

## London Bridge Decarbonisation Charter - FAQs

### **1. How did the Charter come into being? Who has signed and has it had any success?**

The concept of the Charter was proposed in the London Bridge Net Zero Routemap – a strategy which Team London Bridge (TLB) commissioned Useful Projects to write to support London Bridge to be a sustainable business district. This involved consultation and workshops with many local businesses. One of the first actions following the launch of the Routemap was to form a Net Zero Steering Group as the main governance structure. This Group agreed that a Charter should be developed and a working group was set up in July 2023. The initial Charter was written and tested with multiple businesses as well as the TLB Board. Ultimately it was agreed the Charter should enable all businesses to take part, at whatever stage they were at, but to develop tiers of commitment so that those that are doing more are recognised, and to incentivise businesses to do more.

It was opened for signatures in October 2023, and fully launched at an event in February 2024, with 35 founding signatories. By the end of the first charter year (October 2024), there were 44 signatories, and by October 2025 there were 58 signatures. The success is clear from how well the signatories reflect the London bridge area, including:

- A hospital and a university
- A hotel, theatre and food and beverage outlets
- Law firms
- SMEs
- Global companies
- Developers and building contractors
- Building managers and service providers
- Waste contractors
- A park and landscaping teams
- Southwark Council

We look forward to growing this incredible list in 2026.

Part of the success has been to develop awards, and working groups for Charter signatories to share best practice. Our Charter community helps to define how our work progresses.

The Charter won the 2024 Climate Action award the Association of Town and City management (ATCM) awards.

### **2. How will Team London Bridge (TLB) check we are meeting charter commitments? What is the review process?**

TLB expects signatories to do their best to meet the commitments, and we will work hard to meet our own commitments on behalf of the collective. Our efforts will be governed by the Net Zero steering group, made up of representatives from the London Bridge business community.

The commitment made by businesses signing the Charter will be ongoing. Each year, signatories will be given the opportunity to update and review their commitment, or withdraw it. This will be a self-reporting process where businesses indicate whether they are making progress or not against the Charter themes (like energy, transport, waste etc). Individual review results will not be shared, but aggregated to show progress across the area. There will be an opportunity to highlight achievements with a case study that can be used to highlight the efforts of the business community, which will be celebrated annually (Jan/Feb). This will be a light touch process. New signatories do not need to do this review.

As legislation evolves, the targets within the Charter may become more stringent to align with new requirements, pushing for continuous improvement in reducing carbon emissions (see point 5). Indeed, in November 2025 the highest commitment categories have been updated to be more in line with business commitments (science based targets initiative – SBTi - and other environmental assessments), as opposed to being in line with the 2030 Southwark and London commitment (which TLB is aligned to), for which there is no comparable SBTi assessment (see point 4).

The annual review will also be a chance to update contact information, or internal carbon commitments. This will take place throughout the month of November and December each year, allowing stakeholders to assess their progress and set updated goals for the upcoming year. A business can decide not to review their progress, they will continue to be a signatory to the Charter. This is a change from 2024-2025 where the review was planned to be mandatory. This was deemed excessive by businesses, and against the light-touch nature of the Charter principles.

Only businesses that update their commitment level can retain either Trailblazer or Champion status (see below)

### **3. What do we get in return for our participation in the Charter?**

By signing this Charter, businesses will be part of a collective framework that supports TLB's ambition to be part of a carbon neutral Southwark by 2030 as well as to become one of the most sustainable places to do business in the world. It will help businesses demonstrate their commitment to environmental sustainability to employees, shareholders and customers.

Participating businesses will be supported to achieve the commitments through the provision of tools, resources and knowledge sharing, and promotion through TLB website and social media (if requested). TLB will provide an e-badge which can be used on websites, the badge will reflect the level of their commitment. This will **not** be an official accreditation. Businesses will also be given some simple communications messaging – a 'cheat sheet' - enabling them to share their own work while referencing communal objectives.



e-badges from 2024 and 2025

It is expected that the Charter will support efforts to gain new funding streams for the London Bridge BID, and in building momentum towards a sustainable business district, including recognition as a leading place to do business which benefits all our businesses.

In general, resources will also be made available to businesses that have not signed the Charter, but there will be fewer opportunities to celebrate their own best practice.

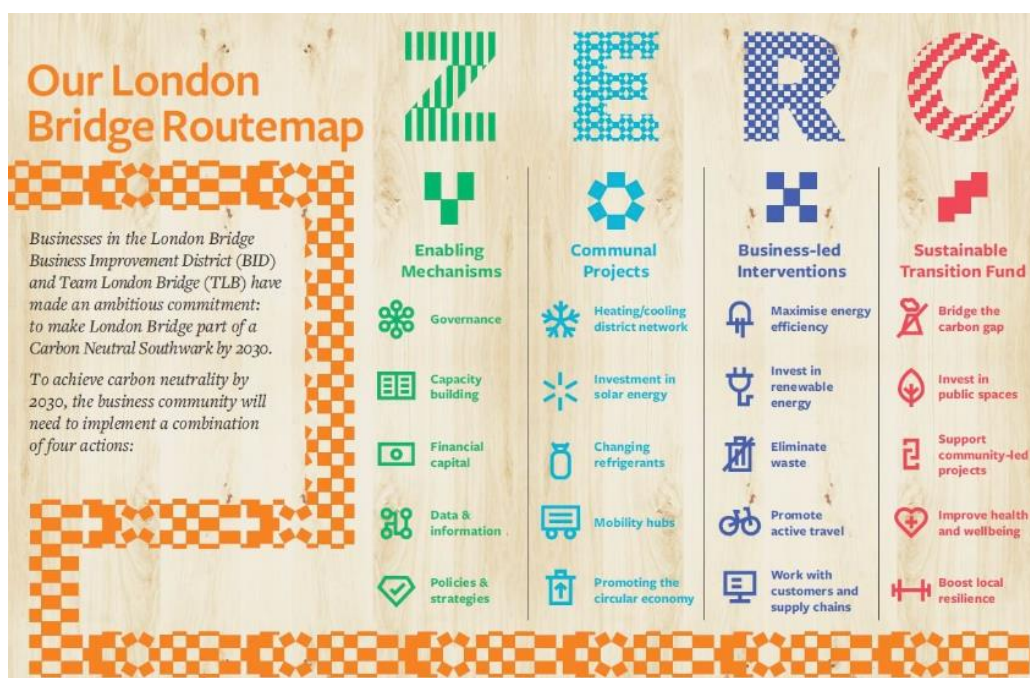
#### 4. The Charter collective commitment mentions business support for the London Bridge BID Net Zero Routemap. What is this and what does that entail?

The Routemap document was produced in 2022, launched in July at the TLB summer party. TLB commissioned Useful Projects to undertake this piece of work (following a competitive tender) in order to ensure its approach to sustainability, including the possibility to be carbon neutral, was grounded in robust evidence and the views of the business community. This involved over 40 businesses using xtonnes carbon footprint tool, as well as landlords providing data on energy use that covered most of the London Bridge BID area.

Through the Charter, the business is effectively supporting the approach set out in the Routemap which indicates what is required to become a net zero business district, although our stated ambition is to be part of a net zero Southwark. Currently there is no mechanism requiring business improvement districts to decarbonise, so this is not subject to any legality. Businesses will not become responsible for the Southwark ambition, nor will their carbon footprint directly be monitored at that level.

The Routemap initially stated an aim to be 'carbon neutral', but this has since been updated to net zero. This reflects terminology change that has also happened at the Southwark level, where the terms were used interchangeably in their own strategy. There isn't a globally recognised definition of a 'Net Zero' city, region or Business Improvement District, and their targets relate to Scope 1 and 2 emissions only. In 2024 we surveyed our businesses, and they indicated a preference for the Net Zero terminology, as their own targets relate to that and extend to scope 3.

The Routemap document is available [here](#) and the delivery framework is illustrated below.



## 5. What is a net zero target for Trailblazer and Champion businesses?

*Important: this section has been updated from 2024-5 based on feedback and evolving legislation.*

Net Zero is defined in line with the Science Based Target Initiative's (SBTi) Corporate Net-Zero Standard for businesses that prioritises rapid, deep emission reductions by setting near-term targets, while setting long-term targets and neutralising residual emissions. More information can be found by following this link: <https://sciencebasedtargets.org/net-zero>. Guidance is "undergoing major revision" at November 2025 to be "simpler and more practical for corporate target setting".

Organisations that have net-zero SBTi approved or aligned carbon reduction targets will have targets for scopes 1,2 and 3. This will be closely aligned to a UK net zero by 2050 target and includes a recommended 2030 near-term target (which complements the 2030 target set by Southwark and London). Since SBTi is the standard that holds companies to account on their net zero commitments, this is the level at which a business can be defined as a "**Trailblazer**".

A "**Champion**" level commitment is where an organisation has set a carbon reduction target, but isn't SBTi aligned. This level can also include businesses that have undergone other third-party assessments, such as B Corp, ISO14001, BREEAM or UN SDGs, though you should be able to indicate that you are achieving progress at a high level (e.g. BREEAM Excellent or Outstanding).

- Net Zero **Trailblazer** = Our organisation has officially validated science-based targets (SBTi) or has set targets aligned with SBTi criteria.
- Net Zero **Champion** = Our organisation has set a carbon reduction target, but it isn't SBTi aligned. Our success is demonstrated through sustainability initiatives that are assessed by a third party (e.g. BREEAM, Bcorp, ISO14001, UN SDG)
- Net Zero **Pathfinder** = our organisation is working towards setting a carbon reduction target or sustainability initiatives that are assessed by third party
- Our organisation is **committed** to a Net Zero business district and reducing emissions where we can

The Charter also encourages pathfinder businesses that have not committed to a net zero target but still wish to commit to reducing their own business emissions, and either plan to measure or are already measuring their footprint with the goal of setting a target and undertaking third party assessment. TLB will not distinguish on our website the level that businesses have signed, but you can indicate this publicly.

A business **cannot** sign the Charter at Trailblazer level unless they have carbon reduction targets in line with the SBTi – and we can check this as it is public information. Remember, all levels are positive and can involve taking lots of sustainability actions, or helping others be sustainable.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can set science-based targets through the [SBTi SME pathway](#), a streamlined route designed to reduce complexity and cost. Instead of conducting a full greenhouse gas inventory and scenario analysis, SMEs can commit to near-term targets aligned with the 1.5°C goal and submit a simplified target form.

Businesses will be given a designed 'badge' that can be uploaded on a company's website (see point 3).

***For a business that has signed the Charter previously as a Trailblazer or Champion, we will make sure that your commitment is up to date as we have changed the wording for achieving these levels. You will have to provide this information in the review form we provide to get the e-badge for the year. We will in any case send you the collective level e-badge.***

**6. Will the targets get harder over time?**

As legislation evolves, the targets within the Charter may become more stringent to align with new requirements, pushing for continuous improvement in reducing carbon emissions. Any signatories will be notified of any changes to the Charter targets during the annual renewal process. **Targets were updated for the year 2026 – as indicated in point 5.**

**7. How will I know if the collective tier's targets have progressed?**

TLB will provide an annual update on its own contribution to progress on the collective tier across the Charter themes, for example in the annual Activity Summary shared with all businesses. All signatories to the Charter play a crucial role in progressing the collective actions by engaging with TLB's sustainability initiatives and supporting the development of resources and services that can contribute collectively.

Every three years TLB will conduct an area emissions footprint (we will request that you contribute to this). In 2023 we saw a reduction in emissions from our 2019 baseline of 5%.

**8. How do we ask questions during our participation?**

Any questions related to the Charter can be directed to [jack@teamlondonbridge.co.uk](mailto:jack@teamlondonbridge.co.uk).

**9. How will the Charter be governed and reviewed?**

The Charter will be governed and reviewed by the dedicated Charter Working Group, with input from the London Bridge Net Zero Steering Group, TLB staff, external experts as appropriate, as well as TLB board members providing input. TLB will organise the Charter's implementation.

**10. Is there any cost in participating?**

No, the Charter is free and open to all TLB members, as well as partners associated with members (like landlords, building contractors, service providers or managing agents).

**11. What happens if my company changes its mind about being part of this initiative?**

You can withdraw your business commitment to the Charter at any point by contacting Team London Bridge via [jack@teamlondonbridge.co.uk](mailto:jack@teamlondonbridge.co.uk). This will be done in a discreet and confidential manner. Every year, you will be given a renewal form, where you can also withdraw.

**12. Will any training be made available to assist my business to make such a commitment?**

Upon signing the Charter TLB will share useful tools and resources to help your business work towards the Charter commitments. Regular events covering the topics of the Charter will be run through TLB's Green Network and we welcome suggestions from our business community on themes that will be most helpful. TLB has started to offer accredited **Carbon**

**Literacy Training**, so enquire about this. Sign up for regular sustainability information at [www.teamlondonbridge.co.uk/subscribe](http://www.teamlondonbridge.co.uk/subscribe)

### **13. What is the term of this commitment?**

This is an ongoing commitment. Each year around November, participants will be given the opportunity to review your progress and update any information, or else withdraw your commitment.

### **14. Am I legally bound to fulfil this commitment should I sign?**

No, the Charter is in no way legally binding. It is intended to capture the collective commitment of TLB members and partners to decarbonise the area and their own business. For trailblazer and champion (and some other pathfinder businesses), it is expected that you will already have your own publicly stated commitments, which may or may not be legally binding, but that is not being assessed through the Charter.

### **15. Is there a possibility that I make a commitment that we are unable to keep and it reflects badly on us, and we get negative feedback, or labelled as greenwash.**

TLB will take great care not to compromise the reputation of its business members. We will ensure that the Charter cannot be mis-represented as greenwash by showcasing actual actions and measuring progress through monitoring (at regular if not annual intervals). If your business has any concerns then contact us so that we are aware of any potential for negative feedback, and we can of course remove a name from the website. We will not promote your business decarbonisation actions or Charter signature without prior approval from yourselves. All data will be strictly subject to GDPR.

### **16. What if despite our collective efforts, as time progresses, it is clear that we are not going to achieve our objective to be a net zero business district by 2030?**

We are aware that there is a lot of work to do to make progress towards being a net zero business district by 2030, and decisions need to be taken that are out of our hands. We do not see this as a reason to not act, state our intent, or develop resources and services that can help progress sustainability in the area. We are developing projects that have the potential to decarbonise the area, such as a district heat network study, and stakeholders are updated on this regularly.

Measuring our progress is crucial for integrity of our efforts, as well as transparency. We can commit to regular footprint measure across the area, every few years. This has been done for baseline 2019, with a follow up count in 2023, showing a 5% reduction in emissions – moving in the right direction, but not fast enough.

The Net Zero Steering Group will take a view on our progress. Currently there is no mechanism requiring business improvement districts to decarbonise, so this is not subject to any legality. We are simply stating that we will support the Southwark Council declaration to be a net zero borough by 2030.

The Net Zero Steering Group is also looking at options for a 'sustainable transition fund', which could provide a mechanism to offset some emissions locally, and signatories to the Charter will be made aware of this as it progresses, and any way for them to be involved, either individually or collectively. Current options, albeit sitting outside the work of TLB, include the Southwark Green Investment and SE1 Solar.



**17. There are organisations in London Bridge with links to fossil fuels or that have interests that may conflict with the sustainability agenda, so how can we be one of the most sustainable business districts?**

Team London Bridge has around 350 members, many operating in multiple locations globally and across diverse sectors. We will support them in reducing their carbon emissions locally and help them work towards their own sustainable targets, while acknowledging that in many cases we cannot affect their core organisational functions and strategic aims. The success of our work is to have businesses and a BID delivering an ambitious sustainability agenda across such a mixed area.