

Community Stakeholder Panel

Meeting note

Agenda: Wednesday 18 September: 6.00pm - 7.30pm.

Location: Southwark Council Office, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH (with hybrid option)

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Financing climate action in Southwark
3. Energy and buildings decarbonisation
4. Planning Policy and Climate Change
5. Forward plan
6. AOB

Attendees

| Organisation/Group | Role |
|--|--------------|
| Southwark Council – Cllr John Batteson | Chair |
| Southwark Council – Tom Sharland | Panel member |
| Southwark Law Centre | Panel member |
| Living Streets | Panel member |
| London LGBTQ Centre | Panel member |
| Southwark TUC | Panel member |
| SGTO | Panel member |
| Extinction Rebellion Southwark | Panel member |
| Southwark Council – Vanessa Parry-O’Driscoll | Guest |
| Southwark Council – Caroline George | Guest |
| Southwark Council – Lauren Wilkinson | Guest |

Apologies/Not in attendance

- Southwark Cyclists
- SDA Living
- SDCAS

Notes

1. Welcome and introductions

- Welcome from Cllr John Batteson, chair of the meeting.
- Introductions from panel members present.

2. Financing climate action in Southwark

Item status: Early engagement

Desired outcome: Seek input on principles and approaches to funding for climate action in Southwark and discuss possible projects

- Caroline George (Southwark Council) presented an update on the scale of the financial challenge in addressing climate change in Southwark. This included details on the council's commitment to deliver climate action through a £25m commitment, known as the Climate Capital Fund. Alongside the £8m that is currently available through developer offset contributions, known as the Green Buildings Fund. This was set against the scale of the challenge in Southwark, with our initial climate strategy costing the total work required, across the borough, to reach net zero at £3.92bn in 2021, a figure which will have since increased.
- The presentation looked at how the council is growing the resources available at its disposal, through government grants for example, how it is seeking to maximise funding and the areas of focus for delivery. Project updates were provided on:
 - Southwark Green Investment
 - Southwark Biodiversity Fund is open for applications from non-profits. Panellists were encouraged to take a look for their own greening/biodiversity initiatives and to promote to networks & partners.
 - Southwark Community Energy Fund. £400k has been successfully allocated to 22 projects across the borough with future rounds of funding being planned.
 - This breaks down as a total of 16 organisations and 104 buildings.
 - There was interest from the panel on what projects have been delivered and it was discussed that funding agreements have only recently been put in place. This means

some community sessions have begun, but we should see capital projects delivered from 2025 onwards.

- An initial question was received from the group on the overall level of investment that the council makes outside of the dedicated funding pots mentioned.
 - It was explained that the council has a much larger capital programme of investment, much of which crosses over with climate ambition and action. For example, the Streets for People programme and tree planting/greening.
- Further discussion centred around the challenges of securing government investment. Challenges in the past have included a significant gap in the level of funding available for councils compared to interest and value of bids submitted. This has resulted in some application streams only accepting the first x number of applications, rather than assessing all bids on merit, or awarding funding via a ballot system. Both systems are deeply flawed and the council is working politically to lobby for improvements to the system, to ensure a fair, robust approach that rewards transformative projects.
- Finally a discussion was had regarding the ability to take this funding conversation to a neighbourhood level and engage through ward forums and local meetings to ensure that local priorities are captured in any funding bids.

3. Energy and buildings decarbonisation

Item status: Live project

Desired outcome: Update on a range of ongoing energy & decarbonisation projects.

- Vanessa Parry-O'Driscoll (Southwark Council) provided an update on the council's commitment to reduce operational emissions by 50% by 2026.
- A buildings strategy has been developed which focuses on operational council buildings: such as leisure centres, offices, libraries. Initially this work does not include housing, schools or commercial property. The methodology shows that a focus on the largest, top 10 emitting buildings should be the priority as the quickest, most cost-effective way to drive down emissions.
- Details were provided on the types of measures that this would include, ranging from upgrades to building management systems and LED lighting, through to larger measures such as insulation upgrades, solar panels and heat pumps.
- The timeline for delivery was provided which is very tight given the complexity of the buildings, in particular leisure centres, which account for 6 of the top 10 emitters.
- There were question from the group around the level of funding required and if this is in place.
 - Indicatively the council do have the funding required, however, this is subject to the detailed design stage and there may be the need for additional government grants.
- A further question from the group was around Seven Islands Leisure Centre, and whether its upcoming closure had been fully communicated locally. It has, and it will also be replaced by a new, local, leisure centre at Canada Water next year.

- A recommendation was made from the panel that council buildings could openly display their energy rating, which is already being done in Westminster.
 - **Action:** Council to explore this suggestion.
- It was recognised by the group that social housing remains a particular challenge, which is not covered by this piece of work. There are significant competing funding demands around fire safety, addressing damp and mould, and making general upgrades to properties to bring them up to modern standards.
 - Retrofit and improved energy efficiency must be part of this conversation, with opportunities explored for where this can sit alongside other projects. The scale of the challenge, given the size of the council's social housing stock was noted as a major challenge.

4. Planning Policy and Climate Change

Item status: Consultation

Desired outcome: Present to the panel on the Climate Change Supplementary Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document and promote the consultation.

- Lauren Wilkinson (Southwark Council) presented to the panel on the Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document and the ongoing consultation. An overview was provided on the four consultations that are currently out for consultation until 27 November 2024.
 - Affordable Housing SPD: Setting out guidance for the delivery of affordable housing, viability and monitoring.
 - S106 and CIL SPD: Setting out the S106 and CIL obligations that support the Southwark Plan 2022 and how these work in practice.
 - Climate and Environment SPD: Setting out guidance to support implementation of climate and environmental related policy.
 - Householder SPD: Setting out guidance for householder development for good quality design.
- The panel discussed what parts of the document could be improved, alongside points and issues that need to be considered for inclusion in the document.
- Feedback from the panel focused on ensuring the council is ambitious and that there is the opportunity to be bolder. These documents will be in place for a number of years and they must push beyond current best practice to stay relevant. The panel recommended that the council should make it difficult for development to simply tick boxes with regards to emissions and sustainability. This is moving in the right direction but the panel was clear that the council should push further where possible.
- Feedback was welcomed and members were encouraged to submit formal consultation responses to ensure all points are picked up in detail and responded to.

5. Forward plan

Desired outcome: review future items on forward plan and seek ideas which panel members may wish to see on future agenda items.

- No comments.

6. AOB

- No comments.