Open Agenda

Environment Scrutiny Commission

Wednesday 14 October 2026
7.00 pm
Ground Floor Meeting Room G02A - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

Supplemental Agenda

List of Contents

Item No.	Title	Page No.
6.	**Exploring the Physical and Mental Health and Wellbeing Impacts of Active Travel and Access to Nature Scrutiny Review progress update** A paper updating the commission on progress is enclosed , to note.	1 - 31
7.	**The Thames and local rivers** A report on the emerging Riverside Strategy is enclosed, to note.	32 - 41
8.	**Work programme** The work programme cover report and workplan are enclosed.	42 - 49

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Date: 12 October 2026

Agenda Item 6

Meeting Name:	Environment Scrutiny Commission (ESC)
Date:	14 October 2026
Report title:	Environment Scrutiny Commission (ESC) Active Travel Scrutiny Review Progress Update
Ward(s) or groups affected:	All
Classification:	Open
Reason for lateness (if applicable):	N/A
From:	Polyvios Polyviou, Head of Highways and Sustainable Transport Policy

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. Note the 1-year update on progress in delivering the recommendations from the ESC's Active Travel Scrutiny Review 2025.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. Increased public participation in active travel and improving access to nature is seen as a key measure for health and wellbeing outcomes and public health more generally in the population.
3. The 2025 report from the Environmental Scrutiny Commission (ESC) sought to enhance these connections and increase activity rates alongside improving access to nature and biodiversity.
4. The ESC has now requested an update on progress in delivering the recommendations that were *accepted*/*partially accepted* for presentation at an ESC meeting on 14 October 2026, which this briefing paper constitutes.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

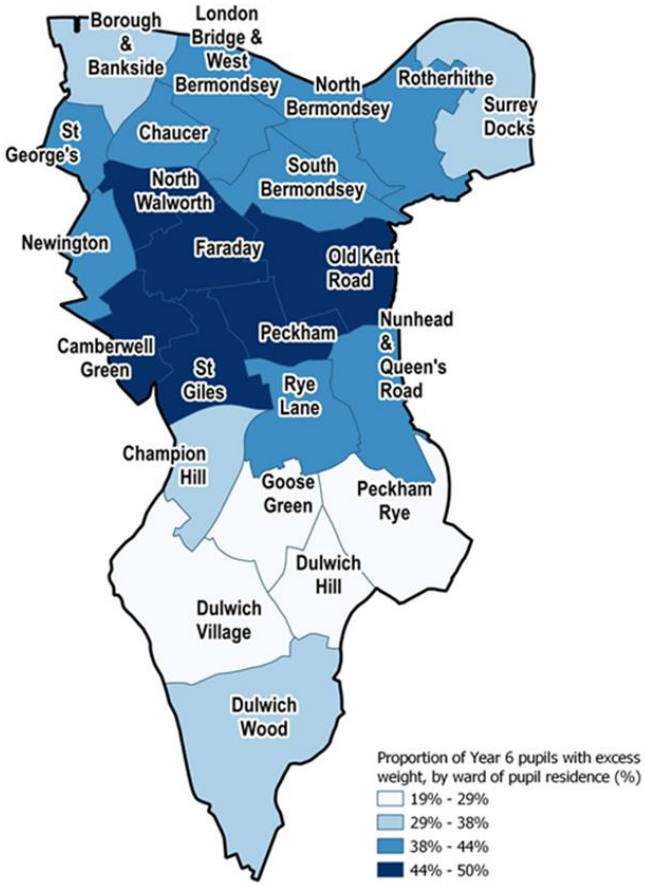
See table below

ESC RECOMMENDATION	COUNCIL RESPONSE 2025	PROGRESS UPDATE 2026
Recommendation no.1	**ACCEPTED**	**Update:**
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	As the report notes, the benefit to residents is not just from the benefits of physical exercise. The mental health and wellbeing benefits should be explicitly referenced in the recommendations. Streets for Nature improvements should be pursued even if they do not directly benefit or relate to physical activity. Given this, the design of Streets for Nature needs to factor in the needs of all animals, not just humans. For example, locating patches of forage in a way that creates a continuous environment for insects. Residents and visitors might not notice a direct benefit, but they will notice a benefit from a healthier overall ecosystem. Recognising Streets for Nature as a 'distinct discipline' should be including it as an input to all projects, rather than as a distinct subset of projects. As an example, considering the needs of biodiversity, maintenance, and sustainable transport goals holistically as part of a project could help us design schemes where the benefits of leaf litter and dead wood could be delivered without impacting on accessibility and ongoing maintenance.	**Lead teams: Transport Policy, Streets for People** <u>Update</u>: Ecology and Tree officers continue to support Highways schemes to maximise biodiversity outcomes, providing advice on plant and tree species selection, planting design and maintenance requirements, while balancing the constraints associated with street schemes including accessibility, safety, cost, maintenance and existing infrastructure (e.g. underground services). Since the publication of the ESC report, a number of de-paving and highway greening projects have been completed, including schemes at Morton Gate, Goose Green, Scylla Road, and Ilderton Road. Highways team is also rolling out a new tree pit design to simplify the planting of street trees within the carriageway. This will enable tree planting in a much wider range of locations than has previously been possible.

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.	The delivery of new long-distance pedestrian routes and cycle greenways, as well as new green space opportunities in general, will need to be linked to the development of the traffic circulation plan and delivery of Streets for People zones. It might make sense to include an explicit reference to this. Ecology and Tree Planting Officers have already met with Highways to agree greater involvement with the design and implementation of Streets for Nature greening schemes. An officer from Parks and Natural Environment (PNE) will attend Streets for People design board meetings to advise on tree and plant species selection, effective maintenance, and other ecological considerations, for all schemes involving an element of greening. The Ecology service will consult with Highways on future biodiversity strategies and projects involving public highways to ensure that strategic biodiversity connectivity is considered within the Streets for People scheme. Ecology Officers also attend Local Flood Risk Management meeting to advise on Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) and flood alleviation projects within green space or involving green infrastructure. The Transport Policy and Urban Forestry officer/s in Planning and Growth can participate	

	in this working group and inform how S106 contributions can help deliver agreed Greenways and other active travel improvements. The Urban Forester can contribute to species choice and project delivery. To build on the joint work being done this recommendation is accepted to further develop and expand the working group 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.	
Recommendation no.2	**ACCEPTED**	**Update:**
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, upCycle LDN). This should include exploring/promoting possible	Our cycling training provider offers special sessions for women only, religious groups, people with disabilities and families. We currently work closely with Wheels for Well-being, the Black Parents Forum, Mums for Lungs, and the London Cycling Campaign. The Parks team strive to support initiatives that support active travel being delivered by Highways colleagues within parks and open spaces, including new walking routes such as the Green Chain Link, and pathway improvements, such	**Lead teams: Behaviour Change** <u>Update</u>: Work on this is ongoing. We continue to work closely with community and voluntary sector organisations that support our active travel objectives. Many of these partners recently participated in and contributed to the success of our Car Free Day activities (22 Sep 2026), helping to engage local residents and

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	as recently delivered in Burgess Park and Sydenham Hill and Dulwich Woods. We ensure that health considerations are integrated into the pre-application and post application submissions through the Developer Consultation Charter (DCC). This includes details of Health Ambassadors which can be contacted by developers as part of the consultation process to advise on local health issues and how a scheme could help address these. Encourage 'Active Design' as well as 'accessible design' in new developments. New standards will be developed as part of the Local Plan review process	promote sustainable travel choices. Due to funding constraints, PedalUK is no longer able to sustain the provision of bicycles for people with disabilities through its partnership with Wheels for Wellbeing. The organisation is currently exploring alternative funding opportunities to continue this support. PedalUK has also sought to engage with Public Health to explore how it might support social prescribing initiatives within the borough.
Recommendation no.3	**ACCEPTED**	**Update:**
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:	There should be a general caveat to allow for delivery of schemes in other areas where there is an opportunity, for example a significant ecological benefit from a minor project, or some geographically-ring-fenced funding. PNE support and work with third-sector organisations wherever possible to increase access to nature, including the London Wildlife Trust, Bankside Open Spaces Trust, The Conservation Volunteers, Surrey Dock Farm and Walworth Garden.	**Lead teams: Transport Policy, Public Health** <u>Update</u>: Public health and social deprivation indicators were incorporated into the prioritisation framework for Streets for People schemes, helping to ensure investment is targeted towards communities that stand to benefit most. In parallel, high-level appraisal work is being undertaken across the borough to ensure opportunities presented by geographically

	The recent Southwark Biodiversity Fund provided £550k worth of capital grants to constituted not-for-profit organisations for local biodiversity and greening enhancement projects. Funding allocation considered spatial inequality in climate risk, access to nature and other socioeconomic factors. The council's tree planting programme uses Treeconomics Tree Planting Opportunity Map (2020) and the Tree equity map, to target areas of low canopy, high deprivation, flooding risk, and heat zones to maximize ecological and social impact. Planting trees with pollution tolerance and species with known pollution capturing abilities is paramount to successful planting program Joint working with the Highways team could enable the Greenways initiative to be shaped by the mapping of health inequalities undertaken by public health which can help set the priority for works that should be progressed first.	specific funding streams, bids and grants are identified and maximised.
Recommendation no.4	**ACCEPTED**	**Update**
Conduct research by working closely with and listening to groups experiencing the most health inequalities to better understand the practical	Through our cycling partners like PedalUK and Community Cycleworks we repeatedly ask the community what they perceive as barriers to walking or	**Lead teams: Behaviour Change** Update: We regularly receive feedback from users of

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 it to: • Identify which groups are not walking, wheeling, and cycling • Engage these groups to understand their barriers and motivation to walking, wheeling, and cycling • Design interventions that are tailored to their needs • Allow for continuous feedback and programme redesign • Measure impact • Accept that behaviour change takes time and requires ongoing support	cycling more. The partners provide quarterly feedback. We also have public representation on the Active Travel Panel to bring ideas and issues to officers. PNE supports and works with third-sector organisations wherever possible to increase access to nature, including the London Wildlife Trust, Bankside Open Spaces Trust, The Conservation Volunteers, Surrey Dock Farm and Walworth Garden. The London Wildlife Trust's 'Reuniting the woods' project, in partnership with Southwark Council, conducted accessibility audits and consulted the group 'Black Girls Hike' on how to improve walking access within Dulwich Woods Planning team is currently completing a wide-ranging Cycle Study into the provision of cycle storage and usage in commercial, residential and PBSA developments over the last 10 years or so. This will help to shape our policy in the Southwark Plan review. Development Management is currently reporting a push-back from developers on the amount of cycle storage required by the council. Southwark has adopted cycle standards in the Southwark Plan (2022)	PedalUK, upCycle LDN, and Community Cycle Works. This feedback consistently highlights many of the same barriers to cycling, providing valuable insights into the challenges faced by residents. Working closely with these organisations, we are seeking to better understand these issues and identify effective ways to address them.

	that exceed the GLAs standards, which are currently under review as part of the London Plan consultation.	
Recommendation no.5	**ACCEPTED**	**Update**
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)	The Greenways initiative could be shaped by the mapping of health inequalities undertaken by public health which can help set the priority for works that should be progressed first.	**Lead teams: Behaviour Change** Update**:** More collaborative working with Public Health, Leisure, and other teams to deliver specific events would be welcomed. The cycling partners support at a range of events across the borough, including Climate Week, Car Free Day, and others. A planned calendar of events would help to ensure more areas are covered and that partners are available. All subject to additional funding.

Recommendation no.6	ACCEPTED	Update
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 diverse groups to adapt and readapt, to understand how people walk, wheel and cycle around an area.	Usability is not just a matter of infrastructure to design. Networks must also be easy for everyone to use and understand, regardless of intellectual disability or ability to use technology. The planning policy, transport policy and Highways team will be working together to develop the spatial development framework for the borough. This will include the movement framework and current and proposed Street for People interventions. All of these factors will be considered alongside the green infrastructure framework for the borough. The Greenways initiative could be shaped by the mapping of health inequalities undertaken by public health which can help set the priority for works that should be progressed first. The design process should include co-design and an opportunity for residents to provide on-going feedback.	**Lead teams: Transport Policy** Update: New schemes are designed to meet the needs of all pedestrians and cyclists, ensuring that people with mobility impairments do not experience fundamentally different routes or levels of access compared with non-disabled users. The prioritisation of pedestrian and cycling improvements is also informed by the recognised need to deliver continuous longer-distance routes that support both everyday journeys and leisure trips.
Recommendation no.7	**ACCEPTED**	**Update**
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.	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.	**Lead teams: Behaviour Change** Update**:** In partnership with upCycle LDN, we have been working to expand cycle

		training provision at Burgess Park, gradually increasing the number of sessions available to support families and individuals who wish to build confidence when cycling or learn to ride. During the summer period, additional sessions were provided to accommodate increased demand from children during the school holidays. We maintain regular dialogue with upCycle LDN to monitor attendance levels and demand, enabling training provision to be adjusted on a month-by-month basis to ensure it continues to meet local needs.
Recommendation no.8	**ACCEPTED**	**Update**
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	Worth including as part of community-based behaviour-change work. It is important to not neglect the message that improving nature is good in itself and for the way it makes people feel, not just for its financial benefits. PNE support and work with several third-sector organisations that provide career support opportunities through training schemes, work placements, or volunteering. For example, BOST's Future Gardeners course, Surrey Dock	**Lead teams: Transport Policy** <u>Update</u>**:** The 'Streets for Nature' pillar of the Streets for People approach will help deliver projects that combine active travel with benefits for the wider environment and the borough's wildlife. Active travel is a lower-cost form of transport that will support financial prosperity for residents on a day-to-day basis. It also helps create community

management of green spaces, raising the status of these pursuits, and widening participation. ii. Proactively seek cycling ambassadors with influence in diverse communities.	Farm's Greenagers programme, and Walworth Garden's horticultural courses. The park's grounds maintenance contractor Idverde also offer work placements in Southwark to gain skills in green space management. The Greenways initiative could be shaped by the mapping of health inequalities undertaken by public health which can help set the priority for works that should be progressed first.	cohesion by removing barriers between people in the space, which in turn helps support career development of people by improving access to and ownership of those locations. The wider Streets for People programme has set up advisory Active Travel groups that feature members of different communities. This helps ensure those populations are represented and feature as part of decision-making.
Recommendation no.9	**ACCEPTED**	**Update:**
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.	Try Before You Bike scheme offer a wide variety of bikes for all, this includes adapted bikes tailored to specific needs, electric bikes, and cargo bikes to name a few. We are also working with Wheels4Me London. Wheels4Me London is a ground-breaking inclusive cycle load scheme offering free cycle loans for Londoners whose needs are not met by most standard bicycle hire schemes. This scheme is run in collaboration with PedalUK and Sustrans and funded by the Motability Foundation which we actively promote.	**Lead teams: Behaviour Change** Update**:** Unfortunately, the funding that enabled Wheels4Me and PedalUK to provide cycles for people with disabilities has now ended. At present, no alternative funding sources have been identified to maintain the project at its current level. However, we continue to explore potential funding opportunities and partnerships that could support the continuation of this valuable service in the future.

	The Greenways initiative could be shaped by the mapping of health inequalities undertaken by public health which can help set the priority for works that should be progressed first.	
Recommendation no.10	**ACCEPTED**	**Update:**
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	Using and getting support for cycle-based mobility aids should at least be as easy and generous as getting cars. This is not just limited to lobbying the government, however. There is more Southwark can do to support adapted cycles, for example by supporting secure on-street storage.	**Lead teams: Behaviour Change** Update**:** No change, ongoing.
Recommendation no.11	**ACCEPTED**	**Update**
Target cycle storage and hangars where they are most needed by: i. Providing funding to increase secure cycle storage capacity, especially focusing 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.	We know what areas of Southwark are most likely to need cycle hangars based on building type. Is it worth exploring whether there are time/cost/admin efficiencies in including cycle hangers as standard in other minor work projects in these areas. We have an active ongoing programme to deliver Cycle Hangars in the borough supporting Streets for People Delivery Strategy. We encourage stand-alone cycle storage solutions in housing estates. Where they are in Conservation Areas or	**Lead teams: Transport Projects / Streets for People** Update**:** In the spring of 2026 that number of cycle hangars in the borough reached 1000, in line with the manifesto commitment from the last political term. The target for this term is an additional 300 hangars and to reduce the time people spend on the waiting list to six months We are also exploring a trial of cargo bike hangars, initially focused on supporting residents to access this

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.	where a property is Listed, these may require Planning Permission and/or Listed Building Consent and a more bespoke solution.	growing transport option, with potential to expand to businesses in the future. The continued rollout of the programme uses existing waiting list data to prioritise which wards require additional secure cycle storage. Ensuring a more even coverage of facilities where there is demand and to address the backlog. In addition, and where possible we aim to include secure cycle storage within other minor/major works projects We utilise our existing engage platform to seek interest from residents, check which areas are likely to create demand and understand where there is currently little to no secure cycle storage in surrounding area.
Recommendation no.12	**ACCEPTED**	**Update:**
Storage should be made available for non-standard bikes such as cargo bikes, larger accessible cycles, and child carriers.	It is important to include two things as part of this and for a working group to explore: Firstly, there is also a bureaucratic aspect to this: getting space in one of the stores should be as easy as getting a parking permit or disabled parking space. Secondly, we also need to deliver short-term parking alongside long-term storage to support	**Lead teams: Transport Projects** <u>Update</u>: We have identified locations across the Borough for a short-scale trial for cycle hangars to accommodate cargo bikes. We will assess the usage and feedback from local stakeholders once they are

	the use of larger bikes as a general mode of transport, not just a leisure activity. We encourage stand-alone cycle storage solutions in housing estates. Where they are in Conservation Areas or where a property is Listed these may require Planning Permission and/or Listed Building Consent and a more bespoke solution may be required. New developments are required to include a minimum provision for storage for larger/accessible cycles within cycle stores.	installed. Installations of the cargo bike cycle hangars are scheduled for late-2026.
Recommendation no.13	**PARTIALLY ACCEPTED**	**Update**
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.	The controlled parking team are already working on this measure and reviewing housing parking policies including fees and charges. The review is underway, and proposals will be going to the Cabinet members for Housing and Environment for consideration. We would not implement housing parking permits to subsidise cycle parking on the basis that parking cannot generate revenue to subsidise budgets. However, the proposal is deemed positive to align on and off-street parking ensuring all our residents and businesses are treated fairly.	**Lead teams: Parking/Housing** Update: Estate parking arrangements are currently being reviewed as part of a wider programme to ensure parking management is fair, consistent and effective for residents across the borough. The review is considering matters such as permit arrangements, enforcement and operational requirements, and is progressing through the council's governance process. There are no significant updates at this stage, but work continues to explore opportunities to improve the management of estate parking.

Recommendation no.14	ACCEPTED	Update:
Ensure that cycle storage facilities are located in areas which are well lit and over-looked so users feel safe when securing their bikes.	We encourage stand-alone cycle storage solutions in housing estates. Where they are in Conservation Areas or where a property is Listed these may require Planning Permission and/or Listed Building Consent and a more bespoke solution may be required. Transport Policy officers urge developers to include high-quality access and design to cycle stores.	**Lead teams: Minor Works** <u>Update:</u> The majority of cycle hangars are installed on the public highway in compliance with lighting standards set out in BS EN 13201-2. Where locations are identified on housing estates, officers consider lighting and visibility as part of the feasibility assessment and seek input from colleagues in street lighting where necessary.
Recommendation no.15	**ACCEPTED**	**Update**
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.	i. Approval was granted by the Cabinet Member Clean Air, Streets and Waste to implement a further 110 bays on the carriageway, all bays will be installed by Spring 2026. The cost of the bays is funded from the fees paid by the operators attached to the memorandum of understandings (MOU). ii. We will review the MOUs with the operators annually and will look to include a clause whereby a penalty is applied to e-bikes/e-scooters parked	**Lead teams: Parking** <u>Update:</u> In total circa 350 bays have been implemented and have identified a further 70 bays to be implemented prior to Spring 2027. The MOU with operators has been reviewed and revised MOUs agreed which includes a sum to be paid by the operator to fund the removal of bikes that are deemed to be causing an obstruction on the footway. Operators

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.	on the footway except in the few footways bays we have in situ.	have also increased resourcing to remove bikes back to dedicated bays.
Recommendation no.16	**PARTIALLY ACCEPTED**	**Update**
Work with providers to explore options for less able riders, e.g., e-trikes	This is not something within our remit as vehicles need to be approved by the Department for Transport; this is something that will naturally occur when new legislation comes into force. We will of course advocate operators to make new vehicles available, but it is an unlikely outcome in the current market. We encourage developers to provide cycle-hire memberships for residents of new developments. Issues of equity and access could be strengthened in the next Southwark Plan. Storage for larger/accessible cycles must be provided within all new major developments.	**Lead teams: Parking** Update: No changes, no update.

Recommendation no.17	PARTIALLY ACCEPTED	Update
Reduce maximum speeds of e-conveyance through geo-fencing at locations where riders share space with pedestrians, e.g., in parks.	Investigate potential opportunities for go-slow zones for e-bikes with operators. This may be prevented by current hardware limitations of vehicles in which case we will raise the concept for future development with both operators and TfL. Consideration should be given to the safety of users.	**Lead teams: Parking** Update: Go-slow zones have been implemented in all parks across the borough.
Recommendation no.18	**ACCEPTED**	**Update:**
Explore partnerships with operators to improve access amongst lower income groups who are less likely to cycle.	All operators have existing schemes to provide for this. We will benchmark with other local authorities with a view to aligning charges for lower income groups where it is possible subject to agreement from the operators We encourage developers to provide cycle-hire memberships for residents of new developments. Issues of equity and access could be strengthened in the next Southwark Plan.	**Lead teams: Parking** Update: All operators offer key worker discounts and discounts to those on benefits; these are standardised offers on each operator's system.

Recommendation no.19	ACCEPTED	Update:
Whilst acknowledging existing work in this area, ensure greater emphasis on inclusion and well-being in nature-based activities. Specific provisions 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.	PNE support and work with several third-sector organisations that support inclusion and wellbeing through nature-based activities. This includes social prescribing, therapeutic, and art outdoor sessions, including for homeless and neurodiverse people and children, from BOST and TCV at their green space sites managed on behalf of the council. Opportunities for children to engage with nature and participate in environmental education through art and crafts are provided by Global Generation at the Paper Garden, and at the 12 Forest Schools currently operating in Southwark's parks. As part of the East Lodge restoration project in Nunhead Cemetery, a Volunteer Outreach and Development Manager post has been created to increase participation with nature at this site, including running mindfulness wellbeing sessions and art programmes in partnership with a variety of groups. The Community Gardening team run regular Community Organising training and Communications training to upskill and empower people to step forward in their community. Standards for communal space and play space are included in the current Southwark Plan (2022) and GLA standards.	**Lead teams: Ecology** <u>Update</u>: No change – ongoing. As outlined in original response, the Parks and Natural Environment department continue to work with and support multiple third-sector organisations that support inclusion and wellbeing through nature-based activities. The emerging Southwark Nature Recovery Action Plan, a new biodiversity plan for the borough, will include reference to the links between inclusion, wellbeing, and access to nature.

	Issues of access to open space will be examined as part of the Southwark Plan review. How these spaces are used in terms of projects within these spaces is not within the remit of planning policy. There are no landscape architect officers within LBS, although the function is accommodated to varying degrees by other teams eg Design & Conservation, Community Garden Coordinator, Ecology, Highway Engineer, Projects, Transport, Arboricultural and Urban Forester roles.	
Recommendation no.20	**PARTIALLY ACCEPTED**	**Update:**
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.	All borough community gardening projects such as the Burgess Park Community Plant Nursery remove financial and other barriers to growing food by providing free seedlings, workshops, and training. The project will continue to expand and build on this with other offers such as growing cultural foods, subject to funding. We support and highlight the work of black led organisations delivering food growing, such as Earth Tenders.	**Lead teams: Community Gardening** <u>Update</u>: No changes, no update required.

	Standards for accessible communal amenity space and dedicated play space are included in our current and GLA housing standards – Southwark Plan (2022). Issues of access to open space will be examined as part of the Southwark Plan review and through the procurement of an Open Space Needs Assessment. Equalities will be examined as part of the policy development process for the Southwark plan review. How communal amenity space is used (whether for food growing or other purposes) is not within the remit of Planning policy team. This would be picked up by developers at planning application stage, if a need for food growing is identified through the application consultation stage, or by the Parks and Leisure team if it is council-owned land.	
Recommendation no.21	**ACCEPTED**	**Update:**
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.	The Centre for Wildlife Gardening is supported by the council's Common Purpose Grant. The activities put on by the Centre for Wildlife Gardening are advertised through the Southwark Life magazine, Southwark Libraries event programme, the Community Gardening newsletter and other council communications channels. The Centre for Wildlife Gardening is a member of the Southwark Biodiversity Partnership,	Lead teams: Parks <u>Update</u>: No change – ongoing The council continues to support the Centre for Wildlife Gardening via the Common Purpose Grant and promote their activities via various council newsletters, including the neighbourhood newsletter and community gardening newsletter.

	which is administered and promoted by the council, providing opportunities for the Centre to network with other third-sector environmental organisations in the borough. The Centre has participated in the workshops and training delivered by the Community Plant Nursery. Additional promotion of this offer can be carried out/supported through the Climate Action School Network. Developers are expected to deliver open space and amenity space in line with the Southwark Plan policy and GLA targets. Best practice for the provision of food growing space is included in the Climate and Environment SPD (2025). However, it is not within the remit of planning policy to consider food growing space within schools.	The council has supported schools to get involved with greening their grounds via promotion of the Department for Education and Royal Horticultural Society's National Education Nature Park (NENP) project. To date, 10 schools have received funding via the scheme, and 35 schools have engaged with the resource-support aspect of the project.
Recommendation no.22	**ACCEPTED**	**Update:**
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).	PNE already strive to support third-sector organisations and other schemes to aim to provide mental health support programmes through access to nature. This includes social prescribing, therapeutic, and art outdoor sessions, including for homeless and neurodiverse people and children, from BOST	**Lead teams: PNE/Public Health?** <u>Update</u>: PNE continue to support third-sector organisations which provide mental health support activities through access to nature, as outlined in the original response.

	and TCV at their green space sites managed on behalf of the council. PNE have been working with Public Health already to direct residents to a variety of offers available across the borough for children and adults to get involved with nature through the Five Ways to Wellbeing programme. Because these activities are already underway, we do not feel that a new programme needs to be commissioned. We encourage developers to provide accessible landscapes for residents of new developments. Design for mental health is not specifically included in the current design standards, although best practice on a range of open space issues is included in the adopted Climate and Environment SPD (2025). Issues of equity and access will be examined as part of the Southwark Plan review.	
Recommendation no.23	**ACCEPTED**	**Update:**
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	This is a powerful way to demonstrate our commitment to delivering these goals would be to deliver community gardening schemes on the highway itself. PNE has developed a business case to deliver 'Right to Grow' which outlines the need	**Lead teams: Parks** <u>Update</u>: The Community Gardening team developed a Business Case in August 2025 to deliver the January 2025 commitment to taking a right to

through TRAs, parks, and other volunteer groups.	for extra capacity in the community gardening team. This is being explored. Delivery is subject to funding. Community Food initiatives could be shaped by the mapping of health inequalities. However, the delivery of community gardening schemes and community food initiatives is not within the remit of planning policy.	grow approach. This has been presented for consideration of funding to SCIL**,** awaiting a decision.
Recommendation no.24	**ACCEPTED**	**Update:**
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 through ensuring adequate provision in new development.	PNE have been working with Public Health to direct residents to a variety of offers available across the borough for children and adults to get involved with nature through the Five Ways to Wellbeing programme. Links on the council's ecology and community gardening web pages also direct residents to opportunities to get involved with nature. The next council's next biodiversity strategy (to replace the Southwark Nature Action Plan) will recognise the benefits of biodiversity and green space for residents' health and wellbeing. Standards for accessible communal gardens and dedicated play space are included in our current and GLA housing standards – Southwark Plan (2022) and apply to all new developments	**Lead teams: Parks** <u>Update</u>: No change – ongoing. PNE officers continue to engage with the Public Health team to ensure that opportunities to get involved with nature are promoted via public health programmes in the borough. The development of the council's next biodiversity plan – a Southwark Nature Recovery Action Plan – has commenced and will include explicit recognition of the links between biodiversity and wellbeing, as outlined in our original response. Issues of equity and access to open space will be examined as part of the Southwark Plan review, which will be informed by an Open Space Needs Assessment.

	Issues of equity and access to open space will be examined as part of the Southwark Plan review.	
Recommendation no.25	**ACCEPTED**	**Update:**
Ensure that new green space is proactively designed with input from ecology officers and landscape designers to maximise public health and biodiversity value.	The ecology team work closely with colleagues from the Leisure policy and programmes team, the flood risk management team and the highways teams who deliver capital projects within parks, green spaces and the public realm, providing advice on plant species selection, habitat features, access to nature, and sound ecological maintenance, to maximise biodiversity, particularly in Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs). New developments are required to achieve Urban Greening and Biodiversity Net Gain standards. We encourage developers to provide accessible landscapes for residents of new developments. Landscape Design guidance is not included in the current design standards. Standards for the provision of open space will be examined as part of the Southwark Plan review	**Lead teams: Parks** <u>Update</u>: Ecology officers continue to support Highways, Housing, Parks, flood risk and Projects teams during the design and implementation of new planting schemes to ensure they consider biodiversity along with maintenance and environmental factors. Recent/upcoming examples include schemes in Burgess Park, the Morton Gate nature garden, Albion Channel, Peckham Rye Park, Consort and Dr Harold Moody Park, Surrey Square Park, Long meadow, and Victory Community Park.
Recommendation no.26	**ACCEPTED**	**Update:**
Include community food growing within non-mandatory planning advice i.e., proactively explore with planning applicants the possibility	The Community Gardening team submitted a response to the Environment Planning SPD consultation in 2025 which now includes a	**Lead teams: Parks** <u>Update</u>: The Climate and Environment SPD was adopted in 2025 and includes a section

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.	section on food growing and edible landscapes for new developments. We encourage developers to provide community food grow-space for residents of new developments. This is currently not a mandatory requirement. Issues of equity and access could be strengthened in the next Southwark Plan.	on food growing spaces within development. Best practice and any policy wording will be examined as part of the Southwark Plan review.
Recommendation no.27	**ACCEPTED**	**Update**
Identify other potential spaces that could be used for community gardening, including 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 coordinators, whose focus is on working with residents on land they have identified.	This requires increased capacity in the Community Gardening team and is part of the business case for Right to Grow which is subject to consideration. S106 funds could be better 'pooled' and directed to areas identified as experiencing health inequalities Community Food initiatives could be shaped by the mapping of health inequalities which can help set the priority for works that should be progressed first.	**Lead teams: Parks** <u>Update</u>: No change - ongoing. The Community Gardening team developed a Business Case in August 2025 to deliver the January 2025 commitment to taking a right to grow approach. This has been presented for consideration of funding to SCIL. Awaiting a decision.
Recommendation no.28	**PARTIALLY ACCEPTED**	**Update:**
Take steps to publicise, mitigate, and reduce the harm of pet insecticide treatments. This includes public education on the damage caused by contaminated dogs entering water courses and contaminated dog and cat fur	The Ecology team acknowledges the threats posed by pet insecticide treatment to our freshwater habitats. We aim to publicise this in areas where dogs frequently enter waterways. We do not encourage dogs to enter waterways as a general rule, to protect wildfowl from	**Lead teams: Ecology** <u>Update</u>: No change - ongoing. The Ecology team continue to advise that dogs do not enter waterways as outlined in our original response. The issue of pet insecticides will be referenced in the emerging Southwark

being discarded where it can be picked up by birds during nesting.	disturbance and pet dogs from risks associated with toxic algae exposure and implement measures such as fencing to support this. However, the use of pet insecticides generally is a national and industry issue that is outside of the council's remit.	Nature Recovery Action Plan – a new biodiversity strategy for the borough.
Recommendation no.29	**ACCEPTED**	**Update**
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" settings 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.	There is an additional aspect to these which is that designing for disassembly and re-use allows us to be more flexible with our designs which can help with co-creation and building sense of community connection to a space. This aligns well with the report's points (and Southwark's existing work) on community gardening and inclusion. Works to Southwark Highways are managed by way of a S278 agreement. These are typically an obligation of the Planning Permission and ensure that the council's Highways Specifications in the adopted Southwark Streetscapes Design Manual (SSDM) are followed. Developers are urged to identify local improvements to public space.	**Lead teams: Transport Policy** Update: The use of high-quality temporary materials is being explored to speed up the delivery of Streets for People streetspace schemes. The SSDM will be updated with learning from this work where appropriate.
Recommendation no.30	**ACCEPTED**	**Update**
Southwark Highways should continue to ensure that the materials it uses in public realm improvements are of high quality, safety, durability, and aesthetic value.	Our Southwark Streetscapes Design Manual (SSDM) material pallet is limited and specifies high-quality materials such as granite slabs in town centres and quality sandstone flags in Heritage	**Lead teams: Maintenance (Asset Management)** Update: Our SSDM material pallet is still referred to for public realm improvements. A

	areas. Works to Southwark Highways are managed by way of a S278 agreement. These are typically an obligation of the Planning Permission and ensure that the council's Highways Specifications in the adopted SSDM are followed. Developers are urged to identify local improvements to public spaces.	Departure application must be approved by Control Officer for proposed materials that are not included in the SSDM.
Recommendation no.31	**PARTIALLY ACCEPTED**	**Update:**
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.	We note the council's move away from the use of tarmac in enhanced public spaces under the Streets for People Strategy. While we will make every effort to ensure reinstatements are carried out on a like-for-like basis, it should be recognised that utility companies retain the statutory right to use a temporary reinstatement where immediate like-for-like reinstatement is not practicable. In such cases, permanent reinstatement will be completed as soon as possible in accordance with the relevant regulations and standards**.**	**Lead teams Maintenance (Asset Management)** Update**:** No change.
Recommendation no.32	**ACCEPTED**	**Update**
Where the surfaces excavated are not of tarmac, employees and contractors must be mindful of the need, wherever possible, to	We can confirm that as part of our capital renewal programme we look to retain and reuse precast concrete flags and blocks as well as natural stone paving wherever possible. It should be noted that modular paving materials	**Lead teams: Maintenance (Asset Management)** Update**:** No change.

preserve and reuse excavated surface materials during reinstatement.	do have a life expectancy as the polished stone value can deteriorate over time which can result in materials no longer meeting our required design requirements. As part of highway improvement works across the borough, it is our default position to reuse all natural stone kerbs unless they are damaged beyond repair and no longer fit for purpose.	
Recommendation no.33	**ACCEPTED**	**Update**
Where surface materials displaced during excavation cannot be reused during reinstatement, utilities of companies shall be obliged to purchase like materials to ensure full reinstatement within due time (6 months).	Through legislation, utilities have 6 months to reinstate and carry out permanent repairs using the like for like material specification. This is monitored by Highways Network Management.	**Lead teams: Construction / Network Management** Update**:** No change.
Recommendation no.34	**ACCEPTED**	**Update**
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 of 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	The material palette in our SSDM is relatively limited. It could be further reduced if we were to cut down on the differences between the areas, maybe consider using block paving (currently used in Docklands) in Dulwich Village (currently asphalt). But we ought to keep ourselves open to innovative materials. With the exception of granite slabs, much of our pallet is available from large suppliers like Marshals and Tobermore, so we can reduce storage. Design Standard DS601 does have a	**Lead teams: Maintenance (Asset Management)** Update**:** No change.

reinstatement and, as such, fulfilment of this recommendation may be contingent on an agreement with utilities companies on this basis.)	preference for an unbound base for modular slabs. It is only where there is excessive vehicle overrun or high traffic volumes that bound construction is required. We need to be robust when schemes like the Pekham Rye railway station (and other special placemaking) propose a high-quality material that is not in our pallet as we simply do not have the space. They have to be readily available from suppliers. The new contract could specify larger storage space, but we must be cautious to avoid the utility companies regarding us as a supplier rather than Marshals. We do not employ a yard's man that controls and takes payment for slabs being taken from our store for the utility company. The contractor will want to be paid if he does this on our behalf and we have to have an audit trail. You have to be reasonable to secure the cooperation of the utility companies. They will accept replacing standard highway materials at their own cost, but if we specify high value materials that are not readily available, they can rightly refuse to pay the extra cost. They have a right to maintain their apparatus in the highway, and they work across the boundaries of many various highway authorities. Therefore, they argue that it is unreasonable to expect them to	

	stock every material. Rather they will set budgets to afford the general highway materials reinstatement costs. If we design a high-quality material, we have to accept they will not have the extra budget for it and they will expect us to supply it to them for reinstatement. In summary, try to keep the material pallet limited to those items readily available with national suppliers and start using General or Docklands specification in the Village. Works by developers to Southwark Highways are managed by way of a S278 agreement. These are typically an obligation of the Planning Permission and ensure that the council's Highways Specifications in the adopted Southwark Streetscapes Design Manual (SSDM) are followed	

Agenda Item 7

Southwark Riverside Strategy: Councillor Briefing Note

Key Summary

Southwark has around 7km of frontage along the River Thames. Climate change is predicted to increase tidal flood risk over the coming decades, requiring significant investment in flood resilience to enhance the protection currently in place for communities, businesses and infrastructure.

This briefing note provides an overview of the Southwark Riverside Strategy, which is being developed to respond to these challenges. It outlines key objectives, timelines, and the role of Southwark Council in applying flood defence and climate resilience strategies to the Southwark Riverside area.

Why is the Strategy Needed?

Southwark's riverside plays a vital role in the Borough's economy, heritage, communities, and environment. It is currently protected against flooding through a combination of the Thames Barrier, which plays a critical role in protecting London against storm surges and high tides, and various river defences, including flood walls, embankments, gates and other riverside defences that run along the riverside.

Climate change is increasing the risk of tidal flooding from the River Thames, meaning that parts of Southwark's flood defences will need to be raised over time to maintain protection.

Thames Estuary 2100 Plan

The Environment Agency's **Thames Estuary 2100 (TE2100) Plan**, originally approved by Government in **2012** and comprehensively updated in **2023**, assessed that London's flood risk is expected to increase significantly over the coming century as a result of climate change, ageing flood defence infrastructure and continued development within flood-prone areas. The Plan was developed by the Environment Agency and its partners to set out how tidal flood risk in London and the Thames Estuary should be managed through to 2100 and beyond.

The principal long-term risk comes from **rising sea levels**. As global temperatures increase, thermal expansion of the oceans and melting polar ice are expected to cause water levels in the Thames Estuary to rise substantially during the 21st century. The Environment Agency's modelling indicates that sea levels could rise by around 0.9 metres by 2100, with higher-end scenarios also requiring planning and adaptation. Rising sea levels will increase

the risk of tidal flooding, place greater pressure on flood walls and embankments, and increase the likelihood of overtopping during high tides and storm events.

A second major source of risk is the interaction between **storm surges and high tides**. While research undertaken as part of TE2100 suggests that North Sea storm surges may not increase significantly in frequency or severity, higher baseline sea levels mean that when storm surges do occur, they will result in higher water levels and greater flood risk. This is one of the key reasons why the Plan anticipates the need for phased upgrades to the Thames Barrier and wider tidal defence network over the coming decades.

The Plan also highlights increasing risks from **river flooding and heavy rainfall**. Climate projections indicate that peak flows in the River Thames could increase by around 40% by the 2080s, driven by more intense rainfall events. This creates the potential for higher river levels at the same time as high tides, increasing flood risk along the tidal Thames. In addition, heavier rainfall is expected to increase incidents of surface water flooding, sewer flooding and groundwater flooding across London, particularly in densely developed urban areas.

Finally, TE2100 identifies **population growth, continued development within the floodplain and ageing flood defence assets** as factors that will increase London's vulnerability to flooding. Many major residential, commercial and transport assets are located behind the Thames flood defences, meaning the consequences of a flood would become increasingly severe as London grows. The Plan therefore adopts an adaptive approach, combining ongoing monitoring, regular reviews and phased investment to ensure that London's flood management infrastructure keeps pace with changing climate conditions. Overall, the TE2100 assessment is that London can remain protected from flooding throughout this century, but only through sustained investment, proactive adaptation and the continued enhancement of flood defences.

The updated TE2100 Plan has three strategic priorities:

- **Aim A –** Improve long term flood resilience to climate change.
- **Aim B –** Support riverside communities and sustainable growth.
- **Aim C –** Deliver environmental improvements and climate adaptation.

Southwark's responsibilities - Protecting and Maintaining Flood Defences

Southwark Council has statutory obligations in relation to flooding, which arise as it is a **Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)** under the **Flood and Water Management Act 2010**, which places on the council a duty to **manage and reduce flood risk so far as reasonably practicable** and to exercise a range of flood-risk management functions.

Many sections of flood defence infrastructure along the Thames are owned or maintained by Southwark Council, together with third parties. The TE2100 requires flood defence assets to be maintained and upgraded over time to ensure that the overall standard of protection is retained as sea levels rise. Boroughs like Southwark that own or manage flood defence structures therefore have an ongoing responsibility to maintain them to an appropriate standard.

Why a Riverside Strategy is needed

Many sections of the Thames River wall and associated flood defence infrastructure will need to be adapted and raised over time to maintain the current standard of flood protection. Without a coordinated long-term approach, there is a significant risk that individual developments and infrastructure projects could deliver fragmented solutions, leading to higher costs, missed opportunities, and inconsistencies in the level of protection provided along the waterfront.

The strategy is needed to provide a clear framework for how flood risk management can be integrated with wider regeneration and placemaking objectives. By taking a strategic approach, Southwark can ensure that necessary flood defence improvements also deliver benefits for residents, businesses and visitors through enhanced public realm, biodiversity, access to the river and cycle route connections.

The Southwark Riverside Strategy will aim to set out a long-term plan to:

- Manage increasing tidal flood risk.
- Improve and adapt riverside flood defences.
- Deliver wider environmental, social and economic benefits.
- Support sustainable riverside growth and regeneration.

The strategy is being developed in line with the Environment Agency's Thames Estuary 2100 (TE2100) Plan, the long-term strategy for managing flood risk across the Thames Estuary.

Future Flood Defence Requirements:

Under TE2100 policy guidance, much of Southwark's riverside falls within TE2100 Policy Area P5, which requires flood defences to be raised over time to maintain the required standard of protection as set out in the below table.

Table 1 Required heights for the 2050 and 2090 targets.

Target Year	Required Defence Height m Above Ordinance Datum (mAOD)
2050	5.70-5.80
2090	6.20-6.30

Drone surveys undertaken in 2025 highlight the significant challenge of adapting Southwark's Thames frontage to future flood risk.



Of the borough's approximately **7 kilometres of river frontage**, the survey identified that around **55% will require flood defences to be raised by 2050**, rising to **96% by 2090** as sea levels continue to rise and the requirements of the Thames Estuary 2100 Plan are implemented

Delivering these upgrades will be particularly complex because much of Southwark's existing flood defence line is integrated into the built environment. **Thirty-six buildings currently form part of the flood defence system**, meaning bespoke engineering solutions will be required where defences need to be upgraded. This

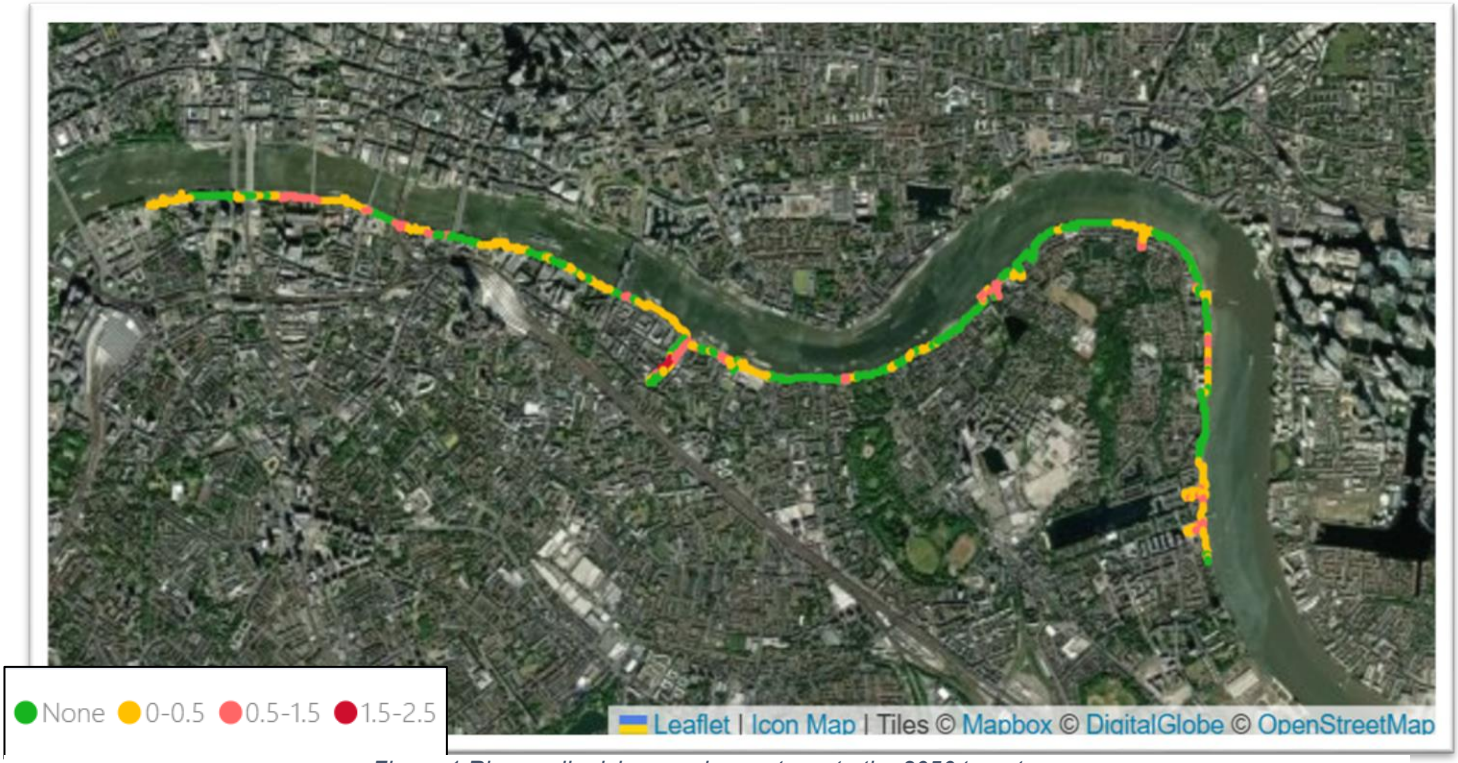


Figure 1 River wall raising requirements up to the 2050 targets.

includes **43 listed buildings**, comprising *one Grade I listed building, one Grade II listed building and 41 Grade II listed buildings**, where both flood resilience and heritage considerations will need to be carefully balanced.

In addition to built heritage assets, the flood defence line intersects with a number of important environmental and community assets, including **seven parks and open spaces, one Local Nature Reserve and eight Conservation Areas**. As a result, future flood defence improvements will need to navigate a complex range of engineering, heritage, environmental and public realm considerations while ensuring that Southwark remains protected from increasing flood risk over the coming decades.

Strategy Development: Timeline

Interim Report (2025)

The Interim Report, completed in 2025, assessed the current condition and height of Southwark's existing flood defences, identified priority locations where future intervention may be required, and established the evidence base for the development of a long-term flood defence strategy.

Full Strategy (2026-2027)

Building on this work, the Council is now progressing with the development of the Full Strategy, which will:

- Develop and assess options for managing future tidal flood risk along Southwark's riverside.
- Identify opportunities to enhance the riverside environment and public realm as part of future flood defence works.
- Establish a long-term action plan to guide future defence raising, investment decisions and programme delivery across the borough's Thames frontage.

To support the development of the strategy, a cross-council working group has been established comprising representatives from Biodiversity, Planning Policy, Design and Conservation, Transport, Climate Change and the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA). This collaborative approach is helping to ensure that the strategy reflects a wide range of technical expertise, aligns with wider corporate priorities and considers the diverse interests and opportunities present along Southwark's riverside.

While raising flood defences will be the primary requirement in some locations, the strategy is also exploring how flood resilience measures can be integrated into parks, public spaces, streets and development sites. This approach seeks to maximise wider benefits, delivering not only enhanced flood protection but also improvements to the public realm, biodiversity, climate resilience and the overall quality of the riverside environment.

The Full Strategy is currently being drafted and is expected to be completed by **March 2027**. Following completion, it will be subject to Member review and approval before being formally adopted and published.

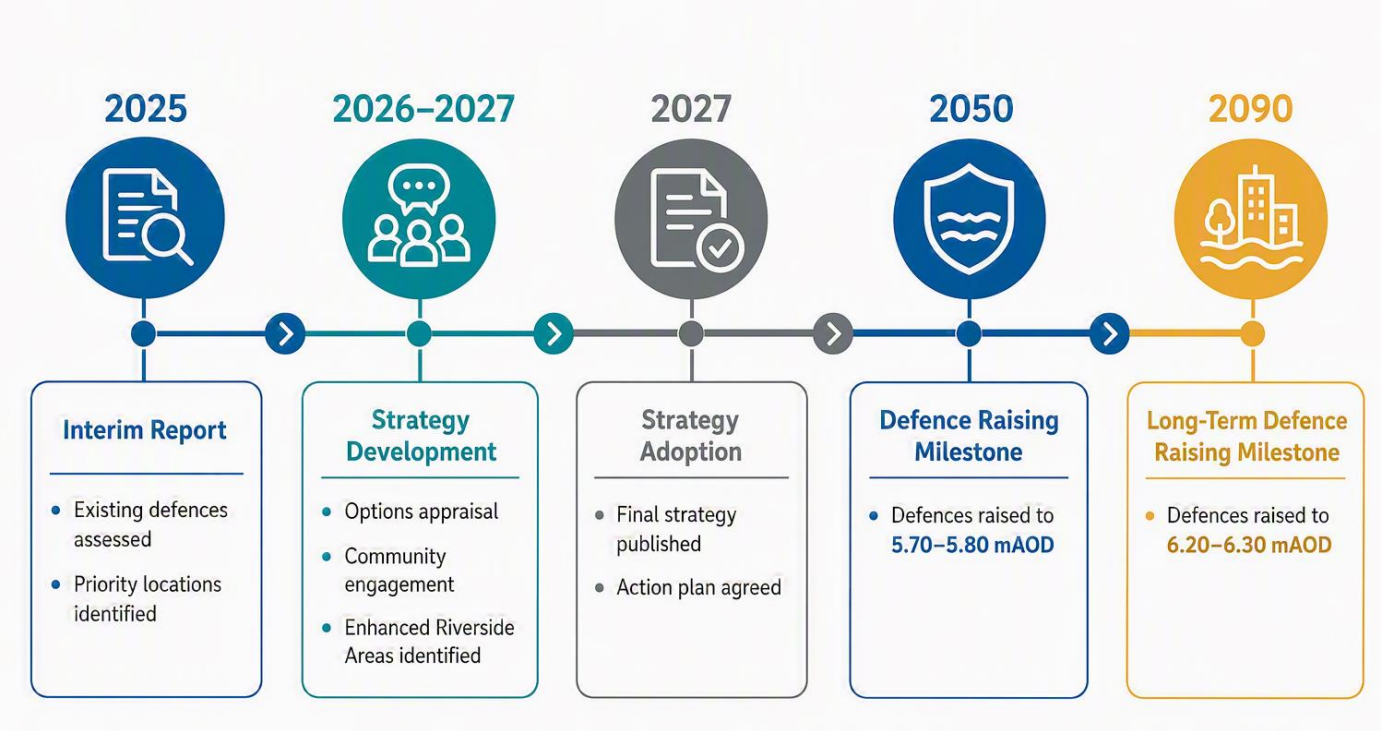


Figure 2 Timeline of Riverside Strategy progress in line with TE2100 programme

Enhanced Riverside Areas (ERAs)

Enhanced Riverside Areas are locations where future flood defence works could deliver wider benefits beyond flood protection. Depending on site opportunities, ERAs may include:

- Improved public spaces and river access.
- New planting, habitats and biodiversity enhancements.
- Active travel improvements for walking and cycling.
- Heritage and cultural enhancements.
- New community facilities and recreational opportunities.

Community and Stakeholder Engagement

Members of the Council Working Group have been consulted to confirm respective Councillors and Lead Members that will be engaged with throughout the development of the Strategy. The draft Strategy will be shared with Councillors for review prior to any community or external stakeholder engagement.

Community and stakeholder engagement will take place throughout the strategy's development to ensure local views are reflected in proposals and to provide early visibility of future policy and infrastructure changes that may affect riverside landowners and developers.

Residents will be consulted on the draft Strategy to provide them with an opportunity to give feedback on the Strategy prior to publication. This will be undertaken in collaboration with Southwark Engagement Officers to ensure full coverage during the consultation process.

What Role Will Councillors play?

Councillors will play a key role in supporting the development and implementation of the Southwark Riverside Strategy by:

- Representing local communities, ensuring resident concerns, priorities and aspirations for an area are heard and reflected in the strategy.
- Supporting local engagement efforts and encouraging participation
- Providing local knowledge
- Informing future decision making by attending workshops on defence proposals

What updates can councillors expect as the strategy progresses:

- Details of Enhanced Riverside Areas (ERAs)
- Community and stakeholder engagement outcomes.
- Proposed flood resilience and riverside enhancement options.
- Funding opportunities and delivery partnerships.
- Any future policy changes or investment decisions arising from the strategy.

Cost Estimates and Funding

The current official estimate for delivering the Thames Estuary 2100 (TE2100) Plan is £16.2 billion between 2023 and 2100. This figure was published by the Environment Agency and Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) in 2023.

The £16.2bn covers securing land for future flood-defence infrastructure, maintaining and upgrading existing flood defences, creating replacement habitat for wildlife, and replacing the Thames Barrier by around 2070. It's important to note that there is a high degree of uncertainty over this figure, as the estimated cost has increased by around 50% since 2012, owing to inflation, faster deterioration of existing assets and improved understanding of the condition of the flood-defence system.

Feedback from the TE2100 Securing Investment for London's future flood resilience event highlighted that maintaining and improving flood defences over the coming decades is expected to require a mixture of funding sources.

What is clear is that councils do not have the resources to fund the works required over the next 75 years, which is why Southwark Council will work with other boroughs to lobby hard for national government support.

Questions

For further information, please contact the Flood Risk Management Team at: FloodRiskManagement@southwark.gov.uk

Agenda Item 8

Item No. 8	Classification: Open	Date: 14 October 2026	Meeting Name: Environment Scrutiny Commission
Report title:		Cover report for the Environment Scrutiny Commission Work Programme 2026-27	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		N/a	
From:		Project Manager, scrutiny.	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Environment Scrutiny Commission note the work programme attached as the Work Programme, plus appendix.

2. That the Environment Scrutiny Commission consider the addition of new items or allocation of previously identified items to specific meeting dates of the commission.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. The general terms of reference of the scrutiny commissions are set out in the council's constitution (overview and scrutiny procedure rules - paragraph 5). The constitution states that:

   Within their terms of reference, all scrutiny committees/commissions will:

   a) review and scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the council's functions

   b) review and scrutinise the decisions made by and performance of the cabinet and council officers both in relation to individual decisions and over time in areas covered by its terms of reference

   c) review and scrutinise the performance of the council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas

   d) question members of the cabinet and officers about their decisions and performance, whether generally in comparison with service plans and targets over a period of time, or in relation to particular decisions, initiatives or projects and about their views on issues and proposals affecting the area

   e) assist council assembly and the cabinet in the development of its budget and policy framework by in-depth analysis of policy issues

f) make reports and recommendations to the cabinet and or council assembly arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process

g) consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants

h) liaise with other external organisations operating in the area, whether national, regional or local, to ensure that the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working

i) review and scrutinise the performance of other public bodies in the area and invite reports from them by requesting them to address the scrutiny committee and local people about their activities and performance

j) conduct research and consultation on the analysis of policy issues and possible options

k) question and gather evidence from any other person (with their consent)

l) consider and implement mechanisms to encourage and enhance community participation in the scrutiny process and in the development of policy options

m) conclude inquiries promptly and normally within six months

4. The work programme document lists those items that have been or are to be considered in line with the commission's terms of reference.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

5. Set out in the Work Programme and review scope appendixes are the issues and reviews the Environment Scrutiny Commission is due to consider in 2026-27.

6. The work programme is a standing item on the Environment Scrutiny Commission agenda and enables the commission to consider, monitor and plan issues for consideration at each meeting.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Environment Scrutiny Commission agenda and minutes	Southwark Council Website	Julie Timbrell Project Manager
Link: https://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CommitteeId=518		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
	Work Programme 2024-25 Appendix A Appendix B

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Everton Roberts, Head of Scrutiny
Report Author	Julie Timbrell, Project Manager, Scrutiny.
Version	Final
Dated	12 October 2026
Key Decision?	No

CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	**Comments Sought**	**Comments Included**
Director of Law and Governance	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	No	No
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Scrutiny Team		12 October 2026

Appendix one

Environment Scrutiny Commission work- programme

Reviews

Waste, cleaner neighbourhoods and a circular Southwark (full review)

- Pre-scrutiny Waste Management Strategy, Veolia, recycling
- Waste Management – the effectiveness of Southwark's approach to street cleansing, waste management, fly-tipping and environmental enforcement

Keeping Southwark Cool - Heat Resilience, Cool spaces and Places (mini review)

- Preparedness for Extreme Heat

Topics

Balcony and plug in Solar

•Solar on council Buildings and Community Energy

Transport Safety and Infrastructure

- Transport Safety and Infrastructure, with a focus on accident investigation of cycle death and serious incidents

DRAFT

Fairness and consistency in Southwark's Resident Parking Permit Charging Model

Food Security and a Resilient, Sustainable Food System

Cabinet Member Interviews

The following Cabinet Member interviews can be organised around the Environment Scrutiny Commission remit.

Leader of the Council, Councillor James McAsh

Proposed areas of questioning:

- Streets for People.
- Walking, wheeling and cycling.
- Road safety.
- Sustainable freight.
- Parking and traffic reduction.
- Highway maintenance.
- Accessible travel.

Executive Member for Council Coordination and Climate, Councillor Eloise Waldon-Day

Proposed areas of questioning:

- Climate Change Strategy.

DRAFT

- Air quality.
- Flood risk.
- Climate adaptation.
- Biodiversity and trees.
- Waste and recycling.
- Estate and street cleaning.
- Fly-tipping.
- Green jobs and decarbonisation.

Executive Member for Parks and Recreation, Councillor Vanessa Threadgold

Proposed areas of questioning:

- Parks and green spaces.
- Play provision.
- Allotments and food growing.
- Leisure centres.
- Grassroots sport.
- Progress on Play Spaces review recommendations.

DRAFT

Dates and items

Environnent Scrutiny Commission meeting	Date	Items
Informal meeting	Wednesday 22 July	Workplan discussion
1	Wednesday 14 October	**Climate adaptation and resilience update** – briefing and presentation **with a focus on current work on adaptation and resilience** Update on implementation of previous scrutiny reviews : • **Exploring the Physical and Mental Health and Wellbeing Impacts of Active Travel** and Access to Nature – briefing paper and presentation to update on progress • **Biodiversity –** briefing paper and presentation to update on progress (with input from previous co-optees) **Thames and local rivers –** update on emerging Riverside Strategy **Workplan**
2	Tuesday 8 December	**Waste, cleaner neighbourhoods and a circular Southwark** **Keeping Southwark Cool - Heat Resilience, Cool spaces and Places**
3	Wednesday 27 January	**Balcony plug in solar**
4	Wednesday 3 March	**TBC**
5	New date to be added	**Transport safety** – Southwark Cyclists , TfL , EV providers, NHS input. **Interview Leader of the Council, Councillor James McAsh**

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Environment Scrutiny Commission

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2026-27

AGENDA DISTRIBUTION LIST (OPEN)

NOTE: Original held by Scrutiny Team; all amendments/queries to Julie Timbrell Tel: 020 7525 0514

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