

More Natural Capital
Coalition

10 Environmental Pledges for London's Borough Elections 2026

A coalition briefing for London's local elections

ONLINE EVENT | 12 FEBRUARY 2026



Pledge 1:

PROTECT TREES

"Record all ancient, veteran and notable trees in a Borough Register of heritage trees, and commit to their protection, including Tree Preservation Orders where appropriate."

**Bridget Fox
Woodland Trust**

The problem: our most precious trees remain at risk

Patchy legal protection

No official register

Government slow to act



The good news: local authorities can help, starting now

The solution: local tree registers in every borough

PROTECT TREES

1. **Record** all ancient, veteran and notable trees in a Borough Register of heritage trees, and commit to their protection, including using Tree Preservation Orders where appropriate.

Uses existing powers

Uses existing data

Volunteers ready to help

Low cost, high impact

Popular: people love trees!

By acting now, we can better protect London's living legends for years to come



Pledge 2:

Clean Rivers

"Create at least one new area of wetland in the borough where feasible, including by de-culverting rivers."

Alice Roberts
CPRE London



London's Rivers Under Pressure

- Surface water flooding is increasing
- Road run-off pollution flows straight into rivers
- Many rivers remain 'buried' and need 'daylighting'



Urban Wetlands: Nature-Based Infrastructure

- Intercept and treat polluted run-off
- Capture peak rainwater flows
- Enhance biodiversity
- Demonstrable local delivery

2/12/2026

Source: <https://www.thames21.org.uk/improving-rivers/creating-urban-wetlands/>



A Deliverable Borough Commitment

- Create at least one new wetland within the council term
- Identify de-culverting opportunities
- Integrate into regeneration and highways programmes



Toby Dighero, Thames 21

Pledge 3: Clean Rivers

“**Prioritise** installation of well-designed on-street rain gardens where other street works are planned; and directly support householders to capture rainfall, & re-green and de-pave front gardens”

Raingardens and de-paving

From concrete jungle to sponge city



*“**Prioritise** installation of well-designed on-street rain gardens where other street works are planned; and directly support householders to capture rainfall, & re-green and de-pave front gardens”*

Where does the water go?



What are Raingardens?



Why do we need raingardens?

**1 in 8 properties in London
are in areas at high or
medium risk of surface
water flooding.**

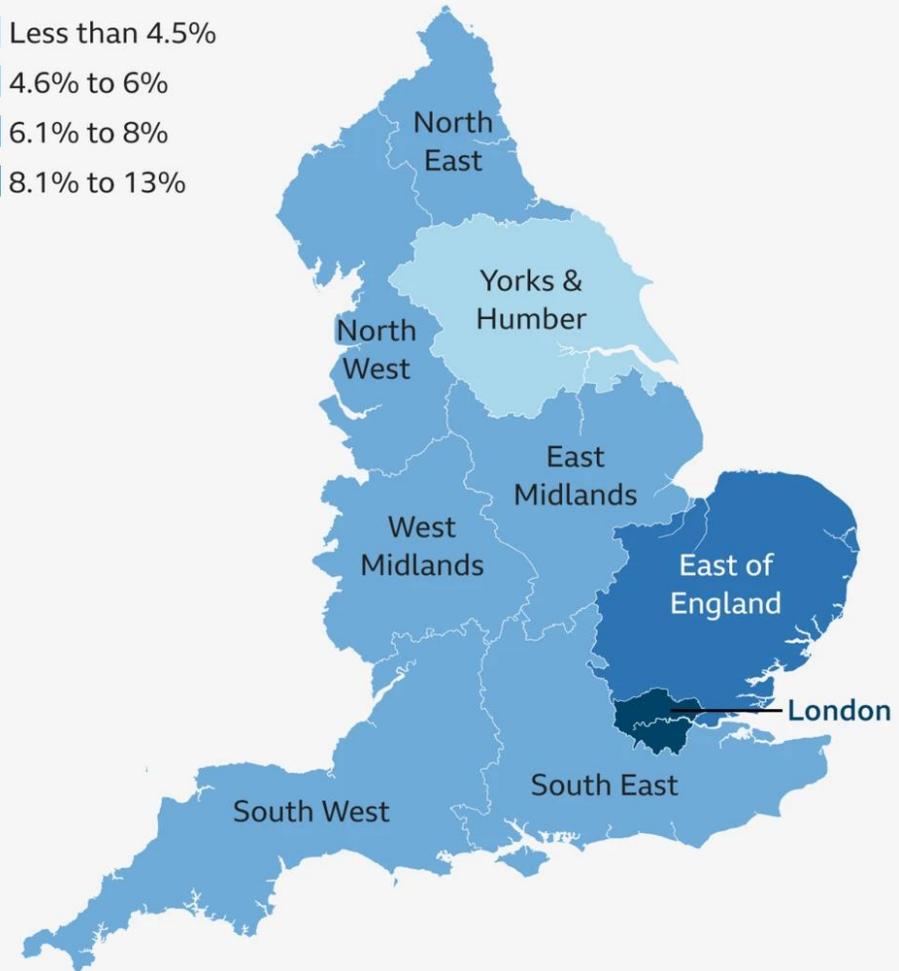
**This is twice the rate
compared to the national
total.**

Environment Agency, 2024

London most at risk from surface flooding

Properties in areas at high/medium risk of flooding from surface water, as a % of total number of properties per region

- Less than 4.5%
- 4.6% to 6%
- 6.1% to 8%
- 8.1% to 13%



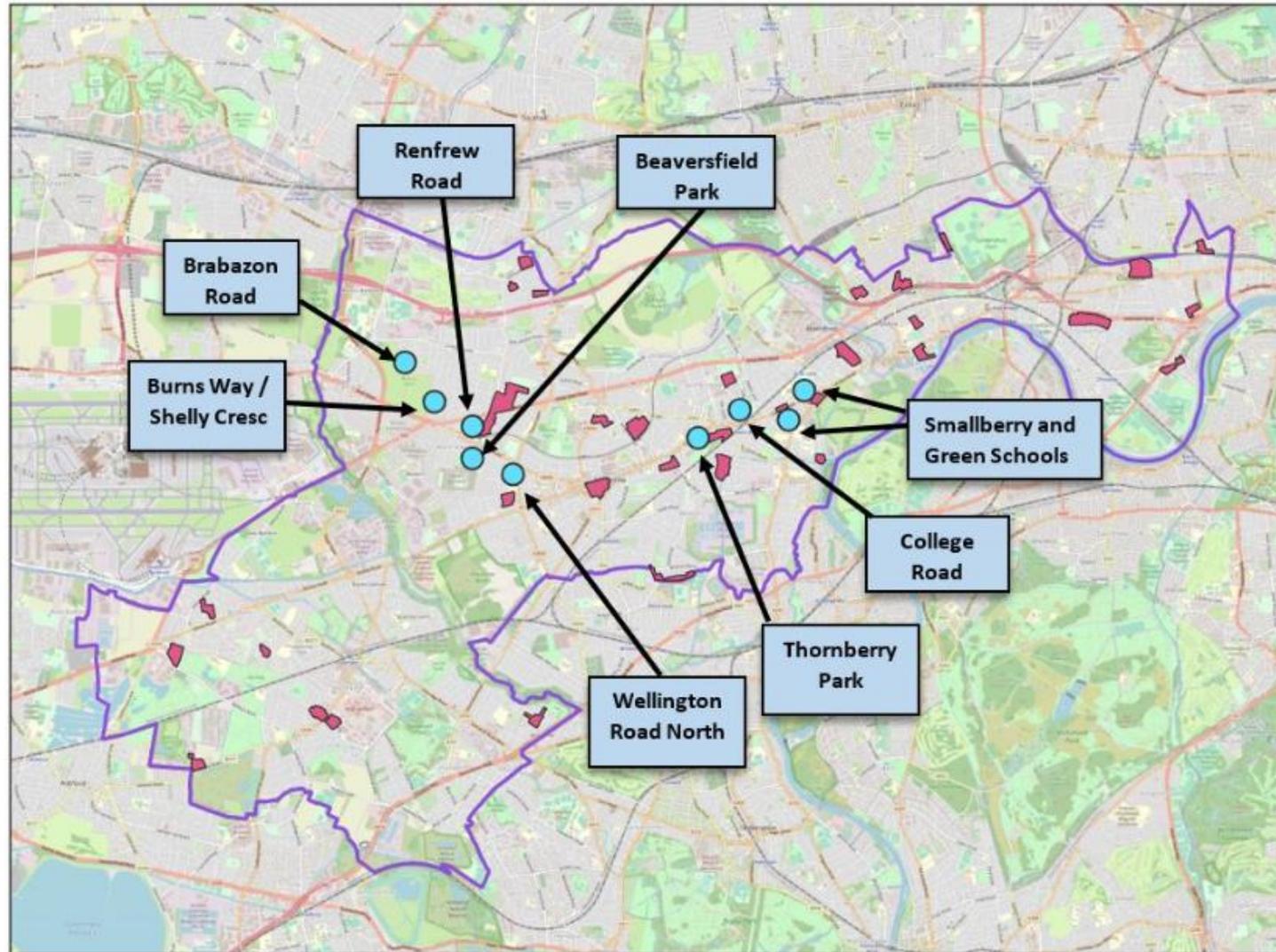
Source: Environment Agency

What are the multiple benefits of Raingardens and de-paving?

- Flood resilience
- Improved water quality (and air quality)
- Transform public space
- Community ownership
- Cooler cities
- Homes for wildlife
- Cheap to install and simple to maintain



Hounslow Raingardens Case Study



Map Legend

- Hotspots
- TWSP Schemes
- Borough Boundary

Open Street Map

Hotspots are areas where 15 or more properties have experienced flooding (SWMP, 2011).





Community



**Raingardens can
transform places**

Pledge 4:

GREEN & BLUE SPACE FOR ALL & A HOME FOR NATURE

"Actively bring back into use, at least one derelict or 'landbanked' green site, so it can become a nature reserve, playing field, park, growing space or wetland."

**Alice Roberts,
CPRE London**

Limbo London - green sites in ne...

This map identifies sites in London which are not being actively managed, possibly derelict, usually neglected, sometimes deliberately. These are more

543 views

Last edit was on 4 August 2025

Add layer Share Preview

Untitled layer

B&D / Redbridge / Havering / New...

Individual styles

New1-NR-BarringtonPlaying...

New1-NR-BarringtonPlaying...

New2-NR-LeighRdSportsGro...

New2-NR-LeighRdSportsGro...

New3-NR-BowerTrustLand (s...

New3-NR-BowerTrustLand

New4-NR-BecktonAlps (subm)

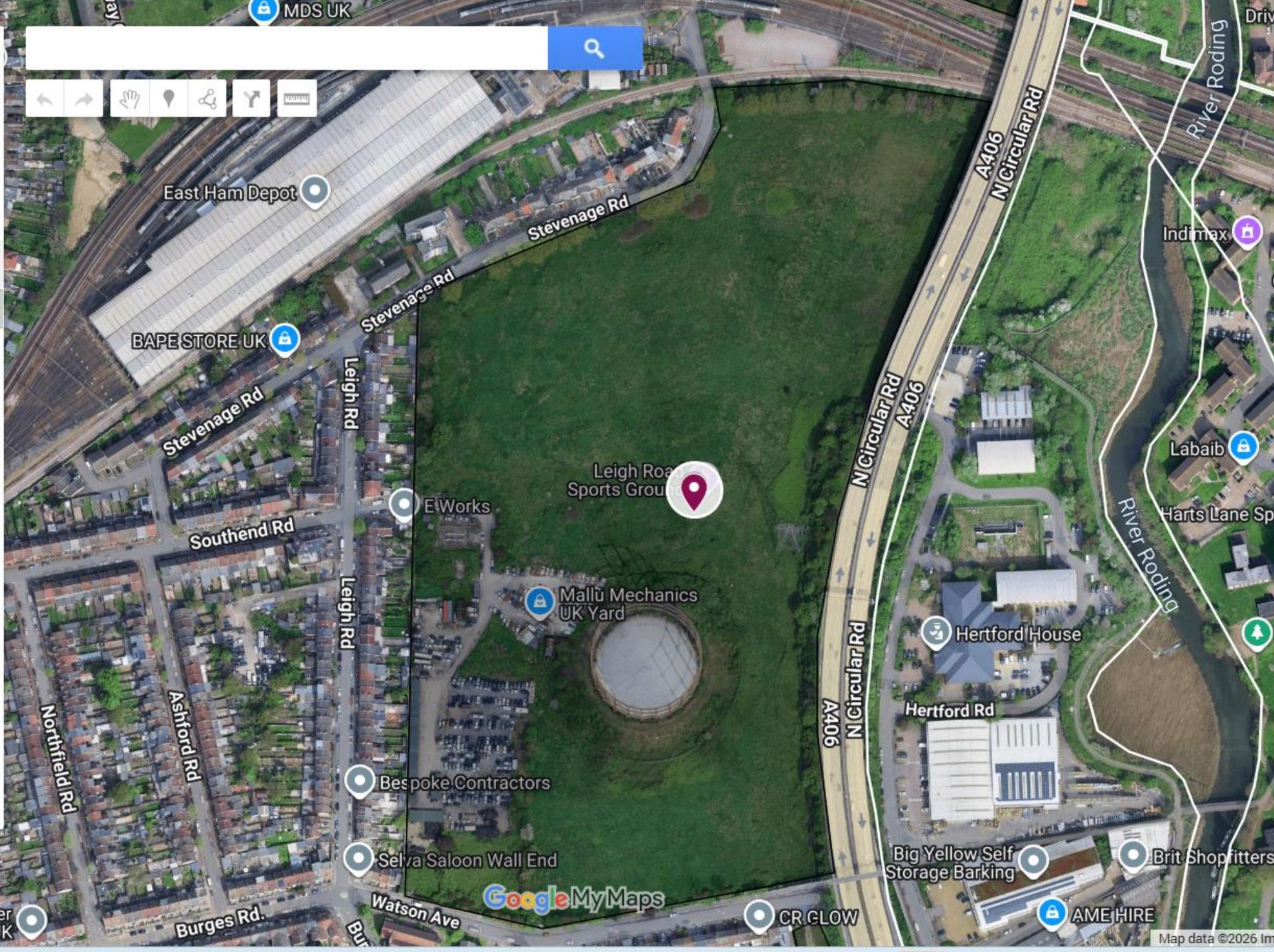
New4-NR-BecktonAlps

LBD1-LL-AdjacentRippleNatu...

LBD1-LL-AdjacentRippleNatu...

LBD2-LL-BarkingRiverside

LBD2-LL-BarkingRiverside



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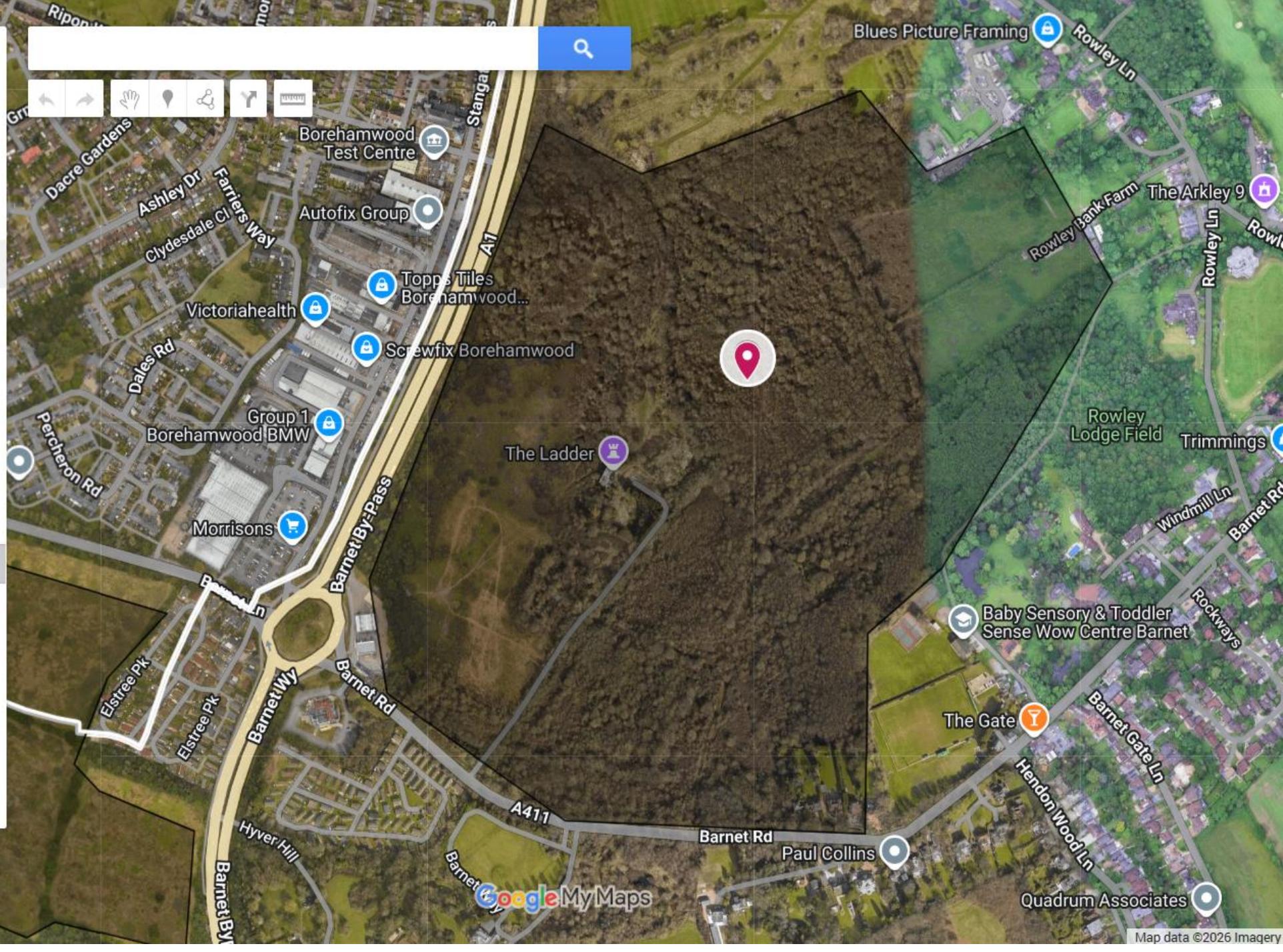
Last edit was on 4 August 2025

 Add layer  Share  Preview

Barnet

Individual styles

-  BAR2-LL-GalleyLn
-  BAR2-LL-GalleyLn
-  **BAR3-NR-Arkley**
-  BAR3-NR-Arkley (subm)
-  BAR4-LL-Scratchwood
-  BAR4-LL-Scratchwood
-  BAR5-NR/ LL- below eltree o...
-  BAR5-LL/NR- below eltree o...
-  BAR6-LL-NuttGrove1
-  BAR6-LL-NuttGrove1
-  BAR6-LL-NuttGrove2
-  BAR6-LL-NuttGrove2
-  BAR7-LL-NrCleopatraPark



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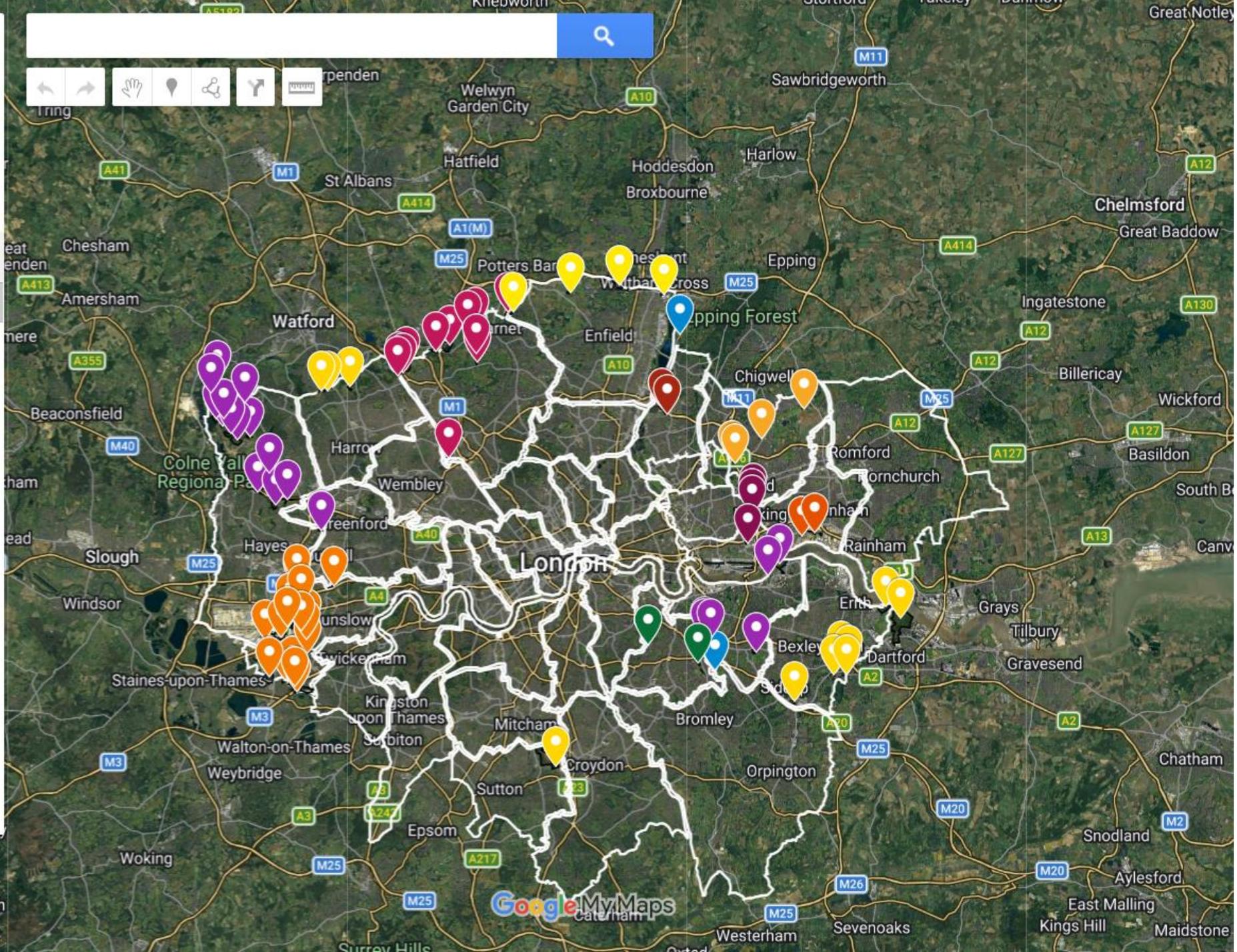
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**Tim Webb,
London Gardens Trust**

**Dave Morris, London
Friends of Green Spaces
Network**

Pledge 5:

GREEN & BLUE SPACE FOR ALL & A HOME FOR NATURE

"Ensure all green and blue spaces are properly funded, thrive and all are managed to Green Flag standards, and sign the Parks Charter."



**Pledge 6:
GREEN & BLUE SPACE
FOR ALL & A HOME FOR
NATURE**

"Protect Local Wildlife Sites, Green Belt, Metropolitan Open Land, valuable & heritage green spaces in your Local Plan or through Local Green Space, Fields in Trust or Village Green status."

**Helen Monger,
Open Spaces Society**

Introduction

A bit of history for the
Open Spaces Society:

- Commons,
- Rights of Way, and
- Village Greens

= PUBLIC RIGHTS OVER LAND



OSS lantern-slide collection

Statutory protections

Public Rights

- Village Green
- Registered Commons

Other Legal Protections

- Fields in Trust Deed of Dedication and other covenants
-

Planning

- NPPF - interaction with the Borough Local Plan
- + Neighbourhood Plans
- Designations – non statutory protection
 - Local Wildlife Sites
 - Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land
 - Local Green Spaces

Local Wildlife Site



Sydenham Hill Wood© Copyright N Chadwick and licensed for reuse under this Creative Commons Licence.

Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land



Crews Hill,
London Borough
of Enfield

[Source: unlocking-londons-green-belt-1024x.jpg \(1024×576\)](#)

Local Green Space



Lambeth Walk
Doorstep Green,
London Borough of
Lambeth

Lambeth Walk Doorstep Green, July 2020. Photograph
Helen Monger From: London Gardens Trust Inventory

What you can do now

- Sign up to the Pledges
 - Designate spaces in your Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans
 - Register Village Greens or dedicate land with Fields in Trust or other covenants.
-

A red fox is the central focus of the image, standing amidst a thick carpet of fallen autumn leaves in shades of yellow, orange, and brown. The fox has a reddish-brown coat with a white patch on its muzzle and chest. The background is a soft-focus green field, suggesting a park or natural area. The overall scene is peaceful and naturalistic.

Pledge 7:

GREEN & BLUE SPACE FOR ALL & A HOME FOR NATURE

"**Give** every community access to nature on their doorstep, and deliver London's nature recovery priorities in the borough, including new wildlife corridors and nature habitat."

**Richard Barnes,
London Wildlife Trust**



London
Wildlife
Trust

More Natural Capital Coalition: Pledge 7

Protecting wildlife sites & Access to Nature



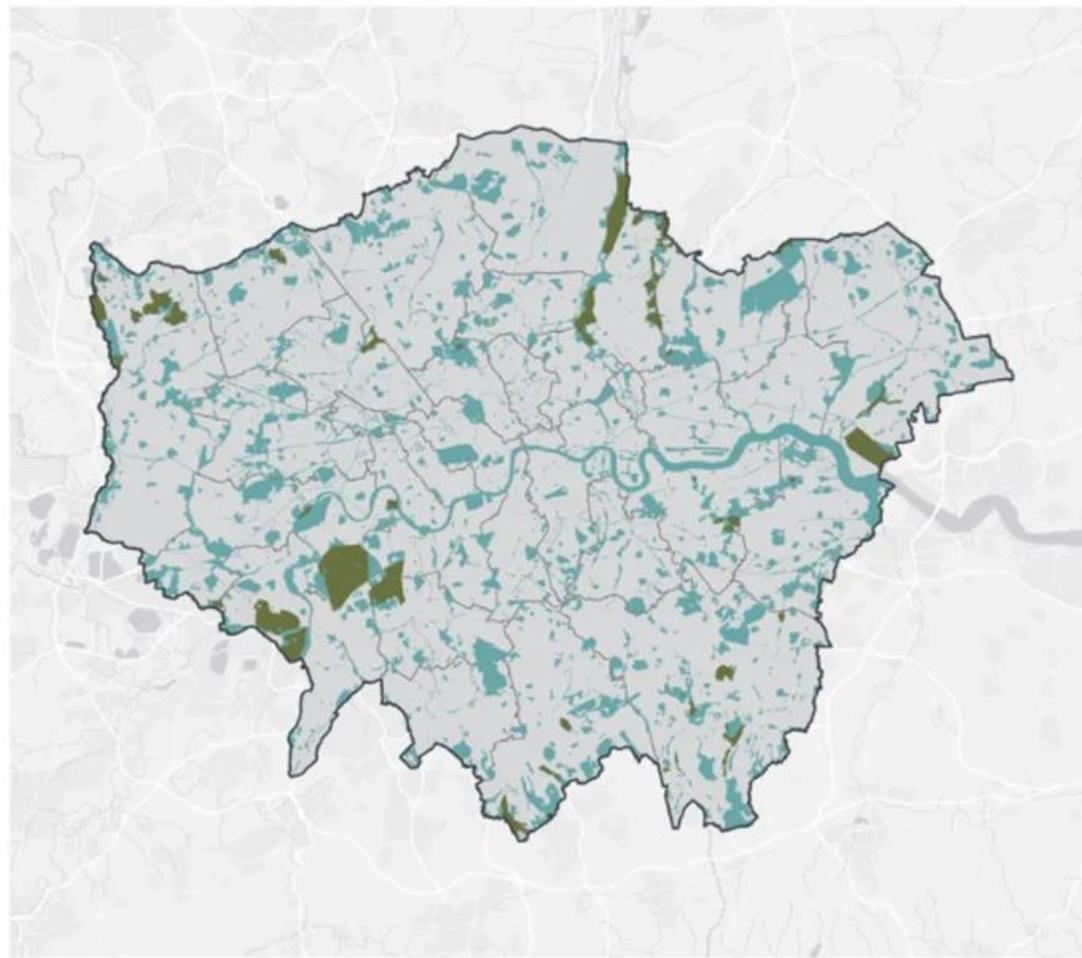


Boroughs need to take action!
This is practical and achievable within
a 4 year elected term, through a new
Local Plan!

Reminder about Local Plans!

- Statutory duty – 5 yearly reviews
- Set out vision for area
- Guide investment and new development
- Legal framework for planning applications
- Reflect up to date circumstances e.g. national policy;
evidence base
- Conformity with **London Plan**

London Plan Policy G6 - Biodiversity and access to nature



Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation and Sites of Special Scientific Interest

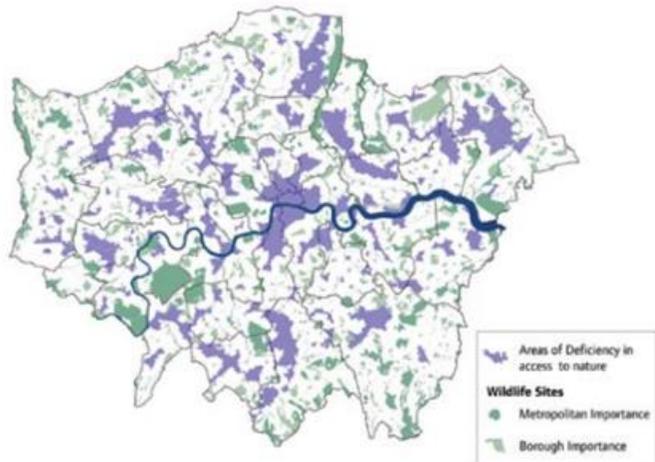
- Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Source: Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL)

Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2018)

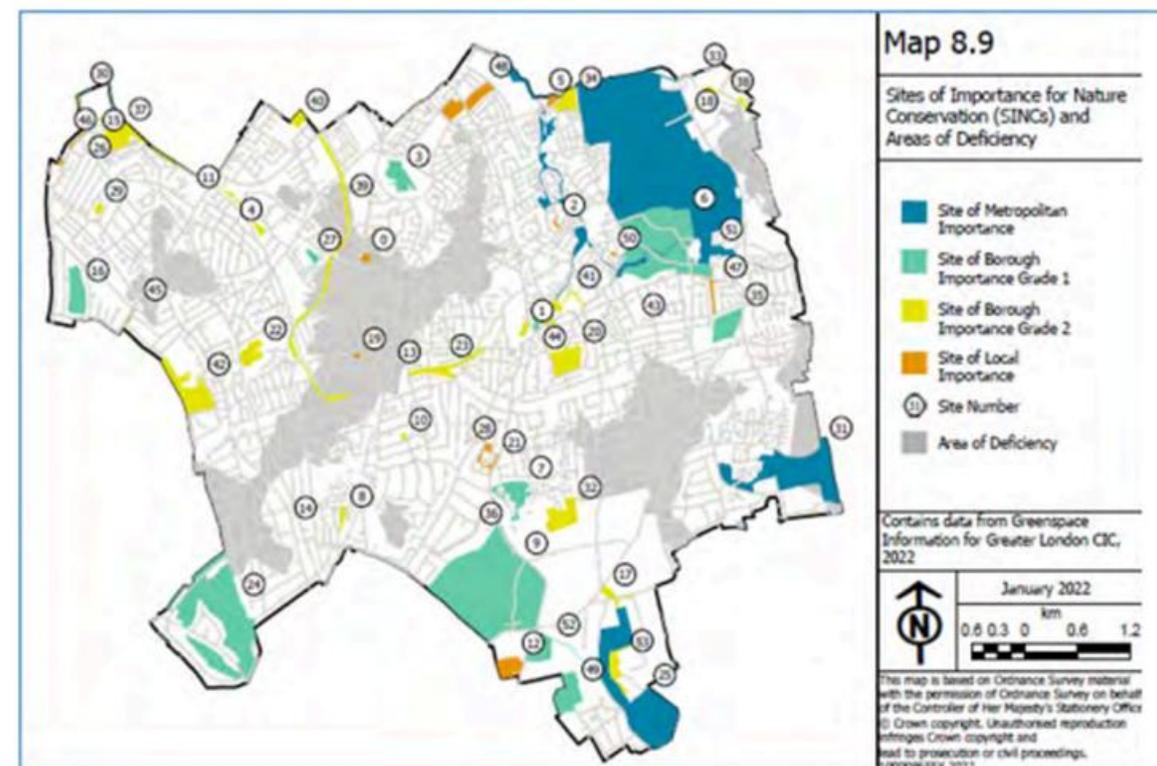
Boroughs, in developing Development Plans, should:

1) use up-to-date information about the natural environment and the relevant procedures to identify SINC and ecological corridors to identify coherent ecological networks



Policy G6 - Biodiversity and access to nature

Map 36.1: Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation and Areas of Deficiency



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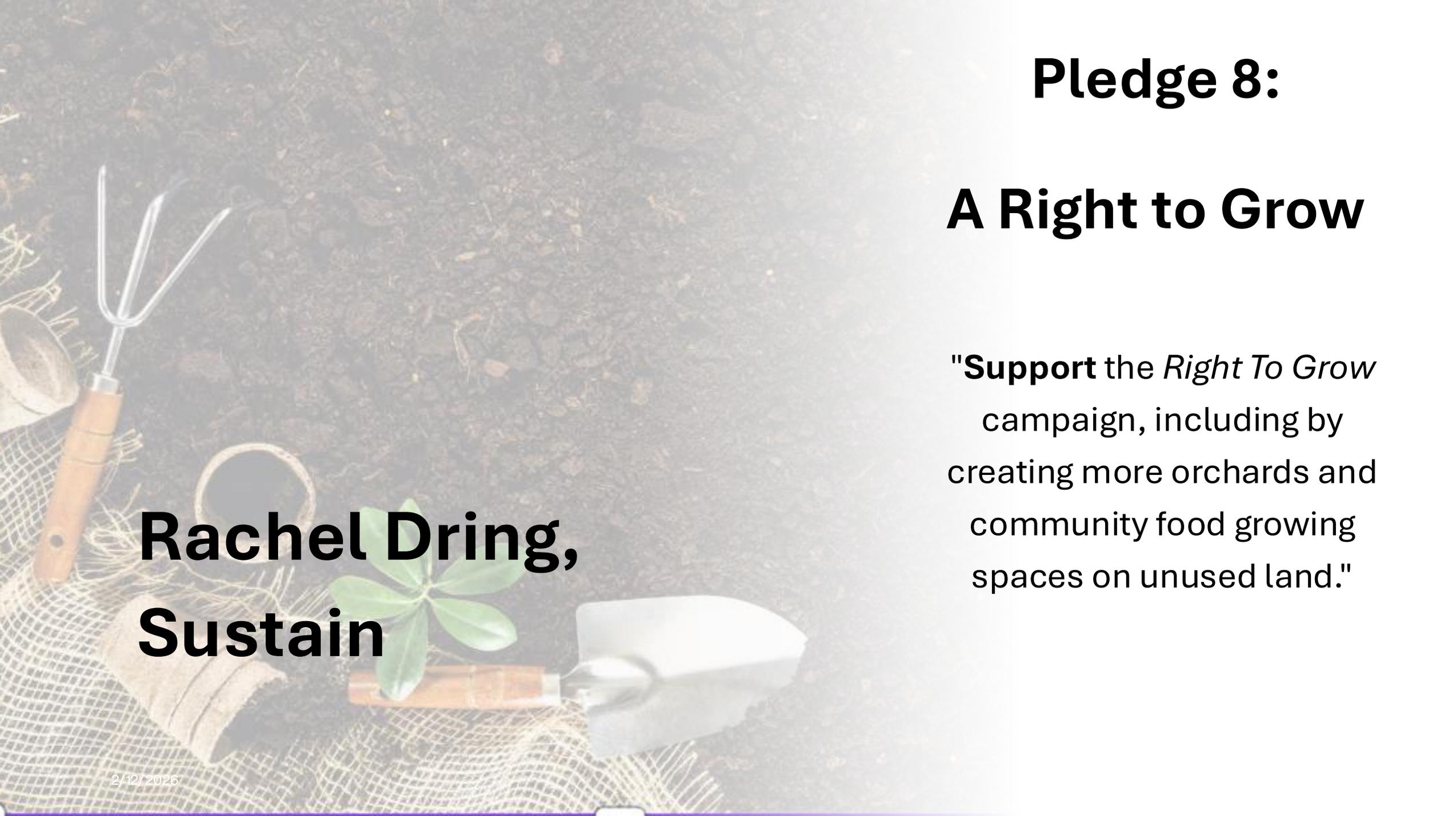
Boroughs, in developing Development Plans, should:

- 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

Pledge 8:

A Right to Grow

"**Support** the *Right To Grow* campaign, including by creating more orchards and community food growing spaces on unused land."



**Rachel Dring,
Sustain**

INSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGES TO COMMUNITY GROWING



- **LIMITED LAND ACCESS**
- **FRAGMENTED COUNCIL POLICIES
& AMBIGUOUS RESPONSIBILITY**
- **LOW PRIORITISATION OF
COMMUNITY GROWING**
- **DISCONNECT OF COMMUNITY
GROWING FROM AUTHORITIES'
WIDER FOOD AND CLIMATE
POLICIES**

From Open University study, Les Levidow

WHAT IS THE RIGHT TO GROW?



- **ACCESSIBLE LISTS/MAPS OF PUBLIC LAND**
- **REPLACING 'PERMISSION' WITH RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH**
- **UNCOMPLICATED, FREE LEASES FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS**
- **AUTHORITIES PRIORITISE COMMUNITY GROWING AND BUILD TRUST BETWEEN CITIZEN AND STATE**



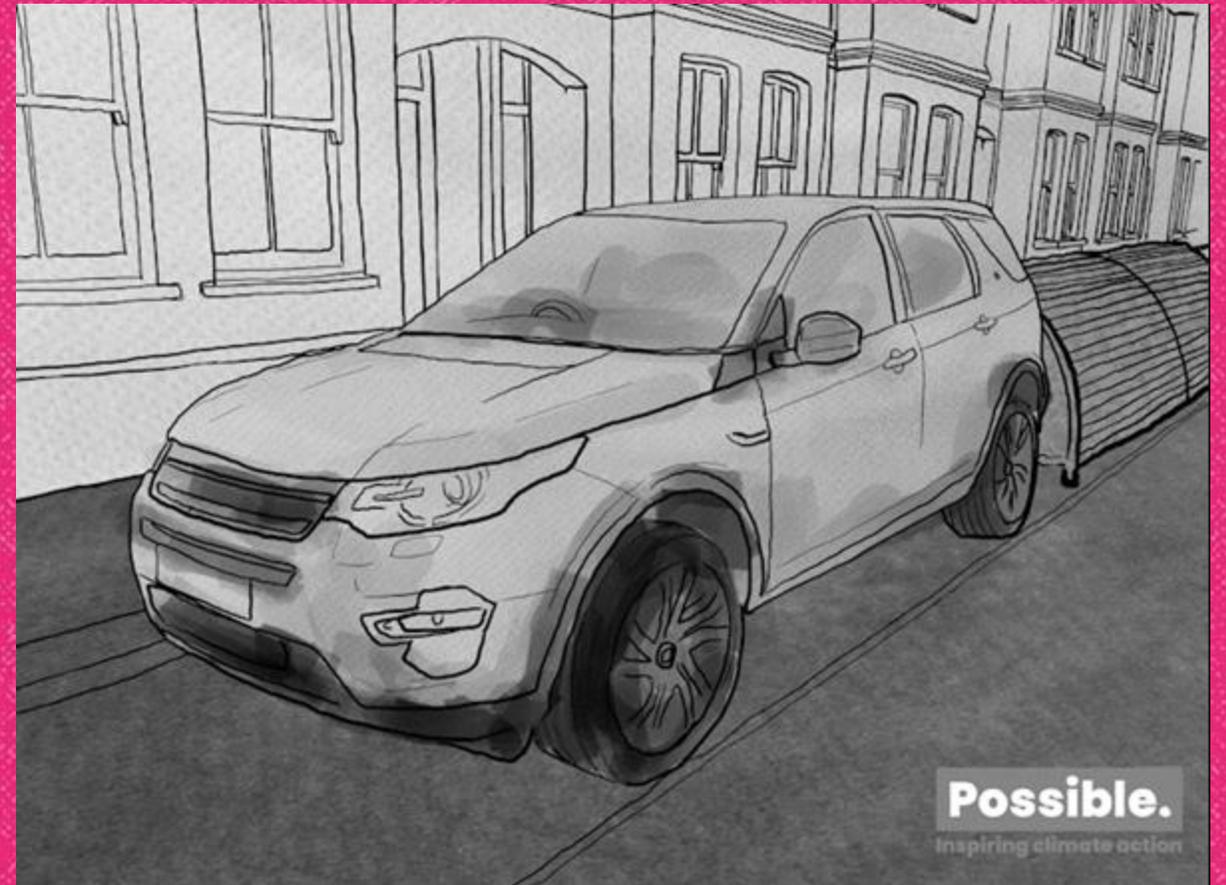
Pledge 9: Green & Healthy Streets

"Transform at least one street in your borough into a local, nature-rich park in a neighbourhood lacking public green space (like Alfred Place Gardens in Camden)."

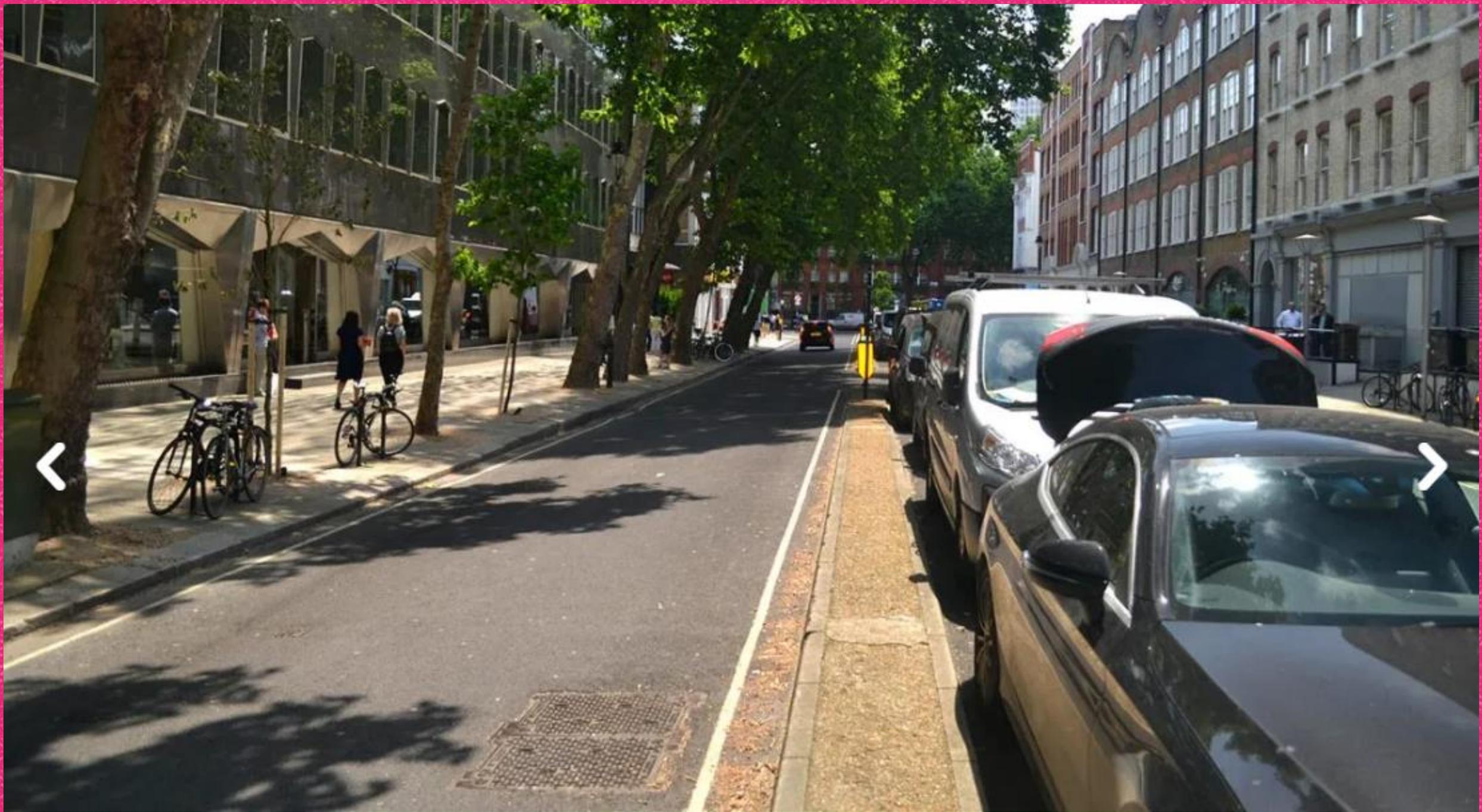
Carolyn Axtell, Possible

Pledge 9: Street Parks

**Carolyn Axtell,
Kerbside Greening Manager
at Possible**



9. **Transform** at least one street in your borough into a local, nature-rich park in a neighbourhood lacking public green space (like Alfred Place Gardens in Camden).





Low-income and minority ethnic people in England most at risk from dangerously hot homes

Exclusive: Homes are heating up as summers get hotter but least well-off are shouldering greatest risk, study finds

- [Why UK housing is dangerously unprepared for impact of climate crisis](#)
- [From shutters to reflective paint: how to prevent UK homes overheating](#)

Outdoor workers risk their lives during heatwaves. How many will die before politicians finally act?

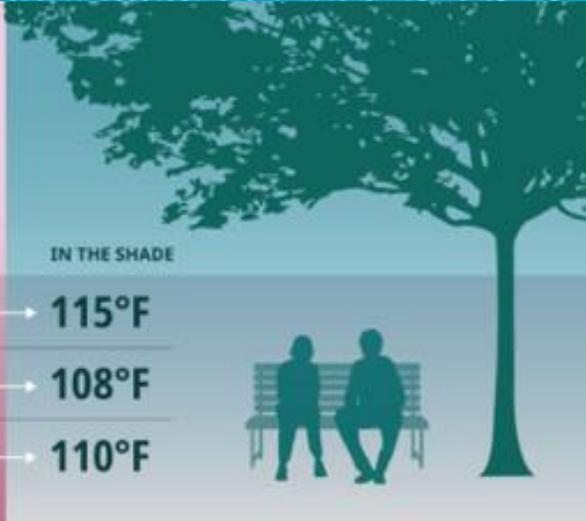
John Harris



There's been fury in Spain over the tragic death of a street cleaner. It's not hard to imagine something similar playing out in the UK

Shade Reduces Air, Surface, and Radiant Temperatures

	IN THE SUN	IN THE SHADE
Radiant Temperature (what we feel)	145°F	115°F
Air Temperature	110°F	108°F
Surface Temperature	130°F	110°F



The colour of the car is also crucial and can directly change how city surfaces hold on to heat. Photo: Pixabay

CLIMATE IMPACT CLIMATE SCIENCE

PARKED VEHICLES SIGNIFICANTLY INTENSIFY URBAN WARMING: REPORT



Parked cars can raise street temperatures by nearly four degrees...



...Whereas trees can reduce street temperatures by eight degrees

How can Possible support with this pledge?



We have lots of great resources on parklets (including a toolkit for local authorities) and repurposing car parking for urban greening

wearepossible.org/parklets-resources

We have funding from City Bridge Foundation to work with communities and councils in London Boroughs on Kerbside Greening - reallocating roadspace for kerbside tree planting, SUDS and raingardens. Get in touch to find out how we can work with you!

wearepossible.org/parklets-for-local-authorities

Community Parklets for Local Authorities

carolyn@wearepossible.org

A toolkit for local authorities in England and Wales that are looking to develop a community parklet policy or establish parklets in their area.

This information was created by Possible, in collaboration with Lambeth, Hackney and Waltham Forest Councils and the Parklets Campaign.

Possible is a UK charity on a mission to speed up climate action. We work in partnership with communities to design and build their own parklets, campaign to make it easier for communities to create parklets, and spread the word to residents and councils about the benefits this can have.

The Parklets Campaign, established in 2020, is a group of like-minded volunteers who want to help make London the parklet capital of the world. Their mission is to make it as easy to create a parklet on residential streets as it is to apply for a parking permit.



Possible.
Inspiring climate action

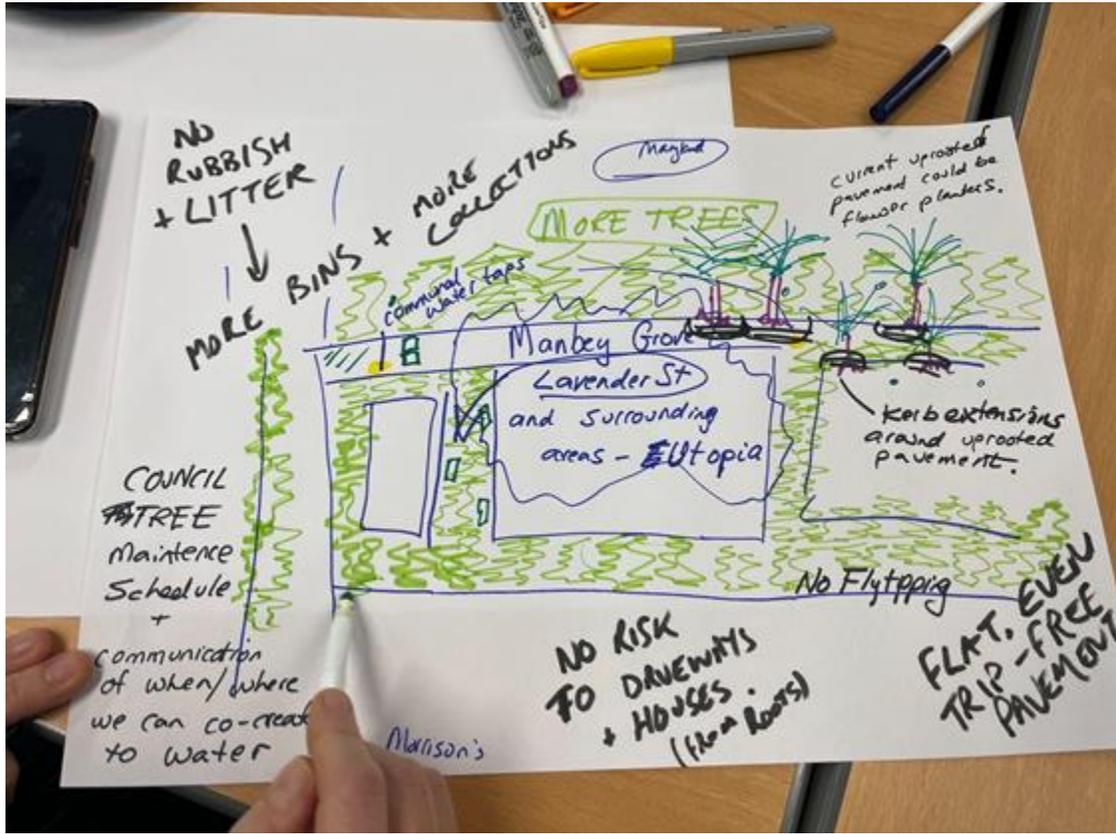
KERBSIDE GREENING MANBLEY GROVE

RIGHT TREE
RIGHT PLACE
NOT REPEATING
SAME MISTAKES



Possible.
Inspiring climate action





Possible.
Inspiring climate action



Forest Gate, Newham

Possible.
Inspiring climate action



What will happen after the workshops?

- Active Travel Academy will create a report with recommendations based on the outcomes of these workshops
- London Borough of Newham (Sustainable Transport) will draw up some options informed by the report and consult with residents on these options
- Possible has applied to the GLA's Green Roots Fund to pay for trees and tree pits
- Implementation will hopefully happen between November 2026 and March 2027
- Planting party to celebrate!



CITY BRIDGE
FOUNDATION

Fig. 2

The wider context shaping the 2025 LUFP Actions Update

National priorities

Reduce housing shortages

Strengthen economic growth

Develop green finance models

Achieve net zero

New or emerging pan-London evidence, spatial frameworks and policies

London Green Infrastructure Framework

Local Nature Recovery Strategy

(both expected to be finalised in 2025)

London Plan Update

(due in 2027)

London Surface Water Strategy

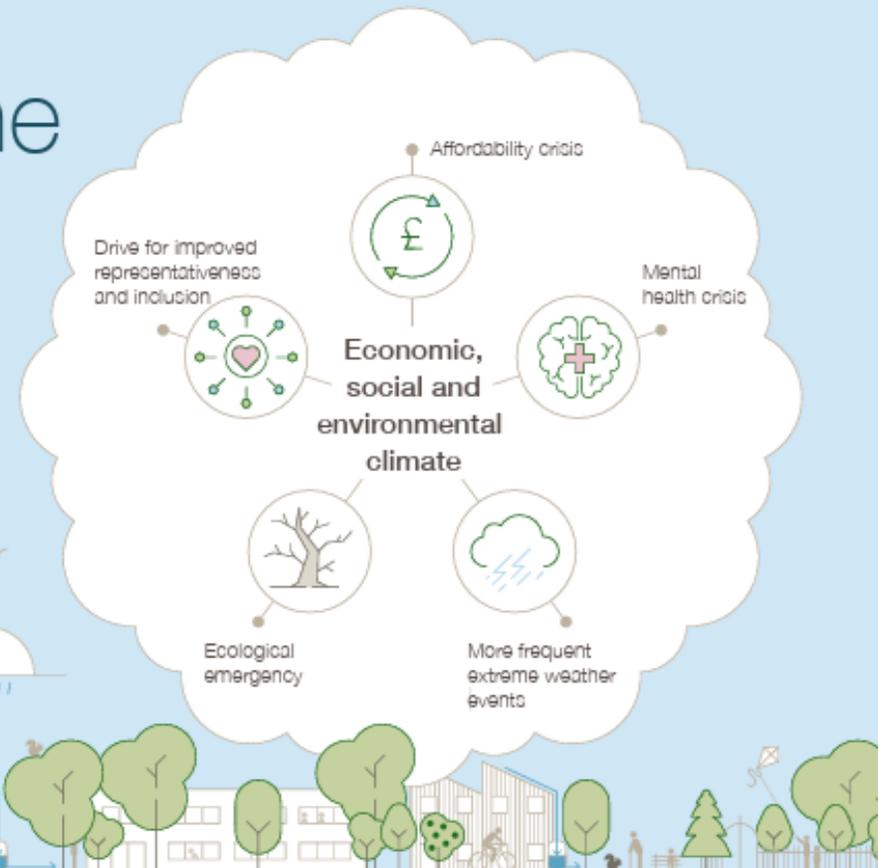
(due in 2025)

London Heat Risk Delivery Plan

(due in 2026)

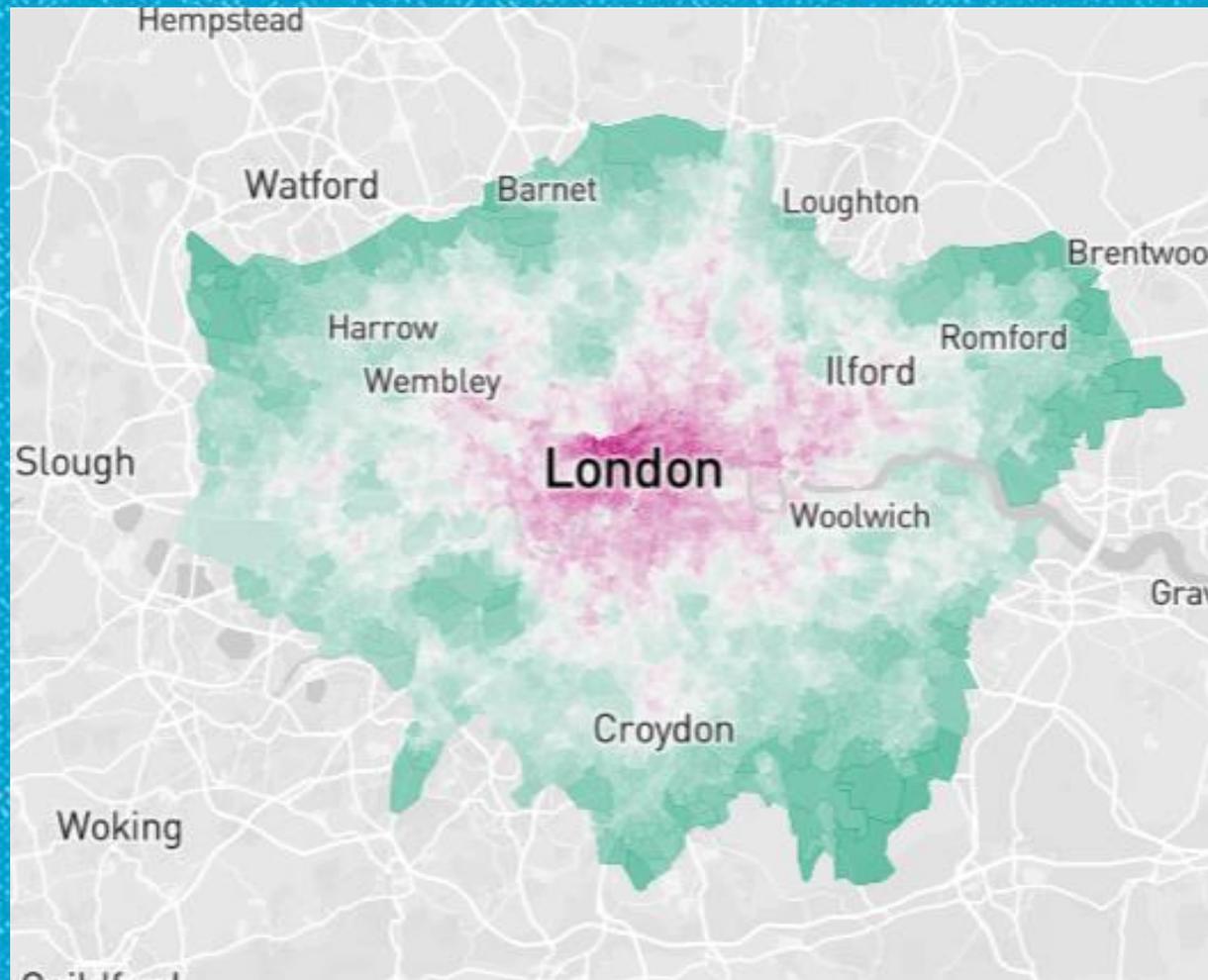
London Climate Resilience Review

(published in 2024)



- R&D phase - producing data analysis and interactive prioritisation maps. We collaborated with spatial data scientist Dr Nicolas Palominos to develop a methodology for identifying London neighbourhoods with the highest need for on-street parking to be converted to street trees and green space.
wearepossible.org/streettrees/
- Community engagement phase - working with Active Travel Academy and local partners to deliver workshops with small groups of local residents to understand their experiences & perceptions of trees, walkability/accessibility, heat waves, urban greening
- Designing and planting phase - Working with local authority partners to fundraise for and plant kerbside trees, using workshop outputs to inform decisions, with residents/workshop participants advocating for the schemes & stewarding the new trees

Our Street Trees Data Explorer





**Hi Tooting,
Notice anything different?**

Possible.
Inspiring climate action

Let's make it happen!
wearepossible.org/visions



Get in touch to find out more!

carolyn.axtell@wearepossible.org



Pledge 10

Green & Healthy Streets

"**Deliver** healthy, safe streets with lower traffic, including through liveable neighbourhoods and reallocating parking spaces for urban greening, tree planting and benches."

**David Harrison,
London Living Streets**



Source: <https://www.healthystreetsscorecard.london/>



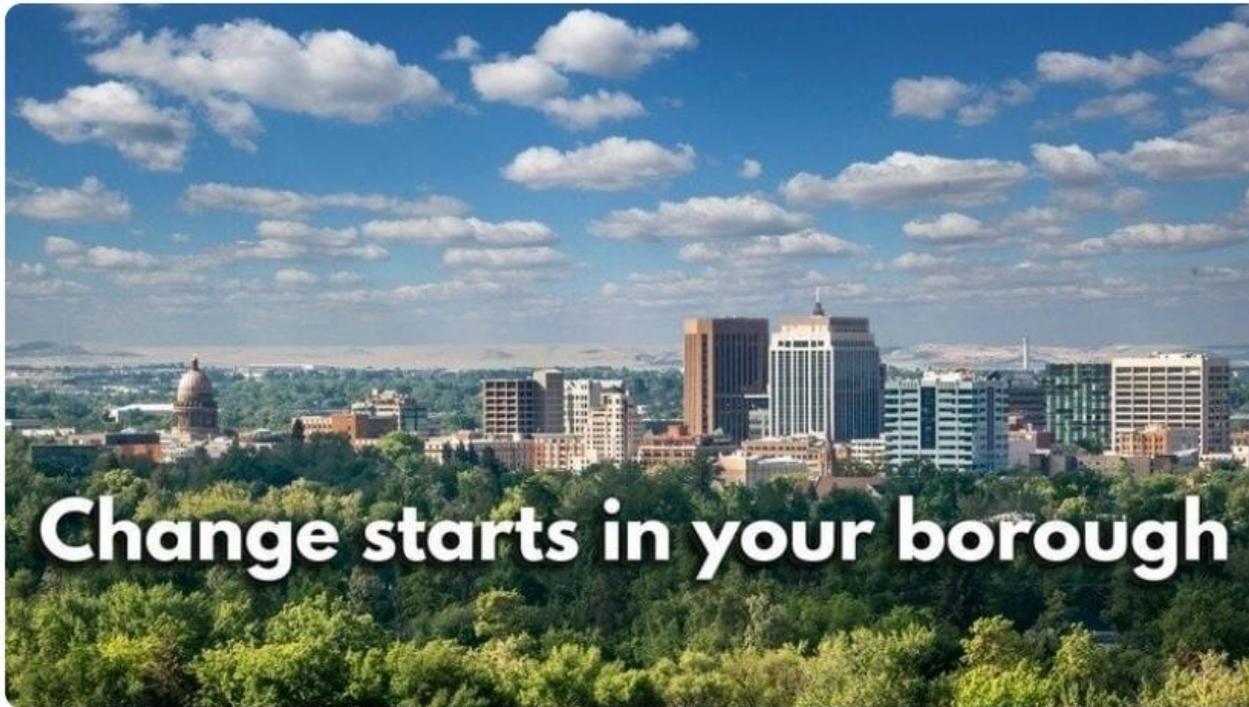
Back the 10 Environmental Pledges

May 2026 London borough elections

The More Natural Capital Coalition* is inviting candidates to support the 10 practical pledges shown below, designed to protect nature, improve access to green and blue space, and deliver environmental benefits for local communities. These pledges have been developed with leading environmental organisations and can be delivered within a single council term.

Sign here to show your support

Sign now to ask your May 2026 election candidate to back 10 Environmental Pledges!



The Issue

We are a group of leading environment charities, including the London Wildlife Trust and Woodland Trust, working to protect and enhance London's natural environment for people and wildlife.

We've set out 10 vital but practical actions we desperately need your borough candidates to commit to in order to protect people and nature, and deliver real benefits for our local communities. By signing here, you are asking your

14

Verified signatures

Sign this petition

First name

Last name

Email

Islington, EC1M
United Kingdom



- Yes! Tell me if this petition wins, and how I can help other relevant petitions
- No. I don't want to hear about this petition's progress or other relevant petitions.

Sign petition