

REDINGTON FROGNAL NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

Camden Biodiversity Strategy – Joint Response from Redington Frogнал Neighbourhood Forum and Redington Frogнал Association

Strategy

This should include a commitment by Camden to engage in nature-based solutions to address climate change, as adopted by:

- Greater Manchester eg:
 - My Back Yard - reviewing the importance of domestic gardens
 - IGNITION: Innovative Financing and Delivery of Climate Solutions in Greater Manchester - use of green and blue infrastructure to tackle climate-related challenges;
 - Living Laboratory part of the Urban Laboratory of Europe (Salford University);
- TCPA: Planning for the Environment and Resource Efficiency in European Cities and Towns (PERFECT).

Access to Nature

Proposed objective: Ensure Camden's green and natural spaces are inclusive and welcoming and increase opportunities for Camden's residents to experience and learn about the natural environment through volunteering, engagement, access and communication.

The objective should be to create new areas of nature, rather than to rely on existing and over-used areas. For example, the 3.2 sq. km of Hampstead Heath received up to 15 million visitors (and, maybe, 10 million dogs) during 2020. This is more than the number of visitors to the Peak District covering 1,438 sq km. Not surprisingly, usage intensity has caused a 40% reduction in the number of bird species on the Heath and the complete eradication of ground nesting birds.

Further increasing usage intensity if not a sustainable objective. Instead of incentivising further damage the natural world, Camden must invest in biodiversity and create new areas of natural habitat in areas of deficiency, including through Site Allocations, Murphy's Yard and the O2 Centre.

Greening the Grey

Proposed objective: Achieve net gain in biodiversity through planning decisions that are supported by policy and guidance, and identify and deliver opportunities to increase biodiversity in urban areas.

The requirement to achieve a net gain in biodiversity should be incorporated into Camden's Local Plan. Actions could range from a hanging basket or a bird brick to the removal of a section of impermeable hard surface or a wildlife hedge.

Camden should introduce a borough-wide Article 4 direction to remove permitted development rights to park in front gardens and convert gardens to car parks and car ports. Opportunities for depaving should also be sought.

Habitats

Proposed objective: Maintain and improve priority habitats and increase the area of species-rich grassland, woodland and reedbed.

It is essential to create new areas of habitat and not simply maintain areas. The creation of new habitat should be an integral part of the planning process. Targets should be set for additional areas of natural water

features, eg wildlife ponds, daylighted rivers, and consideration should be given to setting a target for the creation of new areas of acid grassland.

Areas of amenity grass should incorporate native hedging, trees, areas of wildflowers, swales, rills, retention basins, wildlife ponds and wetlands / retention basins, as well as wildlife or habitat piles .

Camden should support the work of charities such as No Insectinction, Buglife, Plant Life and the Wildlife Gardening Forum. A B-line should be created across Camden

Use of artificial fertilisers and pesticides should cease (other than for invasive species, such as Japanese knotweed) and the environmentally harmful pollarding policy should be reviewed to maximise the value of leaves to insects and wildlife.

The use of leaf blowers should be prohibited throughout the borough, due to the pollutants and fine particulates emitted and the harm caused to minibeasts, which do not have time to flee. This is recognised in Germany:

<https://www.independent.co.uk/climate-change/news/leaf-blowers-insect-noise-pollution-germany-gardening-a9208366.html>

Designated Sites

Proposed objective: Protect, maintain and enhance Camden's designated sites, buffer them and make the network more resilient through strengthened connectivity, and increase the proportion of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation managed for biodiversity.

The objective should be to increase the area of designated sites and strengthen the [weak] protection by converting from SINC to LGS designation, wherever possible. These could be augmented by the creation of pocket parks (as proposed for Oxford Street) and areas of SuDS planting / bioretention areas to attenuate surface water runoff and trap silts and pollutants. Other SuDS measures should include biodiverse living roofs, permeable paving and living walls.

Targets should additionally be set for planted traffic calming and landscaping streets through the use of trees and shrubs to alleviate the urban heat island effect and also to provide habitat for wildlife.

The aim should be to link habitats through the provision of stepping stones or as part of a green / blue corridor and help maintain and build ecological function.

Parks and Green Spaces

Proposed objective: Manage Camden's parks and green spaces to maximise opportunities for space for nature alongside space for people, and continue to provide an increase in inclusive and welcoming areas for people to enjoy wildlife and for wildlife to thrive.

Camden should set targets to create more parks and green spaces for the nature-deprived areas in the south and east of the borough.

Incorporate native hedging, trees, areas of wildflowers, swales, rills, retention basins, wildlife ponds and wetlands / retention basins, as well as wildlife or habitat piles. Create some fenced-off dog-free areas to protect wildlife.

Cease use of artificial fertilisers and pesticides (other than for invasive species, such as Japanese knotweed).

Species

Proposed objective: Monitor and increase populations of key priority species through conservation action.

It is likely that many of the species recordings relate to land that is managed by City of London or the Canal and Riverside Trust. The list of species should be revised to reflect those found on land managed by Camden

or in private gardens. Then, targets can be set to increase habitat provision to support these and other species, including through the establishment of B lines (in association with Bug Life) and nature corridors across Camden.

Trees

Proposed objective: Increase tree canopy cover and promote tree species diversity. Make planting decisions that are informed by their potential to support wildlife, and resist the loss of ancient and veteran trees.

Camden's Biodiversity Strategy and Local Plan should support the objective to make planting decisions that are informed by their potential to support wildlife, and resist the loss of ancient and veteran trees.

Camden should place far greater emphasis on the retention of existing trees and allowing them to grow to maturity. This could be facilitated by:

- publishing inventories of:
 - ancient and veteran trees
 - trees with a high potential to wildlife
- a major increase in the number of TPOs served, including on the basis of conservation area character
- no felling of trees with a high value to wildlife to facilitate development
- accurate data to establish a canopy cover time series for trees in private gardens and on land managed by Camden, taking account of:
 - the felling of over 500 mature trees (estimated) in Camden by HS2, to be compensated by the planting of c. 150 saplings (estimate)
 - felling of trees all trees to the rear of Constantine Road by Network Rail
 - pollarding of an average of 1,747 trees per year by Camden (from FoI response).

Redington Frogna! Neighbourhood Forum

<https://www.redfrogforum.org>

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