

1. What is the review?

To scrutinise and review Southwark Council's handling of the renewal process for Freedom Passes in 2008, including the delays in completion of the renewal cycle, the provision of information to Freedom Pass holders and the treatment of those seeking to renew their Passes.

2. What outcomes could realistically be achieved? Which agency does the review seek to influence?

The review should provide clarity as to why the processes put in place for the renewals process failed to ensure that renewals were completed before the extended deadline in May 2008. The review should seek to provide recommendations to the Executive for the Council's handling of future Freedom Pass renewals and similar major logistical undertakings. The review should also seek to provide recommendations for the provision of information to Southwark residents and the levels of customer service at One Stop Shops at times of exceptional demand.

The review should seek to influence Health and Social Care, Planning and Transport, Client Services and the Executive.

3. When should the review be carried out/completed?

Given the deep levels of concern felt by community/voluntary groups, individuals and members regarding the handling of this matter by Southwark Council, the commencement and completion of this review should be seen as a matter of urgency.

4. What format would suit this review?

At least one and possibly two public meetings, to take evidence from Executive Member, officers and from community groups. A full briefing on the issue should also be requested from officers prior to the commencement of the review.

5. What are some of the key issues that you would like the review to look at?

- What processes were put in place to seek to ensure that Southwark was able to meet the original renewal deadline of March 31 2008 and the subsequent revised deadline of May 31 2008? At what stage did planning for the renewals process commence?
- What were the key areas of these processes that failed and what lessons can be learned from this for future renewals and similar events?
- At what point did it become clear that the deadline would not be met, what efforts were made to mitigate the effects of this failure and to communicate with those likely to be affected?
- In the light of the failure to meet the renewal deadline, could the events following the expiry of the deadline, particularly at One Stop Shops, have been handled better?
- To what extent did the handling of the overall renewals process represent a failing of customer care? Did the handling of the process lead to significant numbers of inaccurate decisions to withhold/approve Disabled Freedom Passes?

6. Who would you like to receive evidence and advice from during the review?

Relevant managers from Planning and Transport, Client Services and Health and Social Care, Executive Member for Health and Adult Care, representatives of voluntary or community groups affected by the delays to the renewal process. This latter should include Patrick Horan of the Southwark Disablement Association, Allan Johnstone and Rasaanq Alli-Balagun from Southwark Carers, Janet Yatak and representatives of Irish Pensioners, MIND, Black Elderly Group Southwark. OSC should also place advertisements in the local press to encourage local residents who experienced particular problems to provide written or oral evidence.

7. Any suggestions for background information? Are you aware of any best practice on this topic?

Data should be made available, if possible, on the number of cases outstanding at weekly intervals throughout the renewals process. Any other relevant data or papers should also be provided. Written or oral evidence could be sought from a borough with similar demographics that did not experience problems with the renewals process.

8. What approaches could be useful for gathering evidence? What can be done outside committee meetings?

Oral Q&A with officers, the Executive Member and stakeholder groups should form the bulk of this review. However, written evidence could be requested from stakeholder groups that do not wish to/are not able to give evidence at meetings.