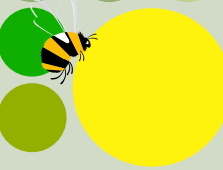


**SOUTH
KEN
ZEN+**



South Kensington ZEN+



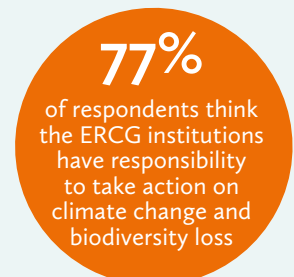
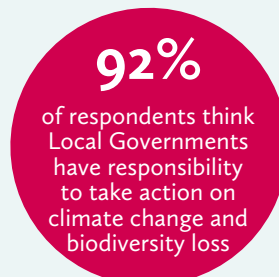
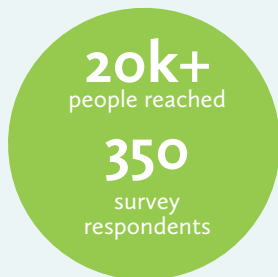
Stakeholder Engagement Report



September 2024



1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Introduction to the South Ken ZEN+ project

Allies and Morrison have produced this report in support of the Exhibition Road Cultural Group (ERCG)'s South Kensington Zero Emissions Nature Positive (ZEN+) Programme. It is a synthesis of findings from an extensive stakeholder engagement exercise conducted in South Kensington, London between April and July 2024.

The purpose of the commission was to seek views on how South Kensington can become a greener, more biodiverse, and more climate-resilient place. Evidence was gathered from local stakeholders through a range of different online and in-person engagement activities.

The aim of this study is to contribute towards a more holistic approach to the neighbourhood by highlighting the views of its stakeholders. It is not a technical review of the spaces in South Kensington, rather it is intended as a starting point for exploration of neighbourhood priorities. The hope is that this will lead to new collaborations for the long-term stewardship of this internationally renowned cultural district in the face of a rapidly changing climate.

South Kensington is a world-renowned centre for the celebration of arts, science and innovation. Developed and nurtured as a legacy of the Great Exhibition of 1851, today the area welcomes over 30 million visitors a year. It is also a neighbourhood cherished by tens of thousands of local residents, workers and students.

South Kensington has always been a place of innovation, exploration and foresight. It is in this spirit that the South Ken ZEN+ programme seeks

to address the challenges of human-induced global climate change and biodiversity loss. With the parallel aims of becoming a zero emissions (ZE) and nature positive (N+) neighbourhood, this project forms the baseline for a collective approach that reaches beyond individual organisations to meet these goals.

The Climate Resilience Review (2024)

The recently published 2024 London Climate Resilience Review concludes that more accelerated work should be done to prepare London communities for the impacts of our changing climate. It calls for urgent attention and action to mitigate the severe impacts of extreme temperatures and higher rainfall on our built environment, natural environment, and human health and wellbeing. It also highlights evidence which shows how London's trees, green spaces and blue spaces are under threat from heatwaves and windstorms, weakening London's resilience.

The engagement activities

We have listened to the views of communities locally to better understand what they like and dislike about the area, and gather ideas from them for how to make the neighbourhood greener and more climate-resilient.

The range of activities conducted, both online and in person, reached an estimated 20,000 people in South Kensington, the majority of whom were living, working or studying in the local area. More in-depth interaction was had with approximately 600 people through active participation in the online survey, online exploratory sessions, interviews, on-street discussions, walking tours and an interactive workshop.

38 stakeholder project ideas



EXHIBITION ROAD WAS WHERE MOST PEOPLE WANTED TO SEE CHANGE

6 EMERGING THEMES

| | | |
|--|---|--|
|  MAKE A CLIMATE RESILIENT PLACE |  NURTURE A BIODIVERSE PLACE |  SUPPORT HEALTH & WELLBEING |
|  ENCOURAGE WALKING & CYCLING |  RESPOND TO CHARACTER & HERITAGE |  MAINTAIN SPACES & EDUCATE |

Themes emerging from the engagement

From the engagement, six key themes emerged. These are:

- **Improving resilience** against warmer weather and higher rainfall
- Increasing climate suitable greening and nature to help recover and encourage **greater biodiversity**
- **Supporting health and wellbeing** of the visitors, residents and students who work, live, study and walk around South Kensington
- **Improving movement** corridors and **prioritising sustainable movement** to make it easier and more pleasurable to navigate on foot and cycle
- **Managing our spaces** and providing opportunities for **people to learn** more about the impacts of climate change in London
- Responding to and reflecting the distinctive and renowned **character and heritage** of the local area

These re-occurring themes demonstrate people’s general awareness of the changing climate. Respondents and participants acknowledged that South Kensington is experiencing higher temperatures, more extreme rainfall, and poor air quality.

As one of the most well-known and well-visited places in London, with a world-class reputation, South Kensington must seek to explore new opportunities to tackle these challenges through innovative ways of designing the public realm. This responds to the call for action from the London Climate Resilience Review.

Next Steps

The themes that have emerged through the engagement work have been translated into principles which are reflected in each of the project ideas that were put forward by the public. This report presents their ideas as suggestions. On occasion these have been lightly interpreted to make sense of them spatially. The report orders the project suggestions in four categories: projects that can be progressed by individual institutions, projects that can be progressed through ERCG or community collaboration, projects that ERCG could advocate for, and suggestions further studies.

There are a total of 38 project ideas identified, many of which have spacial specificity. These ideas provide a list of changes that people with a vested interest in the neighbourhood would like to see.

Whilst not exhaustive, this list of ideas offers a cohesive, community-backed starting point from which to explore projects, funding and support South Kensington’s transformation into a greener, safer and more climate-resilient neighbourhood.