



## Council Assembly (Ordinary meeting)

MINUTES of the Council Assembly (Ordinary meeting) held on Wednesday 20 March 2024 at 7.00 pm at Council Offices, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

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### PRESENT:

The Worshipful the Mayor for , Councillor Michael Situ (Chair)

Councillor Suzanne Abachor	Councillor Sarah King
Councillor Evelyn Akoto	Councillor Sunny Lambe
Councillor Jasmine Ali	Councillor Richard Leeming
Councillor Naima Ali	Councillor Richard Livingstone
Councillor John Batteson	Councillor James McAsh
Councillor Rachel Bentley	Councillor Hamish McCallum
Councillor Cassandra Brown	Councillor Darren Merrill
Councillor Maggie Browning	Councillor Victoria Mills
Councillor Victor Chamberlain	Councillor Portia Mwangangye
Councillor Sunil Chopra	Councillor Graham Neale
Councillor Stephanie Cryan	Councillor Margy Newens
Councillor Ellie Cumbo	Councillor Jason Ochere
Councillor Helen Dennis	Councillor Leo Pollak
Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle MBE	Councillor Bethan Roberts
Councillor Esme Dobson	Councillor Catherine Rose
Councillor Gavin Edwards	Councillor Jane Salmon
Councillor Sabina Emmanuel	Councillor Martin Seaton
Councillor Natasha Ennin	Councillor Andy Simmons
Councillor Sam Foster	Councillor Charlie Smith
Councillor Renata Hamvas	Councillor Cleo Soanes
Councillor Barrie Hargrove	Councillor Emily Tester
Councillor Ketzia Harper	Councillor Chloe Tomlinson
Councillor Jon Hartley	Councillor Joseph Vambe
Councillor Youcef Hassaine	Councillor Irina Von Wiese
Councillor Esme Hicks	Councillor David Watson
Councillor Emily Hickson	Councillor Kath Whittam
Councillor Adam Hood	Councillor Kieron Williams
Councillor Laura Johnson	Councillor Ian Wingfield
Councillor Nick Johnson	

## 1. PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

### 1.1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sam Dalton, Maria Linforth-Hall, Kimberly McIntosh, Reggie Popoola and Sandra Rhule.

Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Evelyn Akoto.

Apologies for early departure were received from Councillors Gavin Edwards and Hamish McCallum.

### 1.2 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR, MEMBERS OF THE CABINET OR CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Mayor confirmed the meeting was not being livestreamed as the council was in the pre-election period for the GLA elections, which began on 18 March 2024.

### 1.3 NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE MAYOR DEEMS URGENT

At this point, the programme motion was agreed:

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

Time	Business
19:00 – 19:10	<b>1. Preliminary business and announcements</b>
19:10 – 19.20	<b>2.2 Public questions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• One public question</li></ul>
19:20 – 20:20  (18 minutes – 5 minutes' speech)  (7 minutes) (5 minutes) (27 minutes) (3 minutes)	<b>Themed debate</b> <b>3.1 Community Evidence</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Nicola Howard, Family Hub; Nicola Noble, Surrey Square Primary School</li><li>2. Ade Odunlade, Miata Noah, Haajera Adil; South London Listens</li><li>3. Nicole Gordon, Better Bankside</li></ol> <b>3.2 Motion on the Theme</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Councillor Kieron Williams, leader of the council</li><li>2. Councillor Rachel Bentley, opposition spokesperson</li><li>3. Themed debate open to all other councillors</li><li>4. Cabinet member's right of reply to the debate</li></ol>
20:20 – 20:25	<b>Recess</b>
20:25 – 20:50 (4 minutes' speech,	<b>4. Deputation requests</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Marcia Road Residents</li><li>2. Southwark Trades Union Council</li></ol>

question to the cabinet; no questions from members)	3. Kirby Estate residents' group and London Play
<b>20:50 – 21:25</b> (5 minutes) (15 minutes) (15 minutes)	<b>5.1 Members' Question Time</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Late questions</li> <li>• Members' questions to the leader</li> <li>• Members' questions to the cabinet</li> </ul>
<b>21:25 – 22:00</b>	<b>5.2 Motions</b>
	Motion 1 – Back the Bakerloo line extension (Lab)
	Motion 2 – A fair deal for housing in Southwark (LD)
	Motion 3 – Southwark Council calls for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza (joint)
	Motion 4 – Protecting play spaces in Southwark (LD)
	Motion 5 – Improving inclusivity for people with dyslexia (LD)
<b>22:00*</b>	<b>6. Reports</b>
	6.1 Proposed Constitutional updates 2023-24: Council assembly procedure rules
	6.2 Review of Call-in Procedure
	6.3 Adjustment of member allowances in line with the national local government officer pay settlement and Member Allowances Scheme 2024-2025
	6.4 Council Assembly Dates and Calendar of Meetings 2024-2025
	6.5 Special Urgency and Urgent Implementation Decisions – Annual Report 2024

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

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

That the meeting be conducted as follows:

### **Item 3 - Themed debate**

#### **Community Evidence Submissions**

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

1. Nicola Howard, Family Hub and Nicola Noble, Surrey Square Primary School (joint)
2. Ade Odunlade, Miata Noah, Haajera Adil; South London Listens
3. Nicole Gordon, Better Bankside

(Five minutes to speak)

#### **Format**

A five minute presentation from the groups.

#### **3.1 Motion on the theme**

### **Themed debate**

To run as listed in the timings above.

### **Item 4 – Deputations**

That the meeting agree to hear deputations from:

1. Marcia Road Residents
2. Southwark Trades Union Council
3. Kirby Estate residents' group and London Play

(Four minutes to speak; deputation question to relevant cabinet member, no questions from members)

### **Item 5.2 General motions:**

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

### **Item 7 Amendments:**

To amend the mover and seconder of **Amendment B** to be:

**Moved:** Councillor Jane Salmon

**Seconded:** Councillor Irina von Wiese

To amend the seconder of **Amendment G** to be:

**Seconded:** Cllr Jane Salmon

## **1.4 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS**

The Monitoring Officer has given all members a dispensation to vote on Item 6.3: Member Allowances Scheme 2024-25.

Councillor Bethan Roberts declared an interest in Motion 2: A fair deal for housing in Southwark, and did not participate in the debate or voting on this item.

## **1.5 MINUTES**

The minutes of the ordinary meeting of council assembly held on 21 February 2024 were approved as a correct record.

## **2. ISSUES RAISED BY THE PUBLIC**

### **2.1 PETITIONS**

There were no petitions.

### **2.2 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

*(See page 1 of supplemental agenda 1 and additional papers circulated at the meeting)*

There was one question from the public, the answer to which had been circulated before the meeting. The public questioner asked one supplemental question; the response was given by the cabinet member for communities, democracy and finance.

### **3. THEMED DEBATE**

#### **3.1 COMMUNITY EVIDENCE**

The meeting agreed to receive submissions from the following:

#### **Nicola Howard, Family Hub, and Nicola Noble, Surrey Square Primary School**

Nicola Noble gave her apologies to the meeting. The representative spoke to the meeting for five minutes.

#### **South London Listens**

The representatives spoke to the meeting for five minutes.

#### **Better Bankside**

The representatives spoke to the meeting for five minutes.

#### **3.2 MOTION ON THE THEME**

Councillor Kieron Williams, leader of the council, presented the motion in the themed debate.

Councillor Rachel Bentley, the opposition spokesperson, responded to the motion and proposed Amendment A.

Following debate (Councillors Barrie Hargrove, Jasmine Ali, David Watson, Richard Leeming, Suzanne Abachor, James McAsh, Ian Wingfield, Victoria Mills, and Catherine Rose) Councillor Kieron Williams responded to the debate.

Amendment A was put to the vote and declared to be Lost.

The motion was put to the vote and declared to be Carried.

#### **RESOLVED:**

#### **Notes**

Southwark is a truly remarkable place. Our borough's success builds on our rich

history. For centuries, Southwark has been a centre of diversity, creativity and innovation. We have much to be proud of, and every reason to have high ambitions for the decades ahead.

To continue to achieve those ambitions we must unite our community with common cause in delivering the future to which we aspire. That is why the council is working with the people and organisations of our borough to agree our shared Southwark 2030 plan. Thousands of Southwark residents and hundreds of Southwark organisations have already been involved in shaping this plan. This work is ensuring that we agree the right shared goals for the future of our borough.

Our greatest strength is the people of our borough, and the plan will therefore at its core be one that unlocks their potential. For centuries, people from across Britain and around the world have been drawn to Southwark to work, to study and make this borough their home. From the first Roman and Anglo Saxon settlers, to Flemish weavers in the fourteenth century, Dutch pottery makers in the sixteenth century and Irish labourers in the eighteenth century, to the Windrush generation from the Caribbean and Commonwealth, people from across Africa, South America, Europe and China, alongside many more people from around the world and across our country, generation after generation, have brought new ideas and cultures that have come together to make Southwark one of the most diverse and creative places in the world. Our Southwark 2030 plan will draw on all of the talent in our community to deliver the change our borough needs.

To achieve the true potential of Southwark we need to unite the people and organisations of our borough with common purpose in delivering the big changes that our community need. That is why our Southwark 2030 plan will be one jointly owned and agreed, not just by the council as the democratic leadership of the borough, but also by our wider community, public services, business, education and cultural sectors. A shared plan setting out our shared ambitions and commitment to deliver them, together with our brilliant schools and universities, our world leading hospitals, innovative businesses and vibrant voluntary, community, faith, arts and cultural sectors all playing their part.

We have many successes to build on. In the last 14 years, Southwark has achieved so much, in very hard times. Working with the community to deliver what Southwark residents want, despite huge funding pressures imposed on local public services, including the council, schools, and our NHS, from Liberal Democrat and Conservative governments.

To give just a few examples of our successes, over recent years we have:

- **Transformed our schools**, from being some of the worst in the country to being some of the best, with 98% now rated as Good or Outstanding. Our schools also have a nationally leading offer of free healthy school meals and mental health support.

- **Created thousands of good jobs**, and supported thousands of Southwark residents into them, with the number of jobs in our borough at a record high, our employment rate lifted from below the London and national average to above both, and more apprenticeships created than any other London borough.
- **Built more council and social rent homes than any other council**, with over 3,000 new council homes built or under construction and more social rent homes started than any other borough in the country since 2015.
- **Delivered new and better parks, libraries, leisure centres and theatres**, opening six new libraries since 2010, new leisure centres and parks opened and under construction at Elephant and Castle and Canada Water, millions of pounds invested in our existing parks including the complete transformation of Burgess Park, and seven new theatres opened across our borough.

The Southwark 2030 plan will build on these successes and the many others our community and Labour run council are already delivering together.

In an ever-changing national and global political environment, we must continue to raise our ambitions for our borough, making sure we are the driving force behind what happens to Southwark and the people that live, work and study here.

Last year the council embarked on Southwark 2030, to outline a shared vision for the borough, developed by people who live, work, and study in Southwark.

The development of the plan is being undertaken collaboratively with our borough community. Over 5,000 people have been involved a programme of engagement through our Social Life, Life After Covid and Southwark 2030 involvement processes.

The Southwark 2030 engagement plan has been co-designed with local community groups and public sector partners. The comprehensive approach has reached a full range of Southwark residents. Including in-depth conversations with people who live, work, study and visit the borough, held in local venues across the borough. Thirty listening events hosted by a wide range of local community and voluntary groups, organised to reach resident who are often less heard, including events hosted by women's, older people's, LGBTQ+, migrants, parents, youth, disability and religious groups. Representative surveys of Southwark residents on their aspirations for their families and our borough. Decision at empowering ward forums. Work with schools and youth groups to hear the views of children and young people.

With local groups and organisations also given the opportunity to drive the direction of the Strategy and partners from the voluntary sector, NHS, schools universities,

Police and cultural institutions activity engaged throughout.

During the consultation process residents have shared the things they love about Southwark: our vibrant and diverse culture, our fantastic schools, our drive to deliver good quality housing, our thriving small business and town centres, our green spaces and our accessible leisure centres.

We also learned about the priorities that people in Southwark want to see progress; even more and better affordable homes, reducing anti-social behaviour, increased access to the mental health support, creating cleaner air, extra chances to gain good jobs and skills, increased opportunities for young people and making sure everyone feel part of a community.

Southwark 2030 will build on what residents have told us, and ensure we have a shared plan focused on delivering on the goals that matter to our residents, ensuring:

- Children can flourish
- People can have good homes, that they can afford
- Our borough is safe
- We improve health and especially mental health
- There are good jobs for Southwark residents
- Our environment is clean and healthy
- Our neighbourhoods are great places to live.

Above all the plan will focus on closing the gaps across our community in each of the above areas. Because whilst our borough, city and country are full of opportunity, the gaps across our society means too many people in Britain today are being left behind. In Southwark, we are determined to lead in the way in closing that gap.

The work in these areas will be guided by overarching principle to guide our borough's plan between now and 2030:

- Reducing inequality
- Investing in prevention
- Empowering people.

**Southwark 2030: a proud history and a vibrant future: harnessing all of the strengths of our borough to deliver opportunity for all.**

1. Council assembly resolves to:
  - a. Thank everyone who was involved in the engagement process so far across our community and voluntary, public, business, education and cultural sectors.



2. Council assembly asks cabinet to:

- a. Finalise and agree our Southwark 2030 Plan. This plan should deliver on the priorities of our community, including those set out above, and be developed in partnership with residents and organisations of our borough.
- b. Establish a new partnership structure with local public services, anchor organisations and key businesses to ensure that they are part of delivering this vision.
- c. Utilise this partnership to develop and agree actions that focus on the transformation changes we want to make together as we look to the future.
- d. Allocate the Southwark 2030 fund towards delivering that plan, ensuring the funding is used to deliver on these priorities.
- e. Put in place annual reporting on the progress in delivering the plan, and the goals within it.

4. **DEPUTATIONS**

As part of the programme motion the meeting agreed to hear deputations from:

**Marcia Road Residents**

The group's representatives spoke to the meeting for four minutes and thereafter asked a question of the cabinet member for the climate emergency, clean air and streets.

**Southwark Trades Union Council**

The group's representatives spoke to the meeting for four minutes and thereafter asked a question of the leader of the council.

**Kirby Estate residents' group and London Play**

The group's representatives spoke to the meeting for four minutes and thereafter asked a question of the cabinet member for neighbourhoods, leisure and parks.

5. **ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS**

## 5.1 MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME

There was one late question to the leader from Councillor Victor Chamberlain, the written response to which was circulated before the meeting. There were two supplemental questions.

There were 27 members' questions, the written responses to which were circulated before the meeting. There were 18 supplemental questions.

## 5.2 MEMBERS' MOTIONS

### Motion 1: Back the Bakerloo Line Extension

This motion was considered prior to the guillotine having fallen.

Councillor Richard Livingstone moved the motion. Councillor Cassandra Brown seconded the motion.

There was one amendment to the motion. Councillor Jane Salmon moved Amendment B. Councillor Irina von Wiese seconded Amendment B. After debate (Councillors Helen Dennis, Renata Hamvas, Charlie Smith, Victoria Mills, and Kieron Williams), Councillor Richard Livingstone responded to the debate.

The Mayor of Southwark called for an adjournment for five minutes.

Amendment B was put to the vote and declared to be lost.

The substantive motion was put to the vote and declared to be carried.

**Note:** This motion will be referred as a recommendation to the cabinet for consideration.

1. Council Assembly believes:
  - a. The Bakerloo Line Upgrade and Extension will deliver for people and businesses across our city and country, creating a more connected, productive and sustainable city and supporting the national economic growth our country needs.
  - b. The Bakerloo Line is an iconic part of the Underground, and a vital piece of economic infrastructure with 920,000 jobs – one in six in London – within a 12-minute walk of a station.
  - c. The Bakerloo Line Upgrade and Extension would have a transformational impact on London, by:
    - i. Boosting the economy:
      - Supporting 150,000 jobs in total, including nearly 10,000 directly
      - Creating 190,000 sqm of new commercial floorspace,

- Generating £1.5bn of GVA per year
- ii. Tackling the housing crisis:
  - Supporting 107,000 homes along the entire line
  - This includes unlocking 20,400 new homes as a direct result of the extension
- iii. Greening our transport network:
  - Creating 150,000 additional public transport trips
  - 20,800 fewer car trips daily
  - Improving connectivity, with travel time from Old Kent Road to Oxford Circus cut by nearly two thirds from 38 minutes to 13 minutes;

2. Council Assembly notes:

- a. The recent major construction milestone with a “bottoming out” ceremony for the new integrated ticket hall at Elephant and Castle’s Northern line tube station. The ITH will serve as the primary entrance to the Northern Line and represents the first piece of substantial infrastructure to support the proposed Bakerloo Line extension
- b. Over the last decade, the council has invested over £70m into the Elephant & Castle tube upgrade, providing a new step-free station and integrating the Northern line with the Bakerloo Line and its anticipated extension.
- c. That the Mayor of London, and the Deputy Mayor for Transport, have offered their vocal support for the Bakerloo Line Extension.
- d. Southwark’s Cabinet have just agreed an allocation of Strategic CIL of £350,000 towards the Elephant and Castle over-ground station and £250,000 towards the Bakerloo Line Extension.
- e. The Bakerloo Line Extension now has support from numerous Councils across London and the Leader of the Council Kieron Williams has been a key voice in rallying and securing this support.
- f. The Bakerloo Line Extension is vital to delivering new homes, jobs and green spaces in the Old Kent Road Opportunity Area – 20,000 new homes in total, which are much needed given the current housing crisis.
- g. That Southwark has an impressive record of affordable housing delivery along the Old Kent Road. Of the 3,333 homes already delivered or on site there, over 50% are affordable. The Bakerloo Line Extension would enable us to deliver many more genuinely affordable homes that Southwark residents need.
- h. The Bakerloo Line Upgrade and Extension cannot happen without more support from government. Transport for London (TfL) has succeeded in boosting passenger numbers and restoring finances after the devastating impact of the pandemic. However, as with all major transport networks,

TfL will need ongoing support with capital funding to maintain the network and invest in future growth.

- i. The Government announced a short sighted and insufficient one-year capital investment deal for TfL in December. However, this provides only £250m next year, half the £500m to £600m TfL requires annually from government to meet its capital needs.
3. Council Assembly resolves to:
- a. Continue to campaign for the Bakerloo line extension working with TfL, the Mayor of London, councils across London and our wider community
  - b. Work with the Mayor of London to continue to deliver major upgrades to the transport network in Southwark to deliver for Southwark Residents including through increased bus capacity, including a Bakerloo Bus, on the Old Kent Road.
  - c. Ask the Cabinet to produce a new piece of work outlining a path to secure the necessary funding from government that would see the BLE come to fruition
  - d. Ensure there is continued investment from Southwark's Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy into the Bakerloo line extension
  - e. After the Mayoral election in May, call on the newly elected Mayor of London to back the Bakerloo line extension.

## **Motion 2: A Fair Deal for Housing in Southwark**

This motion was considered prior to the guillotine having fallen.

Councillor Emily Tester moved the motion. Councillor Victor Chamberlain seconded the motion.

There was one amendment to the motion. Councillor Emily Hickson moved Amendment C. Councillor Kath Whittam seconded Amendment C.

Councillor Maggie Browning proposed a motion to extend the guillotine by ten minutes. This was seconded by Councillor Chloe Tomlinson. This was put to the vote and agreed.

After debate (Councillors Sarah King and Sam Foster), Councillor Emily Tester responded to the debate.

Amendment C was put to the vote and declared to be carried.

The substantive motion as amended was put to the vote and declared to be carried.

**Note:** This motion will be referred as a recommendation to the cabinet for consideration.

1. Council Assembly notes the context that Southwark finds itself in:
  - a. In the context of a housing crisis, Southwark Council is building more council homes than any other local authority. Everyone should be able to afford somewhere they can call home. That is why we are focusing on building new council homes that Southwark residents can actually afford.
  - b. Building genuinely affordable homes is the way to tackle the housing crisis. That is why since 2014 we have built or started building over 3,000 new council homes.
  - c. The latest 'London Assembly Affordable Housing Monitor 2023' reported that there were more social rent and London affordable rent starts in Southwark than in any other London council since 2015.
  - d. 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 the planning consent being granted to at least 14,985 affordable homes, including 9,623 social rent homes in Southwark since 2010.
  - e. We have a plan to deliver affordable homes for Southwark residents who do not qualify for social housing, and are working on pilots for Keyworker Homes and a Community Land Trust.
  - f. We are the largest social landlord in London, and look after 55,000 homes.
  - g. The council is always working to improve our housing stock, since 2010, we have installed 23,500 new bathrooms and kitchens.
  - h. Satisfaction with repairs is now up to 90%. Feedback from residents shows has been significant improvement in our repairs and maintenance service delivery over the past 12 months, continued implementation of our repairs service improvement plan will ensure that this pace of progress continues as we head further into 2024.
  - i. The council has created a Repair Improvement Residents Board, a panel of residents who can now get involved in making decisions about their home and estates to make improvements to our service.
  - f. One third of our residents live in privately rented homes; that is why Southwark Council introduced the Gold Standard Charter (GSC) which is a voluntary scheme that rewards landlords and managing agents who provide a professional level of service and good practice to their tenants in the private rented sector.
  - g. The council has now rolled out its Private Rented Property Licensing scheme, one of the largest in the country to protect residents in the private rented sector.
  - h. Whilst the challenges around Temporary Accommodation are significant, we have an action plan to address homelessness and rough sleeping, set out

alongside our draft strategy published for Cabinet last month. Southwark has also introduced the Good Homes Standard for Temporary Accommodation and signed the London Mayor's Charter to End Rough Sleeping

- i. We are committed to using all powers at our disposal to reduce the number of Empty Homes in the borough. The council will be extending the council tax premium in 24/25 to homes empty for one year or more, and to second homes. While there is more work to do, we are making significant progress bringing homes borough back into use and have developed a comprehensive action plan to use all the available powers to reduce the number of empty homes in the borough, in the continuing housing crises.
  - j. Last week, Southwark Council hosted the Future of Council Housing summit the first of its kind, bringing together the country's largest local authority social landlords, each managing around 20,000 council homes or more. The Summit will inform a major report, authored by respected housing policy, to be published in June. It will set out a comprehensive plan to fix a broken financial model and enable councils to play their part in addressing the national housing crisis.
2. Council Assembly further notes:
- a. What Southwark has achieved is remarkable against the backdrop of all councils facing extraordinary challenges in delivering and retaining council homes.
  - b. The UK is facing a national housing crisis; the scale of the challenge is huge. Across our country over a quarter of a million people are homeless, with one and a half million more living in overcrowded homes. 1 in 23 children in London are living in temporary accommodation.
  - c. In addition, almost one in five council leaders and chief executives in England surveyed by the Local Government Association think it is very or fairly likely that their chief finance officer will need to issue a Section 114 notice this year or next due to a lack of funding to keep key services running.
  - d. Since 2010, Conservative and Liberal Democrat governments have taken political decisions, in the full knowledge it would directly impact local government and most importantly our residents.
  - e. The Affordable Housing Grant was reduced by 60% in 2010 by the Coalition, making it much harder to build social rent homes without significant borrowing and private subsidy.
  - f. That the increase in overcrowding and escalating need for temporary accommodation is worsened by the Benefit Cap agreed by the Coalition which makes it impossible for low-income families to access appropriate housing in the private rented sector in Southwark.
  - g. The Conservatives, with their former Prime Minister Liz Truss, crashed the economy with the disastrous mini budget, and as a result, house building

across London and the country has stalled

- h. There has been a significant reduction of income into the HRA when taking inflation into account as a result of 1% rent cap for 4 years, and then a 7% rent cap. This was right decision for our tenants during a cost-of-living crisis, but without central government financial support local councils are bearing this cost.
  - i. Significant new spending pressure at approx. £100 million to works from Fire and Building Safety Acts on 180 high-rise buildings, again lacking any funding support from the Government
  - j. The impact of the rent cap and the Building Safety Act costs alone will result in £40 million additional cost for Southwark Council in 2024/25.
  - k. In contrast to this, in government Labour delivered a huge upgrade to homes social rent homes – through the Decent Homes Programme, over a million homes were improved between 2001 and 2010.including 810,000 new kitchens, 610,000 new bathrooms and 1,140,000 new central heating systems.
  - l. Labour in government also presided over a halving in homelessness and all but eliminated rough sleeping
3. Council Assembly recognises:
- a. It was right that residents of Devon Mansions and Canada Estate received an unreserved apology, due to the frustration and stress caused during recent major works, and the poor communications they received throughout the project. Labour ward councillors pushed hard for residents to be heard, referring these cases to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
  - b. A Task and Finish Group has been established, internal and external audits will be carried out, to put right what is wrong. This root and branch examination of what went wrong here will lead to changes in the Housing Team and how it operates, to ensure this situation never reoccurs.
  - c. The Council is committed to re-establishing trust with residents, dramatically improving communication with residents and to learn from these events. Residents' voices will be heard in the investigation process and residents are helping to appoint an independent surveyor.
  - d. It has been incredibly disappointing to have to temporarily pause the new homes schemes on four sites: Sceaux Gardens, Bells Gardens, Lindley Estate and Styles House. In addition, that the Council is committed to working with residents to bring forward short-term solutions for these sites, as well as viable plans for the delivery of new homes.
4. Council Assembly resolves to:
- a. Make improving the condition of our council homes the first priority for the council, continuing to improve repairs and bring forward a new Safe, Dry,

#### Warm programme

- b. Continue to build more council homes, bringing forward plans to deliver the next round of our new council homes programme, including viable schemes on sites which are currently 'paused'.
- c. Continue to use our planning policy to secure new affordable and social homes.
- d. Campaign for Bakerloo Line Extension which would directly support an additional 10,500 homes in Southwark.
- e. Deliver on building safety and fire safety work, ensure that our homes are safe and that our residents feel safe in their homes.
- f. Embed the learning from Devon Mansions and Canada Estates, committing to re-establishing trust with residents and dramatically improving communication with residents
- g. Roll out more protections and support for private renters, extending our licensing scheme so landlords have to meet higher standards and funding free advice services so support is there if your landlord is acting unfairly. Campaign for further powers to regulate the sector including three-year tenancies and powers to control rents.
- h. Support homeowners affected by the Cladding Crisis, campaigning for remedial costs to be paid for by developers and will do everything within our power to fight for a fair deal so that leaseholders are not left bearing these costs.
- i. We will take a zero tolerance approach to rogue landlords and empty homes, using all the powers available to the council to tackle the worst offenders and campaigning for the resources and powers to bring more long-term empty homes back into use.
- j. Following the general election work with the government to Get Britain building again by reforming planning laws to kick-start 1.5 million new homes, transport, clean energy, and new industries in all parts of the country. Because cheaper bills, the chance to own your own home, and modern infrastructure are key to growth and the foundations of security.
- k. Call on the government to invest supporting local authorities in making future improvements to council homes, and use the findings of the Council House 20 report that will be produced later this year.

#### **Motion 3: Southwark Council calls for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza**

This motion was considered after the guillotine had fallen.

The motion was put to the vote and declared to be carried.



**Note:** This motion will be referred as a recommendation to the cabinet for consideration.

1. Council Assembly notes:
  - a. Our profound horror and despair at scenes that we have seen unfolding over the past five months in Israel and in Gaza.
  - b. On 7 October 2023 Hamas killed around 1,200 Israelis, and took around 240 hostages, with over 100 still being held;
  - c. Since 7 October 2023, over 30,000 Palestinians have been killed and around 1.9 million have been displaced, with Gaza now facing a severe humanitarian crisis;
  - d. That these events have led to a deeply worrying increase in antisemitism and Islamophobia across the UK.
2. Council Assembly resolves to:
  - a. Stand with the residents of our borough who have been profoundly affected by this conflict, especially those who may be fearing for the lives of their families and friends currently in the region. It is an unconscionable position for far too many.
  - b. Stand firm and united against antisemitism and Islamophobia in all its forms.
  - c. Thank community leaders across our borough for the role they are playing in reducing tensions at this sensitive and difficult time.
3. Council Assembly believes:
  - a. That there can be no excuse for the scale of this suffering, no excuse for terrorist attacks, hostage taking or the utterly disproportionate scale of civilian deaths in Gaza.
  - b. That the fighting must stop now, with an immediate ceasefire observed by all sides. All hostages released. The siege conditions in Gaza ended, with full access for the food medicines, electricity and supplies needed to end the humanitarian crisis.
  - c. That an immediate ceasefire must be accompanied by a political process with the support of the UN, that delivers a permanent end to this suffering and a just and lasting peace.
4. Council Assembly also believes:
  - a. There can be no place for hate in our borough. Southwark must be a safe place for people of all faiths and nationalities. We must support people whose families and loved ones are caught up in this conflict and extend a special welcome to anyone fleeing war and persecution, in

keeping with the Southwark's tradition as a borough of sanctuary.

5. Council resolves to:
  - a. Work with our local Jewish, Muslim and wider community to continue to ensure antisemitism and Islamophobia are not tolerated in our borough, and to be ready to welcome refugees fleeing this conflict.
  - b. Write to the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary to ask the UK Government to:
    - call for an immediate bilateral ceasefire and unfettered humanitarian access to Gaza
    - work to advance a serious and concerted international effort for a two-state solution and a just and lasting peace.
    - provide safe and legal routes for refugees fleeing the region
    - request central government funding to support community cohesion at a local level.

#### **Motion 4: Protecting Play Spaces in Southwark**

This motion was considered after the guillotine had fallen.

There was one amendment to the motion.

Amendment D was put to the vote and declared to be carried.

The substantive motion as amended was put to the vote and declared to be carried.

**Note:** This motion will be referred as a recommendation to the cabinet for consideration.

1. Council assembly notes:
  - a. Access to outdoor play is fundamental to the physical, social, mental and emotional development of children.
  - b. Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that Governments must “respect, protect and fulfil” the “right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities”.
  - c. The UK is currently failing in that duty, with children suffering damage to their mental health and wellbeing due to the lack of accessible play spaces.
  - d. The impact of Covid lockdowns on the mental health of young people is yet to be fully understood but it is a clear that we must provide every opportunity for the affected generation to play and develop socially.
  - e. The disastrous cuts to local government funding implemented by the Conservative Government have left playgrounds falling into disrepair across the UK.

f. The Southwark Plan 2022 policies P13-15 and P57 and London Plan 2021 policies D6, H16 and S4 set out the council's requirements in respect of design and open space. These policies are relevant for amenity space, play space and open space. Open spaces are an essential resource for residents and visitors and all development should ensure that there is sufficient amenity and play space in accordance with GLA guidance. Where the council accepts that the policy requirements cannot be met fully onsite, a financial S106 planning obligation is required in order to ensure that the impact of development is mitigated.

2. Council assembly further notes:

a. The council has just completed an initial phase of an audit of all play provision in Southwark. This has identified 200 play sites, placing Southwark and one of the best provided boroughs for play in London.

b. In recent years the council has made significant investment into play spaces, investing;

- I. £1.2 million at St Marys Churchyard Playground and Plaza,
- II. £1.1 million at Camberwell Green Playground,
- III. £680,000 at Nelson Square Playground and MUGA,
- IV. £600,000 at Pullens Gardens Playground and park,
- V. £500,000 at Southwark Park Playground,
- VI. £4 million at Peckham Rye Park Playground and new playroom building,
- VII. £1.5 million at Mint Street Adventure Playground and building,
- VIII. £700,000 at Leyton Square Playground,
- IX. £3.3 million at Burgess Park West Playground and park expansion and
- X. £1.5 million at Dickens Square Park Playground and park expansion.

c. Many playground improvements are instigated by active ward councillors who have access to Cleaner, Greener Safer funding and local CIL. They can and do use this money to prioritise the improvement of play spaces within their ward. Initial development and assessment studies funded by CSG can then ensure that well designed schemes can be consulted on with the local community and additional a or external funding found to deliver these improvements.

d. Council recognises and is grateful for the efforts made by active ward councillors to improve play spaces in our local parks and housing estates. This can be done with initial funding from the Cleaner, Greener, Safer fund and local CIL.

e. This is also done, by working with local community partners to support provision of better quality play space; in locations, the Council does not direct responsibility for. An example of this can be seen at Dog Kennel Hill Adventure Playground in Champion Hill ward.

3. Council assembly resolves to:

a. Complete the next phase on the 2024 Play Audit, which will include a detailed design and costing plan for priority play areas, and consultation with key

stakeholders.

- b. Continue to invest in our 200+ play spaces in parks and on estates.
- c. Based on information highlighted by the Play Audit, work to secure funding for inclusive play spaces and equipment.
- d. Based on information highlighted by the Play Audit, work to secure the funding for phase 1 for further playground investment, to encompass a range of possible actions from remedial improvements and better maintenance, additional and more inclusive accessible facilities or the full refurbishment of a site.
- e. Establish clear prioritisation and delivery programme for further phases of playground investment and improvement.

### **Motion 5: Improving Inclusivity for People with Dyslexia**

This motion was considered after the guillotine had fallen.

There was one amendment to the motion.

Amendment E was put to the vote and declared to be carried.

The substantive motion as amended was put to the vote and declared to be carried.

**Note:** This motion will be referred as a recommendation to the cabinet for consideration.

#### 1. Council assembly notes:

- a. The council has a duty to ensure all services and materials are accessible to everyone.
- b. Dyslexia is a protected characteristic covered by the Equality Act 2010.
- c. This year the council launched a new branding and visual identity that includes a guide to be used in all council documents on 'How to write in plain English' and 'Write accessible content for our website and intranet'
- d. These contain information to ensure that all written documents and webpages are accessible to everyone.
- e. The 'How to write in plain English guide' contains guidance on layout, headings and structure and writing style that reflect the much of the guidance within the Dyslexia friendly style guide.
- f. Both the Dyslexia friendly style guide and Southwark's house style guide recommends:
  - I. The use of Arial typeface, no smaller than font size 12.
  - II. Avoiding the use of underlining and italics.

- III. Avoiding the use of all capital letters and uppercase letters for continuous text.
  - IV. Using headings and styles to create consistent structure to help people navigate through your content
  - V. For headings, use a font size that is at least 20% larger than the normal text.
  - VI. Add extra space around headings and between paragraphs.
  - VII. Ensure hyperlinks look different from headings and normal text.
  - VIII. Using single colour backgrounds, avoiding background patterns or pictures and distracting surrounds.
  - IX. Using sufficient contrast levels between background and text.
  - X. Using dark coloured text on a light (not white) background.
  - XI. Left align text, without justification.
  - XII. Being concise, avoiding using long, dense paragraphs
  - XIII. Using simple clear language and every day words.
  - XIV. Using bullet points and numbering rather than continuous prose.
  - XV. Avoiding abbreviations where possible
- g. The new house branding and visual identity does not currently offer specific guidance on:
- I. Inter-character spacing and inter-word spacing
  - II. The use of alternatives to white paper
  - III. The use of matt paper rather than gloss
  - IV. Using images to support text.
  - V. Giving instructions clearly
  - VI. Avoid double negatives
  - VII. Providing a glossary of abbreviations and jargon.

2. Council assembly resolves to:

- a. Implement the full roll out and adoption of the new style guide, continuing to make all staff aware of the guides
- b. Ask officers to explore how we could incorporate guidance on the areas within the Dyslexia style guide that are not currently referenced within the new visual identity guides
- c. Regularly review documents and webpages for internal and external use, to make sure that where possible, the house guide is being followed and that all written documents and webpages are accessible to everyone on the understanding that documents may need to be tailored to be accessible to a specific audience.

## 6. REPORT(S) FOR DECISION FROM THE CABINET

### 6.1 PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL UPDATES 2023-24: COUNCIL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURE RULES

There was one amendment to this report. Amendment F was moved by Councillor

Graham Neale. Amendment F was seconded by Councillor Adam Hood.

After debate, (Councillors Maggie Browning, Sabina Emmanuel and Ian Wingfield) Amendment F was put to the vote and declared Lost.

The recommendations were put to the vote and declared Carried.

**RESOLVED:**

1. ***That council assembly agreed the proposed changes to the constitution affecting council assembly as outlined in Appendix 1 and 2 of the report.***

**Consequential changes**

2. That the proper constitutional officer be authorised to make any necessary consequential changes to the constitution as a result of the above.

**6.2 REVIEW OF CALL-IN PROCEDURE**

The recommendations were put to the vote and declared Carried.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That 'the use of call-in: guidance for English authorities' issued by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS), Appendix 1 of the report be noted, section 1 in particular (purpose of call-in).
2. That having regard to the CfGS guidance, the findings from the review of the council's current call-in process (Appendix 2 of the report) be noted.
3. That the main findings set out in paragraphs 13 to 41 of the report be noted (arising report recommendations set out at paragraphs 4 to 7).
4. That it be noted that written guidance on the call-in process in the form of a protocol/procedure note is being prepared for circulation to members, and publication on the council website (paragraphs 15 to 16 of the report).
5. That overview and scrutiny procedure rule 17.4 be amended to 'any five members of the council (including education representatives for the purpose of education decisions only)' (paragraphs 23 to 27 of the report).
6. That the 'Guidance Note: Principles of Decision Making' prepared to support the decision making process (Appendix 3 of the report) be noted.
7. That the proposed changes take effect from 1 April 2024 to enable training for both

members and officers on any new call-in arrangements ahead of implementation (paragraphs 42 to 43 of the report).

### **6.3 ADJUSTMENT OF MEMBER ALLOWANCES IN LINE WITH THE NATIONAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICER PAY SETTLEMENT AND MEMBER ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2024-2025**

There was one amendment to this report. Amendment G was moved by Councillor Emily Tester. Amendment G was seconded by Councillor Jane Salmon.

After debate, (Councillor Stephanie Cryan, Margy Newens, Ellie Cumbo and Richard Livingstone) Amendment G was put to the vote and declared Lost.

Councillor Graham Neale made a point of personal explanation during the debate.

The recommendations were put to the vote and declared Carried.

#### **RESOLVED:**

3. ***That council assembly approved with immediate effect the adjustment of member allowances in line with the national local government officer pay settlement and allowances for officers as detailed in paragraph 20 of the report.***
4. ***That council assembly approved, with effect from 1 April 2024, the member allowances scheme for 2024-2025 as detailed in paragraphs 20 to 26 and Appendix 2 of the report, having had regard to the advice of the London Councils Independent Remuneration Panel Report 2023 (see Appendix 1 of the report).***

### **6.4 COUNCIL ASSEMBLY DATES AND CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2024-2025**

The recommendations were put to the vote and declared Carried.

#### **RESOLVED:**

1. That council assembly agreed the following dates for meetings of council assembly be fixed in the council calendar for the 2024-25 municipal year:

<b>Council Assembly</b>	<b>Type of Meeting</b>
Wednesday 22 May 2024	Mayor Making/Annual meeting
Wednesday 10 July 2024	Ordinary meeting
Wednesday 20 November 2024	Ordinary meeting

Wednesday 26 February 2025	Budget and council tax setting
Wednesday 19 March 2025	Ordinary meeting
Saturday 17 May 2025	Mayor Making/Annual meeting

2. That council assembly noted the agreement in May 2023 for the dates of the annual/mayor making meetings for 2025 to 2027 as set out below:
  - Saturday 17 May 2025 11am
  - Saturday 16 May 2026 11am
  - Saturday 15 May 2027 11am
3. That council assembly noted the calendar of council meetings for the 2024-25 municipal year as shown at Appendix 1.

#### **6.5 SPECIAL URGENCY AND URGENT IMPLEMENTATION DECISIONS - ANNUAL REPORT 2024**

The recommendations were put to the vote and declared Carried.

#### **RESOLVED:**

8. That council assembly noted the schedule of special urgency and urgent implementation decisions (set out in Appendix 1 of the report) taken in accordance with access to information procedure rules 19 and 20.

#### **7. AMENDMENTS**

The meeting closed at 10.40 pm.

**CHAIR:**

**DATED:**