

Council Assembly

Wednesday 19 March 2025

7.00 pm

Council Offices, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

Tabled Items

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Date: 19 March 2025

SOUTHWARK COUNCIL**COUNCIL ASSEMBLY****(ORDINARY MEETING)****WEDNESDAY 19 MARCH 2025****PROGRAMME MOTION**

The order of business and timings for the evening will be as follows:

Time	Business
19:00 – 19:05	1. Preliminary business and announcements
19:05 – 19:10	2.2 Public questions One public question
19:10 – 20:10 (20 minutes – 4 minutes' speech)	Themed debate 3.1 Community Evidence - TailTies - Trevor Austin - Leona Ross - Latin Elephant
(7 minutes)	3.2 Motion on the Theme
(5 minutes)	1. Portia Mwangangye, leisure, parks and young people
(25 minutes)	2. Councillor Rachel Bentley, opposition spokesperson
(3 minutes)	3. Themed debate open to all other councillors
	4. Cabinet member's right of reply to the debate
20:10 – 20:15	Recess
20:15 – 20:25	4. Deputations SHAPE (Southwark Housing and Planning Emergency)
20:25 – 21:00 (5 minutes)	5.1 Members' Question Time
(15 minutes)	- Late question - Members' questions to the leader - Members' questions to the cabinet
21:00 – 22:00	5.2 Motions
	Motion 1 – Scrap the Two Child Cap
	Motion 2 – Extension of the Franchise
	Motion 3 – A Fair Deal for Southwark's Carers
	Motion 4 – A National Care Service for England
22:00*	6. Reports
	6.1 Constitutional changes: Neighbourhoods programme
	6.2 Pay Policy Statement 2025-26
	6.3 Member Allowances Scheme 2025-2026 and adjustment of member allowances in line with the national local government officer pay settlement
	6.4 Special Urgency and Urgent Implementation Decisions – Annual Report 2025
	6.5 The Gambling Act 2005 – renewal of the Statement of Gambling Licensing Policy 2025-2028
	6.6 Calendar of meetings 2025-26

* subject to the guillotine rule; maximum 15 minutes debate per item.

Note: Any time left remaining on any item will be rolled into the next items.

That the meeting be conducted as follows:

Item 3 - Themed debate

Community Evidence Submissions

To receive submissions from the groups listed in the themed section of the agenda:

- TailTies
- Trevor Austin
- Leona Ross
- Latin Elephant

(Four minutes to speak)

Format

A four minute presentation from the groups.

3.1 Motion on the theme

Themed debate

To run as listed in the timings above.

Item 5.2 General motions:

Each motion to have a single debate, subject to the guillotine.

Movers and seconders:

To update the movers and seconders of the following motions and amendments:

Motion 3 – A Fair Deal for Southwark’s Carers:

Moved: **Nick Johnson**

Seconded: Maria Linforth-Hall

Amendment D:

Moved: David Watson

Seconded: **Maria Linforth-Hall**

Amendment F:

Moved: **Jane Salmon**

Seconded: Graham Neale

Alteration of motions and amendments

Amendment C:

To amend Amendment C under CAPR 1.14.15:

To replace "Delete sections 3-5" with "Delete sections 3-7."

SOUTHWARK COUNCIL**COUNCIL ASSEMBLY****(ORDINARY MEETING)****WEDNESDAY 19 MARCH 2025****PUBLIC QUESTION WITH RESPONSE****1. QUESTION FROM CLIVE RATES TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CLIMATE EMERGENCY, JOBS AND BUSINESS**

The cabinet member must be aware of the significant and ongoing reduced footfall experienced by the businesses in Dulwich Village; why does the cabinet member think this has happened and what steps will be taken to support these shops, cafes and restaurants, which are hugely importantly to the local community?

RESPONSE

High streets in Southwark, across London and the country have faced significant challenges in recent years, with shopping trends moving online, the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis all posing major threats to small and independent businesses.

Ensuring our town centres thrive and serve the whole community is a key theme within Southwark 2030 and in our Economic Strategy, so we have acted. The Thriving High Street Fund is a programme that supports the revitalisation of Southwark's town centres and high streets. The fund provided grants to businesses, community groups and organisations to deliver projects to help high street businesses grow and thrive. Previously funded projects in Dulwich included comprehensive training, mentoring, and mental health support for women-led and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic-led businesses. We anticipate that further funding will be made available via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund so we can introduce a third Thriving High Street Fund round.

Alongside any available funding, we continue to listen to and respond to community feedback, supporting the development of and building capacity amongst local business networks.

SOUTHWARK COUNCIL

COUNCIL ASSEMBLY

(ORDINARY MEETING)

WEDNESDAY 19 MARCH 2025

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS WITH RESPONSES

1. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR EMILY HICKSON

Can the Leader update me on the second housing summit held as part of Southwark's Securing the Future of Council Housing campaign?

RESPONSE

On 6 March, Southwark, working with Sheffield City Council, hosted more than 200 council leaders, directors and housing experts at our second council housing summit. This year we were joined by Housing Minister Matthew Pennycook MP who gave the opening keynote, recognising the key role council housing will play in the government's goal to build 1.5 million homes in this Parliament. The Minister directly addressed the issues raised in our landmark report, '*Securing the Future of Council Housing*' and made very welcome announcements on measures to support councils to deliver more and better housing across the country. We have seen movement on reform of Right to Buy, longer term rent settlements, and support for councils to make it easier to start building homes. We will continue to build on our campaign's success growing and strengthening our coalition of more than 100 councils to ensure we can sustainably deliver new homes and maintain existing homes for our residents.

2. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR VICTOR CHAMBERLAIN

Can the council update us on its council house-building progress, in particular by detailing in this financial year to date how many council homes have been a: approved, b: started, c: completed?

RESPONSE

Southwark Council has the largest council house building programme in the country. Since 2014 we have built or started the construction of over 3,000 new council homes. We have completed nearly 600 council homes this year, with more than 1,000 homes on site, and work to procure our next 800 new council home starts is well under way. Most recently we have purchased 44 new social rent council homes at Styles House overlooking Southwark tube station.

Looking across the sector for 2024/25, Southwark has started building the second highest number of social rent homes in London. More than one in five of London's new social rent homes in this year were started in Southwark. Even better than that, in 2024/25 Southwark completed the highest number of social rent homes of any borough in the city, delivering 11% of London's social rent homes.

3. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR MARGY NEWENS

Can the Leader update me on recent discussions the council has had with Lime, Forest and other E-Bike providers?

RESPONSE

Southwark has seen 14 million dockless e-bike and e-scooter trips in the past two years, demonstrating how much local residents value this convenient and environmentally friendly method of travel. Whilst most people use their bikes responsibly, it is unacceptable to see how badly parked and abandoned e-bikes block pavements and roads, impacting older and disabled pedestrians.

Southwark Council is using all its existing powers to clamp down on poor practices by the operators. We have created mandatory parking bays for e-bikes in key areas, including identifying 100 additional locations of new bays. Operators have agreed that they are responsible for removing poorly parked e-bikes. If you see one parked in the wrong place, you can inform Lime by emailing london-ops@li.me and Forest by emailing cs@humanforest.co.uk or through their apps. If the operator fails to act, you can contact the Council through FixMyStreet or by emailing highways@southwark.gov.uk and we will take robust action.

However, with over 40,000 dockless e-bikes in London, it is simply not right that operators can flood the city's streets with bikes without needing to gain any sort of license. Cities with similar numbers of e-bikes around the world have introduced a regulation system, and London should not be left behind. I have personally taken on this issue in my capacity as Chair of the London Councils' Transport and Environment Committee. The previous government refused to listen to Londoners' concerns, but I am pleased to say that the current government are keen to act. I have raised this with the Local Government Minister and in my recent meeting with the Local Transport Minister on Monday 17 March 2025. As a result of our engagement, the Government have promised to give London robust powers to regulate e-bikes and e-scooters.

In the meantime, I wrote a joint letter with Transport for London (TfL) to Lime and Forest to demand a change on current practices by operators. Following this, I had several meetings with Lime and Forest, where I set out the actions they must take to address residents' concerns, including training users on parking, proactively removing bikes in places that are overcrowded with them and banning repeat offenders. They have committed to taking steps to resolve

these issues through action plans. I have provided feedback on them, and we will be holding them to account.

4. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR ADAM HOOD

One of the conditions of awarding the contract to operate St Paul's Sports ground was to regularly use the site, but it appears to residents that it is mostly left unused. What will the council do to hold the operator to its obligations?

RESPONSE

The council has a management agreement in place with the operator of St Paul's Sports Ground which, amongst other things, sets out how they will ensure the site is used as fully as possible. Officers have regular meetings with the operator to discuss programming and community impact. These meetings are also used to look into pitch programming, utilisation and plans to increase occupancy. As the contract approaches the end of the first year of operating, officers will be reviewing the social value that the contract award has secured. This will include reviewing data in respect to employment and skills training programmes, climate-focused activity and the success in delivering a diverse programme which caters for, and attracts, local people, those with disabilities, those from lower socio-economic groups and those from diverse ethnicity backgrounds. How the providers are addressing the gender gap, to ensure continuous improvement, will also be a key feature of our work. Southwark Council's Outdoor Recreation Manager, Jardine Finn, jardine.finn@southwark.gov.uk, is the council's contact, should residents have further questions.

5. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR MOHAMED DEEN

What is the council doing to keep residents safe on our streets and estates across the borough?

RESPONSE

Community safety is a top priority for the council, and for our residents. This is why a safer Southwark is one of the six goals of focus to deliver the Southwark 2030 vision. Southwark Council has invested £2 million into our Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Warden Taskforce to tackle the issue in town centres and estates which has meant we now have total of 26 officers. In addition, all Community Wardens now have new body-worn cameras. We have made our streets safer by upgrading street lighting across the borough and increasing the number of CCTV cameras in Southwark to 570. Alongside this, we have focused on recommissioning our violence against women and girls' services in line with the opening of a groundbreaking women safety centre and we have continued to rollout the women's nighttime safety charter and the network of safe havens. We will continue to build on this vital work in 2025 and beyond.

In February's Council Assembly, we approved a further £450,000 investment for new nighttime wardens, and an additional £100,000 to increase licensed businesses' commitment to the Women's Safety Charter. Our new Police Oversight Board (the first of its kind in London) will continue to hold the police to account locally on trust and confidence. We have also commissioned an independent review of Community Safety in Southwark to see how else we can tackle crime and anti-social behaviour in the borough. The findings of the review will be available in the summer.

6. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID WATSON

In March 2024, I asked when the Council expected neighbours, community groups and members of the public to be able to access the Finch's Grotto Park on Sawyer Street, in line with the planning permission granted in November 2018.

The Administration responded that they anticipated that the Finch's Grotto Park would be open to the public in the summer (2024) once parties had finalised the Service Level Agreement and the Community Management Plan.

One year on, the park is still not open and it is now 7 years since planning permission was granted. What is the latest estimate on when local people will be able to access this green open space?

RESPONSE

The Service Level Agreement and the Community Management Plan have now been agreed but a further insurance issue arose which further protracted the process. The issue now seems to have been resolved between all parties and it is anticipated that the park will be open to the public in time for the summer.

7. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR IN WINGFIELD

What plans does the council have to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the borough?

RESPONSE

To mark this tremendous milestone on 1 April 2025, the Council will unveil monthly historical footage and imagery of residents and staff from the archives. This will lead onto the launch of an educational exhibition and programme of events in September that celebrates our borough, our diverse communities and our flourishing voluntary and community groups. The exhibition will place a special focus on the evolution of the borough's housing, parks, libraries, architecture and town centres. It will also feature the diversity of cultural events, traditions and heritage in our borough. Schools around the borough will be invited to visit the exhibition and take part in activities and workshops to celebrate the anniversary. Councillors will be kept updated on the development of the exhibition and its locations and invited to make

contributions. This exhibition will showcase the positive changes we have delivered together over the last six decades and will hopefully inspire this work to continue to the next sixty years.

8. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR RACHEL BENTLEY

Will the leader update us on the progress against the Land Commission's recommendations?

RESPONSE

Following the agreement of the Land Commission Action Plan at July Cabinet, a number of key recommendations have been taken forward. We are in the process of procuring a Community Land Trust partner to drive forward a pioneering project to transform a Peckham garage site into affordable homes, subject to planning permission.

We are pleased that the GLA have agreed to fully fund our innovative Social Purpose of Land Framework, and we have started the development process. We have also received funding, alongside United St Saviours, for a dedicated post with Community Southwark to improve how communities access council land and property. The Council is developing an Affordable Workspace Strategy and is considering the rollout of a number of Community Review Panels which will seek to widen community representation in the planning process. Further recommendations of the Land Commission report will be taken forward this calendar year.

9. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR BETHAN ROBERTS

Can the Leader update me on the council's investment in leisure centres since in-sourcing in 2023?

RESPONSE

A total of £8.3m has been spent on capital improvements across the 8 Leisure Centre facilities since we successfully brought all our leisure centres back in house in June 2023. This includes, £1.4m on general improvement works including new spin bikes replacement, access Gate replacement and boilers and pipework. £500k on upgrading Camberwell Leisure Centre's historic listed building £370k on upgrading the CCTV systems across all sites. £2.36m on upgrading equipment at the 6 Health and Fitness Gyms. Commitment of £1.8m to fit out the new Canada Water Leisure Centre due to open in 2025. £1.425m on decarbonisation work across the facilities. This includes installation of PV panels, LED lighting, BMS systems and pool covers.

10. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR GRAHAM NEALE

Short term holiday lets are an increasing source of frustration for local residents, from rubbish to noise, and of course the effect of taking supply of residential homes out of the long-term rental market. Ad-hoc reporting of issues can only achieve so much - what is the council doing on a strategic level to ensure that residents do not have to put up with the nuisance of short term lets?

RESPONSE

In council rented homes, short-term lets are not permitted. We thoroughly investigate if we are made aware of this taking place and take robust action, including issuing written warning and eviction notices when clear evidence is found. If you believe a council home is being used in this manner, you can contact housingfraud@southwark.gov.uk

For all other homes in the borough, the current legislation allows for short-term letting of a home for up to 90 nights a year. In total, the council's planning enforcement team has received 25 cases of reports being exceeded. To date 12 cases have been resolved and 13 remain under investigation. Alongside this, we are working with councils across London through Central London Forward and London Councils to call for changes at a national level to improve compliance and address the issues raised in this question. A robust registration system would ensure councils can clearly see how many days a home is being let. This will empower councils to take immediate action if someone exceeds the 90 nights a year period or is breaching their council tenancy.

11. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR CLEO SOANES

What did the council do to mark this year's national apprenticeships week?

RESPONSE

Apprenticeships increase opportunity, reduce inequality and support economic growth. This year, the council delivered a comprehensive programme of activity to promote apprenticeships to residents, employers, and colleagues at the council. Externally, the council delivered or supported; a session by Southwark Works to help residents apply for apprenticeships; a breakfast event for local businesses on demystifying apprenticeships; an apprenticeship open day at the Southwark Construction Skills Centre; and apprenticeship-focused newsletters for young people and local businesses. Internally, council colleagues delivered; an internal communication campaign celebrating the contribution of council apprentices; sessions designed to upskill apprentices, interns and anyone else at an early stage of their career; the opportunity to shadow a number of councillors, gaining valuable insight into the role of local political leaders; and our staff-led Freshers Network hosted a lunchtime meeting focused on career progression, which was attended by the Chief Executive.

12. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING FROM COUNCILLOR MICHAEL SITU

Can the Cabinet Member let me know what work is ongoing to support people at high risk of ill health, including our Black, Asian, and ethnic minority communities, to live healthier lives and access preventative care?

RESPONSE

Ill health can affect anyone at any time and so the council works closely with health partners to address these issues and prevent them as far as possible – especially with those groups at higher risk. For example, we launched the Southwark Maternity Commission, reviewing and taking steps to improve maternity care in Southwark, responding in particular to the experience of Black, Asian and ethnic minority families. The Council recently commissioned a local community HIV prevention and testing campaign to support Black residents with a high risk of HIV. Our outreach roadshow provides targeted health checks, health promotion and signposting across the borough visiting 2-3 different communities each week.

Further, we provide a range of universal healthy weight programmes for adults, families and children. We also recently extended our health kiosk programme, providing free, self-service health kiosks in our libraries and leisure centres that help residents to identify and address health risk factors and last year became the first local authority in the country to offer screening for Chagas Disease, supporting our Latin American community.

13. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING FROM COUNCILLOR CHARLIE SMITH

How is the council monitoring the roll out of Family Forums in Southwark?

RESPONSE

Supporting the relatives of care home residents to be involved in the quality of their care is critical to ensuring the highest standards in the sector. This forms part of our Residential Ethical Care Charter and I am pleased to say that 6 out of 7 of our residential care homes for older people have signed up to our charter. This will drive up the standards for approximately 500 staff, who care for over 400 residents. Going forward we will work with the smaller care homes supporting people with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and mental health. The Council monitors the roll out of Family Forums in residential and nursing care homes via contract management undertaken by the Quality and Contracts Team. Officers will look for evidence of impact and provide advice on resident and family engagement. Alongside Family Forums, there are a range of ways care homes seek to involve people's loved ones – for example menu tasting and planning sessions, and open days.

14. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY AND NEIGHBOURHOODS FROM COUNCILLOR SANDRA RHULE

What work is being done by the council and the police to tackle crime hotspots in Southwark?

RESPONSE

The Council and the police meet on a daily, weekly and monthly basis to proactively tackle crime and anti-social behaviour trends in hotspot areas.

The Southwark Community Safety Partnership (CSP), co-chaired by the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Neighbourhoods and the Police Borough Commander, coordinates the work we do in Southwark to prevent and reduce crime. Working with partners across the borough, we make sure the right funding and resources are allocated at the right time.

The Council and police work together on initiatives that both prevent and reduce crime. For example, in response to the increase of mobile phone thefts, we worked together on an increased visible presence from the Council Community Warden Teams and CCTV and joint public awareness campaign on street robbery.

The Council, police and wider partners also undertake more intense work in areas. Following concerns raised about the high level of crime taking place in Peckham Square, we acted in a number of ways including daily joint patrols by wardens, SASBU, police and partner agencies such as St Mungo's and a coordinated operation to target in the area. This led to arrests, enforcement activity and support for those willing to enter mental health and drug rehabilitation services.

15. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COUNCIL HOMES FROM COUNCILLOR IRINA VON WIESE

The Devon Mansions and Canada Estate Major Works scandals first came to light in late 2023 - investigations into them have been repeatedly delayed. When can we expect to have the full outcomes of those investigations published so that residents can finally have full clarity on what, how, and why things went so catastrophically wrong?

RESPONSE

The investigations into the Major Works projects at Devon Mansions and Canada Estate included an internal review by the Task and Finishing Team (TFT) and an external review by Pellings LLP. We have taken time to ensure the investigations are done properly to ensure residents get the clarity they deserve. It is intended that the internal and external reviews for both estates will be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in April this year. The reviews will then be shared with residents.

16. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CLEAN AIR, STREETS AND WASTE FROM COUNCILLOR NICK JOHNSON

Can the Cabinet Member assure us that the Lower Road scheme will be redesigned, and that this renewed scheme will not repeat the mistakes that have led to such traffic chaos over the last year?

RESPONSE

We are currently reviewing the design and issues on Lower Road. The review is progressing well and we have potential proposals to improve the traffic flow which we are aiming to consult on in the near future, following road safety assessments.

17. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CLEAN AIR, STREETS AND WASTE FROM COUNCILLOR SUNIL CHOPRA

When does the council anticipate the widening of Bermondsey Street will be completed this year?

RESPONSE

I'm delighted to say the first phase of the works to widen Bermondsey Street is currently underway with the works due to be completed by mid-March. This will create more space for residents to walk around this much-loved street in a safe and accessible way.

18. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COUNCIL HOMES FROM COUNCILLOR MAGGIE BROWNING

The Friern Road estate was scheduled for major works, including new kitchens and bathrooms, in 2021-23. These works have been indefinitely postponed due to challenges with the Housing Revenue Account. Can the cabinet member tell me when residents on the estate can expect these major works to take place?

RESPONSE

We very much understand the frustrations regarding the current uncertainty about planned investment to our council homes. The council is having to direct considerable resources, financial and otherwise, to ensuring that we discharge all our responsibilities relating to new building safety, fire safety and regulatory legislation. This includes more than £180m of capital investment over 2024/25 and 2025/26. The safety of our residents is our first priority and there is much to do. Alongside this we are undertaking a comprehensive stock condition survey of all homes and estates to underpin our future programme of investment. Building safety and fire risk safety work priority is restricting our capacity to deliver the sort of improvements that residents deserve at Friern Road.

19. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CLIMATE EMERGENCY, JOBS AND BUSINESS FROM COUNCILLOR CASSANDRA BROWN

Can the Lead Member update me on the work being done by the council to support our high streets and town centres?

RESPONSE

Tailored town centre action plans, agreed by Cabinet this month, have been developed for town centres where we have committed to delivering major improvements including Bermondsey, Canada Water, Camberwell, Elephant & Castle & Walworth and Peckham.

They outline how we will make our town centres cleaner, safer and more vibrant places where people want to spend time and shop and where businesses can rely on enough footfall and custom to succeed. Through engagement with businesses, and the wider community, we have identified key priorities in each town centre and aim to address them through coordinated work across the council.

The town centre action plans will be updated every 6 months to reflect progress and respond to feedback from the community. The recently established town centre team has added capacity to oversee delivery and further develop the council's approach to supporting our high streets and town centres. We will work closely with relevant organisations, networks, business forums and Business Improvements Districts (BIDs) where appropriate to ensure there is a joined-up approach to improving each town centre.

There is also current and planned engagement with the wider community to understand the ongoing needs of businesses and everyone who uses our high streets and town centres, to ensure they are accessible, inclusive and welcoming places for all.

20. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR NEW HOMES AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FROM COUNCILLOR JANE SALMON

We are grateful that the council finally released the millions of pounds of Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) that had been building up for years, and pleased to be able to support many well deserving projects in our wards – but residents and councillors have found the allocations process to be confusing and opaque. What assurances can the Cabinet Member make that the process next time will be clearer and more transparent?

RESPONSE

Since the Cabinet report in September 2024, there has been a lot of very detailed work led by ward members and senior officers to develop the priorities for funding. In a number of wards, forums have taken place to agree what these priorities should be. I am pleased to announce that shortly I will agree the first batch of these projects which relate to about £5m of investment. As with any new process, we will look at lessons learnt through this process once the budgets have been allocated and will apply these to the next bidding round.

21. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COUNCIL HOMES FROM COUNCILLOR EMILY TESTER

In December the council assured leaseholders in North Peckham that their District Heating issues would be investigated - but we are concerned to hear that investigation is not to be recorded in writing. How can leaseholders have faith that the council is taking this issue seriously?

RESPONSE

We have been working closely with affected leaseholders and have undertaken an investigation of heating issues on the estate that has been reviewed within the council at the appropriate levels. This information will be shared at a forum due to take place on 20 March 2025.

22. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CLEAN AIR, STREETS AND WASTE FROM COUNCILLOR RENATA HAMVAS

Residents in Dulwich Hill and Peckham Rye have been calling for the extension of the 63 bus to Honor Oak Park for over a decade. Please can the cabinet member tell me what steps his department can take to work with TfL and colleagues at Lewisham council to extend the 63 bus by three stops to Honor Oak Park?

RESPONSE

Buses are the lifeblood of Southwark. The proposed extension of the 63 bus route will connect the entire area to the centre of the borough, helping residents getting to work or school, and see their families. We are joining forces with Lewisham Council to lobby Transport for London (TfL) on these vital proposals. We have also raised this directly with Southwark's strategic partner at TfL who is making enquiries on our behalf.

23. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COUNCIL HOMES FROM COUNCILLOR MARIA LINFORTH-HALL

What is the average turnaround time for void properties?

RESPONSE

Southwark turns around a huge number of voids each year, with 1,112 properties let between April 2024 – January 2025. The satisfaction rate with the condition of new lets is 98%. For minor voids it can take up to 82 days and for major voids it can take 100 days, which is on target. We recruited three new technical staff in January to help improve our turnaround times.

24. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COUNCIL HOMES FROM COUNCILLOR HAMISH MCCALLUM

Of the empty council homes in Southwark, what proportion are used for temporary and emergency accommodation?

RESPONSE

Currently we have 1,531 homeless households in council homes being used as temporary accommodation. This represents approximately 4% of council homes.

SOUTHWARK COUNCIL**COUNCIL ASSEMBLY****(ORDINARY MEETING)****WEDNESDAY 19 MARCH 2025****LATE QUESTION WITH RESPONSE****1. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR VICTOR CHAMBERLAIN TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

We are alarmed by reports that the government is considering axing benefits for people who cannot work due to disabilities, and the Prime Minister's refusal to rule out such a move at a recent Prime Minister's Questions. What assurances can the leader provide council assembly on action taken to mitigate this locally, including by providing an assessment of the number of, and impact on, Southwark residents affected, and making strong representations to Government opposing this move?

RESPONSE

The Government yesterday outlined a number of reforms to the national social security system. These include an increase to the Universal Credit standard allowance, a move back to face-to-face assessments, changes to Personal Independence Payments, the introduction of Unemployment Insurance, a new 'Right to Try' work and increased funding for employment support. Details of these changes are due to be set out by the Government over the coming days, and the Government have also said they will be consulting on a Green Paper. As is the case for all significant changes to the benefits system, the council will be carefully assessing the impact for Southwark residents.