

**Cllr Kieron Williams**  
Leader of Southwark Council  
Camberwell Green Ward

Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP  
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Dear Prime Minister,

**RE: 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26)**

As you host world leaders in Glasgow for COP26, I am writing to again commit Southwark Council to doing all we can to end our borough's contribution to global warming by 2030. But no local authority can do this without greater support. Your government must work in partnership with councils and communities to be bolder and braver in the action that you take. The resources you make available to deliver this shared ambition and responsibility are needed as soon as possible. Now is the time for action, and we call on you to use this opportunity to make the changes that are so urgently needed for the future of our communities and our planet.

Southwark Council and many other organisations in our borough have ambitious carbon reduction targets and we are already taking decisive action on this issue. However, these ambitions cannot be fully achieved without a step change in government support.

Tackling carbon use in our buildings is our biggest challenge in Southwark. We are determined to deliver a home insulation and zero carbon heating revolution that will make our homes not just zero carbon, but cosier, more economical and healthier too. We are already taking bold action to achieve this.

Southwark Council is proud to be the largest social landlord in London; with over 52,500 homes. We have started work to end carbon emission from these homes, including expanding our South East London Combined Heat and Power district heating scheme and installing heat pumps to serve over 2,100 homes. However, we estimate £2.6bn of capital expenditure is required to make all of our borough's buildings carbon neutral. We recognise and commend the recent boiler upgrade scheme and additional funding for the Social Housing Decarbonisation Scheme announced through the Heat and Buildings Strategy. However, this clearly only begins to cover a small portion of the existing need and money should be provided at scale, rather than through piecemeal schemes. We call on you to **significantly increase funding for schemes that allow both local authorities and residents to retrofit their homes, and to introduce a highly ambitious Future Homes Standard.**

Transport emissions are the next largest sector to tackle in Southwark. Transport accounts for 15% of the borough's emissions, of which around 99% comes from on-road transport. To address this, we are encouraging and supporting residents and businesses to switch away

from petrol and diesel vehicles. As part of this we are making walking and cycling easier, having installed 100 new pedestrian crossings, 117 cycle hangars, and nearly 4km of new cycle routes since March 2019. However, our ability to advance our actions relies heavily on having an agreed long-term funding deal for Transport for London. Without this in place, we cannot move forward with large schemes that would make sustainable travel more accessible, such as the Bakerloo Line Extension and Rotherhithe Bridge. Without a settlement, we are also in a weaker position to enhance our bus service and rail stations and to rollout other active travel infrastructure. **A sustainable funding deal for TfL is fundamental to reducing carbon emissions and increasing air quality not just in Southwark, but across the whole of London and beyond.**

Like all central London boroughs, we face bigger challenges in recycling and reducing waste than other parts of the country. We are working to encourage a more circular economy that reduces consumption, keeps resources in use for as long as possible, and recycles used materials. We are already ensuring that 99% of household waste does not go to landfill but we are determined to go further. For example, we are taking steps to expand food waste collection with a pilot scheme in 15,000 communal properties. We are heartened to see that additional legislation is being planned to make recycling easier, with the separate collection of household food waste becoming mandatory by 2023. However, this legislation will only be effective if local government has adequate funding to implement these policy changes. After years of running down local government finances, **new funding must be brought in to ensure we can provide more sustainable recycling methods for our residents.**

Finally, we know that generating renewable energy locally will reduce our reliance on fossil fuels. We all need to take steps to reduce our own energy use, but a supply of green energy is also needed. The council's plans for a decarbonised energy strategy and local and community sustainable energy production rely on this. We are glad that the government has announced its target for a 100% clean energy grid by 2035. However, at a local level, it is still challenging (in areas such as solar) to generate the renewable energy given the end of feed-in tariffs. With this in mind, **additional incentives are needed to help power local renewables generation.**

Ahead of the conference in Glasgow, Southwark held a conference bringing together local residents and organisations where we discussed what more we can do in Southwark to tackle climate change, but also what the message is from our residents to you. The key message coming from our residents was that they need the government to do more and to do it faster. They want the government to commit to climate justice, to make real progress on ending our reliance on fossil fuels, and to improve insulation in our homes. We have seen encouraging statements from you and the government over the last few weeks, but we urge you to do more and to do it quickly.

The COP26 conference provides the ideal moment to put the UK's approach to tackling climate change at the centre of the world's stage. We in Southwark hope that you and your government seize this opportunity, and enact the required changes that will help us all tackle the climate emergency.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely,



**Cllr Kieron Williams**  
Leader of Southwark Council