



17 June 2021

Dear Cllr Dennis,

Congratulations on your appointment as Southwark Council's Cabinet Member for the Climate Emergency and Sustainable Development. We hope your appointment invigorates Southwark Council's progress towards its own goal of net zero by 2030 and that you are able to provide much-needed leadership and focus across Southwark's various departments intersecting with the climate emergency.

We are writing to request:

1. A meeting with you in the next three weeks as a leading climate group in the borough;
2. Confirmation as to when the climate emergency strategy and action plan are both being presented to Southwark Council's Cabinet, and
3. A commitment to seismic change in Southwark Council's policies and processes in order to address climate change, putting a Citizen's Assembly and genuine community engagement at the heart of the process.

As you are aware, very little meaningful action has been taken since the declaration in March 2019 of a Climate Emergency, 27 months ago. It goes without saying that we are very disappointed. We wrote to your predecessor, Cllr Johnson Situ, on 1 October 2020 and we refer you to this letter here: [XRS Lobbying open letter to Cllr Johnson Situ](#). **You will note the four objectives we raised in this letter have not been met.**

Going forward, it is now your responsibility to ensure that the New Southwark Plan exceeds the national target of a 68% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. For the development plan of a borough where half the housing stock is at risk from sea level rise to not refer to a pathway to decarbonisation or even barely acknowledge the global catastrophe we are facing is as alarming as it is absurd. For a fresh start and to be credible, Southwark Council needs to openly reflect and learn why it has fallen so far behind neighbouring councils.

From January to March 2021, XR Southwark's Lobbying Group ran a campaign called *Why Not Southwark?* across the borough. This campaign shone a light on local authorities across the country who are taking decisive and innovative action to address the climate emergency, in order to encourage Southwark Council to do the same. We gave briefings to councillors outlining relevant examples, as well as both structural changes and 'quick wins' which we think the council can take to meet this moment as a pioneer of environmentally-friendly urban life. We are keen to discuss these ideas further with you. We hope that you are able and willing to take decisive action on mitigating and adapting to the climate crisis with your new portfolio.

**Please let us know when you are available to meet to discuss these priorities further.**

Yours sincerely,  
XRS Lobbying Group