Open Agenda

Environment Scrutiny Commission

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

Membership

Councillor Graham Neale (Chair)
Councillor Ryan Cox (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Ruth Bannister
Councillor Colin Boyle
Councillor Catherine Dawkins
Councillor Richard Leeming
Councillor Jen Thornton

Reserves

Councillor Fatmata Bah
Councillor Callum Fowler
Councillor Adam Hood
Councillor Margy Newens
Councillor Sasjkia Otto
Councillor Rachael Penny
Councillor Richard Taylor

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Contact Julie Timbrell on 020 7525 0514 or email: julie.timbrell@southwark.gov.uk

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Members of the committee are summoned to attend this meeting
Althea Loderick
Chief Executive
Date: 6 October 2026

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

Environment Scrutiny Commission

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7.00 pm
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Order of Business

Item No.	Title	Page No.
1.	**APOLOGIES** To receive any apologies for absence.	
2.	**NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT** In special circumstances, an item of business may be added to an agenda within five clear working days of the meeting.	
3.	**DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS** Members to declare any interests and dispensations in respect of any item of business to be considered at this meeting.	
4.	**CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE**	1 - 51
5.	**BIODIVERSITY SCRUTINY REVIEW PROGRESS UPDATE**	52 - 87
6.	**EXPLORING THE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPACTS OF ACTIVE TRAVEL AND ACCESS TO NATURE SCRUTINY REVIEW PROGRESS UPDATE** A paper is to follow.	
7.	**THE THAMES AND LOCAL RIVERS** A paper is to follow.	
8.	**WORK PROGRAMME** A paper is to follow.	

Item No.	Title	Page No.

Date: 6 October 2026

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The following motion should be moved, seconded and approved if the sub-committee wishes to exclude the press and public to deal with reports revealing exempt information:

"That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1-7, Access to Information Procedure rules of the Constitution."

Agenda Item 4

Meeting Name:	Environmental Scrutiny Commission
Date:	14 October 2026
Report title:	Climate adaptation and resilience update
Executive Member:	Councillor Waldon-Day
Ward(s) or groups affected:	All
Classification:	Open
Reason for lateness (if applicable):	Not applicable

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Environmental Scrutiny Committee note the following paper on the council's climate action plan, climate adaptation and resilience workstreams and context.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. This paper summarises where the council currently stands on climate adaptation and resilience and what is needed to take delivery forward. The evidence base has shifted significantly in the past year, with a refreshed national climate risk assessment, London's first heat plan and surface water strategy, and new legal duties on the council as a landlord, and this briefing seeks to reflect that evidence base.

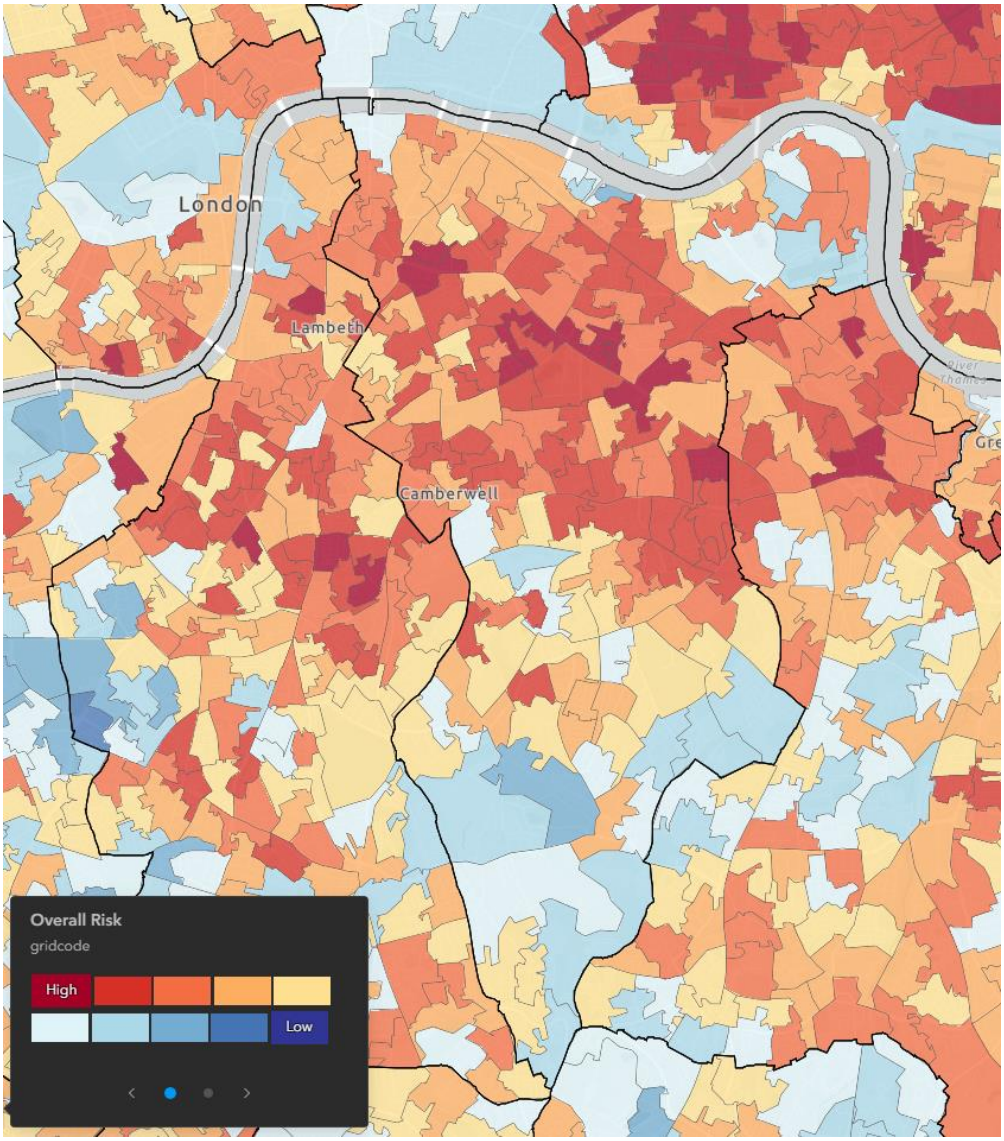
3. The immediate picture is stark. Southwark is exposed to a range of interacting climate hazards, with the principal risks being extreme heat and overheating, flooding, water scarcity and drought, climate-related pests and diseases, and impacts on biodiversity and our green spaces. The borough's dense urban form, extensive areas of low-lying ground and varying access to green space influence the distribution of these risks within the borough. Climate change is expected to increase the intensity and frequency of several of these hazards

4. Over half of Southwark is estimated to be at risk of regular overheating at just 1.5°C of global warming, and the whole borough sits in the highest heat risk category for buildings under Part O of the building regulations, because it is part of London's largest urban heat island. This is not a distant risk. London experienced five heatwaves this summer where climate change increased the frequency, intensity and duration. It was the persistence of the heat that was remarkable and the heat waves broke numerous temperature records.

5. The Greater London Authority's London Climate Risk Mapping analyse

climate exposure and vulnerability across Greater London. It summarises overall climate risk faced in our neighbourhoods based on people's exposure to climate impacts like flooding or heatwaves, but also to personal and social factors that affect their ability to cope with and respond to extreme events. High climate risk coincides with areas of income and health inequalities. Several Southwark neighbourhoods in the centre and north of the borough face greater risk because of these factors.

Figure 1: Southwark overall climate risk by Lower Super Output Area, GLA (2024)



6. Delivery is already underway within the council and is stronger in some areas than others. As climate adaptation and resilience requires a multi-hazard approach because risks are interconnected, different council programmes and services may be impacted. For example, extreme heat and drought can stress our green spaces and reduce natural cooling.

7. The council's heat and spatial risk evidence base, cool space network, and

schools and estates heat vulnerability modelling are maturing and are described in detail below. The council's approach to reducing the impacts of surface water flooding is well established through the it's sustainable urban drainage (SuDs) opportunity mapping on ongoing delivery of projects. However, governance, resourcing, funding and data remain the main limits on pace rather than a shortage of evidence or ambition

8. Climate risk will increase as global temperatures rise from the levels we experience today through to higher temperatures at the end of this century. The council must ensure it takes the impact of these higher temperatures and increased risk into account as it delivers and plans new and existing services for residents and invests in buildings, places and neighbourhoods.

9. Whilst it is recognised that there is a certain amount of uncertainty associated with future climate change projections, the council must plan for change. The national Climate Change Committee (CCC) assesses the urgency of adaption using current and two future climate scenarios that model future temperature rises:

   - A +2°C increases in global mean temperature by the middle of the century (2050), representing a medium-high emissions scenario in carbon emissions. This would result in warmer temperatures with a greater number of hotter days and less rainfall in summer than today. Southwark's weather would also be stormier with heavier rainfall when it does rain and higher chances of flooding.

   - A +4°C rise in global mean temperatures at the end of the century (2100), which is the scenario that is consistent with the current limited global ambition for reducing carbon emissions. This scenario would result in more days above 40°C and summer mean temperatures being significantly warmer. Sea levels will have risen by at least one metre, and this will require long term, collaborative approach within London. Peak river flows will be more extreme due to heavier storms, yet periods of drought will also take place with lower average rainfall in the summer.

10. The CCC advises that councils should plan for impacts of a +2°C temperature increase by 2050 and assess risk for the +4°C temperature rise scenario by 2100. The council will do this by taking an adaptive, flexible approach to delivery, but significant progress is needed to ensure the borough is adapted and the council is ready for the expected harmful impacts of a +2°C scenario.

11. Appendix 1 provides additional detail of Southwark's climate risk and vulnerability.

MATERIAL IMPACTS ON COUNCIL SERVICES AND CASCADING RISKS

Community and service impacts

12. The national Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA) prepared by the Climate Change Committee is clear that climate risks do not sit neatly within single services. The underlying technical report structures its risk assessment across five sectors, health and wellbeing, the built environment, infrastructure, land, nature and food, and the economy,

covering 41 risks and two opportunities in total; the Committee's separate framework for tracking adaptation progress groups these same risks into fourteen systems, from health and public services to energy, transport and the economy, precisely because the most serious risks cascade between them rather than staying contained in one (Climate Change Committee, 2026a; CAG Consultants, 2026).

13. Extreme heat disrupts public transport, intensifies the urban heat island effect within the borough's neighbourhoods, degrades the performance of buildings not designed for it, and worsens outdoor air quality. This places increasing pressure on health, care and transport at the same time. Flooding and drought reduce the availability and quality of water, disrupt transport, damage buildings and infrastructure, and harm the biodiversity and natural systems the borough depends on.

Figure 2: Example cross-sector consequences of extreme heat



14. The Committee's own worked example is instructive. A severe heatwave across the UK in July 2022 caused a data centre outage at Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, the acute trust serving much of Southwark, disrupting clinical IT systems for weeks and resulting in 21 recorded incidents of harm to patients (Climate Change Committee, 2026a; Southwark Council, 2025b). The same event contributed to at least 387 heat-related deaths in London and 15.6 more deaths than expected in Southwark that July alone, and the risk to health and social care delivery from overheating is one of only eight risks nationally rated as needing critical government action in the current assessment (Southwark Council, 2025b; CCC, 2026a).

15. Translated to the council, the material impacts are wide-ranging. Extreme heat raises demand on adult social care and public health while degrading the buildings from which services are delivered. On housing specifically, the Committee's central estimate is that around 92 per cent of existing homes could be at risk of overheating by 2050 and separately finds that in 2023 twelve per cent of households in England already reported their home getting uncomfortably hot (CCC, 2026a). That is a national figure, but it sits alongside Southwark's own borough-level modelling below, which finds over half of Southwark already at risk of regular overheating at just 1.5°C of warming.

16. Surface water and river flooding may damage housing, schools, highways and other council assets and interrupt service delivery. Drought and water scarcity affect our green spaces, trees/green infrastructure I and the wider environment. Furthermore, because the council depends on critical infrastructure it does not control - energy, water, telecommunications and transport - a failure in any of these can halt council services regardless of the council's own resilience. The national assessment separately rates risk to local resilience planning and emergency service response as needing critical investigation, citing wildfire call-outs to English and Welsh fire services more than doubling between mid-June 2022 and mid-June 2025 as one driver (CCC, 2026a).

17. The Committee's own conclusion is that the country's response to adapting is currently far slower than the scale of the risk requires, and it places local authorities, alongside housing providers and other public service organisations, among the bodies best placed to close that gap (CCC, 2026a).

Health impacts

18. Climate change will have an overall negative impact on health, including on mental health, wellbeing and chronic conditions. For heat, the main pathways are respiratory disease, heat-related injury, infections, vector-borne disease, and cardiovascular disease, with the burden falling hardest on older residents, people with existing conditions, and those in poor housing. Flooding and drought bring a different set of risks, including respiratory illness, infections, exposure to contaminants in floodwater, and the direct risk of drowning and flood-related injury, alongside the mental health effects of damage to property.

19. Please see Appendix 2, specifically the overview of the Southwark Hot Weather and Health Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2025) for further heat impact detail, and Appendix 3 that provides detail on the clinically vulnerable populations in Southwark.

Economic impacts: cost of action and in-action

20. All following figures from the Climate Change Committee (CCC), the UK's independent statutory adviser. Two separate cases are set out as action against inaction: adapting to locked-in warming and reaching net zero.

Adaptation: Cost of action against cost of inaction

21. The CCC estimates the UK needs around £11 billion a year (range £7 to £22 billion, 2025 prices) to adapt, roughly 2% of total UK investment (CCC, 2026a; CCC, 2026b). Without further adaptation, climate damages could grow from 0 to 2% of GDP today to 1 to 5% by 2050, or roughly £60 to £260 billion a year against a projected 2050 GDP of £4.8 trillion. This could rise further to 4 to 10% of GDP if temperatures rise above 3°C by 2100 (CCC, 2026a).

22. In short: around £11 billion a year set against £60 to £260 billion a year of avoided damage. Project-level benefit-cost ratios reach 5 to 1 for property flood resilience and coastal erosion management, and 10 to 1 up to 30 to 1 for heatwave plans (CCC, 2026a). The CCC notes both figures are likely underestimates, since the £11 billion excludes whole systems such as energy and food security (CCC, 2026b).

How emissions reductions effect adaptation costs

23. Because of lags in the climate system, cutting emissions today only reduces UK impacts after 2040, so the next two decades of damage are already locked in; only adaptation can reduce the near-term costs the UK is committed to (Watkiss, 2022). Reducing emissions will however reduce the long-term costs of adaptation in line with warming scenarios.

SPATIAL RISK ASSESSMENT

Climate adaptation or climate resilience

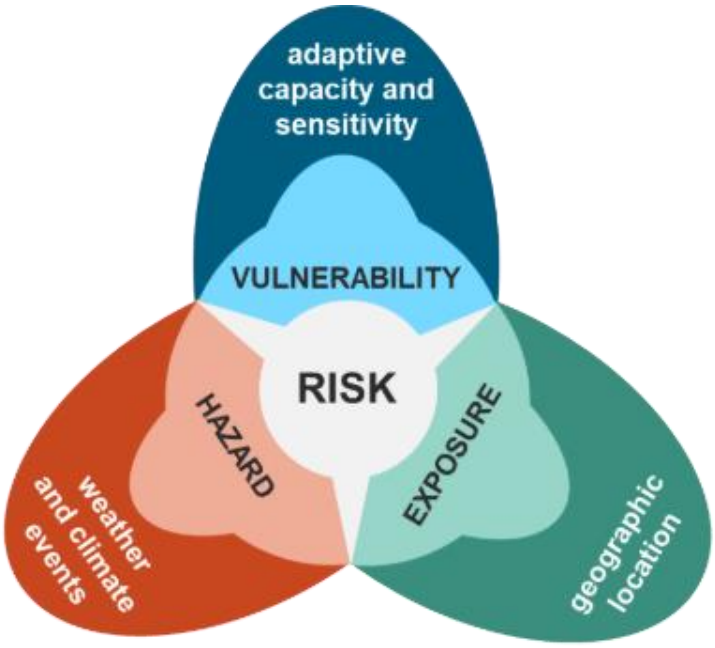
24. By 2050, at around 2°C of global warming, the UK's climate will be fundamentally different from the climate of today. To address this, society must adapt to build resilience to the effects of climate change. In simple definitions:
    - **Climate adaptation** are the actions taken by the council to adjust to actual or expected extreme weather hazards: extreme heat, flooding, drought.
    - **Climate resilience** is the council's or borough's overall ability to withstand, respond to and recover from extreme weather hazards.

    Adaptation is therefore the primary means of building climate resilience, but climate resilience also depends on governance, infrastructure, communities, emergency planning, finances and institutional capacity of the council.

Climate risk

25. Understanding the risks that climate change poses to our communities, organisation or business is the first step to taking action and build the council's climate resilience. The risks from a changing climate and the potential for resultant impacts, depend on three factors:

    Figure 3: Climate risk diagram

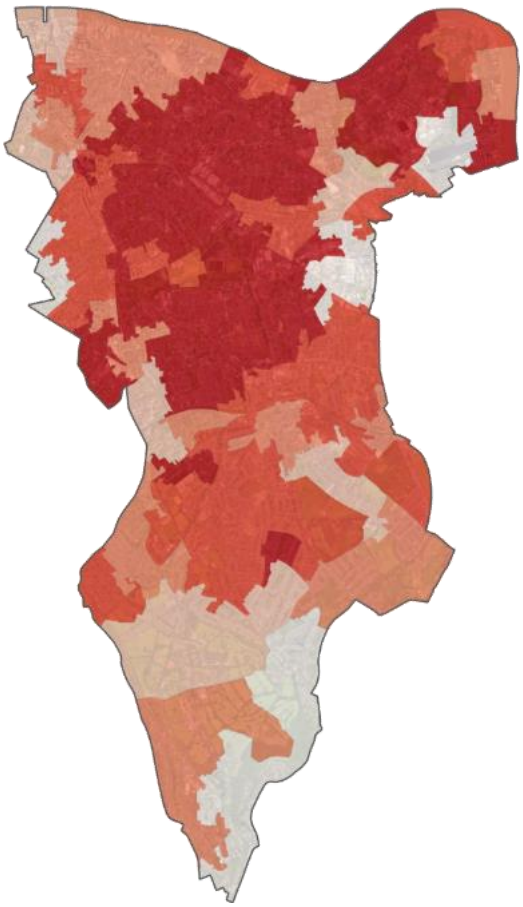


- **Hazard**: weather and climate events which may have adverse effects. Their occurrence, duration and intensity may change due to climate change: Extreme heat, flooding (surface water, fluvial), drought
- **Exposure:** the location of people, property and other resources, relative to the hazard.
- **Vulnerability:** the likelihood of the exposed people, property or resources suffering adverse effects from the hazard. Vulnerability is reduced by the capacity of people and places to adapt or respond to the hazard.

26. The following maps provide a more detailed overview to demonstrate the borough's local climate risk through the climate risk lens. Climate adaptation and improving resilience efforts can focus on reducing vulnerability and exposure.

Urban Heat Island Hazard-Exposure

Figure 4: Southwark urban heat island exposure map



HEAT RISK RANK Lower Higher

27. The urban heat island dataset, Arup's UHeatRank, ranks each Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA) in Southwark on a scale of 1 (coolest) to 5 (hottest). A LSOA is a small geographic region covering 1,000 to 3,000 residents. It models temperatures neighbourhood by neighbourhood, closer to what people actually experience than land surface temperature alone, and identifies the buildings, structures and materials driving the urban heat island effect.

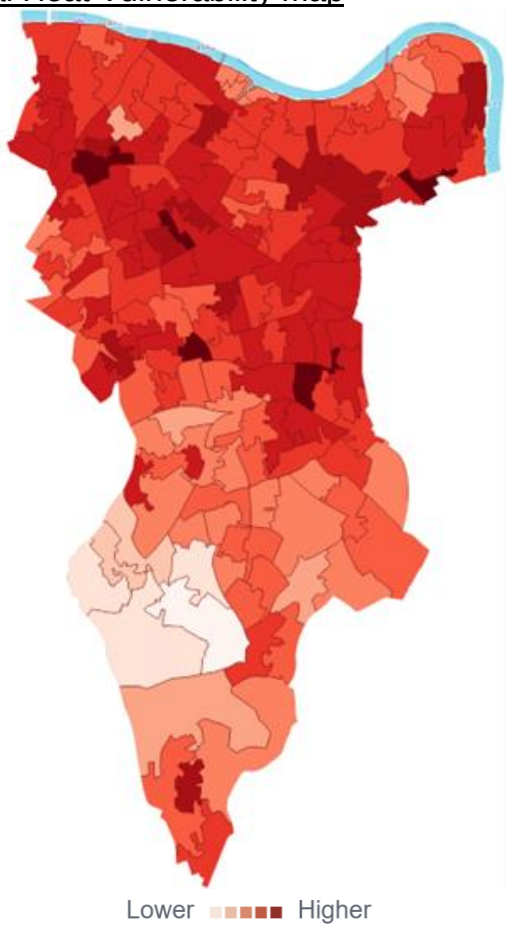
28. Southwark's own position in that ranking is severe. As an inner London borough sitting at the centre of the capital's largest urban heat island, temperatures here are estimated to run around 4.5°C higher than in rural areas on summer days, driven by the combination of dense buildings, hard surfaces and waste heat from human activity that defines the effect (Southwark Council, 2025b; Arup, 2026). The relationship between green cover and heat is correspondingly direct: Arup's international modelling suggests a 30 per cent increase in vegetation cover could reduce excess heat deaths by around 2,500 across six major global cities, and the borough's northern and central wards, Walworth, Camberwell, Peckham and South Bermondsey, combine the highest urban heat rank with the least green space and the highest deprivation, which is why they recur throughout the vulnerability evidence in this briefing (Southwark Council, 2025b).

Socio-Spatial Heat Vulnerability

29. The starting point is the national spatial mapping of human vulnerability to climate-related hazards, which combines the personal, environmental and social factors that shape how heat affects people (Sayers and Partners, 2025). Social vulnerability arises from the interaction of these factors:

- **Personal features of the individual,** such as age and health, which affect their sensitivity to climate impacts;
- **Environmental characteristics,** such as the availability of green space, quality of housing stock or elevation of buildings, which can increase or offset exposure to heat;
- **Social and institutional context,** such as levels of inequality and income, the strength of social networks, the cohesion of neighbourhoods and the day-to-day practices of institutions, such as care regimes in nursing homes, which affect people's ability to adapt.

Figure 5: Socio-Spatial Heat Vulnerability map



30. In Southwark, the areas of highest heat vulnerability cluster where three things coincide: a dense, hard urban form that intensifies the heat hazard; housing poorly suited to heat, including flats and top-floor homes with limited ventilation; and concentrations of vulnerable residents, including older people, those with health conditions, and lower-income households with least capacity to cope. Many of these areas are among the most deprived in the borough, so heat risk and disadvantage reinforce one another. This is consistent with the borough's own statistics below, which show that over half of Southwark is estimated to be at risk of regular

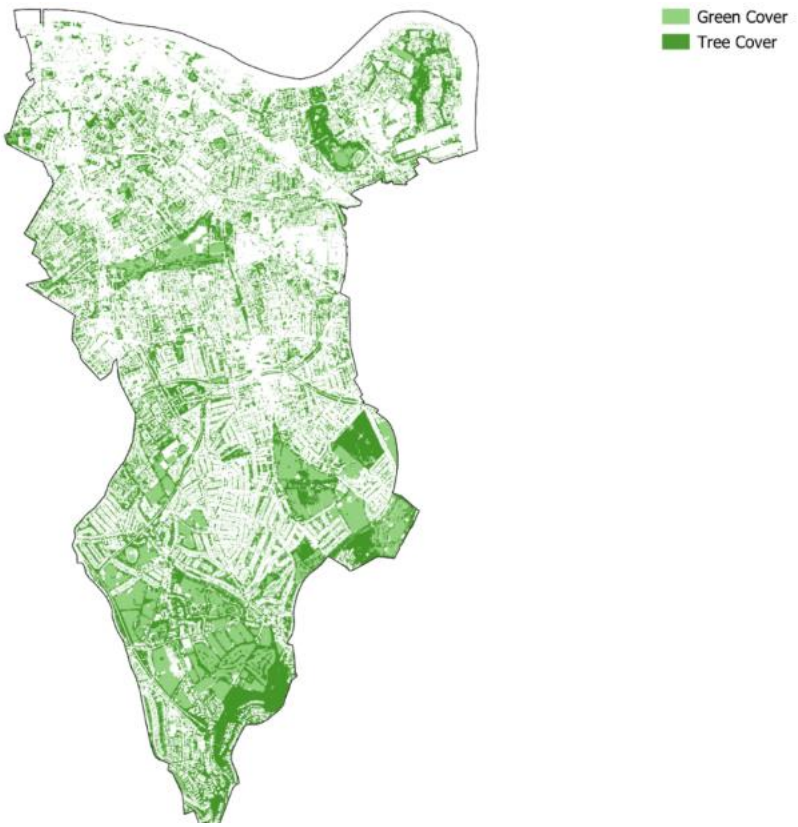
overheating with only 1.5°C of warming, and that up to 123,000 residents are at higher risk from heat because of underlying health conditions.

31. Southwark's own Hot Weather and Health JSNA translates this framework into borough-level evidence, and its population-level analysis is set out in full later in this briefing. In headline terms, it finds that people living in the borough's more disadvantaged wards worry about keeping their home cool at close to three times the rate of those in the least disadvantaged wards, that indoor temperature monitoring found every sampled home exceeded the NHS-recommended maximum during hot weather, and that groups including rough sleepers, older adults living alone, and people with mental health, respiratory or cardiovascular conditions are consistently over-represented among those most severely affected (Southwark Council, 2025b).

Green Cover

32. The green cover mapping shows the expected pattern: the greenest, most tree-covered parts of the borough are also the coolest, while the areas with least green space and canopy run hottest. Access to green space is unevenly distributed and correlates closely with heat vulnerability, so the neighbourhoods with the fewest cool, green places are often those with the most exposed residents. This makes targeted greening, placing new canopy, planting and permeable surfaces where heat risk and vulnerability overlap, one of the most effective and equitable adaptation measures available to the council.

Figure 6: Tree and green cover map



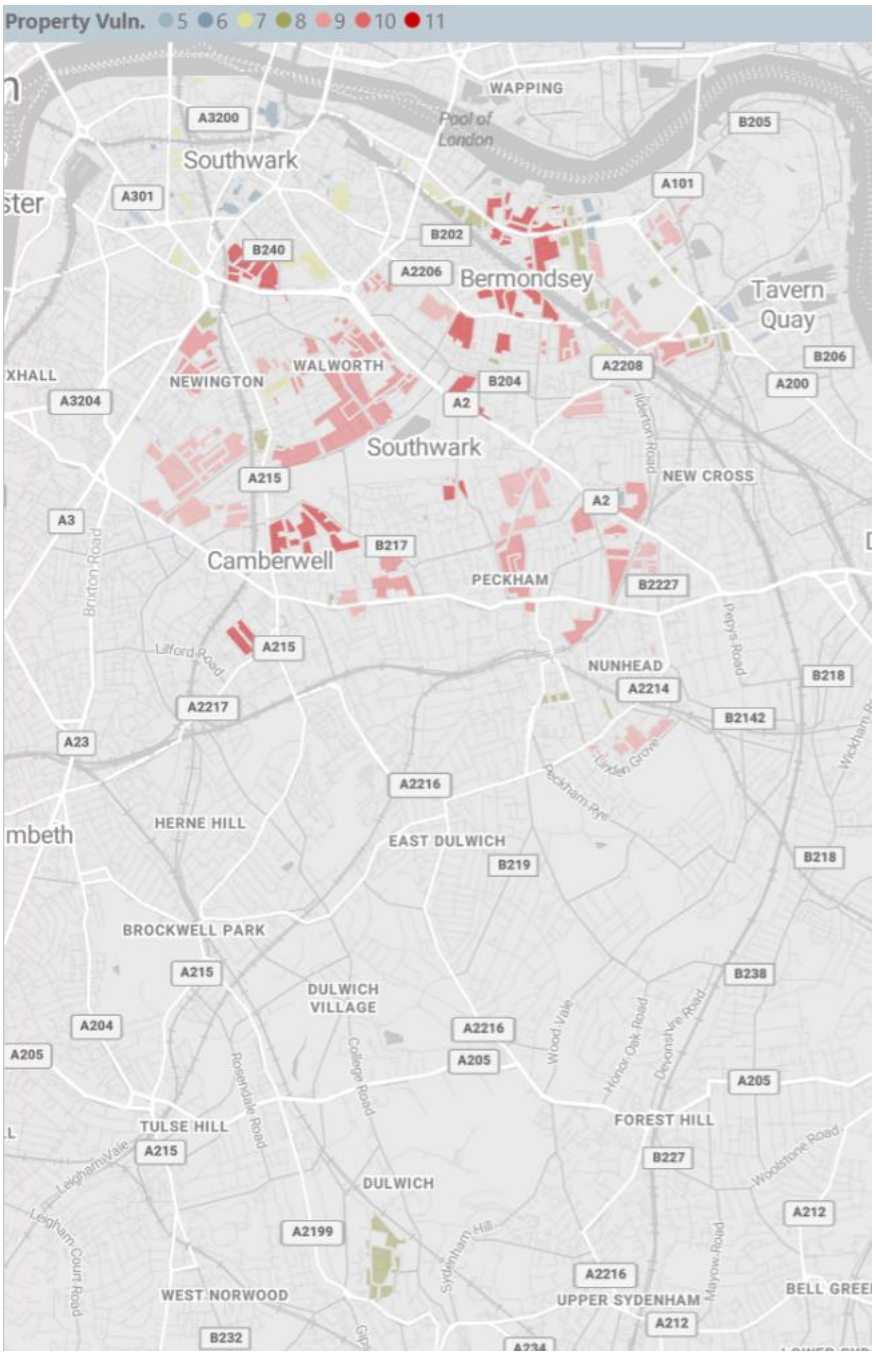
Council estates

33. Officers have also modelled heat vulnerability across Southwark's housing estates using the approach set out in the GLA's assessment of properties vulnerable to heat impacts in London (Greater London Authority, 2024).

34. The modelling identifies the estates and blocks where building form and resident vulnerability combine to produce the highest heat risk, giving the council a prioritised basis for targeting passive cooling, shading, ventilation and retrofit. This is directly relevant both to Awaab's Law Phase 2, since it points to where heat-related defects are most likely to coincide with vulnerable residents, and to the Decent Homes Standard, since it identifies the homes most in need of the wider retrofit and shading programme described below.

35. The council's own housing stock is where the heat risk evidence above converts most directly into an operational challenge. Southwark is the largest social landlord in London, and much of that stock, including a significant number of purpose-built and high-rise flats, predates the ventilation and shading standards now required of new development, which is precisely the combination the national assessment identifies as highest risk (Southwark Council, 2025b). The council's emerging Hot Homes pilot has completed its developmental work in response, identifying shortlisted estates through the same GLA and Arup heat vulnerability dataset used elsewhere in this briefing, combined with social heat vulnerability data, and is scheduled for implementation from summer 2027.

Figure 7: Housing estate heat risk – highest risk



36. The evidence base for what that implementation should prioritise has become considerably clearer this year. National modelling commissioned by the Climate Change Committee tested five packages of heat adaptation measures, from foundational passive measures through to integrated active cooling, and found a marked difference in value for money at the national scale. A foundational package of passive cooling measures (window film and internal blinds) returned a lower cost benefit ratio compared to targeted active cooling (air-conditioning, fans) and passive measures which had a higher cost benefit ratio. In summary, passive measures alone are unlikely to close the gap at the scale the borough's own heat risk data imply, and the case for targeted active cooling in the highest-risk homes is likely to

strengthen rather than weaken as the evidence base matures.

Schools

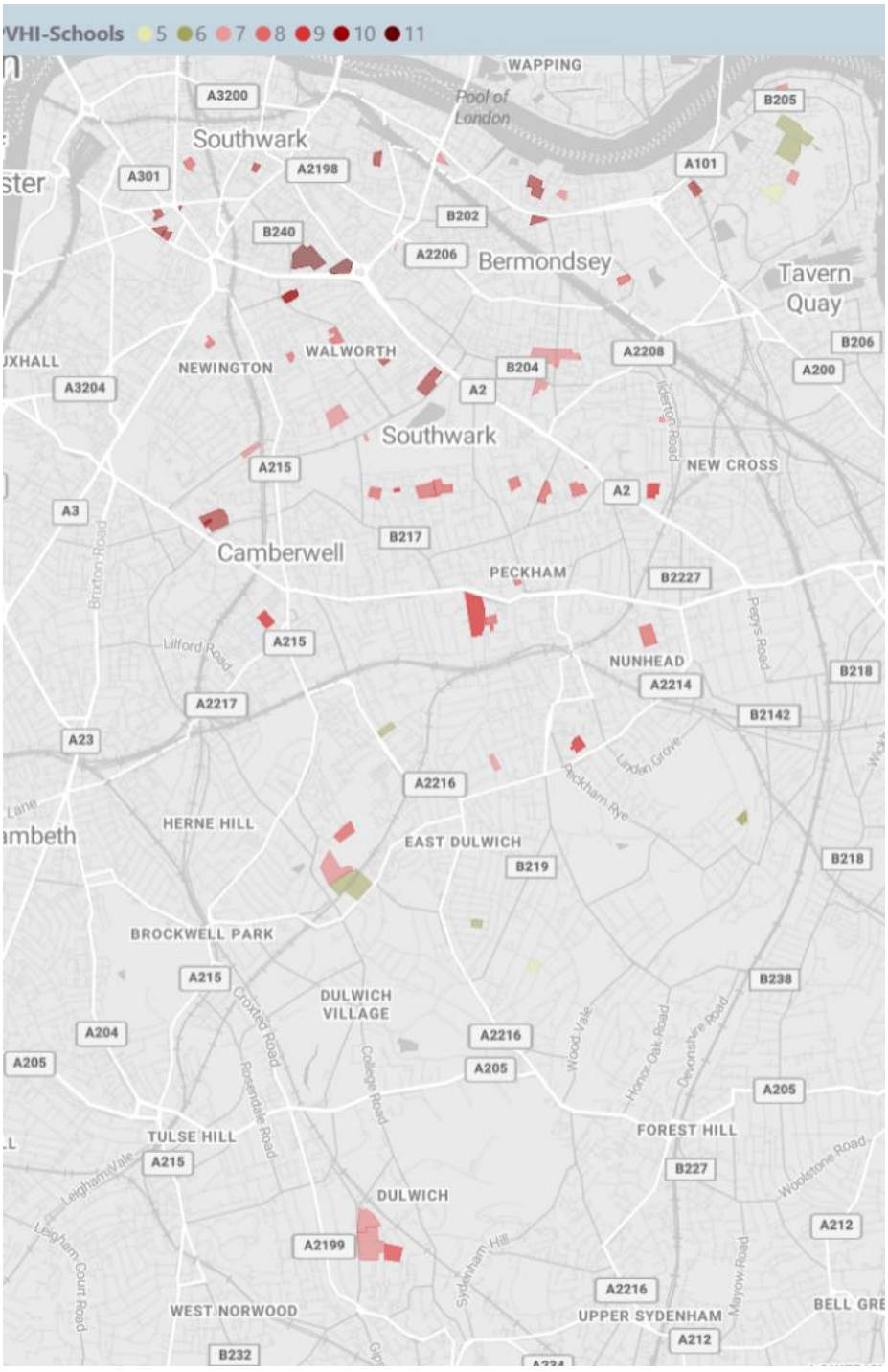
37. Officers have also modelled heat vulnerability across Southwark's schools using the same GLA methodology for properties vulnerable to heat (Greater London Authority, 2024).

38. A dedicated schools heat risk assessment, carried out during the red heat-health alert of June 2026, ranks all 116 of Southwark's open schools using the GLA and Arup PVHI School Heat Vulnerability Index applied at the level of each school's own lower super output area (Southwark Council, 2026a; Greater London Authority and Arup, 2024).

39. Of the 116 schools assessed, 61 fall in the higher vulnerability tier, 37 in the moderate tier and 18 in the lower tier. 75 schools sit in areas of elevated urban heat, 83 have early years pupils on site, and 29 have tree canopy below the borough's lower quartile. Among the higher-tier schools, 45 have early years pupils on site and 17 have low canopy nearby, so high urban heat, deprivation, large pupil numbers and a lack of shade often coincide at the same sites.

40. The risk to schools is well evidenced nationally as well as locally. The Department for Education's own climate risk assessment estimates that days too hot for learning in some spaces will rise from 1.7 a year now to 2.9 by 2050 and 7.8 by 2100, and that learning days lost to generally warmer temperatures will rise from 6.7 to 8.2 and then 11.4 over the same period (Department for Education, 2025). The national risk assessment separately finds that by the 2080s cumulative lost learning time in English schools could reach 14 days a year, with children in southern England experiencing severe cognitive performance loss for over 80 per cent of the spring and summer terms without adaptation (CCC, 2026a). The risk falls hardest on early years and primary pupils, who are physiologically most sensitive to heat, pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, and schools in the most deprived areas, where pupils are least likely to have a cool home to return to.

Figure 8: Schools heat risk map



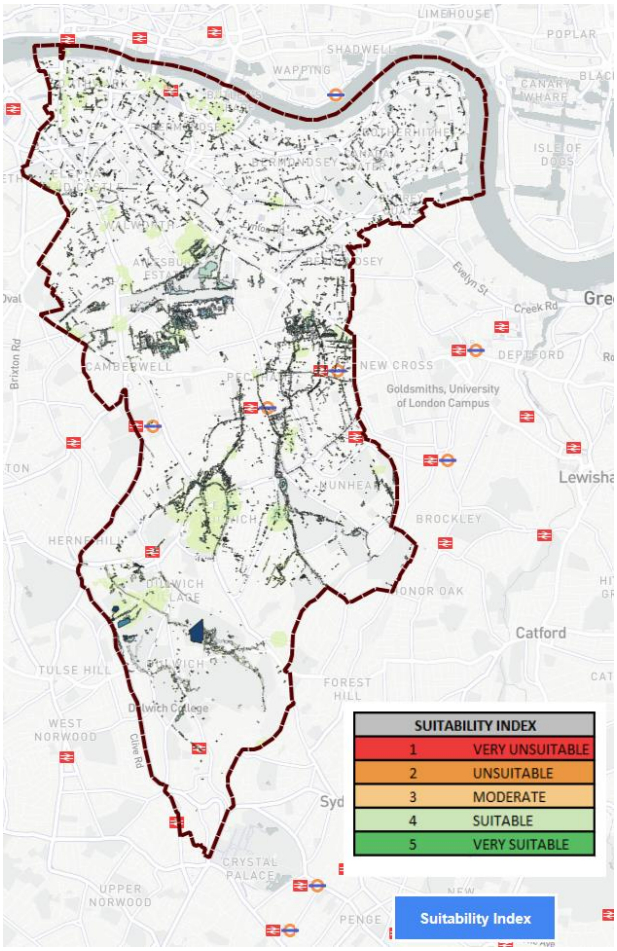
41. For the council this gives a ranked basis to inform potential prioritisation within schools capital programmes, assuming funding is available, confirmation of the stock condition and school support. The highest-risk schools, coloured darker red on the map, combine elevated urban heat, large numbers of young or vulnerable pupils and limited existing shade, and are the natural starting point for the shading, tree planting and cooling ventilation measures set out in a wider heat adaptation programme. School with lower risk are highlighted in a lighter red, but it should be noted that all schools will experience excess heat during heatwaves.

Flood risk

42. Southwark has two primary types of flood risk: tidal flooding from the River Thames and surface-water flooding from intense rainfall. The relative risk varies considerably across the borough because of its topography, built form and land use.

43. Surface water flooding occurs when the volume and intensity of rainfall overwhelms local drainage systems. Unlike flooding from rivers, surface water flooding can happen away from a river, which means it can happen in places that people would not expect. Surface water flood risk is mapped and covered as part of the work of the Southwark Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA). Under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, The LLFA is responsible for managing local flood risks and acting as a statutory consultee on drainage for major developments. Climate change is predicted to worsen rainfall and increase the occurrence of severe surface water flooding

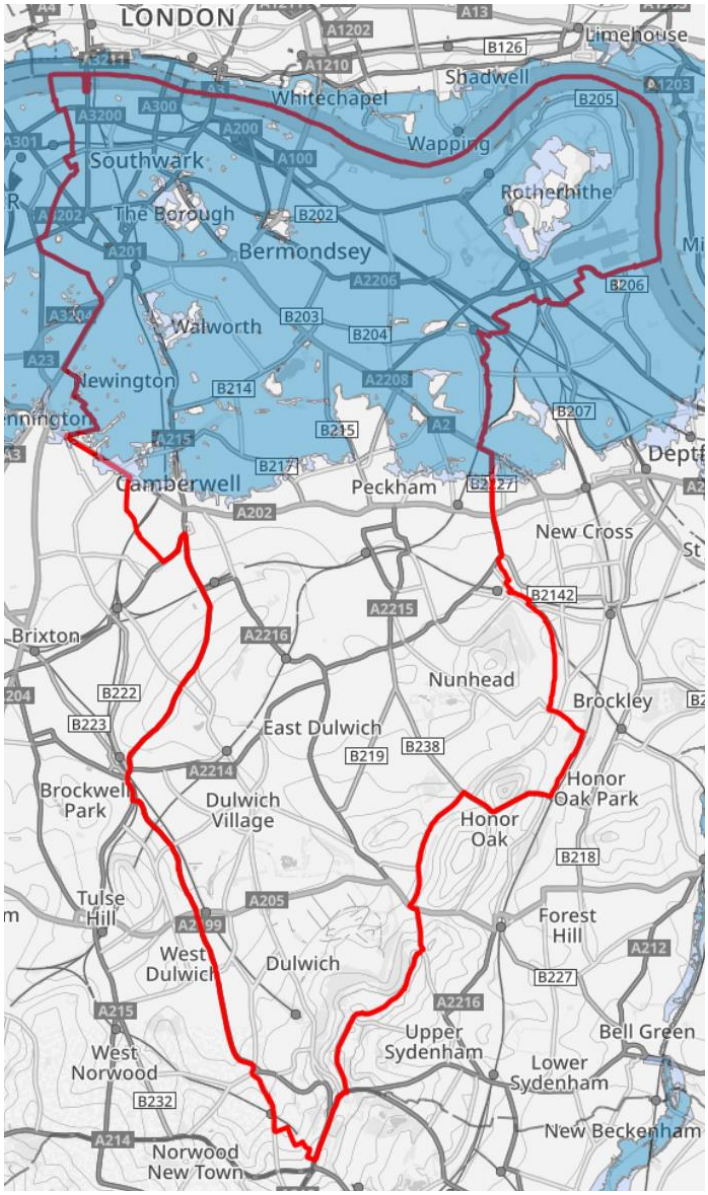
Figure 9: Locations of surface water flooding that are likely to occur because of rainfall with 1% (1 in 100) chance of happening in any given year, and SuDs suitability rating locations for suitable and very suitable locations.



44. Additionally, the LLFA have completed SuDS opportunity modelling for schools to support additional activities to mitigate surface water flood risk across Southwark's schools.

45. Tidal flooding represents the most significant potential consequences because large parts of northern Southwark lie within the Thames tidal floodplain that is currently protected by the Thames flood-defence system, including the Thames Barrier and local defences (river walls). The principal residual risk from tidal flooding is overtopping at the highest tides or a breach of the defences. River flooding risk is also managed by the LLFA with action focused on the emerging Southwark Riverside Strategy to reduced increased tidal flood risk because of long-term sea-level rise arising from climate change.

Figure 10: Map of Southwark flood zones (2 and 3) that have the highest risk of tidal flooding



Drought risk

46. Southwark is considered to have a high and increasing drought risk as part of southeast England context. The borough is supplied primarily by Thames Water, whose supply area is officially classified as having serious water stress. Densification, higher water demand, leakage, and climate change all contribute to the risk, where prolonged dry periods can reduce groundwater, affect the borough's parks and trees, and increase pressure on water supplies for residents and businesses. The council is planning measures such as improving water conservation, developing updated planning policy and making green spaces more drought-resistant through the choice of plant and tree species.

Wildfire risk

47. Wildfire is a newly material risk for a dense central London borough. In 2025 London recorded its highest number of wildfires since 2022, with the London Fire Brigade attending around 88 wildfire incidents between June and August alone, and 122 by the end of the season, a 42 per cent increase on 2024 (Greater London Authority, 2026). Southwark has significant parks and green space, and the risk is to those spaces, to nearby property, and to air quality across the borough during fire events. As hot, dry summers become more frequent, grass and vegetation fires are likely to become a more regular call on the fire service and on the council's parks and emergency planning functions.

Subsidence risk

48. Subsidence risk rises in hot, dry summers as clay soils shrink and swell, damaging building foundations, walls and buried services. Much of London, including Southwark, sits on clay that is susceptible to this movement, and older buildings are particularly exposed. The national assessment identifies subsidence as a growing risk under further warming, with consequences for the housing stock, for insurance costs, and for the council's own buildings and infrastructure. It is a slow, cumulative risk rather than an acute one, but it interacts with heat and drought and adds to the case for managing the borough's trees, drainage and ground conditions together.

POLICY AND DELIVERY CONTEXT

49. The policy framework around the borough has moved quickly, and several instruments now shape what the council must and should do. Some create legal duties, others set strong expectations through planning and funding, and together they define the environment in which the borough's own strategy operates.

50. A summary of the wider national, regional and further Southwark policy context is outlined at Appendix 2.

51.

Southwark Climate Change Strategy and Climate Action Plan

52. The borough's own strategy has evolved steadily towards an integrated approach. Southwark declared a climate emergency in 2019 and adopted a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan in 2021, extended in 2024 by a Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy that set adaptation on a firmer footing and identified the priority climate risks facing the borough (Southwark Council, 2024).

53. In September 2025 the Cabinet brought these strands together, adopting a refreshed Climate Change Strategy and a single Climate Action Plan for 2025 that supersede the earlier documents and consolidate the adaptation actions into one plan (Southwark Council, 2025a). The 2025 review removed actions now delivered through other programmes and produced a slimmer, more focused plan. The effect is that adaptation is no longer a separate track running alongside decarbonisation: the two sit within a single framework, aligned with the national climate risk assessment.

54. The strategy is built on mainstreaming, on the principle that every officer is a climate change officer, since the risks reach across every service the council provides (London Councils, 2025). This is the right model for a risk that touches housing, planning, highways, public health, parks, emergency planning and asset management alike, but it also makes progress dependent on many services rather than on a single team.

55. The Climate Action Plan provides the details of the activity required within five key themes:

- **Theme 1 - Buildings and energy**
  Buildings and energy are central to creating a resilient, low-carbon borough by reducing carbon emissions, improving energy efficiency, expanding clean and community-owned energy, and adapting buildings to the impacts of climate change. As buildings account for around 78% of local emissions, we will prioritise upgrading homes and other buildings to reduce energy use, address overheating and flood risks, and ensure the borough's infrastructure can support growing demand for clean electricity.

- **Theme 2 - Streets and transport**
  Streets and transport play a crucial role in reducing carbon emissions and building climate resilience by creating safer, greener, and more accessible places that encourage walking, cycling, and sustainable travel. Through the Streets for People Strategy, we will reduce transport emissions, improve air quality and road safety, use lower-carbon materials in street improvements, and continue adapting our streets to better withstand heatwaves and surface water flooding.

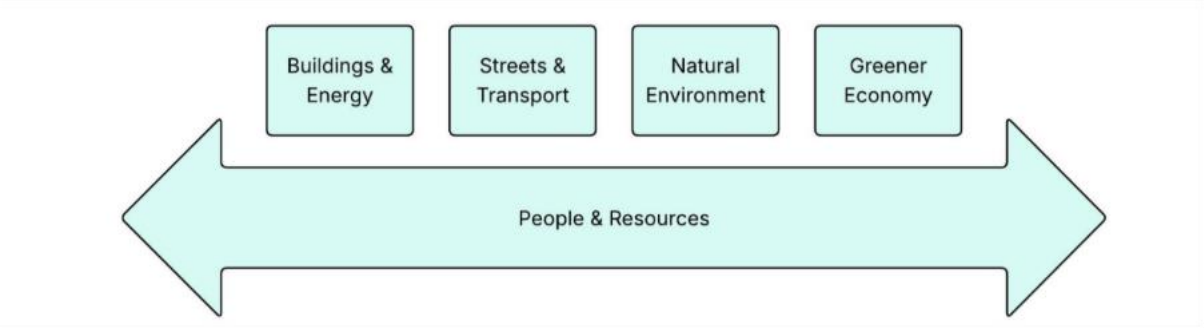
- **Theme 3 - Natural Environment**
  Natural environment plays a vital role in tackling climate change by supporting biodiversity, improving health and wellbeing, and helping communities adapt to increasing climate risks. Through protecting and enhancing parks, trees, and green spaces, we will increase habitats for wildlife, expand the borough's tree canopy, reduce the impacts of

heatwaves and flooding, and ensure all residents have access to a greener, more resilient environment.

- **Theme 4 - Greener Economy**
  Greener economy focuses on creating a low-carbon, resilient local economy by supporting businesses, developing green jobs and skills, and ensuring residents benefit from the transition to a more sustainable future. By reducing waste, increasing reuse and recycling, promoting sustainable consumption and diets, and improving resource efficiency, we will strengthen the circular economy while reducing emissions and delivering wider social, economic, and health benefits.

- **Theme 5 - People and resources**
  People and resources provides the foundations for delivering our climate ambitions by ensuring the council has the skills, funding, partnerships, governance, and tools needed to respond effectively to the climate emergency. By embedding climate considerations into decision-making, strengthening the use of data and climate budgeting, reducing emissions within our supply chains, and securing investment for retrofit and adaptation projects, we will build a climate-ready organisation and empower staff, residents, and partners to lead climate action.

Figure 11: Five themes in the Climate Action Plan



56. Officers within the Climate Change Team engage with colleagues across council departments to review progress against agreed actions and gather evidence of delivery. This process has provided a valuable opportunity to strengthen cross-departmental collaboration, improve oversight of climate-related activity, and promote a more coordinated approach to implementation. It has also helped to embed climate considerations, reinforcing the principle that delivering the council's climate commitments is a shared responsibility across the organisation. Through this engagement, the council has continued to build capacity, strengthen accountability for delivery, and support a more integrated approach to achieving its climate objectives.

57. Following the appointment of the new executive after the local election in May 2025, the council’s Climate Action Plan has been updated at the 13 October 2026 Executive meeting, so that plan's 29 actions are allocated to the new executive members.

58. The allocation of Climate Action Plan actions to executive members is intended to strengthen accountability for delivery. Executive members will act as portfolio leads for their allocated actions, providing strategic oversight, championing delivery within their areas of responsibility, and working with officers to monitor progress, address barriers and ensure climate objectives are reflected in council priorities and decision-making.

59. The council is currently developing a new Borough Action Plan based on the new Joint Administration's priorities. This will serve as the council's overarching strategic delivery framework. Once adopted, the metrics within the plan will drive delivery and change and align with the Climate Change Strategy and Climate Action Plan, ensuring adaptation and resilience, continues to support the council's strategic objectives and outcomes for residents.

Implementation of the Climate Action Plan

60. The Climate Action Plan sets 29 actions across five themes. The actions most directly relevant to climate adaptation and heat are summarised below, but most actions have adaptation threaded through them.
    - Action 1 commits the council to significantly reduce emissions from council homes and ensure they are resilient to climate change, including a portfolio of measures for residents most vulnerable to overheating, training for planned maintenance and repairs teams in retrofit and overheating technologies, and pilot schemes of new low-carbon homes to inform future policy. It is led by Climate Change, Asset Management and Southwark Construction, is costed as very high, and runs on an ongoing basis (Southwark Council, 2025a).
    - Action 3 commits to make schools sustainable and resilient to climate change, adapting buildings and grounds so pupils and staff are safe in heatwaves and reducing flood damage to at-risk schools, delivered through the Climate Action Schools Network and a boiler upgrade and replacement roadmap. It is led by Sustainable Growth, Children's Services, Climate Change and Highways, targeted for 2030, at low to high cost (Southwark Council, 2025a).
    - Action 4 commits to reduce emissions from council buildings and ensure they are climate change ready, including improving the resilience of offices, leisure centres and libraries to heatwaves through the council's Strategic Asset Management Plan. It is led by Climate Change and Corporate Facilities Management, targeted for 2030, at high to very high cost (Southwark Council, 2025a).
    - Action 17 commits to protect people and buildings from flooding, delivering the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, updating the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment to reflect a changing climate, and preparing a Riverside Strategy for rising sea levels and Thames flood events. It is led by the Flood teams with support from the Planning and Climate Change Team, ongoing, at low to high cost (Southwark Council, 2025a).
    - Action 24 commits to collaborate with communities and partners on climate action and resilience, including a programme with the NHS and voluntary sector to protect vulnerable residents from hot weather, based on the Hot Weather and Health JSNA, and expanding the number of buildings offering cool spaces where coverage is weakest. It is led by Climate Change, Public Health and cross-council teams, ongoing, at low cost (Southwark Council,

2025a).

- Action 25 commits to get the council prepared for the effects of climate change, including an extreme weather risk assessment to support emergency planning, a borough-wide climate risk and vulnerability assessment, a wildfire emergency plan with the London Fire Brigade, and a cross-council heat plan with an adverse weather preparedness group spanning Public Health and Emergency Planning. It is led by Climate Change, Organisational Transformation and Public Health, ongoing, at low cost (Southwark Council, 2025a).
- Action 27 commits to make evidence-led investment decisions and grow the funding available for climate action, including setting an annual climate budget, allocating £8 million of Green Buildings Fund funding to projects by the end of 2026, and finishing the allocation of the Climate Capital Fund over the same period. It is led by the Climate Change team, targeted for 2026, at low cost (Southwark Council, 2025a).

61. Current activity on the ground reflects these commitments. On heat and housing, the cool space network gives residents without cool homes verified places of respite during dangerous heat, and the Hot Homes pilot, described above, is preparing for implementation. On data and risk, the schools climate resilience audit produces heat and flood risk profiles for individual school sites through a reproducible geospatial workflow that can be extended to other parts of the estate. On green infrastructure and water, the borough uses its streets, parks and planning functions to add canopy, shading, permeable surfaces and sustainable drainage that reduce heat and surface water risk together. On community and partnership, the Community Energy Fund supports community-led energy and resilience projects, and the borough works through pan-London and academic partnerships to extend its reach.

62. The intended outcomes are practical: homes and public buildings that stay safe in extreme heat; fewer properties and less infrastructure exposed to surface water; a riverside protected over the long term; better data to direct investment to where it does best; and residents, particularly the most vulnerable, who are better informed and better prepared.

63. Other relevant activities underway include the development of options for a just transition toolkit to support to council project and programme design and ensure EDI objectives are considered throughout process so that they result in a just transition for all.

64. Officers are also seeking to maximise the internal and external impact of climate related behaviour change, engagement and communication activities. An example is the London Climate Week programme in June 2026 that focused on improvement the council's organisational capacity to deliver climate action.

65. Further workstreams include developing a staff climate literacy training programme for officers and councillors and a review our 'climate concurrents' in the council decision-making and report writing process, to ensure the Part 1.3, (i) of council's constitution is met, specifically that all decisions of the council consider the likely climate consequences and the

likely equality (including socio-economic disadvantage and health inequality) consequences of the relevant decision. This requirement embeds the likely climate and equality impacts of that decision in council reports.

66. The council has delivered a range of climate action projects over the past year including the following that have positive adaption and resilience outcomes:
    - The Streets for People programme has delivered significant urban greening benefits through the planting of 5,985 trees across highways, housing estates, parks and hedgerows.
    - The creation of a wildlife corridor linking Burgess Park and Myatt's Field, helping to strengthen habitats and biodiversity, and the planting of a new community orchard on the Oliver Goldsmith Estate.
    - Greening initiatives have continued to be delivered through highways projects across the borough, including schemes at Cooks Road, Goose Green and Ilderton Road
    - Supported 12 schools to develop Climate Action Plans and grew the Southwark Climate Action Schools Network to 36 schools.
    - Helped increase total investment raised through Southwark Green Investment to £3.5 million.
    - Received a Leadership Award in Sustain's Good Food Local Report 2026
    - Supported recruitment of a Woodland Nature Recovery Officer to deliver habitat improvements and community engagement.
    - Progressed an Integrated Weed Management Policy to reduce herbicide use across highways, housing and parks.
    - Developed a climate risk dashboard and strengthened climate resilience planning through the Local Plan Review.
    - Partnered with King's College London on the Hopeful Futures climate adaptation project.

Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) and Action Plan

67. Southwark's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) Action Plan sets out how the Council will improve the borough's resilience to flooding and climate change. It includes actions to raise awareness of flood risk, work more closely with partners, deliver flood alleviation schemes, improve flood records and asset management, and promote sustainable drainage and green infrastructure. Although the action plan was last formally updated in October 2023, the Council has continued to make good progress towards its objectives through a programme of planning, SuDS, flood alleviation and community engagement work. Recent projects demonstrate that the Action Plan is continuing to shape work across the borough, with schemes being delivered in schools, housing estates and other areas at risk of surface water flooding. The plan is scheduled to be reviewed to record this progress and provide an update against each action.

68. The following section outlines several recent case studies to support the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy Action Plan.

English Martyrs Primary School, Flint Street

69. The English Martyrs Primary School project is part of Southwark's SuDS in Schools programme and provides a practical example of how sustainable drainage can be incorporated into an existing school site. The scheme progressed from concept and detailed design through to construction, which was completed during February 2026. The completed project includes a planted rain garden and SuDS planters, helping to manage rainwater within the school grounds while introducing visible green features into the playground environment.

Figure 12: English Martyrs Primary School playground



Tupman House, Jamaica Road

70. The Tupman House scheme is a completed housing estate SuDS project designed to improve the management of surface water within the residential grounds. The drainage works were completed in 2025, following earlier consultation with residents, with further planting and landscaping planned. The scheme is designed to remain dry under normal conditions and temporarily manage water during significant rainfall, avoiding permanent standing water. Residents were kept informed through consultation and letter drops.

Figure 12: Tupman House SuDS scheme



SuDS Guidance Document

71. A SuDS guidance document has been prepared and is currently under review. The document brings Southwark's planning, design and submission requirements into one place, providing clearer expectations for what is needed for SuDS in developments, and is written in a non-technical and engaging tone, making it accessible for all developers seeking guidance. It also encourages schemes to deliver wider benefits for water quality, biodiversity, amenity and climate resilience. Once finalised, the guidance will help provide a more consistent approach to securing high-quality, maintainable SuDS through new development.

Southwark Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)

72. This strategic assessment identifies the spatial variation in flood risk across the Borough. Its assists in planning policy formulation, strategic planning, development control and flood risk management. The assessment additionally contains specific recommendations, for both the council and local developers with regards to the effective management and mitigation of flood risk, including guidance on the requirements for site specific Flood Risk Assessments and the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). The SFRA is currently being updated by the LLFA.

Southwark Riverside Strategy (emerging)

73. Southwark has around 7km of frontage along the River Thames. Climate change is predicted to increase tidal flood risk from the River Thames over the coming decades, requiring significant investment in flood resilience to the river wall that will enhance the protection currently in place for communities, businesses and infrastructure. The Southwark Riverside Strategy is being developed by the flood team in collaboration with wider council teams to respond to these challenges. It will outline key objectives, timelines, and the role of the council in applying flood defence and climate resilience strategies to the Southwark riverside area.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

CURRENT PRIORITY ACTION AREAS

The role of the local authority

74. The council's role in adaptation is wider than any single duty. Analysis for the Climate Change Committee finds there is no single climate adaptation duty in law and no dedicated adaptation duty act; instead, adaptation is carried out under a mosaic of duties and broad discretionary powers, spread across the laws governing planning, flood risk, civil contingencies, housing and the environment (CAG Consultants, 2026; CAG Consultants, 2025). The climate team is monitoring developments relating to the UK's Adaptation Reporting Power (ARP) under the Climate Change Act 2008, which requires or invites key infrastructure and public service organizations to assess and report on their climate change risks and adaptation plans.

75. The council has several statutory obligations that may be impacted by the effects of climate change. For example, 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.

76. In practice the council acts through many routes at once. It has specific statutory duties, for example as a lead local flood authority and, under Awaab's Law, as a social landlord. It has broad discretionary powers, including the general power of competence, that allow it to act where no specific duty applies (CAG Consultants, 2025). And it has the planning duty to embed adaptation in development. Beyond formal duties, it acts as a direct service provider and landlord, a place shaper through planning and regeneration, a convener of local partners, and an influencer of residents and businesses (CAG Consultants, 2026).

77. Beyond these general powers, local authorities carry direct statutory duties that make adaptation an operational as well as a strategic matter. Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, Southwark is a Category 1 responder, which carries a duty to assess the risk of emergencies, including extreme weather such as heatwaves and flooding, and to maintain up to date emergency plans, publish a community risk register, and identify and

support people at increased risk (CAG Consultants, 2026). As a lead local flood authority the council has parallel duties to prepare and maintain a local flood risk management strategy and to investigate significant flood incidents. Neither duty is discretionary in the way much of the wider adaptation agenda is, and both connect directly to the emergency planning and community risk work described above.

78. National analysis of what this bundle of roles adds up to in practice identifies several priority actions where local authorities hold the greatest direct influence: adapting council-owned buildings and assets to reduce overheating and flood risk; ensuring departmental business continuity plans are tested and account for climate-related disruption to transport, energy and telecommunications; running or supporting community hubs and cool spaces during severe weather, working through Local Resilience Forums; and identifying and supporting residents most vulnerable to climate impacts, including through utility companies' Priority Services Registers (CAG Consultants, 2026). Each of these maps onto an existing or planned strand of the borough's own programme.

79. The implication cuts two ways. The breadth of these powers gives Southwark real scope to lead, to go beyond a minimum compliance position and shape a well-adapted borough. But because so much rests on discretionary powers rather than hard duties, adaptation depends on local choices about how those powers are used, and can be squeezed when budgets and attention are stretched. This is precisely why clear political direction on priorities matters.

Mainstreaming entry points within the council

80. The council's climate change team is small relative to a climate action plan that spans the whole council. Delivery therefore depends on adaptation being built into the services that control the levers. The decisions that most affect the borough's future resilience are taken in planning, housing, highways and emergency planning, and adaptation succeeds only if it is embedded there. Several main entry points are as follows.

- The emerging **Borough Action Plan** will include metrics to drive delivery and awareness of adaption measures where the council has most control.
- Ongoing delivery of the **Climate Action Plan** to further understanding and ownership of climate action.
- The **Local Plan** is the borough's statutory planning framework and one of the most powerful adaptation tools available. Planning law places a legal duty on the council to include policies that secure that development contributes to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change (CAG Consultants, 2025). It is the route through which overheating standards for new homes, sustainable drainage requirements, urban greening and riverside defence requirements are set and enforced, and because it shapes development for years ahead, getting adaptation right in the Local Plan prevents exposure being built in that would be expensive or impossible to remove later.
- **Housing asset management** is where the borough's duties as a landlord and its largest opportunity to reduce heat risk come together. The social

housing portfolio is where two parallel duties meet: the Awaab's Law duty to repair heat-related defects (broken windows, etc…, although limited to defects) from 30 November 2026, and the Decent Homes Standard's wider requirement to keep homes free of excess heat as a Category 1 hazard, which is where retrofit, passive cooling measures such as shading and ventilation, and, where necessary, active cooling are delivered. Building adaptation into planned maintenance and stock investment is how the borough turns both into a managed programme of works rather than a reactive one.

- The streets and public realm programme, delivered as **Streets for People**, is the vehicle for the measures that cool neighbourhoods and slow rainfall at street level: street trees, shading, permeable surfaces, rain gardens and sustainable drainage. Because these sit in the highway and public realm, they reach parts of the borough that housing and planning interventions do not, and deliver adaptation alongside the programme's wider aims for active travel.
- **Emergency planning** connects adaptation to the council's civil contingencies duties. Response to heat-health and flood alerts, support for vulnerable residents during severe weather, and the arrangements coordinated through the London resilience partnership all sit within this function, alongside the council's wider Category 1 responder duties set out in the section that follows. Following this summer's red heat-health alert, officers are preparing a session for the Business Continuity board in September, reflecting on the borough's response to this year's heatwaves and identifying improvements to emergency plans for the cascading impacts of heat on council services, in the pattern set out earlier in this briefing. This work is being developed jointly with the council's adverse weather preparedness group and the cool kits working group, which is developing a heat resilience kit offer for vulnerable residents in care settings, so that lessons from the acute response and the longer-term adaptation programme reinforce one another rather than sitting in separate tracks.
- The third stage of the council's **climate budget** will assess adaptation pathways alongside emissions reductions. Development work will be undertaken to agree methodologies for portfolios.

Theory of change: three horizons

81. Adaptation must hold together action on very different timescales, from the emergency response that was needed this summer to the reshaping of the borough's buildings and streets over decades. To sequence this, officers use the Three Horizons framework, a simple and widely used way of thinking about change over time that keeps short-term and long-term action in view at once rather than trading one off against the other.

82. The framework describes three overlapping horizons. The first is the present system: the way things are done now, the actions that must be taken within current constraints, and the arrangements that are increasingly strained as the climate changes. The third is the transformed future: a borough adapted to a warmer, wetter climate, where resilience is designed into homes, streets and services as a matter of course. The second is the transition between the two: the enabling changes, innovations and

investments that move the system from the first horizon towards the third.

83. Read across the council's climate and wider programmes:
    - Now, the first horizon: the immediate measures that keep people safe under current conditions and meet current duties, including the cool space network, the seasonal heat-health response, flood incident response, and meeting the Awaab's Law duty as each phase lands. These protect residents today but on their own manage symptoms rather than reduce underlying exposure.
    - Enabling, the second horizon: the changes that build the borough's capacity to adapt at scale, including embedding overheating, drainage and greening standards in planning and asset management, developing more granular local risk data, establishing reliable funding routes, and building the partnerships and governance delivery at scale requires. This is where most of the leverage sits, because it changes the conditions under which every future decision is made. They key enabling conditions for change are detailed in the following the section.
    - Transformative, the third horizon: the longer-term shift towards a resilient borough, with green infrastructure, retrofit for both warmth and cooling, and sustainable water management designed into the fabric of streets, homes and public space. This horizon is reached through the accumulation of enabling changes, and naming it keeps long-term ambition in view when short-term pressures dominate.

84. The value of the framework is that it makes explicit where each piece of work sits and what it is for. It guards against allowing urgent, first-horizon response to crowd out the enabling work that would reduce future demand, and against pursuing long-term ambition without the near-term steps that build towards it. The right portfolio has activity in all three horizons at once.

ENABLING CONDITIONS FOR CHANGE AND DELIVERY

Governance and engagement

85. Adaptation is delivered across divisions and teams rather than by one of them, and the strength and the difficulty of the model are the same thing. Mainstreaming reaches the whole council and puts climate risk in front of every service, but it makes delivery dependent on the capacity and priorities of services that are already stretched, and it can leave no single owner clearly accountable for cross-cutting outcomes.

86. The central barriers are change management and resource. Turning a sound strategy into delivery at pace requires clear ownership of each priority, dedicated capacity to drive it, and firm corporate commitment so that adaptation is weighed properly against other pressures rather than deferred. This is most acute on heat risk. The housing overheating response cuts across all services with several having greater agency and responsibility including housing, highways, asset management, public health and the climate team. No single one of them can deliver it alone, so without a clear lead and an agreed plan the work risks stalling between services even when each is willing.

87. Engagement is the other half of governance, because adaptation done to residents rather than with them is both less effective and less fair. Deliberative work with residents has shown strong appetite for early action and a clear expectation that the most vulnerable are prioritised, and it provides a resident-grounded basis for the choices the council makes (King's College London, 2026)

Funding and finance

88. There is no single climate adaptation budget within the council, and funding is drawn from a mix of sources that gives some flexibility but little certainty. An initial £1 million from the Climate Change Capital Fund is allocated to commence delivery of climate adaptation priorities, alongside a £1 million biodiversity allocation for nature-based solutions. This sits alongside new investment secured for the retrofit of homes, schools and leisure centres and core service budgets (Southwark Council, 2024; Southwark Council, 2025; London Councils, 2025).

89. The council is candid that this falls short of what the risk demands. Two features are worth drawing out. First, capital is consistently easier to secure than revenue: it is easier to fund a one-off scheme than the continuing work of assessment, coordination and maintenance that keeps adaptation effective, and that revenue gap is a structural weakness rather than a temporary one. Second, pilot projects have and will be used deliberately to test measures and build the evidence needed to make the case for wider investment, so that scaling rests on demonstrated outcomes. This is set against the wider significant funding challenge and the need for the council to find significant savings over the three-year period from 2027/28.

90. The national picture reinforces how large the gap is. The CCC puts the adaptation investment needed at around £11 billion a year nationally, split roughly equally between public and private sources (CCC, 2026a). No local authority can close a gap of that order from its own budgets, which points to two conclusions: that a deliberate approach to external and grant funding is essential, and that adaptation has to be embedded in mainstream capital programmes, such as housing retrofit and streets investment, so that it is delivered through spending that is already planned.

Data and evidence

91. The evidence base is a strength of the borough's position. The council works from open-source data, from national and regional risk mapping such as the GLA's heat vulnerability data and the surface water and estuary mapping, and from its own geospatial analysis, including the cool space network and the schools audit. This combination is what allows adaptation to be targeted precisely rather than spread evenly, and it is a capability many authorities lack.

92. There are opportunities to develop more granular local data, specifically around heat risk. National and regional mapping identifies broad concentrations of risk, but sharper information on which specific streets and

buildings (e.g. TRA Halls) run hottest, and on how indoor conditions vary across the stock, would let the council prioritise cooling, retrofit and cool space provision far more precisely. Investing in this data improves the targeting of every subsequent pound spent.

Collaboration and community engagement

93. Adaptation at scale cannot be delivered by one borough alone, and the council works through several kinds of partnership that extend its reach.

94. Deliberative engagement is one strand. Hopeful Futures, a project led by King's College London with London Councils and Southwark brought residents together to imagine what a well-adapted Southwark could look like by 2050 and the steps needed to get there, using creative and participatory methods alongside expert evidence (King's College London, 2026). Its findings are directly useful: residents want early action, a consistent focus on the most vulnerable, regulation that holds organisations to account, and planning that looks beyond electoral cycles. This gives the council resident-grounded priorities to build on, and a tested method for engaging the public on a subject that can otherwise feel remote.

95. Pan-London and academic partnerships are the other strand. The council co-led the Resilient and Green theme of the London Councils Climate Programme with the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, working with boroughs across the capital to strengthen adaptation and resilience, and works with academic and public partners on evidence and delivery (London Councils, 2025).

96. Further VCS listening exercises, and academic and non-profit partnership working will allow Southwark to leverage additional expertise and go further and faster. These partnerships let the borough share the cost of developing tools and evidence, learn from and shape practice across London, and act on risks such as flooding and heat that cross administrative boundaries. They are completed and continuing work that both demonstrates the borough's leadership and feeds back into its own strategic approach.

Priority action for council coordination

97. The picture set out in this paper to a several number of priorities that cut across services and where coordination, and an early steer from members, would make the most difference. They are not a comprehensive list of everything the council does on adaptation, but the actions with the highest leverage over the borough's resilience in the period ahead, noting funding and resources remain tight across the council.

Table 1: Priority climate adaptation action for council coordination

Activity	Scope	Progress
Cool Spaces and wider heat measures	• Development of an internal working group that will include wider provision of cool spaces in communities, estates (cool rooms) and cross boundary opportunities with Lambeth and Lewisham. • Consider options for pilot provision of water fountains, misters and shading projects within the borough • Consideration of active and passive measures for cooling in schools, i.e. cool halls	Work is underway to consider new cool spaces with a working group reporting to the Adverse Weather Preparedness Group.
Adverse Weather Preparedness Group	• Formal establishment of cross-council Adverse Weather Preparedness Group that will focus on heat response and wider strategic/preparatory for future heat events.	Group is established with formalisation of Terms of Reference underway. Initial internal summer heat wave listening session completed.
Planning and place	• Embedding overheating, sustainable drainage and greening standards through the updated Local Plan and ongoing planning delivery • Streets for People and tree planting programme delivery so that adaptation outcomes are built into development and public realm as a matter of course rather than added afterwards. • Link to strategic energy planning workstreams in relation to increased energy demand and local generation. This is enabling work: it costs little in itself but changes the conditions under which every future decision is made.	Ongoing with respective council teams.
Community and partnership engagement	• Undertake a council-led heat risk listening session with VCS organisations, as part of engagement plans • Ongoing opportunities for research and partnership work	Southwark VCS listening exercise took place on 28 September with 32 attendees. Summary report to follow.

Heat and housing	• Establish approach for Awaab's Law Phase 2 bringing defect-related excess heat within council homes into legal scope from 30 November 2026. • Ensuring adaptation pathways and delivery is considered within the upcoming Council Homes Investment Strategy (Dec 2026) to meet Decent Homes 2035 targets • Explore delivery opportunities to establish or pilot heat reduction measures in council housing (e.g. Hot Homes)	Ongoing.
Data and targeting	• Investment in more granular local heat and risk data, to direct cooling, retrofit, drainage and cool space provision to where they will do most good, and to focus both the Awaab's Law defect response and the Decent Homes Standard retrofit programme on the homes that need them most. • Additional work to quantify to costs and benefits of adaptation action at a local scale could help support the business case for scaling up adaptation fundings across capital programmes.	Ongoing.
Funding.	• Reprioritisation of the allocated £1m adaptation funding in Climate Capital Fund. • external and grant funding bids for projects and programmes given the acknowledged limits of current budgets. • embedding adaptation outcomes in mainstream capital programmes so it is delivered through spending that is already planned.	Ongoing.
Governance	• Clear ownership and increased capacity for delivery, so the existing plan can translate into action at pace across a mainstreamed model.	Ongoing, with updated climate director forum being developed.
Health	• Continue working with health team on options for cool kits and heat alert service review roll out.	Ongoing.

Organisational capability and governance	• Embed in Borough Action Plan and emerging corporate strategies • Develop internal leadership on climate adaptation • Embed within corporate climate training content and sessions, business plans/workplans, concurrents, service design, potentially capability assessments within priority teams. • Updated climate hub for latest information and support for staff • London Council's adaptation programme and wider-sectoral engagement: CCC, MACC hub, UKSHA, Met Office	Ongoing.
Business continuity planning and corporate risk	• Embedding further consideration of resilience within divisional business plans, corporate	Climate risk business continuity planning workshop scheduled to take place in November.
Procurement	• Consideration of adaptation and resilience outcomes in council procurement / Sustainable Procurement Strategy	Ongoing.
Flood	• Ongoing delivery of the SuDS projects in the public realm and schools (funding permitting) • Development of the Riverside Strategy including wider borough engagement	Ongoing.

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Southwark Council (2025b) Hot Weather and Health: Southwark's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. London: London Borough of Southwark, Public Health Division.
Southwark Council (2026a) Schools Climate Resilience and Extreme Heat Risk Assessment. Internal analysis. London: London Borough of Southwark.
UK Health Security Agency (2025) Adverse Weather and Health Plan. London: UK Health Security Agency.
UK Health Security Agency (2026) UKHSA Issues Red Heat-Health Alerts Across England. London: UK Health Security Agency.
Watkiss, P. (2022) The Costs of Adaptation, and the Economic Costs and Benefits of Adaptation in the UK. Policy paper for the Climate Change Committee. London: Climate Change Committee.

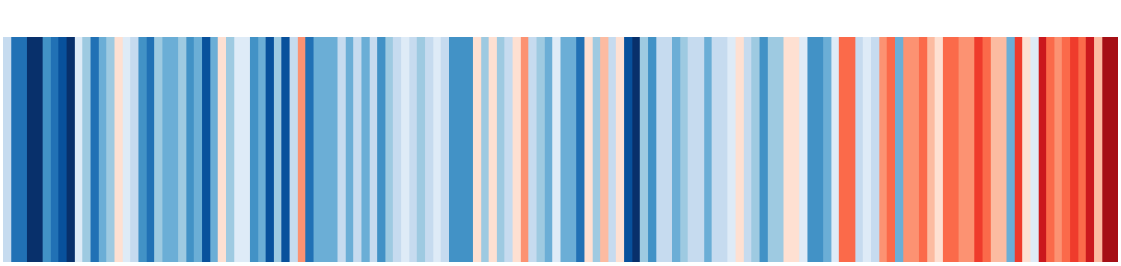
APPENDIX 1. High-level Southwark Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment

1. Observations

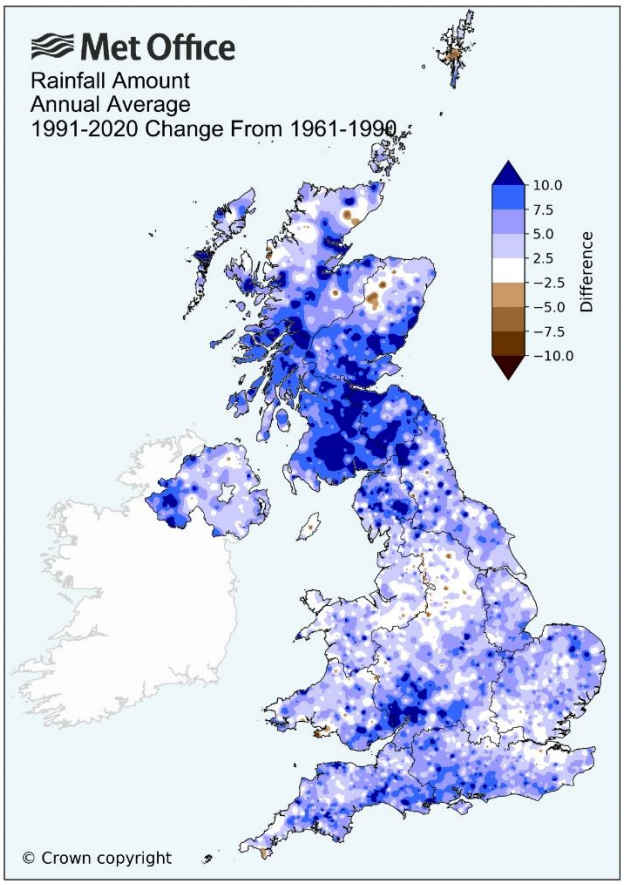
The UK has warmed by around 0.25°C a decade since the 1980s, faster than the global average, and 2025 stands alongside 2022 and 2023 as one of the warmest years in UK records dating back to 1884 (Climate Change Committee, 2026a; Arup, 2026). In 2022 the UK recorded a temperature above 40°C for the first time, an event that would have been virtually impossible without human-caused warming and that Met Office analysis puts at over ten times more likely, and now more than twenty times more likely, because of climate change (Climate Change Committee, 2026a; Arup, 2026). Rainfall has also shifted: the most recent decade was around ten per cent wetter than the 1961 to 1990 average, driven mainly by wetter winters, while UK sea levels have risen by more than 19cm since 1901, with the rate of increase accelerating and two thirds of that rise occurring in the last thirty years (CCC, 2026a).

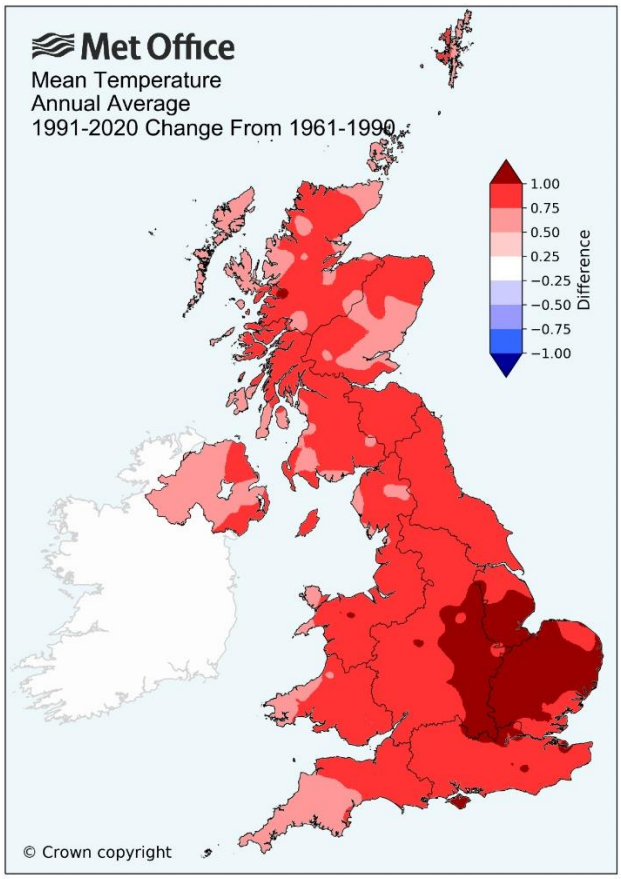
The trend has continued into this summer. From 11am on 22 June 2026 the UK Health Security Agency placed London under an amber heat-health alert, and a red alert, only the second ever issued after July 2022, took effect for London and southern and central England from 1am on 24 June to 11pm on 25 June, with the Met Office forecasting temperatures of at least 39°C and the June UK record of 35.6°C, set in Camden in 1957, expected to break (UK Health Security Agency, 2026; Met Office, 2026). Some London schools closed or dismissed pupils early during the alert, and several Southwark libraries had to close in the equivalent 2022 heatwave because indoor temperatures made them unsafe to staff (Southwark Council, 2025b). Hot weather related deaths through the May and June 2026 heatwaves were confirmed at 2700 in the UK, far exceeding deaths from last year early on into the season (UKHSA, 2026)

This summer's heat also sits against a wider global backdrop. Forecasters at the Met Office, the World Meteorological Organization and other national agencies judge that a significant El Niño event, which some have termed a super El Niño, is likely to develop through mid to late 2026, with ocean temperatures in the tropical Pacific potentially rising more than 2°C above the long-term average. This is comparable in scale to the 1997 to 1998 event that produced the warmest year on record at the time (House of Commons Library, 2026). El Niño's effects on UK weather are indirect and lagged, working through shifts in the jet stream rather than a direct link to any single heatwave, but such events typically add a further 0.2°C or so to global average temperatures for a period afterwards, on top of the underlying warming trend, and forecasters have flagged an increased chance of hotter summers in both 2026 and 2027 as a result (House of Commons Library, 2026).



Temperature Difference (°C)
Data: HadUK-Grid
Concept: Ed Hawkins





1.1. Observed Impacts

- **Heat**: Increased energy demand for summer cooling
- **Sea Level Rise**: Increased risk of coastal flooding
- **Heavy Rainfall**: Increased risk of river and surface water flooding
- **Health**: Increased risk to health from heat stress
- **Drought**: Risk to water supplies from drought
- **Drainage**: Increased disruption to urban drainage systems
- **Transport**: Increased disruption to transport due to heat e.g. rail buckling
- **Environment**: Increased risk to biodiversity (plants and animals)
- **Energy:** Infrastructure such as gas pipes are at high risk from flooding events

Taken together, these observations point the same way: heat that was once exceptional is becoming ordinary within the working life of the buildings and infrastructure the council owns and maintains, and each of the specific extreme weather events the borough has experienced in recent

years, the 2022 heatwave, the 2025 heatwave and drought, and the June 2026 red alert, is consistent with a climate that has already shifted, not a run of unrelated bad luck.

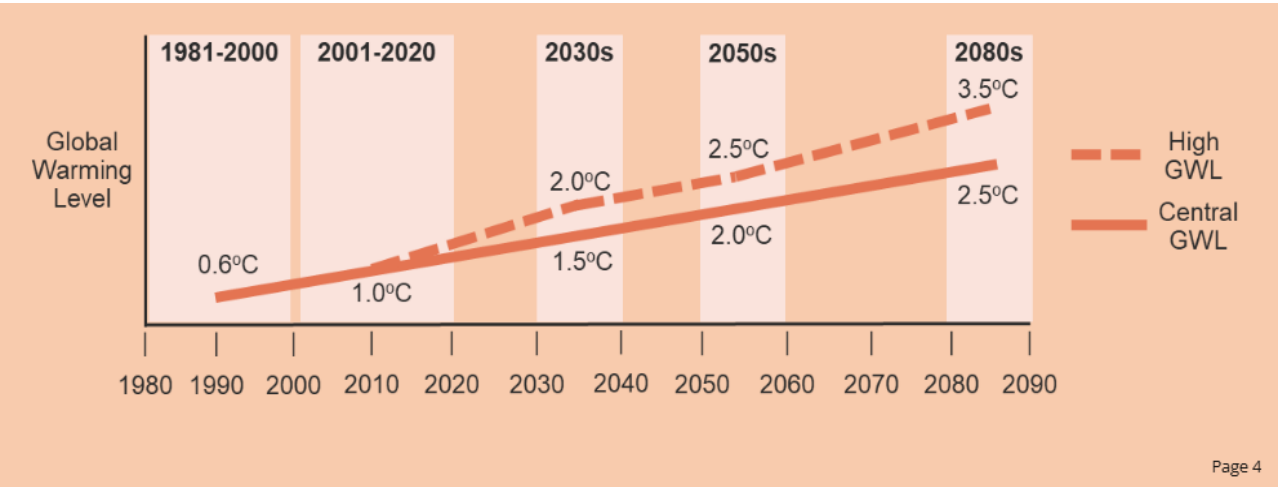
The Met Office recently released its *State of the UK Climate* report (July 2026) that looks back at 2025, putting the year and decade into a historical context and detailing the changes already seen in the UK's climate. This report corroborated the ongoing rise in temperatures, with extremes particularly affected - the latest 10-year period (2016-2025) is 1.33°C warmer than the period from 1961-1990. Key observations from 2025 included: (1) 2025 was the warmest year in the UK series from 1884, with the last four years in the top five warmest; and (2) The number of days over 30°C and nights over 18°C has more than quadrupled for Greater London for the most recent decade, 2016–2025, compared to 1961–1990.

1.2. Projections

The climate is already changing and we are already seeing impacts of this. But how might the UK's climate change in the future? The amount of future climate change will depend on how much greenhouse gas the world emits. However, even in the most optimistic scenario we are already locked into additional climate change.

- There is an increased chance of warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers.
- Although the trend is for drier summers in the future, there may be increases in the intensity of heavy summer rainfall events.
- Hot summers are expected to become more common. By 2050, every other summer may be as hot as the record breaking summer of 2018.
- Sea level will continue to rise in the 21st century even if greenhouse gas emissions are reduced rapidly.

2. Global Warming Levels



Global Warming Levels (GWLs) are a simple way to represent climate change at the global scale, which then drives local changes. They allow us to explore different strands of climate hazard

information consistently. Relative to the pre-industrial baseline (1850-1900), central estimates for current global warming are 1.34 - 1.41°C.

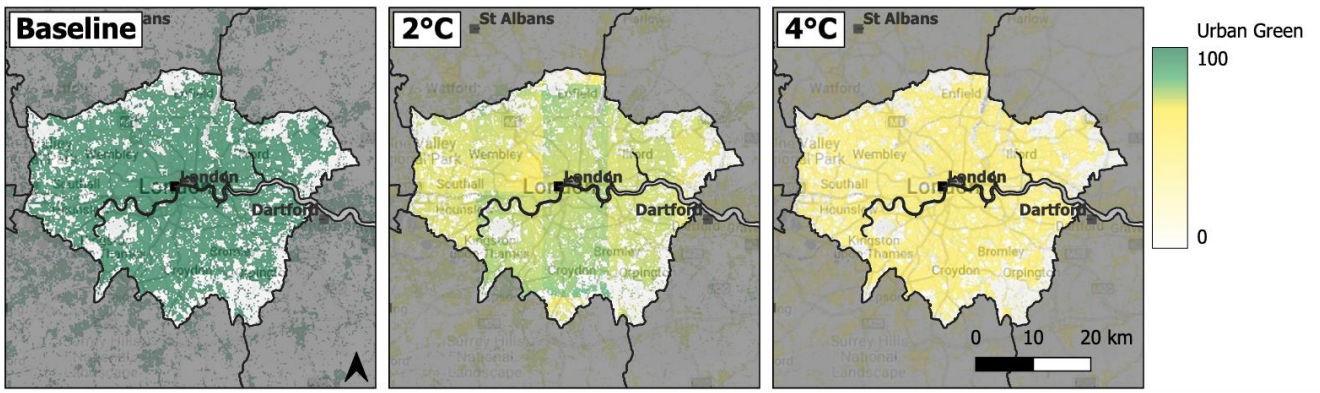
Independent guidance, adopted by the UK government for the Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA) and 3rd National Adaptation Plan (NAP3), is to prepare for a 2°C rise in global temperature, whilst assessing the risks for 4°C. The Paris Agreement says that we must limit global warming to well below 2°C, whilst aiming for 1.5°C.

Limiting warming to below 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels will require bigger emission reductions than currently pledged by nations around the world. Current emission reduction pledges, made as part of nationally determined contributions, are likely to lead to warming above 2°C.

		0.6°C GWL Baseline 1981-2000	**1.0°C GWL** Recent Past 2001-2020	**1.5°C GWL** Paris Agreement	**2°C GWL** Guidance: Prepare	**4°C GWL** Guidance: Assess risks
	TEMPERATURE	**°C**	**°C**	**°C change**	**°C change**	**°C change**
	Summer Maximum Temperature	**30.6** 30.0 to 31.1	**32.4** 30.5 to 33.8	**+2.3** +1.0 to +3.5	**+3.1** +1.7 to +4.5	**+6.7** +5.7 to +8.0
	Summer Average Temperature	**17.7** 17.6 to 17.8	**18.8** 18.3 to 19.4	**+1.4** +0.9 to +2.2	**+2.2** +1.0 to +2.7	**+4.6** +3.8 to +5.2
	Winter Average Temperature	**5.6** 5.5 to 5.7	**6.2** 5.8 to 6.7	**+0.9** +0.4 to +1.5	**+1.3** +0.6 to +1.8	**+2.9** +2.0 to +3.5
	Winter Minimum Temperature	**-5.0** -5.6 to -4.7	**-4.0** -4.9 to -3.0	**+1.4** +0.3 to +2.1	**+1.7** +1.1 to +2.5	**+4.1** +2.9 to +4.4
	Annual Average Temperature	**11.4** 11.4 to 11.4	**12.2** 11.8 to 12.6	**+1.2** +0.8 to +1.5	**+1.7** +1.0 to +2.0	**+3.6** +3.0 to +4.1
	PRECIPITATION	**mm/day**	**mm/day**	**% change**	**% change**	**% change**
	Summer Precipitation Rate	**1.52** 1.46 to 1.55	**1.54** 1.16 to 1.74	**-2** -22 to +8	**-8** -30 to -1	**-37** -58 to -21
	Winter Precipitation Rate	**1.61** 1.58 to 1.65	**1.70** 1.50 to 1.99	**+5** -15 to +26	**+14** -3 to +29	**+25** +9 to +43

	0.6°C GWL Baseline 1981-2000	1.0°C GWL Recent Past 2001-2020	1.5°C GWL Paris Agreement	2°C GWL Guidance: Prepare	4°C GWL Guidance: Assess risks
 **Summer Days*** Daily maximum temperature > 25°C	24 (23 to 25)	37 (31 to 45)	41 (34 to 50)	51 (36 to 57)	86 (81 to 102)
High daytime temperatures with health impacts for vulnerable people at risk of hospital admission or death. Transport disruption – e.g. track buckling on railways. Can also indicate periods of increased water demand.					
 **Hot Summer Days*** Daily maximum temperature > 30°C	2 (2 to 3)	5 (3 to 10)	7 (5 to 13)	10 (5 to 15)	30 (24 to 40)
Increased heat related illnesses, hospital admissions or death. Further transport disruption – e.g. track buckling on railways, road melt. Overhead power lines become less efficient.					
 **Extreme Summer Days*** Daily maximum temperature > 35°C	0 (0 to 0)	0 (0 to 2)	0 (0 to 2)	1 (0 to 2)	6 (2 to 8)
Increased heat related illnesses, hospital admissions or death affecting not just the vulnerable. Further transport disruption – e.g. track buckling on railways, road melt.					
 **Tropical Nights** Daily minimum temperature > 20°C	0 (0 to 0)	1 (0 to 3)	2 (0 to 3)	3 (1 to 4)	13 (7 to 18)
Health impact due to high night-time temperatures with potential for heat stress. Vulnerable people at increased risk of hospital admission or death.					
 **Frost Days** Daily minimum temperature < 0°C	26 (25 to 27)	20 (15 to 23)	17 (13 to 22)	14 (9 to 18)	4 (2 to 7)
Cold weather disruption due to higher than normal chance of ice and snow.					
 **Icing Days** Daily maximum temperature < 0°C	1 (1 to 1)	1 (0 to 1)	0 (0 to 1)	0 (0 to 1)	0 (0 to 0)
More extreme than frost days, so more severe cold weather impacts.					

These changes will also have significant impacts on viability of urban green cover and heat related mortality, as demonstrated by the models overleaf.



Key Points

A relative scoring is shown for an area's suitability for Urban Green Space, based on a metric of species richness remaining. Higher species remaining has better urban green suitability.

Under 2°C and 4°C warming scenarios, a decline in suitability is projected, with mean values shown in the Table (right).

Under 4°C of warming there are no areas remaining with a maximum suitability of 100 (range = 60 to 95), showing the importance of limiting warming to 2°C or less.

Local Summary

Mean, minimum and maximum urban greenspace potential (%) for Greater London at baseline, 2°C and 4°C warming scenarios.

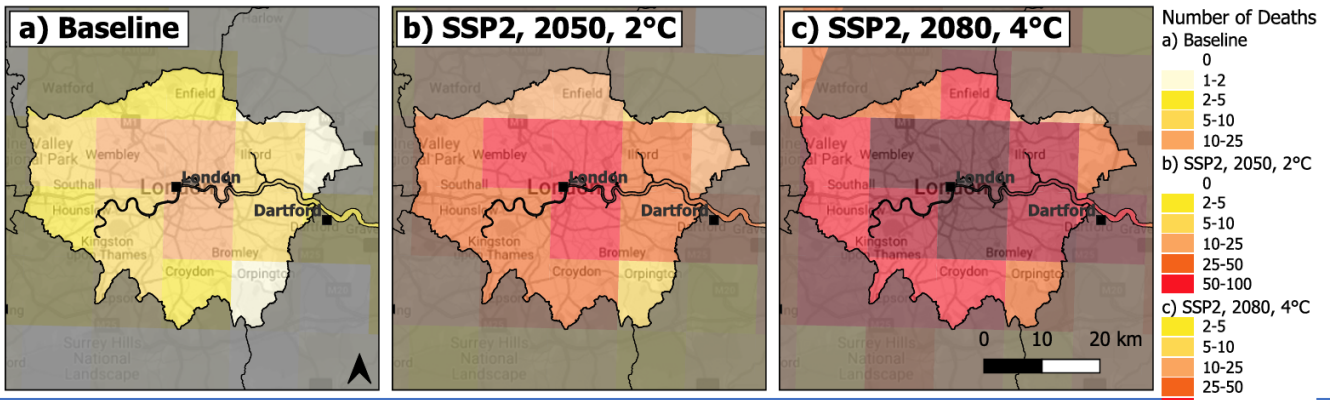
	Mean			Minimum			Maximum		
County	Baseline	2°C	4°C	Baseline	2°C	4°C	Baseline	2°C	4°C
Greater London	70.9	53.4	42.7	0	0	0	100	88	68

MACC Hub

The OpenCLIM project was funded by the UK Climate Resilience Program.
For more information visit openclim.science

OPEN CLIMATE IMPACT FRAMEWORK

Greater London | Heat Mortality | Combined Future Scenarios



Key Points

Heat mortality shows average deaths per year at 12km resolution, under future scenarios combining warming (2°C, 4°C), socioeconomics (SSP2, SSP4), and population (2050, 2080). SSP information

An increase in heat mortality is projected under 2°C and 4°C scenarios under SSP2. Additional population in 2050 and 2080 also increase mortality.

The climate model ensemble shows a range of outcomes, summarised by the 10th to 90th percentile range (bottom Table, right).

Local Summary

Mean deaths per year and cumulative deaths in Greater London for baseline and future scenarios.

	Baseline		SSP2 2050 2°C		SSP2 2080 4°C	
County	Mean	Cumulatiave	Mean	Cumulatiave	Mean	Cumulatiave
Greater London	4.8	110.4	27.3	628	89.8	2066.2

For each region:

Mean = average of all grid squares.

Cumulative = sum of all grid squares.

Mean deaths per year for each future scenario and the climate model ensemble range between 10th and 90th percentile.

County	Baseline Mean	10th - 90th percentile	SSP2 2050 2°C Mean	10th - 90th percentile	SSP2 2080 4°C Mean	10th - 90th percentile
Greater London	4.8	0.6 - 18.1	27.3	4.5 - 102.4	89.8	14.1 - 325.5

MACC Hub

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OPEN CLIMATE IMPACT FRAMEWORK

APPENDIX 2. Overview of policy context

This appendix provides a summary of relevant national and regional policy documents.

National

The next National Adaptation Programme

The UK's Fourth Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA4) evidence will inform the Government's response through its next National Adaptation Programme, the fourth, which will cover the late 2020s and early 2030s (CCC, 2026a). Each programme sets out how national government and its partners, including local authorities, will respond to the risks identified in the risk assessment, and the direction of national policy is towards firmer expectations on councils and clearer frameworks for local risk assessment.

Southwark has limited input to the shape of the next national programme, but it can position itself well for whatever follows. Aligning its approach now with the framing of CCRA4, and building the evidence, delivery mechanisms and partnerships a firmer national framework would expect, means the council will be ready to draw down funding and meet new duties as they arrive rather than starting from behind.

UK Health Security Agency's Adverse Weather and Health Plan

The UK Health Security Agency's Adverse Weather and Health Plan, which brought together the former Heatwave Plan and Cold Weather Plan, is underpinned by the weather-health alerting system run with the Met Office, issuing heat-health alerts through the summer season (UK Health Security Agency, 2025). These alerts are the trigger for operational response by the council and its health and care partners. Together, Heat Ready London and the national plan mean heat is now framed not as an occasional emergency but as a standing risk requiring both long-term adaptation of the building stock and a reliable seasonal response.

Regional

Heat Ready London heat plan

Heat Ready London, launched by the Mayor on 25 June 2026, is London's first ever heat plan and the clearest signal yet of the direction of travel on heat (Greater London Authority, 2026). It responds directly to the London Climate Resilience Review and builds on Exercise Helios, which tested London's response to extreme heat, and it draws on a study of the 2022 heatwaves, estimated to have cost the city £1.5 billion across health, transport, energy use, emergency services and lost productivity (Greater London Authority, 2026).

The plan spans six sectors, the built environment, business and economy, emergency preparedness and response, health and care, green space and nature, and infrastructure, and sets out where action is most needed from delivery partners in each. It states that the

highest-risk buildings should be prioritised for retrofit to prevent overheating, and further analysis behind the plan found that around one million homes across London may currently be at high risk of overheating (Greater London Authority, 2026). The plan names borough public health, social care and housing among the delivery partners expected to act on health and care.

London Surface Water Strategy

The London Surface Water Strategy, produced by the Flood Ready London partnership of the Environment Agency, the Mayor, London Councils, the London Fire Brigade, Thames Water and Transport for London, is the capital's first, developed in response to the July 2021 floods (Greater London Authority, 2025). It sets a shared, citywide approach built around resilience and coordinated delivery, and recognises that the fragmented, borough-by-borough handling of surface water, with permissive powers and constrained budgets, has made cross-boundary action difficult.

The strategy strengthens expectations on boroughs and developers, pressing for greater use of sustainable drainage and for surface water risk to be assessed and designed for through the planning system, and it introduces catchment partnerships that follow the way water moves across the city rather than administrative boundaries (Greater London Authority, 2025). For Southwark as a lead local flood authority, it provides both a stronger mandate for sustainable drainage and a framework for working with neighbours on shared catchments.

Thames Estuary 2100

Thames Estuary 2100 sets the flood risk management policy for the borough's riverside and, through its riverside strategy approach, links upgrades to tidal defences with wider improvements to the public realm, habitat and access to the river (Environment Agency, 2023). It commits the Environment Agency and partners to maintaining and adapting the estuary-wide defence system in phases through the century, and places specific expectations on councils to ensure riverside development incorporates future defence requirements rather than foreclosing them.

The practical significance is that decisions about the riverside taken now, through planning and regeneration, have consequences that run to the end of the century. Development that safeguards the ability to raise defences, or raises them early where efficient, protects the borough over the long term and can deliver amenity and environmental benefits in the process.

Draft London Plan (2026)

The recently published Draft London Plan places a strong emphasis on climate adaptation and resilience by ensuring that new major development is designed to cope with the increasing impacts of climate change. Draft policies, such as 'GHR4 Heat risk', will require developments to assess and manage climate risks such as overheating, flooding, drought, and water scarcity through resilient design. The draft Plan also promotes nature-based solutions to strengthen London's resilience through the expansion of parks, green roofs, street trees, and other green infrastructure. Adoption is scheduled for spring/summer 2028.

Southwark

Southwark Climate Budget (2026)

The first stage of the council's new Climate Budget was adopted by cabinet in February 2026 as part of the council's 2026-27 general fund budget. This was the first step to embedding climate budgeting and emissions reduction pathways into the council's formal budget process.

- Stage 1 focused on the council's operational emissions, over which we have full visibility and the greatest level of control. This includes our operational buildings, streetlighting and fleet.
- Stage 2, which is underway and scheduled for February 2027, adds council homes and schools, and potentially our investment in transport infrastructure, community grants, policy and regulatory work.
- Current plans are to extend coverage to Scope 3 emissions and climate adaptation measures in Stage 3 of the budget. Work will be undertaken on which climate adaption scenarios will be planned for.

The climate budget process is maturing in terms of awareness and understanding within the council, but we will need to continue to engage existing and new colleagues through Stage 2.

Southwark Hot Weather and Health Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2025)

Southwark's Hot Weather and Health JSNA, published in May 2025 by the council's Public Health division, is the borough's own evidence base on how heat affects residents, and its findings underpin the risk picture set out throughout this briefing, including the key statistics set out later in this section (Southwark Council, 2025b). Its value is less in the headline figures, which are summarised below, and more in what sits behind them: who is most affected, why, and what the council and its partners can do about it.

The JSNA identifies population groups at greatest risk and estimates their scale in the borough: several hundred rough sleepers, several thousand older adults living alone, tens of thousands of residents with mental health conditions, and tens of thousands with respiratory or cardiovascular conditions, all groups whose risk from heat is compounded by reduced capacity to recognise or respond to it. National literature reviewed for the JSNA found that 88 per cent of studies looking at temperature and suicide found a significant association, and that certain medications, including diuretics and vasoconstrictors, further raise the risk of heat-related mortality. A 2022 University of Manchester study separately found Southwark to be the sixth highest risk local authority for heat in England, with 91 neighbourhoods at high risk under just 1.5°C of warming.

The JSNA is also candid about the borough's housing stock. Temperature monitoring in a sample of 38 Southwark homes found every one exceeded 25°C, the threshold above which the NHS advises indoor temperatures should not regularly sit, and separate research by the Bureau of Investigative Journalism found that one in eight participating households needed medical care as a direct result of a hot home. Communal heating systems on some estates were found to run around 1°C hotter than average, and residents in the borough's more disadvantaged wards reported worrying about keeping their home cool at roughly three times the rate of those in the least disadvantaged wards, evidence that heat risk and deprivation compound one another in Southwark specifically, not only in the national picture.

The JSNA sets out five themes for a heat and health action plan sitting under the Climate Action Plan: investing in evidence-based adaptation of the built environment; improving support for those most vulnerable to heat; developing robust monitoring of overheating, including in council housing; raising awareness with frontline staff and communities; and further research to close evidence gaps, including the extent of indoor overheating and the link between heat and hospital admissions. Several of its recommendations, including a borough-wide climate risk and vulnerability assessment and a heatwave response emergency planning exercise with the NHS and voluntary sector, are reflected directly in the priorities set out later in this briefing.

Key findings:

- Over 50% of Southwark is estimated to be at risk from regular overheating with just 1.5°C of warming, many of these areas among the most disadvantaged in Southwark
- Under the most likely scenario of 2°C of warming by 2050, Southwark will see 50% more very hot days (>30°C) by 2050.
- 28% of Southwark residents worry about keeping their homes cool often or all the time during summer months, with those who are more vulnerable more likely to do so
- All of Southwark is in the highest heat risk area for buildings according to Part O of the building regulations, because Southwark's built environment is an urban heat island
- 88% of studies reviewed found a significant association between increasing

temperature and suicide frequency.
- Up to 123,000 Southwark residents are at higher risk from heat due to underlying health conditions including mental health conditions, cardiovascular disease & respiratory disease

Awaab's Law Phase 2, HHSRS and the Decent Homes Standard

Awaab's Law is the sharpest near-term driver for the council as a landlord, because it converts the quality of the housing stock from a matter of good practice into an enforceable legal duty. It is implemented through the Hazards in Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2025, made under the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, and its requirements are being introduced in phases (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2025).

Phase 1 has applied since 27 October 2025 and has required social landlords to address all emergency hazards within 24 hours and investigate significant damp and mould hazards within 10 working days, providing a written summary of findings, making the home safe within a set period, and offering alternative accommodation at their own cost where a home cannot be made safe in time. These are hard timescales, enforceable by tenants through the courts (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2025).

Phase 2, from 30 November 2026, brings excess heat and excess cold into scope alongside a wider set of hazards, but its reach is narrower than it first appears (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2026). Government guidance is explicit that Awaab's Law does not apply to overheating caused solely by high outdoor temperatures. It applies where a defect, a window or vent that will not open, missing or broken blinds and shading, or a communal heating system that cannot be switched off, leaves a resident unable to manage heat in their home. Where such a defect exists, the council as landlord has a legal duty to investigate and remedy it within statutory timescales, exactly as for damp and mould, and government guidance sets out worked examples to support that triage. For a large social housing portfolio with a great deal of ageing stock, that is still a substantial and time-critical exposure, in windows, shading and communal plant that do not work as they should, even though it is narrower than a blanket duty on every hot home.

The wider task, adapting homes that are simply not built for today's temperatures rather than defective, sits under a different duty. The Decent Homes Standard requires social homes to be kept free of the most dangerous, Category 1, hazards under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System, of which excess heat is one. This must be remedied by 2035. This is the legal basis for the wider retrofit, shading and cooling programme described later in this briefing, including the Hot Homes pilot, and it is what should guide investment in homes that overheat without a specific repairable defect. Awaab's Law and the Decent Homes Standard are best understood as two parallel duties on the same underlying problem: one fast-moving and defect-triggered, the other a longer-term standard the stock must be brought up to.

Southwark Streets for People Strategy

Our Streets for People strategy and programme integrate transport planning with climate action by reducing transport emissions while making neighbourhoods more resilient to the impacts of a changing climate. It is a long-term initiative that aims to redesign our streets so they are safer, healthier, and more sustainable. Its main climate objectives include building climate resilience through increased tree planting, sustainable drainage, and green infrastructure that help reduce urban heat, manage surface water flooding, and improve biodiversity.

New Southwark Plan (~2029)

Work has now commenced on a new local plan for Southwark which guides all planning and development. It will set out the vision, strategic policies, development management policies, site allocations, and neighbourhood-specific guidance used to determine planning applications and shape future growth. The Southwark Plan will recognise that climate change will increase the risks of flooding, overheating, extreme weather, and biodiversity loss within the borough. To address these challenges, updated planning policies will seek to require developments to incorporate resilient building design, sustainable drainage, urban greening, water efficiency, and measures that protect people and infrastructure from future climate impacts.

Southwark Nature Action Plan (SNAP) 2020–2025

The climate emergency is inexorably linked to the ecological emergency. As such, climate adaptation elements are included in Southwark Nature Action Plan. This is the council's strategic framework to protect, enhance, and promote biodiversity and ecological networks across the borough. A working group for the development of the Southwark Nature Recovery Action Plan (SNRAP) – a new biodiversity strategy and action plan for Southwark, which will replace the Southwark Nature Action Plan.

Regional and sub-regional engagement

Officers continue to actively engage and take a leadership role at the regional and national level on climate adaptation and resilience, specifically London Councils, GLA (London Climate Resilience Review, emerging London Heat Plan), Central London Forward (CLF), Climate Change Committee, Met Office, UKSHA, London Surface Water Strategy, and adaptation data, risk and finance organisations (e.g. OSCAR)

The climate change team has just completed a two-year stint as joint-lead borough (with RKBC) of the London Council's 'Resilient and Green' climate workstream. Southwark led a pan-London cohort of climate officers that has developed regional climate adaptation and resilience maturity and capacity. One of the primary outputs Southwark developed was the

‘Blueprint for Adaption Planning’ that supports London boroughs to develop adaptation plans, and which was based on the EU Pathways2Resilience model.

APPENDIX 3: Clinically vulnerable populations in Southwark

Population Group	Reasons for risk	Southwark population	Evidence-based interventions
People experiencing homelessness, including rough sleepers	Unable to avoid warm environments; lack of knowledge of heat risk; higher rates of chronic disease (often poorly controlled), smoking, respiratory conditions, substance dependencies and mental illness.	678 (2023/24)	• Expand cooling centres and shaded spaces with low-barrier access • Health outreach providing water, sunscreen, health checks • Provide temporary accommodation during heat alerts
Older people aged 65 years and over and/or living alone	Older adults at risk due to decline in physical ability to cool down; living alone risk factor for delayed treatment. UKHSA found awareness of heat risks low in this cohort. In Athens, 83% of people who died in a 2023 heatwave were older adults living alone.	9,500 (2021)	• Proactive welfare checks • Targeted heat-health messaging and alerts • Improve home cooling (insulation, ventilation, shading) • Integration with health and social care monitoring systems

People with dementia & Parkinson's[a]	Unable to adapt behaviour to cool down/seek help.	1,800 (2024)[b]	• Caregiver-focused heat guidance and training • Regular hydration and cooling monitoring protocols • Heat alerts embedded into care pathways
People with mental health conditions[a]	Struggle to adapt behaviour (for serious mental illness); higher temperature associated with increased suicide risk.	~50,000 (2023)	• Integrate heat risk into mental health services and crisis planning • Targeted outreach for socially isolated individuals • Review medications (where appropriate) during heatwaves • Provide cool, safe spaces in community settings
People with respiratory conditions[a]	Heat can exacerbate asthma and COPD.	~20,000 (2024) Asthma & COPD	• Early warning systems linked to air quality and heat alerts • Support self-management plans • Reduce exposure via cool indoor environments and clean air spaces

People with cardiovascular conditions[a]	Cardiovascular illness can be exacerbated by heat.	46,600 (2024) Hypertension; heart disease; stroke	• Clinical guidance for hydration and medication adjustments • Targeted alerts to high-risk patients via primary care systems • Promote cool environments and reduced exertion during peak heat
Those pregnant & babies & young children aged 5 years and under	Risk of miscarriage in hot weather; infants are vulnerable to heat due to immature thermoregulation, smaller body mass and blood volume, high dependency level, dehydration risk in case of diarrhoea.	5,333 (2024) Live births per annum	• Include heat risk in antenatal care advice • Provide clear hydration and cooling guidance • Adjust work/exposure conditions for pregnant individuals during heatwaves • Public campaigns for caregivers on hydration, shade, and safe environments

			• Ensure cooling in childcare/schools • Avoid exposure during peak heat and ensure frequent monitoring

Agenda Item 5

Meeting Name:	Cllr Waldon-Day Lead Member Briefing
Date:	16 September 2026
Report title:	Environment Scrutiny Commission (ESC) Biodiversity Scrutiny Review Progress Update
Ward(s) or groups affected:	All
Classification:	Open
Reason for lateness (if applicable):	N/A
From:	Liam Nash, Ecology Officer

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. Approve this report for presentation to the Environment Scrutiny Commission (ESC) as a 1-year update on progress in delivering the recommendations from the ESC's Biodiversity Scrutiny Review 2025.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. Southwark is committed to protecting biodiversity and increasing access to nature, continuing the council's strong legacy of action for the environment. Biodiversity is in crisis, with species and habitats suffering global and national declines. Protecting and enhancing biodiversity for both nature and people is a statutory requirement, as required of the Biodiversity Duty on local authorities, and is critical to the health and wellbeing of the borough and our residents. A detailed overview of progress made towards meeting our Biodiversity Duty is available via Southwark's first Enhanced Biodiversity Duty Report (2026).

3. The Environment Scrutiny Commission (ESC) was constituted in 2019/20, with reviews taking a lead from the Council Assembly's declaration of a Climate Emergency in March 2019. The ESC's Biodiversity Review came from evidence heard at a series of Scrutiny meetings, largely from 2023-2024, with a focus on biodiversity and the biodiversity crises, in response to growing public awareness and government prioritisation of this issue.

4. The ESC's Biodiversity Review put forward 34 recommendations, which were approved for consideration by Cabinet on 3 December 2024. In line with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure rule 15.3, officers coordinated a written response to each of these recommendations, either "*accepting*", "*partially accepting*" or "*not accepting*" each one. This response to the ESC's recommendations was approved by Cabinet on 17 June 2025, with Cabinet *accepting* 10 recommendations and *partially accepting* 24 recommendations. No recommendations were *not accepted*.

5. Response coordination was led by the Parks and Natural Environment's Ecology team, but as biodiversity is a corporate responsibility cutting across departments and functions, multiple service areas contributed to the responses, including Community Gardening, Trees, Planning Division, Climate Change, Highways, and Cleaning and Grounds Maintenance.

6. Responses to recommendations were made acknowledging that taking actions for nature recovery by the Council is dependent on officer and financial

resources, working within the remit of the Council's jurisdiction, existing legislative and policy frameworks, abiding by best professional practices, consideration of competing council priorities, particularly for land, and practical considerations around infrastructure, safety, and accessibility.

7. As many of the over-arching recommendations consisted of several Priority Actions/sub-recommendations, it was only possible to '*partially accept*' rather than '*accept*' many of the recommendations. The reasons for which were set out in the explanatory detail in the original responses. For example, some of the actions were already being implemented, while others were being actively worked towards, either in whole or in part. Some required the council to review or implement policies which require further approval processes, or where responsibilities for delivery were outside the Council's remit.

8. 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

Navigation table to recommendations and responses			
Rec. no.	**Response 2025**	**Contributing teams**	**Update 2026**
1	Partially accepted	Ecology & Parks, Planning Division, Climate Change	IN PROGRESS
2	Partially accepted	Ecology & Parks, Trees, Planning Division, Highways	IN PROGRESS
3	Partially accepted	Ecology & Parks	COMPLETE
4	Partially accepted	Planning Division	IN PROGRESS
5	Partially accepted	Planning Division	ONGOING
6	Partially accepted	Planning Division, Climate Change, Community Gardening	ONGOING
7	Partially accepted	Planning Division	COMPLETE
8	Partially accepted	Planning Division	COMPLETE
9	Partially accepted	Ecology & Parks	IN PROGRESS
10	Accepted	Ecology & Parks	IN PROGRESS
11	Accepted	Highways	COMPLETE
12	Partially accepted	Ecology & Parks, Trees, Planning Division, Climate Change, Highways	ONGOING
13	Partially accepted	Highways	UNDER CONS
14	Partially accepted	Ecology & Parks, Climate Change, Cleaning & GM	IN PROGRESS
15	Partially accepted	Community Gardening, Planning Division	ONGOING
16	Partially accepted	Trees	ONGOING
17	Partially accepted	Ecology & Parks, Trees, Highways	ONGOING
18	Accepted	Ecology & Parks	COMPLETE
19	Partially accepted	Ecology & Parks	ONGOING
20	Partially accepted	Ecology & Parks	ONGOING
21	Partially accepted	Ecology & Parks	COMPLETE
22	Partially accepted	Ecology & Parks, Planning Division, Highways	IN PROGRESS
23	Partially accepted	Ecology & Parks, Planning Division	IN PROGRESS
24	Accepted	Ecology & Parks	ONGOING
25	Accepted	Ecology & Parks, Climate Change, Highways	UNDER CONS
26	Accepted	Ecology & Parks, Community Gardening, Climate Change	ONGOING
27	Accepted	Community Gardening	ONGOING
28	Partially accepted	Ecology & Parks	ONGOING
29	Accepted	Community Gardening	IN PROGRESS
30	Partially accepted	Community Gardening	UNDER CONS
31	Partially accepted	Ecology & Parks, Community Gardening	IN PROGRESS
32	Accepted	Community Gardening, Planning Division	UNDER CONS
33	Partially accepted	Community Gardening, Climate Change	ONGOING
34	Accepted	Community Gardening	COMPLETE

ESC RECOMMENDATION	COUNCIL RESPONSE 2025	PROGRESS UPDATE 2026
Recommendation no.1	**PARTIALLY ACCEPTED**	**Update: IN PROGRESS**
Adopt the Biodiversity COP 15 commitment known as 30x30, which calls for the effective protection and management of 30% of the world's land, fresh waters and oceans by the year 2030, as a strategic local aim. Adopt also, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) which aims to "catalyse, enable and galvanize urgent and transformative action". This calls for action at an international, national and local level and, as such, will align local ambition and pride to national and global ambition. This is a proven way to increase commitment to pro-environmental behaviour changes. **Priority actions:** • Develop the updated Southwark Nature Action Plan (SNAP) with the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and 30x30 aims. • Build the 30x30 aim into the development of Ecological Networks and the Green Infrastructure Strategy. • Include a commitment to 30x30 and the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) in the Climate Strategy and Action Plan. • Update the Thriving Nature theme referred to in the Climate Change Resilience and Adaptation Strategy and Climate Change Strategy, to ensure the Climate Change Action Plan includes sufficient provision for biodiversity, including a delivery plan for Ecological Networks, measurable objectives for habitat protection, habitat creation, and de-paving as default, wherever possible. • Incorporate a commitment for the Council to see all areas of council policy not only through the prism of a Climate Emergency but also through the prism of a Biodiversity Emergency. • Communicate the 30x30 and GBD as a global and local ambition to stakeholders and residents and encourage civil society to adopt the GDF and 30x30 alongside Net Zero by 2030. • Review Southwark SINCs with view to increasing size and number. • Identify other ways to protect habitat by working with communities, landowners, householders and other stakeholders.	We agree developing our future biodiversity policies and strategies in line with international frameworks and agreements would boost the profile of biodiversity and help incorporate biodiversity considerations across all council departments and functions. A commitment to 30x30 (protecting 30% of Southwark's land for nature by 2030) would require cross-departmental commitments and collaboration with external landowners. At present, 24% of Southwark is designated as either a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) or an Open Space under the Local Plan. However, not all this land is owned or managed by the council, and not all is delivering for biodiversity. There are additional opportunities to designate land for biodiversity outside of these designations through new development, or on housing, highway, institutional, and private land. A scoping exercise would first be necessary to determine whether meeting 30x30 is realistic in Southwark, given the significant competing demands for land. We are currently undertaking a borough-wide ecological survey and review of Southwark's SINC network with the possibility of increasing their size and number. This will contribute to 30x30 but will not be sufficient to reach the final 30% target alone. Officers continually strive to identify novel ways to protect and enhance land for biodiversity and regularly work across council departments and a wide range of local landowners, community groups and stakeholders to protect and enhance nature. The process to develop the next iteration of the Southwark Nature Action Plan (SNAP), will be led by the Parks & Natural Environment team (PNE), following the publication of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for London by the Greater London Authority (GLA), expected in late 2025. This recommendation can be considered as part of this process. Planning Division will investigate the recommendation as part	**Lead teams: Ecology & Parks, Planning Division, Climate Change** A borough-wide ecological survey and review of Southwark's SINC network was completed in spring 2026. This review considered existing SINCs and identified a series of new sites which meet the criteria for SINC status. The results of the SINC Review must next be assessed by the council and the London Wildlife Sites Board – the independent oversight panel ensuring consistency and ecological integrity of the SINC system across London – and form part of the evidence-base informing Southwark's next Local Plan. The formal adoption of new SINCs is a council-decision that will take place via the next Local Plan development process. Potential new SINCs will be put forward as part of the statutory public consultation on new plan options expected in late 2027, with final plan adoption expected in 2029. Bringing new areas into the SINC network would contribute towards a 30x30 commitment, if adopted. The council will be carrying out an Open Space Needs Assessment and will development a Green and Blue Infrastructure study as part of the evidence base for the new Local Plan, which may further contribute towards protecting green and open spaces within planning policies. The London Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), published by the GLA in 2026, identifies 'Areas that Could Become of Particular Importance' on its Local Habitat Map. Officers were actively involved the selection of 'Areas that Could Become of Particular Importance'. While these are not statutory designations, and local authorities are not bound to deliver nature recovery in these areas, they can be used to spatially guide nature recovery actions in Southwark outside of designated sites, contributing to meeting this recommendation. These locations will be considered during the production of Southwark's Nature Recovery Action Plan (SNRAP) – a new biodiversity plan to replace the Southwark Nature Action Plan (SNAP) 2020. The SNRAP is currently under production and expected for publication in 2027.

	of the review of the Southwark Plan. This will involve undertaking research and commissioning evidence on greening and open space issues as part of the technical evidence to support the Southwark Plan. There is the potential to include this recommendation in the Climate Action Plan should a scoping exercise be completed to determine feasibility.	The Southwark Climate Action Plan (2025) now incorporates climate adaption and resilience actions and supersedes the Climate Change Resilience and Adaptation Strategy (2024). The plan commits to several actions under the new "Natural Environment" theme, including planting and maintaining trees, and enhancing streets and green spaces to increase biodiversity, including supporting the delivery of new biodiversity projects, green corridors, de-paving projects, and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). A delivery plan for Ecological Networks, measurable objectives for habitat protection is not in the scope of the Climate Action Plan, but these themes will be explored in the upcoming SNRAP.
Recommendation no.2	**PARTIALLY ACCEPTED**	**Update: IN PROGRESS**
Prioritise development of a Green Infrastructure Strategy to map out a coherent Ecological Network for Southwark, which: **i. Maps current SINCs and green and blue spaces** **ii. Identifies opportunities to increase the size of current SINCs.** **iii. Joins up or enhances connections between wildlife SINCs, either through physical corridors, or through 'stepping stones'.** **iv. Aids the creation of new wildlife SINCs** **v. Reduces the pressures on wildlife by improving the wider environment, including through buffer-zones around wildlife SINCs (amended from Lawton, 2010)** **Priority actions:** • Account must be taken of the full range of semi-natural habitats needed by wildlife. Gaps must be identified (e.g. ponds, absent in many areas of Southwark) and plans developed to address these gaps. • Consider designing nature-friendly crossings of major barriers to nature, such as Jamaica Road at Southwark Park/King's Stairs and Old Kent Road. Consideration should be given to reducing traffic, noise and artificial light, and to increasing vegetation at key locations, including overhead "canopy bridges". • Several of Southwark's existing major wildlife corridors end just short of Peckham's Rye Lane area. Consider	Taking account of ecological connectivity is a priority in several council policies, including the Southwark Plan and Climate Change Action Plan. Officers aims to support projects that are in strategic locations for habitat networks, for example, the North Bermondsey Wildlife Corridor, the North Camberwell Wildlife Corridor, the Low Line project, and Buglife's B-Lines project. We are working towards reviewing our SINCs and other habitat opportunities across the borough through our borough-wide ecological survey taking place this year, with the possibility of increasing their size and number. Our work as a supporting authority to the GLA to develop the London Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) will also contribute towards this recommendation, through identifying opportunity areas for biodiversity recovery, and incentivising the delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in new developments within areas of strategic significance for biodiversity. The next iteration of the Southwark Nature Action Plan (SNAP) – our primary biodiversity strategy – must take the LNRS into account, as per the strengthened Biodiversity Duty required of local authorities. Following the LNRS, our next biodiversity strategy will be required to have a strong spatial component, and ecological connectivity will be a significant consideration.	**Lead teams: Ecology & Parks; Trees; Planning Division; Highways** A borough-wide ecology survey and SINC Review for Southwark was completed in 2026. The SINC review made several recommendations for opportunities to increase the size and number of SINC sites. Increasing connectivity between SINCs was considered as one of the selection criteria, using modelling from Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL). The results of the SINC Review must next be assessed by the council and the London Wildlife Sites Board – the independent oversight panel ensuring consistency and ecological integrity of the SINC system across London – and form part of the evidence-base informing Southwark's next Local Plan. The formal adoption of new SINCs is a council-decision that will take place via the next Local Plan development process. Potential new SINCs will be put forward as part of the statutory public consultation on the new Local Plan, expected in late 2027, with final plan adoption expected in 2029. A map of current SINC boundaries is publicly available on the Southwark Plan 2022 Policies map: https://geomap.southwark.gov.uk/connect/analyst/mobile/#/main?mapcfg=%2FAnalyst%2FNamedProjects%2FSouthwark%20Plan%202022%20Policies%20Map%20-%20layers%20off The London LNRS was published by the GLA in 2026. This new spatial strategy for nature recovery in London was supported by officers from all London's boroughs, including

designating Peckham as a Missing Link / Biodiversity Connectivity Zone and implementing special measures to encourage the development of wildlife affordances in this area. • The Ecological Network, and Green Infrastructure Strategy, should be co-designed and monitored in conjunction with the Southwark Biodiversity Partnership (the Southwark Nature Action Plan (SNAP) reference group), and other local groups/stakeholders, recognizing and building on existing greening efforts by community groups and landowners. • The Green Infrastructure Strategy should be led by the council's Planning department, as part of a cross departmental initiative that recognises the interrelationships between Planning, Climate Change, Parks, Housing, Flood Management, Highways, Air Quality and other departments, while maintaining a co-design approach with the Southwark Biodiversity Partnership. • Link the development of Southwark's Green Infrastructure Strategy and local Ecological Network with the development of the citywide LGIF and LNRS, working with the GLA as an active and informed partner. • The Green Infrastructure Strategy should: i. identify geographically specific opportunities for cross-borough collaboration, ensure existing green infrastructure is optimised and existing barriers to wildlife movement are reduced, and consider green infrastructure in an integrated way as part of a wider network connecting to neighbouring boroughs. ii. recognize a buffer zone around SINC boundaries, with attention to reducing artificial lighting, noise, height limits for tall buildings (overshadowing) and traffic and increasing habitat for wildlife through de-paving, and installation of green roofs. iii. Look to use development and redevelopment opportunities to provide new green spaces and extend and link existing greenspaces and parks. iv. Integrate Food Growing.	Artificial canopy bridges are not an appropriate conservation intervention in Southwark, which lacks arboreal mammals of conservation concern that would benefit from this type of measure. Tree canopies can naturally form bridges over a road depending on tree species and age, road size, and safety. 'Streets for Nature' is one of the central pillars for the Streets for People programme and a key focus of this work is on the interface between the natural world and the built environment. This includes the mapping of these sites and their relation to the transport network. Through the provision of enhanced connectivity by walking and cycling especially, the programme aims to improve access to these sites and public enjoyment of them. As a result, this would increase the value placed on them and therefore increase demand for the number and depth of such sites. An Open Space Needs Assessment along with the Green Infrastructure Strategy, SINC review and LNRS will identify opportunities to increase and enhance connectivity for biodiversity. A Green Infrastructure Strategy for Southwark will draw on a range of sources. This will include the open space and greening elements of the Climate and Environment Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), a new Open Space Needs Assessment and a SINC Review, currently in progress. The GLA are also in the process of developing a London-wide Nature Recovery Strategy which will inform the borough-specific work. The Green Infrastructure Process Guide for Local Planning Authorities (September 2024) and Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework will be followed, as well as London Plan policy guidance.	Southwark. Green Corridors are a key priority within the strategy. There are over 150 priority areas for nature recovery identified in Southwark on the LNRS Local Habitat Map, many of which would contribute to ecological connectivity if implemented – including in Peckham's Rye Lane area. Our next biodiversity plan – a Southwark Nature Recovery Action Plan (SNRAP) – will closely align with the LNRS and take its priorities and priority locations into consideration during development. The SNRAP is currently under production and expected for publication in 2027. Work is ongoing across the borough on a range of highways initiatives that contribute to creating 'stepping stones' for nature through the urban environment, including tree planting, highway bed creation and SuDS schemes, for example in Goose Green, Scylla Rd, Copeland Road, and Ilderton Rd. The Ecology team continue to provide advice on such schemes and advocate for high proportions of wildlife-friendly and native planting.
Recommendation no.3	**PARTIALLY ACCEPTED**	**Update: COMPLETED**
Improve the engagement, governance and oversight of	The Southwark Biodiversity Partnership (SBP) is composed of	**Lead teams: Ecology & Parks**

the SNAP by putting forward a Terms of Reference document, for the Southwark Biodiversity Partnership to consider and adopt, as it sees fit. Ensure, as far as possible, that the Southwark Biodiversity Partnership has a clear remit to report on delivery of the SNAP through the agreed Terms of Reference, including providing the SNAP annual report to Cabinet as part of a wider report on Biodiversity performance.	multiple organisations who would need to collectively agree on any Terms of Reference, or whether they want to contribute to an annual report. This is not a Council decision, although we can support in these functions. The SBP has moved towards greater independence since 2024 and is now chaired by an independent voluntary chair. A revised Terms of Reference is currently in draft. Oversight of the current SNAP (as the primary biodiversity strategy for Southwark), and engagement with future biodiversity strategies is included as a draft objective of the group, although final wording is still to be agreed by the partner organisations.	The Southwark Biodiversity Partnership agreed on a new Terms of Reference in November 2025, this includes "implementing, reviewing, and monitoring progress of Southwark's Biodiversity Action Plan" as a primary objective of the partnership. The SBP operates independently to the council, although the council are a member of the partnership and signatory of the Terms of Reference. The SBP is chaired by a rotating chair elected from the member organisations for a one-year term. The council's reporting timelines for the upcoming revision to its nature action plan will be determined through the development of the plan, expected for completion in 2027. Whether the SBP want to contribute an annual report on the progress of this new strategy would need to be agreed among SBP members. As per the terms of reference of the SBP, the SBP will act as the primary expert stakeholder group during the development of the new plan. A copy of the Terms of Reference is available upon request through contacting the SBP chair.
Recommendation no.4	**PARTIALLY ACCEPTED**	**Update: IN PROGRESS**
Explore methods of delivering biodiversity improvements through the Planning process, beyond the minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) specified in the Environment Act 2021 when undertaking the 2027 review of the Southwark Plan and through Special Planning Documents (SPD). This should be combined with more ambitious Urban Greening Factor (UGF) targets. Improvements to both, taken together, are most likely to deliver better outcomes for biodiversity. **Priority actions:** • Having adopted the London Plan guidance on UGF of 0.3 for predominantly commercial and 0.4 for predominantly residential developments, the council must ensure that, in accordance with the guidance, these targets are treated as the minimum benchmark rather than the maximum required. • Ensure the UGF is adopted into the current SPD on Climate and Environment, currently being consulted	The GLA sets out the Urban Green Factor (UGF) in Policy G5 Urban Greening of the London Plan and Urban Greening Factor London Plan Guidance. Further detail is set out in London Plan guidance. All local authorities will need to align with this guidance. The UGF guidance is set out in the Climate and Environment SPD, which aligns with current London Plan guidance and provides additional detail. Applicants are expected to meet these standards set out in the London Plan policy. The planning policy team are monitoring compliance with BNG and UGF requirements. The Southwark Plan Review will examine evidence and best practice from around the country in relation to the impacts of increasing the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and UGF requirements. All London Boroughs are currently using the 0.4 and 0.3 targets as set by the London Plan planning practice guidance. Westminster is exploring the development of a locally specific UGF based on the Wild West End (WWE) Matrix. This will be investigated further as part of the	**Lead team: Planning Division** The preferred approach for Southwark to UGF is a two-tier framework: apply the Natural England UGF and wider Green Infrastructure Framework to set and monitor borough- and growth-area outcomes, while retaining the London Plan UGF as the mandatory site-level delivery test, supplemented by locally evidenced requirements for canopy, soil provision, biodiversity, SuDS, green-roof quality, long-term management and monitoring. The Natural England Urban Greening Factor is supported by a broader published evidence base, differentiates green-infrastructure quality more effectively and integrates with national standards for green cover, nature recovery, climate resilience, accessibility and health. The London Plan UGF nevertheless remains the more established and enforceable development-management mechanism for individual major schemes. Following the August 2026 revision to BNG, exemptions now

upon. • Monitor BNG and UGF for compliance, with a view to achieving at least the required10% BNG on-site as well as the UGF floor targets. • Ensure continued monitoring and spot auditing of BNG delivery throughout the 30-year period. • Explore the following in the review of the Southwark Plan: ○ Increasing the BNG to above the present 10% improvement on baseline. ○ Applying a minimum 0.4 UGF to all major commercial as well as residential projects. ○ Applying UGF targets to smaller projects as well as major sites. • Adopting higher targets for BNG and UGF at strategic locations, as defined by the Green Infrastructure Strategy/ Ecological Network, such as SINC buffer zones or in areas with poor existing wildlife connections.	Southwark Plan review. The national urban greening factor guidance has also been updated. The Green Infrastructure Process Guide for Local Planning Authorities, dated September 2024, is considered best practice. This guidance will inform our evidence for policy development for greening in the Southwark Plan review. It should be noted that it can be challenging to meet the current UGF scores set out in London Plan guidance, particularly for non-residential development. For example, achieving greening on roof space can conflict with other Southwark Plan policies, e.g. the delivery of solar panels on the roof of buildings to reduce carbon emissions. Some smaller sites are also not always able to meet UGF maximum site coverage due to amenity considerations. BNG systems are setup to allow the ongoing monitoring of BNG. A fee for the 30-year monitoring BNG categorised as 'significant' is set out in the S106 and CIL SPD, which is going to Cabinet in July. The additional evidence required for a new BNG target will be assessed as part of the review of the Southwark Plan. An increase in mandatory BNG above 10% is also not encouraged by Planning Practice Guidance for Biodiversity (2024). Paragraph 6 sets out that: 'Plan-makers should not seek a higher percentage than the statutory objective of 10% biodiversity net gain, either on an area-wide basis or for specific allocations for development unless justified. To justify such policies, they will need to be evidenced including as to local need for a higher percentage, local opportunities for a higher percentage and any impacts on viability for development. Consideration will also need to be given to how the policy will be implemented.'	include sites below the 0.2 ha threshold. The August 2026 revision to the National Planning Division Framework restricts local councils from setting higher Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) standards above the mandatory 10% minimum unless fully justified for specific site allocations and have been shown to be deliverable. A UGF viability review would be required as part of a full plan viability review (ie, a viability review of the policy costs of all the deliverables in the new Southwark Pan, including affordable housing, affordable workspace, open space provision, infrastructure contributions, etc) to evidence a revised policy which could include; 1. Include Minor development (scores 0.3 and 0.4) 2. Include a higher score (0.5, 0.6) for development with potential impacts on greenfield sites with MOL and Ancient Woodland designations. 3. Adopt elements of the Natural England Urban Greening Factor which could enhance development by introducing elements with a higher biodiverse output (such as native hedgerow). Given that these achieve a higher scored in the guidance, it would likely be easier to hit mandatory targets.
Recommendation no.5	**PARTIALLY ACCEPTED**	**Update: ONGOING**
Wherever possible new major residential developments should be conditioned to include grey water recycling and rainwater harvesting, including providing for storage of rainwater in water butts or similar to support community gardening and food growing.	The Climate and Environment SPD has been updated to encourage the inclusion of food growing spaces to support community gardening and for the provision of access to water for this purpose. Food growing is supported in the Local Plan but there are currently no formal planning requirements to deliver or	**Lead team: Planning Division** This recommendation is ongoing. The Climate and Environment SPD was adopted in 2025, including sections on encouraging inclusion of food growing spaces and for the provision of access to water for this purpose. Table 4 of the SPD sets out best practice measures to reduce water consumption, including the use of greywater recycling for all

	designate sites for food growing. It is therefore difficult to mandate rainwater storage for food growing. The installation of a water butts is an issue which is outside of the planning process, as planning permission is not required for their installation. However, this is encouraged in the Climate and Environment SPD. Policy P68 Reducing Flood Risk of the Southwark Plan sets out the drainage hierarchy to ensure new development is minimising the risk of surface and fluvial flooding. This includes grey water attenuation.	non-potable water uses and the installation of water butts to capture and reuse rainwater. As outlined in our original response, the installation of water butts and provision of food growing plot lack formal planning requirements or site outside of formal planning permission, making mandating not possible. The draft London Plan (2026) Policy GHR5 (Flood Risk and Drainage) sets out a drainage hierarchy that prioritises using rainwater as a resource, including rainwater harvesting. Paragraph 5.63 also states that tree planting should be integrated with Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to maximise rainwater capture and infiltration. Designing tree pits to capture rainwater can reduce the need for separate drainage infrastructure.
Recommendation no.6	**PARTIALLY ACCEPTED**	**Update: ONGOING**
Explore how domestic planning applications could be conditioned or, at least, applicants could be encouraged to include wildlife friendly features such as green roofs, flow-through planters, rain gardens, swift bricks, insect houses (for example in cases of loft conversions) and water butts, and to minimise impermeable hard surfacing **Priority Actions:** • The council should develop and make available on its website a mini-guide for homeowners and developers applying for planning permission for minor developments or home improvements, with information on the benefits of these nature-friendly features. • The council's climate change team should engage with Thames Water to explore how more residents can be encouraged to install water butts at their homes, for example, by Thames Water managing the subsidised delivery of water buts to residents. (This could be modelled on the existing composting scheme, where residents can buy compost bins at a subsidised rate and community groups, places of worship and schools are able to claim 2 free bins each.) • Update the New Homes Design Guide to take account of the recommendation on the right • Update the Householder SPD to take account of	Mandatory BNG is not legally required for householder applications. The Householder SPD has been amended to include a section on biodiversity enhancements which are appropriate for residents. Swift brick specifications are also included in the Climate and Environment SPD. Bird boxes are encouraged in the Householder SPD. Swift bricks are encouraged on householder applications where relevant. These are imposed via planning condition. The Householder Development SPD sets out guidance for crossovers and approach to front gardens including permeable surfaces and greening applications. This recommendation is an example of a possible new action that can be considered as part of the Climate Action Plan review to determine the role of the Climate Change Team and priority level.	**Lead teams: Planning Division; Climate Change; community gardening** Following the August 2026 revision to mandatory BNG requirements, BNG is not legally required for applications on sites smaller than 0.2 hectares, a category that includes most householder developments. The Householder Development and Climate and Environment SPDs, both adopted in 2025, include suggestions for wildlife friendly features to be considered for homes. Recommended measures within the SPD include green roofs and walls, native and pollinator-friendly planting, tree planting, flow-through planters, insect hotels, bat and bird boxes, hedgehog highways, wildlife-friendly ponds and water butts. It also promotes wildlife-friendly garden management through reduced mowing and avoiding pesticide use Community Gardening officers signpost offers of free water butts from Veolia to new and existing gardening groups. Note this is gardening groups not individual households. The team includes water capture in new projects and advises existing projects.

the recommendations outlined on the left		The community gardening team is researching a new training offer for 2027 which would include practical support and advice for increasing water capture in community gardening and any growing projects across the borough, as well as incorporating irrigation and planting advice. They will discuss this with the Southwark Biodiversity Partnership and Community Gardening network as well as other projects in London and beyond. Funding is still being explored for this potential project. Updating our planning policy to ensure positive climate outcomes is included in Action 9 of the updated Climate Action Plan (2025).
Recommendation no.7	**PARTIALLY ACCEPTED**	**Update: COMPLETE**
Update the draft Climate and Environment Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and Householder SPD to incorporate the review recommendations. **Where this is not possible bring forward a Biodiversity (SPD) and update versions of the Southwark Plan** **Priority Actions:** • Consider this report in part as a response to the consultation on the Climate and Environment SPD and Householder SPD	The Climate and Environment SPD includes a section on Biodiversity, open space and greening. This includes a specific section on how to meet biodiversity requirements onsite and the mandatory BNG requirements. The Householder Development SPD has been revised to include a section on biodiversity and how it can be encouraged onsite. Most householder applications are exempt from mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain under national policy. Householders are encouraged to implement measures to improve biodiversity outside of the mandatory biodiversity net gain requirements.	**Lead team: Planning Division** The two SPDs were adopted in 2025 and continue to be used as material considerations in planning decisions. Content from the SPDs will be incorporated into the new Local Plan where appropriate, in line with the new plan-making Regulations, biodiversity policies in the new NPPF and draft London Plan.
Recommendation no.8	**PARTIALLY ACCEPTED**	**Update: COMPLETE**
Adopt the full dark sky recommendations from All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) Dark Skies Policy Plan (appgdarkskies.co.uk) including standards on the setting, brightness, colour temperature and density of lighting. **Priority actions:** • Encourage adoption in the new London Plan.	The London Plan Policy D8 Public Realm sets out that - Lighting, including for advertisements, should be carefully considered and well-designed to minimise intrusive lighting infrastructure and reduce light pollution. The GLA's Streetscape Guidance (2022) provides advice on how to avoid light pollution in the design of London's streets and spaces. The London Plan is currently being reviewed for update; the Council could make a representation on this to encourage darker skies.	**Lead team: Planning Division** Local plan policies need to be in conformity with national planning policy (the NPPF) and regional policy (the London Plan) The NPPF was updated in 2026. Policy P3 (e) states that development should *'Limit any adverse impact from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes (those areas entirely, or largely, uninterrupted by artificial light) and nature'.* It does not set numerical lighting standards, colour

	The Southwark Plan will align with GLA guidance for new development. The scope of the review will depend on the detail of the APPG Dark Skies recommendations. It is noted that existing planning policy is contributing to reducing light pollution in the borough. Where relevant, a wildlife friendly lighting design is imposed via condition on a case-by-case basis to mitigate the impact of light on wildlife.	temperature limits, maximum lux levels or require compliance with the APPG Dark Skies recommendations. The London Plan was published in July 2026 and includes policies to limit the impact of lighting from tall buildings and public realm schemes. These are not specific dark skies policies or APPG standards on brightness, colour temperature, density of lighting or statutory controls. This is likely to be in recognition of the urban context of London and the need for lighting as part of community safety in higher density areas. However, the draft London Plan recognises the need to reduce light pollution and advocates a policy approach that requires lighting to be carefully designed to minimise adverse impacts. This approach will be followed in the revised Southwark Plan and reflected in the relevant policy. Lighting schemes continue to be examined by case officers and the Ecology officer on all schemes. Relevant officers in planning and other departments have been invited to a Wildlife friendly lighting design CPD, which will cover current guidance and best practice, including wildlife sensitive lighting design techniques, and alternative lighting options. Wildlife friendly lighting plans are required via condition for relevant applications.
Recommendation no.9	**PARTIALLY ACCEPTED**	**Update: IN PROGRESS**
Conduct an ecological audit of our parks, estates, verges, schools, sports fields, and pockets of land in order to increase habitat for wildlife and adopt wildlife friendly practices. **Conduct this in conjunction with the development of Ecological Networks**	The council are currently undertaking a borough-wide habitat survey and SINC review. This will both audit our existing wildlife sites but also identify and assess new sites for designation. However, conducting ecological surveys and detailed habitat mapping is resource heavy, so this project is limited to SINCs, Open Spaces, and some strategic novel spaces identified by the consultant through a gap analysis as having high potential for wildlife. We are taking a strategic	**Lead team: Ecology and Parks** A borough-wide ecology survey and SINC Review for Southwark was completed in 2026. This review provides recommendations to both increase the size and number of SINCs, as well as opportunities for improving habitat within existing SINCs. Recommendations from the SINC Review relating to new site designations must next be assessed by the council and the London Wildlife Sites Board – the independent

	approach to identify areas of land with the greatest opportunity for nature recovery or need for protection. This approach already considers whether sites are strategically located to improve ecological networks. The development of the London LNRS by the GLA, with input from LB Southwark as a supporting authority, identified through both internal and public consultation a series of Areas that Could Become of Importance for Biodiversity (ACBs). ACB sites are outside of existing wildlife sites and identify novel opportunity areas for nature recovery. The final version of this strategy, including the map of ACB areas is due for publication in autumn 2025. Undesignated land faces several competing demands, particularly from housing need. Ultimately, formal designation of new spaces /changing land use within the Local Plan is a Planning Division decision. The council has already adopted a range of wildlife friendly practises across our parks and open spaces, including the elimination of scheduled pesticide use, the relaxation of mowing regimes, and the retention of deadwood on-site. The council's Ecology officers provide regular support across Council teams, community partners and private landowners on how they can adopt further wildlife friendly practises in project design, delivery, and ongoing maintenance.	oversight panel ensuring consistency and ecological integrity of the SINC system across London – and form part of the evidence-base informing Southwark's next Local Plan. The formal adoption of new SINCs is a council-decision that will take place via the next Local Plan development process. Potential new SINCs will be put forward as part of the statutory public consultation on new plan options expected in late 2027, with final plan adoption expected in 2029. The recommendations from the SINC Review relating to habitat management within existing SINCs will be considered as part of the development of the council's next biodiversity plan, a Southwark Nature Recovery Action Plan, currently under production and expected for publication in 2027. The council continues to adopt and implement wildlife friendly practises across our parks and open spaces including the elimination of scheduled pesticide use, the relaxation of mowing regimes, and the retention of deadwood on-site. The council's Ecology officers provide regular support across Council teams, community partners and private landowners on how they can adopt further wildlife friendly practises in project design, delivery, and ongoing maintenance. The Burgess Park Community Plant Nursery, a council Community Gardening initiative to provide free veg seedlings to community growing groups and act as a training hub for growers, has been funded by the Climate Capital Fund in 2026 to expand its offer. This year it is providing wildflower packs (in addition to vegetable seedlings) to enhance biodiversity within community gardens on estates, schools and other spaces.
Recommendation no.10	**ACCEPTED**	**Update: IN PROGRESS**
Undertake a mapping exercise with ward councillors and community stakeholders (as recommended by Southwark Land Commission) to identify further land that is currently or can potentially be enhanced for biodiversity. Consider	Mapping exercises to identify land that is can potentially be enhanced for biodiversity is currently underway through our Borough-wide ecology survey and SINC Review, the development of the LNRS, and the Streets for People programme as outlined	**Lead team: Ecology and Parks** Mapping to identify land that can be potentially enhanced for biodiversity has been completed in 2026 as part of the SINC Review and development of the London LNRS, as outlined elsewhere in this report. Both programmes involved public and

how undesignated open space, such as land currently used for parked vehicles, estate lands, schools, sports field borders, and rooftops, could be transformed and/or managed as places for nature as well as people.	elsewhere in this report. The SINC Review and LNRS development involved public or community stakeholder consultation elements to identify sites with potential for biodiversity. We welcome suggestions from residents or ward councillors for pieces of land identified as possible opportunities for nature. We are committed to continue our work with the GLA and the community to identify land of current value for biodiversity or could potentially be enhanced for nature recovery.	community consultation to identify sites with potential for biodiversity. The results from the LNRS are publicly available via the GLA. The results from the SINC Review will be available via the next Local Plan development process as part of statutory consultation expected in 2027. The results of both pieces of work will be considered within the development of the Southwark Nature Recovery Action Plan, which will include further rounds of public and stakeholder consultation where residents and ward councillors will have the opportunity to suggest additional opportunities.
Recommendation no.11	**ACCEPTED**	**Update: COMPLETED**
When allocating funding for Council projects – i.e. Cleaner Greener Safer (CGS), Devolved Highways Budget (DHB) and others, ensure that the budget covers the costs of the appropriate number of council officers, including experienced project managers and others who are trained in biodiversity improvements (see recommendation 22).	The cost of Cleaner Greener Safer (CGS) officers is covered in the overall CGS capital allocation and is top sliced before funding is allocated to individual projects so our costs are covered before we start. Any other council officers we use for help and advice are covered by their own budgets. CGS officers work closely with the council's Ecology and Tree services for expertise and advice on biodiversity related improvements.	**Lead team: Highways** Recommendation is implemented, no change since original response
Recommendation no.12	**PARTIALLY ACCEPTED**	**Update: ONGOING**
Depaving has the potential to be a powerful tool against the biodiversity and climate crises and in support of the Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Strategy, particularly with regard to flood risk management. In recognition of this, the Commission recommends the following: **a. Adopt de-paved as default, wherever possible, in all new Streetscape or housing schemes.** **b. Increase our greenspace by de-paving the many unused areas of existing hardstanding to make room for 'pocket parks', new street trees, hedgerows, rain gardens, food growing spaces and other forms of new planting.** **Priority Actions:** • Integrate de-paved as default with the BNG and UGF approach	The Streets for People (SfP) programme is identifying the usage and network value of roads, identifying where the possibility exists to de-pave and return streets to a more natural function. The programme is also delivering pocket parks, trees and other planting solutions, often as part of sustainable urban drainage (SuDS) schemes, across the network and as a component of all schemes delivered. Through SfP's coordination with other council departments, e.g. Parks and Natural Environment and 'Cleaner, Greener, Safer' (CGS) the hope is to create additional community demand for such changes. In line with the Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework, the Southwark Green Infrastructure Framework will include detail on green connections and green spaces, many of which serve a dual purpose as SuDS.	**Lead teams: Ecology & Parks; Trees; Planning Division; Climate Change; Highways** Ecology and Tree officers continue to support Highways schemes to ensure maximum delivery for biodiversity, such as providing advice on plant and tree species selection and maintenance schedules, within the constraints of street schemes including accessibility, safety, cost, maintenance and infrastructure (e.g. underground services). De-paving and highway greening projects that have been completed since the production of the ESC's Biodiversity Review, including at Morton Gate, Goose Green, Scylla Road and Ilderton Road. Ecology officers continue to provide advice on highways schemes. Depaving has been delivered, or is due to be delivered soon,

• Employ an internal design review process to ensure that any new streetscape or housing projects incorporate:
  ○ green wildlife habitat
  ○ SuDS and other permeable spaces to facilitate water attenuation to the maximum extent possible.
• All projects to redesign our Streetscape and other public realm must be treated as opportunities to improve the borough's biodiversity and flood risk management, rather than purely as functional and/or traffic engineering solutions. Proposals should be flagged as a matter of course with the Southwark Biodiversity Partnership, to ensure that they benefit at the design phase from a wide range of input from landscape architects, horticulturalists, ecologists, urban food growers and community leaders
• As part of this, ensure that the Streetscape design, Climate Action Plan, SNAP, Streets for People strategy, Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, Southwark Plan and the Tree Management Policy 2020 are updated to provide a coherent approach to adopting de-paving as the default, wherever possible. Ensure that teams engaged in design and execution of the above, as well as the teams handling the design and execution of Cleaner Greener Safer projects across the borough, are updated and working in accordance with the ambition to de-pave.
• Highways department should routinely consider applications from utility companies involving excavation of public space in the light of possible green infrastructure projects. Where possible, any scheduled infrastructure projects which involve digging or de-paving to access underground utilities should be coordinated with permanent improvements to improve permeability, increase public green space and improve bio. Where possible, de-paving should be designed to be integrated with stormwater management at area drains, to "slow the flow."
• The council should explore all possible sources of funding for the various depaving initiatives described, including DEFRA, Thames Water, GLA, insurance companies and environmental NGOs like the London
	The Climate and Environment SPD details best practice advice for the delivery of green space and SuDS. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) concerns habitat creation as part of new developments. Depaving is considered by as part of an overall scheme's biodiversity approach on a previously developed site.
	
	The Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework and the Green Infrastructure Process Guide for Local Planning Authorities will be followed.
	
	These evidence base documents will be used to inform the development of policy around greening in the review of the Southwark Plan.
	
	Ecology and Tree officers regularly support Highways schemes to ensure maximum delivery for biodiversity, such as providing advice on plant and tree species selection and maintenance schedules, within the constraints of street schemes including accessibility, safety, cost, maintenance and infrastructure (e.g. underground services).
	
	The council are already working on resident-led depaving projects, such as the Moreton Gate Nature Garden, and strive to support future depaving projects, wherever possible.
	
	The Southwark Biodiversity Fund administered by the Climate Change Team aligns our community engagement, habitation creation and de-paving ambitions, and is also supported through climate adaptation projects delivered in coordination with Highways and Flood teams.
		across a number of Southwark Biodiversity fund grants, including Brunswick Park Wildlife Pond, Hawkstone Estate Nature Recovery and Walworth Garden Wildlife Corridor.
		
		The council submitted a funding application to the Mayor's Green Roots fund for a depaving project at Bowyer Place and in the northeast corner of Burgess Park. Unfortunately, this was not successful, but internal funding has been secured to deliver depaving in the northeast corner of Burgess Park and further opportunities for funding are being explored for Bowyer place.
		
		The updated Climate Action Plan (2025) creates a policy hook to encourage de-paving to reduce urban heating and increase opportunities for biodiversity through
		• Action 10: Ensure our streets encourage walking and cycling, reduce emissions from vehicles, and are adapted for the worsening effects of climate change
		• Action 12: Design and maintain our streets and public realm to reduce emissions and improve climate resilience
		• Action 15: Enhance our streets and green spaces to increase biodiversity

Wildlife Trust. • Establish a strategic approach to de-paving linked to the Ecological Networks and Green Infrastructure Strategy recommended above. • Aim for 30% minimum planting for streetscape schemes. • Encourage and enable interested local residents to adopt de-paved sites and contribute to management and maintenance. Work closely with local community to sensibly design de-paved areas in keeping with local needs, and form maintenance agreements for planted areas. • Make a program of technical guidance and support available to any residents wishing to de-pave their own private land. • Where the budget is limited, deliver green spaces with high biodiversity value, and acceptable aesthetic value, by providing an initial seeding of wildflowers, encouraging tolerance of volunteer plants, delivering annual mowing, and ongoing litter picking. • The Council must mandate (or strongly advise where powers are limited) the use of permeable materials for ground cover wherever possible. Non-permeable materials should be accepted only if there is a technical justification given for permeable materials not being suitable.		
Recommendation no.13	**PARTIALLY ACCEPTED**	**Update: UNDER CONSIDERATION**
The Council should adopt a default position that recognises installation of Vehicle Footway Crossovers (VFCs) and associated hard standings as an environmental and social ill which stands at odds with council policies including the Climate Emergency Action Plan, the Climate Emergency Resilience and Adaptation Plan, the Streets for People strategy and the Equal Pavements Pledge (as the repetitive undulation of pavements due to installation of VFCs can be an obstacle to disabled pedestrians and wheelchair users). For these reasons, the council should actively discourage and take steps to reduce the rate and extent of this loss of front gardens and installation of new VFCs wherever possible, publicise its reasons for doing so and ensure that legal	It is unlikely that a change to our Planning Division will be approved to effectively prohibit vehicle accesses to private properties as legal advice declares this to be unlawful. Further legal advice was sought to determine if the council can amend its design standard to refuse a vehicle access if the private property is less than 6m deep. Following the advice and discussion with planning and the agreement by the Cabinet Member for Clean Air, Streets and Waste it is proposed to increase the minimum design standard to 6m. Highways and Planning are also looking at the possibility of introducing an Article 4 Planning Condition on all VFC. This final decision on the approach will be	**Lead teams: Highways** No change since original response**.** There remains councilor desire to prevent new vehicle crossings. Legal advice indicates that this has to be achieved via Article 4 of the Planning Conditions, because Highway Act cannot prohibit vehicle access to your property.

obligations relating to hard standings are enforced. **Priority Actions:** • Highways and Planning work together to bring forward a new policy on VFCs, including greater enforcement, and that this incorporates the below points: a. There should be a presumption against the installation of VFCs where there is a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) in place and/or high parking stress. b. The minimum depth of front garden required for a property to be granted a VFC should be immediately increased to 6m, to ensure that it is large enough to accommodate a modern vehicle without obstruction to the public footway. c. Council tenancy agreements should specifically prohibit tenants from paving over front gardens and there should be a presumption against the granting of a VFC. This could be reviewed in exceptional individual circumstances. d. In an effort to inform the public and discourage further loss of front gardens, details of the adverse environmental impacts of loss of planting and permeability from front gardens should be posted on the council's website under the section where residents apply for a VFC and sent to residents in response to their application. (This could be done by setting up a dedicated email address for applications with an automatic response.) Residents should be asked to confirm that they read and understood the information provided before confirming that they wish to go ahead with their application. e. In the event that an application for a VFCs is granted, applicants should be routinely provided with guidance on minimising the adverse environmental impact of the associated front garden conversion, including advice on paving the minimum area required and maximising permeability and planting based on best practice as described by	incorporated into the Householder Development SPD.	

organisations such as the RHS and National Park City Foundation. Applicants should also be informed of their legal obligations in respect of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (No. 2) (England) Order 2008 which requires front garden hard surfacing of more than five square metres in area "to either be made of porous material or, if an impermeable surface, to direct runoff to a soakaway area or rainwater storage within the property's boundary" f. Increase the application fee and installation charge for VFCs. The increased charge for installation of the VFC will include all existing costs associated with planning, maintenance and implementation, as well as the cost of 2 mandatory checks – 6 months and 1 year after installation – to determine that any associated hard standing conforms as a minimum with the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (No. 2) (England) Order 2008. The upfront charge should also include a deposit sufficient to cover the costs of remedial action should this be necessary to render any installed hard standings compliant. g. The council should enforce against vehicles crossing the public footway where a VFC has been refused. h. The council should speed up the process for delivering disabled bays outside homes of disabled residents to respond to the need for adjacent parking. i. Explore becoming an early adopter of Pavement Channels to facilitate home charging of EVs parked on the kerbside and join a pilot if there is an opportunity to do so or if the government provides the appropriate assurances and planning guidance. Do everything possible in current and future legislation to prevent further loss of planting and permeability in front gardens and encourage depaving		
Recommendation no.14	**PARTIALLY ACCEPTED**	**Update: IN PROGRESS**
Make Southwark a pesticide free borough, to protect	Pesticide reduction is an objective in the Climate Action Plan;	**Lead teams: Ecology & Parks; Climate Change; Waste**

biodiversity and to protect our residents from the inherent harms of pesticides. Take a staged approach to eliminating pesticide use from our streets and estates, following on from the elimination of pesticide use from our parks several years ago. **Priority Actions:** I. Draw upon the Pesticide Action Network's (PAN) Toolkit for Local Authorities to smooth this transition and, in particular, to understand the alternatives to pesticide use, the relative costs and the challenges. II. Consider replicating Lambeth Council's Community Weeding Scheme. III. To best understand and manage the challenges involved in this change of practice, including obtaining value for money and stakeholder buy in the Cabinet Member and officers should actively engage with counterparts in Lambeth and other councils that have already undertaken this change and gone pesticide free IV. Publicise to residents and landowners the reasons that Southwark is taking this approach, explaining the harms associated with the spraying of pesticides, and use this position to discourage residents and landowners from private use of pesticides.	however, a council-wide pesticide reduction strategy has not yet been formally adopted. Pesticide use has been eliminated from our parks and open spaces, except for targeted use against invasive species, such as Japanese knotweed and giant hogweed, where an effective viable alternative for control is not available. Any proposed weed control methods in parks and open spaces are assessed by ecology officers for their environmental impact. The Waste and Cleaning service is responsible for providing weed management on the Council's public streets and housing estates, on behalf of Highway and Housing services. The use of herbicide for control of vegetation growth for Housing and Highway services has been stopped for all 'green' assets, such as grass verges and communal green space (except for invasive species, such as Japanese knotweed and giant hogweed); and reduced from 2-3 times per year to 1 per year for all 'grey' assets, such as surfaced footways and hard standing. The Cleaning Service has undertaken trials of herbicide-free methods of control and found them to be mostly ineffective but also much more costly. There is evidence that local authorities that have previously gone herbicide-free have subsequently reverted to the use of glyphosate, with the reasons most likely being higher cost and lack of effectiveness. Until the integrated weed management planning work has been completed, it will not be feasible to determine whether, or not, the aim to eliminate the use of herbicide from the seasonal management of vegetation on Highway and Housing 'grey' assets can be fully achieved.	**and Cleaning** Herbicides continue to not be used in our parks and open spaces; and our Council Housing and Highway green spaces, except for targeted use against invasive species, such as Japanese knotweed and giant hogweed, where an effective viable alternative for control is not available. Any proposed weed control methods in parks and open spaces are assessed by ecology officers for their environmental impact. Over the 2026 'growing season', with the support of Housing and Highways, the Council's Cleaning and Grounds Maintenance service has trialled not applying herbicide to control weed growth on Housing and Highway sealed surfaces/ areas of hard standing. Instead, the service has invested in additional mechanical control methods and trialling a risk-based management approach to determine whether or not weed growth removal was required. The Southwark Integrated Weed Management Plan Working Group has been set up to work towards minimising herbicide use across all Council services, including Highways, Housing and Parks. The Working Group has finalised a proposed draft Integrated Weed Management Policy document which is due to be considered for adoption by the Council's Executive in 2026/27, following relevant Executive Member briefings autumn 2026. The development of the proposed Policy has been informed by Lambeth Council's experience of going 'herbicide-free'; and the Parks for London/ Amenity Forum Integrated Weed Management Reference Guide for Amenity Spaces and Public Realm (2025).
Recommendation no.15	**PARTIALLY ACCEPTED**	**Update: ONGOING**
Proactively encourage and enable the installation (including retrofitting) of well-designed, wildlife-friendly green roof systems on buildings and structures. Projects vary, but on average green roof systems have many of the ecological benefits of de-paving, at approximately half the cost per m2, sometimes less.	Biodiverse green roofs are regularly secured by planning condition whenever appropriate. The details of the green roof must be approved as part of the condition. This includes the depth of substrate, species proposed and size of the roof. Green roofs are encouraged through the Urban Green Factor and biodiversity net gain. This is set out in Policy 59 Green Infrastructure and Policy P60 Biodiversity of the Southwark	**Lead teams: Planning-Policy; Community Gardening** All biodiversity and greening policies will be reviewed as part of the Southwark Plan review, in line with the draft London plan and new NPPF (issued August 2026). Biodiverse green roofs are regularly conditioned as well as secured through BNG.

<table>
<tr>
<td>Priority actions:
Recognise the significant biodiversity benefits of well-designed green roofs can deliver, and particularly encourage their use through Planning in priority locations identified through the Green Infrastructure Strategy.
Promote the use of green roofs for agroecological urban farming.</td>
<td>Plan. Best practice details are set out within the Climate and Environment SPD. Significant BNG is secured by s106 with non-significant elements secured by condition.

Using green roofs for urban farming or food growing is possible on larger roofs where the site is accessible and has appropriate weight bearing load capacity is verified. This would often be a relationship between a commercial landowner and a social enterprise or growing enterprise. Officers are aware of roof garden projects in other parts of London which are funded by private businesses who own the building or funded by Business Improvement Districts. The scale to grow commercially on a rooftop and cost of setting up and running a project to make a profit does not currently exist in London. The Community Gardening team can hold information such as case studies and signpost/ link opportunities of land that they are made aware of, to experienced growers/ social enterprises/ commercial growing enterprises.</td>
<td>Adopting elements of the Natural England Urban Greening Factor which could enhance development by introducing elements with a higher biodiverse output

<table><tr><th>Feature</th><th>London</th><th>Natural England</th><th>Assessment</th></tr><tr><td>Intensive green roof</td><td>0.8</td><td>0.8</td><td>Aligned</td></tr><tr><td>Extensive roof meeting the general GRO standard</td><td>0.7</td><td>0.5</td><td>London can over-credit a standard extensive roof</td></tr><tr><td>Biodiverse extensive roof meeting the relevant specification</td><td>0.7</td><td>0.7</td><td>Natural England distinguishes quality more clearly</td></tr><tr><td>Lightweight sedum roof not meeting GRO requirements</td><td>0.3</td><td>0.3</td><td>Aligned</td></tr></table>
This is one of the clearest advantages of the national system. The London row awards 0.7 to an extensive roof meeting its general specification, while Natural England reserves 0.7 for a biodiverse extensive roof and assigns 0.5 to a standard extensive roof. That makes the national approach less susceptible to nominally compliant but ecologically limited green roofs receiving a relatively high score.

Community Gardening team have started researching case studies from other cities to learn more about urban farm enterprises on rooftops and on ground level. There are some new London projects, and they will arrange site visits to learn more.
The team are exploring funding options which would give more capacity to look further into this topic.</td>
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<td>Recommendation no.16</td>
<td>PARTIALLY ACCEPTED</td>
<td>Update: ONGOING</td>
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<td>New trees should be considered as part of a larger habitat design and more priority given to their contribution to local ecology and the wider Ecological Network. Where possible, trees should be co-located with other trees and planting, in</td>
<td>Where new and replacement tree planting takes place consideration is always given to providing larger tree pits, soil cells and integrating SuDs schemes.
This is however influenced by existing immovable onsite</td>
<td>Lead team: Trees

Our approach to tree species selection has not changed since our original response.</td>
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larger pits or schemes, and in conjunction with SuDs, wherever possible. **Priority Actions** • Amend the existing criteria for choosing trees to include the following: a. benefit to the wider ecology, with a preference for trees that feed pollinators, other invertebrates, and birds, and which takes account of the advantages of native trees to the ecosystem b. placement within the wider Ecological Network, including wildlife corridors and proximity to SINCs (to be set out in the forthcoming Ecological Network/ Green Infrastructure Strategy and London LNRS) • Planting should be in as large tree pits as possible within the constraints of the site, preferably with at least two trees to support a mosaic habitat designed to sustain the whole life cycle of insects. Where as possible, trees should be integrated with in SuDS. • Encourage and support community trees groups such as Herne Hill Tree Watch and Trees for Bermondsey.	constraints such as utilities, footway widths or buildings. The existing criteria for tree selection is based on the suitability of the tree or trees for a given location based on the existing nursery stock type, eventual height, and spread and environmental tolerances such the ability to tolerate drought stress, paved areas, pollution and waterlogging, in addition to ecosystem services and disservices. In addition to this we ensure that our planting programmes are diverse following the 10-20-30 rule (Santamour 1990) which prescribes that tree populations should not contain 10% of more than one species, 20% of more than one genus and 30% of more than one family to ensure future resilience. All tree species both native and non-native support and are important for biodiversity However, whilst native species such as Oak and willow support invertebrates in greater numbers than non-native trees, such species will not always be suitable for planting within urban areas due to water demand, spatial constraints and their ability tolerate harsh urban conditions. Current climate change modelling by the Botanic Gardens Conservation Internation (BGCI) indicates several UK native species will not be viable due to climate change (Change Alliance of Botanic Gardens, 2025). Furthermore, promoting the concept of planting mostly native trees will lead to a lack of species diversity and put Southwark's urban forest against greater risk of mortality due to pests and pathogens. It is therefore important that we avoid a one size fits all approach to tree species selection to ensure that that the boroughs tree stock is resilient to climate change, in addition to pests and pathogens. Further guidance documents and nationally recognised best practice on the subject of planting and species selection can be found here: https://cat.bgci.org/ https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/publications/urban-tree-	

	manual/ https://www.tdag.org.uk/tree-species-selection-for-green-infrastructure.html https://www.tdag.org.uk/first-steps-in-urban-tree-canopy-cover.html https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/research/quantification-and-valuation-of-benefits-provided-by-urban-trees/selecting-urban-trees-for-ecosystem-service-provision/ londonurbanforestplan_final.pdf London Urban Forest Resilience Project Report We work with, encourage, and support groups such a Herne Hill Tree Watch, Trees for Bermondsey, and numerous community groups to plant trees, hedging and orchards.	
Recommendation no.17	**PARTIALLY ACCEPTED**	**Update: ONGOING**

Mandate biodiverse-friendly planting and maintenance in all new schemes including pocket parks, larger park planting schemes and SuDS.
 	
All new contracts approved through Trees, Housing, Parks, Planning or Highways should be chosen to explicitly enhance and maintain biodiversity
 	
Priority Actions
• All planting must be managed to ensure:
  ○ That herbaceous planting is with wildlife-friendly species, with due consideration given to all phases of invertebrate lifecycles, and majority UK native,
  ○ that Trees are selected according to the amended biodiversity focused criteria (above)
  ○ resilience in case of drought and excess rainfall and the extremes of UK temperatures.
• Council officers including those managing Cleaning Greener Safer and Devolved Highway Budget projects should be made aware of these criteria.
• Where contractors/sub-contractors are responsible for the choice of plant species, these criteria should be specified in contracts.
• This is a useful resource https://www.lbp.org.uk/downloads/Publications/Managem
	Ecology and Tree officers regularly support Highways, Housing and Project teams during the design and implementation of new planting schemes to ensure they consider biodiversity along with maintenance and environmental factors.
	
	It is not possible to limit tree selection to a majority UK native species as this would limit tree selection to that of 21 species many of which are not suitable for planting in urban areas and are not drought tolerant or resilient to climate change.
	
	Please refer to our response to recommendation 16 that provides a further justification on this subject.
	
	Contractors are not responsible for the selection of tree species; they are carefully selected by the council's team of qualified arboricultural officers.
		Lead team: Ecology & Parks; Trees; Highways
		Ecology and Tree officers continue to support Highways, Housing, Parks 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 in Burgess Park, Albion Channel, Peckham Rye Park, Consort and Dr Harold Moody Park, Surrey Square Park, Long meadow and Victory Community Park.
		
		Our process to tree species selection has not changed since our original response.

ent/making-contracts-work-for-wildlife.pdf		
Recommendation no.18	**ACCEPTED**	**Update: COMPLETE**
Improve the active management of SINCs. **Priority Actions:** • Ensure the SINC and management plan for each habitat type is in place and well-communicated to all relevant staff. Explicitly include sections for biodiversity-appropriate first response to Anti-Social Behaviour (such as community policing, community engagement in activities such as litter picking, CCTV, fencing off sensitive habitat).	81% of Southwark's SINCs, and 96% of those managed by the Council, are currently in positive active management for nature, as per the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)'s Single Data List (SDL) 160 statistic. Officers regularly write, update, or commission habitat management plans, which include provisions around anti-social behaviour (ASB) when relevant. ASB concerns must be coordinated with community safety and cleaning teams. Officers regularly provide maintenance advice to other teams or residents on how to manage ecological assets. Improving our equipment to aid with proper ecological management is something we can explore, following on from the purchase of two cut-and-collect mowers using a ReWild London grant to aid with meadow management. Ecological management will be a consideration in the development of any future grounds maintenance contracts. The borough ecology survey and SINC Review currently underway will involve reviewing existing SINC sites, mapping their habitats and providing recommendations on their future management.	**Lead team: Ecology & Parks** Within the 2025 submission to the SDL160 statistic to Defra, 82% of Southwark SINCs, and 98% of those managed by the Council, were assessed as in positive active management for nature – a small improvement over the 2024 figure. Ecology and Parks officers regularly write, update, or commission habitat management plans, which include provisions around anti-social behaviour (ASB) when relevant. ASB concerns must be coordinated with community safety and cleaning teams. Ecology Officers regularly provide maintenance advice to other teams or residents on how to manage ecological assets. Officers are in the process of reviewing and updating the Parks Grounds maintenance contract. This will include new contractual obligations around hedge cutting and mowing to support wildlife.
Recommendation no.19	**PARTIALLY ACCEPTED**	**Update: ONGOING**
Conduct systematic and periodic ecological audits of our parks, estates, verges pockets of land and SINCS, using targeted trial applications of AI-based bioacoustic monitoring devices. Use the information collected to develop more targeted biodiversity protection and support practices and policies.	The council continuously strives to improve our biodiversity monitoring, to ensure there is proper evidence to support decision making around ecology. Wherever possible we support residents and organisations to monitor nature across the borough. Officers have recently been allocated council funding to build recording capacity and skills amongst residents through training and activities. This builds on our network of citizen scientists and third-sector partners who conduct regular biodiversity monitoring of birds, bats, plants, fungi, butterflies, and more, often supported by specialist organisations such as Butterfly Conservation, London Bat	**Lead team: Ecology & Parks** In 2025/26, the ecology service delivered or supported 13 biodiversity workshops, engaging almost 300 attendees to build biological recording capacity and skills. The workshops generated over 1100 biological records, expanding our understanding of species in Southwark with new data. This work built on ongoing, regular surveying carried out by networks of partners and citizen scientists, including regular bird counts, plant surveys, butterfly transects (via the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme), and bat box checks (via the

	Group, and the South London Botanical Institute. The council collaborates or facilitates, where appropriate, academics conducting biodiversity research in Southwark, including, recently from University College London, the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, and the Institute of Zoology. Conducting regular surveys, carrying out scientific analyses, or adopting new sensor technology (e.g. AI-based bioacoustic monitors) carries significant resource costs, and often requires specialist facilities and expertise. Any new monitoring technology would need to be subject to a cost-benefit analysis to ensure that information produced is useful for advancing the Council's policies for biodiversity. The council is committed to developing this area of work but needs to address the issue of finding additional resource to do it.	London Bat Group). Conducting regular surveys, carrying out scientific analyses, or adopting new sensor technology (e.g. AI-based bioacoustic monitors) carries significant resource costs, and often requires specialist facilities and expertise. Any new monitoring technology would need to be subject to a cost-benefit analysis to ensure that information produced is useful for advancing the Council's policies for biodiversity. Officers continue to explore what devices and technology are available and how they can monitor existing projects and support targeted interventions. The council continues its commitment to develop this area of work but needs to address the issue of finding additional resource in order to do so.
Recommendation no.20	**PARTIALLY ACCEPTED**	**Update: ONGOING**
Increase blue habitat, especially in areas where there are gaps by: **i. expanding the areas of marginal habitat around the borough's rivers and ponds.** **ii. increasing the number of ponds and wetlands, including temporary ponds.** **Priority Actions:** • Explore whether and how existing underground rivers could be used in some areas of the borough to achieve this ambition. Create River Basin Management Plans for the catchments of the Rivers Peck and Neckinger, including Earl's Sluice	We strive to expand wetland habitat and building ponds wherever possible. However, any new freshwater habitats must consider long term sustainability, for example ensuring ponds aren't reliant on mains water connections, and management plans are in place. We are project partners on Froglife's 'London Blue Chain' project, which are supporting several new pond builds or restorations in Southwark. We are working on a management plan for Burgess Park's lake to guide the expansion and management of the marginal reedbeds, supporting the addition of floating planters in Greenland Dock, and the management of Albion Channel's freshwater habitats. New measures are being implemented in Peckham Rye Park and Southwark Park to improve water quality and the condition of the riparian zone. However, the creation of River Basin Management Plans is the responsibility of the Environment Agency as per the Water Framework Directive. The above ground sections of the Neckinger and Earl's Sluice are now limited to outlets into the Thames, and their formal management is the responsibility of the Port of London Authority, Environment Agency, and Thames Water.	**Lead teams: Ecology & Parks** Since the ESC's Biodiversity Review recommendations were published, the council has delivered or supported wetland and waterbody enhancement or creation projects, including the restoration of Albion Channel, expansion of floating planters in Greenland Dock, reedbed creation in Surrey Water, the construction or restoration of 10 ponds in partnership with Froglife's 'London Blue Chain' project, riparian enhancement works along a rivulet of the River Peck, and the development of a lake management plan in Burgess Park. Aeration devices and other algae control methods are in place across several of our larger lakes to manage water quality. A new pond has been created as Brunswick Park, funded by the Southwark Biodiversity Fund. Funding has been secured to improve the ponds in Cobourg Road nature area and St James Churchyard, with works expecting to be completed in 2026. As outlined in our original response, the creation of River Basin Management Plans remains the responsibility of the Environment Agency as per the Water Framework Directive.

	This is detailed within the Natural England Green Infrastructure Planning and Design Guide. These documents will inform the evidence base documents that will be used to inform the development of policy around water bodies and water habitat in the review of the Southwark Plan. A 170m bridge across Canada Water was opened in November 2024, bringing residents closer to the restored area of wetland.	The above ground sections of the Neckinger and Earl's Sluice are now limited to outlets into the Thames, and their formal management is the responsibility of the Port of London Authority, Environment Agency, and Thames Water.
Recommendation no.21	**PARTIALLY ACCEPTED**	**Update: COMPLETED**
Southwark should pursue the Water Framework Directive "Good Ecological Status" for all remaining above ground waterways, such as the Peck.	None of the above or below ground waterways in Southwark (excluding the Thames) – Peck, Effra, Neckinger, Earl's Sluice – are currently assessed by Environment Agency as per the Water Framework Directive, and do not have River Basin Management Plans, which are the responsibility of the Environment Agency (EA) to produce and review. Officers supported recent flood alleviation works in Peckham Rye Park and Common which expand the potential of the, largely underground, River Peck to deliver for biodiversity. Further improvements to the surrounding riparian habitat of the above-ground sections of the Peck are planned.	**Lead team: Ecology & Parks** As outlined in our original response, none of the above or below ground waterways in Southwark (excluding the Thames) – Peck, Effra, Neckinger, Earl's Sluice – are currently assessed by Environment Agency as per the Water Framework Directive, and do not have River Basin Management Plans, which are the responsibility of the Environment Agency (EA) to produce and review. Riparian habitat works surrounding the above-ground section of a rivulet of the River Peck in Peckham Rye Parks have commenced 2026.
Recommendation no.22	**PARTIALLY ACCEPTED**	**Update: IN PROGRESS**
Provide, recognise, and protect routes for use by wildlife only, as well as for use for active travel, with reference to the work Southwark Nature Action Volunteers (SNAV) have done on wildlife corridors for nature and people, as part of the broader piece of work on Ecological Networks.	Taking account of ecological connectivity is a priority for several council policies, including the Southwark Plan and Climate Change Action Plan. The council will endeavour to support projects that are in strategic locations for habitat networks. Many green corridors both for wildlife and active travel are already protected within the SINC system, for example, Surrey Canal Walk, Sydenham Hill Railway Cuttings, Deal Porters Walk, and Nunhead Railway Embankments. We are working towards reviewing our SINCs and other habitat opportunities across the borough through our current borough-wide ecological survey. Our work with the GLA to	**Lead teams: Ecology & Parks; Planning Division; Highways** The recently completed SINC Review included ecological connectivity as a key criterion when assessing sites for SINC status, informed by ecological connectivity modelling provided by Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL). The London LNRS, published by the GLA with support from London borough officers including Southwark, includes "green corridors" as one of its priorities for nature recovery. Opportunity areas for green corridors are mapped on the LNRS Local Habitat Map, including several supported by SNAV. The results from the LNRS are publicly available via the GLA. The results from the SINC Review will be available via the next Local Plan development process as part of

	develop the London Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) will also contribute towards this recommendation, through identifying opportunity areas for biodiversity recovery, including green corridors. Through the 'Streets for Nature' component, Streets for People builds connections between the green infrastructure and the built environment. Enhancing connectivity by walking and cycling aims to improve access to these sites and public enjoyment of them. As a result, creating additional demand for existing sites and the value added through them for biodiversity and the natural amenity. Sites and routes for wildlife only will be dealt with by the London Plan, Local Nature Recovery Strategy, Green Infrastructure framework, updated SNAP and SINC review. These evidence base documents will be used to inform the development of policy around greening and wildlife habitat in the review of the Southwark Plan.	statutory consultation expected in 2027. The results of both these reports will be considered within the development of the Southwark Nature Recovery Action Plan, expected 2027. The Local Plan will draw upon evidence including an Open Space Needs Assessment and Green and Blue infrastructure strategy to strengthen these links and adopt any new SINCs, following the statutory consultation process. Streets for People continues to focus on biodiversity outcomes through its 'Streets for Nature' pillar. This includes multiple workstreams across a number of connected goals
Recommendation no.23	**PARTIALLY ACCEPTED**	**Update: IN PROGRESS**
Southwark should work with the GLA to adopt clearer definitions and requirements for nature-friendly "green" corridors, for example including guidelines for minimum widths, sizes, spacing, target species, and types of soil and planting. **Priority Actions:** • Consultation must first take place with Planning and Ecology Officers and the Southwark Biodiversity Partnership.	Defining ideal requirements for ecological connectivity is something that can be considered within our next biodiversity strategy (next iteration of the SNAP), following the LNRS produced by the GLA. The Southwark Biodiversity Partnership will be a key consultee on this strategy. However, the complexities of the urban environment in terms of land use and ownership, infrastructure and services mean adopting explicit minimum requirements for nature corridors could restrict our ability to deliver projects for nature recovery. We strive to support innovative projects that promote ecological connectivity through the urban environment where the creation of linear green spaces is not possible. For example, the creation of 'stepping stone' wildlife corridors, such as the North Bermondsey Wildlife Corridor and the Camberwell Wildlife Corridor. The Planning Division team are actively engaging with the GLA at consultation events on the planning policy open	**Lead teams: Ecology & Parks; Planning Division** The London LNRS was published by the GLA in 2026, with a specific 'green corridor' priority included. The LNRS will be a key consideration while drafting our next biodiversity plan – a Southwark Nature Recovery Action Plan - expected 2027. The production of this plan will include public and stakeholder consultation, including with the Southwark Biodiversity Partnership and officers from multiple council departments. As outlined in our original response, the complexities of the urban environment in terms of land use and ownership, infrastructure and services mean adopting explicit minimum requirements for nature corridors could restrict our ability to deliver projects for nature recovery. We strive to support innovative projects that promote ecological connectivity through the urban environment where the creation of linear green spaces is not possible. For example, the creation of 'stepping stone' wildlife corridors, such as the North Bermondsey Wildlife Corridor and the Camberwell Wildlife

	scoping sessions, Green Infrastructure Framework and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). The planning policy team will continue to respond to relevant consultations to gain clarity on definitions, guidelines and requirements for green corridors. Green corridors will be highlighted as areas for biodiversity potential in the LNRS. Further work will be commenced on identifying and managing green corridors in the borough through the Green Infrastructure framework, updated SNAP and SINC review. These evidence base documents will be used to inform the development of policy around greening in the review of the Southwark Plan.	Corridor.
Recommendation no.24	**ACCEPTED**	**Update: ONGOING**
Encourage, enable and support community and volunteer management of nature, wherever there is interest. As well as reducing costs, this will increase social benefit, educate and enhance the sustainability of wildlife friendly habitat. **Priority actions:** Encourage, define and develop Public-Common Partnerships, as suggested in the Southwark Land Commission Report, where local community organisations share responsibility for land management with Southwark as the landowner	We strongly encourage community stewardship of green spaces, and support third sector partners wherever possible to facilitate this. For example, leases or management agreements are in place from large sites such as Sydenham Hill Woods to small sites such as Bellenden Road Nature Reserve, or areas within parks, such as in Shuttleworth Park. We strive to identify and build new partnerships to support positive environmental management of our green spaces, while ensuring that third sector partners and community organisations are supported to maintain sites sustainably for the long term.	**Lead team: Ecology & Parks** We continue to encourage community stewardship of green spaces and support third sector and community partners wherever possible to facilitate this, for example through leases and management agreements. Since the publication of the ESC Biodiversity Review, management agreements for ecological management of Red Cross Gardens, Stave Hill Ecological Park, Sydenham Hill Woods, Lavender Pond and Dulwich Upper Wood have been extended, and new management arrangements have been set up for Galleywall Rd Nature Garden and the Burgess Park Community Plant Nursery.
Recommendation no.25	**ACCEPTED**	**Update: UNDER CONSIDERATION**
Develop a training programme on biodiversity and wildlife friendly management of green and blue space, targeted at officers and contractors across all relevant roles and grades, suited to their job roles. **This should be an integral part of the staff training already required to ensure that all areas of council policy are seen through the prism of the Climate Emergency and extended to include the Biodiversity Emergency.**	The Climate Change Team is currently developing a staff climate training programme and intranet hub, and biodiversity will be included as part of this programme. Ecology officers could, provided additional capacity and resource is made available, support with the development of this training. Within parks, greater provision for ecological training for grounds maintenance staff can be considered as part of any	**Lead teams: Ecology & Parks; Climate Change; Highways** The council's ecology service does not currently provide any specific/bespoke training on biodiversity. However, ecology officers could, provided additional capacity and resource is made available, support with the development of this training. Regular on-the-job training is provided to grounds maintenance staff and contractors by Ecology, Tree, and Parks Operations officers on how to maintain biodiversity assets to a high standard.

Priority Actions: • Ensure that all teams, including Planning, Climate Change, Sustainable Growth, Parks, Housing, Flood Management, Highways, Air Quality and other departments are aware of our ambitions to address the Biodiversity Emergency • Ecology officers to support / collaborate in developing cross council positive biodiversity training. • The training ought to be developed for: 1. Managers and leaders 2. Staff managing delivery of projects under the Cleaner Greener Safer and Devolved Highways Budget funding streams, 3. Operational staff including: o Grounds maintenance team o Cleaning team o Supervisory staff • The training must ensure proper management and that wildlife friendly practices are embedded into operations. • Training should be repeated at regular intervals for existing staff and embedded in any induction training for new staff. • Contractors and sub-contractors should be obliged to adopt the same commitments to biodiversity across their areas of responsibility, including in respect of training their staff.	future grounds maintenance contracts. Regular on-the-job training is provided to grounds maintenance staff and contractors by Ecology, Tree, and Parks Operations officers on how to maintain biodiversity assets to a high standard. The complex interface of green/blue infrastructure and the built environment is a key component of the work that Highways services delivers, recognising the public demand for these features and access to them. Ensuring additional training and support is available to take full advantage of the opportunities available will be undertaken to make sure the different priorities for public space can be balanced. The council is committed to developing this area of work but needs to address the issue of finding additional resource to do it.	Climate training was delivered by the Climate Chage Team through London Climate Action Week in June 2026, with alll presentations made available on climate change team hub on the staff intranet following the week. Further training options are currently being developed. Highways work with colleagues in Ecology, Trees and Parks to help ensure delivery across biodiversity aims. Further training and guidance on this is currently in process.
Recommendation no.26	**ACCEPTED**	**Update: ONGOING**
Proactively promote Southwark's ambition to address the biodiversity emergency and explain steps that the council is taking and plans to take to achieve that end. This will include information explaining decisions taken in response to the recommendations contained in this document, such going pesticide free and other changes in management of green and blue spaces across the borough. **Develop a programme to engage residents in the appreciation of and connection to nature.** **Priority Actions**	We strive to promote our legacy of action for biodiversity, our current projects for nature recovery, and ambitions for the future with the public, as well as support residents to get involved with nature recovery through comms. The Community Gardening team sends out a quarterly e-newsletter and runs a Southwark Community Gardening Instagram account highlighting projects and relevant educational and biodiversity topics from Southwark and wider. The Climate Change Team supports this through a dedicated comms support and through an annual climate report.	**Lead teams: Ecology & Parks; Community Gardening; Climate Change** The council continues to promote our ambition and progress for nature recovery, as well as opportunities available for getting involved with nature recovery through a variety of comms channels, including social media, Southwark Life magazine and the council website. Biodiversity matters are included within the wider Parks and Natural Environment team's comms planner. The development and launch of the next biodiversity plan for Southwark – a Southwark Nature Recovery Action Plan - will include a specific comms plan. The Community Gardening team sends out a quarterly e-

Use social media and publications such as Southwark Life to explain highlight our ambitions and paths to achieving them. These should include recommendations as to how residents, schools, places of worship and other stakeholders can help to protect and improve biodiversity in their own gardens and local green spaces. Facilitate an exhibition in the Tooley Street Atrium of Insectinside.me and encourage links to Southwark schools. Consider developing livestream wildlife webcams to increase resident involvement in and awareness of Southwark's wildlife.	We are working with the council's comms team to develop a biodiversity comms plan across multiple communication platforms and styles to reach a broad audience, including social media, print media such as Southwark Life, the council website's ecology pages and in-person activities. This could involve novel methods such an exhibition in the Tooley Street Atrium or the use of wildlife livestreams, in collaboration with external third-sector or community organisations and residents. While the council is committed to developing this area of work, this will be subject to finding the necessary resource and agreement against other comms priorities within the council.	newsletter and runs a Southwark Community Gardening Instagram account highlighting projects and relevant educational and biodiversity topics from Southwark and wider. The Burgess Park Community Plant Nursery offers a programme of volunteering and workshops covering in 2026 growing wildflowers alongside food growing – offering plug plants and workshops including local seed saving and care of spaces. Ecology, Community Gardening and climate change have been working closely with comms to continue to promote their work, upcoming events and opportunities to engage with Southwark's nature on the council's social media channels. The Climate Change Team publishes the Climate Annual Report at the Executive meeting on 13 October 2026. The report promotes the variety of climate action undertaken across the council
Recommendation no.27	**ACCEPTED**	**Update: ONGOING**
Actively promote wildlife gardening to residents. **Priority actions** • Promote water butts to households including as recommended above. • Deliver this in partnership with the Centre for Wildlife Gardening and other members of Southwark Biodiversity Partnership.	Community Gardening officers share this through their interaction with individual groups signposting to offers and guidance from other organisations. Also, through their communications channels and the two Southwark Community Gardening networking events they organise each year. Officers regularly link estate community gardens to conservation organisations, such as Froglife and Butterfly Conservation, for collaborations where funding, expertise and training can be delivered by these organisations on site particularly at estate community gardens. We maintain guidance on ecologically friendly activities on the Council's website: https://www.southwark.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-10/guidance_on_creating_habitat_and_biodiversity_features_for_parks_and_open_spaces.pdf As per our response to recommendation 27, we are working with the comms and web team to promote to residents how they can get involved with nature recovery in Southwark, through the development of a dedicated biodiversity comms plan. However, this is subject to the council finding the	**Lead team: Community gardening** Community Gardening team includes water capture in new projects and advises existing projects. The team is researching a new training offer for 2027 which would include practical support and advice for increasing water capture in community gardening and all growing projects across the borough, as well as incorporating irrigation and planting advice. They will invite ideas and experiences from the Southwark Biodiversity Partnership and Community Gardening network as well as other projects in London and beyond.

	necessary resource, and agreement against other comms priorities.	
Recommendation no.28	**PARTIALLY ACCEPTED**	**Update: ONGOING**
Develop ambitious cross borough Ecological Networks and particularly consider the ecological and social potential of daylighting more of Southwark's Rivers (e.g. the River Peck in Peckham Rye Park and River Effra in the south of the borough) and increasing marginal habitat.	Officers regularly network with officers from other Boroughs, through the London Borough Biodiversity Forum and London Tree Officers Association. The production of the London Local Nature Recovery Strategy by the GLA, on which Southwark is a consultee, is defining a pan-London ecological network and promoting cross-borough approaches to biodiversity enhancement. We are not currently considering 'daylighting' any further sections of Southwark's culverted rivers. There are major logistical and environmental challenges with bringing underground segments of rivers aboveground in areas that have been built up, in cases for centuries, and integrated with the sewer system. Responsibility for culverted waterways is divided between the council, Environment Agency and Thames Water. Further improvements are planned to the surrounding riparian habitat of the above-ground sections of the Peck and nearby areas of the Effra in Peckham Rye Park and Belair Park, respectively.	**Lead team: Ecology & Parks** Officers continue to regularly network with officers from other Boroughs, through the London Borough Biodiversity Forum and London Tree Officers Association. The production of our next biodiversity plan – a Southwark Nature Recovery Action Plan – will be informed by the London LNRS, published in 2026 by the GLA. Promoting cross-borough approaches is a major aim of the LNRS. Improvements to an above-ground section of the River Peck in Peckham Rye Park have commenced 2026. More extensive works to daylight culverted rivers would need to be subject to a full cost and feasibility analysis.
Recommendation no.29	**ACCEPTED**	**Update: IN PROGRESS**
Make Southwark a "Right to Grow" borough, taking a motion to Southwark Council Assembly adopting 'The Right to Grow'. **Priority actions** • A 'The Right to Grow' motion along the lines below would be appropriate: • This Council notes: ○ that the cost-of-living crisis and the continued efforts to recover from the pandemic bring a new focus on ensuring that residents have access to enough fresh food for day to day living.	This recommendation has now been passed at Council Assembly and by Cabinet. Officers support this recommendation but note that further resources are needed to deliver more. This would build on the work the Community Gardening service has delivered since 2020 with the launch of the Allotment Expansion Guarantee (AEG). 23 new gardens with 256 growing plots have been set up on Southwark housing estates to date, more in progress.	**Lead team: Community Gardening** 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 and exploring other funding options.

○ The increasing need to put the health and well-being of residents at the heart of our corporate strategies. ○ The powerful evidence which demonstrates the link between people's health and wellbeing and the availability of fresh locally produced food. ○ That the cost-of-living crisis is creating real hunger, reinforcing the need for healthy fresh food at an affordable price. ○ That communities coming together to grow food can radically reduce costs to NHS and social care budgets by reducing loneliness and providing healthy food. ○ That there is plenty of under used publicly owned land which could be used for community food growing while also improving the public realm. • This Council agrees (or to the extent that the below concern executive functions, recommends to the executive) to adopt a Right to Grow on council owned land which is suitable for cultivation. • As a result, this Council will: ○ Identify and produce a map of all council owned land suitable for community cultivation. ○ Make this land available for cultivation by a simple licence to community organisations at no cost. ○ Consider community food growing on sites awaiting development for other uses on a fixed term basis. ○ Write to Southwark's MPs and ask them to support the Incredible Edible campaign and national right to grow. • In addition, the Council will work with partners through the Land for Good delivery process and encourage anchor institutions and civil society to join the council in the above endeavour.	The Community Gardening team support residents and groups to set up new growing spaces on housing land. They have developed a clear process from checks for site suitability, support for group development, agreements that groups manage and maintain the spaces, consultation, agreements with the landowner, collaboration with other council teams, training and the groups becoming part of a Southwark growing network which is mapped. The Community Gardening service collaborate with other teams including Properties, Parks and the Ecology service to support stewardship of available (non-housing) land from groups or organisations carrying out food growing activities. The current capacity of the team would not be able to comprehensively map all prospective land suitable for growing. Possibly this could be resourced as a desktop exercise or ad hoc opportunities identified at different times. The priority remains on supporting resident led projects to ensure sustainability and need, so being led by where people are who want to run these projects.	
Recommendation no.30	**PARTIALLY ACCEPTED**	**Update: UNDER CONSIDERATION**
Map food growing plots **Priority actions:** • Undertake this mapping as part of a larger piece of	The Community Gardening service maps existing gardens rather than potential gardens. Currently they assist enquiries from residents about particular pieces of land – to help identify the landowner. Occasionally they are made aware of existing	**Lead team: Community Gardening** There has been no change in the previous position due to capacity and funding.

engagement work with community stakeholders to release more land for community good (see recommendation 10). • If there is insufficient capacity within the council to carry out this task, mapping will need to be commissioned externally. • Include as a minimum a public facing element that helps residents to discover ownership of land that could be used to grow food and also invites local landowners to submit potential food growing plots for community use under license, preferably for a minimum period of 5 years (although consideration could be given to shorter terms in some circumstances).	community gardens or nature gardens which become available as a group no longer has capacity to look after it. Following our response to recommendation 29, the council is committed to developing this area of work but needs to address the issue of finding additional resource to do it.	
Recommendation no.31	**PARTIALLY ACCEPTED**	**Update: IN PROGRESS**
Update the SNAP to include a community garden plan, which includes the right for residents to have a garden, orchard, or food growing plots on their estate. Include details on how Southwark can support urban agriculture to increase biodiversity.	Work is underway to review and then update the SNAP with a new biodiversity action plan, following the publication of the London Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), which will guide the structure of the Council's biodiversity strategies. Close working between ecology officers and the community gardening team means that community food growing and gardening, as a link to access to nature and a form of habitat creation, is likely to have a larger profile. However, a community gardening policy might benefit from being a standalone document, rather than form part of the SNAP. Biodiversity Action Plans are focused on habitats, species, and access to nature, following the 'UK Biodiversity Framework'. This could result in biodiversity overshadowing the other benefits of community gardens, such as for health and wellbeing, or aspects of community gardening governance and management, unrelated to nature recovery, overshadowing biodiversity actions. The council is committed to considering the idea of a Community Gardening strategy/plan, independently to the biodiversity strategy, subject to addressing additional resource needs, as discussed in the response to recommendation 32.	**Lead teams: Ecology & Parks; Community Gardening** With the SINC Review complete and the London LNRS now published by the GLA, work has commenced on developing a new biodiversity plan for Southwark – a Southwark Nature Recovery Action Plan – to replace the SNAP. Close working between ecology officers and the community gardening team means that community food growing and gardening will have a greater profile, acknowledging it as a key link to accessing nature and nature recovery. As stated in our original response, a community gardening policy might benefit from being a standalone document, rather than form part of the SNAP. Local Nature Recovery Plans are focused on habitats, species, and access to nature, following the Environment Act guidance. This could result in biodiversity overshadowing the other benefits of community gardens, such as for health and wellbeing, or aspects of community gardening governance and management, unrelated to nature recovery, overshadowing biodiversity actions.

Recommendation no.32	ACCEPTED	Update: UNDER CONSIDERATION
Develop a Community Gardening / urban food growing policy and include links to creating local markets and the planning system. **Priority actions** • Create a cross service working group to bring this forward consisting of Community Gardening Coordinators, Planning Division, Regeneration, Public Health, Climate Change and Ecology teams. • As part of this: ○ Create new urban farming and community food growing zones alongside new developments (roof tops, schools and new parks and green land). Old Kent Road would be a good test site for an integrated and inclusive food growing system. ○ Include a Food Growing Policy in the next update of the Southwark Plan (and /or Environment & Climate SPD) that requires developers to include spaces for urban agriculture, allotments and community gardening. ○ Support local market initiatives, such as cooperative grocery stores, farmers' markets and other community hubs, in collaboration with food growing projects in the area and initiatives such as the Walworth Neighbourhood Food Model. ○ Undertake to support Agroecology through all urban agriculture initiatives	The Community Gardening team have developed an action plan for supporting community gardening/ food growing which is updated annually. There is significant potential for a cross-team working group to develop this, with the Community Gardening service able to advise and provide best practise/case-study examples. While, the council is committed to developing this area of work, this is subject to finding required additional resource needs and addressing capacity requirements. The Climate and Environment SPD has been revised to include a section on food growing spaces within development. Best practice on this will also be reviewed as part of the Southwark Plan review.	**Lead teams: Community gardening; Planning Division** The Climate and Environment SPD was adopted in 2025 and includes a section on food growing spaces within development. Best practice and any policy wording will be examined as part of the Southwark Plan review. Lack of capacity within the Community Gardening team (2 x 3 day week officers) has meant no progress on this recommendation. Waiting for funding decision on Right to Grow business case which create capacity to take this work forward.
Recommendation no.33	**PARTIALLY ACCEPTED**	**Update: ONGOING**
Undertake to support Agroecology through food procurement	The Southwark Sustainable Food Strategy (2023-2026) outlines the vision for a sustainable food system in Southwark. This strategy includes the key aim to promote and provide planet-healthy diets https://www.southwarkfoodactionalliance.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Good-Food-Southwark-Sustainable-Food-Strategy-2023-26.pdf The Southwark School Food Transformation Programme supports sustainable food procurement, with goals to reduce meat consumption and increase plant-based food consumption in schools, support more local food producers and food	**Lead teams: Community Gardening, Climate Change** The Sustainable Food Strategy continues to outline the vision for sustainable food systems in Southwark. Southwark received a Leadership Award in Sustain's Good Food Local Report 2026, which considers sustainable food procurement. The climate change team continues to work with public health colleagues on embedding sustainable procurement within Southwark. Community Gardening have been exploring a food systems external funding bid with partners which would encompass supporting more local growing at scale and procurement. At

	businesses, reduce school food waste and source more higher welfare food by using suppliers who have a Food for Life Bronze catering accreditation, which also considers sustainability. Local food is defined as food that is grown, raised, or produced within a 30-mile radius from the borough's boundaries. For essential products that cannot be sourced within this radius, such as fresh fish, the definition is extended to include producers within a 100-mile radius. Local food businesses are suppliers located in Southwark and/or within a 30-mile radius from the borough's boundaries. While the council is committed to exploring further avenues of sustainable food procurement including for example through agro-ecology, this is subject to finding required additional resource needs and addressing capacity requirements.	this stage not certain whether this will progress into a bid due to capacity.
Recommendation no.34	**ACCEPTED**	**Update: COMPLETED**
Work with the Capital Growth network to monitor and measure how food growing projects in Southwark are improving biodiversity and helping to tackle the ecological emergency.	Officers are already working with Capital Growth to develop new methods to measure and improve biodiversity on food growing sites.	**Lead team: Community Gardening** Community Gardening are part of the inter-council and the Capital Growth working group which meet quarterly to input and share ideas and experiences. The team shared the summer Capital Growth Big City Bug Hunt project with the network of Southwark growers and linked up their Critter Consultants with Glengall Wharf Garden. Will continue to work together where possible.

Policy framework implications

9. The protection and enhancement of biodiversity is a corporate responsibility that cuts across all council departments and functions, as required of the Biodiversity Duty on local authorities, and strengthened by the Environment Act, 2021. Meeting the recommendations accepted or partially accepted from the ESC will contribute towards our requirements of the Duty. However, action taken to conserve and enhance biodiversity itself contributes to a range of council, regional and national policies and targets.

10. Meeting the recommendations accepted or partially accepted by the ESC directly contributes to the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (2025) commitment to a "Natural Environment", the Streets for People 2023-2030 'Streets for Nature' theme, and the Southwark Plan 2019-2036 (2022) policies: P57 Open Space, P58 Open water space, P59 Green Infrastructure, P60 Biodiversity and P61 Trees. Action taken for biodiversity additionally contributes to other key council plans and strategies, including the Cultural strategy (2017), Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (2024), Air Quality Strategy and Action Plan (2017), Tree Management Policy (2020), Southwark Land Commission (2023) and Southwark Food Security Action Plan (2019),

11. Action for biodiversity contributes to the London Environment Strategy., the London Plan "Green Infrastructure and Natural Environment" and "Sustainable Infrastructure" policies, and the relevant priorities for Southwark within the London Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).

Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts

Community impact statement

Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement

Health impact statement

12. Accepting the recommendations from the ESC will have a positive impact on communities in Southwark. Actions for the conservation and promotion of biodiversity promote community cohesion by connecting people with nature, providing volunteering opportunities, and fostering positive interactions between people from different communities. Much of the wildlife assets of Southwark are in parks and public spaces, free to all users, and accessible year-round.

13. Volunteering is vital in the action taken for biodiversity protection and enhancement in the borough. Southwark has developed or supports a huge range of regular volunteering opportunities and will continue to promote volunteering in our open spaces. This includes opportunities with schools, people with disabilities, and underrepresented groups.

14. Accepting the recommendations from the ESC will have no detrimental impact to any group or protected characteristic as outlined in the Equalities Act 2010 or the Public Sector Equality duty (PSED) and align with a just transition for our residents in tackling the climate emergency.

15. Many activities to conserve and enhance biodiversity provide novel opportunities for participation with physical activity for members of the public, increasing representation in outdoor activities and promoting resident health and wellbeing. Access to nature is well documented as beneficial to both mental and physical health.

16. Biodiversity directly benefits the health of residents through improving air quality, reducing urban temperatures, reducing noise and calming traffic, managing flood risks, and providing amenity value, recreation space and cultural services.

Further guidance

17. N/A

Climate change implications

18. Conserving and enhancing biodiversity can reduce emissions and mitigate against the impacts of climate change. For example, trees both sequester carbon and provide shade.

19. Accepting the recommendations of the ESC will directly contribute to the Council's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (2025), which commits to a 'Thriving Natural Environment' and an adapted, resilient borough. These commitments include improving biodiversity, introducing new green corridors, making our streets a green place to walk, play and relax and increasing tree canopy cover across the borough. Actions resulting from the delivery of the strategy will offer opportunities for biodiversity improvements through new green infrastructure and sustainable urban drainage to tackle flooding and overheating.

20. A £1m allocation for capital projects for green space enhancements and biodiversity improvements was agreed in 2022 in response to Climate Change Citizen Jury recommendations, which will contribute to both climate change and biodiversity objectives.

Resource implications

21. Much action relating to biodiversity is contained within existing revenue and capital budgets relating to existing biodiversity projects and habitat management within the council. Should the implementation of any activities or recommendations outlined in this report require additional funds in future these will be subject to further decision reports setting out the cost and funding mechanisms.

Consultation

22. Should the implementation of any activities or recommendations outlined in this report require consultation in future these will be subject to further decision making.

23. Consultation on biodiversity-related projects in the public realm is regularly and extensively carried out with internal departments, external groups, residents, organisations and other users of public spaces

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Head of Procurement

24. N/A

Director of Law and Governance

25. N/A

Strategic Director of Resources

26. N/A

Other officers

27. N/A

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

28. Insert text

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Cabinet response to 'Biodiversity Scrutiny Review Report Recommendations'	Cabinet Office 160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Julie Timbrell 020 7525 0514
Cabinet Report: "Report of the Environment Scrutiny Commission: Biodiversity scrutiny review"	Cabinet Office 160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Julie Timbrell 020 7525 0514
Environment Scrutiny Commission agenda and papers 2022/23/24	Scrutiny Team 160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Julie Timbrell 020 7525 0514

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Biodiversity scrutiny review report (ESC, Nov. 2024)
Appendix 2	Biodiversity scrutiny review report recommendations (ESC, Nov. 2024)

AUDIT TRAIL

This section must be included in all reports.

Lead Officer	Tara Quinn, Head of Parks and Natural Environment
Report Author	Liam Nash, Ecology Officer
Version	Final v.1
Dated	16/09/2026
Key Decision?	No

CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / EXECUTIVE MEMBER		
Officer Title	**Comments Sought**	**Comments Included**
Director of Law and Governance	No	No
Strategic Director of Resources	No	No
List other officers here		
Executive Member	Yes	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team		16/09/2026

Note: Consultation with other officers

If you have not consulted, or sought comments from the Director of Law and Governance the Strategic Director of Resources you must state this in the audit trail.

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Environment Scrutiny Commission

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2026-27

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Electronic Copy **Members** <u>Councillors:</u> Cllr Graham Neale (Chair) Cllr Ryan Cox (Vice Chair) Cllr Richard Leeming Cllr Jen Thornton Cllr Ruth Bannister Cllr Colin Boyle Cllr Catherine Dawkins <u>Coopted members:</u> TBC **Reserve Members** Cllr Margy Newens Cllr Sasjkia Otto Cllr Fatmata Bah Cllr Richard Taylor Cllr Callum Fowler Cllr Rachael Penny Cllr Adam Hood		**Total: 10** **Dated: July 2026**	