



Cabinet

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Cabinet held on Tuesday 7 January 2025 at 11.00 am at Walworth Town Hall, 151 -155 Walworth Road, London SE17 1RS

PRESENT: Councillor Kieron Williams (Chair)
Councillor Jasmine Ali
Councillor John Batteson
Councillor Stephanie Cryan
Councillor Helen Dennis
Councillor Natasha Ennin
Councillor Sarah King

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Evelyn Akoto and James McAsh.

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

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

- Item 15: Tustin Estate update and phase 2 compulsory purchase order

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

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

There were none.

4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

Councillors Natasha Ennin and Portia Mwangangye declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of Item 9: Housing Revenue Account – Final Rent and Charges report 2025-26.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

There were none.

6. DEPUTATION REQUESTS

There were none.

7. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the chair.

8. CORPORATE PARENTING ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

RESOLVED:

1. That the report including progress of the corporate parenting strategy, areas of focus for 2024-25 and work of the corporate parenting committee be noted.
2. That it be noted that a child friendly easy read version of the report will be shared widely with children in care and care leavers and made publicly available and easily accessible on the council's website.
3. That the updated corporate parenting strategy be brought back to cabinet for agreement this year.
4. That the strategy should include full proposals for a high-quality space for children in care and care-leavers, to meet their needs, with details how this can be delivered.

9. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - FINAL RENT AND CHARGES REPORT 2025-26

Having declared a disclosable pecuniary interest, Councillors Natasha Ennin and Portia Mwangangye withdrew from the meeting while this item was being

discussed.

RESOLVED:

That the following be noted:

1. The change to the concessionary garage charging policy as previously agreed under individual decision making (IDM) by the cabinet member for council housing as set out in paragraph 22 of the report.
2. The resident feedback from the engagement event that took place on 10 December 2024, attached at Appendix 2 of the report.

That the following be approved:

3. The rent increase of 2.7% for all directly and tenant managed (TMO) housing stock within the council's Housing Revenue Account. This is in accordance with the government's guideline rent formula of CPI+1% (based on September 2024 Consumer Price Index) as set out at paragraphs 14-16 of the report with effect from 7 April 2025.
4. The rent increase of 2.7% for the council's shared ownership stock as set out at paragraph 17 of the report with effect from 7 April 2025.
5. The increases to tenant service charges, comprising estate cleaning, grounds maintenance, communal lighting and door entry maintenance as set out in paragraphs 18-19 of the report with effect from 7 April 2025.
6. The increase in sheltered and supported housing service charges as set out in paragraph 20 of the report with effect from 7 April 2025.
7. The increase in charges for garages as set out in paragraph 21 of the report with effect from 7 April 2025.
8. The freezing of tenant heat network charges for 2025-26 at existing levels, with the exception of the borough-wide metered charge for new homes, which will reduce as set out in paragraphs 23-40 of the report with effect from 7 April 2025.

10. COUNCIL TAX BASE 2025-26

An updated Appendix A was circulated and published.

RESOLVED:

1. That the council tax base for 2025-26 is set at 112,357 (112,166 in 2024-25) band D equivalent dwellings (Appendix A of the report) be agreed.

2. That the schedule of discounts and exemptions in paragraph 12 of the report be recommended to council assembly, including the premiums applicable for long-term empty dwellings.
3. That the assumed council tax collection level for 2025-26 be changed to 96.50% (2024-25 97.20%).
4. That the 2025-26 council tax base for St. Mary Newington parish is set at 11,732 (12,881 in 2024-25) band D equivalent dwellings be agreed.
5. That the proposed continuation of the current council tax section 13A (1)(c) policy¹ covering discretionary relief terms (refer to paragraphs 17 to 18 of the report) be agreed:
 - to continue council tax discretionary relief (0% to 100%) for young people leaving care aged 18 to 24 years for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026
 - to continue foster carers' discretionary relief (0% to 100%) for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.
6. That the following be noted concerning the council tax reduction scheme:
 - no changes to the council tax reduction scheme (CTRS) for 2025-26, as set out in paragraphs 19 to 23.

Any minor and consequential amendments to the CTRS written policy will remain delegated to the strategic director of resources in consultation with the monitoring officer.

11. POLICY AND RESOURCES: REVENUE MONITORING REPORT 2024-25

RESOLVED:

1. That the housing revenue account (HRA) forecast of an adverse variance of £8.2m be noted.
2. That the adverse variance of £17.8m forecast for the general fund (GF) in 2024-25 be noted.
3. That the key adverse variations and budget pressures and mitigating actions underlying the position be noted:
 - Housing revenue account (paragraphs 13-27 of the report)

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

- General fund (paragraphs 28-80 of the report)
- Demand pressures in temporary accommodation (TA) (housing)
- Increased costs for those who have 'No Recourse to Public Funds' (NRPF) (environment, sustainability and leisure)
- Increased demand for adult care packages and increased placement costs for children with complex needs and a shortage of available foster placements (children's and adults)
- Planning and growth – less than expected income and cost of maintaining void properties in the general fund (resources)
- Customer services – additional resources into the contact centre to address capacity issues (resources).

4. The dedicated schools grant (DSG) in-year pressure of £0.8m be noted.

12. POLICY AND RESOURCES: CAPITAL MONITORING REPORT 2024-25 AND SOUTHWARK 2030 STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

RESOLVED:

That the following be noted:

1. The month 8 2024-25 forecast spend and resources and future years for both the general fund and housing investment programmes as detailed in Appendices A1 and C of the report.
2. The alignment of the general fund capital programme to the Southwark 2030 priorities at Appendix A2.
3. The significant borrowing requirement of £313m which needs to be identified for the general fund programme to be fully delivered over the remaining term of the programme, as detailed in Appendix A of the report.
4. The significant borrowing requirement of £426m for the housing investment programme to be fully delivered over the remaining term of the programme, as detailed in Appendix C of the report.

That the following be approved:

5. The virements and variations to the general fund and housing investment capital programme as detailed in Appendix D of the report.
6. The new capital bids in Appendix E and F of the report for inclusion into the capital programme.

13. STREETS FOR PEOPLE DELIVERY PLAN

RESOLVED:

Decisions of the Cabinet

1. That the outcome of the borough-wide engagement exercise undertaken between September 2023 and March 2024 be noted.
2. That the improvements and schemes delivered to date be noted.
3. That the streets for people overall vision and 2025-26 delivery plan as attached at Appendix 1 to the report be approved and that the funding secured to date for 2025-26 be noted.
4. That the implementation of interventions in the first five zones be approved.
5. That it be noted that further annual reports will be brought to cabinet outlining future year delivery plans and associated funding.

Decision of the Leader of the Council

6. That the authority to approve revisions to the borough's traffic circulation plan be delegated to the cabinet member for clean air, streets and waste

14. ALLOCATIONS FOR STRATEGIC COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY FUNDING

RESOLVED:

1. That the allocation of strategic community infrastructure levy funding of up to £1,500,000 towards the fit out of the LGBTQ+ space at Bankside Yards be agreed.
2. That the allocation of strategic community infrastructure levy funding of £2,373,563 towards the development of 634-636 Old Kent Road be agreed.
3. That the allocation of strategic community infrastructure levy funding of £30,000 towards the Bakerloo Line Extension Funding Study be agreed.
4. That the allocation of strategic community infrastructure levy funding of £50,000 towards design work to improve accessibility at Nunhead Station be agreed.

15. TUSTIN ESTATE UPDATE AND PHASE 2 COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER

It was not possible to circulate this report five clear days in advance of the meeting. The chair agreed to accept this item as urgent to secure vacant possession of Heversham House at Tustin Estate (which it is contractually obliged to do) to enable the scheme, including the demolition works scheduled to commence in summer 2025, to proceed.

RESOLVED:

1. That the following be noted:
 - i. The current position in relation to the delivery of 295 new homes at Phase 2 of the Tustin Estate redevelopment:
 - ii. As referred to in the 16 September 2024 cabinet report:
 - A development partnership with BY Development Ltd (trading as Linkcity) to deliver the Estate Redevelopment, along with the financial plan to deliver the scheme, was agreed by cabinet in October 2022.
 - The council appointed BY Development Ltd (trading as Linkcity) to bring forward the phased rebuilding of the Tustin Estate under a Development Agreement dated 8 November 2022.
 - iii. A planning application for Phase 2 was submitted in August 2024, with an expected target date for planning permission in January 2025.
 - iv. The council has now successfully acquired 13 leaseholder interests in Heversham House.
 - v. Only 15 leaseholder interests now remain outstanding in Heversham House.
 - vi. The council is taking and will continue to take reasonable steps to acquire remaining leaseholder interests situated within Heversham House by agreement; and
 - vii. The council is offering to rehouse all resident leaseholders who want to stay on the rebuilt Tustin Estate, a new leasehold home on a shared ownership or shared equity loan basis in Phase 1 or 2. Phase 1 is anticipated to complete in April 2025.
2. That compulsory purchase powers under Section 226(1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (“the 1990 Act”) and section 13 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 for the acquisition of all land and interests (which are not already owned by the council) within the area of land shown edged black and bold on the plan at Appendix 2 of the

report (“the CPO Land”) for the purposes of facilitating the redevelopment, development and improvement of the land and securing the delivery of new homes on the site in line with the planning application for Phase 2 and thereby securing the continued redevelopment of the Tustin Estate, be agreed.

3. That the director of planning and growth, in consultation with the managing director of Southwark Construction, be authorised on behalf of the council to:
 - i. Take all necessary steps to secure the making, confirmation, and implementation of the Compulsory Purchase Order (“CPO”), including land referencing, serving any requisitions for information, preparing all necessary documentation (including the CPO, the Order Plan and Statement of Reasons), the submission of the CPO to the Secretary of State, the publication and service of all notices and the presentation of the council’s case at public inquiry should one be called.
 - ii. Acquire for planning purposes all land and interests in land and new rights (which are not already owned by the council) within the CPO Land and wider masterplan area as may be necessary to facilitate the Scheme either by agreement or compulsorily, including entering into negotiations with any third parties for the acquisition of the land interests and/or for new rights over their land (as appropriate), the payment of compensation and dealing with any blight notices served in connection with the CPO.
 - iii. Dealing with objections to the CPO including approving agreements with landowners setting out the terms for the withdrawal of objections to the CPO, including where appropriate seeking the exclusion of land or new rights from the CPO or giving undertakings as to the enforcement of the terms of the CPO.
 - iv. Remove from the CPO any plot or interest therein no longer to be acquired compulsorily and to then amend the interests in the scheduled CPOs (if so advised).
 - v. Make any minor additions, deletions, or amendments to the extent of the land as shown on the plan at Appendix 2 should the need arise, to include all land and interests in land and rights required to facilitate the construction, maintenance, and use of the Scheme.
 - vi. Take all necessary actions in relation to any legal proceedings relating to the CPO, including defending or settling (as appropriate) any compensation claims referred to the Lands Chamber of the Upper Tribunal due to the making, confirmation or implementation of the CPO, and to take all necessary steps in respect of any other legal proceedings that relate to the making, confirmation or implementation

of the CPO.

- vii. Appoint and/or retain such external professional advisors and consultants as are necessary to assist the council in facilitating the Scheme, including in the promotion of the CPO and the settlement of any compensation claims.
 - viii. Make any amendments to the Statement of Reasons annexed at Appendix 5 to this report as are considered necessary prior to its submission to the Secretary of State.
 - ix. Confirm the CPO if granted the power to do so by the Secretary of State.
 - x. Exercise the compulsory purchase powers authorised by the CPO by way of General Vesting Declaration(s) and or notice(ss) to treat.
4. That the director of planning and growth be delegated authority to negotiate and enter into off-plan sales agreements in Phases 1 and 2 of the new development with resident leaseholders on the estate who qualify for a new council home.
5. That it be resolved to:
- i. Approve the commencement of statutory consultation with secure tenants, pursuant to Part 5 of Schedule 2 to the Housing Act 1985, regarding the proposal to seek the Secretary of State's approval for the redevelopment Scheme for the purpose of Ground 10A, Schedule 2 Housing Act 1985.
 - ii. Agree to obtain vacant possession of Heversham House and Kentmere House pursuant to Ground 10/10A of Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1985 in order to deliver the Scheme.

16. MOTIONS REFERRED FROM COUNCIL ASSEMBLY

RESOLVED:

The climate emergency in Southwark: a fair transition to net zero

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

1. Council Assembly Notes:
- a. That the climate emergency requires continued action to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees and that the UK, along with other wealthier

nations, holds greater responsibility for reducing emissions given larger current and historic contributions.

- b. The UK's legally binding target to reduce emissions by 78% by 2035 compared to 1990 levels, and to be Net Zero by 2050.
 - c. Southwark Council's declaration of a climate emergency in 2019 and our ambitious target of being carbon neutral by 2030.
 - d. That as an urban borough bordering the Thames, Southwark is particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change such as flooding, and that hotter summers in an urban environment will greatly impact our vulnerable residents.
 - e. The need for the transition to net zero to be fair to all residents and businesses and the importance of a collective effort from central government, local government, community groups, voluntary organisations and the private sector to work together to meet this goal.
2. Council Assembly welcomes:
- a. The new government's commitment to tackling the climate emergency.
 - b. The establishment of Great British Energy and a change in policy allowing new onshore windfarms to clean our energy supply along with further commitments in the government's mission to make Britain a clean energy superpower, including a new warm homes plan.
 - c. The new government's commitment to work with businesses and investors to ensure we have a fair and just transition to net zero.
3. Council Assembly further notes:
- a. That despite a lack of leadership and funding from the previous government, Southwark Council and the local community have brought forward action to tackle the climate emergency.
 - b. The council has seen year on year emission reductions since launching our Climate Action Plan in 2021.
 - c. That £25m in the Climate Capital Fund has now been fully assigned to specific projects or project areas which will be delivered over the next 12 months.
 - d. That buildings account for 79% of emissions in the borough and the council has made great progress in reducing these emissions by:
 - i. Remaining on track to halve emissions in council-operated

buildings by 2026.

- ii. Moving over 2,000 council homes onto clean, water-source heat pumps on the Consort, Newington, and Wyndham estates.
 - iii. Launching the Schools Climate Action Guide to help schools reach net zero.
 - iv. Adopting ambitious planning policies which go further than the London Plan and require new developments in Southwark to achieve higher green standards and more operational carbon reductions.
 - v. Encouraging private sector competition in the north of the borough for building low-carbon office space.
 - vi. Introducing a green buildings fund, using developer contributions to subsidise the decarbonization of buildings in the borough.
- e. That transport contributes significant carbon and other toxic emissions which Southwark has made progress on by:
- i. Reducing the need to own a car through the streets through the Streets for People campaign, which also includes cleaning air by reducing traffic around schools and in Low Traffic Neighbourhoods.
 - ii. Encouraging uptake of active travel, particularly in cycling with £2.5m committed to install 3,000 new cycle hangars, and the opening of new cycle routes.
 - iii. Making it easier for people to walk and wheel in Southwark, with a target of 87% of journeys being made by walking, cycling or wheeling by 2030.
 - iv. Campaigning for an extension of the Bakerloo Line and improving all forms of public transport.
 - v. Where driving remains a necessity, encouraging the uptake of EV cars by rolling out over a 1,000 new EV charging points by 2026.
- f. That the natural environment needs to be preserved and expanded in order to combat the climate emergency, which Southwark is achieving by:
- i. Making Southwark the first inner London borough to have over 100,000 trees on council land, providing greater shade for residents and cooling the borough during hot weather, with 13,000

trees planted since 2022.

- ii. Having some of the best parks in London, with 30 parks maintaining their green flag status.
 - iii. Rolling out the Biodiversity Fund, which will provide £500,000-worth of grants to projects which will increase biodiversity and resilience to climate change.
 - iv. Establishing a new park in Canada Water as part of the area's development, designed in consultation with residents and creating new green space in the north of the borough.
- g. That for the climate emergency to be tackled, the economy must be cleaner and greener, and that the council is leading the way in this area by:
- i. Launching the Southwark Green Finance Initiative, with £1m raised for green projects in the borough in round one, and the second round currently open.
 - ii. Creating 1,817 green jobs since 2022 and on track to surpass our target of 2,000 by 2026.
 - iii. Establishing a Green Skills Hub at London South Bank University, so local residents can enter rewarding careers in the green sector.
 - iv. Focusing the Southwark Construction Skills Centre on developing skills for retrofitting homes and buildings, ensuring the workforce has the capacity to decarbonise the borough.
 - v. Increasing recycling rates across the borough and rolling out food waste recycling on estates.
 - vi. Cutting the council's own emissions, including reducing the carbon footprint of the pension fund by 83%.
- h. The renewable and sustainable energy are essential for the borough's future, which is being addressed by:
- i. The Southwark Community Energy Fund, providing £400,000 to 22 projects schools and faith groups to make green improvements to their buildings and make them more efficient.
 - ii. Exploring renewable energy options within the LASER Energy contract including a potential Green Power Purchase Agreement with other councils.

- iii. Improving infrastructure across the borough to more efficient systems, such as upgrading all of our streetlights to LEDs by 2026.
4. Council Assembly recognises, celebrates and thanks:
- a. The commitment of the community, residents and organisations to reducing emissions in Southwark, including the Community Stakeholder Panel, Citizens' Jury on Climate Change, Southwark Climate Action Schools, Southwark Climate Collective, the Southwark Biodiversity Partnership and others who have played their part in tackling the climate emergency.
 - b. Participants in Southwark's annual Climate Day, with residents and organisations showcasing their fantastic work to combat the climate emergency in Southwark and over 350 people who live, work and spend time in the borough coming together to learn how they can play their part.
5. Council Assembly therefore resolves to call upon Cabinet to:
- a. Continue its nationally leading campaign on *Securing the Future of Council Housing*, working with the new Labour government and Southwark's coalition of over 100 councils to establish a new 'Green and Decent Homes Programme' for councils and housing associations to decarbonise our country's social homes.
 - b. Help establish 'Retrofit London' – a hub of retrofit expertise to help decarbonise the city.
 - c. Update the hugely successful climate strategy and climate action plan, utilising the opportunity of working with a new government to ensure the council has a big an impact as possible in helping the country reach net zero.
 - d. Bring forward its early climate review of the Southwark Plan in 2025 to ensure that policies on energy and sustainability represent current best practice.
 - e. Continue its work on Streets for People, bringing forward an ambitious new action plan.
 - f. Bring forward a new plan for enhancing and expanding green spaces across the borough.
 - g. Ensure that the climate emergency plays a central role in Southwark 2030, applying to each goal and seeking opportunities to make even greater progress toward net zero.

- h. Continue to campaign for the upgrade and extension of the Bakerloo line, which would take 20,800 cars off our roads every day.
- i. Continue and strengthen the council's partnerships with neighbouring boroughs, Greater London Authority, the Local Government Association and the new government in order to ensure Southwark has the resources it needs to be a net zero borough.
- j. Work with and support residents, organisations and businesses toward a collective goal of a fair transition to net zero.

Supporting older people this winter

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

1. Council Assembly notes:
 - a. The difficult position that many residents – especially pensioners – find themselves in when paying bills in the winter months.
 - b. Since 2010, the impact of Conservative and Liberal Democrat cruel and misguided austerity measures have left many of our older residents having to make the real and very difficult decision as to whether to heat their homes or eat.
 - c. The new Labour Government has inherited a £22 billion black hole in the nation's finances from the previous Government.
 - d. Since the start of the Cost of Living crisis in 2021, this Labour council has distributed financial help worth more than £53 million to Southwark residents. That support has reached more than one hundred thousand residents – with more support going to those on lowest incomes and those who are most vulnerable to the impacts of rising food and fuel costs.
 - e. That since the summer of 2022, with the support of our Consortium of Older People's Services in Southwark (COPSINS) organisations, the council ran a campaign to increase both awareness of and the take up of Pension Credit which resulted in an additional 900 pension aged households being added to the Pension Credit roll in Southwark.
 - f. That according to the most recent official statistics for February 2024, which were published in August, Southwark had the largest Pension Credit claimant count of all of the South London Boroughs, despite it having one of the smallest pension age populations.

- g. That the Southwark Energy Savers Scheme has helped support 560 residents with advice on their fuel bills this year and has generated income maximisation of over £660,000.

2. Council Assembly therefore:

- a. Welcomes the introduction of the government's £150 Warm Home Discount for low-income households from October, the extension of the Household Support Fund of £1 billion and the maintenance of the Winter Fuel Allowance for 1.3 million households in England and Wales.
- b. Acknowledges this Labour administration's proactive response in ringfencing £380,000 of Household Support Fund for the purpose of supporting pensioners who fall just outside of Pension Credit eligibility. This will support around 1,200 pension age households not in receipt of Pension Credit, and who are on low incomes, with a one-off payment of £150. Other pensioners not in receipt of any means-tested benefits, who are struggling, at risk, or in crisis, will be supported with a £200 payment through a community referral scheme (Pensioners Referral Pathway) via our voluntary and community sector partners.
- c. Recognises and supports an additional one-off payment of £100 to residents receiving domiciliary care.
- d. Welcomes the Chancellor of the Exchequer's announcement in the Autumn Statement to an above inflation increase of 4.1% to the State Pension which gives over 12 million pensioners an additional £470 from next April.
- e. Welcomes the Pension Credit Standard minimum guarantee increase from £11,499 per year to £11,850 per year for a single pensioner.
- f. Asks Cabinet to ensure that the Pension Credit Campaign is advertised as widely as possible to encourage further take up this winter.
- g. Resolves to work with our voluntary partners to open up our warm hubs this winter, where elderly and vulnerable residents can come for a warm meal, a chat, and to receive free advice and sign-posting.
- h. Remains committed to supporting our older people and vulnerable residents as these changes take effect. The exchequer department are working closely with colleagues in Adult Services on the

distribution of Cost of Living Support, including by identifying residents who are housebound or suffering from dementia or similar conditions to ensure tailored plans are in place as needed.

Rethinking winter fuel payment cuts

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

1. Council Assembly notes:
 - a. The £22bn black hole in the UK's finances caused by reckless decisions of previous Governments.
 - b. That Winter Fuel Payments should be means tested, to ensure that those most in need are supported.
 - c. According to Policy in Practice, there are around 4,400 households in Southwark who are eligible to claim Pension Credit, and thus the Winter Fuel Payment, who do not currently claim it.
 - d. That the deadline for claiming Pension Credit to be eligible for the 2024/2025 Winter Fuel Payment is fast approaching on 21 December 2024.
 - e. Existing work the council is doing to encourage uptake of pension credit for those who are eligible, but have not claimed it.
 - f. That the Household Support Fund (HSF), which funds Southwark's Cost of Living Fund, has been extended by the Chancellor in her Autumn Budget.
 - g. That the council fund an energy support scheme to help residents impacted by the rise in energy costs.
 - h. The support being provided by the council to pensioners this winter including:
 - i. A one-off payment of £150 to low income pensioners not eligible for pension credit.
 - ii. A one-off payment of £100 to residents receiving domiciliary care.
 - iii. A one-off payment of £150 to residents living in a property rated EPC D or lower.

- i. That the Energy Price Cap rose by 10% in October, which combined with the removal of Winter Fuel Payments will push thousands of local pensioners into fuel poverty.
 - j. Additional barriers to claiming pension credit – such as rules around pensioner couples (if only one is of pensionable age) and the fact that the threshold is nationwide, despite higher living costs in areas like London
 - k. Recent polling that shows 6 in 10 people think that this change is wrong.
2. Council Assembly believes that:
- a. The Labour Government's commitment to protect the State Pension Triple Lock, increasing the State Pension by an above inflation rate of 4.1% will benefit low income pensioners across Southwark by an additional £470 a year.
 - b. The Labour Government's commitment to increase the Pension Credit Standard minimum guarantee by 4.1% will support many low income pensioners in Southwark.
3. Council Assembly resolves to:
- a. Ask Cabinet to look at how the extension of the Household Support Fund can be used to continue to support pensioners on low income.
 - b. Continue to work with our voluntary and community sector partners to sign up those who are eligible for pension credit to claim their Winter Fuel Payment before 21 December 2024 deadline.

Right to grow

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

1. Southwark Council notes:
- a. The Cost of Living crisis and the continued impact on Southwark residents.
 - b. Recovery from the pandemic brings a new focus on ensuring that residents have access to enough fresh food for day to day living.
 - c. The increasing need to put the health and well-being of residents at the heart of council policy.

- d. The powerful evidence which demonstrates the link between people's health and wellbeing and the availability of fresh locally produced food.
 - e. That the cost-of-living crisis is creating real hunger, reinforcing the need for healthy fresh food at an affordable price.
 - f. That communities coming together to grow food and carry out wildlife gardening can radically reduce costs to NHS and social care budgets by reducing loneliness, improving access to nature and providing healthy food.
 - g. That there is under-used publicly owned land in the borough which could be used for community food growing and/or wildlife planting, while also improving the public realm.
2. Southwark Council agrees to, where possible, take a Right to Grow approach on council owned land which is suitable, or which could be de-paved and made suitable, or which could accommodate planters, for cultivation.
3. As a result, Council Assembly asks Cabinet to consider:
- a. Identifying and producing a map of council owned land suitable for community cultivation, including spaces that are currently covered by hard standing that could be de-paved and/or accommodate planters.
 - b. Exploring where land can be made available for cultivation by a simple license to community organisations at no cost, building upon the council's existing growing scheme.
 - c. Promoting the use of structurally suitable and accessible rooftops for growing.
 - d. Considering community food growing and wildlife gardening on sites awaiting development for other uses on a fixed term basis.
 - e. Working with Southwark's MPs in supporting Southwark's community gardeners, the Incredible Edible campaign and national 'right to grow' campaign.
 - f. Working with partners and stakeholders and encouraging anchor institutions and civil society to join it in the above endeavour.

Supporting the Climate and Nature Bill

That the motion referred from council assembly as a recommendation to cabinet,

set out below be agreed.

1. Council Assembly notes

- a. This summer, the world has witnessed the highest temperatures on record, with hundreds of excess deaths attributed to heat waves estimated in London alone in 2023, which was the second warmest summer on record in the UK.
- b. Alongside this, there is the looming danger of the cost of living crisis due to fuel price shocks following the pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which could be mitigated in the long-term by increases in zero-carbon energy sources.
- c. Our over-reliance on fossil fuels and the need for a transition to renewable energy has never been so clear.
- d. Humans have already caused irreversible climate change, the impacts of which are being felt in the UK and around the world. The global temperature has already increased by 1.3°C above pre-industrial levels, and the natural world has reached crisis point, with 28% of plants and animals threatened with extinction.
- e. A recent UN Environment report found that there is currently no credible pathway to 1.5°C in place. In tandem with this, there is a severe biodiversity crisis.
- f. The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world. More than one in seven of our plants and animals face extinction, and more than 40% are in decline.
- g. If we fail to halt and, crucially, reverse biodiversity loss by 2030, we increase the risk of further pandemics, rising global temperatures and loss of species. The UK needs a legally enforceable nature target so that, by 2030, nature is visibly and measurably on the path to recovery, in line with the Global Goal for Nature.

2. Council assembly further notes

- a. That the Climate and Nature Bill brings forward the development of an integrated strategy to ensure that the UK's climate and environmental response is in line with the latest science.
- b. The Bill was proposed in previous forms across Parliament which received support from a cross-party coalition of politicians and organisations, including the London Assembly, London Councils and Mayor Sadiq Khan.

- c. That Private Member's Bills are the prerogative of Members of Parliament to debate in the House of Commons.
- d. The Bill aims to ensure that:
 - i. The intertwined climate and nature crises is tackled in a joined-up way;
 - ii. The Paris Agreement aim is enshrined into law to ensure that the UK does its full and fair share to limit the global temperature rise to 1.5°C;
 - iii. The UK halts and reverses biodiversity loss by 2030 to ensure that the UK's ecosystems are protected and restored;
 - iv. The UK takes responsibility for its greenhouse gas footprint, including international aviation and shipping, and by accounting for consumption emissions related to the goods and services that are imported and consumed in the UK;
 - v. The UK takes responsibility for its ecological footprint in order to better protect the health and resilience of ecosystems, including along domestic and global supply chains; and
 - vi. No-one and no community is left behind in the just transition by providing retraining for those currently working in fossil fuel industries; and
 - vii. An independent, temporary Climate and Nature Assembly is set-up, representative of the UK population, to engage with the UK Parliament and UK Government to help develop the strategy. This would be setup on broadly similar lines to the Climate Assembly 2020 which was very successful and very well received on all sides of the political divide.

3. Council Assembly further recognises:

- a. Existing work Southwark Council has embarked on to play its role in tackling the climate and nature crises since declaring a climate emergency in 2019 – reducing emissions year on year.
- b. This administration's success in restoring nature by expanding the borough's green spaces, including 30 parks which have been awarded Green Flag status for the 5th year running, planting thousands of trees to reach 100,000 trees on council land, and encouraging greater biodiversity through initiatives such as the biodiversity fund.

4. Therefore, Council Assembly asks Cabinet to:

- a. Continue the hard work in combatting the climate emergency in Southwark and reversing the depletion of the natural environment, including reducing emissions year on year and expanding the borough's green spaces – plantings tens of thousands of new trees and increasing biodiversity across Southwark.
- b. Support the new Labour government in its record-breaking ambitions to tackle the climate and nature crisis, reducing the country's carbon emissions by 81% by 2035 based on 1990 levels, and working with our communities to restore the natural world.

Support renters in Southwark

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

1. Council Assembly notes:

- a. Private rents in Southwark are amongst the highest in the country increasing by 8.2% over the past year with the average rent now being £2,274 per month.
- b. Spiralling private sector rents are one of the leading causes of homelessness in our borough and city, with 1 in 21 children in London now homeless, the equivalent of more than one in every classroom.
- c. Some lettings agents in the borough have been engaging in unethical sales practices known as bidding wars, where they pit prospective tenants against each other, pressuring them to bid above the asking price.
- d. We welcome the inclusion of a ban on bidding wars in the new government's Renters Rights Bill, and commend the work of ACORN, the community union, for their campaigns on this issue.
- e. We also welcome the inclusion of proposed bans on huge above market rate rent hikes during tenancies, no fault evictions, and discriminating against tenants in receipt of benefits or with children in the new government's bill. These are changes that the council has long campaigned for alongside ACORN, Generation Rent, Shelter and many others.
- f. We further note and welcome the council's work rolling out more protections for private renters though a selective private rented

licencing scheme, which now covers the majority of Southwark

- g. However, we recognise that more work needs to be done to address private renting affordability and quality in the borough, and that until this bill is passed, predatory letting agents will continue to increase rents as much as possible, pricing more people out of their homes.

2. Council Assembly resolves to ask Cabinet to:

- a. Support ACORN Southwark's campaign to 'Ban the Bids' in the borough, and the call for an end to letting agents and landlords asking for, encouraging, or accepting bids above the advertised price for a private rented home.
- b. Contact lettings agents in Southwark that have not pledged to stop using bidding wars practices, as highlighted in ACORN's campaign, asking them to stop.
- c. Write to the Minister for Housing and all Southwark MPs setting out the council's support for the Renters Rights Bill.
- d. Extend the council's successful selective private rented licencing scheme to cover the whole borough.
- e. Review the council's support for private renters to ensure it is easy to access and effective and that the council is ready to start using the new powers in the Renters Rights Bill for local authorities to enforce higher standards in the private rented sector as soon they are enacted.

The meeting ended at 12.45pm.

CHAIR:

DATED:

DEADLINE FOR NOTIFICATION OF CALL-IN UNDER SECTION 17 OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES IS MIDNIGHT, WEDNESDAY 15 JANUARY 2025.

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