

Great Estates Guide

Case Studies to inform Estate Improvement Plans

Version 2.0, summer 2022

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Foreword

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Cabinet Member for Council homes and homelessness

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Gardening and food growing

Our estates are surrounded by green spaces, most of which are maintained by the council's grounds maintenance teams. But gardening can be a popular activity, supporting mental and physical wellbeing, a connection to the natural world, as well as creating a sense of pride and connection to place and community. Gardens also provide options for growing food. Many of our residents are keen gardeners and would like to get involved in greening their estates and the council is keen to support and encourage this.

Across the pilot estates, the Community Gardening Coordinators (CGCs) supported a range of resident-led gardening projects, working with new and existing groups to provide feedback on ideas and advice and support to help make them a reality. These diverse resident-led initiatives included community allotments, areas of ornamental planting, fruit tree planting, a wildflower meadow, long-grass trials and wildlife gardens. They are outlined below.

Estate: Brandon 1

Summary: Residents wanted to improve the look and feel of the tired shrub beds at the entrances to the tower blocks, Bateman, Brawne, Cornish and Cruden House, which felt tired and shabby. These were re-designed with low maintenance shrubs and perennials, with an integrated water butt irrigation system. Residents are taking on the maintenance of these newly planted areas, coordinating watering and weeding sessions.

In addition, a new 10-plot community allotment was built as the estates existing allotment was very over-subscribed. Brick planters were built on an open grassed area. Brick was chosen to ensure longevity and low maintenance. Plots are full and overflowing with produce in their first year. Plots are free to tenants and residents of the estate, but plot holders are asked to get involved in helping out with other communal gardening activities.

Residents also requested fruit trees be planted on the estate. A mini-orchard of apples, cherries and walnuts has been planted and residents are helping with pruning trees.



New planting display outside Cruden House; a new plot holder with her produce at Brandon 1 allotment

Estate: Brandon 2

Summary: Residents were keen to have a space where people could grow food, as well as a social space where people could come together. The CGCs helped the existing group to expand its membership and consult on plans. A new 10-bed allotment was installed in the alcoves of Trevelyan House. Residents had 5 sessions with a community gardener with advice about food growing and provision of seedlings and netting/ hoops to protect plots.

New ornamental beds were built in the centrally located 'Peace Garden' with the residents re-planting these to enhance this social space for the estate. Regular gardening club meets at the space to maintain the area.



The revamped 'Peace Garden'



The new resident allotment plots

Estate: Brandon 3

Summary: Residents worked to replant a flowerbed near the playground with pollinator-friendly planting, which the group maintain. An old heating unit was transformed into a tool shed for the group, with an attractive mural on the outside wall.



Residents replanting the flowerbeds around the playground with pollinator friendly perennials



Sheila Benjamin and Eileen Piper from Brandon 3 TRA outside the new garden tool shed mural, which was a redundant heating unit.

Estate: Brandon 3

Summary: New community allotment and wall mural at the Bungalows. Residents designed a new 9-plot allotment for the green space in the centre of the Bungalow allotments. The adjacent overgrown brick-enclosed old washing space was also transformed with new resident planting – led by the weekly gardening group – and a bright and attractive mural on the old brick surface. The space is run by the TRA, who oversee plot allocations. Growers enjoyed training workshops with a community gardener throughout the summer and autumn. TRA Chair Sheila Benjamin talks about the new allotments on this [short film clip](#), developed in 2021.



Plot holders at the new Elmington Allotment

Estate: Elmington

Summary: Shirley House pollinator flowerbed - Ornamental flower bed behind Shirley House replanted by the gardening group with drought-tolerant perennials to create new peaceful space for residents to enjoy. The planting is maintained by the gardening group, working closely with the council. The group is also working with Southwark Nature Action Volunteers on plans for larger SuDS greening scheme



Estate: Rye Hill - Allotments

Summary: Residents and the TRA were keen to have a food-growing space on the estate. The TRA had been running a food bank through Covid and had lots of interest in food growing. A new community garden and communal food-growing plots were created behind Torridge Gardens (equivalent to 15 new plots) in a previously unused space. The group will have 5 sessions with a community gardener to provide advice and seedlings for late-season planting, hoops and netting to protect plots. The resident gardening group is action on social media @RyeHillGrowers



Estate: Elmington

Summary: Langland House Allotment. Growers at Elmington's new community allotment. Residents have had 5 sessions with a community gardener with advice about food growing and provision of seedlings and netting/ hoops to protect plots. One new grower, Kerrie, had never grown anything before in her life and was delighted to harvest over 40 potatoes from her small growing plot.



I give some to my neighbour and we get apples, rhubarb and bay leaves from Rockallot one, everything's shared."



Our A team



Quick check after school by our younger residents on the raised beds



Plot holder George and his wife Sandra.

Estate: Rockingham

Summary: A disused fenced off area of the estate on Tarn Street was overgrown and becoming an eyesore. The area is de-paved and landscaped with drought tolerant perennials and offers a pleasant green area for residents to enjoy and socialise. The mural on the wall was painted by a local artist who lives on the estate.

Estate: Rockingham

Summary: Rockingham Estate already had one very successful community allotment, created over 10 years ago with CGS funding. 'Rockallot' evolved over the years, with a shipping container, a pond and beehives added. Plots were oversubscribed with a long waiting list. Great Estates helped residents to develop a second allotment on the estate, which opened in March 2022 with a new tap installed. Twenty new plots were filled within 1 hour of the site launching, with one resident queuing from 5am. Plots are available to tenants and residents of Rockingham Estate for a small annual fee. One plot is used by children at the Arc Globe Academy opposite. The site is coordinated by the resident gardening group, who manage the existing Rockallot site.



Estate: Brandon

Summary: A disused open area on Conant and Rutley was being used as an unofficial car park. The area is now de-paved and connected with the current resident green space. There is a section with planters for residents to grow their own and the rest of the spaced has been landscaped to offer a

pleasant green area for residents to enjoy and socialise.



Estate: Northfield House (Friary Estate)

Summary: New landscaping improvements as well as the installation of a new play surface to existing Tom & Emily's garden areas.



Estate: Northfield House

Summary: New designed metal gate and archway mural into wildflower meadow garden.



Allotment expansion guarantee (AEG)

The AEG aims to increase the number of food-growing plots available in the borough, by establishing a process and support for residents to create new food-growing spaces on housing land. It was launched in March 2021 with a target to create 200 new growing plots by March 2023.

Residents can find out more and register their interest via a dedicated website: allotmentexpansionguarantee.commonplace.is Where there is adequate resident involvement and a suitable site is identified the Community Gardening Coordinators can support groups to develop their ideas, secure permissions, conduct a consultation and, if successful, can help to fund and project manage the build. Groups are also offered food growing training to help them get started. New groups are encouraged to join Southwark's map of community gardening and food-growing sites and to benefit from being part of this network (www.goodtogrowuk.org/map/southwark).

Estate: Countisbury Estate

Summary: A group of keen residents set up a new food growing space on an unused part of the estate. They have now formed a Gardening Group and have 5 new raised beds for accessible communal food growing. They have been growing strawberries, tomatoes, beans, corn, salad crops, chard, herbs and perennial vegetables in their first year.



Residents planting up the new raised bed plots at the Countisbury estate



Summer abundance at the plots on Countisbury estate

Lighting Projects

Southwark Council has a strong track record in using lighting to improve the feel of areas after dark, turning them from intimidating spaces to well-loved features. Lighting can be about making areas bright as a deterrent to crime but can also be used to make areas feel almost magical, using vibrant colours or twinkling fairy lights in trees.

Estate: Brandon 3

Summary: New string lighting on Grimsel Path

How was it funded? Great Estates Programme & London School of Economics – Configuring Light



Public art

Often art can be a focal point that can really give an estate a sense of identity. Southwark is fortunate to already have some public art pieces on our estates. The Council is committed to looking after these to protect them for future generations. There are also occasional art projects using funding such as Cleaner, Greener, Safer, Neighbourhood Funding Bids, etc.

Southwark is also lucky to have a large number of cultural organisations in the borough who are keen to work with the council to share their passion and interests with local residents. This can have a very positive impact on an estate.

Estate: Brandon 3

Summary: New plinth with school artwork and railings

How was it funded? Great Estates Programme and Anish Kapoor Studios



Estate: Brandon 3

Summary: Highshore School children's artwork produced for artists to interpret their designs on the plinth above.

How was it funded? Great Estates Programme



Estate: Brandon 3

Summary: Playground wall artwork



Estate: Kingswood

Summary: Spirit of the Estate Festival is a programme of summer resilience building, bringing cultural social activities for young people on the Kingswood Estate.

How was it funded? Great Estates Programme and Crystal Palace Festival



Kingswood estate crew at South Facing Festival © Mike Jones



Mural designed by young people on the Kingswood estate



Estate: Brandon Estate

Summary: A 10ft Totem Pole Sculpture which has been carved in a redundant tree space by Morganico, a local artist who is well-known for various artwork pieces nationwide.



Signage and wayfinding

The quality of the signage on an estate can have a big impact on the overall feel of an estate. A beautifully designed building can be made to look less attractive through the addition of poor signage. Replacing signage could have a positive impact on some estates.

Estate: Brandon 2

Summary: New estates map and signage



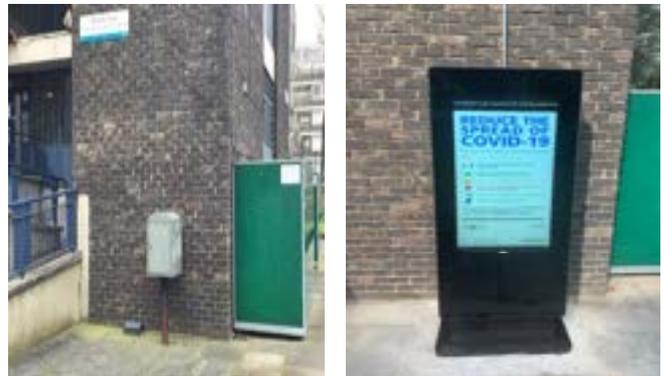
Estate: Brandon 3

Summary: New estate map signage



Estate: Brandon 3

Summary: New digital noticeboard



Estate: Unwin & Friary TRA Hall

Summary: New digital noticeboard

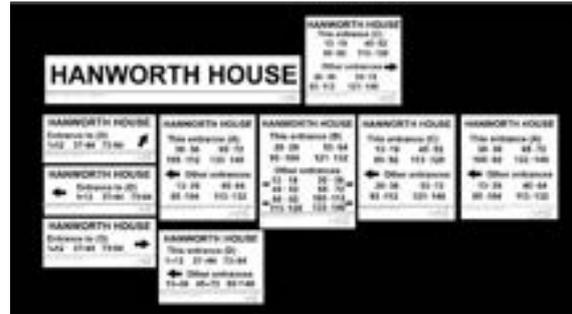


Estate: Ketra Community Hall

Summary: New digital noticeboard



Estate: Brandon, Hanworth House



Estate: Brandon

Summary: The creation of a new disabled access as previously there was no access for residents / children with wheelchairs or limited mobility.



Estate: Brandon Estate



Cleanliness strategies

Estate: Canada Estate

Summary: Food waste pilot

How was it funded? Great Estates Programme



Estates: Brandon Estate



Estates: Brandon, Elmington, Friary & Rockingham

Summary: The installation of recycling bin enclosures has reduced fly tipping, made the bin area tidier and encouraged residents to recycle more. Some enclosures are wood cladded with green roofs and others are made from galvanised steel.

How it was funded? Great Estates Programme and Veolia



Estates: Brandon and Elmington

Summary: A QR code is used to report overflowing recycling bins. Once scanned a webform is pre-populated with location information and there is an option to receive a status update.

How was it funded? Great Estates Programme and the Environment and Leisure Department



Active and healthy estates

In Southwark the physical and mental health and wellbeing of our residents is paramount. Great Estates contribute by providing spaces where people can enjoy exercise and get out and about. Many estates contain features such as play areas, sports pitches, and outdoor gym equipment. Learning new things, like cooking or gardening, is also proven to improve health and wellbeing. Connecting to other people also helps keeping us well, therefore joining a local TRAs or other community groups can go a long way in developing a sense of belonging and making people feel included and happy.

Estate: Brandon 1, Jeff Barnet Playground

Summary: Safety surfacing installed plus 1 new play item. Picnic tables and new bins



Estate: Cooks Road Play Area

Summary: Empty space filled with new play items. Playground 'closed off' with new fence and gate



Estate: Elmington

Summary: The multi-use games area was painted with hopscotch and obstacle lines.



Estate: Brandon 2

Summary: New playground improvements using redundant mound, improvements to John Ruskin Street playground and resurfaced multi use games area



Estate: Elmington

Summary: Improved playground

How was it funded? Great Estates Programme, CGS & South London Gallery



Estate: Kingswood

Summary: New playground facilities



Estate: Rockingham

Summary: Resurfacing of the Multi-Use Games Area.



Estate: Unwin

Summary: Natural play area with planters



Estates: Elmington

Summary: Residents wanted to create a natural play area, which also acted as community focal point for residents to gather and get to know one another. Workshops were held with a diverse group of residents, including children to decide what play equipment and facilities were required.



Biodiversity

There are some successful initiatives that have boosted wildlife habitat in inner-city settings, which has been popular with local residents. This can become a focus for a community to unite around, enhancing and supporting biodiversity on their estate.

Estate: Elmington

Summary: A new wildlife garden was developed by the group in partnership with Southwark Nature Action Volunteers. The Wildlife Gardening Triangle was previously mown grass. With involvement of the group who have taken on maintenance of the site, this has now been left to grow longer and cut just once a year. The group also planted a new hedge and wildflowers and installed log seating circles, a mulch path and a sign about local species that visit the site.

In addition to this site, in three other areas of the estate grass was left to grow long, with just the margins cut, as part of a trial to boost biodiversity on the estate, including invertebrates. This trial was popular and it has been adopted to continue. Residents have since planted spring flowering bulbs in these areas, which provide cheery colour early in the year.



Natural Estates – Brandon 3 Wildflower Meadow

Summary: A new wildflower meadow was also created in three areas which are used as walk-throughs on the grassed area next to the basketball court.



Other projects

Estate: Brandon

Summary: Installation of the roller barrier non-aggressive anti-climb system. This system provides perimeter security without the risk of intruders impaling or seriously injuring themselves on spikey anti-climb products.



Estate: Canada

Summary: Replacement of old wooden fence with a metal fence.



Estate: Elmington

Summary: Planting around the bulky waste cage to prevent fly tipping



Estate: Friary

Summary: The digital inclusion project ensures that residents of Friary and Unwin estates can be digitally engaged, participate and progress their knowledge of the digital world around them, and to be able to harness the opportunities that digital engagement bring. IT equipment was purchased to enable the above.



Estate: Elmington

Summary: To reduce the flood risk to the estate we incorporated basic Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) features into the landscape.

How was it funded? Great Estates Programme



Estate: Elmington

Summary: Bicycle storage hub with a green roof and capacity for 24 bikes.



Estate: Brandon

Summary: A shipping container was converted into an 'Urban Park' with seating, tables, extensive planting and a 'green wall'. It will have an automated irrigation system, fed from a 1,000-litre water tank on the roof. It will be placed in Maddock Way outside the library and provide a tranquil social space for all our residents to use.

How was it funded? Great Estates Programme and High Street Recovery Fund



Estate: Brandon

Summary: The aim of this project is to look at restoring the Maddock Way shopping parade by establishing a vibrant weekend farmers' market and to improve the look and feel of the space by installing a moveable 'Urban Park', see above.

How was it funded? Great Estates Programme and High Street Recovery Fund



We would like to express our gratitude to the following organisations and individuals who have gone above and beyond to help us make the Great Estates Programme a success.

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Complete Ecology Ltd	Redlynch Leisure Installations
Comuzi	Spokesmead
Engie	Stanbury Building Services Ltd
Enliten Architectural Lighting Ltd	StreetSpace Group
Falco UK Ltd	Comuzi
Father Nature	Sustain
FM Conway	Town & Country Turf Ltd
Great North Wood Collective	Urban Growth
	Veolia

Coming next?

This guide contains excellent examples of what is possible if communities come together to improve their estates. The case studies illustrate the range of funding that can be drawn upon to support these projects.

This Guide is a living document and will be updated with new case studies of estate improvements. If there are any inaccuracies please let us know and we will correct this. Please also let us know if you have any ideas for case studies you would like us to include.

We are proud to celebrate these estates in this document and we look forward to working with residents on your ideas for estate improvements. The Council is currently in the process of piloting the estate improvement plans before looking to roll these out wider across the borough. But there is nothing to stop any community coming together now to develop plans and bidding for funding. Please let us know your plans so we can consider what additional support we maybe able to provide.

Please email your thoughts, suggestions and ideas to greatestates@southwark.gov.uk

