



ISLINGTON

Islington Council Biodiversity Action Plan 2020 to 2025

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What is a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)?

- A Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) is an internationally recognised template for protecting and restoring the natural environment. The original impetus for these plans derives from the 1992 Rio Convention on Biological Diversity.
- There is a UK BAP and a London BAP and each London borough aims to have its own BAP.
- The new Islington BAP is the third Biodiversity Action Plan for Islington and covers the period 2020 to 2025.
- BAPs are partnership documents and are not just about what the Council is doing. The success of the BAP is dependent on us working together with other organisations and the wider community.



Why is biodiversity important?

For health and well-being: Access to nature can improve people's mental and physical health

For young people: Contact with nature has been shown to improve children's concentration, confidence and behaviour.

Ecosystem services: e.g. pollination. Around 80 percent of all flowering plant species world-wide are pollinated by animals, mainly insects.

Biodiversity and economics: Londoners avoid £950 million per year in health costs due to public green space.

Climate change: Vegetation has been shown to reduce the effects of raised urban temperatures. Street trees contribute to the capture and storage of CO₂ and improvement of air quality.



Key priorities in Islington's BAP

2019 UN report - an unprecedented loss of species over the past 50 years. Islington's new Biodiversity Action Plan outlines how we in Islington will contribute to the world-wide effort to protect biodiversity for future generations.

The key priorities in the Islington BAP are:

- To conserve existing habitats, biodiversity features and species.
- To enhance and improve the condition of existing areas of habitat.
- To create new habitats or increase the extent of existing habitat or range of species through restoration or expansion.
- To engage the whole community in reducing environmental inequality by increasing access to green spaces for people and wildlife, providing the opportunity to learn about, protect and promote Islington's biodiversity.

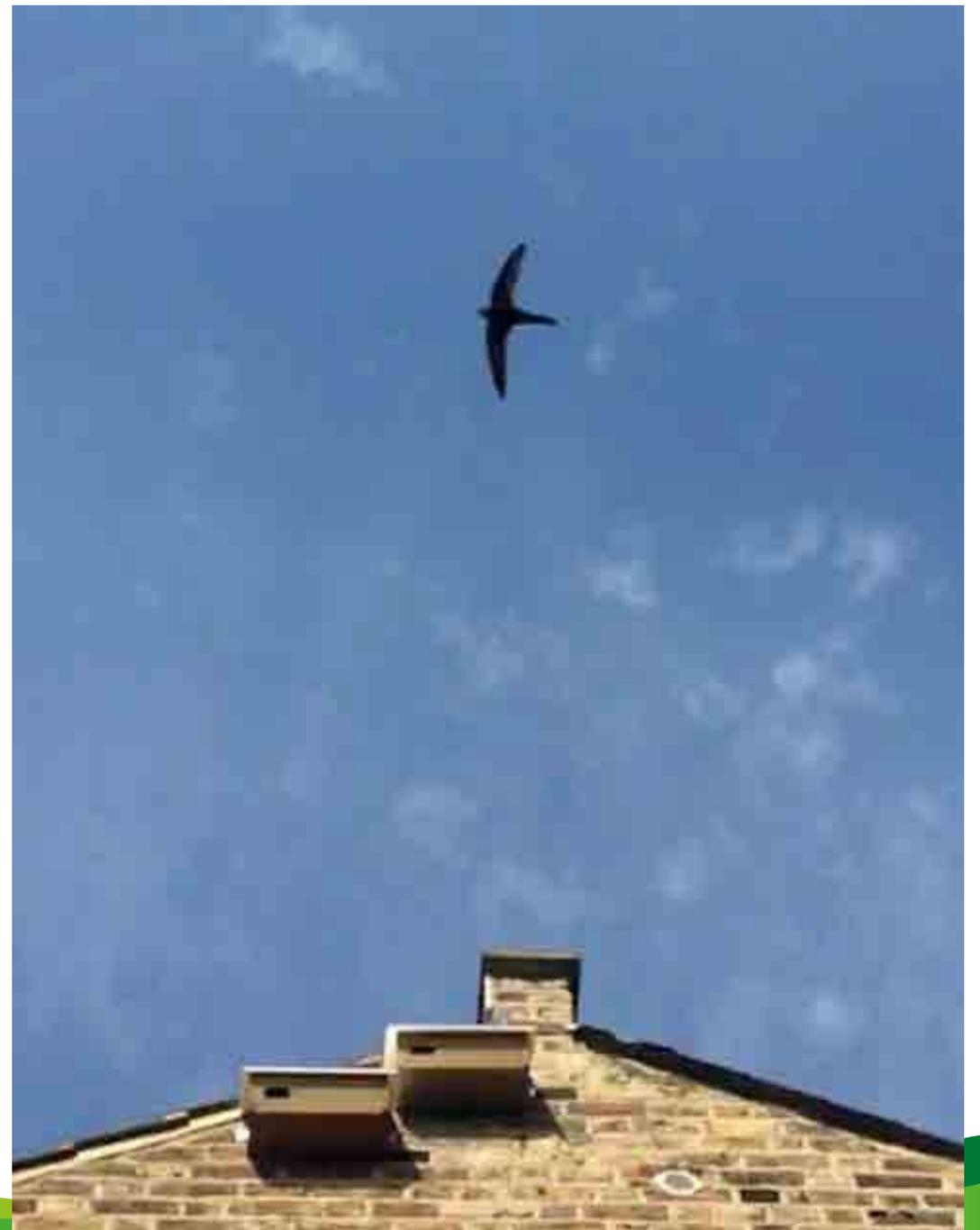


Four Action Plans:

Instead of the traditional Habitat and Species Action Plans, we have identified four broad themes to form the new BAP Action Plans.

These are:

- The Built Environment
- Parks and Urban Green Spaces
- Designated Sites
- Access to Nature



The Built Environment Action Plan

This plan includes actions on the following areas:

- Maintaining and enhancing street trees.
- Maximising biodiversity gains from new developments.
- Requiring the installation of green roofs on new developments and new Council buildings
- Encourage sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDs)
- Identifying opportunities to green streets through the creation of pocket parks and other improvements.



Parks and Urban Green Spaces Action Plan

Islington has the smallest amount of open space per head of population of any London borough. However it has the second highest number of parks.

This plan includes actions on the following areas:

- Protect, enhance or create new wildlife habitats in parks and urban green spaces, e.g. housing estates.
- Protect and enhance trees in parks and open spaces.
- Ensure existing wildlife habitats are managed effectively.
- Collate species data to help to monitor changes.
- Protect and enhance features for London BAP priority species, e.g. house sparrows, bats, bees, swifts.



Designated Sites Action Plan

Sites known as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) have been designated for their wildlife value by the local authority. In Islington there are currently 64 SINCs with 3 additional SINCs proposed in the new Local Plan (2019).

This plan includes actions on the following areas:

- Review SINC data held by the Council to ensure that it is accurate and up to date.
- Strengthen the SINC network through the adoption of new and upgraded SINCs.
- Liaise with Network Rail on the protection of railside SINCs.
- Action to reduce Areas of Deficiency in Access to Nature.



Access to Nature Action Plan

This plan includes actions on the following areas:

- Raise awareness of biodiversity through public events
- Enable people from under-represented groups (e.g. BAME groups, disabled people, young people) to take part in biodiversity activities.
- Encourage and support community action for wildlife e.g. the take-up of unloved spaces.
- Provide volunteering opportunities.
- Aim to provide every child in Islington with the opportunity to experience high quality outdoor environmental education.
- Encourage action for biodiversity on housing estates.
- Provide residents with guidance on wildlife gardening.
- Enable people to derive the health and well-being benefits of contact with nature.



Online Consultation

- We consulted on the BAP from 1st April to 31st July.
- 175 responses were received.
- Strong support in favour of the BAP .
- As a result of the feedback, some changes were made to the final BAP.
- The BAP was adopted by Executive in September 2020.
- The final document is now available on the Council's website:

<https://www.islington.gov.uk/sports-parks-and-trees/parks-and-green-space/biodiversity-action-plan-2020-to-2025>



Examples of exciting new projects in progress that will benefit biodiversity:

- The Council has commissioned Octopus Community Network to develop a Strategy and Action Plan for Community Gardening and Food Growing. This will map out existing community growing sites, identify possible new spaces for food growing; recommend a code of good practice for the support of community gardens and help plan how to promote participation among residents.
- Islington and Camden: Our Parks, Our People, Our Heritage. This is a new funding bid to develop a partnership project across the two boroughs that will deliver green space benefits for both people and wildlife. The project involves five voluntary sector partners.
- An ambitious new blub planting project on housing estates across the borough.



- Freeling Street Pocket Park Project - the transformation of a hard landscaped area into a new green space, designed with community participation.
- The Parks for Health Project - delivering new community gardening and volunteering opportunities.
- New River – a capital spend project to improve this important site for biodiversity.
- New leaflet on birds in Islington parks

