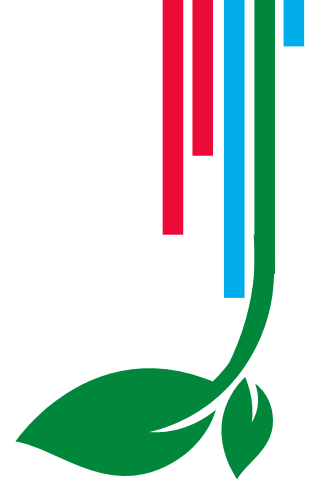


# CLIMATE CHANGE ANNUAL REPORT SEPTEMBER 2025



TACKLING  
THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY  
TOGETHER IN SOUTHWARK

*Southwark*  
Council



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# INTRODUCING THE 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

The past year has seen great progress delivering our climate programme in Southwark, but in the UK and across the globe we also know that climate action is not happening 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.

This was made clear in a recent report from 60 of the world's leading scientists. The report warned we have just three years left to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. Its lead author was even clearer when he said, 'things are all moving in the wrong direction'.

That isn't the case for the council's emissions from buildings and energy, which are heading in the right direction and emissions continue to fall. However, for all this hard work, we are not immune from the same global challenges and trends. That's because these reductions have been counteracted by the indirect emissions from goods and services we buy. For the first time in five years, our borough's overall emissions have also increased slightly.

Yet by looking at the scale of action delivered in the past year we can also see that there is reason to be hopeful here in Southwark. We have seen a host of successes that will start to bear fruit over the coming years. This includes major funding wins from central government that mean we can upgrade key buildings like our leisure centres, schools and homes. This work will move us away from fossil fuels, cut carbon emissions and save money on energy bills.



*A site visit as part of our community energy programme*







*Dulwich Leisure Centre staff at the launch of our new Library of Things site*

We can also see positive climate action growing in our communities and reducing inequalities. Our Library of Things service in Canada Water became so popular that we expanded it to two other locations meaning most residents are within 1.5 miles of a site. Our community energy fund has also empowered our communities to take control of their energy, reduce bills and tackle fuel poverty. With more projects to come next year through our second round of funding this will continue to support a just transition to a green and sustainable borough. Our biodiversity fund was also oversubscribed, with residents wanting to take direct action in their communities to create a greener borough.

This momentum will continue in the next year, with more projects being delivered right across the borough. A refreshed climate action plan will also drive this programme forward and we will continue to do everything we can to tackle the climate emergency. The past year has shown that by delivering key projects we can reduce emissions, tackle inequality and improve the lives of people and future generations across our borough.



# CARBON EMISSIONS IN SOUTHWARK

## How we measure emissions

To end our contribution to climate change we need to get the borough's carbon emissions down to zero. We measure emissions in kilotons of carbon dioxide equivalents. We write this as kt CO<sub>2</sub>e. One kiloton is equal to 1,000 tonnes.

**ONE** = **1,000**  
kiloton tonnes

**ONE**  
tonne of carbon  
is the same as



flight from a  
London airport  
to the east coast  
of the US

OR



driving between  
John O'Groats  
and Land's End  
four times in the  
average car

Emissions are sorted into three groups, which we call scopes. These are:

- **scope one**, which covers direct emissions from things we own or control
- **scope two**, which covers indirect emissions from energy that we have bought
- **scope three**, which includes all other emissions that occur in making all the things we buy

We also monitor these emissions from the borough as a whole. This includes all homes, businesses and journeys in the borough, as well as emissions that are within the control of the council from our own buildings, vehicles and what we buy.

## What the latest information shows

Our updated data shows that for the first time in five years emissions in the borough have gone up slightly. This has been an increase of 5 kt, which amounts to less than 1% (0.6%). We continued to see emissions from domestic buildings, like our homes, decrease. However, this was counteracted by rising emissions from road transport and industrial buildings as business operations and car travel returned to pre-covid levels in 2022 (latest government data available).

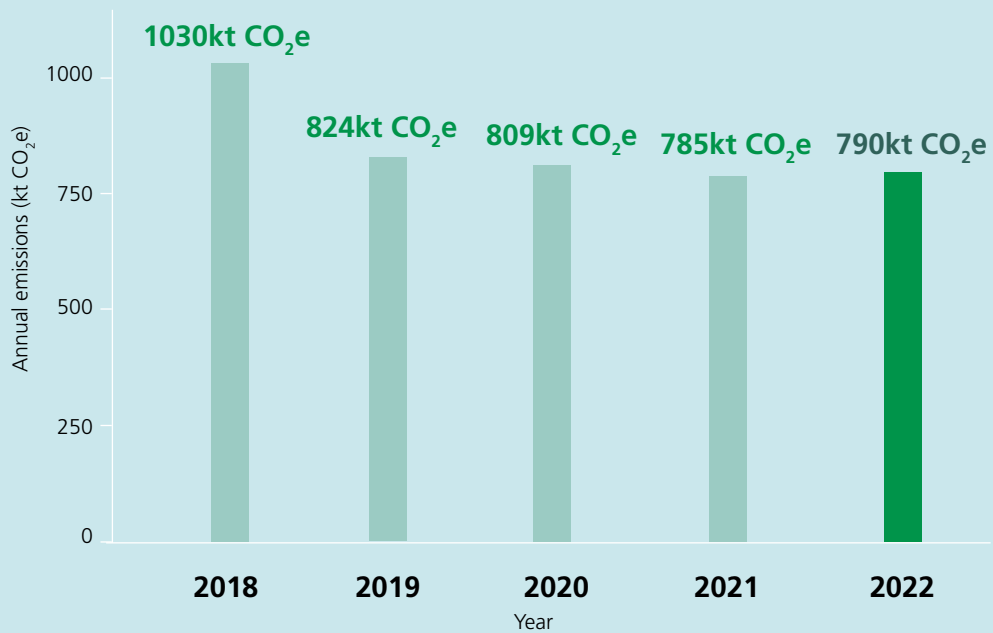
This isn't a problem that is unique to Southwark. It is challenging local and national governments across the world. Yet, by facing up to this challenge we have been able to identify what we need to do and where we need to direct our efforts. We can continue to see that focusing on heating and powering buildings is vital. These activities contribute to 78% of scope one and two emissions in Southwark.



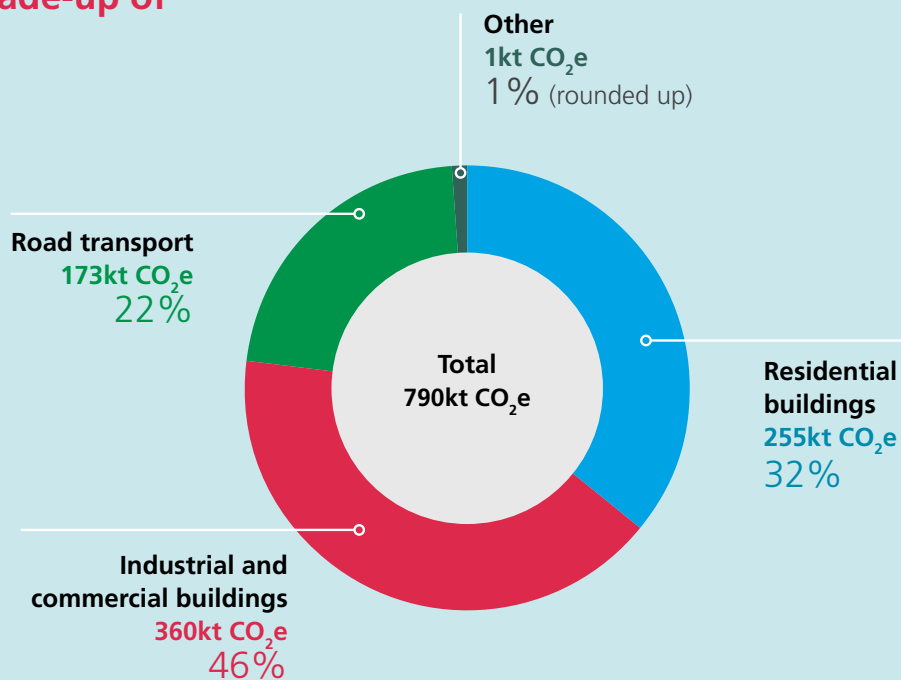
## Borough-wide emissions in Southwark

For this information, we rely on large national datasets from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. There is a delay in publishing these datasets, which means the latest information is three years behind. This is why the latest up-to-date figures are for 2022.

### Borough-wide emissions over the past five years (kt CO<sub>2</sub>e)



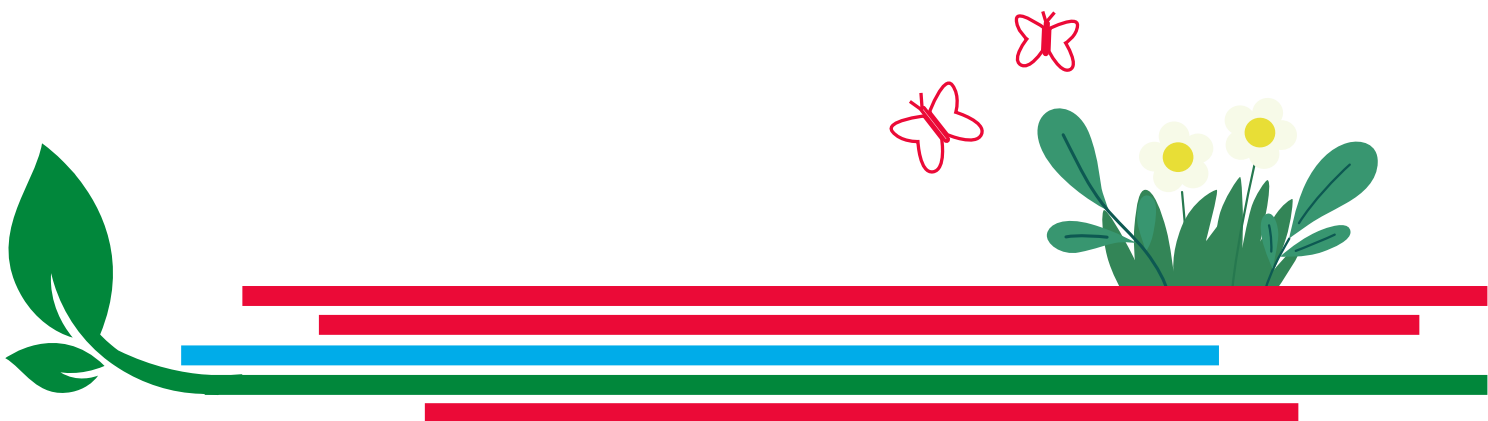
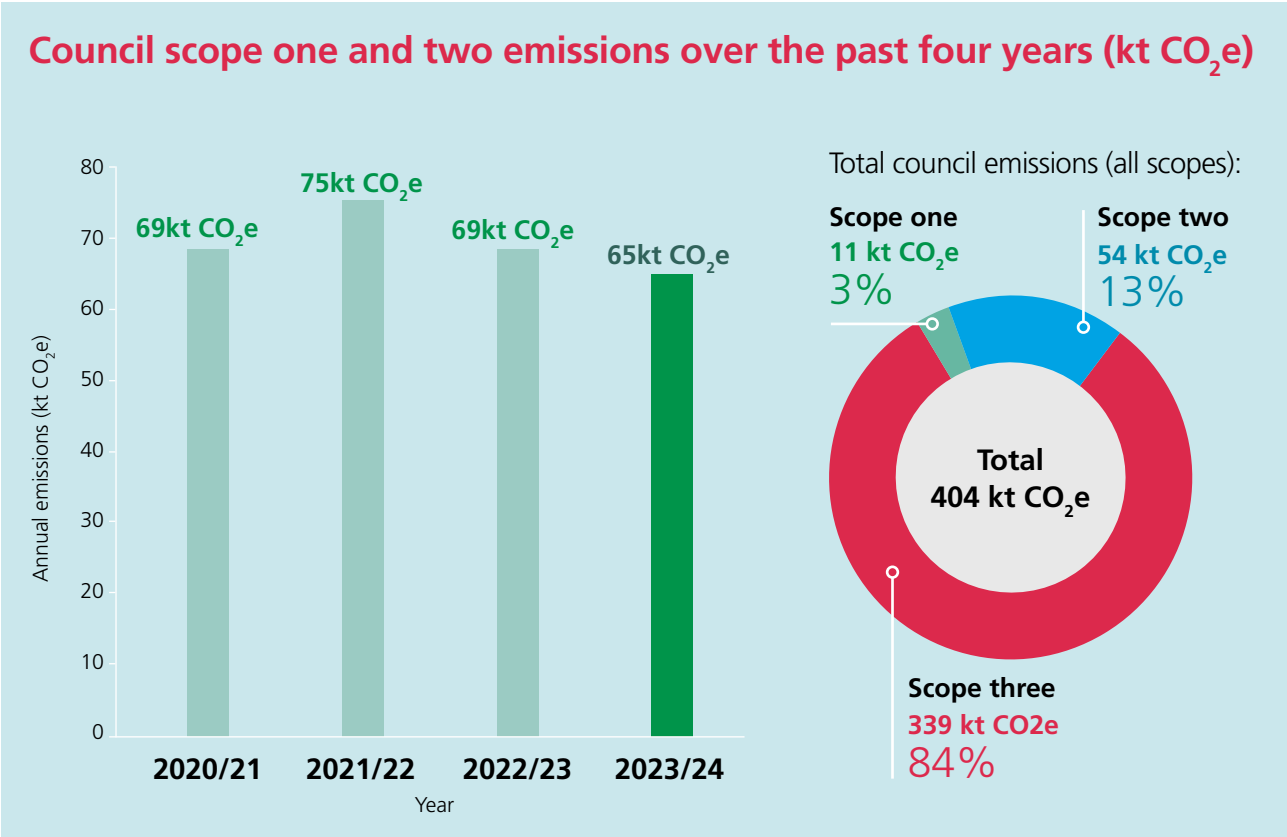
### This is made-up of



# Emissions from the council

We're also focussing on emissions from the council, which form part of the borough-wide figures set out above. We have set a target to halve our operational council emissions by 2026. We have continued to reduce our scope one and two emissions. Compared to last year these decreased from 69 to 65 kt CO<sub>2</sub>e. However, after increased spending, our scope three emissions have risen by 10% to 339 kt CO<sub>2</sub>e.

We calculate our scope three emissions by looking at how much we spend on different things. This gives us a simple understanding of emissions from the things we buy. This year our spending has increased in terms of the number of goods and services we bought. However, spending also increased due to cost of those items rising due to inflation. Both of these things have led to an increase in scope three emissions, and highlights what will be a priority area for the year ahead.



# THE LAST YEAR IN ACTION

Our climate action plan details how we are working to reduce emissions in the borough. This includes key activities for each action and measurements such as cost. This section highlights some of our progress over the past year.



## Buildings and energy

### Investing in our leisure centres

One of our biggest programmes of work is making green improvements in our leisure centres. These buildings are some of our largest energy consumers, needing lots of power to keep our pools and gyms running. A detailed programme is underway and there have already been some successes – like new pool covers, LED lighting and solar panels on Peckham Pulse Leisure Centre.



*Solar panels on Peckham Pulse Leisure Centre*

### Pilot project to move schools away from gas

We delivered a major retrofit project at Crampton Primary School in Walworth. This school is a 1960s school with ageing gas boilers meaning it was burning fossil fuels and wasting lots of energy and money. We have made upgrades to the building as well as replacing the gas boilers with new air source heat pumps. This will slash its carbon footprint and also improve air quality for the pupils and neighbouring area. We're now using what we've learnt from this project to deliver similar projects for more of our schools.

### Strengthening our planning policy

Work to enhance planning guidance and new policy is well underway. Improved policy guidance is vital in ensuring that new development, and adaptations to existing development, consider climate impacts and resilience to issues such as overheating and flooding. Work will also commence on the Southwark Plan review to update the climate and energy policies.

In autumn 2024 we consulted on new Climate and Environment and Householder Development Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD). The Householder Development SPD was adopted at Cabinet in July 2025. The Climate and Environment SPD is scheduled for adoption in October 2025.



*New LED streetlighting being installed*

### LED streetlighting rollout

We have now completed the roll-out of our LED streetlight programme. This has seen us replace all 17,000 highways streetlights across the borough. LED lights use up to 75% less energy than traditional lighting, cutting carbon emissions and saving us money. They also last much longer before needing to be replaced, even up to as much as 50,000 hours more. That means we also have to replace them less, helping to reduce waste and save us money.



## Working across the borough

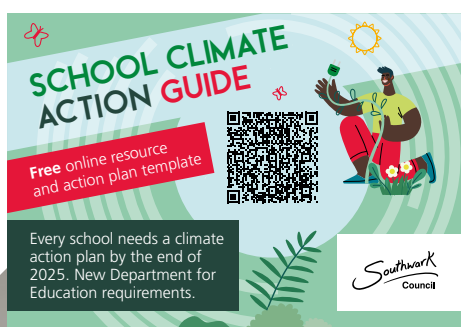
### Community energy

Southwark Community Energy Fund provides grants to community groups, schools and faith groups to make green building improvements that tackle fuel poverty. In our first round, we awarded £400,000 to 22 projects. Last year saw these projects delivering transformative change across the borough to reduce emissions, help tackle inequality and support a just transition.

After this success, we held a second round in early 2025. This has led to another £400,000 being awarded to 23 projects – ranging from solar panels on schools to fuel poverty workshops.

### Joining forces with schools for climate action

Through working with schools and students in our climate action schools network, we produced an easy-to-use guide and template to help local schools take climate action. The guide will help education providers to create a climate action plan so they can go green and create new opportunities for students and staff alike. It will also help them to comply with new government requirements. Our network now stands at 28 schools from across the borough.



*Westminster House Youth Club with new infrared heating funded through community energy*

**£800,000**  
AWARDED TO 45 PROJECTS

**£1,376,620**  
OF SUPPORT TO RESIDENTS

### Energy savers service

The energy savers service continues to run. This is a services available through Citizen's Advice Southwark. Since opening in 2022, it has delivered £1,376,620 of support to residents looking to save on their heating bills. So far, it has supported 1,171 vulnerable residents (as of March 2025).

### Providing free green homes advice

We have continued to support the Energy Advice Centre at London Southbank University. This provides a free green homes advice service for residents. Over the past year, it gave 106 pieces of advice to help residents make their homes more efficient and reduce bills. It also provides advice to residents to stay cooler in the summer, without increasing bills.



*Children from Southwark schools at the launch of our school climate action plan guide*

# STREETS AND TRANSPORT

## Making our streets cleaner, greener and safer for everyone

Last year we continued to support the borough to move away from cars by freeing up space for walking, cycling and public transport. This included adopting our Streets for People delivery plan and launching our walking, cycling and electric vehicle plans.



*Streets for People continues to encourage more people to walk and cycle*



*New flood protection bund at Peckham Rye Park*

## Preparing the borough for increased flooding

We updated our local flood risk strategy. It sets out how we will continue to secure and increase protections over the next five years. That includes a range of different projects to protect our residents and businesses from flooding. This includes green drainage in parks and on streets that help improve biodiversity as well as combat flooding. We were also ranked number one in the country for dealing with flooding on the roads by the National Highways and Transport Public Satisfaction Survey.







*We're helping  
more people  
walk and cycle*



## Working across the borough

### Helping residents to walk and cycle more

A key part of our Streets for People programme is the work we are doing to help people to walk and cycle more. Last year our programme delivered:

- an increase in cycle hangars to 844, providing over 4,700 bike spaces
- cycling training to over 6,000 adults and children
- more pedestrian crossings, taking us to 201 new locations in the past six years
- improvements to walking and cycling in Dulwich Village junction, Bermondsey Street and four pocket parks in Walworth



**INCREASED CYCLE  
HANGARS TO  
844**



**CYCLE TRAINING FOR  
6,000  
ADULTS AND CHILDREN**



**201  
NEW PEDESTRIAN  
CROSSING**

# NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

## Increasing the number of trees

We've continued to plant more trees over the past year. This includes:



**7,800**  
MORE TREES  
PLANTED



**29** SCHOOLS  
HELPED PLANT  
**400** TREES



*Tree planting has been continuing across the borough*



*Community gardening site at Camberwell Triangle*

## Allowing the 'right to grow'

We became the first London borough to commit to creating a free, accessible map of all public land that is suitable for community cultivation or wildlife projects.





## Working across the borough

### Funding new community-led nature projects

As part of our efforts to boost biodiversity in the borough, we have awarded £550,000 to 12 community-led projects that will improve the natural environment and create new habitats for local wildlife.

It includes a variety of projects, such as new wildlife ponds in parks and investment in neighbourhood nature reserves, creation of new green spaces on estates, a new green roof on a set of garages as well as a project to reunite the ancient and popular woodlands of Sydenham Hill Wood and Dulwich Wood. Projects also help to tackle inequality and support a just transition to a greener borough by improving access to green spaces.

**"We're delighted... the funding will allow us to expand public access to the nature reserve through a program of volunteer workdays, and incrementally make improvements to the reserve's biodiversity and habitat value in the coming year."**

Paul McGann, Galleywall Nature Reserve



*Paul and Alfie at Galleywall Nature Reserve*



*A wildlife pond in Galleywall Nature Reserve*

### Southwark biodiversity partnership

This group has been running since 2004 to help promote and protect local nature. It plays a vital role in managing our green spaces for plants and wildlife.

# GREEN ECONOMY

## Helping residents tackle food waste

In October 2024, we rolled out food waste collections throughout Southwark. Food waste collections help us generate green energy and agricultural fertilisers. This helps us to reduce carbon emissions and reduce the costs of providing services, as this is much cheaper than disposal of waste. Thanks to residents separating their food waste, by April 2025 we'd already recycled about 2,300 tonnes of food waste. This continues to increase each week as more residents start to use the service.

## More green jobs and skills



**2,300**  
**GREEN JOBS CREATED**  
in Southwark since 2022



**317**  
**SOUTHWARK RESIDENTS**  
trained through Green Skills  
Hub in partnership with  
London South Bank University



*New food  
waste bins on  
Southwark estates*

## Working across the borough

### Leading the way with the sharing economy

Following the success of the first Library of Things site in Canada Water, we worked with the social enterprise to fund two new locations. Library of Things are now open in Dulwich Leisure Centre and Castle Leisure Centre, as well as the original site in Canada Water Library. This means most Southwark residents now have access to an affordable sharing library within 1.5 miles of their home.

By using the sites, residents and businesses can affordably access useful items like carpet cleaners, drills and sewing machines for a few pounds per day, instead of buying brand new items that won't be used regularly.

In its first two years, our Canada Water site welcomed over 2000 residents. Through their use, they were able to prevent 22 tonnes of waste from being created and saved 64 tonnes of carbon (the same as taking 37 petrol cars off the road).



*Opening event at the Castle Leisure  
Centre Library of Things*



**"I wanted to check the draught or cold spots for ventilation around sash windows after some roof leaks nearby last year. It didn't reveal any particular issue but was incredible for spotting some colder spots in roof indicating weaker insulation... Fantastic"**



Kibbs, local resident after borrowing a thermal imaging camera



*Matthew, one of our first borrowers at the Library of Things in Dulwich Leisure Centre*



*Two residents at the clothes swap shop held in Canada Water Library during climate week*

## Helping high streets move beyond waste

Last year, we partnered with ReLondon to support 16 businesses to reduce their waste and help them to grow. This used grant funding from Southwark Pioneers Fund and is helping a wide range of local businesses from restaurants to local markets.

## Climate week in Southwark

During London Climate Action Week, we brought together a series of free community events. The events ran across the borough, between Saturday 21 and Sunday 29 June including a High Streets for People event. More than 500 people came to these events to connect with neighbours, learn new skills and take climate action.

## Local businesses

We have been using a range of forums to engage with businesses, including our local Business Improvement Districts (BIDs). Last year we continued to support Southwark Climate Collective. This network was created to help small and medium sized businesses take positive environmental action. It has been supporting 160 businesses across the borough to make plans for reducing emissions.

# PEOPLE AND RESOURCES

## Campaigning for green and decent homes

We have been leading a campaign known as Securing the Future of Council Housing. As part of this we're calling for a fully funded green and decent homes programme to deliver safe, secure and healthy homes. The campaign is backed by 111 other councils, and calls for national investment that would:

- modernise and upgrade homes
- decarbonise and support net zero
- improve health
- support green skills and grow the green economy
- safeguard the future of council housing



*Campaigning  
for green and  
decent homes*





## Our pension fund

As of March 2025, we have achieved an 82% reduction of our pension fund's carbon footprint.

## Working across the borough

### Raising money with residents

We have continued to grow our local community of investors through Southwark Green Investment. Through the first three rounds, we have raised £2.5 million. This new funding is already having an impact, with over £1 million already being used last year to make a range of climate projects become a reality.



*One of the new cycle hangars funded through Southwark Green Investment 1*



*Planting a new nature garden in Bermondsey, funded through Southwark Green Investment 2*

### Community stakeholder panel

This group includes local organisations that are interested in climate change and groups that represent local communities. The group continued to meet over the past year, including a focussed workshop on updating the climate action plan.

### Delivery partner network

This group includes our large organisations, like universities and hospitals. The group continues to meet to share knowledge and collaborate on opportunities to work together for example through partnering on funding bids.

# LOOKING AHEAD – A YEAR OF DELIVERY

## Greening our buildings

Our focussed programme of green upgrades at leisure centres, council offices and schools will be continuing at pace over the next year. This will include a wide range of measures such as heat pumps, solar panels and energy efficiency improvements. The work has a clear programme for the next year, and when delivered will reduce emissions from our operations by half when compared with 2022.

## Bringing climate action into our budget

Once we have updated our climate action plan, we will be working across the council to embed these actions into our financial budgeting process for the next year. This is a process known as climate budgeting. It will allow us to clearly map out how our spending plans relate to our climate goals and will provide an extra level of governance within the council. This will help us to connect our goal for being a well-run council that gets value for money, with our carbon-neutral target.

## Preparing the borough for flooding

As part of our work to keep residents, businesses and buildings safe from flooding, we will be installing a series of green drainage projects in key flooding hotspots. These projects will use natural solutions to flooding, by using methods such as rain gardens that will increase biodiversity as well as flood protection.



*Green drainage projects will be going in to key areas*







*Flashy Wings Ministry after a fuel poverty workshop delivered through community energy funding*

## Becoming a council of climate experts

We will be rolling out climate change training for all staff at every level and publishing an internal climate resource hub. This will help our entire workforce to understand the challenge of tackling the climate emergency, including risks and opportunities that they face in their role.

Alongside this, we will also be continuing our work to reduce the emissions that result from the contracts and services we buy. As shown by this year's data, this is the largest area of emissions (scope three) that we as a council are responsible for and will continue to be a key area of focus.

## Delivering more community climate action

The success of our biodiversity fund and community energy fund will continue to be supported over the next year. Community-led nature recovery projects and fuel poverty projects will be appearing all over the borough, and we will be supporting the non-profit groups delivering these projects with ongoing advice and monitoring. We will also be launching a third round of community energy fund, as we continue to support our growing community energy sector that puts power back in the hands of residents and groups, reducing bills, tackling inequality and cutting emissions.



### More delivery for the year ahead



**6,000**  
**SECURE CYCLE**  
**PARKING SPACES**  
across the borough  
by March 2026



**IMPROVEMENTS**  
**TO KEY ROUTES**  
including the cycleways  
from Peckham to  
Rotherhithe, Tanner  
Street to Willow  
Walk, and around  
Bermondsey Street

# ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES

Each year we set out how we are responding to ongoing challenges around funding, resource and behaviour change. These barriers continue to affect our ability to match action to the scale of our ambition.



*The Housing Minister speaks at an event organised through our campaigning*

## Funding

There continues to be an immense funding gap that needs to be closed if we are going to realise our ambition to become carbon neutral. As a council we also need to ensure we deliver excellent value for money, running services well and making sure every penny we spend is for the benefit of the people we serve.



**£11 MILLION**  
secured of new  
government funding

### What we're doing

- we were successful in securing over £11 million of new government funding for clean energy projects across five leisure centres, two schools and over a hundred council homes
- we have continued to grow our local community of investors through Southwark Green Investment raising £2.5 million out of our targeted £6 million
- we will be introducing climate budgeting to clearly map out how our spending plans relate to our climate goals
- we are continuing to lobby government on reforming council housing and upgrading and extending the Bakerloo line



## Resources

There are also challenges around resources and the expertise needed across the borough to reduce carbon. Our wide-ranging actions need to be delivered quickly but also have to be done alongside other demands. Similarly, if we are to reduce emissions many more people need to be trained in new green jobs to carry out this work.

### What we're doing

- we have continued to address resource gaps within the council, including bringing in project management expertise in retrofitting council buildings
- training and skills within the council continues to be a focus and we will be rolling out climate change training for all staff at every level
- at a borough level, we have supported the local economy to create more green jobs, already exceeding our target of 2,000
- we continue to work hard to address the skills gap that exists in delivering a green future, through London South Bank University Green Skills Hub



*Clothes mending workshops during climate week*



**2,000**  
green jobs created  
exceeding our target

## Changing behaviours

To deliver our action plan for the whole borough we will need extensive behaviour change from stakeholders, businesses and residents across the borough.

### What we're doing

- our Streets for People programme is continuing to support residents to do more walking and cycling
- we are working with key stakeholder groups through our engagement networks to help us engage more meaningfully with different communities in the borough
- a week of free community events were held for people of all ages across the borough during London Climate Action Week
- we are continuing to promote positive climate behaviours through services like our food waste collections, Library of Things sites and community funding streams on energy and biodiversity



For more information please visit  
[www.southwark.gov.uk/climate](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/climate)