

## Cabinet

Monday 2 February 2026

3.00 pm

Ground floor meeting rooms, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

## Public questions

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| 6.       | <b>Public Question Time (15 Minutes)</b><br>To receive any questions from members of the public which have been submitted in advance of the meeting in accordance with the cabinet procedure rules. The deadline for the receipt of public questions was midnight Tuesday 27 January 2026. | 1 - 2    |

### Contact

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Date: 3 February 2026

**Public question – Cabinet 2 February 2026****1. Question from Toni Parker**

Residents across London and the Social Housing Action Campaign (SHAC) are holding housing associations accountable for the unreasonable, and potentially dangerous, lack of service we receive, along with the escalating costs of rents and service charge. What can the council do to support our challenge, particularly in Monmouth Court, Southwark?

**Response from Councillor Portia Mwangangye, Cabinet Member for Council Homes**

We want to ensure that all residents in the borough, regardless of their tenure, have the highest quality of life possible. Going forward, the council will be undertaking regular engagement with the largest housing associations in the borough to address the biggest challenges that our residents are facing. We are also hosting a scrutiny session this Wednesday 5 February regarding the council's work in supporting housing associations, with a particular focus on meeting regulatory standards, housing repairs, anti-social behaviour on estates, and waste management and cleaning of the public realm.

Despite this work, the council does not have direct regulatory oversight of housing associations. Housing associations operating as registered social landlords are in the first instance regulated through their own internal complaints procedure and the Housing Ombudsman for individual tenant issues.

For more systemic issues affecting many tenants such as major safety concerns or governance failures, the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) is the body that oversees housing associations and can take enforcement action as necessary. We suggest that the resident/s contact the RSH concerning the problems they have outlined.

Although we cannot intervene directly in the regulation of housing associations, we are always willing to listen, help signpost, and support residents in understanding the best avenues for action. If you or other residents of Monmouth Court would like further guidance on how to engage with the RSH or the Ombudsman, we are happy to assist.

## Public question – Cabinet 2 February 2026

### 2. Question from Arti Dillon

Will the cabinet utilise Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) and Empty Dwelling Management Order (EDMO) powers to secure 2,000+ empty properties locally and end the 149-day re-let delay with a 60-day mandate? The generated revenue could fund a freeze on rents, service charges, and council tax to stop further community displacement and reduce poverty?

#### **Response from Councillor Helen Dennis, New Homes and Sustainable Development**

We recognise the importance of making the best use of Southwark's housing stock, and our comprehensive empty homes action plan addresses issues in both the private sector and for council-owned homes, ensuring we use all powers available to us.

Of the estimated 5,200 empty homes across the borough, the majority are in the private sector. The council already targets these homes using council tax premiums and the use of grants and loans to bring them back in to use where possible. A total of £191,740 has been allocated for empty property grants, and £1,097,840 is available this financial year to support empty homes through loan funding. We have also already allocated £2m of capital funding to a rolling CPO Fund for the compulsory purchase of long-term empty homes, with 2 cases currently progressing.

Empty council homes form part of the overall empty homes figure. As one of the largest council landlords in the country, the authority has disproportionately more empty council homes, with just over 2,000 currently empty. Of these, 1,200 cannot be relet, including around 1,000 in major regeneration schemes such as Aylesbury and Tustin, which are due for demolition. At any time, approximately 2% of council homes are empty and actively being worked on.

CPOs and EDMOs apply only to private sector dwellings and therefore cannot be used in relation to empty council homes. However, a series of strategic improvements are already underway to reduce turnaround times, including stronger management oversight, improved contractor management, increased contracting capacity, the introduction of additional contractors, an expansion of in-house delivery, and simplifying the void delivery model to provide clearer accountability.