist to protect biodiversity and to provide opportunities for enhancement. Designated sites receive protection through the planning system and some species, e.g. bats and nesting birds are protected by law. All developments are assessed for their likely impact on biodiversity and planning conditions are issued to developers which require them to mitigate for any loss and incorporate wildlife-friendly enhancements such as green roofs and nest boxes.

The following is a summary of relevant policies currently detailed in the Local Plan:

- Developments must protect, contribute to and enhance the landscape, biodiversity value and growing conditions of the development site and surrounding area, including protecting connectivity between habitats.
- Developments are required to maximise the provision of soft landscaping, including trees, shrubs and other vegetation, and maximise biodiversity benefits, including through the incorporation of wildlife habitats that complement surrounding habitats and support the council's Biodiversity Action Plan.

- New-build developments and all major applications are required to maximise the provision of green roofs and the greening of vertical surfaces. The policy requires that all available roof space is used for green roofs, subject to other planning considerations and that the green roofs are designed to maximise biodiversity benefits.
- The design of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) must maximise biodiversity benefits, for example through soft landscaping.
- Large major developments and developments where a specific need has been identified by the council are required to provide on-site publicly accessible open space, and such spaces must also maximise biodiversity benefits. New or improved public open space shall incorporate areas of biodiversity habitat complementing surrounding habitats and supporting the council's Biodiversity Action Plan. Public open spaces within the functional vicinity of a Site of Importance

Figure 10. Bug house on a new housing development in Islington



for Nature Conservation (SINC) shall be planted with native species and local provenance species and complement the species composition in the SINC.

- Development will not be permitted where it would adversely affect designated SINC of Metropolitan or Borough Grade 1 Importance, and SINC of Borough Grade II and Local Importance, and any other site of significant biodiversity value, will also be strongly protected.
- Development of private open space is not permitted where there would be a significant impact on biodiversity and ecological connectivity.

Policies covering other areas of development can sometimes conflict with the need to protect wildlife and this can result in planning decisions being made which result in a net loss of biodiversity, for example in the building of new hospitals or schools.

Despite the threats caused by development, greening the built environment arguably presents the greatest opportunity to increase biodiversity in a densely urban borough such

as Islington. Forgotten spaces on housing estates and the public highway can be transformed into places which benefit both biodiversity and improve quality of life for residents. Through incorporating biodiversity within robust planning conditions, features such as green roofs, green walls and wildlife friendly landscaping will maximise the available habitat for biodiversity in new development.

The Draft New London Plan published in 2018 by The Mayor of London states that “The inclusion of urban greening measures in new development will result in an increase in green cover, and should be integral to planning the layout and design of new buildings and developments”. The Mayor has developed a generic Urban Greening Factor model to assist boroughs and developers in determining the appropriate provision of urban greening for new developments. This is based on a review of green space factors in other cities and enables a score to be assigned to different types of landscaping features created in a new development.



Figure 12. A child enjoying activities at a community event

In Islington, these policies will be reflected in our Local Plan. Major developments and large minor developments will be expected to contribute to urban greening by including green cover as a fundamental element of site and building design. An Urban Greening Factor (UGF) will be developed to identify the appropriate amount of urban greening required in new developments. The UGF will encourage developers to incorporate surface cover types such as high-quality landscaping (including trees), green roofs, green walls and nature-based sustainable drainage. Each surface cover type will have a factor rating and developments will be required to achieve the target score relevant to the development type.

**4.3 Islington Council’s corporate priorities**

Protecting and enhancing the environment goes hand in hand with improving the lives of local communities and reducing environmental inequality. The Council’s Spark initiative focuses on building resilience, prevention and early intervention in order to help residents improve their quality of life. Access to high quality natural green spaces has a role to play in building resilient communities and preventing poor health outcomes.

This BAP will contribute to the Council’s priority of a fairer Islington, helping to reduce the differences experienced between the poorest and wealthiest residents, promoting community cohesion and ensuring that every Islington resident is able to access and experience the benefits that Islington’s wildlife and wild spaces provide.

Figure 13. A member of a local gardening group enjoys her harvest



## **5. 2010 – 2013 Biodiversity Action Plan Review**

## 2010 – 2013 Biodiversity Action Plan Review

To inform this new BAP, a review of the 2010 – 2013 BAP was carried out. The review looked at how many actions were completed against the various action plans. Whilst progress was made across the board, more was achieved in areas where Islington Council had a greater degree of control, such as parks and open spaces. In areas outside of Local Authority control, such as rail side land, it was far harder to achieve targets. In order to ensure that this new BAP is deliverable, this will be a key consideration in where we concentrate our efforts.

Figure 14. Planters displaying wildlife-friendly plants in Newington Green



## **6. The Action Plans**

# The Action Plans

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Islington's Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) is the borough's contribution to achieving the targets identified in both the UK and London BAPs. Islington's original BAP was first adopted in 2005 and was put together by Islington Biodiversity Partnership led by the Council. This new Plan will run from 2020 – 2025, and follows a new, simpler structure, that aims to ensure the actions of the BAP are measurable, deliverable and realistic.

The BAP sets out a framework for protecting and enhancing Islington's biodiversity and decreasing environmental inequality by improving access to high quality green spaces. By doing this, Islington's BAP will help improve the quality of life for every resident, protecting the Borough's natural environment and green infrastructure and securing its benefits for generations to come.

The protection and care of our wildlife is something that everyone can contribute to and benefit from and this action plan will help to co-ordinate that approach. We already have much to be proud of Islington, with a huge range of wildlife-rich sites, such as New River Walk, The Regent's Canal, Olden Community Garden and Culpepper Community Garden, to name but a few. In addition to Council resources and those of partner organisations, a huge amount of volunteer effort goes into making our green spaces fantastic places for both people and wildlife. This new BAP hopes to build on our current success by setting how we can engage with more people and create more spaces in the borough where wildlife can flourish. By creating more wildflower meadows, planting more trees and creating more food growing areas, we can help make Islington an even greener borough.

## OUR VISION

To protect and enhance Islington's biodiversity ensuring that everyone can have access to, and benefit from, the borough's natural environment near to where they live or work, now and in the future.

### Our priorities

1. To conserve existing habitats, biodiversity features and species.
2. To enhance and improve the condition of existing areas of habitat.
3. To create new habitats or increase the extent of existing habitat or range of species through restoration or expansion.
4. To engage the whole community in reducing environmental inequality by increasing access to green spaces for people and wildlife, providing the opportunity to learn about, protect and promote Islington's biodiversity.

### BAP themes

This new BAP takes a markedly different approach to the previous BAPs, with broader, thematic areas replacing the more specific Habitat and Species Action Plans. The four Actions Plans that form part of this BAP are:

1. The Built Environment (BE)
2. Parks, Housing Estates and Urban Green Spaces (GS)
3. Designated Sites (DS)
4. Access to Nature (AN)



Figure 15. Volunteers at Gillespie Park celebrating their Green Flag win

# The Action Plans

## Built Environment Action Plan (BE), 2020 to 2025

London’s wildlife depends not only on green spaces, but also on the artificial fabric of the city. Islington is one of the smallest and most built up of the London Borough’s and our built environment has a crucial role to play in supporting and enhancing biodiversity.

Buildings can provide roosting sites for bats and nesting opportunities for birds such as swifts, house sparrow, peregrine falcon and black redstart, species that have seen large population declines, and which are dependent on built areas for their survival. Walls can provide habitats for many species of plant, including ferns and mosses. They also provide spaces for invertebrates. Trees and roadside verges not only provide visual enhancement to the built environment but also help reduce pollution and provide habitats for birds and invertebrates.

It is important that the management of existing buildings and built landscape in

Islington takes account of wildlife and that new development is built with biodiversity in mind. New developments, large and small, for example can have a significant effect on Islington’s wildlife and on the ability of people to experience and enjoy nature.

The biggest opportunity we have for enhancing biodiversity and creating new habitat in the built environment is by ‘urban greening’. Through the use of green roofs, green walls, ecological landscaping and artificial nesting sites and the incorporation of some types of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS), different types of habitats supporting a wide range of species can be created. This forms an important part of our green infrastructure. These features can also play a useful role in connecting existing areas of habitat and supporting rare and protected species, as well as provide a broad range of other benefits, including reducing rainwater run-off, increasing energy efficiency and providing local cooling.

No	Broad area	Action	Target date	Lead Partners	Delivery method
BE 1.1	Conserve and enhance the built environment	Update local policy and guidance to ensure consistency with best practice and London-wide policy	2020	LBI Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the Environmental Design SPD to ensure it contains the most up to date advice for planners and developers.</li> <li>Ensure guidance is in line with other Local Authorities and The London Plan.</li> </ul>

BE 1.2	Conserve and enhance the built environment	Maintain and enhance Islington's street tree resource	2025	LBI Tree Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To increase canopy cover in Islington from 25% (2019) to 30% by 2050.</li> <li>• Increase the net number of street trees in Islington. Aim to replace existing trees when they have to be removed where practical and appropriate and seek opportunities for new tree planting sites.</li> <li>• To ensure resilience in the Islington street tree stock. To plant tree species that are appropriate for their location but also resilient to climate change and with consideration to incoming tree pests and diseases.</li> <li>• To increase the cyclical inspection for Islington tree stock to a minimum of every three years and amend with incoming legislative or best practice changes to ensure the council fulfils its duty of care.</li> <li>• To ensure the trees planted are sourced sustainably and with appropriate biosecurity if imported.</li> <li>• To ensure adequate mitigation for trees lost to development and seek net gain and canopy cover increase where possible.</li> </ul>
BE 1.3	New opportunities in built environment	Maximise biodiversity gains from new developments by requiring developments to incorporate biodiversity measures. This requirement is specified in detail in the new Local Plan	2025	LBI Planning LBI Greenspace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide guidance to developers on how to comply with planning policies that seek to maximise biodiversity gains.</li> <li>• Condition appropriate recommendations in ecological submissions from developers.</li> <li>• Formulate new planning conditions to require swift bricks on buildings over the specified height.</li> </ul>

BE 1.4	New opportunities in built environment	Install green roofs on new Council buildings where feasible as standard	2025	LBI Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to condition green roofs in line with best practice.</li> </ul>
BE 1.5	New opportunities in built environment	Require all major developments and new build minor developments to incorporate high quality green roofs as standard, including on new Council buildings	2025	LBI Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to require all developments to maximise the provision of green roofs and the greening of vertical surfaces as far as reasonably possible, through planning policies and planning conditions.</li> <li>New-build developments, and all major applications, are required to use all available roof space for green roofs, subject to other planning considerations. Green roofs must also be designed to maximise biodiversity benefits.</li> </ul>
BE 1.6	New opportunities in built environment	Encourage biodiversity improvements to be delivered through sustainable urban drainage systems	2025	LBI Planning LBI Greenspace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require the incorporation of SUDS that directly improve biodiversity as a primary function.</li> <li>Consider the incorporation of SUDS schemes into new landscape design projects in parks.</li> <li>Continue to require the design of SUDS measures that maximise biodiversity benefits, alongside water quality, amenity etc.</li> <li>As part of the new Local Plan, Green/'soft' SUDS measures including green roofs and open water features will be preferred over grey/engineered solutions as part of the drainage hierarchy.</li> </ul>

BE 1.7	New opportunities in built environment	Review landscaping proposals submitted with planning applications, to ensure that biodiversity benefits are maximised	2025	LBI Planning LBI Greenspace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planting schemes considered in terms of biodiversity value.</li> <li>Seeding schemes considered in terms of biodiversity value.</li> </ul>
BE 1.8	New opportunities in built environment	Provide specialist arboricultural advice on planning applications	2025	LBI Planning LBI Tree Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that existing trees are protected where possible and appropriate numbers and species of new trees are planted in new developments.</li> </ul>
BE 1.9	New opportunities in built environment	Identify opportunities to green the public realm through the creation of pocket parks and improvements of green infrastructure on our public roads and pavements including SUDs schemes	2025	LBI Highways and traffic engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that new schemes consider biodiversity value.</li> </ul>
BE 2.0	New opportunities in built environment	Identify opportunities to provide schemes which benefit wildlife via the temporary use of sites awaiting development	2025	LBI Planning LBI Highways and traffic engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use the policy in The Local Plan to strongly encourage site owners to make spaces available for temporary use by the local community. This includes very small sites such as pocket parks and the use of parking spaces as parklets.</li> </ul>

# The Action Plans

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## Parks, Housing Estates and Urban Green Spaces (GS), 2020 to 2025

Parks and urban green spaces are a vital asset in an inner city borough such as Islington, especially for the many residents who do not have gardens of their own. Our parks and urban green spaces offer opportunities for relaxation and recreation, and are beneficial to physical and mental well-being. They are of course also critically important for biodiversity.

The scope of this action plan covers publicly accessible green spaces, primarily:

- Parks
- Housing Estate Grounds
- Local Nature Reserves
- Publicly accessible churchyards

### Key Islington facts

- Islington has the second lowest amount of open space of any Local Authority in the country.
- The borough has the second highest number of parks of any other London borough, reflecting the small but densely populated nature of Islington, which supports a large number of very small parks.
- Islington has the smallest amount of open space per head of population of any London borough.
- Islington has 64 sites that are designated as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs). Although SINCS are covered by a separate action plan, it is worth remembering that the large majority are public parks and so there is some overlap.
- All Local Authorities are required to report to central government annually on how many SINCs they have and what proportion are in active management (this reporting system is known as the Single Data List 160).
- 17% of the borough is identified as deficient in access to nature (reduced from 33% of the borough in 2010 due to the designation of more SINCs).
- Islington Council manage approximately 160 parks and open spaces, 11.3% of the total area of which is actively managed for nature conservation. Islington Council's Greenspace Team carry out most of the work in parks and in green spaces on housing estates with our own in house Grounds Maintenance Service. However some parks are maintained by local residents. The Council employs Assistant Park Managers and Community Rangers to organise the management of the parks and help with community involvement, volunteering and events. A dedicated events team co-ordinate events run by external organisations in parks. Every year approximately 400 events take place in parks attracting 150,000 people. There are 35 Friends of Parks Groups in Islington dedicated to protecting and improving parks. Approximately 8,500 volunteer hours go into looking after Islington's parks every year.
- In addition to parks, there is approximately 57.3 hectares of open space on housing estates.
- There are three Local Nature Reserves in Islington: Barnsbury Wood, Gillespie Park, Parkland Walk (shared with Haringey Council)
- Approx 36% of the borough's trees are in the green spaces and 29% are on housing estates.
- Islington Council manage two cemeteries outside of the borough boundaries: Hampstead Cemetery (in Camden) and Islington and St Pancras Cemetery (in Barnet). Both sites support valuable habitats for wildlife, including wildflower meadows and areas of woodland.

No	Broad area	Action	Target date	Lead Partners	Delivery method
GS 1.1	Protect and enhance designated sites	Enhance where possible those parks and estates which are SINC (Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation) and where specific recommendations were made in the ecological survey of the borough in 2010	2021	LBI Greenspace and housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collate recommendations made and assess their feasibility.</li> <li>• Where feasible, create new wildlife habitats or improve existing ones according to the recommendations.</li> </ul>
GS 1.2	Protect and enhance designated sites	Ensure the effective management of parks and estate SINC to protect their wildlife habitats	2021	LBI Greenspace, housing Friends of Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regularly review existing Management Plans.</li> <li>• Produce new Management Plans for priority SINC sites.</li> <li>• Include biodiversity in all SLAs (Service Level Agreements) with groups managing SINC.</li> <li>• Assistant Park Managers to liaise with Friends Groups to raise awareness of the importance of the specific wildlife interest of each site.</li> <li>• Ensure staff have access to land-use maps of parks and SINC, showing where different wildlife habitats are.</li> </ul>

GS 1.3	Species monitoring	Collate species data to help to monitor changes taking place to quality of wildlife habitats	2025	LBI Greenspace GIGL Friends of Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out species monitoring on the borough's 3 Local Nature Reserves.</li> <li>• Supply all parks species records to GIGL.</li> <li>• Support and encourage Friends Groups and the wider public to carry out wildlife surveys and send data to GIGL.</li> </ul>
GS 1.4	Priority Species	Protect and enhance features for London BAP priority species, e.g. house sparrows, bats, bees, swifts	2025	LBI Greenspace and housing RSPB, Octopus, St Luke's Community Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain the 3 wildflower meadows created for house sparrows as part of the London House Sparrow Project.</li> <li>• Support and encourage projects around the protection of London BAP priority species, e.g. planting bee-friendly species on housing estates.</li> </ul>

GS 1.5	Enhance sites for biodiversity	Protect, enhance or create new wildlife habitats in parks and urban green spaces, e.g. housing estates	2025	LBI Greenspace Housing, Friends of Groups, Octopus, St Luke's Community Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create 250m” of new wildlife habitat per year in parks.</li> <li>• Include biodiversity in all SLAs (Service Level Agreements) with groups managing parks and open spaces, and assess the impact of this.</li> <li>• Ensure that all new Park Improvement Projects take account of biodiversity.</li> <li>• Support and encourage Friends of Groups and residents who want to undertake wildlife projects on sites e.g. Islington in Bloom.</li> <li>• Share the BAP with allotment holders via the Islington Allotment Forum and support action for biodiversity on allotments where possible e.g. beekeeping.</li> <li>• Ensure biodiversity improvements are included in all new development schemes in parks.</li> <li>• Seek CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) funding through the planning system to fund new biodiversity projects.</li> <li>• Map all biodiversity improvements on GIS (Geographical Information Systems).</li> <li>• Identify sites where new ponds or wetland habitats could be created, given their scarcity in the borough and their high biodiversity value.</li> </ul>
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GS 1.6	Enhance sites for biodiversity	Take action on housing estates to protect and enhance biodiversity	2025	LBI Housing and LBI Greenspace Octopus Community Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek opportunities to enhance housing estates for biodiversity with wildlife-friendly planting, meadows, nest boxes and food growing areas.</li> <li>• Ensure biodiversity improvements are included in all new development schemes in housing estates.</li> <li>• Provide advice to housing staff on managing sites for wildlife.</li> <li>• On housing estates, ensure overall number of trees does not decrease.</li> </ul>
GS 1.7	Enhance sites for biodiversity	Take action at Hampstead Cemetery and St Pancras and Islington Cemetery for biodiversity	2025	LBI Greenspace, LBI Cemeteries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage existing wildlife habitats in the cemeteries for the benefit of wildlife where possible.</li> <li>• Identify opportunities to extend existing wildlife habitats.</li> <li>• Install new features for wildlife such as bird boxes, bat boxes and log piles.</li> <li>• Support volunteer involvement e.g. TCV Green Gym and Friends Groups.</li> <li>• Produce a new Management Plan for Hampstead Cemetery.</li> </ul>

GS 1.8	Enhance sites for biodiversity	Protect and enhance trees in parks and open spaces	2025	LBI tree service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To increase canopy cover in Islington from 25% (2019) to 27% by 2030 and to 30% by 2050.</li> <li>• To ensure resilience in the Islington street tree stock. To plant tree species that are appropriate for their location but also resilient to climate change and with consideration to incoming tree pests and diseases.</li> <li>• To increase the cyclical inspection for Islington public tree stock to a minimum of every three years and amend with incoming legislative or best practice changes to ensure the council fulfils its duty of care.</li> <li>• To ensure the trees planted are sourced sustainably and with appropriate biosecurity if imported.</li> <li>• To ensure adequate mitigation for trees lost to development and seek net gain and canopy cover increase where possible.</li> <li>• Implement tree veteranisation plans in the nature reserves to speed up the process of decay in specific trees to enhance their value for wildlife. Also identify future veteran trees and manage woodland for them.</li> </ul>
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GS 1.9	Demonstrate best practice for biodiversity	Raise awareness of biodiversity issues by demonstrating best practice	2025	LBI Greenspace and housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure planting plans adhere to Greenspace’s Sustainable Planting Policy and renew this policy within the 5 year period.</li> <li>• Where possible buy peat free plants and work with suppliers to reduce the use of peat.</li> <li>• Use 50 tonnes of recycled compost a year on Islington’s parks and green spaces.</li> <li>• Retain undisturbed dead wood on site wherever possible to benefit invertebrates, amphibians and reptiles.</li> <li>• Install “bug hotels” and bird and bat boxes.</li> <li>• Ensure the benefits to wildlife are considered when decisions are made to remove ivy from trees and walls.</li> <li>• Identify and remove invasive species e.g. Japanese knotweed using best practice techniques.</li> <li>• Continually review use of pesticides and herbicides in public realm and housing and look to reduce where possible. Carry out trials for alternative chemical free weed removal options. Adoption of integrated weed management document.</li> </ul>
GS 2.0	Demonstrate best practice for biodiversity	Ensure existing wildlife habitats are managed effectively	2021	LBI Greenspace and housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide on the ground training for grounds maintenance staff and possibly caretakers on wildlife habitats and their importance.</li> </ul>

# The Action Plans

## Designated Sites Action Plan (DS), 2020 to 2025

Green spaces are designated for their importance for nature, according to nationally and locally recognised criteria. Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are sites that are important for wildlife but also for providing people with access to wildlife. They are selected and designated by local authorities, in consultation with Natural England. LNRs are statutory nature conservation sites. There are three LNRs in Islington: Gillespie Park, Parkland Walk (part of which is in Haringey) and Barnsbury Wood.

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) are areas which have been designated for their wildlife value by the local authority. They are non-statutory nature conservation sites. The London Wildlife Sites board oversees the procedures that local authorities need to follow in order to select and designate SINCs, however the board does not need

to approve the selection of individual sites. SINCs are given some protection through the planning process. SINCs have a hierarchy for their value to wildlife. This ranges from Sites of Metropolitan Importance (the most important sites, and those which have value on a London wide level), through Sites of Borough Importance (Grade I or Grade II) to Sites of Local Importance.

In Islington there are currently 64 SINCs with three additional SINCs proposed in the new Local Plan (2019). Most are owned by Islington Council, and many are parks, but some are owned by other landowners e.g. Network Rail and Thames Water. 58% of SINCs were in positive management for conservation in 2019. SINC designations are not statutory, so as a borough we are limited in what we can achieve on the sites outside of our direct control. This Action Plan reflects this, and lays out how as a borough we will aim to maintain and enhance our SINCs.

No	Broad area	Action	Target date	Lead Partners	Delivery method
DS 1.1	Monitor and maintain	Complete statutory requirements under the DEFRA Single Data List 160-00, reporting on percentage of SINCs in positive management	Annual requirement to report	LBI Greenspace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual collation of data.</li> <li>Maintenance of data and contacts with private landowners to allow accurate reporting.</li> </ul>

DS 1.2	Monitor and maintain	Review SINC data held by the Council to ensure that it is accurate and up to date	2025	LBI Greenspace LBI GIS GiGL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual review of data held by local authority, including checking base maps for any changes.</li> <li>• Notifying the London Wildlife Sites Board of any changes that require their input.</li> <li>• Maintaining up to date data with GiGL.</li> </ul>
DS 1.3	Monitor and maintain	Continue to enter into annual Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL), where budget allows, in order to access data and associated key benefits to aid biodiversity work	2025	LBI Greenspace GiGL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual renewal of SLA.</li> <li>• Regular filing of quarterly reporting data from GiGL.</li> <li>• Annual submission of species and habitat monitoring data from Greenspace to GiGL.</li> </ul>
DS 1.4	Strategic improvements	Focus on spatial impacts when considering any future improvements of SINCs	2025	LBI Greenspace LBI SPAT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult with Spatial Planning and Transport if funding becomes available to make biodiversity improvements, for example under the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) or Section 106 agreements.</li> <li>• Communicate any changes.</li> </ul>

DS 1.5	Strategic Improvements	Strengthen the SINC network through the adoption of new and upgraded SINC through the Local Plan	2020	LBI Greenspace LBI planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify those sites which may qualify for designation or an upgrade.</li> <li>Commission ecological surveys of these sites.</li> <li>Consider the recommendations of the surveys and designate where possible, in liaison with landowners and the London Wildlife Sites Board.</li> <li>Inform GIGL of any changes.</li> </ul>
DS 1.6	Improving connectivity	Liaise with Network Rail on the protection of railside SINC	2025	LBI Greenspace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Request that Network Rail notifies local residents and Islington Council prior to any vegetation works taking place.</li> <li>Communicate with Network Rail re planned vegetation works in order to protect nesting birds and aim to ensure minimal vegetation removal takes place.</li> </ul>
DS 1.7	Increasing access and reducing deficiencies	Action on planning policies for reviewing location of new areas to reduce Areas of Deficiency in Access to Nature	2025	LBI Greenspace LBI planning LBI housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have regard to reducing Areas of Deficiency for Access to Nature through targeted improvement works to designate new SINC or upgrade SINC.</li> </ul>
DS 1.8	Increasing access and reducing deficiencies	Action on Core Strategy policies for ensuring designated sites are identified and protected	2025	LBI Planning LBI Greenspace LBI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take appropriate action through the planning process to protect SINC from damage from development.</li> </ul>

# The Action Plans

## Access to Nature Action Plan (AN), 2020 to 2025

Islington is one of the smallest, most built up of all London Boroughs, with 87% of its total area being built on. It also has the smallest amount of open space per head of population. 17% of Islington is deficient in access to nature, meaning individuals living in areas of nature deficiency are further than 1km walking distance from a designated Site of Importance to Nature Conservation. Increasing people’s contact with nature has been shown to bring about benefits in physical and mental health as well as improvements in social and community well-being. Involving people in looking after our natural green spaces will also help to enhance them and protect them for the future.

This Action Plan aims to increase and enhance people’s contact with nature and promote community involvement in looking after green spaces. Activities to engage Islington's

residents with the natural environment range from volunteering opportunities and community gardening projects to events and environmental education sessions for schools. Islington Council plays a key role in running many of these activities. However, a wide range of other organisations are also working across the borough to deliver important conservation and education projects. These include the Islington Wildlife Gardeners, The Garden Classroom, Octopus Network's Wild Spaces Project, Froglife, London Wildlife Trust, Groundwork, Friends of Parks and tenant's groups. A number of these groups have contributed to drawing up this Action Plan, and their work is vital to delivering the actions that are detailed here.

The Action Plan has four key themes:

- Engagement
- Volunteering
- Education
- Health and wellbeing

No	Broad area	Action	Target date	Lead Partners	Delivery method
AN 1.1	Engagement	Engage Islington residents and raise awareness of biodiversity through public events in parks, nature reserves and housing estates	2025	LBI Greenspace, Friends Groups, Octopus, St Luke's Community Centre, The Garden Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100 events a year to be organised by a range of different groups and organisations.</li> </ul>

AN 1.2	Engagement	Enable people from groups under-represented in visits to green space (e.g. BME groups, disabled people, young people) to take part in biodiversity themed activities in local green spaces	2025	LBI Greenspace, Friends Groups, Octopus, St Luke's Community Centre, The Garden Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with partners to support the delivery of these activities, involving at least 200 beneficiaries a year.</li> </ul>
AN 1.3	Engagement	Encourage and support community action for wildlife projects such as groups who want to seek funding for projects which enhance biodiversity, e.g. planting for pollinators	2025	Community Groups, Friends Groups, LBI Greenspace, The Garden Classroom, Octopus, St Luke's Community Centre, Voluntary Action Islington	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greenspace staff to provide advice, practical help and in-kind match funding where appropriate.</li> <li>• Octopus to seek groups who might want to apply for grants.</li> </ul>
AN 1.4	Engagement	Support and promote the take-up of unloved spaces by communities	2025	LBI Greenspace Islington Gardeners, Octopus, The Garden Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greenspace to support and encourage individuals or groups wanting to improve unused spaces for wildlife.</li> <li>• Octopus to encourage projects on unloved spaces.</li> </ul>

AN 1.5	Engagement	Promote wildlife gardening to residents, schools, estates, businesses and community groups through the annual Islington in Bloom competition	Every summer	LBI Greenspace Islington Gardeners, Octopus, The Garden Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure planting for biodiversity continues to be part of judging criteria.</li> <li>• Octopus to help promote Islington in Bloom using their milk float.</li> </ul>
AN 1.6	Engagement	Maintain and develop Islington Ecology Centre as a community hub and a centre of excellence where third sector organisations, schools and Islington residents can get support and advice on biodiversity issues	2025	LBI Greenspace, The Garden Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publicise the Ecology Centre to ensure more people in the local area are aware of it.</li> <li>• Deliver programme of events, education and volunteering at Ecology Centre.</li> <li>• The Garden Classroom to promote the Ecology Centre to teachers through their LiNE (Learning in Natural Environments) workshops.</li> </ul>
AN 1.7	Engagement	Engage with the London National Park City initiative	2025	LBI Greenspace The Garden Classroom Friends of Groups, Community Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver events as part of London National Park City Week.</li> <li>• Engage with London National Park City staff and volunteers to promote the greening of the urban environment.</li> </ul>

AN 1.8	Volunteering	Provide volunteering opportunities for Islington residents, businesses and other stakeholders to help manage and enhance wildlife habitats in Islington's parks, nature reserves and housing estates	2025	LBI Greenspace Octopus Community Centres London Wildlife Trust, St Luke's Community Centre, The Garden Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Islington Ecology Centre staff to continue to run weekly volunteer sessions encouraging a diverse range of people to get involved.</li> <li>• Greenspace to continue to run community work days in parks.</li> <li>• Greenspace to support corporate volunteering days.</li> <li>• London Wildlife Trust continue to run volunteer days by Regent's Canal.</li> <li>• St Luke's Community Centre to work with volunteers on various sites e.g. St Luke's Gardens, King Square Gardens and Northampton Square.</li> <li>• The Garden Classroom offers volunteering opportunities on their education sessions and at Newington Green.</li> </ul>
AN 1.9	Volunteering	Support the maintenance of existing wildlife gardens e.g. at Gillespie Park, Barnsbury Wood, Culpeper, Sunnyside and King Henry's Walk Garden, as examples of best practice	2025	LBI Greenspace, The Garden Classroom, St Luke's Community Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognise the importance of these gardens and encourage their maintenance by providing assistance where required.</li> </ul>

AN 2.0	Volunteering	Promote community gardening and food growing	2025	LBI Greenspace Octopus Community Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commission Octopus Community Network to develop a Strategy and Action Plan for Community Gardening and Food Growing.</li> <li>• Identify suitable spaces for food growing.</li> <li>• Develop a plan to better promote food growing opportunities to the community.</li> <li>• Increase participation among residents in community gardening projects.</li> </ul>
AN 2.1	Education	Aim to provide every child in Islington with the opportunity to experience high quality outdoor environmental education	2025	LBI Greenspace, The Garden Classroom, St Luke's Community Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1,500 school children to take part in sessions run by Islington Ecology Centre staff every year.</li> <li>• 2,800 school children to take part in Garden Classroom education sessions every year.</li> <li>• St Luke's Community Centre to run gardening activities for children.</li> <li>• The Garden Classroom has established itself as the borough's LiNE (Learning in Natural Environments) service provider supporting Islington school staff to gain skills and training to become more confident to lead activities during school hours in Islington's greenspaces.</li> </ul>
AN 2.2	Education	Educate and engage children with local wildlife through after-school clubs and holiday clubs	2025	LBI Greenspace, The Garden Classroom, Octopus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Run 4 sessions a year for clubs (particularly for special needs children) at Islington Ecology Centre.</li> <li>• Octopus and The Garden Classroom delivering nature-themed holiday clubs reaching over 100 children a year.</li> </ul>

AN 2.3	Education	Support and accommodate other forms of outdoor learning in Islington's green spaces	2025	LBI Greenspace, The Garden Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate the use of the borough's 3 nature reserves for Forest Schools.</li> <li>• Facilitate the use of the borough's 3 nature reserves for adult learners e.g. through partnerships with the Adult Community Learning Team.</li> <li>• Encourage independently led school visits to parks.</li> <li>• Promote the Parkland Walk Education Park to schools.</li> <li>• The Garden Classroom to promote other forms of learning through LiNE Forum.</li> </ul>
AN 2.4	Education	Educate people about the importance of bees and encourage action for bees, e.g. pollinator planting and bee keeping	2025	The Garden Classroom, Octopus and LBI Greenspace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Garden Classroom to continue to run Wonderful World of Bees sessions using the apiary at Gillespie Park.</li> <li>• The Garden Classroom and Greenspace to organise a training session on bee keeping.</li> <li>• Octopus and The Garden Classroom to run bee events in green spaces.</li> <li>• Provide other training or educational resources where possible.</li> </ul>
AN 2.5	Education	Encourage action for biodiversity on housing estates through education for housing staff and third sector organisations working on estates in the borough	2025	LBI Greenspace, Housing, Octopus, St Luke's Community Centre.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Octopus Urban Wild Places Project will work with approx. 40 gardening groups on housing estates.</li> <li>• Education/training resources for housing staff to be delivered by Greenspace.</li> <li>• St Luke's Community Centre to work on improving 6 spaces a year.</li> </ul>

AN 2.6	Education	Enable 500 children a year to take part in the RSPB's Big Schools Bird Watch Event	Every February	LBI Greenspace, RSPB The Garden Classroom,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Islington Greenspace staff to use RSPB resources to deliver free Big Schools Bird Watch sessions to schools.</li> <li>• The Garden Classroom to provide follow-on sessions for schools to book.</li> </ul>
AN 2.7	Education	Provide residents with guidance on wildlife gardening and how to protect some key species such as bats, house sparrows, bees and swifts	2025	LBI Greenspace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide information at the Ecology Centre.</li> <li>• Islington Greenspace to run some targeted events.</li> </ul>
AN 2.8	Health and wellbeing	Enable people to derive the health and well-being benefits of contact with nature	2025	LBI Greenspace Octopus, Friends Groups, St Luke's Community Centre, The Garden Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote volunteering activities.</li> <li>• Work with organisations which support people with disabilities and mental illness to organise joint events.</li> <li>• St Luke's Community Centre to promote health and well-being through gardening and trips to green spaces.</li> <li>• The Garden Classroom to seek funding to run Green Steps guided walks.</li> </ul>
AN 2.9	Education	Urban Forest School	2025	The Garden Classroom, LBI Greenspace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide the Urban Forest School programme developed by The Garden Classroom using 15 sites in Islington.</li> </ul>

## References

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- <sup>1</sup> DEFRA produced an “Evidence statement on the links between natural environments and human health”: [http://randd.defra.gov.uk/Document.aspx?Document=14042\\_EvidenceStatementonnaturalenvironmentsandhealth.pdf](http://randd.defra.gov.uk/Document.aspx?Document=14042_EvidenceStatementonnaturalenvironmentsandhealth.pdf)
- <sup>2</sup> Centre for research on environment, society and health (2012) Regular physical activity in natural environments halves risk of poor mental health: <http://cresh.org.uk/2012/06/20/regular-physical-activity-in-natural-environments-halves-risk-of-poor-mental-health/>
- <sup>3</sup> Green space access, green space use, physical activity and overweight published by Natural England 2011. Natural England Commissioned Report NECR067.
- <sup>4</sup> Links between natural environments and learning: evidence briefing (EIN017) published by Natural England: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5253709953499136>
- <sup>5</sup> Links between natural environments and learning: evidence briefing (EIN017), Natural England, July 2016: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5253709953499136>
- <sup>6</sup> The Impact of Children’s Connection to Nature A Report for the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) November 2015, University of Derby: [http://ww2.rspb.org.uk/Images/impact\\_of\\_children%E2%80%99s\\_connection\\_to\\_nature\\_tcm9-414472.pdf](http://ww2.rspb.org.uk/Images/impact_of_children%E2%80%99s_connection_to_nature_tcm9-414472.pdf)
- <sup>7</sup> The Impact Of Screen Media On Children: A Eurovision For Parliament by Dr Aric Sigman: [https://www.steinereducation.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/uk\\_screen\\_time.pdf](https://www.steinereducation.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/uk_screen_time.pdf)
- <sup>8</sup> <https://www.bumblebeeconservation.org/threats-and-pressures/>
- <sup>9</sup> <https://www.bto.org/research-data-services/publications/state-nature/2013/state-nature-report-2013>
- <sup>10</sup> The Natural Capital Account for London published by Mayor of London: <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/parks-green-spaces-and-biodiversity/green-infrastructure/natural-capital-account-london>



Figure 16. Wildlife Pond at Gillespie Park

# Appendix

# Appendices

## Appendix A: List of Islington Sites of Importance to Nature Conservation

Site Name	Grade	Area Ha	Easting	Northing	Access
Baxter Road Open Space	L	0.49	532830	184580	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No public access</li> </ul>
North London Line in Islington (east)	BI	3.94	532361	185025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be viewed from adjacent paths or roads only</li> </ul>
Caledonian Park	BI	3.13	530198	184756	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free public access (all/most of site)</li> </ul>
New River Walk	BI	2.15	532322	184642	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free public access (all/most of site)</li> </ul>
Barnard Park	L	3.58	531024	183721	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free public access (all/most of site)</li> </ul>
Archway Road Cutting	BI	0.73	529159	187271	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be viewed from adjacent paths or roads only</li> </ul>
Holly Park Estate	BII	4.16	530554	187675	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free public access (all/most of site)</li> </ul>
Elthorne Park and Sunnyside Gardens	BII	2.95	530011	187396	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free public access (all/most of site)</li> </ul>
St Josephs Social Centre	BII	0.49	528929	187143	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No public access</li> </ul>
Spa Green Garden	L	0.32	531453	182775	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free public access (all/most of site)</li> </ul>
St Pauls Shrubbery	L	0.5	532536	184905	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free public access (all/most of site)</li> </ul>
Newington Green	L	0.66	532860	185361	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free public access (all/most of site)</li> </ul>
Dowcras Wood	BII	0.24	533008	184958	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited public access</li> </ul>
Jewish Burial Ground, Kingsbury Road	BII	0.38	533257	184966	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No public access</li> </ul>

St Lukes Churchyard, Old Street	L	0.76	532293	182500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free public access (all/most of site)</li> </ul>
Upper Holloway Railway Cutting	BI	4.73	529916	186851	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be viewed from adjacent paths or roads only</li> </ul>
Moreland Primary School Garden	L	0.02	531954	182771	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No public access</li> </ul>
King Square Garden	L	1.25	531970	182634	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free public access (all/most of site)</li> </ul>
Lloyd Square	L	0.19	531088	182770	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be viewed from adjacent paths or roads only</li> </ul>
Winton Primary School Garden	L	0.03	530611	183243	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be viewed from adjacent paths or roads only</li> </ul>
Wilmington Square	L	0.39	531177	182552	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free public access (all/most of site)</li> </ul>
Claremont Square Reservoir	BII	0.68	531171	183064	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be viewed from adjacent paths or roads only</li> </ul>
Culpeper Community Garden	BII	0.42	531204	183455	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free public access (all/most of site)</li> </ul>
Bunhill Fields Burial Ground	BII	1.63	532693	182262	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free public access (part of site)</li> </ul>
St Johns Gardens	L	0.14	531633	181931	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free public access (all/most of site)</li> </ul>
Claremont Close Lawns	BII	0.2	531303	183052	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be viewed from adjacent paths or roads only</li> </ul>
Newcombe Estate	L	0.42	532176	185378	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents access only</li> </ul>
North London Line in Islington (west)	BI	1.03	530876	184445	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be viewed from adjacent paths or roads only</li> </ul>

Bemerton Estate - Garden (8)	L	0.15	530583	184091	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free public access (all/most of site)</li> </ul>
Dibden Street Open Space	L	0.13	532077	183893	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free public access (all/most of site)</li> </ul>
Copenhagen Junction	BI	2.95	530326	184183	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be viewed from adjacent paths or roads only</li> </ul>
Holloway Road to Caledonian Road Railsides	BI	2.12	530499	184968	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be viewed from adjacent paths or roads only</li> </ul>
Barnsbury Wood	BI	0.35	530852	184219	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited public access</li> </ul>
Laycock Gardens	BII	1	531459	184617	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free public access (all/most of site)</li> </ul>
St Mary Magdalene Garden	L	1.79	531277	184951	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free public access (all/most of site)</li> </ul>
Highbury Fields	L	10.12	531777	185278	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free public access (all/most of site)</li> </ul>
Bingfield Park	L	1.21	530403	183967	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free public access (all/most of site)</li> </ul>
Thornhill Square	L	1.14	530803	184045	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free public access (all/most of site)</li> </ul>
Barnsbury Square	L	0.5	531117	184241	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free public access (part of site)</li> </ul>
St Marys Church of England School Garden	L	0.05	531824	183993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No public access</li> </ul>
St Marys Church Gardens	BII	0.59	531753	183864	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free public access (all/most of site)</li> </ul>
Market Road Garden	BII	1.11	530464	184710	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free public access (all/most of site)</li> </ul>
Freightliners Farm	BII	0.47	531030	184884	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free public access (all/most of site)</li> </ul>

Tufnell Park Primary School Gardens	L	0.23	529801	185603	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No public access</li> </ul>
Hatchard Road Wildlife Garden	L	0.05	529998	186917	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No public access</li> </ul>
Foxham Gardens	L	0.61	529633	186183	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free public access (all/most of site)</li> </ul>
Whittington Park	L	3.77	529818	186457	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free public access (all/most of site)</li> </ul>
Margaret MacMillan Nursery School Nature Garden	L	0.29	529949	187541	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No public access</li> </ul>
Royal Northern Hospital	L	0.48	530311	186361	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents access only</li> </ul>
Gillespie Park	M	3.45	531345	186082	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free public access (all/most of site)</li> </ul>
Isledon Road Railsides	BI	2.53	531202	186199	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be viewed from adjacent paths or roads only</li> </ul>
Drayton Park Railsides and Olden Garden	BI	5.79	531286	186070	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be viewed from adjacent paths or roads only</li> </ul>
Dartmouth Park Hill and Reservoir	BI	3.15	529040	186377	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free public access (part of site)</li> </ul>
Junction Road Railway Cutting	BI	0.5	529131	186031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be viewed from adjacent paths or roads only</li> </ul>
Spa Fields Gardens	L	0.84	531321	182425	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free public access (all/most of site)</li> </ul>
Andersons square gardens	L	0.04	531714	183722	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No public access</li> </ul>

Parkland Walk	M	3.45	528261	188677	• Free public access (all/most of site)
Radnor Street Open Space	L	0.38	532379	182533	• Free public access (all/most of site)
Skinner Street Open Space	L	0.38	531442	182458	• Free public access (all/most of site)
Archway Park	L	0.84	529404	187002	• Free public access (all/most of site)
Charterhouse	BII	0.85	531877	182051	• No public access
Fortune Street Garden	L	0.37	532349	182079	• Free public access (all/most of site)
Redbrick Estate	L	0.27	532444	182431	• Free public access (part of site)
Regents Canal	M	4.30	512336	181157	• Free public access (all/most of site)

Key to SINC Grades (in order of ecological importance) :

M = Metropolitan Level

BI = Borough Grade 1

BII = Borough Grade 2

L = Local

In addition, Islington and St Pancras Cemetery is a 62 hectare Borough Grade 2 SINC, owned and managed by the London Boroughs of Camden and Islington. However the site is located in the borough of Barnet. Hampstead Cemetery is also managed by Islington Council and is a 9.3 hectare Borough Grade 1 SINC, situated in Camden.

Changes to SINCs proposed in the new Local Plan (2019) are as follows:

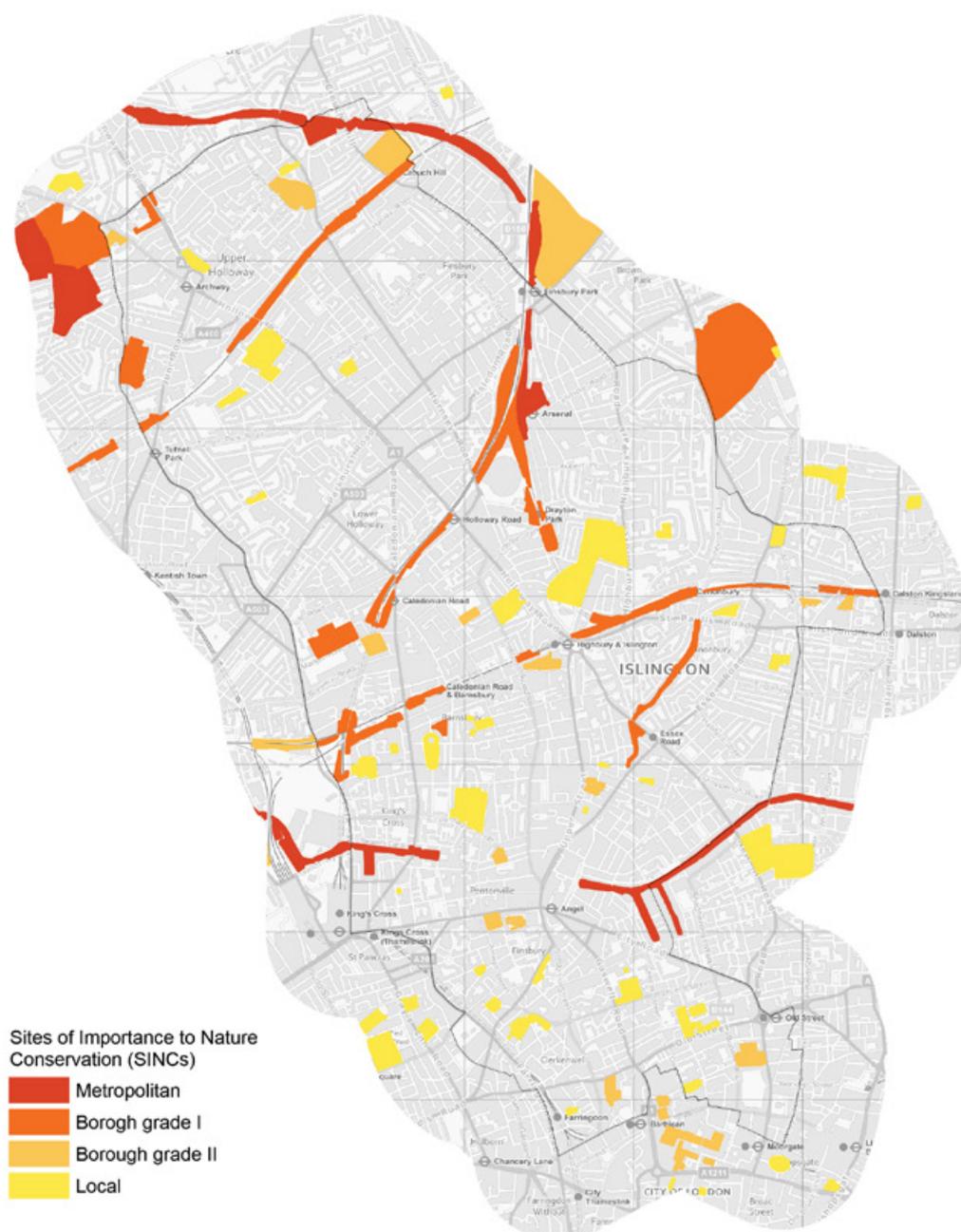
Whittington Park – upgrade from Local status to Borough Grade II, with an extension of the boundary.

Three new Local SINCs – Grenville Road Gardens, Wray Crescent, Bevin Court.  
Caledonian Park – extension of the boundary.

## Appendix B: Map of Islington SINCs

### Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs)

Produced by Greenspace Information for Greater London on behalf of LB Islington, April 2018



Sites of Importance to Nature Conservation (SINCs)

- Metropolitan
- Borough grade I
- Borough grade II
- Local



**GiGL** Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC  
the capital's environmental records centre

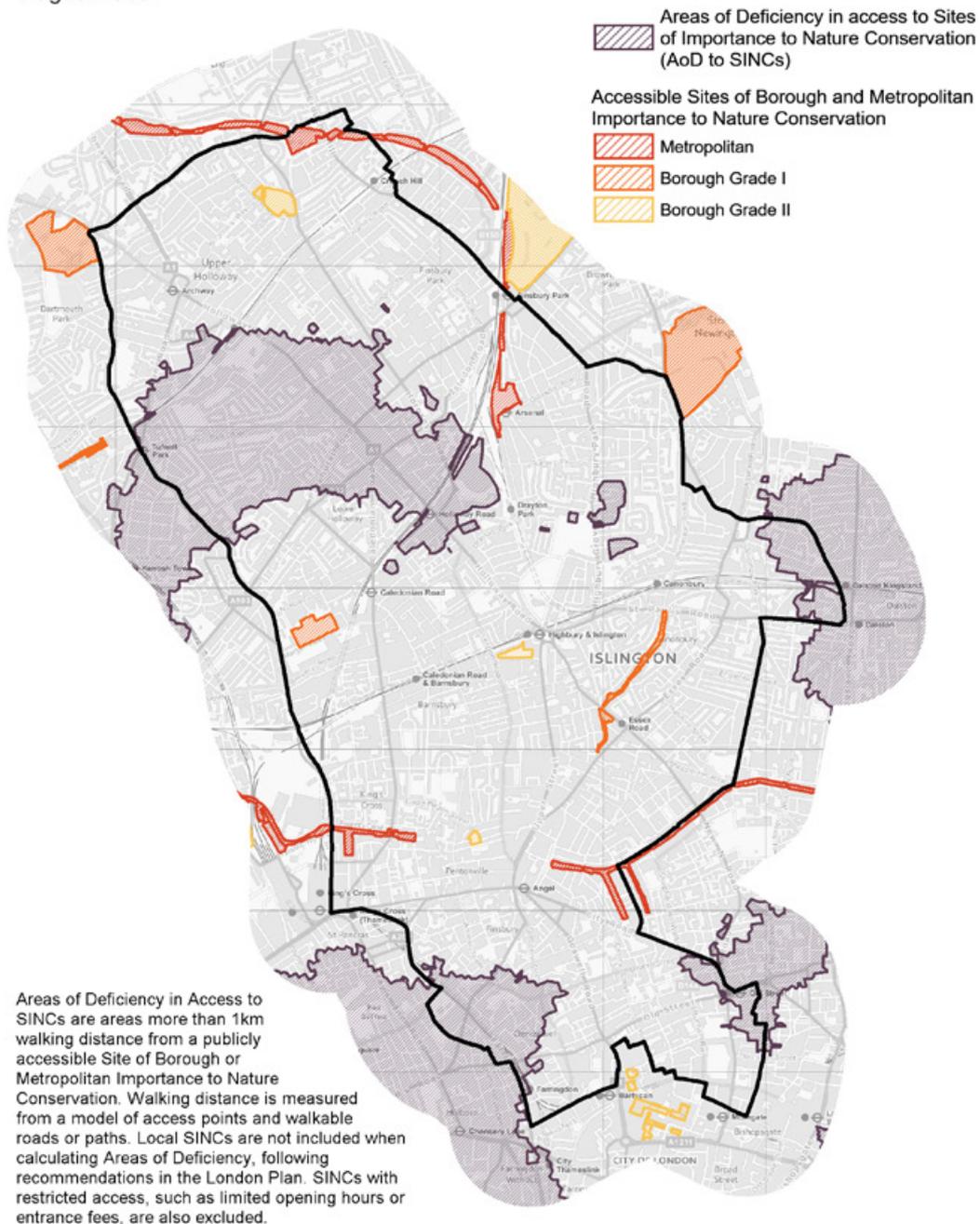
Scale 1:32000 at A4

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## Appendix C: Map of Areas of Deficiency in Access to Nature

### Areas of Deficiency in Access to Nature

Produced by Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC on behalf of LB Islington, August 2018



**GiGL** Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC  
the capital's environmental records centre

Scale 1:33000 at A4

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## **Appendix D: List of partner organisations**

The following organisations are active in Islington and all have a role to play in implementing the actions outlined in this BAP. However, the list is not intended to be exclusive, and it is hoped that further organisations and groups will be added as the plan is reviewed.

Friends of Parks Groups  
Community Gardens  
Octopus Community Network's Wild Places Project  
The Garden Classroom  
Islington Gardeners  
The Canal and Rivers Trust  
Groundwork  
London Wildlife Trust  
London Bat Group  
London Bee keepers Association  
London Natural History Society  
Islington Swifts  
Livingroofs  
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds  
St Luke's Parochial Trust  
Voluntary Action Islington



For further information contact Islington Council at  
email [ecologycentre@islington.gov.uk](mailto:ecologycentre@islington.gov.uk) or call **020 7527 4374**.