

Chief Officer Decision Notice

For non-key decisions

Notice is hereby given that the following Chief Officer Decision has been made, as delegated by the Cabinet/Cabinet Member or under their delegated authority in the Council's Constitution.

1. NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION

Title of decision	Rewilding Hillingdon Participation in the London Rewilding Programme Development Phase
Name and Title of Chief Officer(s) making the decision	Chris Wheeler Director of Environment
Directorate	Resident Services
Reference No.	2026 / 1788
Date of decision	02/09/2026
Relevant Ward	Hillingdon East

Details of Decision Taken

Decision	The Chief Officer agrees to: 1. Approve the London Borough of Hillingdon's participation in the funded development phase of the London Rewilding Programme. 2. Support continued partnership working with the Greater London Authority (GLA) and London Wildlife Trust (LWT). 3. Progress feasibility studies, stakeholder engagement, ecological assessments and concept development for rewilding opportunities within the borough. 4. Note that participation in the programme does not commit the Council to implementing any future rewilding proposals and that any future delivery projects, financial commitments or land management changes will be subject to separate approvals.
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Reason for decision	The London Rewilding Programme provides a fully funded opportunity for the Council to explore landscape-scale nature recovery opportunities within Hillingdon. The programme has identified the Gutteridge Wood and Yeading Brook corridor as a priority area for further investigation following borough-wide feasibility work undertaken between 2024 and 2025. Participation in the development phase will provide access to specialist expertise, technical support and additional officer capacity to undertake ecological, hydrological and stakeholder assessments. The programme will allow Hillingdon to help shape emerging proposals while retaining full control over any future decisions relating to implementation, land management or funding commitments. The proposal supports the Council's biodiversity, environmental improvement, climate resilience and community wellbeing objectives whilst carrying no direct capital commitment from the Council during the development phase.
Alternative options considered and rejected	List alternative options considered and rejected Option 1 – Do not participate in the programme This option was rejected as it would result in the Council missing a fully funded opportunity to investigate landscape-scale habitat restoration and nature recovery initiatives within the borough and would limit Hillingdon's ability to influence proposals being developed through a strategic Mayoral programme. Option 2 – Participate in the development phase (recommended) This option enables the Council to access external funding, technical expertise and partnership support while retaining the ability to make separate decisions on any future delivery proposals.
Factors considered	The following factors were taken into account: • The potential environmental benefits through habitat restoration, biodiversity recovery and ecological connectivity. • Opportunities to improve climate resilience, natural flood management and river health. • Increased access to nature and associated health and wellbeing benefits for residents. • The need to ensure alignment with planning policies and environmental designations. • The importance of early community and stakeholder engagement.

	The fact that no future implementation or financial commitment is being approved through this decision.
Report Author & Directorate	Dragana Knezevic Countryside and Conservation Officer Residents Services

Legal and Finance Comments

Finance comments	Finance has reviewed the proposals and notes that participation in the London Rewilding Programme developmental phase does not require any direct capital funding contribution from the Council.
Finance Officer name and Title	Yasmeen Hasan Capital Finance Business Partner 15/07/2026
Legal Comments	The decisions set out in this decision notice in relation to the rewilding programme do not carry any legal impediments for the Council. The Council has functions in relation to ecology, wildlife, biodiversity and natural spaces under various statutory provisions, such as section 164 of the Public Health Act 1875, section 10 of the Open Spaces Act 1906, and section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. The decisions further these functions. The Council should ensure that any rewilding works comply with planning, environmental and other land restrictions. To this end, this notice confirms that there will be engagement with Planning Services. Also, any contract that is entered into as part of the programme must comply with the Council's Procurement Standing Orders. More specific comments will be provided in any future reports or notices regarding specific works / projects being carried out as part of the programme.
Legal Officer Name and Title	Anita Dhillon Lawyer 16/07/2026

Appendices / report attached

List here any report / appendices / e.g. tender evaluations or other documentation to be included in support of this decision	Report attached (public)
Exempt Classification	N/A - Public

Cabinet Member & other Chief Officer consultation

Name and Title of any other Chief Officer(s) you have consulted with and as per any delegation.	N/A
Name and Title of the Cabinet Member you have consulted, and as per any delegation	Cllr Bridges Councillor Bridges confirmed by email that he approved the proposed decision on 20 th July.
Any conflicts of interest declared by the Chief Officer making this decision and/or Cabinet Member who is consulted by the officer which relates to the decision - or if dispensation by the CEO was granted to them.	N/A

Authority for this decision

Detail authority from Cabinet or under delegated authority in the Constitution / Officer Scheme of Delegations	This decision is made by the Director of Environment under the general operational management delegation contained within the Officer Scheme of Delegations applicable to Level B Officers (Director of Environment). The decision relates to participation in the development phase of the London Rewilding Programme. Councillor Bridges was consulted and confirmed his support for the proposal by email on 20 July 2026. Participation in the programme does not commit the Council to any future expenditure, implementation works, or delivery projects, all of which would be subject to separate approvals if required.
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2. APPROVAL

Formal approval by Chief Officer making the decision



SignedDate 02/09/2026

Chief Officer – Chris Wheeler, Director of Environment

3. REPORT

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. Background

1.1 The Mayor of London established the London Rewilding Taskforce in 2022–23 to identify opportunities for large-scale nature recovery across London.

1.2 Consultant-led feasibility studies undertaken between July 2024 and July 2025 identified two potential opportunity areas within Hillingdon, with the Gutteridge Wood–Yeading Brook landscape emerging as the preferred pilot area.

1.3 In January 2026, the Mayor of London committed funding for a two-year development phase to support rewilding projects across London.

1.4 The programme is being delivered through a partnership between the Greater London Authority and London Wildlife Trust.

1.5 London Wildlife Trust has appointed a Senior Rewilding Partnerships Officer to support programme development with participating boroughs.

2. Proposal

2.1 Participation in the development phase would include:

- Working in partnership with the GLA and London Wildlife Trust.
- Supporting ecological, hydrological and technical feasibility assessments.
- Developing landscape-scale nature recovery concepts.
- Participating in stakeholder and community engagement.
- Working collaboratively with planning, environmental and infrastructure specialists.
- Exploring external funding and investment opportunities.
- Receiving additional officer support through the programme.

2.2 Participation does not commit the Council to implementing any future rewilding projects.

2.3 Any future proposals would be subject to detailed design work, consultation, assessment and separate Member approval processes.

3. Strategic Alignment

3.1 The programme supports a range of Council priorities including:

- Habitat restoration and enhancement.

- Biodiversity recovery.
- Woodland, grassland and wetland conservation.
- Ecological connectivity.
- Natural flood management.
- Climate change adaptation.
- Carbon sequestration.
- Improved water quality and river health.
- Enhanced public access to green spaces.
- Active travel opportunities.
- Community participation and volunteering.

4. Planning Considerations

4.1 No planning approvals are being sought at this stage.

4.2 The current phase focuses on feasibility studies, evidence gathering and option development.

4.3 Planning Services will continue to be engaged throughout the programme to ensure alignment with planning policy, environmental designations and place-making objectives.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

The benefit or impact upon Hillingdon residents, service users and communities?

Participation in the development phase is expected to deliver benefits through:

- Improved biodiversity and habitat quality.
- Enhanced climate resilience and natural flood management.
- Increased opportunities for residents to access and enjoy nature.
- Potential improvements to walking and cycling connectivity.
- Opportunities for volunteering and community involvement.
- Health and wellbeing benefits associated with high-quality green infrastructure.

No adverse impacts on residents are anticipated at this stage as no physical works are proposed.

Consultation & Engagement carried out (or required)

Discussions have taken place with officers from the Greater London Authority, London Wildlife Trust and relevant Council services including Planning.

Community and stakeholder engagement will form a key component of the development phase. Any future proposals will be subject to wider consultation before implementation.

CONSULTEE COMMENTS

Finance comments

There are no direct financial implications arising and no impact on Council resources from the participation in the funded development phase of the London Rewilding Programme.

Finance notes that participation in the development phase does not commit the Council to the delivery of any future rewilding projects or any ongoing funding obligations. Should the project progress to a delivery phase then this will be on the basis that external funding is secured.

The development phase of the London Rewilding Programme is fully funded through external programme funding.

There is no direct capital commitment required from the Council as part of this decision.

The programme will provide access to external technical expertise, specialist assessments and support with feasibility studies and engagement activities, enabling the Council to explore potential nature recovery and environmental enhancement opportunities.

Legal comments

The decisions set out in this decision notice in relation to the rewilding programme do not carry any legal impediments for the Council.

The Council has functions in relation to ecology, wildlife, biodiversity and natural spaces under various statutory provisions, such as section 164 of the Public Health Act 1875, section 10 of the Open Spaces Act 1906, and section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. The decisions further these functions.

The Council should ensure that any rewilding works comply with planning, environmental and other land restrictions. To this end, this notice confirms that there will be engagement with Planning.

Also, any contract that is entered into as part of the programme must comply with the Council's Procurement Standing Orders.

More specific comments will be provided in any future reports or notices regarding specific works / projects being carried out as part of the programme.