

Design Principles to support London becoming the world's first National Park City

How can design principles inspire and support individuals, households and communities to celebrate biodiversity in their everyday lives and transform London into the world's first national park?

Design principles are the building blocks used to create and do new things. Think of them as your North Star to guide you and others to do the best job possible. The Government's Digital Service for example has [ten design principles](#) that underpin creating 'digital by default' services and putting citizens first. They use them to hold themselves to account whenever they are designing something completely new or improving an existing service. One of their principles is 'do the hard work to make it simple based on the belief that people shouldn't have to understand how government works to be able to interact with it. Government and the services it provides are often complicated, so complexity should be hidden where possible.

The design principles for the Greater London National park have to be as relevant for a person growing carrots for the first time as they are for a school creating a garden on top of a paved area or a building company constructing a new office block. And these are your design principles to try out so please feel free to suggest ways to make them better.

Design principles:

Size doesn't matter – from making your first planter box to turning an unused urban space into something that's loved and green again, it all counts to enriching your lives and others. All of your efforts no matter what the scale will make a difference.

Engage others – whatever your 'greening' project is, it's always good to speak to other people before you start. Perhaps you need permission from your parents to buy some seeds and compost to grow vegetables. Perhaps you're setting up a community project to turn an unloved concrete space into a vibrant garden and you need to identify and speak with different stakeholders for support. Perhaps you simply need some hints and tips from an experienced garden to grow your first crop of rhubarb.

Experiment – try out your different ideas for building biodiversity in London with the attitude, 'what's the worst that can happen?' Don't be afraid of failure, it's all part of learning. If your first batch of courgettes don't grow then plant some more and try again. Think about what you could do differently and ask for help.

Be transparent and share your progress – we’re really keen to capture and celebrate your stories of how you’ve positively contributed to the biodiversity in the Greater London National Park by sharing what you’re doing, how you’re doing it and what you are learning with others. That might be a conversation with a friend or neighbour. It might be in a community centre meeting, in the school, or the local afternoon tea club. It might be sharing hints and tips with fellow Londoners on the Greater London National Park website. Where you can we’d love you to take before, during and after photos of the different things you’re doing to turn London into a National Park. One of our ambitions is to create a before and after gallery sharing different changes people have enabled across Greater London.

Use what you’ve got – if you’re ‘greening’ for the first time then inevitably you’ll need some new kit. But before you do that think about what’s already available in your home or what other people have that they don’t want anymore that you can use directly or even [upcycle](#). Transforming Greater London into a National Park doesn’t just have to be about heavy investment to enable change, its spirit is about using resources smartly.