

SOUTH KEN ZEN+

2025 Programme Evaluation Report

Executive Summary

February 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

The South Kensington Zero Emissions (ZE) Nature Positive (N+) (“South Ken ZEN+”), is a programme designed by the Exhibition Road Cultural Group (“ERCG”), and funded by the Royal Commission of the Exhibition of 1851, to marshal a neighbourhood-wide response to the climate and biodiversity crisis. The ERCG’s members are 22 world leading arts and science organisations based in South Kensington in London, who are committed to identifying, understanding, and achieving significant carbon reductions within their own operations, while also recognising the power of collective action to drive wider emissions reductions and environmental benefits across the neighbourhood.

The programme priorities were established collaboratively by partners in 2022 to guide collective action and focus resources where they can have the greatest impact. They are:

- **Zero Emissions** – driving carbon reduction across all participating organisations and operations.
- **Nature Positive** – enhancing biodiversity, ecological resilience, and access to nature across the neighbourhood.
- **Circular Economy** – minimising waste, promoting resource efficiency, and embedding circular practices in all activities.
- **Sustainable Transport** – supporting low-carbon, active, and accessible modes of travel for all who live, work, and visit the district

THIS REPORT

March 2026 marks the conclusion of Phase One of the South Ken ZEN+ Programme and is a key point of reflection and evaluation for the ERCG. Members have expressed a clear appetite to see the work of South Ken ZEN+ continue and for sustainability support and convening to be embedded into ERCG’s business-as-usual operations.

This report presents the story of the South Ken ZEN+ Programme since its inception in 2022 the impacts achieved in the last three years and illustrating how it has grown to deliver substantial outputs and outcomes. Using desk-based analysis, this report tells the impact story of South Ken ZEN+ using qualitative evidence to develop a coherent story of incremental progress. This showcases achievements across the three thematic areas: Zero Emissions, Nature Positive, and Capacity-building, Engagement and Advocacy, and highlights intangible outcomes and added value, illustrating the Programme’s cumulative impact to date.

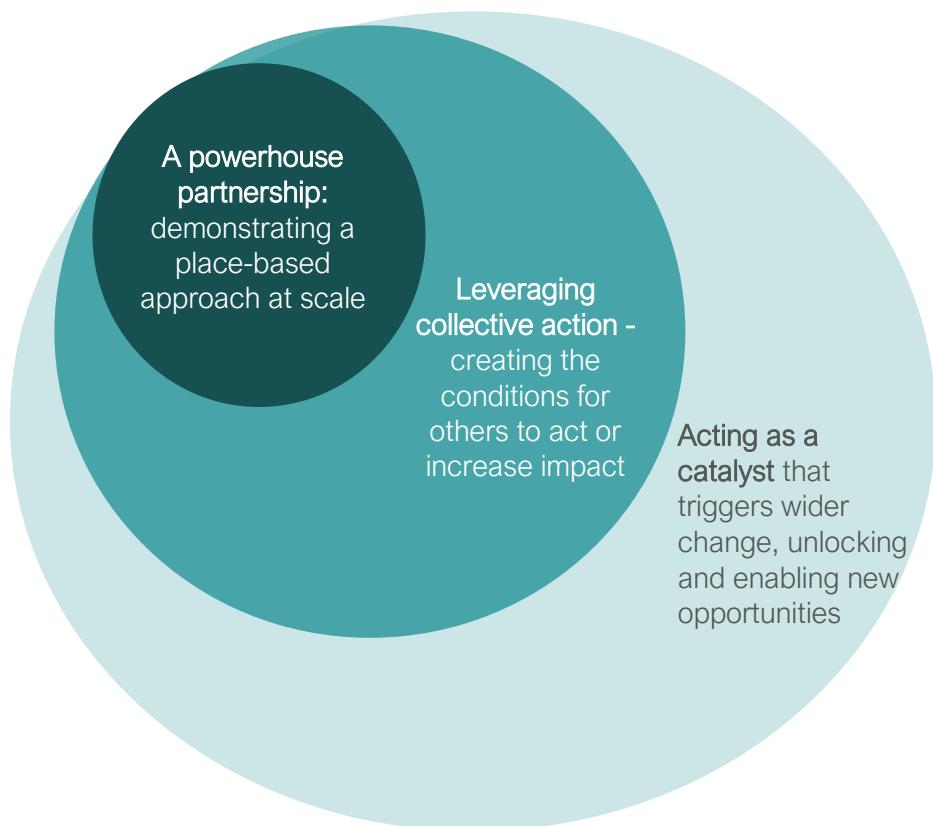
The report also highlights the importance of South Ken ZEN+’s function as a convenor and catalyst, enabling members to lead coordinated decarbonisation efforts across their supply chains and within the wider South Kensington neighbourhood. By working collectively, members are empowered to amplify their impact, share best practices and resources, and

accelerate their journey toward net zero, making meaningful progress that individual institutions would struggle to achieve alone.

Finally, this report makes an assessment of the progress and lessons learnt so far, offering an indicative direction and evolution, ensuring that the achievements and learning from Phase One can inform and strengthen future delivery as the Programme evolves.

SOUTH KEN ZEN+ MOMENTUM MODEL

The South Ken ZEN+ programme has established a lasting culture of collaboration, learning and innovation among its members and the wider community. This can be understood through the Momentum Model, which identifies three complementary roles that South Ken ZEN+ plays in driving change:



Phase One of the South Ken ZEN+ Programme has made significant inroads to achieving the Programme aims. It has increased capacity and knowledge within member organisations, engaged external stakeholders to help shape a shared vision for a greener, more climate-resilient South Kensington, and initiated collaborations which benefit a broad range of neighbourhood stakeholders.

SOUTH KEN ZEN+ PROGRAMME: HEADLINE ACHIEVEMENTS

Member Activities and Capacity-building

- 200+ people from 22 organisations regularly engaged in South Ken ZEN+ activities and initiatives.
- 60+ people trained in Carbon Literacy (CLT) from 18 organisations.
- 40+ workshops delivered since 2023.
- Regular newsletter established for members, with 400+ subscribers.
- 45+ local case studies of climate-focused actions undertaken by member organisations published on the South Ken ZEN+ website.

Emissions Monitoring and Reporting

- Two years' worth of emissions data collected and collated onto the South Ken ZEN+ Emissions Dashboard; this is the first-time emissions data has been gathered on a neighbourhood level.
- 9 members developed their first-ever carbon footprints in 2024.
- 75% of organisations are consistently using the South Ken ZEN+ Emissions Dashboard to report on their Greenhouse Gas emissions.

Community and Stakeholder Engagement

- 100+ local employers, charities, educational organisations and community groups reached through engagement activities.
- c. 20,000 people engaged locally in climate change issues.
- Delivered 40+ walking tours to 500+ people including local staff, students, residents and visitors in 2024 and 2025.

Funding and Resources Mobilisation

- 4,800 hours of time contributed since 2022 (equivalent to ±£250,000).
- Secured around £370K in additional grants for joint projects so far including:
 - £50,000 from the Future Observatory in 2023 to commission the underpinning research for the development of the South Ken ZEN+ Emissions Reporting Framework.
 - £210,000 through two grants from the GLA Heat Network Accelerator fund in 2023 to explore the feasibility of establishing a heat network in South Kensington.
 - £48,000 contributed by members in cash and VAT contributions towards the above feasibility study
 - £70,000 of additional project funding from the Royal Commission for the Great Exhibition of 1851 to expand the Heat & Energy feasibility work.

Recognition and Awards

- Winner of the 2025 Sustainability Impact Award from the Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster Chamber of Commerce.

VALUE FOR MONEY

The South Ken ZEN+ Programme has also demonstrated clear value creation.

For every £1 of grant funding invested, South Ken ZEN+ has generated approximately £1.20 in additional value through in-kind and other leveraged contributions.

Across this period, members provided 690 days of in-kind support through 80+ workshops, roundtables, meetings, and events designed to share knowledge, build capacity, and strengthen collaboration, commitment, and action.

In-kind contributions between 2022 and 2025 totalled around £250,000¹, with the rate and scale of contributions doubling in the last year

Sustained and increasing in-kind support for the programme is a clear indication that ERCG members find the South Ken ZEN+ Programme to be valuable and worth their time commitment.

Additionally, the programme has generated further social value through training and cultural events delivered across the neighbourhood.

c.£110K of Social Value generated through training and events since 2022.

ENABLING LONG TERM CHANGE

The summaries above demonstrate how South Ken ZEN+ has successfully kick-started collective progress towards zero emissions and a nature positive future by combining organisational commitment, neighbourhood-scale collaboration and practical delivery. Its distinctive place-based approach, anchored by world-leading cultural, educational and research institutions, has legitimised sustainability as a strategic priority and sustained momentum through consistent senior-level endorsement. Through shared initiatives, professional networks and joint tools such as the **Sustainable Supply Chain Charter** and **Greenwashing Guide**, South Ken ZEN+ has strengthened delivery at pace and demonstrated the value of coordinated action over isolated efforts.

Robust benchmarking and evidence-building are enabled through shared tools such as the **Emissions Dashboard**, supporting transparency and data-led decision-making. Capacity-building is embedded as a core pillar of the programme, with training, skills development and knowledge-sharing supporting long-term organisational change.

Phase One has laid strong foundations, benefiting both large institutions with established expertise and smaller organisations through access to shared capacity and best practice. It has helped South Ken ZEN+ position itself as an exemplar for innovation and rigour, enabling

¹ Total in-kind contributions from members up to the financial year end 2025 amount to £236,384. For reporting and forecasting purposes, this figure has been rounded and presented as approximately £250,000 for the full year.

experimentation at neighbourhood scale, reducing risk for individual organisations and building a shared evidence base to accelerate progress towards 2030 goals.

LOOKING FORWARD

Building on Phase One, the South Ken ZEN+ programme will continue to support South Kensington's journey towards becoming a zero-emissions, nature-positive and climate-resilient neighbourhood, enabled by the collective commitment of its member organisations. Progress to date has been driven by sustained collaboration, shared priorities and a growing evidence base that supports emissions reduction, innovation and wider community engagement.

As the programme enters its next phase (2026–2030), there is a significant opportunity to build on this momentum by sharpening focus on areas where collective action delivers the greatest value. Strengthening Programme goals through clearer, more measurable – and tangibly deliverable – outcomes, underpinned by a well-defined Theory of Change, will help align activities with neighbourhood priorities and clarify South Ken ZEN+'s unique contribution. Going forward, the Programme will also need to further strengthen monitoring, evidence-building and social value measurement, to showcase progress in a more strategic and coordinated way and communicate its impact more widely.

Overall, the South Ken ZEN+ Programme is well-placed to build on early progress, maintain momentum and support South Kensington in realising its long-term sustainability ambitions

To sustain the impact, expanding the current programme offer, particularly in training, capacity-building and knowledge exchange will need to remain a key priority. Carbon Literacy Training and similar training offers, and peer-to-peer learning opportunities offer strong potential to embed long-term cultural change and collaboration across organisations.

More widely, sustained senior leadership support, more targeted engagement with member organisations and strengthened, tactical communications will also be critical to maintaining momentum and securing continued buy-in across diverse member organisations. Continued public engagement and advocacy will enhance South Ken ZEN+ visibility, build community ownership and encourage behavioural change.

At the same time, addressing capacity and funding constraints – including the need for longer-term funding certainty – will be essential to secure programme stability, ambition and delivery at scale. By sharing learning, amplifying success and positioning itself as a replicable model, the South Ken ZEN+ Programme can extend its influence beyond South Kensington and demonstrate the power of place-based collaboration in addressing global sustainability challenges.

To access the full South Ken ZEN+ Evaluation Report, please visit www.southkenzen.org/Eval2025



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