

THE EXECUTIVE

Tuesday, 8 February 2005

Agenda Item 7. Barking and Dagenham's Local Biodiversity Action Plan (Pages 1 - 45)

Please find attached Appendix A referred to in the report on the main agenda.

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APPENDIX A

Protecting wildlife in the borough

A biodiversity action plan for Barking and Dagenham

Sustainable Development Group

January 2005

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Foreword

There is a wide range of wildlife in Barking and Dagenham. In particular, there are many wetland and grassland sites. These house a range of species that are nationally and regionally rare, such as great crested newts, native black poplars, stonechants and lapwings.

National and regional biodiversity action plans show how important it is to protect the natural environment from poor management, neglect, and insensitive development.

Our Local Biodiversity Partnership reflects the community's desire to protect our natural environment. We must work together to provide awareness and education for everyone on wildlife issues.

This strategy sets out how we plan to make sure that our wildlife is protected.

It is an important step towards our community priority of 'Making Barking and Dagenham cleaner, greener and safer'.

Councillor Milton McKenzie
Lead Member for Cleaner, Greener and Safer Barking and Dagenham
January 2005

Executive summary

Biodiversity means variety of life. It includes all plants and animals and the habitats they live in. Our borough has a rich variety of wildlife. It is important that this is protected for future generations to enjoy.

Protecting wildlife and habitats is set out in legislation, planning policy guidance, and biodiversity action plans at national, regional and local levels.

Our Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) sets out a framework to protect the borough's local wildlife.

We have produced it from our community strategy 'Building Communities, Transforming Lives' (2004) and the 'Parks and Green Spaces Strategy' (2003). It supports our programmes of environmental improvement and redevelopment.

The main aims of the action plan are to:

- provide education and awareness;
- make developments include green initiatives;
- manage biodiversity in the borough's parks and green spaces; and
- support our work with the local community through the Local Biodiversity Partnership.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

The role of this document

1.1 Our Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) sets out a five-year programme of protecting the borough's wildlife. It explains how we will work with the local community to create a better environment.

1.2 We will use this document to help us make decisions on new development that will affect the local environment. It will also help the Local Biodiversity Partnership by improving people's knowledge and involvement in nature conservation.

Our vision

1.3 Our plan sets out how we aim to have a borough that is greener and more attractive, and has a range of wildlife. We want to make sure that the borough's natural environment is managed in such a way that its beauty and wealth can be enjoyed today and in the future.

1.4 We want to improve access, use and enjoyment of the natural environment, and raise awareness on the borough's natural assets.

1.5 We aim to manage our parks and green spaces as best as we can. We also aim to make environmental initiatives a central part of current and future regeneration programmes as well as the planning process.

Our objectives

1.6 The Local Biodiversity Action Plan sets out four main objectives to achieve our vision.

- Raising awareness and education for all sectors of the community
- Planning for wildlife: Making development include green initiatives
- Protecting wildlife: Managing biodiversity in our parks and green spaces
- Working with the local community

Chapter 2 – Background

National guidance and legislation

2.1 By law certain habitats and species must be protected. Legislation includes the Countryside Act 1968, the Conservation of Wild Birds Act 1979, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and the Conservation of Natural Habitats Regulations 1994.

2.2 Under the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive an environmental report and a sustainability appraisal must be carried out when creating statutory planning policy. The environmental report should assess the effects of different policy options to see what the consequences would be for the environment. A sustainability appraisal looks at emerging policies to see if they take account of social, environmental and economic considerations.

2.3 By law, we must also carry out environmental impact assessments (EIAs) when major developments take place or when a scheme is in or near a site that contains habitats of species that may be affected by disturbance. These are often called environmentally sensitive locations. EIAs provide information on the likely effects development would have on the environment. They also provide evidence on the best option that would have the fewest negative effects.

2.4 The planning process must take account of national and regional planning policy guidance. The national guidance for biodiversity is set out in the 'Planning Policy Guidance Note 9: Nature Conservation (1994)'. This explains that local planning authorities should consider nature conservation and biodiversity when developing planning policy and assessing planning applications. 'Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geology, Consultation Draft (2004)' has recently been produced. It is due to replace 'PPG 9: Nature Conservation'. It encourages local authorities to take account of LBAPs produced by Local Biodiversity Partnerships.

2.5 'A Biodiversity Strategy for England, Working with the Grain of Nature' was produced by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in 2002 with many regional and national agencies. It provides a list of habitats and species that will help local authorities when drawing up their proposals for better management of wildlife.

Regional planning policy

2.6 'The Mayor's London Plan Spatial Development Strategy (2004)' highlights the importance of nature conservation and biodiversity in the planning process. Policy 3D.12 says that new developments and regeneration should consider biodiversity. It also supports the role of local biodiversity action plans.

2.7 'The Mayor of London's Biodiversity Strategy, Connecting with London's Nature' (2002) sets out the Mayor's vision to maintain London's biodiversity. The strategy is necessary under the Greater London Authority Act 1999.

2.8 The London Biodiversity Partnership was set up in response to the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. It has a series of biodiversity action plans. There are currently 31. These involve public, private and voluntary organisations. These organisations work together to take these plans further by sharing resources, applying for funding together and delivering work through their own organisations and activities.

Local policy

2.9 Our local biodiversity partnership is set up in a similar way to the London Biodiversity Partnership. There are currently 11 action plans which local residents and environmental interest groups have chosen. The local biodiversity partnership will bring together these plans. You can find more information on the partnership and details of the action plans in chapters 4 and 5 of this document.

2.10 Our Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) is based on 'Building Communities, Transforming Lives' (2004). It will play an important role in making the borough a better place to live and work. It will also help us achieve our relevant priorities, such as the following.

- **Making Barking and Dagenham cleaner, greener and safer** – we will achieve this through supporting education, community involvement and practical biodiversity improvement projects in the borough.
- **Raising general pride in the borough** – an important part of the LBAP is to involve the community in biodiversity projects. This aims to increase people's pride in the natural assets of the borough.
- **Promoting equal opportunities and celebrating diversity** – the LBAP intends to celebrate nature and encourage everyone to take part.
- **Better education and learning for all** – education is an important part of the LBAP. We will issue education packs and launch an awareness campaign to improve people's understanding and knowledge of biodiversity issues.
- **Developing rights and responsibilities within the local community** – involving the community in biodiversity project work will help to develop a sense of responsibility towards the local environment.

2.11 The LBAP is also based on the 'Parks and Green Spaces Strategy' (PGSS) (2003). The PGSS assesses the borough's 25 parks and green spaces and develops our vision of:

- improving green spaces;
- supporting new practices for managing parks and green spaces;
- encouraging the community to use their parks and green spaces;
- getting the community more involved in managing parks and green spaces;
- increasing community use, and satisfaction rates, of parks and green spaces; and
- achieving external accreditation, such as the Green Flag Awards, to show that the borough's parks and green spaces meet excellent standards.

2.12 'The Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 1995' provides a planning framework for land-use development in the borough. It includes statutory policies for protecting biodiversity.

2.13 The UDP is being reviewed. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill 2004 has revised the statutory planning system. The UDP has now been included in a new process called local development frameworks. From 2008, this document will include all the planning policies which will protect the borough's biodiversity.

Regeneration and renewal projects

2.14 **Barking Riverside** is 200 hectares of brownfield land. It is along the banks of the Thames, south east of Barking town centre. The Mayor's London Plan 2004 highlights that this site is London's largest housing development opportunity. The project will take place over the next 15 years. It will create up to 10,700 homes, adding up to around 25,000 people, depending on the development of East London Transit and the extension of Docklands Light Railway.

2.15 **South Dagenham** is 80 hectares. The site used to house the Ford vehicle manufacturing plant. The current plans expect 6000 homes to be built for about approximately 15,000 people.

2.16 **Barking town centre** is considered to be a major centre in the London Plan 2004. It is an important regeneration site in the borough. It includes the redevelopment of existing housing sites and should create 4000 extra homes. The programme for renewal aims to improve the local economy and will include the development of creative industries.

2.17 **Dagenham Dock** is 133 hectares of land set aside for industrial businesses. The Docks are along the banks of the Thames and will make the most of river transport. The businesses on the site follow environmentally friendly practices. The area is becoming a renowned centre of sustainable industries. Economic development in this area will create an extra 4000 new jobs.

2.19 **Other sites** in the borough are due to be developed. These are the University of East London (UEL) site on the western boundary of the borough. Redevelopment of this site is due to creating 300 new houses. Lymington Fields is set aside for community and residential uses. A new development here will include 800 new homes. Both sites will be developed in a sensitive way to protect local wildlife.

Chapter 3 – Our sites and species for nature conservation

Protected sites

3.1 Our Unitary Development Plan (UDP) has set aside areas of environmental importance that should be protected. These areas are set out in the UDP Proposals Map 1995 and come under nine main categories.

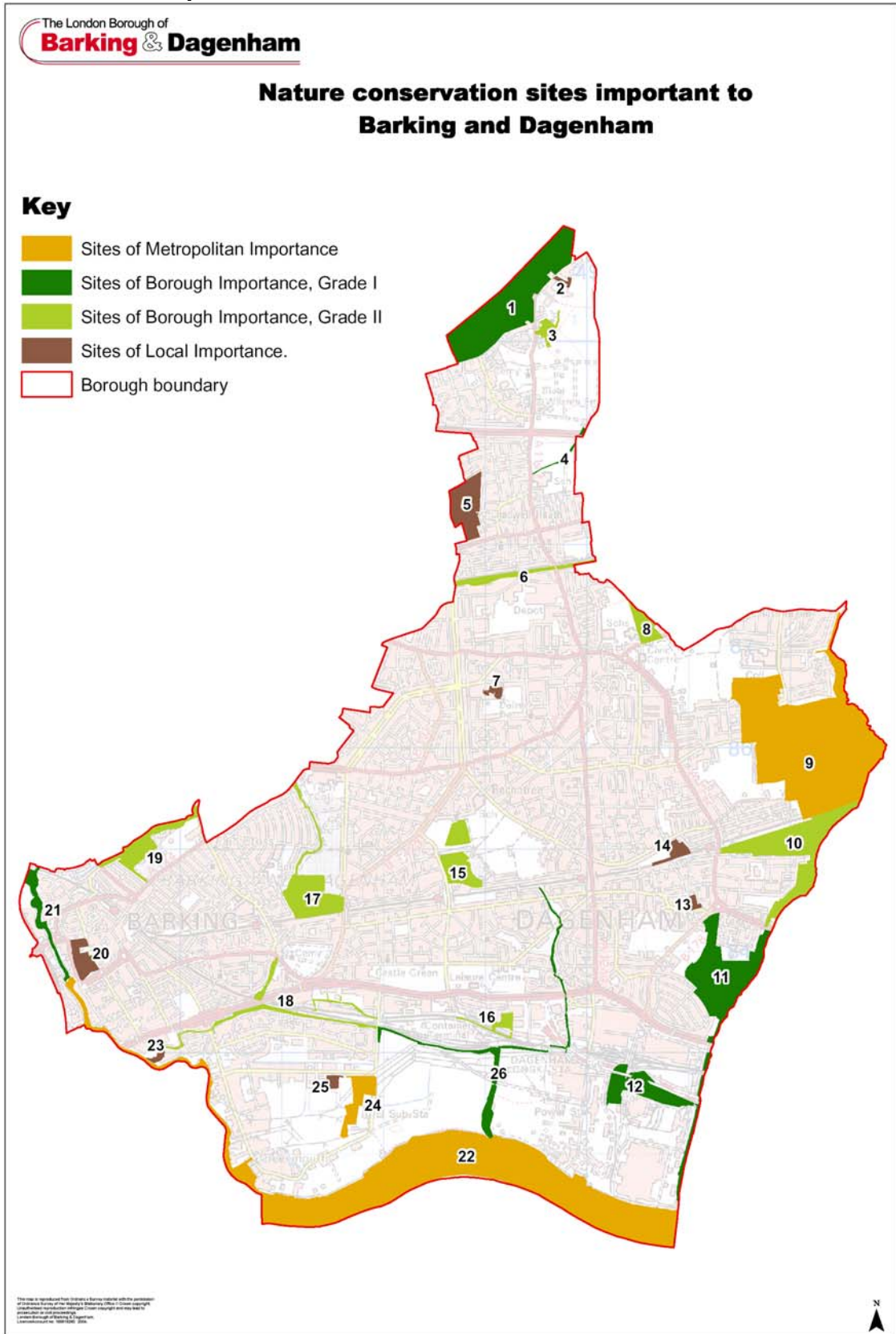
- **Green belt** – is protected open space, set aside to prevent urban areas spreading and to provide open spaces and countryside for people to use.
- **Metropolitan open land** – land is protected as it is considered to be important to all of London.
- **Protected open space** – open space that is protected to protect the ecology of the borough.
- **Green chain** – public rights of way to be protected and maintained.
- **Landscaping improvements** – areas for further landscape development.
- **Nature conservation areas** – areas of ecological or historical value. The character and appearance of these sites should be protected.
- **Wildlife corridors** – rights of way where the ecological value should be protected.
- **The riverside walk** – a public walkway along the Thames and the River Roding. Landscaping and nature conservation is to be protected.
- **Thames Chase community forest** – a nature reserve.

[UDP Map]

3.2 Our sites of importance for nature conservation represent areas of ecological value to the local community. They are based on a survey carried out by the Greater London Authority in 2002. They update the list of sites in the London Ecology Unit's handbook 'Nature Conservation in Barking and Dagenham' 1992 (see map A). The sites are graded into three categories.

- **Sites of metropolitan importance** – these contain the best examples of London's habitats. These sites are protected by law and are included in the Mayor's London Plan 2004.
- **Sites of borough importance (Grade 1 and 2)** – these sites are throughout London and have been classed as important as damage to these would mean a significant loss to the borough.
- **Sites of local importance** – a site of local importance is one which is, or may be, of particular value to people nearby (such as residents or schools). These sites have the same status as those of borough importance.

Map A – Sites of importance for nature conservation



Index to Map A – Sites of importance for nature conservation:

1. Furze House Farm
2. Wellgate Community Farm
3. Whites Farm
4. Marks Hedge and Hainault Road
5. St. Chads Park
6. Romford Line Railsides in Barking
7. Valence House Gardens
8. Wantz Lake
9. The Chase and Eastbrookend
10. The Mid Beam Valley in Barking
11. Beam Valley South in Dagenham
12. Dagenham Breach and the Lower Bream
13. St Peter's and St Paul's Churchyard, Dagenham
14. Pondfield Park
15. Parsloes Park
16. Scrattons Farm Ecopark
17. Mayesbrook Park Lakes
18. Mayes Brook and associated watercourses
19. Barking Park and Loxford Water
20. Barking Abbey Ruins and St Margaret's Churchyard
21. The River Roding in Barking
22. The River Thames and tidal tributaries
23. Gascoigne Road Pumping Station
24. Ripple Nature Reserve
25. Thameside Park City Farm
26. Goresbrook and the Ship & Shovel

3.3 We are carrying out a Local Nature Reserve Designation Programme. This involves sites we own or sites where we have a legal interest, which we can set aside under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. These sites are used to encourage local people to take an interest in nature conservation through education programmes. Up to 2003, our only site was the Chase Local Nature Reserve (a site of metropolitan importance). However, we have entered into a local public service agreement with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, which will set aside a further seven sites by March 2006. These include Eastbrookend Country Park, Beam Valley, Scrattons Ecopark, and Ripple Nature Reserve.

Protected species

3.4 Our borough contains a wide range of valuable species, some of which are rare nationally and regionally. The most important are listed below. You can find more information on these in our 'Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation Document' (2003).

- **Mammals** – water vole, great crested newt
- **Birds** – linnet, skylark, the black redstart
- **Plants** – marsh sow whistle, sea milkwort, deadly nightshade

3.5 Locally important species are mentioned in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan. These are as follows.

- **Amphibians** – common frog
- **Mammals** – bats
- **Trees** – native black poplar
- **Birds** – house sparrow
- **Insects** – stag beetle and butterflies

3.6 Locally important species and habitats need to be protected. The Mayor's London Plan 2004 highlights the importance of nature conservation and biodiversity in the planning process, including local sites. The 'Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geology Consultation Draft' 2004 will soon replace PPG 9. It set out local biodiversity action plans may be a relevant consideration in planning applications.

Policy 1a – A survey of the borough's sites and species

We should carry out a survey of the borough's natural assets, including those chosen for local biodiversity action plans as set out below, and investigate what grants are available.

- Bats, particularly the common and soprano pipistrelles, noctule and Daubenton's bat
- Stag beetles
- Amphibians, particularly the common frog and the great crested newt
- House sparrows
- Butterflies
- Acid grasslands

Policy 1b – Access to information from surveys

The Council will make information from surveys available to everybody.

Chapter 4 – Delivering the vision: working towards a greener environment

Raising awareness and education for all sectors of the community

4.1 There are 50 primary schools in the borough and 11 secondary schools, with a total of 1810 pupils. Supporting the workforce of the future is an essential goal of this document.

4.2 We will support the secondary school curriculum by helping to develop a schools environment award in the borough. Events with primary and secondary schools are ongoing at the chase and Eastbrookend Country Park Nature Reserve.

4.3 We will produce factsheets on local habitats and species to support this document. They will be available to everyone.

4.4 Our Parks and Leisure Development Group and the Ranger Service have ongoing events to encourage people to use our green spaces. 'Friends of the Park' groups are also being set up at certain sites across the borough to increase the use and appreciation of the borough's parks and green spaces.

Policy 2a – Raising awareness on biodiversity issues

We will raise awareness and support education for all sectors of the community relating to the borough's natural environment and local habitats and species.

Planning for wildlife: Making development include green initiatives

4.5 Extensive projects are currently ongoing such as at Barking Riverside, Barking town centre, Dagenham Dock and South Dagenham, UEL and Lymington Fields. It is important that biodiversity is a central part of plans and planning applications from the start. These may include green roofs, green walls, sustainable urban drainage systems (these are systems of drainage which provide wildlife, help improve water quality and help reduce the likelihood of flooding) large gardens, open space and high-quality landscaping.

4.6 Under the Town and Country Planning Regulations 1999, we must carry out environmental impact assessments. We need to consider sites of importance for nature conservation when carrying out these assessments to make sure these areas are protected as much as possible.

4.7 We will take measures to try to:

- protect and create features of nature conservation value:
- avoid negative effects: and
- compensate for the loss of features of nature conservation value.

Policy 3a – Including biodiversity in area regeneration

Aims and initiatives for protecting biodiversity, including local habitats and species, should be included in plans and development schemes from the start.

Policy 3b – Advice notes on greening initiatives

The Council will draw up advice notes for planning officers, regeneration officers, developers people involved in the development process relating to including green initiatives in development schemes.

Policy 3c – Taking account of biodiversity

Planning applications should take account of biodiversity from the start.

Policy 3d – Sensitive development

Sensitive management, compensation and high standards of action against negative effects should be introduced when developments take place on or near a site of importance for nature conservation or a species covered in a local habitat action plan.

4.8 We use the local development framework (LDF) process to develop planning policy on how the land is used for the borough. The main policy document in this new framework will be the core strategy (CS). The CS will set out the strategic planning policies for the borough. There will also be development plan documents and area action plans, which will set out more detailed policies and those that relate to specific sites.

4.9 New planning documents must also come with a statement of community involvement which reflects how much the community was involved in developing policy.

4.10 We need to consider protecting biodiversity (including local priority habitats and species) as part of the core strategy, development plan documents and area action plans.

Policy 4a – Strategic planning for biodiversity

The Local Biodiversity Partnership will consider policies for protecting biodiversity (including locally important habitats and species) as part of the core strategy, development plan documents and area action plans.

Protecting wildlife: Managing biodiversity in our parks and green spaces

4.11 The borough's parks and green spaces are currently being redeveloped through a 20-year programme. We are developing management plans for the borough's 25 parks and green spaces to set out targets for improvement, identify maintenance standards and

encourage the community to get involved. We are currently developing a landscape development framework plan to show the current position of landscaping and improvements.

Policy 5a – Involving the community in our parks and green spaces

'Friends of the Parks' groups and programmes to involve the community should be encouraged and biodiversity (especially locally important habitats and species) should be protected.

Policy 5b – Value for biodiversity in our parks and green spaces

Sensitive management practices for the borough's sites of importance for nature conservation and local habitat and species action plans, should be part of our parks and green spaces strategy over the next 20 years.

Policy 5c – Treeplanting projects

Treeplanting projects should be supported and promoted across the borough, such as the woodland grant scheme. We want to involve schools and members of the community in treeplanting projects in line with our Parks and Green Spaces Strategy (2003) and landscape development framework.

Working with the local community

4.12 Our local biodiversity partnership is an independent voluntary organisation. It is based at the millennium centre in the Chase Nature Reserve. It is made up of local nature enthusiasts and experts. The partnership represents local people's views on biodiversity issues in the borough.

4.13 Local communities have chosen species action plans and habitat action plans through a community event hosted by the councils Ranger Service.

The species they chose were:

- the house sparrow;
- the common frog and amphibians;
- butterflies;
- native black poplar trees;
- the stag beetle; and
- bats.

The habitats they chose were:

- wastelands;
- gardens and allotments;
- woodland;
- reed beds and river margins; and
- acid grasslands.

These are set out in more detail in chapter 5 of this document.

4.14 Each action plan is divided into four main sections. These are the aims, the current status, things affecting the species or habitat, and current action.

4.15 it is important that the local biodiversity partnership and action plans are considered at the early stages of developments, planning applications and issues relating to the borough's sites of importance to nature conservation.

Chapter 5 – The habitat and species action plans

Wastelands

5.1 Our aims

- To highlight the importance of careful management of wasteland sites.
- To promote and support wasteland nature reserves in the borough.

5.2 Introduction

- Wastelands, also known as brownfield sites, are wild and often unmanaged. They used to be used by businesses and industry. Barking and Dagenham contains London's largest brownfield site, Barking Reach. This action plan was chosen to highlight the importance of sensitive treatment of this area when development takes place.
- The borough also contains wasteland nature reserves. The action plan sets out to promote and encourage these to be used more as they are often seen to be untidy, unpleasant places. However, they support a wide range of habitats and species such as goldfinches, linnets, black redstarts and reptiles, and a wide range of unusual and rare plants.

5.3 Current status

- Some associated species are protected within current legislation. These are the black redstart and little ringed plover, which feature under schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Also, the common lizard and the slow worm are partly protected.
- The Ripple Nature Reserve, an ex-industrial site, is now full of birch trees, willow woodland and orchids. It has been set aside as a metropolitan site of importance for nature conservation.
- Land next to the Scrattons Farm Estate was originally allotments and wasteland but it is now the borough's first ecopark. It has been set aside as a local site of importance for nature conservation.

5.4 Specific things affecting wasteland habitats

- Insensitive development and negative public views
- Vandalism and antisocial activity such as motorbiking

5.5 Current action

- The London Brownfield Forum has been set up to discuss issues concerning wasteland. The work of the forum should be developed to promote an understanding of the social and ecological value of these habitats.

Gardens and allotments

5.6 Our aims

To promote gardening that supports local wildlife (known as wildlife gardening).

To promote allotment management that is carried out in line with biodiversity principles.

5.7 Introduction

- Gardens and allotments were chosen as an action plan as they represent what members of the local community can easily do themselves at home or by supporting the borough's allotment societies.
- All gardens and allotments have the potential to be informal nature reserves, however small. Planting nectar-rich plants, creating loggeries, and other initiatives, can play an important role in supporting and protecting local biodiversity.

5.8 Current status

- Local residents are responsible for managing private gardens, although there is some control over the space of gardens that council tenants use.
- On the other hand, allotments have considerable protection in law. Our Unitary Development Plan Policy G70 protects allotments that are in use from development. They are also protected by legislation such as the Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908, the Allotments Act 1925 and the Land Settlement (Facilities) Act 1919. Also, in 1988 the Government introduced the requirement for local authorities to ask for permission from the Secretary of State for using allotment land in other ways.
- There are a number of allotment sites across the borough, some of which are no longer used. These are ecologically important. Grassland is left uncut, and brambles and other native shrubs are left, which encourage a number of birds and insects to feed and breed on the site.

5.9 Things affecting gardens and allotments

- Concreting front gardens for parking, using pesticides and fertilisers, and the view that wildlife-friendly gardening is difficult and involves extra cost and effort.
- When allotments are not used, the areas can often be altered for other uses, such as development. As a result, it is important to promote and encourage their upkeep, while allowing some parts to be managed for nature conservation.

5.10 Current action

- The Government introduced 'Growing in the Community' in June 2001. This is a good practice guide for successfully managing of allotments.
- The London Wildlife Trust carried out a London-wide wildlife garden survey in 2003. They have also produced a wildlife gardening pack.

- English Nature has produced a series of wildlife gardening packs and leaflets, and is strongly promoting education and awareness.
- There are allotment societies in Barking and Dagenham which help to maintain our allotment sites. These include the Barking and District Allotment Holders Society Limited, East Barking Allotment and Horticultural Society, Exeter Road Allotment Association, and Gale Street Organics.
- We are promoting wildlife gardening in the borough. We set up stalls and information on wildlife gardening at the borough's Town Show in June 2004. Also, we handed out bat and bird boxes and a range of wildlife gardening seeds to the community during the London sustainability weeks.

Reed beds and river margins

5.11 Our aims

To protect and develop reed beds and river margins.

To promote the benefits of reed beds and river margins. They house a range of wildlife. They also can be used for flood protection and filtering out pollutants, and they look attractive.

5.12 Introduction

- Reed beds are found in open water, ditches and wet grassland. They are particularly good nesting sites for birds, slugs, snails and so on. They are wetlands dominated by strands of common reed (*phragmites australis*).
- River margins are important wildlife areas which link valuable habitats and species such as water voles (which are thought to be present in large numbers on some of the borough's rivers and streams). The wildlife that surrounds river margins can act as a screen that protects watercourses. It can filter out disturbance caused by urban areas especially where there is public access as alongside river margins they are often called a buffer zone.
- These were chosen as an action plan as they were considered to be an important habitat of great value and purpose in the borough.

5.13 Current status

- Reed beds are priority habitats in the UK and London's biodiversity action plans.
- Our Unitary Development Plan 1995 sets out how we protect river margins and their associated habitats.
- Sites of metropolitan importance include the River Thames and tidal tributaries, and the Ripple Nature Reserve.
- Sites of borough importance include the River Roding, Buzzards Mouth Creek, Dagenham Breach and Lower Bream, Goresbrook Ship and Shovel, Mayes Brook, and Mid Beam Valley In Dagenham and Dagenham East Lake.

5.14 Things affecting reed beds and river margins

- Reed beds and river margins are particularly sensitive to pollution and development.
- Other things such as changes in water levels, waste, mineral extraction, drainage and inappropriate management can all harm reed bed habitats.

5.15 **Current action**

- Defra (Department for Environment, Food And Rural Affairs) is running an ongoing grant programme ('the Countryside Stewardship Scheme') which offers payments for maintaining and creating reed beds.
- The River Beam and the River Rom have undergone significant habitat improvements, particularly at the Chase Local Nature Reserve and the Beam Valley.
- Reed beds have been used to filter out pollutants on the Wantz Stream in the Beam Valley.
- Environmental improvement projects are ongoing on the River Roding. These aim to improve and protect reed beds, other river-margin habitats and their species.

Acid grasslands

5.16 Our aims

- To educate and spread awareness on the value of acid grasslands for wildlife within the borough.
- To promote management practices that support the ecological value of acid grassland sites.

5.17 Introduction

- Acid grasslands contain a range of fine-leaved grasses and wild flowers, such as common bent, red and sheep's fescues, wavy hair-grass, sheep's sorrel, tormentil, catsear and heath bedstraw.
- Acid grasslands were chosen as an action plan as it was felt that their value was underestimated within the local community. It is only recently that the value of these grasslands has become better known.

5.18 Current status

- Acid grasslands are covered by the National and Regional Biodiversity Action Plan and are a priority for protection.
- A number of sites within the borough have been set aside either as sites of metropolitan importance for nature conservation (Chase Local Nature Reserve and Eastbrookend Country Park), or sites of borough importance (Beam Valley South, and Parts of Parsloes Park). Sites of local importance include St Peter's and St Paul's Churchyard, Dagenham.

5.19 Things affecting acid grasslands

- Acid grasslands are easily overlooked, can be undervalued and are vulnerable to a lack of management.
- The best way of managing acid grassland is 'low-intensity grazing'. This is done by occasionally letting animals such as horses, sheep and cows feed on the site. This is often difficult as it needs animals to be on the grasslands, with the associated fencing. Animals are difficult to get in urban areas such as Barking and Dagenham, and fencing open spaces is unpopular with the public. Due to this, mowing tends to be the most widely used method. However, as this is often completed across the whole site, this often destroys the wildlife value of acid grassland.

5.20 Current action

- Acid grasslands are covered by national and regional action plans and are a priority for protection.
- The London acid grassland working group has created management guidance on acid grasslands. They are also holding a conference on acid grasslands in 2005.

- The Chase Local Nature Reserve and the Beam Valley are currently developing management guidance notes to protect their acid grassland sites.

Woodlands

5.21 Our aims

- To increase the number of trees throughout the borough through programmes such as our local public service agreement.

5.22 Introduction

- Barking and Dagenham has little woodland. However, there are projects currently underway to increase the percentage of woodland in the borough.
- This action plan was chosen to provide further support for these projects as woodland is considered to be an important resource for public enjoyment and health, especially for walking and other recreational and educational uses.

5.23 Current status

- Tree preservation orders (TPOs) are main methods of protecting trees. TPOs have been given to specific trees in the borough.
- Trees in a tended area (not growing wild) are protected from vandalism by the Criminal Damage Act 1971. Trees in the wild are also covered by this Act, apart from their leaves and fruit.
- An UK action plan for woodland is in place to protect, promote and increase public awareness.
- The Greater London Authority produced a woodland action plan in 2001.
- Our Unitary Development Plan 1995 says that we will encourage people to protect and plant individual or groups of shrubs and trees, particularly native species which have a high nature conservation value. Where appropriate tree preservation orders will be made.
- Areas with tree preservation orders include the Chase Local Nature Reserve and Eastbrookend Country Park, Ripple Nature Reserve, Marks Gate Hedge and Hainault Road Allotments, Parsloes Park and Beam Valley Country Park.

5.24 Things affecting woodland

- Lack of appropriate management such as introducing non-native plants (such as Japanese knotweed), vandalism or insensitive or inappropriate uses of woodland areas.
- Grey squirrels stripping bark can cause a significant problem, especially to young unprotected trees in new plantations.
- Diseases such as Dutch elm, alder and oak dieback.
- Pests such as the Asian longhorn beetle.

5.25 **Current action**

- The UK biodiversity action plan strongly promotes woodland development.
- The Greater London Authority developed its woodland action plan in 2001.
- The Forestry Commission's biodiversity research programme started in 1995. It aims to protect woodlands.
- The woodland grant scheme is available to encourage the creation and management of woodlands. This covers new planting, including grants for further recreational facilities, restocking and natural regeneration.
- 'Trees for care' is a Parks and Countryside Ranger Project at Eastbrookend Country Park and the Beam Valley. It helps to care for newly planted trees as part of the Tree Council's national campaign.
- We contribute authorities to the Thames Chase Community Forest. This was set up in 1990 to extend the borough's woodland habitat from 9% to 30% over the 40-year life of the Thames Chase Plan.
- Woodland has already been planted at Eastbrookend Country Park and in the Beam Valley. There are plans to increase woodland in the borough through further initiatives such as our local public service agreement.

The common frog and amphibians

5.26 Our aims

- To investigate populations of amphibian life especially the great crested newt.
- To raise awareness raising and education on frogs and amphibians.

5.27 Introduction

- The common frog action plan was chosen as the life cycle of a tadpole to frog was seen as a good tool in education relating to ecology especially for primary schools.
- Amphibians were also included as Barking and Dagenham has some valuable species in its wetlands including the nationally rare great crested newt. Amphibians are unique as they generally move, feed and breathe equally well on land and in fresh water.
- Recent studies have shown that amphibians are generally under threat. Studies carried out by the Global Amphibian Assessment show that up to 122 amphibian species have become extinct in the past 20 years due to poor environmental conditions and disease.

5.28 Current status

- The UK and regional habitat action plans for amphibians cover the great crested newt. The common frog is not listed.
- We have no survey information on the common frog. However, recent figures have shown that we have a healthy population of great crested newts in the Beam Valley.

5.29 Things affecting the species

- Amphibians, especially the common frog, can suffer from 'red-leg' disease, which has been a major cause of the decline in this species.
- Amphibians can be sensitive to disturbance. Land-use activities such as drainage and filling in ponds can harm the species.
- Amphibians breathe and drink through their skin. As a result, they are very sensitive to exposure to chemical fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides.

5.30 Current action

- The Pond Conservation Trust helps to build ponds. It is made up of groups such as English Nature, The Environment Agency, the British Trust of Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) and the Wildlife Trusts. It provides a national focus for protecting ponds, particularly by carrying out practical conservation projects and research across the UK. It also aims to increase people's awareness of the current problems relating to ponds.

- Froglife is a registered charity which works with volunteers, ecologists, government departments and the public to protect the native amphibians and reptiles of Britain and Ireland.
- We have a lakes improvement programme which is due to start in 2005.
- We are investigating whether to develop an action plan to protect the great crested newt in Beam Valley.

Bats

5.31 Our aims

- To investigate what species of bats there are in the borough, and to support bat colonies where appropriate.
- To improve the public's view of bats.

5.32 Introduction

- Bats were chosen as an action plan as it was felt that they were misunderstood. The action plan aims to change people's negative view of them and find out more about bat populations in the borough.
- They are also a declining species. Recent evidence from the London Bat Group has shown that bats have continued to decline in Greater London during the period from 1985 to 1999.

5.33 Current status

- Bats and their roosting sites are protected under current legislation (mainly in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981).
- There is little information on current bat populations although Common Soprano Pipistrelles, Noctule, and Daubenton's bat are in the borough.

5.34 Things affecting the species

- The loss of roost sites in buildings and trees.
- The loss of habitats such as woodlands, wetlands and grasslands.

5.35 Current action

- The National Bat Monitoring Programme run by the Bat Conservation Trust provides ongoing information on recent population levels.
- Members of the Essex Bat Group and the London Bat Group help to improve roost sites with English Nature.
- Bat walks and talks are hosted at Eastbrookend Country Park, organised by our Ranger Service.
- In the Beam Valley, a World War 2 pill box has been converted into a bat cave and extra bat boxes have been put up at other sites.

The house sparrow

5.36 Our aims

- To investigate house sparrow populations in the borough.
- To provide information and create awareness of the bird's importance.

5.37 Introduction

- The house sparrow was chosen as an action plan as they are in dramatic decline. They were once one of the most common birds in London.

5.38 Current status

- The house sparrow is not protected by law.
- The populations in Barking and Dagenham are unknown.

5.39 Things affecting the species

- Decline in habitats such as wasteland and brownfield sites and garden land.
- Changes in roof design may be an issue in some areas where older housing is being redeveloped, as modern roof repairs tend to prevent birds from getting into roof spaces.
- An increase in predator species such as the sparrow hawk and the magpie.

5.40 Current action

- Gardening that supports house sparrows including planting bushes, hedges and using of bird tables, bird feeders and nest boxes – all are being promoted in the borough.
- Bird boxes and landscaping that includes plants such as chickweed, dock, teasel, forget-me-nots and evening primrose are being encouraged in new developments in the borough.

Butterflies

5.41 Our aims

- To survey, maintain and increase butterfly populations in the borough.
- To provide education and awareness on creating habitats for butterflies.

5.42 Introduction

- Butterflies are known for their beauty. They were chosen as an action plan as they are so popular with local residents and schoolchildren.
- They are also currently under threat. There are up to 50 different types of butterfly in Britain. Over the last 150 years, five of these species have become extinct, the most recent being the large blue in 1979 and the large tortoiseshell (which have not been confirmed as breeding regularly for over a decade).

5.43 Current status

- There are a number of butterflies which have been chosen for national species action plans under the UK action plan.
- The main species, which are a focus for protection, are the heath fritillary, the large copper, the large blue butterfly, the silver spotted skipper, the marsh fritillary, the pearl-bordered fritillary and the high brown fritillary.
- There are currently 22 species of butterfly recorded at the Chase Nature Reserve.

5.44 Things affecting the species

- Habitat has been destroyed due to over-intensive land management such as cutting down trees, removing hedgerows, land drainage and using pesticides.

5.45 Current action

- The Butterfly Conservation Trust has launched a new website to make it easier to record populations across Europe.
- The UK holds a celebration of butterflies and moths on 22 May each year.
- The Chase Nature Reserve regularly records butterfly populations during the summer to monitor the effect of habitat management and to highlight any changes in populations.

The native black poplar

5.46 Our aims

- To raise the profile of the native black poplar as a national tree species in the borough.
- To increase the number of native black poplars in the borough.

5.47 Introduction

- Native black poplars are rare across the country.
- There is an important difference between black poplars in general and the native variety.
- They are large and have massively-arching, down-curved branches.
- Native black poplar wood is very hard-wearing and is heat and fire-resistant.

5.48 Current status

- Native black poplars are protected in the UK through the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. As a result, they cannot be uprooted or cut down without the permission of the landowner.
- Tree preservation orders (TPOS) and the Forestry Act 1967 prevent protected trees from being cut down.
- There are six female native black poplars at the Chase Local Nature Reserve, and several have been successfully grown from cuttings and planted on site.

5.49 Things affecting the species

- Native black poplars, seeds and seedlings thrive in wetland conditions. As a result, drainage practices, over-intensive stream and ditch management, and some bankside developments can be harmful.
- Climatic change, with generally warmer and drier summers, may also harm the species.
- Clearing fallen trees and branches can prevent the species from reproducing.

5.50 Current action

- The London Biodiversity Partnership has produced an action plan for the black poplar. It sets out the regional objectives for protecting this species.
- There are breeding projects at the Thames Chase Nature Reserve and Hainault Forest Country Park. Two new trees have successfully been grown so far.

Stag beetles

5.51 Our aims

- To find out more about populations of stag beetles in the borough.
- To promote the creation of habitats such as deadwood piles, which house stag beetles and other insects.

5.52 Introduction

- The stag beetle is Britain's largest terrestrial (ground-living) beetle. It grows up to 8 centimetres long.
- A national survey, which was carried out in 1998 by the People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES) found that it was in decline.

5.53 Current status

- The stag beetle is protected by the EC Habitats Directive and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
- The stag beetle is included in London's biodiversity action plans.
- The London Wildlife Trust (as a part of the biological records project) has identified 10 important sites for the stag beetle in the borough.

5.54 Things affecting the species

- Decline of the stag beetle is mainly caused by the reduction of deadwood habitat; this can be caused by clearing up fallen trees.
- Negative views of stag beetles and predators including cats, foxes, crows and kestrels have also contributed to its decline.

5.40 Current action

- A leaflet 'Stags and Stumps' was produced by the People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES) and has been distributed by conservation organisations.
- Habitats have been created in the last few years in Eastbrookend Country Park to help reintroduce the species.

Chapter 6 – Putting the plan into practice

Policy 1a – A survey of the borough’s sites and species

The Local Biodiversity Partnership will survey the boroughs natural assets including those chosen for local biodiversity action plans.

Action	Target	Lead	Partners
To investigate resources for survey work of the borough’s sites and with the borough’s Local Biodiversity Partnership.	Investigate funding in 2005	Parks and Leisure	Local Biodiversity Partnership and the Ranger Service

Policy 1b – Access to information from surveys

We will survey sites and species and make that information available to everyone.

Action	Target	Lead	Partner
To put all survey information on our website.	Sites of importance for nature conservation and other planning information to be posted on our website	Research and Information Planning – The Development Control Group	Parks and Leisure

Policy 2a – Raising awareness on biodiversity issues

We will raise awareness and education for all sectors of the community on the borough’s natural environment and local habitats and species.

Action	Target	Lead	Partner
To create factsheets on priority habitats and species that are available to everyone.	Finish factsheets in 2005	Environmental Sustainability	Ranger Service
To raise awareness on the value of biodiversity and the priority habitats and species through parks development programmes, and community events aimed at local residents and schools.	Community events for 2005 to include promoting biodiversity	Parks and Leisure	The Ranger Service, Parks and Leisure Services and The Local Biodiversity Partnership
To promote wildlife gardening and allotment management through park development programmes and information packs for local community groups, voluntary organisations, schools, and allotment societies.	Community events for 2005 to include promoting wildlife gardening	Environmental Sustainability	The Ranger Service, Parks and Leisure Services and The Local Biodiversity Partnership

Policy 3a – Including biodiversity in area regeneration

We will include objectives and initiatives for protecting biodiversity (including local habitats and species) plans and development schemes from the start.

Action	Target	Lead	Partner
To include green initiatives in development briefs, design guidance and development schemes such as green walls, green roofs, sustainable urban drainage systems and areas of open space.	Initiatives for biodiversity to be set out in planning briefs and masterplans at the early stage of development.	Regeneration and Implementation	Environmental Sustainability
To treat Reed beds sensitively as part of flood protection initiatives, with the Environment Agency.	To investigate this as part of the SEA process in plans and the LDF.	Planning Policy and Strategy Environmental Sustainability	Regeneration and Implementation

Policy 3b – Advice notes on greening initiatives

We will create advice notes for planning officers, regeneration officers, developers and other people involved in the development process on including green initiatives into development schemes.

Action	Target	Lead	Partner
To create advice notes on green roofs.	Create notes by February 2005.	Environmental Sustainability	Planning Policy and Strategy

Policy 3c – Taking account of biodiversity

We will take account of biodiversity from the start in planning applications.

Action	Target	Lead	Partner
To investigate opportunities to including green initiatives in development proposals with developers at the start of the process.	Names and application references of schemes that have included biodiversity features to be made available to everyone.	Development Control	Environmental Sustainability

Policy 3d – Sensitive development

We will take account of sensitively management, compensation and high standards of action against negative effects when development takes place on or near a site of importance for nature conservation or a species covered in a local action plan.

Action	Target	Lead	Partner
To maintain, protect and create features of nature conservation value. To take action against negative effects. To compensate against any loss.	High standards of mitigation to be adopted.	Development Control	Environmental Sustainability
To deal with sites of importance for nature conservation (including locally designated sites) sensitively and take them into account in environmental impact assessments.	Local as well as national and regional sites to be considered, and measures to protect local biodiversity to feature on a summary of the main environmental issues that the local planning authority would like the EIA to investigate.	Development Control	Environmental Sustainability

Policy 4a – Strategic planning for biodiversity

We will consider policies for protecting biodiversity (including local priority habitats and species) as part of the core strategy, development plan documents and area action plans.

<i>Action</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partner</i>
To include objectives for protecting local biodiversity (including local important habitats and species) in sustainability appraisals and strategic environmental assessments to make sure policy documents are effective.	Local, regional and national species and habitats of value to be accounted for in the monitoring and assessment of biodiversity.	Planning Policy and Strategy	Environmental Sustainability
To include the Local Biodiversity Partnership in developing policy.	Local Biodiversity Partnership to be consulted.	Planning Policy and Strategy	Environmental Sustainability

**Policy 5a – Involving the community in our parks and green spaces
‘Friends of the Park’ groups and community involvement programmes to encourage and promote biodiversity, especially local priority habitats and species.**

Action	Target	Lead	Partner
To set up new ‘Friends of the Parks’ groups and community involvement programmes by 2005.	Ongoing	Parks and Leisure Services	Ranger Service
To include biodiversity and protecting local priority habitats and species in community involvement programmes and management plans.	Ongoing	Parks and Leisure Services Ranger Service	Environmental Sustainability

**Policy 5b – Value for biodiversity in our parks and green spaces
Management plans will support local biodiversity and sensitive management practices for the borough’s sites of importance for nature conservation and local habitat and species action plans as part of putting of the parks and green spaces strategy into practice over the next 20 years.**

Action	Target	Lead	Partner
Management guidance of parks and green spaces to include methods to support biodiversity (including locally important habitats and species).	Management guidance to be developed to include biodiversity.	Parks and Leisure Services	Environmental Sustainability
To make sure the Ripple Nature Reserve and Scrattons Ecopark are set aside as local nature reserves, reflecting their community and environmental education value.	Community events and environmental work to include the Scrattons Farm Residence Association	Parks and Leisure Services	Environmental Sustainability
To make sure the Ripple Nature Reserve becomes the borough’s main site for wasteland conservation and that it is fully included in the Barking Riverside development.	Ripple Nature Reserve to be highlighted as a positive feature in project plans in that area.	Regeneration and implementation	Environmental Sustainability Planning Policy and Strategy
To complete the expansion of Scrattons Ecopark with English Nature, London Wildlife Trust and local residents.	Ongoing	Parks and Leisure Services	Environmental Sustainability Planning Policy and Strategy

Policy 5c – Tree-planting projects

We should support and promote tree-planting projects across the borough in line with the borough’s parks and green spaces strategy and landscape development framework.

Action	Target	Lead	Partner
To make sure tree-planting projects are in line with the borough’s landscape development framework.	Opportunities to get funding for planting trees should be investigated in 2005.	Parks and Leisure Services	Environmental Sustainability
To include schools and the local community in tree-planting projects.	Ongoing	Parks and Leisure Services	Environmental Sustainability

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The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

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The Birds Directive EC Council Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (Directive 79/409/EEC)

The Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 and the Allotments Act 1925

The Land Settlement Facilities Act 1919

The Criminal Damage Act 1971

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Glossary

Biodiversity

The range of plants, animals and other living things in a particular area or region.

Biodiversity action plan

A plan that sets targets and actions for protecting biodiversity.

Brownfield land

Any land or premises which has been used or developed and or not currently fully in use, although they may be partially used. The land may also be vacant, derelict or contaminated. This does not include parks, recreation grounds, allotments and land where the remains of previous use have blended into the landscape, or where development is not needed.

Compensation

In this document, compensation means dealing with harm caused by development compensation. It involved providing features to fully replace those lost through development. Compensation preferably involves replacing like with like.

Conservation

This means protecting, promoting and managing biodiversity for the benefit of wild species and habitats, as well as the people who use and enjoy them. This also covers creating wildlife habitats.

Environmental impact assessment

Either a formal assessment of a major development proposal under the statutory regulations (the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment)(England and Wales Regulations 1999), or an informal assessment using similar procedures.

Green corridor

Green corridors are relatively continuous areas of open space leading through the built environment, which may link sites to each other and to the green belt or to open land. They often include railway embankments and cuttings, roadside verges, canals, parks, playing fields and rivers. They may allow animals and plants to be found further into the built-up area than would otherwise be the case and provide an extension to the habitats of the sites they join.

Greening

Improving the appearance, function and wildlife habitat value of the urban environment through landscaping and other features.

Habitat

The environment that animals, plants and other species need. It includes air, water and soil, as well as other living things. In the London open space and habitat survey, the habitat categories are mainly types of vegetation.

Habitat survey

Collecting information on habitat types. In London, there has been a standard method for this since 1984. This has recently been revised to include the Greater London Authority's open space information as well.

Important species

Species that are important in London because they are identified as a priority in a biodiversity action plan or are protected by law.

Local nature reserve

Nature reserves set aside by local authorities under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. It may include sites that are important to people's quiet enjoyment of nature.

Priority habitat

London's priority habitats, identified by the London Biodiversity Partnership, cover areas defined particularly by their vegetation. There are 19 priority habitats and these aim to cover all of London's important wildlife areas. Local priority habitats have been chosen by the local community. These are wastelands, gardens and allotments, woodland, reed beds and river margins, and acid grasslands.

Priority species

These are species that are chosen for priority action because they are under particular threat or they are characteristic of a particular region. In London, these have been listed in the first volume of the partnerships London biodiversity action plan.

Protected species

Certain plant and animal species protected by law, particularly the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Regeneration

The Council aims to renew and develop the borough through improving the quality of life people have through their work and where they live.

Sites of importance for nature conservation (SINCs)

A series of sites identified originally by the Greater London Council, and then the London Ecology Unit, London boroughs and Greater London Authority, chosen to represent the best wildlife habitats and emphasising the value of access for people. Sites classed as sites of metropolitan, borough and local importance for nature conservation. Procedures for identifying this series have been approved by the Mayor.

Sustainable development

Development that meets the needs of the present without harming the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Sustainable urban drainage systems

Systems of drainage that provide a wildlife habitat, help to improve water quality and reduce the likelihood of flooding.

Unitary development plan

Statutory plans produced by each borough which include strategic and local planning responsibilities through policies and proposals for developing and using land in their area.

Wildlife

A term for animals and plants found in a natural environment.

Wildlife habitat

The physical environment wildlife needs to survive.

Acronyms

AAP	Area action plan
BTCV	British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
CS	Core strategy
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DPD	Development plan document
HAP	Habitat action plan
GLA	Greater London Authority
LBAP	Local biodiversity action plan
LDF	Local development framework
PCT	Pond Conservation Trust
PGSS	Parks and green spaces strategy
PPG	Planning policy guidance
PPS	Planning policy statement
PTES	People's Trust for Endangered Species
SAP	Species action plan
SINC	Site of importance for nature conservation
TPO	Tree preservation order
UEL	University of East London
UDP	Unitary development plan
WCA	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

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