

Cabinet

Tuesday 16 September 2025

11.00 am

Ground floor meeting rooms, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

Appendices

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Contact

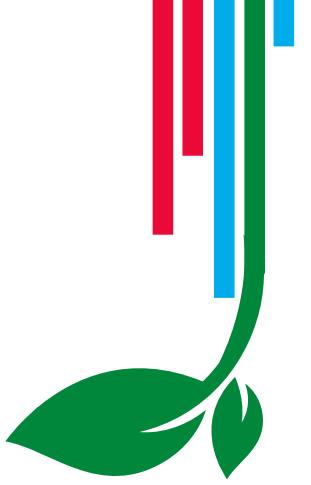
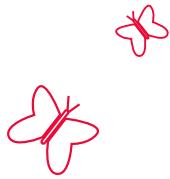
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Date: 8 September 2025

CLIMATE CHANGE ANNUAL REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2025





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INTRODUCING THE 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

The past year has seen great progress delivering our climate programme in Southwark, but in the UK and across the globe we also know that climate action is not happening fast enough.

Despite commitments made by world leaders, efforts are continuing to fall short, and in some places these commitments are also being rolled back.

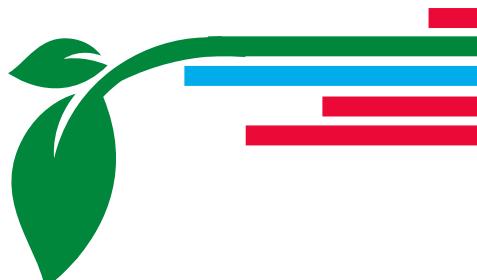
This was made clear in a recent report from 60 of the world's leading scientists. The report warned we have just three years left to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. Its lead author was even clearer when he said, 'things are all moving in the wrong direction'.

That isn't the case for the council's emissions from buildings and energy, which are heading in the right direction and emissions continue to fall. However, for all this hard work, we are not immune from the same global challenges and trends. That's because these reductions have been counteracted by the indirect emissions from goods and services we buy. For the first time in five years, our borough's overall emissions have also increased slightly.

Yet by looking at the scale of action delivered in the past year we can also see that there is reason to be hopeful here in Southwark. We have seen a host of successes that will start to bear fruit over the coming years. This includes major funding wins from central government that mean we can upgrade key buildings like our leisure centres, schools and homes. This work will move us away from fossil fuels, cut carbon emissions and save money on energy bills.



A site visit as part of our community energy programme





Dulwich Leisure Centre staff at the launch of our new Library of Things site

We can also see positive climate action growing in our communities and reducing inequalities. Our Library of Things service in Canada Water became so popular that we expanded it to two other locations meaning most residents are within 1.5 miles of a site. Our community energy fund has also empowered our communities to take control of their energy, reduce bills and tackle fuel poverty. With more projects to come next year through our second round of funding this will continue to support a just transition to a green and sustainable borough. Our biodiversity fund was also oversubscribed, with residents wanting to take direct action in their communities to create a greener borough.

This momentum will continue in the next year, with more projects being delivered right across the borough. A refreshed climate action plan will also drive this programme forward and we will continue to do everything we can to tackle the climate emergency. The past year has shown that by delivering key projects we can reduce emissions, tackle inequality and improve the lives of people and future generations across our borough.



CARBON EMISSIONS IN SOUTHWARK

How we measure emissions

To end our contribution to climate change we need to get the borough's carbon emissions down to zero. We measure emissions in kilotons of carbon dioxide equivalents. We write this as kt CO₂e. One kiloton is equal to 1,000 tonnes.

ONE = **1,000**
kiloton tonnes

ONE
tonne of carbon
is the same as



flight from a London airport to the east coast of the US

OR



driving between John O'Groats and Land's End four times in the average car



Emissions are sorted into three groups, which we call scopes. These are:

- **scope one**, which covers direct emissions from things we own or control
- **scope two**, which covers indirect emissions from energy that we have bought
- **scope three**, which includes all other emissions that occur in making all the things we buy

We also monitor these emissions from the borough as a whole. This includes all homes, businesses and journeys in the borough, as well as emissions that are within the control of the council from our own buildings, vehicles and what we buy.

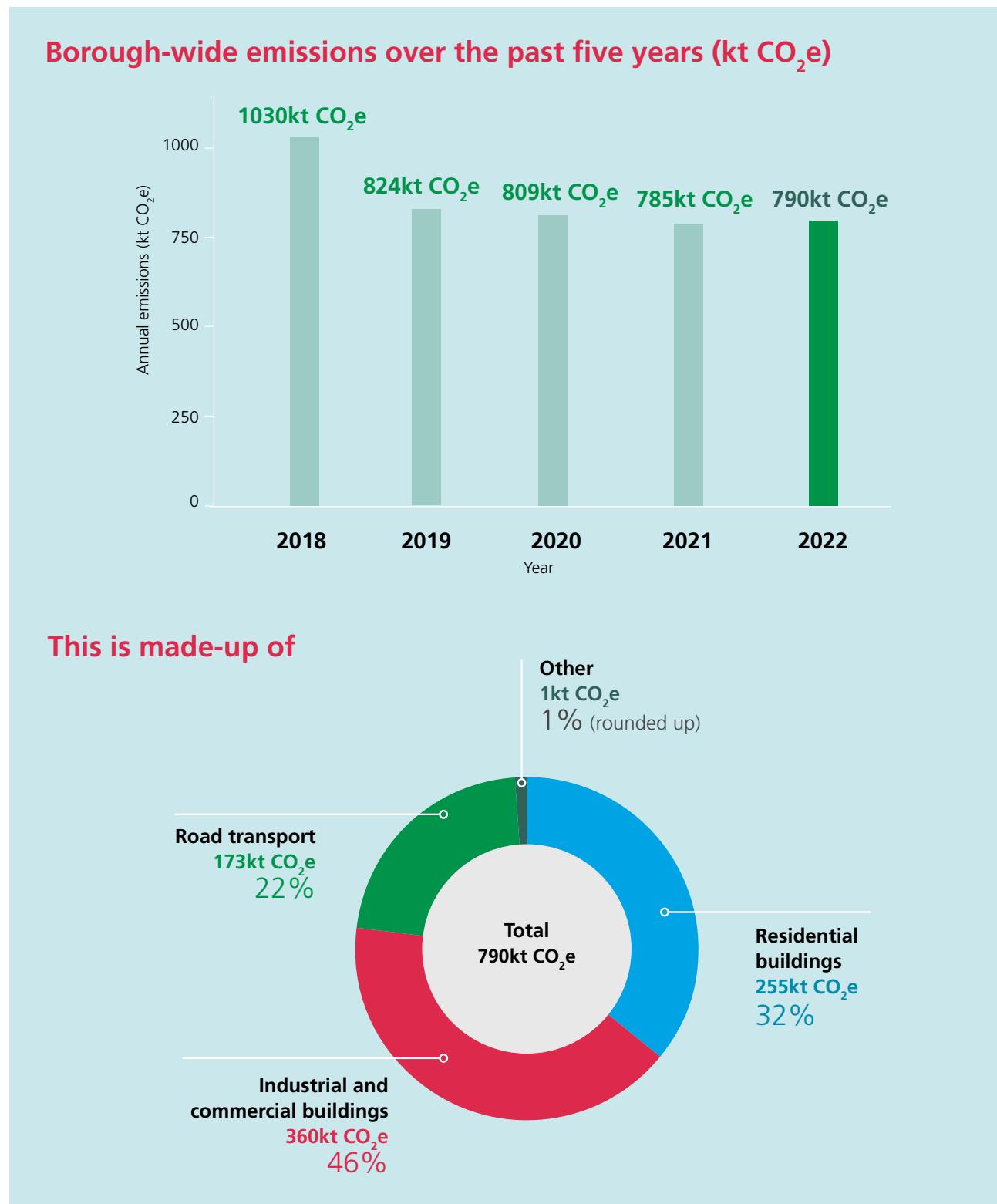
What the latest information shows

Our updated data shows that for the first time in five years emissions in the borough have gone up slightly. This has been an increase of 5 kt, which amounts to less than 1% (0.6%). We continued to see emissions from domestic buildings, like our homes, decrease. However, this was counteracted by rising emissions from road transport and industrial buildings as business operations and car travel returned to pre-covid levels in 2022 (latest government data available).

This isn't a problem that is unique to Southwark. It is challenging local and national governments across the world. Yet, by facing up to this challenge we have been able to identify what we need to do and where we need to direct our efforts. We can continue to see that focusing on heating and powering buildings is vital. These activities contribute to 78% of scope one and two emissions in Southwark.

Borough-wide emissions in Southwark

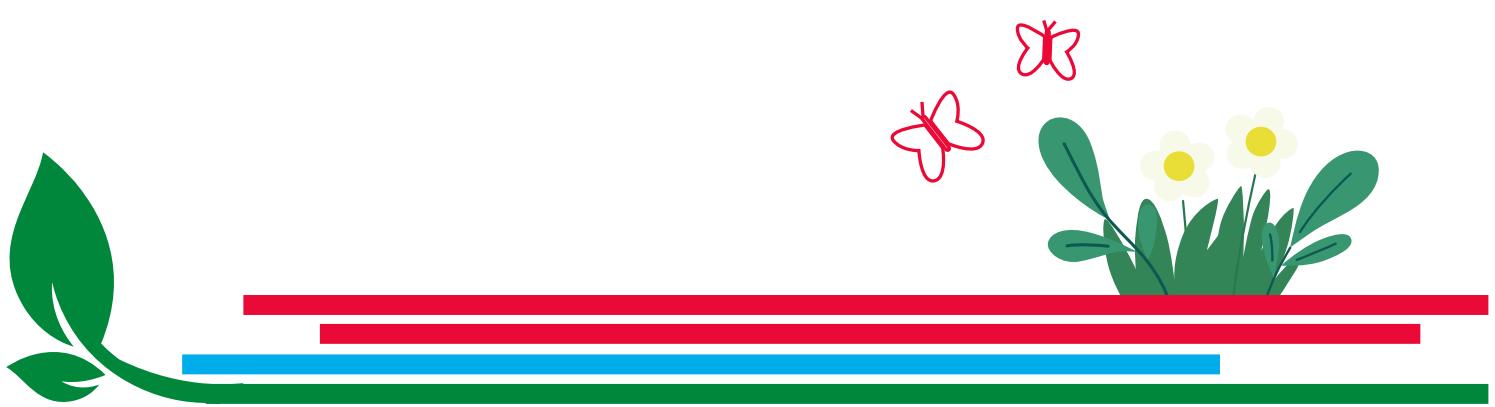
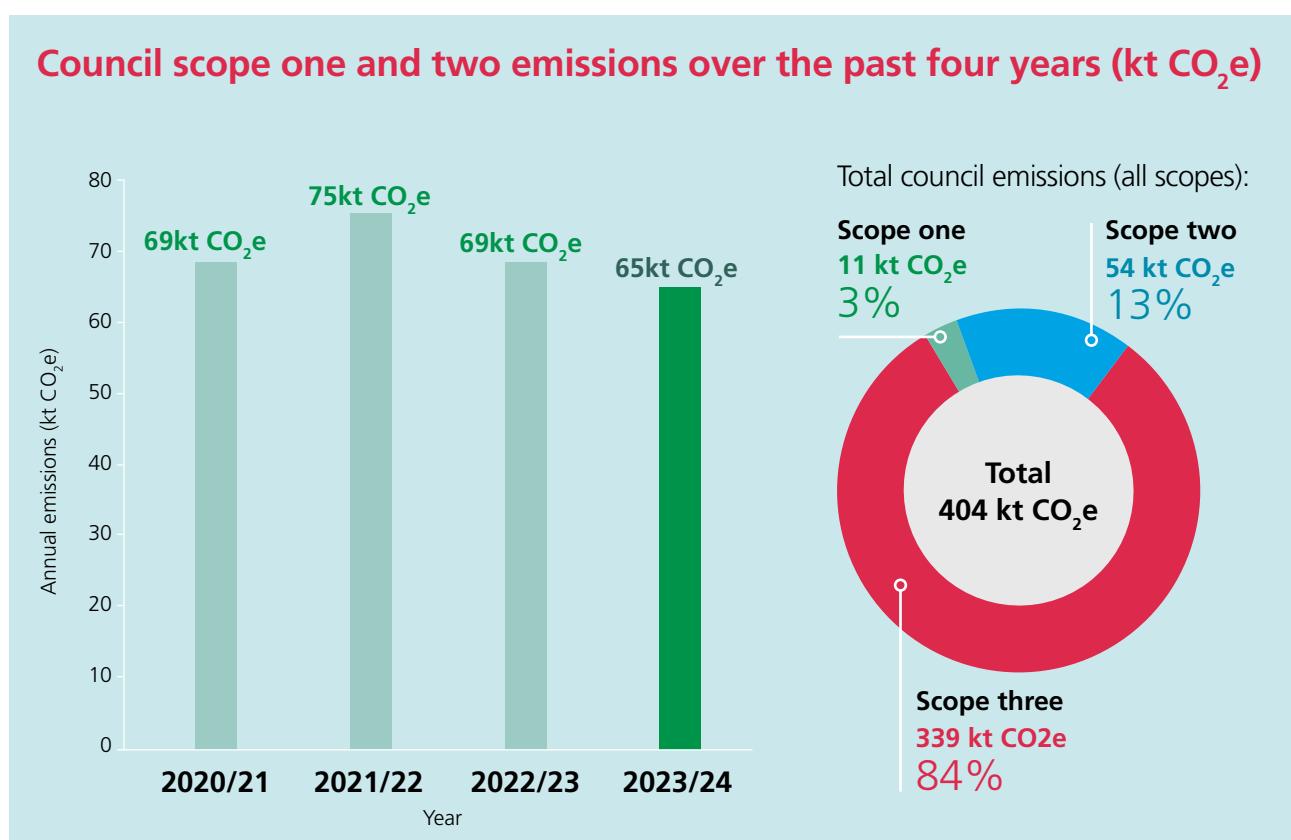
For this information, we rely on large national datasets from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. There is a delay in publishing these datasets, which means the latest information is three years behind. This is why the latest up-to-date figures are for 2022.



Emissions from the council

We're also focussing on emissions from the council, which form part of the borough-wide figures set out above. We have set a target to halve our operational council emissions by 2026. We have continued to reduce our scope one and two emissions. Compared to last year these decreased from 69 to 65 kt CO₂e. However, after increased spending, our scope three emissions have risen by 10% to 339 kt CO₂e.

We calculate our scope three emissions by looking at how much we spend on different things. This gives us a simple understanding of emissions from the things we buy. This year our spending has increased in terms of the number of goods and services we bought. However, spending also increased due to cost of those items rising due to inflation. Both of these things have led to an increase in scope three emissions, and highlights what will be a priority area for the year ahead.



THE LAST YEAR IN ACTION

Our climate action plan details how we are working to reduce emissions in the borough. This includes key activities for each action and measurements such as cost. This section highlights some of our progress over the past year.



Solar panels on Peckham Pulse Leisure Centre

Buildings and energy

Investing in our leisure centres

One of our biggest programmes of work is making green improvements in our leisure centres. These buildings are some of our largest energy consumers, needing lots of power to keep our pools and gyms running. A detailed programme is underway and there have already been some successes – like new pool covers, LED lighting and solar panels on Peckham Pulse Leisure Centre.



Pilot project to move schools away from gas

We delivered a major retrofit project at Crampton Primary School in Walworth. This school is a 1960s school with ageing gas boilers meaning it was burning fossil fuels and wasting lots of energy and money. We have made upgrades to the building as well as replacing the gas boilers with new air source heat pumps. This will slash its carbon footprint and also improve air quality for the pupils and neighbouring area. We're now using what we've learnt from this project to deliver similar projects for more of our schools.

Strengthening our planning policy

Work to enhance planning guidance and new policy is well underway. Improved policy guidance is vital in ensuring that new development, and adaptations to existing development, consider climate impacts and resilience to issues such as overheating and flooding. Work will also commence on the Southwark Plan review to update the climate and energy policies.

In autumn 2024 we consulted on new Climate and Environment and Householder Development Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD). The Householder Development SPD was adopted at Cabinet in July 2025. The Climate and Environment SPD is scheduled for adoption in October 2025.



New LED streetlighting being installed

LED streetlighting rollout

We have now completed the roll-out of our LED streetlight programme. This has seen us replace all 17,000 highways streetlights across the borough. LED lights use up to 75% less energy than traditional lighting, cutting carbon emissions and saving us money. They also last much longer before needing to be replaced, even up to as much as 50,000 hours more. That means we also have to replace them less, helping to reduce waste and save us money.

Working across the borough

Community energy

Southwark Community Energy Fund provides grants to community groups, schools and faith groups to make green building improvements that tackle fuel poverty. In our first round, we awarded £400,000 to 22 projects. Last year saw these projects delivering transformative change across the borough to reduce emissions, help tackle inequality and support a just transition.

After this success, we held a second round in early 2025. This has led to another £400,000 being awarded to 23 projects – ranging from solar panels on schools to fuel poverty workshops.

Joining forces with schools for climate action

Through working with schools and students in our climate action schools network, we produced an easy-to-use guide and template to help local schools take climate action. The guide will help education providers to create a climate action plan so they can go green and create new opportunities for students and staff alike. It will also help them to comply with new government requirements. Our network now stands at 28 schools from across the borough.



Children from Southwark schools at the launch of our school climate action plan guide



Westminster House Youth Club with new infrared heating funded through community energy

**£800,000
AWARDED TO 45 PROJECTS**

**£1,376,620
OF SUPPORT TO RESIDENTS**

Energy savers service

The energy savers service continues to run. This is a service available through Citizen's Advice Southwark. Since opening in 2022, it has delivered £1,376,620 of support to residents looking to save on their heating bills. So far, it has supported 1,171 vulnerable residents (as of March 2025).

Providing free green homes advice

We have continued to support the Energy Advice Centre at London Southbank University. This provides a free green homes advice service for residents. Over the past year, it gave 106 pieces of advice to help residents make their homes more efficient and reduce bills. It also provides advice to residents to stay cooler in the summer, without increasing bills.

STREETS AND TRANSPORT

Making our streets cleaner, greener and safer for everyone

Last year we continued to support the borough to move away from cars by freeing up space for walking, cycling and public transport. This included adopting our Streets for People delivery plan and launching our walking, cycling and electric vehicle plans.



Streets for People continues to encourage more people to walk and cycle



New flood protection bund at Peckham Rye Park

Preparing the borough for increased flooding

We updated our local flood risk strategy. It sets out how we will continue to secure and increase protections over the next five years. That includes a range of different projects to protect our residents and businesses from flooding. This includes green drainage in parks and on streets that help improve biodiversity as well as combat flooding. We were also ranked number one in the country for dealing with flooding on the roads by the National Highways and Transport Public Satisfaction Survey.





*We're helping
more people
walk and cycle*



Working across the borough

Helping residents to walk and cycle more

A key part of our Streets for People programme is the work we are doing to help people to walk and cycle more. Last year our programme delivered:

- an increase in cycle hangars to 844, providing over 4,700 bike spaces
- cycling training to over 6,000 adults and children
- more pedestrian crossings, taking us to 201 new locations in the past six years
- improvements to walking and cycling in Dulwich Village junction, Bermondsey Street and four pocket parks in Walworth



NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Increasing the number of trees

We've continued to plant more trees over the past year. This includes:



Allowing the 'right to grow'

We became the first London borough to commit to creating a free, accessible map of all public land that is suitable for community cultivation or wildlife projects.





Working across the borough

Funding new community-led nature projects

As part of our efforts to boost biodiversity in the borough, we have awarded £550,000 to 12 community-led projects that will improve the natural environment and create new habitats for local wildlife.

It includes a variety of projects, such as new wildlife ponds in parks and investment in neighbourhood nature reserves, creation of new green spaces on estates, a new green roof on a set of garages as well as a project to reunite the ancient and popular woodlands of Sydenham Hill Wood and Dulwich Wood. Projects also help to tackle inequality and support a just transition to a greener borough by improving access to green spaces.

"We're delighted... the funding will allow us to expand public access to the nature reserve through a program of volunteer workdays, and incrementally make improvements to the reserve's biodiversity and habitat value in the coming year."

Paul McGann, Galleywall Nature Reserve



Paul and Alfie at Galleywall Nature Reserve



A wildlife pond in Galleywall Nature Reserve

Southwark biodiversity partnership

This group has been running since 2004 to help promote and protect local nature. It plays a vital role in managing our green spaces for plants and wildlife.

GREEN ECONOMY

Helping residents tackle food waste

In October 2024, we rolled out food waste collections throughout Southwark. Food waste collections help us generate green energy and agricultural fertilisers. This helps us to reduce carbon emissions and reduce the costs of providing services, as this is much cheaper than disposal of waste. Thanks to residents separating their food waste, by April 2025 we'd already recycled about 2,300 tonnes of food waste. This continues to increase each week as more residents start to use the service.



New food waste bins on Southwark estates

More green jobs and skills



2,300
GREEN JOBS CREATED
in Southwark since 2022



317
SOUTHWARK RESIDENTS
trained through Green Skills
Hub in partnership with
London South Bank University



Opening event at the Castle Leisure Centre Library of Things

Working across the borough

Leading the way with the sharing economy

Following the success of the first Library of Things site in Canada Water, we worked with the social enterprise to fund two new locations. Library of Things are now open in Dulwich Leisure Centre and Castle Leisure Centre, as well as the original site in Canada Water Library. This means most Southwark residents now have access to an affordable sharing library within 1.5 miles of their home.

By using the sites, residents and businesses can affordably access useful items like carpet cleaners, drills and sewing machines for a few pounds per day, instead of buying brand new items that won't be used regularly.

In its first two years, our Canada Water site welcomed over 2000 residents. Through their use, they were able to prevent 22 tonnes of waste from being created and saved 64 tonnes of carbon (the same as taking 37 petrol cars off the road).

"I wanted to check the draught or cold spots for ventilation around sash windows after some roof leaks nearby last year. It didn't reveal any particular issue but was incredible for spotting some colder spots in roof indicating weaker insulation... Fantastic"

Kibbs, local resident after borrowing a thermal imaging camera



Matthew, one of our first borrowers at the Library of Things in Dulwich Leisure Centre



Two residents at the clothes swap shop held in Canada Water Library during climate week

Helping high streets move beyond waste

Last year, we partnered with ReLondon to support 16 businesses to reduce their waste and help them to grow. This used grant funding from Southwark Pioneers Fund and is helping a wide range of local businesses from restaurants to local markets.

Climate week in Southwark

During London Climate Action Week, we brought together a series of free community events. The events ran across the borough, between Saturday 21 and Sunday 29 June including a High Streets for People event. More than 500 people came to these events to connect with neighbours, learn new skills and take climate action.

Local businesses

We have been using a range of forums to engage with businesses, including our local Business Improvement Districts (BIDs). Last year we continued to support Southwark Climate Collective. This network was created to help small and medium sized businesses take positive environmental action. It has been supporting 160 businesses across the borough to make plans for reducing emissions.

PEOPLE AND RESOURCES

Campaigning for green and decent homes

We have been leading a campaign known as Securing the Future of Council Housing. As part of this we're calling for a fully funded green and decent homes programme to deliver safe, secure and healthy homes. The campaign is backed by 111 other councils, and calls for national investment that would:

- modernise and upgrade homes
- decarbonise and support net zero
- improve health
- support green skills and grow the green economy
- safeguard the future of council housing



Our pension fund

As of March 2025, we have achieved an 82% reduction of our pension fund's carbon footprint.

Working across the borough

Raising money with residents

We have continued to grow our local community of investors through Southwark Green Investment. Through the first three rounds, we have raised £2.5 million. This new funding is already having an impact, with over £1 million already being used last year to make a range of climate projects become a reality.



Planting a new nature garden in Bermondsey, funded through Southwark Green Investment 2



One of the new cycle hangars funded through Southwark Green Investment 1

Community stakeholder panel

This group includes local organisations that are interested in climate change and groups that represent local communities. The group continued to meet over the past year, including a focussed workshop on updating the climate action plan.

Delivery partner network

This group includes our large organisations, like universities and hospitals. The group continues to meet to share knowledge and collaborate on opportunities to work together for example through partnering on funding bids.

LOOKING AHEAD – A YEAR OF DELIVERY

Greening our buildings

Our focussed programme of green upgrades at leisure centres, council offices and schools will be continuing at pace over the next year. This will include a wide range of measures such as heat pumps, solar panels and energy efficiency improvements. The work has a clear programme for the next year, and when delivered will reduce emissions from our operations by half when compared with 2022.



Bringing climate action into our budget

Once we have updated our climate action plan, we will be working across the council to embed these actions into our financial budgeting process for the next year. This is a process known as climate budgeting. It will allow us to clearly map out how our spending plans relate to our climate goals and will provide an extra level of governance within the council. This will help us to connect our goal for being a well-run council that gets value for money, with our carbon-neutral target.

Preparing the borough for flooding

As part of our work to keep residents, businesses and buildings safe from flooding, we will be installing a series of green drainage projects in key flooding hotspots. These projects will use natural solutions to flooding, by using methods such as rain gardens that will increase biodiversity as well as flood protection.





Flashy Wings Ministry after a fuel poverty workshop delivered through community energy funding

Becoming a council of climate experts

We will be rolling out climate change training for all staff at every level and publishing an internal climate resource hub. This will help our entire workforce to understand the challenge of tackling the climate emergency, including risks and opportunities that they face in their role.

Alongside this, we will also be continuing our work to reduce the emissions that result from the contracts and services we buy. As shown by this year's data, this is the largest area of emissions (scope three) that we as a council are responsible for and will continue to be a key area of focus.

Delivering more community climate action

The success of our biodiversity fund and community energy fund will continue to be supported over the next year. Community-led nature recovery projects and fuel poverty projects will be appearing all over the borough, and we will be supporting the non-profit groups delivering these projects with ongoing advice and monitoring. We will also be launching a third round of community energy fund, as we continue to support our growing community energy sector that puts power back in the hands of residents and groups, reducing bills, tackling inequality and cutting emissions.



More delivery for the year ahead



6,000
SECURE CYCLE PARKING SPACES
across the borough
by March 2026



IMPROVEMENTS TO KEY ROUTES
including the cycleways from Peckham to Rotherhithe, Tanner Street to Willow Walk, and around Bermondsey Street

ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES

Each year we set out how we are responding to ongoing challenges around funding, resource and behaviour change. These barriers continue to affect our ability to match action to the scale of our ambition.



The Housing Minister speaks at an event organised through our campaigning

Funding

There continues to be an immense funding gap that needs to be closed if we are going to realise our ambition to become carbon neutral. As a council we also need to ensure we deliver excellent value for money, running services well and making sure every penny we spend is for the benefit of the people we serve.



£11 MILLION
secured of new
government funding

What we're doing

- we were successful in securing over £11 million of new government funding for clean energy projects across five leisure centres, two schools and over a hundred council homes
- we have continued to grow our local community of investors through Southwark Green Investment raising £2.5 million out of our targeted £6 million
- we will be introducing climate budgeting to clearly map out how our spending plans relate to our climate goals
- we are continuing to lobby government on reforming council housing and upgrading and extending the Bakerloo line

Resources

There are also challenges around resources and the expertise needed across the borough to reduce carbon. Our wide-ranging actions need to be delivered quickly but also have to be done alongside other demands. Similarly, if we are to reduce emissions many more people need to be trained in new green jobs to carry out this work.

What we're doing

- we have continued to address resource gaps within the council, including bringing in project management expertise in retrofitting council buildings
- training and skills within the council continues to be a focus and we will be rolling out climate change training for all staff at every level
- at a borough level, we have supported the local economy to create more green jobs, already exceeding our target of 2,000
- we continue to work hard to address the skills gap that exists in delivering a green future, through London South Bank University Green Skills Hub



Clothes mending workshops during climate week



2,000
green jobs created
exceeding our target

Changing behaviours

To deliver our action plan for the whole borough we will need extensive behaviour change from stakeholders, businesses and residents across the borough.

What we're doing

- our Streets for People programme is continuing to support residents to do more walking and cycling
- we are working with key stakeholder groups through our engagement networks to help us engage more meaningfully with different communities in the borough
- a week of free community events were held for people of all ages across the borough during London Climate Action Week
- we are continuing to promote positive climate behaviours through services like our food waste collections, Library of Things sites and community funding streams on energy and biodiversity



For more information please visit
www.southwark.gov.uk/climate

Tackling the Climate Emergency Together

Our strategy for a resilient and carbon neutral
Southwark

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Foreword

The climate emergency remains the challenge of our time. We now have a limited window to confront and reverse it. The consequences of inaction become more devastating and impactful with each passing year. The scale of the task remains huge, but we must continue to work collaboratively and with the required urgency.

To prevent this change becoming catastrophic the evidence tells us we must do our part to keep average global temperature rises as close to 1.5 degrees as possible. As we pass the halfway point in this decade, we can see that climate action across the globe is happening nowhere near fast enough. Despite commitments made by world leaders, efforts are continuing to fall short, and in some places these commitments are also being rolled back.

We will continue to do all we can to make the borough carbon neutral by 2030, as climate action will make our air cleaner air, green our borough, lower our energy bills and make our homes and neighbourhoods better places to live.

We have secured £12m of new investment to support the retrofit of our leisure centres, homes and schools, but the cost of addressing climate change, and the lack of available funding and resources to reduce carbon emissions and deliver climate adaptation measures to protect the borough remains a significant challenge.

We are determined that climate action in Southwark ensures a fair transition. One that helps to improve the lives of residents on lower incomes, and that delivers the new green jobs which are so clearly needed. It is underpinned by the core values of Southwark 2030, to reduce inequality, invest in prevention and empower people.

This strategy is now our single climate change strategy as it merges our Climate Change Strategy (2021) with the Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy (2024) into a single document. Having one strategy focuses our ambition on reducing emissions, improving our climate adaptation and resilience, and aligns with the goals of Southwark 2030. Our vision for the borough now plays a central role in guiding how we will implement climate action.

This refreshed strategy and its updated action plan sets out how we will continue to take action for the whole borough. The technical analysis which supports this work, shows why this must be the case. The council is responsible for just 12% of emissions in the borough, not only through its direct operations but also through the goods and services it purchases. So, while it's important that we lead by example, we will only achieve impact on the scale required, if all organisations, businesses and community groups in our borough pull in the same direction.

However, we also want to be clear that, we cannot realise all the change we need without increased and broadened support from national government. We will continue to live up to our reputation as a campaigning council, making the case to government to deliver the national investment needed to truly green our local economy, our homes and our infrastructure.

But even if global greenhouse gas emissions stopped tomorrow, our climate will continue to change. We must therefore improve our resilience to the worsening impacts of climate change and adapt our council and borough to meet new challenges. Making changes now will help prepare Southwark for the future, as the effects of climate change are already being felt.

Extreme weather, flooding, water scarcity, food insecurity and new pests and disease which threaten our biodiversity are all impacts of climate change. We must build our resilience to hotter and longer heatwaves by ensuring buildings and places are cooler and provide respite from higher temperatures. These temperatures will impact our most vulnerable residents, and we must ensure our most important council services are resilient and robust so that they function well during hazardous events. Reducing the risk of flooding by improving surface water drainage, reducing the demand on the sewer system and improving our flood defences are a key part of our work. We must also plan for the likely impacts of rising sea-levels along the River Thames. Conversely, we must also conserve more water and adapt our green spaces to be more resistant as the likelihood of summer droughts increase.

Our updated Climate Action Plan (2025) defines actions that will both reduce emissions and adapt the borough through each of its five themes. These are the actions we will prioritise, and we will do this while remaining true to our values and our commitment to climate justice, reducing inequality and building a fairer borough for all.

As we set on the following pages, this strategy is not the ‘final word’ on the topic, and it must respond to new ideas, data, technologies and available funding. We know that we can only deliver fundamental change if we work in close partnership with residents, local groups, businesses and partner organisations such as universities, schools and NHS trusts who are key stakeholders across our communities.

We look forward to taking this crucial work forward together as we build a fairer and more sustainable Southwark.

Cllr John Batteson

Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency, Jobs and Business

Introduction

The climate emergency is the defining challenge of our time. Without bold and immediate action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the future of humanity and the ecosystems we depend on are at risk. Southwark Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and committed to do it all could to become a carbon neutral borough by 2030.

The 2030 target date to get to carbon neutral is based on the stark warning issued by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 2018. They found that urgent action is needed before 2030 if global temperature rises are to remain within 1.5°C, the maximum average temperature rise considered safe for humanity. The IPCC found that a global rise above 1.5°C would lead to climate-related risks to human health, livelihoods, food security, human security, water supply and economic growth. While the 1.5°C target is intended as a long-term average over multiple decades, it's significant that 2024 was the hottest year on record and the first full year in which global temperatures surpassed the 1.5°C thresholdⁱ. Even if we were to stop the emission of all greenhouse gases immediately, the warming of the planet would continue for at least several more decades.

In 2024 the council adopted the Climate Resilience and Adaptation strategy to formalise the approach for delivering a resilient borough that can overcome the current and future impacts of climate change, such as a warming planet, in a just, equal and fair manner.

Working with our communities, we have already made progress decarbonising buildings, making walking and cycling easier and delivering projects across the borough to reduce carbon and invest in a more sustainable future. It is right that our top priority remains to reduce carbon emissions to slow and eventually stop the warming of the planet and the catastrophic effects of climate change.

Southwark has made meaningful progress in reducing its carbon emissions over several years. When developing the Climate Change strategy, the council commissioned an independent analysis to understand the volume of the borough's emissions. The findings estimated that in 2017 emissions across the entire borough of Southwark sat at 1,288 kt CO₂e. Boroughwide emissions are estimated to have been approximately 790ktCO₂e in 2023, demonstrating the impact of local action already underway across Southwark. Despite this, substantial government support remains essential to sustain and accelerate this progress.

However, even with sustained reductions in emissions, too much damage has already been done. Even if the world stopped producing carbon and other greenhouse gases tomorrow, the increased carbon already in the atmosphere means the planet will continue to warm and it will take many thousands of years to return to pre-industrial temperaturesⁱⁱ. While we need to redouble our efforts to reduce carbon and move to a net zero future, we also need to adapt for a warmer world and

ensure we are resilient to the changes that are already happening. We also expect those changes to continue to intensify in the coming years.

Climate change will not impact everyone equally and will exacerbate existing economic and social inequity. Research from CDP in 2023 shows that 92% of low-income households are among those that will be most affected by climate-related risks including flooding and heatwaves. This is followed by older people (85%), children (73%) and minority communities (65%)ⁱⁱⁱ. Our commitment to both emission reductions and climate adaptation and resilience must focus on these groups who contribute the least to greenhouse gas emissions due to lower levels of consumption and energy use yet are disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change and often have the least resource to mitigate against the impact.

Our aim is to create a borough that does not passively endure climate change but acts to limit its impacts and do so in a way that contributes to a reduction in carbon emissions. Our aim is to do this working with our residents, businesses, schools, institutions and everyone who lives, works and cares about Southwark and its future.

The transition to a low-carbon and climate-resilient society is not just a necessity, it's an opportunity to reshape Southwark into a healthier, fairer, and more sustainable place for everyone. The urgent action required to cut carbon emissions and can also bring wide-ranging benefits: improving public health, raising housing standards, creating good green jobs, and strengthening our communities.

Equally, adapting our borough to the growing impacts of climate change, such as extreme heat, flooding, and poor air quality, is essential to protect lives, safeguard infrastructure, and reduce long-term costs. Building resilience can also help ease cost of living pressures by improving energy efficiency and reducing vulnerability to climate shocks.

In Southwark, we are committed to ensuring this is a just transition - one that actively works to close the stark inequalities in our borough and ensures that no one is left behind.

The scale of change needed is vast and will also require comprehensive national action, to back the changes we need to deliver locally. We will therefore ensure Southwark is a strong voice in making the case for the urgent national changes and government investment needed.

As of 2025, we have brought together the Climate Change Strategy (2021) and the Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy (2024) into one cohesive strategy. It integrates the strengths of both documents and highlights the interconnected nature of climate mitigation and adaptation.

Since the original strategies were published, the council adopted the flagship Southwark 2030 strategy, our borough-wide plan shaped by thousands of residents, setting out a shared ambition

for a fairer, greener, and more connected future for the borough. This vision now plays a central role in guiding how we deliver climate action across the borough.

The foundations of this combined strategy remain as vital today as when they were first established. While some adjustments have been made to align with Southwark 2030 and improve clarity and effectiveness of delivery, the core ambition remains unchanged. We continue to work toward the same ambitious goals, guided by our commitment to climate action, resilience, and social justice. The actions and approach continue to be shaped by the extensive consultation carried out with the people and organisations of Southwark. Since the council declared a climate emergency in 2019, we have hosted events across the borough and engaged with hundreds of residents, workers, and community groups. The strategy also continues to be grounded in the same technical analysis of the borough's emissions and the steps required to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030, now supplemented with updated data from the years since.

Looking ahead, we will continue to adapt and strengthen both the combined strategy and its action plan, learning through delivery to ensure we are doing all we can to reach a carbon neutral, climate-resilient Southwark by 2030, in line with the broader ambitions of Southwark 2030.

What is climate change?

Greenhouse gases are produced by human activities including the burning of fossil fuels for heat, transport, electricity, farming and deforestation. The amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere is rising and since the industrial revolution, there has been a 40% increase in the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, a 20% increase in nitrous oxide, and a 150% increase in methane^{iv}. These gases trap energy from the sun warming the planet.

This is causing average temperatures across the globe to warm which in turn is leading to catastrophic changes to our planet.

If we do not change our behaviour, it will be devastating for our world. Places like Bangladesh are the hardest hit by climate change, with monsoon flooding in the region becoming more severe year on year. Climate change is also affecting places like West Africa and Latin America, with crop yields and production predicted to fall because of higher temperatures. 2024 was informally referred to as the 'year of the flood' due to a series of extreme rainfall events across the globe. In Spain, the Valencian Community experienced devastating floods in the autumn, receiving more than a year's worth of rain in just a few days. The event caused numerous fatalities and over €10 billion in damages. In the UK, although total annual rainfall was close to average, the country recorded over 7,600 flood alerts and warnings, the highest number ever. These were driven by sudden, intense downpours that caused widespread damage and contributed to the second worst harvest in the UK on record^v. Even if we stopped releasing greenhouse gases immediately, some estimates show

that global heating would continue for several decades. If things do not change, it will affect our world in dramatic ways. We could see more extreme weather, rising sea levels, ecological damage, more people dying from disease and wars caused by poor food supply. There is a climate emergency, and we need to take urgent action now.

Tackling climate change requires coordinated global action, and several landmark decisions have shaped the international response. These decisions are overseen by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which brings nations together to agree on shared climate goals. Each year, the UNFCCC hosts the Conference of the Parties (COP), a global summit where countries negotiate agreements, assess progress, and set future targets. Notable outcomes include the Kyoto Protocol (1997), which introduced the first legally binding emission reduction commitments, and the Paris Agreement (2015), which formally recognised the importance of limiting global warming to 1.5°C. The global commitments made at COP influence our borough's approach to climate action, helping to shape our local strategies and align them with international efforts.

Climate change is a global crisis, but its impacts are deeply local. While rising emissions and environmental degradation are driven by global systems, the effects, such as extreme heat, flooding, and air pollution, are felt directly by residents here in Southwark. That's why we are committed in playing our part in cutting emissions and contributing to global climate goals. At the same time, building resilience and adapting to climate change must happen at the local level. The specific risks faced by our communities, shaped by geography, culture, housing, inequality and more require detailed, place-based local planning. Hence the importance of combining our climate change and resilience and adaptation strategies.

What is climate resilience and adaptation?

Building resilience and adapting to climate change are essential parts of our response to the climate emergency. According to the Mayor of London's City Resilience Strategy^{vi}, resilience is defined as the capacity of communities and systems to survive, adapt, and thrive no matter what kinds of chronic stresses or acute shocks they face. Adaptation, in this context, refers to the adjustments communities and systems make in response to actual or expected climate impacts.

Both resilience and adaptation are critical because climate change is already affecting Southwark, and these effects are likely to intensify. Climate risk refers to the potential harm caused by climate change, and it arises from the interaction between three factors: the hazards (like extreme heat, flooding, or drought), the exposure of people and infrastructure to those hazards, and the vulnerability of those exposed - how sensitive they are to hazards and how well they can cope.

In Southwark, this means recognising that some residents, particularly those in low-income or poorly insulated housing, are more at risk from overheating during heatwaves or flooding from heavy rainfall. These risks are not just environmental; they are deeply social and economic. For example, 60% of residents live on land less than 10 metres above sea level, making the borough particularly vulnerable to sea level rise and future flood risks. Current flood defences will need to be renewed to keep pace with these changes. Meanwhile, air pollution is thought to cause upwards of 71 deaths per year on average^{vii}, often disproportionately affecting those who contribute the least to emissions. Neighbourhoods at the centre of Southwark have been identified to be most vulnerable to climate risk (London Climate Risk Map^{viii}). The red areas on the left in Figure 1 below illustrate this high climate risk coinciding with areas of income and health inequalities which are shown in blue on the right.

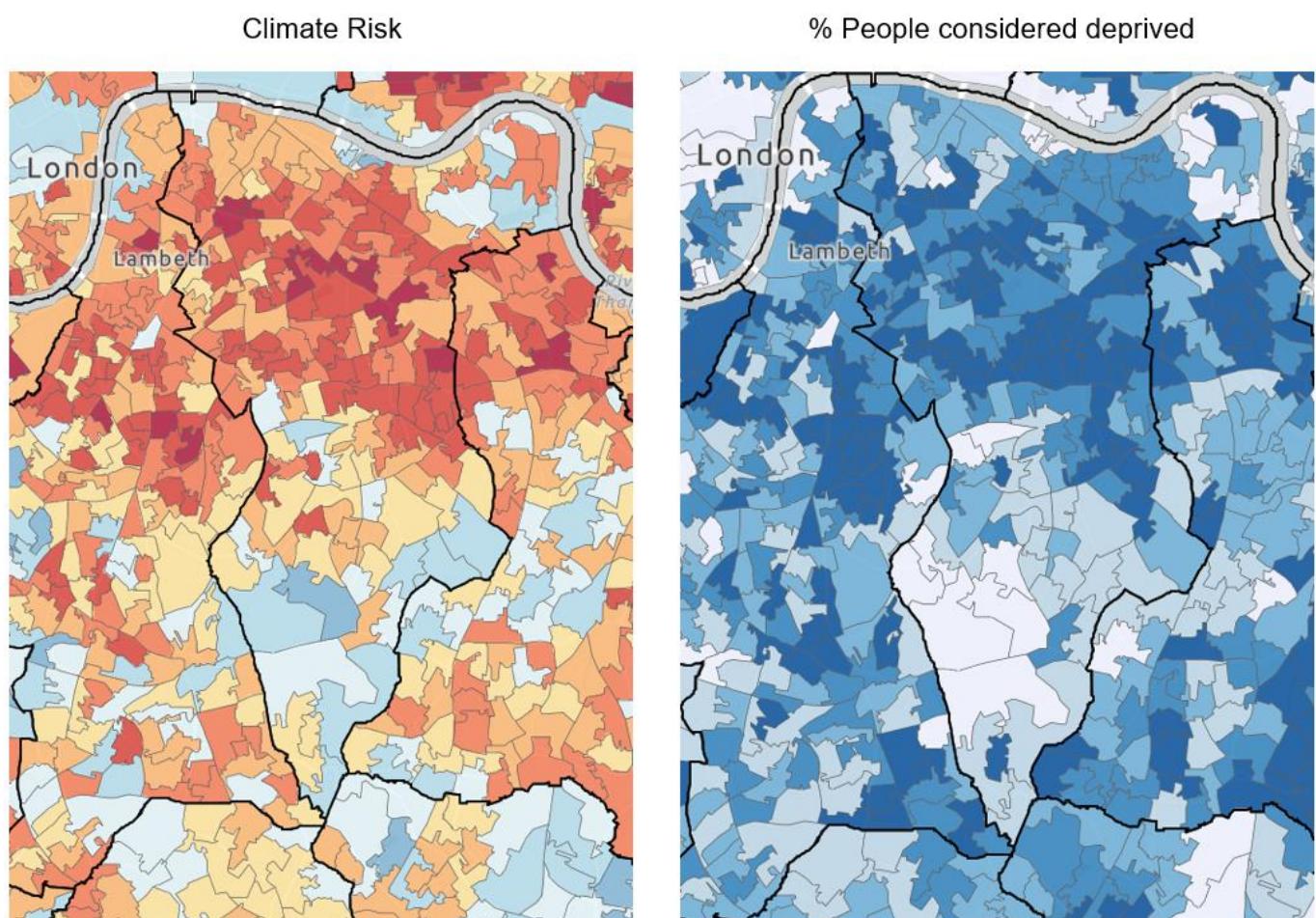


Figure 1: London Climate Risk Map showing London Borough of Southwark climate risk on the left and % of people considered deprived on the right, darker colours indicate higher percentage, note similarities in areas of deprivation and high climate risk.

Climate change also threatens food security. An estimated 75,000 Southwark residents are already food insecure^{ix}, and climate-related disruptions to food supply chains could worsen this, increasing

prices and deepening inequality. As a global borough, Southwark is also connected to communities around the world affected by climate-driven migration, conflict, and resource scarcity, issues that will increasingly impact our communities.

While mitigation efforts aim to reduce emissions and slow climate change, resilience and adaptation are about protecting people, infrastructure, and ecosystems from the impacts we are already experiencing and preparing for those yet to be felt. Planning for resilience is especially important because climate risk is not distributed equally. By actively strengthening our borough's resilience, we are not only responding to climate change, we are also working to reduce inequality, protect public health, and ensure that Southwark can thrive in a changing climate.

Climate change as a social justice issue

The impact of climate change is not experienced equally. Poorer and otherwise disadvantaged communities, including the elderly, are more at risk and have less resource to mitigate against its impact. That is why climate change is not just an environmental issue, but one of social justice where we must ensure our approach reduces inequality, makes our borough and planet fairer and does not place the burden of change on those least responsible and least able to afford it.

Although we are all affected by our changing climate, factors such as race, income, age and health play a significant role in how directly we feel this impact. In Southwark, we are proud to be home to a diverse community and including significant populations from the global majority.

The global south is disproportionately affected by climate change. The impact of floods, landslides and other natural disasters is much higher and exacerbated by human-made climate change, much of which is due to actions in richer countries like our own. The impact of climate change is also experienced differently here in Southwark. An individual's income significantly affects their experience of climate change and the resources they have available to adapt to the changing environment.

Southwark, like the rest of London, is a borough of contrast. Southwark is home to some of the most and also the least deprived areas in the country. Median household income in Dulwich Village at £61,000 is significantly higher than that of Old Kent Road at £37,000^x. This disparity means that in Southwark not every individual has the capacity to act at the same rate or in the same way but will also not experience the impact equally. For example, some housing adaptions such as triple glazing, solar panels or heat pumps are out of reach for people on lower incomes.

People from a higher income are generally more likely to emit more carbon as they are more likely to have larger homes in need of greater heating, to own one or more cars and to fly for holidays or work. We must recognise this disparity in resource and its relationship with our fight against the climate emergency.

Other important characteristics that are disproportionately affected by climate change and the burning of fossil fuels are age and health. People with more vulnerable health are more affected by climate change, which is sometimes determined by age. Children are exposed to higher levels of pollution, particularly while walking to school and on the playground, and the effects of this pollution are more serious on children than on adults. Exposure to air pollution at an early age can hinder lung growth, inhibit brain development, and increase the risk of conditions such as asthma. Alongside this, air pollution has been shown to disproportionately affect people with existing heart or respiratory conditions, who are more likely to be older than average. Overall, vulnerable groups, including young children, the elderly, and those with existing health issues, face heightened risks from climate-related impacts.

Opportunity for Southwark

Southwark's commitment to meeting the challenge of the climate emergency opens enormous opportunity for the borough, its residents and businesses. By taking an approach that puts social justice at the centre there is an opportunity to tackle not just the climate emergency, but to reshape our borough, to create a better, fairer Southwark where everyone can fulfil their potential and benefit from all that our borough has to offer.

Addressing climate change and investing in climate resilience offers a significant opportunity to tackle the cost-of-living crisis while building a healthier, more equitable borough. By improving energy efficiency in homes, expanding access to affordable renewable energy, and enhancing green infrastructure, residents can benefit from lower energy bills, reduced exposure to pollution, and improved public health. Initiatives such as retrofitting buildings, promoting active travel, and supporting green jobs not only reduce carbon emissions but also stimulate the local economy and create employment opportunities.

Climate resilience is a powerful tool for driving inclusive growth, enabling Southwark to reduce inequality, empower communities, and create opportunities that benefit everyone. By embedding sustainability into its long-term planning, the council can ensure that progress on climate action also delivers on its social and economic goals, making Southwark a better place for all its residents. These efforts are closely aligned with the Southwark 2030 vision, which aspires to build a fairer, greener, and more connected borough.

The Southwark Context

Southwark's emissions

To achieve our goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2030, Southwark must continue to build a clear understanding of its carbon emissions and monitor progress over time. We now have several years of emissions data, building on the original baseline that was developed and adopted as part of the strategy. This expanding dataset strengthens our ability to assess our trajectory and refine our approach as needed. As more accurate and comprehensive data becomes available, we will continue to iterate and evolve our strategy to ensure it remains responsive and effective.

Scope

Greenhouse gas emissions are categorised into three categories, known as scopes. Scope 1 includes direct emissions from sources that are owned or controlled by the organisation, such as the council. Scope 2 covers indirect emissions from the generation of purchased electricity, heating, and cooling. Scope 3 encompasses all other indirect emissions that occur across the wider supply chain.

Our commitment is to do all we can to be carbon neutral for Scope 1 and 2 emissions, including those generated directly by the council. We will prioritise action in these areas and report regularly on our progress.

However, a significant portion of greenhouse gas emissions that support daily life and activity in the borough fall outside the direct control of individuals in Southwark or the council. These are Scope 3 emissions and include those generated through the production and delivery of the goods and services we consume. While more challenging to influence, these emissions still contribute to climate change. Where possible, we are committed to reducing our Scope 3 emissions and encouraging more sustainable choices across the borough.

Emissions which the council has direct control over are considerably higher than other inner London local authorities because Southwark has a much larger stock of council housing than any other council in London. Despite this, the council is directly responsible for only a small fraction of the borough's total emissions. However, the council plays a vital leadership role in driving climate action. Through its procurement choices, policy decisions, and resource allocation, the council has broader influence across the borough. It is therefore essential that the council leads by example—reducing its own emissions while actively working with residents, businesses, and partners to support borough-wide efforts to cut emissions.

To effectively track progress and drive meaningful change, this strategy splits the analysis of emissions into two categories. First, it considers ‘Borough-Wide Emissions’, which include those generated by residents, businesses, and visitors across Southwark. It then focuses on the ‘Council’s Own Emissions’, the emissions the council directly controls. These are the areas where the council can take the most immediate action, setting an example for others. By analysing both, the council can lead by example while also supporting wider efforts to reduce emissions across the borough.

Borough Wide Emissions

Between 2005 and 2017, government estimates suggest that the entire borough of Southwark reduced its carbon emissions by around 40%. Following the council’s declaration of a climate emergency in 2019, further analysis was commissioned to gain a clearer understanding of local emissions. Using the SCATTER Inventory Tool, Anthesis were commissioned and developed an updated baseline, which showed that in 2017, emissions from buildings, transport, and waste disposal (Scope 1 and 2) totalled 1,288 ktCO₂e. Of this, buildings were responsible for 79% and transport for 15%.

Since then, borough-wide emissions have generally declined, with four consecutive years of reductions recorded between 2018 and 2021. However, data for 2022 shows a slight increase in emissions. This rise in emissions may be linked to increased transport activity, greater use of industrial petroleum, and higher domestic electricity consumption across the borough, potentially driven by post-pandemic behavioural changes and extreme weather conditions. Buildings now account for 78% and road transport 22%. It’s important to note that this data is derived from a subset of national datasets and is subject to a three-year reporting lag, meaning the most recent figures reflect conditions from several years prior and are informed by changes at a national level. Nonetheless, these trends provide valuable insight into Southwark’s progress and help shape future priorities for climate action.

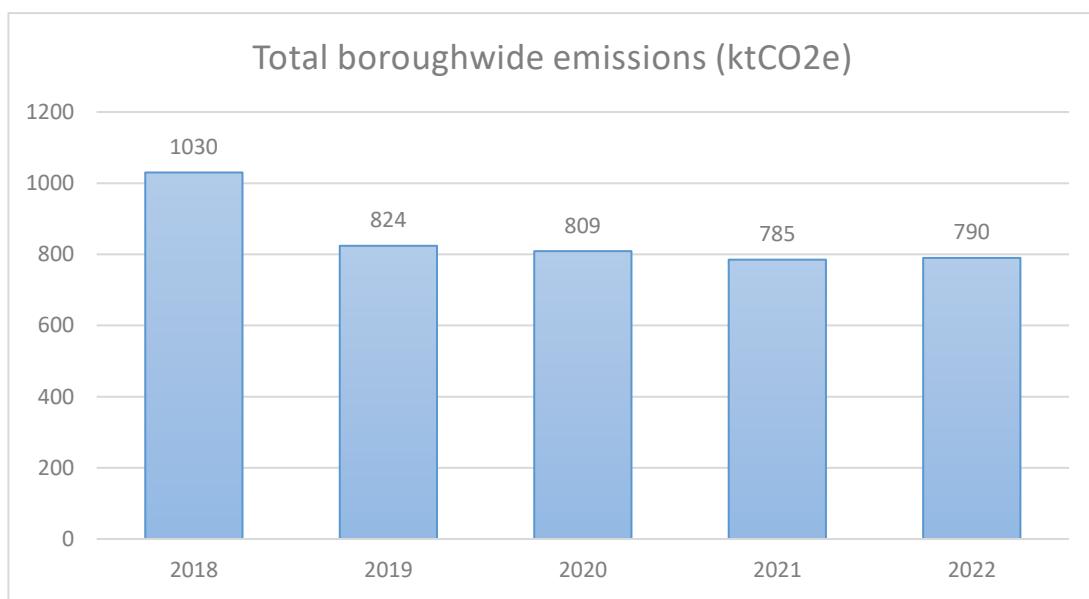


Figure 2: Boroughwide carbon emissions in ktCO₂e for the period 2018 - 2022

In 2018, Southwark's consumption-based emissions (Scope 3) were estimated at 2,194 ktCO₂e. The estimate was based on economic activity data specific to Southwark and calculated using national consumption-based emissions factors provided by DEFRA and BEIS.

By 2021, Southwark's consumption-based emissions were estimated at 2,664 ktCO₂e using the Local Authority Consumption Account tool^{xi}. These figures represent the emissions associated with all goods and services imported into the borough and reflects the wider environmental impact of local consumption.

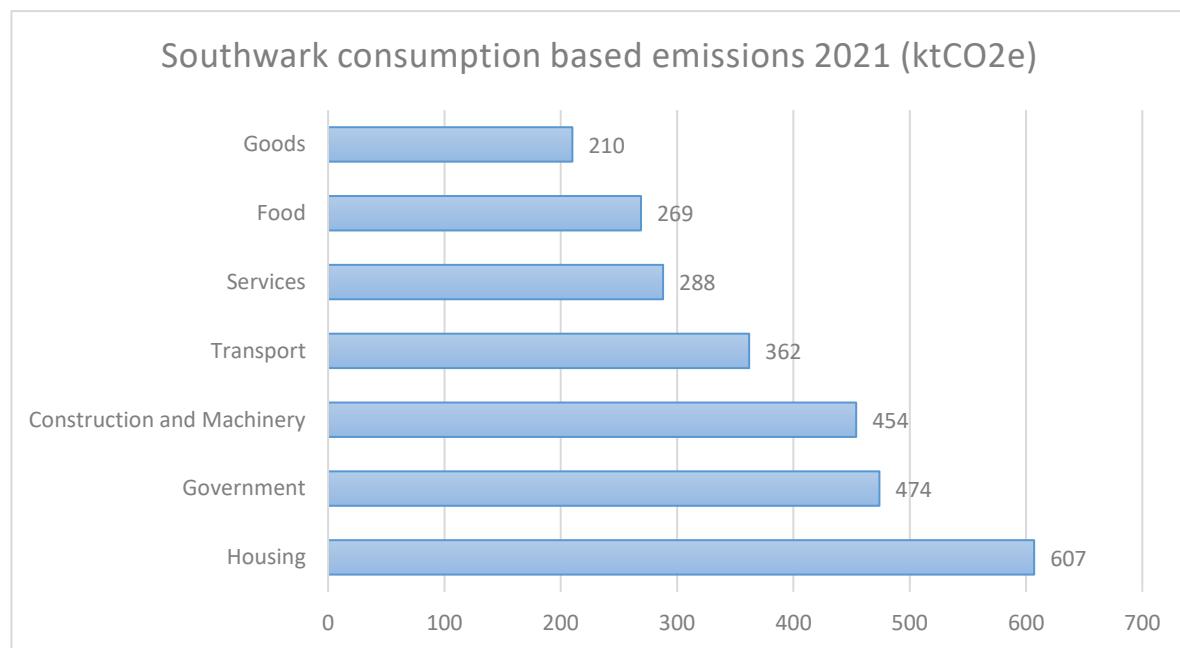


Figure 3: Chart showing total consumption based spend emissions (ktCO₂e) by category of spend in 2021

Borough Wide emissions pathway

An emissions pathway using EnergyPRO was developed alongside the original climate change strategy. While now several years old, it remains a foundational element of Southwark's carbon neutrality strategy. The pathway assesses emissions from buildings, on-road transport, and energy supply, identifying key opportunities for reduction. The modelling assumes a transition to electrified heating and transport, alongside robust energy demand reduction measures. Despite these interventions, residual emissions would still require offsetting.

The council's own emissions

Prior to adopting the Climate Change Strategy in 2021, Southwark Council had already been working to reduce its carbon emissions. By that year, it was estimated that the council had achieved a 36.7% reduction in its own emissions compared to a 2008 baseline. This was made possible through a range of measures, including consolidating buildings, increasing the use of renewable electricity, and investing in energy efficiency improvements such as better insulation and more efficient boilers. The council's main office at Tooley Street, for example, had already reduced its electricity consumption by 75%.

Following the strategy's adoption in 2021, the council has accelerated its climate action, reducing total emissions from an estimated 432 ktCO₂e in 2021 to 375 ktCO₂e in 2024. However, the most

recent data shows an increase in overall emissions. This is due to a rise in Scope 3 emissions, mostly driven by increased procurement spending and inflationary pressures.

Scope 1 and 2 emissions, those from council-owned buildings, fleet and housing, over which the council has the greatest control, have seen year on year reductions from 69 ktCO₂e in 2020 down to 63 ktCO₂e in 2024. This sustained reduction reflects the council's proactive efforts to lead by example in decarbonising its own operations and infrastructure, including the council's significant housing stock. Continuing to tackle the significant impact of buildings is a key priority, with specific Council Delivery Plan targets aimed at reducing operational emissions - from council owned non-domestic buildings and fleet. The first of these targets was to halve operational emissions, a goal that has since been achieved. Building on this success, the council has committed to work towards a further 50% reduction in emissions from its operational buildings and fleet by 2026.

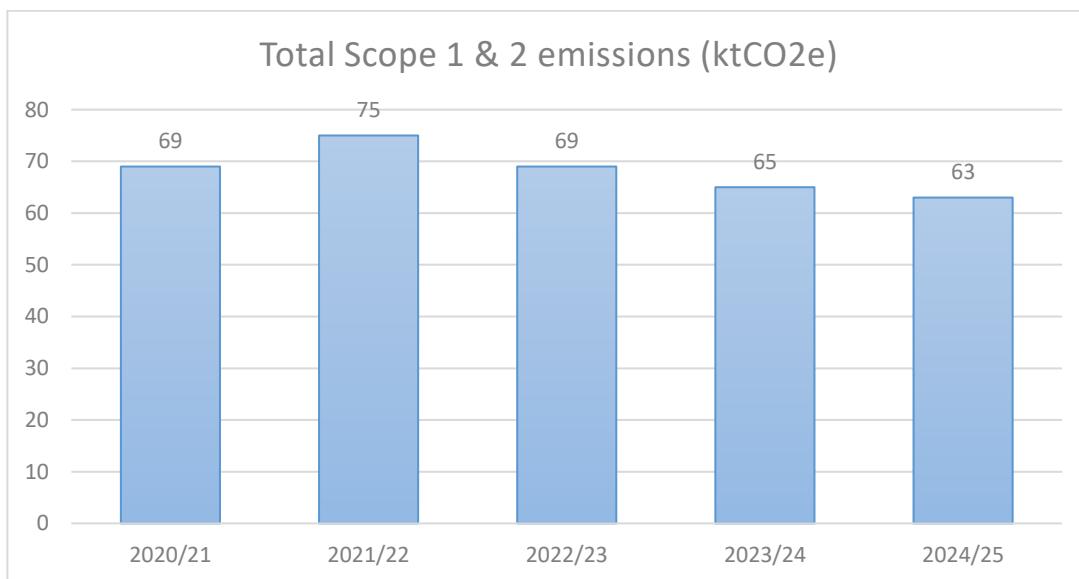


Figure 4: Total council Scope 1 & 2 emissions in ktCO₂e

Scope 3 emissions continue to make up most of the council's total emissions, averaging over 80% annually. These are estimated using procurement spend data across financial years, applying emissions factors to various categories of goods and services, such as materials used in construction or highway maintenance. While these emissions are outside the council's direct control, they remain an important part of our overall emissions profile. Procurement emissions can vary year on year, partly due to changes in spending levels, but also because emissions factors and the carbon intensity of goods and services evolve over time, sometimes significantly influencing the results. As procurement spending increases, associated emissions are also likely to rise, even when sustainable options are chosen, because spend-based methodologies generally link higher expenditure with greater emissions. Consequently, the recent increases in spending have led to higher estimated emissions. Addressing these emissions is more complex and typically

slower due to the expertise required and the long-term nature of many council contracts. Our action plan includes steps to influence the sustainability of our supply chain and reduce indirect emissions where feasible. This includes building internal understanding and developing practical tools to help council officers make more sustainable procurement decisions.

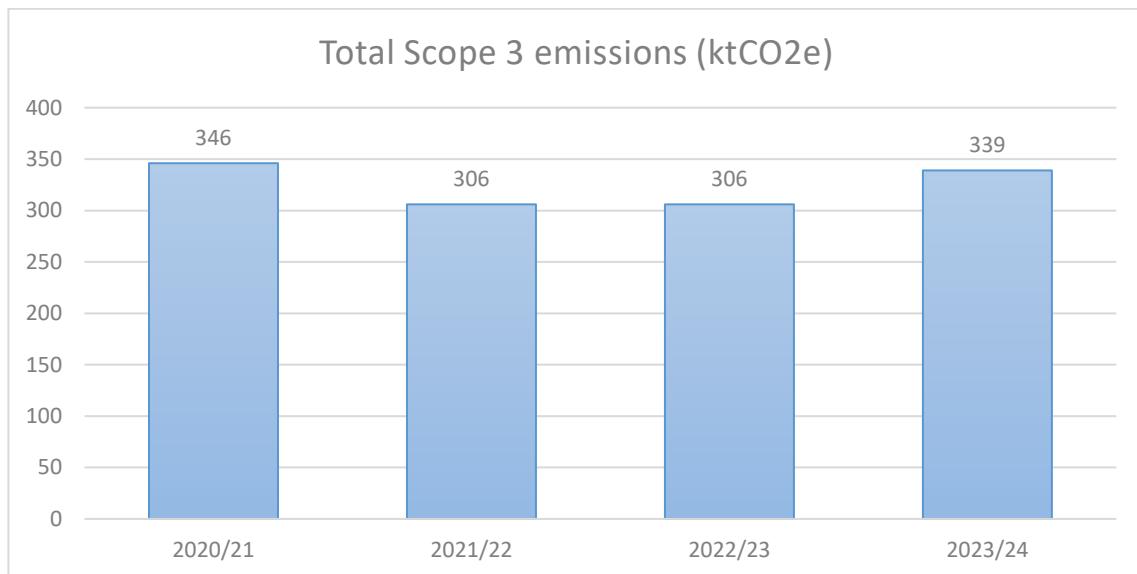


Figure 5: Total council Scope 3 emissions in ktCO2e

Council's own emissions pathway

As part of developing the council's first climate change strategy in 2021, high-level modelling was used to estimate the potential impact of seven carbon-reducing measures on the council's direct emissions from buildings and its vehicle fleet (scope 1 and 2). These included reducing vehicle mileage, switching to electric vehicles, improving energy efficiency, retrofitting buildings, phasing out gas heating, deploying local renewables, and offsetting. Compared to a low-action scenario, the modelling showed that a more ambitious approach, focused on energy, buildings, and transport, could cut emissions by 57% by 2030.

The modelling and assumptions behind the original pathway remain a useful reference point. Continued delivery of actions, alongside emerging data and evolving best practice, will help ensure the council's approach remains focused and responsive to the most effective ways of cutting emissions and strengthening resilience.

Residual emissions

In any realistic pathway to carbon neutrality, there will always be a level of residual emissions, those that remain despite the most ambitious efforts to reduce them. These emissions typically come from sectors that are difficult to fully decarbonise with current technologies or where

alternatives are not yet viable. There is no universally agreed standard for what constitutes an acceptable level of residual emissions, and views on this vary. For example, the Mayor of London's preferred 'Accelerated Green' pathway to net zero by 2030 includes approximately 22% residual emissions, highlighting the challenge even in the most ambitious scenarios. As Southwark moves closer to its 2030 target, it will be important to have a borough-wide conversation about how to address these remaining emissions, whether through offsetting, innovation, or long-term carbon storage and removal, and to ensure our approach is informed by wider regional and national strategies.

The London and national context

Climate change

The UK has a legally binding commitment to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, based on 1990 levels. To support this long-term goal, the government has set out a series of interim targets:

- A 68% reduction by 2030, as part of the UK's Nationally Determined Contribution under the Paris Agreement
- A 78% reduction by 2035, established through the Sixth Carbon Budget

In 2025, the Climate Change Committee (CCC) published its Seventh Carbon Budget, recommending a more ambitious trajectory: an 87% reduction by 2040. Meeting this target would require a significantly faster pace of emissions reduction over the next five years.

Yet even this may not be enough. Accelerated, place-based action is essential to drive meaningful change. The London Assembly declared a climate emergency in 2018, followed by the Mayor of London in 2020. The Mayor has since committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030^{xii} setting a bold example for climate leadership. Following the adoption of the Accelerated Green Pathway in 2022, several key areas of London Plan guidance, funding mechanisms, and strategies were reviewed or adapted to align with the more ambitious net zero by 2030 target, including the introduction of the GLA's Green Financing Framework to support projects aligned with the Accelerated Green Pathway such as building retrofit and district heating programmes. Across the capital, nearly all local authorities have declared a climate emergency and/or established formal emissions reduction targets, reinforcing a city-wide commitment to climate action.

Some of the changes needed to reach net zero are within the direct control of individual boroughs and can be delivered through strong local partnerships. Others, such as retrofitting existing homes with energy-efficient technologies, are more complex and will require regional and national

coordination and the right funding and regulatory frameworks. To support this ambition, London Councils is working closely with boroughs to help deliver on their climate goals. This collaborative approach aims to align strategies across the capital, enabling boroughs to share resources, coordinate efforts, and maximise impact.

Southwark will continue to advocate for the financial and political support needed to deliver the ambitions of this strategy, including where action is required beyond the borough's control. This will be done in collaboration with other London boroughs and councils nationwide.

Southwark continues to demonstrate leadership in shaping national climate related policy. The council played a key role in coordinating the landmark report *Securing the Future of England's Council Housing*, developed with over 100 council landlords. A central proposal of the report is a fully funded Green and Decent Homes programme, which highlights the importance of delivering energy-efficient, low-carbon homes, not only to meet climate targets, but also to reduce fuel poverty and improve residents' health and wellbeing. As London's largest local authority landlord, the council draws on its extensive experience in managing and improving housing to inform national policy. The council will continue to work with other local authorities and experts to advocate for the changes and investment needed, ensuring its expertise contributes meaningfully to the national response to the climate emergency.

Resilience and adaptation

Climate adaptation and resilience are now central to global climate policy, particularly under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The 2015 Paris Agreement marked a major shift by giving adaptation equal importance to mitigation. It commits countries to strengthening their ability to adapt, build resilience, and reduce vulnerability to climate impacts. As part of this commitment, signatory countries are expected to develop National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) to identify and address their specific climate risks. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) supports this work by providing scientific assessments that highlight the growing urgency of preparing for more frequent and severe climate-related events.

In the UK, adaptation policy is shaped by the Climate Change Act 2008, which mandates a five-year cycle of risk assessment and planning. The most recent UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA3), published in 2022, highlights a range of urgent climate risks, including overheating in homes and public buildings, increased flood risk, water scarcity, impacts on natural ecosystems, risks to food production and supply chains, and threats to health and wellbeing. CCRA3 advises that the UK must prepare for a global temperature rise of at least +2°C by 2050 and assess risk for a +4°C temperature rise scenario by 2100, calling for more ambitious and timely adaptation measures. In response, the government developed the third National Adaptation Programme (NAP3), which sets out actions for the period 2023 to 2028. NAP3 includes measures across key

sectors, such as infrastructure, health, the natural environment, and local government, to help the UK become more resilient and better prepared for the impacts of climate change.

London's dense urban environment and ageing housing stock present distinct challenges in adapting to climate change. In response to the growing frequency and severity of climate impacts, the Mayor of London commissioned the London Climate Resilience Review^{xiii}, published in 2024. The review sets out 50 recommendations to strengthen the capital's preparedness, covering areas such as infrastructure, public health, emergency services, and nature-based solutions. It places strong emphasis on collaboration between local authorities, the Greater London Authority, and national government. Prompted by extreme weather events across the capital, including the 2021 flash floods and the record-breaking 40°C heatwave in 2022, the review calls for urgent investment and updated standards to protect London's communities and economy. Local authorities, including Southwark, are expected to play a central role in delivering these recommendations, working together to build a fairer, greener, and more climate-resilient city.

Southwark's Approach

Achieving a carbon neutral and climate resilient borough cannot be achieved by any one organisation. It requires everyone with a stake in the borough to work together at every level to transform Southwark and create a greener, more resilient and sustainable future. To deliver our priorities there is work that the council needs to do, but also government, city hall, businesses, institutions and individuals. It is only by every part working together, with the backing of urgent and large-scale government investment, that we can achieve our goal to be carbon neutral by 2030. Our work must be part of a much larger global movement for change, and so our approach will be rooted in the global foundational framework of the UN Sustainable Development Goals which provide a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all.

Our approach to tackling the climate emergency must also be rooted in Southwark's core values. The council's Southwark 2030 goals shape every decision we make and guide how we deliver on our commitments. These principles: empowering communities, tackling inequality, and investing in prevention, are central to our vision of making Southwark a place we can all be proud of, where opportunity and support enables everyone to lead good lives, including those who are often overlooked. They will underpin our climate response, ensuring that our strategy reflects the unique character of the borough and places social justice at its heart.

Southwark's transition to a low-carbon future presents a powerful opportunity, not only to cut emissions, but to build a borough that is fairer, healthier, and more resilient. Climate action can help address some of our most pressing social challenges, including the cost-of-living crisis and fuel poverty. It can also support healthier communities by improving air quality, increasing access to

green spaces, and promoting both mental and physical wellbeing. At the same time, the shift to a greener economy opens up new opportunities for employment and skills development through green jobs.

Our climate strategy is about more than carbon reduction; it's a key tool for delivering long-term social and economic benefits. By aligning with the council's Southwark 2030 goals, our approach supports broader ambitions around housing, health, and equal opportunity. It recognises that climate resilience and adaptation are essential to protecting our communities from the growing risks of extreme weather, while ensuring that the benefits of climate action are shared fairly. To guide this work, we are committed to a just transition and will constantly strive to be ambitious, inclusive and transparent.:

Ambitious

We should not constrain ourselves to changing existing projects, or activities that the council traditionally delivers. We should instead look at all opportunities to act and be ambitious in the scale and scope of our work. Failure is not an option and so we will be bold in our ambition and bold in our actions.

We know that we do not know all the answers, and so will be flexible, adaptable, always learning and willing to try new approaches. We will achieve change by pushing the boundaries of what is possible and not being afraid to try new ideas and approaches to deliver change.

Inclusive

The climate emergency is an ethical and political issue, not just an environmental one. We will support a just transition where the requirement to change is spread fairly with the greater share to those most able to afford it. Part of this is the principle that the polluter pays – ensuring that those who produce the most carbon are accountable for the cost of managing it. We will support plans that tackle the climate emergency, but which also reduce inequality, support an economy that works for everyone and promotes a fairer future for all.

Southwark is rightly proud to celebrate its diverse population. Our approach will be inclusive of all our residents, whoever they are and whatever their background. We will reach out to every part of Southwark and meet the climate emergency with a response built by all our community and owned by all our community.

Transparent

We want to ensure that we are open and honest in our approach. We do not know all the answers and information on our climate can sometimes be difficult to produce. We will only achieve carbon

neutrality if we work together as a community but to do this, we need to be honest with each other and accountable to each other.

Being open, honest and accountable will help foster a constructive and inclusive environment in which we can come together to find solutions to the challenges that we all face. We will be a good partner and work with others to lead change in Southwark and to campaign for change across London, the country and beyond.

Alignment with Southwark's priorities and operations

Southwark 2030 is the council's central strategic vision for the borough and the foundation for delivering the Climate Change Strategy. Co-designed with residents, communities, and partners, Southwark 2030 sets out a shared ambition to create a fair, green, and safe Southwark where everyone can thrive as part of a strong and healthy community. The Climate Change Strategy plays a key role in advancing this vision, driving progress across the three key principles and all seven goals of Southwark 2030 by promoting environmental sustainability, social inclusion, and resilience to climate impacts. For example:

3 Key Principles

Empowering People

The strategy places a strong emphasis on community involvement, recognising that climate action must be a shared effort. It supports local engagement through education, co-design of green spaces, and community-led sustainability projects. By providing residents with the tools, knowledge, and platforms to act, such as energy-saving advice, local climate events, and funding for community-based initiatives, the strategy empowers people to shape a greener, more resilient future for their neighbourhoods.

Tackling Inequality

Climate change disproportionately affects the most disadvantaged members of our community. The strategy aims to address this by embedding social justice into every aspect of our climate response. It prioritises support for vulnerable groups, such as those in poorly insulated homes or areas prone to flooding, and ensures that the benefits of climate action, like cleaner air and lower energy bills, are shared fairly as part of a Just Transition.

Investing in Prevention

The strategy is built to be flexible and responsive to our changing climate, with a clear strong focus on long-term resilience and reducing future climate risks. It sets out proactive measures to address

threats like extreme heat, flooding, and water scarcity. Through early adaptation planning, investment in sustainable infrastructure, and the protection of biodiversity, the strategy aims to limit future negative impacts on the community, helping to create a borough that is more resilient and ready for the challenges ahead.

The 6 Goals

Decent Homes for All

The strategy promotes energy-efficient, climate-resilient housing that is affordable to heat and safe in extreme weather, supporting healthier living conditions and reducing fuel poverty.

A Good Start in Life

By improving air quality, access to green spaces, and safe travel routes to schools, the strategy helps create healthier environments for children to grow, learn, and thrive.

A Safer Southwark

Climate-related impacts like heatwaves and flooding can heighten social vulnerability and strain communities. By creating inclusive, well-designed, resilient homes and public spaces, the Climate Strategy supports safer communities and complements efforts to reduce crime and support community policing.

A Strong and Fair Economy

The strategy supports the growth of green industries and skills, creating new employment opportunities and ensuring that the transition to a low-carbon economy is inclusive and equitable.

Staying Well

By tackling key environmental factors that affect health, such as air pollution, extreme heat, and limited access to green spaces, the strategy plays a vital role in enhancing both physical and mental wellbeing across the borough.

A Healthy Environment

Central to the strategy is the protection and enhancement of Southwark's natural assets, including biodiversity, tree cover, and sustainable transport, ensuring a cleaner, greener borough for future generations.

A well-run council

The Strategy supports Southwark's ability to deliver high-quality services by embedding climate action across all departments. Through collaboration, knowledge sharing, and forward planning, the council is building resilience to environmental and financial pressures, key to being a well-run, future-ready organisation.

Alignment with other strategies

The council delivers a wide range of services and operates under many strategies and policies, therefore our climate actions must be iterative and adaptive, aligning with, and contributing to, each area of strategic focus across the organisation. Notable strategic documents include:

- **Southwark 2030 Council Delivery Plan** – which outlines the council's core priorities and commitments through to 2026, including goals related to housing, health, equity, and environmental sustainability.
- **The Southwark Plan** – the borough's statutory development framework guiding land use and planning decisions through to 2036, with a strong focus on sustainable growth and design.
- **Streets for People Strategy and Delivery Plan** – which sets out the council's vision for safer, greener, and more inclusive streets that support active travel and reduce reliance on private vehicles.
- **Local Flood Risk Management Strategy** - addressing increasing flood risks from surface water and groundwater. It promotes community awareness, sustainable infrastructure, and long-term adaptation to climate change.
- **Southwark's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy** - focuses on reducing health inequalities and improving outcomes for all, with sustainability and tackling climate change embedded as an integral part of protecting and improving health in the borough.
- **Land for Good: 2023 Southwark Land Commission** – which aims to ensure land is used for community benefit, supporting affordable housing, green space, and sustainable development.

As new strategies emerge and existing ones evolve, the council's approach to climate action must remain dynamic and responsive. This means the council must stay informed of the latest evidence, policy developments, and best practices. Ongoing collaboration, knowledge sharing, and regular review of actions will be essential to ensure alignment with emerging priorities and to refine our responses to climate risks. Crucially, climate considerations must be embedded into the development and delivery of each service area's action plans, ensuring that all teams are actively

contributing to our carbon neutral goal and accounting for the full range of climate risks and resilience measures. By fostering a culture of continuous learning and integration, we can ensure that climate action is a core component of strategic planning across the organisation.

Iterative development

Given the scale, urgency and complexity of the climate emergency this strategy should not be considered the end of our approach, but rather the beginning. Our whole approach should be iterative and flexible to respond to the rapidly changing regional, national and international contexts. The process is one that we will continually define, develop and deliver. Through this process we need to constantly review and evaluate what we are doing and how, so that we can ensure that we are always using the best ideas which will have the greatest impact.

Having an iterative approach is particularly important in order to allow the council to remain agile and forward-looking in the face of a rapidly evolving climate landscape. As new technologies emerge, such as carbon storage solutions, or as existing technologies like heat pumps become more mature and accessible, we must be ready to evaluate and adopt them in ways that align with our strategic goals. At the same time, our understanding of effective climate action continues to grow through ongoing learning, practical experience, and the development of more advanced methodologies.

One such emerging approach is climate budgeting, a relatively new tool for local authorities that could play a valuable role in producing costed pathways towards our climate goals, setting these alongside our core financial planning. This has the potential to enable informed and evidence-based investment decisions with the funds we do have, maximising our impact with existing resources, while also making clear the funding gap that needs closing to meet our ambitious targets and using this to inform asks of national and regional government.

In parallel, the field of climate resilience and adaptation is being continually strengthened by the development of new and updated research and datasets, such as Southwark's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) on overheating, the council's detailed flood risk mapping, and the Greater London Authority's Climate Risk Mapping tool. These resources are helping us better understand the specific climate risks facing Southwark residents and are vital for shaping targeted, locally relevant action.

A borough partnership

To deliver these priorities, we need strong and coordinated partnerships that operate effectively at local, regional, and national levels. Local institutions including the council must work together to align their ambitions in tackling the climate emergency and building long-term climate resilience.

Collaborating with NHS trusts, universities, colleges, and other anchor institutions can help identify shared opportunities to reduce collective carbon emissions, for example, through joint procurement or shared supply chains. The council will take a proactive role in convening local actors to respond to both the causes and consequences of climate change. This strategy provides a framework for collective action, one that supports both mitigation and adaptation, and invites everyone in the borough to play a part in creating a more sustainable and resilient Southwark.

Southwark will continue to be a leading voice in London, working with councils and London Councils. It will use its voice to lobby government for change both unilaterally and with partners. Working with the Mayor and London Councils, Southwark will be a strong voice for action. Southwark will lobby for government action and funding, and for recognition of the importance of partnership in delivering carbon reduction and climate resilience.

Our response to the climate emergency is only successful if the council is working as a partner and influencing at local, regional and national levels.

The government has committed to the UK being net zero by 2050. While we believe this target could be more ambitious, current data suggests the UK may fall short of even this goal without accelerated action. A renewed emphasis on climate policy at the national level offers a promising opportunity to close the gap.. However, local councils will continue to play a crucial role in delivering the local changes needed to support national progress.. The government must see councils as equal partners to deliver. As with so much, the real innovation and political drive happens at the local level, we encourage the government to recognise this and to work with councils to deliver the change that is needed. We will continue to lobby government to properly fund councils to deliver change and to devolve greater powers to councils so that they can drive the change that is needed.

Working with business and the Green New Deal

Social justice and a just transition require us to tackle climate change in a way which reduces inequality and creates opportunity for people in the borough. That is why we support the principles of a green new deal.

In line with the Southwark 2030 vision, we are committed to supporting a strong, fair, and green economy, one where businesses are empowered to adopt sustainable practices, contribute to local wellbeing, and thrive in a low-carbon future. By helping businesses become more environmentally responsible, we can ensure that economic growth goes hand in hand with climate action and community resilience.

We recognise that economic, social and climate justice are linked. We will work with business to support the growth of green jobs, and support initiatives that promote and use the latest green technology available.

Southwark is home to organisations with significant global reach. We have international companies, branches of global retailers and other large UK retail. Working with these companies in Southwark enables us to have reach beyond our borough. We will use this to find local solutions that encourage companies to act nationally or internationally. We will also work to ensure that businesses are doing their fair share in reducing their carbon impact, moving towards more sustainable practices and strengthening resilience to the impacts of climate change.

We will work directly with microbusinesses and small and medium size businesses (SMEs), including through bodies like the Southwark Business Forum and our local Business Improvement Districts. We will collaborate to build a consensus around the strategy and the development of practical programmes that we can put into action. We will work with our small businesses to support those taking steps to reduce waste and carbon emissions. This could include waste management, improvements to energy efficiency or changes to the public realm to encourage sustainable travel and protect against overheating. We will seek to develop local skills and employment based on improved education and understanding of climate change across the borough.

Working in partnership with our business community we will help them to make the changes needed. We will also listen, recognising that change can present challenges to businesses. By working in partnership, we aim to help our businesses be part of the solution to climate change in Southwark.

As Southwark and the country transition to a sustainable and climate change resilient low carbon future, we will invest in the green jobs of the future. We will work with business, charities and others to support the jobs we need to deliver zero carbon and local adaptation. These jobs and access to training will be open to all residents but we will target support most where it also reduces inequality and delivers other wider benefits to our community.

Taking Action

To strengthen Southwark's response to the climate emergency, a unified approach has been taken by merging the borough's Climate Change Strategy with its Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy. This integration ensures that both mitigation and resilience are addressed together, reflecting the interconnected nature of climate change. By bringing these strategies into a single, cohesive strategy, the council can more effectively coordinate action, avoid duplication, and ensure that efforts to reduce emissions are aligned with those that prepare the borough for the impacts of

a changing climate. This joined-up approach also supports more efficient use of resources and clearer communication with residents, partners, and stakeholders. The resulting strategy is structured around key themes that reflect the areas where the council can have the greatest impact, helping to prioritise actions and track progress in a transparent and accountable way.

Defining our themes and actions

As we bring together our Climate Change Strategy and Climate Resilience Strategy into a single, unified strategy, we have also taken the opportunity to update and streamline our action plan. This has involved a thorough review of every individual action to ensure it reflects our current goals and priorities. The result is a more concise and efficient action plan that is easier to understand, follow, and implement. Importantly, it remains flexible, designed to be periodically reviewed and updated, so it can continue to respond to the evolving challenges and opportunities in both climate mitigation and adaptation. Actions will be added or removed over time as targets are achieved, new targets are set, technologies and methodologies evolve, or as the wider policy and funding landscape changes.

The action plan now provides detailed breakdowns of the outcomes and key activities for each action under every goal in the strategy. This structure allows for clear tracking of progress while remaining flexible enough to adapt over time.

Setting actions

Ambitious activity is required to meet the borough's climate action targets. In determining the actions in this strategy, we have been informed by the work done to date within the council, including modelling and research. We have also undertaken comprehensive engagement with our residents.

While the original evidence base for Southwark's climate change strategy and subsequent action planning provided a strong foundation, much of that evidence now reflects an earlier stage in our journey. The initial emissions modelling, commissioned from Carbon Descent in 2020 and later updated by Anthesis, offered important insights into the scale and type of actions needed to meet our climate goals. This modelling remains a key reference point, but it has since been enriched by several years of practical experience, new data, and evolving technologies. Similarly, early work to align actions with local context, drawing on input from multiple council teams, commissioned research, and policy reviews, has been built upon through continued collaboration and learning. Soon after the adoption of the strategy, we convened a Citizens' Jury to help shape our approach and that collaboration deepened our understanding of local priorities. The jury's recommendations, ranging from making walking and public transport more accessible, to increasing transparency and accountability, informed updates and additions to the action plan.

As we now combine our climate change and resilience strategies, this growing body of knowledge has enabled a more thorough review of every action, ensuring they remain relevant, achievable, and aligned with both mitigation and adaptation goals. This has allowed us to streamline the action plan, making it more concise and easier to follow, while ensuring that actions support both climate resilience and carbon reduction.

The role of the council

The council plays a leading role in climate work across London and will continue to engage with other councils to learn from and enable best practice. We also work closely with the Greater London Authority and London Councils

The council has an important role as a leader of a whole borough approach to tackling the climate emergency. The council only has direct control over a small proportion of the total emissions in Southwark. However, it does have a role as a leader, a convener and an enabler. A body with democratic legitimacy to challenge government and be a voice for the borough regionally and nationally. It has a role in convening partners and communities to develop a strong vision.

The council has influence in a range of areas where we:

- Directly manage such as the use of our buildings.
- Can enable through funding, such as through grants for community gardens.
- Can enable through policy, such as changes to use of residential streets by cars.
- Can influence locally, such as working with local businesses to reduce plastic use.
- Can influence or ask for nationally, such as decarbonising our national grid at a quicker pace or for funding to research new climate technologies.

A comprehensive approach to decision making recognises our role across these various levels and the multi-layered solutions that may be necessary to deliver change. We will develop a lobbying and advocacy strategy to help ensure that our climate goals are delivered. We recognise that we cannot do this on our own and must use our influence at every level from the individual to national government.

Table 1.0 illustrates the scale of the council's ability to influence carbon reduction.

Influence	Description	Emissions impacted	Resilience & Adaptation
Direct	Actions relate to emissions sources and climate risks that are directly	e.g., council's own scope one and two	e.g. Retrofit council buildings for

control	owned, operationally controlled or managed by the council.		overheating, flood-proofing assets, emergency planning.
Stronger influence	Actions relate to the council's ability to influence emissions and adaptation outside of its direct control through policy making and/or certain procurement activities e.g., council's procurement policy.	e.g., council's own scope three, borough- wide scope one and two	e.g. Embed resilience in procurement (e.g., climate-resilient materials), influence planning policy.
Medium influence	Actions relate to other activities in the borough not deemed 'stronger'. This may influence some procurement and supply chain emissions sources but primarily is centered on borough-wide policy changes e.g., raising minimum energy standards for private-rented homes.	e.g., council's own scope three, borough- wide scope one and two	e.g. Promote adaptation standards in private housing, support green infrastructure.
Weaker influence	Actions relate to the council's ability to convene and engage a wide range of stakeholders in the borough, lobby national government and influence behaviour changes e.g., the council is positioned to take a leading role in facilitating joint commitments, information sharing and maximising efficiencies and community resilience.	All	e.g. Raise awareness of climate risks, support community resilience, advocate for national adaptation funding.

Sequencing actions

Southwark has already made huge progress in reducing carbon. This varies across the different priority areas and so the actions need to reflect that and build on what has already taken place. When developing actions, we have considered the starting point and what is necessary to deliver savings in each area. We have considered the strategic actions required to set the groundwork and the direct actions to deliver tangible reductions.

The approach to setting actions is cyclical, enabling us to set the groundwork in a theme before moving onto the more tangible direct actions.

This cycle, in Figure X below, goes through three stages, with continued review and evaluation.

Research & Design (R&D) actions help us to understand the context we are working in, such as the existing evidence on a policy and the options available. These inform the design of solutions and shape next steps. For example: Baseline impacts, new policy making, undertaking energy audits.

Engagement actions are specific supporting actions which can facilitate a carbon saving project, but do not lead to a direct saving themselves. For example: Establishing business partnerships, convening a citizens' jury, consulting low-carbon specialists, improving governance and accountability.

Implementation actions are those which lead directly to low-carbon projects. For example: Building retrofit programmes, construction of renewable supply infrastructure.

Continued review and evaluation shape this process to inform new initiatives and scrutinise progress.



Figure X: Diagram which describes how actions can be sequenced together to deliver progress

Cost of delivery

When developing the Climate Change Strategy (2021) the council commissioned Carbon Descent and Anthesis to assess the scale of the challenge and the estimated cost of achieving our climate ambitions. At the time, the capital investment required was estimated at approximately £3.92 billion, a useful early indication of the scale of action needed. This figure is now significantly outdated and likely a considerable underestimate due to inflation, shifting market conditions, and a more

advanced understanding of the complexities involved in adapting the borough to climate risks. Since the initial estimate, much has changed, technologies have advanced, costs have shifted, funding remains constrained and our understanding of both the climate challenge and the opportunities for action has deepened. As we move forward, further work will be needed to refine our understanding of the resources required. The table below illustrates the different costs that must be considered.

Capital costs	“Up-front” expenditure e.g., the material cost of implementation of a retrofit programme, that is recognised on a balance sheet.
Operational/ revenue costs	“Lifetime” costs e.g., monthly energy bills or asset maintenance that reduce the organisation’s annual surplus (profit)
Resource/ time costs	Typically, a type of operational cost, but often expressed in units of time or full-time employee equivalents, as a reallocation of an existing role may be possible e.g., one full time employee to design & oversee retrofit delivery.
Savings & payback	Financial benefit of a given action e.g., saved operational costs because of capital expenditure on retrofit.

Figure X6: illustrates the different costs that must be considered.

Investment in low carbon activities often brings direct and indirect benefits, many of which are financial. When considering costs, we will also consider operational implications. We will also consider any “additionality.” Some investments may have needed to happen anyway; for example, there may be a requirement to make capital expenditure on assets that are coming to the end of their life. In this way, making the distinction between ‘low carbon’ spend and planned maintenance is important. For example, if a gas boiler needs replacing, it is important to look at the additional cost of a low-carbon heat pump relative to a gas boiler, rather than the cost and benefits of a heat-pump on its own. We will also consider other co-benefits. Benefits such as reducing inequality, improving health are important to our aim of social justice but sometimes harder to measure financially.

Action Plan

Buildings and Energy

Southwark is a diverse and exciting borough and a truly vibrant population that comes from being in central London. Within the borough 43% of all housing is social housing. The council is proud to be the largest landlord in London with over 52,500 properties and 14,500 leaseholders with a further 17,000 homes owned by housing associations. The council also has control of over 350 buildings including offices, schools and depots. The borough is growing and regenerating, creating opportunities for the council and its residents. With approximately 15,000 businesses we want to create a green economy that delivers co-benefits of economic growth, reduced inequality and carbon reduction. Across our town centres, the borough is also home to major anchor institutions with large buildings including hospitals, universities, cultural institutions, faith buildings, large business and retail space. The owners of each of these buildings will be on their pathway to reducing their emissions and making them more sustainable.

Actions

Our actions for Southwark's built environment and development have been combined with actions concerning the generation and supply of renewable energy and electrification. This is because most energy actions primarily relate to buildings as the highest energy users. Combining the sections allows us to streamline and prioritise the most effective action, while removing duplication in the action plan. This is particularly important as buildings are responsible for approximately 78% of Southwark's emissions. Making buildings more sustainable, through planning policy that accounts for whole lifecycle carbon, direct capital investment, and retrofitting (including heritage sites), will cut emissions, reduce energy bills and improve comfort for residents. The electrification of the borough will include an ever-increasing number of locally developed community energy projects where local people come together to produce, own or manage renewable energy systems such as solar panels on schools or shared heating systems for homes.

Southwark has a high risk of excessive heating, particularly in the centre of the borough. High heat is felt more significantly in areas with less tree canopy and a lower level of access to green open spaces, but is also impacted by building design and typology. Addressing excessive heat within buildings, in particular homes, in the borough will ensure climate adaptation is embedded within this theme. Alongside this, we will consider the increased impact of flooding, and the impact on properties, be that from the Thames or more localised surface water flooding. In July 2021, Southwark was directly affected by two serious flash floods in two weeks. Across London, some areas received more than twice the average monthly rainfall in just two hours

To be carbon neutral by 2030 Southwark must:

- Commit to carbon neutral buildings in the borough.
- Require energy reduction measures and sustainable building techniques such as green roofs and solar panels
- Repurpose existing buildings that are no longer fit for purpose or need modernising where possible.
- Use new development to create, protect and enhance our green spaces and improve biodiversity
- Ensure buildings are built to minimise carbon emissions in their use.
- Strengthen all policy documents including the Southwark Plan with a carbon neutral commitment.
- Continue to support local community developed renewable energy projects

Policy Context

To deliver a carbon neutral, climate resilient future, our actions need to be aligned with and responsive to the national, regional and local context. This includes:

National Policy

- **The UK Net Zero Strategy** (2021) Includes commitments to decarbonise buildings, phase out fossil fuel heating, and expand renewable energy which includes phasing out gas boilers in new homes, upgrading energy efficiency, and retrofit of public sector buildings alongside ensuring that the UK's electricity system is fully decarbonised by 2035.
- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** (2025) Encourages sustainable design, energy efficiency, and local renewable energy generation and requires local plans to integrate climate mitigation and adaptation into development decisions
- **Heat and Buildings Strategy** (2021) Supports the transition to low-carbon heating (e.g. heat pumps) and promotes energy efficiency upgrades and retrofit programmes for homes and public buildings.
- **UK Green Building Council Advancing Net Zero Programme** (2018) provides guidance on delivering emissions reductions to the construction and property sectors.
- **The Domestic Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES)** (2017) in the domestic private rented sector currently prevents landlords from letting properties rated below EPC band E, these rules may be revised following recent consultations.

GLA Policy

- **London Net Zero 2030 Pathway** (2022–2025) Sets a target for London to reach net zero by 2030, prioritises rapid decarbonisation of buildings, energy systems, and transport. Includes a preferred ‘accelerated green’ pathway focusing on deep retrofit, electrification of heat, and local renewable energy generation.
- **The London Plan** (2021) outlines net carbon zero targets for major new developments and further targets for emissions reductions beyond national policy for domestic buildings.
- **Local Area Energy Planning (LAEP)** - Identifies the most effective local routes to decarbonise energy systems, including retrofit, heat networks, solar, and grid upgrades. Southwark is part of the Central, Inner East and North London subregional LAEP, completed in 2024
- **‘Be Seen’ Energy Monitoring Guidance** (2020) requires new developments to monitor and report on their actual operational energy performance for up to 5 years after completion. The draft Whole Life-Cycle Carbon Assessment Guidance (2020) sets out guidance for tackling the embodied carbon of existing buildings.
- **The Warmer Homes Programme** provides free retrofit improvements for low- income homeowners who own their own homes or rent privately.
- **London Energy Transformation Initiative** (LETI) network provides guidance and resources for borough energy policies and stakeholder collaboration across London.

Southwark Policy

- **Green and Decent Homes Programme** - Aims to upgrade council housing to be safe, energy-efficient, and climate-resilient, part of a national call for a fully funded Green and Decent Homes programme.
- **The Southwark Plan Policy P68** Sustainability Standards requires the majority of development over 500sqm to achieve a BREEAM rating of ‘Excellent’.
- **The Southwark Plan Policy P69** Energy requires major developments (of less than 10 units) to reduce on-site carbon dioxide emissions by a minimum of 100% (for residential developments). For non-residential development a reduction of at least 40% should be achieved onsite beyond 2013 Buildings Regulations Part L standards.
- **Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)** - Heritage SPD: Provides guidance on retrofitting listed and historic buildings, the Climate SPD will offer borough-wide guidance on sustainable design, adaptation, and carbon reduction in planning applications.

Next Steps

Beyond the council’s own actions, there must also be a focus on what other partners and stakeholders can action themselves, from a central government to resident level. This highlights how important collective action will be. Central government need to significantly increase the level of funding available for renewable heat technology and for raising the thermal efficacy of existing

buildings. Businesses can identify and maximise opportunities to install green roofs, facades and cool roofs on buildings, while residents can identify opportunities for renewable heat in properties. Both groups can also continue to engage with the council on energy efficiency standards and other behaviour change initiatives.

Streets and Transport

Encouraging active and sustainable travel around our borough is key to the success of reducing the impacts of climate change. Emissions from transport accounts for 22% of the borough's emissions profile, of which around 99% comes from on-road transport. After buildings and associated energy supply, treatment of the borough's transport emissions is the next largest sector to tackle. Reducing transport emissions across the borough will require a reduction in the number of vehicles on our roads. Fewer vehicles on our roads would have several significant co-benefits beyond just lowering carbon emissions including improved air quality, more space for active forms of transport such as public transport or cycling and fewer road traffic accidents. The streets which make up our borough will need to evolve to this changing volume and composition of vehicle traffic, but also to the changing climate.

Actions

These actions relate to surface transport across the borough, including those targeting the reduction of emissions from private car use and ensuring streets in the borough are designed primarily around active and sustainable travel, including walking, cycling and public transport use. The design and maintenance of our streets will need to use low carbon materials and processes in a way that reduces emissions, extends the longevity of our highway infrastructure and increases resilience to climate extremes such as overheating and periods of heavy rainfall and flash flooding. This aligns our climate ambition as a council, with that of our Streets for People Strategy and Delivery Plan, seeking to reduce emissions, while improving air quality, safety, community cohesion and encouraging healthier lifestyles. The council will embed climate adaptation in this theme by continuing to implement sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) on highways, which can help to lower the impact of periods of heavy rain by slowing the rate at which water enters the sewer system.

To be carbon neutral by 2030 Southwark must:

- Reduce car journeys to a minimum by 2030.
- End freight and commercial delivery in polluting vehicles.
- Encourage and support residents and businesses to switch away from petrol and diesel vehicles.

- Improve the accessibility and sustainability of public transport.
- Be a borough where walking and cycling becomes the default way to get around.

Policy Context

To deliver a carbon neutral, climate resilient future, our actions need to be aligned with and responsive to the national, regional and local context. This includes:

National Policy

- **Net Zero Strategy** (2021): Commits to decarbonising the transport sector as the UK's largest source of emissions. Includes targets to: End the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2035, expand electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure and public transport and promote active travel (walking and cycling) and modal shift from private car use.
- **Transport Decarbonisation Plan** (2021): A detailed roadmap for achieving net zero transport that prioritises: Zero-emission vehicles and charging networks, cleaner freight and logistics and sustainable urban mobility, including low-traffic neighbourhoods and integrated transport systems.
- **Transport Adaptation Strategy** (2025): Developed by the Department for Transport to address climate resilience in the transport system, focuses on integrating climate risk into transport planning and infrastructure design, enhancing flood resilience, heat tolerance, and emergency preparedness and supporting local authorities to embed adaptation into transport investment and maintenance.
- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** (2025): Requires local plans to support sustainable transport, reduce the need to travel by car, and promote climate-resilient infrastructure, encourages development that enables safe, inclusive, and accessible streets for all users.
- **Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy** (2022): Sets out the UK's approach to delivering a robust, accessible EV charging network and supports local authorities with funding and guidance to expand public and on-street charging.

GLA Policy

- **The London Plan** (2021): Sets a strategic target for 80% of all trips in London to be made by walking, cycling, or public transport by 2041, promotes Healthy Streets, sustainable travel, and reduced car dependency, requires development plans to support mode shift and mitigate transport impacts.
- **The Mayor's Transport Strategy** (2018) aims for 80% of all London journeys to be completed on foot, by bike or public transport by 2041.
- Vehicle usage and emissions within London are regulated by Transport for London's Low Emissions Zone (LEZ), Ultra Low Emissions Zone (ULEZ), and Congestion Charge.

Southwark Policy

- **Streets for People: Southwark's Transport Strategy (2023–2030):** Southwark's overarching transport strategy, aligned with the Mayor's Transport Strategy. Aims to reclaim street space for walking, cycling, public transport, and community use.
- **The Southwark Plan Policy P48 Public Transport** requires development to improve accessibility to public transport by creating and improving walking and cycling connections, and Policy IP2 Transport Infrastructure requires developers to collaborate with Transport for London and other stakeholders to improve transport infrastructure and promote active travel.
- **The Southwark Plan Policy P53 Car Parking** requires development to provide electric vehicle charging points (EVCP) where onsite parking is permitted.
- We will continue to run our campaigns on the Bakerloo line upgrade and extension, including upgrades to key stations such as Elephant & Castle.
- The council is working with the Port of London Authority to develop innovative and strategic solutions to the climate emergency across London as part of the development of a 2050 plan for the River Thames.

Next steps

Alongside working on the actions above, the council will continue to deliver the objectives set out in the Streets for People Strategy and Delivery Plan, alongside regular monitoring of movement patterns in the borough to ensure our approach is targeted to the areas with most benefit.

National government must lead the transition to zero carbon vehicles, provide certainty and encourage EV manufacturers to supply more affordable vehicles to the UK market. Alongside this government must support research and development into other low carbon fuels e.g., hydrogen while prioritising funding for active travel and public transport ahead of new road building programmes. We will be considering how we can best influence government to make the necessary changes.

At an individual level we will consider a range of actions to promote locally that can have a positive impact in this area. This could be opting to walk or cycle for short journeys, using public transport for longer journeys and shopping locally and reducing travel miles.

Natural Environment

Southwark's award-winning parks, open spaces and built environment provide homes for a range of common and rare wildlife, including birds, bats, invertebrates and plants. We value our parks and trees as a vital component of the borough's landscape. We have over 100,000 trees that bring

joy to people and help clean our air. We recognise that parks, open spaces, fields and allotments are also important for supporting good health and wellbeing, reducing health inequalities, improving social cohesion, and managing health and social care costs. They help to reduce levels of depression, anxiety, and fatigue; mitigate air pollution, heat and flooding; and enhance quality of life for both children and adults.

Actions

These actions relate to the maintenance and improvement of the borough's natural environment, for example tree planting, increasing tree canopy cover and removing areas of paving to create new areas of green space. Green spaces in the borough are already at risk from a changing climate; wildfires are becoming a far more prevalent risk as temperatures soar during summer. The London Fire Brigade saw a 128% increase in grass fires in 2022 compared to 2021 for example. Alongside this, extreme weather and an ageing sewer system threatens water security. The Environment Agency has warned that within just 25 years, the southeast of England, including Southwark, could run out of water. Without protecting our water sources, we would experience severe economic, social and environmental consequences. A changing climate also brings increased risk of invasive species, pests and diseases. In order to protect our natural environment, we will need to work with local communities to monitor the borough for emerging risks, ensure our green spaces are biodiverse and continue improving access to green spaces for all our residents.

To be carbon neutral by 2030 Southwark must:

- Improve biodiversity and introduce new green corridors to help wildlife to move.
- Make our streets a green place to walk, play and relax.
- Further increase tree canopy coverage across the borough with more planting, ensuring any loss of existing trees cover is a last resort and that those trees are replaced.
- Increase food growing in the borough, expanding allotments and community gardening.
- Enable building and development that works alongside and enhances our natural environment.

Policy Context

To deliver a carbon neutral, climate resilient future, our actions need to be aligned with and responsive to the national, regional and local context. This includes:

National

- **Environment Act (2021):** Sets legally binding targets for: Biodiversity net gain (BNG), air and water quality, waste reduction and resource efficiency and requires local authorities to

prepare Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) to guide habitat restoration and green infrastructure planning.

- **Third National Adaptation Programme (NAP3) (2023–2028):** Includes commitments to protect natural carbon sinks, improve urban green infrastructure to reduce overheating and surface water flooding and support local authorities with tools like the Local Authority Climate Service for climate risk data and planning.
- **Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) (2023):** reinforces national goals to halt biodiversity loss, expand woodland, and restore habitats, mandates tools like Local Nature Recovery Strategies and Biodiversity Net Gain.

GLA Policy

- **The London Environment Strategy (2018)** sets out a target of increasing London's tree cover by 10% by 2050 and promotes green infrastructure as a climate adaptation tool.
- **London Climate Resilience Review (2024):** Recommends urgent action to protect natural assets, expand green infrastructure, and build ecological resilience to climate risks like heatwaves and flooding.
- **The Mayor of London's Green Roots Fund (2025)** is a £12m fund to support the creation of greener, healthier, and more climate-resilient neighbourhoods across London, with grants for projects like tree planting, wildflower meadows, parklets, and river cleanups.
- **Transport for London's Healthy Streets Approach** includes provision for improvements to the city's green infrastructure and sets a number of indicators to deliver healthier streets for Londoners.

Southwark Policy

- **Southwark Nature Action Plan (SNAP) (2020)** sets out the vision and strategy for the continued protection, conservation and enhancement of nature in the borough.
- **Local Flood Risk Management Strategy** sets out how the council will manage flood risks from surface water, groundwater, and ordinary watercourses across the borough, ensuring a coordinated and sustainable approach.
- **The Southwark Plan Policy P56 Open Space** protects Metropolitan and Borough open land (MOL and BOL) from development except in exceptional circumstances.
- **The Southwark Plan Policy P58 Green Infrastructure** requires major development to support green infrastructure with arrangements in place for long term maintenance, with new publicly accessible open space and green links.
- **The Southwark Plan Policy P59 Biodiversity** requires development to deliver net gains in biodiversity.

Next steps

The council will continue delivering the Southwark Nature Action Plan, making nature accessible to everyone, expanding and enhancing green spaces, and ensuring they are connected to support thriving wildlife corridors. Locally led community action will remain vital to achieving this, and the council is committed to working in close partnership with residents, community groups, and local organisations to support and expand these efforts.

At a national level, government must promote strategic green infrastructure planning and nature-based solutions, particularly in urban areas, to create well connected green spaces that act as wildlife corridors. This should be supported by clear national standards and long-term funding. At the same time, government should look to encourage innovative private investment mechanisms, such as green bonds and biodiversity credits, to channel investment into nature recovery and biodiversity projects.

Greener Economy

What we consume, what we eat, wear, and use, and how it's made and transported, is a major but often hidden source of emissions. Southwark's central location and demographics mean consumption levels are relatively high. Alongside this, how we dispose of waste matters: Southwark leads inner London in recycling, but most of what we throw away is still recyclable. Reducing, reusing, and recycling, including food and garden waste, remains essential. Water use is also critical; we must cut consumption and energy use through solutions such as rainwater recycling. Embracing more sustainable diets will reduce emissions and can also deliver important public health benefits. We want our residents to benefit from the green jobs of the future, with the skills and training they need to transform the borough and drive economic and environmental change.

Actions

These actions relate to building a sustainable, inclusive, and low-carbon local economy. Economic resilience is addressed through green job creation, skills development, and support for SMEs and green innovation. The council is working with partners to adapt the local economy and help businesses become more sustainable, using sustainable freight for example, whilst also adapting to climate risks such as extreme heat and flooding. This theme includes promoting climate-friendly diets and reducing meat and dairy consumption through school meals and public campaigns, while strengthening food networks like the Southwark Food Action Alliance to reduce waste and improve access to culturally appropriate, affordable food. These actions also support local food growing, circular economy initiatives, and improved recycling and waste reduction.

To be carbon neutral by 2030 Southwark must:

- Deliver a green new deal which creates green jobs and invests in green skills training to support green jobs of the future.

- Encourage a more circular economy that reduces consumption, keeps resources in use for as long as possible, and recycles used materials.
- Change how the council, businesses and organisations procure and invest, ending investment in fossil fuels, and considering the carbon impact of doing business.
- Support local supply chains and local businesses to be more sustainable.
- Work with large businesses to move away from carbon heavy methods of delivery and production.

Policy Context

To deliver a carbon neutral, climate resilient future, our actions need to be aligned with and responsive to the national, regional and local context. This includes:

National Policy

- **Our Waste, Our Resources: A strategy for England** (2018) works towards eliminating food waste to landfill by 2030, and the elimination of avoidable waste of all kinds by 2050. Plastic packaging is now covered by the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and Deposit Return Schemes (DRS).
- **Simpler Recycling reforms**: standardise recycling across England by requiring all councils to collect the same core materials like paper, plastic, glass, and food waste. Starting in 2025–2026, these changes aim to make recycling easier, reduce confusion, and boost national recycling rates.

GLA Policy

- **The London Plan** (2021) Policy SI 7 Reducing waste and supporting the circular economy outlines how stakeholders can successfully conserve resources, reduce waste, increase in material re-use and recycling and reduce the disposal of waste.
- **The London Plan** (2021) Policy SI 8 Waste Capacity states that London should attain net waste sufficiency (100% of London's waste managed within London) by 2026 and outlines how development plans and development proposals can contribute to this commitment.
- **Circular Economy Statement Guidance** (2020) sets out how Circular Economy Statements, which demonstrate how developments incorporate circular economy principles into all aspects of their design, construction and operation, should be prepared.
- **Reduction and Recycling Plans** (RRPs): Under the Mayor's London Environment Strategy, all boroughs must produce RRPs outlining how they will reduce waste and improve recycling, this aligns with national reforms like Simpler Recycling.

Southwark Policy

- **The Southwark Plan Policy P61 Reducing Waste** requires developments to reduce waste in alignment with the waste hierarchy. Circular Economy Statements are required for major developments.
- **Southwark Local Economic Strategy (2023–2030)** sets out a vision for a fairer, greener, and more resilient economy and commits to shaping a high-growth, low-emission economy that supports inclusive neighbourhoods, sustainable jobs, and local ownership.
- **Southwark Waste Strategy:** Focuses on reducing waste, increasing recycling, and preparing for national reforms like Simpler Recycling and mandatory food waste collections. Supports community-led initiatives such as Repair Cafés and reuse hubs.

Next Steps

Beyond the council's own actions, there must also be a focus on what other partners and stakeholders can action themselves, from central government to resident level. This highlights how important collective action will be. Central government need to significantly increase the level of funding available to improve waste management and develop new technologies. Businesses can identify ways in which they can reduce packaging in their products, while residents can think about how they can make the way they shop and consume more climate friendly. Both businesses and residents can also continue to engage with the council on how to reduce consumption, reuse materials already in circulation and recycle more.

People and Resources

To effectively respond to the climate emergency, the council must build the internal resilience and capacity needed to lead by example. This involves strengthening organisational systems, policies, and the workforce to ensure that climate considerations are embedded across all aspects of council operations. By strengthening its infrastructure and evolving how it operates, the council will be better equipped to deliver long term emissions reductions, demonstrate leadership in low-carbon resilience and adaptation, and drive transformation across the borough.

Actions

These actions are about strengthening the council's internal capacity and infrastructure to respond to climate challenges while enabling low-carbon ways of working. For example, developing an extreme weather risk assessment for Southwark Council's workforce, which ensures staff are protected and services remain accessible during heatwaves, storms, or flooding. There are also actions on tackling our scope 3 supply chain emissions by embedding carbon reduction standards into procurement, behavioural change initiatives, climate budgeting and funding, and lobbying for national policy changes to accelerate net zero housing and transport. These actions collectively aim to future-proof council operations and empower staff and systems to lead on climate action.

To be carbon neutral by 2030 Southwark must:

- Build internal capacity and systems to embed climate action across all council strategic functions, including service design, workforce development and emergency planning.
- Integrate climate considerations into everyday operations through behavioural change, effective internal communications, and climate impact assessments across services.
- Use good data to make informed decisions by combining different sources of information, both internal and external to track progress and drive change.
- Influence wider policy and systems change by lobbying for national reforms in housing, transport, and climate governance.

Policy Context

To deliver a carbon neutral, climate resilient future, our actions need to be aligned with and responsive to the national, regional and local context. This includes:

National Policy

- **Climate Change Committee (CCC) – 2025 Progress Report:** Stresses the need for a well-managed just transition to maintain public support for climate action and recommends stronger policy integration, funding, and monitoring of social impacts during the transition.
- **Plan for Change – Sustainable Finance Capital of the World (2025):** Under development, aims to make the UK the global hub for green investment and includes support for climate transition plans by banks and large companies.
- **Green Finance Strategy (2023 Refresh):** Promotes climate-aligned budgeting, investment, and procurement. Encourages integration of climate risk into financial systems.
- **The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy (2025):** Supports a green industrial transition with a focus on regional equity, skills development, and inclusive economic growth. Promotes investment in low-carbon industries and reskilling for workers in declining sectors.
- **UK Government Resilience Framework (2022, updated 2023):** Sets out national approach to resilience, emergency planning, risk registers, and cross-sector governance.
- **Procurement Policy Note (PPN) 006:** Requires suppliers to commit to net zero and report Scope 3 emissions through carbon reduction plans. Applies to all central government contracts over £5M.

GLA Policy

- **London City Resilience Strategy:** Provides a framework for governance, data-led resilience, community engagement, and emergency planning. Includes an Equality Impact Assessment and supports collaborative, cross-sector resilience planning.

- **The London Plan:** Embeds circular economy, sustainable procurement, and climate impact assessments into planning. Supports Scope 3 emissions reduction through design and construction policies.
- **GLA Group Responsible Procurement Policy:** Supports climate budgeting, behavioural change, and community resilience. Encourages boroughs to align with net zero and adaptation goals.
- **London Climate Budgeting Pilot (2023–2025):** Tests integration of climate impact into financial planning. Supports boroughs in aligning budgets with net zero and resilience outcomes.
- **London Risk Register & Resilience Framework:** Provides a shared framework for emergency planning, risk assessment, and coordination. Informs borough-level climate risk and vulnerability assessments.

Southwark Policy

- **Southwark Fairer Future Procurement Framework:** guides council procurement, includes considerations on social value, ethical standards, sustainability, and inclusive economic growth.
- **Southwark Social Value Framework:** guides the implementation of social value in council contracts, including through the use of specific measures, two of which are specifically sustainability focussed.
- **Southwark Economic Strategy 2023 to 2030:** Sets out the council's vision for the economy of the borough including 7,000 new jobs in Southwark's green economy by 2030.

Next Steps

Strengthening the council's processes and systems to effectively respond and adapt to the climate emergency is a wide-ranging and complex undertaking that covers the full breadth of the council's diverse functions. It requires time, ongoing refinement, and a sustained commitment to change. Central to this transformation will be behavioural shifts, supported by targeted training, skills development, and collaborative working across departments. We will develop and roll out training, accessible to all council departments, and ensure that sustainability and resilience related information, tools and guidance is readily accessible to all staff. This will support its integration into decision-making and day to day operational activities.

In addition to internal improvements, the council will continue to advocate for stronger national policy and increased government investment to accelerate the transition to net zero housing, particularly for social housing, and will also continue the call for government support and funding

for sustainable transport initiatives, including the upgrade and extension of the Bakerloo line. To make meaningful progress, we need urgent and sustained action from government to deliver the policy changes and funding commitments required.

Wider benefits

Making the borough more resilient not only mitigates against the main impacts of climate change, it also potentially enables us to further reduce our carbon emissions and deliver other benefits to our residents.

Greener buildings – Improvements to buildings are needed to protect against extremes of hot and cold. Greater energy efficiency to enable people to stay warm will make our homes and residents more resilient but also reduce energy demand and fuel poverty.

Biodiversity and air quality – Through implementing greening measures to manage climate risks such as improved drainage, shade and canopy coverage, we will also support our local ecology and wildlife. **Air quality** can also be improved through greening our borough which impacts on health and wellbeing.

Water scarcity – By taking steps to reduce demand for water and preventing flooding, we reduce water run-off and risk of water pollution. We also reduce energy demands by using less water which reduces our overall carbon emissions.

Cost reduction and risk limitation – Steps to protect the borough from extremes of weather and flooding reduces risk for businesses, making the borough a more attractive place for them. This benefits the local economy and jobs and helps Southwark to thrive.

Health – Lessening the impact of climate change can improve health outcomes for Southwark. The shocks that climate change causes are a risk to mental and physical health which is reduced as we become more resilient. We are also better prepared to deal with new diseases that are introduced due to climate change.

Learning and Engaging

A key element of our work will be recognising that we need to continue learning and improving as new opportunities and challenges arise. We do not know all the answers, and it is important that we listen and share information with partners throughout the process. We need to engage actively with

each other to tackle the emergency effectively and the council will put in place processes and mechanisms to make sure this happens.

To achieve the emissions reductions and adaptation required, everyone must play their part across the borough, and the council is committed to lead a climate conversation that engages, educates and empowers residents to contribute.

Engagement - The council will proactively reach out using its communication channels and through community groups and forums to promote action to address the climate emergency and to ensure that people are able to input into our future plans. We will engage with existing groups and networks such as TRAs, parks and greenspace groups, and will also seek to bring more people into the conversation. In particular, we want to partner with young people who have been at the forefront of pressing for global change, to build on and respond to their energy and ideas.

Education - To build greater understanding of the climate emergency and its impacts, we will support and implement education programmes about the climate emergency to help the community understand its impact. This includes working proactively with schools, colleges and universities to bring learning out of the classroom into the community.

Empowerment - This is an agenda that everyone needs to feel ownership over, so the council will aim to create an enabling environment and support residents to take action in their own lives, equipping people with the information they need to make positive decisions as citizens and consumers.

Diverse voices

Southwark is proud to be home to a diverse and vibrant population, but it is only if every part of that community is heard and is part of the conversation, that we will make the change we need together. As well as engaging with existing groups and community networks, we will particularly focus on those that are often less engaged with. These groups include:

Young People – Southwark is a young borough, and we need to ensure that young voices are heard in the process. We will continue to work with young people and seek their advice on how to best engage so that our approach is relevant and impactful with our young residents. We will ensure that young people's voices are always part of the debate by establishing channels where they can be heard. We will work closely with our Youth Parliament.

We will also work with the many schools through the Schools Action Climate Network, colleges and universities in the borough to engage with young people. As part of our engagement, we will work with schools and young people to develop resources for schools to educate and empower young people to take action. We will also work with students and universities to ensure that new ideas,

and innovation that is coming from our higher education establishments helps to shape and build our work going forward.

Global majority communities – Southwark is home to a racially diverse population. We will work with groups that represent our different global majority communities, but also identify where communities are not represented, and reach out directly to them. This includes large diaspora communities in Southwark from areas such as Latin America, West Africa and South Asia. We will ensure that we also work with communities where English is not the primary language.

Social housing tenants – With one of the largest stocks of social housing in the country, Southwark is home to thousands of residents who may be particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Many live in older buildings that are less energy efficient and more susceptible to extreme weather. We will work to ensure that social housing residents are a key part of our climate action. The insights of social housing tenants will be vital in shaping retrofit programmes, improving energy efficiency, and building resilience across our housing estates.

People with disabilities – Disabled residents may experience disproportionate impacts from climate change, including barriers to accessing services, safe housing, and public spaces during extreme weather. We will engage with disabled people and advocacy organisations to ensure that our climate strategy is inclusive and accessible. This includes co-designing solutions that consider mobility, communication needs, and health vulnerabilities, and embedding accessibility into all aspects of climate planning and delivery.

Vulnerable Communities – We are committed to ensuring that the voices of our most vulnerable residents are heard and reflected in our climate action. This includes people experiencing food poverty, homelessness, or those with no recourse to public funds, such as asylum seekers and refugees. As a Borough of Sanctuary, Southwark recognises the unique challenges faced by those seeking refuge, who are often disproportionately affected by climate-related risks such as extreme heat, poor housing conditions, and limited access to support services. We will work to ensure that our climate policies and programmes are inclusive, accessible, and responsive to the needs of these communities, and that they are actively involved in shaping a more resilient and equitable borough.

LGBTQ+ Community – LGBTQ+ individuals may face social exclusion or lack of access to safe and inclusive spaces, which can be further compounded during climate-related emergencies. We will work with our LGBTQ+ community to ensure that climate action in Southwark reflects the needs and experiences of LGBTQ+ residents. By fostering inclusive engagement and safe spaces for dialogue, we aim to build a climate strategy that supports equity, visibility, and resilience for all.

Faith communities – Southwark is home to people of a wide range of faiths and faith communities. Good stewardship of our world and natural resources is central to the beliefs of many

faiths and so we will work with our faith communities to ensure that they are engaged in this plan and its delivery.

We will also engage with older people, less mobile people and disabled people throughout this process. Our community is tied to communities across the world. Our residents will know people in parts of the world who are feeling the negative effects of climate change more acutely than we are in the UK, and they will know the impact of our action here on those they love in other parts of the world. Just as they are linked to the effects of climate change, they also bring to Southwark a wealth of perspectives and understanding from countries around the world. Many are from countries who produce far less carbon than the UK and where their ways of living are more sustainable. In engaging with our diverse communities, we need to listen and understand and learn from these global experiences and perspectives. We will be open and encouraging of solutions from the global south being adapted to work in Southwark.

Resourcing

Our estimates on first developing the climate change strategy projected that achieving carbon neutrality in Southwark would require significant capital investment, alongside additional revenue funding. Those estimates are now significantly outdated and likely a substantial underestimate. Since then, inflation and shifts in both the national and global economy have driven up costs across sectors, particularly in construction, energy, and infrastructure. Moreover, the initial estimates placed less emphasis on climate adaptation, which is now recognised as equally critical as mitigation. As the full scale of adaptation needs becomes clearer, it is evident that the total investment required will be considerably higher, underscoring the urgent need for sustained and increased government support.

Potential investment or funding streams include, but are not limited to, the council's carbon offset fund, central government grants, revenue and capital funding from the GLA or TfL and various funding bids across the public, private and charity sectors. To put the scale of this challenge into context, Southwark's revenue budget for 2025-26 was just over £356million. In addition to this, the Government also needs to invest in further decarbonisation of the grid.

This strategy sets out what needs to happen, but where we do not have the resources, the council will need to work with both public and private sector partners to secure the funding. Without considerable government investment it will not be possible to become carbon neutral and adapt our borough and so lobbying will be a central part of our response to the climate emergency. The council will call on the government for the required financial and political resource to achieve our target including for a Green and Decent Homes programme.

The council will remain open to all opportunities to increase investment in initiatives that support climate neutrality and ecological protection. For example, continuing the use of Community Municipal Investments (CMIs), enabling local residents to directly support and benefit from green projects. Future rounds of the Southwark Community Energy Fund will also be explored to further empower local energy initiatives. In addition, the council will continue to collaborate with the GLA and other partners to share costs and reduce the capital burden of financing innovative green solutions.

The council will also work to support our staff through training in carbon literacy, climate resilience and adaptation, ecological protection and a range of other areas which relate to the climate emergency. We recognise that for the council to effectively deliver change, all staff need to have a good level of knowledge of the impacts and response to climate change.

There will also be cost to individuals and to businesses. It is important that these individual costs are met by those who can most afford them, and in some cases, those who are responsible for higher emissions, so that we do not increase inequality in the borough.

Governance and Accountability

Good governance is essential to deliver our climate emergency response. While this strategy is a council strategy, it should represent an approach for the whole borough. To deliver this and ensure good governance we will use the following mechanisms:

Council Executive and Scrutiny Functions – the Cabinet will have responsibility for the delivery of this work. They are accountable to the council and scrutinised by relevant scrutiny commissions as well as being open and transparent to the public.

Citizens' Jury - We engaged with our citizens' jury of residents to learn about the climate emergency, hear from expert witnesses, and develop informed recommendations for local action. The jury produced 20 core recommendations, which were further broken down into 93 sub-recommendations. These recommendations informed the Climate Change Action plan, with several of the longer-term actions still being actioned to date. The jury's work has significantly shaped Southwark's climate policy, embedding community-led priorities into long-term planning and investment.

Community stakeholder panel – we have established a panel of local organisations that are interested in climate change and groups that represent local communities. The group meets quarterly and strengthens our climate work, through sharing ideas, insights and views with the council.

Delivery partners – we have convened a panel of major organisations and institutions in the borough. Through working together on shared challenges and opportunities we aim to deliver impactful activity to reduce carbon emissions and tackle the climate emergency in Southwark. A central principle in this strategy is transparency and we will aim to enhance our engagement with partners and community groups to take forward this strategy and action plan. We will hold at least one annual event which brings together different community groups, residents and partners to openly discuss progress, the challenges and find solutions to overcome them together.

The council will publish an annual climate change progress report, which sets out work that has taken place and the impact this has had on meeting our climate commitments.

Reviewing our approach

This strategy sets out our ambition and how we will approach the climate emergency. It outlines our commitment to engage and empower our communities and work in partnership with organisations in the borough to achieve our aim.

We will engage with, and respond positively to, scrutiny and learn from the ideas and experiences of others including experts and best practice in other local authorities. Our focus will be on delivery, making the changes needed to reach our goal. We will publish an annual progress report where we will also take corrective action for areas which are off-track. As we work toward our 2030 carbon neutrality target, we will continuously review and refine our overall strategy and approach. Our commitment remains focused on identifying new opportunities to accelerate progress and respond decisively to the climate emergency, ensuring that Southwark moves further and faster in delivering meaningful change.

Conclusion and Next Steps

This strategy and action plan sets out our ambitious approach and roadmap to a carbon neutral, climate resilient and sustainable future. It demonstrates the scale of the change necessary and emphasises that we can only make this change working together across the borough. It also highlights the need for Government to step up and do more to support the work of local authorities like Southwark if we are to become a carbon neutral borough.

Action is required across many areas to deliver the borough's ambitious targets. As a council we have finite staff and capital resources and so it is essential to prioritise how we allocate our resources, but also work with government and others to secure the investment which is needed for this ambitious plan.

Since the launch of our strategy, we have engaged with our community through the actions set out in our existing action plan, and through related strategies such as our Streets for People Strategy and our citizens' jury in 2022. We will continue to engage with key partner organisations and talk with and listen to our residents, businesses and others with an interest in the future of our borough.

This strategy sets out our approach. What we have done already, and what our priorities are for the future. It also sets out the next steps and how this plan will continue to evolve and develop as we deliver. To be effective we need to prioritise our actions. To do this we will consider:

- **Speed & magnitude of carbon reduction** – We will assess the relative carbon impact of projects, including the time sensitivity of the savings. This strategy and action plan is part of that process. Potential carbon savings will need to be considered in all decision-making within the council. It will not be possible to undertake all actions immediately, due to financial and resource restraints. We will need to prioritise those actions that offer the greatest carbon saving for the budget available.
- **Strengthening Climate adaptation** – As we strengthen Southwark's resilience to the impacts of climate change, we will regularly assess and refine our approach to adaptation. This strategy and action plan marks the continuation of that journey. Recognising that not all actions can be implemented immediately due to financial and resource constraints, we will prioritise those measures that offer the greatest benefit in protecting people, infrastructure, and ecosystems. Adaptation considerations, such as risk, urgency, and long-term resilience, will be embedded into all council decision-making to ensure we are building a borough that is prepared for the challenges ahead.
- **Alignment with other council goals** - Given that the actions in this strategy and action plan promote a range of other benefits we will ensure that this strategy is aligned with other policy documents and strategies, particularly Southwark 2030 and its three principles of empowering people, investing in prevention and reducing inequality.
- **Playing to Southwark's strengths** – Southwark has a range of engaged and active stakeholders. To deliver this programme we must build these partnerships and help those already undertaking work in this area to scale up initiatives. This will also inform priorities moving forward.
- **The importance of timing** - It is important to consider the future cumulative carbon legacy of decisions made to today, the emissions produced over the operational life of assets or projects. Some actions carry an element of short- term disruption before longer term gain can be realised. We must also account for the long-term resilience of these decisions, ensuring that investments made now not only reduce emissions but also strengthen the borough's ability to adapt to climate impacts such as flooding, overheating, and resource stress.

- **Technology costs** – We have an important role to play in stimulating demand and helping to bring costs of low carbon technology down. Waiting for this to happen may compromise carbon targets and cost savings for other stakeholders within the borough. We will look for ways to do this and help bring down costs.

In declaring a climate emergency and setting out our ambition to become a carbon neutral borough by 2030, Southwark Council has made clear its commitment to addressing one of the most urgent global challenges of our time. We have already made significant progress, achievements we can be proud of, but the scale and complexity of the task ahead must not be underestimated. As the impacts of climate change become increasingly visible, it is clear that our response must go beyond carbon reduction to include building resilience and adapting to future risks such as extreme weather, overheating, and flooding. We will continue to look to national government, especially in the context of international leadership forums like COP, to recognise local authorities as essential partners in this effort and to provide the resources needed to act at scale. The path to carbon neutrality and climate resilience will be challenging, but it is also filled with opportunity. The vision set out in this strategy - of resilient greener homes and buildings, active and sustainable travel, a thriving natural environment, a circular economy with green jobs, and clean, renewable energy – is a positive, exciting vision for Southwark. It is also one that we must follow for the sake of our planet and our future generations.

Glossary of Terms

A

Adaptation – Actions that help prepare for and defend against the effects of climate change. For example, protecting against rising sea levels by building river or sea barriers.

Anthesis – Anthesis are a sustainability consultancy who have worked with the council on developing our climate strategy.

Aquifer - An underground layer of permeable rock, which can hold and transport water to and from rivers and other water sources. In London, we have a large chalk basin aquifer.

Aquifer Depletion – Taking water faster than it can be replaced within an aquifer. When there are water shortages, due to low rainfall or leaky pipes, water companies may increase abstraction to compensate which can lead to aquifer depletion.

B

Biodiversity - The variety of plants, habitats and animal life in a particular place. A high level of biodiversity shows that the ecosystem is thriving, and species can be supported. In Southwark, we are aiming to increase our biodiversity.

BREEAM Rating – A method of assessing, rating, and certifying the sustainability of buildings.

C

Carbon Budget - The cumulative amount of carbon dioxide emissions permitted over a period to keep within a certain temperature limit.

Climate Budgeting – The process of integrating climate considerations into the financial budget process for an organisation.

Carbon capture and storage - The collection of carbon dioxide gas from large emission sources, such as factories or power stations. Carbon is often stored underground. Carbon capture is sometimes referred to as carbon sequestration.

Carbon dioxide (CO₂) - Carbon dioxide is a gas that can occur naturally and can also occur due to human activities, such as manufacturing or using fossil fuel-based energy. The more carbon dioxide we produce, the greater the impact on Earth's atmosphere. Carbon dioxide is the

greenhouse gas that human activity produces the most.

Climate emergency - A recognition that urgent action is now required to reduce or halt climate change, and that irreversible environmental damage is a result from our rapidly changing climate.

Carbon emissions - Carbon produced by human activity, which is released into the atmosphere.

Carbon neutral - A process where there is no net release of CO₂. A process is said to be carbon neutral when the amount of carbon taken out and the amount of carbon released is identical. Carbon offsetting is a tool used by organisations to achieve carbon neutrality.

Carbon offsetting – A way of compensating for carbon emissions by participating in, or funding, efforts to take carbon out of the atmosphere elsewhere. Offsetting often involves paying another party to save emissions equivalent to those produced by your activity. For example, a company might pay another company to offset their carbon emissions by planting trees.

Carbon sequestration - The process of storing carbon dioxide. See Carbon capture and storage.

Circular economy – A process of keeping resources in use for as long as possible in order to reduce waste. It is used to move away from our current model of disposing products after use.

Climate change - A shift in an environmental variant such as average temperature or rainfall, which affects an existing climate and can lead to an increase of extreme weather conditions. This may be caused by both natural processes and human activity, and global warming is one aspect of climate change.

Climate Change Committee (CCC) - an independent, statutory body established under the Climate Change Act 2008. Advises the UK and devolved governments on emissions targets and reports to Parliament on progress made in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for and adapting to the impacts of climate change.

Council Emissions – Emissions that the Council has a direct influence over, such as emissions from council offices.

CO₂ - See carbon dioxide.

Co-benefits - positive effects of a policy that cover more than one objective. For example, becoming more energy efficient will help with our climate targets but may also help tackle fuel poverty.

D

Decarbonise - To remove or reduce the amount of carbon.

DEFRA – Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs.

DESNZ - Department for Energy Security and Net Zero

Drought - Periods of prolonged below average rainfall, which leads to low levels of groundwater and reduced river flows. These affect both people and wildlife, and in London can build over period of months and years.

E

Ecological Emergency – The rapid and continual loss of natural assets like green space, wildlife, ecosystems and natural habitats. Urgent action is required to address this.

Embodied carbon - Embodied carbon consists of all the emissions associated with the construction of buildings. This includes emissions from transport, manufacturing and installing building materials. It also included the operational and end-of-life emissions of those materials.

Energy efficiency - Eliminating energy waste by using less energy to perform tasks.

EPC rating - An EPC rating gives a property an energy efficiency rating from A (most efficient) to G (least efficient) and is valid for 10 years.

F

Flooding – The covering or submerging of land that is usually dry with a large amount of water, often but not exclusively from heavy rainfall.

Fossil fuels - Natural resources, such as oil, coal, and natural gas that can be used as fuels. These fuels produce carbon dioxide when burnt.

Food Insecurity – Someone who does not have enough money to buy food, has to skip meals or has to cut down on quantities due to money, or does not have the money for a balanced diet.

Fuel Poverty – Fuel poverty is caused primarily by low incomes, the poor energy efficiency of homes, and high energy prices. If the fuel costs required to heat and power a home adequately are above the national median level, and if this would leave a household with a residual income below the poverty line, this household would be considered in fuel poverty.

Future emissions modelling - Helps predict what actions we will need to take in the future, considering newer technologies and decisions from government that we expect to see before 2030.

G

Global South - The phrase “Global South” refers broadly to the regions of Latin America, Asia, Africa, and Oceania. It is a term that denotes regions outside Europe and North America that are mostly (though not all) low-income and often politically or culturally marginalised.

Global majority - refers to the vast majority of the world's population who are not white and are often categorised as ethnic minorities. This includes people of African, Asian, Indigenous, and Latin American descent, who collectively represent approximately 80-85% of the global population.

Global warming - The steady rise in global average temperature in recent decades, which experts believe is largely caused by man-made greenhouse gas emissions.

Green Corridor - Continuous areas of open space leading through the built environment which allow animals and plants to be found further into the built-up area than would otherwise. Green Corridors often consist of rivers, railway embankments and cuttings, roadside verges, canals, parks, playing fields and extensive areas of private gardens.

Green New Deal - Links investment in carbon reduction programmes with inclusive economic renewal. A Green New Deal for Southwark is one of the six headline commitments of our economic renewal plan and a new commitment within the Borough Plan up to 2022.

Greenhouse gases - Natural and industrial gases that trap heat from the Earth and warm the surface. Carbon dioxide is the main greenhouse gas. Other greenhouse gases are given a carbon dioxide equivalent value. This means that we can calculate all greenhouse gases on the same scale and so refer to carbon to mean carbon dioxide and all other greenhouse gases.

Groundwater flooding - When the level of water within the rock or soil making up the land surface rises significantly. Groundwater levels typically peak in Southwark during March, and if there is extremely heavy rainfall, basements and low-lying land can be flooded.

H

Heatwave – An extended period of hot weather relative to the expected conditions of the area at that time of year, which may be accompanied by high humidity.

I

Impermeable surface - Mainly artificial structures (such as pavements, roads, driveways, parking areas and rooftops) that are covered by materials impenetrable to water (such as asphalt, concrete,

brick and stone). Impermeable surfaces also collect solar heat in their dense mass. When the heat is released, it raises air temperatures.

Invasive Species – Species (plant or animal) that have entered an area but are not usually found in that area. These species can disrupt local biodiversity. An example is the Oak Processionary moth which is native to southern Europe but is now able to survive and reproduce in the warmer temperatures found in the UK. It can cause severe allergic reactions which are increasing across London.

IPCC - The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is an international body reporting to the UN which reviews work relevant to climate change. It received the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize.

L

London Councils - An organisation that represents London's 33 local authorities, and lobbies on their behalf.

Low carbon economy - An economy that attempts to minimise or halt the carbon produces from activity within it.

M

Methane – Methane is the second most important man-made greenhouse gas. There are natural sources for methane, such as wetlands and wildfires, and human activity such as agriculture.

Mitigation - Action that we can take to reduce man-made climate change. This includes action to reduce our carbon or absorb greenhouse gases.

N

Nitrous Oxide - A gas formed by combustion, which is harmful to human health as an air pollutant.

O

Overheating – When the local indoor temperature and humidity exceeds those acceptable for human thermal comfort or those that may adversely affect human health.

P

Paris Agreement - Signed in 2016, the Paris Agreement is an international agreement to limit global temperature rises to below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels; and to pursue efforts to limit the

increase to 1.5 °C. The UK is a signatory of this agreement.

R

Renewable energy - Energy created from sources that after a short period can be replenished. This includes biomass, water-based energy, geothermal, wind, and solar.

Residual emissions - Emissions that remain after all feasible measures to reduce an organisation's carbon footprint have been implemented. These emissions are often difficult to reduce with current practices, technology or resources.

Resilience - The ability of a system to recover from the effect of extreme conditions that may have caused harm.

Retrofit - To modify existing and in use infrastructure using new parts to reduce the impact on the environment e.g., installing solar panels or green roofs on existing social housing.

Risk (climate) - The potential for negative consequences for humans or ecological systems due to climate change.

S

SELCHP network - South East London Combined Heat & Power. The plant in Lewisham provides heat and hot water to some homes in Southwark. It generates heat from non-recycled waste which would have otherwise gone to landfill to provide heat to communal heating and hot water systems through a network of underground hot water pipes to the boiler houses, removing the reliance on using gas.

Sewer Flooding - The discharge of sewage or wastewater from the sewer system, either onto land or into buildings. Southwark's largely Victorian-era sewer network is under significant strain; even moderate rainfall can result in sewage spilling into the River Thames and nearby streets.

SCATTER - Anthesis-developed tool which is used to set emissions baselines and reductions targets.

Scope One Emissions - Emissions that are generated in the borough e.g., driving a car.

Scope Two Emissions - Emissions generated elsewhere but where the energy that they generate is used in the borough e.g., turning on a light where the generation happens at a power station, but the energy use is in the borough.

Scope Three Emissions - Indirect emissions that are produced to provide something in the borough e.g., the emissions produced to make a product that is consumed in the borough.

Social Housing - Refers to rental housing which may be owned and managed by the council or a not-for-profit organisation with the aim to provide affordable housing.

Social Justice - Justice in terms of the distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society.

Southwark 2030 – A strategy based on 3 key principles and 7 goals with the aim of building a better future for our people and our place and securing a good life for everyone. The strategy underpins the Southwark Delivery Plan.

Southwark Plan - The Southwark Plan is the borough's strategic planning framework guiding development, regeneration, and land use from 2019 to 2036. Comprised of strategic policies and Area Action Plans.

Supply Chain - The network of organisations and processes involved in delivering goods, services, and works to meet the needs of an organisation. This network includes not only the direct suppliers to the council, but also organisations and processes involved in sourcing, production, distribution, and disposal.

Surface water flooding - When water cannot drain away or soak into the ground. This is a particular problem in urban areas as they often have a high percentage of impermeable surfaces.

Sustainable - To ensure it causes little or no damage to the environment or economy and therefore is still able to continue for a long time.

T

Tidal Surge - When river levels rise, creating increased wind and low atmospheric pressure. London is currently protected from tidal surges by the Thames Barrier, but additional stress could weaken these defences.

Traverse – Traverse is an engagement consultancy that helped the council with their consultation on the climate strategy.

W

Water Scarcity - When the demand for water exceeds the available supply, either due to insufficient water resources or high demand.

ⁱ Data from Royal Meteorological Society (2025): [World exceeds 1.5°C threshold for entire year for the first time | Royal Meteorological Society](#)

ⁱⁱ The Royal Society, "If emissions of greenhouse gases were stopped, would the climate return to the conditions of 200 years ago?" (2020): [20. If emissions of greenhouse gases were stopped, would the climate return to the conditions of 200 years ago? | Royal Society](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ CDP, Building Local Resilience (March 2023). [https://cdn.cdp.net/cdphttps://cdn.cdp.net/cdp-production/cms/reports/documents/000/006/915/original/CDP_UK_Cities_Report_EN_\(2\).pdf?1678720265](https://cdn.cdp.net/cdphttps://cdn.cdp.net/cdp-production/cms/reports/documents/000/006/915/original/CDP_UK_Cities_Report_EN_(2).pdf?1678720265). CDP is a not-for-profit charity that runs the global disclosure system for investors, companies, cities, states and regions to manage their environmental impacts

^{iv} US EPA (2019). Global greenhouse gas emissions data. Available from <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/global-greenhouse-gas-emissions-data> [accessed July 2025]

^v Defra Crop Yield statistics: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/cereal-and-oilseed-rape-production/provisional-cereal-and-oilseed-production-estimates-for-england-2024>

^{vi} London City Resilience Strategy (2020):

https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/london_city_resilience_strategy_2020_digital_0.pdf [accessed July 2025]

^{vii} London Health Burden of Current Air Pollution and Future Health Benefits of Mayoral Air Quality Policies:

https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/london_health_burden_of_current_air_pollution_and_future_health_benefits_of_mayoral_air_quality_policies_january2020.pdf [Accessed July 2025]

^{viii} London Climate Risk Map:

<https://cityhall.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/media/index.html?appid=59236d2e842c4a3ba6480d9dac585d1e>
[Accessed July 2025]

^{ix} Southwark JSNA Household Food Insecurity 2021: <https://www.southwark.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-10/Household%20food%20insecurity%20JSNA%202021.pdf> [Accessed July 2025]

^x Southwark JSNA Annual Report 2024: <https://www.southwark.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-02/JSNA%20Annual%20Report%202024.pdf> [Accessed July 2025]

^{xi} Local Authority Consumption Account Tool: [Local Authority Consumption Accounts](#) [Accessed July 2025]

^{xii} GLA: Pathways to Net Zero Carbon by 2030: [https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/environment-and-climate-change/climate-change/zero-carbon-london/pathways-netzero-carbon-2030](https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/environment-and-climate-change/climate-change/zero-carbon-london/pathways-net-zero-carbon-2030) [Accessed July 2025]

^{xiii} London Climate Resilience Review 2024: [The London Climate Resilience Review | London City Hall](#) [Accessed July 2025]

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

SEPTEMBER 2025



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Introduction

The Southwark Climate Action Plan is our bold and practical roadmap to responding to the climate emergency. It brings together a wide range of actions that will improve the lives of our residents and make our borough and neighbourhoods a better place to live.

We will do this by cutting carbon emissions and adapting our places, infrastructure and services to reduce climate-related weather risks. This will improve the resilience of the borough to ensure that we are better prepared for the worsening effects of climate change. Recognising the urgency of the challenge, our plan is rooted in reducing inequality, fairness and inclusion. It will promote a 'just transition' so that the move to a fairer, safer, greener future means that everyone can live a good life as part of a strong community.

This Action Plan is the delivery plan for our Climate Change Strategy. It will deliver our ambition to do all we can to make the borough carbon-neutral by 2030 and will play a key role in delivering the goals of the council's Southwark 2030 Strategy.

From reducing emissions from buildings, lowering energy costs, generating clean energy, and improving our streets and green spaces so that they are safer, greener, healthier, each action in the plan contributes to fair, resilient, carbon-neutral borough, reflecting our commitment to climate leadership and collaboration with our communities.

We will review the plan each year to ensure we are on track, share progress and respond to new opportunities and challenges.

How to read this plan

Our Climate Action Plan is focused on five themes. Each theme covers some of the most important areas for our two climate goals: reducing carbon emissions and preparing the borough for the effects of changing weather patterns like heatwaves and flood events.

The first four themes focus on our buildings and neighbourhoods, streets and transport, green spaces and biodiversity, and economy and businesses. These are important areas where we need to directly reduce emissions, or areas that are directly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. The fifth theme, People & Resources, equips the council with the necessary skills and tools to ensure we better deliver climate action and support progress across the other four themes.

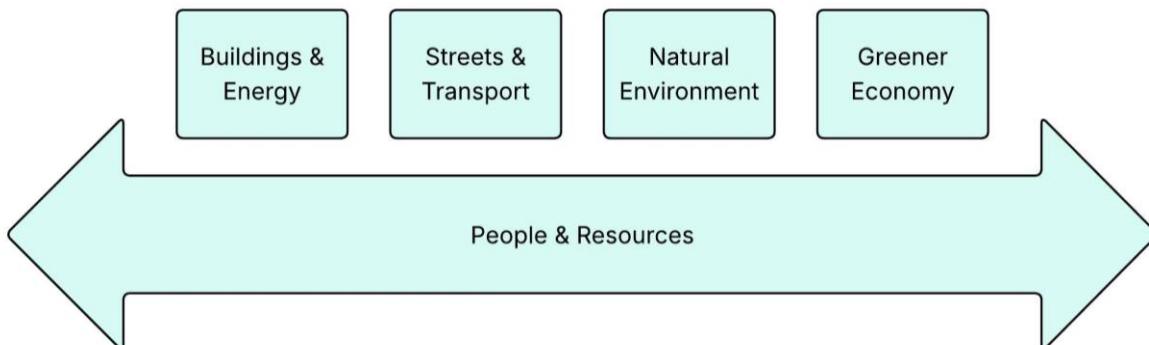


Figure 1: Five themes within the Climate Action Plan

Each theme is sub-divided into several priority areas that contain the actions that we will take. Each action includes an outcome that the action will achieve and several of the key activities that will be undertaken. We also include action monitoring details to ensure each action is SMART, transparent and accountable so that we can monitor progress. All actions have a target date. For some actions this date is ongoing due to the nature of the action

- **Lead cabinet member** – The councillor who is responsible for ensuring the action is completed.
- **Lead council team** – The council team who will lead on delivering the action. Some actions may have several teams as they will be delivered across the council.
- **Target date** – The specific date we are aiming to complete the action, if specific.
- **Cost** – How much the key activities contained within the action will cost: Low – under £100k, Medium – £100k - £1m, High - £1m to £10m, Very High - £10m+
- **Southwark 2030 goals** – The Southwark 2030 goals the action will support: (1) Decent homes for all; (2) A good start in life; (3) A safer Southwark; (4) A strong and fair economy; (5) Staying well; (6) A healthy environment; and (7) A well-run council

- **Action type** – The type of climate action we take: (1) enabling action - actions that support or create the conditions for other climate actions to succeed; (2) direct action - actions that deliver outcomes to reduce emissions or improve climate resilience; (3) mitigation - actions that reduce or prevent emissions:(4) adaptation - actions that help people, places, or ecosystems adjust to the current or expected effects of climate change; (5) resilience - actions that strengthen the ability of our communities, infrastructure or ecosystems to withstand and recover from climate shocks or stresses.
- **Wider benefits** - These are the wider benefits to our residents and neighbourhoods that also result from the action being delivered: (1) Cleaner air and environment; (2) Improved public health; (3) Lower energy bills (4) Reduced waste (5) Economic growth; (6) Empowering people

1. Buildings and energy

Reducing carbon emissions, adapting our buildings to climate change, and using more cleaner energy is vital to creating a resilient, low-carbon borough where we are protected from the worsening effects of climate change.

Our borough is diverse and exciting with a truly vibrant population that comes from being in central London. 43% of all housing is social housing, and we are proud to be the largest landlord in London with over 52,500 properties and 14,500 leaseholders, with a further 17,000 homes owned by housing associations. We are home to major institutions who own and operate the large buildings including hospitals, universities, cultural institutions, faith buildings, and large business and retail spaces within our town centres. The borough is growing and regenerating, creating new opportunities for residents and the council. With approximately 15,000 businesses we want to create a green economy that delivers co-benefits of economic growth, reduced inequality and carbon reduction.

Our actions for buildings and energy are particularly important as buildings are responsible for approximately 78% of the borough's carbon emissions. This is because buildings are the highest energy users in the borough. Increases in local electricity demand for new and upgraded buildings means we will need to improve the borough's electrical infrastructure. We will also need to connect an ever-increasing number of community energy projects where local people come together to produce, own or manage renewable energy such as solar panels on buildings or shared heating systems for homes that reduce fuel bills and emissions.

As an urban borough, we have a higher risk of extremely hot days during heatwaves. Higher temperatures are felt more significantly in neighbourhoods with less trees and where residents are in poorer health, less green open spaces, and according to the age, design and type of buildings. Addressing overheating in buildings, in particular homes, is a priority for accelerating climate adaptation in our buildings. Alongside this, we will continue to take action to reduce the risk of flooding to buildings from the River Thames and surface water flooding from storms.

1.1 Homes

Action 1: Significantly reduce emissions from council homes and ensure they are resilient to the effects of climate change

Outcomes

In our approach to maintaining council housing and building new homes, we will reduce carbon emissions, lower fuel bills, and improve quality and thermal comfort so that our residents are supported in a changing climate.

Key activities

We will:

- Ensure the council's Better Homes Asset Management Strategy sets out a clear pathway to reducing emissions, climate adaptation and a just transition for council homes residents, through planned maintenance and major works cycles.
- Reduce emissions and adapt council housing through planned maintenance cycles and additional funding opportunities, including improving energy efficiency and preparing properties for transition away from gas where possible.
- Deliver training for all planned maintenance and repairs teams in technologies and skills for retrofit (including both low carbon, energy efficiency and tackling overheating).
- Upgrade external housing estate lighting to low energy LEDs
- Implement a portfolio of measures to support residents who are most vulnerable to overheating in their homes, improve thermal comfort and reduced heat risk on very hot days. We will focus on helping heat-vulnerable residents like older people and those with existing health conditions and in the longer term inform investment and repairs.
- Deliver pilot schemes of new low-carbon council homes, that can be used to inform the development of new policy
- Continue to lobby central government for better policy and funding on retrofitting to reduce emissions and support climate adaptation.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Situ
- **Lead council teams:** Asset Management, Southwark Construction
- **Target date:** Ongoing
- **Cost:** Very high
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** Decent homes for all, A healthy environment
- **Action type:** enabling mitigation and adaptation
- **Wider benefits:** Improved public health, lower energy bills, cleaner air and environment

Action 2: Support the retrofit of private homes

Outcomes

Support the retrofitting of private homes across the boroughs to reduce emissions, generate local renewable energy, improve efficiency and reduce fuel bills.

Key activities

We will:

- Deliver a free green homes advice service for homeowners to help make homes greener, with lower carbon emissions, and adapted to the effects of climate change.
- Signpost retrofitting best practice to support homeowners to retrofit their homes, improve comfort on very hot summer days and explore options for further support.
- Encourage improved energy performance in homes that are privately rented through Southwark's Gold Standard Charter, and enforce minimum energy efficiency standards.
- Highlight best practice and leading examples of decarbonised and heat-resilient homes in the borough to support retrofitting and new design.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Batteson, Cllr Ennin
- **Lead council teams:** Climate Change, Regulatory Services
- **Target date:** 2028
- **Cost:** Low
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** Decent homes for all, A healthy environment
- **Action type:** enabling mitigation and adaptation
- **Wider benefits:** Improved public health, lower energy bills, cleaner air and environment, empowering people

1.2 Schools

Action 3: Make our schools sustainable and resilient to climate change

Outcomes

Support schools and education settings to engage with climate change through their climate action plans and curriculums. Encourage, fund and deliver projects to minimise emissions and energy use from school buildings, encourage recycling and lower food waste, install renewable energy, make playgrounds greener, and adapt school buildings and grounds so that students and staff are safe in heatwaves and we prevent or reduce the damage from flooding for at-risk schools

Key activities

We will:

- Engage with all Southwark schools through the Climate Action Schools Network, collaborating across council teams and with local partners to support schools in developing and delivering climate action plans.
- Complete our 'roadmap to reducing school emissions' by producing a boiler upgrade and replacement plan for council-maintained schools that prioritises decarbonising heating systems. By 2026, we will agree numerical targets & interim objectives aligned to that pathway and seek to secure relevant resources.
- Implement the decarbonisation of heating systems in council owned schools that have the highest carbon emissions, and improve energy efficiency through school maintenance
- Support 'School Superzones' to improve children's health and climate action, such as walking to school, air quality greening projects, school streets and healthy food availability.
- Reduce the carbon footprint of our school meals services and food waste in schools.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Akoto, Cllr Ali, Cllr McAsh,
- **Lead council teams:** Sustainable Growth, Children's Services, Climate Change, Highways
- **Target date:** 2030
- **Cost:** Low to high
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A good start in life, A healthy environment
- **Action type:** Enabling, Mitigation and Adaptation
- **Wider benefits:** Improved public health, cleaner air and environment, lower energy bills

1.3 Council-owned buildings

Action 4: Reduce emissions from council buildings and ensure they are climate change ready

Outcomes

Retrofitting our public and community buildings will reduce the amount of carbon emissions that we are responsible for and lower our energy bills, as we transition away from fossil fuel use. Improved thermal comfort will enable residents and staff to use these buildings when we experience extreme weather events like heat waves.

Key activities

We will:

- Halve the council's operational carbon emissions by 2026, staying on track to cut emissions from the council's operations and vehicles to net-zero by 2030.
- Reduce emissions in council and leisure buildings that emit the most carbon emissions through retrofitting and building maintenance, and improve their resilience to climate hazards like heatwaves. These include our offices, leisure centres, libraries, sports facilities, and other council sites.
- Seek to reduce emissions and improve the climate resilience of properties that we own through the delivery of the council's Strategic Assessment Management Plan.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Batteson, Cllr Cryan, Cllr McAsh, Cllr Mwangangye
- **Lead council teams:** Climate Change, Corporate Facilities Management
- **Target date:** 2030
- **Cost:** High to very high
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment, A well-run council
- **Action type:** Enabling, Mitigation and Adaptation
- **Wider benefits:** Lower energy bills, cleaner air and environment

Action 5: Minimise the environmental impact of our operations

Outcomes

We will lead by example to minimise the environmental impact of our operations through the way we run and manage our services and buildings. To do this, we will use fewer natural resources, purchase green energy and lower energy use, and reduce the number of things the council buys to save money and cut carbon emissions.

Key activities

We will:

- Explore options to buy more green electricity, including collaborating with other London boroughs to find the best value for money.
- Upgrade parks lighting to low energy LEDs.
- Roll out best practice water saving measures across the council's buildings and operations to reduce the potential costs and impacts of drought.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Cryan, Cllr McAsh, Cllr Mwangangye,
- **Lead council teams:** Climate Change, Corporate Facilities Management, Parks
- **Target date:** 2028
- **Cost:** Medium
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment
- **Action type:** Direct, Mitigation
- **Wider benefits:** Cleaner air and environment, lower energy bills, reduce waste

1.4 Energy

Action 6: Deliver resilient low-carbon heat networks

Outcomes

New and expanded heat networks will reduce carbon emissions and energy bills by supplying heat to homes and businesses across the borough using low-carbon energy sources. As energy systems become greener, heat networks can switch to cleaner sources without needing changes in individual buildings, improving reliability and comfort for residents and workers.

Key activities

We will:

- Lead, support and facilitate the development of district heat networks across the borough.
- Increase the number of homes and buildings that are connected to district heat networks powered by South East London Combined Heat and Power (SELCHP) and other low-carbon heat sources.
- Improve the energy efficiency of our existing heat networks, including compliance with Heat Networks (market framework) regulation that is coming into effect in 2026.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Batteson, Cllr Dennis, Cllr Situ
- **Lead council teams:** Asset Management, Climate Change, Planning
- **Target date:** Ongoing
- **Cost:** High to very high
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment
- **Action type:** Enabling, Direct, Mitigation
- **Wider benefits:** Lower energy bills

Action 7: Ready the borough for electrification and support community energy

Outcomes

Making our energy infrastructure fit for purpose to deliver new, greener homes and buildings, while retrofitting our existing buildings will support our transition away from fossil fuels, and achieve our ambition of a cleaner, healthier borough. This will require significant planning and upgrading to our electrical infrastructure, including the grid, substations, and local wiring, to handle increased demand and support renewable energy sources.

We will also further support our communities to co-design and deliver community energy projects to make our energy system fairer, greener, and more resilient to climate change. Community energy projects help cut borough carbon emissions, lower energy bills, and keep more money in the local economy. They also give communities more control over energy generation and use, build local skills, and support people who are in fuel poverty.

Key activities

We will:

- Prepare the Southwark Power Plan, a local area energy plan for the borough. We will prepare this in collaboration with neighbouring boroughs and utility providers to inform delivery and investment.
- Support the expansion of our community energy sector through grant funding and legal and planning support for projects on council-owned buildings.
- Support the creation of community energy cooperatives and groups, innovative projects and business models.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Batteson
- **Lead council team:** Climate Change
- **Target date:** Ongoing
- **Cost:** Low to medium
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment
- **Action type:** Enabling, Direct, Mitigation
- **Wider benefits:** Lower energy bills, empowering people, cleaner air and environment, economic growth

Action 8: Generate renewable energy on our buildings

Outcomes

Generating local renewable energy is one of the best tools for tackling climate change. Projects on council homes and buildings helps us cut carbon emissions and reduce our energy bills, while showing strong local leadership. Local energy generation, when cost effective, supports a well-run council by reducing our reliance on external energy sources and saves the council money over time. Our communities also benefit through cleaner air, local investment, and opportunities to partner and grow our community energy sector.

Key activities

We will:

- Increase the amount of renewable energy we generate on council homes and buildings.
- Develop a council working group to review and improve utilisation of existing local energy generation assets.
- Identify and develop new opportunities to install new solar panels through our asset management governance planning and processes.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Batteson, Cllr Cryan
- **Lead council teams:** Climate Change, Housing Asset Management, Sustainable Growth, Corporate Facilities Management
- **Target date:** Ongoing
- **Cost:** Medium
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment
- **Action type:** Enabling, Direct, Mitigation
- **Wider benefits:** Lower energy bills, empowering people

1.5 Planning

Action 9: Update planning policy so that buildings and places are more sustainable

Outcomes

Ensure new homes, buildings and our public places and neighbourhoods minimise their impact on climate change through how they are designed, operate or built. This will mean less carbon emissions through lower energy use and better energy efficiency, as well as more renewable energy generation and reduced fuel bills for residents and tenants.

Retrofitting and new development will consider the effects of a hotter, wetter climate in our borough and ensure climate adaptation and resilience measures are well considered.

Key activities

We will:

- Through the review of the Southwark Plan:
 - explore new policy options that prioritises reductions in the amount of energy new buildings will use, rather than relying on carbon offsetting.
 - consider policy options so we can better understand how much energy a building uses, reduce the amount of carbon emissions that are emitted through construction and demolition, and ways to make it easier to install low-carbon technology like solar panels and heat pumps at home.
 - improve the climate resilience of our built environment through the design and greening of new homes, buildings and our public realm.
- Introduce a pilot for the Listed Building Local Development Order (LBDO) to simplify and speed-up solar panel installation on listed buildings in specific conservation areas.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Dennis
- **Lead council team/s:** Planning Policy
- **Target date:** 2028
- **Cost:** Low
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** Decent homes for all, A healthy environment
- **Action type:** Enabling, Mitigation and Adaptation
- **Wider benefits:** Cleaner air and environment, improved public health

2. Streets and transport

The scope of this theme focuses on reducing emissions and increasing our climate resilience through the design of our streets, efficient transport choices and the use of council vehicles.

This theme aligns our climate ambitions with our adopted Streets for People Strategy which is our strategy for taking climate action on streets and transport. We will reduce vehicle emissions by ensuring our streets encourage more journeys by walking and cycling, improve our air quality and road safety, and make our streets greener and sociable. Changing the way how we move around our borough is key to the success of reducing the effects of climate change. Emissions from transport accounts for 22% of the borough's emissions, of which around 99% comes from on-road transport. Reducing transport emissions across the borough will require a reduction in the number of vehicles on our roads and we will use Streets for People to do this. The design and maintenance of our streets will use low carbon materials and construction processes to reduce emissions and extend the life of our streets and public realm. We have embedded climate adaptation in this theme and will continue the rollout of measure to adapt our street and places to the reduce the harmful effects of heatwaves and minimise surface water flooding.

2.1 Streets and transport

Action 10: Ensure our streets encourage walking and cycling, reduce emissions from vehicles, and are adapted for the worsening effects of climate change

Outcomes

The ongoing delivery of our Streets for People Strategy and Delivery Plan will make the air in our neighbourhoods cleaner and reduce carbon emissions by making walking, cycling and wheeling the first choice to getting around the borough, instead of using private vehicles. Our streets will be greener, cooler and more pleasant spaces for our communities to connect and socialise, as they are key locations for adapting our neighbourhoods to overheating and flooding from extreme weather events.

Key activities

We will:

- Lower carbon emissions from vehicles by improving our streets so they encourage people to walk, cycle and wheel more through the delivery of Streets for People Strategy and Delivery Plan.
- Implement climate adaptation measures that reduce surface water flooding, provide shading and green infrastructure to support vulnerable residents and improve biodiversity.
- Support walking choices through the design of our streets and our Walking Plan.
- Increase the number of cycling routes that are detailed in our Cycling Plan.
- Develop electric vehicle infrastructure by delivering the updated objectives of our Electric Vehicle Plan.
- Collaborate with Transport for London to improve the streets that they manage.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr McAsh
- **Lead council team/s:** Transport Policy, Highways
- **Target date:** Ongoing
- **Cost:** Low to high
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment
- **Action type:** Direct, Enabling, Mitigation, Adaptation
- **Wider benefits:** Cleaner air and environment, improved public health, economic growth, empowering people

Action 11: Encourage sustainable transport options to reduce emissions from vehicles

Outcomes

Collaborating with Transport for London and other transport operators will improve low-carbon public transport options for our residents, businesses and visitors so that they can move around the borough quickly and safely. This will reduce carbon emissions from vehicles and improve air quality.

Key activities

We will:

- Collaborate with transport operators including Transport for London to make bus journeys quicker, more reliable and with zero emissions.
- Campaign for the extension and upgrade of the Bakerloo Line to ensure critical funding is secured for its delivery.
- Support new options of low-carbon travel such as bikes and scooters, ensuring safety and convenience.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr McAsh
- **Lead council team/s:** Transport policy, Highways
- **Target date:** Ongoing
- **Cost:** Low
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment
- **Action type:** Direct, Enabling, Mitigation
- **Wider benefits:** Cleaner air and environment, improved public health, economic growth

Action 12: Design and maintain our streets and public realm to reduce emissions and improve climate resilience

Outcomes

The low-carbon design, construction and maintenance of our streets and spaces reduces our carbon emissions and improves the climate resilience of the borough by making our streets safer, greener, and better prepared for extreme weather.

Key activities

We will:

- Ensure highway design and construction minimises emissions through low-carbon design, delivery and emissions monitoring,
- Develop a 'lifecycle' approach for highway infrastructure ensuring resources and processes are in place to maintain infrastructure for longer periods of time and need to be replaced.
- Update the Southwark Streetscape Design Manual to include greater climate adaptation measures, ensuring council staff are trained to deliver these approaches.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr McAsh
- **Lead council team:** Highways
- **Target date:** 2026
- **Cost:** Low to medium
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment
- **Action type:** Direct, Enabling, Mitigation
- **Wider benefits:** Cleaner air and environment, reduced waste

2.2 Council vehicles

Action 13: Reduce emissions from council vehicles

Outcomes

Reducing the emissions generated from the council's fleet of vehicles through the management of how we use them and the roll-out of electric and hybrid vehicles, will deliver a range of benefits, including positively improving air quality and public health.

Key activities

We will:

- Reduce the carbon emissions from our vehicles by challenging the number of fleet vehicles in use, active monitoring of fleet usage, and procuring hybrid or EV vehicles where feasible.
- Maintain the delivery and resilience of important services to our residents and businesses, and encourage the use of more sustainable modes of transport for our staff.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** All cabinet members as vehicles are purchased or leased.
- **Lead council team/s:** Cross-council as each department procures vehicles
- **Target date:** 2030
- **Cost:** Medium
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment
- **Action type:** Direct, Mitigation
- **Wider benefits:** Cleaner air and environment, improved public health

3. Natural environment

The scope of this theme covers the important links between our natural environment and climate change.

Our award-winning parks, open spaces and neighbourhoods provide homes for a range of common and rare wildlife. This includes species of birds, bats, invertebrates and plants. We value our parks and trees as a vital part of the borough's landscape that bring joy to people and help clean our air. We also recognise that our parks, open spaces, fields and allotments are important for supporting good health and wellbeing, and help our communities feel more connected. They help to reduce levels of depression and anxiety, and enhance quality of life for both children and adults.

The actions in this theme relate to how we improve and look after our natural environment. Planting more trees and turning areas of paving into new areas of green space are vital for wildlife-friendly habitats and adapting the borough to heatwaves and surface water flooding. A changing climate also increases the risk of invasive species, pests and diseases to our borough. To protect our natural environment, we will work with local communities to monitor the borough for emerging risks, ensure our green spaces encourage wildlife and improve access to green spaces for all our residents.

3.1 Trees

Action 14: Plant and maintain more trees

Outcomes

Trees provide multiple benefits to our borough. They make it healthier, cooler, and more resilient to heatwaves by providing shade and releasing moisture which reduces the way our built environment holds on to heat in the hottest months. Trees also provide habitat for wildlife and help improve the borough's air quality by absorbing pollutants and releasing oxygen. By absorbing rainwater to help prevent flooding they help combat climate change by storing carbon.

Key activities

We will:

- Sustainably manage our existing trees in a way that supports long-term environmental, social, and economic benefits for all. This includes regularly monitoring tree health and maintaining them to prevent disease and damage, and replacing trees, when necessary, with appropriate species. We will protect mature trees during construction.
- Endeavour to increase the number of trees and the size of the borough's canopy cover by undertaking new tree planting throughout the planting season, and working with community groups and partners to do this.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr McAsh, Cllr Mwangangye
- **Lead council team/s:** Trees, Highways
- **Target date:** Ongoing
- **Cost:** Medium
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment
- **Action type:** Direct, Enabling, Adaptation, Mitigation
- **Wider benefits:** Cleaner air and environment, Improved public health

3.2 Biodiversity

Action 15: Enhance our streets and green spaces to increase biodiversity

Outcomes

Enhancing our streets and green spaces will create more habitats for wildlife, helping plants, birds, and insects thrive. It will also make our neighbourhoods greener, more attractive, and healthier for our communities. Biodiversity improvements support climate adaptation by helping to manage rainwater, reduce overheating during hotter months, and improve our air quality.

Key activities

We will:

- Support the delivery of new biodiversity projects, green corridors, de-paving projects, and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), as well as the creation and enhancement of wildlife ponds.
- Work with local community groups to create new spaces for nature, and deliver community-led habitat creation and enhancement projects through our Southwark Biodiversity Fund.
- Prepare a new Southwark Nature Action Plan which is the biodiversity strategy for Southwark, and consider the latest research on the link between climate change and ecology.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr McAsh, Cllr Mwangangye
- **Lead council team/s:** Ecology, Highways, Planning
- **Target date:** Ongoing
- **Cost:** Low to Medium
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment
- **Action type:** Direct, Enabling, Mitigation
- **Wider benefits:** Cleaner air and environment, Improved public health, Empowering People

Action 16: Monitor and manage our natural environment in a healthy way

Outcomes

Managing our natural environment is incredibly important as the climate in our borough changes. This is because warmer temperature and changing weather patterns will create more favourable conditions for pests and diseases, directly affecting how quickly they multiply and where they spread. If we keep a close eye on these pests, we will spot new problems early and deal with them quickly. Reducing the use of herbicides and pesticides in our public realm promotes the health of insect communities, which are vital for healthy ecosystems.

Key activities

We will:

- Work with our community partners to monitor the borough to quickly detect new pests and diseases, using modern monitoring techniques such as drones equipped with sensors.
- Ensure the use of herbicides and pesticides in the public realm better protects residents, wildlife and promotes biodiversity.
- Develop an integrated weed management plan for our highways and housing estates.
- Ensure our parks and green spaces continue to offer cooler areas that provide respite during periods of hot weather when they see increased use.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Situ, Cllr McAsh, Cllr Mwangangye
- **Lead council team/s:** Cross-council
- **Target date:** Ongoing
- **Cost:** Low
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment
- **Action type:** Enabling, Direct, Adaptation
- **Wider benefits:** Cleaner air and environment, Improved public health

3.3 Flooding

Action 17: Protect people and buildings from flooding

Outcomes

Through the delivery of flood projects and an improved understanding of future climate risk, our communities and infrastructure are better protected from the flood risks that are being exacerbated by climate change. This will lead to reduced loss and damage, and support new homes and businesses within the borough.

Key activities

We will:

- Deliver new projects that protect the borough from surface flooding through the delivery of our Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and increased capacity of our sustainable drainage systems.
- Improve community awareness of local flood risks and the authorities responsible for managing them.
- Update Southwark's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment to ensure it considers the increased flood risks resulting from a changing climate.
- Prepare a Riverside Strategy that will protect the borough from rising sea levels and flood events from the River Thames.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr McAsh
- **Lead council team/s:** Flood, Planning, Climate Change
- **Target date:** Ongoing
- **Cost:** Low to High
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment
- **Action type:** Enabling, Adaptation
- **Wider benefits:** Improved public health

4. Greener economy

The scope of this theme spans how we work with businesses, develop green jobs, improve recycling and support the circular economy.

Our residents must benefit from the green jobs that drive the changes that are needed to meet our climate ambitions and as a council we must ensure the right skills and training are available.. We will do this by working closely with our businesses and business improvement districts to ensure our local economy and town centres are low-carbon, greener and resilient.

What we consume, use and how it is made and transported, is a major but often hidden source of emissions. Our central London location and demographics mean our consumption levels are high. Alongside this, how we dispose of our waste matters. We lead inner London in recycling, but most of what we throw away is still recyclable. Reducing, reusing, and recycling, including food and garden waste, remains essential as part of a local circular economy. Reducing the amount of water we use is increasingly important as drought risk increases across London.

Embracing more sustainable diets will reduce emissions and can also deliver important public health benefits, through healthier school meals and strengthening local food networks through the Southwark Food Action Alliance.

4.1 Green jobs and skills

Action 18: Increase green jobs and skills

Outcomes

Increasing green jobs and skills in Southwark means creating more employment opportunities for local people and businesses in industries that help tackle climate change and protect the environment. It also involves providing education, training, and career pathways so local people can gain the skills needed for these roles, including young people, career changers, and those currently out of work.

Key activities

We will:

- Connect our communities, employers, skills providers and job brokerage organisations in a local green skills supply network to support the creation of green jobs.
- Improve the alignment between skills training and job opportunities, and help residents access pathways into green careers.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Batteson
- **Lead council team/s:** Local Economy Team, Climate Change
- **Target date:** Ongoing
- **Cost:** Low
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment, A strong and fair economy
- **Action type:** Enabling, Mitigation, Adaptation
- **Wider benefits:** Economic growth, Empowering people

4.2 Businesses

Action 19: Grow our green economy

Outcomes

Our local economy will grow through the collaboration of businesses and the council to support and take advantage of the opportunities that arise from a green transition. This will include green business innovation, increased green job opportunities, investing in resilient, green and healthy town centres and places that people want to visit, supply chains and improved waste management.

Key activities

- Support Southwark's businesses and markets to become climate-ready, including support to green their buildings and energy, supply chains, waste, and be prepared for the effects of extreme weather.
- Support innovation and funding on green business sectors through council business.
- Support innovation in green business sectors through council business support and workspace programme, identify innovation funding to support climate innovation projects and design guidance to mainstream innovation considerations into project design and procurement.
- Work with our business improvement districts and employers to work together on climate action by combining resources, expertise, and influence to create bigger, faster change.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Batteson
- **Lead council team/s:** Local Economy Team, Climate Change
- **Target date:** Ongoing
- **Cost:** Low
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment, A strong and fair economy
- **Action type:** Enabling, Mitigation, Adaptation
- **Wider benefits:** Lower energy bills, Reduced waste, Economic growth, Empowering people

Action 20: Promote cleaner freight and supply chains

Outcomes

Changing the way goods and deliveries take place for residents, businesses and partners will lead to lower carbon emissions, quieter streets, and improved public health as our air gets cleaner. Less vehicles moving around our borough or deliveries from cleaner vehicles will ensure cleaner supply chains.

Key activities

- Adopt a new freight plan by 2026 to reduce harmful effects of freight while meeting business and resident needs.
- Support businesses to switch to zero pollution delivery vehicles, working with them to shift more local deliveries to electric cargo bikes.
- Explore greater use of the River Thames for freight and deliveries into the borough, minimising impact of polluting vehicles on our streets.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Batteson, Cllr McAsh
- **Lead council team/s:** Transport Policy, Local Economy Team, Environmental Protection, Climate Change
- **Target date:** Ongoing
- **Cost:** Low
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment, A strong and fair economy
- **Action type:** Enabling, Direct, Mitigation, Adaptation
- **Wider benefits:** Cleaner air and environment, Improved public health, Reduced Waste, Economic growth

4.3 Circular economy and waste

Action 21: Work with residents, local groups and partners to support climate friendly behaviours

Outcomes

Less waste is produced as a whole, supporting emissions reduction and improving the sustainability of the borough. Southwark residents are saving money, learning skills and connecting with neighbours through climate-friendly behaviours.

Key activities

We will:

- Work with local groups and residents to support climate friendly behaviours by supporting the growth of the sharing economy through services such as Library of Things and local repair cafes.
- Deliver behaviour change campaigns that remove barriers, increase motivation and support residents and groups to adopt positive changes.
- Decrease overall residual waste in Southwark, utilising cross council campaigns and education programmes promoting the circular economy and sustainable practices as part of the council's waste strategy, including reducing water use and encouraging rainwater recycling.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Batteson, Cllr McAsh,
- **Lead council teams:** Waste, Climate Change
- **Target date:** Ongoing
- **Cost:** Low
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment, A strong and fair economy
- **Action type:** Enabling, Direct, Mitigation
- **Wider benefits:** Improved public health, Reduced waste, Empowering people

Action 22: Improve recycling rates and reduce waste

Outcomes

Supporting our residents to improve recycling rates and reducing waste helps us cut carbon emissions, lower disposal costs, and protect our environment. It means less rubbish goes to incineration, and more materials are reused or recycled to save resources.

Key activities

We will:

- Increase percentage of waste recycled incrementally from 37% until 2030, including increasing the percentage of food waste that is recycled by households
- Support residents by removing barriers to improving recycling in areas with low rates, including adding more bins to estates and reducing contamination through education programmes.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr McAsh, Cllr Batteson
- **Lead council teams:** Waste, Climate Change
- **Target date:** Ongoing
- **Cost:** Low
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment, A strong and fair economy
- **Action type:** Enabling, Direct, Mitigation
- **Wider benefits:** Reduced waste, Empowering people

4.4 Sustainable food

Action 23: Support access to healthy and sustainable food

Outcomes

We will foster a planet-friendly food system that supports our residents and businesses in making healthy, sustainable dietary choices, and strengthens local food security, contributing to a healthier environment and thriving local economy.

Key activities

We will:

- Sustain and extend food growing in the borough and explore the implementation of council's January 2025 commitment to the Right to Grow.
- Promote a planet-friendly food system by supporting residents, organisations and the local economy to champion local and healthy sustainable food through the delivery of the Sustainable Food Strategy.
- Support the Good Food Business Charter to help ten businesses make sustainable food choices
- Develop a promotion plan to encourage climate-friendly diets and meat and dairy reduction.
- Strengthen the surplus food donation network, like the Southwark Food Action Alliance (SFAA).
- Explore and implement Neighbourhood Food Models.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Akoto, Cllr Batteson
- **Lead council team/s:** Public Health, Climate Change
- **Target date:** Ongoing
- **Cost:** Low
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment, A good start in life, Staying well
- **Action type:** Enabling, Direct, Mitigation, Adaptation
- **Wider benefits:** Improved public health, Reduced waste, Empowering people

5. People and resources

This theme focuses on the people, resources, funding, partnerships and governance which underpin our response to the climate emergency.

To effectively respond to the climate emergency, we must continue to build the necessary skills and tools to reduce emissions and ensure we are prepared to understand and adapt to the worsening effects of climate change.

This involves strengthening the way we work within the council, and ensuring our workforce considers climate change across all aspects of council operations, decision making and policy.

By strengthening our approach and evolving how we work, whether through improving our use of data to identify needs and compare options, developing a 'climate budget' that helps us to plan and make investment decisions to reduce emissions and manage climate risks, we will be better prepared to deliver long term emissions reductions and create a climate ready borough that prepares and involves our communities.

We will reduce the emissions in our supply chains (Scope 3 emissions) by embedding carbon reduction standards into our procurement and behavioural change initiatives. We will also grow our sources of funding to accelerate retrofitting and adaptation measures. These actions collectively aim to future-proof council operations so that our services run well, and our staff and residents are empowered to lead on climate action.

5.1 Working with communities and partners

Action 24: Collaborate with our communities and partners to take climate action and improve resilience

Outcomes

Working together to tackle the climate emergency will ensure the best outcomes for all. We will collaborate, coordinate and support climate action with our residents, community groups and voluntary sector, schools and education sector, businesses and business improvement districts, public sector delivery partners, Greater London Authority, London Councils, Transport for London, our cultural sector and others.

Key activities

We will:

- Collaborate with delivery partners and businesses to tackle shared climate challenges and support borough stakeholders to reduce carbon emissions.
- Empower and co-create with our communities to improve community resilience to the worsening effects of climate change, including our most vulnerable communities.
- Work with businesses, public-sector partners, and utility companies to coordinate plans and responses to climate-related events, support our local economy and business continuity. This will include the impact on supply chains, local extreme weather and flooding, and how harmful impacts can create further challenges to people or places that are already at risk. We will seek to agree a shared data and carbon accounting process to track the borough's emissions more accurately and support future shared climate action.
- Work in partnership with the NHS and voluntary sector to deliver a programme of actions to support and protect vulnerable residents from the harmful health effects of hot weather, based on recommendations in our Hot Weather and Health Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). This will include rough sleepers, care homes residents and those with pre-existing health conditions.
- Increase the number of buildings that offer cool spaces to provide an escape from hot temperatures, and ensure good coverage and accessibility in the parts of the borough where residents are most vulnerable to heat risk.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Batteson
- **Lead council team/s:** Climate Change, Public Health, Cross council
- **Target date:** Ongoing
- **Cost:** Low
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A well-run council

- **Action type:** Enabling, Mitigation, Adaptation
- **Wider benefits:** Improved public health, Economic growth, Empowering people

5.2 Mainstreaming climate adaptation and resilience

Action 25: Get the council prepared for the effects of climate change

Outcomes

We must respond to how the worsening effects of climate change will affect the borough and every aspect of the council's operations, planning, and decision-making. Rather than being treated as a separate issue, being a proactive and more capable council will enable us to effectively plan for and respond to the worsening effects that climate change will have on the services that our communities use, and the neighbourhoods where we live, go to school and do business.

We will continue to incrementally adapt our borough day-by-day through the delivery of services, projects and programmes, and we will also be ready to respond to worsening extreme weather events when they take place and support communities afterwards. In practice, this action will result in reduced risks and damages from events like floods and heatwaves, better protection for public safety and infrastructure, and more efficient use of resources by "climate-proofing" investments and avoiding costly reactive measures.

Stronger governance, aligned ways of working, and better-informed people and decisions will ensure we are ready to respond to the effects of climate change and support our communities to create good lives together.

Key activities

We will:

- Assess how council services, workforce, and buildings will be affected by climate change, and ensure each is resilient by improving our skillsets, as part of a well-managed council. This will include an extreme weather risk assessment to support our emergency planning to ensure we are ready to continue services when extreme weather events occur.
- Prepare a borough-wide climate risk and vulnerability assessment to understand how climate change will affect our residents and places in our borough, and the council in terms of costs and investment, and use its findings to support the council services, projects, programmes, strategy and business continuity.
- Ensure council financial, investment and risk management planning understand, consider and plan for the impact and costs of climate adaptation and resilience.
- Work with emergency planning to improve our emergency plans and how we respond to events by using climate risk-informed decision-making and processes.
- Prepare a wildfire emergency plan working in partnership with strategic partners including the London Fire Brigade to improve coordination.

- Create a cross-council heat plan and establish an adverse weather preparedness group to coordinate efforts across Public Health, Emergency Planning, and other key teams.
- Prepare a longer-term approach to managing climate risk that is flexible and can change over time as conditions unfold. This will help manage uncertainty, avoid over-investing too soon, and allow us to stay responsive to future climate effects and risks.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Akoto, Cllr Cryan, Cllr Batteson
- **Lead council team/s:** Climate Change, Organisational Transformation, Public Health
- **Target date:** Ongoing
- **Cost:** Low
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A well-run council, A healthy environment
- **Action type:** Enabling, Mitigation, Adaptation
- **Wider benefits:** Clean air and environment, Improved public health

5.3 Climate training

Action 26: Train all council staff to identify and take climate action

Outcomes

Each council officer and councillor will be empowered to recognise and take opportunities to deliver positive climate action through their role in delivering the council's Southwark 2030 goals. Training will cover understanding how climate action must be fair and equitable to support our vulnerable communities, reduce carbon emissions and adapt our services and the borough to the worsening effects of climate change. We will also improve how we report and assess our progress.

Key activities

We will:

- Update and launch climate literacy resources that align with our Southwark 2030 goals and principles.
- Deliver training sessions for teams with the greatest opportunity to deliver positive action through their work, and bespoke training where necessary (e.g. low carbon highway construction and design, housing maintenance and repairs teams).
- Develop a straightforward, simple to use 'just transition' framework/tool for emissions to deliver positive climate outcomes for all, embed just transition principles, reductions and adaptation for officers to use alongside our public sector equalities duty and Southwark Stands Together
- Strengthen council climate reporting processes and improve monitoring and evaluation by improving the way climate outcomes are assessed for council projects, programmes and decision-making.
- Launch internal campaigns which encourage climate-friendly behaviours in the workforce, including a review of council staff's commuting and general travel patterns
- Develop the technical and leadership skills and capabilities needed to achieve climate net-zero and resilience goals across key service areas.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Batteson
- **Lead council teams:** Climate Change Team, Learning and Development
- **Target date:** 2026
- **Cost:** Low
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment, A well-run council
- **Action type:** Enabling, Mitigation, Adaptation
- **Wider benefits:** Cleaner air and environment, Improved public health, Empowering people

5.4 Finance and funding

Action 27: Make evidence-led investment decisions and grow the funding available for climate action

Outcomes

Transformative climate projects that deliver our emissions reduction target or fully prepare the borough for a changing climate require significant funding and resources. This is a significant challenge due to the number of homes and buildings that we own and the size and responsibilities of the council. This challenge is shared by our partners and stakeholders across the borough. The funding required to deliver our full climate ambitions exceeds the financial resources available to the council at present – meaning we will constantly ensure the funds and processes that we have are put to best use, explore and prioritise new funding opportunities, and lobby for increased funding from central government.

Key activities

We will:

- Set an annual climate budget alongside our core financial planning, to identify the resources we need to deliver on this action plan and inform associated requests to partners, funders, regional and national government.
- Investigate opportunities for new or increased income streams to support council and community climate action.
- Allocate £8m of Green Buildings Fund funding to projects by the end of 2026.
- Finish allocating funds in our Climate Capital Fund by the end of 2026, and identify new sources of capital funding.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Batteson, Cllr Cryan
- **Lead council team:** Climate Change
- **Target date:** 2026
- **Cost:** Low
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment, A well-run council
- **Action type:** Enabling, Mitigation, Adaptation
- **Wider benefits:** Economic growth

5.5 Procurement and supply chains

Action 28: Reduce the carbon footprint of the goods and services we buy

Outcomes

The emissions that result from the goods and services that we purchase to deliver our services and run our buildings make up the highest proportion of our emissions. These are scope 3 emissions that are challenging to reduce as they come from sources outside of our direct control. Data on these emissions can be difficult to gather and verify, especially when our suppliers vary in size and transparency. Alongside our Social Value Framework, improved approaches to procurement will enable us to reduce these emissions while maintaining high standards of service delivery as part of a well-run council.

Key activities

We will:

- Introduce a carbon neutral aligned procurement policy, with workable models for its use and application during the procurement process and contract awards.
- Establish and implement standards of effective carbon reduction, measurement and management within contracts. Develop guidance, tools and training to support staff involved in procurement and contract management to improve sustainability, taking account of their specific areas and industries.
- Explore options to reduce the advertisement of carbon-intensive products or services on public advertisements that we manage.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Batteson, Cllr Cryan
- **Lead council team:** Climate Change
- **Target date:** 2026
- **Cost:** Low
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment, A well-run council
- **Action type:** Enabling, Mitigation, Adaptation
- **Wider benefits:** Cleaner air and environment, Reduced waste

5.6 Policy, data and tools

Action 29: Ensure the council makes decisions that are climate-informed

Outcomes

To make climate-informed decisions, we need good data and the right tools so we can design climate change outcomes into our work. Clear policies help make sure climate action is built into all plans and decisions. Reliable data shows where emissions and climate risks are highest, so action can be focused where it matters most or is most effective. Together, these make climate action a routine part of council work.

Key activities

We will:

- Embed positive climate outcomes as a thread within all our strategies, plans and governance, and show how climate action delivers our Southwark 2030 goals and principles.
- Work collaboratively to develop the right data and tools to ensure positive climate outcomes within council decision making, service design, projects and programmes. This will include mapping for visualising climate risks and public health vulnerabilities, and financial risk modelling to work out the economic impacts of climate change on council assets and services.
- Integrate climate change outcomes into our Health-in-all-Policies approach to support the borough's schools, businesses and organisations.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Batteson
- **Lead council team:** Climate Change
- **Target date:** 2026
- **Cost:** Low
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment, A well-run council
- **Action type:** Enabling, Mitigation, Adaptation
- **Wider benefits:** Cleaner air and environment, Improved public health, Lower energy bills, reduced waste, Economic growth, Empowering people

Schedule of actions

Theme 1. Buildings and energy

- Action 1: Significantly reduce emissions from council homes and ensure they are resilient to the effects of climate change
- Action 2: Support the retrofit of private homes
- Action 3: Make our schools sustainable and resilient to climate change
- Action 4: Reduce emissions from council buildings and ensure they are climate change ready
- Action 5: Minimise the environmental impact of our operations
- Action 6: Deliver resilient low-carbon heat networks
- Action 7: Ready the borough for electrification and support community energy
- Action 8: Generate renewable energy on our buildings
- Action 9: Update planning policy so that buildings and places are more sustainable

Theme 2. Streets and transport

- Action 10: Ensure our streets encourage walking and cycling, reduce emissions from vehicles, and are adapted for the worsening effects of climate change
- Action 11: Encourage sustainable transport options to reduce emissions from vehicles
- Action 12: Design and maintain our streets and public realm to reduce emissions and improve climate resilience
- Action 13: Reduce emissions from council vehicles

Theme 3. Natural environment

- Action 14: Plant and maintain more trees
- Action 15: Enhance our streets and green spaces to increase biodiversity
- Action 16: Monitor and manage our natural environment in a healthy way
- Action 17: Protect people and buildings from flooding

Theme 4. Greener economy

Action 18: Increase green jobs and skills

Action 19: Grow our green economy

Action 20: Promote cleaner freight and supply chains

Action 21: Work with residents, local groups and partners to support climate friendly behaviours

Action 22: Improve recycling rates and reduce waste

Action 23: Support access to healthy and sustainable food

Theme 5. People and resources

Action 24: Collaborate with our communities and partners to take climate action and improve resilience

Action 25: Get the council prepared for the effects of climate change

Action 26: Train all council staff to identify and take climate action

Action 27: Make evidence-led investment decisions and grow the funding available for climate action

Action 28: Reduce the carbon footprint of the goods and services we buy

Action 29: Ensure the council makes decisions that are climate-informed

Relevant council documents

We have adopted and emerging council strategies and plans that cover the climate themes in this action plan. They should be read alongside this document and our Climate Change Strategy as they will also ensure positive climate action through their delivery.

Theme 1: Buildings and energy

Southwark Plan, Climate Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), Strategic Asset Management Plan (emerging), Better Homes Asset Management Strategy (emerging), Local Area Energy Plan – Phase 1 and 2 (emerging)

Theme 2: Streets and transport

Streets for People Strategy and Delivery Plan, Walking Plan, Cycling Plan, Electric Vehicle Plan, Air Quality Action Plan, Southwark Streetscape Design Manual

Theme 3: Natural environment

Southwark Nature Action Plan (SNAP), Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Action Plan, Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)

Theme 4: Greener economy

Local Economy Strategy, town centre action plans, Southwark Waste Management Strategy, Sustainable Food Strategy

Theme 5: People and resources

Southwark 2030 strategy, Southwark Fairer Future Procurement Framework, Southwark Social Value Framework, Hot Weather and Health Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), Joint Health and Wellbeing Plan, Borough Sanctuary Plan (emerging), Good Landlord Plan (emerging), Creative Southwark

Climate Change Strategy & Action Plan Update

Equality Impact and Needs Analysis

Section 1: Equality Analysis Details

Proposed policy/decision/business plan to which this equality analysis relates	The proposed update to the council's Climate Action Plan focuses action on reducing emissions and improving climate adaptation and resilience in a just and fair way. The plan is the delivery plan for our Climate Change Strategy. It will deliver our ambition to do all we can to make the borough carbon-neutral and adapt it to the worsening impacts of climate change. The plan will play a key role in delivering the goals of the council's Southwark 2030 Strategy.
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Equality analysis author	Tom Buttrick				
Strategic Director:	Aled Richards				
Department	Environment, Sustainability and Leisure	Division	Climate Change		
Period analysis undertaken	July 2025				
Date of review (if applicable)	N/A				
Sign-off	Tom Sharland	Position	Climate Change Programme Director	Date	27 August 2025

Section 2: Brief description of policy/decision/business plan

1.1 Brief description of policy/decision/business plan

Our climate declaration of 2019 committed the council to doing all it could to make the borough carbon neutral by 2030. The subsequent Climate Change Strategy and Climate Action Plan (2021) set out how we would seek to achieve this through five key themes: buildings, transport, energy, a circular economy, and biodiversity. A sixth theme was added to the Climate Action Plan, following the adoption of our Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy in February 2024. This added actions that focused on adapting the borough to the hazards arising from a changing climate.

We proposing to merge the Climate Change Strategy (2021) and Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy (2024) into a single Climate Change Strategy. The updated Climate Action Plan remains the delivery plan for our Climate Change Strategy, and will deliver our ambition to do all we can to make the borough carbon-neutral by 2030. The plan will play a key role in delivering the goals of the council's Southwark 2030 Strategy. From decarbonising buildings, generating clean energy and improving our streets and green spaces to make our environment healthier and biodiverse, each action contributes to resilient, carbon-neutral borough, reflecting our commitment to climate leadership and collaboration with our communities.

Section 3: Overview of service users and key stakeholders consulted

2. Service users and stakeholders	
Key users of the department or service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council officers • Councillors • Residents • Visitors • Businesses • Community organisations • Schools and educational establishments • Public health and public sector institutions
Key stakeholders were/are involved in this policy/decision/business plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Change Programme Director • Strategic Director of Environment, Neighbourhoods and Growth • Cabinet Member for the Climate Emergency, Clean Air and Street • Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Refugees • Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing • Cabinet Member for Council Homes • Cabinet Member for Equalities, Democracy & Finance • Cabinet Member for New Homes & Sustainable Development • Cabinet Member for Community Safety & Neighbourhoods • Cabinet Member for Clean Air, Streets & Waste • Cabinet Member for Leisure, Parks & Young People • Finance • Legal

Section 4: Pre-implementation equality analysis

This section considers the potential impacts (positive and negative) on groups with 'protected characteristics', the equality information on which this analysis is based and any mitigating actions to be taken.

<p>Age - Where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds).</p>	
Potential impacts (positive and negative) of the proposed policy/decision/business plan	Potential Socio-Economic impacts (positive and negative)
<p>The delivery of the council's updated Climate Action Plan (CAP) will shape many aspects of daily life for the borough's residents. The impacts on people—positive and negative—will depend on how the actions in the plan are designed, resourced, and implemented.</p> <p>The worsening impacts of climate change will affect all within the borough, however some age groups are disproportionately affected due to their vulnerability to climate impacts (e.g. heatwaves.) This includes the very young and older people.</p> <p><u>Positive impacts of climate action for all ages</u></p> <p>Improved public health</p> <p>Cleaner air from reduced traffic emissions can lower rates of asthma, heart disease, and other respiratory conditions in the borough. Healthier lifestyles are promoted through active travel (walking, cycling) and better access to nature and our green spaces.</p> <p>Warmer, more energy efficient homes</p> <p>The retrofit of homes will improve insulation and heating systems, cutting energy bills and reducing cold and heat-related health risks with appropriate thermal comfort measures. A reduction in fuel poverty, particularly for vulnerable households, children, and low-income families.</p>	<p>The implementation of the council's Climate Action Plan could have wide-ranging effects on our residents social and economic wellbeing, when these impacts may vary across different income groups, housing tenures, employment sectors, and communities.</p> <p><u>Positive impacts of climate action for all ages</u></p> <p>Jobs and skills</p> <p>Investment in our green economy, skills and training can create opportunities for local people, including younger residents and those seeking to retrain.</p> <p><u>Potential negative impacts on all ages</u></p> <p>Financial costs of transition</p> <p>Some climate actions (e.g. electric vehicles, home retrofits, new appliances) require upfront costs that not all households can afford. The affordability of changes to heat or electricity supply to residents of all ages must also be considered, particularly those who have low incomes or access to funds.</p>

<p>Enhanced streets and greens spaces</p> <p>More trees and green infrastructure on our streets and green spaces create more liveable, healthier neighbourhoods for all age groups. Our parks, community gardens, and green roofs help reduce the urban heat island effect that can impacts vulnerable ages. Improved streets and places provide places for social interaction for all.</p> <p>Improved borough resilience to climate risks</p> <p>The implementation of better drainage, flood defences, and urban cooling strategies will reduce harm from heatwaves, storms, and floods. The ages of those who are most at risk from these hazards are the young and elderly. Improved council climate resilience planning will protect homes, schools, transport, and health infrastructure used by all ages. More resilient council services will ensure vulnerable service users are better protected.</p> <p>Stronger communities</p> <p>Our climate action involves community-led projects, boosting civic participation within the borough, creating and strengthening social and community connection, and encouraging local ownership of energy, food, and green space initiatives.</p> <p>Potential negative impacts on all ages</p> <p>Financial costs of transition</p> <p>Some climate actions (e.g. electric vehicles, home retrofits, new appliances) require upfront costs that not all households can afford. The affordability of changes to heat or electricity supply to residents of all ages must also be considered, particularly those who have low incomes or access to funds.</p> <p>Disruption from physical works</p> <p>Works to improve housing, install cycle lanes, or change road layouts can cause temporary noise, dust, and access issues. This may disproportionately affect people with disabilities, young children, or shift workers.</p>	<p>Uneven distribution of investment into and within the borough</p> <p>Some parts of the boroughs may see more investment (e.g. green spaces, retrofits) than others.</p>
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Accessibility challenges	
Street design changes may inconvenience those reliant on cars, including disabled people, carers, and some older residents. Public transport upgrades may not reach all areas equally.	
Equality information on which above analysis is based	Socio-Economic data on which above analysis is based
<p>The young and elderly are most susceptible to impacts of climate change, particularly heatwaves.</p> <p>8.3% of residents in Southwark are 65+. This is lower than the London average of 12%.</p> <p>5.3% of residents in Southwark are 4 years old or under.</p> <p>Census, 2021</p>	Census, 2021
Mitigating actions to be taken	
<p>Undertake equality impact assessments for CAP actions through the design, decision-making, and delivery of projects, programmes and services and mitigate where necessary to ensure equality of outcomes.</p> <p>Where appropriate, co-design projects with residents and community groups.</p>	<p>Undertake social-economic impacts assessment for CAP actions through the design, decision-making, and delivery of projects, programmes and services and mitigate where necessary to ensure equality of outcomes.</p> <p>Where appropriate, co-design projects with residents and community groups.</p> <p>Seek out grants or subsidise to ensure inequality is not worsened</p>

<p>Disability - A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.</p>	
<p>Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan</p> <p>The delivery of the council's updated Climate Action Plan (CAP) will shape many aspects of daily life for the borough's residents. The impacts on people—positive and negative—will depend on how the actions in the plan are designed, resourced, and implemented.</p> <p>The worsening impacts of climate change will affect all within the borough, however some people who have a disability are disproportionately affected due to their vulnerability to climate impacts (e.g. heatwaves.)</p> <p><u>Positive impacts of climate action on disability</u></p> <p>Improved public health</p> <p>Cleaner air from reduced traffic emissions can lower rates of asthma, heart disease, and other respiratory conditions in the borough. Improved accessibility and healthier lifestyles are promoted through better public realm design, and improved access to nature and our green spaces.</p> <p><u>Negative impacts of climate action on disability</u></p> <p>Having a disability is linked to higher living costs and home energy needs, so high energy prices are having an even bigger impact on disabled people, and are also more likely to be unemployed and relying on universal credit.</p>	<p>Potential socio-economic impacts (positive and negative)</p> <p>The implementation of the council's Climate Action Plan could have wide-ranging effects on social and economic wellbeing, when these impacts may vary across different income groups, housing tenures, employment sectors, and communities.</p> <p><u>Positive impacts of climate action for those with a disability</u></p> <p>Jobs and skills</p> <p>Investment in our green economy, skills and training can create opportunities for local people and those seeking to retrain.</p> <p><u>Potential negative impacts of climate action for those with a disability</u></p> <p>Financial costs of transition</p> <p>Some climate actions (e.g. electric vehicles, home retrofits, new appliances) require upfront costs that not all households can afford. The affordability of changes to heat or electricity supply to all residents must also be considered.</p>
<p>Equality information on which above analysis is based</p>	<p>Socio-economic data on which above analysis is based</p>

<p>8.2% of residents in Southwark are registered disabled. This is lower than the London average of 15.7%.</p> <p>Census, 2021</p>	<p>Census, 2021</p>
<p>Mitigating actions to be taken</p>	
<p>Undertake equality impact assessments for CAP actions through the design, decision-making, and delivery of projects, programmes and services and mitigate where necessary to ensure equality of outcomes.</p> <p>Where appropriate, co-design projects with residents and community groups.</p>	<p>Undertake social-economic impacts assessment for CAP actions through the design, decision-making, and delivery of projects, programmes and services and mitigate where necessary to ensure equality of outcomes.</p> <p>Where appropriate, co-design projects with disabled residents and relevant community groups</p> <p>Seek out grants or subsidise to ensure inequality is not worsened</p>

<p>Gender reassignment - The process of transitioning from one gender to another.</p>	
<p>Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan</p>	<p>Potential socio-economic impacts (positive and negative)</p>
<p>No potential impacts of proposed decision on this protected characteristic group.</p> <p>The delivery of the council's updated Climate Action Plan (CAP) will shape many aspects of daily life for the borough's residents. The impacts on people—positive and negative—will depend on how the actions in the plan are designed, resourced, and implemented.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Equality information on which above analysis is based.</p>	<p>Socio-economic data on which above analysis is based</p>

N/A	N/A
Mitigating actions to be taken	
N/A	N/A

<p>Marriage and civil partnership – In England and Wales marriage is no longer restricted to a union between a man and a woman but now includes a marriage between a same-sex couples. Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples and must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters. (Only to be considered in respect to the need to eliminate discrimination.)</p>	
Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan	Potential socio-economic impacts (positive and negative)
No potential impacts of proposed decision on this protected characteristic group.	N/A
The delivery of the council's updated Climate Action Plan (CAP) will shape many aspects of daily life for the borough's residents. The impacts on people—positive and negative—will depend on how the actions in the plan are designed, resourced, and implemented.	
<p>Equality information on which above analysis is based.</p>	
N/A	N/A
Mitigating actions to be taken	

N/A	N/A
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<p>Pregnancy and maternity - Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.</p>	
<p>Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan</p>	<p>Potential socio-economic impacts (positive and negative)</p>
<p>The delivery of the council's updated Climate Action Plan (CAP) will shape many aspects of daily life for the borough's residents. The impacts on people—positive and negative—will depend on how the actions in the plan are designed, resourced, and implemented.</p> <p>Pregnant women may have specific health contexts or needs that are impacted by worsening the impacts of climate change, including heatwaves. This could manifest within the buildings or public spaces.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Equality information on which above analysis is based.</p>	<p>Socio-economic data on which above analysis is based</p>
<p>Census, 2021</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Mitigating actions to be taken</p>	
<p>Undertake equality impact assessments for CAP actions through the design, decision-making, and delivery of projects, programmes and services and mitigate where necessary to ensure equality of outcomes.</p> <p>Where appropriate, co-design projects to consider pregnancy.</p>	<p>Undertake social-economic impacts assessment for CAP actions through the design, decision-making, and delivery of projects, programmes and services and mitigate where necessary to ensure equality of outcomes.</p>

	Where appropriate, co-design projects to consider pregnancy.
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<p>Race - Refers to the protected characteristic of Race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins. N.B. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller are recognised racial groups and their needs should be considered alongside all others.</p>	
Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan	Potential socio-economic impacts (positive and negative)
<p>The delivery of the council's updated Climate Action Plan (CAP) will shape many aspects of daily life for the borough's residents. The impacts on people—positive and negative—will depend on how the actions in the plan are designed, resourced, and implemented.</p> <p>48.6% of residents in Southwark identify as belonging to an ethnic minority group. Residents from a Black African and Black Caribbean background are more likely to live in communities with high levels of deprivation, develop a greater number of long-term conditions, have poorer mental health, and experience discrimination and racism when accessing services.</p> <p>Although the worsening impacts of climate change will affect all within the borough, some groups are disproportionately affected due to their vulnerability to climate impacts (e.g. heatwaves.) because of pre-existing health conditions. This includes those who live in our most deprived neighbourhoods who have higher rates of long-term illnesses and number of ethnic minority residents.</p> <p><u>Positive impacts of climate action for all people</u></p> <p>Improved public health</p> <p>Cleaner air from reduced traffic emissions can lower rates of asthma, heart disease, and other respiratory conditions in the borough. Healthier lifestyles are</p>	<p>The implementation of the council's Climate Action Plan could have wide-ranging effects on social and economic wellbeing, when these impacts may vary across different income groups, housing tenures, employment sectors, and communities. While inequalities are often measured according to one factor (for example socio-economic activity), disadvantages can interact and multiply.</p> <p><u>Positive impacts of climate action on race</u></p> <p>Jobs and skills</p> <p>Investment in our green economy, skills and training can create opportunities for local people and those seeking to retrain.</p> <p><u>Potential negative impacts on race</u></p> <p>Financial costs of transition</p> <p>Some climate actions (e.g. electric vehicles, home retrofits, new appliances) require upfront costs that not all households can afford. The affordability of changes to heat or</p>

<p>promoted through active travel (walking, cycling) and better access to nature and our green spaces.</p> <p>Warmer, more energy efficient homes</p> <p>The retrofit of homes will improve insulation and heating systems, cutting energy bills and reducing cold and heat-related health risks with appropriate thermal comfort measures. A reduction in fuel poverty, particularly for vulnerable households, children, and low-income families in more deprived parts of the borough.</p> <p>Enhanced streets and greens spaces</p> <p>More trees and green infrastructure on our streets and green spaces create more liveable, healthier neighbourhoods for all age groups. Our parks, community gardens, and green roofs help reduce the urban heat island effect that can impact vulnerable residents. Improved streets and places provide places for social interaction for all.</p> <p>Improved borough resilience to climate risks</p> <p>The implementation of better drainage, flood defences, and urban cooling strategies will reduce harm from heatwaves, storms, and floods. Those who are most at risk from these hazards can include those with pre-existing health conditions. Improved council climate resilience planning will protect homes, schools, transport, and health infrastructure used by all ages. More resilient council services will ensure vulnerable service users are better protected.</p> <p>Stronger communities</p> <p>Our climate action involves community-led projects, boosting civic participation within the borough, creating and strengthening social and community connection, and encouraging local ownership of energy, food, and green space initiatives.</p> <p>Potential negative impacts on all ages</p>	<p>electricity supply to all residents must also be considered.</p>
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<p>Financial costs of transition</p> <p>Some climate actions (e.g. electric vehicles, home retrofits, new appliances) require upfront costs that not all households can afford. The affordability of changes to heat or electricity supply to residents of all ages must also be considered, particularly those who have low incomes or access to funds.</p> <p>Accessibility challenges</p> <p>Street design changes may inconvenience those reliant on cars, including disabled people, carers, and some older residents. Public transport upgrades may not reach all areas equally.</p>	
<p>Equality information on which above analysis is based.</p>	<p>Socio-economic data on which above analysis is based</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh - 9.9% Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African - 25.1% Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups - 7.2% White - 51.4% Other ethnic group - 6.3% <p>Census, 2021</p>	<p>Census, 2021</p>
<p>Mitigating actions to be taken</p>	
<p>Undertake equality impact assessments for CAP actions through the design, decision-making, and delivery of projects, programmes and services and mitigate where necessary to ensure equality of outcomes.</p> <p>Utilise appropriate community engagement, work with existing stakeholders and community groups.</p> <p>Where appropriate, co-design projects.</p>	<p>Undertake social-economic impacts assessment for CAP actions through the design, decision-making, and delivery of projects, programmes and services and mitigate where necessary to ensure equality of outcomes.</p>

<p>Religion and belief - Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.</p>	
<p>Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan</p>	<p>Potential socio-economic impacts (positive and negative)</p>
<p>The delivery of the council's updated Climate Action Plan (CAP) will shape many aspects of daily life for the borough's residents. The impacts on people—positive and negative—will depend on how the actions in the plan are designed, resourced, and implemented.</p> <p>All religious and non-religious sites located in the borough will be impacted by the effects of climate change.</p>	<p>Potential negative impacts</p> <p>Financial costs of transition</p> <p>Some climate actions (e.g. electric vehicles, home retrofits, new appliances) require upfront costs that not all faith groups can afford.</p>
<p>Equality information on which above analysis is based.</p>	<p>Socio-economic data on which above analysis is based</p>
<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Mitigating actions to be taken</p>	
<p>Undertake equality impact assessments for CAP actions through the design, decision-making, and delivery of projects, programmes and services and mitigate where necessary to ensure equality of outcomes.</p> <p>Utilise appropriate community engagement, work with existing stakeholders and community groups.</p>	<p>Undertake social-economic impacts assessment for CAP actions through the design, decision-making, and delivery of projects, programmes and services and mitigate where necessary to ensure equality of outcomes.</p>

<p>Sex - A man or a woman.</p>

Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan	Potential socio-economic impacts (positive and negative)
<p>The delivery of the council's updated Climate Action Plan (CAP) will shape many aspects of daily life for the borough's residents. The impacts on people—positive and negative—will depend on how the actions in the plan are designed, resourced, and implemented.</p> <p>Households with children headed by a single adult have been the hardest hit by the cost of living and energy price rises. 83% of single-parent households are led by women. There has been a surge in the share of women who were late in paying their energy bills and single mothers were more likely than other groups to struggle to pay their energy bills.</p> <p><u>Positive impacts of climate action for all people</u></p> <p>Warmer, more energy efficient homes</p> <p>The retrofit of homes will improve insulation and heating systems, cutting energy bills and reducing cold and heat-related health risks with appropriate thermal comfort measures. A reduction in fuel poverty, particularly for vulnerable households, children, and low-income families in more deprived parts of the borough.</p> <p>Stronger communities</p> <p>Our climate action involves community-led projects, boosting civic participation within the borough, creating and strengthening social and community connection, and encouraging local ownership of energy, food, and green space initiatives.</p> <p><u>Potential negative impacts on all ages</u></p> <p>Financial costs of transition</p> <p>Some climate actions (e.g. electric vehicles, home retrofits, new appliances) require upfront costs that not all households can afford. The affordability of changes to heat or electricity supply to residents of all ages must</p>	<p><u>Potential negative impacts</u></p> <p>Financial costs of transition</p> <p>Some climate actions (e.g. electric vehicles, home retrofits, new appliances) require upfront costs that not all faith groups can afford.</p>

also be considered, particularly those who have low incomes or access to funds.	
Equality information on which above analysis is based.	Socio-economic data on which above analysis is based
<p>In Southwark, over 12,100 households are made up of a lone parent with at least one dependent child. 9% of all household types in Southwark, though this varies substantially across the borough.</p> <p>51.6% of people in Southwark are female.</p> <p>Census, 2021.</p>	N/A
Mitigating actions to be taken	
Undertake equality impact assessments for CAP actions through the design, decision-making, and delivery of projects, programmes and services and mitigate where necessary to ensure equality of outcomes.	Undertake social-economic impacts assessment for CAP actions through the design, decision-making, and delivery of projects, programmes and services and mitigate where necessary to ensure equality of outcomes.

Sexual orientation - Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes	
Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan	Potential socio-economic impacts (positive and negative)
<p>The delivery of the council's updated Climate Action Plan (CAP) will shape many aspects of daily life for the borough's residents. The impacts on people—positive and negative—will depend on how the actions in the plan are designed, resourced, and implemented.</p> <p>No potential impacts of proposed decision on this protected characteristic group.</p>	N/A

Equality information on which above analysis is based.	Socio-economic data on which above analysis is based
N/A	N/A
Mitigating actions to be taken	
N/A	N/A

<p>Climate Change – Southwark Council recognises that climate change is an issue that affects everyone but affects certain communities more than others. The Council has a duty to ensure that its policies and practices help to mitigate the impact of climate change on all residents in the borough, by reducing carbon emissions and protecting our biodiversity. You can find further information on this in our climate change strategy.</p>	
<p>Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan</p> <p>The delivery of the council's updated Climate Action Plan (CAP) will shape many aspects of daily life for the borough's residents. The impacts on people—positive and negative—will depend on how the actions in the plan are designed, resourced, and implemented.</p> <p>From decarbonising buildings, generating clean energy and improving our streets and green spaces to make our environment healthier and biodiverse, each action in the Climate Action Plan contributes to resilient, carbon-neutral borough, reflecting our commitment to climate leadership and collaboration with our communities.</p> <p>Careful consideration will be given to ensure negative impacts of climate action are mitigated.</p>	<p>Potential socio-economic impacts (positive and negative)</p> <p>The delivery of the council's updated Climate Action Plan (CAP) will have potential socio-economic impacts many for our residents. The impacts — positive and negative— will depend on how the actions in the plan are designed, resourced, and implemented.</p> <p>Climate action, while requiring ongoing capital investment, offers significant positive socio-economic benefits. It can lead to cleaner air and improved public health and increasing productivity. The transition to a green economy fosters innovation in our green economy, creates new jobs in retrofitting and</p>

	renewable energy, and can reduce energy bills across the borough.
Equality information on which above analysis is based.	Socio-economic data on which above analysis is based
N/A	N/A
Mitigating actions to be taken	
Undertake equality impact assessments for CAP actions through the design, decision-making, and delivery of projects, programmes and services and mitigate where necessary to ensure equality of outcomes.	Undertake social-economic impacts assessment for CAP actions through the design, decision-making, and delivery of projects, programmes and services and mitigate where necessary to ensure equality of outcomes.

Human Rights
There are 16 rights in the Human Rights Act. Each one is called an Article. They are all taken from the European Convention on Human Rights. The Articles are The right to life, Freedom from torture, inhuman and degrading treatment, Freedom from forced labour, Right to Liberty, Fair trial, Retrospective penalties, Privacy, Freedom of conscience, Freedom of expression, Freedom of assembly, Marriage and family, Freedom from discrimination and the First Protocol
Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan
No potential impacts of proposed decision on Human Rights.
Information on which above analysis is based
N/A

Mitigating actions to be taken
N/A

Section 5: Further actions

5. Further actions			
Based on the initial analysis above, please detail the key mitigating actions or the areas identified as requiring more detailed analysis.			
Number	Description of issue	Action	Timeframe
1	Potential impact of climate action (mitigation, adaptation and resilience) on ethnic minorities, children under the age of 4 years old, older people, women, pregnant women and those with a disability, if consideration of the design, decision-making, and delivery of projects, programmes and services do not consider and ensure equality of outcomes for all.	<p>Staff climate literacy training to improve capability within the council.</p> <p>Mainstreaming climate action through council processes, governance and reporting.</p> <p>Equality impact assessments for Climate Action Plan actions through the design, decision-making, and delivery of projects, programmes and services, and mitigate where necessary to ensure equality of outcomes.</p>	<p>Through every-day council processes.</p> <p>Annual review of Climate Action Plan actions.</p>

APPENDIX A

Exploring the Physical and Mental Health and Wellbeing Impacts of Active Travel and Access to Nature

Scrutiny review report

September 2025

Environment Scrutiny
Commission

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INTRODUCTION

Increasing participation in active travel and improving access nature have been pursued by many councils as key environmental policy areas which, indeed, they are. Generally, the link made to public health has been secondary and largely focused on the irrefutable contribution that both can make to improved air quality, especially in an urban environment.

Nevertheless, the over-arching purpose of this review is to highlight the clear and growing body of evidence that both active travel and improving nature should rightfully be considered as key public health policies, and to explore how access to both can be extended to yield considerable positive impacts on the physical and mental health and wellbeing of all Southwark residents. Equal opportunity of access to active travel and nature must be seen as mainstays of public health policy, ending their compartmentalisation as environmental “nice to haves”.

There is a multitude of evidence from across the globe that physical activity improves health. Strikingly, the evidence is that people living in Blue Zones (regions around the world identified as having exceptionally long-lived populations with a high proportion of centenarians) don't exercise purposefully, say, by going to the gym. Instead, exercise is built into daily life through walking, gardening and daily chores. For example, a study in the Sardinian Blue Zone found that longer lives were associated with raising farm animals, living on steeper slopes in the mountains and walking longer distances to work. These findings are replicated in other Blue Zones around the world. Whilst it may be challenging to recreate the conditions of the Sardinian Blue Zone here in Southwark, the principles can still inform our approach.

Furthermore, whether walking, cycling, scooting, skating or other, active travel can usually be more easily and universally fitted into a daily routine than a trip to the gym. Just twenty mins a day of active travel can make a significant contribution to supporting improved health outcomes and making it easier for residents to meet the UK Chief Medical Officer's guidance that all adults should undertake at least 150 minutes of physical activity per week.

Active travel through green space is the most beneficial for health and wellbeing. Routes through parks, woods and open spaces are often safer, with reduced or no vehicle traffic. And the Commission heard evidence that simply being in and around nature is well demonstrated to improve mental health and wellbeing. Active travel can also help to combat social isolation.

The Commission heard that recreational/social journeys can help to lower the bar to participation and can be a more appealing way to begin building active travel into daily routines: a social cycle through green space is often very different from a commute to work through city traffic and different types of infrastructure are often required.

In general, the greatest barrier to active travel is motor traffic, which dominates the public realm reducing the amount of space – especially the amount of safe, clean and pleasant space – available for other activities like walking, wheeling and cycling. Southwark Council's Streets for People strategy addresses this primary issue. Meanwhile, this review seeks to explore some of the others.

During the course of the review the Commission sought to gain an understanding of some of other the barriers to accessing active travel and nature, particularly amongst residents with protected characteristics including ethnicity, sex, age, disability and socio-economic disadvantage, and explore how these barriers may be broken down to achieve equal opportunity of access.

We have set out to identify measures that can be taken by the council and its partners to plot a path towards achieving improved access to active travel and nature as a route to reducing health inequalities. In particular, the Commission wanted to explore how improved access to active travel and nature could help Southwark residents to build activity into their daily lives, thus reducing the incidence of conditions such as obesity, high cholesterol, heart disease, poor mental health and well-being and other conditions that are frequently linked to a sedentary lifestyle.

Key issues

- 1. How can uptake of healthy active travel be increased and the obesogenic environment/lifestyle reduced by:** Considering the needs of different demographics and making active travel more appealing and accessible to those experiencing the highest levels of health inequalities, with particular reference to Southwark's Streets for People strategy and the associated walking and cycling plans.
- 2. How can exposure to pollution be reduced and access to nature increased by considering the following:** How green infrastructure can be further used to reduce exposure to air pollution and improve the aesthetic value as well as the health impacts of our streets and wider environment for walking, cycling and other healthy activities.
- 3. Exploring and improving access to the benefits of community and wildlife gardening as a way of increasing physical and mental activity and wellbeing:** Identifying how time in nature is beneficial and how to widen participation in community gardens, including engagement with food growing, as well as wildlife gardens.

IMPROVING HEALTH OUTCOMES AND ADDRESSING INEQUALITIES

Obesity and inequality in Southwark compared with the national picture

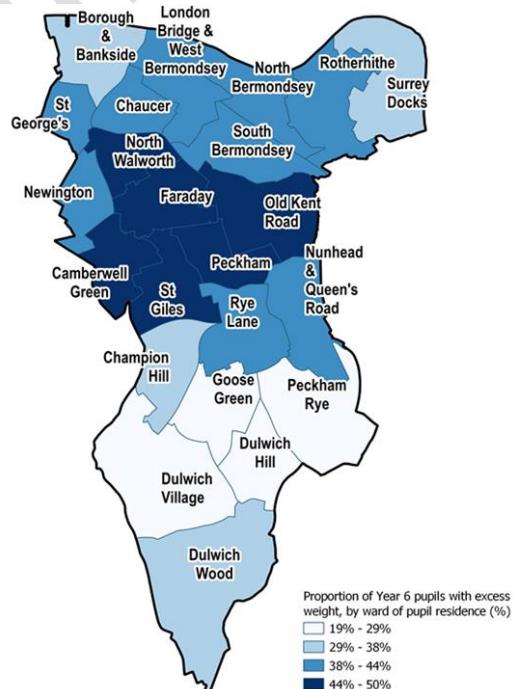
We have an obesity crisis in Southwark, which has a significant impact on our residents' health and wellbeing, our economy and our community as a whole.

The council and Partnership Southwark Integrated Care Board (ICB) strategies are focusing on addressing the 'Vital 5' factors of BMI, smoking, harmful drinking, blood pressure, and mental health and wellbeing. Obesity is one of the five significant risk factors for premature death; high blood pressure (hypertension) is the leading metabolic risk factor globally and is linked to a large portion of global non-communicable disease (NCD) deaths, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). Physical inactivity is the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality accounting for 6% of deaths globally.

Physical activity has significant benefits for both physical and mental health and can help to prevent and manage over 20 chronic conditions and diseases.

We know already from Southwark Council's work in public health that children from a black ethnic background are more likely to be living with obesity than those from a white ethnic background; children from Asian, mixed or other ethnic backgrounds fall in the middle.

In 2022/23, 22% of reception children nationally were classed as having excess weight (overweight or obese). By year 6, this rose to 42%. Children living in the most deprived areas are more likely to be overweight or obese than those living in the least deprived areas. This is starkly illustrated in the map below:



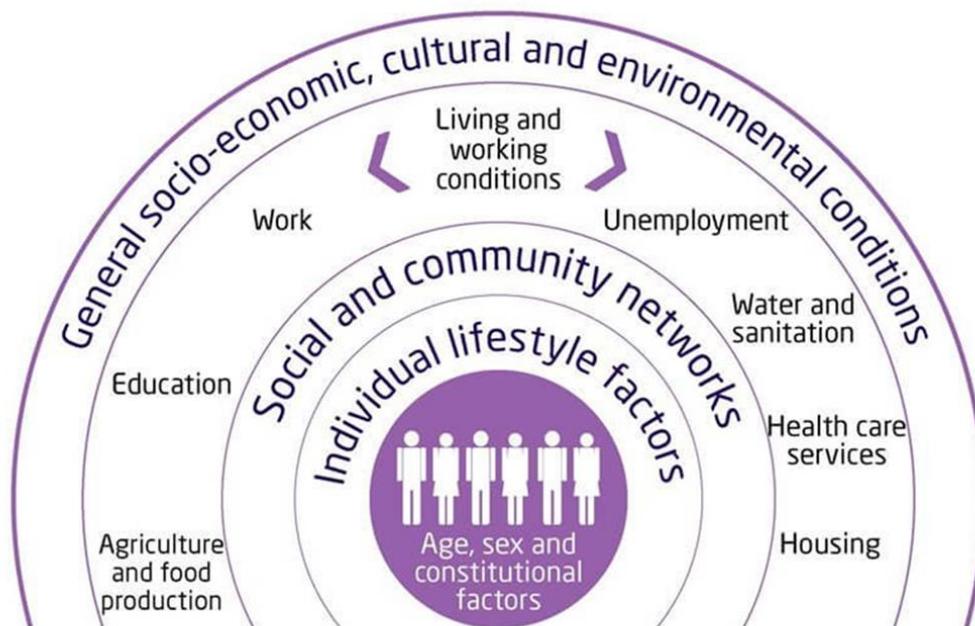
In 2022/23, 56.5% of adults in Southwark were classed as overweight or obese. Excess weight amongst men aged between 45-74 years is the highest of any age group in Southwark. Whilst these statistics place Southwark, on average, slightly below the national average for obesity, they are a cause for concern, especially when considering the health inequalities within the borough.

Southwark Healthy Weight Strategy 2022-2027

Southwark Council is working with partners across the borough's healthy weight network to deliver effective prevention and treatment services that aim to reduce inequalities and improve health.

The Strategy prioritises 5 population groups, identified on the basis of obesity rate inequality:

1. Maternity and early years
2. Children and young people
3. Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups
4. People experiencing food insecurity
5. Men aged 45 years and above



The Strategy applies a whole systems approach to address inequalities and the obesogenic environment.



Whilst references to improved physical activity are included alongside other important elements focusing on medical services and improving diet and nutrition, the Commission felt that there are compelling reasons to place more emphasis on boosting the type of physical activity that can easily be incorporated into existing routines, such as active travel.

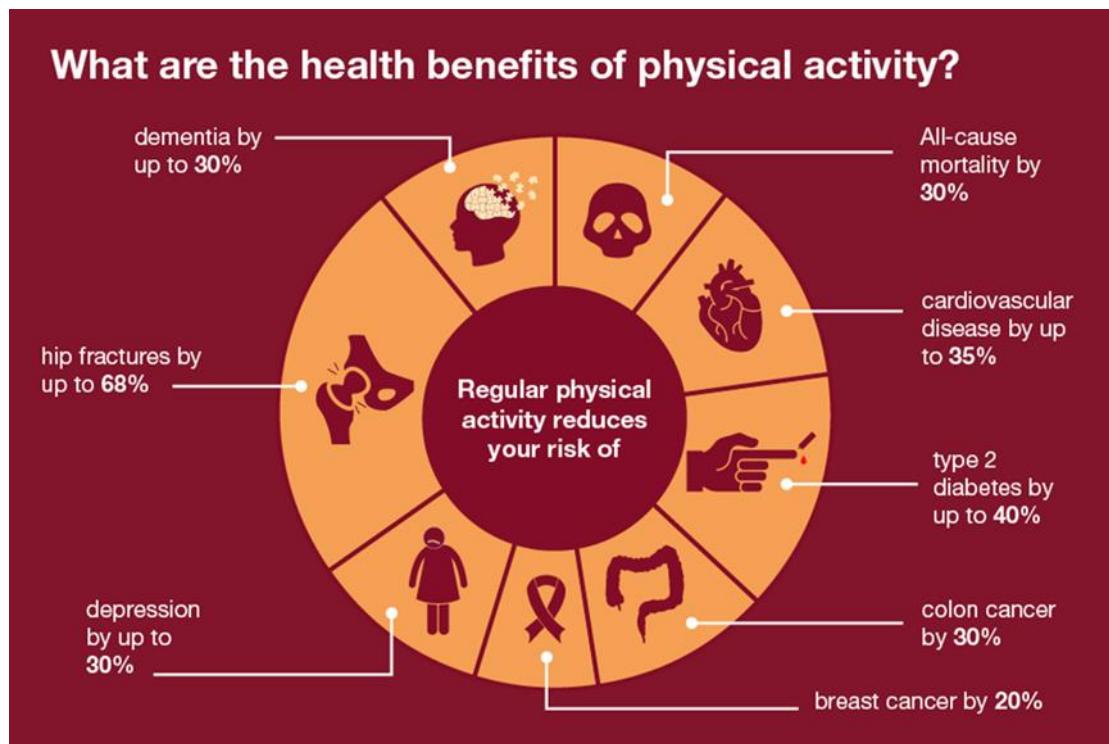
The Director of Public Health acknowledged that there are lots of barriers to participation in physical activity based on gender, class, age, ethnicity etc. and asserted that the approach has been to work with groups over time to find out what they want. In general, however, the evidence presented showed a tendency to focus on organised indoor activities (such as gym sessions).

The Commission felt that more priority should be given to fully embedding active travel and access to nature into the Healthy Weight Strategy as key public health policies. In particular, Southwark's widely acclaimed Streets for People Strategy should be fully exploited in this context.

Around 1 in 3 (34%) of men and 1 in 2 (42%) of women in the UK are not active enough for good health. People not doing any exercise at all are most at risk of poor health outcomes.

People with disabilities or long-term health conditions are particularly disadvantaged as they are typically twice as likely not to be active enough for good health.

Regular physical activity is associated with a reduced risk of a number of medical conditions.



ACTIVE TRAVEL – EVIDENCE

The Commission heard from a number of organisations which aim to promote participation in active travel particularly amongst groups with protected characteristics that are currently less likely to participate.

A key consideration for all groups and demographics was the safety and general appeal of routes for walking, wheeling and cycling. It follows, without doubt, that reducing motor traffic will always be the biggest catalyst for increased participation in active travel. This principle is key to Southwark's Streets for People strategy.

In addition to improving infrastructure, there are many council initiatives within the borough aimed at reducing car dependency and/or boosting participation in active travel:

1. Travel Training Bus
A joint initiative between Southwark Council, TfL, and The Metropolitan Police to give young people and special needs residents guidance and advice on safe independent travel on the bus network.
2. Pedestrian Training

The Active Travel Team offers free pedestrian training and practical road safety to all Southwark schools.

3. Active Travel Maps

An Active Travel Map is produced for and with each Southwark School to encourage more families to walk, cycle and scoot to school and surrounding areas.

4. Southwark Cycle Fest

Community focussed event in Burgess Park supported by partners and funded by Streets for People.

5. Free Cycle Training with JoyRiders (as outlined below).

6. Try Before You Bike

An innovative hire scheme that allows anyone who lives, works or studies in the borough to try out a new or nearly new bike for a monthly fee.

7. Second Hand Bike Markets

8. Bike Marking

9. Fix a Bike

Bike maintenance sessions, provided by Community Cycle Works.

10. BetterPoints

A reward-based app to change behaviour and get residents active.

11. Walking Diary

Children record details of their efforts to walk, scoot or bike to school, capturing obstacles like lack of pedestrian crossings on their route.

12. Parent/Carer Coffee mornings

A collaborative project with the Public Health team for active listening to schools and local community to establish the needs/obstacles of the area.

13. Theatre in Education

An innovative road safety education programme delivered through theatre performance.

14. Children Design a Road Sign to Slow Down Traffic

15. TfL 'Travel for Life'

The borough works with schools to help create a School Travel Plan unique for each school.

The Commission felt that some of these projects could be refreshed and enhanced as public health initiatives.

Black Riders' Association

The Commission heard from Temi Lateef, founder of the Black Riders Association. The initiative – originally “My Choice” – started when Temi decided to cycle to Nigeria, and was aimed at encouraging people to participate in social cycle rides. There was a noticeable absence of black and women cyclists and naming the initiative the Black Riders Association led to much more diversity.

The initial call out generated 800 people signing up for cycle rides integrated with social activities: turning cycling into an activity perceived as being sociable and enjoyable brought in new participants. Over time, the rides expanded beyond borough boundaries to take in parks and canals further afield.

Black Riders Association now works with schools and community organisations including other cycling groups. The Commission heard that fostering belonging amongst communities/participants is key to the success of the organisation. This gave the opportunity for skill sharing and spending time outside, generating a sense that barriers are coming down.

More recently Temi has started working with communities with different languages and developed leaders who would organise fun events and conduct low-key easy engagement to find out what people would like to do. There is a process of developing cycling captains and coaching to build capacity. Temi also highlighted the attraction of taking bikes further afield by train and enjoying a ride in a different location.

Temi highlighted to the Commission that in his community some people continue to see cycling as an activity for children, and that the media promotes car use as an image of success. Due to these pressures, cycling as an adult is often perceived as an indication of financial under-achievement/failure. Temi said that the limited exception to this is wearing Lycra and riding an expensive racing bike, which is associated with professional success, however this type of cycling is not appealing or possible for many people.

Temi concluded that to make cycling more acceptable to a wider demographic, people needed to see themselves represented in images of cyclists, whether for leisure or sport. He also emphasised the importance of linking cycling with professional/financial success and social recognition – for example to careers in sports/ health and fitness etc. as well as business and engineering.

Sustrans

Sustrans gave a whistle stop tour of some of the work it is doing across London and beyond to foster behaviour change, focused on schools, workplaces and community. Sustrans highlighted the following steps to achieve a greater uptake of active travel:

1. Identify which groups aren't walking, wheeling and cycling.
2. Engage with these groups to understand the barriers and motivation for walking, wheeling and cycling.
3. Design interventions that are tailored to their needs.
4. Allow for continuous feedback and programme redesign.
5. Measure impact.
6. Accept that behaviour change takes time and requires ongoing support

The Commission noted that similar advice was given by the Public Health team.

Sustrans gave examples of groups it had targeted on this basis:

- Teen cycling
Barriers: “It’s not cool”; low levels of cycle ownership; concerns about safe routes to cycle; lack of secure cycle storage.
- GPs cycling
Barriers: commuting distance; cycling confidence; lack of secure storage; childcare and requirement for multiple stops; being too busy; disability.
- East End Mom cycling
Barriers: Insufficient safe routes; low levels of cycle ownership; lack of secure storage; lack of cycle skills/confidence; cultural norms; requirement for a female led activity.

Two barriers common to all groups were concerns over safe cycle routes and insufficient access to secure cycle storage, once again highlighting that these are major barriers to behaviour change across the board.

JoyRiders

JoyRiders has been commissioned by the council to deliver free cycle training, aiming to widen participation amongst groups least likely to cycle. The sessions have a high take up by demographics least likely to cycle in Southwark: e.g. by people from the more deprived areas of Southwark, by people of colour and by women. Sessions are based in Burgess Park and target families and women with fun social rides. Participants across the Burgess Park projects are most likely to be black, aged 5-12 years or 26-45 and from Walworth or Faraday wards.

Following attendance at women’s sessions with JoyRiders, 26% reported that they had got themselves a bike, 11% reported getting bikes for their children and 43% said that they had started cycling for fun.

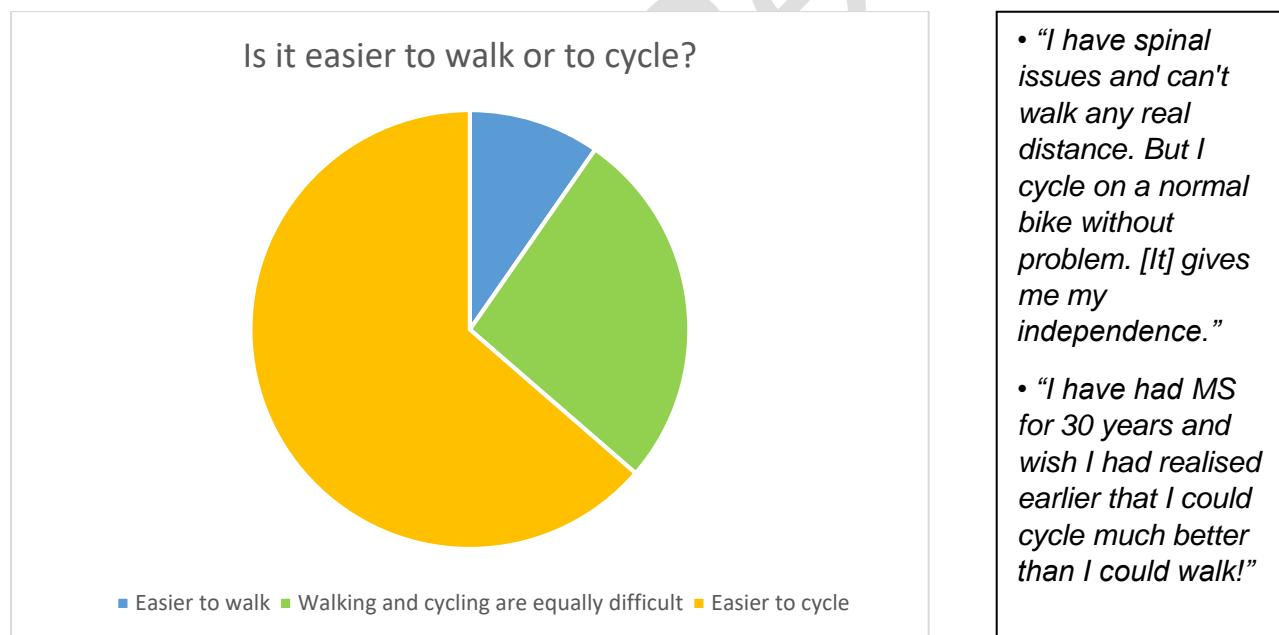
JoyRiders asserted that it can be more fun to cycle outside and there is no need to go on the road: there are opportunities in parks, including social activities, which offer the additional benefits of being in nature and of meeting people.

JoyRiders emphasised that cycling infrastructure must go beyond Cycle superhighways aimed at the very able bodied and must offer opportunities to the less able too. The representatives from JoyRiders advised ongoing design and redesign and greater engagement with different groups to understand how people cycle around an area, in order to adapt and readapt cycling spaces.

Wheels for Wellbeing

Wheels for Wellbeing (WfW) is a disabled people's charity that campaigns for mobility justice, develops policy and training resources, and delivers inclusive cycling sessions for disabled people. The group is based across South London including in Herne Hill Velodrome where it leads rides and has a scheme to hire non-standard/adapted bikes.

The Commission heard that disabled people are far less likely than able bodied people to own a car, have regular access to private motor transport, or be able to drive. According to the Disabled Ramblers, 90% of mobility impaired disabled people don't have a suitable mobility aid to complete a 1km journey. On the other hand, there are numerous options in types of cycles which can cater to different disabilities, meaning that cycling has the potential to offer extended mobility and independence to many disabled people. WfW's 2021 National Survey found that most mobility impaired disabled people find cycling easier than walking. The current definition of what constitutes a "mobility aid" is outmoded and should be extended to include cycles.



WfW's 2021 National Survey also provided information on the barriers to cycling experienced by disabled people:

- Infrastructure (53%)
- Secure parking / storage (35%)
- Cost (33%)
- Unable to hire a suitable cycle (30%)
- Abuse (24%)
- Lack of inclusive cycling opportunities (23%)

Sport England's Active Lives Adult Survey data shows that disabled people are almost twice as likely to be physically inactive as those without a disability, effectively halving the likelihood that disabled people are able to reap the key health benefits of exercise that are more easily available to people without a disability. By enabling a form of physical activity that, for many disabled people, is easier than walking, improving access to cycling, including through the provision of non-standard cycles, could considerably improve the health of disabled people.

Thus, the benefits of making cycling accessible to disabled people are potentially even greater than the benefits to the population as a whole, simply because there are fewer alternative ways for disabled people to access exercise, social contact, mobility, freedom, independence, nature and the outdoors, or to access the significant mental health and well-being benefits thus accrued.

Battery powered cycles/tricycles can improve accessibility for the less mobile – (disabled and older people) and WfW strongly supports the expansion in public e-bikes, although emphasises that better enforcement against inconsiderate parking is important. WfW favours dedicated bays over pavement parking, as clutter makes pavements less accessible for disabled people.

E-bikes and e-scooters for hire

In November 2022 the council approved trialling e-bikes for hire in the borough. Two operators of e-bikes – Lime and Forest (formerly Human Forest) have agreed memorandums of understanding that stipulate conditions, including the locations where vehicles may be deployed. As of the time of discussion, there have been over 12 million trips made on e-bikes in the borough. There are over 300 e-bike parking bays in Southwark.

Southwark Council has been participating in the pan London e-scooter trial managed by Transport for London ("TfL") since May 2021. There are currently 10 participating local authorities, and this trial was extended until May 2026. Since May 2021 there have been over 700,000 trips in the borough.

E – bikes can further open up cycling for disabled people and older people, and there are adapted bikes and hire bikes in use and available. Wheels for Wellbeing supports e-bikes, and urges proportionate action regarding safety concerns around batteries etc. which should not jeopardise the future of this vital form of transport.

E-Conveyances can be a disincentive to pedestrians in parks and there are concerns about the danger of collisions with children. It is possible to limit speed and access in certain areas by geo-fencing.

Lime has teamed up with the London Cycling Campaign and Loud Mobility to launch a new £100,000 'Share the Joy' fund to increase cycling within underrepresented groups and deliver equitable access to its benefits.

There have been efforts made to standardise rules for the use of e-bikes and e-scooters for hire across London, as different boroughs have developed different rules since these conveyances were introduced. Southwark initially favoured a flexible model which simply permitted considerate parking, preferably on the carriageway, whilst some other boroughs opposed carriageway parking. Having adopted the Equal Pavements Pledge, Southwark has been firmly against extending pavement parking as favoured in some other boroughs, as this obstructs pedestrians, especially those in a wheelchair or with other mobility impairment.

There are concerns that the withdrawal of the flexible parking model, which effectively delivers door-to-door travel by permitting the parking of the hired e-conveyance in any safe parking space, may limit up-take by women, especially for late night journeys.

Lime said that park-ability is key to maintaining and increasing uptake. If Southwark opts for mandatory parking in designated bays, there will need to be a mass rollout of bays (reaching a minimum of 25 bays per square kilometre) which may prove prohibitively expensive (the greatest cost being associated with the time and consultation process). An insufficient number of bays will result in any associated noise disruption being focussed in a single location, which could prove unpopular on quieter streets. Data shows that people will not take a bike if they cannot locate one close by.

Lime has offered to assist with the provision of bays using the infrastructure fund for London Boroughs. The proposal is to provide dual parking for regular bicycles and Lime e-bikes. This is subject to ongoing discussion with officers and TFL.

Cycle Parking

The Commission heard evidence from a number of sources that a lack of secure cycle parking, particularly for people living on older estates and for disabled people, is a significant barrier to widening participation in cycling. Sustrans research shows that just 27% of people who live in a flat have access to a secure place to store a bike, compared with 60% of people living in a street property. Accessible storage was even less commonly available: to just 23% of people living in flats vs 58% of people in street properties.

Over 70% of Southwark residents live in flats and, according to 2021 census data. 12% live in overcrowded homes, making them even less likely to have space to store

bikes. Low income households are most likely to live in high density housing and/or overcrowded homes.

According to Sustrans, almost half of people on a low income or not in employment (47%) said they would start cycling or cycle more if they had a place to park their cycle at home which was convenient, secure, safe, and accessible. Sustrans highlighted that cycle storage must be safe and accessible to ensure women and disabled people utilise provision available. Residential cycle parking must be designed to be inclusive of those who need (more expensive) specialised cycles, including e-cycles, hand cycles and recumbent cycles.

There is no council programme aimed at increasing cycle parking provision in older estates managed by housing associations; however, this is a place where provision is particularly inadequate.

The Commission was concerned at the imbalance in parking costs on council estates, where residents can park their cars for free, whilst having to pay for cycle parking. This contradicts the Street for People hierarchy which prioritises active travel over car use or, specifically, aims to “Keep cycle parking cheaper than car parking so that nobody is penalised for making responsible transport decisions”.

Sustrans recommended that local authorities should increase residential cycle parking provision, prioritising flats and areas of deprivation and incentivise housing associations to do the same. Local authorities and housing associations should provide communal cycle parking for flats and in areas of deprivation. Care should be taken to increase awareness of availability of residential cycle parking amongst local communities and tenants’ and residents’ groups.

Streets for nature, greenways and nature corridors

Streets for People has a Streets for Nature theme, which is focused on integrating nature into the streetscape in order to clean our air, increase carbon sequestration and water attenuation and improve biodiversity, making our streets greener and more resilient to extreme weather.

New street trees and green spaces were ranked as the highest priority for highways improvements in the Streets for People public consultation. Highways officers said their priorities are linked to reducing the negative impacts of car use and increasing active travel. Highways land is a finite entity, and competing priorities have to be balanced. Highways currently aims to deliver planting on 10% of space in new schemes.

The Commission is keen to see what more can be done to depave highways land, in order to expand the area given over to planting in planned Streetscape schemes.

The Commission heard that ecology officers advise on planting, design, species selection and maintenance requirements, helping to deliver Streets for People SuDS and street tree planting programmes alongside infrastructure designed to discourage traffic and enable active travel.

There is growing evidence to suggest that physical activity in green spaces is more beneficial than activity in other settings, linked to reduced feelings of tension and stress and increased energy and positivity. The Streets for People walking plan states that the council will: “look for opportunities to extend existing long-distance leisure routes and connect them with our parks and green spaces. We will link them to our town centres and train stations, so they are easy to access”.

The Streets for People cycling plan contains a specific commitment to deliver “separate greenways”: routes for walking and cycling that are completely separate from roads for motor vehicles.

The Commission supports Transport for London’s signposted walking routes encouraging active travel through Southwark’s parks, such as the Green Chain Walk, and London’s newest walking route: the Green Link Walk, running from Epping Forest to Peckham, and would like to see the addition and expansion of such networks.

The Commission’s earlier report on Biodiversity recommended that Southwark develop Nature Corridors. Strategic nature corridors prioritise nature but can be less suited for active travel due to a lack of access/infrastructure (e.g. those in railway sidings and cuttings).

Pedestrian nature corridors combine wildlife routes with active travel routes (e.g. Surrey Canal Walk, Green Dale, Kirkwood Road Nature Garden, Deal Porters Walk, Brenchley Gardens. There are several green corridor projects currently in development/underway, for example: North Bermondsey Wildlife Corridor; North Camberwell Wildlife Corridor; Low Line (an urban regeneration initiative in the north of the borough) and the B-Line national scheme which aims to create a pollinator pathway running through the west of the borough from Elephant Castle through Camberwell and down through Dulwich.

Improving the accessibility of nature sites for active travel and enhancing the biodiversity of these spaces has the potential to deliver significant public health benefits in Southwark. This is especially significant when such initiatives are focussed on areas with a higher proportion of residents experiencing multiple forms

of deprivation, such as those facing both poor health outcomes and limited access to nature.

Mapping by Southwark Nature Action Volunteers shows that areas of social and economic deprivation are also often areas where improved connectivity would deliver greater ecological benefits – e.g. Old Kent Road, Peckham Rye, and Canada Water – and where there are both needs and opportunities associated with restoring missing green links.

Developing a Green Infrastructure Strategy to strategically plan out Ecological Networks was a key recommendation of the Biodiversity Review. Linking Nature Corridors, Greenways and Streets for Nature is vital to improve integration, connectivity and deliver best value.

Green Active Travel – Conclusions

Active Travel represents a huge opportunity to increase physical activity amongst groups that are least active and experience most health inequalities. One of the best ways to do this is to ensure that walking, wheeling and cycling are easy to access, inclusive, attractive and fun. This can best be achieved by linking recreation and travel to greenways, green walks, parks, woods and open spaces. Turning recreational walking, cycling and wheeling into a gateway to a wider enjoyment of and participation in active travel is key.

Recreational journeys in nature may be particularly important for people undertaking manual jobs who could be less inclined to commute by active travel. Here it is useful to acknowledge that physical activity is not the only outcome: there is compelling evidence that time spent in nature will also improve mental health and reduce stress.

Greening the highway was the most popular request in the Streets for People consultation. In addition, making the environment more pleasing for people, plants and carefully placed trees will reduce air pollution and increase biodiversity. Investing in greening our active travel routes will help to maximise the positive impact of walking, wheeling and cycling.

Separate Greenways as connections between parks and green spaces for walking and wheeling will maximise Active Travel opportunities for the most vulnerable road users whilst maximising recreational use.

The Thames and river tributaries offer opportunities to make the most of blue and green space, and opportunities here ought to be explored thoroughly.

Introducing Greenways in areas of highest deprivation should be a key priority, in recognition of the fact that these are places where people are statistically least active, experience most health inequalities and are, therefore, most likely to reap the greatest health benefits of an enhanced natural environment. These are also often where there are missing biodiversity connections.

Ensuring that active travel routes become nature corridors, enhancing local biodiversity by increasing connectivity as far as possible, will maximise the benefits. Thought will need to be given to location, protecting ecology and recognising trade-offs.

There is a need for hard flat surfaces in line with Sustrans' Disabled Citizen Inquiry (solution 8 – Improving off-road routes) but there could be more emphasis on permeable planted space to enhance the experience of all users and reduce flood risk. Increasing secure cycle storage capacity across the borough, as well as awareness of it, is a key pillar in expanding participation in cycling.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF PARKS, WILDLIFE GARDENS AND COMMUNITY GARDENING

Public Health England (2020) asserts that greater access to greenspace is linked with improved physical health, including healthier immune systems, lower risk of chronic disease such as asthma, and better maternal and birth outcomes. It is estimated that £2.1 billion per year could be saved in health costs if everyone in England had good access to greenspace, due to increased opportunities for physical activity in those spaces.

Additional research has drawn a direct correlation between improved ecological quality (i.e. greater biodiversity) of greenspaces and better health outcomes, with worse outcomes in degraded environments (Public Health England, 2020).

Some councils in the United Kingdom have produced compelling research on the value of green space to urban communities. Birmingham City Council concluded that:

- The annual net benefit of the city's parks and greenspaces to society was nearly £600million, which included £192million in health benefits (£4.6billion over 25 years).
- For each £1 invested in parks and greenspaces Birmingham saw returns of £24 to society, and £1.60 directly to the Council through direct parks income such as fees and Council Taxes.
- Physical and mental health benefits are estimated to add more than 3,300 Quality Adjusted Life Years (QALYs) each year (83,000 over 25 years).

- Council-managed woodlands capture more than 350 tonnes of pollutants each year, avoiding approximately 133 hospital admissions, 28 deaths, and adding 489 life years.
- Its parks and greenspaces store more than 573,000 tonnes of carbon, equivalent to 2.1 million tonnes of CO₂ with a value of £221 million.
- Nearly 7,300 Council-managed allotments are estimated to produce 2.9 tonnes of food each year with a value of approximately £4.3 million.

In summary, for every £1 spent on maintaining parks and green spaces, Birmingham saw over all public benefits worth £27. Similar research by Sheffield City Council led to an estimate that for every £1 spent on parks maintenance there was a £34 saving in health costs, with local residents being the primary beneficiaries.

Community Gardening and Inclusivity

Community Gardening can offer significant physical and mental health and wellbeing benefits through gentle physical activity, social interaction and collective creativity. Access to locally grown nutritious food, often combined with participation in its production is a common characteristic of Blue Zones.

The Commission heard from Capital Growth, London's largest food growers' network, established in 2008 with the aim of creating 2,000 growing spaces in London. The network has expanded significantly, reflecting a strong interest in food growing across diverse communities, including amongst people of colour, migrants, and refugee groups.

Access to land remains a challenge across London. Capital Growth conducts annual surveys to better understand the needs and challenges of urban food growing communities, with a focus on diversity and inclusion. Key findings from recent surveys include:

- Only 20% of gardens fully reflect the ethnic diversity of their areas with 36% reflecting the diversity to some extent.
- Paid staff in community gardens are predominantly white, with 70-80% not reflecting the ethnic diversity of the communities they serve.

There is a strong desire to improve diversity and inclusion, with 40% of members identifying it as a challenge and nearly 60% seeking support to become more organized and inclusive. The organization collaborates with local food growing networks and recognizes the need for a people of colour led food growers' network. Resources provided include a Growing Change Toolkit, an anti-racism resource page, and an anti-racism movement building program.

Southwark Council has been commended for its work to expand community gardening. Southwark community gardening coordinators take a resident-led approach with the food growing on estates, which means that community gardens are based in areas with greater socio-economic disadvantage.

From officer observation food growing and community gardening in Southwark are more representative of our borough's diversity than, for example, conservation volunteering. Nevertheless, there remains an under representation of Black and Asian residents.

The Community Gardening Coordinators work with black led groups, homeless groups and neurodiverse communities to increase inclusivity. The Common Place mapping tool and the demand for allotments indicate that access to sufficient land to meet the demand for community gardening remains a challenge in Southwark. The community gardening coordinators advised that, in line with their project ethos, they work with the community to bring forward plots of land that residents have identified, rather than themselves setting out to identify land that could be brought forward, as this would take additional capacity and expertise.

Southwark Sustainable Food Strategy 2023-2026 aims to build on the existing Good To Grow map of food growing spaces, and identify suitable, unused public spaces that could be utilised for food growing, cooking and other food activities.

Earth Tenders CIC – a case study

Earth Tenders is a community garden and hub in Southwark led by two black women. They have transformed the Dulwich vegetable garden into a vibrant space for marginalized groups, especially people of colour.

Their mission is to make green spaces accessible to everyone and address diversity challenges in the environmental horticulture sector. They offer workshops on food growing, cooking, nature walks, crafts, and art to foster community connection and resilience. They prioritize inclusivity and co-creation, gathering feedback to shape their programs.

The space is seeking to look after people who come along and make it a safe and healing place, which is resource intensive. In their first year, they hired seven black facilitators, upskilled 30 volunteers, welcomed over 600 attendees, and redistributed 15 kg of food each month.

Earth Tenders offers support for career development in the horticultural sector and is supporting a Young Fellowship. The group aims to expand and continue advocating for inclusion and equity in community gardening.

London Wildlife Trust: Centre for Wildlife Gardening – case study

The Centre for Wildlife Gardening, based in East Dulwich, is run by the London Wildlife Trust. Various sessions are held with schools, and also with disadvantaged groups. There is a focus on family learning as well as sessions for people with learning disabilities, and older people. The centre works with volunteers, many of whom are older people.

Capacity to deliver sessions for schools currently outweighs demand, as wildlife is not part of the national curriculum. Nevertheless, wildlife gardening can be particularly captivating as people observe nature unfolding. People with autism in particular can benefit.

If nature has not been introduced by parents and grandparents, young people are likely to be less familiar with wildlife. The Centre for Wildlife Gardening focuses on whole family learning and children are often extremely enthusiastic to learn more. This can be infectious for the whole family. The project builds familiarity and appreciation of nature, and encourages good stewardship. For example, the centre teaches the children about the important role of insects.

The London Wildlife Trust runs the London wide “Nature in Mind” project, which works with people on the CAMHS green list whilst they are awaiting further mental health care. There are two age groups (under and over 11). The sessions help young people to develop practical and personal life skills, and to provide a perspective.

Parks, green spaces, wildlife gardens and community gardening: conclusions

The evidence pointed overwhelmingly towards the need for a greater emphasis on inclusion and well-being in nature based activities. As with active travel, maintaining a focus on making these activities enjoyable ways to build relationships and connect with nature is seen to boost participation. This takes time and energy which must be accounted for and valued.

As with active travel, the multiple benefits go well beyond the health impacts of increased physical activity to encompass better mental health and well-being.

Links to learning and career development are also important.

Black African and Caribbean residents are most underrepresented, but well served in our borough by organisations such as Earth Tenders.

Neurodiverse people and those experiencing poor mental health may particularly benefit from time in nature.

Resources or links with outside organisations are required to bring forward more land for community gardening

Investment in green spaces is proven to pay high dividends through enhanced public health and economic wellbeing.

THAMES WATER AND NETWORK MANAGEMENT

The Commission felt that some focus on network management fitted well with the theme of this review, as decades of under-investment by privatised utility companies has ultimately led to catastrophic neglect of their networks. This has, in turn had a deleterious effect on the public realm and road network, which is increasingly frequently disrupted by emergency works, impacting the way we are able to travel around our borough.

Councillors frequently receive complaints about poor reinstatement following road works by utility companies, in particular Thames Water, and the sheer number of these interventions means that it is almost impossible for each one to be inspected upon completion. Accordingly, poorly executed reinstatement is not always reported immediately, and remedial works are frequently delayed.

This problem is becoming still more challenging as we invest in improvements to the public realm, including through delivery of our Streets for People strategy. There are a growing number of instances where high quality paving materials have to be dug up to access poorly maintained utility infrastructure and, rather than preserving the original surface materials, they are removed and discarded. Reinstatement following excavation all too frequently leaves an ugly tarmac scar. Members of the Commission wondered about the possibility of purchasing excess paving materials in order to be able to deliver faster reinstatement following excavation. However, it was noted that additional costs would be incurred for spares and storage space.

The Commission heard from Thames Water and Network Management colleagues, who contended that it is often difficult to re-use the same surface materials once they have been dug up due to the way that they are originally bonded into place. Whilst they said that contractors are instructed to re-use paving materials in reinstatement where possible, often this is not feasible. Furthermore, often the surface materials used are not widely available in the UK, meaning that the lead time for replacement can be considerable. For example, materials such as York stone and Chinese

granite can take up to 48 months to procure. Nevertheless, there is a legal statutory duty to reinstate within 6 months.

The Traffic Manager spoke about the context, and noted that this is a nationwide issue currently being examined by the Transport Select Committee, which has issued a Call for Evidence on managing the impact of street works.

Scrutiny Review

ACTIVE TRAVEL AND NATURE REPORT

RECOMMENDATIONS

Green Active Travel

Recommendation 1

A working group is recommended to bring together Highways, Public Health, Parks, Ecology and Planning officers to deliver a strand of Streets for Nature that includes a more prominent focus on integrating the wider health benefits of active travel and access to nature into the Council's public health function. This ought to include a particular focus on the health benefits of increasing Greenways for people and nature and the link with Nature Corridors, as well as enhancing the Streets for Nature theme. This is in recognition of the wide-ranging health benefits of physical exercise in nature. As part of this:

- i. Landscape Architects /public realm designers and ecology officers should be empowered to take a more proactive role in delivering the Streets for Nature strand of the Streets for People Strategy to ensure maximum incorporation of nature for health.
- ii. Streets for Nature and the provision of more Greenways requires oversight beyond the Highways division if it is to be optimised. Creating separate Greenways and enhancing Streets for Nature needs to be recognised as a distinct discipline within highways engineering if it is to achieve its potential to bring the benefits of nature to people and enhance biodiversity connectivity. Ecology officers and Landscape Architects / Public realm designers should be fully empowered to provide specialised input to maximise greenery, help select the right species palate, enhance connectivity and oversee the installation of SuDS.
- iii. Ecology officers, Public Health and Planning should also be empowered to provide specialised input to help determine routes for Greenways, including along our rivers, to ensure that the Streets for Nature theme is integrated with the emerging Nature Corridors, Ecological Network and Green Infrastructure strategy. This will help to deliver nature enhanced Active Travel and recreation opportunities to the most disadvantaged communities.

Inclusive Active Travel

These interventions are aimed at increasing active travel by cohorts with protected characteristics who are typically less likely to take exercise and/or more likely to experience most health inequalities (e.g. disabled people, people of colour, women, people experiencing socio- economic deprivation, older people)

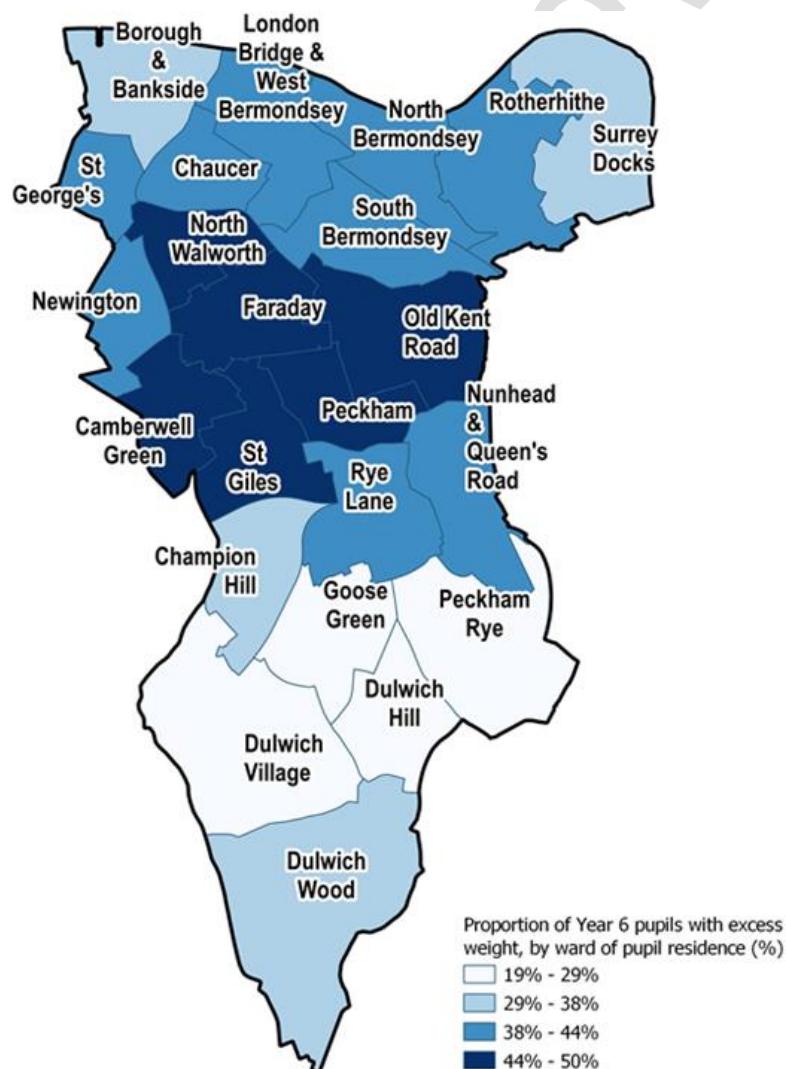
Recommendation 2

Amplify and build the capacity of local community and voluntary groups working to make active travel more inclusive in Southwark:

- i. Continue to invest in and explore further ways of building relationships and unlocking funding for local groups who are already working with disadvantaged cohorts in Southwark to improve access to active travel: (e.g. Wheels for Well-being, Joy Riders). This should include exploring/promoting possible funding opportunities through social prescribing.
- ii. Identify other local groups that are delivering or could deliver similar benefits in order to further expand access to active travel and nature for these cohorts

Recommendation 3

Given the mapping of health inequalities across the borough, higher priority should be given to facilitating access to active travel and nature in areas of higher deprivation:



Recommendation 4

Conduct research by working closely with and listening to groups experiencing the most health inequalities to better understand the practical and cultural barriers to increasing active travel and recreational time in nature, in order to remove this over time. Sustrans could be a good partner in this task.

Sustrans told the commission that their approach is to:

- i. Identify which groups aren't walking, wheeling and cycling
- ii. Engage these groups to understand their barriers and motivation to walking, wheeling and cycling
- iii. Design interventions that are tailored to their needs
- iv. Allow for continuous feedback and programme redesign
- v. Measure impact
- vi. Accept that behaviour change takes time and requires ongoing support

Recommendation 5

Consider designing and expanding bespoke activities/events/walks aimed at particular groups in tandem with addressing structural disadvantages such as a lack of cycle parking, inaccessible infrastructure for cycling, wheeling and walking, and transforming wider social and cultural attitudes to support active travel.

Pay specific attention to:

- i. People who are not active at all
- ii. People with health conditions often associated with inactivity such as obesity, hypertension, diabetes and poor mental health
- iii. People in multiple and/or low paid jobs (including cleaning/ caring construction and service industries)

Recommendation 6

Ensure that walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure is fully accessible through a process of engagement and codesign. In particular, the cycle network must not only be for the very able bodied, so not just Cycle superhighways. Infrastructure must also include separate Greenways, wider connectivity to the train network and other open spaces and be suitable for a range of mobilities. Ensure that routes are designed for recreation, as well as getting from A to B, and include circular routes. Undertake a process of ongoing redesign with more engagement with different groups to adapt and readapt, to understand how people walk, wheel and cycle around an area.

Recommendation 7

Increase availability of cycle training for children and adults, especially promoting these amongst cohorts we know are less likely to try cycling. Whilst working through schools is useful, engagement and training must be aimed at families too.

Recommendation 8

Explore ways to link active travel and working in nature to social recognition, career pathways, professional success and financial prosperity in all cohorts with a protected characteristic – paying particular attention to ethnic minorities and disabled people.

- i. For example, demonstrate a link between active travel and enjoying nature and study and careers in sports science, physiotherapy, coaching, ecology, horticulture, arboriculture and management of green spaces, raising the status of these pursuits and widening participation.
- ii. Proactively seek cycling ambassadors with influence in diverse communities.

Recommendation 9

Explore grant funding to lower the cost to disabled people of owning an adapted/accessible cycle and ensure that the Try Before You Bike scheme includes accessible bikes.

Recommendation 10

Join with Wheels for Wellbeing to lobby the government to a) have bikes recognised as mobility aids and, b) recognise the importance of e-assisted bikes for disabled people and ensure proportionate actions regarding battery safety

Improving cycle storage

Recommendation 11

Target cycle storage and hangers where they are most needed by:

- i. Providing funding to increase secure cycle storage capacity, especially focussing on areas around homes without private storage space – e.g. flats on older estates and HMOs.
- ii. Work with residents and tenants' organisations to actively build demand.
- iii. Where possible work proactively with housing associations and private landlords to encourage delivery of sufficient cycle storage for tenants and residents. This is particularly necessary on some older estates where there is currently almost no provision.

Recommendation 12

Storage should be made available for non-standard bikes such as cargo bikes, larger accessible cycles and child carriers.

Recommendation 13

Roll out residents' parking permits on estates on the same basis as on-street parking. Parking revenue can be used in part to significantly subsidise the fees charged to users of secure cycle storage space.

Recommendation 14

Ensure that cycle storage facilities are located in areas which are well lit and overlooked so users feel safe when securing their bikes.

E bikes and scooters

Recommendation 15

Work with e-conveyance providers to improve parking by:

- i. Accelerating rollout of dedicated bays for e-bikes and e-scooters on carriageways across the borough. Funding ought to be provided by conveyance operators to deliver this.
- ii. Work with operators to ensure that e-conveyances are parked either in dedicated bays or in regular parking spaces on the carriageway after use. Where possible, pavement parking of e-conveyances should be discouraged and eliminated over time. This will rely on operators maximising enforcement against poor parking to ensure that users are aware of obligations to park conveyances considerately in accordance with the Council's commitment to Transport for All's Equal Pavements Pledge.

Recommendation 16

Work with providers to explore options for less able riders, e.g. e-trikes.

Recommendation 17

Reduce maximum speeds of e-conveyances through geo-fencing at locations where riders share space with pedestrians, e.g. in parks.

Recommendation 18

Explore partnerships with operators to improve access amongst lower income groups who are less likely to cycle.

Wildlife Gardens and Community Gardening

Community gardens (wildlife, horticultural, community)

Recommendation 19

Whilst acknowledging existing work in this area, ensure greater emphasis on inclusion and well-being in nature-based activities. Specific provision should be made to fund projects enabling resident participation in nature based fun, arts, craft and health pursuits, as well as encouraging use of produce to promote healthy eating and developing healthy cooking skills for children and families.

There is particular value in investing time and resources in community building to sustain social relationships, especially in marginalised communities.

Recommendation 20

Whilst acknowledging existing work in this area, focus on ensuring that people from marginalised communities have access to community gardens, particularly Black African and Caribbean residents who are most underrepresented.

Recommendation 21

The education service should actively promote the Centre for Wildlife Gardening's offer to local schools to maximise take-up and work with the Centre to further explore ways to incorporate gardening including food growing into school life across the borough.

Recommendation 22

Commission a mental health programme that links children and young people to nature in recognition of its therapeutic benefits, particularly for people with autism (see 'Nature in Mind', a collaboration between the London Wildlife Trust and East London NHS Foundation Trust).

Recommendation 23

Expand the community gardening team to help build capacity across the borough in recognition of the significant health, environmental and social value and demonstrable multiplier effect of investment in this activity. Develop schemes through TRAs, parks and other volunteer groups.

Parks and Green Space

Recommendation 24

Recognise and publicise the significant public health benefits of green space and, accordingly, the value of investing in green space, both with regard to existing spaces and also through ensuring adequate provision in new development.

Recommendation 25

Ensure that new green space is proactively designed with input from ecology officers and landscape designers to maximise public health and biodiversity value.

Recommendation 26

Include community food growing within non-mandatory planning advice i.e. proactively explore with planning applicants the possibility of integrating community food growing spaces and edible landscapes in developments involving communal spaces within flats, student halls of residence and public spaces. Examples may include community orchards and gardens.

Recommendation 27

Identify other potential spaces that could be used for community gardening, including for allotments and orchards. Ensure there is a dedicated and adequate resource to bring forward land (cf. Southwark Sustainable Food Strategy 2023-2026 aim re Good to Grow map). This ought to be complementary to the role of community gardening co-ordinators, whose focus is on working with residents on land they have identified.

Recommendation 28

Take steps to publicise, mitigate and reduce the harms of pet insecticide treatments. This includes public education on the damage caused by contaminated dogs entering water courses and contaminated dog and cat fur being discarded where it can be picked up by birds during nesting.

Highways Reinstatement

Recommendation 29

Design public space to maximise safety, durability, permeability, aesthetics, and wherever possible, ease of disassembly and re-use. Where possible, consideration should be given to suitable "soft" setting and permeability, for example using sand-based settings for paving units, with suitable underlay materials and subsurface preparation, in place of rigid and impermeable surfaces, which require breaking to be removed.

Recommendation 30

Southwark Highways should continue to ensure that the materials it uses in public realm improvements are of a high quality, safety, durability and aesthetic value.

Recommendation 31

Utilities companies must be made aware that the council is increasingly moving away from the use of tarmac in enhanced public spaces delivered under its Streets for People strategy. As such, employees and contractors engaged in excavation of the highway and other public space must be made fully aware of the need to ensure prompt and like for like reinstatement.

Recommendations 32

Where the surfaces excavated are not of tarmac, employees and contractors must be mindful of the need, wherever possible, to preserve and reuse excavated surface materials during reinstatement.

Recommendations 33

Where surface materials displaced during excavation cannot be reused during reinstatement, utilities companies shall be obliged purchase like materials to ensure full reinstatement within due time (6 months).

Recommendations 34

Highways should consider limiting the palette of surface paving materials deployed in the public realm and explore the possibility of retaining small stocks of these materials to ensure availability of supply to utilities companies where required following excavation. This would be conditional on utilities companies covering the storage and financing costs. (These could be less onerous than the costs of shipping in new materials combined with the costs of fines levied in respect of delayed reinstatement and, as such, fulfilment of this recommendation may be contingent on an agreement with utilities companies on this basis.)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Environment Scrutiny Commission members 2024/25:

Elected members

Councillor Margy Newens (Chair)

Councillor Graham Neale (Vice Chair)

Councillor Reggie Popoola

Councillor Bethan Roberts

Councillor Sabina Emmanuel

Councillor Leo Pollak

Councillor Hamish McCallum

Co-optees

Anna Colligan

Simon Saville

Officer

Julie Timbrell, scrutiny Project Manager

Evidence received – Partners

Diana Wallace, Community Learning and Engagement Officer , London Wildlife Trust

Jane Lilley, the acting Head of Learning and Engagement, London Wildlife Trust

Jack McKenna, Senior Public Affairs Manager UK and Ireland, Lime

Temi Lateef, My Choice/ Black Riders Association

Isabelle Clement, Director of Wheels for Wellbeing

Mariam Draaijer, Chief Executive , JoyRiders

Scott Weddell, General Manager, JoyRiders

Alison Litherland, Head of Team, Behaviour Change at Sustrans

Racheal Dring, Capital Growth and Sustain

Idman Abdurahaman, Co-Director, Earth Tenders CIC

James Abbott, Local Engagement Manager, Public Affairs, Thames Water

Steve Dennard, Regional Streetworks Manager, Thames Water

Claire Alleguen, Community Partnerships Specialist, TfL,

Evidence received – Members and Officers

Councillor James McAsh, Cabinet Member for Clean Air, Streets & Waste

Councillor Portia Mwangangye, Cabinet Member for Leisure, Parks & Young People

Sangeeta Leahy, Director of Public Health

Abi Oguntokun, Director of Landlord Services (acting)

Gillian Boundy, Senior Public Health Programme Manager – Place and Health Improvement

Tim Long, Team Leader Transport Policy

Hedley Mellor, Transport Policy Officer

Ruth Arnott, Community Gardening Coordinator

Liam Nash, Ecology Officer

Holly Weber, Ecology Officer

Tom Robison, Programme and Policy Manager – Highways

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Paul Lowbridge, Roads and Street Works Manager

Matt Club, Director of Environment

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