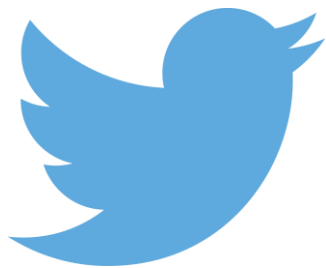




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APSE Southern: Neighbourhood Services Thematic Forum

What Council Unitarisation may mean for Neighbourhood Services

- Neighbourhood Services Affected
- Potential Benefits
- Risks and Challenges
- Keeping the Local Voice



English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Explanatory notes to the Bill, prepared by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, are published separately as Bill 283—EN.

EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Secretary Angela Rayner has made the following statement under section 19(1)(a) of the Human Rights Act 1998:

In my view the provisions of the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill are compatible with the Convention rights.

Protection of functions

- 54 Prohibition of secondary legislation removing functions

PART 3

OTHER MEASURES ABOUT LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PCCS

CHAPTER 1

REORGANISATION, GOVERNANCE AND ELECTIONS

Reorganisation

- 55 Single tiers of local government
56 Certain functions of shadow authorities for single tiers of local government

Governance

- 57 Local authority governance and executives
58 Local authorities: effective neighbourhood governance

Elections

- 59 Mayors and Police and Crime Commissioners: supplementary vote system

CHAPTER 2

ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE

- 60 Community right to buy assets of community value and protection of special assets

PART 4

LOCAL AUDIT

Local Government Reorganisation

- The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill
- Differences in Council Types
- Counties (Waste disposal, social care, education catering, highways)
- Districts (Waste collection, parks, public realm, housing)
- Unitary

Why Unitary?

- Simplified system of local government
- Efficiencies?
- Bigger footprint – population size over 500,000 people
- Ultimately saving money for the public purse...
- Already in place in Wales, Scotland (and to some extent Northern Ireland)

The 21 Areas

1. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough
2. Derbyshire and Derby
3. Devon, Plymouth and Torbay
4. East Sussex and Brighton & Hove
5. Essex with Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock
6. Gloucestershire
7. Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton
8. Hertfordshire
9. Kent and Medway
10. Lancashire, Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen
11. Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland
12. Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire
13. Norfolk
14. Nottinghamshire and Nottingham
15. Oxfordshire
16. Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent
17. Suffolk
18. Surrey
19. Warwickshire
20. West Sussex
21. Worcestershire

The Roadmap to Change

- All areas submitted responses initially by the deadline of 21 March (and in many applications to the Devo Priority Areas)
- Approval needed from the Minister
- Suspension of elections (if applicable) (Ministerial statement of 5 February)
- Legislation before Parliament (slightly different process for unitary changes).
- Shadow Authority
- But then the hard work.....

Councillors

- Fewer councillors (More powers...?)
- Politics with a big P and small p!
- Disruptors to local political institutions / parties
- Council leaders – fewer overall
- Voting pattern changes

What about the workers?

- TUPE or not TUPE ...that is the question..
- No...is the answer but....
- Cabinet Office Code of Practice – TUPE in all but name
- Still workforce fall out
- Redundancies
- Equal Pay
- Managerial tiers (tears)....

Neighbourhood Service Delivery

- 'New' to some services
- Merger of multiple services
- Capacity
- Models of delivery – outsourced models – do they give rise to opportunities to insource?
- Systems and operational delivery – resolving conflicts

Optimal Efficiency

- Optimal efficiency = Reducing waste and scaling production to match demand.
- But.....not as simply as economies of scale in some aspects of service delivery
- Care needed not to create more inefficient or ineffective delivery of services

Practical considerations



Issues for Neighbourhood Level Services?

- Service reviews? What, where, for what purpose?
- Working arrangements: merging teams, fleet, maintenance regimes
- Management teams: Avoiding duplication but avoiding knowledge loss
- Service delivery models

Assets, Efficiencies and Optimal Efficiency

- What existing buildings do you have?
- Reviewing the property and asset register
- ‘Service assets’ such as depots
- Rationalisation? Sell-offs? Refurbish or Repurpose?
- Can efficiencies be realised?

Policy conundrums

- Climate and ecological emergency – different councils and different policies
- Tree planting/rewilding/biodiversity
- Commercial policies – trading, charging, income generation
- Fleet register and vehicle replacements
- Recycling policy / waste contracts
- Leisure rationalisation?

New financial priorities or constraints?

- Adults and Childrens Services
- Waste disposal contracts?
- PFI / Street-lighting?
- School meals / education services
- Homelessness and Housing Provision

Predecessors, successors, legacies, data, debts and culture

- Do you know your neighbour's wealth?
- Buying a house with all its contents...?
- Legacy issues? Debts, litigation, toxic culture, reputation?
- Transformation and change opportunities?
- Getting workforce buy-in to change?
- Risk of brain drain?



Questions..

Over to YOU!



Association for Public Service Excellence

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The shift work experts

Supporting your performance & people

APSE Networks meeting

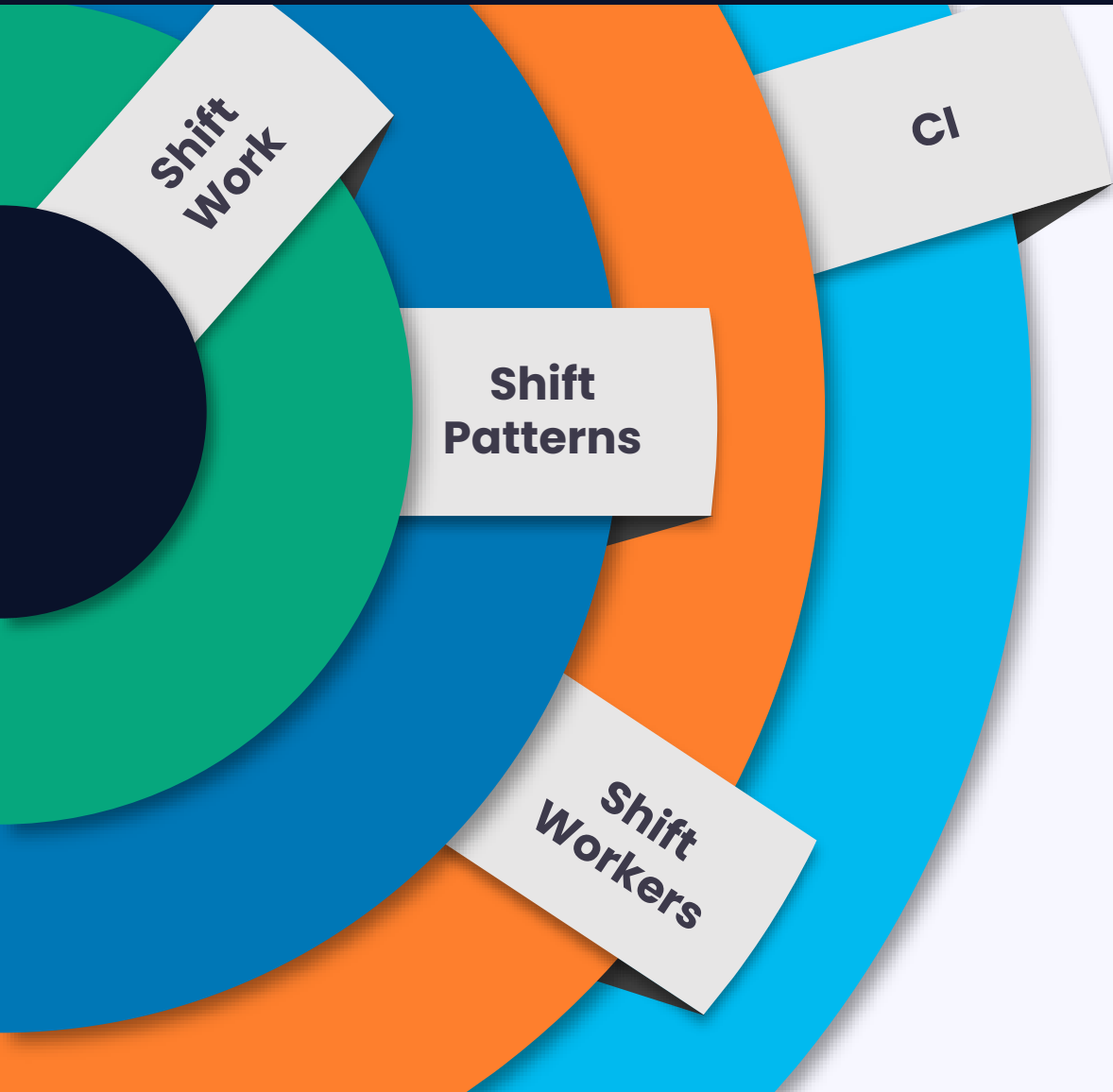
Rethinking shift work in local government

02/10/2025

Analyse | Create | Engage

Rethinking shift work in local government

About optashift



Our purpose – Helping tackle economic & societal challenges by improving shift work

Experienced – Specialist optimisation & best practice expertise across four decades & diverse industries/orgs

Holistic view – Focused on measurement & innovation across all aspects of shift work



The impact of shift work

- **Perfect storm** – Increasing (24/7) demand, funding constraints, workforce issues
- **Modernisation matters** – Significant influence over performance, capacity & working conditions & health
- **Overlooked/avoided** – Change often slowed by lack of specific focus, evidence, expertise & anticipated resistance



The impact of shift work

- **Shift work is hard** – On the body, the mind & personal life
- **‘Wellbeing washing’** – Much preventative support is passive & not tailored to the unique pressures faced by shift workers
- **Increased scrutiny** – It’s likely the impact of shift work will be a focus of future legislative change & potential litigation



Shift work has been scientifically linked to:

- Cancers
- Heart Disease
- Mental health issues
- Dementia
- Suicide
- Sleep disorders
- Reproductive health issues
- Driving Accidents
- Diabetes
- Cognitive Impairment
- High Blood Pressure
- Preterm Births
- Obesity
- Social Isolation
- Musculoskeletal conditions
- Breathing difficulties
- Work-family conflict
- Workplace accidents



Aspects to consider



Demand & Capacity | Align supply to demand



Shift Patterns | Co-design balanced options



Policy & Governance | Follow best practice



Systems & Processes | Optimise daily management



Engagement & Comms | Empower through collaboration



Fatigue, Health & Wellbeing | Support your people





Relevant across local government

Optimisation proven to deliver benefits across local government services which rely on shift work:

- Street scene, facilities management, housing maintenance
- CCTV operations, security, border control
- Waste collection, processing, environmental enforcement
- Public health, social care, homecare
- Highways, transport, parking enforcement
- Leisure, community amenities, heritage sites
- 3rd party delivery partners (compliance & best value)

100% Compliance

+60% Productivity

-55% Absence

-45% Waste

-10% Labour costs

Data & design principles



Design considerations

- **Operating windows** – 5/7 day working, extended hours/ 24-7, aligning to seasonality
- **Demand-led** – Redeploy capacity from lower demand periods to when you need more cover
- **Teaming/crewing structures** – Consider alternatives to increase options
- **Cover/abstractions** – Rostered/part-rostered holidays
- **Flex mechanisms** – Manage uncertainty with standby shifts, improve systems like shift swaps
- **'Family' of patterns** – Appeal to different demographics, plan for different forecasts/scenarios



Example – 24 x 7 holiday options

shift | Plan

- **Holidays on request** – 42-hour contract (paid breaks), 4 on 4 off:

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	Total
1	D1	D1	N1	N1					D1	D1	N1	N1			96.00 hrs
2			D1	D1	N1	N1					D1	D1	N1	N1	96.00 hrs
3					D1	D1	N1	N1					D1	D1	72.00 hrs
4	N1	N1					D1	D1	N1	N1					72.00 hrs

- **Rostered holidays** – 39-hour contract (paid breaks), 4 on with 12, 8 & 6 off:

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	Total
1	D1	D1	N1	N1											48.00 hrs
2			D1	D1	N1	N1					D1	D1	N1	N1	96.00 hrs
3					D1	D1	N1	N1					D1	D1	72.00 hrs
4	N1	N1							D1	D1	N1	N1			72.00 hrs
5							D1	D1	N1	N1					48.00 hrs

- **Multiple other options** – e.g. 8-hour shifts, different weekend distribution, fixed midweek/weekends, alternative crewing, fixed days/nights)



Example – Variable cover

shift | Plan

- 12-hour day coverage, 5 staff midweek & 3 weekend average 37.2 hrs (unpaid breaks), delivers 2 x 7 day breaks every 10 weeks...

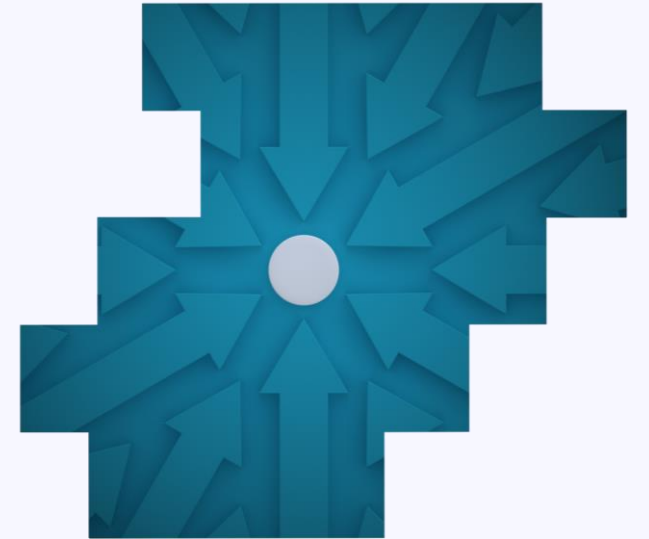
	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	Total
1	D1	D1				D1	D1	48.00 hrs
2	D1	D1						24.00 hrs
3			D1	D1	D1			36.00 hrs
4			D1	D1	D1			36.00 hrs
5	D1	D1				D1	D1	48.00 hrs
6	D1	D1				D1	D1	48.00 hrs
7	D1	D1						24.00 hrs
8			D1	D1	D1			36.00 hrs
9			D1	D1	D1			36.00 hrs
10			D1	D1	D1			36.00 hrs

Balance is key



Design tips

- **Assess** – Create a data-validated view of current ways of working to prioritise & target benefits, establish a plan & build an evidence base to make the case for change
- **Explore your options** – There are almost infinite ways of structuring shift work...best fit is not always the most obvious solution
- **Establish rules** – Establish a framework around your variables & interdependencies to inform & guide the design process
- **Remember** – Every design choice will have pros, cons & trade-offs...tailoring your solution is about balance...& engagement is key to achieving this...



Shift worker engagement & support

Engagement is essential

- **Data first** – Gather the evidence, establish the rationale/business case, understand & outline the shape of change
- **Employee sensitivity** – Working patterns are emotive & change resistance can be strong in unionised environments with legacy ways of working
- **Collaboration is key** – Empathy, transparency & empowerment reduces friction & supports acceptance when adapting shift work models
- **Establish a platform** – Everything changes...creating an understood & appreciated co-design approach during transformation supports continuous improvement



Engagement tips

- **Put employees at the heart of the process** – Detail the rationale, process & benefits but give colleagues a meaningful voice & ensure they help shape solutions
- **Create a robust implementation plan** – Focus on driving engagement, overcoming barriers & providing employees with ownership over their shift patterns:
 - > Clear, evidence-based comms to build awareness, understanding & participation
 - > Sentiment & preference gathering to democratise solution development
 - > Collaborative co-design & feedback loops to agree rules & iterate pattern options
- **Focus on balance** – Be clear from the outset that it's about finding the best way forward for all stakeholders within the model's defined parameters

Shift worker fatigue & health support

- **Embed commitment into transformation** – Maintain an effective, healthy & engaged shift working environment
- **Provide specific & personalised support** – Tailor to patterns, processes, demographics & existing HR/OH approaches
- **Design a continuous programme** – Wide range of data-driven strategic, operational, practical & technical solutions:
 - > Risk identification, monitoring & solution design
 - > Structured & tailored guidance/resources/training
 - > Environmental improvements (light, heat, rest/catering facilities etc)
 - > Nudges/interventions & specialist 1-2-1 support for at-risk individuals
- **Marathon not a sprint** – Focus on evolving your approach



What next?

What next?

- Consider the shift working areas in your organisation
- Keep an eye on the tell-tale signs →
- The truth is in the data
- Assess & build the case for change
- Engage appropriately
- Get creative
- Continuously improve

Performance:

- Low productivity
- High labour costs
- Inefficiency & waste
- High absence
- Compliance breaches
- Service quality issues
- Employee churn
- Limited labour pool
- Industrial unrest

People:

- Poor quality jobs
- Uncertain hours & pay
- Work-life balance issues
- Fatigue risk
- Health & wellbeing impacts
- Low morale
- Skills fade
- Restricted opportunities
- Disengagement



The shift work experts

Supporting your performance & people



optashift.com

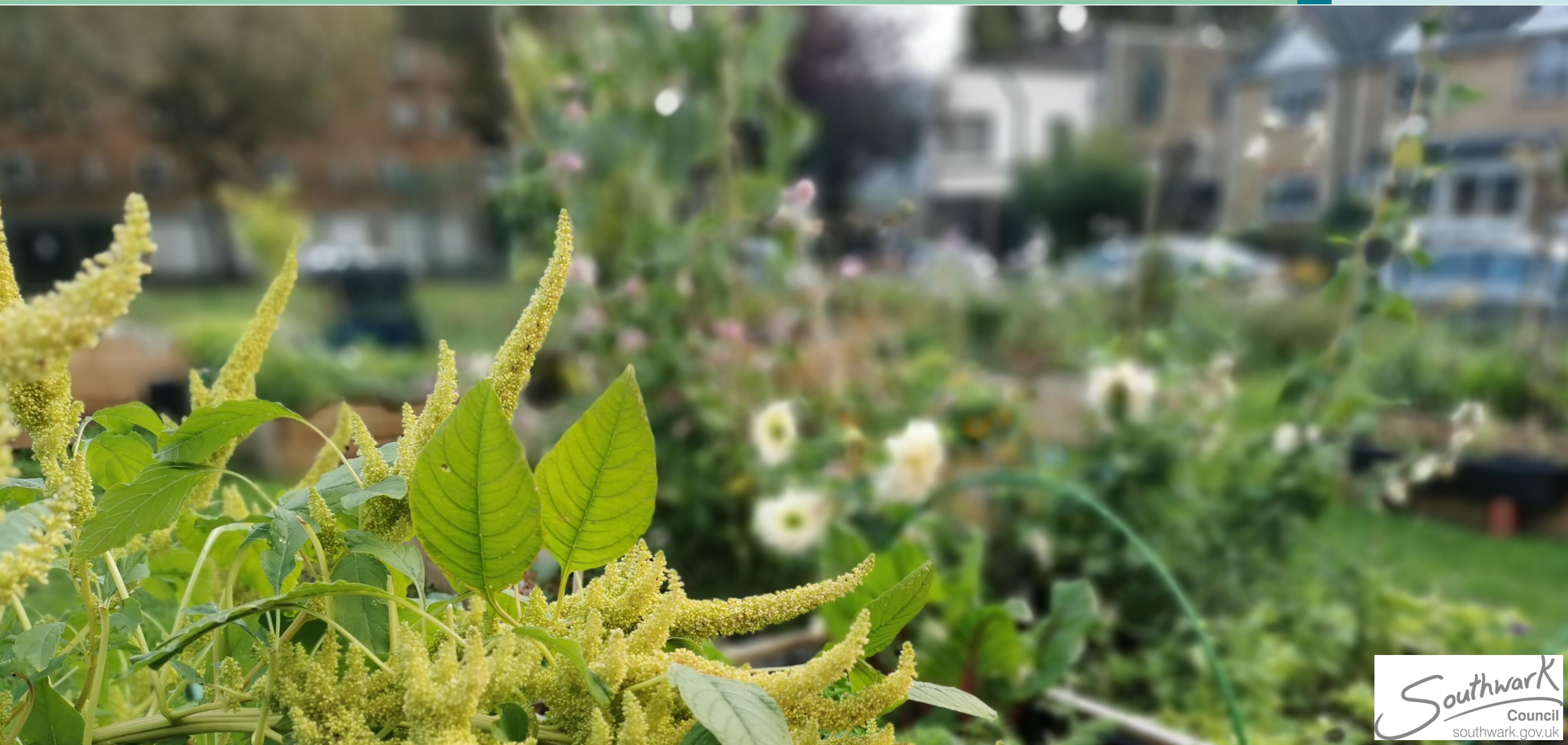


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Southwark Council support for food growing and community gardening



Development of officer support



- June 2020: Creation of 2 year temporary post of Community Gardening Coordinator (jobshare, 2 roles 3 days a week)
- Part of the Great Estates pilot project in Communities team, working with 7 estates to co-design outside projects including food growing and greening. Developed a process of support for new projects
- April 2021: Launch of the Allotment Expansion Guarantee, support for residents who want to set up and run new food growing projects opened up to all Southwark Council housing estates. So far.. 287 new growing plots at 27 new gardens..
- 2023: Post made permanent, moved to Parks and Ecology team in restructure. Focus on network building and training to support existing projects

Community Gardening officer role

- **Main point of contact** within council for existing community growers and new enquiries re/ growing
- **Supporting the network** of growers via e-newsletter, running 2 events a year at different gardens, informal introductions, linking to existing networks and mapping
- Run **training programme to support existing and new gardens, building resilience** - offer ranges from food growing and composting, to community organising and communications
- Increase food growing opportunities on estates, focus on **building resilient and sustainable** groups and projects, and give advice to projects on other types of land in borough
- Community engagement link for other related greening and biodiversity enhancement projects
- **Strategic development** promoting community gardening and food growing within the council – collaborating with many other teams e.g.: recent consultation for Planning SPD

Community Gardening roles



Council:

- Meet interested residents; site suitability/ permissions
- Support group development, advise on project plans, designs and engagement activities
- Provide funding, or advice about funding sources
- Coordinate build of gardens
- Provide initial food-growing training and ongoing advice
- Collaborate with other teams (RSO, GM, etc) to make sure the project is resilient

Residents:

- Bring together group of at least 5 residents to develop project
- Work in partnership with the council to establish local needs, create project plan and resident consultation
- Sign an agreement to manage any future garden, including coordinating plot allocations
- Fundraise for garden development, ongoing garden costs and repairs

Timeline



2022 Council Delivery Plan

Commitment to provide residents on housing land with a right to grow food

Land Commission 2023

Report on how land is used in Southwark, opportunities for change

Sustainable Food Strategy 2023-26

Protect and increase food growing spaces in the borough through planning policy

Right To Grow January 2025

Right To Grow approach passed at Council Cabinet following recommendation by Environment Scrutiny Committee which was passed at Council Assembly November 2024

Right To Grow

The Right To Grow motion (below) was adopted at Southwark Council Cabinet on 7th Jan 25

Southwark Council agrees to, where possible, take a Right to Grow approach on council owned land which is suitable, or which could be de-paved and made suitable, or which could accommodate planters, for cultivation

- Identifying and producing a map of council owned land suitable for community cultivation, including spaces that are currently covered by hard standing that could be de-paved and/or accommodate planters.
- Exploring where land can be made available for cultivation by a simple license to community organisations at no cost, building upon the council's existing growing scheme.
- Promoting the use of structurally suitable and accessible rooftops for growing.
- Considering community food growing and wildlife gardening on sites awaiting development for other uses on a fixed term basis. e. Working with Southwark's MPs in supporting Southwark's community gardeners, the Incredible Edible campaign and national 'right to grow' campaign.
- Working with partners and stakeholders and encouraging anchor institutions and civil society to join it in the above endeavour.

Right To Grow



First phase of Right To Grow Action Plan from Feb 2025:

- Align to Land Commission Action Plan
- Food growing and community gardening to be part of the Social Purpose for Land framework due Oct 25
- Connect Land Commission consultants with Southwark food growers to engage with this research
- Look into using GLA map and Southwark Maps for mapping
- Investigate other localised mapping opportunities
- Participate in cross London academic research led by Sustain, Incredible Edible: Right To Grow (Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Lambeth, Southwark)
- Contact other UK councils (Hull, Runnymede) who are implementing Right To Grow to share learnings and approaches

Projects



Compost Dr

In 2024 we launched the Compost DR pilot. The project run from April 2024 to March 2025 to upskill community gardeners with bespoke workshops at 22 sites from estate gardens, community gardens in parks, community centres and allotments. 62 people attended the 2 workshops organised at St Francis food forest , a SLUG project.

[Compost Dr video](#)

Community Plant Nursery

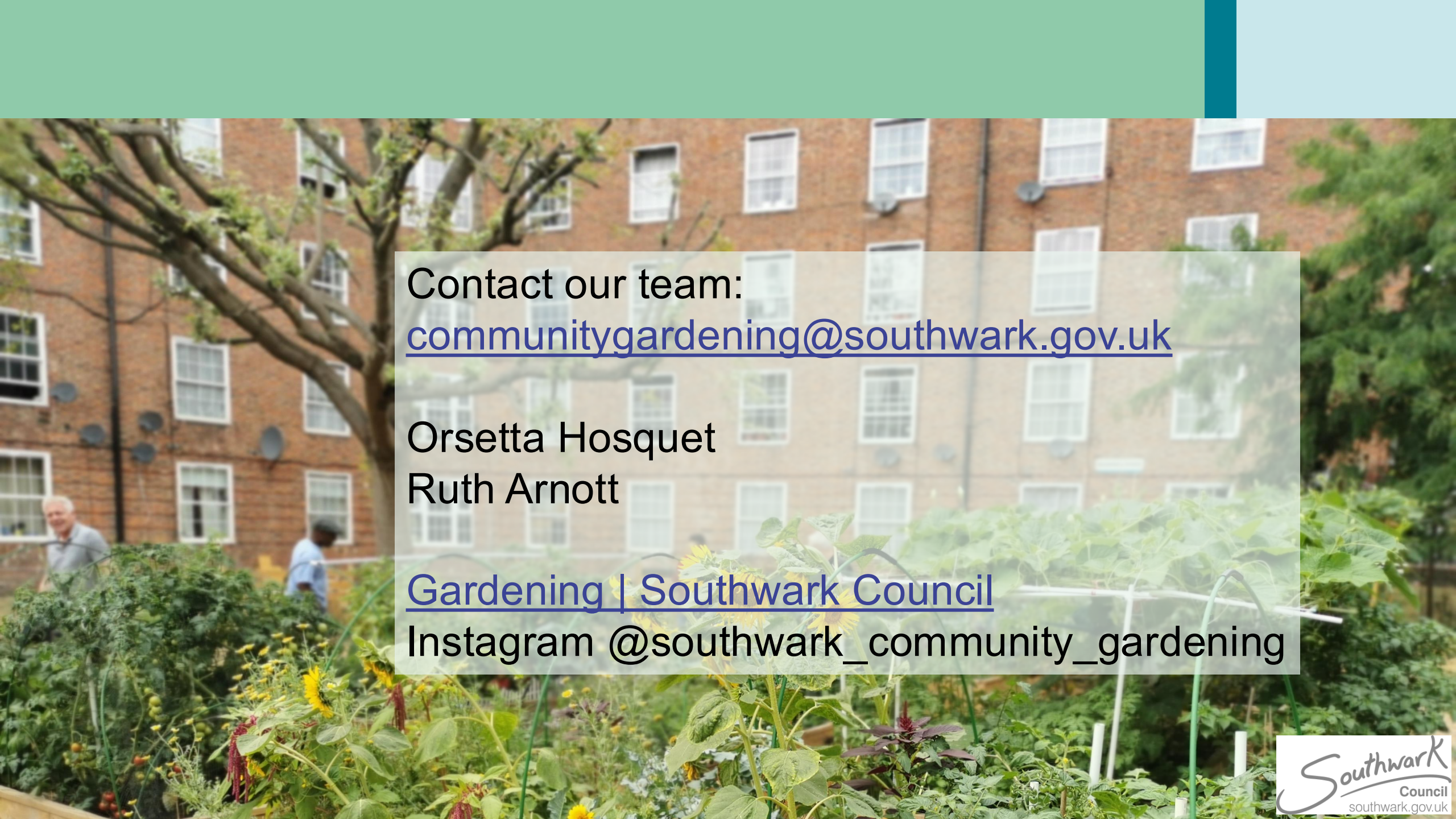
This year we launched the Community Plant Nursery. A new initiative which will provide free vegetable plug plants to community food growers across the borough, located in Chumleigh Gardens polytunnels in the heart of Burgess Park. The nursery will also be hosting more in-depth weekly volunteer workshops open to local community members to learn about propagation and food growing. This project will provide seedling all year round to increase the growing season and support people growing in the winter months.

So far 25000 seedlings were donated to 60 projects

Action Plan 2025/26

- **Developing** Right to Grow
- **Investigating opportunities for mapping** land within borough to identify potential growing spaces, aligning with **Land Commission** action plan
- **Promoting** food growing/community gardening in Planning consultation advisory notes for new developments in CDP
- **Continue** to support the build of new gardens in parks, estate or any other LBS land
- Improving **lease/license system** in place to support growing projects
- **Exploring** expansion of Community Gardening team
- Conducting **audit** of current food growing in Southwark parks
- **Identifying opportunities** to improve access to existing community growing areas in parks (mapping, linking groups to sites, supporting/advising Parks staff with suitable management agreements and formal leases)
- Developing project in **homeless hostels** in collaboration with Public Health
- **Advising and signposting** projects in schools and GP surgeries, other types of land, create meanwhile space and rooftop case studies
- Delivering programme of **training and support** for Southwark growers, 2025 focus on **Community Plant Nursery** hub delivering seedlings and teaching propagation skills; continuing with training to aid sustainable projects eg community organising and communication skills



The background image shows a lush community garden in the foreground with various plants, including sunflowers and leafy greens. In the mid-ground, two people are visible working in the garden. The background is a multi-story brick building with many windows, some of which have satellite dishes. A large tree is on the left side of the frame.

Contact our team:
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