

- 8.6.6 Biodiversity net gain is an approach to development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before. This means that where biodiversity is lost as a result of a development, the compensation provided should be of an overall greater biodiversity value than that which is lost. This approach does not change the fact that losses should be avoided, and biodiversity offsetting is the option of last resort. The Mayor will be producing guidance to set out how biodiversity net gain applies in London.

Policy G7 Trees and woodlands

- A London's urban forest and woodlands should be protected and maintained, and new trees and woodlands should be planted in appropriate locations in order to increase the extent of London's urban forest – the area of London under the canopy of trees.
- B In their Development Plans, boroughs should:
- 1) protect 'veteran' trees and ancient woodland where these are not already part of a protected site¹³⁹
 - 2) identify opportunities for tree planting in strategic locations.
- C Development proposals should ensure that, wherever possible, existing trees of value are retained.¹⁴⁰ If planning permission is granted that necessitates the removal of trees there should be adequate replacement based on the existing value of the benefits of the trees removed, determined by, for example, i-tree or CAVAT or another appropriate valuation system. The planting of additional trees should generally be included in new developments – particularly large-canopied species which provide a wider range of benefits because of the larger surface area of their canopy.

¹³⁹ Forestry Commission/Natural England (2018): Ancient woodland and veteran trees; protecting them from development, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/planning-applications-affecting-trees-and-woodland>

¹⁴⁰ Category A, B and lesser category trees where these are considered by the local planning authority to be of importance to amenity and biodiversity, as defined by BS 5837:2012