# Hackney Richer in Wildlife

# A Local Nature Recovery Plan

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# Foreword

*To be added by Hackney Council following consultation on the Hackney Green Infrastructure Strategy*

# Executive summary

Conserving wildlife in urban areas is both a challenge and a necessity. A challenge because there are multiple competing land-uses in urban areas, exacerbated by high population density and intense recreational demand on existing parks and green spaces. A necessity because not only is there a moral responsibility to provide space for wildlife amongst us, but also because we know that making space for nature has benefits for people too, not least for improving public health and mitigating the impacts of climate change.

Hackney has a long-tradition of conserving wildlife, much of it led and delivered by community groups and volunteers. Abney Park Cemetery was declared a statutory Local Nature Reserve in 1993 and the first Hackney Biodiversity Action Plan was published in 2012. Between then and now wildlife conservation has been bolstered by a range of projects and initiatives including: changes in parks management to allow for the establishment of wildflower meadows; the creation of Woodberry Wetlands nature reserve; an extensive tree-planting programme; an increase in biodiverse green roofs and many community-led projects aiming to increase opportunities for wildlife in parks, on housing estates, along the canal, and in private gardens.

Despite many successes, there have been losses too and wildlife is facing a range of threats, including: increased recreation pressure on open space, the need for densification to accommodate a growing population, and the vagaries of climate change which can have a major impact on often isolated and relatively small areas of semi-natural habitat.

Government has indicated that it will require local authorities to prepare Local Nature Recovery Strategies to help reverse biodiversity decline. In London the Greater London Authority has recommended that these are Local Nature Recovery Plans (alongside plans for parks and the 'urban forest') that are delivery plans for a comprehensive and integrated Green Infrastructure Strategy.

Hackney's Local Nature Recovery Plan has the borough's Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) as the foundation of a local nature recovery network. Their continued protection and appropriate management is a prerequisite for ensuring local nature recovery.

The borough is divided into five 'nature recovery areas' which identify opportunities for projects and interventions that can help make ecological connections that protect, augment and connect the SINC network through, for example, enhancements to parks, wildlife-friendly planting in amenity green-spaces, and urban greening in new developments. The plan also identifies a range of plant and animal species that are flagship species which require particular measures to conserve and protect locally important populations or which can be indicators of local nature recovery as the plan is implemented and they become more widespread across the borough.

The plan focuses on projects and interventions that can be delivered by Hackney Council, with its key partners and stakeholders, on land that it owns or over which it has influence through planning designations and controls or partnership agreements. It also highlights some of the examples of community-led projects that are delivering

local nature recovery at the neighbourhood level through collaboration between residents, tenants management organisations and private land-owners under the guidance of local environmental groups.

The plan is not an exhaustive suite of projects and proposals. It provides a framework which will improve ecological connectivity across the borough based on a core network of protected and well-managed SINCs. With this framework in place everyone with influence on the design and management of land (including the built environment) can make a contribution to making Hackney richer in wildlife. The plan provides examples and links to further guidance to aid those wanting to support this ambition.

The Hackney Local Nature Recovery Plan is focused on improving the borough's ecological health to conserve nature and help wildlife flourish. But as an integral part of a borough-wide Green Infrastructure Strategy, it will also help to ensure that planning, designing and managing space for nature can benefit people too by helping to mitigate the impacts of climate change and creating healthier, more liveable neighbourhoods.

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Why a Local Nature Recovery Plan for Hackney?

1.1.1 Alongside the widely publicised climate emergency there is also an increasingly severe ecological crisis. The State of Nature (England) report published in 2019 indicates that England's biodiversity is continuing to decline[1]. Since 1970 the populations of 35% of wildlife species have decreased and 31% of species are found in fewer places than before. The breeding woodland bird indicator is 24% lower than 1970; and woodland butterfly numbers have dropped by 58%.

1.1.2 This national trend has been mirrored in London. For example, populations of some relatively common species of bird (including blackbird, grey heron, house sparrow, mistle thrush, song thrush, starling and swift) have declined and some bird species (such as spotted flycatcher, turtle dove and tree sparrow) may no longer breed within Greater London[2]. Of 20 species monitored by the London Natural History Society, half have experienced significant declines in recent years[3]. Hackney has lost lesser spotted woodpecker and tree creeper, both resident at Abney Park Cemetery in the mid-1990s.

1.1.3 There is increasing recognition of the role of the natural world in the 'services' it provides; an ecologically robust network of green spaces and places plays a vital role in cleaning the air, reducing the effect of the 'urban heat island' and helping to control stormwater run-off flooding. Just as critically, it is increasingly recognised that contact with nature can improve wellbeing, reduce stress, and provide health benefits. Consequently, the forthcoming Environment Act (see 1.2.2.3) will require local authorities to prepare and publish a 'Local Nature Recovery Strategy' to identify opportunities for recovering nature – for wildlife, for people and as a contribution to tackling climate change and improving the environment[4].

1.1.4 However, in line with emerging guidance from the Greater London Authority, the approach in London is to prepare an overarching Green Infrastructure Strategy that provides a framework for operational plans that cover parks, urban forestry, and nature recovery. This document is therefore a Hackney Local Nature Recovery Plan, that is framed by the Hackney Green Infrastructure Strategy[5]. This approach is illustrated in Figure.1.

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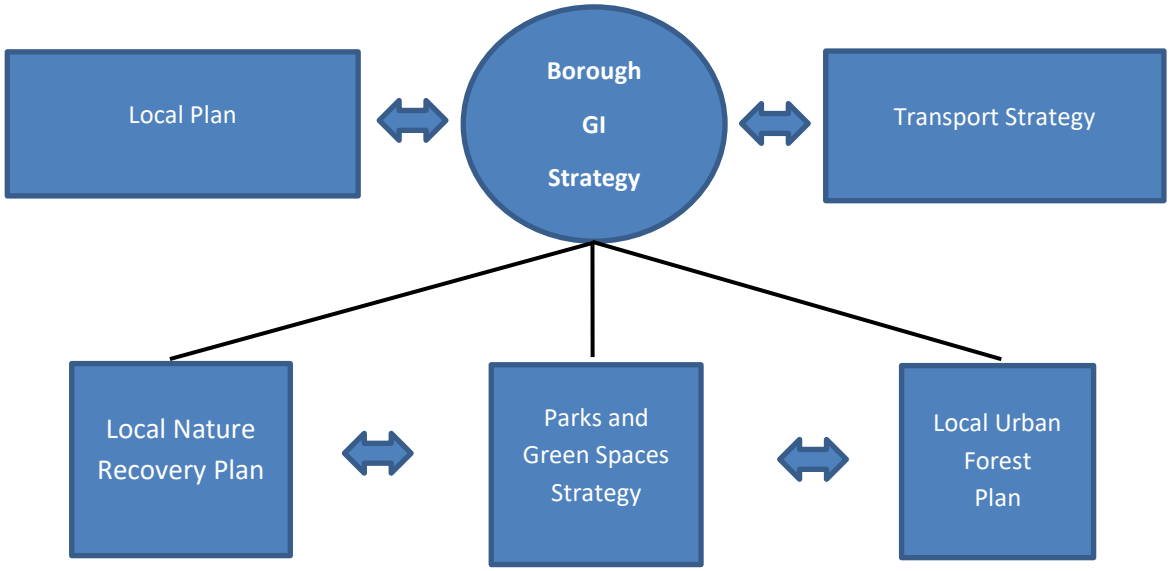
[1] https://nbn.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/State-of-Nature-2019-England-summary.pdf
[2] Population trend graphs | BTO - British Trust for Ornithology
[3] London Natural History Society (LNHS) calculated trends for butterflies in London between 1995-2016
[4] 30 January 2020: Environment Bill 2020 policy statement - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
[5] ADD LINK FOLLOWING CONSULTATION

Figure 1 - Relationship between the Green Infrastructure Strategy and other core documents, and operational plans for parks and green spaces; local nature recovery; and the urban forest




1.1.5 A Hackney Local Nature Recovery Plan (HLNRP) sets out the priorities for protecting, conserving, and enhancing biodiversity in Hackney, identifying a range of interventions that will help to create an ecologically resilient nature recovery network.

1.1.6 A core element of any nature recovery plan for a London borough is the protection and conservation of a network of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) – those sites that have intrinsic nature conservation value and require protection through land-use planning policies in the Local Plan. Consequently, this Local Nature Recovery Plan has been informed by a review of Hackney's SINCs which was undertaken prior to the preparation of this local nature recovery plan. A map of Hackney's SINCs is provided in section 3.2.Policy context for nature recovery – national and regional

1.1.7 National legislation, plus national, regional, and local planning policies and strategies provide a strong and comprehensive framework for the protection and conservation of biodiversity and the natural environment.

1.1.8 The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan sets out proposals to help the natural world regain and retain good health[6]. It aims, amongst other things to develop a Nature Recovery Network (NRN); improve land management; expand woodland cover; embed an 'environmental net gain' principle for

[6] 25 Year Environment Plan - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

development; encourage greater use of natural flood management solutions; and 'green' towns and cities by creating new green infrastructure.

1.1.9 The forthcoming Environment Act will require all local authorities to map existing habitat, proposals for creating and improving habitat, and priorities for nature's recovery. It will also introduce a mandatory biodiversity net gain requirement for new development.

1.1.10 The National Planning Policy Framework requires local plans to include policies that: a) identify, map, and safeguard local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, and the wildlife corridors and stepping-stones that connect them; and, b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity[7].

1.1.11 At the regional level, the Mayor's Environment Strategy aims, amongst other things, to ensure that more than half of London is green, and that the natural environment is protected and managed as a network of green infrastructure to benefit all Londoners[8]. In particular, the strategy sets out a framework for the protection of a core network of nature conservation sites and a net gain in biodiversity.

1.1.12 The London Plan includes specific policies on the protection of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, biodiversity net gain and improving access to nature. In addition, policies on green infrastructure, urban greening, trees, and river restoration provide additional mechanisms for conserving and enhancing biodiversity[9].

[7] National Planning Policy Framework - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
[8] London Environment Strategy | London City Hall
[9] New London Plan | London City Hall

## 1.2 Borough policy context

1.2.1 The Hackney Local Plan (LP33) is the Council's key strategic planning framework, setting out an approach to managing land use, alongside planning policy for development sites, places, and neighbourhoods[10].

1.2.2 It sets out a wide range of land-use planning policies which, amongst other things, aim to ensure that new development supports the greening of the borough and the conservation of biodiversity. These include:

- policy **LP1** which sets out the requirement for developments to incorporate elements which enhance design quality and local character, including biodiversity;
- policy **LP49** which identifies five potential green chains, connecting the borough's main green and open spaces;
- policy **LP46** which stipulates that new development should enhance the borough's network of green and blue infrastructure, including green roofs for new developments over 100m$^2$;
- policy **LP47** which requires development to achieve biodiversity net gain; and,
- policy **LP48** which sets out Urban Greening Factor thresholds set by the Greater London Authority for development proposals of 10 or more units.

1.2.3 In addition, the Hackney Transport Strategy establishes a movement hierarchy that will result in the reallocation of road space to encourage more pedestrian, cycling and public transport use, providing opportunities to enhance and expand the green infrastructure network[11]; and the Hackney Surface Water Management Plan identifies nine Critical Drainage Areas within the borough and sets out methods for managing surface water flooding, including the implementation of sustainable urban drainage, which includes green roofs, swales, ponds and wetlands[12].

## 1.3 Hackney's Biodiversity Action Plan

1.3.1 The Hackney Local Nature Recovery Plan builds on the previous Hackney Biodiversity Action Plan (2002-17)[13]. This provided the initial framework for

[10] https://hackney.gov.uk/lp33
[11] Transport strategy 2015-25 | Hackney Council
[12] https://hackney.gov.uk/flooding-drainage
[13] https://hackney.gov.uk/biodiversity

ensuring that biodiversity conservation was embedded into Hackney Council policy and the land-management practices of Hackney Council and other major landowners. Key outcomes from the Hackney BAP include:

- an increase in habitat creation on Hackney parks such as establishment of wildflower meadows;
- a major tree-planting programme in both streets and open spaces;
- a significant increase in the installation of green roofs and other urban greening features in new developments; and
- creation of a major new nature reserve at Woodberry Wetlands.

1.3.2 However, despite the biodiversity action plan process in Hackney and elsewhere resulting in some significant achievements, most biodiversity action plans were not spatially focused; they were themed by habitats or species which often resulted in actions being delivered wherever opportunities arose rather them where they would optimise landscape scale solutions to connecting habitats and conserving species at a population level rather than within individual sites. Local Nature Recovery Plans aim to ensure that a spatial focus and ecological connectivity is a key consideration in decision-making with regards to biodiversity conservation and long-term nature recovery.

# 2 The nature of Hackney

## 2.1 Summary of Hackney's natural assets

2.1.1 Hackney is the greenest inner London borough, with more than 40% of its land made up of parks, open spaces, gardens, and other green areas. These areas provide valuable spaces for wildlife and give people the opportunity to experience nature nearby.

2.1.2 Sites of particular importance in the borough include:

- Woodberry Wetlands (which forms part of the larger Stoke Newington Reservoirs) is an important habitat for wetland birds, including wintering pochard, shoveler, tufted and gadwall and breeding reed warblers and sedge warblers. Swifts congregate in large numbers over the reservoirs to feed, as do various bats species including pipistrelles and noctules. The banks and habitats surrounding the reservoirs support a wide range of invertebrate species including reed yellow-face bee, silky wainscot moth, broad-bodied chaser dragonfly and red-eyed damselfly; and breeding birds such as reed bunting and Cetti's warbler.

*Broad-bodied chaser*

- Abney Park Cemetery represents an urban example of a naturally regenerated woodland. The 13 hectares of woodland is home to around 200 'old' trees including exotics that were planted as part of the original layout of the cemetery in 1840, but the bulk of the woodland is secondary woodland established after the cemetery ceased to operate in the 1970s. It has a remarkable population of breeding birds for an inner London borough – including tawny owl, sparrowhawk, stock dove, goldcrest, and coal tit. The large number of old trees makes the woodland particularly important for invertebrates that favour decaying wood including a number of rare beetles and the hoverfly *Pocata personata,* which is reliant on rot holes in old trees. Other invertebrates include the longhorn beetle *Phytoecia cylindrica,* which favours the sunlit rides through the woodland and white-letter hairstreak butterfly which feeds on elm in its larval stage.

*White-letter hairstreak*

- Hackney Marshes lie adjacent to the River Lea. Although a large part of the site is managed as sports pitches planting of native trees began in the 1990s and parts of the site, especially Wick Woodland in the south, are now diverse secondary woodland providing habitat for a wide range of woodland species, including birds such as blackcap, and butterflies such as speckled wood. Further habitat enhancement along the boundary with the river has included creation of wildflower meadow and habitat for reptiles, including grass snakes.
- Springfield Park and Clissold Park are both formed from the grounds of former 18th and 19th Century country houses and comprise a landscape of mature trees, shrubberies, areas of relatively unimproved grassland and small water bodies. Consequently, they provide habitat for a range of species, including birds such as green woodpecker, mistle thrush and moorhen, not often found in parks designed primarily for sport and recreation. Springfield Park is also a Regionally Important Geological Site because of the occurrence of numerous springs where groundwater flowing through the underlying Hackney gravel emerges at the surface where it meets the impervious London clay.

*Pedunculate oak*

- The River Lea, the largest tributary of the Thames in London, flows through Hackney as the old River Lea and the Lea Navigation. It links the borough to the wider Lea Valley which incorporates a wide range of natural and semi-natural habitats including Walthamstow Marshes SSSI which provides a source for some species to recolonise or expand their range in Hackney as the quality of habitat within the borough improves.
- The Regent's Canal links the Lea Navigation with Victoria Park, Haggerston Park, Kingsland Basin, Shoreditch Park and Wenlock Basin. Abundant fish populations including perch, pike and eel result in the canal being frequented by cormorants, herons and kingfishers in locations where encountering these species might be unexpected. The canal also provides a ribbon of aquatic habitat that allows wetland invertebrates such as dragonflies to infiltrate into some of the most densely-developed parts of the borough.

*Pike*

2.1.3 These and other wild green spaces across the borough are already home to a wide range of plants, animals, and fungi, some of which are protected or are recognised as being of conservation importance, including kingfisher, slow-worm, common toad, Daubenton's bat, white-letter hairstreak butterfly, black poplar, and black spleenwort. However, some wildlife has adapted to, and in some cases, is now dependent on parts of the built environment: pipistrelle bats, peregrine falcons, and swifts, for example, roost and nest in and on buildings; and where biodiverse green roofs have been installed they provide habitat for black redstarts and invertebrates such ashy mining bee and bee wolf.

Common toad

# 3 Nature recovery in Hackney

## 3.1 Key principles of nature recovery

3.1.1 A local nature recovery network in London is based on three key principles:

- to protect what is best;
- to increase connectivity between the best habitats;
- to create new habitat and features for wildlife to augment existing good quality habitat and to strengthen connectivity.

3.1.2 These principles can be further developed into a series of actions that provide the basic requirements for identifying a local nature recovery network and implementing a local nature recovery plan.

3.1.3 Protecting what's best requires:

- the identification of the most important nature conservation sites as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) in the Local Plan, along with existing and potential wildlife corridors;
- the management of SINCs to be consistent with maintaining and enhancing the site's biodiversity value;
- ensuring that new development avoids any adverse impact on SINCs, wildlife corridors, and protected and priority species.
- recognising other valuable habitat outside the SINCs, such as private gardens, which make up almost one fifth of open land in Hackney and provides important habitat for species such as bats and tawny owl.

3.1.4 Increasing connectivity requires:

- ecological enhancement of existing green spaces, green corridors, rivers and canals adjacent to and between existing SINCs and other valuable habitats, to allow existing habitats to expand, and species to move between areas of good quality wildlife habitat;
- ensuring new development adjacent to SINCs or wildlife corridors provides additional habitat and/or reduces barriers to movement;
- providing advice to private land-owners (including householders with gardens) about ways in which they can contribute to the strengthening of wildlife corridors and ecological connectivity.

3.1.5 Creating new opportunities requires:

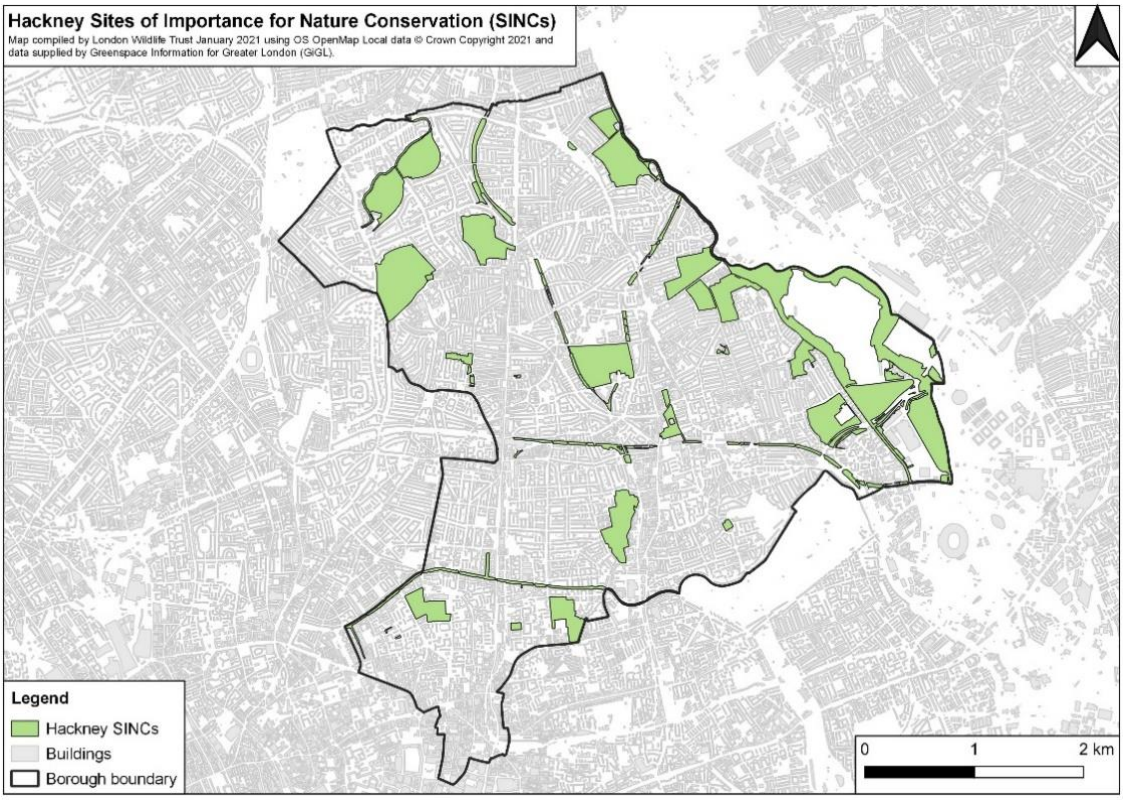
- increasing the capacity of existing SINCs to support more priority habitat or a more diverse range of species;

- installation of features such as biodiverse green roofs, building-integrated nesting and roosting sites, and nature-based sustainable drainage, in new developments;
- sign-posting guidance and design codes that ensure that new landscaping and public realm improvements contribute to local nature recovery.

## 3.2 Key elements of a nature recovery network

3.2.1 The SINCs provide the network that includes land that is of intrinsic ecological value in the borough - see Map 1. The protection and management of this network, including the support and participation of community groups, is the core requirement of a Local Nature Recovery Plan.

Figure 2 – Hackney Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (existing and proposed, subject to confirmation in Local Plan)




3.2.2 However, although the protection and management of the SINC network ensures the conservation of the most important wildlife habitats, many wildlife species forage, move through and breed in, the borough's wider green infrastructure network of amenity green spaces, gardens, street trees, green roofs, etc. Although these spaces are not always of intrinsic nature conservation value they provide supplementary habitat that complements and helps to connect the SINC network.

3.2.3 Wildlife that is especially dependent upon this supplementary habitat includes: species that are very mobile or migratory; species that require a range of

different habitats to complete their life cycle; and species that have adapted to exploit new habitats provided by buildings and private gardens.

3.2.4 Certain bats, for example, will often roost in buildings and feed and forage along avenues of trees and well vegetated areas of parks and gardens; many species of pollinating insects (such as bees, butterflies and moths) may nest in wilder areas of habitat but will visit gardens with an abundance of flowering plants for nectar and pollen; and many woodland birds (such as great spotted woodpecker and nuthatch, for example) may become partly dependent on a regular supply of food from bird-feeders during the winter months.

3.2.5 Figures 3 - 5 illustrate where the most valuable supplementary habitats, wildlife corridors and stepping-stones are present for a range of different groups of species. Figure 6 shows the coincidence of these areas with the SINC network and provides the spatial layout of a local nature recovery network.

Figure 3 - Supplementary habitat for bats, pollinators and common birds

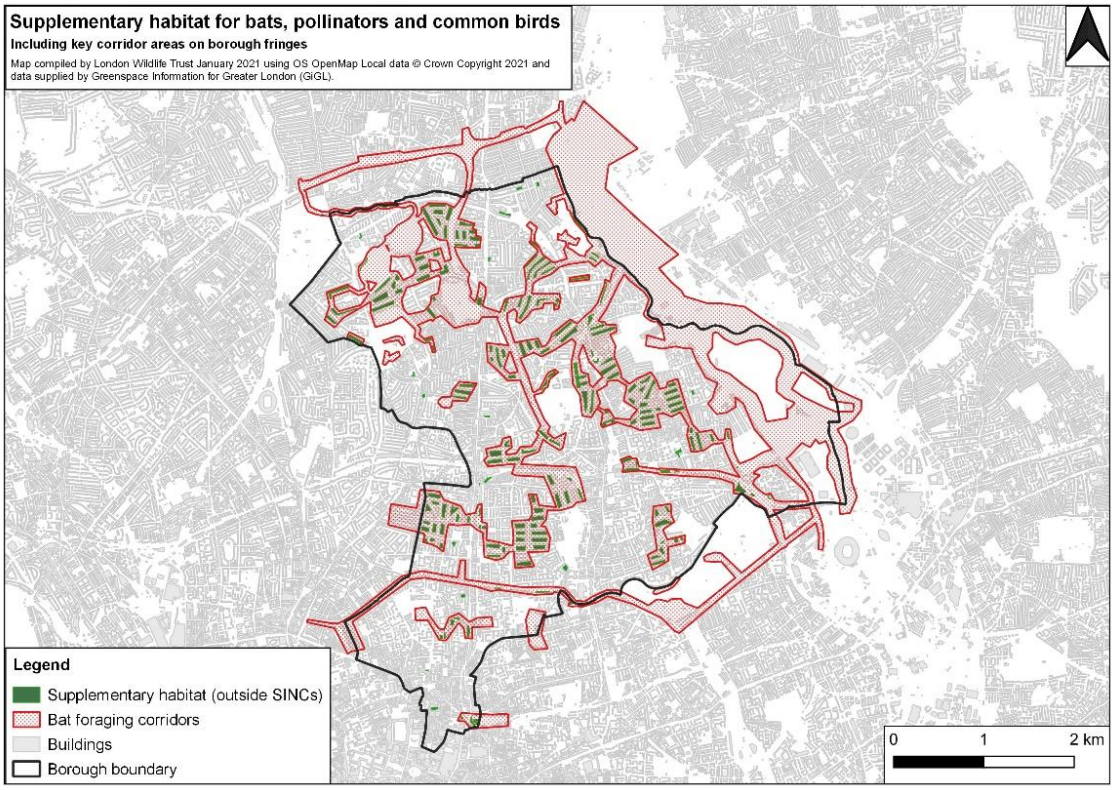


Figure 4 - Reptile and amphibian populations

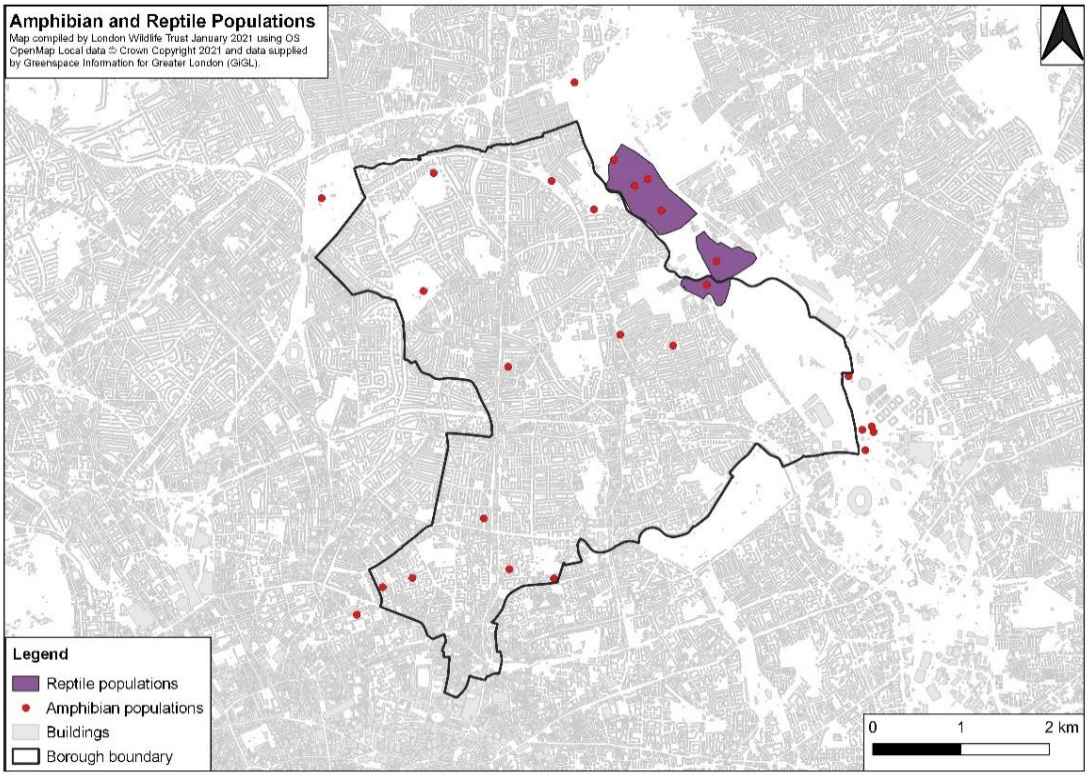



Figure 5 - Locations of existing green roofs

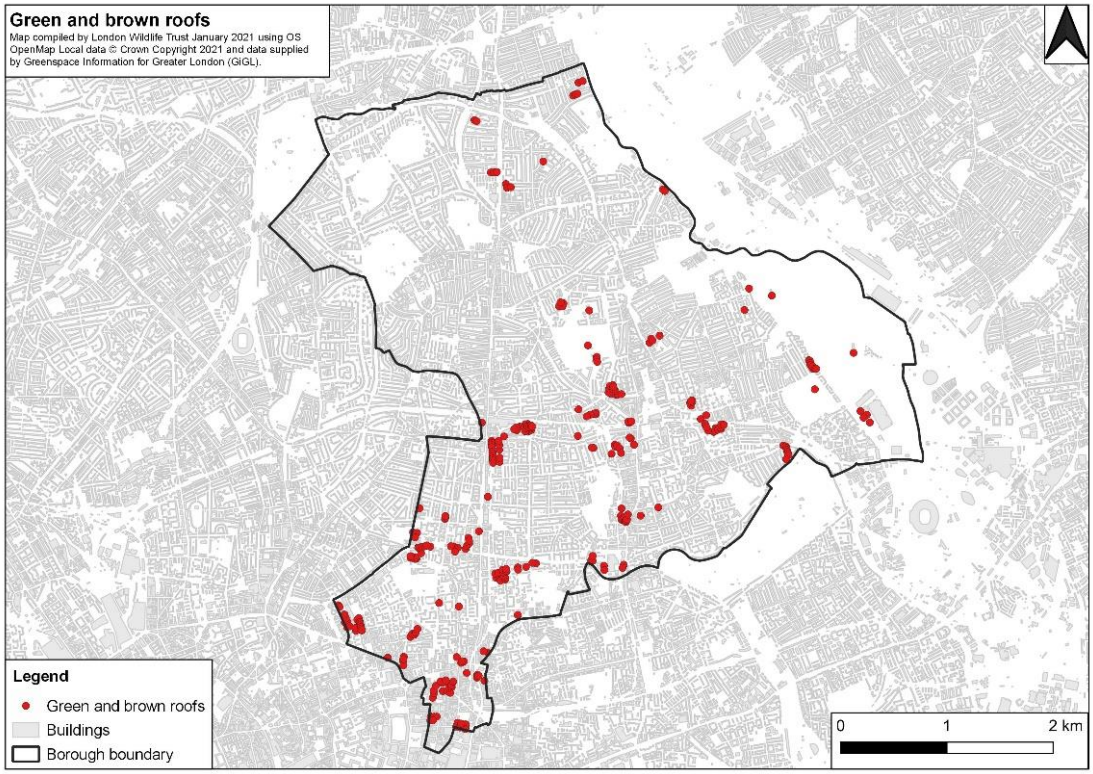
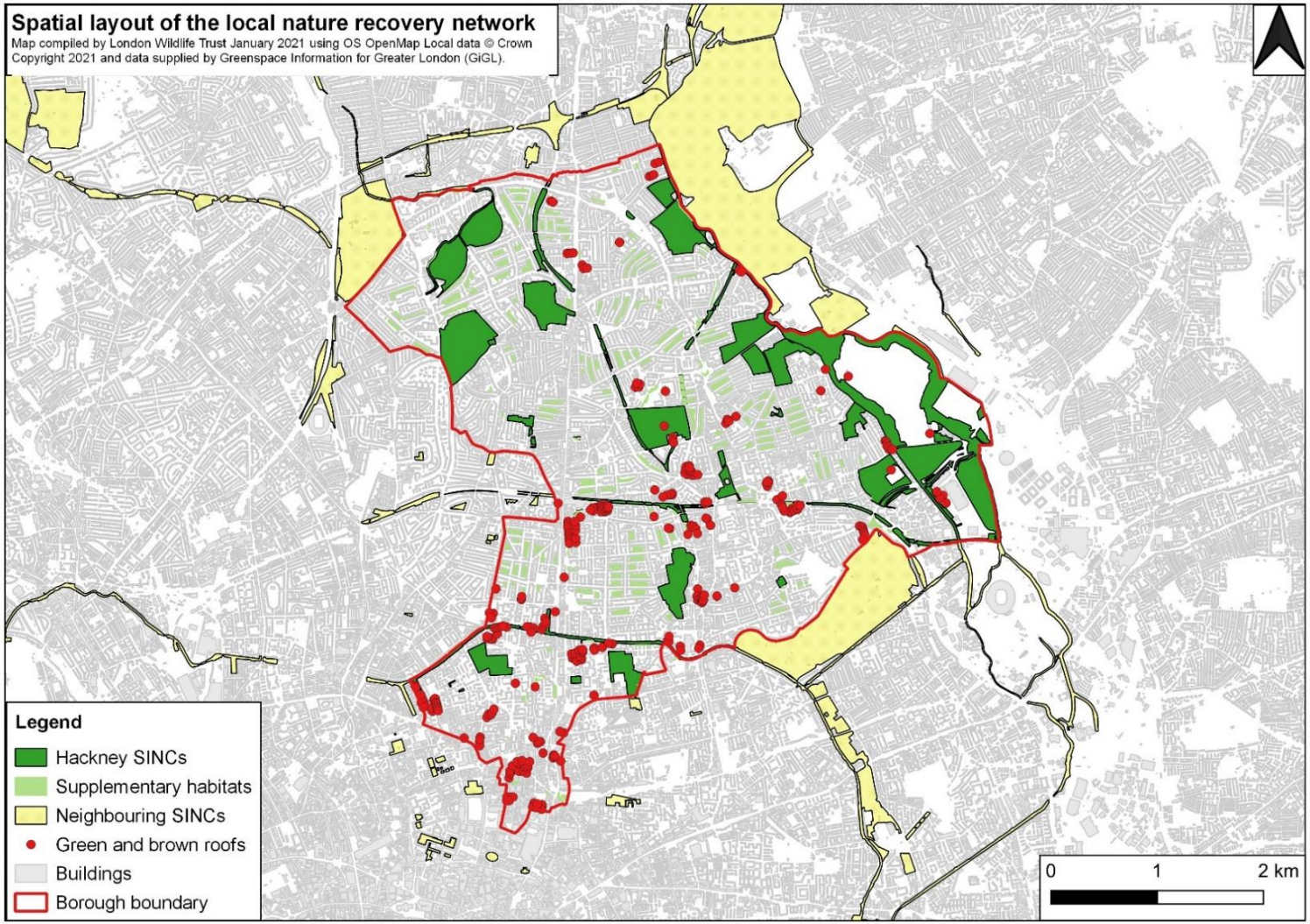


Figure 6 – Spatial layout of the local nature recovery network



# 4 Hackney's Local Nature Recovery Plan

## 4.1 Framing the local nature recovery plan

4.1.1 This section sets out the range of nature recovery actions and proposals in those parts of the borough where there are strategic opportunities to enhance, connect and create wildlife habitat. Their focus is on land and owned by Hackney Council and land over which the council has influence through its land use planning powers or partnerships and relationships with other land-owners and land-managers

4.1.2 However, these are not exhaustive and there will be many opportunities to create and enhance habitat at the local level by, for example, wildlife-friendly landscaping, planting wildflowers, or installing nest boxes in spaces (especially gardens) owned or managed by individuals, tenant management organisations, institutions and businesses. Examples of community-led projects and generic for supporting nature recovery are provided in Section 5.

4.1.3 To ensure the actions proposals are as strategic as possible, but also have sufficient specificity, the borough has been divided into 5 Nature Recovery Areas (NRAs), each of which is focused on existing ecological assets which provide the starting point for nature recovery. These NRAs are:

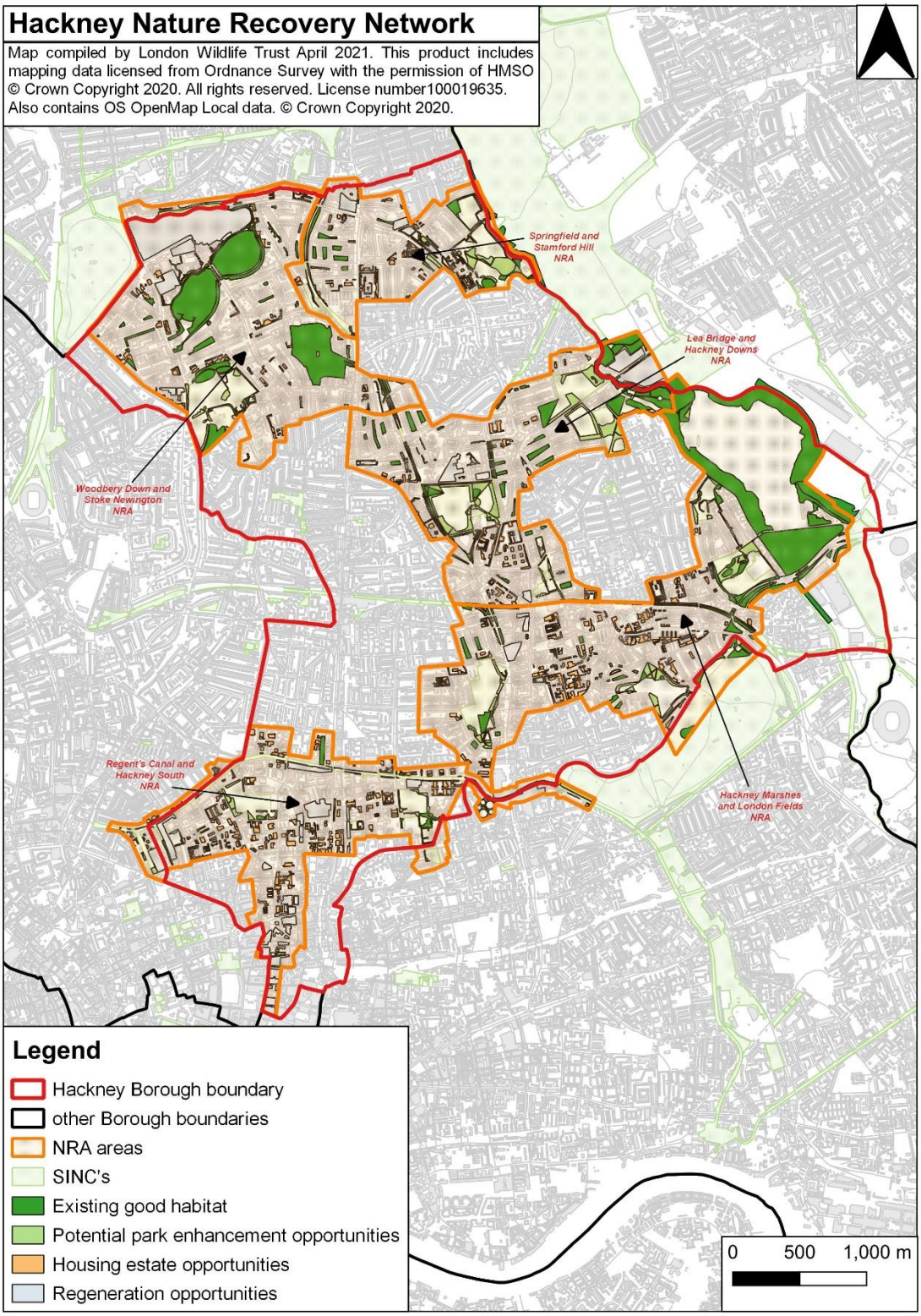
- Woodberry Down and Stoke Newington – focused on Woodberry Wetlands, Abney Park Cemetery and Clissold Park
- Springfield and Stamford Hill – focused on the River Lea, Springfield Park and Clapton Common
- Lea Bridge and Hackney Downs – focused on Millfields and Hackney Downs Park
- Hackney Wick and London Fields – focused on the River Lea, Hackney Marshes, Wells Street Common and London Fields
- Regents Canal and Hackney South – focused on the Regents Canal, Shoreditch Park and Haggerston Park.

4.1.4 The NRAs (and the wider nature recovery network) are shown in Figure 7 and described individually in more detail in section 5.2. Sites within the network are coloured to indicate their existing or potential value as wildlife habitat:

- Dark green – areas of existing good habitat for wildlife. These areas require long-term bespoke management to maintain their biodiversity value.
- Light green – areas located within parks, amenity green space and adjacent to waterways that are ideal to relax mowing, create wildflower meadows or plant additional trees or shrubs. They are mostly areas of amenity grassland with scattered groups or avenues of trees.

- Orange – existing greenspace within housing estates, consisting mostly of amenity grassland, with scattered trees and formal shrub or flower planting. These are areas with the potential to create small areas of new habitats such as wildflower meadows or urban orchards, or additional diversity through prairie planting and planting of hedges, native shrubs and wildflowers.
- Grey – regeneration areas with opportunities for ecological enhancement through inclusion of street trees, green roofs, rain gardens and other suitable planting within the development site and adjacent public realm.

Figure 7 – Hackney's Nature Recovery Areas and Nature Recovery Network



## 4.2 The Nature Recovery Areas

**Woodberry Down and Stoke Newington NRA**

4.2.1 Woodberry Wetlands, Abney Park Cemetery and Clissold Park are three of Hackney's most important ecological assets. They lie in close proximity to each other in the north east of the borough. In addition, the New River runs along the borough boundary and into the adjacent Finsbury Park, another important ecological asset over the borough boundary in the London Borough of Haringey.

4.2.2 Woodberry Wetlands are former water supply reservoirs. The east reservoir is now managed as a nature reserve and has been enhanced in recent years with the creation of extensive areas of reedbed. The west reservoir is used for aquatic sports but still provides an important habitat for wildfowl especially during the winter months. Together they comprise a Metropolitan SINC. To the north of Woodberry Wetlands, the Woodberry Down estate is undergoing extensive regeneration which has provided the opportunity to create new areas of open space and landscape along New River, also a Metropolitan SINC, to complement the nature conservation interest of Woodberry Wetlands.

4.2.3 Abney Park Cemetery is a Metropolitan SINC and the most important woodland area in Hackney, comprising almost a third of the woodland habitat in the borough. Although secondary woodland, it contains many old and mature trees, some of which were planted when the cemetery was first laid out in the middle of the 19th Century. Consequently, it has a surprising diverse bird population and supports a range of rare and uncommon invertebrates. The woodland is isolated except for some small areas of woodland along the Stamford Hill rail corridor, in Allen Gardens, and in relatively large residential back-gardens in the streets between Abney Park Cemetery, Woodberry Wetlands and Clissold Park.

4.2.4 Clissold Park was once the grounds of Clissold House which was built in the latter half of the 18th century. It was laid out in typical fashion with lawns, avenues of trees and water features. Despite some changes over the years to improve its capacity to provide for sport and formal recreation it has retained many of these historic features, and the mature trees, small lakes and areas of less intensively managed grassland are now valuable habitats, making the park a valuable Borough SINC.

4.2.5 Priorities for the Woodberry Down and Stoke Newington NRA:

- protect and manage the existing SINCs to enhance their ecological value;
- maximise canopy cover to extend the ecological 'footprint' of Abney Park Cemetery;

- ensure the Woodberry Down regeneration project continues to integrate ecological objectives into the landscape design; and,
- promote the conservation of swifts, an iconic urban bird reliant on nest sites in buildings, which congregate in large numbers over Woodberry Wetlands in the summer months.

4.2.6 Key opportunities – see Figure 8:

- include additional wetland features (swales and rain gardens) in future development at Woodberry Down and in housing estates around Woodberry Wetlands to complement and augment the existing wetland habitat of Woodberry Wetlands;
- improve the riverine corridor created by the New River along the northern boundary of Woodberry Down by using swales and rain gardens to create patches of wet meadow and wet woodland - see example in Figure 9. Maintain as a dark corridor as far as is possible;
- increase tree cover in streets and other areas of public realm between Abney Park Cemetery, Woodberry Wetlands and Clissold Park to extend the ecological footprint of Abney Park Cemetery. Utilise oaks where possible to link oaks at Woodberry Wetlands and Abney Park Cemetery;
- install dead wood habitat (e.g. stag beetle loggeries and bee posts – see Figure 9) in housing green space at Lister Court and Hillcourt Estates. Consider management of existing mature trees on these estates and other estates to retain and maximise potential 'veteran' tree habitat;
- increase native shrub planting and specimen trees and install dead wood habitat in housing green space at Listria Lodge;
- plant native hedgerow along the boundary of Kings Crescent Estate and Lakeside Court;
- underplant the mature trees along the Green Lanes and Church Street boundaries of Clissold Park with clumps of native shrubs to diversify structure and increase screening of roads;
- extend wildflower meadow on Stoke Newington Common north of Brooke Road.
- create wildflower meadow in front of John Scott Health Centre;
- require installation of swift boxes in all new major developments within this NRA; and,
- encourage retention of trees, additional tree and shrub planting and creation of dead-wood habitat in residential gardens.

### 4.2.7 Species conservation

Flagship species requiring projects and management to maintain or expand populations, include:

- kingfisher and reed warbler, by creating additional nest banks in undisturbed areas for kingfisher, and managing reedbeds for reed warbler;
- white-letter hairstreak butterfly, by managing existing elm trees in Abney Park Cemetery and plant new elms in suitable locations;
- *Pocata personata* (a bumble-bee mimic hoverfly), by retaining and managing veteran/ancient trees at Abney Park Cemetery and Clissold Park, as larvae live in rot-holes;
- tawny owl and noctule bat, by encouraging the retention of large trees in residential gardens;
- four-banded flower bee *Anthophora quadrimaculata,* by maintaining or creating suitable nesting sites (e.g. earth banks or old walls) in warm and sunny situations in parks and green spaces with plenty of flowers such red dead-nettle (*Lamium purpureum)* and other labiates nearby;
- swift, by encouraging retention of existing swift nest-sites in buildings and install swift bricks on new and existing buildings where swifts nest nearby.

Figure 8 – Woodberry Down and Stoke Newington NRA Opportunities Map

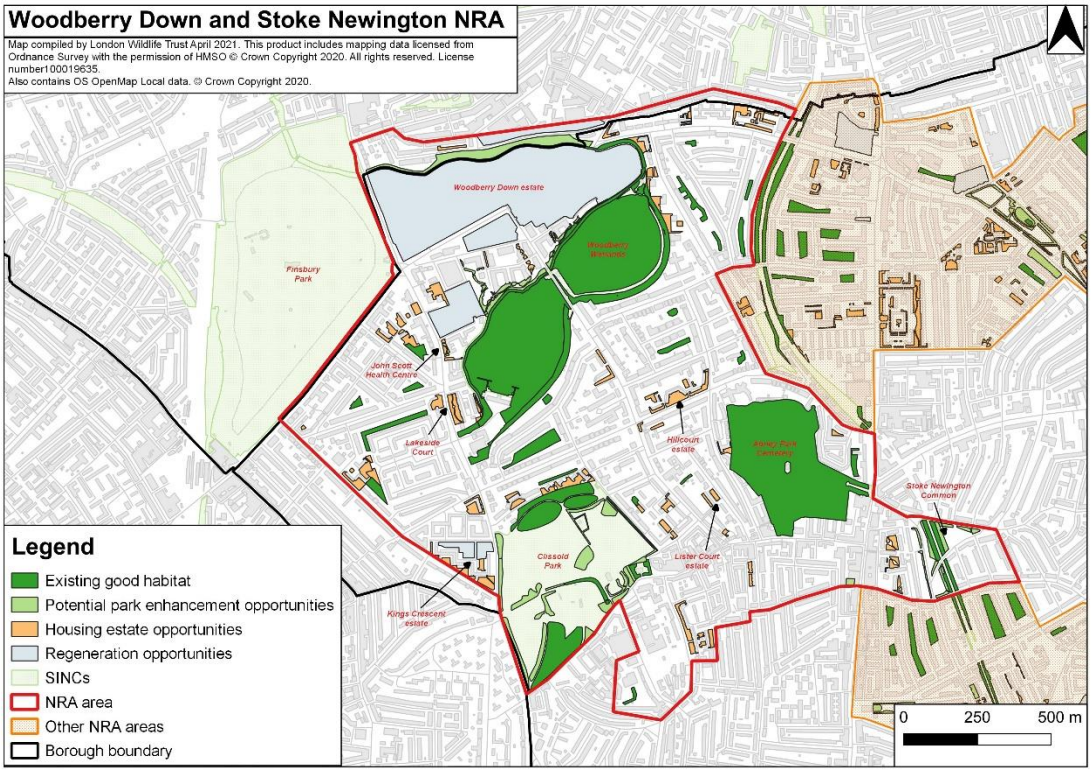


Figure 9 – wet woodland created at Greenwich Ecology Park

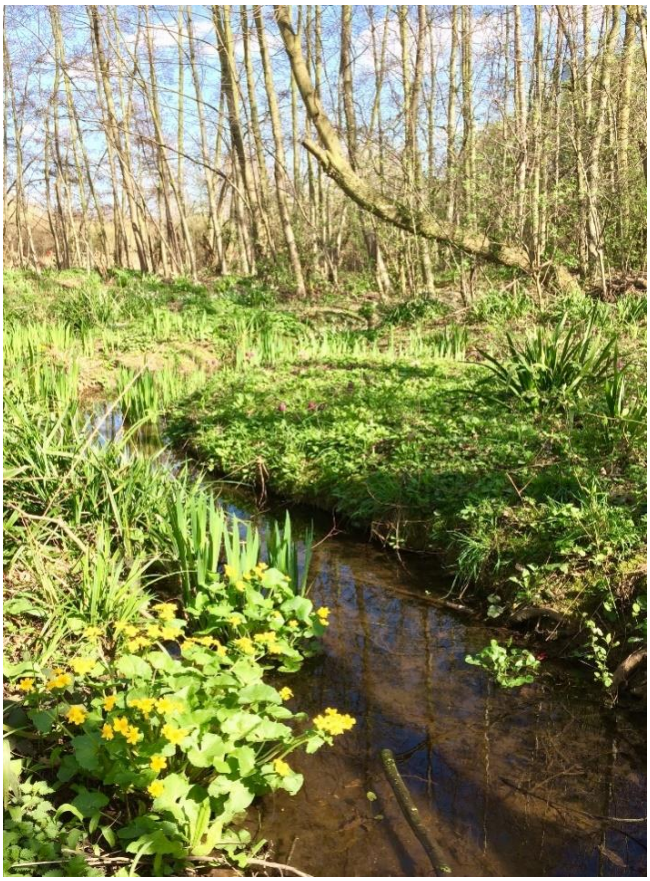


Figure 10 – artificial nest-sites for solitary bees

**Springfield and Stamford Hill NRA**

4.2.8 Springfield Park was formerly the private landscaped grounds of three country houses built in the late 19th Century; consequently, the site supports many mature trees, including oaks and hybrid black poplars, and some of the grassland is relatively unimproved and supports species such as sheep's sorrel and sweet vernal grass. In combination with its geological interest (the spring-lines within the park), ecological enhancements (such as the planting of native black poplars) and the extensive views it provides across Walthamstow Marshes and Walthamstow Wetlands, the park is one of Hackney's most valuable Borough SINCs.

4.2.9 On the western edge of this NRA the railway corridor between Stoke Newington and Stamford Hill stations creates a wooded corridor that provides habitat for a range of woodland birds and invertebrates and a degree of ecological connectivity with Abney Park Cemetery.

4.2.10 Other than Springfield Park, the other areas of existing nature conservation interest in this NRA are of local value, they include Spring Hill Playing Fields which supports a variety of wildflowers at its margins, and Clapton Common Pond which supports a range of aquatic plants. The other significant green space, Clapton Common, is not ecologically rich but it does contain a large number of mature London Plane trees.

4.2.11 Despite the relative paucity of high-quality wildlife habitat, much of the NRA comprises residential streets with rear gardens containing relatively large trees. These form small patches of wooded habitat which are used by common garden and woodland birds and invertebrates and foraging areas for bats.

4.2.12 Priorities for the Springfield and Stamford Hill NRA:

- continue to improve the ecological value of Springfield Park, especially remnant areas of semi-improved grassland;
- introduce areas of wildflower meadow or prairie planting into amenity green spaces to increase the range for common grassland invertebrates found on the nearby Walthamstow Marshes;
- encourage and support additional wetland edge planting to increase ecological connectivity along the Lea;
- renew the management plan for the East and West Bank Nature Reserve in light of the new vegetation management standard instituted by Network Rail on their land-holding;

4.2.13 Key opportunities – see Figure 11:

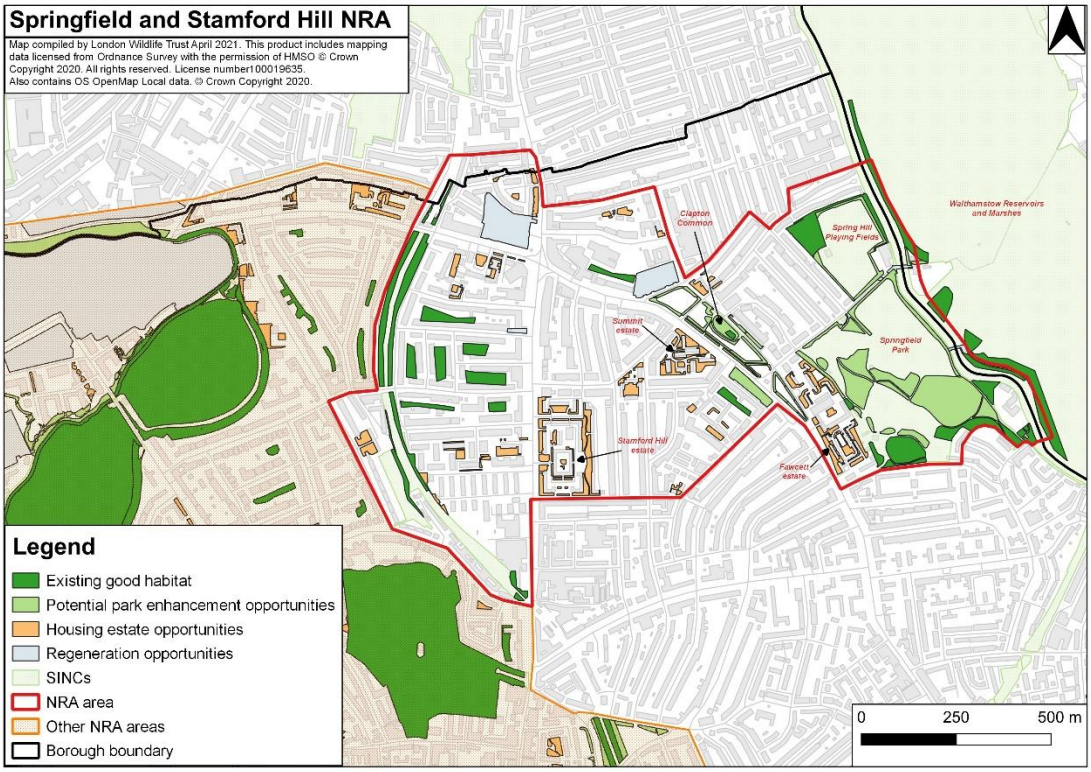
- plant hedgerow and shrubs along Spring Hill and River Lea boundaries of Springfield Park and maintain as a low hedge to maintain sight-lines;
- establish a second avenue of trees such as small-leaved lime in Springfield Park to replace the False acacias (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) along the Spring Hill boundary;
- create/enhance an area of wet woodland near the Springfield Park bandstand;
- create wildflower meadows in Spring Hill Playing Fields between the access road and Spring Hill tennis courts;
- plant native hedgerow or groups of native shrubs along A107 boundary of Clapton Common and create wildflower meadows between Craven Walk and Clapton Common Pond, and at the northernmost part of the common adjacent to Castlewood Road;
- create wildflower meadows, or introduce prairie planting (see description in Box 1) in amenity green space along western and southern boundaries of the Fawcett Estate, and the eastern boundary of the Summit Estate;
- diversify planting (with flowering shrubs and prairie planting) in linear green space to the east of Stamford Hill Estate and in front of Arran House; and,
- encourage retention of trees, additional tree and shrub planting and creation of dead-wood habitat in residential gardens.

4.2.14 Species conservation

Flagship species requiring projects and management to maintain or expand populations, include:

- native black poplar, by managing existing trees and taking cuttings from suitable trees ,and planting in Springfield Park;
- common toad, by encouraging and supporting creation of additional ponds in allotments, residential gardens and other private green space around Springfield Park;
- common pipistrelle, by encouraging retention of trees in private gardens and increase canopy cover in streets and public realm, especially between East and West Bank Nature Reserve and Stamford Hill Road (A10); and,
- hairy-footed flower bee (*Anthophora plumipes*), by creating small areas of exposed, light, sandy soils and planting lungworts (*Pulminaria*), primroses (*Primula* spp.), dead-nettles (*Labium* spp.) and comfrey (*Symphytum officinale)* in suitable places in parks and green spaces.

Figure 11 – Springfield and Stamford Hill NRA Opportunities Map



Box 1 – description of prairie planting

Prairie planting is a naturalistic form of planting comprising a mix of native and ornamental grasses and flowering perennials. Designed with wildlife in mind it can provide nectar and pollen from spring right through to late autumn, foraging sites for birds and a structural diversity which benefits a wide range of invertebrates and shelter for overwintering insects. A good example is at the New North Road entrance to Wenlock Barn TMO – see image below.

Typical plants in a prairie planting scheme include non-native perennials such as varieties of *Echinaceas*, *Heleniums*, *Nepeta, Asters*, *Rudbeckias, Alliums* and *Verbena bonariensis,* mixed with clump-forming grasses such as cultivars of *Calamagrostis*, *Molinia*, and *Deschampsia*; plus native perennials such black knapweed, ox-eye daisy, yarrow, hemp agrimony can be included in the planting palette. See also RHS Plants for Pollinators.

See also RHS Plants for Pollinators. https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/pdf/conservation-and-biodiversity/wildlife/plants-for-pollinators-plants-of-the-world.pdf

## Lea Bridge and Hackney Downs NRA

4.2.15 Middlesex Filter Beds is part of the Lee Valley Regional Park. Part of a former Victorian water treatment works the site is now managed as a nature reserve comprising areas of woodland, grassland and scrub bordered by the relatively natural channel of the River Lea and the canalised Lea Navigation. It is part of the Lee Valley Metropolitan SINC.

4.2.16 The only borough SINCs in this NRA are the railway corridors running north west and north-east from Hackney Downs. Both provide a partly wooded

corridor that creates some ecological connectivity through the centre of the borough.

4.2.17 To the west of the Lea Navigation, Millfields Park, comprising three parcels of land, contains a boundary of relatively mature trees but was managed primarily for amenity and recreational use. In recent years, the part of the park closest to the Lea has been managed to create more wildlife habitat and now includes some rough grassland and scrub and a community orchard thus making Millfield Park a Local SINC.

4.2.18 Hackney Downs is the largest open space in the centre of Hackney and although managed primarily as a recreational space, the presence of mature trees and some areas which are managed less intensively makes it a Local SINC.

4.2.19 The only other extensive green space in this NRA is Stoke Newington Common. Although it contains a number of relatively mature trees and is bisected by the railway corridor which is a borough SINC and is bounded by ecologically valuable shrub planting, the rest of the site has limited ecological value.

4.2.20 <u>Priorities for the Millfields and Hackney Downs NRA</u>

- Enhance the ecological value of Millfields Park, especially the land closest to the River Lea.
- Strengthen the ecological corridor provided by the rail corridor SINCs.
- Extend the wildflower meadow planting in Hackney Downs Park into neighbouring estates.
- Work with Canals and Rivers Trust to reconnect Middlesex Filter Beds with the Old River Lea.
- Work with London Borough of Waltham Forest to ensure that regeneration plans for the Thames Water depot on Lea Bridge Road contribute to increased ecological connectivity between Middlesex Filter Beds and the Waterworks Nature Reserve.

4.2.21 <u>Key opportunities for Millfields and Hackney Downs NRA – see Figure 12:</u>

- establish a native wildflower meadow in Millfields Park north of the electricity substation. This area has already benefitted from less intensive management but could be further enhanced by improving the floral diversity;
- establish groups of shrubs in Millfields Park along the boundaries with Lea Bridge Road and Chatsworth Road where canopy of existing mature trees allows;
- underplant mature trees in westernmost part of Millfields Park with woodland shrubs and woodland wildflowers;

- establish small wildflower meadows in amenity green spaces in Beecholme Estate – see example in Figure 13;
- establish a native hedgerow or groups of shrubs in the amenity green spaces along Pembury Road; and,
- introduce areas of prairie planting into the Pembury Estate and amenity green spaces at Morris Blitz Court and The Beckers.

4.2.22 Species conservation

Flagship species requiring projects and management to maintain or expand populations, include:

- native black poplar, by managing existing trees and taking cuttings from suitable trees, and planting in Millfields Park.
- kingfisher, by creating additional nest banks in undisturbed areas and maintain structural diversity of trees and shrubs along the Lea;
- willow emerald damselfly, by maintaining branches of willow and alder overhanging water along the Lea and within Middlesex Filter Beds;
- hairy-footed flower bee (*Anthophora plumipes*), by creating small areas of exposed, light, sandy soils and planting lungworts, primroses, dead-nettles, and comfrey in suitable places in parks and green spaces;
- swift, by encouraging retention of existing swift nest-sites in buildings and installing swift bricks on new and existing buildings where swifts nest nearby; and,
- common pipistrelle, by encouraging retention of trees in private gardens and increase canopy cover in streets and public realm

Figure 12 – Lea Bridge and Hackney Downs NRA Opportunities Map

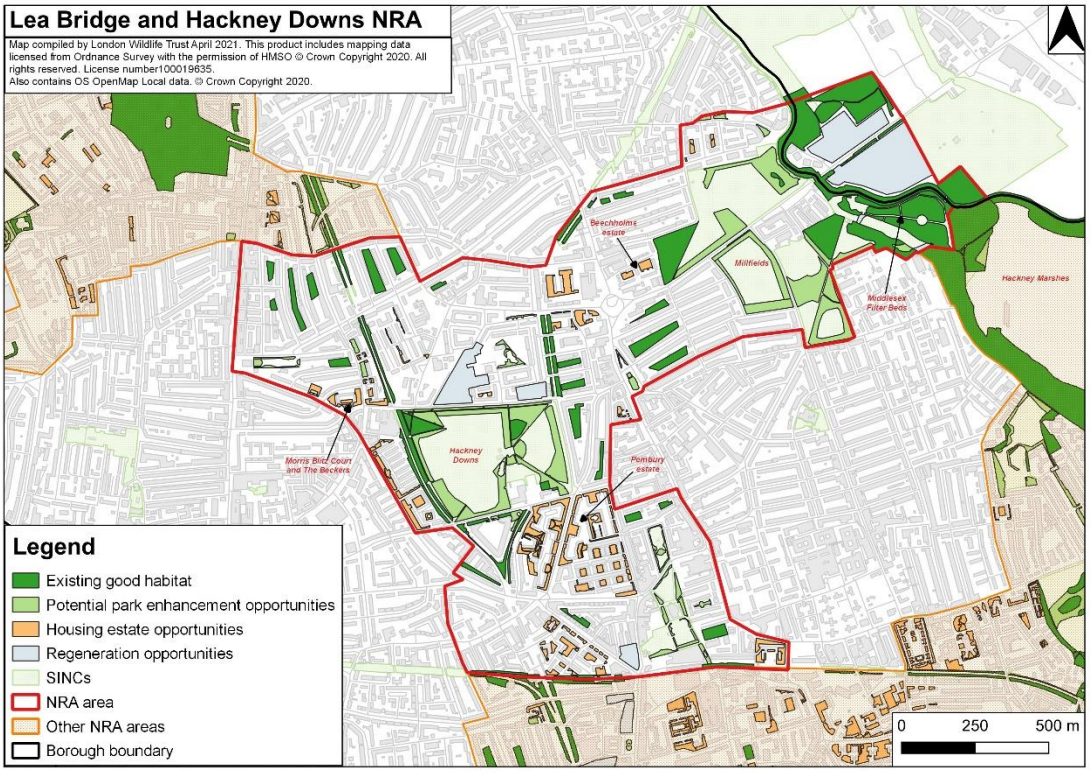



Figure 13 – example of a small wildflower meadow

**Hackney Marshes and London Fields NRA**

4.2.23 The extensive area of Hackney Marshes, although maintained primarily as sports pitches, is the largest open space in Hackney and one of its most important ecological assets. To the north it is bordered by the River Lee, which is a relatively natural river channel, and to the south by the Lea Navigation which is a canalised section of the Lea. In recent years, the borders of Hackney Marshes have been planted with native woodland, creating a continuous corridor along both arms of the River Lee. In addition, a wildflower meadow has been established close to the Middlesex Filter Beds. This habitat creation has strengthened the ecological connectivity between Walthamstow Marshes and the naturalistic landscape of the northern part of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. To the south of the main area of Hackney Marshes is Wick Woodland; planted in the late 1990s it is now the second largest area of woodland in Hackney. Hackney Marshes, Wick Woodland, and the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park are all part of the Lee Valley Metropolitan SINC.

4.2.24 West of the Lea Navigation, Daubeney Fields and Mabley Green are two parks that create an ecological link between Hackney Marshes and suburban Homerton. In addition, Red Path Wood, the secondary woodland bisected by the twin carriageways of the A12, is a useful addition to the woodland habitat of Wick Woodland, and creates a link for woodland birds and invertebrates to Victoria Park in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. These sites are all Borough SINCs.

4.2.25 Well Street Common, lying to the north of Victoria Park, and London Fields to the west, are the other major areas of green space in this NRA. Both contain areas of mature trees and extensive areas of amenity grassland. London Fields also has some areas where tree planting and relaxation of mowing has created areas of some nature conservation value, making London Fields a Local SINC.

4.2.26 <u>Priorities for Hackney Marshes and London Fields NRA</u>

- Manage the planted woodland on Hackney Marshes to optimize its ecological value.
- Enhance the ecology and ecological connectivity between the River Lea and Hackney Marshes
- Strengthen the woodland link between Wick Woodland and Victoria Park and between Victoria Park and Well Street Common.
- Enhance parts of Well Street Common to establish it as a Local SINC.
- Increase tree cover in amenity green spaces between Well Street Common and London Fields.

4.2.27 Key opportunities for Hackney Marshes and London Fields NRA – see Figure 14:

- selective coppicing of some of the woodland edges surrounding Hackney Marshes to create a woodland edge ecotone – see Box 2;
- planting clumps of native shrubs beneath the tree canopy on the southern boundary of Hackney Marshes to create more structural diverse corridor;
- working with Canals and Rivers Trust to improve the ecology of the River Lea by increasing the variability of the in-channel profile and establishing marginal aquatic vegetation;
- creating a wildflower meadow in Daubeney Fields on the boundary with the Lea Navigation;
- introducing prairie planting in the linear green space in Kingsmead Estate linking Daubeney Fields and Mabley Green;
- strengthening the tree corridor on southern boundary of Mabley Green with additional trees and shrub underplanting;
- strengthening the tree and shrub planting within housing green space on estates between Cassland Road and Wick Road;
- creating a woodland understorey beneath the tree canopy on Well Street Common opposite Victoria Park Queen's Gate;
- extending and improving the wildflower meadow on Well Street Common adjacent to Meynell Road;
- planting a native hedgerow along Well Street boundary of Frampton Park estate and introducing prairie planting into amenity green spaces throughout the estate;
- extending the wildlife areas in London Fields by planting of native shrubs and perennials in areas adjacent to Landsdowne Drive and introducing prairie planting in green spaces of Mapledene and Fields estates;
- extending wilder area of London Fields south of Richmond Road by planting of native trees, shrubs and perennials, linking it to the community orchard, and introduce prairie planting into green space of Wayman Court estate.
- continuing the enhancement of the former RedGra area of London Fields by shifting from a 'pictorial meadow' to the establishment of a native wildflower meadow; and,
- regenerating the area of degraded woodland in London Fields and limit access to maintain a more diverse understory.

4.2.28 Species conservation

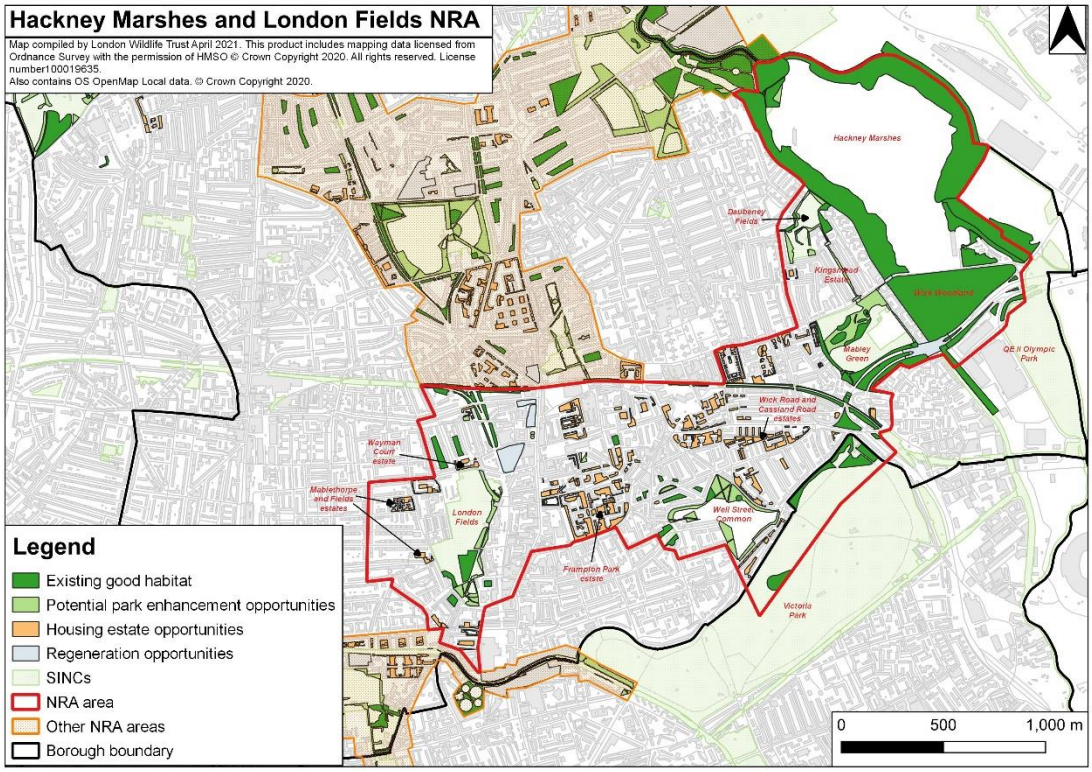
Flagship species requiring projects and management to maintain or expand populations, include:

- grass snake, by creating hibernacula and basking spots in undisturbed parts of Hackney Marshes;
- native black poplar, by manage existing trees and taking cuttings from suitable trees, and planting in Millfields Park;
- kingfisher, by creating additional nest banks in undisturbed areas and maintaining structural diversity of trees and shrubs along the Lea;
- willow emerald damselfly, by maintaining branches of willow and alder overhanging water along the Lea;
- hedgehog, by undertaking a survey to establish distribution and population size; encourage hedgehog friendly gardening[14] - including non-use of slug pellets - and creation of hedgehog highways[15] through gardens and estates;
- horehound longhorn moth (*Fasciella nemophora*), by creating small patches of flower rich habitat containing black horehound (*Ballota nigra*) will help maintain and expand local populations. This nationally scarce species and species of principle importance has been recorded in the NRA.

[14] https://www.hedgehogstreet.org/help-hedgehogs/helpful-garden-features/

[15] https://www.hedgehogstreet.org/help-hedgehogs/link-your-garden/

Figure 14 - Hackney Marshes and London Fields NRA Opportunities Map




Box 2 – establishing a woodland edge ecotone

In urban areas in particular, where there is limited opportunity to establish large areas of mature woodland, areas planted with trees are often better managed as a woodland edge. Selective cutting and coppicing of trees to maximise structural diversity and create dense multi-stemmed regrowth creates nesting habitat for common warblers such as blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*) and whitethroat (*Curruca communis*) and a flush of soft growth and flowers attractive to a variety of insects including a wide range of bees and butterflies.

**Regent's Canal and Hackney South**

4.2.29 The Regent's Canal is part of the extensive London Canals Metropolitan SINC which reaches across much of north London and is an important ecological corridor through the south of the borough. Although riparian and aquatic vegetation is sparse in some stretches, there is a significant amount of good quality aquatic and riparian planting between Kingsland Road and Whitmore Road bridges. Kingsland Basin in particular is known to support shoals of rudd (*Scardinius erythrophthalmus*), perch (*Perca fluviatilis*), and dace (*Leuciscus leuciscus*), as well as pike (*Esox Lucius*) and eels (*Anguilla anguilla*).

4.2.30 Although this part of the borough is more densely developed than most other parts of Hackney it contains two reasonably large parks – Haggerston Park and Shoreditch Park - although neither are particularly well connected to the canal or any areas of good quality wildlife habitat. Haggerston Park includes areas of shrub planting, secondary woodland, a wildflower grassland, and a reasonably large pond which makes it a Borough SINC. Shoreditch Park is less ecologically diverse but contains several mature trees. Due to its location, it provides one of the few areas for access to nature and is, therefore, a Local SINC.

4.2.31 There are a considerable number of small housing estates in this NRA and much of it is subject to ongoing and future regeneration. This provides an opportunity for urban greening including the provision of biodiverse green roofs.

4.2.32 Priorities for the Regent's Canal and Hackney South NRA

- Enhance the ecological corridor provided by the Regents Canal.
- Improve connectivity between the two main parks and between the parks and the canal corridor.
- Ensure all new developments maximise urban greening, especially in the most densely developed parts of the borough south of Old Street.

4.2.33 Key opportunities for the Regent's Canal and Hackney South NRA - see Figure 15:

- increasing the amount of vegetated areas in and along the canal corridor is the most effective way of promoting nature recovery in the NRA. Redevelopment of sites along the canal should contribute to enhancement of the canal-side through planting of reed, sedge, and other aquatic vegetation habitat along canal edges, where possible – see example in Figure 16. In addition, new development should avoid light spill onto the canal corridor; where lighting is required it should be

designed to minimise adverse ecological impacts. See Bat Conservation Trust artificial lighting guidance[16];

- extending the ecological footprint of the canal by creating complementary habitat in the form of rain gardens and naturalistic other sustainable drainage features - see Figure 17. These should be incorporated into new development within the NRA and retrofitted into the green spaces of housing estates east of Queensbridge Road bridge;
- enhancing the ecological value of Shoreditch Park by underplanting the treed section of the park along the boundaries of New North Road and Poole Street, and creating a better connection to the canal by planting shrubs and perennials in the housing green space along Avebury Street;
- protecting and enhancing the ecological value of Haggerston Park by fencing the pond to prevent access by dogs;
- requiring biodiverse green roofs on all new developments, especially those south of Old Street; and,
- enhancing east-west ecological connectivity, south of the canal by:
  - introducing small areas of prairie planting into the housing estates between Haggerston Park and Shoreditch Park to bolster the pockets of habitat already provided by St Mary's Secret Garden, the grounds of the Geffrye Museum and Hoxton Trust Community Garden;
  - greening associated with the redevelopment of the St Leonard's Hospital site;
  - introducing small areas of prairie planting into the housing green spaces south of Shoreditch Park.

4.2.34 Species conservation

Flagship species requiring projects and management to maintain or expand populations, include:

- Pike, by protecting the spawning site in Kingsland Basin and continuing to improve marginal planting within the canal;
- dragonflies (various species), by continuing to improve marginal planting within the canal and encouraging creation of rain-gardens and small ponds in housing estates and private gardens and green spaces;
- black redstart, by establishing green roofs on new developments;

[16] Artificial Lighting Guidance - Buildings, planning and development - Bat Conservation Trust (bats.org.uk)

- swift, by promoting the work of Hackney Swifts and The Benyon Estate (see case-study in Section 5) and replicate elsewhere;
- solitary bees (various species), by establishing green roofs on new developments; installing demonstration ‘bee hotels’ in parks and green spaces; and, encouraging similar features in residential gardens and private green spaces;
- common pipistrelle, by increasing tree cover in streets along the northern bank of Regent’s Canal to increase foraging opportunities and links to neighbouring housing green space.

Figure 15 – Regents Canal and Hackney South NRA Opportunities Map

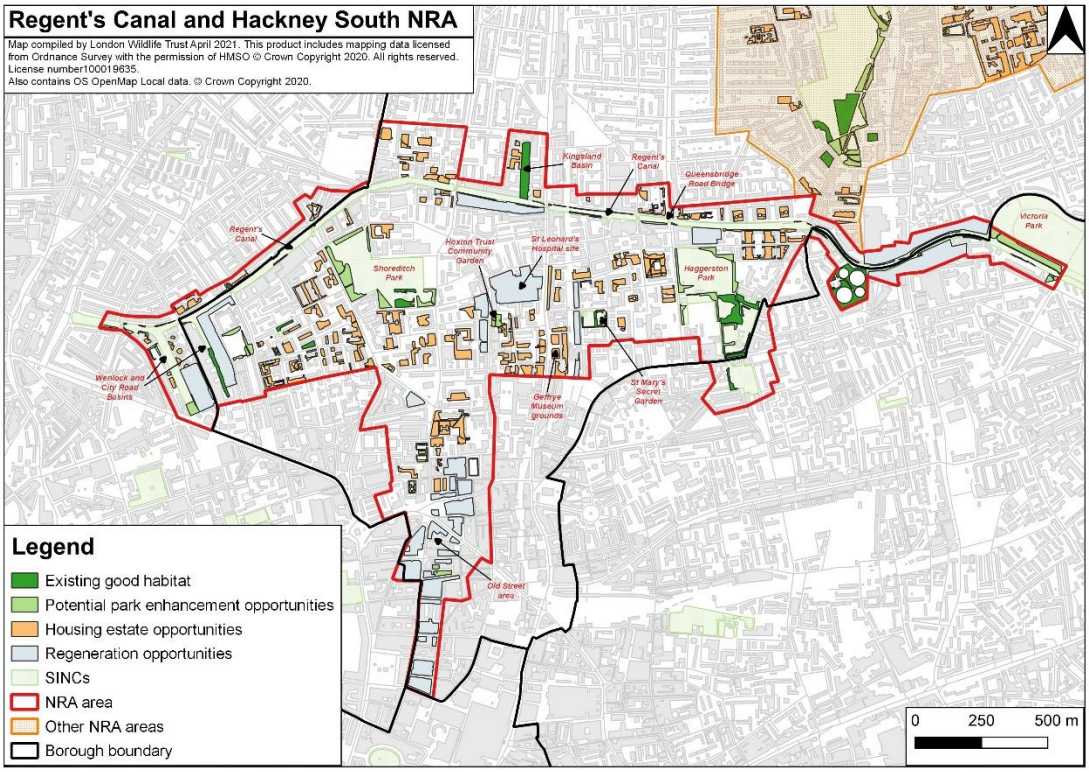


Figure 16 –aquatic planting in Kingsland Basin, Regent's Canal

Figure 17 – example of naturalistic SuDS retrofitted the public realm.

# 5 Citizen Action

## 5.1 Community-led projects

5.1.1 Community groups are often the primary drivers for change; identifying opportunities and driving action at the local level. Hackney is fortunate to have a range of community-led initiatives whose aims and objectives align with the principles of nature recovery. Support for these initiatives from the local authority and other decision-makers and potential funders will be critical in delivery a local nature recovery plan. Some of the key initiatives are described below. This is not a description of all such groups but is intended to serve as case-studies for approaches that can be applied elsewhere in the borough.

**10xGreener**

5.1.2 10xGreener is a project to make the Daubeney Fields neighbourhood in Homerton better for nature and people. Daubeney Fields is a small park and a SINC. It provides habitats for threatened birds like house sparrows, starlings and song thrushes and other species. In 2018, park user group Daubeney Fields Forever linked with Friends of the Earth and charity ecoActive to help residents create nature-friendly street spaces. A 'postcode gardener' brings local people together to make new mini wildlife habitats. They build planters, depave front gardens, make bug habitats, put in bird and bat boxes, plant tree pits and seed pavements with wildflowers. Hackney Council has stopped spraying herbicide in the area and more than 100 plant species, including the rare Jersey Cudweed, now grow on the streets.

5.1.3 Local gardening and greening groups are growing 10xGreener into a green corridor through the Kings Park ward, connecting the SINCs at Millfields . The corridor will link them through greener streets and estates that help wildlife forage, breed, and move easily. It will provide a model for how residents and community groups can work with Hackney Council to create habitats that build the NRA network.

https://www.facebook.com/daubeneyfieldsforever/

**The Growing Kitchen and Wenlock Orchard**

5.1.4 Like many estates in Hackney, the Wenlock Barn Estate has many underused grass areas. They are often mown regularly and therefore support very little wildlife. The Growing Kitchen community garden is a growing space with micro allotments, a perennial foraging garden, a mini orchard and wildlife pond. It was started by local residents supported by an organisation called Fourthland and the tenant management organisation in 2008. The site has transformed into a space for organic food growing but also a haven for wildlife. The herbs, vegetables and fruits provide forage for pollinators and the once booming slug and snail population are now managed by breeding common toads and smooth newts. Bats feed over the pond at night and it's used as a watering hole and bath by house sparrows, blue, great and coal tits, dunnock, robin, wrens, blackbirds and more recently long tailed tits.

5.1.5 Nearby, Wenlock Orchard was planted in 2013 with support from The Orchard Project, with a mix of apple, pear, plum and apricot trees. A meadow area has been created, hundreds of blubs planted and there is a relaxed mowing regime which has encouraged species such Essex skipper butterflies, six-spot burnet moth and cinnabar moth. A small population of toads has also become established Both spaces are managed by local residents on a voluntary basis and have become focal points for the estate.

http://www.wenlockbarntmo.co.uk/community-projects/the-growing-kitchen/
http://www.wenlockbarntmo.co.uk/wenlock-orchard/

## Tree Musketeers

5.1.6 Hackney's Tree Musketeers is a voluntary organisation established to work with local people, Hackney Council and other organisations to plant and care for trees across the borough and support the management of the borough's woodlands. This is achieved through: growing locally-sourced trees at their community tree nursery on Hackney Marshes; planting trees in parks and other green spaces across Hackney, including the planting of 101 Japanese flowering cherry in January 2021; planting and caring for Hackney community orchards; support local groups to plant trees on estates and green spaces; managing forest trees in Wick Woodland; and working with Hackney Council and other community organisations to promote good practices for urban tree stewardship.

https://www.treemusketeers.org.uk/

## Kingsland Basin

5.1.7 Kingsland Wharves development, completed in 2012, had landscape elements unfinished and poor grounds maintenance. Public spaces were barren, neglected and litter strewn and shallow aquatic areas suffered anaerobic conditions producing a bad odour during summer.

5.1.8 The Wildlife Gardeners of Haggerston took on responsibility for grounds maintenance and lobbied for the promised landscaping to be finished. Planting particular native species with benefits for wildlife, working with nature and allowing natural processes to develop has created a welcoming public space with abundant wildlife. Fish species and populations have increased alongside insects, birds and bats. The presence of sparrowhawk, heron, kingfisher and pike indicate healthy terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. New

species sightings such as fingernail clam and willow emerald damselfly are recorded with Greenspace Information for Greater London.

5.1.9 The area under the group's management has expanded to include once neglected parts of the Regent's Canal. Neighbours and local cafes see the benefits of the work being done and have joined in or contribute to the cost of maintenance. A 'de-paving' project has replaced hardstanding with 'Kingsland Copse'.

https://wildlifegardenersofhaggerston.org/

**De Beauvoir Swifts**

5.1.10 De Beauvoir has a significant population of swifts, a summer migrant bird that returns each year to traditional nest sites in old buildings. Swift populations are in steep decline nationally - decreasing by more than 50% over the last twenty years.

5.1.11 Working with Hackney Swifts Group, the local management company, The Benyon Estate, are raising awareness about the presence of swifts and are helping to replace swift nest sites often lost through refurbishment work. They are undertaking their work in a swift-friendly way, retaining nest spaces and installing new nest boxes when they carry out work on their properties. They have installed eight boxes on their office refurbishment on De Beauvoir Road.

5.1.12 The work undertaken by The Benyon Estate is in addition to many swift boxes installed by residents, and also in the tower of St Peter De Beauvoir church. One resident has installed innovative swift nesting bricks in an extension to

their home, and there is even a nest box on the local pub. Working together this collective action will hopefully keep the 'scream' of the swifts as the sound of summer for many years to come.

https://thebenyonestate.com/news/2020/making-new-homes-for-swifts-in-de-beauvoir

## 5.2 Action by all – further guidance on contributing to local nature recovery

5.2.1 Everyone can play at part in local nature recovery by identifying opportunities for ecological enhancement on land over which they have control or influence, including: parks and the public realm, private gardens, landscaped areas around public or private buildings, or communal spaces in housing estates.

**Parks, green spaces and public realm**

5.2.2 These provide the most significant areas of land that can be enhanced for wildlife. This can include small changes to seasonal management or altering the planting palette to a range of species more attractive to wildlife. The links below provide guidance that helpfully illustrates some of the changes that can be made:

Parks, people and nature

Landscape design for bats

5.2.3 Changing the planting or topography of an existing area of amenity green space can provide opportunities for bats, bees, butterflies and moths that need variety in vegetation type and structure, and aspect and orientation of banks and other features, to create a range of habitats in relatively small spaces. The links below provide guidance on creating designing landscapes for bats and creating banks and bumps for butterflies, bees and beetles:

Butterfly banks

Bee banks

Beetle bumps

**Buildings and streets**

5.2.4 The built environment needs to be designed and managed to create habitat for wildlife too. Green roofs and sustainable drainage can be designed to create a range of habitats; tree-planting in streets and civic spaces can be undertaken with wildlife and other environmental objectives in mind and lighting can be designed to minimise adverse impacts on wildlife. The links below provide examples of how habitat can be incorporated into buildings and civic spaces:

Living roofs and walls

SuDS in London guide

Trees in Hard Landscapes: A Guide for Delivery

Tree species selection for green infrastructure

Grey to green – depaving guide

Bats and lighting

**Gardens and community spaces**

5.2.5 All of the major nature conservation organisations provide web-sites with information about how to help wildlife in gardens and community green spaces:

The Wildlife Trust's Wildlife Gardening

RSPB's Nature on your doorstep

WWT's Gardening for Wetlands

Buglife's Gardening for Bugs

5.2.6 Some projects are especially good for local nature recovery, particularly in urban areas. These include creating a wildlife pond, creating mini-meadows, installing bee posts and bee hotels, or creating a stumpery for stag beetles and other invertebrates. The links below provide quick and easy guides to creating space for wildlife:

Wildlife ponds

Lawns and meadows

Bee posts

Stumperies

Rain garden guide