



SCRUTINY PANEL 3 – 2022/2023

REGROW, REWILD AND RECYCLE

FINAL REPORT

11 MAY 2023

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CHAIR'S OVERVIEW



Councillor Miriam Rice
(Panel Chair)

The Regrow, Rewild and Recycle Scrutiny Review Panel knew it had a substantial brief, and the areas covered would coincide with a number of hot topics in Ealing.

For that reason, this panel demanded much more than meetings and discussions, and I was delighted that we managed to pack in such an excellent programme of site visits. North Acton Playing Fields to visit ARTification, Horsenden Farm, Perivale Park to witness the fruits of the Greenford to Gurnell Greenway Project, Warren Farm, Bixley Fields Allotments, Grove Farm and the N&P Material Recycling Facility (MRF) in Crayford.

It has certainly been an honour to meet and hear from expert witnesses including Dr Sean McCormack from Ealing Wildlife Group and Susannah Littlewood from Trees for Cities, and place the focus on the magnificent volunteer effort from Ealing residents, and the running theme throughout the year has been to look at how best we can support existing volunteers and build on that to further promote Active Citizenship in the borough.

The panel settled on three areas, Ealing Council Biodiversity Action Plan, Ealing Trees Programme, and Reducing, Reusing and Recycling of Waste in the Borough.

It was exciting to discuss the BAP and how Ealing was all set to welcome beavers to Paradise Fields, and again, we did want to learn more about the undoubted reliance we have on volunteers to deliver, whether it be planting, clearing waters, or creating educational opportunities for the community. A day visiting a number of sites illuminated the panel on what was happening in the borough.

Trees are critical, especially in a climate emergency, and we do emphasise this through the number of trees which we plant. We do recognise the challenge to maintain our trees, and we must consider the impact of development on existing trees. Residents are always encouraged to assist with our efforts to plant trees and ensure they thrive.

We also have an obligation to make it easier for as many residents as possible to recycle, and ensure they are informed as to how to reduce, reuse and recycle effectively, and so it was extremely useful to witness a MRF in action and be equipped to reassure residents of the value of their efforts. Ealing already leads in recycling due to the initiatives taken over the past few years, and it was beneficial to highlight present work and future aspirations, whilst we look to getting residents even more involved.

I personally would like to thank all the expert witnesses, officers, and panel members for their contributions, and for the recommendations which are included in this report at the end of an inspiring year.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Panel's work would assist the Council in meeting the commitments of the new administration's manifesto pledge of **Regrow, Rewild and Recycle** "We will create 10 new parks and open spaces, plant 50,000 more trees, and give 800,000 sqm back to nature. Everyone agrees we need to tackle the climate crisis, protect the environment and do even more to make our borough open and accessible for people to enjoy" and the associated priorities within the Council Plan.

Scope

1.2 The Panel's scope was to scrutinise matters relating to regrowing, rewilding and recycling in greening of the borough and make recommendations for improvements accordingly. The Panel focused on the Council's biodiversity action plan; Ealing trees programme; and the reduction, reuse and recycling of waste in the borough.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

General

2.1 The Panel received reports and presentations from internal services, external agencies and expert witnesses at its four hybrid meetings which participants could join in person or virtually via Zoom. The meetings were held in Ealing Town Hall and webcast live on the Council's YouTube channel. The Panel also conducted several site visits.

Site Visits

2.2 Within the Borough

- **Various Biodiverse Sites:**
 - North Acton Playing Fields, Acton
 - Horsenden Hill Farm, Perivale
 - Greenford to Gurnell Greenway, Perivale
 - Warren Farm, Southall
 - Bixley Fields Allotments, Southall

- **Grove Farm Local Nature Reserve, Greenford**

2.3 Outside the Borough

- **Materials Recycling Facility, Crayford Creek in Dartford**

Co-option

2.4 Mr Paul Carter (Trustee of Ealing Parks Foundation and Chairman of Ealing Allotments Partnership) was co-opted onto the Panel at the second meeting.

Publicity

2.5 The Panel's work was publicised in the Council's *Around Ealing* free magazine which is delivered to all households in the borough, website and direct emails.

3.0 **DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS**
OVERVIEW – REGROW, REWILD AND RECYCLE

3.1 The Panel received an overview of rewild, regrow and recycle from Council officers and two partner organisations – Parks for London (PfL) and Ealing Allotments Partnership (EAP):

Ealing Council

- 3.2 Chris Welsh (Parks Operations Manager) outlined that the new Ealing Biodiversity Action Plan 2022-2027 (BAP) had defined *Rewild* as “*leaving spaces unmanaged for nature to revert to its natural processes*”. In 2015, the Council had decided to start rewilding the municipal sites by reducing its grooming regime. The Ealing Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy 2021-2030 (ECEES) had defined *Regrow* as “*food growing is one way we interact with the environment; it offers us a unique opportunity to place ourselves within the ecosystem and see the workings of nature first-hand*”. The ECEES had defined *Recycle* as “*increasing the amount of our belongings that we fix, reuse, upcycle and recycle throughout the borough*”. The BAP and ECEES would guide the Council’s work in the next four years and beyond.
- 3.3 Some of the borough’s recent achievements had included the publication of the BAP; more Green Flag awards; Britain in Bloom accreditation; working closely with Trees for Cities plus securing funding for planting more trees; and ongoing success as one of the Tree Cities of the World.
- 3.4 The Council had actively changed its approach to land management since 2017 in rewilding the borough. It had worked with nature and de-intensified historical municipal maintenance regimes. Vast hectares of previously mown grass had been converted into wildflower meadows since 2015. The reduction in mechanical mowing and compaction had initially started under tree canopies. It had taken three years to convince people, particularly dog owners, that in moving back to a more natural environment was a positive change. Harvest mice had been released at Horsenden Hill and new wetland habitats had been created in parts of the borough. For example, the creation of new swales in Lammas Park helped to stop continuing flooding, hosted a vast quantity of new fauna and flora, and ensured that the paths remained accessible to park users. This project was used as a case study in the Greater London Authority’s (GLA) guide to sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) in parks and open spaces. The Greenford to Gurnell Greenway SuDS scheme in Perivale Park had created new habitats and managed water quality and flood risk. Many kilometres of hedgerow, for example the mixed border in Walpole Park, had been planted around the borough.
- 3.5 Planting of 37,000 trees, which included 20,000 trees planted at Marnham Fields in Northolt and Greenford Country Park, in the past four years had exceeded the previous administration’s manifesto commitment to plant 30,000 trees by 2022. The new administration had pledged to plant 50,000 trees in the next four years. There had been a reduction in the use of chemicals for weed control particularly on paving areas. The use of some chemicals was inevitable in containing the giant hogweeds that came down

the river from the neighbouring boroughs to ensure public safety. Parks for London had devised an integrated weeds management plan template for London boroughs to use which Ealing aimed to complete by December 2022.

- 3.6 Over the past few years there had been many achievements and positive steps towards increasing the access to and education of locally grown food. There were over 2,000 allotment tenants across the borough who were supported by various organisations including ARTification which was based in North Acton Playing Fields (NAPF), MindFood which had several plots across a few sites such as Cleveland Crescent in Acton and Horsenden Hill, and APPLE supported initiatives in Acton Park. Cultivating Ealing (previously Ealing in Bloom) was a judged process which had been taken on by EAP. There had been renewed enthusiasm with allotment tenants, residents and schools participating in the Cultivating Ealing competitions. Hundreds of fruit trees had been planted around the borough. The Hanwell and Norwood Green Orchard Trail had several hundred fruit trees in a string of public community orchards along the Grand Union Canal corridor. Following a restructure, the Council no longer had dedicated staff to support allotments and food growing. Existing staff had taken on the additional duties and depended upon volunteers to sustain these areas. There were supported volunteer sessions such as at Walpole Park Walled Garden. A previous post at Walpole Park, funded through the Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) project, had delivered for schools and food growing sessions. EPF had sometimes funded a continuation of this activity. Ealing Wildlife Group (EWG) had partnered with educational sessions on locally grown/sourced food. Trees for Cities (TfC) had developed an edible playground at Blair Peach Primary School in Southall. The Nepalese community visited Horsenden Farm twice a week during the growing season. Horsenden Horticultural Association, which managed three allotment sites north of Greenford, had involved the community in growing grapes along a previously overgrown south-facing slope at the Horsenden Grape and Honey Farm.
- 3.7 Ealing was one of the top performing London boroughs for recycling with a rate of 49% in 2020-21. The Council had increased efforts through the ECEES to further progress up the waste hierarchy with the aim to help engender behavioural change. The service supported community groups such as LAGER Can and service users on litter recycling through litter reduction initiatives and exploring infrastructure for recycling in parks. The Library of Things scheme enabled individuals to rent useful household items cheaply, encouraging reuse. The recycling/repair initiatives such as the repairing of bicycles through the Let's Go Southall programme gave a new lease of life to discarded bicycles collected from the West London Waste Authority. People were encouraged to cycle and use more active travel methods to maintain a healthy lifestyle and protect the environment. The Council was exploring options for a circular economy hub and updating Ealing's reduction, reuse and recycling plan.
- 3.8 In the last 5-7 years, volunteers from across the borough had made a significant contribution to the Council's achievements in rewilding, regrowing

and recycling. They had come up with innovative initiatives and solutions to help attain the borough's target of zero carbon by 2030. The Council continued to work as a partner on an initiative and provided as much support as possible to a community group without turning it into a Council-led group.

- 3.9 Inconsistencies in the aftercare within parks depended on the community group with which the service worked. It was challenging for the stretched Parks Service to provide the level of continued support that was required by some community groups. This situation was also reflected within the allotments. When a community group approached the Parks Service with an idea, officers highlighted to them the time and resource commitment that would be required to look after some of the spaces. The service would review its present advice and guidance for community groups and individuals to ensure that it was clearer on the ongoing involvement and dedication required of them to maintain the spaces. The Council was looking at different ways in which it could reduce the use of chemicals for weed control.
- 3.10 The resource constraints made it challenging for existing Parks Services staff to keep abreast of regular communications required to inform the public of new initiatives and changes to the standard regimes. The service would look to emulate London Borough of Sutton's website which provided clear updated information about what the Council was doing about their various green spaces.
- 3.11 The Council's work with the Government was limited. The small amounts of £25,000 in grants funding for the various Government initiatives had been inadequate. The Parks Service had started to make small changes to its provision from 2015 in doing things differently by learning from others through the Pfl benchmarking group. There had been budget cuts but some of the changes that were implemented had required reduced resources. Convincing the public of the need for change had been the biggest challenge for the service. Increasingly, more people were willing to work with the service on various initiatives. There had been a significant increase in the membership of many local voluntary organisations such as EWG and LAGER Can in the past five years. More people tended to join community-led initiatives.
- 3.12 Traditionally, Friends Groups existed in areas with high levels of home ownership and stable occupation compared to areas that had high levels of private renting. The COVID-19 pandemic had highlighted the need for green spaces particularly for apartment blocks and multi-occupancy dwellings. Parks usage had increased by 200-250% during the pandemic. The sustained surge in usage had been evident from the increased litter. Many residents had joined groups to pick litter in their local neighbourhoods instead of complaining to the Council. There had been more wear and tear of the Council's assets as a result of increased usage but many volunteers were helping the service to manage some of these challenges.

- 3.13 Dog fouling in the parks was a challenge for the service. There had been an increase in the number of new dog owners during the pandemic. In the initial summer period, the service had partnered with Parkguard Limited to conduct dog training programmes at some parks where spare funding had been available. The service continued to work closely with the Council's enforcement team at some persistent sites to tackle the ongoing problem.

Parks for London

- 3.14 Mr Tony Leach (Chief Executive, Pfl) highlighted that Pfl, a charity supported by the London Mayor, worked across London. It produced an annual audit of all the London boroughs measured against 10 criteria of how their parks were doing. Pfl's resources hub about good parks for London had started in 2017. Ealing was always in the top half and edged more towards the top quartile in comparison with other London boroughs against the 10 criteria. Rewild, regrow and recycle crossed several of the 10 criteria for which data was gathered. Food growing was considered within the health, fitness and wellbeing criteria. The management of assets, types of kits used and kind of recycling undertaken were considered within the nature criteria.
- 3.15 The scores in Pfl's feedback report for the previous year had shown that Ealing was performing very well in comparison with other London boroughs. The report had indicated that the strongest area within Ealing's parks services was collaboration. This was demonstrated by the close working relationship with the local communities resulting in increased rewilding, regrowing and recycling within the borough.
- 3.16 In 2020, Pfl had undertaken a case study of sustainability in Ealing when the Council brought the grounds maintenance contract back in-house. Compared to London Borough of Lambeth, Ealing Council had done well because the Council had purchased green equipment that made a vast difference to the way in which its carbon footprint was measured. The Council had also equipped staff with electric or battery operated handheld equipment that was lighter and less noisy with reduced vibration.
- 3.17 The recently published 2022 Pfl annual assessment had assessed Ealing's Parks Service a joint 10th position out of 32 London Boroughs. The service had scored the highest possible scores for collaboration – demonstrating its work with the local communities and community involvement through the Active Citizens programme which had included the creation of Ealing Parks Foundation, friends of various parks groups and a growing network of organisations supporting the green agenda in Ealing; events – demonstrating the management, promotion and attracting diverse audiences; health, fitness and wellbeing – investing in outdoor gyms and trim trails to enable residents to keep fit and be healthy; and sustainability – actively supporting nature. It was anticipated that Ealing would score highly for strategic planning once the green spaces strategy was completed.
- 3.18 The Panel was assured that compared to other London boroughs, Ealing was in a good position and Pfl had no concerns regarding its whole area of rewilding, regrowing and recycling.

Ealing Allotments Partnership

- 3.19 Mr Paul Carter (Chair, EAP and Trustee Ealing Parks Foundation) highlighted that the Council's active citizenship programme relied significantly on volunteers, particularly those within well-established local groups. The borough's whole network was supported by volunteers so the Council needed to reconsider its relationship with local community groups and volunteers. The Council ought to set a minimum standard for situations by facilitating local enthusiasm to enable day-to-day activity by volunteer groups. For example, residents should not feel that they were not allowed to water trees outside their house even if these were dying because it was someone else's job. This model had operated successfully in the neighbouring boroughs of Hounslow and Kensington & Chelsea.
- 3.20 The Council could consider redefining its programme of engagement and communication. For example, the concept of local ownership of some green spaces could be improved by calling the volunteers 'supporters of a park' instead of 'friends of a park' as the term did not appeal to everyone.
- 3.21 There were 2,000-2,500 tenants on the borough's 45 allotment sites. EAP had compiled a questionnaire and guide for allotments which highlighted the ongoing time and resource commitment required in maintaining an allotment site. EAP was still short of achieving its goal of 'no produce left wasted on allotment sites' because lots of rotting produce was evident there in September. There was a logistical challenge in getting fresh fruit and vegetables from where it was grown on allotments, front gardens or green spaces to places such as Ealing Foodbank, Southall Food Hub and South Ealing Community Food Cupboard that could use the much needed produce in the borough. More green spaces such as front gardens, community gardens and forgotten spaces in the borough could be utilised to produce edible foods.

EALING BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

- 3.22 The Panel received presentations from Council officers and two partner organisations – EWG and Friends of Horsenden Hill (FHH) on delivery of the BAP.

Ealing Council

- 3.23 Chris Bunting (Assistant Director Leisure) and Chris Welsh (Parks Manager) highlighted that at NAPF, the first site of the five biodiverse sites visited by the Panel, ARTification's three-year funded Edible Acton project entailed working with local volunteers at various sites across Acton such as South Acton Recreation Grounds. The weekly gardening sessions at NAPF had enabled volunteers to connect more with nature, learn how to grow vegetables and meet other people in the community, particularly after isolation during the pandemic.
- 3.24 The second site, Horsenden Farm, had demonstrated ways in which volunteers from groups such as FHH had managed areas of the hill creatively through animal grazing on the meadows, food grown on the farm to support mental health charities and connecting residents with nature.

- 3.25 The third site, Greenford to Gurnell Greenway, had demonstrated how the GLA funded Greenford to Gurnell SuDS scheme had improved water quality and created new wetland habitats in disused areas. Volunteer groups such as Greenwayers, LAGER Can and Clean Up River Brent (CURB) worked collaboratively at the site by litter picking along the course of River Brent in Ealing and Brent.
- 3.26 The fourth site, Warren Farm, demonstrated the unique advantages to large scale connected meadows and the benefits for many types of wildlife including vulnerable and rare species such as skylarks. Volunteers from groups such as Brent River & Canal Society and Campaign Group for Warren Farm Nature Reserve helped to retain it as a biodiverse rewilded grassland site.
- 3.27 The fifth site, Bixley Field Allotments, showcased a variety of benefits of biodiversity and food growing. The enthusiastic allotment community was keen to form an association to help improve the site and educate more Southall residents and school children about food growing and healthy lifestyles.
- 3.28 The Council's BAP had been produced in consultation with numerous key stakeholders across the borough. The BAP aimed to include a set of objectives and actions, taking into consideration both local and national priorities, to help deliver and protect strategic biodiversity networks.
- 3.29 The BAP's vision was to conserve enhanced habitats that created better and more interconnected places for wildlife across the borough; increase awareness of biodiversity and encourage more people to connect with nature. The actions would benefit biodiversity and reduce the use of chemicals for weed control. Some accomplishment was evident from the diligent and innovative work that various volunteer groups had performed across the borough.
- 3.30 BAP outlined the status and future priorities for habitats and species for the period 2022-27 within its Habitat Action Plans (HAPs) and Species Action Plans (SAPs). HAPs focused on the four specific habitats of built environment; parks and open spaces; wetlands and waterways; and woodland. Each habitat had a clear action plan that outlined what the local authority, residents and private landowners could do for it. Helpful tips and links which people could utilise were also provided. SAPs focused on seven specific species of reptiles and amphibians: bats; water voles; hedgehogs; birds; pollinators; other invertebrates; and plants that were endangered or at risk of extinction.
- 3.31 The BAP was adopted in March 2022 and the Ealing Biodiversity Partnership (EBP), comprising of Council officers and representatives of consulted organisations, would provide the first annual update in March 2023. Regular quarterly partnership meetings would review progress and prioritise actions against the set BAP targets. The progress would be monitored and actioned over the next four years.

- 3.32 The key actions undertaken within the BAP had included maintaining and updating local planning practice guidance (LPPG) and ensuring sustained communication with planning colleagues; developing and maintaining the ecological network map; creating an EBP; reviewing and improving land management uses and practices; creating and updating site specific management plans; regularly monitoring and updating records; and sharing the BAP and engaging with various audiences.
- 3.33 Tangible outcome targets within the BAP included improving a minimum of five hectares of grassland by 2027; improving 0.5 hectares of gardens for pollinators by 2027; increasing tree canopy in the borough to 25% by 2030; and creating new wetlands/flood management projects managing 10,000m³ surface water by 2027. Independent ecologists were presently assessing all the sites to inform the Council's new local plan. The enhanced information would assist the service to successfully achieve the set quantitative targets. The BAP would be reviewed annually to ensure the aspirations were met.
- 3.34 The BAP had targets to build wildlife-friendly practices into the planning process and listed a selection of things for developers to do on their sites. Actions such as green roofs within built environments would have a big impact on capturing carbon, support pollinators, and enable people to enjoy and learn more about nature from their homes.
- 3.35 The BAP provided information on what residents could do to engage with nature such as with window boxes, gardens, allotments and various species. The service planned to send out periodic bite-sized information publications of the BAP to enable residents to undertake appropriate biodiversity activities. There were toolkits for residents on how to embrace biodiversity and gardening. The Council's Do Something Good website contained toolkits on how to engage residents, volunteer and involvement with groups. This summer's inaugural tree festival sought to educate and inform residents on the benefits of trees including the planting of trees on highways, front and back gardens, attitudes and policy change around car use, parking and crossovers.
- 3.36 Conflict was inevitable in development and green spaces. It was evident that there should be a better connection between active planning decisions and the BAP to ensure that planners and developers used it as a live document to progress environmental matters. The Trees Service used a Capital Asset Value for Amenity Trees (CAVAT) method to calculate the community valuation for the loss of trees due to development as well as secure adequate and appropriate compensation for their removal through private development from the developer. In some developments trees were irreplaceable due to the lost generations of tree development and growth which money could not compensate. Such situations were always difficult to resolve in London which had a housing shortage.
- 3.37 For the eighth consecutive year, Ealing had attained several awards for some of its parks and open spaces from London in Bloom. Horsenden Hill East, Horsenden Hill West, Longfield Meadow, Perivale Meadow and Bolo

Brook Park had received gold awards. Yeading Brook Meadow had received a silver gilt and Longfield Meadow had also received a Special Trustees Award.

- 3.38 The Trees and Parks Services had received significant resources to transform the canopy cover in parts of the borough. The service was working closely with the Canal and River Trust (C&RT) on a project in Southall to create a wellbeing way. The project had received £700,000 from the London Mayor to transform the relationship of communities with the canal and green/open spaces. Southall residents wanted an intervention within 500 metres of their front door to get daily exercise and interaction with nature. The project would create a hyper localised space that was expected to change people's behaviour and attitude towards daily physical activity.
- 3.39 The service acknowledged the valuable input from collaborators for the achievements in the borough's parks and open spaces. The social return on investment and a community's engagement in certain locations of the borough was deemed more rewarding than commercial opportunities.
- 3.40 The Council and the Parks Service were custodians of the borough's green spaces. The last Council's green spaces strategy adopted in 2012 had largely met its target of no net loss of open space over the last 10 years except for some loss of space due to the HS2 project and a utility company projects. It would be beneficial to inform residents of this achievement as some public concerns had been expressed about these issues.
- 3.41 Some conflicting issues occurred on sites which were often created by the Council. Some sites were unique such as NAPF which was 99% sports orientated but horticulture community gardening had been introduced there. It was anticipated that this offer would be applied more widely to other sites across the borough. There had been some resistance from residents when the Council changed its grass management practices to make financial savings. Ealing was a trailblazer in London for creating biodiverse area pollinating corridors and some mature sites now contained new species. Community engagement regarding this approach had challenges such as with Warren Farm. Warren Farm used to be a farm and then a sports ground from 1966-7 which fell into disrepair in 2009-10. Consequently, it had been allowed to rewild and the Council now needed to work with the local communities and interested groups to co-design and achieve the best solution for this site. Ealing Council was liaising with Imperial College and other nearby landowners regarding the use of their land and how that could complement the current activities at Warren Farm Sports Ground. The Parks Service had recommended more locations in the borough for nature reserve designations which included Horsenden Hill and several meadows adjacent to Warren Farm. It was evident that there needed to be a balanced offer regarding parks and open spaces to meet the different needs of local communities such as physical activity, sport, recreation and dog walking.
- 3.42 The quarterly Around Ealing paper magazine had two pages of coverage for Leisure/ Parks/Environment services which mainly promoted the good collaborative work undertaken with partners. The weekly Around Ealing

digital bulletin also contained some articles covering leisure and culture activities. There was reasonable coverage of biodiversity activities through the Council's communications channels but more extensive promotion could be undertaken.

- 3.43 It was challenging to get large diverse populations to be interested and involved in activities so it was important to build a community of practice for a common goal. For example, a group of 45 people from diverse backgrounds in Southall were consulted on the Let's Go Southall project which aimed to help inactive residents become healthier and more active. The group has since been consulted and involved in various local activities such as development planning issues, physical activity, nutrition, nature and nature conservation. C&RT and Ealing Council had recently worked with the group to launch the Southall Grand Union Canal Wellbeing Way Project to improve the canal towpath and surrounding green spaces in Southall. This project had been funded through a grant of approximately £1m from C&RT and Ealing Council.

Ealing Wildlife Group

- 3.44 Dr Sean McCormack (Chair, EWG) highlighted that EWG was set up in 2016 as a Facebook group to put on some bat walks and had grown into a community group of over 5,000 members. EWG had a core group of about 100 active volunteers across the borough so its projects now covered more areas.
- 3.45 EWG's present volunteers were predominantly white middle-class people interested in nature and green spaces. EWG had recently included a diversity and inclusion strategy into its work and would shortly be recruiting a diversity inclusion officer. It sought to cover the whole borough through targeted outreach activities but got less engagement from the Acton, Northolt and Southall areas. EWG had limited resources to undertake extensive community engagement as most of its volunteers worked full time and undertook wildlife conservation activities in their spare time.
- 3.46 EWG had contributed to the SAPs and regarded Ealing Council as progressive due to its value of green space and biodiversity. EWG focused on delivering meaningful change for people and wildlife. It operated on the ethos of conservation, collaboration and community. EWG aimed to get people actively involved in what green spaces meant for nature and people.
- 3.47 EWG concentrated on species that were of national and London concern. Species within BAP were termed as umbrella species because any action on them would have a wide-ranging impact on lots of other wildlife and people. Some of the actions were habitat management and public engagement. Charismatic species had been selected to attract and involve the public.
- 3.48 EWG assumed BAP's five-year timescale to be very short. For example, it had taken EWG 3-4 years to get barn owls to breed again in Ealing by changing the management of grassland to encourage their food which included field voles and harvest mice. EWG had selected harvest mouse,

which was not on the BAP, due to its massive public appeal. The public had crowdfunded harvest mice, an emblem of good mosaic grassland habitat, that would also support other species. EWG had applied for a licence to introduce beavers in Ealing.

- 3.49 Many public fears about species such as beavers were common and often mislaid. The UK now had over 1,000 free living beavers in the wild that were reintroduced legally and illegally, through natural spread or escape. Beavers were a protected species in England. EWG had worked closely with the Beaver Trust and would apply for a 5-year enclosure trial of beavers in an urban landscape licence. The entire 10-hectare Paradise Fields would be enclosed to give beavers space away from human habitation to see what they did, the impacts such as beaver dams and resulting floods, and how these could be mitigated. People would not be restricted from entering the site. Beavers did not live more than 20 metres from a waterside environment and were easy animals to manage. A willow chopped by a beaver would sprout again into a new tree. The young willow tree supported a lot more different species of insects than a mature one which also benefitted birds and bats. Rangers regularly managed protected trees in the borough to ensure that these were unharmed and there remained a structural diversity within trees and age of trees. In response to EWG's consultation some concerns had been expressed about beavers eating trees, changing rivers/streams and making them inhospitable to fish. These concerns were unfounded because beavers had existed alongside trees and fish for millions of years and had only been gone from the UK for about 400 years. Several scientific studies had shown that beavers had increased fish in freshwater systems by putting more wood into the water system which sheltered fish from predators. Salmon could jump over obstacles and had no problem getting upstream around beaver dams through the surrounding flooded areas.
- 3.50 EWG sought to educate the public that everything was linked, equally important and had to be looked after through connected green spaces, particularly in an urban environment.
- 3.51 EWG urged the Council to provide shovel-ready projects that could be supported and additional funding sought to help deliver BAP targets.
- 3.52 EWG expressed concern that non-replacement of essential staff could cause problems in delivering the BAP as several Rangers who had undertaken the research and stakeholder sessions had left. The Council could emulate London National Park City by operating a network of volunteer rangers to replace the abolished permanent roles that supported volunteers.

Friends of Horsenden Hill

- 3.53 Mr Martin Smith (Chair, FHH) outlined that he had worked as a conservation volunteer at Horsenden Hill since 1984 and then as a Ranger/Senior Ranger for 10 years before retirement. At 100 acres, Horsenden Hill was the biggest single site nature reserve in the borough. It comprised of meadows, wetland and woodland habitat. The site was managed and maintained by

Council Rangers and FHH, a volunteer group. Horsenden Farm was a small part of the site. It had an orchard and animals such as cows, goats, pigs, chickens and geese. Since 2006, the smaller patches of grassland were managed by letting cattle graze in the fields. MindFood, which operated from the farm, was an Ealing based charity that supported people with depression, anxiety and stress to improve their wellbeing through gardening and horticulture. The produce was sold from the farm shop at weekends and the income reinvested in other farm projects.

- 3.54 Changes at Horsenden Hill had included the reintroduction of harvest mice and grass meadows been left for longer each season to provide cover. In the last three years, brown hairstreak, a butterfly not unique to Ealing had also been detected there.
- 3.55 FHH had organised community events such as an apple day to produce apple juice and a summer nature festival that was attended by nearly 2,000 people. Income from events was reinvested in the farm projects.
- 3.56 FHH had established a new Forest School on the site in 2018 and planted a new orchard two years ago. It had won several top awards over the years in the London in Bloom community category and a special award from the Royal Horticultural Society in the previous year.
- 3.57 FHH and Horsenden Farm were seeking funding for refurbishment of the derelict big house. The refurbished house would be put to community use. The refurbishment project would require about £1m and several volunteers were devising a project plan for this work. Some ideas proposed by visitors to Horsenden Hill for use of the refurbished house had included a cafeteria, conference centre and studios for small start-up businesses such as craft shops. FHH commended and endorsed the aspirations of BAP.

Panel Conclusions:

- During the Panel's site visits to various biodiverse sites to observe the community at work in helping to deliver the BAP, it was evident that there was a need for associations/forums to plan and spread learning from activities in Ealing's parks, allotments and other green spaces across the borough.
- The Council should consider putting signage in Warren Farm advising people about minimising disturbance to the nesting skylarks and improving the peripheral pathways to help preserve the rewilded site.
- Appropriate bite-sized biodiversity articles should be promoted through all Council's communications channels such as the website, social media and Around Ealing magazine, including a volunteering page in the digital edition to inform and engage residents in BAP activities that were taking place across the borough.
- Environmental volunteer groups such as EWG and EPF should also be consulted on the Local Plan and directed to the Community Amenities chapter for their input. The Council should establish the relationship

between Community Amenities and its Climate Change and Health & Wellbeing strategies. The relationship between these strategies and the built environment on commercial sites was also relevant to local business consultees. Businesses could be asked to provide space and opportunity for employees to engage in biodiversity through edible gardens on site or professionally run volunteer projects such as Greenwayers and TfC.

- The Council should consider investing some of its community infrastructure levy funds from planning projects in the borough's green spaces.
- The BAP depended on volunteers for its successful delivery so the Council ought to have sufficient resource in place to support all volunteer groups effectively for the long term to help achieve the set targets. A network of volunteers, like the London National Park City volunteer rangers, should be considered to replace abolished permanent roles that supported volunteers across the borough.
- Volunteer networks should promote diversity, inclusion and encourage excellence through rewards facilitated by the Council. Strong volunteer networks would be more effective in fundraising and facilitating ecological activities across the borough.

No.	Recommendation
R1	The Panel had visited a number of projects and witnessed the community at work in helping to deliver the Ealing Council Biodiversity Action Plan. The Council should help further to publicise and support such projects and utilise its communications channels to do so. This would entail publicising bite-sized biodiversity articles on social media to encourage more people to get involved, greater coverage in Around Ealing magazine and include a volunteering page in the digital edition. Other support could include getting information circulated such as where visitors should not venture in Warren Farm to avoid disturbing the nesting skylarks.
R2	The Council should consult environmental volunteer groups such as Ealing Wildlife Group and Ealing Parks Foundation on the Local Plan and direct them to the appropriate chapter for their input. In compiling the Local Plan, the Council should determine the relationship between community amenities and its Climate Change and Health & Wellbeing strategies. The relationship between these strategies and the built environment on commercial sites was also relevant to local business consultees. Businesses could be asked to provide space and opportunity for employees to engage in biodiversity through edible gardens on site or professionally run volunteer projects such as Greenwayers and Trees for Cities.
R3	Ealing's parks, allotments and other green spaces identified a need for associations/forums where holders could plan and learn from across the borough, aspire towards improved enforcement and amenities, and ascertain how progress could be sought in

No.	Recommendation
	<p>the current financial climate. These would depend on voluntary efforts, recognising the dependency also of the Council Plan on voluntary commitment. The Council could learn from others such as London National Park City's network of volunteer rangers in replacing abolished permanent roles which had supported volunteers. Volunteer networks should promote diversity, inclusion and encourage excellence via rewards facilitated by the Council. Strong networks would be more effective in fundraising and instrumental in facilitating activities across the borough. The Council should consider investing some of its community infrastructure levy funds from planning projects in the borough's green spaces.</p>

EALING TREES PROGRAMME

- 3.58 The Panel received presentations on the delivery of Ealing Trees Programme from Ealing Council officers, representatives of two partner organisations – Trees for Streets (TfS), Trees for Cities (TfC), and an Acton resident.

Ealing Council

- 3.59 Dale Mortimer (Tree Service Manager) outlined that in growing Ealing's urban forest, the Council's vision was to ensure trees remained a defining feature of the borough. Aligned with the London target, it was committed to increasing canopy cover from 16.9% to 25%, attaining a 35% increase on the existing canopy cover by 2030.
- 3.60 London Borough of Ealing was one of the greenest boroughs in London, containing a vast collection of street trees, housing trees, many parks and green spaces which all contributed to its urban forest.
- 3.61 The Council's 2018 i-Tree Project had accurately measured the full extent of the urban forest and highlighted the numerous eco-system benefits that it provided such as the interception of 48 Olympic swimming pools of water. The urban forest also offered many environmental, economic and social benefits, many yet unmeasurable. The borough's trees greatly enhanced the quality of life for its people and the need for trees had never been greater.
- 3.62 The potential effects of climate change were widely recognised now as a significant threat for humanity and its ecological systems. Ealing Council had declared a climate emergency in April 2019 and adopted ECEES in 2021, pledging to make the borough carbon neutral by 2030.
- 3.63 The impact and role of nature had been considered within one of the four themes of CEE and identified three objectives – increasing tree canopy across Ealing by 2030; managing green spaces to increase biodiversity, increasing natural carbon capture and reducing carbon emissions; and utilising green infrastructure to capture carbon, mitigate surface water flooding and improve biodiversity and water quality.

- 3.64 Growing and sustaining Ealing's urban forest was paramount in achieving the nature objectives. This would entail preserving and protecting existing trees and planting new trees and woodlands. The Council had recently pledged to plant 50,000 new trees by 2025 to help meet its canopy cover target.
- 3.65 Canopy cover was the area of land covered by trees when viewed from above. The Ealing i-Tree Canopy survey had used aerial photography at random points to conduct a land cover assessment. Each point had been classified to a ground cover type such as tree canopy, road and water. 500-700 random sample points had been classified for each of the 23 Wards. The canopy assessment had highlighted disparities in the extent of tree cover between Wards – North Greenford had the highest at nearly 26% and Southall Green the lowest at 6.4% – but the environmental and sociological reasons for the variations were more complex.
- 3.66 The borough's present vast urban forest comprising of extensive woodlands, parkland trees, garden planting and street trees contributed to an estimated 234,000 trees. Ealing had been awarded the status of Tree City of the World in 2019 which recognised its responsible and innovative arboricultural management.
- 3.67 Ealing Council had increased its street tree stock by approximately 8% in the last decade and created more woodlands. Its ambitious target of growing the urban forest by 35% would require thorough planning and due care to ensure that the local impact of tree planting was positive and existing land uses not compromised.
- 3.68 The Council recognised GLA's 2005 'Tree and Woodland Framework for London' principle of 'right place, right tree' and the importance of considering the context within which a tree was planted and likely impact of future design issues over its lifetime. When planting new trees, it was important to select the right species and location as that would affect the establishment of a tree, future management and have a long-term impact on the local environment.
- 3.69 The Council had provided a capital budget of £3M over four years to plant the 50,000 trees which included the employment of a Tree Planting Officer. An uplift in the revenue budget for tree maintenance had been approved when the trees target was set. There was an ongoing revenue contribution to support the additional trees and the overall budget target to support the increase in tree canopy was £5M over four years. The Tree Service had presently acquired £3.8M of the overall budget through various funding streams including the Mayor of London's Street Trees Programme. The costs of tree maintenance had increased significantly in recent years and the Tree Service was reviewing its schedules to assess how the budget could be stretched to support ongoing maintenance.
- 3.70 The most appropriate tree establishment method varied depending on the budget, site factors, growing challenges and opportunities. Planting very

young trees in large groups was most cost-effective to establish canopy cover but this was often incompatible with the site conditions and its existing usage. The site conditions in an urban environment were often inhospitable for very small trees so larger and stronger specimens were required which also provided significant and instant impact. A very young tree could be purchased for under £1 whilst a 10 metre semi-mature tree could cost over £5,000.

- 3.71 Very young trees known as 'Whips' were about 18 months old, approximately 50cm long and planted in large groups of 30+ trees. Whips would be planted on copses and woodlands within existing park grassland at 1.5 metre spacing, accounting to 4,444 trees per hectare (2,400 per acre). The new trees would be heavily mulched to suppress other vegetation and not require watering.
- 3.72 Specimen parkland trees would be planted with larger young trees known as 'Light Standards' which were about 2 metres long with a stem circumference of 6-8 centimetres. Light Standards were significantly more established than Whips but relatively easy to handle and could be planted as open-grown trees or in groups with a minimum of 6-metre spacing. Light Standards would be double-staked with tree ties, heavily mulched and generally required a two-year watering programme which had been increased to three years in recent summers. Ealing Council had contractors with contract arrangements for routine watering and aftercare of trees. Volunteers and Tree Wardens were required for additional care.
- 3.73 New street trees would be 'Standards' or 'Select Standards' that were 2.5-3.0 metres long with a stem circumference of 8-10 centimetres and 10-12 centimetres, respectively. An average street tree faced many challenges because a built urban environment presented harsh conditions for tree establishment which often included heavily compacted ground, surrounded impermeable surfaces, reflective structures, and pedestrian/vehicle traffic. Standard sized trees were widely planted in street locations for being large enough to have an immediate presence, reserves to assist establishment, and planted practically without substantial excavation and cost.
- 3.74 The planned 50,000 new trees would consist of 30,000 Whips; 10,000 Light Standards; and 10,000 regular Standards. The proposed street tree planting would be investigated and confirmed three months prior to the planting season and about 2,500 trees planted annually. It was anticipated that the bulk of tree planting would happen in 2023-24 and completed in 2025.
- 3.75 Ealing Council's Tree Service, the custodian of the borough's urban forest, worked closely with various stakeholders and partners including TfS and TfC. The team was responsible for the management and maintenance of all publicly owned trees, provided professional arboricultural advice to all internal departments, and responded to all tree-related enquiries. The Tree Service was responsible for the delivery of Growing Ealing's Urban Forest project. A recently appointed Tree Planting Officer would plan, coordinate

and deliver the planting of 50,000 new trees plus a wider expansion of the urban forest on private land and residential gardens.

- 3.76 The Council's Parks and Rangers Service would be integral in planning, investigating and locating the new trees, copses and woodlands on parkland. Their extensive knowledge of local sites, habitats and park users would ensure that new trees enhanced the aesthetics of the landscape and offered a significant positive outcome for the local community.
- 3.77 In 2023, the Tree Service would relaunch the Ealing Tree Wardens scheme by engaging local volunteers to help maintain new trees, promote the benefits of trees and encourage residents to plant trees in their gardens. The Tree Service would offer annual training to Tree Wardens and encourage them to attend tree planting and young tree maintenance event days.
- 3.78 The Tree Service had signed up to the national TfS project in November 2022. The project provided an online platform for residents to request and contribute for a new tree in their street. An additional discount was offered to any residents willing and able to water the new tree for two years. The platform also provided a Memorial/Celebration Tree Sponsorship Scheme which facilitated the purchase of a new tree and an ornamental plaque in a designated park location.
- 3.79 In 2016, Ealing Council had created a strategic partnership with tree planting charity, TfC. The collaboration had planted thousands of new trees, engaged community groups and facilitated the Ealing i-Tree project. The strategic partnership would continue to expand the Council's tree stock, seeking opportunities for tree planting across all sites. It would be challenging to increase 35% in canopy cover on Council land alone due to insufficient space. Working with TfC, the Tree Service would seek to engage with residents, community groups, businesses, schools and all landowners in a campaign to encourage planting of more trees. The partnership would promote the many social and environmental benefits of trees and their importance in meeting the challenges of climate change through social media, educational activities, events and roadshows.
- 3.80 The trees were routinely surveyed every three years but consideration would be given for a two-year check on new trees subject to resources. The Tree Planting Officer would monitor young trees annually for the first three years until better established.
- 3.81 1,500 trees had been planted in the previous year and the majority of trees that had died were in parkland sites. This could be because many residents had watered the street trees which also had less competition in water take-up within a built environment. Trees planted in parkland sites two years ago had been watered in the summer instead of a regular three-year cycle. It would be difficult to increase this frequency but the Tree Service could work with the Rangers Service to re-mulch grass sites annually to retain moisture in the soil. This treatment would be costly so consideration would be given to involving volunteer friends' groups at parks in assisting with the task.

- 3.82 There were 28,000 street trees that were checked every three years. An average street tree pit was 60 by 60 centimetres but contractors could be asked to enlarge these in the future. It appeared that some pits had been tarmacked during highway alterations to the surrounding pavement which made it difficult to spot and resolve this issue.
- 3.83 Sponsoring a memorial tree was expensive because half the cost (£450.00) was for a long-lasting cast aluminium alloy plaque. Some boroughs used cheaper wooden plaques which rotted away after some years. The cost of a memorial tree included the price of tree, planting it and three-year maintenance. If a memorial tree failed within the initial three years then a replacement was planted and maintained for a further three years. Memorial trees could be sponsored without a plaque, making it more affordable for residents. Residents could be involved in the planting and aftercare of a memorial tree.
- 3.84 The Council was considering promoting tree planting in private front gardens. The Council anticipated subsidising such trees and would recommend the choice of species through Tree Wardens and Tree Planting Officer.
- 3.85 Ealing Council did not have its own tree nursery. It was more cost effective to buy trees because nurseries required substantial resources such as land to grow trees and extensive water supplies. The Council purchased its trees from some well-established suppliers.
- 3.86 An additional 35% of existing 234,000 overall forest had to be planted to achieve a 25% boroughwide canopy cover by 2030. This would require planting numerous trees on Council and private land. The Council would initially plant trees on its land where appropriate and liaise with residents and private landowners to plant on private land. This would be a challenging exercise to undertake. Tree planting was aimed first at low canopy areas such as Southall Green Ward. The Council had planted nearly 500 trees in the Ward over recent years but some had not survived due to unique challenges such as parking pressures from residents and vandalism. The Council would endeavour to plant more trees in this Ward despite the issues. The Park Royal industrial estate, a massive predominantly private land, had very low canopy cover so the Council would seek to plant trees there.
- 3.87 The annual tree planting season was from October to March so any damaged and diseased trees were replaced almost straight way, depending on when a tree had been removed and where the Council planned to plant in the next planting season.
- 3.88 The Tree Officer commented on arboriculture issues in planning applications and there had been an improved response from Planning Officers regarding Section 106 agreements since. The Tree Service rarely visited development sites to check whether agreed actions had been implemented due to resource constraints. The Service acknowledged that it was

beneficial to undertake checks after five years at newly completed developments. The biggest challenge in new developments was the lack of sufficient space for tree planting once a building was constructed near the edge of a property to provide much needed housing.

- 3.89 A wide variety of trees were planted annually to deter potential pests and diseases. Presently, London Plane trees had the largest canopy cover across London and there was concern that these could be destroyed within 10-15 years if the disease affecting France reached Great Britain.
- 3.90 The 10,000 street trees would be planted in suitable sites across the borough but a site list was currently unavailable. A tree surveyor was presently surveying the existing trees and identifying new sites in accordance with the tree planting criteria. Any trees planted in error, such as under existing canopy cover, were removed and the pavement restored. The regulations required a minimum space of 90 centimetres on a pavement to enable a double buggy to pass. Some large historic London Planes did not meet this criterion on certain roads of the borough but local residents found the best way to manoeuvre around these obstacles.
- 3.91 Presently, no consideration had been given to hay fever issues in tree planting. When disturbed by wind in summer, fine hair on the underside of London Plane leaves could cause some irritation such as coughing to individuals but not hay fever. Birch trees were more likely to aggravate hay fever but the Council was unlikely to stop planting them for this reason.
- 3.92 The benefits of trees were difficult to measure and quantify. The Council only removed trees for good or arboricultural reasons such as unreasonable and unfeasible ongoing maintenance. Trees were only removed if assessed as dangerous, dead, diseased or dying. All good quality trees that had been removed were replanted in other suitable sites. The life expectancy of a street tree was 60-80 years. Sheffield City Council had undertaken a cost benefit exercise of its trees about five years ago which had determined the removal of numerous street trees to reduce pavement maintenance costs. The controversial tree-felling programme was very unpopular with residents and had provoked scenes with protesters, police, arrests and immense adverse national publicity.
- 3.93 The present untimely response to complaints about trees was mainly due to lack of staff and resources within the Tree Service. The Service anticipated an improved trees complaints procedure with the additional new staff.

Trees for Streets

- 3.94 Mr Simeon Linstead (Project Director, TfS) highlighted that TfS was the new national street tree sponsorship scheme from the national charity, TfC. The scheme enabled Councils an easy mechanism to run a sponsorship scheme for trees in streets and parks.
- 3.95 The Street Trees Sponsorship Scheme (STSS) offered residents the opportunity to donate for sponsorship of a new street tree to go outside their house or somewhere in their neighbourhood. Residents could access the

TfS website and select a spot on the street where they would like their tree. There were some questions to determine whether the location was suitable for planting. TfS relayed this information to the Council who assessed the suitability of the location and planted the trees accordingly.

- 3.96 In some London boroughs such as Haringey, many residents had come together to green whole streets by crowdfunding the planting of their trees. Approximately 430 trees had been sponsored there over two seasons.
- 3.97 The London Mayor had funded 110 extra trees to each participating London Council including Ealing. The additional funding was used to plant trees in priority streets which included spots that had low canopy, high deprivation, less affluence, state schools or playgrounds.
- 3.98 For the Memorial/Celebration Tree Sponsorship Scheme, residents could donate for sponsorship of a new tree, complete with an ornamental plaque, in a designated park location.
- 3.99 The schemes had generated significant engagement about trees and greening of neighbourhoods. Sponsorship was another source for funding trees in addition to the Council's direct funding, grants, Section 106 agreements and community infrastructure levy funds.
- 3.100 STSS offered sponsors a reduced sponsorship contribution of £170 for watering their tree instead of £275 if the Council had to water it. TfS had sent weekly reminders to sponsors throughout the watering season and advised about the required amount of water as recommended by the Agricultural Association. This scheme was launched in Ealing recently and TfS had put promotion notices on trees to encourage more sponsorship which could be taken up jointly with other residents. The Tree Officer at London Borough of Croydon had observed that their residents who had invested in a tree took good care of it and sometimes planted other smaller flowering plants around it. The care of sponsored trees by residents had often been better than that provided by their contractors. Similar to other Councils, TfS sought regular promotion of STSS through Ealing Council's website and social media channels to encourage increased participation in the scheme by residents.
- 3.101 STSS was about connecting, enabling and empowering residents so collaboration to sponsor a single or several street trees was encouraged. The TfS website enabled crowdfunding for street trees so that people could contribute what was affordable for them. For example, 180 residents and businesses in a rundown retail street in the centre of Croydon had successfully raised £113,500 and some residents in Haringey had raised enough to sponsor 18 trees for their street. STSS had received funding from participating Councils in the first year and some additional GLA funding in the second year. Ealing Council had become involved in the scheme when it received GLA funding for 110 street trees. The GLA funding requirements included the planting of trees in areas of high deprivation; streets with low canopy cover; streets with a state school; and shade planting around children's playgrounds.

Trees for Cities

- 3.102 Ms Susannah Littlewood (Senior Partnerships and Development Coordinator, TfC) outlined that TfC had a long ongoing partnership with Ealing Council for over a decade. It had planted nearly 90,000 trees with the Council since 2010 and anticipated helping to plant the planned new 50,000 trees.
- 3.103 TfC had undertaken 30 projects in the borough including a mixture of planting in parks, woodland creation, edible playgrounds in schools involving the growing of fruit and vegetables with children. TfC had significant community engagement in their projects. It had helped to organise the first Ealing Tree Festival held in May 2022 to get residents more interested in trees and learn about their importance in an urban environment.
- 3.104 TfC had a Whole Schools Programme which entailed engaging with schools to undertake various projects involving children in tree planting and growing fruits/vegetables. TfC also organised community engagement days which involved families, children and young people. TfC offered workshops to local schools near a planting site for all its tree planting projects. It also conducted surveys with participants to gauge the success of activities and inform future projects.
- 3.105 The maintenance of trees was critical particularly during the recent hot summer weather. TfC had worked closely with various Council departments including the Tree Service, Parks Service, Regeneration Service, and Schools. TfC had previously worked with the Council annually on various projects but had formed a three-year strategic partnership in 2016 which had been more effective in the planning and delivery of projects. The three-year strategic partnership had since been renewed in 2019-22 and 2022-25.
- 3.106 The Council had changed the type of ties used to support trees over the years. Initially, a single rigid plastic buckle tie on a single stake method had been replaced by a two ties technique but the current method employed two stakes with a loose-fitting loop. The latest method enabled a tree to grow within the loop and the wooden stakes gradually rotted away. TfC used the loop method with biodegradable hessian ties and maintained new trees for three years. TfC kept a record of all the trees and their staff checked these trees periodically, removing ties after three years once the trees were well established.
- 3.107 TfC anticipated supporting the Council's plan of planting 50,000 new trees by planning appropriate projects; getting match funding; and increasing community awareness and participation to help achieve this ambitious target.

Acton Resident

- 3.108 Dr Martin Kunz (Acton Resident) expressed views on the planting of street trees in his area. He was a member of Mill Hill Residents Association and had previously been involved in planting an orchard in Heathfield Gardens, Acton which had not thrived due to lack of water and poor soil conditions.

- 3.109 In the Council's quest to meet its tree planting targets, the street trees were often planted in unsuitable locations such as under overhanging canopies from existing trees in private gardens and parks; too close to the curb so trees were often mown down by large construction lorries trying to turn the narrow corner at Mill Hill Road and Gunnersbury Lane; too narrow pavements with trees taking at least 25% of the space; failure of protection in allowing sufficient space around trees; appropriate tree species such as hardy Turkish Hazel should be planted near schools to prevent damage by exuberant young people; and lack of aftercare for example, regular watering.
- 3.110 Ealing Council's online complaints procedure for reporting issues about street trees was inadequate. The process enabled easy reporting about tree obstructions but not vandalism to trees.

Panel Conclusions:

- The Council's efforts in planting more trees in greening the borough were commendable.
- The recent site visit to Grove Farm Local Nature Reserve had highlighted the overshadowing to trees and green spaces from nearby building developments resulting in loss of vital light and cession of its metropolitan open land status.
- Consideration should be given to employing an Ecology Officer to offer advice and guidance at all levels of tree planting.
- More information ought to be provided to residents and key stakeholders on the planting and maintenance of trees. There needed to be better aftercare in tree planting including the replacement of vandalised trees; frequent trimming of overgrown canopy and basal growth; regular watering particularly in hot dry weather; and ample tree pits around street trees to enable adequate watering.
- Consideration should be given to subsidising the Memorial/Celebration Tree Sponsorship Scheme to enable more residents to plant trees in memory of their loved ones.
- More information should be provided to residents about planting trees in their private gardens and a list of tree species to the Councillors.
- The Council should actively encourage more volunteering in the borough, identify volunteers and provide appropriate support to them.

No.	Recommendation
R4	The Planning process should also consider the matter of overshadowing to the borough's trees and green spaces in preventing loss of vital light. In the absence of an Ecology Officer at Ealing Council, more education on this matter should be made available to Councillors and relevant staff. Ideally, Ealing Council should consider employing an Ecology Officer to offer advice and guidance at all levels. Further clarification on the proposed changes to status of spaces within the Local Plan was essential, for example why Grove Farm would cease to be metropolitan open land, and an Ecology Officer could play a useful role in this exercise.
R5	For the reassurance of residents and other stakeholders, more information on the maintenance of trees was necessary particularly in light of the 50,000 new trees manifesto pledge. Additional trees would result in more leaves on the ground, making pavements unsafe for those less steady on their feet and the roots could damage pavements which would create further work for the Highways Department. A system must be in place to monitor the unwelcome outcomes of tree planting and how these would be addressed within available budgets. Also, residents should be informed of how the Council would avoid infringing on other budgets to maintain its trees.
R6	Increased reliance on voluntary efforts required empowerment for residents and Councillors. Councillors needed a list of tree species in the borough, further knowledge about the work of Trees for Streets and how residents could get involved and sponsor trees. Also, residents with suitable gardens should be informed of the opportunity to have trees planted in their gardens. Volunteers required support and the Council should be explicit about how it intended to identify volunteers and provide that support to them.

REDUCING, REUSING AND RECYCLING OF WASTE

- 3.111 The Panel received presentations on the progress in the reduction, reuse and recycling of waste in this borough from officers of Ealing Council and West London Waste Authority (WLWA).

Ealing Council

- 3.112 Earl McKenzie (Assistant Director Street Services) and Catherina Pack (Waste and Street Services Manager) highlighted that Ealing Council, a Waste Collection Authority, had a statutory duty to collect waste and recycling from residents (and businesses on request) in the borough.
- 3.113 The Council's local authority trading company, Greener Ealing Limited (GEL), carried out the collections and was responsible for street cleansing including flytipping within the borough.

- 3.114 Residents could recycle a wide range of materials from their homes, a network of neighbourhood recycling sites or the Household Reuse and Recycling Centre in Greenford.
- 3.115 Ealing's recycling rates were consistently in the top three of the London local authorities. The recycling rate for the current year to date (April-December 2022) was 48.29%, an improvement from 47.25% in 2021-22. The recycling rate in 2020-21 (during the COVID-19 pandemic) had been 48.82% and 50.07% in 2019-20 (pre-COVID 19 pandemic).
- 3.116 The Council's waste disposal authority, WLWA, was responsible for the processing and disposal contracts for much of the waste from the borough's residents and businesses.
- 3.117 Ealing's dry mixed recycling was processed at the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) in Crayford Creek, Dartford which several Panel Members and Waste and Street Service (WSS) officers had visited on 29 March 2023. The process for separating mixed materials into individual materials for onward sale to be made into new products involved mechanical sorting, screening, use of infra-red technology, magnets and eddy currents.
- 3.118 Regular and targeted communications by the Council helped to ensure that the material collected for recycling from residents and businesses was of a high quality. A recent doorstep campaign across the seven lower performing rounds had encouraged participation in kerbside food waste recycling and correct dry mixed recycling, reducing contamination.
- 3.119 The Council continued to roll out food waste recycling to flatted properties and 29% of the roll out had been accomplished.
- 3.120 Ealing Council's Cabinet was due to approve its new Reduction and Recycling Plan (RRP), a requirement of the London Environment Strategy 2018, in May 2023. The RRP disclosed that Ealing was already meeting the London Mayor's minimum service level for collection of the six main dry recyclable materials and separate collection of food waste for kerbside properties including flats. The RRP themes were waste reduction, maximising recycling, reducing environmental impact and maximising waste sites.
- 3.121 There had been ongoing work in engaging with communities to reduce waste and reuse activities to move towards a circular economy approach. A circular system maintained the reclaiming of materials through sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling – reducing waste to a minimum.
- 3.122 Ealing Council was involved in an innovative pan-London food waste campaign, *Eat Like a Londoner*, that was designed to help Londoners shop, cook and eat better more sustainably, cost-effectively and deliciously.
- 3.123 WSS ensured that businesses were aware of the requirement to have separate arrangements in place for the collection and disposal of their

commercial waste as this was not covered through business rates. Businesses could sign up to the Council's business waste collection service for residual waste and dry mixed recycling. The Council did not have a food waste collection service presently but had considered the feasibility and recently surveyed existing customers. Businesses could have contracts with other private contractors for the collection of food waste and used cooking oil. The Council was keen to extend its food waste collection service to businesses and expand its existing dry mix recycling offer to them in the near future.

- 3.124 There was a need for enforcement as not all residents and businesses disposed of their waste responsibly. In 2022-23, the service had issued 1,754 fixed penalty notices (FPN) for flytipping offences in the borough of which nearly two-thirds related to flytipped household rubbish and a third to flytipped commercial waste.
- 3.125 WSS also ensured that new residents were made aware of the rubbish and recycling services available to them, including collection dates and times.
- 3.126 WSS worked closely with residents, businesses, landlords and managing/letting agents to ensure that correct information was provided to them.
- 3.127 Waste contamination was initially considered through collection crews who placed contamination tags on the relevant bins to help inform occupants of those properties. The crews recorded details of the offending properties through their in-cab technology. It was anticipated that the contamination tags which had pictures of what could or could not be recycled would help inform the occupants to recycle materials correctly. Similarly, contamination from flats was also monitored and addressed through the collection crews. The service intervened where persistent contamination was encountered by communicating with the occupants directly or through landlords and managing agents.
- 3.128 Soft plastics were presently recycled by supermarkets which would be subject to the imminent extended producer responsibility (EPR) for packaging regulations. Local authorities would receive funding support from the government to enable recycling of soft plastics in the next few years.
- 3.129 Ealing was the largest of the six WLWA boroughs so it seemingly collected a higher tonnage of waste which was still the lowest kilogrammes per household per year of residual waste. The performance of the boroughs was measured as a percentage to provide an accurate comparison of recycling rates. Ealing's recycling rate had consistently been in the top three of all London boroughs over the last few years.
- 3.130 WSS worked closely with the Private Sector Licensing team for the provision of bins in HMOs. The quantity of bins were issued according to the number of occupants in a property and reviewed when necessary. Leaflets and posters to inform residents about recycling were also provided. The service was presently reviewing some of its recycling leaflets and would consider making these available more readily online and through collection crews.

Illustrative stickers of what could or could not be recycled in bins were stuck on the inside of lids when alternate weekly collections had been introduced. WSS would also review the recycling information presently provided to HMOs.

- 3.131 WSS maintained data for recycling and reuse of different types of items. Ealing's contamination rate was 11-13% and the main contaminants were waste from black bags, food waste, sanitary waste and textiles. WSS was developing some awareness campaigns through social media about common recycling contaminants such as soiled nappies.
- 3.132 Textiles were collected separately to the blue bin if placed in a clear bag on top of or next to the bin. Residents could also book an appointment with TRAIID, Ealing Council's textiles recycler, for the collection of textiles and small electrical items. This provision was not widely known by residents so the service would have to promote the offer extensively.
- 3.133 The clear bags provided for household mixed recycling at flatted properties did state this on them but the service would review that to make it clearer.
- 3.134 Ealing Council engaged with schools and had recently sent them information and resources about food waste. Many schools had participated in the food waste action week in March 2023 and had sought additional information. The service intended to run a competition for schools that would involve designing a poster on the side of a waste collection vehicle and get recycling crews to explain about their work. Various video resources were also available for schools. School children were not allowed to visit recycling sites due to health and safety reasons.
- 3.135 Council officers were liaising with the new Circular Economy Manager at Acton Market about various recycling related activities such as repair workshops in the area. WSS was also liaising with housing officers about facilitating repair workshops in community areas of the borough's seven towns.
- 3.136 WSS provided information leaflets to people on request and had articles on waste management in every issue of the Council's free Around Ealing magazine that was distributed to households in the borough. There had been information leaflets in various commonly spoken languages in the borough that could be refreshed to meet the needs of specific communities.
- 3.137 WSS had worked with various community groups such as LAGER Can regarding volunteering and litter picking. It was keen to liaise with faith and other community groups in the borough.
- 3.138 The booking system at Greenford Centre had been introduced for health and safety reasons during the pandemic but the site efficiency had improved significantly since. There had been reduced illegal waste getting through the paid waste system. The Council had received positive feedback from residents about the booking system as it enabled them to plan ahead accordingly. Although the site had been used by pedestrians and cyclists

previously, the Health and Safety team deemed it to be unsafe for them with large vehicles in operation. The Council would inform residents and businesses through its various communications channels once the site was made safe for use by pedestrians and cyclists.

- 3.139 Younger people could learn from older generations who were generally thriftier and tended to home compost their food waste, repaired, reused and recycled items. The older generations had used reusable nappies whilst disposable nappies were mostly used nowadays. Although it was environmentally friendly to use reusable nappies consideration had to be given to drying them economically indoors or on balconies in flats. Compared to other recyclables that were being captured, 30% of Ealing's rubbish was food waste so it was important to focus more on this area to achieve a significant increase in recycling rates. Ward Councillors could promote food waste recycling in their areas to encourage more residents to participate in the activity.
- 3.140 Any unauthorised waste put in the environment was illegal. Flytipping was a problem across the borough. Preventing people from flytipping was a massive ongoing challenge for the limited enforcement resources within the service. The Council's special flytipping investigation team and up to six officers a day from its external enforcement contractor looked at the flytipping hotspots. CCTV camera had been deployed at the hotspots based on intelligence, leading to some successful prosecutions of perpetrators. Flytipping was an environmental blight, a fire risk and costly. Removal of flytipping had costed the Council £350,000 per annum excluding disposal costs. The Enforcement Manager produced a bi-monthly bulletin of all enforcement activity in the borough such as flytipping investigated, fixed penalty notices issued and number of prosecutions. The bulletin was also circulated to Councillors. The service would work more closely with the Housing team to ensure that preventative measures such as regular fire risk surveys were in place for all Council housing stock and surrounding environment to mitigate any adverse risks.
- 3.141 Organised gangs carried out flytipping across West London. Flytipping was a criminal offence so local authorities regularly shared intelligence on major flytipping instances in order to catch the perpetrators. The boroughs had similar flytipping challenges which they continued to tackle through their teams. There was a transient population in many of the hotspot areas which made it difficult for services to get the right messages across to everyone.
- 3.142 The Council was not doing enough presently to support volunteer groups adequately. The Assistant Director Street Services had a personal objective set to increase the number of volunteer groups that his service worked with but had not achieved it this year due to capacity issues. WSS worked well with some groups such as LAGER Can and would continue to build on this work to engage and support more volunteer groups.

West London Waste Authority

- 3.143 Ms Emma Beal (Managing Director, West London Waste Authority) highlighted that WLWA was a statutory body, created in 1986, that represented the six West London boroughs of Brent, Ealing, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, and Richmond upon Thames. It was responsible for disposing of waste collected by these boroughs and the recycling centres. Its expertise was collaboration and cooperation across the sub-region to create efficiencies.
- 3.144 WLWA was governed by six Councillors, one from each borough, and funded through pay as you throw and fixed cost levies. It serviced a population of approximately 1.8 million across the whole area, giving the boroughs a city-sized purchasing power and an opportunity for collaborative work.
- 3.145 WLWA focused on materials and infrastructure. Its head office was in West Drayton and trains were used to take waste to the energy recovery site through the two large rail link transfer stations in Brentford and Ruislip. It also had a recycling centre in Brent. It leased several contracts which included MRF.
- 3.146 Food waste was transported to WLWA's anaerobic digestion facility where it was transformed into gas and then energy. Vehicles that transported food waste in the sub-region utilised some of the gas produced, creating a circular system.
- 3.147 WLWA had been decarbonising waste for some time by getting waste out of landfill as that was within its control. Decarbonising by increasing recycling and reducing waste was more complex as it required circular economy thinking; working with partners including local groups, businesses, and residents; integration with growth; and place making.
- 3.148 WLWA measured carbon in the waste annually to help prioritise its waste projects. The largest carbon producing components were food waste; composite and hard to recycle materials such as plastic; and textiles. It was particularly important to get the high carbon producing materials out of the waste to help achieve the government's Net Zero standard.
- 3.149 WLWA had developed a framework with the boroughs in March 2022 to reduce waste by tackling food, textile and plastic waste and encouraging more reuse of materials. It aimed to have a clear plan in place by 2030 that would be delivered using data and communications. The plan would be underpinned by a change in skills.
- 3.150 WLWA had invested £3M in 2019 in projects across the six boroughs to increase food waste recycling including introduction of the service to 24,500 flats and providing bin swap and cleaning services. This had increased the food waste capture rate from 21% in 2019-20 to 24% in 2022-23. Reducing food waste from going into landfill had decreased the carbon impact on the environment and saved money for individuals and Councils.

- 3.151 WLWA had offered resources to stimulate the growth of reuse and repair markets and drive innovation by setting up new bulky waste collection and booking systems; training operatives and extracting valuable products such as bicycles, furniture, laptops and smartphones, and healthcare equipment. It had a fixing factory where items were repaired for reuse.
- 3.152 In measuring the social value of its furniture project, WLWA had found that there had been £4.39 in social value created for every £1 expenditure. The benefits had included reduced isolation in individuals, green skills development, improved mental health, support into work, volunteer opportunities, business support for small and medium enterprises as well as reduction in carbon emissions and waste materials.
- 3.153 There were presently 13-14 electrical recycling banks in the borough to which people could take their small electrical items. Laptops that were taken to the Greenford Recycling Centre were fixed through WLWA's Fixing Factory and redistributed through its Reuse project to those in need within the local community. Bicycles that were disposed at the Recycling Centres were repaired and given to the local community through the Let's Go Southall and Let's Ride Southall projects. There was an online repair directory that residents could use to check where they could get items fixed.
- 3.154 WLWA had found that more publicity of its activities such as the Fixing Factory, refurbishment of furniture and bicycles being repaired at the onsite workshop had helped to raise awareness and interest in local communities. Many people tweeted and posted online messages about these activities and it was anticipated that this process would grow. The present partnership working with the Councils and understanding how things worked was very beneficial. There were funding difficulties for local authorities but EPR would be an excellent model for attracting further funds to help scale up these projects considerably. The Council's aspirations for a circular economy would localise much of this activity within the borough's seven towns, enabling people to exchange items and get things repaired.

Panel Conclusions:

- Members commended the commitment and responsiveness of the Waste and Street Services teams in tackling flytipping reported through the Love Clean Streets application and Council's website.
- The Panel's site visit to the MRF had been very informative in learning about how the borough's mixed dry recycling was processed.
- Volunteers were essential for the Council's work so it needed to ensure that they were well supported and their contribution recognised.
- The enforcement bi-monthly bulletin needed to be circulated more widely through different communication channels to make people aware of the activity that was taking place in the borough.

- The Council's recycling information should be refreshed and made available in different formats and languages to inform the borough's diverse communities and meet their varying needs effectively.
- In meeting the Council's objective of tackling the climate crisis, WSS needed to apply a more coordinated approach in working more closely with other internal services and external partners for proactive identification and implementation of relevant activities for the borough's residents and businesses.

No.	Recommendation
R7	Volunteers had proven beyond a doubt how critical they were to the Council's efforts. The Council should be investing further to provide support to volunteer groups to form and thrive whilst in turn they supported its efforts and were enabled to work more effectively. Specific incentives should be offered such as awards for exceptional volunteer and recycling efforts, whilst highlighting where there was still need for volunteers to step in. The Council already had structure and experience, including its Do Something Good initiative, to build the central support.
R8	Important and relevant facts were publicly circulated on matters such as the number of fixed penalty notices issued, however, residents and Councillors were not always in receipt of the documents. As the Council had stated that there would be Town Forums put in place, then these would provide an ideal opportunity to ensure that all attendees were aware of the enforcement work undertaken. Town Forums should be open and welcoming to all, and it would be useful to provide guidance through them on how to effectively recycle and this should be in a number of languages and in a manner accessible to those with little online access. By whatever medium the information was communicated, picture symbols should be included to educate residents on what could be recycled, and how to avoid contamination, especially to explain why the recycling that had been left out had not been collected.
R9	The Council's administration has three key priorities for Ealing which included tackling the climate crisis. Departments across the Council would be working with this in mind, and there may be further opportunities for partnership between relevant activities. These included Active Travel where bicycles could be refurbished for the benefit of those who could use them, where Housing Services should be proactive in speaking to landlords to identify where more recycling bins were needed in flats, and where the Food Safety Service should encourage commercial sites to recycle food in order to combat the threat of vermin. The skills of residents could be key in this, and this covered where greater knowledge and encouragement could be given to schools, and where the Council could raise further awareness of the Acton Market Reduce and Recycle Hub, for example. Also, projects such as <i>Eat Like a Londoner</i> could offer opportunities to improve skills and tackle loneliness.

4.0 **MEMBERSHIP AND ATTENDANCE**

4.1 The tables below show the Panel membership and attendance at meetings and site visits.

Membership and Attendance at Panel Meetings

Name	Total Possible	Actual Attendance	Apologies Received
<u>Councillors</u>			
Cllr Miriam Rice (Chair)	4	4	-
Cllr Athena Zissimos (Vice Chair)	4	4	-
Cllr Shahbaz Ahmed	4	2	-
Cllr Fabio Conti	4	4	-
Cllr Kate Crawford	4	4	-
Cllr Monica Hamidi	4	3	1
Cllr Karam Mohan	4	4	-
Cllr Grace Quansah	4	4	-
Cllr Hitesh Tailor	4	4	-
<u>Co-optee</u>			
Mr Paul Carter (Trustee, Ealing Parks Foundation and Chairman, Ealing Allotments Partnership)	3	2	1
<u>Substitutes and Other Councillors</u>			
None.			
<u>External Witnesses</u>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr Tony Leach (Chief Executive, Parks for London) - Mr Paul Carter (Chairman, Ealing Allotments Partnership) - Dr Sean McCormack (Chair, Ealing Wildlife Group) - Mr Martin Smith (Chair, Friends of Horsenden Hill) - Mr Simeon Linstead (Project Director, Trees for Streets) - Ms Susannah Littlewood (Senior Partnerships & Development Co-ordinator, Trees for Cities) - Dr Martin Kunz (Acton Resident) - Ms Emma Beal (Managing Director, West London Waste Authority) 			
<u>Service Officers</u>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chris Bunting (Assistant Director Leisure) - Chris Welsh (Parks Operations Manager) - Dale Mortimer (Tree Service Manager) - Earl McKenzie (Assistant Director Street Services) - Catherina Pack (Waste and Street Services Manager) 			

4.2 **Attendance at Panel Site Visits**

Site Visited		Member Attendance
1.	<p>Various Local Biodiverse Sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - North Acton Playing Fields, Acton - Horsenden Hill Farm, Perivale - Greenford to Gurnell Greenway, Perivale - Warren Farm, Southall - Bixley Fields Allotments, Southall <p>10:00am-4:00pm Saturday 15 October 2022</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cllr Miriam Rice (Chair) - Cllr Athena Zissimos (Vice Chair) - Cllr Fabio Conti - Cllr Kate Crawford - Cllr Monica Hamidi - Cllr Karam Mohan - Cllr Hitesh Tailor - Mr Paul Carter (Co-optee)
2.	<p>Grove Farm Nature Reserve Greenford 10:00am-1:00pm Sunday 15 January 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cllr Miriam Rice (Chair) - Cllr Athena Zissimos (Vice Chair) - Cllr Fabio Conti - Cllr Karam Mohan - Cllr Grace Quansah
3.	<p>Materials Recycling Facility Century Wharf, Crayford Creek, Dartford 9:30am-4:00pm Wednesday 29 March 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cllr Miriam Rice (Chair) - Cllr Athena Zissimos (Vice Chair) - Cllr Kate Crawford - Mr Paul Carter (Co-optee)

Materials Recycling Facility, Crayford Creek in Dartford



Grove Farm Nature Reserve, Greenford



Various Biodiverse Sites in the Borough



5.0 **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

5.1 **Useful Papers**

Ealing Council's Constitution, available at [Council constitution | Council constitution | Ealing Council](#)

Scrutiny Panel 3 – 2022/2023: Regrow, Rewild and Recycle – Work Programme, Agendas, Minutes and Reports available at [Committee details - Scrutiny Panel 3 - 2022/23: Regrow, Rewild and Recycle \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#).

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Work Programme, Agendas, Minutes and Reports available at [Committee details - Overview and Scrutiny Committee \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#).

Current agendas and reports are available at [Committees \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#).

5.2 **Useful Websites**

- Ealing Council – www.ealing.gov.uk
- Centre for Governance and Scrutiny – [Home - Centre for Governance and Scrutiny \(cfgs.org.uk\)](#)
- Government Services and Information – www.gov.uk
- Greater London Authority – [Home page \(london.gov.uk\)](http://london.gov.uk)
- Local Government Association – [Home | Local Government Association](#)
- Canal and River Trust – [Canal & River Trust | Wellbeing for everyone \(canalrivertrust.org.uk\)](#)
- Ealing Parks Foundation – [Parks | Ealing Parks Foundation | England](#)
- Ealing Allotments Partnership – [EAP website \(ealingallotmentspartnership.co.uk\)](#)
- Parks for London – [Parks for London](#)
- Ealing Wildlife Group – [Home - Ealing Wildlife Group](#)
- Friends of Horsenden Hill – [Friends of Horsenden Hill – Horsenden Farm & Hill](#)
- Trees for Cities – [Home | Trees for Cities](#)
- Trees for Streets – [Trees for Streets - Let's fill our streets with trees](#)
- West London Waste Authority – [West London Waste | Homepage](#)
- N&P – [N+P Group](#)
- TRAIID – [Clothes Reuse and Recycling - TRAIID](#)

5.3 **Further Information**

For further information about Scrutiny Panel 3 – 2022/2023: Regrow, Rewild and Recycle please contact:

Harjeet Bains
Scrutiny Review Officer
Ealing Council
Email: bainsh@ealing.gov.uk
Tel: 020-8825 7120

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Rec No.	Panel Recommendation
R1	The Panel had visited a number of projects and witnessed the community at work in helping to deliver the Ealing Council Biodiversity Action Plan. The Council should help further to publicise and support such projects and utilise its communications channels to do so. This would entail publicising bite-sized biodiversity articles on social media to encourage more people to get involved, greater coverage in Around Ealing magazine and include a volunteering page in the digital edition. Other support could include getting information circulated such as where visitors should not venture in Warren Farm to avoid disturbing the nesting skylarks.
R2	The Council should consult environmental volunteer groups such as Ealing Wildlife Group and Ealing Parks Foundation on the Local Plan and direct them to the appropriate chapter for their input. In compiling the Local Plan, the Council should determine the relationship between community amenities and its Climate Change and Health & Wellbeing strategies. The relationship between these strategies and the built environment on commercial sites was also relevant to local business consultees. Businesses could be asked to provide space and opportunity for employees to engage in biodiversity through edible gardens on site or professionally run volunteer projects such as Greenwayers and Trees for Cities.
R3	Ealing's parks, allotments and other green spaces identified a need for associations/forums where holders could plan and learn from across the borough, aspire towards improved enforcement and amenities, and ascertain how progress could be sought in the current financial climate. These would depend on voluntary efforts, recognising the dependency also of the Council Plan on voluntary commitment. The Council could learn from others such London National Park City's network of volunteer rangers in replacing abolished permanent roles which had supported volunteers. Volunteer networks should promote diversity, inclusion and encourage excellence via rewards facilitated by the Council. Strong networks would be more effective in fundraising and instrumental in facilitating activities across the borough. The Council should consider investing some of its community infrastructure levy funds from planning projects in the borough's green spaces.
R4	The Planning process should also consider the matter of overshadowing to the borough's trees and green spaces in preventing loss of vital light. In the absence of an Ecology Officer at Ealing Council, more education on this matter should be made available to Councillors and relevant staff. Ideally, Ealing Council should consider employing an Ecology Officer to offer advice and guidance at all levels. Further clarification on the proposed changes to status of spaces within the Local Plan was essential, for example why Grove Farm would cease to be metropolitan open land, and an Ecology Officer could play a useful role in this exercise.
R5	For the reassurance of residents and other stakeholders, more information on the maintenance of trees was necessary particularly in light of the 50,000 new trees manifesto pledge. Additional trees would result in more leaves on the

Rec No.	Panel Recommendation
	ground, making pavements unsafe for those less steady on their feet and the roots could damage pavements which would create further work for the Highways Department. A system must be in place to monitor the unwelcome outcomes of tree planting and how these would be addressed within available budgets. Also, residents should be informed of how the Council would avoid infringing on other budgets to maintain its trees.
R6	Increased reliance on voluntary efforts required empowerment for residents and Councillors. Councillors needed a list of tree species in the borough, further knowledge about the work of Trees for Streets and how residents could get involved and sponsor trees. Also, residents with suitable gardens should be informed of the opportunity to have trees planted in their gardens. Volunteers required support and the Council should be explicit about how it intended to identify volunteers and provide that support to them.
R7	Volunteers had proven beyond a doubt how critical they were to the Council's efforts. The Council should be investing further to provide support to volunteer groups to form and thrive whilst in turn they supported its efforts and were enabled to work more effectively. Specific incentives should be offered such as awards for exceptional volunteer and recycling efforts, whilst highlighting where there was still need for volunteers to step in. The Council already had structure and experience, including its Do Something Good initiative, to build the central support.
R8	Important and relevant facts were publicly circulated on matters such as the number of fixed penalty notices issued, however, residents and Councillors were not always in receipt of the documents. As the Council had stated that there would be Town Forums put in place, then these would provide an ideal opportunity to ensure that all attendees were aware of the enforcement work undertaken. Town Forums should be open and welcoming to all, and it would be useful to provide guidance through them on how to effectively recycle and this should be in a number of languages and in a manner accessible to those with little online access. By whatever medium the information was communicated, picture symbols should be included to educate residents on what could be recycled, and how to avoid contamination, especially to explain why the recycling that had been left out had not been collected.
R9	The Council's administration has three key priorities for Ealing which included tackling the climate crisis. Departments across the Council would be working with this in mind, and there may be further opportunities for partnership between relevant activities. These included Active Travel where bicycles could be refurbished for the benefit of those who could use them, where Housing Services should be proactive in speaking to landlords to identify where more recycling bins were needed in flats, and where the Food Safety Service should encourage commercial sites to recycle food in order to combat the threat of vermin. The skills of residents could be key in this, and this covered where greater knowledge and encouragement could be given to schools, and where the Council could raise further awareness of the Acton Market Reduce and Recycle Hub, for example. Also, projects such as <i>Eat Like A Londoner</i> could offer opportunities to improve skills and tackle loneliness.

7.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS WITH OFFICER COMMENTS**

The Service Officer Comments will be sought once the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agrees the Panel's recommendations.

Rec No.	Panel Recommendation	Service Officer Comments (Including Any Resource and Legal Implications)	Recommended Cabinet Response (Accept/Reject)
R1	The Panel had visited a number of projects and witnessed the community at work in helping to deliver the Ealing Council Biodiversity Action Plan. The Council should help further to publicise and support such projects and utilise its communications channels to do so. This would entail publicising bite-sized biodiversity articles on social media to encourage more people to get involved, greater coverage in Around Ealing magazine and include a volunteering page in the digital edition. Other support could include getting information circulated such as where visitors should not venture in Warren Farm to avoid disturbing the nesting skylarks.		
R2	The Council should consult environmental volunteer groups such as Ealing Wildlife Group and Ealing Parks Foundation on the Local Plan and direct them to the appropriate chapter for their input. In compiling the Local Plan, the Council should determine the relationship between community amenities and its Climate Change and Health & Wellbeing strategies. The relationship between these strategies and the built environment on commercial sites was also relevant to local business consultees. Businesses could be asked to provide space and opportunity for employees to engage in biodiversity through edible gardens on site or professionally run volunteer projects such as Greenwayers and Trees for Cities.		
R3	Ealing's parks, allotments and other green spaces identified a need for associations/forums where holders could plan and learn from across the borough, aspire towards improved enforcement and amenities, and ascertain how progress could be sought in the current financial climate. These would depend on voluntary efforts, recognising the dependency also of the Council Plan on voluntary		

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	<p>commitment. The Council could learn from others such London National Park City's network of volunteer rangers in replacing abolished permanent roles which had supported volunteers. Volunteer networks should promote diversity, inclusion and encourage excellence via rewards facilitated by the Council. Strong networks would be more effective in fundraising and instrumental in facilitating activities across the borough. The Council should consider investing some of its community infrastructure levy funds from planning projects in the borough's green spaces.</p>		
R4	<p>The Planning process should also consider the matter of overshadowing to the borough's trees and green spaces in preventing loss of vital light. In the absence of an Ecology Officer at Ealing Council, more education on this matter should be made available to Councillors and relevant staff. Ideally, Ealing Council should consider employing an Ecology Officer to offer advice and guidance at all levels. Further clarification on the proposed changes to status of spaces within the Local Plan was essential, for example why Grove Farm would cease to be metropolitan open land, and an Ecology Officer could play a useful role in this exercise.</p>		
R5	<p>For the reassurance of residents and other stakeholders, more information on the maintenance of trees was necessary particularly in light of the 50,000 new trees manifesto pledge. Additional trees would result in more leaves on the ground, making pavements unsafe for those less steady on their feet and the roots could damage pavements which would create further work for the Highways Department. A system must be in place to monitor the unwelcome outcomes of tree planting and how these would be addressed within available budgets. Also, residents should be informed of how the Council would avoid infringing on other budgets to maintain its trees.</p>		

Rec No.	Panel Recommendation	Service Officer Comments (Including Any Resource and Legal Implications)	Recommended Cabinet Response (Accept/Reject)
R6	Increased reliance on voluntary efforts required empowerment for residents and Councillors. Councillors needed a list of tree species in the borough, further knowledge about the work of Trees for Streets and how residents could get involved and sponsor trees. Also, residents with suitable gardens should be informed of the opportunity to have trees planted in their gardens. Volunteers required support and the Council should be explicit about how it intended to identify volunteers and provide that support to them.		
R7	Volunteers had proven beyond a doubt how critical they were to the Council's efforts. The Council should be investing further to provide support to volunteer groups to form and thrive whilst in turn they supported its efforts and were enabled to work more effectively. Specific incentives should be offered such as awards for exceptional volunteer and recycling efforts, whilst highlighting where there was still need for volunteers to step in. The Council already had structure and experience, including its Do Something Good initiative, to build the central support.		
R8	Important and relevant facts were publicly circulated on matters such as the number of fixed penalty notices issued, however, residents and Councillors were not always in receipt of the documents. As the Council had stated that there would be Town Forums put in place, then these would provide an ideal opportunity to ensure that all attendees were aware of the enforcement work undertaken. Town Forums should be open and welcoming to all, and it would be useful to provide guidance through them on how to effectively recycle and this should be in a number of languages and in a manner accessible to those with little online access. By whatever medium the information was communicated, picture symbols should be included to educate residents on what could be recycled, and how to avoid		

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	contamination, especially to explain why the recycling that had been left out had not been collected.		
R9	The Council's administration has three key priorities for Ealing which included tackling the climate crisis. Departments across the Council would be working with this in mind, and there may be further opportunities for partnership between relevant activities. These included Active Travel where bicycles could be refurbished for the benefit of those who could use them, where Housing Services should be proactive in speaking to landlords to identify where more recycling bins were needed in flats, and where the Food Safety Service should encourage commercial sites to recycle food in order to combat the threat of vermin. The skills of residents could be key in this, and this covered where greater knowledge and encouragement could be given to schools, and where the Council could raise further awareness of the Acton Market Reduce and Recycle Hub, for example. Also, projects such as <i>Eat Like A Londoner</i> could offer opportunities to improve skills and tackle loneliness.		