

Committee(s): Streets and Walkways Sub Committee– For Decision Projects and Procurement Sub Committee– For Information Natural Environment Board – For Information	Dated: 16 September 2025 14 October 2025 23 October 2025
Subject: Cool Streets and Greening – programme update	Public report: For Decision
This proposal: • delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes • provides statutory duties • provides business enabling functions	Corporate Plan: - Leading sustainable environment - Flourishing public spaces - Vibrant thriving destination
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of: Executive Director, Environment Department	Katie Stewart
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Summary

This report provides an update on the delivery of the Cool Streets and Greening programme (CSG), which is structured around five phases. This programme is one of the ways that we are meeting the aim of the Climate Action Strategy (CAS) to ensure that our public spaces and infrastructure are resilient to the impacts of climate change and creating a greener and more pleasant City.

The five phases of the programme are as follows:

- Phase One - Pilot projects to test the suitability of climate resilience measures in the City environment.
- Phase Two - Developed projects to adapt existing schemes to include climate resilience measures.

- Phase Three - City greening and biodiversity including re-landscaping of new sites, re-planting of existing gardens and street tree planting.
- Phase Four - Sustainable drainage projects (SuDS).
- Phase Five - Green and Blue Links (extending green corridors and SuDS)

The programme also contains a number of related workstreams including monitoring, mapping of infrastructure, and guidance to support implementation of resilient measures. Since the programme inception in April 2021, the following progress has been made:

- 30 projects have been completed to date.
- Development of three catalogues to help provide designers with guidance on resilience for materials, planting and measures.

A further 22 projects are planned to be implemented over the next 2 years, varying in scale from replanting of existing gardens with more climate resilient plants to the complete re-landscaping of streets and spaces within the public realm. The programme has also been shortlisted for an award under the public space category of the New London Architecture Awards.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note the content of this programme update.
- Note the extension of the Cool Streets and Greening programme timeframes by 12 months to March 2027. As agreed by the CAS Square Mile Programme Board.
- Note the additional projects being proposed to be delivered in Phase Five through the relevant gateway approval processes, detailed in Appendix 3.

Members of the Streets and Walkways Sub-Committee are asked to:

- i. Note that completed project underspends will be reallocated to other projects within the Cool Streets and Greening programme.
- ii. Agree that an additional £110K is allocated to the Fann Street project, and £70K is allocated to the St Peter Westcheap project, funded from the programme underspend, outlined in Appendix 1.
- iii. Agree a budget of £100k to be released to develop the designs for Phase Five projects to reach the next gateway, funded from the programme underspend, as set out in Table 2.

Main report

Background

1. The Climate Action Strategy (CAS) was adopted by the Court of Common Council on 8th October 2020 with a key ambition to increase resilience in our public spaces and infrastructure. The Cool Streets and Greening programme which seeks to delivery this increased resilience was initially approved by committees in April 2021 with a total budget of £6.8 million funded through On Street Parking Reserve.
2. Officers developed the projects within the programme in close collaboration through the CAS Square Mile Programme Board and extensive stakeholder engagement.
3. The primary focus of the programme is the piloting of different climate resilient interventions within the public realm. With the intention that the lessons learnt from this process will be used in future programmes and business as usual approaches.
4. Initially the programme was divided into four phases (1:Pilot, 2:Developed, 3:Greening and Biodiversity, and 4:Sustainable Drainage).
5. The Cool Streets and Greening programme was originally intended to be a four-year programme (March 2021-March 2025), this was extended by 12 months in 2024 to March 2026.
6. As part of wider agreements of the CAS Square Mile Programme Board it has been agreed to extend the timeframe by 12 months up to March 2027. This is to enable: a fifth delivery phase, extend data collection, delivery of the full construction programme, and to embed lessons learnt.

Current Position

Progress to date on Phases 1-4

7. To date 30 projects have been completed, as well as four tranches of street tree planting and ongoing monitoring across the Square Mile.
8. These projects have been delivered efficiently, and several have had cost savings. Some of the complex and multi-stakeholder projects have been subject to delay, however, these have been managed and provide valuable lessons to the remaining programme.
9. The delivery of the programme is divided into phases with details set out below, (including the new fifth phase):

Phase One (Pilot projects) – to ensure momentum and to get results on the ground as soon as possible, initial pilot projects were developed and schemes already underway were amended to incorporate climate resilience measures.

Phase Two (Developed projects) – The second phase integrated resilience measures into existing schemes at an earlier stage of development. This was to ensure value for money by jointly funding projects.

Phase Three (City greening and biodiversity) – The third phase included sites where climate resilience measures would be most beneficial and to test strategic measures including creating green corridors. This phase includes re-landscaping, climate resilient planting schemes and City-wide tree planting.

Phase Four (Sustainable drainage) – The fourth phase identified sites specifically for incorporation of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), where rainwater from the immediate catchment could be redirected into newly created raingardens reducing and slowing the flow into the sewer system, whilst providing more greenery in the public realm.

Phase Five (Green & blue links) – The fifth phase includes sites specifically identified to extend the programme impact, by match funding wider projects to ensure maximum benefit for the programme. It focuses on delivering more 'green-links' to extend green corridors and more 'blue-links' continuing the roll out of SuDS as a surface water management approach.

10. 'Replanting for Resilience' (part of Phase 3) projects cover 14 City Gardens. These projects are progressing well and so far works have been completed under budget. A total of £400,000 was allocated to this project. With 10 sites completed, there are four remaining including larger sites such as St Dunstan's in the East and Grants Quay. It is proposed that additional sites are replanted to maximise the benefits of the project and these extra sites will be set out in the next programme update report in 2026.
11. The tree planting project (part of Phase 3) aims to investigate and deliver street trees throughout the Square Mile. This has been completed in tranches over the span of the programme. To date a total of four tranches have been delivered including 64 trees. The remaining budget, is to be utilised to deliver further trees and support the delivery of tree planting at King William Street this coming planting season.
12. Appendix 2 provides a detailed update on all the current projects in the programme.

Lessons learnt from completed Phase 1- 4 projects 2022 – 2025

13. As part of the on-going assessment of the projects implemented through CSG, projects have been monitored and evaluated to build an evidence-based approach. To date 19 projects have been reviewed to assess the positive outcomes, wider benefits, identify improvements and the lessons to take away. This work will continue to be developed to provide a full report on the lessons learnt for the conclusion of the programme.

Positive outcomes:

- Innovative approaches to drought resistant planting design have proven successful, such as the use of alternative mulches in sunnier locations including crushed brick, sand and gravel.
- Successful trialling of new plant species within projects that are providing a range of benefits to biodiversity and climate resilience.
- Stakeholder engagement and partnerships have supported the delivery of complex schemes.
- Officers have developed designs for raingardens that best suit the unique City environment and this ensures that designs are consistent and efficient.
- The programme has also been shortlisted for an award under the public space category of the New London Architecture Awards.

Update on other programme elements:

14. The Cool Streets and Greening programme included from the onset a number of supplementary workstreams to enable the main aims of the programme and also provide strategic direction and policy guidance. This included the following:
- **Natural Flood Management (NFM) pilot** – Whilst there will be limited opportunities from NFM in the Square Mile, a pilot has been developed for use in the Natural Environments to support the Carbon Removals programme.
 - **Climate Resilient Measures Catalogue Version 2** – The first version of the catalogue was developed at the beginning of the programme, and it incorporates the interventions being piloted. An updated version was completed in March 2025.
 - **Climate Resilient Planting Catalogue Version 2** – The first version of the catalogue was published in Spring 2024. It incorporates industry best practice and includes plants used in already completed replanting schemes. It will be updated before the end of the programme. An updated version was completed in March 2025.

Financial implications

15. The programme is funded from the On-Street Parking Reserve (£6.8m). A further £1m has been approved by the Square Mile Programme Board to come from existing CAS funds.
16. Several projects within the programme combine funding from other sources including S106s, S278s and external contributions delivering wider benefits and meeting multiple objectives. The primary reason for this is that CSG projects are often coordinated with other projects and in these cases the funds can be used to enhance and deliver better outcomes for climate resilience.

17. A number of completed projects have underspends. This is primarily as a result of these projects having progressed smoothly, without encountering issues on site and therefore not requiring use of costed risk provisions. It is proposed that these unspent funds are reallocated across the programme to deliver additional projects and greening opportunities (as well as associated maintenance costs).
18. Underspent projects include, Bevis Marks SuDs, completed in April 2023, Little Trinity Lane completed in April 2025 and Finsbury Circus Western Arm completed in April 2025; From the underspends identified at this stage, a total of £180k is proposed to be reallocated to provide additional funding to two projects from the programme: Fann Street, St Peter Westcheap as set out in table 1. This reallocation will cover additional greening elements as well as maintenance costs.

Table 1 – Budget adjustments and increases for existing projects

Project	Estimated project costs from latest Gateway reports	Additional CSG budget to be allocated from identified programme underspend
Fann Street	£150,000 – 230,000	£110,000
St Peter Westcheap	£180,000 – 350,000	£70,000
Total		£180,000

19. A further £100k is proposed to be allocated to cover the resources required for Phase Five projects to reach the next gateway as outlined in table 2 in the next section of this report.
20. It is proposed that future project underspends also be used to deliver additional projects and greening elements as well as maintenance costs for other remaining projects, including Temple Avenue. Details of this will be set out in future reports.

Commuted sums

21. Originally £6.8m of capital funding was approved to deliver four phases along with some investment in monitoring infrastructure. The budget for CSG must be committed by March 2027.
22. Whilst many projects have existing match funding which has secured maintenance commitments beyond implementation there are some which do not. For these, an agreement has now been reached with the Square Mile programme board to re-allocate £700k of the budget to be held as commuted sums once the programme is completed. The process of handling will be outlined in a handling note to be approved before the end of the programme.
23. A further programme report in mid 2026 will provide an update on spend to date and remaining works.

Phase Five: Blue-Green links

24. The Climate Action Strategy (CAS) has allocated a further £1m to the Cool Streets and Greening programme, extending it to March 2027, and allowing the introduction of 'Phase five'. This additional budget does not come from OSPR and has been secured through wider CAS funds.
25. Phase Five will be delivered towards the end of the programme. The overarching aim is to embed the lessons of earlier phases and expand on its successes. All projects will aim to align with funding opportunities through development and other works. This includes:
- Creechurch Place - Green-link
 - America Square - Green-link
 - Coleman Street - Blue-link
 - St Dunstan's Hill - Blue-link
 - Gough Square - Blue-link
- Details of these projects and their funding strategies are listed in Appendix 3.
26. Green links are projects that work towards expanding the Square Mile's green coverage, their primary aims are to: Introduce greening, provide biodiverse and climate resilient landscapes, and expand canopy cover; providing stepping-stones between our open spaces and green corridors.
27. Blue links are projects which focus on SuDS, to improve the management of surface water and reduce overall flood risk, through capturing, attenuating, infiltrating and utilising surface water. These aim to better link up the emerging network of rain gardens, soakaways and other SuDS features, providing a network of blue links.
28. Projects will seek to achieve the following:
- Continue to increase greening to create green corridors and links
 - Introduce more SuDS into the public realm
 - Increase biodiversity through biodiverse planting
 - Increase resilience through climate adaptive planting
 - Introduce greening in parts of the City not previously addressed by other phases of the programme
29. It is recommended that the projects listed in Appendix 3 are approved to be initiated and taken forward to the next gateway, resources required are outlined below in table 2.

Table 2: Phase 5: Resources Required to reach the next Gateway (funded from programme underspend)	
Description	Cost (£)
Env Servs Staff Costs	25,000
Open Spaces Staff Costs	15,000
P&T Staff Costs	40,000
P&T Fees	20,000
Total	100,000

Programme development and management

30. From its initiation the programme has been developed with involvement from the CAS Square Mile Programme Board, and has directly involved a cross-departmental officer delivery group including Environmental Resilience, Transport and Public Realm Projects, City Gardens and Cleansing, and Highways.
31. The CAS Square Mile Programme Board has agreed to the extension of the programme to March 2027. This has been done to enable a longer period for data collection and time to gather best practice. The extension will also enable the full delivery of the projects in the programme, and scope in new projects to scale up delivery. To enable this an additional £1 million of funding from the CAS programme has been reallocated to the Cool Streets and Greening programme.
32. The primary aim of the programme has been to trial different climate resilience measures to ascertain which could be most appropriate in the context of the Square Mile and to build capacity within the organisation to deliver these measure. At the end of the programme a number of design approaches will have been developed to enable lessons learnt to be incorporated as business as usual.

Corporate & Strategic implications

33. The Cool Streets and Greening programme contributes to three outcomes identified in the Corporate Plan 2024 -29 (leading sustainable environments, flourishing public spaces, and vibrant thriving destination). The programme includes actions to create a climate resilient City by reducing the risk of overheating and flooding, ensuring our open spaces enrich people's lives, and making the City's streets more accessible.

Legal implications

34. There are no new legal implications arising from this update.

Climate implications

35. The Cool Streets and Greening programme is one of the ways that the City Corporation is meeting the aim of the Climate Action Strategy to ensure that our buildings, public spaces and infrastructure are resilient to the impacts of climate change.

Risk implications

36. No new risks have been identified.

Conclusion

37. The Cool Streets and Greening programme is a key deliverable of the Climate Action Strategy and includes 52 schemes and workstreams to help prepare the Square Mile to become resilient to the impacts of climate change. To date, numerous projects have been completed or are underway that make the Square Mile a greener, more pleasant and more resilient place for the benefit of residents, workers and visitors.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Finance Tables

Appendix 2: Project update table

Appendix 3: Phase Five projects table

Appendix 4: Selected photos and visuals – progress report

Background Papers

Gateway 6: Little Trinity Lane

Gateway 6: Finsbury Circus Western Arm

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