

**SOUTHWARK
COUNCIL: 2022-2026
END OF TERM REPORT**

Leader and Chief Executive Foreword

In 2022, Southwark Council set out an ambitious programme to respond to the pressures facing our borough — the rising cost of living costs, housing need, concerns about safety, persistent health inequalities and the climate emergency.

Through our council delivery plans, we set out a shared vision with our community that together, we will build a fair, green and safe Southwark where everyone can live a good life as part of a strong community.

This end of term report sets out what has been delivered between 2022 and 2026. It shows the progress we have made, the scale of our investment, and the difference this work is making to our residents' lives. It also reflects the dedication of our staff, the strength of our partnerships, and our focus on putting residents first.

Over the past four years, we have delivered improvements in every part of the borough. We have expanded access to decent, safe and genuinely affordable homes — completing 2,500 new council homes with over 600 homes under construction, investing £250 million in existing stock, and launching the largest council housing stock condition survey in the country.

We have strengthened homelessness prevention, helped more rough sleepers into secure accommodation, and improved landlord services, with most repairs now completed right first time. Our private sector licensing scheme is making life safer and better for private tenants in the borough.

We have continued to invest in children and young people to fulfil our goal of giving every child the best start in life. 99% of Southwark schools are now rated Good or Outstanding, educational outcomes remain above national averages, and the number of children in care has reduced by 20%. Alongside this, we have expanded special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) provision, opened a new children's home, improved youth facilities, supported thousands of families through our Children and Family Hubs, and continued to ensure no child goes hungry through our free healthy school meals offer which also covers the school holidays.

Making Southwark safer has been a key focus. Through targeted investment in CCTV, lighting, community wardens, joint patrols and youth-led prevention, we have worked with the police to improve residents' feelings of safety.

We have taken action to build a stronger and more inclusive local economy. More than £40 million has been invested to help residents manage the cost of living. We have supported thousands of people into employment and training, including through our Connect to Work hub, green jobs programmes and apprenticeships. We have secured more than 450 London Living Wage employers and backed local enterprise through initiatives such as the Southwark Pioneers Fund.

Improving health and wellbeing has remained a priority. We have expanded mental health support, delivered over 49,000 Vital 5 face-to-face and digital health checks, increased access to leisure and physical activity, and brought eight leisure centres back in house with

significant new investment and opening a brand-new leisure centre. Working with partners, we have targeted health inequalities and supported families through initiatives such as the Holiday Activities and Food programme.

We have accelerated our response to the climate emergency, planting over 13,000 trees and becoming the first inner London borough to have 100,000 trees on council-owned land and significantly reducing the council's emissions by 18%. More work will continue through our investments to further decarbonise our council buildings, including our Tooley Street offices and our leisure centres.

We have invested nearly £18 million in parks and green spaces, retained all 30 Green Flag Awards in our parks and green spaces, expanded walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure, and installed more than 1,000 electric vehicle charging points via our investment in our Streets for People programme.

We have also strengthened how the council works with and for our communities. Through investment in neighbourhood working, town centre regeneration, and sustained support for the voluntary and community sector, we are becoming more responsive to local needs.

Our latest Resident Insight Survey shows over 70% of residents are satisfied with council services, and 91% feel positive about their local area.

None of this would be possible without the active involvement of our residents. Thousands of people have helped shape our decisions during this term — through neighbourhood forums, engagement on Streets for People, and our new Resident Insight Survey which will continue to be delivered twice-yearly, helping to guide our priorities as we continue to challenge ourselves.

We are proud of what has been achieved, but we are clear about the challenges that remain. The cost of living, housing pressures and concerns about safety continue to affect too many residents.

Our commitment is to build on the progress made so far, keep listening, and remain focused on supporting everyone in Southwark to live a good life.

Sarah King

Leader of the Council

Althea Loderick

Chief Executive

1. Decent homes for all



Our Goal: People live in safe, well-maintained homes

A decent home is the cornerstone of a good life. Our residents told us they love living in Southwark, but too many of our residents struggle with the cost of a good home.

As the largest council landlord in London, with 37,000 council homes and 18,000 leasehold properties, we play a vital role in ensuring our homes in providing safe, well-maintained homes. Our Good Landlord Plan sets out our work to improve what our residents care about most – better homes, better estates, better repairs, a stronger voice for residents, better customer services and new council homes.

Everyone in Southwark deserves a safe, warm and affordable place to call home. Since 2022, we have made real progress towards that goal — improving existing homes, building new ones, and making housing services easier to use.

New council homes and better housing options

- We have built 2,500 new council homes and have over 600 homes under construction — more than any other council in the country — helping more local people find a secure and genuinely affordable home.
- We are investing over £3m to bring more empty homes back into use, working to use all housing in the borough more efficiently and providing more support for tenants to move into homes that are the right size for their needs.
- We have expanded our Housing First programme and delivered new modular homes in Bermondsey, providing safe, stable accommodation for people who are homeless or sleeping rough.
- Through our Life on the Street partnership, council services and local organisations are working together to support people off the streets and into long-term housing.
- We launched a national campaign, *Securing the Future of Council Housing*, working with over 100 other councils, successfully calling on the government to provide more funding for council homes.
- We have completed 1,476 social rent homes during the term. Agreement is now in place for the development of around 150 key worker homes in Bermondsey.
- Our Older People's (Age-Friendly) Housing Strategy for 2025 – 2035 will take a proactive approach to helping our older residents live independently, safely and comfortably in homes suited to their evolving needs, including through expanded housing options and support services, and prioritising accessibility.
- We continue to work closely with almshouses in the borough to provide affordable, independent housing for older residents. We helped deliver the award-winning Appleby Blue almshouse, run by United St Saviours Charity, providing 57 beautiful, spacious homes in a lively community setting to people over 65. Last year Appleby Blue won the Stirling Prize, Britain's most prestigious architecture award.

Improving the homes people live in

- We are investing £250 million over three years to make council homes safer, better maintained and more energy efficient.
- We have continued our work to deliver major improvements to council estates, working with residents to create better homes and stronger communities for the long-term. In December 2025, we accelerated plans to deliver more genuinely affordable housing on the Tustin estate, with nearly 300 new high-quality and sustainable council homes to be delivered. We are transforming the Ledbury Estate with work to provide 340 new homes, including 261 council homes, replacing older homes with high-quality new housing. The first phase is due to complete later this year.
- We have launched the largest stock condition survey in the country, inspecting homes and shared spaces so we can target improvements where they are needed most.
- New low-carbon heating networks now provide around 5,000 homes and businesses with reliable, affordable heat, helping to cut energy bills and reduce carbon emissions.

Better repairs

- A new dedicated housing complaints team has cleared the backlog of stage 1 complaints, meaning that we are getting better at responding to resident complaints at the earliest point and putting things right where we can.
- We have held over 50 Repair Action Days on estates, fixing more than 1,600 issues on the spot and arranging follow-up repairs where needed.
- Nine in ten heating repairs and 85% of internal repairs are now completed right first time, with resident satisfaction close to 90%.

Listening to residents and improving services

- We have worked with tenants and leaseholders to create a new Resident Engagement Strategy, giving residents a stronger voice in shaping housing services.
- We have created five Housing Management Boards for tenants, receiving over 70 membership applications from residents.
- We have responded to leaseholder feedback by delivering enhanced leaseholder services by increasing post-service charge billing sessions so residents receive clear, itemised breakdowns of how their money is spent.
- Overall tenant satisfaction has increased, rising from 58% to 62% in the last year.
- We are actively improving Wi-Fi in temporary accommodation to ensure all residents have fast, stable and free internet access, including installing better broadband and offering router lending schemes.

Helping people before problems grow

- We have refreshed our Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, focusing more strongly on prevention and early help. This year alone, over 750 households have been supported with appropriate housing solutions, reducing temporary accommodation placements by 23%.

- New monthly housing advice drop-ins at Children and Family Hubs in Peckham Rye Oak and South Bermondsey make it easier for families to get advice and support before housing problems escalate.

This work is helping more people live in decent homes and get the support they need. But we know the housing crisis continues to affect many residents and there is much more to do. We will keep listening to residents and investing in homes and services that people can rely on.

Delivering more quality council homes for our residents

In April 2025, 22 brand-new council homes opened at Lomond Grove in Camberwell, bringing modern, high-quality homes to families across the borough.

The estate isn't just about homes, it's about community.

Residents enjoy a shared communal garden, a pocket park, green spaces with new trees, and a recently renovated playground, creating safe, welcoming spaces for children and families to enjoy.



Abayommy and his family, one of the first to move in, shared how the new home has transformed their lives:

“We’re really pleased with our new home. It’s spacious, we have our own garden, and it’s a big improvement on where we were living before. There is enough space for our two children now and our lives are much improved since we moved.”

Delivering homes that matter

Azucena and her son are among the first to move into 26 brand-new council homes on Salisbury Estate, bringing modern, accessible homes to families who need them most.

For Azucena, the new home has been life-changing:

“I’m really pleased with my new home. My favourite thing is the space — it’s made such a difference to us. We were living in temporary accommodation for years before we moved here, so this is a world of difference. All my stress has gone, we feel relaxed, my son is doing better, and we are very happy here.”



Putting tenant voices at the heart of our Good Landlord Plan

We are working closely with tenants and leaseholders to shape better services and homes across Southwark.

James, a council tenant for 15 years, has been actively involved in the Good Landlord Plan:

“I’ve been involved in contributing to the Good Landlord Plan and I’m absolutely pleased with it. The aims and goals of the plan are absolutely correct, and things are moving in the right direction.”



Working with partners to deliver more affordable homes in Peckham

Southwark Council has partnered with London Community Land Trust (CLT) to deliver 12 genuinely affordable homes on New James Court Estate in Peckham. The new homes will replace 27 old garages and be sold at prices based on the average local income, helping local people get on the housing ladder.

Since 2016, the council has worked with Southwark & Peckham Citizens, a network of local community groups, to explore ways to bring more affordable housing to the area. They added:

“We are delighted that Southwark Council bought into that vision and saw it as an opportunity to work with people in the borough to shape what their area will look like. The council’s decision to appoint London CLT is the next step towards truly community-led development.”

This project shows how partnership and community engagement can create homes that meet local needs and shape thriving neighbourhoods.



Repairs Action Days delivering more on-the-spot repairs

Our Repairs Action Days bring council teams and partners directly to estates, offering on-the-spot repairs, advice, and support — making life easier for residents and helping communities thrive.

From plumbing and electrical fixes to carpentry, communal repairs and estate concerns, our teams are on hand to solve problems quickly and efficiently. Residents have felt the difference:

“I was extremely impressed with how organised and professional the Repair Action Day was. Issues that had been outstanding for a while were resolved in one visit, and the team were friendly and respectful throughout.” — Brian and Claire

“It was really helpful having different trades available on the same day. Several issues that I'd been waiting on were sorted straight away, which saved time and follow-up appointments.” — Sandra



2. A good start in life



Our Goal: Children and young people have a great childhood that builds on a very solid foundation for adult life

Every child and young person in Southwark deserves a happy childhood and the best possible start in life. Our borough is full of opportunity, and residents have told us they want us to be ambitious for all of our children and young people.

We know that some families continue to face real pressures, from the rising cost of living to growing concerns about children and young people's mental health. We have focussed on ensuring that strong support from the early years, through school, and into adulthood.

Strong schools and high-quality education

- 99% of Southwark schools are now rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted.
- GCSE results remain above national averages, including in English and maths.
- 97% of 16- and 17-year-olds now move into education, training or work after leaving school — well above the national average.

Better support for children with SEND

- We have invested £2 million to expand special and mainstream SEND provision locally, meaning fewer children need to travel outside Southwark for education.
- We have agreed over £37 million of investment across council and government funds to deliver 100 more local special school places across two expanded sites in 2026/27.

Keeping families together and children safe

- The number of children in care has reduced by 20%, allowing more children and young people to remain safely with their families, supported by the right help at the right time.
- We opened a new local children's home in 2024 to support children with complex needs. The home was rated Outstanding by Ofsted in December 2025.

Supporting young people to thrive

- We launched the Funding Your Future grants scheme, providing almost £30,000 to help young people with costs such as equipment, training and extra tuition.
- Over £2.5 million has been invested in 36 youth projects, alongside the wide range of activities offered through our eight council-run youth centres.
- Our youth centres have been improved with £220,000 of investment, creating safer, more welcoming spaces for young people to spend time, build confidence and develop skills.

Helping families early

- We have increased access to our Children and Family Hubs within 15 minutes of the support families need, offering health, wellbeing and parenting support to all.

- We supported almost 8,400 families to take up their free childcare entitlement, supporting the health, development and school readiness of three- and four-year-olds.
- We extended our nationally leading free school meal offer and are working with schools to roll out free breakfast clubs to all primary schools in the borough – nearly 2 million meals were provided to primary pupils in the past year alone.

This work is helping children and young people grow up healthier, safer and better supported — and giving families the help they need when it matters most. We know there is more to do, and we will continue to work with parents, schools, young people and partners to make sure every child in Southwark gets the strong start they deserve.

Youth voice shaping funded opportunities in the borough

Since 2022, Southwark Council has invested over £2.5 million in borough-wide youth projects — with young people directly shaping how the money is spent.

Hundreds of young residents helped decide which activities should be funded, and the Southwark Youth Parliament (SYP) played a formal role in recommending projects for investment. The SYP gives 14–18-year-olds a platform to influence decisions on mental health, youth violence, climate change, career planning, and more.

Sarah, Leader of the Youth Parliament 2023–25, said:

“I didn’t know what my voice could actually do. Many young people feel overlooked, but through the Youth Parliament, I’ve seen how even small changes can make a real difference. I want to be a part of this. I want to make a change.”



Southwark’s Supported Lodgings scheme

Southwark’s Supported Lodgings scheme helps young care leavers aged 18–21 build independence in a safe, family-like environment. Trained local hosts offer a spare room, practical guidance on cooking and budgeting, and emotional support, helping young people gain the life skills they need to thrive in adulthood.

Fola, a host, said:

“It’s more than just giving a room. It’s actually a life changer, and just to see them doing really well encourages me and helps me feel that I’m contributing to society.”

Sofia, a young person supported by the scheme, told us:

“It’s very motivating — you take a lot more responsibility and do the stuff that needs to be done. My year here was a very lovely experience, and I think that has changed my life a lot.”

The scheme shows how mentorship, guidance, and a stable home can transform lives and help young people flourish.



Ensuring all children can participate in activities

Through our Thrive-to-25 programme, Southwark has developed ‘SENsational’ stay & play and short break sessions for children aged 0–11 with special educational needs.

Working with our Children and Family Hubs and Cherry Gardens Special School, these sessions help children learn, play, and grow in a supportive environment. Almost 80% of parents reported their child developed new or existing skills through the sessions, which show how inclusive, supportive activities can transform children’s confidence, social skills, and enjoyment of life.

Before joining, Kemi and James often found social settings overwhelming. Through regular participation, they became more confident, engaged with other children, and even started recognising friends by name.

Kemi’s mother told us:

“At first, she liked to keep herself to herself... now there is one child, and they get along and play together.”

James’ mother said:

“He allows other people to come and show him how to do things. He’s letting people in and is more open to learning with others. SENSational is amazing... it has changed me completely.”

Celebrating long-term foster carers: Stella and Emmanuel

Stella and Emmanuel have been fostering with Southwark Council for 26 years, welcoming children and young people into their home alongside their adult children, some of whom also foster.

Their story highlights how care, understanding, and support can help children thrive in a safe, welcoming home.

Stella told us:

“The two boys living with us now are refugees from Sudan. One arrived settled, but the younger one had no formal education. Language and school were difficult. Because we also came from another country, we understood how they felt — scared, sad, and missing family. We included them in everything and told them, ‘This is your home.’”

Emmanuel added:

“From the beginning, Southwark Council said that if we lacked knowledge, they would provide training and support — and they did. That’s why we’ve stayed for 26 years. We feel part of a team.”



3. A safer Southwark



Our Goal: Crime is low and people feel safe

We want everyone in Southwark to feel safe in their own neighbourhoods and as they go about life in our borough.

Residents have told us that crime and antisocial behaviour are some of their top priorities and their feedback is helping to shape our approach. According to our most recent Resident Insight Survey, a third of all women feel unsafe after dark in our borough, and we need to tackle anti-social behaviour on our estates.

We know concerns remain, but since 2022, we have taken practical, visible steps to improve safety and reassurance across the borough.

The council is working closely with residents, community groups, local businesses and the police, to focus on prevention, visibility and support.

More visible action in neighbourhoods

- We invested £2 million in a dedicated antisocial behaviour task force, providing a highly visible presence and targeted action in hotspot areas.
- We delivered 4,600 joint patrols in areas experiencing higher levels of crime and antisocial behaviour to help increase reassurance and deter offending.
- We have introduced night-time wardens, investing £550,000 in new nighttime patrols, keeping our town centres and estates safe after dark.
- We worked with the police to welcome two new sergeants and 12 police constables in Peckham and North Walworth to work alongside council teams and strengthen local policing.

Safer streets and public spaces

- We have invested £3 million in CCTV and the upgrade of over 11,000 streetlights to LED lighting to improve visibility and make streets, estates and public spaces feel safer after dark.
- Our expanded private rented sector licensing now covers more than half (over 20,000) privately rented homes, improving safety and standards for residents renting privately.
- In 2023, we launched London's first cross-borough network of safe havens. We distributed anti-spiking kits to licensed venues and provided personal safety alarms to residents, helping people feel safer when socialising.

Tackling violence against women and girls

- We launched the Women Safety Alliance service and a dedicated Women's Safety Centre, so women, girls and anyone experiencing violence or abuse can access all the support they need in one place.

- Campaigns such as Through Her Eyes and Stand With Her have reached millions, encouraging men and boys to play an active role in challenging misogyny, harassment and violence.
- We launched free women’s and girls’ self-defence workshops, with more than 280 women attending over 25 sessions.
- 77 local businesses have signed up to the Women’s Night Safety Charter, committing to safer nightlife environments.

Supporting young people and preventing harm

- Our Southwark Young Advisors continue to lead the borough’s youth-led Stop and Search training programme in partnership with Southwark and the police. Over 1,000 police officers were trained through the programme and hundreds of young people engaged at our schools and youth hubs.
- Southwark is a member of the MyEnds consortium, funded by the London Violence Reduction Unit, which brings networks of local people together to deliver their own prevention measures to prevent violence where they live and work.
- The youth-led Stop and Search campaign reached nearly 250,000 people on social media, helping to build understanding, dialogue and trust.
- Together, these initiatives remain central to building trust, transparency, and accountability between young people, the community, and the police.

Stronger partnerships

- We have strengthened partnership working with the Metropolitan Police through the Policing Oversight Board, improving transparency, trust and local accountability.
- Council services and the police are working more closely together, sharing information and responding faster to concerns raised by residents.

This work is helping to make Southwark safer and more welcoming, and to build confidence that concerns will be acted on.

We know there is much more to do, and we will continue to listen to residents, work with our partners and focus on the issues that matter most to our communities.

Working with our young people to prevent crime

Listening to our residents and acting on their ideas is at the heart of creating a safer Southwark, where crime is prevented before it happens. We are working with young people to ensure that they can shape initiatives that protect communities, build confidence, and give everyone the chance to thrive.

Sydney, a Southwark Young Advisor, said:

“More preventative measures need to be put in place to keep young people safe within our borough. Southwark has the potential to be an even greater place to live and work, where each community feels heard, supported and valued, all contributing to building a good life for others.”



Supporting safety on our streets 24 hours a day

Our 32 Community Wardens are out every day across estates, streets, town centres, parks and open spaces, talking to residents, addressing concerns, and tackling crime, antisocial behaviour and environmental issues.

Neville, one of our wardens, told us:

“We do our patrols where there are issues. Whatever area it is, we go there, check the blocks and engage with residents. I am always in pole position taking a zero-tolerance approach to ASB. I am well known in the community for my strong commitment to a better quality of life for those who live and work within Southwark. Working together we can make change happen.”

In August 2025, we launched a night-time patrol pilot service, running 7 days a week from 6pm–2am across areas most affected by antisocial behaviour and crime.

Residents have welcomed the extra visibility and reassurance, and reporting of incidents has increased, helping the council respond faster to community concerns.



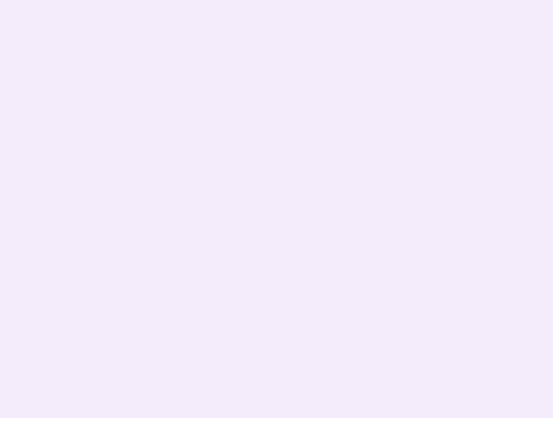
Helping young people to make positive choices

We work closely with local communities to support young people in making positive choices, including tackling violence against women and girls.

Our Through Her Eyes campaign, co-created with young people, highlights everyday harassment and how it can escalate into violence. The video has been viewed over a million times online and is now used in more than 1,000 schools across London.

A sixth form student at South Bank University Academy told us:

“The video made me think about the consequences that we carry as men on society. The problem can start as a joke, but then go all the way to violence, so it has to be stopped straightaway.”



Empowering women through free self defence

Our free self-defence workshops give women practical skills to stay safe, from body language awareness and de-escalation to simple, effective physical techniques.

Since launching, 281 women have taken part in 25 sessions across Peckham, Dulwich, Walworth, Rotherhithe, and London Bridge, with plans to expand further in 2026.

One participant said:

“This kind of training is so important for women in Southwark. It makes us feel safer and more empowered when moving around the borough.”



4. A strong and fair economy



Our Goal: Making sure everyone benefits from Southwark's success

Southwark has a diverse and thriving economy, home to major hospitals, universities and more than 15,000 small and micro-businesses. Together, they generate over £20 billion each year and create a wide range of job opportunities for local people.

But we know that not everyone benefits equally. Many households are under real pressure from the cost of living, and too many families are still struggling to make ends meet.

Our focus has been on building an economy that works for everyone — helping people into secure, well-paid work, supporting local businesses to grow, and investing in skills, town centres and community life.

Supporting households with the cost of living

- We have provided over £40 million in direct support through our Cost-of-Living Fund and Better Living Fund, helping more than 103,000 households with essentials such as food, energy and bills.
- Through the Southwark Energy Savers scheme, we supported over 1,300 residents, unlocking almost £2 million in financial support and advice to help reduce energy costs.

Helping residents into work and better opportunities

- We opened a new Connect to Work hub in Peckham, building on support that has helped almost 3,000 residents into employment, many of whom have faced barriers to work such as caring responsibilities or physical and mental health conditions.
- We invested over £1 million in skills and training, focusing on sectors with strong local opportunities, including health, construction, hospitality, the green economy, and creative and digital industries.
- Nearly 1,900 adults have retrained through our Skills for Life courses in English, maths and digital skills.
- We supported the creation of nearly 2,400 green jobs, with a further 2,400 construction jobs on the lowest-carbon developments aligned to our Southwark Plan policies.
- We supported the creation of over 2,000 apprenticeships, and nearly 250 paid internships for our young people.
- We have established Southwark's world-class SC1 health and life sciences innovation district, working with King's Health Partners, Lambeth Council, and the Guy's and St Thomas's Foundation to driving investment in these sectors and create new employment opportunities.
- We work closely with our 5 existing Business Improvement Districts, often partnering on business engagement and business support initiatives. One example is the Southwark Climate Collective, which supports local enterprises across the borough to reduce carbon and build resilience.

Fair pay and good work

- We have grown the number of accredited London Living Wage employers in Southwark to 450, nearly doubling the number in four years and delivering fairer pay for over 7,100 workers.
- We updated our procurement and social value frameworks, so more council spending supports local businesses, social enterprises, charities and underrepresented groups.

Backing local businesses

- Through the Southwark Pioneers Fund, we supported more than 1,000 enterprises and pre-startups led by people from underrepresented backgrounds, awarding over £430,000 in grants to almost 100 local businesses.
- We adopted a new Affordable Workspace Strategy, securing funding to protect and grow genuinely affordable workspace across the borough.
- Our work on the Southwark Land Commission, the first of its kind in London, is identifying opportunities to use land more effectively for the benefit of residents.

Vibrant high streets and community life

- We invested nearly £650,000 through our Thriving High Streets Fund, helping town centres adapt, attract footfall and support local businesses.
- Through Culture Together Grants and the Culture Celebration Fund, we supported over 26,000 residents to take part in cultural activity and enabled more than 29,000 people to enjoy free outdoor festivals, investing nearly £1 million.
- Major town centre improvements have delivered new housing, commercial space and opportunities, and improved public spaces in Canada Water, Elephant and Castle, East Street, Camberwell, Peckham, the Old Kent Road, and Walworth. Highlights include 180,000 sq. ft of commercial space in Canada Water, the regeneration of Walworth Town Hall, and the refurbishment of Bramcote Park

This work is helping residents cope with rising costs, access better jobs and see their local economy thrive. We will continue to focus on building a strong and fair economy that supports households, businesses and communities across Southwark.

Preserving the borough's high streets

Through our Walworth Heritage Action Zone, we've helped local businesses keep their character and charm while giving them a fresh lease of life.

Working with Historic England and heritage specialists, we've supported shops like Mary's, a family-run business for over 60 years, to thrive for the next generation.

Huseyin, who now runs Mary's, told us:

“The response we’ve had is absolutely amazing. People who don’t know us always stop and say how lovely it is. We’ve been so impressed by the workmanship and the traditional style – it’s quite similar to how it was in Victorian times. People even stop outside to take pictures!”



Increasing access to the London Living Wage

Through our Living Wage Unit, Southwark supports businesses and organisations to become accredited London Living Wage Employers, including covering accreditation fees for smaller employers.

Working with partners across hospitality, health, education, and construction, the council champions fair pay and good work across the borough.

In 2025, Southwark’s leadership was recognised nationally with two Living Wage Champion Awards, highlighting our commitment to making work pay.

Jamaica, a bartender benefiting from the Living Wage, has benefitted from this work:

“It’s a huge deal for youngsters starting out, especially with living prices going up. If I was earning £60 a day it wouldn’t make much of a difference but knowing I can earn more than £100 every day I work, it’s definitely worth coming to work and wanting to do well.”





Helping residents overcome barriers to work

Shantal joined Southwark's Connect to Work programme in October 2025. Having lived in the UK for just three years, she was balancing childcare, learning English, and navigating her first work experience here - finding a job felt almost impossible.

With the support of her employment specialist, Mohima, Shantal explored flexible roles that matched her skills, attended job fairs, and gained confidence speaking directly with employers. After four interviews, she secured a permanent role that fits her family life and provides greater financial security.

Shantal said:

"I am currently waiting to start a new job thanks to Mohima, which I am very pleased about and grateful for. If you are willing to get a job, Connect to Work are determined to work with you to get you a job too!"



Supporting pioneering local businesses

The Southwark Pioneers Fund, launched in 2022, helps local entrepreneurs start, grow, and strengthen their businesses.

Through tailored support at every stage, the programme reaches those often underrepresented in business. 67% of supported enterprises are led by people from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds, 66% are female-led, and 14% are led by people with a declared disability.

Paola, who graduated from the programme in May 2023, said:

“I want to thank Southwark Pioneers Fund for the expertise and shared knowledge they offered me and my not-for-profit. The sessions helped us step back, ask the right questions, and re-engineer the way we do things. It gave us the tools to bring our business forward with confidence.”



**Southwark
Pioneers Fund**
Start and grow your enterprise

5. Staying well



Our Goal: Supporting good health and wellbeing for everyone

Good health is essential to a good life. We know that many people in Southwark face challenges that affect both physical and mental wellbeing, and that it is not always easy to find the right support.

Over the past four years, we have worked closely with the NHS, community organisations and local partners to make health support easier to access, more joined up and focused on keeping people well.

Helping people look after their health

- We introduced free Vital 5 health checks, helping residents keep track of key health indicators. More than 3,150 face-to-face checks have been delivered by trained health ambassadors, alongside over 46,000 digital health checks in libraries and leisure centres.
- Our network of 200 Community Health Ambassadors has delivered over 150 local health events, sharing trusted health information in neighbourhoods across the borough.
- We installed over 90 public defibrillators in libraries and schools, improving access to life-saving equipment.

Better mental health support

- We opened the Nest to provide mental health support for children and young people. It is now available in more than 100 schools, supporting nearly 1,270 pupils and has low waiting times for one-to-one support of around four weeks.
- We invested £400,000 to pilot new perinatal mental health support, helping parents during pregnancy and after birth.
- More than 4,000 residents have been supported to set a quit date through our stop smoking services, helping people improve their long-term health.

Reducing health inequalities

- We delivered London's first Maternity Commission to improve outcomes for women and babies, with a particular focus on closing gaps for Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. This work continues with contributions to the national investigation taking place in Parliament.
- Through the Residents Health and Wellbeing Programme, we invested over £150,000 in community-led projects on three large estates, supporting local ideas to improve health and wellbeing.

We provided 211,500 healthy meals for children and young people through the Holiday Activities and Food programme.

Care and support for older residents

- We opened the Camberwell Lodge Nursing Home in 2022 and brought Tower Bridge Care Home back into council ownership in 2024, increasing local care capacity and helping more older residents stay in their communities and close to their loved ones.
- We rolled out our Residential Care Charter to ensure Southwark residential and nursing homes have high standards of care with a fair pay for care home staff. 55% of Southwark's care homes are signed up to the charter, representing 86% of staff working in our local care homes.
- We ensured all 11 in-borough care homes have a Family Forum in place, so residents can raise any concerns about their loved one's care.
- Through our Older People's (Age-Friendly) Housing Strategy for 2025 – 2035 and our work with almshouses in the borough, we are taking a proactive approach to helping our older residents live independently, safely and comfortably in homes suited to their evolving needs

Helping people stay active and connected

- We brought eight leisure centres back in house and invested over £7 million in them, helping more residents get active and contributing to a 25% increase in attendance in the past year.
- We opened a new leisure centre at Canada Water and a waterside swimming site at Greenland Dock, creating more ways for residents to improve their wellbeing.
- We invested nearly £280,000 in Warm Spaces across the borough, offering welcoming places for residents to stay warm, connect with others and access support.
- Our work with local businesses and community groups has improved access to healthy food, with 72 businesses signing up to the Good Food Business Charter.

This work is helping residents stay healthier, feel more supported and access care closer to home. We need to continue to work with our partners and communities to reduce health inequalities and find more innovative ways to support wellbeing at every stage of life.

Funding warm spaces across the borough

Walworth Living Room is one of 50 warm spaces across Southwark, run by the council and local community organisations. These welcoming spaces provide residents with somewhere to escape the cold, connect with others, and enjoy activities that lift the spirits.

One resident said:

“It motivated me when I really needed to get out. It was so good for my mental health and got me through winter. I’ve lived here all my life, and you don’t always meet people. I’ve even tried activities I was scared of as a child – it’s been so enjoyable.”

Another added:

“I wish my mum had somewhere like this. You feel welcomed and don’t have to worry about money.”



Building stronger communities

Residents on the Rockingham Estate wanted more opportunities to come together, tackle social isolation, and enjoy activities that support wellbeing. Through the Resident Health and Wellbeing Programme, the idea of a festival was born.

RockiFest, held in July 2025 and organised by 22 local residents, brought the community to life.

The festival featured live music, family-friendly activities, and a wellbeing area where residents could access free health checks, pick up plants, and join art workshops led by their neighbours.

It was a celebration of connection, creativity, and community spirit—showing what can happen when residents shape the activities that matter most to them.

Jill, a local resident, said: *“RockiFest was the best community festival I have ever been to!”*



Improving health and wellbeing through our leisure offer

Move Southwark makes it easier for residents to get active, stay healthy, and connect with others. From affordable gym access and free classes to family activities and health support services like smoking cessation, there's something for everyone. The programme was co-designed with the NHS, Public Health, and local community partners to meet the needs of Southwark's diverse communities.

Our Health Kiosk data shows 84% of participants improved their lifestyle, from being more active to eating healthier, and monthly visits are up by over 40,000 in 2025 compared to the previous year.

Yvonne, a regular at Castle Leisure Centre, described how the programme has supported her:

"I started with arthritis and hip problems, and physiotherapy at the gym has really helped. Doing aqua aerobics, swimming, and using the machines, plus meeting people, has made a real difference to my health and wellbeing."



Providing holiday activities for our children and young people

Southwark's Holiday Activities and Food programme offers children aged 4–16 from families on benefits-related free school meals the chance to enjoy healthy meals and fun activity clubs during the school holidays. Last summer, over 2,800 children took part. Since 2022, over 210,000 meals have been provided through the scheme.

One parent said:

"This really helped us as a family. When the children are on holiday, costs add up, but this programme meant we could save money and still enjoy time together."

Another added:

"The staff are caring and supportive, the activities are engaging, and I've seen real improvements in my child's confidence, social skills, and happiness. It's been such a valuable experience for our family."



6. A healthy environment



Our Goal: A cleaner, greener Southwark for everyone

Clean air, safe green spaces and a healthy environment are essential to living well in Southwark both now and for future generations.

Residents have told us they care deeply about tackling climate change in ways that are fair, practical and improve daily life. We have prioritised practical interventions and have worked in partnership with communities to protect and improve our environment.

Protecting and improving green spaces

- We achieved and retained all 30 Green Flag Awards for our parks and open spaces, recognising the dedication of volunteers, community groups and council staff.
- We invested almost £18 million in major improvements to parks, playgrounds and green spaces across the borough, including Pelier Park, Cossall Park, Nursery Row Park, Burgess Park and Victory Community Park.
- Over 260 playgrounds have been upgraded, creating welcoming, high-quality places for children to play and families to spend time together.
- Residents report high levels of satisfaction with our work to keep Southwark clean and green, with 82% satisfied with Southwark's parks and green spaces.
- We have undertaken a multi-year programme of renovation, safety and accessibility upgrades, and redesigns across our adventure playgrounds. The recently refurbished Ellen Brown adventure playground opened in December 2024 and provides children and young people with a safe space to have fun and connect with others.

Taking action on climate change

- We have reduced the council's operational carbon emissions by 18% since 2022.
- Through the Southwark Green Investment scheme, we have raised £3 million to fund local green projects, giving residents the opportunity to invest locally while supporting climate action.
- We planted more than 13,000 trees, making Southwark the first inner London borough with over 100,000 trees on council-owned land, helping to improve air quality, biodiversity and shade.
- We are committed to boosting biodiversity across Southwark through measures including growing canopy cover, creating parklets and rain gardens, and reducing herbicide use on our streets and estates. Our Southwark Biodiversity Fund launched in October 2024, offering grants of £15,000 - £120,000 to non-for-profit organisations delivering nature-enhancement projects.

Greener streets and cleaner air

- Over 9,000 residents helped shape our Streets for People programme through the largest consultation of its kind in the borough, ensuring changes reflect how people live, travel and move around.

- We added over 2.5km of new segregated cycle lanes and installed 900 new cycle hangars, making cycling easier and safer.
- More than 7,500 children and 4,000 adults took part in free cycle training, helping more residents feel confident getting around actively.
- We installed over 1,000 electric vehicle charging points, supporting the transition to cleaner transport.
- We expanded School Streets to 32 locations, reducing traffic, cutting air pollution and creating calmer, safer streets for families.

Supporting local food growing and community action

- We became the first London borough to adopt the Right to Grow, supporting residents with over 350 new community gardens and growing plots on council estates. These spaces are helping people grow food locally, connect with neighbours and take pride in their environment.

This work is making Southwark greener, healthier and more resilient. Our work will continue to help residents enjoy cleaner air, better green spaces and streets that work for everyone, working with our communities to protect the environment and tackle climate change in a way that is fair and benefits everyone.

Investing in inclusive, greener and more active neighbourhoods

Burgess Park in Camberwell was revitalised with the opening of a new, modern sports hub and community facilities in June 2025. Designed to support healthier, more active lifestyles, the hub features two full-size all-weather football pitches alongside a wheelchair-accessible outdoor basketball court.

Inclusion and sustainability were embedded throughout the project. Improvements include new cycle parking, blue badge parking, raised tables to improve accessibility, 50 newly planted trees, and ecological planting along Surrey Canal Walk, helping to enhance biodiversity and the local environment.

At the heart of the park is a new electric hotplates outdoor cooking area, co-designed with residents through community workshops and a dedicated steering group. This shared space reflects local voices and strengthens opportunities for connection, culture and social wellbeing.

Valerie, from a local community group, said:

“It has taken years of commitment to make this project happen. We hope people from the communities around Burgess Park will be able to enjoy what has become a real privilege – having a welcoming outdoor space to cook, eat and come together.”



Making it safer and easier to move around Southwark

Our Streets for People programme is creating a growing network of accessible routes and quieter streets, designed for all types of cycling and for people of every ability. These improvements make daily journeys safer, greener, and more enjoyable for everyone.

For residents like Kenneth, the changes have been life-changing:

“I work in the disability sports sector with young people, and I have a physical disability. Since getting my trike, my confidence has grown, I’ve been out and about much more, and I’ve been able to explore London freely. I’ve even been encouraging others to give cycling a try too.”



A park for everyone: Victory Community Park

Victory Community Park has been fully upgraded to welcome people of all ages and abilities. Improvements include accessible play equipment, a multi-sports ball court, table tennis tables, new seating and picnic areas, additional trees, and more inviting gates and fencing.

The project was shaped through three public consultations, targeted engagement on play and youth sports, and close collaboration with the Friends of Victory Community Park, alongside support to establish the Elba Place Garden community group. Visitor surveys show the impact: weekend visits have risen by 30% and play area use has doubled.

The Chair of the Friends of Victory Community Park said:

“I’m so happy with the new facilities. Children and sports players stay until after dark, and there are almost always people chatting and using the benches throughout the park. It’s become a real hub for the community.”



Funding new community-led nature projects

To boost biodiversity across Southwark, we awarded £550,000 in 2025 to 12 community-led projects, supporting the creation of new habitats and improving the natural environment for people and wildlife alike.

Paul from Galleywall Nature Reserve told us:

“We’re delighted. The funding will help us expand public access through volunteer workdays and gradually enhance the reserve’s biodiversity and habitat over the coming year.”

Southwark's biodiversity partnership has been running since 2004 to help promote and protect local nature.



Increasing access to food growing

Growing opportunity: Burgess Park Community Plant Nursery

Launched in May 2025, the Burgess Park Community Plant Nursery (BPCPN) aims to increase access to food growing and community gardening. Based at a council depot in Chumleigh Gardens, Burgess Park, and run by local growers from Glengall Wharf Garden, the nursery features two polytunnels and provides free vegetable and herb seedlings to community growing projects.

During its pilot year, 39,500 seedlings were distributed to over 80 projects. The nursery also serves as a training hub, delivering 34 volunteer sessions and 63 workshops, totalling over 1,500 volunteer hours, helping residents gain practical skills and confidence.

Ed, a Southwark resident, shared:

“When I first volunteered, I had no gardening experience and had been unemployed for months. Within weeks at BPCPN, I was growing and giving out vegetable plants, and I discovered what ‘meaningful work’ really means. A few months later, I’m now employed as a landscape gardener and studying for a Horticulture NVQ – an opportunity made possible by meeting head grower Charlene. This experience truly changed my life.”



7. A well-run council



Our Goal: A council that works for everyone

To make Southwark a great place to live, work and thrive, the council must lead by example. That means achieving excellent value for money, running services well and making sure every penny we spend benefits the people we serve.

It also means using our influence to bring investment, opportunity and support into the borough.

Listening to residents and improving services

- We have carried out three waves of our Residents Insight Survey, helping us better understand what matters most to residents and how services can improve.
- Over 70% of residents say they are satisfied with council services, and 91% feel positive about their local area.
- We launched a new Resident Experience Plan with the aim of improving how residents contact the council, strengthening complaints handling and increasing the number of services available online.
- We have strengthened our household waste and recycling services. We now collect recycled food waste every week for free from most flats and street level properties. Our recycling rate has now reached 37.4%, the highest level the council has ever achieved.
- We are clamping down on graffiti and flytipping through our Streets Transformation programme, with 88% of fly-tipping removed within 24 hours of being reported and 80% of graffiti removed within 5 days of being reported.

Strong neighbourhoods and community leadership

- We have invested over £20 million in community action, including a £3.3 million Neighbourhoods Grant scheme, enabling residents and local organisations to deliver community-led improvements.
- We launched our Neighbourhoods programme in July 2025, introducing neighbourhood forums for residents to drive local decision-making.
- Each of Southwark's 10 neighbourhoods now receives a dedicated quarterly newsletter, helping residents stay informed about local priorities and activity.

Supporting the voluntary and community sector

- We are the borough's largest investor in the voluntary and community sector, with £28.5 million invested in 2024/25, supporting more than 400 local organisations that deliver vital services and support. This includes investment in neighbourhood improvements, culture and heritage events, and wider employment, wellbeing and legal advice services.

Great public buildings and community spaces

- We opened two brand new libraries, the Una Marson Library on the Aylesbury estate and Kingswood Library on the Kingswood estate, and have expanded services across our whole library network, including the highly popular new 'Library of Things' service, which helps residents to save money by borrowing rather than buying infrequently used items such as sewing machines, gardening and DIY tools.
- We invested £2 million to transform Brandon Library and Brandon Youth Centre into modern, welcoming and fully accessible spaces.
- We restored Walworth Town Hall, creating flexible workspace and a community hub as part of the long-term regeneration of Elephant & Castle.
- Our libraries welcomed over 5 million visits, provided more than 2 million hours of free Wi-Fi, and enabled residents to borrow 3,500 items through the Library of Things.

A welcoming and compassionate borough

- We supported over 3,000 refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants, ensuring access to advice, housing and essential services.
- In recognition of this work, Southwark was awarded Borough of Sanctuary status in September 2024, marking our commitment to being a welcoming place of safety.

A committed workforce

- We introduced an annual staff survey, with almost 3,000 responses in 2024.
- Almost 90% of staff said they are invested in the council's future, and 85% are clear about what is expected in their role, exceeding local authority benchmarks — helping us deliver better services for residents.

This work shows what a well-run council looks like in practice — one that listens, invests, supports communities and delivers reliable services. We will continue to build on this progress, working openly with residents to make Southwark an even better place to live.

A cleaner, greener, safer Southwark

Southwark's Cleaner Greener Safer programme provides funding for local organisations and residents to deliver projects that make their neighbourhoods greener, more vibrant, and safer.

One standout project brought a mural to life on the side wall of 58 Linden Grove in Peckham. Stretching over 10 metres high and covering almost 100 square metres, the mural celebrates nature and its importance in city life.

The project also created a learning opportunity for local students. Three students from Camberwell School of Art joined mural artist Claire as assistant painters, gaining hands-on experience in a professional public art project.

Merryn, a fine art student, told us:

“It’s been such a special experience and privilege working with Claire and the Limes Walk Community Garden. The mural highlights this beautiful space, and I had so much fun being part of the project and soaking in the view from atop the scaffold!”



Investing in great places for our communities

In 2024, the new Una Marson Library opened on the Aylesbury Estate and the Kingswood Estate Library reopened. Libraries continue to be hubs for learning, creativity, and community, with initiatives like the Summer Reading Challenge inspiring children to read more every year.

Navya, age 11, shared:
“I love reading, I read anywhere.”

Emma, age 12, loved “The Extraordinary Life of Serena Williams” and won best teen book review, while Theo, age 8, said: “I enjoyed the Summer Reading Challenge, and I really like Pokémon books.”



Joint action to keep our streets clean

Southwark's Streets Transformation programme is tackling fly-tipping and graffiti across estates and town centres, keeping streets cleaner and safer for everyone.

Our programme combines stronger enforcement, higher fines, and clear guidance to help residents and businesses dispose of waste responsibly. Lawrence and Olu, two of our Environment Enforcement Officers, are out on the streets whatever the weather helping to combat fly-tipping.

They added: "There's many things that we do to try and find the perpetrator or the person that's responsible for the rubbish. The weather doesn't come into it. We got a job to do, got to keep things clean. So rain or shine, we're out here educating, issuing and investigating".

