London Green Infrastructure Framework (LGIF) and London Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

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What is the London Green Infrastructure Framework (LGIF)?

The London Green Infrastructure Framework (LGIF) will provide London's spatial evidence to target and prioritise new, improved and protected green infrastructure (GI). It will help decision makers across London optimise GI benefits to meet the social, environmental and economic needs of Londoners. It will provide up to date, London-wide spatial data and priorities for green and blue infrastructure. It will help the Mayor/GLA, borough planners, green space landowners and managers, developers and communities consider how best to plan, fund, design and deliver GI. It will help prioritise strategic locations and types of intervention for the protection, enhancement and creation of green and blue infrastructure.

It will comprise spatial mapping and data, providing a comprehensive evidence base to enable decision makers to identify area of highest need for GI, and a framework document which will set a strategic vision and spatial priorities for London's GI network. Using data layers across a range of criteria, users will be able to identify specific location characteristics such as an area with high biodiversity value, an area prone to flooding, or an area with deficiency in access to nature. This will help decision makers identify optimum locations for investment in GI, understand trade-offs and ensure vital green space is protected.

The LGIF will replace the GLA's existing All London Green Grid (ALGG) and the Green Infrastructure Focus Map and will be developed alongside and dovetail with the emerging London Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), which will provide the biodiversity layer(s) of the LGIF.

What is the London Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)?

The GLA is responsible for preparing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for London. LNRSs are a new system of 48 spatial biodiversity strategies in England, required by law under the Environment Act 2021.

The London LNRS will comprise an updated map of existing, designated wildlife areas and prioritised opportunities for nature recovery, and a statement of London's strategic biodiversity priorities.

Development of the LNRS will closely involve all 33 of the London Boroughs (including the City of London), as well as working closely with our six neighbouring counties (Hertfordshire, Kent, Essex, Buckinghamshire, Surrey, and Berkshire) and Natural England.

The aim is for London's ecological network to be bigger, better, and more joined up. The LNRS will provide the biodiversity data and map layer of the LGIF.

Why are these documents being developed?

The London Environment Strategy committed the GLA to update the ALGG. This is now being developed in alignment with an update to the GI Focus Map, the development of the LNRS and the evidence gathering needed for future updates to the [London Plan](#) and [London Environment Strategy](#). The updated ALGG will take a different approach to the original document and be recast as the LGIF.

It is also a key recommendation in the London Climate Resilience Review for the Mayor to develop a strategic framework for the delivery of GI across London to inform funding programmes and convene partners to drive a strategic approach.

Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) are a new system of spatial biodiversity strategies in England, required by law under the Environment Act 2021. The GLA is responsible for preparing an LNRS for London.

What is the difference between the purpose of the LGIF and LNRS?

The LNRS is specifically about nature recovery, whereas the LGIF is an umbrella framework that also brings in the wider benefits of GI.

The LGIF is the overarching framework for all things related to green infrastructure in London. This includes the wider benefits of GI, and a wider range of both human-led and nature-led issues than the LNRS. The LNRS is a plan for prioritising action for nature, identifying specific measures to achieve these priorities and areas where implementing measures will achieve the most for nature. The LGIF is a pan-London framework that can be applied across multiple aims and that considers how to prioritise across a range of issues.

The LNRS will provide the nature-led/ biodiversity layer(s) of the LGIF, which will also include layers across the wider benefits of GI.

Both documents will function as evidence for future updates to the London Environment Strategy and the London Plan.

Will the LGIF and LNRS have weight in the planning system?

GLA teams are identifying how the LGIF should be considered as part of future updates to the London Plan. Outside of the planning system, the LGIF, like the GI Focus Map, will be useful in identifying priority areas for GLA funding, but will be much more impactful if the areas are recognised more widely by other stakeholders.

Public bodies are legally required to 'have regard' to the LNRS, and the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs must issue guidance to local planning authorities about how they must comply with the duty. This guidance is currently being prepared by Government and is not yet published. Once this guidance is released, the GLA will consider how this will fit into any London Plan update. In

addition, the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 (LURA) amends the GLA Act to state that 'the spatial development strategy must take account of any local nature recovery strategy'. The LURA also requires neighbourhood plans, local plans, minerals and waste local plans, and supplementary plans to 'take account' of the LNRS.

How will the LGIF and LNRS development process be coordinated?

LNRS Regulations require the LNRS to identify 'areas where the recovery or enhancement of biodiversity could make a particular contribution to other environmental benefits' and the statutory LNRS guidance notes the need to consider 'co-benefits' of nature recovery, such as Nature Based Solutions or ecosystem services. Given the focus of the LGIF on the wider benefits of green infrastructure, the LNRS will likely be led by other elements of the LGIF in considering where nature recovery will contribute to wider benefits.

Data management and stakeholder engagement will be co-ordinated across the LGIF and LNRS. The specific role and the responsibility of the LNRS, within the LGIF, is to focus on identifying species and habitat priorities, then identifying specific measures to aid their recovery. This will be a focused approach engaging key influential and technical stakeholders. Using this list, opportunity areas will be identified spatially, where recovery for these species and habitats would have the biggest impact, engaging with a broader spectrum of stakeholders.

The LGIF data will focus more widely on topics such as:

- Access to open space
- Active travel
- Air quality
- Flood and heat risk
- Land development opportunity areas

The LGIF will also feature social demographic data to help users understand the social characteristics in any location. Data such as indices of multiple deprivation, and other proxy health data could be used to help users prioritise interventions in areas of greatest need.

Data will be categorised into themed areas matching those used in the Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework as follows:

- Nature rich beautiful places
- Active and healthy places
- Thriving and prospering communities
- Improved water management
- Resilient and climate positive places

The LGIF (containing the LNRS) will be the primary spatial evidence base for GI-related updates to the London Environment Strategy and the London Plan. It is these documents that will take forward any new strategic priorities and objectives.

What are the government requirements for how we develop the LNRS?

The LNRS will be driven by a written Statement of Biodiversity Priorities, which forms the first part of the LNRS process. The second part, the 'Local Habitat map' of the LNRS will comprise two elements; 'areas of particular importance for biodiversity', which consists of existing protected sites (including both nationally and locally designated sites) and irreplaceable habitats; and 'areas that could become of particular importance', which are prioritised opportunity areas to focus action for nature recovery. The Local Habitat Map does not introduce any new designations into planning, nor does the LNRS infer any new protections to areas identified on the Local Habitat Map. Any material considerations in planning terms, towards the Local Habitat Map, still await formal confirmation/guidance from government (although planning is required to 'take account' of the LNRS, as set out above). However, as an area that could become of particular importance will be a focus for nature recovery, it has potential in the future to be designated as a SINC by boroughs. This would depend on the change for nature being delivered and would have to meet the stringent criteria associated with SINC designation.

Who will be involved in the development of the LGIF and LNRS?

As a new approach to strategic GI, it will be important to ensure that key stakeholders have an opportunity to help shape the scope and format of the LGIF as well as input into its content. The development of the LGIF and LNRS will involve a wide range of stakeholders including local authorities, major landowners and developers, environmental NGOs, community representative organisations and pan-London partnerships such as the London Green Infrastructure Partnership and the London Urban Forest Partnership. The London Boroughs (including City of London) and Natural England have a statutory role in developing the LNRS as 'supporting authorities'. GLA stakeholders will also be involved including the teams responsible for the London Plan, Regeneration, Climate Change Adaptation and City Intelligence, as well as wider GLA group organisations.

We will invite selected stakeholders to workshops so that a suitable variety of expertise, roles and user groups can input.

Will Londoners have an opportunity to influence these pieces of work?

The LGIF will form a critical part of the spatial evidence base underpinning any update to the London Environment Strategy and London Plan. Public consultation will be carried out as part of the development of these plans allowing London's communities and other stakeholders an opportunity to influence the resulting output.

There is a statutory requirement for public consultation on the draft LNRS, and we are strongly encouraged to engage communities during preparation of the draft. Sustain and London National Park City have been commissioned to work with boroughs and communities to support this engagement.

How will this work relate to the London Plan and London Environment Strategy?

The LGIF will form the green infrastructure spatial evidence base for any update to both the London Environment Strategy and the London Plan. The LGIF will consist of

a spatial map and framework document outlining strategic priorities for London's green infrastructure. These will align with the objectives, policies and proposals outlined in both the London Environment Strategy and the London Plan. The London LNRS will in effect be the nature layer(s) of the LGIF and is also being framed to complement the existing London Environment Strategy objectives and policies. The final LNRS strategic biodiversity priorities will inform update/review of the London Environment Strategy objectives, policies and proposals. As set out above, the London Plan will need to take account of the LNRS when it is reviewed.

The diagram below sets out how the LGIF is expected to fit with other environmental strategies across London.

How will the LGIF relate to Natural England's GI Framework?

Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework, launched in January 2023, provides England-wide GI guidance and mapping. It comprises:

- **Green Infrastructure Principles:** the why, what and how of good green infrastructure.
- **Green Infrastructure Standards:** guidance on national standards for green infrastructure quantity and quality.
- **Green Infrastructure Maps:** mapped environmental, socio-economic datasets to support the standards.
- **Green Infrastructure Planning and Design Guide:** practical, evidence-based advice on how to design good quality green infrastructure.
- **Green Infrastructure Process Journeys:** guides on how to apply all the products in the Green Infrastructure Framework.

In recognition of the scale and character of the urban context in London, the LGIF will provide more detailed and London-specific mapping and strategic priorities which will add to and refine the England-wide guidance for the specific case of London.

When will the LNRS and LGIF be completed?

The aim is to publish both the LGIF and LNRS by Summer 2025.

How will we ensure the LGIF and LNRS are used / delivered?

There will be a robust programme of stakeholder engagement during development of the LGIF. Early involvement and contribution of stakeholders will ensure the LGIF meets user needs and supports better awareness and use in the long term. Following its initial launch, there will be a comprehensive programme of awareness raising and subsequent training to roll out the LGIF. The mapping output of the LGIF will also feature a comprehensive user guide which will include a playbook of use cases.

As an evidence base for the updated London Plan and London Environment Strategy, the LGIF will guide policies and priorities for Mayoral investment in GI including by GLA Group organisations.

There is a statutory requirement to take account of the LNRS in local planning. In addition, the collaborative process of preparing the LNRS is intended to leave a legacy of partnership working through the 'Nature Recovery Forum'. The LNRS is intended to focus nature recovery activity, and therefore will be a first port of call to inform any organisation or person planning action for nature. Furthermore, the LNRS will define where areas are of 'strategic significance' for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). This means that there is an uplift in BNG units if they deliver the measures set out in the LNRS, which will act as an incentive for delivering nature recovery in line with the LNRS. Defra has also indicated that the LNRS will inform future Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS).

How would strategic uplift for BNG interact with the mitigation hierarchy?

The LNRS will not change the statutory BNG process set out by Defra, it will simply be the evidence base by which areas of 'strategic significance' are defined for the purposes of the BNG metric. Biodiversity metric principle 4, set out by Defra, states that use of the BNG metric does not override the ecological mitigation hierarchy or existing biodiversity projections or statutory obligations.

The LNRS will identify strategic opportunities for nature recovery but will not introduce any new mechanisms for achieving these.

For the LNRS, what process will be used to identify sites for habitat creation? Other local authorities have used a 'call for sites' model.

For the LNRS, 'areas that could become of particular importance' will be identified through a combination of spatial modelling and engagement with key parties. We will not be holding a discreet call for sites, but there will be an opportunity for landowners and land managers to highlight opportunities on their land through the engagement process, including via an interactive mapping tool.

It is the developer's responsibility to identify how and where they will meet BNG requirements in accordance with Defra's BNG metric. The LNRS will provide an opportunity for members of the public to let us know where they think action should be taken for nature recovery, which will be one of the factors feeding into the identification of 'areas that could become of particular importance'.

How will local community needs for greenspace be balanced with environmental/ecological data in terms of creating local strategic priorities?

A key purpose of integrating the LNRS into the LGIF is to consider how various aspects and benefits of green infrastructure can be balanced. While the LNRS is nature-focused, it will also consider where 'win-wins' can be achieved and will seek to be realistic in terms of acknowledging where other land uses may conflict with nature recovery.

Is there scope for AI be used to help aid the LGIF and LNRS process? e.g. identifying strategic locations for local nature/species recovery

We currently have no plans to incorporate AI into the production of the LGIF and LNRS and will instead largely draw on suitable technical evidence bases and spatial modelling.

The LNRS seems very habitat focused. Will it also cover major factors which adversely impact wildlife such as pesticide use, pollution from artificial lighting, motor vehicles etc?

Defra has advised that the LNRS priorities should primarily be framed in terms of habitat creation and enhancement. However, there is scope for the LNRS to recognise the causes of species and habitat loss and degradation and to include measures to address them.

Will the map data be downloadable as shapefiles so that Local Authorities are able to use them alongside our internal mapping?

Data will be downloadable for further use as far as possible. We are yet to finalise the datasets the LGIF will use, or the analysis approach, so what can be shared may depend on restrictions on any data, but open data will be used as far as possible.

We recognise that there is value in providing sharable datasets that Local Authorities and other stakeholders can use alongside their own local-level data. We'll be working though how this might be achieved over the course of the project, as well as discussing functionality in more detail with stakeholders at a future engagement workshop.

What kind of maps specifically relate to social justice and equity?

We are still identifying the data that will be most appropriate to use in the Framework and will be talking more with stakeholders about this at forthcoming workshops. We welcome any suggestions!

For social justice and equity, we will likely be focussing on demographic data to help identify communities and areas of London that face disadvantage, with a view to

prioritising GI to areas it can have the greatest positive impact in overcoming these inequalities.

Are there plans to provide best practice / case studies with this framework e.g. for nature rich and beautiful places - guidance around land management, species planting etc.

This is yet to be decided. It is important to recognise that there is a lot of good practice/case study material already available and therefore we will consider how to most effectively link with this existing work. Any feedback on significant gaps within the existing best practice material would be welcomed.

What do you envisage the process will be to get sites designated /protected?

The LNRS will identify areas where action for nature recovery should be focused but does not introduce any new designations. However, as an area that could become of particular importance will be a focus for nature recovery, it has potential in the future to be designated as a SINC by boroughs. This would depend on the change for nature being delivered and would have to meet the stringent criteria associated with SINC designation.

What assessment method is being used to assess multiple benefits of areas covered by the LGIF? As well as measuring natural capital, will there be a mechanism/ indicators for measuring social value created?

We have not identified specific assessment tools or defined the assessment methodology yet - we are currently identifying which datasets will best illustrate / help assess the different functions of GI and related needs - and the stakeholder workshops will be an opportunity to help inform that decision-making.

The LGIF is a strategic framework for London at the city scale. At the project or site level, it will remain with GI asset owners or managers to measure and assess the impact and benefit at a more local level, but the LGIF will help to identify which benefits it would be most valuable to measure and assess in a particular area.

How will large landowners (that are not local authorities) be engaged?

Landowners and land managers are important parties in preparation of the LGIF and LNRS. We have identified the largest landowners in London and will be inviting them to input via workshops and other engagement routes.