

Health and Social Care Scrutiny Commission

Monday 3 February 2025
7.00 pm
160, Tooley Street, SE1 2QH

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Contact

Julie Timbrell on 020 7525 0514 or email: Julie.Timbrell@southwark.gov.uk

Members of the committee are summoned to attend this meeting

Althea Loderick

Chief Executive

Date: 26 January 2025



Health and Social Care Scrutiny Commission

Monday 3 February 2025
7.00 pm
160, Tooley Street, 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	To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2024.	1 - 5
5. BLUE BADGE	Michelle Peake, Head of Specialist Services and Shaidi Khan, Accessible Transport Manager will present the enclosed briefing , which is a follow up from an item held on 15 November 2023 .	6 - 15
6. DAMP AND MOULD	Officer reports on damp and mould are to follow.	

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7. WORK PROGRAMME

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

Date: 26 January 2025



HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMISSION

MINUTES of the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Commission held on Wednesday 13 November 2024 at 7.00 pm at 160, Tooley Street, SE1 2QH

PRESENT: Councillor Suzanne Abachor (Chair)

Councillor Esme Dobson
Councillor Sandra Rhule
Councillor Jason Ochere
Councillor Charlie Smith

OTHER MEMBERS Cllr Evelyn Akoto , Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing
PRESENT:

OFFICER & Rhiana Ebanks-Babb, Healthwatch Southwark Manager
PARTNER Ruman Kallar, Healthwatch Southwark
SUPPORT: Kate Kavanagh, Associate Director of Community Based Care
Rebecca Jarvis, Director of Partnership Delivery and Sustainability (Southwark), NHS South East London
Samantha Lewis, Early diagnosis programme lead Cancer Alliance
Sangeeta Leahy, Director of Public Health
Pauline O'Hare, Director of Adult Social Care
Dr Nancy Kuchemann , GP and Co-chair of Partnership Southwark
Julie Timbrell, Project Manager, scrutiny

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr Nick Johnson and Cllr Maria Linforth-Hall gave apologies.

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

There were none.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There were none.

4. MINUTES

The commission approved the minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2024 as an accurate record.

5. TOPIC: CANCER PREVENTION AND EARLY DIAGNOSIS

The chair welcomed Samantha Lewis, Early diagnosis programme lead, Cancer Alliance and Dr Nancy Kuchemann, GP and Co-chair of Partnership Southwark, and invited them to present.

The chair then invited questions and the following points were made:

- A member asked about prostate cancer and if celebrities sharing stories had a positive impact; clinicians confirmed it did.
- Clinicians spoke about projects providing more information about diagnostic blood tests for prostate cancer (PSA test) and targeted outreach for men at higher risk.
- A member asked if time constraints during an appointment with a GP made it more difficult to obtain a diagnosis for cancer. Dr Nancy Kuchemann said that the duration of an appointment with a GP has remained fairly consistent but there are now longer wait times for tests, scans and x rays, which means that GPs are referring with less certainty on timescales. Samatha Lewis spoke about the Pharmacy First pilot operating in Southwark that gives pharmacists the ability to make referrals to hospitals for suspected cancer.

6. PRIMARY CARE ACCESS

The chair welcomed Kate Kavanagh, Associate Director of Community Based Care, and Rebecca Jarvis, Director of Partnership Delivery and Sustainability (Southwark), NHS South East London, and invited them to present.

The chair then invited questions and the following points were made:

- Members spoke about the difficulty in getting an appointment, either via a GP surgery or pharmacy, and noting the phone system is a block, whereas previously patients could go into a surgery and wait for appointment. The NHS colleagues explained that there is a move to cloud-based telephony where patients ought to receive a ring back. In addition, it is now possible to access prescriptions via a pharmacy; this was noted and welcomed by members. Capacity problems were acknowledged; to both testing due to the cyber-attacks but also workforce issues.
- Members asked how difficult it is to attract people to Primary Care and how might a younger person become a GP and remain in the borough. NHS colleagues explained that there is an aging population of GPs and nurses. Often younger GPs have a portfolio career now so work as a GP and do other specialist roles, which makes the work more interesting and varied. There is ongoing work to encourage people to work in Primary Care to make it exciting.

7. CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING - ANNUAL INTERVIEW

The chair welcomed Cllr Evelyn Akoto for her annual interview.

Officer support was provided by:

- Pauline O'Hare, Director of Adult Social Care,
- Sangeeta Leahy Director of Public Health.

The following themes were covered in the cabinet member presentation and the discussion with members:

- Homecare and an update on learning from the equal care cooperative pilot,
- Residential care charter , uptake and implementation,
- Care home ownership , assurance and re-provision,
- Obesity,
- Sexual health,
- People who are completely inactive.

8. HEALTHWATCH SOUTHWARK - ANNUAL REPORT

The chair welcomed Rhyana Ebanks-Babb, Healthwatch Southwark Manager, and invited her to present the Healthwatch Southwark's Annual report 2023 -24, which was circulated with the agenda.

The chair then invited questions and the following points were made:

- Members asked how Healthwatch do outreach to engage local people. Healthwatch colleagues said they do outreach in community spaces . There are also community ambassadors who are volunteers and engage with the community regarding vaccination.
- Healthwatch were asked how they will increase engagement with young people. Healthwatch said that they are working with the NEST, increasing board engagement, and a conducting a listening tour.

9. HEALTHWATCH SOUTHWARK : EMPOWERING VOICES

The chair welcomed Ruman Kallar and invited her to present Healthwatch Southwark's report on Empowering Voices: Examining Healthcare Access for Adults with Learning Disabilities and Autistic Adults.

The chair then invited questions and the following points were made:

- A member asked if Healthwatch encouraged people to make complaints. Healthwatch colleagues explained that they did, however people were often exhausted and so prefer telling their story to Healthwatch.
- Healthwatch said that a recommendation to encourage autism and learning disability champions has been rolled out.
- Members thanked Healthwatch for the report and recognised the barriers they were seeking to overcome.

10. WORK PROGRAMME

The commission discussed the work plan and resolved:

- to invite the lead cabinet member to discuss plans to deliver a new care home and the models under consideration.
- the previous briefing paper provided to members on the outcome of the public consultation on Orient Street Community Adult Short Breaks (respite) is sufficient to bring the matter to a close as this confirms the facility will continue to provide respite for adults.

Agenda Item 5

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 3 Feb 2025	Meeting: Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee
Report title:		Blue Badge Scheme Follow up Briefing	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Report Author:		Shaidi Khan	

1 Recommendations

- 1.1 Southwark Health and Social Care Committee notes the move to the national Government online application form, providing significant improvements in residents experience and overall processing times.
- 1.2 The Committee notes that residents have the opportunity to have their application reconsidered. This is communicated once the original application has been assessed, and the resident is advised that there is currently not sufficient evidence provided to confirm they meet the legal threshold for a Blue Badge.
- 1.3 The Committee notes residents issued with a Blue Badge, are made aware of possible Southwark parking permits and exemptions that may be available to them.

2 Background information

- 2.1 Southwark Health and Social Care Scrutiny Commission called for a briefing on 15 November 2023 to address the following:
 - The criteria for a Blue Badge
 - The Blue Badge application process: including how people can access support and assistance in completing an online form.
 - Scope to reduce the time taken to make a decision to award a Blue Badge.
- 2.2 A link to the briefing paper can be found on the Southwark Council website, here. [Blue Badge briefing.pdf](#)
- 2.3 Southwark Health and Social Care Scrutiny Commission asked for further comments on the following:
 - Reducing the burden for Blue Badge applicants who have lifelong conditions.
 - Communicating that there is an opportunity for a decision to be reviewed and if the resident chooses to, provide additional information to assist in evidencing eligibility so a Blue Badge can be awarded.

3 Lifelong Blue Badges

- 3.1 The Local Authority is responsible for administering the scheme, in line with Department for Transport (DfT)'s guidance and has a duty to protect the integrity of the scheme ensuring accessibility whilst maintaining robust processes and systems for evaluating entitlement.
- 3.2 There are currently around 8,800 Southwark Blue Badge holders.
- 3.3 There are a variety of routes to qualifying for a Blue Badge, where the badge holder's condition does not need to be permanent. The Blue Badge holder may have a condition that is substantial and enduring and expected to last at least three years.
- 3.4 The resident may be in receipt of a passported benefit, that makes them eligible for a Blue Badge for the duration they receive that particular benefit. 54% of Southwark badges currently fall into this category. (see appendix A, for a list of passported benefits).
- 3.5 20% of Southwark Blue Badge holders have been identified to have a permanent/ lifelong condition.

Badges issued based on:	%	Lifelong
Receipt of Passport benefit	54%	No
Substantial condition lasting 3 yrs plus	43%	Potentially
Permanent/Lifelong condition	20%	Yes

4 Reducing the burden for Blue Badge applications who have a lifelong condition.

- 4.1 The Council has a duty to ensure every Blue Badge issued, is issued to a person who is eligible for one, and confirmation of eligibility is required.

4.2 Current Position

4.2.1 Residents currently apply for a Blue Badge, by completing a Southwark specific application form. The form is structured in a way to ask all the necessary questions to support the residents in evidencing that they are eligible via all routes.

4.2.2 The service will review the application, and carry out a manual check of all the systems that are accessible to the service, identifying, if there is any evidence that the person qualifies, so the badge can be awarded. The national Blue Badge database is also checked, to identify if a Blue Badge was awarded previously, and if the resident, is eligible permanent. If so, the Blue Badge is automatically approved.

4.3 Improvements

4.3.1 In November 2024, it was agreed by Customer & Exchequer Project and Digital Board that the service will develop a plan to transition over to the national gov.uk Blue Badge application form, in line with the other Local Authorities.

4.3.2 Central government have employed a considerable amount of energy and resources in continually developing and improving the national gov.uk Blue Badge form, and whilst the Southwark application form has served its purpose, the national gov.uk offers more efficiencies and improvements.

4.3.3 The national Blue Badge system has a recent feature, where LA's can mark the residents Blue Badge record as 'not for further assessment', in short, that it has been established they are entitled to a Blue Badge permanently.

4.3.4 When these residents re apply via the national gov.uk system, the system will identify that they are permanently eligible, and ask them to complete a shortened application.

4.3.5 The shortened application requires no medical information or eligibility details, making the process less onerous for these residents. Based on other Local Authorities feedback, residents who fall into this category, usually complete the application form in under 10 minutes. The average time take to complete Southwark application form is around 1 hour and 20 minutes.

4.3.6 Currently 54% of residents qualify for a Blue badge as they are in receipt of a passport benefit. On that basis, it is estimated that approximately 4,752 residents will have a shortened application. This is because, once the resident states that they are in receipt of a passport benefit that would make them eligible, the application form will not ask further questions to determine eligibility. It should be noted that some residents may misunderstand the benefit that they are in receipt of, and provide incorrect information at this point, which may result in the service requesting further information.

4.3.7 The main benefits in using the national gov.uk Blue Badge application form are:

- Shortened application form for those identified as permanently eligible or in receipt of a passport benefit
- Improved customer journey, improving customer satisfaction
- Easy to use form which meets public sector accessibility requirements
- Nationally aligned application form
- Dedicated expertise and resources continually improving the form
- Cabinet Office led indepth user research continually and regularly completed and tested with live users to drive improvements, at no cost to Local Authorities.
- Regular audited by individuals with disabilities to remove accessibility barriers.
- User feedback contribution to form and customer journey improvements

- Increased support information (how to guides) on completing national application forms

4.3.8 Moving to the national gov.uk Blue Badge form will also help in reducing the processing times for Southwark Council. For example, the system identifies those already established as permanently eligible at the point of application, removing the need for manual checks on all applications to be carried out, also moving to the national gov.uk Blue Badge application form allows for the automation of the ordering of Blue Badges.

4.3.9 The continual development and improvements in the national gov.uk Blue Badge application, along with the how to guides to assist and support residents in completing a more fuller application, with the correct information, reduces the need for the service to check or request more information.

4.3.10 Transitioning to the national application form, requires a considerable amount of work. It includes:

- Training admin staff to identify fast track applications
- Redesigning the process
- The Southwark form is a joint Freedom Pass and Blue Badge application form, that is integrated with a Southwark case management system. The Southwark form will need to be redesigned to be a Freedom Pass form only.
- The national gov.uk Blue Badge application form will need to be integrated into Southwark's case management system.
- Training the Peckham Service Point staff to support residents
- Review and updated websites
- Redesign the request to reconsider the concession application form
- Communicating around new applications

5 Communicating that there is an opportunity for the decision to be reviewed.

- 5.1 Members have asked for some reassurance that where an application is not successful, that it is communicated to residents that the decision can be reviewed.
- 5.2 Whilst it is encouraged that residents provide as much information/evidence as possible, to help confirm eligibility, it should be noted that the threshold for a Blue Badge is quite high and not all residents applying are expected to meet the threshold.
- 5.3 Those individuals whose Blue Badges are approved, when they are notified of this, they are also signposted to some of the parking permits/exemptions that are available to Blue Badge holders. This includes:

- Digital parking permit
- Southwark Streetspace exemption
- London Congestion charge exemption.

5.4 Where applications are received, and it has been determined that there is no confirmation that the resident meets the eligibility threshold for a Blue Badge, they are advised of this via email and an explanation is provided.

5.5 The email explains that if a resident feels that the incorrect decision has been made, they can complete a request to reconsider the concession application (review from). The form also allows the resident to provide further information and evidence. Please see appendix B, for an example.

5.6 Where it is felt a resident may be eligible from their declared conditions, it is sometimes possible to provide the resident with some guidance on the types of documents that a person with such conditions would have and may help the resident evidence that they are eligible. The information will also be included in the same email. Please see appendix B, for an example.

5.7 The request to reconsider the concession form (review form) was redesigned in late 2024 using government digital service principles, making the form more user friendly, simpler and more accessible.

5.8 On the opening page it states, that the form can be completed if your Blue Badge was not approved and you would like to ask for the decision to be reviewed.

Lead Officer	Michelle Peake	
Report Author	<i>Shaidi Khan</i>	
Version	6	
<i>Dated</i>	16 January 2025	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Head of Specialist Services Michelle Peake	Yes	Yes

Director of Customer & Exchequer, Resources Directorate Dominic Cain	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency, Clean Air and Streets Briefing Cllr McAsh	Yes	Yes
Parking Services Development Manager David Sole	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Scrutiny Team		16/01/2025

Appendix A

Individuals who receive the below benefits, will automatically qualify for a Blue Badge. No further eligibility checks are required.

The badge will be issued to the expiry date of the benefit, to a maximum of three years.

- Receives the '**Higher Rate**' for the Mobility Component of the Disability Living allowance (HMRCDLA)
- Receives the mobility component of the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and has obtained **eight points or more** under the moving around activity.
- Receive the mobility component of (PIP) and obtains '**10 point specifically**' for descriptor E under the 'planning and following a journey activity'. This must be specifically award on the grounds that **they are unable to undertake any journey because it would cause them overwhelming psychological distress.**
- Receives a War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement (WPMS)
- Has been awarded lump sum benefit at tariffs 1-8 of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme and certified as having a permanent and substantial disability which causes inability to walk or considerable difficulty walking

Appendix B

From: Southwark Council <disabledtravel@southwark.gov.uk>
Sent: Monday, December 2, 2024 12:11 PM
To:
Subject: No evidence of eligibility - Blue badge application (ref: xxxx)

Blue Badge application reference: 28064917

Dear Ms.XXXXXXX,

Thank you for applying for a Blue Badge with Southwark Council.

The aim of the Blue Badge scheme is to help people with severe mobility problems caused by visible and non-visible ('Hidden') disabilities to access goods and services, by allowing them to park close to their destination. The criteria for a Blue Badge is set by Department for Transport (DfT).

The Council's role is to approve all requests where there is evidence that legal criteria to the scheme has been met.

Your application was assessed by an expert assessor, against the national legislation and guidance.

Below is a link explaining the automatic criteria and the documents that would support evidencing this.

<https://www.southwark.gov.uk/assets/attach/209320/Blue-Badge-automatic-criteria-examples.docx>

As no evidence was provided that you met the automatic criteria your application was considered under the non automatic route, which is for:

A person who has been certified by an expert assessor as having an enduring and substantial disability which causes them, during the course of a journey, to:

- *be unable to walk*
- *to experience very considerable difficulty whilst walking (which may include very considerable psychological distress) or*
- *to be at risk of serious harm or pose a risk of serious harm to any other person when walking.*

The assessment took into account the information that was provided:

- The medical conditions that you reported and provided evidence of: Bilateral total knee replacement and managing pain of osteoarthritis with frequent cramps due to type 2 diabetes. Back ache, CKD stage 4, and bilateral cataract eye surgery
- Treatment and interventions: Novamix Insulin-60 units Dapagliflozin-10 mg tablets Atorvastatin-20 mg tablets Linagliptin-5 mg tablets Ramipril-10 mg tablets Sodium Bicarbonate-500 mg tablets

You reported that you walk with a prescribed walking stick and are able to walk around the supermarket slowly, but have to stop and rest on occasion.

There was no recent and documented evidence provided regarding your current mobility levels.

The reported information, and evidence provided at the time of your assessment do not meet the non-automatic criteria set by the Department for Transport.

Therefore, we are unable to approve your request for a Blue Badge at this time, as no evidence was found to suggest that you were unable to walk, experienced very considerable difficulty walking, or was at serious risk of harm to yourself or others when walking.

Request to review:

If you believe the incorrect decision has been made you can request for a review by completing a review form https://forms.southwark.gov.uk>ShowForm.asp?fm_fid=1101, within the next 30 days.

You must clearly explain why you believe you meet the legal criteria for the concession that you have applied for, and provide documentary medical evidence to support this. You may have the following additional documents:

- ***This includes a document, report or patient summary from an involved healthcare professional. This could be from your GP, Consultant, a Physiotherapist, or another registered and involved health care professional, with information regarding your current medical status and the impact it has on your mobility.***

If at any time your circumstances change and you believe that you meet the legal rules for a badge, we would welcome an application. The application form can be found here <https://www.southwark.gov.uk/transport-and-roads/help-with-transport/blue-badge>. The decision is based on the information and evidence at the time of submission, therefore you must include all the information that you would like to be considered, even if it has been provided before.

Whilst we appreciate this is not the response that you were hoping for, it is important that Southwark Council operates the scheme fairly, and in line with current legislation and guidance.

Kind regards,

Ms XXXXXX
Disabled Travel Team
Tel: 0207 525 2146

Disabledtravel@southwark.gov.uk

Health & Social Care Scrutiny Commission

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2024-25

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