



Council Assembly (Ordinary meeting)

MINUTES of the Council Assembly (Ordinary meeting) held on Wednesday 19 March 2025 at 7.00 pm at Council Offices, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT:

The Worshipful the Mayor for , Councillor Naima Ali (Chair)

Councillor Evelyn Akoto
Councillor Jasmine Ali
Councillor John Batteson
Councillor Rachel Bentley
Councillor Cassandra Brown
Councillor Maggie Browning
Councillor Victor Chamberlain
Councillor Sunil Chopra
Councillor Stephanie Cryan
Councillor Sam Dalton
Councillor Mohamed Deen
Councillor Helen Dennis
Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle MBE
Councillor Esme Dobson
Councillor Gavin Edwards
Councillor Sabina Emmanuel
Councillor Renata Hamvas
Councillor Esme Hicks
Councillor Emily Hickson
Councillor Nick Johnson
Councillor Sarah King
Councillor Sunny Lambe
Councillor Maria Linforth-Hall
Councillor Richard Livingstone
Councillor James McAsh
Councillor Hamish McCallum

Councillor Darren Merrill
Councillor Victoria Mills
Councillor Portia Mwangangye
Councillor Graham Neale
Councillor Margy Newens
Councillor Jason Ochere
Councillor David Parton
Councillor Leo Pollak
Councillor Reginald Popoola
Councillor Sandra Rhule
Councillor Bethan Roberts
Councillor Catherine Rose
Councillor Jane Salmon
Councillor Martin Seaton
Councillor Andy Simmons
Councillor Michael Situ
Councillor Charlie Smith
Councillor Cleo Soanes
Councillor Emily Tester
Councillor Joseph Vambe
Councillor Irina Von Wiese
Councillor David Watson
Councillor Kath Whittam
Councillor Kieron Williams
Councillor Ian Wingfield

1. PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

1.1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Suzanne Abachor, Ellie Cumbo, Natasha Ennin, Sam Foster, Barrie Hargrove, Ketzia Harper, Jon Hartley, Youcef Hassaine, Adam Hood, Laura Johnson, and Richard Leeming.

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

Announcements were made by Councillor Evelyn Akoto, cabinet member for health and wellbeing, about new funding; by Councillor Kieron Williams, encouraging council assembly to support the “Back the Bakerloo” project, and to welcome William Hougbo to the meeting; and by Madam Mayor Councillor Naima Ali to welcome Deputy Mayor Councillor Sunny Lambe to the dais.

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

At this point, the programme motion was agreed:

The order of business and timings for the evening were agreed as follows:

Time	Business
19:00 – 19:05	1. Preliminary business and announcements
19:05 – 19:10	2.2 Public questions One public question
19:10 – 20:10 (20 minutes – 4 minutes’ speech) (7 minutes) (5 minutes) (25 minutes) (3 minutes)	Themed debate 3.1 Community Evidence - TailTies - Trevor Austin - Leona Ross - Latin Elephant 3.2 Motion on the Theme - Portia Mwangangye, leisure, parks and young people - Councillor Rachel Bentley, opposition spokesperson - Themed debate open to all other councillors - Cabinet member’s right of reply to the debate
20:10 – 20:15	Recess
20:15 – 20:25	4. Deputations SHAPE (Southwark Housing and Planning Emergency)
20:25 – 21:00 (5 minutes) (15 minutes) (15 minutes)	5.1 Members' Question Time - Late questions - Members' questions to the leader - Members' questions to the cabinet
21:00 – 22:00	5.2 Motions
	Motion 1 – Scrap the Two Child Cap
	Motion 2 – Extension of the Franchise
	Motion 3 – A Fair Deal for Southwark’s Carers
	Motion 4 – A National Care Service for England

22:00*	6. Reports
	6.1 Constitutional changes: Neighbourhoods programme
	6.2 Pay Policy Statement 2025-26
	6.3 Member Allowances Scheme 2025-2026 and adjustment of member allowances in line with the national local government officer pay settlement
	6.4 Special Urgency and Urgent Implementation Decisions – Annual Report 2025
	6.5 The Gambling Act 2005 – renewal of the Statement of Gambling Licensing Policy 2025-2028
	6.6 Calendar of meetings 2025-26

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

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

That the meeting be conducted as follows:

Item 3 - Themed debate

Community Evidence Submissions

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

- TailTies
- Trevor Austin
- Leona Ross
- Latin Elephant

Format

A four minute presentation from the groups.

3.1 Motion on the theme

Themed debate

To run as listed in the timings above.

Item 5.2 General motions:

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

Movers and seconders:

To update the movers and seconders of the following motions and amendments:

Motion 3 – A Fair Deal for Southwark’s Carers:

Moved: Nick Johnson

Seconded: Maria Linforth-Hall

Amendment D:

Moved: David Watson

Seconded: Maria Linforth-Hall

Amendment F:

Moved: Jane Salmon

Seconded: Graham Neale

Alteration of motions and amendments

Amendment C:

To amend Amendment C under CAPR 1.14.15:

To replace "Delete sections 3-5" with "Delete sections 3-7."

1.4 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

Councillor Gavin Edwards made a disclosable pecuniary interest in Motions 3 and 4, as he works for UNISON. He left the room for these motions.

Councillor Victoria Mills made a disclosable pecuniary interest in Motions 3 and 4, as her partner works for UNISON. She left the room for these motions.

1.5 MINUTES

The minutes of the ordinary and extraordinary council assembly meetings held on 26 February 2025 were approved as a correct record.

2. ISSUES RAISED BY THE PUBLIC

2.1 PETITIONS

No petitions were received for this meeting.

2.2 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

One public question was received. There was one supplemental question.

3. THEMED DEBATE

3.1 COMMUNITY EVIDENCE

The meeting agreed to receive submissions from the following:

TailTies

The representatives spoke to the meeting for four minutes.

Trevor Austin

The representative spoke to the meeting for four minutes.

Leona Ross

The representative was not present for the meeting.

Latin Elephant

The representative spoke to the meeting for four minutes.

3.2 MOTION ON THE THEME

Councillor Portia Mwangangye, cabinet member for leisure, parks, and young people, presented the motion in the themed debate.

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

Following debate (Councillors Michael Situ, Bethan Roberts, Jane Salmon, Sunil Chopra, James McAsh, Victor Chamberlain, Evelyn Akoto, Reginald Popoola, Ian Wingfield, David Parton, Kieron Williams) Councillor Portia Mwangangye responded to the debate.

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

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

RESOLVED:

Creating healthy green and leisure spaces for the whole community

1. Council Assembly believes:
 - a. In order to create good lives for the whole community, we must ensure that our leisure spaces and green spaces are as healthy as they can be. This includes parks and green spaces, leisure centres and sports facilities, playgrounds, libraries and biodiversity corridors.
2. Council Assembly agrees:
 - a. That fourteen years of cuts to local government by Conservative and Liberal Democrat governments has made it harder for councils across the country to deliver high quality, healthy green and leisure spaces.
 - b. That despite this context, Southwark's Labour administration has excelled in delivering for our borough's residents, establishing Labour as the only party able to deliver a greener and healthier Southwark, including:

- i. The hugely successful in-sourcing of Southwark's leisure centres, providing a Free Swim and Gym offer for all Southwark residents, opening Southwark's first open-water swimming facility and decarbonising leisure centres across the borough.
- ii. Achieving 30 Green Flag Awards including Burgess Park, Peckham Rye Park and Warwick Park on Rye Lane, the opening of a brand new park at Elephant Park and completing Southwark Labour's manifesto commitment to be the first inner London borough to have over 100,000 trees.
- iii. Expanding Southwark's network of community gardens, with 21 community gardens and over 250 growing plots established since 2021 and adopting Incredible Edible's Right to Grow.
- iv. This administration's investment in playgrounds, including the opening of the newly refurbished Ellen Brown Adventure Playground in South Bermondsey and Fredrick Playground in Newington.
- v. The opening of two new libraries on the Aylesbury and Kingswood estates, despite austerity forcing councils to close local libraries across the country.

3. Council Assembly also welcomes:

- a. Improvements made to our much-loved green spaces including Cossall Park, Burgess Park and Victory Park, refurbishments to 19 council-managed tennis courts across the borough and support provided for residents to set up community gardens across Southwark.
- b. Revamping sports facilities and expanding activities, including St Paul's Sports Ground, Burgess Park Sports Centre and Southwark Park Sports and Athletics Centre, as well as £1.3 million paid or committed to local sports clubs and organisations.
- c. The £8 million upgrade of our leisure centres and £2 million spent on refurbishing our gyms, including cleaner facilities and upgraded changing rooms and the state of the art e-gyms at Peckham Pulse and Camberwell Green leisure centres.
- d. This administration's continued work with residents and local councillors in Nunhead & Queen's Road in making Nunhead Green and Brayards Community Garden thriving community spaces for all ages.
- e. The opening of health kiosks at Camberwell, Una Marson, Canada Water and Dulwich libraries, used by over 14,000 users since they were

installed.

- f. The raising of over £1 million for nature projects through the Community Investment Scheme and renewed focus on biodiversity following the recommendations of our Citizens' Jury on Climate Change, with the £500,000 Southwark Biodiversity Fund.

4. Council Assembly asks that Cabinet:

- a. Continue to deliver an ambitious programme of investing in and expanding our parks and green spaces, by bringing forward a new Green Spaces Plan to:
 - i. Deliver major improvements to our parks and green spaces across the borough, including Bramcote, Elephant, and Guy's parks, and creating more parkland and Dr Harold Moody and Consort Parks in Rye Lane.
 - ii. Work with local people to create more opportunities to be involved in planting and establish an action plan for Right to Grow, mapping new opportunities for community gardens and potential growing spaces.
 - iii. Support Southwark's thriving arts and culture sector through events held in parks across our borough.
 - iv. Continue to make our parks and green spaces safer by tackling crime and antisocial behaviour, strengthen community initiatives around safety in our parks and co designing plans to make our parks safe.
- b. Continues to invest in leisure and sports facilities and activities for children and young people across our borough, including:
 - i. Delivering a brand new, state of the art leisure centre at Canada Water in Rotherhithe.
 - ii. Improving outdoor gyms and sports facilities, so they enable more people to have better health and wellbeing and help to reduce health inequalities, including through major upgrades to Marlborough Gardens, Burgess Park and Brimington Park sports centres.
 - iii. Continuing to deliver a free and low-cost holiday food and fun programme for the children who need it most, so every child can access positive activities and be well fed during school holidays.
 - iv. Provide high quality and targeted leisure provision to improve

accessibility and improve health.

- c. Continues to deliver fantastic play facilities for our children and young people, including:
 - i. A major revamp of Alexis St Park.
 - ii. Upgrade playgrounds across the borough so wherever you live you have a local high quality, inclusive and fun playground, including:
 - I. Upgrading Peckham Rye Park Adventure Playground and Dulwich Village playground.
 - II. Upgrading playgrounds on our housing estates, including at the Kirby Estate, Rye Hill Estate and Bells & Lindley.
- d. Expands the fantastic offer in our libraries, including:
 - i. New health kiosks, building on their success to date and finding new opportunities to open health kiosks in other local libraries in Southwark, seeking opportunities to use our library spaces to offer wellbeing services.
 - ii. Upgrades to Dulwich and Brandon libraries, a second Library of Things to help residents reduce bills on household tools and cut carbon emissions and investment in green space around Nunhead Library.
- e. Continue to deliver a community-led approach to boosting biodiversity, including:
 - i. Boosting biodiversity, including work at Moreton Gate nature garden, Burgess Park habitat restoration and Belair Wood meadow, and delivering on the recommendations of the Land Commission to deliver a network of biodiversity corridors.
 - ii. Ensuring neighbourhoods across the borough benefit from more tree canopy cover and working with local people to create more nature sites, woodlands and urban planting.

4. DEPUTATIONS

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

Southwark Housing and Planning Emergency (SHAPE)

The group's representatives spoke to the meeting for five minutes and thereafter asked a

question of the leader of the council.

5. ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS

5.1 MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME

The leader of the opposition asked a late question. There was one supplemental question.

There were 24 members' questions, the written responses to which were circulated before the meeting. There were 18 supplemental questions.

5.2 MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion 1: Scrap the Two Child Cap

This motion was considered prior to the guillotine having fallen.

Councillor Victor Chamberlain moved the motion. Councillor Rachel Bentley seconded the motion.

There was one amendment to the motion. Councillor Jasmine Ali moved Amendment B. Councillor Cleo Soanes seconded Amendment B. After debate (Councillors Catherine Rose, Emily Tester, Irina von Wiese) Councillor Victor Chamberlain responded to the debate.

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

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

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

1. Council assembly notes:

- a. The dire impact of austerity on children and families in Southwark and across the country instigated by the Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition, undoing all of the work of the previous Labour Government that lifted 2 million children out of poverty
- b. The £22 billion black hole in the national finances inherited by the government and the responsible handling of the economy since Labour were elected in 2024.
- c. The Labour Party's commitment to tackling child poverty, including the upcoming Child Poverty Strategy.
- d. The Free Breakfast Clubs pilot rolled out by the government, already benefitting two schools in Southwark and set to give every child in the country a healthy breakfast when fully rolled out.
- e. The additional 3,000 nurseries with 100,000 places committed in Labour's 2024

manifesto.

- f. Labour's New Deal for Working People and uplift to the living wage, set to benefit working people across our borough and have a material impact on child poverty.
- g. The government's plan for 100,000 urgent child dental appointments and major new supervised toothbrushing programme, helping children have the best start in life.
- h. The commitment of the Mayor of London to fund free healthy school meals for primary school children across London.

2. Council Assembly further notes:

- a. The work of Southwark's Labour administration to support children and families in our borough and help alleviate poverty, including:
 - i. Over £53million of cost of living support provided to thousands of families.
 - ii. The most comprehensive free healthy school meals offer for children in the country, which has improved reading skills, reduced childhood obesity and increased financial support to households.
 - iii. Free healthy school meals during the holidays.
 - iv. Holiday food and fun programmes.
 - v. Support for low income families with school uniform costs.
 - vi. Help with energy costs and free advice on reducing bills.
- b. This administration's submission to the Child Poverty Taskforce, which outlined the impacts of child poverty in Southwark and describing the work we are doing with partners to ameliorate its affects.
- c. This administration's continued work with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions and other government ministers in finding and working through long term solutions to child poverty.
- d. The council's work with the Living Wage Foundation to lift Southwark residents out of poverty pay, which so far has benefitted over 7,000 working people in the borough.

3. Council Assembly resolves to:

- a. Ask that the council continue to provide support to children and families in Southwark, putting money back in our residents' pockets wherever possible. This includes:
 - i. Continuing providing free healthy school meals for Southwark children.
 - ii. Continuing to provide holiday school meals.
 - iii. Continuing the council's Holiday Food and Fun schemes for families in the school holidays.
 - iv. Continue with a cash first approach to our cost of living support.
 - v. Continue to expand the number of registered Living Wage employers in the

borough to lift residents out of poverty pay.

- b. Support the government in the establishment of the Child Poverty Strategy, providing expertise on the pressures facing families in Southwark and working to end child poverty in this country.

Motion 2: Extension of the Franchise

This motion was considered prior to the guillotine having fallen.

Councillor Sam Dalton moved the motion. Councillor Joseph Vambe seconded the motion.

There were no amendments to the motion. After debate (Councillors Maria Linforth-Hall, Charlie Smith, Maggie Browning, Irina von Wiese, Jasmine Ali) Councillor Sam Dalton responded to the debate.

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

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

1. Council Assembly notes:

- a. Southwark have given a welcome and a home to migrant communities across the ages, from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East. Our culture, cuisine, community, and spirit have been enriched a thousandfold by citizens and families from all over the world. In 2024 we were recognised by the wonderful Charity City of Sanctuary as a Borough of Sanctuary for welcoming, supporting opportunities to our sisters and brothers from overseas.
- b. The Elections Act is a major piece of national legislation with local implications for the residents of this local authority, including the use of mandatory photographic voter ID at the polling station, changes to overseas voting and voting and candidacy rights of EU citizens.
- c. According to the 2021 census, [one in six usual residents of England and Wales were born outside the UK](#). They live, work, study, make use of public services, and call the UK their home. Many foreign-born residents of this local authority from EU and Commonwealth countries can vote in our local elections. However, over 1 million residents across England and Northern Ireland do not have a right to vote.
- d. Scotland and Wales implemented residence-based voting rights where all residents with lawful immigration status have the right to vote in local and devolved national elections.
- e. According to a poll by Opinium Research, over [50% of people agree that every resident, no matter where they are from, should have the right to vote at least in local elections](#).

2. Council Assembly welcomes:

- a. That all our residents, no matter their nationality, call this local authority their home and bring significant value to our area.
 - b. That the voting and candidacy rights of EU citizens with pre-settled and settled status who entered the UK before 2021 will be maintained through the Elections Act.
 - c. That [15 local authorities across England have passed motions asking for the right to vote to be extended to all residents in local elections.](#)
3. Council Assembly expresses concern that:
- a. EU citizens who enter the UK from the 1st of January 2021 and are not covered by bilateral voting rights treaties (currently only active with Poland, Luxembourg, Portugal, Spain, and Denmark) will lose voting and candidacy rights in local elections when the Elections Act is fully implemented. This will create an unequal situation where some EU citizens will have the right to vote where others will not.
 - b. The complexity in voting eligibility will cause confusion and will reduce voter turnout in local elections amongst migrant voters, a group already under-registered compared to British voters.
 - c. This is particularly pertinent in Southwark, where more than 40% of our residents were born outside of the UK – over 121,000 people.
 - d. Furthermore, a burden will be placed on Local Authorities managing the removal of a significant number of EU citizens from the electoral register. This may result in some being wrongfully removed from the electoral register.
4. The Council commits to:
- a. Request that the relevant cabinet member writes to the Minister of State at the Department for Housing, Communities and Local Government and the relevant shadow frontbencher requesting that the franchise for local elections be extended to all qualifying foreign nationals in England and Northern Ireland in line with eligibility criteria in Scotland and Wales. This would ensure a UK-wide and fair approach to voting rights so that all our residents, who are also our council taxpayers, are enfranchised.
 - b. Delivering a training to councillors and relevant officers on the changes brought by the Elections Act so that residents can be accurately informed about their voting rights.
 - c. Work collaboratively with voluntary sector organisations in our local authority to reach residents about voter eligibility rules and how to vote.
 - d. Ensure council officers have a strategy in place to ensure that the implementation of the Elections Act, including the removal of some EU citizens from the register, does not wrongfully remove eligible voters from the register.

- e. Continue promoting voter registration and photo ID requirements to residents at citizenship ceremonies, events, and other communication channels.

At this point, Councillors Gavin Edwards and Victoria Mills left, as they have disclosable pecuniary interests in Motions 3 and 4 (see Declarations of Interests).

Motion 3: A Fair Deal for Southwark's Carers

This motion was considered prior to the guillotine having fallen.

Councillor Nick Johnson moved the motion. Councillor Maria Linforth-Hall seconded the motion.

The guillotine fell at this point.

There were two amendments to the motion.

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

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

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

1. Council Assembly notes:

- a. The Carers Trust estimates that there are at least one million young carers aged 17 and under in the UK and over 600,000 young adult carers between the ages of 18 and 25.
- b. In Southwark, 407 young carers are supported by the council, but the true number of young carers in the area is likely to be far higher.
- c. Young carers miss an average of 23 school days per year and young adult carers are four times more likely to drop out of college or university.
- d. Caring responsibilities can affect young carers' readiness to engage fully in school life, adding barriers to punctuality, their capacity to complete homework, and their ability to focus and participate effectively in lessons.

2. Council Assembly further notes:

- a. That the NHS and social care system face multiple crises of access, staff retention, long waiting times, missed targets and poor outcomes as a direct result of 14 years of cuts from Conservative and Liberal Democrat governments.
- b. That people across Southwark are struggling to access health and care services, and that much of the strain on the NHS is caused by a dire lack of funding and support for social care inherited from the Conservative government.

- c. the Labour government has initiated and is actively working on holding cross-party talks to achieve meaningful social care reform, recognising the positive vision for social care in Southwark and nationally.
 - d. That difficulty accessing services increases pressure on acute care such as Accident & Emergency (A&E) as well as undermining overall population health
 - e. That the new Labour government struck a fair pay deal with doctors and nurses within months of running the country.
 - f. That the Labour government has also already met its target of 2 million new NHS appointments, after just 8 months in office.
 - g. The Labour government has set out immediate investment and reforms to improve adult social care and support the workforce, including helping to keep older people out of hospital and living at home independently for longer, and improved technology and data sharing between NHS and social care.
 - h. That Baroness Louise Casey is chairing an independent commission into adult social care to build a national consensus around a new national care service able to meet the needs of older and disabled people into the 21st century.
 - i. That the Southwark Labour administration has shown leadership in investing in the care workforce – paying the London Living Wage, Travel time, Enhancements for unsocial Hours, Occupational Sick Pay and much more to staff that are employed by local services who are signed up to Southwark's Ethical Care Charter and the more recently Southwark's Residential Care Charter.
 - j. The positive efforts by Southwark's health partners to increase GP access, with Southwark GPs conducting an additional 23,971 appointments in Q3 2024/25 compared to Q3 2023/24, reflecting a 6.5% increase. Efforts to promote the NHS App in Southwark have also led to a significant rise in registrations from 5.4% in January 2024 to 60.1% by January 2025.
3. Council Assembly welcomes:
- a. The government's plans for reforming the NHS and building an integrated health service, with health and social care services delivered locally and in coordination with one another.
 - b. The great work in Southwark to bring together key partners from Health, VCS and Council to collectively design and implement plans to improve health and care services for Southwark residents and patients through partnership Southwark and Health and Wellbeing Board.
 - c. The Council's collaboration with partners continues to facilitate timely discharges from hospitals, enabling residents to return home. This involves commissioning community-based reablement services in partnership with Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Trust and a home care agency, as well as bed-

based reablement services at the Avon Unit located within Waterside Care Home.

- d. The Council's commitment to enhancing support for carers by redesigning services and embedding them in the Health and Wellbeing Board's strategy. We value unpaid carers for their role in keeping residents safe and well and aim to support their health.
 - e. The commitment made in the Labour Party's 2024 general election manifesto to "undertake a programme of reform to create a National Care Service, underpinned by national standards, delivering consistency of care across the country".
 - f. This Labour-run council's 'Health on the High Street' programme, bringing vital services into local areas for our residents to access.
4. Council Assembly therefore pledges its support for a National Care Service, with health and social care delivered locally, and encourages the new government to carry out this reform.

Motion 4: A National Care Service for England

This motion was considered after the guillotine had fallen.

There was one amendment to the motion.

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

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

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

- 1. This council believes adult social care should enable people to live the life they want to live.
- 2. But despite the previous government's commitment to "fix social care", buck-passing and intransigence by the previous national government has broken this vital public service.
- 3. The problems in social care are particularly evident in the workforce. Many care staff are paid minimum wage or less for a difficult and skilled job. Some domiciliary care employees do not get paid for their travel time between care visits, while care workers are paid significantly less than the minimum wage for overnight sleep-in shifts. Most care workers do not even have access to an adequate occupational sick pay scheme, which means they lose significant sums in wages when they are unwell or need to self-isolate. Meanwhile, this country has been shamed by the exploitation of many migrant care staff, who are forced to work excessive hours or pay huge amounts for their training or equipment.
- 4. Figures from Skills for Care show there are 131,000 vacancies in the care sector, one of the highest rates in the entire economy. Workforce shortages; poor pay and

conditions; and a lack of national direction on social care mean too many people cannot access the care they need.

5. But there is hope. This council notes the campaign by UNISON, the lead trade union in social care, for a National Care Service (NCS) in England, for a service which will:
 - a. improve the quality of care for everyone who needs it.
 - b. support independent living and take a 'home first' approach which enables people to recover outside hospital and care homes with the right help.
 - c. promote public sector and non-profit delivery of care services.
 - d. have national partnership working, bringing together employers, unions, and government in a national partnership.
 - e. implement a Fair Pay Agreement in adult social care.
6. This council also welcomes the commitment made in the Labour Party's 2024 general election manifesto to "undertake a programme of reform to create a National Care Service, underpinned by national standards, delivering consistency of care across the country".
7. This council acknowledges the commendable efforts made in the borough to invest in the workforce through the implementation of both the Ethical and Residential Care Charter, inspired by UNISON's charter. These charters are designed to enhance care standards for vulnerable residents and improve working conditions for care workers. By offering the London Living Wage, compensating travel time, providing occupational sick pay, and remunerating staff for training hours, the borough has effectively attracted and retained staff, resulting in relatively low vacancy and turnover rates.
8. This council further notes that the Fabian Society has published a comprehensive plan for building a NCS in England, with empowered local authorities at its core, called *Support Guaranteed: The Roadmap to a National Care Service*. The report states: "Councils should remain in charge [of social care]. But our firm view is that more nationwide rights, standards and functions are needed for local government to fulfil its adult social care mission
9. This council believes that building a NCS can also help drive wider economic growth. The 2023 Future Social Care Coalition report *Carenomics* demonstrates the contribution that social care makes to the UK economy, with the sector generating in England alone £51.5 billion in gross value added to the economy.
10. This council pledges its support for a NCS and encourages the new government to carry out this reform.

6. OTHER REPORTS

6.1 CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES: NEIGHBOURHOODS PROGRAMME

Councillor Gavin Edwards returned to the meeting at this point.

There was one amendment to this report. Amendment E was moved by Councillor Emily Tester. Amendment E was seconded by Councillor David Watson.

After debate, (Councillors Joseph Vambe, Kieron Williams) Amendment E was put to the vote and declared Lost.

The recommendations were put to the vote and declared Carried.

RESOLVED:

1. That Council Assembly agreed the proposal to replace the current community champions and multi ward area geography with 10 neighbourhood areas.
2. That Council Assembly approved the creation of five neighbourhoods champions.
3. That Council Assembly noted that the proposed changes will require changes to Article 8 and Part 3H of the Constitution and any other consequential constitutional changes.
4. That Council Assembly noted that executive functions for the Neighbourhood Fund, Cleaner, Greener, Safer, and Devolved Highways funding will sit with Neighbourhood Community meeting.
5. That Council Assembly noted that wards are still able to discuss and meet on issues that affect them and that this proposal retains the opportunity for residents to present funding proposals for their local area.

6.2 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2025-26

The recommendations were put to the vote and declared Carried.

RESOLVED:

1. That council assembly agreed the annual pay policy statement at Appendix A of the report.

6.3 MEMBER ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2025-2026 AND ADJUSTMENT OF MEMBER ALLOWANCES IN LINE WITH THE NATIONAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICER PAY SETTLEMENT

There was one amendment to this report. Amendment F was moved by Councillor Jane Salmon. Amendment F was seconded by Councillor Graham Neale.

After debate, (Councillors Stephanie Cryan, Gavin Edwards) Amendment F was put to the vote and declared Lost.

The recommendations were put to the vote and declared Carried.

RESOLVED:

1. That council assembly approved with immediate effect the adjustment of member allowances in line with the national local government officer pay settlement and allowances for officers as detailed in paragraphs 20 to 23 of the report.
2. That council assembly approved, with effect from 1 April 2025, the member allowances scheme for 2025-2026 as detailed in paragraphs 20 to 29 and Appendix 2 of the report, having had regard to the advice of the London Councils Independent Remuneration Panel Report 2023, published January 2024 (see Appendix 1 of the report).

6.4 SPECIAL URGENCY AND URGENT IMPLEMENTATION DECISIONS - ANNUAL REPORT 2025

The recommendations were put to the vote and declared Carried.

RESOLVED:

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

6.5 THE GAMBLING ACT 2005 - RENEWAL OF THE STATEMENT OF GAMBLING LICENSING POLICY 2025-2028

After debate (Councillor Renata Hamvas), the recommendations were put to the vote and declared Carried.

RESOLVED:

1. That council assembly agreed to the publication of the Southwark Statement of Gambling Licensing Policy for 2025-2028 (Appendix A of the report) from 24 March 2024.

6.6 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2025-26

The recommendations were put to the vote and declared Carried.

RESOLVED:

1. That council assembly agreed the following dates for meetings of council assembly be fixed in the council calendar for the 2025-26 municipal year:

Council Assembly	Type of Meeting
Saturday 17 May 2025	Mayor Making/Annual meeting
Wednesday 9 July 2025	Ordinary meeting
Wednesday 12 November 2025	Ordinary meeting
Wednesday 25 February 2026	Budget and council tax setting meeting
Wednesday 18 March 2026	Ordinary meeting
Wednesday 20 May 2026	Mayor Making/Annual meeting

2. That council assembly noted the agreement in May 2023 for the date of the annual/mayor making meeting for 2027 as set out below:

- Saturday 15 May 2027 11am

3. That council assembly noted the calendar of council meetings for the 2025-26 municipal year as shown at Appendix 1 of the report.

7. AMENDMENTS

The amendments were listed in supplemental agenda no. 1.

The meeting closed at 10.25 pm.

CHAIR:

DATED: