

BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 2022 - 2027**



FOREWORD BY COUNCILLOR DEIRDRE COSTIGAN, DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR CLIMATE ACTION



' I am proud to be introducing the updated Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) for Ealing at this vital time. We have set out ambitious actions for how we will meet the challenge of responding to the dual climate and biodiversity crises.

The BAP is a part of the council's Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy and pledge to reach net zero for carbon emissions in the borough by 2030. '

All the many green spaces in Ealing, from our parks and gardens, to allotments, street trees, green roofs, to the smallest of window boxes are vital parts of a wider ecological network. They help clean up our air, provide habitat for the species we all know and love, including bats, bees, and butterflies, and tackle extreme heat and flooding.

Ealing is fortunate to have superb green spaces that everyone can be proud of and be part of. These green spaces are essential for the health and well-being of our residents as well as the planet – and we have never appreciated them more than during COVID-19.

We have already taken huge steps to improve the local environment, by planting 37,000 trees since 2018, and in 2021 we achieved 23 Green Flag awards for our parks, a record for Ealing.

But we cannot afford to slow down. That's why we have upgraded our target for tree canopy cover to 25%, which we will meet via ambitious tree planting programmes in our parks and on our streets, plus working with schools and community groups to green the whole borough. We've also committed to increasing the amount of grassland and space for pollinators in Ealing, and creating vibrant, diverse wetlands.

This BAP is not just about the council, we need everyone to do their part in making the borough more biodiverse. That's why we are creating an Ealing Biodiversity Partnership which will harness the skills, knowledge and enthusiasm of our whole community.

I hope you will join us in meeting the unprecedented challenge of the climate crisis – whether you plant a tree, volunteer in parks, put up a bird box or fundraise for a rewilding project, you are helping the borough's nature thrive.



Councillor Deirdre Costigan

Deputy leader and cabinet member for climate action





What is Biodiversity?

Biodiversity means the abundance and variety of all life on earth. This includes all animals, plants, the habitats they live in and the ecosystems they are part of. The relationships between species, habitats and ecosystems and their processes are key to sustaining a healthy, functioning planet and creating essential environmental, social and economic benefits for people.

What is a Biodiversity Action Plan?

The aim of the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) is to produce a set of objectives and actions to assist in delivering and protecting strategic biodiversity networks taking into consideration both local and national priorities. The vision of the Ealing BAP is:

- To conserve and enhance habitats that create better, and more interconnected places for wildlife across Ealing
- To increase awareness of biodiversity and encourage more people to connect with nature and by doing so take positive actions that benefit biodiversity in Ealing.

The Ealing BAP covers the whole borough, from parks, public and private green infrastructure and spaces to buildings of all types and transport networks. It provides strategic and practical direction for conserving and enhancing biodiversity for a range of audiences, including council departments, an individual, organisation or

developer seeking further guidance, whether you are already interested in nature or have little idea of what to do.

It has been developed through consultation with internal and external stakeholders, including local experts, conservation and community groups, land managers and different services within the council. All these contributors, in addition to residents, the voluntary sector, private, health and social housing landlords and owners, schools, local businesses and developers are all vital in contributing and successfully delivering actions to protect and enhance biodiversity in Ealing.

Covering the period from 2022 to 2027, the BAP outlines the current status and future priorities for habitats and species. **The Habitat Action Plans** (HAPs) and **Species Action Plans** (SAPs) provide 'best practice and other tips and guidance for various audiences.

What is a Habitat Action Plan?

The Habitat Action Plans (HAPs) include more and specific outcomes than the Species Action Plans (SAPs) as achieving the HAP targets will also have a positive outcome for the species that depend on them.

Habitat Action Plans' Aims

- Protect and enhance biodiversity through the development and implementation of borough wide plans, policies and strategies

- Protect and enhance biodiversity through management of the environment directly or through engagement with other council services, developers, landowners / managers, community groups and residents
- Identify opportunities to enhance and create more spaces for nature and implement them, directly or through engagement with other council services, developers, landowners/ managers, community groups and residents
- Obtain and encourage collection of data to add to the ecological network map
- Raise awareness of the value of biodiversity through engagement activities and media, in order to create a connection to nature
- Increase positive actions and outcomes to protect and enhance biodiversity across the borough

Habitat Action Plans are focused into 4 specific habitats, with clear action plans for each. They are:

- Built Environment
- Parks and Open Spaces
- Wetlands and Waterways
- Woodland



Built Environment

The Built Environment refers to all buildings; grounds and garden of buildings that are not maintained by the council, including private gardens, school', businesses' and some housing land; open mosaic habitats on previously developed land; and the transport network, including railway land, streets and other highways, some council and some privately owned.

Parks and Open Spaces

Parks and open spaces refer to the green spaces that are owned and in general managed by the council, such as Parks; Public sports grounds and some golf courses; Other green open spaces maintained by the council, including housing estates, allotments and cemeteries

Wetlands and Waterways

Wetlands and waterways priority habitats in Ealing include Rivers and Streams; Canals; Ponds, swales, scrapes and similar areas of standing open water; Reedbeds; and Wet marginal vegetation and ditches

Woodland

UK and London Priority and other woodland habitats in Ealing include Mixed deciduous woodland; Secondary (including damp and linear) woodland; Newly planted woodland; Veteran trees; Traditional and linear orchards

What is a Species Habitat Action Plan?

The Species Action Plans (SAPs) in the Ealing BAP were selected for their national, London and local priority and significance, and as 'umbrella' species, in that actions we take to conserve and protect these species will have a positive knock on effect for other species and our environment too.

Habitat Action Plans' Aims

- Establish presence of species in Ealing and key sites of importance by seeking reports of sightings and surveying for signs of presence
- Obtain and encourage collection of survey data to iRecord (via app or online) / directly to GiGL, to add to the Ecological Network Map
- Reverse the decline of this species locally, actively seeking to protect and increase populations and connectivity of populations with suitable habitat
- Raise awareness of the value of these species to biodiversity and the habitat features they need to survive
- Engagement, education activities and media will create a connection to nature and inspire positive actions to protect and conserve these species

Species Action Plans are focused into 7 specific species, with clear action plans for each. They are:

- Reptiles and Amphibians
- Bats
- Water voles
- Hedgehogs
- Birds
- Pollinators and other invertebrates
- Plants

Reptiles and Amphibians

Ealing is home to several species of native reptile and amphibians. Those assessed in the Ealing BAP as either UK BAP priority species, European conservation importance or local importance are Grass Snakes (*Natrix helvetica*), Slow Worm (*Anguis fragilis*), Common Lizard

(*vivipara*), Common Toad (*Bufo bufo*), Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*), Common Frog (*Rana temporaria*) and Smooth Newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*).

Bats

There are 7 confirmed species of Bats in Ealing, three being UK BAP priority species*. These are: Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), Soprano Pipistrelle* (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), Nathusius' Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus nathusii*), Noctule* (*Nyctalus noctule*), Leisler's (*Nyctalus leisleri*), Daubenton's (*Myotis daubentonii*) and Brown Long Eared* (*Plecotus auritus*).

Water voles

Protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, it is an offence to intentionally damage or destroy areas water use for shelter or protection. Recent surveying evidence suggests that there are currently no water voles in Ealing, so concerted efforts to enhance previously inhabited locations will be needed. Of note, the habitat creation and management that would be needed for a future water vole reintroduction project can be achieved sustainably with low cost and low ongoing human interventions by reintroduction of another native aquatic rodent, the Eurasian Beaver (*Castor fiber*). Beavers are true ecosystem engineers, creating extremely biodiverse wetland habitats and therefore are of massive benefit to other wildlife, including birds, reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates, bats, water voles; many of the species in the Ealing BAP.



Hedgehogs

Hedgehogs are IUCN red listed, classed as vulnerable to extinction and protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act and are a key UK Biodiversity Action Plan Species. Hedgehog numbers in London & Ealing reflect the national trends with overall downward trends. Some local hotspots have regular reported sightings, however more is needed across Ealing to improve the declining status.

Birds

The SAP focuses on key red listed species such as the House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*), Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*), Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), Swift (*Apus apus*) and Linnet (*Linaria cannabina*).

Pollinators and other invertebrates

Many insects and other invertebrates fall under the category of pollinators, even though we most commonly associate bees and butterflies as the main two groups of species. But wasps, beetles, flies and many other invertebrates play a crucial pollinating role too. According to the DEFRA National Pollinator Strategy, the evidence on population levels and trends in pollinators is patchy but the overall pattern is that many species are in decline. The SAP focuses on key species and habitats needed for key pollinators and other invertebrates.

Plants

Ealing's green spaces support a vast diversity of plant species, some of which are relatively scarce or rare nationally and locally such as Dyer's Greenwood (*Genista tinctoria*) and Wild Service Tree (*Sorbus torminalis*).



The Ealing BAP specific focus is given to the Native Black Poplar (NBP) and Mistletoe. But many of the management goals and targets in the Habitat Action Plans are of benefit to a host of other plant species and maintaining general plant diversity and success.

Key Actions and Targets

Key actions Ealing BAP include, but are not limited to:

- Maintaining and updating Local Planning Practice Guidance (LPPG) and ensuring sustained communication with planning colleagues.
- Developing and maintaining the Ecological Network Map
- Creating an Ealing Biodiversity Partnership
- Reviewing and improving land management uses and practices
- Creating and updating site specific management plans
- Regularly monitoring and updating records
- Sharing the BAP and engaging with various audiences

Tangible outcome targets include, but are not limited to:

- Improve a minimum of 5 hectares of grassland by 2027
- Improve 0.5 hectares of gardens for pollinators by 2027
- Increase tree canopy in Ealing to 25% by 2030
- Create new wetlands/flood management projects managing 10,000m³ surface water by 2027

