Tackling the Climate Emergency Together

Our strategy for a resilient and carbon neutral Southwark

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Foreword

The climate emergency remains the challenge of our time. We now have a limited window to confront and reverse it. The consequences of inaction become more devasting and impactful with each passing year. The scale of the task remains huge, but we must continue to work collaboratively and with the required urgency.

To prevent this change becoming catastrophic the evidence tells us we must do our part to keep average global temperature rises as close to 1.5 degrees as possible. As we pass the halfway point in this decade, we can see that climate action across the globe is happening nowhere near fast enough. Despite commitments made by world leaders, efforts are continuing to fall short, and in some places these commitments are also being rolled back.

We will continue to do all we can to make the borough carbon neutral by 2030, as climate action will make our air cleaner air, green our borough, lower our energy bills and make our homes and neighbourhoods better places to live.

We have secured £12m of new investment to support the retrofit of our leisure centres, homes and schools, but the cost of addressing climate change, and the lack of available funding and resources to reduce carbon emissions and deliver climate adaptation measures to protect the borough remains a significant challenge.

We are determined that climate action in Southwark ensures a fair transition. One that helps to improve the lives of residents on lower incomes, and that delivers the new green jobs which are so clearly needed. It is underpinned by the core values of Southwark 2030, to reduce inequality, invest in prevention and empower people.

This strategy is now our single climate change strategy as it merges our Climate Change Strategy (2021) with the Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy (2024) into a single document. Having one strategy focuses our ambition on reducing emissions, improving our climate adaptation and resilience, and aligns with the goals of Southwark 2030. Our vision for the borough now plays a central role in guiding how we will implement climate action.

This refreshed strategy and its updated action plan sets out how we will continue to take action for the whole borough. The technical analysis which supports this work, shows why this must be the case. The council is responsible for just 12% of emissions in the borough, not only through its direct operations but also through the goods and services it purchases. So, while it's important that we lead by example, we will only achieve impact on the scale required, if all organisations, businesses and community groups in our borough pull in the same direction.

However, we also want to be clear that, we cannot realise all the change we need without increased and broadened support from national government. We will continue to live up to our reputation as a campaigning council, making the case to government to deliver the national investment needed to truly green our local economy, our homes and our infrastructure.

But even if global greenhouse gas emissions stopped tomorrow, our climate will continue to change. We must therefore improve our resilience to the worsening impacts of climate change and adapt our council and borough to meet new challenges. Making changes now will help prepare Southwark for the future, as the effects of climate change are already being felt.

Extreme weather, flooding, water scarcity, food insecurity and new pests and disease which threaten our biodiversity are all impacts of climate change. We must build our resilience to hotter and longer heatwaves by ensuring buildings and places are cooler and provide respite from higher temperatures. These temperatures will impact our most vulnerable residents, and we must ensure our most important council services are resilient and robust so that they function well during hazardous events. Reducing the risk of flooding by improving surface water drainage, reducing the demand on the sewer system and improving our flood defences are a key part of our work. We must also plan for the likely impacts of rising sea-levels along the River Thames. Conversely, we must also conserve more water and adapt our green spaces to be more resistant as the likelihood of summer droughts increase.

Our updated Climate Action Plan (2025) defines actions that will both reduce emissions and adapt the borough through each of its five themes. These are the actions we will prioritise, and we will do this while remaining true to our values and our commitment to climate justice, reducing inequality and building a fairer borough for all.

As we set on the following pages, this strategy is not the ‘final word’ on the topic, and it must respond to new ideas, data, technologies and available funding. We know that we can only deliver fundamental change if we work in close partnership with residents, local groups, businesses and partner organisations such as universities, schools and NHS trusts who are key stakeholders across our communities.

We look forward to taking this crucial work forward together as we build a fairer and more sustainable Southwark.

Cllr John Batteson

Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency, Jobs and Business

Introduction

The climate emergency is the defining challenge of our time. Without bold and immediate action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the future of humanity and the ecosystems we depend on are at risk. Southwark Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and committed to do it all could to become a carbon neutral borough by 2030.

The 2030 target date to get to carbon neutral is based on the stark warning issued by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 2018. They found that urgent action is needed before 2030 if global temperature rises are to remain within 1.5°C, the maximum average temperature rise considered safe for humanity. The IPCC found that a global rise above 1.5°C would lead to climate-related risks to human health, livelihoods, food security, human security, water supply and economic growth. While the 1.5°C target is intended as a long-term average over multiple decades, it's significant that 2024 was the hottest year on record and the first full year in which global temperatures surpassed the 1.5°C threshold[i]. Even if we were to stop the emission of all greenhouse gases immediately, the warming of the planet would continue for at least several more decades.

In 2024 the council adopted the Climate Resilience and Adaptation strategy to formalise the approach for delivering a resilient borough that can overcome the current and future impacts of climate change, such as a warming planet, in a just, equal and fair manner.

Working with our communities, we have already made progress decarbonising buildings, making walking and cycling easier and delivering projects across the borough to reduce carbon and invest in a more sustainable future. It is right that our top priority remains to reduce carbon emissions to slow and eventually stop the warming of the planet and the catastrophic effects of climate change.

Southwark has made meaningful progress in reducing its carbon emissions over several years. When developing the Climate Change strategy, the council commissioned an independent analysis to understand the volume of the borough's emissions. The findings estimated that in 2017 emissions across the entire borough of Southwark sat at 1,288 kt CO_2e. Boroughwide emissions are estimated to have been approximately 790ktCO_2e in 2023, demonstrating the impact of local action already underway across Southwark. Despite this, substantial government support remains essential to sustain and accelerate this progress.

However, even with sustained reductions in emissions, too much damage has already been done. Even if the world stopped producing carbon and other greenhouse gases tomorrow, the increased carbon already in the atmosphere means the planet will continue to warm and it will take many thousands of years to return to pre-industrial temperatures[ii]. While we need to redouble our efforts to reduce carbon and move to a net zero future, we also need to adapt for a warmer world and

ensure we are resilient to the changes that are already happening. We also expect those changes to continue to intensify in the coming years.

Climate change will not impact everyone equally and will exacerbate existing economic and social inequity. Research from CDP in 2023 shows that 92% of low-income households are among those that will be most affected by climate-related risks including flooding and heatwaves. This is followed by older people (85%), children (73%) and minority communities (65%)[iii]. Our commitment to both emission reductions and climate adaptation and resilience must focus on these groups who contribute the least to greenhouse gas emissions due to lower levels of consumption and energy use yet are disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change and often have the least resource to mitigate against the impact.

Our aim is to create a borough that does not passively endure climate change but acts to limit its impacts and do so in a way that contributes to a reduction in carbon emissions. Our aim is to do this working with our residents, businesses, schools, institutions and everyone who lives, works and cares about Southwark and its future.

The transition to a low-carbon and climate-resilient society is not just a necessity, it's an opportunity to reshape Southwark into a healthier, fairer, and more sustainable place for everyone. The urgent action required to cut carbon emissions and can also bring wide-ranging benefits: improving public health, raising housing standards, creating good green jobs, and strengthening our communities.

Equally, adapting our borough to the growing impacts of climate change, such as extreme heat, flooding, and poor air quality, is essential to protect lives, safeguard infrastructure, and reduce long-term costs. Building resilience can also help ease cost of living pressures by improving energy efficiency and reducing vulnerability to climate shocks.

In Southwark, we are committed to ensuring this is a just transition - one that actively works to close the stark inequalities in our borough and ensures that no one is left behind.

The scale of change needed is vast and will also require comprehensive national action, to back the changes we need to deliver locally. We will therefore ensure Southwark is a strong voice in making the case for the urgent national changes and government investment needed.

As of 2025, we have brought together the Climate Change Strategy (2021) and the Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy (2024) into one cohesive strategy. It integrates the strengths of both documents and highlights the interconnected nature of climate mitigation and adaptation.

Since the original strategies were published, the council adopted the flagship Southwark 2030 strategy, our borough-wide plan shaped by thousands of residents, setting out a shared ambition

for a fairer, greener, and more connected future for the borough. This vision now plays a central role in guiding how we deliver climate action across the borough.

The foundations of this combined strategy remain as vital today as when they were first established. While some adjustments have been made to align with Southwark 2030 and improve clarity and effectiveness of delivery, the core ambition remains unchanged. We continue to work toward the same ambitious goals, guided by our commitment to climate action, resilience, and social justice. The actions and approach continue to be shaped by the extensive consultation carried out with the people and organisations of Southwark. Since the council declared a climate emergency in 2019, we have hosted events across the borough and engaged with hundreds of residents, workers, and community groups. The strategy also continues to be grounded in the same technical analysis of the borough's emissions and the steps required to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030, now supplemented with updated data from the years since.

Looking ahead, we will continue to adapt and strengthen both the combined strategy and its action plan, learning through delivery to ensure we are doing all we can to reach a carbon neutral, climate-resilient Southwark by 2030, in line with the broader ambitions of Southwark 2030.

What is climate change?

Greenhouse gases are produced by human activities including the burning of fossil fuels for heat, transport, electricity, farming and deforestation. The amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere is rising and since the industrial revolution, there has been a 40% increase in the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, a 20% increase in nitrous oxide, and a 150% increase in methane[iv]. These gases trap energy from the sun warming the planet.

This is causing average temperatures across the globe to warm which in turn is leading to catastrophic changes to our planet.

If we do not change our behaviour, it will be devastating for our world. Places like Bangladesh are the hardest hit by climate change, with monsoon flooding in the region becoming more severe year on year. Climate change is also affecting places like West Africa and Latin America, with crop yields and production predicted to fall because of higher temperatures. 2024 was informally referred to as the 'year of the flood' due to a series of extreme rainfall events across the globe. In Spain, the Valencian Community experienced devastating floods in the autumn, receiving more than a year's worth of rain in just a few days. The event caused numerous fatalities and over €10 billion in damages. In the UK, although total annual rainfall was close to average, the country recorded over 7,600 flood alerts and warnings, the highest number ever. These were driven by sudden, intense downpours that caused widespread damage and contributed to the second worst harvest in the UK on record[v]. Even if we stopped releasing greenhouse gases immediately, some estimates show

that global heating would continue for several decades. If things do not change, it will affect our world in dramatic ways. We could see more extreme weather, rising sea levels, ecological damage, more people dying from disease and wars caused by poor food supply. There is a climate emergency, and we need to take urgent action now.

Tackling climate change requires coordinated global action, and several landmark decisions have shaped the international response. These decisions are overseen by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which brings nations together to agree on shared climate goals. Each year, the UNFCCC hosts the Conference of the Parties (COP), a global summit where countries negotiate agreements, assess progress, and set future targets. Notable outcomes include the Kyoto Protocol (1997), which introduced the first legally binding emission reduction commitments, and the Paris Agreement (2015), which formally recognised the importance of limiting global warming to 1.5°C. The global commitments made at COP influence our borough's approach to climate action, helping to shape our local strategies and align them with international efforts.

Climate change is a global crisis, but its impacts are deeply local. While rising emissions and environmental degradation are driven by global systems, the effects, such as extreme heat, flooding, and air pollution, are felt directly by residents here in Southwark. That's why we are committed in playing our part in cutting emissions and contributing to global climate goals. At the same time, building resilience and adapting to climate change must happen at the local level. The specific risks faced by our communities, shaped by geography, culture, housing, inequality and more require detailed, place-based local planning. Hence the importance of combining our climate change and resilience and adaptation strategies.

What is climate resilience and adaptation?

Building resilience and adapting to climate change are essential parts of our response to the climate emergency. According to the Mayor of London's City Resilience Strategy[vi], resilience is defined as the capacity of communities and systems to survive, adapt, and thrive no matter what kinds of chronic stresses or acute shocks they face. Adaptation, in this context, refers to the adjustments communities and systems make in response to actual or expected climate impacts.

Both resilience and adaptation are critical because climate change is already affecting Southwark, and these effects are likely to intensify. Climate risk refers to the potential harm caused by climate change, and it arises from the interaction between three factors: the hazards (like extreme heat, flooding, or drought), the exposure of people and infrastructure to those hazards, and the vulnerability of those exposed - how sensitive they are to hazards and how well they can cope.

In Southwark, this means recognising that some residents, particularly those in low-income or poorly insulated housing, are more at risk from overheating during heatwaves or flooding from heavy rainfall. These risks are not just environmental; they are deeply social and economic. For example, 60% of residents live on land less than 10 metres above sea level, making the borough particularly vulnerable to sea level rise and future flood risks. Current flood defences will need to be renewed to keep pace with these changes. Meanwhile, air pollution is thought to cause upwards of 71 deaths per year on average[vii], often disproportionately affecting those who contribute the least to emissions. Neighbourhoods at the centre of Southwark have been identified to be most vulnerable to climate risk (London Climate Risk Map[viii]). The red areas on the left in Figure 1 below illustrate this high climate risk coinciding with areas of income and health inequalities which are shown in blue on the right.

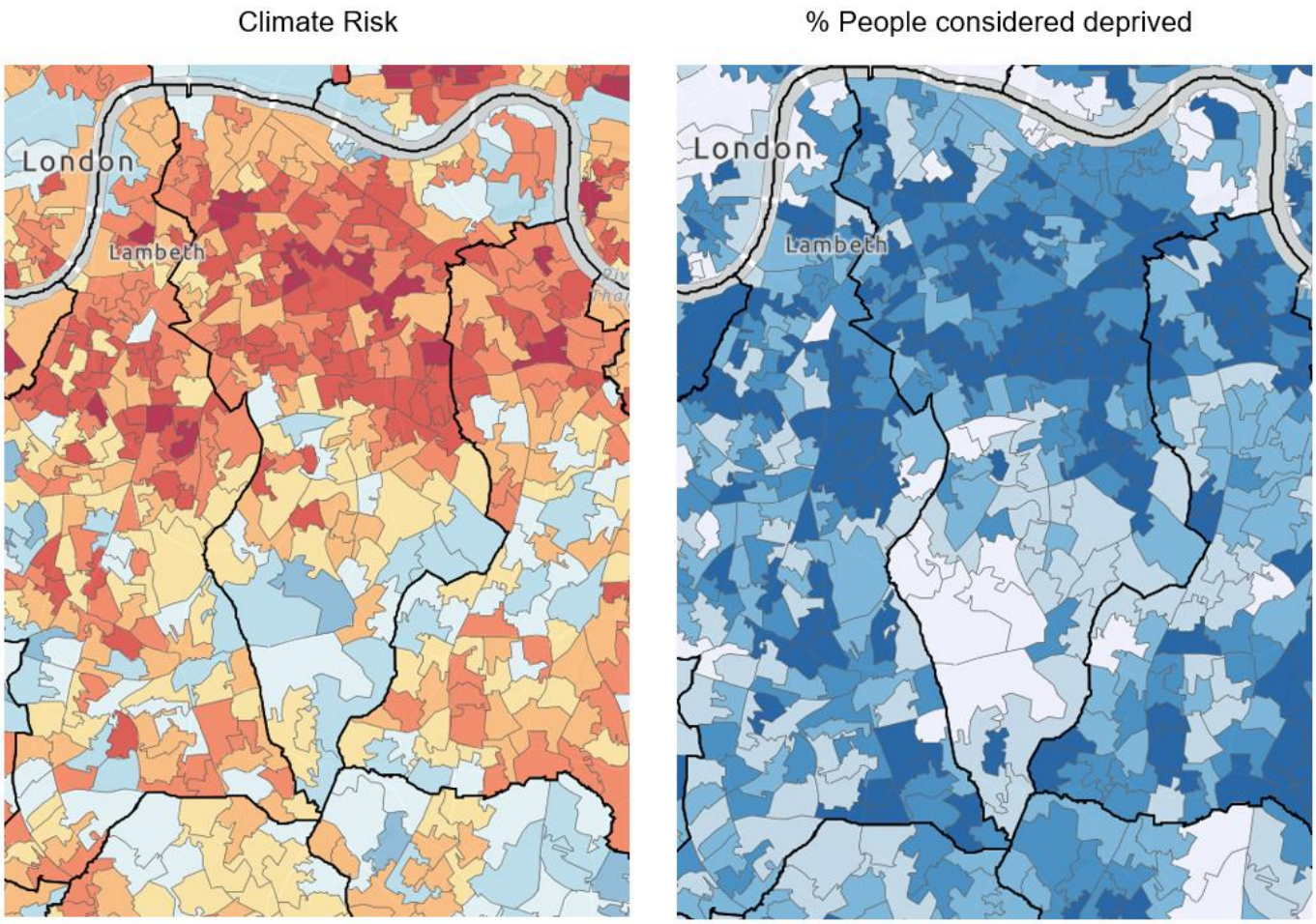

Figure 1: London Climate Risk Map showing London Borough of Southwark climate risk on the left and % of people considered deprived on the right, darker colours indicate higher percentage, note similarities in areas of deprivation and high climate risk.

Climate change also threatens food security. An estimated 75,000 Southwark residents are already food insecure[ix], and climate-related disruptions to food supply chains could worsen this, increasing

prices and deepening inequality. As a global borough, Southwark is also connected to communities around the world affected by climate-driven migration, conflict, and resource scarcity, issues that will increasingly impact our communities.

While mitigation efforts aim to reduce emissions and slow climate change, resilience and adaptation are about protecting people, infrastructure, and ecosystems from the impacts we are already experiencing and preparing for those yet to be felt. Planning for resilience is especially important because climate risk is not distributed equally. By actively strengthening our borough's resilience, we are not only responding to climate change, we are also working to reduce inequality, protect public health, and ensure that Southwark can thrive in a changing climate.

Climate change as a social justice issue

The impact of climate change is not experienced equally. Poorer and otherwise disadvantaged communities, including the elderly, are more at risk and have less resource to mitigate against its impact. That is why climate change is not just an environmental issue, but one of social justice where we must ensure our approach reduces inequality, makes our borough and planet fairer and does not place the burden of change on those least responsible and least able to afford it.

Although we are all affected by our changing climate, factors such as race, income, age and health play a significant role in how directly we feel this impact. In Southwark, we are proud to be home to a diverse community and including significant populations from the global majority.

The global south is disproportionally affected by climate change. The impact of floods, landslides and other natural disasters is much higher and exacerbated by human-made climate change, much of which is due to actions in richer countries like our own. The impact of climate change is also experienced differently here in Southwark. An individual's income significantly affects their experience of climate change and the resources they have available to adapt to the changing environment.

Southwark, like the rest of London, is a borough of contrast. Southwark is home to some of the most and also the least deprived areas in the country. Median household income in Dulwich Village at £61,000 is significantly higher than that of Old Kent Road at £37,000[x]. This disparity means that in Southwark not every individual has the capacity to act at the same rate or in the same way but will also not experience the impact equally. For example, some housing adaptions such as triple glazing, solar panels or heat pumps are out of reach for people on lower incomes.

People from a higher income are generally more likely to emit more carbon as they are more likely to have larger homes in need of greater heating, to own one or more cars and to fly for holidays or work. We must recognise this disparity in resource and its relationship with our fight against the climate emergency.

Other important characteristics that are disproportionally affected by climate change and the burning of fossil fuels are age and health. People with more vulnerable health are more affected by climate change, which is sometimes determined by age. Children are exposed to higher levels of pollution, particularly while walking to school and on the playground, and the effects of this pollution are more serious on children than on adults. Exposure to air pollution at an early age can hinder lung growth, inhibit brain development, and increase the risk of conditions such as asthma. Alongside this, air pollution has been shown to disproportionately affect people with existing heart or respiratory conditions, who are more likely to be older than average. Overall, vulnerable groups, including young children, the elderly, and those with existing health issues, face heightened risks from climate-related impacts.

Opportunity for Southwark

Southwark's commitment to meeting the challenge of the climate emergency opens enormous opportunity for the borough, its residents and businesses. By taking an approach that puts social justice at the centre there is an opportunity to tackle not just the climate emergency, but to reshape our borough, to create a better, fairer Southwark where everyone can fulfil their potential and benefit from all that our borough has to offer.

Addressing climate change and investing in climate resilience offers a significant opportunity to tackle the cost-of-living crisis while building a healthier, more equitable borough. By improving energy efficiency in homes, expanding access to affordable renewable energy, and enhancing green infrastructure, residents can benefit from lower energy bills, reduced exposure to pollution, and improved public health. Initiatives such as retrofitting buildings, promoting active travel, and supporting green jobs not only reduce carbon emissions but also stimulate the local economy and create employment opportunities.

Climate resilience is a powerful tool for driving inclusive growth, enabling Southwark to reduce inequality, empower communities, and create opportunities that benefit everyone. By embedding sustainability into its long-term planning, the council can ensure that progress on climate action also delivers on its social and economic goals, making Southwark a better place for all its residents. These efforts are closely aligned with the Southwark 2030 vision, which aspires to build a fairer, greener, and more connected borough.

The Southwark Context

Southwark's emissions

To achieve our goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2030, Southwark must continue to build a clear understanding of its carbon emissions and monitor progress over time. We now have several years of emissions data, building on the original baseline that was developed and adopted as part of the strategy. This expanding dataset strengthens our ability to assess our trajectory and refine our approach as needed. As more accurate and comprehensive data becomes available, we will continue to iterate and evolve our strategy to ensure it remains responsive and effective.

Scope

Greenhouse gas emissions are categorised into three categories, known as scopes. Scope 1 includes direct emissions from sources that are owned or controlled by the organisation, such as the council. Scope 2 covers indirect emissions from the generation of purchased electricity, heating, and cooling. Scope 3 encompasses all other indirect emissions that occur across the wider supply chain.

Our commitment is to do all we can to be carbon neutral for Scope 1 and 2 emissions, including those generated directly by the council. We will prioritise action in these areas and report regularly on our progress.

However, a significant portion of greenhouse gas emissions that support daily life and activity in the borough fall outside the direct control of individuals in Southwark or the council. These are Scope 3 emissions and include those generated through the production and delivery of the goods and services we consume. While more challenging to influence, these emissions still contribute to climate change. Where possible, we are committed to reducing our Scope 3 emissions and encouraging more sustainable choices across the borough.

Emissions which the council has direct control over are considerably higher than other inner London local authorities because Southwark has a much larger stock of council housing than any other council in London. Despite this, the council is directly responsible for only a small fraction of the borough's total emissions. However, the council plays a vital leadership role in driving climate action. Through its procurement choices, policy decisions, and resource allocation, the council has broader influence across the borough. It is therefore essential that the council leads by example—reducing its own emissions while actively working with residents, businesses, and partners to support borough-wide efforts to cut emissions.

To effectively track progress and drive meaningful change, this strategy splits the analysis of emissions into two categories. First, it considers ‘Borough-Wide Emissions’, which include those generated by residents, businesses, and visitors across Southwark. It then focuses on the ‘Council’s Own Emissions’, the emissions the council directly controls. These are the areas where the council can take the most immediate action, setting an example for others. By analysing both, the council can lead by example while also supporting wider efforts to reduce emissions across the borough.

Borough Wide Emissions

Between 2005 and 2017, government estimates suggest that the entire borough of Southwark reduced its carbon emissions by around 40%. Following the council’s declaration of a climate emergency in 2019, further analysis was commissioned to gain a clearer understanding of local emissions. Using the SCATTER Inventory Tool, Anthesis were commissioned and developed an updated baseline, which showed that in 2017, emissions from buildings, transport, and waste disposal (Scope 1 and 2) totalled 1,288 $ktCO_2e$. Of this, buildings were responsible for 79% and transport for 15%.

Since then, borough-wide emissions have generally declined, with four consecutive years of reductions recorded between 2018 and 2021. However, data for 2022 shows a slight increase in emissions. This rise in emissions may be linked to increased transport activity, greater use of industrial petroleum, and higher domestic electricity consumption across the borough, potentially driven by post-pandemic behavioural changes and extreme weather conditions. Buildings now account for 78% and road transport 22%. It’s important to note that this data is derived from a subset of national datasets and is subject to a three-year reporting lag, meaning the most recent figures reflect conditions from several years prior and are informed by changes at a national level. Nonetheless, these trends provide valuable insight into Southwark’s progress and help shape future priorities for climate action.

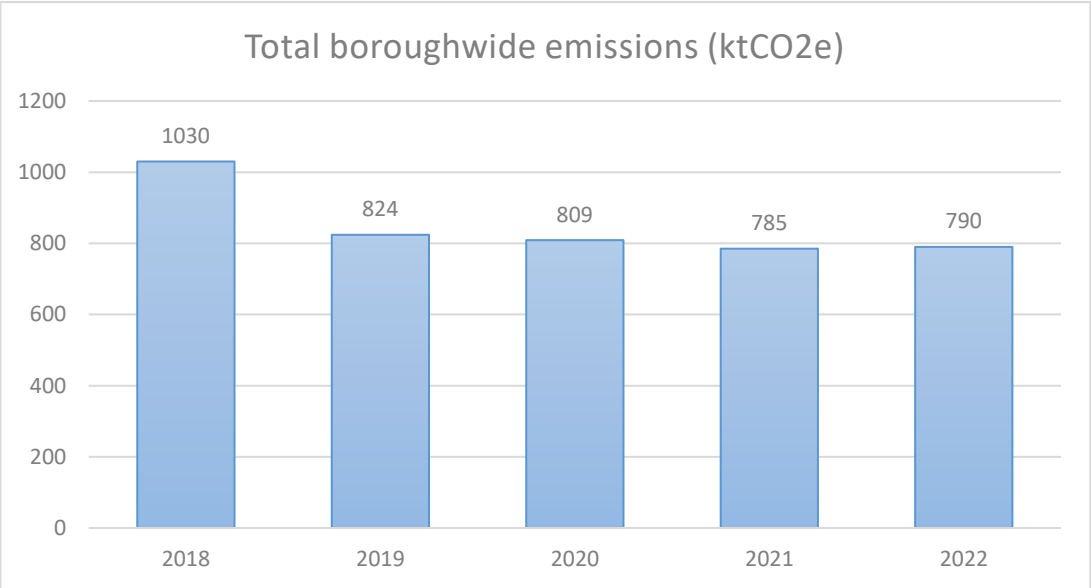

Figure 2: Boroughwide carbon emissions in ktCO2e for the period 2018 - 2022

In 2018, Southwark's consumption-based emissions (Scope 3) were estimated at 2,194 $ktCO_2e$. The estimate was based on economic activity data specific to Southwark and calculated using national consumption-based emissions factors provided by DEFRA and BEIS.

By 2021, Southwark's consumption-based emissions were estimated at 2,664 $ktCO_2e$ using the Local Authority Consumption Account tool[xi]. These figures represent the emissions associated with all goods and services imported into the borough and reflects the wider environmental impact of local consumption.

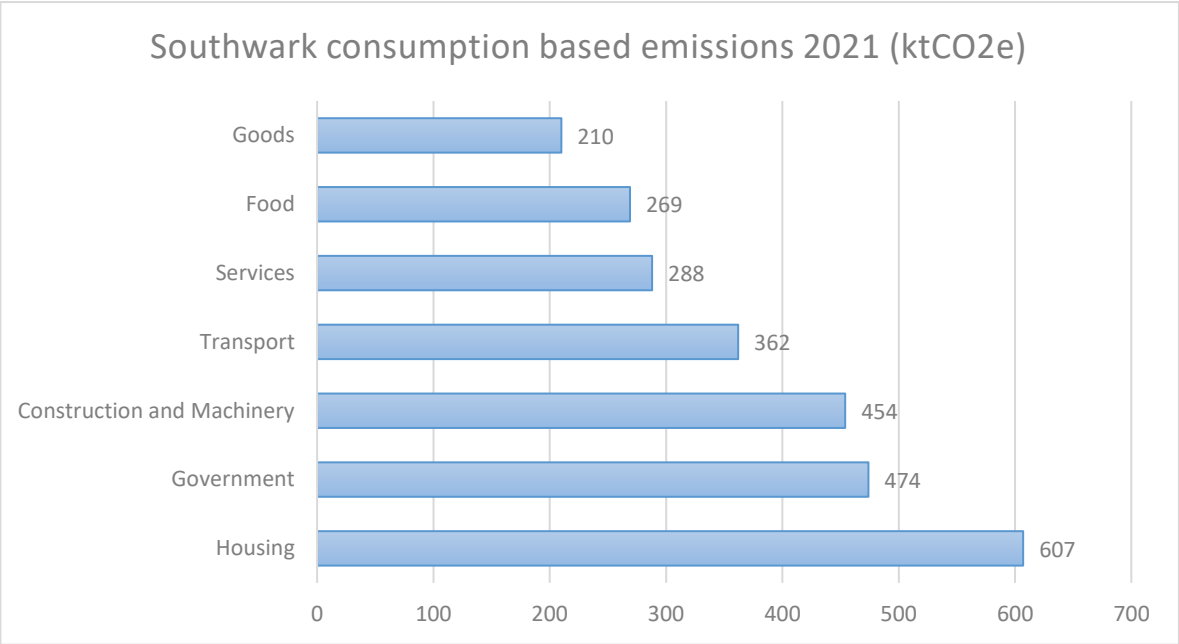

Figure 3: Chart showing total consumption based spend emissions (ktCO2e) by category of spend in 2021

Borough Wide emissions pathway

An emissions pathway using EnergyPRO was developed alongside the original climate change strategy. While now several years old, it remains a foundational element of Southwark's carbon neutrality strategy. The pathway assesses emissions from buildings, on-road transport, and energy supply, identifying key opportunities for reduction. The modelling assumes a transition to electrified heating and transport, alongside robust energy demand reduction measures. Despite these interventions, residual emissions would still require offsetting.

The council's own emissions

Prior to adopting the Climate Change Strategy in 2021, Southwark Council had already been working to reduce its carbon emissions. By that year, it was estimated that the council had achieved a 36.7% reduction in its own emissions compared to a 2008 baseline. This was made possible through a range of measures, including consolidating buildings, increasing the use of renewable electricity, and investing in energy efficiency improvements such as better insulation and more efficient boilers. The council's main office at Tooley Street, for example, had already reduced its electricity consumption by 75%.

Following the strategy's adoption in 2021, the council has accelerated its climate action, reducing total emissions from an estimated 432 $ktCO_2e$ in 2021 to 375 $ktCO_2e$ in 2024. However, the most

recent data shows an increase in overall emissions. This is due to a rise in Scope 3 emissions, mostly driven by increased procurement spending and inflationary pressures.

Scope 1 and 2 emissions, those from council-owned buildings, fleet and housing, over which the council has the greatest control, have seen year on year reductions from 69 $ktCO_2e$ in 2020 down to 63 $ktCO_2e$ in 2024 This sustained reduction reflects the council's proactive efforts to lead by example in decarbonising its own operations and infrastructure, including the councils significant housing stock. Continuing to tackle the significant impact of buildings is a key priority, with specific Council Delivery Plan targets aimed at reducing operational emissions - from council owned non-domestic buildings and fleet. The first of these targets was to halve operational emissions, a goal that has since been achieved. Building on this success, the council has committed to work towards a further 50% reduction in emissions from its operational buildings and fleet by 2026.

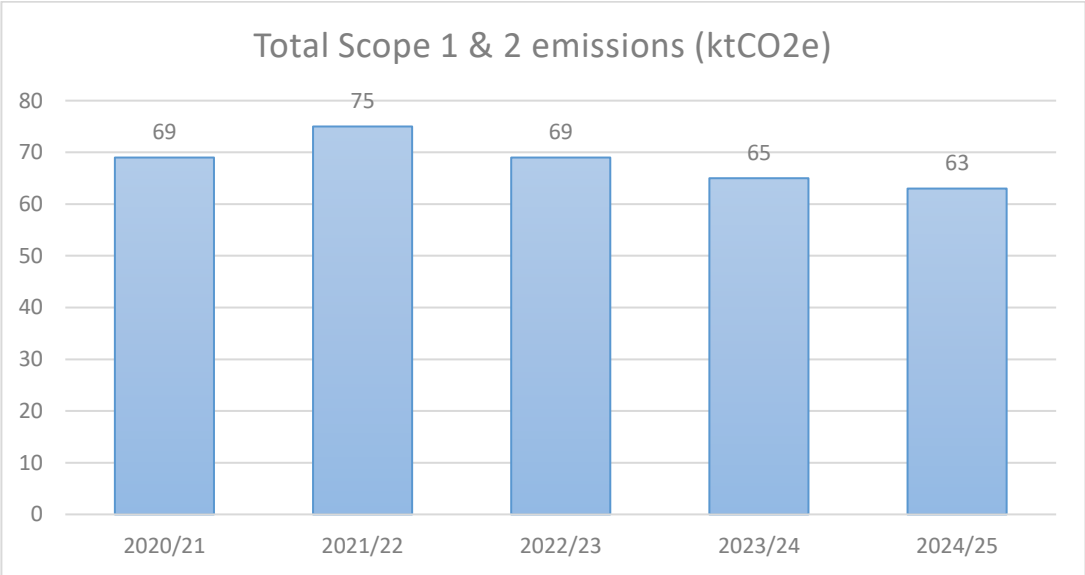

Figure 4: Total council Scope 1 & 2 emissions in ktCO2e

Scope 3 emissions continue to make up most of the council's total emissions, averaging over 80% annually. These are estimated using procurement spend data across financial years, applying emissions factors to various categories of goods and services, such as materials used in construction or highway maintenance. While these emissions are outside the council's direct control, they remain an important part of our overall emissions profile. Procurement emissions can vary year on year, partly due to changes in spending levels, but also because emissions factors and the carbon intensity of goods and services evolve over time, sometimes significantly influencing the results. As procurement spending increases, associated emissions are also likely to rise, even when sustainable options are chosen, because spend-based methodologies generally link higher expenditure with greater emissions. Consequently, the recent increases in spending have led to higher estimated emissions. Addressing these emissions is more complex and typically

slower due to the expertise required and the long-term nature of many council contracts. Our action plan includes steps to influence the sustainability of our supply chain and reduce indirect emissions where feasible. This includes building internal understanding and developing practical tools to help council officers make more sustainable procurement decisions.

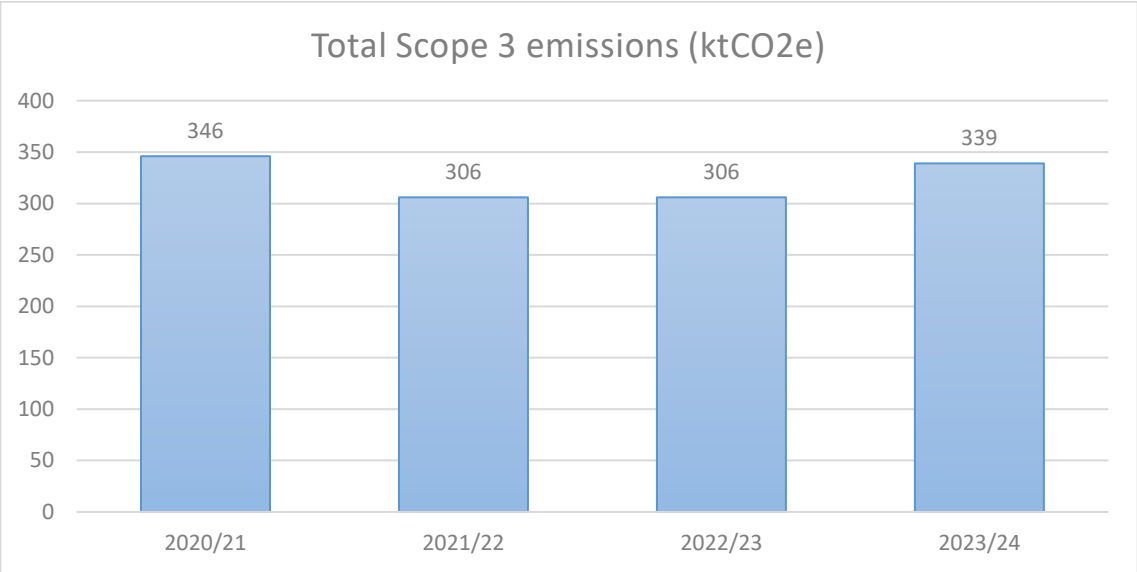

Figure5: Total council Scope 3 emissions in ktCO2e

Council's own emissions pathway

As part of developing the council's first climate change strategy in 2021, high-level modelling was used to estimate the potential impact of seven carbon-reducing measures on the council's direct emissions from buildings and its vehicle fleet (scope 1 and 2). These included reducing vehicle mileage, switching to electric vehicles, improving energy efficiency, retrofitting buildings, phasing out gas heating, deploying local renewables, and offsetting. Compared to a low-action scenario, the modelling showed that a more ambitious approach, focused on energy, buildings, and transport, could cut emissions by 57% by 2030.

The modelling and assumptions behind the original pathway remain a useful reference point. Continued delivery of actions, alongside emerging data and evolving best practice, will help ensure the council's approach remains focused and responsive to the most effective ways of cutting emissions and strengthening resilience.

Residual emissions

In any realistic pathway to carbon neutrality, there will always be a level of residual emissions, those that remain despite the most ambitious efforts to reduce them. These emissions typically come from sectors that are difficult to fully decarbonise with current technologies or where

alternatives are not yet viable. There is no universally agreed standard for what constitutes an acceptable level of residual emissions, and views on this vary. For example, the Mayor of London's preferred 'Accelerated Green' pathway to net zero by 2030 includes approximately 22% residual emissions, highlighting the challenge even in the most ambitious scenarios. As Southwark moves closer to its 2030 target, it will be important to have a borough-wide conversation about how to address these remaining emissions, whether through offsetting, innovation, or long-term carbon storage and removal, and to ensure our approach is informed by wider regional and national strategies.

The London and national context

Climate change

The UK has a legally binding commitment to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, based on 1990 levels. To support this long-term goal, the government has set out a series of interim targets:

- A 68% reduction by 2030, as part of the UK's Nationally Determined Contribution under the Paris Agreement
- A 78% reduction by 2035, established through the Sixth Carbon Budget

In 2025, the Climate Change Committee (CCC) published its Seventh Carbon Budget, recommending a more ambitious trajectory: an 87% reduction by 2040. Meeting this target would require a significantly faster pace of emissions reduction over the next five years.

Yet even this may not be enough. Accelerated, place-based action is essential to drive meaningful change. The London Assembly declared a climate emergency in 2018, followed by the Mayor of London in 2020. The Mayor has since committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030[xii] setting a bold example for climate leadership. Following the adoption of the Accelerated Green Pathway in 2022, several key areas of London Plan guidance, funding mechanisms, and strategies were reviewed or adapted to align with the more ambitious net zero by 2030 target, including the introduction of the GLA's Green Financing Framework to support projects aligned with the Accelerated Green Pathway such as building retrofit and district heating programmes. Across the capital, nearly all local authorities have declared a climate emergency and/or established formal emissions reduction targets, reinforcing a city-wide commitment to climate action.

Some of the changes needed to reach net zero are within the direct control of individual boroughs and can be delivered through strong local partnerships. Others, such as retrofitting existing homes with energy-efficient technologies, are more complex and will require regional and national

coordination and the right funding and regulatory frameworks. To support this ambition, London Councils is working closely with boroughs to help deliver on their climate goals. This collaborative approach aims to align strategies across the capital, enabling boroughs to share resources, coordinate efforts, and maximise impact.

Southwark will continue to advocate for the financial and political support needed to deliver the ambitions of this strategy, including where action is required beyond the borough's control. This will be done in collaboration with other London boroughs and councils nationwide.

Southwark continues to demonstrate leadership in shaping national climate related policy. The council played a key role in coordinating the landmark report Securing the Future of England's Council Housing, developed with over 100 council landlords. A central proposal of the report is a fully funded Green and Decent Homes programme, which highlights the importance of delivering energy-efficient, low-carbon homes, not only to meet climate targets, but also to reduce fuel poverty and improve residents' health and wellbeing. As London's largest local authority landlord, the council draws on its extensive experience in managing and improving housing to inform national policy. The council will continue to work with other local authorities and experts to advocate for the changes and investment needed, ensuring its expertise contributes meaningfully to the national response to the climate emergency.

Resilience and adaptation

Climate adaptation and resilience are now central to global climate policy, particularly under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The 2015 Paris Agreement marked a major shift by giving adaptation equal importance to mitigation. It commits countries to strengthening their ability to adapt, build resilience, and reduce vulnerability to climate impacts. As part of this commitment, signatory countries are expected to develop National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) to identify and address their specific climate risks. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) supports this work by providing scientific assessments that highlight the growing urgency of preparing for more frequent and severe climate-related events.

In the UK, adaptation policy is shaped by the Climate Change Act 2008, which mandates a five-year cycle of risk assessment and planning. The most recent UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA3), published in 2022, highlights a range of urgent climate risks, including overheating in homes and public buildings, increased flood risk, water scarcity, impacts on natural ecosystems, risks to food production and supply chains, and threats to health and wellbeing. CCRA3 advises that the UK must prepare for a global temperature rise of at least +2°C by 2050 and assess risk for a +4°C temperature rise scenario by 2100, calling for more ambitious and timely adaptation measures. In response, the government developed the third National Adaptation Programme (NAP3), which sets out actions for the period 2023 to 2028. NAP3 includes measures across key

sectors, such as infrastructure, health, the natural environment, and local government, to help the UK become more resilient and better prepared for the impacts of climate change.

London's dense urban environment and ageing housing stock present distinct challenges in adapting to climate change. In response to the growing frequency and severity of climate impacts, the Mayor of London commissioned the London Climate Resilience Review[xiii], published in 2024. The review sets out 50 recommendations to strengthen the capital's preparedness, covering areas such as infrastructure, public health, emergency services, and nature-based solutions. It places strong emphasis on collaboration between local authorities, the Greater London Authority, and national government. Prompted by extreme weather events across the capital, including the 2021 flash floods and the record-breaking 40°C heatwave in 2022, the review calls for urgent investment and updated standards to protect London's communities and economy. Local authorities, including Southwark, are expected to play a central role in delivering these recommendations, working together to build a fairer, greener, and more climate-resilient city.

Southwark's Approach

Achieving a carbon neutral and climate resilient borough cannot be achieved by any one organisation. It requires everyone with a stake in the borough to work together at every level to transform Southwark and create a greener, more resilient and sustainable future. To deliver our priorities there is work that the council needs to do, but also government, city hall, businesses, institutions and individuals. It is only by every part working together, with the backing of urgent and large-scale government investment, that we can achieve our goal to be carbon neutral by 2030. Our work must be part of a much larger global movement for change, and so our approach will be rooted in the global foundational framework of the UN Sustainable Development Goals which provide a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all.

Our approach to tackling the climate emergency must also be rooted in Southwark's core values. The council's Southwark 2030 goals shape every decision we make and guide how we deliver on our commitments. These principles: empowering communities, tackling inequality, and investing in prevention, are central to our vision of making Southwark a place we can all be proud of, where opportunity and support enables everyone to lead good lives, including those who are often overlooked. They will underpin our climate response, ensuring that our strategy reflects the unique character of the borough and places social justice at its heart.

Southwark's transition to a low-carbon future presents a powerful opportunity, not only to cut emissions, but to build a borough that is fairer, healthier, and more resilient. Climate action can help address some of our most pressing social challenges, including the cost-of-living crisis and fuel poverty. It can also support healthier communities by improving air quality, increasing access to

green spaces, and promoting both mental and physical wellbeing. At the same time, the shift to a greener economy opens up new opportunities for employment and skills development through green jobs.

Our climate strategy is about more than carbon reduction; it's a key tool for delivering long-term social and economic benefits. By aligning with the council's Southwark 2030 goals, our approach supports broader ambitions around housing, health, and equal opportunity. It recognises that climate resilience and adaptation are essential to protecting our communities from the growing risks of extreme weather, while ensuring that the benefits of climate action are shared fairly. To guide this work, we are committed to a just transition and will constantly strive to be ambitious, inclusive and transparent.:

Ambitious

We should not constrain ourselves to changing existing projects, or activities that the council traditionally delivers. We should instead look at all opportunities to act and be ambitious in the scale and scope of our work. Failure is not an option and so we will be bold in our ambition and bold in our actions.

We know that we do not know all the answers, and so will be flexible, adaptable, always learning and willing to try new approaches. We will achieve change by pushing the boundaries of what is possible and not being afraid to try new ideas and approaches to deliver change.

Inclusive

The climate emergency is an ethical and political issue, not just an environmental one. We will support a just transition where the requirement to change is spread fairly with the greater share to those most able to afford it. Part of this is the principle that the polluter pays – ensuring that those who produce the most carbon are accountable for the cost of managing it. We will support plans that tackle the climate emergency, but which also reduce inequality, support an economy that works for everyone and promotes a fairer future for all.

Southwark is rightly proud to celebrate its diverse population. Our approach will be inclusive of all our residents, whoever they are and whatever their background. We will reach out to every part of Southwark and meet the climate emergency with a response built by all our community and owned by all our community.

Transparent

We want to ensure that we are open and honest in our approach. We do not know all the answers and information on our climate can sometimes be difficult to produce. We will only achieve carbon

neutrality if we work together as a community but to do this, we need to be honest with each other and accountable to each other.

Being open, honest and accountable will help foster a constructive and inclusive environment in which we can come together to find solutions to the challenges that we all face. We will be a good partner and work with others to lead change in Southwark and to campaign for change across London, the country and beyond.

Alignment with Southwark's priorities and operations

Southwark 2030 is the council's central strategic vision for the borough and the foundation for delivering the Climate Change Strategy. Co-designed with residents, communities, and partners, Southwark 2030 sets out a shared ambition to create a fair, green, and safe Southwark where everyone can thrive as part of a strong and healthy community. The Climate Change Strategy plays a key role in advancing this vision, driving progress across the three key principles and all seven goals of Southwark 2030 by promoting environmental sustainability, social inclusion, and resilience to climate impacts. For example:

3 Key Principles

Empowering People

The strategy places a strong emphasis on community involvement, recognising that climate action must be a shared effort. It supports local engagement through education, co-design of green spaces, and community-led sustainability projects. By providing residents with the tools, knowledge, and platforms to act, such as energy-saving advice, local climate events, and funding for community-based initiatives, the strategy empowers people to shape a greener, more resilient future for their neighbourhoods.

Tackling Inequality

Climate change disproportionately affects the most disadvantaged members of our community. The strategy aims to address this by embedding social justice into every aspect of our climate response. It prioritises support for vulnerable groups, such as those in poorly insulated homes or areas prone to flooding, and ensures that the benefits of climate action, like cleaner air and lower energy bills, are shared fairly as part of a Just Transition.

Investing in Prevention

The strategy is built to be flexible and responsive to our changing climate, with a clear strong focus on long-term resilience and reducing future climate risks. It sets out proactive measures to address

threats like extreme heat, flooding, and water scarcity. Through early adaptation planning, investment in sustainable infrastructure, and the protection of biodiversity, the strategy aims to limit future negative impacts on the community, helping to create a borough that is more resilient and ready for the challenges ahead.

The 6 Goals

Decent Homes for All

The strategy promotes energy-efficient, climate-resilient housing that is affordable to heat and safe in extreme weather, supporting healthier living conditions and reducing fuel poverty.

A Good Start in Life

By improving air quality, access to green spaces, and safe travel routes to schools, the strategy helps create healthier environments for children to grow, learn, and thrive.

A Safer Southwark

Climate-related impacts like heatwaves and flooding can heighten social vulnerability and strain communities. By creating inclusive, well-designed, resilient homes and public spaces, the Climate Strategy supports safer communities and complements efforts to reduce crime and support community policing.

A Strong and Fair Economy

The strategy supports the growth of green industries and skills, creating new employment opportunities and ensuring that the transition to a low-carbon economy is inclusive and equitable.

Staying Well

By tackling key environmental factors that affect health, such as air pollution, extreme heat, and limited access to green spaces, the strategy plays a vital role in enhancing both physical and mental wellbeing across the borough.

A Healthy Environment

Central to the strategy is the protection and enhancement of Southwark's natural assets, including biodiversity, tree cover, and sustainable transport, ensuring a cleaner, greener borough for future generations.

A well-run council

The Strategy supports Southwark's ability to deliver high-quality services by embedding climate action across all departments. Through collaboration, knowledge sharing, and forward planning, the council is building resilience to environmental and financial pressures, key to being a well-run, future-ready organisation.

Alignment with other strategies

The council delivers a wide range of services and operates under many strategies and policies, therefore our climate actions must be iterative and adaptive, aligning with, and contributing to, each area of strategic focus across the organisation. Notable strategic documents include:

- **Southwark 2030 Council Delivery Plan** – which outlines the council's core priorities and commitments through to 2026, including goals related to housing, health, equity, and environmental sustainability.
- **The Southwark Plan** – the borough's statutory development framework guiding land use and planning decisions through to 2036, with a strong focus on sustainable growth and design.
- **Streets for People Strategy and Delivery Plan** – which sets out the council's vision for safer, greener, and more inclusive streets that support active travel and reduce reliance on private vehicles.
- **Local Flood Risk Management Strategy** - addressing increasing flood risks from surface water and groundwater. It promotes community awareness, sustainable infrastructure, and long-term adaptation to climate change.
- **Southwark's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy** - focuses on reducing health inequalities and improving outcomes for all, with sustainability and tackling climate change embedded as an integral part of protecting and improving health in the borough.
- **Land for Good: 2023 Southwark Land Commission** – which aims to ensure land is used for community benefit, supporting affordable housing, green space, and sustainable development.

As new strategies emerge and existing ones evolve, the council's approach to climate action must remain dynamic and responsive. This means the council must stay informed of the latest evidence, policy developments, and best practices. Ongoing collaboration, knowledge sharing, and regular review of actions will be essential to ensure alignment with emerging priorities and to refine our responses to climate risks. Crucially, climate considerations must be embedded into the development and delivery of each service area's action plans, ensuring that all teams are actively

contributing to our carbon neutral goal and accounting for the full range of climate risks and resilience measures. By fostering a culture of continuous learning and integration, we can ensure that climate action is a core component of strategic planning across the organisation.

Iterative development

Given the scale, urgency and complexity of the climate emergency this strategy should not be considered the end of our approach, but rather the beginning. Our whole approach should be iterative and flexible to respond to the rapidly changing regional, national and international contexts. The process is one that we will continually define, develop and deliver. Through this process we need to constantly review and evaluate what we are doing and how, so that we can ensure that we are always using the best ideas which will have the greatest impact.

Having an iterative approach is particularly important in order to allow the council to remain agile and forward-looking in the face of a rapidly evolving climate landscape. As new technologies emerge, such as carbon storage solutions, or as existing technologies like heat pumps become more mature and accessible, we must be ready to evaluate and adopt them in ways that align with our strategic goals. At the same time, our understanding of effective climate action continues to grow through ongoing learning, practical experience, and the development of more advanced methodologies.

One such emerging approach is climate budgeting, a relatively new tool for local authorities that could play a valuable role in producing costed pathways towards our climate goals, setting these alongside our core financial planning. This has the potential to enable informed and evidence-based investment decisions with the funds we do have, maximising our impact with existing resources, while also making clear the funding gap that needs closing to meet our ambitious targets and using this to inform asks of national and regional government.

In parallel, the field of climate resilience and adaptation is being continually strengthened by the development of new and updated research and datasets, such as Southwark's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) on overheating, the council's detailed flood risk mapping, and the Greater London Authority's Climate Risk Mapping tool. These resources are helping us better understand the specific climate risks facing Southwark residents and are vital for shaping targeted, locally relevant action.

A borough partnership

To deliver these priorities, we need strong and coordinated partnerships that operate effectively at local, regional, and national levels. Local institutions including the council must work together to align their ambitions in tackling the climate emergency and building long-term climate resilience.

Collaborating with NHS trusts, universities, colleges, and other anchor institutions can help identify shared opportunities to reduce collective carbon emissions, for example, through joint procurement or shared supply chains. The council will take a proactive role in convening local actors to respond to both the causes and consequences of climate change. This strategy provides a framework for collective action, one that supports both mitigation and adaptation, and invites everyone in the borough to play a part in creating a more sustainable and resilient Southwark.

Southwark will continue to be a leading voice in London, working with councils and London Councils. It will use its voice to lobby government for change both unilaterally and with partners. Working with the Mayor and London Councils, Southwark will be a strong voice for action. Southwark will lobby for government action and funding, and for recognition of the importance of partnership in delivering carbon reduction and climate resilience.

Our response to the climate emergency is only successful if the council is working as a partner and influencing at local, regional and national levels.

The government has committed to the UK being net zero by 2050. While we believe this target could be more ambitious, current data suggests the UK may fall short of even this goal without accelerated action. A renewed emphasis on climate policy at the national level offers a promising opportunity to close the gap.. However, local councils will continue to play a crucial role in delivering the local changes needed to support national progress.. The government must see councils as equal partners to deliver. As with so much, the real innovation and political drive happens at the local level, we encourage the government to recognise this and to work with councils to deliver the change that is needed. We will continue to lobby government to properly fund councils to deliver change and to devolve greater powers to councils so that they can drive the change that is needed.

Working with business and the Green New Deal

Social justice and a just transition require us to tackle climate change in a way which reduces inequality and creates opportunity for people in the borough. That is why we support the principles of a green new deal.

In line with the Southwark 2030 vision, we are committed to supporting a strong, fair, and green economy, one where businesses are empowered to adopt sustainable practices, contribute to local wellbeing, and thrive in a low-carbon future. By helping businesses become more environmentally responsible, we can ensure that economic growth goes hand in hand with climate action and community resilience.

We recognise that economic, social and climate justice are linked. We will work with business to support the growth of green jobs, and support initiatives that promote and use the latest green technology available.

Southwark is home to organisations with significant global reach. We have international companies, branches of global retailers and other large UK retail. Working with these companies in Southwark enables us to have reach beyond our borough. We will use this to find local solutions that encourage companies to act nationally or internationally. We will also work to ensure that businesses are doing their fair share in reducing their carbon impact, moving towards more sustainable practices and strengthening resilience to the impacts of climate change.

We will work directly with microbusinesses and small and medium size businesses (SMEs), including through bodies like the Southwark Business Forum and our local Business Improvement Districts. We will collaborate to build a consensus around the strategy and the development of practical programmes that we can put into action. We will work with our small businesses to support those taking steps to reduce waste and carbon emissions. This could include waste management, improvements to energy efficiency or changes to the public realm to encourage sustainable travel and protect against overheating. We will seek to develop local skills and employment based on improved education and understanding of climate change across the borough.

Working in partnership with our business community we will help them to make the changes needed. We will also listen, recognising that change can present challenges to businesses. By working in partnership, we aim to help our businesses be part of the solution to climate change in Southwark.

As Southwark and the country transition to a sustainable and climate change resilient low carbon future, we will invest in the green jobs of the future. We will work with business, charities and others to support the jobs we need to deliver zero carbon and local adaptation. These jobs and access to training will be open to all residents but we will target support most where it also reduces inequality and delivers other wider benefits to our community.

Taking Action

To strengthen Southwark's response to the climate emergency, a unified approach has been taken by merging the borough's Climate Change Strategy with its Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy. This integration ensures that both mitigation and resilience are addressed together, reflecting the interconnected nature of climate change. By bringing these strategies into a single, cohesive strategy, the council can more effectively coordinate action, avoid duplication, and ensure that efforts to reduce emissions are aligned with those that prepare the borough for the impacts of

a changing climate. This joined-up approach also supports more efficient use of resources and clearer communication with residents, partners, and stakeholders. The resulting strategy is structured around key themes that reflect the areas where the council can have the greatest impact, helping to prioritise actions and track progress in a transparent and accountable way

Defining our themes and actions

As we bring together our Climate Change Strategy and Climate Resilience Strategy into a single, unified strategy, we have also taken the opportunity to update and streamline our action plan. This has involved a thorough review of every individual action to ensure it reflects our current goals and priorities. The result is a more concise and efficient action plan that is easier to understand, follow, and implement. Importantly, it remains flexible, designed to be periodically reviewed and updated, so it can continue to respond to the evolving challenges and opportunities in both climate mitigation and adaptation. Actions will be added or removed over time as targets are achieved, new targets are set, technologies and methodologies evolve, or as the wider policy and funding landscape changes.

The action plan now provides detailed breakdowns of the outcomes and key activities for each action under every goal in the strategy. This structure allows for clear tracking of progress while remaining flexible enough to adapt over time.

Setting actions

Ambitious activity is required to meet the borough's climate action targets. In determining the actions in this strategy, we have been informed by the work done to date within the council, including modelling and research. We have also undertaken comprehensive engagement with our residents.

While the original evidence base for Southwark's climate change strategy and subsequent action planning provided a strong foundation, much of that evidence now reflects an earlier stage in our journey. The initial emissions modelling, commissioned from Carbon Descent in 2020 and later updated by Anthesis, offered important insights into the scale and type of actions needed to meet our climate goals. This modelling remains a key reference point, but it has since been enriched by several years of practical experience, new data, and evolving technologies. Similarly, early work to align actions with local context, drawing on input from multiple council teams, commissioned research, and policy reviews, has been built upon through continued collaboration and learning. . Soon after the adoption of the strategy, we convened a Citizens' Jury to help shape our approach and that collaboration deepened our understanding of local priorities. The jury's recommendations, ranging from making walking and public transport more accessible, to increasing transparency and accountability, informed updates and additions to the action plan.

As we now combine our climate change and resilience strategies, this growing body of knowledge has enabled a more thorough review of every action, ensuring they remain relevant, achievable, and aligned with both mitigation and adaptation goals. This has allowed us to streamline the action plan, making it more concise and easier to follow, while ensuring that actions support both climate resilience and carbon reduction.

The role of the council

The council plays a leading role in climate work across London and will continue to engage with other councils to learn from and enable best practice. We also work closely with the Greater London Authority and London Councils

The council has an important role as a leader of a whole borough approach to tackling the climate emergency. The council only has direct control over a small proportion of the total emissions in Southwark. However, it does have a role as a leader, a convener and an enabler. A body with democratic legitimacy to challenge government and be a voice for the borough regionally and nationally. It has a role in convening partners and communities to develop a strong vision.

The council has influence in a range of areas where we:

- Directly manage such as the use of our buildings.
- Can enable through funding, such as through grants for community gardens.
- Can enable through policy, such as changes to use of residential streets by cars.
- Can influence locally, such as working with local businesses to reduce plastic use.
- Can influence or ask for nationally, such as decarbonising our national grid at a quicker pace or for funding to research new climate technologies.

A comprehensive approach to decision making recognises our role across these various levels and the multi-layered solutions that may be necessary to deliver change. We will develop a lobbying and advocacy strategy to help ensure that our climate goals are delivered. We recognise that we cannot do this on our own and must use our influence at every level from the individual to national government.

Table 1.0 illustrates that scale of the council's ability to influence carbon reduction.

Influence	Description	Emissions impacted	Resilience & Adaptation
Direct	Actions relate to emissions sources and climate risks that are directly	e.g., council's own scope one and two	e.g. Retrofit council buildings for

contr ol	owned, operationally controlled or managed by the council.		overheating, flood-proofing assets, emergency planning.
Stronger influence	Actions relate to the council's ability to influence emissions and adaptation outside of its direct control through policy making and/or certain procurement activities e.g., council's procurement policy.	e.g., council's own scope three, borough- wide scope one and two	e.g. Embed resilience in procurement (e.g., climate-resilient materials), influence planning policy.
Medium influence	Actions relate to other activities in the borough not deemed 'stronger'. This may influence some procurement and supply chain emissions sources but primarily is centered on borough-wide policy changes e.g., raising minimum energy standards for private-rented homes.	e.g., council's own scope three, borough- wide scope one and two	e.g. Promote adaptation standards in private housing, support green infrastructure.
Weaker influence	Actions relate to the council's ability to convene and engage a wide range of stakeholders in the borough, lobby national government and influence behaviour changes e.g., the council is positioned to take a leading role in facilitating joint commitments, information sharing and maximising efficiencies and community resilience.	All	e.g. Raise awareness of climate risks, support community resilience, advocate for national adaptation funding.

Sequencing actions

Southwark has already made huge progress in reducing carbon. This varies across the different priority areas and so the actions need to reflect that and build on what has already taken place. When developing actions, we have considered the starting point and what is necessary to deliver savings in each area. We have considered the strategic actions required to set the groundwork and the direct actions to deliver tangible reductions.

The approach to setting actions is cyclical, enabling us to set the groundwork in a theme before moving onto the more tangible direct actions.

This cycle, in Figure X below, goes through three stages, with continued review and evaluation.

Research & Design (R&D) actions help us to understand the context we are working in, such as the existing evidence on a policy and the options available. These inform the design of solutions and shape next steps. For example: Baselining impacts, new policy making, undertaking energy audits.

Engagement actions are specific supporting actions which can facilitate a carbon saving project, but do not lead to a direct saving themselves. For example: Establishing business partnerships, convening a citizens' jury, consulting low-carbon specialists, improving governance and accountability.

Implementation actions are those which lead directly to low-carbon projects. For example: Building retrofit programmes, construction of renewable supply infrastructure.

Continued review and evaluation shape this process to inform new initiatives and scrutinise progress.

Figure X: Diagram which describes how actions can be sequenced together to deliver progress

Cost of delivery

When developing the Climate Change Strategy (2021) the council commissioned Carbon Descent and Anthesis to assess the scale of the challenge and the estimated cost of achieving our climate ambitions. At the time, the capital investment required was estimated at approximately £3.92 billion, a useful early indication of the scale of action needed. This figure is now significantly outdated and likely a considerable underestimate due to inflation, shifting market conditions, and a more

advanced understanding of the complexities involved in adapting the borough to climate risks. Since the initial estimate, much has changed, technologies have advanced, costs have shifted, funding remains constrained and our understanding of both the climate challenge and the opportunities for action has deepened. As we move forward, further work will be needed to refine our understanding of the resources required. The table below illustrates the different costs that must be considered.

Capital costs	"Up-front" expenditure e.g., the material cost of implementation of a retrofit programme, that is recognised on a balance sheet.
Operational/ revenue costs	"Lifetime" costs e.g., monthly energy bills or asset maintenance that reduce the organisation's annual surplus (profit)
Resource/ time costs	Typically, a type of operational cost, but often expressed in units of time or full-time employee equivalents, as a reallocation of an existing role may be possible e.g., one full time employee to design & oversee retrofit delivery.
Savings & payback	Financial benefit of a given action e.g., saved operational costs because of capital expenditure on retrofit.

Figure X6: illustrates the different costs that must be considered.

Investment in low carbon activities often brings direct and indirect benefits, many of which are financial. When considering costs, we will also consider operational implications. We will also consider any "additionality." Some investments may have needed to happen anyway; for example, there may be a requirement to make capital expenditure on assets that are coming to the end of their life. In this way, making the distinction between 'low carbon' spend and planned maintenance is important. For example, if a gas boiler needs replacing, it is important to look at the additional cost of a low-carbon heat pump relative to a gas boiler, rather than the cost and benefits of a heat-pump on its own. We will also consider other co-benefits. Benefits such as reducing inequality, improving health are important to our aim of social justice but sometimes harder to measure financially.

Action Plan

Buildings and Energy

Southwark is a diverse and exciting borough and a truly vibrant population that comes from being in central London. Within the borough 43% of all housing is social housing. The council is 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. The council also has control of over 350 buildings including offices, schools and depots. The borough is growing and regenerating, creating opportunities for the council and its residents. With approximately 15,000 businesses we want to create a green economy that delivers co-benefits of economic growth, reduced inequality and carbon reduction. Across our town centres, the borough is also home to major anchor institutions with large buildings including hospitals, universities, cultural institutions, faith buildings, large business and retail space. The owners of each of these buildings will be on their pathway to reducing their emissions and making them more sustainable.

Actions

Our actions for Southwark's built environment and development have been combined with actions concerning the generation and supply of renewable energy and electrification. This is because most energy actions primarily relate to buildings as the highest energy users. Combining the sections allows us to streamline and prioritise the most effective action, while removing duplication in the action plan. This is particularly important as buildings are responsible for approximately 78% of Southwark's emissions. Making buildings more sustainable, through planning policy that accounts for whole lifecycle carbon, direct capital investment, and retrofitting (including heritage sites), will cut emissions, reduce energy bills and improve comfort for residents. The electrification of the borough will include an ever-increasing number of locally developed community energy projects where local people come together to produce, own or manage renewable energy systems such as solar panels on schools or shared heating systems for homes.

Southwark has a high risk of excessive heating, particularly in the centre of the borough. High heat is felt more significantly in areas with less tree canopy and a lower level of access to green open spaces, but is also impacted by building design and typology. Addressing excessive heat within buildings, in particular homes, in the borough will ensure climate adaptation is embedded within this theme. Alongside this, we will consider the increased impact of flooding, and the impact on properties, be that from the Thames or more localised surface water flooding. In July 2021, Southwark was directly affected by two serious flash floods in two weeks. Across London, some areas received more than twice the average monthly rainfall in just two hours

To be carbon neutral by 2030 Southwark must:

- Commit to carbon neutral buildings in the borough.
- Require energy reduction measures and sustainable building techniques such as green roofs and solar panels
- Repurpose existing buildings that are no longer fit for purpose or need modernising where possible.
- Use new development to create, protect and enhance our green spaces and improve biodiversity
- Ensure buildings are built to minimise carbon emissions in their use.
- Strengthen all policy documents including the Southwark Plan with a carbon neutral commitment.
- Continue to support local community developed renewable energy projects

Policy Context

To deliver a carbon neutral, climate resilient future, our actions need to be aligned with and responsive to the national, regional and local context. This includes:

National Policy

- **The UK Net Zero Strategy** (2021) Includes commitments to decarbonise buildings, phase out fossil fuel heating, and expand renewable energy which includes phasing out gas boilers in new homes, upgrading energy efficiency, and retrofit of public sector buildings alongside ensuring that the UK's electricity system is fully decarbonised by 2035.
- **National Planning Policy Framework** (NPPF) (2025) Encourages sustainable design, energy efficiency, and local renewable energy generation and requires local plans to integrate climate mitigation and adaptation into development decisions
- **Heat and Buildings Strategy** (2021) Supports the transition to low-carbon heating (e.g. heat pumps) and promotes energy efficiency upgrades and retrofit programmes for homes and public buildings.
- **UK Green Building Council Advancing Net Zero Programme** (2018) provides guidance on delivering emissions reductions to the construction and property sectors.
- **The Domestic Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard** (MEES) (2017) in the domestic private rented sector currently prevents landlords from letting properties rated below EPC band E, these rules may be revised following recent consultations.

GLA Policy

- **London Net Zero 2030 Pathway** (2022–2025) Sets a target for London to reach net zero by 2030, prioritises rapid decarbonisation of buildings, energy systems, and transport. Includes a preferred 'accelerated green' pathway focusing on deep retrofit, electrification of heat, and local renewable energy generation.
- **The London Plan** (2021) outlines net carbon zero targets for major new developments and further targets for emissions reductions beyond national policy for domestic buildings.
- **Local Area Energy Planning (LAEP)** - Identifies the most effective local routes to decarbonise energy systems, including retrofit, heat networks, solar, and grid upgrades. Southwark is part of the Central, Inner East and North London subregional LAEP, completed in 2024
- **'Be Seen' Energy Monitoring Guidance** (2020) requires new developments to monitor and report on their actual operational energy performance for up to 5 years after completion. The draft Whole Life-Cycle Carbon Assessment Guidance (2020) sets out guidance for tackling the embodied carbon of existing buildings.
- **The Warmer Homes Programme** provides free retrofit improvements for low- income homeowners who own their own homes or rent privately.
- **London Energy Transformation Initiative** (LETI) network provides guidance and resources for borough energy policies and stakeholder collaboration across London.

Southwark Policy

- **Green and Decent Homes Programme** - Aims to upgrade council housing to be safe, energy-efficient, and climate-resilient, part of a national call for a fully funded Green and Decent Homes programme.
- **The Southwark Plan Policy P68** Sustainability Standards requires the majority of development over 500sqm to achieve a BREEAM rating of 'Excellent'.
- **The Southwark Plan Policy P69** Energy requires major developments (of less than 10 units) to reduce on-site carbon dioxide emissions by a minimum of 100% (for residential developments). For non-residential development a reduction of at least 40% should be achieved onsite beyond 2013 Buildings Regulations Part L standards.
- **Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)** - Heritage SPD: Provides guidance on retrofitting listed and historic buildings, the Climate SPD will offer borough-wide guidance on sustainable design, adaptation, and carbon reduction in planning applications.

Next Steps

Beyond the council's own actions, there must also be a focus on what other partners and stakeholders can action themselves, from a central government to resident level. This highlights how important collective action will be. Central government need to significantly increase the level of funding available for renewable heat technology and for raising the thermal efficacy of existing

buildings. Businesses can identify and maximise opportunities to install green roofs, facades and cool roofs on buildings, while residents can identify opportunities for renewable heat in properties. Both groups can also continue to engage with the council on energy efficiency standards and other behaviour change initiatives.

Streets and Transport

Encouraging active and sustainable travel around our borough is key to the success of reducing the impacts of climate change. Emissions from transport accounts for 22% of the borough's emissions profile, of which around 99% comes from on-road transport. After buildings and associated energy supply, treatment of the borough's transport emissions is the next largest sector to tackle. Reducing transport emissions across the borough will require a reduction in the number of vehicles on our roads. Fewer vehicles on our roads would have several significant co-benefits beyond just lowering carbon emissions including improved air quality, more space for active forms of transport such as public transport or cycling and fewer road traffic accidents. The streets which make up our borough will need to evolve to this changing volume and composition of vehicle traffic, but also to the changing climate.

Actions

These actions relate to surface transport across the borough, including those targeting the reduction of emissions from private car use and ensuring streets in the borough are designed primarily around active and sustainable travel, including walking, cycling and public transport use. The design and maintenance of our streets will need to use low carbon materials and processes in a way that reduces emissions, extends the longevity of our highway infrastructure and increases resilience to climate extremes such as overheating and periods of heavy rainfall and flash flooding. This aligns our climate ambition as a council, with that of our Streets for People Strategy and Delivery Plan, seeking to reduce emissions, while improving air quality, safety, community cohesion and encouraging healthier lifestyles. The council will embed climate adaptation in this theme by continuing to implement sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) on highways, which can help to lower the impact of periods of heavy rain by slowing the rate at which water enters the sewer system.

To be carbon neutral by 2030 Southwark must:

- Reduce car journeys to a minimum by 2030.
- End freight and commercial delivery in polluting vehicles.
- Encourage and support residents and businesses to switch away from petrol and diesel vehicles.

- Improve the accessibility and sustainability of public transport.
- Be a borough where walking and cycling becomes the default way to get around.

Policy Context

To deliver a carbon neutral, climate resilient future, our actions need to be aligned with and responsive to the national, regional and local context. This includes:

National Policy

- **Net Zero Strategy** (2021): Commits to decarbonising the transport sector as the UK's largest source of emissions. Includes targets to: End the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2035, expand electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure and public transport and promote active travel (walking and cycling) and modal shift from private car use.
- **Transport Decarbonisation Plan** (2021): A detailed roadmap for achieving net zero transport that prioritises: Zero-emission vehicles and charging networks, cleaner freight and logistics and sustainable urban mobility, including low-traffic neighbourhoods and integrated transport systems.
- **Transport Adaptation Strategy** (2025): Developed by the Department for Transport to address climate resilience in the transport system, focuses on integrating climate risk into transport planning and infrastructure design, enhancing flood resilience, heat tolerance, and emergency preparedness and supporting local authorities to embed adaptation into transport investment and maintenance.
- **National Planning Policy Framework** (NPPF) (2025): Requires local plans to support sustainable transport, reduce the need to travel by car, and promote climate-resilient infrastructure, encourages development that enables safe, inclusive, and accessible streets for all users.
- **Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy** (2022): Sets out the UK's approach to delivering a robust, accessible EV charging network and supports local authorities with funding and guidance to expand public and on-street charging.

GLA Policy

- **The London Plan** (2021): Sets a strategic target for 80% of all trips in London to be made by walking, cycling, or public transport by 2041, promotes Healthy Streets, sustainable travel, and reduced car dependency, requires development plans to support mode shift and mitigate transport impacts.
- **The Mayor's Transport Strategy** (2018) aims for 80% of all London journeys to be completed on foot, by bike or public transport by 2041.
- Vehicle usage and emissions within London are regulated by Transport for London's Low Emissions Zone (LEZ), Ultra Low Emissions Zone (ULEZ), and Congestion Charge.

Southwark Policy

- **Streets for People: Southwark's Transport Strategy** (2023–2030): Southwark's overarching transport strategy, aligned with the Mayor's Transport Strategy. Aims to reclaim street space for walking, cycling, public transport, and community use.
- **The Southwark Plan Policy P48 Public Transport** requires development to improve accessibility to public transport by creating and improving walking and cycling connections, and Policy IP2 Transport Infrastructure requires developers to collaborate with Transport for London and other stakeholders to improve transport infrastructure and promote active travel.
- **The Southwark Plan Policy P53 Car Parking** requires development to provide electric vehicle charging points (EVCP) where onsite parking is permitted.
- We will continue to run our campaigns on the Bakerloo line upgrade and extension, including upgrades to key stations such as Elephant & Castle.
- The council is working with the Port of London Authority to develop innovative and strategic solutions to the climate emergency across London as part of the development of a 2050 plan for the River Thames.

Next steps

Alongside working on the actions above, the council will continue to deliver the objectives set out in the Streets for People Strategy and Delivery Plan, alongside regular monitoring of movement patterns in the borough to ensure our approach is targeted to the areas with most benefit.

National government must lead the transition to zero carbon vehicles, provide certainty and encourage EV manufacturers to supply more affordable vehicles to the UK market. Alongside this government must support research and development into other low carbon fuels e.g., hydrogen while prioritising funding for active travel and public transport ahead of new road building programmes. We will be considering how we can best influence government to make the necessary changes.

At an individual level we will consider a range of actions to promote locally that can have a positive impact in this area. This could be opting to walk or cycle for short journeys, using public transport for longer journeys and shopping locally and reducing travel miles.

Natural Environment

Southwark's award-winning parks, open spaces and built environment provide homes for a range of common and rare wildlife, including birds, bats, invertebrates and plants. We value our parks and trees as a vital component of the borough's landscape. We have over 100,000 trees that bring

joy to people and help clean our air. We recognise that parks, open spaces, fields and allotments are also important for supporting good health and wellbeing, reducing health inequalities, improving social cohesion, and managing health and social care costs. They help to reduce levels of depression, anxiety, and fatigue; mitigate air pollution, heat and flooding; and enhance quality of life for both children and adults.

Actions

These actions relate to the maintenance and improvement of the borough's natural environment, for example tree planting, increasing tree canopy cover and removing areas of paving to create new areas of green space. Green spaces in the borough are already at risk from a changing climate; wildfires are becoming a far more prevalent risk as temperatures soar during summer. The London Fire Brigade saw a 128% increase in grass fires in 2022 compared to 2021 for example. Alongside this, extreme weather and an ageing sewer system threatens water security. The Environment Agency has warned that within just 25 years, the southeast of England, including Southwark, could run out of water. Without protecting our water sources, we would experience severe economic, social and environmental consequences. A changing climate also brings increased risk of invasive species, pests and diseases. In order to protect our natural environment, we will need to work with local communities to monitor the borough for emerging risks, ensure our green spaces are biodiverse and continue improving access to green spaces for all our residents.

To be carbon neutral by 2030 Southwark must:

- Improve biodiversity and introduce new green corridors to help wildlife to move.
- Make our streets a green place to walk, play and relax.
- Further increase tree canopy coverage across the borough with more planting, ensuring any loss of existing trees cover is a last resort and that those trees are replaced.
- Increase food growing in the borough, expanding allotments and community gardening.
- Enable building and development that works alongside and enhances our natural environment.

Policy Context

To deliver a carbon neutral, climate resilient future, our actions need to be aligned with and responsive to the national, regional and local context. This includes:

National

- **Environment Act** (2021): Sets legally binding targets for: Biodiversity net gain (BNG), air and water quality, waste reduction and resource efficiency and requires local authorities to

prepare Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) to guide habitat restoration and green infrastructure planning.

- **Third National Adaptation Programme** (NAP3) (2023–2028): Includes commitments to protect natural carbon sinks, improve urban green infrastructure to reduce overheating and surface water flooding and support local authorities with tools like the Local Authority Climate Service for climate risk data and planning.
- **Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP)** (2023): reinforces national goals to halt biodiversity loss, expand woodland, and restore habitats, mandates tools like Local Nature Recovery Strategies and Biodiversity Net Gain.

GLA Policy

- **The London Environment Strategy** (2018) sets out a target of increasing London's tree cover by 10% by 2050 and promotes green infrastructure as a climate adaptation tool.
- **London Climate Resilience Review** (2024): Recommends urgent action to protect natural assets, expand green infrastructure, and build ecological resilience to climate risks like heatwaves and flooding.
- **The Mayor of London's Green Roots Fund** (2025) is a £12m fund to support the creation of greener, healthier, and more climate-resilient neighbourhoods across London, with grants for projects like tree planting, wildflower meadows, parklets, and river cleanups.
- **Transport for London's Healthy Streets Approach** includes provision for improvements to the city's green infrastructure and sets a number of indicators to deliver healthier streets for Londoners.

Southwark Policy

- **Southwark Nature Action Plan** (SNAP) (2020) sets out the vision and strategy for the continued protection, conservation and enhancement of nature in the borough.
- **Local Flood Risk Management Strategy** sets out how the council will manage flood risks from surface water, groundwater, and ordinary watercourses across the borough, ensuring a coordinated and sustainable approach.
- **The Southwark Plan Policy P56 Open Space** protects Metropolitan and Borough open land (MOL and BOL) from development except in exceptional circumstances.
- **The Southwark Plan Policy P58 Green Infrastructure** requires major development to support green infrastructure with arrangements in place for long term maintenance, with new publicly accessible open space and green links.
- **The Southwark Plan Policy P59 Biodiversity** requires development to deliver net gains in biodiversity.

Next steps

The council will continue delivering the Southwark Nature Action Plan, making nature accessible to everyone, expanding and enhancing green spaces, and ensuring they are connected to support thriving wildlife corridors. Locally led community action will remain vital to achieving this, and the council is committed to working in close partnership with residents, community groups, and local organisations to support and expand these efforts.

At a national level, government must promote strategic green infrastructure planning and nature-based solutions, particularly in urban areas, to create well connected green spaces that act as wildlife corridors. This should be supported by clear national standards and long-term funding. At the same time, government should look to encourage innovative private investment mechanisms, such as green bonds and biodiversity credits, to channel investment into nature recovery and biodiversity projects.

Greener Economy

What we consume, what we eat, wear, and use, and how it's made and transported, is a major but often hidden source of emissions. Southwark's central location and demographics mean consumption levels are relatively high. Alongside this, how we dispose of waste matters: Southwark leads 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. Water use is also critical; we must cut consumption and energy use through solutions such as rainwater recycling. Embracing more sustainable diets will reduce emissions and can also deliver important public health benefits. We want our residents to benefit from the green jobs of the future, with the skills and training they need to transform the borough and drive economic and environmental change.

Actions

These actions relate to building a sustainable, inclusive, and low-carbon local economy. Economic resilience is addressed through green job creation, skills development, and support for SMEs and green innovation. The council is working with partners to adapt the local economy and help businesses become more sustainable, using sustainable freight for example, whilst also adapting to climate risks such as extreme heat and flooding. This theme includes promoting climate-friendly diets and reducing meat and dairy consumption through school meals and public campaigns, while strengthening food networks like the Southwark Food Action Alliance to reduce waste and improve access to culturally appropriate, affordable food. These actions also support local food growing, circular economy initiatives, and improved recycling and waste reduction.

To be carbon neutral by 2030 Southwark must:

- Deliver a green new deal which creates green jobs and invests in green skills training to support green jobs of the future.

- Encourage a more circular economy that reduces consumption, keeps resources in use for as long as possible, and recycles used materials.
- Change how the council, businesses and organisations procure and invest, ending investment in fossil fuels, and considering the carbon impact of doing business.
- Support local supply chains and local businesses to be more sustainable.
- Work with large businesses to move away from carbon heavy methods of delivery and production.

Policy Context

To deliver a carbon neutral, climate resilient future, our actions need to be aligned with and responsive to the national, regional and local context. This includes:

National Policy

- **Our Waste, Our Resources: A strategy for England** (2018) works towards eliminating food waste to landfill by 2030, and the elimination of avoidable waste of all kinds by 2050. Plastic packaging is now covered by the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and Deposit Return Schemes (DRS).
- **Simpler Recycling reforms**: standardise recycling across England by requiring all councils to collect the same core materials like paper, plastic, glass, and food waste. Starting in 2025–2026, these changes aim to make recycling easier, reduce confusion, and boost national recycling rates.

GLA Policy

- **The London Plan** (2021) Policy SI 7 Reducing waste and supporting the circular economy outlines how stakeholders can successfully conserve resources, reduce waste, increase in material re-use and recycling and reduce the disposal of waste.
- **The London Plan** (2021) Policy SI 8 Waste Capacity states that London should attain net waste sufficiency (100% of London's waste managed within London) by 2026 and outlines how development plans and development proposals can contribute to this commitment.
- **Circular Economy Statement Guidance** (2020) sets out how Circular Economy Statements, which demonstrate how developments incorporate circular economy principles into all aspects of their design, construction and operation, should be prepared.
- **Reduction and Recycling Plans** (RRPs): Under the Mayor's London Environment Strategy, all boroughs must produce RRPs outlining how they will reduce waste and improve recycling, this aligns with national reforms like Simpler Recycling.

Southwark Policy

- **The Southwark Plan Policy P61 Reducing Waste** requires developments to reduce waste in alignment with the waste hierarchy. Circular Economy Statements are required for major developments.
- **Southwark Local Economic Strategy (2023–2030)** sets out a vision for a fairer, greener, and more resilient economy and commits to shaping a high-growth, low-emission economy that supports inclusive neighbourhoods, sustainable jobs, and local ownership.
- **Southwark Waste Strategy**: Focuses on reducing waste, increasing recycling, and preparing for national reforms like Simpler Recycling and mandatory food waste collections. Supports community-led initiatives such as Repair Cafés and reuse hubs.

Next Steps

Beyond the council's own actions, there must also be a focus on what other partners and stakeholders can action themselves, from central government to resident level. This highlights how important collective action will be. Central government need to significantly increase the level of funding available to improve waste management and develop new technologies. Businesses can identify ways in which they can reduce packaging in their products, while residents can think about how they can make the way they shop and consume more climate friendly. Both businesses and residents can also continue to engage with the council on how to reduce consumption, reuse materials already in circulation and recycle more.

People and Resources

To effectively respond to the climate emergency, the council must build the internal resilience and capacity needed to lead by example. This involves strengthening organisational systems, policies, and the workforce to ensure that climate considerations are embedded across all aspects of council operations. By strengthening its infrastructure and evolving how it operates, the council will be better equipped to deliver long term emissions reductions, demonstrate leadership in low-carbon resilience and adaptation, and drive transformation across the borough.

Actions

These actions are about strengthening the council's internal capacity and infrastructure to respond to climate challenges while enabling low-carbon ways of working. For example, developing an extreme weather risk assessment for Southwark Council's workforce, which ensures staff are protected and services remain accessible during heatwaves, storms, or flooding. There are also actions on tackling our scope 3 supply chain emissions by embedding carbon reduction standards into procurement, behavioural change initiatives, climate budgeting and funding, and lobbying for national policy changes to accelerate net zero housing and transport. These actions collectively aim to future-proof council operations and empower staff and systems to lead on climate action.

To be carbon neutral by 2030 Southwark must:

- Build internal capacity and systems to embed climate action across all council strategic functions, including service design, workforce development and emergency planning.
- Integrate climate considerations into everyday operations through behavioural change, effective internal communications, and climate impact assessments across services.
- Use good data to make informed decisions by combining different sources of information, both internal and external to track progress and drive change.
- Influence wider policy and systems change by lobbying for national reforms in housing, transport, and climate governance.

Policy Context

To deliver a carbon neutral, climate resilient future, our actions need to be aligned with and responsive to the national, regional and local context. This includes:

National Policy

- **Climate Change Committee (CCC) – 2025 Progress Report**: Stresses the need for a well-managed just transition to maintain public support for climate action and recommends stronger policy integration, funding, and monitoring of social impacts during the transition.
- **Plan for Change – Sustainable Finance Capital of the World** (2025): Under development, aims to make the UK the global hub for green investment and Includes support for climate transition plans by banks and large companies.
- **Green Finance Strategy** (2023 Refresh): Promotes climate-aligned budgeting, investment, and procurement. Encourages integration of climate risk into financial systems.
- **The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy** (2025): Supports a green industrial transition with a focus on regional equity, skills development, and inclusive economic growth. Promotes investment in low-carbon industries and reskilling for workers in declining sectors.
- **UK Government Resilience Framework** (2022, updated 2023): Sets out national approach to resilience, emergency planning, risk registers, and cross-sector governance.
- **Procurement Policy Note (PPN) 006:** Requires suppliers to commit to net zero and report Scope 3 emissions through carbon reduction plans. Applies to all central government contracts over £5M.

GLA Policy

- **London City Resilience Strategy**: Provides a framework for governance, data-led resilience, community engagement, and emergency planning. Includes an Equality Impact Assessment and supports collaborative, cross-sector resilience planning.

- **The London Plan**: Embeds circular economy, sustainable procurement, and climate impact assessments into planning. Supports Scope 3 emissions reduction through design and construction policies.
- **GLA Group Responsible Procurement Policy**: Supports climate budgeting, behavioural change, and community resilience. Encourages boroughs to align with net zero and adaptation goals.
- **London Climate Budgeting Pilot** (2023–2025): Tests integration of climate impact into financial planning. Supports boroughs in aligning budgets with net zero and resilience outcomes.
- **London Risk Register & Resilience Framework**: Provides a shared framework for emergency planning, risk assessment, and coordination. Informs borough-level climate risk and vulnerability assessments.

Southwark Policy

- **Southwark Fairer Future Procurement Framework**: guides council procurement, includes considerations on social value, ethical standards, sustainability, and inclusive economic growth.
- **Southwark Social Value Framework**: guides the implementation of social value in council contracts, including through the use of specific measures, two of which are specifically sustainability focussed.
- **Southwark Economic Strategy 2023 to 2030**: Sets out the council's vision for the economy of the borough including 7,000 new jobs in Southwark's green economy by 2030.

Next Steps

Strengthening the council's processes and systems to effectively respond and adapt to the climate emergency is a wide-ranging and complex undertaking that covers the full breadth of the council's diverse functions. It requires time, ongoing refinement, and a sustained commitment to change. Central to this transformation will be behavioural shifts, supported by targeted training, skills development, and collaborative working across departments. We will develop and roll out training, accessible to all council departments, and ensure that sustainability and resilience related information, tools and guidance is readily accessible to all staff. This will support its integration into decision-making and day to day operational activities.

In addition to internal improvements, the council will continue to advocate for stronger national policy and increased government investment to accelerate the transition to net zero housing, particularly for social housing, and will also continue the call for government support and funding

for sustainable transport initiatives, including the upgrade and extension of the Bakerloo line. To make meaningful progress, we need urgent and sustained action from government to deliver the policy changes and funding commitments required.

Wider benefits

Making the borough more resilient not only mitigates against the main impacts of climate change, it also potentially enables us to further reduce our carbon emissions and deliver other benefits to our residents.

Greener buildings – Improvements to buildings are needed to protect against extremes of hot and cold. Greater energy efficiency to enable people to stay warm will make our homes and residents more resilient but also reduce energy demand and fuel poverty.

Biodiversity and air quality – Through implementing greening measures to manage climate risks such as improved drainage, shade and canopy coverage, we will also support our local ecology and wildlife. **Air quality** can also be improved through greening our borough which impacts on health and wellbeing.

Water scarcity – By taking steps to reduce demand for water and preventing flooding, we reduce water run-off and risk of water pollution. We also reduce energy demands by using less water which reduces our overall carbon emissions.

Cost reduction and risk limitation – Steps to protect the borough from extremes of weather and flooding reduces risk for businesses, making the borough a more attractive place for them. This benefits the local economy and jobs and helps Southwark to thrive.

Health – Lessening the impact of climate change can improve health outcomes for Southwark. The shocks that climate change causes are a risk to mental and physical health which is reduced as we become more resilient. We are also better prepared to deal with new diseases that are introduced due to climate change.

Learning and Engaging

A key element of our work will be recognising that we need to continue learning and improving as new opportunities and challenges arise. We do not know all the answers, and it is important that we listen and share information with partners throughout the process. We need to engage actively with

each other to tackle the emergency effectively and the council will put in place processes and mechanisms to make sure this happens.

To achieve the emissions reductions and adaptation required, everyone must play their part across the borough, and the council is committed to lead a climate conversation that engages, educates and empowers residents to contribute.

Engagement - The council will proactively reach out using its communication channels and through community groups and forums to promote action to address the climate emergency and to ensure that people are able to input into our future plans. We will engage with existing groups and networks such as TRAs, parks and greenspace groups, and will also seek to bring more people into the conversation. In particular, we want to partner with young people who have been at the forefront of pressing for global change, to build on and respond to their energy and ideas.

Education - To build greater understanding of the climate emergency and its impacts, we will support and implement education programmes about the climate emergency to help the community understand its impact. This includes working proactively with schools, colleges and universities to bring learning out of the classroom into the community.

Empowerment - This is an agenda that everyone needs to feel ownership over, so the council will aim to create an enabling environment and support residents to take action in their own lives, equipping people with the information they need to make positive decisions as citizens and consumers.

Diverse voices

Southwark is proud to be home to a diverse and vibrant population, but it is only if every part of that community is heard and is part of the conversation, that we will make the change we need together. As well as engaging with existing groups and community networks, we will particularly focus on those that are often less engaged with. These groups include:

Young People – Southwark is a young borough, and we need to ensure that young voices are heard in the process. We will continue to work with young people and seek their advice on how to best engage so that our approach is relevant and impactful with our young residents. We will ensure that young people's voices are always part of the debate by establishing channels where they can be heard. We will work closely with our Youth Parliament.

We will also work with the many schools through the Schools Action Climate Network, colleges and universities in the borough to engage with young people. As part of our engagement, we will work with schools and young people to develop resources for schools to educate and empower young people to take action. We will also work with students and universities to ensure that new ideas,

and innovation that is coming from our higher education establishments helps to shape and build our work going forward.

Global majority communities – Southwark is home to a racially diverse population. We will work with groups that represent our different global majority communities, but also identify where communities are not represented, and reach out directly to them. This includes large diaspora communities in Southwark from areas such as Latin America, West Africa and South Asia. We will ensure that we also work with communities where English is not the primary language.

Social housing tenants – With one of the largest stocks of social housing in the country, Southwark is home to thousands of residents who may be particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Many live in older buildings that are less energy efficient and more susceptible to extreme weather. We will work to ensure that social housing residents are a key part of our climate action. The insights of social housing tenants will be vital in shaping retrofit programmes, improving energy efficiency, and building resilience across our housing estates.

People with disabilities – Disabled residents may experience disproportionate impacts from climate change, including barriers to accessing services, safe housing, and public spaces during extreme weather. We will engage with disabled people and advocacy organisations to ensure that our climate strategy is inclusive and accessible. This includes co-designing solutions that consider mobility, communication needs, and health vulnerabilities, and embedding accessibility into all aspects of climate planning and delivery.

Vulnerable Communities – We are committed to ensuring that the voices of our most vulnerable residents are heard and reflected in our climate action. This includes people experiencing food poverty, homelessness, or those with no recourse to public funds, such as asylum seekers and refugees. As a Borough of Sanctuary, Southwark recognises the unique challenges faced by those seeking refuge, who are often disproportionately affected by climate-related risks such as extreme heat, poor housing conditions, and limited access to support services. We will work to ensure that our climate policies and programmes are inclusive, accessible, and responsive to the needs of these communities, and that they are actively involved in shaping a more resilient and equitable borough.

LGBTQ+ Community – LGBTQ+ individuals may face social exclusion or lack of access to safe and inclusive spaces, which can be further compounded during climate-related emergencies. We will work with our LGBTQ+ community to ensure that climate action in Southwark reflects the needs and experiences of LGBTQ+ residents. By fostering inclusive engagement and safe spaces for dialogue, we aim to build a climate strategy that supports equity, visibility, and resilience for all.

Faith communities – Southwark is home to people of a wide range of faiths and faith communities. Good stewardship of our world and natural resources is central to the beliefs of many

faiths and so we will work with our faith communities to ensure that they are engaged in this plan and its delivery.

We will also engage with older people, less mobile people and disabled people throughout this process. Our community is tied to communities across the world. Our residents will know people in parts of the world who are feeling the negative effects of climate change more acutely than we are in the UK, and they will know the impact of our action here on those they love in other parts of the world. Just as they are linked to the effects of climate change, they also bring to Southwark a wealth of perspectives and understanding from countries around the world. Many are from counties who produce far less carbon than the UK and where their ways of living are more sustainable. In engaging with our diverse communities, we need to listen and understand and learn from these global experiences and perspectives. We will be open and encouraging of solutions from the global south being adapted to work in Southwark.

Resourcing

Our estimates on first developing the climate change strategy projected that achieving carbon neutrality in Southwark would require significant capital investment, alongside additional revenue funding. Those estimates are now significantly outdated and likely a substantial underestimate. Since then, inflation and shifts in both the national and global economy have driven up costs across sectors, particularly in construction, energy, and infrastructure. Moreover, the initial estimates placed less emphasis on climate adaptation, which is now recognised as equally critical as mitigation. As the full scale of adaptation needs becomes clearer, it is evident that the total investment required will be considerably higher, underscoring the urgent need for sustained and increased government support.

Potential investment or funding streams include, but are not limited to, the council's carbon offset fund, central government grants, revenue and capital funding from the GLA or TfL and various funding bids across the public, private and charity sectors. To put the scale of this challenge into context, Southwark's revenue budget for 2025-26 was just over £356million. In addition to this, the Government also needs to invest in further decarbonisation of the grid.

This strategy sets out what needs to happen, but where we do not have the resources, the council will need to work with both public and private sector partners to secure the funding. Without considerable government investment it will not be possible to become carbon neutral and adapt our borough and so lobbying will be a central part of our response to the climate emergency. The council will call on the government for the required financial and political resource to achieve our target including for a Green and Decent Homes programme.

The council will remain open to all opportunities to increase investment in initiatives that support climate neutrality and ecological protection. For example, continuing the use of Community Municipal Investments (CMIs), enabling local residents to directly support and benefit from green projects. Future rounds of the Southwark Community Energy Fund will also be explored to further empower local energy initiatives. In addition, the council will continue to collaborate with the GLA and other partners to share costs and reduce the capital burden of financing innovative green solutions.

The council will also work to support our staff through training in carbon literacy, climate resilience and adaptation, ecological protection and a range of other areas which relate to the climate emergency. We recognise that for the council to effectively deliver change, all staff need to have a good level of knowledge of the impacts and response to climate change.

There will also be cost to individuals and to businesses. It is important that these individual costs are met by those who can most afford them, and in some cases, those who are responsible for higher emissions, so that we do not increase inequality in the borough.

Governance and Accountability

Good governance is essential to deliver our climate emergency response. While this strategy is a council strategy, it should represent an approach for the whole borough. To deliver this and ensure good governance we will use the following mechanisms:

Council Executive and Scrutiny Functions – the Cabinet will have responsibility for the delivery of this work. They are accountable to the council and scrutinised by relevant scrutiny commissions as well as being open and transparent to the public.

Citizens' Jury - We engaged with our citizens' jury of residents to learn about the climate emergency, hear from expert witnesses, and develop informed recommendations for local action. The jury produced 20 core recommendations, which were further broken down into 93 sub-recommendations. These recommendations informed the Climate Change Action plan, with several of the longer-term actions still being actioned to date. The jury's work has significantly shaped Southwark's climate policy, embedding community-led priorities into long-term planning and investment.

Community stakeholder panel – we have established a panel of local organisations that are interested in climate change and groups that represent local communities. The group meets quarterly and strengthens our climate work, through sharing ideas, insights and views with the council.

Delivery partners – we have convened a panel of major organisations and institutions in the borough. Through working together on shared challenges and opportunities we aim to deliver impactful activity to reduce carbon emissions and tackle the climate emergency in Southwark. A central principle in this strategy is transparency and we will aim to enhance our engagement with partners and community groups to take forward this strategy and action plan. We will hold at least one annual event which brings together different community groups, residents and partners to openly discuss progress, the challenges and find solutions to overcome them together.

The council will publish an annual climate change progress report, which sets out work that has taken place and the impact this has had on meeting our climate commitments.

Reviewing our approach

This strategy sets out our ambition and how we will approach the climate emergency. It outlines our commitment to engage and empower our communities and work in partnership with organisations in the borough to achieve our aim.

We will engage with, and respond positively to, scrutiny and learn from the ideas and experiences of others including experts and best practice in other local authorities. Our focus will be on delivery, making the changes needed to reach our goal. We will publish an annual progress report where we will also take corrective action for areas which are off-track. As we work toward our 2030 carbon neutrality target, we will continuously review and refine our overall strategy and approach. Our commitment remains focused on identifying new opportunities to accelerate progress and respond decisively to the climate emergency, ensuring that Southwark moves further and faster in delivering meaningful change.

Conclusion and Next Steps

This strategy and action plan sets out our ambitious approach and roadmap to a carbon neutral, climate resilient and sustainable future. It demonstrates the scale of the change necessary and emphasises that we can only make this change working together across the borough. It also highlights the need for Government to step up and do more to support the work of local authorities like Southwark if we are to become a carbon neutral borough.

Action is required across many areas to deliver the borough's ambitious targets. As a council we have finite staff and capital resources and so it is essential to prioritise how we allocate our resources, but also work with government and others to secure the investment which is needed for this ambitious plan.

Since the launch of our strategy, we have engaged with our community through the actions set out in our existing action plan, and through related strategies such as our Streets for People Strategy and our citizens' jury in 2022. We will continue to engage with key partner organisations and talk with and listen to our residents, businesses and others with an interest in the future of our borough.

This strategy sets out our approach. What we have done already, and what our priorities are for the future. It also sets out the next steps and how this plan will continue to evolve and develop as we deliver. To be effective we need to prioritise our actions. To do this we will consider:

- **Speed & magnitude of carbon reduction** – We will assess the relative carbon impact of projects, including the time sensitivity of the savings. This strategy and action plan is part of that process. Potential carbon savings will need to be considered in all decision-making within the council. It will not be possible to undertake all actions immediately, due to financial and resource restraints. We will need to prioritise those actions that offer the greatest carbon saving for the budget available.
- **Strengthening Climate adaptation** – As we strengthen Southwark's resilience to the impacts of climate change, we will regularly assess and refine our approach to adaptation. This strategy and action plan marks the continuation of that journey. Recognising that not all actions can be implemented immediately due to financial and resource constraints, we will prioritise those measures that offer the greatest benefit in protecting people, infrastructure, and ecosystems. Adaptation considerations, such as risk, urgency, and long-term resilience, will be embedded into all council decision-making to ensure we are building a borough that is prepared for the challenges ahead.
- **Alignment with other council goals** - Given that the actions in this strategy and action plan promote a range of other benefits we will ensure that this strategy is aligned with other policy documents and strategies, particularly Southwark 2030 and its three principles of empowering people, investing in prevention and reducing inequality.
- **Playing to Southwark's strengths** – Southwark has a range of engaged and active stakeholders. To deliver this programme we must build these partnerships and help those already undertaking work in this area to scale up initiatives. This will also inform priorities moving forward.
- **The importance of timing** - It is important to consider the future cumulative carbon legacy of decisions made to today, the emissions produced over the operational life of assets or projects. Some actions carry an element of short- term disruption before longer term gain can be realised. We must also account for the long-term resilience of these decisions, ensuring that investments made now not only reduce emissions but also strengthen the borough's ability to adapt to climate impacts such as flooding, overheating, and resource stress.

- **Technology costs** – We have an important role to play in stimulating demand and helping to bring costs of low carbon technology down. Waiting for this to happen may compromise carbon targets and cost savings for other stakeholders within the borough. We will look for ways to do this and help bring down costs.

In declaring a climate emergency and setting out our ambition to become a carbon neutral borough by 2030, Southwark Council has made clear its commitment to addressing one of the most urgent global challenges of our time. We have already made significant progress, achievements we can be proud of, but the scale and complexity of the task ahead must not be underestimated. As the impacts of climate change become increasingly visible, it is clear that our response must go beyond carbon reduction to include building resilience and adapting to future risks such as extreme weather, overheating, and flooding. We will continue to look to national government, especially in the context of international leadership forums like COP, to recognise local authorities as essential partners in this effort and to provide the resources needed to act at scale. The path to carbon neutrality and climate resilience will be challenging, but it is also filled with opportunity. The vision set out in this strategy - of resilient greener homes and buildings, active and sustainable travel, a thriving natural environment, a circular economy with green jobs, and clean, renewable energy – is a positive, exciting vision for Southwark. It is also one that we must follow for the sake of our planet and our future generations.

Glossary of Terms

A

Adaptation – Actions that help prepare for and defend against the effects of climate change. For example, protecting against rising sea levels by building river or sea barriers.

Anthesis – Anthesis are a sustainability consultancy who have worked with the council on developing our climate strategy.

Aquifer - An underground layer of permeable rock, which can hold and transport water to and from rivers and other water sources. In London, we have a large chalk basin aquifer.

Aquifer Depletion – Taking water faster than it can be replaced within an aquifer. When there are water shortages, due to low rainfall or leaky pipes, water companies may increase abstraction to compensate which can lead to aquifer depletion.

B

Biodiversity - The variety of plants, habitats and animal life in a particular place. A high level of biodiversity shows that the ecosystem is thriving, and species can be supported. In Southwark, we are aiming to increase our biodiversity.

BREEAM Rating – A method of assessing, rating, and certifying the sustainability of buildings.

C

Carbon Budget - The cumulative amount of carbon dioxide emissions permitted over a period to keep within a certain temperature limit.

Climate Budgeting – The process of integrating climate considerations into the financial budget process for an organisation.

Carbon capture and storage - The collection of carbon dioxide gas from large emission sources, such as factories or power stations. Carbon is often stored underground. Carbon capture is sometimes referred to as carbon sequestration.

Carbon dioxide (CO2) - Carbon dioxide is a gas that can occur naturally and can also occur due to human activities, such as manufacturing or using fossil fuel-based energy. The more carbon dioxide we produce, the greater the impact on Earth's atmosphere. Carbon dioxide is the

greenhouse gas that human activity produces the most.

Climate emergency - A recognition that urgent action is now required to reduce or halt climate change, and that irreversible environmental damage is a result from our rapidly changing climate.

Carbon emissions - Carbon produced by human activity, which is released into the atmosphere.

Carbon neutral - A process where there is no net release of CO2. A process is said to be carbon neutral when the amount of carbon taken out and the amount of carbon released is identical. Carbon offsetting is a tool used by organisations to achieve carbon neutrality.

Carbon offsetting – A way of compensating for carbon emissions by participating in, or funding, efforts to take carbon out of the atmosphere elsewhere. Offsetting often involves paying another party to save emissions equivalent to those produced by your activity. For example, a company might pay another company to offset their carbon emissions by planting trees.

Carbon sequestration - The process of storing carbon dioxide. See Carbon capture and storage.

Circular economy – A process of keeping resources in use for as long as possible in order to reduce waste. It is used to move away from our current model of disposing products after use.

Climate change - A shift in an environmental variant such as average temperature or rainfall, which affects an existing climate and can lead to an increase of extreme weather conditions. This may be caused by both natural processes and human activity, and global warming is one aspect of climate change.

Climate Change Committee (CCC) - an independent, statutory body established under the Climate Change Act 2008. Advises the UK and devolved governments on emissions targets and reports to Parliament on progress made in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for and adapting to the impacts of climate change.

Council Emissions – Emissions that the Council has a direct influence over, such as emissions from council offices.

CO2 - See carbon dioxide.

Co-benefits - positive effects of a policy that cover more than one objective. For example, becoming more energy efficient will help with our climate targets but may also help tackle fuel poverty.

D

Decarbonise - To remove or reduce the amount of carbon.

DEFRA – Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs.

DESNZ - Department for Energy Security and Net Zero

Drought - Periods of prolonged below average rainfall, which leads to low levels of groundwater and reduced river flows. These affect both people and wildlife, and in London can build over period of months and years.

E

Ecological Emergency – The rapid and continual loss of natural assets like green space, wildlife, ecosystems and natural habitats. Urgent action is required to address this.

Embodied carbon - Embodied carbon consists of all the emissions associated with the construction of buildings. This includes emissions from transport, manufacturing and installing building materials. It also included the operational and end-of-life emissions of those materials.

Energy efficiency - Eliminating energy waste by using less energy to perform tasks.

EPC rating - An EPC rating gives a property an energy efficiency rating from A (most efficient) to G (least efficient) and is valid for 10 years.

F

Flooding – The covering or submerging of land that is usually dry with a large amount of water, often but not exclusively from heavy rainfall.

Fossil fuels - Natural resources, such as oil, coal, and natural gas that can be used as fuels. These fuels produce carbon dioxide when burnt.

Food Insecurity – Someone who does not have enough money to buy food, has to skip meals or has to cut down on quantities due to money, or does not have the money for a balanced diet.

Fuel Poverty – Fuel poverty is caused primarily by low incomes, the poor energy efficiency of homes, and high energy prices. If the fuel costs required to heat and power a home adequately are above the national median level, and if this would leave a household with a residual income below the poverty line, this household would be considered in fuel poverty.

Future emissions modelling - Helps predict what actions we will need to take in the future, considering newer technologies and decisions from government that we expect to see before 2030.

G

Global South - The phrase “Global South” refers broadly to the regions of Latin America, Asia, Africa, and Oceania. It is a term that denotes regions outside Europe and North America that are mostly (though not all) low-income and often politically or culturally marginalised.

Global majority - refers to the vast majority of the world's population who are not white and are often categorised as ethnic minorities. This includes people of African, Asian, Indigenous, and Latin American descent, who collectively represent approximately 80-85% of the global population.

Global warming - The steady rise in global average temperature in recent decades, which experts believe is largely caused by man-made greenhouse gas emissions.

Green Corridor - Continuous areas of open space leading through the built environment which allow animals and plants to be found further into the built-up area than would otherwise. Green Corridors often consist of rivers, railway embankments and cuttings, roadside verges, canals, parks, playing fields and extensive areas of private gardens.

Green New Deal - Links investment in carbon reduction programmes with inclusive economic renewal. A Green New Deal for Southwark is one of the six headline commitments of our economic renewal plan and a new commitment within the Borough Plan up to 2022.

Greenhouse gases - Natural and industrial gases that trap heat from the Earth and warm the surface. Carbon dioxide is the main greenhouse gas. Other greenhouse gases are given a carbon dioxide equivalent value. This means that we can calculate all greenhouse gases on the same scale and so refer to carbon to mean carbon dioxide and all other greenhouse gases.

Groundwater flooding - When the level of water within the rock or soil making up the land surface rises significantly. Groundwater levels typically peak in Southwark during March, and if there is extremely heavy rainfall, basements and low-lying land can be flooded.

H

Heatwave – An extended period of hot weather relative to the expected conditions of the area at that time of year, which may be accompanied by high humidity.

I

Impermeable surface - Mainly artificial structures (such as pavements, roads, driveways, parking areas and rooftops) that are covered by materials impenetrable to water (such as asphalt, concrete,

brick and stone). Impermeable surfaces also collect solar heat in their dense mass. When the heat is released, it raises air temperatures.

Invasive Species – Species (plant or animal) that have entered an area but are not usually found in that area. These species can disrupt local biodiversity. An example is the Oak Processionary moth which is native to southern Europe but is now able to survive and reproduce in the warmer temperatures found in the UK. It can cause severe allergic reactions which are increasing across London.

IPCC - The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is an international body reporting to the UN which reviews work relevant to climate change. It received the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize.

L

London Councils - An organisation that represents London's 33 local authorities, and lobbies on their behalf.

Low carbon economy - An economy that attempts to minimise or halt the carbon produces from activity within it.

M

Methane – Methane is the second most important man-made greenhouse gas. There are natural sources for methane, such as wetlands and wildfires, and human activity such as agriculture.

Mitigation - Action that we can take to reduce man-made climate change. This includes action to reduce our carbon or absorb greenhouse gases.

N

Nitrous Oxide - A gas formed by combustion, which is harmful to human health as an air pollutant.

O

Overheating – When the local indoor temperature and humidity exceeds those acceptable for human thermal comfort or those that may adversely affect human health.

P

Paris Agreement - Signed in 2016, the Paris Agreement is an international agreement to limit global temperature rises to below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels; and to pursue efforts to limit the

increase to 1.5 °C. The UK is a signatory of this agreement.

R

Renewable energy - Energy created from sources that after a short period can be replenished. This includes biomass, water-based energy, geothermal, wind, and solar.

Residual emissions - Emissions that remain after all feasible measures to reduce an organisation's carbon footprint have been implemented. These emissions are often difficult to reduce with current practices, technology or resources.

Resilience - The ability of a system to recover from the effect of extreme conditions that may have caused harm.

Retrofit - To modify existing and in use infrastructure using new parts to reduce the impact on the environment e.g., installing solar panels or green roofs on existing social housing.

Risk (climate) - The potential for negative consequences for humans or ecological systems due to climate change.

S

SELCHP network - South East London Combined Heat & Power. The plant in Lewisham provides heat and hot water to some homes in Southwark. It generates heat from non-recycled waste which would have otherwise gone to landfill to provide heat to communal heating and hot water systems through a network of underground hot water pipes to the boiler houses, removing the reliance on using gas.

Sewer Flooding - The discharge of sewage or wastewater from the sewer system, either onto land or into buildings. Southwark's largely Victorian-era sewer network is under significant strain; even moderate rainfall can result in sewage spilling into the River Thames and nearby streets.

SCATTER - Anthesis-developed tool which is used to set emissions baselines and reductions targets.

Scope One Emissions - Emissions that are generated in the borough e.g., driving a car.

Scope Two Emissions - Emissions generated elsewhere but where the energy that they generate is used in the borough e.g., turning on a light where the generation happens at a power station, but the energy use is in the borough**.**

Scope Three Emissions - Indirect emissions that are produced to provide something in the borough e.g., the emissions produced to make a product that is consumed in the borough.

Social Housing - Refers to rental housing which may be owned and managed by the council or a not-for-profit organisation with the aim to provide affordable housing.

Social Justice - Justice in terms of the distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society.

Southwark 2030 – A strategy based on 3 key principles and 7 goals with the aim of building a better future for our people and our place and securing a good life for everyone. The strategy underpins the Southwark Delivery Plan.

Southwark Plan - The Southwark Plan is the borough's strategic planning framework guiding development, regeneration, and land use from 2019 to 2036. Comprised of strategic policies and Area Action Plans.

Supply Chain - The network of organisations and processes involved in delivering goods, services, and works to meet the needs of an organisation. This network includes not only the direct suppliers to the council, but also organisations and processes involved in sourcing, production, distribution, and disposal.

Surface water flooding - When water cannot drain away or soak into the ground. This is a particular problem in urban areas as they often have a high percentage of impermeable surfaces.

Sustainable - To ensure it causes little or no damage to the environment or economy and therefore is still able to continue for a long time.

T

Tidal Surge - When river levels rise, creating increased wind and low atmospheric pressure. London is currently protected from tidal surges by the Thames Barrier, but additional stress could weaken these defences.

Traverse – Traverse is an engagement consultancy that helped the council with their consultation on the climate strategy.

W

Water Scarcity - When the demand for water exceeds the available supply, either due to insufficient water resources or high demand.

[i] Data from Royal Meteorological Society (2025): World exceeds 1.5°C threshold for entire year for the first time | Royal Meteorological Society
[ii] The Royal Society, "If emissions of greenhouse gases were stopped, would the climate return to the conditions of 200 years ago?" (2020): 20. If emissions of greenhouse gases were stopped, would the climate return to the conditions of 200 years ago? | Royal Society
[iii] CDP, Building Local Resilience (March 2023). https://cdn.cdp.net/cdphttps://cdn.cdp.net/cdp-production/cms/reports/documents/000/006/915/original/CDP_UK_Cities_Report_EN_(2).pdf?1678720265production/cms/reports/documents/000/006/915/original/CDP_UK_Cities_Report_EN_%282%29.pdf? 1678720265 . CDP is a not-for-profit charity that runs the global disclosure system for investors, companies, cities, states and regions to manage their environmental impacts

[iv] US EPA (2019). Global greenhouse gas emissions data. Available from https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/global-greenhouse-gas-emissions-data [accessed July 2025]

[v] Defra Crop Yield statistics: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/cereal-and-oilseed-rape-production/provisional-cereal-and-oilseed-production-estimates-for-england-2024
[vi] London City Resilience Strategy (2020): https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/london_city_resilience_strategy_2020_digital_0.pdf [accessed July 2025]
[vii] London Health Burden of Current Air Pollution and Future Health Benefits of Mayoral Air Quality Policies: https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/london_health_burden_of_current_air_pollution_and_future_health_benefits_of_mayoral_air_quality_policies_january2020.pdf [Accessed July 2025]
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[xiii] London Climate Resilience Review 2024: The London Climate Resilience Review | London City Hall [Accessed July 2025]