

**Health of the Borough:  
A report from the Healthy  
Communities Scrutiny Sub-Committee**

June 2015

## Contents

Terms of Reference .....	3
Committee participants .....	3
Evidence received .....	4
Summary of Recommendations.....	5
Chapter 1: Financial Health.....	8
Chapter 2: Environmental Health .....	14
Chapter 3: Physical Health .....	18

## **Terms of Reference**

The health of our communities is intrinsically important to the health of our borough – the way in which our residents interact with their surroundings has a major impact on their health & wellbeing.

The Healthy Communities Committee undertook an inquiry into the health of our borough. We are looking at three themes: financial health, environmental health and physical health.

### **The financial health of the borough**

- The availability of banks and credit unions
- The role of payday loan and pawn shops
- Financial awareness in the borough

### **The environmental health of the borough**

- The air quality
- The use of our parks and open spaces

### **The physical health of the borough**

- The provision of cycle paths
- The provision of indoor & outdoor exercise space
- Availability of alcohol on our high streets and in pubs and bars
- Availability of tobacco products

## **Committee participants**

The following members of the Committee were involved in the writing of this report:

Councillor Rebecca Lury, Chair, Healthy Communities Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Councillor David Noakes, Vice-Chair, Healthy Communities Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Councillor Jasmine Ali

Councillor Paul Fleming

Councillor Maria Linforth-Hall

Councillor Kath Whittam

Councillor Bill Williams

Councillor Johnson Situ (as reserve)

Thanks are also due to Julie Timbrell as Support Officer for the Healthy Communities Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

## Evidence received

The Committee wishes to thank the following for their evidence, both written and in person which contributed to the final recommendations in this report.

- Councillor Stephanie Cryan, Deputy Cabinet Member for Financial Inclusion
- Councillor Ian Wingfield, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities, Employment and Business
- Councillor Chris Gonde, London Mutual Credit Union
- Councillor Darren Merrill, Cabinet Member for Environment and Recycling
- Councillor Mark Williams, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Transport
- Councillor Barrie Hargrove, Cabinet Member for Public Health, Parks and Leisure
- Sally Causer, Southwark Citizens Advice Bureau
- Jeremy Leach, Walworth Society/Southwark Living Streets
- Rightfully Yours
- Walworth Society
- Southwark Living Streets
- Southwark Youth Council
- Dr Ruth Wallis, Public Health
- Southwark Cyclists
- Stop Killing Cyclists
- Diana Cochrane, Walworth Society/Pullens Tenants & Residents Association
- Peter Wright, East Walworth Green Links
- Peta Steele, Friends of Pasley Park/Walworth Society
- Shelagh Farren, Friends of Pasley Park
- Jin Lim, Assistant Director, Public Health
- Rosie Dalton-Lucas, Health Improvement Partnership Manager, Public Health
- Simon Bevan, Director of Planning
- Professor Brendan Delaney, Stop Killing Cyclists
- Alastair Hanton, Southwark Cyclists
- Bruce Lynn, Southwark Cyclists
- Southwark Youth Council
- Environment & Leisure Department

## **Summary of Recommendations**

### **Financial Health**

Recommendation 1: The Committee recommends that the Council continue to provide funding for the Southwark CAB so that it continue to support vulnerable residents, in particular men in their 50s who are adversely affected..

Recommendation 2: The Committee recommends that the Council continue to promote local CAB services to residents, particularly the Money Savvy service, providing financial education for social housing tenants

Recommendation 3: The Committee recommends the January edition of Southwark Life should carry information on financial services provision in the Borough to raise awareness at a time when people are more likely to be looking at organising their finances.

Recommendation 4: The Committee further recommends that Community Council chairs should be encouraged to invite financial support services to present and be on display at Community Councils throughout the administrative year.

Recommendation 5: The Committee recommends that the Cabinet Member writes to all Tenants & Residents Associations on an annual basis to provide them with details of services that are located within Southwark.

Recommendation 6: The Committee therefore recommends that a named Cabinet Member works to identify a potential premise for a credit union on the Walworth Road, which would help to balance the number of payday loan shop services.

Recommendation 7: The Committee also recommends that all Councillors should be encouraged to join a credit union so that they can speak from first-hand experience to residents about using credit unions.

Recommendation 8: The Committee recommends that the Council takes the lead in initiating discussions about the potential for working with the CCG, local GP practices and CAB services to provide financial health services in health centres in Southwark.

### **Environmental Health**

Recommendation 9: The commitment that the Council has so far made to our parks and green spaces should be commended, and the Committee recommends that the Council continues to invest in these areas to improve the health of residents.

Recommendation 10: The Committee would recommend that the Cabinet member continue to put pressure on TfL to reconsider the scope for the ultra-low emission zone to include Southwark.

Recommendation 11: The Council should consider banning smoking in children's playgrounds. This will be a good initial move to improve the air quality for young people in our borough and those who are likely to be affected by second hand smoking from adults whilst they are at play.

Recommendation 12: The Committee would recommend that the Cabinet Member looks into the possibility of funding a project highlighting the green link projects throughout the Borough.

Recommendation 13: The Committee welcomes the suggestion from meeting participants that we have planted sections which would act as a 'green ribbon' through the Borough and recommend that the Cabinet member factors this into the ongoing Cycling Strategy that the Council is developing.

Recommendation 14: The Committee recommends that the Cabinet Member for Regeneration seriously considers the viability of a low line and works with the Walworth Society to develop a proposal to take this forward.

Recommendation 15: The Committee would recommend that the Cabinet Member looks to conduct a study into the better use of green space in the Borough and work with local TRAs and community groups to identify community projects that can be undertaken.

Recommendation 16: We would encourage the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and the Chair of Planning to look to encourage developers to consider interim use projects which contribute to improving the environment for Southwark residents during their schemes.

### **Physical Health**

Recommendation 17: The Committee recommends that the Council consider further sites for outdoor gyms in parks and open spaces throughout the Borough.

Recommendation 18: The Committee believes that the play street scheme provides an ideal opportunity for engaging children in safe play near their homes, and would recommend that the Cabinet Member looks to extend the scheme during school holidays.

Recommendation 19: The Committee is currently conducting a Licensing Policy Review, and the Committee would recommend that the new guidance would seek to ban the sale of super strength alcohol as a standard condition of a licence

Recommendation 20: The Committee recommends that the Licensing Review further considers the ways in which current licensing policy can be used more effectively to have a clear impact on decision making.

Recommendation 21: As a Committee we believe there needs to be great importance placed on health as a licensing objective. We recommend that the Cabinet Member lobbies central Government for weight to be put behind this objective, so that it can be added to the updated licensing conditions.

Recommendation 22: The Committee would recommend that Public Health is regularly consulted on licence applications and review processes, and data is taken into account to assess the likely impact on health for residents, including A&E admissions, noise disturbance and ambulance call-outs.

Recommendation 23: The Committee supports the idea that there needs to be a more localised approach to tackling smoking and we would recommend the close working together of the CCG, the Council and local partner organisations.

Recommendation 24: Tackling smoking needs to remain a high priority for Public Health. The Committee supports the idea that there needs to be a more localised approach and we would recommend the close working together of the CCG, the Council and local partner organisations.

Recommendation 25: Discouraging young people from taking up smoking is a particularly important want to tackle the issue, and there needs to be more done to educate in schools. At present 3 schools per year are being funded in a 4 year project working with year 8 students. This does not provide a comprehensive enough approach and we recommend that the Council needs to work with secondary schools to have a yearly programme of activity.

Recommendation 26: In terms of tackling illegal tobacco, there is currently a partnership with Lambeth, Lewisham, Greenwich, Bexley and Bromley looking at the situation in SE London. The Committee commends this approach and would like to see a more concerted effort to tackle sales of illegal tobacco.

Recommendation 27: The Committee would recommend that the Cabinet Member takes note of the submissions to this Committee in his consideration of responses to the Council's Cycling Strategy.

Recommendation 28: The Committee recommends that the Cabinet Member looks at a joined up approach and fairer allocation of safe cycle storage schemes and communication with residents about their location and provision.

Recommendation 29: The Committee recommends that the Cabinet Member works with TfL to extend further cycle hire schemes throughout the Borough.

Recommendation 30: The Committee recommends that the Cabinet Member considers the outcomes of the Grange Project and looks to see whether the scheme could be further extended in other areas in the Borough to encourage cycling.

Recommendation 31: The Council is currently aiming to have 10% of the borough actively cycling. Given the success of the Grange Project, the Committee recommends that the Cabinet Member should consider increasing the target percentage of those actively cycling in the Borough for 2016/17.

Recommendation 32: For contracting purposes, the Committee recommends that the impact of public health on staff is taken into consideration.

Recommendation 33: The Committee recommends mandating Audit & Governance to investigate the inclusion of public health impact assessments across all Council departments.

## Chapter 1: Financial Health

### The context

1. Within our borough, the most deprived areas can be found in the middle of the borough. As can be seen in the map below, there is an increasing split between the north and south of the borough, and this is likely to have increased as a result of rising house prices along the Thames.

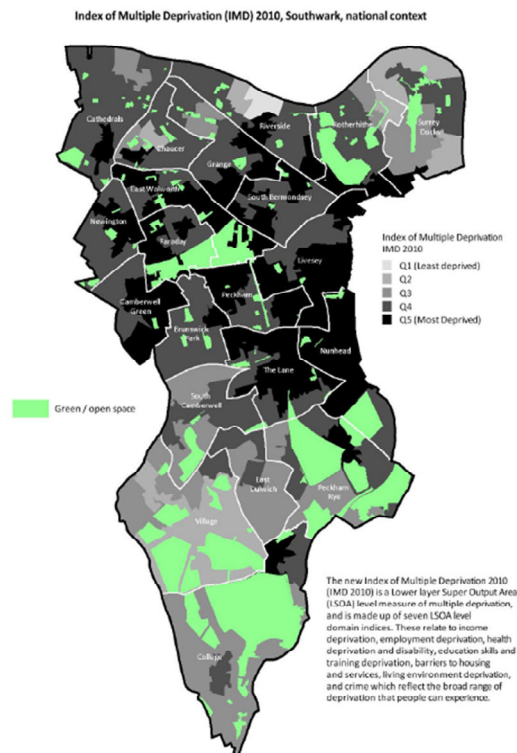


Figure 1: Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010, Overall Deprivation<sup>1</sup>

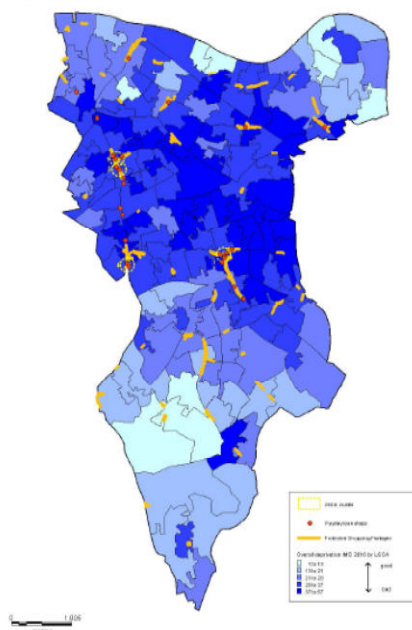
2. The majority of the Council's social housing can be found in these areas, and there continues to be pressure in the north of the borough to provide further social housing.
3. It is also within these areas of the borough that there is an increased proliferation of payday loans shops, as can be seen in figure 2 below.

<sup>1</sup> Public Health Presentation, Economy, Inequality and Poverty, October 2014



## Payday loan shops

Map 8-9: Indices of Deprivation Overall Score by LSOAs – payday loan shops



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Figure 2. Proliferation of payday loan shops, London Borough of Southwark<sup>2</sup>

4. The main reasons for using payday loans services differ depending on the age bracket in which individuals fall. For those aged 25-35, the key considerations are food, child essentials, vehicle expenses and utility bills, whereas for 45 to 54 year olds, the key considerations are university fees, family expenses and emergency expenses.
5. The payday loans sector has grown significantly over the past 10 years, from 0.3million borrowers in 2006 to 1.9million in 2010.<sup>3</sup> And whilst there is a legislation now in place to limit the interest rates of such organisations, they still provide a source of finance for many of Southwark's vulnerable residents.
6. However, whichever we look at the situation, a large number of people are accessing these services in the (perhaps perceived) absence of being able to access credit elsewhere. This means that many get trapped in a cycle, and consumers themselves also see the problems with payday loan shops, and 64% of payday loan shop borrowers agreed that this type of credit trapped them into a cycle of borrowing.<sup>4</sup>
7. Having debts undoubtedly has a negative health impact, and given the proliferation of payday loan shops services in Southwark, there is a knock on effect for the health of our residents.

<sup>2</sup> Public Health Presentation, Economy, Inequality and Poverty, October 2014

<sup>3</sup> Response of Cllr Ian Wingfield, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities, Employment and Business, October 2014

<sup>4</sup> Public Health Presentation, Economy, Inequality and Poverty, October 2014

8. There is a 33% higher risk of developing depression and anxiety as a result of unmanageable debts, and 1 in 2 adults with debt has a mental disorder. The effects also spread to physical health, where those with debt have a 17% higher risk of hypertension and a 15% higher risk of stroke.<sup>5</sup>
9. The Committee therefore believes that tackling access to financial services and providing residents with support in their financial decision making can have a positive effect on their health, and improve the health benefits for the borough.
10. The Committee heard from the Citizens Advice Bureau that in 2013/14 Southwark CABx helped 12,951 local residents with the top three areas of inquiry being (i) benefits (ii) debt (iii) housing<sup>6</sup>.
11. They have identified a number of issues that are leading to an increase in inquiries citing the changes to the welfare benefits as one of the main reasons; specifically around the bedroom tax, the abolition of Council Tax benefit and the benefit cap.
12. There is also an adverse effect on men in their 50s, who are particularly vulnerable to debt and poverty due to a number of factors, including the onset of disability, finding it difficult to access the labour market and changes to the benefits system.
13. ***The Committee recommends that the Council continue to provide funding for the Southwark CAB so that it continue to support vulnerable residents, in particular men in their 50s who are adversely affected.***

#### **Improving access to finance**

14. The CAB believes that the reliance on payday loans and pawn shops is a symptom, but not the cause of poverty in the borough. They found that people on the lowest incomes are often the best at budgeting and have good financial awareness, but they have limited choices in accessing finance.<sup>7</sup>
15. In conjunction with the Council, Southwark CAB is running a 5 year funded financial education project which is aimed as social housing tenants. To date they have helped over 2000 residents looking at issues such as cost of credit, and prioritising housing costs.
16. ***The Committee recommends that the Council continue to promote local CAB services to residents, particularly the Money Savvy service, providing financial education for social housing tenants***
17. Alongside the Council directly promoting the services available to residents, we should be doing more to ensure that awareness of the financial services available in the Borough is increased.

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<sup>5</sup> Response of Cllr Ian Wingfield, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities, Employment and Business, October 2014

<sup>6</sup> Southwark Citizens Advice Bureaux Response, October 2014

<sup>7</sup> Southwark Citizens Advice Bureaux Response, October 2014

18. Publications such as Southwark Life, and forums such as Community Councils provide ideal opportunities for outreach to large numbers of individuals throughout the Borough.
19. ***The Committee recommends the January edition of Southwark Life should carry information on financial services provision in the Borough to raise awareness at a time when people are more likely to be looking at organising their finances.***
20. ***The Committee further recommends that Community Council chairs should be encouraged to invite financial support services to present and be on display at Community Councils throughout the administrative year.***
21. Alongside support provided in improving the financial awareness within the borough, and offering support services, the availability of credit will play an important part in ensuring that residents are able to manage their finances.
22. The London Mutual Credit Union offers a 'Credit Union OK' payday loan product. This allows loans of up to £1000 with interest charged at 26.8%, compared to circa 4000% charged by standard payday lenders. Loans are transferred to customers within 3 working days, but can be transferred on the same day for an additional charge.<sup>8</sup>
23. Southwark Council recognises the importance of this offering to residents who feel they have no other option other than to access payday loan services. In 2014, the former Cabinet Member for Communities and Economic Wellbeing wrote to all Tenants and Residents Associations in the borough informing them of Credit Unions and requesting they publicise services to its residents.<sup>9</sup>
24. ***The Committee recommends that the Cabinet Member for Business & Enterprise writes to all Tenants & Residents Associations on an annual basis to provide them with details of services that are located within Southwark.***
25. Payday loans are seen as a major problem, especially in the north of the borough, where main roads such as the Walworth Road see a multitude of these shops within a relatively short stretch of road.
26. The Walworth Society in their response to the inquiry put forward its supportive for the development of a Credit Union in Walworth. As part of their research into the Walworth Road, they found that out of the total 172 retail units along the Walworth Rd, 9 are devoted to betting/gambling, 5 are high interest/payday loans and 4 are pawnbrokers.

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<sup>8</sup> Response of Cllr Ian Wingfield, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities, Employment and Business, October 2014

<sup>9</sup> Response of Cllr Ian Wingfield, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities, Employment and Business, October 2014

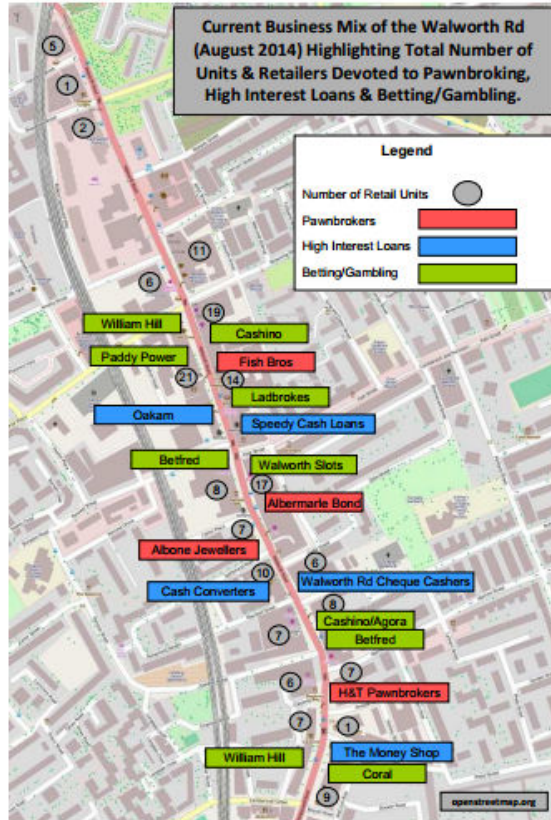


Figure 3: Retail units usage on the Walworth Road, Walworth Society<sup>10</sup>

27. In October 2013, the planning committee initiated the process of implementing at Article 4 Direction to withdraw the permitted development rights for certain use classes, and this was approved in March 2014. In doing so a change of use from an A3 use (restaurants and cafes), A4 (drinking establishments) and A5 (hot food takeaways) to A2 use (financial and professional services including betting shops, pay day lending shops and pawnbrokers) will require a planning application.<sup>11</sup>
28. Whilst this goes some way to helping to alleviate the problem, in that there is the opportunity to prevent further services being provided on the Walworth Road, the Committee believes that we have not yet gone far enough to provide alternative finance services for residents.
29. ***The Committee therefore recommends that a named Cabinet Member works to identify a potential premise for a credit union on the Walworth Road, which would help to balance the number of payday loan shop services.***
30. ***The Committee also recommends that all Councillors should be encouraged to join a credit union so that they can speak from first-hand experience to residents about using credit unions.***

<sup>10</sup> Submission from the Walworth Society, October 2014

<sup>11</sup> Response of Cllr Ian Wingfield, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities, Employment and Business, October 2014

31. Whilst these services will help to raise awareness of existing services and potentially increase services for local residents, there is one further option which the Committee believes can directly target the link between mental health and financial health.
32. Whilst residents can independently seek out financial advice at CABs, it is not always the case that people will voluntarily come forward with their concerns, and this can lead to them getting into more severe financial difficulties.
33. People with mental health concerns however are likely to be regularly attending their GP surgery for advice and support. In many circumstances, these are the same individuals who are struggling financially and this is only acting to increase the pressure being placed on them.
34. There is therefore a compelling argument for linking more strongly financial health and health service provision by the Council and the CCG. If residents are able to be referred to financial support services by their GP, who can see the physical effects of financial difficulties, there may be more opportunity for tackling the problem.
35. The issue was discussed extensively at the Committee hearing on 8 October, and Councillor Stephanie Cryan, Deputy Cabinet Member for Financial Inclusion was keen to see whether this might be something that Southwark was able to do.
36. The Southwark CAB talked extensively about the success that this had had previously, and it is something that the Committee were very keen to explore. This would provide demonstrable benefit as financial advice would be offered directly through Southwark health centres.
37. ***The Committee recommends that the Council takes the lead in initiating discussions about the potential for working with the CCG, local GP practices and CAB services to provide financial health services in health centres in Southwark.***

## Chapter 2: Environmental Health

### The Context

38. The role that parks and open spaces play in increasing environmental health is well documented. There is considerable evidence for the benefits to mental and physical health as a result of spending time in green spaces and nature.<sup>12</sup>
39. However, Southwark suffers from slightly less green space than the London average (25% vs. an average of 31%) and according to London Data Store, 50% of Southwark households have deficient access to nature.<sup>13</sup>
40. Whilst this may be the case, Southwark is making great efforts to make the best possible use of the resources that it has. And at the same time, regeneration at Elephant and Castle and at the Aylesbury site will help to increase the amount of new green space for residents to enjoy.
41. Southwark can also boast 19 Green Flag parks; we are the third most awarded borough in London demonstrating the excellence of park management.<sup>14</sup> Our green spaces also boast 15 outdoor gyms, alongside free or low cost outdoor facilities, such as the ping-pong tables in Burgess Park.
42. Further the rewards from the investment made by the Council into Burgess Park can be reaped through the statistics that show how usage figures have increased by half a million visits per year.<sup>15</sup> The BMX track, the barbeque facilities, the outdoor gyms and the improved footways are only some of the reasons why more people are using the renovated space.
43. ***The commitment that the Council has so far made to our parks and green spaces should be commended, and the Committee recommends that the Council continues to invest in these areas to improve the health of residents.***

### Improving air quality

44. Public Health presented the Committee with shocking statistics about the number of deaths caused by poor air quality which significantly raised the concerns expressed by Committee members.
45. In 2014 the Health Protection Agency published estimates for deaths attributable to poor air quality (PM2.5), estimating approx 113 deaths in Southwark adults (25yrs +) would be in part due to poor air quality.<sup>16</sup>
46. The evidence submitted by Southwark Cyclists further reinforces this, stating that 'motor vehicles are responsible for 40-60% of UK air pollution, which exacerbates heart and lung

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<sup>12</sup> Public Health Presentation, Parks & Open Spaces, November 2014

<sup>13</sup> Public Health Presentation, Parks & Open Spaces, November 2014

<sup>14</sup> Public Health Presentation, Parks & Open Spaces, November 2014

<sup>15</sup> Public Health Presentation, Parks & Open Spaces, November 2014

<sup>16</sup> Public Health Presentation, Parks & Open Spaces, November 2014

diseases...Estimates suggest up to 24,000 people die and the same number again are taken to hospital each year because of air pollution caused by motor vehicles.<sup>17</sup>

47. One of the key ways in which we can look to improve the air quality for residents is by tackling the amount of polluting vehicles that are on Southwark's roads.
48. At the end of 2014, at the time of the Committee meeting, Transport for London (TfL) was consulting on the introduction of an ultra-low emission zone, which he hopes will address some of the problem.
49. Whilst this is welcome, Councillor Darren Merrill explained to the Committee that he does not believe that TfL's plans go far enough, and Southwark joined forces with three other inner-London councils to lobby TfL to make changes to their proposals.
50. The Committee congratulates the Council on its recognition of air quality as a key issue for residents in the Borough and welcomes the submission to TfL to increase the scope of their recommendations for action.
51. ***The Committee would recommend that the Cabinet member continue to put pressure on TfL to reconsider the scope for the ultra-low emission zone to include Southwark.***
52. Alongside reducing the number of vehicles on our roads, effectively utilising the green spaces and parks that we have to provide fresh air is an important consideration.
53. One of the key topics for discussion at the Committee meeting was around the issue of second hand smoking, which directly affects residents. Whilst smoking has been banned in public places, this does not extend as yet to parks. The London Health Commission reported to the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, in October 2014 its recommendation to ban smoking in parks and open spaces.
54. The recommendation comes on the back of the introduction of a ban on smoking in parks and public places which Michael Bloomberg, the former mayor of New York, said had helped to increase life expectancy by three years.<sup>18</sup>
55. ***As a first step, the Committee would recommend that the Council considers looking to ban smoking in children's playgrounds. This will be a good initial move to improve the air quality for young people in our borough and those who are likely to be affected by second hand smoking from adults whilst they are at play.***

### **Green links**

56. As outlined above, 19 Green Flags have been awarded to Southwark's parks, recognising them as having excellence in park management.
57. However, less well recognised, but equally contributing to the 'green-ness' of the Borough, are the green spaces that are distributed throughout. A key way in which we link these spaces together with the parks are through green links.

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<sup>17</sup> Southwark Cyclists, The public health case for increasing cycling and walking in Southwark, December 2014

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/oct/15/boris-johnson-advised-ban-london-parks>

58. Whilst in many areas these green links are already in existence, there is a feeling amongst residents who attended the Committee meeting that more needs to be done to advertise and maintain these routes.
59. ***The Committee would therefore recommend that the Cabinet Member for Parks looks into the possibility of funding a project highlighting the green link projects throughout the Borough.***
60. There is also the ideal opportunity to further extend green links whilst there is a focus on redesigning the transport infrastructure throughout the Borough.
61. The new cycle superhighway provides such an opportunity. Residents at the meeting raised the idea that rather than having cement to provide segregated routes, it would be advisable to instead have planted sections which would act as a 'green ribbon' through the Borough.
62. ***The Committee welcomes this suggestion and would recommend that the Cabinet member factors this into the ongoing Cycling Strategy that the Council is developing.***
63. The second area in which infrastructure might be changed to support improving the environment in Southwark is through the Low Line Project, being worked on by the Walworth Society.<sup>19</sup>
64. Such a project would open up the railway line to both walking and cycling opportunities, but also provide a new space which could be effectively greened to improve both the look and feel, alongside providing environmental benefits for residents.
65. ***The Committee recommends that the Cabinet Member for Regeneration seriously considers the viability of a low line and works with the Walworth Society to develop a proposal to take this forward.***

### **Utilising green spaces**

66. As the Walworth Society raised at the Committee meeting, attractive green spaces and provision for community involvement helps to promote community cohesion.<sup>20</sup>
67. Alongside the parks and green links in our Borough, there are many green spaces which are currently under-utilised. Often there are flower beds and green spaces attached to our Council estates which are not effectively being used to provide attractive features for the local area.
68. These spaces can be improved through the introduction of planters, or by giving residents licence to use the spaces for gardening purposes to grow flowers and shrubbery. This would not only help to lift the appearance of estates throughout the Borough, but would also help to bring communities together.
69. Furthermore, meeting participants highlighted the potential for the further use of growing boxes, allotments and edible gardens that could be put in place across the borough. As well as improving environmental health, there are many community cohesion benefits that can also be realised.

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<sup>19</sup> Submission from the Walworth Society, October 2014

<sup>20</sup> Submission from the Walworth Society, October 2014



70. ***The Committee would recommend that the Cabinet Member looks to conduct a study into the use of green space in the Borough and work with local TRAs and community groups to identify community projects that can be undertaken.***
71. Whilst we are under-utilising some of the green space in the Borough, there are also many regeneration projects which have derelict sites for a period of time during the redevelopment. The Mobile Gardeners is a great example of a community group utilising space that developers are planning on building on as an interim use before development occurs.
72. With large amounts of regeneration, particularly in the north of the Borough, there will be more sites which could be used for interim periods of time by community groups to, in effect, create 'pop up' gardening or park spaces.
73. ***We would encourage the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and the Chair of Planning to look to encourage developers to consider interim use projects which contribute to improving the environment for Southwark residents during their schemes.***

## Chapter 3: Physical Health

### The context

74. Physical inactivity currently accounts for nearly one-fifth of premature deaths in the UK and it is predicted that this will increase by a further 15% by 2030. The estimated cost of inactivity to society in Southwark including health care costs and losses in economic productivity is £17million per 100,000 population.<sup>21</sup>
75. The Active People Survey suggests that approximately 26% of adults in Southwark are inactive – ie. Doing less than 30 minutes moderate physical activity a week. Southwark is ranked 41 in the Survey of London Boroughs, significantly behind neighbouring boroughs such as Lambeth.

Active People Survey Data 2013/14 (London Boroughs)

Authority name	National rank	Proportion inactive	Premature deaths	Cost of inactivity
Richmond upon Thames	2	20.03	202.3	£13,130,993
Islington	3	20.07	320.5	£13,157,874
Kensington and Chelsea	6	20.72	212.5	£13,583,305
Hammersmith and Fulham	7	20.79	295.6	£13,629,125
Lambeth	8	21.72	321.6	£14,242,276
Wandsworth	12	22.76	259.5	£14,919,361
Kingston upon Thames	13	22.77	215.5	£14,925,480
Sutton	17	23.15	234.4	£15,179,621
Bromley	19	24.08	213.8	£15,787,699
Harrow	24	24.76	261.1	£16,236,590
Barnet	38	26.11	235.6	£17,120,127
Enfield	40	26.26	284.6	£17,219,069
Southwark	41	26.32	236.5	£17,257,113
Haringey	43	26.40	245.2	£17,311,267
Waltham Forest	67	28.36	288.2	£18,592,625
Westminster	70	28.44	295.7	£18,648,227
Tower Hamlets	74	28.62	300.9	£18,763,499
Ealing	82	29.14	264.7	£19,102,686
Lewisham	84	29.18	270.7	£19,131,037

26% Southwark residents (16+ yrs) considered 'inactive' <30 mins moderate physical activity per week

Figure 4: Active People Survey Data 2013/14<sup>22</sup>

76. At the same time, we can look more closely at this data and see the spread of obesity throughout the Borough. As we can see there is a widespread problem in Southwark, which is not necessarily concentrated to one specific area.

<sup>21</sup> Physical Health of the Borough, Rosie Dalton Lucas, December 2014

<sup>22</sup> Public Health, Physical Health, December 2014

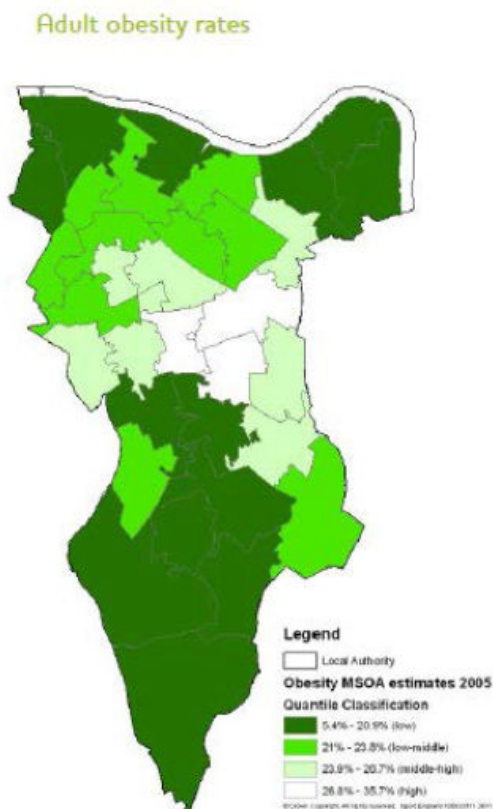


Figure 5: Adult Obesity Rates, Southwark<sup>23</sup>

77. There is clear evidence that physical activity has a positive effect on improving health, and this does not just mean undertaking large amount of physically exertive activity.
78. In fact, as the figure below demonstrates, there are three core sets of activity that can help to use calories, and increase the heart rate, providing health benefits.

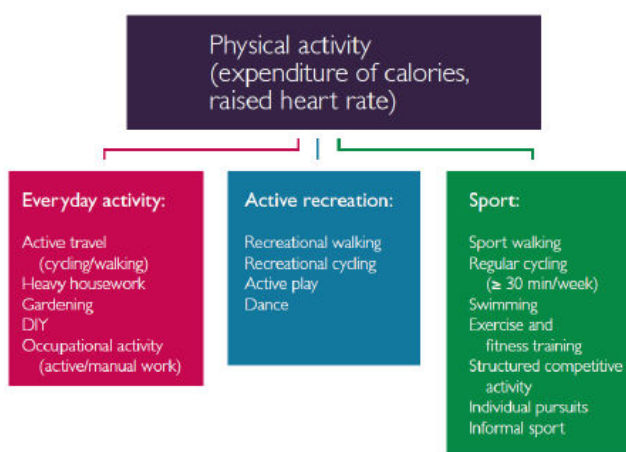


Figure 6: Types of physical activity<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Public Health Presentation, Parks & open spaces, October 2014

<sup>24</sup> Public Health Presentation, Parks & open spaces, October 2014

79. Southwark takes the issue of poor public health very seriously, and has a variety of approaches to tackle obesity, and encourage physical activity in the borough.

### **Exercise & play**

80. Southwark's parks and open spaces provide the ideal environment for physical activity. There are currently 15 outdoor gyms throughout the Borough that provide equipment for residents to use whilst not having to pay for gym membership, or be forced to exercise indoors.

81. In discussions at the Committee, residents spoke very favourably about outdoor gyms and members and residents alike have seen for themselves the large amount of usage that they have.

**82. *These facilities provide people with a simple way to exercise, whilst also enjoying our open spaces and the Committee recommends that the Council consider further sites for outdoor gyms in parks and open spaces throughout the Borough.***

83. Identifying other spaces where physical activity can occur is also an important way to help improve the health of the borough.

84. Southwark Living Streets in their submission to the Committee made an interesting proposition about the creation of PlayStreets. Southwark already has active play streets, which means that roads are closed for a period of time during the week, providing a safe space in which children can play.<sup>25</sup>

85. Under the current regulations, successful applicants will be granted a temporary play street order which allows a road to be closed for a maximum of three hours for one day per month.<sup>26</sup>

**86. *The Committee believes that the play street scheme provides an ideal opportunity for engaging children in safe play near their homes, and would recommend that the Cabinet Member looks to extend the scheme during school holidays.***

87. Whilst some people will be happy to exercise in their local park, or in an open space on their estate, there are large numbers of residents who do not currently have gym or swimming pool access, who would greatly benefit from being able to utilise the leisure centre facilities that we have as a Council.

88. Southwark Labour's pledge at the Local Elections in May 2014 goes a way to making this a reality, with the pilot scheme for free, universal access to swimming pools and gyms throughout the Borough starting at the beginning of 2015.

89. The Committee is delighted that the Council is taking such innovative steps forward to open up access to leisure facilities, especially for those who may not currently use the service, and looks forward to the results of the pilot scheme and a full rollout in 2016.

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<sup>25</sup> Submission from Southwark Living Streets, October 2014

<sup>26</sup> [http://www.southwark.gov.uk/info/100011/transport\\_and\\_streets/3449/play\\_streets](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/info/100011/transport_and_streets/3449/play_streets)

## Alcohol

90. Southwark is understood to be one of the top 5 Boroughs in terms of numbers of licensed premises. Within Southwark there are 1286 premises licensed under the Licensing Act 2013.<sup>27</sup> Additionally there are around 800 Temporary Event Notices and alcohol is readily available for purchase throughout the Borough 24 hours a day.
91. Whilst this is the case, the most recent annual partnership analysis of alcohol related violence for 2013, indicates that alcohol related violence against the person and calls to the police concerning alcohol related disorder and rowdiness are at their lowest level in Southwark since the monitor began back in 2007.<sup>28</sup>
92. However, compared to neighbouring Boroughs, Southwark remains with the highest number of alcohol related admissions to hospital.

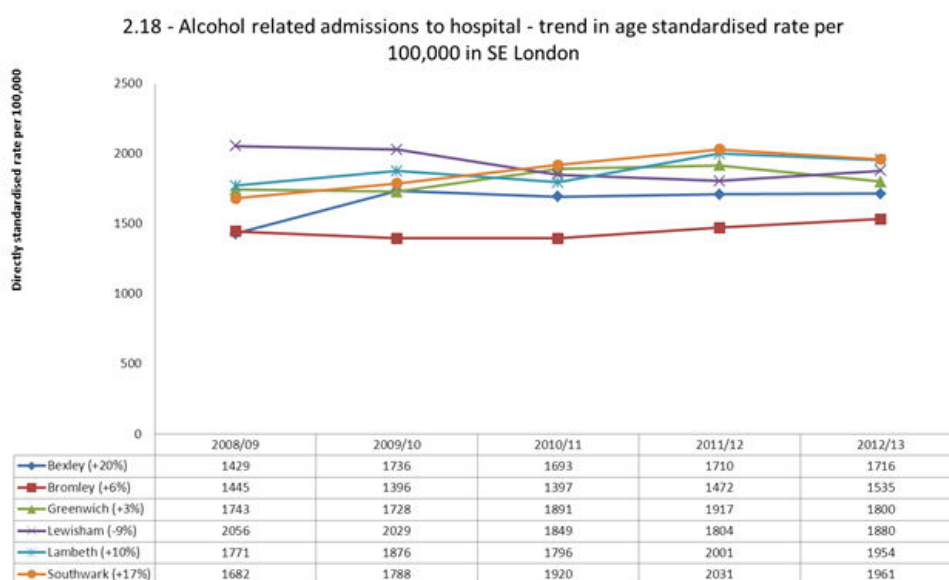


Figure 7: Alcohol related admissions to hospital, December 2014

93. There is therefore still a significant challenge for Southwark to reduce the issues associated with alcohol in the Borough.
94. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) made a number of recommendations in its public health guidelines *Alcohol use disorders: preventing harmful drinking*.<sup>29</sup> These included 'policy' issues, such as price and availability and 'practice' issues such as licensing, intervention programmes and referrals.
95. Tackling the sale of super-strength alcohol is one way in which it is possible to directly tackle the issue of excessive drinking, leading to health problems. A number of local licensing authorities

<sup>27</sup> Availability of alcohol on our high streets and in pubs and bars, Richard Parkins and Anna Richards, December 2014

<sup>28</sup> Availability of alcohol on our high streets and in pubs and bars, Richard Parkins and Anna Richards, December 2014

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph24>

have targeted cheap super-strength lager and cider and have worked toward voluntary agreements not to sell such products.

96. Whilst this approach is commendable, the Committee is concerned that a voluntary agreement will only work with those premises who are responsible and may still lead to pockets of irresponsible retailers selling produce.

97. ***The Committee is currently conducting a Licensing Policy Review, and the Committee would recommend that the new guidance would seek to ban the sale of super strength alcohol as a standard condition of a licence***

98. ***The Committee recommends that the Licensing Review further considers the ways in which current licensing policy can be used more effectively to have a clear impact on decision making.***

99. Directly linking health to licensing is also an area in which the Committee feels a tangible benefit can be made. Public Health is now able to comment on licence applications and call licence reviews as a 'responsible authority'. This opens up the opportunity to directly look at health data and the potential impact that a premise is having on the local area.

100. ***As a Committee we believe there needs to be great importance placed on health as a licensing objective. We recommend that the Cabinet Member lobbies central Government for weight to be put behind this objective, so that it can be added to the updated licensing conditions.***

101. ***The Committee would recommend that Public Health is regularly consulted on licence applications and review processes, and data is taken into account to assess the likely impact on health for residents, including A&E admissions, noise disturbance and ambulance call-outs.***

## Smoking

102. Southwark is statistically higher in smoking attributable deaths especially from lung cancer and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease than surrounding Boroughs.

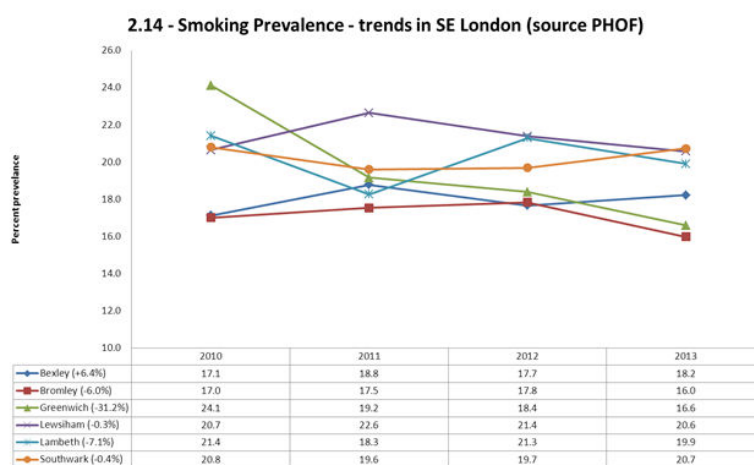


Figure 8: Smoking prevalence – trends in SE London<sup>30</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Public Health Presentation, Physical Health, December 2014

103. Each year in Southwark the estimated cost of smoking to society is approximately £66.4million.<sup>31</sup>
104. There is an ongoing issue with illegal tobacco. In Southwark, 1 in 5 cigarettes smoked is illegal and 73% of smokers surveyed in Southwark said that they had been offered illegal tobacco at least once in the last year and 56.4% had actually bought illegal tobacco in the last year. The highest percentage of smokers offered illegal tobacco at least once in the last year was 95% for smokers surveyed in Peckham Rye.<sup>32</sup>
105. At this time, the Council are taking steps to prevent the uptake of smoking, smoking cessation and protection from second hand smoke and illegal sales. The Lambeth and Southwark Tobacco Control Alliance continues to promote an evidence based tobacco control approach, represented by statutory and non-statutory sectors.
106. ***However, there is more that needs to be done and tackling smoking needs to remain a high priority for Public Health. The Committee supports the idea that there needs to be a more localised approach and we would recommend the close working together of the CCG, the Council and local partner organisations.***
107. Discouraging young people from taking up smoking is a particularly important want to tackle the issue, and there needs to be more done to educate in schools. At present 3 schools per year are being funded in a 4 year project working with year 8 students. ***This does not provide a comprehensive enough approach and we recommend that the Council needs to work with secondary schools to have a yearly programme of activity.***
108. In terms of smoking cessation there is Stop Smoking support currently offered through 45 GP practices, 42 pharmacies, specialist services and through SLAM. Specific focus at the moment is placed on those who are housebound with long term conditions, and pregnant women.
109. ***However, there needs to be more done by local GP surgeries to provide information to patients and create pathways for more priority groups. The Committee recommends that the CCG needs to work with the Council to ensure that these services can be delivered appropriately.***
110. ***In terms of tackling illegal tobacco, there is currently a partnership with Lambeth, Lewisham, Greenwich, Bexley and Bromley looking at the situation in SE London. The Committee commends this approach and would like to see a more concerted effort to tackle sales of illegal tobacco.***

#### Active Travel

111. A key area for improving health easily is through incorporating physical activity into everyday living. The Council is committed to being a 20 MPH borough creating a healthier, safer and more pleasant street environment for pedestrians and cyclists.<sup>33</sup>
112. The Council is also working on the Cycling Strategy and it was this that stoked the most discussion amongst participants at the Committee meeting.

<sup>31</sup> Tobacco Control in Southwark, Bimke Opi and Sally Slade, December 2014

<sup>32</sup> Tobacco Control in Southwark, Bimke Opi and Sally Slade, December 2014

<sup>33</sup> Public Health Presentation, Parks & Open Spaces November 2014

113. ***The Committee would recommend that the Cabinet Member takes note of the submissions to this Committee in his consideration of responses to the Council's Cycling Strategy.***
114. Cycling England has said that 'cycling is a highly efficient way of exercising, easy on the joints, mixing periods of high energy use with pauses for breath. It produces measureable improvements in fitness over a short period of time.'<sup>34</sup>
115. As Southwark Living Streets said in their submission to the Committee, there needs to be 'large volumes of cycle parking at destinations (eg high streets, local shops and services and local amenities (eg leisure centres)) and where people live (secure on street parking and secure parking on estates).'<sup>35</sup>
116. This would further help to encourage people to take up cycling as they are able to find reliable and secure places to store their cycles.
117. The Committee recommends that the Cabinet Member looks at a joined up approach and fairer allocation of safe cycle storage schemes and communication with residents about their location and provision.
118. Whilst some people do own their own cycles, the success of the Barclays Bike Hire Scheme means that people can rent bikes at a low cost.
119. The number of Cycle Hire points in the Borough has been slowly increasing, but more needs to be done by TfL to put in place the infrastructure for people to hire cycles.
120. ***The Committee recommends that the Cabinet Member works with TfL to extend further cycle hire schemes throughout the Borough.***
121. Alongside this, offering free bicycle loan schemes and interest free loans to buy bicycles can help to encourage more people to take up cycling.
122. The Southwark Cyclists in their evidence talked about the Grange Project, which is running on the Grange Estate in Bermondsey and used leafleting plus the offer of free bike loan and cycle training to get people to try cycling or return to cycling. The results of the Project were a 'statistically significant' 9% increase in cycling with consequential health improvements.<sup>36</sup>
123. ***The Committee recommends that the Cabinet Member considers the outcomes of the Grange Project and looks to see whether the scheme could be further extended in other areas in the Borough to encourage cycling.***
124. ***The Council is currently aiming to have 10% of the borough actively cycling. Given the success of the Grange Project, the Committee recommends that the Cabinet Member should consider increasing the target percentage of those actively cycling in the Borough for 2016/17.***

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<sup>34</sup> Cycling and Health – what's the evidence, Cycling England, December 2014

<sup>35</sup> Submission from Southwark Living Streets, October 2014

<sup>36</sup> Southwark Cyclists, The public health case for increasing cycling and walking in Southwark, December 2014



### **Council staff and contractors**

125. Public health affects all individuals, and we should be aware of the impact of public health policies on our staff and contractors.
126. In discussions amongst the Committee, we were keen to ensure that the issues of public health are considered and therefore would like to make two further recommendations.
127. ***For contracting purposes, the Committee recommends that the impact of public health on staff is taken into consideration.***
128. ***Furthermore, the Committee recommends that Audit & Governance Committee look at how public health impact assessments are integrated into governance across all Council departments.***