Cool Streets and Greening

Progress Report

CITY OF LONDON

Executive Summary:

The City of London Corporation is the governing body of the Square Mile, dedicated to a vibrant and thriving City, supporting a diverse and sustainable London. The Cool Streets and Greening (CSG) Programme is a flagship initiative of the City of London Corporation, approved in April 2021 to deliver on the ambitions of the Climate Action Strategy (CAS).

With a total investment of £7.8 million, the programme is transforming the Square Mile's streets and public spaces to address the growing risks of climate change, such as overheating, flooding, and biodiversity loss; while enhancing the quality and resilience of the urban environment.

The programme is delivering **50 projects** across five phases. To date completed projects have led to the enhancement of **17,211m² of public space**, equivalent to **66 tennis courts**, and the assessment of over **450 locations for tree planting.**

These interventions include drought-tolerant planting, climate-resilient trees, rain gardens, and permeable paving, all contributing to cooler, greener, and more accessible public spaces.

The programme is underpinned by an interdisciplinary, collaborative, cross-departmental approach and supported by leading experts from a range of fields. The programme not only mitigates climate risks but embeds long-term resilience, sustainability, and inclusivity into the fabric of the Square Mile, ensuring it remains a thriving place for generations to come.

- **£7.8 million invested across five phases**
- **A total of 50 projects**
- **17,211m² of public space enhanced to date – equivalent to 66 tennis courts**

Key Statistics:

The CSG programme supports the City Corporation's ambition for **inclusive and sustainable growth.** In 2024 alone, **120 individuals** participated in related activities, contributing a total of **1,320 hours** through **biodiversity surveys, educational sessions,** and **guided walks.**

These efforts are helping to embed climate resilience into the City Corporation's operations and foster a sense of community ownership.

To monitor the effectiveness of interventions, the City is using an **integrated climate sensor network.** This data is being used to model environmental impacts and inform future planning, ensuring that the programme remains adaptive and evidence-led.

Benefit

M² of green space created and enhanced

17,211m²
66 tennis courts

Total works completed to date for CSG

Risk

Number of days over 32°C in the Square Mile

Since 2022

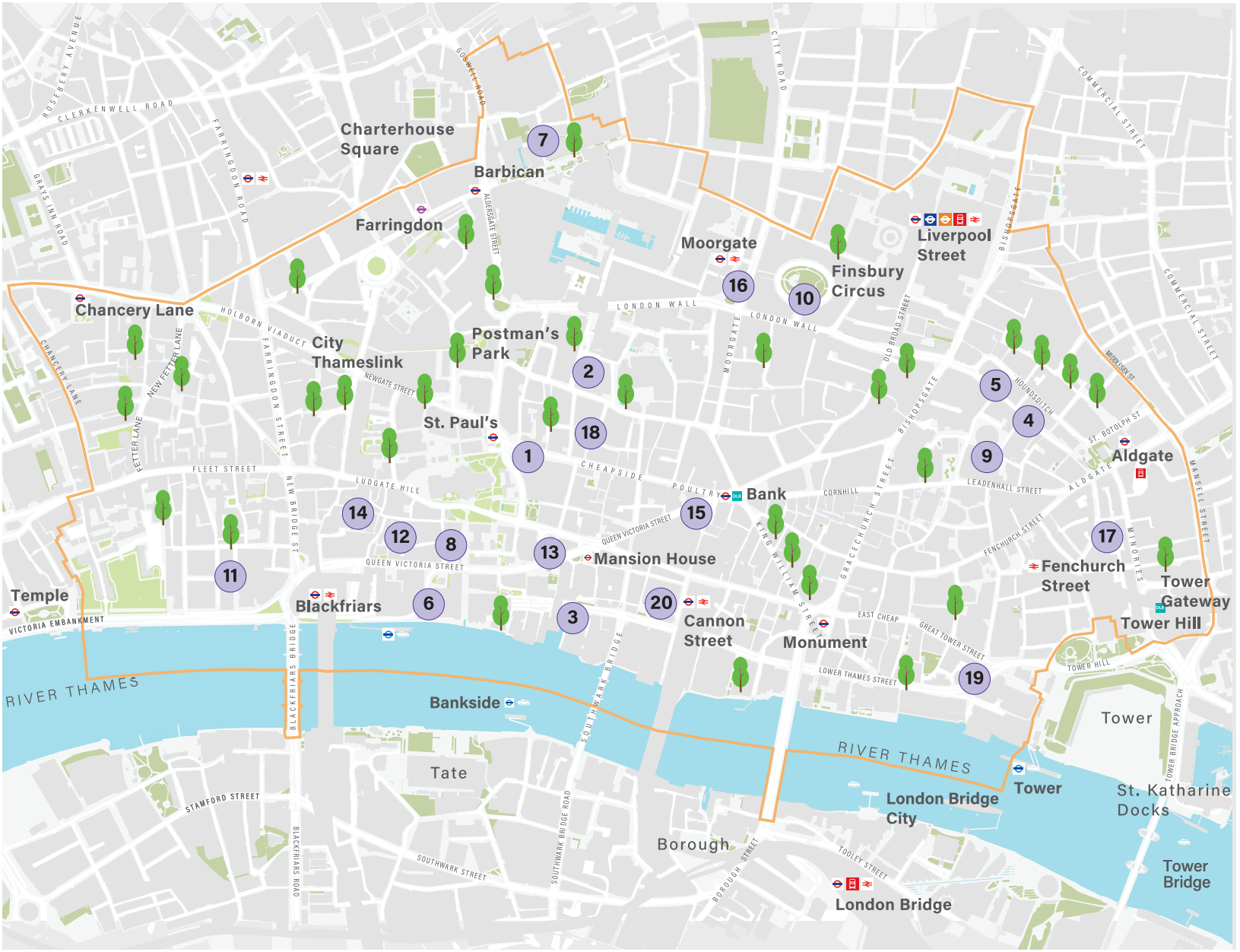
- **45 days above 32°**
- **120 days above 28°**
- **14 heatwaves**
- **Hottest day 42.5°**

Risk

Baseline expected number of days of water stress

88

- **Integrated climate sensor network deployed**
- **120 individuals engaged in 2024**



Cool Street and Greening Projects Map: Selection of 20 of the 50 projects from the programme helping to create greener and more resilient Square Mile.

KEY:

- Area-wide Tree Planting
1. New Change Garden
2. St Mary Aldermanbury
3. Little Trinity Lane
4. Bevis Marks SuDS
5. Jubilee Gardens
6. Riverside beds
7. Fann Street
8. Knightrider Court
9. St Andrews Undershaft
10. Finsbury Circus and Western Arm
11. Temple Avenue
12. St Andrew's Hill
13. Bread Street
14. Ludgate Broadway
15. Bank
16. Moorgate London Wall
17. Vine Street
18. St Peter Westcheap
19. St Dunstan's in the East
20. Whittington Gardens

Overview:

Cool Streets and Greening aims to transform the Square Mile's streets and public spaces, making them resilient and attractive, and ensuring the future wellbeing of the City community.

Climate projections for the City of London indicate a future of hotter, drier summers, warmer, wetter winters, and more frequent extreme weather events, and sea level rise.

These changes present six key climate resilience risks. The programme is actively addressing these risks by implementing measures that increase shading and cooling, support urban biodiversity, introduce drought-tolerant planting, and create flood-resilient infrastructure.

£7.8m is being invested into five phases of the programme, comprising a total of 50 projects. Each phase targets climate change impacts to reduce urban heat, alleviating flood risk, and increase biodiversity; providing more resilient, greener and pleasant public spaces.

Acceleration of tree planting has grown the urban forest canopy for future generations and extensive mapping has enabled the prioritisation of opportunities to create cooler and greener pedestrian routes.

The aim is to connect the cooler routes to others beyond the borough boundary. Linking into wider frameworks such as the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and All London Green Grid.

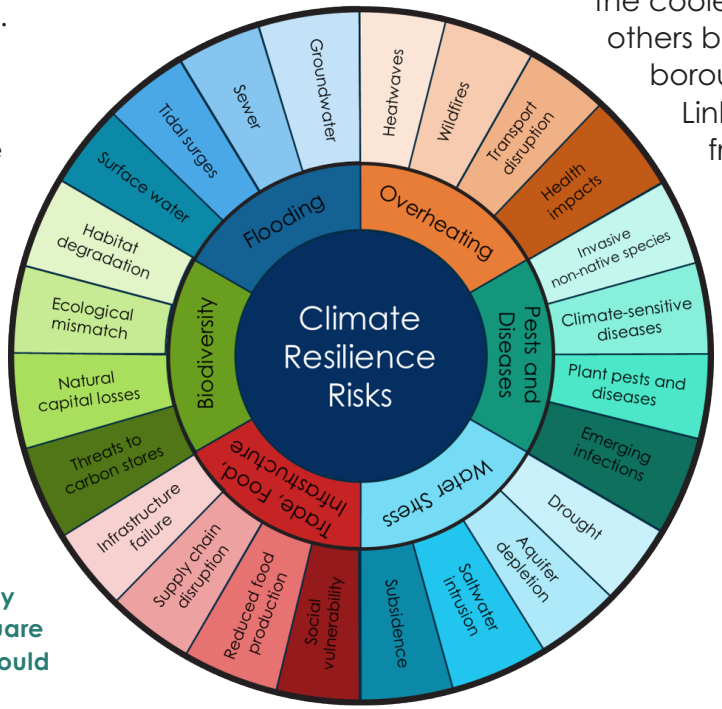


Figure 1:
The climate resilience risks wheel shows the six different risks that could impact the City Corporation and Square Mile and how they could occur.

Tree Planting-Houndsditch: Acceleration of tree planting was made possible through the Cubic Mile project, working in partnership with the British Geological Survey (BGS) enabled us to take a subsurface approach to planning new street trees, navigating below-ground constraints.

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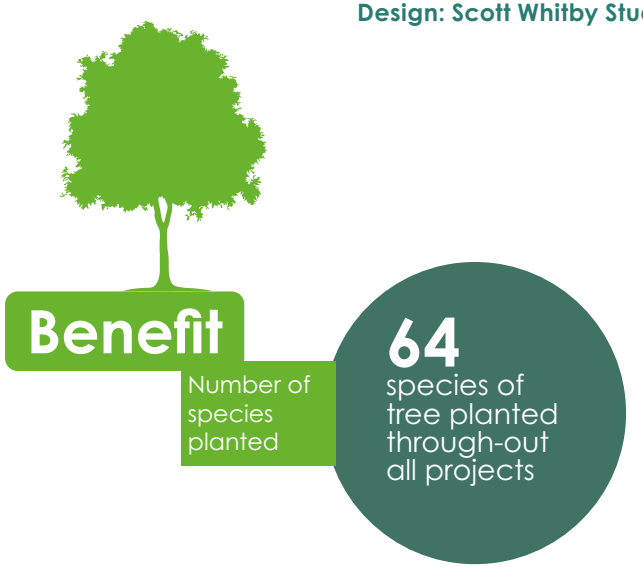
New Change Garden: Working together with Cheapside Business Alliance, Hoare Bank and Landsec, New Change was designed with circularity and resilience in mind, re-purposing felled plane trees and river wall granite into benches; enhancing the existing trees retaining shade and using permeable paving for surface water management.

Design: Scott Whitby Studio



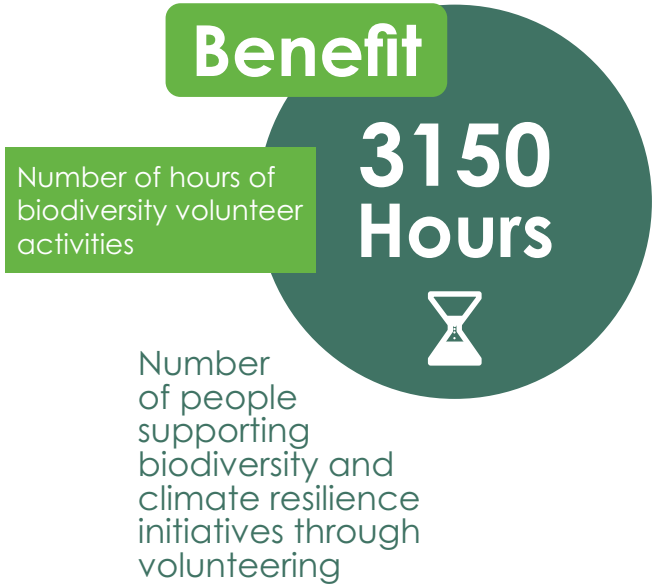
Progress to date:

Projects to date include greening and relandscaping streets and public spaces, trialling "xeriscape" drought-resistant planting, introducing new species of climate and disease-resistant trees and plants, and the addition of rain gardens and permeable paving. These measures provide greener, shaded walking routes and an enhanced public realm, as well as adding seasonal interest and improving biodiversity.

To date, the programme has prioritised and investigated over 450 locations for tree planting and led to the enhancement and creation of 17,211m² of public space across the Square Mile, the equivalent of 66 tennis courts.

The projects have incorporated trials and pilots in order to test the best approach for greening and cooling the City. The aim is to use the outcomes and learning to transition to business as usual, ensuring best practice for future public space projects, including updated policy, design guides and toolkits.

A collaborative project team comprising of officers from the Transport & Public Realm, Highways, City Gardens, and Environmental Resilience ensures a joined-up approach to project delivery. These partnerships allow projects to access additional funding opportunities, provide multiple benefits, and enable shared learning from innovations.



Wider benefits include more opportunities for active travel and improving accessibility in the public realm.

Each project is designed to take account of site context and constraints, including movement, sunlight, depth, utilities and townscape. The project team have appointed innovative architecture, urban design and landscape experts to design the spaces. These include Studio Weave architects, Tom Massey, Scott Whitby Studio, Growth Industry, Project Centre and LDA. This ensures the highest quality outcomes for the public spaces.

Jubilee Gardens: A hidden oasis in the heart of the City. Planting uses a reclaimed crushed brick mulch to improve moisture retention.

Benefit

Number of resilience measures

56 resilience measures piloted to date

St Mary Aldermanbury: Replanting for Resilience! St Mary Aldermanbury offers a range of nectar rich planting for pollinators, enhancing biodiversity and ecological resilience. The project was implemented in partnership with Westminster College in Missouri which is now home to the sites original church.

Completed projects

Finsbury Circus Gardens: Cool Streets and Greening provided match funding to enhance the resilience of the Finsbury Circus project, the City's largest public park and garden.

Design: Realm and Studio Weave

Little Trinity Lane: Flood resilience at Little Trinity Lane, which captures surface water running down Garlick Hill storing it in the beds to irrigate plants.

Design: Growth Industry

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Bevis Marks SuDS: Future proofing our streets to flooding. Rain gardens in the east of the City capture and store surface water, interconnected with permeable paving and featuring ZiNCO, a medium used for its lightweight and hydraulic efficiencies.

Design City of London Corporation

Jubilee Gardens: Offering respite from heatwaves and access to nature, Jubilee Gardens has been completely re-landscaped to maximise trees and plants for biodiversity.

Design: Studio Weave and Tom Massey

Riverside beds: An innovative approach to planting design the riverside beds were re-designed with future climate in mind. Utilising 'xeriscape' principles drought tolerant species were planted into a range of soils and mulches including sand and crushed brick. The project was delivered in partnership with local schools, who also assist with ongoing monitoring.

Design: City of London Corporation

Bank Junction Junction: Rain gardens designed to capture surface water from the footway and the carriageway installed along Queen Victoria Street.

Design: City of London Corporation

Finsbury Circus Western Arm: A new series of beds created on what was previously a road creating a green link into Finsbury Circus Garden and a new area of public realm.

Design: Studio Weave and Tom Massey

London Wall Moorgate: A redesign of existing public space which enhances biodiveristy, creating a new and inviting public realm outside of Moorgate station.

Design: LDA

New Change Garden: A redesign of the landscape surrounding mature beech trees in the shadow of St Pauls along the City's retail district, the garden uses permeable paving to manage surface water promoting sustainability and resilience.

Design: Scott Whitby Studio

Future projects

Fann Street: Bringing nature closer to people is at the core of the Fann Street project, which has engaged the local community to co-design the scheme and leverage support for its implementation, with the aim of creating steppingstones to enhance biodiversity and connectivity.

Design: Scott Whitby Studio

Knightrider Court: Innovating SuDS in the City using Hydrorock systems to help store more surface water, whilst offering new public realm with access to cafés in the shadow of St Paul's.

Design: City of London Corporation

St Andrew Undershaft Churchyard: Integrating future-proof design with historic architecture, St Andrews Undershaft churchyard captures rainwater from the church's roof to store it in new planting beds. The scheme features permeable paving, more greenery, increased seating and offers a revitalised space for public enjoyment and biodiversity.

Design: Growth Industry

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