



## **Council Assembly (Ordinary meeting)**

MINUTES of the Council Assembly (Ordinary meeting) held on Wednesday 18 March 2026 at 7.00 pm at Council Offices, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

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### **PRESENT:**

The Worshipful the Mayor for 2025-26, Councillor Sunny Lambe (Chair)

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 Sunil Chopra  
Councillor Stephanie Cryan  
Councillor Ellie Cumbo  
Councillor Sam Dalton  
Councillor Mohamed Deen  
Councillor Helen Dennis  
Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle MBE  
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 Adam Hood  
Councillor Laura Johnson  
Councillor Nick Johnson

Councillor Sarah King  
Councillor Richard Leeming  
Councillor Maria Linforth-Hall  
Councillor Richard Livingstone  
Councillor Darren Merrill  
Councillor Victoria Mills  
Councillor Portia Mwangangye  
Councillor Graham Neale  
Councillor Margy Newens  
Councillor Jason Ochere  
Councillor David Parton  
Councillor Leo Pollak  
Councillor Reginald Popoola  
Councillor Sandra Rhule  
Councillor Bethan Roberts  
Councillor Jane Salmon  
Councillor Andy Simmons  
Councillor Michael Situ  
Councillor Charlie Smith  
Councillor Cleo Soanes  
Councillor Emily Tester  
Councillor Joseph Vambe  
Councillor Irina Von Wiese  
Councillor David Watson  
Councillor Kath Whittam  
Councillor Ian Wingfield

## 1. PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

### 1.1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Esme Dobson, Esme Hicks, Emily Hickson, James McAsh, Hamish McCallum, Jason Ochere, Catherine Rose, Martin Seaton, and Kieron Williams.

Apologies for early departure were received from Councillors Maggie Browning, Ketzia Harper, Darren Merrill, and Victoria Mills.

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

The chief executive of the council, Althea Loderick, announced the planned retirement of the assistant chief executive, governance and assurance, Doreen Forrester-Brown, the council's monitoring officer. She offered her thanks for her service. Tributes were given by the Mayor and the group leaders.

The cabinet member for health and wellbeing announced the Care Quality Commission's "good" rating for Southwark's adult social care.

The Mayor announced Southwark's cross-party support for "March together against the far right".

The Mayor thanked all members for their service in this political term.

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

At this point, the programme motion was agreed:

The order of business and timings for the evening will be as follows:

| Time                                              | Business                                                                                                                                                          |
|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 19:00 – 19:10                                     | <b>1. Preliminary business and announcements</b>                                                                                                                  |
| 19:10 – 19:15                                     | <b>2.2 Public questions</b><br>One public question                                                                                                                |
| 19:15 – 20:15<br>(15 minutes – 5 minutes' speech) | <b>Themed debate</b><br><b>3.1 Community Evidence</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Spring Community Hub</li><li>• Active Communities Network</li></ul> |
| (7 minutes)                                       | <b>3.2 Motion on the Theme</b><br>1. Councillor Sarah King                                                                                                        |
| (5 minutes)                                       | 2. Councillor David Watson, opposition spokesperson                                                                                                               |
| (30 minutes)                                      | 3. Themed debate open to all other councillors                                                                                                                    |
| (3 minutes)                                       | 4. Cabinet member's right of reply to the debate                                                                                                                  |

|                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>20:15 – 20:40</b><br>(4 minutes' speech and a question to cabinet member) | <b>4. Deputations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sonay Ozkutayli and St Saviours Residents</li> <li>• Southwark and Peckham Citizens</li> <li>• King's Maternity Voices Partnership</li> <li>• Latin Elephant</li> </ul> |
| <b>20:40 – 20:45</b>                                                         | <b>Recess</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>20:45 – 21:20</b><br>(5 minutes)<br>(15 minutes)<br>(15 minutes)          | <b>5.1 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>5.2 Motions</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|                                                                              | Motion 1 – Tackling antisocial behaviour on Southwark's estates                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                                                                              | Motion 2 – Liberal Democrats will Fix Southwark                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                                                                              | Motion 3 – Protecting the Freedom Pass for Older Londoners                                                                                                                                                                             |
|                                                                              | Motion 4 – Southwark has no confidence in Sir Keir Starmer                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>22:00*</b>                                                                | <b>6. Reports</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|                                                                              | 6.1 – Proportionality and Allocation of Seats on Committees March 2026                                                                                                                                                                 |
|                                                                              | 6.2 – Licensing Act 2003: Review of Statement of Licensing Policy 2026 to 2031                                                                                                                                                         |
|                                                                              | 6.3 – Pay Policy Statement 2026/27                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|                                                                              | 6.4 – Member Allowances Scheme 2026-2027                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                                                              | 6.5 – Calendar of meetings 2026-27                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|                                                                              | 6.6 – Special Urgency and Urgent Implementation Decisions – Annual Report 2026                                                                                                                                                         |
|                                                                              | 6.7 – Re-appointment of independent persons                                                                                                                                                                                            |

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

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

That the meeting be conducted as follows:

### **Item 3 - Themed debate**

#### **Community Evidence Submissions**

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

- Spring Community Hub
- Active Communities Network

#### **Format**

A five minute presentation from the groups.

### **3.1 Motion on the theme**

**Themed debate**

To run as listed in the timings above.

To have a single debate.

**Item 4 Deputation requests:**

To receive submissions from the groups listed in the deputation requests report in supplemental agenda no. 1:

- Sonay Ozkutayli and St Saviours Residents
- Southwark and Peckham Citizens
- King's Maternity Voices Partnership
- Latin Elephant

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

**Item 5.2 General motions:**

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

**1.4 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS**

It was confirmed that all members had a dispensation from the monitoring officer to vote on item 6.4, Member allowances scheme 2026-27.

There were no other declarations.

**1.5 MINUTES**

The minutes of the budget and council tax setting meeting of council assembly on 25 February 2026 were agreed as a correct record.

**2. ISSUES RAISED BY THE PUBLIC****2.1 PETITIONS**

No petitions were received for this meeting.

**2.2 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

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

**3. THEMED DEBATE****3.1 COMMUNITY EVIDENCE**

The meeting agreed to receive submissions from the following:

### **Spring Community Hub**

The representative spoke to the meeting for five minutes.

### **Active Communities Network**

The representative spoke to the meeting for five minutes.

## **3.2 MOTION ON THE THEME**

Councillor Sarah King, leader of the council, presented the motion in the themed debate.

Councillor David Watson, the opposition spokesperson, responded to the motion and proposed Amendment A.

Following debate (Councillors Maggie Browning, Naima Ali, Maria Linforth-Hall, Leo Pollak, Evelyn Akoto, Cassandra Brown, Nick Johnson, Reginald Popoola, Stephanie Cryan, Margy Newens, Adam Hood, Youcef Hassaine, Mohamed Deen), Councillor Sarah King 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.

### **A borough where everyone can succeed**

#### **1. Council Assembly celebrates:**

- a. The diversity and vibrancy of our borough, from Peckham's food scene to Dulwich's parks and sports grounds, Bermondsey's estates to Walworth's street markets and Bankside's heritage.
- b. Our amazing, energised local communities.
- c. The small businesses and entrepreneurs that make our town centres thrive.
- d. The teachers, nurses, doctors, firefighters and other key workers who keep our borough running.
- e. Our tireless and hard-working network of voluntary and community organisations.

#### **2. Council Assembly thanks:**

- a. The vast network of voluntary and community organisations that help make our borough succeed, including but not limited to:
  - i) Community Southwark – who bring our VCS partners together with help and guidance for charities and community groups.

- ii) Spring – the organisation behind Spring Community Hub and The Blue Youth Centre that provide so much for residents in need.
- iii) MyEnds – who work with families of young people affected by and involved in violent crime, alongside Southwark’s Violence Reduction Unit, to prevent and stop knife and other violent crime.
- iv) Bede House – who support our entire community with specialist services including assisting people with learning disabilities and our new Women’s Safety Alliance.
- v) Our network of Tenants’ and Residents’ Associations – who work tirelessly to champion our estates and improve people’s homes right across our borough.
- vi) The council’s Repairs Improvement Board – representing tenants and leaseholders.
- vii) Teachers, school governors and parents – who have helped Southwark Labour get 99% of our schools to be rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted.
- viii) Members of the Policing Oversight Board – who are helping to improve local people’s trust in the police by increasing accountability.
- ix) ‘Friends of’ park groups – who nurture and champion our local parks and green spaces, helping maintain them as some of the best parks in the country.
- x) The Southwark Pensioners Action Group – who champion the rights of older people right across our borough.
- xi) Southwark Law Centre – whose efforts help protect our residents, including asylum seekers and refugees.
- xii) Millwall Community Trust – who work with thousands of people in Southwark delivering projects that support initiatives for young people, community engagement, charitable causes, education and life skills, and more.

3. Council Assembly welcomes this Labour administration’s:

a. Investment in making Southwark more affordable, including:

- i) £99.1 million-worth of council tax cuts for residents struggling to pay their bills, via the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.
- ii) The £53 million Cost of Living Fund, helping over 100,000 people with cash payments and targeted support.
- iii) Working with the Living Wage Foundation to help over 7,000 people onto a London Living Wage, including Southwark’s first ‘living wage building’ in North Bermondsey.
- iv) Campaigning to support eligible older people to claim the Pension Credit they

are entitled to.

- v) Free Swim and Gym, that helps residents lead healthy, active lives by expanding access to our brilliant leisure centres.
- vi) Investing £28.5 million in 2024/25 in more than 400 local organisations that deliver vital services and support, making the council the borough's largest investor in the voluntary and community sector.

b. Work to tackle the housing crisis, including:

- i) Building or starting over 3,000 new council homes, with more council homes built in Southwark last year than anywhere else in the country, according to Inside Housing.
- ii) Building more social rent homes in the last 5 years than any other London borough, with more social rent homes built in one year than the three Liberal Democrat-run councils in London built together over the previous decade.
- iii) Plans to start Southwark's first rent-controlled homes for key workers in London Bridge & West Bermondsey and our first Community Land Trust homes in Peckham – where prices will be tied to local incomes forever.
- iv) Expansion of our 'Housing First' programme to support rough sleepers into secure accommodation, with modular housing schemes at Leroy Street and coming forward on the Rochester Estate.
- v) A new Temporary Accommodation (TA) Working Group and action to support families in TA with free Wifi and laundry, ensuring no families with children are placed in B&Bs.
- vi) £250 million investment in our council homes over three years to make them safer and healthier, improving fire, electrical, gas, lift and water safety, tackling damp and upgrading old and unreliable heating systems.
- vii) The new Better Repairs Plan, which establishing neighbourhood repairs teams and making sure repairs are done right the first time, building on successes such as regular Repairs Action Days on estates.
- viii) The national-leading *Securing the Future of Council Housing* campaign, with Southwark leading a coalition of over 100 councils on behalf of our residents to fix the broken system and save council housing for future generations.

c. Work to keep our communities safe, including:

- i) Setting up the Women's Safety Alliance, our groundbreaking service to help women experiencing domestic abuse and sexual violence, providing safe and accessible spaces at the point of crisis and subsequent integrated support.
- ii) Investing £5 million in rolling out new and improved CCTV and an antisocial behaviour taskforce.

- iii) Introducing nighttime uniformed wardens to patrol hotspot areas and make our town centres and estates safer, extending the work of our community wardens.
  - iv) Ramping up fly-tipping enforcement, with new £1,000 fines, to clean up our streets and hold perpetrators to account.
- d. Investment in public spaces and services, leading the way when it comes to:
  - i) Protecting and improving our council-owned libraries and opening two libraries including Una Marson in Faraday.
  - ii) Bringing our leisure centres back in house so they are owned by our residents, upgrading our leisure centres, opening a brand new leisure centre at Canada Water in Rotherhithe, and new open water swimming in Greenland Dock.
  - iii) Investing £18 million our parks, making them some of the best in London and retaining all 30 of our Green Flag awards.
  - iv) Planting nearly 40,000 trees in the last 5 years – including planting the 100,000th tree on council land in St George's.
  - v) Investing in new playgrounds, with almost £18 million invested in revamping playgrounds including Ellen Brown Adventure Playground, Frederick's Playground, Peckham Rye Adventure Playground and many more, and a further £7.1 million of investment to upgrade 15 parks over the next three years.
  - vi) Creating cleaner, greener, safer streets that prioritise pedestrians, with over 100 crossings installed since 2022, including Evelina Road in Nunhead & Queen's Road and Lordship Lane in Dulwich Wood.
  - vii) The Southwark Pioneers Fund, which has provided £2.6m to help new and established local businesses to expand and thrive, including over 900 local entrepreneurs and businesses since launching in 2022 with two-thirds being female-led.
  - viii) Making affordable and more sustainable travel more accessible: installing over 2.5km of segregated cycle lanes, hundreds more cycle hangars, 1,000 new EV charging points, and investing £10 million with TfL to improve bus journeys.
  - ix) Clearing up and deterring graffiti in our town centres, by rolling out 'graffiti blitz' teams in problem areas, such as Camberwell Church Street, and expanding to known hotspots such as Rye Lane.
- e. Investment in families:
  - i) Expanding free healthy school meals into secondary schools, providing free school meals in the holidays and rolling out new breakfast clubs, as no child can learn while they're hungry.
  - ii) Working with our teachers, school governors, parents and communities to



improve our schools so now 99% of Southwark schools are rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted.

- iii) Investing in Children & Family Hubs, so every family is within 15 minutes of the support they need.
  - iv) Opening a brand-new nursing home at Camberwell in May 2022, with state of the art facilities and high-quality care.
  - v) With the award-winning Appleby Blue almshouse in Bermondsey, with 57 of the best affordable homes for older people in the country.
  - vi) Rolling out the Residential Care Charter, which has resulted in better quality of care for residential care homes in the borough, and improved working conditions for staff.
  - vii) Making our streets safer for children, rolling out 32 school streets across the borough to keep kids safe outside schools.
- f. Commitment to defending our communities:
- i) Achieving Borough of Sanctuary status, rubber-stamping our commitment to welcoming refugees, asylum seekers and migrants.
  - ii) Establishing Southwark Stands Together to combat racism, discrimination and inequality in our borough, and ensuring that our services and public spaces reflect and respect the diversity that makes Southwark great.
  - iii) Becoming an Age Friendly Borough, bringing to life our commitment to older residents by embedding age-friendly principles into planning, housing, public realm, health and community services, so that people can age well, stay connected and live independently for longer.
  - iv) Becoming the first council to incorporate the UN Genocide Convention into the council's investments framework, divesting pension funds away from companies linked to the occupation of Palestine and other conflicts.

4. Council Assembly believes:

- a. The next four years will be pivotal for the continued success of our borough.
- b. The prospect of the Green Party or Liberal Democrats running the council puts at risk the support for and investment in our diverse communities, whether through a return to Liberal Democrat austerity or the Green's financial incompetence.
- c. Only Labour has the experience in protecting and expanding vital services while prudently managing the council's finances.
- d. Amidst a housing crisis, only Labour has the track record of building genuinely affordable homes.

- e. Liberal Democrat and Green proposals on affordable housing would result in zero social rent homes being built in Southwark.
- f. That their plans to block the building of new homes would cut income from taxes on developers, leading to less investment in our local communities.
- g. The Liberal Democrats' plans to tackle crime with 'Community Safety Gazebos' and Greens' plans to decriminalise drug abuse on our streets and estates are not serious and will reverse progress made by this Labour administration on tackling crime and antisocial behaviour.

5. Council Assembly resolves to:

- a. Call upon cabinet to bring forward a substantial policy programme including a refreshed Borough Plan for the next four years that will include Southwark Labour's plan to create a borough where everyone can succeed:
  - i) Building genuinely affordable homes
    - with 1,500 new social rent homes, one third of which will be council-owned.
  - ii) Keeping neighbourhoods safe
    - by doubling the number of community wardens, meaning tougher enforcement on streets and estates, night and day.
  - iii) A new youth guarantee
    - with opportunities for all young people leaving school while helping residents find a good, well-paid job.
  - iv) A free culture pass
    - breaking down barriers so everyone can enjoy our amazing, diverse nightlife, art, theatre and all the borough has to offer.
  - v) A council you can trust
    - to cherish the things you love most about Southwark, like our parks and libraries, to take your issues seriously and to get it right first time, whether it's housing repairs or fly-tipping.

#### 4. DEPUTATIONS

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

##### **Sonay Ozkutayli and St Saviours Residents**

The group's representatives spoke to the meeting for four minutes and thereafter asked a question of the cabinet member for council homes.

##### **Southwark and Peckham Citizens**

The group's representatives spoke to the meeting for four minutes and thereafter asked a question of the leader of the council.

## **King's Maternity Voices Partnership**

The group's representatives spoke to the meeting for four minutes and thereafter asked a question of the cabinet member for health and wellbeing.

## **Latin Elephant**

The group's representatives spoke to the meeting for four minutes and thereafter asked a question of the cabinet member for climate emergency, jobs and transport.

## **5. ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS**

### **5.1 MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME**

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

There were 30 members' questions, the written responses to which were circulated before the meeting. There were 13 supplemental questions.

### **5.2 MEMBERS' MOTIONS**

#### **Motion 1: Tackling antisocial behaviour on Southwark's estates**

This motion was considered after the guillotine had fallen.

There was one amendment to the motion.

Amendment B 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 welcomes:**

- a. Southwark Labour's £5 million investment in tackling crime and antisocial behaviour (ASB), including £3 million to upgrade CCTV coverage across our borough.
- b. Southwark Labour's investment in uniformed community wardens, with new enforcement powers, to tackle ASB day and night.
- c. This Labour-run council's work with the Metropolitan Police Service to double the number of neighbourhood police officers in Peckham and Walworth town centres.
- d. The work of the Southwark Anti Social Behaviour Unit (SASBU) - coordinating enforcement and prevention across our borough.

- e. Recent walkabouts in ASB hotspot areas in our town centres and on our estates, to keep our neighbourhoods safe.

2. Council Assembly notes with concern:

- a. Green Party proposals which could legalise drugs including crack cocaine, heroin and date-rape drug GHB for recreational use.
- b. The loss of power for community wardens and the police to prevent drug abuse in communal areas on estates and in town centres, should drugs be legalised.
- c. The devastating impact the legalisation of drugs could have on our communities, estates and town centres in Southwark, creating the prospect of open abuse in stairwells, streets and other communal areas.
- d. The potential acceptance of drug abuse in Southwark's estates and in town centres, should the Green Party ever be in power.

3. Council Assembly welcomes:

- a. The Labour Party's zero-tolerance approach to drug dealing and taking on our estates and in other communal areas.
- b. Southwark Labour's promise to double the number of community wardens.
- c. This Labour-run council's £1.5 million investment in better street lighting, making streets safer after dark.
- d. Labour's investment in security doors on estates including the Brimington Estate in Nunhead and the St Saviour's Estate in London Bridge & West Bermondsey.
- e. The new Resident ASB Partnership (RAP):
  - i. Bringing council, police and community services together to tackle ASB on our estates.
  - ii. Noting that decisions about estates should be made with our residents rather than for them.
  - iii. Further noting the partnership will ensure residents have a say in addressing drug related ASB on their estates and that everyone's input is valued.
  - iv. Welcoming the trial of this new approach on the St Saviours, Brimington and Nelson & Portland estates.

4. Council Assembly also welcomes:

- a. The council's increased enforcement measures on fly-tipping, including:
  - i. Targeted action across the borough to clean up hotspot areas, introduce preventative "design-out" measures, and deliver tougher enforcement.

- ii. Working with businesses to ensure streets are free of waste.
- iii. Organising visible daily patrols of hotspot areas, with additional environmental enforcement officers and graffiti removal operatives.
- iv. Working with residents in flats above shops to improve waste collection practices and ensure optimal bin infrastructure to help keep waste off our streets.
- v. Using crime tape as a visible warning to potential offenders that fly-tipping is a crime and that the council is cracking down on perpetrators.
- vi. Issuing fixed penalty notices to offenders, with new £1,000 fines.
- vii. Tackling fly-tipping on council estates, collaborating with tenants and residents associations on improved communications and behaviour change, enforcement trials including daily visible patrols, 'crime tape' warning notices and fixed penalty notices for repeat offenders, on 14 estates including Acorn Estate in Nunhead & Queen's Road, Hawkstone Estate in Rotherhithe, Sceaux Gardens Estate in St Giles, and Manor Estate in South Bermondsey.

5. Council Assembly resolves to ask that:

- a. Cabinet use the evidence gained from the council's new estate ASB pilots to tackle ASB right across our borough.
- b. The council moves swiftly to deliver on investment in infrastructure to tackle ASB, such as new security doors.
- c. The council continues to take a zero-tolerance approach to ASB right across our borough, including doubling the number of community wardens, as proposed by Southwark Labour.
- d. Cabinet continue to tackle fly-tipping on estates and in our town centres, taking an evidence-based approach following the council's estate plots.

**Motion 2: Liberal Democrats will Fix Southwark**

This motion was considered after the guillotine had fallen.

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

**Motion 3: Protecting the Freedom Pass for Older Londoners**

This motion was considered after the guillotine had fallen.

There was one amendment to the motion.

Amendment C 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 notes:

- a. The Freedom Pass enables older residents of pension age and disabled residents to travel for free on public transport across London.
- b. That the Freedom Pass is a vital lifeline for older Londoners, enabling them to travel across the city, see their loved ones, make appointments and access essential services.
- c. The Freedom Pass is funded by every London council.
- d. Local government funding has been slashed by previous Conservative and Liberal Democrat governments, leaving councils to pick up increased costs.
- e. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the Conservative government sought to impose restrictions on the Freedom Pass and attempted to remove free travel for young people through the Zip Oyster card as a condition of funding Transport for London.
- f. The Conservative government did not seek to impose such restrictions on private rail companies in their bailouts but targeted older and younger Londoners.
- g. Southwark is a borough where the majority of residents do not own a car, making affordable public transport essential.
- h. Losing access to the Freedom Pass would hit the poorest Londoners hardest, at a time when finances are stretched more than ever, with the impact of Conservative and Liberal Democrat cost-of-living crisis and austerity still felt.
- i. Despite huge cuts to council finances from the Conservative and Liberal Democrat governments, Southwark Labour has protected concessionary travel in our borough as prices elsewhere became more difficult to afford.

2. Council Assembly also notes:

- a. Southwark Labour has, with the Labour Mayor of London and other Labour councils, consistently made it safer, more affordable and more accessible for people to travel in and around our borough.
- b. This Labour-run council has recently secured £10 million from Transport for London to deliver a Better Bus Partnership, rolling out new, fully electric buses and reducing travel times from London Bridge to the South Circular, via Elephant, Walworth Road, Camberwell Green, Denmark Hill and Lordship Lane.
- c. Southwark Labour used taxes on big developers to fund the Bakerloo Bus – a new express route down the Old Kent Road which is easing congestion, baking regular services quieter and proving the demand for the Bakerloo

Line Extension.

3. Council Assembly notes with concern:

- a. That a Liberal Democrat councillor serving on the committee responsible for overseeing the Freedom Pass described the Pass as an “expensive burden”, as reported in the Evening Standard.
- b. The Liberal Democrats’ track record of austerity – with deliberate budget and funding cuts delivered when in government.
- c. That rising living costs mean any restriction to concessionary travel would significantly impact older residents’ independence and wellbeing.

4. Council Assembly welcomes:

- a. The commitment of Southwark Labour and other Labour councils to oppose restrictions to the Freedom Pass scheme.
- b. The leadership of London Councils’ Labour Group in ensuring sustainable funding solutions do not come at the expense of older Londoners.
- c. That the Mayor of London has confirmed his full support for Labour councils working to protect the Freedom Pass and continues to provide the 60+ Oyster card and other concessionary options.

5. Council Assembly resolves to ask that:

- a. Cabinet continues joint work to ensure the Freedom Pass remains fully protected.
- b. Southwark Council actively opposes any proposals that diminish the scope or value of the Freedom Pass.
- c. The Council reaffirms its commitment to keeping costs down for residents, especially older people.
- d. That investment opportunities continue to be sought to improve bus and other public transport, including continuing campaigns to upgrade train stations across Southwark to be fully accessible.

**Motion 4: Southwark has no confidence in Sir Keir Starmer**

This motion was considered after the guillotine had fallen.

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

**6. REPORTS FOR DECISION**

## 6.1 PROPORTIONALITY AND ALLOCATION OF SEATS ON COMMITTEES MARCH 2026

The recommendations were put to the vote and declared Carried.

### RESOLVED:

That council assembly:

1. Noted the political balance of the council as follows:

| Group                             | Members | %      |
|-----------------------------------|---------|--------|
| Labour                            | 45      | 71.43  |
| Liberal Democrat                  | 11      | 17.46  |
| Green and Independent Alliance    | 6       | 9.52   |
| Independent members (not a group) | 1       | 1.59   |
| Total                             | 63      | 100.00 |

2. Noted that for the purpose of calculating the allocation of seats on committees, only political groups with greater than one member are considered.
3. Noted changes to proportionality and agreed the change to the allocation of seats on committees from that agreed by council assembly on 25 February 2026. The new allocation is set out at paragraphs 9, 10, and 11 of the report, in Tables 2, 3 and 4.

## 6.2 LICENSING ACT 2003: REVIEW OF STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY 2026 TO 2031

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

### RESOLVED:

1. That council assembly agreed to the publication of the Southwark Statement of Licensing Policy for 2026-2031 (Appendix A of the report).

## 6.3 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2026/27

The recommendations were put to the vote and declared Carried.

### RESOLVED:

That Council Assembly:

1. Agreed the annual pay policy statement for 2026-27 at Appendix 1 of the report.

## 6.4 MEMBER ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2026-2027

There was one amendment to the report. Amendment D was moved by Councillor



Graham Neale, and seconded by Councillor Emily Tester.

After debate (Councillors Stephanie Cryan, Irina von Wiese, Sarah King), Amendment D was put to the vote and declared Lost.

The recommendations were put to the vote and declared Carried.

**RESOLVED:**

4. That council assembly approved, with effect from 1 April 2026, the member allowances scheme for 2026-2027 as detailed in paragraphs 18 to 23 and Appendix 2 of the report, having had regard to the advice of the London Councils Independent Remuneration Panel Report 2023, published January 2024 (see Appendix 1 of the report).
5. That council assembly noted that the adjustment of member allowances in line with the national local government officer pay settlement and allowances for 2026-2027 has not yet been agreed.
6. That council assembly noted that the member allowances scheme provides that allowances are to be adjusted in line with the local government officer pay settlement, unless a different approach is agreed by council assembly.

## 6.5 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2026-27

The recommendations were put to the vote and declared Carried.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That council assembly agreed the following dates for meetings of council assembly be fixed in the council calendar for the 2026-27 municipal year:

| Council Assembly           | Type of Meeting                |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Wednesday 20 May 2026      | Mayor Making/Annual meeting    |
| Wednesday 8 July 2026      | Ordinary                       |
| Wednesday 18 November 2026 | Ordinary                       |
| Wednesday 24 February 2027 | Budget and council tax setting |
| Wednesday 17 March 2027    | Ordinary                       |
| Saturday 15 May 2027       | Mayor Making/Annual meeting    |

2. That council assembly noted the agreement in March 2023 for the date of the annual/mayor making meeting for 2027 as set out below:
  - Saturday 15 May 2027 11am
3. That council assembly noted that the calendar of council meetings for the 2026-27 municipal year as shown at Appendix 1 of the report.

## **6.6 SPECIAL URGENCY AND URGENT IMPLEMENTATION DECISIONS - ANNUAL REPORT 2026**

The recommendations were put to the vote and declared Carried.

### **RESOLVED:**

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

## **6.7 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS**

The recommendations were put to the vote and declared Carried.

### **RESOLVED:**

1. That council assembly approved the appointment of the two individuals named in the closed report as independent persons for three years with effect from the dates given.

## **7. AMENDMENTS**

The amendments were listed in supplemental agenda no. 1.

## **8. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS (CLOSED REPORT)**

The decision for this item is set out in item 6.7.

The meeting closed at 10.30 pm.

**CHAIR:**

**DATED:**