

London's plan for nature

Key information

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Introduction

The **London Assembly Environment Committee** is holding a one-off meeting to explore the implications of new national and local spatial planning approaches for London's environment and biodiversity.

Meeting aims and objectives (Terms of Reference)

In this one-off meeting, the Committee will explore the implications of new national and local spatial planning approaches for London's environment and biodiversity. The Committee will scrutinise the draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for London, prepared by the GLA, and explore the priorities that it sets for nature and biodiversity in the capital. The Committee will consider this in the context of the Mayor's consultation on the principles of the next London Plan ('Towards a new London Plan'), and the London Green Infrastructure Framework (LGIF), which are also being developed.

Key issues

- The Mayor is responsible for the preparation of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Greater London - one of 48 being produced nationwide. Every strategy must contain a local habitat map and a written statement of biodiversity priorities. The GLA states its aim is for "London's ecological network to be bigger, better, and more joined up." The GLA aims to publish a draft LNRS for consultation in late May / early June 2025.

- National guidance on LNRS is produced by Natural England. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) released updated guidance in February 2025 which states that information contained in the LNRS may be a ‘material consideration’ in the planning system. All public authorities in England now also have a legal duty “to consider how they can conserve and enhance biodiversity” and in complying with this, they must “have regard” to the LNRS. Wildlife and nature organisations have raised concerns about proposed changes in the Planning and Infrastructure Bill, which could undermine these measures, and other protections.
- In May 2025, the Mayor launched a consultation on key principles to inform the development of the next London Plan. This included a proposal to release parts of London’s green belt to build new homes. ‘Towards a new London Plan’ states that the Mayor wants to ensure that “any release of the green belt to help address the housing crisis makes the best use of land and meets strict requirements. This includes... increasing biodiversity and access to good-quality green spaces as part any developments.”
- The GLA state that the new London Plan will “help prioritise where greening should be protected, enhanced and/or connected to help nature recover and maximise other benefits for Londoners”, and suggests using the LNRS and LGIF to inform these decisions. The consultation also proposes creating a distinction between Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) and green belt, and protecting MOL from green belt reviews.
- The London Plan consultation also seeks information about how the Urban Greening Factor (UGF), a tool to increase the provision of green infrastructure, has been implemented in London, and “whether it can be clarified or improved to make it easier to implement”. This includes whether it should apply to more development types and “how it can work with other requirements such as national mandatory BNG (biodiversity net gain).”
- The GLA is also developing a new London Green Infrastructure Framework (LGIF). The GLA says the LGIF will “provide a vision and new spatial framework to target and prioritise green and blue infrastructure across London so that nature and green space can flourish and is accessible to all Londoners.” The LGIF will replace the existing [All London Green Grid](#) and [Green Infrastructure Focus Map](#).

Key questions

1. Does the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) provide sufficient information to inform decisions about how to protect and enhance nature in London? If not, what is missing?
2. What processes are there for Londoners to feed into decisions to ensure that the existing value of green spaces is understood and able to be protected?
3. Can the Mayor release land in the green belt for development and still improve biodiversity in London overall?
4. What resources are there to take forward the priorities identified in the LNRS?
5. How well do national priorities, such as the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) apply to London, and how well do they work in conjunction with the Urban Greening Factor (UGF)?

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