

## Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 21 January 2025

7.00 pm

Ground Floor Meeting Room G02A - 160 Tooley Street, London  
SE1 2QH

## Supplemental Agenda No.2

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5.	<b>SCRUTINY IMPROVEMENT REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION - UPDATE</b> To receive a progress update on implementation of the actions arising from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) scrutiny improvement review.	1 - 15

### Contact

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Date: 21 January 2025

<b>Meeting Name:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
<b>Date:</b>	21 January 2025
<b>Report title:</b>	Scrutiny Improvement Review Implementation - Update
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>	N/a
<b>Classification:</b>	Open
<b>From:</b>	Head of Scrutiny

### RECOMMENDATION

1. That the overview and scrutiny committee note the current position in respect implementation of the CfGS scrutiny improvement review recommendations set out in the report.
2. That the overview and scrutiny committee note the proposed cabinet scrutiny protocol and scrutiny recommendations action tracker (Appendix 1 and 2 respectively).

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. The overview and scrutiny committee agreed the CfGS Scrutiny Improvement Review recommendations at its meeting in October 2023.

### KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

4. The action plan has been revised following an audit of the action plan by BDO Auditors who recommended that the action plan log be transferred to excel and rearranged to enable better manipulation of data quality and analysis. Due to formatting issues the revised action log is not ready to be published.
5. The auditors also recommended that the actions log be reviewed to determine whether all actions are practical and bring about the benefits that address the CfGS recommendations. They have recommended that where actions do not provide benefit or are not achievable, alternatives should be considered and agreed with OSC. A review of these actions will be undertaken by the Head of Scrutiny in consultation with the Chair of overview and scrutiny committee and reported to the next meeting.
6. The auditors also recommended that the action log be presented to OSC on a quarterly basis. The actions log will be presented to the February meeting, and then in June/July 2025.

## Progress on main recommendations / enhancements

**Recommendation 1:** Strengthen collaborative relationships between scrutiny, Cabinet and Directors whilst maintaining the independence of scrutiny. Earlier and more systematic involvement of portfolio holders and Directors would enable scrutiny to identify issues, trends, and topics where it can focus for accountability and impact.

### Cabinet Scrutiny Protocol

7. A cabinet scrutiny protocol has been developed (draft attached as appendix 1). The purpose of the protocol is to enable Cabinet members (and senior officers) and the Scrutiny function to have a clear understanding of the expectations and behaviours of members, officers, organisations, and individuals engaging in the various aspects of the scrutiny process and to foster good working relations.
8. The protocol sets how cabinet and scrutiny will work together, the development of the overview and scrutiny committee / commission work programmes, with a focus on key council priorities. Expectations of cabinet members / senior officers in keeping scrutiny informed of significant issues, and how they will participate in the scrutiny process, and in turn scrutiny keeping cabinet members and senior officers informed of scrutiny activity and findings, and how it will go about scrutiny, including reasonable notice for requests for information/attendance at meetings, a commitment to evidence based SMART recommendations.
9. There will be processes that will sit underneath the protocol to support agreed arrangements, exact detail to be established. The protocol has been reviewed by CMT and is now at the stage for consultation with overview and scrutiny committee and the cabinet office.
10. The aim is to have the protocol in place by March 2025 so that actions arising from the protocol can be progressed ahead of the forthcoming municipal year and can inform work programming for 2025/26. A key driver to this is to enable earlier engagement on the proposed scrutiny work programmes with cabinet members and senior officers to identify council priorities, allow time for review of where scrutiny can add value, clear scoping of issues, consideration of education sessions, key lines of enquiry in preparation for the forthcoming year (with input from senior officers).
11. The final agreed protocol will address a number of the scrutiny improvement review recommendations/actions.

**Recommendation 2:** Enable the scrutiny team to take a more strategic role in managing the relationships between different parts of the Council. This offers further opportunities to raise the profile and impact of scrutiny.

12. This recommendation is still to be explored.

**Enhancement:** Developing a working agreement between Members and Officers to strengthen collaborative relationships, clarify mutual expectations

and manage potential areas of conflict.

13. The cabinet scrutiny protocol addresses this recommended enhancement.

**Enhancement:** Using benchmarking and share good practice case studies to promote examples of 'what good scrutiny looks like' to inform reviews and design challenge questions.

14. This recommended enhancement is still to be actioned.

**Recommendation 3:** Provide development support and training for Officers across the Council to refresh and enhance their understanding and appreciation of scrutiny.

15. This recommendation will be actioned following agreement of the cabinet scrutiny protocol.

**Recommendation 4:** Review how reports and information is supplied to scrutiny - so that it supports the scrutiny objective, is not excessively detailed and is understandable by Members.

16. As indicated in paragraph 10 of the report, the intention is to hold earlier engagement on proposed scrutiny topics for review. This will allow time for greater scoping of issues and earlier identification of required information, in consultation with officers. It is envisaged that this process will inform what is required, and adequate notice for information to be prepared.

**Enhancement:** Establishing cross-party pre-meetings for Scrutiny Committees and Commissions as an additional way to support the process.

17. Pre-meetings have been introduced or offered as part of the scrutiny meeting preparation process.

**Recommendation 5:** Developing a systematic approach to mapping opportunities for community engagement and collaborative approaches including a methodology for identifying local issues for residents.

18. This recommendation is yet to be fully explored. The scrutiny team are currently discussing with community engagement team, ways in which they may be able to support the scrutiny function with engaging with the community, including utilising the [engage.southwark.gov.uk](https://engage.southwark.gov.uk) website. The intention is to have a dedicated scrutiny page on the site which will inform on the work of scrutiny, how community representatives may get involved in particular scrutiny reviews, and a suggestion section for the public to indicate suggested matters for scrutiny.

19. The aim is to have this page up and running by the beginning of March so that suggestions can be factored into the considerations for the scrutiny work programmes for the forthcoming municipal year. Suggested topics will need to be reviewed and prioritised as part of the scrutiny work programme prioritisation process with the support of officers in the relevant departments.

**Enhancement:** Extending the use of creative approaches to scrutiny in Southwark. Use work planning and scoping to consider the best methods for each review. Share examples of good practice and creative methods by creating a menu of different methods available to the Scrutiny Committee and Commissions.

20. The council's current scrutiny work planning and scoping tool is in the process of being reviewed. The updated version will be used as a matter of course for all scrutiny reviews for the 2025/26 year.

**Enhancement:** Supporting the co-opted Members through a refreshed support programme identifying their learning and development needs to get the most from their contributions.

21. This recommended enhancement is still to be explored.

**Recommendation 6:** Review and enhance work planning process for the Committee and the Commissions, building on current practice by using insights from this review. Consider the systematic use of work planning tools to assist with prioritising issues.

22. The prioritisation process set out in the cabinet scrutiny protocol, and the review of the council's scoping template will address this recommendation.

**Recommendation 7:** Use member education sessions, masterclasses, and pre-briefing to support Members to be ready to engage with scrutiny topics and Council plans.

23. As indicated previously, earlier engagement around proposed scrutiny topics will allow for identification of issues which will inform required education sessions and accordingly scheduled into the scrutiny pre-meetings as appropriate.

**Enhancement:** Continue to develop an approach to pre-decision scrutiny in collaboration with Cabinet and Officers.

24. The issue of pre-decision scrutiny is identified as a requirement in the cabinet scrutiny protocol. The circumstances that will trigger pre-decision scrutiny (outside of a direct request) is still being worked through.

**Enhancement:** Supporting Members to design effective challenge questions using triangulated evidence and data to enhance accountability.

25. Previously, through the London Scrutiny Network introductory training on key questioning skills facilitated by the CfGS was offered to members across London in February 2024. Consideration is being given as to whether a bespoke training session for Southwark Councillors should be sought ahead of the general new/returning member induction session due to be undertaken in June 2026.

**Recommendation 8:** Consider the use of task and finish group work and other alternative scrutiny arrangements to ensure the most effective use of

time and resources and to deliver maximum impact.

26. This is open for OSC and the commissions to consider as appropriate. Earlier preparation and planning for 2025/26 may see greater take up of alternative scrutiny arrangements.

**Recommendation 9:** Review the call-in procedure based on benchmarking and examples of good practice.

27. The call-in arrangements were reviewed, and revised call-in arrangements introduced from 1 April 2024 following agreement of council assembly.

**Recommendation 10: Focus on smaller sets of high-quality recommendations from scrutiny reviews.**

28. This recommendation is addressed in the cabinet scrutiny protocol.

**Enhancement:** Enhance the formal system for tracking recommendations over time - identify the impact and learning from specific recommendations as well as factors that produce effective recommendations.

29. A scrutiny recommendations action tracker has been created for this purpose. The document is currently being populated with information for OSC and each of the commissions, covering period from 2023/24 municipal year. Extract of document attached as Appendix 2.

**Enhancement:** Consider cross-cutting issues as a regular part of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee work plan and agenda, bringing together strategic themes from across the four Commissions to identify opportunities for system wide working and accountability.

30. It is anticipated that there will be a greater focus on cross-cutting issues arising from the revised work programme planning process for 2025/26.

**Enhancement:** Create a strategic summary statement on the purpose and contribution of scrutiny in Southwark. Use this to map impact.

31. The creation of a strategic summary statement is still to be explored.

**Enhancement:** Use a self-assessment tool to support the annual review and evaluation of scrutiny.

32. The scrutiny recommendations action tracker will assist in assessing impact of scrutiny. The implementation of recommendations in preparation for the 2025/26 year will provide a greater reflection of scrutiny's success operating revised arrangements. The annual review for municipal year ending 2025/26 will provide a clearer picture of the impact of scrutiny.

**Recommendation 11:** Further skills development support is offered for the key roles of Chairs and Vice-Chairs - to support them to develop their approach to leading scrutiny and to reflect on their personal style and learning.

33. Group Chairs training has been offered to chairs and vice-chairs and individual training offered to new chairs.

**Enhancement:** Extending the development process for Members to enable them to refresh their knowledge and understanding of the role of scrutiny - this should include learning activities such as workshops supported with materials and case studies.

34. Scrutiny training is offered to members by CfGS through the London Scrutiny Network. Southwark specific training is usually offered at the beginning of a new term of office as part of the Member induction programme.

**Enhancement:** Use pre-meetings to prepare for scrutiny sessions by reviewing the key lines of enquiry and coordinating approaches to questions and evidence. Pre-meetings can facilitate teamwork between Members of the Committee or Commission.

35. Pre-meetings have been introduced. The effectiveness and operation is under review with a view to seeing how arrangements for the pre-meeting can best support the aims of the pre-meetings.

**Enhancement:** Provide Scrutiny Members with the essential core knowledge to be sufficiently effective in the scrutiny task through briefings, education sessions or 'master classes' for complex topics.

36. The pre-meetings / informal meetings will be utilised for the purpose.

#### **Public engagement**

37. Work is underway to facilitate better engagement with the public/community – see paragraph 18 and 19 for initial steps.

### **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

<b>Background Papers</b>	<b>Held At</b>	<b>Contact</b>
CfGS Scrutiny Improvement Review Report and Action Plan	Title of department/unit Address	Name Phone number
<a href="#">Agenda for Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday 4 October 2023, 7.00 pm - Southwark Council</a> (See item 7)		

### **APPENDICES**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Title</b>
Appendix 1	Draft Cabinet Scrutiny Protocol
Appendix 2	Scrutiny Recommendations Action Tracker

**AUDIT TRAIL**

Lead Officer	Everton Roberts, Head of Scrutiny		
Report Author	Everton Roberts, Head of Scrutiny		
Version	Final		
Dated	21 January 2025		
Key Decision?	No		
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER			
Officer Title		Comments Sought	Comments Included
Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance		No	No
Strategic Director, Finance		No	No
Cabinet Member		No	No
Date final report sent to Scrutiny Team			21 January 2025



# Cabinet / Scrutiny Protocol

## Background

### Purpose of protocol

The purpose of this protocol is to enable the Cabinet (and senior officers) and the Scrutiny function to have a clear understanding of the expectations and behaviours of members, officers, organisations, and individuals engaging in the various aspects of the scrutiny process and foster good working relations.

For scrutiny to be effective, the process for scrutiny needs to be managed. This protocol sets out the principles to be followed when engaging with the scrutiny process.

### The scrutiny function

The provision of local authority scrutiny is established through the Local Government Act 2000 (Executive Arrangements) and ensures that members of a local authority who are not part of a council's executive can hold the executive [cabinet] to account.

It is generally recognised that the role of local authority scrutiny is to:

- provide constructive 'critical friend' challenge
- amplify the voices and concerns of the public
- be led by independent people who take responsibility for their role
- drive improvement in public services and strategic decision-making

Legislation provides scrutiny with various powers to undertake its function, including, scrutinising decisions the executive (cabinet) is planning to take, to call-in for scrutiny, executive decisions taken but not yet implemented, to compel members and officers and organisations to attend scrutiny meetings to answer questions on performance and decisions taken. The remit of scrutiny is wide ranging and covers matters that affect the authority's area or the inhabitants of the area. The scrutiny members also have powers to access information beyond the general rights of access to information afforded to local authority councillors.

# General principles, values, and behaviours

## Working together

It is acknowledged that there are different rights and roles for the cabinet and the overview and scrutiny committee (and its commissions), but that both are committed to securing the best outcomes for people living and working in Southwark.

It is expected that there will be:

- frequent and honest dialogue between cabinet members and scrutiny members
- regular discussions around the cabinet, and scrutiny work programmes
- opportunities for scrutiny to be involved in pre-decision scrutiny, policy development and review
- effective formal and informal reporting structures
- open and transparent scrutiny, but on occasion may require operating outside of the formal committee meeting process if this facilitates addressing sensitive matters or enables a more thorough analysis or a frank exchange of views
- Respect for the confidential nature of any exempt / confidential discussions that may take place

## Developing the overview and scrutiny committee / commission annual work programmes

In developing the overview and scrutiny committee/commission annual work programmes, it is expected that scrutiny will focus on issues of concern to the community and / or matters that are linked to the Council's corporate objectives. The following selection criteria will be applied when prioritising the content of the scrutiny work programmes:

- matters linked to the Council's corporate objectives (Council Delivery Plan / Southwark 2030 Strategy)
- is a matter of current concern
- is not being reviewed elsewhere
- is a matter capable of being influenced by the committee
- is of manageable scope, and of sufficient size/importance to warrant a scrutiny review

- can be scrutinised within available resources

In developing the work programmes, the overview and scrutiny committee and its commissions (through the committee chairs) will seek input from the cabinet / senior leadership on potential issues to be included in the work programme. The committee will also seek input from the opposition group, and scrutiny committee members in general.

Once scrutiny topics have been identified by the overview and scrutiny committee and or its commissions, cabinet members / senior leadership (including directors) will be informed. The committee will consult with cabinet members / senior leadership and seek input on the appropriateness of the topics for scrutiny, and support with undertaking the reviews.

The final content of the scrutiny work programmes is decided by the overview and scrutiny committee, and its commissions. Additional items may be added to the work programmes throughout the year.

Cabinet members / senior leadership will be kept informed of scrutiny activity as reviews are undertaken, including information on groups being invited to submit evidence. Cabinet members / senior leadership should not attempt to influence that process but can assist in identifying and suggesting individuals / groups.

## **Expectation of cabinet members / senior officers**

Cabinet members should ensure its priorities are communicated to scrutiny to inform work planning, so that scrutiny is adding value by focussing on key council priorities.

Cabinet members should keep scrutiny chairs, vice-chairs and support officers informed of the outline of major decisions as they are being developed, to allow for discussion of scrutiny's potential involvement in policy development.

The overview and scrutiny committee and its commissions may require officers and members to attend and provide information required to answer questions. It is the duty of any officer or member to attend and answer questions (other than those which he or she would be entitled to refuse to answer in a court of law) if the overview and scrutiny committee and its commissions so request. In attending a scrutiny meeting (or providing information), cabinet members and senior officers are expected to prepare for the meeting as appropriate and provide information in a timely manner.

Officers should provide all relevant information in their possession, and they should use their best efforts to make sure that they possess all relevant information.

## Expectation of the scrutiny function

Scrutiny members should work together with the cabinet in a non-partisan environment and adopt a non-adversarial but challenging approach to identify improvements.

In inviting cabinet members / senior officers to attend scrutiny to give evidence or to provide information, scrutiny will make clear the reason for a request and be specific about the information being requested. A minimum of five clear working days' notice will be provided, but the aim will be to give at least one month's notice depending on the circumstances.

Scrutiny members should adopt an inquisitorial (information seeking) approach to questioning rather than a confrontational one. They may be firm and assertive, but adopting a facilitative and exploratory way of working to generate an atmosphere in which members and officers can explore issues openly and honestly. Under no circumstance should members adopt a rude or aggressive style.

Scrutiny chairs should share key findings, drafts of scrutiny reports and recommendations with cabinet members and officers ahead of publication to ensure accuracy and no surprises.

## Access to information

Overview and scrutiny committee (and its commissions) will be entitled to copies of any document which is in the possession or control of the cabinet or its committees and which contains material relating to any business transacted at a meeting of the cabinet or its committees.

Rules in relation to access to information (and limits on rights) are contained in Part 4 of the council constitution – 'access to information procedure rules' (section 24).

Information may be shared informally with scrutiny committee members on a confidential basis (e.g. proposals not possible to be shared publicly). This may be to determine whether and how a matter should be scrutinised or as part of scrutiny of policy development.

Scrutiny members should respect the confidential nature of information received and the discussions that may take place from time to time.

## Information relating to performance

Within their terms of reference, all scrutiny committees/commissions will review and scrutinise the performance of the council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas, and question members of the cabinet and officers about their decisions and performance.

Cabinet members / senior officers will provide scrutiny with appropriate timely information that enables scrutiny to undertake this function satisfactorily.

Scrutiny may use performance data to identify issues for further scrutiny.

## Pre-decision scrutiny and involvement in policy development

Within their terms of reference, all scrutiny committees/commissions will assist council assembly and the cabinet in the development of its budget and policy framework by in-depth analysis of policy issues.

Individual cabinet members and scrutiny committee chairs should meet bi-annually to identify and plan for pre-decision scrutiny and policy development work for which all members can participate, noting the two common approaches to pre-decision scrutiny:

- Immediately before the decision - scrutiny undertaken two or three weeks before the decision is made at Cabinet.
- Some time before the decision - This type of scrutiny intersects with policy development and may be more in-depth. Its use to be reserved to major decisions and significant strategic matters.

Views of the relevant cabinet member and senior officer should be sought at the start of a review to define the process to be followed.

## Recommendations from scrutiny

Once it has formed recommendations on proposals for development, the overview and scrutiny committee or a commission will prepare a formal report for consideration by the cabinet.

Recommendations from scrutiny will be clear, evidenced based and SMART [(s)pecific, (m)easurable, (a)chievable, (r)ealistic and (t)imebound)].

The chair of the relevant scrutiny committee/commission will be given the opportunity to present the scrutiny recommendations to cabinet.

The cabinet shall consider and provide a written response to a scrutiny committee's/commission report within two months.

In responding to recommendations, the cabinet will make clear any recommendations it does not intend to accept and provide reasons why.

Scrutiny will monitor the implementation of agreed recommendations and use this information to assess impact of the scrutiny function.

## Scrutiny pre-meetings

The overview and scrutiny committee and its commissions may arrange cross-party scrutiny pre-meetings (to be held virtually) to coordinate activities and prepare for scrutiny meetings. This may involve, but not limited to, discussion on scoping and key lines of enquiry for particular topics, approaches to questions and evidence, briefings, and education sessions.

Cabinet members / and senior officers may be invited to the pre-meetings as appropriate to inform discussion and will be expected to attend when requested.

## Scrutiny call-in

Any five Councillors can request the call-in of an executive decision which has been made but not yet implemented. Decisions that have been called-in are considered by the council's overview and scrutiny committee, which can recommend that a decision maker reconsider its decision. The call-in process provides an opportunity to explore matters of concern raised around a particular decision.

A separate information resource exists on the call-in process – [see here](#).

## Compliance with this protocol

The council's statutory scrutiny officer will monitor compliance with the protocol in consultation with the monitoring officer, cabinet, overview and scrutiny members, and the senior leadership. Any matters arising will be reported through the overview and scrutiny committee annual report to council assembly.

## Scrutiny Recommendations Action Tracker

Scrutiny Reports submitted to Cabinet			Cabinet Response Report received		Recommendation status				
Scrutiny Commission	Report Title and Link	Date Report Submitted to Cabinet	Date of Cabinet Response	Response Report Title and Link	Accepted	Partially Accepted	Not Accepted	To be clarified	Total
Education and Local Economy	Scrutiny Review of the cost of living crisis on businesses	13/06/2023	12/09/2023	Response to Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Review: Impact of Cost of Living Crisis on	4	1	2	0	7
Education and Local Economy	Review of mitigating falling pupil numbers in schools	13/06/2023	12/09/2023	Response to Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Review: Mitigating Falling Pupil Numbers	5	3	0	0	8
Health and Social Care	Access to Medical Appointments	13/06/2023	12/09/2023	Response to Health and Social Care Scrutiny					
Health and Social Care	Care Contributions	13/06/2023	12/09/2023	Response to Health and Social Care Scrutiny					
Housing and Community Safety	Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), Hate Crime and Domestic Abuse	13/06/2023	12/09/2023	Response to Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Review: Violence Against Women and	2	0	0	1	3
Housing and Community Safety	Housing Repairs Service, Council Leaseholders and Empty Homes	13/06/2023	12/09/2023	Response to Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Review: Housing Repairs Service, Council	3	0	0	5	8
Environment and Community	Resident Participation Framework	13/06/2023	12/09/2023	Response to Environment and Community	2	0	0	10	12
Environment and Community	Financing Southwark's Green Transition	13/06/2023	12/09/2023	Response to Environment and Community					
Overview and Scrutiny	Recommendations to Cabinet on Policy and Resources Strategy	06/02/2024	06/02/2024	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) – 24 January 2024 - Recommendations to Cabinet on	4	3	0	0	7
Housing, Community Safety & Community Engagement	Review of Housing Allocations, Homelessness, and Heating & Hot Water Outages, Fire Safety and Policing in Southwark	22/07/2024	03/12/2024	Response to the report of the H,CS&CE Scrutiny Commission - review of heating and hot water outages	4	0	2	0	6
			03/12/2024	Response to the report of the H,CS&CE Scrutiny Commission - Homelessness and Review of Housing Allocations	3	2	0	0	5
Environment	Sustainable Freight	22/07/2024	03/12/2024	Sustainable Freight Environment Scrutiny Response	6	4	1	0	11
Education and Local Economy	Review of School Amalgamations and Closures	22/07/2024	15/10/2024	Response to the Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission - School amalgamations and	5	2	1	0	8
Education and Local Economy	Community Wealth Building and Youth Employment	22/07/2024	15/10/2024	Response to Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission: Community Wealth Building	5	1	0	0	6
Health and Social Care	Access to Toilets Scrutiny Review Report	22/07/2024	15/10/2024	Response to Health and Social Care Scrutiny Commission: Access to Toilets	7	4	0	0	11
Environment	Biodiversity Scrutiny Review Report	03/12/2024							
					50	20	6	16	92

## Scrutiny Recommendations Action Tracker - Education &amp; Local Economy Scrutiny Commission

Scrutiny Recommendations			Cabinet Responses			Action Tracking					Evidence
Report Title	Date report submitted to Cabinet	Recommendation	Date of response to Recommendation	Response to Recommendation	Cabinet Response	Lead Officer	Target date for implementation	Progress last checked	Progress recorded	Action status...	Evidence supporting "Implemented" status
Scrutiny Review of the cost of living crisis on businesses	13/06/2023	Recommendation 1 - That the cabinet ask officers to review the access and support for small businesses through the council website whilst also ensuring that the support is widely publicised in the business community; and also that the cabinet look at organising, promoting and setting up workshops and networking events to help small businesses.	12/09/2023	Accepted	Response to recommendation 1 - In line with the Council Delivery Plan (CDP) commitment to "Back Southwark residents to start more businesses, co-operatives and social enterprises," the council launched the Southwark Pioneers Fund (SPF) in September 2022. The SPF offers business advice, guidance and financial assistance to anyone with a business idea, through to founders with an established micro enterprise, to reach their full potential. Support includes workshops and networking events to help businesses to develop and connect with each other. 6. Officers regularly review our business support offer on the council website, and we also send a monthly e-newsletter to over 12,000 businesses and community groups, providing a wealth of up-to-date information on business support programmes available both locally and pan-London. All support programmes are communicated to the Federation of Small Businesses and Southwark Chamber of Commerce so that their members can access appropriate opportunities. 7. As part of our Town Centres and High Streets programme, the council is organising a series of local business engagement events to find out what local businesses want and need to survive and thrive. These events are also an opportunity to showcase the wider business support on offer to SMEs generally. 8. Southwark has five Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and numerous 3 local networks that work together to support their local area. The council is working hard to encourage and support local networks in town centres and help businesses to work collaboratively to boost local activity. By way of example, we are currently supporting the Elephant & Castle business forum to explore a Business Improvement District (BID) which includes Walworth, and we are working alongside Tree Shepherd to launch a new Peckham business forum in autumn 2023.	Danny Edwards				In progress	
Scrutiny Review of the cost of living crisis on businesses	13/06/2023	Recommendation 2 - That the cabinet review the council's role in the hospitality sector and act as liaison to help bridge the hospitality skills by connecting young people and the community to academies run by the sector; and also extend support in hiring apprenticeships.	12/09/2023	Accepted	Response to recommendation 2 – As a central-London borough, Southwark is home to a diverse and thriving hospitality sector, catering to a wide range of tastes and enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. Despite continued strong employment growth in the sector, large recruitment and skills gaps still exist. The sector also has a poor reputation, with many citing low pay, long hours and a lack of opportunities for progression as reasons not to pursue a career in hospitality. Despite this negative perception, many good jobs and careers exist within the sector, but awareness of these and of the pathways into them is lacking. These issues of reputation and awareness sit alongside an issue of provision, with the local skills offer currently unable to meet the sector's demand for skilled labour. 11. The need for intervention within the hospitality sector is something that has been identified as a priority by the Southwark Skills Partnership and is recognised within the Southwark Skills Strategy delivery plan. Our objectives are to: raise the profile of the hospitality sector locally; increase awareness of the employment and training opportunities available locally and of the pathways to them; improve and increase capacity for hospitality skills provision locally to provide new pathways to hospitality jobs locally. 12. To do this, we are looking to establish a Hospitality Skills Centre in Southwark (a CDP milestone), designed and delivered in partnership with sector specialists, to improve and increase capacity for good quality hospitality skills provision within the borough. A potential site has been identified and we are currently in the process of assessing the viability of the skills centre at this venue. 13. In the interim, we will continue to work alongside Lewisham Council to support the Mayor's Academies Hospitality Hub at Lewisham College with the design and delivery of its activities, working with employers to formalise the regional skills response, provide work-based training and employment opportunities, and inspire residents to work in the hospitality sector.	Danny Edwards				In progress	
Scrutiny Review of the cost of living crisis on businesses	13/06/2023	Recommendation 3 - That the cabinet review the cabinet member for jobs, business & town centres portfolio for the coming municipal year to provide clear remits as it currently does not include business rates; this is to avoid businesses reaching a crisis point due to being unable to afford increase in 4 business rates.	12/09/2023	Not Accepted	Response to recommendation 3: The council is not responsible for setting business rates, which is done centrally via the Valuation Office Agency (VOA). In lieu of any potential changes to portfolio remits, the respective portfolio holders (and local economy and business rates teams in particular) will continue to work together to provide wider support to local businesses, signposting to relevant programmes or business rate relief schemes to help them with economic challenges including business rate rises.	Danny Edwards					
Scrutiny Review of the cost of living crisis on businesses	13/06/2023	Recommendation 4 - That the cabinet look to review and invest more in the council's governance and on-site management structure for support to Local Businesses especially Street Markets; this could be achieved by appointing business liaison officers to help organise night markets, historical and cultural festivals; and a local trader to be involved in managing the site, as a co-operative manager working with the on-site council management; and also that the council carry out quarterly reviews on the progress of the above mentioned initiatives.	12/09/2023	Partially Accepted	Response to recommendation 4 - We are committed to delivering the CDP target of encouraging the expansion of street markets across Southwark. To achieve this the Council's in house markets and street trading service is already supporting market traders whether it be the work being undertaken in collaboration with Big Local Works/Bermondsey BID in relation to the Blue market or working with Southwark Association for Street Trading (SAST) to develop East St. market. We have been supporting the Blue market to enable them to deliver a variety of events and are supporting East St. Community/SAST in developing a thriving high streets fund bid focused on governance, branding and promotion through continued engagement and events. The service has also supported the introduction of a market at Maddock Way through working with the tenant resident's association. The service also supports community event organisers through the licensing of market stalls, for example the Queer Arts Fair held in Peckham last summer which was a great success and the more recent Akwasidae Festival on Camberwell Green which was well attended this summer	Danny Edwards			On-site management involving a local trader not responded	In progress	
Scrutiny Review of the cost of living crisis on businesses	13/06/2023	Recommendation 5 - That the cabinet look at utilising the benefits of central areas of successful businesses like Blue Bermondsey and Elephant by providing Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) money for Local Street Markets in the year 2023-2024.	12/09/2023	Accepted	Response to recommendation 5 - The strategy for future rounds of CIL allocations is currently under discussion and a delivery programme has not yet been determined. Any future CIL strategy will consider the allocation criteria, community engagement, process for developing projects and decision-making processes. Officers will be bringing forward a report to cabinet towards the end of 2023 that will make proposals on aligning the approach to the CDP commitment on thriving neighbourhoods. Any 5 application for CIL for Local Street Markets will need to follow the process and timeframes approved through the future cabinet report.	Danny Edwards			Accepted pending further Cabinet discussions	In progress	



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## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MUNICIPAL YEAR 24/25

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