

Appendix 1 – draft policies on Open Spaces and Green Infrastructure

Context

The City of London is a busy urban environment containing many small open spaces and pocket parks. These spaces are vital to the success of the City, offering residents, workers and visitors outside spaces in which to work or to relax and appreciate the streetscape. There is a growing recognition that green infrastructure also helps to mitigate against some effects of climate change, provides benefits for well-being and mental health and improves air quality. These same small green spaces are essential for wildlife found in this urban setting. The policy seeks to encourage further green infrastructure, open space provision and biodiversity within the City.

Policy CS XX: Open Spaces and Green Infrastructure

The City of London Corporation will work in partnership with developers, landowners and other agencies to promote a greener City by:

- Protecting existing open and green space;
- Increasing public access to existing and new open spaces;
- Creating, maintaining and encouraging high quality green infrastructure;
- Using planting and habitat creation to enhance biodiversity and combat the impacts of climate change;
- Promoting the greening of the City through new development opportunities and refurbishments;
- Ensuring new development and refurbishment protect and enhance the City's biodiversity.

Reason for the policy

The City is densely built up and most of its open space provision consists of small spaces at street level. Green infrastructure in the City includes civic spaces, parks and gardens, cemeteries and churchyards, and green roofs & walls in addition to amenity spaces. A key environmental asset is the River Thames.

Open and green space is under increasing pressure due to the intensification of development, an expanding workforce and growing visitor numbers projected over the next twenty years.

The City of London Corporation is committed to protecting existing open spaces and expanding the provision of green infrastructure as far as possible consistent with heritage significance. The City Corporation wishes to see further urban greening to make the Square Mile more attractive to workers, residents and visitors. This would contribute to the Mayor of London's ambition to make over 50 per cent of London green by 2050.

Given that space is at a premium in the City, all new developments and refurbishments will be required to include a greening element to the building

and/or the public realm where consistent with good design. This approach will have many benefits over time such as improving the urban environment for biodiversity, reducing rainwater run-off, improving insulation, reducing air and noise pollution, regulating temperature, and improving visual amenity. Public access to greening elements should be achieved wherever possible.

How the policy works

The City of London Corporation will work with developers and landowners at all stages of the development process and actively monitor developments from pre-application stage through to post completion to ensure that the highest standards of green infrastructure are achieved, and existing provision is improved.

Open Spaces

Policy DM X.X: Protection and provision of open spaces

The quantity, quality and accessibility of public open space will be maintained and improved.

- Existing open space will be protected, particularly that of historic interest. Where a loss of existing open space is proposed, it will be replaced on redevelopment by open space of equal or improved quantity and quality on or near the site;
- Additional publicly accessible open space and pedestrian routes will be sought in major commercial and residential developments wherever practical but particularly in areas of open space deficiency;
- Further civic spaces will be created from underused highways and other land;
- Public access will be secured, wherever possible, to existing private spaces;
- Access to new and existing open spaces will be improved;
- Open spaces must be designed to meet the needs of all the City's communities.

Reason for the policy

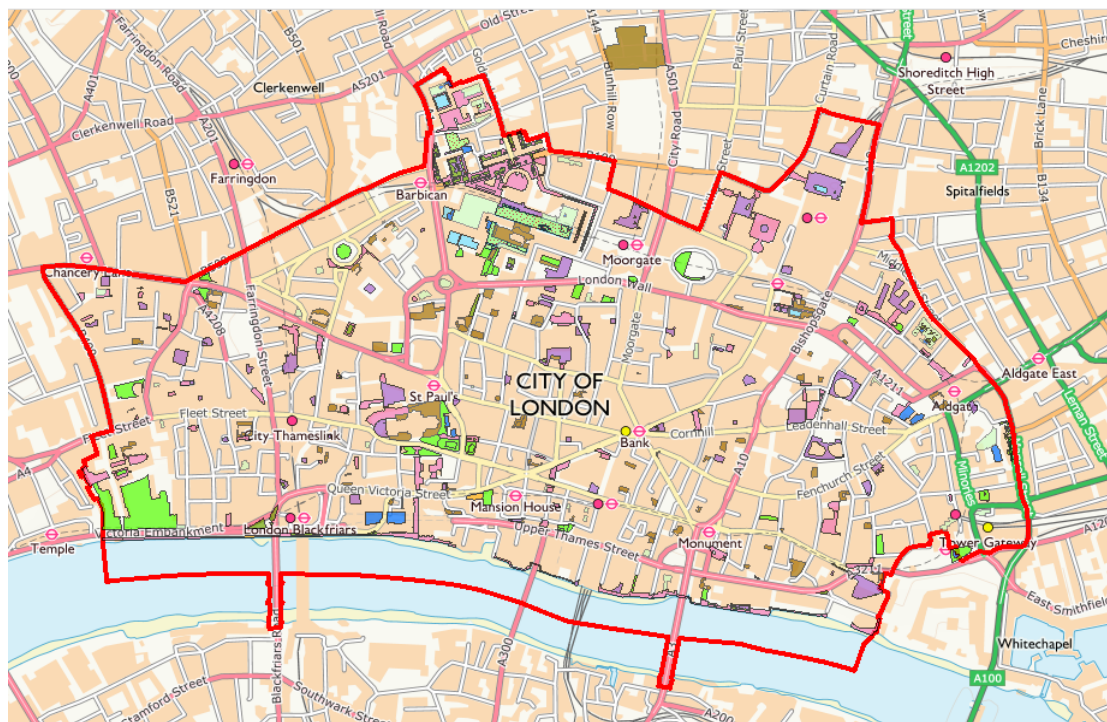
The City of London has approximately 376 open spaces totalling 32 hectares which includes parks, gardens, churchyards and hard open spaces such as plazas and improvements to the highway. Most of the open spaces are small, with approximately 80% of sites less than 0.2 hectares in size and only 11% over half a hectare.

Many open spaces in the City are of historic value, such as churchyards, while others are of more recent origin. New or improved spaces are created through a programme of public realm enhancements undertaken by the City of London Corporation and others. These new spaces may be public highway land or private space around buildings. They offer the opportunity to create

areas which meet a range of needs. There is a need for additional open space in the City to provide facilities for the growing daytime population, to help reduce the effects of pollution and climate change, to provide facilities for relaxation, tranquillity, agile working, leisure and sport, and to increase biodiversity.

The provision of open space across the City is uneven. The northern area of the City contains just over half of all the open space in the City, due to the relatively large amounts of space in the Barbican and Golden Lane estates and the Broadgate commercial estate. There is significant open space along the Thames and the riverside, with the Riverside Walk, the Temples legal precinct and space close to the Tower of London. A new public open space will be created at Blackfriars foreshore as a result of the Thames Tideway Tunnel project. Although open space provision in the Aldgate area has been significantly enhanced with the opening of Aldgate Square, this area and the Eastern Cluster areas have the lowest percentages of open space and face pressure from the increasing employment numbers associated with commercial intensification.

There is intense pressure on all the City's open spaces particularly at lunchtimes and new development provides an opportunity to create additional open space, which should be designed for multiple uses and resilient to future climate conditions.



Map X Open Spaces in the City of London

Policy DM X.X: City Greening

The provision of urban greening should be integral to the design and layout of buildings and the public realm.

- All development proposals will be required to demonstrate the highest feasible levels of greening consistent with good design and the local context
- The installation of biodiverse extensive or intensive green roofs, terraces and green walls will be encouraged

Major development proposals will be required to:

- Demonstrate an Urban Greening Factor (UGF) of 0.3 as a minimum
- Submit an operation and maintenance plan to demonstrate that the green features will remain successful throughout the life of the building.

Reason for the policy

Urban greening provides a wide range of benefits for air quality, noise, urban heat island effect, rainwater run-off, biodiversity enhancement, recreation, and health and wellbeing of the City's communities. This will increase in importance as weather patterns continue to change with rising average temperatures, summer droughts and more intense rainfall events periodically through the year. Evidence demonstrates a positive correlation between urban greening and good mental and physical health¹. However, the provision of large green spaces in the City's high density urban environment is difficult to achieve. Small areas of soft landscaping, green walls and green roofs, associated with buildings and the public realm, will therefore play a vital role in promoting wellbeing. Increased access to green spaces will be encouraged.

The City of London Corporation has long championed green roofs and continues to actively encourage them, but other forms of greening are less common in and around new buildings. The provision of trees and landscaping, and vertical greening such as green walls is also encouraged. Green walls bring many of the same benefits to the environment as green roofs and can improve the appearance of locations where there is limited opportunity for horizontal planting. To be successful they require careful design and installation and regular maintenance.

Green roofs should be designed, installed and maintained appropriately and can be designed as sustainable or ecological features, and recreational spaces. To ensure that the maximum practicable coverage of green roof and terraces can be achieved, location-appropriate plants should be installed on sloping roofs, between cradle tracks and underneath solar panel installations.

¹ http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/321971/Urban-green-spaces-and-health-review-evidence.pdf?ua=1

There are two main types of green roofs, intensive green roofs which can be used as recreational spaces with similar features to parks and gardens, and extensive ones having plants such as sedums and wildflowers but with limited or no access for people. Varying extensive green roof substrate levels will be encouraged to improve rainwater retention and enhance biodiversity, using a high proportion of native plants. Where developers prefer to install intensive green roofs with deep substrates for amenity space, these are expected to be of high quality design incorporating rainwater harvesting for irrigation to minimise water use.

The green roof should not impact adversely on protected views and planting should be appropriate to the location and height of the roof. All green roofs should be designed, installed and maintained appropriately to maximise the roof's environmental benefits including biodiversity, rain water run-off attenuation and building insulation.

How the policy works

This policy provides a mechanism for ensuring a consistent approach to greening for all new buildings and public realm schemes. It takes account of the value of different types of greening through the application of an Urban Greening Factor (UGF), with a higher UGF for greening that provides multiple benefits.

The Draft London Plan (2017) has introduced a UGF scoring system for London, which is intended to operate as a planning policy tool to assess the amount, type and value of greenery within development proposals. It recommends interim target scores, pending work by individual boroughs to develop their own approaches tailored to local circumstances.

The City of London Corporation has commissioned a UGF Study to assess the level of urban greening which can be delivered successfully in new development. This indicates that an UGF target of 0.3 should be adopted within the Local Plan. Policy DM XX therefore requires all development proposals in the City to demonstrate a minimum UGF target of 0.3. Residential developments will be expected to attain the same UGF score as commercial developments as they are likely to be of a similar high-density form.

Developers will need to provide evidence to justify why the UGF target cannot be met. The City Corporation will take a flexible approach to developments with listed building or conservation area considerations if achieving the UGF target would detract from their heritage significance.

Development proposals could include greening of roofs, facades, terraces and balconies, both internal and external, and/or landscaping around the building depending on the circumstances of each site. The UGF assessment should be included in the Design and Access Statement. An operation and maintenance plan should be submitted as part of the planning application to show how the greenery will be maintained and will be secured through

condition. This will ensure that suitable green elements are designed in and will remain attractive and viable throughout the life of the development.

More details including a worked example of a UGF calculation are set out in Appendix X of the Local Plan.

Biodiversity

Policy DM X.X: Biodiversity

Development should incorporate measures to enhance biodiversity, which may include all or some of the following:

- Retention and enhancement of habitats within Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs), including the River Thames;
- Measures recommended in the City of London Habitat Action Plan and the City of London Biodiversity Action Plan 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 and insect hotels;
- A planting mix and variation in vegetation types which encourages biodiversity;
- Planting which will be resilient to a range of climate conditions, with a high proportion of native plants.

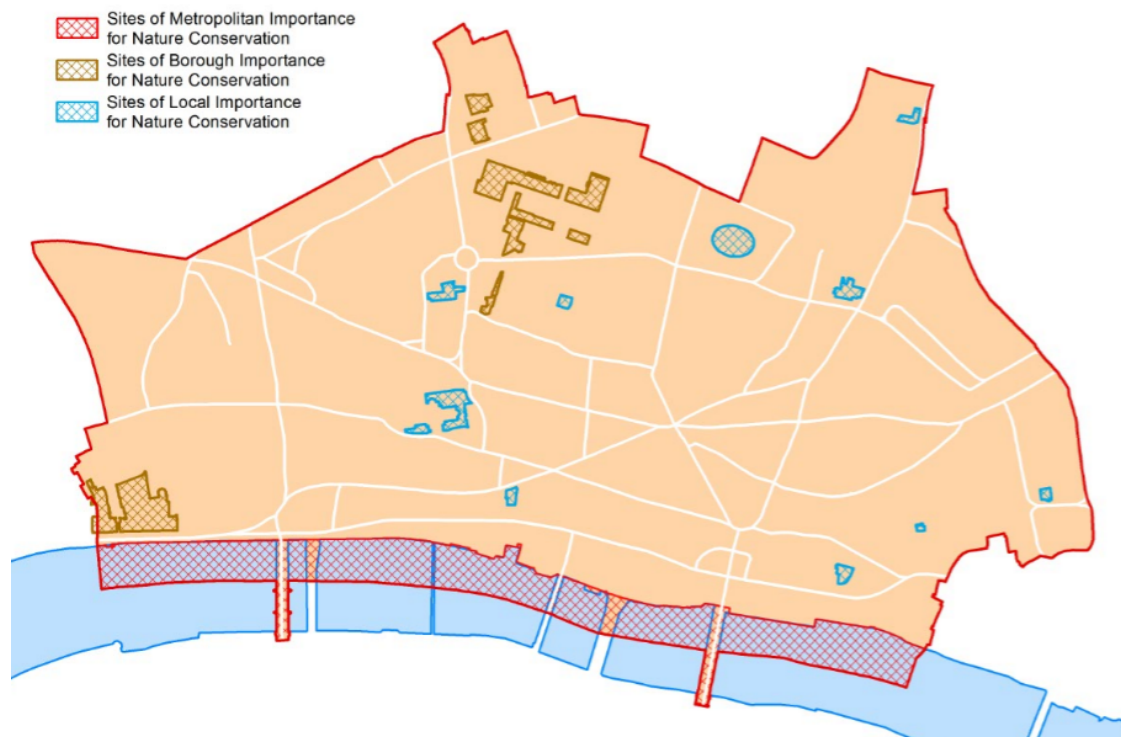
Reason for the policy

Protecting and improving biodiversity involves enhancing wildlife populations and their habitats. This has associated positive impacts to the environment, economic and social life of the City and the aesthetics of the streetscape. Healthy biodiversity can be viewed as a sign of a healthy environment and healthy city.

Measures to enhance biodiversity should address the need to provide habitats that benefit the City's flagship species (house sparrows, peregrine falcons, swifts, black redstarts, bats, bumblebees and stag beetles) and by extension a wider range of insects and birds.

New developments should seek to protect and enhance biodiversity and the City's environmental assets. This can be achieved by providing spaces for biodiversity to flourish through the planting of trees and soft landscaping, along with green roofs and walls where possible. A variety of these provisions in one development will create habitats for a range of different wildlife species. Joined up green spaces and corridors give species a better chance of survival in the urban landscape and greater resilience to future climate change. These measures will assist in the delivery of the London wide Green Grid.

The City has 13 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs), including four new SINCs (Postman's Park, Portsoken Street Garden, St Dunstan in the East Church Garden) which were designated following a review in 2016. However, certain areas along the riverside, west of Farringdon Street and east of Bishopsgate have been identified as areas of deficiency in nature conservation by the GLA. It is important that opportunities are taken to improve biodiversity throughout the City, and particularly in areas where this would improve green corridors or biodiversity links, such as along the riverside. The River Thames, which is a Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation (SMINC), brings wider benefits for migrating birds and fish species.



Map X: Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs)