Enhanced Biodiversity Duty Report

Kensington and Chelsea Council

Final report
Prepared by LUC
March 2026

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Executive Summary

The Enhanced Biodiversity Duty (EBD) was introduced under the Environment Act (2021). It requires all public authorities in England to consider how they can actively conserve and enhance biodiversity. Defra requires all Local Planning Authorities (LPA) and Local Authorities to report and publish what actions they have taken during the reporting period, and plan to take over the next five years, to meet the EBD. The first EBD report is due within 12 weeks from the 1 of January 2026 and will continue in five-year cycles.

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC), despite being the smallest borough in London, has a diverse range of green and blue spaces that support priority habitats and notable species, provide important areas for recreation and education, and help improve the wellbeing of urban residents. RBKC has 24 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) (151 ha total coverage, 12 percent of the borough). Tree canopy cover, a key asset for biodiversity, air quality, and climate resilience, is estimated at 23.26 percent within RBKC, higher than the London average of 19.56 percent and higher than the national target of 16.5 percent, demonstrating RBKC's positive contribution to certain national, regional and local targets.

Across RBKC, habitat creation and enhancements have been delivered, including 3,600$_{m2}$ of grassland restoration at Little Wormwood Scrubs, planting at Emslie Horniman Park, installation of 79 Bee Superhighway hotspots, delivery of over 30 improvement projects in neglected or derelict spaces, and the establishment of 55 community kitchen gardens providing 650 food growing plots for residents. RBKC Council have received numerous awards for their project work related to biodiversity enhancements, with six of their green spaces receiving the gold award in the London in Bloom awards in 2025. Eighteen of the borough's community kitchen gardens have also received awards in the "It's your neighbourhood" category, and the borough features ten parks with Green Flag awards.

Sustained tree planting has been occurring across the borough, with 501 trees being planted by the RBKC Council over the past four years. This has exceeded RBKC's target within their strategic Council Plan (2023-2027) by 25 percent.

RBKC Council has funded multiple nature-related projects, including the Green Fund between 2021 and 2025, which was available to both Council-led and community-led sustainability-related projects. External funding has been used to deliver biodiversity enhancements across the borough, most notably, £2.2 million granted by the Greater London Authority's (GLA) Future Neighbourhoods 2030

programme to deliver over 42 projects within Notting Dale ward to create an eco-neighbourhood through tree planting, revitalising underused garden spaces, creating food growing space and installing sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) and rain gardens.

RBKC Council supports a range of education and engagement activities, which are crucial in delivering opportunities for access to nature directly to communities within the borough. The purpose-built Ecology Centre at Holland Park hosts a large proportion of these activities, delivering environmental education to over 8,500 students per year. RBKC's community reach also extends beyond Holland Park, with over 100 organisations, charities and 'friends of' groups involved in creating and managing habitats, hosting nature-related events and improving education and access to nature within the borough.

No Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) plans have currently been approved by the LPA. As of December 2025, there are no legally listed BNG sites in RBKC or in Greater London. This highlights the current financial and practical delivery challenges associated with BNG delivery but also demonstrates that there is an opportunity for RBKC to ensure biodiversity gains remain within the borough.

Over the next five years RBKC Council will continue to enhance biodiversity in the borough through installing additional green infrastructure in 'grot spots', on council buildings, in schools and via community spaces. Highways and development plans will support delivery of further sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS). RBKC will continue with the maintenance of the SINC sites on Council owned land across the borough and the attainment of a Council target to get 80 percent of all SINCs in positive management by 2027. Additionally, ways to take account of the London Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), once published, will be considered. The Council will continue to monitor key metrics and report in five years on further progress.

Chapter 1
Introduction

Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to enable the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) Council to meet the requirements of their Enhanced Biodiversity Duty (EBD), as per the reporting requirements for the period of 1 January 2024 – 1 January 2026.

1.2 The report brings together existing work including policies, strategies and action plans that RBKC Council have completed or have in progress. It sets out what actions RBKC Council has taken for biodiversity since 2020 and takes a forward look at future actions to 2030. It provides a framework to assess current progress and sets a baseline for future reporting periods.

1.3 Beyond the Department for Food, Environment and Rural Affairs (Defra) guidance, this report also presents a "state of nature" section providing a baseline of the quantity, quality and accessibility of nature-rich green space across the borough. It provides an overview of key national and regional biodiversity targets and the progress the Council is making toward helping to achieve them. Beyond biodiversity, the inclusion of elements focussing on climate resilience seek to emphasise the importance of joined up thinking and the reality of climate risks for now and the future, and how best to ameliorate them and work with nature-based solutions for people, nature and the climate.

Why Nature Matters

1.4 Nature is essential for all life on earth. We depend on it for the air we breathe, the water we drink and the food we eat. It boosts health and wellbeing, captures and stores carbon and has a vital role to play in climate change adaptation. Nature underpins all economic activity, and the benefits received from nature is estimated to be valued at 95 trillion pounds globally.

1.5 Nature also has intrinsic worth beyond the quantifiable value we attribute it via natural capital and ecosystem services thinking. It enriches us spiritually, brings us great joy and warrants an ethical consideration beyond the framework we conventionally ascribe value; an intangible, but important, aspect of our humanity and our connection with nature.

1.6 In RBKC, the conservation and enhancement of nature is key to achieving the overall vision of the Council Plan in 'becoming the best Council for a borough that is Greener, Safer, Fairer', delivering the Green Plan, which is, in turn, supported through the delivery of the Biodiversity Action Plan, Climate Emergency Action Plan and Air Quality Action Plan. Enhancing biodiversity will also help meet the ambitions and targets of other related strategies and plans across the borough (see Chapter 3).

1.7 The Council's approach to climate change, including the Climate Emergency Action Plan, is heavily integrated with its work with nature. This reflects the interdependencies of the twin-crises and effort to mitigate and increase resilience.

Borough Overview

1.8 RBKC is the smallest borough in London, both by size and population. It covers approximately 12$_{km2}$ and has a population of 147,500 **1**.

1.9 It is situated north of the River Thames and is immediately west of the City of Westminster, east of the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, and south of the London Borough of Brent (see Figure A.1 in Appendix A).

1.10 RBKC is a densely populated inner London borough. The urban built environment has a rich heritage with over 70 percent of its land designated as Conservation Areas. The Council manages over 30 parks and open spaces, the majority of which are small squares that were built to service residential buildings around them. Kensington Gardens, Brompton Cemetery and Holland Park form the larger open spaces within RBKC. RBKC has 24 SINCs covering 151 hectares (12 percent of the borough). five percent of the borough (62 hectares) is deciduous woodland. (see Figure A.2 and Figure A.3 in Appendix A).

RBKC Council

1.11 RBKC Council is based at Kensington Town Hall, London and provides borough-level services. The Council constitutes 50 Councillors, representing 18 wards. The Council currently employs approximately 2,670 staff, including those working for shared services.

1.12 The Council is responsible for the provision of a range of services, including housing, transport and waste collection. The provision of some services is shared with Westminster City Council and the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham.

Legal and National Policy Context

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006

1.13 The NERC Act 2006 first introduced the Biodiversity Duty, requiring all public authorities in England to consider what action they can reasonably take for the conservation of biodiversity.

The Environment Act 2021

1.14 The Environment Act 2021 strengthened the Biodiversity Duty and amends the NERC Act. Under the strengthened duty, public authorities must consider what they can do to both conserve and enhance biodiversity. The Act also introduced the Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) amongst other key instruments for conserving and enhancing nature. LNRS, prepared by a Responsible Authority, identify priorities for nature recovery locally and propose measures in locations identified using local evidence and input from local stakeholders. BNG mandates that developers must deliver a biodiversity uplift of at least 10 percent in some circumstances.

The Environmental Improvement Plan

1.15 The Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 (and later revised Environmental Improvement Plan 2025) took forward the delivery of the Environment Act 2021. The plan sets out the legally binding targets and actions needed for protecting, conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Defra will use EBD reporting to assist in their requirements to monitor the delivery of the Environmental Improvement Plan.

Levelling Up and Regeneration (LUR) Act 2023

1.16 The LUR Act 2023 instructs Public Authorities to “take account” of the LNRS; the Environment Act 2021 requiring public authorities to “have regard” for the LNRS. This strengthened duty places an onus on Local Authorities to consider how they can “take account” of the LNRS. The EBD provides clear opportunity for these bodies to articulate how they have or are planning to deliver this duty.

Methodology

1.17 This report has been prepared by LUC. The process has included:

1. An inception meeting to discuss the scope, timeline and relevant data to support delivery of the report.
2. Targeted research to identify key targets, metrics, actions and other relevant quantitative and qualitative data that could help capture the local, regional and national objectives and measures and the progress in achieving them.
3. A workshop with officers from across the organisation to discuss and identify relevant strategic targets and actions undertaken to deliver for biodiversity and climate change resilience.
4. Data analysis including spatial analysis through GIS. With support from the local environmental records centre: Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC (GiGL), and analysis of other data collated to assess progress against targets.
5. The preparation of this report efficiently and effectively capturing the research and analysis undertaken and delivering the requirements of the EBD reporting.

Target Audience

1.18 This report will provide key information to Defra to assist in the monitoring of Environmental Improvement Plan delivery and to enable them to evaluate whether public authorities are delivering their EBD.

1.19 This report will be taken to the Leadership team and provide a useful overview to RBKC councillors and officers of contributions the Council has made to conserving and enhancing biodiversity within the borough.

1.20 This report will be published on the RBKC Council website and provide information to residents to understand what action is being taken for nature in their borough.

Consultation

1.21 This report has been prepared in consultation with RBKC Council officers from a range of Council departments. Data has been collated and analysed through targeted consultation and workshops with officers representing RBKC functions.

Chapter 2
State of Nature

2.1 This chapter describes the current biodiversity baseline across RBKC. Formed from a set of measurable criteria, it can be repeated in future iterations.

The State of Nature

Designated Sites

Non-statutory Designated Sites

2.2 There are 24 SINCs within the borough, covering a total of 151 hectares, equivalent to 12 percent of the borough. Five of the SINCs are classified as Sites of Metropolitan Importance, reflecting their importance within London, nine are Sites of Borough Importance (grade two), four are Sites of Borough Importance (grade one) and six are Sites of Local Importance (see Figure A.2 SINCs within RBKC in Appendix A) **2**.

2.3 RBKC Council reports annually on the National Indicator SDL160 (SINCs in positive environmental management). In 2024, 75 percent of RBKC's SINCs were recorded in positive environmental management **3**.

Statutory Designated Sites

2.4 The borough does not support any national (SSSI/NNR) or international (SAC/SPA/RAMSAR) statutory designations.

Habitats and Species

2.5 Despite the dominant urban environment of RBKC, the borough features 213 hectares of semi-natural habitats, covering 17 percent of the borough. 2.06 hectares of RBKC, approximately 0.14 percent of the borough, is covered by priority habitats, 77 percent of which fall within a SINC. Acid grassland constitutes the dominant priority habitat, covering 1.87 hectares (0.13 percent of the borough). This is scattered around the borough in locations such as Little Wormwood Scrubs Park (Local SINC), Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens (Metropolitan SINC), Natural History Museum Gardens, Brompton Cemetery and Chelsea Physic Garden

(Borough SINCs). The two other priority habitats, which cover just 0.01 percent of the borough, are traditional orchards, covering 0.14 hectares and lowland meadows, covering 0.05 hectares. Both priority habitats are in the north of the borough. See Figure A.3 Priority Habitats within RBKC in Appendix A.

2.6 Deciduous woodland, classified as all woodland areas over 0.5 hectares with a minimum of 20 percent canopy cover, totals 62 hectares (five percent of the borough)**4**. Ancient woodland (wood pasture and parkland) covers a small area of RBKC, totalling four hectares, which is equivalent to 0.3 percent of the borough. One hundred percent of this ancient woodland is located on the western side of Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens (Metropolitan SINC) **5**.

2.7 Tree canopy cover, a key asset for biodiversity, air quality, and climate resilience, is estimated at 23.26 percent. This exceeds both the London average of 19.56 percent, and all boroughs with adjacent boundaries to RBKC **6**.

2.8 In total, 4,143 species have been recorded within RBKC: 9.09 percent of these are designated species of conservation importance, and 1.28 percent of these are invasive and non-native species. Refer to Appendix C for GiGL's RBKC Factsheet for further information.

2.9 Species monitoring and recording occur regularly at the Natural History Museum, Holland Park, Little Wormwood Scrubs and Brompton Cemetery by formal and informal groups. Recent native invertebrate records include the Spongy Moth, once thought to be extinct within the UK, and Common Blue Damselfly within the Natural History Museum Gardens **7**.

2.10 RBKC Council commission formal monitoring surveys of key species across the borough, to support planning decisions.

Wider Green and Blue Infrastructure

2.11 Green cover, which includes all green infrastructure such as open spaces, highway verges, sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS), allotments, private gardens and green roofs, is estimated at 31.4 percent in RBKC. This is below the London average of 51.68 percent**8**. However, this wider green infrastructure still provides key habitats and connections within RBCK's ecological network.

2.12 Of the 385 open spaces within RBKC, totalling 244 hectares and covering 19.7 percent of the borough's area, 122 of them are publicly accessible, totalling 91.3 hectares and covering 7.4 percent of RBKC. Refer to Appendix C for GiGL's RBKC Factsheet for further information.

2.13 Blue space, comprising rivers, canals, ponds and other blue infrastructure totals 23 hectares, which is equivalent to two percent of the borough. It is nevertheless an important ecological feature within RBKC, providing foraging habitats for key species, improving connectivity within the predominant urban landscape and regulating air temperatures through evaporative cooling. The Grand Union Canal in the north of the borough and the River Thames in the south of the borough form the largest expanses of blue space within RBKC, totalling four kilometres in length **9**.

2.14 Both the Grand Union Canal and the River Thames (Upper and Middle), which flow through RBKC, have had their Water Framework Directive ecological status assessed as Moderate **10**, signalling that action is needed to improve the ecological conditions within these water bodies.

Access to Nature

2.15 The majority of RBKC's residents live within proximity to high-value green spaces and waterways, enabling daily interaction with nature, a key factor in mental and physical wellbeing. However, 13.5 percent of RBKC's population lives within an Area of Deficiency (AoD) in access to nature. This is classified as an area where people must walk more than one kilometre to reach a SINC of Metropolitan or Borough Importance. The largest AoD is located between Latimer Road and Westbourne Park in the north of the borough, with a couple of smaller AoDs located near Chelsea in the south. These areas simultaneously have a Green Infrastructure Index above 0.75, demonstrating the need for green infrastructure interventions (Figure A.4 Areas of Deficiency in Access to Nature within RBKC in Appendix A). The Greater Infrastructure Index is modelled by the Greater London Authority (GLA) and is a tool to help London's decision-makers identity where green infrastructure improvements and investments might be targeted. It integrates several different layers including access to green space, health and climate data. The Green Infrastructure Index is presented as a score from zero to one. Areas closer to one represent areas with a greater need for green infrastructure.

2.16 It should be noted that the AoD in access to nature within the borough has decreased by eight percent between 2021 and 2025, reflecting the concerted effort to improve access to nature within the borough.

2.17 Tree equity includes a rating between 0 – 100 to identify neighbourhoods that lack urban tree canopy cover, leaving them disproportionately affected by environmental hazards like extreme heat and pollution. A score of 100 indicates that tree equity has been achieved, meaning there are enough trees for everyone to experience their benefits. The lower the score, the greater the need for trees and the higher the priority for investment in that area. In RBKC, the tree equity score is

variable, with neighbourhoods such as North Kensington scoring below 80 out of 100, while those around Holland Park score 100 out of 100 **11**. The low score in North Kensington reflects a canopy cover of about 10 percent, where greening and tree planting should be prioritised to reach the Mayor's Environment Strategy (2018) canopy cover goal of 22 percent.

Climate Change

2.18 Risks related to climate change are increasing nationally, but heat-related risks are particularly acute within London due to the urban heat island effect. 203 hectares of RBKC, equivalent to 16 percent of the borough, has a very high heat risk **12**. Communities with the highest heat risk are concentrated towards the north of the borough, within North Kensington and along the Westway Flyover, as well as in the southwest corner of the borough, within Lots Village and the World's End estate (Figure A.5 Heat and Flood Risk within RBKC in Appendix A).

2.19 In terms of sea and river flooding, a smaller area of RBKC is considered at risk, principally those neighbourhoods located just north of the River Thames. In total, 99 hectares, equivalent to eight percent of the borough, is estimated to have a one in 1000 (0.1 percent) chance of experiencing flooding from the sea or river each year **13**. (Figure A.5 Heat and Flood Risk within RBKC in Appendix A).

2.20 Surface water flooding is also a risk in RBKC, mainly due to the urban characteristics of the borough, meaning rainfall cannot quickly drain into the ground. Latimer Road, north of Ladbroke Grove and Westbourne Park, are areas with a particularly high risk of flooding from surface water where there is more than a 3.3 percent chance of a flood each year **14**.

2.21 Specifically related to habitats, Natural England's National Biodiversity Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment model identifies that 72 hectares of RBKC's priority habitats, equivalent to five percent of the borough, have medium sensitivity to climate change. This means that some loss of extent or an increase in unfavourable conditions of these priority habitats is expected by 2050 because of climate change.

Chapter 3
Meeting the Biodiversity Duty

3.1 This chapter sets out the plans, policies and strategies that form the principal instruments to conserve and enhance biodiversity in RBKC and the actions for nature the borough has committed to through the delivery of its functions.

The Enhanced Biodiversity Duty

3.2 The Enhanced Biodiversity Duty (EBD) was introduced under the Environment Act 2021. It requires all public authorities in England to consider how they can actively conserve and enhance biodiversity.

3.3 Public Authorities must report their consideration, actions they've carried out to comply with the EBD and how they will comply with it over the next five years.

3.4 By law, the report must include;

- The policies and objectives they have set to meet the biodiversity duty and the actions completed to date.
- What strategies (including the Greater London Local Nature Recovery Strategy) have influenced their polices, objectives and action and how they have contributed to their preparation.
- How they plan to comply with the biodiversity duty in the next reporting period.
- Any other information they consider appropriate.

3.5 Reports from local planning authorities must also include:

- Actions carried out to meet BNG obligations.
- Details of gains resulting, or expected to result, from biodiversity gain plans they've approved.
- Plans to meet BNG obligations in the next reporting period.

First Consideration

3.6 The duty requires a "first consideration" by all relevant public bodies by January 2024. This consideration should include agreement of policies, objectives and actions that will support the delivery the duty over the next five years.

3.7 In 2024, RBKC Council presented a first consideration to the Leadership team recommending they note and support the requirement of the EBD. It detailed the reasons for recommendation, the requirements and implications of meeting the duty and the biodiversity objectives of the Council.

3.8 This report builds on that consideration, providing further detail on actions and achievements, whilst framing these using national, regional and local targets and metrics.

Local Context and Progress

3.9 This section reviews RBKC local polices, strategies and plans which refer to biodiversity. Appendix B pulls together all targets and actions within these plans and summarises RBKC's progress to date.

Headline Commitments

- RBKC has a Biodiversity Action Plan with 84 actions covering the themes of: access to nature, parks and open spaces, the built environment and surveying and monitoring.
- The overall vison of the Council Plan is to 'Become the Best Council for a borough that is Greener, Safer, Fairer'.

Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Biodiversity Action Plan 2022 -2027 15

3.10 The Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) 2022 – 2027 has been produced to deliver the borough's commitment to protect and enhance biodiversity within its Green Plan. The BAP sets out how RBKC will protect, restore and enhance biodiversity to 2027, helping to secure the borough's natural environment and green infrastructure for future generations. The BAP covers priorities at local, regional and national levels and turns them into actions.

3.11 The vision of the BAP is 'by 2027, the borough will have an accessible natural environment rich in wildlife that everyone can feel connected to and will benefit from'.

3.12 The BAP sets out four objectives grouped into four themes: 'access to nature, parks and open spaces, the built environment and surveying and monitoring'. These four objectives will be achieved by the delivery of 84 actions.

3.13 The four objectives of the BAP are focussed on creating well connected green infrastructure, protecting and enhancing SINCs, ensuring biodiversity and BNG is embedded into policy and working in partnership with others.

Local Plan and Supplementary Plannings Documents (SPD)

RBKC Local Plan 2024 16

3.14 The RBKC Local Plan Review sets out the vision for future development in the borough over a 20-year period and includes the planning policies to help achieve this vision. The vision for the Local Plan is that it will support good growth and future development in the borough will be green, inclusive and liveable. The vision states that the local plan will 'put the environment at the heart of all new development'.

3.15 Chapter 4 of The New Local Plan Review is entitled Green-Blue Future. Specific policies related to biodiversity are:

- Policy GB10 – Light Pollution.
- Policy GB11 – Flood Risk.
- Policy GB12 – Sustainable Drainage.
- Policy GB14 – Green and Blue Infrastructure.
- Policy GB15 – Parks, Gardens and Open Spaces.
- Policy GB16 – Trees.

3.16 Policies require all development to contribute to the greening of the borough, enhance habitats to increase biodiversity, improve green corridors and protect and enhance nearby waterways. Major residential development is required to achieve an Urban Green Factor (UGF) score of 0.4 and major non-residential development is required to meet a UGF score of 0.3, in line with GLA recommend targets. Development must retain subtly lit and dark spaces to protect biodiversity from light spill, interventions to reduce flood risk should prioritise natural flood management and green infrastructure and SuDS should be installed where possible. The Council will protect and enhance existing parks, and lost trees will be replanted.

Neighbourhood Plans 17

3.17 RBKC has two neighbourhood plans. The neighbourhood plans and their references to biodiversity are summarised below:

- Saint Quintin – Action to 'Support the Council's policies on maintaining amenity and biodiversity'.
- Norland – Aim to 'Protect and enhance our open spaces, gardens and trees, both private and public.' Additionally, community infrastructure levy payments should go towards street tree planting.

Greening SPD 18

3.18 The Greening SPD covers all facets of planning that can contribute towards reducing carbon emissions, enhancing the natural environment and promoting a healthier borough.

3.19 The SPD provides details on the UGF, green and blue roofs, green walls, enhancement of biodiversity and BNG, streetscape greening, trees, private gardens, SuDS, ecological surveys and avoidance, mitigation and compensation.

Trees and Development SPD 19

3.20 The Trees and Development SPD sets out the Council's requirements in relation to any proposed development with trees on or near the site. It states that applicants must consider tree retention as a high priority at the start of the design process, and that tree retention is preferable but where not possible, replacement tree planting must be provided to maintain and expand canopy cover within the borough.

Lancaster West Sustainability Strategy 2025 - 2028 20

3.21 Lancaster West is a housing estate in North Kensington, owned by RBKC. The housing estate has a sustainability strategy with a vision of being 'a model twenty-first century carbon-neutral estate, and a part of the UK's biggest eco-neighbourhood'. The strategy has five themes of which one is 'restoring a garden estate with a thriving and resilient environment'.

3.22 Priority actions over the next three years for the strategy are: complete estate-wide landscape design work to maximise biodiversity, deliver SuDS and landscape work at Morland House, Talbot Grove House, and Treadgold House by 2026 and

improve the biodiversity with at least 200 square metres of additional green space by 2028, in line with 10 percent BNG requirements for each block.

Notting Dale Future Neighbourhood 2030 Strategy 21

3.23 Notting Dale is one of only two neighbourhoods in London that has been selected as part of the Mayor of London's Future Neighbourhoods 2030 (FN2030) programme to deliver a range of environmental pioneering projects and initiatives, alongside the development of a community-led environmental strategy. The Council and the Mayor of London are funding work with residents to transform Notting Dale into an exemplar model eco-neighbourhood that is greener, fairer and more climate resilient for all, by 2030.

3.24 Notting Dale FN2030 programme focuses on five key themes centred around retrofitting, energy supply, health and wellbeing, nature recovery and green skills that will help to secure sustainable and inclusive growth of Notting Dale up to 2030 and beyond.

3.25 Actions within theme four 'nature recovery' include: create new and improve existing green spaces across Notting Dale, tree planting, improve access to nature, make improvements to underused garden spaces, enhance available habitats for wildlife, support community kitchen gardens and create climate adaptable green spaces through SuDS and rain gardens.

Transport and Streets SPD 22

3.26 The Transport and Streets SPD provides further detail for planning applications that impact on transport systems and streets within RBKC. Provisions include how street trees should be planted, avoidance of damage to trees during construction and crossovers, and forecourt parking will not be granted when negative impact to street trees is anticipated as a result.

Other Relevant Strategies

Council Plan 2023 – 2027 23

3.27 The overall vison of the Council Plan is 'Becoming the Best Council for a borough that is Greener, Safer, Fairer'.

3.28 An ambition of the plan is ‘A Greener Kensington and Chelsea’. RBKC want to deliver greener neighbourhoods, cleaner air and healthier lives for all residents.

3.29 Actions in the plan to meet the vision and green ambitions are to:

- Continue to invest and maintain parks and open spaces promoting biodiversity (by planting wildflower meadows and expanding the Bee Superhighway),
- Ensure landowners at Kensal and Earl’s Court prioritise green spaces in their plans,
- Continue to improve public squares and spaces with investment in the public realm at Lots Road, Portobello Road, Bute Street and Cremorne Wharf,
- Make small local improvements in every ward over the next four years,
- Plant 400 new trees; and
- work with local people to transform Notting Dale ward into an eco-neighbourhood by 2030.

Council Plan Action Plan 2025 – 2027 24

3.30 The Council Plan Action Plan includes a review of what has been achieved and what is incomplete within the Council Plan 2023 – 2027. The Action Plan sets out what RBKC will achieve over the next two years. Actions that will be taken in the next two years to deliver the Council Plan are detailed in Chapter 7.

Green Plan 25

3.31 In 2019 RBKC Council declared a Climate Emergency Pledge for the organisation to be carbon neutral by 2030, and for the whole borough to be carbon neutral by 2040. The Green Plan sets out how RBKC is going to meet these commitments. One of the five environmental priorities with the plan is ‘protecting and enhancing biodiversity’.

3.32 The vision of the Green Plan is that it ‘will help RBKC, residents and stakeholders work in partnership to create a cleaner, greener and safer borough, where people love to live, work and learn. The Plan will ensure RBKC “build back better” and deliver a Green Recovery to COVID-19’.

3.33 Aims within the ‘protecting and enhancing biodiversity’ priority are:

- Creating a better, more joined up green space network.

- Protecting and improving important local habitat sites.
- Improve the understanding, enjoyment of nature, and making it accessible to all.

3.34 Actions being taken to deliver the aims are ensuring all new development provides at least 10 percent BNG, publish a five-year plan for the borough's biodiversity, increase the number of SINCs in positive conservation management from 66 percent to 80 percent by 2027, implement a full review of the boroughs SINCs and habitats by 2022, develop a spatial plan for biodiversity by 2023 and deliver a Bee Superhighway with 15 new pollinator-friendly schemes during 2021.

The Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022 – 2027 26

3.35 RBKC declared a climate emergency in October 2019. The Climate Emergency Action Plan sets out the Council's response to the climate emergency, and the collective action required to deliver the carbon neutral targets.

3.36 The action plan is a live document that is updated every year. The actions have been grouped into six categories. One of those categories is 'places and greener borough'. The 13 actions within the category include: implementing a BAP, investigating the feasibility of reallocating parking spaces into parklets, installing new community kitchen gardens, energy gardens, SuDS, trees, hedges and plants and expanding the Bee Superhighway. Actions centred upon increasing access to nature include supporting schools to adopt food-growing gardens on their grounds and delivering outdoor education, identifying barriers to nature and expanding conservation volunteering.

3.37 Actions in other categories that could have positive benefits for biodiversity include raising environmental awareness and green skills, developing an engagement and communication strategy, creating a borough-wide environmental and climate change steering group and green champions network and seeking funding opportunities for climate-led community-owned projects.

The Air Quality Action Plan 2022 – 2027 27

3.38 The actions within the Air Quality Plan fall into one of six themes. One theme is 'localised solutions', described as actions that seek to improve the environment of local neighbourhoods.

3.39 Actions in the plan that refer to biodiversity include: creating a combined sustainability leaflet centring around the priorities of the green plan, working with schools to install green infrastructure and carrying out five site walkovers a year to

identify green infrastructure opportunities, working with major landowners to improve greening in the streetscape and develop an eco-neighbourhood at Notting Dale.

Parks Strategy 2016 – 2025 28

3.40 The Parks Strategy sets out the RBKC's priorities for deployment of its resources in parks and open spaces between 2016 to 2025. It has strong links to the BAP as the delivery of goals and targets in one plan benefits the other. The strategy has four priority themes. The two priorities focussed on the delivery of biodiversity enhancements are 'manage the long-term resilience of the parks in relation to usage, biodiversity and climate change' and 'maximise funds by harnessing external resource (where this fits park interests)'. Goals within these themes are creating a long-term tree strategy, biodiversity action plan and proactive plan for the management of SINCs, raising the quality and quantity of SINCs, improving parks and SuDS, expanding the managed volunteer programme and identifying and applying for external funds.

3.41 RBKC has a service-level target for 50 percent of all new planting to be pollinator/ wildlife friendly.

Tree Strategy 2022 29

3.42 The Tree Strategy sets out the Council's aims and objectives for trees in RBKC. The strategic aim of the strategy is 'to ensure trees are planted, preserved and managed in accordance with sound arboriculture practice, with regard to their contribution to amenity and the urban landscape, for both the current and future generations'.

3.43 Strategic objectives in the strategy include managing the tree stock in accordance with good arboriculture practice, replacing removed trees, promoting trees in the built environment, increasing tree stock, producing a supplementary planning document on tree protection and planting, prosecuting unauthorised tree work and informing and educating residents on the value of trees.

3.44 RBKC have a commitment to replace every tree that is removed, where possible.

Housing Strategy 2025 – 2030 30

3.45 RBKC's Housing Strategy states that it will support the ambition of the Council Plan to be a borough that is greener, safer and fairer for residents.

3.46 No priorities directly address biodiversity but both Priority two – 'Ensure our homes are safe and meet the Decent Homes Standard' and Priority three – 'Deliver exemplary housing and landlord services' could in part be delivered by improvements to biodiversity and the green estate surrounding Council properties.

3.47 Within Priority two there is commitment to 'respond and adapt to climate change' and an action to 'strengthen housing stock and estates against extreme weather events by improving resilience to flood risks, where this is reasonably possible.' It is possible that this could be done via nature-based solutions.

Housing Sustainability and Fuel Poverty Strategy 31

3.48 This strategy sets out the broad aims for how housing management can help the Council in meeting its target to be net zero carbon in its own buildings and operations by 2030. The strategy identifies nine areas of sustainability that housing management can focus on to improve energy efficiency and environmental outcomes. These include:

- Responding to and adapting to climate change,
- Green neighbourhoods and communities; and
- Ecology and increasing biodiversity.

3.49 Actions in the strategy to enhance biodiversity include: investigating opportunities to install SuDS and rain gardens, researching opportunities for grants and supporting residents to seek funding for improvements to their own estates, supporting the Council's commitment to continue developing the Community Kitchen Garden scheme and incorporating it into estate schemes where appropriate, facilitating the delivery of the Council's upcoming BAP, specifying appropriate protection measures during future construction works, investigating the feasibility of installing green roofs and walls as part of new build programmes and retrofit works, reviewing grounds maintenance approaches, looking at options for improving public space, tree planting and species provisions (e.g. bee boxes) and working with residents to promote the importance of biodiversity.

Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023 – 2033 32

3.50 This strategy includes a vision to achieve good health and wellbeing in RBKC that is equitable for all. One of ten ambitions in the strategy is entitled 'Healthy Environments'.

3.51 There is a recognition that the built and natural environments have an important impact on health. The strategy states that RBKC will continue to invest in public spaces, to ensure they are green and biodiverse, active, accessible, and inclusive.

Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2024 – 2030 33

3.52 Kensington and Chelsea Council is the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) for the borough. The Local Flood Risk Management Strategy sets out the flood sources in the borough, local, regional and national flooding policy, partnerships in the borough for dealing with flooding and the objectives and measures for managing the risk of flooding.

3.53 The impacts of climate change and innovative solutions to managing flood risk are embedded within the strategy. Multiple examples of SuDS are provided including rain gardens, green roofs, playground schemes and ponds (see Chapter 4).

3.54 The strategy has four core themes: 'flood resilient communities, adaptive places, working together and monitoring and reviewing'. Under adaptive places the objectives are to: develop schemes that slow the flow of rainwater falling on roads, roofs and infrastructure by installing SuDS as well as championing the delivery of projects by others that include SuDS, maintain and reinforce planning policies on the management of flood risk and surface water runoff through new development and embed climate adaptation into construction projects delivered by the Council.

3.55 The strategy includes an action to develop a Riverside Strategy (see Chapter 7).

Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) 34

3.56 The SWMP outlines the predicted risk and preferred surface water management strategy for the borough. The SWMP states that 'measures which achieve multiple benefits, such as water quality, biodiversity or amenity, should be encouraged and promoted'. Within the plan there are actions to look at retrofitting SuDS such as bioretention basins, and that all developments that cause a net increase in impermeable area are to include at least one 'at source' SuDS.

Regional Context and Progress

London Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

3.57 The London LNRS is currently in draft 35 and scheduled to be published in early 2026 after public consultation.

3.58 As a supporting authority, RBKC has contributed to the creation of the London LNRS through various means. This includes the attendance of RBKC's Ecology Service Manager at the LNRS introductory webinar and LNRS freshwater habitats workshop in July 2024, as well as attendance at regular LNRS steering group meetings. RBKC submitted ecological data to support the draft London LNRS and played an important role during the June 2024 and February 2025 consultation rounds by confirming baseline data and identifying additional opportunities for green corridors within London.

3.59 The London LNRS sets out six overarching priorities that apply everywhere in London and are unmapped. These are to:

1. Help people enjoy nature,
2. (Create) Bigger, better, more connected and more diverse (habitats),
3. Boost wildlife populations,
4. Help pollinators and minibeasts thrive,
5. Support healthy soils, and
6. Protect wildlife from invasive species.

3.60 There are 30 focused priorities tailored to improve London's key habitats, 22 primary measures to manage these habitats and 37 species-specific measures to help important plants, animals and fungi.

3.61 Several potential measures are located within RBKC. These are areas identified as having potential for nature recovery for a particular LNRS priority. These LNRS priorities are the creation of green corridors on Exhibition Road, Barlby Road and Kensington High Street, the expansion of acid grassland at Brompton Cemetery and Kensington Gardens, the creation of wet woodland at Holland Park and the increase in ecological value of Meanwhile Garden.

3.62 How RBKC will take account of the LNRS is included in Chapter 7 of the report. Progress RBKC has made to delivering suggestions in the London LNRS will be recorded in future EBD reporting cycles.

Mayor's Environment Strategy (2018)

3.63 The Mayor's Environmental Strategy (2018), with a Greater London focus, sets the ambition for the environment within the GLA. It includes targets for green infrastructure, climate change, waste and other themes across the environmental spectrum. The strategy calls for >50 percent for greenspace across London. At a local level, RBKC has under >50 percent for green space, though this target is for the authority as a whole and equal distribution across boroughs is not expected. Due to the small size and central location of RBKC it will be difficult for the Council to increase greenspace coverage. It is anticipated that larger outer boroughs will balance out the spatial limitations of smaller central boroughs. RBKC has a canopy cover of 23.26 percent which exceeds the 22 percent tree canopy cover target in the Strategy. Actions identified in the RBKC BAP and elsewhere indicate that the borough is contributing to other biodiversity related targets (see Appendix B).

London Plan 2021

3.64 The London Plan 2021 is the Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London. It sets out a framework for how London will develop over the next 20-25 years and the mayor's vision for Good Growth. The London Plan states that all residential development should have a UGF ≥0.4 and commercial developments a UGF of ≥0.3. These conditions are embedded within RBKC's Local Plan.

National Context and Progress

Environmental Improvement Plan

3.65 The Environmental Improvement Plan 2025 sets binding national targets for habitat restoration, species recovery, tree cover, and protected area expansion. Key commitments include restoring or creating 500,000 ha of wildlife-rich habitat by 2042, halting species decline by 2030, and protecting 30 percent of England's land and sea for nature by 2030.

3.66 RBKC contributes to the Environmental Improvement Plan through delivery of the LNRS, the BAP, local planning policy and other Council strategies. Habitat

creation and enhancement projects (such as the Bee Superhighway, community kitchen gardens and installation of SuDS detailed in Chapter 4) support the national ambition of wildlife rich habitat restoration, while the species-specific actions such as the installation of bird boxes, bug hotels, hibernaculum and a reptile basking bank contribute to halting species decline. With 12 percent of the borough (151 hectares) designated as SINC and 75 percent of these in positive environmental management, RBKC contributes to underpinning the national 30 by 30 target. Sustained tree planting (see Chapter 4) has contributed to a tree canopy cover to 18 percent, exceeding the national target of 16.5 percent (see Appendix B).

Chapter 4
Integrated Action

4.1 This chapter sets out what actions RBKC Council has taken for nature, across all departments, through the delivery of its functions and duties since 2020. While the previous chapter outlined the statutory targets and strategic commitments at national, regional, and local level, this chapter focuses on delivery, highlighting how those ambitions are being translated into concrete projects, policies, and partnerships on the ground.

4.2 This chapter is based on data collated for the purposes of the report via:

- Researching key strategies, policies and plans,
- An online officer workshop,
- Targeted engagement with Council officers, and;
- Analysis of data made available by GiGL or open source.

4.3 It intends to present an efficient and effective process of data collation, analysis and reporting through bringing together the disparate work streams of the Council to identify how it is delivering for nature and climate resilience across its many functions.

Designated Sites Network

4.4 Designated sites form the backbone of RBKC's ecological network, providing protected spaces for habitats and species, and anchoring wider efforts to connect and enhance biodiversity across the borough.

4.5 A wide range of enhancement works have been delivered across the borough:

- RBKC staff undertake regular visits to all SINC sites and hold review meetings with external owners / managers.
- RBKC undertook a habitat restoration project at Little Wormwood Scrubs involving 3,600$_{m2}$ of grassland restoration, the planting of seven trees and the establishment of a conservation volunteer group. Note: Little Wormwood Scrubs is held in Trust by the London Borough Of Hammersmith and Fulham and managed by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea under a management agreement from 2008 until 2028. Under this agreement The Royal Borough has delegated responsibilities for management and maintenance of

Little Wormwood Scrubs including authority to carry out improvement and enhancement works.

- Holland Park has a woodland management plan in place to improve the biodiversity and sustainability of the woodland.
- Natural Flood Management (NFM) initiatives have been installed at Holland Park.
- A habitat enhancement project was completed at Emslie Horniman Park (2024-2025), renewing planting around Voysee Garden water feature.
- Butterfly monitoring transects are in place at Holland Park and Little Wormwood Scrubs.

Development Management – habitats and species

4.6 RBKC Council has implemented the following for developers to ensure all development supports biodiversity:

- BNG - Planning applicants must comply with BNG requirements as part of the permit process (see Chapter 5 for more information).
- RBKC secured funding from the Mayor of London's Future Neighbourhoods programme to deliver environmental projects and initiatives across the Notting Dale ward.

Highlights & Challenges

- Notting Dale is one of only two neighbourhoods in London selected as part of the Mayor of London's Future Neighbourhoods 2030 programme to deliver environmental projects and initiatives across the Notting Dale ward, and co-design a community-led environmental strategy.
- In 2023, 'PlanBee' by the Lancaster West Neighbourhood Team was selected as the winner of the Biodiversity and Nature category at the first Unlock Net Zero Live awards.
- PlanBee on Lancaster West won the climate adaptation award at the 2022 Pineapples awards. The Pineapples awards celebrate outstanding contributions to placemaking and urban development.

Managing Land to Improve Biodiversity

4.7 RBKC continues to deliver biodiversity improvements across its public realm, integrating ecological gains with urban maintenance.

- RBKC holds ten Green Flag awards, which considers biodiversity in its judging criteria.
- As part of the Bee Superhighway, 79 bee pollinator hotspots have been created across the borough by the Council, partners and community groups. Initiatives include planters, SuDS, community gardens and wildflower areas in schools (see Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1: A Bee Superhighway site in RBKC (Source: RBKC)

- The Ecology Service works with other Council departments to improve under-used, neglected and/or derelict areas in the borough, so called ‘grot spots’. To date, over 30 improvement projects have been completed, including installing sensory gardens, orchards, wildflower meadows, green roofs, and street planters (see Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.2: Lorne Gardens converted 'grot spot' (Source: RBKC)

- RBKC have created 55 community kitchen gardens providing 650 free food growing plots for residents. These kitchen gardens blend food growing with provision for biodiversity. All sites include biodiversity enhancements. Eighteen of the borough's community kitchen gardens received awards in the "It's your neighbourhood" category of the 2025 London In Bloom awards, with two receiving a National Certificate of Distinction.
- RBKC have created wildflower meadows and log pile habitats and planted mixed native hedging at Gunnersbury and Hanwell Cemeteries.
- RBKC have planted over 300,000 spring bulbs across parks and open spaces in RBKC between 2021-2024.
- RBKC have renewed planting schemes across the borough with 50 percent pollinator-supporting plants, accounting for over £100,000 investment in horticulture.
- RBKC have installed habitat enhancements to target specific species across their estate. This includes sparrow terraces, bat boxes, bug hotels, hibernaculum and a reptile basking bank created at Little Wormwood Scrubs.
- RBKC have adopted management practices to provide habitats for species across the borough, including planting mixed native hedging for birds and

invertebrates and ‘food plants’ for lepidoptera. Dead wood is retained where possible to support saproxylic invertebrates and fungi.

- RBKC supported the development of several community gardens across the borough including: a community garden at Bramley House in Notting Dale, The Secret Garden in partnership with the Museum of Brands, The Prairie Garden at Camelford Walk housing estate in partnership with Grow to Know and two ‘energy gardens’ at Ladbroke Grove (2,500$_{m2}$) and Latimer Road (five$_{m2}$) tube stations in partnership with Energy Garden (see Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3: Energy Garden – Ladbroke Road Tube Station (Source: Energy Garden)

- RBKC have installed green roofs at Camelford Court, Bramley House, Jubilee Square, Avondale Park, and Kensington Memorial Park.
- RBKC have installed ten green walls across the borough, at schools and nursery settings, walkways, North Kensington Resource Centre, and Kensington Town Hall. The Kensington Town Hall wall includes over 5,000 plants of which 80 percent feature on the RHS plants for pollinators list and also incorporates bird boxes and invertebrate habitat panels (see Figure 4.4).

Figure 4.4: Green Wall at Kensington Town Hall (Source: RBKC)

- RBKC officers work with four schools in the borough who have received National Education Nature Park grants to deliver grey to green measures.
- RBKC's Public Health team have been funding community growing and school food growing across the borough.

Highlights and Challenges

- Six green spaces won gold awards at London in Bloom 24 awards. Three greenspaces were awarded with a silver award. Eighteen of the borough's community kitchen gardens received awards in the "It's your neighbourhood" category.

Climate Change Resilience – including Natural Flood Management

4.8 The following actions have aimed to strengthen RBKC's flood resilience and nature-based adaptation using SuDS and other nature-based solutions across the public realm:

- As part of the Future Neighbourhoods programme, SuDS planters were installed at Camborne Mews, Treadgold House, Verity Close and Lower Clarendon.
- SuDS are being installed as part of highway schemes across the borough including in Bute Street, Chelsea Green, St Helen's Gardens, Barlby Road and Bevington Road.
- With support from RBKC, four schools in the borough were successful in applying for the Department of Education's (DoE) SuDS in schools funding programme. These SuDS incorporate biodiversity features and are being installed in early 2026.

Highlights & Challenges

- Multiple SuDS have been installed across the borough as part of highways schemes, the Future Neighbourhoods programme at Notting Dale ward and within schools.

Trees

4.9 RBKC have been actively undertaking tree planting.

- RBKC planted 501 trees between 2021 and 2025.
- Tree planting has been included within highways projects for example in Hogarth Road and Sloane Street and tree pits have been installed in Napier Road.

Highlights & Challenges

- RBKC exceeded their target of planting 400 in four years by 25 percent, planting 501 trees.

Education and Engagement

4.10 Community involvement is central to RBKC's approach to nature recovery with thousands of residents, schools and local groups contributing time, skills and stewardship to support biodiversity across the borough. Examples include:

- The Holland Park Ecology Centre provides a purpose-built base for the RBKC Ecology Service (Figure 4.5). The Centre provides resources and space for schools and residents to enjoy and learn about the natural environment. The Centre offers a forest school programme and environmental education. It caters for all levels of educational groups (early years to university), SEND groups and local youth groups. On average, the Centre works with 8,500 students per annum.
- RBKC's Ecology Service works with over 100 community groups, organisations, charities and education settings.
- RBKC officers host walk and talk programmes for residents to learn more about biodiversity and green spaces within the borough.
- RBKC officers run a conservation volunteer programme to improve wildlife areas in the borough. Tasks are linked to priorities within the biodiversity action plan and include meadow and scrub management, building dead hedges and loggeries, and pond maintenance. Over 30,000 volunteer hours have been logged over the past five years (2020 – 2025).
- RBKC offer corporate volunteering in their parks and green spaces with businesses regularly assisting in biodiversity enhancements across the borough.
- RBKC Council officers work with 'friends of' groups in the borough who support the management of green spaces and biodiversity improvements.
- RBKC receive funding from the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme to deliver outdoor education activities for children from low-income families in the borough during the school holidays. Biodiversity-related activities are included within the programme.
- RBKC consults with residents, resident associations and voluntary organisations to develop strategies for nature across the borough. This included public consultations on the Green Plan in 2020 and the BAP in 2022.
- Libraries in RBKC host a series of events and initiatives linked to biodiversity including a 'Sustainable September' programme and a greener libraries month.

- RBKC issue a variety of different newsletters that residents can subscribe to including ecology and community gardening newsletters. Newsletters include stories, updates and events related to biodiversity.
- In April 2024, RBKC launched the Parks Uncut podcast. The podcast featured staff, Friends groups and contractors discussing what the parks mean to them and shared fascinating facts about RBKC's green spaces. Themes of sustainability and biodiversity where included.
- RBKC has installed numerous interpretation signs across green spaces to raise awareness of biodiversity.
- The Ecology Service works with Hammersmith Community Gardens Association to deliver a food growing project in 12 schools in the borough. The programme installs kitchen garden infrastructure and works with 3,000 students per annum.

Figure 4.5: Holland Park Ecology Centre (Source: RBKC)

- The Ecology Service runs a Nature Wellbeing programme for residents in the borough. Forty sessions have been delivered in 2025.
- Downloadable nature connection activity sheets are available on the Council website.

- RBKC is due to launch a Bee Superhighway education pack for schools in early 2026.
- There are currently nearly 60 kitchen gardens in RBKC and over 1000 residents involved in the scheme.
- As part of the FN2030 programme in Notting Dale ward, RBKC have run a schools climate summit and outreach programme.
- RBKC ran a climate action week during June 21 – 29 2025. Three resident events focused on biodiversity.

Highlights & Challenges

- RBKC's Ecology Service work with over 100 community groups, organisations, charities and educational settings.
- The Holland Park Ecology Centre maintains a Learning Outside the Classroom (LoTC) Certification.
- RBKC won Resident Engagement of the Year (2025) at the Unlock Net Zero Awards 2025 for the work of their Landscape Ambassadors at Lancaster West.
- RBKC community gardening programme was shortlisted for an MJ award (awards that recognise excellent with local government).

Chapter 5
Biodiversity Net Gain – a Tool for Action

5.1 This chapter draws out information specifically relating to BNG. It provides a complete overview of the actions taken and the gains achieved and anticipated resulting from BNG.

5.2 BNG has created a world-first regulatory nature market with ground-breaking policy and legislation. Launched in 2024, the regime is still bedding in; many development types entered scope at different times, and Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) are only now (mid–late 2025) approving some of the first biodiversity gain plans.

5.3 In terms of BNG monitoring, Defra has only recently published the high-resolution inputs required for EBD reporting. Therefore, timing and data availability are currently limited on the impact of BNG.

5.4 A short overview of the state of BNG within RBKC is provided in Table 5.1 below:

Table 5.1: Overview of BNG in RBKC

Criteria	Number
Number of applications that are BNG eligible and have been determined	Three (up to the end of October 2025. Cyber security attack means no planning applications have been determined since then).
Number of gain plans approved	Zero
Number and type (habitat) of units approved in gain plans	N/A
Hectarage per habitat of gains approved in gain plans	N/A
Number of legal agreements / conditions secured and associated funding	Zero

Actions Taken to Meet BNG Obligations

5.5 BNG is predominantly a planning matter with the assessment, processing and approval of planning applications requiring BNG a responsibility of the planning team and the ecologists embedded within that function. As a result, the majority of actions relate to how these applications are processed and assessed within that function.

5.6 The RBKC Local Plan 2024 includes Policy GB14 Policies F to K on biodiversity, which require developments to attain a minimum of 10 percent BNG. This reflects the national legislation of mandatory 10 percent BNG that came into effect for most developments in February 2024 and for small sites in April 2024.

5.7 RBKC Council held BNG training workshops in 2024 for officers and Members to help improve BNG literacy and skills. There is also a BNG working group where BNG skills, best practices and legislation changes are shared, along with an internal document about the BNG procedure to help officers effectively process BNG applications.

5.8 RBKC Council uses EXACOM software to log and monitor BNG data. This provides officers with an easier interface to assess BNG applications, ultimately saving time and provides a robust database of reports that can be used for long-term monitoring.

5.9 Other functions that may work on BNG include:

- The legal function – delivering Section 106 agreements for “significant” gains.

Highlights & Challenges

- BNG is now a formal requirement. The Council's strategic planning tools (Local Plan 2024 and multiple SPDs) now embed BNG requirements and guidance.
- Training, workshops, internal guidance documents and software are being deployed to equip Council officers with BNG knowledge and skills, strengthening the Council’s BNG review capacity.
- Remaining challenges include ensuring consistent monitoring and enforcement of BNG compliance over the long-term.

Legal Agreements

5.10 RBKC Council secures biodiversity delivery through legal frameworks, primarily Section 106 (S106) agreements, which embed long-term obligations into development projects:

- S106 agreements can be set up between developers and the Council to ensure that works related to BNG are undertaken and those habitats are secured for 30 years using a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan.
- RBKC Council is in the process of developing templates to help increase and speed up off-site BNG delivery through S106 agreements.

BNG Banking

5.11 At present, no BNG habitat banks are registered in London, including RBKC and none are anticipated in the near future:

- The National Biodiversity Gain Site Register (DEFRA) lists all legally secured off-site BNG sites in England. As of December 2025, none are located in London.
- The largest provider, The Environment Bank, has established over 35 habitat banks across England (circa 2,500 acres, 6,700 plus units), but none in London.

5.12 One borough (Kingston) has publicly explored establishing a bank 36, whilst Thames21 is developing a river habitat banking model for London 37, but neither is yet operational.

5.13 The limited requirement for BNG within the boroughs thus far, combined with the uncertainty over the financial and practical deliverability of habitat banking with the capital, has led to the current situation – i.e. no existing habitat banks within London. This means RBKC and other boroughs currently rely on on-site delivery, with off-site options available only outside Greater London. The lack of local habitat banks highlights both a challenge for developers and a strategic opportunity for the borough to explore future habitat banking and ensure biodiversity gains remain within RBKC.

Chapter 6
Investment in Nature

6.1 This chapter describes funding for nature-related activities in the borough. Delivery examples are signposted in Chapter 4. The structure of governance for nature is also outlined.

Council-led Grant Funding

6.2 RBKC Council operates dedicated funding to enable community and organisational projects that deliver biodiversity, climate resilience, and environmental enhancements. These grants are often Council-led or work in partnerships with local organisations to ensure that action for nature is embedded within neighbourhoods and driven by residents, schools, charities, and local partners. These include:

- Green Fund – Launched in 2020 alongside the Green Plan and ran until 2025. From 2022 onwards, 15 percent of the £1million annual allocation was available for community projects, whilst the remaining 85 percent was allocated to Council-led projects. The capital was used to deliver sustainability improvements focusing on the five key priority areas of the Green Plan. In 2021, £200,000 was spent on the upgrade of Kensington Memorial Park, which included the creation of green roofs on top of the sports changing room, providing foraging opportunities for invertebrates. The Green Fund has also funded other projects that indirectly enhance biodiversity, such as £16,000 for seven schools within RBKC to implement air quality improvement measures such as green walls and screens 38.

Funding Secured

6.3 RBKC Council has been successful in securing external funding to deliver biodiversity enhancements across the borough. These include:

- GLA's Green Roots Fund - £12 million of funding available from the Mayor of London over three years to local authorities and not-for-profit organisations within London for projects which improve green and blue spaces. Grants available range between £10,000 to £500,000 39. RBKC were successful is securing £500,000 funding to deliver biodiversity enhancements across housing estates in the borough, and support a new community orchard at Kensington Memorial Park.

- GLA's Future Neighbourhoods 2030 - £7.7 million of funding available from the Mayor of London to tackle environmental challenges within some of London's most disadvantaged and climate-vulnerable areas. Notting Dale ward, within RBKC, has received over £2.2 million from FN2030, with match contributions from RBKC and external partners to fund over 42 projects, some of which are directly enhancing biodiversity, such as planting at Verity Close Nature Garden and creation of a green roof and bug hotel at Avondale Park 40.
- Green and Resilient Spaces Fund – Round Two – Lancaster West estate in RBKC was one of nine projects awarded £40,000 in project development grants from the Mayor of London. This fund has been spent on projects that maximise access to and the quality of green spaces and increase the area's resilience to the impacts of climate change, including heat and flood risk.
- Bupa Foundation Green Community Grants - £2,000 was awarded to RBKC to revitalise the green space at Bramley House, just north of Latimer Road 41.

Service Level Agreements

6.4 Since 2018, RBKC have had an annual service level agreement (SLA) in place with GiGL2 for the maintenance of environmental data.

Planning-Related Mechanisms

6.5 RBKC leverages statutory planning tools to secure funding for nature. These include Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) allocations for green infrastructure, S106 agreements securing on-site or off-site habitat enhancements, and future monitoring fees and unit purchases under BNG (see Chapter 5 for more information on BNG).

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

6.6 RBKC Council applies a CIL to new developments with the borough. 15 percent is set aside as Neighbourhood CIL (NCIL) to be spent in consultation with local communities of their local priorities. In areas where a Neighbourhood Plan is adopted, the proportion is 25 percent and is to be spent on infrastructure identified in the relevant neighbourhood plan. The borough has two neighbourhood plans – Saint Quintin's and Norland.

6.7 NCIL funding is for physical infrastructure. Projects must involve improving infrastructure that benefits the local community and contributes to NCIL priorities (of

which biodiversity is listed). Projects should support RBKC's ambitions for a greener, safer and fairer borough. In March 2025, there was £3.75 million of NCIL funds available.

6.8 Projects funded by NCIL since 2020 include a pollinator paradise garden at the Olympia community kitchen garden and street planters.

Council Resourcing

6.9 Multiple teams within RBKC Council undertake actions that deliver biodiversity benefits. Teams that are directly linked with projects or the management of habitats, species, and greenspace for the benefit of biodiversity include:

- The Ecology Service comprises seven full-time equivalents (FTE) delivering a diverse range of ecological projects, as well as leading on biodiversity-related education and engagement and running the Community Gardens within RBKC.
- The Parks Team comprises three FTE, responsible for park management within RBKC. Maintenance is provided by Idverde, with 65 FTE plus up to six seasonals working across parks, cemeteries and other green spaces.
- The Parks Project Team comprises two FTE, responsible for biodiversity and capital works projects within RBKC's parks.
- The Housing Team comprises one FTE, responsible for delivering landscaping, including biodiversity enhancements.

6.10 Other teams within RBKC Council focus on wider sustainability improvements within the borough but also link to the enhancement of biodiversity. These are:

- The Sustainability Team,
- The Air Quality Team, and
- The Public Health Team.

Partnerships

6.11 RBKC sustains biodiversity action with a wide network of delivery partners to deliver specific biodiversity projects. They include:

- The Royal Parks support management of Kensington Gardens and Brompton Cemetery, including funding ecological surveys, implementing biodiversity enhancement projects, and identifying tree species and locations for planting schemes.

- Hammersmith Community Gardens Association deliver environmental education and food growing projects in 12 schools in the borough.
- The Friends of Holland Park is a charity dedicated to preserving and enhancing the ecological value of Holland Park. Partnership projects include tree planting and care, guided nature walks, bird ringing demonstrations and natural flood management interventions.
- London Borough Biodiversity Forum through which London borough officers can exchange information, identify cross-borough opportunities and contribute to the London Biodiversity Action Plan.
- London Environmental Educators Forum (LEEF) aims to improve the quality and quantity of environmental education delivered to Londoners.
- Public Health Centres on projects that simultaneously support resident wellbeing and biodiversity. For example, the creation of a large community kitchen garden at St Charles Hospital and garden restoration and training at the Violet Melchett Hub 42.
- Energy Garden have been pivotal in creating an accessible green space at Ladbroke Grove Secret Garden with a woodland and medicinal garden, with future plans to incorporate a pond.
- Brown Baby Community Group has been involved in creating gardens at Latimer Road and Ladbroke Grove stations.
- Grow to Know pursue equal access to green space in RBKC with most recent community garden creations located in North Kensington.
- The Environment Agency attended a SuDS and natural flood management case study session at Holland Park.
- Residents' associations at Lancaster West, Nottingwood House, Bramley House and Silchester to deliver projects directly within the local communities.
- Neighbouring London boroughs, including the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham and Westminster City Council, to plan SuDS projects, survey works and biodiversity enhancements that cross borough boundaries.
- Landowners and managers, such as Cadogan Estate and Royal Hospital Chelsea, support the delivery of BAP targets and SINC enhancements.
- Educational and Research Institutions, such as Imperial College London, King's College London, Zoological Society London, and Kew Gardens, to carry out ecological research projects and deliver BAP actions within RBKC.

Highlights & Challenges

- RBKC partners with a broad range of organisations spanning community groups, charities, public bodies, and private companies, enabling biodiversity enhancement projects to be delivered effectively and equitably within RBKC.
- Partnering with research bodies such as Kew Gardens on future resilient tree species demonstrates that RBKC's preparedness for future challenges associated with climate change.

Other stakeholders in RBKC

6.12 Many organisations are working to enhance biodiversity across RBKC. Their contributions include:

- Provision of a £23,500 grant from Kusuma Trust to Hubbub Foundation to turn an unused space on the Lancaster West estate into a food and flower garden and to provide gardening training to residents.

Case Study: South Ken ZEN+

- A partnership of 23 arts and cultural institutions, including RBKC, in South Kensington, who have come together to become a net-zero and nature-positive neighbourhood 43.
- Recent biodiversity enhancement projects include pollinating planters on Exhibition Road and the commission of a biodiversity baseline audit from GiGL due end of 2025.
- RBKC's Ecology Service Manager sits in the working group of South Ken Zen+ to help drive biodiversity enhancements within the area.

Case Study: Bee Superhighway

- Numerous partners were involved in the creation and maintenance of the Bee Superhighway. Idverde contractors support the maintenance of pollinator planting in the borough's parks, the Maxilla Men's Shed workshop made bug hotels, the Westway Trust manage the wildflower garden and meadow under the Westway, and residents volunteer to help maintain street planters. Following initial investment to establish the programme, ongoing support for new pollinator-friendly enhancements is provided from internal budgets, and resident applications to available funding, such as NCIL. A Bee Superhighway school education pack will be launched in 2026 with accompanying outreach activities.

Case Study: Cadogan Estates

- Cadogan Estates is privately owned historic property estate located in Chelsea. The estate covers ~93 acres and includes a diverse range of properties including over 3,000 residential properties, 500,000$_{ft2}$ of office spaces, 300 shops and nine hotels. The estate has 15 acres of gardens and a dozen parks and green spaces.
- Cadogan Estates have been working to enhance biodiversity on their estate via the planting of two pocket forests (Figure 6.1), The forests cover a combined space of 480$_{m2}$ and are planted with 1,410 trees comprising 77 native species. Before being planted, both sites were compacted gravel areas with few London Plane trees and no other vegetation. Each forest now has the potential to support 168 species of animal, sequester 10,650 kilograms of CO_2, provide accessible greenspace to 3,393 people living within 300 metres of its perimeter and reduce surface temperature by up to 220 Celsius on hot summer days.

Figure 6.1: Pocket Forest (Source: Estates Gazette)

Holland Park Woodland Management Plan (2023-2028)

- The management plan, covering eight hectares of mixed deciduous woodland in Holland Park, is delivered by the Ecology Service, working closely with the Parks and Park Projects teams and maintenance contractor Idverde to mitigate the impacts of climate change and support a sustainable woodland.
- Conservation volunteer groups, who contributed over 4,700 volunteer hours in 2025, have been systematically working to clear ground ivy, thin self-seeded saplings, plant 2,500 mixed native hedging plants, and consolidate deadwood into dead hedging (Figure 6.2). Tree surgeons are working to reduce a predominance of Holly. These actions have opened up glades, allowing an abundance of ground flora to grow from the seed bank, and providing much needed space to introduce new tree and shrub species, creating structural and species diversity to enable the woodland to thrive in the future. A natural SuDS scheme is being installed in the woodland, with bunds directing surface run-off into woodland channels and ponds, where leaky dams help slow the flow of water to support habitat management and reduce flood risk. An unexpected co-benefit of the work is a reduction in antisocial behaviour in the park due to increased visibility through the vegetation.

Figure 6.2 Holland Park Woodland Management (Source: RBKC)

Chapter 7
Looking Ahead for Nature

7.1 This chapter sets out how RBKC Council will fulfil the biodiversity duty over the coming reporting period to 2030. It first considers the challenges facing RBKC and how these will be overcome to deliver on the vision and targets of RBKC Council.

7.2 As evidenced in the previous chapters, RBKC Council have taken great steps to conserve and enhance biodiversity across the borough, fulfilling the requirements of their EBD. Looking to the future, continuing to meet the EBD has implications for strategic planning and delivery across Council functions. Delivering on the priorities of the London LNRS and embedding the ambition of the Council Plan Action Plan, the Green Plan and the Biodiversity Action Plan, and other strategies into delivery plans has the potential to be challenging but a hugely important step. The next five years will see greater integration of biodiversity considerations within Council teams and their work areas.

Context and Challenges

7.3 RBKC Council could experience several different challenges over the next five years. These include but are not limited to:

- Reduction in government funding for council-provided services, including the management of green spaces. London Council's press release in October 2025 highlighted that London boroughs together will need to make savings of around £4.7 billion over the next four years 44.
- Increased pressure from housing and transport development, with potential changes to SINC and species protection.
- New, or exacerbation of already present, invasive and non-native species and diseases affecting native species and impacting the health of natural habitats. Floating Pennywort and Water Fern, both invasive and non-native species, have been found in the Grand Union Canal at the northern boundary of RBKC and Japanese Knotweed has been found in Kensal Green Cemetery and Kensington Palace Gardens in recent years 45.
- Climate change is leading to more extreme weather events such as droughts and flooding, which affect ecosystem function. Trees within RBKC are increasingly being impacted by low water availability and cases of subsidence during heatwaves are increasing.

- Lack of space within RBKC to plant trees and deliver nature-based solutions such as SuDS.
- Difficulties in sourcing adequate and suitable tree species as nearby nurseries lack enough stock to cater for all London boroughs.
- Lack of resources and skills to deliver biodiversity projects within RBKC.
- Water scarcity and reduced water quality affecting the viability of habitats and species. Water is typically delivered at a catchment scale with close coordination between key stakeholders. RBKC and the other London boroughs will continue to engage with the Ravensbourne Catchment Partnership, Thames 21 and feed into the Thames River Basin Management Plan.

Vision and Opportunities

7.4 Despite these challenges, RBKC's vision, as outlined in the Green Plan, is 'to create a cleaner, greener and safer borough, where people love to live, work and learn.' This includes continuing to meet BNG requirements, implementing the Biodiversity Action Plan, continuing to expand the Bee Superhighway and delivering the priorities of the London LNRS.

7.5 Over the next five years, opportunities exist to deliver biodiversity enhancements within Council-owned sites, leverage external funding, and deepen partnerships with community groups, research and educational institutes, and businesses. These actions can help RBKC not only meet local targets and contribute to regional and national targets but also ensure the long-term resilience of its parks, wider green spaces, waterways, and natural heritage.

7.6 Actions RBKC can prioritise to deliver national, regional and local biodiversity targets across the next five years include:

- Raise the percentage of SINCs in positive environmental management from 75 percent in 2024 to 80 percent by 2027, as outlined in the Green Plan.
- Increase tree planting in neighbourhoods such as North Kensington, where canopy cover is currently around 10 percent, leading to a low tree equity score and health inequalities for residents.
- Look to increase the percentage cover of priority habitats that fall within a SINC designation. The figure currently stands at 77 percent but increasing this would ensure that RBKC's acid grassland, lowland meadows and traditional orchard priority habitats are appropriately protected and managed.

- Prioritise innovative solutions such as green roofs to raise the current green cover within RBKC from 31.4 percent, with the aim of getting closer to the London average of 51.68 percent.
- Continue to reduce the AoD in access to nature (8 percent reduction in the previous period between 2021 and 2025). This calls for greater provision of SINCs of Metropolitan or Borough Importance in the north of the borough and in Chelsea in the south of the borough.
- Continue to work with a wide range of partners, including charities, non-profit organisations, and community groups, who can engage local communities and deliver accessible green spaces innovatively and effectively within RBKC.
- Focus on upskilling current council staff with biodiversity and ecology training to help alleviate challenges associated with biodiversity projects.

7.7 These priorities are based on targets and actions within RBKC's strategies and plans (see Appendix B) and supplemented with information from Chapter 2.

Delivery Actions

7.8 RBKC Council has committed to several specific actions to deliver for biodiversity over the next five years, including:

- Deliver the Amazing Spaces Programme, which involves the creation and enhancement of public spaces at Hogarth Road, Sloane Square, Hans Crescent and Gloucester Road South through perennial and tree planting.
- Continue to deliver the sustainability projects at Notting Dale to help transform it into an exemplary eco-neighbourhood.
- Create five new sustainable Bee Superhighway sites each year.
- Deliver new open space at Lots Road / Cremorne Wharf, incorporating significant biodiversity enhancements through the provision of natural habitats and perennial plant beds using 50 percent of species from the RHS Plants for Pollinators list.
- Ensuring that new projects are resilient to climate change through detailed location and long-term management planning and the use of better-adapted species.
- Exploring cross-departmental and cross-borough projects to maximise the biodiversity enhancement potential of nature-based solutions such as SuDS and green roofs.

Other Related Policies and Strategies

7.9 RBKC Council is set to review and update several plans, policies and strategies spanning the next reporting period that incorporate elements of biodiversity delivery, including:

- At the time of writing (Q4, 2025), the Climate Emergency Action Plan is being updated with new climate adaptation and resilience actions, including nature-based solutions.
- The Biodiversity Action Plan is due to be updated and renewed in 2028.
- The Air Quality Action Plan and Air Quality SPD are also due for renewal in 2028, with the SPD having been written at the time of writing this report.
- The Holland Park Woodland Management Plan is due to be updated in 2028.
- The Local Flood Risk Management Strategy is scheduled for review and renewal in 2029-2030.
- RBKC is drafting an emerging Riverside Strategy to identify the work required to raise the flood defences along the southern borough boundary to manage the risk of fluvial/tidal flooding to 2100. Inventions will include nature-based solutions and enhancements to biodiversity.
- The Tree Strategy is due to be updated within the next reporting period.
- The Greening SPD is due to be refreshed within the next reporting period.
- The Local Plan is due to be updated within the next reporting period. This will take into account the findings of the latest SINC review.

Taking Account of the LNRS

7.10 Once published in early 2026, RBKC Council will take account of the London LNRS over the next five years by integrating the priorities and measures proposed in the LNRS into the delivery of their polices and plans and how the Council plans to meet their EBD duty.

Meeting BNG Obligations

7.11 RBKC Council will continue to monitor BNG delivery, keeping appraised of any changes in legislative requirements and opportunities to optimise delivery within the borough. It is not anticipated that any off-site, in-borough delivery opportunities will emerge on Council-owned sites.

7.12 As biodiversity gain plans become active, officer resourcing of monitoring reports and any other enforcement activities, will remain under review.

Climate Change Resilience

7.13 Though not among the requirements identified by Defra, consideration of the effects of climate change over the next five years and identification of actions to be taken to build climate resilience is essential. The climate and biodiversity crises are inextricably linked, and the rapidly changing climate will affect biodiversity in the UK, especially in cities first. Nature-based solutions can offer benefits to biodiversity as well as for climate mitigation and resilience.

7.14 RBKC Council have declared a climate emergency and has a Climate Emergency Action Plan in place to build climate resilience across the borough. The ongoing monitoring and reporting of these strategies will enable efficiencies moving forward for capturing relevant data for EBD reporting.

7.15 Possible options that RBKC Council could continue to explore to build climate resilience include:

- Further increase the provision of green infrastructure, including trees, to reduce the urban heat island effect, particularly in locations such as North Kensington, along the Westway Flyover, as well as in the southwest corner of the borough within Lots Village and the World's End estate, where health inequalities have been identified.
- Further increase the use of SuDS in Council-owned parks to reduce flood risk, contributing to meeting the aims of the Green Plan, Climate Emergency Action Plan, the Parks Strategy and the Housing Sustainability and Fuel Poverty Strategy.

Monitoring and Evaluation

7.16 A variety of metrics can be used to support the monitoring and evaluation of associated targets and objectives. Metrics associated with other reporting, such as the Biodiversity Action Plan, the Green Plan and the Council Plan Action Plan, are preferred to avoid duplication. Those that the Council could record include:

Target / Action	Source of Target	Metric	Data Source	Baseline 2025
Increase number of SINCs in positive management (80 percent by 2026).	The Green Plan	Number of SINCs in positive management	RBKC	75 percent of SINCs are in positive management.
Expand the Bee Superhighway project across the borough.	The Climate Emergency Action Plan	Number and hectare of Bee Superhighway locations.	RBKC	As of Dec 2025, RBKC have created 79 Bee Superhighway locations. Hectares unknown
Install energy gardens on Tube stations, starting with North Kensington	Climate Emergency Action Plan	Number of energy gardens installed.	RBKC	As of Dec 2025, RBKC have installed energy gardens at two tube stations (out of a possible 13).

Target / Action	Source of Target	Metric	Data Source	Baseline 2025
Continue to expand and plant fruit trees and native hedges around community kitchen gardens and in disused/ underused spaces. Plant street planters and pocket parks with a variety of plants to help capture pollution and carbon.	Climate Emergency Action Plan	Number of 'grot spots' improved across the brough	RBKC	As of 2025, RBKC have improved 30 'grot spots' across the borough.
Support the delivery of SuDS, both in new developments and through retrofitting.	Climate Emergency Action Plan	Number of SuDS installed	RBKC	As of 2025, 13 SuDS have been delivered within RBKC (see Chapter 4).
Improve sustainability of parks.	Parks Strategy	Good Parks for London Rating Number of parks awarded green flag status	Good Parks for London Green Flag	RBKC came joint 12 in the 2024 Good Parks for London with a score of 43.75 46 (an improvement of three points from 2022). In 2025 RBKC held 10 green flag wards.

Target / Action	Source of Target	Metric	Data Source	Baseline 2025
BNG Delivery	RBKC Local Plan	Number of BNG units delivered	RBKC	Total net gain in habitat units: 0 Total net gain in hedgerow units: 0 Total gain in watercourse units: 0
Working with schools to find opportunities to install green infrastructure (minimum of 5 site walkovers at school per annum)	The Air Quality Action Plan 2022 – 2027	Number of school site walk overs per annum Number and type of green infrastructure installed Number of food growing gardens installed.	RBKC	Unknown RBKC have installed green walls in five education settings and supported four schools in installing SuDS as part of a Duke of Edinburgh funded scheme. As of 2025, RBKC have installed food growing gardens and infrastructure at 12 schools across the borough.

Target / Action	Source of Target	Metric	Data Source	Baseline 2025
Expand the conservation volunteering offer across the borough	The Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022 – 2027	Number of groups in the borough supported (e.g. advice given) to take nature-positive action. Number of groups in the borough supported (e.g. advice given) to take nature-positive action. Number of meetings held with the local community groups and other partners. Engagement statistics from third sector organisations, including volunteer hours, number of events and attendees, and training sessions delivered.	RBKC Third Sector Organisations	Over 30,000 conservation volunteer hours have been logged since 2021. A new conservation volunteer group was established at Little Wormwood Scrubs.

Target / Action	Source of Target	Metric, Data Source, Baseline 2025
Species	Environmental Improvement Plan	The London LNRS lists 243 priority species 47. Of these, 48 have been recorded in RBKC and two (Silky Wave Moth (*Idaea dilutaria*) and Small Flowered Catch Fly (*Silene gallica*)) have only been recorded in RBKC (out of all London boroughs). To monitor changes in species the following four steps need to be followed: 1. Select with priority species to focus action on. 2. Decide a suitable metric for each species (e.g. no. of nesting sites). 3. Establish a baseline for each species (collaborating with GiGL). 4. Develop a monitoring system for each species.

Next Report

7.17 The next enhanced biodiversity report is due five years from the submission date of the previous report. This will be January 2031.

Chapter 8
Summary and Conclusion

8.1 This chapter summarises the achievements that RBKC Council has delivered to meet its biodiversity duty to January 2026, and concludes the actions required to deliver this to 2030.

State of Nature

8.2 Despite RBKC's small size and dense urban characteristics, the borough supports 24 SINCs, five of which are of Metropolitan Importance, nine of Borough Grade Two Importance, four of Borough Grade One Importance, and six of Local Importance.

8.3 The tree canopy cover in RBKC stands at 23.26 percent, exceeding the London average of 19.56 percent and that of all neighbouring boroughs. This target exceedance can be attributed to the deciduous woodland (62 hectares), ancient wood pasture and parkland (four hectares) and numerous park and street trees within RBKC.

8.4 AoD in access to nature within RBKC has decreased by eight percent between 2021 and 2025, demonstrating the Council's action in improving access to green spaces. Nevertheless, significant disparities related to green spaces and urban tree canopy cover, leading to climate change risk inequalities, still remain within the borough, foremostly in the communities around Latimer Road, Westbourne Park and World's End.

Headline Achievements

8.5 RBKC Council have taken many steps to enhance biodiversity within the borough. The overall vison of the Council Plan is for RBKC to become 'the Best Council for a borough that is Greener, Safer, Fairer'. RBKC has a Green Plan that sets out the Council's vision for achieving net zero. One of five priorities within this plan is 'protecting and enhancing biodiversity'. The Council has a dedicated Biodiversity Action Plan listing 84 actions to enhance biodiversity across the borough. Biodiversity is embedded with the strategies of several other Council remits including transport, health and wellbeing, air quality, local flood risk management and parks. Provisions for biodiversity are included within RBKC's Local Plan and Greening SPD.

8.6 RBKC Council have taken dedicated action to enhance biodiversity and greenspaces across the borough. Key examples include; the creation of 79 Bee Superhighway hotspots supporting pollinators, improvements to over 30 ‘grot spots’ including the installation of sensory gardens, orchards, wildlife meadows and street planters, the installation of numerous SuDS as part of highways and development schemes, investments in green infrastructure including the installation of ten green walls and the planting of 501 trees since 2021.

8.7 RBKC Council have been celebrated for their work and have received several awards including ten green flag awards, six gold awards at London in Bloom 2025 and winners of the Biodiversity and Nature Category at the Unlock Net Zero Live awards for ‘PlanBee’ at the Lancaster West estate.

8.8 RBKC Council supports residents and local communities to play a part in biodiversity enhancements. Highlights include the Green Fund funding both Council and community-led projects to enhance biodiversity across the borough. The Holland Park Ecology Centre, a purpose-built base for the RBKC Ecology Service offers an extensive programme for residents to engage with nature. The Centre works with an average of 8,500 students per annum. ~30,000 hours have been logged as part of RBKC conservation volunteer programme between 2021 and 2025. RBKC Council maintain ~70 kitchen gardens (which incorporate biodiversity enhancements) involving over 1,000 residents.

Next Steps

8.9 Over the next five years, RBKC Council will continue to carry out their duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity and meet local, regional and national biodiversity targets.

8.10 Actions included within RBKC strategies and policies include continuing to expand the Bee Superhighway, install more energy gardens, continue to develop ‘grot spots’, work with five schools per annum to explore opportunities to improve green infrastructure on school grounds and work with local communities to explore funding opportunities to encourage climate-led and community-owned projects.

8.11 Challenges lie ahead, particularly the reduction in government funding for Council-provided services, including the management of green spaces, increased pressure from housing and transport development reducing available green space in an already heavily urbanised inner London borough and wider implications from climate change (including rising temperature and water scarcity).

Appendix A
Figures

A.1 Location of RBKC.

A.2 Designated Sites within RBKC.

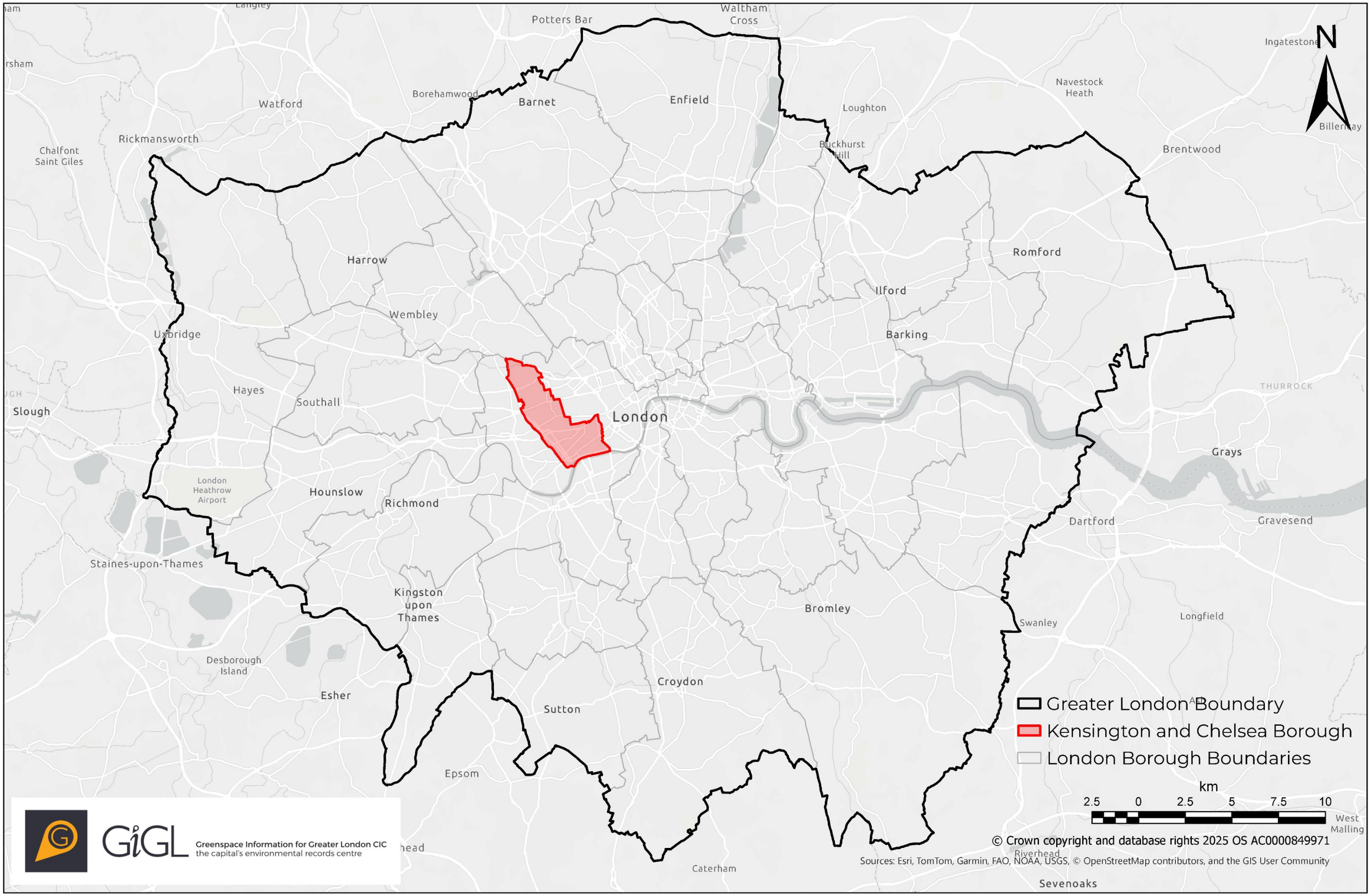
A.3 Priority habitats with RBKC.

A.4 Access to Nature within RBKC.

A.5 Climate Vulnerability within RBKC.

Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

Produced by Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC, November 2025

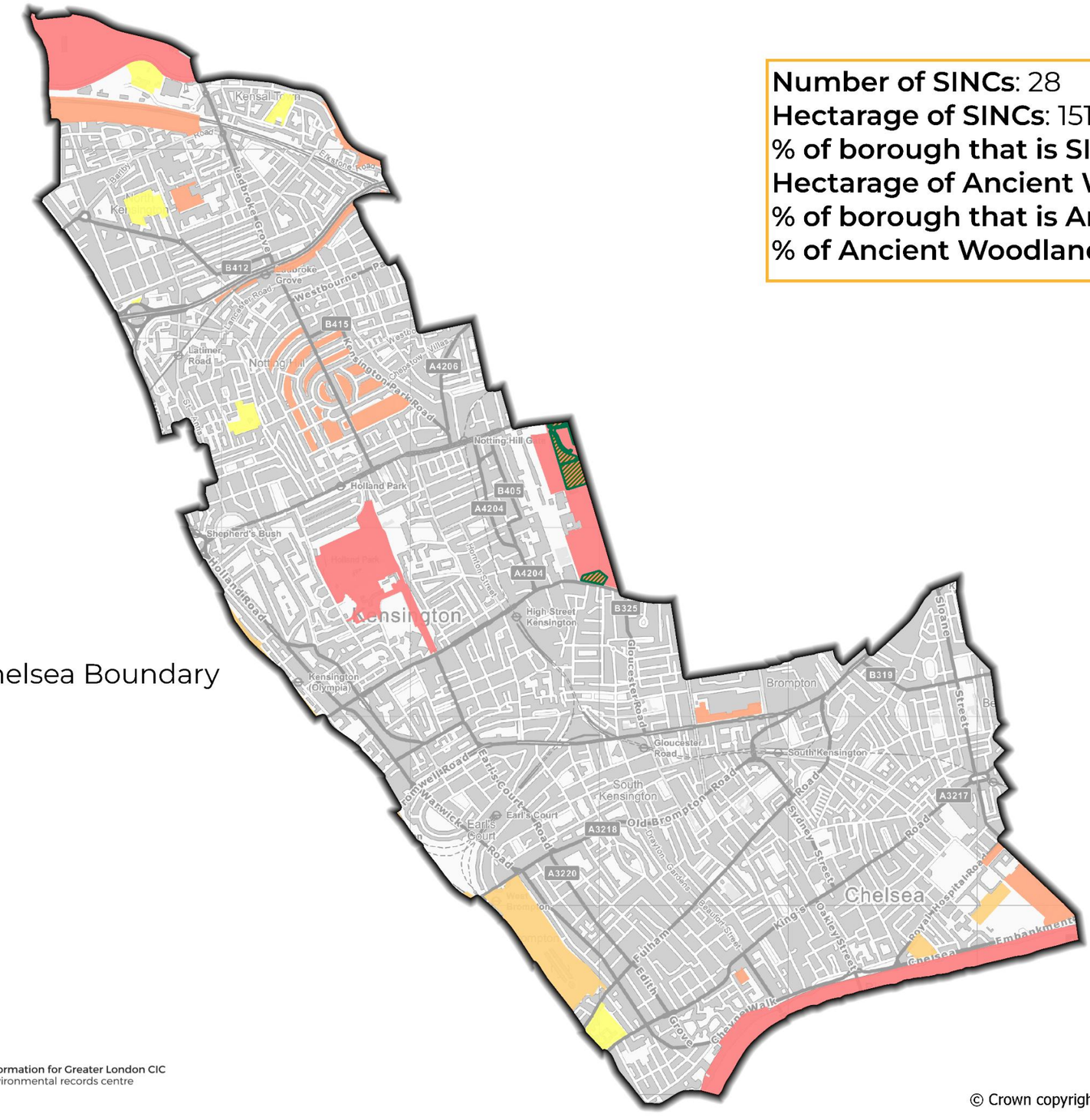


GiGL Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC
the capital's environmental records centre

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation within RB Kensington and Chelsea

Produced by Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC, in collaboration with LUC, November 2025

N



Kensington and Chelsea Boundary

Ancient Woodland

SINCs (by grade)

- Local
- Borough Grade 1
- Borough Grade 2
- Metropolitan

Number of SINCs: 28
Hectarage of SINCs: 151ha
% of borough that is SINC: 12%
Hectarage of Ancient Woodland: 4ha
% of borough that is Ancient Woodland: 0.3%
% of Ancient Woodland within SINCs: 100%

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) are London's local wildlife sites. They are split by importance for nature from local importance to metropolitan importance. GiGL manage the SINC data for London with data and inputs provided by local authorities.
Ancient Woodland is provided by Natural England under an Open Government Licence.

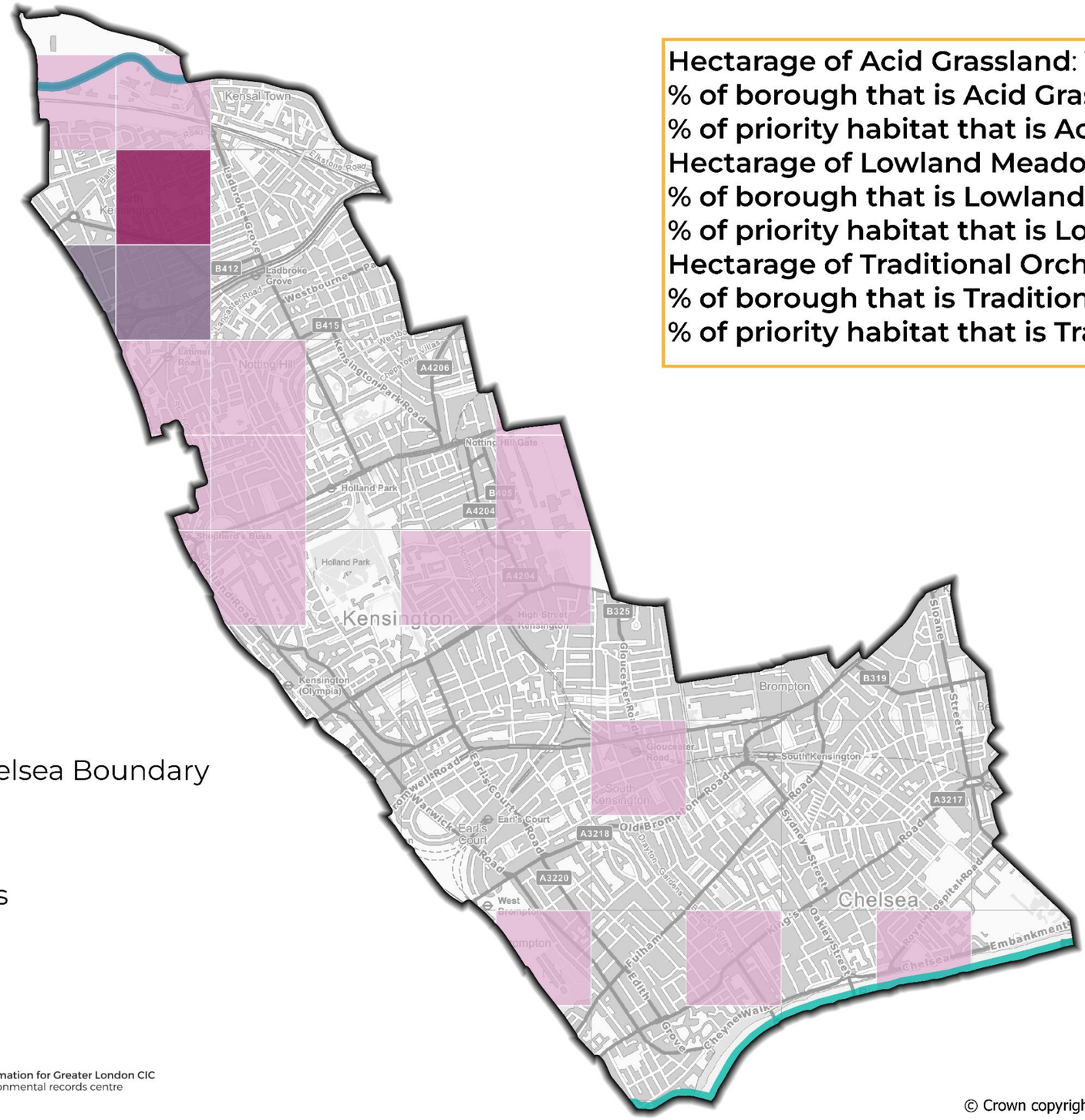
km
0.3 0 0.3 0.6 0.9 1.2

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

Priority Habitats within RB Kensington and Chelsea

Produced by Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC, in collaboration with LUC, February 2026

N



Hectarage of Acid Grassland: 1.87ha
% of borough that is Acid Grassland: 0.15%
% of priority habitat that is Acid Grassland: 90.77%
Hectarage of Lowland Meadow: 0.05ha
% of borough that is Lowland Meadow: 0.005%
% of priority habitat that is Lowland Meadow: 2.42%
Hectarage of Traditional Orchard: 0.14ha
% of borough that is Traditional Orchard: 0.01%
% of priority habitat that is Traditional Orchard: 6.80%

- Kensington and Chelsea Boundary
- Acid Grassland
- Lowland Meadows
- Traditional Orchards
- Rivers
- Canals

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

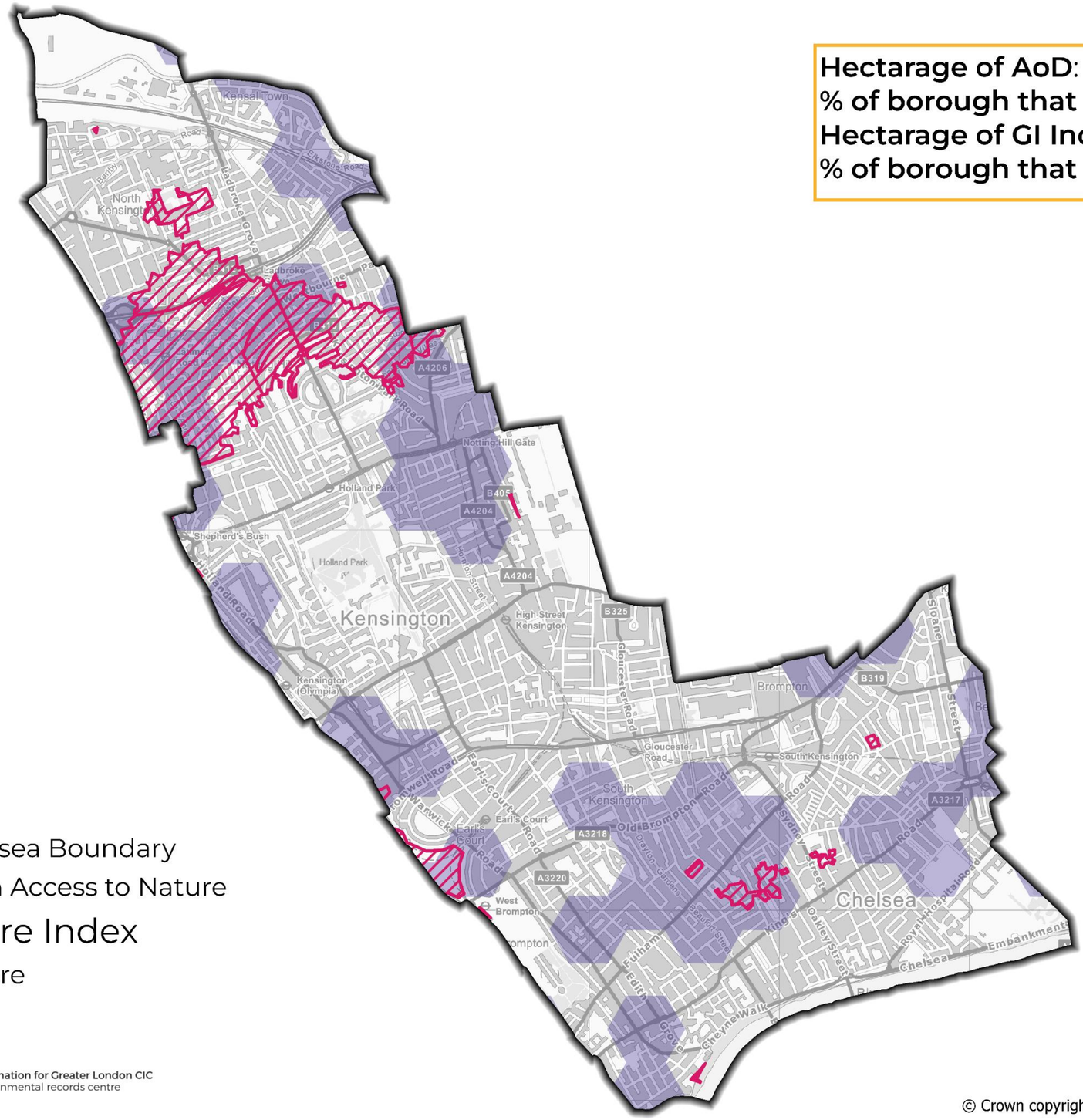
This map shows the distribution of priority habitats as 500m grid squares. Each square represents the presence of that particular habitat somewhere within the square. Habitat data are from GiGL's Habitat and Land Use (HLU) dataset. Habitat data may not be complete in all areas and rely on GiGL being sent up to date data.
Canal data are provided by the Canals and Rivers Trust and River data are provided by the Environment Agency. Both are under Open Government Licence.

km
0.3 0 0.3 0.6 0.9 1.2

Areas of Deficiency in Access to Nature within RB Kensington and Chelsea

Produced by Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC, in collaboration with LUC, November 2025

N



Hectarage of AoD: 106ha
% of borough that is within AoD: 9%
Hectarage of GI Index >0.75: 365ha
% of borough that has GI Index > 0.75: 30%

Kensington and Chelsea Boundary

Areas of Deficiency in Access to Nature

Green Infrastructure Index

> 0.75 Composite Score

This map shows the distribution of Areas of Deficiency (AoD) in Access to Nature and areas where the Green Infrastructure (GI) Index is over 0.75 meaning there is high need for green infrastructure interventions.
AoD in Access to Nature is calculated by GiGL as areas over 1km walking distance from a SINC of borough or metropolitan importance.
The GI Index is modelled by the Greater London Authority.

km
0.3 0 0.3 0.6 0.9 1.2

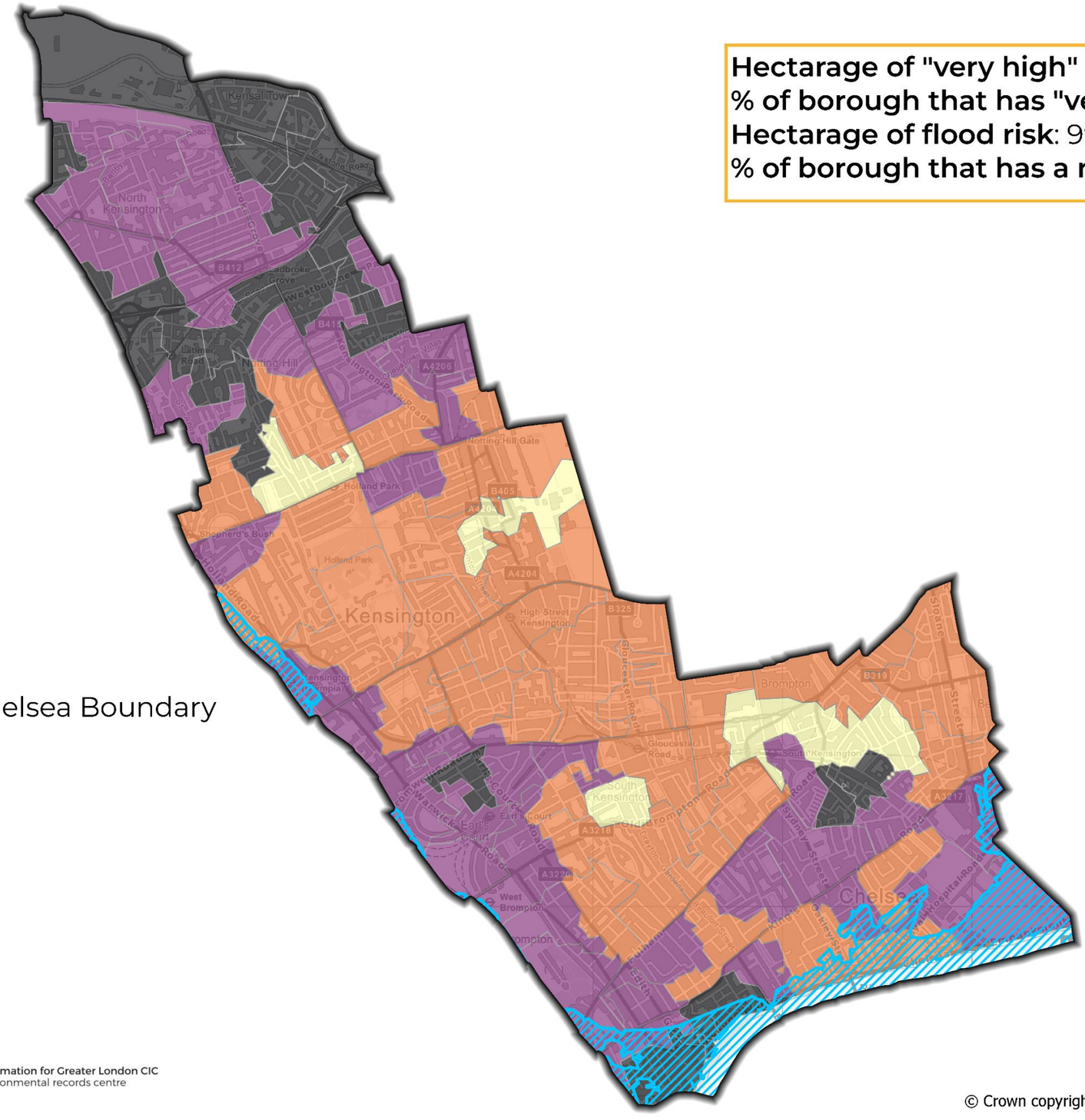
GiGL Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC
the capital's environmental records centre

Heat and Flood Risk within RB Kensington and Chelsea

Produced by Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC, in collaboration with LUC, November 2025

N

Hectarage of "very high" heat risk: 203ha
% of borough that has "very high" heat risk: 16%
Hectarage of flood risk: 99ha
% of borough that has a risk of flooding: 8%



Kensington and Chelsea Boundary

Flood Risk

Heat Risk

- Low
- Medium
- High
- Very High

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This map shows the distribution of heat and flood risk across Kensington and Chelsea.
Heat risk data are provided by the GLA's London Climate Risk Mapping under Open Government Licence.
The flood risk layer is the Environment Agency's Flood Zone 2 layer, which is their best estimate of the areas of land at risk of flooding from rivers or the sea with a 1 in 1000 (0.1%) chance of flooding each year.

km
0.3 0 0.3 0.6 0.9 1.2

Appendix B

RBKC's progress against national, regional and local targets since 2020 to date

Table B.1: National targets and progress since 2020 to date

Source	Theme	Target	Type	Notes	Progress
Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) 2023	Habitat restoration / creation	Restore/create > 500,000 hectares wildlife-rich habitat by 2042: 140,000 hectares by 2028	Quantitative	Projects like the Bee Superhighway creating 79 sites for pollinators across RBKC contribute to this target.	Ongoing
Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) 2023	Species protection	Halt species decline by 2030; increase abundance by ≥ 10 percent by 2042	Quantitative	Work by RBKC to create the Bee Superhighway and the installation of bird boxes, bug hotels and loggeries etc. contribute towards this target.	Ongoing

Source	Theme	Target	Type	Notes	Progress
Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) 2023	Protected areas	Protect 30 percent of land and sea for nature by 2030	Quantitative	12 percent of RBKC is designated as a SINC.	Ongoing
Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) 2023	Tree cover	Increase woodland and canopy to 16.5 percent by 2050	Quantitative	Tree canopy cover is estimated to be 23.26 percent within RBKC.	Exceeded
Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework	LNR Designations	1 hectare of LNR per 1,000 population.	Quantitative	RBKC has no LNRs.	Not Applicable

Table B.2: Regional targets and progress since 2020 to date

Source	Theme	Target	Type	Notes	Progress
Mayor's Environment Strategy (2018)	Green space	>50 percent of London's total area to be green space by the year 2050.	Quantitative	31.4 percent of the borough is covered by green space and a further two percent comprises blue space.	Ongoing
Mayor's Environment Strategy (2018)	Tree canopy cover	Increase the proportion of land covered by tree canopy from about 20 percent to 22 percent (roughly a 10 percent increase in canopy cover)	Quantitative	Tree canopy cover is estimated to be 23.26 percent within RBKC.	Exceeded
Mayor's Environment Strategy (2018)	Species-rich woodland	Create 20 hectares species-rich woodland by 2025; +200 hectares by 2050	Quantitative	62 hectares of deciduous woodland in RBKC and 4 hectares of ancient woodland (wood pasture and parkland)	Ongoing

Source	Theme	Target	Type	Notes	Progress
Mayor's Environment Strategy (2018)	Grassland habitat	Create over 50 hectares of flower rich grassland by 2025; +250 hectares by 2050	Quantitative	Projects like the Bee Superhighway creating 79 sites for pollinators across RBKC contribute to this target.	Ongoing
Mayor's Environment Strategy (2018)	Rivers and waterways	Restore +10 kilometres by 2025; +40 kilometres by 2050	Quantitative	Not applicable	Not applicable
Mayor's Environment Strategy (2018)	Reedbeds	Create +5 hectares by 2025; +30 hectares by 2050	Quantitative	There is an opportunity to create reedbed habitat at Cheslea Creek.	Not applicable
London Plan (2021)	Urban Greening Factor	UGF ≥ 0.4 (residential), ≥ 0.3 (commercial)	Quantitative	RBKC planning policy embeds London Plan targets through Policy GB14 in the RBKC Local Plan 2024.	Ongoing - applied in planning control

Table B.3: Local targets and progress since 2020 to date

Source	Theme		Type	Notes	Progress
Council Plan	Green Infrastructure	Continue to improve public squares and spaces, with investment in the public realm at Lots Road, Portobello Road, Bute Street and Cremorne Wharf. Alongside small local improvements in every ward over the next four years.	Qualitative	A number of SuDS and other green infrastructure measures (green wall, roofs, gardens and planters) have been installed across the borough (see Chapter 4).	Ongoing
Council Plan	Green Infrastructure	Ensure landowners at Kensal and Earl's Court prioritise green spaces in their plans and encourage landowners to include new parks in masterplans.	Qualitative	Not applicable	Ongoing
Council Plan	Habitat creation / restoration	Improve biodiversity and protect and enhance habitats across the borough, including by planting wildflower meadows in our parks and expanding our Bee Superhighway.	Qualitative	As of Dec 25, Bee Superhighway includes 79 sites.	Ongoing

Source	Theme		Type	Notes	Progress
Council Plan	Tree Cover	Plant 400 new trees across the borough to enhance our streets, estates and green spaces.	Quantitative	RBKC planted 501 trees between 21 – 25.	Completed
Council Plan	Education and Engagement	Work with local people to transform Notting Dale ward into an eco-neighbourhood by 2030, upskilling local people to secure green jobs and provide renewable energy for residents' homes, and working with residents on the Lancaster West estate to retrofit homes to help make the estate carbon neutral by 2030.	Qualitative	RBKC won Resident Engagement of the Year (2025) at the Unlock Net Zero Awards for work on their Landscape Ambassadors at Lancaster West.	Ongoing
The Green Plan	Planning	Ensure that all new development in the borough provides at least a 10 percent net gain in biodiversity from 2022 onwards.	Quantitative	Not applicable	Ongoing
The Green Plan	Strategies and Policies	Publish a 5-year plan for the protection and enhancement of the borough's biodiversity by 2021.	Qualitative	Not applicable	Completed

Source	Theme		Type	Notes	Progress
The Green Plan	Protected Areas	Increase the number of designated Local Sites that are in positive conservation management from 66 percent to 80 percent by 2027.	Quantitative	The latest figure in 2024 was 75 percent of SINCs in positive conservation management, which is an increase from 66 percent.	Ongoing
The Green Plan	Surveying and Monitoring	Implement a full review of the borough's designated Local Sites and habitats by 2022.		Not applicable	Completed
The Green Plan	Strategies and Policies	Develop a spatial plan for biodiversity through a nature recovery strategy by 2023.	Qualitative	Not applicable	
The Green Plan	Habitat creation / restoration	Deliver a Bee Superhighway including 15 new pollinator friendly schemes during 2021.	Quantitative	As of Dec 25, Bee Superhighway includes 79 sites.	Completed
Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Biodiversity Action Plan 2022 -2027	Various	The BAP sets out the borough's vision for biodiversity which will be achieved by the delivery of 84 actions. These actions are grouped into four themes: access to nature, parks and open spaces, the built environment and surveying and monitoring.	Qualitative and Quantitative	Not applicable	Ongoing

Source	Theme		Type	Notes	Progress
The Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022 – 2027	Strategies and Policies	Implement the BAP	Qualitative	Created and currently implementing the BAP from 2022 -2027	Ongoing
The Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022 – 2027	Habitat creation / restoration	Investigate the feasibility of reallocating some parking spaces to become parklets.	Quantitative	Not applicable	Ongoing
The Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022 – 2027	Access to Nature	Continue to investigate opportunities for new community kitchen garden projects.	Quantitative	RBKC has installed over 60 kitchen gardens in the borough.	Ongoing
The Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022 – 2027	Green Infrastructure	Support the delivery of SuDS, both in new developments and through retrofitting.	Quantitative	RBKC have delivered a number of SuDS in 2021 -2025 (see Chapter 4).	Ongoing
The Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022 – 2027	Access to Nature	Support schools to adopt food-growing gardens on their grounds.	Quantitative	RBKC has supported 12 schools with food growing gardens and related infrastructure.	Ongoing

Source	Theme		Type	Notes	Progress
The Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022 – 2027	Habitat creation / restoration	Continue to expand and plant fruit trees and native hedges around community kitchen gardens and in disused/ underused spaces. Plant street planters and pocket parks with a variety of plants to help capture pollution and carbon.	Quantitative	RBKC have improved over 30 ‘grot spots’ across the borough.	Ongoing
The Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022 – 2027	Access to Nature	Increase access to, and connection with, nature by identifying and addressing the barriers faced by people living and working in the borough. Reduce the inequalities in access to green space.	Quantitative	Not applicable	Ongoing
The Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022 – 2027	Habitat creation / restoration	Expand the Bee Superhighway project across the borough.	Quantitative	As of Dec 25, Bee Superhighway includes 79 sites.	Ongoing
The Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022 – 2027	Habitat creation / restoration	Install energy gardens on Tube stations, starting with North Kensington.	Quantitative	RBKC have installed two energy gardens in the borough (see Chapter 4).	Ongoing

Source	Theme		Type	Notes	Progress
The Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022 – 2027	Access to Nature	Improve the borough's parks and green spaces for wildlife and people.	Qualitative	RBKC have improved parks and green spaces throughout the borough through planting over 30,000 spring bulbs, planting trees and installing bird boxes and loggeries etc. (see Chapter 4).	Ongoing
The Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022 – 2027	Access to Nature	Work with schools and other education providers to deliver outdoor environmental education.	Quantitative	RBKC engages with over 8,500 student per annum (see Chapter 4).	Ongoing
The Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022 – 2027	Education and Engagement	Expand the conservation volunteering offer across the borough. Work with residents, partners, landowners, volunteers and visitors to help nature to thrive.	Quantitative	Over 30,000 conservation volunteer hours have been logged since 2021.	Ongoing
The Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022 – 2027	Tree canopy cover	Plant more trees across the borough.	Quantitative	RBKC council have planted 501 trees between 2021 – 2025. RBKC's current tree canopy cover is 23.26 percent, higher than adjacent London boroughs.	Ongoing

Source	Theme		Type	Notes	Progress
The Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022 – 2027	Education and Engagement	Roll out green skills training for Council staff , contractors and staff to encourage green jobs across the borough and develop a Green Skills Academy	Qualitative	Not applicable	Ongoing
The Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022 – 2027	Education and Engagement	Develop a community engagement and communication strategy to help with delivering the Climate Emergency Action Plan.	Qualitative	Not applicable	Ongoing
The Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022 – 2027	Education and Engagement	Develop communication and engagement initiatives for residents and businesses that will encourage consumers to change their habits and become more environmentally aware.	Qualitative	Not applicable	Ongoing
The Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022 – 2027	Education and Engagement	Create a borough-wide Environmental and Climate Change Coalition/Steering Group.	Qualitative	Not applicable	Ongoing
The Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022 – 2027	Education and Engagement	Develop a Green Champions network across the borough and provide climate change training for residents, community groups and local businesses.	Qualitative	Not applicable	Ongoing

Source	Theme		Type	Notes	Progress
The Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022 – 2027	Education and Engagement Funding	Seek funding opportunities to encourage climate-led and community-owned projects.	Quantitative	RBKC has been successful in winning external funding for local projects (see Chapter 6).	Ongoing
The Air Quality Action Plan 2022 – 2027	Education and Engagement	Production of combined sustainability leaflet/ booklet centred on key information and actions around the five priorities of Green Plan for residents and businesses.	Qualitative	Not applicable	Ongoing
The Air Quality Action Plan 2022 – 2027	Education and Engagement Green Infrastructure	Work with schools on installing green screens and green infrastructure - Carry out five site walkovers at schools per annum to identify opportunities to install green infrastructure.	Quantitative	RBKC has been working with schools to install green infrastructure on school sites (see Chapter 4).	Ongoing
The Air Quality Action Plan 2022 – 2027	Education and Engagement	Work with landowners on large streetscape improvements which include significant greening - Work with landowners such as Cadogan Estates and the Westway Trust to implement localised measures to improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions.		RBKC work with multiple partners to deliver biodiversity enhancements that deliver wider ecosystem service benefits (see Chapter 6).	Ongoing

Source	Theme		Type	Notes	Progress
The Air Quality Action Plan 2022 – 2027	Habitat creation / restoration Education and engagement	Future Neighbourhoods programme - Develop an eco-neighbourhood in Notting Dale through the Greater London Authority's 2030 Future Neighbourhoods programme.	Qualitative	RBKC is working on the Future Neighbourhoods programme (see Chapter 4).	Ongoing
Park Strategy 2016 – 2025	Strategies and Policies Surveying and Monitoring	Create and start implementing a long-term tree strategy, BAP, and a proactive plan for the management of the borough's SINCs.	Qualitative	RBKC Council have a BAP and tree strategy in place.	Completed.
Park Strategy 2016 – 2025	Protected Areas	Raise the quality, quantity and sustainability of SINCs and green spaces to ensure their protection as a show of best practice for other landowners.	Qualitative	75 percent of RBKCs SINCs are recorded as being in positive management.	Ongoing
Park Strategy 2016 – 2025	Green Infrastructure	Improve sustainability of parks, including improving existing buildings, and pioneering SuDS and sustainable/resilient planting where appropriate.	Qualitative	RBKC has been working with local volunteer groups to improve biodiversity within parks across the borough (see Chapter 4). A SuDS scheme has been added to Holland Park.	Ongoing
Park Strategy 2016 – 2025	Education and Engagement	Expand managed volunteer programme.	Qualitative	Not applicable	Ongoing

Source	Theme		Type	Notes	Progress
Park Strategy 2016 – 2025	Funding	Identify external sources of funds/grants/donations and apply for funds.	Quantitative	RBKC have been successful in winning funding for biodiversity enhancements across the borough (see Chapter 6).	Ongoing

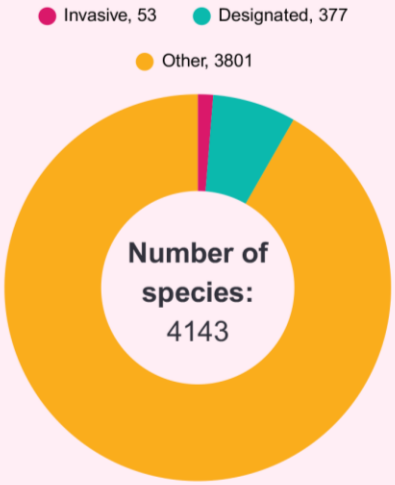
Appendix C

GiGL's Kensington & Chelsea Factsheet

GiGL's Kensington & Chelsea Data

Top 5 Contributors of Wildlife Records:

Wildlife Records



Taxon Group	Count
Amphibians	140
Birds	21137
Fish	18
Fungi	1247
Invertebrates	16922
Mammals	2071
Other (*bacteria, diatoms, etc.*)	1364
Plants	62562
Reptiles	27
Total records	**102909**

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs)

Number of SINCs: 24
SINC area: 151.5 ha, 12.2% of borough

Areas of Deficiency in Access to Nature: 106.3 ha, 8.6% of borough

Habitats

Category	Hectares	% of borough area
Gardens	215.4	17.4%
Natural Habitat	179.5	14.5%
Woodland	85.7	6.9%
Grassland	85.0	6.9%
Priority habitats	1.8	0.1%

Open Space

Number of open spaces: 385
Open space area: 244 ha, 19.7% of borough

Number of Public Open Spaces: 122
POS area: 91.3 ha, 7.4% of borough

Click the links to find out more...

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation | Areas of Deficiency in Access to Nature
Species | London Invasive Species | Habitats | Priority Habitats | Open Spaces and POS

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