

Cabinet

Wednesday 17 January 2024

1.00 pm

Rooms GO2A, B and C, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

Membership

Councillor Kieron Williams (Chair)

Councillor Jasmine Ali

Councillor Evelyn Akoto

Councillor Stephanie Cryan

Councillor Helen Dennis

Councillor Natasha Ennin

Councillor Darren Merrill

Councillor James McAsh

Councillor Catherine Rose

Councillor Martin Seaton

Portfolio

Leader of the Council

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for
Children, Education and Refugees

Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing

Cabinet Member for Communities,
Democracy and Finance

Cabinet Member for New Homes and
Sustainable Development

Cabinet Member for Community Safety

Cabinet Member for Council Homes

Cabinet Member for the Climate Emergency,
Clean Air and Streets

Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods,
Leisure and Parks

Cabinet Member for Jobs, Skills and
Business

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Access to information

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Contact

Email: paula.thornton@southwark.gov.uk; constitutional.team@southwark.gov.uk

Members of the committee are summoned to attend this meeting

Althea Loderick

Chief Executive

Date: 9 January 2024



Cabinet

Wednesday 17 January 2024

1.00 pm

Rooms GO2A, B and C, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

Order of Business

Item No.	Title	Page No.
	PART A - OPEN BUSINESS	
	MOBILE PHONES	
	Mobile phones should be turned off or put on silent during the course of the meeting.	
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.	NOTICE OF INTENTION TO CONDUCT BUSINESS IN A CLOSED MEETING, AND ANY REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED	
	To note the items specified which will be considered in a closed meeting.	
4.	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.	
5.	MINUTES	1 - 8
	To approve as a correct record the minutes of the open section of the meeting held on 5 December 2023.	

Item No.	Title	Page No.
6.	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)	
	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 public questions is midnight Thursday 11 January 2023.	
7.	DEPUTATION REQUESTS	
	To consider any deputation requests. The deadline for the receipt of deputation requests is midnight Thursday 11 January 2023.	
8.	CORPORATE PARENTING ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23	9 - 35
	To note the progress of corporate parenting strategy, areas of focus for 2024-25 and work of the corporate parenting committee.	
9.	LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE - REPORT AND ACTION PLAN	36 - 96
	To endorse the action plan which responds to the eleven recommendations from the Corporate Peer Challenge Report.	
10.	PLACEMENT POLICY FOR TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION AND PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR OFFERS	97 - 154
	To approve the placement policy for temporary accommodation (TA) and private rented sector offers (PRSO).	
11.	HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - FINAL RENT AND CHARGES REPORT 2024-25	155 - 173
	To agree recommendations associated with the housing revenue account rent setting and budget for 2024 – 2025.	
12.	POLICY AND RESOURCES STRATEGY: CAPITAL MONITORING REPORT 2023-24	174 - 213
	To approve the virements and variations to the general fund and housing investment capital programme and the new capital bids and note related recommendations.	
13.	POLICY AND RESOURCES STRATEGY: REVENUE MONITORING REPORT, 2023-24	214 - 235
	To note the forecast revenue outturn position and approve the interdepartmental budget movements and the approach proposed in principle to reduce the housing revenue account contribution to capital.	

14. MOTIONS REFERRED FROM COUNCIL ASSEMBLY

236 - 255

To consider the following motions referred from council assembly 22 November 2023:

- Giving our children and young people the best start in life
- Protecting Southwark Parks from anti-social behaviour
- Homelessness and rough sleeping
- Ending violence against women and girls
- Towards a greater provision of public toilets
- Southwark stands with the trans community.

DISCUSSION OF ANY OTHER OPEN ITEMS AS NOTIFIED AT THE START OF THE MEETING**EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The following items are included on the closed section of the agenda. The Proper Officer has decided that the papers should not be circulated to the press and public since they reveal confidential or exempt information as specified in paragraphs 1-7, Access to Information Procedure Rules of the Constitution. The specific paragraph is indicated in the case of exempt information.

The following motion should be moved, seconded and approved if the cabinet wishes to exclude the press and public to deal with reports revealing exempt information:

“That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1-7, Access to Information Procedure Rules of the Constitution.”

Item No.

Title

Page No.

PART B - CLOSED BUSINESS

**DISCUSSION OF ANY OTHER CLOSED ITEMS AS NOTIFIED AT THE
START OF THE MEETING AND ACCEPTED BY THE CHAIR AS
URGENT**

Date: 9 January 2024



Cabinet

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Cabinet held on Tuesday 5 December 2023 at 11.00 am at the Council Offices, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

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

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Helen Dennis and Catherine Rose.

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

The chair gave notice of the following late items:

- Item 14: Policy And Resources: Budget Setting 2024-25
- Item 15: Council Tax Base 2024-25.

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

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

No closed items for this meeting.

4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

The following members declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of Item 13: Housing Revenue Account – Indicative 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 17 October, 2023 be approved as correct record and signed by the chair.

6. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

1. Tristan Honeyborne

Please can Cllr McAsh confirm how much public money was spent pursuing the 'borough-wide' CPZ, in including but not limited to the cost of communications, consultations, legal advice, traffic monitoring and external consultants, and provide evidence for the assertion that controlled parking zones are needed in Dulwich Village and Nunhead?"

2. Simone Brown

Will the council now suspend the Trafalgar Extension CPZ, cover the signs, refund permit fees and PCNs, and commit to a comprehensive review similar to those carried out in Nunhead and Queens Road, aligning with the acknowledged ineffectiveness of a one-size-fits-all CPZ approach?"

As the questioners were not in attendance, the leader confirmed that arrangements would be made for responses to be sent after 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:
 - AGE UK as part of the London Loos campaign
 - Southwark Refugee Communities forum
 - Support of controlled parking zones (CPZ) in Dulwich from Scoot School run.
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. SOUTHWARK SCHOOL STANDARDS REPORT 2022-2023

Reema Reed, Headteacher at Hollydale primary school and Joe Bell, Headteacher at St Johns and St Clements CE primary school were in attendance to provide their input to the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Southwark School Standards Report, 2022-2023 be noted.
2. That it be agreed that the 2024-2025 Southwark School Standards Report will include an increased focus on closing the gaps in pupil attainment.

9. SOUTHWARK YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE INSPECTION OUTCOME**RESOLVED:**

That the good outcome of His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation's inspection of Southwark Youth Justice Service be noted.

10. SOUTHWARK GREEN FINANCE - COMMUNITY MUNICIPAL INVESTMENT (CMI)**RESOLVED:**

1. That the launch of a Community Municipal Investment (CMI) opportunity in the borough, which will support the delivery of projects within the council's climate action plan be approved.
2. That the scale of ambition of the CMI programme, with a target to raise up to £6m of funding by 2030, which would be the largest CMI to date offered by a council in the UK be noted.
3. That the adoption of the Southwark Green Finance Framework (SGFF) for

CMI, which sets out how the key principles of the scheme will operate and the types of projects that will be funded be approved.

4. That the signing of the Green Finance Institute (GFI) Local Climate Bond Pledge be approved.

11. ECONOMIC STRATEGY 2023-30

RESOLVED:

That the Economic Strategy 2023-30 as set out in Appendix 1 of the report be approved.

12. SOUTHWARK LOCAL LIST ADOPTION

RESOLVED:

That the draft Southwark Local List be approved for adoption.

13. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - INDICATIVE 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.

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 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 be agreed with effect from 1 April 2024.

6. That officers be instructed to undertake a review of garage policy including the concessionary scheme and to bring forward proposals following consultation with residents 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 23-39 of the report be agreed with effect from 1 April 2024.

14. POLICY AND RESOURCES: BUDGET SETTING 2024-25

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 the council were committed to publishing budget proposals at the earliest possible opportunity to ensure that they were available to the public for comments and questions. Presenting the report to cabinet on 5 December 2023 gave the opportunity for debate prior to presentation of budget figures to February cabinet. Under the council's constitution, there is a requirement for the overview and scrutiny committee to review and challenge budget proposals and this is due to take place in January 2024.

RESOLVED:

That the following be noted:

1. The updates from the autumn statement delivered on the 22 November 2023 and the budget challenge process.
2. The updated budget gap for 2024-25 of £6.7m; and for the following 2 years £4.5m and £4.6m respectively.
3. The proposed options to help achieve a balanced 2024-25 budget and indicative savings for 2025-26 and 2026-27 together with departmental narratives (Appendices A to E of the report).
4. Appendix F of the report which details the draft fees and charges schedules.
5. Strategic directors will continue to work with their respective cabinet members to find additional savings option.
6. The intention is to prepare a balanced one year 2024-25 budget, together with indicative savings for the following two years, for recommendation by cabinet, in advance of approval by council assembly in February 2024.
7. Equality impact assessments are ongoing and that a cumulative impact assessment will be presented to cabinet as part of the budget update in February.
8. Officers will undertake further consultation for new budget options where

necessary or appropriate.

9. The appendices A-F will be considered by the overview and scrutiny committee on 22 January 2024, prior to February 2024 cabinet.

That the following be approved:

10. The write-off of one NNDR debt of £292,849.08 which is irrecoverable (Appendix G) of the report.

15. COUNCIL TAX BASE 2024-25

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 as the council tax base calculation for 2024-25 must be made between 1 December 2023 and 31 January 2024. The figure is used for revenue budget setting purposes and has historically been reported to members at the December cabinet.

RESOLVED:

1. That the council tax base for 2024-25 is set at 112,166 (109,174 in 2023-24) band D equivalent dwellings (Appendix A of the report) be agreed.
2. That the schedule of discounts and exemptions in paragraph 12 of the report be recommended to council assembly, including the premiums applicable for long-term empty dwellings.
3. That the assumed council tax collection level for 2024-25 should remain at 97.20% (2023-24 97.20%) be agreed.
4. That the 2024-25 council tax base for St. Mary Newington parish is set at 12,881 (12,509 in 2023-24) band D equivalent dwellings be agreed.
5. That the proposed continuation of the current council tax section 13A (1)(c) policy¹ covering discretionary relief terms (refer to paragraphs 17 to 18) be agreed:
 - to continue council tax discretionary relief (0% to 100%) for young people leaving care aged 18 to 24 years for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025
 - to continue foster carers' discretionary relief (0% to 100%) for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.
6. That it be agreed to implement a 100% premium on second homes from 1 April 2025 as per the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023.

¹ Southwark council tax section 13A (1)(c) policy

7. That the following be noted concerning the council tax reduction scheme:
 - no changes to the council tax reduction scheme (CTRS) for 2024-25, as set out in paragraphs 19 to 23 of the report
 - any minor and consequential amendments to the CTRS written policy are to remain delegated to the strategic director of finance in consultation with the monitoring officer.
8. That the change in definition of long-term empty properties for the purposes of the 100% premium as set out in paragraph 12 of the report be noted.

16. GATEWAY 0 - STRATEGIC OPTIONS ASSESSMENT DOMESTIC ABUSE AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE SERVICES

RESOLVED:

1. That the strategic options assessment for delivery of the domestic abuse and gender based violence services for Southwark Council be approved and that the next steps set out in the report be noted.
2. That the decision to approve the gateway 1 procurement strategy for the domestic abuse and gender based violence services be delegated to the strategic director for environment, neighbourhoods and growth, in consultation with the cabinet member for community safety.

17. CREATION OF A NEW SENIOR MANAGEMENT POST: ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

RESOLVED:

That the creation of a new senior management post, assistant director of repairs be approved.

MOTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in category 3 of paragraph 10.4 of the access to information procedure rules of the Southwark Constitution.

The following is a summary of the decisions taken in the closed part of the meeting.

18. MINUTES**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the closed section of the meeting held on 17 October 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the chair.

The meeting ended at 1.00pm

CHAIR:

DATED:

DEADLINE FOR NOTIFICATION OF CALL-IN UNDER SECTION 17 OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES IS MIDNIGHT, WEDNESDAY 13 DECEMBER 2023.

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.

Item No. 8.	Classification: Open	Date: 17 January 2023	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Corporate Parenting Annual Report 2022-23	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Cabinet Member:		Councillor Jasmine Ali - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education	

FOREWORD – COUNCILLOR JASMINE ALI, DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION

I am delighted to introduce the Corporate Parenting Annual Report to Cabinet. I am equally delighted to share this foreword with the fantastic chair of Speaker Box, Rukiya Davenport.

We know that care experience in the UK can be a mixed bag for many. Even with a powerful parent that is the state, the outcomes for children in care are not always as positive as they should be. Yet here in Southwark many things are going well. We have a dedicated social work team, highly experienced and loving foster carers and an effective corporate parenting committee that is committed to improving outcomes for children and young people in our care.

In 2018 when I became chair, I worked closely with the now Director of Children's Services, councillor colleagues and Speaker Box, our fantastic group of young people who give voice to the issues important for children in care, to make sure that all of our meetings are representative of our young people. We hold thematic meetings covering the issues that young people see as their personal priorities such as housing, education, health, immigration and employment. Young people tell us that housing is a key priority. Therefore the Housing cabinet member and two of his leading officers regularly update the committee on progress on accommodation. Our young people ensured that we lobby the Home Office on the many issues confronting our unaccompanied asylum seeking young people in care.

We introduced a series of co-opted committee members including a foster carer, employment specialist and policy expert – all with care experience. Outcomes for children in our care are the best that we have seen to date. We are working hard so that we can have great outcomes for all of the 420 children in our care and all of the 708 young people who are care leavers. The report highlights includes 94% of care leavers supported in suitable accommodation, with many benefiting from more housing closer to Southwark. The report also highlights success of bespoke education plans and many the young people getting their first choice university. This year that included a care leaver overcoming major challenges to get a place at Oxford University. Thanks to Speaker Box we have a number of events run by our young people in care for our young people in care – including the fortnightly sessions by Speaker Box called Creative Collective bringing young people leaving our care together.

After five years we had our 'Big Ofsted' that rated our children's services good across the piece, including this time unlike last time our Care Leavers service. Then as 2023 drew to a close and Christmas approached we had an Ofsted Care Leavers 'Focussed Visit'. We have not received a formal letter yet but the verbal feedback was excellent.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone at Southwark council for their part in the success of this report. Not least the children and young people themselves and of course the Corporate Parenting Committee: Cllrs Charlie Smith, Naima Ali, Natasha Ennin, Esme Dobson, Darren Merrill, and Rachel Bentley. Officers: Alasdair Smith, Helen Woolgar, Andrew Fowler, Clare Ryan, Dechaun Malcolm, Elaine Reid, Usha Singh and Paula Thornton.

Going forward we know well that there is more to do. We know well that the challenges that confront us all remain like the post Covid-19 landscape, the persistent cost of living crisis and the impact of thirteen years of cuts to local government services. However we must remain optimistic and ambitious for our children. As this report shows our approach can work, as long as we remember that nothing is too good for the children in our care.

FOREWORD – RUKIYA DAVENPORT CHAIR OF SPEAKERBOX, SOUTHWARK CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL

I am Rukiya, I am a creative. I love performing and creating art. I am also the chair of the Children in Care Council and advocacy service, Speakerbox. We do social outings, trips and provide support. We empower children and young people who have experience of being in care to have a voice while providing a safe space for them to feel at home and meet other people. We want them to find a home with us.

As someone who is care experienced I use this to drive my creativity and get involved in Speakerbox. I get involved from the inside to develop and change services using my experiences to drive change. I want to encourage all children and young people to have their voices heard, drive change and advocate for themselves.

This report is to let you know what the Corporate Parenting Committee has been doing over the last year and for the coming year. Many young people supported by Speakerbox have been very involved in meeting with the committee making sure what is important to us is spoken about and our voices listened to.

Speakerbox is for children and young people who have experience of being in care. We want to continue to encourage more to come forward so we can hear what is important to them, to influence what the council should be doing and prioritising to support them now and in the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That cabinet:

1. Note the report including progress of Corporate Parenting Strategy, areas of focus for 2024-25 and work of the Corporate Parenting Committee.
2. Note a child friendly easy read version of the report that will be shared widely with children in care and care leavers and made publicly available and easily accessible on the council's website

PURPOSE OF REPORT

3. The purpose of this report is to provide cabinet with a report in accordance with para 9 of Part 3J of the council's constitution relating to the Corporate Parenting Committee, describing one of its roles and functions to report to the council's cabinet on an annual basis¹.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

4. This report provides an overview of the council delivery of its corporate parenting duties during 2022-23. It sets out our achievements in delivering our Corporate Parenting Strategy as well as what more we need to do. It describes the work of the Corporate Parenting Committee in delivering its role to *secure real and sustained improvements in the life chances of looked after children.*²

¹ [Southwark Corporate Parenting Committee – Purpose of the Committee](#)

² [Southwark Corporate Parenting Committee – Purpose of the Committee](#)

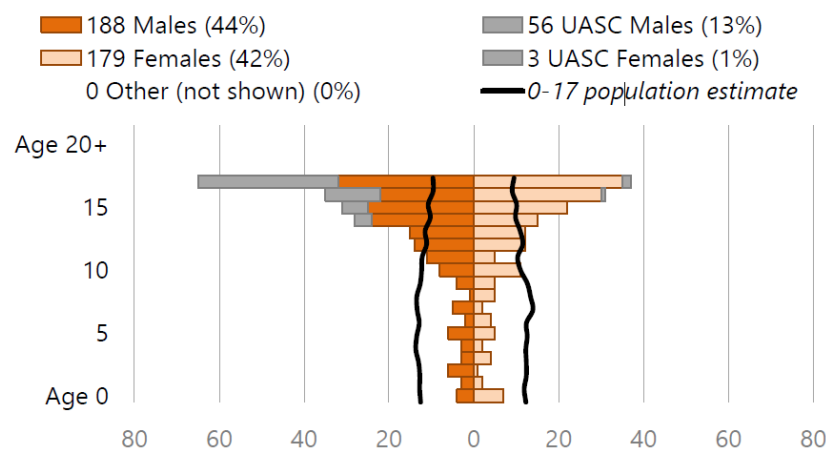
What is a corporate parent?

5. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 says that when a child comes into the care of the local authority, or is under 25 and was in the care of the local authority for at least 13 weeks after their 14th birthday, the authority becomes their corporate parent. This means that they should follow the core principles enshrined in the 2017 legislation to:
 - act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people
 - encourage them to express their views, wishes and feelings, and take them into account
 - make sure they have access to services
 - make sure children and young people are safe, with stable home lives, relationships and education or work
 - promote high aspirations and try to secure the best outcomes for them
 - prepare them for adulthood and independent living.
6. As corporate parents, it's every councillor's responsibility to make sure that the council is meeting these duties towards children in care and care leavers.
7. Corporate parenting means the whole council, its public and private sector partners, taking collective responsibility to achieve the outcomes for our children in care and those who have left out care that we would want for our own children.
8. Being an excellent corporate parent means we should be tirelessly ambitious for our children and unashamed at using every tool at our disposal to provide for our children, giving them access to opportunities, offering every ounce of support we can to ensure they grow up to live their best lives.
9. The Lead Member for Children's Services and Director of Children's Services share a statutory responsibility to ensure that *all officers and members of the local authority [act] as effective and caring corporate parents for looked after children, with key roles in improving their educational attainment, providing stable and high quality placements and proper planning for when they leave care*³;

³ [Statutory guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member for Children's Services – April 2013](#)

Who are the children in our care?

10. At the end of March 2023 there were 420 children in care, 8% less than April 2022. Southwark has a lower rate of children in care (64 per 10,000) than nationally (70 per 10,000), but more than the rate across London (52 per 10,000). 14% (58) of the children in our care at March 2023 were unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) compared to 7% nationally.



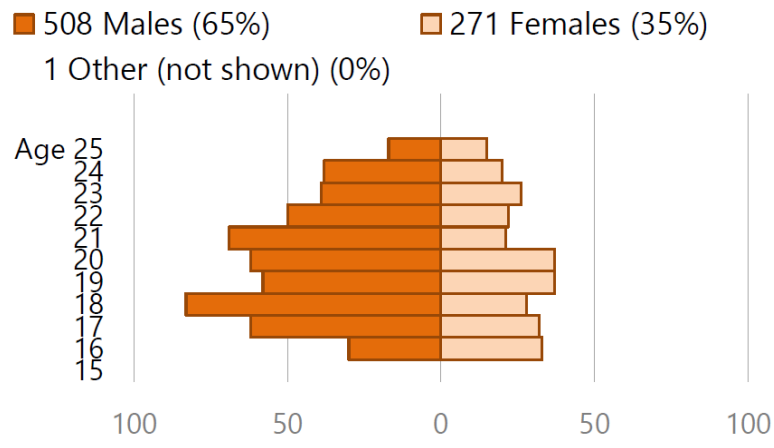
11. This is an historically low number, reflecting declining numbers over the last decade from over 600, against the national trend (3 percent over the last 20 years). Around half of all children in care enter at 16 or 17 years old.

	All CLA	Not UASC	UASC
White	22%	25%	2%
Mixed	22%	25%	2%
Asian or Asian British	5%	2%	25%
Black or black British	43%	46%	22%
Other ethnic group	9%	2%	49%
Not stated	0%	0%	0%
Not recorded	0%	0%	0%

12. 30% (65) of the children who left care in 2022-23 were supported by the service to return home to their parents in a planned way, compared to 18% nationally. A further 30% were supported to move into living independently.
13. 182 children came into our care in 2022-23 the majority (60%) were adolescents. Most children who came into our care also left care in the year (63%) the majority of those children spent less than a month in our care before they were supported to safely return home. 227 children left our care.
14. The rate of children entering care in 2022-23 was 27.6 per 10,000 compared to 40 per 10,000 in 2021-22, and against a national average of 26 per 10,000.
15. 98% of our children in care have an up to date annual health assessment compared to 89% nationally. 76% have an up to date dental check compared to 70% nationally.

Who are the young people we support as care leavers?

16. At the end of March 2023 our services were actively supporting 708 care leavers aged 16 to 25 years old. Southwark has a rate of care leavers (177 per 10,000) higher than the London average of (137 per 10,000). This is an 20% increase from April 2022. 17% of our care leavers were formerly UASC.



17. 86% of care leavers aged 17-18 were in education, employment or training, compared to 66% nationally, and 74% of care leavers aged 19-21 were in education, employment or training, compared to 55% nationally.

White	19%
Mixed	11%
Asian or Asian British	8%
Black or black British	47%
Other ethnic group	14%
Not stated	0%
Not recorded	0%

18. 94% of our care leavers aged 19-21 were in supported to live in suitable accommodation, compared to 88% nationally.
19. Children in our care and care leavers did themselves, and us as corporate parents, proud by achieving passes at GCSE and A-Levels, including 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. At least eight students received offers from their first choice universities.

Corporate Parenting Strategy

20. In July 2021 the Corporate Parenting Committee agreed Caring to Care: Achieving Excellence for Our Children⁴ - Southwark's Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021-2024.
21. The strategy sets out how the council intends to deliver on the Corporate Parenting Principles set within The Children and Social Work Act 2017. The principles are, in relation to children and young people in the council's care to:
 - act in their best interests, and promote their physical and mental health and wellbeing,
 - encourage them to express their views, wishes and feelings
 - take into account their views, wishes and feelings
 - help them gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
 - promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes,
 - be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and
 - prepare them for adulthood and independent living.
22. Our Corporate Parenting Strategy delivers on the principles through 6 priorities which are:
 - Supporting More Families to Safely Stay Together
 - Growing Up Safe and Independent in Society
 - Health, Wellbeing, Education & Opportunity
 - Happy, Safe and Stable
 - Identity & Belonging
 - A Whole Borough That 'Cares to Care'

⁴ [Southwark Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021-2024 – July 2021](#)

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Strategy Priority 1: Supporting More Families to Safely Stay Together

Our commitment

23. Ensuring all children and families get the right help at the right time, and at the earliest possible opportunity. To make sure that every child is supported to safely thrive at home.
24. What **we said we would do**
- Continue to invest in evidence-based edge of care services and provision
 - Further increase the rate of children in connected care arrangements, through investment in our Family Group Conferencing and support offers
 - Further develop our re-unification support offer to ensure when children return home they are able to do so sustainably and that more children are supported to return home

How we have delivered

25. We have year on year increasingly supported more children to remain at home with their parents and families. By the end of 2022-23 the rate of children in care was below the national rate, as well as that of similar boroughs, with just 64 children per 10,000 of our child population in our care, down from 76 per 10,000 children in 2018.
26. We value and invest in families and our services work hard alongside our families to help them realise the support and strength they have together. Since 2017 we have more than trebled (figure 1) the number of children who are in the care of their relatives and wider networks. Maintaining the links between families and supporting children to remain close to those who know and care for them and who they care for.

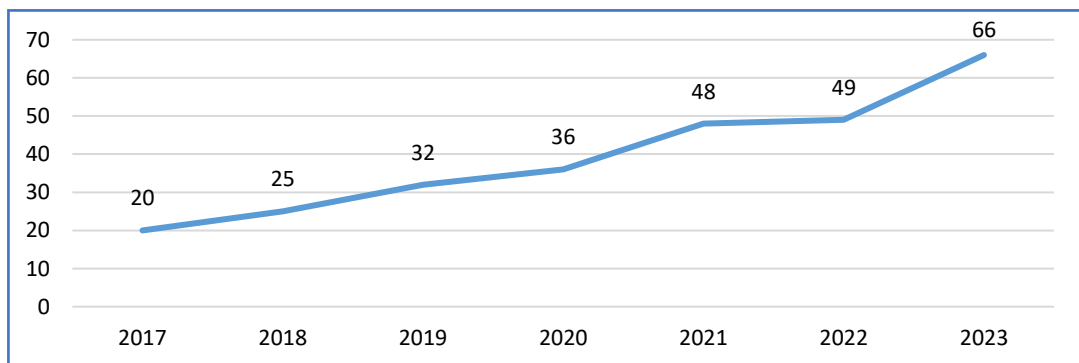


Figure 1: Children in family and friend placements 2017-2023

27. We continue to invest in a specialist Keeping Families Together Team with a focus on supporting children, primarily adolescents, on the edge of care to remain with their families if that is in their best interests. This is particularly important because the rate of older children aged 10 to 16 years entering care has increased from 74% in 2021/22 to 84% in 2022/23.
28. Research has been conducted in this area by the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory and whilst they found that concerns relating to issues outside of the family (extra-familial concerns - such as gang involvement and exposure to criminal or sexual exploitation) were present for a quarter of the children in their study, children were not in care because of either only extra-familial or safeguarding concerns in the family. Children in this age group appear to be impacted by both the extra-familial concerns plus issues of neglect, emotional abuse, and sexual and/or physical abuse. The cumulative trauma experienced by these children and young people has presented challenges to all fostering providers to find and train carers who are able to provide appropriate placements offering the right care for these children and young people. The Nuffield findings are consistent with the experience of our children in Southwark.

What we still need to achieve

29. Whilst we have succeeded in safely supporting more and more children to remain at home and with their families. There is more we can do to ensure that families receive help earlier and are less in need of support to remain together to further reduce the rate of children in our care to match our London peers at 52 per 10,000.
30. Nationally around 26% of children who have been supported to return home will return into care at some point later in life. Our children experience approximately the same rate of return into care, and this is overwhelmingly when those children transition into adolescence. We must do more to ensure that those children and their families who have experienced difficulties earlier in their childhood are supported to remain strong and resilient as their children grow into their teenage years.
31. In particular we need to work more closely with our colleagues in the Police to ensure that less teenagers are brought into care in emergency circumstances using powers of police protection (section 46 of the Children Act 1989). With 33% of the children who entered our care in 2022-23 being as a result of the use of powers of police protection, 68% of those being adolescents.
32. We recognise to address this for our adolescents we need to have services that are more responsive with specialist skills in an emergency out of hours in the evenings and weekends. This will build upon the effective work in Keeping Families Together Team but look at how we have this support available out of hours. This wrap around support will be developed in 2023-2024.

Strategy Priority 2: Growing Up Safe and Independent in Society

Our commitment

33. Giving all of our children the tools, skills, resources and support that they need to grow towards independence, and be protected from the threats and risks to them from an increasingly complex world.
34. What **we** said **we would** do:
 - Embed transitional safeguarding practice so that care leavers are safeguarded from exploitation and abuse when they turn 18.
 - Continue to invest in support for our children to 'stay put' with their carer's when they wish to do so.
 - Work with Housing to ensure care leavers are given as much help as possible to find not just suitable housing, fit for their futures.
 - Invest in enhanced life skills programmes for all of children in care.
 - Develop deposit support schemes and savings accounts for our children

How we have delivered

35. We successfully supported more 19-21 year old care leavers to remain in the care of their former foster carers. The 'staying put' rate increased from 8% in 2022 to 16% in 2023. The national rate is 9%.
36. We ensured our Children's Social Care and Housing services worked closely to support care leavers, and this has contributed to continued success in ensuring our care leavers are in suitable housing and good quality accommodation with 94% of young people considered to be in suitable accommodation compared to 88% nationally.
37. Our Children's Rights Team provides our children in care and care leavers with a full programme of opportunities to develop the skills they need to live independently, such as our 'Carefree Kitchen' which combines fun, engaging and practical life learning sessions with the opportunity to engage and explore complex issues such as relationships, conflict and safety from exploitation.
38. We re-designed our approach to saving for our children's futures. Previously funding was provided to carers directly to save for the children in their care. We recognise that too often when children move placements or leave care they can face difficulties accessing those savings. We partnered with The Share Foundation to create long-term tax free child savings accounts for all children in care. We also doubled the weekly savings amount from £5 to £10.

What we still need to achieve

39. The majority of children in care become successfully independent care leavers, in good accommodation, equipped to thrive into adulthood. But we know that the pressure on everyone is increasing, the cost of living is adding significant pressure on already disadvantaged groups and our care leavers remain one of the most exposed groups to these vulnerabilities.
40. We need to create more opportunities and maximise the use of our Care & Care Leaver's facility at Talfourd Place SE15 to deliver more life skills and direct support to our children and young people. We have a vision that in 2023-2024 Talfourd will be developed to be a vibrant Care Experienced Young Person's Hub renamed by young people with an exciting programme of activities co-designed with our children and young people.
41. Our Housing and Children's Service have already recognised that whilst we go above and beyond to support our care leavers into good accommodation, we need to do more to support them to access accommodation that is not just good for today; but good for them to grow and build their future in a stable home and ensuring more of our care leavers who have their own children can be supported to live in appropriate family sized homes.
42. In 2023-2024 we will work with Housing Colleagues and take to the Corporate Parenting Committee for approval a new Protocol for Care Leavers and Housing. This will include the joint Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DHLUC) and Department for Education (DfE) Good Practice Guidance⁵ and incorporate the new Pan London Care Leaver Compact⁶ pledges on housing which are:
 - Council Tax Exemption for Care Leavers
 - Principles of avoiding 'intentional homelessness' assessments for Care Leavers and extending priority need to the age of 25
 - Rent Deposit Scheme
 - Joint housing protocols for Care Leavers between Housing and Children's Services in line with the Governmental best practice model.

⁵ [Good Practice Guidance](#)

⁶ [Pan London Care Leaver Compact](#)

Strategy Priority 3: Health, Wellbeing, Education & Opportunity

Our commitment

43. Marshalling the unique resources of the borough to ensure that every one of our children and young adults gets the support and advocacy they deserve and expect from an excellent parent.
44. What **we** said **we would** do:
- Set high aspirations, listen and develop every possible opportunity for new experiences matching aspirations and harnessing enthusiasm
 - Commit to providing the right digital devices and connections so there is no disadvantage
 - Guarantee access to high quality mental health support
 - Strengthen the sporting, leisure and cultural offer
 - Deliver a comprehensive educational catch-up offer to mitigate the impact of the pandemic.

How we have delivered

45. We increased the number of children in our care in good or outstanding schools. In 2022-23 this was 97% of all children, having risen from 95% the previous year. This was helped by continued investment in the council's strong and well equipped Virtual School which is a consistent and powerful advocate for the educational aspirations of all of our children in care.
46. We delivered, through our Virtual School, a Summer Tuition Programme to support Covid Recovery providing over 400 hours of additional tuition to children of all school ages contributing to improved attainment for many. 2023 exam results exceeded pre-pandemic levels. For example in 2023 30% of our children achieved GCSE grades 9-4 in English compared to 24% in 2019, with 21% achieving a strong English result compared to 15% in 2019.
47. We continued to ensure our services focused intensively on support for children through the crucial transition points in their educational journey, to support them to access and remain in the right educational, employment or training arrangement for them. In 2022-23 every one of our children entering Year 12 was allocated a new Education Advisor who supports them throughout the two years of their Key Stage 5 education.
48. In 2022-23 this work resulted in 8 out of 10 of our children receiving offers from their first choice universities, including one pupil who had previously faced significant disruption in their education, including periods of exclusion who was supported jointly by our Virtual School and our Child and Adolescent Mental

Health Service and has now received 3 A's and progressed on to their chosen destination to study law at Oxford University.

What we still need to achieve

49. Children in care are much more likely to be identified as having special educational needs and / or disabilities (SEND) than their peers. 41% (112) of our children have an identified special educational need, compared to 13% of the school age population nationally.
50. We know that the two groups in society who experience the most difficulty in achieving positive educational outcomes are those who have been involved with statutory children's social care services, and those with SEND. For children in care who meet both these criteria we know we need to continue to invest in supporting them to achieve and meet their ambitions.
51. We are planning to create more local placement provision for our children and young people. This is centred on ensuring more of our children remain able to access the high level of support of our local services, such as our Virtual School, our clinical mental health support and our schools, 98% of which are rated good or outstanding by Ofsted. We want less disruption in the educational and care journey's for our children and for them to remain in the schools they know, around the professionals they trust, in or near to their own communities.

Strategy Priority 4: Happy, Safe and Stable

Our commitment

52. Making sure that every one of our children has a say in where they live and who they live with. That they are safe and in permanent homes earlier, closer to home, and supported to remain there as long as they need to.
53. What **we said we** would do:
- Increase the sufficiency, range and quality of opportunities for our children and our young adults, to ensure more are able to live within and close to the Borough
 - Listen more to our children and change how we all speak and think about them
 - Continue to invest in the support offer for our children and carers, through our clinical services and other partners
 - Provide an enhanced training offer to our carers and increase the availability of therapeutic carers.

How we have delivered

54. We have heard from our children and young people, they tell us that our words matter and the way we talk and write about them and their lives shows in the way we relate, behave and deliver support to them. We have integrated new guidance '*Recording for and about children, young people and families in Southwark – writing accessible, with purpose and care*' into our Learning and Development Programme to explicitly focus on changing the way speak, write and think about our children and their experience. The majority of visits to children in care are now recorded as letters to children and Independent Reviewing Officer (IROs) write letters to children at the end of each review.
55. We have secured funding from the Department of Education to build two new children's homes in Southwark run by the council. This funding was matched by capital investment from the council. These children's homes will be the first run by the service in over a decade. They will create new capacity in the heart of the borough to keep our children living closer to home and make sure that they remain connected to their communities. Our first home is due to open in March 2024 and the second in March 2025.
56. We have also, alongside the children's home project, begun a programme of work to re-develop properties to make new high-quality local semi-independent and supported accommodation for our care leavers.
57. We have brought down the rate of children who were living more than 20 miles from home from 21% to 19% over 2023-24. Wherever possible, children and

young people should be supported to live close to their families. We have more to do to support more children to live locally and match our statistical neighbours at 17% of children in care more than 20 miles from home.



Figure 4: % children in care placed more than 20 miles from home address

58. The majority of our children in care live in Southwark (25%) or outside of the borough boundary but close by (41%), predominantly in our nearby London boroughs.
59. In March 2023 most of our children are living with foster families (69%) which is a slight reduction on the previous year (72%). This reflects the changing age profile of children in our care with more 16 and 17 year old children living in semi-independent accommodation.

What we still need to achieve

60. The stability of care placements is a vital part of delivering good outcomes for our children. In 2023 we saw placement stability fall, with the percentage of children with three or more placements during the year increasing from 9% to 10%, the national average is 10%. Similarly, the percentage of children who have been in the same stable placement for more than 2 years decreased from 76% to 65% and is now lower than the national average of 71%. To help tackle this change in 2023-24 the council will be the first in the United Kingdom to embed an innovative approach, developed by researcher and children's social care professionals in the United States; to understanding and responding to the needs of children in care, called the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths Assessment.
61. In 2023-24 we will be repeating the Bright Spots Survey for children in care and care leavers so the feedback from our children and care leavers directly informs how we develop services and support.

Strategy Priority 5: Identity & Belonging

Our commitment

62. Giving all our children and young people the chance to learn about themselves, their history and identity, and to live with carers who understand and reflect their cultural identity. Providing every chance for our children to appropriately engage with their own families and personal history.
63. What **we said we** would do:
- Provide enhanced opportunities for children to 'Re-Connect' with their families, family networks and important people in their lives
 - Review our assessment, learning and development for foster carers about the needs of black young people in care.
 - Address disproportionality in our carer population, and bring more young people back to live in our Borough, and with their communities
 - Deliver a mandatory education program for workers and managers about racism, anti-discriminatory practice, black history and inequality
 - Improve our equality data collection and monitoring, address the gaps and understand why certain groups are overrepresented in care
 - Ensure that life story work is completed with our children and young people

How we have delivered

64. In 2022-23 our Children in Care Council 'Speakerbox' have focused on an identity campaign supporting a programme of workshops and sessions on the theme of Identity and Belonging. Over 60 people including many members of the committee attended the launch event at the South London Gallery where our children's photography was displayed, they performed a prepared thematic drama and delivered a spoken word performance. A film they had worked on outlining why identity was so important for care experienced children and young people was premiered.
65. Speakerbox delivered activities and events throughout 2022-23 providing new opportunities and experiences for children in care and care leavers including: a project on identity for different age groups; a film making project; photography project; sports mentoring programme; and trips to escape rooms, bowling, Thorpe Park and Legoland.
66. The service also launched the Caring Life App as part of a plan to ensure all children coming into care better understand why they are looked after and have photographs and important memories recorded and saved for them. The Caring Life App provides a secure space for photographs and previous memories to be uploaded by carers, young people, families and professionals

to ensure children and young people have important memories securely stored. The development of the app, builds on the findings of our existing Re-Connect programme that supports children to re-build relationships that are important to them that were impacted by their entry into care.

67. As a part of our Divisional Southwark Stands Together Against Racism Programme the service undertook a comprehensive review of the assessment, learning and development approach for foster carers about the needs of global majority children and young people in care. This was identified as important through work of the committee during the pandemic. The review identified a number of areas for improvement in how we support carers to support our children from global majority backgrounds. These are now part of the Fostering Service improvement planning for 2023-24.
68. A major driving force for plans to develop local children's home provision was the recognition that children from global majority backgrounds are disproportionately impacted by the lack of local options for them to live. Too often they are required to live in places, areas and communities that do not reflect their background or identity. The work to create local provision will reverse this trend and needs to go further to ensure more of our children do not face this disproportional impact.
69. We have been continuing to deliver throughout 2022-23 a programme of mandatory anti-discriminatory practice training for all social work and social care staff. As a part of the commitment to continually develop and improve both the service and its offer to staff the training programme is being re-commissioned and developed again for 2023-24.

What we still need to achieve

70. We want to continue to harness the power of the voice and messages from our children and young people, particularly in how they experience inequality in our system, and how they value the opportunity to understand themselves and their culture. We will be embedding the content produced by our Speakerbox into the training and development offer for staff, to even more put the voice of children at the heart of workforce development.
71. Despite all the positive developments in work to bring more children back to live closer to their communities we know that we are still too often reliant on placements that are away from Southwark. Sometimes this is the right plan for a child but when it is we need to do more to recognise and respond to the disproportional consequences on their identity and access to cultural links that children placed far from the borough can experience.

Strategy Priority 6: A Whole Borough That 'Cares to Care'

Our commitment

72. Placing delivering for our children and young adults at the heart of everything the Council and its partners do. Broadening the voice and experience of our children across all decision making, and making Southwark a truly Corporate Parenting Borough.
73. What **we said we** would do:
- Review the council's commissioning, planning and licensing arrangements to leverage Social Capital for our children and young adults
 - Establish a shadow Children & Young People's Cabinet to hold the whole council to account to include young people with experience of care
 - Work with our children and young people to develop their own version of this strategy and develop a new pledge
 - Develop a corporate parenting champions network across the Council and our key partners
 - Challenge all the major organisations in the Borough to adopt the corporate parenting principles and deliver on a promise to our children
 - Improve how we listen to our children and young adults and embed them and their views in our service improvement activity at every stage

How we have delivered

74. In November Southwark Council Assembly agreed to recommend to the council cabinet a motion to as follows:
- a) To formally support the Show Us You Care Too campaign which calls for care experience to be made a protected characteristic as part of the Independent Review into Children's Social Care;
 - b) For the council to proactively seek out and listen to the voices of care experienced people when developing new policies based on their views;
 - c) To continue to build on the existing ring-fenced apprenticeship opportunities for care experienced people by committing to an agreed number of apprenticeships places each year delivered through the council's levy funding;
 - d) To take an intersectional approach and commit to tackling the systemic discrimination and disproportionality faced by specific groups of care experienced people

75. In January 2023 cabinet agreed this motion. This is a significant step in developing our whole council approach to recognising, supporting and delivering against our corporate parenting duties. We have begun to see this shift in organisational culture translate into practical change within our system through for example the agreement to recognise care experience in our recruitment processes as a criteria for guaranteed interviews.
76. The voice of our children and young people is well heard by our elected members through the attendance of Speakerbox representatives at every Corporate Parenting Committee meeting. Their ideas and feedback shapes the priorities of the committee and through them the services and improvements we make.
77. Throughout 2022-23 we have increasingly seen awareness and engagement in corporate parenting delivery on a cross council basis. Our Care Celebration in October 2022 was attended by the Chief Executive, Strategic Director for Children and Adults, the Mayor of Southwark, Lead Member for Children, Young People and Education as well as multiple Elected Members who are members of the Corporate Parenting Committee. The recent event in November 2023 similarly was well supported.
78. We have also developed a cross-council pool of Care Leaver's Mentors in 2022-23 and now have representation from multiple divisions across Council including in the environment, commissioning and housing.

What we still need to achieve

79. In 2023-24 with children in care and care leavers we will be developing Talfourd Place as a hub for children in care and care leavers. We know that there is a great amount of capacity and desire from all parts of the council to invest time and support to work with and help our children develop and thrive, by developing and naming the location for that support offer we are confident we can better mobilise and harness that potential across the council and our partners.

The work of the Corporate Parenting Committee

80. The council's Corporate Parenting Committee is a cross-party committee, chaired by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Refugees. The committee meets on a quarterly basis to fulfil its role to secure real and sustained improvements in the life chances of children in care.
81. The committee champions the voice and experience of children in care and care leavers who attended every committee meeting in 2022-23. Children and young people are active participants in driving the agenda and discussions of the committee. They have grown in confidence, raising topics which are important to them such as housing for young people leaving care, finances, opportunities for paid employment and training, mental health support and as a result have influenced plans and services for young people.
82. The committee takes a thematic approach to looking in depth at the key issues impacting on the life chances of care experienced children and young people.

Housing

83. The committee explored the housing needs of care leavers and has been critical in driving cross-council approaches and policy changes to better support care leavers to access and be secure in housing, such as reforms to Housing prioritisation and council tax relief.
84. The committee heard the experience of young people in semi-independent accommodation and challenged the council about how it drives quality in commissioned providers. Specifically how our young people want to live in accommodation that promotes trust and accountability amongst them so that they feel ownership of their accommodation and develop the skills and personal responsibilities that support them to thrive in independence.
85. The committee helped to define a broad vision for quality semi-independent accommodation for care leavers which is driving our commissioning approach and supporting decisions in the creation of new accommodation in partnership with our main providers. This included accommodation in which young people feel secure and safe; that they feel they have independence and privacy, but within an environment of trusted support that they can be confident in securing advice and guidance when they need too; that promotes planning for future life and the move into independence; and most importantly where they feel listened to and able to influence and make decisions.

Health

86. The provision of good quality health support is a regular topic of discussion for the committee. Challenging partnership providers to go above and beyond to meet the needs of our children and young people.
87. The committee has recognised the particular challenges faced by our children and young people in recovering from the pandemic and the impact this has had on their emotional and mental health and wellbeing. The Annual Health Report 2022-23 provided the committee the opportunity to hold the partnership to account for delivery and to agree recommendations for further improvement in support for our children.
88. The Designated Doctor for Looked After Children, Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children, Looked after Children and the Virtual Mental Health Lead for Looked After Children report regularly to the committee to provide assurance on service performance and the issues facing the system impacting on their ability to meet need.
89. The committee has focused particularly on the developmental and mental health needs of children in care. Challenges from the committee to continuously improve the quality of support on emotional wellbeing of our children has driven the service to innovate. The Council have invested in the implementation of the Child & Adolescent Needs and Strengths Framework (CANS) to assist our understanding of our children's needs, making Southwark the first authority in the United Kingdom to adopt this innovative new tool developed in the United States.

Education & employment

90. The committee monitors the effectiveness of support for children's education and their outcomes through the work of the Virtual School.
91. The committee has particularly focused on how services can better support children who face difficulty with accessing education and those who are persistently absent from education settings. Services have been challenged to work closer together to both ensure children are back in education as quickly as possible when they move between placements, and also to make sure that wraparound provision and tuition is in place for those children who aren't in school to make sure that they continue to receive good educational opportunity.
92. Through the Virtual School the committee maintained oversight of the Covid Recovery Programme which was swift with a shift in practice designed to close the education gap created through the pandemic. Bespoke personal education plans, digital resources, educational psychology and speech and language support were all put in place, as well as increases in supplementary tuition.

93. In championing system improvement for employment of care leavers the committee held a themed workshop on education and employment facilitated by young people that developed an action plan. This had seven identified points of action to improve employment chances of our young people: *wellbeing; champions; paid internship/work experience; apprenticeships; guaranteed shortlisting/interview scheme; mentors; and a safe affordable home*. The committee identified individual leads and has begun to further influence cross council policy such as the new approach to guaranteed interviews for care experienced candidates.

Fostering and placement sufficiency

94. The committee has responsibility for oversight of the council's sufficiency strategy and the plans of services to ensure that all our children have the opportunity to live in the right placement commensurate with their needs and that there is a sufficiently broad capacity available to match individual requirements of our children and young people.
95. The committee heard the challenges facing the recruitment and retention of foster carers, and the impact on our existing carers, of the cost of living crisis. The committee has provided input and challenge to the service in the development of the foster carer training and development offer and been critical in developing service improvement intentions, in particular the plans to develop more therapeutic support carers, the professionalization of foster carers, and plans to develop more communities of peer support across our carer population.
96. In March 2023 the committee agreed the new Children in Care and Care Leavers Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2023-2026 which sets out understanding of the drivers of placement demand, and identifies the requirements and intentions to ensure sufficient placements for children in care and care leavers. It describes our route map for ensuring sufficiency of accommodation and support for children in and leaving care.

Quality of practice and services

97. As well as scrutinising the main themes and issues affecting children in care and care leavers the committee plays a vital role in overseeing the effectiveness of service delivery to our children and young people.
98. The Annual IRO Report was received by the Committee in March 2023 and set out the performance of services in meeting our key service obligations. The committee was provided with the details on the work of the Independent Reviewing Officers Service whose role is to provide independent scrutiny of services delivered to children in care and ensure our care services are properly meeting the needs of individual children and the whole cohort of children in our care.

99. This includes performance in regularly reviewing the individual care plans of children and holding social workers to account for properly capturing and representing the views, experiences and ambitions of individual children in their plans with them.

Listening, and bringing our care experienced children together

100. The council and particularly the committee has always been proud of championing the voice of children and young people and celebrating their achievements. Our Care Leaver Steering Group and Speakerbox, is well supported by two full time Children's Rights Officers (CRO) and additional support from strategic leaders within our Care and Care Leaver Service, and our Quality Assurance and Practice Development Service.
101. The services through the CROs are tasked with ensuring the voice of care experienced children and young people is influencing strategic and senior leadership activity, engagement and decisions. For example they support all young people attending all committees, preparing them to ensure they are able to get the messages across they want to. They we involved in recruitment for the Chief Executive and are involved in all senior recruitment within the Children & Families Division now includes a Speakerbox stakeholder panel.
102. In October 2022 we held our annual Children in Care Celebration. The annual Care Celebration honours the achievements of children in care and care leavers with categories that include Care Leaver of the Year Award, Community Champion Award, Education Award, Music Award and Outstanding Achievement Award. The event is organised by the Care and Care Leaver Service, Virtual School and Speakerbox. The ideas and input of children and young people shapes the event. In 2022 it was fantastic and was attended by the Chief Executive, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education, the Southwark Mayor and many elected members from the committee. This is really valued by young people.
103. Another annual event co-produced with our children and young people is our Big Picnic. This was held in a local Southwark park on a Saturday in the summer for all children in care, The event was a great chance for siblings who may not live together to meet up and connect with each other. There are lots of ART opportunities run by the South London Gallery and other creative projects, as well as food and fun games and sporting activities. A real highlight is seeing children, foster carers and social worker connect over games and food in a really informal and fun setting.
104. Speakerbox also run a fortnightly session called Creative Collective which is an opportunity for care experienced young people to come together to sing and engage in creative activities, facilitated by a singer songwriter and one of our extremely talented care leavers. The idea for this project came from a care leaver who is the current chair of Speakerbox.

105. The Care Leaver Steering Group and Speakerbox, has plans for 2023-24 to bring more cross-council participation in planning and delivering events and activities, mobilizing the wealth of positive will, skills and areas of interest that exist in all Council departments to broadening opportunity. A number of areas have been identified including support from the Technology and Digital Service on IT skills and our parks teams on learning to grow and care for our natural environment.

Our priorities for 2023-24

106. As our Corporate Parenting Strategy enters its final year of delivery our priority for the year are to continue to deliver against those areas we still have work to do to achieve the ambitions set out in that strategy, as well as initiating our work to refresh our strategy for the next years through to 2030.

107. In addition to this we have a number of specific priorities that are to be delivered in 2023-24:

- *Southwark Homes for Southwark Children* - Preparing to open the first Southwark Children's Home so more children can live locally to the borough. Continuing to recruit more local foster carers for Southwark children to live locally to attend the excellent local school and be closer to their friends and family. This programme will be led by establishing a Southwark Homes for Southwark Children Board.
- *Stability and support* – We have seen significant challenges in placement stability for our children in 2022-23 we will be launching a new action plan to turn this around improving stability for all children in care both measures short- term and long-term.
- *Development of a Hub in collaboration with Children in Care and Care Leavers* - Development of Talfourd Place as a Care Experienced Young Person's Hub co-designed with young people and with input and commitment from across the Council to the focus of being the best possible Corporate Parent.
- *Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths Assessment (CANS)* – The implementation of our new approach to better understanding the needs of our children. This will sit alongside the SDQ and it is hoped will be a clearer picture of the mental health support and treatment needs of children in care. This strength based approach will be incorporated into profiles for children seeking a new home and into the stability template.
- *Care Leavers Pledge* – Undertake work to renew the council's pledge for care leavers. Working with the Care Leaver Covenant implementing across the Council Assembly motion and exploring the opportunities this affords us in accelerating the whole council and partnership offer to our children.

Key / Non-Key decisions

108. The report does not relate to a key-decision.

Policy implications

109. There are no policy implications arising from this report.

Financial implications

110. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts**Community impact statement**

111. The decision to note this report has been judged to have a small but important impact on local people and communities. The work relating to children in care and care leavers is intended to improve the outcomes for them.
112. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, lays out the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which requires public bodies to consider all individuals when carrying out their day to day work – in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. The council's Approach to Equality commits the council to ensuring that equality is an integral part of our day to day business.
113. The council's Children's Services involves working closely with all relevant stakeholders and partners across the sector and collectively we are committed to upholding the responsibilities towards advocating the Public Sector Equality Duty and complying with the Equalities Act 2010. 13. The PSED enables public bodies to consider the diverse needs of groups and have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. Due regard is about considering the different needs of protected characteristics in relation to the three parts of the duty.
114. The Equalities Act 2010 define the following as protected characteristics; age; disability, gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation. Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement 15. The report takes account of the ethnicity, age and disabilities of children in care, as well as their racial ethnic background and considers these areas in light of commitments set out by Southwark Stands Together.

Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement

115. A number of research studies and analyses have identified a clear social gradient in relation to social care statutory intervention to promote the protection and the welfare of children. We know that the greater the levels of deprivation and disadvantage faced by families the higher the likelihood that they will become involved with children's services nationally. This trend is consistent in Southwark with the level of deprivation in the home wards of the children in care being strongly correlated with the numbers of children in care.
116. Children from black/black British and mixed/multiple global majority groups are overrepresented in our children in care population when we compare them against the overall population of children in Southwark. This reflects national research around such intersectionality in relation to deprivation as described above. Overrepresentation of global majority communities is compounded when we account for unaccompanied asylum seeking children.
117. Of the group of children in our care at the end of March 2023, when reviewed against the age at which they came into care, with the exception of the group from a white background who entered care at age 16 or 17, there is a trend towards later entry into care particularly for children from Black/Black British backgrounds, and earlier entry for children from white and mixed backgrounds. The disproportionate increase in the white care population entering at age 16 relates primarily to white British females entering care due to concerns around their mental health and emotional wellbeing.
118. Overall there are more males (58%) in our care than females (42%). This trend is exacerbated again by age with more males entering care in later adolescence and slightly more females entering care in early adolescence.
119. Research suggests that when children in care are compared with children who have not been in care, they tend to have poorer outcomes in a number of areas including their and mental and physical health. Corporate parenting work seeks to address these inequalities.

Climate change implications

120. There are no relevant climate change implications

Social Value considerations

121. There are no relevant social value considerations

Economic considerations

122. There are no relevant economic considerations

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Documents	Held At	Contact
Corporate Parenting Strategy	160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Michael Crowe 0207 525 5000
Link (please copy and paste into browser): https://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s99637/Appendix%201%20Draft%20Corporate%20Parenting%20Strategy%202021-2024.pdf		

APPENDICES

No	Title
None	

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Jasmine Ali, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education	
Lead Officer	David Quirke-Thornton, Strategic Director of Children's and Adults' Services	
Report Author	Michael Crowe, Service Development Manager – Children & Families	
Version	Final	
Dated	4 January 2024	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Strategic Director of Finance	No	No
Head of Procurement	No	No
Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance	No	No
Contract Review Boards		
Departmental Contract Review Board	No	No
Corporate Contract Review Board	No	No
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team		4 January 2024

Item No. 9.	Classification: Open	Date: 17 January 2024	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge – Report and Action Plan	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Cabinet Member:		Councillor Kieron Williams - Leader of the Council	

FOREWORD – COUNCILLOR KIERON WILLIAMS, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

I was eager to welcome our Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge Team to Southwark at the end of October 2023 in response to my request for a peer review.

Since becoming Leader, I have sought to make transparency core to the administration that I lead. By definition, the Corporate Peer Challenge process opens the doors of the council to scrutiny from a group of experienced and professional peers. The Challenge process is a key point in our learning as we strive to be the best council we can possibly be for our residents.

The Team found much for Southwark to be proud of. It found that we are a good council and noted the energy for change within the council. They singled out the work of our children and adults services, our council house building programme, the work we do within our local economy and our efforts in community safety for particular note.

But they also reflected back our known challenges – that of the ongoing pressures and need for improvement in housing and the challenges wrought within our community by the rising cost of living and the continuing housing supply crisis in London. They have made important points to us about the need to ensure that our interface with residents and members continues to improve, and the need to redouble our efforts to ensure that our systems and processes are modernised and our staff supported to ensure that they can continue to serve our residents into the future.

They noted the strong relationships that we have with partners and our efforts to build on these strong foundations as we move towards our 2030 Strategy.

I am very pleased but unsurprised by the levels of commitment and pride the Team encountered in talking with our staff and councillors.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

Recommendation(s) for the Cabinet

1. Cabinet is asked to note the Local Government Association's Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) report attached at appendix 1.
2. Cabinet is asked to endorse the action plan as set out in appendix 2, which responds to the eleven recommendations from the Corporate Peer Challenge Report.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. In October 2023, Southwark Council welcomed a team from the LGA to undertake a Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC). Peer challenges are delivered by experienced elected member and officer peers. Southwark's Peer Challenge Team was led by Tom Riordan CBE, Chief Executive, Leeds City Council and Cllr Bev Craig, Leader, Manchester City Council.
4. All councils are given the opportunity to have one of these reviews every 4 – 5 years as part of a local government approach to sector led improvement and mutual support.
5. The LGA team spent three days on site, and prepared by reviewing a range of documents and information in order to ensure they were familiar with the council and the challenges it is facing.
6. During their time on site, they gathered information and views from more than 35 meetings, in addition to further research and reading. The CPC team spoke with more than 100 people, including a range of council staff, members and external stakeholders. Some team members were given a tour of Peckham Rye station and parts of the wider Peckham area, including Peckham Library and key community assets
7. The report attached at Appendix 1 provides a summary of the peer team's findings, including the eleven recommendations.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

8. There is an expectation that all councils undertaking a Corporate Peer Challenge will commit to publishing the feedback report and produce an action plan which responds to the recommendations in the report.
9. The recommendations are important in supporting the council's commitment to continuous improvement and transparency.
10. The action plan at appendix 2 sets out what the council will be doing to respond to the recommendations, including specific actions, when they will

be delivered and which senior officer will be responsible for delivering them.

11. The recommendations reference the ongoing priority of housing repairs and the HRA. The report notes the progress being made in these areas, and provides a recommendation that this focus and work continue at pace.
12. Amongst the early actions that the council will take is the establishment of a programme to improve services and support to members, including improved processes for members' enquiries and a new member's services team.
13. In response to the recommendations, we will also develop a new internal change programme called Future Southwark. This will ensure that staff are supported to ensure that they have the skills, tools and processes to do the best job possible for our residents.
14. The CPC team will return in the summer to discuss progress.

Policy framework implications

15. The CPC report responds to the themes in the Council Delivery Plan, the upcoming 2030 strategy, and the council's approach to organisational development. The report and action plan require no changes or alterations to the Policy Framework.

Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts

Community impact statement

16. The CPC process focuses on the council's ability to serve and work with its residents. The recommendations will be utilised to support the council to deliver more efficient, resilient and resident focused services.

Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement

17. The CPC Report reflects the council's current practices for tackling inequalities and Southwark Stands Together and makes recommendations for improved practice. The feedback from the report will be used to improve practice and reporting.

Health impact statement

18. There are no direct health implications from this report.

Climate change implications

19. There are no direct climate change implications from this report.

Resource implications

20. The response to the CPC recommendations will be carried out within existing resources.

Legal implications

21. There are no Legal comments.

Financial implications

22. Currently, none of the proposed actions set out in the CPC action plan are expected to require additional resource over and above those already agreed within service budgets.

Consultation

23. The LGA produced the CPC report as a result of multiple conversations with residents, staff, members and stakeholders.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS**Head of Procurement**

24. There are no procurement implications or decisions resulting from this report.

Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance

25. The Assistant Chief Executive – Governance and Assurance has been consulted in the drafting this report.

Strategic Director of Finance

26. The Strategic Director of Finance has been consulted in the drafting this report.

Other officers

27. Members of the Council's Corporate Management Team have been involved in the creation of the action plan.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Process	Local Government Association	Local Government Association 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ info@local.gov.uk
https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/council-assurance-and-peer-support/peer-challenges-we-offer/corporate-peer-challenge-4		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Report
Appendix 2	Southwark Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan
Appendix 3	Southwark Council Corporate Peer Challenge Position Statement

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Kieron Williams, Leader of the Council	
Lead Officer	Althea Loderick, Chief Executive	
Report Author	Rhona Cadenhead	
Version	Final	
Dated	4 January 2024	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	4 January 2024	

LGA Corporate Peer Challenge

Southwark Council

23-25 October 2023

Feedback report



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2. Key recommendations	5
3. Summary of the peer challenge approach	6
4. Feedback	9
5. Next steps	23

1. Executive summary

Overall, the London Borough of Southwark is a good council, in a vibrant place at the heart of a global city. The new political and managerial leadership brings energy for change, both internally and externally of the organisation. The council is working through a transition from the previous to the current leadership and is developing plans to deliver new strategic priorities. It has a bigger role to play in the sector both in and beyond London.

The council has a strong track record of physical regeneration, particularly in the north of the borough which is known for a number of new and repurposed iconic buildings, and which attract large numbers of people to visit and work in the borough. It performs well in both adults' and children's social care, has built an impressive volume of new council homes, its local economy is thriving, and joint work on community safety is well regarded.

There are clear challenges facing the council which are having a significant impact on residents' quality of life. These include the availability of homes to rent, the need to tackle high volumes of council housing repairs, and the cost-of-living crisis affecting residents. In the light of the challenging financial and demand led pressures that many councils face, now is the right time to further refine and focus the council's strategic priorities to ensure that they continue to be deliverable.

Finances are relatively stable, with high levels of reserves which partly reflect the success of urban regeneration and the income the council can generate. However, in keeping with challenges across local government, there are uncertainties for the medium and long-term sustainability of the budget, as well as a trend towards increasing overspending which need to be addressed. The most urgent of these are housing related: the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is in deficit and the large capital Housing Investment Programme is increasingly affected by interest rate pressures and construction inflation. The council is assessing the changing realities of its financial landscape and how this will affect what can feasibly be delivered in the medium term: the approach should ensure that councillors fully understand this changing landscape and how it relates to the council's priorities and delivery.

Until recently the council has had fairly autonomous departments and a lighter corporate centre. But the new leadership of the council, the context of greater

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18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ www.local.gov.uk Telephone 020 7664 3000 Email info@local.gov.uk

Acting Chief Executive: Sarah Pickup CBE

Local Government Association company number 11177145 Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government company number 03675577

financial challenge for residents and the council, and the ambition for the new 2030 Strategy to bring a place leadership approach to delivery brings a different focus to the organisation. This brings new expectations and demands on how officers should respond and operate, which in turn requires more co-ordination across cross-cutting areas of working, and more cohesion at the senior level.

Members and officers expressed frustrations about the way some back office but important core functions operate, and which sometimes feel as if they get in the way of prompt responses to residents, as well as streamlined working. More emphasis is needed on getting the basics right including internal communications; the human resources (HR) function; organisational development; what is expected of staff as new priorities have emerged; how individual and collective performance is recorded and reported; and how requests from councillors, MPs and residents are handled and responded to. Many people in the organisation want it to perform and respond better and quicker to external demands in a more consistent and coherent way.

As the overall vision of Southwark 2030 is developing there is an opportunity to utilise it to reiterate and refine political priorities. Consideration needs to be given to how best to deliver priorities within the resources available, underpinned and supported by a change programme that enables people to respond appropriately within agreed parameters, and which is coordinated at the highest levels. Engaging with residents and partners through the next phase of this programme will be important.

Southwark 2030 is welcomed as an opportunity to set out what the council will do next, who is involved, and how staff and partners can deliver through a strategic change programme which galvanises the organisation and the borough. Partners hope it can help to build on positive changes in the council's relationship with them and communities to encourage more consistent engagement across the borough. Now would also be a good time to explore how the council's senior political and managerial teams want to work together, to clarify each other's expectations, behaviours, boundaries and success measures, so that a new working relationship can be forged. This will be important if delivery is to be sustained and more outcomes are to be achieved.

2. Key recommendations

There are a number of observations and suggestions within the main section of the report. The following are the peer team's key recommendations to the council:

2.1 Recommendation 1

Use Southwark 2030 to reinforce priorities (the what) and focus the change programme (the how)

2.2 Recommendation 2

Introduce a clear, resourced change programme with ambition, values and behaviours, linked to performance and internal success measures, e.g. equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)

2.3 Recommendation 3

Create a new, well-owned corporate centre that can make it easier to work in the council and drive transformation, prioritising internal communication

2.4 Recommendation 4

Enhance the Anchors network and introduce key account management for the top 50 council partners

2.5 Recommendation 5

Maintain prudent financial management with a clear and well-owned Council Delivery Plan

2.6 Recommendation 6

Prioritise the housing repairs improvement plan and stabilise the HRA via strategic oversight of the capital programme and revenue budget

2.7 Recommendation 7

Streamline informal governance structures, improve the ward member support function, standardise the member-officer briefing arrangements and Cabinet/Corporate Management Team (CMT) engagement

2.8 Recommendation 8

Improve resident access for requests, complaints, Freedom of Information (FOI) and Subject Access Requests (SARs) to enable effective performance monitoring and feedback

2.9 Recommendation 9

Agree a digital strategy that utilises technology, artificial intelligence (AI) and innovation to drive change, with sharper use of data to improve performance and insight to understand residents' experiences

2.10 Recommendation 10

Clarify the success measures for the pivotal initiatives of People Power, Closing the Gap, and Neighbourhoods. Be clear on the intended outcomes of these key programmes

2.11 Recommendation 11

Play a bigger role in London and national sector leadership

3. Summary of the peer challenge approach

3.1 The peer team

Peer challenges are delivered by experienced elected member and officer peers. The make-up of the peer team reflected the focus of the peer challenge and peers were selected on the basis of their relevant expertise. The peers were:

- Cllr Bev Craig, Leader, Manchester City Council
- Tom Riordan CBE, Chief Executive, Leeds City Council
- Cecilie Booth, Executive Director of Corporate Services and Section 151 Officer, Peterborough City Council
- Piali Das Gupta – Strategy Director: London's Future, London Councils
- Tunde Olayinka – Executive Director, Communities and Skills, GLA
- Thomas Cattermole – Director of Customer Access, London Borough of Brent
- Emma McGowan – Director of Design and Transformation, Surrey County

Council

- LGA Peer Challenge Manager – Judith Hurcombe

3.2 Scope and focus

The peer team considered the following five themes which form the core components of all Corporate Peer Challenges. These areas are critical to councils' performance and improvement.

1. **Local priorities and outcomes** - Are the council's priorities clear and informed by the local context? Is the council delivering effectively on its priorities?
2. **Organisational and place leadership** - Does the council provide effective local leadership? Are there good relationships with partner organisations and local communities?
3. **Governance and culture** - Are there clear and robust governance arrangements? Is there a culture of challenge and scrutiny?
4. **Financial planning and management** - Does the council have a grip on its current financial position? Does the council have a strategy and a plan to address its financial challenges?
5. **Capacity for improvement** - Is the organisation able to support delivery of local priorities? Does the council have the capacity to improve?

In addition to these questions, the council asked the peer team to provide feedback on the following issues, which have been referenced in the five main areas outlined above:

- How to further bolster partnership readiness to work together collaboratively and at pace to deliver the 2030 vision
- How to further strengthen the council's culture in ways that empower, support and inspire the workforce to work in collaboration with residents
- What more needs to be done to build organisational capacity and ways of working to deliver at pace?

- What critical success factors should be considered as you start on the transformation programme
- How to balance being ambitious, innovative and a leading voice in local government with tackling the basics of providing consistently good services to residents?

3.3 The peer challenge process

Peer challenges are improvement focused; it is important to stress that this was not an inspection. The process is not designed to provide an in-depth or technical assessment of plans and proposals. The peer team used their experience and knowledge of local government to reflect on the information presented to them by people they met, things they saw and material that they read.

The peer team prepared by reviewing a range of documents and information in order to ensure they were familiar with the council and the challenges it is facing. The team then spent three days onsite at Southwark Council, during which they:

- Gathered information and views from more than 35 meetings, in addition to further research and reading.
- Spoke to more than 100 people including a range of council staff together with members and external stakeholders.
- Some team members were given a tour of Peckham Rye station and parts of the wider Peckham area, including Peckham Library and key community assets

This report provides a summary of the peer team's findings. In presenting feedback, they have done so as fellow local government officers and members.

4. Feedback

4.1 Local priorities and outcomes

Southwark is a borough of contrasts, with significant wealth and private investment, as well as some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the country which record some stark health inequalities. It has a very diverse population which is younger than the London and England average, with around a quarter of residents from the Black ethnic group, one of the largest Latin American communities in England, and with over 80 languages being spoken in the borough. It has the fourth largest LGBTQ+ population in England.

There are some strong services being delivered by Southwark Council. Its Children's Services were rated by Ofsted as Good in the most recent inspection of September 2022, and 98% of the borough's schools are rated as Good or Excellent. On the metrics provided through LG Inform, the council's service performance largely hovers around the average when compared to other London Boroughs¹.

Councillors are proud of Southwark's track record on physical regeneration and projects to develop support for communities. This includes the big iconic schemes that the borough is known for at Borough and Bankside and others planned and underway at Canada Water, Old Kent Road, and Elephant and Castle. The ongoing restoration of Peckham Rye Station includes co-design with local people. Projects such as The Nest, which is a mental health wellbeing advice and support service for young people aged 13-25, show high levels of outcomes and satisfaction from service users.

Over the past year the council has worked alongside communities and partners to develop a renewed vision for 2030, due to be reported to Cabinet in Spring 2024. Its development has involved a wide range of local residents, partners, businesses and stakeholders, and the overall approach is positive and energetic.

The Fairer, Greener, Safer Delivery Plan 2022-26 (CDP) was agreed by Cabinet in September 2022 and sets out how the organisation will deliver the administration's political commitments to tackle inequalities in health, opportunities and deprivation. It has seven stated priorities to address the rising cost of living, building more council

¹ [Oflog Dashboard Report for London Borough of Southwark | LG Inform \(local.gov.uk\)](#)

homes, reducing carbon emissions, protecting both physical and mental health, and creating new jobs and opportunities. At the headline level these are widely recognised both internally and externally of the council. Delivery is shaped by three broad strands of People Power, Closing the Gap and Neighbourhoods, each led by a Strategic Director, and with the overall aim of delivering a cultural shift with a stronger whole council approach.

People Powered aims to bring a more resident centric approach to how the council does its business, and staff are buying into its concept of treating residents as if they were their own family members. Closing the Gap aims to reduce gaps in inequality, poverty, racism and discrimination, and an independent research study is underway to gain more insight into how these areas affect Southwark's residents. The Neighbourhoods programme focuses on 10 neighbourhood areas, each to have a vision and action plan, underpinned by funding linked to local priorities.

There are aspirations at the highest levels of political and managerial leadership to see faster delivery and action relating to these priorities. What is less clear however is how these link to individuals' performance and their roles in delivery. Making more overt connections between these through staff appraisal will help employees and the organisation more widely to focus on realising the high-level ambitions.

Southwark Stands Together is one of the strands of the CDP. Developed in response to community concerns about Black Lives Matter it is regarded as a success by participants. The peer team felt that this could be expanded further to incorporate broader equality, diversity and inclusion ambitions and targets, which more clearly reflect the diversity of the borough, for example the growing Latin American population, and residents from the LGBT+ community.

An area of significant concern and focus for residents and the council is the quality and maintenance of council housing. Southwark is the largest local authority landlord in London, with around 40,000 dwellings and around 27% of the borough's population living in council owned properties. Its new build rate is impressive for social housing, with over 1,000 new homes being built for rent each year and in 2021 the council built the largest number of council homes in England. However, owning a large housing stock brings pressure on maintenance and repair to a reasonable standard, and backlogs and costs have been subjected to a recent focus in the

context of challenging financial circumstances.

A Repairs Improvement Residents' Board (RIRB) with Cabinet member input has been created, with the purpose of driving further improvements to the service and managing expenditure. There is still more progress to be made, as partners, staff and councillors report that housing repairs are a live issue for residents. The Housing Ombudsman also issued reports into two cases of maladministration at Southwark earlier in 2023. Perceptions locally are that the service is beginning to improve, and this is reflected in feedback from residents, and some small reductions in the number of complaints received when comparing recorded data from March 2022 with March 2023.

There are mixed views about how the council manages its performance. Staff told the peer team about different systems which don't necessarily align with each other, as well as a range of initiatives which are aspirational rather than set up to be target or outcome focused, which are then in turn hard to show delivery against. They also reflected that an enhanced focus on performance would help to further drive up quality and catch risks earlier.

There is a clear ambition at the highest level for pace and delivery. It will be important for the council to prioritise so that it can focus on the quality and timeliness of delivery, and to articulate measures of success so that officers and the organisation more broadly can plan to deliver. These should be based on SMART targets which are outcome focused, agreed and widely understood. They also need to be underpinned by agreed resources which support delivery. As part of that approach, consideration should be given to what the council will stop doing so that the headline priorities are within reach of being achieved.

4.2 Organisational and place leadership

The political leadership has a clear vision and ambition for what Southwark should be delivering for its residents and communities. Partnership working is regarded as good by key stakeholders, who feel engaged with the council and what it is aiming to achieve through this vision. Partners feel the council interacts well with them at the most senior levels and speak of positive strategic relationships.

Partners generally find it difficult, however, to stay on top of all of the different interactions and approaches across various council teams, and sometimes it can feel that engagement is ad hoc and transactional. Some partners feel they are approached on many different things and would value better prioritisation to make best use of their time and resources. They describe very solid engagement feeling they were on an equal footing during the Covid-19 response and the cost-of-living crisis, with concerns that some of that energy has dissipated as the council and its communities have settled into post-pandemic working. The council has a good relationship with the voluntary and community sector (VCS) and the latter is keen for more ongoing engagement, working alongside the council as equal partners, with consideration given to how to enable everyone to play a full role.

There is a strong appetite to focus more on delivering together and partners were really positive about the council's ambitions, but some have concerns about a proliferation of strategies and priorities. They have a keen interest in helping to translate strategy into action, even if that action starts off through a modest approach.

The overall approach to partnership working could be improved by undertaking some detailed analysis and mapping of stakeholder relationships, and then introducing a key account management approach with named lead officers for each key relationship.

Many people participating in the peer challenge showed personal knowledge and commitment to improving their understanding of and delivery for local communities. At the organisational level there is a clear focus on tackling inequalities, which is evidenced by the articulation of the 'closing the gap' strategy. This has resulted in minority groups being given extra support to thrive, such as subsidised rent and business advice for BAME micro businesses.

However, there are concerns of a lack of parity or voice for all of Southwark's communities given the evident diversity across the borough. Clear metrics are missing for success measures on EDI, so it will be difficult for the council to show it is making progress in this area, what it will deliver and when, and how it plans to meet the needs and aspirations of residents. Looking externally at how others have done this well will also support continuous improvement in this area.

There are examples of good co-production with residents and communities, leading to 'you said, we did' outcomes, particularly in relation to the construction of new homes and some place-making initiatives. There is a desire to involve young people voices in shaping the services that affect them with the Young Advisers initiative being well received. Young people for example reflect on some highly positive interactions with the Youth Justice service, citing tangible and exemplary support which has made a profound difference to their lives and life chances.

However, there are concerns that engagement with residents, especially the underserved can be mixed and sometimes inconsistent. Young people feel that engagement can be improved through a better understanding of the barriers they face to participation, for example young carers and their needs. And more widely stakeholders would like improved feedback loops to inform participants of how their involvement and engagement has been heard. The council has showed a keen interest in developing new, more participatory ways of engaging with its residents and communities; however it must work harder to hear the rich diversity of voices in the borough. This is an area where a focus on internal and external best practice, and stronger strategic leadership and co-ordination will be crucial if the council is to meet its ambition of being people powered.

Although Climate Change considerations have been included in the signing off process for decision making reports, the overall approach to climate change appears to have a lower profile than some of the council's stated priorities.

4.3 Governance and culture

It is clear that staff, councillors and partners are proud of Southwark and what has been achieved to date. Communities feature strongly in the council's approach, and the commitment to improving the quality of life for residents is overtly stated.

How the council works at the most senior levels is undergoing a transition. There is a strong directorate culture which has supported good quality service provision. However, the new leadership, post Covid-19, is reflecting the need for the council to act as one council in line with modern service expectations, increased service

demand, and the challenging financial burdens placed on residents and council services.

How members and officers work together across the organisation is not always consistent. Some officers describe member behaviours that can border on micro-management, yet others describe supportive councillors who are open to challenge and advice as well as being inspirational to work with. Similarly some members indicated frustrations with not getting a timely or adequate response to their queries from officers, whilst others felt the quality of officer support they receive is very strong.

How these relationships work at the strategic and frontline levels is at times at odds with the aspiration for an empowering culture which enables staff to flex and deliver People Power. Values and behaviours and the member-officer protocol and expectations, as well as the council values and behaviours, should be revisited. These mixed views point toward a need to invest in building member-officer relationships outside of everyday operational matters to establish and deepen trust and shared purpose.

The ongoing work on Southwark 2030 presents an opportunity for closer and clearer working between the Corporate Management Team and the Cabinet. Taking some time to reflect on roles and responsibilities, values, behaviours, priorities, what will be delivered, by whom and when, will be invaluable if delivery is to be sustained, and to encourage a deeper approach to risk and challenge. Expectations from the political leadership need to be clarified through a series of honest and realistic conversations, including what is appropriate and realistic given the changing profile of the council's resources. In thinking about how the council can better prioritise, consideration should also be given to what can be delivered later, or in a different way, so that capacity is not overstretched and the potential for frustrations is minimised.

There have been recent changes in key positions within the CMT which means new working relationships and understandings will need to be forged across the senior leadership team, as well as between the political and managerial teams. Care needs to be taken to ensure that the changes at CMT level do not become destabilising or

become a distraction for staff when the organisation is expecting them to deliver at pace.

Delivery of the 2030 vision also needs to be underpinned by clear governance structures which set out how partners, staff and residents can engage. The current informal boards arrangement is unclear, and the temptation to add more arrangements without reviewing what is already in existence should be avoided. Streamlining the informal boards will also help to contribute to better use of the council's officer and member capacity.

Complaints are discussed at CMT through a quarterly performance report including analysis of members' enquiries, complaints and information requests, and the top 10 service areas are presented for discussion. In June 2023 the Audit and Governance Committee received a report on members' enquiries which followed a full process review during Spring 2023 with a refreshed framework being rolled out. Some members expressed frustration to the peer team about how their casework enquiries are handled, voicing concerns about the agreed standard for responses, the amount of time it can take to get responses from some officers, and an overall inconsistency of approach.

Officers also expressed concerns about how to balance members' enquiries with direct enquiries from residents, and which ones should take precedence as part of an overall approach to customer service. The member-officer protocol states that members should direct enquiries to staff through senior management but there appear to be differing approaches across the directorates, which may contribute to members' and officers' perceptions of inconsistency. There is no "one size fits all" remedy to requests for service or complaints, irrespective of their source, but taking some time to talk through the issues involved between members and officers may help to develop solutions. Greater rigour is now being applied to member enquiries through the casework system but members have yet to experience the benefits.

At the high level there is enthusiasm and commitment for the concept of People Power, but there are some concerns about what this means for ward councillors and

their roles when residents and communities are playing a greater role. This should be openly discussed and resolved.

4.4 Financial planning and management

The council's general finances are relatively stable, and budget pressures have been generally managed well in the past few years. Revenue reserves appear to be healthy, with a General Fund balance of combined general and earmarked reserves of £235m on 31st March 2023. The 2023/24 budget was balanced by using £2.5m of earmarked reserves, which is also relatively small when compared to some other upper tier councils. The overall level of reserves for the council are lower than the average across London when compared to the council's net revenue budget.

There are however challenges both in the short and longer term. During 2022/23 there were overspends arising in some service areas, reflecting in part the impact of a higher than anticipated pay award. Homelessness, home to school transport and increasing numbers of households with no recourse to public funds, of which the latter cost £6.2m in the last financial year, are contributory factors in the forecast.

Southwark has around 55,000 properties in the HRA with a total combined income and expenditure of around £250m per annum. There has been overspending on the Housing Revenue Account for the last 2 years and in October 2023 an in-year overspend forecast was of £13.8m, and despite increases to the budget for the current financial year these have been exceeded by inflationary pressures and the impact of government policy such as the revised definition of high rise property. Budget gaps for the HRA have been identified of a total of £62m for the 3 years to 2026-27. HRA reserves have declined over the last 2 financial years and if the forecast overspend is realised, the reserves will reduce again. Given the overall size of the council's HRA, its HRA reserves are low.

The HRA capital programme is large with committed spending of £1.7bn and whilst the council's housing ambitions are high, so are its borrowing requirements. If the housing programme is to be delivered over the next 10 years, this will require a further £1bn of borrowing. Financing the Housing Investment Programme also creates more pressure on the HRA due to the revenue costs of borrowing and the capping of rents in recent years. Officers are developing a plan to manage the in-year overspending and a medium-term strategy to improve financial stability and

have flagged the need to drive greater efficiency through HRA in order to meet the costs of borrowing. Members also need to ensure they understand and fully consider the risks associated with such high levels of borrowing.

Getting housing budgets onto a more sustainable path is a high corporate priority. A financial plan is in development. To do so will require a balancing of ambition and meeting needs particularly for people in temporary accommodation with the practical reality of what is available, affordable and sustainable, and may require some difficult political decisions. This may also require accepting a different balance of social and market value homes to support the overall viability of schemes. A spending moratorium on the capital and revenue aspects of the HRA, a recruitment freeze in the Housing Service and a Housing Board meeting fortnightly were introduced in October 2023. An Asset Management Transformation programme is underway.

The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) has been in deficit for a number of years and by the end of 2021/22 the cumulative deficit was £21.7m. The council has reached a Safety Valve Agreement with the Department for Education (DfE) through which it received £9.2m during the last financial year and where the DfE will pay off historic deficits as long as the council delivers against its agreed mitigation plan. Early progress has been positive.

The overall capital programme is large and a key issue is how this will be funded. At the February 2023 budget meeting reference was made to needing a full refresh of the capital programme in light of the high interest rate and high inflation environment. This is currently being put in place and is due at the February 2024 budget meeting.

A new Medium Term Financial Strategy has been created which largely outlines the issues and policies at a strategic level and provides the framework for a more detailed financial plan outlining year by year assumptions and pressures. Until this year the MTFS only included a one-year projection, but Cabinet in July 2023 agreed a 3-year budget planning process and outlook. October 2023 reporting identified forecast budget gaps of £23.8m for 2024/25, £42.8m in 2025/26 and £54.7m in 2026/27. Work has since commenced to establish how the council will address these gaps beyond the usual annual budget cycle.

The council is currently developing a new, three year strategic budget which will be agreed in February 2024. As part of this process, the new Strategic Director is

leading the organisation through a significant budget challenge process which is working to identify £50 million of budget savings over the course of the MTF5.

A full consultation and scrutiny process is planned in advance of the final 2024/25 budget setting meeting which will seek feedback and challenge financial risk, assumptions and savings options for the 2024/25 budget round.

The council's constitution requires the council assembly to agree the capital strategy and programme at least once every four years, and in February 2019 council assembly agreed a 10-year capital programme of £792m and a housing investment programme of £2.1bn. Given the nature of some of the challenges ahead and the risks associated with them, it would be worth considering increasing the frequency and visibility of the programme to members, over and above what is reported to Cabinet.

The last audited accounts for the council are from 2020/21 and these were published in September 2023. Unaudited accounts have been published for both 2021/22 and 2022/23. This is common across local government due to the acknowledged shortage of trained auditors and the changes to accounting requirements which are not a good fit with local authorities.

There are a range of projects which the council has developed but which don't recover their costs, for example the multi-storey car park in Peckham, which acts as a valued community hub. Members and officers are keen to innovate and empower the community to design to long standing issues and, in the process, promote lasting positive change. This is laudable. However, a wider and shared understanding is needed both within the council and with external stakeholders of how long investment can be safely sustained given continued resource pressures and mounting demand across a number of services.

An agreed set of principles/process to review whether to maintain investment could provide a structured and transparent way to take decisions about the future of these types of projects.

Overall, the council's general financial position is relatively strong with increased general fund reserves over the past few years. However, there are growing pressures including SEN transport, children's social care and temporary accommodation where more grip and focus are needed, notwithstanding that these

are demand-led services over which the council has limited leverage. Like other councils, Southwark faces uncertainties about future funding which are difficult to plan for. Clear budget processes for members have been established but some members don't yet show that they fully appreciate how much will need to change due to future constraints. Achieving the delivery of existing priorities may mean that introducing new priorities is not affordable or realistic. Officers are working with members to develop an understanding of the challenges ahead on the budget and how this may impact service delivery and investment, particularly because Southwark has had a relatively strong financial position and the council has not had to take the sorts of decisions which other boroughs have already faced. Budget gaps have been forecast for future years which will need more corporate and strategic oversight, and which may require some previously unpalatable decisions to be made if they are to be addressed.

4.5 Capacity for improvement

Early results from the staff survey conducted during September 2023 shows high levels of engagement from staff and nearly three quarters of staff would recommend Southwark Council as a good place to work, with 80% saying they are proud to work for the council. There was, however, uncertainty amongst staff about the overall vision and plans of the council and employees' understanding of their roles and how they fit in to these plans.

Lower scoring responses were on levels of confidence about whether the council would act on the survey results, on pay and benefits, career progression opportunities and the visibility of senior managers. Some concern was raised on EDI. Whilst the majority of respondents agreed that the council is committed to it, there were also concerns from a significant minority about whether the council ensures fair and equal treatment of its staff.

Independent pay gap analysis was undertaken earlier in 2023 to cover the five years from 2018/19 to 2022/23. It showed that the median hourly pay for Black, Asian and minority ethnic employees across the council was 9.35% lower than for White employees, with some wider gaps in some directorates. This analysis has led to the council developing an ethnicity pay gap strategy for closing these gaps, and more

broadly to support the delivery of Southwark Stands Together. It feels like a key learning moment for the organisation.

The HR function has been boosted by permanent appointments and at the leadership level there is a clear sense of their priorities, supported by CMT. The new organisational development team and the new payroll system once established, will be important factors in providing the level of support the organisation needs.

EDI work across the council internally and externally has a strong presence and there is a good understanding of the characteristics of local communities, with various initiatives underway. However, it is not clear whether the voices of all groups are heard because the overall impression given is that matters relating to race are the most important and get the most attention. This may not reflect the actual delivery underway nor the council's intentions and thought should be given to inclusivity in its broadest sense so that these perceptions can be addressed.

ICT systems and approaches do not always meet the needs of staff. Managers spoke of long delays of around 3 months in some instances for new starters receiving laptops and them having to introduce "work arounds" in order to get equipment provided more quickly. They also describe delays in getting new members of staff access to necessary systems, such as finance, and frustrations on HR support and advice, and recruitment processes.

Staff are generally enthusiastic about the overall headline priorities of the council but in some instances are struggling to deliver because of a lack of clarity at frontline level, pressures on the "day job" and because they already feel stretched. They also have concerns that resources are not realistically aligned to the expectations of them, and the organisation's perceived lack of prioritisation.

They also said it is difficult to have conversations with some councillors about the practical realities of service delivery at the frontline. The tone of engagement from councillors to staff was described as appropriate for most but not all of the time, which again suggests that more overt attention needs to be paid to values and behaviours.

The buy-in to high levels of ambition needs to be balanced by the council needing to collectively to get the basics of some aspects of service delivery right, such as responsiveness to residents and internally across the council. This is recognised by

staff as an area which could improve. Some of this frustration is shared by external partners. Investing more in core council infrastructure and clarifying expectations about systems and processes will help to reduce divergence and improve consistency at the corporate level

At middle manager and frontline level staff are not yet describing the ambition expressed at senior levels for a culture change which allows them freedom to flex and deliver in the best ways for residents through doing things differently. The council is aware it has much to do in this area, and work has started on a new People Strategy.

More overt linkages need to be made between strategic plans and individual employees' roles in delivering them. Using the personal development plan process to enable everyone to connect in a way which is simple, universally applicable and consistent will help them to engage and deliver. Extending understanding of the vision and what it means also needs to be more widely promoted through internal communications.

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement the council introduced Southwark Stands Together, which is largely outward facing. An element of this is an internal group of champions and allies working together across the organisation to consider performance in key areas, such as employee engagement, equality at work and delivering better outcomes.

During 2023 a new digital approach to appraisals is being introduced through the My Learning Source Platform. This will enable objectives for all employees to be set using the online process Thrive@Southwark. Future plans aim to review values and behaviours and improve feedback loops. This will help to address the concerns raised by staff about capacity, but it will need encouragement and corporate leadership to ensure that there is consistent uptake and buy-in across all services and is not regarded as optional. At the time of the peer challenge however, the programme had a low profile and people did not yet appear to be making linkages between it and broader EDI concerns.

A clearer internal vision and case for overall change, transformation and organisational development is needed. It will be important for the council to clearly state its transformation priorities and the reasons behind them. Currently

transformation appears to be regarded mainly as a measure to balance the forthcoming budget gaps, rather than also as an opportunity to improve ways of service delivery as well as to consider what the council might stop doing, or do differently alongside others. A number of stakeholders for example suggest that transformation needs to be applied to how and what is offered on housing.

A need for culture change is recognised by staff, including the need to invest more in training and development, including better managerial skills and opportunities, which would help retention. Much remains to be done to build the organisation further, but there is evidence that the building blocks are being put in place, for example new posts have been created and with new leadership, and the OD team is out to recruitment.

Whilst the council has an emerging digital team it feels that the organisation is at the beginning of its digital journey. Clear delineation between what is picked up the IT shared service and what sits independently in the organisation will be helpful. A maturity assessment on the council's digital capabilities could contribute to an effective digital strategy. Developing an understanding of where new technology (including AI) will be key to ensure Southwark does not fall behind its peers. Using data as a key capability for the new corporate centre will help to drive performance, and using more insight and design-led practices will enable the council to better understand the experiences of residents. Developing a service design team and bringing all of these capabilities together will help to bring about change across the organisation.

As might be expected where departments have been strong, performance data has largely been held within directorates. There are concerns that the quality of this information is variable, and not enough insight or analysis is applied to what is happening in services. Sometimes there is a tendency of councillors to focus on the minutiae of delivery at operational level rather than seeing the overall big picture of what the council is delivering. Stakeholders feel more needs to be done to tackle silo working. These views all support the new council leadership's ambition to develop a more consistent approach to corporate working with reduced silos so that issues can be more widely shared and owned and resolved. Capacity at the corporate centre has been boosted through the appointment of two new Assistant Chief Executive posts.

A review has been undertaken of council wide capacity and now the organisation needs to decide how best to utilise it. The council should consider accelerating its approach to the development of its new corporate centre and its corporate resources in order to ensure it has the right skills, tools and approaches to develop new capabilities and ensure it becomes the integrated and collaborative organisation that the leadership aspires to, and which can support the delivery of the council's stated priorities.

Southwark is going through a period of significant change. It needs to put in place some further building blocks if improvement is to be sustained, and a golden thread needs to be traced between high level ambition and delivery. Relationships need to grow further, roles and responsibilities should be clarified, priorities need to be balanced by resources, and collaboration internally and externally needs to be developed and sustained.

5. Next steps

It is recognised that senior political and managerial leadership will want to consider, discuss and reflect on these findings.

Both the peer team and LGA are keen to build on the relationships formed through the peer challenge. The CPC process includes a progress review published within twelve months of the CPC, which provides space for the council's senior leadership to update peers on its progress against the recommendations from this report.

In the meantime, Kate Herbert, Principal Adviser for London, is the main contact between your authority and the Local Government Association. Kate is available to discuss any further support the council requires (kate.herbert@local.gov.uk, 07867 632404)

Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan

Introduction

Southwark is home to more than 300,000 people, 18,000 businesses, engaged and supportive communities, and a world class cultural scene. We are powered by our people, whose heritage and history make our borough dynamic and diverse.

Residents have told us they want to live in a borough that is green, safe and caring - a borough that provides a fair chance for everyone to get ahead through a relentless focus on tackling inequality and discrimination. Southwark people want to live in a decent home that supports their health and wellbeing, and have fulfilling and stable work that enables them to thrive and enrich their lives and that of their families.

Our constant aim is to provide the best services, partnership and interventions that we can to help our borough thrive. The cost of living crisis, the impact of inflation, critical funding shortfalls and the overwhelming pace of societal change continue to present significant challenges to our residents and our organisation.

We know that in order to best serve our residents, we need to be transparent, open to learning and willing to do things differently. It is against this backdrop that we invited a Local Government Association Team to undertake a Corporate Peer Challenge in October 2023.

The Team spent three days on site, had access to a full suite of council documents and evidence, and met with over 100 members of staff, councillors, residents and partners.

The nature of a CPC means the focus of the challenge is based on the council's stated aims, progress in delivery and organisational capacity. The team have offered insightful feedback which will help us to redouble our effort on the continuous improvement that will ensure we are the best organisation that we can be.

This plan is focussed on the actions which will deliver the team's recommendations. The recommendations are firmly rooted in the council as an organisation, so the focus of the action plan is organisational effectiveness and enabling our staff to serve our residents and our borough.

The recommendations will serve as both an initial focus and ongoing guide for our work.

We would like to thank the LGA team for their time, commitment and honesty. Their recommendations will help us become a better organisation, and we look forward to sharing our progress with them later in the year.

Cllr Kieron Williams
Leader of the Council

Althea Loderick
Chief Executive

A guide to this plan

Work began on an action planning process as soon as the peer team delivered their recommendations. The outline recommendations from the CPC can be described under three broad action planning themes. We are using these as workstreams for action planning and reporting:

1. Strategic direction of the council

- Use Southwark 2030 to reinforce place priorities (the what) and focus the change programme (the how)
- Maintain prudent financial management with clear and well-owned Council Delivery Plan
- Play a bigger role in London and national sector leadership

2. Service specific recommendations

- Enhance the Anchors network and introduce key account management for top 50 council partners
- Prioritise housing repairs improvement plan and stabilise HRA via strategic oversight of the capital programme and revenue budget
- Improve resident access for requests, complaints, FOI, SARs to enable effective performance monitoring and feedback.
- Agree a digital strategy that utilises technology, AI and innovation to drive change, with sharper use of data insight to improve performance

3. Future Southwark capacity and corporate infrastructure

- Introduce a clear, resourced change programme with ambition, values, behaviours, linked to appraisal and internal success measures e.g. EDI
- Create a well owned new corporate centre that can make it easier to work in the council and drive transformation, prioritising internal communication
- Streamline informal governance structures, improve ward member support function, standardise member-officer briefing and Cabinet/CMT engagement
- Clarify success measures for People Power, Closing the Gap and Neighbourhoods

Delivering the plan

The timeframe for the Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) action planning is:

Short Term (quick wins)	November – December 2023
Medium Term (full mobilisation)	January – March 2024
Long Term (into core delivery)	April 2024 onwards

Many of the CPC recommendations relate to work already underway. The council is taking a streamlined and pragmatic approach to delivering and monitoring the CPC action plan, utilising existing teams and governance wherever possible.

There are three areas in the recommendations which have extensive existing plans and reporting. Updates from these areas will be fed into the review process and reported to the LGA as part of their monitoring of the action plan.

These are:

- The Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Council Delivery Plan
- Housing Repairs Improvement and HRA development

Where existing work programmes are in place, leads have been asked to review existing plans utilising the CPC feedback. They will outline the changes that they will make as a result of the CPC feedback and findings, and accelerate specific outcomes which relate to the recommendations.

The strategic lead for each recommendation area will ensure that there are detailed plans in place to deliver the work outlined.

Programme governance has been established in line with existing internal best practice. Reporting on the specific CPC action plan will be to the council's Corporate Management Team and the Leader's Board.

By the summer, the LGA will organise a progress review visit. This will create space for the council to explore progress and challenges with peers, and discuss next steps.

Workstream 1 – Strategic direction of the council

Recommendation	Key milestones and description	Strategic owner	Timescale
<p>Use Southwark 2030 to reinforce place priorities (the what) and focus the change programme (the how)</p>	<p>Milestone: Completion of the 2030 Strategy.</p> <p>The 2030 is in its last phase of development. Specific, partner wide commitments are being developed, and the full strategy will be ready to go to Cabinet and then Assembly in the spring.</p> <p>The Strategy will be used to develop a corporate change programme called Future Southwark which will support the organisation in delivering the change and improvements required to deliver the vision and goals of the 2030 strategy.</p>	<p>Assistant Chief Executive - Strategy and Communities</p>	<p>Medium Term</p>
<p>Maintain prudent financial management with clear and well-owned Council Delivery Plan</p>	<p>Milestone: Three year MTFS to Council Assembly in February</p> <p>The council is developing its first three year Medium Term Financial Strategy(MTFS) which will form the basis of the 2024/15 budget onwards. This is the result of a wholesale review of the budget planning process, and a Cabinet and CMT budget planning process throughout the autumn.</p> <p>Regular budget monitoring will continue via Cabinet.</p>	<p>Strategic Director of Finance</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
	<p>The Council Delivery Plan is currently being refreshed to reflect a three year delivery approach. This will deepen the clarity of expectations in delivery, outcomes and ownership. Monitoring will continue via the Leader’s Board and reports to Cabinet.</p>	<p>Assistant Chief Executive- Strategy and Communities</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Play a bigger role in London and national sector leadership</p>	<p>Milestone: Agreement of a public affairs and sector engagement strategy</p> <p>The council will develop a public affairs and sector engagement strategy for agreement with cabinet members and the corporate management team.</p>	<p>Assistant Chief Executive- Strategy and Communities</p>	<p>Medium Term</p>

Workstream 2 – Service specific recommendations /1

Recommendation	Key milestones and description	Strategic owner	Timescale
<p>Enhance the Anchors network and introduce key account management for top 50 council partners</p>	<p>Milestones: Creation of partnership capacity and partnership action plan</p> <p>In line with the development of the 2030 strategy and the Anchor Network, the Strategy and Communities department is undergoing a significant restructure. Part of this restructure will establish capacity to support the Anchor Network. Once this is complete, a stakeholder and partnership engagement action plan and account management process will be created.</p>	<p>Assistant Chief Executive Strategy and Communities</p>	<p>Long Term</p>
<p>Prioritise housing repairs improvement plan and stabilise HRA via strategic oversight of the capital programme and revenue budget</p>	<p>The housing repairs improvement plan and HRA review are existing long term priorities for the council.</p> <p>Extensive delivery plans are in place with internal council and external tenant governance and reporting systems. There is close monitoring of progress. Housing will continue to be the council's number one priority. CPC reporting to the LGA will include updates on these issues.</p>	<p>Strategic Director of Housing</p> <p>Strategic Director of Finance</p>	<p>Ongoing, long term commitment with timescales in specific plans</p>
<p>Improve resident access for requests, complaints, FOI, SARs to enable effective performance monitoring and feedback.</p>	<p>Milestones: Current state analysis and performance improvement plans and delivery</p> <p>The service will develop a current state analysis to deepen understanding of current issues and performance. This will then inform a staged performance improvement plan with clear targets and milestones for service improvement, which will be agreed and monitored by the Corporate Management Team and at the Leader's board.</p>	<p>Strategic Director of Finance</p>	<p>Short - Medium Term</p>

Workstream 2 – Service specific recommendations /2

Recommendation	Key milestones and description	Strategic owner	Timescale
<p>Agree a digital strategy that utilises technology, AI and innovation to drive change, with sharper use of data insight to improve performance</p>	<p>Milestones: Scoping and programme plan, strategy and delivery plan.</p> <p>Work has started on the Digital and Technology Strategy. This will be rescoped in light of the CPC feedback, and a revised scope, methodology and delivery plan will be agreed by the Corporate Management Team and relevant cabinet members.</p> <p>The strategy development will be completed by the end of the spring, and will include expert consultation support to ensure consultation is inclusive and includes people with all needs. Delivery of the strategy will begin in early summer, with regular reporting to CMT and the Leader’s Board.</p>	<p>Strategic Director of Finance</p>	<p>Short term - Long Term</p>

Workstream 3 – Future Southwark capacity and corporate infrastructure /1

Recommendation	Key milestones and description	Strategic owner	Timescale
<p>Introduce a clear, resourced change programme with ambition, values, behaviours, linked to appraisal and internal success measures e.g. EDI</p>	<p>Milestones: Creation of the Future Southwark Programme and People Plan</p> <p>An internal change programme called Future Southwark is being created. The programme is being scoped to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ People plan, revised values and behaviours, associated HR policies and capacity ▪ Accommodation Strategy ▪ Corporate resources review ▪ Internal systems and process review ▪ Response to CPC <p>The Future Southwark programme will be launched at a staff conference at the end of January, with work starting on the programme in February.</p> <p>A key deliverable of the programme will be the People Plan, which will set out how we will develop, retain and attract people, and will be used for current and prospective staff. The plan will be developed via extensive staff engagement and will include new values and behaviours. Work will be complete on this in late spring.</p> <p>A phased Future Southwark delivery plan will be developed, with stage one launched in February 2024, stage 2 in April and subsequent stages planned and launched throughout the year.</p> <p>Appropriate governance processes and an outcomes framework will be established with the programme. Monthly programme reporting will be put in place.</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>Short term – Long term and ongoing</p>

Workstream 3 – Future Southwark capacity and corporate infrastructure /2

Recommendation	Key milestones and description	Strategic owner	Timescale
<p>Create a well owned new corporate centre that can make it easier to work in the council and drive transformation, prioritising internal communication</p>	<p>Milestones: Strategy and Communities restructure and creation of Organisational Development and Internal Communications Team</p> <p>Strategy and Communities Senior Management Structure, PPP structure, LOCO structure will be completed, and a recruitment campaign will be launched. This will ensure that the council has the capacity and skills to deliver the 2030 Strategy and related transformation.</p> <p>A new Organisational Development and Internal Communications Team will be created under the Director of People and Organisational Development. The team will also assume responsibility for the delivery of the Directors Forum and Leadership Network.</p>	<p>Assistant Chief Executive - Strategy</p> <p>Director of People and Organisational Development</p>	<p>Short Term</p>
	<p>Milestones: Strategy and Communities service offer, corporate performance framework and transformation framework</p> <p>Once the Strategy and Communities structure is in place and staffed, a clear service offer and impact measures will be developed in partnership with council departments. This will lead to new corporate performance and transformation frameworks, driven by the 2030 Strategy.</p>	<p>Assistant Chief Executive - Strategy and Communities</p>	<p>Medium – long Term</p>
	<p>Milestone: Internal Communications and Engagement Strategy</p> <p>A new Internal Communications and Engagement Strategy will be codesigned with staff across the organisation. This work will be carried out concurrently with the development of the People Plan and will underpin the organisation’s communications and staff involvement approaches. The strategy will be completed in the spring.</p>	<p>Director of People and Organisational Development</p>	<p>Medium Term</p>

Workstream 3 – Future Southwark capacity and corporate infrastructure /3

Recommendation	Key milestones and description	Strategic owner	Timescale
<p>Streamline informal governance structures, improve ward member support function, standardise member-officer briefing and Cabinet/CMT engagement</p>	<p>Milestones: Two stage informal governance review and findings implemented</p> <p>In the short term, a stage one 1 informal governance review will be conducted of high level informal governance, member-officer briefing at Cabinet and CMT levels. This will be focussed on streamlining processes and ensuring strategic informal governance is efficient and effective. Findings will be implemented in the medium term.</p> <p>Stage 2 will broaden out to governance which includes partners and residents. This will begin in the long term once the 2030 Strategy is agreed and the structure for Strategy and Communities, including resource to support the Anchor Network, is in place.</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p> <p>Assistant Chief Executive Strategy and Communities</p>	<p>Short - Long Term</p>
	<p>Milestone: Services to members review programme, to include developing a Members Support Service and a rapid improvement plan for Members Enquiries</p> <p>Throughout the report the CPC Team made reference to services and support to members. We will launch a Services to Members Programme to improve all aspects of support to members.</p> <p>In the short term, a rapid improvement plan for Members Enquiries will be developed and put into delivery. The plan will have targets and clearly defined outcomes. This will be monitored regularly with officer and member reporting mechanisms in place.</p> <p>The council currently does not have a members support service, which is inconsistent with other authorities across London. A new service will be co-designed with members in the medium term for delivery in the long term.</p> <p>All other aspects of council support and interaction with members will be included in the programme with the aim of ensuring that members are well supported to carry out their roles.</p>	<p>Strategic Director of Finance</p> <p>and</p> <p>Assistant Chief Executive - Governance and Assurance</p>	<p>Short - Medium Term</p>

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Workstream 3 – Future Southwark capacity and corporate infrastructure /4

Recommendation	Key milestones and description	Strategic owner	Timescale
<p>Clarify success measures for People Power, Closing the Gap and Neighbourhoods</p>	<p>Milestone: Corporate Outcomes Framework developed for the 2030 Strategy</p> <p>The 2030 Strategy will define the vision and goals for the borough. The People Power, Closing the Gap and Neighbourhoods programmes will be rescoped in order to support the delivery of the 2030 Strategy goals</p> <p>A corporate outcomes framework will be developed to set out the outcomes we expect to see as a result of the delivery of these programmes. This will be agreed at Cabinet.</p>	<p>Assistant Chief Executive - Strategy and Communities</p>	<p>Long term</p>



Corporate Peer Challenge Position Statement

October 2023

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Welcome to Southwark

Southwark is home to more than 300,000 people, 18,000 businesses, engaged and supportive communities, and a world class cultural scene. We are powered by our people, whose heritage and history make our borough dynamic and diverse.

Our borough is rich with internationally renowned locations and destinations. Peckham, London Bridge, Elephant and Castle, and Dulwich are all well-known beyond our borders, as are our world-class institutions and landmarks, including Tate Modern, The Shard, Borough Market, Guys Hospital and Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts.

Whether they are descendants of nation-building generations of factory workers and dockmasters; pioneering immigrants who travelled on the Windrush and via other routes to reach England from Africa, the Caribbean, Ukraine and beyond; or bold reformers determined to change the fortunes of south Londoners trapped in poverty, Southwark's people enrich local life with a distinctive mix of passion, resilience, hard work and joy.

In common with the rest of our city we are also a place of contrast. While many thrive, others struggle. Inequalities in health, income and access to opportunities remain, despite efforts to reduce them. Our **Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)** shows that life expectancy varies by almost a decade across the borough, from 89 in the south of the borough to 80 in other areas.

Southwark contains some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the country and had faced significant issues of fuel poverty and food insecurity even before the start of the cost of living crisis.

Our residents have told us they want to live in a borough that is green, safe and caring - a borough that provides a fair chance for everyone to get ahead through a relentless focus on tackling inequality and discrimination. Southwark people want to live in a decent home that supports their health and wellbeing, and have fulfilling and stable work that enables them to thrive and enrich their lives and that of their families.

Our council

In the first decade of austerity, the council's focus was firmly rooted in excellence in service delivery, and regeneration to fund more and better social housing; stimulate growth; create jobs; and generate funding for public services. An asset-driven financial strategy was guided by a determination to establish as much financial independence as possible to shield us from falling funding.

Throughout these challenging times, and right up to the present day, every member of staff has demonstrated the same ambition: to make a positive impact on the lives of our residents and our borough, guided by our value of treating residents as valued members of our own family. We are a supporter and enabler of the incredible communities we serve.

As London's biggest council landlord with almost 40,000 tenants we have a unique relationship with many of our residents, with 27 percent living in council rented homes, the highest proportion in the country. Indeed, 40 percent of our residents live in social rented homes, the second highest proportion in the country.

Our focus on children and young people is demonstrated through consistently strong service provision and the quality of the borough's schools. Schools have been on a significant improvement journey - 98 percent of schools in the borough are excellent or good. Our young people continue to shine, with the most recent summer GCSE results showing their achievements positively bucking national trends. We were proud to be rated 'Good' for our Children's Services in our last Ofsted in September 2022, where we were told that children are at the heart of practice in Southwark and children's lives are improved as a result of our impact.

As well as high quality schools and social care provision, local people enjoy hundreds of services

that are for everyone, including 363 parks and open spaces, 30 of which have been awarded Green Flags; a growing number of modern and welcoming libraries; and a recently insourced leisure service with eight leisure centres. Our borough is fortunate to enjoy and continue to attract excellent universities and colleges; quality employers; enviable NHS services and unrivalled support from our varied voluntary and community organisations.

The council's work benefits from this rich local network of sector-leading partners and businesses, and vibrant communities underpinned with a strong tapestry of VCS and faith organisations.

Team Southwark

Team Southwark is driven by the people and communities we serve. Guided by shared corporate and political values, we demand the very best for them, from ourselves, our partners, businesses and regional and national Government.

Southwark is characterised by strong and driven political Leadership. Cllr Kieron Williams was elected Leader in September 2020, and returned in 2022 with an increased majority for the Labour administration, which has been in place since 2010.

Joined by Althea Loderick as the Chief Executive in May 2022, the partnership has worked with a high performing Cabinet and Corporate Management Team to build on Southwark's considerable strengths.

Following the local elections last year, the organisation worked swiftly to operationalise the administration's manifesto into a **Council Delivery Plan (CDP)** which guides the council's work. This has been supported by a new system of politically-led informal governance, which has a laser focus on delivery plan outcomes and performance.

Key Facts

Southwark is a densely populated and diverse inner London borough situated on the south bank of the River Thames, with Lambeth to the west and Lewisham to the east.

Southwark is a patchwork of communities: from leafy Dulwich, to bustling Peckham and Camberwell, and the rapidly changing Rotherhithe peninsula. Towards the north, Borough and Bankside are thriving with high levels of private investment and development. Yet there remain areas affected by high levels of disadvantage, where health outcomes fall short of what any resident should expect.

Our population is young, diverse and growing, with large numbers of young adults and residents from a wide range of ethnic and social backgrounds

- The average age (32.4 years) is more than two years younger than London, and almost seven years younger than England
- Around half (51 percent) of people living in Southwark have a White ethnic background compared to 81 percent nationally
- The largest ethnic group other than White is 'Black, Black British, Caribbean or African', accounting for one-quarter (25 percent) of Southwark residents
- Southwark has one of the largest Latin American Communities in the country, predominantly made up of Colombians and Ecuadorians living around Elephant and Castle
- The last census found that over 80 languages are spoken in the borough, with 79 percent of the population speaking English as their main language
- There were over 40 distinct religions identified among Southwark residents

- Southwark has the 4th largest LGBTQI+ population in England, with 8 percent of residents (nearly 21,000 people) aged 16+ identifying as non-heterosexual. Southwark also has the 5th largest trans/non-binary population in England
- Over 18,000 residents provide some level of unpaid care, equivalent to 6 percent of Southwark's population

Towards 2030

In seeking to build on the council's strengths, the Leader and Cabinet have set out a distinctive 'People Power' agenda. Driving this approach is the determination that communities must be able to shape the places they live in and make decisions about issues that affect their lives.

With the Council Delivery Plan guiding daily work and focus, three significant initiatives are already exemplifying the People Power agenda - the development of a 2030 Strategy, our Streets for People Strategy and our Neighbourhoods programme.

Throughout 2023, local residents, organisations, businesses and communities have come together to work towards creating a Southwark 2030 Strategy. Over 2,000 residents and a range of organisations have taken part in this work so far.

Guided by a partner design group chaired by the Chief Executive, the emerging 2030 Strategy marks the first time in over a decade that partners have worked together on developing a place-based vision for Southwark. This process has deepened already strong partner relationships throughout Southwark. We are working towards a truly partnership document ready for agreement next spring.

Transformation of the council's purpose and delivery methods have been consolidated into a programme led by members of the Corporate Management Team and driven by strong political direction. The programme is being designed to deliver a practical and cultural shift and is driven by a belief that Southwark can only address the ongoing inequalities in the borough and improve outcomes when the whole organisation and wider partnership works together as a system.

The programme consists of three work streams: People Power, Closing the Gap and Neighbourhoods. To make real our commitments to moving to a 'One Council' approach, the council has built cross-organisational leadership into the governance and oversight of these three transformational programmes.

Closing the Gap is being led by David Quirke-Thornton (Strategic Director - Children and Adults), People Power by Clive Palfreyman, (Strategic Director - Finance) and Neighbourhoods by Caroline Bruce (Strategic Director - Environment, Neighbourhoods and Growth).

Being People Powered is about putting residents at the heart of everything we do. At its core it is about a fundamentally different relationship between residents and the council. It is also about empowering staff and shifting our organisational culture so that collaboration is a default and staff feel they have the agency they need to make a difference.

The Closing the Gap programme is about working to tackle inequality, poverty, racism and discrimination, as well as the specific inequalities in health, education, housing and employment that mean some residents are currently falling through the gap. In partnership with Impact on Urban Health we are currently undertaking

a comprehensive research study to understand the real and current impact of inequalities for residents in our borough. This is due to be finalised in October.

Southwark is committed to a neighbourhoods approach, so people feel empowered and involved in shaping the places they live, work, study and visit. The Neighbourhoods programme is about ensuring that the essentials of life are close by.

Within the Neighbourhoods programme we are developing 10 neighbourhood areas each of which is being co-led by two directors from different parts of the organisation.

Each neighbourhood will have a vision and an action plan, a pot of funding which can be directed to local priorities, a strengthened role for councillors and a renewed role for voluntary, community and faith sector anchor organisations.

There is strong political and organisational oversight of every transformation priority. Overall, the three programmes, alongside other major programmes, are subject to discussion and development via our new Corporate Portfolio Board. This was established in July 2023 to provide space for the Corporate Management Team (CMT) to exercise collective leadership and take an active role in steering the most important cross-cutting programmes in the organisation. Each of the three programmes also has a dedicated programme manager to support delivery.

2

Equality, diversity and inclusion

Underpinning our ambition for everyone in Southwark is our commitment to tackle inequality and racial injustice.

In 2020, the communities of Southwark came together to launch Southwark Stands Together (SST), our plan for addressing racial injustice and being an anti-racist borough. The aims of the Southwark Stands Together programme are far reaching, bringing together the police, health partners, staff, the community and voluntary sector, residents, businesses and all those invested in our borough. The programme is shaped around a number of core work streams that came from conversations with our communities after the murder of George Floyd.

Since its inception, SST has led to a number of significant changes. We've commissioned the community organisation Forum for Equality and Human Rights in Southwark (FEHRS) to act as a 'critical friend' to support and challenge us. FEHRS helps to ensure our policies are as fair as possible.

During 2022-2023, we established a new SST Programme Board, chaired by the Chief Executive and attended by the Corporate Management Team, to ensure that progress in delivering SST continues to be overseen by the most senior leaders of the council's workforce.

A number of projects have already been delivered, with real impact on the lives of local residents. Our Arts Board Diversification Programme has supported Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic residents to take up Special Independent Director and Trustee roles with 11 organisations in the borough. The participating arts organisations have created Special Independent Director (SID) places on their boards as part of their own journeys towards more inclusive governance practice.

This summer we showcased the work of seven incredible artists from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds who had taken part in our I Create programme. Funding was allocated to seven aspiring talents to help address the under-representation of creatives from Black, Asian, and minority ethnic backgrounds in the arts. The artists were paired with mentors from well-known Southwark-based cultural organisations such as Bold Tendencies, Central School of Ballet, Dulwich Picture Gallery, Tate Modern, and Theatre Peckham. The mentors played a crucial role in supporting the artists' creative development during the year.

We are partnering with Olmec, an award winning Black and Minoritised Communities led race equality organisation, and other local authorities (Islington, Richmond, Westminster and Wandsworth) to provide our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic **staff** the opportunity to become a Board Member through the Black on Board Programme. Black on Board is a governance training programme for organisations investing in Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff designed to train and mentor participants onto board positions. Olmec's focus is people of colour from Black, Asian, Latin American and Arabic communities to address under representation of these communities at board level.

We have co-designed a new equalities grant fund worth £400k, of which £200k is ring-fenced for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic led organisations. We also launched the Southwark Pioneers Fund to support people who are under-represented in entrepreneurship to start and grow their enterprise, including minority ethnic businesses.

Our broader equality mission is guided by the Southwark Equality Framework, which focuses our work on six priorities: Leading Equalities, Knowing Our Communities, Working with You, Working for You, Equalities in Commissioning and Procurement and A Skilled, Representative and Valued Workforce.

We are currently working with independent EDI experts to complete a comprehensive EDI review and audit, which is designed to provide a 360 degree assessment of what we're doing well and where there are gaps or issues we need to address. This work, which will be finalised in November 2023, includes a specific focus on leadership so the findings will provide us with an opportunity to recognise and reflect on our leadership strengths and how we want to develop and build our leadership capability.

Internally, staff networks have been established. We are developing a new, co-designed ethnicity pay gap strategy that will set out, in detail, why the council has an ethnicity pay gap and how we will work with staff to narrow it.

3

Local priorities and outcomes

There are two key elements governing the council's planning and delivery; the here and now and our long term vision for the future.

The first is reflected in the **Council Delivery Plan 2022-26 (CDP)** which informs the day-to-day priorities of the organisation. The second is the process through which we are looking at what we need to deliver by the end of the decade - Southwark 2030. Both are grounded in the aspirations of our people.

The Council Delivery Plan details the organisational priorities over the course of the current four-year term of the administration. Titled "Fairer, Greener, Safer", it is based on seven themes:

1. Transforming our borough
2. A thriving and inclusive economy
3. A healthy environment
4. Quality, affordable homes
5. Keeping you safe
6. Investing in communities
7. Supporting families

These themes describe how the council responds to local priorities – tackling the rising cost of living, building more council homes, reducing carbon emissions, creating new jobs and opportunities and protecting the borough's mental and physical health. The plan also makes clear how the council will deliver on priorities – supporting our young people to succeed at school, ensuring our older people are cared for, keeping our streets clean and ensuring our homes and neighbourhoods are safe and well looked after.

The CDP was informed by large scale and detailed research, and the administration's manifesto. This research included Understanding Southwark, a piece of research commissioned by the council with Social Life; Life after COVID, a

2021 piece of research in partnership with The Social Innovation Partnership (TSIP) involving nearly 3,000 people who live and work in the borough, and Survey of Londoners, a survey and field work carried out by Ipsos Mori for the Greater London Authority.

Progress against the CDP is monitored through quarterly Performance Sessions led by members of Cabinet and relevant lead officers on the Corporate Management Team. This is then fed upwards to the 'Leader's Board' which takes place monthly. An annual report for 2022/23 was reported to Cabinet in October 2023.

From the CDP, service plans and business plans are developed and individual officer work plans are agreed, with performance targets agreed at every level. Detailed budgets are aligned to corresponding plans following a robust budget challenge process, which challenges managers to demonstrate efficiency and value for money. Performance is monitored and managed at every level on a regular basis.

The performance management process helps to identify learning and development needs, which are translated into personal development plans for staff. Members are also offered development opportunities, with a programme of learning and development available to officers and members.

Good quality homes

The council's overarching focus for many years has been to put the infrastructure in place so that residents are able to live happy, rewarding lives. Where residents need more support to do that, we will do our best to provide it.

The council is very proud to be the leading council house builder in England. Over one third of all council homes built in England in 2021 were built in Southwark.

We launched a long-term approach to building new council homes in January 2013, and met our target of starting construction of delivering 2,500 new council homes by May 2022. We have plans to build 1,000 more by 2026.

We have approved high levels of social rented units in the past year, with nearly half of all units from major schemes being affordable homes rather than market rented units. 59 percent of major housing schemes this year provided genuinely affordable homes, far exceeding the 35 percent target – with 49 percent being available for social rent and 10 percent for intermediate rent. 1,085 social rented homes have received planning consent in the last year, with an additional 291 intermediate homes approved.

A total of 1,632 social rented units have started construction on site in the past year with 458 from council-led projects.

Like all social housing providers, the council has significant challenges with its social housing precipitated by the rent cap, new legislation and duties, the drive to net zero, stock condition, inflation and cost of borrowing, the general economic outlook for our tenants, and industry wide skills shortages. These issues are presented at scale in Southwark due to the size and age of our housing stock.

We recognise significant issues within our housing repairs service, which we are acting to transform, with a recent report to **Cabinet** setting out the council's approach. We have had some successes but for a range of important reasons, including the Covid19 pandemic, we have not made as much progress as we have wanted.

We know residents are frustrated by the slow progress, and we are determined to drive things forward quickly so that they start to see a positive difference. We believe that the service is now

turning a corner, with rising satisfaction and a new resident led improvement board driving progress alongside our Cabinet lead.

The Repairs Improvement Residents' Board (RIRB) was established following a council commitment to empower council tenants and residents. An external independent partner was appointed to support the council in the initial set up of the board and then to provide support to the board throughout the programme. The RIRB was set up after an expression of interest through an online panel of residents and will have a key role in assisting with improvements for the repairs service improvement plan.

We are reviewing the financial strategy for our HRA to take into account the significant national and local challenges. We know, however, that housing will continue to take significant organisation wide focus and capacity. Members of CMT are actively leading this process and a new Strategic Director for Housing is being recruited.

Cost of living support

In 2022, as more residents found it harder to manage, we introduced a Cost-of-Living Fund. By spring this year, the council had distributed more than £30m in cost-of-living support to more than one hundred thousand households. The fund was created by merging Government grants and topping them up from the council's reserves.

Because Government Cost of Living support was payable in irregular lump sums, the council filled gaps between payment dates by providing extra support for more than thirty thousand low-income households on means-tested benefits. Holiday free school meals continued throughout the year, and, in the winter, we provided extra help for those receiving council domiciliary care, arguably the most vulnerable of all our residents.

We set up a cross-council Communications and Engagement group, replicating the model used throughout the pandemic, to deliver comprehensive plans to ensure residents were aware of the support available to them, adjusting and responding in real time to feedback from VCS partners. We ran a Cost of Living Summit for partners, and a resident webinar to help spread the word about support, as well as working with VCS partners to set up more than forty Warm Spaces across the borough.

A strong and focussed partnership between the council, health and VCS was at the heart of delivery. The centrepiece of the council's Cost of Living response was the community referral pathway, to help us reach low-income households not claiming welfare benefits. The council worked with schools and dozens of community VCS partners who could refer vulnerable people who were known to them or who they encountered, for support from the Cost-of-Living Fund.

Partners were recruited with the support of **Community Southwark** – the umbrella organisation for the VCS. Fifteen thousand referrals were made between October and March and eighty percent of those referred received payments of £100. Cabinet received a full **evaluation report**.

The council has a strong history of tackling food insecurity together with our partners in the voluntary, community and faith sector. We are proud to be one of only four councils in London to be recognised as cross-cutting leaders in our food work as part of the recently published Good Food for All Londoners report. As a council there has been a long standing commitment to offering support to families through the offer of free, healthy school meals, which is now in place for all nursery and primary pupils. This support is being extended to some secondary school pupils whilst the Mayor of London's primary school support is in place.

Leisure insourcing

As an example of our values-led approach to service delivery, Southwark Council made the decision to insource its leisure services at the end of the contract with the then incumbent, Everyone Active. This decision was taken in order to better align the leisure offer with the council's wider health and well-being offer across, for example, public health, adult and children's services, as well as the wider integrated health system, and to provide better employment for leisure centre team members.

Services were transferred in house in the summer of 2023. This was a complex, whole council project. Outcomes achieved include;

- a new standalone leisure ICT system, which interfaced with other council systems and processes
- transfer of 350 staff through the TUPE process
- transfer of 19,000 leisure members
- development of a financial target operating model and financial reporting system
- capital asset review, 5 year asset lifecycle plan and development of funding bids to address under-investment in facilities

4

Organisational and place leadership

There is a strong and effective partnership between members and officers, with clarity on delivery provided by the Council Delivery Plan.

The administration operates in a consensual decision making manner, bringing borough wide representation to decision making. Officer leadership is set up to support this approach, which leads to robust governance and deep political buy in, particularly on contentious issues.

There are clear targets and plans to work towards becoming a net zero borough, with the council meeting its target to halve its operational council emissions in 2022. Renewable electricity is being rolled out in schools and communal areas of housing estates. Over 1,000 council homes have been retrofitted to make them greener, improve their energy efficiency and make them cheaper to run.

Our ground-breaking **Streets for People Strategy** was agreed in July 2023 with a clear vision for 2030. Pledges include ensuring that all homes will be within 200m of a safe and pleasant walking route; local schools will have a "School Street" or other new safety measures; bikes will gain access to a cycle hangar within six months of applying; and each neighbourhood will have parking spaces for cycles, e-bikes, hire cars and electric vehicles.

Child mental health

In 2018 we undertook a joint review with the former Southwark Clinical Commissioning Group of mental health services for children and young people aged 0-25 in the borough. This showed a shortfall for those who needed extra support with their mental health but did not meet the criteria for specialist services. We heard from young people about their struggle to get help. This

informed our decision to set up an early support hub for young people with low-level mental health problems, such as anxiety and stress. Our aim was to reduce the number of young people reaching crisis point, and make it available to all children in the borough who are experiencing mental health problems. We are working to make support available in all schools.

Local young people helped us design and name our service **The Nest**, which supports children, involving their whole family, through to individual children and young people up to the age of 25 years old and bespoke support for parents and carers, as well as a dedicated team that works in schools across Southwark. In 2022-2023, 373 children used the Nest walk-in service.

Employment and skills

The council has stepped in to establish a locally-delivered employment and skills system, providing support to help residents into work and to progress in work.

The front door to this local system is Southwark Works, the council's employment support programme and a key channel through which the council delivers its ambition to create a thriving and inclusive economy. Unlike the Job Centre, the service is free from conditionality, providing help for anyone who wants to find a job, not just those in receipt of particular benefits. Between 2019 and 2022 a total of 3,681 people were supported into a job, apprenticeship, or training, with over half of those starting jobs.

Southwark Works is delivered by a network of third sector providers rooted in the local community, who offer a range of tailored employment support based on underlying needs, such as mental health, homelessness or disability. The programme integrates two main elements.

For residents, it offers employment support tailored to the needs of different cohorts. For employers it provides a free recruitment service, helping them match their vacancies with local residents and to successfully employ people who face challenges entering and progressing in the workplace.

An independent evaluation of Southwark Works found that it outperformed similar national programmes for all of its client groups, with a higher rate of people starting a job or apprenticeship. Crucially, the evaluation also revealed that residents feel that Southwark Works has had a great positive impact on their mental wellbeing, demonstrating the broader impact of a holistic employment service.

Southwark has run a successful and award-winning apprenticeship programme for nearly 15 years. We are one of the top 100 apprentice employers and 25 per cent of all apprenticeships in London are created by Southwark. Over the next three years we plan to recruit 100 interns across the council. This programme is for our young residents aged 16-24 who may be struggling to get on the career ladder in order to make their way in the world. This is part of the council's wider commitment in the Council Plan to get 500 internships for young people from low income backgrounds

Since opening its doors, the **Southwark Construction Skills Centre** has developed its reputation and standing within the local community and wider construction industry and over 6,000 Southwark residents have attended a range of construction skills training. Nearly 500 Southwark residents have secured apprenticeships, over 1,300 have started jobs and over 2,000 existing construction employees have increased their skills and qualifications.

A key commitment in our Council Delivery Plan, our Living Wage Unit is driving efforts to double the number of accredited London Living Wage

employers headquartered in Southwark from a baseline of 269 to 498 over 4 years. The number of accredited employers has increased to 311 in the first 18 months.

As London's first Living Wage Place, our actions are coordinated through a steering group of committed partners including businesses, universities and community campaigning groups who each make business engagement and advocacy commitments under a shared action plan. Our own commitments include leading the reaccreditation of Southwark as a Living Wage Place, increasing targeted communications resources, and launching a grant scheme to cover the cost of accreditation for smaller employers.

We are working with Lambeth council to create SC1, a Life Sciences Innovation District spanning both boroughs.

Our goal is to make the district a world-recognised home for transformative innovation in life sciences. Health equity is at the heart of SC1 and we are planning to use creative, public-private partnerships to develop solutions to complex healthcare challenges and to improve life for our local communities and society as a whole.

The seven partners behind the project are: King's College London; Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust; King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust; South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust; Guy's & St Thomas' Foundation; Lambeth Council and Southwark Council.

Borough of Sanctuary

The council is ambitious about being a place that welcomes migrants and refugees to our borough, working with local communities to welcome and support people fleeing persecution, conflict and disasters from across the world despite the challenges and pressures this brings. According to Home Office data on those receiving asylum

support Southwark has 2,363 - the second highest number in London after Hillingdon. This represents almost 10% of those receiving asylum support in London. Alongside this we have high numbers of people presenting with No Recourse to Public Funds, and we have welcomed people evacuated from Afghanistan and a significant number of refugees from Ukraine.

We are working through the process of becoming an officially recognised borough of sanctuary. Over the past year alone we have:

- Provided direct support to 756 refugee households (total of 1456 individuals including 556 children). This was an 89 percent increase in the number of households supported in the previous year
- Supported 409 households (total of 779 individuals including 349 children) through our No Recourse to Public Funds Service
- Delivered a wide range of wrap around support to over 200 Afghan nationals evacuated in Operation Pitting
- Supported 301 Ukrainian households (total of 508 guests including 127 children) who have arrived in Southwark.
- Provided longer term Resettlement Support to refugees in Southwark under the various Government resettlement schemes
- Worked with voluntary sector partners ensuring a further 5,000 received various forms of support and advice

Place Making

For many years Southwark's reputation was linked to controversial regeneration projects. Under the Leader and Cabinet, there has been a discernible shift of focus towards resident-led regeneration. We have held two ballots on the Ledbury and Tustin estates, with residents voting for major redevelopment.

The Ledbury Estate redevelopment is a hugely ambitious regeneration project which will provide 340 new homes and transform the estate and surrounding area. In 2021, residents voted in favour of demolishing the four towers on the estate which were no longer safe, in favour of building 265 new council homes and 75 private sale homes. Underpinned by residents' input, wider engagement and a social value programme tailored for the community, this project exemplifies our goals to provide more council homes in the borough and bring social and economic benefits for local people.

In keeping with our commitment to moving towards Net Zero carbon, the Ledbury project exceeds local environmental policy, achieving 89 percent carbon emissions savings through fabric first interventions, connection to the South East London Combined Heat and Power (SELCHP) network, and the use of photovoltaic panels.

Given our central London location, the council seeks to use the potential of development to benefit local people by creating homes, jobs, transport improvements and other positive changes.

Old Kent Road's central London location means that over 400 business are based there, 9,000 people work locally, and 35,000 people live along its three mile length. We are building on Old Kent Road's strengths with a 20 year programme of investment that will deliver tangible benefits for the local community. 20,000 high quality new homes will be built. 35 percent of all new housing will be affordable, a minimum of 15 percent of which must be social rent equivalent homes and 20 percent affordable rent capped at London Living rent equivalent.

Lendlease's **Elephant Park** is one of two major schemes in the council-led regeneration of Elephant and Castle. Overall, the programme will deliver at least 5,000 new and replacement homes for the neighbourhood and create 10,000 new jobs.

Elephant has a rich, cultural tradition and the redevelopment has built upon this by providing more arts, leisure, cultural and community facilities. A new council leisure centre; a new council heritage centre and library; plus a new Southwark Playhouse theatre, have already been delivered.

The project is also creating a more environmentally sustainable future for Elephant and Castle. New transport infrastructure, new and better parks, open spaces and pedestrianisation have already started to shift the neighbourhood's focus away from cars and towards public transport, cycling and walking. A new Northern line tube station and, potentially, the Bakerloo Line extension, will cement the neighbourhood's reputation as one of the best connected locations in London.

The council has played a leading role in securing a commitment to the Bakerloo Line extension in London Councils' new infrastructure framework. The scheme would unlock over 110,000 new homes and 130,000 jobs across the capital. Technical work to prepare for the Bakerloo line extension continues, laying the way for Southwark, Lewisham and TfL to seek government approval for the scheme via the Transport and Works Act in 2025. In Old Kent Road alone, an extension to the Bakerloo Line would enable substantial further growth, with the number of homes rising from 14,500 to 34,500 and the number of jobs rising from 9,500 to 20,000.

In Canada Water, British Land is redeveloping 53 acres of brownfield land to deliver a new town centre, which will include a new high street and town square. Located in former docklands, this scheme will create up to 3,000 new homes, including 1,000 affordable homes; 2 million sq. ft. of workspace and 16 acres of new parks and open public space

As well as delivering much needed new homes (of all tenures) both the Elephant and Castle

and Canada Water schemes are creating huge benefits for the local community in terms of new infrastructure, better public realm, community facilities and improved public transport.

Strong Partnerships

Southwark Council is a well-connected and well-regarded partner and leader within the borough. The development of the 2030 Strategy, and the response to the COVID and cost of living crises have deepened and enhanced existing relationships. A new approach to establishing an Anchor Network of key institutions in the borough was developed earlier this year, and is forming strong relationships as a key strategic partnership group.

One of the commitments in the Council Delivery Plan is to transform the way we work with Southwark's community and faith groups. We recognise that it is important to support a sustainable, confident and resourceful voluntary sector that can work alongside the public and private sector to deliver the best outcomes for our residents. This is evidenced by the scale of our ongoing investment in the sector with around £20 million of grants and contracts with VCS organisations, and by the strength of our partnerships.

We recognise there is still much to do and recently undertook two independent reviews of our grant making and funding of the VCS. One of these was focused on barriers that Black and Minority Ethnic led groups have in accessing funding opportunities and came out of our Southwark Stands Together conversations with local residents.

We have a long history of bringing organisations together to develop joint responses to the challenges we face. Significant examples include our Young People's Mental Health Commission and our Land Commission where we have

been able to bring together key local partners, including the NHS, TfL, local schools and religious organisations and significant key private sector employers in the borough.

The Southwark Land Commission was established in 2022 to explore how more land in the borough can be used for the benefit of all. Bringing together a wide range of independent experts, community groups, academics and landowner representatives, the commission led a collaborative process of panel discussions, workshops, community events and discussion sessions with local groups and landowners to explore and identify areas of land which could be better utilised for social purpose.

The resulting report, **Land for Good**, was published in September 2023, with a key recommendation to establish a social purpose for land framework to put social purpose at the heart of land use.

Southwark's distinctive approach to practical partnership working can be evidenced by the 'Here to Help' programme. This was established in response to the cost of living crisis and involved working with a range of voluntary sector partners including Community Southwark, Citizens Advice Southwark and the Southwark food alliance to support those in greatest need.

Our **Health and Well-being Board** coalesces around a shared Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Following the establishment of the ICB, the council and health are working to integrate services. The council and ICB have agreed to appoint a shared Strategic Director of Health and Social Care, with recruitment starting imminently.

We have a particularly strong relationship both with our Police BCU and the MPS centrally and this extends not just to sharing of information, co-ordination on emergency planning and safeguarding but working closely together on issues like violence against women and girls, joint

work on serious violence, combatting drugs and wider social issues.

We have well-developed mechanisms for joint tasking of police and council resources to deal with emerging issues and use both police and local authority assets and powers to deal with specific issues. The maturity of the relationship means a good level of challenge in both directions and there are many examples of where this has produced results including our strong work with young people around their relationship with the Police. Our Young Advisors have trained police officers and challenged them on police encounters such as stop and search, not only working with local officers but Met Units centrally, such as TSG and Firearms Officers.

We are currently engaged in a joint series of policing conversations with our local communities about their expectations of how they are policed, part of which is taking the police on a journey testing better ways of engaging with our communities locally. Being a good partner also means being prepared to be challenging and a critical friend, and that's what we're prepared to do in our relationship – holding the Police to account on behalf of our local communities and supporting them to be better.

Whilst core relationships are strong, as with the rest of London, there are challenges created by the absence of co-terminosity and by the significant individual challenges faced by the Met Police and NHS.

5

Governance and culture

Governance in Southwark is based on consistent and appropriate behaviours, not process alone. There is clear and highly functional political governance, supported by a strong and experienced senior management team. The political leadership take ownership of decision making within a strong governance and financial framework which members understand and appreciate.

Driven by the council leadership, we are opening ourselves up to more challenge and criticism, and to having difficult conversations with communities and partners. There is significant time and space for public questions and contributions at public meetings – over the past year we have heard 67 delegations at public meetings, demonstrating a productive and open process to hearing what residents and groups think.

We are also making democracy visible in our communities and earlier this year took our Cabinet meeting to the Brandon Estate at the Jack Hobbs Centre, a local community hub that has been improved following work with a partnership of resident organisations. The Brandon Estate is a special place for many – it has faced some significant challenges over the years, and through pro-active work by the community with the council there is now greater community activity and pride in the place.

We have a culture of transparency when things go wrong and seek to deal with issues openly. This can be evidenced by recent issues with the creation of low traffic neighbourhoods where the council has been openly reflective.

Officer informal governance is well established, with weekly Corporate Management Team Meetings, monthly Directors Forums and a cross council Leadership Network for managers.

Following the election in 2022, the council revised its informal governance arrangements into a member-led structure shaped around

regular performance challenge sessions, Lead Member briefing meetings, a Leaders Board and Strategic Policy Board.

The Overview and Scrutiny committee and its scrutiny commissions scrutinise decisions made by the cabinet, and those delegated to officers, and review services provided by the council and its partners. Their in-depth **reviews** from the past year were recently reported to the council's Cabinet.

Challenge is also offered by the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee, which provides independent assurance of the adequacy of the council's governance arrangements, including its standards regime, the risk management framework and the associated control environment.

Southwark's culture has long been based around the delivery of excellent services, underpinned by strong values. The determination to deliver for our residents is the golden thread that runs through everyone at Southwark Council. We recognise, however, that in seeking to deliver the best possible services that our culture can sometimes feel paternalistic.

At its heart, people power is therefore about a fundamentally different relationship between residents and the council. We recognise in moving to a more relational, people powered model that we need to develop an organisational approach which empowers staff and shifts our organisational culture so that collaboration is a default and staff feel they have the agency to make a difference.

The council has invested in a new role of Director of People and Organisational Development who is working to develop a new People Strategy early next year. This will follow our first staff survey since 2018, which launched in September 2023 to ensure that colleagues feel valued and listened to. The new strategy will review and renew our values and behaviours and ensure staff can contribute to the future workplace.

6

Financial planning and management

The council has robust financial governance arrangements with regular management and public reporting of its financial position and has a clearly defined approach to dealing with the challenges it faces. From 2024-25 onwards, the council will be publishing a 3-year budget plan underpinned by a supporting financial strategy that was presented to our October 2023 Cabinet (enroute to Council Assembly in November).

In previous years, a 1 year budget was adopted, but going forwards the organisation will be looking to use a longer planning time-frame as a basis to look at organisation-wide and transformational savings and growth opportunities.

The council's General Fund revenue budget has consistently balanced over the years and the council has built a prudent level of General Fund reserves over this period. Whilst the council has a substantial amount of external debt, this is largely a consequence of its ambitious housebuilding programme and is proportionate to the income stream supporting it. We are seeing continued demand and cost pressures in homelessness services, for those who have no recourse to public funds, and in the costs of providing transport to SEND children. Borrowing remains well within prudential indicator limits.

Currently, there are too many households living in temporary accommodation and the council plans to build new council homes to give families somewhere secure and affordable to live. In order to keep building new council homes, the council is exploring new sources of funding, in addition to borrowing from government. Specific challenges such as the Housing Revenue Account, High Needs pressures and Temporary Accommodation overspends are being tackled through the use of focussed 'Budget Recovery Boards'. These provide an enhanced level of support and scrutiny to challenging areas and engage senior professional colleagues from across the organisation to develop and implement solutions.

Indeed, our Housing Revenue Account is where our greatest financial pressures lie. Our 2022/23 outturn left us with c. £19m reserves and our most recent Monitoring Report to Cabinet for delivery of the 23/24 budget was forecasting a £13m+ pressure in addition to a capital pressure which will place further revenue cost onto the HRA in 24/25. The council is considering immediate financial interventions to mitigate our in year pressure and also to return the HRA to balance in the mid-term. Addressing these challenges is a high priority cross-organisation activity.

The council is the largest council landlord in London and one of the biggest in the country. Safety is always the top priority. The council has drafted a new 'Asset Management Strategy', which responds to new building safety legislation and sets out the council's approach to investing in council homes, blocks and estates. This draft strategy also includes updating and 'greening' heat networks as well as moving forward with plans agreed by residents to rebuild the Tustin, Ledbury, and Aylesbury and Maydew estate.

We have undertaken a full review of our housing related capital programme (both General Fund and Housing Revenue Account) in the last 12 months. This has emphasised the need to reprioritise and re-programme works into an affordable envelope and timescale, particularly on the Housing Investment Programme. A report entitled '**Southwark Construction Strategic Plan**' was approved by cabinet in March 2023 and a similar report for the council's Asset Management Strategy is in train. Together, these documents set out how the council will continue to deliver new builds and maintain existing stock in an affordable, sustainable way.

Southwark Council's Fairer Future Procurement Framework (FFPF) sets out how the council will use its procurement to support the delivery of the Borough Plan and Fairer Future Commitments and the processes and practices that are needed to do this.

The Environment and Community Engagement Scrutiny Commission Report '**Climate Finance-Financing Southwark's Green Transition**' commended Southwark on the progress made in meeting its ambitious 2030 net zero target, with the weighted carbon intensity of the LBS pension fund reduced by 59 percent in the five years to 31 March 2022.



Strengthening our organisation: transformation capacity and priorities

We have good practice to build on from across the organisation. We excel in many areas of service provision, and are strengthening and growing communities of practice to support organic growth alongside strategic transformation programmes.

However, improvement and transformation capacity varies across the organisation. Over the past ten years the council has favoured more departmentally embedded improvement driven by departmental goals and priorities, with organisational impact captured through quarterly performance challenge meetings with Lead Members.

We recognise that organisational infrastructure and corporate capacity has not benefited from enough focus and investment. In seeking to develop corporate capacity, the Chief Executive quickly set out to strengthen the corporate centre and senior management team via two phases of senior management restructures in the past year.

The Corporate Management Team has been strengthened by the appointment of Assistant Chief Executives for Governance and Assurance, and for Strategy and Communities.

In recognition of the need to build corporate capacity, investment is being made in Strategy, Performance, HR, Change and Communications. This will be further bolstered by a council wide review of corporate resources, which has been completed over the summer and is now being readied for delivery. This work will seek to consolidate corporate functions in the council's corporate centre and bring common services together to create critical mass and greater efficiency.

Upon her arrival, the Chief Executive quickly identified the HR function as an important priority for improvement. A new post of Director of People and Organisational Development has been permanently appointed, bringing together the management of people resources with that of payroll and council buildings for the first time. Through a One People Service Transformation Programme, progress is being made to strengthen operational HR delivery and build the strategic capabilities required to achieve the council's new approach. This includes the establishment of new teams to support recruitment and organisational development.

One of the areas where significant development is needed is in data, intelligence and insight. At present all resource is dispersed throughout the council, and whilst there are high quality examples of work such as the JSNA, council and borough wide intelligence is more limited.

The council and its partners have recently made a circa £5 million bid to a national programme to allow us to develop a blueprint for intelligence and insight which will drive the resources review in these areas (whether the bid is successful or not).

We acknowledge that investment in the council's core IT infrastructure has fallen behind, and there is now a renewed focus on driving through a rapid improvement programme over the next twelve months.

One of the primary issues is WiFi connectivity, coverage and quality of service. With the first stage focussing on the Tooley St hub during the Autumn of 2023, contractors and partners are installing new cabling and wireless access points. That will resolve the issues of poor service. In addition a capital refresh programme is being brought forward to 2023/24 for a full laptop replacement, upgrade to windows 11 and Microsoft 365 implementation.

8

Conclusion and key questions

This is a critical time for Southwark as we commence our transformation programme and get ready to deliver our 2030 Strategy with partners.

We would particularly welcome feedback on these questions as part of the Corporate Peer Challenge Team's assessment:

1. How can we further bolster our partnership readiness to work together collaboratively and at pace to deliver the 2030 vision?
2. How can we further strengthen our council's culture in ways that empower, support and inspire our workforce to work in collaboration with our residents?
3. To achieve our collective ambitions, what more needs to be done to build organisational capacity and ways of working to enable us to move at pace?
4. What critical success factors should we consider as we embark on our transformation programme?
5. How might we better square the circle of being ambitious, innovative and a leading voice in local government with tackling the basics of providing consistently good services to residents?

Item No. 10.	Classification: Open	Date: 17 January 2024	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Placement Policy for Temporary Accommodation and Private Rented Sector Offers	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Cabinet Member:		Councillor Helen Dennis – Cabinet Member for New Homes and Sustainable Development	

FOREWORD - COUNCILLOR HELEN DENNIS, CABINET MEMBER FOR NEW HOMES AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Across the country there is a crisis in homelessness and temporary accommodation, and this crisis is now particularly acute in London where 1 in 23 children are now estimated to be in living in temporary accommodation. This is driven by both an increase in homelessness applications, including as a result of Section 21 evictions and rising Home Office cases, and by higher procurement costs, with very few affordable properties available to local authorities. It is in this context that we are bringing forward a suite of measures designed to ensure that our approach in Southwark is as efficient and fair as possible, whilst remaining focused on homelessness prevention and securing the best possible outcomes for our residents who find themselves vulnerable and without a stable and secure home.

This reviewed placement policy builds on policies adopted in 2021, including our Good Homes Standard for Temporary Accommodation, and brings Southwark in line with other local authorities by moving to one offer rather than two as a means to discharge our statutory duties. This will ensure that we focus our efforts in meeting the suitability criteria and should also reduce the amount of time that residents may stay in expensive nightly paid accommodation. It is coupled with a clear process for requesting reviews and over the coming months, will also be accompanied by further work on procurement, an overarching Homelessness Strategy and work to review our Allocations Policy. Southwark Council is committed to doing all that we can to respond to this escalating crisis, to build the affordable homes we need in the long-term, and to work with partners to ensure that our resources are deployed in the most effective way. But ultimately, it is a joined-up national approach to homelessness which is required, and we will continue to advocate for this and for fair benefits and funding to end homelessness and rough sleeping for good.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That cabinet:

1. Approves the Placement Policy for Temporary Accommodation (TA) and Private Rented Sector Offers (PRSO) (Appendix 1).
2. Agrees to an annual review of the Placement Policy which takes account of service user feedback.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. In London and nationally, levels of homelessness have been consistently rising. This has impacted both on the numbers of homelessness assessments carried out, prevention work with residents and placements in temporary accommodation.
4. The most recent national figures provided in July 2023 reported the number of households in temporary accommodation in England was at its highest since records began in 1998, with 104,510 households in temporary accommodation at the end of March 2023. This has increased by 9,520, or 10%, since the same time last year.
5. Generally, the shortage and unaffordability of housing in the private sector is the critical underlying factor for the majority of homelessness instances. This is largely impacted by the cost of living, interest rates and follow up outcomes coming out of the pandemic.
6. The Council has a statutory obligation to homeless households under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) Order 2002, the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
7. The Council's duties include the provision of housing advice; action to prevent and relieve homelessness; providing housing related support; carrying out inquiries and making decisions on housing duties to homeless households; providing emergency accommodation and longer term temporary accommodation in response to homelessness; discharging the prevention, relief, temporary or full housing duties through an offer of suitable accommodation, which may be in the private or social sector.
8. The temporary accommodation and homelessness policies that determine how homes are procured, allocated and minimum property and management standards, are set out in the below policies:
 - Temporary Accommodation Procurement Policy;
 - The Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy;
 - Private Rented Sector Offer Policy

9. The policies were last reviewed and amended in September 2021, to provide the Council with the option of placing households in accommodation further from Southwark (outside of the M25) and to include the introduction of the Southwark Good Homes Standard.
10. The council collates statistical information alongside exploring case studies which have been used in order to review the impact of the existing policy.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

11. The TA Placement policy and Private Rented Sector Offer Policy are being combined as they largely cover the same issues, namely suitability, location and number of offers.
12. The policies were last reviewed in September 2021 and amended to provide the option of placing households in accommodation further from Southwark (outside of the M25) and the introduction of the Good Homes Standard.
13. The revised policy that is being recommended, improves the process of allocating affordable and suitable homes, and focuses on factors that are relevant to individual households. This requires the Housing Solutions Service to ensure that suitability assessments are carried out before the decision to offer accommodation is made. Similarly, personal housing plans will also have to be prepared in a timely manner to ensure that the Council is able to achieve its prevention of homelessness objectives.
14. The revised policy seeks to achieve the strategic outcome of enabling the Council to offer properties that are affordable and suitable for those who require housing assistance under the legislation to resolve the housing need. The lack of available homes in Southwark and the immediate vicinity, means offering suitable property within and close to the local area is extremely challenging. The largest provision of in-borough homes comes from the Housing Revenue Account stock.
15. The policy also seeks to simplify the process of offering temporary accommodation and to adopt of a more thorough customer first approach by the Housing Solution Service.
16. The current approach of making two offers of TA has become constrained due to limited housing stock. A lot of time and effort is expended trying to source scarce accommodation, which results in a shift of focus away from adequately assessing suitability in order to allocate the right property first time.

Policy framework implications

17.Placement Policy for Temporary Accommodation and Private Rented Sector Offers: Proposed changes

- Reducing the number of offers of accommodation down to a single offer of temporary accommodation whether on an interim or longer-term basis, post acceptance of a full duty.
- A requirement on the Council to carry out suitability assessments to ensure that it can evidence the suitability of accommodation that is offered.
- A strictly defined set of factors to enable the determination of suitability and geographical locations;
- A robust transfer process for those that are in accommodation that is unsuitable.

18.The current two offer policy is unique to Southwark, goes above the requirements set out in legislation and is not reflective of the challenges of procuring accommodation in the private rented sector. This is therefore placing unnecessary additional operational pressures on staffing resources to fulfil the policy requirement. In making the change to one offer, the council will align processes with what is legally required and the practices completed by other local authorities and make best use of staffing resources in a housing market which has seen a reduction in supply.

19.The proposal to make a single offer and emphasis on suitability assessments will have an impact on customers by ensuring that prior to making a placement, the household's circumstances have been fully considered. This will put greater onus on the Council to change how and when it assesses suitability, drafts personalised housing plans and decides if the criteria for those with the highest need to be in or closer to Southwark are met.

20.The reduction in the number of offers that will be made should enable the Council to streamline a robust process, focusing on matching applicants with suitable offers and ensuring that case management actions are undertaken within appropriate timescales. Currently, the two-offer policy has financial implications in that it inadvertently extends the period of time that an applicant spends in Nightly Paid Accommodation.

21.This new policy seeks to ensure no child of school age is prevented from accessing education due to travel limitations. Therefore due regard to the Department for Education's published document, Travel to School Statutory guidance for Local Authorities June 2023 has been considered. In practice, the council will ensure that a thorough suitability assessment will be conducted, including full reference to the travel times

to school as well as availability of a new school in the accommodation location. In addition, the policy includes specification that children undertaking exams within 6 months will be prioritised for accommodation local to the school.

22. The existing policy permits Southwark to place households outside of London. This has been part of working practices applied by Southwark with less than 5% of temporary accommodation located outside of London. Given the market conditions, it is inevitable that the Council will need to look further afield for properties and this is likely to lead to a larger number of households being offered suitable accommodation outside of the Borough. Where no suitable accommodation is available in the short term, the Council will be responsible for applying the transfer process transparently and fairly.
23. The revised policy highlights the processes relating to a temporary accommodation transfer list. Specifically the policy highlights TA moves will not be prioritised simply by time spent on such a list without regard to the specifics of their case. Instead, the council will track households who need to move because of their needs by maintaining a list which fully records this information. This will be done on a daily and weekly basis to update and distinguish between those in accommodation that is unsuitable now and applicants whom the council considers will need to move in the short or medium term. This change will also bring the policy in line with updated legislation.
24. As with the existing policy, the revised policy outlines that the household will be provided with details of the property they are being offered and can still refuse an offer of TA or a PRSO. The Resident will be informed of this in writing and also informed of the consequences of refusing an offer.
25. Households who are provided with an offer of TA or a PRSO will be provided with details of their rights to lodge a review of the offer. Any review request or legal challenges to accommodation offered will be processed through the councils Reviews Team and legal services respectively, as it is under the current process. However moving to one offer will streamline the process and permit the council to improve efficiency in placing households into suitable accommodation and prioritise households for a TA transfer. Thus, it is anticipated the council will see a reduction of reviews; however it we will be fully equipped to deal with any that come in. The initial discussion with the resident at the point of offer will help to manage expectations and seek to reduce the number of reviews lodged based on a household's preference, that cannot be met in the current housing market.

Future supply of accommodation

26. Growing pressures from homelessness demand and unaffordability of accommodation in London will likely see an increase of households placed further afield. However, the council will continue to explore all options to secure accommodation locally and meet the needs of households presenting as homeless. This includes the following:
- a. Long term accommodation investment opportunities
 - b. Usage of council owned accommodation on regeneration sites
 - c. Allocations of council accommodation
 - d. Engagement in the private rented sector market
27. The above list is not exhaustive and each option will be carefully considered and thought out against costing and alignment with the councils overall strategy. In doing so, separate reports will be produced and placed through the relevant scrutiny to ensure the appropriate consideration has been given.

Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts

Community impact statement

28. The Council has taken extensive steps to make improvements in the homelessness assessment and temporary accommodation provision and procedures. Maximising the supply of local accommodation for those who need it, is a critical part of the policy, but where the Council is not able to offer in-borough accommodation it must have demonstrably taken relevant factors into account and provide or enable access to improved resettlement and tenancy sustainment services. The new management agreement will ensure that providers offer applicants more support in the locality where they going to be accommodated, and information to enable households to make informed decisions about the offer of accommodation that is made to them.

Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement

29. Extensive examination of the policy of making two offers found that in practice the second offer did not provide any benefits to households. Therefore, reducing the number of offers from two to one will not have an adverse impact on any groups.
30. The impact on young people and education has been highlighted as an area of concern. The impact that living in temporary accommodation has on children is well documented. However the support provided through the Councils Resettlement team will help to mitigate any adverse impact and identify the households where further intervention is required. One offer of suitable accommodation in the private sector will have a positive impact on households as it provides a permanent rehousing solution and stability to households.

31. Greater emphasis on making a suitable offer the first time will have a positive impact on households across all groups. Ensuring households are provided with accommodation that is affordable will mean households are not disadvantaged going forward.
32. The introduction of a TA transfer list will have a positive impact on households who require an urgent move due to medical needs.
33. The council will keep the policy under constant review and will monitor equalities data and information.

Health impact statement

34. There are no direct health impact issues. However, any unintended health issues will be mitigated through the Equalities impact and needs assessment.

Climate change implications

35. There are no climate change implications. The Council has already adopted property standards that focus on energy efficiency and fuel poverty reduction in its Southwark Good Homes Standard.

Resource implications

36. There are no specific resources implications, but the policy will enable officers to focus on improved service delivery.

Legal/Financial implications:

37. The new TA Policy, as reviewed, is compliant with legislative requirements, government guidelines, relevant case law and our fairer future commitments.
38. Simplifying the policy and focus to one suitable offer will drive efficiencies in the service, reducing abortive offers, and potentially mean applicants spend less time in nightly paid accommodation and ensure that officers focus on a single suitable offer that reflects the suitability assessment and the contents of the personal housing plan.

Consultation

39. There is no legal requirement to conduct a consultation process on a TA placement policy, however feedback from various forums has been sought.
40. The revised policy changes has been consulted through the Homelessness Forum which raised the importance of ensuring sufficient suitability assessments are completed. This has been reflected in the revised policy.

41. Feedback from complaints and case studies, has led to amendments within the policy to re focused the service on ensuring offers of TA and PRSO are suitable first time.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Assistant Chief Executive – Governance and Assurance [KM 4/12/23]

42. Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 (“HA96”) imposes duties on the Council as a local housing authority to secure suitable temporary accommodation for the homeless while enquiries are made into their entitlement to assistance and, thereafter if certain conditions are satisfied.
43. The Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012 (“the 2012 Order”) and the accompanying Supplementary Guidance issued by the Secretary of State, establishes that the location of the accommodation – including, where the accommodation is out of the borough, its distance from the borough - is relevant to the issue of the suitability of the accommodation secured. The 2012 Order also sets out other matters related to location that the authority must have regard to in considering suitability of accommodation.
44. By s208 of the HA96, the Council must, so far as practicable, secure temporary accommodation within its district.
45. The Supreme Court decision in the case of *Nzolameso v Westminster City Council* (“Nzolameso”) emphasises the need for local authorities to have regard to their statutory duties under ss206 and 208 of the Act. It establishes that where “in-borough” accommodation cannot be secured, a local housing authority must secure accommodation as close to the borough as reasonably practicable (which may involve considerations of cost to the authority), and be prepared to justify in a particular case why the accommodation that was offered was suitable having regard to the statutory duties. The Supreme Court sets out guidance for local authorities. It recognises that authorities will predict likely demand and recommends that: “...Ideally, each local authority should have, and keep up to date, a policy for procuring sufficient units of temporary accommodation to meet the anticipated demand during the coming year. That policy should reflect the authority's statutory obligations under both the 1996 Act and the Children Act 2004...” and: “...each local authority should have, and keep up to date, a policy for allocating those units to individual homeless households. Where there was an expected shortfall of “in borough” units, that policy would set out the factors which would be considered in offering households those units of accommodation, the factors which would be taken into account in offering units close to home, and if there was a shortage of such units, the factors that make it suitable to accommodate a household further away...” . The policies

would need to be approved in accordance with the council's arrangements and have to be available to the public.

46. In preparing these policies, the Council has to have regard to its public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010, which requires it to have due regard to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a "protected characteristic" and people who do not;
- foster good relations between people who share a relevant "protected characteristic" and people who do not.

The "protected characteristics" are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (formerly gender) and sexual orientation. They also cover marriage and civil partnership with regards to eliminating discrimination.

47. As regards consultation, the law requires that consultation must be undertaken when proposals are at a formative stage and include sufficient reasons for the proposal and time for interested parties to respond. The cabinet member is required take into account the outcome of the consultation when making a decision on the recommendations and is referred to the consultation section of this report.

Strategic Director of Finance

48. The report notes the change in policy, particularly the removal of the two offer policy and difficulty quantifying the financial implications, however, in some instances it may reduce the number of nights a household spends in more expensive nightly paid and should allow staff more time to focus on adequately assessing suitability to allocate the right property.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**APPENDICES**

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Placement Policy for Temporary accommodation and Private Rented Sector Offers
Appendix 2	Summary - Placement policy for Temporary accommodation and Private Rented Sector Offers
Appendix 3	Equality Impact and Needs Assessment (EINA) - Placement Policy for temporary accommodation and Private rented sector offers

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Helen Dennis – New Homes and Sustainable Development	
Lead Officer	Cheryl Russell – Director of Resident Services	
Report Author	Roberto Bruni – Procurement Specialist	
Version	Final version	
Dated	4 January 2024	
Key Decision?	Yes	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Assistant Chief Executive – Governance and Assurance	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	5 January 2024	

APPENDIX 1

Placement policy for temporary accommodation and private rented sector offers

Part A: Introduction

1. This document sets out the Council's Policy for the allocation of temporary accommodation and properties, offered in discharge of its statutory obligations in the private rented sector (PRSO), to homeless households according to its location. This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Council's Temporary Accommodation Procurement Policy.
2. The policy applies to all households placed in accommodation by the Council under section 188, S190, S189B and section 193 of the Housing Act 1996 as amended and Localism Act 2011. This policy also takes into account the statutory requirements on local authorities in respect of suitability of accommodation, including Suitability Orders, case law, and the Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities 2018. This policy does not apply to offers of accommodation under Part VI of the Act.
3. This document has been drafted with careful consideration of the Equality Act 2010 and the Children's Act 2004, S11.
4. The factors taken into account in determining the right and right accommodation is the suitability of a property for the household and considering whether it is affordable while being able to prioritise essentials such as food, clothing, heating, transport and other essentials. The Council will take account of costs resulting from the location of the accommodation as well the distance from the borough.
5. All decisions regarding the offer accommodation will have regard to the provisions of the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) Order 2012.
6. The Council is committed to securing suitable temporary accommodation (TA) and Private Rented Accommodation (PRSO) for homeless households where this is required and the policy is to provide accommodation wherever reasonably practicable, except in cases where there is a specific reason why the household should not be accommodated within the borough itself (e.g. those at risk of violence).
7. This Policy sets out that Southwark does not have sufficient supply of accommodation within its own stock, and as a result, it will rely on a supply of privately owned properties to meet our statutory obligations. Therefore, locating homes within Southwark or close proximity is subject to the supply and availability of suitable and affordable homes.

8. Changes to the Local Housing Allowance, the introduction of the “benefit cap” and a number of other factors have reduced the number of properties in South East London that can be obtained for this purpose due to the cost of doing so. As a result, there will be an increasing need to use accommodation that will be some distance away.
9. This policy is intended to ensure that it prioritise those who have the greatest need to be in or close to a particular location.
10. We have set out the location of accommodation according to three geographical zones:
 - Zone A: Southwark and close locality
 - Zone B: Greater London and surrounding counties transport links
 - Zone C: Outside of London
11. Properties for rent in the private sector
12. A Personalised Housing Plan (PHP) will be completed with the household in parallel to and in some instances after a Prevention or Relief Duty being accepted. The PHP is a live document that sets out what steps that the household can take to prevent or relieve homelessness and may include advice about where to look for properties to rent.
13. Southwark has on-going relationships with a variety of providers and the majority of the available homes comes from these providers.
14. Southwark will aim to prevent and relieve homelessness through assisting households to stay in their accommodation. Where this is not possible, we will also seek to make a suitable offer in the private sector. In doing so, a private landlord will offer an assured short-hold tenancy for at least a 24 month period. This also applies to households where the council has accepted a full housing duty to provide permanent accommodation.
15. We will make one offer of private accommodation and in doing so, we will ensure the property is suitable based on the individual households circumstances. The assessment will consider affordability, safety, medical needs, location needs and any other relevant circumstances. Where possible we will also consider area’s of preference listed by the household. Where a suitable offer has been made, we will provide a notification letter to the household advising our statutory duty has ended, this is regardless of whether the offer is accepted or not.
16. We will encourage and support residents to also conduct independent searches to enable the household to exercise choice for their new home. Once a property has been found, we will help the household to determine the affordability of the accommodation and provide appropriate assistance to secure the accommodation. This could be through an incentive payment directly to the landlord.

Part B: Suitability Assessment

17. The Council has a duty to prepare a suitability assessment and will do so in collaboration with the household. Without the household's input the Council will potentially miss vital information or not give it the appropriate weight to relevant factors.
18. In most circumstances this assessment must be completed by the Council before the offer of accommodation is made. In an emergency, the Council may just need the most pertinent facts but must carry out the full assessment as soon as possible.
19. As examples of factors relevant to the assessment and specifically relevant to a household:
- Any prevailing risk factors.
 - Where the household's children go to school and whether they have any special educational needs
 - Whether the children have national exams in the next six months
 - Whether anyone in the household has any health needs, the NHS service used and treatment received
 - Location of place of work, travelling method, hours of employment and take home pay
 - Benefits entitlement including in-work benefits
 - Access to local services or provision from social services or statutory care package

(A comprehensive indication of factors to be taken into account of are set out further below) As part of the assessment process, the council will develop a personal housing plan. At this point the council will seek key information relating to the households circumstances and requirements. It must be noted that while the council will obtain an applicant's views and wishes, the council will make the placement based on the suitability assessment. Ensuring the details of the assessment have been provided to the household.

How the Council finds and allocates temporary accommodation

20. The Council's Accommodation Procurement Policy for Homeless Households sets out how it obtains accommodation.
21. The Council aims to offer accommodation within the Borough or immediate proximity (Zone A). However, Southwark and South East London are ever increasingly expensive and highly sought-after places and the Council will use the relevant factors to prioritise allocation in Zone A. Where it is not possible to offer accommodation in Zone A, the Council will look further afield in Zones B or C, taking into account the household's circumstances.

22. When considering a specific offer the Council also carries out a search of property websites to see if there are properties in borough or neighbouring boroughs which are affordable and suitable. If such a property can be procured it will be offered. However, the gap between what rent assistance can be claimed and the rent charged it is likely that it will not be affordable. The council will evidence this in the offer letter.

Part C: Allocation process

23. There are a huge number of factors to consider when allocating a property – size, does it have stairs, where is it located, is it ‘nightly booked’ or ‘longer term’, how close it is to public transport links etc.. The Council takes all these issues into account when making an offer. Whilst it is desirable to offer everyone a property in Southwark, this is not possible. Therefore, Zone A properties will be first considered for those that have been assessed as requiring a Zone A offer for specific needs. Level access properties will usually be offered to those who have severe mobility needs or where someone uses a wheelchair.

24. Every day, the Temporary Accommodation Placement team obtains a list of all the properties that are available from various suppliers. In the first instance, the team will check households who are waiting for an offer of suitable temporary accommodation to matches each available property prioritising those in accordance with the “next available offer” status, those requiring a transfer and those short term accommodation.

25. On the occasions where we receive a property that is in particularly short supply, such as a very large home or a longer term, in-borough home and we do not have a family who has been assessed for that type of home waiting, we may decide to hold that property back until a family that really needs it comes to our attention. This is because we know that it may be a long time before another property of that type becomes available again and given the heavy demand we face from homeless families who need housing, it is very likely that in the next few days a family will come in whose need for that particular home are greater than those waiting at that point.

Part D: Placements according to the Geographical Areas (ZONES)

26. Every household’s circumstances are different and we consider everyone’s situations on a case by case basis taking into account the full range of needs that the household has based on the both the suitability assessment and Personal Housing Plan.

27. The Council identifies the needs of households and requirement of remaining in the borough or as close to and has identified the three zones listed below:

Zone A – Southwark and adjacent locality - This refers to areas bordering the borough that may be closer or more accessible than some part of the borough.

- If anyone in the household has a severe and enduring health condition requiring intensive and enduring specialist medical treatment only available at a Southwark's NHS service.
- If anyone in the household are in receipt of a significant care package and a range of healthcare options which cannot be transferred.
- If anyone in the household has a severe and enduring mental health problem who are receiving psychiatric treatment and aftercare provided by local community mental health services and have an established 2 support network where a transfer of care would severely impact upon their ability to engage with treatment and care plans.
- Households containing a child or children with special educational needs who are receiving education or educational support at a local school in or in a neighbouring borough and where a change to another school or learning establishment would be detrimental to their continuing development.
- Households with a child(ren) subject to a Southwark Child Protection Plan or families/pregnant women who have high social needs who are linked into local support services and where it is verified that a transfer to another area could be detrimental to their welfare.
- Applicants who are currently employed in borough and who have been continuously employed for at least six months and where financial assessment confirms the cost of travel would render accommodation in another area unaffordable. Each case will be assessed on an individual basis.
- Pregnant women who are on maternity leave but who intend to return to work at their place of employment will also be considered under the criteria
- Households who have a longstanding arrangement to provide care and support to another family member in Southwark who is not part of the resident household and would be likely to require statutory health and social support if the care ceased.
- The household is receiving services locally and support can not be transferred to another area and in doing so would severely disrupt essential caring and support arrangements.
- Any other special circumstance will also be taken into account.

Zone B: London area and adjoining Counties with reasonable travel connections

- Applicants who have been continuously employed in at a single location in Greater London for a period of six months, and for 16 hours or more per week where financial assessment confirms the cost of travel would render

accommodation in another area unaffordable. Each case will be assessed on an individual basis. Women who are on maternity leave from employment and meet the above criteria would also be prioritised for placements in Greater London.

- Applicants who have as part of their household, a child or children who are enrolled in public examination courses in Southwark, with exams to be taken within the next six months or at a Key Stage assessment.
- Where a child is currently in a public exam year, we will seek to ensure that any accommodation offered is within reasonable travelling distance of school so they can continue their studies uninterrupted.
- Any other special circumstance will be taken into account.

Zone C: Greater London and outside London

- Non-working (or less than 16h) households.
- Households with children at nursery, primary or secondary school, who are not sitting public exams.
- The household is receiving services locally but support could be transferred to another area without severely disrupting caring arrangements.
- Households who are not considered a priority for accommodation in Band A or B will be considered for an offer of accommodation elsewhere in London or outside London (if accommodation has not been identified that is closer)

Vulnerabilities

28. Our scheme sets out how we determine who gets priority for in-borough temporary accommodation, when there is not enough available for everyone.
29. We also have a monthly liaison meeting with Children's Services where we discuss the needs of those families we know are threatened with homelessness so we can jointly plan how best to meet their housing and support needs in the future.
30. The Council recognises that in many cases it may be in the best interests of children to remain at existing schools where they are settled. Unfortunately due to the difficulties in procuring accommodation referred to above it is not always possible to offer accommodation which avoids the need for parents to consider moving their child's school and we have to prioritise the needs of the most vulnerable children.
31. If children are not sitting a national exam and do not have any special needs, households may decide that moving their child(ren) to a school nearer to the temporary accommodation may be preferable to travelling back and forward. It will be our duty to determine that the accommodation provided is not for a short period and that the household will be able to plan for the longer term. It is also our duty to ensure that we have confirmed that places are available at local schools subject to specific admission criteria for some schools. The council, where possible, will seek to minimise the disruption to the education.

32. Section 14 of the Education Act 1996 requires that all local authorities provide school places for all resident children. Before a household accepts and moves to the new address, we will have advised the household of the local schools' availability. The councils will provide support through our Resettlement team to access application forms, connect to local support and any other relevant support required. The Council recognises that pregnant women and new mothers could be especially vulnerable when facing homelessness. Therefore we will ensure extra support is provided through also through our resettlement services. Where any special circumstances are identified, we will look at available options to transfer the household into alternative suitable temporary accommodation when it becomes available.

Part E: Temporary accommodation offer

33. Applicants will be given one offer of suitable interim and one offer of temporary accommodation in compliance with this policy and meets the Southwark Good Homes Standard. Where the council is not able to rehouse applicants into accommodation that meets the good homes standard, they will be placed in emergency interim temporary accommodation. The household will be placed on the internal temporary accommodation transfer list. Upon making an offer they will be given a reasonable amount of time to consider the offer. In making the offer, individual circumstances will be considered, taking into account the factors set out in Part D of this policy and the council's criteria on out of borough placements.
34. If we allocate suitable accommodation on an interim basis and the council subsequently accepts a full housing duty, the accommodation provided may be deemed suitable and no further offers will be required.
35. Households will be given an opportunity to view accommodation that is offered although this will not always be possible on all initial emergency placements. In some circumstances, households may initially virtually view through an up to date recording. Applicants will then be required to decide whether they accept the offer and the council will outline the consequences of any refusals. Where a household has made an offer of accommodation, the council will also make direct with the household in order to discuss the property offered. In doing so, the council will seek feedback from and make reference to the suitability assessment as referenced in Part B above.
36. Where households are placed outside of the borough and further afield, outside of London and not had the ability view the property in advance of acceptance, the council will ensure applicants have sufficient information about the location and services in the local area. Pressures in the housing market may not always permit the council the ability provide residents with a specific timeframe to make a decision on the accommodation. However where possible, the council will consider the individual households circumstances when determining the length of time available to the household before making a decision on whether to accept the offer.

37. Where the person is dissatisfied with an offer of temporary accommodation (which may include out of borough placements), they can lodge a review providing the reasons. This applies to new applicants to whom the Council has an interim duty to accommodate under Section 188 (1) of the HA96, those where the council exercise their discretion to accommodate under Section 188 (3) of the Housing Act 1996, as well as those seeking a transfer from existing TA.
38. There are a number of ways that the council can end its accommodation duties to an applicant, set out in the Housing Act 1996; including by making a 'final' stage offer of accommodation. It will be made clear whether an offer of accommodation is temporary or is intended to be a 'final' stage including an offer as defined in the Private Rented Sector Offers Policy for Homeless Households.
39. Where an applicant to whom the council has accepted a main housing duty and refuse a suitable offer, the council will inform the household in writing that its statutory obligations have been discharged. In this case, the household will also receive a notice terminating the temporary accommodation tenancy. Households can submit a review request and request an extension to the TA provision pending the outcome of the review, they will only continue to be accommodated during the review period for exceptional reasons.
40. Each case will be considered on an individual basis, carrying out a balancing exercise, taking into account the overall merits of the case. This includes the extent to which it could be said that the decision was contrary to the merits of the case or was one which was finely balanced, any new material which could have a real effect on the decision under review, the personal circumstances of the applicant and the consequences of an adverse decision, and the potential impact of the loss of accommodation.

Part F: Temporary Accommodation Transfers

41. There will be instances where the Council has been unable to allocate a property in the agreed Zone and when this occurs, balancing that the accommodation may be suitable for the short term, the household will be agreed for a transfer to move to alternative suitable temporary accommodation. The offer of accommodation may also have been deemed to be unsuitable following review or the household's circumstances have changed resulting in the accommodation is no longer suitable. To address these eventualities, the council maintains a transfer list.
42. The Council will always need to ensure that it has a clear process for managing transfers and how it maximises the suitable allocation of available properties according to geographical location, size and type.

43. Priority between households on the transfer list will be determined by the reasons for transfer, urgency, personal circumstances and considering the availability of the current accommodation occupied.
44. Where there are exceptional circumstances, the Housing Supply Manager can prioritise any household above another and allocate the next available property.
45. The Council recognise that it needs keep track of households who need to move and their needs, and a list or database is useful. However, we will not prioritise households for a transfer simply by time spent on such a list without regard to the specifics of their case. We will monitor the transfer list on a daily and weekly basis to update and distinguish between those in accommodation that is unsuitable now and applicants whom the council considers will need to move in the short or medium term.

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APPENDIX 2**Placement Policy for Temporary Accommodation and Private Rented Sector Offers - Summary of changes****Removal of the two offer policy**

Within the existing policy, Southwark has advised they will make two offers of suitable accommodation. This goes above the statutory requirement of making one offer. Given the limitations on housing temporary accommodation supply, the council intends to remove the two offer policy and place greater emphasis securing suitability accommodation for a one offer process.

Temporary Accommodation Placement

Limited availability of housing stock, it will not be possible to place all homeless households in temporary accommodation within the borough. Based on the individual circumstances, households will be prioritised for accommodation locally as defined within the TA placement policy banding system. The bands are shown below and defined as below:

Current policy	Proposed policy changes
<p>Band A – Southwark and adjacent boroughs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children with a Statement of Special Educational Need, Child In Need or Child Protection Plan receiving such a significant package of care from a variety of providers that transferring them elsewhere will create significant risk to the safety and sustainability of the caring arrangements. • Households with complex needs who are engaged with services and where a move out of borough may severely disrupt this engagement thus creating significant risk to the safety and sustainability of the caring arrangements. • Households who have a longstanding arrangement to provide care and support to another family member in Southwark who is not part of the resident household and would be likely to require statutory health and social support if the care ceased. • Any other special circumstance will also be taken into account 	<p>Zone A – Southwark and adjacent locality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If anyone in your household has a severe and enduring health condition requiring intensive and enduring specialist medical treatment only available at a Southwark’s NHS service. • If anyone in your household are in receipt of a significant care package and a range of healthcare options which cannot be transferred. • If anyone in your household has a severe and enduring mental health problem who are receiving psychiatric treatment and aftercare provided by local community mental health services and have an established 2 support network where a transfer of care would severely impact upon their ability to engage with treatment and care plans. • Households containing a child or children with special educational needs who are receiving education or educational support at a local school

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	<p>in or in a neighbouring borough and where a change to another school or learning establishment would be detrimental to their continuing development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Households with a child(ren) subject to a Child Protection Plan Southwark or families/pregnant women who have high social needs who are linked into local support services and where it is verified that a transfer to another area could be detrimental to their welfare.• Applicants who are currently employed in borough and who have been continuously employed for at least six months and where financial assessment confirms the cost of travel would render accommodation in another area unaffordable. Each case will be assessed on an individual basis. Pregnant women who are on maternity leave but who intend to return to work at their place of employment will also be considered under the criteria• Households who have a longstanding arrangement to provide care and support to another family member in Southwark who is not part of the resident household and would be likely to require statutory health and social support if the care ceased.• The household is receiving services locally and support can not be transferred to another area and in doing so would severely disrupt essential caring and support arrangements.• Any other special circumstance will also be taken into account.
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<p>Band B: in borough or the rest of Greater London</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants who have been continuously employed in Greater London for a period of six months, and for 24 hours or more per week. Women who are on maternity leave from employment and meet the above criteria would also be prioritised for placements in Greater London. • Applicants who have as part of their household, a child or children who are enrolled in public examination courses in Southwark, with exams to be taken within the next six months. • Any other special circumstance will be taken into account. 	<p>Zone B: London area and adjoining Counties with reasonable travel connections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants who have been continuously employed in at a single location in Greater London for a period of six months, and for 16 hours or more per week where financial assessment confirms the cost of travel would render accommodation in another area unaffordable. Each case will be assessed on an individual basis. Women who are on maternity leave from employment and meet the above criteria would also be prioritised for placements in London and the adjoining counties. • Applicants who have as part of their household, a child or children who are enrolled in public examination courses in Southwark, with exams to be taken within the next six months or at a Key Stage assessment • Where your child is currently in a public exam year, we will seek to ensure that any accommodation offered is within reasonable travelling distance of school so they can continue their studies uninterrupted. • Any other special circumstance will be taken into account.
<p>Band C: In borough or further afield</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-working households. • Households with children at nursery, primary or secondary school, who are not sitting public exams. • The household is receiving services locally but support could be transferred to another area without severely disrupting caring arrangements. 	<p>Zone C: Greater London and outside London</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-working households. • Households with children at nursery, primary or secondary school, who are not sitting public exams. • The household is receiving services locally but support could be transferred to another area without severely disrupting caring arrangements. • Households who are not considered a priority for accommodation in Zone A or B will be considered for an offer of accommodation elsewhere in London or outside London (if accommodation has not been identified that is closer)

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Transfer list

The proposed Placement policy for Temporary accommodation and Private Rented sector accommodation will include greater clarity on temporary accommodation transfers. Specifically advising households who are placed in unsuitable TA will be added to a list where personal circumstances will be considered to enable priority transfers can take place. This brings the policy up to date with the Good Practice guide produced by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman on unsuitable temporary accommodation.

Case studies

Old policy	Updated policy
<p>Location of accommodation:</p> <p>Household A approaches with children under in school age and due to take exams within the next 6 months.</p> <p>The household would be prioritised anywhere within the borough for an offer of temporary accommodation.</p>	<p>Location of accommodation:</p> <p>Under the new policy, the council will continue to seek accommodation within the borough, however consideration will be given to accommodation that is in a neighbouring borough and closer in location to the school to minimise any disruption to schooling.</p>
<p>Offers of accommodation:</p> <p>Household B approaches the council as homeless and in need of emergency temporary accommodation. The council secures accommodation that meets the medical, welfare and household composition needs. The property condition has been verified and in an appropriate area, therefore the property has been deemed to suitable to offer to the household for temporary accommodation. The policy permits 2 offers will be made and therefore the household refuses the accommodation as they believe there is another property will be offered which will be the final offer and there is no possibility to revert back to the original offer. Securing further accommodation will take valuable staffing resources from other households who require suitable accommodation.</p>	<p>Offers of accommodation:</p> <p>Under the new policy, the council will make one offer only. This council will use all endeavours to make a suitable offer. The household will not be prioritised above further households for an additional offer of accommodation where a suitable offer has already been made.</p> <p>Households will be given greater information on the process to resolve housing issues and seek permanent re housing.</p>

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<p>Temporary Accommodation transfers:</p> <p>Household C approached the council as homeless and placed in temporary accommodation. Due to a lack of available accommodation, the household was placed in accommodation that did not meet the medical needs of the household. The household is placed on a transfer list order by the date they were placed in the accommodation. This would mean that there is potential that households with a lesser transfer need will be moved before household C.</p>	<p>Temporary accommodation transfers:</p> <p>Under the new policy, the council will be prioritise households based on the need to move. The date will be a secondary determining factor. This list will be reviewed daily to ensure households who have a greater need to move will be able to do so, spending less time in accommodation that does not fully meet their needs.</p>
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Equality Impact and Needs Analysis: Placement Policy for Temporary Accommodation and Private Rented Sector Offers - Jan 2024

Guidance notes

Things to remember:

Under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) public authorities are required to have due regard to the aims of the general equality duty when making decisions and when setting policies. Understanding the affect of the council's policies and practices on people with different protected characteristics is an important part of complying with the general equality duty. Under the PSED the council must ensure that:

- Decision-makers are aware of the general equality duty's requirements.
- The general equality duty is complied with before and at the time a particular policy is under consideration and when a decision is taken.
- They consciously consider the need to do the things set out in the aims of the general equality duty as an integral part of the decision-making process.
- They have sufficient information to understand the effects of the policy, or the way a function is carried out, on the aims set out in the general equality duty.
- They review policies or decisions, for example, if the make-up of service users changes, as the general equality duty is a continuing duty.
- They take responsibility for complying with the general equality duty in relation to all their relevant functions. Responsibility cannot be delegated to external organisations that are carrying out public functions on their behalf.
- They consciously consider the need to do the things set out in the aims of the general equality duty not only when a policy is developed and decided upon, but when it is being implemented.

Best practice guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission recommends that public bodies:

- Consider all the [protected characteristics](#) and all aims of the general equality duty (apart from in relation to marriage and civil partnership, where only the discrimination aim applies).
- Use equality analysis to inform policy as it develops to avoid unnecessary additional activity.
- Focus on the understanding the effects of a policy on equality and any actions needed as a result, not the production of a document.
- Consider how the time and effort involved should relate to the importance of the policy to equality.
- Think about steps to advance equality and good relations as well as eliminate discrimination.
- Use good evidence. Where it isn't available, take steps to gather it (where practical and proportionate).
- Use insights from engagement with employees, service users and others can help provide evidence for equality analysis.

Equality analysis should be referenced in community impact statements in Council reports. Community impact statements are a corporate requirement in all reports to the following meetings: the cabinet, individual decision makers, scrutiny, regulatory committees and community councils. Community impact statements enable decision makers to identify more easily how a decision might affect different communities in Southwark and to consider any implications for equality and diversity.

The public will be able to view and scrutinise any equality analysis undertaken. Equality analysis should therefore be written in a clear and transparent way using plain English. Equality analysis may be published under the council's publishing of equality information, or be present with divisional/departmental/service business plans. These will be placed on the website for public view under the council's Publications Scheme. All Cabinet reports will also publish related

Equality analysis should be reviewed after a sensible period of time to see if business needs have changed and/or if the effects that were expected have occurred. If not then you will need to consider amending your policy accordingly. This does not mean repeating the equality analysis, but using the experience gained through implementation to check the findings and to make any necessary adjustments.

Engagement with the community is recommended as part of the development of equality analysis. The council's Community Engagement Division and critical friend, the Forum for Equality and Human Rights in Southwark can assist with this (see section below on community engagement and www.southwarkadvice.org.uk).

Whilst the equality analysis is being considered, Southwark Council recommends considering Socio-Economic implications, as socio-economic inequalities have a strong influence on the environment we live and work in. As a major provider of services to Southwark residents, the council has a legal duty to reduce socio-economic inequalities and this is reflected in its values and aims. For this reason, the council recommends considering socio-economic impacts in all equality analyses, not forgetting to include identified potential mitigating actions.

Section 1: Equality impact and needs analysis details

Proposed policy/decision/business plan to which this equality analysis relates		Placement Policy for Temporary Accommodation and Private Rented Sector Offers			
Equality analysis author		Ricky Bellot, Budget Recovery Board Programme Manager			
Strategic Director:		David Quirke-Thornton			
Department		Housing	Division		Resident Services
Period analysis undertaken					
Date of review (if applicable)					
Sign-off	Cheryl Russell	Position	Director of Resident Services	Date	31 Oct 2023

Section 2: Brief description of policy/decision/business plan

1.1 Brief description of policy/decision/business plan

This Equalities Impact and Needs Analysis EINA assesses the impacts (individual and cumulative) of Southwark's placement policy for Temporary Accommodation (TA) and Private rented sector offers (PRSO). This policy replaces the councils existing TA placement and Private Rented sectors offer policy and seeks to review the past period and bring the policy in line with current factors surrounding homelessness and temporary accommodation as well as ensuring the policy meets statutory requirements.

The policy provides guidance on the placement of households in temporary accommodation. It highlights the process for decision-making on the type of accommodation and the location of accommodation to meet interim placements and longer term placements. The policy notes that due to a shortage of supply, an increasing number of households are likely to be placed outside the borough, on the periphery of London and in some circumstances, further afield. The policy outlines the circumstances in which priority will be given to households for accommodation in the borough or in neighbouring boroughs.

Legal framework

The requirement for the policy is a legal obligation based on Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 ("HA96") which imposes duties on the Council to secure suitable temporary accommodation for the homeless while enquiries are made into their entitlement to assistance and, thereafter if certain conditions are satisfied.

The Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012 ("the 2012 Order") and the accompanying Supplementary Guidance issued by the Secretary of State, establishes that the location of the accommodation – including, where the accommodation is out of the borough, its distance from the borough - is relevant to the issue of the suitability of the accommodation secured. The 2012 Order also sets out other matters related to location that the authority must have regard to when considering suitability of accommodation.

The Supreme Court decision in the case of *Nzolameso v Westminster City Council* ("Nzolameso") emphasises the need for local authorities to have regard to their statutory duties as set out above and specifically that *"...Ideally, each local authority should have, and keep up to date, a policy for procuring sufficient units of temporary accommodation to meet the anticipated demand during the coming year. That policy should reflect the authority's statutory obligations under both the 1996 Act and the Children Act 2004..."* and: *"...each local authority should have, and keep up to date, a policy for allocating those units to individual homeless households.*

Where there was an expected shortfall of "in borough" units, that policy would set out the factors which would be considered in offering households those unit of accommodation, the factors which would be taken into account in offering units close to home, and if there was a shortage of such units, the factors that make it suitable to accommodate a household further away..."

In addition, a number of other Acts which have shaped the national framework for homelessness services and the development of a placement policy. this includes the following:

The Localism Act (2011) also amended the 1996 Housing Act by allowing local authorities to discharge their homelessness duty by arranging a suitable offer of accommodation in the private rented sector.

The Homelessness Reduction Act (2017) made significant changes to the Housing Act (1996) and placed a number of new duties upon local authorities. These include:

To assess the cause of homelessness, circumstances and needs of all household members, including children.

To develop and agree with applicants a personalised plan of the steps that will be taken to prevent or relieve homelessness.

Extending the time frame a household is threatened with homelessness from 28 days to 56 days, meaning that local authorities have a duty to prevent homelessness from an earlier stage.

New duties to assess all eligible applicants (not just those unintentionally homeless and in priority need), and new duties to take reasonable steps to prevent and relieve homelessness.

A duty on public authorities to refer service users who may be homeless or threatened with homelessness to the housing authority (with the consent of the individual)

Services must be designed to meet the needs of specific groups including care leavers, people leaving hospital / prison and victims of domestic abuse.

The Domestic Abuse Act (2021) places a duty on local authorities in England to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children. It makes provision that all eligible homeless victims of domestic abuse automatically have 'priority need' status for homelessness assistance.

The Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) requires a homelessness strategy for every housing authority district, to be renewed at least every five years and consulted upon by other local or public authorities or voluntary organisations.

The Government Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018 delivery plan set out the Government target of halving rough sleeping by 2022 and eradicating all street homelessness by 2027.

Key changes

The review of the Placement policy for TA and PRSO proposes the following changes:

- Reducing the number of offers of accommodation down to a single offer of temporary accommodation whether on an interim or longer term basis, post acceptance of a full duty.
- A requirement on the Council to carry out suitability assessments to ensure that it can evidence the suitability of accommodation that is offered.
- a strictly defined set of factors to enable the determination of suitability and geographical locations;
- a robust transfer process for those that cannot immediately or subsequently be allocated suitable accommodation.

The council is seeking to implement the new Placement Policy for TA and PRSO and arrangements for annual monitoring of placements. This analysis relates to the Council's new approach to meeting the housing needs of households in temporary accommodation, including those that share the protected characteristics. It is therefore of high relevance to the Council's Equality Duty. In doing so, the council will also analyse the impact of the previous policy implemented in Oct 2021.

The aim is to implement the changes in January 2024.

Section 3: Overview of service users and key stakeholders consulted

2. Service users and stakeholders	
Key users of the department or service	Homeless household are usually defined as being residents in the borough that require assistance from the Council to resolve their housing situation. There may be single individuals, couples, or families.
Key stakeholders were/are involved in this policy/decision/business plan	<p>The following stakeholders were involved in reviewing this strategy -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southwark Children’s and Adults Services • Southwark Housing

Section 4: Pre-implementation equality impact and needs analysis

This section considers the potential impacts (positive and negative) on groups with 'protected characteristics', the equality information on which this analysis is based and any mitigating actions to be taken, including improvement actions to promote equality and tackle inequalities. An equality analysis also presents as an opportunity to improve services to meet diverse needs, promote equality, tackle inequalities and promote good community relations. It is not just about addressing negative impacts.

The columns include societal issues (discrimination, exclusion, needs etc.) and socio-economic issues (levels of poverty, employment, income). As the two aspects are heavily interrelated it may not be practical to fill out both columns on all protected characteristics. The aim is, however, to ensure that socio-economic issues are given special consideration, as it is the council's intention to reduce socio-economic inequalities in the borough. Key is also the link between protected characteristics and socio-economic disadvantage, including experiences of multiple disadvantage.

Socio-economic disadvantage may arise from a range of factors, including:

- poverty
- health
- education
- limited social mobility
- housing
- a lack of expectations
- discrimination
- multiple disadvantage

The public sector equality duty (PSED) requires us to find out about and give due consideration to the needs of different protected characteristics in relation to the three parts of the duty:

1. Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation
2. Advancing equality of opportunity, including finding out about and meeting diverse needs of our local communities, addressing disadvantage and barriers to equal access; enabling all voices to be heard in our engagement and consultation undertaken; increasing the participation of under represented groups
3. Fostering good community relations; promoting good relations; to be a borough where all feel welcome, included, valued, safe and respected.

The PSED is now also further reinforced in the two additional Fairer Future For All values: that we will

- Always work to make Southwark more equal and just
- Stand against all forms of discrimination and racism

<p>Age - Where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds).</p>	
<p>Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan; this also includes needs in relation to each part of the duty.</p>	<p>Potential Socio-Economic impacts/needs/issues arising from socio-economic disadvantage (positive and negative)</p>
<p>There are some age range of the lead household member makes up the majority of homeless approaches and would therefore be subject to the be affected by changes to the policy.</p> <p>Previously we had reported the age range of applicants making an approach consisted of households aged between 25-44. There is no significant change in this proportion of approaches. Conversely, those aged over 65 are under-represented and so less likely to be directly affected. Households with children (or expecting a first child) are disproportionately represented among homeless households (85%). The proposed changes will have a neutral impact on single residents aged between 18-35 as they will have greater access to a supply of accommodation that the council can offer, although this more likely to be outside of the borough. Conversely the council will be exercising the discharge of duty ability across all age ranges through the offer of one suitable offer.</p> <p>Age - Children</p> <p>The revised changes to the policy and growing demand may mean that more children may need to move outside of Southwark and London if the children are not at specific stages in the education, i.e. examinations. This is due to the potential requirement to start new schools, which can be disruptive. The policy and legislation however requires children taking exams not to be placed where this would affect their ability to attend schools. The new changes puts an onus on the Council to take this factor into account</p>	<p>57% of parents report that their children's health has been harmed by being in temporary accommodation. 47% reported that their children have had to move school as well as 52% reporting that their children have missed days of school due to the disruption of temporary accommodation (Shelter, 2023)</p> <p>1 in 4 parents of children who are in temporary accommodation say their children are often unhappy or depressed as a result of their living situation. (Shelter, 2022). Living in temporary accommodation affects children's attendance to school as well as 45% arriving late, tired or hungry. (Shelter, 2022)</p> <p>Male life expectancy is 79.6 years compared to 79.4 years in England. Female life expectancy is 84.1 years compared to 83.1 years in England.</p>

when allocating homes although there is no longer an assumption that only in-borough may be suitable. Those attending SEN schools are recognised as being prioritised for in borough accommodation. The allocations process will mean that if it is recognised a household needs to be prioritised for an in borough move, this will be prioritised for a TA transfer.

Age – Young adults

Due to the benefit cap, many young people approaching as homeless cannot access private rented accommodation in London as it is not affordable. The placement policy allows the borough to seek private accommodation further afield in areas which may be more affordable. Therefore this will have a positive impact on this age range.

Age – Older people

Older people eligible for Sheltered housing, being more readily available, will not usually be made private rented offers. However, if required, older people could be offered temporary accommodation outside Southwark and London until this type of housing is available (although generally waits are much shorter). They may potentially be negatively impacted by this, if they have long established links to the local area and also as they are more likely to receive care and support packages which would need to be transferred. Also they may be more likely to receive informal support, possibly from family members, which might be harder to sustain at a distance. The data shows that people in these age groups are significantly under-represented among homeless people. Since the introduction of the policy in July 2019, a small proportion of residents of pension age have been placed in private accommodation. However it is not imagined the amended policy will negatively impact this group.

Equality information on which above analysis is based	Socio-Economic data on which above analysis is based
<p>JSNA, Annual Report 2022, Southwark Public Health</p> <p>Age profile of statutorily homeless households (Derived from HCLIC data).</p> <p>ONS Census 2021 data</p> <p>A review of Ofcom’s research on digital exclusion among adults in the UK, 2022</p> <p>Southwark Homelessness Data Review, 2023</p> <p>Shelter’s Growing Up Homeless Research, 2022</p> <p>Shelter, Not a Home, Temporary Accommodation, 2022</p>	<p>Shelter 2022 - https://blog.shelter.org.uk/2022/12/not-a-home-temporary-accommodation/</p> <p>Shelter 2023 – Still Living in Limbo, Why the Use of Temporary Accommodation Must End.</p>
Mitigating and/or improvement actions to be taken	
<p>Each household placed in TA or made a PRSO will be subject to a full suitability assessment. This assessment will consider the specific needs of the individual household and identify what type of accommodation and location is required. This will mitigate adverse impacts to households.</p> <p>Where there has been a requirement for a household to be placed in unsuitable TA, the transfer details will help to prioritise households for a move based on urgency and not simply length of time waiting.</p> <p>Some children and families will be prioritised for in borough/adjacent borough accommodation, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Households where at least one of the children has a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an 	

Education, Health and Care Plan, is receiving education or educational support in Southwark and where it is demonstrated that a placement would be significantly detrimental to their wellbeing

- Households where there is a recommendation through a joint assessment with Children's and Adult's Services

Some children and families will be prioritised for accommodation in Greater London, where a child is at their final year of Key Stage 4 (generally Year 11) or in Key Stage 5 (A levels or equivalent Level 3 vocational courses, such as BTECs, or GCSE re-sits in English and Maths) at a school or further education college in London. These families will be prioritised for 'zone b' accommodation - Zone B: London area and adjoining Counties with reasonable travel connections

The Council recognises that in many cases it may be in the best interests of children to remain at existing schools where they are settled. Unfortunately, due to the difficulties in procuring accommodation referred to above it is not always possible to offer accommodation which avoids the need for parents to consider moving their child's school and we have to prioritise the needs of the most vulnerable children.

Resettlement support will be offered for some private rented offers. This could include help to enrol children in new schools and to find nursery places

Southwark's 16/17 pathway for those at risk or presenting as homeless has been an effective joint working initiative between Housing and Children's services. Accommodation provision and advice and support is delivered well and approaches from 16/17 year olds is small.

With Southwark's off the street provision and offer when a rough sleeper is

identified, those in this age group would be supported quickly to access accommodation and support.

Age – Young adults

Care leavers from 18 years considered here -

The development of Southwark's joint housing protocol has greatly improved homeless prevention from care placements, access to supported or private rented accommodation and securing permanent accommodation through our choice-based lettings scheme.

Due to the benefit cap, many young people who are in a housing need cannot access private rented accommodation in London as it is not affordable. The placement policy allows the borough to see private accommodation further afield in areas which may be more affordable. Therefore this will have a positive impact on this age range.

Age – Older people

Some older households will be exempt from private rented sector offers i.e. those that are eligible for sheltered housing and disabled households needing wheelchair accessible housing.

Support will also be offered to households moving into temporary accommodation outside London and this could involve help to transfer any care and support packages

'Digital literacy' is improving with every generation, so over time, the risk of inequality is reduced.

The council will monitor customer satisfaction and aim for year-on-year improvement in satisfaction with fewer

<p>formal customer complaints made.</p> <p>The council will ensure alternative service access remains available such as face to face appointments, so that no one is excluded from accessing the service.</p> <p>Our partners such as Citizens Advice Bureau offer weekly sessions for helping people with no access to online resources.</p> <p>The council will also consider cases that are deemed exceptional in order to determine if there are exceptional circumstances which may warrant a direct allocation of permanent social housing.</p> <p>The council will also support households to move into social housing via Housing Moves or any other mobility scheme the council has signed up to.</p> <p>Policy will be kept under constant review and where necessary, improvement actions can be taken.</p>	
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Disability - A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Please note that under the PSED due regard includes:

Giving due consideration in all relevant areas to “the steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.” This also includes the need to understand and focus on different needs/impacts arising from different disabilities.

Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan; this also includes needs in relation to each part of the duty.	Potential socio-economic impacts/ needs/issues arising from socio-economic disadvantage (positive and negative)
<p>The previous policy took in to account that only a small proportion of accepted homeless households have members needing a wheel</p>	<p>A national survey conducted by Shelter of 1,112 people in Temporary accommodation,</p>

chair adapted property or a level access property. Overall, this was less than 9% of homeless households have members with a physical disability which impacts on the type of properties needed. The data relates to the main applicant and therefore it is likely that household members could be under reported. This is also reflected in the data as the majority of the applicants with mental health or learning disability are single applicants.

Statistics in the Census 2021 shows that Southwark has 17.6% of people reporting a disability under the equality Act. This has increased from 14.6% of the population in 2011.

Of those approach as homeless, 21% of households reported mental health as a support need, compared to 22% in London (average) and 23% in England. It is important to note that it is likely, that other applicants and members of their households may have mental health problems, but this information cannot be easily accessed as it is self-reported. 19% reported a physical disability of ill health (compared to 15% of England as a whole) which shows an over representation of this group in the borough.

Nationally, 65% of working age disabled people are in work compared to 83% of non-disabled people. In London, 22.6% of disabled people are unemployed which is one of the lowest rates in the country (joint with the West Midlands). Employment rates vary greatly according to the type of impairment a person has, for example people with severe or enduring mental health conditions are more likely to move in and out of work more often. (ONS, 2023)

Accommodating households in temporary accommodation for long periods could have a detrimental impact on mental and physical health.

Placing disabled households away from their support networks and associated facilities could have a detrimental impact on their health.

found that two thirds reported a negative impact on their physical or mental health. (Shelter, 2022)

<p>The introduction of a new TA transfer procedure will enable the council to ensure households quicker based on the urgency of the case. This will benefit households with a disability who have been placed in unsuitable TA due to limited availability.</p>	
<p>Equality information on which above analysis is based</p>	<p>Socio-economic data on which above analysis is based</p>
<p>JSNA, Annual Report 2022, Southwark Public Health</p> <p>Disability profile of statutorily homeless households (Derived from HCLIC data).</p> <p>ONS Census 2021 data</p> <p>A review of Ofcom’s research on digital exclusion among adults in the UK, 2022</p> <p>Southwark Homelessness Data Review, 2023</p>	
<p>Mitigating and/or improvement actions to be taken</p>	
<p>We have reviewed the factors that will inform the suitability assessment process to ensure all placements have a robust assessment completed when placed in temporary accommodation or placed in private accommodation provided by the council. This will help to ensure any of the policy has been fully implemented and reduce unintended consequences of unsuitable placements. This must be audited at regular intervals. The private rented sector offers policy excludes some disabled households who wouldn’t be able to manage a private rented tenancy (for example, those who may have care and support needs or a mental health condition which prevents them from managing a tenancy) and disabled households with members needing wheelchair accessible housing Some people with particular health</p>	

problems or disabilities will be prioritised for in borough/adjacent borough accommodation, these include:

- Households where at least one member has a severe health condition or disability (including a severe mental health condition) that requires intensive and specialised medical/mental health treatment/ aftercare that is either (a) only available in Southwark or (b) where a transfer of care would create a serious risk to their safety or the sustainability of the treatment or care
- Households where at least one member is receiving support through a significant commissioned care package or package of health care options provided in Southwark, where a transfer of care would create a serious risk to their safety or the sustainability of the care Some carers, and people being cared for, will be prioritised for in borough/adjacent borough accommodation Since the introduction of the first policy and the completion of the initial EINA, the services have recruited additional Resettlement staff within the service. Resettlement support is offered to households being made private rented offers who are relocating out of London, and where needed where they are moving from Southwark to another London borough. This support could include help to transfer care and support packages Support is also be offered to households moving into temporary accommodation outside London and as above this could include help to transfer care and support packages. The Housing allocations scheme priorities households with physical disabilities to obtain accessible social housing. This is restricted to eligible households and therefore this will aim to meet the required need, limiting the need for a household with physical disabilities to move into private accommodation or temporary accommodation.

The council will also consider cases that are deemed exceptional in order to determine if there are circumstances which may warrant a direct allocation of permanent social housing.

<p>The council will also support households to move into social housing via Housing Moves or any other mobility scheme the council has signed up to.</p> <p>The policy will be kept under constant review and where necessary, improvement actions can be taken.</p>	
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<p>Gender reassignment: - The process of transitioning from one gender to another.</p> <p>Gender Identity: Gender identity is the personal sense of one's own gender. Gender identity can correlate with a person's assigned sex or can differ from it.</p>	
<p>Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan; this also includes needs in relation to each part of the duty.</p>	<p>Potential socio-economic impacts/ needs/issues arising from socio-economic disadvantage (positive and negative)</p>
<p>The council has begun including equalities questions about the sexual orientation and gender reassignment of the lead applicant for homeless households in the homelessness application. However, applicants can decline answering these and as this was only implemented in April 2017, it is too early to analyse any data collected. Indeed only 3 households whom approach the service in 2020 are listed as having undergone gender re assignment. There are no specific issues from the proposed changes which are felt could discriminate or disadvantage residents whom have undergone gender reassignment other than general matters detailed elsewhere in this report, and the significant reduction in the availability of affordable in Southwark.</p> <p>However that being said, transgender customers may be particularly at risk of housing crisis and homelessness arising from transphobic reaction by family, neighbours and members of the local community.</p>	<p>77% of LGBTQ+ young people gave, 'family rejection, abuse or being asked to leave home' as a cause of their homelessness. - Crisis, 2022</p> <p>The most common cause of young trans people's homelessness is family abuse and rejection. Young trans people's exclusion from their family home is usually related to their gender identity: most trans young people cite this exclusion because of coming out or being outed. - akt & Homeless Link, 2022</p> <p>Data on LGBTQ+ youth homelessness is limited, particularly on trans youth homelessness. akt found that only one third (35 per cent) of LGBTQ+ young people recall "being asked to provide information about [their] gender identity and sexual orientation". As a result, the needs, and experiences of trans young</p>

	people aren't captured and are often missing from the homelessness narrative - akt & Homeless Link, 2022
Equality information on which above analysis is based.	Socio-economic data on which above analysis is based
<p>JSNA, Annual Report 2022, Southwark Public Health</p> <p>Gender profile of statutorily homeless households (Derived from HCLIC data).</p> <p>ONS Census 2021 data</p> <p>Southwark Homelessness Data Review, 2023</p>	
Mitigating and/or improvement actions to be taken	
<p>The focus on procuring properties in more urban areas, where their diversity as far as possible reflects that of Southwark, might help to ensure there are facilities for transgender people, which may be more likely where the population is more diverse. In addition the focus on also procuring properties in areas with reasonable transport links to London might help transgender people in particular to continue to use local support services if there are fewer where they live. Resettlement services provided to all residents placed into private and temporary accommodation to help link up with the relevant support. The housing solutions service has entered into a partnership with Stonewall Housing dedicated to provide support and advice to residents from the LGBTQ community. This will aim to promote the services and ensure any resident whom has gone through gender reassignment do not face any barriers to access social housing through the allocations scheme.</p> <p>Policy will be kept under constant review and where necessary, improvement actions can be taken.</p>	

<p>Marriage and civil partnership – In England and Wales marriage is no longer restricted to a union between a man and a woman but now includes a marriage between a same-sex couples. Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples and must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters. (Only to be considered in respect to the need to eliminate discrimination.)</p>	
<p>Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan</p>	<p>Potential socio-economic impacts/ needs/issues arising from socio-economic disadvantage (positive and negative)</p>
<p>Our data shows that there are very little residents whom approach our service whom are married or have a civil partnership. Our current snapshot of data shows there are only 4% of households. This has not changed since the implementation of the policy in 2021. A joint income household will likely be able to have more disposable income. Therefore income assessments will take this into consideration when determining where an affordable property would be available in the private sector. Lone parents are disproportionately affected by homelessness compared to their share of the population so are more likely to be affected by the policies. The proposed changes to the policy are not likely to have an impact upon this specific group.</p> <p>No issues have been discovered which relates to the policy implementation.</p>	
<p>Equality information on which above analysis is based</p>	<p>Socio-economic data on which above analysis is based</p>
<p>Southwark Homelessness Data Review, 2023</p>	
<p>Mitigating or improvement actions to be taken</p>	
<p>There are no actions to be taken at this point. Policy will be kept under constant review and where necessary, improvement actions can be taken.</p>	

<p>Pregnancy and maternity - Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.</p>	
<p>Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan; this also includes needs in relation to each part of the duty.</p>	<p>Potential socio-economic impacts/ needs/issues arising from socio-economic disadvantage (positive and negative)</p>
<p>As identified under the previous EINA, a significant number of lead applicants from accepted households are pregnant women. A potential move outside of the borough for a pregnant mother or mother on maternity leave may impact upon services received from the health service. This will likely require services to be transferred to the new area if moved away from the area. Additional properties identified further afield will assist in clients being offered permanent accommodation at an earlier stage and spend less time in temporary accommodation. In assessing the amended policy, the changes have not identified any additional direct or indirect discrimination on the basis of pregnancy or maternity.</p>	<p>The majority of households living in TA are families with children, and over 50% of these are lone mother led. (Shelter 2023)</p> <p>99% of midwives reported seeing mothers who were homeless, 66% felt the numbers were higher than ever before (Centre Point, 2020)</p> <p>Access to appropriate healthcare can be a challenge when living in TA with 4 in 10 reporting TA made it harder to access services. (Groundswell)</p>
<p>Equality information on which above analysis is based</p>	<p>Socio-economic data on which above analysis is based</p>
<p>Southwark Homelessness Data Review, 2023 HCLIC data April 2022 – March 2023</p>	<p>Pregnant and homeless: a guide to support during pregnancy – Centre Point, 2020</p> <p>Improving the health of people living in Temporary Accommodation in London, Groundswell, 2023</p> <p>As stated above</p>
<p>Mitigating and/or improvement actions to be taken</p>	
<p>Every offer of accommodation will take into account the household's individual circumstances and suitability of the</p>	

accommodation offered to meet their needs. Any special circumstances will be taken into account when making offers to households – taking into account if there is a compelling need for the accommodation to be in a particular location. Resettlement support will be offered to households being made private rented sector offers where they are relocating out of London and where needed when they are moving from Southwark. Each household with a pregnant mother placed into temporary accommodation will be contacted by our resettlement service. In order to identify any additional support needs or changing needs, pregnant mothers and new mothers will be contacted within one month of a placement outside of the borough. Regular contact will then be maintained through regular email, postal and telephone contact. Where identified specific needs to move back into the borough, the policy allows the transfer of temporary accommodation into alternative accommodation. The completion of a suitability form will be completed for all households whom move into temporary or private accommodation

Race - Refers to the protected characteristic of Race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins. N.B. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller are recognised racial groups and their needs should be considered alongside all others

Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan; this also includes needs in relation to each part of the duty.

Potential socio-economic impacts/ needs/issues arising from socio-economic disadvantage (positive and negative)

The make up of the borough in relation to race is represented with 54% of residents being of white ethnicity, 25% Black, 11% Asian & 10% of other ethnicities. In 2021/22 22% of applicants were of a white ethnicity, 27% were of a black ethnicity and Asian applicants made up 3%. This shows that black homeless households are over represented in our approach figures compared to the overall makeup of ethnicity in the borough. This is a statistic reflected nationally also (although on a smaller scale), Black main applicants

Over half of households in TA identify as Black, Asian, or Mixed ethnicity which is an over representation as just 15% of people are from a ethnic minority group in England (Shelter 2023)

Black households are 11 times more likely to be in TA than white households. (Shelter 2023)

accounted for 10% of those owed a prevention or relief duty in England in 2021-22, but Black people make up only 4% of England's population (according to the 2021 census).

Analysis of HCLIC data shows that 27% of approach households for homelessness assistance in Southwark identifies as Black/African/Caribbean/Black British which shows this group is overrepresented in approaches.

As identified within the previous EINA, a greater proportion of homeless decisions are made for ethnic minorities and therefore the policies will have a disproportionate effect on ethnic minority households.

There may also be fewer cultural facilities for some ethnic groups in locations outside London, although this would very much depend on the area where the offer was made. Poor quality information or language problems could impact negatively. English not first language – if households are allocated a private rented home they will need to receive adequate guidance to explain the rent charged and the ability to pay. Members of gypsy and travelling communities may be reluctant to approach the Council for help due to suspicion of official organisations. In addition to this, a lack of understanding of homelessness in gypsy and traveller communities means that this group may not be adequately planned for. Larger properties with three, four, five or six bedrooms are often a requirement of some racial groups and lack of availability could disadvantage some families. The additional stock anticipated from procurement work further afield will be able to meet the needs of larger families. In assessing the amended policies, the changes have not identified any additional direct or indirect discrimination on the basis of race. It is anticipated the Good Homes standard will continue to have a positive impact upon households across all races as they will be able to benefit from a better standard of accommodation.

In 18% of households in Southwark, English is not the main language spoken.

(Census 2021)

Equality information on which above analysis is based	Socio-economic data on which above analysis is based
HCLIC data returns	Still Living in Limbo – Shelter 2023
Mitigating and/or improvement actions to be taken	
<p>The council will aim to procure properties in London which is likely to Places will be identified for procuring properties, where their diversity as far as possible reflects that of Southwark, focussing on more urban areas where there are likely to be more facilities and support networks. This might particularly benefit households of different ethnic origins. Procurement of properties outside London will, wherever possible, be focussed on urban areas in the South East in areas with reasonable transport links to Southwark – in order to help households maintain local connections. This might particularly benefit households of different ethnic origins Discharge into the private sector decisions will be monitored by ethnicity. As applicants move on in the process, progress is monitored through the iWorld Northgate housing system which enables a series of reports that monitor by relevant equality characteristics. All literature, forms and other information is readily available in the languages most commonly used. The Service ensures that people from whatever ethnicity can compete on an equal basis; this includes Gypsy and traveller communities. Translation services are made widely available. Southwark has committed in the Homelessness Strategy 2018-22 Action Plan (Action 1.6) to exploring factors behind Black, Asian and minority ethnicities households being over-represented as accepted homeless cases. With a better understanding it could be possible to improve prevention of homelessness in the first place. The overall aim of this policy is to prevent homelessness and reduce the necessity for people to remain in inappropriate temporary accommodation. The delivery of the actions identified will have positive impact for Black, Asian and minority ethnicities, disabled and vulnerable, young people and women, all of whom are over represented amongst those who are at risk of homelessness.</p>	<p>The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy review 2024 and other council policies seeks to mitigate and include improvement actions to address any impacts based on race.</p>

<p>Religion and belief - Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.</p>	
<p>Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan; this also includes needs in relation to each part of the duty.</p>	<p>Potential socio-economic impacts/ needs/issues arising from socio-economic disadvantage (positive and negative)</p>
<p>According to census data, 43% of Southwark residents are Christian, 37% reported no religion and 10% are Muslim. The remaining 10% are made up of other religions.</p> <p>Homeless applicants may, for example, regularly attend a place of worship. If they are allocated a private sector accommodation out of the borough it may make it difficult for them to continue to attend regularly. Whilst the detailed recording of homeless applications and housing allocations by people of different faith groups can pin point adverse trends in relation to individual faith groups, the information should be treated only as an issue for further investigation since much will depend on the respective priorities of applicants and the particular areas they are aspiring to. Therefore, close monitoring in this area is essential to identify any patterns that may arise. Please note that religion or belief alone would not have any bearing on the ability to access services. However this could impact on a household decision to move away for the existing community. There is no evidence of inequality taking place as a result of amended policy. It is anticipated the Good Homes standard will have a positive impact upon households across all faiths as they will be able to benefit from a better standard of property.</p>	

Equality information on which above analysis is based	Socio-economic data on which above analysis is based
ONS, 2021 - Religion - Census Maps, ONS	
Mitigating and/or improvement actions to be taken	
<p>Residents who approach will be given full advice in order to aid their individual search for permanent accommodation in the private sector. The council will work with households to assist them in their home search and understanding of amenities if moving further afield from London.</p> <p>Places will be identified where the diversity is, as far as possible reflective of Southwark, focussing on more urban areas where there are likely to be more facilities and support networks for people. This might particularly benefit people with different faiths and beliefs. Procurement of properties outside London will, wherever possible, be focussed on urban areas in the South East in areas with reasonable transport links to Southwark – in order to help households maintain local connections. This might particularly benefit people with different faiths and beliefs. During the homelessness application, information is collected which ensures that a suitable offer of accommodation can be made in the private rented sector. Religious beliefs can be taken into account by reviewing the suitability of accommodation and its proximity to relevant places of worship. The resettlement services will be able to assist households to new places of worship where they move away from the existing area.</p> <p>We will continue to collect information on all protected characteristics through our assessment forms, as this improves our data collection and helps inform best practise.</p>	

Sex - A man or a woman.	
Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan; this also includes needs in relation to each part of the duty.	Potential socio-economic impacts/ needs/issues arising from socio-economic disadvantage (positive and negative)
<p>As identified within the previous EINA, women are disproportionately represented among lead applicants from accepted households. Women are also more likely to be lone parents, who are disproportionately affected by homelessness in Southwark. Women are also more likely to be carers, who can be impacted by moves away from the people they are caring for, they are also more likely to be impacted if they move outside Southwark and London and have to travel greater distances to maintain that care. People with children, and lone parents (who are more likely to be women) in particular, will potentially be negatively affected if they move outside Southwark and London as they are more likely to rely on local support networks for child care arrangements. Households with children with special educational needs, where Family Services are working with them and where children are at key exam stages could be particularly affected. Women of a working age are less likely than men of a working age to be in employment. Women are 8 times more likely to be a victim of domestic abuse. Therefore, obtaining accommodation further afield will enable greater choice to women whom require permanent and temporary accommodation. In assessing the amended policies, the changes have not identified any additional direct or indirect discrimination on the basis of sex. Women are 8 times more likely to be victims of domestic abuse. Therefore they may require specific suitable temporary accommodation. The increase in the geographical area will enable the provision of more temporary accommodation available for this client group.</p>	

Equality information on which above analysis is based	Socio-economic data on which above analysis is based
<p>HCLIC returns for 2022/23</p> <p>ONS, Census 2021 data</p> <p>CHAIN Annual Report, Southwark, April 22-March 23</p> <p>Commons Library - Women and the UK economy - House of Commons Library (parliament.uk)</p>	
Mitigating and/or improvement actions to be taken	
<p>Some carers (who are more likely to be women) will be prioritised for in borough/adjacent borough accommodation. Resettlement support will be offered for private rented offers which are out of London, and for moves within London where they are needed and this could include help to register children in local schools. Support will also be offered to households moving into temporary accommodation outside London and as above this could include help to enrol children in local schools and to find nursery places. Provision of temporary accommodation for victims of domestic abuse. Ensure suitability assessments are completed to ensure victims of domestic abuse are removed from area's of risk.</p>	

Sexual orientation - Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes	
Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan; this also includes needs in relation to each part of the duty.	Potential socio-economic impacts/ needs/issues arising from socio-economic disadvantage (positive and negative)
<p>According to the JSNA Annual Report 2022- "Southwark has one of the largest LGBTQI+ communities in the country. There is</p>	

<p>increasing academic evidence that key public health challenges disproportionately impact this population group, with higher levels of smoking, alcohol use, incidence of some cancers and mental ill-health. LGBTQI+ individuals also experience discrimination and homophobia when accessing health, care and other services. While the evidence base continues to improve, robust data on health outcomes is lacking at both a national and local level. As with ethnicity, additional work is required to collect data on sexual orientation within local services to enable better monitoring and tackle local inequalities”</p> <p>ONS data (2021) indicates that LGBTQI+ residents are more likely to live in private rentals and much less likely to live in social rentals areas which means they could be disproportionately affected by housing insecurity and potentially require TA or a PRSO.</p> <p>The proportion of the LGBT population in the UK is estimated to be 3.1% compared to Southwark’s 8%.</p> <p>There may be impacts arising from the relative lack of support and other services designed specifically for LGBTQI+ people in some places outside London, but again this would very much depend on the area where the offer was made.</p> <p>No issues have been discovered which relates to the policy implementation.</p>	
<p>Equality information on which above analysis is based</p>	<p>Socio-economic data on which above analysis is based</p>
<p>JSNA Annual Report 2022 ONS, Census 2021</p>	
<p>Mitigating and/or improvement actions to be taken</p>	
<p>The initial assessment and suitability assessment at the point of placement, will help to identify any additional support required for households this is part of the business as usual.</p> <p>There are no additional actions identified to be taken at this point. The policy will be kept under constant review and where necessary, improvement actions can be taken.</p>	

<p>Human Rights</p> <p>There are 16 rights in the Human Rights Act. Each one is called an Article. They are all taken from the European Convention on Human Rights. The Articles are The right to life, Freedom from torture, inhuman and degrading treatment, Freedom from forced labour , Right to Liberty, Fair trial, Retrospective penalties, Privacy, Freedom of conscience, Freedom of expression, Freedom of assembly, Marriage and family, Freedom from discrimination and the First Protocol</p>
<p>Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan</p>
<p>According to some estimates there are over 16,000 refugees in Southwark and this group are adversely affected by the current economic climate and the aftermath of the pandemic which has increased isolation, unemployment, poverty, ill health and significant delays in claims being processed by the Home Office. (SDCAS)</p>
<p>Information on which above analysis is based</p>
<p>SDCAS, Our impact - Southwark Day Centre for Asylum Seekers (sdcas.org.uk)</p>
<p>Mitigating and/or improvement actions to be taken</p>
<p>Targeted work with asylum seeker applicants who have recently gained their status from the Home Office is ongoing and will likely require consideration as part of the impact of placement outside of the borough and further afield.</p> <p>We will work with partners including advice services, specialist refugee agencies and rough sleeping services to ensure that this cohort are assisted as quickly and effectively as possible to help to reduce the number of instances households require TA.</p> <p>This will be through co-location, new referral pathways and better more joined up working. Working groups will be continued with local services to help to encourage joined up and cooperative working for this vulnerable group.</p>

Conclusions

Summarise main findings and conclusions of the overall equality impact and needs analysis for this area:

The review of the policy identified little changes and therefore the mitigating actions and assessment from the previous EINA continue to be relevant. Ongoing monitoring of these are required and will continue to be done throughout the

operation of the policy. The legal requirements in place to conduct a suitability assessment will help to ensure the council is able to pick up

The changes that have been identified to the policy will have minimal impact upon the protected groups. While we understand that on the face of it, reducing the number of offers for TA and PRSO is seemingly a negative for residents, the process and procedures will enable the council to improve the overall outcomes for residents. The focus away from making multiple offers to one single and suitable offer will enable the council to support residents earlier and reduce levels of homelessness across all the protected groups.

The changes to implement a new transfer of TA process will also have a greater impact across specific groups as identified in the above groups namely Disability, Age and exceptional cases in other groups. This will enable households to be able to move from unsuitable accommodation to suitable accommodation in a timely way based on need and not simply based on time listed on a transfer list.

The revised policy will also help to ensure we have the right level and type of support, information and guidance for residents in housing need through the support provided through resettlement services. This will help prevent homelessness and length of time in TA in a person centred way operating across all groups.

The findings of this EINA supports the implementation of the revised policy and will be subject to future reviews to ensure all the aspects of the policy remain relevant and appropriate. With the review will come a further EINA.

Section 5: Further equality actions and objectives

5. Further actions			
Based on the initial analysis above, please detail the key mitigating and/or improvement actions to promote equality and tackle inequalities; and any areas identified as requiring more detailed analysis.			
Number	Description of issue	Action	Timeframe
1	Providing sufficient support to groups placed outside of Southwark and further afield	Review resettlement procedures	Jan 2024
2	Monitoring of further data of protected groups.	Produce statistical data review	Jan 2025

5. Equality and socio-economic objectives (for business plans)				
Based on the initial analysis above, please detail any of the equality objectives outlined above that you will set for your division/department/service. Under the objective and measure column please state whether this objective is an existing objective or a suggested addition to the Council Plan.				
Objective and measure	Lead officer	Current performance (baseline)	Targets	
			Year 1	Year 2

6. Review of implementation of the equality objectives and actions			

Implementation Equality Impact and Needs Analysis

Item No. 11.	Classification Open	Date: 17 January 2024	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Housing Revenue Account – Final Rent and Charges Report 2024-25	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Cabinet Members:		Councillor Darren Merrill – Cabinet Member for Council Homes Councillor Stephanie Cryan – Cabinet Member for Communities, Democracy and Finance	

FOREWORD - COUNCILLOR DARREN MERRILL, CABINET MEMBER FOR COUNCIL HOMES.

Cabinet on 5 December 2023 received indicative proposals for increases in tenant rents and a range of service charges for 2024-25, and Local Housing Forums have met over recent weeks to consider the proposals and provide feedback to Cabinet.

In terms of funding, the HRA is wholly reliant on tenant rents and service charges, homeowner service charges, garages, commercial property and other income streams to fund landlord services. The council has faced unprecedented budget challenges over the last two years caused by external factors beyond its control, namely, more onerous building safety requirements, exceptional inflationary pressure, rising interest rates and a rent cap, that has restricted the amount of income able to be generated to pay for services. This has combined to undermine the financial resilience of the HRA and place it at increased risk, requiring greater focus on controlling expenditure within the available resources and to ensure we can set a balanced budget in accordance with our statutory duty.

We remain acutely aware of the challenges that residents face given the current economic climate and understand that increases in rent and charges will be difficult for some. However, there are financial support schemes in place to assist those in most need, and help and information can be found on the council's website.

We are also aware that residents want us to continue to improve and invest in their homes and this administration is committed to providing a high standard of service and ensure the homes our residents live in are safe, dry and warm. Nevertheless, to do this, it is critical that we have a financially stable housing revenue account and raise the funds necessary to meet those challenges, as recommended in this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Cabinet agrees a rent increase of 7.7% for all directly and tenant managed (TMO) housing stock within the council's Housing Revenue Account. 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 with effect from 1 April 2024.

2. Cabinet agrees a rent increase of 7.7% for the Council's shared ownership stock as set out at paragraphs 15-16 with effect from 1 April 2024.
3. Cabinet agrees the increases to tenant service charges, comprising estate cleaning, grounds maintenance, communal lighting and door entry maintenance as set out in paragraphs 17-18 with effect from 1 April 2024.
4. Cabinet agrees the increase in sheltered housing service charges as set out in paragraph 19 with effect from 1 April 2024.
5. Cabinet agrees the increase in charges for garages and other non-residential facilities as set out in paragraphs 20-21 with effect from 1 April 2024.
6. Cabinet notes 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.
7. Cabinet agrees the increase in tenant heating charges, including metered charges as set out in paragraphs 23-42 with effect from 1 April 2024

Statutory Framework and Background Information

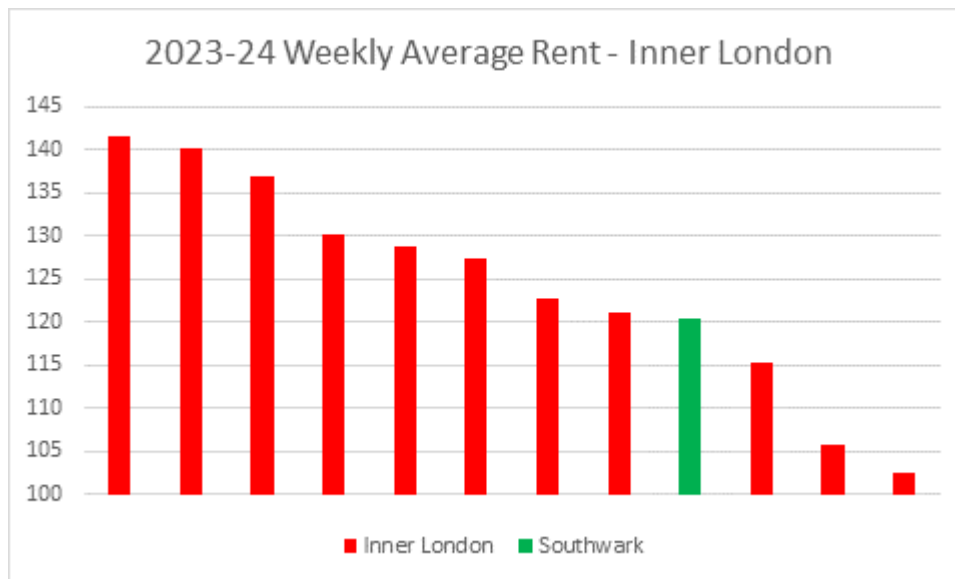
8. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) reflects the statutory requirement under Section 74 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to account separately for local authority housing provision. It is a ring-fenced account, containing solely the costs arising from the provision and management of the council's housing stock, offset by tenant rents and service charges, homeowner service charges, commercial property and other income streams. The council has a statutory responsibility to set a balanced HRA budget.
9. The Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 compelled councils and housing associations to reduce rents by 1% each year for the financial years 2016-17 to 2019-20. In October 2017, government announced that national rent policy would revert to CPI+1% for a period of five years from 2020-21 to 2024-25. In February 2019, government issued a direction on the Rent Standard to the Regulator of Social Housing effective from 1 April 2020. This direction also brought local authority registered providers within the scope of the Regulator's Rent Standard.
10. Government rent policy of CPI+1% was set at a time of prolonged low inflation well within the government's own inflationary target of 2%. However, macro-economic conditions arising from the pandemic and the conflict in Ukraine combined to markedly increase inflationary pressure with September 2022 CPI being 10.1%, which would have resulted in a rent increase of 11.1% from April 2023. In recognition of the financial impact that a rent increase at that level would have, government consulted on a proposal to introduce a temporary rent cap for 2023-24. The council responded positively to the consultation, supporting action

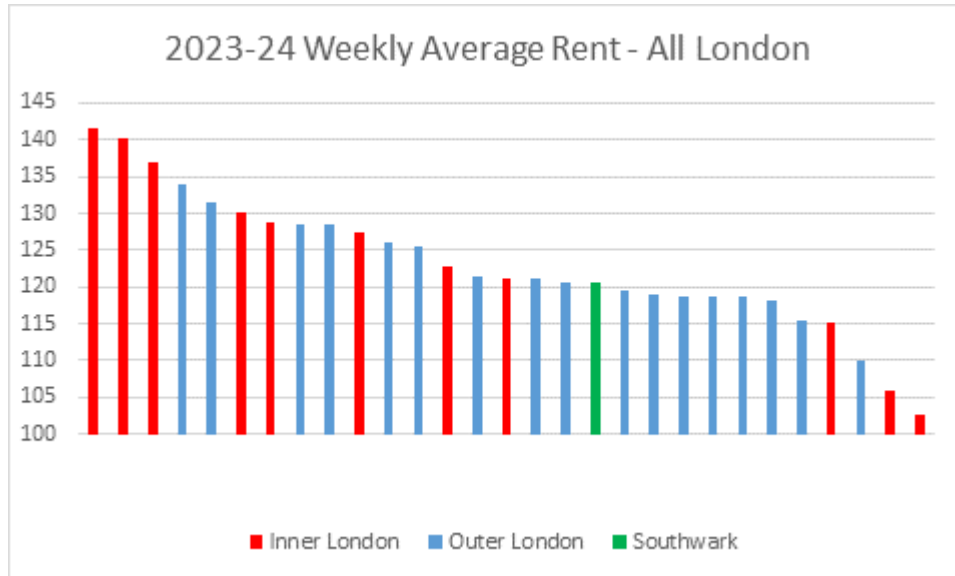
to protect tenants, with the proviso that government fully compensated local authorities for the loss of rental income (estimated at circa £9m per annum).

11. Government subsequently confirmed a maximum rent cap of 7% for 2023-24, but no assurance or funding was received to mitigate the resources forgone, thereby transferring the budget risk to the council. The compound effect of the imposed four-year rent reduction policy and one-off rent cap effectively reduces the rental baseline for future year's increases, and over the life of the thirty-year business plan runs in to hundreds of millions of income foregone.

Southwark Average Weekly Rents

12. Average rents in Southwark have historically been low and remain so compared with the 12 inner London boroughs and the wider 29 London boroughs that have retained housing stock. They also currently remain around 8% lower than the government rent target, with consequent rent loss, though the "straight-to-target" policy continues to gradually erode the gap, but will take many years to be fully convergent. The tables below illustrate Southwark's position in relation to other boroughs.





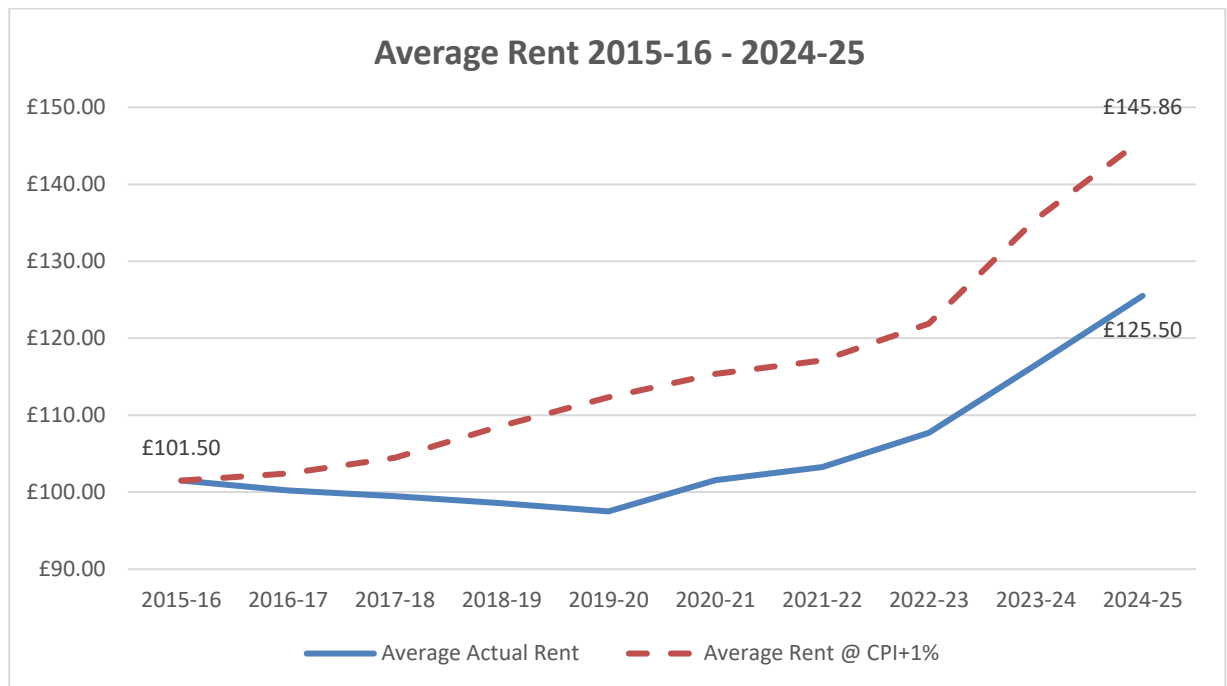
13. The table below compares the average rent by bed size for 2023-24 (updated to reflect the mid-year stock position), against the indicative average rent for 2024-25 uplifted by 7.7% (CPI+1%). It also includes estimated stock movements arising from stock loss offset by the addition of new homes coming on stream and the effect of the 'straight-to-target' rent policy for new lets. These rates only relate to the council's General Needs housing stock, excluding those used for temporary accommodation purposes pending regeneration.

Number of Bedrooms	Average Rent	Average Rent	Increase	Increase
	£ per week 2023-24	£ per week 2024-25	£ per week	£ per annum
0	91.21	98.24	7.03	365.56
1	105.10	113.20	8.10	421.20
2	116.36	125.32	8.96	465.92
3	127.50	137.32	9.82	510.64
4	138.25	148.89	10.64	553.28
5	152.41	164.15	11.74	610.48
6+	165.51	178.26	12.75	663.00
Borough – Wide Average	116.53	125.50		

Note. 2023-24 average updated to reflect the mid-year stock position.

14. The chart below illustrates the impact on average rents arising from the four year national rent reduction policy under the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016, together with the current rent cap imposed for 2023-24 to mitigate the impact of the cost of living crisis. The dotted line shows what the average rent would have been had formula (CPI+1%) been applied throughout. In 2020-21, it shows that the average rents broadly returned to the point they were at when the reduction

process commenced. The gap in 2024-25 between the two lines represents the equivalent of £20.36 per week on average, equating to circa £40m in rent forgone for the provision of services and investment in the housing stock.



Shared Ownership Rent Reforms

15. From 12 October 2023, government has introduced a series of reforms to shared ownership rents. These reforms apply to the leases of shared ownership properties delivered through the Affordable Homes Programme, Section 106 developer contributions and leasehold interests through the Right to Shared Ownership.
16. In the past, shared ownership rents have been set by reference to the Retail Price Index (RPI+0.5%), which government recognise is an outdated measure of inflation and committed to phasing out. This reform brings shared ownership rents in to line with the limit applied to annual rent increases in other forms of social housing (i.e. CPI+1%). For existing shared ownership properties where RPI is stated in the lease, the council retains flexibility to implement the CPI methodology rather than RPI, where the former is lower, to ensure equity between shared ownership residents. The council currently has c. 50 shared ownership properties; therefore, the financial impact is not material.

Tenant Service Charges

17. Tenant service charges (TSC) originated from the government's rent restructuring regime in 2002-03 with the intention of engendering greater consistency and transparency between local authority and Registered Social Landlord (RSL) sectors. They were first de-pooled from rents (i.e. rents were reduced by an

equivalent amount to match the cost of the service charges) in Southwark in 2003-04 and are rebased annually to reflect inflationary pressures.

18. The principle underpinning the calculation of charges is that they are set at a level to recover the cost of providing the service. Borough-wide costs are pooled in order to moderate any area cost differentials, then divided by the estimated number of service recipients to derive a standard charge. In order to ensure that costs and charges remain aligned, they are subject to annual rebasing and the existing and recommended rates are set out below. Crucially, like rents, they remain eligible for welfare benefit support.

Tenant Service Charges	2023-24 £ per week	2024-25 £ per week	Increase £ per week	Increase £ per annum
Estate Cleaning	6.73	8.11	1.38	71.76
Grounds Maintenance	1.51	1.77	0.26	13.52
Communal Lighting	2.06	2.44	0.38	19.76
Door Entry	0.78	0.82	0.04	2.08
Total	11.08	13.14	2.06	107.12

Sheltered Housing Service Charges

19. Sheltered housing service charges reflect the cost of enhanced housing management support and emergency call services provided to residents. They are in addition to the standard rent for sheltered accommodation and are reviewed annually and set at a rate to be cost neutral to the HRA. For 2024-25, it is recommended to increase charges by £2.27 to £38.20 per week (6.32%), reflecting inflationary cost pressures. Service charges like rents are eligible for welfare benefit and currently circa 80% of residents are in receipt of full or partial support or receive transitional funding from Adult Social Care, a long-standing agreement emanating from the Supporting People funding regime, which is gradually falling out as residents leave sheltered care.

Garage and Other Non-residential Charges

20. The garage portfolio remains a valuable asset within the HRA and generates an income stream that contributes to the wider provision of housing management services. Maintenance and repair of the stock and a programme of refurbishment continues to bring obsolete and closed garages back into use, albeit policy priorities for garage sites have shifted towards the provision of new homes, and where appropriate and financially viable, more affordable business/ creative workspace.
21. Charges are routinely benchmarked against inner London quartile rates, taking into account elasticity of demand and stock availability. For 2024-25, it is recommended that charges are increased broadly in line with CPI (rounded). Charge rates for private renters (non-LBS tenants or homeowners) are set at a premium over the standard rate (circa 10%) and are inclusive of VAT at the

prevailing rate (20%). The table below sets out the existing and proposed charges for 2024-25.

Garage Charges	2023-24 £ per week	2024-25 £ per week	Increase (%)	Increase £ per week	Increase £ per annum
Standard rate	23.10	24.70	6.93	1.60	83.20
Concessionary rate	18.10	19.70	8.84	1.60	83.20
Small sites rate	12.60	13.40	6.35	0.80	41.60
Private sector rate	41.20	45.30	9.95	4.10	213.20
Additional charges:					
Larger garage	5.80	6.20	6.90	0.40	20.80
Additional parking	5.80	6.20	6.90	0.40	20.80
Water supply	0.50	0.50	–	–	–
Additional security	1.00	1.00	–	–	–

Note. The private sector charge is inclusive of VAT at the standard rate of 20%.

Concessionary Garage Rate

22. The council has for many years applied a concessionary reduction of £5 per week from the standard rate for registered disabled and elderly residents over 70 years of age, which currently applies to around 940 residents in either directly managed or TMO stock. Whilst this is commendable, the loss of income to the HRA equates to circa £240k on average per annum. Cabinet on 5 December 2023 instructed officers to undertake an audit of garage usage and the application of the concessionary scheme with a view to consulting with residents on a refreshed garage charging policy early in the New Year.

District Heating Charges - Background

23. The council's district heating systems are charged to service users on a full cost recovery basis. Utility costs for operating the district heating systems are paid from a ring-fenced Heating Account. Costs are recovered from tenants via pooled heating charges and homeowners through their service charge bills respectively.
24. While homeowners always pay the actual cost of their estate's heating within a financial year, the ring-fenced Heating Account allows small surpluses or deficits from tenants to be carried from one year to another to help smooth-out the impact of small energy price fluctuations or severe weather on tenants' charges.
25. The procurement of gas and electricity for the council's district heat networks is undertaken by LASER Energy, part of the Commercial Services Group wholly owned by Kent County Council (KCC). LASER are one of the largest energy buying organisations in the UK, purchasing over £500 million of energy from the wholesale market per annum and serving over 200 public sector bodies. This arrangement has delivered very competitive energy prices over a sustained

period, with unit costs consistently lower than retail market rates, for the benefit of district heat network customers.

26. On-going investment in energy efficiency measures to reduce consumption has also contributed to the financial stability of the heating account over time, and historically helped to keep energy costs down. Measures have included loft insulation, cavity wall insulation and double glazing, as well as steps to ensure efficient generation and distribution of heat, for example by replacing heating pipes with better insulated equivalents. In 2013 the council began taking waste heat from the nearby SELCHP energy recovery facility which has yielded a significant financial benefit as well as carbon saving by offsetting gas consumption. The council is actively looking at how this scheme could be extended.
27. However, global events over the last two years have created unprecedented disruption in global energy markets, leading to huge price rises for customers across the board. Despite competitive buying through LASER Energy, the council's gas prices have quadrupled since 2021. Given this market turmoil, both tenants and homeowners have seen unavoidable increases in their heating charges, mirroring what has happened in the wider economy.
28. In January 2023, government introduced the Energy Bills Discount Scheme (EBDS), which provides a subsidy to heat network providers for 2023-24. This meant the rate increase was lower than it would otherwise have been. Latest market intelligence from LASER suggests there may be a modest reduction in wholesale prices next year, but in the absence of an extension to EBDS, the prices the council actually pays are anticipated to rise by around 10% above the existing subsidised capped rate. This is still uncertain and will remain so until further advanced utility purchasing has been completed by LASER Energy and government confirm their intentions with regards EBDS.
29. In accordance with the Heat Networks (Metering and Billing) Regulations, all new build properties on a communal or district heating system must have a heat meter fitted and in the last two years, new obligations have come into force requiring certain existing properties to have meters retrofitted. By April 2024, the council will have well over a thousand heat meters in operation.
30. A heat metering policy is currently being prepared which will deal with the principles relating to heat metering and billing, such as the pros and cons of credit billing vs pre-payment billing. The heat metering policy will not define specific tariffs and charges, which will change from year to year. These are instead addressed in this report.
31. Unmetered heat network charges (heat with rent) are not subject to VAT, but once heat is metered it is deemed to be a separate service to the rent and VAT is applicable at the reduced rate of 5%. For the avoidance of doubt the tariffs and charges shown in Appendix 1 are inclusive of VAT, where applicable, to reflect what residents will actually pay. Residents with a heat meter will receive separate communication in the New Year to explain how the proposed tariffs and charges apply to them individually. For some this communication will come from external

billing partners, for others it will come from the council directly if internal billing applies.

Tenant Charges – Non-metered

32. Most council properties connected to district heating do not have heat meters. Since there is no way of knowing how much heat a property without a meter consumes, the fairest way of apportioning cost is by property size (number of bedrooms) and service provision (whether both space heating and hot water are provided, or only one of these). For tenants without heat meters, the charges are set on an average basis across the borough, as tenants are not necessarily able to choose where they live, and should not be penalised if their particular heating system is less efficient than the average. Tenants' weekly heating charges only recover the fuel costs and do not include any contribution towards the cost of repairs and maintenance as this is included in the basic rent.
33. The current and recommended weekly charges commencing 1 April 2024 for tenanted properties without heat meters are set out in Table 1 of Appendix 1, which includes an increase of 10% over existing rates. This is necessary to ensure that the costs of the energy purchased to provide heating and hot water are fully recovered from service recipients over the medium term, thereby avoiding the need to increase charges at a higher rate as experienced in the wider domestic energy market. Whilst there can be no certainty in relation to price movements in global energy markets, LASER (the council's energy adviser), expect that prices will stabilise and, whilst not falling back to the levels of just three short years ago, pricing is expected to be significantly below that of the last 12 to 24 months. If this holds true, the heating account will be brought back into balance within two years (and sooner should energy prices fall at a faster rate than currently assumed), which could provide the opportunity to reduce charges in the future to match the lower costs incurred by the council.

Tenant Charges - Metered

34. Heat metered properties pay for their individual heat consumption according to a heat tariff – a combination of a daily standing charge and a variable charge so what individual properties pay varies with how much heat they use. Tenant tariffs are set in a borough-wide manner for simplicity and fairness, and to mirror the non-metered pool charging principle. However, it is necessary to have two different tenant tariffs – one for new homes built since the heat metering Regulations came into force in 2014, and one for older homes that have recently had a meter retrofitted.
35. New homes are better insulated and the cost of providing heat is therefore lower. A cost recovery tariff applicable to new homes only (rather than an average for all homes) is a partial departure from the 'pool charging' principle but rent levels in new homes are higher and this is often justified on the basis that energy costs in new homes are lower. It would not be fair, therefore, to make tenants in new homes, who are paying higher rent, subsidise the heating of older properties with lower rent.

36. In light of energy cost increases, tenant heat meter tariffs for new blocks have which have been in place for some time, need updating to reflect current energy prices. The current and recommended tariffs are shown in Appendix 1 Table 2 along with the equivalent weekly cost for an average user. The standing charges are set to reduce by around 10-15% but the variable charge to increase by 53%. The net effect of these changes for an average user will be an overall increase of between 20-40%. The resulting average weekly costs remain well below both non-metered and retrofit metered property charges.
37. For retrofit heat metered properties, April 2024 will be the first time tenants are charged according to how much energy they use. For many properties, a whole year of consumption data has been collected to aid in setting the tariffs and charges fairly. The objective in tariff setting is to recover costs in a way that encourages the conservation of heat, while not overly penalising those who unavoidably need more warmth.
38. The approach for 2024-25 is to recover around two-thirds of the cost via a daily standing charge and one third via a variable charge. The split between standing charge and variable charge will be reviewed annually to ensure charges remain fair and reflective of costs. The recommended borough-wide tenant tariffs for retrofit heat meters is set out in Appendix 1 Table 3 along with equivalent weekly charges for low, average and high users.
39. An average user with a retrofit heat meter is expected to pay about the same as the unmetered charge, whilst lower or higher volume users will pay less or more according to their individual consumption. Those properties with historical data recorded via an installed meter will have a unique weekly charge applied to their account to reflect their individual consumption levelled out across the year. Those properties for which no historic consumption data is available will be placed on the 'Average' charge level initially. This will then be adjusted to an individual charge once their consumption level is established.

Homeowner Charges – Non-metered

40. In accordance with the terms of the leases, homeowners connected to district heat networks are liable for the actual energy costs incurred in a particular financial year. The council cannot therefore allow deficits or surpluses to carry from one year to another. In addition and in line with other communal services, they are also liable for a proportion of the actual cost of repairs and maintenance to the heating system in the block/estate in which they reside. Where meters are not present, fuel charges to homeowners are weighted to reflect the type of heating in their property and then allocated on a bedroom weighting. Bills are administered by the Homeowner Services team via estimated bills (issued before the start of a financial year), and actual bills (issued after the end of a financial year as an adjustment to the estimate).

Homeowner Charges - Metered

41. Where heat meters are fitted, heat tariffs for homeowners are different to the tenant tariffs as in order to comply with the terms of the leases, tariffs need to be unique to the individual heating system, to ensure actual cost recovery for the scheme in question, i.e. there is no borough-wide averaging for homeowner tariffs.
42. Those homeowners whose systems are heat metered by an external billing company will receive notifications from their billing agent in the New Year of the new tariffs that apply to their property from 1 April 2024. Those homeowners whose systems have been retrofitted with heat meters will receive estimated bills from the Homeowner Services team in February 2024. These will explain the tariff applicable to their heating system, their estimated consumption and the amount payable. Any differences in real consumption or costs will be adjusted in the actual service charge bill at the end of the financial year to ensure accurate cost recovery.

Other HRA Income Streams

43. Whilst tenants rent and service charges constitute circa 85% of HRA income; the remainder comprises homeowner revenue and capital service charges, garage rents, commercial property rents, interest receivable, recharges and costs recovered, capitalised expenditure and mandatory and discretionary fees and charges.
44. Homeowner service charges are the second-largest income stream to the HRA (circa 10%) and represent the actual cost of services provided to homeowners that are recoverable under the terms of the lease. Major works are determined by the scale and delivery of investment in the housing stock and the extent to which it pertains to leasehold property (external and communal works), and can fluctuate year on year according to the capital programme.

Budget Background and Framework 2024-25

45. Over the past three years the HRA has experienced exceptional budget pressures as a result of factors largely outside the council's control, primarily government rent policy and macro-economic events, which include:
 - The cumulative effect of the government imposed 1% rent reduction for four years for the period 2016-17 to 2019-20, running into hundreds of millions in income foregone over the life of the current HRA business plan
 - A government imposed 7% cap on rents for 2023-24, when formula rent would have yielded 11.1%, a loss of £9m+ in the current year and a lower income base going forward than it would otherwise have been, resulting in on-going year on year rent loss
 - Unfunded additional burdens relating to the housing stock arising from the Fire Safety and Building Safety Acts

- Unprecedented energy price volatility impacting the council's heat network and other energy intensive elements such as lighting
 - Exponential growth in the HRA borrowing requirement for the capital programme (primarily new homes), together with the three-fold increase in interest rates since December 2021, which has substantially increased the revenue financing cost to the HRA.
46. It should be noted that the pressures on the HRA outlined above are not unique to Southwark, they have affected all councils responsible for social housing to a greater or lesser degree. However, the impact is more pronounced for Southwark, given it has the largest housing stock in London and the fourth largest in the country, with over 187 in-scope high-rise blocks to manage, together with a relatively low starting base rent compared to other London boroughs.
47. The HRA is currently forecast to be overspent in 2023-24, but is subject to a management action plan to mitigate the position before year-end. A repairs improvement programme and an asset management transformation piece is underway, along with an end-to-end voids review. A temporary spending moratorium has been introduced which focusses on essential spending only, for the remainder of the year, to ensure the financial sustainability of the HRA going forward.
48. Consideration will be given as to how any deficit (after the actions to reduce in-year spending) will be addressed at year-end. The HRA has limited reserves available and will consider using a prudent share of these together with a reduction in revenue funding for the housing investment programme (HIP), in order to bring the account back into balance.
49. Consequently, the budget setting for 2024-25 is going through a thorough review and planning process to establish realistic and resource driven budget proposals for 2024-25, but this will not be completed within the timeline for setting rents and charges for next year. Consequently, HRA budget information will form part of the council's policy and resources strategy report to Cabinet and Council Assembly in February 2024.

Statutory Notification Requirements

50. Unlike matters of direct housing management, there is no statutory requirement to consult on changes to rents and other charges; however, the council remains committed to engaging with residents under the terms of the Tenancy Agreement. The timetable for setting rents is tight and as a pre-cursor to this report, Cabinet considered indicative proposals for rents and charges for 2024-25 at their meeting on 5 December 2023. This enabled information to be in the public domain in advance of Christmas with Local Housing Forum meetings taking place during December and January to consider the proposals. Given the final resident engagement meeting is scheduled for 15 January, feedback on the proposals will be reported to Cabinet separately (Appendix 2 to follow).

51. Homeowner representatives are unable to make recommendations in the matter of tenant rents and service charges, but they may do so in respect of proposals regarding garage and other miscellaneous charges and matters pertinent to their service charges. Following approval of the recommendations as set out or amended by Cabinet, the council will issue the statutory and contractual notification of variation in rents and other charges to all tenants, not less than 28 days prior to the effective date of 1 April 2024 for commencement of the new rent year.

Community, Equalities (including Socio-economic) and Health Impacts

52. In making decisions the council is required to have regard to its Public Sector Equality Duty contained in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act. Equality analysis and screening enables understanding of the potential effects that the proposals may have on different groups and whether there may be unintended consequences and in the event, how such issues can be mitigated.
53. It is recognised that any increase in rents and charges may present particular difficulties for people on low incomes; however, rents and tenant service charges remain eligible for welfare benefits. In addition, both government and the council have put in place financial support mechanisms to mitigate the wider cost of living crisis and specifically energy costs, along with resources to support tenancy sustainment. Information about what support is available now can be found on the Cost of Living pages on the Council website.
<https://www.southwark.gov.uk/benefits-and-support/cost-of-living-support>

Climate Change Implications

54. The council has committed to do everything it can to make Southwark carbon neutral by 2030. The Climate Emergency is a major focus for the council, working in partnership with stakeholders, residents and staff to tackle the effects of global warming. How the council uses its resources can have an impact on the borough's carbon emissions and the climate action strategy sets out the council's plans and progress against the plan is monitored and published on the website. Specific areas relating to the decarbonisation programme for council housing is as follows:
- Raise the energy efficiency of council stock with an EPC rating of D or lower
 - Replace existing infrastructure with low-carbon heat generation technologies
 - Make all future council home projects low/net zero
 - Move council stock to metered energy provision to reduce gas consumption
 - Move to green gas and electricity provision

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance (08/12/2023 DG)

55. This report sets out the Housing Revenue Account Rent and Charges recommendations for 2024-25.

Policy and Legislative Context

56. The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (“the 1989 Act”) sets out legal requirements in relation to housing finance, in particular a duty under Section 74 of the Act to maintain a Housing Revenue Account (“HRA”). The 1989 Act provisions include a duty, under Section 76, to budget to prevent a debit balance on the HRA and to implement and review the budget.
57. The Housing Act 1985 (“the 1985 Act”) section 24 gives the council power to “make such reasonable charges as [it] may determine for the tenancy or occupation of [its] houses”. Section 24 of the 1985 Act additionally requires the council, from time to time, to review rents and make such changes as circumstances may require.
58. As referenced in paragraphs 8-11 of this report, the discretion as to rents and charges in the Housing Act 1985 is subject to requirements, limitations and restrictions arising from legislation and government rent policy.
59. From 1 April 2020, the council must set rents in accordance with the Rent Standard April 2020 (“the 2020 Standard”). This is issued by the Regulator of Social Housing under direction (the Rent Standard Direction 2019) of the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government pursuant to powers in section 197 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008. Government policy in this respect is set out in the “Policy Statement of Rents for Social Housing”.
60. Under the 2020 Rent Standard, the council may apply annual rent increases, over a five-year period, of up to 1% above the general index of consumer prices CPI. Under the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 section 194(2A) the council must comply with the rules contained in the Rent Standard and with all the requirements and expectations in the Policy Statement on Rents for Social Housing.

Consultation

61. Changes in rent and other charges are excluded from the statutory consultation requirements on matters of “housing management” in respect of which local authorities are required to consult their secure, introductory and demoted tenants pursuant to Section 105 of the Housing Act 1985 and Sections 137 and 143A of the Housing Act 1996.
62. *The council however has undertaken in its tenancy conditions to consult with the Tenant representative body before seeking to change rent and other charges. The report confirms, in paragraph 50, that consultation has taken place in order to*

comply with this term. Appendix 2 to the report sets out the outcome of the consultation, which must be taken into account when a decision is taken by Cabinet Members on the recommendations in this report.

63. Additionally the report notes a review of garage policy, including the concessionary charging scheme for registered disabled and elderly residents, and confirms that consultation on a refreshed garage policy is taking place. The responses from this consultation must be taken into account when a decision is taken on the policy.

Statutory Notice of Variation

64. The council is required, by Section 103 of the Housing Act 1985 (relating to its secure tenancies), and by Section 111A of the Housing Act 1985 (relating to its introductory tenancies), and further to the council's agreement with its tenants, to notify tenants of variations of rent and other charges. The council will need to serve a notice of variation, at least 28 days before the variation takes effect.

Equalities Impact

65. In making a decision on the recommendations in this report the cabinet must give due regard to the council's equalities duties set out in the Equalities Act 2010, specifically the need to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct
 - Advance quality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and
 - Foster good relationships between those who share relevant characteristics and those who do not
66. The relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
67. The report includes a community impact statement that sets out consideration given to the equality duties in the Equality Act to which members must have regard.

Strategic Director Finance (FC23/005)

68. This report sets out recommendations for increases to tenants rent and a range of service charges for the financial year commencing 1 April 2024. All pertinent information relating to the recommendations are contained in the report. It is important that the council's HRA expenditure is controlled to within the income limits that this report proposes in order to "balance" the 2024-25 HRA budget. It is also important that the council's collection methods are effective to ensure that the charges outlined within the report are received and made available to invest effectively within the council's housing stock. HRA reserves are lower than what optimal values would be and therefore this places the council's HRA finances at greater risk than previous years. Whilst there is an emerging strategic plan to

build the HRA's financial resilience, the success of this is dependent on operational elements of the HRA budget (such as rents and charges outlined within this report) being delivered as planned. Further detail on activity related to HRA financial resilience will be addressed as part of the February 2024 Policy and Resources Strategy Report to Cabinet & Council Assembly.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None		

APPENDICES

Appendix 1	District Heat Network – Tariffs and Charges
Appendix 2	Feedback from Local Housing Forum meetings (to follow)

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Members	Councillor Darren Merrill, Cabinet Member for Council Homes Councillor Stephanie Cryan – Cabinet Member for Communities, Democracy and Finance	
Lead Officers	Clive Palfreyman, Strategic Director of Finance	
Report Author	Ian Young, Departmental Finance Manager, Housing	
Version	Final	
Dated	4 January 2024	
Key Decision?	Yes	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS/DIRECTORATES/CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team		4 January 2024

APPENDIX 1 - District Heating -Tariffs and Charges

Table 1 – Current and Recommended Non-metered Tenant Charges

	Number of Bedrooms	2023-24 £ per week	2024-25 £ per week	Increase £ per week	Increase £ per annum
Central Heating and Hot water	0	15.24	16.76	1.52	79.04
	1	21.40	23.54	2.14	111.28
	2	26.49	29.14	2.65	137.80
	3	31.71	34.88	3.17	164.84
	4+	34.23	37.65	3.42	177.84
Weatherfoil Heating and Hot Water	0	12.83	14.11	1.28	66.56
	1	18.40	20.24	1.84	95.68
	2	22.99	25.29	2.30	119.60
	3	27.50	30.25	2.75	143.00
	4+	29.82	32.80	2.98	154.96
Weatherfoil Heating only	0	9.68	10.65	0.97	50.44
	1	12.00	13.20	1.20	62.40
	2	14.45	15.90	1.45	75.40
	3	16.87	18.56	1.69	87.88
	4+	19.27	21.20	1.93	100.36
Central Heating only	0	11.91	13.10	1.19	61.88
	1	14.97	16.47	1.50	78.00
	2	17.96	19.76	1.80	93.60
	4+	22.48	24.73	2.25	117.00
Hot Water only	1	4.07	4.48	0.41	21.32
	2	8.58	9.44	0.86	44.72
	3	10.62	11.68	1.06	55.12
LRB Heating	0	10.34	11.37	1.03	53.56
	1	15.41	16.95	1.54	80.08
	2	16.69	18.36	1.67	86.84
	3	18.02	19.82	1.80	93.60
Partial Heating	0	8.11	8.92	0.81	42.12
	1	9.95	10.95	1.00	52.00
Underfloor Heating	0	12.16	13.38	1.22	63.44
	1	13.49	14.84	1.35	70.20
	2	14.83	16.31	1.48	76.96
	3	16.60	18.26	1.66	86.32

Table 2 – Current and Recommended Borough-wide Metered Tenant Tariffs for New Homes (including VAT at 5%)

Number of bedrooms	Current tariffs (2023-24)		Proposed (2024-25)		Equivalent weekly charge for average user (£/week)	Increase for average user (%)
	Standing charge (p/day)	Variable charge (p/kWh)	Standing charge (p/day)	Variable charge (p/kWh)		
0	46.95	11.56	44.04	17.72	7.55	22%
1	51.48		46.55		10.19	25%
2	56.02		49.07		12.83	28%
3	59.90		51.58		18.48	33%
4+	63.79		54.09		24.14	36%

Table 3 – Recommended Borough-wide Metered Tenant Tariffs for Retrofitted Homes (including VAT at 5%)

Number of bedrooms	Proposed (2024-25)		Equivalent weekly charge for different users		
	Standing charge £/day	Variable charge p/kWh	Low user £/week	Average £/week	High user £/week
0	1.52	4.54	12.81	16.00	20.08
1	2.14		17.49	21.14	24.35
2	2.66		20.44	25.05	31.52
3	2.89		28.47	34.63	43.02
4+	3.02		30.54	37.53	47.07

APPENDIX 2 - Feedback from Local Housing Forum meetings (to follow)

Item No. 12.	Classification: Open	Date: 17 January 2024	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Policy and Resources Strategy: Capital Monitoring Report 2023-24	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Cabinet Member:		Councillor Stephanie Cryan – Cabinet Member for Communities, Democracy and Finance	

FOREWORD - COUNCILLOR STEPHANIE CRYAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES, DEMOCRACY AND FINANCE

Our capital programme delivers real and tangible benefits for our residents and despite ongoing financial pressures, we continue to invest to improve our neighbourhoods. Our range of projects covers all areas across the length and breadth of the borough. We have committed to improving air quality, increasing the number of cycle hangers, making improvements in care home settings, delivering new children’s homes, and investing in our parks and leisure centres.

Our proposed new capital programmes continue to support improvements in our environment and infrastructure – such as investing in road maintenance to support a long-term solution to potholes, investing in our street markets and updating our street lighting to maintain well-lit and safe areas for our residents.

In addition, substantial investment has been made in our leisure facilities to improve the quality of our residents’ lives, improve physical and mental well-being. The key leisure capital schemes are focused on improving the fabric and decoration of the centres, repairing and replacing equipment, improving heating and ventilation systems and refurbishing our gyms.

The housing investment programme is experiencing significant economic risk through rising interest rates, together with the potential for cost overruns, due to huge inflationary pressures particularly in energy costs, building materials and labour costs.

The council has reviewed the affordability of the housing investment programme. Recent changes in the legislative, regulatory and policy environment have added very significant costs to an already ambitious programme and without any additional funding from government. In addition, interest rates are near their highest level in 15 years. It is becoming increasingly clear that the council will need to reduce the pace of borrowing. We have a planned approach to reduce our borrowing and these measures will ensure that our housing investment programme remains financially sustainable.

Our capital programme remains ambitious despite the national financial outlook and continues to deliver on the things that are important to our residents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That cabinet:

1. Approve the virements and variations to the general fund and housing investment capital programme as detailed in Appendix D and the new capital bids in Appendix E;
2. Notes 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;
3. Notes the £1.7bn housing investment programme to be fully delivered over the remaining term of the programme, as detailed in Appendix C.
4. Notes the mitigating actions to ensure the affordability of the housing investment programme and the sustainability of the housing revenue account.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

5. On 17 October 2023, the medium term financial strategy and capital update report was presented to cabinet. The report considered the key aspects of both revenue and capital accounts, the interplay between the accounts, the main risks and identified potential mitigations. This report updates cabinet on the forecast capital outturn for 2023-24 together with the revised 10 year capital programme,
6. Capital investment plans are driven by the council delivery plan and by the council's housing strategy. The council has a long tradition of investing in housing, local infrastructure and facilities that support the development of the borough for the benefit of residents and businesses. The scale of the capital programme is immense, representing a major element of the council's financial activities.
7. The council's constitution requires council assembly to agree the capital strategy and programme at least once every four years, ensuring effective financial control and the achievement of value for money, within the provisions of financial standing orders. Council assembly will be presented with the refreshed 10 year general fund capital programme and housing investment programme (HIP) in February 2024.
8. Due to the size and scale of the programme and the number of projects involved, it is inevitable that unforeseeable delays can occur which lead to some variations against planned spend. This has historically resulted in the capital programme being over-programmed in year, whilst retaining a balanced programme over the entire ten year life of the programme. However, it was reported in October 2023 that the council faced a position

where planned spend is considerably in excess of forecast resources, not only in year, but also over the life of the programme.

9. Given high rates of inflation, the capital budgets were revisited to ensure that the programme was based on an up to date price base and inflationary pressures are captured in the programme for the period to 2032-33.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Programme position at month 8 2023-24

10. The capital programme is detailed within the report and appendices as follows:
 - Appendix A provides further detail on the general fund capital programme 2023-2033;
 - Appendix B the accompanying departmental narratives;
 - Appendix C sets out the housing investment programme for 2023-2033;
 - Appendix D sets out the general fund capital programme budget virements and variations for approval (and notes the Housing Investment Programme changes to codes to reflect the phasing of projects);
 - Appendix E provides a summary of the new capital bids;
 - Appendix F provides the narrative detail of the new capital bids.

General Fund Capital Programme

11. In response to the inclement financial conditions (inflation, borrowing costs), and in anticipation of the capital programme refresh at council assembly, the council has undertaken a full review of all capital projects. The review found that whilst some costs had increased (due to construction inflation), management of projects and re-distribution of unused contingencies and project underspends meant the programme reported for month 4 could be contained within the existing funding envelope. This position remains at month 7.
12. As noted in the October cabinet report, affordability of the General Fund capital programme is dependent on grant income, 'Section 106', and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts and capital receipts. Any shortfall is met through prudential borrowing, which incurs financing costs. The council currently has sufficient budget to afford these financing costs and provision is made through the budget-setting process to increase this amount annually to allow for growth within the programme.

Table 1 General Fund Capital programme (M8) to 2033-34

Department	2023/24			2024/25			Total Programme 2023/24-33/34		
	Revised Budget	Forecast	Variance	Revised Budget	Forecast	Variance	Revised Budget	Total Forecast	Total Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Children's and Adults' Services	33,850	33,189	(661)	43,319	44,019	700	103,722	103,722	-
Southwark Schools for the Future	2,229	327	(1,902)	-	1,902	1,902	2,229	2,229	-
Finance	7,538	6,396	(1,142)	2,171	3,074	903	11,053	10,053	(1,000)
Governance & Assurance	5,783	5,227	(556)	5,783	5,425	(358)	18,828	18,828	-
Environment, Neighbourhoods & Growth	96,358	62,016	(34,342)	59,287	88,994	29,707	219,545	219,545	-
Housing	2,360	2,408	48	3,244	3,244	-	28,571	28,571	-
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	148,118	109,563	(38,555)	113,804	146,658	32,854	383,948	382,948	(1,000)
FUNDED BY:									
Corporate Resource Pool	1,039	1,039	-	10,000	10,000	-	26,039	26,039	-
Major Repairs allowance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Supported Borrowing	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Reserves	719	719	-	-	-	-	719	719	-
Revenue	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Grants	26,148	23,566	(2,582)	13,321	17,106	3,785	60,483	60,655	172
Section 106 and CIL	15,205	14,430	(775)	7,147	7,922	775	28,368	28,368	-
External Contributions	3,680	3,680	-	62	62	-	3,742	3,742	-
TOTAL RESOURCES	46,791	43,434	(3,357)	30,530	35,090	4,560	119,351	119,523	172
Financing to be agreed/Borrowing	101,327	66,129	(35,198)	83,274	111,568	28,294	264,597	263,425	(1,172)

13. Table 1 shows that programmed expenditure over the period 2023-24 to 2033-34 is currently £382m and that approximately £263m will be funded by borrowing, this remains the same as the month 4. Appendix A details the departmental capital programmes and Appendix B provides the departmental narratives. Appendix D sets out the budget virements to be approved.

New capital bids

14. New capital bids of £121m over the 10 year are detailed in Appendix E and Appendix F. These will be financed from corporate resources, with the debt financing being assessed as affordable from the general fund revenue budget. The new bids include £40m for leisure, environment and planning projects to 2027-28, £36m (c£4m per annum) to support the future investment requirements of digital transformation and £45m (c£5m per annum) for the maintenance and compliance with health and safety regulations of the operational buildings. If these bids are approved, they will be included in the approved capital programme.

Housing Investment Programme (HIP)

15. The 'Housing Investment Programme' (HIP) is the capital programme for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Broadly, there are two major strands; the New Build programme and the Asset Management (AM) programme. The New Build programme is the commitment to new council home delivery. The Asset Management programme arises from the council acting as a social landlord, with legal obligations to ensure the maintenance of its council homes, to ensure they are safe, healthy and free from things that can cause harm, as well as day to day repairs and maintenance.
16. From 2010-11 to 2022-23, the council has invested:
- £1.1bn in programmes to ensure homes are safe, warm and decent and an additional £127m in those estates that have had high investment needs;
 - £754m in new homes;
 - £170m in regeneration projects.
17. Appendix C shows the programme expenditure over the period 2023-24 to 2033-34 is currently £1.74bn, comprising of £974m for new homes, £761m for asset management and £8m for other programmes.
18. The forecast spend for the Housing Investment Programme for 2023-24 is £368m (£427m at month 5). Of this, £260m (£308m at month 5) relates to the new build programme, £101m (£112m at month 5) is for asset management and £6.5m (£7.5m at month 5) for other schemes.
19. A breakdown of the schemes and budgets within the housing investment programme is included in Appendix C.

Financing the Housing Investment Programme

20. The New Build Programme is financed through a range of funding sources including grants, Section106 receipts, Right to Buy receipts and capital receipts from the sales of assets. Any shortfall is made up through

prudential borrowing and the financing cost of this is charged, as a 'first call', to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

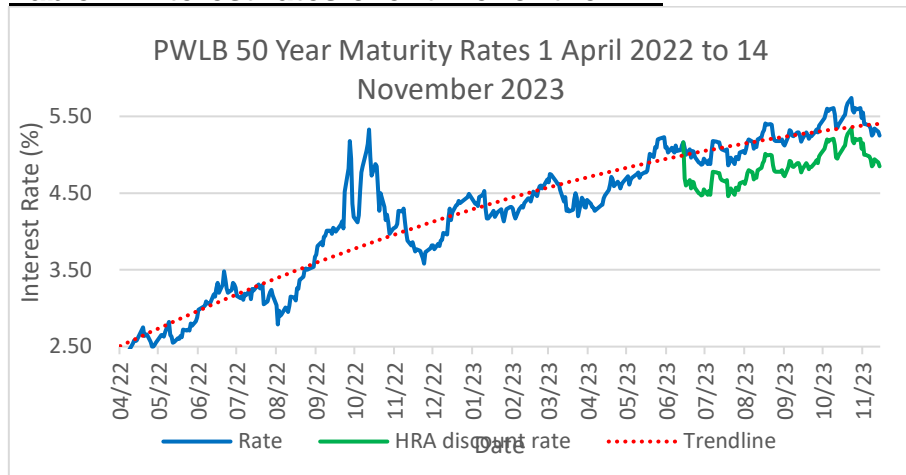
21. The Asset Management (AM) programme is financed through the depreciation charges levied on the HRA and through the discretionary revenue contribution to capital. However, it is increasingly likely that external borrowing will be required in 2023-24 and beyond with the financing cost of this adding to the burden on the housing revenue account which may result in the slowing of the New Build programme overall.

New Build Programme

22. Like the General Fund programme, the HIP underwent a detailed review in 2022-23 to ensure that it continues to meet the strategic aims and policy objectives of the council whilst remaining affordable and sustainable. As part of this review, the new homes programme has been separated into two categories; a 'committed' and an 'uncommitted' programme.
23. The committed programme comprises those projects for which a contractual commitment exists or where the council has demonstrated a deep commitment to proceed with, such as by way of a resident ballot. However, these committed projects still need constant review to ensure their continuing affordability, particularly when both borrowing costs and construction costs are rising. So completion of these 'committed' projects remains subject to the test of affordability, as they are affected by a range of factors, including inflation, interest rates and other pressures impacting the Housing Revenue Account.
24. The uncommitted programme comprises the pipeline of projects that the council would like to pursue, but for the time being cannot be contained within the affordability envelope. The council will endeavour to introduce these to the committed programme as and when funding and affordability allow.
25. In light of rapidly increasing build and financing costs, the council took a decision in November 2023 to pause planned construction on a small number of sites across the borough, namely Bells & Lindley and Sceaux Gardens. This action significantly reduces the council's need to borrow over the next few years and goes some way towards reducing pressures on the Housing Revenue Account. Officers will continue to review proposals for these sites with a view to identifying alternative approaches to delivery that remain affordable.
26. Exposure to interest rate rises and the consequent cost of borrowing remains the key constraint on the council's New Build programme. The cost of borrowing has effectively tripled since December 2021. With effect from 15 June 2023, HM Treasury introduced a new concessionary PWLB rate for Housing Revenue Accounts (HRA) borrowing. The discount margin is set at 40 basis points (i.e. 0.4%) below the rate at which local authorities

usually borrow from the PWLB. While this is welcome, it has so far had limited impact in achieving its objective due to continuing underlying interest rate rises. On implementation, the prevailing rate was 5.13% before the application of the HRA discount, and on 14 November 2023 the rate was 4.85% after the application of the discount. Table 2 shows the movement in the PWLB since April 2022.

Table 2: Interest rates over time for the HIP



27. The prospect of interest rates falling significantly over the short to medium term is extremely unlikely, which needs to be acknowledged when programming for the HIP. While interest rates remain relatively high the council will seek to minimise borrowing over and above that to which it is already committed.
28. Unfortunately, borrowing rates are near their highest level in 15 years just as the council reaches a peak in its borrowing requirement for the new homes programme. It is becoming increasingly clear that the council will need to reduce the pace of borrowing in order to prevent the cost of servicing the debt from exceeding available resources. This will be achieved in a number of ways, including by slowing down or pausing projects or by finding other sources of income including capital receipts from the sale of vacant or unproductive assets.

Asset Management (AM)

29. Recent changes in the legislative, regulatory and policy environment, described in the October 2023 report, have added very significant costs to an already ambitious programme and without any additional funding from government. The HIP has an annual budget of £60m-£70m to undertake capital works to its stock, but is currently anticipating expenditure in the region of £101m (£112m at month 5), largely on works to ensure the stock is safe. This potentially leaves a funding gap in 2023- 24 of around £31m (£42m at month 5).

30. Officers are considering a range of options to reduce the gap in 2023-24, and beyond including:

- Reducing spend on the housing revenue account to allow more of the capital asset management programme to be funded via revenue contribution,
- Reducing or re-profiling the existing asset management programme to bring it closer to the £70m envelope,
- Reviewing contracts and procurements to maximise value for money,
- Selling surplus housing assets (e.g. a small number of long-term voids that have proved uneconomical to repair, vacant land) in order to generate capital receipts,
- Limiting works to the statutory minimum duty.

Table 3: Financing of 2023-24 spend

Funding Source	£
Major Repairs Reserve & Revenue Contributions	60,000,000
Non RTB receipts	31,469,984
RTB receipts	2,371,536
Grants & external contributions	19,074,729
S106 receipts	26,352,311
Borrowing	220,670,352
Total financing	368,235,053

31. As identified, the borrowing requirement is forecast at £220.7m (£251.4m at month 5). The annual revenue cost of this borrowing in terms of interest payable at interest rates estimated between 4.5% and 5.5% would be between £9.9m and £12.1m (£11.3m-13.8m at month 5) as illustrated below. This places a significant financial pressure on the HRA.

Interest Rate	Annual Interest
5.50%	£12,136,869
5.00%	£11,033,518
4.50%	£9,930,166

Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts

32. This report monitors expenditure relating to the council's capital programme. Although as a monitoring report this report has been judged to have no direct impact on local people and communities, the expenditure it is reporting reflects plans designed to have an impact on local people and communities. Community impact was considered at the time the projects

and programmes were agreed. It is important that resources are efficiently and effectively utilised to support the council's policies and objectives.

Climate change implications

33. This report provides an update on the council's capital programme as a whole and includes climate change programme updates. The impact of individual projects and programmes will be considered in line with constitutional requirements as part of the specific decision making and procurement processes.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Assistant Chief Executive (Governance and Assurance) (AJW 12.12.2023)

34. The council has a duty to maintain a balanced budget throughout the year and, accordingly, members are required to regularly monitor the council's financial position. Section 28 of the Local Government Act 2003 imposes a duty on the council to monitor its budgets throughout the financial year. The council must take necessary appropriate action to deal with any deterioration in the financial position revealed by the review. This report sets out the current situation regarding the general fund capital programme indicating that the costs can be contained within the current funding envelope. It also sets out the position regarding the housing investment programme and the planned mitigation given the current projected funding gap.
35. Decisions regarding the strategic aspects of the regulation and control of the council's finances are reserved to the cabinet in accordance with Part 3B of the constitution. This part refers to the cabinet having responsibility for the "council's revenue and capital budgets, including the housing revenue account, ensuring effective financial control and the achievement of value for money, within the provisions of financial standing orders. The Financial Standing Orders require the chief finance officer to report on the overall financial position of the council and on capital expenditure incurred by the council to the cabinet on a regular basis.
36. Specific provisions for the approval of virements over £1,000,000 and up to £10,000,000 between capital projects or programme headings as set out in the overall programme approved by council assembly are reserved to cabinet in Part 3C.
37. The capital programme assists the council in complying with the duty under the Local Government Act 1999 which requires it to make arrangement to secure the continuous improvement in the way its functions are exercised, by having regards to the combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

38. The council is required under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to the need to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination harassment and victimisation
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not
 - Foster good relations between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not.
39. Cabinet needs to take account of this duty in considering this report.
40. The Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts section above indicates that whilst this report has been judged to have no direct impact on local people and communities, the expenditure it is reporting reflects plans designed to have an impact on local people and communities.
41. The public sector equality duty is a continuing duty and will need to be taken account of in any processes to mitigate budget pressures.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held at	Contact
Policy and Resources report- October cabinet	Southwark Council Finance and Governance 160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Tim Jones, Departmental Finance Manager, Finance and Governance
Link: Cabinet, 17 October 2023 - Agenda Item 9		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix A	General fund capital programme month 8 2023-24
Appendix B	Departmental Narratives month 8 2023-24
Appendix C	Housing investment programme 2023-24
Appendix D	Capital programme budget virements and variations 2023-24
Appendix E	Capital Bids
Appendix F	New Capital Bids – Narrative

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Stephanie Cryan, Communities, Democracy and Finance	
Lead Officer	Clive Palfreyman, Strategic Director of Finance	
Report Author	Tim Jones, Departmental Finance Manager,	
Version	Final	
Dated	4 January 2024	
Key Decision?	Yes	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
	Officer Title	Comments Sought
	Comments included	
	Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance	Yes
	Strategic Director for Finance	N/a
	Cabinet Member	Yes
	Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	4 January 2024

Appendix A - General fund capital programme 2023-24 M8 detail

Capital Programme 2023/24 - 2033/34	2023/24				2024/25			2025/26 - 2033/34			Total Programme 2023/24-2033/34		
Description of Programme / Project	Revised Budget	Spend to Date	Forecast	Variance	Revised Budget	Forecast	Variance	Revised Budget	Forecast	Variance	Revised Budget	Forecast	Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Environment, Neighbourhoods and Growth													
CIL 2021- CGS	48	35	48	0	77	77	0	0	0	0	125	125	0
Cleaner Greener Safer	1,915	1,064	1,900	(15)	2,333	2,363	30	10,805	10,790	(15)	15,053	15,053	0
Cycle Superhighway 4 Project	50	5	50	0	2,854	2,854	0	0	0	0	2,904	2,904	0
Southwark School Streets	650	(34)	650	0	833	833	0	311	311	0	1,794	1,794	0
CIL 2021- Highways	860	294	456	(404)	164	569	404	0	(0)	(0)	1,024	1,024	0
LIP Programme	4,042	2,110	3,707	(335)	0	335	335	0	0	0	4,042	4,042	0
Other PR Projects	992	980	858	(134)	1,609	1,724	115	289	307	19	2,890	2,890	0
StreetCare	6,484	3,075	6,184	(300)	6,507	6,911	404	21,736	21,632	(104)	34,726	34,726	0
Air Quality	1,045	39	710	(335)	521	856	335	0	0	0	1,566	1,566	(0)
Air Quality Action Plan & Climate Emergency Delivery Projects	1,016	11	266	(750)	0	750	750	0	0	0	1,016	1,016	0
CCTV	250	0	250	0	1,500	1,500	0	1,250	1,250	0	3,000	3,000	0
Regulatory Services	56	0	56	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	56	56	0
Carbon Reduction Investment	1,331	0	0	(1,331)	0	1,331	1,331	0	0	0	1,331	1,331	0
Climate Emergency	5,052	192	3,655	(1,397)	2,526	4,023	1,497	15,527	15,427	(100)	23,105	23,105	0
Street Metal Works	835	0	835	0	889	889	0	889	889	0	2,613	2,613	0
Youth Services	805	4	150	(655)	0	655	655	0	0	0	805	805	0
Culture	210	251	302	92	113	130	18	574	464	(110)	896	896	0
Cemetery Burial Strategy	29	0	29	0	2	2	0	106	106	0	137	137	0
Drinking Water Fountains throughout Southwark	0	0	0	0	20	20	0	180	180	0	200	200	0
Tree Planting	1,025	186	875	(150)	1,168	1,068	(100)	392	642	250	2,585	2,585	0
CIL 2021- Parks	200	0	200	0	951	951	0	(0)	(0)	0	1,151	1,151	0
Parks	6,023	3,383	6,013	(10)	9,365	9,017	(348)	5,640	5,997	357	21,028	21,028	(0)
South Dock Marina	2,104	100	175	(1,929)	1,832	2,700	868	31	1,092	1,061	3,967	3,967	0
Leisure	1,522	397	1,472	(50)	103	153	50	0	0	0	1,625	1,625	0
Planning	2,077	266	1,140	(937)	0	937	937	0	0	0	2,077	2,077	0
Walworth Town Hall	1,091	0	1,091	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,091	1,091	0
Canada Water Leisure Centre	12,896	2,793	11,000	(1,896)	150	2,046	1,896	0	0	0	13,046	13,046	0
Blue Market Regeneration Programme	2	10	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0
Revitalising the Blue	1,600	0	0	(1,600)	822	1,459	637	0	0	0	2,422	1,459	(963)
Riverside Walk	20	0	0	(20)	1,439	2,422	983	0	0	0	1,459	2,422	963
Regeneration North	3,760	138	1,709	(2,052)	3,159	4,670	1,511	2	543	541	6,921	6,921	0
Revitalising Camberwell	150	0	0	(150)	178	328	150	0	0	0	328	328	0
Peckham Rye Station Redevelopment	4,769	(717)	1,383	(3,386)	7,596	10,982	3,386	150	150	0	12,515	12,515	0
The Old Vic	2,736	0	0	(2,736)	1,000	3,736	2,736	0	0	0	3,736	3,736	0
Regeneration South	8,160	153	4,369	(3,791)	1,767	5,558	3,791	0	0	0	9,927	9,927	0
21-23 Parkhouse Street	3,380	0	0	(3,380)	0	3,380	3,380	0	0	0	3,380	3,380	0
Peckham Library Square	3,165	304	600	(2,565)	4,000	6,565	2,565	0	0	0	7,165	7,165	0
Regeneration Capital	5,150	306	1,023	(4,127)	813	2,203	1,390	0	2,737	2,737	5,963	5,963	0
Strategic Acquisitions	100	0	100	0	198	198	0	0	0	0	298	298	0
Property Services	2,208	233	2,208	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,208	2,208	0
Elephant & Castle Regeneration	8,550	3,750	8,550	0	4,800	4,800	0	6,016	6,016	0	19,366	19,366	0
Environment, Neighbourhoods and Growth	96,359	19,328	62,016	(34,343)	59,287	88,995	29,708	63,899	68,534	4,635	219,545	219,545	(0)
Children's and Adults' Services													
Telecare Expansion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0,000	0	0
Lifecycle Capital Prog- Anchor Homes	1,963	486	1,963	0	1,309	1,309	0	3,299	3,299	0	6,571,387	6,571	0
Lifecycle Capital Prog- ASC properties	661	161	661	0	3,031	3,031	0	1,747	1,747	0	5,437,900	5,438	0
Mosaic Management Information Development	500	64	500	0	286	286	0	0	0	0	785,677	786	0
Bed Based Care	1,000	72	300	(700)	3,000	3,700	700	12,000	12,000	0	16,000,000	16,000	0

Appendix A - General fund capital programme 2023-24 M8 detail

Capital Programme 2023/24 - 2033/34 Description of Programme / Project	2023/24				2024/25			2025/26 - 2033/34			Total Programme 2023/24-2033/34		
	Revised Budget	Spend to Date	Forecast	Variance	Revised Budget	Forecast	Variance	Revised Budget	Forecast	Variance	Revised Budget	Forecast	Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Changing Places Toilet Programme	120	4	120	0	15	15	0	30	30	0	165,000	165	0
MH Supported Housing Insourc. Transition	22	4	22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	21,586	22	0
Primary Schools Refurbishment Programme Retention	95	0	95	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	95	95	0
Primary Schools Refurbishment Programme 2020/21	395	8	395	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	395	395	0
Primary Schools Refurbishment Programme 2021/22	392	29	392	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	392	392	0
Primary Schools Refurbishment Programme 2022/23	2,017	687	2,017	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,017	2,017	0
Primary Schools Refurbishment Programme	0	0	0	0	2,505	2,505	0	2,505	2,505	0	5,009	5,009	0
Primary Schools Refurbishment Programme 2023/24	3,093	957	3,093	0	107	107	0	0	0	0	3,200	3,200	0
Autism Spectrum	0	0	0	0	900	900	0	0	0	0	900	900	0
Beormund Primary School Redevelopment	5,996	193	5,996	0	8,830	8,830	0	367	367	0	15,193	15,193	0
Ilderton Primary - Air Quality Improvements	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	(0)	1	1	(0)
Healthy Pupils Programme	59	59	59	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	59	59	0
Permanent Expansion	8,602	1,375	8,602	0	6,228	6,228	0	695	695	0	15,526	15,526	0
Riverside Primary School	3,933	167	3,933	0	2,616	2,616	0	182	182	0	6,730	6,730	0
School Retention	0	0	0	0	666	666	0	0	0	0	666	666	0
Rotherhithe Primary School Expansion	1,559	396	1,559	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,559	1,559	0
St Josephs CIL	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SEND and Disabilities Development	1,630	481	1,669	39	8,482	8,482	0	5,699	5,659	(40)	15,811	15,811	(0)
Southwark Inclusive Learning Service KS4	0	0	0	0	3,200	3,200	0	0	0	0	3,200	3,200	0
Childrens Homes	1,813	730	1,813	0	2,145	2,145	0	30	30	0	3,988	3,988	0
Classrooms	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Children's and Adults' Services Total	33,850	5,872	33,189	(661)	43,319	44,019	700	26,553	26,514	(40)	103,722	103,721	(0)
Southwark Schools for the Future													
KS3 SILS	327	0	327	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	327	327	0
Contingency and retention payments	1,902	0	0	(1,902)	0	1,902	1,902	0	0	0	1,902	1,902	0
Southwark Schools for the Future Total	2,229	0	327	(1,902)	0	1,902	1,902	0	0	0	2,229	2,229	0
Housing													
Gypsy and Travellers Site Fire Safety Reconfiguration	266	0	266	0	202	202	0	0	0	0	468	468	0
Housing Renewal	2,093	965	2,142	48	3,042	3,042	0	22,968	22,920	(48)	28,103	28,103	0
Housing Total	2,360	965	2,408	48	3,244	3,244	0	22,968	22,920	(48)	28,571	28,571	0
Finance													
IT Investment Schemes	5,739	0	5,200	(539)	0	539	539	0	0	0	5,739	5,739	(0)
Smart Working Programme	723	0	360	(363)	0	363	363	0	0	0	723	723	0
Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) Digitalisation	1,075	0	836	(239)	2,171	2,171	0	1,344	583	(761)	4,590	3,590	(1,000)
Finance Total	7,538	0	6,396	(1,142)	2,171	3,074	903	1,344	583	(761)	11,053	10,053	(1,000)
Governance & Assurance													
PPM & Compliance Programme (CRP)	832	0	350	(482)	832	400	(432)	6,652	7,565	913	8,315	8,315	0
Operational Buildings Life Cycle Investment	4,951	0	4,877	(74)	4,951	5,025	74	610	610	0	10,512	10,512	0
Governance & Assurance Total	5,783	0	5,227	(556)	5,783	5,425	(358)	7,262	8,176	913	18,828	18,828	0
Capital Programme 2023/24-2032/33													
		2023/24				2024/25				2025/26- 2033/34			Total Programme 2023/24-2033/34

Appendix A - General fund capital programme 2023-24 M8 detail

Capital Programme 2023/24 - 2033/34	2023/24				2024/25			2025/26 - 2033/34			Total Programme 2023/24-2033/34		
Description of Programme / Project	Revised Budget	Spend to Date	Forecast	Variance	Revised Budget	Forecast	Variance	Revised Budget	Forecast	Variance	Revised Budget	Forecast	Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
	Revised Budget	Spend to date	Forecast	Variance	Revised Budget	Forecast	Variance	Revised Budget	Forecast	Variance	Revised Budget	Forecast	Variance
	£'000		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Total Expenditure	148,118	26,164	109,563	(38,555)	113,803	146,658	32,855	122,026	126,725	4,700	383,947	382,947	(1,000)
Total Resources	46,791	0	43,434	(3,357)	30,530	35,090	4,560	42,030	40,999	(1,031)	119,351	119,523	172
Forecast variation (under)/over	101,327	26,164	66,129	(35,198)	83,273	111,568	28,295	79,996	85,726	5,731	264,596	263,424	(1,172)
Cumulative position					184,600	177,697	(6,903)	264,596	263,424	(1,172)	264,596	263,424	(1,172)

Appendix B: DEPARTMENTAL NARRATIVES

ENVIRONMENT NEIGHBOURHOODS AND GROWTH

1. The total value of the capital programme for the department is currently £219.6m for the 10 year programme. The projected 2023-24 outturn is £62m against the revised budget of £96.4m (after allowing for reprofiling of budgets due to slippage in this year's programme).
2. Year to date spend is currently only £19.3m as billing for completed works is behind schedule. However, significant commitments have been made to avoid slippage and the department is setting up a capital programme review board to strengthen the focus on capital projects and their delivery. This should resolve any bottlenecks that may be preventing delivery to plan.
3. Table 1 below summaries the 2023-24 financial position by key schemes and responsible division:

	2023/24						
	Agreed Budget	Budget Virements	Budget Variations	Revised Budget	Spend	Forecast	Variance
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Leisure	1,521,631	0	0	1,521,631	515,771	1,471,631	(50,000)
South Dock Marina	2,103,826	0	0	2,103,826	102,145	175,000	(1,928,826)
Parks	7,196,404	0	80,208	7,276,612	3,865,886	7,117,096	(159,516)
Culture	1,004,660	0	10,000	1,014,660	261,384	452,000	(562,660)
TOTAL - Leisure & Culture	11,826,521	0	90,208	11,916,729	4,745,186	9,215,727	(2,701,002)
Climate Change and Sustainability	6,283,829	98,877	0	6,382,706	397,916	3,654,820	(2,727,886)
TOTAL - Climate Change and Sustainability	6,283,829	98,877	0	6,382,706	397,916	3,654,820	(2,727,886)
Street Lighting	835,282	0	0	835,282	0	835,282	0
Regulatory Services	2,367,817	0	0	2,367,817	97,497	1,282,617	(1,085,200)
StreetCare	6,484,047	0	0	6,484,047	3,725,567	6,184,047	(300,000)
Other PR Projects	2,412,034	0	140,000	2,552,034	1,344,280	2,013,948	(538,086)
LIP PROGRAMME	3,992,445	0	50,000	4,042,445	2,210,900	3,707,445	(335,000)
Cleaner Greener Safer	1,880,000	82,942	0	1,962,942	1,201,721	1,947,942	(15,000)
Street Market	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL - Environment	17,971,625	82,942	190,000	18,244,567	8,579,965	15,971,281	(2,273,286)
Planning	2,076,536	0	0	2,076,536	282,547	1,139,631	(936,905)
Sustainable Growth - North	19,370,071	0	0	19,370,071	4,367,653	13,802,010	(5,568,061)
Sustainable Growth - South	18,609,793	0	370,747	18,980,540	179,977	6,351,594	(12,628,946)
Sustainable Growth - Capital Projects	8,530,210	0	0	8,530,210	309,564	1,023,316	(7,506,894)
Property Services	2,307,852	0	0	2,307,852	276,445	2,307,852	0
E&C REFCUS(Regen North)	8,550,000	0	0	8,550,000	3,750,000	8,550,000	0
TOTAL - Planning & Growth	59,444,462	0	370,747	59,815,209	9,166,186	33,174,403	(26,640,806)
TOTAL	95,526,436	181,819	650,955	96,359,210	22,889,253	62,016,230	(34,342,980)

4. The progress of some of the major programmes by Division are detailed below:-

Climate Change & Sustainability Division

5. The projected 2023-24 outturn is £3.7m against the revised budget of £6.4m mainly due to slippage.
6. Cabinet agreed an additional £25m capital budget to enable the council to do more, faster, to reduce carbon emissions. £21m of the £25m has been allocated to strategic project areas that meet our carbon reduction ambition as set out in the council's climate action plan. This is profiled over the next 7 years.
7. Recent work undertaken includes the installation of the energy saving measures, including heat pumps at the Burgess Park sports hub and the Peckham Library upgrade. The council has also opened its first 'library of things' at Canada Water Library, expanding the council's libraries offer through the provision of household items to rent. LED lighting was recently completed at the Burgess Park BMX track, while LED Street Lighting, cycle hanger and EV charging programmes have also seen their delivery rapidly increased through this funding. The council has also planted its first 'Tiny Forest' at Peckham Rye. Funding has recently been allocated to begin improving the energy efficiency of the council's leisure centres and will also be used to purchase 4 new electric refuse collection vehicles for household waste collection.

Leisure Division

8. The projected 2023-24 outturn is £9.2m against the revised budget of £11.9m mainly due to slippage.

Parks, Leisure Centres. Youth and Play

9. The programme includes 34 individual projects. The most significant expenditure in the programme this year will be in respect of the following projects:
- South Dock Marina Boatyard Essential H&S works - construction works (£1.2m)
 - Burgess Park Sports Pavilion and Pitches - completion of pavilion construction and ancillary landscaping (£1.8m)
 - Borough wide tree planting programme – (£1m)
 - South Dock Marina Boatyard Crane – supply and installation - (£0.9m)
 - Adventure Playgrounds – construction at 3 sites (£735k)
 - Active Southwark Community Investment Fund – 2nd and 3rd round grants (£0.755m)

10. There are also 11 individual projects, primarily covering lifecycle maintenance and replacement works at various Leisure Centres. The programme includes roof repairs and glass replacement at Dulwich Leisure Centre, roof repairs at Camberwell Leisure Centre, replacement of training boats at Surrey Docks Fitness & Watersport Centre, structural repairs to Dulwich Leisure Centre Fitness Room and electrical works at Dulwich and Camberwell Leisure Centre.
11. Also included within the Youth and Play Service Capital budget (Youth New Deal) is funding of £1m for planned capital works, and a summary of how this fund is being used was provided in the month 4 cabinet report.

Libraries and Culture

12. The libraries capital programme includes IT innovation projects, building improvements and costs associated with new library projects and library refurbishments. The budget for 2023-24 has been used to fund the fit-out of the new Kingswood library on Seeley Drive and Peckham library refurbishment costs. These projects have now been completed.

Environment Division

13. The projected 2023-24 outturn is £16.8m against the revised budget of £18.2m mainly due to slippage.

Cleaner Greener Safer, (Including air quality projects)

14. The Cleaner Greener Safer 2023-24 programme is well under way with spend and completion targets agreed at £1.88m and 200 completions, which are being continuously monitored. Rising costs remain a risk to delivery.

The Mayor's Air Quality Fund

15. The projects funded by this source have been completed including the Walworth Low Emission Neighbourhood (LEN). Building on this success, the council are now conducting further projects in the Walworth area to improve the market and shopping street, and to improve health outcomes and further environmental improvements in LEN intervention areas e.g. Browning Street.

Streets and Highways

16. The Non Principal Road (NPR) programme, delivering major resurfacing of footways and carriageways, is on target to achieve the projected full annual spend. The carriageway resurfacing programme is expected to see an

accelerated rate of spend over the next few months due to the faster rate that carriageway surfacing is carried out by comparison to footway surfacing.

17. The School Streets programme is expected to deliver to target. There have been some minor issues with reaching an agreement with the schools concerned but these have been resolved for the most part.
18. Cox's Walk footbridge major repair works commenced in February 2023 and is expected to be completed this financial year. The projected cost has increased significantly due to inflation and a capital growth bid has been submitted for the next round of bidding for the additional funding required.
19. Cycle Superhighway 4 continues construction on site. There have been some delays due to Transport for London's contractors carrying out traffic signals and station refurbishment work. Works are now expected to complete in December 2023. Work to design the longer term removal of the gyratory is progressing in line with expectations.
20. The cycle hangars programme is progressing well with 76 hangars having been installed by the end of Q2 this year, 61% of the year-end target of 125 hangars.

Planning & Growth Division

21. The projected 2023-24 outturn is £33.2m against the revised budget of £59.9m mainly due to slippage.

Peckham Rye Station development

22. The first phase of works to construct new commercial space on Blenheim Grove, was completed in August 2023. The buildings are currently being fitted out. In parallel, phase 2 tender documents are being finalised, for the works to demolish the buildings in the front of the station to form the new civic square, with a start on site anticipated for Summer 2024. This scheme will be further complemented by a planned major upgrade to Peckham Rye station, which is currently awaiting planning permission. This will deliver a fully accessible station, subject to Department for Transport (DfT) funding.

Aylesbury Plot 18

23. This council flagship scheme in Walworth, will provide new community facilities including a new library, a GP health centre including community health and early year's facilities surrounding a new public square. The new community facilities are expected to be completed by December 2023 for the library and by the end of March 2024 for the health centre.

CHILDREN'S AND ADULTS' SERVICES

24. The total value of the department capital programme for the 10 year period, 2023-24 to 2032-33 is £105.9m (£103.6m at M4).

Adult Social Care

25. The capital programme value for the period 2023-24 to 2033-34 is £29m. The main projects are; £6.6m for an essential lifecycle capital programme for the four residential care homes; £5.4m in respect of a programme of improvements to existing care settings; and £16m for the building of a new nursing home.
26. The Adult Social Care Capital Board has identified a number of priorities for 2023-24 and beyond in order to meet current and future needs of vulnerable adults in the borough. Accessibility is the key to improving the lives of those with disabilities and their carers. Projects such as contribution to the Changing Places Toilets and the insourcing of three hostels have been undertaken to deliver improved services to all, not just those with Care Act Eligible needs, and reduce on Adult Social Care.
27. The Adult Social Care service invest in the property portfolio to ensure buildings provide safe and secure environments for staff and users. A proactive strategy of replacing building assets as they reach the end of their lifecycle and investing in low carbon/sustainable technology results in reduced breakdowns, lower maintenance and operating costs and helps the council meet its low carbon commitment.
28. The capital programme also includes an estimated £0.8m to enhance the council's social care IT systems to develop business intelligence that will drive savings, enhance management information and result in improved outcomes for our service users.
29. Southwark Council owns a range of properties that are used by Adult Social Care (ASC) for residential and nursing care for older people and supported living accommodation for mental health and learning disabilities service users.
30. The lifecycle work on these properties, including four residential/nursing homes for the elderly, consists of a five year programme to 2026 to upgrade and maintain the buildings fabric and the mechanical and electrical infrastructure. The work also includes a number of projects that will make the buildings more energy efficient and help the council meet its low carbon target. These projects include LED lighting, installing air source heat pumps (ASHP), new double glazed windows and solar panels.

31. The four residential/nursing homes programmes reflect the responsibilities agreed with the new care provider Agincare who are taking over the redecoration of residents' en-suite rooms. The programme consists of various projects of life cycle works such as lifts, replacement lighting, fire alarms, window replacements and pipework. Completed projects include lifts replacement at Greenhive and Rose Court with Waterside and Bluegrove planned for 2023-24 and 2024-25. The work to replace hot and cold services pipework at Bluegrove should start in January and the feasibility study is in progress on installing an air source heat pump system.
32. The activity on the planned life cycle work on ASC supported living accommodations is ongoing. Refurbishments have now restarted in Therapia Rd, Mount Adon Park. Grosvenor Terrace has been completed apart from windows where there is a planning delay as the building is in a conservation area. Significant works to the heating and cooling system at Riverside/Cherry Garden have been put on hold due to the longer term decisions that are to be made on the future of the building.
33. The Corporate Facilities Management team are in the process of carrying out condition surveys to identify the feasibility, cost/benefit return and prioritisation of further low carbon schemes with the scope to inform a new five-year plan for the property portfolio covering 2026-2030.
34. The ASC plan includes the build of a new nursing home to provide an additional bed-based care facility to meet the demand for placements of an increasingly older-population. The revised programme cost of £16m takes account of construction inflation (20-25%) and demolition costs of £1m.

Children's Services and Southwark Schools Capital Programme

35. The Children's Services capital programme forecast for 2023-24 to 2032-33 is £76.9m (£74.6m at M4). This consists of £11.1m for the schools refurbishment programme and £15.8m for Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) capital strategy as well as certain specific projects such as £14.4m for Charter school; £15.2m for Beormund Special School; £6.1m for Riverside Primary school; and £3.8m for the development of the two children's homes.
36. The overall programme is focused on rightsizing provision, ensuring the estate remains fit for purpose. In addition to this, a key priority is to ensure there is sufficient high needs provision in the borough. Rising construction prices are affecting the capital programme by increasing demands on existing resources. Material costs are beginning to stabilise but the shortage of labour is now the

biggest concern for contractors with wage inflation outstripping the general market place.

37. There is spare capacity in the primary sector (spread unequally across the borough) because of falling rolls relating to a reduced birth rate and a change in the population demographic. Additionally, there has been a reduction in pupil numbers in the earlier secondary year groups. Opportunities are being explored for rationalisation of buildings to make the best use of existing assets to reduce running costs for school. These proposals may be subject to future capital bids. There is also pressure to increase pupil places for children with special needs - a national issue for all education authorities.
38. A key priority of the programme is to ensure that any new school buildings are fuel-efficient and in line with the council's target to become carbon neutral by 2030. To address this, all current new school buildings are designed to a BREEAM 'very good' standard as a minimum.
39. The Children and Families division has two capital projects in operation at present, these being the two planned new children's homes (5 beds in each). The first is 18 St Mary's Road where main works are ongoing. Practical completion is forecasted to occur by March 2024. The second children's home at 1 Colyton Road is at an early stage of development (RIBA Stage 3) and will open as a care home for children in 2025.

Primary School Provision

40. The Primary School refurbishment programme delivers a yearly programme of planned refurbishment works alongside emergency reactive works where necessary. Under this programme, the decarbonisation strategy for the school estate will be developed to plan for the move away from the use of fossil fuels in the heating of schools. This programme is funded from the School Condition Allocation grant and calculations are based on pupil numbers. Therefore the yearly allocation has been reducing in line with falling rolls.
41. Riverside school is being redeveloped to re-provide defective early year's classrooms, dining space and safe access into the school. Contractors have been appointed to deliver phase 1 of the scheme which includes the new classrooms and the dining hall. This contract commenced in October half term. Expected completion date for this project is Autumn 2024.

Secondary School provision

42. The Charter School East Dulwich is being expanded to address a shortfall in spaces in the local area. The project is in its second stage, which involves the demolition of the remaining buildings and construction of a new hall, renovation of the original 'Chateau' building and new play landscaping. This work also includes the additional ASC unit for 20 pupils. The original completion date for the project has been delayed due to the main works contractor withdrawing from the contract. Therefore new procurement arrangements had to be undertaken. Facilities are expected to be available to the school by Autumn 2024.

Special Education Needs provision (SEND)

43. In order to address a growth in the number of pupils with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), options are being explored to expand SEND provision in Southwark to avoid placing pupils out of borough.
44. Additional capacity for SEND provision is being sought in new projects being proposed to address the issue including works at Highshore, to accommodate an additional 40 places in a satellite site, and at SPA Camberwell to provide 24 places in a 6th form provision also in a satellite site. The council has received £9.6m ESFA High Needs Capital funding to deliver this programme of works. In addition to this, Southwark has received £3m of Department for Education funding for capital projects that support the 'Safety Valve' programme
45. Beormund School is being relocated as part of a wider redevelopment of the school area for residential use. The new site will provide a purpose built facility and will support modern teaching techniques and learning for the Beormund SEMH School. It will also increase the school capacity to 56 pupils. The tender for the main contract is in progress. The anticipated completion for the project is Winter 2024.

HOUSING GENERAL FUND

General Fund

Overview

46. The forecast spend for the Housing general fund capital programme for the ten years to 2032-33 is circa £28.6m (£28.3m at M4). Other than residual spend on Traveller Sites (£0.5m), the programme comprises Housing Renewal schemes (£28.1m). The projected spend for 2023-24 is £2.4m (£2.3m at M4)

Asset Management - Housing Renewal

47. Housing Renewal comprises a range of initiatives primarily designed to support people to remain living independently in private sector accommodation through assistance. This is through repairs, improvements and adaptations to their homes. Support is also provided to landlords and property owners to bring their empty properties back into use. This support is provided through the provision of grants and loans and is largely funded through Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) and the council's own resources. The forecast spend for 2023-24 is £2.1m.
48. Most of the service spend is for the DFG with a forecast outturn for 2023-24 of £1.9m. The remaining forecast spend for 2023-24 of £0.2m for Housing Renewal comprises funding for home repairs, small works and support for landlords.
49. In February 2022, cabinet approved £2m of additional resources specifically to enable the compulsory purchase of empty homes. The council has now put in place resources to deliver these services, including the use of a dedicated surveyor. The council continues to promote these additional services, including the offer for technical assessments for long term empty properties and the increase in the funding available to property owners. This is all detailed on the council's empty homes web page and the borough wide newsletter. However as the Compulsory Purchase Offer (CPO) process is complex and will take time to be fully effective, we envisage spending the CPO budget commencing from 2024-25.

Resident Services - Traveller Sites

50. A comprehensive programme of reconfiguration and improvement works to address health and safety and compliance issues (principally fire safety) at traveller sites has been undertaken. Further investment in sites continues. However, delays due to the pandemic have resulted in additional costs, namely prolonged temporary re-housing, storage of mobile homes and residents belongings, in addition to enhancements to the planned projects as the programme progresses. Fire Safety works at the Brideale and Burnhill sites are close to completion, with the remaining budget of £0.2m expected to be fully spent in 2023-24.
51. A variation of £0.3m was approved for Springtide by cabinet in month 4. Grant funding of 50% has been secured from the Greater London Authority (GLA). The forecast spend for 2023-24 is £0.2m, with the remaining balance expected to be spent the following year.

FINANCE

52. The total value of the finance capital programme for the ten years to 2023-24 is £11m, with a forecast spend in 2023-24 of £6.4m. A revised digital strategy will be subject to a further report to cabinet in March 2024.

Technology and Digital Services (TDS)

53. Key deliverables this year include the development of a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to improve use of data, technology transformation following the “Future Gov” review, investment in cloud optimization opportunities, continued migration away from dated windows servers and refresh of the network infrastructure. Other important projects include website and intranet replacement and consolidation of applications which together with a range of other smaller scale projects completes the focus for the year.
54. TDS supports and manages investment in the council’s IT infrastructure. This is necessary to improve the on-line experiences of residents, enabling them to find the information and guidance they require and access our services. In addition, investment in technology will enable staff to deliver improved public services across communities and help the council to become one of the best-connected and digital boroughs in London. Use of emerging technology and data helps to enhance our communities and to ensure that residents are able to connect to fast accessible broadband.
55. The investment of £5.2m forecast for 2023-24 is marginally below that forecast earlier in the year and this is largely due to a re-evaluation of the likely call on contingency built into the earlier forecast. As previously reported the current approved budget for IT investment is largely consumed and as a result Cabinet are asked to approve a new bid to support future investment requirements over the full life of this 10 year programme.
56. Looking forward, investment will concentrate on replacement of networking technology across the wider operational estate, improving workplace collaboration through upgrades to meeting spaces, a rolling programme of laptop replacement for employees with older devices, continued development of the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to improve use of data, case management and enhance transformation within Customer Services and Housing.
57. Other planned investment includes delivering a Modern Data Platform to support the Council in becoming a data led organisation, website development to

enhance channels to citizens and customer portal technology and review and completion of the data centre migration, embracing cloud computing.

58. Investment in measures to ensure there is IT security compliance remain ever present and other investment opportunities including robotic process automation to remove repetitive work from employees, intranet replacement and the integration of back office systems to improve productivity complete the main objectives of the longer term technology and digital programme.

Smart Working Programme

59. The remainder of the 'modern ways of working' programme has continued to focus on transforming how the council operates, a key element of which is facilitating the ability for employees to work in more flexible and efficient ways as supported by technology. The pandemic saw an acceleration of the programme with investment in remote working technology needed to ensure services were maintained. The remaining focus of the programme included modernising the council's telephony and audio-visual capabilities that facilitate hybrid working and is a key element to modernising working practices. While there is a residual budget, activity does start to merge with the main TDS programme and this may see permission being sought to move any remaining resource at the end of this financial year across to the main programme. With spend this year forecast at £360k, this leaves £363k.

Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN)

60. In November 2017, BT Openreach announced they would be switching off the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) in December 2025. The PSTN allows the delivery of "analogue" telecommunications services via copper lines and is being switched off to be replaced with Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) services delivered over a fibre network. Switching off the PSTN and moving to VoIP is also called the digital switchover.
61. A number of technologies are dependent on PSTN wiring and will need to be upgraded to deal with this change. For the council, this includes our lift infrastructure and SMART monitor systems. The General Fund programme budget of £4.59m is required at this stage to enable works relating to Telecare (SMART), Council offices, Schools & Nurseries and Highways and CCTV.
62. The programme goal is to manage all commercial and residential services that will be affected by the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) switch off that is due to begin between summer 2023 through to summer 2025. This will involve overseeing the migration, replacement and implementation of new technologies

to limit the effect of this decision upon the residents, services provided and officers within Southwark.

63. The Telecare (SMART) service is delivered to residents living in both Lambeth and Southwark. This means that the cost of the upgrades necessary for the service to continue will be shared proportionally across both authorities.
64. It must be noted that the national scale of responding to the decision to close down the Public Switched Telephone Network means that it is difficult to predict the profile of spend across 2023-26 as much will be dependent on availability of suitable resources and equipment that can be procured to deliver the required upgrades. Spend is therefore limited at present, £836k forecast in 2023-24, but will pick up as the outcome of procurement exercises become known and further dedicated resources are engaged.

GOVERNANCE AND ASSURANCE

Asset Management - Corporate Facilities Management (CFM)

65. The focus of CFM capital programme is split between lifecycle and compliance schemes. Lifecycle schemes focus on the maintenance of the fabric of buildings, meeting sustainability targets through upgrading heating and lighting including installation of air sourced heat pumps and LED lighting. Investment this year is expected to total £4.8m leaving £5.7m of the current programme budget for investment needs in 2024-25.
66. The continuous nature of much of what the CFM lifecycle programme delivers means that the service will continue to require capital programme resources beyond what is currently approved by cabinet. As a result, cabinet are asked to approve a new bid for budget to meet future investment requirements.
67. A comprehensive inspection and assessment regime drives investment through the compliance programme that enables the council to meet its statutory responsibilities for ensuring its operational buildings are compliant with health and safety regulations and ensure the wellbeing of its employees and service users. Spend this year is forecast at £0.35m, which together with the lifecycle programme investment enhances the life of the operational estate and maintains asset value.

	Total Other		774,732	6,536,891	1,447,802	132,462	-	-	-	8,117,154
	Financing									
	Major Repairs Reserve & Revenue Contributions		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Non RTB receipts		2,794,870	1,220,000	-	-	-	-	-	4,014,870
	RTB receipts		928,455	-	-	-	-	-	-	928,455
	Grants & external contributions		2,445,090	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,445,090
	S106 receipts		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Borrowing		368,476	227,802	132,462	-	-	-	-	728,739
	Total financing		6,536,891	1,447,802	132,462	-	-	-	-	8,117,154
	Total Housing Investment Programme		161,050,266	359,938,912	262,874,706	181,644,586	163,611,789	201,145,562	573,697,974	1,742,913,529
Financing	Major Repairs Reserve & Revenue Contributions	-	60,000,000	60,000,000	60,000,000	60,000,000	60,000,000	60,000,000	272,272,365	572,272,365
	Non RTB receipts	-	31,469,984	17,210,980	1,966,000	5,000,000	4,000,000	4,000,000	-	59,646,964
	RTB receipts	-	2,371,536	1,912,825	3,472,439	2,407,528	1,241,055	-	-	11,405,384
	Grants & external contributions	-	19,074,729	8,565,845	10,545,522	27,990,725	13,267,002	36,539,702	36,539,702	115,983,526
	S106 receipts	-	26,352,311	10,467,135	9,672,730	10,000,000	10,000,000	44,173,849	44,173,849	110,666,025
	Borrowing	-	220,670,352	164,717,920	95,987,895	58,213,536	112,637,505	220,712,058	220,712,058	872,939,266
	Total financing	-	359,938,912	262,874,706	181,644,586	163,611,789	201,145,562	573,697,974	573,697,974	1,742,913,529

Appendix D - Budget Virements and Variations 2023-24 M8 Monitor

Project Name	Project Code	Children's	Adult Social Care	Children's and Adults' Services	Southwark Schools for the Future	Finance and Corporate Services	Environment, Neighbourhoods & Growth	Housing	General Fund Programme Total	Housing Investment Programme	Total Programmed Expenditure
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
CURRENT PROGRAMME AT MONTH 8 2023/24											
		74,592,295	28,981,550	103,573,845	2,228,820	29,880,391	217,971,371	28,571,148	382,225,575	944,279,232	1,326,504,808
M8 VIREMENTS TO BE APPROVED											
Children's Services											
Riverside Primary School	E-1137-0320	600,000		600,000					600,000		600,000
School Retention	School Retention	(600,000)		(600,000)					(600,000)		(600,000)
Environment, Neighbourhoods & Growth											
Leisure Retrofit	L-6200-0090.20						95,877		95,877		95,877
Peckham ward	L-2403-2015						61,494		61,494		61,494
Peckham CGS	L-2403-1600						(61,494)		(61,494)		(61,494)
Kentish Drover Ceram	R-4020-0067						100,000		100,000		100,000
Old Kent Road Green Fringes	R-1230-0160.08						(100,000)		(100,000)		(100,000)
Climate Emergency	L-6200-0090						(95,877)		(95,877)		(95,877)
Housing											
Empty Homes Grants	G-7791-0020							(4,049,683)	(4,049,683)		(4,049,683)
Empty Homes Loans	G-7791-0030							4,049,683	4,049,683		4,049,683
HRA											
Sceaux Gardens New Homes	H-8888-9495.01									12,160,973	12,160,973
Sceaux Gardens Phase 2 & Loss & Disturbance claims	H-8888-9495.03									(12,160,973)	(12,160,973)
Ledbury Towers-Approved Phase 1	Ledph1									(19,916,122)	(19,916,122)
Ledbury Towers-Approved Phase 2	Ledph2									19,916,122	19,916,122
TOTAL VIREMENTS TO BE APPROVED AT M8		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
M8 - VARIATIONS TO BE APPROVED											
Children's Services											
18 St Mary's Road Children's Home	S-9999-0001	147,978		147,978					147,978		147,978
Adults											
Environment, Neighbourhoods & Growth											
Wyndham Road Area LTN	L-2023-0040.06						(267,000)		(267,000)		(267,000)
Evelina Road Accessibility Improvements	L-2023-0040.08						267,000		267,000		267,000
Borough Road	L-2023-0080.09						50,000		50,000		50,000
CIL 2021- Highways	L-7000-2021.02						140,000		140,000		140,000
CIL 2021- Parks	L-7000-2021.03						623,000		623,000		623,000
Adventure Playground	L-2340-0423						80,208		80,208		80,208
Flood Prevention Programme	L-5110-0080						30,000		30,000		30,000
Flood Prevention Programme	L-5110-0080						135,000		135,000		135,000
Public Art Projects	L-1340-0006						10,000		10,000		10,000
Additional Replacement Tree Planting	L-2340-0390						68,311		68,311		68,311
Additional Replacement Tree Planting	L-6200-0060						66,336		66,336		66,336
Livesey Exchange	R-4020-0063.01						370,747		370,747		370,747
Housing											

Project Name	Project Code	Children's	Adult Social Care	Children's and Adults' Services	Southwark Schools for the Future	Finance and Corporate Services	Environment, Neighbourhoods & Growth	Housing	General Fund Programme Total	Housing Investment Programme	Total Programmed Expenditure
HRA											
Aylesbury FDS Pk A New Build	H-8888-9300									3,118,496	-
Slippers Place Estate	H-8888-9605									1,674,694	3,118,496
66 Linden Grove	H-8888-9607.01									2,632,574	1,674,694
Albion New Homes	R-5014-0000.3									2,418,592	2,632,574
Haddonfield Estate	H-8888-9463									442,635	2,418,592
											442,635
											-
											-
											-
											-
											-
											-
											-
TOTAL VARIATIONS TO BE APPROVED AT M8		147,978	-	147,978	-	-	1,573,602	-	1,721,580	10,286,991	12,008,571
TOTAL PROGRAMME BUDGET VIREMENTS & VARIATIONS AT M8 2023/24		147,978	-	147,978	-	-	1,573,602	-	1,721,580	10,286,991	12,008,571
REVISED BUDGETS		74,740,273	28,981,550	103,721,823	2,228,820	29,880,391	219,544,973	28,571,148	383,947,156	954,566,223	1,338,513,379
VIREMENTS & VARIATIONS REQUESTED TO BE APPROVED FINANCED BY:											
Corporate Resources / Capital Receipt		(197,655)	-	(197,655)	-	-	-	-	(197,655)	-	(197,655)
Major Repairs Allowance		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Reserves		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Revenue		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Grant		345,633	-	345,633	-	-	595,747	-	941,380	-	941,380
Section 106 and CIL		-	-	-	-	-	977,855	-	977,855	-	977,855
External Contribution		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Supported Borrowing		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10,286,991	10,286,991
TOTAL RESOURCES		147,978	-	147,978	-	-	1,573,602	-	1,721,580	10,286,991	12,008,571

Appendix E

Division	Programme	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33+	Total	
TDS	Laptop Refresh (1/4 stock annually)	500,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	18,500,000	
	Digital Strategy	-	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	18,000,000	
CFM	Capital Lifecycle (incl. Tooley Street)	-	4,000,000	4,000,000	4,000,000	4,000,000	4,000,000	4,000,000	4,000,000	4,000,000	4,000,000	36,000,000	
	PPM Compliance	-	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	9,000,000	
Leisure	South Dock Marina Boatyard Improvements		2,750,000	300,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,050,000	
	South Dock Marina Crane		400,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	400,000	
	Greenland Dock		1,300,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,300,000	
	New Burial provision	50,000	450,000	2,500,000	1,000,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,000,000	
	GM Contract Chattels Replacement		750,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	750,000	
	Canada Water Leisure Centre	-	1,800,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,800,000	
	Leisure Insourcing - Full refurb of all gym		1,600,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,600,000	
	Leisure centre remedial and improvement works		3,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	1,000,000	-	-	-	-	-	8,000,000	
	Decarbonisation of Leisure Centres		600,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	600,000
	Leisure Insourcing - Digital Transformation		500,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	500,000
	Camberwell Roof Lantern		500,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	500,000
Environment	Closure of Stoney Street to vehicular traffic		900,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	900,000	
	Street Lighting - Central Management System		700,000	700,000	700,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,100,000	
	East Street Market improvements		100,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	100,000	
	Highways- Principal Road programmes		1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,000,000	
	Cox's Walk bridge refurbishment		800,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	800,000	
Planning & Growth	5 year rolling programme (including London Bridge portfolio, Sojourners Truth Ctr, Tower Workshops and other new acquisitions)		5,200,000	1,200,000	1,200,000	1,200,000	1,200,000	-	-	-	-	10,000,000	
Total		550,000	31,350,000	16,700,000	14,900,000	11,200,000	10,200,000	9,000,000	9,000,000	9,000,000	9,000,000	120,900,000	

APPENDIX F GENERAL FUND CAPITAL BIDS NARRATIVE

Technology Digital Services (TDS) (£36.5m)

1. The TDS new bid to support future investment requirements over the full life of this 10 year programme. Key deliverables this year include the development of a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to improve use of data, technology transformation following the “Future Gov” review and completion of the data centre migration and refresh of the network infrastructure.

2. Other projects over the full 10 year programme include:
 - Replacement of networking technology such as switches, wi-fi access points, and cabling for all satellite sites since the successful update of Tooley Street.
 - Upgrades of meeting room technology to match Tooley Street in all other locations.
 - Laptop replacement rolling programme for employees which have an older device.
 - Continued development of the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to improve use of data, case management and enhance transformation within Customer Services and Housing.
 - Continuing the investment in the Modern Data Platform to become a data led organisation.
 - Website development to enhance channels to citizens and customer portal technology.
 - IT security compliance.
 - Robotic process automation, to remove repetitive work from employees following the proof of concept with Exchequer services.
 - Intranet replacement programme, integrating with back office systems to enhance productivity.
 - Establishing a Digital programme to increase efficiency and customer experience.

Corporate Facilities Management (CFM) (£45m)

3. The CFM programme enables the council to meet its statutory responsibilities for ensuring its operational buildings are compliant with health and safety regulations and ensure the wellbeing of its employees and service users. Delivery is through a comprehensive inspection and assessment regime and building a lifecycle maintenance programme designed to enhance their life and maintain asset value. The continuous lifecycle nature of much of what CFM deliver means that the service will continue to need to draw on capital programme resources. As a result council assembly are asked to approve a new 10 year bid of £5m per annum to 2032-33.

Environment Directorate

Closure of Stoney Street to vehicular traffic (£0.9m)

4. In response to the terrorist attack at London Bridge in 2017, measures were put in place to improve the security at Stoney Street which included the installation of concrete blocks at either end of the street. Advice from counter terrorism security advisers is that the measures should be replaced with PAS68 (publicly available specification used for impact testing and rating hostile vehicle mitigation products) rated barriers. It is proposed to install fixed barriers as this will remove all risk from the use of vehicles as weapons. This capital funding is needed to supply and install the security rated barriers.

Street Lighting - Central Management System (£2.1m)

5. This is an invest-to-save proposal for the introduction of a Central Management System (CMS) for Street Lighting. Works include installation of a 'mesh' of nodes and controls for each of the 17,000 street lights on the public highway. The CMS will give us the ability to reduce our energy consumption and carbon emissions across the borough. The system will also give us a live status of street lights, ensuring we maintain a well-lit and safe network for our residents and users. The system will build on the good work already being undertaken on our Capital LED renewal Programme.

East Street market infrastructure improvements (£0.1m)

6. A key council plan target is to encourage the expansion of street markets across Southwark, East Street market being a flagship market. This capital funding is required to fund much needed investment in infrastructure in the market. This will encourage an increase in footfall and as a result will attract new traders to trade in the market thus improving the customer experience through a greater number and variety of market stalls.

Highways- Principal Road programmes (£3m)

7. Last year's independent surveys of the Principal Roads (PRs) in Southwark demonstrated a deterioration in road condition. The percentage of PRs in perfect or good condition is just over half, at 53%. The percentage of PRs in poor or defective condition is almost a quarter at 24% (18% and 6% respectively). Southwark used to benefit from approximately £600k each year from TfL to maintain the strategic PRs in Southwark. However, due to TfL's financial difficulties, there has been no funding provided for the last four years. It should be noted that over a fifth of our PRs are in a deteriorating amber condition (20%).

Whilst not yet defective, trafficking and winter weather accelerates the deterioration and almost half of our Principal Road network will be red. The capital growth bid of £3m spread over 3 years from 2024-25 will help arrest the rate of deterioration, improve the condition of our PR network and thereby minimise the percentage of roads classified as 'defective' and 'poor'.

8. The principal road network forms the main roads in the borough that carry the most traffic. While the council is working hard to reduce traffic in the borough, the principal roads need to be kept in good order as these will always form the essential routes that keep the borough moving. Many of our essential bus routes run on these roads and good maintenance is vital for the safety and comfort of bus passengers. They also enable deliveries to our businesses and essential routes for the emergency services. Patching individual potholes is a short term solution that will always need to be redone after a little time, with this money, the council will be able to carry out investment in the network that will secure a long-term solution to potholes, instead of being on the back-foot with short-term and unsightly patches. Roads blighted by potholes are the number one concern for drivers often resulting in expensive vehicle repairs and also a major concern for cyclists, bikers and pedestrians.

Cox's Walk bridge refurbishment (£0.8m)

9. Cox's Walk footbridge is a heritage structure built around 1865 and forms part of the Green Chain Walk and is an adopted highway. It was closed in 2019 on Health and Safety grounds as it was deemed to be unsafe. Cox's Walk footpath and the bridge form part of the Green Chain Walk and is an adopted highway. Consequently, we have a legal duty to keep the footbridge open and safe for public use (Section 41 Highways Act 1980).
10. The proposal to repair the bridge has been an evolving task that has taken into account all the stakeholders feedback and numerous challenges to ensure the bridge can be repaired whilst maintaining two large (mature) oak trees at the west end. Following careful consideration of a number of options, the selected option would retain the trees but at significantly higher cost than originally envisaged.
11. A design has been produced that ensures the trees are kept and that the bridge can be rebuilt and reopened for public use. The original proposals in 2018 would have cost £400k. However, since this date, there has been a redesign to ensure the maintenance of the trees and material costs have seen large increases due to high levels of current inflation.
12. The current capital budget is insufficient to cover the estimated costs of £1.2m for the reconstruction of the ramp and bridge repairs (an access ramp has to be implemented in Sydenham Wood to allow the plant to access the bridge for the

works. The construction and location of the ramp has to sustain heavy loading and vehicle movements to access the works area under the bridge). A successful £0.8m capital bid will allow full repairs and reopening of the bridge to the public in March 2024. The works will resolve all the safety issues, retain the historic nature of the bridge. This will be accompanied by a replanting programme in conjunction with the London Wildlife Trust.

Leisure Directorate

13. Since the transfer of leisure services back into the council in June 2023, the Council has been developing plans for substantial investment in its leisure estate, to improve the quality of residents' experience, maximise visits and improve physical and mental well-being, improve the impact on the climate, and reduce ongoing revenue pressures, particularly relating to energy consumption. The key leisure capital schemes are focused on improving the fabric, decoration and access to the centres. In addition, the programme will include new fitness equipment and full gym refurbishment, and various improvement works to reduce carbon emissions at the leisure centres. The overall programme, which requires a total of £13 million capital funding investment, supports the borough's leisure, health and well-being, and climate commitments.

Canada Water Leisure Centre (£1.8m)

14. Practical completion of the Canada Water is due for handover to the council in October 2024. A project board has now been established to develop and deliver the plans to fit out the new facility to meet all operational requirements. Work has been completed to identify all requirements to meet the fit-out of the building to the required standard which is estimated to be £1.6m.

15. In addition to this cost, the project will require professional support to ensure that all the building requirements have been tested, compliant and support procurement of the appropriate purchase contracts. The capital bid of £1.8m is expected to meet all planning, purchase and delivery requirements to enable the building to start trading in 2025. To ensure effective delivery, this work needs to start as soon as practical and secure the appropriate funding to enter supply contracts. The project will be a fantastic advert for the borough to demonstrate high quality investment in the future of communities' health and wellbeing.

Leisure Insourcing - Full refurbishment of all gyms (£1.6m)

16. The primary source of revenue for leisure centres is dependent on the quality of fitness facilities provided. This attracts members and supports the provision of other services. This is an extremely competitive market, which is led by consumer trends and expectations. The public gyms, with the exception of Southwark Park

Athletic and Fitness Centre, last had investment in 2016, at the start of the previous operators contract. A substantial volume of users and wear and tear on facilities have created the need to invest in gyms across the Borough to ensure the service remains competitive and meets community needs. This capital investment will demonstrate commitment to improving fitness and health facilities across the borough and creating the potential to improve community health outcomes.

Leisure centre remedial and improvement works (£8m)

17. During mobilisation of services in preparation for the transfer of the leisure facilities back to council management and operation, the Contract Facilities Management team, commissioned an in depth structural, plant and machinery survey of all assets contained within the transferring leisure centres. The brief included preparation of a five year life cycle cost plan that would ensure the leisure centres would be sustainable and provide a high standard of user experience. The report identified works which required immediate attention in the next twelve months, which is covered by the existing capital programme and a further plan for the remaining four years.

18. The capital bid is for the total cost of delivering this four year plan. The council has taken a bold step towards helping communities improve their health and well-being by in-sourcing the leisure services. This can only be achieved if the buildings for delivery of health and wellbeing services are of a sufficient and good quality for users to enjoy a positive experience. Delivery of this planned programme of capital works will ensure a high quality experience for users and enhance the council's reputation for provision of high quality public leisure facilities.

Decarbonisation of Leisure Centres (£0.6m)

19. The council has set high targets for the reductions in carbon emissions for public building by 2025. Leisure centres represent a significant part of the councils total output for public buildings and the biggest opportunity to make a significant difference.

20. In November 2022 a bid for the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme met all the technical requirements to support a £4.5m application for funding. The bid was not successful due to a high demand for funding and a first come serve approach for bids. A new funding stream will be available from 7 November 2023 and a repeated application for funding is being prepared. If the bid is successful, it will require a council contribution of £0.6m towards the total project costs of £5.1m to provide air source heat pumps and solar energy conservation and

decarbonisation across four leisure facilities. This investment is estimated to achieve a 556 tonnes CO₂e reduction in carbon emissions.

Leisure Insourcing - Digital Transformation (£0.5m)

21. During mobilisation of services, in preparation for the transfer of the leisure facilities back to council management and operation, a number of digital projects were identified. These projects included CCTV, audio visual equipment, provision of a booking and payment system, membership and sales software, quality management system software and contingency broadband connections. The capital programme provision of £0.5m will enable these projects to be capitalised.

Camberwell Roof Lantern (£0.5m)

22. Camberwell leisure centre is currently at significant risk of flooding due to defective roof window units. A project has been developed to replace the defective window units and create a watertight roof provision at the centre. A full investigation by the council's facilities management team identified the cause of the flooding and identified the solution. This project is seeking inclusion in the council's capital programme to enable the work to be completed and secure the future of Camberwell leisure centre and provide a quality environment for users to continue using the facility.

South Dock Marina (SDM) Boatyard Improvements (£3.05m)

23. Further investment is required to make up a budget shortfall in the SDM essential health and safety works. Additional funds are needed to facilitate container removal and to deliver a full scheme that includes ground and first floor work units to accommodate the current level of boatyard businesses.

South Dock Marina Crane (£0.4m)

24. Further investment is required to make up a budget shortfall in the project to purchase and install a new crane and boat lifting equipment for the South Dock Marina Boatyard.

Greenland Dock (£1.3m)

25. Investment is required to address failing electrical infrastructure and pontoon platforms. The budget will deliver design and installation of new electricity substation, cabling and pontoons.

New Burial Provision (£4m)

26. To undertake a scoping exercise for future burial, develop design proposals and deliver construction works to prepare cemetery areas for new burial. Investment will also be used to support implementation of 'Cemetery Conservation Management Plans'. The estimated time frame for project completion is 3 years. The initial phase includes scoping exercise to establish site constraints and opportunities Design proposals for areas within the borough's cemeteries (protected burial land and designated public open space) will be scoped for potential return to burial use. The proposals will give careful consideration to the cemetery landscapes as attractive public open spaces in their own right as against just being burial grounds. The proposals will be developed in consultation with stakeholders, particularly local people who are key to the development and management of the cemetery and ultimately, the successful implementation of the 'Cemetery Conservation Management Plans'. Any approved proposals will be brought forward to implementation in subsequent years.

Grounds Maintenance (GM) Contract Plant and Equipment Replacement (£0.75m)

27. To repair and replace plant and machinery for the duration of the Grounds Maintenance contract extension (Oct 2023-Sep 2026) to cover the expiry of the equipment leases, at the end of the initial contract term. This includes funding new lease agreements on approximately 14 vehicles, plus the purchase of mowers, sweepers and other grounds maintenance equipment.

Planning and Growth Directorate*5 year rolling programme – (£10m)*

28. The commercial estate provides an important income stream to the council. However from time to time investment is required to ensure the minimisation of voids, the maximum rents can be charged and new legislation met. The majority of the funding is required for the full refurbishment of vacant commercial property (including London Bridge portfolio, Sojourners Truth Centre, Tower Workshops and other new acquisitions) high quality office in a prime central London location with the potential to generate significant income for which additional savings have been assumed in the recent budget challenge sessions. Works to the wider estate will also include environmental works not only to meet legislation but to also contribute towards the council's net zero target. The investment is expected to deliver £1.1m over the next 3 years as a minimum, and this has been built into

the 24/25 Budgets (subject to Cabinet approval). The council's aim is to bring more properties back into use, thereby increasing its potential to generate income in the medium to long term.

29. The details of some of these projects can be summarised as follows;

- LB Portfolio: replace HVAC and other works to improve EPC ratings and improve vacant space for re-letting. This work will help us achieve market rents and mitigate void periods
- Sojourner: this is to complete the repair and refurbishment programme to the building, protecting the GII asset and also bringing vacant space up to lettable condition
- Tower Workshops: the common parts toilets need full replacement. Some other areas of the common parts also require upgrading to include lighting. This work will help secure new lettings and lease renewals at market rents.
- 22 Shand Street. Acquired as an income generating / investment asset forming part of a wider land holding creating significant strategic and development potential. Income potential £950k p.a. subject to the completion of a full refurbishment of the property

Item No. 13.	Classification: Open	Date: 17 January 2024	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Policy and Resources Strategy: Revenue Monitoring Report, 2023-24	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Cabinet Member:		Councillor Stephanie Cryan – Cabinet Member for Communities, Democracy and Finance	

FOREWORD – COUNCILLOR STEPHANIE CRYAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES, DEMOCRACY AND FINANCE

This report sets out the current forecast position for the general fund, housing revenue account and dedicated schools grant for the 2023-24 financial year.

As set out in September, the council is experiencing demand and inflationary pressures in temporary accommodation, the costs of those with ‘No Recourse to Public Funds’ and home to school transport. These pressures are not unique to Southwark and have been acknowledged, by central government as having an adverse financial impact on local councils. Similarly, the projected overspend in the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) from demand and cost pressures has reduced and is on target to meet the planned targets set out in the Safety Valve agreement

It is reassuring that the mitigations put in place to contain these pressures have started to have a positive impact and this report shows a small improvement in the overall picture at month 8. Our General Fund continues to be robust and the mitigations we have put in place should continue to reduce the current in year overspend.

The housing revenue account was forecasting a projected overspend at month 4 due to the impact of the rent capping policy (rent increases below inflation) and the 1% annual rent reduction from 2016 and 2020 as part of the Welfare Reform Act. This is coupled with above inflation running costs, rising interest rates and energy costs. The impact of these, is again, common across all councils responsible for social housing, but more pronounced for Southwark given it has the largest council housing stock in London. This report notes the worsening position at month 8 but details the collective council response to this situation, assessing short term and long term measures to ensure the housing revenue account remains financially sustainable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That cabinet note;

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).
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 cabinet approves;

7. The interdepartmental budget movements that exceed £250k, as shown in Appendix A (noting those under this threshold);
8. The approach proposed in principle in paragraph 20 - 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.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

9. This report sets out the forecast position at month 8 for the General Fund (GF), Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for the 2023-24 financial year.
10. The short-term macro-economic environment remains challenging. CPI inflation has reduced from 6.7% in September, to 4.6% in October and 3.9% in November but still remains well above the government's target of 2%. The Bank of England base rate is at 5.25%. Meanwhile, a significant proportion of council contracts will have been indexed on CPI rates and inflation on repairs and construction materials and contracts has been well publicised as running well above CPI. The Autumn Statement in November 2023 made it clear that local government would not be compensated for the higher than expected inflationary costs of providing services in 2023-24.
11. Interest rate increases to 5.25% have significantly increased the cost of council borrowing. The cost of borrowing continues to pose a material risk to the sustainability of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and mitigation activity is underway to lessen that impact as far as feasible.
12. The 2023-24 position at month 4 was reported to October cabinet. This report updates this position, with a revised forecast outturn. The report also considers the mitigating actions that have taken place, and their impact to date (Appendix B)

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

General Fund

13. The outturn projections in this monitoring report remain subject to some uncertainty. The forecast outturn position for the general fund is an adverse variance of £3.4m, (at month 4, this was £3.5m) after the utilisation of reserves, as set out in Table 1. The table shows the projected departmental budget outturn variances together with the estimated utilisation of reserves as at the end of 2023-24.

Table 1: 2023-24 General Fund Forecast Month 8

General Fund	Budget	Forecast	Reserve Movement	Total use of Resources	Variance after use of reserves
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Children & Families	62,612	62,487	(99)	62,388	(224)
Adult Social Care	78,294	77,968	-	77,968	(326)
Commissioning & Central	6,059	6,035	(97)	5,938	(121)
Education	20,678	24,328	(1,633)	22,695	2,017
Public Health	-	-	-	-	-
Children & Adults total (excl. DSG)	167,643	170,818	(1,829)	168,989	1,346
Environment, Neighbourhoods and Growth	93,583	85,438	9,435	94,873	1,290
Housing	25,475	29,026	(333)	28,693	3,218
Finance	40,058	44,058	(3,000)	41,058	1,000
Governance and Assurance	22,395	23,578	(565)	23,013	618
Strategy and Communities	7,602	7,999	(505)	7,494	(108)
Support Cost Reallocations	(42,423)	(42,423)	-	(42,423)	-
Contribution from Reserves	(2,500)	(2,500)	-	(2,500)	-
General Fund Service Outturn Forecast	311,833	315,994	3,203	319,198	7,364
General Contingency	4,000	-	-	-	(4,000)
Outturn	315,833	315,994	3,203	319,198	3,364

14. The month 4 revenue monitor, projected an adverse variance of £3.5m against the 2023-24 budget, with the projected overspend largely attributed to the following key variances:
- Higher demand and cost pressures in home to school transport;
 - £1.3m increased costs for those who have 'No Recourse to Public Funds' (NRPF)
 - Temporary accommodation (TA) demand pressures which will not be fully contained within the planned TA contingency.
15. The month 8 projections show a mixed picture. Some areas have reduced their expected adverse variances, showing a positive impact from the mitigations that were put in place after month 4, such as home to school transport. In other areas, where there continues to be underlying demand-led pressures such as temporary accommodation and those who have 'no recourse to public funds', a worsening position has been reported. Chief Officers hold ultimate responsibility for budget overspends and have pursued mitigations to minimise the impact of areas forecasting demand-led and inflationary pressures. Appendix B details the mitigating actions that were presented at month 4, with an update for month 8.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

16. The council manages its housing stock through its ring-fenced landlord account, the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), which shows an adverse variance of £16.8m at this point (Table 2). This position is the result of a number of factors largely outside the council's control, such as government policy and macro-economic events which include:
- The cumulative effect of a government imposed 1% rent reduction for four years for the period 2016-17 to 2019-20, running into hundreds of millions in income foregone
 - A government imposed 7% cap on rents from 1st April 2023 when formula rent would have yielded 11.1%, an annual loss of £9m+ in the current year and a reduced income base going forward
 - Unfunded additional burdens arising from the Fire Safety and Building Safety Acts of 2020 and 2021
 - Unprecedented construction industry inflationary pressure
 - The additional borrowing requirement for the new homes programme and the impact of a three-fold increase in interest rates since December 2021, which has substantially increased the revenue impact of financing costs in the HRA.

HRA - Mitigating Actions

17. To address the situation the council are collectively assessing options to manage the short term pressure by reducing in-year spending and actions are underway to moderate the impact of this through, for example, the repairs improvement programme, an end to end review of void properties and the refresh of the asset management strategy. Additionally, the scheme of management is currently under review and robust spending controls are being implemented. It is also a council strategic priority to consider how the HRA can be managed in the longer term to ensure financial sustainability, including:
- Reviewing service expenditure and preparing sustainable and affordable budgets and taking management action to contain expenditure within approved cash limits
 - Improving procurement practices and embed more robust contract management to maximise outcomes and achieve value for money
 - Agreeing a plan to increase the level of HRA reserves to a more prudent level over the medium term

- Continuing to lobby central government, via DLUHC and the Treasury, for appropriate funding for social housing
 - Limiting and ultimately repaying any borrowing for the Asset Management capital programme
 - Maximising capital receipts through sales of uneconomic assets and land in order to reduce the borrowing burden on the HRA
 - Applying prudent viability criteria to all new build projects to minimise the need for borrowing
 - Pausing a small number of new build schemes in order to limit the council's borrowing and ensure that interest repayments remain affordable
 - Taking all necessary steps to limit the impact of capital financing on the HRA to an affordable level, taking into account all other service demands and priorities.
18. It should be noted that the pressures on the HRA are not unique to Southwark. The impact of the rent capping policy and rent increases below inflation, coupled with above inflation running costs, rising interest rates and energy costs are impacting on all councils responsible for social housing. But the impact is more pronounced for Southwark given it has the largest social housing stock in London and is the fourth largest social landlord in the country.
19. Consideration will need to be given as to how any deficit (after the council's actions to reduce in year spending) will be covered at year-end. The HRA has limited reserves available and will consider using a prudent share of these, together with assessing the scale of reduction required in the revenue contribution to the housing investment programme, in order to bring the account into balance at year-end. In order to maintain reserves at a prudent level, it is highly likely that the council will have to borrow in order to fund elements of its asset management programme for 2023-24. This is an approach that has been avoided previously as it adds additional pressure to the revenue account (through the interest payments on the borrowing) and it reduces the borrowing headroom available for the New Build programme.

Table 2: 2023-24 Housing Revenue Account Forecast Month 8

Category	Budget	Forecast	Variance	Change since M4
Expenditure	£000	£000	£000	£000
Resident Services (Housing Management)	59,637	70,343	10,706	5,032
Asset Management (Repairs & Maintenance)	69,629	81,950	12,321	4,062
New Homes	670	1,165	495	179
Customer Services	5,272	6,982	1,710	1,227
Directorate	1,902	1,720	(182)	(147)
Total Tenant Facing Services	137,110	162,160	25,050	10,353
Capital, Financing and Support Services	157,128	147,560	(9,568)	(11,678)
Tenant and Homeowner Charges	(294,238)	(292,964)	1,274	4,270
Housing Revenue Account Forecast Outturn	0	16,756	16,756	2,945

2023-24 Tenant Facing Services

20. For 2023-24, additional budget provision of £11.4m was made across tenant facing services. However, costs continue to outstrip the available resources, leading to the forecast overspend position shown above.
21. For Resident Services, the forecast has worsened to £10.7m, notwithstanding a budget uplift of £4.4m for 2023-24. The main pressure areas comprise a higher volume and unit cost of estate voids, together with increases in the estate cleaning and grounds maintenance contract costs provided through the Environment, Neighbourhoods and Growth (ENG) department. This is predominantly driven by the 2023-24 pay award (which was higher than previously estimated). Other contributory factors are energy costs for estate lighting, council tax losses on long term voids and planned maintenance works on Tenant Resident Association (TRA) Halls.
22. Similarly for Asset Management, the forecast has increased to £12.3m, despite a budget increase of £6.4m this year. The main cost pressures continue to be on repairs and maintenance to the housing stock, particularly communal works, disrepair, voids and damp and mould.

23. Within the New Homes division, the nature of the work is predominantly project specific, therefore a high proportion of costs are capitalised. This year has seen a peak in delivery terms with consequent cost pressure and the forecast overspend has been revised to £0.5m to reflect this. However, as the programme slows and re-phasing takes place due to the current economic climate, it is anticipated that costs will start to reduce next year, which may impact on the level of capitalisation that can be charged and may give rise to abortive feasibility costs being charged to revenue.
24. Customer Services has a relatively small revenue budget by comparison to others within the HRA (£5.3m), which covers a significant proportion of the costs of the contact centre, customer complaints and other housing specific services. Given extremely high call volumes and housing related activity the forecast has been revised to £1.7m. This comprises the 2023-24 pay award, superannuation and additional resources that have been put in place to address severe capacity shortfalls, predominantly related to the repairs service and in anticipation of further call growth over the winter period.

Capital, Financing and Support Services

25. Budget forecasts in these areas have also been closely scrutinised and revised where appropriate. The discretionary contribution to meet capital expenditure has been reduced to reflect the reduction in major works billing referred to below (£7.6m). Whilst this has the immediate impact of reducing the overspend, the corollary is that it will likely require additional borrowing to meet the capital programme funding gap (unless other capital resources become available), resulting in higher interest costs going forward. However, on a positive note a review of the debt funding profile allows the forecast for interest to be revised downwards by around £4m this year based on the latest capital programme estimates. This includes the impact of pausing a small number of new build schemes which the council would otherwise have had to borrow for. Other changes, including additional energy costs for the heat network, mean the revised forecast is £9.6m overall.

Tenant and Homeowner Charges

26. Tenant rents and service charge income has been revised downwards in light of trend analysis over the first eight months of the year (£1.4m). This is a consequence of a higher volume of voids coming through and longer turn-round times in excess of the original budgeted estimates. It also reflects a spike in the number of new homes coming on stream which has created a temporary bottleneck which is being urgently addressed.
27. Homeowner revenue service charge billing is forecast to be higher than planned due to the costs for energy and buildings insurance (£8.2m), both of which have increased substantially this year. In contrast, the major works billing will be markedly lower than budget by £8m (previously

forecast at £5.2m), having been revised downwards following an in-depth mid-year programme review. Other changes in fee income and operational running costs account for the movement between forecasts.

GENERAL FUND DEPARTMENTAL NARRATIVES

28. The departmental narratives for month 8 2023-24 are as follows:

- Housing General Fund (Table 1 and paragraphs 29-33)
- Children and Adults Services (Table 1 and paragraphs 34-48)
- Environment, Neighbourhoods and Leisure (Table 1 and paragraphs 49-59)
- Finance (Table 1 and paragraph 60)
- Governance and Assurance (Table 1 and paragraph 61)
- Strategy and Communities (Table 1 and paragraph 62-65).

HOUSING – GENERAL FUND

Overview

29. The outturn forecast for 2023-24 shows an unfavourable variance of £3.55m (gross) and £3.22m net of reserves. This is primarily caused by the continuing budget pressure in homelessness, offset by positive variations elsewhere across the department.

Asset Management - Private Sector Building Safety

30. The Private Sector Building Programme was established during 2021 to undertake inspections and enforcement on high rise residential blocks with specific focus on Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding. Subsequently, the scope of the programme has increased beyond cladding due to more onerous building safety requirements. Funding is through a combination of base budget and grant (£0.366m) from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). This will enable the service to meet programme commitments this year and augment reserves (£0.227m) for future years' requirements, without the need for any additional base budget commitment.

Resident Services – Travellers, Hostel Accommodation and Support

31. In April 2023, the council in-sourced three hostels previously run by external providers, with the Resident Services division assuming day to day running and management responsibility for service provision. It is anticipated that the rent and service charges will cover the operational costs, with the caveat that void loss is kept within budget range.

Resident Services - Temporary Accommodation and Housing Solutions

32. The numbers of homeless approaches and acceptances had remained relatively stable until September, but have been rising steadily since then. Supply-side availability and increased charge rates account for the increase in this forecast to £3.34m (net of reserves of £0.56m), as providers exit the private rental market in response to rising interest rates impacting their financial returns. There is also a noticeable shift by providers to more expensive nightly-paid agreements, over which the council has little control if it wishes to retain supply. The mitigations in place are detailed in appendix B.
33. No effective controls exist to regulate rents in the private sector and with restrictions placed on Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates for council supply, this will inevitably increase demand for local authority provision, which is also impacted by Home Office asylum cases. However, as part of the Autumn Statement (22 November 2023), the Chancellor announced an uplift in private sector LHA rates, which should help increase private sector discharge rates and allow the service to focus more on prevention. Notwithstanding this, if the current trajectories for demand and cost continue as they are it is likely that the overspend on TA in 2024-25 will move into eight figures and a fundamental change in approach will be required to mitigate this.

CHILDREN'S AND ADULTS' SERVICES

Overview

34. Children's and Adults' services is forecasting an unfavourable variance of £1.3m. This is an improvement of £1.2m in comparison to the month 4 forecast. The key areas of concern is the continuous pressure on Special Education Need (SEN) services, especially SEN transport. The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is also forecasting an adverse variance of £0.4m. Management actions are in place to address the unfavourable variance. The department has reserves built up over the years to withstand some of the challenges, in a planned and purposeful way, over the short to medium term, and Directors continue to practice strict financial management across all areas.

Adult Social Care

35. Adult social care is forecasting a favourable variance of £0.3m. The service continues to experience rises in expenditure especially in nursing, homecare and supported living placements due to higher acuity of need as residents are impacted by NHS waiting lists and inflationary increases. The costs are driven by the increased complexity of client need on discharge from hospital, as well as the higher than expected inflationary increases as result of rising inflation. This is more prevalent in nursing and residential care costs, which have risen significantly over the last 18

months.

36. Adult Social Care continue to work with the NHS to ensure a comprehensive and coordinated approach to support the well-being of residents. Adult Social Care and the Integrated Care Board (ICB) have reached agreement in regards to historical complex funding arrangements for mental health placements, which provides for a sustainable way forward.
37. The All Age Disability Team continue to reduce demand for out of borough residential care placements by managing the needs of service users locally in the community.

Children's Social Care

38. Children's Social Care is forecasting a favourable variance of £0.2m. The service has experienced a number of years of improved outturn which can be attributed to purposeful early help work to better support children and families rather than the more costly statutory social care system, as well as some reduced cost pressure from staffing. While the shortage in the supply of children's social workers is still a major challenge, new recruitment and retention initiatives are improving the position.
39. The overall improved financial position, in comparison to previous years, is also the result of a well managed reduction in demand for statutory social care services, i.e. lower numbers of children in care, and this is somewhat offset by increased numbers of care leavers, higher cost placements due to inflation and higher numbers of unaccompanied asylum seeking children. The service is also working hard with commissioning and corporate colleagues to address the lack of sufficient placements through opening two children's homes in the next 12 to 18 months, and increasing the capacity of commissioned semi-independent accommodation providers within the borough through use of capital assets.

Commissioning

40. The Commissioning division is expecting a favourable variance of £0.1m. The increase in permanent staffing and reduction in the use of agency staff contribute to achieving this position.
41. The division has posts that are joint funded by the Council and Integrated Care Board (ICB) and further integration is progressing positively with the agreement to jointly recruit and fund a Place Executive Lead for Southwark.
42. The division continues to implement the Southwark Residential Care Charter and is using the Southwark Supplement to support payments for the workforce in relation to London Living Wage, Occupational Sick Pay,

and other benefits. Implementation within the borough's care home sector means that already nearly 70% of our care home workforce are benefitting from this policy.

Education

43. Education division is forecasting an unfavourable variance of £2m. Home to school transport remains the key driver for financial pressures on education general fund. This is driven by higher demand pressures as well as the high inflationary increases within the taxi and bus contracts. Implementation of the independent travel training programme, promoting direct payments and further reviews of the 16-25 transport commitments are a current priority in mitigating the pressure on the budget. This sits within a wider review of SEND and strategic work to better manage costs and demand for SEND provision. Management action will continue to address the forecast unfavourable variance (Appendix B).

Dedicated School Grant

44. The ring-fenced Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is forecasting an unfavourable outturn of £0.4m which is mainly due to pressures within the high needs service. The High Needs Block remains the main risk area for the DSG. In order to bring the service to a sustainable footing officers need to continue to pursue savings and efficiencies. In particular, through commissioning work focussed on Independent Non-Maintained Special Schools, a focus on 16-25 pathways and Alternative Provision, as well as increasing in borough provision.
45. In order to manage the accumulated DSG deficit the Council entered into a Safety Valve Agreement with the Department of Education (DfE). The DfE programme was established by Government in recognition of their historic underfunding of need. Key to this programme is the agreement to ensure a balanced position within the timeframes agreed. In exchange of this achievement the DfE will provide additional funding to eliminate the accumulated deficit. The achievement of key milestones will be challenging and will mean all aspects of service provision need to be reviewed. The division in conjunction with the High Needs sub-group of the School's Forum, HR, Finance and Commissioning developed detailed action plans. There is close oversight of this work by Strategic Directors, and political oversight by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member.

Public Health

46. Public Health will achieve a balanced position for 2023-24. The public health grant is a ring fenced grant paid to local authorities from the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC). It is used to provide preventative and early help services that help to support the health and wellbeing of our residents.

47. This includes smoking cessation, preventive cardiovascular health checks, drug and alcohol services, children's health services and sexual health services, as well as broader public health support across the council and NHS.
48. The current cost of living crisis is having wide-ranging negative impacts on mental and physical health and well-being, and public health plays a vital role in mitigating these effects. Initiatives include introducing free targeted secondary school meals, building on the successful free healthy primary school meal offer, an extensive holiday activity and food programme and outreach health promotion activities including programmes to increase HIV diagnosis and take up of cancer screening and vaccinations.

ENVIRONMENT NEIGHBOURHOODS AND GROWTH

Overview

49. The projected outturn for the Environment, Neighbourhoods and Growth (ENG) department is an adverse variance of £1.3m (after a proposed net transfer to reserves of £9.4m). This represents a favourable movement of £0.3m from month 4. Officers are exploring further opportunities to mitigate the remaining variance between now and year end.
50. The overspend is due to a significant increases in 'No Recourse to Public Funds' (NRPF) costs (£1.5m) and additional property management costs (£0.773m). These are partially offset by additional income from various services within the Environment department (£0.981m).
51. The revised budget reflects approved structure changes that resulted in 'Communities, Equality and Diversity' moving to 'Strategy and Communities' department, while the 'Local Economy' team transferred into the department.

Environment

52. The directorate is currently reporting a favourable variance of £0.981m, after transfers to reserves of £11.9m, which is income received in advance for private rented housing service licences and transfers into the ring-fenced parking places reserve account revenue (which has restrictions on spending).

Leisure

53. The directorate is currently reporting a breakeven position (after drawdowns from reserves of £2m which was reported in month 4) mainly

due to the mobilisation costs of in-sourcing leisure services. It should be noted that this service is still in transition and as a result, there are a lot of moving parts that will still have an impact on both income and expenditure (i.e. staffing recruitment, leisure activity provision/enhancements etc.) and could further impact the outturn position between now and year end. However, any leisure services in-sourcing variance will be funded from earmarked reserves, and it is currently anticipated that these are adequate to cover all known in-year cost pressures.

Stronger Neighbourhoods

54. The directorate is currently reporting an adverse variance of £1.5m mainly arising from the impact of the cost of living crisis on individuals and families subject to 'no recourse to public funds' which has increased demand for support, resulting in significant increases in client payments and accommodation costs.
55. As reported at month 4, Southwark has seen a 15% increase in the number of households supported between 2021-22 to 2022-23, together with rising costs for accommodation, utilities and care costs resulting in an over spend last year. Year to date figures suggest that this will lead to an expected overspend of about £1.5m – an increase of £0.2m from month 4. Officers are looking into options to address the current cost pressure (Appendix B).

Planning & Growth

56. The Directorate is currently reporting an adverse variance of £0.773m, an improvement of £0.2m on the month 4 position. The variance is mainly due to unbudgeted property management costs on commercial properties, and public enquiry costs of the New City Court case, these are partially offset by additional commercial property income and drawdowns from corporate reserves.

Climate Change & Sustainability

57. The Directorate is currently reporting a nil variance.

Local Economy

58. The Directorate is currently reporting a nil variance.

Planned movement in Reserves

59. The department is planning to drawdown £2.5m from reserves in 2023-24 to both cover the leisure services mobilisation costs and the public enquiry costs. A new reserve is planned for the 'private rented housing service licence' fees. Income for these licences can cover a 5 year period, so the reserve will be used for income received in advance of the issuing and monitoring of licence applications. The reserve is currently estimated at £6.1m in 2023-24. The department expects to top up the 'Streets for People' reserve by £5.8m to ensure adequate provisions are built up to deliver the council's strategy.

FINANCE

60. The Finance department is projecting an adverse variance of £1m, after an expected contribution of £3m from the Cost of Living Reserve. The main pressure is in the Customer Services department due to a significant increase in administrative burdens. The current forecast for IT remains similar to the month 4 position, with a pressure of £0.3m, which is largely due to the range and complexity of activity across the department and the need to supplement existing resources with the use of interims and agency staff.

GOVERNANCE AND ASSURANCE

61. Governance and Assurance are showing a small adverse variance of £0.6m due to difficulties in recruiting and retaining professional and specialist staff and inflationary pressures in Facilities Management.

STRATEGY AND COMMUNITIES

Overview

62. The Assistant Chief Executive – Strategy & Communities Department is currently forecasting a favourable variance of £0.1m for 2023-24. This also represents a favourable movement of £0.1m from the month 4 reported position.
63. This is mainly due to a current underspend against the department's salary budget, before recruitment for a new post, which forms part of the restructure. This is partly offset by agency staff costs. The department expects spend to be on track by the end of the year.
64. The revised budget reflects the approved structure changes that resulted in 'Communities, Equality and Diversity' moving into this department, while the 'Local Economy' team transferred into the Environment, Neighbourhoods and Growth department, as well as some other staff related budget movements.

Planned movement in Reserves

65. The department plans to drawing down £0.5m from earmarked reserves for community engagement projects, comprising of £0.4m is from the Equalities Grant Reserve, £0.075m from the Windrush reserve and £0.03m from the Black History Month reserve.

CONTINGENCY

66. The £4m contingency budget is assumed to be fully utilised to offset in-year budget pressures.

Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts

67. This report monitors expenditure on council services, compared to the planned general fund budget agreed in February 2022, and HRA budget agreed in January 2022. Although as a monitoring report, this report has been judged to have no direct impact on local people and communities, the expenditure it is reporting reflects plans designed to have an impact on local people and communities. Community impact was considered at the time the services and programmes were agreed. It is important that resources are efficiently and effectively utilised to support the council's policies and objectives.

Climate change implications

68. There are no climate change implications arising directly from this report, which provides an update on the revenue outturn for 2023-24

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Policy and Resources Strategy 2023-24 Month 4 revenue budget: September Cabinet	160 Tooley Street PO Box 64529 London SE1P 5LX	Tim Jones 020 7525 1772
Link: Agenda item 10, September 2023 cabinet		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix A	Interdepartmental budget movements to be approved to Month 8
Appendix B	Impact of mitigating actions

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Stephanie Cryan - Communities, Democracy and Finance	
Lead officer	Clive Palfreyman, Strategic Director of Finance	
Report author	Tim Jones, Departmental Finance Manager,	
Version	Final	
Dated	4 January 2024	
Key Decision?	Yes	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance	N/a	N/a
Strategic Director for Finance	N/a	N/a
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team		4 January 2024

Appendix A - Interdepartmental Budget Movements months 5 to 8 2023-24

Interdepartmental movements to be approved months 5 to 8 2023-24

	Department From	Amount £	Department to	Amount £	Description of the budget movement
Approve	Strategic Finance	(1,024,909)	Governance and Assurance	476,533	Transfer of NNDR budgets on corporate buildings to match charges
			Environment Neighbourhoods and Growth	548,376	
Approve	Strategic Finance	(2,668,000)	Housing - General Fund	2,668,000	Transfer of inflation budgets for temporary accommodation to department
Approve	Environment Neighbourhoods and Growth	(3,407,979)	Strategy and Communities	3,407,979	Transfer of Community Engagement service budgets
Approve	Strategy and Communities	(1,568,500)	Environment Neighbourhoods and Growth	1,568,500	Transfer of Local Economy team
Approve	Strategic Finance	(1,906,000)	Children and Adults	861,000	Additional salary inflation for 2022-23
			Environment Neighbourhoods and Growth	532,000	
			Finance	513,000	

Interdepartmental movements to be noted months 5 to 8 2023-24

	Department From	Amount £	Department to	Amount £	Description of the budget movement
Note	Children and Adults	(59,990)	Strategy and Communities	114,803	Transfer of budgets following implementation of Executive Business Support
	Finance	(54,813)			

APPENDIX B

Actions on General Fund Projected Budget Pressures

The key General Fund variations and budget pressures were reported to September cabinet in the month 4 budget monitor. Cabinet approved the following mitigations to contain overspends. Progress on these at month 8 are summarised below.

- 1) Budgetary pressure at month 8 of £2m in Education, mainly driven by higher demand and cost pressures in home to school transport. The continued growth in children and young people with Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs) reflected in increased demand for the home to transport service. Currently, approximately 25% of children and young people with EHCPs receiving travel assistance. Budget pressures are especially affected by the number of high costs of 'out of borough' placements. In addition, the current economic conditions and the rise of inflation has led to increased costs in the taxi and bus contracts.

Mitigating activities and progress

The department has implemented a number of initiatives to reduce the budget pressure in line with the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) strategy. The strategy is expected to develop in-borough provision to meet needs which is expected to reduce the number of children requiring transport out of borough. In addition reducing demand for EHCPs into and across the system through a strengthened universal offer and early intervention. Work also continues to increase take up of the independent travel training programme, reviewing and promoting direct payments and reviewing the 16-25 transport as well as the high costs placement commitments. These actions sit within a wider review of managing the costs of the SEND provision and with the Safety Valve programme.

There has been an improvement in comparison to month 4. This is due to lower than forecasted demand on the bus service which is based on a demand led banding system. In addition, with the start of the new academic term, we may see the impact of the introduction of personal budgets to reduce costs further.

- 2) £1.5m pressure in the costs supporting those with 'No Recourse to Public Funds' (NRPF)

The cost of living crisis has increased pressure on families subject to NRPF, which has resulted in significant increases in client payment and

accommodation costs. Data from the NRP Network' for 2021-22 highlighted that 72 councils were providing accommodation and financial support for 3,423 households at a cost of £64 million per annum. Latest Southwark data shows the council supporting 435 households at a cost of £6.2m in 2022-23. This represents a 15% increase in the number of households supported between 2021-22 to 2022-23, together with rising costs for accommodation, utilities and care costs resulting in an overspend last year. Year to date figures, at month 4, was an expected overspend of £1.3m. At month 8 this is projected to be £1.5m.

Mitigating activities and progress

Officers are exploring options that could help manage/bring down these costs over the medium term, as the statistics show that we are funding a disproportionate number of families at 8% of the total number in the Network.

Work is ongoing to devise a strategy to bring down these costs over the medium term. A growth bid has also been submitted as part of the 2024-25 budget challenge process, to provide an uplift to the budget for the service.

- 3) The continuing budget pressure in homelessness and demand for temporary accommodation (TA) which is exacerbated by the cost of living crisis. In addition, there is an emerging supply-side pressure, as providers are exiting the private rental market due to rising interest rates impact on the financial return. As there are no effective controls to prevent private sector rent rises and continued restrictions on Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates, many who are on welfare benefits and those on low incomes will find themselves struggling to pay rents. This in turn will increase the demand for local authority provision.

Mitigating activities and progress

The council is part of the Inter-Borough Accommodation Agreement (IBAA) which is a Pan London arrangement to set consistent rent levels across London for the provision of accommodation. Whilst this has worked well in the past, the cost of living crisis has seen rates rise by 10% since March 2023, and given the diminishing availability of suitable properties, has seen councils breaching the agreement and procuring at rates in excess of the IBAA rates. The council is working with current providers to maintain good working relationships in order to negotiate competitive overnight rates and maintain supply.

The council has established a cross-departmental board, overseen by the Section 151 officer, to review all aspects of temporary accommodation provision. This group is considering best practice for demand management and

taking practical steps to increase the supply of appropriate housing solutions including the use of empty housing stock and increase void turn-round times. The council is also actively reviewing its procurement strategy and examining alternative investment models to help increase supply and looking at how its allocations policy could assist with additional local provision.

Within the Housing Solutions service which administers the wider service, including homelessness prevention, additional temporary staffing resources have been put in place to increase case management capacity and drive forward new processes designed to increase efficiency.

Item No. 14.	Classification: Open	Date: 17 January 2024	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Motions Referred from Council Assembly	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Council Assembly	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the cabinet considers the motions set out in the appendices attached to the report.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. Council assembly at its meeting on 22 November 2023 agreed several motions and these stand referred to the cabinet for consideration.
3. The cabinet is requested to consider the motions referred to it. Any proposals in a motion are treated as a recommendation only. When considering a motion, cabinet can decide to:
 - Note the motion; *or*
 - Agree the motion in its entirety, *or*
 - Amend the motion; *or*
 - Reject the motion.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

4. In accordance with council assembly procedure rule 2.10.6, the attached motions were referred to the cabinet.
5. The constitution allocates responsibility for particular functions to council assembly, including approving the budget and policy framework, and to the cabinet for developing and implementing the budget and policy framework and overseeing the running of council services on a day-to-day basis.
6. Any key issues, such as policy, community impact or funding implications are included in the advice from the relevant chief officer.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Council agenda	Report on the council's website	Virginia Wynn-Jones Constitutional Team 020 7525 7055
Link: Agenda for Council Assembly on Wednesday 22 November 2023, 7.00 pm - Southwark Council		

APPENDICES

Number	Title
Appendix 1	Giving our children and young people the best start in life
Appendix 2	Protecting Southwark Parks from Anti-Social Behaviour
Appendix 3	Homelessness & Rough Sleeping
Appendix 4	Ending Violence Against Women and Girls
Appendix 5	Towards a greater provision of public toilets
Appendix 6	Southwark stands with the trans community

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Chidilim Agada, Head of Constitutional and Member Services	
Report Author	Virginia Wynn-Jones, Principal Constitutional Officer	
Version	Final	
Dated	4 January 2024	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments sought	Comments included
Strategic Director of Finance	No	No
Assistant Chief Executive – Governance and Assurance	No	No
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	4 January 2024	

APPENDIX 1**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.

APPENDIX 2**Protecting Southwark Parks from Anti-Social Behaviour**

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

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

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

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

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.

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