

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday 4 October 2023

7.00 pm

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

Membership

Councillor Ian Wingfield (Chair)
Councillor Irina Von Wiese (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Suzanne Abachor
Councillor Victor Chamberlain
Councillor Ellie Cumbo
Councillor Jon Hartley
Councillor Laura Johnson
Councillor Sunny Lambe
Councillor Margy Newens
Councillor Bethan Roberts
Councillor Chloe Tomlinson
Martin Brecknell (Co-opted Member)
Lynette Murphy-O'Dwyer (Co-opted Member)
Jonathan Clay (Co-opted Member)
Marcin Jagodzinski (Co-opted Member)

Reserves

Councillor Rachel Bentley
Councillor Sunil Chopra
Councillor Sam Dalton
Councillor Sam Foster
Councillor Esme Hicks
Councillor Sarah King
Councillor Sandra Rhule
Councillor Jane Salmon
Councillor Andy Simmons
Councillor Cleo Soanes

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

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Contact

Everton Roberts on 020 7525 7221 or email: everton.roberts@southwark.gov.uk

Members of the committee are summoned to attend this meeting

Althea Loderick

Chief Executive

Date: 26 September 2023



Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday 4 October 2023

7.00 pm

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

Order of Business

Item No.	Title	Page No.
	PART A - OPEN BUSINESS	
1.	APOLOGIES	
	To receive any apologies for absence.	
2.	NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT	
	In special circumstances, an item of business may be added to an agenda within five clear working days of the meeting.	
3.	DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS	
	Members to declare any interests and dispensations in respect of any item of business to be considered at this meeting.	
4.	MINUTES	1 - 5
	To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2023.	

Item No.	Title	Page No.
5.	CANADA ESTATE QUALITY HOMES IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME (QHIP) - SCRUTINY OF MAJOR WORKS DELIVERY	6 - 11
	<p>To receive a briefing from officers in response to concerns raised in connection to the delivery of Major Works on the Canada Estate.</p> <p>The committee will also hear from local ward councillors and the Canada Estate Tenants and Residents Association.</p> <p>Included within the agenda papers is correspondence requesting scrutiny of the issue and a briefing report from officers responding to the concerns raised.</p>	
6.	KEEPING EDUCATION STRONG RECOMMENDATIONS	12 - 79
	<p>To receive a briefing from Councillor Jasmine Ali, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Refugees on the 'Keeping Education Strong Recommendations' agreed by cabinet in June 2023.</p> <p>The item has been added to the agenda to enable the cabinet member to address concerns raised by some committee members at the time the decision was taken, particularly in relation to the decision(s) in connection with St Mary Magdalene School. The cabinet member was unable to attend the July overview and scrutiny committee due to being away at an annual conference.</p>	
7.	SOUTHWARK COUNCIL CFGS SCRUTINY IMPROVEMENT REVIEW AND ACTION PLAN	80 - 120
	<p>To consider which of the recommendations/actions arising from the scrutiny improvement review and subsequent discussions to take forward.</p>	
8.	SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2023-24 [AMENDMENT]	121 - 122
	<p>To approve the transfer of the 'community engagement' element of the Environment and Community Engagement Scrutiny Commission to the Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Commission.</p>	
9.	WORK PROGRAMME	123 - 131
	<p>To note the work programme as at 4 October 2023 and consider the addition of new items or allocation of previously identified items to specific meeting dates of the committee.</p>	

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

PART B - CLOSED BUSINESS

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

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The following motion should be moved, seconded and approved if the committee 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.”

Date: 26 September 2023



Overview & Scrutiny Committee

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday 4 July 2023 at 7.00 pm at 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT: Councillor Ian Wingfield (Chair)
Councillor Irina Von Wiese (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Suzanne Abachor
Councillor Ellie Cumbo
Councillor Jon Hartley
Councillor Laura Johnson
Councillor Margy Newens
Councillor Jane Salmon (Reserve)
Martin Brecknell (Co-opted Member)
Marcin Jagodzinski (Co-opted Member)

OFFICER Sarah Feasey, Deputy Head of Law (Communities)
SUPPORT: Everton Roberts, Head of Scrutiny

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Victor Chamberlain, Sunny Lambe, Bethan Roberts, Chloe Tomlinson, and Jonathan Clay (co-opted member).

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

There were no additional late items.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no disclosures of interests or dispensations.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meetings held on 5 December 2022, 11 January 2023, 24 January 2023, 1 March 2023, 24 April 2023 and 20 May 2023 be approved as correct records.

5. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMMES 2023-24

The chair and vice-chair of overview and scrutiny committee and the commission chairs went through the proposed initial work programme areas for overview and scrutiny committee and the scrutiny commissions. Other committee members also provided comment on the proposed work programmes. Following discussion the committee agreed the initial work programmes for overview and scrutiny committee and the commissions for the 2023-24 year.

RESOLVED:

That the initial overview and scrutiny committee and scrutiny commission work programmes for 2023-24 be as follows:

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Standing items

- Council Delivery Plan Performance Monitoring
- Climate Emergency Performance Monitoring
- Budget Setting Process 2024-25
- Annual Workforce Strategy Report

Pre-decision scrutiny

- Southwark Stands Together Refresh and Southwark Equality Framework

Scrutiny reviews and mini review topics

- Abbeyfield Estate – A Way Forward (Maydew House) Scrutiny review to establish procedures that will prevent a similar situation occurring in the future.
- Regeneration Scrutiny – with a focus on individual schemes
- Improving Customer Services for Council Housing Repairs
- Review of the Mayor's Budget and Operations of the Mayor's Office

- Exploration of how the council could use the voluntary sector as a commissioned service to deliver the work that the council has committed to around:
 - Elections Act – Increase in communication costs and workload of Electoral Services
 - Managing the constitutional and governance changes arising from emerging and new legislation e.g. Health & Social Care Act
- Increase in Bulky Waste Charges – update on impact
- Bids to alleviate excessive inflationary pressures in the Voluntary Sector
- Capital Budget Refresh
- Temporary Accommodation Budget (including housing allocation and use of temporary accommodation)
- Formal council complaints and legal action (how many received/resolved, repeat problems, and cost of legal settlements)
- Contract Management (assessing value, quality and efficiency, under-performing contractors)
- In house Leisure Service (management of transition, quality of day to day management, overall financial health of service)
- Mooring Fees (to be factored into budget scrutiny process)

EDUCATION AND LOCAL ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMISSION

- Traders and markets (how council can support markets and local businesses by cutting costs)
- Community Wealth Building
- School amalgamations and closures in Southwark
- Planning processes and policies for Southwark businesses to help boost the local economy sector in Southwark
- Southwark Stands Together – role and successes (schools perspective)
- Update on Children’s Safeguarding Partnership in Southwark

ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Biodiversity:

- Kerb side strategy
- Trees strategy
- Biodiversity in parks and green spaces
- Community gardening and urban food production
- Council use of herbicides and pesticides

Sustainable Freight Review (continuation from previous years scrutiny review)

- Air Quality (from a mitigation perspective)

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMISSION

- Air Quality (from a health perspective)
- Access to public toilets
- Adult Safeguarding
- Access to Dental Care
- Blue Badge Application Process
- Drug and Alcohol
- Pain Clinic Management

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY SCRUTINY COMMISSION

- New Allocations and Lettings Scheme
- Temporary Accommodation
- Compensation scheme for heating outages
- New Council Homes
- The Casey Review
- Interviews with the Borough Police and Fire Commanders

The chair indicated that the community engagement element of the environment and community engagement scrutiny commission would be transferring to the housing and community safety scrutiny commission. This would be ratified at the next overview and scrutiny committee meeting.

6. SOUTHWARK COUNCIL CFGS SCRUTINY IMPROVEMENT REVIEW AND ACTION PLAN

The chair informed the meeting that it was not intended for the committee to consider the majority of the recommendations at this meeting. This was due to further member discussions to be arranged with the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) in relation to the scrutiny improvement review.

RESOLVED:

1. That the guidance issued by Centre for Governance and Scrutiny for English local authorities on the use of call-in be noted.
2. That recommendation 9 of the CfGS report 'Review the call-in procedure based on benchmarking and examples of good practice' be approved.

7. SAFER SOUTHWARK COMMUNITIES - MOTION REFERRED FROM COUNCIL ASSEMBLY AND AGREED BY CABINET

Councillor Ellie Cumbo informed the meeting that the housing and community safety scrutiny commission would be continuing to look at particular findings of the Casey review.

Councillor Cumbo drew attention to the very wide ranging and concerning findings of the review and stressed to the committee that one of the findings was that local authorities did not have sufficient powers to hold the Metropolitan police service to account. She therefore expressed caution on the limits of some of the improvements that the council would wish to see, which could arise only from structural change for which the senior political and police leadership would need to commit to in order to secure change.

RESOLVED:

1. That the motion be noted.
2. That the housing and community safety scrutiny commission initially undertake the work highlighted in the motion as appropriate.
3. That the findings of the commission's review be presented to the overview and scrutiny committee.

The meeting ended at 8.06pm

CHAIR:

DATED:

Cllr Ian Wingfield
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Via email

Date: 9th September 2023

Dear Cllr Wingfield

Canada Estate Major Works

Following a request from the Rotherhithe ward councillors, including Cllr Roberts who is a member of the Overview and Scrutiny committee, we are requesting that the most recent major works that have taken place on the Canada Estate are considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The works started in October 2020 with the erection of the scaffolding to Regina Point, followed by the scaffolding going up on Columbia Point a few weeks later. When the original consultation with residents and ward councillors took place it was estimated that the works would take approximately 14 months. However the contractors were on site for almost three years, a delay of 17 months.

The litany of mistakes and delays that were caused by the contractors themselves, and indeed the Council's mishandling of the contract have meant that the total cost of the project has risen by over £1.7m from the original estimate of £4.8m to £6.5m. This will not only impact the Housing Revenue Account but will also add thousands of pounds of extra costs onto leaseholders, many of whom are struggling with the cost of living crisis.

The work that has been completed on the estate has been of a generally poor standard and in the opinion of the ward councillors does not constitute value for money. There have been numerous complaints about the windows whistling in winds and poor workmanship in the painting and decorating of the blocks. Furthermore, we believe that the consultation with residents and the ward councillors has been below what we expect from the Council and that having to rectify the initial lack of consultation led to delays in the project.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Laura Johnson Cllr Margy Newens Cllr Bethan Roberts

From: [Von Wiese, Cllr Irina](#)
To: [Roberts, Everton](#)
Cc: [Wingfield, Cllr Ian](#); [Chamberlain, Cllr Victor](#); [Cadzow-Webb, Euan](#)
Subject: Agenda for OSC 4/10
Date: 12 September 2023 10:32:49

Dear Everton,

An issue has come to our attention that we believe requires urgent scrutiny at the next OSC meeting. As revealed by [Southwark News](#), the regeneration of the Canada Estate in Rotherhithe has both vastly exceeded its original budget and ran 17 months past the original completion date. The residents of Canada Estate have been pushing for further scrutiny of the improvements programme.

Given the recent controversy around the Kirby Estate improvements, I believe it is vital that the council takes the issue seriously by adding it to the agenda for the OSC meeting on 4th October, with members of the Canada Estate TRA and relevant officers invited to speak.

I look forward to your response.

Kind regards

Irina

Irina von Wiese
Liberal Democrat Councillor
Borough & Bankside Ward
London Borough of Southwark



Item No. 5.	Classification: Open	Date: 4 October 2023	Meeting Name: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Report title:		Briefing Note - Canada Estate - 2017/18 QHIP Works	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		Rotherhithe	
From:		Desmond Vincent AD Building Safety and Major Works	

Background Information

1. This brief paper aims to respond to the concerns raised by Councillors on Major Works undertaken on Canada Estate.
2. Canada Estate forms a part of the 2017/2018 QHIP programme that commenced on the 19th of October 2020. The works were scheduled to be undertaken in 60 weeks with a planned completion date of 10th December 2021. The Practical Completion was issued on the 28th of April 2023 resulting in 72 weeks delay.
3. This scheme consists of works to all the 7 blocks (2 High Rise Blocks and 5 Low Rise Blocks) on Canada Estate and a new build of two units of two-bedroom flats. The estate is in the Bermondsey and Rotherhithe area. There are 58 leasehold properties and 193 tenanted properties. The address details are as follows: Blocks receiving QHIP works.

Table 1 - Block Address

S/No	Block Address	Block Type
1	1-80 Regina Point	High Rise Blocks
2	1-80 Columbia Point	High Rise Blocks
3	1-18 Calgary Court	Low Rise Blocks
4	1-18 Manitoba Court	Low Rise Blocks
5	1-18 Niagara Court	Low Rise Blocks
6	1-18 Scotia Court	Low Rise Blocks
7	1-21 Edmonton Court	Low Rise Blocks

4. A Gateway 2 Report was approved on 22 June 2020 to award the framework contract for a period of 60 weeks. There total scheme fund was £4,734,372.

Key Issues for Consideration

A. Duration of project

5. **Concerns raised by Ward Councillors** – “The works started in October 2020 with the erection of the scaffolding to Regina Point, followed by the scaffolding going up on Columbia Point a few weeks later. When the original consultation with residents and ward councillors took place it was estimated that the works would take approximately 14 months. However the contractors were on site for almost three years, a delay of 17 months.”
6. **Response** - The project was initially estimated to be completed in 60 weeks however practical completion was received on the 28th of April 2023 which is 72 weeks later than the expected completion date. This was due to the following reasons:
 - COVID-19
 - Extended consultation
 - Additional instructions – windows to low rise blocks, front entrance doors to High Rise (FEDs)
 - Late instructions (Pigeon netting, colour choices)

B. Cost of Project/Project Management

7. **Concerns raised by Ward Councillors** – “The litany of mistakes and delays that were caused by the contractors themselves, and indeed the Council’s mishandling of the contract have meant that the total cost of the project has risen by over £1.7m from the original estimate of £4.8m to £6.5m.”
8. **Response** – The final account is forecast at £6.3m. The reasons for the additional costs are set out within the heading **duration of project**. Additionally, lessons have been learnt and form part of the new ways of working within Major Works implemented by the AD of Building Safety and Major Works.

C. Quality of Works

9. **Concerns raised by Ward Councillors** - “The work that has been completed on the estate has been of a generally poor standard and in the opinion of the ward councillors does not constitute value for money. There have been numerous complaints about the windows whistling in winds and poor workmanship in the painting and decorating of the blocks”.
10. **Response** – During consultation with the Resident Participation Group (RPG), they raised the lack of visibility of council officers and consultants on site. A new Chartered Project Manager was engaged on behalf of the council to focus more closely on quality control on site. At the practical

completion, a walk around the estate was undertaken with the Lead Cabinet Member, and officers. A final walk around was undertaken with the RPG which produced the final snagging list to address any quality issues.

11. The windows installed have received statutory planning approval. Building Control initial inspection did not raise any concerns on materials or workmanship. Building Control are currently undertaking their final inspection and we await any feedback from that.
12. Due to the concerns of the inability of some residents to clean the windows and standards on quality of the installation raised by the RPG, the Council have also commissioned an independent consultant to review the windows, and will share the outcome of that review with the Lead Cabinet Member and ward councillors.

D. Consultation

13. **Concerns raised by Ward Councillors** - “Furthermore, we believe that the consultation with residents and the ward councillors has been below what we expect from the Council and that having to rectify the initial lack of consultation led to delays in the project.”
14. **Response** - The Council undertook several pre and post contract consultations. There were regular RPG meetings however the quantum membership of the RPG was not reflective of the wider estate and therefore the challenges for the Council was in understanding the wider requests of the residents. As a result, the Council sought additional members but unfortunately it was not able to increase the RPG membership.
15. The KPIs for resident satisfaction at Canada Estate at Quarter 4 (March 2023) was 99%. Of the 250 residents on the Estate, we received 231 responses. At the recent AGM held on the 6th September 2023, some residents voiced concerns and scepticism on these figures.
16. It was agreed at the AGM that a further series of meetings will be held to resolve concerns. In regards to Ward Councillor briefings, the key lesson learnt is that a project that raised many challenges should have had regular briefings to inform and present mitigations. Our practice going forward will incorporate and embed regular Ward Councillor briefings on major works.

Item No. 8.	Classification: Open	Date: 13 June 2023	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Keeping Education Strong Recommendations	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Cabinet Member:		Councillor Jasmine Ali, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Refugees	

FOREWORD - COUNCILLOR JASMINE ALI, DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND REFUGEES.

Education in Southwark has never been stronger following our £200m investment in school buildings and the subsequent 97% Ofsted *Good* or *Outstanding* ratings. Yet steep demographic change in the capital present real challenge.

This paper follows the Keeping Education Strong Strategy that I brought to Cabinet in December 2022 outlining the challenge and our approach to keeping education strong.

The paper is to update Cabinet on the current school's plan. The strategy follows the principle to work *with* and not to *do to* schools and represents a collaboration between our education department, Southwark schools, including academy schools and those governed by the Catholic and Church of England diocesan bodies.

The plan benefits from external oversight from an independent consultancy firm Isos, their work informs our recommendations. In addition we have undertaken a detailed Equalities Impact Assessment for this work – balancing the impacts of the negative disruption for those who need to move school and the positives of full schools and therefore better funding.

The Isos work (Appendix 2) is along with the *Equalities Impact Assessment for the Keeping Education Strong* strategy and the *Equalities Impact and Needs Assessment for the recommendations* set out in the appendices to the report.

What is the plan?

This work started with a desk top school rolls assessment of 74 Southwark schools followed by a further deep dive and rolls assessment into 49 schools.

Following this intense work we agreed to recommendations made by our independent consultants to manage surplus capacity in Southwark's primary schools down to 10%.

The recommendations are that seven schools reduce their Pupil Admission Numbers (PAN) they are; Bessemer Grange, Goose Green, Grange, St Joseph's Infants, Rye Oak, St Francis and St Paul's.

In addition three schools are asked to consider amalgamation with neighbouring schools, they are; Comber Grove, Harris Free Primary and St Mary Magdalene.

Actions taken outside of the scope of the strategy

Some schools have already taken remedial action for a range of reasons including falling rolls. This has clearly contributed to a more positive outcome than first anticipated. Remember there were reports that high numbers of schools faced financial pressure.

In 2018 we asked the schools adjudicator to reduce the PAN numbers for 13 schools, in 2021 we reduced the PAN numbers for a further six schools. Two faith schools have subsequently closed and today we are looking at the closure of a community school.

In advance of the recommendations - Coburg and Camelot Primary Schools are already amalgamating. In addition, St Jude's Church of England Primary School and Charlotte Sharman Foundation Primary School are at an early and exploratory stage of seeing how they might come together.

Southwark Council will support everyone impacted by falling school rolls

The council will support everyone that is impacted by proposed change - including school staff, parents and not least our children. Council education staff are and will continue to work with families and schools to secure places in good or outstanding neighbouring schools. I have briefed all councillors on how they too can support families.

Lobbying

Following my letter in 2021 to the Education Secretary highlighting the issue of falling school rolls and asked for support – backed by many London authorities. We have secured a cross party London wide lobby for government support.

Southwark believe that schools should be funded as organisations, not per capita and lobby for a new schools funding formula to keep our schools open with smaller class sizes. To continue school improvement, enabling our children and young people to get the best possible education, narrow attainment gaps and improve outcomes for all.

Supporting schools and communities

This extensive work on falling school rolls exists because of a demographic crisis in London and beyond.

We are not the only authority affected by this - we are the first to apply a comprehensive strategic approach. It is hoped this work will be instrumental in supporting our schools and communities through this difficult and challenging time. It will enable us to be ready in future years for further demographic shifts, in the event we see *fewer* or *more* pupils in Southwark.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Cabinet agree to the following pan reductions and amalgamations:
 - A) That the council continues to have discussions with the schools, Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) or Diocesan bodies concerned for the following schools about reducing their PAN:
 - i. Bessemer Grange Primary School
 - ii. Goose Green Primary School
 - iii. Grange Primary School
 - iv. Rye Oak Primary School
 - v. St Francis Roman Catholic Primary School
 - vi. St Joseph's Camberwell Catholic Infants School
 - vii. St Paul's Church of England Academy

Note, as regards changes to the published admission number of a school, these can be made by the relevant admission authority. For community schools this is the council. For other schools the council will need to discuss their proposals with the relevant admission authority. Where it is proposed to vary admission arrangements already in place, this will need the agreement of the schools adjudicator after consultation with any relevant school.

- B) That the council continues to have discussions with the schools, Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) or Diocesan bodies about proposing a consultation on an amalgamation for the following schools:
 - i. Harris Academy Free (Academy Free, PA3, Rye Lane) with Harris Primary Academy Peckham Park (Academy, PA3, Peckham)
 - ii. Comber Grove primary school with another Southwark primary school to be identified.
 - iii. St Mary Magdalene Church of England primary school with another Southwark primary school to be identified.

Note, statutory processes apply to any proposal to alter a maintained

school. Where amalgamations are recommended that will include the closure of a maintained school any proposals will be subject to statutory consultation and publication under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, and in accordance with regulations and guidance issued under that Act.

Any decisions to close a maintained school will ultimately need to be made by the Cabinet.

Decisions regarding academies will be made by the relevant academy trust in consultation with the Department for Education.

2. That the Cabinet note the report and appendices.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. Local authorities have a legal duty to provide sufficient school places, in the right location, for the population. The number of school places required fluctuates over time as a result of local and national changes, for example, in birth rates, migration and housing.
4. Between 2010 and 2016, as demand and projected demand across London increased rapidly, Southwark, and other local authorities, needed to add primary school places. Within Southwark, the number of children entering Reception grew from approximately 2950 in 2007/08 to nearly 3600 in 2015/16: a 22% increase. The number of school places was increased through provision of additional classes and expanding some schools in order to meet demand.
5. Since 2016, we have seen a steady decline in demand for primary school places across London, including Southwark and its neighbours. The reasons for this decline are covered in more detail in the Keeping Education Strong Strategy (see background papers) and are complex: primarily a declining birth rate, and more recently, the impact of Brexit and the Covid pandemic.
6. This means we have seen pupil numbers fall across our primary schools. Schools are funded per pupil, and so, as pupil numbers fall, this places an increasing pressure on school budgets, posing a financial risk to the council for its maintained schools, and will ultimately have an impact on quality of education. Currently, 97% of Southwark's schools are judged Good or Outstanding by Ofsted.
7. By September 2022, Southwark had considerable over capacity in the primary sector, with 924 Reception year (Year R) vacancies and 5,855 vacant places across school year groups Year R to Year 6. A number of actions to address this had already been taken by the Local Authority, including: school mergers, PAN reductions and the closure of a primary school. GLA projections anticipate that primary reception demand overall

will continue to decline until at least September 2031 and, most likely, beyond this date.

8. Across the system, we currently have an average vacancy rate of 22%. The Local Authority has a duty to ensure that there are sufficient places for children in its schools, and to ensure that there is enough space maintained throughout the year for any in year changes. This is usually managed at between 5-10% spare capacity.
9. The Local Authority has a number of levers it can pull to manage surplus capacity: it can restrict the opening of new community schools; it can request changes to Published Admissions Numbers (PAN) in schools; and can propose amalgamations of schools that are no longer sustainable, which would result in the closure of at least one school.
10. Between 2019-2023, Southwark, in consultation with its school leaders, implemented a number of changes to manage capacity, including reducing PAN in 17 schools and two schools losing bulge classes. These actions removed 495 Reception places, which, once they have worked through the system, will result in 2100 primary school places being removed by 2028. However, these changes have not kept pace with the continuing decline in birth rate, and in 2022/23.
11. This means that further changes will need to be made in our schools to bring the surplus capacity down to the 5%-10% stated above in paragraph 9.
12. In 2021, Senior Local Authority officers began to work closely with members and with primary school leaders across the borough to address concerns about surplus capacity in schools and to develop a set of principles for a planned approach and strategy in order to reduce the surplus capacity across our primary schools.
13. The “Keeping Education Strong: A strategy for future proofing primary schools and protecting the quality of education in Southwark” report (linked to in Background papers) was ratified by Cabinet in December 2022. It provides detail of the strategic approach Southwark developed with its school leaders and which it has applied to managing its surplus capacity in the borough.
14. The strategy aims to ensure school places are sufficient in number, character, diversity and equipment to provide all children with the opportunity of receiving a good quality education; to maintain parental choice of schools; to support schools to be financially sustainable in the medium and long term; to ensure that we have the right number of places in the right areas; to minimise disruption and distress to children and families, communities and staff, so that if a school move is required, it is only required once.

15. The strategy prioritised working closely with school leaders and coordinating communications, as well as receiving independent oversight, in order to provide a fair and transparent process that anticipates and mitigates any potential disproportional impact on communities.
16. However, outside of this strategy, some schools had already started to make their own proposals for change. These proposals are currently (May 2023) at various stages, from agreement to close St Francesca Cabrini RC school (see link to background paper below), consultation for closure-Townsend primary school, and amalgamation of Coburg and Camelot schools. Early exploration of the possibility of an amalgamation between St Jude's Church of England primary school and Charlotte Sharman primary school is underway.
17. An independent research and advisory company, with a track record of working with the public sector, [Isos Partnership](#), was commissioned to support the London Borough of Southwark over the autumn and spring terms, to review publicly available data to provide an independent view of the health and context of schools and pupil numbers.
18. After ratification of the Keeping Education Strong strategy by Cabinet in December 2022, Local Authority officers worked with school leaders to conduct a number of exercises to identify where surplus capacity was causing the greatest concern. This included an assessment of pupil rolls and trends across the whole primary estate, including in academies and faith schools.
19. The results of this assessment provided a group of 49 schools (appendix 3) for further evaluation, based on an agreed, broader range of criteria including: pupil rolls; quality of education; budget health; buildings and the estate; local issues.
20. Isos consultants scrutinised and tested the data analysis carried out by Southwark across primary schools which were potentially at risk from falling rolls, alongside its own independent analysis, and made a series of recommendations for possible future school reorganisations based on an objective analysis of the data. The final report from Isos Partnership is attached as appendix 2, and a summary can be found below:
21. The work Isos undertook with Southwark had three distinct stages: firstly, confirming direction of travel; secondly, collating agreed data to begin considering possibilities; and the third stage, agreeing analysis.
22. They used these data to start making an assessment of the areas in which changes should be recommended. Schools were broken down further from large planning areas to local groups of neighbouring schools to provide a more meaningful assessment.
23. A series of workshops were held with LA officers to discuss initial ideas for meeting the declining school population needs. These workshops enabled

Isos to check their rationale for recommendation- making, and refine their understanding of the likely impact of changes, both on provision and the sustainability of quality future provision.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

24. The recommendations for Cabinet are based on the outcomes of the work with the Isos consultants, which can be found in full in the report in appendix 2. These are also summarised in paragraphs 26- 31 below.
25. We believe the proposed actions will help us achieve our target of reducing surplus capacity to an acceptable excess of 10%.
26. Based on the current numbers of pupils, look to remove a further 630 places as a matter of priority.
27. Keep a watching brief on actual numbers and set a target to take out a minimum of 630 and a maximum of 1,773 places over the next five years.
28. Manage the uncertainty of fluctuating pupil numbers by approaching this reduction in phases and prioritising options that build flexibility into the system.
29. Look to reduce primary numbers by around 1 form of entry in the Bermondsey, Kennington and North Dulwich areas, around 2 forms of entry in the Camberwell area and up to 3 forms of entry in the Peckham and Nunhead area.
30. Southwark's councillors and officers continue to work with schools to both ensure that currently planned reductions are realised and that up to 8 further forms of entry are removed from primary schools in a phased approach. Suggestions for which schools might be approached, and why, are set out in Appendix 3 of the Isos report. These form the basis of our recommendations.
31. Recommendations:
 - A)** That the council continues to have discussions with the schools, Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) or Diocesan bodies concerned about reducing their PAN:
 - i. Bessemer Grange Primary School
 - ii. Goose Green Primary School
 - iii. Grange Primary School
 - iv. Rye Oak Primary School
 - v. St Francis Roman Catholic Primary School
 - vi. St Joseph's Camberwell Catholic Infants School
St Paul's Church of England Academy/

Note, as regards changes to the published admission number of a school, these

can be made by the relevant admission authority. For community schools this is the council. For other schools the council will need to discuss their proposals with the relevant admission authority. Where it is proposed to vary admission arrangements already in place, this will need the agreement of the schools adjudicator after consultation with any relevant school.

- B)** That the council continues to have discussions with the schools, Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) or Diocesan bodies about proposing a consultation on an amalgamation:

Harris Primary Academy Peckham Park (Academy, PA3, Peckham) with Harris Academy Free (Academy Free, PA3, Rye Lane)

Comber Grove primary school with another Southwark primary school- to be identified.

St Mary Magdalene Church of England primary school with another Southwark primary school- to be identified.

Note, statutory processes apply to any proposal to alter a maintained school. Where amalgamations are recommended that will include the closure of a maintained school any proposals will be subject to statutory consultation and publication under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, and in accordance with regulations and guidance issued under that Act.

Any decisions to close a maintained school will ultimately need to be made by the Cabinet.

Decisions regarding academies will be made by the relevant academy trust in consultation with the Department for Education.

Policy framework implications

32. Southwark's Borough Plan commits to giving residents "a great start in life", which includes closing the attainment gap and committing to 100% inclusion of all pupils in schools.
33. These recommendations will strengthen the ability of Southwark's primary schools to deliver a full and high-quality education to its pupils.

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

Community impact statement

34. Our schools are the heart of their communities and we know that making any changes to them can be unsettling, both to the families of the children attending them and for the staff. We are using this approach to mitigate disruption and have been careful to develop the strategy and our approach to making changes in as transparent a way as possible, and have supported our school leaders to help keep their families and communities informed,

and our communications team to help keep residents informed.

Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement

35. An Equalities impact statement has been completed for the Keeping Education Strong Strategy (background papers and appendix 1). In addition, for the purposes of being able to consider equalities in making the recommendations, further equalities data was collected and analysed around ethnicity, Special Educational Needs and Disability, and economic disadvantage (those eligible for Free School Meals). These data can be seen in appendix 3. There will be further, individual Equalities Impact Needs Analyses (EINAs) completed for each school directly affected and recommended to make a change. These are being created now.
36. On the following contextual factors: ethnicity, SEND, Free School Meals, the vast majority of Southwark's schools are above the national average.
37. Reducing the number of schools will increase the capacity to meet the needs of the most vulnerable and to strengthen diversity across all of our schools.

Health impact statement

38. We understand that making changes, such as having to move school or employment, can have an impact on mental health. We have provided school leaders of all of our schools with access to support resources for their staff and have also provided support to our children and families through our education services.

Climate change implications

39. Southwark has many primary schools in close proximity to one another and we actively encourage children to travel to school on foot, by bicycle or on public transport. We do not anticipate any of the changes above having a significant impact on this.
40. As we repurpose any school buildings for alternative educational use, we will have an opportunity to ask new providers to invest in making them more environmentally friendly and moving towards our ambition of net zero.

Resource implications

41. There are additional human resource requirements to manage the change process.
42. There are also costs attached to closing down a school, including data storage, furniture storage, etc.

Legal implications

43. Please refer to the Assistant Chief Executive- Governance and Assurance's comments below.

Financial implications

44. The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Schools Block, which is awarded to fund education provision, is primarily calculated using pupil numbers and pupil characteristics. Consequently, there is expected to be minimal impact on the amount of the grant as a consequence of the closure, amalgamation and PAN reductions. With a similar amount of income spread over a smaller number of schools, there will be a positive impact on the financial position of the remaining schools.
45. The anticipated actions within the strategy will also incur costs such as redundancies, site security, uniforms for children transferring to other schools, archiving/disposal. In order to minimise the costs of closure it is important that the school and officers work together to maximize redeployment opportunities to existing staff to alternative, suitable positions.

Consultation

46. We have consulted extensively with our primary school leaders throughout this process, by holding workshops and webinars, hosting presentations at different forums, and setting up stakeholder consultation groups to inform how we move forward. We have supported school leaders to keep their parents and communities informed by providing key messages from our communications teams and sharing presentations and key information.
47. In addition, we have kept informed and consulted with other stakeholders (Trades Unions, Councillors, senior council officers and the media) at key milestones throughout this process.
48. As we move to proceed with the recommendations made by Isos, we will continue to discuss how to move forward with the schools directly involved and to keep informed all schools and stakeholders so they are able to manage any potential impact of changes on their communities.
49. All statutory consultation processes in regards to any agreed closures (St Francesca Cabrini) have been followed, and where a statutory process is required (as will be the case for any amalgamations) this will be followed. Please see Background Papers for a link to the statutory process for opening or closing a maintained school, which includes details of how to consult.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Head of Procurement

50. There are no procurement matters for consideration.

Assistant Chief Executive – Governance and Assurance

51. The council has duties under the Education Act 1996 to secure that there are sufficient schools for providing primary and secondary education for their area. These schools need to be sufficient in number, character and equipment to provide for all pupils the opportunity of appropriate education. Appropriate education means education that offers such variety of instruction and training as may be desirable in view of the pupils' different ages abilities and aptitudes and the different periods for which they may be expected to remain at school including practical instruction and training appropriate to their different needs. In exercising these functions the Act requires councils to have particular regard to the need for securing that primary and secondary education are provided in separate schools and the need for securing that special educational provision is made for pupils who have special educational needs. In practice, discharging these duties requires the council to actively monitor demand for school places, and plan to match supply to demand.
52. The report sets out some proposals for next steps to make changes to primary school provision in the light of the current over capacity.
53. As regards changes to the published admission number of a school, these can be made by the relevant admission authority. For community schools this is the council. For other schools the council will need to discuss their proposals with the relevant admission authority. Where it is proposed to vary admission arrangements already in place, this will need the agreement of the schools adjudicator after consultation with any relevant school.
54. Statutory processes apply to any proposal to alter a maintained school. Where amalgamations are recommended that will include the closure of a maintained school any proposals will be subject to statutory consultation and publication under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, and in accordance with regulations and guidance issued under that Act.
55. Any decisions to close a maintained school will ultimately need to be made by the Cabinet.
56. Decisions regarding academies will be made by the relevant academy trust in consultation with the Department for Education.
57. Cabinet is reminded that the public sector equality duty under section 149 Equality Act 2010, applies to the exercise of these functions. This requires that due regard be given to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between people with

protected characteristics and those with none. Cabinet should take account of the Equality Impact Needs Analysis included as an Appendix to the strategy and give this due regard in considering this report. Any proposals to alter a maintained school will be subject to a full equality impact assessment which will be submitted for consideration when taking any relevant decisions.

Strategic Director of Finance REF: [CAS23/19]

58. The Strategic Director of Finance notes the recommendations in this report to agree the strategy and approach for future-proofing the quality and supply of school places. Noting the rapidly declining financial situation across the school estate it is important that the proposed approach is implemented robustly and that the schools estate is rightsized as swiftly as possible, both to ensure the sustainability of the schools and to protect the financial stability of the Local Authority.
59. Schools governing bodies have a responsibility to manage their delegated budgets in accordance with the Southwark Scheme for Financing Schools, which in turn is based on national regulations. The scheme was last updated with effect from April 2023. Therefore, any revenue consequences flowing from the changes contained within the report to individual schools delegated budgets will need to be managed closely and carefully by schools having due regard to the provisions set out in that document and any existing financial arrangements agreed with the Local Authority set out in the scheme.

Other officers

60. There were none.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Keeping Education Strong: A strategy for future proofing primary schools and protecting the quality of education in Southwark	Education Directorate, Children and Adult Services, 4 th Floor 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	Poppy Charlton 0207 525 5000
Link (please copy and paste into browser): https://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s110486/Appendix%201%20Place%20planning%20across%20Southwarks%20Primary%20Schools%20A%20Strategy%20for%20future-%20proofing%20quali.pdf		
Annual School Place Planning Report, October 2022	Education Directorate, Children and Adult Services, 4 th Floor 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	Poppy Charlton 0207 525 5000
Link (please copy and paste into browser): https://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=50029861&PlanId=737&RPID=8764558		
Closure of St Francesca Cabrini Primary School, Cabinet Report, December 2022	Education Directorate, Children and Adult Services, 4 th Floor 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	Poppy Charlton 0207 525 5000
Link (please copy and paste into browser): https://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s110487/Report%20Closure%20of%20St%20Francesca%20Cabrini%20Primary%20School.pdf		
Managing Surplus Places in London Schools	Education Directorate, Children and Adult Services, 4 th Floor 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	Poppy Charlton 0207 525 5000
Link (please copy and paste into browser): https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/download/file/fid/29061		
Southwark's Borough Plan	Education Directorate, Children and Adult Services, 4 th Floor 160 Tooley Street,	Poppy Charlton 0207 525 5000

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
	London SE1 2QH	
Link (please copy and paste into browser): https://starfishsearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Southwark-Borough-Plan.pdf		
Opening and closing maintained Schools	The Department for Education	The Department for Education
Link (please copy and paste into browser): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1131568/Opening_and_closing_maintained_schools_Jan_2023.pdf		
Southwark Council's Equality Objectives	Education Directorate, Children and Adult Services, 4 th Floor 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	Poppy Charlton 0207 525 5000
Link (please copy and paste into browser): https://www.southwark.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/equality-and-diversity/equality-objectives		
Southwark Council's response to tackling the climate emergency	Education Directorate, Children and Adult Services, 4 th Floor 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	Poppy Charlton 0207 525 5000
Link (please copy and paste into browser): https://www.southwark.gov.uk/environment/climate-emergency		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Keeping Education Strong: EQIA
Appendix 2	Isos Partnership Southwark Primary Place Planning - Final Report
Appendix 3	Supplementary data: List of 49 schools, equalities piano charts, borough-wide changes slide, criteria and templates

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Jasmine Ali, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Refugees	
Lead Officer	David Quirke-Thornton, Strategic Director of Children and Adult Services	
Report Author	Nina Dohel, Director of Education	
Version	Final	
Dated	5 June 2023	
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
List other officers here	N/a	N/a
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	5 June 2023	



Equality Impact and Needs Analysis

Section 1: Equality impact and needs analysis details

<p>Proposed policy/decision/business plan to which this equality analysis relates</p>	<p>This analysis relates to the recommendations made to manage surplus capacity in Southwark's primary schools in order to manage down surplus capacity to a maximum of 10%.</p> <p>These recommendations are to reduce the Published Admissions Number (PAN) in seven primary schools and to amalgamate 3 primary schools.</p> <p>Recommendations to reduce the PAN:</p> <p>Bessemer Grange Goose Green (academy) Grange St Joseph's Infants Rye Oak St Francis St Paul's</p> <p>Recommendations to amalgamate:</p> <p>Comber Grove Harris Free Primary (Free school/ Academy) St Mary Magdalene</p> <p>It should be noted that where a recommendation has been made about an academy or free school, the school itself is its own admissions authority and Southwark Council cannot make a decision or propose any change to its PAN or whether it remains open. In these cases, the Council is working closely with the Regional Director (Academies) Multi-Academy Trusts or free schools themselves to support their decision-making and a full Equalities Impact Needs Analysis would need to be developed for those schools by the respective Trust.</p> <p>The recommendations are based on work undertaken by Isos Partnership alongside officers, councillors and school leaders.</p> <p>This work forms part of the Keeping Education Strong strategy (Appendix 1 Place planning across Southwarks Primary Schools A strategy for future-proofing quali.pdf), ratified in December 2022, which has its own EQIA, based on data which was accurate at the time of writing.</p>
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	It should be acknowledged that the data in this analysis has been updated to reflect the current situation and so may be different from previous reports and analyses.
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Equality analysis author					
Strategic Director:	David Quirke-Thornton				
Department	Children's Services	Division	Education		
Period analysis undertaken	January-April 2023				
Date of review (if applicable)					
Sign-off	Nina Dohel	Position	Director of Education	Date	

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

1.1 Brief description of policy/decision/business plan

The Keeping Education Strong (KES) strategy was developed to manage the challenges arising from a continuing trend of falling rolls which has led to increasing surplus capacity in Southwark's Primary Schools. The strategy sets out a borough-wide approach to reduce surplus capacity down to a workable 10% from the current 22%.

Following the Cabinet approval of the Strategy in December 2022, work commenced to identify those schools where capacity significantly exceeded demand and to explore further criteria around rolls, quality, finance, buildings and local issues. This work produced a number of schools and council officers worked with an independent consultancy, Isos, to recommend options for managing their surplus capacity.

The options for change were to reduce Published Admissions Numbers (PAN) across seven primary schools and/ or to amalgamate three schools. In an amalgamation it is usual for one of the two schools being amalgamated to close. The primary schools identified represent a cross section of designations: community, voluntary aided and academy.

The positive impact of managing surplus capacity by reducing PAN is that the disruption is minimal for current pupils, school communities, and staff. However, it is a much slower way of reaching a sustainable level of surplus capacity, taking up to six years to come into full effect. In the meantime, while those changes run through, the school still needs to manage its finances carefully in order to be able to deliver the best quality of education, and it may struggle to balance budgets while managing the previous and current situations simultaneously. There are no negative impacts of reducing PANs identified here as these schools have already been working at the admissions numbers we are recommending they now formally reduce to.

The benefits of closing a school through amalgamation are that:

- children across both schools would receive more resource to support their learning and achievement.
- further strengthens the receiving school for the long term
- immediately reduces surplus capacity across the school system.
- for children in a closing school, there is a guaranteed place, with their friends, at the receiving school.
- staff would be moved across to the new school and there were no or fewer reductions in the workforce,

The negative effects of an amalgamation might be that:

- parents/ carers choose not to take up a place in the amalgamated schools. In this case, there are sufficient vacancies across Southwark's schools of which 97% are good or outstanding,
- where two schools merge, there may need to be a re-structure if the number of staff in the amalgamated school are more than is required. This could result in some redundancies,
- whilst children moving to a new school will be in fuller classes, which are better resourced, moving schools can be a disruptive experience for children and their families, with disruption to education and social groups and additional financial costs relating to travel and uniform. In this case we have planned mitigations for this in place, including a guaranteed place for children in the school their school is amalgamating with, financial support for uniforms and travel, open days for pupils, and coffee mornings for parents/families.
- a key negative impact of a merger is likely to be the anxiety it causes for some children who are emotionally unsettled by the move. Overall this should be outweighed by the positive impacts of being in a better resourced school mitigations to minimise how unsettling the move is for children, especially those who are already experiencing poor

mental health or learning difficulties. In these cases we have planned mitigations for this in place set out in the body of the report.

The remainder of this analysis details further the likely impact and mitigations on specific groups.

Section 3: Overview of service users and key stakeholders consulted

2. Service users and stakeholders	
Key users of the department or service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children (2-11 years old) attending a primary, infants, juniors or attached nursery setting in Southwark • Parents, carers and families of those children. • School staff (teaching or non-teaching) • Governors of those schools • Local Authority departments (Children's Social Care, Education)
Key stakeholders were/are involved in this policy/decision/business plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head teachers of all primary schools in Southwark • Governors of all primary schools in Southwark • Elected members of Southwark Council • Leadership teams in Education and Children's and Adults' services • Finance, Sustainable development, Schools' HR, Legal, Communications colleagues • Directors of Diocesan Boards • Regional Director (Academy sector)

Section 4: Pre-implementation equality impact and needs analysis

<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>The actions resulting from the KES strategy will be 7 PAN reductions, as well as closures or amalgamations of 3 schools.</p> <p>There are no negative impacts of reducing PANs identified here as these schools have already been working at the admissions numbers we are recommending they now formally reduce to.</p> <p>A proposal to amalgamate would have the greatest potential impact on children in Years 5 and 6 (ages 9-11) as they come to the end of their primary schooling.</p> <p>A strong benefit of an amalgamation is that all children whatever their age are guaranteed a place in the school with which their school is amalgamating.</p> <p>Outside of this broad consideration, the proposals to close schools will not disproportionately affect particular age groups.</p>	<p>The impact of amalgamation or closure would result in stronger long term socio-economic benefits as children will be attending a school that is better resourced and sustainable. Particularly for those most vulnerable.</p>
<p>Equality information on which above analysis is based</p>	<p>Socio-Economic data on which above analysis is based</p>
<p>Statistics: school and pupil numbers - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p>	<p>No data available</p>
<p>Mitigating and/or improvement actions to be taken</p>	
<p>Our admissions team will support children, families in securing a place in a good or outstanding school in the immediate area.</p> <p>In any school closure there will be a transition plan for years 5 and 6 in particular.</p>	

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.

There are no negative impacts of reducing PANs identified here as these schools have already been working at the admissions numbers we are recommending they now formally reduce to.

Although any change in school can have an unsettling effect on children, the amalgamation/closure of primary schools will have a negligible effect on disabilities for pupils.

We expect a positive impact as the facilities and services offered in remaining schools will be better resourced and further enhanced by the additional financial resource that additional pupils joining the school will bring.

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

There is insufficient contextual evidence to say whether disability is concentrated in particular socio-economic groups, more that disability may affect certain economically disadvantaged groups disproportionately, irrespective of prevalence.

Data is not available on socio-economic impact of school changes related to disability.

The impact of amalgamation or closure would result in stronger long term socio-economic benefits as children will be attending a school that is better resourced and sustainable. Particularly for those most vulnerable.

Equality information on which above analysis is based

Socio-economic data on which above analysis is based

No central record of pupil or staff disability is maintained by the LA, but a proxy measure is the number of children with Education and Healthcare Plans (EHCPs), or pupils identified as "SEND Plus". The Source for this data is the School Census January 2023 (EHCPs and SEN Support)

School	Category	EHCP	SEND Plus
St Joseph's Infants RC	PAN Reduction	1.7%	9.5%
St Mary Magdalene CE	Amalgamation/closure	4.5%	32.1%
Comber Grove	Amalgamation/closure	2.4%	12.4%
Harris Free Peckham	Amalgamation/closure	2.4%	8.0%
Goose Green	PAN Reduction	2.0%	18.0%
Rye Oak	PAN Reduction	9.4%	28.9%
Grange	PAN Reduction	3.4%	21.5%
St Paul's CE Academy	PAN Reduction	1.6%	14.1%
Bessemer Grange	PAN Reduction	2.7%	12.8%
St Francis	PAN Reduction	4.1%	18.7%
Schools in Scope (PAN)		3.6%	17.6%
Schools in Scope (Amalgamations)		3.1%	17.5%
Schools in Scope		3.4%	17.6%
Southwark		3.2%	14.3%
London		4.1%	11.7%

As can be seen from the figures above, the schools where a PAN reduction is recommended have generally a lower level of EHCPs than Southwark as a whole, with the exception of St Francis which has an internal resource base and Rye Oak, which has a formal resource base.

For children with SEND Support, four of the seven schools recommended for a PAN Reduction have higher than the Southwark average percentage of pupils. Two of these (Rye Oak and St Francis) have Resource Bases, so you would expect to see this. However, Goose Green and Grange do not have Resource Bases.

For the schools where an amalgamation has been recommended, Comber Grove and Harris Free both have a percentage of children with EHCPs and SEN Support, which is lower than the Southwark average. However, St Mary Magdalene's has a percentage of children with EHCPs and SEN Support which is higher than the average.

Where the percentage is larger the number of children in the school is much smaller.

Mitigating and/or improvement actions to be taken:

Children from the schools affected who have EHCPs and SEND Plus are being closely supported to ensure their needs are met whichever schools they are proceeding to after amalgamation or closure.

The SEND service will review EHCPs for any children moving schools, and provide additional support for transition.

The educational psychology teams will work with school leaders and services to provide strategies for supporting children experiencing anxiety and/or are struggling with their mental health.

Gender reassignment:

- The process of transitioning from one gender to another.

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.

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

Information relating to gender reassignment is not collected about children in our primary schools. If this data was collected, it is likely to be in small numbers and may lead to identifiable data.

Southwark Schools ensure that they comply with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010 and The Equality Act 2010: advice for schools, under which sexual orientation and gender reassignment are amongst the protected characteristics.

Southwark schools adhere to the 1998 Human Rights Act and 2004 Gender Recognition Act and follow statutory guidance in relation to gender reassignment.

There is no record of staff undergoing gender reassignment at any of the primary schools listed, but, were this to be the case, the same statutory guidance around equalities would be followed in any redeployment or redundancy process.

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

There will be little or no potential socio-economic impact/ needs/issues arising from socio-economic disadvantage resulting from gender reassignment.

The impact of amalgamation or closure would result in stronger long term socio-economic benefits as children will be attending a school that is better resourced and sustainable. Particularly for those most vulnerable.

Equality information on which above analysis is based.	Socio-economic data on which above analysis is based
<p>Data is not collected for children, parents or carers on gender reassignment. In the 2021 Census, 0.6% of the UK population identified themselves as not having the same gender they were born with. In London, this rose to 1.4%, and Southwark, 1.2%. Such a percentage would mean that the lack of a transgender staff member would not be statistically significant. (Source, ONS Census 2021).</p> <p>There may be a number of children/ staff members going through any part of a gender reassignment process that we are unaware of. We would expect that they will be known to the school and the school is providing appropriate support. We signpost to advice, services and resources to support any child or adult going through this process.</p>	<p>No appropriate or useful data has been identified.</p>
<p>Mitigating and/or improvement actions to be taken</p>	
<p>Regular updates and reminders to schools to review that their policies and processes are up to date.</p> <p>Provide signposting to schools to advice/ support on gender reassignment.</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>	
Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan	Potential socio-economic impacts/ needs/issues arising from socio-economic disadvantage (positive and negative)
<p>The Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022, makes it illegal for a child under the under the age of 18 to enter a marriage in any circumstances.</p> <p>In relation to civil partnerships, both parties must be aged 18 or over.</p> <p>The marital status of the parents or carers of school pupils forms no part of the admissions process, and children are admitted based on religious or distance criteria alone.</p>	<p>As mentioned in the adjacent “potential impacts of the proposed policy”, the marital status of the parents or carers of school pupils forms no part of the admissions process. Children are admitted based on sibling, medical or distance criteria alone. Therefore there are no realistic socio-economic impacts, needs or issues arising from socio-economic disadvantage relating to marital status.</p>

Equality information on which above analysis is based	Socio-economic data on which above analysis is based
<p>As the legal age for marrying is 18 years old, this falls outside of the age scope for children of primary school age.</p> <p>Information on the marital/civil partnership status of parents and staff at Southwark schools is not available.</p> <p>In Southwark, 26.9% of adults over 16 years of age are married or in a civil partnership, compared with 39.7% for London 44.5% for England [source: ONS 2021 Census)</p>	<p>No data has been identified that suggests a socio-economic disadvantage arising from civil partnership as compared with marriage or single status.</p>
Mitigating actions to be taken	
<p>Marriage or civil partnership is a protected characteristic, protected under equalities and employment law.</p> <p>Due process under statutory guidance will be followed in any redundancy or redeployment process.</p>	<p>No appropriate or useful data has been identified.</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.	
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>Pregnancy and maternity are unlikely to directly involve children of primary age, and the LA does not collect data on primary school children who are pregnant. This would be a safeguarding issue.</p> <p>The pregnancy and maternity rate in Southwark has been falling for many years, so, given the extensive level of vacancies, it is also unlikely to affect parental choice.</p> <p>As regards staffing, school employees' contracts mean that they are paid for some of their pregnancy and maternity leave, and this would continue if a staff member were redeployed to another school. The pregnancy or maternity/ paternity leave status of a staff member or potential applicant should form no part of the recruitment or the redeployment process, so should not negatively impact on staffing.</p>	<p>As mentioned in the adjacent "<i>potential impacts of the proposed policy</i>", pregnancy/ maternity status of the parents/carers of school pupils forms no part of the admissions process, and children not are admitted based this status. Similarly, this status is not part of the recruitment process. Therefore there are no realistic socio-economic impacts, needs or issues arising from socio-economic disadvantage relating to pregnancy or maternity status.</p>
Equality information on which above analysis is based	Socio-economic data on which above analysis is based

Fertility is measured at a range of rates and geographies by the ONS. These include the “GFR” and “TFR”. The “*General Fertility Rate (GFR)*” is the number of live births per 1,000 women aged 15-44. The Total Fertility Rate (TFR) is the number of births per woman aged 15-44

Area	GFR	TFR
Southwark	44	1.14
Inner London	48	1.28
London	56	1.52
England	56	1.62

(Source, GLA/ONS 2021 (latest figures))

From this, we can see Southwark has low fertility rate compared the rest of London and England. This is another explanation, together with outmigration – why pupil numbers in Southwark are falling.

No appropriate or useful data has been identified.

Mitigating and/or improvement actions to be taken

We will encourage schools to review and update their policies in line with their statutory obligations towards the protected characteristics relating to pregnancy and maternity.

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.

The ethnic diversity of Southwark schools is much greater among our children and young people than our adult population. Southwark primary pupils are **78.5%** Black, Asian or minority ethnic, compared to **62.5%** of Southwark’s population as a whole.

There are no negative impacts of reducing PANs recommended here as these schools have already been working at the admissions numbers we are recommending they now formally reduce to.

The positive impact of reducing the PAN or amalgamating two schools into one will be that the school will be more sustainable financially in order to be able to provide a high quality of education.

There is no evidence available to show that closure or amalgamations of schools and PAN reductions would be likely to reduce diversity in the area. Given the diversity of Southwark’s schools, it is more likely that the recommendations would increase diversity across more schools.

Southwark schools adhere to the Equality Act 2010 and are committed to having a diverse workforce. Legally, an employer is not allowed to discriminate

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

The impact of amalgamation or closure would result in stronger long term socio-economic benefits as children will be attending a school that is better resourced and sustainable. Particularly for those most vulnerable.

against job candidates or staff on the basis of race. Southwark school employers are expected to take measures to make their recruitment process more inclusive and their organisations more diverse.																						
Equality information on which above analysis is based		Socio-economic data on which above analysis is based																				
School	Category	Banladeshi	Indian	Pakistani	Any Other Asian Background	Black African	Black Caribbean	Any Other Black Background	Chinese	White and Black African	White and Black Caribbean	White and Asian	Any Other Mixed Background	White British	White Irish	Gypsy / Roma	Traveller of Irish Heritage	Any Other White Background	Any Other Ethnic Group	Unknown / Missing	Total	Non White British
Besemer Grange Primary School	PAN Reduction	0.7	0.5	0.5	2.4	9.7	4.6	8.0	0.3	1.5	2.2	1.9	6.8	43.8	1.4	0.0	0.0	5.8	6.1	3.7	100	56.2
Comber Grove School	Amalgamation/Closure	4.3	0.5	0.0	1.4	28.4	11.1	3.4	1.9	2.4	4.3	0.5	1.4	7.7	0.5	0.0	0.0	14.9	7.7	9.6	100	92.3
Goose Green Primary School	PAN Reduction	1.6	0	0.9	0.3	18.2	11.9	5.0	0.0	1.6	7.2	2.5	9.4	20.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.5	7.2	5.3	100	79.6
Grange Primary School	PAN Reduction	5.2	0.5	1.4	1.4	24.3	4.6	6.3	0.8	3	3.3	0.5	4.9	14.4	0.3	0.0	0.0	6.5	13.1	9.5	100	85.6
Harris Free School Peckham	Amalgamation/Closure	2.2	1.3	0.0	1.3	27.8	9.6	5.2	0.9	1.7	7.8	0.4	9.1	6.1	0.4	0.0	0.0	8.3	12.6	5.2	100	93.9
Rye Oak Primary School	PAN Reduction	2.0	0.3	2.3	1.3	36.7	13.1	3.6	2.3	1	6.6	1.0	7.5	9.8	0.0	0.7	0.0	1.3	9.8	0.7	100	90.2
St Francis RC Primary School	PAN Reduction	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.6	58.8	5.0	6.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.5	0.8	0.0	0.0	3.6	0.3	21.8	0	100	99.2
St Joseph's Camberwell Catholic Schools' Federation (INFANTS)	PAN Reduction	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.7	65.5	3.6	2.9	1.4	0.7	0.7	0.0	0.7	3.6	1.4	0.0	0.0	6.5	8.6	2.9	100	96.4
St Mary Magdalene CofE Primary School	Amalgamation/Closure	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	33.9	11	26.3	0	0.8	0.0	0.0	10.2	2.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.1	0.8	7.6	100	97.5
St Paul's CE Primary School	PAN Reduction	4.1	1.0	1.0	0.0	43.1	10.3	8.7	0.5	3.1	1.0	0.0	2.1	10.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.1	9.7	1.5	100	89.2
Schools in Scope		2.0	0.5	0.6	1.1	34.6	8.5	7.6	0.8	1.6	3.3	0.7	5.5	12.0	0.4	0.1	0.4	6.0	9.7	4.6	100	88.0
Schools in Scope (PAN Reductions)	PAN Reduction	1.9	0.4	0.9	1.0	36.6	7.6	5.8	0.8	1.6	3.0	0.8	4.8	14.8	0.4	0.1	0.5	4.6	10.9	3.4	100	85.2
Schools in Scope (Amalgamations)	Amalgamation/Closure	2.2	0.6	0.0	1.5	30.0	10.6	11.6	0.9	1.6	4.0	0.3	6.9	5.4	0.3	0.0	0.0	9.4	7.0	7.5	100.0	94.6
Southwark Primary		2.3	0.7	0.7	1.8	25.2	6.3	5.2	1.3	2.1	3.3	1.7	6.5	21.1	0.4	0.1	0.1	9.3	7.7	4.0	100	78.9
A breakdown by ethnicity of the schools affected is given above. As can be seen, the ethnicity of the schools in scope (88.0%) is more diverse than the school population at large (78.9%), with the schools recommended for amalgamation being higher still (94.6%).																						
Areas where pupil rolls have fallen the most are amongst the most diverse in Southwark. Groups such as Black African and Black Caribbean are more likely to be affected than other groups. However, the most important issue is likely to be where children of any particular ethnicity are re-accommodated – the likelihood is that children would attend similarly diverse schools in the localities identified but better resourced.																						
Mitigating and/or improvement actions to be taken																						
In the process of identifying the most appropriate school to amalgamate with, the council takes into account maintaining a good level of diversity among other factors in order to deliver an excellent quality of education to all pupils.																						

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.

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

Statutory guidance when deciding this type of decision requires us to consider the balance of religious places in the borough, and the balance between different denominations. As regards staffing, there is no requirement for staff to practice (or not) any religion, so a reduction in the number of staff would not differentially effect one group of staff over another.

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

There are no potential socio-economic impacts/ needs/issues arising from these changes nor any socio-economic disadvantage.

<p>In considering the designations of schools that have had a PAN reduction or amalgamation recommended, there is a range, so not just one type of school is affected.</p>																																	
<p>Equality information on which above analysis is based</p>	<p>Socio-economic data on which above analysis is based</p>																																
<p>The percentages of religious/non-religious places (Non-R) in Southwark are given in the table below, both before (2022 and 2023) and after the proposals in 2024</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="236 544 837 678"> <thead> <tr> <th>Type</th> <th>2022</th> <th>2023</th> <th>2024</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>RC</td> <td>16%</td> <td>16%</td> <td>17%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CE</td> <td>14%</td> <td>13%</td> <td>14%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Non-R</td> <td>70%</td> <td>70%</td> <td>70%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>No substantive change in the percentage of non-religious places has been identified. As regards staffing, other than the Head or Deputy, there is no explicit requirement for staff to be practicing Christians for Church Schools, and no record of staff's religious belief is maintained. It is therefore unlikely that a closure or amalgamation or PAN reduction will have any discernible effect on staff's religious belief education in Southwark. Similarly, any restructuring as regards staff is also unlikely to have repercussions on one religious group or another.</p> <p>Extracted from the 2021 Census.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="236 1137 691 1585"> <thead> <tr> <th>Religion</th> <th>Southwark</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Christian</td> <td>46%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Buddhist</td> <td>1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hindu</td> <td>10%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Jewish</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Muslim</td> <td>7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sikh</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other/No religion/not stated</td> <td>37%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>(Source, ONS Census 2021)</p>	Type	2022	2023	2024	RC	16%	16%	17%	CE	14%	13%	14%	Non-R	70%	70%	70%	Religion	Southwark	Christian	46%	Buddhist	1%	Hindu	10%	Jewish	0%	Muslim	7%	Sikh	0%	Other/No religion/not stated	37%	<p>No data available.</p>
Type	2022	2023	2024																														
RC	16%	16%	17%																														
CE	14%	13%	14%																														
Non-R	70%	70%	70%																														
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Sikh	0%																																
Other/No religion/not stated	37%																																
<p>Mitigating and/or improvement actions to be taken</p>																																	

As there have been no negative impacts relating to religion or belief identified, no mitigating or improvement actions are proposed.

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.

If there was a significant imbalance in the provision or uptake of places at schools in Southwark then the closure and amalgamations of schools, or the net reduction of PANs *may* effect this. However, all primary schools are both co-educational and there is no entrance requirement based on gender.

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

There are no potential socio-economic impacts or issues arising from disadvantage as regards the closure/amalgamation of schools and/or the reduction of PANs with respect to the gender of pupils.

As regards staffing, it could be that female staff are affected more, due to their prevalence in the workforce

Equality information on which above analysis is based

Socio-economic data on which above analysis is based

School	Category	% of cohort	
		Female	Male
Bessemer Grange Primary School	PAN Reduction	46.7	53.3
Comber Grove School	Amalgamation/Closure	45.9	54.1
Goose Green Primary School	PAN Reduction	52.7	47.3
Grange Primary School	PAN Reduction	46.0	54.0
Harris Free School Peckham	Amalgamation/Closure	49.5	50.5
Rye Oak Primary School	PAN Reduction	46.9	53.1
St Francis RC Primary School	PAN Reduction	49.7	50.3
St Joseph's Camberwell Catholic Schools' Federation (INFANTS)	PAN Reduction	52.6	47.4
St Mary Magdalene CofE Primary School	Amalgamation/Closure	55.4	44.6
St Paul's CE Primary School	PAN Reduction	48.4	51.6
Schools in Scope (PAN Reductions)	PAN Reduction	48.4	51.6
Schools in Scope Amalgamations)	Amalgamation/Closure	49.6	50.4
Schools in Scope		48.7	51.3
Southwark Total		49.4	50.6

A breakdown of gender for each school is given above, extracted from the Schools Census for 2022/23. Schools across the borough are balanced more or less 50:50, with slightly more boys than girls (+1.2%). Of the schools "in scope", there are slightly fewer (-0.7%) girls than the Southwark average, but no real difference between the different varieties of schools in scope. The figures are too small to bear any realistic statistical analysis or conclusions.

Mitigating and/or improvement actions to be taken

As there have been no negative impacts relating to gender identified, no mitigating or improvement actions are proposed.

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>The LA has no statutory duty to collect information about the sexual orientation of primary school children. However, the percentages of primary school children who are LGBTQ+ are likely to mirror society in general.</p> <p>Schools have equalities duties towards LGBTQ+ children and all schools in Southwark adhere to these. Parents should have confidence that any school they choose for their child will be mindful of these duties.</p> <p>Pupils may have parents or carers who are LGBTQ+. In either case, admissions do not take into account the sexual orientation of the child or parent/carers.</p>	No socio-economic impacts/needs/issues arising from socio-economic disadvantage linked to school changes have been identified in relation to sexual orientation.																																								
Equality information on which above analysis is based	Socio-economic data on which above analysis is based																																								
<p>The prevalence of different sexualities was covered in the 2021 Census for the first time. This is not (yet) available at a ward level, but the figures for Southwark show the following figures for the population over 16.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Area</th> <th>Straight or Heterosexual</th> <th>Gay or Lesbian</th> <th>Bisexual</th> <th>Pansexual</th> <th>Asexual</th> <th>Queer</th> <th>All other sexual orientations</th> <th>Not answered</th> <th>Non heterosexual</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Southwark</td> <td>82.71</td> <td>4.53</td> <td>2.57</td> <td>0.67</td> <td>0.07</td> <td>0.17</td> <td>0.06</td> <td>9.21</td> <td>8.07</td> </tr> <tr> <td>London</td> <td>86.19</td> <td>2.23</td> <td>1.52</td> <td>0.37</td> <td>0.05</td> <td>0.06</td> <td>0.04</td> <td>9.54</td> <td>4.27</td> </tr> <tr> <td>England</td> <td>89.37</td> <td>1.54</td> <td>1.29</td> <td>0.23</td> <td>0.06</td> <td>0.03</td> <td>0.02</td> <td>7.46</td> <td>3.17</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Southwark is lower than the national and London average for heterosexuality and more than twice the London average for gay and lesbian residents over 16</p>	Area	Straight or Heterosexual	Gay or Lesbian	Bisexual	Pansexual	Asexual	Queer	All other sexual orientations	Not answered	Non heterosexual	Southwark	82.71	4.53	2.57	0.67	0.07	0.17	0.06	9.21	8.07	London	86.19	2.23	1.52	0.37	0.05	0.06	0.04	9.54	4.27	England	89.37	1.54	1.29	0.23	0.06	0.03	0.02	7.46	3.17	<p>There appear to be no clear socio-economic impacts/needs/issues arising from socio-economic disadvantage for people based on sexual orientation in relation to schools, no appropriate or useful data has been identified.</p>
Area	Straight or Heterosexual	Gay or Lesbian	Bisexual	Pansexual	Asexual	Queer	All other sexual orientations	Not answered	Non heterosexual																																
Southwark	82.71	4.53	2.57	0.67	0.07	0.17	0.06	9.21	8.07																																
London	86.19	2.23	1.52	0.37	0.05	0.06	0.04	9.54	4.27																																
England	89.37	1.54	1.29	0.23	0.06	0.03	0.02	7.46	3.17																																
Mitigating and/or improvement actions to be taken																																									
As there have been no negative impacts relating to sexual orientation identified, no mitigating or improvement actions are proposed or required.																																									

Eligibility for Free School Meals	
Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan.	Potential socio-economic impacts/ needs/issues arising from socio-economic disadvantage (positive and negative)
<p>Southwark has a high proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals (Free school meals: guidance for schools and local authorities - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)). Southwark already funds a free school meal for all primary school children but the national eligibility information provides a useful tool for identifying socio-economic disadvantage.</p> <p>Five of the seven schools recommended for a PAN reduction have a percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals that is higher than the Southwark average and all of the schools recommended for an amalgamation do.</p> <p>There will be no impact of a PAN reduction on these pupils but a possible impact from amalgamation might be that parents struggle to find additional funding to pay for things like a new school uniform, transport to school, that is in a different location, etc.</p>	<p>In the medium-long term, the impact of amalgamation or closure would result in stronger long term socio-economic benefits as children will be attending a school that is better resourced and sustainable. Particularly for those most vulnerable.</p> <p>In the immediate-short term, a possible impact from amalgamation might be that parents struggle to find additional funding to pay for things like a new school uniform, transport to school, that is in a different location, etc.</p>
Equality information on which above analysis is based	Socio-economic data on which above

			analysis is based
School	Category	FSM %	See column to the left
Bessemer Grange School	PAN Reduction	19.3	
Comber Grove School	Amalgamation/Closure	37.6	
Goose Green Primary School	PAN Reduction	42.0	
Grange Primary School	PAN Reduction	45.4	
Harris Free School Peckham	Amalgamation/Closure	56.1	
Rye Oak Primary School	PAN Reduction	53.8	
St Francis RC Primary School	PAN Reduction	33.5	
St Joseph's Camberwell Infants	PAN Reduction	36.2	
St Mary Magdalene CofE Primary School	Amalgamation/Closure	46.4	
St Paul's CE Primary School	PAN Reduction	42.4	
School in Scope		41.3	
Schools in Scope (PAN Reduction)	PAN Reduction	38.9	
Schools in Scope (Amalgamations)	Amalgamation/Closure	46.7	
Southwark		34.0	
Mitigating and/or improvement actions to be taken			
Once a school amalgamation is proposed and agreed following the statutory process, then a range of support is available to pupils moving to the "new" school, and to the existing community of the new school, to help them to transition smoothly. This includes: helping with the cost of buying a new uniform; open and welcome days for new pupils; coffee mornings for parents/ carers/ families and staff; support from the admissions team for parents and carers, etc.			

Human Rights

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

Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan

In respect of the 16 rights listed, the proposal to reduce PAN numbers and amalgamate schools will not affect any of those listed. This said, the "The first sentence of Article 2 of Protocol No. 1 guarantees an individual right to education. The second guarantees the right of parents to have their children educated in conformity with their religious and philosophical convictions". The proposed school changes will not endanger this freedom, as there are numerous school places available in schools across Southwark.

Information on which above analysis is based

At the last census time in January 2023, there were 5,790 spare places in Southwark primary schools.
Mitigating and/or improvement actions to be taken
As there have been no negative impacts relating to human rights identified, no mitigating or improvement actions are proposed or required.

Conclusions

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

There is minimal impact of the proposed changes of the recommendations of the Keeping Education Strong Strategy. There will be no impact on schools where we propose PAN reductions as these schools have already been operating for some years at the pupil admissions numbers we are proposing to reduce to. Instead the formal reduction enables the schools to plan for class sizes and resourcing more efficiently and reliably.

For schools where an amalgamation is proposed, it is not an option to do nothing. Taking no action would mean that children in those schools will be disadvantaged further by not receiving a quality of education that will increase their life chances, particularly for the most vulnerable children. Mitigations are in place to support families to find places in vibrant, good and outstanding schools able to provide a consistently high quality of education and experience of schooling.

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	A proposal to amalgamate would have the greatest potential impact on children in Years 5 and 6 (ages 9-11) as they come to the end of their primary schooling.	Our admissions team will support children, families in securing a place in a good or outstanding school in the immediate area. In any school closure there will be a transition plan for years 5 and 6 in particular.	During statutory consultation and until the schools have amalgamated/closed.
2	Although any change in school can have an	Children from the schools affected who have	During statutory consultation and until the

	<p>unsettling effect on children, the amalgamation/closure of primary schools will have a negligible effect on disabilities for pupils.</p>	<p>EHCPs and SEND Plus are being closely supported to ensure their needs are met whichever schools they are proceeding to after amalgamation or closure.</p> <p>The SEND service will review EHCPs for any children moving schools, and provide additional support for transition.</p> <p>The educational psychology teams will work with school leaders and services to provide strategies for supporting children experiencing anxiety and/or are struggling with their mental health.</p>	<p>schools have amalgamated/closed.</p>
3	<p>There may be a number of children/ staff members going through any part of a gender reassignment process that we are unaware of. We would expect that they will be known to the school and the school is providing appropriate support.</p>	<p>We signpost to advice, services and resources to support any child or adult going through this process.</p> <p>Regular updates and reminders to schools to review that their policies and processes are up to date.</p> <p>Provide signposting to schools to advice/ support on gender reassignment.</p>	<p>During statutory consultation and until the schools have amalgamated/closed.</p>
4	<p>The pregnancy or maternity/ paternity leave status of a staff member or potential applicant should form no part of the recruitment or the redeployment process, so should not negatively impact on staffing.</p>	<p>We will encourage schools to review and update their policies in line with their statutory obligations towards the protected characteristics relating to pregnancy and maternity.</p>	<p>During statutory consultation and until the schools have amalgamated/closed.</p>
5	<p>There is no evidence available to show that closure or amalgamations of schools and PAN reductions would be likely to reduce diversity in the area. Given the diversity of Southwark's schools, it is more likely that the recommendations would</p>	<p>In the process of identifying the most appropriate school to amalgamate with, the council takes into account maintaining a good level of diversity among other factors in order to deliver an excellent quality of education to all pupils.</p>	<p>During statutory consultation and until the schools have amalgamated/closed.</p>

	increase diversity across more schools.		
6	Parents struggle to find additional funding to pay for things like a new school uniform, transport to school, that is in a different location, etc.	Once a school amalgamation is proposed and agreed following the statutory process, then a range of support is available to pupils moving to the “new” school, and to the existing community of the new school, to help them to transition smoothly. This includes: helping with the cost of buying a new uniform; open and welcome days for new pupils; coffee mornings for parents/ carers/ families and staff; support from the admissions team for parents and carers, etc.	In the first term of amalgamation/closure.

6. Review of implementation of the equality objectives and actions				

Implementation Equality Impact and Needs Analysis



Southwark Primary Places planning – final report

Purpose of the work

Isos Partnership was commissioned to support the London Borough of Southwark over the autumn and spring terms, to provide independent comment on and further develop their strategy for addressing the over-supply of primary places and the associated financial risks for primary schools.

Prior to the start of this project, Southwark had already made significant progress in developing a strategy to address the trend of declining pupil numbers and the subsequent over-supply of places in the primary phase. Working with school leaders and councillors, the local authority had established a set of principles to guide their work, had initiated the analysis to identify how many pupil places and/or forms of entry may need to be taken out of the system and in which areas and had begun to engage schools, including governors, in these difficult decisions.

The purpose of this project has therefore been to scrutinise and test the analysis carried out by Southwark across Primary schools which are potentially at risk from falling rolls and make a series of recommendations for possible future school reorganisations based on an objective analysis of the data. These recommendations were discussed and refined with the team of project officers within Southwark before developing a summary set of provisional proposals that could be more widely shared with the school leaders, elected members and affected schools. This report contains our recommendations.

Methodology

The work with Southwark has had three distinct stages. Dr Helen Jenner and Natalie Parish (Isos Partnership Director) have worked together and individually to support different stages of the project.

Stage One - Autumn Term 2022 - Confirming direction of travel.

A desk top analysis of published information was undertaken to ensure the perspectives arrived at by LA officers reviewing the LA data, were mirrored using publicly available information. To collate the data, we accessed the January 2022 School Census, all DFE comparator websites, and Borough admissions brochures.¹ This was therefore a limited picture but gave insight into the issues that would need further exploration for a more

¹ <https://schools-financial-benchmarking.service.gov.uk/Help/DataSources>
<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-their-characteristics>

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detailed and up-to-date analysis and recommendations. The DFE comparator websites provide information on pupil population; equalities, for example SEN percentages, free school meals, which enabled us to keep inclusion and diversity in mind in our initial analysis; finance and expenditure; and the quality of education. The information was helpful in giving insight into the scale of the challenge, and to confirm that LA officers' analysis and Isos Partnership analysis had reached similar conclusions.

The analysis enabled us to confirm the Southwark estimations of the scale of change required, and to start to work with officers to develop our support for a more detailed second phase of work, which could consider more detailed information about the geographic and demographic area. This very early analysis was shared with officers. (Appendix A)

Stage Two - Early Spring Term 2023 - Collating Agreed Data to begin considering possibilities

Southwark identified 49 schools where there was evidence for a trend of declining pupil number entering at reception and/or across the school, and were therefore deemed in scope for the purposes of this projects. Schools were deemed in scope if they had experienced:

- i) A drop between 2019 and 2022 of all school rolls by 5% or more and/or
- ii) More than 20% vacancies across the whole school

Schools in Southwark that were deemed in scope were provided with their core data by the LA in January 2023, they were invited to comment on the data to ensure accuracy and flag any other issues.

During this period the Local Authority provided Isos with the school level data, and full information on dates or previous and planned organisational change within the primary sector. Isos took this data and reviewed alongside DFE data looking in more detail at small geographical areas, as well as looking at groups of schools (Federations, MATs and faith groupings). Isos identified schools where changes could be made based on local clusters, linked to the 5 Planning Areas.

Stage Three. Later Spring Term 2023 Agreed Analysis

Five workshops were held with LA officers to discuss these initial ideas for meeting the declining school population needs. These workshops enabled Isos to check their rationale for decision making, and refine their understanding of the likely impact of changes, both on provision and the sustainability of quality future provision.

The workshops helped us to refine suggestions for change, which have been considered based on smaller geographical clusters as well as the Planning Areas already established.

A meeting with the Lead Member was helpful in understanding the information Councillors would like before they are asked to reach decisions, and the principles they would like to be observed as part of the Southwark School Organisational Change Strategy.

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Current context

There are currently 26,399 places from reception year up to year 6 in Southwark's primary schools. **These are filled by 20,694 children, leaving 5,705 places empty in primary schools across the borough.** This is a borough-wide vacancy rate of 22%.²

Vacant places are not distributed equally between schools. Some primary schools in Southwark are full. At the other end of the spectrum, some schools have more than half of their places empty. There are many factors which are leading to a fall in primary aged children in Southwark – a phenomenon which is observable right across London. These are chiefly falling birth rate, reduced immigration, housing pressures, higher numbers of families moving out of London post Covid and benefit changes leading to relocation of families as set out in the Southwark Strategy in December 2022.

The current situation has been alleviated by actions that Southwark has taken historically. Between 2019 and 2023, a total of 495 places have already been removed from the school system through a mixture of reducing forms of entry and closing schools.

Recommendations for the scale of further reductions needed

The information that Southwark shared with us indicated that, in addition to the 495 places that have already been removed from the system, there is more action underway right now to reduce the number of primary school places in Southwark further.

Changes already underway:

The first way in which primary surplus capacity is being reduced is through agreed reductions in Published Admission Numbers (PANs). Between 2019 and 2023, 17 schools agreed to reduce their PANs and two schools will lose bulge classes, as listed in Appendix B. These changes will take several years to work through the system. For example, a school that reduced its primary admission number from 60 to 30 in 2019 would continue to experience a reduction in the overall places up until 2026 (when the cohort of children in reception in 2019 enters Year 6). **Once all these agreed PAN reductions have worked their way through the system, this will lead to a further reduction of 2,100 places.**

Further reductions:

The second way in which primary surplus capacity is being reduced is through proposed closures and amalgamations of schools. At present, consultation is underway to close Townsend school, close St Francesca Cabrini RC school and amalgamate Coburg and Camelot schools. Discussions are also underway around a potential amalgamation of St Jude's and Charlotte Sharman. **As and when these changes have been completed a further 1,170 primary places will have been removed.**

However, at the same time there are a small number of schools (mainly free schools or academies) which have opened or expanded in recent years and are filling to reach their

² Pupil numbers based on October 2022 Census returns.

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planned capacity. This will lead to a small increase of 228 places. A list of schools where changes are already planned is included in Appendix B.

Despite the action that has already been taken, the analysis that we have undertaken suggests that there is further to go. Once all the changes described above have been achieved, **we estimate that there will still be 2,663 vacant places in Southwark's primary schools.**

It is not desirable to get to a position of zero vacancies. There needs to be some flexibility in the system for parental choice and movement of pupils in year, particularly in an inner city environment where pupil mobility tends to be higher. The accrued experience of local areas over time suggest that Southwark should be aiming for a vacancy level of about 10% - or between 2000 and 2100 places on current pupil numbers. That means that to ensure a primary school system that is sustainable, based on the current number of pupils, Southwark still needs to remove around 600 places.

A primary school is structured around class sizes of 30, therefore a single form entry primary school has 210 pupils, a two-form entry primary school has 420 pupils and so on. When removing places from the primary system, it is therefore expedient to do so in multiples of 210. **To stabilise the system, based on current numbers of pupils, we therefore recommend looking to remove a further 630 places** – this could be achieved by 3 schools each reducing their Primary Admission Number by one form of entry (this would take several years to have full impact), or by closing or amalgamating schools, or some combination of these actions.

The reduction by 630 places that we are recommending, in addition to the changes Southwark already have in train, **is a minimum.** It is what should come out of the primary education system based on **current pupil numbers.**

Unfortunately, projections by the Greater London Authority, based on birth rates and projected pupil yield from housing developments, suggest that over the next five years, the number of primary aged pupils in Southwark will continue to fall. According to GLA projections, in 2026/27 there will be 1,143 fewer primary aged children in Southwark than there are today.

If these projections are accurate, that would suggest **that Southwark may need to lose a further 1,143 places, on top of the 630 that we already know we need to take out.** This would equate to five further units of 210.

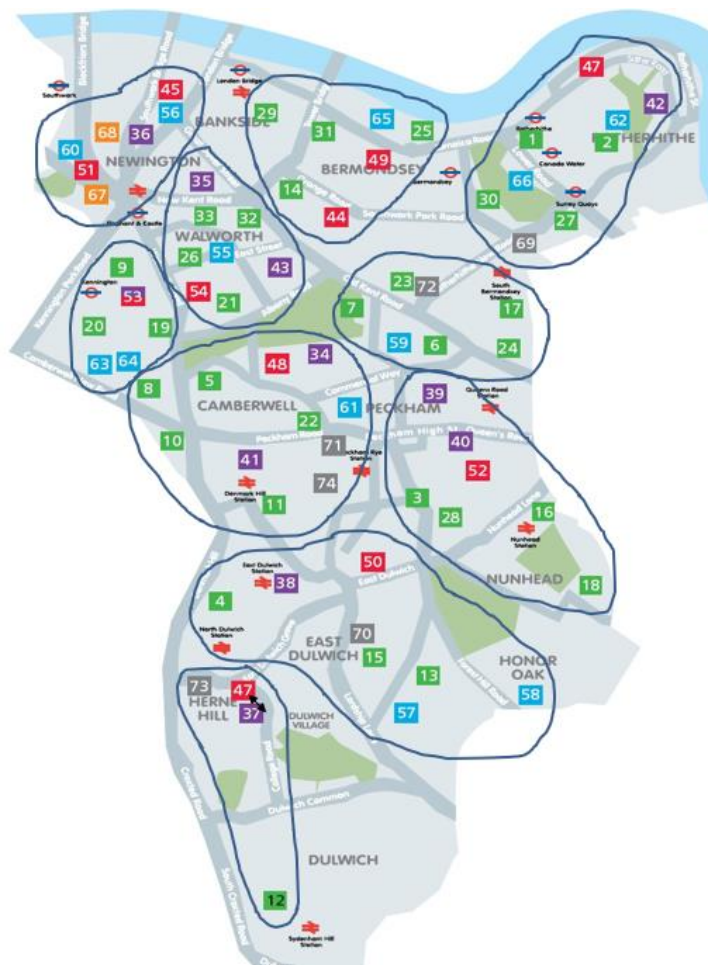
However, we do not know how accurate the population projections will be. We therefore recommend that Southwark continues to keep a watching brief on actual numbers and sets **a target to take out a minimum of 630 and a maximum of 1,773 places over the next five years.** This equates to between 3 and 8 forms of entry. To manage the uncertainty of fluctuating pupil numbers we recommend that Southwark approaches this reduction in phases and prioritises options that build flexibility into the system.

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Analysis of where reductions should take place

The distribution of primary school vacancies across Southwark is not even. There are some areas of the borough with significantly higher levels of vacancy than others. At the same time, further reductions in pupil numbers is more likely to affect some areas of the borough than others. It is therefore important that the 3 to 8 forms of entry are removed from the right areas. If not, there will remain over capacity in some bits of the borough and in others there will not be enough places to meet parental demand.

In order to assist in determining where reductions should take place, we split Southwark schools in 10 clusters for the purposes of analysing pupil numbers. We attempted to base these on natural 'geographies' that correspond to the different neighbourhoods in Southwark. The map below shows the clusters that we used for our analysis.



In each cluster we considered data on:

- the number of pupil vacancies in primary schools now
- the number of pupil vacancies there will be when all the planned changes have come into effect
- the projected decrease in primary pupil numbers up until 2025/26 according to GLA estimates
- the number of first choice preferences for schools in that area for September 2023

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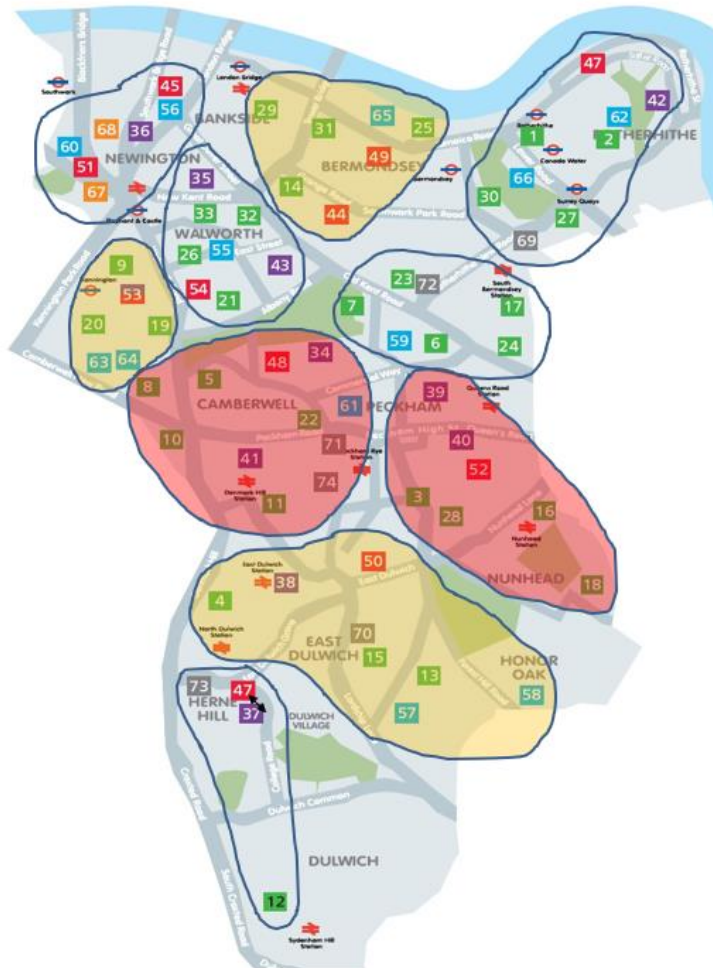
We used this information to identify how the maximum of eight forms of entry reduction might be distributed across the cluster areas. This is shown in the table and map below:

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Cluster	Pupils now	Places now	Vacancies now	%	First place prefs Sept 2023	Reception places in excess of first choices	Places after planned changes	Vacancies after planned changes	%	2026/27 projected pupils	Projected vacancies 2026/27	%	Reduction needed to meet 10% target	Possible whole forms of entry reduction
Newington (PA1)	1399	1860	461	25%	182	58	1470	71	5%	1237	233	16%	110	0
Bermondsey (PA2)	1782	2100	318	15%	213	87	2100	318	15%	1690	410	20%	241	1
Rotherhithe (PA2)	2826	3270	444	14%	442	8	3150	324	10%	2680	470	15%	202	0
Walworth (PA1)	2040	2610	570	22%	204	156	2100	60	3%	1803	297	14%	117	0
Kennington (PA1 & PA4)	1452	1845	393	21%	180	75	1755	303	17%	1267	488	28%	362	1
Old Kent Road (PA1, PA2 & PA3)	1969	2865	896	31%	247	143	2100	131	6%	1799	301	14%	121	0
Camberwell (PA3 & PA4)	3240	4170	930	22%	384	156	3570	330	9%	2792	778	22%	499	2
Peckham (PA3)	1771	2535	764	30%	194	136	2310	539	23%	1526	784	34%	631	3
North and East Dulwich (PA3, PA4 & PA5)	2853	3720	867	23%	408	102	3360	507	15%	2790	570	17%	291	1
Herne Hill and Dulwich village (PA5)	1362	1424	62	4%	292	-86	1442	80	6%	1408	34	2%	-107	0

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The map shows colour coded yellow those clusters where a 1 form of entry reduction may be needed, and red those areas where two or more forms of entry reduction may be needed by 2026/27.



What this analysis shows is that many of the planned reductions in place numbers that are already underway are likely to have most impact in the North of the borough – particularly Newington, Walworth and the Old Kent Road areas. It is therefore the middle of the borough – Kennington, Camberwell, Peckham and Nunhead where this analysis suggests there will be the greatest oversupply of places in future.

Our recommendations, therefore, are that over the next five years Southwark should look to reduce primary numbers by around 1 form of entry in the Bermondsey, Kennington and North Dulwich areas, around 2 forms of entry in the Camberwell area and up to 3 forms of entry in the Peckham and Nunhead area.

However, these recommendations can only be a guide. One of the things that we cannot know, at the moment, is how parental choice will respond to some of the changes already underway. To take a concrete example, our analysis at present assumes that the impact of closing Townsend school will chiefly be felt by schools in the Walworth cluster, meaning that current vacancies there are used by families that would otherwise have gone to Townsend. However, it may be that families choose instead to travel North to schools in the

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Bermondsey or Newington clusters, or West to schools in the Kennington cluster. It is impossible to know the actual impact until changes have taken place. It is therefore recommended that Southwark repeats this analysis at frequent intervals to test the geographical impact of changes to pupil numbers and adjust plans accordingly if necessary.

Assessment of which schools may be affected by reductions

In assessing which schools may be affected by reductions we have limited our analysis to those schools which have been deemed in scope by Southwark. We have also been guided by the principles that are important to Southwark. These are:

- Assuring future sustainability for schools
- Ensuring minimum possible disruption
- Protecting the education estate
- Recognising that change is essential
- Avoiding, or minimising, the impact of closure
- Supporting diversity and equality

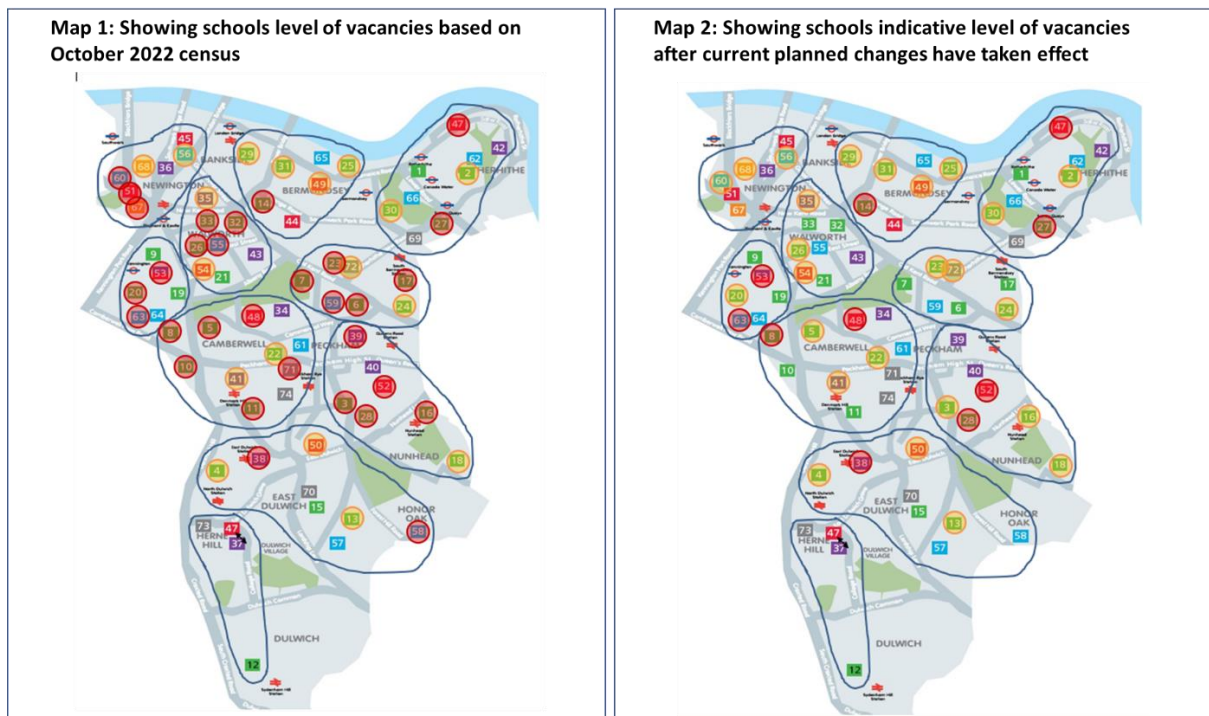
Beyond these principles, we have been guided by our geographical analysis outlined above and taken into account four key pieces of data:

- 1) A calculation of the expected vacancy rate in a school, after any already agreed changes have been implemented.
- 2) Evidence of financial risk – either large in-year deficit or a cumulative deficit.
- 3) Quality of education
- 4) First place preferences for September 2023

Experience shows that it is difficult to maintain the quality of education in a school carrying much more than a 10% vacancy rate – once there are fewer than 27 children per class it is difficult for schools to afford the full range of services. Where population figures are showing trends falling below this level they were considered to be at risk in our analysis, those schools with high deficits and those where quality of education is less than good were also highlighted as being at risk.

The first map below colour codes schools based on the current level of vacancy, according to the October 2022 census. Those schools with more than 10% vacancies are circled in orange. Those with more than 25% vacancies are circled in red. The second map shows an approximation of how those levels of vacancy might change, after the planned changes that are in the pipeline have all fed through the system. For the sake of simplicity, we have used some very basic rules to underpin this analysis. We have assumed that where a school is reducing PAN that will just have an impact on the school itself; where a school is amalgamating that pupils will transfer to the amalgamated school and where a school is closing pupils will go to the nearest school of the same type (community, CofE, RC etc). The real-world will, of course, be infinitely more complex than this but we have used this as a simple basis upon which to illustrate how the planned changes could impact on vacancy levels.

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Following our risk analysis of schools, we considered a possible approach to phasing the work, identifying schools where Southwark leaders could begin to take action in the shorter term and also looking ahead to where further capacity may need to be removed in the medium to long term:

Phase 1 – includes those schools in which possible reductions in pupil numbers should be considered and discussed in order to meet the minimum reduction of 3 forms of entry required based on current pupil numbers. These are schools in the cluster areas where most reduction is thought necessary.

Phase 2 – includes those schools where further exploration is required but may be candidates for reducing by a further 5 forms of entry if the number of primary aged children continues to decline.

Phase 3 – includes those schools unlikely to be involved in pupil reductions in the near future but which are in areas where populations could continue to fall so will need regular review.

In general, our consideration of the phases is based on weighing up a series of inter-related factors. These are:

- Our assessment of whether an individual school is currently at risk in terms of pupil numbers, financial sustainability, or quality of education.
- Where schools are located – specifically aiming to bring forward action in areas of the borough with a significant over-supply of places.
- Whether the proposed reduction in places is something that might be relatively quick to achieve or may take longer to broker and work through.

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- Whether there are other changes (such as a neighbouring school closing) that need to happen and where the full impact needs to be understood, before proceeding.

These are not hard and fast ‘rules’ but they are factors that we have taken into consideration in suggesting the phasing of possible changes, and which schools might be involved at each stage. For each school we have suggested a possible course of action to pursue and a rationale for this. This detail is included in Appendix C.

A summary of the three phases, the possible number of schools involved at each phase, and the potential for places reductions, is set out below. It will be apparent that across groups 1 and 2 there are more than 8 possible reductions in forms of entry. This is prudent as it is likely that not all will be achieved.

Phase	Possible number of schools involved	Potential for reduction in forms of entry
1	14	8.5 to 9.5
2	14	6
3	20	None at present

Expected impact of proposed reductions

If Southwark were to be successful in reducing by 8 further forms of entry as recommended, and if overall population estimates prove to be accurate, we calculate that in 2025/26 the overall vacancy rate in Southwark’s primary schools would be 9.8%, and the vacancy rate in reception year should be 11.1%. This is very close to the target set of 10%. However, as we have cautioned throughout, this analysis is based on snap-shot in time and will require regular review to ensure that both the totality of place reductions remains accurate as more information becomes available about pupil numbers, and that the geographical targeting of those place reductions remains sensible as more information comes to light about the real-world impact of planned changes.

Recommendations

Our recommendation is that Southwark councillors and officers work with schools to both ensure that currently planned reductions are realised and that up to 8 further forms of entry are removed from primary schools in a phased approach. It will be necessary to continue to monitor real-time data on numbers of pupils and the impact of changes to primary pupil numbers to ensure that this reduction remains on-track and that it is geographically targeted to the right areas. Our suggestions for which schools might be approached is set out in Appendix C. This is based on a snap-shot in time and will require careful monitoring and adjustment as the programme of changes is realised.

As councillors and officers work with schools to reach final decisions about the changes to make we make the following observations.

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1. Any changes required are done so to ensure Southwark maintains excellent primary education whilst addressing population change. To not change would lead to unplanned decline as some schools become unaffordable.
2. The most effective and least stressful organisational changes are those where the school leadership and governors understand and support the rationale, even if the change proposal brings some sadness.
3. It is important to recognise that parental preference will always be difficult to predict so assumptions that amalgamating schools will lead to a particular change in pupil population should always be carefully reviewed.
4. Communications is absolutely key – discussing a particular school publically too soon can lead to further decline in numbers, but schools also find being left with uncertainty drains staff pupils and parents morally, affecting the quality of education.
5. Although many of the schools most significantly affected have higher levels of FSM than the borough average, reducing the number of schools will increase the capacity to meet the needs of the most vulnerable. Equality Impact assessments for each change process should help ensure sufficient finances to meet the needs of the vulnerable and to strengthen diversity in the schools.

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Appendix A – Phase one analysis

Southwark Primary Pupil Place Planning

Preparatory Work

During the Autumn Term 2022 Isos Partnership undertook a top level analysis of pupil place issues for Southwark pupil place planning, based on data accessible on line, prior to accessing Southwark’s strategy and without specific knowledge of the individual schools, their location, or the communities that attend them.

To collate the data we accessed:

the January 2022 School Census, (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2022>) – this includes snapshot data about the number of children in every school on census day in January

DFE comparator websites, (<https://schools-financial-benchmarking.service.gov.uk/SchoolSearch/Search?nameId=&suggestionUrn=&locationorpostcode=&LocationCoordinates=&option=on&openOnly=true&laCodename=Southwark&SelectedLocalAuthorityId=210&searchtype=search-by-la-code-name>) – these are informed by key data collected by the DFE, including School Capacity returns.

Children and Maternity Statistics (ChiMAT) information for 2021, (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/2022-child-health-profiles>) – this includes data on child birth rates

DFE School Capacity data (<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-capacity/2021-22>) – this includes pupil population forecasts

Borough admissions brochure. (<https://www.southwark.gov.uk/schools-and-education/school-admissions/primary-admissions/applying-for-a-primary-school-place>)

This introductory work was undertaken to give Isos and Southwark early insight into the issues that would need further exploration for a more detailed and up-to-date analysis and recommendations. It provided a tool to independently “stress test” the work undertaken by the Southwark Place Planning Team

Numbers across Southwark

The largest cohort year in Southwark appeared to be Year 9, all years below that show a constant decline, apart from Year 2. The birth rate is not yet increasing.

This indicates that lower numbers of children is a trend, rather than a blip, and Southwark are correct to be taking strategic and operational action to address this.

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Primary Capacity

If we consider Year 9 as the current highest possible number of primary spaces needed in the last 10 years, the spare capacity (based on 2020/21 data) was around 9 FE (around 8%) in comparison with current PANs. In 2019/20 The Local Authority and schools were proactive in reducing Forms of Entry and in having discussions with particularly vulnerable schools regarding mergers, without this action the gap from need would have remained around 17 FE (around 13%).

The reductions so far, and our recommendations have taken into account a flexibility buffer, in that in the unlikely event in the next 10 years, numbers were to return to above the Year 9 position, there would still be significant spare capacity in the system simply by restoring PANs to September 18 levels.

This is important because it means councillors and other stakeholders can be confident that any future reductions will not over reduce spare capacity in primary schools.

DFE Finance benchmark figures indicate at least 25 schools show some financial challenge. 8 of these have negative reserve figures. Of these 6 have negative in year spend and negative reserves. Two of these six schools have already reduced their PAN which will enable them to reduce staffing as part of financial recovery planning.

Across the Borough 40 schools were showing some level of pressure from vacancies in 2022, in 24 of these their reception numbers are below the level needed for financial efficiency (based on their PAN). Based on work in other Boroughs Isos estimates that where reception figures fall below 27 in a one form entry school the costs of providing the necessary school infrastructure, a full curriculum range and meeting individual educational needs starts to become financially challenging. Below 25 it is likely to become educationally limiting, potentially leading to a reduced curriculum offer, sometimes mixed age classes and less leadership expertise.

Following this analysis, we estimated that across the borough the removal of 17 forms of entry at Primary level (9 currently planned and a further 8 to be identified) would still leave 6 FE capacity for parental preference, and a number of schools that could easily re increase their PAN if necessary.

Based on 2020/21 figures, this would give capacity of 105 FE (3150 places) with flexibility to increase to 110 (3300) if required. Allowing 5% for parental preference based on Jan22 reception figures – with access to allow for up to 10% if required. (These figures are updated in our main report once DFE data for 2021/2 and local information were available)

From the available Local Authority information we could see that it would be possible to analyse by planning area and to identify possible groups of schools well located for PAN reductions. At this stage of analysis, we looked at the 5 Planning Areas and provided a top level summary for the areas that, based on 2021 data, appeared to be facing the greatest challenges. For information, we have included as examples Planning Area 1 (which from

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2021 statistics had the largest capacity challenge), and Planning Area 5 (which had the least capacity challenge)

The DFE benchmarking also provides information on equalities and diversity, but not on quality of buildings or local environment. Whilst these aspects have been born in mind further analysis will be crucial as we move to next stage considerations in the Spring and Summer Terms.

Planning Area 1

There are 115 children fewer in reception classes in Planning Area 1, than there are in Year 6. Despite four schools having reduced their PAN in this area (St George's Cathedral, Charlotte Sharman, Keyworth and Robert Browning) there was still an overall vacancy rate of around 20 % vacancy in the Reception numbers for Jan 22. There seems to be a particular density of schools in the Walworth area.

Three schools are already in the position of having in year over spends and no reserves and one had a large in year deficit. Several schools may face financial constraint if numbers fall further.

Eleven of the schools appear to show signs of unaffordable vacancy levels – which is likely to become an increasing problem if numbers continue to fall.

Two schools seem to be located close to each other and between them only have enough reception children for 1 FE.

Faith schools in the area reflect varying demand, but overall have over capacity, only 1 of the 6 faith schools has reduced its PAN in recent years, despite there being around 2 FE spare capacity across the faith schools in this planning area.

There is a need to reduce capacity in this area. We understood that some discussions and changes have already taken place and the Spring Term analysis would help us plan further changes.

Planning Area 5

In planning area 5 the number of children enrolling in Reception is going up. Further analysis is needed as this could either be population growth or parental preference from other planning areas causing a southward drift of children.

Even with this possible southward drift in some schools there are more forms of entry than are necessary (allowing for parental choice between 5-8%).

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None of the schools in Area 5 has currently reduced their PAN, but 2 schools appear to have a significant challenge to fill reception places. Four schools appear to be facing financial challenge.

Without knowledge of parental preference data it is difficult to analyse where children might move IF PAN was reduced in any of the schools in this planning area.

Variation Across Southwark

There appears to be significant risk across the Borough, however analysis of Area 5 suggests that there may be southward population drift into the area, mitigating the pressure in that area.

Parts of Planning Area 1 appear to be particularly crowded for primary schools, and there may be some “border” issues for particular schools at both primary and secondary level. Isos understands that this is an area where possible changes are already being considered. These changes will impact on our Spring Term analysis and recommendations.

Stress-testing Southwark work to date

There was strong agreement between our independent analysis of published data and the premises in the agreed Southwark Strategy. Southwark officers’ analysis of the challenge and number of schools at risk appears to be appropriate and as accurate as possible in a period where population change is especially volatile.

We agreed with Southwark that the planned more detailed area analysis with possibly at risk schools would give further information for Isos Partnership to be able to make recommendations for further changes that may be needed. Based on our early analysis we would consider around 35-45 schools are likely to be affected by the impact of a reducing population. The level of vacancies appears to be increasing in all planning areas, although the impact is less obvious in Planning Area 5. The planned forms of entry changes seem appropriate, we will use updated data to confirm what further changes may be needed in our Spring Term 2023 work.

As part of next stages work we needed further information on where new and existing changes had been planned and agreed and in which years changes were expected to impact. This was necessary for us to be able to evaluate the balance between implemented changes, planned changes and new recommendations.

We recommended that it may be useful to look at smaller planning areas (ie not necessarily Planning Areas as a whole) where schools are feeling particular impact.

We also recommended that it may also be helpful to look at data across Catholic/C of E and MATs in the Borough to support the Diocese and MAT leaders with their thinking.

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Appendix B - List of schools in Southwark where planned changes have been agreed

Name of school	Planned change	Date decided	Places reduction
Bellenden Primary School	Reduce by 1FE	2019	90
Brunswick Park Primary School	Reduce by 0.5FE	2019	45
Camelot Primary School	Reduce by 0.5FE and merge with Coburg	2019 & 2023	45
Charlotte Sharman Primary	Reduce by 1FE and merge with St Jude's	2019 & TBC	90
St Jude's C of E	Merge with Charlotte Sharman	TBC	210
Coburg School	Merge with Camelot	2023	210
Crawford Primary School	Reduce by 1FE	2019	120
Dog Kennel Hill School	Reduce by 1FE	2023	210
English Martyrs RC Primary School	Reduce by 1FE	2022	210
Harris Primary Academy Peckham Park	Reduce by 1FE	2021	150
Harris Primary Free School Peckham	Reduce by 1FE	2022	180
Hollydale Primary School	Reduce by 0.5FE	2019	45
Ilderton Primary School	Reduce by 1FE	2023	210
Keyworth Primary School	Reduce by 1FE	2019	90
Phoenix Primary School	Reduce by 1FE	2019	60
Robert Browning Primary School	Reduce by 1FE	2019	90
St Francis RC Primary School	Reduce by 1FE	2023	210
St George's Cathedral School	Reduce by 1FE	2019	90
Townsend	Closure	2023	210
St Francesca Cabrini	Closure	2023	210

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Appendix C – Proposals and rationale

Phase 1

School name	Proposal	Rationale
Grange	Reduce PAN to 1FE	Small class sizes increasing financial pressure. Reduction to 1 FE would increase viability and therefore capacity to improve quality of Education. There are nearby schools with spaces, and first preferences would not be affected as they are below 30
St Paul's CofE	Reduce PAN to 1FE Discuss possibility of school amalgamation with the SDBE MAT.	0.5 PAN Reduction, review sustainability longer term. Concerns over quality of education. Very low numbers from R to Year 4. Parental preference would not be affected by reduction to 1FE. Longer term viability may need to be considered.
St Joseph's Catholic Infants	Reduce to 1FE, amalgamate with junior school	Infant School reducing to 1FE, 1 FE will work through to juniors. Schools may be more financially viable as a Primary. Schools share a site. Year 1 and Reception numbers below 40. If current low numbers in the infant school feed through to the junior school, without PAN reduction, it will have an impact on sustainability for the junior school.
St Joseph's Catholic Juniors		
Comber Grove	Possible amalgamation of Comber Grove with a nearby school. If an amalgamation is not an option may have to consider closure of Comber Grove.	Comber Grove first preferences too small to be viable, with implications for finances and quality of education. Amalgamation is more comfortable for families than straightforward closure, and there are potential schools with spaces nearby that could provide an option for amalgamation.
Goose Green	Explore possible reduction in 1FE discuss possible options with MAT	Goose Green runs risk of expensive class sizes by filling at just over 30. Reducing to 1FE is more sustainable for schools in partnership (Goose Green and Dog Kennel Hill in same MAT). As First Preferences below 30 parental preference will not be badly affected. Dog Kennel Hill already reducing to 1 FE - the two schools may be sustainable as part

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Dog Kennel Hill		of MAT, possibly with closer forms of joint working / sharing assets or site.
St Mary Magdalene	Possible amalgamation with a nearby school. If an amalgamation is not an option may have to consider closure.	St Mary Magdalene numbers look unsustainable financially in the long term, despite school currently managing within budget. Low first preference means fewer children affected. Capacity available in nearby schools
Rye Oak	Reduce PAN to 1 FE	Has been operating consistently at around 1FE (just above and below 30 pupils) but has PAN of 2 FE, other schools in area have already experienced PA reductions. Possible implications for resources base and staffing across the school/resource base.
Harris Primary Academy Peckham Park	Explore merger as 1FE school with Harris	Financially costly. Neither school full, low applications, both Harris schools. Peckham School very close to The Belham. Two schools .6m apart flat walk, schools could decide how best to configure.
Harris Primary Free School Peckham		
Bessemer Grange	Possible reduction to 2FE	School runs risk of expensive class sizes by filling at just over 60. (Highest year group 76. Current first preferences 57). Spaces in nearby schools (Dog Kennel .5m uphill; Goose Green.6 flat). School likely to be financially viable at 2 FE, and as first preferences are below 60 parental preference will not be affected.

1. The 49 schools requiring further evaluation, based on agreed criteria

Alfred Salter Primary School	Ark Globe Academy	Bellenden Primary School	Bessemer Grange Primary School	Brunswick Park Primary School
Camelot Primary School	Charlotte Sharman Primary School	Cobourg Primary School	Comber Grove School	Crawford Primary School
Dog Kennel Hill School	English Martyrs' Roman Catholic Primary School	Friars Primary Foundation School	Galleywall Primary School	Goodrich Community Primary School
Goose Green Primary and Nursery School	Grange Primary School	Harris Primary Academy Peckham Park	Harris Primary Free School Peckham	Hollydale Primary School
Ilderton Primary School	Ivydale Primary School	John Donne Primary School	John Keats Primary School	Keyworth Primary School
Michael Faraday School	Oliver Goldsmith Primary School	Peter Hills with St Mary's and St Paul's CofE Primary School	Phoenix Primary School	Pilgrims' Way Primary School

Appendix 3: Supplementary data

Riverside Primary School	Robert Browning Primary School	Rotherhithe Primary School	Rye Oak Primary School	Saint Joseph's Catholic Primary School, the Borough
Snowsfields Primary School	St Anthony's Catholic Primary School	St Francis RC Primary School	St George's Cathedral Catholic Primary School	St George's Church of England Primary School
St James' Church of England Primary School	St John's and St Clement's Church of England Primary School	St Joseph's Catholic Infants School	St Jude's Church of England Primary School	St Mary Magdalene Church of England Primary School
St Paul's Church of England Primary School	Surrey Square Primary School	Tower Bridge Primary School	Victory Primary School	

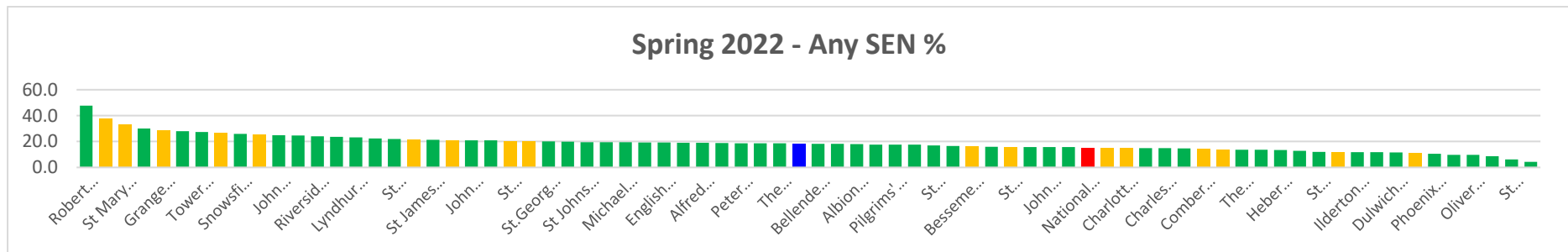
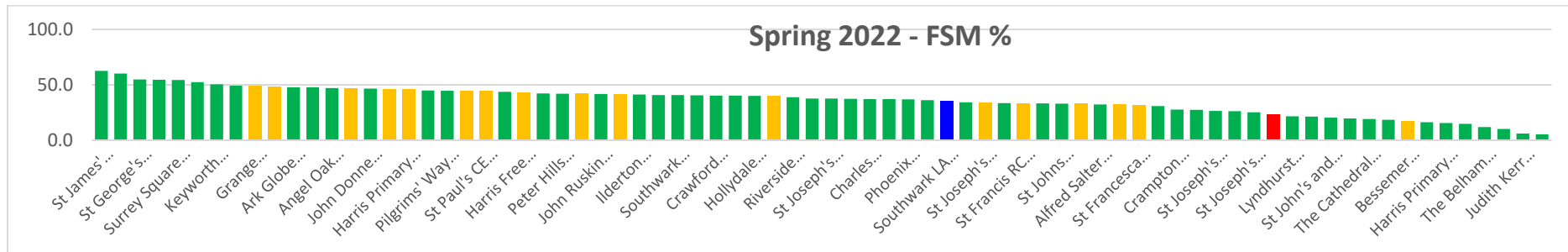
Appendix 3: Supplementary data

2. Equalities piano charts for all Southwark primary schools

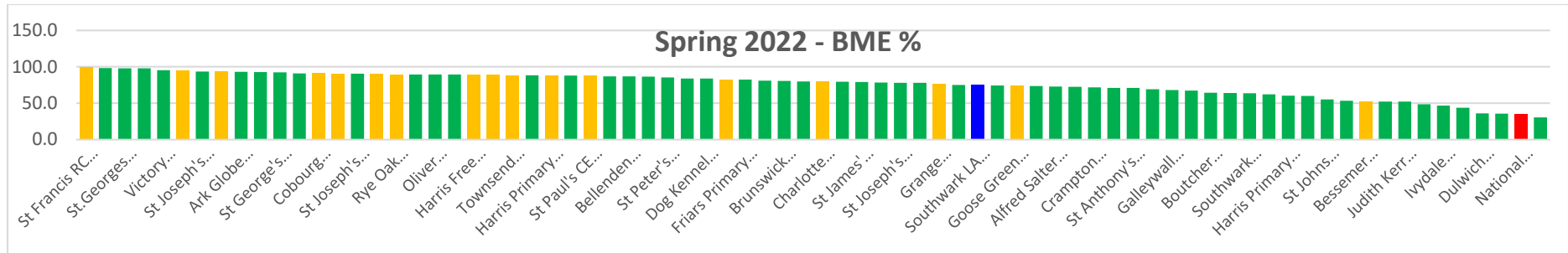
Red= National average

Blue= Southwark average

Yellow bars represent a school that is currently recommended to make a change (PAN reduction/ amalgamation)



Appendix 3: Supplementary data



Appendix 3: Supplementary data

3. Actions taken since 2019

PA	Primary School	Previous PAN	Agreed PAN	Reduction
1	St George's Cathedral RC	60	30	-30
	Charlotte Sharman	60	30	-30
	English Martyrs RC	60◇	30◇	-30◇
	Keyworth	90	60	-30
	St John's Walworth‡	30‡	0‡ (closed)	-30‡
	Robert Browning	60	30	-30
2	Phoenix*	120*	90*	-30*
	Ilderton◇	60◇	30◇	-30◇
3	Hollydale	45	30	-15
	Bellenden	60	30	-30
	Camelot	75	60	-15
	Ivydale	120	90	-30

Appendix 3: Supplementary data

	St Francis RC◇	60◇	30◇	-30◇
	Harris Primary Free Peckham¶¶	60¶¶	30¶¶	30¶¶
	Harris Peckham Park†	60†	30†	-30†
	St Francesca Cabrini RC† ‡	30* 60†	0 *(closing) 30†	-30* -30†
4	Brunswick Park	75	60	-15
	Comber Grove	45	30	-15
	Dog Kennel Hill◇	60◇	30◇	-30◇
	Crawford	90	60	-30
Total agreed		1,350 (45FE)	780 (26FE)	-570 (19FE)

School PAN reductions by school, by planning area – PANs reduced from September 2019 unless otherwise noted

*PAN reduction from September 2020 onwards

†PAN reduction from September 2021 onwards

¶¶ PAN reduction from September 2022 onwards

◇ PAN reduction agreed from September 2023 onwards

‡ Closure of school agreed from September 2021

* School closing in September 2023

Appendix 3: Supplementary data

4. Criteria for further evaluation

Recommendation Template: PRIMARY

Criterion/ Principle: Pupil Roll Trends and Projections

Instructions:

Data provider: Please provide the data requested below in the format requested.

- a. Provide the rolls from Reception to Year 6 for the past 5 years
- b. Provide the unused capacity from Reception to Year 6 for the past 5 years

[Name of School]	PAN Reception	Intake	PAN Reception Spaces	PANs Total	Total School Numbers	Spare capacity Y-6	% spare capacity	% points above 20%
2022/23								
2021/22								
2020/21								
2019/20								
2018/19								

- c. Provide the roll projections from Reception to Year 6 for next 5 years
- d. Provide the projected capacity if nothing changes

[Insert Name of School]	PAN Reception	Intake	PAN Reception Spaces	PANs Total	Total School Numbers	Spare capacity Y-6	% spare capacity	% points above 20%
2022/23								
2023/24								

Appendix 3: Supplementary data

2024/25								
2025/26								
2026/27								

Appendix 3: Supplementary data

Recommendation Assessment Template: PRIMARY

Criterion/ Principle: Quality of provision

Instructions:

Data provider: Please provide the data requested below in the format requested.

Name of School	Existing Ofsted Grade (and date)	
	1	Outstanding
	2+	Good, re-inspection in two years with view to being graded as outstanding
	2	Good
	2-	Good, re-inspection in two years with view to being graded as requires improvement
	3	Requires improvement
	4	Inadequate

Name of School	Ofsted Grade (expected)	Assessment by link adviser informed by school improvement overview
	Current assessment of evidence at time of the evaluation.	Write a summary narrative here explaining current assessment based on evidence gathered by SELA team – ideally bullet points Impact of school within LA – hub, engaged in school –to- school support.

Appendix 3: Supplementary data

Recommendation Assessment Template: PRIMARY

Criterion/ Principle: Budget health

Instructions:

Data provider: Please provide

1. A RAG rating of the budgetary health of the school, where red = in very poor health, amber = in poor health and green= in good health.

Ratings should take into account:

- a. The year-end financial position for the past 5 years,
- b. Financial projections/ forecast for the next 3 financial year(s) and include assumptions these are based on.
- c. Internal Audit Assurance level from latest report and high priority recommendations
- d. Any existing intelligence about rolls, staffing, capital, reserves/ deficits, loans and repayments.

2. A brief summary explaining the rating and any anomalies that the recommendation maker should be aware of (eg high level of maternity leave/ agency cover this year)

Criteria templates: Quality of Buildings and Estate

Recommendation Assessment Template: PRIMARY

Criterion/ Principle: Quality of estate & buildings

Instructions:

Data provider: Please provide the data requested below in the format requested.

A) How old is the building?

B) How easy would it be to bring the school up to a net zero standard? (grade this from 0= impossible and/ or very costly, to 5= simple and/ or inexpensive)

	Yes/ No/ No information held	Any further comment
Does the school have a condition survey from DfE?		
Have there been any major changes to the building(s) since the last condition survey?		
Has the survey identified any major issues with the building(s) (e.g. asbestos/ health and safety issues)?		
Is the school compliant with all relevant regulations (to be based on health and safety info)?		

Does the school have a maintenance programme in place?		
Does the school have a full time premises manager or equivalent?		
Is the building listed?		
Is the building in a conservation area?		
Is there sufficient play space for the existing and projected number of pupils (consult rolls officer)?		
Is there sufficient floor space for existing and projected number of pupils?		
Is it an appropriate space for its use?		
Has this building been built or expanded recently as part of the 2009 expansion programme?		

Criteria templates: Local Issues

Recommendation Assessment Template: PRIMARY

Criterion/ Principle: Local issues

Instructions:

Data provider: Please provide the data requested below in the format requested.

	Yes/ No	Any additional comment
Is it the only school of its designation in a 0.5 mile radius?	Yes= Green No= Red	
Is there a Resource Base in the school?	Yes= Green No = Red	
Is it on the border with other boroughs (ie would we lose the children from that school to other boroughs)?	Yes= Green No= Red	
Is there a Nursery or provision for 2 year olds in the school?	Yes= Green No= Red	
What percentage of the children in this school are from other boroughs?	High percentage= Green Low percentage = Red	
Are there any issues that you are aware of that should stop this school being put forward for consideration for change?	Yes (and what)= Green No= Red	
Are there any issues that you are aware of that should support this	Yes = Red No= Green	

school being put forward for consideration for change?		
Are alternative options covered by the congestion or low emission zones? (would parents incur more cost sending their children to another school?)	Yes= Green No= Red	
What percentage of children has an EHCP?	Over X% = Green Under X% = Red	
Any other issues to consider not covered by other templates (please just note them)	Note the issues in the additional comment column	

Majority Green= recommendation not to change
Majority Red= recommendation to make a change

Item No. 7.	Classification: Open	Date: 4 October 2023	Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Report title:		Southwark Council CfGS Scrutiny Improvement Review and Action Plan	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		N/a	
From:		Everton Roberts, Head of Scrutiny	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That overview and scrutiny committee notes the letter from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) arising from the scrutiny improvement review commissioned by the council (Appendix 1 to the report).
2. That the overview and scrutiny committee notes the proposed Action Plan (Appendix 2) and considers which of the actions it wishes to take forward. The main recommendations arising from the review are set out at paragraph 14 of this report for ease of reference.
3. That the overview and scrutiny committee notes the additional recommendations of the opposition group members on the committee, set out at paragraph 16 of the report and considers which of these recommendations it wishes to take forward.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

4. The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny were commissioned by the Council in August 2022 to provide a health check of the council's scrutiny function and to indicate where improvements could be made.
5. The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny undertook a scrutiny improvement review of the council's scrutiny function in September and October 2022, and issued its draft letter to the Council in December 2022. All members of the council were provided with a copy of the draft letter in January 2023. The final version of the letter attached as Appendix 1 was issued in April 2023 following feedback from the council.
6. An action plan has been developed based on the guidance and recommended actions arising from the scrutiny improvement review (Appendix 2 of the report). This report highlights the proposed actions being recommended for implementation within the 2023-24 municipal year.

7. The overview and scrutiny committee received the CfGS Scrutiny Improvement Review letter at its meeting held on 24 April 2023. The letter was presented by Ian Parry Head of Consultancy, CfGS.
8. The committee agreed to defer consideration of the recommendations arising from the scrutiny improvement review to its next meeting.
9. A number of recommendations were put forward by Councillor Irina von Wiese to be considered as part of the scrutiny improvement review process. The additional recommendations are set out at paragraph 16 of the report.
10. The overview and scrutiny committee noted the guidance issued by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny for English local authorities on the use of call-in at its meeting held on 4 July 2023. The committee also agreed to a 'review of the call-in procedure based on benchmarking and examples of good practice' recommendation 9 of the scrutiny improvement review report.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

11. The CfGS letter identifies areas the council may wish to focus on to improve its scrutiny function. The CfGS has made 11 recommendations following its review (set out at paragraph 14 of this report), and has also made a number of suggestions on areas where the scrutiny process could be enhanced and improved. Due to the number of recommendations, suggested enhancements and actions the council may wish to adopt, it is proposed that agreed actions are implemented over a 2 year period (see CfGS letter or action plan for the complete list of recommendations, enhancements and other actions).
12. The proposed priority areas for implementation in 2023-24 municipal year are:
 - Recommendation 1 – strengthening collaborative relationships between scrutiny, cabinet and directors. Implementation of this recommendation will provide greater direction for the scrutiny function in terms of setting its work programme and supporting the council in delivering its agenda.
 - Suggested enhancement – developing a working agreement between members and officers. This will provide clarity and expectations for scrutiny members, cabinet members and officers when involved with the scrutiny process.
 - Recommendation 3 – providing development support and training for officers across the council. The council is keen to raise awareness of scrutiny across the council, which will enable a greater understanding around the role of scrutiny, and officers will be better able to factor the scrutiny process into their work as appropriate.

- Suggested enhancement – using work planning and scoping to consider the best methods for each review. The council is keen to maximise best use of Members time and effectiveness when undertaking reviews.
 - Suggested enhancement – developing an approach to pre-decision scrutiny. The scrutiny function is keen to assist with the development of policy areas.
 - Recommendation 9 – review of call-in procedure. A review of the call-in procedure will be timely in light of new guidance shortly to be issued by CfGS.
 - Recommendation 10 – focus on smaller set of high quality recommendations from scrutiny reviews (SMART recommendations). This will improve tracking of implementation of recommendations.
 - Recommendation 11 – further skills development for chairs and vice-chairs. This will enable the development of higher quality agenda items, and improving on take away actions from meetings.
13. Many of the actions detailed in the action plan will be implemented as scrutiny undertakes it work during the 2023/24 year.

14. **Centre for Governance and Scrutiny Recommendations**

- **Recommendation 1:** Strengthen collaborative relationships between scrutiny, Cabinet and Directors whilst maintaining the independence of scrutiny. Earlier and more systematic involvement of portfolio holders and Directors would enable scrutiny to identify issues, trends, and topics where it can focus for accountability and impact.
- **Recommendation 2:** Enable the scrutiny team to take a more strategic role in managing the relationships between different parts of the Council. This offers further opportunities to raise the profile and impact of scrutiny.
- **Recommendation 3:** Provide development support and training for Officers across the Council to refresh and enhance their understanding and appreciation of scrutiny.
- **Recommendation 4:** Review how reports and information is supplied to scrutiny – so that it supports the scrutiny objective, is not excessively detailed and is understandable by Members.
- **Recommendation 5:** Developing a systematic approach to mapping opportunities for community engagement and collaborative approaches including a methodology for identifying local issues for residents.

- **Recommendation 6:** Review and enhance work planning process for the Committee and the Commissions, building on current practice by using insights from this review. Consider the systematic use of work planning tools to assist with prioritising issues.
 - **Recommendation 7:** Use member education sessions, masterclasses, and pre-briefing to support Members to be ready to engage with scrutiny topics and Council plans.
 - **Recommendation 8:** Consider the use of task and finish group work and other alternative scrutiny arrangements to ensure the most effective use of time and resources and to deliver maximum impact.
 - **Recommendation 9:** Review the call-in procedure based on benchmarking and examples of good practice.
 - **Recommendation 10:** Focus on smaller sets of high-quality recommendations from scrutiny reviews.
 - **Recommendation 11:** Further skills development support is offered for the key roles of Chairs and Vice-Chairs – to support them to develop their approach to leading scrutiny and to reflect on their personal style and learning.
15. Actions arising from Recommendations 1, 2 and 9, if adopted, will require consultation and agreement with cabinet / lead cabinet member / CMT.
16. In addition to the recommendations set out in the scrutiny improvement review letter, the opposition group members on the committee have requested the following recommendations are considered as part of the scrutiny improvement review:
1. To remove the requirement for a councillor to be a sitting member of the overview and scrutiny committee to call-in a decision, allowing any three councillors to request a decision to be called-in.
 2. To establish a recommendations monitor to be maintained by the scrutiny team in order to track the progress of recommendations.
 3. To treat the recommendations of the scrutiny improvement review as a priority area in the council's action plan.
 4. For minutes of the overview and scrutiny committee meetings to be submitted to council assembly, to be moved by the chair, and to be scrutinised and agreed by all members.
 5. To offer the position of the OSC chair to a member of the main opposition group of the council.

Resource implications

17. The actions arising from the proposed recommendations may require additional resource in terms of officer and member time, as well as additional officer time to support the process.
18. Meetings / initiatives that take place outside of the council's main offices may incur cost for venue hire, refreshments, hiring of audio/visual equipment.

Legal implications

19. There are no specific legal implications arising from the recommendations of the CfGS.

Financial implications

20. The majority of the actions arising from the scrutiny improvement will be contained within existing resources. As detailed in paragraph 18 of the report, meetings / initiatives that take place outside of the council's main offices may incur cost. If the recommendation is agreed, a bid for additional resources will need to be made, and will be subject to approval.

Consultation

21. All members of the council were sent a copy of the CfGS, draft letter issued in December 2022.
22. Consultation with CMT was undertaken on 4 April 2023. Further consultation is planned as appropriate around recommendations 1, 2 and 9, if adopted by overview and scrutiny committee.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	CfGS Scrutiny Improvement Review Feedback report letter
Appendix 2	Scrutiny Improvement Review Action Plan

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Doreen Forrester Brown, Assistant Chief Executive – Governance and Assurance	
Report Author	Everton Roberts, Head of Scrutiny	
Version	Final	
Dated	26 September 2023	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Assistance Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance	No	No
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team / Scrutiny Team	26 September 2023	



Centre for Governance and Scrutiny

Scrutiny

Improvement Review

April 2023

Althea Loderick
Chief Executive
Southwark Council

Dear Althea,

Scrutiny Improvement Review – CfGS consultancy support

I am writing to thank you for inviting the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) to carry out an evaluation of the London Borough of Southwark's scrutiny function. This letter provides feedback on our review findings and offers suggestions on how the Council could develop its scrutiny process.

As part of this feedback stage, we would like to facilitate a workshop with Members and Officers to reflect on this review and to discuss options for improvement.

Background to the review

CfGS undertook a review of these scrutiny arrangements, involving evidence gathering in person and online through conversations with Members and Officers on 20th and 22nd September and 31st October 2022.

CfGS met with elected Members and Officers, including the Council Leader and Cabinet Members, the Scrutiny Committee/Commission Chairs, Scrutiny Members, and the Council's senior leadership team.

Southwark Council currently operates an Overview and Scrutiny Committee and four Commissions:

- The Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission
- The Environment and Community Engagement Scrutiny Commission
- The Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Commission
- The Health and Social Care Scrutiny Commission

The Council was also part of the Our Healthier South East London Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee at the time the review was undertaken.

We also completed a short literature review of key documents including the Constitution, the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, the Corporate Plan, the emerging Borough Plan, scrutiny work programmes, agendas, minutes and recommendations from a range of scrutiny reports. In addition we observed past Scrutiny Committee meetings online.

The review was conducted by:

- Paul Cutler – Associate, Centre for Governance and Scrutiny
- Sarah Parry-Jones - Associate, Centre for Governance and Scrutiny
- Review oversight – Ian Parry – Head of Consultancy CfGS

The findings and recommendations presented in this letter are intended to advise Southwark Council in strengthening the quality of scrutiny activities, increasing the impact of its outputs, and through its Members, to develop a strong and shared understanding of the role and capability of the scrutiny function.

Summary of findings

1. Scrutiny has the conditions for success

- 1.1 It is readily apparent that scrutiny has a good foundation in Southwark. Members and Officers engaged enthusiastically with the review and offered many insights and suggestions for the development of local processes. Members spoke of their confidence to participate in scrutiny activities. They are willing to pose independent and challenging questions. This is supported by a review of documentation, minutes, and reports.
- 1.2 When asked to explore the purpose of scrutiny in Southwark there was broad consensus. All groups were able to identify the following themes:
- Independent member-led exploration of key issues
 - Accountability
 - Critical friend challenge
 - Promoting the voice of residents and the needs of communities in the borough
 - Having a measurable and demonstrable impact that improves and adds value to the provision of local services
 - Exploring alternative approaches for service delivery and Council priorities
 - Transparency
 - Strengthening local democracy
- 1.3 Interpersonal relationships are largely positive. They work best when based on behaviours founded on mutual respect and values. A key unifier for individuals across the political spectrum is the explicit commitment to residents. This will prove an essential when navigating some of the more challenging aspects of scrutiny. Relationships work less well when mediated by political dynamics. A shared working agreement would help all parties explore these issues and agree ways to manage and avoid conflict.
- 1.4 A significant number of individuals have valuable scrutiny experiences beyond their current role. We were able to speak to Cabinet Members and others who had previous experience of chairing and participating in scrutiny committees. Many shared their largely positive experiences of creative forms of scrutiny, testing out different ways of working beyond the more traditional committee meetings. Officers were able to give examples of experience of scrutiny beyond Southwark, drawing on good practice from across local government. A key theme emerges of a rich set of scrutiny knowledge. These assets can help drive forward the culture of scrutiny in Southwark. The challenge is to support the sharing of this knowledge to embed it in current practice and approaches. Individuals commented that sometime opportunities from this knowledge have been missed. Issues of continuity, corporate memory and group learning are significant. Articulating 'what good looks like' and creative methods for scrutiny offers a valuable condition for success.
- 1.5 At the same time, individuals were able to identify a range of features and challenges at the personal and system levels. These will be explored throughout this report in subsequent sections. For example, there are a significant number of new Members. Some are having their first experiences of elected roles, local government and in some cases chairing a committee or commission. There are many positives as new people bring new ideas, community relationships, enthusiasm, and skills to the Council. Fresh thinking and a willingness to challenge existing ways of doing scrutiny are valued.

However, it will be important to support the development of those joining the authority and ensure their needs are understood by colleagues and Officers.

- 1.6 A consistent theme during the conversations for all groups was how to enhance the position of scrutiny in a busy authority with a fast pace of decision-making and diverse needs across the different wards. This was frequently posed as building a parity of esteem. This positions scrutiny as an essential component of the democratic function in the Council. Scrutiny is therefore an active partner in delivering effective, high quality and responsive services. This can raise awareness of scrutiny for Members who are not directly involved in specific Commissions. At times these factors may, albeit unintentionally, reduce the status of scrutiny alongside other parts of Council business.
- 1.7 The report presents a range of recommendations based on evidence gathering and analysis. Some are incremental and process based. There are also wider strategic opportunities that can enable Southwark to build this parity of esteem and impact of the scrutiny function. Many of these recommendations have already been identified in internal discussions and some captured in documents such as the annual report of the Overview and Scrutiny committee. In many cases work has already commenced to drive scrutiny forward. There is an appetite amongst Members and Officers to achieve this. We hope that this analysis will give further encouragement and support for this journey.

We recommend:

- **Recommendation 1:** Strengthen collaborative relationships between scrutiny, Cabinet and Directors whilst maintaining the independence of scrutiny. Earlier and more systematic involvement of portfolio holders and Directors would enable scrutiny to identify issues, trends, and topics where it can focus for accountability and impact.
- **Recommendation 2:** Enable the scrutiny team to take a more strategic role in managing the relationships between different parts of the Council. This offers further opportunities to raise the profile and impact of scrutiny.

Further ways to enhance and improve scrutiny:

- Developing a working agreement between Members and Officers to strengthen collaborative relationships, clarify mutual expectations and manage potential areas of conflict.
- Using benchmarking and share good practice case studies to promote examples of 'what good scrutiny looks like' to inform reviews and design challenge questions.

2. Officer support and organisational culture

- 2.1 The scrutiny team is valued and appreciated across the Council. They have developed good working relationships with Members and Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Commissions. The practical and administrative support they provide is considered good quality.
- 2.2 The Head of Scrutiny is particularly well regarded across the Council and is seen as a trusted and valued colleague. The current focus of the scrutiny team is balanced towards supporting the smooth administration of the scrutiny function. This has partly been a response to adapting working practices during the Covid pandemic. Later in this

section we will highlight opportunities to support a shift to a more strategic focus and facilitate wider relationships with the Cabinet and Officers.

- 2.3 The organisational culture in Southwark has a good foundation and there is evidence of mutual respect and appreciation of the roles of Officers and Members. Officers are willing to support scrutiny by providing advice, information and participating in sessions. Officers were keen to articulate their neutral and non-political obligations to good decision-making in Southwark, based on evidence and data. They recognise that scrutiny is an important element in holding them to account. Several Officers felt that good scrutiny can enhance their work as it provides challenge and critical thinking. Officers are mindful to prevent poor experiences of scrutiny that can be overly personalised and damage respect between Officers and Members.
- 2.4 The political dimension of scrutiny is an important consideration. Scrutiny works best when Committees can work towards consensus. Officers and Members felt it was important to address these issues more explicitly. Learning from previous CfGS reviews identifies the development of mature cross-party relationships as a key component of effective scrutiny. Themes include:
- The value of listening to alternative viewpoints and opposition voices
 - The importance of independent challenge and accountability for residents
 - Creating working relationships on both the individual and group level on the Committee and Commissions to get the most from all the Members
 - Agreeing ways to manage disagreements in a constructive way that can minimise conflict and promote positive behaviours
 - The risks to trust and co-working when these issues are not addressed in an open way
- 2.5 Whilst there is a good understanding of scrutiny amongst the most senior Directors and Officers in the Council there is feedback that the wider officer group may benefit from further training and development in this area. Some Officers may not have had the opportunity to explore the principles and role of scrutiny. This includes the legislative and statutory underpinnings of the function and the expectations of participating in evidence gathering and accountability sessions. Some Officers may have had previous negative experience of engaging with scrutiny (including in other authorities) and this may influence their appreciation of the function. Development support for Officers can build the esteem for scrutiny and outline the needs of scrutiny for focused information, advice, and scoping support. Drawing on examples of good practice and ways of working can also support the development of stronger working relationships between the scrutiny team and the wider officer group. Conversations during this review indicate that this would be welcomed by Officers.
- 2.6 Minutes of scrutiny meetings are detailed and thorough. However, they appear to take up a significant amount of officer time as they take a very comprehensive approach to how the meetings are recorded. We would recommend an exploration of different ways of capturing the essential components of meetings in a streamline way that meets expectations and the needs of the accountability process. Developing and presenting effective summaries, both verbally during the meetings and in the written format of the minutes offers one option to streamline this process. Linking the minutes to the scoping and key lines of enquiry also can ensure the information captured during the meetings is aligned to the purpose of the session. Video records are also available for each session.

-
- 2.7 Evidence and information are usually available for scrutiny. Officers appear to work hard to provide reports and material to support the work of the committee and commissions. This is reflected in the scrutiny reports which reference a wide range of information and evidence. However, there are a range of challenges identified by Members and Officers that could be addressed by articulating the needs and expectations of both groups to produce a shared working agreement.
- 2.8 These include:
- Ensuring reports are focused on the agenda item and topic under consideration. Officers commented that without clear guidance on the scope and focus of scrutiny agendas it is challenging to tailor the information to the scrutiny focus.
 - Managing the size of reports to ensure useability
 - Ensuring the timely production of reports and information to ensure Members have sufficient preparation and reading time
 - Managing changing expectations or realignment of key lines of enquiry as a scrutiny review progresses
 - Accessing information from a range of different parts of the Council in a coordinated and multi-departmental way – again this is partly dependent on the clarity of the scoping and design of key lines of enquiry
 - Ensuring Members are familiar with the reports before designing questions and review enquiries
- 2.9 The evolution of hybrid and IT based working as been effective and has added different opportunities for participation, public engagement and evidence collecting. Committee sessions are available to stream online. However, there is a consensus that face-to-face working offers enhanced ways to engage and work as a collective group of Members.
- 2.10 Given the strengths in Southwark, there is an opportunity to enhance the focus of the scrutiny team, empowering the Head of Scrutiny to take a greater strategic role. Conversations indicate that this would be welcomed and encouraged by senior Officers and Members.
- 2.11 Repositioning the Southwark scrutiny function would emphasise the significance of the strategic elements of the role in contrast to the operational focus of the wider scrutiny team. This could include:
- Championing the parity of esteem for scrutiny across the organisation by sharing a vision statement and promoting principles
 - Supporting the Head of Scrutiny to facilitate and broker a wider range of meetings for Scrutiny and Commission chairs with senior Officers and leaders in the Council – enabling scrutiny to have an enhanced ‘seat at the table’ as it develops its independent priorities and work planning
 - Working strategically across directorates to enable scrutiny to access cross-cutting information and insights
 - Sponsoring the development of enhanced scoping, key line of enquiry and recommendation tools
 - Articulating the purpose and added value of scrutiny for wider Council delivery
 - Focusing on trends from national policy agendas and direction to inform scrutiny
 - Highlighting wider examples of innovation and good practice for scrutiny – this can include ways to trial creative ways of working
 - Supporting Officers from other directorates to prepare for scrutiny and to align their input with the needs of the committee

- Developing a strategic roadmap for scrutiny with a refreshed focus on impact
- Horizon scanning

2.12 We would recommend supporting this through a development plan with the provision of further support including coaching and mentoring where appropriate. It will also be important to consider any further resourcing issues to support greater strategic working.

Organisational culture is also a product of the political context. During the review, we were able to speak to a range of Members from the main opposition party in individual interviews and group discussion. They raised several themes:

- Cross-party working between Members
- Allocation of chairing roles
- Remuneration for Commission vice-chairs
- Call-in procedures
- Transparency
- The independence of scrutiny challenge and accountability
- Focusing on residents' interests and the principles of good scrutiny

We address these throughout the report and advise that in the first instance these themes be taken forward through recommendations relating to cross-party working, work planning, pre-meetings, pre-scrutiny and the annual scrutiny review and appraisal processes.

We recommend:

- **Recommendation 3:** Provide development support and training for Officers across the Council to refresh and enhance their understanding and appreciation of scrutiny.
- **Recommendation 4:** Review how reports and information is supplied to scrutiny – so that it supports the scrutiny objective, is not excessively detailed and is understandable by Members.

Establishing cross-party pre-meetings for Scrutiny Committees and Commissions offers an additional way to support this process.

3. Collaborative approach to scrutiny

- 3.1 Members and Officers articulated a variety of diversity and demographic factors across Southwark. These included themes around age, ethnicity, homelessness, employment patterns and carer roles. It is important for scrutiny to continue to identify key lines of enquiry that can interrogate the impact of local decisions for these local groups. It is important that recommendations promote equitability of services and outcomes.
- 3.2 There is a commitment to engage with local partners and stakeholders to achieve this – scrutiny sees this as a powerful way to hear local voices and scrutinise the delivery of services. We looked at a range of scrutiny reports that presented a rich range of evidence and engagement with local partners in housing, education, health, and environment. This can be developed further by more systematic approaches to community engagement and the identification of local experience. Examples of good practice from other authorities can also offer examples of innovation.

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- 3.3 There is a keenness to address any potential barriers to greater collaboration including:
- Accessibility of scrutiny venues – there was interest from Members and Officers to consider different venues for evidence gathering sessions
 - Access to IT resources for virtual participation
 - Language and literacy need
 - Timings of sessions
- 3.4 Community and voluntary sector partnerships were identified as effective ways to enhance collaborations and support local people.
- 3.5 It is important to ensure good communication between different parts of the Council when engaging with local partners. Scrutiny can benefit from the networks of senior Officers and Cabinet Members to identify organisations. This advice can enable scrutiny to understand and navigate complex relationships. At the same time, keeping other parts of the Council informed of direct engagement with partners is important. This will ensure colleagues are well briefed and enhance coordination to avoid any potential difficulties.
- 3.6 There was a feeling amongst Officers that they could offer scrutiny colleagues more help with identifying local specialists and partners in Southwark. This included a greater breath of in-house expertise and in institutions located in the borough. There is a willingness to support scrutiny to map this wider range of potential partners and facilitate expert support for Members as they scope questions and enquiry lines.
- 3.7 Health scrutiny is well represented in the work of the Commission and there is evidence of interactions and relationships between the Commission and health partners. However, there are opportunities to enhance this understanding through additional training and access to best practice guides. All parties recognise that the health context is changing. It will be important for scrutiny to keep up to date with changing regulations and the development of Integrated Care Systems. At the same time, the health scrutiny work plan will need to make some strategic decisions about how it balances the voice and needs of patients and carers with wider organisational changes at the system level.
- 3.8 We were able to speak to a group of co-opted Members and education representatives who are involved in the scrutiny Commissions focusing on education, housing, and school provision. Co-opted Members can offer a valuable dimension to scrutiny, embedding local knowledge in the accountability process. Some are voting and other non-voting Members. The experience of this group was quite varied as was their length of involvement in scrutiny. All were passionate to ensure the voice of local people was included in the scrutiny work. Requests included:
- Clarifying the role and expectations of co-opted Members with reference to sections 3.1, 3.2 and 4 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules
 - Providing support and training for the co-opted role
 - Capturing their experience and contributions as part of the annual scrutiny self-appraisal
- 3.9 Members and Officers shared a range of creative and collaborative ways of working for scrutiny. These included:
- ‘Scrutiny in a day’ approaches
 - Social Return on Investment participatory scrutiny reviews

- Field trips
- Stakeholder mapping and scoping
- Following a fictional service user through the system to map impacts, integration opportunities and barriers
- Task & finish groups

3.10 There is an appetite to consider the use of creative approaches alongside the regular scrutiny meetings. It will also be important to consider any additional resourcing and scheduling issues. CfGS has a range of published resources with many creative approaches and we can signpost the scrutiny team to these.

We recommend:

- **Recommendation 5:** Developing a systematic approach to mapping opportunities for community engagement and collaborative approaches including a methodology for identifying local issues for residents.

Further ways to enhance and improve scrutiny include:

- Extending the use of creative approaches to scrutiny in Southwark. Use work planning and scoping to consider the best methods for each review. Share examples of good practice and creative methods by creating a menu of different methods available to the Scrutiny Committee and Commissions.
- Supporting the co-opted Members through a refreshed support programme identifying their learning and development needs to get the most from their contributions.

4. Scrutiny's focus and workplan

4.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee and each Commission has its own independent member-led work plan. These are detailed and reflect a significant amount of thinking and prioritisation. Each work plan seeks to balance Council priorities with proactive issues as well as internal and external topics. There is also a mix of issues identified by Members. The work plans are extensive as each body seeks to ensure a watching brief on a full range of issues with a deeper examination of key priorities. As a result, individual agendas can be very busy and there are challenges to allocating sufficient time to the most important issues.

4.2 Feedback identified opportunities to strengthen the work planning process and we would recommend an incremental approach applying the following principles:

- Use a consistent work planning tool to support each body to create a balanced work plan that is manageable and logical
- Focus on key issues where scrutiny can make a significant impact for local people
- Work closely with senior Officers and Cabinet Members to understand the most challenging issues around Council delivery and outcomes
- Identify the areas where there are already robust forms of accountability and scrutiny – where possible avoid replication or where added-value is minimal
- Highlight the issues that are high priorities for resident's and that reflect their concerns
- Less is often more – focusing on two or three substantive issues in a meeting
- Link the work planning to the scoping process for specific review topics

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- 4.3 Observations and feedback highlight that scrutiny often takes a broad approach to many topics. Whilst there are virtues in considering the big picture, in many instances a more targeted and focused approach would enable greater impact and enhance accountability. Scrutiny reports are comprehensive and detailed. Reports therefore have a large spread of recommendations which may be more difficult to implement and track. There are important connections to learning from previous recommendations as scrutiny scopes new reviews. This theme is explored further in section six on impact.
- 4.4 Linked to work planning is the scoping process for individual reviews. We have seen a range of examples of scoping during this review. Officers can support Members to map a topic and identify potential issues to scrutinise. This includes appreciating the areas directly under Council control and those where there is only influence or external control. Key lines of enquiry and focused scrutiny questions can then emerge from the scoping. This will support greater targeting of challenge questions and accountability.
- 4.5 Five broad sources of evidence for scrutiny were highlighted through the discussions. Effective scrutiny needs to access, assess, and triangulate these different forms of data. From this scrutiny can form lines of enquiry and formulate recommendations:
- The voice, concerns, and experience of local people - with a focus on recognising diverse experiences and how community organisations can support this
 - The plans and decisions of senior leaders
 - Frontline experience of delivering services as encouraged by section 46d of the 2019 Statutory Guidance for Overview and Scrutiny
 - Evidence of outcomes and impact - including finance, quality, risk, and sustainability
 - A wider survey of the literature on good practice, policy frameworks and research
- 4.6 Support to design challenge questions that can highlight and probe these different sources was felt to be beneficial. Members are also keen to consider new ways to integrate frontline experiences in a proportionate and relevant way to highlight the performance and quality of services.
- 4.7 Conversations reflected on the difference between scrutinising Council performance for the benefit of accountability and the separate process of direct performance management for Officers and Cabinet Members. Further training could support Members to distinguish between these two approaches and explore skills and strategies.

Under section 5.1 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules part b states:

'...review and scrutinise the decisions made by and performance of the cabinet and council Officers both in relation to individual decisions and over time in areas covered by its terms of reference....'

- 4.8 It would be useful to clarify that this does not refer to the managerial process of performance management but rather the wider non-executive scrutiny function around accountability for performance and delivery. Conversations indicate that the boundary between these two processes are not always clear. It may result in some Members misconstruing scrutiny as a mechanism for the performance management of individuals.
- 4.9 The annual accountability session for Cabinet Members at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is seen as a valuable way to connect the committee with the full range of portfolios across the Council. The importance given to this meeting is felt to signify the

status of the scrutiny function in Southwark. It also enables the Chairs of the Commissions to align their work with the wider strategic context including issues of policy, delivery, finance, and risk. As Members reflected on these sessions it was felt that strengthening the focus of each engagement would enable Cabinet Members to prepare effectively and enable the Committee to get the best from each set of questions.

- 4.10 Pre-decision scrutiny enables Members to engage with topics proactively. Recommendations can have impact when they influence and enhance decision making. Pre-decision scrutiny can contribute to longer-term policy development, workstreams, scheduled decision-making timetables and even more urgent short-term issues. Members have identified pre-scrutiny as an important goal across the Commissions and the Committee. Effective pre-scrutiny therefore needs joined-up collaboration with Cabinet and other decision-makers to agree a formal process. Work is already being developed in Southwark to introduce more pre-scrutiny. CfGS has a range of case studies and guidance around pre-decision scrutiny to support this process. Scrutiny will benefit from using prioritisation tools to create a balanced work plan of pre-scrutiny, post decision scrutiny and wider strategic topics.

We recommend:

- **Recommendation 6:** Review and enhance work planning process for the Committee and the Commissions, building on current practice by using insights from this review. Consider the systematic use of work planning tools to assist with prioritising issues.
- **Recommendation 7:** Use member education sessions, masterclasses, and pre-briefing to support Members to be ready to engage with scrutiny topics and Council plans.

Further ways to enhance and improve scrutiny:

- Continuing to develop an approach to pre-decision scrutiny in collaboration with Cabinet and Officers.
- Supporting Members to design effective challenge questions using triangulated evidence and data to enhance accountability.

5. Scrutiny committee structure and scheduling

- 5.1 The current structure of one Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its four Commissions is felt to be working effectively. The Committee enables the Chairs of the Commissions to come together to scrutinise wider Council business including the Corporate Plan, finance, and human resources issues. The Commissions also hold the key statutory briefs for issues such as health scrutiny. There is also a separate Our Healthier Southeast London Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
- 5.2 The Commissions are given significant autonomy in their work planning with the opportunity to report directly to Cabinet. This is felt to work well and encourages delegated leadership. Support and advice are provided by the Committee Chair to the Commission Chairs.

- 5.3 Several individuals queried the original underlying vision for the Commissions when they were first established. Some felt that the Commissions were initially seen as task & finish groups for the Committee but over time had taken on a more overarching role for their thematic areas. Whilst this is only of historical interest at this point it does raise the issue of other formats for undertaking elements of scrutiny work such as deep dives on issues. The Southwark model does not currently use separate task & finish groups for any of its scrutiny work. The Council may wish to consider this approach as part of a wider spectrum of creative methods.
- 5.4 Frequency and scheduling of scrutiny meetings is felt to be effective. There is a recognition of the scale of the scrutiny workload. Effective work planning, prioritisation, member education sessions and pre-meetings are important tools in managing these demands.
- 5.5 CfGS takes the view that there are a range of possible committee structures that can deliver effective scrutiny. What is most significant is the culture, processes, and behaviours in which the structure operates. We would not advise any substantive changes to the current structures in Southwark.
- 5.6 A few Members and Officers raised the issue of the call-in process for the reconsideration of specific decisions prior to implementation. Across the political spectrum it was felt that call-in can be important process. Though only to be used exceptionally, it is available to consider the impact of decisions for residents including the needs of different demographics and specific wards. We looked at the regulations under section 17 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules as part of this. Three themes were identified:
- The relatively low number of call-ins for decisions
 - The threshold for making a call-in as structured under section 17.4 is reserved for Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and requires three Members
 - The decision criteria for reviewing call-in requests and how they are processed based on the content and detail of the challenge
- 5.7 CfGS is currently undertaking a review programme on the topic of call-in. This includes benchmarking practice across England and sharing practical experiences from Members and Officers. We will be producing some refreshed guidance. We recommend that Southwark draws on this work when complete to consider any learning that could enhance the local call-in procedure. This could include additional training and a strategic consideration of the purpose of call-in for the Council.

We recommend:

- **Recommendation 8:** Consider the use of task and finish group work and other alternative scrutiny arrangements to ensure the most effective use of time and resources and to deliver maximum impact.
- **Recommendation 9:** Review the call-in procedure based on benchmarking and examples of good practice.

6. Scrutiny's output and impact

- 6.1 Scrutiny reports currently produce a wide range of recommendations. These can vary from detailed action points to wider policy topics, process changes, underpinning principles and learning themes.

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- 6.2 There is evidence of good dialogue and responses from Cabinet on recommendations, many of which are accepted and approved. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee also provides a yearly report to the Council Assembly.
- 6.3 It is important to develop effective recommendations and track their impact. Key features identified during the review included:
- Focusing recommendations on a small set of priorities - this is more effective than having a long list that is not prioritised
 - Ensuring recommendations are clearly articulated and are focused using SMART approaches (specific, measurable, actionable, realistic, and timetabled)
 - Testing draft recommendations with Officers to ensure issues are understood and are factually correct
 - Reviewing the impact and learning from recommendations over set time periods through regular agenda items
 - Revisiting previous scrutiny reviews to identify work that has already been done to inform future scrutiny
 - Ensuring a clear protocol with Cabinet to agree the process for considering and responding to scrutiny recommendations
 - Where applicable, to share recommendations with external partners such as health bodies
 - Collecting additional evidence and feedback to identify the impact of recommendations

Designing effective recommendations enables scrutiny to identify impact.

- 6.4 Evidence of tracking recommendations is currently dispersed across a range of documents including minutes, reports, work plans, scoping and agendas. A central tracking tool would support Scrutiny to maintain an overview of recommendations and enhance accountability.
- 6.5 Cross-cutting issues such as the wider determinants of health have real impact on residents' lives and can extend beyond the remit of each Commission. Taking a joined-up systems wide approach to cross-cutting issues is important. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is well placed to consider these types of issues as its Membership includes the chairs of each Commission.
- 6.6 Several individuals raised the possibility of presenting the purpose of scrutiny in Southwark through a short centralising document such as a mission statement, plan-on-a-page or theory of change. It was felt that a strategic statement would be beneficial in raising awareness and esteem for the scrutiny process. A range of possible tools are available to demonstrate the way scrutiny is embedded in the democratic process and how impact adds value for local people and service delivery. Taking a collaborative approach to developing this statement offers a practical opportunity for scrutiny to work strategically with a wider group of Cabinet Members, Officers, and stakeholders.
- 6.7 It is important that scrutiny can hold itself to account for its work and impact. Modelling good practice can set expectations for ways of working to promote a culture of accountability. Applying the principles of challenge to how it uses its time and resources most effectively.

- 6.8 Southwark already has a process of annual review and produces an annual report to capture learning from the scrutiny activities. Additional self-assessment tools are available from CfGS to support this process. This could include a training needs assessment and exploration of templates and good practice examples.

We recommend:

- **Recommendation 10:** Focus on smaller sets of high-quality recommendations from scrutiny reviews.

Further ways to enhance and improve scrutiny:

- Enhance the formal system for tracking recommendations over time – identify the impact and learning from specific recommendations as well as factors that produce effective recommendations.
- Consider cross-cutting issues as a regular part of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee work plan and agenda, bringing together strategic themes from across the four Commissions to identify opportunities for system wide working and accountability.
- Create a strategic summary statement on the purpose and contribution of scrutiny in Southwark. Use this to map impact.
- Use a self-assessment tool to support the annual review and evaluation of scrutiny.

7. Chairing, member development and meeting preparation

- 7.1 The role of Chair is crucial to the effective delivery of scrutiny. It is the key leadership role. The tasks are complex and multifaceted with the need to manage the group, the meetings, relationships and set a vision for the culture of scrutiny across the Council.
- 7.2 During the review we spoke with the five Chairs and four Vice-chairs of the Committee and Commissions. We also observed Chair performance during streamed meetings.
- 7.3 The Chairs report good working relationships with Officers and support for their role.
- 7.4 Chairing is generally felt to be effective and inclusive. Most Members felt they were given opportunities to contribute to meetings. As expected, there is with some variation in style based on general approach and experience. Summary skills were felt to be very important to synthesise the discussions and identify next steps for the review. Linking these summaries to the scoping and key lines of enquiry offers a structure for this. Continuous chair development and direct support is essential to strengthening the role. This will be important as scrutiny explores new creative approaches to reviews.
- 7.5 Each of the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee and the four Commission chairs all come from the majority party. The vice-chairs of the four commissions each come from the opposition. Interpersonal relations between the chairs and vice-chairs are reported to be positive.
- 7.6 A few Officers and Members have raised the issue of chairing roles and opposition roles. Whilst recognising the virtues of independent challenge the broad CfGS view is that the role of chair is best allocated based on skillset and ability to fulfil the role. One of the key functions of an effective chair is to then ensure that a range of voices are

heard and engaged in the Committee to promote effective challenge and accountability.

- 7.7 Member education and background briefings on key issues is essential for effective scrutiny. It is important to ensure Members are supported to understand the wider policy and decision-making frameworks before engaging in the actual scrutiny meetings. Member education, 'master classes' and briefing sessions outside the formal scrutiny sessions are the most effective way to achieve this and ensure that limited scrutiny time in the Committee and Commissions is used for questions and enquiry rather than education. Education sessions can sit alongside more formal scrutiny skills training as referenced earlier in the report. Using the scoping and work planning tools to identify and schedule briefing sessions can help to forward plan the needs of scrutiny across the year. Officers have indicated they would be very receptive to requests for these types of sessions.
- 7.8 Pre-meetings before the formal scrutiny sessions are a valuable way for the Chair and Members to coordinate their activities. Scrutiny is most effective when the group understands the purpose of the session and has prepared questions based on the scoping and key lines of enquiry for the topic. Pre-meetings also enable the group to self-manage their dynamics and provide a space for urgent or new issues. This can provide inclusive opportunities for cross-party working. Members also report that pre-meetings can help build individual confidence as they prepare for their role during the public meetings.
- 7.9 Scrutiny training has been well received in the past. Members found the following topics useful:
- Designing scrutiny questions
 - Building collaborative relationships
 - Developing a work plan
 - Exploring case studies of effective scrutiny reviews
 - Writing recommendations
- 7.10 Further training has been requested to revisit these areas plus financial scrutiny and working with data and evidence. It was also felt that refreshing member knowledge on the principles, statutory framework and procedures would be helpful.

We recommend:

- **Recommendation 11:** Further skills development support is offered for the key roles of Chairs and Vice-Chairs – to support them to develop their approach to leading scrutiny and to reflect on their personal style and learning

Further ways to enhance and improve scrutiny:

- Extending the development process for Members to enable them to refresh their knowledge and understanding of the role of scrutiny – this should include learning activities such as workshops supported with materials and case studies
- Use pre-meetings to prepare for scrutiny sessions by reviewing the key lines of enquiry and coordinating approaches to questions and evidence. Pre-meetings can facilitate teamwork between Members of the Committee or Commission.

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- Provide Scrutiny Members with the essential core knowledge to be sufficiently effective in the scrutiny task through briefings, education sessions or ‘master classes’ for complex topics.

8. Public engagement

- 8.1 Scrutiny should explore and experiment with ways to allow greater access, openness, and involvement with the public. This could include scrutiny going on more site visits in the community, inviting the public to offer ideas for work plans, and greater use of social media channels for resident input and communicating the progress and impact of scrutiny work.

Thank you and acknowledgements

We would like to thank the Chair, Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the four Scrutiny Commissions, Cabinet Members and Officers who took part in interviews for their time, insights and open views.

Yours sincerely,

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Southwark CfGS Scrutiny Improvement Review – Action Plan

This document sets out the actionable findings, recommendations and suggested enhancements arising from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) scrutiny improvement review and has been created to track agreed actions.

CfGS Issues identified / Recommendations and suggested enhancements to scrutiny process	Para.	How can this be achieved / Proposed actions	Adopted? (Y/N)	Action by / When	
Scrutiny has the conditions for success (Feedback Report Letter – Section 1)					
Issues identified / proposed actions arising	Shared working agreement to manage and avoid conflict.	1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement reached through discussion between political group whips. • Agreement included in a protocol 		
	Sharing of internal and external knowledge via internal sources (member/officer experiences both internally and externally) to embed into current practices and approaches.	1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify individuals who may wish to share their experiences. • Creation of feedback forms/questionnaire. • Picking up through discussion via internal briefings around role and work of scrutiny. 		

CfGS Issues identified / Recommendations and suggested enhancements to scrutiny process	Para.	How can this be achieved / Proposed actions	Adopted? (Y/N)	Action by / When	
	Challenges at personal and system level (supporting development of new councillors)	1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify appropriate training and learning and development needs from the outset. • Essential training delivered by scrutiny experts (CfGS). • Development through Member learning and development programme. 		
<p>Recommendation 1: Strengthen collaborative relationships between scrutiny, Cabinet and Directors whilst maintaining the independence of scrutiny. Earlier and more systematic involvement of portfolio holders and Directors would enable scrutiny to identify issues, trends, and topics where it can focus for accountability and impact.</p>					
<p>Recommendation 2: Enable the scrutiny team to take a more strategic role in managing the relationships between different parts of the Council. This offers further opportunities to raise the profile and impact of scrutiny.</p>					
<p>Enhancement: Developing a working agreement between Members and Officers to strengthen collaborative relationships, clarify mutual expectations and manage potential areas of conflict.</p>					
<p>Enhancement: Using benchmarking and share good practice case studies to promote examples of 'what good scrutiny looks like' to inform reviews and design challenge questions.</p>					

CfGS Issues identified / Recommendations and suggested enhancements to scrutiny process	Para.	How can this be achieved / Proposed actions	Adopted? (Y/N)	Action by / When	
Officer support and organisational culture (Feedback Report Letter – Section 2)					
Issues identified / proposed actions arising	Training and Development support for Officers around the work of scrutiny and the scrutiny function.	2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section included on the ‘Source’ around the role of scrutiny, including legislative background / references to the constitution. • Briefings undertaken at Departmental Management Team meetings explaining the function and providing opportunity for questions. • Clearer guidance to be made available/ issued to officers participating in scrutiny meeting/review. 		
	Capturing essential components of meetings in a streamline way that meets expectations and needs of the accountability process (to enable a reduction of officer time spent on producing minutes of meetings).	2.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and presentation of effective summaries. • Clearer scoping and key lines of enquiry, aligned to purpose of meeting. • Chair summarising discussion and main points at end of each item. 		

CfGS Issues identified / Recommendations and suggested enhancements to scrutiny process		Para.	How can this be achieved / Proposed actions	Adopted? (Y/N)	Action by / When
Issues identified / proposed actions arising	Challenges around providing reports and material supporting the work of the committee and commissions.	2.7 / 2.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearer articulation of scope and focus of topics when requesting information. • Concise reports • Reports being produced in time for circulation with agenda to allow for sufficient preparation and reading time. • Managing changing expectations or realignment of key lines of enquiry as a scrutiny review progresses • Accessing information from different parts of the Council in a co-ordinated way. • Ensuring members are familiar with reports/subject matter before designing questions and review enquiries. • Development of working agreement / protocol to confirm agreed way of working. 		
	Repositioning the scrutiny function to emphasise the significance of the strategic elements of the role.	2.11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing vision statement and promoting principles. • Wider range of meetings between scrutiny chairs with senior officers and leaders in the council. 		

CfGS Issues identified / Recommendations and suggested enhancements to scrutiny process	Para.	How can this be achieved / Proposed actions	Adopted? (Y/N)	Action by / When
<p>Issues identified / proposed actions arising</p>	<p>Repositioning the scrutiny function to emphasise the significance of the strategic elements of the role cont.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working strategically across directorates to access cross-cutting information and insights. • Sponsoring the development of enhanced scoping, key line of enquiry and recommendation tools. • Articulating the purpose and added value of scrutiny for wider Council delivery. • Focusing on trends from national policy agendas and direction to inform scrutiny. • Highlighting wider examples of innovation and good practice for scrutiny. • Supporting officers to prepare for scrutiny and aligning their input with the needs of the committee. • Developing a strategic road map for scrutiny with a refreshed focus on impact. • Horizon scanning. 		

CfGS Issues identified / Recommendations and suggested enhancements to scrutiny process		Para.	How can this be achieved / Proposed actions	Adopted? (Y/N)	Action by / When
Issues identified / proposed actions arising	Repositioning scrutiny function through a development plan	2.12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development plan prepared with provision of support, including coaching and mentoring. • Consider further resourcing issues to support greater strategic working. 		
Recommendation 3: Provide development support and training for Officers across the Council to refresh and enhance their understanding and appreciation of scrutiny.					
Recommendation 4: Review how reports and information is supplied to scrutiny – so that it supports the scrutiny objective, is not excessively detailed and is understandable by Members.					
Enhancement: Establishing cross-party pre-meetings for Scrutiny Committees and Commissions as an additional way to support the process.					
Collaborative approach to scrutiny (Feedback Report Letter – Section 3)					
Issues identified / proposed actions arising	Engaging with local partners and stakeholders to identify key lines of enquiry that can interrogate the impact of local decisions.	3.1 / 3.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopting more systematic approaches to community engagement and the identification of local experience. • Identifying examples of innovation / good practice from other local authorities. 		

CfGS Issues identified / Recommendations and suggested enhancements to scrutiny process		Para.	How can this be achieved / Proposed actions	Adopted? (Y/N)	Action by / When
Issues identified / proposed actions arising	Addressing potential barriers to greater collaboration	3.3 / 3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring different venues for evidence gathering sessions. • Access to IT resources for virtual participation. • Identifying language and literacy need. • Considering timing of meetings/sessions. • Utilising community and voluntary sector to enhance collaborations and support to local people. 		
	Ensuring good communication between different parts of the council when engaging with local partners.	3.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tapping into the networks of senior officers and cabinet members to identify organisations. • Keeping cabinet members/senior officers informed of direct engagement with partners. 		
	Mapping of local specialists and partners in Southwark and facilitating expert support for scrutiny members to scope questions and enquiry lines.	3.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with key officers to develop a mapping document. • Arrange meetings with chairs and key officers to scope questions and lines of enquiry. 		

CfGS Issues identified / Recommendations and suggested enhancements to scrutiny process	Para.	How can this be achieved / Proposed actions	Adopted? (Y/N)	Action by / When	
Issues identified / proposed actions arising	Enhancing understanding of Health Scrutiny, in a changing context.	3.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange training and briefings for members involved with health scrutiny to keep them up to date with changing regulations and best practice. 		
	Co-opted Members on scrutiny commissions – enhancing their role	3.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce document setting out roles and expectations of co-opted members. • Provide briefings and training for co-opted members as appropriate. • Schedule in annual feedback on co-opted member experience. 		
	Adopting creative approaches to scrutiny, outside of formal meeting process.	3.9	<p>Consider appropriate approach to evidence gathering – Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny in a day • Social Return on Investment participatory scrutiny reviews • Field Trips • Stakeholder mapping and scoping • Following a fictional service user through the system to map impacts, integration opportunities and barriers • Task and Finish Groups 		

CfGS Issues identified / Recommendations and suggested enhancements to scrutiny process		Para.	How can this be achieved / Proposed actions	Adopted? (Y/N)	Action by / When
Issues identified / proposed actions arising	Adopting creative approaches to scrutiny, outside of formal meeting process cont.	3.10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of CfGS published resources 		
Recommendation 5: Developing a systematic approach to mapping opportunities for community engagement and collaborative approaches including a methodology for identifying local issues for residents.					
Enhancement: Extending the use of creative approaches to scrutiny in Southwark. Use work planning and scoping to consider the best methods for each review. Share examples of good practice and creative methods by creating a menu of different methods available to the Scrutiny Committee and Commissions.					
Enhancement: Supporting the co-opted Members through a refreshed support programme identifying their learning and development needs to get the most from their contributions.					
Scrutiny's focus and workplan (Feedback Report Letter – Section 4)					
Issues identified / proposed actions arising	Strengthening the work planning process	4.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of a consistent work planning tool to support each body to create a balanced work plan. Focus on key issues where scrutiny can make a significant impact on local people. Close working with senior officers and cabinet members to understand the most challenging issues around council delivery and outcomes. 		

CfGS Issues identified / Recommendations and suggested enhancements to scrutiny process		Para.	How can this be achieved / Proposed actions	Adopted? (Y/N)	Action by / When
Issues identified / proposed actions arising	Strengthening the work planning process cont.	4.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying areas where there are already robust forms of accountability and scrutiny, avoiding replication or where added value will be minimal. Highlighting issues that are high priorities for residents and that reflect their concerns. Focusing on only two or three substantive issues per meeting. Link work planning to the scoping process. 		
	Improving scoping process for individual reviews	4.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilise support from officers to map topics and identification of potential issues to scrutinise. Acknowledging areas that are directly under Council control and those where there is only influence or external control – key lines of enquiry and focused scrutiny questions can then emerge. 		
	Accessing, assessing and triangulating different forms of data.	4.5	<p>Receive evidence/review as appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The voice, concerns, and experience of local people. 		

CfGS Issues identified / Recommendations and suggested enhancements to scrutiny process		Para.	How can this be achieved / Proposed actions	Adopted? (Y/N)	Action by / When
Issues identified / proposed actions arising	Accessing, assessing and triangulating different forms of data cont.	4.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plans and decisions of senior leaders. Frontline experience of delivering services. Evidence of outcomes and impact – including finance, quality, risk and sustainability. Wider survey of literature on good practice, policy frameworks and research. 		
	Receiving support to design challenging questions that highlight and probe different sources.	4.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify training for Members on key question skills. Liaise with officers on relevant subject matter with a view to preparing questions. 		
	Integrating frontline experiences to highlight the performance and quality of service.	4.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore how to achieve this at CfGS facilitated workshop. Consult with other local authorities around this process. 		
	Scrutinising Council performance for the benefit of accountability.	4.7 / 4.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review wording of OSC Procedure Rule 5.1(b) to clarify scrutiny role not related to performance management of individual councillors and chief officers. 		

CfGS Issues identified / Recommendations and suggested enhancements to scrutiny process		Para.	How can this be achieved / Proposed actions	Adopted? (Y/N)	Action by / When
Issues identified / proposed actions arising	Strengthening the focus of cabinet member interviews to enable effective preparation.	4.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make clear to cabinet members, areas of interest in advance. • Provide cabinet members with questions in advance. 		
	Agreeing formal process for pre-decision scrutiny	4.10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw upon CfGS case studies and guidance around pre-decision scrutiny. • Establish in advance emerging issues where pre-decision scrutiny may be appropriate. • Consider process(s) for enabling identification of issues. 		
Recommendation 6: Review and enhance work planning process for the Committee and the Commissions, building on current practice by using insights from this review. Consider the systematic use of work planning tools to assist with prioritising issues.					
Recommendation 7: Use member education sessions, masterclasses, and pre-briefing to support Members to be ready to engage with scrutiny topics and Council plans.					
Enhancement: Continue to develop an approach to pre-decision scrutiny in collaboration with Cabinet and Officers.					
Enhancement: Supporting Members to design effective challenge questions using triangulated evidence and data to enhance accountability.					

CfGS Issues identified / Recommendations and suggested enhancements to scrutiny process	Para.	How can this be achieved / Proposed actions	Adopted? (Y/N)	Action by / When
Scrutiny committee structure and scheduling (Feedback Report Letter – Section 5)				
Issues identified / proposed actions arising	Considering the use of task and finish groups as part of a wider spectrum of creative methods.	5.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish situations / circumstances where task and finish groups might be appropriate and feed into the scrutiny process. 	
	Managing scrutiny workload.	5.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of work planning, prioritisation, member education sessions and pre-meetings to manage demands. 	
	Scrutiny Call-in Process and enhancing the call-in procedure.	5.6 / 5.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review current call-in process against the CfGS guidance once issued. 	
Recommendation 8: Consider the use of task and finish group work and other alternative scrutiny arrangements to ensure the most effective use of time and resources and to deliver maximum impact.				
Recommendation 9: Review the call-in procedure based on benchmarking and examples of good practice.				
Scrutiny’s output and impact (Feedback Report Letter – Section 6)				
Issues identified / proposed actions arising	Developing effective recommendations and tracking their impact.	6.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus recommendations on a small set of priorities. 	

CfGS Issues identified / Recommendations and suggested enhancements to scrutiny process		Para.	How can this be achieved / Proposed actions	Adopted? (Y/N)	Action by / When
Issues identified / proposed actions arising	Developing effective recommendations and tracking their impact cont.	6.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring recommendations are clear and focused using SMART approaches (specific, measurable, actionable, realistic, and timetabled). • Testing draft recommendations with officers to ensure issues are understood and factually correct. • Reviewing the impact and learning from recommendations over set time periods through regular agenda items. • Revisiting previous scrutiny reviews to identify work that has already been done to inform future scrutiny. • Ensuring a clear protocol with Cabinet to agree the process for considering and responding to scrutiny recommendations. • Sharing recommendations with external partners, where applicable. • Collecting additional evidence and feedback to identify the impact of recommendations. 		

CfGS Issues identified / Recommendations and suggested enhancements to scrutiny process		Para.	How can this be achieved / Proposed actions	Adopted? (Y/N)	Action by / When
Issues identified / proposed actions arising	Evidence of tracking recommendations dispersed across a range of documents.	6.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify suitable central tracking tool to maintain an overview of recommendations. Liaise with other local authorities to establish how they manage this. 		
	Taking a joined up system wide approach to cross-cutting issues.	6.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross cutting-issues being reserved to overview and scrutiny committee. Commission chairs are part of its membership. 		
	Development of a 'Mission Statement' to raise awareness and esteem of scrutiny process.	6.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaison with other local authorities. Working with scrutiny members, cabinet members, officers and other stakeholders in developing a statement. 		
	Scrutiny holding itself to account for its work and impact.	6.7 / 6.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual report process Accessing self-assessment tools available from CfGS to support review process. 		
Recommendation 10: Focus on smaller sets of high-quality recommendations from scrutiny reviews.					
Enhancement: Enhance the formal system for tracking recommendations over time – identify the impact and learning from specific recommendations as well as factors that produce effective recommendations.					

CfGS Issues identified / Recommendations and suggested enhancements to scrutiny process	Para.	How can this be achieved / Proposed actions	Adopted? (Y/N)	Action by / When	
Enhancement: Consider cross-cutting issues as a regular part of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee work plan and agenda, bringing together strategic themes from across the four Commissions to identify opportunities for system wide working and accountability.					
Enhancement: Create a strategic summary statement on the purpose and contribution of scrutiny in Southwark. Use this to map impact.					
Enhancement: Use a self-assessment tool to support the annual review and evaluation of scrutiny.					
Chairing, member development and meeting preparation (Feedback Report Letter – Section 7)					
Issues identified / proposed actions arising	Continuing chair development and direct support to strengthen the role.	7.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with chairs and establishing development needs and arranging training as appropriate. • Providing chairs with quality briefings and information to enable them to keep abreast of subject matters and relevant considerations. 		
	Member education, master classes' and briefing sessions outside of formal scrutiny sessions.	7.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use scoping and work planning tools to identify and schedule briefing sessions. 		

CfGS Issues identified / Recommendations and suggested enhancements to scrutiny process		Para.	How can this be achieved / Proposed actions	Adopted? (Y/N)	Action by / When
Issues identified / proposed actions arising	Pre-meetings before formal scrutiny sessions to co-ordinate activities.	7.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange pre-meetings as appropriate. 		
Recommendation 11: Further skills development support is offered for the key roles of Chairs and Vice-Chairs – to support them to develop their approach to leading scrutiny and to reflect on their personal style and learning.					
Enhancement: Extending the development process for Members to enable them to refresh their knowledge and understanding of the role of scrutiny – this should include learning activities such as workshops supported with materials and case studies.					
Enhancement: Use pre-meetings to prepare for scrutiny sessions by reviewing the key lines of enquiry and coordinating approaches to questions and evidence. Pre-meetings can facilitate teamwork between Members of the Committee or Commission.					
Enhancement: Provide Scrutiny Members with the essential core knowledge to be sufficiently effective in the scrutiny task through briefings, education sessions or ‘master classes’ for complex topics.					

CfGS Issues identified / Recommendations and suggested enhancements to scrutiny process	Para.	How can this be achieved / Proposed actions	Adopted? (Y/N)	Action by / When	
Public engagement (Feedback Report Letter – Section 8)					
Issues identified / proposed actions arising	Exploring and experimenting with ways to allow greater access, openness, and involvement with the public	8.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site visits in the community. • Inviting the public to offer ideas for work plans. • Use of social media channels for resident input. • Communicating the progress and impact of scrutiny. 		

Everton Roberts, Head of Scrutiny

Dated: 14 April 2023

Item No. 8.	Classification: Open	Date: 4 October 2023	Meeting Name: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Report title:		Scrutiny arrangements for 2023-24 [Amendment]	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Head of Scrutiny	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the 'Community Engagement' element of the Environment and Community Engagement Scrutiny Commission be transferred to the Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Commission.
2. That the commissions be renamed:
 - Environment Scrutiny Commission
 - Housing, Community Safety and Community Engagement Scrutiny Commission

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. The overview and scrutiny committee established scrutiny commissions for 2023-24 municipal year at its meeting held on 20 May 2023. As part of that process the overview and scrutiny committee re-established the environment and community engagement scrutiny commission, and the housing and community safety scrutiny commission, along with two other commissions (health and social care scrutiny commission / education and local economy scrutiny commission).
4. At the last meeting of the overview and scrutiny committee held in July 2023 it was indicated that 'community engagement' should sit within the remit of the housing and community safety scrutiny commission.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

5. It is for the overview and scrutiny committee to appoint scrutiny commissions and determine their terms of reference (overview and scrutiny procedure rule 1.1).

Legal implications

6. There are no specific legal implications arising from the report.

Financial implications

7. There are no specific financial implications arising from the report.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Agenda – Overview and Scrutiny Committee 20 May 2023	160 Tooley Street London SE1 5LX	Everton Roberts, Head of Scrutiny Tel: 020 7525 7221

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Everton Roberts, Head of Scrutiny	
Report Author	Everton Roberts, Head of Scrutiny	
Version	Final	
Dated	25 September 2023	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Assistant Chief Executive – Governance and Assurance	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance	No	No
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Scrutiny Team	25 September 2023	

Item No. 9.	Classification: Open	Date: 4 October 2023	Meeting Name: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Report title:		Work Programme 2023-24	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		N/a	
From:		Head of Scrutiny	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the overview and scrutiny committee note the work programme as at 4 October 2023 attached as Appendix 1.
2. That the overview and scrutiny committee consider the addition of new items or allocation of previously identified items to specific meeting dates of the committee.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. The terms of reference for the overview and scrutiny committee are:
 - a) to appoint commissions, agreeing the size, composition and terms of reference and to appoint chairs and vice chairs
 - b) to agree the annual work programme for OSC and the commissions
 - c) to consider requests from the cabinet and/or council assembly for scrutiny reviews
 - d) to exercise the right to call-in for reconsideration of executive decisions made but not yet implemented
 - e) to arrange for relevant functions in respect of health scrutiny to be exercised by an overview and scrutiny committee of another local authority where the council considers that another local authority would be better placed to undertake those relevant functions, and that local authority agrees to exercise those functions
 - f) if appropriate, to appoint a joint overview and scrutiny committee with two or more local authorities and arrange for the relevant functions of those authorities to be exercised by the joint committee
 - g) to periodically review overview and scrutiny procedures to ensure that the function is operating effectively
 - h) to report annually to all councillors on the previous year's scrutiny activity
 - i) to scrutinise matters in respect of:
 - the council's policy and budget framework
 - regeneration

- human resources and the council's role as an employer and corporate practice generally
 - customer access issues, including digital strategy, information technology and communications
 - the council's equalities and diversity programmes.
4. The work programme document lists items which have been or are to be considered in line with the committee's terms of reference.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

5. Set out in Appendix 1 (Work Programme) are the issues the overview and scrutiny committee has identified for consideration in the 2023-24 municipal year.
6. The work programme is a standing item on the overview and scrutiny committee agenda and enables the committee to consider, monitor and plan issues for consideration at each meeting.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Overview and Scrutiny Committee agenda and minutes	Southwark Council Website	Everton Roberts 020 7525 7221
Link: http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=308		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023-24

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Everton Roberts, Head of Scrutiny	
Report Author	Everton Roberts, Head of Scrutiny	
Version	Final	
Dated	26 September 2023	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Assistance Chief Executive of Governance and Assurance	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance	No	No
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Scrutiny Team	25 September 2023	

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme – 2023/24

Meeting	Agenda items	Comment
4 July 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OSC and Commission Work Programmes 2023-24 	Initial work programmes agreed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southwark Council CfGS Scrutiny Improvement Review and Action Plan 	Use of call-in guidance noted, and agreement given to start review of call-in procedure. Rest of decisions relating to scrutiny improvement review deferred to the October meeting.
	Safer Southwark Communities – Motion referred from Council Assembly and agreed by Cabinet	Agreed that the Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Commission would undertake the scrutiny actions arising.
4 October 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canada Estate Quality Homes Investment Programme (QHIP) 	On agenda
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping Education Strong 	On agenda
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southwark Council CfGS Scrutiny Improvement Review and Action Plan 	On agenda
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny Arrangements 2023/24 [Amendment] 	On agenda
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Programme 	On agenda (reviewed at each meeting)

Meeting	Agenda items	Comment
29 November 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="566 276 1111 344">• Council Delivery Plan Performance Monitoring 	Confirmation of cabinet member and officer availability to be confirmed.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="566 392 1245 424">• Climate Emergency Performance Monitoring 	Confirmation of cabinet member and officer availability to be confirmed.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="566 504 1232 608">• Refresh of Southwark Stands Together and Southwark Equality Framework – Pre decision scrutiny 	Confirmation of cabinet member and officer availability to be confirmed.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="566 655 947 687">• Capital Budget Refresh 	<p data-bbox="1279 655 1928 687">Request arising from budget scrutiny process.</p> <p data-bbox="1279 727 1966 831">Capital monitoring report and capital programme update due to be received by Cabinet in October 2023.</p>
10 January 2024		
	<p data-bbox="517 951 831 983">Initial Budget Scrutiny</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="566 1031 1133 1126">• Initial discussion on budget including presentation on Provisional Local Government Settlement 	
	Other agenda items to be scheduled	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="566 1254 864 1286">• Work Programme 	Reviewed at each meeting.

Meeting	Agenda items	Comment
22 January 2024		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual budget Scrutiny 	
23 January 2024		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget Scrutiny – Formulation of OSC recommendations to cabinet 	
	Other agenda items to be scheduled	
28 February 2024		
	Agenda items to be scheduled	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Programme 	Reviewed at each meeting.
April 2024 – Date to be confirmed		
	Agenda items to be scheduled	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Programme 	Reviewed at each meeting.

Items requiring scheduling

Meeting (tbc)	Agenda items	Comment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Workforce Strategy 	Not received in 2022/23. Date for consideration by cabinet to be confirmed.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regeneration Scrutiny – focus on individual schemes Old Kent Road, viability benchmarking, etc 	Not considered during 2022/23 Municipal year.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equality Audit Report Findings 	Agreed at April 2023 meeting that the equality audit report and recommendations be presented to a future OSC meeting.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abbeyfield Estate – A Way Forward (Maydew House) Scrutiny review to establish procedures that will prevent a similar situation occurring in the future. 	Arising from call-in – April 2023
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving Customer Services for Council Housing Repairs 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of the Mayor’s Budget and Operations of the Mayor’s Office 	Arising from budget scrutiny process

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploration of how the council could use the voluntary sector as a commissioned service to deliver the work that the council has committed to around: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elections Act – Increase in communication costs and workload of Electoral Services • Managing the constitutional and governance changes arising from emerging and new legislation e.g. Health & Social Care Act 	Arising from budget scrutiny process
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in Bulky Waste Charges – update on impact 	Arising from budget scrutiny process
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bids to alleviate excessive inflationary pressures in the Voluntary Sector 	Arising from budget scrutiny process
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary Accommodation Budget (including housing allocation and use of temporary accommodation) 	Arising from budget scrutiny process
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal council complaints and legal action (how many received/resolved, repeat problems, and cost of legal settlements) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract Management (assessing value, quality and efficiency, underperforming contractors) 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In house Leisure Service (management of transition, quality of day to day management, overall financial health of service) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet Member Interviews <p>Cllr Kieron Williams, Leader of the Council</p> <p>Cllr Jasmine Ali, Children, Education and Refugees</p> <p>Cllr Evelyn Akoto, Health and Wellbeing</p> <p>Cllr Stephanie Cryan, Homes, Communities, and Finance</p> <p>Cllr Helen Dennis, New Homes and Sustainable Development</p> <p>Cllr Dora Dixon-Fyle, Community Safety</p> <p>Cllr James McAsh, Climate Emergency, Clean Air and Streets</p> <p>Cllr Catherine Rose, Neighbourhoods, Leisure and Parks</p> <p>Cllr Martin Seaton, Jobs, Skills and Business</p>	<p>To be determined (as and when appropriate).</p>

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OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MUNICIPAL YEAR 23-24

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