

Governor Forum

Southwark Climate Action Schools Network

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Climate Action and Sustainability in Schools

1. The governing board's role
2. Southwark climate successes
3. Southwark Climate Action Schools Network offer for 2025/26

DfE climate targets

By 2025, all settings will:

- **Create a Climate Action Plan:** A comprehensive strategy that details how a school will work to decarbonise and improve its energy efficiency in line with achieving the UK's net zero goals.
- **Appoint a sustainability lead:** The role of the sustainability lead is to drive forward both action and awareness for the school. Driving forward the Climate Action Plan, build community engagement, and support the integration of sustainability into the curriculum.

The sustainability lead/s can be teaching staff, SLT or governors.

Climate in Southwark

Southwark's ambition is to do all we can to be a carbon neutral borough by 2030 and adapt the borough to the effects of climate change. This is being delivered through internal mechanisms within the council and collaboration with community partners, including schools.

Schools are instrumental in reducing emissions across the borough and supporting in the delivery of climate action, they can:

- Encourage, fund and deliver projects to minimise emissions and energy use from school buildings, encourage recycling and lower food waste,
- Install renewable energy,
- Make playgrounds greener
- Adapt school buildings and grounds so that students and staff are safe in heatwaves and we prevent or reduce the damage from flooding for at-risk schools

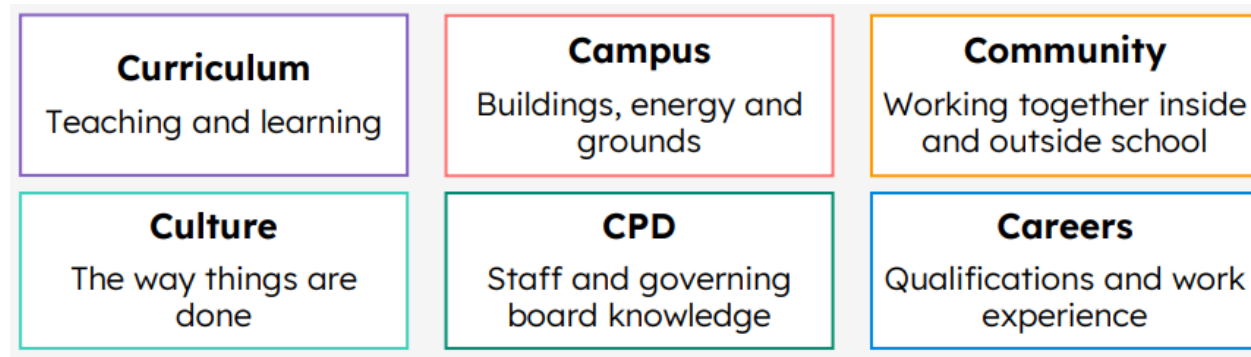
The role of the governing board

The governing board's role is to ensure that the school/trust has a strategy for their contribution to environmental sustainability and climate action.

In practice, governing board responsibilities can include:

- Initiating discussion on environmental sustainability and climate
- Appointing an eco-governor/trustee or working group
- Incorporating environmental sustainability into the school/trust vision and strategy
- Agreeing school climate action plans

The National Governing Associations lays out a whole school/trust approach to environmental sustainability through the Six Cs:



The role of a sustainability and climate link governor

Example role description from Waltham Forest – available at Sustainability for education DfE resources - [Appoint a sustainability focused governor](#)

1. To have an active interest in, and develop an understanding of, climate education, decarbonising school operations and resilience to climate change impacts
2. To support the process of developing a Climate Action Plan and delivering its actions
3. To be aware of the financial constraints on delivering on the Action Plan with particular view on capital works and site improvements.
4. To stay up to date on opportunities for the school, including potential funding
5. To work with the Finance, Resources and/or Premises Link Governor to report on school estate works and to present information required for Governing Body decisions as required.
6. To undertake termly link visits to the school to meet with the sustainability lead, SBM, and potentially participate in pupil engagement activities.

Southwark School climate successes to date

Schools have an opportunity to inspire children and families to action, improve the environment on their sites and local communities, and reduce emissions and energy bills by improving their buildings.

- 30+ schools have already engaged with Southwark's Climate Action Schools Network.
- Southwark schools are also delivering climate action through partnerships with local and national organisations: Let's go Zero, Greener Schools, Motives, Nature Parks, Eco Schools, Trees for Cities, National Education Nature Parks, Energy Sparks, TfL Travel for Life and more.



Climate project successes in Southwark

Funding successes

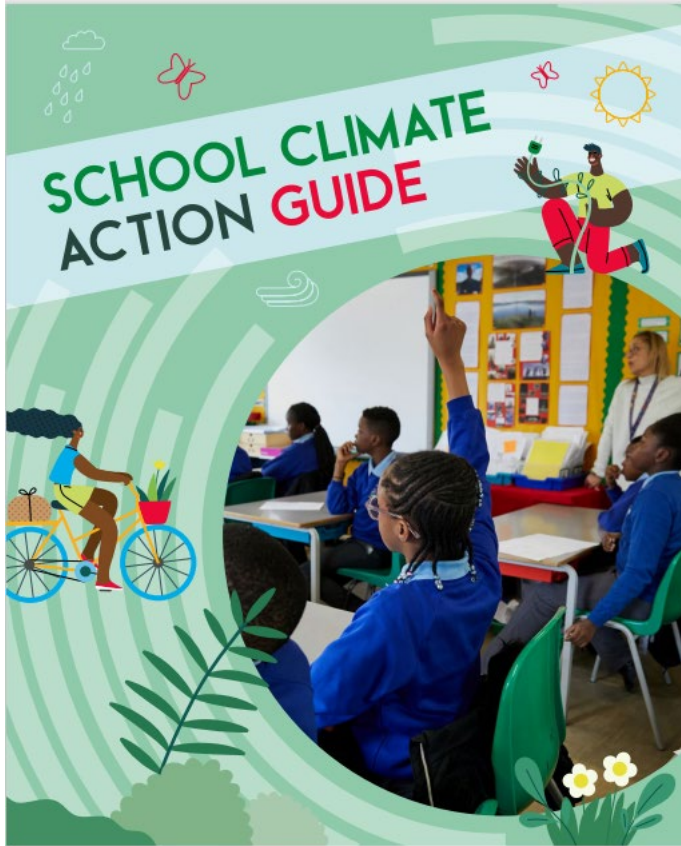
- GLA Greener Schools Pilot - Capital works for window and door replacement
- Southwark Biodiversity Fund – nature gardens, school grounds enhancements
- Southwark Community Energy Fund – solar panels, air source heat pumps, LED lighting,
- London Community Energy Fund

Wider council projects supporting sustainability and climate action

- Superzone schools
- School Streets
- Air Quality Asthma Audits
- Active travel plans
- And more..



Southwark Climate Action Guide and Template



We are here to help you.

Available to all Southwark Schools to support the development and delivery of your Climate Action Plans:

1. A helpful website
2. A climate action guide (pdf)
3. A climate action plan template with examples of actions that schools can take

The guide has different areas of climate action, each containing suggested activities, case studies, resources, and practical tips from within the borough and beyond

[School climate action guide and template | Southwark Schools](#)

Southwark offer 25/26

Challenge: A net zero mandate without a map

Schools across the UK face a complex, systemic challenge:

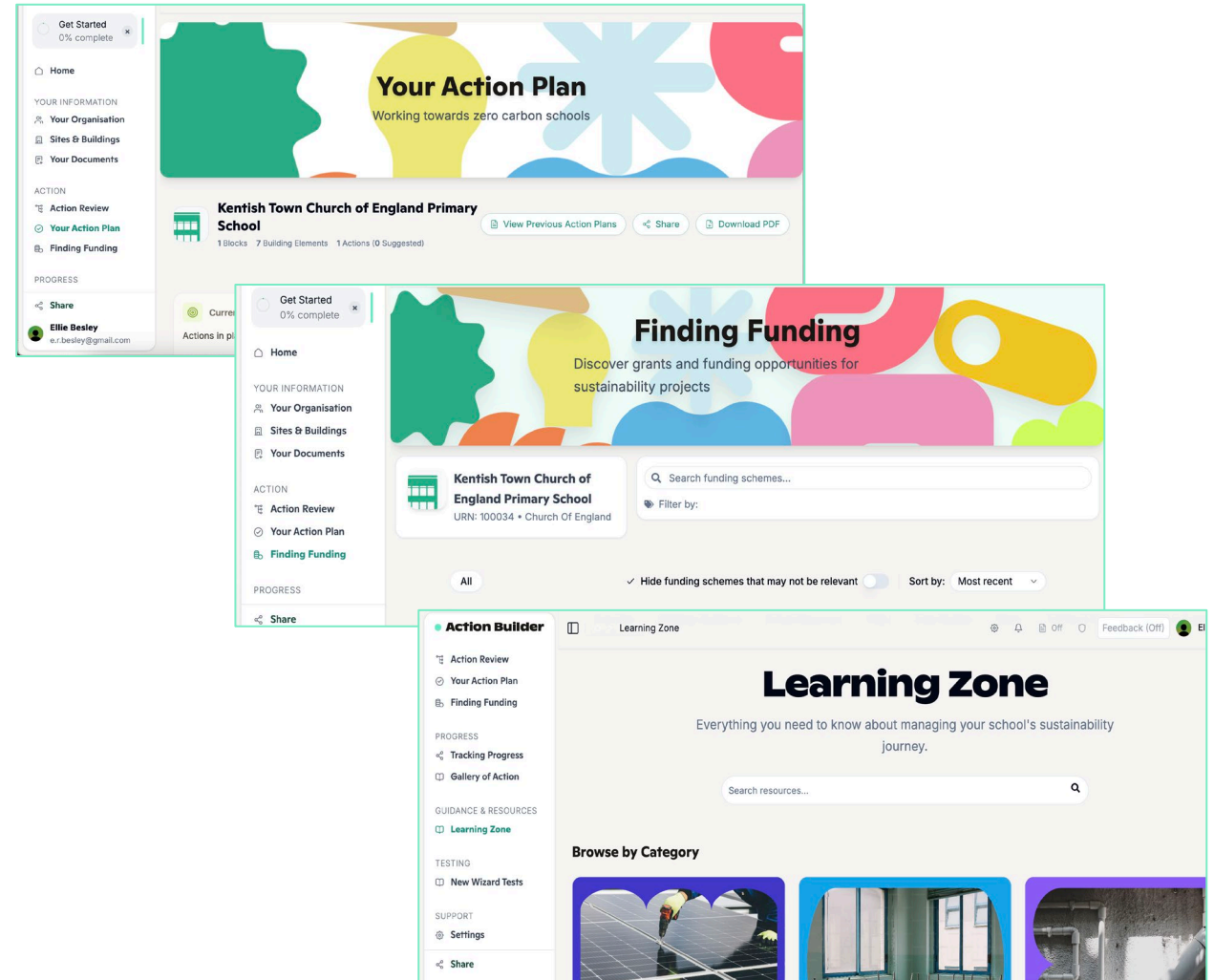
- 15% of public sector emissions come from schools
- Schools know they need to improve their buildings, but they don't know where to start
- Poor air quality, overheating, and damp in classrooms are impacting student and staff health
- Most schools lack data, planning tools, and capacity
- Where public funding exists, schools often can't access it. The barrier isn't ambition, it's knowledge and capacity: missing data, no plans, and no system to coordinate action
- We've set national targets, but failed to build the infrastructure to enable schools to meet them



Solution: The Action Builder platform for schools

RAFT's **Action Builder** provides schools with the plans they need to reduce emissions and energy bills.

- A digital platform that helps schools understand their buildings, prioritise action, and discover funding
- Designed for all schools and completely free for them to use
- Accessible guidance from a trusted source
- Resources including classroom activities to engage the wider school community
- Evidence and guidance to inform and deliver the decarbonisation pillar of a school's Climate Action Plan
- Keeps local authorities updated about schools' buildings information and action plans



Southwark Schools Action Builder Accelerator

Led by RAFT, the Action Builder Accelerator programme provides bespoke support for up to 30 Southwark schools to use the platform.

This support includes:

- Workshops
- 1:1 support sessions with experts
- Improving knowledge of premises and site managers
- Support with self-auditing school buildings
- Q&A drop-in clinics

This will help schools:

- Learn how to reduce energy use and bills
- Plan and fund a retrofit strategy
- Plan and track progress towards decarbonisation
- Access teaching and learning resources

We want to
... know what to do next
... achieve evidenced outcomes
... plan & fund a retrofit strategy

My School
Zero Carbon
Action Builder

LAUNCH!

BUILDINGS SELF-AUDIT

WALLS			
ID	SURFACE	THICKNESS	INSULATION
W1	Brick	280mm	None

1

SIGN UP

2

UNDERSTAND

Save Energy, Save Costs, Go Zero Carbon!

Head Teacher
Governor
Premises Manager

Fossil fuel free!

Air Source Heat Pump

Loft Insulation

Solar Panels

Heat Controls

ACTION PLAN

HEAT CONTROLS
COST ££ SAVINGS ££

INSULATION
COST £ SAVINGS ££

Energy Efficiency

Keep Understanding

Act Now

Plan

3

ACT

Start Sharing & Engaging

4

SHARE & ENGAGE

Keep Acting

5

TRACK

SCHOOL
ZERO CARBON
ACTION BUILDER

RAFT
Retrofit Action
for Tomorrow

Our Zero Carbon School!

Sign up to the Action Builder Programme

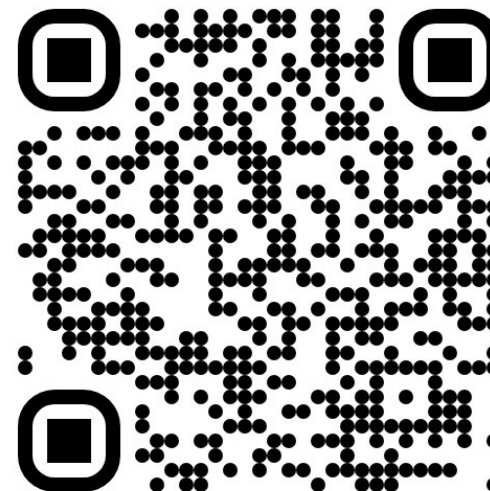
What's happening?

Introductory Webinar
Tuesday 14th October
4 – 5pm

1-2-1 support sessions
for your school

Q&A drop-in clinics
(online, 1 hour)

To sign your school up for the Introductory Webinar and programme, scan the **QR code** or click here to [register](#).



We'll continue to work with schools to deliver climate action

Register for Southwark Climate Action Schools Network to receive updates as new opportunities and resources become available - [Climate action school sign up](#)

More ways to develop climate action in your school:

- Join [Transport for London's Travel for Life](#) programme (formerly known as STARS).
- [Access free food growing, tree planting, community gardening support](#) from the council
- Include green careers and green skills training in careers days and fairs
- [Contact LSBU Green Skills Hub](#) for information on pathways to green careers and include green career
- [Let's go Zero](#) provides free support to your school from a Climate Action Advisor
- [Nature Park England](#) provides free resources to support your pupils in creating a network of green spaces across the country
- [Sustainability Support for Education](#) provides additional guidance for shaping your climate action plan

Many of the climate action activities are already underway in your settings, we're here to support with the extra steps.

Please email Georgia.Moss@Southwark.gov.uk with any questions.

Learn more about climate and sustainability governors

- [Appoint a sustainability focussed governor](#) – Sustainability Support for Education
- [Sustainability Leadership](#) – Climate Ambassadors
- [Environmental sustainability at a glance](#) – National Governors Association
- [Sustainability Governors](#) – Governors for Schools
- [Environmental sustainability: a whole school approach](#) – National Governors Association
- [The board's role on environmental sustainability](#) – National Governance Association
- [DfE Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy summary](#)