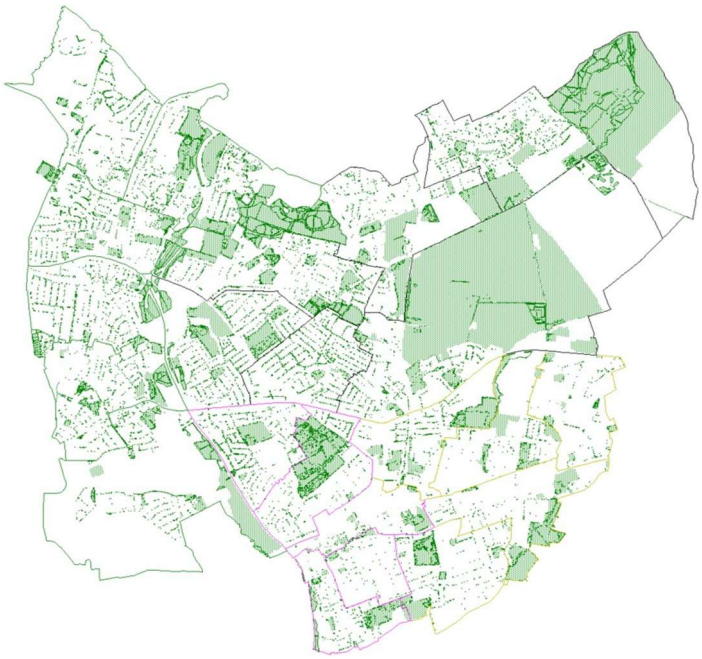

BIODIVERSITY DUTY

First Reporting Period 2023 - 2025

London Borough of Redbridge

October 2025

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1. Executive summary

1.1. This report provides an overview of the actions that London Borough of Redbridge has undertaken since the Environment Act came into force in 2023.

1.2. This report demonstrates how the Council are meeting our statutory obligations on biodiversity and how London Borough of Redbridge (LBR), through partner organisation Vision, has considered biodiversity in our decision making at a strategic level. The report also shows the positive changes being made in the borough because of biodiversity net gain.

1.3. It also demonstrates scrutiny of environmental considerations in planning applications including mandatory biodiversity net gain and landscaping.

1.4. As well as giving an overview of the work done so far, this report provides an indication of what actions the Council could take in the future to improve nature conservation and recovery.

1.5. Projects include managing land to improve biodiversity, creating dedicated spaces for wildlife, enhance protected space, running volunteering sessions to educate, advise and raise awareness on biodiversity issues.

1.6. This report details how the Council recorded biodiversity data on habitats as well as species.

1.7. The borough has successfully implemented the mandatory policy on biodiversity net gain (as set out in schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) into its planning application assessment process.

1.8. The planning policy team have worked with the planning advisory service to develop a triaged approach to the assessment of biodiversity net gain (BNG) that is bespoke to the borough.

1.9. There have been seven major planning applications subject to mandatory BNG from February 2024 to November 2025 that have not been exempt and have provided satisfactory levels of information regarding BNG.

1.10. Three will need to provide BNG offsite and two are classed as significant for the purposes of management and monitoring.

1.11. Of the six fully approved schemes: site A has achieved a 15% uplift; site B has achieved a 252% uplift; site C has achieved a 21% uplift; site D has achieved a 10% uplift; site E has achieved a 251% uplift; site F has achieved a 14% uplift.

1.12. The planning policy team have engaged with the GLA on the development of a London-wide Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). LBR have submitted potential sites to include in the strategy. These sites include several areas of priority habitat that potentially be enhanced.

The areas identified in the LNRS will have strategic significance in BNG assessments and thus habitats within them will have greater protection.

1.13. The council is in the process of scoping the possibility of having a habitat bank of sites on council-owned land.

2. Introduction

2.1. Overview

2.1.1. Chapter 2 provides an overview of why there is a need for this report and what it covers. As well as this it provides an overview of the authority and the functions of the authority.

2.1.2. Chapter 3 covers how we have managed land within our ownership to improve biodiversity levels. It also provides an overview of how we have educated and raised awareness about biodiversity in the local community.

2.1.3. Chapter 4 is regarding biodiversity net gain – the work we have done so far and the resulting net gains.

2.1.4. Chapter 5 sets out the policies, procedures and actions to meet our biodiversity duty.

2.1.5. Chapter 6 details how we have educated our local community about biodiversity net gain.

2.1.6. Chapter 7 states how we have recorded biodiversity data in the borough, and how we are using this to assess the ecological health of land in the borough.

2.1.7. Chapter 8 provides information on the successes in biodiversity policies and actions since 2023 and future challenges to be addressed.

2.1.8. Chapter 9 shows an indication of future actions we could take over the next reporting period.

2.2. Purpose

2.2.1. Public authorities who operate in England must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England as set out in schedule 7a of Town and Country Planning Act 1990

2.2.2. It also provides an overview of how the authority plans to comply with the biodiversity duty over the course of the next reporting period (5 years from the publication of this report).

2.2.3. The requirement to report is stated in section 103 of the Environment Act 2021 which amends the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

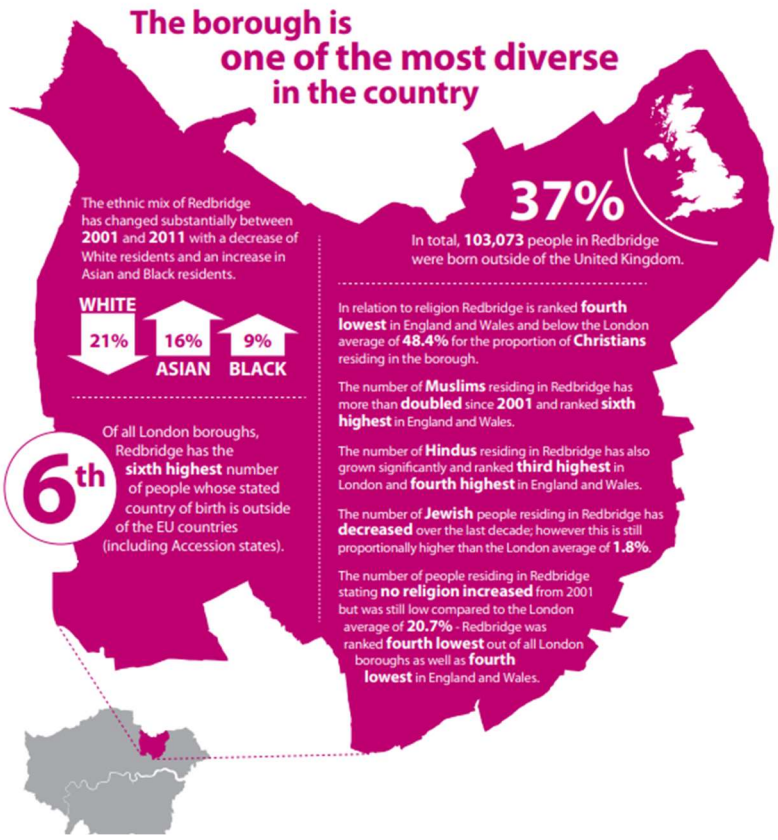
2.2.4. Nature conservation and recovery responsibilities are shared across multiple departments within the council and Vision Regeneration, Leisure and Culture who operate on behalf of the Authority. Everything they do is on behalf of the council.

2.3. An overview of Redbridge

2.3.1. Redbridge is an outer London borough in north-east London extending to approximately 22 square miles. It is home to a diverse and vibrant population of 310,300 people.

2.3.2. Positioned within the Thames Gateway and the London-Stansted-Cambridge corridor, the borough sits entirely within the M25

Image 1: Borough of Redbridge profile



2.3.3. LBR oversees various functions such as social housing, street and neighbourhoods, and social care.

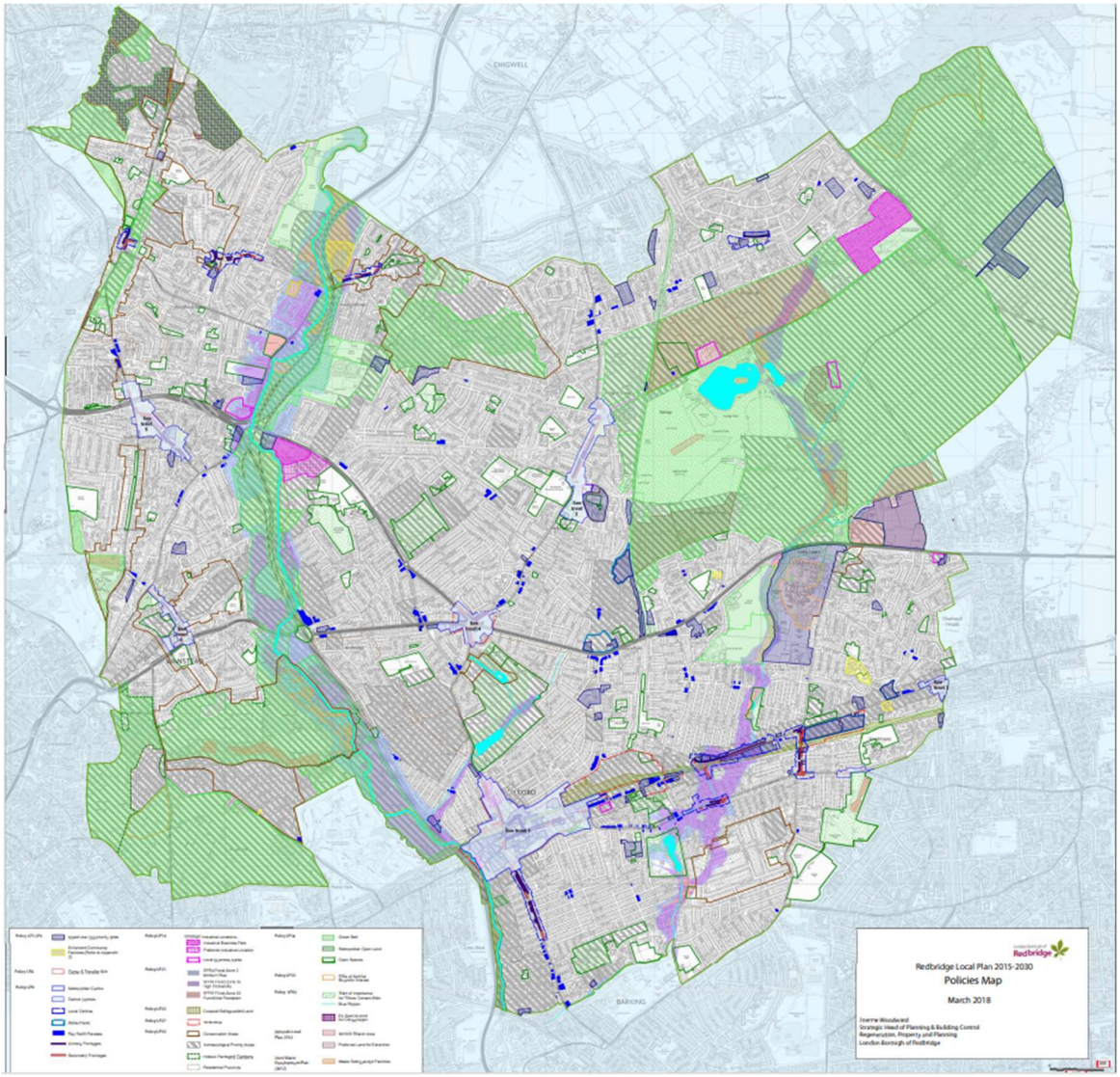
2.3.4. The Cabinet member for the environment and sustainability's portfolio includes strategic and spatial plans & policies relating to climate change. This response includes nature as well.

2.4. Planning and development decisions

2.4.1. LBR are the main statutory body for making planning decisions. LBR have responsibility for deciding all but the largest schemes (major schemes that are preferable to the mayor of London and, Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects) and work closely with stakeholders to give our residents a say in this.

2.4.2. The planning and other teams in the Council give advice on topics such as design, heritage, air quality and environmental impacts.

Image 2: Redbridge Green Infrastructure Network

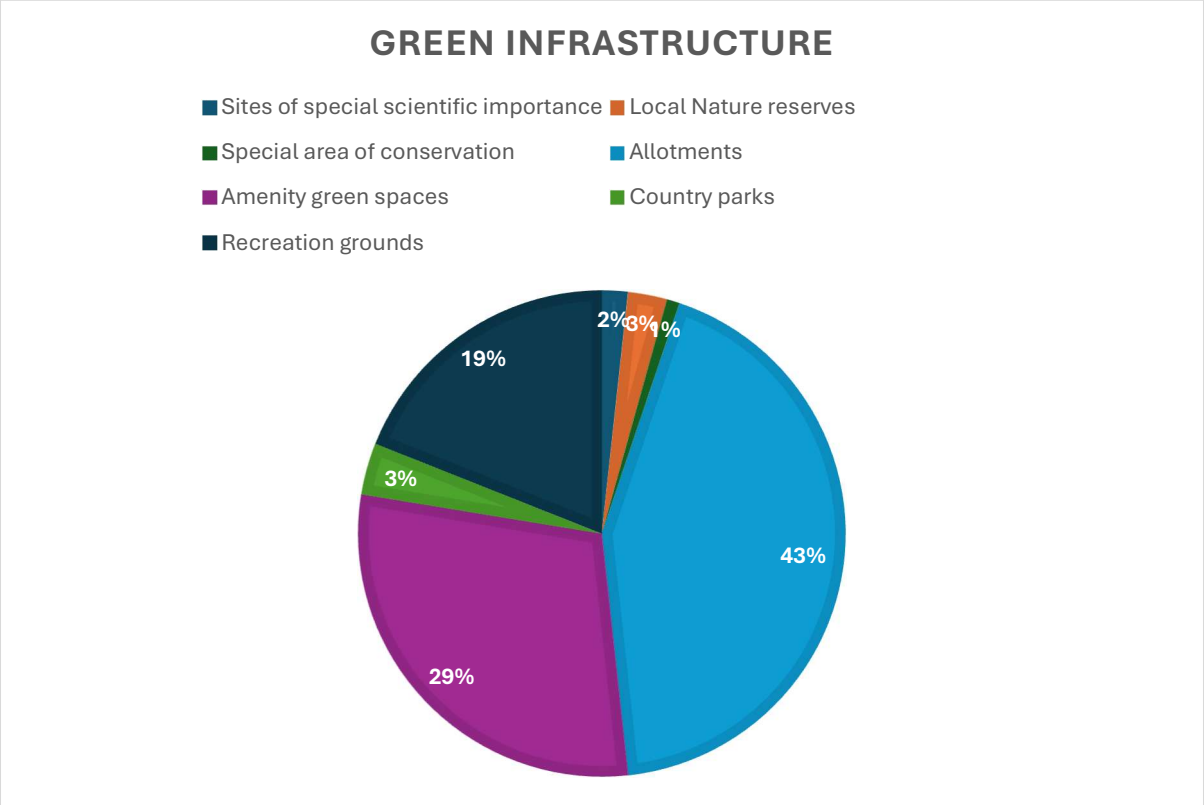


2.4.3. The Council recognises the unique natural environment in the borough and its importance to residents. The significant open spaces and local parks (shown in image 2), plus

the River Roding, provides the borough with diverse habitats and a rich wildlife resource. As well as hosting sites that are of local nature conservation importance, the borough includes sites that have national, European and international protection.

2.4.4. Planning decisions can have large impacts on these spaces and their quality. Careful spatial planning can ensure that the risk of flooding is mitigated whilst ensuring air quality is improved and the urban heat island effect is addressed.

Image 3: Types of green and open spaces in the borough by number



2.4.5. Image 3 shows that most green and open spaces in the borough are allotments followed by amenity green spaces, both of which are directly impacted by planning decisions. This type of open space is most commonly found in residential areas. It includes informal recreation spaces and green spaces in and around housing, with a primary purpose of providing opportunities for informal activities close to home or work.

3. Meeting the biodiversity duty

3.1. Improving biodiversity through land management

3.1.1. London Borough of Redbridge (LBR) actively contributes to the conservation, restoration, and enhancement of species populations and habitats across Redbridge parks. By implementing dedicated habitat projects and sustainable management practices, LBR supports biodiversity and fosters resilient ecosystems in both Green Flag and other community parks.

3.1.2. Wildflower meadows established in multiple parks, including Goodmayes Park and Seven Kings Park, support pollinators like bees, butterflies, and other insects by providing essential nectar sources. These meadows enhance plant diversity, which in turn supports a broader range of wildlife and creates robust ecosystems that withstand environmental pressures.

3.1.3. Installed across several parks, bug hotels offer safe habitats for insects critical to ecosystem health, such as solitary bees and ladybirds. These pollinator-focused initiatives contribute directly to supporting insect populations that are essential for pollination and pest control, reinforcing the parks' ecological stability**.**

3.1.4. Dead hedges constructed in parks like Clayhall Park provide natural barriers that double as habitats for small mammals, birds, and insects, promoting biodiversity. LBR also maintains and restores woodland areas within sites like Seven Kings Park, creating habitats for species that rely on tree cover and understory plants for shelter.

3.1.5. Long grass zones are designated and maintained across several parks as part of LBR's low-intervention landscape management. These areas offer essential cover and food sources for small mammals and insects, enhancing local biodiversity by supporting species that thrive in undisturbed habitats. Native plant species are prioritised for these areas, ensuring a sustainable habitat aligned with local ecology.

3.1.6. Composting programs in Goodmayes Park and Seven Kings Park improve soil health, promoting microbial activity that support diverse plant growth and habitat resilience. By enhancing soil quality, these initiatives indirectly support species populations by creating a strong foundation for habitat health.

- **Goodmayes Park:** Features a 250-square-metre wildflower meadow, bug hotels, and pollinator-friendly flower displays, all contributing to pollinator and plant diversity. Additionally, two woodland areas are preserved and maintained, supporting a variety of wildlife within a controlled, conservation-focused environment.
- **Claybury Woods:** With its designation as a Borough Grade II Site of Nature Conservation Importance, Claybury Woods integrates long grass areas, dead hedges, and a soakaway system that improves habitat quality and water conservation, aligning with conservation goals for both plant and animal species. A recently cleared space been sown with a shade tolerant, woodland wildflower mix, including only native species, so as not to disrupt the long-established natural balance of species in the area. Additional seed was also sown in the surrounding woodland.

- **Ray Park, Loxford Park, and South Park:** Community-led bulb planting initiatives add seasonal biodiversity, providing critical food resources for early-spring pollinators. These efforts support local pollinator populations and enhance the overall aesthetic and ecological value of these parks.
- **Roding Valley Park:** Annual pruning of fruit trees in ancient orchards to reduce the risk of damage and disease to trees. This also maximises fruit production, which is not only beneficial for potential harvesting, but also for wildlife, from a variety of insects which will feed on and pollinate the flowers, to birds which will feed on the fruit. Trees and the adjacent meadow areas also provide habitat for a diversity of insects and birds in which they can shelter and nest.
- **Elmhurst Gardens:** A small wildflower area has been created, composed of a seed mix with both native and non-native species which has been designed to provide the maximum amount of nectar for pollinators throughout the year.
- **Goodmayes Park:** Management of the existing meadow complimented by the sowing of a special pollinator seed mix in additional patches within the area.

3.1.7. Adjusted seasonal mowing schedules allow wildflowers to seed, providing nectar and pollen sources for pollinators like bees and butterflies. This practice is implemented at multiple Green Flag sites, including satellite sites where managed grassland habitats are maintained to balance ecological diversity with visitor access.

3.1.8. Soil health is a priority in our parks, where LBR uses organic composting and mulching to enrich the soil. This approach encourages microbial activity, supporting healthy plant growth and increasing soil biodiversity. Goodmayes Park and Seven Kings Park host community composting workshops that promote soil enrichment and enhance biodiversity through community involvement.

3.1.9. In response to habitat fragmentation, LBR has established specific wildlife habitats such as bug hotels, dead hedges, and wildflower beds. These microhabitats support insects, birds, and small mammals. Dead hedges and wildflower beds, in particular, are integral to creating interconnected habitats that sustain diverse species within the parks.

3.1.10. Native plant species are prioritised for habitat support, helping to ensure plant resilience and minimise maintenance needs. Invasive species control is regularly performed to reduce competition with native flora, enhancing the conditions for biodiversity to thrive.

- **Claybury Park:** Invasive cherry laurel removed from parts of the woodland. This species can thrive in the shade and grows very quickly in addition to being toxic, which means that it prevents any native flora from growing near it and it can quickly dominate large areas. This work is regularly carried out as it can be difficult to completely eradicate.

3.1.11. Regular control of encroaching scrub, including smaller shrubs such as hawthorn, blackthorn and bramble, upon open grassland and meadow areas. This is to ensure that existing grassland and meadow areas are maintained and not overtaken by scrubland, which

would crowd out wildflower species and grasses, and not allow light to reach these species. Additionally, this will ultimately increase the nutrient levels in the soil, which is not ideal for wildflower species which prefer nutrient-poor environments. This work is particularly important, as grasslands and particularly wildflower meadows would struggle to exist, as scrubland will eventually dominate an environment without management. Therefore, this results in a greater diversity of habitats within a site, supporting a greater number of species. Wildflowers are vital for supporting a greater diversity of pollinating insects such as bees, butterflies, beetles and hoverflies.

- **Roding Valley Park:** meadow area surrounding the orchard is regularly cleared of encroaching bramble and requires ongoing management.
- **Redbridge Cycling Centre:** Removal of scrub from a large meadow area to halt the succession of this area into scrub/woodland as is found across the majority of the site and maintenance as open grassland and wildflower meadow. This may require regular management.
- **Claybury Park:** Encroaching bramble cleared from a newly established wildflower meadow to allow wildflower species to thrive and maintain the area as an open meadow.

3.2. *Creating dedicated spaces for wildlife*

3.2.1. Implementation of effective meadow management, including annual cutting, ideally after final seeds have been dropped, raking off cut material and maintaining as short grass until springtime. Existing meadows, which have not been managed for some time, have been cut and managed in spring to promote growth. This is to ensure that old, dead vegetation does not crowd out new growth in subsequent growing seasons and to ensure that particular species do not become dominant. This also means that nutrients from dead material does not add to the nutrients of the soil, maintaining nutrient poor conditions in which wildflower species thrive. This results in a greater diversity of species and therefore greater insect diversity.

- **Goodmayes Park:** Existing wildflower meadow, with dense vegetation layer, cut and raked off to boost the regeneration of wildflowers.
- **Ray Park**: Removal of old growth from two wildflower areas allowing meadows to regenerate more effectively, with a higher diversity of species.

3.2.2. Wildflower meadows have been established in multiple parks to provide natural habitats for pollinators like bees and butterflies. These meadows serve as critical spaces for nectar and pollen collection, supporting pollinator populations whilst adding seasonal beauty to the landscape.

3.2.3. Bug hotels have been installed in parks to provide shelter and breeding grounds for insects, such as solitary bees and ladybirds, which play vital roles in local ecosystems through pollination and pest control.

3.2.4. Dead hedges, made from branches and logs, serve as both barriers and natural habitats, supporting insects, small mammals, and birds. By recycling organic material within

the parks, dead hedges offer both a sustainable solution and a valuable addition to local biodiversity.

- **Seven Kings Park:** A dedicated woodland area and a 150-square-metre wildflower meadow support biodiversity, with additional pollinator-friendly flower beds and a bug hotel. These spaces provide resources for insects and small animals, contributing to the park's ecological balance.
- **South Park** contains two bug hotels and supplementary wildflower areas. These habitats support beneficial insects and pollinators, and ongoing drainage improvements aim to further enhance these spaces by supporting water-dependent native plants.
- **Clayhall Park:** This park's soakaway system, combined with wildflower and long grass areas, provides shelter and food sources for local fauna, especially pollinators and small mammals.
- **Hainault Forest** is dedicated to wildlife in its entirety. It is a SSSI and local nature reserve. LBR have bat boxes in the beech wood and a bat loft in the buildings. LBR fence areas during breeding season for ground nesting birds. LBR have log piles and stumperies for insects as well as standing deadwood. LBR leave long grass areas in both summer and winter and have planted hedgerow as well as Wildflower meadows. LBR are also creating a tiered system on woodland borders.
- **Valentines Park:** LBR identify suitable quiet areas with all the requirements for the species intended to conserve whether they be woodland, grassland or Aquatic. An example of this would be the Ornamental Pond in Valentines Park that underwent major tree and shrub removal to open up the views and to allow the sunlight to penetrate the water again which then encouraged a colony of Ardea cinerea to return one pair at a time.

3.2.5. In allotments, LBR asks plot holders to include a small pond and refuge areas on their plots for wildlife.

3.2.6. LBR advocate for landscape plans to include nest boxes for birds, bats and other animals.

3.2.7. Landscape plans for development need to prioritise native species and species diversity in order to ensure tree health.

3.2.8. Planning applications for major development including retrofit have to provide an urban greening factor as per policy G5 of the London Plan. This plan can include green walls or roofs, where appropriate.

3.2.9. Tree planting in landscape plans should prioritise native species. Mixed populations of tree species require more resilient schemes that require less maintenance.

3.2.10. The Council is working on a project to rewild parts of Fairlop Waters.

3.2.11. Active management of pond habitats across different sites. This includes removing large trees and shrubs from pond boundaries, particularly on the southern side, to allow more light in. This benefits pond life by promoting the growth of aquatic plants, which, in turn, provides habitat and food for animals, such as a range of insects, amphibians and aquatic

snails. Additionally, dominant vegetation on the margins of ponds is cleared to allow a greater variety of plant species to colonise. This is supplemented by the planting of additional marginal and oxygenating plant species.

- **Redbridge Cycling Centre:** Management of the large pond included the removal of large willow trees, to allow more light in and the removal of sections of dominant sedges and rushes on the margins. A variety of marginal plant species were planted in the cleared section, to help establish a more diverse habitat, supporting a range of species. The focus of this work was to enhance the habitat for great-crested newts, by providing them with plants on which they can lay eggs, and boosting the productivity of the habitat as a whole.
- **Claybury Park:** Addition of oxygenating plants to a number of ponds in the park, to improve water quality and provide additional habitat for pond life. Marginal plants were also added to the ponds to increase the diversity of plant life and assist natural colonisation.
- **Lincoln Road Allotments:** Two small ponds created by placing small plastic tanks into the ground. These included planting baskets with aquatic plants and oxygenating plants to give the ponds a head start in the colonisation process. Over time these will become established pond habitats, attracting a diversity of pond life.

3.2.12. The overall masterplan for the Fairlop Waters expansion commits the council to expand the park from 160ha to 241ha, returning the gravel extraction to parkland rather than arable farming and grazing pasture. Significant areas will be rewilded for nature conservation and Seven Kings Water will be renaturalised.

3.3. Enhancing our protected spaces

3.3.1. Developers of new residential developments within 6.2km of the boundary of Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation are required to pay a set Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGs) payments tariff (set out in the strategy in image 5) on commencement of their development, which is spent on the accessibility improvement interventions.

Image 4: NGIS strategy settings out SANGs tariff

Case Study: Restore nature pledge

- The restore nature pledge offers simple, impactful actions Redbridge residents can take to support nature, especially local wildlife and plants.
- A list of ten potential pledges have been drawn up the Council in collaboration with Pesticide Free Redbridge community group
- Each pledge comes with associated tips to help its successful implementation

3.3.2. The planning policy team have mapped the environmental buffers of key open spaces in the borough to inform planning application assessments and incorporated statutory advice from Natural England.

3.3.3. Ilford Golf Course is a council owned site which suffers from flooding issues and does not generate significant revenue. In order to mitigate the lack of access to open space that is faced by residents of Ilford Town Centre, present and future, the intention is to 'rewild' the golf course landscape and deliver extensive public access.

3.4. Raising awareness through education

3.4.1. LBR run volunteering sessions to help improve the biodiversity of the parks, and during these sessions LBR tell our volunteers about how the work that they are doing benefits the biodiversity of the parks. Where this work is visible to the public, LBR may also put up signage to inform passersby of the benefits of the work for biodiversity.

3.4.2. From January to July 2025, the Vision Nature Conservation Team has organised Conservation Workdays in multiple council-owned parks, in addition to shorter Action Days, based in Claybury Park and Roding Valley Park. A total of 30 sessions has amounted to 993 hours, involving 38 unique volunteers, so far in 2025.

- **Goodmayes Park:** Two woodland areas, a 250-square-metre wildflower meadow, and pollinator-friendly flower displays help sustain pollinators and other wildlife. Community Action Days further support plant diversity and habitat maintenance.
- **Seven Kings Park:** The park's 150-square-metre wildflower meadow and woodland area foster biodiversity through soil enrichment and pollinator support. Composting workshops hosted here are integral to soil and habitat quality improvement efforts.
- **South Park:** Two bug hotels and additional wildflower areas serve as habitats for local insects, and enhanced drainage supports native plant growth, creating an ecologically supportive environment.
- **Loxford Park:** bug hotel, arboretum and wildflower display.

3.4.3. LBR manage different areas of land differently, with some areas being managed as meadows, woodland, ponds, orchards or scrubland, and this ensures that there are a variety of habitats present, which improves biodiversity.

3.4.4. LBR run a number of nature recovery programmes:

- Adopt A Tree Pit, this year 328 residents adopted 600 tree pits across the borough);

Image 5: Wildflower planting

- Pollinator Pathways - this scheme means residents adopt all green spaces on their street (tree pits, shrub beds) and commit to manually control weed growth on pavements, kerbs, around shrub beds, there are currently 11 PP streets, covering 4.2km of the highway and including an additional 248 adopted tree pits;

➢ Community Gardens - Residents/community groups can apply to adopt LBR owned land, for community planting. This can range from a small flowerbed to a mini orchard (of which there are currently two).

Image 6: Community garden at Finchingfield

Before After

3.4.5. As shown in image 6, the Council is asking homeowners to restore nature in their local communities. This idea was inspired by the Manifesto Commitment to create 160,000sqm of new wild spaces in the borough. Since launching in July 2025, over 350 pledges have been made, and 314,000 square metres have been committed to restoring nature through the project.

3.4.6. Surveys are undertaken to identify populations and track changes in numbers and distribution. With regular management of areas of diverse habitat to maintain and improve condition with staff, contactors and volunteers. LBR review usage and impact of visitors and work with key national organisations to monitor and improve conditions for a range of species.

3.4.7. VRCL employs a range of educational and engagement strategies to foster public awareness of biodiversity across Redbridge's parks. These efforts encourage community involvement in conservation, educate visitors on ecological practices, and promote a shared commitment to protecting local ecosystems.

3.4.8. Community Action Days are hosted regularly across Redbridge's parks, providing hands-on opportunities for residents to engage in conservation activities such as planting, mulching, litter picking, and habitat maintenance. These events raise awareness about the importance of biodiversity and connect the public directly with local conservation initiatives.

3.4.9. Many parks feature educational signage that highlights key biodiversity initiatives, such as wildflower meadows, bug hotels, and dead hedges. Interpretation boards provide visitors with information on the ecological benefits of these features, promoting an understanding of wildlife habitats and conservation practices.

3.4.10. VRCL hosts workshops, including composting and gardening sessions, that educate community members on sustainable practices. These events are often tailored to specific ecological goals, such as soil enrichment, pollinator support, and water conservation, and are designed to enhance public knowledge of biodiversity-friendly techniques.

3.4.11. LBR's biodiversity initiatives are promoted online via the corporate website and social media channels, where posts inform the community about ongoing conservation efforts, volunteer opportunities, and educational resources. Online outreach expands VRCL's reach, engaging a wider audience in biodiversity awareness.

3.4.12. Partnerships with schools, local councils, and environmental organisations enable LBR to deliver biodiversity education to a broader audience. Activities like school-led tree plantings, youth volunteer events, and conservation workshops foster early engagement with environmental stewardship.

3.4.13. These parks have hosted 'Go Green' events attended by local leaders and community members, including the Mayor. Events like these combine education with public engagement, reinforcing biodiversity goals and connecting the public to LBR's conservation mission.

- **Uphall Recreation Ground, Seven Kings Park, and Ilford High Street:** Past roadshow events with the Redbridge Council's Education and Engagement Team have promoted biodiversity awareness at multiple locations, including high-traffic areas. These events demonstrate VRCL's commitment to broad community engagement in urban biodiversity.
- Event held at **Claybury Park** to introduce a particular type of butterfly surveying as part of Butterfly Conservation's national monitoring scheme. This included identification tips, information on survey technique and some background information about particular butterfly species to be found in the area. LBR then practiced carrying out a survey, allowing participants to put these skills into action. This was also an opportunity to make people aware of the importance of butterfly species and recording their numbers and distribution as an indicator of wider biodiversity.
- At **Hainault Forest** LBR have self-led school visits where an information pack is given to all teachers with information about habitats, wildlife and history of Hainault Forest. LBR are developing guided visits being. In terms of Children's activities during School holidays, LBR have crafts and activities that have an educational focus around biodiversity and the forest. In terms of Adult's activities, LBR have guided walks (discussions are had during these about the management of the site to protect biodiversity), informal group being set up to discuss the wildlife on site and encourage more people to take an interest in biodiversity
- LBR's Marketing & Communications for **Hainault Forest** comes via a newsletter and information on website & social media
- A public event was held to engage people with the birdlife in the local area at **Valentines Park.** With the help of a local expert, this provided people with information on the identification of species, both visually and by sound, behaviour, life history and conservation issues. This gave people a perhaps unknown insight into the surprising diversity of bird species in urban environments and the need for conservation work to maintain this.

- VRLC host a guided bird walk in **Valentines Park**, with the assistance of a local expert, with attendees receiving information about local bird species, including identification, behaviour and life history.

3.4.14. The planning team provide advice to developers regarding how to ameliorate the negative environmental impacts and provide net gains

3.5. Using libraries and museums to raise awareness

3.5.1. LBR host exhibitions and work with partners and/or artists to deliver public engagement workshops and information sessions and workshops, so for example LBR have gardening clubs at some libraries, and at others we've run workshops at other libraries where people have grown plants from seeds. LBR use storytellers, authors and theatre practitioners for a show/story themed around biodiversity (or to promote a book with those theme) etc.

3.5.2. LBR also signpost to other local activity and information in the borough.

3.6. Putting information boards in green spaces

3.6.1. LBR have notice boards in our main parks and country parks. Some of the parks and open spaces have information boards on biodiversity.

3.6.2. LBR have a number of guided walks in parks and open spaces delivered by our Rangers and Volunteers.

3.6.3. At Hainault Forest the Council do walks with the Education Ranger, different themes, activities and discussions around the importance of the forest and protecting biodiversity.

3.7. Reviewing waste management and recycling processes

3.7.1. A joint-waste plan is being produced for East London. The formulation of which includes an assessment of existing waste management capacity and forecasts for different types of waste arising in East London.

3.7.2. This includes a review of waste management and recycling processes to reduce water pollution and air pollution from waste transport and landfill.

3.7.3. The resulting plan highlights the need for planning policies to encourage the management of waste in accordance with the waste hierarchy and the importance of considering specific waste characteristics for appropriate management technologies.

3.8. Working with other organisations

3.8.1. Hosted an event by Thames 21, in collaboration with the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) and Thames Water, which involved training members of public in outfall surveying, a method of assessing the levels of pollution flowing into rivers due to misconnections. This included information on how misconnections occur and what to like out for.

3.8.2. Hosted an event by ZSL, in collaboration with the People's Trust for Endangered Species, which involved training for members of the public regarding the national water vole monitoring project. This aims to establish data on the populations of water voles across the country and particularly in and around London. This included training on the survey methodology and some background on the species, in addition to a walk along the River Roding to put these skills into practice. Where it is unlikely that any water voles remain on the Roding, their absence is still important to know about in relation to potential future reintroductions.

3.8.3. Conducted discussions with Citizen Zoo about urban rewilding in relation to the plans for Fairlop Waters and how to engage the public with this concept. LBR have provided information about Fairlop's biodiversity and habitats, our planned management works, and how LBR could collaborate on certain initiatives in the future.

3.8.4. Set up a Facebook group in which people can post about nature related subjects in Redbridge, including sightings across the parks, environmental initiatives and ways in which people can help wildlife. The group is controlled by the Nature Conservation Team, and LBR regularly post about our volunteer days, including information about the benefit of the work for biodiversity. Other posts include information about notable species to be found in the parks at certain times of the year, ways to help wildlife and links to other initiatives and wildlife organisations.

3.8.5. LBR publish a monthly newsletter which includes information about volunteering days and other events. Other features may include information about a particular species, or group of species, sometimes with a focus on the less well-known wildlife. Additionally, advice on what people can do to help and attract wildlife to their spaces is provided and how people can experience and connect with nature more.

3.8.6. LBR run volunteering sessions focused on practical habitat management, enhancement and creation. Activities have included: scrub clearance, wildflower meadow management/enhancement/creation, pond management/creation, aquatic planting, orchard management. Volunteers will help carry out this practical work and be provided with information on its benefit for biodiversity, including any specific species within the work area.

Case Study: A tiny forest making a big impact – Earthwatch's Collaborative Project in South Park

- In collaboration with Vision Redbridge Culture and Leisure, the South Park User Group, and the London Borough of Redbridge, Earthwatch has developed a "Tiny Forest" in South Park, a dense, biodiversity-focused green space created to enhance local ecosystems and promote sustainability. Established in 2021 with funding from the Defra Green Recovery Challenge Fund, the Tiny Forest contains over 20 native tree species—including oak, wild service, birch, alder, hazel, and blackthorn—planted within a space comparable to a tennis court.
- As a part of their ongoing commitment, Earthwatch revisited the Tiny Forest this year to assess its environmental contributions. Assisted by volunteers and supported by the Ministry of Justice's Community Payback team, Earthwatch conducted comprehensive tests such as soil pH analysis, nutrient and organic matter assessments, and biodiversity sampling through pitfall traps and quadrat surveys. The findings from these assessments are contributing valuable data on the forest's impact on air quality, biodiversity, flood reduction, and carbon storage. This Tiny Forest serves multiple functions: it acts as a wildlife corridor, supports local biodiversity, and provides a site for nature-based learning. In addition to environmental benefits, the project also serves as an educational resource, with workshops planned for local schools to engage students in hands-on learning about urban ecosystems and sustainability.
- Earthwatch's partnership with Vision RCL and local groups exemplifies the role that collaborative, science-based projects can play in urban conservation. This project not only enhances local green spaces but also serves as a replicable model for sustainable development in urban environments.

3.8.7. LBR provide assistance to the ZSL with their European eel monitoring scheme. Part of this scheme includes surveying the number of young eels travelling up the River Roding, falling within Roding Valley Park. Monitoring populations of this critically endangered species is vital, as they are an indicator of the suitability of the river for such as sensitive species.

4. Biodiversity net gain

4.1. Public engagement

4.1.1. The biodiversity net gain legislation as well as planning policy guidance formalise the process by which BNG is applied. LBR have produced an internal process note for officers, have a framework for recording the results of any assessment, and have completed staff training. Officers have also worked closely with the team at the planning advisory service (PAS) to ensure that the appropriate legal templates are in place.

4.1.2. The planning policy team have engaged with the GLA on the development of a London-wide *local nature recovery strategy*. LBR have submitted potential sites to include in the strategy. These sites include several areas of priority habitat that potentially can be enhanced. The areas identified will have strategic significance in BNG assessments and thus habitats within them will have greater protection.

4.1.3. The planning policy team have worked with the planning advisory service to develop a triaged approach to the assessment of BNG that is bespoke to the borough

4.1.4. LBRs corporate plan includes the environment as one of its core themes in the section *Clean and Green*. It sets out that LBR will reduce waste, lower the borough's carbon footprint and support our open spaces.

4.1.5. Planning applications are assessed to ensure that they align with the Government's environmental improvement plan.

4.1.6. LBRs *climate change action plan* is currently being refreshed and includes creating a climate resilient green borough as one of its core themes. This has a priority of greening urban spaces and enhancing biodiversity.

4.2. Results of biodiversity net gains approved

4.2.1. There have been nine applications from February 2024 to November 2025 that have not been exempt and have provided satisfactory levels of information in regard to BNG.

4.2.2. Three will need to provide BNG offsite and two are classed as significant for the purposes of management and monitoring

4.2.3. Of the six fully approved schemes: site A has achieved a 15% uplift; site B has achieved a 252% uplift; site C has achieved a 21% uplift; site D has achieved a 10% uplift; site E has achieved a 251% uplift; site F has achieved a 14% uplift.

4.2.4. LBR is exploring options to create a habitat bank for BNG offsetting purposes.

4.3. Meeting biodiversity net gain obligations in the next reporting period

4.3.1. Continue to assess submitted BNG plans

4.3.2. The council is in the process of scoping the possibility of having a habitat bank of sites on council-owned land

4.3.3. Incorporate where possible the recommendations of the GLA's Local Nature Recovery Strategy

4.3.4. Seek to implement the Climate Change Action Plan's biodiversity priorities

5. Meeting our biodiversity duty

5.1. Nature conservation and recovery

5.1.1. LBR have been conserving and working to restore the ancient orchard in Claybury Park, by pruning the ancient trees to improve their health and planting new trees to ensure the continuation of the orchard habitat after the ancient trees die.

5.1.2. LBR have been conserving and working to restore the acid grassland habitat in Claybury Park, by removing the nutrient-rich topsoil to expose the nutrient-poor acidic soil underneath, ensuring that plants that like the nutrient-poor acidic soil can thrive. LBR have also been using volunteers to cut and collect the acid grassland to keep the soil nutrient-poor.

5.1.3. At Hainault Forest LBR have specific information shared through communication channels relevant to seasonal issues for biodiversity (e.g. Control of dogs around skylark nesting sites, reasons not to dump pumpkins in the forest). LBR have a creation of open rides in the forest to improve conditions for birds and butterflies amongst others. LBR manage grassland to successfully increase skylark numbers. LBR have restored a ghost pond. LBR have installed hedgerows across the site and laying existing hedges to improve the condition and increase the offer for a variety of species of birds, insects and small mammals.

5.1.4. Vision is currently working with ZSL on reintroducing water voles *(Arvicola amphibius)*

5.1.5. On some of the allotments LBR have been protecting / conserving the common slow worm *(anguis fragilis),* the viviparous lizard *(zootoca vivipara),* the northern crested newt *(Triturus cristatus)* and the European hedgehog *(erinaceus europaeus)* amongst the usual species found in gardens.

5.1.6. In Valentines Park LBR have created habitat for species such as European turtle dove *(streptopelia turtur),* the smooth newt *(lissotriton vulgaris)* and the European stag beetle *(lucanus cervus).*

5.1.7. At Claybury Woods LBR have been restoring the acid grasslands, small ephemeral ponds ancient Apple Orchard and the larger reed bed pond. LBR are currently creating a meadow area from the small scraps / ponds that will be used to retain excess water on site,

create new habitats and to reduce the risk of fire through increased humidity levels within the woodlands.

5.1.8. With populations of the great-crested newt on multiple sites, LBR have made efforts to enhance pond habitats to suit their requirements and increase the breeding success. This has included the clearance of excessive vegetation around ponds to allow more light in and the planting of favourable aquatic plant species, on which the newts like to lay their eggs.

5.2. Improving the condition of protected areas and sites

5.2.1. The council has started to address the main causes of biodiversity loss – for example, land use changes, invasive non-native species, and wider pressures like pollution LBR

5.2.2. LBR have reduced Pesticide use, by having different grass cutting regimes, planting a wide variety of ornamental and native plants to extend the period of feeding opportunities, leaving standing / lying deadwood, thinning of woodlands / Aquatic vegetation, creation of new / restoration of past habitats.

5.2.3. At Claybury Woods, a designated Borough Grade II Site of Nature Conservation Importance, long grass areas, dead hedges, and the soakaway system have contributed to improved habitat quality for invertebrates, birds, and small mammals. Monitoring data shows increased species presence and reduced impact from invasive species, indicating a positive trend in habitat health.

5.2.4. LBR has worked pro-actively with the GLA who are responsible for producing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for London.

5.2.5. The Council has installed a number of raingardens in locations susceptible to flooding. These help with surface water drainage and storage of rainwater during flood events. It also provides valuable habitats for species, in particular pollinators.

Image 7: Raingardens at Blake Hall (left) and Chalgrove (right)

6. Biodiversity in the community

6.1. Raising awareness of biodiversity in the community

6.1.1. LBR have raised awareness of biodiversity in the community by including information on noticeboards.

6.1.2. LBR have some gardening clubs at some libraries, and at others we've run workshops at other libraries where people have grown plants from seeds. LBR use storytellers, authors and theatre practitioners for a show/story themed around biodiversity.

6.1.3. Community engagement efforts, such as Community Action Days and workshops, have raised public awareness and involvement in conservation. This has had a positive impact on ecological health, as increased volunteer participation has led to cleaner, well-maintained habitats and reduced littering in sensitive areas.

6.1.4. Volunteer days often include educational elements, such as demonstrations on planting techniques, composting, and habitat creation. These sessions enhance participants' understanding of ecological principles, reinforcing VRCL's broader biodiversity goals.

6.1.5. Over 8,000 volunteer hours were contributed across the borough from March to October 2024, with an average of 8–16 volunteers per event, depending on the site and activity. Activities like flower planting, pruning, and litter collection have directly improved the aesthetic and ecological quality of parks, while also encouraging public responsibility for these spaces.

6.1.6. VRCL run a three hour long volunteering session at Claybury Park and Roding Valley Park every other Wednesday and Sunday respectively, where the volunteers help to maintain the park and improve its biodiversity, by conserving and restoring the habitats that are present.

6.1.7. At Hainault Forest the Authority have regular volunteer groups on Monday, Friday and Saturday. LBR offer daily opportunities on the farm for individuals. Work experience placements.

6.1.8. It is important to engage with different demographic groups in different ways and understand that groups have different levels of education in natural sciences

Image 8: Engaging residents case study

Case Study: Youth Engagement at Ray Park

- Three Year 10 students participated in a 12-week community service project at Ray Park as part of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Every Sunday, these students dedicated their time to litter-picking across the park, contributing to a cleaner environment and improved park conditions. Their consistent efforts, undertaken in varied weather conditions, were well-received by the community, with frequent visitors noting the positive impact on the park's appearance. This initiative reflects VRCL's support for youth involvement in community service, encouraging local engagement in park maintenance and environmental responsibility.

6.1.9. The planning service advise on how to conserve and enhance biodiversity in an application for development

7. Monitoring and evaluation

7.1. Recording biodiversity data

7.1.1. LBR employs systematic biodiversity monitoring methods across Redbridge parks to track ecological health, assess species presence, and inform conservation decisions. These recording practices ensure that VRCL remains responsive to environmental changes and actively supports local biodiversity.

7.1.2. LBR conducts seasonal biodiversity surveys to document the presence of key species and assess the health of various habitats. These surveys, carried out by trained personnel, focus on identifying plant and animal species in designated areas, including wildflower meadows, woodland zones, and pollinator habitats.

7.1.3. Specific tracking practices are in place for notable species, particularly those listed under conservation importance, such as pollinators, protected bird species, and invertebrates like the stag beetle and Small Blue butterfly. Clayhall Park, a Borough Grade II Site of Nature Conservation Importance, is a focus for tracking due to its sensitive ecological status.

7.1.4. Transect surveys conducted as part of Butterfly Conservation's national monitoring scheme, at both Claybury Park and Fairlop Waters Country Park. Surveys are conducted according to the specific protocol detailed by Butterfly Conservation. Surveys take place regularly, with the help of volunteers and help to assess the general levels of biodiversity in these areas, due to role of butterflies as indicators, due to their high sensitivity to environmental and land use changes. Continual recording over time will help identify trends relating to abundance and diversity.

7.1.5. Regular assessment of breeding bird activity at multiple sites such as Claybury Park, Fairlop Waters Country Park and Redbridge Cycling Centre, during the breeding season. This usually entails a couple of visits to survey. This helps to assess the numbers and diversity of bird species on site, which can also act as an indicator of wider biodiversity. Over time, tracking these numbers will reveal trends about abundance and diversity of such species. LBR incorporates community participation in biodiversity recording through citizen science initiatives and Community Action Days. Volunteers assist in tracking flora and fauna, adding local observations to VRCL's biodiversity database and providing additional data for ecological assessments. Our volunteer species surveys such as butterflies, reptiles and amphibs as well as records reported by visitors and staff. Some professional surveys where possible.

7.1.6. LBR collaborates with local environmental groups and biodiversity experts for specialised recording, particularly on invasive species monitoring, bird population studies, and pollinator health assessments. These partnerships enhance the accuracy and depth of VRCL's biodiversity records, benefiting from specialised knowledge and external validation.

7.1.7. Biodiversity data is collected and stored digitally, allowing LBR to track trends, monitor progress, and evaluate the impact of conservation efforts across Redbridge parks. This data

is used in periodic ecological health reports, providing insights into species diversity, habitat health, and conservation needs.

- **Claybury Woods** undergoes regular ecological assessments, with a focus on protected species like stag beetles and native birds. Invasive species control logs and habitat quality assessments are maintained for this site.
- **Seven Kings Park and Goodmayes Park:** Seasonal surveys are conducted to monitor the health of wildflower meadows, pollinator presence, and community-led composting impacts on soil health. These sites benefit from enhanced tracking of pollinators and other insects through citizen science initiatives.

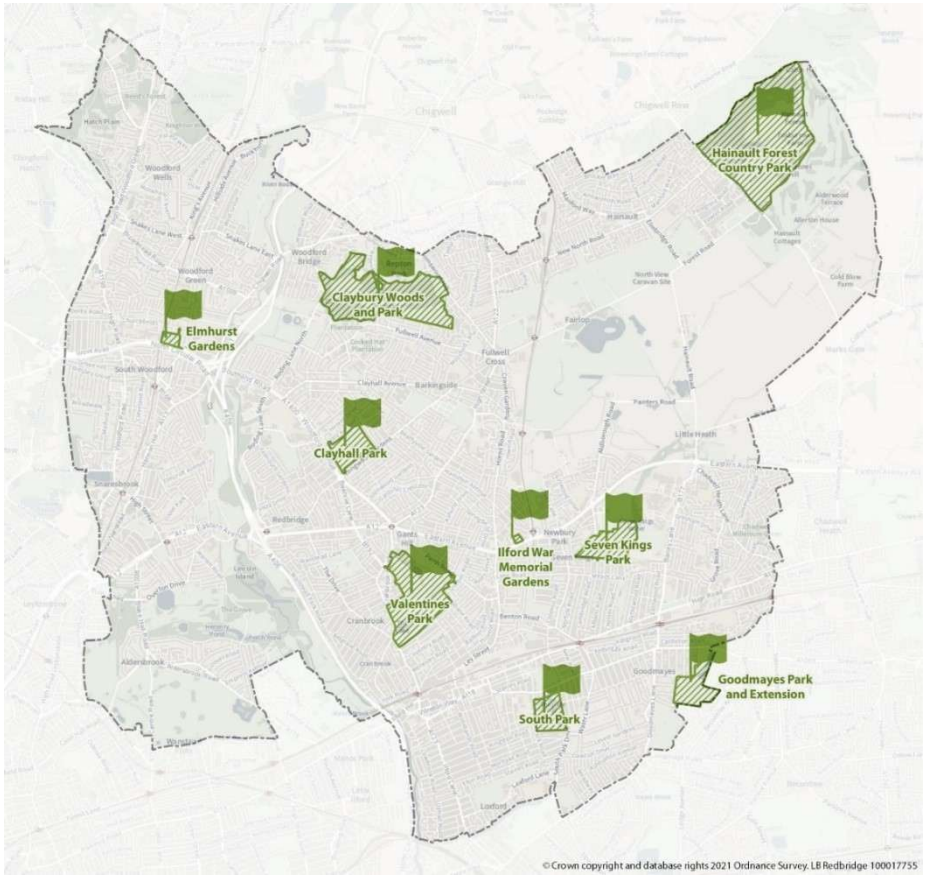
7.1.8. Species records are uploaded to our local environmental records centre – *Greenspace In Greater London*. This means that they collaborate with a network of experts to ensure Redbridge has robust and up-to-date environmental records. Without the information they provide LBR are to make environmental decisions at a strategic level. LBR also have a statutory duty to include the environment and biodiversity in our decision-making.

7.1.9. LBR ensures that biodiversity net gain information submitted at planning application stage is recorded in the following categories:

- Baseline onsite
- Post-intervention
- Quantity of biodiversity gains
- Location of offsite gains
- Number of development sites including sensitive areas

7.1.10. BNG may require ongoing monitoring for 30 years depending on a number of variables such as where it is located, the size of the post-intervention habitats and the quality

Image 9: Map of Redbridge with a map of green flag sites



7.1.11. Image 12 shows a total of nine sites in Redbridge which were managed to Green Flag standard again in 2023/24. These sites were the same as in the previous reporting year, including Valentines Park, South Park, Goodmayes Park, Ilford War Memorial, Elmhurst Gardens, Clayhall Park, Seven Kings Park, Claybury Park, and Hainault Forest. The total area covered by the nine sites is 313.016 hectares. There has been no change to this indicator since previous years. In Valentines Park LBR test the water during the summer for Nitrates, Phosphates and pH and add biological bacteria and enzymes to help maintain water quality. Soils are only tested if the area has been contaminated by external parties.

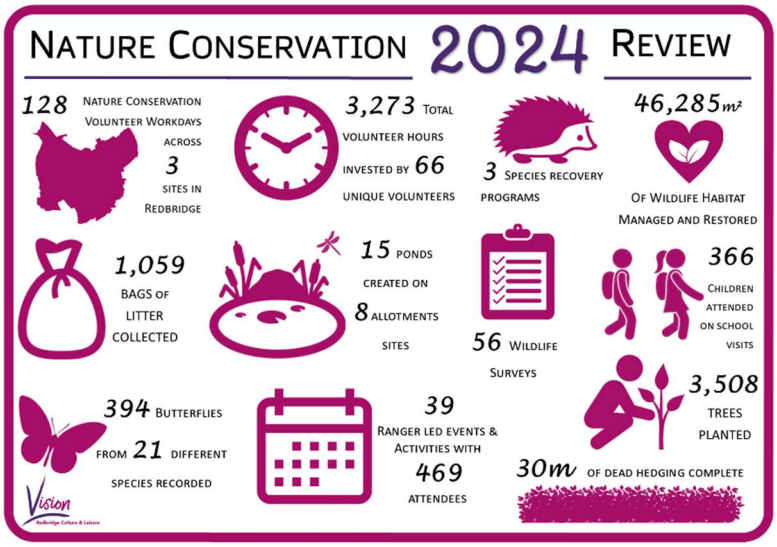
7.1.12. Redbridge Council has taken a number of positive steps in nature conservation during the reporting period which have mainly been delivered by Vision RCL. In 2024, the Nature Conservation Team held 128 volunteer workdays across Redbridge which involved 66 volunteers contributing over 3,273 hours of their time.

7.1.13. 3,508 trees were planted, and 1,059 bags of litter were picked from parks and green spaces. 46,285m2 of important conservation habitat were either created, managed, or restored. New habitats that were created included, hedgerows, wood piles and wildflower meadows.

7.1.14. There were 39 Ranger led events with 469 attendees in total, and 366 school children attended on school visits.

7.1.15. 56 surveys were undertaken to understand baseline species data and to monitor the success of habitat management, in addition to weekly butterfly transects that recorded 394 butterflies from 21 different species at Hainault Forest, between June and September.

Image 10: Nature conservation in Redbridge in 2024



7.1.16. The GLA are conducting a metropolitan SINC review, informed by a desktop assessment from GIGL. The assessment sites in Redbridge are:

- Claybury Wood
- River Roding (north of the Liverpool Street to Southend railway)
- Epping Forest North
- Hainault Country Park and Golf Course
- Valentines Park
- South Park, Ilford

7.1.17. VRCL's consistent monitoring and conservation initiatives have led to observable improvements in the ecological health of Redbridge parks. By implementing targeted biodiversity strategies and sustainable management practices, VRCL has supported an increase in species diversity, habitat quality, and ecosystem resilience across managed sites.

7.1.18. Wildflower meadows and pollinator-focused habitats in parks like Goodmayes Park and Seven Kings Park have seen an increase in bee and butterfly populations. Regular tracking indicates a sustained presence of pollinators, which contributes to greater biodiversity and supports the health of flowering plants and surrounding vegetation.

7.1.19. Composting and mulching programs in sites such as Goodmayes Park and South Park have enriched soil quality, fostering robust plant growth and reducing the need for chemical interventions. These improvements have resulted in healthier ecosystems, with native plants thriving and supporting local wildlife.

7.1.20. Through climate adaptation practices such as drought-resistant planting, water conservation, and the establishment of shade-providing woodland areas, LBR has strengthened park resilience against changing climate conditions. Parks with these adaptations, including Clayhall Park and South Park, demonstrate improved stability in vegetation health during extreme weather events, thereby enhancing overall ecological health.

7.1.21. In 2023, LBR implemented sustainable water management practices across Redbridge parks, notably through the use of Treegator slow-release watering bags. These devices deliver water directly to the root zones of newly planted trees, promoting deep root growth and reducing water waste. By ensuring efficient hydration, Treegators have enhanced tree establishment and resilience, contributing to the overall health and sustainability of the park ecosystems.

- Goodmayes Park: Enhanced soil health and increased pollinator diversity are evident in this park, where wildflower meadows, composting, and community-led planting projects have created a thriving environment for both plant and animal species.
- Seven Kings Park: Wildflower meadows and a dedicated woodland area have led to increased sightings of butterflies, birds, and small mammals, signalling an improvement in habitat quality and ecological balance.
- Clayhall Park: Monitoring reports indicate stronger biodiversity presence in long grass and dead hedge areas, with improved habitat quality supporting protected species. The soakaway system has contributed to enhanced soil and water retention, further supporting resilient plant life.
- Valentines Park: Over the last 16 years there has been a steady improvement in soil, air and Flora and fauna in Valentines Park.

8. Biodiversity highlights and challenges

8.1. Biodiversity highlights

8.1.1. LBR created a series of documents to ensure that the mandatory policy for BNG is incorporated into the application assessment process. This includes:

- A process note that maps out the biodiversity net gain assessment process for minor and major applications. This document simplifies a complex mandatory planning policy into discrete tasks for different teams within the planning department. It incorporates process maps that provide an in-depth visual representation of the process.
- A monitoring fee calculator to determine what to charge developers if habitat monitoring is required over a 30-year period
- The planning policy team have worked with the planning advisory service to develop conditions and legal templates to ensure BNG is a legal requirement
- BNG monitoring trackers that enable us to record key data and follow applications through the development process
- LBR have engaged with various stakeholders in the BNG process through presentations and workshops

8.2. Notable species in the borough

8.2.1. LBR found Orchard Toothcrust *(Sarcodontia Crocea)* in Claybury Orchard, which is a very rare fungus that only grows on ancient apple trees.

8.2.2. At Hainault Forest LBR have Skylark and Barbastelle bat.

8.2.3. Great-crested newts have been found on multiple sites.

8.2.4. European eels have been found in Roding Valley Park

8.2.5. Scarce emerald damselfly has been recorded at Fairlop Waters and is a threatened species with a highly localised distribution, having relatively recently colonised Fairlop.

8.2.6. The brown hairstreak butterfly species is thought to have recently colonised Claybury Park, with numbers of eggs recorded increasing each year. This species is listed as Vulnerable on the GB Red List, and is of high conservation priority, with a relatively small population nationally.

8.2.7. The cuckoo is a red-listed bird species, carrying the highest priority conservation importance. The species has experienced extreme declines in the last few decades. Cuckoos have been recorded at both Claybury Park and Fairlop Waters.

8.2.8. Little Egrets are a species which have increased in number dramatically over the last couple of decades, however it is unclear whether it has bred in Redbridge before. This year,

at least two nests, with young, have been recorded at both Fairlop Waters and Valentines Park.

8.3. Engaging the public

8.3.1. LBR's volunteer initiatives play a crucial role in conservation, maintenance, and community engagement across Redbridge's council-owned parks. Volunteer days, held under both VRCL-led and community-led initiatives, have made substantial contributions to park upkeep and biodiversity enhancement, while also fostering a community-focused approach to park management.

8.3.2. From March to October 2024, LBR organised Community Action Days in multiple council-owned parks (Goodmayes Park, Seven Kings Park, Elmhurst Park, South Park, Uphall Recreation Ground, Barkingside Recreation Ground), providing structured volunteer activities such as planting, mulching, litter picking, and habitat maintenance. These events not only support conservation efforts but also educate participants on sustainable practices and biodiversity's importance.

8.3.3. Several parks benefit from community-led action days, organised in collaboration with local groups and volunteer organisations. These events, often held at parks like South Park, Ray Park, Christchurch Green, and Barley Lane Recreation Ground, engage local residents in conservation and park maintenance, fostering long-term support for park preservation.

8.3.4. Partnership with Ministry of Justice – Community Payback Scheme: This collaboration includes regular volunteer days where participants engage in litter picking, hard surface maintenance, and leaf clearance, contributing hundreds of hours in support of Redbridge parks.

8.4. Future challenges

8.4.1. **Economic and resource pressures**: Budgetary pressures of delivering essential services whilst introducing new environmental policies.

8.4.2. **Delivering cross-cutting actions:** Ensuring that there is a long-term strategic action plan for biodiversity.

8.4.3. **Preventing further loss of habitats and species:** Implement an effective programme of monitoring and reporting.

8.4.4. **Effective management of invasive non-native species:** Ensuring our parks team is adequately trained to recognise INNS.

8.4.5. **Pressures for space:** Any future Local Plan will need to balance housing targets and environmental aspirations.

8.4.6. **Upskilling staff** to understand national targets as well as regional and local ones.

9. Future actions

This section details plans to fulfil our biodiversity duty over the 5 years following the end of this reporting period.

- Continue to build on the work LBR have done on nature conservation and recovery
- Implement sustainable transport strategy
- BNG offsetting habitat bank on council-owned land
- Incorporate biodiversity into CCAP
- Translate outcomes of local nature recovery strategy for London to a local level

Glossary

Terminology:

BNG – Biodiversity Net Gain

LBR – London Borough of Redbridge

VRCL – Vision Redbridge Culture & Leisure: *An arms-length organisation managing parks, gardens and libraries in the borough on behalf of the Council*

CCAP – Climate Change Action Plan

LNRS – Local Nature Recovery Strategy