

Committee(s): Planning and Transportation – For Recommendation Open Spaces & City Gardens Committee – For Decision	Dated: 29th June 13th July
Subject: Biodiversity Action Plan Consultation Response and Adoption Report	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	2,5,11 & 12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	£
What is the source of Funding?	
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N
Report of: Colin Buttery, Director Open Spaces	
Report author: Jake Tibbetts, City Gardens Manager	

Summary

This report sets out the response to the consultation carried out on the Draft City of London Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) 2021-2026 that was presented to Planning and Transportation on 30th March and Open Spaces and City Gardens committee on 27th April.

The BAP aims to ensure that the City meets its obligations towards the protection and enhancement of biodiversity.

A timetable for the production of the BAP was agreed by Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee in December 2020. A five week consultation process was held during May, the response to which can be seen in appendix A. This response helped form the draft BAP presented to committee in appendix B.

Members are asked to agree to the attached draft as the final text for the new City of London Corporation’s Biodiversity Action Plan (2021-26). Following agreement, the City Gardens team will develop a final document with photos and illustrations to accompany the text in preparation for an official launch.

This report is supported by the Planning and Transportation Committee for onward approval to the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee.

Recommendations

- i) Members of the Planning and Transportation committee are asked to:
 - Recommend for onward approval to the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee, the text of the final draft Biodiversity Action Plan 2021/2026 for

adoption, subject to the incorporation of any changes proposed by this Committee.

- ii) Members of the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee are asked to:
- Approve the text of the final draft document for adoption.

Main Report

Background

1. The City of London produced its first Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) in 2003 which was subsequently updated in 2010, 2012 and 2016. The BAP covers the geographical area of the Square Mile. Sites outside of the City are covered by the local authorities in which they are located.
2. Open Spaces committee agreed the following timetable for the development of the BAP in December 2020.

DATES	ACTION/ EVENT
2nd Dec	Present Timetable to Committee
17th Dec	First Draft of Biodiversity Action Plan circulated to Biodiversity Partnership Group
14th Jan	City of London Biodiversity Group - Consultation meeting
15th -30th Jan	Second Draft of Biodiversity Action Plan produced
1st -15th Feb 2021	Second draft circulated to Partnership Group for Further comments
8th Feb	Second draft presented to Open Spaces Committee
16th Feb -15th Mar	Third Draft of Biodiversity Action Plan Produced
30th March	Third Draft of Biodiversity Action Plan presented to Planning & Transportation Committee
27th April	Open Spaces Committee to sign off third draft of Biodiversity Action Plan
3rd May -31st May	Public Consultation
1st June - 15th June	Response to Public Consultation and Final draft Produced
29th June	Final draft of Biodiversity Action Plan presented to Planning & Transportation Committee for Information
13th July	Final draft of Biodiversity Action Plan presented to Open Spaces Committee for sign off
TBC	Launch

Current Position

3. In line with the above timetable the draft was subject to a consultation process that ran from the 3rd May and was extended to the 7th June.

The consultation was promoted through:

- The Biodiversity Action Plan Partnership Group
- A social media campaign
- City of London website
- City AM, City Matters, London Post and Horticulture Week
- Consultation poster displayed in City Gardens noticeboards
- The consultation documents were available in hard copy at libraries

4. An online form was produced which respondents were asked to complete.
5. The form was divided into nine sections, these largely reflected the structure of the biodiversity action plan:
 1. About You
 2. Biodiversity in the Square Mile and Beyond
 3. Target species
 4. Biodiversity Action Plan Themes
 5. Action Plan 1: Open space and habitat management
 6. Action Plan 2: The built environment
 7. Action Plan 3: Education and community engagement
 8. Action Plan 4: Data collection, surveys and monitoring
 9. Green infrastructure and biodiversity in the Square Mile
6. For sections 3-9 that related directly to the biodiversity action plan questions were asked to gauge levels of support of the draft document and each had an open text field for further comments.
7. The Consultation Statement document provides detail of the results of the consultation, it contains details all of the responses as well as changes that have been incorporated as a result of the consultation. This document can be found in appendix A.
8. The consultation gathered 83 responses, from residents, workers and visitors. It clearly demonstrated support for the document. As can be seen by the results to the questions regarding the documents four main themes and the corresponding action plans:
 - Do you agree that the themes that have been chosen for the BAP
73% responding "They are about right", with 19% responding "others should be considered"
 - Action Plan 1 : Open space habitat management
67% responding "Generally agree", with 22% responding "do not go far enough"
 - Action Plan 2 : The built environment
62% responding "Generally agree", with 30% responding "do not far enough"

- Action Plan 3 : Education and community engagement
78% responding “Generally agree”, with 11% responding “do not far enough”
 - Action Plan 4 : Data collection, surveys and monitoring
74% responding “Generally agree”, with 14% responding “do not far enough”
9. The response to the list of Target Species demonstrated less support than the other areas. However; 47% responded that the list was either “about right” (40%) or was “too extensive” (7%) with 45% responding that it “should be extended”.
10. Apart from a new action being added, no significant changes have been made following the consultation.

Strategic implications

11. The BAP ensures that a key aim of Corporate Plan; *‘To Shape Outstanding Environments’* is realised as well as the priorities;
- *We have clear air, land and water and a thriving sustainable natural environment*
 - *Businesses are trusted and socially and environmentally responsible.*
 - *Our spaces are secure, resilient and well-maintained*
12. Under the Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 states that “Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity’.
13. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that local planning authorities should set out a strategic approach to their Local Plans by planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks for biodiversity and green infrastructure.
14. The London Environment Strategy 2018 of which conserving and enhancing wildlife and natural habitats is a key element of the strategy, which recognises that important social, health and economic benefits result from greening the city.
15. The London Plan 2021 Policy G6: Biodiversity and access to nature reads:
- Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) should be protected.
- Boroughs, in developing Development Plans, should:
- 1) use up-to-date information about the natural environment and the relevant procedures to identify SINCs and ecological corridors to identify coherent ecological networks

- 2) identify areas of deficiency in access to nature (i.e. areas that are more than 1km walking distance from an accessible Metropolitan or Borough SINC) and seek opportunities to address them
- 3) support the protection and conservation of priority species and habitats that sit outside the SINC network, and promote opportunities for enhancing them using Biodiversity Action Plans
- 4) seek opportunities to create other habitats, or features such as artificial nest sites, that are of particular relevance and benefit in an urban context
- 5) ensure designated sites of European or national nature conservation importance are clearly identified and impacts assessed in accordance with legislative requirements.

16. The Proposed Submission Draft City Plan 2036 Policy OS3: Biodiversity reads:

Development should aim to secure net gains for biodiversity where possible by incorporating measures to enhance biodiversity, including:

- retention and enhancement of habitats within Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs), including the River Thames
- measures recommended in the City of London Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) in relation to particular species or habitats
- green roofs and walls, gardens and terraces, soft landscaping and trees
- green corridors and biodiversity links
- wildlife-friendly features, such as nesting or roosting boxes a planting mix and variation in vegetation types to encourage biodiversity
- planting which will be resilient to a range of climate conditions, with a high proportion of native plants
- a lighting scheme designed to minimise impacts on biodiversity.

17. The BAP is also integral to the Climate Action Strategy includes the following actions:

- *Introduce new land management practices across our open spaces aiming to maximise their ability to remove carbon, and optimise their biodiversity and resilience value*
- *Advocate the importance of green spaces and urban greening as natural carbon sinks, and their contribution to biodiversity and overall wellbeing*
- *Enhance greening and biodiversity across our public realm and open spaces*

Financial implications

18. None

Resource implications

19. The development of the BAP document will be resourced by City Gardens staff, internal partnership members and relevant support services. £3k has been secured to pay for the final production of the document.

Legal implications

20. There would be risk of non-compliance of policy should the City not have an up to date BAP in place. Any BAP should meet the policy requirements as set out above.

Risk implications

21. There is a reputational and legal risk of not having a current BAP as the City has obligations towards the protection and enhancement of biodiversity.

Equalities implications

22. None

Climate implications

23. It is widely recognised that Biodiversity and Climate change are interconnected. Protecting and restoring ecosystems can help us reduce the extent of climate change and cope with its impact. The BAP will support the delivery of the City's Climate Action Strategy.

Security implications

24. None

Conclusion

25. A new BAP for the City is necessary to ensure that we continue to meet our legal and moral duties, it is also required to ensure that we meet our other strategic commitments. The current draft has been formed as a result of a careful process of internal discussions, development with the BAP partnership Group and external consultation. The public consultation has demonstrated support for the current draft. It is recommended that the attached draft is adopted as the new Biodiversity Action Plan 2021-26

Appendices

Appendix A – Draft City of London Biodiversity Action Plan 2021-2026 Consultation Statement

Appendix B – Draft City of London Biodiversity Action Plan 2021-2026

Jake Tibbetts

City Gardens Manager – Open Spaces Department

T: 020 7 374 4152

E: jake.tibbetts@cityoflondon.gov.uk