

London Green Belt Enhancement Opportunities Greater London Report

Prepared for the Greater London Authority

Final report

Prepared by LUC

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Background and scope

1.1 LUC was commissioned by the Greater London Authority (GLA) to undertake an independent, robust and transparent strategic assessment of opportunities for potential enhancement of the Green Belt to improve its beneficial use, in accordance with relevant policy. This report was undertaken in conjunction with LUC's wider study which assessed the strategic contribution of Green Belt land and has identified where there is currently potential to define it as grey belt land. Both studies will be used alongside wider evidence to inform the development of the next London Plan.

1.2 This report provides evidence, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) [See reference 1], to allow the GLA and London boroughs to plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt (paragraph 151 of the NPPF). Consideration has been given to opportunities to provide access, deliver outdoor sport and recreation, retain and / or enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity or to improve damaged and derelict land. This study therefore identifies the opportunities to enhance green infrastructure (GI) within Green Belt, acknowledging the multi-functional benefits of these enhancement opportunities. The NPPF defines GI as:

“A network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity”.

1.3 This report does not take into account the deliverability of the potential enhancement opportunities as that is a matter for detailed consideration by the GLA and London boroughs. Instead it presents a long list of potential enhancement opportunities which can be considered further and then taken forward or discounted, as necessary. The document represents a high-level, desk-based exercise aimed at reviewing existing evidence and strategies only, and does not include stakeholder engagement, which may be required as part of subsequent local studies. The list of opportunities is also not necessarily exhaustive and there may be other measures not included in this report that could be equally suitable and which could be identified in consultation with key stakeholders.

Report format and structure

1.4 This report is in an ‘accessible format’, which means it has been formatted to meet the requirements of the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations (2018), as set out in the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1). It has larger font, larger spacing between lines and headings, ‘alternative text’ provided for all figures, and it can be read by screen-reading software.

1.5 The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2** sets out the methodology that was used to undertake the assessment; and
- **Chapter 3** provides a summary of the recommendations for enhancement to the Green Belt and relevant acronyms.

1.6 The appendices which accompany this report explore the Green Belt enhancements for individual clusters in turn, as listed below:

- **Appendix A:** Epping Forest and the River Roding Corridor
- **Appendix B:** Land at Fairlop Plain and the River Beam Corridor
- **Appendix C:** Romford to Rainham and the River Ingrebourne Corridor
- **Appendix D:** Cray Valley
- **Appendix E:** Chislehurst and Petts Wood
- **Appendix F:** Bromley and Croydon Southern Fringes
- **Appendix G:** South London Downlands
- **Appendix H:** Chessington
- **Appendix I:** Feltham and Hounslow
- **Appendix J:** London Heathrow North
- **Appendix K:** Ruislip and the Colne Valley
- **Appendix L:** Harrow Northern Fringe
- **Appendix M:** Edgware and Barnet
- **Appendix N:** Enfield Chase
- **Appendix O:** River Lee Corridor
- **Appendix P:** Composite list of all borough-level GI evidence base documents

Chapter 2

Methodology

2.1 The approach has encompassed the following three stages; definition of assessment clusters, desk-based review of the baseline and existing evidence base, and the identification of enhancement opportunities, as described in the following paragraphs.

Identification of assessment clusters

2.2 As part of the development of the London Plan, the GLA and Transport for London (TfL) have identified areas of Green Belt land that are highly connected, either through existing stations or where there is potential for long-term future rail infrastructure. These areas are reflected by a 1,200 metre buffer around existing or potential future rail stations (see **Figure 1**) which equates to an approximate 15-minute walking distance. The assessment clusters used as part of this study were created by grouping these buffer extents based on geographic and / or landscape features. The boundaries were applied to aid consideration of strategic and cross boundary opportunities for enhancement. For the purposes of this study, the consideration of enhancement opportunities is limited to the areas of Green Belt within each assessment cluster.

2.3 Areas within the buffers are considered to have the greatest potential to accommodate sustainable housing growth, in light of the unmet need identified within the London Plan that cannot be delivered within the existing urban area. All such locations will be subject to detailed assessment through the London Plan process and may not ultimately be identified as suitable for growth. However, for the purposes of this study, broad clusters of existing and potential future rail extension areas have been identified, with the surrounding land forming a particular focus. This approach assumes that, should limited Green Belt release be required in some of these locations, it could present opportunities to support and fund Green Belt enhancement interventions.

Approach to desk-based baseline review

2.4 In order to identify enhancements suitable at a strategic level, it was necessary to understand where there are existing deficiencies and opportunities to ameliorate and enhance GI provision. Consequently, the study involved a detailed review of a wide range of relevant evidence base and guidance documents within Greater London.

2.5 The review has focussed specifically on highlighting the existing evidence base and baseline evaluation relating to the four criteria set out below:

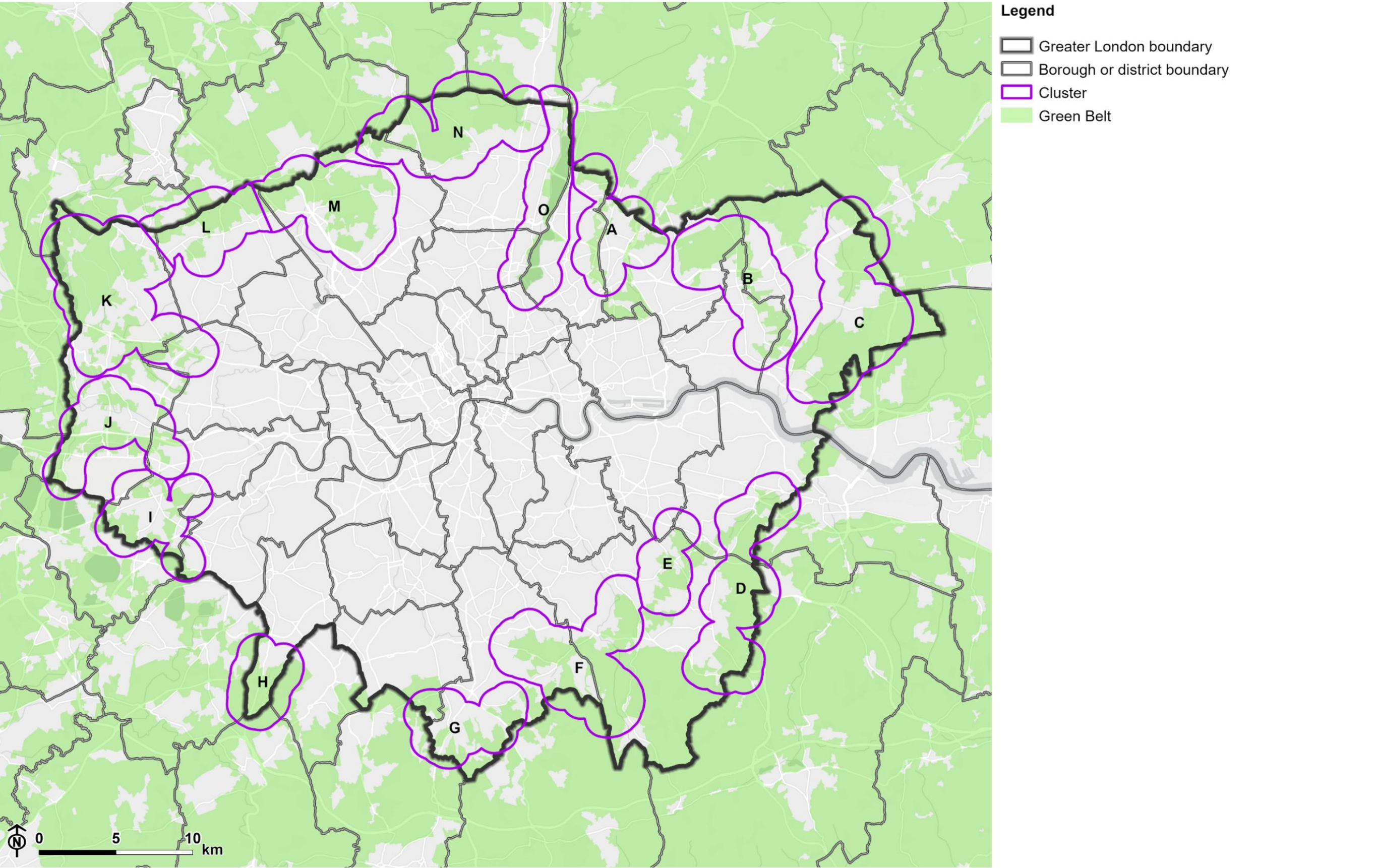
- **Access:** The ability of people to reach, enter, and move through spaces, including connectivity, rights of way, and inclusivity of use.
- **Sport and recreation:** Opportunities for formal and informal physical activity, leisure, and outdoor recreation.
- **Landscape and visual amenity:** The quality, character and appearance of the landscape, and the visual experience it provides.
- **Biodiversity:** The variety of plant and animal life, habitats and ecological features within an area.

2.6 These criteria were used to structure the enhancement opportunities and reflect the multi-functionality of GI, including its wide range of environmental and social benefits. The categories also ensure consistency with the relevant language used in Paragraph 151 of the NPPF, as outlined below:

“Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land.”

2.7 A detailed review of Geographical Information System (GIS) mapping layers and evidence base was undertaken. However, the findings of this study are only as robust as the primary data available. It is recommended that London boroughs and other delivery partners interrogate local level data, where possible, to refine enhancement opportunities.

Figure 1: Distribution of assessment clusters



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Evidence base sources

London Green Infrastructure Framework

2.8 The London GI Framework (January 2026) [See reference 2] is a strategic evidence tool to help plan and prioritise investment in GI in London. It brings together data on 10 objectives that relate to the benefits of GI most relevant to London, as outlined below:

- Improved access to green space;
- Improved access to blue space;
- Nature recovery;
- Flood risk mitigation;
- Clean water;
- Urban cooling;
- Clean air;
- Noise reduction;
- Greener active travel routes; and
- Greener high streets.

2.9 A review has been undertaken to determine areas of high need and low provision for each objective within the assessment clusters. The three objectives demonstrating the largest distribution of high need and low provision across Green Belt within each cluster were identified and detailed in each appendix.

All London Green Grid Supplementary Planning Guidance

2.10 The All London Green Grid (ALGG) Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) (June 2011) [See reference 3] is a guidance framework to promote the design and delivery of GI across London. The SPG is supported by 11 ALGG Area Frameworks that provide a detailed assessment of the strategic opportunities for GI delivery at the sub-regional level. A number of smaller scale GI projects are also included which offer the opportunity to be implemented through a range of delivery mechanisms. These documents were used to inform the identification of enhancement opportunities within each cluster.

London Local Nature Recovery Strategy

2.11 The London Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) (March 2026) [\[See reference 4\]](#) provides a new spatial tool to support nature recovery in London. It sets out which parts of London's nature need most urgent attention, what and where it's needed to help nature flourish. This tool is split into two main elements; the Statement of Biodiversity Priorities and the Local Habitat Map.

2.12 A review of potential measures within each cluster was undertaken to inform the identification of enhancement opportunities. These potential measures include a number of 'potential large-scale rewilding opportunity zones', as identified in the report from the London Rewilding Taskforce (March 2023) [\[See reference 5\]](#).

Regional Parks (existing or aspirational)

2.13 Each cluster was evaluated to identify any proposed or aspirational regional parks within their extent with the aim of informing the identification of enhancement opportunities. This also included a review of existing and proposed accessibility catchments. The findings were then detailed in each corresponding appendix.

Published borough-level GI evidence base documents

2.14 An individual search of borough Local Plan evidence base libraries was conducted to source any published borough-scale GI strategies. Those applicable are discussed in **Appendices A-O** in relation to each cluster. Specific consideration was given to previously defined GI opportunities, priority zones or projects to ensure alignment with the borough-level evidence base. A composite list of all borough-level GI evidence base documents accessed as part of this study is provided in **Appendix P**.

Chapter 3

Recommendations for enhancement to the Green Belt

Cluster assessments

3.1 For each cluster, an assessment has been completed to inform identification of enhancement opportunities (see **Appendices A-O**) which includes the following information:

- Baseline description of existing GI assets; including the distribution of accessible greenspace within each cluster using data published as part of the Natural England GI Framework.
- Evidence-based potential Green Belt enhancement opportunities; structured using the following sources:
 - London Green Infrastructure Framework;
 - All London Green Grid Supplementary Planning Guidance;
 - London Local Nature Recovery Strategy;
 - Regional Parks (existing or aspirational); and
 - Published borough-scale GI evidence base documents.
- Summary of potential Green Belt enhancement opportunities.

3.2 Strategic opportunities for potential Green Belt enhancement are displayed spatially on the figures listed below:

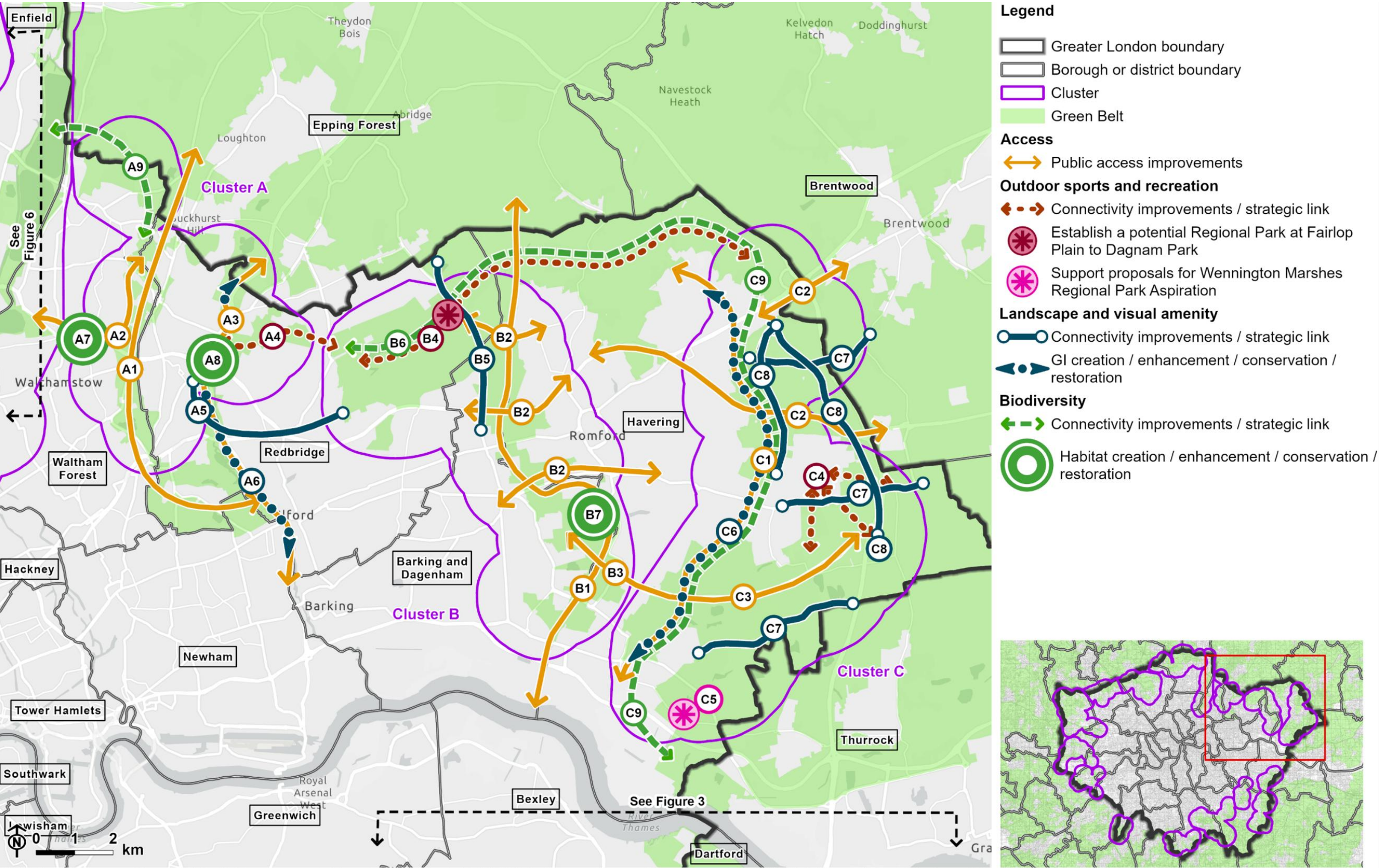
- **Figure 2:** Clusters A-C;
- **Figure 3:** Clusters D-E;
- **Figure 4:** Clusters F-H;
- **Figure 5:** Clusters I-L; and
- **Figure 6:** Clusters M-O.

Acronyms

Table 3.1: Acronyms

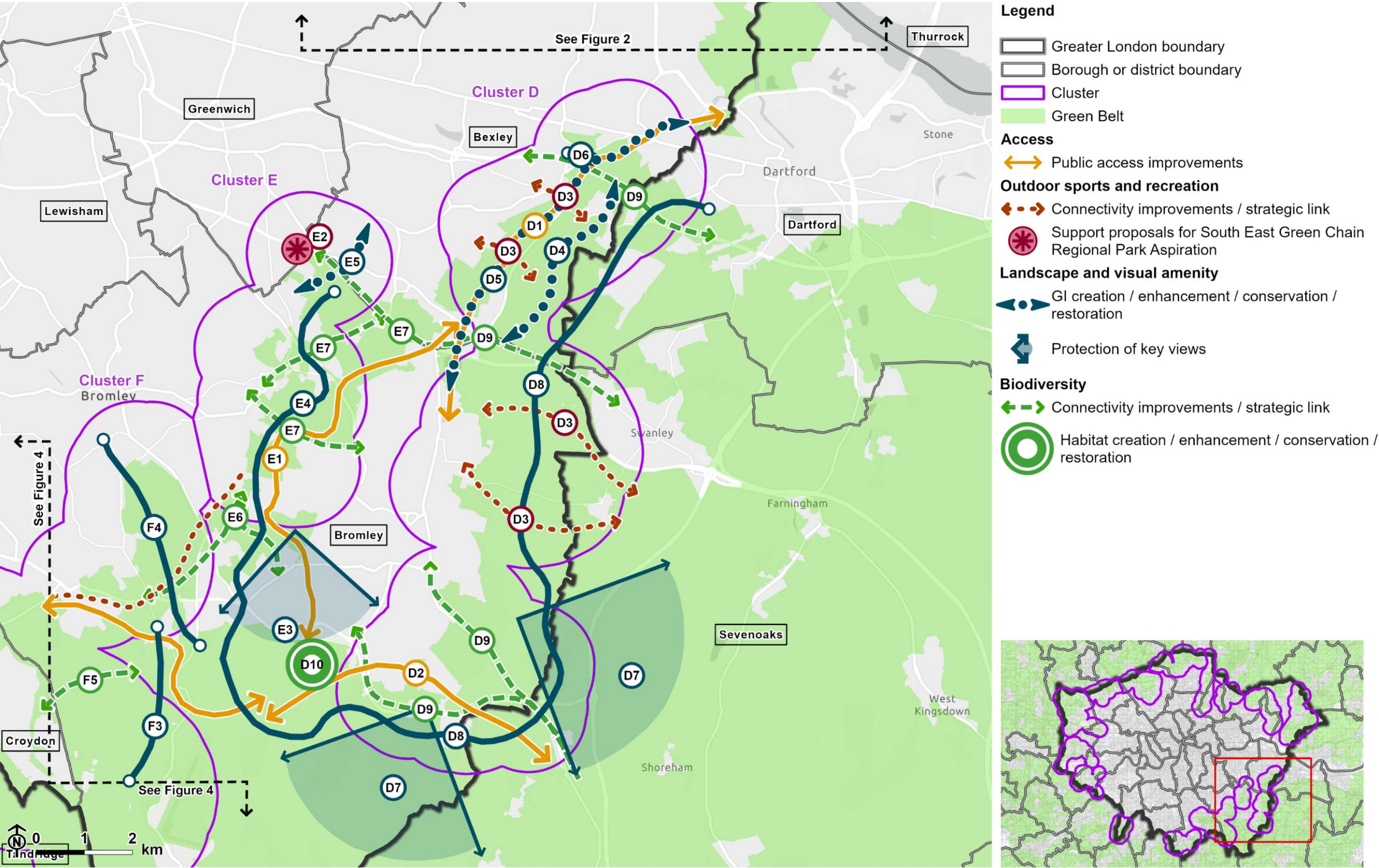
Acronym	Definition
ALGG	All London Green Grid
GI	Green Infrastructure
GLA	Greater London Authority
LGIF	London Green Infrastructure Framework
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
LNRS	Local Nature Recovery Strategy
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SINC	Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation
SPG	Supplementary Planning Guidance
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest

Figure 2: Summary of potential strategic Green Belt enhancement opportunities in Cluster A-C



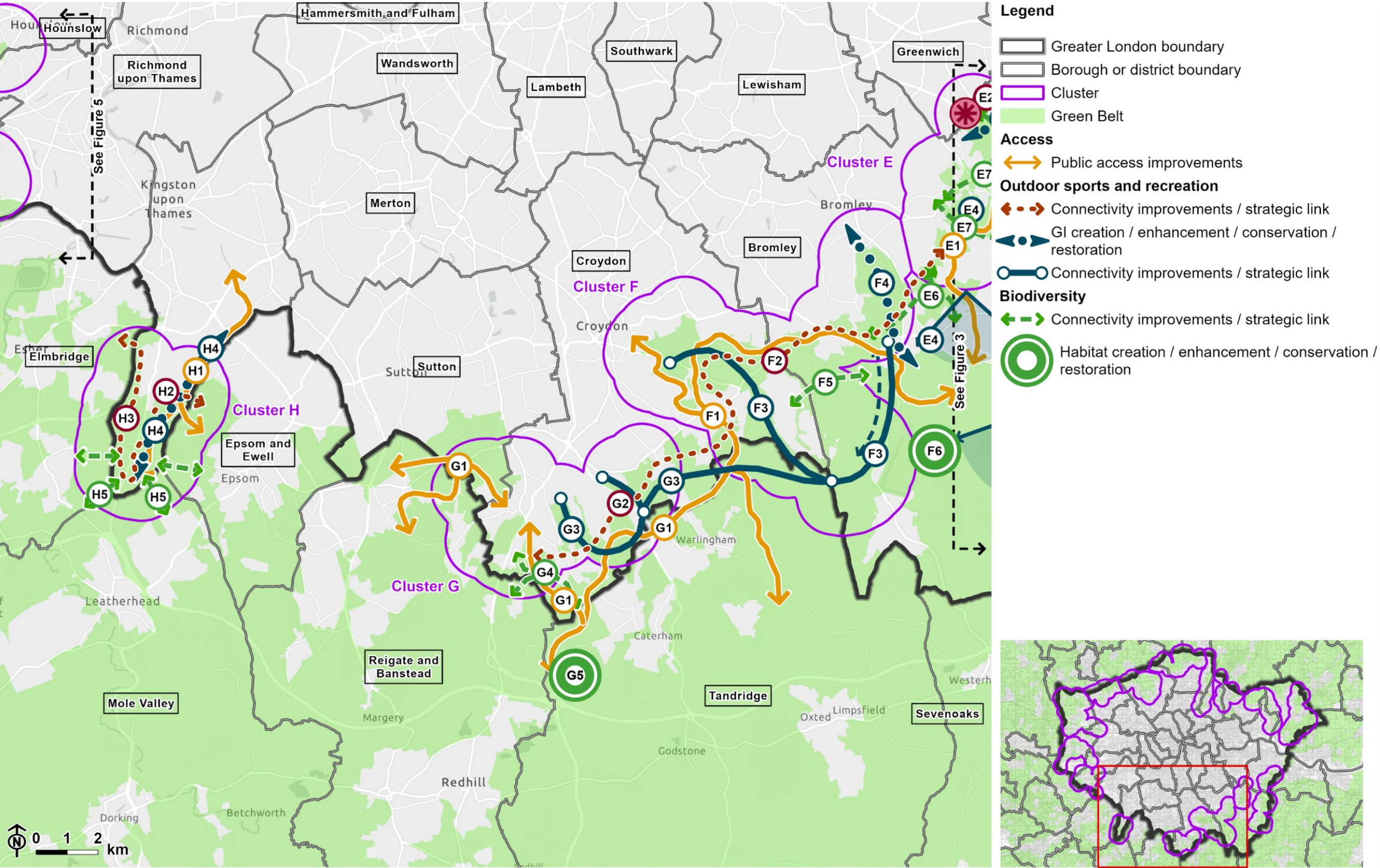
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Figure 3: Summary of potential strategic Green Belt enhancement opportunities in Clusters D-E



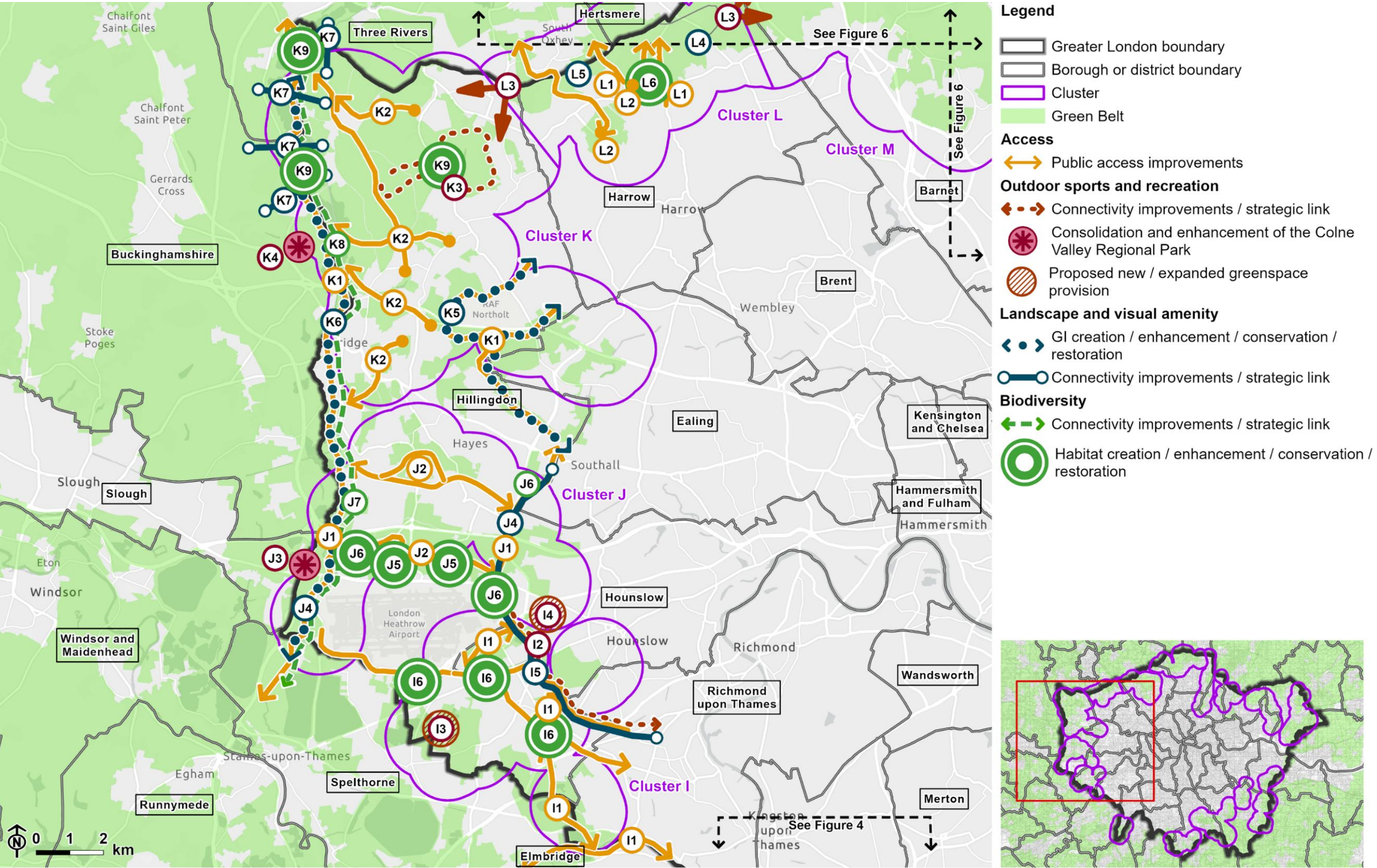
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Figure 4: Summary of potential strategic Green Belt enhancement opportunities in Clusters F-H



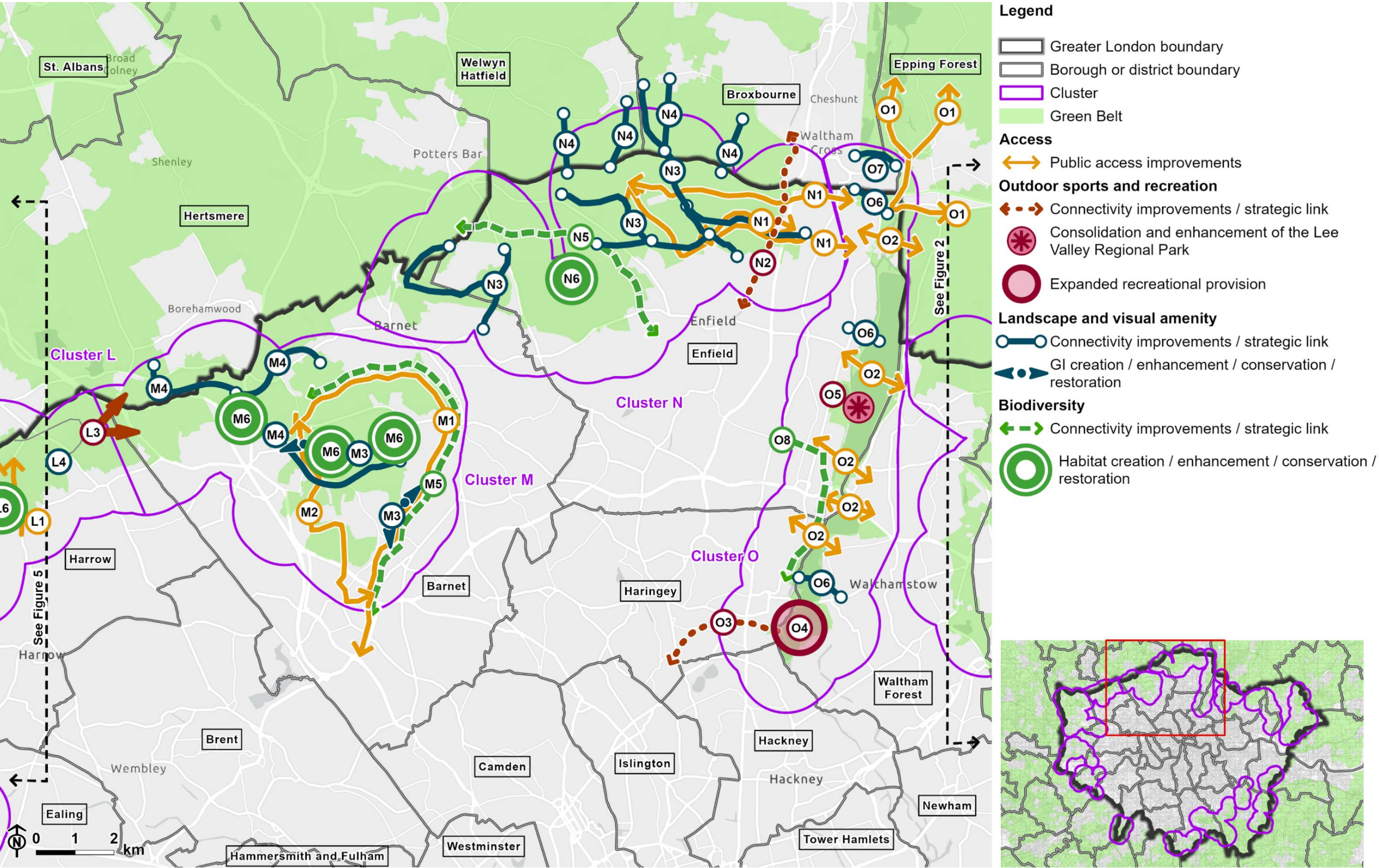
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Figure 5: Summary of potential strategic Green Belt enhancement opportunities in Clusters I-L



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Figure 6: Summary of potential strategic Green Belt enhancement opportunities in Cluster M-O



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References

- 1 [Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government \(2024\) National Planning Policy Framework](#) (Accessed 26 February 2026)
- 2 [Greater London Authority \(2026\) London Green Infrastructure Framework](#) (Accessed 3 March 2026)
- 3 [Mayor of London \(2011\) Green Infrastructure and Open Environments: the All London Green Grid Supplementary Planning Guidance](#) (Accessed 10 February 2026)
- 4 [Mayor of London \(2026\) Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#) (Accessed 16 March 2026)
- 5 [Greater London Authority \(2023\) Rewilding London: Final Report of the London Rewilding Taskforce](#) (Accessed 18 June 2026)

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