

Cabinet

Tuesday 6 January 2026

11.00 am

Ground floor meeting rooms, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

Membership

Councillor Sarah King (Chair)
Councillor Jasmine Ali

Councillor Evelyn Akoto
Councillor John Batteson

Councillor Stephanie Cryan

Councillor Ellie Cumbo
Councillor Helen Dennis

Councillor Natasha Ennin

Councillor James McAsh

Councillor Portia Mwangangye

Portfolio

Leader of the Council
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Refugees
Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing
Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency, Jobs and Business
Cabinet Member for Equalities, Democracy and Finance
Cabinet Member for Parks and Culture
Cabinet Member for New Homes and Sustainable Development
Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Neighbourhoods
Cabinet Member for Clean Air, Streets and Waste
Cabinet Member for Council Homes

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Access to information

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Contact

Email: paula.thornton@southwark.gov.uk; constitutional.team@southwark.gov.uk

Members of the committee are summoned to attend this meeting

Althea Loderick

Chief Executive

Date: 18 December 2025



Cabinet

Tuesday 6 January 2026

11.00 am

Ground floor meeting rooms, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

Order of Business

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PART A - OPEN BUSINESS

MOBILE PHONES

Mobile phones should be turned off or put on silent during the course of the meeting.

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

1

To note the items specified which will be considered in a closed meeting.

4. 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.

5. MINUTES

2 - 28

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the open section of the meeting held on 2 December 2025.

Item No.	Title	Page No.
6.	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)	
	To receive any questions from members of the public which have been submitted in advance of the meeting in accordance with the cabinet procedure rules. The deadline for the receipt of public questions is midnight Tuesday 23 December 2025.	
7.	DEPUTATION REQUESTS	
	To consider any deputation requests. The deadline for the receipt of deputation requests is midnight Tuesday 23 December 2025.	
8.	SOCIAL PURPOSE OF LAND FRAMEWORK	29 - 147
	To approve the implementation of the Social Purpose of Land Framework ('the Framework') pilot phase on four council-identified sites.	
9.	LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME 2026-2029	148 - 157
	To adopt the Local Development Scheme ("LDS") and note the commencement of a full review of the Southwark Plan in 2026, following the adoption of the LDS.	
10.	HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) - FINAL RENT AND CHARGES REPORT 2026-27	To follow
	To approve the housing revenue account budget and rent setting for 2026-27.	
11.	THE COUNCIL TAX BASE FOR 2026-27	158 - 168
	To approve the council tax base 2026-27	
12.	GATEWAY 3 - VARIATION DECISION: PARKS GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT EXTENSION	169 - 198
	To approve the variation of the grounds maintenance contract.	
13.	SENIOR RESOURCES LEADERSHIP TEAM STRUCTURE	199 - 208
	To approve the proposed changes to the resources senior leadership structure.	

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

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The following items are included on the closed section of the agenda. The Proper Officer has decided that the papers should not be circulated to the press and public since they reveal confidential or exempt information as specified in paragraphs 1-7, Access to Information Procedure Rules of the Constitution. The specific paragraph is indicated in the case of exempt information.

The following motion should be moved, seconded and approved if the cabinet wishes to exclude the press and public to deal with reports revealing exempt information:

“That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1-7, Access to Information Procedure Rules of the Constitution. “

PART B - CLOSED BUSINESS

14. MINUTES

To approve as a correct the closed minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2025.

15. GATEWAY 3 - VARIATION DECISION: PARKS GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT EXTENSION

DISCUSSION OF ANY OTHER CLOSED ITEMS AS NOTIFIED AT THE START OF THE MEETING AND ACCEPTED BY THE CHAIR AS URGENT

Date: 18 December 2025

**NOTIFICATION OF CLOSED BUSINESS FOR URGENT CONSIDERATION
BY AN EXECUTIVE DECISION MAKING BODY**

The required 28 days notice relating to a decision likely to be considered in closed session has not been given on the forward plan in respect of the decision detailed in this document. The matter is considered to be urgent and cannot be reasonably deferred for a further 28 days to enable the required notice to be given. Details of the issue are set out below.

Note: This notice applies to meetings of the cabinet, cabinet committee or multi-ward area forums considering an executive function.

DECISION MAKER

Name of decision maker: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 6 January 2026

LEAD OFFICER DETAILS

Name and contact details: Tara Quinn, Head of Parks and Leisure
tara.quinn@southwark.gov.uk

DETAILS OF THE REPORT

Title and brief description of the nature of the business to be considered:

Gateway 3 – Variation Decision: Parks Grounds Maintenance Contract Extension

To approve variation of the grounds maintenance contract with Quadron Services Limited, now trading as Idverde U.K Limited, for a four-year period from 3 October 2026.

What is the potential cost to the council if the decision is delayed?

Financially approximately £350k (if no extension is exercised – as per closed report). Also reduced time for transition to revised arrangements.

How long has the department known the decision required a closed report?

Several months. It was an oversight not to have listed as open and closed.

Paula Thornton

For Proper Constitutional Officer

Dated: 18 December 2025



Cabinet

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Cabinet held on Tuesday 2 December 2025 at 11.00 am at the Council Offices, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT: Councillor Sarah King (Chair)
Councillor Jasmine Ali
Councillor Evelyn Akoto
Councillor John Batteson
Councillor Ellie Cumbo
Councillor Helen Dennis
Councillor Natasha Ennin
Councillor James McAsh
Councillor Portia Mwangangye

1. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Stephanie Cryan.

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

The following were identified as late and urgent items which the chair agreed to accept:

Item 10: Disposal of land at Greendale, East Dulwich

Item 15: Policy and Resources: Budget Setting Update 2026-27

Item 16: Housing Revenue (HRA) – Indicative Rent and Charges report 2026-27

Item 23: Report from Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Outcome of call-in Asylum Road Care Home, Disposal of the site by way of a long-leasehold interest.

Reasons for urgency and lateness were included in the reports.

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

No representations were received.

4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

The following interests were declared:

- Councillors Evelyn Akoto and Natasha Ennin declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of Item 16: Housing Revenue Account – Indicative Rent and Charges report 2026-27.
- Councillors Evelyn Akoto and Natasha Ennin declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of items 19 / 29: Gateway 3 – Variation Decision: Phase 2 of Extension to the South East London Combined Heat and Power Plant (SELCHP) Heat Network.
- Councillor Sarah King declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of Item 10: Disposal of land at Greendale, East Dulwich.

5. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the cabinet meeting 14 October 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed by the chair.

6. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

There were no public questions.

7. DEPUTATION REQUESTS

The report had not been circulated five clear days in advance of the meeting. The chair agreed to accept this item as urgent.

RESOLVED:

1. That the deputation request from Dulwich Hamlet Football Club be heard.

2. A spokesperson for the deputation addressed cabinet for five minutes and questions were asked of the deputation for a period of five minutes.

8. DEMOLITION OF MARIE CURIE

Cabinet heard representations from Mike Edge, chair of tenants and residents association and ward councillors Ian Wingfield, Ellie Cumbo and Jason Ochere.

RESOLVED:

1. That the recommendations in the report to scrutiny committee on 14 October (Appendix 1 of the report) including the recommendation to demolish the residential block known as Marie Curie and the need to consider appropriate steps to address the findings of the recent Type 4 Fire Risk Assessment in 2025 (Appendix 2 of the report) be noted.
2. That the departure from the original approved 2022 cabinet recommendation to undertake Phase 2 fire safety works and remediation be noted. The recommendation not to proceed with the original approval reflects the impact of updated fire safety regulations, the recommendations from the recent structural engineering report, the introduction of a new compliance sign-off process for high-rise buildings, ongoing market volatility, inflationary pressures, and sustained financial strain on the housing revenue account (HRA).
3. That it be noted that Marie Curie and Lakanal House are sister blocks situated within the Sceaux Gardens Estate. They exhibit comparable architectural characteristics, notably their duplex 'scissors flat' configuration and concrete frame construction. Nevertheless, the context surrounding decision-making and the implementation of safety measures for each block varies considerably as set out in the report.
4. That the progress with the resident engagement and rehousing of residents and buy backs of leaseholder properties has progressed and that all tenants have been offered the right to return be noted.
5. That the outcome of the independent structural engineering report on the Marie Curie block that identifies emerging issues ranging from structural degradation due to humidity, insufficient reinforcement bar cover and the building nearing or exceeding its original design life, highlighting the need for decisive intervention be noted.
6. That it be noted that if a decision to approve demolition is agreed by cabinet that the procurement of a demolition contractor for Marie Curie will be subject to a separate GW1 and GW2 process in line with the council's gateway process.

7. That to maintain continuity for residents, estate and key stakeholders, the proposal is to include the Marie Curie scheme together with the Florian and Racine sites on the Sceaux Gardens Estate in the pipeline sites as part of the Southwark Construction Development Agreement (DA) Future Programme for new homes, subject to separate approval from the cabinet member for new homes and sustainable development in consultation with strategic director of housing, strategic director of resources and director of planning and growth be noted.
8. That it be noted that the demolition is subject to the council obtaining ballot exemption from the Greater London Authority (GLA) as set out in paragraphs 68 to 70 of the report.
9. That the estimated cost for the demolition works as set out in paragraph 13 of the report be noted. This will be subject to additional approval to vary the housing investment programme.
10. That subject to paragraphs 8 and 9 of the report, the demolition of the Marie Curie block, following its review by the housing scrutiny committee be approved, noting that all alternative options have been thoroughly assessed, with demolition identified as the most cost-effective and practicable solution as detailed in paragraphs 31 to 43 of the report.

9. A GOOD START IN LIFE- SOUTHWARK SCHOOL STANDARDS REPORT 2024-25

Janice Babb, St. John's Catholic Primary School, SE16 / St James the Great, SE15 and Carl Vernalls, Southwark Park Primary School were in attendance to provide their input to the report.

RESOLVED:

That the Southwark Standards Report, 2024-25 be noted.

10. DISPOSAL OF LAND AT GREENDALE, EAST DULWICH

Having declared a non-pecuniary interest, Councillor Sarah King withdrew from the meeting while this item was being discussed and a decision was made.

It was not possible to circulate this report five clear days in advance of the meeting. The chair agreed to accept this item as urgent because consideration of the report was required in order to ensure implementation of the proposed decision could be achieved prior to the expiry of the planning consent for the development scheme. Delaying the decision would risk the council's ability to ensure all necessary delivery arrangements were in place prior to the deadline for expiry of the planning consent, which would ultimately result in the failure to deliver both the new sporting

facilities and the wider development.

RESOLVED:

1. That the proposed land transfer arrangements for land at Greendale, East Dulwich, in line with the principles set out within the report, including acceptance of a freehold transfer of land from Greendale Property Company Limited (or their successors in title) and disposal of a long leasehold interest to Dulwich Hamlet Football Club Limited (referred to herein as "Dulwich Hamlet FC", "DHFC" or "the club") be agreed.
2. That the finalisation of the detailed contractual terms for the proposed land transfer arrangements be delegated to the director of planning and growth to agree in line with the principles set out in the report.

11. PHASE 2 OF THE TUSTIN ESTATE RENEWAL

Cabinet heard representations from Andrew Eke, chair of tenants and residents' association.

RESOLVED:

1. That it be noted that since the development agreement was signed in October 2022, the Tustin Estate Renewal has been progressing well on site, and that Phase 1 is about to complete and will deliver 167 new homes, including 157 council homes for social rent, and 10 homes for resident leaseholders.
2. That it be agreed that the strategy for delivering Phase 2 should change to accelerate the delivery of affordable housing as set out in paragraphs 38-51 of the report.
3. That it be agreed that 98 homes that were previously intended to be key worker homes for London Living Rent should be changed to deliver additional new council homes for social rent.
4. That it be noted that the Greater London Authority (GLA) have agreed to provide grant funding for these 98 additional council homes, if the tenure change is agreed.
5. That it be agreed that to start Phase 2, the council will enter into an early works contract in the sum of £10,667,678 for a period of six months commencing December 2025 to finalise the detailed Phase 2 design work and to demolish Kentmere House and Heversham House, ahead of demolition starting in March 2026 (subject to vacant possession being achieved).

6. That it be noted that the main works contract will include the construction of all four blocks within Phase 2, but will include separate prices for the development of each of the four blocks within Phase 2, with Phase 2a including Block G2, and a break clause that can be exercised before the end of October 2026 to exclude Phase 2b which is made up of Blocks F1, F2 and H.
7. That it be noted that a subsequent report will be presented to cabinet in early 2026 to confirm the final price for Phase 2a main works, and an updated estimate for Phase 2b main works, and to agree that Bouygues Development should enter into a construction contract to deliver them.
8. That the updated total estimated cost to deliver Phase 2 of the Tustin Estate Renewal as set out in the closed version of the report be noted.
9. That a minor variation is made to the development agreement in line with the points set out in paragraph 53 of the report to accommodate the Building Safety Act changes.

12. RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

RESOLVED:

1. That the resident engagement strategy set out in Appendix 1 of the report be approved.
2. That it be agreed to evaluate the impact of the strategy in January 2028 to monitor progress.

13. POLICY AND RESOURCES: REVENUE MONITORING REPORT 2025-26

RESOLVED:

1. That the housing revenue account (HRA) forecast of an adverse variance of £7.3m be noted
2. That the adverse variance of £26.2m forecast for the general fund (GF) in 2025-26 be noted.
3. That the key adverse variations and budget pressures and mitigating actions underlying the position be noted:
 - Housing revenue account (paragraphs 13-22 of the report)
 - General fund (paragraphs 23-88 of the report)
 - Demand pressures in temporary accommodation (TA) (Housing)
 - Increased demand in adult's and children's social care (children's and adult's).

4. That the update on the 2025-26 and 2026-27 departmental savings and transformational savings (paragraph 84-88 of the report) be noted.
5. That the dedicated schools grant (DSG) in-year balanced position (paragraphs 48-50 of the report) be noted.

14. POLICY AND RESOURCES: CAPITAL MONITORING REPORT 2025-26 AND SOUTHWARK 2030 STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

RESOLVED:

1. That the month 6 2025-26 forecast spend and resources and future years for both the general fund and housing investment programmes as detailed in Appendices A1 and C of the report be noted.
2. That the alignment of the general fund capital programme to the Southwark 2030 priorities at Appendix A2 of the report be noted.
3. That the significant borrowing requirement of £321m which needs to be identified for the general fund programme to be fully delivered over the remaining term of the programme, as detailed in Appendix A of the report be noted.
4. That the significant borrowing requirement of £358m for the housing investment programme to be fully delivered over the remaining term of the programme, as detailed in Appendix C of the report be noted.

That the following be approved:

5. The movements and variations to the general fund and housing investment capital programme as detailed in Appendix D of the report.
6. The demolition of the Marie Curie block on Sceaux Gardens Estate at an estimated cost of £3m to be funded from other HRA asset disposals (paragraph 44 of the report).

15. POLICY AND RESOURCES: BUDGET SETTING UPDATE 2026-27

It was not possible to circulate this report five clear days in advance of the meeting. The chair agreed to accept this item as urgent because the council were responding to immediate circumstances and it was necessary to bring this to the attention of cabinet for any comments ahead of the budget report in February 2026.

RESOLVED:

That the following be noted:

1. The update to the local government funding arrangements including the policy statement and the autumn budget
2. The approach to setting the 2026-27 budget.
3. The proposed options to help achieve a balanced 2026-27 (Appendix A of the report).
4. The draft fees and charges schedules (Appendix B of the report).
5. That strategic directors will continue to work with their respective cabinet members to find additional savings options to close the estimated funding gap.
6. That equality impact assessments are ongoing, and a cumulative impact assessment will be presented to cabinet as part of the budget update in February.
7. That the contents of the report will be considered by the overview and scrutiny committee in December 2025 and January 2026 prior to February 2026 cabinet.

16. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) - INDICATIVE RENT AND CHARGES REPORT 2026-27

Having declared a disclosable pecuniary interest, Councillors Evelyn Akoto and Natasha Ennin withdrew from the meeting while this item was being discussed.

It was not possible to circulate this report five clear days in advance of the meeting due to the timing of the Chancellor's Autumn Statement on 26 November 2025. The statement was expected to confirm details on the implementation of the social rent convergence policy, which has implications for the council's housing revenue account (HRA) and tenant rents for 2026-27. As noted in paragraph 16 this has been delayed.

Submitting the indicative rent and charges report to December cabinet enabled the statutory 28-day notice period to be met ahead of the effective date of 6 April 2026. Any further delay would risk breaching legal notification requirements and potentially result in a loss of income to the HRA.

RESOLVED:

1. That the proposed rent increase of 4.8% (based on September 2025

Consumer Price Index plus 1%) for all directly and tenant managed (TMO) housing stock held within the council's housing revenue account (HRA) be noted.

2. That it be noted that guidance on the proposed implementation of rent convergence expected to be announced in the Autumn Statement (26 November 2025) has been delayed to January 2026, as set out in paragraphs 16-18 of the report.
3. That the proposed rent increase of 4.8% for the council's shared ownership stock as set out in paragraph 20 of the report with effect from 6 April 2026 be noted.
4. That the proposed increases to tenant service charges, comprising estate cleaning, grounds maintenance, communal lighting and door entry maintenance as set out in paragraphs 21-22 of the report with effect from 6 April 2026 be noted.
5. That the proposed increase in sheltered and flexi-care housing service charges as set out in paragraph 23 of the report with effect from 6 April 2026 be noted.
6. That the disaggregation of the combined rent and service charges for supported hostels and the proposed increase for both in line with CPI+1% as set out in paragraphs 24-25 of the report with effect from 6 April 2026 be noted.
7. That the proposed increase in garage charge rates as set out in paragraphs 26-27 of the report with effect from 6 April 2026 be noted.
8. That the withdrawal of the concessionary garage rate for non-blue badge holders as previously agreed under individual decision making (IDM) by the cabinet member for council homes as set out in paragraph 28 of the report with effect from 6 April 2026 be noted.
9. That the proposed freezing of heat network charges for 2026-27 at existing levels, with the exception of the borough-wide metered charge for new homes, which will be reduced as set out in paragraphs 29-43 of the report with effect from 6 April 2026 be noted.
10. That it be noted that resident engagement on the proposals will be undertaken during December, and the outcomes reported to cabinet at its meeting on 6 January 2026.

NOTE:

Councillor James McAsh left the cabinet meeting at 12.55pm.

17. GATEWAY 1 PROCUREMENT STRATEGY APPROVAL REPORT: ALL-AGE INTEGRATED DRUG AND ALCOHOL TREATMENT AND RECOVERY SERVICES

RESOLVED:

1. That the procurement strategy for the all-age integrated drug and alcohol treatment and recovery services contract to be procured through a competitive process up to a maximum estimated annual contract value of £7,399,584 for a period of five years commencing on 1 April 2027, with an option to extend by a further period of up to five years (three years + two years), subject to satisfactory performance and with recourse to a contractual break clause, making a total maximum estimated contract value of £73,995,840, be approved.
2. That the gateway 2 contract award approval for the all-age integrated drug and alcohol treatment and recovery services contract be delegated to the strategic director of children and adult services, in consultation with the cabinet member for health and wellbeing.

18. ALLOCATIONS FOR STRATEGIC COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

RESOLVED:

That the allocation of strategic community infrastructure levy funding of up to £3,500,000 as a grant to Veolia ES Southwark Limited towards the South East London Combined Heat and Power heat network extension be agreed.

19. GATEWAY 3 – VARIATION DECISION: PHASE 2 OF EXTENSION TO THE SOUTH EAST LONDON COMBINED HEAT AND POWER PLANT (SELCHP) HEAT NETWORK

Councillors Evelyn Akoto and Natasha Ennin, having declared a disclosable pecuniary interest did not participate in the discussion on this item.

RESOLVED:

That, subject to receipt of First Tier Property Tribunal dispensation (see paragraph 2 of the report), and approval of the community infrastructure levy funding and green building fund funding (see paragraph 3 of the report):

1. That the proposed variation to the council's heat supply agreement with Veolia ES Southwark Limited (VESS) involving works which requires capital expenditure from the council of £5,500,000 and the supply of low carbon heat to 31 March 2050 at an estimated cost of £208,761,745 (precise value will

depend on inflation) making a total estimated variation value of £214,261,745 and a total estimated contract value of £267,873,179 be approved.

2. That the contents of the report, that the council aims to extend its heat supply agreement with VESS to supply low carbon heat to several additional housing estates and to continue doing so through to 31 March 2050 be noted. In this regard the council is seeking dispensation from the First Tier Property Tribunal from the requirement to run a standard Section 20 consultation process (see paragraph 76).
3. That for the council's £5,500,000 capital contribution to receive separate approval (£2,000,000 from the green buildings fund, £1,000,000 of which is subject to a drawdown request to the planning committee, and £3,500,000 from the strategic community infrastructure levy requiring approval by the cabinet, also at December 2025 cabinet meeting but falling within a separate report) be noted.

20. APPROVAL TO PURCHASE: ROCKINGHAM STREET ARCHES NOS. 107, 106,105

RESOLVED:

1. That the strategic director of resources, advised by the director of planning & growth and in consultation with the assistant director of property be authorised, to purchase the property. That the circumstances leading to the purchase and due diligence being undertaken by officers and their advisors be noted.
2. That the legal and financial arrangements and the conditions of the purchase be noted.
3. That authority be delegated to the strategic director of resources, advised by director of planning and growth and in consultation with the assistant director of property to:
 - Complete the acquisition and
 - Agree detailed transactional terms pursuant to the Heads of Terms (see closed appendices 1 to 4 of the closed report).

21. RESPONSE TO THE HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMISSION: OUTCOME OF THE REVIEW OF THE CANADA ESTATE 2017/18, FAIR STREET / DEVON MANSIONS 2018/19 AND KIRBY ESTATE 2018/19 QHIP MAJOR WORKS PROJECTS

RESOLVED:

That all recommendations made by the housing scrutiny commission as set out in the report be accepted.

22. RESPONSE TO THE ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMISSION 2024-25: EXPLORING THE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH WELLBEING IMPACTS OF ACTIVE TRAVEL AND ACCESS TO NATURE SCRUTINY REVIEW REPORT

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be approved as the council's response to the 34 recommendations put forward by the environment scrutiny commission's report 'exploring the physical and mental health and wellbeing Impacts of active travel and access to nature' as set out in the overview and scrutiny procedure rule 15.3.
2. That 28 recommendations be accepted and 6 recommendations be partially for reasons outlined in the report.

23. REPORT FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: OUTCOME OF CALL-IN ASYLUM ROAD CARE HOME, DISPOSAL OF THE SITE BY WAY OF A LONG-LEASEHOLD INTEREST

It was not possible to circulate this report five clear days in advance of the meeting. The chair agreed to accept this item as urgent because if the report was not received at this cabinet meeting, then it is likely that the response would not be considered by cabinet until its 10 March 2026 meeting, which is after the last meeting of the health and social care scrutiny commission before the local elections.

Care home provision has been an integral part of the commission's ongoing work, and in order to provide the current commission with the opportunity to have benefit of the cabinet response to inform future direction, the report needs to be received at this meeting to fit with the cabinet response timescales which will enable the commission to view the response in this municipal year.

RESOLVED:

1. That the recommendations from the overview and scrutiny committee arising from the call-in of the cabinet decision in respect of Asylum Road Care Home

– disposal of the site by way of a long-leasehold interest with a selected party to deliver and operate a new care home at Asylum Road, SE15 be noted.

2. That the recommendations from the committee be considered and that the relevant cabinet member report back to cabinet on the recommendations within two months.

24. REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: CHILTON GROVE ESTATE - INFILL AND MAJOR WORKS

RESOLVED:

1. That the recommendations from the overview and scrutiny committee arising from the Internal Review of the Chilton Grove Estate Rooftop Homes and 2018-19 QHIP Major Works Project be noted.
2. That the recommendations from the committee be considered and that the relevant cabinet member report back to cabinet on the recommendations within eight weeks.

25. REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: SOUTHWARK COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

RESOLVED:

1. That the recommendations from the overview and scrutiny committee arising from the Review of Southwark Community Safety – Working Together for a Safer Southwark be noted.
2. That the recommendations from the committee be considered and that the relevant cabinet member report back to cabinet on the recommendations within eight weeks.

26. MOTIONS FROM COUNCIL ASSEMBLY

RESOLVED:

Rights for Residents: Putting People First

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

1. Council Assembly believes:
 - a. That a core goal of local and national government is to improve people's lives by guaranteeing rights for residents.

- b. That rights empower people against more powerful organisations and individuals.
- c. That every worker has the right to join a Trade Union.
- d. That under fourteen years of Conservative government, the balance of power shifted away from working people and toward more powerful individuals and organisations.
- e. That amidst the cost of living crisis, rights at work and for renters are especially vital and in need of reform.

2. Council Assembly notes:

- a. That the Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition oversaw an end to real terms wage rises for the first time in 50 years.
- b. That this end to real terms wage rises is a core driver of the cost of living crisis today, with rising prices and bills outstripping wages leaving thousands of Southwark residents struggling to make ends meet.
- c. That this year the Liberal Democrats once again sided with the Conservatives and Reform to try to block improved rights for working families.
- d. That private rents are rising at unacceptable levels in central London boroughs such as Southwark, also driving the cost of living crisis.
- e. That this is partly caused by the Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition's cut to investment in genuinely affordable housing, with a 60% cut in capital investment for new affordable homes from 2010.
- f. That the Labour Party has a proud history of enshrining rights in law, from the Minimum Wage to maternity leave, and continues to lead on expanding rights for workers and renters.
- g. That the balance of power in both the workplace and the rental market is tilted against individuals, and this must change.

3. Council Assembly welcomes:

- a. This Labour administration's continued adherence to Labour values, supporting the rights of our residents and backing working families.
- b. The council's new Know Your Worth, Know Your Rights campaign, showcasing the rights our residents have at work and how to access the right guidance and advice to better understand them.

- c. The council's work to partner with organisations like Citizens Advice Southwark and the Southwark Law Centre in the campaign, to promote information about our residents rights in the workplace, such as entitlement to sick leave and paid holidays.
- d. The work of the Southwark Living Wage Unit, Southwark Works, and Connect to Work in supporting fair pay and employment access.
- e. The council's support for local businesses, including through Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and business forums, and efforts to double the number of Living Wage employers.
- f. The largest landlord licensing scheme in the country, successful prosecutions of rogue landlords, and the Gold Standards Charter for responsible landlords.

4. Council Assembly also welcomes:

- a. Labour's Employment Rights Bill, which will deliver day-one rights, ban fire-and-rehire, and improve job security and workplace protections.
- b. Labour's Renters' Rights Bill, which will abolish Section 21 evictions, end rental bidding wars, and introduce a new landlord ombudsman and database.

5. This Council resolves to:

- a. Ask Cabinet to continue to adhere to Labour values in decisions they take and support and empower working families at every opportunity.
- b. Support the full implementation of both the Employment Rights Bill and the Renters' Rights Bill.
- c. Work with employers to become early adopters of the Employment Rights Bill.
- d. Work with employers and landlords to raise awareness of new rights and responsibilities.
- e. Collaborate with trade unions, advice services, and community organisations to support residents in exercising their rights.
- f. Promote the London Living Wage and positive employment practices across the borough.
- g. Train enforcement teams and amplify communications to tenants about their rights.

- h. Work with the Greater London Authority and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to boost enforcement and share best practices across London.

Demanding Real Fairer Funding for Southwark

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

1. Council Assembly notes:
 - a. In November 2022, Council Assembly passed a motion rightly condemning the assault on local government funding by Conservative and Liberal Democrat governments, which threatened the ability of Southwark Council to continue to deliver vital services for residents.
 - b. The brutal cuts to local council spending undertaken by the Liberal Democrats in coalition with the Conservatives from 2010.
 - c. That local government spending will not reach 2010 levels until the 2030s, due to the severity of cuts by undertaken by the Liberal Democrats in coalition with the Conservatives from 2010.
 - d. That despite this assault from the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats, Southwark Labour have protected our libraries, in-sourced our leisure centres and continued to invest in local services – presenting balanced budgets every year.
 - e. The Liberal Democrats' failure to present balanced 'alternative' budgets.
 - f. The Section 151 Officer's response to the Liberal Democrats' 2023 'alternative' budget put forward, which stated:
 - i. "Collectively, these proposals create significant risk to the 2023-24 budget and are not in line with the recommendations of the s151 officer as set out to Council Assembly, especially with regard to collection rates, one off contributions from reserves and income targets."
 - g. This Labour administration's three-year budget, which has kept the council's finances stable during a turbulent economic period following Liz Truss's mini-budget and Russia's invasion of Ukraine.
2. Council Assembly recognises:
 - a. The impact of Conservative and Liberal Democrat austerity on local authorities across the country, which hollowed out many councils

outside of London

- b. The need for wealth to be redistributed around the country.
- c. The long-overdue need for local government funding reform, which is being undertaken by the Labour government.

3. Council Assembly welcomes:

- a. This council's engagement with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, as well as other government ministers, which is ensuring a fair settlement for Southwark.
- b. This council's role in leading inner-London boroughs' campaign for fairer funding in meetings with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and, alongside local Labour MPs, in Parliament.
- c. The leading role this council is playing alongside London Councils and Central London Forward to ensure a fair settlement for Southwark.

4. Council Assembly resolves to:

- a. Ask that the council continues to engage with the government to ensure a fair outcome for Southwark.
- b. Ask that the council continues to work with local MPs, London Councils, Central London Forward and others in ensuring a fair outcome for inner London boroughs.

Action to divest the Southwark Pension Fund from conflict and genocide

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

1. Council Assembly notes:

- a. The devastating humanitarian crisis in Gaza, including the suffering, death, and famine that have followed Israel's military actions in response to the appalling attacks by Hamas in 2023.
- b. That Israeli forces have killed more than 65,000 Palestinians in Gaza since 2023, including more than 20,000 children.
- c. The UN estimates that approximately 92% of all residential buildings in Gaza – around 436,000 homes – have been damaged or destroyed since the start of the conflict, causing the displacement of 1.9 million Palestinians. Many have been displaced several times.

- d. That in April 2025, Save the Children reported that all schools in Gaza had been closed for 625,000 students for 6 months and that 88% of all school buildings in Gaza had been damaged or destroyed. In May 2025 WHO reported that Israeli forces had destroyed or damaged 94% of all hospitals in Gaza.
- e. That UN reports confirm the escalating crisis in the West Bank, including mass displacement on a scale not seen since 1967, with more than 40,000 Palestinians uprooted and neighbourhoods destroyed.
- f. That on 16 September 2025, the United Nations Independent Commission of Inquiry found a risk of genocide against Palestinians in Gaza and called on all Member States, including the UK, to “employ all means reasonably available to them to prevent the commission of genocide in the Gaza Strip”.
- g. That this position is representative of the growing international consensus shared by Amnesty International, Oxfam, leading Israeli human rights organisations B’tselem and Physicians for Human Rights Israel, the International Association of Genocide Scholars, and leading Israeli scholars of genocide such as Raz Segal and Omer Bartov that Israel is committing genocide.
- h. The deep concern and distress felt by many Southwark residents, particularly those with personal or familial ties to the region, and the calls from across our borough for action.
- i. Southwark Council has a proud record of ethical investment and is one of only four UK local government pension funds with an ambitious 2030 net zero target, showing our commitment to placing our values at the heart of our investment policy.
- j. That since December 2023, the Southwark Local Government Pension Scheme has been monitoring its exposure to companies listed by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) as being linked to the occupation of Palestine. The Southwark Local Government Pension Scheme has no direct investments in the companies listed by the United Nations but has £4.9m invested through managed funds.
- k. That the council has already begun engaging with fund managers to stress the importance of human rights as a key criterion in responsible investment.

2. Council Assembly welcomes:

- a. The tentative ceasefire in Gaza which - at the time of writing - is resulting in the exchange of prisoners and hostages, both living and

dead, between Israel and Palestine.

- b. The Labour Government's recognition of the state of Palestine on 21 September 2025, as a significant and historic step in British foreign policy on the path to a two-state solution.
- c. The council's announcement that Southwark will become the first local authority to incorporate the United Nations Genocide Convention into its investment framework, enabling the exclusion of investments in any state found by the International Court of Justice to be in breach of the Convention.

3. Council Assembly resolves to ask that:

- a. The Pensions Advisory Panel continues to work with fund managers to disclose and divest pension fund investments in companies listed by the United Nations OHCHR as being linked to the illegal occupation of Palestine, regularly reporting on progress made.
- b. The council also recognises that the OHCHR list is not fully comprehensive, including for arms companies supplying countries in breach of international law. Therefore, Council Assembly also calls on the London Collective Investment Vehicle (LCIV) to develop a more robust framework that enables the exclusion of investments linked to conflict, military occupation, or genocide, including the creation of a new fund that allows greater flexibility to divest from specific asset classes within pooled funds.
- c. The council use the pension fund's recently adopted "pass-through voting" mechanism to influence decisions on investments linked to human rights concerns, conflict, or military occupation.
- d. The council complete the necessary steps to become the first local authority to incorporate the United Nations Genocide Convention into its investment framework.
- e. The council reaffirm Southwark Council's commitment to ethical investment, transparency, and the protection of human rights, ensuring that our pension fund reflects the values of our diverse and compassionate community.

Southwark Council will not water down affordable housing requirements

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

1. Council assembly notes:

- a. That the prioritisation of genuinely affordable housing, and social rent housing in particular, is a central commitment of this administration
- b. That since the establishment of Southwark's council house-building programme, 3,000 new council homes have either been built or are on site
- c. That since January 2025, there have been new council homes completed on the Rennie Estate (South Bermondsey), Salisbury Estate (North Walworth), Sedgmoor Place (St Giles) and Linden Grove (Peckham Rye), with 581 new council homes also now delivered on the Aylesbury Estate (Faraday), and residents on the Tustin Estate (Old Kent Road) about to move into new homes
- d. That the council has recently announced the next phase of new council homes delivery
- e. That this Labour administration has a strong track record of securing additional homes at social rent from developers, with Southwark responsible for the highest number of GLA-funded social rent completions in London last year
- f. That Liberal Democrat controlled councils in London (Sutton, Richmond and Kingston) started a combined total of 0 (zero) social rent homes last year
- g. That in Labour-run Southwark there were more social rent homes build last year (581) than in Liberal Democrat controlled councils (Sutton, Richmond and Kingston) over the past 10 years combined
- h. The Green Party's continued and consistent campaigning against new homes in any form, including 100% affordable schemes such as Flaxyards in Peckham
- i. That our planning policies have secured over 50% affordable housing delivery in the Old Kent Road Opportunity Area, and 35% affordable housing at the Biscuit Factory – which will on its own deliver 338 new social rent homes for Southwark residents on the waiting list
- j. That this Labour administration has a unique policy requiring affordable housing from student accommodation and co-living developers which over the last year has contributed to 892 affordable homes, of which 695 are at social rent, being consented by the Main Planning Committee. The Committee has also secured an additional £22.49m in potential contributions to our New Homes programme
- k. That Southwark's Labour Cabinet have also proposed increasing the CIL rate on speculative student accommodation to generate additional

investment for our neighbourhoods, building on the £20m currently being distributed as a result of our planning policies

- i. That Southwark council is robustly defending its planning policies at the current Aylesham Centre appeal and inquiry
- m. That Southwark remains London's biggest social landlord, and that across Southwark, approximately 40% of households are socially renting
- n. That as Private Rented Sector (PRS) rents continue to escalate, demand for socially rented housing also continues to increase, with over 20,000 households now on the Southwark waiting list
- o. That eviction from the PRS is the second highest reason given for homelessness applications in Southwark
- p. That demand for new housing in Southwark is overwhelmingly for homes that are genuinely affordable for Southwark residents – for social rent homes, and homes that will enable families to remain the borough.

2. Council Assembly welcomes:

- a. The government's stated commitment to deliver the biggest boost in affordable and social housing in a generation
- b. The allocation of £39bn over 10 years to deliver the next Affordable Homes Programme with a greater emphasis on social rent homes
- c. The reform of Right to Buy including the reduction in discount, to prevent the loss of council homes
- d. The Renters' Rights Act, including the end to S21 evictions and the introduction of more secure, periodic tenancies
- e. The new City Hall Developer Investment Fund to enable the Mayor to unlock and accelerate housing delivery
- f. The exclusion of student accommodation and co-living schemes from the measures outlined in the proposed Emergency Package for London.

3. Council Assembly resolves:

- a. To continue leading the national campaign on behalf of our residents to save council housing for future generations
- b. To work with the government and GLA to focus efforts on scaling up the delivery of social rent homes in London, and especially council homes,

as the top priority

- c. To join with the Chair of the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee, in calling for a clear numerical target for the delivery of social rent homes nationally and across London
- d. To continue defending Southwark's planning policies and ensure we maximise long-term community benefit from new developments.

Make Peckham Rye Station safe and accessible

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

1. Council Assembly notes:
 - a. That Peckham Rye Station is the busiest interchange in the country without step-free access, with more than 6 million passengers using the station in 2024.
 - b. That the lack of step-free access currently excludes many disabled residents, wheelchair users, parents with buggies, and older people from using the station, forcing them onto longer or less convenient routes.
 - c. That the Treasury has paused funding for the station upgrade, which would have eased overcrowding and installed lift access to all platforms.
 - d. That the upgrade is shovel-ready, with Network Rail having secured planning permission.
 - e. That this Council has committed £1 million to supporting this project.
 - f. That the station upgrade would not only improve accessibility for all but also increase the station's capacity, removing the risk of dangerous overcrowding at peak times, and unlock economic growth, supporting local housing delivery and high street renewal.
 - g. That Labour's plans to create a public square in front of the station on Rye Lane are progressing, with demolition of vacant buildings on the new forecourt set to begin shortly.
 - h. That Southwark Labour Leader, Councillor Sarah King, has written to the Transport Secretary urging a rethink of the decision to pause the upgrade.
 - i. That under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a duty to remove barriers and advance equality of opportunity. Upgrading

Peckham Rye Station is a clear example of that duty in practice.

- j. That Rye Lane's Labour councillors have launched a petition to ensure local voices are heard and to call on the Government to deliver this vital investment.
- k. That Nunhead, North Dulwich, South Bermondsey and Elephant & Castle stations also need investment to make them fit for the future.

2. Council Assembly welcomes:

- a. The campaign and petition led by Labour councillors in Rye Lane ward.
- b. Network Rail's continued commitment to the upgrade of Peckham Rye Station.

3. This Council resolves to:

- a. Support the campaign led by Rye Lane's Labour councillors to secure full Government funding for the Peckham Rye Station upgrade.
- b. Continue to work with Network Rail to progress immediate health and safety improvements at the station.
- c. Call on the Treasury to reverse its decision to pause funding and commit to delivering the full upgrade, including lift access to all platforms.
- d. Highlight the economic, social, and accessibility benefits of the station upgrade for Peckham, Southwark, and wider south-east London.
- e. Ensure that the station upgrade is delivered in tandem with the redevelopment of the station square and public realm improvements along Rye Lane.
- f. Reaffirm the Council's commitment to inclusive transport infrastructure that meets the needs of all residents, including those with disabilities, parents with buggies, and older people.
- g. Reaffirm the Council's commitment to inclusive transport infrastructure that is designed and tested with disabled residents, setting a borough-wide benchmark for equality of access.

Our water our way

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

1. his council notes:
 - a. Serious flooding on Gallery Road, Dulwich, in October 2025, resulting in road closures.
 - b. Serious flooding in Ilderton Road, Bermondsey, in July 2025, caused by a burst water main which flooded 27 homes.
 - c. A serious burst water main in Dulwich in February 2025 which affected 5,000 households in South London.
 - d. Repeated failures from Thames Water to communicate with residents about works and fixes taking place, including road closures.
 - e. Decades of underinvestment from Thames Water alongside huge dividend payouts to shareholders and mounting debt, resulting in crumbling local infrastructure.
 - f. Ofwat's findings in 2024 that Thames Water broke dividend payment rules, resulting in an £18 million fine.
2. This council also notes:
 - a. Thames Water, the UK's largest water company and provider to thousands of households in Southwark, is on the brink of collapse - saddled with billions in debt, facing unprecedented public outcry over pollution and chronic underinvestment.
 - b. The consequences of any new ownership or restructure at Thames Water will impact millions of people's bills (including thousands across Southwark), our environment, and our ability to prepare for the tremendous strain our water system is set to face due to climate change.
 - c. That the Conservatives' obsession with privatisation prioritises shareholders over people, resulting in little or no investment in services. Our residents are paying the price for this ideology.
 - d. The model of privatisation is not the norm - 90% of the world runs water in public ownership, with clear benefits for customers, staff and environment.
 - e. Many experts believe that Thames Water could be nationalised at minimal cost.
 - f. The Water Special Measures Act 2025 has attempted to rescue the water sector through measures such as blocking bonuses for executives who are polluting waterways.

- g. Executives have circumnavigated this ban by renaming executive payouts. Regulation is failing. We must change the ownership model of Thames Water.
- h. The Water Industry Act 1991 grants the government authority to place water companies into Special Administration when they face financial distress or significantly breach their licence or statutory duties, rendering their continued operation inappropriate.
- i. Both of these conditions have been met by Thames Water, which should be put into special administration with immediate effect.
- j. Special Administration is a form of temporary public ownership. It presents the government with a choice. If they choose to re-privatise, taxpayers will bear the financial burden of Thames Water's reckless financial decision making, while private, international shareholders reap the profits. Alternatively, they can choose to keep Thames Water in permanent public ownership, and provide billpayers with a water service that prioritises people and the environment.
- k. Any decisions made about the future of Thames Water should be conducted with full public scrutiny and democratic involvement. Protections for the workers, our environment and for residents' bills must be honoured.

3. This council resolves to:

- a. Write to Emma Reynolds as Secretary of State for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs, and Rachel Reeves, Chancellor of the Exchequer, urging government to:
 - i. Use its powers under the Water Industry Act 1991 to place Thames Water into Special Administration, ensuring that workers' current terms and conditions on pay and pensions are honoured and public interests are protected.
 - ii. Use the provisions of Special Administration to end the failed experiment of privatisation and bring Thames Water back into permanent public ownership.
 - iii. Enable accountability and transparency under a publicly owned Thames Water by changing its governance model so that local councils, workers and households are all represented on the Board.
- b. Ask that Cabinet communicate the text of this motion to:

- i. Southwark Members of Parliament
- ii. Secretary of State for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, Emma Reynolds
- iii. Rachel Reeves, Chancellor of the Exchequer
- iv. CEO of Thames Water, Chris Weston.

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in category 3 of paragraph 10.4 of the access to information procedure rules of the Southwark Constitution.

The following is a summary of the decisions taken in the closed part of the meeting.

27. MINUTES

The closed minutes of the cabinet meeting held on 14 October 2025 were approved as a correct record and signed by the chair.

28. PHASE 2 OF THE TUSTIN ESTATE RENEWAL

The cabinet considered the closed information relating to this item. Please see item 11 for the decision.

29. GATEWAY 3 - VARIATION DECISION: PHASE 2 OF EXTENSION TO THE SOUTH EAST LONDON COMBINED HEAT AND POWER (SELCHP) HEAT NETWORK

The cabinet considered the closed information relating to this item. Please see item 19 for the decision.

30. APPROVAL TO PURCHASE: ROCKINGHAM STREET ARCHES NOS. 107, 106,105

The cabinet considered the closed information relating to this item. Please see item 20 for the decision.

The meeting ended at 1.25pm

CHAIR:

DATED:

DEADLINE FOR NOTIFICATION OF CALL-IN UNDER SECTION 17 OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES IS MIDNIGHT, WEDNESDAY 10 DECEMBER 2025.

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

Meeting Name:	Cabinet
Date:	6 January 2026
Report title:	Social Purpose of Land Framework
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Helen Dennis, New Homes and Sustainable Development
Ward(s) or groups affected:	All
Classification:	Open
Reason for lateness (if applicable):	N/a

FOREWORD – COUNCILLOR HELEN DENNIS, CABINET MEMBER FOR NEW HOMES AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

I'm delighted to be bringing this report which recommends moving forward with several key actions arising from the Southwark Land Commission, which was set up by this administration to explore how we maximise public good from public land. One of the key proposals made by the Commissioners was to develop a 'Social Purpose of Land Framework' which would help guide decision-making around council land and assets, with the potential for wider applicability to other landowners in the future.

Earlier this year, the council commissioned the New Economics Foundation (NEF) to help us develop a draft framework, using the principles of community organising to ensure that the model would have local resonance and be embedded within the community going forward. Funded by the Greater London Authority (GLA), NEF's draft framework is attached to this report and provides a template that we can now pilot across four Southwark sites, three of which are council-owned, and one of which has been nominated by the Anglican Diocese.

The Social Purpose of Land Framework will seek to increase transparency around decision-making and to bring forward a new process in partnership with the local community. Neighbourhood Land Panels will be established around each of the pilot sites, and will seek to engage a wide and representative range of voices in discussions, exploring options that take account of neighbourhood and boroughwide priorities, and assessing their feasibility. We will be investing in this process using unallocated reserves and plan to tweak the model across the different sites to take account of the different contexts, and to test and learn from the different approaches.

In addition, this report also enables the establishment of a Southwark Land Partnership, which will bring together key landowners across the borough to help release sites for common priorities, maximising social value including the delivery of genuinely affordable housing, thriving high streets and improved green spaces.

I want to thank everyone who has been involved in this ground-breaking work including all of the Land Commissioners, Miatta Fahnbulleh as Chair, Councillor James McAsh who led the original process from cabinet, and staff at the NEF I am

incredibly excited by this next step and to seeing what ideas might now emerge from the community that will enable us to better use the built environment to achieve our Southwark 2030 goals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for the Cabinet

That Cabinet:

1. Approve the implementation of the Social Purpose of Land Framework ('the Framework') pilot phase as set out in Section 4 and 5 (page 39 to 50 of **Appendix 1 – Social Purpose of Land Framework a Proposal from The New Economics Foundation**, and paragraph 26 of this report, on four (4) council-identified sites as set out in paragraph 59.
2. Note that a revised Framework will be brought back to cabinet following the pilot phase for further consideration.
3. Delegates the approval of any minor non-substantive amendments resulting from its meeting and a final review by officers on the framework to the director of planning and growth in consultation with the cabinet member for new homes and sustainable development prior to final release.
4. Delegates authority to the director of planning and growth to oversee implementation and refinement of the framework processes, including the development of an action plan supporting the framework.
5. Establish the Southwark Land Partnership (SLP) in accordance with the Terms of Reference in **Appendix 3** and delegate authority to the director of planning and growth to finalise governance arrangements and partnership agreements.
6. To consider whether to issue early notice of the intention to dispose of council's owned land or buildings at the time of reviewing the asset management plan.
7. Agrees an allocation of £500,000 of reserve funding towards the costs of informing and resourcing the pilot sites of the Social Purpose of Land Framework.

Recommendations for the Leader of the Council

8. Vary the executive scheme of delegation to delegate authority to the cabinet member for new homes and sustainable development to approve the details of the fifth pilot site, in accordance with paragraph 60 of this report.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

9. In 2022, Southwark Council launched the Southwark Land Commission, which was the first of its kind in London, to explore how land in our borough could better serve the needs of local people. Made up of community leaders,

landowners, and experts, the Commission spent several months seeking feedback from residents, reviewing evidence, and making recommendations for improvement.

10. Based on this work, the Land Commission developed the Land for Good report, published towards the end of 2023, which called for a bold shift: to put social purpose at the heart of how land and public assets are used and managed. The report outlined 7 headline recommendations, the first of which was to “Put Social Purpose at the Heart of Land Use” with a proposal to establish a “Social Purpose of Land Framework” which would ultimately be applied to all land and property use decisions by participating landowners. Other linked recommendations included:
 - Recommendation 3 of the Action Plan included the commitment to no net loss of public and community owned land, and for all disposals to be considered through the Social Purpose Framework.
 - Recommendation 6 of the Action Plan included an action to bring together participating landowners into a SLP, committed to freeing up land for the public good through the Social Purpose of Land Framework.
 - Recommendation 7 of the Action Plan included an action to identify 2 council owned pilot sites and encourage stakeholders to bring forward a further 4 sites.
11. In response to the Southwark Land Commission’s recommendations, the Council committed to exploring new models of land governance that embed community voice and deliver long-term social outcomes. The New Economics Foundation (NEF) was commissioned to develop the Framework, which proposes a structured, participatory process for evaluating and shaping land use decisions.
12. This framework provides a practical tool to implement this recommendation and commitment made by council, ensuring that land owned by the council is used in ways that prioritise public good, community benefit, and long-term social outcomes.
13. This framework outlines the overarching principles and process used as part of a community engagement tool to ensure social benefits are an integral part of how proposals for the use of land are developed with regard to the use of land. This framework seeks to provide a process that is responsive to the needs and aspirations of Southwark’s diverse communities while also considering council resources.
14. This report also seeks to establish the SLP to support the facilitation of the Framework and overseeing its progress.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

Do not produce a Social Purpose of Land Framework; continue with existing processes

15. This Framework ensures that every decision we make helps move us closer to the Southwark 2030 goals, including tackling inequality, responding to the climate emergency, or empowering communities to shape their neighbourhoods. The Framework is not only a response to the Land Commission but is a vital step toward achieving the ambitions set out in Southwark 2030.
16. Some of the risks without a clear Framework include:
 - The 2023 Southwark Land Commission identified the lack of social purpose in land use planning as a critical challenge. Not adopting the Framework would represent a missed opportunity to act on this strategic recommendation and could undermine the credibility of the council's commitment to inclusive community land governance.
 - Without the Framework, there is an increased risk of inconsistent approaches across departments and projects, leading to inefficiencies and potential conflicts in land use priorities.
 - Not adopting the Framework could signal a lack of commitment to participatory governance, potentially eroding trust and reducing future community engagement.
17. The implementation of the pilot sites under the Social Purpose of Land Framework has financial implications on the council. As there is a need to avoid revenue and capital growth due to the wider council budgetary issues, it is proposed to utilise existing reserve funding.

POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

18. If the cabinet approves the recommendations, the following activities will be implemented:
 - Update the Framework with feedback from cabinet and any essential updates from delivery teams.
 - Publish the Framework on the council's website.
 - Continue engagement with stakeholders in response to Framework.
 - Undertake the pilot projects with a view of using the learnings from the pilot as part of further refinement of the Framework in a future cabinet submission.
 - Outcomes from the pilot phase will be reported back to cabinet with recommendations for future application of the Framework including funding and governance implications.
 - Set up the SLP
 - Table the Framework at an inaugural meeting of the SLP meeting with other key landowners in the Borough.
 - Consider amendments to the Asset Management Plan.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

19. As the first local authority-led Land Commission in London, it brought together residents, community organisations, landowners, and experts to explore how land could be used more fairly and effectively. The Commission's work was rooted in the belief that land should be a tool for public good, not just private

gain. The final report being the Land for Good, set out a bold vision for putting social purpose at the heart of land use, and called for new tools and policies to make that vision a reality.

20. The Council has committed to addressing the six key challenges within the Land for Good, including the insufficient focus on the social purpose of land. The report recommended that the council develop a Social Purpose of Land Framework to fairly balance social value with commercial income and help evaluate trade-offs that this may influence.
21. In February 2025, the council engaged the New Economics Foundation (NEF) to develop the Framework in collaboration with the Greater London Authority, council officers and the community. This work has been funded by the Greater London Authority with match council funding through senior officer engagement.
22. The Social Purpose of Land Framework is Southwark Council's proposed approach to making public land governance more transparent, equitable, and community led. The framework introduces participatory processes, including Neighbourhood Land Panel (NLPs), to evaluate and shape land use proposals. It will apply to specific council-identified pilot sites only, with guiding principles focused on transparency and accountability.
23. Social purpose as part of this framework seeks to address a local and strategic need, contributing to community wellbeing, equity and long-term public benefit. Importantly, social purpose does not imply that a use must be non-profit. Uses may be financially sustainable or income-generating, provided they align with identified social outcomes.
24. This cabinet decision relates only to the delivery of pilot sites using the Framework. However, the council remain committed to drawing on several recommendations made by NEF which will continue to inform the council's process design for future application of the Framework.
25. The Framework applies to specific council-owned assets (e.g., vacant land, surplus buildings, community spaces) but could also be applied to land/assets belonging to other partners. It draws on the original Land Commission proposal of NLPs to guide decision-making and uses a structured process.
26. The Framework is described below (and in accordance with Section 4 of **Appendix 1**) and will be applied to the pilot sites only:
 - a) Once recruited, NLPs will undertake a workshop (and potentially a walkabout) in each pilot neighbourhood to identify local priorities. A short "mission" statement is created by the NLP to guide land use decisions on each pilot site. NLPs should be recruited and facilitated in accordance with the Terms of Reference outlined in **Appendix 1**.
 - b) Public submissions are considered from members of the community through an online engagement platform and in person engagement event to inform the Asset Brief of the pilot sites. This is in addition to the Framework described in Section 4 of **Appendix 1**.

- c) The leading officer and council team draft an Asset Brief considering site constraints and other borough-wide policies (including the Community Plans for each neighbourhood). Council brief is subject to internal review and approvals before release. NLP reviews and must endorse the brief (2/3 majority).
- d) Council and NLPs invite expressions of interest from community groups, organisations, charities etc. on proposed uses and delivery models on the pilot sites.
- e) NLP evaluates proposals and submissions using the Desirability vs. Feasibility Matrix in **Appendix 1**.
- f) The NLP will make a formal recommendation on the preferred proposal to the responsible senior officer and cabinet member. The recommendation for each pilot site will be taken to cabinet for a formal decision, unless the decision can be made under delegated powers.
- g) The council retains final decision-making authority but must publish a formal response to the NLP's recommendation, including reasons for acceptance or rejection. If the recommendation is rejected, the NLP has the right to request an independent review, potentially led by another NLP.
- h) Selected proposals are implemented with agreed terms. Progress is monitored annually and publicly reported on council's website.

A more detailed outline of the process can be found in Section 4 of **Appendix 1**.

- 27. A number of different recruitment methods and approaches will be tested on each of the pilot sites to determine the best ways to promote participation across the borough.
- 28. The Land Commission findings also highlighted a need to leverage partnerships with public bodies, housing associations, and landowners to maximise land value for community benefit. The Commission recommended creating a dedicated partnership vehicle to bring together stakeholders, pool resources, and provide a transparent governance structure for land-based projects. This cabinet report also seeks endorsement to establish the SLP in accordance with the Terms of Reference in **Appendix 3**.
- 29. Feedback obtained as part of the work has also highlighted the importance of public confidence and openness in how land is acquired, disposed of, or developed. Currently, transparency is addressed through statutory notices and cabinet reports at key decision points. However, these measures often occur late in the process, limiting opportunities for early public engagement and scrutiny.
- 30. To strengthen trust and governance, this report also notes that as part of the review of the Asset Management Plan a mechanism to allow an early notification of the intent to dispose is considered. This is designed to increase

the awareness of the local community and interested stakeholders.

31. In establishing Neighbourhood Land Panels, we will draw on lessons from successful community-led initiatives such as the Resident Project Groups that have supported our New Homes programme. These groups have demonstrated the value of early engagement, transparent decision-making, and collaborative design processes. Similarly, the refurbishment of Walworth Town Hall has shown how involving local voices can create spaces that reflect community priorities while delivering high-quality outcomes. We will build on these examples to ensure Neighbourhood Land Panels become trusted forums for shaping development in a way that benefits residents and strengthens local identity.
32. While the NEF report and its recommendations have informed the development of the Framework in Section 4 and 5 of **Appendix 1** and in paragraph 26, it is important to note that the NEF's analysis and research in the remaining sections of their report does not represent the formal position or policy of Southwark Council. In proposing the recommendations in this report, the council has considered NEF's findings alongside its own priorities, statutory obligations, and operational requirements.
33. The council will undertake its own recruitment processes for NLPs and the appointment of a council officer, ensuring alignment with council procedures and governance standards. Publication of the NEF report is intended to support transparency, but does not imply wholesale adoption of all recommendations in relation to the future phases after the pilot (Section 6 of **Appendix 1**). The council will continue to refine the Framework, drawing on both the NEF's work and ongoing feedback from residents, partners, and internal teams.
34. The adoption of the Framework for the pilot sites and the associated activity will be carried out at the same time that the council is considering the creation of Community Review Panels for a number of neighbourhoods based on the Old Kent Road model. These are aimed at increasing community engagement in major developments at a pre-planning application stage.
35. It should be noted that the name "NLPs" will be reconsidered after cabinet, and it is not fixed. The council will determine if a more appropriate name is needed moving forward.

Strategic and service alignment

36. The Social Purpose of Land Framework and the Southwark 2030 strategy are closely aligned, both aiming to ensure that land and resources in the borough are used to benefit the community and promote equity, sustainability, and inclusion. The Framework supports all six (6) goals within Southwark 2030 by supporting the prioritisation of land use that delivers social value. This includes ensuring land supports environmental sustainability, community wellbeing and providing more affordable housing which is identified across a number of different goals of the 2030 Strategy. Land and assets can be used (and are needed) to achieve all of our Southwark 2030 goals.

37. The Social Purpose of Land Framework aligns closely with our ambitions around Neighbourhoods by increasing the transparency and community involvement in decisions taken locally. The Neighbourhoods model has progressed through the identification of the geographical neighbourhoods and subsequent neighbourhood meetings, the appointment of neighbourhood champions and officer coordinators, the start of the drafting of community plans and the formation of the Neighbourhood Grants Fund. By bringing forward pilot sites in a Neighbourhood context, we can test different models and use the built environment as a catalyst for greater engagement.
38. There is also significant cross-over with the voluntary and community sector (VCS) property strategy which is currently under review. The current policy is to charge market rent to all occupiers of the council's commercial estate including voluntary and community sector organisations.

Community engagement and co-delivery

39. Alongside targeted research, NEF undertook extensive community engagement through a number of different qualitative research methods. NEF's research was informed by 15 interviews with community leaders, Southwark Land Commissioners, council officers, local practitioners and wider civic landowners to understand the strengths and opportunities in developing the process. Further information including a summary of feedback has been provided in **Appendix 1**.
40. The council recognises that the local community have a wealth of relevant expertise and know the borough and what is needed. Three participatory land use workshops were undertaken involving residents of the borough to develop and define the parameters of this decision-tool. The research undertaken by NEF has informed the refinement of the Framework which takes this feedback into account.
41. NEF recruited community leaders through these interviews who have been involved in facilitating the land use workshops with the community, as well as participating in 1-to-1 conversations to build a further understanding of the community's perspective on land-use issues. This approach has allowed for learning outside of NEF, and supports future implementation and ownership of the Framework within the community.
42. A Southwark Advisory Group was established as part of the project to ensure the development of the Framework is informed by cross-council expertise, aligns with council priorities, and reflects the needs and aspirations of Southwark's communities. This group is made up of representatives from the following areas of council and externally:
 - Planning Policy
 - Property Services
 - Strategy and Communities
 - Sustainable Growth
 - Leisure
 - Stronger Neighbourhoods
 - Procurement

- Corporate Finance
- Law (Communities)
- Law (Property)
- Social Value – Local Economy
- Greater London Authority

43. A youth session took place on 19 November at the Westminster House Youth Club which focussed on asset mapping of spaces they value and want more of, and future visioning of what spaces for young people should look like. The activities were also intended to empower the group to contribute to the way spaces are used in a meaningful way and raise awareness of how they could participate on a NLP. This information has informed how the evaluation matrix of the framework could be applied and how we can best involve young people in the NLPs.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Governance

44. Whilst the usual council decision-making processes apply to the delivery of the Framework, via cabinet, planning committee and/or delegated powers, it is intended that there will also be the continued involvement of the Council Social Purpose of Land Advisory Group and the SLP to participate and oversee the delivery of the Framework.

45. As outlined in the framework in **Appendix 1**, council seeks to introduce a structured process involving new NLPs to ensure that residents and community organisations have meaningful influence over how council-owned land is used.

46. The NLPs will be central to the Framework's participatory approach. Each panel will involve a standing group made up of residents, community organisations, local businesses, ward councillors, and relevant council officers. NLPs will help shape the Asset Briefs and evaluate proposals for each pilot site. This ensures that decisions reflect locally agreed social priorities. While they do not replace formal planning powers, they will embed community voice early in the process and help build trust and accountability.

47. This Framework will precede the planning application stage as there may be circumstances where an Asset Brief and recommended proposal could be implemented without the need for planning permission.

48. The NLPs are not the decision-making body, as this stays with the planning committee, cabinet or senior officers depending on the proposal. The NLP can only make a recommendation to the council about how a pilot site will be delivered.

49. It is intended that the NLPs will align the processes under the existing Neighbourhoods Programme currently being coordinated by the Neighbourhoods Team. This programme involves existing Neighbourhoods meetings which aligns with the NLPs process. These meetings will be used to help identify local priorities and recruit the

NLPs.

50. A key outcome of the engagement activities informing this Framework is gaining interest in and recruiting the membership of the Southwark Land Partnership (SLP). The SLP will be convened in direct response to the recommendations of the 2023 Southwark Land Commission report, Land for Good.
51. The SLP will act as a collaborative forum to support the implementation of the Land Commission's recommendations, while also monitoring progress in implementing the Social Purpose of Land Framework. The terms of reference for this body is provided in **Appendix 3**.
52. As needs evolve, the governance structure will be reviewed to provide flexibility to ensure the Framework remains responsive to the changing needs of the local community.

Policy framework implications

53. The Framework is essential to the Southwark 2030 vision of building a fair, green and safe Southwark. The Framework supports all Southwark 2030 goals in one way or another, particularly the following:
 - ensuring that our town centres thrive and serve our local community
 - views of local people help shape their local areas
 - genuinely affordable homes will help towards addressing the housing crisis
 - reducing inequalities in health across our community
 - facilitating more green space and biodiversity across the borough.
54. In terms of planning applications that may be required on pilot sites these need to be determined in accordance with development plan including the London Plan (2021) and the Southwark Plan (2022) and all other relevant material considerations. The application of the framework and its outcome on each pilot site would have been subject to public engagement and the approval of the council. It will therefore have a degree of weight as an “other material consideration” which will need to be considered in the balance with adopted Development Plan policies and all other relevant material considerations at the time any planning application is determined. Consequently, the application of the Framework cannot predetermine the outcome of a planning application made on a pilot site.
55. The implementation of the pilot of the Framework it is unlikely to conflict with the ongoing Local Plan review process. Insights gathered through the pilot phase, including community engagement, asset briefs, and evaluation outcomes, will contribute to the development of the Local Plan. This evidence will be considered as part of a future cabinet decision on the wider application of the Framework, including its potential integration into planning policy and borough-wide land governance strategies.

Financial implications

56. Implementing the Framework will require dedicated financial resources including the following:

- One full-time officer to steward the process
- Paid participation for community panel members
- Internal coordination across different council teams
- Survey and design work on the pilot sites.

57. While some costs are new, much of the work reframes existing activity to make it more transparent. Over time, the Framework may also unlock cost savings by reducing conflict, improving delivery outcomes, and aligning land use with long-term community needs.

58. The following provides a broad breakdown of the costs likely to be attributed to the pilots of the Framework.

Type of Cost	Unit Cost	Total Cost
Neighbourhood Land Panel Remuneration	London Living Wage rate x 3 meetings	£2,700
Full time employee remuneration	1 x £52,000 p/a	£52,000
Potential NLP Facilitation Cost	3 x £3,000 + VAT NLP meetings 1 x £2,500 + VAT governance and development sessions	£11,500
Feasibility and Design Studies	£100,000 - £180,000	Site dependant
TOTAL COST ESTIMATE		Approx. £100,000 (excluding VAT) per pilot site

*This does not include any income generated.

52. The source of funding for the Framework will utilise reserves budgets.

Pilot Sites

59. The council has identified four (4) council-owned sites for the initial pilot projects to apply the Framework. The pilot sites will involve the following:

Old Peckham Library, Peckham Hill Street	A council owned prefabricated building in poor structural condition occupies the majority of the site. The site was considered for council homes, but it is not a priority to take the site forward in the current programme.
Thorburn Square	This site which was included in Land For Good as a pilot site, owned by The Diocese of Southwark, is occupied by St Annes Church. A feasibility study commissioned by the Diocese

	has identified the potential to provide housing, a new worship space and community space.
Former Abbeyfield Housing Office, Rotherhithe New Road	This council owned building which used to provide office accommodation is currently occupied by Guardians. The site was considered for council homes at one point but it is not a priority to take the site forward in the current programme.
Community space at 177 Abbey Street	This new provision which is at the ground floor of a new council owned key workers housing scheme on Abbey Street is subject to planning permission. It is anticipated that the new facility, which will remain in council ownership, will be completed in 2028. The new facility replaces that previously provided by the Beormund Centre on this site.

60. A potential additional pilot site (fifth pilot site) has been identified as an inactive Tenant and Resident's Association Hall. Following further consultation, a report will be provided to the cabinet member for new homes and sustainable development for decision.
61. The council will apply the insights and learnings from the pilot site to inform the future development of the Framework.

Monitoring

62. The SLP will monitor the implementation of the Framework overtime. The council will provide regular reports on the application of the Framework to the SLP. The inaugural meeting of the SLP will involve establishing monitoring requirements.

Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts

Community impact statement

63. The Framework will enable meaningful engagement with the community as part of its application. Land across the borough needs to effectively serve underrepresented groups and seek to ensure that more land in Southwark is used for the benefit of the local community. For this reason, the Framework considers the needs of all people and reflects the needs and priorities of people with different protected characteristics and help mitigate against any potential negative impacts that could arise. It will also help promote good community relations and highlight opportunities to tackle inequality.
64. The Framework is provided in an accessible format that will be published online and can be printed if needed. To ensure that as wide a range of people can engage with the Framework, the following engagement channels will be utilised where appropriate:

- Forums and networks
- Local community and resident groups
- Council business e-newsletter
- Council website, social media and publications

Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement

65. To ensure a fairer, stronger economy, the Framework must reflect the needs and priorities of people from a range of socio-economic backgrounds.
66. The public sector equality duty (“PSED”) is set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (“2010 Act”). The PSED requires public authorities, in the carrying out of their functions, to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the 2010 Act, advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
67. A full equality impact and needs analysis (EINA) has been undertaken for the Framework and is attached in **Appendix 2**. This considers the potential positive and negative impacts of the Framework on people with different protected characteristics such as age, disability and race. The EINA considers the wider impacts of the Framework on those persons with protected characteristics and people who are socio-economically disadvantaged. The assessment undertaken found that the Framework has strong objectives for improving the quality of life for underrepresented people including improving access to decision making functions in council, fostering community cohesion, improving health and equal opportunities for all. It concludes that there are no negative impacts arising from the Framework.

Health impact statement

68. To ensure that the needs and priorities of people with health conditions are reflected in the implementation of the Framework, all engagement channels outlined above will be utilised.
69. The positive health impacts from the Framework are well documented in **Appendix 2**.

Climate change implications

70. The Framework will be published online to reduce paper generated by printing. However, the documents will be printable on request to ensure full accessibility.
71. A key outcome of the Framework is the inclusion of environmental sustainability as part of the considerations to inform a decision of how land could be used. This seeks to improve the sustainability of the local environment.

Resource implications

72. An additional dedicated officer resource is required and will be responsible for:
 - Developing a project plan for the pilot
 - Facilitating the delivery of the Framework
 - Monitoring the progress of the Framework, ensuring compliance with the council's overarching economic development, environmental and social value goals.
73. The proposal is to allocate up to £0.5m of reserve funding to the Social Purpose of Land Framework.
74. This proposal can be accommodated from existing reserve balances.

Consultation

75. The Framework has been informed by non-statutory, informal engagement with a number of key stakeholders within the borough including as stated in paragraphs 39 to 43. This feedback has driven the objectives and vision of the Framework. A summary of the feedback provided is included in **Appendix 1**.

The feedback on the research undertaken by NEF and the proposed Framework from the consultees and stakeholders has been constructive and positive. There were some clear themes such as:

- Lack of clarity of legal, financial and governance arrangements currently forming part of the operation of council.
- The risks to council income and programmes from reduced commercial rents and/or reuse of council assets.
- Significant council resources being required to delivery on the research undertaken by NEF.
- Social benefits must balance with financial planning and income.
- Framework must align with Southwark 2030 and Local Plan processes.
- Governance structure should be clear including decision making process confirmed.
- Panel membership may not reflect the views of all stakeholders in a community.

76. A number of changes were made to the Framework to reflect this feedback including (but not limited to):
 - A clear acknowledgement the Framework does not conflict with the financial and governance arrangements currently forming part of the operation of council.
 - Clearer processes for NLP membership and the neighbourhood level engagement open for all residents to avoid misrepresentation of a community.
 - Pulling back to introduce only four pilot sites in order to test and learn lessons on the application of the Framework.
77. The council acknowledges that there is valuable experience and knowledge

amongst the community and further stakeholder engagement will continue throughout the implementation of the Framework due to the nature of its application. Feedback will continue to be captured as it useful and could be applied as part of further refinement of the Framework post-pilot phase.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Strategic Director of Resources (FIN25 – 32)

78. This report seeks cabinet approval to the Social Purpose of Land Framework and the eight stated recommendations which are detailed at the outset of this report.
79. The strategic director of resources notes the contents of the report, the post approval implementation programme and the forecast expenditure by category as detailed in the financial implications.
80. It is also noted that cabinet is asked to approve the release of £500k from reserves in relation to funding this programme.
81. As detailed in the financial implications the future programme expenditure will be regularly reviewed and capitalised as appropriate.

Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance (KD – 12/12/25)

82. The cabinet is asked to:
 - Approve the implementation of the Social Purpose of Land Framework ('the Framework') pilot phase as set out in Section 4 and 5 (page 39 to 50 of Appendix 1 – Social Purpose of Land Framework a Proposal from The New Economics Foundation, and paragraph 26 of this report, on four (4) council-identified sites as set out in paragraph 59.
 - Note that a revised Framework will be brought back to cabinet following the pilot phase for further consideration.
 - Delegate the approval of any minor non-substantive amendments resulting from its meeting and a final review by officers on the Framework to the director of planning and growth in consultation with the cabinet member for new homes and sustainable development prior to final release.
 - Delegate authority to the director of planning and growth to oversee implementation and refinement of the Framework processes, including the development of an Action Plan supporting the framework.
 - Establish the Southwark Land Partnership (SLP) in accordance with the Terms of Reference in Appendix 3 and delegate authority to the director of planning and growth to finalise governance arrangements and partnership agreements.

- Consider whether to issue early notice of the intention to dispose of Council's owned land or buildings at the time of reviewing the Asset Management Plan.
- Agree an allocation of £500,000 of reserve funding towards the costs of informing and resourcing the pilot sites of the Social Purpose of Land Framework.

This is to be approved by the cabinet in accordance with the Part 3B of the council's constitution.

83. The Equality Act 2010 introduced the public sector equality duty (PSED), which merged existing race, sex and disability equality duties and extended them to include other protected characteristics; namely age, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief, and sex and sexual orientation, including marriage and civil partnership.

In summary those subject to the equality duty, which includes the council, must in the exercise of their functions:

- (i) have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; and
- (ii) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

84. The officers carried out the EINA which is set out in the Appendix 2. The impact the proposed recommendations may have on those with protected characteristics is considered as part of this report and in the EINA.

85. Officers have concluded that the proposals are not considered to have any adverse impacts on persons with protected characteristics and will advance equality of opportunity.

86. The Human Rights Act 1998 imposed a duty on the council as a public authority to apply the European Convention on Human Rights; as a result, the council must not act in a way that is incompatible with these rights. The most important rights for planning purposes are Article 8 (respect for homes), Article 6 (natural justice) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (peaceful enjoyment of property). Officers consider that the implementation of the proposals contained in this report have been considered in the EINA and the officers conclude that this will not result in the council acting in the way that is incompatible with the European Convention.

87. Council Assembly on 14 July 2021 approved a change to the council's constitution to confirm that all decisions made by the council will consider the climate and equality (including socio-economic disadvantage and health inequality) consequences of taking that decision. This has been considered in this report at paragraph 65 to 71.

88. Whilst there is no requirement to consult the public on the production of this strategy, the report identifies the extensive engagement which informed the Framework and the continued engagement that will follow when giving effect to the Framework.
89. The cabinet will note the informal extensive consultation that has been carried out in connection with the proposals. It is necessary as a matter of law for the cabinet to carefully take account of the outcome of this consultation as set out in the report in reaching its conclusions on this item.
90. The principles of fair consultation have been followed, and officers have reviewed the outcome of the consultation, making any necessary amendments before recommending a revised recommendations to the cabinet.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None.		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Social Purpose of Land Framework – New Economics Foundation Report
Appendix 2	Equality Impact and Needs Analysis
Appendix 3	Southwark Land Partnership Terms of Reference

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Helen Dennis, New Homes and Sustainable Development
Lead Officer	Neil Kirby, Assistant Director, Sustainable Growth
Report Author	Lauren Mudd, Regeneration Programme Manager, Sustainable Growth
Version	Final
Dated	17 December 2025
Key Decision?	Yes

CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER

Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance	Yes	Yes
Head of Legal Planning and Property	Yes	Yes
Divisional Accountant	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	17 December 2025	



SOCIAL PURPOSE OF LAND FRAMEWORK

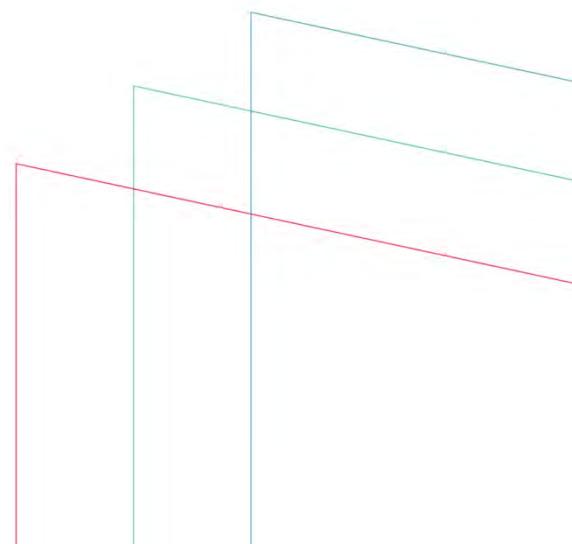
A PROPOSAL FROM THE NEW ECONOMICS FOUNDATION

Written by: Molly Harris, Emmet Kibberd, Hannah Peaker
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New Economics Foundation
www.neweconomics.org
info@neweconomics.org
+44 (0)20 7820 6300

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Social Purpose of Land Framework (SPLF) reimagines how the stewardship of public land can prioritise social outcomes, community voices, and local capacity building.

BACKGROUND

Councils are stewards of the public estate. They are responsible for providing – and protecting – the key assets that make our neighbourhoods feel like home. Parks, homes, leisure centres, libraries, roads; these buildings and spaces underpin the social infrastructure that bring us meaning, connection, and wellbeing.

Yet the long tail of austerity has pushed councils across the UK to develop their commercial asset management skills. While the primary role of local governments is to delivery statutory services, significant reductions in central government funding over the last 15 years paired with growing demand for services driven by the intersecting crises of affordability, the climate emergency, an aging population, and the lasting impacts of the pandemic means that councils' property portfolios are increasingly called on to fund essential services.

This shift in emphasis for councils - from service provider to asset manager - changes our relationship to the land and buildings that make up our neighbourhoods. Under sustained financial pressure, places that once served as anchors of community life can struggle to survive within an economic system that measures success primarily by the ability to generate income.

The Social Purpose of Land Framework (SPLF) recognises that the value of land is defined not only by what it earns, but by what it enables. It prioritises the social, cultural, and environmental contributions that land and buildings make to civic life. The public estate is a cornerstone of community, where people come together to learn, celebrate, connect, and play. In a time of deep political division and declining trust in institutions, public land can act – literally and figuratively – as common ground.

As the largest landowner and steward of assets in the borough, Southwark Council manages these spaces as a shared inheritance. Responsible stewardship matters because once public land is sold or its purpose is reduced to revenue generation, that broader civic value can be difficult to recover. By embedding community voices early in the decision-making process, defining local need locally, and making explicit the social purposes of land, the SPLF can help build a richer more inclusive vision of what public land can offer.

METHOD

This report is the synthesis of six months of collaboration, organising, research, and policy design. We worked with a group of 14 Southwark residents who helped design and lead three participatory workshops. Findings from the workshops, along with stakeholder interviews, policy analysis, precedent review, and discussions with council officers, informed the design of the proposed SPLF.

FRAMEWORK

The SPLF is built around participatory decision-making. It aims to move beyond consultation and engagement and towards co-production, broadening participation in decisions about land use and challenging the use of technical knowledge as a method of gatekeeping. It prioritises local expertise and values all knowledge and experience equally.

It tests a more collaborative process, sharing responsibility between the council as land steward, and community members, as users of public spaces and services. It creates opportunities for meaningful input and influence early in the process of deciding how publicly owned land and buildings are used.

TEST-AND-LEARN

The ambition of the SPLF is tempered by the real constraints that the council operates within: legal duties, financial pressures, and a highly regulated planning environment. We therefore recommend implementing the SPLF through a test-and-learn approach. Test-and-learn is an iterative method of public policy and service design that tests assumptions through real world experiments and uses evidence-based learning to refine the design.

In the pilot phase, the framework will apply to a select number of sites. Drawing from test-and-learn principles, we recommend that Southwark embed review and adaptation practices throughout the pilot phase. This will allow for adjustments to be made to the process along the way. At the end of the first year, insights from a comprehensive review of the pilot will feed into a revised SPLF, to be used in the following phases.

Taking a test-and-learn pilot approach lets the council and community explore how to balance social purpose with fiduciary responsibility, while also building the trust and infrastructure needed for a more open, long-term approach to stewarding land for public good.

PILOT PHASE

The pilot phase will start with site selection. It is important to test the pilot process on a variety of sites that represent different built forms, neighbourhood contexts, and potential uses. NEF recommends starting with a pilot of five sites, seeking diversity in asset type and location. For example, a tenant hall, library, school, vacant land, and space in new development, each in a different neighbourhood.

Testing the SPLF on too few pilot sites risks undermining the ambition of this research and organising project. Beyond the economies of scale for administration and neighbourhood land panel recruitment, a pilot programme of at least five sites signifies a commitment to systemic change and mitigates the risk of the process reverting to a standard - and standalone - engagement process.

The next step is neighbourhood land panel (NLP) recruitment. Depending on the location of the pilot sites, up to five NLPs will be established. NLPs will be made up of residents, community organisations, local businesses, ward councillors, and relevant council officers. The NLPs' first task is to define the neighbourhood social purpose mission. NLPs, with support from the council, will lead community engagement in the neighbourhood of each pilot site to understand local priorities and social needs. The NLP will synthesise findings into a short statement that will shape the rest of the process.

Council officers will then draft an asset brief. This is a document that sets out the site's context and constraints and invites interested groups to express an interest in using it. The NLP can provide feedback on the asset brief before it is finalised. Interested groups – such as small community organisations, area residents, local businesses, or charities – will develop concepts in response to the asset brief. The NLP will evaluate proposals and make a recommendation to the cabinet. The council is then responsible for implementation.

FUTURE PHASES

The test-and-learn approach is deliberatively iterative and scalable. The pilot, Phase 1, applies the SPLF to a diverse mix of five council-owned pilot sites.

After learning from the pilot and updating the SPLF accordingly, NEF recommends that Phase 2 applies the SPLF to sites owned by other civic landowners (NHS trusts, housing associations, faith organisations). A partnership approach distributes the responsibility of identifying sites across multiple landowners while also defining a strong coalition of

4 Social Purpose of Land Framework

support and interest in changing the status quo. This builds on the Southwark Land Commission's recommendation to establish a Southwark Land Partnership.

In Phase 3, NEF recommends that the SPLF is applied more widely to the council's and partners' property portfolios. Committing to a certain number of sites per year, hosting a digital map where community members can suggest sites, and offering a Community Empowerment Fund will mark a clear shift towards embedding community empowerment in the land use system.

The development of the Social Purpose of Land Framework has shown what's possible when residents and the council work together around a shared ambition. People new to thinking about land and development worked collaboratively with long time advocates and officers to shape it, showing the coalition of demand in support of more democratic and transparent land decisions. By building trust, sharing power, and recognising land as a foundation for civic life, Southwark can lead the way in showing how councils and communities can work together to shape a fairer, more inclusive borough.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work is the result of more than six months of collaboration, dialogue, and shared learning. We are deeply grateful to everyone who contributed their time, insight, and experience to the research and design of the Social Purpose of Land Framework.

- The community facilitators who helped us design and deliver stakeholder workshops: Lucy Atkinson, Ola Balogun, Gillian Benneh, Steph Bent, Lara Daniel, Jaki Glen, Joshua Gottlieb, Tom Harvey, Farrah Hendrickson, Jed Holloway, Erika Huartos-Castaneda, Tasnim Ince, Sharon Simpson, Sheeana Street.
- The officer advisory group that reviewed early drafts and advised on council policy: Forid Ahmed, Toni Aigne, Charlotte Brooks-Lawrie, Sarah Feasey, Mark Grant, Katy Griffith, Andrew Jackson, Timothy Jones, Jessica Leech, Elaine McLester, Chloe Melvin, Sheanna Street.
- Stakeholder interviewees: Anood Al-Samerai, Lucy Atkinson, Eileen Conn, Natasha Ennin, Sarah Goldzweig, Katie Godding, Mark Grant, Tim Jones, James McAsh, Anna Minton, Chloe Melvin, Stephen Platts, Tim Rettler, Jonathan Sedgewick, Cedric Whilby, Denise Williams-Dean, Joseph Vambe.
- Workshop participants for sharing their ambitions for how land in Southwark can better serve community life, including members of the Southwark Community Gardening Network, Southwark Travellers Action Group (STAG), Southwark Youth Parliament, and Westminster House Youth Club.

Thanks also to the Greater London Authority for supporting this project.

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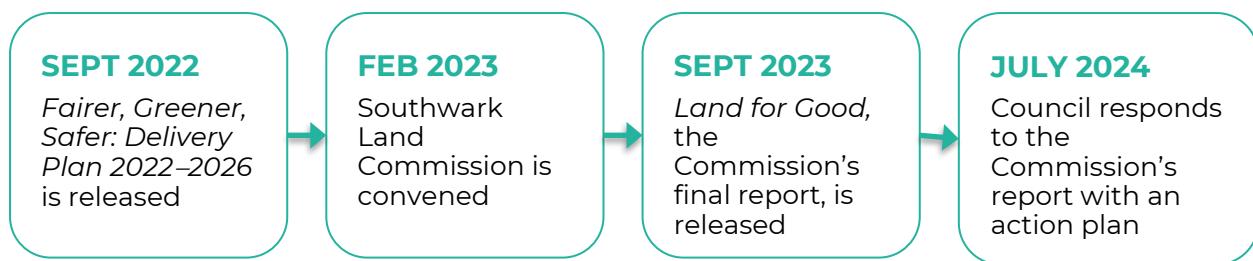
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WHY IS A SOCIAL PURPOSE OF LAND FRAMEWORK NEEDED?

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Southwark Land Commission



In September 2022, Southwark council published *Fairer, Greener, Safer: Delivery Plan 2022–2026*, setting out the council's priorities and delivery commitments. Included in the plan is a commitment to "deliver a Land Commission to identify how more land in Southwark can be freed up for public good".¹ In February 2023, Southwark council convened the Southwark Land Commission. An independent group of experts that met regularly over six months, the Commission was invited to provide and receive evidence and make clear recommendations for how land should be valued and used in the borough.

The Commission's final report highlighted inequalities in access to and governance of land, and called for more democratic, transparent, and accountable decision-making. It made seven key recommendations with 25 priority actions. A core recommendation was the creation of a Social Purpose of Land Framework (SPLF). The Commission envisioned this framework as a tool to put social purpose at the heart of all land decisions in Southwark, ensuring that land is valued not only for the income it generates but also for the social goods it creates. It recommended co-producing the framework with Southwark's diverse communities, applying it first to council-owned land, and ultimately embedding it into the council's statutory planning document, the local plan, so that decisions about land balance financial considerations with long-term community and environmental benefit.

Southwark council responded to the Commission's *Land for Good* report in July 2024, committing to take concrete steps, including co-producing the SPLF in partnership with communities and landowners.² In early 2025, the New Economics Foundation (NEF)

was awarded the council contract to develop the framework. NEF kicked off the research and organising project in March 2025.

Southwark's priorities

Southwark 2030, the borough's local plan, sets a clear direction for how the council intends to shape the future of the borough. At its core are three guiding principles: reducing inequality, empowering people, and investing in prevention. These principles frame the council's ambition to create a fairer, greener, and safer Southwark by ensuring that everyone has access to the opportunities, resources, and spaces they need to thrive. These priorities recognise that persistent inequalities in health, housing, and access to neighbourhood resources harm Southwark residents. Addressing these inequalities requires both shifting power to residents and acting early to prevent crises before they occur.

The SPLF builds directly on Southwark 2030, providing a practical mechanism to embed these priorities in decisions about how public land is used. By aligning land governance with Southwark 2030, the framework will help ensure that one of the borough's most significant public resources – its land – contributes to reducing inequality, enabling participation, and securing long-term social and environmental benefits.

National context

Over the past 15 years, major reductions in central government funding have placed significant pressure on local authorities, with councils expected to deliver more while relying on fewer resources. Councils' property portfolios play an increasingly integral role in supporting day-to-day council operations by generating income to support the delivery of core council services. This financial context means that land and property decisions are often framed primarily in the context of commercial logic and feasibility, even when the aim is to deliver wider social outcomes. The SPLF responds to this reality by offering a way to balance financial sustainability with the borough's long-term social mission.

Alongside these financial pressures, national policy reinforces a strong narrative of economic growth and housebuilding as key measures of success. The national planning system – through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and associated guidance – requires that local authorities plan for housing need and identify a pipeline of development-ready sites. While there is a clear need for more homes, the growth agenda places additional pressure on already constrained land resources, especially in

dense urban boroughs, such as Southwark, where competing demands for housing, green space, employment, and community uses are acute.

WHY IS A FRAMEWORK NEEDED?

The SPLF is a proposed approach to reimagining how the stewardship of public land can prioritise social outcomes, community voices, and local capacity building.

Southwark council owns the freehold interest of 36% of the land in the borough, making it one of the largest landowners. Most of this land is already tied up in existing, essential uses – council housing, parks and playing fields, schools, streets and highways, and operational facilities – along with income-generating commercial assets that help fund frontline services. Nonetheless, this scale of ownership means the council plays a major role in shaping how land is stewarded in Southwark. With that role comes the responsibility of ensuring that decisions about the land it controls, whether directly or through partnerships, are made transparently and in the long-term public interest.

Land is inherently finite. Land use decisions, as a result, must navigate a range of often competing issues while operating within the broader governance framework set by the national planning system. Southwark, as an inner London borough, has high land values, sustained by its central location and persistent demand for housing and commercial uses. How land is used, therefore, is highly contested. Housing, commercial uses, community spaces, and public services compete for limited space. The council, in addition to navigating these competing demands, is also responsible for delivering a range of critical statutory services. Faced with austerity-induced national funding cuts and operating within an economic system and development model predicated on financial viability and accumulation, councils across the UK are leveraging their property portfolios to generate revenue to fund the key services that support residents to thrive.

For example, entering a planning agreement with a development partner on a council-owned asset could bring much needed workspace and complementary social uses secured through Section 106 agreements to a local area, along with capital receipts from the land sale which help fund critical services. Yet pursuing a new office development means other policy priorities – such as green spaces, new nursery spots, or a community centre – will not be delivered at-scale on that site. These decisions, and the trade-offs that are made to get there, often feel opaque and disconnected from the people who are most affected.

The SPLF is a first step to reimagining the status quo. It aims to redistribute power, bring transparency to decisions about land and its governance, and make visible the trade-offs in delivering long-term social purpose on public land. The proposed

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framework builds on steps the council already takes when it makes land use decisions, including understanding local need, assessing different land use options, considering social outcomes, and determining financial implications. While there is a robust statutory consultation process for planning proposals, there are other decisions about assets that are not governed by the council's statutory planning document, the local plan, which take place without much public oversight or clear opportunities for community involvement. The framework aims to open up these processes on a series of pilot sites, to make them more transparent, participatory, and accountable.

HOW WE CREATED THE FRAMEWORK

Residents, council officers, and researchers collaboratively developed the Social Purpose of Land Framework (SPLF). Through stakeholder interviews, participatory community workshops, and a review of existing council policies and best practices, we gathered insights to ground the framework in both lived experience and the council policy landscape. The approach drew on principles of community organising, with community facilitators playing a central role in designing and delivering workshops. This balance of technical research with organising and engagement built power and ownership of the framework by residents.

INTERVIEWS AND STAKEHOLDER CONVERSATIONS

NEF conducted 15 semi-structured stakeholder interviews. Interviewees were recruited using a snowball approach. We developed an initial longlist and reached out to potential participants. The goal was to have a range of perspectives represented in the interviews, from inside and outside the council, as well as with individuals familiar with the Southwark Land Commission (eg former commissioners) and people new to the project, whether officers from council teams that were not involved with the Commission, or community advocates who did not take part in engagement activities as part of the Commission. Interviewees were asked to suggest additional contacts for interviews, follow-up conversations, or for recruitment as community facilitators.

Interviewees provided informed consent, and interviews were conducted on the basis of anonymity. We coded and analysed transcripts using a thematic analysis approach.

COMMUNITY FACILITATORS

A central part of the project was working with a group of community facilitators. NEF recruited 14 community facilitators through recommendations from council contacts, interviewees, and desktop research. We also issued a call-out to the Active Communities Network's Civic Leaders Programme, which provides training and support for minority ethnic Southwark residents in community leadership and advocacy. Of the 14 facilitators, 8 were drawn from the Civic Leaders Programme and 6 were recruited independently, ensuring there was continuity with existing council-led leadership development efforts while also creating opportunities for new leaders. Facilitators took part in a two-day NEF-led training based on Marshall Ganz's community organising approach, including the 'story of self' method.³ Facilitators were remunerated for their

time, recognising that fair participation requires financial support to enable involvement from those who might otherwise be excluded.

Based on discussions in the training, NEF developed draft agendas for two community workshops. The community facilitators reviewed and suggested revisions to the agenda on planning calls with NEF, ensuring that the facilitators were involved not just with the delivery of engagement but also with its design.

The group of facilitators played an active role in the two participatory workshops. Ten facilitators took part in the first workshop and eight in the second. Working in pairs, facilitators led table discussions with residents and stakeholders and took detailed notes. Between the two workshops, we held further planning calls to refine workshop design in response to emerging insights. Towards the end of the process, we met for a debrief session, which gave the facilitators and researchers an opportunity to reflect on the process, consolidate learning, and explore how the facilitator group might continue to play a role in shaping land governance in Southwark.

WORKSHOPS

We held three participatory community workshops, supported by the group of trained community facilitators. The first workshop was held on 19 June 2025 at the Dene Community Centre. There were 35 participants representing a diverse mix of stakeholders, including council officers, Greater London Authority (GLA) staff, community activists, Southwark residents, former commissioners from the Southwark Land Commission, and staff from a range of local voluntary and community sector organisations. In addition to participants, there were 10 community facilitators and three NEF staff. The second workshop was held on 9 July 2025 at Walworth Town Hall. There were 30 participants, eight community facilitators, and three NEF staff. Many workshop participants attended both workshops, though there was some turnover between the two. The final workshop was held on 19 November 2025 at Westminster House Youth Club. There were 30 participants, five community facilitators, two NEF staff, and one council officer.

The first workshop aimed to build a shared understanding of what ‘social purpose’ means in practice, and to begin testing early decision-making methods. The session opened with a ‘story of self’ exercise, encouraging participants to introduce themselves as people rather than as representatives of their organisations. In small groups, participants discussed what social purpose meant to them and what local needs example sites could meet. They then assessed three preliminary decision-making models developed by the project team, reflecting on what worked and what didn’t in each

model while considering both the council's perspective (technical and financial feasibility, legal duties) and communities' perspectives (local priorities, transparency, ownership).

The second workshop aimed to test elements of the framework and the process for how it would be applied. Participants first reviewed the draft framework principles and evaluation criteria and provided feedback. In small groups, they charted a path through a skeleton governance process, deciding who should be involved at various stages of the land governance process. Finally, they assessed two land use options against each other, scoring them against the draft evaluation criteria.

The third workshop engaged a group of 13- to 18-year-olds at a youth club in Nunhead, whose members come from 35 different schools across the borough. The session was designed to understand young people's experience of local spaces, introduce the Social Purpose of Land Framework, and explore how young people can build power and influence local decision-making processes.

POLICY ANALYSIS AND THE COUNCIL OFFICER ADVISORY GROUP

In addition to the workshops and interviews, NEF analysed existing council policies and had conversations with relevant officers about policies in development. These included:

- Affordable workspace, cabinet report and strategy
- Corporate asset management plan
- Community review panels
- Design review panels
- Neighbourhoods Programme
- Premises plan (Community Southwark)
- Right to Grow
- Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy supplementary planning documents
- Social Value Framework
- Southwark 2030 (Borough Plan)
- Southwark Land Commission and the council's response
- Southwark Plan 2022–2027 (local plan)
- Statement of community involvement and development consultation charter
- VCS letting approach

An officer advisory group, with representatives from key departments including property, planning, finance, procurement, resident services, and legal, also supported

the development of the framework. The group met every six weeks throughout the process to provide feedback on framework drafts, provide council context, and highlight constraints.

PRECEDENT REVIEW

NEF also reviewed relevant local, national, and international precedents to understand best practices around land use frameworks, social letting, and democratic decision-making models, and how to embed equity and social justice in land use decisions. These included:

- **National frameworks for land use planning** (Scotland's Land Use Strategy, Defra's Land Use Framework consultation)
- **Tools for evaluating trade-offs** (multi-criteria analysis, matrices, decision trees)
- **Mass engagement methods** (Streetspace Southwark, New Homes Programme, Neighbourhoods Programme)
- **Democratic and participatory methods** (Forum for Equalities and Human Rights in Southwark, citizens' assemblies, public-common partnerships)
- **Letting for social purpose** (peppercorn rent for affordable workspace, voluntary and community sector (VCS) premises policies, social value leases, partnership approaches to surplus land, embedding equity in land dispositions)

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

The following chapter distils insights from across the research methods. The insights reveal both the potential and practical limits of embedding social purpose in council land decisions, showing where progress is already being made, where the system constrains it, and how the Social Purpose of Land Framework (SPLF) can help bridge the gap.

- **Willingness without the system:** There is clear institutional openness to using the council's portfolio for collective social good (affordable workspace strategy (AWS), voluntary and community sector (VCS) lettings, Right to Grow) and strong site-level examples (Livesey Exchange, Mentity). Current good practice remains ad hoc and opaque to outsiders, though, lacking consistency or transparency.
- **A culture defined by austerity:** Severe budget pressures and property revenue dependence have created a risk-averse and scarcity-steeped council culture, driven by real demands to generate near-term income, while limiting opportunities for experimentation and innovation.
- **Engagement ≠ power:** Current land use engagement approaches are mostly advisory and typically take place after key decisions have already been made; communities want to be co-producers with genuine influence, supported with appropriate resourcing (time, training, compensation).
- **Transparency builds trust:** A history of land decisions that felt opaque and extractive has eroded public confidence in council-led processes. Rebuilding trust requires being clear about what is genuinely open for input, who decides, and how trade-offs are made.
- **From combative to collaborative:** Land decisions are often contentious and defensive. The framework, as a collaborative process, aims to shift this dynamic. It will not remove conflict, but it will allow it to be channelled productively, with clear principles for process, structured dialogue, and shared accountability.
- **Outcomes over uses:** Stakeholders want to define desired impacts (eg cohesion, wellbeing, inclusion) rather than prescribing uses. Quantitative scoring can structure discussions, but should not determine decisions.
- **Act, then learn:** It is better to do something and learn from it than to do nothing. Favour activation of assets over leaving them vacant. Create paths to permanence for meanwhile users. Embed a test-and-learn approach into implementation.

- **Process, not policy change:** The SPLF is a structured decision-making process, not a new statutory policy; it prototypes a more transparent and participatory approach within existing legal and planning parameters.

FINDINGS: POLICY ANALYSIS

Reviewing key Southwark policies reveals that many of the ambitions behind the SPLF are also reflected elsewhere. Together, these policies – Social Value Framework, Corporate Asset Management Plan, the local plan, Southwark 2030, AWS, Right to Grow – demonstrate the council’s strong commitment to using land and property to deliver social benefits. The review, however, also highlights gaps and tensions in existing policy that the framework can help address. (See key insights from the policy review below; a full summary can be found Appendix 1.)

While there are complementary policies, there is no overarching social framework for public land governance.

While several policies touch on the social use of council-owned assets, there is no single framework that coordinates how decisions about public land are made with social purpose as the primary principle. The Corporate Asset Management Plan (2021) sets principles for stewardship and financial performance, but focuses on internal rather than joint decision-making. Other strategies, like the AWS and the emerging VCS lettings policy, define approaches for specific asset types but stop short of establishing a borough-wide process for determining social purpose.

The SPLF is just that. Its pilot is a way to test a more structured, transparent, and collaborative process to decide how certain council assets are used. It is a practical approach for prototyping new ways of working within known boundaries.

Commercial pressures shape asset decisions.

Like all local authorities, Southwark faces severe financial constraints. Across England, years of austerity budgets have meant that funding for local governments fell by 56% in real terms from 2010 to 2020.⁴ The decades-long impact of austerity, coupled with forthcoming government changes to local council funding formulas, and a worsening temporary accommodation crisis and other rising service demands, means that Southwark council faces a £70mn shortfall over the next three years.⁵

This financial context cannot be ignored when considering how the council manages its assets. With a significant projected budget shortfall, the council is increasingly dependent on generating income from its £5.4bn property portfolio to sustain statutory

services. It is pushed to take a more commercial mindset while also delivering vital services that are inherently non-commercial.

This creates a culture shaped by scarcity and risk aversion, one that encourages officers to think in terms of income maximisation and cost recovery even when the goal is to deliver social good. Decision-making under such constraints can become reactive and transactional, privileging short-term financial certainty over longer-term social purpose. It also puts real pressure on staff, straining the capacity for experimentation, collaboration, and trust-based partnerships with communities.

This challenge is not unique to local government. The Office for Budget Responsibility's public finance accounting practices distinguish between investment in capital improvements and social infrastructure.⁶ Narrow fiscal multipliers devalue the longer-term benefits of public investment in social infrastructure and prioritise short-term fiscal outcomes.

The SPLF recognises these realities. It does not dismiss the need for financial responsibility but instead seeks to create a more transparent and balanced process, one that makes trade-offs explicit and enables social outcomes to be valued alongside financial ones.

Good precedents and emerging policies indicate a culture of willingness.

Despite financial pressures, it is clear that there is institutional openness and innovation within Southwark council and how it approaches land. The AWS (2025) formalises the idea of social benefit as a legitimate basis for subsidised rent. The forthcoming VCS lettings policy will bring greater consistency to how community organisations lease council spaces with discounted rent. Through the planning system, the statement of community involvement and development consultation charter set out engagement expectations for development partners.

As the first London council to adopt the Right to Grow, Southwark is committed to enabling residents and organisations to cultivate unused council land for community food growing and greening projects provided it is suitable and approved through a formal process in the process of being established. The Right to Grow policy explicitly frames unused land as a shared civic asset and places trust in residents to bring it back into productive social use. This is a significant symbolic shift from gatekeeping to co-stewardship.

There are also examples of good practice on individual sites, like the Livesey Exchange and Mentity. These successes, however, generally rely on the initiative and

relationships of individual officers, rather than taking place as part of a systematised process. Without public visibility, even though the outcomes are positive, cases like these risk perpetuating the perception that the council makes deals behind closed doors, preventing fair and equal access to opportunity.

The SPLF builds on the momentum demonstrated by these examples and provides a structured way to extend these principles to a wider range of assets.

Existing engagement processes stop short of co-governance or democratic decision-making.

Southwark is committed to broadening participation in land and planning decisions through programmatic initiatives, such as the Neighbourhoods Programme, and more place-based engagement approaches, like community and design review panels. These processes, however, remain largely advisory. Consultation typically takes place after key parameters have been set, restricting community influence to reactions rather than ideation.

The SPLF introduces a model of shared decision-making, where communities and council representatives work together from the outset to shape briefs, assess proposals, and monitor outcomes, as a step-change from engagement to co-production.

Recognising boundaries: statutory policy, council governance, legal, and financial.

The SPLF sits firmly within council policy, not planning policy. Planning policy is statutory, governed by the Southwark Plan (local plan), the London Plan, and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). These frameworks set out formal requirements for development, land use, and consultation, with the associated statutory obligations. In contrast, the council's strategic priorities inform council policies, which are determined at the cabinet level. Generally, there is less formal accountability with the delivery of council policy, compared to planning policy. While there are fewer formal levers, the council can shape practice, influence future policies, and inform revisions to statutory planning frameworks over time.

Throughout the framework's development, the officer advisory group helped clarify what financial, legal, and planning parameters must be respected. This includes compliance with the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954, which provides security of tenure for commercial tenants; the council's constitution, which governs decision-making and delegation of authority; and statutory planning processes that regulate how land use changes are approved.

The activation and application of the SPLF does not supersede existing legal or regulatory frameworks. All decisions made through the framework will continue to comply with relevant legislation and policy. Its purpose is to add transparency, participation, and consistency to how land and property decisions are made, not to alter legal duties. By working within these parameters – and making them explicit – the framework aims to expand what is possible through collaborative governance, while maintaining the council's statutory responsibilities and fiduciary integrity.

FINDINGS: PRECEDENT REVIEW

By situating the SPLF within a landscape of wider practice – looking to examples from elsewhere in London, the UK, and abroad – we can learn about different approaches to balancing social, economic, and environmental goals in land use and asset decisions. As an urban land use framework that seeks to centre social purpose in decisions about how the public estate is used, the SPLF is the first of its kind. And while a direct comparator may not exist, the approach and method of the SPLF draws from best practices tested elsewhere.

National frameworks for land use planning

Across the UK, decision-makers are recognising the need for a more strategic approach to spatial planning to balance competing demands on land. The UK's land must serve multiple objectives: support economic opportunity, meet housing needs, safeguard food security, restore nature, address climate change, and more. Land use frameworks are emerging as a policy tool to coordinate these goals, shaping decisions about who uses land, for what purposes, and how those decisions are made. They sit alongside planning policy to support greater coordination between environmental, social, and development priorities.

Scotland's Land Use Strategy

Scotland first launched its Land Use Strategy in 2011, with a mandate to update the strategy every five years; the third edition came into effect in 2021. The Scottish Land Use Strategy recognises the critical threat that the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss create. It also acknowledges how farming practices, natural resource management, and approaches to new development can directly contradict efforts to restore nature and adapt to and mitigate the harms of climate change. It emphasises the multifunctionality of land, or the principle that with strategic foresight, land can deliver multiple benefits concurrently. The Scottish government has also piloted regional land use partnerships and is exploring the opportunity for regional land use frameworks.⁷

Defra Land Use Framework Consultation

In early 2025, the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) launched a 12-week public consultation to create a national Land Use Framework.⁸ The framework aims to provide a coherent, cross-sector approach to how land is managed and allocated, balancing demands for food production, housing, energy, nature recovery, and climate mitigation. It will seek to create a shared evidence base, reduce conflicts between competing priorities, and guide decision-makers at national and local levels towards more sustainable and multifunctional uses of land.

Takeaways for the Social Purpose of Land Framework

These national examples demonstrate growing interest in strategic land use planning, with a particular emphasis on the need to balance competing priorities and trade-offs. Southwark's SPLF brings the national approach to the community level, as the first local urban framework that puts social purpose at its core. By embedding community voice and social outcomes alongside environmental and financial considerations, the SPLF can be a model for local implementation that complements Defra's Land Use Framework as it develops.

Tools for evaluating trade-offs

As discussed, land use planning inherently requires navigating trade-offs between different uses and outcomes. There are several methods and approaches to decision-making that we can look to, both from within the land use planning system and other policy areas.

Multi-criteria analysis

Multi-criteria analysis (MCA) is an analytical method to help decision-makers choose between multiple policy options with potentially competing objectives. It can help make trade-offs between two or more approaches transparent. Typically, MCA defines a set of criteria or outcomes that the policy approach should deliver; then, each option is evaluated against those criteria. The evaluation is often a straightforward numerical score, sometimes weighted by relative importance.

In land use contexts, MCA can be used to compare potential development sites or assess competing land uses. For example, a Swiss study combined MCA with spatial mapping to evaluate the suitability of different parcels of land for housing, weighing factors such as transportation access, existing land use, and environmental constraints.⁹ In the UK, Defra released guidance about using MCA as part of the appraisal process for flood management and coastal defence projects.¹⁰ The guidance suggests that MCA, compared to cost-benefit analysis, can better capture multiple environmental and social outcomes in land and water management decisions.

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While MCA can bring structure and transparency to complex land use trade-offs, these analyses tend to be expert-led with a heavy reliance on numerical scoring that can overlook local knowledge, relationships, and lived experience.

Matrices and decision trees

Matrices and decision trees are a more visual way of understanding how different policy decisions or approaches interact. The Scottish Ecological Design Association (SEDA) used decision trees during its Land Conversations (2021) to help participants understand the many interlinked factors that shape how land is used, from soil health and biodiversity to ownership and governance, to macro-economic and macro-environmental influences.¹¹

SEDA started by creating a matrix, listing different land uses (eg energy, farming, woodland) on one axis, and products that land creates (eg food, jobs, wildlife, wellbeing) on the other axis. Mapping the relationship between specific land uses and their outputs helped show which land uses support multiple outcomes, where tensions arose between land uses, and where gaps existed in the provision of certain products. The matrix was then translated into a decision tree, a semi-quantitative assessment tool used to visualise the interactions between different parts of the system.

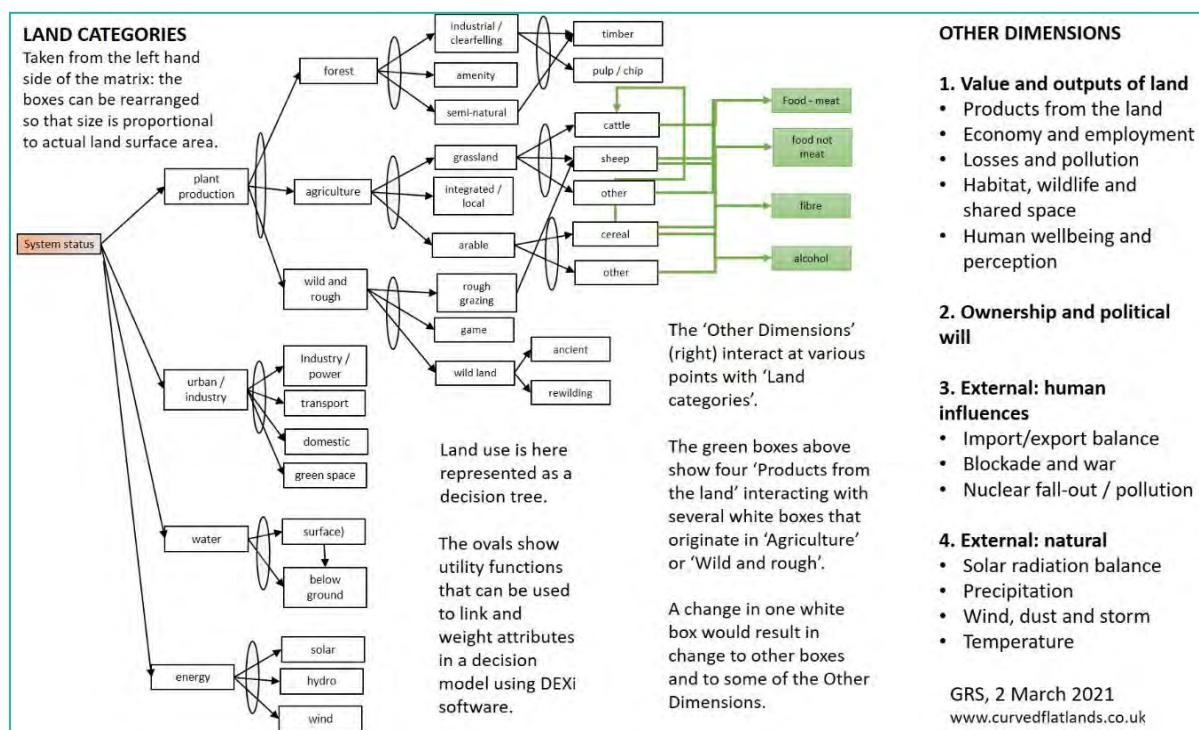


Figure 1: Scotland Ecological Design Association's (SEDA) decision tree of main land use types and 'products'.

Takeaways for the Social Purpose of Land Framework

Methods like MCA, matrices, and decision trees can help structure complex land use trade-offs and make underlying assumptions more transparent. They risk, however, oversimplifying nuanced considerations into numerical scores that obscure local context and social realities. We tested a high-level MCA in the second participatory workshop, the results of which are discussed in Section 0. Ultimately, the lesson is that without proper guardrails, an MCA or highly detailed matrix and decision tree is an exercise in technical optimisation rather than collective deliberation.

Mass engagement methods

Southwark council already makes use of digital and place-based mass engagement tools to involve residents in shaping local priorities. Platforms such as Commonplace and new neighbourhood-level websites enable residents to contribute ideas to make the places they live safe and welcoming. These methods show how large-scale engagement can capture hyper-local insights, identify patterns of community concern, and make participation accessible.

Streetspace Southwark

Streetspace Southwark was a programme of traffic reduction and safety schemes across the borough that ran through the Covid-19 pandemic. The council commissioned Commonplace, an online community engagement platform, to create an interactive map on which residents could suggest locations for investment in street improvements, to help people move around their neighbourhoods more safely.¹²

Residents could add points to the map, noting unsafe intersections or ideas for traffic-calming measures, or recommending cycling infrastructure improvements. The map elicited more than 2,400 suggestions and more than 15,000 upvotes for other residents' suggestions. This hyper-local engagement approach fed into the council's decisions about where to prioritise 'slow streets' and invest in walking and cycling infrastructure.

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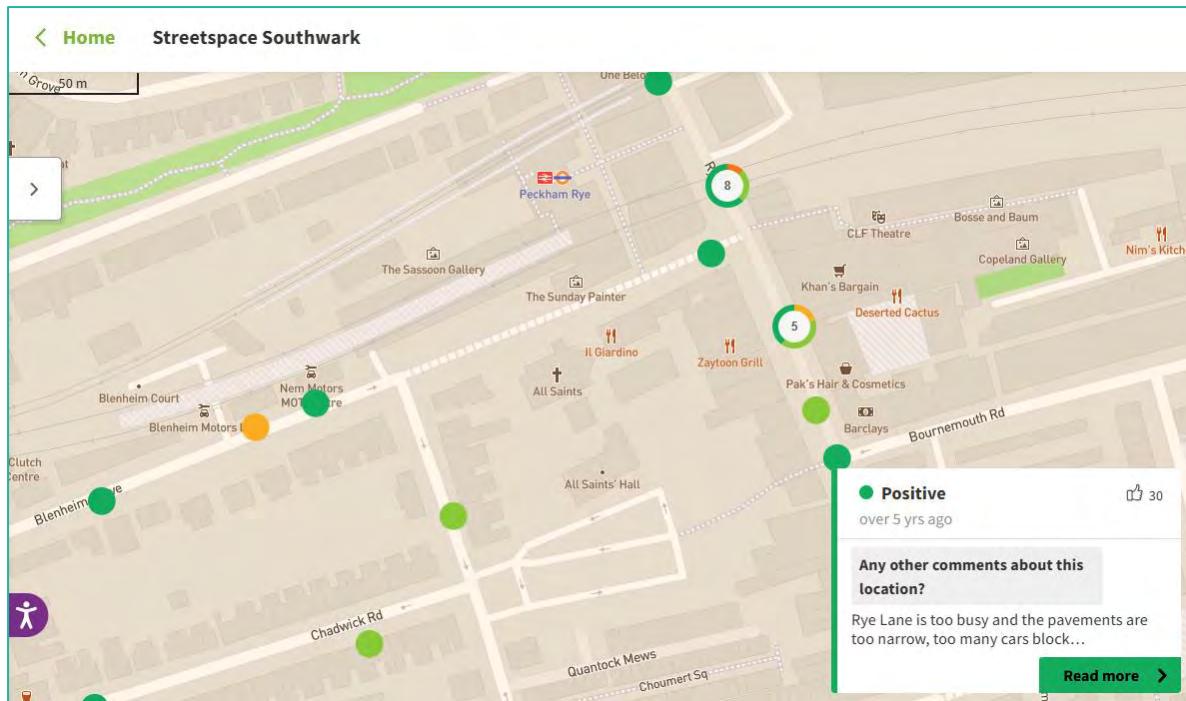


Figure 2: Streetspace Southwark user-generated map with suggested traffic and public realm improvements.

Identifying sites for the New Homes Programme (2014)

The council's 2014 New Homes Programme committed to building 1,500 new council homes by 2018. The next step in the programme was to work with community members to identify sites for housing development. On an interactive map, similar to the Commonplace platform (Figure 2), residents were asked to nominate sites for new council-led housing. The map generated more than 700 site ideas for new housing.

Neighbourhoods Programme and community plans

In summer 2025, Southwark council launched the Neighbourhoods Programme. Splitting the borough into 10 neighbourhoods, the council will work with local communities to create neighbourhood-specific community plans. Each neighbourhood has a dedicated website with information on the neighbourhood champion (the area's ward councillor), updates on the emerging community plan, and opportunities to feed into the process through surveys and feedback on draft materials.¹³ (See Appendix 1 for more detail on the Neighbourhoods Programme.)

Takeaways for the Social Purpose of Land Framework

Southwark's previous experience using mass engagement, and especially spatial engagement tools, demonstrates that the council is well positioned to develop and host a map to solicit ideas for social purpose uses at a neighbourhood scale as part of the SPLF.

Democratic and participatory methods

This section reviews different models of participatory governance. We look at an existing approach in Southwark council, citizens' assemblies, and public-common partnerships (PCPs). These models demonstrate that participation needs to be representative and resourced, with clear pathways for accountability, especially if the participatory body is advisory rather than decision-making.

Forum for Equalities and Human Rights in Southwark

The Forum for Equalities and Human Rights in Southwark (FEHRS) is a council-funded initiative led by Citizens Advice that serves as a 'critical friend' to the council on issues relating to equalities and human rights.¹⁴ Participation is open to all voluntary and community sector organisations in the borough. The FEHRS serves as the primary method of consultation for the council around the development of the council's approach to equality and human rights. The forum plays an advisory, rather than decision-making, role. It demonstrates a tested model of partnership governance – independently convened, council-supported, and a trusted avenue for local organisations to learn from each other and challenge the council.

Citizens' assemblies

Citizens' assemblies can be a deeply democratic and deliberative way to understand informed preferences on complex or contested issues. They bring together a randomly selected, but representative, sample of the community to learn about, debate, and make recommendations to powerholders on a particular social issue.

Assembly members are selected based on demographics (eg age, ethnicity, gender, class), and depending on the focus of the assembly, their attitudes towards a certain issue (eg abortion). Recruitment often takes place by sortition (ie lottery), with invitations to take part sent out to a random sample of community members who are then selected to represent the community at large. While the assembly is responsible for making a recommendation, final decision-making power typically remains with the relevant legislative authority (eg UK Parliament, local authorities).

Originating in Canada in the early 2000s, citizens' assemblies have since been adopted across the UK. The 2018 Citizens' Assembly on Social Care was the first national assembly convened in the UK, followed by the UK Climate Assembly in 2020. Local governments across the country have also held citizens' assemblies, from Southwark's own citizens' jury on climate change to the Camden Health and Care Citizens' Assembly to Newham's permanent assembly.

While citizens' assemblies can enable informed and inclusive discussion on complex issues, experience from Southwark's climate jury highlights important limitations.

Despite strong commitment from participants, the process revealed how assemblies risk becoming symbolic exercises when they lack a clear mandate, sufficient time, or robust links to decision-making. Critiques from local observers noted weak accountability for recommendations, uneven facilitation, limited diversity in participation, and expert input that did not always connect to local realities or measurable outcomes.¹⁵

While the SPLF does not propose a citizens' assembly, community facilitators' interest in the idea underlines a shared ambition for representative, transparent, and well-resourced participation, where deliberation is meaningfully connected to how decisions are ultimately made.

Public-common partnerships

PCPs are an emerging alternative to the familiar public-private partnership (PPP) model. Instead of relying on collaboration between the public sector and private investors, PCPs propose a new form of shared governance between the public sector, workers, and the wider community. A PCP operates on the principle of commoning, bringing critical community infrastructure into common ownership rather than private enclosure. A PCP centres on a jointly-owned enterprise, such as a housing project, workspace, or utility company, that is co-governed by three partners: (1) a public body (eg local authority); (2) a Common Association made up of community members, residents, local business owners, and consumers; and (3) project-specific stakeholders (eg union reps, relevant experts).

Unlike PPPs, PCPs are designed to hold assets in democratic ownership. As a non-profit, any surplus revenues generated through the joint enterprise are reinvested locally through the common association, with the explicit aim of supporting social and environmental benefits. Decisions about land, housing, or infrastructure within a PCP are guided by community needs, rather than profit extraction.

As an emergent model, PCPs are being explored through pilot projects in the UK

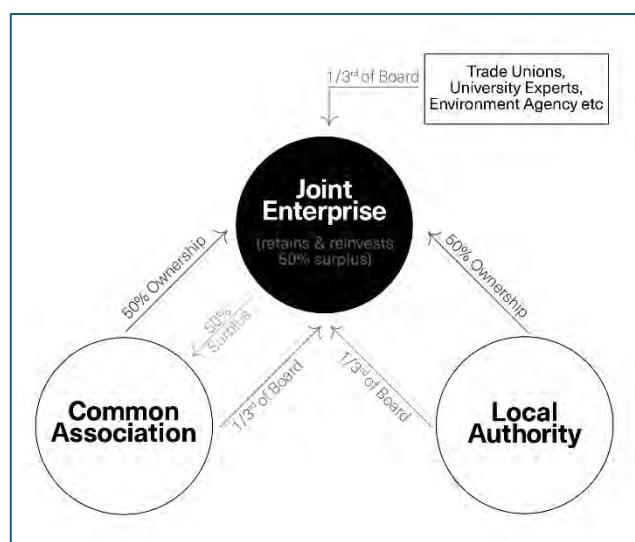


Figure 3: Public-common partnership's shared governance.

and Europe. For example, Haringey's Wards Corner is home to the Latin Village market, one of the last such hubs for London's Latin American communities. The building and land are publicly owned (by Transport for London), and the market was recognised as an Asset of Community Value in 2014 by Haringey council. Since 2007, community organisers have iteratively developed a community plan – a community-led design process – and secured planning permission for the plan. In 2022, a coalition of community organisations founded the Wards Corner Community Benefit Society, which is responsible for restoring and running the buildings. The Community Benefit Society functions as the 'joint enterprise' in the PCP. A separate development trust plays the role of the 'common association'. By taking a PCP approach, the Wards Corner buildings will be protected as a community-controlled asset, embodying the principles that community-led must also mean community-owned.

Takeaways for the Social Purpose of Land Framework

These examples provide a snapshot of potential participatory methods that could be embedded in the SPFL. From the FEHRS, we can see that the council has experience running advisory panels made up of external stakeholders that operate with the explicit purpose of scrutinising council activities. Running a full citizens' assembly is highly resource intensive and risks devolving into a standard engagement process without adequate facilitation and critique of power structures; we can take citizens' assemblies' commitment to representation as a learning for the SPLF. Finally, PCPs chart a path towards community-led governance models that move beyond engagement towards shared ownership and stewardship.

Letting for social purposes

This section summarises a handful of operating examples of councils and other public landlords using their land and property for social purposes. We look at relevant local council policies, the NHS's Surplus Land collection, and an example from California that puts social equity at the heart of leasing and disposal decisions.

Peppercorn rent for affordable workspace – Islington council

Islington council's Affordable Workspace Policy requires that commercial developments over 1,000 square metres provide 10% of the floorspace as affordable workspace. This space is leased to the council at a peppercorn rent for 20 years. The council sublets the affordable spaces to operators, taken from its approved list of affordable workspace providers. The policy has already led to the creation of three affordable workspace buildings, generating over £1.2m in social value to date.¹⁶

The council also grants peppercorn rents in exchange for the delivery of defined social value outcomes, such as for the Black Cultural Centre¹⁷ and several youth centres

(including the Rose Bowl, Lift, and Platform).¹⁸ These leases are excluded from Part II of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954, meaning tenants do not have an automatic right to renew. In addition, the council has issued a 250-year ground lease at a peppercorn rent to a non-profit housing provider to enable the development of 11 new affordable homes.¹⁹

Voluntary and community sector premises policies – Lambeth, Haringey, Newham

In 2019, Newham council agreed to a new methodology for managing council-owned community centres. Central to the method was an asset review flowchart.²⁰ As detailed in the flowchart, when a council-owned community centre is vacated, the council goes through a process of first determining whether the building is needed as a community centre. It will then review it against the local plan policy (IFN8), which sets out the council's obligations to provide and protect community infrastructure. If the building does not meet the policy criteria, then the council will look to lease it out on the open market or offer a lease to VCS organisations. VCS organisations will complete a social value self-assessment form, which identifies the level of social value that they expect to deliver in the first year of their lease. A social value subsidy will be provided that reflects the self-assessment; the rent discount can range from 20% to 80% of the market rate. Occupiers must acknowledge that the primary purpose of the building is to serve tenants and leaseholders, which should be reflected in their delivery model.

Since 2021, Lambeth council has recognised the value of the VCS as a key part of the borough's social ecosystem. As such, the VCS Lettings Policy²¹ sets out a process for VCS organisations to enter into community leases with the council at below-market rents. Premises are let out through a call for proposals, with clearly defined selection criteria against which VCS applicants are evaluated. Organisations granted community leases are required to self-report on their social value impact. Leases are granted for up to 10 years, with development break clauses, and are granted outside the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954. Rent is set at a fixed VCS rate, which does not account for market rates or the differential in property values in the north versus the south of the borough. The council is transparent about the total rental subsidy expected as part of the policy – at the time of the policy's release, they forecast it would be £850,000. Currently, Lambeth has 49 properties in its VCS portfolio.

In April 2025, Haringey council implemented a Community Assets Social Value Policy.²² Recognising that the VCS is key to supporting Haringey residents, especially the most vulnerable, the council sought to standardise its approach to providing subsidised lettings for VCS organisations. It proposed co-creating a social value matrix with VCS

organisations that it would use to self-assess the social value they produce. VCS organisations would apply for a rental subsidy that reflected the social value created across each criterion in the matrix, up to a maximum subsidy level. The alternative explored was to try to calculate a monetary value for the social value generated. This approach was deemed too challenging, given the complexity of financially valuing the creation of social value. The council proposes using weighting criteria as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Haringey's proposed Social Value Policy weighting criteria.

Social value criteria	Subsidy value
Access (opening hours and inclusion)	25
Health and wellbeing	40
Opportunities	25
Environment and sustainability	10

The maximum subsidy is 80% of market rent, achievable if organisations fulfil every criterion in the matrix; organisations need to achieve at least 25 points from the matrix to be eligible for a social value subsidy. This model will apply to an initial tranche of 23 community centres that are currently out of lease. As other buildings in the community centre portfolio come up for lease review or renewal, they will be renegotiated under the policy.

Social value leases – Poole, Bootle, Belfast

Private asset managers are pioneering social value leases to bring vacant high street buildings back into use for community benefit.²³ Asset managers, such as Legal & General, Bywater Properties, and Ellandi, are offering below-market rents to small local businesses, artisans, community kitchens, music venues, and other occupiers that generate a clear community benefit. Occupiers get access to the otherwise vacant units rent-free for two years; this platform gives them the chance to test and grow their ideas, while bringing vibrancy, footfall, and community life to otherwise struggling high streets or town centres.

Partnership approach to surplus land – NHS, Southeast London Integrated Care Board

The NHS Surplus Land collection looks to make better use of land in the NHS's property portfolio by identifying surplus or underused sites that can be used to meet local priorities. Disposals consider non-monetary value and encourage reinvestment into initiatives that reduce health inequalities.

Southeast London's Integrated Care Board (ICB) takes a place-based approach to developing its estates strategy. Through the Local Estates Forum, NHS organisations, local authorities, and housing partners work together to plan how surplus sites can address population health needs and local housing shortages. This collaborative model ensures that land decisions contribute to wider system priorities, including the prevention of ill health, the creation of healthy neighbourhoods, and affordable housing for NHS staff and key workers.

Embedding equity in land dispositions – City of Richmond (California)

The City of Richmond, a municipality in the San Francisco Bay Area, adopted the Equitable Public Land Disposition Policy in March 2024. The policy sets out the city's approach to developing affordable housing on city-owned land. The city owns 100 vacant sites, 14 of which were declared 'surplus land'; these surplus sites are what the policy applies to.

Richmond City Council recognised that without a clear policy guiding the process for leasing, selling, or developing surplus sites, there was a major risk that financial return rather than social outcomes would lead the process. As a city with significant pressures on land that are driving up housing costs, and a long history of environmental injustice, the council took an ambitious and active role in developing the Equitable Public Land Disposition Policy to ensure that surplus public property would be used to maximise public good.

The policy is the first of its kind, giving strong priority to development proposals that prioritise permanently and genuinely affordable homes, with a preference for development partners that can deliver these homes through community land trusts (CLTs) or limited equity co-operatives. Recognising the social value of creating and protecting affordable homes, the policy allows the city to lease land at below-market prices if proposals meet the policy criteria.

The evaluation criteria for selecting development partners to build affordable housing put social equity and racial justice at the core of the policy. An explicit policy goal is to proactively prevent gentrification and the displacement of Richmond residents, which is codified with an anti-speculation covenant that prohibits resale or subletting of property at rates deemed unaffordable to residents.

Priority is given to proposals that enable community control and resident empowerment, through governance models like CLTs or co-ops. It also favours proposals that include co-operative ownership models for any commercial or non-

housing uses. Preference is given to local non-profit housing developers, with community connection demonstrated through letters of recommendation from community members and participation in local community events. The assessment process also accounts for the skills that less established, but highly local or innovative developers can bring, which is reflected in how partners are evaluated for financial capacity and developer experience. Transparency and public participation are also key to the policy. The project selection panel includes two Richmond residents who have been impacted by the housing crisis, along with city staff.

Takeaways for the Social Purpose of Land Framework

Many public and private sector landowners use their property portfolios as tools for equity and community wealth. Our examples show the shift from ad hoc leasing to transparent and strategic criteria-based approaches that recognise social value and community benefit as legitimate forms of return.

The City of Richmond goes furthest, explicitly naming gentrification, displacement, and social inequities as challenges that public land policy should address. By prioritising permanently affordable homes, community ownership models (CLTs, co-ops), and transparency in partner selection, it reframes land disposal as an instrument of racial and economic justice. The SPLF could also factor in the different skills that partners can bring (ie emerging developers), such as By-and-For organisations.

Significantly, looking at London examples shows that other councils and partner organisations are considering how to leverage their property portfolios for social good. As the Southwark VCS strategy is developed, officers should look to tried and tested approaches from elsewhere, to tap into that momentum and be bold in its support for the VCS.

FINDINGS: INTERVIEWS

Across the board, interviews show a clear shift in focus: from why social purpose matters to the harder question of how to make it work in a fiscally stressed, risk-averse municipal system enmeshed in wider London growth pressures. The interviews show both promising alliances (political-community-regional) and institutional tripwires (legal, financial, cultural) that the framework has to clear to translate aspiration into durable practice.

Key themes from the interviews are summarised in the next section.

Social benefit versus fiscal pressure: a core fault-line

While some stakeholders within the council perceive the issue as near zero-sum, with every £1 foregone in revenue resulting in a £1 cut elsewhere, others broaden the ledger, recognising the hidden social costs that are borne by the council and community when space is lost or communities are displaced. There is a collective understanding that externalities are not priced in current asset appraisals.

Some political leaders propose an inversion: make social uses the default for council assets and only revert to commercial uses if equivalent social outcomes can be funded another way. This approach would require an explicit opportunity-cost conversation. The implication for the SPLF, therefore, would be to stage a ‘social first’ options appraisal before financial disposal pathways are triggered.

Officers’ perspectives and actions are shaped by a culture of risk aversion and financial prudence. Community representatives are vocal in their frustration with sites sitting unused, seeing this as an unacceptable social cost unwillingly borne by residents. Academics challenge the utility of analytical approaches that attempt to assign financial values to social benefits, while ignoring social losses (eg ascribing value to the number of trees planted as part of a new development while disregarding the cost of closing a treasured community space).

Calls to transition from opaque, episodic deals to transparent, staged decisions

There were repeated accounts of sites emerging late with pre-determined proposals, fuelling mistrust of the council. Interviewees expressed that the historic and expected pattern is that the council, or a developer working closely with the council, sets the agenda behind closed doors. Residents’ opportunity to respond to the agenda is too little too late.

VCS leaders report exclusion through jargon, timing, and informal gatekeeping networks. Prior high-profile schemes have inflicted reputational damage on the council when it seems like commitments post-planning are not enforced. Interviewees pointed to the experience of displaced Elephant & Castle traders, for example. Political leaders and officers alike advocate for cabinet-affirmed criteria, open calls, and structured forums to surface options earlier; regional officers believe shared criteria could reduce downstream conflict and speed up the delivery of projects and outcomes.

Complicating time horizons: ‘meanwhile’ activation versus long-term stewardship

Officers are wary about tying up strategic sites in long-term social purpose uses, preferring instead to issue temporary licences or meanwhile leases. Community actors countered that prolonged vacancy is a tangible social loss and that bureaucratic delay has left small sites unused for years. There is an academic critique of cosmetic pop-ups that do not transition into more permanent community assets, and a call for pathways from interim uses to durable community assets. Political leadership is interested in using pilots to test more innovative models, but it also advocates for community involvement

in early decisions between potential longer-term uses (care vs leisure, etc.) before a meanwhile default locks in inertia.

Reimagining participation: from consultation to co-production and power-sharing

Councillors and community intermediaries show that when residents are trained, informed, and brought into the process early, engagement shifts from reactive objection to collaborative problem-solving. Capacity, translation, and compensation were repeatedly flagged as barriers to meaningful involvement: communities cannot sustainably donate unpaid labour to statutory change processes. Grassroots organisers cite mixed experiences. For example, they mentioned being invited to feed into plans for a flagship regeneration scheme. While they thought their key request (a CLT) was going to be incorporated, they found out later that plans for it were dropped. Participation must connect to power.

VCS stakeholders lobby for formalised avenues to share power through forums, binding checkpoints, or open competitions. Internal reformers are sympathetic to those appeals but wary of the perceived delivery risk and governance burden that would accompany such a devolution of power. Leadership signals a willingness to devolve some power via pilots, as discussed.

Displacement campaigners and community board members show how race, migration status, and language shape who wins and who loses in land deals. For example, 'language justice' gaps impacted the participation of traders at Elephant & Castle. Faith-sector landholders explicitly request equity diagnostics in decision tools. They seek a framework that queries "Who currently benefits, and who's missing out?" as a means of disciplining negotiations.

Measuring what matters: qualitative community outcomes vs. quantified performance metrics

While officers seek quantifiable metrics to report on outcomes and assuage the perceived risk that comes with social investment, academics and campaigners warn that metrics mismeasure what matters. For example, the loss of a critical community asset, such as affordable studio space, is not counted, while less structurally impactful corporate volunteer hours are. Faith and grassroots stakeholders want transparent value narratives backed by enough numbers to negotiate credibly without collapsing nuance.

FINDINGS: WORKSHOPS

While the first two participatory workshops focused on specific sites and testing specific skeleton decision-making models, the facilitated table discussions raised broader concerns and aspirations for how land is managed and who gets to take part in the process. Testing high-level decision-making models on simulation sites in the workshops allowed participants to articulate their expectations for the SPLF. Most notably, participants challenged the assumption that the framework could include a quantitative evaluation with weighted criteria. The youth workshop highlighted the young people's interest in understanding and influencing land use decisions, especially when they are met where they are; it revealed the need to demystify power and create clearer pathways for youth involvement.

The following workshop insights distil these discussions.

'Social purpose' must be defined contextually.

Participants discussed a range of outcomes and uses that could be considered as meeting a social purpose. Spaces should be open, welcoming, and accessible. They should be places to gather and socialise, providing a platform for community care and cohesion and facilitating intergenerational interactions. They can be cultural and educational spaces, or places to celebrate local heritage. They can support local creatives and enterprises, and enable positive health and wellbeing outcomes.

Participants debated whether social purpose inherently means not-for-profit use; while the group identified a clear need for more free or low-cost spaces throughout Southwark, some participants also highlighted the significant social purpose and community cohesion outcomes generated in spaces such as cinemas and pubs. There were discussions about how community uses and revenue-generating uses, rather than being construed as sitting in opposition to one another, could be combined for cross-subsidisation.

Social purpose can also be understood in terms of control and decision-making power. Participants discussed how residents should be empowered to have a degree of ownership over spaces, which could be cultivated with long leases and governance models that enable autonomous management. To decide what social purpose(s) should be delivered on a site, participants flagged that a significant evidence base about the specific needs and demographics of the communities living and working nearby is needed.

The workshop discussion made it clear that developing a unified definition of social purpose would be challenging, as it is highly contextual and must reflect local needs.

Because trust is fragile, the process must be genuinely open to community input.

During the exercise, some participants expressed a fear that a nominally participatory process could be undermined if the council is perceived to have a pre-determined outcome in mind. This risk is especially acute if the council retains veto power in the future governance of the framework. There was also a strong view that communities should be involved in shaping decisions from the outset, rather than reacting to council-produced concepts.

These discussions highlighted a wider mistrust of council-led processes, rooted in past experiences of regeneration, land use decisions, and neighbourhood change. This structural mistrust reinforces the need for new approaches that prioritise openness, collaboration, and accountability, and that value community members' ideas.

Participants from within and outside the council recognised that not all needs can be met at once on the same site. They called for more open discussions about the trade-offs between different uses; transparent criteria and processes around how decisions are made between providing housing, green space, or workspaces on a site, for example, would help communities understand how and why priorities are set the way they are.

Participants also called for more information about land ownership and how land use and operational decisions are made. Much of this information, however, is already publicly available (eg, the Greater London Authority's (GLA) public land map²⁴, the council's commercial property lettings²⁵); so while transparency is important, it must be matched with skills development and awareness raising to ensure residents can engage with the information shared. Facilitators noted a promising level of willingness among stakeholders to participate, with council officers showing greater openness than expected.

One group also pointed to Kingswood Arts as a positive local example that could inform the SPLF. Workshop participants highlighted how important it was that the council was not overly prescriptive about the uses and operating model of the building, instead setting broad parameters and leaving room for flexibility to be proposed by interested operators. (See more details on Kingswood Arts in Appendix 1.)

Doing something is better than doing nothing.

Participants expressed frustration at seeing buildings and parcels of land sitting empty or underused for years. There was support for 'meanwhile uses' as a way to activate sites quickly, create visible community benefit, and build momentum while longer-term plans

are developed. These short-term and often lower-cost initiatives were seen as a potential path towards more permanent community stewardship.

In addition, while Section 123 of the Local Government Act sets out the obligation for local authorities to achieve “best consideration”, or market value, for land disposals, best consideration does not apply to short-term tenancies. This means that for any council-owned asset that is leased for a period of less than seven years, the council has more flexibility around who they lease it to and the tenant’s ability to pay market value.

While this creates a real opportunity for more social purpose uses on shorter-term tenancies, there are also limitations to this approach: short leases make it hard for organisations to access grant funding or invest in staff and infrastructure, projects can take years to become established, and the risk of displacement just as initiatives begin to succeed can undermine both community trust and long-term sustainability.

Participants also emphasised the need to balance innovation with pragmatism. There were collective concerns about the resources, training, and sustained engagement required to make highly participatory models work, as well as the challenges of scaling them or integrating them with existing legal frameworks. Councils also face the need to justify any potential loss of income from land and to align with national policy priorities, including housebuilding targets.

Overall, the group emphasised that some action – even if it’s temporary or partial – is preferable to prolonged inaction. Testing ideas in practice allows for learning, adaptation, and trust-building in a way that endless consultation does not.

Representation matters.

Participants raised concerns that even well-designed participatory processes risk being dominated by the loudest or most resourced voices. Highly educated, articulate individuals are often privileged in public forums, leaving many local needs unheard. There was a strong call for diversity in representation, ensuring voices from across ages, neighbourhoods, and income groups are included in any governing body established to oversee the implementation of the SPLF.

Participants questioned whether small governing bodies could ever be truly representative, with some advocating for the use of citizens’ assemblies or sortition-based panels to ensure fairness and inclusivity. How members are selected was seen as crucial: without careful design, representation risks reproducing existing inequalities.

Participants also highlighted the need to properly resource participation. Meaningful involvement requires not just paying people for their time but also investing in training

and capacity-building so that community members can take part confidently and effectively. Participants noted that residents are often time-poor, while councils have more staff capacity. At the same time, some noted how tiring it can be to be continually asked for input without seeing tangible change, which reinforces the importance of respectful design, fair recognition, and visible follow-through.

Scepticism towards quantitative scoring.

Participants felt that reducing social purpose to a numerical matrix risks oversimplifying complex social outcomes. Rather than scoring specific uses (eg youth centre vs. affordable workspace), the emphasis should be on comparing desired impacts – such as community cohesion, inclusion, or wellbeing – and allowing flexibility in how those outcomes are achieved. The process should start with the ambition for the site, not a predefined building type, leaving space for creativity from designers and operators. While scoring can help structure discussion, it should not drive decisions. Participants called for a more qualitative, deliberative approach, supported by a community empowerment fund to resource meaningful community participation and capacity-building.

Young people's experiences of place reveal critical social purpose needs.

The youth workshop brought forward perspectives that were distinct from – but complementary to – those raised in the adult workshops. Young people spoke with clarity and honesty about how safety, belonging, and access to free “third spaces” shape their everyday experience of Southwark. They identified parks, streets, and community facilities where they feel welcome or unwelcome, often highlighting issues that adults overlook, including gang activity, lack of lighting, territorial boundaries, and the scarcity of safe places to spend time after school in the winter months. Their reflections underscored that social purpose cannot be detached from lived experience: a space that is technically “public” is not socially accessible if young people do not feel safe or invited to use it.

The session also demonstrated young people’s appetite to understand and influence how land decisions are made. While they were mostly unfamiliar with the council’s governance structures, they showed sophisticated insight into power, and a keen interest in learning how to exercise influence collectively. Facilitators noted that youth engagement is most effective when it happens in familiar, youth-centred settings where participants can speak freely and build confidence together. This suggests that ongoing youth involvement in the SPLF would be better delivered through sustained

engagement in youth clubs and peer-led spaces than through expecting individual young people to sit on formal governance bodies. The youth workshop highlighted the importance of designing participatory processes that feel accessible, grounded in place, and attentive to the needs of younger residents who experience public land differently.

SOCIAL PURPOSE OF LAND FRAMEWORK

APPROACH

The Social Purpose of Land Framework (SPLF) translates research insights into a practical model for decision-making. It seeks to move from a combative to a collaborative land use system, where social purpose can be negotiated openly and delivered jointly. While the framework is about giving voice to people who have historically been excluded from decisions about land, it also recognises the real constraints that the council operates with: legal duties, financial pressures, and a highly regulated planning environment.

Participatory decision-making

The framework is built around participatory decision-making, going beyond consultation and engagement towards genuine co-production. This is easy to say, but difficult to do. As one Southwark council officer reflected in the Future of London's report *Making the Case for Co-Production*²⁶:

We're not very good at being transparent about what's up for grabs and what's not. We need to be braver and more honest about our aims, what's possible to be co-created and where we can share power.

At the core of the proposed framework are neighbourhood land panels (NLPs). These standing groups will bring together residents, community organisations, and council representatives to shape how certain council-owned assets are used. These panels will define local social purpose outcomes, co-develop briefs, evaluate proposals, and make recommendations.

Test and learn pilot

Critically, implementation of the framework is intended to be phased and iterative. We recommend implementing the SPLF through a test-and-learn approach. Test-and-learn is an iterative method of public policy and service design that tests assumptions through real world experiments and uses evidence-based learning to refine the design.

In the pilot phase, the framework will apply to a minimum of 5 sites. Drawing from test-and-learn principles, we recommend that Southwark embed review and adaptation practices throughout the pilot phase. This will allow for adjustments to be made to the

process along the way. At the end of the first year, insights from a comprehensive review of the pilot will feed into a revised SPLF, which will be used in the following phases.

Taking a test-and-learn pilot approach lets the council and community explore how to balance social purpose with fiduciary responsibility, while also building the trust and infrastructure needed for a more open, long-term approach to stewarding land for public good.

Sites included in the pilot phase must be varied, representing different built forms, neighbourhood contexts, and potential uses. NEF recommends starting with a pilot of 5 sites, seeking diversity in both asset type and location. For example, a tenant hall, library, school, vacant land, and space in new development, across 5 different Southwark neighbourhoods.

Testing the SPLF on too few pilot sites risks undermining the ambition of this research and organising project. Beyond the economies of scale for administration and neighbourhood land panel recruitment, a pilot programme of at least 5 sites signifies a commitment to systemic change and mitigates the risk of the process reverting to a standard - and standalone - engagement process.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Southwark's SPLF is guided by the following principles. These set expectations for how power, expertise, and accountability are shared and sustained. They are also a stress test: if the principles are not upheld, the process is not working. These should be reviewed as part of the framework's iterative implementation.

The principles align with the borough plan, Southwark 2030, which is a place-based strategy that sets a vision for a fair, green, and safe Southwark where everyone can live a good life as part of a strong community.²⁷ The principles behind Southwark 2030 are to reduce inequality, empower people, and invest in prevention.

- **Transparency:** Decisions about how public land is used must be made in the open, recognising legal constraints. This means sharing information in clear and accessible formats, explaining how decisions are made and by whom. Relevant information, including trade-offs, data, and legal or financial constraints, should be shared in accessible and non-technical language. The framework must make it possible for someone outside the room to understand how and why a decision was made. This aligns with the Southwark 2030 principle to empower people and reduce inequalities, as openly sharing accessible information enables more residents to take a direct role in shaping their neighbourhoods.

- **Democratic participation:** The application of the framework must start with mutual trust and a commitment to collaboration between stakeholders. Involvement should be compensated and designed to include those typically left out. Greater transparency and participation can also build accountability and help bring underused assets back into productive, socially valuable use. Again, this principle supports the broader borough plan principle around empowering residents by creating real opportunities for active participation and leadership in decision-making.
- **Power-shifting:** The SPLF is about widening who has influence over public land within the scope of the framework. It seeks to include communities that have historically been excluded from these decisions, particularly minority ethnic groups, underrepresented residents, and those affected by large-scale major development. Community proposals must be taken seriously, with real weight in the decision-making process. The framework must avoid reinforcing the loudest voices. Widening community engagement will support the Southwark 2030 principle of reducing inequality by ensuring that access to opportunities and resources is more fairly distributed.
- **Shared and valued expertise:** Acknowledging the differences between community and professional expertise, the framework values them equally and resources them accordingly. Council officers, residents, and community organisations may have access to different legal and technical resources, and residents and community organisations, along with council officers, will bring lived experience, cultural insight, and local understanding to the application of the SPLF. The framework aims to create space for all forms of expertise to inform decisions and help make them legible to one another, and is well-aligned to the borough plan's commitment to empowering people.
- **Enforceable:** Land use decisions made through the SPLF will include a written explanation of how public input was considered, how final choices were made, and who is responsible for action and by when. Without these commitments, trust cannot be rebuilt, and power cannot genuinely shift. This supports Southwark 2030's principles of empowering people and reducing inequality.
- **Deliverable and pragmatic:** While the SPLF is ambitious, it must also be usable. That means working with existing council tools and programmes when possible (eg aligning with the Neighbourhoods Programme engagement process). It is also better to try something and learn from it, iterating and improving, rather than waiting for a perfect path to present itself. Developing a framework that is deliverable and pragmatic works in tandem with the borough plan's principle of investing in prevention, as acting early to secure better long-term outcomes helps avoid costly problems later.

PILOT PHASE PROCESS

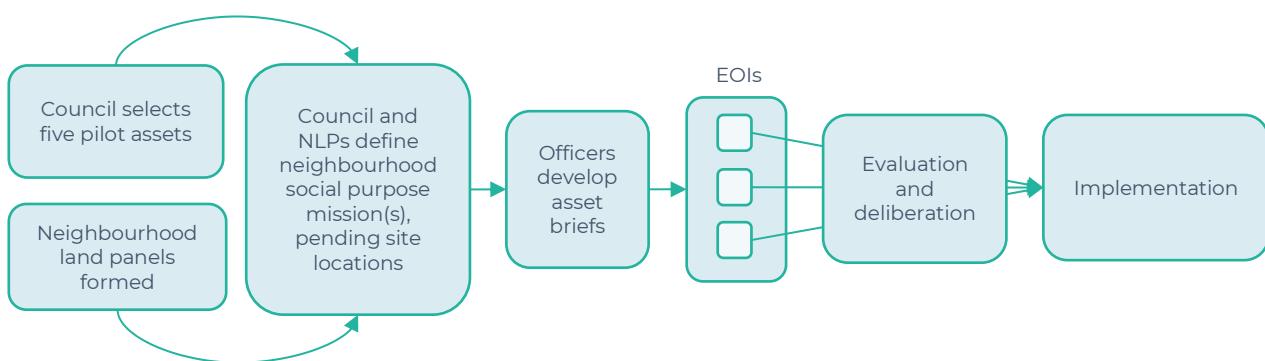


Figure 4: Pilot phase process.

To start with, the SPLF will apply to 5 council-nominated pilot sites. Table 2 details the step-by-step process for implementing the framework in its initial pilot phase. The left column in the table sets out who is involved, what decisions are made, and when each step takes place. The table includes two worked examples on the right-hand side, to illustrate how the framework could be applied to real sites.

Table 2: Step-by-step process for implementing the SPLF.

	Pilot phase process	Worked examples	
1. Site selection	<p>The council will identify five pilot sites to achieve relative geographic distribution across Southwark's 10 neighbourhoods.</p> <p>A more detailed proposal for how sites could be selected in later phases, after the pilot, is outlined in Section 0.</p>	<p>A school has closed in the borough's urban centre. The council will retain ownership and the option to re-open it in the future, but it is available for social purpose use in the meantime.</p>	<p>A community centre in a housing estate in the south of the borough is underused. It's been sitting vacant for many years. Estate residents are keen for the space to come back into use.</p>
2. Neighbourhood land panel formation	<p>Five pilot NLPs will be established, made up of residents, community organisations, local businesses, ward councillors, and relevant council officers. The NLPs provide structured forums for dialogue, evidence gathering, and shared decision-making between the council and communities. The panels are responsible for defining the neighbourhood social purpose missions, reviewing and feeding back on council-drafted asset briefs, evaluating expressions of interest (EOIs) received in response to the asset briefs, and making a</p>	<p>Panel members are recruited through open call and targeted outreach.</p> <p>Some priority is given to panel members with a connection to the former school (teachers, parents).</p> <p>The council will coordinate training and support for induction.</p>	<p>Panel members are recruited through open call and targeted outreach.</p> <p>A minimum of two panel members must live on the housing estate; at least one must live in social rented housing.</p> <p>The council will coordinate training and support for induction.</p>

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	<p>recommendation on the preferred delivery partner or operator.</p> <p>More detail on the member recruitment process and panels' terms of reference is noted in Appendix 2.</p>		
3.	<p>Setting neighbourhood social purpose missions</p> <p>The NLPs, with support from the council, will host a public workshop and walkabout in the neighbourhood of each pilot site to understand local priorities and social needs.</p> <p>Notification of the site walkabout and design of deeper engagement methods – such as canvassing, mass communications, or training in citizen science – can be coordinated with the Neighbourhoods Programme, community engagement, and resident participation teams.</p> <p>At this stage of the process, the NLP will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review quantitative evidence (Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, local plan evidence base, neighbourhood community plans, resident insight survey results, housing needs, etc.). • Develop qualitative insights (collected during the workshop and walkabout). • Define neighbourhood social purpose mission(s). <p>The neighbourhood social purpose mission will be a short statement of locally defined social outcomes that public land and assets in that area should contribute to, grounded in community evidence and used to guide the asset brief. The mission will be integrated into neighbourhood community plans and will shape downstream decisions.</p>	<p><i>Neighbourhood social purpose mission:</i></p> <p>We will use local spaces to nurture learning, creativity, and connection across generations. Our goal is to create places that help young people grow in confidence, develop skills, and find support. Assets should contribute to youth development, lifelong learning, and community belonging.</p> <p><i>Core social outcomes:</i></p> <p>Improved youth confidence and access to opportunities, greater access to affordable learning and making spaces, and stronger intergenerational connections.</p> <p><i>People who should benefit:</i></p> <p>Young people transitioning between school and work, older residents with skills to share, and local educators and community groups.</p>	<p><i>Neighbourhood social purpose mission:</i></p> <p>We will use community spaces on and near this estate to rebuild local connection, care, and opportunity. The neighbourhood has strong social roots but limited access to places for residents to meet, eat, and organise. Community assets should support community wealth generation and retention.</p> <p><i>Core social outcomes:</i></p> <p>Reduced social isolation, improved food security, and more opportunities for resident leadership.</p> <p><i>People who should benefit:</i></p> <p>Estate residents, older adults and single parents, local social enterprises, and mutual aid groups.</p>
4.	<p>Asset brief development</p> <p>The project team will draft a baseline asset brief for each pilot asset, drawing from the neighbourhood social purpose mission, site constraints (viability, planning,</p>	<p><i>Asset brief summary:</i></p> <p>Seeking a medium-term operator with a</p>	<p><i>Asset brief summary:</i></p> <p>Seeking a long-term operator with an initial</p>

	<p>legality), and relevant borough-wide policies (local plan, asset strategy).</p> <p>The NLP will then review and amend the brief. The panel must endorse the brief before it is released. If the NLP cannot come to a consensus and endorse the asset brief with a two-thirds majority within six weeks, the brief is considered invalid and cannot proceed. The council will re-initiate the process by drafting a new brief, following a working session with the NLP to understand the core challenges with the initial brief. Alternatively, if no agreement can be reached, the council may withdraw the asset from the process.</p> <p>Once the NLP endorses the asset brief, the final document is published alongside any call for EOIs or other pathways to concept development.</p>	<p>break clause for educational uses.</p> <p>Proposals should show how they'll deliver community connection and learning outcomes, in line with the mission.</p>	<p>five-year lease and option to renew.</p> <p>Proposals should show how they'll support connection through food or cultural heritage, in line with the mission.</p>
5. Concept development	<p>Based on the neighbourhood social purpose mission and asset brief, the council will invite EOIs that align with the asset's defined social purpose. Proposals have to demonstrate high-level financial, legal, and technical viability.</p> <p>The spirit of this stage is not to set applicants up to fail but to help them succeed. To reduce barriers for less-resourced groups, such as By & For organisations, community groups or new social purpose businesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal formats will be light-touch (eg, 2-3 pages, no detailed business plans) • Council officers and panel members will offer optional support or Q&A sessions • Signposting provided to potential delivery partners, including non-profit partners. <p>The NLP will shortlist submissions. Where appropriate (eg for complex or strategic assets), the council may convene a design lab. This short, facilitated design sprint will invite applicants, officers, and local</p>	<p>Proposals:</p> <p><i>1. Youth development and mentoring centre</i> Partnership of education charities and social enterprises offering youth mentoring and wellbeing programming.</p> <p><i>2. Neighbourhood hall and shared workspace</i> A local operator combines affordable workspace for non-profits with a hall for events and assemblies.</p> <p><i>3. Community workshop</i> A collective of creatives provides affordable access to tools and training, offering classes to all ages in repair, design, and craft.</p>	<p>Proposals:</p> <p><i>1. Community kitchen</i> New social enterprise will open a community kitchen, hosting cooking classes and food sharing.</p> <p><i>2. Neighbourhood living room</i> Partnership between the Tenants and Residents Association (TRA) and a local charity to create a drop-in hub – café, meeting area, after-school space, and other community programming (lending library, language classes, plant workshops).</p> <p><i>3. Event venue</i> Low-cost event rentals, with bar and sound system.</p>

	stakeholders to collaboratively refine ideas. ^a		
6.	<p>Evaluation and deliberation</p> <p>Once shortlisted proposals from the EOI stage are further developed, they are reviewed and deliberated on by the NLP (see Section 4.4 for evaluation methods).</p> <p>This process can be self-facilitated or with support from a trained community facilitator. External facilitators may be particularly useful in the first phase while the process is still being refined, with the expectation that the NLP will self-facilitate in later phases.</p> <p>The deliberation process has to be transparent: any scores, rationales, and trade-offs will be documented and published on the council's website. The NLP will make a formal recommendation on the preferred proposal to the responsible senior officer and cabinet member.</p> <p>The council retains final decision-making authority but must publish a formal response to the NLP's recommendation, including reasons for acceptance or rejection. If the recommendation is rejected, the NLP has the right to request an independent review, potentially led by another NLP.</p> <p>For qualifying framework assets seeking planning permission (eg new development), it is anticipated that the SPLF will precede the planning application, though planning committee reports should reference the framework's evaluation and recommendation.</p>	<p>Using the desirability/feasibility evaluation matrix, the NLP recommends that the council move forward with the community workshop proposal.</p> <p>During the Neighbourhood Mission-setting stage, the Panel heard that there aren't many options for skills development and continuing education in the area. Young people in the neighbourhood take part in nearby Mentity's programmes, and adults aren't lacking for affordable workspace. They want more options for creative outlets.</p> <p>The Panel is confident in the business model - the collective includes people with experience running maker spaces elsewhere, along with local creatives. The tiered fees help cross-subsidise programmes, ensuring lower-income locals have access.</p>	<p>The NLP recommends the neighbourhood living room. Because the TRA is involved, the space will prioritise outcomes for estate residents, a key consideration in the desirability/feasibility matrix.</p> <p>The local charity, while relatively new and without asset management experience, has a board member with demonstrable experience in property management. The charity also has deep ties to the local community and potential partners for programme delivery.</p> <p>With a 10-year grant commitment from a private funder, the charity, in partnership with the TRA, does not present a major financial risk.</p>

^a A design sprint, or charette, is a short, intensive, hands-on workshop where local people, prospective operators, and council officers co-design viable options for a site. Over one to two days, participants work in mixed teams to: (1) translate the neighbourhood mission and site brief into clear concepts; (2) rapidly test feasibility (planning, finance, operating models); and (3) iterate towards two or three publishable options with draft governance models and delivery routes. It is a structured way to surface trade-offs, blend community and technical expertise, and produce comparable, realistic proposals that can move straight into evaluation and deliberation.

<p>7. Implementation</p> <p>After a proposal is accepted by the NLP and the council, through a typical decision process (eg cabinet decision), the selected provider, operator, or developer will be onboarded. This includes finalising lease terms that reflect the agreed social purpose and outcomes, such as clauses around affordability, accessibility, or community use.</p> <p>To ensure continued accountability, a 'decision audit trail' will be created and made public, detailing how the decision was made, who was involved, and what commitments were set. This will include a measurement capability against which social purpose outputs will be assessed, with the ability to terminate an agreement that fails to perform.</p>	<p>The panel facilitator, chair, and council officers will work together to publish the decision audit trail. This will include a summary of what was heard through public engagement, notes from NLP meetings, a record of how the proposals were evaluated, and the final recommendation and cabinet decision.</p>
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EVALUATION MATRIX

The evaluation matrix is a simple framework that helps evaluate proposals or concepts by balancing two dimensions: desirability and feasibility.

It is not a rigid scoring matrix. Instead, it provides a shared structure to guide discussion, assess competing interests and issues, and support transparent, consistent decision-making. It can be used by the NLP throughout the evaluation and deliberation stage of the process, as set out in Section 4.3.

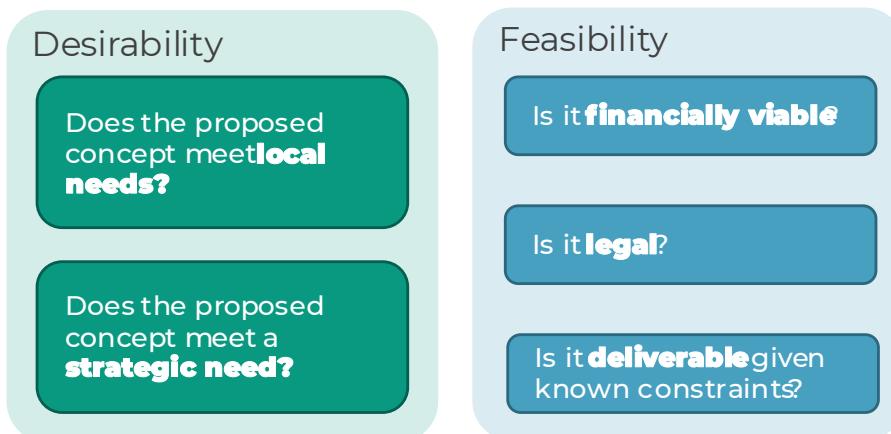


Figure 5. Evaluation matrix.

Desirability

Desirability is about whether a proposed concept serves the public interest, both in terms of local needs and wider strategic priorities.

- **Local need:** Does the concept respond to specific unmet needs in the neighbourhood? These should be defined through the neighbourhood social purpose mission process and may relate to youth inclusion, access to care, everyday affordability, safety, or other priorities identified by residents and stakeholders.
- **Strategic need:** Does the concept help address broader social, economic, or environmental goals for the borough? This might include supporting groups historically excluded from land use decisions, delivering long-term affordability or stewardship of assets, or strengthening climate resilience.

A project doesn't need to meet both local and strategic needs, but concepts that do should be prioritised.

Feasibility

Feasibility considers whether the proposal can realistically be delivered, given legal, financial, and operational constraints. It helps ensure social purpose is pursued in ways that are viable and sustainable.

- **Legal viability:** Is the proposed use compatible with land ownership, planning policies, equality duties, and other statutory obligations? Does it require changes to land use classifications?
- **Financial feasibility:** Is the concept deliverable with available funding? Does it have a clear pathway to financing? Is the proposed use and user able to demonstrate financial sustainability? Proposals need to be resourced, fundable, and have reasonable assumptions about costs and revenue.
- **Deliverability**
Can the proposal be implemented within a reasonable timeframe, given the capacity of the partners involved? Does it help build local capacity to support the delivery of future projects?

Using the matrix

The matrix is embedded in the broader participatory process. During the evaluation and deliberation step, the NLP can use it to structure dialogue. For example, the panel can compare concepts not just by technical merit but by the proposals' alignment with community priorities and borough-wide aims. Even if decisions are not made numerically, the evaluation matrix ensures a transparent and reasoned basis for choice.

Importantly, the matrix helps make explicit the trade-offs between different proposals. For example, a concept that ranks high on desirability but medium on feasibility may still be pursued, but would likely require additional council support, investment, or flexibility to bring it to life. These negotiated trade-offs – such as choosing depth of impact over speed, or innovation over certainty – should be documented and shared publicly as part of the audit trail.

A note on legal compliance

The activation and application of the SPLF does not supersede existing legal and regulatory frameworks. All decisions made through the framework will continue to comply with relevant legislation and policy, including the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954, which provides security of tenure for commercial tenants, and statutory planning processes. The framework is designed to add transparency and participation to land decisions, not to alter legal duties. It will also operate in line with the council's constitution, ensuring that statutory responsibilities and governance requirements remain intact.

ACTION PLAN

RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

Participant remuneration

Remunerating community participants is a critical step to ensure that engagement is accessible and fair. Without compensation, participation risks being limited to those who already have time and financial flexibility, reinforcing existing inequities. Paying participants recognises the value of their expertise, helps overcome barriers such as childcare, caring responsibilities, or lost income, and ensures that people who have historically been marginalised by housing and land policies can play a meaningful role.

Council officer

Successful delivery of the Social Purpose of Land Framework (SPLF) will require a dedicated officer responsible for coordinating and overseeing its implementation. This role should act as the central point of contact between council teams, neighbourhood land panels (NLPs), and external partners. It should be a new mid/senior (principal) officer role, likely within the sustainable growth team. This new post will manage the pilot process, maintain documentation and decision audit trails, support learning and evaluation, and champion the approach internally (see job description and person specification in Appendix 3).

External facilitation

The council can consider commissioning independent facilitation to support the set-up and early operation of the pilot. The external role can add value through impartiality, as a neutral presence that can navigate tensions and build trust among stakeholders. There are many organisations with experience in convening and running citizen panels and other deliberative civic processes that the council can tender services from.

External facilitation should be time-limited; the goal should be to build capacity among panel members and move towards a model of self-facilitation or peer support, where trained members from other NLPs take turns to facilitate sessions.

Training and other resources

The dedicated officer, working with external facilitators, will coordinate access to relevant training and resources to support panel members to participate fully. These might be introductions to the planning system and asset management approach or skills in deliberation and conflict resolution.

GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The SPLF will sit within the council's existing governance structures. Cabinet will retain ultimate decision-making authority over the use of council-owned land and property, based on recommendations from the NLPs.

Day-to-day coordination of the framework will be led by the dedicated officer post. They could be supported by an internal officer advisory group (eg continuing the one convened for the development of the framework) to ensure compliance with statutory and policy requirements.

Each NLP will operate under agreed terms of reference, setting out its remit, membership, and decision-making processes. To ensure transparency, summaries of panel discussions, site briefs, and recommendations will be made public, creating a clear decision audit trail from initial proposal to cabinet approval.

Regular reports to cabinet should summarise activity across all participating sites, progress against key outcomes, and lessons learned to date.

LEARNING AND EVALUATION

As discussed in Section 0, the pilot should be approached as a test-and-learn process, embedding reflection and adaptation from the outset. Evaluation should capture both process learning (how well the framework supports transparency, participation, and collaboration) and outcome learning (whether social purpose assets deliver tangible community benefit).

The dedicated officer, supported by the independent facilitator, will coordinate regular feedback loops, or short reflective sessions, after key milestones and a formal evaluation after 12 months of operation.

Learning should be shared internally across departments and externally with partners through the Southwark Land Partnership, helping to shape the potential expansion of the framework. The final evaluation will inform recommendations to the cabinet on whether and how to scale the approach across additional sites or institutional partners.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PHASES

EXPANDING THE PILOT

The decision going to the cabinet seeks approval for the pilot phase only. The Southwark Land Commission, which was the impetus for the creation of the Social Purpose of Land Framework (SPLF), set an ambition that was far bolder than a time-limited pilot. As such, the proposed pilot should be used to experiment, evidence, and refine a new way of making land decisions. Learning from the pilot should inform not only future sites brought into the framework, but also wider policy development around asset management, social purpose and value, and neighbourhood planning.

If the pilot demonstrates value and feasibility, the council should plan for a second phase of implementation, expanding the framework to a broader set of assets and exploring partnerships with other civic landowners, such as the NHS, faith institutions, and housing associations.

TYPES OF ASSETS FOR INCLUSION

In future phases, the SPLF may apply to qualifying assets such as:

- **Vacant parcels of council-owned land** that are not in the land assembly pipeline for new housing, commercial, or operational delivery, as identified in the current or future local plan.
- Identified council-owned **commercial assets** (eg ground-floor retail units). These will likely be either vacant and commercially unviable to let and/or not suitable for new homes provision, and therefore well suited to being repurposed for social purposes rather than being disposed of. The property team would identify a list of potential assets each year. More coordination is needed with the property team to understand what a reasonable annual target number of assets would be. Assets can be identified from the General Fund and/or the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), recognising that assets in the HRA will need to meet the financial rules of the HRA; the rules for the General Fund are broader.
- Identified **surplus operational assets** (eg schools, leisure centres, office space), capable of potential repurposing with community involvement, whether temporarily unused or assets that are no longer required for core council functions.

- Designated quantum of space within new major development^b schemes where the council is the landowner or delivery partner. If the council is entering into a development agreement or joint venture with a third-party delivery partner, there is an expectation that the delivery partner will engage with the NLP prior to entering a section 106 agreement to seek input on the scheme's provision of community facilities or other social infrastructure, subject to an identifiable need and prospect of use by appropriate viable organisations. This process should align with the community review panel (CRP) if the scheme falls within a CRP catchment area.
- **Tenants' halls** and other community-managed assets on housing estates (on an opt-in basis). The aim is not to reduce or commercialise these spaces, but to work with residents to expand access to the social purpose these valuable community assets can provide and ensure these spaces are well-used.

It does not apply to:

- Existing housing, as it is governed by a separate regulatory system.
- Commercial assets with existing leases or those that will be commercially re-let.

METHODS FOR IDENTIFYING ASSETS

Assets can be identified through a mix of council review and community suggestions:

- The council can maintain a publicly accessible map of eligible assets.
- Members of the public can also suggest specific assets for social purpose use on the map. The council has extensively used this engagement method (Section 0). While suggestions carry no automatic obligation, they will be logged transparently and reviewed by the NLP.

Each year, the NLPs can work with council officers to review the list of eligible assets and community suggestions and prioritise one to two per neighbourhood for activation under the framework. Prioritisation could consider:

^b Per the Southwark Plan 2022, "major development" means development involving any one or more of the following:

- the winning and working of minerals or the use of land for mineral-working deposits; or
- waste development; or
- the provision of homes where the number of homes to be provided is 10 or more; or the development is to
- be carried out on a site having an area of 0.5 hectares or more; or
- the provision of a building or buildings where the floor space to be created by the development is 1,000
- square metres or more; or
- development carried out on a site having an area of 1 hectare or more.

- Alignment with unmet needs identified in the neighbourhood social purpose mission.
- Level of community interest or readiness.
- Timeliness (eg upcoming lease breaks or planned disposals).
- Deliverability within council capacity.
- Planning suitability.
- Financial and legal constraints.

This prioritisation step ensures the process is both strategic and realistic, while remaining responsive to local knowledge and opportunity.

WORKING WITH PARTNERS

Successfully implementing a follow-on phase of the framework will be supported by the establishment of the Southwark Land Partnership, another recommendation of the Southwark Land Commission. This platform can be used to identify sites held by other civic landowners – such as NHS trusts, housing associations, and faith organisations – that could be piloted for social purpose uses. Several partners have already expressed interest in more transparent, participatory models of land governance, and many are pursuing related initiatives, such as surplus land strategies or community asset transfers. Expanding the framework collaboratively would share responsibility and opportunity across institutions.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Policy review

Appendix 2: Terms of reference for NLP recruitment

Appendix 3: Principal social purpose officer - job description and person specification

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SOCIAL PURPOSE OF LAND FRAMEWORK

APPENDICES

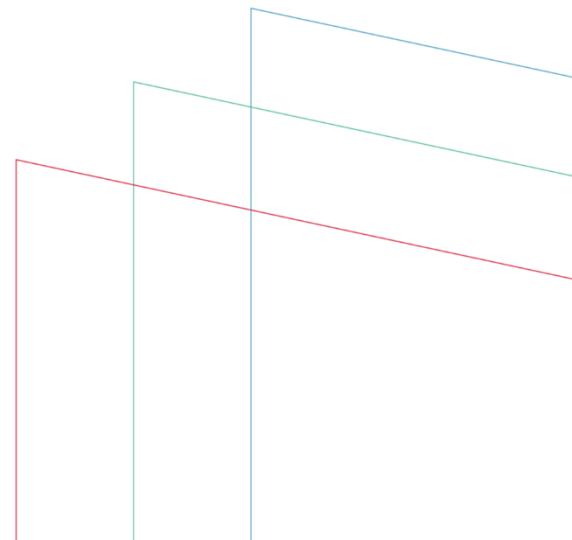
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New Economics Foundation
www.neweconomics.org
info@neweconomics.org
+44 (0)20 7820 6300

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APPENDIX 1: POLICY REVIEW

This appendix outlines the findings of a review of relevant existing council policies, examining how they relate to or differ from the proposed Social Purpose of Land Framework (SPLF). It not only illustrates that many of the aims of the SPLF are represented in other policies, but also confirms that the SPLF will fill a gap not currently served by other interventions.

CORPORATE ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Corporate Asset Management Plan 2021 (AMP 2021) provides the basis for how the council manages its property and land to achieve its corporate goals and good outcomes for residents. The overarching approach aims to use these assets to deliver the Corporate Plan; to make effective use of other council resources, such as money and staff; to recognise the importance of asset income for running high-quality council services; to fully use assets; and to ensure that the council's assets are affordable, cost effective, and value for money. The list of 27 high-level management objectives that guide this approach reflects the wide range of different considerations that the council must balance when managing its properties. Many of these objectives focus on ongoing efforts to ensure assets meet operational need, financial outcomes such as capital receipts targets and rental income, and statutory compliance, and minimise risk.

An objective of direct relevance to the SPLF is the aim to contribute to strong communities by supporting “a network of affordable community-run buildings across the borough that meet the needs of local people and provide high value for money for Southwark residents”. Another objective seeks to implement a “strategy for community premises (including asset transfer arrangements), underwritten by sound asset management practices”.

The AMP 2021 guides work planning for the property and regeneration teams, set out in an accompanying Action Plan for Assets, and ultimately informs the local work plans of individual teams and officers. Decision-making on asset management sits with the cabinet, taking advice from the strategic director, resources; the director, planning and growth; and the head of property, who have some delegated powers to act on the council's behalf. As of the end of 2019, the council's portfolio was valued at approximately £5.4bn, of which operational properties, including housing, made up 80% by value and floor area. Council homes, valued at a total of £3.5bn, were the largest asset class, followed by schools and office space.

AFFORDABLE WORKSPACE STRATEGY

A new affordable workspace strategy (AWS) was adopted by the cabinet in July 2025. This develops the council's approach to affordable workspace and responds directly to a recommendation of the 2023 Southwark Land Commission to establish "affordable workspace hubs across the borough, geared to community need, and funded through private development contributions".

The AWS covers a relatively broad definition of affordable workspace, including small and medium enterprises (SMEs), creative organisations, voluntary and community sector (VCS) groups, and start-ups. In this sense, the affordable workspace provided under the AWS has a significant overlap with the uses that are likely to result from the SPLF. The strategy acknowledges that SMEs and VCS organisations are needed for a healthy Southwark economy yet are unable to pay full market rent, creating a need for some intervention by the council to provide affordable space. Competing for limited workspace in the borough based on who can pay the most will exclude smaller businesses, which are important for a diverse and healthy economy, along with VCS groups which deliver valuable services for residents, often in collaboration with the council.

The strategy also emphasises the benefits of a flexible approach where the outcomes sought from a space, the types of space let out, the types of tenants supported, and the forms of support offered (eg reduced rents vs rent-free periods or help with fit-out costs) can be tailored to the needs of the local area. Similarly, the AWS encompasses various delivery models from enlisting workspace operators to achieve jointly agreed outcomes, to joint ventures with operators, or direct delivery by the council, with the preferred model matched to the nature and aims of individual affordable workspace hubs. There is potential for the approach to include 'meanwhile' spaces as well as more permanent sites.

Another commonality with the SPLF is a strong focus on equity and the use of assets to support those who are most likely to have been previously excluded from the local economy. Aligned with the Southwark 2030 goal of a strong and fair economy, the AWS includes objectives around equity, among them creating more equitable access to workspace and supporting cohorts with the most obstacles to usually securing space. The proposed affordable workspace hubs aim to create opportunities that narrow inequalities across Southwark and "support businesses and enterprises which typically haven't secured the financial backing or achieved maturity to survive in the open market (i.e. voluntary and community sector)".

To better identify which organisations need affordable workspace, the council will undertake stakeholder engagement in the form of targeted surveys, discussions, and workshops with key stakeholders. This will generate an expression of interest (EOI) list “to build a database of businesses and voluntary and community organisations that may need space imminently or in the near future. This database will also provide evidence to support projected demand and required typologies.” Given the overlap in aims, the proposed EOI list may prove a useful input into the process to determine local needs where the SPLF is applied in the coming years.

The strategy proposes a financial model that reflects the current limited room to manoeuvre in the council’s finances, creating an affordable workspace fund that will be fed by developers’ Section 106 contributions from new development over time (given instead of on-site affordable workspace). The council will proactively seek contributions in lieu due to the economies of scale made possible by pooling the contributions of multiple developers to invest in a single affordable workspace hub. The affordable workspace hub will be expected to be self-sustaining, covering its revenue spend with its own income each year, implying rents set at a sub-market level but above peppercorn rents.

The AWS is expected to be implemented gradually, as funding flows into the dedicated fund and as hubs are established over time. The definition of affordable rent has not been tightly defined in the strategy, but it will be a sub-market rent adapted to the context of each hub. A first pilot affordable workspace hub is envisaged for a site in Peckham once funding is in place. Initial feasibility studies have already been done, and the council intends to enlist a specialist operator. More generally, operators will be appointed under the AWS based on criteria such as experience, financial sustainability, track record of tenant satisfaction, commitment to social and economic inclusion, ability to engage, and ability to deliver social value.

COMMUNITY REVIEW PANELS

The community review panel (CRP) is a relatively new form of advisory body used in several local authorities, aiming to improve the quality of community engagement on new developments. The concept was first implemented by the [Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation](#) in 2018, and has since been implemented by Dacorum, Brent, and Ealing councils and the London Legacy Development Corporation. Southwark council has operated the Old Kent Road CRP since 2020.

The [Old Kent Road CRP](#) is made up of 14 members. Members are local experts who live, work, or spend time in the Old Kent Road area and bring a deep understanding of the

neighbourhood and its needs. The members are recruited to be representative of the area in terms of geography, gender, and ethnicity. They receive training and can reclaim expenses incurred in attending meetings. The membership criteria exclude built environment professionals and those already involved in local amenity societies, such as conservation groups, in an effort to involve people who don't already engage with the planning system. The CRP meets regularly (every 1–2 months) to discuss and advise on specific proposals for new development in the area. Facilitated by external consultants (Frame Projects), CRP meetings are also attended by council officers focused on planning, regeneration of Old Kent Road, and the specific planning proposals to be discussed at each meeting, along with the relevant developers who present their proposals to the panel. Operating costs are funded through developer contributions, with each prospective developer paying a fee of £4,350 + VAT to convene a CRP meeting to hear their proposal.

The CRP's meetings and discussions are summarised in reports, which are published [on its website](#). These contain detailed, high-quality advice on different aspects of proposed developments, such as building design, transport, workspace, and community facilities, and whether these features align well with local needs. The CRP takes place before the developer applies for planning permission, enabling them to refine their proposal based on CRP feedback to improve the quality and chance of approval. In this way, the CRP also begins to address a common critique of public engagement through the regular planning process: that it takes place too late on, when the public is asked to give their views on something the developer has already largely decided on. The CRP is purely advisory, however, with no decision-making power; it is up to developers and the council officers assessing their planning application to ultimately determine how many of the CRP's recommendations are implemented.

The Old Kent Road CRP is a useful comparator model for the proposed neighbourhood land panels (NLPs). It is a successful test case of facilitating high-quality conversations about land and property with a representative group of local people, making use of the broader expertise of people outside the built environment sector. The regularity of the meetings and the attention to training needs for members help to develop a more effective panel. There may be opportunities to seek CRP input in sites where the SPLF is being applied, given the overlap in topic areas, although the model for this integration would need to be developed further. In its 2024 response to the Southwark Land Commission's recommendations, the council expressed an interest in establishing further CRPs "on a geographical basis with a focus on the involvement of under-represented groups, including young people" and providing training and support for members of these future CRPs.

DESIGN REVIEW PANELS

Design review panels (DRPs) provide independent, expert advice on the design quality of major development proposals. Southwark's DRP comprises architects, urban designers, landscape architects, and other built environment professionals who review significant planning applications at pre-application and planning stages. While DRPs play an important role in improving the quality of the built environment, their focus is primarily on technical and aesthetic design rather than social outcomes or community priorities.

KINGSWOOD ARTS – LETTING APPROACH

Kingswood Arts is a community arts centre run out of Kingswood House, a Southwark council-owned Victorian mansion at the centre of the Kingswood Estate in Dulwich. Before 2020, Kingswood House hosted a council library and a youth facility, along with commercial office tenants. The building shut its doors in March 2020, due to Covid-19 and the need for essential repairs.

In 2022, the council released an invitation to tender (ITT), seeking proposals from potential partners to operate Kingswood House with a commitment to delivering low-cost or no-cost programming. Workshop participants, familiar with the process, highlighted that the council was not overly prescriptive about the uses and operating model of the building, instead setting broad parameters and leaving room for flexibility to be proposed by interested operators.

The process for selecting an operator informed the SPLF's proposed EOI model. Following initial engagement, the council ran a transparent two-stage process: an open call for ITTs and a shortlist for full proposals. Bidders were assessed on social value, community benefit, and operational capability, with a mixed panel of officers, members, and community stakeholders overseeing evaluation.

The successful operator was granted a full repairing lease, with rent reflecting the balance between affordability and social value delivered. No council capital funding was provided, incentivising creative, sustainable business planning. Kingswood Arts later led community engagement to shape its activities around local needs. The process demonstrates how open competition, grounded in social outcomes, can deliver trusted, community-led use of public assets.

NEIGHBOURHOODS PROGRAMME

Southwark's new Neighbourhoods Programme divides the borough into 10 neighbourhoods, designed to reflect how residents understand and identify with their local areas. Each neighbourhood will have a community plan, shaped by residents' priorities and coordinated by a neighbourhood champion (the ward councillor). Engagement to confirm neighbourhood boundaries and develop community plans began in summer 2025, and includes local events, online input, and regular community meetings.

Information gathered through neighbourhood engagement for the Neighbourhoods Programme can help define local needs for the SPLF. Conversely, lessons from the SPLF process can feed into the neighbourhood community plans.

PREMISES PLAN (COMMUNITY SOUTHWARK)

Community Southwark VCS Premises Project: Learning and Recommendations (2025) draws on the first year of its Premises Matching project, engagement with VCS tenants, and research into community asset management models. The report identifies the systemic barriers that VCS organisations face in accessing and managing affordable space and sets out clear recommendations for how the council can build a fairer, more transparent approach to allocating and supporting VCS premises.

Premises issues affect VCS organisations of all sizes, but the most acute needs are among small and emerging groups (especially those led by black, Asian and minority ethnic communities) working with residents facing multiple disadvantages.

Affordability, rather than availability, is the main constraint.

The plan calls for the creation of a defined VCS property portfolio with transparent allocation criteria, rent subsidy structures, and dedicated management capacity within the council. It recommends a standard community lease model where rent reductions are offset by demonstrable social benefit. The report emphasises involving VCS representatives early in planning and developer agreements, particularly in shaping new community spaces secured through Section 106 agreements.

Community Southwark also highlighted the need to address structural inequities in access to space, including the lasting impact of racial and economic inequality. The plan advocates for a VCS premises repair fund, a consistent rent subsidy framework, and the use of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 funds to cover capital and revenue costs. It further recommends using the proposed Community Empowerment

Fund, as recommended by the Southwark Land Commission, to help VCS groups secure and manage space.

The premises plan and SPLF share a common ambition: to use public assets to strengthen community infrastructure, particularly for those historically excluded from land and space. The plan's proposed governance model – transparent criteria, community involvement, and recognition of structural inequalities – is a useful precedent for the SPLF's approach to participatory, outcomes-led asset management.

RIGHT TO GROW

In January 2025, Southwark became the first London borough to adopt a Right to Grow, which commits the council to supporting residents to use suitable unused council land for community food growing and greening projects. The policy signals a shift from gatekeeping to "saying yes in principle", with officers helping groups identify suitable sites and navigate practicalities (eg water, access).

The move aligns with the national Incredible Edible campaign to give communities a clear route to use suitable public land for growing, and with London-wide recommendations encouraging boroughs to support new meanwhile and permanent growing spaces. Southwark's Right to Grow approach is still being developed and operationalised, but the policy intent is to start with people and projects and then match them to suitable land, working with other civic landowners (NHS, TfL, Network Rail, faith estates, housing associations) where possible.

SOCIAL VALUE FRAMEWORK

Adopted in 2025, Southwark's Social Value Framework defines the council's approach for securing social, economic, and environmental benefits through procurement. The framework aligns with the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012.

Southwark's Social Value Framework combines measures from the Open Access TOM (Themes, Measures, Outcomes) System (OATS) with Southwark-specific measures, for a total of 27 potential measures that contracts can deliver against. Tenders for council contracts will be evaluated against the framework, with the level of weighting set based on contract value (eg for contracts valued over £100,000, 10% of the evaluation will be based on how well the tender responds to the framework). Council officers will select a menu of applicable measures that contractors have to deliver. Measures can be quantified in financial terms and supplemented with surveys and case studies to build a supporting narrative and capture the impact of less quantifiable outcomes.

The SPLF is complementary, rather than duplicative, of the Social Value Framework. Social value, by its definition in the Public Services Act, applies to procurement decisions. The premise of social value is based on capturing a share of public expenditure and directing it to create tangible social outcomes. As a major purchaser of goods and services, social value is a means of leveraging public purchasing power for the public good. Contractors must demonstrate how they will invest in the local community, such as by creating jobs and training opportunities, supporting small businesses, protecting biodiversity, or providing housing advice and initiatives to address rough sleeping.

If social value is about using the council's spending power to achieve wider public benefit, then social purpose is about using the council's land and asset power to do the same. Where the Social Value Framework asks how public money can deliver community outcomes, the SPLF asks how public land can, ensuring that the public estate works as hard as its procurement budget to create lasting social and economic value for Southwark residents.

SOUTHWARK 2030

Southwark 2030 sets out the borough's long-term vision for a fairer, greener, and more connected Southwark, shaped through extensive community engagement. The strategy is built around three guiding principles: reducing inequality, empowering people, and investing in prevention. These principles highlight the council's commitment to increasing resident influence in local decisions, ensuring economic benefits are more widely distributed, and aligning public assets and services with collective societal goals.

The SPLF aligns directly with these principles. It offers a mechanism to put "sharing power" into practice through participatory decision-making; to advance "sharing wealth" by enabling more equitable access to land and spaces; and to live out "sharing purpose" by directing publicly owned land towards outcomes that reflect community-defined needs rather than solely commercial returns.

SOUTHWARK PLAN AND UPCOMING REVIEW

The Southwark Plan (2022) is the borough's statutory Local Plan. It sets out the spatial strategy and policies guiding development and land use in Southwark, defining where new homes, jobs, community facilities, and infrastructure will be delivered. While the current plan remains in force, the council is preparing to commence its formal review, as Local Plans must be updated every five years to reflect changing housing needs, national

planning policy, and local priorities. The next iteration of the plan is expected to reach the Regulation 19 consultation stage by late 2027.

Several policies within the Local Plan align closely with the SPLF; specifically, policies that secure social benefits from new development. These include the protection and provision of non-residential social infrastructure and the use of Section 106 and CIL contributions to secure local benefits.

The Local Plan also sets expectations for public consultation as part of the planning process, through statements of community involvement (SCIs) and development consultation charters (DCCs). While these tools strengthen expectations for engagement and accountability, the planning system itself remains constrained. Developers can still meet consultation requirements and proceed with applications even where there is strong community opposition. Local authorities operate under substantial pressure to meet housing delivery targets, with limited funding to build council homes and the risk of intervention by central government or the Greater London Authority (GLA). As a result, planning decisions are often driven by viability and delivery imperatives rather than long-term social outcomes.

With the forthcoming Local Plan review, there may be an opportunity to secure the SPLF in planning policy, shifting it from council policy into statutory policy.

VCS LETTING POLICIES

While the council currently has some VCS organisations as tenants in its properties, the approach to this letting is handled on a case-by-case basis in a similar way to commercial letting, and the council does not have a dedicated policy in place at present for VCS letting. However, developing a VCS lettings policy is a priority for the council's property services team, as stated in the July 2025 affordable workspace strategy.

The council has increasingly emphasised understanding and meeting the needs of local VCS groups in the past few years. Specifically, it is jointly funding a premises and policy officer position with Community Southwark, the umbrella body for the VCS in the borough. The newly created role is responsible for matching groups with available spaces and liaising with stakeholders to broaden access and identify opportunities for the VCS. (See Section 7 for more information.)

APPENDIX 2: TERMS OF REFERENCE – NEIGHBOURHOOD LAND PANELS

Vision for neighbourhood land panels

NLPs are representative bodies that collaboratively identify opportunities to use the stewardship of public land to prioritise delivering social outcomes, amplifying community voices, and building local capacity.

Role and aims

Role

Each NLP will be an advisory and participatory body that brings together residents, community organisations, local businesses, councillors, and council officers to shape how land and assets in the neighbourhood are used for social purposes. The panels provide a structured forum for dialogue, evidence gathering, and shared decision-making between the council and communities.

Specifically, panels will:

- Define the neighbourhood social purpose mission by identifying local priorities, opportunities, and needs through participatory research, policy review, and deliberation, supported by council officers.
- Review and provide feedback on the council-drafted asset brief, ensuring that proposed objectives and outcomes reflect the neighbourhood social purpose mission and community priorities.
- Evaluate proposals received in response to the asset brief using the evaluation matrix, with support from officers and technical advisers as needed.
- Make a recommendation to the council on the preferred delivery partner or operator, based on alignment with the neighbourhood social purpose mission and the capacity to deliver agreed outcomes.

Note, the council will retain responsibility for formal monitoring of progress and the delivery of outcomes, but the panel will have opportunities to scrutinise the outcomes as reported by officers.

Aims

- Strengthen trust and collaboration between the council, residents, community organisations, local businesses, and other community stakeholders in shaping the future of pilot assets.
- Provide community insight into the priorities, opportunities, and challenges facing the neighbourhood, helping shape the neighbourhood social purpose mission and guide council decision-making.
- Act as a critical friend in reviewing council asset briefs and evaluating proposals, ensuring that decisions about council-owned assets are transparent, equitable, and aligned with the agreed mission.
- Promote inclusive participation by ensuring that the panel reflects the diversity of Southwark's communities across ethnicity, gender, age, income, ability, and other facets of lived experience.

Structure

Term of membership

Two years, with the option to reapply at the end of the term.

Time commitment

The panel will meet 3 to 5 times per year. The number of meetings depends on the number of sites included in the framework. It is expected that workshops will be held for (1) panel induction, (2) mission-setting, (3) asset identification (not applicable in the initial pilot with council-identified assets). These sessions will typically take place on a two-year rotation. In addition, the panel will convene for (4) asset brief reviews and (5) evaluation and recommendations.

Members must attend regularly; missing two consecutive or three meetings within 12 months without a valid reason may lead to removal from the panel.

Chair

An annually rotating chair is selected by the panel at the initial meeting.

Membership

The NLPs will be made up of a maximum of 12 members in total. Members shall include representatives from:

- Voluntary and community sector organisations, including by-and-for organisations.
- Neighbourhood residents, representing different housing tenures and experiences.
- Local businesses and employers.
- Statutory sector organisations such as further and higher education institutions.
- Youth champion (16-22 years of age).
- Council officers.
- Elected members.

As much as possible, members will represent the seven equality strands of age, disability, sex, gender identity, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation, as well as other groups facing multiple disadvantages such as Gypsy, Roma, Traveller (GRT), refugees, and asylum seekers.

In addition to ensuring membership reflects the seven equality strands, consideration will also be given to socio-economic status, housing tenure, and other factors that shape people's relationship with land and local assets.

Members may represent multiple identities – for example, an employee of a local anchor institution may also be an active volunteer, a local business owner may belong to one or more equality groups, or a council housing resident may also be a faith leader.

Recruitment

The final recruitment method should be refined in partnership with the council engagement team, but the proposed approach is two-pronged: an open call for applications supplemented with targeted recruitment to ensure the panel reflects the diversity of Southwark's communities.

From the pool of applicants, members can be selected by sortition; by a small independent selection group (ie one council officer, one councillor, one resident, and one other local stakeholder) or organisation (eg Community Southwark); or by a combination of the two (eg six members are selected via sortition and the remaining six through evaluation by an independent group). Regardless of method, selection should balance experience, lived expertise, and representativeness.

Open call for applications

The open call will be promoted through an extensive communications campaign, tapping into planned Neighbourhoods Programme activities and other council

engagement events. Promotion will use multiple channels to reach a wide audience, ideally combining traditional and more creative approaches.

Alongside leveraging local press, council newsletters, social media, and the council website, the campaign should aim to:

- Have a presence in community spaces like libraries, markets, parks and gardens, and community events and festivals, whether through printed materials or via engagement officers.
- Create short video content to be shared via WhatsApp groups and community social media pages (street chats, parent groups, mutual aid collectives, estate newsletters).
- Create posters for display in places that residents regularly visit (shops, cafés, GP surgeries, barbershops, nurseries, places of worship).

Clear, accessible materials will explain the purpose of the panel, what participation involves, and the support available (eg remuneration, childcare, translation, or accessibility assistance). Communications should encourage residents to nominate friends or family who would be well suited to the opportunity, in an effort to reach people who might otherwise not apply. Applicants can submit either written or recorded audio/video applications.

Targeted recruitment

Where membership gaps remain following the open call, targeted recruitment can be undertaken to achieve a balanced and inclusive panel. Targeted outreach will be developed in collaboration with trusted community partners and, where possible, specialist organisations that work with underrepresented groups (including by-and-for organisations).

Targeted outreach may take place in partnership with the Civic Leaders Programme, Citizens Southwark, Black Parents Forum, Community Champions, Community Southwark, anchor organisations' engagement channels, and other partner organisations and networks.

Support

While membership applications are open, council officers will hold online information sessions to give prospective applicants a chance to ask questions.

The first meeting will be a comprehensive induction session. Further training and capacity building requirements will be assessed following the first session, and after new members join.

Remuneration

To support equitable participation, external panel members (non-council officers) will be compensated for their time. The council will confirm the specific payment arrangements before the start of the pilot.

APPENDIX 2. JOB DESCRIPTION FOR PRINCIPAL SOCIAL PURPOSE OFFICER

Directorate: Sustainable Growth

Reports to: Head of Sustainable Growth

Contract: Fixed-term, 2 years

PURPOSE OF THE ROLE

The principal social purpose officer will lead the delivery of Southwark's Social Purpose of Land Framework (SPLF), a pilot initiative that embeds social purpose, transparency, and collaboration into decisions about how council-owned land and property are used.

The role will be the central point of coordination across council departments, neighbourhood partners, and community stakeholders, ensuring that the framework is implemented consistently, credibly, and in line with council policy, legal, and financial parameters.

This post is pivotal to turning Southwark's ambitions for socially purposeful land use into practice. It will support new models of community participation, deliver the framework on pilot sites, and champion a culture of learning and co-production across the council.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Lead the implementation** of the SPLF, coordinating pilot sites from inception through evaluation.
- **Develop and manage processes** for site selection, community engagement, and decision-making, ensuring transparency and consistency across all phases.
- **Act as secretariat** for the neighbourhood land panels (NLPs), supporting recruitment, induction, and operation in line with the agreed terms of reference.
- **Maintain a clear decision audit trail**, publishing key documents (site briefs, recommendations, evaluation summaries) to promote public accountability.
- **Liaise with internal officers** (property, legal, finance, regeneration, planning) to ensure decisions comply with statutory and policy requirements.
- **Commission and manage external partners**, including facilitators, researchers, or evaluators, ensuring value for money and alignment with framework objectives.

- **Coordinate learning and evaluation**, capturing process insights and outcome data to inform refinement and future scaling.
- **Represent the council** at strategic forums (eg the Southwark Land Partnership) and support collaboration with external landowners such as NHS Trusts, housing associations, and community partners.
- **Champion innovation and culture change**, promoting participatory, transparent, and outcomes-focused approaches to land and asset decisions.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Essential skills, knowledge, and experience

- Proven experience in **community development, local government policy, and/or asset stewardship**.
- Strong **programme and stakeholder management** skills. Able to coordinate across multiple teams and external partners.
- Demonstrated experience of **designing or delivering participatory or co-production processes**, ideally involving residents and community organisations.
- Understanding of the **legal, financial, and planning context** of local government property decisions (eg Local Government Act 1972, Landlord and Tenant Act 1954, best consideration principles).
- Strong ability to **balance competing priorities** (eg financial feasibility, social outcomes, and political deliverability).
- Excellent **communication and facilitation** skills, with the ability to translate complex issues for diverse audiences and foster trust across sectors.
- Demonstrated capacity for **data-informed and reflective practice**, including monitoring, evaluation, and learning.
- Commitment to **equity, inclusion, and social purpose** in public decision-making.

Desirable

- Experience working with **voluntary and community sector partners** on land or social value projects.
- Knowledge of test-and-learn principles, community ownership models (eg community land trusts, co-operatives), and/or social impact evaluation.
- Experience commissioning or managing consultants, facilitators, or evaluators.
- Familiarity with Southwark's strategic context.

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

- Collaborative and empathetic leadership style. Able to work across disciplines and build bridges between institutional and community perspectives.
- Proactive and pragmatic, with a focus on getting things done while maintaining integrity and inclusion.
- Comfortable operating in politically sensitive environments, balancing ambition with realism.
- Curious and reflective, sees experimentation and learning as integral to delivery.



Equality Impact and Needs Analysis – Social Purpose of Land Framework

Guidance notes

Things to remember:

Under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) public authorities are required to have due regard to the aims of the general equality duty when making decisions and when setting policies. Understanding the affect of the council's policies and practices on people with different protected characteristics is an important part of complying with the general equality duty. Under the PSED the council must ensure that:

- Decision-makers are aware of the general equality duty's requirements.
- The general equality duty is complied with before and at the time a particular policy is under consideration and when a decision is taken.
- They consciously consider the need to do the things set out in the aims of the general equality duty as an integral part of the decision-making process.
- They have sufficient information to understand the effects of the policy, or the way a function is carried out, on the aims set out in the general equality duty.
- They review policies or decisions, for example, if the make-up of service users changes, as the general equality duty is a continuing duty.
- They take responsibility for complying with the general equality duty in relation to all their relevant functions. Responsibility cannot be delegated to external organisations that are carrying out public functions on their behalf.
- They consciously consider the need to do the things set out in the aims of the general equality duty not only when a policy is developed and decided upon, but when it is being implemented.

Best practice guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission recommends that public bodies:

- Consider all the [protected characteristics](#) and all aims of the general equality duty (apart from in relation to marriage and civil partnership, where only the discrimination aim applies).
- Use equality analysis to inform policy as it develops to avoid unnecessary additional activity.
- Focus on the understanding the effects of a policy on equality and any actions needed as a result, not the production of a document.
- Consider how the time and effort involved should relate to the importance of the policy to equality.
- Think about steps to advance equality and good relations as well as eliminate discrimination.
- Use good evidence. Where it isn't available, take steps to gather it (where practical and proportionate).
- Use insights from engagement with employees, service users and others can help provide evidence for equality analysis.

Equality analysis should be referenced in community impact statements in Council reports.

Community impact statements are a corporate requirement in all reports to the following meetings: the cabinet, individual decision makers, scrutiny, regulatory committees and community councils. Community impact statements enable decision makers to identify more easily how a decision might affect different communities in Southwark and to consider any implications for equality and diversity.

The public will be able to view and scrutinise any equality analysis undertaken. Equality analysis should therefore be written in a clear and transparent way using plain English. Equality analysis may be published under the council's publishing of equality information, or be present with divisional/departmental/service business plans. These will be placed on the website for public view under the council's Publications Scheme. All Cabinet reports will also publish related

Equality analysis should be reviewed after a sensible period of time to see if business needs have changed and/or if the effects that were expected have occurred. If not then you will need to consider amending your policy accordingly. This does not mean repeating the equality analysis, but using the experience gained through implementation to check the findings and to make any necessary adjustments.

Engagement with the community is recommended as part of the development of equality analysis. The council's Community Engagement Division and critical friend, the Forum for Equality and Human Rights in Southwark can assist with this (see section below on community engagement and www.southwarkadvice.org.uk).

Whilst the equality analysis is being considered, Southwark Council recommends considering implications arising from socio-economic disadvantage, as socio-economic inequalities have a strong influence on the environment we live and work in. As a major provider of services to Southwark residents, the council has a policy commitment to reduce socio-economic inequalities and this is reflected in its values and aims. For this reason, the council recommends considering impacts/needs arising from socio-economic disadvantage in all equality analyses, not forgetting to include identified potential mitigating actions. **The Council has adopted the Socio-Economic Duty as part of its overall equality, diversity and inclusion policy commitments in the Southwark Equality Framework.** This requires us to ensure we do not make any conditions worse for those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage through our policies and practices.

Section 1: Equality impact and needs analysis details

Proposed policy/decision/business plan to which this equality analysis relates	A Social Purpose of Land Framework					
Equality analysis author	Lauren Mudd					
Strategic Director:	Clive Palfreyman					
Department	Planning and Growth	Division	Sustainable Growth			
Period analysis undertaken	August 2025 – November 2025					
Date of review (if applicable)	N/A					
Sign-off	Neil Kirby	Position	Head of Sustainable Growth	Date		
				1 December 2025		

Section 2: Brief description of policy/decision/business plan**1.1 Brief description of policy/decision/business plan**

The Social Purpose of Land Framework (the “Framework”) is Southwark Council’s proposed tool for engaging the community on how public land could be used. It prioritises social outcomes, equity, and community voice, aiming to make land use decisions more transparent, participatory, and accountable. The Social Purpose of Land Framework introduces structured processes like the Neighbourhood Land Panels to ensure that residents and community organisations have meaningful influence over how council-owned land is used.

The Framework does not replace existing functions of the planning legislation. The application of the Framework is intended to occur prior to the formal application process for obtaining planning permission.

The Framework is a multi-functional tool that:

- Provides a process on how the community can be involved in evaluating land use options based on social purpose.
- Establishes a governance model that embeds community participation at every stage.
- Acts as a public accountability mechanism, ensuring transparency and traceability in decisions.
- Functions as an equity and repair tool, addressing historical imbalances in land governance.

The Framework will first be tested on pilot council-owned sites.

Section 3: Overview of service users and key stakeholders consulted

2. Service users and stakeholders	
Key users of the department or service	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Southwark Council staff• Southwark Council partners• Southwark residents
Key stakeholders were/are involved in this policy/decision/business plan	Clive Palfreyman – Strategic Director for Resources Steve Platts – Director of Planning and Growth Neil Kirby – Head of Sustainable Growth

Section 4: Pre-implementation equality impact and needs analysis

This section considers the potential impacts (positive and negative) on groups with 'protected characteristics', the equality information on which this analysis is based and any mitigating actions to be taken, including improvement actions to promote equality and tackle inequalities. An equality analysis also presents as an opportunity to improve services to meet diverse needs, promote equality, tackle inequalities and promote good community relations. It is not just about addressing negative impacts.

The columns include societal issues (discrimination, exclusion, needs etc.) and socio-economic issues (levels of poverty, employment, income). As the two aspects are heavily interrelated it may not be practical to fill out both columns on all protected characteristics. The aim is, however, to ensure that socio-economic issues are given special consideration, as it is the council's intention to reduce socio-economic inequalities in the borough. Key is also the link between protected characteristics and socio-economic disadvantage, including experiences of multiple disadvantage.

Socio-economic disadvantage may arise from a range of factors, including:

- poverty
- health
- education
- limited social mobility
- housing
- a lack of expectations
- discrimination
- multiple disadvantage

The public sector equality duty (PSED) requires us to find out about and give due consideration to the needs of different protected characteristics in relation to the three parts of the duty:

1. Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation
2. Advancing equality of opportunity, including finding out about and meeting diverse needs of our local communities, addressing disadvantage and barriers to equal access; enabling all voices to be heard in our engagement and consultation undertaken; increasing the participation of underrepresented groups
3. Fostering good community relations; promoting good relations; to be a borough where all feel welcome, included, valued, safe and respected.

The PSED is now also further reinforced in the two additional Fairer Future For All values: that we will

- Always work to make Southwark more equal and just
- Stand against all forms of discrimination and racism

Age - Where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds).

Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan; this also includes needs in relation to each part of the duty.	Potential Socio-Economic impacts/needs/issues arising from socio-economic disadvantage (positive and negative)
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<u>Potential positive impacts</u>	<u>Potential positive impacts</u>
<p>The application of the Framework will support community-led decision making on proposed development. The Neighbourhood Missions that are developed have an opportunity to prioritise youth inclusion and accessibility for older residents.</p>	<p>The Framework prioritises community-led proposals, giving disadvantaged young or older people more influence over land use decisions.</p>
<p>Those participating in the Framework can also influence how the pilot sites are developed for example, supporting repurposing a site for a youth centre, play areas, or educational hub.</p>	<p>By making land governance more open, the Framework helps demystify decision-making and reduce the exclusion of young or older people.</p>
<p>The Neighbourhood Land Panels will reserve a seat for a young person, ensuring youth perspectives are heard.</p>	<p>There is no negative impact associated with the Social Purpose of Land.</p>
<p>There is no negative impact associated with the Social Purpose of Land.</p>	
<p>Equality information on which above analysis is based</p>	<p>Socio-Economic data on which above analysis is based</p>
<p><u>General data</u></p> <p>The average (median) age of Southwark is 33 years, lower than the median age in London as a whole (35). (Source: How life has changed in Southwark: Census 2021 (ons.gov.uk)).</p> <p>In 2021, 3.3 million people aged 65 years and over were living alone in England and Wales. (Source: Profile of the older population living in England and Wales in 2021 and changes since 2011 (ons.gov.uk)).</p>	<p><u>General data</u></p> <p>Economic inactivity in Southwark is slightly higher than across London. Across London, 21.4% of people aged 16 to 64 years were economically inactive during the year ending December 2023. Around 51,900 people or 21.6% of the population aged 16 to 64 years in Southwark were "economically inactive" in the year ending December 2023. Southwark's employment, unemployment and economic inactivity - ONS</p> <p>As of the year ending December 2023, Southwark had an employment rate of 76.5% among residents aged 16 to 64, higher than the London average Southwark's employment, unemployment and economic inactivity - ONS.</p>
<p>Mitigating and/or improvement actions to be taken</p>	

The application of the Framework will ensure different age group representation is made across each of the Neighbourhood Land Panels. Southwark Council continues to support and works with underrepresented organisations and groups wherever possible, and support and engage with underrepresented groups in a number of ways including business support and access to grant funding.

Targeted outreach to underrepresented groups (e.g., LGBTQ+ youth, disabled residents, older people, faith-based communities) will be resourced and embedded in the Neighbourhood Missions and Panel recruitment stages.

Flexible formats for the Panel meetings and ongoing involvement should be considered to reduce barriers for different groups.

Training for Panel members on unconscious bias and inclusive decision-making will be considered to ensure fairer outcomes.

Disability - A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Please note that under the PSED due regard includes:

Giving due consideration in all relevant areas to "the steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities." This also includes the need to understand and focus on different needs/impacts arising from different disabilities.

Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan; this also includes needs in relation to each part of the duty.	Potential socio-economic impacts/needs/issues arising from socio-economic disadvantage (positive and negative)
<p><u>Potential positive impacts</u></p> <p>The Framework encourages land uses that reflects local social needs, which may include accessible community spaces, inclusive housing, and mobility-friendly infrastructure.</p> <p>The participatory model, especially through Neighbourhood Land Panels, creates opportunities for disabled residents and disability advocacy groups to shape land use decisions.</p> <p>The Framework values lived experience as a form of expertise, helping ensure disabled people's perspectives are taken seriously.</p> <p>There is no negative impact associated with the Framework for Southwark Council.</p>	<p><u>Potential positive impacts</u></p> <p>Participation in Neighbourhood Land Panels and community consultations can help surface intersectional needs, such as those faced by disabled people who also experience poverty, isolation, or housing insecurity.</p> <p>Disabled people facing socio-economic disadvantage may encounter multiple barriers to engaging in the Framework's processes—such as lack of digital access, transport, time, or support.</p> <p>There is no negative impact</p>

	associated with the Framework for Southwark Council.
Equality information on which above analysis is based	Socio-economic data on which above analysis is based
<p><u>General data</u></p> <p>3 out of 4 disabled people (72%) have experienced negative attitudes or behaviour in the last 5 years.</p> <p>9 out of 10 disabled people (87%) who had experienced negative attitudes or behaviour said it had a negative effect on their daily lives. (Source: Disability facts and figures (Scope.org.uk)).</p> <p>14% of Southwark residents reported being disabled on the 2021 Census, in line with London and England averages. The number of disabled residents increased by 3,000 (8%) between 2011 and 2021 (Source: 2011 and 2021 Census).</p>	<p><u>General data</u></p> <p>There is a strong association between disability and poverty in Southwark, with disabled people more likely to experience income deprivation, housing insecurity, and barriers to employment.</p>
Mitigating and/or improvement actions to be taken	
<p>The application of the Framework will involve tailored outreach and accessibility measures, so these groups are not excluded from participation in the pilot process.</p> <p>See above response.</p>	

<p>Gender reassignment: - The process of transitioning from one gender to another.</p> <p>Gender Identity: Gender identity is the personal sense of one's own gender. Gender identity can correlate with a person's assigned sex or can differ from it.</p>	
<p>Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan; this also includes needs in relation to each part of the duty.</p>	<p>Potential socio-economic impacts/needs/issues arising from socio-economic disadvantage (positive and negative)</p>
<p><u>Potential positive impacts</u></p> <p>The participatory model, especially through Neighbourhood Land Panels, encourages participation from all members of the community, regardless of gender.</p> <p>The Framework encourages proposals that respond to local unmet needs, such as youth mental health, safety, and inclusive community spaces. This opens the door for gender-affirming projects like:</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGBTQ+ youth centres • Gender-inclusive housing or shelters • Safe spaces for trans and non-binary individuals <p>The Framework aligns with Southwark 2030 goals of reducing inequality and empowering people, which can be interpreted to include gender identity as a core axis of social justice.</p> <p>There is no negative impact associated with the Framework for Southwark Council.</p>	
Equality information on which above analysis is based.	Socio-economic data on which above analysis is based
<u>General data</u> In Southwark, about 1 in 80 (1.2%, 3,200) residents reported a gender identity different from their birth sex registration, significantly higher than London (0.9%) and England (0.5%) levels. These are probably substantial under-estimates: 7.3% of Southwark residents did not answer (2021 Census).	<u>General data</u> Existing research shows that transgender Londoners are a marginalised group who faces multiple barriers regarding healthcare, education, housing, and employment (Source: Census 2021 deep dive: gender identity and deprivation in London (trustforlondon.org.uk))
Mitigating and/or improvement actions to be taken	
See above responses.	

<p>Marriage and civil partnership – In England and Wales marriage is no longer restricted to a union between a man and a woman but now includes a marriage between a same-sex couple. Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples and must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters. (Only to be considered in respect to the need to eliminate discrimination.)</p>	
Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan	Potential socio-economic impacts/needs/issues arising from socio-economic disadvantage (positive and negative)
<u>Potential positive impacts</u> The Framework's emphasis on equity and care supports diverse relationship types and household arrangements, including those not traditionally recognised in planning or service delivery.	<u>Potential positive impacts</u> Civil partnerships and non-traditional family structures may benefit from inclusive design and programming, especially where mainstream services have been inaccessible or unaffordable.

<p>The equity principles within the Framework challenges traditional, often heteronormative, assumptions about who public land is for and how it should be used.</p> <p>There is no negative impact associated with the Framework for Southwark Council.</p>	<p>There is no negative impact associated with the Framework for Southwark Council.</p>
<p>Equality information on which above analysis is based</p>	<p>Socio-economic data on which above analysis is based</p>
<p><u>General data</u></p> <p>Those identifying as heterosexual or straight were most likely to be married (46.4%) in 2022, while for those identifying as LGB, the majority had never married or entered a civil partnership (72.0% of those identifying as lesbian or gay and 82.9% of those identifying as bisexual, respectively). (Source: Sexual orientation, UK: 2021 and 2022 (ons.gov.uk))</p>	
<p>Mitigating or improvement actions to be taken</p>	
<p>See above responses.</p>	

<p>Pregnancy and maternity - Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.</p>	<p>Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan; this also includes needs in relation to each part of the duty.</p> <p>Potential socio-economic impacts/needs/issues arising from socio-economic disadvantage (positive and negative)</p>
<p><u>Potential positive impacts</u></p> <p>The framework encourages the repurposing of underused council-owned sites for community benefit, which could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family-friendly community hubs • Accessible childcare facilities • Parenting support centres • Safe, inclusive spaces for prenatal and postnatal care <p>Through the Framework, communities could identify unmet needs such as maternal health, childcare, or family support which could guide land use decisions.</p> <p>There is limited data available for this characteristic in relation to the Social Purpose of Land Framework, but no detrimental impacts are expected from the</p>	

Framework.

There is no negative impact associated with the Framework for Southwark Council.

Equality information on which above analysis is based

Socio-economic data on which above analysis is based

General data

Overall, three in four mothers have said they have experienced a negative or possibly discriminatory experience during pregnancy, maternity leave, and/or on return from maternity leave.

(Source: [Pregnancy and Maternity-related Discrimination and Disadvantage \(EHRC\)](#))

Mitigating and/or improvement actions to be taken

See above responses.

Race - Refers to the protected characteristic of Race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins. N.B. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller are recognised racial groups, and their needs should be considered alongside all others

Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan; this also includes needs in relation to each part of the duty.

Potential socio-economic impacts/needs/issues arising from socio-economic disadvantage (positive and negative)

Potential positive impacts

The Framework aims to shift power from traditional council-led decision-making to community-led governance, prioritising racially minoritised groups historically excluded from land use decisions.

The framework creates structured opportunities for racially minoritised residents and organisations to propose, shape, and evaluate land use projects.

It also values lived experience and cultural insight as forms of expertise, helping to reflect the needs of people within the community from marginalised groups.

Offers a pathway for rebuilding relationships

Potential positive impacts

Supports local enterprise and employment by enabling community-led projects that generate income, jobs, and training opportunities – particularly those led by ethnic minority groups.

Prioritises low-yielding or surplus assets, which can be repurposed for economic activities benefiting racially minoritised entrepreneurs and organisations.

Reduces barriers to entry by offering more accessible engagement opportunities and

<p>through transparency, shared governance, and enforceable commitments.</p> <p>There is no negative impact associated with the Framework for Southwark Council.</p>	<p>council support during the process.</p> <p>There is no negative impact associated with the Framework for Southwark Council.</p>
<p>Equality information on which above analysis is based</p>	<p>Socio-economic data on which above analysis is based</p>
<p><u>General data</u></p> <p>In 2021, 9.9% of Southwark residents identified their ethnic group as Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh, 25.1% as Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African, 7.2% as Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups and 6.3% of as 'Other' category ('Arab' or 'Any other ethnic group') (Source: ONS, Census 2021).</p> <p>There are many factors contributing to the changing ethnic composition of England and Wales, such as differing patterns of ageing, fertility, mortality, and migration. Changes may also be caused by differences in the way individuals choose to self-identify between censuses.</p> <p>(Source: How life has changed in Southwark: Census 2021 (ons.gov.uk))</p>	<p><u>General data</u></p> <p>Between March 2020 and January 2021, we know that Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, young people and people in low-income households experienced job, financial and household insecurity which led to increasing financial stress and negative impacts on mental health (Source: Southwark Stands Together Annual Report 2021 (Southwark.gov.uk))</p>
<p>Mitigating and/or improvement actions to be taken</p>	
<p>See above responses.</p>	

<p>Religion and belief - Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.</p>	
<p>Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan; this also includes needs in relation to each part of the duty.</p>	<p>Potential socio-economic impacts/needs/issues arising from socio-economic disadvantage (positive and negative)</p>
<p><u>Potential positive impacts</u></p> <p>The framework could enable the establishment of the following uses on council-</p>	<p><u>Potential positive impacts</u></p> <p>Access to land through the Framework can help these</p>

<p>owned land where, meeting a local or strategic need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Places of worship • Interfaith community centres • Faith-based social services (e.g. food banks, youth centres). <p>Faith communities, especially those from minoritised backgrounds, could gain formal roles in governance through Neighbourhood Land Panels and the potential Stewardship Board. This helps raise awareness of those that may be underrepresented in planning and regeneration processes.</p> <p>There is no negative impact associated with the Framework for Southwark Council.</p>	<p>groups scale their impact, improving wellbeing and social cohesion.</p> <p>The framework supports community-led stewardship, which can help protect and promote religious heritage, traditions, and practices.</p> <p>There is no negative impact associated with the Framework for Southwark Council.</p>
<p>Equality information on which above analysis is based</p>	<p>Socio-economic data on which above analysis is based</p>
<p><u>General data</u></p>	
<p>In 2021/22, Home Office's Annual Hate Crime Statistics show there were 8,730 religious or other faith-based Hate Crimes, an increase of 37% from last year. (Source: Religious Discrimination (stophateuk.org))</p>	
<p>Over 40 distinct religions were identified among Southwark residents according to 2021 Census. Around 133,300 Southwark residents reported their religion as Christian: over two fifths (43%) of the population and 29,600 Southwark residents reported their religion as Muslim, making up one tenth (10%) of the population (Census, 2021).</p>	
<p>Mitigating and/or improvement actions to be taken</p>	
<p>See above responses.</p>	

<p>Sex - A man or a woman.</p>	
<p>Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan; this also includes needs in relation to each part of the duty.</p>	<p>Potential socio-economic impacts/needs/issues arising from socio-economic disadvantage (positive and negative)</p>
<p><u>Potential positive impacts</u></p>	
<p>The Social Purpose of Land Framework could assist in prioritising spaces or uses that address gender-specific needs (i.e. childcare, men's mental health).</p> <p>The establishment and application of Neighbourhood Land Panels and their</p>	

missions could assist in identifying and addressing unmet needs relating to gender-based disparities in accessing public spaces. Women and men may experience public space differently; embedding their lived experiences into land use decisions can lead to more inclusive urban design.

The framework's emphasis on designing with the community and-defined missions allows for targeted responses to gendered issues such as women's health and wellbeing, men's mental health and social isolation, gender-based violence prevention and support for single parents.

Equality information on which above analysis is based	Socio-economic data on which above analysis is based
<u>General data</u>	
<p>Of the UK's small and medium-sized enterprises with employees, 18% were led by women in 2022, according to data from the Government's annual Small Business Survey.</p> <p>(Source: Women and the UK economy (researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk))</p>	
Mitigating and/or improvement actions to be taken	
See above responses.	

<p>Sexual orientation - Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes</p>	
<p>Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan; this also includes needs in relation to each part of the duty.</p>	<p>Potential socio-economic impacts/needs/issues arising from socio-economic disadvantage (positive and negative)</p>
<u>Potential positive impacts</u>	
<p>The Framework aims to include historically excluded groups in land use decisions. The themes around democratic participation and power-shifting can also benefit LGBTQ+ individuals, including those marginalised due to sexual orientation.</p>	
<p>The Framework also supports community involvement in the development process which could lead to the establishment of safer spaces for LGBTQ+ youth, community centres, or health and wellbeing hubs tailored to LGBTQ+ needs.</p>	
<p>The Framework values lived experience alongside technical expertise. LGBTQ+ individuals and organisations bring unique insights into spatial justice, safety, and inclusion, which can shape land use decisions.</p>	
Equality information on which above analysis is based	Socio-economic data on which above analysis is based

<u>General data</u>	
In 2021, 8.1% of residents aged 16+ identified as non-heterosexual. Specifically, 4.5% of Southwark's residents identified as lesbian or gay, and 3.2% identified as bisexual or pansexual. The borough ranked as the 4th highest in England for LGB+ identity, and it also ranked 5th for the proportion of residents with a trans or non-binary gender identity, with 1.2% of residents identifying as such.	
Mitigating and/or improvement actions to be taken	
See above responses.	

Human Rights

There are 16 rights in the Human Rights Act. Each one is called an Article. They are all taken from the European Convention on Human Rights. The Articles are The right to life, Freedom from torture, inhuman and degrading treatment, Freedom from forced labour , Right to Liberty, Fair trial, Retrospective penalties, Privacy, Freedom of conscience, Freedom of expression, Freedom of assembly, Marriage and family, Freedom from discrimination and the First Protocol

Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan

The Social Purpose of Land Framework for Southwark Council support several Human Rights Act articles, enhancing human rights for communities within the borough.

Article 8 – Right to Respect for Private and Family Life

The Framework provides for community involvement in land use decision making in order to reflect local needs (e.g., housing, care spaces, youth centres). The Framework also supports environments where people can live with dignity, privacy, and family cohesion. Increasing the opportunity for community involvement in this process creates more equitable access opportunities to land use decision making, and helps protect the right to life, especially for vulnerable groups such as those with health inequalities.

Article 10 – Freedom of Expression

The Framework encourages public participation, deliberation, and community voice in land governance. This gives residents, including marginalised groups, gain platforms to express needs and shape their environments, fostering civic engagement and empowerment.

Article 9 – Freedom of Thought, Conscience and Religion

Involving the community in developing land use proposals could involve the development of faith-based uses of land (e.g., places of worship, interfaith

centres), supporting religious expression. This strengthens social cohesion and provides inclusive spaces for spiritual and cultural practices.

Article 14 – Protection from Discrimination

The Framework emphasises equity and power-shifting principles which aim to redress inequalities, including those based on race, sex, sexual orientation, disability, and other protected characteristics. This creates fairer access to public resources, improved representation, and targeted support for all.

Article 11 – Freedom of Assembly and Association

The framework enables community organisations to be a part of land use decision making to meet together and deliberate future use of space. This supports grassroots activities and fosters democratic participation.

Protocol 1, Article 1 – Protection of Property

While this right primarily protects private property, the Framework ensures that public land is used transparently and fairly. This allows communities further involvement in how the pilot sites (especially for long-term stewardship or meanwhile use) is used.

Article 2 – Right to Life (Indirectly)

While this right is not directly about land, the Framework can support uses that are in direct response to local or strategic need that improve public health and safety (e.g., mental health hubs, food access, safe youth spaces). This can reduce harm and promote wellbeing.

There is no negative impact associated with the Social Purpose of Land Framework for Southwark Council.

Information on which above analysis is based

[The Human Rights Act](http://equalityhumanrights.com) (equalityhumanrights.com)

Mitigating and/or improvement actions to be taken

As there are no negative impacts, no mitigating actions are required. The Council will continue to monitor impacts on human rights. The Council will mitigate against any unforeseen issues that arise.

Conclusions

Summarise main findings and conclusions of the overall equality impact and needs analysis for this area:

The Social Purpose of Land Framework for Southwark provides an important opportunity to make a positive impact on those in the community who may experience discrimination, inequality, and exclusion due to one or more protected characteristics. By adopting the processes within the Framework, Southwark Council is presenting a public commitment to supporting underrepresented groups as part of the decision-making process in the use of public land.

This framework will ensure that the community has a stronger voice when decisions are made on how council land is used in the future, contributing to reducing systemic inequality and fostering a fairer, more inclusive community for all.

To ensure that the proposed process is undertaken and remains relevant for stakeholders involved, the council will ensure regular engagement is made with the community through the Neighbourhood Land Panels, as well as the neighbourhood engagement opportunities once the Cabinet approves the framework's application on the pilot phase.

Section 5: Further equality actions and objectives

5. Further actions			
Based on the initial analysis above, please detail the key mitigating and/or improvement actions to promote equality and tackle inequalities; and any areas identified as requiring more detailed analysis.			
Number	Description of issue	Action	Timeframe
1	The need for different age group representation across the Neighbourhood Land Panels.	As part of the recruitment of the Neighbourhood Land Panels, there will be a reserve spot for youth representation on each panel. Engagement as part of the panels' recruitment will also involve more inclusive approach and channels for communication to ensure all ages are involved	Upon commencement of the framework and ongoing.
2	Understanding local needs of underrepresented or	Targeted outreach and engagement to reach	Upon commencement of the framework and

	vulnerable groups.	underrepresented groups (e.g., LGBTQ+ youth, disabled residents, older people, faith-based communities) will be resourced and embedded in the Neighbourhood Mission and Panel recruitment stages.	ongoing.
3	Accessibility in participating in the Neighbourhood Land Panels.	Flexible formats for the panels meetings and ongoing involvement should be considered to reduce barriers for different groups.	Upon commencement of the framework and ongoing.
4	Expertise and experience of the Neighbourhood Land Panels' membership where involving members that are historically marginalised from accessing resources that would enable meaningful participation.	Training for panel members on unconscious bias and inclusive decision-making will be considered to ensure fairer outcomes.	Upon commencement of the framework and ongoing.



Southwark Land Partnership

Terms of Reference

Background

The Southwark Land Commission was established to explore how more land in the borough could be used for further benefit to the local community. The Southwark Land Partnership Group (SLPG) will be convened in direct response to the recommendations of the 2023 Southwark Land Commission report, *Land for Good*. The Commission called for a fundamental shift in how land is used, governed, and shared in the borough – placing social purpose and transparency at the heart of land use decisions. Recommendation 6 – Give the community real power and voice, recommends *“bringing together participating landowners into a Southwark Land Partnership, committed to freeing up land for the public good through the Social Purpose of Land Framework.”*

The SLPG will be established to bring together key landowners involved in land use, development, and stewardship across the London Borough of Southwark. The borough faces unique challenges and opportunities related to housing, regeneration, green space, heritage, and community development. The SLPG aims to ensure that land use decisions are inclusive, sustainable, and aligned with Southwark Council's strategic priorities.

It was agreed on 22 July 2024 that the Terms of Reference and membership of the SLPG be delegated to the Cabinet Member for New Homes and Sustainable Development.

Purpose

The SLPG is a key mechanism to help implement the Land Commission recommendations, particularly:

- Recommendation 1: Put social purpose at the heart of land use
- Recommendation 2: Map what's there and what isn't
- Recommendation 3: Take control of our land and assets

- Recommendation 6: Give the community real power and voice

The SLPG serves as a collaborative forum to:

- Foster collaboration between Southwark Council communities, landowners, private sector and other stakeholders
- Support the delivery of Southwark 2030, housing targets, and climate action goals.
- Support the implementation of the Land Commission's recommendations.
- Empower communities to shape land use decisions.
- Promote coordinated and transparent land use planning and development.
- Facilitate dialogue between public and private sector stakeholders.
- Identify and address land-related challenges, including affordability, access, and environmental impact.

Objectives

- Share data, insights, and best practices on land use and development in Southwark.
- Provide input into planning policy, regeneration projects, and land-based initiatives.
- Encourage inclusive development that reflects the needs of Southwark's diverse communities.
- Monitor and report on progress in implementing the Social Purpose of Land Framework.

Membership

Membership will include representatives from:

Categories	Stakeholders
Southwark Council	<p>Council Chief Executive</p> <p>Senior representatives from Planning, Sustainable Growth, Housing, Environment, Property, and Local Economy</p> <p>Cllr Sarah King (Chair)</p> <p>Cllr Helen Dennis</p>
Government Authorities	<p>Greater London Authority (GLA), Transport for London (TfL), London Fire Brigade, London Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime, NHS Integrated Care Boards</p>

Local landowners and developers	BIDs, British Land, Land Securities, Berkeley, Barratts, Arch Co, Network Rail, Dulwich Estate, Kings Hospital, Guys and St Thomas, SLAM, Dorrington, LSBU, Greystar, Delancey, Get Living, Native Land, Inter Faith Forum
Registered housing providers	Peabody, L&Q
Existing Regeneration Partnerships	Chair of Elephant and Castle Partnership Chair of London Bridge Partnership

Membership will be reviewed annually to ensure broad and balanced representation.

The following criteria outlines how membership has been determined:

Strategic Influence and Land Ownership

Members must hold or manage land that significantly impacts Southwark's urban fabric – whether through housing, infrastructure, public services or community assets.

Members must have ownership, stewardship or development rights over land that is:

- Publicly accessible (whether part of full)
- Strategically located within the borough
- Using land in ways that promote social, environmental and economic benefit

A balanced forum requires voices from public, housing, private and faith-based sectors. Members must represent one or more of the following:

- Local government departments with land-related responsibilities
- Public authorities (e.g. NHS, TfL, GLA)
- Major developers and institutional landowners
- Registered housing providers
- Faith and community land stewards
- Regeneration partnerships

Roles and Responsibilities

- Chair (Southwark Council representative): Convene and facilitate meetings, set agendas, and ensure alignment with borough priorities.
- Members: Actively participate in meetings, share relevant information, and contribute to working groups or task forces as needed.

- Secretariat (provided by Southwark Council): Coordinate logistics, circulate agendas and minutes, and maintain records.

Refer to **Attachment 1** for a template agenda.

Meetings

Frequency	Bi-annually, with additional meetings and working groups as required.
Format	Hybrid (in-person and virtual options).
Quorum	At least 50% of member organisations represented.
Decision-making	Consensus where possible; otherwise, by majority vote.

Reporting and Communication

- Meeting summaries and key decisions will be shared with all members.
- An annual progress report will be produced, tracking implementation of the Land Commission's recommendations and the group's contributions.
- Minutes will be made publicly available on Council's website.

Review and Amendments

- The ToR will be reviewed annually by the group.
- Amendments must be approved by a majority of members present at the relevant meeting changes are discussed.

Duration

The SLPG will operate on an ongoing basis, subject to annual review and continued relevance to Southwark's strategic land use objectives and progress on the Land Commission's implementation roadmap.

Documents that can be tabled

The following documents are deemed appropriate to be tabled at this meeting:

- Implementation roadmap or planning documents – e.g. timeline and milestones for each recommendation, assigned leads and responsible teams
- Mapping – e.g. visuals or screenshots of the open-access land map, data sources and methodology
- Social Purpose of Land Framework – e.g. principles or methodology for land use aligned with community benefit, framework documentation, consultation feedback summary
- Pilot Site Briefs – e.g. site descriptions, ownership, and proposed uses, pipeline of developments and existing or proposed workspace hubs
- Community/stakeholder engagement plans
- Budget, and governance documentation and potential funding sources,
- Biodiversity corridor proposals
- Risk register – e.g. key risks to implementation and mitigation strategies
- Monitoring and Evaluation – e.g. KPIs and success metrics, reporting schedules (including social value reporting)

Attachment 1 – Template Agenda

Date & Time	TBC 9:30am – 11:30am
Location	-
Attendees	-
Chair	-
Apologies	-

Agenda Item	Presenter	Duration
Welcome and Introductions	Chair	5 mins
Progress Updates on Priority Actions • Social Purpose of Land Framework	Chair	40 mins
Strategic Planning and Next Steps • Timeline for implementation of key actions • Roles and responsibilities • Funding and resource allocation • Monitoring and evaluation framework	Chair/TBC	25 mins
Community Engagement Strategy • Outreach plans • Inclusion and accessibility • Feedback mechanisms	Chair/TBC	20 mins
Round the Grounds • Attendees provide an update on key projects or initiatives relevant for the group and Land Commission Report	All attendees	20 mins
AOB	All attendees	10 mins

Agenda Item 9

Meeting Name:	Cabinet
Date:	6 January 2026
Report title:	Local Development Scheme 2026–2029
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Helen Dennis, New Homes and Sustainable Development
Ward(s) or groups affected:	All
Classification:	Open
Reason for lateness (if applicable):	N/a

FOREWORD - COUNCILLOR HELEN DENNIS, CABINET MEMBER FOR NEW HOMES AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

This update of our Local Development Scheme (LDS) highlights key workstreams for Southwark's planning policy team over the coming years including our review of the CIL charging regime for speculative student accommodation, our review of Southwark's ground-breaking Development Consultation Charter (DCC), and our work to bring the Old Kent Road Area Action Plan (AAP) to adoption in 2026.

The LDS also sets out our current timetable for review of the Southwark Plan, including early engagement across the borough, to ensure that land use in the borough is delivering on our key priorities including genuinely affordable housing, thriving high streets, community infrastructure and much-loved green spaces.

I continue to be immensely proud of our record and what we have achieved through strong planning policies, including the highest level of social rent completions in London last year, and the distribution of £20m in Neighbourhood CIL to our local communities. The LDS may require a further update next year in light of national legislation on planning reform, but the workplan outlined in this report gives everyone a good indication of our priorities and work to come.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation for the Cabinet

1. That Cabinet adopt the Local Development Scheme ("LDS") in Appendix 1.
2. That Cabinet note the commencement of a full review of the Southwark Plan in 2026, following the adoption of the LDS.

Recommendations for the Leader of the Council

3. Not applicable.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

4. The LDS is a statutory document required under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
5. The current LDS, published in September 2022, is now out of date. The new LDS covers the period from Q4 2025/ 2026 to Q4 2029/30. The timeframe reflects the requirement for a full review of the Southwark Plan, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requirement for a five-yearly review.
6. The review of the Southwark Plan is also necessary due to policy changes in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which have increased the emphasis on housing delivery and viability issues which are affecting housing delivery across London.
7. The LDS ensures the council's planning framework remains up to date and responsive to legislative, demographic and economic changes.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

8. No alternative option has been considered. The updating and adoption of a Local Development Scheme is a statutory requirement.

POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

9. The LDS will be published on the council's website. It will guide the preparation and review of the Southwark Plan and other planning policy documents. It provides transparency to the community and other stakeholders concerning the scheduling of key milestones, including when consultation on the draft plan will occur.
10. The review of the Southwark Plan will commence following adoption of the LDS, in accordance with the timetable set out in Appendix 1.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

11. The Local Development Scheme (LDS) is a statutory requirement, setting out the timetable for the preparation and review of planning policy documents. The overarching document which sets the development and spatial framework for the borough is the Southwark Plan.
12. Preparation for the Southwark Plan review has been triggered by several factors. These includes changes in national planning policy, the increased emphasis on housing delivery and viability issues which are affecting delivery. There is also a requirement for the Southwark Plan policies to align with the forthcoming London Plan, which is expected to be published in late 2027 and adopted in 2028.
13. The Southwark Plan review will incorporate the previously scheduled early

review of energy and carbon policies and town centres. Their inclusion as part of a comprehensive, full plan review will ensure that they are considered as part of a full plan viability assessment and refreshed spatial framework for the borough.

14. The adopted Town Centre action plans have already addressed part of the town centre review requirement. This will be supplemented by ongoing work on a borough wide characterisation study and separately commissioned studies to inform employment and retail land use and vision areas.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Policy framework implications

15. The LDS provides the timetable for the review and production of the Southwark Plan and other planning documents. This includes Development Plan Documents, including the Old Kent Road Area Action Plan.
16. The Southwark Plan is the council's statutory planning policy document, setting out the vision, strategy, policies and site allocations for the borough's future development. The Southwark Plan addresses the borough's needs and opportunities for housing, the economy, community facilities, transport, greening, the historic environment and infrastructure. It also supports the council's ambitions for climate action, design and a healthier, inclusive environment.
17. The LDS includes statutory stages for the Southwark Plan review. These are Regulation 18 consultation, Regulation 19 consultation, submission to the Secretary of State, Examination in Public and adoption. Evidence base studies are underway to support this process. Early consultation on key local plan issues will occur with the community and stakeholder groups during 2026. Adoption of the new Southwark Plan will follow the adoption of the new London Plan.
18. The LDS also sets out the remaining statutory stages for the Old Kent Road Area Action Plan (AAP), with Examination expected by Spring 2026. The significant work undertaken on the AAP's spatial framework and characterisation will be included in the new Southwark Plan.
19. The LDS shows the timeframe for the partial review and adoption of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule. The CIL rate for direct-let student accommodation is currently being consulted upon. Adoption is expected by Q3 2026/27.
20. The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and Development Consultation Charter (DCC) will be reviewed in 2027, in line with the statutory requirement for a 5-year review. The current SCI and DCC was adopted in October 2022, with a revised version with minor amendments adopted in June 2025.
21. The council will continue to support neighbourhood planning in Southwark. Neighbourhood plans provide the opportunity for communities to develop a

shared vision for their area and shape development.

22. The LDS confirms the council's commitment to publishing Authority Monitoring Reports (AMR) annually. These monitor the implementation of the Southwark Plan and other planning policy documents, track progress against strategic targets and provide transparency and accountability.
23. No additional Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) are proposed. Four SPD's have been adopted in 2025 (Affordable Housing, S106 and CIL, Householder Development and Climate & Environment). Updated or new SPDs will be scheduled following the Southwark Plan review.
24. By adopting the LDS, the council ensures that all planning policy documents are prepared in accordance with statutory requirements and are informed by meaningful public consultation at each stage. It ensures that the Southwark Plan is updated to a clear schedule, providing a framework for decision-making on planning applications and supporting the delivery of the council's wider corporate objectives.
25. It should be noted that secondary legislation arising from the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act (LURA) (2023) concerning planning reform is expected to be published in early 2027. This will inform new legal requirements for plan-making, including methods of engagement, three Gateway reviews and a revised 30-month timeframe for plan-making.
26. This legislation will be carefully reviewed and a subsequent LDS update will be brought to Cabinet later in 2026 to meet the new requirements. In the meantime, the adoption of this LDS ensures that there is clarity over the proposed timeframe for the Southwark Plan review.

Southwark 2030

27. The decision to agree the Local Development Scheme for adoption aligns with the [Southwark 2030 Strategy](#), which sets out a shared vision for a fair, green, and safe borough where everyone can live a good life as part of a strong community.
28. By adopting the Local Development Scheme, the council is helping to deliver on Southwark 2030's ambitions for the borough. The LDS, in setting out the timeframe for the Southwark plan review, supports the provision of decent homes and well-designed neighbourhoods, contributes to a safer and healthier Southwark and access to green spaces, and underpins a strong and fair local economy through sustainable growth and regeneration. It also advances opportunities for residents to stay well and thrive, ensuring that planning policies embed environmental sustainability and climate resilience.
29. Through a clear timetable and framework for the implementation and review of planning policies, the LDS plays a vital role in realising Southwark 2030's vision for a fair, green, and safe borough where everyone can live a good life as part of a strong, inclusive community.

Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts

Community impact statement

30. The LDS itself does not create new policies, but provides the framework and timetable for the preparation and review of planning documents that will deliver positive outcomes for all communities in Southwark.
31. The planning documents programmed in the LDS will have a positive impact on the achievement of the council's vision for the borough, set out in Southwark 2030 Strategy and the current Southwark Plan 2022. The LDS ensures that the council's planning framework remains responsive to changing needs and opportunities, and that the benefits of growth and development are shared across all communities.
32. The new Southwark Plan will be subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment. This will include a sustainability appraisal and health impact assessment which assesses social, economic, environmental and health impacts. An Equalities impact and needs assessment (EINA) will also be carried out to ensure that the needs of residents are considered and that the council's approach to equality, diversity and inclusion is embedded in the plan-making process.
33. The council is committed to meeting the requirements of the Statement of Community Involvement, ensuring meaningful public participation in the preparation of all planning documents. This includes publishing consultation plans and consultation reports, using a range of consultation and engagement methods which provide opportunities for residents, businesses and stakeholders to shape the future of the borough.

Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement

34. The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) contained in Section 149 (1) of the Equality Act 2010 ("the Act") imposes a duty on public authorities to have, in the exercise of their functions, due regard to three "needs" which are central to the aims of the Act.
 - a) The need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
 - b) The need to advance equality of opportunity between persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. This involves having due regard to the need to:
 - o Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic
 - o Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of

persons who do not share it;

- Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low

c) The need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

35. The purpose of the LDS is to timetable the planning documents in the borough. The production of these documents will ensure that community and equalities impacts are taken into account. All Development Plan Documents are supported by an Equalities Impact Assessment.

36. The methods of consultation and engagement used as part of the production of the Southwark Plan will follow the approach set out in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. Additional early engagement will be carried out, with emphasis on engaging hard to reach groups.

Health impact statement

37. By setting a clear timetable for the preparation of planning documents which set the framework for the borough's growth, the LDS will have an indirect neutral to positive impact on the health and wellbeing of Southwark's residents. The LDS supports the preparation of planning documents that include targeted measures to address environmental health concerns, such as managing overheating in homes, improving energy efficiency and air quality, and protecting and maintaining green infrastructure and open spaces.

38. These interventions support a healthier environment and which will contribute to both physical and mental wellbeing. In doing so, the LDS supports the Southwark 2030 Strategy's ambition to create a clean, green, and healthy borough, ensuring that residents can live well in safe and sustainable environments.

Climate change implications

39. The Council has declared a Climate Emergency with an ambition to do all we can to make the borough carbon-neutral by 2030. This is supported by the Climate Change Strategy and Southwark's Climate Change Action Plan (2025) which will deliver the goals of the council's Southwark 2030 Strategy.

40. Planning applications are required to meet the policy requirements set out in the Local Plan. The LDS supports climate change mitigation, sustainability standards and environmental protection by ensuring that the review and preparation of planning documents, including the new Southwark Plan, are programmed and delivered in a timely manner.

Resource implications

41. There are no additional resource implications arising from the Local Development Scheme. Staffing and any other resources related to the LDS are be contained within existing departmental capacity.

Legal implications

42. This report is being brought before the Cabinet under Part 3C of the Constitution. Paragraph 21 of the constitution states that the Cabinet has the power to adopt the Local Development Scheme.
43. Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a local authority to prepare and maintain a Local Development Scheme, identifying the documents to be prepared, their subject matter, and the timetable for their preparation and revision. The LDS is not subject to public consultation. Instead, it is presented to Cabinet for approval and, once agreed, will be published online in accordance with statutory requirements.
44. The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 require that the LDS is made publicly available after adoption. There is no requirement for independent examination or formal consultation on the LDS itself, although all development plan documents prepared under the LDS will be subject to statutory consultation and engagement as appropriate.

Financial implications

45. There are no immediate financial implications arising from the Local Development Scheme. Staffing and any other costs connected to the LDS are to be contained within existing departmental revenue budgets.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Assistant Chief Executive – Governance and Assurance (CM 20.11.2025)

46. The Cabinet has authority to decide on the adoption of the proposed Local Development Scheme under Part 3C of the Constitution paragraph 20 of the Southwark constitution.
47. Southwark Council acting as the local planning authority must prepare and maintain a local development scheme as a requirement of s.15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The Act specifies what content the scheme must have. The scheme must be revised at such times that the planning authority considers appropriate.
48. Cabinet will need to ensure that the public sector equality duty in section 149 Equality Act 2010 is considered i.e. to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and to foster good relations between people with protected characteristics and others. Reference is made to this in the “Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts” section above which Cabinet should take account of in its deliberation.

49. The Human Rights Act 1998 imposes a duty on the council as a public authority to apply the European Convention on Human Rights; as a result the Council must not act in a way which is incompatible with these rights.
50. Council Assembly on 14 July 2021 approved a change to the council's Constitution to confirm that all decisions made by the council will consider the climate and equality (including socio-economic disadvantage and health inequality) consequences of taking that decision. This has been considered above.

Strategic Director of Resources (FIN25 – 23)

51. This report seeks Cabinet approval to formally adopt the Local Development Scheme as well as noting the commencement of a full review of the Southwark Plan in 2026 post adoption.
52. The strategic director of resources notes that there are no direct financial implications arising from this report.
53. Staffing and any other costs associated with this recommendation are to be contained within existing departmental revenue budgets.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
The Southwark Plan 2022	Planning Policy 160 Tooley Street London SE1P 5LX	Planning Policy team planningpolicy@southwark.gov.uk
Link: https://www.southwark.gov.uk/planning-environment-and-building-control/planning/planning-policy-and-guidance/southwark-plan-2022		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Local Development Scheme

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Helen Dennis, New Homes and Sustainable Development	
Lead Officer	Juliet Seymour, Assistant Director of Policy, Building Control and the Historic Environment	
Report Author	Charlotte Brooks-Lawrie, Head of Planning Policy and Monitoring Innovation	
Version	Final	
Dated	8 December 2025	
Key Decision?	Yes	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Assistant Chief Executive – Governance and Assurance	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director, Resources	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team		
10 December 2025		

Appendix 1 – Local Development Scheme

	Q4 Jan-Mar 25/26	Q1 Apr-Jun 26/27	Q2 Jul-Sep 26/27	Q3 Oct-Dec 26/27	Q4 Jan-Mar 26/27	Q1 Apr-Jun 27/28	Q2 Jul-Sep 27/28	Q3 Oct-Dec 27/28	Q4 Jan-Mar 27/28	Q1 Apr-Jun 28/29	Q2 Jul-Sep 28/29	Q3 Oct-Dec 28/29	Q4 Jan-Mar 28/29	Q1 Apr-Jun 29/30	Q2 Jul-Sep 29/30	Q3 Oct-Dec 29/30	Q4 Jan - Mar 29/30
Local Plan																	
New Southwark Plan				EE	EE			Reg18			Reg19			SfE	EiP	IR	A/P
Area Action Plans (AAP)																	
Old Kent Road AAP	EiP	IR	A/P														
Other documents																	
Review of Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and Development Consultation Charter (DCC)				PfC			A/P										
CIL Schedule: Examination of revised rate for Purpose Built Student Housing (PBSH)	PfC	SfE	EiP	A/P													
Authority Monitoring Report (AMR)		A/P															

Key

Early engagement	EE
Publication for comment	PfC
Consultation (Regulation 18)	Reg18
Formal publication for representations (Regulation 19)	Reg19
Submission for Examination	SfE
Examination In Public (EiP)	EiP
Inspector's Report	IR
Adoption/Publication	A/P

Scope of documents:

- **New Southwark Plan**; the council's statutory development plan document. It sets out the vision, strategy, planning policies and site allocations for the borough.
- **Old Kent Road AAP**; a development plan document (DPD) which forms part of the adopted local plan. It provides specific planning policy and design guidance for the Old Kent Road vision area and site allocations.

Agenda Item 11

Meeting Name:	Cabinet
Date:	6 January 2026
Report title:	The Council Tax Base for 2026-27
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Stephanie Cryan, Equalities, Democracy and Finance
Ward(s) or groups affected:	All wards
Classification:	Open
Reason for lateness (if applicable):	N/a

FOREWORD - COUNCILLOR STEPHANIE CRYAN CABINET, MEMBER FOR EQUALITIES, DEMOCRACY AND FINANCE

This report seeks cabinet approval for the proposed Council Tax Base and the assumed collection rate for the financial year 2026-27.

I am recommending a revised Council Tax base of 111,464.6 Band D equivalent dwellings, representing a decrease of approximately 892 dwellings from the 2025-26 figure of 112,357. This adjustment reflects updated projections and demographic changes within the borough.

The Council Tax collection rate for 2025-26 was reduced from 97.2% to 96.5%, in response to ongoing economic pressures. Given the continued challenges in collection and the prevailing uncertainty in the economic environment we recommend maintaining the collection rate assumption at 96.5% for 2026-27.

Premiums

I am pleased to confirm a continuation of the discretionary council tax premiums, which serve both as a revenue raising measure and as a deterrent against properties being left vacant. The premiums are applied below:

- 100% for second homes;
- 100% for those dwellings empty for 1 year and less than 5 years;
- 200% for dwellings empty for at least 5 years but less than 10 years; and
- 300% premium for dwellings empty for at least 10 years.

Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Exemptions

I reaffirm our commitment to supporting residents experiencing financial hardship through the ongoing provision of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. In addition, Southwark will continue to offer Council Tax exemption for: Young people leaving care; and Southwark Foster carers.

These exemptions are vital in supporting care leavers as they transition to independent living and recognising the invaluable contribution of foster carers in our

community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for the Cabinet

1. To approve the council tax base for the year 2026-27 as 111,464.6 (112,357 in 2025-26) band D equivalent dwellings (Appendix A).
2. To approve the council tax collection rate for the year 2026-27 as 96.50% (96.50% in 2025-26).
3. To approve the proposed continuation of the
 - Council Tax discounts, exemptions and premiums as summarised in paragraph 8
 - Discretionary relief as per section 13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 summarised in paragraph 9 and
 - Council Tax reduction scheme administered under section 13A(1)(a) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.
4. Delegate authority to the strategic director of resources in consultation with the cabinet member for equalities, democracy and finance and monitoring officer for any minor and consequential amendments to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme policy.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

5. The Council Tax Base is calculated in accordance with a nationally prescribed formula and represents the equivalent number of Band D properties within the area.
6. The Council Tax Base must be determined and notified to the Greater London Authority (GLA) and other levying and precepting bodies. As in the past, these notifications must be made by 31 January.
7. A further report will be presented to council assembly in February 2026 setting out the level of council tax needed to meet the council's net expenditure for the financial year 2026-27.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Council tax discounts, exemptions and premiums

8. All council tax discounts, exemptions and premiums from 2025-26 remain unchanged for 2026-27 and are summarised in table on next page.

Type of Council Tax Discounts, Exemptions and Premiums	Discount / Premium
Single person discount	-25%
All except one person in household disregarded	-25%
All persons in household disregarded	-50%
Empty dwelling for greater than 1 year and less than 5 years	+100%
Dwellings empty for at least 5 years but less than 10 years	+200%
Dwellings empty for at least 10 years - continuing premium	+300%
Second home premium	+100%

Southwark council tax section 13A(1)(c) – discretionary relief

9. There is no change in 2026-27 to the council's section 13A policy, which continues with the initiative to include council tax discretionary relief for young people leaving Southwark council's care aged 18 to 24 years, who are liable for council tax. Foster carers are able to claim discretionary relief.

Council tax reduction scheme section 13A(1)(a)

10. There is no change in the council tax reduction scheme which is means-tested support for residents on low incomes.
11. Current estimates show that for 2026-27 this will reduce the overall council tax base by 16,580.4 (16,511 in 2025-26) properties before adjustment for the collection rate (Appendix A).

Collection Rate

12. The Strategic Director of Resources recommends maintaining the Council Tax collection rate at 96.5% for 2026-27. This figure takes into consideration the likely yield from Council Tax demands issued in April 2026, based on collection performance in previous years and the current year to date.

Growth

13. While a marginal increase is projected in number of properties, this is counterbalanced by a rise in discounts and exemptions, resulting in a net reduction in the base of 0.80%.

Calculation of the council tax base

14. Calculation of the council tax ("the tax") is governed by the Local Government Finance Act 1992 ('the Act') and various regulations thereunder. Section 31B of the Act requires the basic (band D) tax to be calculated by applying the formula: the council tax requirement divided by the council's tax base.
15. The tax base calculation is subject to the Local Authorities (Calculation of

Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012.

16. The formula takes account of the
 - a) Number of properties in each band,
 - b) Discounts given for single occupiers and students,
 - c) Premiums charged on empty dwellings and second homes,
 - d) Other eligible criteria,
 - e) The prescribed proportions (see paragraph 18) to convert numbers to Band D equivalents,
 - f) Local Council Tax Reduction scheme,
 - g) Anticipated developments that may occur during the year, and
 - h) The estimated collection rate.
17. The result of this calculation for each band is then scaled to a Band D equivalent to the ratios laid down in Section 5 of the 1992 Act as summarised below:

Band	Proportion (ninths)
A	6/9
B	7/9
C	8/9
D	9/9
E	11/9
F	13/9
G	15/9
H	18/9
18. There is an additional band -A (5/9 of band D). This only arises where a person in a band A property receives a band reduction through disability related relief (Appendix A).
19. The calculation of the tax base is summarised below (Appendix A):

Total Band D equivalent	115,507.4
Tax base collection rate	96.5%
2026-27 council tax base	111,464.6

Revenue budget implications 2026-27

20. The proposed council tax base for 2026/27 is 111,464.6 and will form part of the overall calculation of the Council's budget and determines the Council Tax income available to fund the Council's services.

Climate change implications

21. There are no implications for climate change from the recommendations arising from this report.

Consultation

22. Calculation of the council tax base forms an integral part of the revenue budget setting process for 2026-27. The budget is supported by the council's Medium Term Financial Strategy as agreed by cabinet.

Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts

23. This report contains technical calculations relating to the council's tax base for 2026-27. There are no direct community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts arising from this decision. As regards the continuing provision of the CTRS and the section 13A discretionary relief, there are positive impacts on individuals with protected characteristics including age and disability and a positive socio-economic impact given the assistance being provided to more vulnerable people.
24. The impact on the community of any potential change in service design, outcomes or access arising from recommendations relating to the 2026-27 revenue budget will need to be addressed and identified as part of the final budget submission to council assembly in February 2026.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Assistant Chief Executive (Governance and Assurance) (NBC 20251210)

25. Decisions relating to the setting of the council tax base are reserved to cabinet under part 3B of the council's constitution.
26. The legal basis for the setting of the council tax base is found under section 31B of the Act which imposes a duty on a billing authority to calculate its council tax by applying a formula laid down in that section. This relies on calculating a figure for the council tax base for the year which is formulated with reference to The Local Authority (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012. The report sets out this calculation for decision by cabinet.
27. As stated under the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, billing authorities were given the discretion to charge additional council tax of up to 100% on furnished homes not used as a sole or main residence (Public Notice 7th March 2024 [News 1675 - FINAL.indd](#)). A billing authority's first determination under this section must be made at least one year before the beginning of the financial year to which it relates. In exercising this function, a billing authority must have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
28. Where a billing authority decides under this section it must publish a notice of the determination in at least one newspaper circulating in the area. This notice must be published before the end of the period of 21 days beginning with the date of the determination; this has been done.
29. On 23 January 2013 council assembly adopted the CTRS written policy which had been developed by officers. At the same meeting the council also

approved that decision-making on any minor and consequential amendments to the CTRS written policy be delegated to the Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services [now the Strategic Director of Resources] in consultation with the monitoring officer. The council is required to consider annually whether to amend the scheme. This report indicates that no such amendments are being recommended this year.

30. The council has the power under s13A(1)(c) of the Act to reduce council tax to such extent as it thinks fit, in addition to any CTRS. The power to do this is an executive function which the cabinet determines in accordance with its responsibilities for the council's financial management under Part 3B of the council's constitution. This report sets out the ongoing additional council tax reductions being agreed under these provisions.
31. A number of discounts and exemptions are identified in the report. Provision is made for these in sections 11- 11C of the Act. Some of these are statutorily imposed as indicated. Where there is local discretion in accordance with the table in paragraph 10 the approval has to be made by council assembly in accordance with section 67 of the Act. This report recommends the continuing application of the same discounts and exemptions as are currently applied.
32. Cabinet is reminded that the council is subject to the public sector equality duty in section 149 Equality Act 2010, and attention is drawn to the community impact section of the report in this regard.
33. The duty requires the council, in the exercise of all its functions, to have due regard to the need to:
 - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
 The duty is a continuing one. Consideration of the points made in the community impact section assists the cabinet and the council in complying with this duty.
34. Members are reminded that Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 ("the Act") places restrictions on the ability of members in arrears of council tax to vote in meetings on certain financial matters.
35. Where a member has at least two months' arrears of council tax, and they are present at a meeting in which any of the following matters is being considered:
 - Any calculation relating to next year's council tax; or
 - Any recommendation, resolution or other decision which might affect the making at any such calculation [which includes the decisions being made by cabinet at this meeting] or
 - Decisions relating to the administration of council tax

the member affected must declare that section 106 of the Act applies and they shall not vote on any question relating to the matter. The member may remain in the meeting and may speak, but he or she may not vote on the matter. For executive functions, no member of the executive to whom this applies shall take any action or discharge any function with respect to the matter.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix A (i)	Consolidated Council tax base for 2026-27 for all wards
Appendix A (ii)	Council tax base for 2026-27 Southwark, St Mary and St Saviour

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Clive Palfreyman, Strategic Director of Resources	
Report Authors	Hasina Shah, Interim Chief Accountant, Resources	
Version	Final	
Dated	15 December 2025	
Key Decision?	Yes	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Assistant Chief Executive (Governance and Assurance)	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Resources	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	15 December 2025	

Appendix A (i)

London Borough of Southwark Consolidated (all Wards)		Council Tax Band									
		-A	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	Total
1	Number of Chargeable Dwellings (H)	9.0	10,827.0	35,850.0	34,851.0	27,598.0	20,699.0	7,499.0	4,515.0	806.0	142,654.0
2	Adjustment for the number of dwellings subject to a discount (Q)	-1.6	-1,629.3	-4,150.0	-2,957.3	-2,200.1	-1,302.9	-401.0	-198.6	-35.6	-12,876.4
3	Adjustment for the number of dwellings subject to a premium (E)	0.0	393.0	689.0	508.0	383.0	357.0	159.0	105.0	35.0	2,629.0
4	Adjustment for the localised council tax support scheme (Z)	-4.5	-2,148.8	-6,035.3	-4,169.6	-2,462.2	-1,453.7	-253.1	-52.1	-1.1	-16,580.4
5	Adjustment for forecast changes in the tax base (J)					260.0					260.0
6	Total in band (H - Q + E+ J) - Z	2.9	7,441.9	26,353.7	28,232.1	23,578.7	18,299.4	7,003.9	4,369.3	804.3	116,086.2
7	Multiply by band factor F/G	5/9	6/9	7/9	8/9	9/9	11/9	13/9	15/9	18/9	
8	Number of Band D Equivalents	1.5	4,961.3	20,497.3	25,095.2	23,578.7	22,365.9	10,116.7	7,282.2	1,608.6	115,507.4
9	Estimated Collection Level										96.50%
10	Estimated 2026-27 Tax base										111,464.6

Appendix A (ii)

London Borough of Southwark (excluding St. Mary Newington & St Saviour)		Council Tax Band									
		-A	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	Total
1	Number of Chargeable Dwellings (H)	8.0	8,378.0	29,103.0	29,559.0	25,447.0	19,007.0	6,983.0	4,301.0	733.0	123,519.0
2	Adjustment for the number of dwellings subject to a discount (Q)	-1.3	-1,272.3	-3,432.5	-2,562.8	-2,038.8	-1,210.3	-370.0	-184.8	-33.5	-11,106.3
3	Adjustment for the number of dwellings subject to a premium (E)	0.0	171.0	479.0	426.0	344.0	337.0	141.0	95.0	26.0	2,019.0
4	Adjustment for the localised council tax support scheme (Z)	-4.5	-2,148.8	-6,035.3	-4,169.6	-2,462.2	-1,453.7	-253.1	-52.1	-1.1	-16,580.4
5	Adjustment for forecast changes in the tax base (J)					260.0					260.0
6	Total in band (H - Q + E+ J) - Z	2.2	5,127.9	20,114.2	23,252.6	21,550.0	16,680.0	6,500.9	4,159.1	724.4	98,111.3
7	Multiply by band factor F/G	5/9	6/9	7/9	8/9	9/9	11/9	13/9	15/9	18/9	
8	Number of Band D Equivalents	1.1	3,418.6	15,644.4	20,669.0	21,550.0	20,386.7	9,390.2	6,931.8	1,448.8	99,440.6
9	Estimated Collection Level										96.50%
10	Estimated 2026-27 Tax base										95,960.1

St Saviour		Council Tax Band									
		-A	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Total	
1	Number of Chargeable Dwellings (H)	0.0	94.0	270.0	305.0	191.0	232.0	151.0	141.0	50.0	1,434.0
2	Adjustment for the number of dwellings subject to a discount (Q)	0.0	-29.0	-32.5	-33.5	-15.0	-21.3	-13.0	-10.3	-1.8	-156.4
3	Adjustment for the number of dwellings subject to a premium (E)	0.0	1.0	3.0	1.0	4.0	4.0	7.0	8.0	8.0	36.0
4	Adjustment for the localised council tax support scheme (Z)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
5	Adjustment for forecast changes in the tax base (J)					0.0					0.0
6	Total in band (H - Q + E+ J) - Z	0.0	66.0	240.5	272.5	180.0	214.7	145.0	138.7	56.2	1,313.6
7	Multiply by band factor F/G	5/9	6/9	7/9	8/9	9/9	11/9	13/9	15/9	18/9	
8	Number of Band D Equivalents	0.0	44.0	187.1	242.2	180.0	262.4	209.4	231.2	112.4	1,468.7
9	Estimated Collection Level										96.50%
10	Estimated 2026-27 Tax base										1,417.3

Meeting Name:	Cabinet
Date:	6 January 2026
Report title:	Gateway 3 – Variation Decision Parks Grounds Maintenance Contract Extension
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Ellie Cumbo, Parks and Culture
Ward(s) or groups affected:	All
Classification:	Open
Reason for lateness (if applicable):	N/a

FOREWORD – COUNCILLOR ELLIE CUMBO, CABINET MEMBER FOR PARKS AND CULTURE

Our parks and open spaces are an essential part of living well in Southwark, and we know they matter to residents. Our high quality and diverse green infrastructure is also key to achieving our biodiversity and climate change aspirations as an inner-city London Borough.

The current level of service is well received by local residents and receives positive industry recognition through its Green Flag achievements and consistent Good Parks for London performance. Fundamental to this success is a good maintenance regime, which is currently provided to Southwark Council under contract. This has enabled us to achieve a good balance between cost and quality.

The current grounds maintenance contract extension is due to expire in October 2026, but with the option to extend for a further four years. In view of a number of issues, including the quality and value of current provision, a four-year contract extension is proposed, in order to ensure ongoing quality of service and to mitigate risks including market volatility. This additional extension period will ensure ongoing quality of provision and value.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Cabinet approves the variation of the grounds maintenance contract with Quadron Services Limited, now trading as Idverde U.K Limited, for a four-year period from 3 October 2026 with an estimated annual cost of £3.289m and subject to the contract provision as set out in paragraph 20 of this report, making a total contract value of the extension period £13.156m, and a total estimated lifetime contract value of £42.5m.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

2. The reason for the proposed recommendation in this report is detailed in paragraphs 21-23 (*Reason for Variation*).

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

3. The alternative options considered to the proposed variation are set out in the section entitled Alternative Options Considered within this report at paragraphs 27-28.

POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

4. Once the recommendation within this report has been approved, the following will take place:
 - i. Next steps aligned to the future proposals for this service are set out in paragraphs 24-26 of the report.
 - ii. The timeline for implementation of the actions in this report is within the project plan within the body of the report at paragraph 30.
 - iii. The planned contract management and monitoring regime is detailed out in paragraphs 35-42 of this report.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

5. Government policy increasingly recognises the importance of greenspace in people's health and wellbeing for promoting good health, prevention of poor health and treatment and recovery from illness and injury. The government's 25-Year Environment Plan, 'A green future: Our 25-year plan to improve the environment' acknowledges the essential role that the natural environment and greenspace play in people's physical and mental health and aims to improve population health and wellbeing by forging a closer connection between people and the natural environment.
6. The council's parks and open spaces play an essential part in improving the quality of life for residents. As an inner-city London Borough, high quality and diverse green infrastructure is also very important environmentally and is considered a significant contributor to residents' well-being and also to supporting the delivery of the council's climate emergency targets.
7. The provision and upkeep of parks and open spaces remain a strategic priority for the council, and this has been demonstrated through the large injection of capital funding into infrastructure for parks over the past decade. Southwark's parks are increasingly popular and are enjoyed by growing local populations.

8. The council has ensured that its parks provision remains a high priority. This has ensured that green spaces remain able to contribute positively to the wider health and wellbeing agenda and the quality of life of local residents. There are also economic benefits as a green borough is attractive to live and work in, which boosts the local economy.
9. The current level of parks service is well received by local residents and has positive industry recognition through its Green Flag achievements (all 30 Green Flags retained again in 2024) and Good Parks for London performance. The quality of provision was formally recognised in 2022, with the council being awarded the title of 'Best Parks in London'. Fundamental to this success is a good maintenance regime, which is provided to the council through the Grounds Maintenance (GM) contract. This has enabled the achievement of a good balance between cost and quality.
10. The GM contract was awarded to Quadron Idverde for an initial period of seven-years (3 October 2016 – 2 October 2023) with the option to extend for a further period or periods of up to seven years.
11. The GM contract was extended in October 2023 for a period of three-years (see Background Documents: Gateway 3 – Variation Decision Parks Grounds Maintenance Contract Extension) to ensure service stability and to maintain quality.
12. The GM contract includes the option to extend by a further four years. The estimated value of the GM contract for financial year 2025-26 is £3,432,283. The total original contract value and current extension have a combined value of £29,344,000. The current contract spend from October 2016 to October 2025 is £27,803,547.
13. The GM contract provides a year-round service and is borough-wide covering 105 sites including five major parks, 33 local parks, 15 gardens and squares, two sports grounds, three cemeteries, five adventure playgrounds and 42 other open spaces. Contract quantities indicate a total asset measurement of around 300 hectares under management (as of October 2025).
14. The primary items covered by the GM contract include grounds maintenance (all gardening tasks), cleansing and weed control of hard surfaces and the opening and locking of some parks. Also included are an emergency out-of-hours provision, park-keeping services (including room booking facilitation) plus bin emptying, litter picking, faeces, drug and sex litter removal. The contract includes an apprenticeship programme and provision of staff to support coaching sessions at the specialised BMX cycling centre in Burgess Park, green waste composting and re-use and volunteering programmes in conjunction with friends and stakeholder groups.

15. The contract is output-based with individual programmed elements of work priced against a bill of quantities. There are also priced schedules of rates to facilitate any required ad-hoc works.
16. As part of the original procurement strategy in 2016, the council made a capital investment of £1.2m to service the costs of plant and machinery associated with the contract. During the initial seven-year term Idverde was responsible for repair, maintenance and replacement of vehicles and machinery under the terms of a Chattel Lease with the council. However, on the commencement of the first extension period in October 2023 the Chattel Lease expired with all responsibility for vehicles and machinery transferring back to the council. In advance, a growth bid of £750k was allocated by the council which is currently being unlocked as the original machinery reaches end of life and requires replacement. All new machinery is estimated to be replaced by June 2026. Vehicle provision is now being transitioned to a leasing arrangement with Idverde as this provides greater value for money than purchase and will be completed by April 2026.
17. Further detail with reference to parks grounds maintenance vehicles and machinery procurement, leasing and environmental considerations is set out in Gateway 1 Report – Procurement of machinery for Parks Grounds Maintenance Contract (background papers).

Contract highlights summary

18. An overview and some of the contract highlights between 2016 and 2025 include:
 - high public satisfaction, supported by ongoing volumes of compliments and low number of complaints
 - Internal client team monitoring scores consistently exceeding 90% target (see Contract management and monitoring, paras 35-42)
 - Independent external validation – 30 Green Flag parks and top ten performing London borough 2019-25 (Good Parks for London)
 - Quality green infrastructure supporting the physical and mental health of residents
 - Welcoming, safe and well-maintained landscapes supporting passive and active recreation and sport
 - 81% of sites of importance for nature conservation (SINCs) in positive management, ranking Southwark fifth in England on this national indicator.

Previous savings

19. Please refer to the closed version of this report.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Key Aspects of Proposed Variation

20. Please refer to the closed version of this report.

Reasons for Variation

21. In 2016 there were enough suitably-sized grounds maintenance suppliers in the marketplace to ensure a competitive marketplace. It is apparent, however, that due to the current economic landscape, high London living wages and business operational costs that there is now a much-reduced supplier base.
22. The current provider Idverde has consistently demonstrated high quality performance delivery for the lifetime of the contract to date. This reflected in positive customer satisfaction feedback, stakeholder engagement and contractual performance reporting.
23. The reason for variation is to exercise the option to extend the current contract as outlined in this report and as summarised in paragraph 20 above on the basis of value for money and the most recent benchmarking data.

Future Proposals for this Service

24. Sufficient time has been allocated to a full comprehensive service review during the proposed contract extension period to plan for a new procurement or the transition to other new arrangements.
25. A Gateway Zero – Strategic Options Assessment is timetabled for Cabinet review in June 2029.
26. The above review with an associated procurement timetable allow for a sufficient period of mobilisation for new arrangements prior to a start date in October 2030.

Alternative Options Considered

27. Alternative options considered are set out in Appendix 1. Officers considered the available options for this service in the autumn of 2024:
 - Undertaking a new procurement exercise
 - Bringing the service in-house
 - Managing the service through a Local Authority Trading Organisation (LATCO)
 - Extending the current contract for a period of up to a further four years (in whole or in part)
28. A high-level RAG rated options appraisal is included as appendix 1, this considers all the benefits and risks associated with each option. On

balance, taking into account all issues, it is felt that a further service extension was the most appropriate way forward to:

- Ensure that the current level of grounds maintenance provision will continue, with no risk of interrupted or reduced service quality through a new contractor
- Ensure stability during a time of significant economic market turbulence, the contract price could be guaranteed, with an additional negotiated reduction in the contract sum, as part of the agreed extension package.

Identified risks for the Variation

29. Please refer to the closed version of this report.

Procurement project plan (Key Decision)

30.

Activity	Completed by/Complete by:
Briefed relevant cabinet member (over £100k)	27/11/2025
DCRB Review Gateway 3:	05/11/2025
CCRB Review Gateway 3:	20/11/2025
CMT Review Gateway 3:	25/11/2025
Notification of forthcoming decision – despatch of Cabinet agenda papers	29/11/2025
Approval of Gateway 3 Report	06/01/2026
End of Scrutiny Call-in period and notification of implementation of Gateway 3 decision	20/01/2026
Contract Variation Enacted	02/10/2026
Amend Contract Register	01/10/2026
Contract amendment start	02/10/2026
Contract completion date	01/10/2030

Policy implications

31. A healthy environment is one of the Southwark 2030 six goals. In order to achieve this, the council seeks, where possible to improve or increase greenspace and biodiversity for the community to enjoy. This means taking a proactive approach to rewilding underused green space and converting non-green spaces by roads and in estates to community gardens, parklets and other forms of green community space.

32. The council's declaration of a climate emergency and current carbon neutrality commitments drives the need to ensure that the future grounds maintenance service supports this commitment through associated targets as set out in the Climate Change Action Plan. Associated initiatives include the Southwark Nature Action Plan (SNAP) and ongoing capital programme tree-planting commitments.
33. The Environment Act 2021 strengthened the 'Biodiversity Duty' required of public authorities under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006. Under the strengthened duty, the council has a statutory obligation to 'consider' what it can do to both 'conserve and enhance' biodiversity.
34. The Southwark 2030 Procurement Framework mandates the inclusion of Social Value within all council contracts. This is supported by the Social Value Framework which provides the methodology for securing, evaluating, monitoring, and reporting activity from our supply chain.

Contract management and monitoring

35. The council's contract register publishes the details of all contracts over £5,000 in value to meet the obligations of the Local Government Transparency Code. The Report Author must ensure that all appropriate details of this procurement are added to the contract register via the eProcurement System.
36. The contract will continue to be managed by the Parks, Trees and Ecology Manager with support from the Parks Management Team.
37. The council monitors the provider's performance against a range of measures including a mixture of nationally determined Audit Commission and locally determined council Indicators and measures.
 - Monitoring Statistics (including an assessment of the authorised officer's inspection results and number of rectification and default notices issued)
 - Management Systems (including an assessment of the provider's management of the contract, quality control measures, provision of information, complaint handling and operation of asset management systems)
 - Resources (including an assessment of the provider's resources allocated to the contract including staffing levels and equipment provision in terms of availability and sufficiency)
 - Production and scrutiny of an annual performance review report with reference to the above.
38. Based on the total number of points awarded with the above indicators the provider is placed in one of three possible Performance Bands as follows:
 - Green: Score 9 to 10 Points, at this standard the provider is performing to expectations and no intervention is required.

- Amber: Score 7 to 8 Points, at this standard, the provider is not yet meeting expectations and will prepare a rectification plan for discussion at the joint council and provider operational meetings setting out the corrective action necessary to improve performance to the Green standard.
- Red: Score 0 - 6 Points, at this standard, the Provider is performing below an adequate standard, and the Council will issue a Warning Notice.

39. The Key Performance Indicator of overall contract quality is proposed to remain at 90% annually despite the operational savings proposed to be applied to the service. Operational savings will be mitigated through a restructure of contracted staff through reorganisation, training and development.

40. Since the start of the GM contract, Idverde's contract performance has exceeded the agreed annual performance target of 90%, with a current average performance score of 93%. It is also clear through the last public satisfaction survey and ongoing compliments and limited complaints, that customers are very happy with the current service.

41. A healthy professional relationship also exists between the council and Idverde and was demonstrated through the substantial support provided by the contract staff during the Covid-19 pandemic and continued flexibility where contract adjustments have been required.

42. External independent measurement of the quality of parks also takes place through the Green Flag scheme. Southwark currently has 30 parks with this status (the second highest in London). In addition, the Good Parks for London annual assessment has placed Southwark's parks in the top ten in London for the last six years, with Southwark being the top performing London borough in 2022.

Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts

Community impact statement

43. Maintaining high quality standards of grounds maintenance across our parks and greenspaces will have a positive impact on the community. Actions for the conservation and promotion of biodiversity promote community cohesion by connecting people with nature, providing volunteering opportunities, and fostering positive interactions between people from different communities. Much of the wildlife assets of the council are in parks and public spaces, free to all users, and accessible year-round.

44. The council has developed regular volunteering with business and community volunteers and will continue to promote volunteering in our open spaces. This includes opportunities with schools, people with disabilities, and underrepresented groups.

45. Implementing the recommended option in this report will have no detrimental impact on any group or those with protected characteristic as outlined in the Equality Act 2010 or the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).
46. Many activities to conserve and enhance biodiversity provide novel opportunities for participation with physical activity for members of the public, increasing representation in outdoor activities and promoting resident health and wellbeing. Access to nature is well documented as beneficial to both mental and physical health.
47. Parks benefit the health of communities through improving air quality, reducing urban temperatures, reducing noise and calming traffic, managing flood risks, and providing amenity value, recreation space and cultural services.

Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement

48. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 imposes a general equality duty on public authorities (the PSED in the exercise of their functions), to have due regard to the need to:
 - Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it
 - Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
49. For the purposes of the PSED the following are “protected characteristic” considerations:
 - Age
 - Marriage and civil partnership
 - Disability
 - Gender reassignment
 - Pregnancy and maternity
 - Race
 - Religion or belief
 - Sex
 - Sexual orientation
50. The PSED and its implications for groups with protected characteristics using the council’s parks and open spaces will be considered further as the parks and grounds maintenance service is developed and delivered.
51. In line with the PSED full equalities impact assessments are undertaken when designing, consulting on and delivering parks projects and programmes, and ensuring mitigation is in place.

Health impact statement

52. Years of scientific study show a positive link between nature and good mental and physical health. Through connecting with nature, appreciating it and building a relationship with the natural environment the benefits are most profound. Connecting with nature can:

- Reduce stress, anxiety, depression and fatigue
- Boost immune systems
- Encourage people to be more physically active and
- It may reduce the risk of chronic disease.

Climate change implications

53. Conserving and enhancing biodiversity through good parks and open spaces management can reduce emissions and mitigate against the impacts of climate change, for example, trees both sequester carbon and provide shade.

54. Continuing good maintenance of our parks will directly contribute to the Council's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, which commits to a 'Thriving Natural Environment' and an adapted, resilient borough. These commitments include improving biodiversity, introducing new green corridors, making our streets a green place to walk, play and relax and increasing tree canopy cover across the borough. The Action Plan for the strategy includes 14 SMART actions for the 'Thriving Natural Environment' priority area.

55. A £1m allocation for capital projects for green space enhancements and biodiversity improvements was agreed in 2022 in response to Climate Change Citizen Jury recommendations, which will contribute to both climate change and biodiversity objectives. The majority of these enhancements and improvements are situated within parks.

56. The resilience and adaptation elements of the Climate Strategy, defines the council's approach to responding to the harmful effects of a changing climate. Actions resulting from the delivery of the strategy will offer opportunities for biodiversity improvements through new green infrastructure and sustainable urban drainage to tackle flooding and overheating. This also includes the following targets and goals:

- Review the current approach to the use of pesticides in the public realm to better protect residents, wildlife and promote biodiversity
- Identify potential green corridors between key green spaces/Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation
- Parks, gardens and green spaces are adapted to be drought resistant.

57. The council's recent and ongoing investment in parks vehicles and machinery will increase the provision of new vehicles and equipment with modern green engines across the life of the contract extension period.

58. Waste recycling management will also be reviewed prior the commencement of the extension arrangements in 2030 in collaboration with Waste Management colleagues and term supplier Veolia.

Social Value considerations

59. The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 requires that the council considers, before commencing any procurement process, how wider social, economic and environmental benefits that may improve the wellbeing of the local area can be secured. Social value considerations and how the delivery of these services can benefit the local area are below:

- Third sector management of key sites of importance for nature conservation
- Community participation/volunteering
- Opportunities for educational engagement
- Local employment and supporting contract opportunities.

60. In terms of added value, the contract facilitates an apprenticeship programme with five places available at any one time. In addition, there is also provision for volunteer opportunities, joint projects with friends and stakeholders, corporate volunteer days and community payback schemes.

61. Social considerations are to be built into the contract variation for delivering the recommended option, the contractors are expected to:

- guarantee the payment of at least the London Living Wage (LLW) for contracted staff and any subcontractors used in the delivery of the service
- follow all relevant standard provisions on blacklisting
- follow the standards for financial transactions and payment windows for their entire supply chain
- make every effort to reflect the council's Fairer Future Vision principle by 'looking after every penny as if it was our own'.

62. Please refer to the closed version of this report.

Economic considerations

63. Inflationary pressures and the cost-of-living crisis had significant impacts on the economy and commercial businesses nationally. The green industry which predominantly employs lower paid semi-skilled workers has been struggling for several years now to both recruit and retain staff, especially for jobs in central London, where pay has failed to keep pace with living and commuting costs. As the current cost of living crisis continues, it is unlikely that the availability of a competitive marketplace and available staff will become more abundant in the short term.

64. This report considers an appropriate delivery model for the provision of parks grounds maintenance services. The provision of this service

already exists and therefore no significant impacts to the local economy are anticipated.

65. The procurement exercise associated with this recommendation takes into consideration how the delivery of these services can benefit the local area in consideration of the Southwark 2030 Procurement Framework, For example, through:

Local contractors

- All of the options currently presented have opportunities to engage local supporting contractors
- All of the options have opportunities to vary and expand third sector management participation.

Apprenticeships/internships

- Idverde further engage with the council's apprenticeship model
- Apprenticeships are to continue to be monitored through monthly, quarterly and annual performance meetings.

Social considerations

66. The council continually recognises the benefit of working closely with its local communities to improve and increase the use of its parks and greenspaces. That work is developed in partnership with residents, third sector groups, volunteer networks and other important stakeholders to maximise the health and wellbeing benefits of visiting parks for residents.
67. Community engagement; further engagement with leading workdays with Friends of Groups, corporate volunteers, community payback, and educational placements to be monitored through monthly, quarterly and annual performance meetings.

Environmental/Sustainability considerations

68. No additional impacts are envisaged to result from the contract extension.
69. The new machinery purchased to service the contract extension period has been benchmarked against the leading environmentally friendly items available in the market.
70. Replacing existing 2016 purchased fleet with new leased vehicles with the latest efficient engines will reduce total emissions produced servicing the contract extension period.
71. Idverde will further engage with the council's biodiversity initiatives in increasing the number of enhanced ecologically managed spaces as the transition from ornamental to biodiverse management in parks grounds maintenance continues.

Financial Implications

72. Please refer to the closed version of this report.

Legal Implications

73. Please see concurrent from the Assistant Chief Executive – Governance and Assurance.

Consultation

74. None.

Other implications or issues

75. N/a.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Strategic Director of Resources (FC25/006)

76. Please refer to the closed version of this report.

Head of Procurement

77. Please refer to the closed version of this report.

Assistant Chief Executive – Governance and Assurance (SB041225)

78. Please refer to the closed version of this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
GW2 Contract Award for the parks grounds maintenance service	Parks & Natural Environment	Julian Fowgies 07925 637218
Link: https://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/g5372/Public%20reports%20pac%20Tuesday%2019-Jul-2016%2016.00%20Cabinet.pdf?T=10		
GW3 Final Cabinet Open Version – Parks Grounds Maintenance Contract Extension 7 March 2023	Parks & Natural Environment	Julian Fowgies 07925 637218
Link: Report template - contract award approval		

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Delegated Officer Decision Gateway 1 Report – Procurement of machinery for Parks Grounds Maintenance Contract	Parks & Natural Environment	Julian Fowgies 07925 637218

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APPENDICES

No	Title
Appendix 1	GM Contract Future Service Options Appraisal (From October 24)
Appendix 2	Equality Impact and Needs Analysis – Grounds Maintenance Contract Variation

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Ellie Cumbo, Parks and Culture	
Lead Officer	Aled Richards, Strategic Director of Environment, Sustainability and Leisure	
Report Author	Julian Fowgies, Parks, Trees & Ecology Manager	
Version	Final	
Dated	15 December 2025	
Key Decision?	Yes	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Strategic Director of Resources	Yes	Yes
Head of Procurement	Yes	Yes
Assistant Chief Executive – Governance and Assurance	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Contract Review Boards		
Departmental Contract Review Board	Yes	Yes
Corporate Contract Review Board	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team		10 December 2025

GM Contract Future Service Options Appraisal (From October 24)

APPENDIX 1

Option No.	Service Stream	Cost	Benefits	Risks	Rating (RAG)
1.	New external procurement	Price would be determined by market, currently impacted by the broader economic environment. A significant increase would be expected due to inflationary factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An opportunity to re-write the specification. Ability to build in mechanisms for future efficiencies the start of the contract 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service price and quality vulnerable to both industry and broader national & global economic impacts. Goes against the preferred approach for service delivery – i.e. insourcing where possible A risk of a higher cost & reduced quality. Client resource impacts - heavy procurement process Transition period service impacts Losing control of known price and quality outputs 	Amber
2.	Bringing the service in-house	Increase in current costs (estimated at circa 15-30%, but would require further investigation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets the Council's preference for internalised services Control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential for higher cost of staff Liabilities for repair of machinery and vehicles Short-term client officer resource impacts Recruitment and retention of GM staff Significant resource required re TUPE implications for circa 90 x staff 	Amber
3.	LATCO	Increase in current costs estimated at circa 15-20%,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific focus equipped to develop bespoke services Potential to develop commercial culture & services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No organisational experience of creating LATCO Unknown financial pressures present risk to LATCO Under the Companies Act 2006 – directors to act in best interest of company rather than the council 	Amber
4.	Extension of the current contract	Known costs with extension adjustments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No transition impacts Known costs and quality Consistency of high-quality service Designs out the potential for additional industry & broader economic impacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited flexibility around future additional savings, as these will be front loaded and pre-agreed, 	Green



APPENDIX 2

Equality Impact and Needs Analysis – Grounds Maintenance Contract Extension

Guidance notes

Things to remember:

Under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) public authorities are required to have due regard to the aims of the general equality duty when making decisions and when setting policies.

Understanding the effect of the council's policies and practices on people with different protected characteristics is an important part of complying with the general equality duty. Under the PSED the council must ensure that:

- Decision-makers are aware of the general equality duty's requirements.
- The general equality duty is complied with before and at the time a particular policy is under consideration and when a decision is taken.
- They consciously consider the need to do the things set out in the aims of the general equality duty as an integral part of the decision-making process.
- They have sufficient information to understand the effects of the policy, or the way a function is carried out, on the aims set out in the general equality duty.
- They review policies or decisions, for example, if the make-up of service user changes, as the general equality duty is a continuing duty.
- They take responsibility for complying with the general equality duty in relation to all their relevant functions. Responsibility cannot be delegated to external organisations that are carrying out public functions on their behalf.
- They consciously consider the need to do the things set out in the aims of the general equality duty not only when a policy is developed and decided upon, but when it is being implemented.

Best practice guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission recommends that public bodies:

- Consider all the [protected characteristics](#) and all aims of the general equality duty (apart from in relation to marriage and civil partnership, where only the discrimination aim applies).
- Use equality analysis to inform policy as it develops to avoid unnecessary additional activity.
- Focus on the understanding the effects of a policy on equality and any actions needed as a result, not the production of a document.
- Consider how the time and effort involved should relate to the importance of the policy to equality.
- Think about steps to advance equality and good relations as well as eliminate discrimination.
- Use good evidence. Where it isn't available, take steps to gather it (where practical and proportionate).
- Use insights from engagement with employees, service users and others can help provide evidence for equality analysis.

Equality analysis should be referenced in community impact statements in Council reports. Community impact statements are a corporate requirement in all reports to the following meetings: the cabinet, individual decision makers, scrutiny, regulatory committees and community councils. Community impact statements enable decision makers to identify more easily how a decision might affect different communities in Southwark and to consider any implications for equality and diversity.

The public will be able to view and scrutinise any equality analysis undertaken. Equality analysis should therefore be written in a clear and transparent way using plain English. Equality analysis may be published under the council's publishing of equality information, or be present with divisional/departmental/service business plans. These will be placed on the website for public view under the council's Publications Scheme. All Cabinet reports will also publish related

Equality analysis should be reviewed after a sensible period of time to see if business needs have changed and/or if the effects that were expected have occurred. If not then you will need to consider amending your policy accordingly. This does not mean repeating the equality analysis, but using the experience gained through implementation to check the findings and to make any necessary adjustments.

Engagement with the community is recommended as part of the development of equality analysis. The council's Community Engagement Division and critical friend, the Forum for Equality and Human Rights in Southwark can assist with this (see section below on community engagement and www.southwarkadvice.org.uk).

Whilst the equality analysis is being considered, Southwark Council recommends considering Socio-Economic implications, as socio-economic inequalities have a strong influence on the environment we live and work in. As a major provider of services to Southwark residents, the council has a legal duty to reduce socio-economic inequalities and this is reflected in its values and aims. For this reason, the council recommends considering socio-economic impacts in all equality analyses, not forgetting to include identified potential mitigating actions.

Section 1: Equality impact and needs analysis details

Proposed policy/decision/business plan to which this equality analysis relates	Gateway 3 Report – Extension of the Grounds Maintenance Contract (3 years) – Oct 23 – Oct 26					
Equality analysis author	Tara Quinn					
Strategic Director:	Caroline Bruce					
Department	Environment & Leisure	Division	Parks & Leisure			
Period analysis undertaken	November 2022 (Ongoing)					
Date of review (if applicable)	November 2025 (Dec 2025 update - review not required as no change)					
Sign-off		Position		Date		

Section 2: Brief description of policy/decision/business plan**1.1 Brief description of policy/decision/business plan**

The current contract was awarded to Idverde for a seven year period (3rd October 2016 – 2nd October 2023). The contract facilitates the option to extend for up to a further seven year period, or indeed pursue an alternative service option.

The contract provides a 365 day per year service and is borough-wide covering some 105 sites including five major parks, 33 local parks, 15 gardens and squares, two sports grounds, three cemeteries, five adventure playgrounds and 42 other open spaces. Contract quantities indicate a total asset measurement of around 300 ha under management (March 2022).

The primary items covered by the contract include grounds maintenance (all gardening tasks). Cleansing and weed control of hard surfaces. Opening and locking of parks. Out of hours service cover provision. Park keeping services including room booking facilitation. Bin emptying, litter picking and faeces and needles removal. Apprenticeship programme and BMX coaches. Green waste composting & re-use. Volunteering programme(s) and close working with friends and stakeholder groups.

Officers considered the available options for this service from October 2023:

- Undertaking a new procurement exercise
- Bringing the service in-house
- Extending the current contract for a period of up to 7 years (in whole or in phases)

An options analysis was undertaken and on balance it was determined that a 3 year extension of the current contract was the most appropriate way forward.

Section 3: Overview of service users and key stakeholders consulted

2. Service users and stakeholders	
Key users of the department or service	The maintenance service covers all parks across the borough but does not provide direct services to the public and is not bookable. The service facilitates the provision of safe and presentable green spaces for both passive and active recreation, sports and leisure.
Key stakeholders were/are involved in this policy/decision/business plan	<p>The decision relates to the extension of an existing service only, with no significant change to existing service levels. Accordingly, involvement has been limited to the Council's standard Procurement Gateway decision making process.</p> <p>Cabinet Members & Internal Business Units</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks & Leisure • Procurement • Legal • Finance

Section 4: Pre-implementation equality impact and needs analysis

This section considers the potential impacts (positive and negative) on groups with 'protected characteristics', the equality information on which this analysis is based and any mitigating actions to be taken, including improvement actions to promote equality and tackle inequalities. An equality analysis also presents as an opportunity to improve services to meet diverse needs, promote equality, tackle inequalities and promote good community relations. It is not just about addressing negative impacts.

The columns include societal issues (discrimination, exclusion, needs etc.) and socio-economic issues (levels of poverty, employment, income). As the two aspects are heavily interrelated it may not be practical to fill out both columns on all protected characteristics. The aim is, however, to ensure that socio-economic issues are given special consideration, as it is the council's intention to reduce socio-economic inequalities in the borough. Key is also the link between protected characteristics and socio-economic disadvantage, including experiences of multiple disadvantage.

Socio-economic disadvantage may arise from a range of factors, including:

- poverty
- health
- education
- limited social mobility
- housing
- a lack of expectations
- discrimination
- multiple disadvantage

The public sector equality duty (PSED) requires us to find out about and give due consideration to the needs of different protected characteristics in relation to the three parts of the duty:

1. Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation
2. Advancing equality of opportunity, including finding out about and meeting diverse needs of our local communities, addressing disadvantage and barriers to equal access; enabling all voices to be heard in our engagement and consultation undertaken; increasing the participation of underrepresented groups
3. Fostering good community relations; promoting good relations; to be a borough where all feel welcome, included, valued, safe and respected.

The PSED is now also further reinforced in the two additional Fairer Future For All values: that we will

- Always work to make Southwark more equal and just
- Stand against all forms of discrimination and racism

Age - Where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds).

Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan; this also includes needs in relation to each part of the duty.	Potential Socio-Economic impacts/needs/issues arising from socio-economic disadvantage (positive and negative)
No specific impacts identified	No specific impacts identified
Equality information on which above analysis is based	Socio-Economic data on which above analysis is based
Maintenance service only, no change to existing provision	Maintenance service only, no change to existing provision
Mitigating and/or improvement actions to be taken	
N/A	N/A

Disability - A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Please note that under the PSED due regard includes:

Giving due consideration in all relevant areas to "the steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities." This also includes the need to understand and focus on different needs/impacts arising from different disabilities.

Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan; this also includes needs in relation to each part of the duty.	Potential socio-economic impacts/needs/issues arising from socio-economic disadvantage (positive and negative)
No specific impacts identified	No specific impacts identified
Equality information on which above analysis is based	Socio-economic data on which above analysis is based
Maintenance service only, no change to existing provision	Maintenance service only, no change to existing provision

Mitigating and/or improvement actions to be taken	
N/A	N/A

<p>Gender reassignment: - The process of transitioning from one gender to another.</p> <p>Gender Identity: Gender identity is the personal sense of one's own gender. Gender identity can correlate with a person's assigned sex or can differ from it.</p>	
Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan; this also includes needs in relation to each part of the duty.	Potential socio-economic impacts/needs/issues arising from socio-economic disadvantage (positive and negative)
No specific impacts identified	No specific impacts identified
Equality information on which above analysis is based.	Socio-economic data on which above analysis is based
Maintenance service only, no change to existing provision	Maintenance service only, no change to existing provision
Mitigating and/or improvement actions to be taken	
N/A	N/A

<p>Marriage and civil partnership – In England and Wales marriage is no longer restricted to a union between a man and a woman but now includes a marriage between a same-sex couples. Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples and must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters. (Only to be considered in respect to the need to eliminate discrimination.)</p>	
Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan	Potential socio-economic impacts/needs/issues arising from socio-economic disadvantage (positive and negative)
No specific impacts identified	No specific impacts identified

Equality information on which above analysis is based	Socio-economic data on which above analysis is based
Maintenance service only, no change to existing provision	Maintenance service only, no change to existing provision
Mitigating or improvement actions to be taken	
N/A	N/A

<p>Pregnancy and maternity - Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavorably because she is breastfeeding.</p>	
Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan; this also includes needs in relation to each part of the duty.	Potential socio-economic impacts/needs/issues arising from socio-economic disadvantage (positive and negative)
No specific impacts identified	No specific impacts identified
Equality information on which above analysis is based	Socio-economic data on which above analysis is based
Maintenance service only, no change to existing provision	Maintenance service only, no change to existing provision
Mitigating and/or improvement actions to be taken	
N/A	N/A

<p>Race - Refers to the protected characteristic of Race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins. N.B. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller are recognised racial groups and their needs should be considered alongside all others</p>
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Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan; this also includes needs in relation to each part of the duty.	Potential socio-economic impacts/needs/issues arising from socio-economic disadvantage (positive and negative)
No specific impacts identified	No specific impacts identified
Equality information on which above analysis is based	Socio-economic data on which above analysis is based
Maintenance service only, no change to existing provision	Maintenance service only, no change to existing provision
Mitigating and/or improvement actions to be taken	
N/A	N/A

<p>Religion and belief - Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.</p>	
Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan; this also includes needs in relation to each part of the duty.	Potential socio-economic impacts/needs/issues arising from socio-economic disadvantage (positive and negative)
No specific impacts identified	No specific impacts identified
Equality information on which above analysis is based	Socio-economic data on which above analysis is based
Maintenance service only, no change to existing provision	Maintenance service only, no change to existing provision
Mitigating and/or improvement actions to be taken	
N/A	N/A

Sex - A man or a woman.

Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan; this also includes needs in relation to each part of the duty.	Potential socio-economic impacts/needs/issues arising from socio-economic disadvantage (positive and negative)
No specific impacts identified	No specific impacts identified
Equality information on which above analysis is based	Socio-economic data on which above analysis is based
Maintenance service only, no change to existing provision	Maintenance service only, no change to existing provision
Mitigating and/or improvement actions to be taken	
N/A	N/A

<p>Sexual orientation - Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes</p>	
Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan; this also includes needs in relation to each part of the duty.	Potential socio-economic impacts/needs/issues arising from socio-economic disadvantage (positive and negative)
No specific impacts identified	No specific impacts identified
Equality information on which above analysis is based	Socio-economic data on which above analysis is based
Maintenance service only, no change to existing provision	Maintenance service only, no change to existing provision
Mitigating and/or improvement actions to be taken	
No mitigating actions are currently required	

Human Rights

There are 16 rights in the Human Rights Act. Each one is called an Article. They are all taken from the European Convention on Human Rights. The Articles are The right to life, Freedom from torture, inhuman and degrading treatment, Freedom from forced labour , Right to Liberty, Fair trial, Retrospective penalties, Privacy, Freedom of conscience, Freedom of expression, Freedom of assembly, Marriage and family, Freedom from discrimination and the First Protocol

Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan

The contract extension and continuation of grounds maintenance services will have no impact on the articles that are set out in the Human Rights Act.

Information on which above analysis is based

Maintenance service only, no change to existing provision

Mitigating and/or improvement actions to be taken

No mitigating actions are currently required

Conclusions

Summarise main findings and conclusions of the overall equality impact and needs analysis for this area:

No impacts were identified through this exercise mainly due to the maintenance related work type and detached public interface. It was considered prudent however to ensure the ongoing consideration of EQIA issues to inform future key decisions around the service, via the formalised procurement and governance processes.

Section 5: Further equality actions and objectives

5. Further actions			
Based on the initial analysis above, please detail the key mitigating and/or improvement actions to promote equality and tackle inequalities; and any areas identified as requiring more detailed analysis.			
Number	Description of issue	Action	Timeframe
1	EQIA update	Review prior to future key decision(s)	November 2025

5. Equality and socio-economic objectives (for business plans)				
Based on the initial analysis above, please detail any of the equality objectives outlined above that you will set for your division/department/service. Under the objective and measure column please state whether this objective is an existing objective or a suggested addition to the Council Plan.				
Objective and measure	Lead officer	Current performance (baseline)	Targets	
			Year 1	Year 2
Future assessments will be undertaken as part of the procurement governance process and considered in conjunction with the associated Gateway report.				

6. Review of implementation of the equality objectives and actions			
There are no equality actions and objectives that require implementation at this point in time. This will remain under review and considered when making future key decisions around the service.			

Meeting Name:	Cabinet
Date:	6 January 2026
Report title:	Senior Resources Leadership Team Proposal
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Stephanie Cryan, Equalities, Democracy and Finance
Ward(s) or groups affected:	All
Classification:	Open
Reason for lateness (if applicable):	N/a
From:	Strategic Director, Resources

FOREWORD - COUNCILLOR STEPHANIE CRYAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR EQUALITIES, DEMOCRACY & FINANCE

I am pleased to bring this report to cabinet as a small but significant step in our journey towards delivering Southwark 2030 and the new posts will strengthen oversight of the council's procurement, commercial activity, digital, ICT and resident experience, ensuring better value for money, helping drive through savings and improved outcomes for residents.

Improving resident experience is a key priority of the council and the new post of Director of Digital and Resident Experience comes at a time when we have recently launched our new Resident Experience Plan and will give us the opportunity and expertise to capitalise on that work.

Likewise, in a difficult financial environment the new Director of Commercial Partnerships and Investments will give us enhanced commercial capability, stronger strategic oversight of procurement and more effective management of contracts and partnerships, taking on board recent feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

We have a responsibility to our residents to use their money wisely and ensure their interactions with the council are seamless, productive and reassuring, these new posts help to deliver those goals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for the Cabinet

1. Approve the proposed changes to the Resources Senior Leadership Team structure as set out in this report.

2. Approve the creation of the following new posts:
 - **Director of Commercial Partnerships and Investments**
 - **Director of Digital and Resident Experience**
3. To note the Strategic Director of Resources will be leading a process to incorporate the two new director level posts into the Resources Senior Leadership Team structure as part of a wider reorganisation.
4. To delegate authority to the Strategic Director of Resources to progress recruitment to new Director-level roles.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

5. The current Resources Senior Leadership Team structure has a significant number of direct reports (8) in addition to having oversight of the council's shared technology arrangement and sponsoring a major transformation programme. There is potential for enhanced collaboration in certain areas between roles such as commercial, pensions, digital & ICT and resident experience.
6. The key functions in Resources are required to deliver significant change over the next few years. Examples include:
 - Leading the council through the largest change to its General Fund financial position in a generation.
 - Leading the council through to a healthier Housing financial position.
 - Respond to changes brought about through Pension Scheme reform from an investment, governance and administrative perspective.
 - Deliver a new HR, payroll and finance system.
 - Deliver the council's core place master plans such as Old Kent Road, Elephant & Castle and Canada Water within a difficult external market.
 - Fundamentally remove the council's delivery model for its digital and technology services into new arrangements.
 - Strengthen the council's procurement arrangements through more consistent coordination and oversight.
 - A requirement to drive greater visibility and strategic alignment over capital resource allocations.
7. This, therefore, requires a wide reorganisation of roles and responsibilities within the Resources portfolio which ultimately will deliver an efficiency saving back to the council. The posts specified within this report will be funded from existing resources. The recommendations within this report are required to satisfy the council's constitution however further actions to reorganise other functions will be taken within officer delegated authority.
8. The recommendations in this report are designed to strengthen leadership capacity to deliver Southwark 2030 by enhancing strategic oversight of

procurement, commercial activity, digital, ICT and resident experience, ensuring better value for money and improved outcomes for residents. The shifting financial environment and the scale of third-party spend require enhanced commercial capability, stronger oversight of procurement and more effective management of contracts and partnerships. The transformation of Digital, ICT, data and resident experience is a major opportunity area for the council and requires strategic leadership and expertise.

9. Forthcoming national changes linked to the Local Government Pension Scheme pooling will alter the council's responsibilities for investment activity, making clearer strategic oversight essential.
10. Enhancing senior leadership across digital, commercial and resident experience will enable an ambitious One Council approach, aligning priorities across directorates and creating the conditions for whole-system transformation.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

11. The council could maintain its existing Senior Resources Leadership Team structure. However, this would limit progress to delivering a consistent, resident-focused approach to digital, ICT and data and constrain efforts to improve commercial capability and procurement oversight.

POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

12. Subject to Cabinet approval of the recommendations in this report the timeline for implementation will run as follows:

Key activity	Target Completion date
New director posts recruitment	January 2026 onwards
Directors in post	May 2026
Wider reorganisation	May 2026 onwards

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

13. Southwark is operating in the context of increasing financial pressures, rising demand for services and a desire to significantly improve resident experience and outcomes through its Southwark 2030 goals and delivery plan. The financial pressures require an emphasis on value for money, financial savings and commercial capability to ensure that the council can operate sustainably. While the focus on outcomes for residents demonstrate our ambitions to deliver high-quality and high-impact services.
14. The council is making significant improvements through existing programmes and projects, however, in order to meet our future ambitions; a fundamental step change in how the council operates is required.

15. Services covering digital, technology, resident experience, commerciality and procurement are key to creating new and more affordable ways of delivering for Southwark residents. This report proposes the creation of the following Director posts to lead a step-change in these areas to improve outcomes for residents:
 - Director of Commercial Partnerships and Investments
 - Director of Digital and Resident Experience
16. It is proposed that the creation of these roles specifically will be cost neutral and delivered in conjunction with wider changes within the Resources Directorate which overall should deliver a saving to the council.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

17. Southwark has a major opportunity to modernise how it delivers services by strengthening leadership across digital, data and resident experience. The council's digital strategy sets a clear ambition for smarter, more inclusive and outcome-focused services, supported by better use of technology and information.
18. With major programmes such as Southwark 360 and the insourcing of Shared Technology Services underway, the council is creating the foundations to build a more integrated digital environment that streamlines processes, reduces duplication and improves the experience for residents and staff. Harnessing these opportunities will also support the delivery of financial savings and contribute directly to the council's long-term financial sustainability.
19. A Director of Digital and Resident Experience would accelerate and scale this progress by providing clear strategic leadership and a unified approach across digital, ICT and data. This role would help the council design services around resident needs, increase digital take-up, reduce demand on higher-cost channels and ensure that technology investment delivers maximum value.
20. Stronger digital integration and governance would also reduce reliance on legacy systems, avoid fragmented spending and support a more efficient, forward-looking organisation. Introducing this senior role will help Southwark unlock the full benefits of digital transformation and ensure these improvements translate into better outcomes and lower costs.
21. The Shared Technology Service has delivered valuable services that have helped Southwark progress its digital and technology capabilities. Transitioning these functions in-house will allow the council to build on this strong foundation, bring leadership closer to strategic decision-making, and realise significant financial savings. The Director of Digital and Resident Experience role will provide the leadership needed to deliver this change and ensure it maximises benefits for residents and the organisation.
22. There is also significant opportunity to enhance the council's commercial capability and strengthen its approach to procurement, contract management and partnerships. By developing a more coordinated commercial framework, the council can secure better value from its suppliers, negotiate more

effectively and generate greater financial benefits from its spend. A more strategic and high-performing commercial function would support the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, identify opportunities for savings and income, and ensure residents see the benefits of well-managed contracts and partnerships.

23. A Director of Commercial Partnerships and Investments would bring together this strategic leadership, helping the council embed consistent commercial standards, improve supplier performance and fully realise the value of its commercial relationships.
24. The role would lead a more proactive approach to managing spend, securing efficiencies, reducing potential waste and strengthening financial resilience. It would also ensure strong oversight of the pension fund, supporting long-term stewardship and alignment with emerging national requirements.
25. Many comparable boroughs already have senior roles of this kind; introducing one in Southwark would enable the council to maximise opportunities, deliver savings and ensure commercial activity is firmly aligned with organisational priorities.
26. Southwark is increasingly out of sync with comparable London boroughs, many of which have already elevated digital, resident experience, procurement and commercial functions to senior director level to drive transformation and financial sustainability.
27. Authorities such as Merton, Waltham Forest, Camden and Hounslow have invested in dedicated senior posts overseeing commercialisation, procurement, digital strategy and resident experience, recognising these as essential enablers of modern, efficient and financially resilient councils.
28. Southwark's current arrangements are fragmented across directorates and potentially limits the council's ability to keep pace with best practice, fully leverage commercial opportunities or deliver the level of digital transformation that other boroughs are achieving. Introducing these director roles would bring Southwark into alignment with sector standards and ensure the council is positioned to benefit from the key strategic advantages.

Policy framework implications

29. This report supports the delivery of the council's Southwark 2030 vision, in particular the ambition to create a fairer, greener and safer borough by strengthening the council's organisational capability and ensuring services are designed around resident needs. The proposed changes to the Resources Senior Leadership Team structure are aligned to the following aspects of the Southwark 2030 strategy:
 - I. Delivering a stronger, fairer and more resilient council able to meet Southwark 2030 goals. The strategy highlights the need for modern, efficient and financially sustainable public services. Strengthened leadership across digital, ICT, data, procurement, commercial partnerships and resident experience will enable the council to plan and

deliver services that are more inclusive, accessible and effective for all residents.

- II. Improving outcomes for residents through better-designed, digitally enabled services. Southwark 2030 emphasises the importance of empowering residents, improving access to services and reducing inequality. A unified strategic focus on digital transformation and resident experience will support these aims by delivering more intuitive, user-centred and accessible services, reducing barriers for those who rely most on council support.
- III. Ensuring value for money and long-term financial sustainability. The strategy's commitment to fairness and sustainability requires a more coordinated and commercially capable organisation. The senior roles proposed in this report will enhance oversight of procurement, strengthen contract management, improve financial stewardship, and maximise the value of the council's substantial third-party spend.
- IV. Enabling whole-system transformation and cross-council collaboration. Southwark 2030 identifies the need for collaborative, integrated approaches to tackling the borough's challenges. The proposed leadership changes will promote a One Council approach, ensuring investment, digital transformation and commercial activity are aligned to shared outcomes and are delivered consistently across directorates.

30. All relevant legislation required to enable the delivery of the aforementioned Southwark 2030 goals will be followed, including the following:

- Local Government Act 1972
- Access to Information Act 1985
- Local Government Act 2000
- Employment Act 2002
- Equalities Act 2010
- Trade Union Act 2016

Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts

Community impact statement

31. The proposals in this report are intended to strengthen leadership capacity across digital, ICT, data, commercial and resident-facing functions, ensuring the council can deliver modern, efficient and inclusive services that improve outcomes for all Southwark residents.

Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement

32. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the council has a duty when exercising its functions to have due regard to:

- the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act

2010

- the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics and those who do not
- the need to foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not.

33. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity status, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

34. The proposals in this report are not anticipated to adversely impact on any of the duties defined in the Equality Act 2010.

Health impact statement

35. There are no significant health implications arising from the proposals in this report.

Climate change implications

36. There are no significant climate change implications arising from the proposals in this report.

Resource implications

37. Subject to cabinet approval, the proposals in this report will be implemented in line with the council's agreed HR policies and procedures.

Financial implications

38. The creation of the two new director posts is part of a wider change throughout the directorate which overall will deliver a financial return on investment to the council. This includes the exit from STS and related contractual obligations, reduction on expenditure interims and efficiencies across the council's procurement spend. The budgetary cost of these two roles is estimated to be between c£330k and £420k (c£380k at midpoint) based on two Grade 18 posts including oncosts.

39. The creation of the Director of Commercial Partnerships & Investments role will strengthen the council's commercial capability and financial oversight, enabling greater income generation and increased savings across the organisation. The budgeted cost of this role is estimated to be between c£170k and c£210k annually (c£190k at midpoint). The cost of this role will be met partially by the Pension Fund with the remainder by the General Fund (split to be determined). The General Fund budget requirement will be met from the early permanent contractual savings identified from within the directorate.

40. The creation of the Director of Digital & Resident Experience role will improve strategic oversight of digital investment and technology spend. The budgeted cost of this role is estimated to be between c£170k and c£210k annually (c£190k at midpoint). The cost of this role will be met through the early

savings already identified by STS through its review of ways to drive efficiencies from its current contractual arrangements and resourcing requirements.

The creation of the two new roles reflected in this report are not expected to lead to any redundancies.

Legal implications

41. Under the council's constitution, cabinet is responsible for making any decisions regarding the strategic management of the council, including decisions on major reorganisations, major reallocations of functions between departments or chief officers, and the creation of posts at grade 18 or above.
42. Subject to the outcome of the council's job evaluation process, the two new positions discussed in this report are expected to be graded at level 18, which is the standard grade for director-level roles within the council.

Consultation

43. The proposals in this report will be followed by a wider reorganisation to incorporate the new director-level posts. Any reorganisation will affect a small number of employees.
44. Any subsequent consultation required will be undertaken in line with the council's agreed HR policies and procedures and in consultation with affected staff their trade union representatives.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Head of Procurement

45. A response from the Head of Procurement is not required.

Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance

46. This is a report to approve the proposed changes to the Resources Directorate Senior Leadership Team structure and to approve the creation of two new Director posts.
47. The approval of the creation of new senior management posts, defined as chief officer posts (i.e. those posts reporting directly to the chief executive, or otherwise designated as chief officers by legislation) and director posts is reserved to full Cabinet by the constitution.
48. The cabinet will need to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and to foster good relations between people with protected characteristics and others in accordance with the public sector equality duty in section 149, Equality Act 2010.

Strategic Director, Resources

49. This report seeks approval to create two new Director posts within the Resources directorate senior leadership structure. The total budget requirement for these roles is estimated to be between c£330k and £420k (c£380k at midpoint) based on two Grade 18 posts including oncosts. The cost of these roles is expected to be managed within the service and met from early efficiency savings being made in 2026/27. There will be a need to closely monitor the action plans to deliver the contract efficiency savings to ensure that the cashable savings are fully realised and delivered in year to meet the permanent costs of the roles. It is expected that these roles will enable the council to unlock greater efficiencies over the medium term.

50. These are two new roles within the service and the proposals in the report outline that whilst there will be changes within the wider team there are no redundancies expected from this change. However, it should be noted that should there be any wider restructuring within the directorate this would be subject to the council's governance and approval procedures and the normal HR policies and procedures. Any resultant financial implications associated would need to be considered and met through the services current budget envelope.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Stephanie Cryan, Equalities, Democracy and Finance	
Lead Officer	Strategic Director, Resources	
Report Author	Alice Granville, Assistant Director of Change	
Version	Final	
Dated	16 December 2025	
Key Decision?	Yes	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director, Resources	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	16 December 2025	

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