

Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Commission

Wednesday 15 February 2023

7.00 pm

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

Membership

Councillor Ellie Cumbo (Chair)
Councillor Jane Salmon (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Sam Foster
Councillor Barrie Hargrove
Councillor Esme Hicks
Councillor Portia Mwangangye
Councillor Emily Tester
Bassey Bassey (Co-opted member)
Cris Claridge (Co-opted member)
Ina Negoita (Co-opted member)

Reserves

Councillor Sam Dalton
Councillor Ketzia Harper
Councillor Adam Hood
Councillor Hamish McCallum
Councillor Kimberly McIntosh
Councillor Leo Pollak
Councillor Joseph Vambe

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Access to information

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Contact

Amit Alva on email: amit.alva@southwark.gov.uk

Members of the committee are summoned to attend this meeting

Althea Loderick

Chief Executive

Date: 7 February 2023



Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Commission

Wednesday 15 February 2023

7.00 pm

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

Order of Business

Item No.	Title	Page No.
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PART A OPEN BUSINESS

1. APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

In special circumstances, an item of business may be added to an agenda within five clear working days of the meeting.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS.

Members to declare any interests and dispensations in respect of any item of business to be considered at this meeting.

4. MINUTES

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2022.

5.	INTERVIEW WITH CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY	1 - 7
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Interview with Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle, Cabinet Member for Community Safety on:

- Southwark's Community Safety Plan (*Report to follow*)
- Impact of the change of Domestic abuse providers from Solace to Refuge
- The projected impact of the cost of living crisis on Southwark council housing tenants, report covering but not limited to:
 - Effect on Domestic Abuse
 - Effect on Anti-Social Behaviour (*Report to follow*)

6.	INTERVIEW WITH THE BOROUGH POLICE COMMANDER FOR THE LONDON BOROUGH OF SOUTHWARK	
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To receive a presentation and interview Chief Supt. Colin Wingrove, Borough Police Commander for Southwark on 'Trust and visibility of policing in the community'. (*Presentation to follow*)

7.	WORK PROGRAMME 2022-2023	8 - 16
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To note the work programme for the 2022-2023 year.

DISCUSSION OF ANY OTHER OPEN ITEMS AS NOTIFIED AT THE START OF THE MEETING.

Date: 7 February 2023



Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Commission

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Commission held on Monday 21 November 2022 at 7.00 pm at Ground Floor Meeting Room G02A - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT: Councillor Ellie Cumbo (Chair)
Councillor Jane Salmon (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Sam Foster
Councillor Esme Hicks
Councillor Emily Tester
Bassey Bassey (Co-opted member)
Cris Claridge (Co-opted member)
Ina Negoita (Co-opted member)

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor Darren Merrill

OFFICER SUPPORT: Amit Alva, Scrutiny Officer

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Portia Mwangangye and Councillor Barrie Hargrove.

2. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

There were no items of business which the Chair deemed urgent.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS.

Councillor Esme Hicks, Councillor Jane Salmon and Ina Negoita (Co-opted member) disclosed that they are Council Leaseholders.

4. MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2022 was approved as a correct record.

5. FIRE COMMANDER INTERVIEW- LONDON BOROUGH OF SOUTHWARK

The commission first received a report from Verona Clark, Borough Commander for the London Fire Brigade in Southwark on the following points.

- Risk areas such as high rises and commercial buildings.
- Key fire safety issues and fire safety work undertaken by engaging with the community
 - Poor loading and overcharging of e-bikes in residential properties especially communal areas in high rise buildings.
 - Fire safety team enforcing legislation in shops where counterfeit chargers that are the main cause of fires.
 - Encouraging business to do fire risk assessments online with the support of the Local Authorities.
 - Home fire safety visits and Public Relations to encourage people to resolve issues with their recalled white goods such as tumble dryers and washing machines that pose a fire risk.
 - Poor ventilations in shops where people are sleeping due to tough economic times, this is being handled by the fire brigade enforcement teams, fire safety inspections team and also liaising with the councils fire safety teams.
- Scrutiny commission members and ward councillors to encourage and promote home fire safety visits which constituents and residents can book through telephone, text messages, online through londonfire.gov.uk or visiting the local fire station thus providing residents with bespoke fire safety advice.
- Drying of clothes on electric heaters rather than using gas for heating, increasing the fire risk due to exposed elements such as filament tubes.
- Safe smoking outdoors and discouraging charging e-vapes overnight.
- Encouraging use of branded mobile phone, e-scooter and e-bike chargers.
- 95 buildings in Southwark with cladding related fire safety issues Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) there are 9 buildings that fall under simultaneous evacuation but are not cladded but do undergo regular checks.

- Minimum of 12 visits a week to high rise commercial buildings.
- Quarterly meetings and joint visits with fire safety department, brigade fire safety teams and council fire safety teams to identify issues and data being fed back to the head office and fire safety teams.
- 240 high rise buildings and new developments undergo inspections at every building stage.
- Southwark Fire Brigade has the best response time with targets of 6 minutes for the first instance and 8 minutes for the second instance.
- Backlog of fire safety visits during Covid recovering.
- No existing issues with empty homes with regards to fire safety, alarms triggered would come through directly to fire brigade or reported by public. No life risk thus different approach to empty homes. Arson incidents due to anti-social behaviour are very low.
- Fire stations organising physio sessions for elderly, counselling sessions, community spaces, food banks, clothes and toys for children and coffee mornings.
- Increase in arson proof letter boxes and fire retardant bedding across the borough for vulnerable people and victims in court cases referred by social services.
- No reported increase in fires on bonfire nights due to anti-social behaviour but reporting of potential fireworks issues reported to the police by the fire brigade.

The commission then asked questions around the following themes.

- Perennial issue of fire risk assessments of businesses.
- Fire safety issues with compartmentation within buildings in Southwark built in the 1800's.
- Enforcements in shops with dwellings and issues with lifts, comparison of enforcements between council and private properties.
- Number of home visits requested and response times.
- Fire Safety Issues identified by the fire brigade and monitoring progress of such matters.
- Efforts made to inform residents of action to be taken during a fire such as staying put or leaving the premises.

The commission learned from Verona that fire risk assessments have been a concern for a while and it would be best resolved by further checks and publicising the need for fire risk assessments. Compartmentation within buildings and fire

spread issues are relayed to fire safety departments. Shops with dwellings are shops with flats above and if there is no adequate ventilation between the two, mitigation measures are put in place for fats and oils to escape. The turnaround time for homes visits depends on resident availability and booking through telephone calls has a response time of 24-48 hrs. Good amount of requests are received for home visits.

A good partnership exists between the council and the fire brigade to address fire safety issues but are resolved by the council once identified by the fire brigade. High rise buildings are regularly risk assessed and residents are advised accordingly, home safety visits includes any bespoke fire safety advice that are down to differing factors among buildings. General advice is to exit the building if possible, however if residents are not in the place of origin of the fire and can't leave, the compartmentalisations should safely hold in the event of a fire.

The commission then asked further questions on the following points

- Advice on electric heaters.
- Relationship with the council on fire safety issues with contractor work and repairs service.

The commission heard that general fire safety advice should be followed and heaters only be used when present in the property and in open spaces and also avoiding contact with anything other materials. The fire brigade conducts joint visits with the council when fire safety issues with contractor work is reported and if the work is not remedied up to the standards, the fire enforcement team issues a notice. Only repeat fire incidents that flag issues with repairs are further investigated.

6. CABINET MEMBER INTERVIEW - COUNCILLOR DARREN MERRILL, CABINET MEMBER FOR COUNCIL HOMES AND HOMELESSNESS

The commission heard from Councillor Merrill on the following points

- Inflation rise of 30% on costs of materials for new builds.
- Rising rate of borrowing affecting the housing market.
- Ensuring that costs of repairs for leaseholders are accurately calculated and repairs completed in a timely manner.
- Improvements in the repairs service involves setup of repairs resident group, repairs hub, hiring of multi trade services that could complete the entire repair work and improving the call centre effectiveness by using video calls.

The commission then asked questions around the following points of discussion

- Only 50% of stage one complaints being upheld.
- Council communication with leaseholders and estate agents on channelling repair complaints to the correct team within the council.
- Repairs resident group.
- Real time updates for residents on repairs through telematics systems.
- Prevention of minor repairs turning into major repairs.
- Differing repair needs of buildings built decades apart.
- Apprenticeships for trade services.

Councillor Merrill explained to the commission that repairs resident group would include Southwark Group of Tenants Organisation (SGTO) Chair, Local Housing Forum Chairs and members of the public and it due to be setup by December 2022.

The commission then heard from Christine Bramman, Head of Repair and Maintenance that the council do not directly contact letting agents, repairs are managed holistically by trained staff at the repairs contact centre and a repairs improvement program is underway. On only 50 % of complaints being upheld, the commission learned that more than 40% of stage one complaints are a result of residents not reporting the issue on the first occurrence this then gradually leads to major issues later which take longer to resolve, multi skilled operatives have been hired and tasked with resolving stage one complaints and process failures.

The commission learned that the proposed telematics system is being negotiated and is to be launched soon. Text messages are currently being used to communicate with residents. Some minor repairs have turned to major repairs due to Covid and not being able to access the property and also staff being redirected to delivering food, supplies in the community and only essential repairs being carried out. The backlog of repairs has now recovered. A cohort of 11 apprenticeships have started in September 2022, 5 electricians, 4 plumbers and two multi-skilled traders undergoing training courses.

The commission then discussed the following points

- Major works prevention in asset management strategy and restrictions in budget.
- Terms of reference of Repairs Residents Group to be discussed at its first meeting as its resident led and reconvening of Local Area Forums to meet.
- Call backs for inadvertently disconnected customers getting through to the

call centre after long waiting times this is to be fed back to the contact centre as a customer service improvement measure.

- Customer service training for internal repairs service and contractor code of conduct to be enforced during their interactions with residents.
- Leaseholder charges are to be fair, value for money, calculated accurately and scrutinised rigorously by the major works team.
- Transparency of leaseholder's charges from inception to completion of work; extensive market research and benchmarking with other London councils on costs before contracts are out for tender; value for money to be attained by looking at specific elements within improvements in the homeowners' improvement plan.
- Transparency that has been built in with the help of Strategic Core Group where consultants and contractors are discussing market fluctuations; the rise in inflation causing the feasibility to not reflect the final accounts.

The commission then asked questions around the following themes

- Unclear breakdown of leaseholder charges and reasons for repair leading to leaseholders questioning the value for money.
- Involving leaseholders in conversations with major works contractors and councils to build trust in the community.
- Responsibilities of leaseholders and freeholders with regards to charges.
- Several tiers of contractors and sub-contractors leading to spiralling costs.

The commission then learned from Councillor Merrill that there is a need to involve leaseholders when major works contracts are being procured to ensure they are well informed of the works needed on their estates. In addition there is substantial amount of work being undertaken to be able to explain to leaseholders as to why certain small works are being included in the major works contracts. For example a cost effective measure would be to replace windows that are nearing their end of life whilst scaffolding has been setup for other major works. Leaseholder charges only include costs which the leaseholder is legally required to pay, additional costs are paid from the council's budget, for e.g. when external insulation is required as per the council's climate emergency strategy.

The commission then heard from Desmond Vincent, Asst. Director of Building Safety, Housing and Modernisation that the council's homeownership team is legally required to send leaseholders specific component breakdowns of charges which includes a contingency sum for unknown risks, works and related costs. Leaseholders can contact the homeownership team for further explanation on certain service charges that might be a result of a response to preventive repairs to avoid major works in the future.

The commission also learned that the partnering framework between consultants and contractors has mechanisms to look at fluctuating costs in different supply chains and the council as the contract administrator looks at unit cost prices being reflective of the contracts that have been agreed. The council with the help of the homeowners' improvement plan is looking at challenging the consultants on feasibility.

On empty homes the commission heard that private sector empty homes are decreasing and that two contractors have been hired to bring the council back on target to reduce minor council voids by the end of 2022.

The commission then discussed the following points

- Empty homes to be included on the agenda in the council meetings with large housing associations of more than 1000 units.
- Property visits and checks by special investigation teams on council tenants illegally sub-letting in high rental cost properties.
- Update on housing allocation strategy and its consultation by end of financial year.
- Under occupying residents registering interests in downsize has increased due to economic crisis and rise in energy bills, although it is not substantial enough yet to address overcrowding, efforts are being made to reach out to people through advertising and individually answering residents' concerns with downsizing.
- Response to recommendation 4 from the previous year's commission *'that the Cabinet Member asks officers to implement a consultation protocol which prioritises clear, consistent and timely communications for all development projects where the council is building on existing estates. This protocol should take account of recommendations made in the SGTO consultation Charter.'* The commission heard that the housing consultation processes have improved and mistakes made during the Covid lockdown period of online consultations have been addressed; and that the commission would be kept updated on progress.

7. HOUSING ALLOCATION STATISTICS AND OVERCROWDING REPORT

The report was noted by the commission.

8. WORK PROGRAMME 2022-2023

The Work Programme 2022-2023 was noted by the commission along with questions to be prepared for the upcoming meeting.

Meeting ended at Time 9:18 pm

CHAIR:

DATED:

Item No. 6	Classification: Open	Date: 15 February 2023	Meeting Name: Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Commission
Report title:		<i>Domestic abuse; change of council commissioned domestic abuse service providers from Solace to Refuge, and impact of cost of living crisis.</i>	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Report author(s):		Sharon Ogden, Safer Communities Team Manager	

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Domestic abuse (DA) is defined as any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can include, but is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial, and emotional.
2. The council and its partners have recognised DA as a priority for many years and it is a fairer future commitment to tackle all forms of gender-based violence. Tackling DA and its long-term effects is also a shared priority for the Community Safety Partnership (CSP).
3. A 5 year Domestic Abuse Strategy was launched in 2015 and Solace Women's Aid was commissioned to deliver Southwark's integrated Domestic and Sexual Abuse service. Building on the Domestic Abuse Strategy, July 2019 saw the launch of a new VAWG Strategy (2019-2024). This extended the partnership priorities to tackle all forms of gender-based violence. These are:
 - Supporting victims
 - Tackling perpetrators
 - Prevention and early intervention
 - Partnership working
4. The Council's main DA support is commissioned through the Southwark Advocacy Support Service (SASS), delivered by Solace Women's Aid. The service provides; Survivor advocacy and support, Sanctuary scheme, Perpetrator Programme, Child therapy, Counselling, IRIS programme (GP support and training), Survivor group work programme, training and awareness raising,
5. Other commissioned services by the council include:
 - Refuge service; 26 beds including family units

- Independent Domestic Violence Advocate - full-time housing Senior IDVA working with survivors of VAWG presenting as homeless.
- YUVA - service for young people using or experiencing violence in close relationships.

CHANGE IN DOMESTIC ABUSE SERVICE PROVIDER

6. From the 6 February 2023, the councils commissioned domestic abuse service provider will change from Solace Women's Aid to Refuge. This will see the continuation of the services listed above with some changes in delivery mechanism:
7. **Independent Gender-Based Violence Advocates (IGVAs)** – work with people who are resident in Southwark from the age of 16. The IGVAs will support all levels of risk; high, medium, standard and provide information advice and guidance, effective case management and intensive advocacy for survivors of gender-based violence and abuse.
8. **Homelessness IDVA** - Specialist support for survivors of domestic abuse with complex housing issues. Co-located within Southwark Housing Solutions Service and referrals directly received from housing teams.
9. **Sanctuary Scheme** - aims to minimise the number of households, families and individuals who must leave their own home because of domestic abuse by exploring safe alternatives where appropriate such as implementing safety measures in victim's homes.
10. **IRIS Advocate Educator** - specialist advocacy and support to clients with referrals received specifically from GP surgeries.
11. **Perpetrators Service** - The overarching goal of the service is to increase the safety and wellbeing of domestic abuse survivors and any children involved by intervening with perpetrators to hold them accountable and provide them with opportunities to change through 1-to-1 intensive case management sessions. To do this the survivor also needs to be referred to the IGVA service so we can offer them support and assess any ongoing risks to them.
12. **Survivor group work programme** - 12-week group, which supports women to regain ownership of their lives when they have been subjected to abuse or violence.
13. In Partnership with Bede House, we will also be delivering:
14. **Counselling** - 16-week 1-2-1 counselling programme for survivors of domestic and/or sexual abuse. The service is for women and girls who are 14 years and over who are resident in or have a connection with Southwark and have experienced domestic and/or sexual abuse.

15. **Children's Therapeutic Support** - Qualified Children's Therapist to provide a 1-2-1 12 week play and arts based therapeutic intervention to children and young people.

DOMESTIC ABUSE STATISTICS

16. For 2021/22 Southwark was ranked 15th highest volume borough for DA offences in London (out of 32). Since FY 18/19, our ranking has improved year on year from being 5th highest.
17. Between 2013/14 Southwark saw a 52% increase in the number of Police recorded DA offences from 2357 recorded offences in 2013/14 peaking at 3578 in 2018/19. Since 2018/19 recorded offences have decreased year on year with 3242 offences recorded in 2021/22, a 9% decrease from since the 2018/19 peak.
18. 118% increase in number of referrals to the councils commissioned DA Service (2013/14 v 2020/21).
19. Children's Social Care - for financial years 19/20 and 20/21 domestic violence was the primary reason for 53% of all contacts received. For 21/22 and 22/23 this has decreased to 38% (22/23 year to date Dec 2022).
20. During Covid (20/21), the Police saw a slight increase in reported offences, however our local DA service saw a much more significant change with a 21% increase in referrals. Children's Service saw a 28% increase in domestic violence contacts in 20/21 compared to 19/20. 21/22 saw a return to more normal levels however this was still 10% higher than 19/20.
21. The latest police data available for Southwark shows a 6% reduction in total DA offences financial year to date (01/04/22 – 08/01/23 vs 01/04/21 – 08/01/22). If we look at the medium term (last 12 weeks: 17/10/22 – 08/01/23 vs 25/07/22 – 16/10/22) there has been a slight increase of 2.7% and short term (last 4 weeks: 12/12/22 – 08/01/23 vs 14/11/22 – 11/12/22) 5% reduction.

IMPACT OF COST OF LIVING CRISIS ON DOMESTIC ABUSE

22. The most recent police offence figures above (point 21 above) doesn't suggest any overall increase in recorded DA offence levels as a result of the cost of living crisis.
23. In relation to council Housing Services, there has not been a noticeable increase in cases. However If the financial crisis is preventing survivors from fleeing their home to escape the abuse, then we would not expect to see an increase in cases approaching housing services for accommodation, these would be largely unknown to housing services.

24. Three local domestic abuse providers; Solace Women's Aid, Refuge, and Bede House were approached to ask what they are experiencing as a direct result of the increase in cost of living. Unfortunately, services do not have any direct recorded data in relation to the cost of living, but anecdotally providers have been able to give an indication of the impact that they are seeing.
25. **Solace Women's Aid**
- Increased requests for financial assistance/foodbank vouchers.
 - Impact on safe accommodation particularly for single mothers who are currently working with a secure tenancy as the cost of Temporary Accommodation would be out of their reach.
26. **Bede House** – Last year (21/22) we saw 66 clients who completed risk assessments and engaged. This year we have see 133 clients, an increase of 102%. We can't say if this increase is wholly due to the increase in cost of living, however we have had to support more clients through the winter with food vouchers and hampers. 80% of the referrals are first time callers who have never called a DA service before. We have seen that 21% of clients have been in the abusive relationship between 3-5 years (during the start of cost of living). The added stress period of COVID and cost of living has resulted in the increase of referrals.
27. We are certainly finding that clients are having to make the decision of staying with the perpetrator because of finances. It is also impacting clients wishing to apply for non-molestation orders¹ due to the cost being prohibitive (the means testing for legal aid can be harsh). We had one client who was charged £900 to obtain an order; she is on benefits and is now on the breadline. She stated, "If I had known I had to pay that much I wouldn't have got the order and managed the risk myself." Clients are having to make the choice of staying safe verses being able to feed and clothe themselves and children. We are having to support and referral more clients to other agencies (such as benefit's agencies, local food banks) to receive more support. We have partnered with local business and charities' to provide food parcels and toiletries for clients this Christmas.
28. Impact on Bede as an organisation - As an organisation we are hearing more and more stories of clients being more financial dependent on abusers. We are having to research local organisations that can help clients financial, and source food and clothes donations. During Christmas we saw a 90% increase in clients needing food and warm clothes. We have seen an 80% increase in clients that need financial support and this has added to our workload as a whole.

¹ A non-molestation order is aimed at preventing the perpetrator from using or threatening violence, intimidating, harassing, or pestering the survivor (and/or children), in order to ensure the health, safety and well-being of the survivor and/or their children

29. **Southwark case study**

30. Survivor Mary had been married to her abuser for 5 years; she had shared experiences of financial, sexual, emotional and physical abuse. Mary had successfully left him 4 years ago and had a child contact order in place for him to see the children. During COVID Mary was furloughed, after the lockdown period the business she worked at closed and she found herself without work. Her abuser offered to help her financially; he stated, “he didn’t want the kids to suffer”. Mary described the contact with him as a slow drip, he would show up to her house with food and toys for the kids and she felt grateful for the support. One weekend the kids wanted him to stay over, before she knew it, he was staying over every week. Mary was grateful as he was helping her with food and electric when she was short. Mary referred herself to Bede In Nov 22. Mary described how the abuser was using her financial situation to control her. The abuser would put enough money on the electric meter when he was home, he would turn on all the lights, turn the heater on full blast and turn on every electrically appliance on. When the meter was on low he would leave the home. Mary would come home to see the meter was on emergency. Mary would have to stay in the dark and cold until he came home and would top up the meter. Mary described her main concern was not her physical safety, as he had physical assaulted her when she had told him to stop this behaviour. Mary was concerned how she would be able to pay the bills and provide for her children without his help.

31. **Refuge** have published a national report on the cost of living crisis [New data from Refuge warns that cost of living crisis is forcing survivors of domestic abuse to stay with abusive partners. – Refuge](#). The report published in November 2022 includes has the following key findings:

- Refuge’s specialist technology-facilitated and economic empowerment team has seen an 87% increase in referrals for support with complex cases – they say this can be directly linked to the impact of the crisis.
- 77% of frontline workers surveyed said that the cost-of-living crisis is stopping women from leaving their abusers, forcing women to choose between remaining with their abusive partner or risking destitution. More than 50% of Refuge frontline staff surveyed said that the cost-of-living crisis is leading survivors to return to their abusers.
- Over three quarters (77%) of Refuge’s frontline workers also said the cost-of-living crisis is impacting survivors’ mental health. Refuge’s services staff shared that survivors are being pushed into debt or further debt as income from work and/or benefits is not enough to pay for essentials. This includes food and clothing for themselves and their children,
- Perpetrators are also taking advantage of the cost-of-living crisis to increase economic abuse and control. Some perpetrators are restricting food and heating and attempting to gain custody of

children on the basis that survivors simply cannot afford to maintain a warm home and enough food.

- Refuge warns that it will need an additional £1 million pounds to address the rising costs of running its specialist services.

32. **Southwark case study** – below is a case study from Southwark refuge housing provision

33. *Have you been affected by cost-of-living crisis?*

The most serious issue was access to benefits. Living off £60 pound per week carer's allowance, which after paying the service charge, putting money on the oyster, and buying food I am left with nothing. Before I came here, I was working and looking after myself, it has been really hard to do that on the money I get now and the cost-of-living crisis has made it worse.

34. *What was the impact on you?*

The lack of funds has made it difficult to make the long-distance journeys to visit my child and to adequately attend to my mother who I care for. I am unable to afford basic needs and rely on my mother and father to support me. I like to eat healthy due to my body dysmorphia this is made difficult with the cost of living as food costs more. I used to own a car which I have had to sell as I could not afford to keep it, I now must pay for transport which I cannot always afford.

35. *How did it make you feel?*

I have been quite depressed, all over the place really. When I was with my ex-partner I was working and driving and able to look after myself. I feel I was in better position financially before I fled. Whilst I feel safer physically, I do feel financially affected.

36. *Have you received support from others?*

My mother and father have financially supported me when they can. My Father works and my mother receives PIPs, they have done a lot for me to keep me going.

37. *Implication?*

I never felt that I needed to go back to my ex-partner as he relied on me for money. I feel that I would be worse off if I was not in the Refuge. I feel inadequate because it feels like I am living off my parents and as an adult I really do not want to be doing that.

38. *Refuge Support?*

My refuge worker supported me to access the Southwark Hardship Fund and they provided me with £130 shopping vouchers for Sainsbury, this has helped me buy food and sustain myself. I was also supported to access my universal credit to add the hours that I care for mother, this as shown that I should receive an increase in carers allowance, and it will be backdated 3 months. I have also been supported to apply for PIPs due to my anxiety and depression. I hope that through the support I am getting I can also get back to work.

AUDIT TRAIL

This section must be included in all reports.

Lead Officer	Sharon Ogden	
Report Author	Sharon Ogden	
Version	Final	
Dated	6 February 2023	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Law and Governance	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	No	No
List other officers here		
Cabinet Member	To be presented at LMB on 9 February 2023	
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team / Scrutiny Team	7 February 2023	

Item No. 7.	Classification: Open	Date: 15 February 2023	Meeting Name: Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Commission
Report title:		Work Programme 2022-23	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		N/a	
From:		Scrutiny Officer	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the housing and community safety scrutiny commission note the work programme as at 15 February 2023 attached as Appendix 1.
2. That the housing and community safety scrutiny commission consider the addition of new items or allocation of previously identified items to specific meeting dates of the commission.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. The general terms of reference of the scrutiny commissions are set out in the council's constitution (overview and scrutiny procedure rules - paragraph 5). The constitution states that:

Within their terms of reference, all scrutiny committees/commissions will:

- a) review and scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the council's functions
- b) review and scrutinise the decisions made by and performance of the cabinet and council officers both in relation to individual decisions and over time in areas covered by its terms of reference
- c) review and scrutinise the performance of the council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas
- d) question members of the cabinet and officers about their decisions and performance, whether generally in comparison with service plans and targets over a period of time, or in relation to particular decisions,

initiatives or projects and about their views on issues and proposals affecting the area

- e) assist council assembly and the cabinet in the development of its budget and policy framework by in-depth analysis of policy issues
 - f) make reports and recommendations to the cabinet and or council assembly arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process
 - g) consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants
 - h) liaise with other external organisations operating in the area, whether national, regional or local, to ensure that the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working
 - i) review and scrutinise the performance of other public bodies in the area and invite reports from them by requesting them to address the scrutiny committee and local people about their activities and performance
 - j) conduct research and consultation on the analysis of policy issues and possible options
 - k) question and gather evidence from any other person (with their consent)
 - l) consider and implement mechanisms to encourage and enhance community participation in the scrutiny process and in the development of policy options
 - m) conclude inquiries promptly and normally within six months
4. The work programme document lists those items which have been or are to be considered in line with the committee's terms of reference.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

5. The Housing service areas that fall within the scope of the Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Commission are:
- Resident Services (which includes area management, strategy and business support, strategic business and support housing services).
 - Customer Experience Division (which includes the Contact Centre; Customer Resolution and Specialist Services, My Southwark Home Owners and the Housing Solutions Services).
 - Asset Management Division (which includes New Homes; Investment, Repairs & Maintenance and Engineering).

6. As of 6 July 2022 the commission also now has within in its remit the area of community safety.
7. The cabinet portfolio elements relating to this commission are listed below:

Housing (Councillor Darren Merrill)

- Southwark’s Housing Strategy
- Management of the council’s homes, including sheltered and extra care homes
- Council housing repairs and major works services
- Delivery of new council homes, including older people’s homes
- Tenant and homeowner involvement, including relationships with Tenants and Resident Associations (TRAs) and Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs)
- Services and advice for council tenants, leaseholder and freeholder
- Maintenance of tenants and residents halls and related facilities on our estates
- Housing allocations and lettings
- Management of council owned temporary accommodation
- Homes for Gypsy, Roma and traveller communities
- Housing fire safety, cladding and remediation
- Relationship with housing associations
- Tackling empty homes and absentee landlords

Community Safety (Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle)

- Reducing crime, anti-social behaviour and noise nuisance
- Violence Against Woman and Girls (VAWG)
- Community Harm and Exploitation Hub
- Modern day slavery
- Community wardens
- The Southwark Young Advisors
- Public spaces protection orders (PSPOs)
- Strengthening community relations with the police and promoting equitable policing
- Private rented housing and short-term lets
- Licensing, Trading Standards, Environmental Health and gambling

Climate Emergency and Sustainable Development – Councillor Helen Dennis (Housing related portfolio area covered by Councillor James McAsh during Councillor Dennis’s maternity leave)

Delivering commitments

- Use our planning powers to robustly require new social rent homes

Parks, Streets and Clean Air – Councillor Catherine Rose (Housing related portfolio area)

Delivering commitments

- A new right to community gardens or food growing plots on estates

8. Set out in Appendix 1 (Work Programme) are the issues the housing scrutiny commission is due to consider in the 2022-23 municipal year.
9. The work programme is a standing item on the housing scrutiny commission agenda and enables the commission to consider, monitor and plan issues for consideration at each meeting.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Commission	Southwark Council Website	Amit Alva 020 7525 0496
Link: https://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=605&Year=2022		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Work Programme 2022/23

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Amit Alva, Scrutiny Officer	
Report Author	Amit Alva	
Version	Final	
Dated	7 February 2023	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Law and Governance	No	No

Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	No	No
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Scrutiny Team	7 February 2023	

Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Commission Work Programme – 2022/23

Meeting	Agenda items	Comment
12 July 2022	Housing Repairs Call Centre report on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waiting times • Staff capacity • Impact of the pandemic • Main Issues faced over longer term 	Commission received report from Ade Aderemi, Head of Customer Services.
	Safer Neighbourhood Teams <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordination and support provided to the Safer Neighbourhood police teams • Structures and number of people in such teams, turnover levels of police officers • Ward specific differences amongst the police teams • Community cohesion role of the police teams in the wards and key competencies required • Impact of pandemic 	Commission interviewed Chief Inspector, Steve Boswell in charge of all Safer Neighbourhood Teams from the London MET Police.
	Work Programme	Considered at each meeting.

<p>3 October 2022</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To hear from David Eyles of the Leaseholders Association of Southwark on leasehold matters • To hear from leaseholder representatives on leaseholder experiences of legacy and current repair issues • Issues with Leaseholder charges and the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on leaseholders especially but not limited to rising energy bills and repair issues. 	<p>Officer attending Louise Turff, Head of Homeownership Services, Finance and Governance to present a report on how expenditures are accounted for in service charges and also any repair issues</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress on Empty homes 	<p>Progress made on the utilisation of empty homes.</p> <p>Officers attending Perry Singh, Strategy and Business Support Manager, Housing and Modernisation.</p>

Meeting	Agenda Items	Comment
15 February 2023	<p>Interview with Cabinet Member for Community Safety on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southwark’s Community Safety Plan • Impact of the change of Domestic abuse providers from Solace to Refuge • The projected impact of the cost of living crisis on Southwark council housing tenants, report covering but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Effect on Domestic Abuse ▪ Effect on Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) • Interview with the Police Commander for the London Borough of Southwark 	<p>Projected or reported increase in domestic abuse cases in Southwark by Refuge, Safe lives etc. due to victims being unable to afford to leave unsafe homes due to factors such as cost-of-living crisis etc. including victims that are private rented and council tenants and the council’s response in providing support services and reporting.</p> <p>Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle</p> <p>Officer Sharon Ogden, Safer Communities Team Manager Environment and Leisure to present on domestic abuse.</p> <p>Officer presenting ASB report to be confirmed.</p> <p>BCU Commander Colin Wingrove to be interviewed and presenting on ‘Trust and visibility of the policing in the community’.</p>
Upcoming Meeting		
19 April 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Repairs service overall strategy review including contact centre repeated calls (multiple failures). • Final Scrutiny recommendations 	To be confirmed for 19 April 2023 meeting.

Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Commission

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2022-23

AGENDA DISTRIBUTION LIST (OPEN)

NOTE: Original held by Scrutiny Team; all amendments/queries to Amit Alva Tel: 020 7525 0496

Name	No of copies	Name	No of copies
Electronic Copy		Aine Gallagher – Cabinet and Public Affairs Manager	
Members		Joseph Brown- Senior Cabinet Officer	
Councillor Ellie Cumbo (Chair)		Pavle Popovic – Liberal Democrat Group Office	
Councillor Jane Salmon (Vice-Chair)		Euan Cadzow-Webb - Liberal Democrat Group Office	
Councillor Emily Tester		External	
Councillor Barrie Hargrove		Caroline Vicent	
Councillor Esme Hicks			
Councillor Sam Foster			
Councillor Portia Mwangangye			
Reserves Members			
Councillor Leo Pollak			
Councillor Sam Dalton			
Councillor Joseph Vambe			
Councillor Ketzia Harper			
Councillor Kim McIntosh			
Councillor Hamish McCallum			
Councillor Adam Hood			
Co-Opted Members			
Bassey Bassey (Southwark TMO)			
Cris Claridge (Tenants Forum)			
Ina Negoita (Homeowners Forum)			
		Dated: February 2023	