

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Monday 5 December 2022

7.00 pm

160 Tooley Street, SE1 2QH (Ground Floor West Area)

Tabled documents

The enclosed documents were circulated at the meeting.

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Date: 6 December 2022

Cost of Living Crisis Impact on Mental Health & Wellbeing

Public Health Division

November 2022

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Energy prices will increase by 96% this winter, with average household seeing 64% increase after £400 energy rebate

BACKGROUND

Energy, food and transport are main drivers of rising inflation, but harder for households to cut back on. Government support to limit this will help to reduce extent of rise but will still leave many struggling to meet increasing costs across multiple areas.

- In the year to October 2022 there has been significant inflation in energy, transport and food.

Gas Prices	Electricity Prices	Food Prices
↑ 129%	↑ 66%	↑ 16%

- Households are limited in the extent to which they can reduce their consumption of these essential goods. This creates a challenge for low-income households in particular.
- Blanket government measures of £400 energy rebate and the new Energy Price Guarantee will help reduce the sharp increase in fuel costs. Households will still have a 27% increase in energy costs from 1 October, after a 54% increase in April, equivalent to 96% increase on previous year. Once the £400 energy rebate is applied, the average household will have a 64% increase.
- There are additional government measures in place to support people who receive means-tested benefits, disability benefits, pension credit. The extent these help to cover additional costs will be affected by individual circumstances – caring, disability, number of dependants.

Peoples mental and physical health will suffer due to impacts on other things

LINK BETWEEN IMPACTS OF CRISIS AND MENTAL HEALTH

The rising cost of living can significantly affect mental health. Those on low incomes are likely to experience both a larger number and greater impacts, putting their mental health at greater risk.

Impact	Evidence	Impact on mental health
Food insecurity and lack of nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪With increasing food costs, it will become increasingly difficult to afford a healthy diet for those on lower incomes. ▪The rising cost of food has led to an increase in people reporting that they are cutting back on meals or missing food altogether. ▪GLA research in September showed that those who reported financially struggling were twice as likely to report buying less food and essentials to manage costs (70% vs 35%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪Food insecurity can cause stigma and social isolation ▪Research in North West of England showed higher physical and mental distress among people who had experienced limited access to food over the previous year
Transport poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪Costs of fuel rising more sharply than Transport for London prices, so will affect residents differently. ▪Reduced access to transport can affect access to employment, education, healthcare, shops including essentials, with both immediate and longer term impacts on health and wellbeing. 	Not being able to use transport to attend appointments or socialise can lead to feelings of loneliness and isolation

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Impact	Evidence	Impact on mental health
Fuel poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Results from the 2019 Survey for Londoners showed 15% of Southwark respondents reported they could not keep their homes warm enough. The Institute for Health Equity have reported that 10% of excess winter deaths are directly related to fuel poverty in England, and 22% are related to cold homes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cold homes can cause and worsen poor mental health, in addition to physical health problems One in four (28%) young people living in cold homes were found to have four or more negative mental health symptoms, compared with 4% of young people who had always lived in warm homes
Debt and financial stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More than a third (34%) of those on UC who have fallen into debt in the three months to August because they couldn't afford to keep up with essential bills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Debt problems can lead to poor mental and physical health, and stress around finances can make managing debt more difficult Financial difficulties and problem debt are associated with suicidal thoughts and dying by suicide

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Peoples mental and physical health will suffer due to impacts on other things

LINK BETWEEN IMPACTS OF CRISIS AND MENTAL HEALTH

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Impact	Evidence	Impact on mental health
Housing instability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Crisis estimated in February 2022 that homelessness in England could increase by a third to 66,000 people as a result of the increasing cost of living and the end of COVID-19 eviction bans ▪ In London, average private rents for new tenancies have risen by 14% in the period to July 2022 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Living somewhere insecure or overcrowded can cause stress or anxiety related to the cost of housing or members of the household ▪ Housing problems can impact sleep which can lead to mental health problems and make existing ones harder to cope with

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People with mental health conditions experience poorer health and wellbeing, which will be impacted by the crisis

IMPACTS ON PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

One population group who must be focused on as part of the response to the cost of living crisis is people with a mental health condition.

- Financial security and mental health can affect each other:
 - Suffering financial losses or living in poverty can worsen mental health
 - People with mental health conditions may end up in poverty or suffer financial loss because of their illness e.g. not able to work

Impacts of previous financial crises on people with mental health conditions

- In England, the 2008 economic recession was associated with increased male suicide in the general population and among people with existing mental health problems. Middle-aged men were found to be most at risk.
- 44% of adults with mental health problems in the UK who fell behind on bills either considered or attempted suicide during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Evidence of disproportionate risk for people with mental health conditions

- Housing affordability is frequently cited as an issue for people experiencing mental ill health.
 - People with mental health conditions are also more likely to live in rented and poor-quality housing than the general population, which can exacerbate existing issues.
- Adults with mental ill health are disproportionately affected by food insecurity.
 - The Trussell Trust reports that mental ill-health is a concern reported by food banks, with on average, 38% of people accessing them having mental ill-health

Children and young people will be stressed and worried, and poverty known to be bad for mental health

IMPACTS OF CRISIS ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES'S MENTAL HEALTH

The cost of living crisis will increase the number of children living in poverty and the severity of conditions for those who already are. Increased stress and anxiety in the household related to the cost of living will impact children's mental health.

YoungMinds national research in August showed:

- Cost of living was the **major worry for over half (56%) of young people**, who reported disruption to daily life, particularly diet and sleep
- 1 in 5 (21%) 11 year olds said money worries had cause them stress, anxiety, unhappiness or anger

Kings Maudsley Partnership for Children and Young People's Mental Health national research for parents of children aged 5-17 years old in September showed:

- One in three **(34%) parents think the rising cost of living could affect the mental health of their children a great deal**
- Seven in ten (72%) parents say it could affect it at least a little over the coming months
- A third (33%) of parents feel their child is currently experiencing mental health difficulties, with the most **common symptom or behaviour as anxiety** (68% of those with mental health difficulties) with those noticing depression or low mood episodes much lower (37%)

Childhood Trust national survey of parents with children aged under 18 in May showed:

- One in three **(34%) parents said their children have raised concerns about the cost of living crisis**
- Of those who said that their child had raised concerns: 30% said their children felt stressed, 17% said their child had started self harming – represents just under 6% of all parents surveyed.

The rising cost of essential goods is expected to affect low-income households disproportionately

HOW WILL THIS AFFECT SOUTHWARK RESIDENTS?

Whilst everyone will experience rising costs of essential goods, low-income households have less flexibility in their personal finances to absorb the extra costs.

People on low-incomes, especially those who do not receive Universal Credit

- Low-income households spend higher proportion of total spend on food, housing and energy – areas which have seen highest inflation, and more limited space to cut back on essentials (40% for lowest income group; 4% of Southwark households)
- There is targeted assistance, but those on low incomes not receiving Universal Credit will be most affected
- Across London, people earning less than £20,000 are more likely to report financially struggling in June 2022 (29% vs 17% total).

Faraday, Old Kent Road and Peckham

- Highest % of residents in lowest three income decile groups, and highest % receiving Universal Credit.
- Amongst top 7 highest wards for fuel poverty (13-14% of households).

Camberwell Green, Nunhead and Queens Road

- In 2020, fuel poverty was highest in these wards, at 15% of households, with some communities at 16-20%.

People with disabilities

- In 2019, people with a disability in Southwark were more likely to be in fuel poverty (26% vs 15% total)
- Across London, people who are deaf or disabled are more likely to report financially struggling/ just about managing in September 2022 (63% vs 53% total).

Cost of Living Profile

This is a live document and reflects intelligence available as of September 2022.

Who will be most affected by cost of living crisis?

People on low-incomes, especially those who do not receive Universal Credit

- Low-income households spend higher proportion of total spend on food, housing and energy – areas which have seen highest inflation, and more limited space to cut back on essentials (40% for lowest income group; 4% of Southwark households)
- There is targeted assistance, but those on low incomes not receiving Universal Credit will be most affected
- Across London, people earning less than £20,000 are more likely to report financially struggling in September 2022 (36% vs 20% total).

Faraday, Old Kent Road and Peckham

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How will this affect health and wellbeing?



Food security and nutrition

- Increasing food costs and increased demand for lower priced food ranges makes shopping on a limited budget harder → low income households most affected
- More difficult to maintain a healthy, nutritious diet due to healthy food costs and costs of food preparation
- Increase in households cutting back on food or missing meals



Fuel poverty

- Cold homes can affect respiratory or circulatory problems, and increase risk of poor mental health
- Over half (55%) of respondents to April 2022 poll felt their health had been negatively affected by rising costs; 84% as a result of rising heating costs



Mental wellbeing and financial stress

- In September, half (48%) of Londoners were very worried about increasing living costs, and additional third (35%) fairly worried
- Financial stress can lead to poor mental health and wellbeing
- Debt problems can lead to poor mental and physical health, and stress around finances can make managing debt more difficult



Housing instability

- Housing affordability is often an issue for people experiencing mental ill health
- Average private rent for new tenancies increased by 14% to July



Transport poverty

- Rising cost of petrol will affect those who rely on car travel for work and can't use active travel/ public transport/ car share

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Southwark Public Health Division

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee

5 December 2022

Digital Southwark

Digital Southwark – The Future



"Every Southwark resident to have access to a fast and stable internet connection, a device and the skills needed to participate in society and the digital economy by 2025"

Smart Borough - Becoming a Smart Borough

- Over the last 3 years, fibre connectivity on Southwark estates has been a key priority. Fibre to the Property (FTTP) programme has resulted in circa 40,000 council estate properties being connected, with an additional 60 community halls being provided with a free fibre connections.
- Southwark was successful in the DCMS-funded LFFN programme which will attract £2-3million to install fibre in Rotherhithe and Bermondsey. We will look to use this investment to install fibre on lamp posts to support CCTV, Electric Vehicle charging points and smart technology sensors
- Partnered with UK Broadband/Relish (now owned by Three) wireless broadband service to upgrade aerials and improve the service for residents.
- £2 million agreement over 10 years will provide a wireless broadband offer in Southwark and Income generation for the council a further upgrade where some high in demand areas they are offering a 5G wireless Wifi solution.



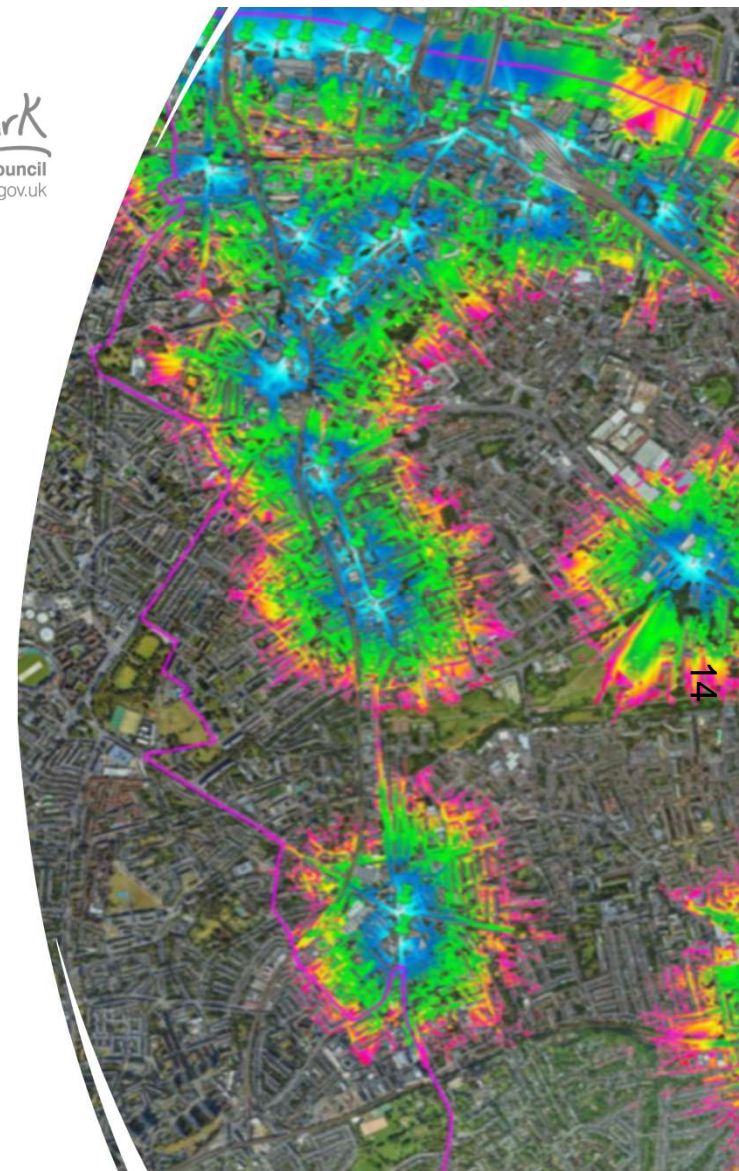
Increased Connectivity



4G small cells have been deployed on 50+ locations across the Borough during its first year, improving the connected experience of 40% of mobile users using Vodafone and Virgin Media / O2 mobile phones, especially around London Bridge

This project has also improved the fibre footprint across these areas as every small cell is fibre connected.

Primarily focusing on congregated people, namely, Tate museum, Borough Market, London Bridge Station, among others.



Digital Inclusion Pillars

Our six digital inclusion pillars form the basis of our work to ensure nobody is left offline, these are as follows:

- Affordable Broadband
- Access to Devices
- Jobs & Training
- Digital Skills (Residents)
- Digital Resilience (Businesses)
- Digital Education (For All)



Digital Inclusion initiatives for the community

What we have done so far.....



- ✓ Over 90 community buildings have been given a free lifelong full-fibre connection
- ✓ 1500 free digital skills training guides distributed to residents in the borough through local organisations and over 400 digital skills sessions this year
- ✓ Over 90 community buildings have been given a free lifelong full-fibre connection
- ✓ Nearly £400,000 in donations and devices raised for schools as part of the Laptops for Learning Campaign during the pandemic.
- ✓ 54 free broadband connections to the homes of schoolchildren who were struggling to get online during the pandemic.
- ✓ The provision of 230 free sim cards to residents in need through the Good Things Foundation National Databank

Digital Inclusion Funding Breakdown – Awaiting confirmation

- ⑩ Digital skills guides & banners across the borough
- ⑩ Tablet lending scheme
- ⑩ Routers distribution building on pilot with careleavers
- ⑩ F2F training for house-bound residents
- ⑩ Digital Champions Network Subscription for volunteers
- ⑩ Staff to deliver programme
- ⑩ Strategic evaluation & sustainability initiatives

Digital Southwark - Opportunities

Focusing on Vulnerable Residents

IoT – Technology

- Early detection of decline / or signs of life stopping - very simple and easy to deploy with right Officer support linked to above temperature monitoring - too cold or hot
- Humidity Sensors to improve health outcomes
- Trip / falls
- Care packages – what if we can determine if residents are getting up and eating? Maybe sending out caregivers to dress is no longer necessary. However, residents may need social engagement
- Assist with Supporting the release from hospital to home with right care package
- Measuring air quality to improve people's health and reduce pollution



Website Accessibility

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What do we mean when we talk about web accessibility?

- People are not excluded on the basis of experiencing a disability
- People can do what they need to do in a similar amount of time and effort as someone that does not have a disability
- Someone can complete a task without encountering a barrier or issue
- **4 out of 10** people globally need an accessible solution
- It is not a choice. **It's a legal requirement.** We are required by law to meet WCAG 2.1 AA accessibility standards.
- It's not just relevant for people with disabilities - the benefits will encompass a broader range of people such as those whose first language isn't English, or simply work in a noisy environment.

What are we doing to improve web accessibility?

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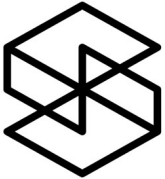
Tools



Dania Assist



Adobe Pro



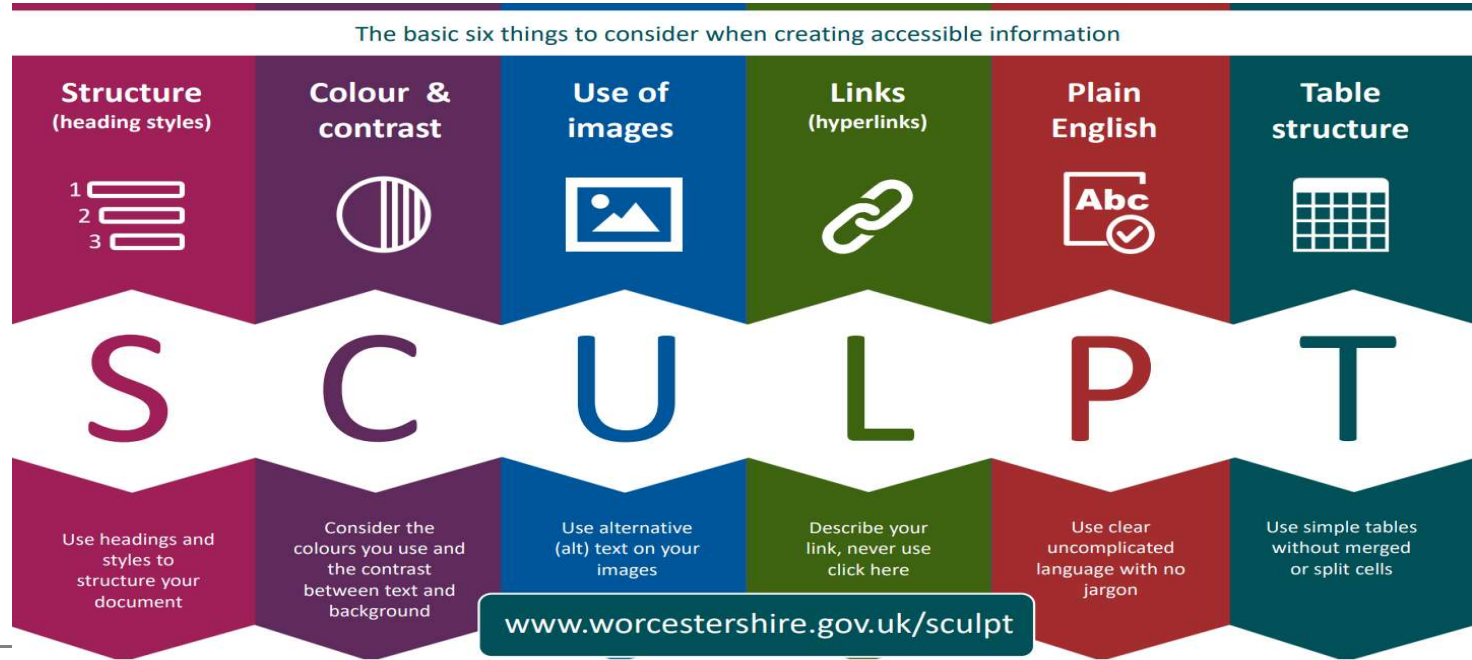
Silktide

What is it?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plugin for Microsoft Office • Accessible document creation – scans documents and recommends fixes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For use when Assist cannot help • Can manually tag PDFs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automated web accessibility testing platform • Identifies and assists in fixing accessibility issues for content and PDFs

Who uses it?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services • Web Team • Documents must pass checks before upload to website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web Team, particularly when receive inaccessible documents from 3rd parties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web Team • Future plan to roll out to microsites

Training

- The Web Team are creating a training package for Southwark colleagues, based on the SCULPT framework
- Provides guidance to support anyone to develop basic skills for digital inclusion
- Relevant to anyone who is publishing content on the website.
- Employees will be required to complete a knowledge test before having access to our systems to create content.
- This will complement the expert understanding of accessibility in the Web Services team



Website Redesign

Auditing and improving content on the main Southwark website

- Accessibility is a core requirement
- No inaccessible content will be published
- Removing documents where possible & addressing historic documents as part of this
- Inclusive user engagement and testing – including a diverse range of residents

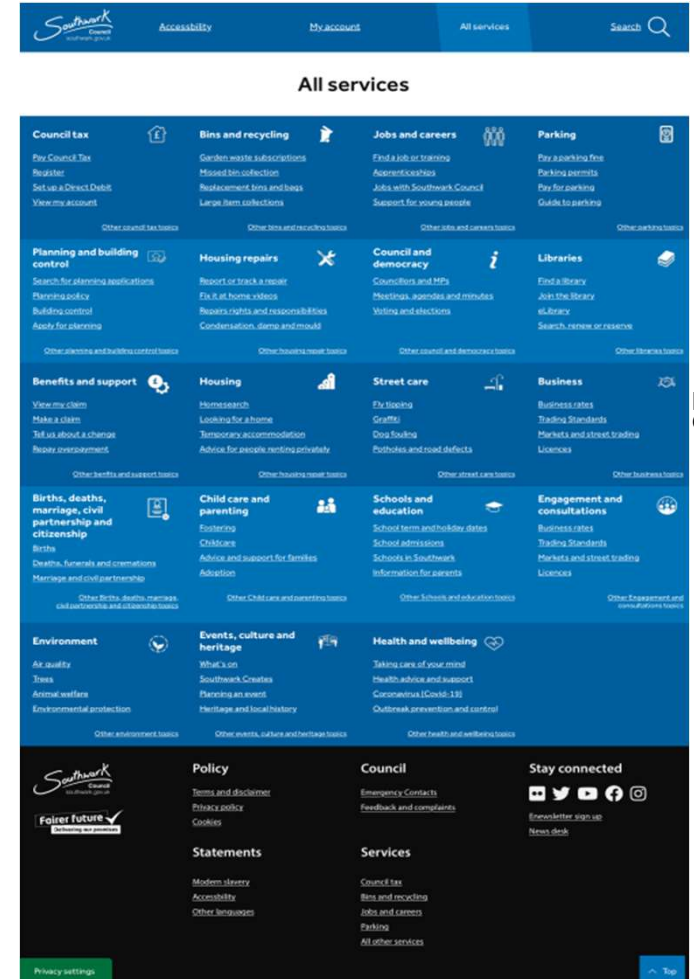
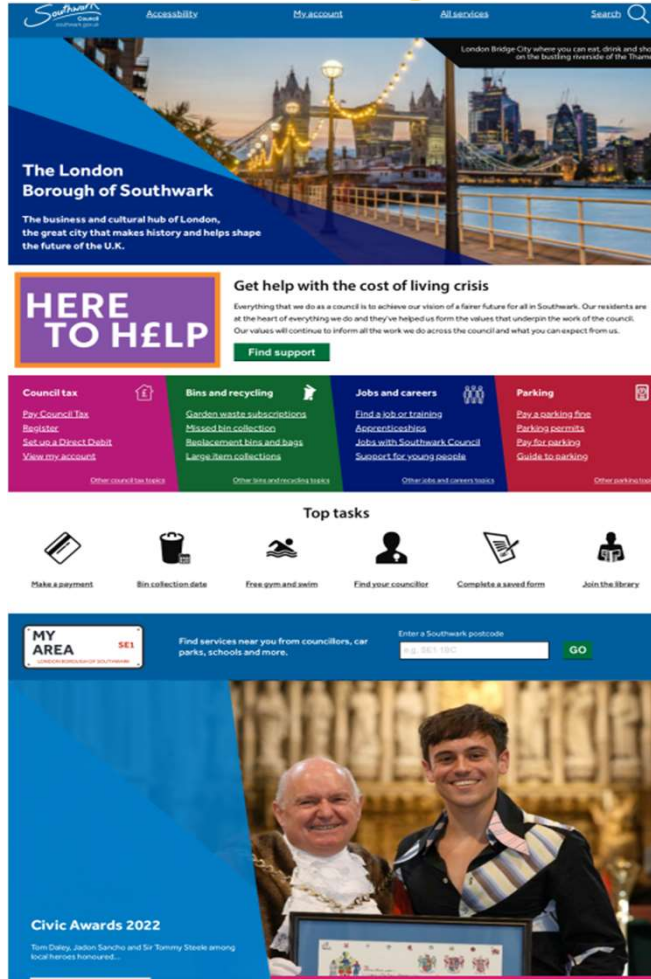
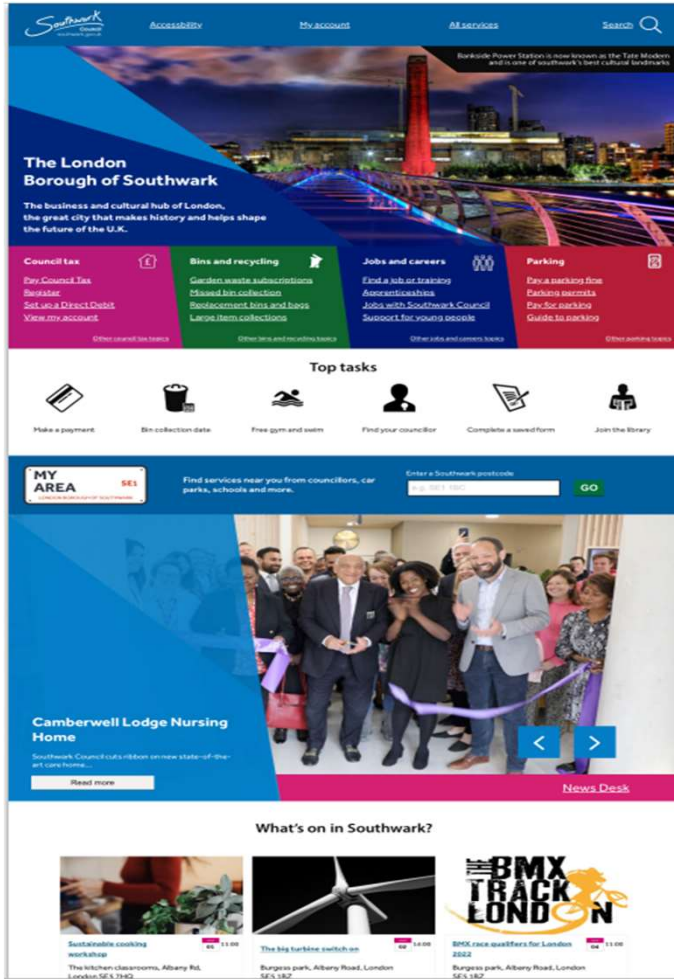
Reviewing functionality

- New functionality will be focused on ensuring an accessible experience for users

Updating the look and feel of the website

- New designs created with accessibility at the forefront
- Resident testing has been carried out on the new designs
- Engaging with NCompass disability network for feedback

New website design



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Briefing paper for Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 5 December 2022

Item: Support being provided to Southwark LGBTQ+ communities

1. Bankside Yards LGBTQ+ Community Centre

As part of the emerging development at Bankside Yards, developer Native Land (NL) is delivering a new space for a LGBTQ+ Community Centre. The Bankside Yards mixed-use development, adjacent to Blackfriars rail Bridge, comprises 8 new buildings across a range of heights of up to 50 storeys, the restoration of 14 rail arches and a public space, including a section of the Low Line. Planning S106 provisions include circa £70M off-site affordable housing contribution as well as space – two of the rail arches, comprising 5000sq ft - for a new LGBTQ+ Community Centre. (See illustrations overleaf).

The LGBTQ+ Community Centre is intended to provide a safe place to meet and socialise, promoting both cultural and wellbeing initiatives for the LGBTQ+ community. It is anticipated the space may include one or more of the following: exhibitions and performance spaces, events, workshops, retail, food and beverage. The space will be delivered to Shell & Core and let on a 25-year lease to a suitable operator. Completion date of the construction works is Q3 2023; allowing a period of time for the fit-out, it is expected that the centre would open early/ mid-2024.

The procurement of a suitable operator is a priority for the council and the process is being monitored through the council's Performance Plan. Sustainable Growth officers are working closely with NL (and its consultant Kanda Consult) and the first stage of the process (Q3 2022) is in train: a draft ITT is in place and evaluation panel members confirmed, comprising representatives from the Southwark LGBTQ Network, GLA, Southwark Council and NL.

The ITT is open to suitable LGBTQ+ organisations who can demonstrate strategic vision, resources and experience to deliver a positive, relevant and dynamic community offer at this locality. The panel will assess proposals on a range of criteria, including the benefit for the LGBTQ+ community, wider social value and a

sustainable business plan; the price evaluation will include rent offsets for the cost of the fit-out works which are expected to be circa £1M. The evaluation will be weighted 60% quality: 40% price and the assessment will be through a written proposal and interview. The selection process is programmed to conclude in mid-2023.



Fig. 1: Bankside Yards: illustration of the emerging development



Fig. 2: Bankside Yards: the arches as currently



Fig 3: Bankside Yards: the renovated arches

2. LGBTQ+ Centre at 60-62 Hopton Street

Property Services has undertaken a letting of 60-62 Hopton Street SE1 to the London LGBTQ+ Centre. Initially the Centre occupied these vacant shops on a “pop-up” basis, starting in November 2021. It was subsequently agreed to secure the Centre’s longer term future in this now well-established location by granting a five year lease.

The premises has provided a successful and well regarded base for the Centre, and a platform for partnering directly with other LGBTQ+ charities, community groups and institutions local to Southwark, including near neighbours Tate Modern and Living Bankside. The Centre reports that it welcomes more than 1,500 visitors every month and runs a large programme of events “ranging from regular programming which includes free yoga, meditation, book club, film club and sexual health screenings, to special events including an LGBTQ+ climate summit, a Queer Women’s Day and community pride meetups. These events have been attended by more than 4,000 visitors”.

Negotiation on the 5-year lease is almost concluded and it is expected to be completed this month. Officers continue to be receptive to discussions with the London LGBTQ+ Centre about their future in Hopton Street, as the development of the new Bankside Yards LGBTQ+ cultural centre takes shape.



Fig 4. Hopton Street: LGBTQ+ Centre



Fig 5. Hopton Street: the interior