

**Barnet's Local Plan**  
**Examination in Public**  
**Technical Paper on Biodiversity**  
**April 2022**

## **1.0 Executive Summary**

1.1 This Technical Paper sets out the manner in which the new Barnet Local Plan will identify, map and safeguard the wildlife rich habitats across the Borough. The Paper also addresses how the Plan promotes the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species.

## **2.0 Evidence**

2.1 The formal definition of biodiversity taken from the 'Convention on Biological Diversity' is 'the Variability among living organisms from all sources including terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems, and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.' This is recognised in Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006. Maintaining the quality of the environment whilst delivering the levels of forecast growth is a key challenge for Barnet. Green spaces and low density suburban development form an important element of Barnet's character. There is a challenge in protecting and enhancing this space and character.

2.2 In meeting this challenge of maintaining the greener qualities of Barnet the Local Plan's Vision highlights that we will get 'the best out of our natural environment through expanding and improving access to green and blue infrastructure, delivering biodiversity net gain and restoring the Borough's rivers to the benefit of people and wildlife whilst protecting our communities from flooding.' The Local Plan's Vision reflects the cross-cutting themes of Barnet's Growth Strategy (2019-2030) – in particular 'a great borough to live in and visit'.

2.3 A suite of key objectives help to deliver the Local Plan Vision. Of particular relevance to Biodiversity is

- To integrate the natural environment into the urban landscape, improving access to, and enhancing the contribution of biodiversity, Green Belt, Metropolitan Open Land and green and blue infrastructure.

2.4 The Local Plan delivers a strategy for meeting Barnet's challenges. The overarching spatial strategy in Policy BSS01 captures the aspirations for Barnet's Plan Period – 2021 to 2036 and sets the framework for improving green infrastructure and mitigating climate change which is reflected in the policy suite of the CDH07 Amenity Space and Landscaping and Chapter 10 Environment and Climate Change. This includes Policy ECC06 on Biodiversity. Other policy considerations are:

- The All London Green Grid (ALGG) (EB\_GI\_05) which is a policy framework developed by the Mayor of London to promote the design and delivery of 'green infrastructure' across London, for the benefit of people and wildlife.
- The London Plan 2021 has introduced the Urban Greening Factor as a generic model to determine the appropriate provision of urban greening in new major developments. Further details are set out in London Plan Policy G5. It is expected that developers will combine the requirements of the Urban Greening Factor with the BNG. For instance, if planting is to be provided for the Urban Greening Factor, that it will be of benefit to local wildlife and not simply ornamental.
- The Green Infrastructure SPD (EB\_GI\_10) will provide detail on how to deliver multifunctional green infrastructure including best practice for Sustainable Drainage Systems, give advice on achieving biodiversity net gain and the Urban Greening Factor.

### **3.0 Components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks**

- 3.1 Barnet is one of the greenest boroughs in London. Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land covers a third of the Borough and makes a major contribution to quality of life. Barnet has a wide range of different habitats that have been recognised as Sites of Importance to Nature Conservation (SINCs) including: Woodland; Grassland/Acid Grassland/ Pastures and Meadows; Streams, lakes and ponds; Wetlands and Bogs; and Ancient Hedgerows. In addition, it contains the Welsh Harp / Brent Reservoir – this is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Significance (SSSI) and serves as an important refuge and breeding site for waterfowl and other birds.
- 3.2 Within this variety 65 sites other than the SSSI have been identified as being of importance to nature conservation (SINCs). These sites are listed in Table 22 and include 8 sites of Metropolitan Importance, with the remainder being of importance to the Borough, or locally to the area in which they are situated.

#### Mapping and Safeguarding

- 3.3 All SINCs within the Borough are mapped on Barnet's existing Proposals Map (Core\_04) (This information will be carried over to the new Polices map that supports the new Local Plan. Policy ECC06 Biodiversity part (a) provides the policy protection for these sites.

### **4.0 Promoting the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species.**

- 4.1 With regards to the promotion of conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species. Policy ECC06 requires the protection of priority habitats and species. The policy also provides for cooperating with London Wildlife Trust and the Brent Catchment Partnership to improve and enhance biodiversity in Barnet.
- 4.2 The Environment Act 2021 requires the development of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) by Responsible Authorities. Section 105 of the Act names the Mayor of London as a Responsible Authority in relation to the LNRS. The Mayor will

therefore work with London Boroughs as well as environment and nature interest groups across London to produce the London LNRS.

- 4.3 The LNRS will contain a statement of biodiversity priorities for the area and a habitat map. The GLA maps habitats and species for London through Greenspace Information for Greater London ( <https://www.qigl.org.uk/> ). Barnet provides information to and is able to extract information from this data source on habitats and species across Barnet. This data helps inform planning decision making with regards to proposals affecting habitats and species for Barnet.
- 4.4 Once the London LNRS is in place then Barnet will prepare a Local Nature Recovery Network which will provide more detail on the ecological networks across the Borough and how they can be enhanced. Together these documents will then assist Barnet and London in meeting the expectations of the 25 Year Environment Plan and the Environment Act 2021. As an outer London borough Barnet will work with Hertsmere Borough Council (HBC) and Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) to ensure that the Nature Recovery Network extends beyond London. Barnet highlights the importance of The Watling Chase Community Forest in the draft Local Plan (para 10.23.2) and is a key partner in the development of the Hertfordshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (which is still being drafted). This partnership work will be set out in the Statement of Common Ground between Barnet, HBC, and HCC.
- 4.5 Policy ECC06 supports the requirements of the Environment Act by requiring the uplift in Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). Through a Proposed Modification this will be set as a minimum of 10% within Policy ECC06.

## **5.0 Conformity with the London Plan and NPPF**

- 5.1 The Regulation 19 Draft Barnet Local Plan Table 22 meets the requirements set out in the NPPF paragraphs 174 and 175 and the Mayor’s Environment Strategy and London Plan Policy G6 Biodiversity. Further information on habitats, protected species and their conservation and restoration is found in documents outside the Local Plan and are often part of programmes that go beyond the reach of the Local Plan. The Local Plan also provides for the Environment Act, although many of the actions will be brought forward outside the jurisdiction of the Local Plan the policy framework provides support where this is required.