

# BIG

# AMBITION

## SOUTH LONDON GROWTH



# THIS IS SOUTH LONDON



**BIG Ambition: South London Growth** is our focus for driving South London's\* economy forward. Aligned with the London Growth Plan, it sets a clear vision, clarifies priorities, and sets out how and where we will deliver inclusive, sustainable growth over the next decade. It strengthens our case for UK government support and devolution, and sets out a clear narrative about South London's future.

\*All references to 'South London' within this document relate to the South London Partnership sub region of Croydon, Kingston, Merton, Richmond and Sutton unless otherwise stated.

Front cover: Kingston (Credit: Kingston Council)  
Inside cover: Croydon Town Centre (Credit: Croydon BID)



Croydon Town Centre (Credit: Croydon BID)

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South London is a unique and very special place to live, work and study and we want to see all of its people grow and thrive. We welcome this Statement and especially support its aspirations to include more and more people in a diverse and inclusive workforce. No-one in South London should be left behind and these ambitions will help us work together to make that a reality"

Peter Mayhew-Smith, Principal,  
South Thames Colleges Group



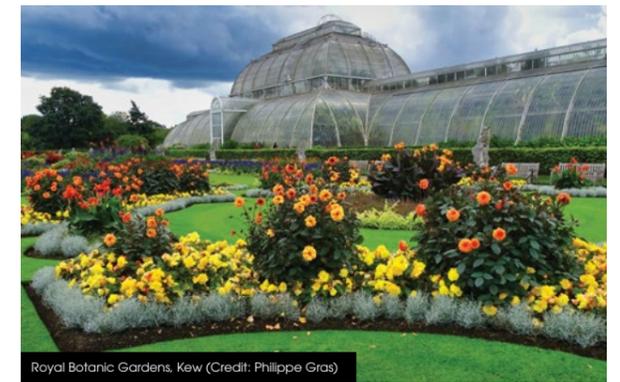
Kingston Riverside (Credit: Robert Cook)

# SOUTH LONDON 2035



South London has the talent and potential to be one of the most productive and innovative parts of the country. Our boroughs and strategic partners are committed to working together around a shared sense of purpose. But we need investment to realise our ambitions for local people and local businesses. We have the clear vision, we have the partnership to deliver – we now need the backing to make it happen.”

Councillor Gareth Roberts,  
Leader, Richmond Council and  
Chair, South London Partnership



The South London Partnership subregion is a vibrant, diverse, and thriving place to live, work, and visit. Across our boroughs of Croydon, Kingston upon Thames, Merton, Richmond upon Thames, and Sutton, we're proud of our strong, deep-rooted communities and the unique character of our towns, villages, and neighbourhoods.

People choose South London for its outstanding quality of life – great schools, abundant green spaces, rich arts and culture, thriving leisure scenes, and a strong sense of place. Add excellent housing, heritage, easy access to Central London and the close proximity of the UK's two main airports, its easy to see why our boroughs and sub region continue to grow.

We're now set to deliver bold, polycentric growth aligned with the new London Growth Plan. South London is already a hub for creative and digital industries, sustainable construction, deep-tech science, and health and life sciences, powered by world-class institutions like the London Cancer Hub in Sutton, Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, and the National Physical Laboratory in Teddington.

Our natural and cultural assets are second to none – from iconic parks and gardens to global sporting and cultural destinations. Think Twickenham Stadium, Wimbledon Championships, Crystal Palace FC, Hampton Court Palace, and Chessington World of Adventures Resort – all world-famous, all right here in South London.

But we're not standing still. To drive the growth London and the UK need over the next decade, we must accelerate innovation, support and develop future-ready talent, and connect our communities to opportunity.

That's why we're committed to working in partnership to deliver on three core growth ambitions:

**PLACE** – positioning South London as a leading destination for inclusive, sustainable innovation and investment

**PEOPLE** – unlocking access to high-quality, high-value jobs for all

**INFRASTRUCTURE** – building better connections between people, places, and opportunity

This vision sets out our shared roadmap for growth through to 2035. It highlights where the opportunities lie, and the support we need to unlock South London's full potential.

Our ambition for South London is BIG – which mirrors the aspirations of our residents and local business. We now look forward to supporting London's critical role in delivering the UK National Industrial Strategy by working with regional and national partners to deliver on these ambitions.

Mayor <b>JASON PERRY</b> Executive Mayor, London Borough of Croydon	Councillor <b>ANDREAS KIRSCH</b> Leader of Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames	Councillor <b>ROSS GARROD</b> Leader of Merton Council	Councillor <b>GARETH ROBERTS</b> Leader of London Borough of Richmond upon Thames	Councillor <b>BARRY LEWIS</b> Leader of Sutton Council
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# SOUTH LONDON'S GROWTH AMBITIONS

The London Growth Plan presents a significant opportunity for South London to secure investment to support better housing, improved connectivity, strengthened collaboration, higher levels of education and skills, and access to well paid jobs.

By building on our strengths, tackling barriers to growth head-on, and clearly setting out the support we need, we can grow an inclusive, sustainable economy and society. Our ambition is bold: to make South London the go-to **PLACE** for innovation, powered by our businesses, universities, colleges, schools and a network of exciting strategic investment sites.

Delivering on this ambition means creating a South London where people want to live, study, work, invest, and thrive — now and into the future.



Automotive Lab (Credit: Peter Langdown)

To achieve this ambition we must unlock the potential of all our **PEOPLE** by eliminating barriers to learning and enabling access to the good jobs that can be found within the growth-driving, high-value clusters we wish to nurture.

However, to better connect people with these opportunities we require investment in **INFRASTRUCTURE**. Poor orbital public transport leads to congestion, hurting productivity and access to jobs and mobile 'not-spots' remain a barrier to digital inclusion and economic growth.

The UK's economy can't thrive without London — and London can't maximise its growth ambitions without South London playing a leading role. This document sets out our shared ambitions, the actions we're taking to achieve them, and the asks we're making to unlock South London's full potential.



Flight Simulator (Credit: Peter Langdown)



Meaningful collaboration between educational institutions, local authorities, health partners, businesses, and communities is essential to achieving inclusive and sustainable growth. This statement presents a powerful opportunity to leverage our collective strengths, aligning diverse stakeholders around shared priorities for investment. We are committed to working with our partners to navigate these challenges, ensuring South London continues to thrive economically and socially for the benefit of all residents.

Professor Jean-Noël Ezingear, Vice-Chancellor, University of Roehampton

# SOUTH LONDON'S GROWTH COMMITMENTS



INVESTMENT IN PLACE



INVESTMENT IN PEOPLE



INVESTMENT IN INFRASTRUCTURE

## OUR GROWTH AMBITION

To become a leading 'go-to and stay' place for inclusive, sustainable innovation

To deliver greater access for all our residents to do good work - higher quality, higher paid, & higher value jobs

To better connect people with opportunity to support polycentric growth

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Investing in place-based innovation could transform South London's contribution to London's economy and generate billions in additional GVA for the UK.

To unlock the potential of all our people by providing them with skills, qualifications and experience that South London needs to ensure its future sustainability, prosperity and success, and creating opportunity for everyone, everywhere.

By better connecting people with opportunity, be that skills, jobs or housing, we can boost South London's productivity and growth. Our infrastructure must match our ambitions for growth.

## HOW WE WILL ACHIEVE GROWTH:

By increasing investment levered in for research, innovation & collaboration.

By creating a robust & inclusive pipeline of talent, ideas & creativity.

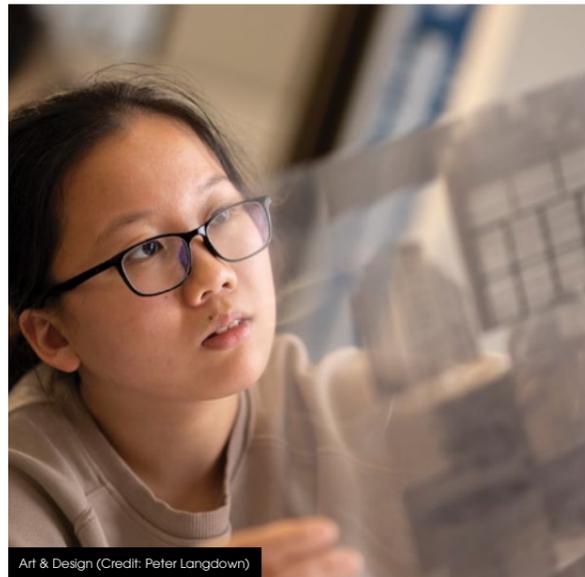
By unlocking transformative investment in housing, digital & transport connectivity.

## OUR COMMITMENTS TO GROWTH:

- ▶ Create a South London Anchor Network to drive collaboration across health, education, skills, net zero, housing, and procurement.
- ▶ Establish a South London Investment and Growth Board to unlock public and private investment in regional growth opportunities.
- ▶ Launch Destination: South London, a strategic forum to attract investment into our towns, high streets, and experiential economy.
- ▶ Pursue opportunities through the proposed International Centre of Creative Industries to grow the region's creative economy.
- ▶ Strengthen integration of health and care, skills and employment services to improve wellbeing and economic resilience.
- ▶ Support 2,800 economically inactive residents into work by 2030 through trailblazer and Connect to Work initiatives.
- ▶ Deliver a refreshed South London Local Skills Improvement Plan to align training with growth sectors and employer needs.
- ▶ Expand inclusive employment pathways through effective programmes like Connect to Work.
- ▶ Maximise social value by building on proven successes such as the South London Careers Hub, the Skills and Employment Alliance and the Green Skills Academy.
- ▶ Take forward South London's strategic housing developments as set out in the London Growth Plan and support the London Warmer Homes programme.
- ▶ Partner with TFL to develop business cases linking transport investment with housing delivery.
- ▶ Work with the NHS to identify potential opportunities to better align estate assets with primary and community care services and for joined-up approaches to developing key worker housing.
- ▶ Expand greener, more sustainable transport options to reduce climate impact.
- ▶ Working collaboratively as a sub region to identify streamlined ways to improve digital and mobile connectivity.

# WHY GROWTH?

**BECAUSE THE WORLD IS CHANGING FAST, AND SOUTH LONDON IS CHANGING WITH IT.**



Art & Design (Credit: Peter Langdown)



Wimbledon Quarter (Credit: Suzanne Mitchell Photography)



Eden Campus



Rocket Propulsion Lab (Credit: Peter Langdown)



St Mary's strategic growth in health sciences, illustrated by our new School of Medicine, will enable us to support South London's Health and Life Sciences cluster. We look forward to working with all partners to help South London realise these ambitions and will actively support its delivery through our expertise in teaching, research, innovation, and knowledge exchange."

Professor Anthony McClaran,  
Vice-Chancellor,  
St Mary's University, Twickenham

Global trends are reshaping how we live, work, and do business. Rather than be left behind, South London is stepping up. Our vision embraces these shifts and turns them into opportunities. We're not just adapting — we're innovating, driving progress, and shaping a future that works for our communities and our economy.



## GROWING PLACES: Polycentric London

As London continues to grow, the role of polycentric towns across our sub region will continue to evolve. Our challenge will be to meet demand for housing, transport and infrastructure whilst embracing opportunities to innovate by unleashing the dynamism of South London's polycentric growth opportunities.



## ENVIRONMENT: Our Changing Climate

Right across the world our environment is changing, and we all face challenges that are the direct consequences of the way we have lived. To support future green growth in South London we must tackle these challenges by supporting our residents and business.



## TECHNOLOGY: Our Digital World

The technological and digital worlds dominate many of the changes happening in our social and working lives and promises to continue to do so. South London needs to be adaptable to nurture new skills, change the ways we move around, do business, socialise, and live our lives.



## WORKING LIVES: New Ways of Working

The world of work is being transformed and working patterns are becoming more flexible and unpredictable. Not only will part-time working, freelancing and home and hybrid working impact how we work now but automation and artificial intelligence will shape how South London works in the future.



We warmly welcome the South London Growth Ambitions Statement. South London has the potential to deliver significant growth. Croydon College is committed to developing the skills of our communities and businesses to support the fulfilment of these ambitions, which so clearly align with the London Growth Plan.

Caireen Mitchell, Principal, Croydon College



Wimbledon Town Centre (Credit: Love Wimbledon)

# SOUTH LONDON'S TURBOCHARGER

## THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP

Over the past decade, especially since the pandemic, South London has witnessed the power of stronger partnerships working in action. The South London Partnership has been central to this progress, uniting key people and institutions to unlock growth and deliver real, measurable benefits across the subregion.

Examples of our existing successful partnerships are shown on the right and, to achieve our growth ambitions, we will establish and facilitate new partnerships where they create value.



BIG South London Summit (Credit: Kay Ransom Photography)

### SOUTH LONDON PARTNERSHIP – PLACE, PEOPLE & PARTNERSHIP



The South London Partnership is a cross-political party sub-regional collaboration of five London boroughs: Croydon, Kingston upon Thames, Merton, Richmond upon Thames, and Sutton. Working together and with partners in and beyond our area, SLP champions and seeks to build on the many strengths of South London as a place for people to live, study, work, invest and thrive.

By promoting collaboration and joint working, SLP adds value to the activities of individual boroughs by:

- ▶ Helping residents into good work
- ▶ Promoting the integration of health and care
- ▶ Supporting innovation and investment
- ▶ Improving infrastructure, transport and digital connectivity

BIG South London has acted as a catalyst in bringing academics and innovators alongside businesses, entrepreneurs, local authorities and communities to provide opportunities and support to stimulate knowledge-based economic growth in South London.”

Dr. Robin Hutchinson, Director, The Community Brain



#### INVESTING IN PLACE: BIG South London



BIG South London is boosting innovation and growth across the region by unleashing the resources, expertise, and facilities available within South London's universities and colleges, to help local businesses and organisations boost capacity, productivity, and competitiveness. Now a thriving partnership of over 30

organisations, since 2021 BIG South London has delivered £32m GVA to South London's economy, supported over 850 South London businesses and organisations, levered more than £12m of additional investment into research and innovation activities and helped create over 900 new jobs across the sub-region.



#### INVESTING IN PEOPLE: The South London Skills and Employment Alliance



The South London Skills and Employment Alliance brings together a partnership of business leaders, educational providers, local authorities, voluntary and community sector, and employment support organisations to strengthen skills and employment provision in South London. The Alliance is shaping and influencing the delivery of skills and employment programmes across South London and enabling effective engagement across

sectors through commonality, collaboration, and collective action. This includes increasing awareness, sharing and pooling of resources and, most critically, strengthening relationships between employers and providers, including initiatives such as the South London Skills and Employment Charter, the partnership's public commitment to creating an inclusive, accessible skills and employment ecosystem.



#### INVESTING IN INFRASTRUCTURE: Unlocking the London Cancer Hub



Better public transport will be key to delivering the huge health and employment benefits of the London Cancer Hub. In 2023 Sutton Council and partners successfully secured over £14m of investment to improve rail services at Belmont Station which will see services double and the addition of more direct services into London Victoria. This funding will also enable

improved accessibility and new green travel routes into the London Cancer Hub. The impact of this investment will significantly help unlock the full potential of the London Cancer Hub into one of the world's leading life sciences campuses, enabling the creation of over 13,000 jobs and generating £1.2 billion each year for the UK economy.



London Cancer Hub (Credit: Socius)

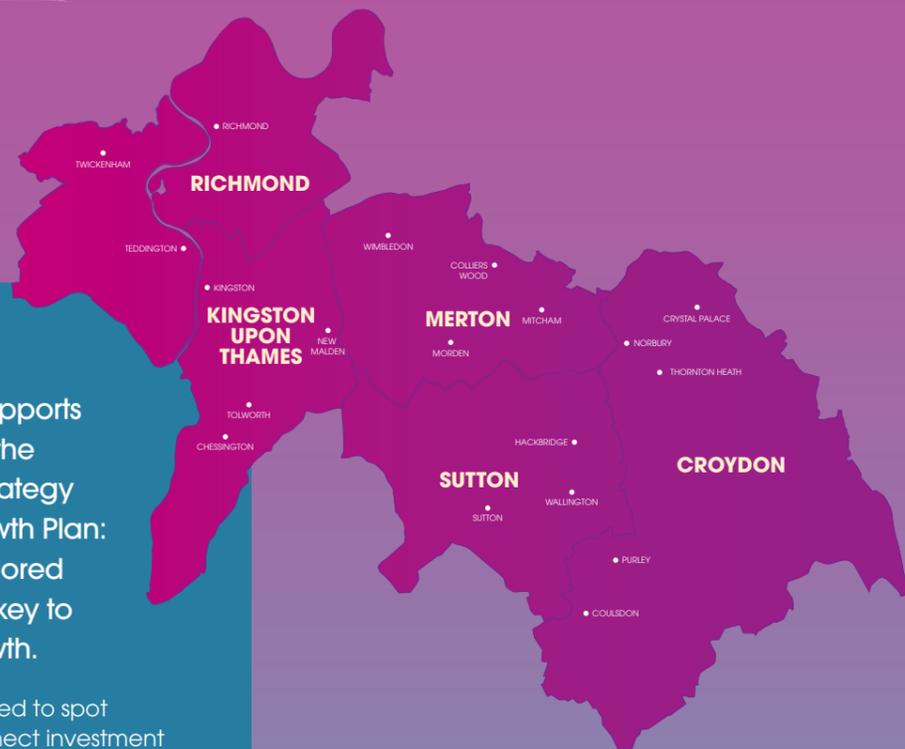
# POLYCENTRIC SOUTH LONDON

**CROYDON**  
www.croydon.gov.uk



**LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF RICHMOND UPON THAMES**



South London fully supports the principle in both the National Industrial Strategy and the London Growth Plan: that place-based, tailored approaches are the key to delivering good growth.

Local areas are best placed to spot opportunities and to connect investment across health, education, housing, transport, quality of life, and reducing inequality.

The London Growth Plan made the compelling case for a polycentric approach - where all parts of London can grow and thrive. In South London, this means harnessing the unique strengths of our boroughs and partnerships to deliver growth that's locally driven and widely shared.

As well as setting out our ambition at a sub regional level, we also recognise the unique part that our individual boroughs play in delivering polycentric growth. The growth aspirations within each borough are set out in the following borough profiles, showcasing the local opportunities and ambitions for growth.



London today is like a galaxy: a collection of complementary, connected stars.

Each shine brightly in its own right, but together they are powerful."

London Growth Plan

# CROYDON

Croydon is central to London's vision for sustainable, inclusive growth and plays a pivotal role in driving economic progress across the wider South East. As the capital's most populous borough, with nearly 400,000 residents, Croydon's scale is comparable in size and economic output to major UK cities such as Leicester, Coventry, and Aberdeen. With over 1,000 trains running daily, Croydon town centre is just 13 minutes from Central London and 15 minutes from Gatwick Airport, making it uniquely placed for business, residential, and leisure growth.

A borough with deep historical roots and a strong sense of place, today Croydon is leading a new era of growth: diverse, creative, and investment-ready. In 2024, the borough recorded a 24% surge in microbusinesses, the highest in London and third in the UK — a clear signal of entrepreneurial energy and strong local demand.

Croydon also boasts more creative businesses per capita than Manchester, Leeds, or Birmingham, with a cultural ecosystem anchored by organisations like Merky HQ (Stormzy), Boypark, Fairfield Halls, and The BRIT School.



Croydon Town Centre Market (Credit: Croydon BID)



Croydon is a borough defined by its history, its hustle, and its heart. We have an edge – the energy of the youngest, most diverse community in London, and the drive to turn opportunity into growth. Our unrivalled connectivity binds us not only to Central London and the South East, but to the heart of a £100 billion economy. We are London's greenest borough, where open spaces meet a bustling town centre, creating the perfect conditions for business, creativity and life to flourish. With 16,000 businesses and a growing network of innovation hubs, Croydon is leading the way."

Mayor Jason Perry, Executive Mayor, London Borough of Croydon

## MAJOR EMPLOYERS

**CRYSTAL PALACE FC, MOTT MACDONALD, AECOM, LONDON SOUTH BANK UNIVERSITY, CROYDON UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL AND SUPERDRUG**



**GVA £10.7 BN**  
In 2022



**HOME TO 16,000**  
Businesses



**24%**  
Rise in microbusinesses  
in 2024



**12,000**  
Public sector jobs

### INNOVATION & INVESTMENT IN CROYDON

Croydon welcomes over 140,000 daily visitors, reflecting its importance as a sub-regional economic, cultural, and commercial centre. Planned infrastructure investment will further enhance this offer, including:

- ▶ Proposed improvements to East Croydon Station
- ▶ Renewal of the tram fleet
- ▶ Expansion of capacity at Gatwick Airport

This has been underpinned by £30 million programme of public investment into Croydon's town centre which will improve public places, spaces, connections and assets.

These enhancements will reinforce Croydon's role as a development hotspot, attracting residents, businesses, and visitors while supporting growth across the wider South London Partnership area.

# KINGSTON

Kingston upon Thames successfully blends its unique heritage with its appeal as a destination for investment, learning or leisure. The borough was recently ranked highest in London as a place to live and work, with strong growth prospects. An enviable cultural heritage combines with a diverse range of communities including Europe’s largest Korean population. Kingston town centre itself sits in an enviable location on the banks of the river Thames, it is regularly ranked as one of the country’s best and most resilient retail centres and is home to the UK’s first Business Improvement District.

The borough has always been a place of innovation and evolution, and has more recently become home to a range of national and international businesses including Unilever and Lidl. Kingston University, is the largest education provider in South London, with one of the finest art schools in the UK.

Recent jobs growth has been driven by health activities, food and beverage and social and residential care, but also through professional, scientific, and technical activities.



Kingston Riverside (Credit: Kingston Council)

South London is well placed to play an important role in London’s success – but a successful economy is only successful if everyone reaps the rewards. Enhanced orbital transport links across the region are crucial for realising our ambitions, unlocking economic opportunities, reduced congestion, and better connecting businesses with local talent.”

Councillor Andreas Kirsch, Leader, Kingston Council

## MAJOR EMPLOYERS

CHESINGTON WORLD OF ADVENTURES RESORT, LIDL, UNILEVER, CHELSEA WOMEN’S FC, NHS - KINGSTON HOSPITAL, OLIVER BONAS

**85%**  
Economically active residents

**20K+**  
Students at Kingston University

**74%**  
Start-up year 2 survival rate

**77K**  
Jobs

## INNOVATION & INVESTMENT IN KINGSTON

The riverside north of Kingston is transforming from a run down and grossly underused area to a commercial and cultural location helping to diversify the town centre. The new flexible workspace and Fusebox multi-arts venue underline the value of combining funding opportunities from the Mayor of London, government and Kingston Council.

Enabling this progress has been a collaboration between John Lewis Partnership and Kingston Council to bring forward a disused restaurant space, nightclub and vast undercroft containing the remains of Kingston’s 12th century bridge. The location now provides essential business support and start-up advice which will help to create up to 500 new jobs.

# MERTON

Merton, in South West London, is one of the city’s greenest boroughs, with over 100 parks and 18% open space - nearly all residents live within 400m of nature. It’s well connected to central London, nearby boroughs, and the Surrey Hills.

Home to 215,000 people, Merton is a diverse community, with one-third of its residents born outside the UK and a rich mix of languages and cultures. It’s one of London’s safest boroughs, with excellent schools and the lowest rate of temporary accommodation in the city.

Merton welcomes 500,000 visitors yearly for the Wimbledon Tennis Championships and supports a strong local sports scene, including AFC Wimbledon and Tooting & Mitcham FC.

Wimbledon is a vibrant business centre with strong post-COVID recovery and unmatched transport links. Morden regeneration is being prepared for delivery and across the Northern Line corridor, new homes, jobs and public spaces are being developed while preserving the borough’s character.



Wimbledon Plaza (Credit: Love Wimbledon)

Merton is special. We’re delivering on our plan to Build a Better Merton by breathing new life into our high streets and town centres, building the first council homes in a generation, connecting local people with good jobs, and breaking down the barriers to getting active as part of our ambition to become London’s Borough of Sport. We want everyone in Merton to succeed, as a thriving part of a fairer, more prosperous London.”

Councillor Ross Garrod, Leader, Merton Council

## MAJOR EMPLOYERS

AELTC, DOMESTIC & GENERAL, CLOSE BROTHERS, COTY, FLIGHT CENTRE, AFC WIMBLEDON

**GVA £42.30 HOUR**  
Productivity

**£46,000 GROSS**  
Per person salary

**84%**  
Employment rate

**86% OF RESIDENTS**  
Resident satisfaction

## INNOVATION & INVESTMENT IN MERTON

Merton Council, in partnership with BIG South London, has delivered five new affordable workspaces in council-owned buildings: Canons House, Vestry Hall, The Workary at Mitcham Library, and Wimbletech at Wimbledon Library. These spaces offer accessible facilities for local entrepreneurs, creatives, and businesses. Canons House, set in a Georgian estate, provides 300 m<sup>2</sup> of workspace, community areas, and event space, serving as the hub for the Mitcham Knowledge Exchange, which supports green economy, recycling,

and creative initiatives such as upcycling, podcasting, and placemaking projects.

The Vault in Morden, a former bank, has been transformed into a lively co-working and events space with a café, bar, and home to Flex FM radio. It supports local employment and skills development through DJ and podcast training. Collectively, these workspaces have supported 77 businesses, created 115 jobs, and offer valuable platforms for collaboration, entrepreneurship, and community engagement across Merton.

# RICHMOND

Home to outstanding parks, landscapes and historic sites, including Hampton Court, Twickenham Stadium and Kew Gardens, the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames is a special part of London. Richmond plays an import role in London's economy with the second largest growth of any borough over the last 25 years, despite over half of the Borough being designated as green space.

Richmond's fantastic natural, historic and cultural heritage draws many visitors from London, the UK and overseas.

World famous attractions provide one of London's strongest and most varied visitor experiences and the Visit Richmond Partnership brings together attractions, accommodation providers and partners to promote a coherent visitor offer.

As well as a being a great location to start and run a business, with one of London's best qualified populations, Richmond is home to some of the capital's most important concentrations of research and innovation ranging from global-reach assets such as the National Physical Laboratory and Twickenham Studios to many international corporate HQs within an ecology of knowledge-based companies.



Richmond Bridge (Credit: Richmond Borough Council)



Richmond has a thriving business community ranging from international corporates to new and growing ventures. We offer great opportunities – a talented workforce, outstanding research and innovation, a growing creative economy and some of London's most iconic visitor destinations. Our high streets and town centres provide great places for companies to grow. The Council works closely with businesses of all types to help them grow and contribute to the health and wellbeing of our borough.

Councillor Phil Giesler  
Lead Member for Business and Growth  
London Borough of Richmond upon Thames

## MAJOR EMPLOYERS

NATIONAL PHYSICAL LABORATORY, TWICKENHAM STUDIOS, HAMPTON COURT, KEW GARDENS



61%

Workforce qualified Level 4+



28%

Businesses in professional, scientific and technical sectors



57%

Borough green space



20 MILES  
Of Thames riverfront

## INNOVATION & INVESTMENT IN RICHMOND

Richmond Council has long championed the borough's town centres and high streets and is backing this up with investment in public realm improvements, new business spaces such as Patch in Twickenham and key projects such as Twickenham Riverside. With one of London's first Night Time Strategies, we will be working with

businesses, communities and local stakeholders to ensure our town centres are safe and attractive spaces at all times of the day. We are leading a focused strategy for Richmond Town Centre, to ensure the most economically important and connected part of the borough continues to be a key location for businesses.

# SUTTON

Sutton is rapidly emerging as a key Outer London location. The area is an attractive place to live, work, visit and invest - with excellent schools, parks, affordable housing, low unemployment rates, and low retail vacancy rates. The borough's proactive approach, securing land, funding, and partnerships, has attracted major private investment and growing interest from developers and businesses. A standout feature is the London Cancer Hub in Belmont, which is evolving into a global centre for oncology.

Regeneration is in full swing at several sites across Sutton Town Centre. One of the largest schemes, with the Council and GKRL leading the transformation of key sites to deliver hundreds of new homes, a modern civic hub, and an improved leisure and retail offer. Alongside this, thousands of new homes are planned and over £2bn is being invested.

£14.1m from the Government will improve rail access to Sutton, with the Council focused on developing its transport infrastructure. Sutton is growing and is fast becoming a leading destination in South London.



Oru Sutton (Credit: Oru Spaces)



Sutton is building a future for our residents, with ambitious plans for new homes, secure and well-paid jobs and a thriving and welcoming town centre. On the main high street, we are delivering bold schemes that bring empty buildings back into a variety of retail, leisure, and commercial uses. Sutton will be the place where you can live well, work hard and have fun. The London Cancer Hub, just outside the Town Centre, will be one of the top four cancer research campuses in Europe, with important economic benefits including over three thousand new and well paid local jobs".

Councillor Barry Lewis  
Leader of Sutton Council

## MAJOR EMPLOYERS

ROYAL MARSDEN NHS TRUST, INSTITUTE OF CANCER RESEARCH, EPSOM & ST HELIER NHS TRUST, SUBSEA 7, LEXISNEXIS



£44,000 GROSS  
Per person salary



93%  
Occupancy rate for retail and leisure units



98%  
Schools good or outstanding



45%  
Five-year business survival rate

## INNOVATION & INVESTMENT IN SUTTON

Oru Sutton is a mixed use space that provides over 300 desks and 40 private offices, giving small businesses and entrepreneurs an affordable and high-quality workspace. The Council has acted as the enabler in the development - providing the building, creating the right conditions and opportunity for this outstanding space.

The 35,000 sq ft space embeds a sustainable ethos to providing co-working facilities, wellness studios, a nursery, a café/restaurant and a rooftop community garden. The multigenerational, mixed-use space offers a new open venue, ranging from conversations over coffee to wellbeing and gardening activities for the community.

# ACCELERATING SOUTH LONDON'S GROWTH CLUSTERS

The National Industrial Strategy Invest 2035 is the UK government's 10-year plan to deliver the innovation, opportunity, certainty, and stability businesses require to enable investment in the eight high-growth clusters that will drive the future success of the UK economy.

London is the beating heart of the UK economy, and the Mayor has, through the publication of the London Growth Plan, set out the clusters that will be most impactful over the next decade - clusters where London is already at the frontier of science and technology, leading global innovation, and ones that have the potential to be highly productive and exportable.

However, the London Growth Plan rightly acknowledges that local areas will have their own growth ambitions, which will need to be supported by London-wide policy and investment.

The following section outlines South London's key growth clusters, areas of investment that will drive our ambition to become the go-to destination for inclusive and sustainable innovation in:



**HEALTH AND LIFE SCIENCES**



**NET ZERO AND NATURE**



**EXPERIENCE AND VISITOR ECONOMY**



**CREATIVE AND DIGITAL**

These growth clusters have been identified by analysing the concentration of our existing businesses and knowledge asset base, the research, innovation and teaching strengths of our South London partner universities and colleges and the growth potential of the many, varied and exciting strategic investment sites being brought forward across the region.

To achieve inclusive and sustainable growth across these clusters, we will seek investment in:

- ▶ **PLACE** – nurturing our emerging frontier innovation clusters, accelerating their development, and significantly boosting their growth and global impact; and, enhancing the productivity and influence of our existing clusters of foundational research and innovation by promoting greater collaboration rooted in place;
- ▶ **PEOPLE** – realising the potential of all our people by reducing barriers to learning and creating inclusive opportunities across the higher-paid employment that can be found within our growth-driving, high-value clusters;
- ▶ **INFRASTRUCTURE** – enhancing our region's transport and digital networks, unlocking and bringing forward new homes, facilities, and spaces, enabling businesses to start-up, scale and stay, strengthening regional supply chains, and better connecting our residents to good jobs.



South London has significant potential for transformative growth. It has a history of creative, digital, health, engineering and life science innovation. We need to be ambitious by utilising our strengths, including our research, innovation and teaching partnerships with universities and colleges. To meet the many real challenges that impact day-to-day lives, Kingston Chamber endorses closer strategic links that will deliver genuine investment and employment."

Forbes Low, CEO,  
Kingston Chamber of Commerce



City St George's, University of London



Automotive Lab (Credit: Peter Langdown)



University of Roehampton



The University's partnership with SLP has been instrumental in driving innovation and delivering impactful research. We have collaborated on initiatives that foster business growth, enhance skills, and promote entrepreneurial development. These have provided local businesses with access to resources, support, and training, thereby strengthening local job markets, boosting productivity, and creating lasting economic opportunities for South London."

Dr. Martin Davies,  
Pro Vice-Chancellor, Kingston University



Pottery (Credit: Peter Langdown)



CAVE (Credit: Peter Langdown)



The London Cancer Hub is a transformational opportunity for South London. It will become a home for life science breakthroughs on a global scale and will make a real impact for those living locally too, given the significant economic and job opportunities it will generate. The LCH will create an ecosystem which could shape the future of healthcare for years to come."

Daniel May, Director, Socius



Harrow, Richmond & Uxbridge Colleges

## HEALTH & LIFE SCIENCE CLUSTER



**83,000** people currently employed in the cluster

Forecasting **20%** cluster growth (2025 to 2028)

Potential to create **13,000** good jobs by 2030

### WHERE ARE THE GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES IN SOUTH LONDON?

The Health and Life Sciences cluster in South London consists of globally recognised institutions and organisations. The cluster has significant growth potential and represents a substantial opportunity for investment given the region's research knowledge asset density and the diversity and maturity of strategic sites.

These include the London Cancer Hub, the Botanic Gardens at Kew, City St George's, University of London, the National Physical Laboratory, and the Royal Marsden - all world leading research-intensive institutions - as well as the new international School of Medicine at St. Mary's University, Twickenham.

### WHAT IS SOUTH LONDON GREAT AT?



Oncology



Genomics



Cell Biology



Cardiovascular

### WHAT DOES THE LONDON GROWTH PLAN SAY?

London has important competitive advantages in frontier innovation: globally leading universities; a deep and diverse talent pool; access to global capital; a large market for innovation; and a culture of entrepreneurship. London is already the leading European city for life

sciences, with strong ambitions to close the gap with Boston and New York. The London Cancer Hub in Sutton is Europe's leading cancer research district and a key driver in London's economic growth and innovation.

### WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS TO CLUSTER GROWTH?



Navigating a complex ecosystem



Workforce & skills



Availability of grow-on space



Access to investment

### CLUSTER ASSETS

1. London Cancer Hub
2. National Physical Laboratory
3. Royal Marsden Hospital
4. St. Helier Hospital
5. City St George's, University of London
6. St. Mary's University School of Medicine
7. Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew
8. Kingston University
9. University of Roehampton
10. LSBU (Croydon)
11. Kingston Hospital
12. St George's Hospital
13. Springfield University Hospital
14. Croydon University Hospital



### SOUTH LONDON - INVESTING IN INNOVATION: LONDON CANCER HUB, SUTTON

London Borough of Sutton is partnering with Socius and Aviva Capital Partners on a once-in-a-generation opportunity to deliver a sustainable district for excellence in cancer research. Working closely with The Institute of Cancer Research, London, The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust, and Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust, the London Cancer Hub (LCH) will consist of a one million square feet life sciences district on a five-hectare site. The shared vision of the partners is to build on the groundbreaking facilities already provided by the Institute for Cancer Research and Royal Marsden Hospital with a new ecosystem of labs, R&D and commercial facilities that will attract researchers and scientists from around the world and accelerate the development of groundbreaking cancer treatments. The site at maturity will deliver major social and economic benefits, including 13,000 jobs in health, science, education and construction and make a contribution of circa £1.2bn GVA to the UK economy.



We are proud to be investing in the London Cancer Hub as a key innovation district which embodies the spirit of frontier innovation set out within the London Growth Plan. By delivering groundbreaking innovation, the Hub will create highly skilled job opportunities and drive growth across the UK economy. South London has the potential to lead globally in cancer research and treatment and we're excited to help make that vision a reality."

David Epstein, Managing Director, Aviva Capital Partners



## NET ZERO & NATURE CLUSTER



**40,000** people currently employed in the cluster

Forecasting **35%** cluster growth (2025 to 2028)

Potential to create **13,000** good jobs by 2030

A **£17bn** retrofit market opportunity

### WHERE ARE THE GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES IN SOUTH LONDON?

South London's transition to Net Zero offers major socio-economic benefits. The region's Net Zero cluster holds strong potential for job creation and commercial investment but will require a coordinated, system-based investment approach to enhance collaboration across

the supply chain and market. South London universities provide a competitive edge through established research centres in high-productivity green innovation sectors, including climate tech, materials science, and built environment services such as architecture and engineering.

### WHAT IS SOUTH LONDON GREAT AT?



Biodiversity



Botanical Science



Sustainable Construction



Sustainable Engineering & Technology

### WHAT DOES THE LONDON GROWTH PLAN SAY?

London has two significant economic opportunities from the transition to Net Zero: the domestic growth created by the capital's own green transition, and the export growth from selling London's green innovation and green finance to the world. Decarbonising London will require massive investment in power,

transport, homes, and businesses, driving new jobs and innovation. London's challenge is to unlock that investment quickly. That needs an investible pipeline of green growth projects, an approach to planning that gets them moving quickly, and a significant expansion of the green supply chain to deliver them.

### WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS TO CLUSTER GROWTH?



Procurement, Supply Chains



Access to Finance



Workforce & Skills



End Consumer Market Demand

### CLUSTER ASSETS

1. University of Roehampton
  2. LSBU (Croydon)
  3. South Thames College Group
  4. South London Retrofit
  5. City St George's University of London
  6. Sutton Decentralised Energy Network
  7. Canons House and Grounds
  8. Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew
  9. BedZed
  10. Croydon College
- South London Green Spaces, Parks & Gardens



### SOUTH LONDON - INVESTING IN INNOVATION: SETEC @ ROEHAMPTON

The University has invested over £10m into the development of a new centre of sustainable engineering and technology education centre. The Centre, which opened in 2025, provides industry-leading facilities for students and supports the UK's strategic journey to achieve net-zero by 2050. Spanning over 3,000 sqm in size, SETEC is already providing comprehensive green skills education, delivering high-quality and industry-engaged programmes in engineering, architecture and built environment courses. SETEC will offer new built environment and engineering courses at degree and apprenticeship levels, and foster greater collaboration with FE partners.



South London's commitment to net zero is helping to harness opportunities to foster inclusive growth, creating high-quality jobs and driving innovation. Our engineering and construction industry is at the forefront of sustainable practice and identifying opportunities for green growth. The University's investment in SETEC is a powerful example of partnership working with industry, local government and education providers all behind this common vision."

Professor Richard Keogh, Deputy Vice Chancellor, University of Roehampton



## EXPERIENCE & VISITOR ECONOMY CLUSTER



Over **2m** people visit Kew Gardens & Hampton Court each and every year

The Allianz Stadium Twickenham generates over **£180m** for the region

The Wimbledon Championships has an economic impact of over **£400m**

Over **1.5m** people visit London's only theme park at Chessington World of Adventures Resort

**5m** public art viewings during Croydon's London Borough of Culture

### WHERE ARE THE GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES IN SOUTH LONDON?

South London's unique sporting, heritage and cultural destinations include Twickenham Stadium, the All-England Club Championships at Wimbledon, Selhurst Park, Croydon, and visitor attractions such as historic Hampton Court Palace and Chessington World of Adventures Resort. With over six million visitors every year to these iconic South London venues alone, we believe South London is perfectly placed to achieve the London's ambition to not only grow the diversity and quality of world-class visitor destinations across the city but also encourage visitors to stay longer and see more than the familiar attractions of Zone 1.

### WHAT IS SOUTH LONDON GREAT AT?



Sporting & cultural venues



Historic royal palaces & estates



Vibrant & thriving high streets



Abundant parks & green spaces

### WHAT DOES THE LONDON GROWTH PLAN SAY?

The experience economy refers to culture, events, sports, attractions, retail and hospitality that are tradeable. While most of these clusters do not rank among the most productive, the experience economy matters because it is what makes London a brilliant place to visit,

study and live. London has the opportunity to create new, internationally significant visitor destinations outside the city centre. There is a particular opportunity to grow destinations in outer London and those that celebrate London's diverse communities.

### WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS TO CLUSTER GROWTH?



Procurement & Supply Chains



Workforce Recruitment, Training & Retention



Investment in Physical & Digital Connectivity

### CLUSTER ASSETS

1. Twickenham Stadium
2. All England Lawn Tennis Club
3. Hampton Court Palace
4. Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew
5. Ham House
6. Crystal Palace FC
7. Croydon Town Centre
8. Chessington World of Adventures Resort
9. Rose Theatre
10. AFC Wimbledon
11. Tooting & Mitcham FC
12. Sutton United FC
13. New Wimbledon Theatre
14. Throwley Yard
15. Boxpark
16. Fairfield Halls
17. Polka Theatre
18. Croydon Minster
19. Heathfield House & Gardens



### SOUTH LONDON - INVESTING IN INNOVATION: DESTINATION: SOUTH LONDON

Destination: South London will convene a better-connected, better-supported experience economy cluster. It will transform South London's visitor experience by creating a new and robust regional destination strategic partnership that will lead on place shaping to deliver economic growth, and generate quality outcomes for visitors, our natural environment, local communities and businesses.

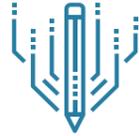
The partnership will set clear priorities for investment, promoting sustainability and accessibility, including transport and digital connectivity, and grow regional supply chains to create opportunities for local growth and local jobs.



Chessington World of Adventures Resort is proud to be London's only theme park, and we are pleased to see this Growth Ambitions statement championing the experience and visitor economy here in South London. The sub-region has significant potential to be recognised for its visitor offer, and a collaborative approach for enhancing our profile and attracting visitors, not only supports businesses within the hospitality sectors but also stimulates growth across South London's wider economy, generating vital employment opportunities for the region's residents."

Simon Burge, Strategic Development Director, Chessington World of Adventures Resort

## CREATIVE & DIGITAL CLUSTER



**40,000** people currently employed in the clusters

Forecasting **30%** cluster growth (2025 to 2028)

Potential to create **12,000** good jobs by 2030

### WHERE ARE THE GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES IN SOUTH LONDON?

From film and screen industry best-in-class production studios and venues to globally recognised talent incubators such as University of Arts, London, Kingston School of Art, Merky HQ, and the Brit School, South London is a hotbed for world-leading content creation, gaming and cutting-edge platform development. Over the last two years, we have

worked intensively to engage with and better understand the cluster's needs to deliver sustainable growth, propelling individual creatives and businesses forward into global markets while contributing to the overall resilience and collaborative strength of the South London creative and digital community.

### WHAT IS SOUTH LONDON GREAT AT?



Film



Art & Design



Theatre



Production



Content

### WHAT DOES THE LONDON GROWTH PLAN SAY?

London's creative industries entertain, educate and inspire people all over the world. We are leading global exporters of film, TV, gaming, music, marketing, fashion and architecture. These clusters are large, productive, tradeable and growing. They are also the heart of London's soft power, reaching the hearts and

minds of audiences globally with London's creativity, diversity, heritage and values.

London will use all its levers to support these creative industries clusters to thrive – including planning, infrastructure, public land, placemaking, business support, inward investment, skills development and promotion.

### WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS TO CLUSTER GROWTH?



Access to finance



Availability of creator/maker spaces



Availability of and access to talent



Opportunities for collaboration

### CLUSTER ASSETS

1. Twickenham Studios
2. Battersea Design Technology Quarter
3. University of the Arts Wimbledon
4. Kingston University
5. LSBU (Croydon)
6. The BRIT School
7. Polka Theatre
8. New Wimbledon Theatre
9. South Wimbledon Business Area
10. Rose Theatre, Kingston
11. Fusebox
12. Cryer Arts
13. London School of Innovation
14. Sound Lounge
15. Merky HQ
16. Croydon College



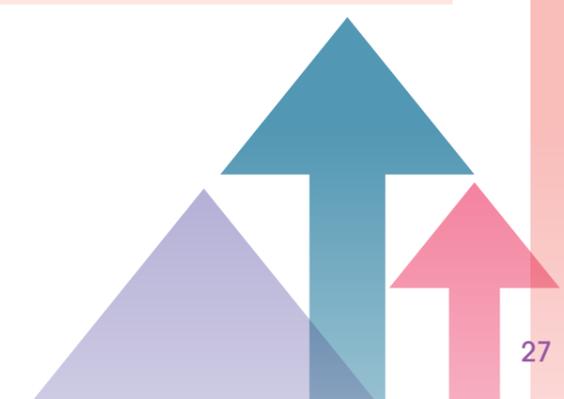
### SOUTH LONDON – INVESTING IN INNOVATION: CREATIVE & DIGITAL CLUSTER

The South London Creative and Digital Innovation Cluster was established in 2023 by Kingston University and UAL Wimbledon. The cluster's mission is to support creative and digital businesses in the region to drive innovation and growth in the sector. The initiative delivered a business support programme alongside networking and stakeholder engagement events. Over 200 businesses have engaged with the cluster and its activities. The cluster is led by a team of representatives and stakeholders from Higher Education Institutions, local businesses, South London Partnership Boroughs, community groups, and workspaces. Investment priorities going forward focus on three key areas: innovation – facilitating access to the right support and expertise; connection – leveraging and building on meaningful connections; and skills – enabling a skills and talent pipeline.



University of the Arts London fully supports this Growth Ambitions Statement. Not only are we the largest specialist arts university in Europe with significant national and global reach, but we are very much rooted in the communities where our Colleges are based. UAL is committed to widening access to creative education and supporting the creative digital sector as a major driver of growth in South London."

Professor Trevor Keeble, Pro-Vice Chancellor, University of the Arts London



## INVESTING IN PLACE

INCREASING INVESTMENT IN RESEARCH, INNOVATION & COLLABORATION



### OUR GROWTH AMBITION

To become a leading 'go-to and stay' place for inclusive, sustainable innovation.

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Investing in place-based innovation could transform South London's contribution to London's economy and generate billions in additional GVA for the UK. South London has strong potential for growth in key sectors including creative and digital industries, sustainable construction, deep-tech, and life sciences. By leveraging the strengths of our universities, colleges, and strategic investment sites, we will become a hub for innovation and enterprise.



Art & Design (Credit: Peter Langdown)



LSBU strongly supports this Statement and its focus on regional innovation and place-based growth. We are proud to align our strengths in research and innovation with its growth clusters, particularly health and life sciences, net zero, and creative and digital industries. We believe in the power of collaboration to unlock potential and are committed to working together to build a fairer, better connected, and more prosperous sub region."

Professor Tara Dean, Provost, Co-Vice-Chancellor, London South Bank University

### OUR COMMITMENTS TO GROWTH

- ▶ Create a South London Anchor Network to drive collaboration across health, education, skills, net zero, housing, and procurement.
- ▶ Establish a South London Investment and Growth Board to unlock public and private investment in regional growth opportunities.
- ▶ Launch Destination: South London, a strategic forum to attract investment into our towns, high streets, and experiential economy.
- ▶ Pursue opportunities through the proposed International Centre of Creative Industries to grow the region's creative economy.



City St George's, University of London

## INVESTING IN PEOPLE

CREATING AN INCLUSIVE PIPELINE OF TALENT, IDEAS & CREATIVITY



### OUR GROWTH AMBITION

To deliver greater access for all our residents to do good work – higher quality, higher paid, & higher value jobs

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

South London's future prosperity is dependent on training, developing and retaining its future workforce. We must unlock the potential of all our people by providing them with skills, qualifications and experience that South London needs to ensure its future sustainability, prosperity and success, and creating opportunity for everyone, everywhere. To supply the talent, skills and workforce that South London needs we will continue to work closely with local business and education partners. Our Local Skills Improvement Statement sets out our ambitions to develop the skills we need, with a particular focus on:

- ▶ Health and Social Care
- ▶ Built Environment
- ▶ Hospitality and Retail
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Information and Communication



Fashion (Credit: James Tye)



There's a genuine sense of partnership in South London to deliver a diverse and inclusive workforce for now and for our future, which is galvanising employers and educators to work together strategically. This collaborative approach means South Londoners of all ages are being provided with new opportunities to learn, develop and progress. It's an exciting time to be in South London and to be part of this transformation."

Craig Hurring – CEO, Love Wimbledon  
Co-Chair, Skills & Employment Alliance

### OUR COMMITMENTS TO GROWTH

- ▶ Strengthen integration of health and care, skills and employment services to improve wellbeing and economic resilience.
- ▶ Support 2,800 economically inactive residents into work by 2030 through trailblazer and Connect to Work initiatives.
- ▶ Deliver a refreshed South London Local Skills Improvement Plan to align training with growth sectors and employer needs.
- ▶ Expand inclusive employment pathways through effective programmes like Connect to Work.
- ▶ Maximise social value by building on proven successes such as the South London Careers Hub, the Skills and Employment Alliance and the Green Skills Academy.



Harrow, Richmond & Uxbridge Colleges

## INVESTING IN INFRASTRUCTURE



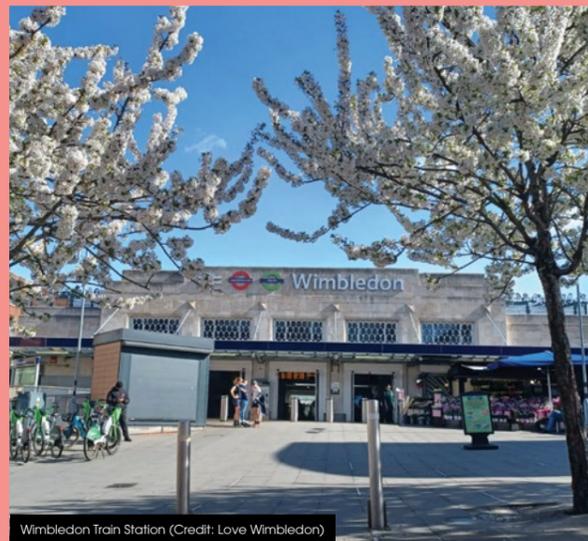
UNLOCKING TRANSFORMATIVE INVESTMENT IN HOUSING, DIGITAL & TRANSPORT CONNECTIVITY

### OUR GROWTH AMBITION

To better connect people with opportunity to support polycentric growth.

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

By better connecting people with opportunity be that skills, jobs or housing we can boost South London's productivity and growth. South London's growth relies on modern transport and digital infrastructure. Poor connectivity limits access to jobs, education, and housing, and constrains economic potential. Investing in transport and digital networks will unlock homes, support business growth, foster inclusion, and drive a thriving, sustainable economy. Our infrastructure must match our ambitions for growth.



Wimbledon Train Station (Credit: Love Wimbledon)

### OUR COMMITMENTS TO GROWTH:

- ▶ Take forward South London's strategic housing developments as set out in the London Growth Plan and support the London Warmer Homes programme.
- ▶ Partner with TFL to develop business cases linking transport investment with housing delivery.
- ▶ Work with the NHS to identify potential opportunities to better align estate assets with primary and community care services and for joined-up approaches to developing key worker housing.
- ▶ Expand greener, more sustainable transport options to reduce climate impact.
- ▶ Working collaboratively as a sub region to identify streamlined ways to improve digital and mobile connectivity.



Croydon Town Centre (Credit: Croydon BID)



The boroughs of South West London are key to London's and the UK's ambitions for strong economic growth and a prosperous and fair society. Our strengths include an educated workforce and good links to central London, the South, Heathrow and Gatwick and top universities. Businesses are already investing here because they can see our potential. To fully unlock this, we must see ongoing public and private investment into transport, digital connectivity and housing."

Councillor Barry Lewis, Leader of Sutton Council

# WHAT IS SOUTH LONDON ASKING FOR?

This Growth Ambitions Statement sets out South London's shared vision and commitment to realising inclusive, sustainable, good growth. We believe that such growth can only be achieved by working closely in partnership, with local businesses, with local people and with our anchor civic partners. As a sub-region we are ambitious for the future – for the opportunities it can offer and for the contribution we can make to the on-going success of London and the future of the whole of the UK.

However, just as we are committing to an ambitious agenda to support growth through this document, we also call on national and local government to provide the investment and support to make London's polycentric growth ambitions a reality.

This will require investment, particularly our connectivity challenges, to ensure that we can double down on our strengths and accelerate growth. Our asks for support across our investment themes are as follows:



## WHAT SOUTH LONDON IS ASKING FOR

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ A London Innovation Strategy that gives local leaders control over research and innovation investment, supporting our Frontier Innovation goals.</li> <li>▶ Devolved funding to South London's Innovation Partnership, BIG South London, to invest in our prioritised innovation and growth clusters and unlock RDI talent and opportunity across the sub-region.</li> <li>▶ Devolution of powers (including fiscal) to drive inclusive, sustainable growth across our sub-region.</li> <li>▶ Work closely with London and Partners to support the development of Destination: South London in order to grow the visitor economy, developing current attractions, creating new ones and encouraging longer stays.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The Mayor's support to ensure South London's needs, as set out in our Local Skills Improvement Plan, are reflected in London's Inclusive Talent Strategy and any future skills or employment plans.</li> <li>▶ Longer term, devolved funding of skills and employment support to enable effective and continuous support to South London's communities.</li> <li>▶ Support for businesses to become more inclusive and to expand the local talent pool, including funding for work with South London's employers to support the creation of more experiences of the world of work which will address the experience gaps that can prevent people finding good employment.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Support from key partners in regional and national Government in shaping a future South London Transport Strategy that will unleash polycentric growth through a focus on:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Localised transport investment and service improvements.</li> <li>- Better orbital connections across the sub region.</li> <li>- More frequent and reliable suburban rail (metro-style service).</li> <li>- Modernising trams and buses.</li> <li>- Expanding active travel schemes.</li> <li>- Route map for the delivery of Crossrail 2.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Support for stronger, more resilient digital and mobile connectivity and full fibre broadband.</li> </ul> |
|---|---|--|

Working with regional and national government, South London is committed to advancing the polycentric growth goals of the National Industrial Strategy and the London Growth Plan, fostering

inclusive, sustainable economic and social development to create a healthy, prosperous community through 2035 and beyond.

