



# Council Assembly (Ordinary meeting)

MINUTES of the Council Assembly (Ordinary meeting) held on Wednesday 9 July 2025 at 7.00 pm at Council Offices, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

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## **PRESENT:**

The Worshipful the Mayor for , Councillor Sunny Lambe (Chair)

Councillor Suzanne Abachor  
Councillor Evelyn Akoto  
Councillor Jasmine Ali  
Councillor Naima Ali  
Councillor John Batteson  
Councillor Rachel Bentley  
Councillor Cassandra Brown  
Councillor Maggie Browning  
Councillor Victor Chamberlain  
Councillor Stephanie Cryan  
Councillor Ellie Cumbo  
Councillor Mohamed Deen  
Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle MBE  
Councillor Esme Dobson  
Councillor Gavin Edwards  
Councillor Sabina Emmanuel  
Councillor Natasha Ennin  
Councillor Sam Foster  
Councillor Renata Hamvas  
Councillor Barrie Hargrove  
Councillor Ketzia Harper  
Councillor Jon Hartley  
Councillor Youcef Hassaine  
Councillor Esme Hicks  
Councillor Emily Hickson  
Councillor Adam Hood

Councillor Laura Johnson  
Councillor Sarah King  
Councillor Richard Leeming  
Councillor Maria Linforth-Hall  
Councillor Richard Livingstone  
Councillor Hamish McCallum  
Councillor Darren Merrill  
Councillor Victoria Mills  
Councillor Portia Mwangangye  
Councillor Graham Neale  
Councillor Jason Ochere  
Councillor David Parton  
Councillor Leo Pollak  
Councillor Sandra Rhule  
Councillor Bethan Roberts  
Councillor Jane Salmon  
Councillor Martin Seaton  
Councillor Andy Simmons  
Councillor Michael Situ  
Councillor Charlie Smith  
Councillor Cleo Soanes  
Councillor Emily Tester  
Councillor David Watson  
Councillor Kieron Williams  
Councillor Ian Wingfield

## **1. PRELIMINARY BUSINESS**

### **1.1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sunil Chopra, Sam Dalton, Helen Dennis, Nick Johnson, James McAsh, Margy Newens, Reggie Popoola, Catherine Rose, Joseph Vambe, Kath Whittam, and Irina von Wiese.

Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Victoria Mills.

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

There were none.

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

The Mayor agreed to accept item 7.2, Treasury Management – Outturn 2024-25 as late and urgent.

At this point, the programme motion was agreed:

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

| Time                                                                                                                              | Business                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>19:00 – 19:05</b>                                                                                                              | <b>1. Preliminary business and announcements</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>19:05 – 19:15</b>                                                                                                              | <b>2 Election of the Leader</b><br>Cllr Kieron Williams – short announcement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>19:15 – 19:25</b>                                                                                                              | <b>3.2 Public questions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two public questions</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>19:25 – 20:25</b><br><br>(20 minutes – 5 minutes' speech)<br><br>(7 minutes)<br>(5 minutes)<br>(25 minutes)<br><br>(3 minutes) | <b>Themed debate</b><br><b>4.1 Community Evidence</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quince Garcia, Roadworks Media</li> <li>Nancy Trullo, United Hearts</li> <li>Lucia Adams</li> </ul> <b>4.2 Motion on the Theme</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cllr Natasha Ennin</li> <li>Councillor Victor Chamberlain, opposition spokesperson</li> <li>Themed debate open to all other councillors</li> <li>Cabinet member's right of reply to the debate</li> </ol> |
| <b>20:25 – 20:30</b>                                                                                                              | <b>Recess</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>20:30 – 20:45</b><br>(5 minutes speech each)                                                                                   | <b>5. Deputations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bells Garden TRA</li> <li>Manor Estate TRA</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>20:45 – 21:20</b><br>(5 minutes)<br>(15 minutes)<br>(15 minutes)                                                               | <b>6.1 Members' Question Time</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Late question</li> <li>Members' questions to the leader</li> <li>Members' questions to the cabinet</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>21:20 – 22:00</b>                                                                                                              | <b>6.2 Motions</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                                                                                                                   | Motion 1 – Southwark welcomes 400th refugee family                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                                                                                                                   | Motion 2 – Southwark Stands Against Welfare Cuts                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|                                                                                                                                   | Motion 3 – Making Space for Girls in Parks and Open                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

|               |                                                                                             |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|               | Spaces                                                                                      |
|               | Motion 4 – Implementation of a Tourist Tax                                                  |
|               | Motion 5 – Limiting the spread of damaging gambling premises in the Blue                    |
| <b>22:00*</b> | <b>7. Reports</b>                                                                           |
|               | 7.1 Waiver of six-month councillor attendance rule: Section 85 of Local Government Act 1972 |
|               | 7.2 Treasury Management – Outturn 2024-25                                                   |

\* 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 4 - Themed debate**

##### **Community Evidence Submissions**

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

- Quince Garcia, Roadworks Media
- Nancy Trullo, United Hearts
- Lucia Adams

##### **Format**

A five minute presentation from the groups.

#### **4.1 Motion on the theme**

##### **Themed debate**

To run as listed in the timings above.

To have a single debate.

##### **Item 5 Deputation requests:**

To receive submissions from the groups listed in the deputation requests report in supplemental agenda no. 2:

- Bells Garden TRA
- Manor Estate TRA

(Five minutes to speak, question to relevant cabinet member)

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

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

##### **Motion 2 – Southwark Stands Against Welfare Cuts**

To change the seconder of Motion 2 from Councillor Rachel Bentley to Councillor Jane Salmon

##### **Item 7.1 Waiver of six-month councillor attendance rule: Section 85 of Local**

### **Government Act 1972**

Paragraph 9 of the report refers to Councillor Hicks; this should read as Councillor Browning.

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

Councillor Maggie Browning declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in item 7.1, Waiver of six month councillor attendance rule: Section 85 of Local Government Act 1972, as it relates to her attendance. She left the room for this item and did not vote on it.

#### **1.5 MINUTES**

The minutes of the annual meeting of council assembly on 17 May 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

### **2. ELECTION OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

#### **2.1 ELECTION OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

##### **RESOLVED:**

1. That council assembly elected Councillor Sarah King as leader of the council.
2. That council assembly noted that the leader's term of office shall commence immediately, and end at the start of the first annual meeting of the council following the next ordinary election (May 2026), unless as otherwise specified in Article 6.3 of the constitution (see paragraph 7 of the report).

#### **2.2 EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS 2025-26**

##### **RESOLVED:**

That the leader reported to council assembly that the cabinet will remain unchanged at present.

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

#### **3.1 PETITIONS**

No petitions were received for this meeting.

#### **3.2 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

Two public questions were received. There was one supplemental question.

### **4. THEMED DEBATE**

#### **4.1 COMMUNITY EVIDENCE**

The meeting agreed to receive submissions from the following:

**Quince Garcia, Roadworks Media**

The representative spoke to the meeting for five minutes.

**Nancy Trullo, United Hearts**

The representative was unable to attend.

**Lucia Adams**

The representative spoke to the meeting for five minutes.

#### **4.2 MOTION ON THE THEME**

Councillor Natasha Ennin, cabinet member for community safety and neighbourhoods, presented the motion in the themed debate.

Councillor Victor Chamberlain, the opposition spokesperson, responded to the motion and proposed Amendment A.

Councillor Victoria Mills arrived at this point.

Following debate (Councillors Emily Hickson, Bethan Roberts, David Watson, Richard Leeming, Leo Pollak, Adam Hood, Sam Foster, Emily Tester, Andy Simmons, Jon Hartley, Charlie Smith, Kieron Williams, and Ketzia Harper) Councillor Natasha Ennin 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:**

#### **Keeping Southwark Safe: Fighting crime and the causes of crime**

1. Council Assembly notes:
  - a. That tackling crime and anti-social behaviour is a top priority for many of our residents.
  - b. The council's commitment to making Southwark safer for all.
  - c. The council's continued ambitions to work collaboratively with local communities to identify key concerns, target action in hotspot areas, including on our streets and our estates, work to restore trust and

confidence in the police, and to invest in prevention.

- d. This Labour government's commitment to 13,000 extra neighbourhood police, visible on the beat, cracking down on anti-social behaviour, and a named, contactable officer in every community.
- e. On protecting our public spaces:
  - i. The upcoming rollout of new nighttime wardens following a £450,000 investment in Southwark Labour's budget amendment this year, with new officers patrolling streets and estates from 6pm to 2am.
  - ii. The powers to be given to wardens to carry out enforcement, with training from the police allowing them to address and prevent anti-social behaviour.
  - iii. The launch of the council's £2m Anti-Social Behaviour Task Force, with 100 officers recruited to work on tackling crime and antisocial behaviour.
  - iv. The pilots to improve safety in our parks developed with friends of parks, the wider community, the metropolitan police service and council to monitor impact of efforts to deter anti-social behaviour (ASB) and crime in a named park.
  - v. The £3 million investment in upgrading existing CCTV across our borough.
  - vi. The upgrading of over 2,800 street lights since 2022, and ambitions to upgrade all our street lights by 2026, which are on track.
  - vii. The Home Secretary's initiative to keep streets safe this summer, with new local ASB Action Plans and a Summer Surge Delivery Plans.
  - viii. The Council's enforcement cracking down on fly-tipping, with fees increased from £400 to £1,000 and new powers from the Labour government for the police to identify, seize and crush vehicles of waste criminals.
- f. On working to improve public trust in the police:
  - i. The successful launch of the Southwark Policing Oversight Board, the first of its kind in London, which puts residents at the heart of improving public trust and confidence in the Metropolitan Police by increasing accountability and transparency and allowing residents to share their concerns.

- ii. This council's initiative to bring young people in to advise on Stop and Search, helping to train over 100 police officers to meet the highest standards.
  - iii. This Labour government's Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee, which includes measures that will put named and contactable officers back in our neighbourhoods, with a 50% increase in community police officers by 2029.
- g. Local councillors are fighting to save a police hub in Rotherhithe:
- i. That despite this guarantee, Bermondsey Safer Neighbourhood Teams have vacated their base at Seven Islands Leisure Centre.
  - ii. That the council alongside British Land have offered the Borough Commander several potential sites for a dedicated police hub.
  - iii. That all of these sites have been declined by the Borough Commander.
  - iv. That the Safer Neighbourhood Teams are now based at Southwark Police Station which is further than the Met Police's commitment of no more than twenty minute journey for local based policing.
  - v. Further notes the work of the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Neighbourhoods and the Rotherhithe Ward councillors in lobbying the Assistant Commissioner of the Met Police and the Borough Commander to actively engage in finding a suitable location for a police hub.
  - vi. The petition set up by the Rotherhithe Ward councillors that has gained local support.
- h. Tackling violence against women and girls:
- i. Southwark now has 20 Safe Havens and 58 Safe Spaces where any resident who feels unsafe, particularly women, can drop in for support and advice.
  - ii. The council's 'Through Her Eyes' campaign has been shown in over 1,000 schools, and garnered over 1 million views across various social media platforms, raising awareness amongst men and boys to change their attitudes towards women and girls.
  - iii. This council has dedicated resources to extend work being done to improve women's safety at night – with £150,000 for training,

spiking kits, and accelerating the rates of signups to the Women's Nighttime Safety Charter.

- iv. The government's Crime and Policing Bill, when introduced, will criminalise the taking or recording of intimate images or videos without consent.
- i. Notes and supports Women's Aid's Motion for Change: Together against violence towards women and girls (VAWG):
- i. Welcoming Labour's commitment to halve VAWG in the next decade.
  - ii. Noting that Labour's bold ambition cannot be realised by national government alone - we need action from local councillors, council leaders and Police and Crime Commissioners to turn the tide on VAWG in our local communities.
  - iii. Agrees that VAWG services should meet the needs of all survivors, including the most marginalised survivors.
- j. Resident engagement in hotspot areas:
- i. During national ASB awareness week, with the council and partners holding a range of events to encourage reporting and to highlight support available to victims and witnesses of ASB and crime.
  - ii. With upcoming town centre engagement days to be held in Camberwell, Elephant and Castle, Rye Lane and Borough High Street, with information stalls included materials on town centre action plans, business crime prevention, reporting and opportunity to meet community wardens and local police officers.
  - iii. The six days of action in Elephant and Castle, which included robbery and VAWG operations to deter phone snatches and to promote and increase signups to the London nighttime women's safety charter.
  - iv. The Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Neighbourhoods, Councillor Natasha Ennin, has been regularly visiting hotspot areas, listening to residents, identifying key issues and acting to prevent crime and antisocial behaviour.
- k. Prevention:
- i. Welcomes the government's announcement that rough sleeping will be decriminalised for the first time since the Vagrancy Act 1824, to which Emma Haddad, Chief Executive of St Mungo's, said: "*The*



*repeal of the Vagrancy Act, which criminalises rough sleeping, cannot come soon enough... The answer is not to criminalise people for living on the streets but instead to focus on tackling the health, housing and wider societal issues that are causing homelessness in the first place.”*

- ii. The appointment of a new Rough Sleeper Coordinator to help progress toward the council's ambitions to end rough sleeping.
  - iii. Increasing youth engagement, with street-based outreach from youth advisors on healthy relationships and offers of youth activities across the borough, to act as diversion to young people at early risk of committing ASB or crime during the summer holidays. This work is supported by our Southwark Violence Reduction Unit in partnership with our local My Endz provider Active Communities Network.
  - iv. New youth engagement days to ensure the youth voice is heard within our residents' neighbourhoods and to encourage reporting in areas that they feel are unsafe, facilitated and supported by local voluntary organisations working with young people in each neighbourhood.
  - v. Council Assembly supports Labour's plans to intervene earlier to stop young people being drawn into crime, creating a new Young Futures programme with a network of hubs reaching every community.
2. This council resolves to:
- a. Take action on the results of the Women's Safety Survey 2025:
    - i. Improve areas in which women have reported feeling unsafe including visual audits of locations of concern to make improvements to the public realm.
    - ii. Hold information sessions across the borough to provide women with practical tools to increase feelings of safety at night including, personal safety alarms, anti-spiking kits and torches.
    - iii. Improve the council's communications to ensure that women and anyone who feels unsafe in borough knows where safe spaces are to get support.
  - b. Explore the possibility of appointing a councillor as a VAWG Champion to ensure council services and actions in preventing violence against women and girls are as comprehensive and effective as possible.

- c. Continue to roll out better lighting and CCTV to make streets, parks and estates safer, to deter crime and continue to help the police catch criminals.
- d. Open a Women's Safety Centre to provide services to support women facing violence and domestic abuse.
- e. Establish safe routes to school for our children and young people, with increased policing, CCTV support and other means to deter crime and protect children.
- f. Help ensure a policing presence is maintained in Rotherhithe by:
  - i. Asking cabinet to work with the GLA Police and Crime Committee and our London Assembly Member, Marina Ahmad, to hold the police to account.
  - ii. Continuing to work with the police to identify a suitable site within 20 minutes' walk of Rotherhithe.
  - iii. Calling on the Borough Commander to be open and transparent about the reasons for refusing space for a temporary police hub.

## 5. DEPUTATIONS

The meeting held a five minute recess following the themed debate.

Councillor Rachel Bentley left the meeting at this point.

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

### **Bells Garden TRA**

The group's representatives spoke to the meeting for five minutes and thereafter asked a question of the leader of the council, who asked Councillor Cleo Soanes, ward councillor for the area, to respond.

### **Manor Estate TRA**

The group's representatives spoke to the meeting for five minutes and thereafter asked a question of the leader of the council, who asked Councillor Cassandra Brown, ward councillor for the area, to respond.

## 6. ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS

## 6.1 MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME

At this point, Councillors Esme Dobson and Gavin Edwards left the meeting.

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

There were 29 members' questions, the written responses to which were circulated before the meeting. There were 18 supplemental questions.

## 6.2 MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Councillor Suzanne Abachor left the meeting at this point.

### **Motion 1: Southwark welcomes 400th refugee family**

This motion was considered prior to the guillotine having fallen.

Councillor Jasmine Ali moved the motion. Councillor Mohamed Deen seconded the motion.

There were no amendments to the motion. After debate (Councillor Maria Linforth-Hall, Youcef Hassaine) Councillor Jasmine Ali 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 celebrates:
  - a. The council's achievement in resettling the 400th family under the Refugee Resettlement Programme.
  - b. The outstanding contribution of the voluntary and community sector for their continued work in helping sanctuary seekers and refugees to settle in our borough.
  - c. The generosity and support of Southwark residents in coming forwards and opening their hearts and homes to refugees.
  - d. The efforts of partner organisations and officers in helping to resettle so many families in our borough.
  - e. The collective efforts of the council, voluntary and community sector (VCS) and partner organisations in making Southwark a Borough of Sanctuary, welcoming refugees and sanctuary seekers in all walks of life.
2. Council Assembly recognises:
  - a. The support provided by the council for 116 children seeking sanctuary since 2022.

- b. The council's work in supporting almost 600 Ukrainian refugees following Russia's invasion in 2022.
  - c. The council's work in supporting 50 Afghan refugees as part of the Afghan Resettlement Scheme in addition to the 200 individuals supported in the borough.
  - d. The council's support of the Home Office accommodated 574 asylum seekers.
  - e. The council's £24.6 million expenditure since 2022 in supporting almost 800 households with No Recourse to Public Funds.
  - f. The continued support for the Southwark Law Centre's vital work in supporting sanctuary seekers and refugees.
  - g. The support provided to over 650 sanctuary seekers and refugees who found themselves homeless.
3. Council Assembly stands united in:
- a. Welcoming sanctuary seekers and refugees to Southwark.
  - b. Doing everything in our power to support those who have fled the most unimaginable of circumstances.
  - c. Our belief that our diversity makes our borough stronger, and that our culture, cuisine, community and spirit have been enriched a thousand-fold by citizens and families from all over the world.
  - d. The continued belief that sanctuary seekers should be granted the right to work rather than having to wait 12 months or for their application to be decided, supporting the Lift the Ban coalition.
4. Council Assembly reiterates:
- a. Its commitment to the five City of Sanctuary values:
    - 1. Inclusivity: welcoming and respecting people from all backgrounds, placing value on diversity and committing to equality
    - 2. Openness: Committing to a culture of working collaboratively across the City of Sanctuary network and in partnership with other councils
    - 3. Participation: Working with people seeking sanctuary and valuing and recognising the contribution of all. Aspiring to ensure that people seeking sanctuary are involved in all decision making at all levels and are supported to become leaders in the organisation, networks and the wider movement.
    - 4. Inspiring: Working with enthusiasm and positivity and being determined to surpass what has already been achieved to welcome refugees and

people seeking sanctuary.

5. Integrity: Aspiring to high standards of honesty and behaviour and always acting in the interests of people seeking sanctuary.

5. Council Assembly notes:

- a. The four objectives of the Borough of Sanctuary Action plan:
  1. Stand together: We want Southwark to be a place of safety, support and opportunity for those seeking sanctuary and amplify their voices and experiences to shape positive change.
  2. Voice: We want to celebrate the culture, diversity and contributions of those seeking sanctuary and amplify their voices and experiences to shape positive change.
  3. Shaping Services: We want to better understand the experiences and needs of those seeking sanctuary and ensure that services and local agencies are responding to these issues and enabling opportunities.
  4. Bespoke support: We want to foster collaboration between different local agencies so they can respond effectively, cooperatively and flexibly to the ongoing and changing needs of sanctuary-seekers.

6. Council Assembly asks Cabinet to:

- a. Continue its role in delivering on the Borough of Sanctuary Action Plan to surpass what has already been achieved to welcome refugees and people seeking sanctuary.
- b. Enable our Borough of Sanctuary team to continue to provide essential wrap around support for refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants.
- c. Ensure a whole council approach is being taken to support refugees and sanctuary seekers, including helping those who find themselves homeless.
- d. Publish a report to mark one year of Southwark as a Borough of Sanctuary.
- e. Reiterate its support for and membership of the Lift the Ban coalition.
- f. Actively support our sisters and brothers in their annual celebration of refugee week to make Southwark Refugee Week the loudest, most inclusive and celebratory refugee celebrations in the country.

**Motion 2: Southwark Stands Against Welfare Cuts**

This motion was considered prior to the guillotine having fallen.

Councillor Victor Chamberlain moved the motion. Councillor Jane Salmon seconded the motion.

There were two amendments to the motion. Councillor Maria Linforth-Hall moved Amendment B. Councillor Emily Tester seconded Amendment B. Councillor Stephanie Cryan moved Amendment C. Councillor Ian Wingfield seconded Amendment C.

At this point, the guillotine fell.

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

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. That 3.7 million people in England and Wales currently receive Personal Independence Payments (PIP).
- b. PIP is a benefit not linked to being in work or out of work, but instead designed to help people with the additional unavoidable costs of having a disability. Many disabled people use PIP to cover the cost of getting to and from work, for paying for essential equipment and for meeting their social care charges.
- c. That Universal Credit contains a health-related element that currently supports 2.25 million people with severe health problems.
- d. Research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation which has found that 50% of recipients of the health element of Universal Credit are either unable to heat their home, are behind on their household bills or have low food security.
- e. That there are 900,000 children currently living in households where someone receives the health-related Universal Credit.

2. Council Assembly notes:

- a. The regrettable consequences of austerity on Southwark's most vulnerable residents, instigated by the Conservative - Liberal Democrat collusion, which has had deleterious and long-lasting effects on our residents living with disabilities and health conditions, including children. Policies such as the Bedroom Tax and Benefit Cap pushed vulnerable people into poverty and homelessness.
- b. That the previous Labour government took a million children out of poverty and reduced homelessness by more than two-thirds.
- c. That the £22 billion black hole in the public finances left by the Conservative Government has resulted in tough decisions having to be made.
- d. That despite tough decisions, the Labour Party is committed to fixing the

broken welfare system, and that tackling poverty and inequality has always been central to the Labour Party's mission.

3. Council Assembly welcomes:

- a. The work of the Southwark Labour administration to provide welfare support to those most in need across our borough:
  - i. We have delivered the country's most comprehensive free healthy school meals programme across our nursery, primary and secondary schools, and in the school holidays. Furthermore, Southwark Labour has led the way nationally, by providing free school meals universally to primary school children since 2013, and by extending free school meal provision in secondary schools with £3.2m of investment for children who need it most.
  - ii. In 2024 alone, the Southwark Cost of Living Support Fund distributed more than £40 million to families in immediate need. Since the start of the Cost of Living Crisis in 2021, the Council has reached over 100,000 Southwark residents, those on the lowest incomes and most vulnerable to the impacts of rising costs.
  - iii. Offering a package of cost-of-living support that includes help for residents on low or insecure incomes and dealing with problem debt
  - iv. The Holiday Food and Fun programme funded nearly 70,000 free meals for children aged 4-6 in 2024
  - v. The distribution of Rose Vouchers, to help families buy fresh fruit and vegetables
  - vi. The Pension Credit take-up campaign, which supported eligible residents in applying for Pension Credit, enabling them to benefit from the Winter Fuel Allowance
  - vii. The Southwark Energy Savers Scheme, which provides energy-saving advice and support to residents struggling with rising energy bills and the cost of living crisis.
- b. The role that Labour MPs have played:
  - i. Voting for the amended Welfare Reform Bill, recognising the impact that the original bill would've had on those claiming PIP
  - ii. The work done by MPs Florence Eshalomi and Helen Hayes, in scrutinising the government's welfare plans and securing changes, so that no one currently in receipt of the health top-up of universal credit, will lose out.
- c. The proposed Timms Review to examine eligibility for PIP, and the changes now secured around the implementation timetable to take account of that review which will be co-produced with disabled people.

4. Council Assembly recognises:

- a. That the Labour government inherited a mess from the Tories but that over the last year, important steps have been taken to invest in the NHS and get waiting lists down and put money back in people's pockets through a significant increase in the national minimum wage.
  - b. That the current welfare system needs a thorough review, to take account of emerging health challenges, address high levels of worklessness amongst young people, and to tackle child poverty and homelessness.
  - c. That the government has committed to investing £1bn in vital back to work support;
  - d. That despite this, there have been significant concerns raised by disabled people and anti-poverty organisations about proposals that were put forward around PIP eligibility, and the health-related top-up to Universal Credit.
5. Council Assembly resolves to:
- a. Ask that the Council continues to provide support to residents who need it most:
    - i. Continuing to provide Short Breaks to children with SEND through the Thrive-to-25 programme
    - ii. Continuing to lend a helping hand to families during school holidays in providing free healthy meals through initiatives such as Holiday Food and Fun
    - iii. Continue to provide free healthy school meals in nursery, primary and secondary schools, including the Department of Education's pilot free breakfast clubs currently running in some Southwark primary schools
    - iv. Continuing to provide financial assistance to those receiving domiciliary care
  - b. To write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, to set out our priorities for Welfare Reform, including the abolition of the two-child limit in Universal Credit and permanent re-pegging of the Local Housing Allowance.
  - c. To engage with the Timms Review and ensure that the voices and experiences of disabled Southwark residents are heard in that process

### **Motion 3: Making Space for Girls in Parks and Open Spaces**

This motion was considered after the guillotine had fallen.

There were no amendments to the motion.

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

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



1. This Council notes:
  - a. This Labour administration's continued investment in parks, green spaces, and leisure facilities, including:
    - i. Having 30 Green Flag parks and an extensive parks and playground investment and improvements programme that has delivered major upgrades the length and breadth of the borough.
    - ii. A borough-wide plan to tackle safety and antisocial behaviour in parks.
    - iii. Upgrades to outdoor gyms and sports facilities.
    - iv. Initiatives such as the creation of more community growing spaces and the borough-wide action plan for Right to Grow so that our green spaces can meet the leisure needs of even more of our residents.
2. This Council also notes:
  - a. That despite these positive developments, there is compelling evidence from the Make Space for Girls campaign showing that teenage girls continue to feel excluded from parks and open spaces.
  - b. That the provision of multi-use green areas (MUGAs), skateparks and other facilities tends to cater to boys, and does not reflect the social needs of girls.
  - c. That often facilities such as outdoor gyms are designed with equipment that can be daunting or inaccessible to female users and particularly teenage girls.
  - d. That the work concerning our green and open spaces, while extensive, does not yet include specific design standards or data monitoring to ensure teenage girls are equitably served.
  - e. That research from Women in Sport indicates that teenage girls are almost twice as likely than teenage boys to disengage from sport during adolescence. Primary reasons for this include fear of judgement, a lack of confidence and not feeling safe outdoors.
  - f. That exercise has significant physical but also mental health benefits and can support young people with improved social and emotional resilience.
3. This Council believes:
  - a. That all young people deserve green and public spaces where they feel welcome, safe and seen – and that girls and young women must be part of shaping the parks, playgrounds, sports facilities and outdoor spaces that serve them.
  - b. That we have an opportunity to build on Southwark's leadership in public space investment by becoming a national leader in designing spaces for teenage girls and young women.
4. This Council resolves to:

- a. **Include a gender-inclusion strand** in the new Green Spaces Plan, specifically focused on teenage girls' use of parks and green spaces, and informed by the research and guidance from Make Space for Girls.
- b. **Undertake an audit** of a representative sample of Southwark's parks and play areas by Autumn 2026 to assess current usage, inclusion, and accessibility for teenage girls and other underrepresented groups.
- c. **Engage girls and young women** across the borough – including through schools, youth groups and other community partners – to understand what facilities, layouts and activities would make public spaces work for them.
- d. **Deliver at least three co-designed pilot interventions** in parks or green spaces or new public realm by Summer 2027. These will be pilots within existing capital projects. The pilots will look to include some of features known to support the use of spaces by girls and young women such as:
  - i. **Social Seating Arrangements:** Designing seating in clusters or circles facilitates social interaction, allowing girls to gather comfortably without feeling isolated or exposed.
  - ii. **Subdivided and Open Sports Areas:** Instead of large, enclosed multi-use games areas (MUGAs), creating smaller, open courts can prevent domination by single groups and make the spaces more inviting for all users, including girls.
  - iii. **Inclusion of Swings and Natural Play Elements:** Incorporating swings and natural play features like logs or climbing structures can cater to varied interests and promote active engagement among girls.
  - iv. **Accessible and Quality Toilets:** Providing clean and well-maintained toilets can remove barriers to access and comfort for girls. 78% of girls say they avoid sport during menstruation.
  - v. **Circular Pathways:** Designing circular paths around parks encourages movement and can be particularly appealing for walking and socialising, activities often preferred by teenage girls.

Above all, these pilots should actively involve teenage girls in the design process to ensure that their specific needs and preferences are addressed, leading to more inclusive spaces.

- e. Build on these pilot interventions by then **embedding girl-inclusive principles** in all future park and playground refurbishments.
- f. **Join the Make Space for Girls local authority network**, working collaboratively to share learning and push national standards forward.
- g. **Publish an update report** alongside the pilot projects delivery, and ensure equalities reporting, with data broken down by sex and age, is regularly reviewed by Cabinet.

#### **Motion 4: Implementation of a Tourist Tax**

This motion was considered after the guillotine had fallen.

There was one amendment to the motion.

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

The amended 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. That millions of people visit Southwark every year, with the Imperial War Museum receiving over 1 million tourists annually and Borough Market attracting 500,000 visitors every week.
- b. That visitors to Southwark, whilst significantly contributing to the local economy, place additional strain on infrastructure, public services, and the local environment.
- c. That many cities, such as Venice and Amsterdam, successfully employ a tourist contribution scheme (colloquially known as a tourist tax) to offset these impacts, without deterring visitors to the local economy.
- d. That several cities in the UK have now implemented, or are in the process of implementing their own tourist tax, including Manchester, York, Liverpool, and Edinburgh, with the latter two having just implemented the tax in May 2025.
- e. Manchester City Council reportedly made £2.8 million from their tourist tax, whilst Edinburgh expects to bring in as much as £50 million per year.
- f. The recent support for a tourist tax from the Mayor of London.
- g. That a tourist tax could provide additional revenue for maintaining public spaces, public transport, heritage conservation, waste management, sustainability projects, supporting the borough's long-term goals and for promoting Southwark.

2. Council Assembly believes:

- a. Welcome though visitors are, a tourist tax would allow Southwark to ensure visitors contribute fairly to the borough's upkeep and to its sustainability, and to better manage the pressures that mass tourism brings.
- b. Evidence from numerous cities shows a modest visitor levy would not deter tourists and is now an accepted contribution across Europe to the costs of maintaining and enhancing popular visitor destinations.
- c. A London-wide tourist tax could, by some estimates, potentially generate hundreds of millions of pounds in revenue for the capital

3. Council Assembly resolves to:

- a. Utilise our strong relationships with Business Improvement Districts in order to understand the potential impact of a tourism levy on businesses, particularly those in the hospitality sector.
- b. Support the call to implement a London-wide tourism levy through accommodation costs.

**Motion 5: Limiting the spread of damaging gambling premises in the Blue**

This motion was considered after the guillotine had fallen.

There was one amendment to the motion.

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

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

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

1. Council Assembly:

- a. Notes the successes of the Blue Lettings Strategy, established with the support of local councillors, Blue Bermondsey business improvement district (BID) and the council over the past decade, that has seen:
  - i. Major public realm improvements
  - ii. Market infrastructure upgrades
  - iii. Shopfront improvements
  - iv. Four new restaurants set up on the high street
  - v. New locally owned uses such Brotherhood of Games thriving and bringing footfall and vitality
  - vi. The upcoming launch of the new B223 Multi-arts centre and community centre in the Thorowgoods building
  - vii. New affordable workspace supported to be established in the arches.
- b. Notes that more needs to be done drive footfall and improved mix of shops and stalls, creating new jobs as well as progression for local entrepreneurs, especially with the growing population (as well as retail competition) deriving from the new development at the Biscuit factory.
- c. Notes the growing prevalence of Adult Gaming Centres in the borough and nationally, and recent research showing their propensity to target areas of higher deprivation, and findings from addiction experts showing a spike in clinical referrals for gambling addicts.
- d. Notes that the Blue currently has an over-concentration of five gambling premises along a 150 yard stretch, in units that could do more to support the local economy, and less to fuelling addiction and financial distress.

- e. Calls on the council assembly to restate its commitment to the Blue lettings strategy, working with private commercial landlords and the Blue Bermondsey BID, to curate the high street and prioritise marketing and letting of commercial premises that:
  - i. Bring pride &/or distinction to the area
  - ii. Are independent businesses
  - iii. Avoid duplication
  - iv. Introduce uses that meet the needs of different incomes and backgrounds in the community
  - v. Drive footfall
  - vi. Generate local jobs and promotes skills development opportunities
  - vii. Support progression for locally owned businesses
  - viii. Avoid known public health risks.
- f. Calls on the council to re-commit to the Blue lettings strategy covering the above principles, and to use every available lever to avoid turning over leases of existing betting shops within its property portfolio in deprived or over-saturated areas.
- g. Calls on the Leader and Cabinet Member for Business to organise a meeting with local ward councillors, Blue Bermondsey BID and other stakeholders to support the strategy for improving the Blue, and long-term prospects for commercial property portfolio.
- h. Calls on the council to explore options for strengthening planning policy to combat over-concentration of gambling premises, through its forthcoming review of the Southwark Plan.
- i. Calls on the council to commission independent field research with local health charities and research organisations, to better understand the spending profiles and psychological backgrounds of repeat customers of gambling shops at the Blue, and to publicise those findings on its website.

## **7. REPORT(S) FOR DECISION**

### **7.1 WAIVER OF SIX-MONTH COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCE RULE: SECTION 85 OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

Councillor Maggie Browning left the meeting at this point and did not vote on this item, as she had declared a pecuniary interest in this matter.

The recommendations were put to the vote and declared Carried.

#### **RESOLVED:**

1. That in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, council assembly approved Councillor Maggie Browning's non-attendance at meetings from 4 September 2025 for twenty-six weeks (until 5 March 2026) on the grounds of parental responsibility (maternity leave).

## **7.2 TREASURY MANAGEMENT - OUTTURN 2024-25**

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

### **RESOLVED:**

1. That Council Assembly noted the 2024-25 treasury management annual outturn report and in particular:
  - the update on the economic background.
  - that all treasury management activity was undertaken in compliance with the 2024-25 approved treasury management strategy and the council's prudential indicators for 2024-25, attached at appendix A.
  - that the balance outstanding on all external debt as at 31 March 2025 was £1,159m.
  - that the balance on investments as at 31 March 2025 stood at £53m.

## **8. AMENDMENTS**

The amendments were listed in supplemental agenda no. 2.

The meeting closed at 10.15 pm.

**CHAIR:**

**DATED:**