

Climate Action Plan Update for 2023/24

*Overview & Scrutiny Committee
15 July 2024*

Climate Action Plan themes

The Climate Action Plan covers action in six priority themes:

1. **Greener buildings** - planning, new development, retrofitting
2. **Active and sustainable transport** - encouraging walking, cycling and public transport
3. **Thriving natural environment** - improving biodiversity and green spaces
4. **Circular economy with green jobs** - reducing consumption and supporting new green jobs and skills
5. **Renewable energy** - delivering and purchasing renewable energy
6. **Resilience and adaptation** - adapting our borough and making it more resilient to climate change. This is a new addition following the adoption of the Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy in Feb 2024.

Delivery is supported by other council strategies, plans and programmes of work that have a positive climate impact

Status of actions

The 2023/24 action plan has 117 actions that are delivered by teams across the council: climate change, housing, facilities, highways, parks, leisure, waste, planning etc. Each action is 'SMART' to show clear ownership, targets and timelines.

The RAG status of deliverability is:

- **104 are green rated (89%)**
- **10 are amber rated (9%)**
- **3 are red rated (3%)**
- In 2023/24, an additional 8 actions have been completed or closed. Moving forward, eleven actions are being consolidated to simplify reporting and are struck through in the action plan.

Whilst the total number of actions at risk are low, they do concern areas of significant cost and action that are behind schedule if the council is to achieve its target of net zero by 2030, particularly the major challenge of retrofitting the council's housing stock.

Key challenges

Funding gap

- In 2021, we estimated the capital cost of delivering the strategy to be £3.92 billion. Given the significant increase in inflation since 2021, this funding gap is getting larger, rather than smaller, as costs across the board increase.
- There is a significant funding gap for retrofitting our housing, as budgets are already stretched by other crucial demands for our housing relating to fire safety, addressing damp and mould and electrical testing.

Resource

- There are also challenges around resources and the expertise needed across the borough to reduce emissions and adapt the borough. This includes resourcing within council teams to prioritise and delivery climate action, alongside a wider knowledge gap on key issues such as retrofitting.

Behaviour Change

- Delivery requires extensive behaviour change from stakeholders, businesses and residents across the borough. Multiple new external engagement groups have launched through 23/24 to build key relationships in this area. How the council engages with its residents on this issue dovetails with our broader approach to resident engagement and council identified priorities around behaviour change (e.g. Streets for People).

Delivery highlights – 2023/24

- Launched **Streets for People**. ~9,000 residents engaged on how we can improve their neighbourhood, encouraging active and sustainable travel while continuing to deliver; schools streets have increased to 29, over 6,000 residents took part in cycle training, we installed over 700 cycle hangers and have delivered 1600 EV charging points
- Completed significant **building retrofit** work, including work at Peckham Library, John Harvard Library and Peckham Registry Office. Commenced energy saving projects across our leisure centres
- Launched the **Southwark Community Energy Fund**, to increase renewable energy generation across the borough and build knowledge and expertise in the community
- Launched the council's first **Library of Things** at Canada Water Library
- Started **Southwark Green Investment**, which raised £1m in 8 weeks, with the highest number of local investors (111)
- As of March 2024, there has been a 79% reduction in our **pension fund's** carbon footprint – a further 19% reduction from the previous year
- Launched external facing networks; **Deliver Partners Network, Community Stakeholder Panel, Schools Climate Network**

Delivery priorities – 2024/25

- **Retrofitting the borough** - Preparing building decarbonisation strategies and plans for retrofitting will focus initially on our operational buildings, target of a 50% reduction in emissions by 2026
- Continue the delivery of **Southwark Green Finance**, exploring future raises while also refreshing our approach to funding opportunities and working in partnership with teams across the council
- Continuing delivery of **Streets for People**, adoption of the Walking, Cycling and Electric Vehicle plans
- **Climate Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)** – will undergo public consultation and will guide new development
- Comprehensive management of the **council's energy contracts** will continue, including the re-procurement of a new energy contract for the council through to 2030, striving for value and sustainability
- A public-facing biodiversity project fund will launch this year alongside delivering our new **statutory biodiversity duty** to protect and enhance habitat in the borough
- Commence work on understanding the council's **supply chain emissions**, exploring opportunities for carbon neutral aligned procurement
- **2025 refresh of Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan**: an opportunity to reframe our approach to the climate emergency, building on the learning of the previous 6 years while aligning with Southwark 2030 and other emerging council priorities