



# Southwark's Borough Plan 2020-22



# Leader's foreword

As the new Leader of Southwark Council, I am proud to take forward this ambitious plan to build a better future for the people of Southwark. Our borough is an amazing place and I'm proud of the work we have done over the last ten years to deliver on our commitments to residents: to make Southwark clean, green and safe, to build more homes local people can afford, to create jobs and opportunities for residents and to give young people in our borough the best start in life. We have made good progress in delivering on many of the commitments we made in 2014 and we remain ambitious for the future, despite the significant challenges facing our borough.



The COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on our borough, from residents who have sadly lost loved ones, to businesses which have been forced to close. The pandemic has also changed the way we work as a council and we have taken urgent action to respond, keeping vital frontline services operating and supporting residents and businesses through the crisis. The response of people in Southwark to the pandemic, including volunteers, frontline workers, public services, charities, faith groups and businesses, has been truly inspiring. We have shown incredible resilience as a borough and I am confident that together we will not just rebuild from the crisis, but build something better.

Responding to the pandemic and supporting our borough through this difficult period is our biggest priority, alongside working towards the borough's long-term recovery. We know that the financial impact of the pandemic is also likely to last for many years. However, COVID-19 is not the only challenge we face as a borough. The unequal impact of the pandemic on different communities has shone a light on wider inequalities and injustice in our society. My ambition as Leader is to unite communities in Southwark so we can break down that inequality. Our vision is to build a Southwark where everyone has a home, where everyone can get a decent job, where we end our carbon emissions and where everyone is empowered to make the best of their life.

This plan sets out our bold ambitions and commitments to the people of Southwark and the actions we will take between now and May 2022 to build a stronger, more equal borough. As Leader, I want to work with local communities and all of our partners across Southwark's voluntary, public and private sectors to deliver this ambition and unlock the amazing potential in every part of our borough.

**Cllr Kieron Williams**  
Leader of Southwark Council

# Introduction

This Borough Plan sets out our priorities and our promises to the people of Southwark.

The plan considers the progress we have made since we set out 4-year commitments in 2018 and consolidates our ambitions for the next two years. It reflects the significant changes that have affected the borough since 2018, in particular the COVID-19 pandemic, and the new and refreshed priorities the council is adopting in response.

Southwark, like the whole country and indeed the world, has been significantly affected by the global COVID-19 pandemic. The crisis has had a huge impact on our borough, and the council itself, which has had to fundamentally change the work we do in response. The council has played a critical role in Southwark's public health response to the pandemic, as well as keeping frontline services operating during the crisis and working with partners to develop new structures to support our residents. The pandemic and economic fallout has also had a lasting impact on Southwark's finances. The cost of our response, alongside huge loss of income, means the council is facing a significant shortfall in our budget.

Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, supporting local residents affected and rebuilding the local economy is the council's biggest priority for the coming months and years. We must build COVID-19 resilience into our long term plans, preventing further spread of the virus and protecting residents. The pandemic has also shone a light on wider inequalities which persist in our society as a whole. Tackling inequality and injustice is a priority for the council, and we are committed to taking action identified through Southwark Stands Together, our borough-wide approach to tackling entrenched racism and injustice. The disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, and recent events around the world, have shown us how far we still need to go before we live in a world that values every life equally.

We face an unprecedented challenge as a borough but we will not let it dent our ambition for the future. This plan sets out the bold action we will take to create a fairer and more just society in our borough. We will continue to deliver new quality, affordable homes, take action to tackle the Climate Emergency, rebuild the local economy and give all young people in our borough the best opportunities in life. We will also harness the potential of partners, building alliances across London and nationally, to deliver on our ambitions.

# Our Values

Everything that we do as a council is to work towards a fairer, more equal and just Southwark. Our values inform how we will do this, and will guide our decisions and determine how we deliver on the commitments that we have made.

In 2010 we set out our vision for Southwark. A decade later, some of the challenges have changed and some of the solutions have too, but our values remain the same. We remain committed to supporting, standing up for and empowering residents. Our residents are still at the heart of everything we do and they have helped us form the values that underpin the work of the council. Our values will continue to inform all the work we do across the council and what you can expect from us.

We will:

- Treat residents as if they were a valued member of our own family;
- Be open, honest and accountable;
- Work for everyone to realise their own potential;
- Spend money as if it were from our own pocket;
- Make Southwark a place to be proud of;
- Always work to make Southwark more equal and just;
- Stand against all forms of discrimination and racism.

# COVID-19 response

COVID-19 has had a huge impact on Southwark. The pandemic has been an unprecedented challenge for the whole country, with thousands of lives tragically lost and millions more profoundly impacted. However, the community response in Southwark has also been incredible. The council, public services, voluntary sector, businesses and residents have come together to support our residents through the crisis, in ways that should make our whole community proud.

We know that there is still a long way to go to tackle the public health crisis, to stop the spread of COVID and ensure vital health services in the borough are able to recover. We will work with the NHS, local communities and businesses to respond to the crisis and to support residents through this difficult period. Through the Community Support Alliance, we will continue to build on the positive work of the council and voluntary and community organisations to support vulnerable residents during the pandemic.

## We will:

- Develop and lead a Community Support Alliance bringing together the voluntary & community sector, council, NHS and volunteers to support our communities through the pandemic and beyond, building on the work of Southwark's Community Hub
- Continue to strengthen and deliver an effective local test, trace, isolate and support programme
- Work with the NHS to promote take-up of COVID vaccination when available to relevant populations
- Support people in Southwark to understand COVID guidance and restrictions
- Support local businesses to be COVID safe and take action against the minority of businesses who risk people's health by breaking the COVID safety laws
- Provide targeted engagement and support to groups most affected by COVID, including Black, Asian and minority ethnic residents, older people and those with disabilities and long term health conditions
- Ensure social care, schools and community services have access to appropriate PPE, testing and support
- Work with the NHS to ensure a high take up of flu vaccinations
- Work with the CCG to ensure effective health recovery in Southwark
- Lobby the government to provide the funding and resources needed to effectively respond to COVID-19 and provide the support residents need



# Southwark Together

Southwark is a unique, vibrant borough and our greatest asset is our residents and communities. Our vision is for united, connected communities across the whole borough and everything we do aims to ensure that the opportunities Southwark has to offer are accessible and open to all. We know that inequality, injustice and discrimination are still huge challenges and we are committed to breaking down inequality and creating a fairer, more just society.

Although we are one borough, we have not all been equally affected by COVID-19. The pandemic, and recent events around the world, have shone a light on wider inequalities which persist in our society as a whole. As a council we have never accepted things as they are, and our ambition always has been and remains to improve the life chances of everyone who lives in our borough. Through Southwark Stands Together, our borough-wide response to entrenched racism and injustice, we have worked together with local communities to identify and implement solutions.

We are committed to working with our communities, from partners to faith groups to charities and voluntary organisations, to challenge ourselves and others to be better at every opportunity. We will take action across all areas of the council's work, and ensure that equality is embedded in everything we do. We will support the resilience, unity and cohesion of Southwark's communities, and take positive action to ensure equality of opportunity.

## We will:

- Strengthen our approach to equalities, embedding it further in everything we do as a council
- Ensure the top of the council's workforce is proportionately representative of Southwark's BAME population by 2030
- Work with partners to increase representation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities on Southwark boards and in other community leadership positions for example on Tenants and Residents Association committees
- Celebrate and promote the rich diversity of the borough and support Black, Asian and minority ethnic artists to create and showcase new work, including drawing up plans with the community for a Black cultural centre
- Work with the police and our Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities to strengthen trust in policing
- Increase the quality and effectiveness of the council's engagement with Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities
- Review the council's grants to make sure they develop the best value for communities and remove barriers to equal access to funding, particularly for Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups
- Make Southwark a Borough of Sanctuary, working with community groups and partners to help and support refugee, migrant and asylum seekers in Southwark, and campaign to end the Hostile Environment
- Work with the LGBTQ+ community to secure a new LGBTQ+ cultural space and ensure it meets the community's needs
- Celebrate and support Southwark's EU citizens and protect all local residents from the effects of Brexit
- Campaign to ensure the Windrush generation are compensated by the national government for past injustices
- Tackle radicalisation, extremism, and hate-crime
- Make adult learning accessible for all, including basic qualifications in English, maths and digital skills

# A green and inclusive economy

Southwark has a thriving local economy and our businesses and employers are an essential part of what makes Southwark a unique place to live and work. We are committed to growing the local economy by supporting local businesses and tackling the barriers that hold people back from securing good work. Over the last two years, we have made great strides in working towards making Southwark a full employment borough. We have supported almost 2,800 residents into jobs, created hundreds of quality apprenticeships and 66 more employers in Southwark are paying the London Living Wage. We have taken steps to address inequality and low pay and the council has been recognised as an excellent employer with accreditation from the Mayor's Good Work Standard.

The economy has been hit hard by COVID-19 and the impact on some local businesses and employment levels has been catastrophic. We have already distributed over £62 million in grants to Southwark businesses during COVID and set up a £2m Business Hardship Fund. We know that the biggest challenge our borough's economy will face over the next two years is recovering from the impact of the pandemic. We are committed to supporting local businesses through the period of renewal and we will also continue to support residents into work. We know that the pandemic will have a huge impact on young people, particularly on those students leaving school this year. We will guarantee access to education, employment, training or volunteering for every school leaver, to ensure that the pandemic does not stop them reaching their potential.

We want to grow Southwark's economy, investing in our town centres and supporting thriving sectors such as construction, cultural and creative, and biomedical, to grow. We know that any economic recovery must contribute to tackling the Climate Emergency, with support for green businesses and an ambitious Green New Deal for Southwark. Through the recovery, we will also seek to tackle the barriers which hold back individuals and businesses from playing a full part in our economy.

## We will:

- Return employment levels to where they were before COVID-19
- Help 5,000 people into work including by launching a Southwark Green New Deal to create 1,000 green jobs
- Guarantee access to education, employment, training or volunteering for every school leaver
- Provide one to one support for residents who have lost their jobs because of COVID-19 to help them re-enter the workplace
- Help Southwark's high streets to be thriving and vibrant, seeking to achieve full occupancy and encourage residents to shop local
- Grow Southwark's construction industry including by establishing a Southwark Construction Company that builds green homes and provides jobs to local residents
- Support Southwark's Black, Asian and minority ethnic-led and women-led businesses to secure contracts with public sector anchor institutions
- Protect, promote and support Southwark's creative and cultural sector
- Back new and growing green business and social enterprises, with help to access business support, affordable workspace and finance to help to deliver the new infrastructure Southwark needs
- Create new quality apprenticeships and internships
- Encourage all Southwark businesses with more than 50 employees to publish their Black, Asian and minority ethnic and gender pay gaps
- Provide effective business support to Black, Asian and minority ethnic-led businesses
- Establish a Creative and Cultural District in Camberwell and Peckham
- Develop a night-time economy plan to ensure Southwark's rich nightlife flourishes post-COVID



# Climate Emergency

Southwark declared a Climate Emergency in 2019, recognising that this is one of the biggest issues affecting our borough, the country and indeed the world. The Climate Emergency has a direct impact on Southwark residents and the situation requires urgent action at all levels of government, businesses and individuals. The council has already taken action to reduce carbon, but we know we need to go further to tackle this challenge.

We have already made good progress on our commitment to halve council emissions by 2022 and Southwark is leading the way on sustainable divestment. We have published our ambitious Climate Emergency Strategy, setting out how we will work towards making Southwark carbon neutral by 2030. We have installed over 100 lamppost charging points and 45 rapid chargers for electric cars, and made it easier for people to walk and cycle instead of driving. Our Back the Bakerloo campaign has the support of over 20,000 Londoners and we'll continue to campaign for the Bakerloo line extension, which will reduce air pollution and congestion on the roads, as well as improving transport links and accessibility in Old Kent Road.

We will go further to tackle the Climate Emergency, putting the environment at the heart of everything we do as a council. We will retrofit our council homes to make them greener and more energy efficient, and we will ensure new homes are built to the highest environmental standards. We will build on positive changes introduced during the pandemic to enable residents to walk and cycle safely by creating more space for active travel and improving air quality. We will plant thousands of new trees and continue to protect Southwark's biodiversity, for all residents to enjoy.

## We will:

- Make Southwark carbon neutral by 2030 and deliver the Southwark Climate Emergency Strategy
- Plant 10,000 new trees by 2022
- Make Southwark a Low Traffic Borough, dedicating more of our highways to zero carbon uses including walking and cycling and improving air quality by reducing car journeys
- Double the number of bike hangars in the borough by 2022 and work towards every home in Southwark having access to a safe place to keep a bike
- Continue the work we began in 2010 to halve council emissions by 2022
- Make the Old Kent Road opportunity area a carbon-neutral development
- Use council land and roofs to produce clean energy
- Divest council investments away from fossil fuels and into sustainable alternatives
- Bring forward low waste, low energy new council homes
- Work towards having electric car charging points on every street with an additional 200 charging points delivered by 2022
- Vary parking charges to discourage the most polluting vehicles
- Protect and enhance Southwark's biodiversity and make nature accessible for all
- Boost access to cycle hire
- Campaign to extend the Bakerloo Line to Old Kent Road and introduce an active travel plan for the area
- Work with the Mayor of London to improve cycling infrastructure in Rotherhithe and campaign for a river crossing that connects Canada Water to Canary Wharf
- Campaign for the reopening of Camberwell Station and promote active travel in the area

# Tackling health inequalities

In 2018 we set out our commitment to reducing health inequality, so that whatever your background you can live a healthy life. We want to break down barriers that prevent people from thriving in Southwark.

Over the last two years we have invested in mental health services, supporting over 6,000 people in the community through the Southwark Mental Health and Wellbeing Hub, and training 121 mental health first aiders. We've made it easier to cycle by delivering bikeability training for nearly 10,000 children and adults and building nearly 10km of new accessible cycling routes across the borough. Southwark has led the way with free swim and gym for all our residents and we have successfully introduced free swimming lesson pilots for adults. As our leisure centres try to recover from the significant impact of COVID-19 and the resulting closures, we are committed to ensuring our residents can continue to access high quality leisure services.

The disproportionate impact of COVID-19 has shown clearly that breaking down barriers that prevent people from living a healthy life must include tackling health inequalities that affect different communities. We are committed to closing the gap in health inequalities and tackling health issues that particularly affect our Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. We know that COVID-19 will have a long-term impact on our borough and we will continue to deliver the public health response to the pandemic, and work to tackle issues of loneliness and mental health, which have increased as a result. We will continue to support and protect our most vulnerable residents, and we will continue to do everything we can to make it easy for residents in Southwark to lead healthy and active lives.

## We will:

- Close the gap in health inequalities that affect our Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities
- Tackle food insecurity and obesity through a borough-wide Sustainable Food Strategy
- Increase HIV testing to reduce late diagnosis, particularly in Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities
- Have zero tolerance on domestic abuse and ensure domestic abuse survivors can access high quality services and do not end up without a home
- Build trust and confidence of Black, Asian and minority ethnic patients in the health system
- Work with the CCG to develop new health hubs
- Introduce a Residential Care Charter that protects vulnerable residents and the people who are working to keep them safe
- Open two nursing homes
- Build extra care housing
- Train even more mental health first aiders
- Continue to protect adult mental health services
- Invest in our leisure centres and ensure our residents can continue to access high quality leisure services
- Make walking fun, safe and accessible by continuing to develop green links

# Homes for all

Having a decent home is the foundation of everything in life. Everyone should have a safe place they are proud to call home. We will leave no stone unturned in meeting the housing needs of our borough, including by building new quality council homes. Southwark Council is the biggest social landlord in London and we are committed to maintaining the highest standards, so all our homes are clean, safe and cared for. As more people in Southwark than ever before are living in private rented homes, we're taking action to drive up standards in the private rented sector. And we're empowering residents to make improvements on their own homes and estates, and to have a greater say in decisions which affect their communities.

We have already made progress towards our ambitious homebuilding target and we are on track to deliver 1,000 more council homes by 2022, with thousands more being designed in consultation with local residents. We've launched the Great Estates programme with a £1m pilot scheme and we are hitting our ambitious target to turn around empty homes to make them ready for new tenants to move in. We have brought housing repairs back in-house to improve standards and we've changed the rules on estate improvements like security doors so those who live on estates get the biggest say.

COVID-19 has had an enormous and detrimental impact on our borough, but it has also shown us what is possible. Southwark, like other boroughs, took quick and widespread action to get all rough sleepers off the streets of our borough. This work must continue and we have set out a ten-year vision to end homelessness in Southwark, developed in partnership with Britain's leading homelessness charities. The housing crisis means that Southwark still faces a significant shortage of affordable homes. We will continue our long-term homebuilding programme, invest in and improve our estates, and make the case nationally for the powers and resources to build the homes our residents need.

## We will:

- Increase the number of council homes in Southwark, with at least 1,000 more built or on site by 2022
- Work to end rough sleeping in Southwark, including by campaigning for an end to '*no recourse to public funds*' laws that trap people on the street
- Take action to reduce the number of empty homes in our borough, so more local people can move into them
- Introduce a Southwark Renters Union and campaign for fair rents and tenancies for private renters.
- Deliver a Southwark Gold Standard for private rental properties and clamp down on irresponsible short term lets
- Retrofit council homes to make them greener
- Secure the future of the Ledbury Estate, improving the estate for all residents and increasing the number of council homes
- Work with the community to agree major improvements to the Tustin Estate, ensuring residents have the final say and there is no reduction in council homes
- Refurbish and expand Maydeu House, increasing the number of council homes and providing new council rented key worker homes
- Deliver quality new homes for residents on the Aylesbury Estate, with no reduction in the number of social rent homes
- Introduce a new quality standard for temporary accommodation that guarantees it is good quality and families have self-contained accommodation
- Make it easier to book and track repairs to council homes online and ensure more jobs are done right first time
- Improve the reliability and energy efficiency of the heat networks that serve our council homes
- Deliver the Great Estates Guarantee initiatives so that every council estate is clean, safe and cared for
- Empower more people who live in council homes to get involved in making decisions about their homes and estates
- Lobby the government to fix the broken housing system, supporting councils to build the truly affordable homes our residents need, ensuring benefits cover the cost of renting locally, ending Right to Buy, tackling the cladding scandal and pursuing land reform

# A great start in life

Every child deserves the best start in life. We want all children and young people in the borough to grow up in a safe, healthy and happy environment where they have the opportunity to reach their potential.

Schools in Southwark have improved significantly, with 94% of schools now rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding'. Since 2018 we've opened a new secondary school in Borough and rolled out free healthy school meals to school nurseries. We've closed roads around schools to make it easier for children to walk and cycle to school, and over half of primary schools in Southwark are now taking part in the '*daily mile*'. We have improved opportunities for young people, launching the Positive Futures Fund, re-opening the Blue Youth Club in Bermondsey, and working with young people to find solutions to knife crime. We have protected funding for mental health services for children and young people and Southwark was the first council to set an ambitious target to ensure that 100% of young people with a mental health condition receive the support they need.

Schools in Southwark have gone above and beyond during the pandemic, remaining open for vulnerable and key worker children and taking necessary steps to ensure that they can safely reopen for all students. We will support schools to ensure that children do not fall behind because of COVID-19, and to close the attainment gap between the most and least advantaged pupils. We will continue to protect mental health funding and open the new Mental Health Hub in Peckham for young people, to give all our young people the best start in life.

## We will:

- Support schools to close the attainment gap and ensure children can catch up on education missed during COVID-19
- Support 100% of children and young people with a diagnosable mental health need
- Work towards 100% inclusion of pupils in Southwark schools
- Improve air quality and road safety at every primary school and introduce 60 '*school streets*' to close roads at drop off and collection time to get more children walking and cycling to school
- Invest in young people in Southwark, ensuring our youth services meet their needs and giving them a stronger voice in decisions which affect them
- Continue to provide Free Healthy School Meals to all primary school children and school nurseries
- Work with schools and the community to tackle holiday hunger and campaign for government to provide necessary funding
- Guarantee education, employment or training for every care leaver
- Work with communities to find local solutions that protect young people from community harm and exploitation, including knife crime
- Mainstream the Positive Futures Fund so that every generation of young people can benefit from this investment
- Increase activity by introducing a '*daily mile*' in all primary schools

# Thriving neighbourhoods

Southwark is our neighbourhoods. From Bermondsey to Dulwich, Peckham to Walworth, Nunhead to Rotherhithe, Borough to Camberwell, it is the diversity of our communities that makes our borough so special. We will be ambitious for each and every part of Southwark. The pandemic has made more people want or need to stay local. We must respond to that and build more prosperous, inclusive and sustainable neighbourhoods that each have the parks, shops, cafes, leisure facilities, health centres, schools and workplaces needed for their community to thrive. Places where people can give up their cars and move around easily.

We will take pride in our town centres, work with local communities and listen to residents about the things that are important to them. We will ensure that every part of the borough has good quality services that are accessible to everyone and respond to community need. Our aim is to ensure all key services, shops and leisure facilities are within a 15 minute walk or cycle.

We will work with local people to agree a plan for each part of our borough, identifying the key things that the council and partners will do to improve life and reduce inequalities in their neighbourhood. We will join up investment in our neighbourhoods, ensuring that each of our area plans is backed by a coordinated funding plan.

We will support communities to support each other, building on the incredible community response to the pandemic to support a thriving voluntary and community sector, encouraging and supporting volunteering. We will build on the work we have already done with local communities to develop charters, setting out the long-term vision of how we will ensure new development and growth leads to better outcomes, reduced inequalities and more opportunities for local people:

- [Canada Water](#)
- [Old Kent Road](#)
- [St Thomas Street](#)
- [Borough and Bankside](#)
- [Walworth](#)
- [Bermondsey and The Blue](#)
- [Camberwell](#)
- [Peckham and Nunhead](#)
- [Dulwich](#)
- [Elephant & Castle](#)

## We will:

- Develop neighbourhood charters and action plans to ensure each part of the borough is thriving and vibrant with key services and facilities within a short walk or cycle, working with local communities
- Ensure every new development has enough GPs, parks and affordable homes and is child-friendly
- Ensure that street names, public art and Southwark's local environment reflects and celebrates our diverse communities
- Provide free fast Wi-Fi for all Southwark residents in a network of community buildings across our borough
- Ensure more residents benefit from the digital revolution by piloting free and affordable broadband on council estates
- Ensure libraries retain a central role in our local communities, with continued investment and innovation
- Open the new library and heritage centre on the Walworth Road
- Open a new, modern leisure centre at Canada Water in 2023
- Deliver more pedestrian crossings including at the junction of Lordship Lane and Dulwich Common and push TfL to make all their roads in the borough 20mph
- Ensure Kingswood House continues to benefit the local community and improve facilities on the Kingswood Estate
- Restore the Walworth Town Hall with a new publicly accessible and protected community space
- Work with residents to agree an estate improvement plan for Brandon, including better facilities for young people
- Restore the historic Nunhead Cemetery East Lodge and boundary wall.
- Deliver a new library and GP Health Centre on the Aylesbury Estate
- Create a network of accessible toilets and baby changing facilities
- Provide a responsive noise nuisance service
- Have zero tolerance on fly tipping and increase enforcement action by targeting hot spots
- Protect your finances, spend money wisely during a difficult financial period and only increase council tax to protect services for the most vulnerable

