

Southwark Land Commission

A response from Southwark Council



DRAFT: July 2024

Southwark
Council

INTRODUCTION

The Southwark Land Commission was convened in 2022.

Instigated by the council but independent of the council, the Commission was chaired by Dr Miatta Fahnbulleh, Chief Executive of the New Economics, and its members included experts, community representatives and major landowners.

The Commission's remit was to investigate how more of the land in Southwark could be used for the benefit of all and it produced its final report, *Land for Good*, in September 2023.



Land for Good set out 25 recommended actions across seven categories:

- Put social purpose at the heart of land use
- Map what's there and what isn't
- Take control of our land and assets
- Defend and extend affordable accommodation for all
- Cherish our natural capital and decarbonise our land
- Give the community real power and voice
- Disrupt the status quo to unlock bigger changes

You can find the full report, alongside background information on how it was put together, on [the council website](#).

This document summarises the council's response to the recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Put social purpose at the heart of land use

Priority Action 1

Establish a Social Purpose of Land Framework, co-produced with Southwark's diverse communities, and applied to all land and property use decisions by participating landowners.

Response: the council supports this recommendation

The Council will work in partnership with our communities and other key landowners to produce the Social Purpose of Land Framework, ensuring that it draws on and supports the established work of the Southwark Plan, the [Social Regeneration Charters](#) and is guided by our new [Southwark 2030](#) borough-wide priorities.

The framework will help us to weigh-up difficult decisions on land use in the future, by finding a balance between direct 'social purpose' and other council priorities, including income generation which supports our wider delivery programme.

To get us started, we will produce a plan for developing the framework by November 2024. The intention is to turn the concept into a tool which is useable in decision-making and we hope this may also be applicable to other land-owners operating in Southwark.

Priority Action 2

Review the Southwark Plan to incorporate the Social Purpose of Land Framework and the other recommendations that follow from it.

Response: the council supports this recommendation

The next iteration of the Southwark Plan is scheduled for submission to the Secretary of State in 2027 and this would be the most appropriate opportunity to incorporate the overlapping objectives between the Southwark Plan and the emerging Social Purpose of Land Framework.

The current adopted plan, which was agreed in 2022, was driven by key social outcomes that we want to achieve, including our aims to deliver genuinely affordable housing, good jobs and sustainability. It was supported by an evidence base and subject to an 'Examination in Public'. The 2027 version will be an opportunity to review progress in these areas and to align more explicitly with the Social Purpose of Land Framework.

In the meantime, we are publishing a series of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) this year. These new SPDs will provide further guidance,

alongside examples of best practice for applicants, to consider when implementing the Southwark Plan. The SPDs are for Affordable Housing and Development Viability, Affordable Workspace, Climate and Environment, S106 and CIL and Householder Development.

Work on the Southwark Plan climate emergency policies will be brought to council Cabinet later this year. The Southwark Plan full review will be presented to Cabinet for submission to the Secretary of State in 2027.

The Old Kent Road Area Action Plan will be submitted to Cabinet in Autumn 2024 with a view to consideration by Council Assembly in November 2024. The submission version of the plan for the Secretary of State, following consultation, is likely to be in Spring 2025.

We are also scheduled to complete our project to standardise the recording and monitoring of the social value delivered from every development in the borough by the end of the year.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Map what's there and what isn't

Priority Action 3
Develop and endorse 'Our Land', an open access map of land use and ownership. Participating partners should allocate funding and resources to keep it up to date.
Response: the council supports this recommendation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

In supporting this recommendation we acknowledge that it will need strong co-operation and input from all partners and the Southwark Land Partnership.

The GLA already hosts an online public land register for London. It shows what land is owned by each local authority, the GLA family and others. However, good as it is, it still has significant gaps.

Rather than create yet another new registry (and the expense, duplication and potential confusion this would entail) we are working with the GLA to develop their existing platform and ensure that the Southwark component (at least) is accurate and updated regularly.

Note, there can be significant challenges involved in getting data from private landowners and keeping a database like this fully up-to-date. It will also require effort and commitment from all of our partners to provide timely data in the right format.

Priority Action 4

Create an open source, accessible portal and database of rooms, which can be accessed and booked by people and community groups across the borough.

Response: the council supports this recommendation

The principle of an accessible portal is something that the Council has always wanted to successfully deliver, but it has proven to be a tough challenge in practice

By supporting this recommendation we will make a renewed effort to develop this portal with the understanding that it will require sufficient resources; buy-in and assistance from all of our partners; as well as some standardisation of booking and access arrangements.

In order to achieve this, we will establish a task-and-finish group comprising all the key stakeholders to prepare a project initiation document (PID). The PID will clearly set out the scope of the project, resources required, the timeframe and the steps we need to take to make progress on this priority action.

Priority Action 5

Assemble a deeper Land Use Evidence Base of unmet need for space across the borough, and integrate it into the Social Purpose of Land Framework.

Response: the council supports this recommendation

The Council is committed to working with our partners, including Community Southwark to achieve this objective, as we recognise the need for transparent co-ordination around the publicly owned spaces currently at our disposal, and for any new community spaces that are in the pipeline to be designed around known neighbourhood needs.

Working in partnership with Community Southwark, we are currently assessing the premises needs of community organisations and will promote future opportunities in a more transparent way. As part of this important work we are part funding a dedicated post at Community Southwark. In preparation for the next iteration of the Southwark Plan scheduled for submission to the Secretary of State following consultation in 2027 we will undertake a robust assessment of future needs for social, environmental and economic land uses, alongside other council strategies to build upon the Land Use Evidence Base of spaces across the borough produced for the Southwark Plan.

This document will continue to inform the Plan and the Social Purpose of Land

Framework through the allocation of specific sites in the borough to meet identified community needs, the increase of adopted open space and alternative economic and housing uses.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Take control of our land and assets

Priority Action 6
Commit to no net loss of public and community owned land, and for all disposals to be considered through the Social Purpose of Land Framework.
Response: the council partially supports this recommendation <input type="checkbox"/>

The council is one of Southwark's most significant landowners and we are proud of what we are able to deliver on public land our large stock of council housing and estates, and Green Flag parks. Whilst we cannot commit to this recommendation in its entirety, this would be our ultimate goal and we will work to get to as close a position to this goal as possible. We will use our power through the Southwark Land Partnership and as a planning authority to influence the decisions that other public sector bodies make in this regard.

We both acquire and dispose of land and property on a regular basis with the aim of achieving our priorities as a council. For example, we have recently agreed to dispose of a number of council-owned street properties in order to generate receipts for the Housing Revenue Account which is under significant pressure. We have also decided to acquire Tower Bridge Nursing Home in order to further our objectives around Adult Social Care. The majority of disposals are governed by statute (Right to Buy/Enfranchisement) and whilst the council has little discretion in these areas, we have openly advocated for reform which would enable us to curb Right to Buy in the borough

The council is required to demonstrate that it has achieved best consideration in any transaction. In determining best consideration the council can take account of the community benefits as well as the financial return. Through the Social Purpose of Land Framework, the council will set out more detail of how this assessment is carried out. We will ensure future changes to the Asset Management Plan and Housing Void Strategy take account of Land for Good and the Social Purpose of Land Framework.

We do also know that partnership working is essential to achieve our social, economic and environmental objectives. Through diverse models of ownership we can unlock investment and deliver wider social benefits and assets that the whole community can enjoy, in a way that the council working alone cannot do. For example, by working with British Land in Canada Water, we've been able to deliver new council homes, parks, a new leisure centre and transport improvements. Similarly, by working with Native Land in Bankside we will shortly deliver a new LGBTQ+ cultural centre alongside new housing, public realm and arts venues.

Priority Action 7

Unlock at least six pilot sites across the borough by 2026 to test new models of community engagement and control, while demonstrating focused response to identified need.

Response: the council partially supports this recommendation

As part of the work in enabling the Community Land Trust in Nunhead, the council is already proposing a different approach to land disposal and planning policy. The Community Land Trust will secure housing which is affordable in perpetuity for local residents.

In addition the council has identified two pilot sites at Queens Road and Sandgate Street. The Anglican Diocese of Southwark has identified Thorburn Square as a pilot site. We are encouraging other landowners to consider bringing forward additional sites. Through the pilot sites we will be able to test different models of community engagement with a focus on widening participation (see Priority Action 22).

The Livesey Exchange is one good example of how we already work with the community in this way and it provides a model that we can learn from. The [Livesey Exchange](#), which opened last summer (2023) is a community project in Old Kent Road, delivered on council owned land, using public sector investment. Further examples of this activity include Kingswood Arts and Walworth Town Hall.

Priority Action 8

Produce a Community Asset Transfer policy, facilitating the community to take control of unused or underutilised sites through democratic and participative models of ownership and governance.

Response: the council supports this recommendation

We will update the existing Community Asset Transfer policy 2021 when the new Social Purpose of Land Framework is implemented. The policy will also be uploaded onto the council website.

The current policy document sets out clear benefits to all parties, and directs the council to support a transfer, but can be further developed to align with the frameworks approach whilst also paying regard to the risks that come with such transfers.

For example, at [Dilston Grove](#), a transfer enabled a charity to access National Lottery Funds, which would have been unavailable to the council. Although successful the reality is, any community organisation taking control of an asset

would also take on substantial statutory obligations in terms of compliance as well as ongoing repairs.

Priority Action 9
Create and meaningfully resource an independent Community Empowerment Fund to support and empower our diverse communities to engage in this work, including the provision of training, activities and compensation for time.
Response: the council supports this recommendation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

The Council is committed to empowering our community organisations and we want to meet with those that have experience in managing Council buildings in the context of contractual arrangements with the Council as a landlord, to understand the barriers they have faced, and ultimately to agree collectively on effective resources that will support with access to community spaces and future funding.

There have been discussions around the creation of an independent Community Empowerment Fund and we are actively exploring the need for this and the availability of resources. In the interim community organisations can access the Local Access Programme which is part-funded by the council. This programme helps to establish and support community enterprises. We will work to ensure that any capacity-building in this space is also well integrated with the [Southwark 2030](#) Neighbourhoods programme.

Priority Action 10
Set up new Co-operatives, Community Land Trusts or Public-Common Partnerships to steward pilot sites and to support a bigger, broader, and more sustained drive for community land transfer.
Response: the council supports this recommendation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

A pilot project for a housing Community Land Trust is in development with a report scheduled for Cabinet this autumn. If agreed (and if it's successful), we will use the project as a template to follow in future. We are also working with Peckham Citizens, London CLT and Berkeley Homes to secure some Community Land Trust homes (an intermediate housing offer) in the planning proposal for the Aylesham Centre in Peckham.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Defend & extend affordable accommodation for all

Priority Action 11
Ensure at least 50% of homes built on public land is social rent or London Living Rent.
Response: the council partially supports this recommendation <input type="checkbox"/>

We agree that defending and extending affordable accommodation for all is very important which is why the council has been committed to delivering affordable housing, especially homes at social rents, as demonstrated by both the Southwark Plan and our own [council house-building programme](#).

Southwark is the largest council landlord in London (responsible for 55,000 homes) and we are proud to be building more new council homes than any other local authority in the country. We have already built or started 3,000 new council homes. To date, those sites in our direct delivery programme with funding committed, are delivering 79% council housing, a figure achieved through council borrowing against future rental income along with GLA grant. Moving forward, additional borrowing for new council homes will not be an option, and are bringing forward alternative approaches for new homes delivery, always with a focus on how we can viably bring forward as many council homes as possible.

The Southwark Plan sets-out ambitious policies to deliver affordable and social rent housing across all developments, public and private (especially on small sites and in conjunction with student housing). Since 2015/16, we have delivered more low-cost-rent starts than any other London borough. Moreover, in some neighbourhoods, we are already hitting the 50% mark for affordable housing. For example, more than half of all the new homes consented along the Old Kent Road are affordable in planning policy terms (with particular emphasis on family-sized units).

A commitment to deliver 50% social rent or London Living Rent is more challenging than current Southwark Plan or London Plan policy, the latter of which stipulates 50% affordable housing on public land. Whilst our own record is strong and ambition remains high, we are needing to look at innovative ways to combat the challenges caused by high interest rates, construction costs and the level of grant available.

The next iteration of the Local Plan, following consultation, is scheduled to be submitted to the Secretary of State in 2027 We are committed to achieving as much genuinely affordable housing as possible through planning policy, and will consider this target during our review. This will include a detailed evidence review and viability assessment, although the ultimate decision on a variation to the Southwark Plan would lie with the Inspector.

Priority Action 12

Ensure that all tenures and models of affordable housing are maintained as such in perpetuity as with Community Land Trusts.

Response: the council partially supports this recommendation

The council's standard policy is to deliver at least 35% affordable housing through development, measured by habitable room, although as previously noted, there is a higher 50% target for public land.

The 35% comprises a minimum of 25% social rent – intended to remain as such in perpetuity (and managed by the council or a registered social landlord) - and 10% 'intermediate' (typically delivered on a shared ownership basis).

Nonetheless, all council homes are subject to Right-to-Buy legislation. As for the intermediate, shared-ownership model, these homes meet a recognised, local housing need and enable residents to progress towards home ownership (as such, they aren't intended to be 'in perpetuity').

We remain committed to the social rent model and we have no plans to change this policy. However, we are exploring a range of other intermediate options, as alternatives to the shared ownership model. These include keyworker homes and Community Land Trusts which can remain affordable in perpetuity. We do not accept 80% of market rent to be affordable in Southwark. We will publish more detail in our new Affordable Housing SPD.

Affordable homes delivered under planning [Section 106 \(S106\)](#) agreements are secured in perpetuity unless explicitly stated or are subject to primary legislation (e.g. Right-to-Buy or shared ownership staircasing). Any request to change tenure would require a variation to the agreement and would be a matter reserved for Planning Committee.

Where the tenure isn't controlled through a S106 agreement, but by virtue of the type of ownership, different rules apply (dependant on landlord and appropriate legislation). In very specific circumstances (outlined in the Void Disposals Strategy), we will sell affordable homes which will result in a change in tenure. We reinvest the money this raises (including the savings on repairs) into good quality, fit-for-purpose, affordable homes.

Priority Action 13

Hold developers to account for delivering on commitments for affordable provision through robust monitoring and clawback and overage policies.

Response: the council supports this recommendation

We agree with the Commission that it is vital to hold developers accountable for their delivery of affordable housing.

The Council has already undertaken a significant amount of work to refine the processes associated with the monitoring of financial obligations in the S106 agreements secured when planning permission is approved. Signed S106 agreements are viewable on the Council's Planning Register.

The monitoring of affordable housing is also visible on the Council website on [Power Bi](#) and is supported by an annual affordable housing audit. This survey is sent to all Registered Providers with completions in the previous financial year. Questions include the tenure status of completed units, rent levels and the number of wheelchair accessible homes. Preparation is currently underway on the retrospective 2023/24 affordable housing audit.

The draft S106 and CIL SPD, to be issued for consultation in July 2024, retains the existing charge to developers for the cost of monitoring affordable housing, and introduces a range of other financial obligations.

Late-stage viability assessments are included in Section 106 agreements where the policy requirement for affordable homes is not met. This ensures that there is no loss of the potential for affordable housing as part of a development if market conditions improve. Provision can be made in a S106 agreement can be more than one late-stage viability assessment. Post-approval, we check properties regularly to ensure that compliance triggers for late stage viability assessments have been met. Triggers vary, but can include 'substantial implementation' or the completion of a defined number of homes. The viability assessment is paid for by the applicant and will include the latest land values and rent levels. We take enforcement action if the agreement is breached.

CIL reviews are carried out in accordance with the CIL regulations. They examine the potential for clawback of CIL relief in the event that there has been a change in tenure from affordable housing to market housing. Clawback, overage and reviews are agreed and managed in accordance with the specific legal agreements applicable, with full charges levied against developers.

Priority Action 14
Establish affordable workspace hubs across the borough, geared to community need, and funded through private development contributions.
Response: the council supports this recommendation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

The Southwark Plan is designed to secure a minimum of 10% affordable workspace from new employment floor-space of 500sqm or more (Policy P31) and we think that the Commission's recommendation in this space is very exciting.

We know that current arrangements don't always deliver the right type of

space, in the right location, at the right price. Primarily, this is because most major commercial development is in SE1. This creates an oversupply of workspace in this part of the borough rather than more inexpensive neighbourhoods where SME businesses need the workspace.

We will address this by developing a new Affordable Workspace Strategy to create a network of affordable workspace hubs. We will produce an SPD later this year outlining how we can achieve this via S106 (ensuring an equivalence with our adopted policy). In advance of the formal policy being agreed, the council has already secured over £12.5m as affordable workspace off site payments from section 106 agreements for 18 Blackfriars and Paris Gardens.

Priority Action 15
Create Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) centres, providing space on low or peppercorn rents, guided by the Social Purpose of Land Framework.
Response: the council supports this recommendation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

The council is committed to doing more work with Community Southwark to explore how we can create VCS hubs across the borough. Southwark does not currently have a VCS portfolio and our property portfolio is primarily focused on income generation. However we have, tried to accommodate a range of VCS organisations based on requests made from community organisations, and have recently entered into an arrangement with Community Southwark to employ a worker who will aim to improve the information sharing between groups looking for space and spaces available.

For example, we are currently working with the Southwark Pensioners Centre to [deliver a new home](#) for the organisation in Camberwell; we have a VCS hub in in Peckham at the Sojourner Truth Centre and there are plans for a new VCS hub in Bankside (linked to the delivery of new almshouses by Southwark Charities) opening in 2026.

As we recognise the value of co-locating different VCS organisations, we will develop a new VCS Property Strategy that aligns with the emerging Social Purpose for Land Framework. Potentially, we could also tie this in with our Affordable Workspace provision - possibly with dual-purpose hubs or by providing affordable business and voluntary space side-by-side.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Cherish our natural capital & decarbonise our land

Priority Action 16
Join up existing green spaces to create a network of Biodiversity Corridors.
Response: the council supports this recommendation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

We are committed to expanding and connecting green spaces across the borough to build on the established data sets we have to date.

We understand that our green spaces and parks play a vital role in supporting wildlife and they help us tackle climate change, which reflects in us having produced a [Climate Emergency Action Plan](#) and [Southwark Nature Action Plan](#) to ensure we protect and improve these spaces. In addition we are aware of the health benefits of open space and access to nature through mental health and physical activity.

The Council has successfully enhanced the biodiversity value of its public parks. This includes measures such as eliminating scheduled pesticide use, relaxing mowing regimes, planting meadows, woodlands and hedgerows, creating ponds and sustainable urban drainage schemes, and installing nest boxes and habitats for invertebrates. Such measures have occurred throughout the borough, including major enhancements in Burgess Park, Russia Dock Woodland, and Peckham Rye Park. There has also been an extensive tree planting strategy supported by the Tree Management Policy 2020.

We also have identified more than [30 Green Flag parks](#) and many [Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation](#) that can be found throughout the borough, in addition to making investments in sites such as Lavender Pond Nature Reserve using [Community Infrastructure Levy](#) (CIL).

This has enabled us to start mapping the existing biodiversity data we have for the borough and we will identify where additional, offsite [Biodiversity Net Gain](#) secured through the planning process can be realised. We will incorporate this in our new Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Corporate Biodiversity Report. We will address Biodiversity Corridors in the Open Space Strategy.

The biodiversity work undertaken by officers has enabled us to start mapping the existing biodiversity data we have for the borough. We will use this work to inform the GLAs Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Biodiversity First Report, due in January 2026. As part of the Early Review of the Southwark Plan, a range of other evidence base studies will be commissioned to update the biodiversity and greening policies. New studies will include a new Green Infrastructure Strategy, an updated Open Space Needs Assessment and a review of the boroughs Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs).

The [Southwark Plan \(2022\)](#) includes provision for a network of green spaces (P59) that could support biodiversity corridors. There are also specific policies on biodiversity (P60), Trees (P61) and Open Water Space (P58). Specifically, the Southwark Plan (2022) resulted in the designation of several new Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINCs) and new allocations of Borough Open Land (BOL). Together, this has contributed to joining up the greenspace network and ecological corridors across the borough and the achievement of the strategic objectives set out in the Southwark Nature Action Plan.

Other plans such as our draft [Old Kent Road Area Action Plan](#), also incorporate green corridors at a more local, neighbourhood level.

Priority Action 17
Offer opportunities to participate in the greening of our borough, through community gardening and re-wilding.
Response: the council supports this recommendation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

The Council would like to extend the existing offer of opportunities to participate in the greening of our borough further. To date we have successfully achieved projects through the below approaches and want to build upon this with our residents:

- Setting a [Council Plan](#) commitment to increase the number of food-growing plots and allotments across Southwark;
- Investing in new spaces through our Great Estates programme (such as the 'Rockallot' allotments on the Rockingham estate);
- Residents on our estates approaching the council for help and groups receiving funding, either through grants or CIL (for example; Bankside Open Spaces Trust);
- The Council partnering with 'Friends' groups to engage local residents in greening and rewilding initiatives (for example; working with the Friends of Burgess Park on a project to create a new habitat for butterflies
- Relaxed mowing implemented across housing estates, road verges and parks, delivered through engagement with Friends of groups, TRAs, residents and maintenance teams.
- New meadows have been planted including in One Tree Hill, Russia Dock Woodland, Dulwich Upper Wood, Peckham Rye Park, Burgess Park, Dulwich Park and Camberwell Old Cemetery. Further meadow restoration projects scheduled for spring 2024 in Burgess Park.
- Over 1400m of native hedging has been planted in parks including Burgess Park, Southwark Park, Dulwich Park and GMH
- New ponds installed, including in Rockingham Estate, Rouel Road Community Garden and Paper Garden
- Burgess Park Green wall: Creation of a green barrier wall, planted with wildflowers. Works planned for Spring 2024
- Peckham Rye Park 'Lost Peck' Flood alleviation project: biodiversity enhancements related to the flood mitigation measures include perennial

and meadow planting.

We also want to encourage ‘meanwhile uses’ – short-term nature projects - on sites scheduled for development. Recent examples include the Paper Garden at Canada Water and the Walworth Garden in Elephant and Castle. When permanent opportunities arise, we promote them through appropriate stakeholders.

Priority Action 18
Decarbonise existing buildings, avoid demolitions and insist on high standards for new buildings.
Response: the council partially supports this recommendation <input type="checkbox"/>

The Southwark Plan includes an ambitious policy on energy (P70) that states, all new developments must reduce operational greenhouse gas emissions and minimise both annual and peak energy demand.

It stipulates that all major development must be net zero carbon and sets out an approach to ‘energy hierarchy’. This means we expect energy efficient design and construction, first and foremost, followed by low carbon energy supply and onsite renewable energy generation. Where net zero can’t be met onsite, the remaining carbon emissions must be offset by a financial contribution.

The new Climate and Environment SPD, to be issued for consultation in July 2024, will set out additional guidance to supplement the existing policies.

The next iteration of the Southwark Plan is scheduled to be submitted to the Secretary of State in 2027. As part of our review, we will assess whether additional standards should be introduced to the plan alongside the requirements of the Social Purpose for Land Framework.

Southwark Plan Early Review

Work on the limited early review of the current [Southwark Plan \(2022\)](#) is underway. The focus is on updating energy policies P69 (sustainability standards) and P70 (energy) which form part of the council’s response to the Climate Emergency and net zero target for 2030. The intention is to set higher standards for sustainability and encourage increased carbon emission reduction onsite.

The Early Review will involve developing options for the use of Absolute Energy Use (EUI) targets in development by removing fossil fuel sources onsite, improving energy efficiency and increasing the use of renewable energy. The benefit to residents will be more energy efficient homes, lower bills and a reduced risk of overheating in buildings.

Implementing Carbon Offsetting and Retrofit

The Council's Green Building Fund has secured S106 contributions for carbon offsetting. The policy mechanism to achieve greater onsite carbon savings is currently being examined and will be presented to Planning Committee later this summer.

We are looking at the potential to accept contributions from the business community to help them achieve net zero. This will be explored through a new council offsetting strategy developed in the next twelve months.

In terms of Council priorities for decarbonisation, officers are finalising a decarbonisation strategy for 68 operational buildings which include offices, leisure centres and public buildings. This strategy sets the framework for decarbonisation work alongside retrofitting and maintenance programmes already planned.

The preferred retrofitting approach is to focus capital funding and resources on the top ten carbon emitting buildings in the portfolio. This will enable the Council to meet its target to reduce operational emissions by 50% in 2026. Detailed decarbonisation plans will follow. In 2024/25, officers will commence the preparation of retrofitting strategies for other buildings within the council's ownership, including schools and commercial property.

Challenges remain. For example, delivering climate adaptation works for homes and buildings at the same time as decarbonisation and maintenance requires additional consideration, funding and resourcing.

Southwark has 55,000 council homes that require retrofit measures alongside established maintenance cycles and programmes to improve standards. Funding gaps remain for major council retrofit programmes, specifically for large-scale programmes of capital works and the resourcing needed to deliver them.

Examples of decarbonisation projects currently underway in the borough include the DHN network expansion in the Old Kent Road. This involves replacing the gas boilers used to heat the water in the existing network with the excess waste heat emitted from the SELCHP station.

The next full iteration of the Southwark Plan is scheduled to be submitted to the Secretary of State in 2027. As part of our review, we will assess whether additional standards should be introduced to the plan alongside the requirements of the Social Purpose for Land Framework.

Priority Action 19
Use roof space for biodiversity and the production of renewable energy
Response: the council supports this recommendation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

The council [declared a climate emergency](#) in 2019 and we support the Commission's proposal to use roof space for biodiversity and the production of renewable energy.

New build properties will have green roofs and solar panels built in as a matter of course (through planning) and we already have some incredibly innovative projects in the pipeline.

The council has used some of its [£25m Climate Capital Fund](#) to install solar panels and air source heat pumps into our own buildings (such as Dulwich Library and Brandon Youth Club).

We have also launched a [Community Energy Fund](#), designed to scale-up community-based, green projects, across the borough. This fund builds on the initiative of organisations such as SE24 who worked with schools and faith-based organisations to install solar panels and LED lighting in their premises.

The [Southwark Plan \(2022\)](#) includes ambitious policies for renewables in all new developments, including roof space (P70). It also has measures to encourage developments to contribute to net gains in biodiversity (P60) and green roofs (P69).

The introduction of mandatory [Biodiversity Net Gain](#) in 2024 for major and minor developments (with some exceptions) will further encourage biodiversity and habitats onsite, including through the use of biodiverse landscaping and planting and the use of green roofs. As part of the Early Plan review of energy policies P69 (sustainability standards) and P70 (energy) consultants are examining the use of PV on green roofs to see how the policy requirements for both greening and carbon reduction can be optimised.

We also expect major applications to comply with Policy U5 from the [London Plan](#). This encourages the use of higher-scoring surfaces, including biodiverse roof coverings, to meet requirements for urban greening.

Priority Action 20
Redistribute street space away from private cars to uses with a positive impact on air quality and that respond to the climate emergency.
Response: the council supports this recommendation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

A lot of our public space is given over to motor vehicles even though most people who live in Southwark don't own a car.

Last year, we adopted the [Streets for People](#) strategy. Its five objectives are to create:

- Cleaner air
- Safer and quieter streets with less traffic and fewer accidents

- Healthy travel options like walking, cycling and wheeling
- Greener and more pleasant spaces for our communities to connect & socialise
- A better place for all who live, work or study in Southwark as well as visitors

Consultation on the strategy has taken place and will feed into an action plan for delivering these objectives by 2030. The action plan will be presented to Cabinet in December 2024.

A number of Streets for People projects have already been delivered. These include the pedestrianisation of Liverpool Grove in Walworth (alongside public realm improvements) and the creation of a new public square in Dulwich Village.

RECOMMENDATION 6: Give the community real power and voice

Priority Action 21
Bring together participating landowners into a Southwark Land Partnership, committed to freeing up land for the public good through the Social Purpose of Land Framework.
Response: the council supports this recommendation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

A new Southwark Land Partnership could help us to coordinate our priorities for land use and develop a shared Social Purpose of Land Framework. It could also provide a useful platform to run pilot schemes and lobby Government for reform (as proposed in Priority Action 27, below). As we already support a number of locally-based partnerships and we would want to ensure that we do not duplicate work and that we focus on matters of borough-wide significance.

We have confirmed interest from relevant Land Commissioners and other key property stakeholders in attending a regular strategic meeting. Although the terms of reference need to be drafted, it is anticipated that the meeting would discuss common issues such as the Social Purpose of Land Framework, development of 'pilot sites', and decarbonisation of existing property.

Priority Action 22
Create a People's Land Assembly to oversee the shift in land use across the borough and scrutinise the Southwark Land Partnership.

Response: the council partially supports this recommendation

The Commission, and indeed the Southwark 2030 process undertaken over the last year, have both challenged the Council to think about the breadth of participation in planning, and how we are supporting people to engage, who typically feel excluded from these kinds of council processes and decisions. The proposal for a People's Land Assembly could be an incredibly exciting prospect as we develop the next iteration of the Southwark Plan, but in the shorter term, we would like to focus on ways of strengthening and widening engagement building on existing mechanisms.

We already have processes to review, oversee and direct land use. These include:

The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

[The SCI](#) describes our approach for engaging residents and businesses in the planning process. It also includes a Development Consultation Charter, which sets out our expectations of developers operating in Southwark (especially those bringing forward strategic applications) and how we expect them to engage with the community. We will review the SCI to ensure it is working effectively and produce a Cabinet report for October 2024.

Multi-Ward Forums

We often use our [Empowering Communities Multi-Ward Forums](#) to host discussions about significant planning applications, to scrutinise proposals and to hold developers to account. These, and any new 'Neighbourhood' structures should be used as a matter of course, to discuss applications of strategic importance.

Priority Action 23

Establish Local Land Forums for each neighbourhood or ward so that local people can shape land use in their area and allocate funding to improve it.

Response: the council partially supports this recommendation

Rather than establishing separate Local Land Forums, the Council's priority will be ensuring that conversations about planning and land use are well integrated into existing and emerging local structures, with people from under-represented communities supported to participate through targeted training and support.

Several years ago, we established a [Community Review Panel](#) (CRP) for Old Kent Road to get the community involved in assessing potential schemes, long before a planning application is submitted. Last year, we set up the Aylesham

Centre Community Forum, comprised of representatives of local community and business organisations, to facilitate direct, community engagement with Berkeley Homes around its plans to redevelop the Aylesham Centre in Peckham.

We would like to establish further Community Review Panels on a geographical basis with a focus on the involvement of under-represented groups, including young people, in order to increase their engagement in the planning process. The establishment of these Panels would include training and support for those attending.

In addition, we will also test new models of community engagement and participation through the processes linked to proposed pilot sites.

Priority Action 24
Form a Land Advisory Panel to support the People's Land Assembly
Response: the council partially supports this recommendation <input type="checkbox"/>

As we are not currently proposing an assembly we will not be looking at a panel at this time.

Listening to our residents is a key priority for us as part of the Southwark 2030 strategy, and the Cabinet Member for New Homes and Sustainable Development already has a regular meeting with community planning groups, including the Southwark Planning Network.

Rather than establish another panel to accomplish the same objectives, we propose the Commissioners reconvene in six months' time (and again, six months' later), to receive an update on how all the actions set out in this document are working in practice and to hear from other local landowners as well as the council.

RECOMMENDATION 7: Disrupt the status quo to unlock bigger changes

Priority Action 25:

Landowners, institutions, and community groups in Southwark and beyond to form a coalition to lobby and campaign for the national and regional changes including:

- new powers to compulsory purchase land significantly below market value
- new local powers to introduce rent controls
- an increased 10 year housing and infrastructure funding settlement
- the abolition of Right to Buy
- land and property tax reform
- reform of national planning policy and guidance to redefine affordability and set targets for affordable housing in new developments
- limits on on-site viability assessments
- a free and open access land registry

Response: the council fully supports this recommendation

We operate in a fast changing and uncertain national planning context, one which is full of competing demands, ideas and interests. Therefore, strong, collective advocacy as well as thought leadership is necessary if we are to bring about the changes that will help Southwark and other local authorities to realise our ambitions for land use.

We will continue to lobby on key issues - especially the abolition of Right to Buy; the prioritisation of social rent housing and a reformed Compulsory Purchase Order process. We will also work with partner organisations, including London Councils, the LGA and the Southwark Land Partnership to achieve these goals.

The reason why this is shown as only partial support is that the council needs to respond within a changing political, social and economic context and therefore the key campaigning issues will change over time.
