

Cabinet

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Cabinet held on Wednesday 17 January 2024 at 1.00 pm at the Council Offices, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT: Councillor Kieron Williams (Chair)
Councillor Evelyn Akoto
Councillor Stephanie Cryan
Councillor Natasha Ennin
Councillor Darren Merrill
Councillor James McAsh
Councillor Catherine Rose
Councillor Martin Seaton

1. NOTICE OF INTENTION TO CONDUCT BUSINESS IN A CLOSED MEETING, AND ANY REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

There were none.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jasmine Ali and Helen Dennis.

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

The chair gave notice of the following late and urgent item:

- Item 15: Creation of a New Senior Management Post: Director, Communications, Engagement and Change.

Reasons for urgency and lateness will be specified in the relevant minute.

4. **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS**

The following members declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of Item 11: Housing Revenue Account – Final Rent and charges report 2024-25 as follows:

- Councillor Evelyn Akoto: leaseholder
- Councillor Natasha Ennin: council tenant
- Councillor Darren Merrill: has a business that rents a garage
- Councillor Martin Seaton: leaseholder.

5. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the chair.

6. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)**

1. Jeremy Harrington

Council assembly motions on agenda refers to “Southwark stands with the trans community policy. Can this policy be reviewed before it is ratified? In para 3c vi, I suggest ... work with local businesses across Southwark to try and improve the provision of gender neutral toilets while maintaining female-only toilets across the borough.

Response by Councillor Stephanie Cryan, Cabinet Member for Communities, Democracy and Finance

It is the council’s position that whilst we want to see improved provision of gender-neutral toilets, both in council buildings and across the borough, that this should be in addition to existing single-sex facilities.

Motions from council assembly set out recommendations for cabinet, which we take into account. In this case our position as a cabinet is that this motion will be implemented on the understanding set out above.

2. Tristan Honeyborne

Please can Cllr McAsh confirm whether controlled parking zones (CPZs) in Southwark will be used to reduce car ownership?

Response by Councillor James McAsh, Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency, Clean Air and Streets

The purpose of exploring the introduction of controlled parking zones is to secure the expeditious, convenient, safe and free movement of traffic and the provision of suitable and adequate parking facilities. Reduction of car ownership is an ambition of the council, as set out in our Streets for People strategy, but this is not the purpose of controlled parking.

3. Clive Rates

Could Councillor McAsh please confirm that if the public consultation fails to show strong resident support for Southwark's proposal to install a CPZ in Dulwich Village he will drop the proposal entirely? Will the same apply for the CPZ consultations in Nunhead and Queens Road ?

Response by Councillor James McAsh, Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency, Clean Air and Streets

The consultation remains active at this point and therefore we cannot pre-empt the potential outcome at this stage. We will consider the consultation responses and all other relevant evidence. Any proposals will go through the council's normal governance and decision-making process.

As questioners 2 and 3 were not in attendance, the leader confirmed their questions and responses would be included in the published minutes of the meeting.

7. DEPUTATION REQUESTS

The report had not been circulated five clear days in advance of the meeting. The chair agreed to accept this item as urgent (the requests had been received in line with the council's constitutional deadline for the receipt of deputation requests).

RESOLVED:

1. That the following deputation requests be heard:
 - North East Local Housing Forum on Housing Revenue Account - Final Rent and Charges Report 2024-25
 - Local residents on controlled parking zone plans for Dulwich.
2. A spokesperson for each deputation addressed cabinet for five minutes and questions were asked of the deputations for a period of five minutes.

8. CORPORATE PARENTING ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23

Rukiya Davenport, Chair of Speakerbox, Southwark Children in Care Council was in attendance to provide her comments on the report and answer questions.

RESOLVED:

1. That progress of the corporate parenting strategy, areas of focus for 2024-25 and work of the corporate parenting committee be noted.
2. That it be noted a child friendly easy read version of the report will be shared widely with children in care and care leavers and made publicly available and easily accessible on the council's website.

9. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE - REPORT AND ACTION PLAN

RESOLVED:

1. That the Local Government Association's Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) report attached at Appendix 1 of the report be noted.
2. That the action plan set out in Appendix 2 of the report, which responds to the eleven recommendations from the Corporate Peer Challenge report be endorsed.

10. PLACEMENT POLICY FOR TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION AND PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR OFFERS

RESOLVED:

1. That the placement policy for temporary accommodation (TA) and private rented sector offers (PRSO) (Appendix 1 of the report) be approved.
2. That an annual review of the placement policy which takes account of service user feedback be agreed.

11. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - FINAL RENT AND CHARGES REPORT 2024-25

Having declared a disclosable pecuniary interest, Councillors Evelyn Akoto, Natasha Ennin, Darren Merrill and Martin Seaton withdrew from the meeting while this item was being discussed.

Appendix 2 setting out feedback from local housing forum meetings was published

and circulated in advance of the meeting.

RESOLVED:

1. That a rent increase of 7.7% for all directly and tenant managed (TMO) housing stock within the council's housing revenue account be agreed. This is in accordance with the government's guideline rent formula of CPI+1% (based on the September Consumer Price Index) as set out at paragraphs 12-14 of the report, with effect from 1 April 2024.
2. That a rent increase of 7.7% for the council's shared ownership stock as set out at paragraphs 15-16 of the report be agreed with effect from 1 April 2024.
3. That the increases to tenant service charges, comprising estate cleaning, grounds maintenance, communal lighting and door entry maintenance as set out in paragraphs 17-18 of the report be agreed with effect from 1 April 2024.
4. That the increase in sheltered housing service charges as set out in paragraph 19 of the report be agreed with effect from 1 April 2024.
5. That the increase in charges for garages and other non-residential facilities as set out in paragraphs 20-21 of the report be agreed with effect from 1 April 2024.
6. That it be noted that a review of garage charging policy including the concessionary scheme will be undertaken and proposals brought forward following consultation with residents to cabinet in the New Year as set out in paragraph 22 of the report.
7. That the increase in tenant heating charges, including metered charges as set out in paragraphs 23-42 of the report be agreed with effect from 1 April 2024.

**12. POLICY AND RESOURCES STRATEGY: CAPITAL MONITORING REPORT
2023-24**

RESOLVED:

1. That the virements and variations to the general fund and housing investment capital programme as detailed in Appendix D of the report and the new capital bids in Appendix E of the report be approved.
2. That the significant funding requirement of £263m which needs to be identified for the general fund programme to be fully delivered over the remaining term of the programme, as detailed in Appendix A of the report be noted.

3. That the £1.7bn housing investment programme to be fully delivered over the remaining term of the programme, as detailed in Appendix C of the report be noted.
4. That the mitigating actions to ensure the affordability of the housing investment programme and the sustainability of the housing revenue account be noted.

13. POLICY AND RESOURCES STRATEGY: REVENUE MONITORING REPORT, 2023-24

RESOLVED:

That the following be noted:

1. The adverse variance of £3.4m forecast for the General Fund in 2023-24.
2. The continuing budget pressures in:
 - Temporary accommodation
 - No recourse to public funds (NRPF)
 - Home to school transport.
3. The progress on plans to contain general fund projected overspends since month 4 reporting (Appendix B of the report).
4. The dedicated schools grant (DSG) in-year pressure of £0.4m, an improvement from £0.6m reported at month 4 and consistent with the Safety Valve Agreement.
5. The housing revenue account forecast of £16.8m, an adverse movement of £2.9m since month 4, and the mitigations in place to contain this.
6. The ongoing inclement macro-economic environment, with inflation running at 3.9% in November (6.7% in September), and interest rates remain at 5.25%.

That the following be approved:

7. The interdepartmental budget movements that exceed £250k, as shown in Appendix A of the report (noting those under this threshold).
8. The approach proposed in principle in paragraph 19 of the report to reduce the HRA revenue contribution to capital in order to preserve reserves and to fund any resulting shortfall in the capital asset management programme through borrowing, noting the impact this will have on borrowing headroom and financing budgets.

14. MOTIONS REFERRED FROM COUNCIL ASSEMBLY

RESOLVED:

That the motion referred from council assembly as a recommendation to cabinet, set out below be agreed.

Giving our children and young people the best start in life

1. The opening statement of the council's delivery plan is "We will support children and young people to thrive".
2. We are delivering excellent schools:
 - a. Under this Southwark Labour administration, our council is delivering the best possible start in life for our children. The recent Ofsted report for our children's services was rated Good and reported that "Children are at the heart of practice in Southwark". With 97% of our schools rated good or outstanding, education in Southwark has never been stronger.
 - b. Today education outcomes for our children and young people are consistently above the national average with many of our schools among the best 10% state-funded schools in the country.
 - c. Children in our care are also achieving phenomenal results. This year the children in our care achieved straight A's, B's, ABC's, Distinctions and Merits, with one student achieving AAA* to meet (and then accept) their offer from St Hugh's College, Oxford University. Ten students successfully progressed on to their choice of further education. As corporate parents, we couldn't be more proud of what children in our care have achieved.
3. We are delivering Free Healthy School Meals:
 - a. This year marks 10 years since Southwark Council began providing universal free school meals for all primary school children, improving health outcomes for children and reducing the prevalence of obesity.
 - b. Now we are providing Free Healthy Schools for our nursery settings and this autumn we are piloting Free Healthy School meals for secondary school children in need.
 - c. This extra support is a lifeline for families through austerity and now the cost of living crisis. Along with our Holiday Fun programme makes sure that children in need have activities through the school holidays.
 - d. During the pandemic Southwark Council worked with the Teaching Schools Alliance and local residents to raise £500k for laptops and

tablets for any child who needs one.

4. We are committed to delivering support for 100% of children and young people with a mental health need, special education needs and or disabilities:
 - a. In 2020 Southwark council opened The Nest, our free mental health drop-in for children and young people. We invested £2 million into schools as part of our commitment to support 100% of children and young people with a diagnosable mental health need.
 - b. Southwark is home to 9,000 Children with Special Education Needs, 3,000 of those children are on Education Health and Care plans. We have special needs schools, and have launched a SEND strategy for faster assessments and more opportunities for children and young people with special needs and or disabilities.
5. We are delivering justice for our young people:
 - a. Our Youth Justice Team shows a consistently lower reoffending rate than the national average, and lower than London as a whole.
 - b. Our service rated Good and the lead inspector said “There’s a genuine community spirit about Southwark Youth Justice Service. From the staff to local volunteers to the children themselves, there is support for the service’s work and an ambition to succeed.”
6. We are delivering healthy lives:
 - a. The council is committed to enabling children in Southwark to lead happy, healthy and full lives.
 - b. We further note the refurbishment of play areas across the borough so that every child has access to a top quality place to play in their neighbourhood.
7. We are delivering a Youth New Deal:
 - a. Our New Deal for Young People has invested over £1.6 million in positive activities for young people
 - b. We have created 623 apprenticeships since May 2022, for people of all ages, and in particular our young people
 - c. We are building on the learning from the pilot of the sure start for adolescents – we are working with young people, parents and youth providers to deliver the vision for early intervention across the borough. This will align with our family hub development

- d. We have launched an Information Hub with up-to-the-minute real time information on employment, education and training opportunities
 - e. We are guaranteeing mental health support for young people in our borough with projects like, Southwark Space. Southwark Space has been able to do to this in an innovative way by creating a platform where young people can express themselves and tell their stories and link them to charities like the Sickle Cell Society who offer mentoring to young people with this disease.
8. This council nevertheless believes:
- a. That after thirteen years of cuts and austerity from Conservative and Liberal Democrat governments, not all families are thriving.
 - i. Early years services are underfunded and our nurseries in the absence of adequate funding are being decimated. A recent Early Education and teaching unions found that more than half of all maintained nursery schools in England had an in-year deficit in 2021-22, and 28 per cent of them had a cumulative deficit, with only 41 per cent had been able to set a balanced budget for 2022-23.
 - ii. In September 2023, a report commissioned by Action for Children, Barnardo's, The Children's Society, National Children's Bureau and NSPCC, found that spending on early intervention for children has reduced from just over £3.7 billion in 2010-11, to just over £2 billion in 2021-22 - a fall of almost half (46%), while spending on late intervention services grew from around £6 billion to £8.8 billion, again an increase of almost half (46%)
 - iii. 8.3 At the same, the government Early Intervention Grant fell from £2.8 billion to £1.1 billion, a 60% fall in funding that was specifically provided to prevent children and young people and families falling into crisis before they get help and support.
 - b. There is therefore a vital need to invest in early intervention and prevention.
 - i. We are continuing to see high levels of complex need in Southwark and increasing demand for support to give our children and young people a good start in life.
 - ii. There has been a 100% increase in the number of children with the most complex special educational needs and disabilities –up from 1,421 in 2015 to 2,956 in 2023.
 - iii. Children and young people in the borough are more likely to face

poverty and deprivation than the older age groups in Southwark.

- iv. The Children's Commissioner for England's childhood vulnerability index, consistently ranks Southwark in the highest 10% for key areas of concern for children's wellbeing in the home:
 - Some 5% of children in Southwark live in households where an adult has an alcohol or drug dependency
 - Some 8% of children in Southwark live in households where an adult experienced domestic abuse in the last year
 - Some 18% of children live in households where an adult has severe mental ill-health symptoms
 - A massive 23% of children live in households where an adult has one of the above risks; in total 4,360 (7%) of children live in households where an adult has two or more of the above risks; and 1% of children live in households where an adult has all three of the above risks.
9. Council assembly calls on the cabinet to support children and young people to thrive, and therefore to prioritise:
 - a. Closing the gap in life chances for our most vulnerable and disadvantaged children and families.
 - b. Increasing identification of special educational needs and disabilities in the early years, and intervening earlier to support families with children with SEND.
 - c. Making sure all children are school-ready at age 5
 - d. Work with our health and early years system to deliver the start for life programme
 - e. Developing the multi-agency offer and support to parents of children and adolescents to reduce the incidence of issues such as serious youth violence, exploitation, and the rate of teenagers entering care
 - f. Ensuring the best start for life for all children by ensuring more parenting support for new parents, more access to support around perinatal mental health concerns, and increasing the breastfeeding rates.
 - g. Empowering local communities themselves to develop and drive the local offer of services through our Family Hubs.
10. This council resolves to:

- a. Inspired by the London Challenge, set up a Southwark Challenge to close the gap in outcomes for our children and young people. This will be representative of schools, early year's settings, social care, housing, youth services, the voluntary sector, health, children's mental health and youth justice.
- b. Realise the massive opportunity for our partnership services and communities to work more closely together to intervene earlier and improve outcomes for our children and families and realise the benefits and opportunities to reinvest those benefits in earlier support.
- c. Bring our residents, community and partners together for an Early Help/Supporting Families Summit to design together, in a people powered way, the future state of our support system.
- d. To build on the missions developed through the Southwark 2030 consultation and engagement exercise to develop a single borough vision and missions for the present and futures of our children and young people.
- e. Work within the council and with partners to marshal our social value, power and influence to advocate and create every possible opportunity for our most disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people, those with special educational needs and disabilities, our children in care, and those facing the starkest inequalities in our society.
- f. Work to transform our whole borough supporting families system away from siloed services in single centralised spaces into integrated neighbourhood delivery arrangements through our Family Hubs.
- g. Work with our partners to take the opportunity to integrate and pool resources and assets to incrementally move from a place of investing in crisis to investing in prevention.
- h. Close the gap in life chances for our most vulnerable and disadvantaged children and families.
- i. Increase identification of special educational needs and disabilities in the early years, and intervening earlier to support families with children with SEND and make Southwark an exemplar in child and family centred SEND services.
- j. Make sure all children are school ready at age 5.
- k. Expand our offer of Free Healthy School Meals programme to secondary schools for pupils in families affected by the Universal Credit threshold.

- l. Develop the multi-agency offer and support to parents of children with adolescents –to reduce the incidence of issues such as serious youth violence, exploitation, and the rate of teenagers entering care.
- m. Ensure the best start for life for all children –by ensuring more parenting support for new parents, more access to support around perinatal mental health concerns, and increasing the breastfeeding rates.
- n. Empower local communities through people power, to develop and drive the local offer of services through our Family Hubs.
- o. Support the election of a government that will:
 - i. Make it a mission to break down the barriers to opportunity FOR every child, at every stage, and shatter the class ceiling.
 - ii. Create a modern childcare system with breakfast clubs in every primary school to give children the best start.
 - iii. Make sure there is a world class teacher in every classroom, recruiting 6,500 new staff, paid for by ending tax breaks for private schools.
 - iv. Introduce a broader curriculum, developing creativity, digital and speaking skills that ensure young people leave school ready for work and ready for life.
 - v. Expand apprenticeships and skills training to spread opportunity for all.

Protecting Southwark Parks from Anti-Social Behaviour

That the motion referred from council assembly as a recommendation to cabinet, set out below be agreed.

1. Council assembly notes
 - a. We know how much residents value our award winning parks and green spaces. We will protect and invest in them, as well as creating new ones, ensuring that everyone has access to nature. Our satisfaction rates for our parks are between 90% and 96%.
 - b. Parks teams provide vital support to our many and diverse friends of groups and other volunteers throughout the borough, helping with planting activities, supplying materials and offering advice and supporting grant funding bids for park improvements. The average yearly number of volunteer hours delivered across our parks is 30,000, with thousands more hours delivered in other settings, green spaces, nature reserves and woodlands.
 - c. Groups are also consulted with as vital stakeholders for new

development applications, park improvement projects, events and filming projects. We have a £35m capital improvement programme for our parks and a £5m tree planting delivery plan that will see Southwark exceed 100,000 directly maintained trees.

- d. Developing strong relationships with “Friends of...” groups is key to fostering valuable community engagement, maximising the enjoyment of our parks and open spaces for the widest range of our residents.
- e. We have a team of six officers who provide a vital service in tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB) across our parks. Regular visits are undertaken to sites, issues are dealt with using a calm, friendly and educative approach. If necessary, further action is taken for breaches of parks bylaws or escalated to the police in order to tackle criminal activity.
- f. We are very proud to have successfully retained all 30 Green Flag Awards this year for our outstanding parks and open spaces. This prestigious status stands as a testament to the relentless efforts made by volunteers, community groups, park staff and our contractors Quadron/Idverde, in maintaining well-managed, safe and welcoming open spaces for park-goers.
- g. We are equally proud to have won the overall Good Parks for London award for 2022-2023 which has recognised outstanding performance and innovation across a wide range of criteria, including community engagement.
- h. The grounds maintenance contract has recently entered a 3-year extension period with Quadron/Idverde following successful delivery over the initial 7-year term. Performance tracked through KPIs has consistently scored at above 95% along with positive feedback from members of the public, “Friends of...” groups and our other stakeholders.
- i. At Nursery Row Park, a partnership between Parks, Parks Liaison Officers, the Safer Neighbourhoods Team and a mediator resulted in an improvement in ASB reported by residents living to the north of the park. The same partnership was reformed in response to the recent increase in ASB and reported criminal behaviour when a new group also became active on site. This has resulted in considerable resources being allocated to Nursery Row Park in attempting to resolve issues.
- j. This model of collaboration is one we adopt across all of our parks, green spaces and other areas of public realm. All year round, we work to design out ASB, prevent crime and deliver activities in our parks that support the safety and well-being of all our residents in these natural settings.

- k. We develop specific strategies to tackle ASB and crime for organised events of varying size and complexity in our strategic parks and larger green spaces.
2. Council assembly resolves:
- a. To continue to work with our Parks Liaison Officers, the Metropolitan Police Service and local residents to find a resolution to the issue of ASB in our parks.
 - b. To develop plans to improve areas of Nursery Row Park through capital funding; with the designs being subject to public consultation.
 - c. To invest in all our parks, providing large scale capital investment in sports facilities, new and refurbished playgrounds, improved open gym equipment and better walking and cycling routes to connect them to communities around them.
 - d. To tackle the ecological emergency, by making our council the first in inner London to have over 100,000 trees, and creating more parks, woodlands, nature sites, wildflower meadows and community gardens. People, birds, bats and bees can all thrive in Southwark.
 - e. To deliver even more high quality green spaces, working with local people to create more parks, nature sites, woodlands and urban planting. This includes brand new parks at Canada Water and off the Old Kent Road, and strengthening further through the council's response to the recent land commission.

Homelessness & Rough Sleeping

That the motion referred from council assembly as a recommendation to cabinet, set out below be agreed.

1. Council Assembly notes:
- a. 13 years of government cuts by Conservative and Liberal Democrat governments have left local services for single homeless people with a huge funding gap.
 - b. Between 1997 and 2010, the last Labour Government cut rough sleeping in England by three quarters, to the lowest level on record. Since the Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties came to power in 2010 the number of people sleeping rough in England has more than doubled.
 - c. That rough sleeping in London is on the increase, up 12% on the same

time last year.

- d. That according to the latest figures, homelessness is up by 10%, with nearly 105,000 households in temporary accommodation, in England, last March, the highest number ever recorded.
 - e. The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) covers only 2.3% of properties advertised to rent in London. This is making it harder and harder to secure temporary accommodation in the capital.
 - f. That collectively London Councils are spending £52m every month on temporary accommodation.
 - g. That these figures are rapidly worsening as a result of Home Office policies relating to the asylum process, and in particular the decision to give successful applicants just 7 days' notice to quit their accommodation following a positive decision.
 - h. That Southwark is seeing a dramatic increase in homelessness applications resulting from Home Office cases, with a tenfold increase observed in the last two months.
2. Council Assembly recognises:
- a. That Southwark Council has a goal to support everyone who is on the street to access a home of their own.
 - b. That Southwark is also committed to being a 'Borough of Sanctuary' giving a warm welcome to refugees and assisting with resettlement.
 - c. That in 2010, homelessness figures were less than half what they are today, and rough sleeping virtually eliminated, thanks to the focused efforts of the last Labour government
 - d. That the Council is continuing to invest in homelessness prevention with family mediation, and has set up 'surgeries' to support refugees with their housing options
 - e. That the work of public and voluntary sector partners is vital, including Robes, BEAM, the Manna Centre, Southwark Law Centre, and St Mungo's, in our ambition to end homelessness and rough sleeping
 - f. That partnership, innovation and advocacy will all be essential this year as we approach the winter months
 - g. Southwark has the largest council house-building programme in the country.

- h. We must build affordable homes in order to end homelessness. That is why since 2014 we have built or started building over 3,000 new council homes. It is also the reason the council works with external partners to ensure that social rent homes are delivered as part of every major schemes. This has led, directly, to a net increase of at least 3,600 approved social rent homes in Southwark since 2014 – 2015.
3. Council Assembly resolves:
- a. To write to both the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities, and the Home Secretary, requesting urgent action to deal with the crisis in rough sleeping and temporary accommodation including:
 - i. An immediate increase in the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) so that it covers the bottom 30% of rents in the local area
 - ii. Additional financial support through an increase to the Homelessness Prevention Grant, recognising the additional costs that are falling on local authorities
 - iii. An increase in funding for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) to support residents struggling with rents in a cost of living crisis
 - iv. An urgent review of Home Office policies to prevent refugees, including those who have arrived from Afghanistan and Sudan, becoming homeless.
 - v. A Cross-Departmental Strategy to end homelessness and rough sleeping.
 - vi. A long-term commitment to dramatically increase the number of social rent homes being built across the country, with an increase in dedicated grant to support this.
 - b. To request publication of a ‘winter plan’ bringing together borough-wide efforts to prevent rough sleeping over the coming months
 - c. To develop a new Homelessness Strategy for adoption in 2024 which takes account of the rapidly deteriorating context
 - d. Ask the council to explore every lever available to build and deliver social rent homes in Southwark.
 - e. Continue the work to guarantee support to everyone who is on the street in Southwark to access a home of their own and campaign for the government action needed to end rough sleeping for good
 - f. Calls on the next Government with a plan to end homelessness, get Britain building again and deliver the biggest boost to affordable housing for a generation.

Ending Violence Against Women and Girls

That the motion referred from council assembly as a recommendation to cabinet, set out below be agreed.

1. Council assembly notes
 - a. Sexual violence, sexual harassment, and domestic abuse remain endemic in modern society, highlighted most recently by the appalling murders of Sabina Nessa, Sarah Everard, sisters Bibba Henry and Nicole Smallman, and Elianne Andam.
 - b. The distressing statistics that show at least 1 in 4 women have been raped or sexually assaulted as an adult, and that the conviction rate of reported rapes is below 1%.
 - c. The Casey review that included a sobering quote from an officer that states that 'you might as well say it's legal in London' in relation to low detection rates of rape and serious sexual assault.
 - d. The lived experience of survivors of rape, sexual assault, and domestic violence, unknowable to those who have not gone through it.
 - e. The recent consultation conducted by the council last year, and the valuable contributions made by councillors, residents, and organisations.
 - f. The existing council strategy, which has a time frame of 2019-2024.
 - g. The recommendations made by the Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Commission on this subject, and the Cabinet's subsequent response earlier this year.
 - h. The launch of the 'Through Her Eyes' campaign earlier this year. The video was accompanied by a poster campaign focused in three local areas disproportionately impacted by violence against women and girls. Since its launch in Q2 2022/23, the campaign has registered 396,400 social media views, surpassing our target of 200,000. The campaign has been circulated to all secondary schools and youth provisions in the borough. The campaign has been circulated to all Metropolitan Police Service Safer Schools Officers operating across London as part of a suite of materials delivered and is therefore available to 1,033 schools across the whole of London.
 - i. The cross party, cross-borough initiatives such as the Lambeth and Southwark 'safe havens' network, where 39 premises will function as places of safety and support, with staff receiving specialised training.

- j. The intersectional nature of misogynistic hate crime and violence, including the impact of race, sexuality, and gender identity.

2. Council assembly acknowledges

- a. After a consultation the council identified the 5 hotspots where women told the council they felt less safe. All 5 of these had an Environmental Visual Audit undertaken by a specialist design out crime officer and each of which now has an action plan of short medium and longer term works. Not all identified lighting as an issue they include other works. The first audit to have works carried out identified lighting remedial works as an issue, and these works are now underway including LEDs and some upgrades designed as part of the capital programme. The council has also put in place, enhanced patrols by council Wardens and Anti-Social Behaviour Officers complemented by enhanced police activity. In addition to the audits, walk and talks have also taken place in the area with Police and local residents to identify any concerns and deal with them. This area of work is included in the council delivery plan and regularly monitored.
- b. The Safe Spaces scheme was launched in 2021/22, providing safe locations across the borough where victims of domestic abuse can access support services. The scheme was initially targeted at Children and Family Centres, primary and secondary schools. This year saw the expansion of the scheme to other community sectors including libraries and leisure centres, cultural and arts venues, places of worship, community venues. 48 venues have now signed up to the scheme.
- c. Southwark also launched its Safe Havens scheme jointly with Lambeth. The safe haven network is the first of its kind in London to cross borough boundaries in a joint bid to target harassment hotspot areas along their border. Staff at the 39 licensed premises and other businesses in both boroughs undergo bespoke training with the Safer Business Network, a crime reduction agency. Women who feel unsafe or have been harassed can get assistance at safe haven businesses, including staff helping organise safe transport home or calling family, friends or the police.
- d. The council developed the Women's Safety Charter, with venues in the borough. The charter is based on a number of key principles, which ensure that all staff working at licensed premises act in a responsible and supportive manner, taking all reports seriously, sending out a clear message that female harassment in their premises will not be tolerated.

3. Council assembly believes:

- a. That male violence against women and girls is part of a broader culture of misogyny in society.

- b. More focus should be placed on changing men's behaviour than on women taking action to make themselves safer.
 - c. That despite positive work by the council and local charities, more can always be done, and the opportunity to reaffirm a commitment to end violence against women and girls should not be passed.
4. Council assembly resolves:
- a. To encourage all male councillors to take the White Ribbon pledge: to never use, excuse, or remain silent about men's violence against women.
 - b. To call out all forms of sexual objectification and all its negative outcomes, and encourage others to do the same.
 - c. To champion the wellbeing of everyone, particularly of women and girls, and encouraging the education of everyone, particularly of men and boys.
 - d. To have a zero-tolerance approach to misogyny and backs calls for crimes shown to be motivated by misogyny to be regarded as hate crimes and ensure this is meaningful in the workplace and in interactions with residents.
 - e. Finish the roll out of upgraded street lighting across the whole borough to LED, which provides better quality lighting and helps to improve street safety.
 - f. To ask the Cabinet to re-launch the Women's Safety Charter, encompassing a range of regional and nation campaigns, including 'Ask for Angela', to ensure an ever-evolving programme to tackle women's safety across the borough by delivering a robust and standardised training programme to licensed premises whilst at the same time, increasing public awareness on the topic.

Towards a greater provision of public toilets

That the motion referred from council assembly as a recommendation to cabinet, set out below be agreed.

1. Council assembly notes:
- a. We are committed to improving access to public toilets for all our residents and visitors. This access is important to enable people to get

out and about, shop, socialise and live life to the full. We are exploring ways to improve access to toilet facilities.

- b. The council has created a directory and map of all the facilities currently available, including opening times.
 - c. We currently manage and maintain 33 public toilets across the borough.
 - d. Changing Places Toilets (CPTs) are fully accessible toilets that include a hoist, adult-size changing bench and enough space for people with complex care needs to receive safe and dignified personal care away from home. There are currently seven such facilities in Southwark.
 - e. From January 2021 a significant change was made to building regulations, requiring the installation of CPTs in any new builds or major refurbishment.
 - f. In April 2022, the Children & Adult Services secured £120,000 from the government's Changing Places scheme to increase provision in Southwark.
 - g. The funding is being used to develop provision in two locations, in line with feedback from key stakeholders.
 - h. The council reached out to local shops, coffee chains and other public buildings to join the Community Toilet Scheme. Unfortunately, the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown rules made it impossible to continue the work of the Community Toilet Scheme.
2. Council assembly further notes:
- a. In January 2023, the council committed to explore the costs and practicalities of providing free period products in all of the council's public toilets and buildings, including the town hall, libraries and community centres.
 - b. In April 2023, Corporate Facilities Management drew up plans to install free vending machines at 63 sites and work on this has begun. These machines cost £115 per unit. This includes six additional vending machines, which are being installed in the Tooley Street and Queen's Road Council offices.
 - c. Since April, the council has spent circa £7,500 per month on providing free sanitary products in council buildings.
3. Council resolves to:
- a. Open new CPTs at Peckham Pulse and Dulwich Park, and explore

plans for other CPTs in Southwark

- b. As part of our strategy to create a connected network of streets, provide additional facilities to support pedestrian journeys, including information on where to find toilets and other local amenities.
- c. Explore ways to reinvigorate the Community Toilet Scheme, ensuring the way forward represents good value for money for the council and builds on existing relationships with businesses.
- d. Continue the roll out of additional sanitary product vending machines in council owned buildings.

Southwark Stands with the Trans Community

That the motion referred from council assembly as a recommendation to cabinet, set out below be agreed.

1. Council assembly notes:
 - a. Southwark is the proud of home of a large, diverse and thriving LGBTQ+ community.
 - b. Results of the 2021 Census show Southwark to have the fourth largest population of LGB+ people and the fifth largest community of people identifying as trans or non-binary in England.
 - c. Southwark Council is proud to have worked with our LGBTQ+ community and the Mayor of London to open an LGBTQ+ centre in our borough to serve our whole city. The centre provides a safe, inclusive, intergenerational and intersectional space run by the community for the community. Work is now underway to build a permanent LGBTQ+ cultural space in Blackfriars in partnership with the community.
 - d. This year, Southwark held its first 'Pride in Southwark' event to celebrate the LGBTQ+ community, held at our LGBTQ+ centre. At this event, the leader of the council and leader of the opposition came together to commit to making Southwark a safer, more equal place for everyone in the LGBTQ+ community.
2. Council assembly notes with concern:
 - a. Hate crimes against trans people have increased by 186% in the past five years.
 - b. In London, we have seen an increase in LGBTQ+ hate crimes, including two violent attacks recently in neighbouring Lambeth.

- c. Some people, including the government, have sought to create division in our community through the stoking of culture wars on LGBTQ+ issues.

3. Council assembly resolves to:

- a. Stand united with trans, non-binary and gender diverse people, assert that trans rights are human rights and reject attempts to create division in our society for political gain.

- b. Call on national government to:

- Introduce full, no loopholes, trans-inclusive ban on conversion therapy.
- Reform the gender recognition law. The current process of gender recognition is intrusive, outdated and humiliating. The government must introduce a modernised, simplified and reformed process, taking into account international evidence of what works effectively.
- Strengthen and equalise the law on hate crime to further protect trans people by extending the aggravated offences regime for all protected characteristics.

- c. Ask Cabinet to:

- Prioritise the delivery of permanent LGBTQ+ cultural space in Blackfriars in partnership with the community to open in 2024/25 financial year.
- Work with Southwark's LGBTQ+ community to develop and deliver an action plan to address inequalities experienced by LGBTQ+ people in the borough.
- Produce and implement an updated Equalities Framework for Southwark to further promote equality for all those with protected characteristics recognised under the Equality Act 2010.
- Ensure this work addresses the intersectional inequalities that compound the impact on life chances for many people.
- Continue to ensure trans people have access to the services they need, including changing rooms, homeless and domestic violence services, in line with the council's duties under the 2010 Equality Act, including the legal requirements for single sex exemptions.
- Create gender neutral bathrooms in addition to single sex

bathrooms in council buildings, and work with local businesses across Southwark to try and improve the provision of gender neutral toilets across the borough.

- Ensure the council's equal opportunities, recruitment and anti-bullying and harassment policies make specific reference to trans equality and ensure that trans equality is included in all induction and training, including staff handbooks.
- Ensure the council continues to take a zero tolerance approach to all forms of hate crime, including against LGBTQ+ people.
- Encourage services across the council to be sensitive to the preferred pronouns of staff and residents.

15. CREATION OF A NEW SENIOR MANAGEMENT POST: DIRECTOR, COMMUNICATIONS, ENGAGEMENT AND CHANGE

It was not possible to circulate the report five clear days in advance of the meeting. The chair agreed to accept the item as urgent because a decision was required to approve the new director role and so move forward with the timeline for implementation of the reorganisation of senior management arrangements for the strategy and communities department as set out to staff.

RESOLVED:

That the creation of a new post, director, communications, engagement and change be approved.

The meeting ended at 2.40pm.

CHAIR:

DATED:

DEADLINE FOR NOTIFICATION OF CALL-IN UNDER SECTION 17 OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES IS MIDNIGHT, THURSDAY 25 JANUARY 2024.

THE ABOVE DECISIONS WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTABLE UNTIL AFTER THAT DATE. SHOULD A DECISION OF THE CABINET BE CALLED-IN FOR SCRUTINY, THEN THE RELEVANT DECISION WILL BE HELD IN ABEYANCE PENDING THE OUTCOME OF SCRUTINY CONSIDERATION.