

Green and open spaces plan 2025-2030

Introduction

South Liverpool Homes acknowledges that green and open spaces play a fundamental role on our communities' social and environmental functions. We also recognise that we have a commitment to improve and deliver good-quality spaces for our customers, residents and wider stakeholders. In light of the growing importance of environmental sustainability and community wellbeing, we have developed this plan as an essential framework for our organisation to provide sustainable, healthy, and attractive living environments for tenants, residents and other key community stakeholders.

Our plan aligns with national and local policies that advocate the integration of green spaces into urban developments, enhancing both the quality of life for residents and the wider ecological impact of our operations. Housing associations are encouraged by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019) to incorporate green infrastructure into new developments and refurbishments. The NPPF highlights the importance of well-designed green spaces in improving residents physical and mental health, promoting biodiversity and tackling climate change [1]. Additionally, a 2018 report from Fields in Trust estimates that using parks and greenspaces provides the UK with £34 billion in health and wellbeing benefits every year. This saves the NHS around £111 million every year [2].

We are aware of our responsibility to address the climate crisis right across our operations and green spaces play a pivotal role, absorbing carbon dioxide, improving flood resilience, and assisting natural cooling. The UK Climate Change Act (2008) and its commitment to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 further emphasises the importance of sustainable urban planning, with green infrastructure being a critical element of this transition [3]. We support national and Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) [4] net-zero ambitions and will seek the integration of sustainable green spaces along with other objectives in our Planet/Sustainability Strategies to uphold our obligation to this [5].

The plan outlines the creation, management, and maintenance of green areas within our estates; planting native trees, developing community gardens, and promoting access to outdoor recreational spaces. We will also work with the local authority, community groups and key partners across Speke and Garston to develop these spaces in a way that meets the diverse needs of our residents, while considering major environmental concerns.

[1] [National Planning Policy Framework December 2024](#)

[2] [Revaluing Parks and Green Spaces](#)

[3] [Climate Change Act 2008](#)

[4] [Liverpool City Region Pathway to Net Zero](#)

[5] [Our Planet Plan – SLH April 2024](#)

Sites and environmental assets

We deliver affordable housing and other services in Speke and Garston, with specialist accommodation across other areas within south Liverpool. We are also the landowner of other plots across Speke and Garston. From large green and open spaces to small infill plots, we will deliver on the commitments and targets set within this plan to enhance our green offer, creating accessible, quality natural spaces and opportunities to engage with the environment, whilst reducing the impacts of climate change.



Strategic vision and objectives

Our vision

Deliver great homes, strong communities, and bright futures. We will do this through four key objectives: People, Place, Planet and Pound.

People

Engaged and included residents who can access a range of services to support their health, wellbeing and economic aspirations. Colleagues who are engaged and empowered to deliver SLH's objectives.

Place

Building homes to meet current and future needs whilst investing in existing homes. Building strong communities – places where people choose to live and stay. A good quality home will be the foundation to tackling social inequality.

Planet

Preparing our business, our homes and our communities to meet net-zero carbon targets; going a step further by providing cleaner, greener neighbourhoods and helping our customers navigate the energy challenges they face.

Pound

Creating a sound financial platform to deliver our vision, maximising investment opportunities and working together with others to deliver more.



People

As a community-focused landlord, we want our tenants to be central to everything we do. We will continue to empower our residents to take an active role in the development and care of green spaces, ensuring these areas reflect local needs and desires. Tenants will also have opportunities to engage with environmental educational workshops and training courses, improving their green skillset, and unlocking community potential to respond to net zero demands. We will create ways for residents to have their say about their local environment, create hands-on, active volunteering roles, and ensure that those community involvement opportunities are accessible and meaningful for all.



Action Plan

- Establish and promote community-led volunteer programs for the maintenance, planting, and care of green spaces, communal areas, and parks. Involve residents in regular engagement days where they help with tasks like litter picking, planting trees, and maintaining flower beds.
- Facilitate workshops and meetings for residents to propose ideas for local green space developments. This could include children's play areas, community gardens, or nature trails.
- Regenerate parks and communal spaces to include areas for social gatherings, exercise and/or quiet relaxation. This could include outdoor gyms, community/sensory gardens, or spaces for pop-up community events.
- Ensure green and open spaces are accessible to everyone, improving lighting in poorly lit areas and ensuring pathways are clear and wheelchair friendly.

Goals

- Provide 5,000 volunteer hours for the benefit of green community spaces by the end of year five.
- Deliver two community consultations annually to discuss green space improvements.
- Host five community events per year, ranging from large seasonal events to small gardening sessions, with more than 100 participants annually.
- Work together with the local authority and other partners to ensure pathways are wide and level, and that green/open space entrances and key areas are well lit to improve visibility, safety and accessibility.



Place

We aim to enhance the biodiversity of our communal spaces and green areas to make them sustainable habitats for local wildlife and to contribute to reducing the likelihood and impact of climate change. We also recognise the benefit that these improvements have on local aesthetics and will ensure that suggested initiatives are carried out with community consultation and landscape architect plans, to maximise visual appearance.



Action plan

- Create a community orchard, benefiting the local environment and strengthening community bonds, enhancing the local sense of place. The orchard will promote environmental education and wellbeing by providing a space for relaxation, exercise, and learning about sustainable practices. Additionally, the orchard will support biodiversity and sustainability, contributing to a vibrant and resilient community.
- Develop and protect wildlife corridors between existing green spaces to allow wildlife and plants to develop and migrate. This will involve planting native species and installing wildlife habitats like birdhouses, bat boxes, and insect hotels.
- Neighbourhood aesthetics: Undertake planting and other initiatives in line with existing architecture and local planting to ensure natural assets suit the immediate surrounding architecture.
- Work alongside LCC to ensure more dog waste bins are installed in key locations with clear signage. We will also collaborate with leading animal welfare organisations to ensure responsible pet ownership is practiced across our neighbourhoods.

Goals

- Plant 20+ fruit trees in key community green spaces, hosting at least two community workshops per year in these spaces focusing on the environment and conservation.
- Convert at least 50% of our spaces into wildlife friendly zones (e.g., native planting, insect hotels, or bird feeders) by year three.
- Ensure our community spaces are assessed and accredited by awarding bodies (e.g., Royal Horticultural Society (RHS), Myerscough College), recognising their commitment to the environment through nature based aesthetic enhancements.
- Increase access to dog waste bins at key green spaces and include pet advice/support at community events.

Planet

We will ensure our green and open spaces are more resilient to the impacts of climate change. Expanding tree planting programs in our spaces, streets, and communal areas will create more shade, reduce air pollution, and balance our carbon impact. Transitioning to native and sustainable landscaping practices will support local wildlife and will enhance biodiversity.

By creating pollinator habitats, we will ensure all improvements include native flowering plants to support local pollinator species. Combining this with annual workshops to educate residents on the importance of pollinators, including beekeeping training, we will promote community engagement focused on healthy ecosystems. We will seek to introduce composting and food waste separation in our offices, shared spaces, and community assets. This will reduce landfill waste and create nutrient-rich soil for community facilities like Grow Speke. Emphasising the use of green and open spaces in these initiatives will significantly enhance environmental sustainability, promote biodiversity, and add to our community investment offer.



Action plan

- Expand tree planting programs in parks, streets, and communal spaces to create more shade, reduce air pollution, and balance our carbon impact. Transition to sustainable landscaping practices by replacing non-native species with drought-resistant plants and trees that support local wildlife. This approach will also reduce water consumption and enhance biodiversity.
- Enhance pollinator habitats and education, ensuring all improvements include native flowering plants to support local pollinator species. We will deliver annual workshops to educate residents on the importance of pollinators and provide beekeeping training.
- Introduce composting and food waste separation in our offices, shared spaces and community spaces to reduce landfill and create nutrient-rich soil for community gardens.

Goals

- Plant at least 100 native trees and shrubs across in key parks and communal spaces by year five, contributing to biodiversity and carbon dioxide reduction.
- Consider native pollinator plants during all environmental improvements and deliver annual pollination/beekeeping workshops to residents.
- Implement food waste and composting programs in our offices and in our community spaces by year three.



Pound

Investing in our communities is key to creating socially and environmentally sustainable neighbourhoods. Furthermore, this can keep costs associated to ASB management, and reaction to environmental crimes such as fly tipping to a minimum, allowing more funding to be prioritised where it is needed.

Lenders recognise and value good quality, thriving greenspaces, improving our overall Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) performance, leading to significant interest savings on our loans and more success when applying for external funding, meaning we can invest more into our communities.



Action plan

- Create initiatives that exchange environmental spend on routine maintenance with natural investments, while still delivering/reacting to environmental issues.
- Continue to adopt UK Sustainability Reporting Standards and improve our SHIFT accreditation, improving biomass score to enhance our performance and likelihood of better lending rates through recognised ESG key performance indicators.
- Attract funding for future biodiversity improvements.

Goals

- Continue to invest more than £300,000, annually, towards the development and maintenance of our green spaces.
- Seek external funding to support the delivery of the priorities in the plan.
- Ensure investment into local, natural improvements with every new development.

Planning for the future

As we navigate the impacts of climate change, it becomes increasingly important to establish a clear and actionable plan for our green and open spaces. The unpredictable nature of environmental change highlights the need for proactive action to protect and improve our natural environments. By prioritising the preservation and improvement of these areas, we can ensure that our communities remain resilient and vibrant in the face of environmental challenges.

We have outlined a comprehensive summary of goals for the next five years, underscored by the actions detailed in this plan and supported by our other corporate priorities. These goals are designed to create a pathway for meaningful natural change within our neighbourhoods. By focusing on sustainable practices and community engagement, we aim to encourage a healthier and more sustainable environment that benefits tenants and residents. Our commitment to these objectives will drive us towards greener, more connected, and thriving communities.



Summary of goals

Strategic priority	Goal	Frequency	Target year
People	Develop community orchard and deliver two workshops.	Annual	2028 onwards
	Make half of our green and open spaces wildlife friendly	One off	2028
	Ensure community green spaces are assessed	Annual	2025 onwards
	Invite animal welfare organisations to community events and increase dog waste bins	Annual	2025 onwards
Place	Create opportunities for 1000 green volunteer hours	Annual	2025 onwards
	Conduct two community consultations focused on green and open space improvement	Annual	2025 onwards
	Deliver five environmental events attracting 100 residents	Annual	2025 onwards
	Review and continue to improve accessibility of our greens and open spaces	Annual	2025 onwards
Planet	Plant 100 native trees across our green and open spaces	One off	2030
	Utilise pollinators to improve our environmental performance. Deliver pollination and beekeeping workshops to educate residents and increase domestic pollinator planting.	Annual	2025 onwards
	Create and promote food waste and composting schemes in SLH offices and at community sites.	One off	2028
Pound	Continue to invest in our green and open spaces	Annual	2025 onwards
	Seek external funding through grants and bids for environmental enhancements	Annual	2025 onwards
	Compensate for new developments with investment into immediate nature recovery	Annual	2025 onwards



Great homes | Strong communities | Bright futures