

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

SEPTEMBER 2025



TACKLING
THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY
TOGETHER IN SOUTHWARK

Southwark
Council

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Introduction

The Southwark Climate Action Plan is our bold and practical roadmap to responding to the climate emergency. It brings together a wide range of actions that will improve the lives of our residents and make our borough and neighbourhoods a better place to live.

We will do this by cutting carbon emissions and adapting our places, infrastructure and services to reduce climate-related weather risks. This will improve the resilience of the borough to ensure that we are better prepared for the worsening effects of climate change. Recognising the urgency of the challenge, our plan is rooted in reducing inequality, fairness and inclusion. It will promote a 'just transition' so that the move to a fairer, safer, greener future means that everyone can live a good life as part of a strong community.

This Action Plan is the delivery plan for our Climate Change Strategy. It will deliver our ambition to do all we can to make the borough carbon-neutral by 2030 and will play a key role in delivering the goals of the council's Southwark 2030 Strategy.

From reducing emissions from buildings, lowering energy costs, generating clean energy, and improving our streets and green spaces so that they are safer, greener, healthier, each action in the plan contributes to fair, resilient, carbon-neutral borough, reflecting our commitment to climate leadership and collaboration with our communities.

We will review the plan each year to ensure we are on track, share progress and respond to new opportunities and challenges.

How to read this plan

Our Climate Action Plan is focused on five themes. Each theme covers some of the most important areas for our two climate goals: reducing carbon emissions and preparing the borough for the effects of changing weather patterns like heatwaves and flood events.

The first four themes focus on our buildings and neighbourhoods, streets and transport, green spaces and biodiversity, and economy and businesses. These are important areas where we need to directly reduce emissions, or areas that are directly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. The fifth theme, People & Resources, equips the council with the necessary skills and tools to ensure we better deliver climate action and support progress across the other four themes.

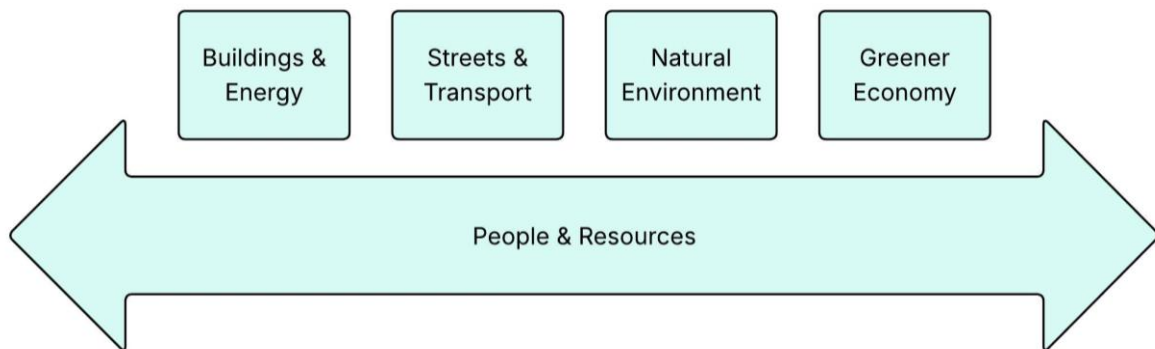


Figure 1: Five themes within the Climate Action Plan

Each theme is sub-divided into several priority areas that contain the actions that we will take. Each action includes an outcome that the action will achieve and several of the key activities that will be undertaken. We also include action monitoring details to ensure each action is SMART, transparent and accountable so that we can monitor progress. All actions have a target date. For some actions this date is ongoing due to the nature of the action

- **Lead cabinet member** – The councillor who is responsible for ensuring the action is completed.
- **Lead council team** – The council team who will lead on delivering the action. Some actions may have several teams as they will be delivered across the council.
- **Target date** – The specific date we are aiming to complete the action, if specific.
- **Cost** – How much the key activities contained within the action will cost: Low – under £100k, Medium – £100k - £1m, High - £1m to £10m, Very High - £10m+
- **Southwark 2030 goals** – The Southwark 2030 goals the action will support: (1) Decent homes for all; (2) A good start in life; (3) A safer Southwark; (4) A strong and fair economy; (5) Staying well; (6) A healthy environment; and (7) A well-run council

- **Action type** – The type of climate action we take: (1) enabling action - actions that support or create the conditions for other climate actions to succeed; (2) direct action - actions that deliver outcomes to reduce emissions or improve climate resilience; (3) mitigation - actions that reduce or prevent emissions; (4) adaptation - actions that help people, places, or ecosystems adjust to the current or expected effects of climate change; (5) resilience - actions that strengthen the ability of our communities, infrastructure or ecosystems to withstand and recover from climate shocks or stresses.
- **Wider benefits** - These are the wider benefits to our residents and neighbourhoods that also result from the action being delivered: (1) Cleaner air and environment; (2) Improved public health; (3) Lower energy bills (4) Reduced waste (5) Economic growth; (6) Empowering people

1. Buildings and energy

Reducing carbon emissions, adapting our buildings to climate change, and using more cleaner energy is vital to creating a resilient, low-carbon borough where we are protected from the worsening effects of climate change.

Our borough is diverse and exciting with a truly vibrant population that comes from being in central London. 43% of all housing is social housing, and we are proud to be the largest landlord in London with over 52,500 properties and 14,500 leaseholders, with a further 17,000 homes owned by housing associations. We are home to major institutions who own and operate the large buildings including hospitals, universities, cultural institutions, faith buildings, and large business and retail spaces within our town centres. The borough is growing and regenerating, creating new opportunities for residents and the council. With approximately 15,000 businesses we want to create a green economy that delivers co-benefits of economic growth, reduced inequality and carbon reduction.

Our actions for buildings and energy are particularly important as buildings are responsible for approximately 78% of the borough's carbon emissions. This is because buildings are the highest energy users in the borough. Increases in local electricity demand for new and upgraded buildings means we will need to improve the borough's electrical infrastructure. We will also need to connect an ever-increasing number of community energy projects where local people come together to produce, own or manage renewable energy such as solar panels on buildings or shared heating systems for homes that reduce fuel bills and emissions.

As an urban borough, we have a higher risk of extremely hot days during heatwaves. Higher temperatures are felt more significantly in neighbourhoods with less trees and where residents are in poorer health, less green open spaces, and according to the age, design and type of buildings. Addressing overheating in buildings, in particular homes, is a priority for accelerating climate adaptation in our buildings. Alongside this, we will continue to take action to reduce the risk of flooding to buildings from the River Thames and surface water flooding from storms.

1.1 Homes

Action 1: Significantly reduce emissions from council homes and ensure they are resilient to the effects of climate change

Outcomes

In our approach to maintaining council housing and building new homes, we will reduce carbon emissions, lower fuel bills, and improve quality and thermal comfort so that our residents are supported in a changing climate.

Key activities

We will:

- Ensure the council's Better Homes Asset Management Strategy sets out a clear pathway to reducing emissions, climate adaptation and a just transition for council homes residents, through planned maintenance and major works cycles.
- Reduce emissions and adapt council housing through planned maintenance cycles and additional funding opportunities, including improving energy efficiency and preparing properties for transition away from gas where possible.
- Deliver training for all planned maintenance and repairs teams in technologies and skills for retrofit (including both low carbon, energy efficiency and tackling overheating).
- Upgrade external housing estate lighting to low energy LEDs
- Implement a portfolio of measures to support residents who are most vulnerable to overheating in their homes, improve thermal comfort and reduced heat risk on very hot days. We will focus on helping heat-vulnerable residents like older people and those with existing health conditions and in the longer term inform investment and repairs.
- Deliver pilot schemes of new low-carbon council homes, that can be used to inform the development of new policy
- Continue to lobby central government for better policy and funding on retrofitting to reduce emissions and support climate adaptation.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Situ
- **Lead council teams:** Asset Management, Southwark Construction
- **Target date:** Ongoing
- **Cost:** Very high
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** Decent homes for all, A healthy environment
- **Action type:** enabling mitigation and adaptation
- **Wider benefits:** Improved public health, lower energy bills, cleaner air and environment

Action 2: Support the retrofit of private homes

Outcomes

Support the retrofitting of private homes across the boroughs to reduce emissions, generate local renewable energy, improve efficiency and reduce fuel bills.

Key activities

We will:

- Deliver a free green homes advice service for homeowners to help make homes greener, with lower carbon emissions, and adapted to the effects of climate change.
- Signpost retrofitting best practice to support homeowners to retrofit their homes, improve comfort on very hot summer days and explore options for further support.
- Encourage improved energy performance in homes that are privately rented through Southwark's Gold Standard Charter, and enforce minimum energy efficiency standards.
- Highlight best practice and leading examples of decarbonised and heat-resilient homes in the borough to support retrofitting and new design.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Batteson, Cllr Ennin
- **Lead council teams:** Climate Change, Regulatory Services
- **Target date:** 2028
- **Cost:** Low
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** Decent homes for all, A healthy environment
- **Action type:** enabling mitigation and adaptation
- **Wider benefits:** Improved public health, lower energy bills, cleaner air and environment, empowering people

1.2 Schools

Action 3: Make our schools sustainable and resilient to climate change

Outcomes

Support schools and education settings to engage with climate change through their climate action plans and curriculums. Encourage, fund and deliver projects to minimise emissions and energy use from school buildings, encourage recycling and lower food waste, install renewable energy, make playgrounds greener, and adapt school buildings and grounds so that students and staff are safe in heatwaves and we prevent or reduce the damage from flooding for at-risk schools

Key activities

We will:

- Engage with all Southwark schools through the Climate Action Schools Network, collaborating across council teams and with local partners to support schools in developing and delivering climate action plans.
- Complete our 'roadmap to reducing school emissions' by producing a boiler upgrade and replacement plan for council-maintained schools that prioritises decarbonising heating systems. By 2026, we will agree numerical targets & interim objectives aligned to that pathway and seek to secure relevant resources.
- Implement the decarbonisation of heating systems in council owned schools that have the highest carbon emissions, and improve energy efficiency through school maintenance
- Support 'School Superzones' to improve children's health and climate action, such as walking to school, air quality greening projects, school streets and healthy food availability.
- Reduce the carbon footprint of our school meals services and food waste in schools.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Akoto, Cllr Ali, Cllr McAsh,
- **Lead council teams:** Sustainable Growth, Children's Services, Climate Change, Highways
- **Target date:** 2030
- **Cost:** Low to high
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A good start in life, A healthy environment
- **Action type:** Enabling, Mitigation and Adaptation
- **Wider benefits:** Improved public health, cleaner air and environment, lower energy bills

1.3 Council-owned buildings

Action 4: Reduce emissions from council buildings and ensure they are climate change ready

Outcomes

Retrofitting our public and community buildings will reduce the amount of carbon emissions that we are responsible for and lower our energy bills, as we transition away from fossil fuel use. Improved thermal comfort will enable residents and staff to use these buildings when we experience extreme weather events like heat waves.

Key activities

We will:

- Halve the council's operational carbon emissions by 2026, staying on track to cut emissions from the council's operations and vehicles to net-zero by 2030.
- Reduce emissions in council and leisure buildings that emit the most carbon emissions through retrofitting and building maintenance, and improve their resilience to climate hazards like heatwaves. These include our offices, leisure centres, libraries, sports facilities, and other council sites.
- Seek to reduce emissions and improve the climate resilience of properties that we own through the delivery of the council's Strategic Assessment Management Plan.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Batteson, Cllr Cryan, Cllr McAsh, Cllr Mwangangye
- **Lead council teams:** Climate Change, Corporate Facilities Management
- **Target date:** 2030
- **Cost:** High to very high
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment, A well-run council
- **Action type:** Enabling, Mitigation and Adaptation
- **Wider benefits:** Lower energy bills, cleaner air and environment

Action 5: Minimise the environmental impact of our operations

Outcomes

We will lead by example to minimise the environmental impact of our operations through the way we run and manage our services and buildings. To do this, we will use fewer natural resources, purchase green energy and lower energy use, and reduce the number of things the council buys to save money and cut carbon emissions.

Key activities

We will:

- Explore options to buy more green electricity, including collaborating with other London boroughs to find the best value for money.
- Upgrade parks lighting to low energy LEDs.
- Roll out best practice water saving measures across the council's buildings and operations to reduce the potential costs and impacts of drought.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Cryan, Cllr McAsh, Cllr Mwangangye,
- **Lead council teams:** Climate Change, Corporate Facilities Management, Parks
- **Target date:** 2028
- **Cost:** Medium
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment
- **Action type:** Direct, Mitigation
- **Wider benefits:** Cleaner air and environment, lower energy bills, reduce waste

1.4 Energy

Action 6: Deliver resilient low-carbon heat networks

Outcomes

New and expanded heat networks will reduce carbon emissions and energy bills by supplying heat to homes and businesses across the borough using low-carbon energy sources. As energy systems become greener, heat networks can switch to cleaner sources without needing changes in individual buildings, improving reliability and comfort for residents and workers.

Key activities

We will:

- Lead, support and facilitate the development of district heat networks across the borough.
- Increase the number of homes and buildings that are connected to district heat networks powered by South East London Combined Heat and Power (SELCHP) and other low-carbon heat sources.
- Improve the energy efficiency of our existing heat networks, including compliance with Heat Networks (market framework) regulation that is coming into effect in 2026.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Batteson, Cllr Dennis, Cllr Situ
- **Lead council teams:** Asset Management, Climate Change, Planning
- **Target date:** Ongoing
- **Cost:** High to very high
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment
- **Action type:** Enabling, Direct, Mitigation
- **Wider benefits:** Lower energy bills

Action 7: Ready the borough for electrification and support community energy

Outcomes

Making our energy infrastructure fit for purpose to deliver new, greener homes and buildings, while retrofitting our existing buildings will support our transition away from fossil fuels, and achieve our ambition of a cleaner, healthier borough. This will require significant planning and upgrading to our electrical infrastructure, including the grid, substations, and local wiring, to handle increased demand and support renewable energy sources.

We will also further support our communities to co-design and deliver community energy projects to make our energy system fairer, greener, and more resilient to climate change. Community energy projects help cut borough carbon emissions, lower energy bills, and keep more money in the local economy. They also give communities more control over energy generation and use, build local skills, and support people who are in fuel poverty.

Key activities

We will:

- Prepare the Southwark Power Plan, a local area energy plan for the borough. We will prepare this in collaboration with neighbouring boroughs and utility providers to inform delivery and investment.
- Support the expansion of our community energy sector through grant funding and legal and planning support for projects on council-owned buildings.
- Support the creation of community energy cooperatives and groups, innovative projects and business models.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Batteson
- **Lead council team:** Climate Change
- **Target date:** Ongoing
- **Cost:** Low to medium
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment
- **Action type:** Enabling, Direct, Mitigation
- **Wider benefits:** Lower energy bills, empowering people, cleaner air and environment, economic growth

Action 8: Generate renewable energy on our buildings

Outcomes

Generating local renewable energy is one of the best tools for tackling climate change. Projects on council homes and buildings helps us cut carbon emissions and reduce our energy bills, while showing strong local leadership. Local energy generation, when cost effective, supports a well-run council by reducing our reliance on external energy sources and saves the council money over time. Our communities also benefit through cleaner air, local investment, and opportunities to partner and grow our community energy sector.

Key activities

We will:

- Increase the amount of renewable energy we generate on council homes and buildings.
- Develop a council working group to review and improve utilisation of existing local energy generation assets.
- Identify and develop new opportunities to install new solar panels through our asset management governance planning and processes.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Batteson, Cllr Cryan
- **Lead council teams:** Climate Change, Housing Asset Management, Sustainable Growth, Corporate Facilities Management
- **Target date:** Ongoing
- **Cost:** Medium
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment
- **Action type:** Enabling, Direct, Mitigation
- **Wider benefits:** Lower energy bills, empowering people

1.5 Planning

Action 9: Update planning policy so that buildings and places are more sustainable

Outcomes

Ensure new homes, buildings and our public places and neighbourhoods minimise their impact on climate change through how they are designed, operate or built. This will mean less carbon emissions through lower energy use and better energy efficiency, as well as more renewable energy generation and reduced fuel bills for residents and tenants.

Retrofitting and new development will consider the effects of a hotter, wetter climate in our borough and ensure climate adaptation and resilience measures are well considered.

Key activities

We will:

- Through the review of the Southwark Plan:
 - explore new policy options that prioritises reductions in the amount of energy new buildings will use, rather than relying on carbon offsetting.
 - consider policy options so we can better understand how much energy a building uses, reduce the amount of carbon emissions that are emitted through construction and demolition, and ways to make it easier to install low-carbon technology like solar panels and heat pumps at home.
 - improve the climate resilience of our built environment through the design and greening of new homes, buildings and our public realm.
- Introduce a pilot for the Listed Building Local Development Order (LBDO) to simplify and speed-up solar panel installation on listed buildings in specific conservation areas.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Dennis
- **Lead council team/s:** Planning Policy
- **Target date:** 2028
- **Cost:** Low
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** Decent homes for all, A healthy environment
- **Action type:** Enabling, Mitigation and Adaptation
- **Wider benefits:** Cleaner air and environment, improved public health

2. Streets and transport

The scope of this theme focuses on reducing emissions and increasing our climate resilience through the design of our streets, efficient transport choices and the use of council vehicles.

This theme aligns our climate ambitions with our adopted Streets for People Strategy which is our strategy for taking climate action on streets and transport. We will reduce vehicle emissions by ensuring our streets encourage more journeys by walking and cycling, improve our air quality and road safety, and make our streets greener and sociable. Changing the way how we move around our borough is key to the success of reducing the effects of climate change. Emissions from transport accounts for 22% of the borough's emissions, of which around 99% comes from on-road transport. Reducing transport emissions across the borough will require a reduction in the number of vehicles on our roads and we will use Streets for People to do this. The design and maintenance of our streets will use low carbon materials and construction processes to reduce emissions and extend the life of our streets and public realm. We have embedded climate adaptation in this theme and will continue the rollout of measure to adapt our street and places to the reduce the harmful effects of heatwaves and minimise surface water flooding.

2.1 Streets and transport

Action 10: Ensure our streets encourage walking and cycling, reduce emissions from vehicles, and are adapted for the worsening effects of climate change

Outcomes

The ongoing delivery of our Streets for People Strategy and Delivery Plan will make the air in our neighbourhoods cleaner and reduce carbon emissions by making walking, cycling and wheeling the first choice to getting around the borough, instead of using private vehicles. Our streets will be greener, cooler and more pleasant spaces for our communities to connect and socialise, as they are key locations for adapting our neighbourhoods to overheating and flooding from extreme weather events.

Key activities

We will:

- Lower carbon emissions from vehicles by improving our streets so they that encourage people to walk, cycle and wheel more through the delivery of Streets for People Strategy and Delivery Plan.
- Implement climate adaptation measures that reduce surface water flooding, provide shading and green infrastructure to support vulnerable residents and improve biodiversity.
- Support walking choices through the design of our streets and our Walking Plan.
- Increase the number of cycling routes that are detailed in our Cycling Plan.
- Develop electric vehicle infrastructure by delivering the updated objectives of our Electric Vehicle Plan.
- Collaborate with Transport for London to improve the streets that they manage.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr McAsh
- **Lead council team/s:** Transport Policy, Highways
- **Target date:** Ongoing
- **Cost:** Low to high
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment
- **Action type:** Direct, Enabling, Mitigation, Adaptation
- **Wider benefits:** Cleaner air and environment, improved public health, economic growth, empowering people

Action 11: Encourage sustainable transport options to reduce emissions from vehicles

Outcomes

Collaborating with Transport for London and other transport operators will improve low-carbon public transport options for our residents, businesses and visitors so that they can move around the borough quickly and safely. This will reduce carbon emissions from vehicles and improve air quality.

Key activities

We will:

- Collaborate with transport operators including Transport for London to make bus journeys quicker, more reliable and with zero emissions.
- Campaign for the extension and upgrade of the Bakerloo Line to ensure critical funding is secured for its delivery.
- Support new options of low-carbon travel such as bikes and scooters, ensuring safety and convenience.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr McAsh
- **Lead council team/s:** Transport policy, Highways
- **Target date:** Ongoing
- **Cost:** Low
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment
- **Action type:** Direct, Enabling, Mitigation
- **Wider benefits:** Cleaner air and environment, improved public health, economic growth

Action 12: Design and maintain our streets and public realm to reduce emissions and improve climate resilience

Outcomes

The low-carbon design, construction and maintenance of our streets and spaces reduces our carbon emissions and improves the climate resilience of the borough by making our streets safer, greener, and better prepared for extreme weather.

Key activities

We will:

- Ensure highway design and construction minimises emissions through low-carbon design, delivery and emissions monitoring,
- Develop a 'lifecycle' approach for highway infrastructure ensuring resources and processes are in place to maintain infrastructure for longer periods of time and need to be replaced.
- Update the Southwark Streetscape Design Manual to include greater climate adaptation measures, ensuring council staff are trained to deliver these approaches.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr McAsh
- **Lead council team:** Highways
- **Target date:** 2026
- **Cost:** Low to medium
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment
- **Action type:** Direct, Enabling, Mitigation
- **Wider benefits:** Cleaner air and environment, reduced waste

2.2 Council vehicles

Action 13: Reduce emissions from council vehicles

Outcomes

Reducing the emissions generated from the council's fleet of vehicles through the management of how we use them and the roll-out of electric and hybrid vehicles, will deliver a range of benefits, including positively improving air quality and public health.

Key activities

We will:

- Reduce the carbon emissions from our vehicles by challenging the number of fleet vehicles in use, active monitoring of fleet usage, and procuring hybrid or EV vehicles where feasible.
- Maintain the delivery and resilience of important services to our residents and businesses, and encourage the use of more sustainable modes of transport for our staff.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** All cabinet members as vehicles are purchased or leased.
- **Lead council team/s:** Cross-council as each department procures vehicles
- **Target date:** 2030
- **Cost:** Medium
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment
- **Action type:** Direct, Mitigation
- **Wider benefits:** Cleaner air and environment, improved public health

3. Natural environment

The scope of this theme covers the important links between our natural environment and climate change.

Our award-winning parks, open spaces and neighbourhoods provide homes for a range of common and rare wildlife. This includes species of birds, bats, invertebrates and plants. We value our parks and trees as a vital part of the borough's landscape that bring joy to people and help clean our air. We also recognise that our parks, open spaces, fields and allotments are important for supporting good health and wellbeing, and help our communities feel more connected. They help to reduce levels of depression and anxiety, and enhance quality of life for both children and adults.

The actions in this theme relate to how we improve and look after our natural environment. Planting more trees and turning areas of paving into new areas of green space are vital for wildlife-friendly habitats and adapting the borough to heatwaves and surface water flooding. A changing climate also increases the risk of invasive species, pests and diseases to our borough. To protect our natural environment, we will work with local communities to monitor the borough for emerging risks, ensure our green spaces encourage wildlife and improve access to green spaces for all our residents.

3.1 Trees

Action 14: Plant and maintain more trees

Outcomes

Trees provide multiple benefits to our borough. They make it healthier, cooler, and more resilient to heatwaves by providing shade and releasing moisture which reduces the way our built environment holds on to heat in the hottest months. Trees also provide habitat for wildlife and help improve the borough's air quality by absorbing pollutants and releasing oxygen. By absorbing rainwater to help prevent flooding they help combat climate change by storing carbon.

Key activities

We will:

- Sustainably manage our existing trees in a way that supports long-term environmental, social, and economic benefits for all. This includes regularly monitoring tree health and maintaining them to prevent disease and damage, and replacing trees, when necessary, with appropriate species. We will protect mature trees during construction.
- Endeavour to increase the number of trees and the size of the borough's canopy cover by undertaking new tree planting throughout the planting season, and working with community groups and partners to do this.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr McAsh, Cllr Mwangangye
- **Lead council team/s:** Trees, Highways
- **Target date:** Ongoing
- **Cost:** Medium
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment
- **Action type:** Direct, Enabling, Adaptation, Mitigation
- **Wider benefits:** Cleaner air and environment, Improved public health

3.2 Biodiversity

Action 15: Enhance our streets and green spaces to increase biodiversity

Outcomes

Enhancing our streets and green spaces will create more habitats for wildlife, helping plants, birds, and insects thrive. It will also make our neighbourhoods greener, more attractive, and healthier for our communities. Biodiversity improvements support climate adaptation by helping to manage rainwater, reduce overheating during hotter months, and improve our air quality.

Key activities

We will:

- Support the delivery of new biodiversity projects, green corridors, de-paving projects, and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), as well as the creation and enhancement of wildlife ponds.
- Work with local community groups to create new spaces for nature, and deliver community-led habitat creation and enhancement projects through our Southwark Biodiversity Fund.
- Prepare a new Southwark Nature Action Plan which is the biodiversity strategy for Southwark, and consider the latest research on the link between climate change and ecology.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr McAsh, Cllr Mwangangye
- **Lead council team/s:** Ecology, Highways, Planning
- **Target date:** Ongoing
- **Cost:** Low to Medium
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment
- **Action type:** Direct, Enabling, Mitigation
- **Wider benefits:** Cleaner air and environment, Improved public health, Empowering People

Action 16: Monitor and manage our natural environment in a healthy way

Outcomes

Managing our natural environment is incredibly important as the climate in our borough changes. This is because warmer temperature and changing weather patterns will create more favourable conditions for pests and diseases, directly affecting how quickly they multiply and where they spread. If we keep a close eye on these pests, we will spot new problems early and deal with them quickly. Reducing the use of herbicides and pesticides in our public realm promotes the health of insect communities, which are vital for healthy ecosystems.

Key activities

We will:

- Work with our community partners to monitor the borough to quickly detect new pests and diseases, using modern monitoring techniques such as drones equipped with sensors.
- Ensure the use of herbicides and pesticides in the public realm better protects residents, wildlife and promotes biodiversity.
- Develop an integrated weed management plan for our highways and housing estates.
- Ensure our parks and green spaces continue to offer cooler areas that provide respite during periods of hot weather when they see increased use.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Situ, Cllr McAsh, Cllr Mwangangye
- **Lead council team/s:** Cross-council
- **Target date:** Ongoing
- **Cost:** Low
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment
- **Action type:** Enabling, Direct, Adaptation
- **Wider benefits:** Cleaner air and environment, Improved public health

3.3 Flooding

Action 17: Protect people and buildings from flooding

Outcomes

Through the delivery of flood projects and an improved understanding of future climate risk, our communities and infrastructure are better protected from the flood risks that are being exacerbated by climate change. This will lead to reduced loss and damage, and support new homes and businesses within the borough.

Key activities

We will:

- Deliver new projects that protect the borough from surface flooding through the delivery of our Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and increased capacity of our sustainable drainage systems.
- Improve community awareness of local flood risks and the authorities responsible for managing them.
- Update Southwark's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment to ensure it considers the increased flood risks resulting from a changing climate.
- Prepare a Riverside Strategy that will protect the borough from rising sea levels and flood events from the River Thames.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr McAsh
- **Lead council team/s:** Flood, Planning, Climate Change
- **Target date:** Ongoing
- **Cost:** Low to High
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment
- **Action type:** Enabling, Adaptation
- **Wider benefits:** Improved public health

4. Greener economy

The scope of this theme spans how we work with businesses, develop green jobs, improve recycling and support the circular economy.

Our residents must benefit from the green jobs that drive the changes that are needed to meet our climate ambitions and as a council we must ensure the right skills and training are available.. We will do this by working closely with our businesses and business improvement districts to ensure our local economy and town centres are low-carbon, greener and resilient.

What we consume, use and how it is made and transported, is a major but often hidden source of emissions. Our central London location and demographics mean our consumption levels are high. Alongside this, how we dispose of our waste matters. We lead inner London in recycling, but most of what we throw away is still recyclable. Reducing, reusing, and recycling, including food and garden waste, remains essential as part of a local circular economy. Reducing the amount of water we use is increasingly important as drought risk increases across London.

Embracing more sustainable diets will reduce emissions and can also deliver important public health benefits, through healthier school meals and strengthening local food networks through the Southwark Food Action Alliance.

4.1 Green jobs and skills

Action 18: Increase green jobs and skills

Outcomes

Increasing green jobs and skills in Southwark means creating more employment opportunities for local people and businesses in industries that help tackle climate change and protect the environment. It also involves providing education, training, and career pathways so local people can gain the skills needed for these roles, including young people, career changers, and those currently out of work.

Key activities

We will:

- Connect our communities, employers, skills providers and job brokerage organisations in a local green skills supply network to support the creation of green jobs.
- Improve the alignment between skills training and job opportunities, and help residents access pathways into green careers.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Batteson
- **Lead council team/s:** Local Economy Team, Climate Change
- **Target date:** Ongoing
- **Cost:** Low
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment, A strong and fair economy
- **Action type:** Enabling, Mitigation, Adaptation
- **Wider benefits:** Economic growth, Empowering people

4.2 Businesses

Action 19: Grow our green economy

Outcomes

Our local economy will grow through the collaboration of businesses and the council to support and take advantage of the opportunities that arise from a green transition. This will include green business innovation, increased green job opportunities, investing in resilient, green and healthy town centres and places that people want to visit, supply chains and improved waste management.

Key activities

- Support Southwark's businesses and markets to become climate-ready, including support to green their buildings and energy, supply chains, waste, and be prepared for the effects of extreme weather.
- Support innovation and funding on green business sectors through council business.
- Support innovation in green business sectors through council business support and workspace programme, identify innovation funding to support climate innovation projects and design guidance to mainstream innovation considerations into project design and procurement.
- Work with our business improvement districts and employers to work together on climate action by combining resources, expertise, and influence to create bigger, faster change.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Batteson
- **Lead council team/s:** Local Economy Team, Climate Change
- **Target date:** Ongoing
- **Cost:** Low
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment, A strong and fair economy
- **Action type:** Enabling, Mitigation, Adaptation
- **Wider benefits:** Lower energy bills, Reduced waste, Economic growth, Empowering people

Action 20: Promote cleaner freight and supply chains

Outcomes

Changing the way goods and deliveries take place for residents, businesses and partners will lead to lower carbon emissions, quieter streets, and improved public health as our air gets cleaner. Less vehicles moving around our borough or deliveries from cleaner vehicles will ensure cleaner supply chains.

Key activities

- Adopt a new freight plan by 2026 to reduce harmful effects of freight while meeting business and resident needs.
- Support businesses to switch to zero pollution delivery vehicles, working with them to shift more local deliveries to electric cargo bikes.
- Explore greater use of the River Thames for freight and deliveries into the borough, minimising impact of polluting vehicles on our streets.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Batteson, Cllr McAsh
- **Lead council team/s:** Transport Policy, Local Economy Team, Environmental Protection, Climate Change
- **Target date:** Ongoing
- **Cost:** Low
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment, A strong and fair economy
- **Action type:** Enabling, Direct, Mitigation, Adaptation
- **Wider benefits:** Cleaner air and environment, Improved public health, Reduced Waste, Economic growth

4.3 Circular economy and waste

Action 21: Work with residents, local groups and partners to support climate friendly behaviours

Outcomes

Less waste is produced as a whole, supporting emissions reduction and improving the sustainability of the borough. Southwark residents are saving money, learning skills and connecting with neighbours through climate-friendly behaviours.

Key activities

We will:

- Work with local groups and residents to support climate friendly behaviours by supporting the growth of the sharing economy through services such as Library of Things and local repair cafes.
- Deliver behaviour change campaigns that remove barriers, increase motivation and support residents and groups to adopt positive changes.
- Decrease overall residual waste in Southwark, utilising cross council campaigns and education programmes promoting the circular economy and sustainable practices as part of the council's waste strategy, including reducing water use and encouraging rainwater recycling.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Batteson, Cllr McAsh,
- **Lead council teams:** Waste, Climate Change
- **Target date:** Ongoing
- **Cost:** Low
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment, A strong and fair economy
- **Action type:** Enabling, Direct, Mitigation
- **Wider benefits:** Improved public health, Reduced waste, Empowering people

Action 22: Improve recycling rates and reduce waste

Outcomes

Supporting our residents to improve recycling rates and reducing waste helps us cut carbon emissions, lower disposal costs, and protect our environment. It means less rubbish goes to incineration, and more materials are reused or recycled to save resources.

Key activities

We will:

- Increase percentage of waste recycled incrementally from 37% until 2030, including increasing the percentage of food waste that is recycled by households
- Support residents by removing barriers to improving recycling in areas with low rates, including adding more bins to estates and reducing contamination through education programmes.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr McAsh, Cllr Batteson
- **Lead council teams:** Waste, Climate Change
- **Target date:** Ongoing
- **Cost:** Low
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment, A strong and fair economy
- **Action type:** Enabling, Direct, Mitigation
- **Wider benefits:** Reduced waste, Empowering people

4.4 Sustainable food

Action 23: Support access to healthy and sustainable food

Outcomes

We will foster a planet-friendly food system that supports our residents and businesses in making healthy, sustainable dietary choices, and strengthens local food security, contributing to a healthier environment and thriving local economy.

Key activities

We will:

- Sustain and extend food growing in the borough and explore the implementation of council's January 2025 commitment to the Right to Grow.
- Promote a planet-friendly food system by supporting residents, organisations and the local economy to champion local and healthy sustainable food through the delivery of the Sustainable Food Strategy.
- Support the Good Food Business Charter to help ten businesses make sustainable food choices
- Develop a promotion plan to encourage climate-friendly diets and meat and dairy reduction.
- Strengthen the surplus food donation network, like the Southwark Food Action Alliance (SFAA).
- Explore and implement Neighbourhood Food Models.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Akoto, Cllr Batteson
- **Lead council team/s:** Public Health, Climate Change
- **Target date:** Ongoing
- **Cost:** Low
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment, A good start in life, Staying well
- **Action type:** Enabling, Direct, Mitigation, Adaptation
- **Wider benefits:** Improved public health, Reduced waste, Empowering people

5. People and resources

This theme focuses on the people, resources, funding, partnerships and governance which underpin our response to the climate emergency.

To effectively respond to the climate emergency, we must continue to build the necessary skills and tools to reduce emissions and ensure we are prepared to understand and adapt to the worsening effects of climate change.

This involves strengthening the way we work within the council, and ensuring our workforce considers climate change across all aspects of council operations, decision making and policy.

By strengthening our approach and evolving how we work, whether through improving our use of data to identify needs and compare options, developing a 'climate budget' that helps us to plan and make investment decisions to reduce emissions and manage climate risks, we will be better prepared to deliver long term emissions reductions and create a climate ready borough that prepares and involves our communities.

We will reduce the emissions in our supply chains (Scope 3 emissions) by embedding carbon reduction standards into our procurement and behavioural change initiatives. We will also grow our sources of funding to accelerate retrofitting and adaptation measures. These actions collectively aim to future-proof council operations so that our services run well, and our staff and residents are empowered to lead on climate action.

5.1 Working with communities and partners

Action 24: Collaborate with our communities and partners to take climate action and improve resilience

Outcomes

Working together to tackle the climate emergency will ensure the best outcomes for all. We will collaborate, coordinate and support climate action with our residents, community groups and voluntary sector, schools and education sector, businesses and business improvement districts, public sector delivery partners, Greater London Authority, London Councils, Transport for London, our cultural sector and others.

Key activities

We will:

- Collaborate with delivery partners and businesses to tackle shared climate challenges and support borough stakeholders to reduce carbon emissions.
- Empower and co-create with our communities to improve community resilience to the worsening effects of climate change, including our most vulnerable communities.
- Work with businesses, public-sector partners, and utility companies to coordinate plans and responses to climate-related events, support our local economy and business continuity. This will include the impact on supply chains, local extreme weather and flooding, and how harmful impacts can create further challenges to people or places that are already at risk. We will seek to agree a shared data and carbon accounting process to track the borough's emissions more accurately and support future shared climate action.
- Work in partnership with the NHS and voluntary sector to deliver a programme of actions to support and protect vulnerable residents from the harmful health effects of hot weather, based on recommendations in our Hot Weather and Health Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). This will include rough sleepers, care homes residents and those with pre-existing health conditions.
- Increase the number of buildings that offer cool spaces to provide an escape from hot temperatures, and ensure good coverage and accessibility in the parts of the borough where residents are most vulnerable to heat risk.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Batteson
- **Lead council team/s:** Climate Change, Public Health, Cross council
- **Target date:** Ongoing
- **Cost:** Low
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A well-run council

- **Action type:** Enabling, Mitigation, Adaptation
- **Wider benefits:** Improved public health, Economic growth, Empowering people

5.2 Mainstreaming climate adaptation and resilience

Action 25: Get the council prepared for the effects of climate change

Outcomes

We must respond to how the worsening effects of climate change will affect the borough and every aspect of the council's operations, planning, and decision-making. Rather than being treated as a separate issue, being a proactive and more capable council will enable us to effectively plan for and respond to the worsening effects that climate change will have on the services that our communities use, and the neighbourhoods where we live, go to school and do business.

We will continue to incrementally adapt our borough day-by-day through the delivery of services, projects and programmes, and we will also be ready to respond to worsening extreme weather events when they take place and support communities afterwards. In practice, this action will result in reduced risks and damages from events like floods and heatwaves, better protection for public safety and infrastructure, and more efficient use of resources by "climate-proofing" investments and avoiding costly reactive measures.

Stronger governance, aligned ways of working, and better-informed people and decisions will ensure we are ready to respond to the effects of climate change and support our communities to create good lives together.

Key activities

We will:

- Assess how council services, workforce, and buildings will be affected by climate change, and ensure each is resilient by improving our skillsets, as part of a well-managed council. This will include an extreme weather risk assessment to support our emergency planning to ensure we are ready to continue services when extreme weather events occur.
- Prepare a borough-wide climate risk and vulnerability assessment to understand how climate change will affect our residents and places in our borough, and the council in terms of costs and investment, and use its findings to support the council services, projects, programmes, strategy and business continuity.
- Ensure council financial, investment and risk management planning understand, consider and plan for the impact and costs of climate adaptation and resilience.
- Work with emergency planning to improve our emergency plans and how we respond to events by using climate risk-informed decision-making and processes.
- Prepare a wildfire emergency plan working in partnership with strategic partners including the London Fire Brigade to improve coordination.

- Create a cross-council heat plan and establish an adverse weather preparedness group to coordinate efforts across Public Health, Emergency Planning, and other key teams.
- Prepare a longer-term approach to managing climate risk that is flexible and can change over time as conditions unfold. This will help manage uncertainty, avoid over-investing too soon, and allow us to stay responsive to future climate effects and risks.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Akoto, Cllr Cryan, Cllr Batteson
- **Lead council team/s:** Climate Change, Organisational Transformation, Public Health
- **Target date:** Ongoing
- **Cost:** Low
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A well-run council, A healthy environment
- **Action type:** Enabling, Mitigation, Adaptation
- **Wider benefits:** Clean air and environment, Improved public health

5.3 Climate training

Action 26: Train all council staff to identify and take climate action

Outcomes

Each council officer and councillor will be empowered to recognise and take opportunities to deliver positive climate action through their role in delivering the council's Southwark 2030 goals. Training will cover understanding how climate action must be fair and equitable to support our vulnerable communities, reduce carbon emissions and adapt our services and the borough to the worsening effects of climate change. We will also improve how we report and assess our progress.

Key activities

We will:

- Update and launch climate literacy resources that align with our Southwark 2030 goals and principles.
- Deliver training sessions for teams with the greatest opportunity to deliver positive action through their work, and bespoke training where necessary (e.g. low carbon highway construction and design, housing maintenance and repairs teams).
- Develop a straightforward, simple to use 'just transition' framework/tool for emissions to deliver positive climate outcomes for all, embed just transition principles, reductions and adaptation for officers to use alongside our public sector equalities duty and Southwark Stands Together
- Strengthen council climate reporting processes and improve monitoring and evaluation by improving the way climate outcomes are assessed for council projects, programmes and decision-making.
- Launch internal campaigns which encourage climate-friendly behaviours in the workforce, including a review of council staff's commuting and general travel patterns
- Develop the technical and leadership skills and capabilities needed to achieve climate net-zero and resilience goals across key service areas.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Batteson
- **Lead council teams:** Climate Change Team, Learning and Development
- **Target date:** 2026
- **Cost:** Low
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment, A well-run council
- **Action type:** Enabling, Mitigation, Adaptation
- **Wider benefits:** Cleaner air and environment, Improved public health, Empowering people

5.4 Finance and funding

Action 27: Make evidence-led investment decisions and grow the funding available for climate action

Outcomes

Transformative climate projects that deliver our emissions reduction target or fully prepare the borough for a changing climate require significant funding and resources. This is a significant challenge due to the number of homes and buildings that we own and the size and responsibilities of the council. This challenge is shared by our partners and stakeholders across the borough. The funding required to deliver our full climate ambitions exceeds the financial resources available to the council at present – meaning we will constantly ensure the funds and processes that we have are put to best use, explore and prioritise new funding opportunities, and lobby for increased funding from central government.

Key activities

We will:

- Set an annual climate budget alongside our core financial planning, to identify the resources we need to deliver on this action plan and inform associated requests to partners, funders, regional and national government.
- Investigate opportunities for new or increased income streams to support council and community climate action.
- Allocate £8m of Green Buildings Fund funding to projects by the end of 2026.
- Finish allocating funds in our Climate Capital Fund by the end of 2026, and identify new sources of capital funding.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Batteson, Cllr Cryan
- **Lead council team:** Climate Change
- **Target date:** 2026
- **Cost:** Low
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment, A well-run council
- **Action type:** Enabling, Mitigation, Adaptation
- **Wider benefits:** Economic growth

5.5 Procurement and supply chains

Action 28: Reduce the carbon footprint of the goods and services we buy

Outcomes

The emissions that result from the goods and services that we purchase to deliver our services and run our buildings make up the highest proportion of our emissions. These are scope 3 emissions that are challenging to reduce as they come from sources outside of our direct control. Data on these emissions can be difficult to gather and verify, especially when our suppliers vary in size and transparency. Alongside our Social Value Framework, improved approaches to procurement will enable us to reduce these emissions while maintaining high standards of service delivery as part of a well-run council.

Key activities

We will:

- Introduce a carbon neutral aligned procurement policy, with workable models for its use and application during the procurement process and contract awards.
- Establish and implement standards of effective carbon reduction, measurement and management within contracts. Develop guidance, tools and training to support staff involved in procurement and contract management to improve sustainability, taking account of their specific areas and industries.
- Explore options to reduce the advertisement of carbon-intensive products or services on public advertisements that we manage.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Batteson, Cllr Cryan
- **Lead council team:** Climate Change
- **Target date:** 2026
- **Cost:** Low
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment, A well-run council
- **Action type:** Enabling, Mitigation, Adaptation
- **Wider benefits:** Cleaner air and environment, Reduced waste

5.6 Policy, data and tools

Action 29: Ensure the council makes decisions that are climate-informed

Outcomes

To make climate-informed decisions, we need good data and the right tools so we can design climate change outcomes into our work. Clear policies help make sure climate action is built into all plans and decisions. Reliable data shows where emissions and climate risks are highest, so action can be focused where it matters most or is most effective. Together, these make climate action a routine part of council work.

Key activities

We will:

- Embed positive climate outcomes as a thread within all our strategies, plans and governance, and show how climate action delivers our Southwark 2030 goals and principles.
- Work collaboratively to develop the right data and tools to ensure positive climate outcomes within council decision making, service design, projects and programmes. This will include mapping for visualising climate risks and public health vulnerabilities, and financial risk modelling to work out the economic impacts of climate change on council assets and services.
- Integrate climate change outcomes into our Health-in-all-Policies approach to support the borough's schools, businesses and organisations.

Action monitoring details

- **Lead cabinet member:** Cllr Batteson
- **Lead council team:** Climate Change
- **Target date:** 2026
- **Cost:** Low
- **Southwark 2030 goals:** A healthy environment, A well-run council
- **Action type:** Enabling, Mitigation, Adaptation
- **Wider benefits:** Cleaner air and environment, Improved public health, Lower energy bills, reduced waste, Economic growth, Empowering people

Schedule of actions

Theme 1. Buildings and energy

Action 1: Significantly reduce emissions from council homes and ensure they are resilient to the effects of climate change

Action 2: Support the retrofit of private homes

Action 3: Make our schools sustainable and resilient to climate change

Action 4: Reduce emissions from council buildings and ensure they are climate change ready

Action 5: Minimise the environmental impact of our operations

Action 6: Deliver resilient low-carbon heat networks

Action 7: Ready the borough for electrification and support community energy

Action 8: Generate renewable energy on our buildings

Action 9: Update planning policy so that buildings and places are more sustainable

Theme 2. Streets and transport

Action 10: Ensure our streets encourage walking and cycling, reduce emissions from vehicles, and are adapted for the worsening effects of climate change

Action 11: Encourage sustainable transport options to reduce emissions from vehicles

Action 12: Design and maintain our streets and public realm to reduce emissions and improve climate resilience

Action 13: Reduce emissions from council vehicles

Theme 3. Natural environment

Action 14: Plant and maintain more trees

Action 15: Enhance our streets and green spaces to increase biodiversity

Action 16: Monitor and manage our natural environment in a healthy way

Action 17: Protect people and buildings from flooding

Theme 4. Greener economy

Action 18: Increase green jobs and skills

Action 19: Grow our green economy

Action 20: Promote cleaner freight and supply chains

Action 21: Work with residents, local groups and partners to support climate friendly behaviours

Action 22: Improve recycling rates and reduce waste

Action 23: Support access to healthy and sustainable food

Theme 5. People and resources

Action 24: Collaborate with our communities and partners to take climate action and improve resilience

Action 25: Get the council prepared for the effects of climate change

Action 26: Train all council staff to identify and take climate action

Action 27: Make evidence-led investment decisions and grow the funding available for climate action

Action 28: Reduce the carbon footprint of the goods and services we buy

Action 29: Ensure the council makes decisions that are climate-informed

Relevant council documents

We have adopted and emerging council strategies and plans that cover the climate themes in this action plan. They should be read alongside this document and our Climate Change Strategy as they will also ensure positive climate action through their delivery.

Theme 1: Buildings and energy

Southwark Plan, Climate Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), Strategic Asset Management Plan (emerging), Better Homes Asset Management Strategy (emerging), Local Area Energy Plan – Phase 1 and 2 (emerging)

Theme 2: Streets and transport

Streets for People Strategy and Delivery Plan, Walking Plan, Cycling Plan, Electric Vehicle Plan, Air Quality Action Plan, Southwark Streetscape Design Manual

Theme 3: Natural environment

Southwark Nature Action Plan (SNAP), Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Action Plan, Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)

Theme 4: Greener economy

Local Economy Strategy, town centre action plans, Southwark Waste Management Strategy, Sustainable Food Strategy

Theme 5: People and resources

Southwark 2030 strategy, Southwark Fairer Future Procurement Framework, Southwark Social Value Framework, Hot Weather and Health Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), Joint Health and Wellbeing Plan, Borough Sanctuary Plan (emerging), Good Landlord Plan (emerging), Creative Southwark