

Natural Environment Division Strategy

Strategy Name: Nature Conservation and Resilience	Date: 20/11/2023
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Introduction and context <p>The Corporation of London manages over 11,000 acres of stunning open spaces including 58,000 ancient trees, six Sites of Special Scientific Interest and three National Nature Reserves. These irreplaceable open spaces deliver a wide range of ‘ecosystem services’ such as timber, food, biodiversity, carbon capture and storage, flood mitigation, air purification, and health and wellbeing benefits. The total economic value of these benefits is estimated at £30-£40 million per year. The sites capture thousands of tonnes of carbon and attract an estimated 25 million visitors annually.</p> <p>The Natural Environment Division forms part of the City of London Corporation’s Environment Department. We manage nine Charities, through which our open spaces are governed and whose objects reflect our vision. Our management of open spaces and assets supports the role of London as a world-class city. We work with local authorities, statutory and government agencies, special interest groups, schools, businesses, community groups, residents and people who are not typically represented. By reaching out to these wider communities, we seek to ensure our long-term relevance.</p> <p>The Natural Environment Strategies set out the City of London Corporation’s strategic approach to our managed open spaces, assets, and activities. They build upon over 150 years of stewardship of open spaces across London and the South-East. They explain the importance of the natural environment to the achievement of economic, societal, and environmental outcomes described in our Corporate Plan 2024-29. They describe why we all need to act now and our proposed approach during the next five years. The Strategies describe our objectives for the natural environment and the measures by which we will assess our performance against objectives. The Strategies will inform our business plans and management plans and set out how our activities will align with corporate and regional priorities and policies.</p> Purpose We will protect and enhance the special biodiversity and habitats of our open spaces, securing their resilience through a time of significant change and providing the evidence of the impact of the actions we take. Key Themes The Nature Conservation and Resilience Strategy has three key themes informing our work to deliver the City of London Corporation’s response to the biodiversity and climate crises through its open spaces: Biodiversity: To protect and enhance the biodiversity of our open spaces	

Resilience and Adaptation: To increase the resilience of our open spaces within a wider, interconnected natural landscape

Evidence: To establish a natural capital based management approach across our open spaces

Links to Corporate Plan

The Nature Conservation and Resilience Strategy support three of the six outcomes in the Corporate Plan 2024-29 (Draft). These are:

- People of all ages and backgrounds are proud of their city and feel they belong. Communities are involved co-creating fair and innovative outcomes and we show our appreciation for their contributions.
- The City of London Corporation is a leader in driving the success of London as a whole, through our stewardship of public goods, through our major capital investment into the capital’s civic fabric, and through our protection and enhancement of 11,000 acres of amazing open spaces and our unique and iconic assets.
- People and businesses understand and follow our example as leaders in striving for equity, focussing on economic, social and environmental principles in our operations and protecting our environment for future generations.

Key themes

Measures

Theme 1: To protect and enhance the biodiversity of our open spaces

Measure 1:
Management plans in

<p>Theme 1, Objective 1: Management plans are in place to ensure that their biodiversity and natural assets are conserved, engaged with stakeholders, and are implemented</p> <p>Theme 1, Objective 2: SSSI condition improvement and Species Recovery plans are in place for all our sites</p> <p>Theme 1, Objective 3: Species records and other biological data are regularly gathered and professionally managed</p> <p>Theme 1, Objective 4: Community support and engagement in the conservation of our open spaces is increased</p>	<p>place for all sites with annual reporting on progress</p> <p>Measure 2: SSSI improvement and species recovery plans in place for key habitats and species</p> <p>Measure 3: A central NED repository for biological reports is established</p> <p>Measure 4: Biological survey records uploaded onto national recording databases within 12 months of collection.</p> <p>Measure 5: Volunteer involvement in biodiversity monitoring and habitat restoration</p>
<p>Theme 2: To increase the resilience of our open spaces within a wider, interconnected natural landscape</p> <p>Theme 2, Objective 1: Greater and more effective engagement with the planning system to influence the protection of our open spaces in the most relevant way</p> <p>Theme 2, Objective 2: Landscape connectivity around our open spaces is enhanced through collaboration with other organisations and stakeholders</p> <p>Theme 2, Objective 3: Reduced visitor impact on priority habitats and other important sites through sustainable visitor and mitigation strategies being in place and implemented</p> <p>Theme 2, Objective 4: Damaging introduced species monitored and kept under control</p> <p>Theme 2, Objective 5: Climate resilience plans prepared for each open space</p>	<p>Measure 1: Percentage of Local Authority plan consultations responded to</p> <p>Measure 2: Participation in landscape partnership initiatives</p> <p>Measure 3: Ecological monitoring of visitor impact (various measures)</p> <p>Measure 4: Damaging Introduced Species policy prepared and implemented</p> <p>Measure 5: Climate resilience plans completed</p>
<p>Theme 3: Establish a natural capital based management process across our open spaces.</p> <p>Theme 3, Objective 1: Baseline natural capital valuation for NED undertaken</p>	<p>Measure 1: Natural capital assessment completed for the open spaces</p> <p>Measure 2: TBC- Monitoring measure</p>

<p>Theme 3, Objective 2: <i>Natural capital monitoring and reporting system established</i></p>	<p>will be developed from the baseline assessment</p>
<p>Theme 3, Objective 3: <i>The City of London Corporation's Climate Action Strategy goals are met for the open spaces</i></p>	<p>Measure 3: ktCO2e removed each year from NE open spaces</p>

How will the strategy be implemented?
 This strategy will be implemented via Divisional business plans and through other relevant Corporation strategies and plans e.g. the Climate Action Strategy. New income generation opportunities will be developed, and external grants will be sought to contribute to the resourcing of activity.

Cross-cutting themes
 Working in partnership with external organisations and landowners, encouraging visitors to give back through well planned campaigns, climate action, tackling the biodiversity crisis, income generation.