

## Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Thursday 11 December 2025

6.30 pm

Ground Floor Meeting Room G02A - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

### Membership

Councillor Ian Wingfield (Chair)  
Councillor Irina Von Wiese (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Suzanne Abachor  
Councillor Cassandra Brown  
Councillor Victor Chamberlain  
Councillor Esme Hicks  
Councillor Laura Johnson  
Councillor Richard Leeming  
Councillor Jason Ochere  
Councillor Bethan Roberts  
Councillor Martin Seaton  
Martin Brecknell (Co-opted member)  
Claire Williams (Co-opted member)  
Mannah Kargbo (Co-opted member)  
Alie Kallon (Co-opted member)

### Reserves

Councillor Rachel Bentley  
Councillor Sunil Chopra  
Councillor Sabina Emmanuel  
Councillor Barrie Hargrove  
Councillor Jon Hartley  
Councillor Richard Livingstone  
Councillor Hamish McCallum  
Councillor Margy Newens  
Councillor Catherine Rose  
Councillor Cleo Soanes

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**Contact**

Amit Alva on e-mail: [amit.alva@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:amit.alva@southwark.gov.uk)

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Members of the committee are summoned to attend this meeting

**Althea Loderick**

Chief Executive

Date: 3 December 2025



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Ground Floor Meeting Room G02A - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

### Order of Business

Item No.	Title	Page No.
	<b>PART A - OPEN BUSINESS</b>	
<b>1.</b>	<b>APOLOGIES</b>	
	To receive any apologies for absence.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT</b>	
	In special circumstances, an item of business may be added to an agenda within five clear working days of the meeting.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS</b>	
	Members to declare any interests and dispensations in respect of any item of business to be considered at this meeting.	
<b>4.</b>	<b>MINUTES</b>	
	To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2025. <i>(To follow)</i>	
<b>5.</b>	<b>BUDGET INTRODUCTION AND SCENE SETTING</b>	1 - 29
	To receive a presentation from Councillor Stephanie Cryan and officers on Budget introduction and scene setting - training, fair funding consultation, current financial strategy.	

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>COST OF LIVING - SOUTHWARK 2030 GOALS INCLUDING ECONOMIES</b>	30 - 46
	To receive a presentation from Councillor Stephanie Cryan and officers on the Cost of Living - Southwark 2030 goals including economies.	
<b>7.</b>	<b>ANNUAL WORKFORCE REPORT</b>	47 - 58
	To receive the Annual Workforce Report from Councillor Stephanie Cryan and officers.	
<b>8.</b>	<b>WORK PROGRAMME</b>	59 - 67
	To note the work programme as at 11 December 2025.	
	<b>DISCUSSION OF ANY OTHER OPEN ITEMS AS NOTIFIED AT THE START OF THE MEETING.</b>	

Date: 3 December 2025

# Overview & Scrutiny Committee Finance Update

*December 2025*



# Funding Reform – Key Headlines

## Needs & Resources

- Review of the formulas that determine our relative need & resources
- **Children's social** care formula changes massively. London loses **£700m** as a result (in general grant, the loss won't fall directly on children's services!).
- **Deprivation** formula uses Indices of Multiple Deprivation. But its measure recognises income **before housing costs** so makes London look less disadvantaged.
- **Scope** of reform includes Core Spending Power, Council Tax, Business Rates & Homelessness Prevention Grant.

## Impact

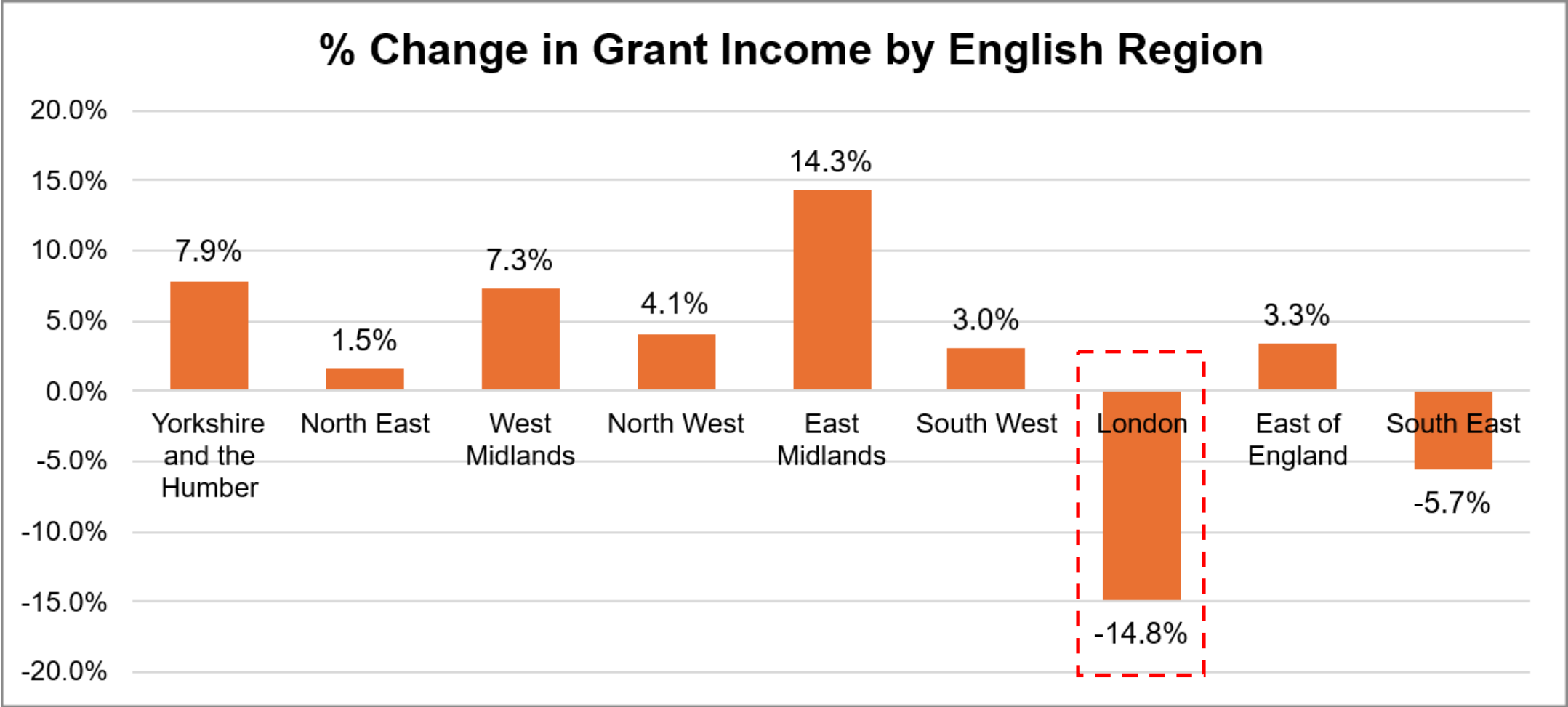
- Expect grant loss of £30m-£40m
- Phased in over a 3 year transition
- 'Damping' expected to protect funding levels to a degree
- Follows increases in funding every year since 2016-17.
- Grant being equalised across the country so that your level of grant 'need' is assessed using your share of the national taxbase rather than your actual council tax level.

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*Biggest change to Local Government Funding since Business Rates Retention in 2013*

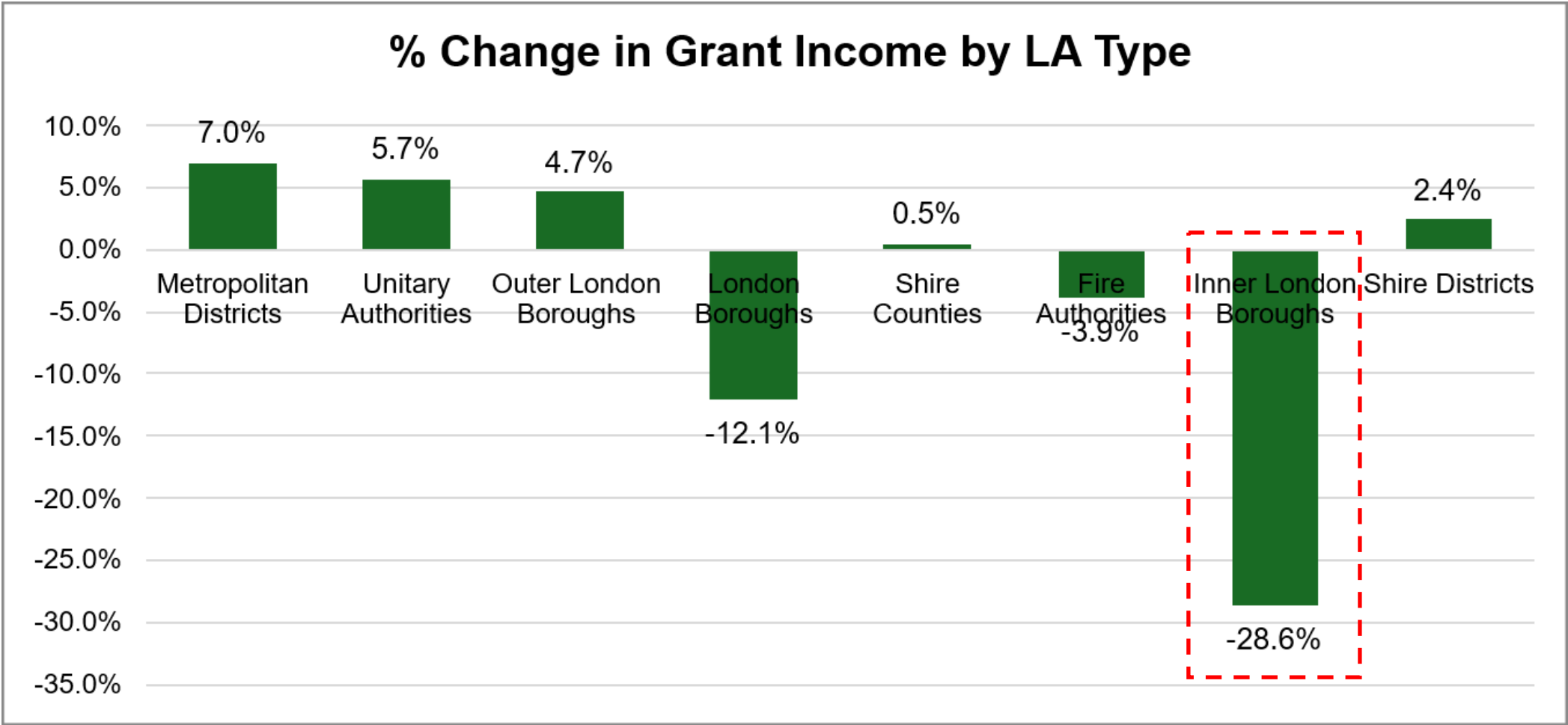
# Funding Reform – Distribution (before transition)

Latest London Councils modelling based on consultation



# Funding Reform – Distribution (before transition)

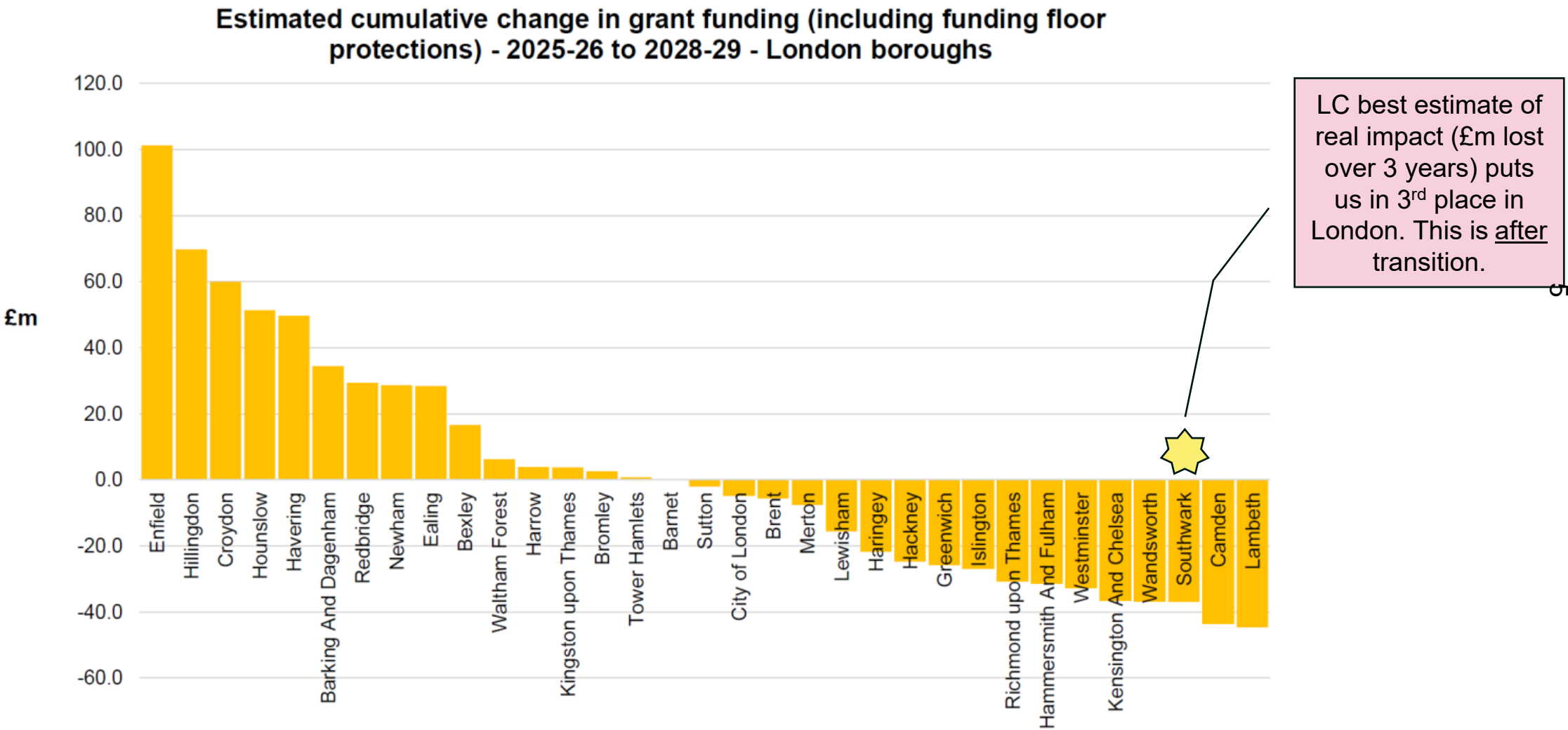
Latest London Councils modelling based on consultation





# Funding Reform – Distribution £

Latest London Councils modelling based on consultation

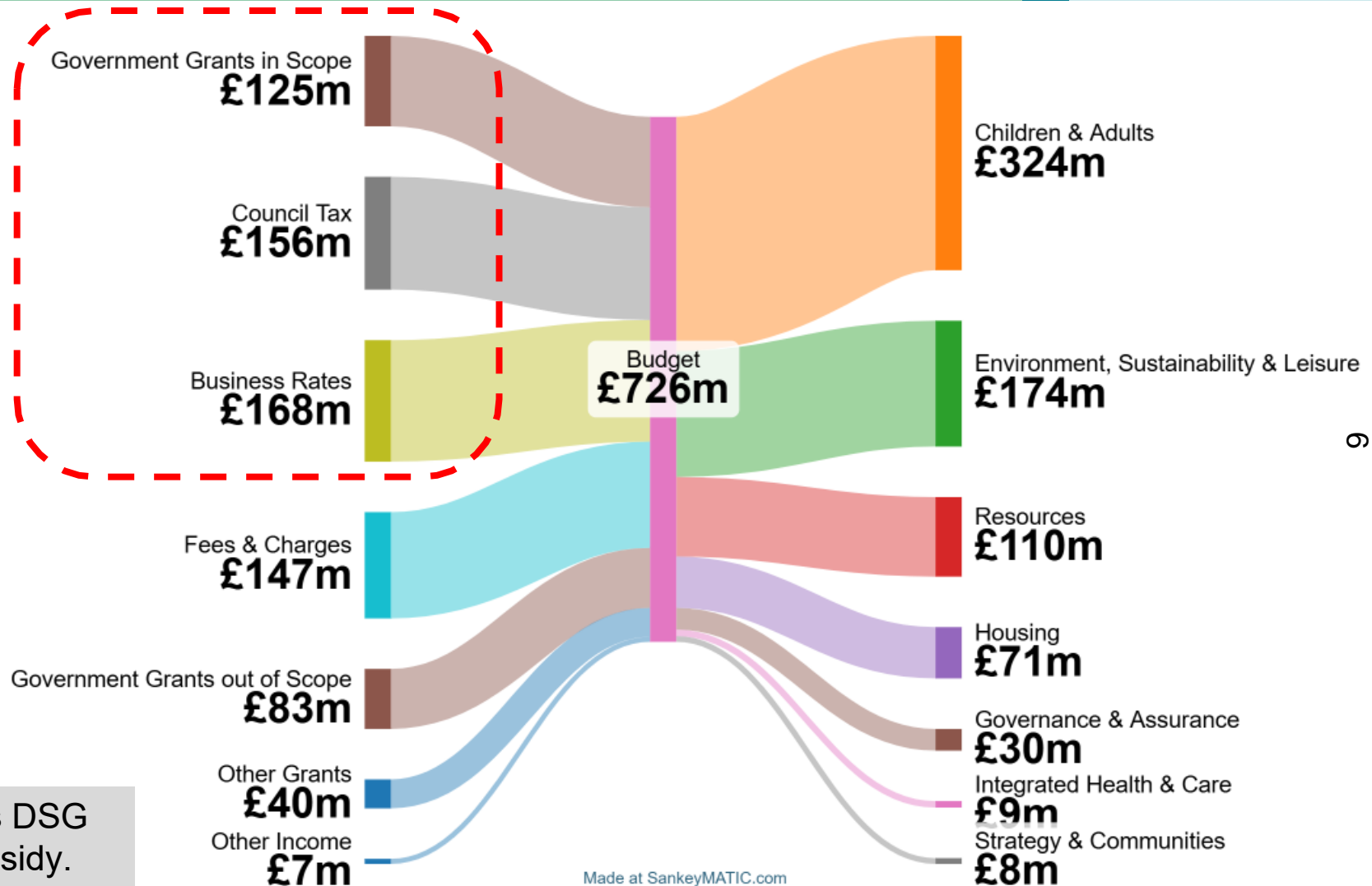


# Council Funding & Spending (General Fund)

*\*very simplified, but broadly representative!*

**Funding within the  
scope of Funding  
Reform**

**c.£450m**



Income & Expenditure shown here excludes DSG (Schools Funding) and Housing Benefit/Subsidy.

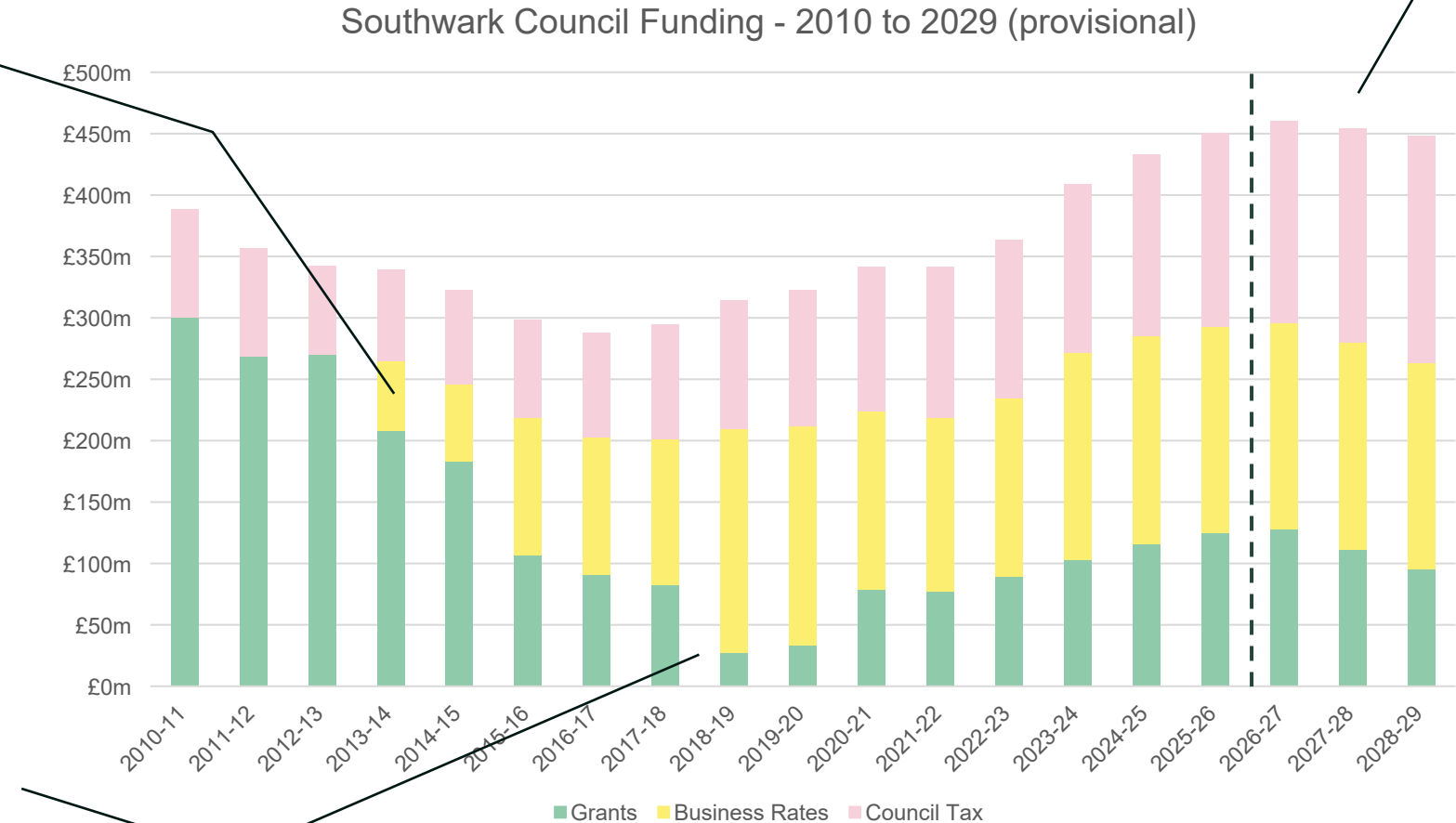
Made at SankeyMATIC.com

# Local Modelling

Original consultation indicated 'flat cash' protection. November policy statement now indicating some element of growth.

Business Rates Retention Starts

100% Business Rate Retention Pilot (2yrs)



Total Income stays flat

Council Tax grows

NNDR grows (hopefully)

Grant falls

# History of Approved Savings



Balancing the budget will likely require up to **£90m of savings** over 3 years.

This would be the first time in 20yrs (probably ever) that the council has had to make this scale of savings.

# Current Year Forecasts...

Cabinet 2<sup>nd</sup> December

## General Fund

- **£26.2m** Overspend forecast after planned reserve movements (underlying overspend is £39.2m)
- This follows a reduction in GF reserves in the prior year of £5.3m.
- **TA** is key pressure: **£15.6m**
- Children & Adults: £4.8m pressure
- Current year pressures not factored in to c.£90m MTFS gap.

## Housing Revenue Account

- **£7.3m** Overspend forecast
- This will require using **over a third** of the remaining £20m of reserves.
- Repairs & Maintenance remains biggest overspend (c.£5m).
- Recovery options remain limited; reduce spend on R&M or scale back the capital programme (to limit the cost of interest on borrowing)

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# Timeline (High Level)



# 2026-27 Budget Setting

Extract from Budget Setting Report – Council Assembly  
Feb '25: 2026-27 Budget (and savings options)  
provisionally balanced.

	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
	£m	£m	£m
<b>Un-Ringfenced Government Grants</b>	<b>(84.52)</b>	<b>(85.78)</b>	<b>(82.97)</b>
Revenue Support Grant	(44.97)	(45.83)	(45.83)
Top-Up	(34.30)	(34.77)	(34.77)
Services Grant/ Recovery Grant	(0.81)	(2.38)	(2.38)
New Homes Bonus	(4.45)	(2.81)	-
<b>Ringfenced Government Grants</b>	<b>(88.93)</b>	<b>(116.98)</b>	<b>(115.73)</b>
Public Health Grant	(31.13)	(33.38)	(33.38)
Social Care Grant	(33.09)	(43.20)	(43.20)
Improved Better Care Fund	(17.85)	-	-
Local Authority Better Care Grant	-	(22.02)	(22.02)
Children's Social Care Prevention Grant	-	(2.13)	(2.13)
ASC Market Sustainability & Improvement Fund	(6.87)	(6.87)	(6.87)
Homelessness Prevention Grant Increases	-	(3.15)	(3.15)
Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)	-	(6.22)	(4.98)
<b>TOTAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING</b>	<b>(173.46)</b>	<b>(202.76)</b>	<b>(198.70)</b>
Council Tax	(145.29)	(155.90)	(164.50)
Business Rates	(134.84)	(133.20)	(135.94)
<b>COUNCIL TAX AND RETAINED BUSINESS RATES</b>	<b>(280.13)</b>	<b>(289.10)</b>	<b>(300.43)</b>
<b>Total Funding before contributions from balances</b>	<b>(453.59)</b>	<b>(491.86)</b>	<b>(499.14)</b>
Contribution to earmarked reserve for EPR and NI contribution		6.51	4.98
Contribution from general reserves	(2.43)	(2.50)	(2.50)
<b>TOTAL RESOURCES</b>	<b>(456.02)</b>	<b>(487.85)</b>	<b>(496.66)</b>
<b>PRIOR YEAR BUDGET</b>	<b>437.32</b>	<b>456.02</b>	<b>487.85</b>
Inflation	28.99	34.04	19.83
Commitments & Contingency	10.48	16.83	5.92
<b>Budget Before Savings &amp; Efficiencies</b>	<b>476.80</b>	<b>506.89</b>	<b>513.60</b>
<b>Budget Gap before Savings &amp; Efficiencies</b>	<b>20.78</b>	<b>19.04</b>	<b>16.94</b>
Effective use of resources and efficiencies	(13.08)	(9.21)	(6.28)
Income, Fees and Charges	(7.48)	(5.69)	(3.57)
Other Savings	(0.22)	(1.14)	(0.09)
<b>Efficiencies and Savings</b>	<b>(20.78)</b>	<b>(16.04)</b>	<b>(9.94)</b>
<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>	<b>456.02</b>	<b>490.85</b>	<b>503.65</b>
<b>Shortfall Before Transformation savings</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>3.00</b>	<b>7.00</b>
<b>Transformation savings</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(3.00)</b>	<b>(7.00)</b>
<b>GAP post transformation</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(0.00)</b>	<b>0.00</b>

- Council Assembly approved the 2025-26 Budget and **the MTFS savings proposals to 2026-27** in February 2025.
- The council continues to deliver those savings plans and this will continue into 2026-27.
- All but one of **the 2026-27 savings proposals are continuations** of proposals already agreed in the 2025-26 budget i.e the implications of these savings have already been considered previously and we are not implementing any 'new' savings in 2026-27.
- We await the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement in late December which will inform our next update to Cabinet.
- **Reserves have been set aside** for many years now for this specific eventuality (Fair Funding & Business Rates Reset) and will enable us to transition through to our new 3 year MTFS from 2027 smoothly.

<b>Meeting Name:</b>	Cabinet
<b>Date:</b>	2 December 2025
<b>Report title:</b>	Policy and Resources: Budget Setting Update 2026-27
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Stephanie Cryan – Cabinet Member for Equalities, Democracy and Finance
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>	All
<b>Classification:</b>	Open
<b>Reason for lateness (if applicable):</b>	See paragraphs 76-77

## **FOREWORD – COUNCILLOR STEPHANIE CRYAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR EQUALITIES, DEMOCRACY AND FINANCE**

In 2023 we set a three year budget that has helped us to better plan our finances to ensure we deliver vital front line services and continue to fund the things our residents have told us are important to them. In a period of financial uncertainty across local government, this has stood us in good stead and our finances in the General Fund have continued to remain robust.

The Chancellor's budget, presented just last week, confirms that the Government will be providing a three-year funding settlement when we receive the provisional statement in late December. Although there is still much detail to follow, including the final outcome of the Fair Funding Review and any associated transitional arrangements, that three-year settlement will allow us the opportunity to plan into the longer term and deliver the services our residents need.

Whilst we fully agree with the principle of Fair Funding and ensuring that councils are funded according to need and deprivation, the recent Policy Statement on the funding settlement means that for Southwark we will be looking at a funding gap of £60m - £90m. We welcome the commitment to consolidate funding streams into a much clearer and simpler system and the certainty that a three year settlement provides. We will continue to make the case for including housing costs as an index of deprivation to ensure that housing costs for Inner London Boroughs are taken into account.

Our work on Transformation will be vital in helping to deliver on our Southwark 2030 goals as well as fostering a one council approach to savings and efficiencies, ensuring support our most vulnerable residents.

Our cost-of-living work over the past few years has specifically focused on supporting our most vulnerable residents including those with children and struggling with energy bills. So alongside much good budget news, I specifically welcome the scrapping of the 'two child cap' and action being taken to drive down energy bills. Modelling done by Southwark council estimates that more than 8,200



children in the borough, from 2,350 families will benefit from the scrapping of the cap. The action on energy bills will, in turn, see an average cut of £150 from household energy bills.

As our Labour Government steps up and fulfils the duties in government that their predecessors so obviously failed to do, we will have the time and space to work on longer term, strategic prevention work to reduce inequalities and to continue to invest in our Borough.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That cabinet note:

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).
4. The draft fees and charges schedules (Appendix B).
5. Strategic Directors will continue to work with their respective Cabinet Members to find additional savings options to close the estimated funding gap.
6. Equality Impact Assessments are ongoing, and a cumulative impact assessment will be presented to cabinet as part of the budget update in February.
7. The contents of this report will be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in December 2025 and January 2026 prior to February 2026 cabinet.

## **POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION**

8. N/A

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

9. Each year, the council reviews and updates its Policy and Resources Strategy, which typically aligns with the duration of the government's financial settlement. This strategy forms the basis for the draft annual budget, which is presented to Cabinet in July, December, and February for consideration and refinement. In accordance with the Local Government Finance Act, the 2025–26 annual budget was formally approved by Council Assembly in February 2025 alongside the statutory council tax setting.
10. The council has adopted a three-year budget framework to support long-term

financial sustainability and strengthen its strategic approach to resource planning. This process reinforces the council's commitment to efficiency and ensures that the policies and priorities outlined in the Council Delivery Plan are aligned with projected financial resources over the medium term. As part of this framework, savings and spending commitments were established for the period 2024–25 to 2026–27. Following the approval of the 2025–26 budget and the presentation of an initial draft balanced budget for 2026–27 in February 2025, the government announced a major reform to local government finance—set to take effect from 2026–27—through the Fair Funding Review. This reform marks a significant and major reform in how funding will be distributed across councils, with implications for future budget planning and service delivery. The provisional local government settlement, expected in late December 2025, is anticipated to outline the new funding framework and allocations for the period 2026–27 to 2029–30.

11. This report sets out an approach to setting the annual budget for 2026-27 and also establishing the strategic parameters for the next Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) period covering 2027-28 to 2029-30.
12. The report is structured as follows:
  - Updates to local government funding
    - Fair Funding review
    - November Policy Statement
    - Autumn Budget
  - Approach to 2026-27 budget setting and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)
    - Budget Setting process
    - Risk areas
    - Transformation savings
  - Budget Assumptions
    - July cabinet report – starting position for 2026-27 annual budget
    - Likely revisions to the 2026-27 budget following updates to local government funding arrangements
  - Long term strategy for Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)
  - Update on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

## **KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **Updates to local government funding**

#### *Fair Funding Review*

13. The need to modernise local government funding was first formally recognised in December 2017, when the previous government initiated work on developing a new formula to replace the outdated grant system. The existing distribution methodology and underlying data have not been updated since 2013, coinciding with the introduction of the business rates retention system.

This prolonged period without reform has contributed to growing disparities in funding allocations and service pressures across councils.

14. In December 2024, the government launched a high-level consultation titled *Local Authority Funding Reform: Objectives and Principles*<sup>1</sup>, inviting stakeholder views on the design of a reformed funding system that would be fair, simple, and transparent. Building on this foundation, the government published *Fair Funding 2.0*<sup>2</sup> on 20 June 2025—a formal consultation setting out proposals for multi-year funding settlements under the Local Government Finance Settlement, commencing in 2026–27. Alongside this, a reset of the national non-domestic rating system has also been proposed, with implementation aligned to the same financial year.
15. The consultation focused on several core areas of reform:
  - Consolidation of grants
  - Measuring demand and cost of services, and creating a simplified formula to assess relative need
  - Equalisation of resources through a notional council tax level
  - Reform of the New Homes Bonus
  - Business rates retention system – full reset of business rate growth in 2026–27
  - Devolution and strategic authority funding
  - Sales, fees, and charges reform
  - Transitional arrangements – a three year phased transition with a funding floor to protect councils at 2025-26 levels.
16. An initial analysis of the impact of this by London Councils, indicated that 23 out of 32 boroughs would face a reduction in funding under the proposed model. Inner London authorities were projected to be the most adversely affected, raising concerns about the redistribution effects of the new formula for London.
17. The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS)<sup>3</sup> report on the impacts of the Fair Funding Review on council funding predicted that inner London boroughs would on average see a reduction in funding of 19%, without transitional protection and a cash reduction of 1% between 2025-26 and 2028-29. London Councils modelled the funding reform and found a similar result, so at that time it seemed likely that Southwark would lose around 20% of funding before the application of any transitional protections.
18. The council formally responded to the consultation, welcoming the proposed simplification of the grant system, which is expected to improve transparency and operational efficiency. However, the council expressed concern that the new funding model introduced significant volatility in allocations, posing risks to financial stability across the sector. To mitigate these risks, the council responded, that authorities facing reductions, be protected in real terms and

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<sup>1</sup> [Local authority funding reform: objectives and principles - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>2</sup> [The Fair Funding Review 2.0 - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Fair Funding Review 2.0](#)

that a longer transition period of four to five years be implemented to support responsible financial planning and adjustment.

19. As part of its detailed response to the Fair Funding Review consultation, the council highlighted the acute financial pressures in delivering social care and homelessness services, a challenge shared by many London boroughs. The council welcomed the introduction of a separate formula for homelessness, recognising it as a step toward more equitable funding. However, the proposed weighting—particularly for temporary accommodation—was deemed insufficient and not reflective of the actual financial burden. The council also advocated for housing incentives to include targeted support for social housing delivery through the Housing Revenue Account. Similarly, the council noted the proposed weighting for social care did not adequately reflect existing expenditure levels or the scale of demand.
20. To support long-term growth and innovation, the council stressed the importance of a funding system that rewards proactive economic development. It raised concerns about the proposed full reset of National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) growth in 2026–27, warning that such a reset could undermine past achievements and disincentivise future investment. Southwark recommended that local authorities retain a meaningful share of business rate growth to sustain momentum in regeneration and local economic initiatives, ensuring that councils are empowered to drive inclusive growth in their communities.

#### *November Policy Statement*

21. The local government finance policy statement was published on 20 November 2025 setting out the government's approach ahead of the provisional settlement. Key points included:
  - Multi-year settlement: The government confirmed plans for the first multi-year Local Government Finance Settlement in a decade, covering 2026–27 to 2028–29, alongside reforms under the Fair Funding Review.
  - Fairer funding system: A new evidence-based approach allocated resources based on local need and ability to raise revenue, with greater support for the most deprived areas.
  - Transitional protection: Changes will be phased in over three years, with funding floors and transitional grants to limit losses for councils receiving less support.
  - Targeted support: A new Recovery Grant was announced and designed to provide un-ringfenced funding to councils with greater need and demand for services. This measure is part of the government's commitment to help authorities recover from the impact of past austerity and rebuild essential local services.
  - Additional funding for children's social care prevention.
  - Systemic reforms: Commitment to simplify funding pots, improve transparency, and empower councils through devolution and long-term planning.

*Autumn Budget – 26 November 2025*

22. The Autumn Budget, originally expected in early November, was rescheduled to 26 November 2025, and the provisional local government settlement is now anticipated in late December 2025. The OBR overall forecast was better than expected with higher spending forecasts tempered by higher than expected tax receipts. Overall economic indicators on growth and inflation are detailed in table 1.

Table 1: Economic Indicators on Growth and Inflation

Indicator	2025	2026	2027
GDP Growth	1.5%	1.4%	1.5%
CPI Inflation	3.5%	2.5%	2.0%

23. Other announcements included:

- From 1 April 2026, the National Living Wage will increase by 4.1% to £12.71 per hour. The National Minimum Wage for 18-20 year olds will also increase by 8.5% to £10.85 per hour and for 16-17 year olds and apprentices by 6.0% to £8.00 per hour.
- Abolition of the two child limit to lift 450,000 out of relative poverty from April 2026.
- Freezing of rail fares and NHS prescriptions for one year
- Freezing Tax thresholds
- Tax on electric car use from 2028

Local government specific

- Business rates – From 1 April 2026, business rates bills in England will be updated to reflect changes in property values since the last revaluation in 2023. There was confirmation of the introduction of two lower multipliers of Retail, Hospitality and Leisure (RHL) – (Table 2)

Table 2: Business Rate Multipliers

<b>Multiplier</b>	<b>2025-26</b>	<b>2026-27</b>	<b>Scope</b>
<b>Small business RHL multiplier</b>		38.2p	RHL hereditaments with RVs under £51,000
<b>Standard RHL multiplier</b>		43p	RHL hereditaments with RVs between £51,000 and £499,999
<b>National small business multiplier</b>	49.9p	43.2p	Non-RHL hereditaments with RVs under £51,000
<b>National standard multiplier</b>	55.5p	48p	Non-RHL hereditaments with RVs between £51,000 and £499,999
<b>High-value multiplier</b>		50.8p	All hereditaments with RVs of £500,000 or above

- The Valuation Office Agency published details of the 2026 Revaluation and the changes in the list. The February Budget report to cabinet will assess the implication for local businesses on these changes.
- The government is to introduce the High Value Council Tax Surcharge a new charge on owners of residential property in England worth £2 million or more, starting in 2028-29. Owners of properties over £2m will be liable for an additional charge of £2,500, rising to £7,500 for properties over £5m.

Table 3: High Value council tax surcharge

The bands and charges are:

<b>Threshold (£m)</b>	<b>Rate (£)</b>
<b>2.0 – 2.5</b>	2,500
<b>2.5 – 3.5</b>	3,500
<b>3.5 – 5.0</b>	5,000
<b>5.0+</b>	7,500

- Local authorities will collect this revenue on behalf of central government. Revenue will be used to support funding for local government services, with further detail to be set out at the next spending review

- A reform to SEND funding will be set out early next year with the extension of the DSG Statutory overrides and the future commitment for the government to assume responsibility for SEND funding.
- Social rent convergence- There will be no decision made about how to implement Social Rent convergence until January 2026. The government remains committed to the 10 year rent settlement announced at the Spending review 2025, which will permit social housing rents to increase by CPI +1%.
- A reduction in the financial cliff edge for claimants in supported housing and temporary accommodation from Autumn 2026. The government is adjusting how earnings are treated for Housing Benefit and Universal Credit claimants in supported housing and temporary accommodation, so that most claimants will not be subject to any reduction in income for working more hours.
- By 2029-30, the government will commit over £2 billion annually for local authorities to repair, renew and fix potholes on their roads – doubling funding since coming into office.

### **Approach to 2026-27 budget setting**

#### *The Budget Setting Process 2026-27*

24. This year, the approach taken to setting the annual budget 2026-27 and revising the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is to:
- Review the progress of maintaining spending within agreed budgets in 2025-26
  - Establish that the agreed savings targets remain on track for delivery, for 2025-26 and for 2026-27
  - Assume that the starting point for 2026-27 was the agreed draft balanced budget (year 3 of the council's three year MTFS)
  - Update the assumptions after the Local Government Provisional Settlement confirms the Fair Funding arrangement and estimates of inflation and other pressures
  - Address the funding challenges ahead, from the projected impact of the Fair Funding Review and Business Rates reset.

#### *2025-26 Risk areas*

25. The revenue monitoring report for this year at month 6 indicates a projected overspend of £26.2 million, after the application of planned reserves. The report highlights the key areas of demand-led pressure and the corresponding mitigation strategies. However, significant challenges remain, particularly in relation to in-year budget pressures in Temporary Accommodation and Social Care. Any pressures that are not fully mitigated in 2025–26 pose a dual risk:

the potential need for unplanned drawdowns on reserves at year-end, and the creation of structural funding gaps that could carry forward into future financial years.

26. Planned savings for 2025–26 and 2026–27 have been largely validated as achievable, although some adjustments to the timing of delivery may be required. Full details of these savings are provided in the revenue monitoring report.

#### *Transformation Savings 2025-26 and 2026-27*

27. The reported gap in February 2024 for the years 2025-26 and 2026-27 was estimated at around £10m which was to be bridged through an organisation wide approach to transformation, change and savings rather than a service / departmental led approach. The MTFS set an estimated target of £3m for 2025-26, with a further £7m in 2026-27. The progress on these savings for both years is provided in the revenue monitoring report.

### **Updated Budget Assumptions**

28. The July 2025 Cabinet report presented a revised financial position for 2026–2027, reflecting the Spending Review 2025 funding levels alongside updated assumptions on inflation and economic growth. The MTFS was updated on this basis and identified a projected funding gap of £68 million over the three-year period. However, the report cautioned that this may represent a best-case scenario, as the forthcoming Fair Funding (FF) Review was expected to result in significant shifts in funding—both geographically and between individual local authorities—potentially introducing further financial pressures and uncertainty.
29. Over summer 2025, London Councils modelled the potential impact of the Fair Funding (FF) Review based on the available – but limited -data available, to estimate overall resource levels. This modelling incorporated all grants expected to be rolled into the new formula, including the Revenue Support Grant (RSG), all social care grants (with the exception of the Children’s Prevention Grant), and a portion of the Homelessness Prevention Grant. Several smaller grants were also assumed to be redistributed through the new formula. The changes represented a significant shift in how funding is allocated across local authorities. Based on this modelling, the council estimated a potential government funding loss in the region of £60 million.
30. Given the potential for significant shifts in funding between local authorities, the government consultation paper put forward protections for councils facing substantial reductions—such as Southwark—to remain at least cash-flat at 2025–26 levels and be protected over the three-year period from 2026–27 to 2028–29. On this basis, the budget gap was estimated to be as much as £99m, again based on speculative modelling with the incomplete data available at the time.



31. Following the consultation earlier this year, the government published its November policy statement setting out the outcomes and next steps. In response to feedback, additional protections have been introduced through targeted support. A new 'Recovery Grant Guarantee' has been announced, providing un-ringfenced funding to councils with the greatest need and demand for services. These new measures forms part of the government's commitment to help authorities recover from the impact of past austerity and rebuild essential local services.
32. The council is expected to benefit from this grant. Whilst the precise mechanism for applying the grant will not be confirmed until the provisional settlement, it is clear that the potential large-scale financial loss will be mitigated over the three-year funding period (2026–27 to 2028–29). This support will help smooth the transition and enable the authority to move towards the new fair funding position in a more financially sustainable way. This is a welcome development. The latest information we have on the impact of damping was released in the policy statement and indicates that a real terms increase in in-scope funding is likely but subject to a limit of £35m across the three years of the settlement.
33. As at 28 November 2025, neither London Councils nor the other modellers in the market have produced authority-level forecasts of the likely overall funding allocations based on the policy statement and budget.
34. Whether further protections will be available in 2029–30 will not be known until the next spending review which will cover the period 2029–30 to 2031–32. For comparative purposes we have estimated that funding in 2029-30 will be at least cash flat.
35. Table 4 below highlights the change in assumptions and estimated funding gap.

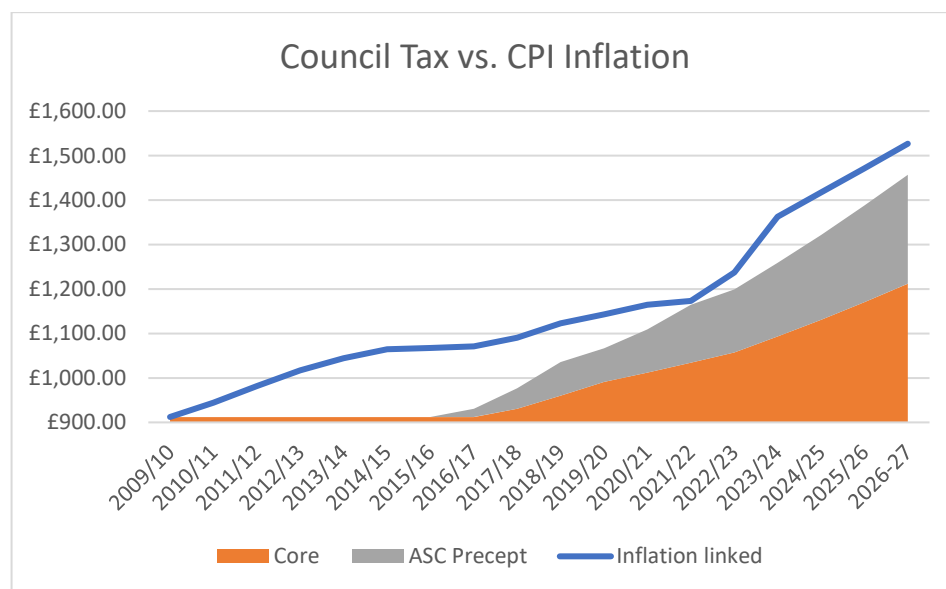
Table 4: Changes to assumptions in the MTFS

<b>MTFS updates</b>	<b>Basis</b>	<b>2026-27 annual budget</b>	<b>Cumulative impact 2027-28 to 2029-30 (i.e budget gap)</b>
February 2025 cabinet report	Final year of 3-year budget - one year only	Balanced	
July cabinet report	Spending Review 2025 increases in overall local govt resource	Balanced	£68m
Summer Projections from Fair Funding review consultation	Fair funding losses - but transitional arrangements - cash flat	Expected budget gap of £10m	£99m
November Policy Statement	Update in data for Fair funding; updated transitional arrangements - new Recovery Grant Guarantee	Broadly Balanced	£60m- £90m

## Council Tax

36. The policy statement confirmed that the council tax maximum increase of 4.99% per annum, (core element at 2.99% and social care element at 2%) remained the same as in previous years. The autumn statement introduced a surcharge for properties over £2m, to start in 2028-29, with the increased revenue being retained by central government, and used to support funding for local government services. Further detail is to be set out at the next spending review.
37. The council remains committed to keeping council tax low. The authority has been able to maintain the eighth lowest level of council tax in London in 2025-26 despite having incurred some of the largest reductions in government grants. Table 5 shows that council tax would remain below the charge it would have been if CPI had been applied each year since 2010-11. Similarly, 30 of the 33 London Boroughs raised their council tax by maximum permitted 4.99% in 2025-26 London.

**Table 5: Comparison of Actual (and proposed) Council Tax increases vs. Inflation**



38. In the context of pressures on council finances, the resilience of reserves and the historical year on year reductions in spending power, council tax remains a key source of income for the council. An increase of 2.99% in council tax amounts to £4.6m income.
39. The Council Tax Relief Scheme continues to provide vital support to our financially vulnerable residents. As part of our ongoing commitment to fairness and value for money, the council is planning to review this scheme as well as the ongoing cost of living support to continue to provide a more integrated and targeted framework. This approach will ensure that, for 2026–27, we maintain council tax support as a key priority—delivering more responsive assistance to those who need it most while maximising the impact of available resources.

40. The Council Tax base report, due at January cabinet, is likely to show a small decline in the council tax base in 2026-27. This pattern is similar across other London authorities, where assumptions are revised downwards. The collection rate in 2024-25 was 96.5% however this remains under review as collection has been persistently challenging since the pandemic and subsequent cost of living crisis. The current estimated council tax deficit attributable to Southwark is estimated to be £5m in 2025-26. The council has set aside reserves to cover this deficit. The revenues collection teams will be reviewing approaches to collection and enforcement, where possible, to sustain the collection rate.

#### Business Rates

41. From 1 April 2026, business rates bills in England will be updated to reflect changes in property values since the last revaluation in 2023. As detailed in paragraph 23, in the Autumn statement, there was confirmation of the introduction of two lower multipliers of Retail, Hospitality and Leisure (RHL). The February Budget report to cabinet will assess the implications for local businesses of these changes.

#### Grants outside Fair Funding

42. The Public Health Grant, the Children's Prevention Grant and the Recovery grant will remain outside the scope of the Fair Funding Review. A new Recovery Grant Guarantee will provide transitional protection for the authority to smooth the transition to the new funding arrangement.

#### Inflation and commitments

43. Pay and contractual inflation remains a significant risk to the council's budget-setting process for 2026–27. With CPI inflation currently at 3.8% and services inflation elevated at 4.7%, the cost pressures on staffing and commissioned services are substantial. CPI estimates in the autumn statement expect inflation to reduce to 2.5% in 2026 and 2% in 2027.
44. The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) will incorporate prudent inflation assumptions over the spending review period. Key financial commitments will be updated from the July assumptions in 2026–27 to include the annual uplift to the borough's contribution toward the London-wide Freedom Pass, obligations arising from the consolidation of grants and funding streams and the ongoing revenue support for the Women's Safety Centre.

#### Savings

45. The three year savings plans agreed at February cabinet have largely been confirmed as achievable for 2026-27. A full list of savings and income generation is provided at Appendix A.
46. As the council looks for ways to protect front line services, consideration is given to maximising the council's income generation by seeking income

streams in line with council policies and priorities. Under Part 3C of the constitution, cabinet is responsible for the approval of new fees and charges and agreement of charging levels in line with the medium term resources strategy. In reviewing fees and charges for 2026-27 the policy is to increase them to a level that is at least in line with neighbouring authorities except where this either conflicts with council policy or would lead to adverse revenue implications or would impact adversely on vulnerable clients. The draft schedules have used 5% as a default increase (Appendix B).

47. In July 2024, Cabinet was presented with a revised strategy for closing the budget gap. This marked a shift from a department-led approach to a more integrated, organisation-wide model for transformation, change, and savings. The new approach is designed to deliver both financial and non-financial benefits, supporting the delivery of Southwark 2030 while maintaining financial sustainability over the medium term. Further details on the areas of focus was provided in the February 2025 budget report and the July 2025 budget remit.
48. The transformation programme is budgeted to deliver £3m in savings during 2025-26 and £7m in 2026-27. Progress across programmes is variable. Some are more advanced, while others—due to the complexity of proposals—will take longer to realise benefits. As noted in the latest financial monitoring report to cabinet, the expected delivery is currently £250k against the £3m target for 2025-26, and £1.35m against the £7m target for 2026-27.
49. The projected budget gap for 2026-27, between expected and currently forecast savings, will require a disciplined and robust programme management approach. This is essential to ensure activities are delivered effectively; benefits are realised, and the full cashable savings are achieved. These savings must be permanent to support the council's long-term financial sustainability.
50. Looking ahead to the 2027-28 to 2029-30 period, as outlined in the MTFS section of this report, the transformation agenda will need to evolve further. It must become more ambitious and innovative, with a broader and more challenging scope. To deliver tangible benefits within the next MTFS timeframe, the programme will need to be more sharply focused and delivered at pace.

#### 2026-27 Budget

51. The budget for 2026–27 will be presented to Cabinet in February 2026, following publication of individual local authority allocations in the provisional settlement. At present, the level of uncertainty is significant. There is no clarity on how damping will operate, making it difficult to accurately assess the overall grant funding. However, based on the policy statement and the Autumn Statement, the following assumptions remain:
  - The Fair Funding Review is expected to substantially reduce the council's grant allocation over the medium term.

- Transitional arrangements to protect against short term and large losses are anticipated to be substantially more generous than previously expected.

### Reserves and Balances

52. The council maintains the level of earmarked reserves, and these are reported each year within the annual statement of accounts. These reserves are maintained to fund:
- invest to save opportunities, which form part of the modernisation agenda and are expected to deliver future ongoing revenue savings.
  - investment in regeneration and development where spend may be subject to unpredictable market and other factors.
  - exceptional items or pressures which are difficult to predict, and which are not included in revenue budgets or within the capital programme.
53. For a number of years previously, the council had planned for the use of reserves to help smooth the impact of government funding reductions and other budget pressures, especially during the period of austerity. Not only did this help to protect council services but it has also allowed time to transition towards new ways of working, productivity improvements and efficiencies.
54. The General Fund budget proposals in July for 2026–27 include a planned contribution of £2.5 million from general reserves to balance the budget. This will be reviewed once the provisional settlement is published. The level of balance remains subject to the scrutiny of the section 151 officer who must ensure that any one off contributions to the budget is appropriate and affordable. In previous years, this judgment has been facilitated by the availability of unused contingency funds as budgets have met their targets.

### **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET SETTING**

55. The Council's Housing Revenue Account continues to operate in a fiscally constrained environment as a result of external factors outside of the Council's control. Government interventions in rent policy over the last decade combined with ongoing inflationary pressures, high interest rates, unfunded regulatory burdens and increasing demand for services continue to outstrip the resources available. Whilst the Council remains committed to protecting frontline services and delivering on the ambitions of the Southwark 2030 strategy, it is statutorily required to set a balanced budget in accordance with duties contained in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.
56. Following the HRA budget deficit in 2023-24, the Council acted quickly to put in place additional financial and governance measures to address the immediate threat and ensure long-term resilience, through the implementation of the HRA Recovery Plan.
57. Phase 1 (covering the initial three years) sought to swiftly reduce revenue spending in order to prevent further deterioration in the financial position by:

- Imposing a spending moratorium in 2023-24 and setting strict service cash limits (including savings targets) to reduce expenditure in 2024-25 and 2025-26, to prevent or minimise revenue deficits.
- Reducing planned revenue contributions to cover revenue budget shortfalls as required.
- Minimise the need for temporary borrowing to fund the asset management capital programme (option of last resort).
- Disposing of redundant and uneconomic HRA assets to minimise the borrowing requirement and revenue financing impact.
- Pausing some pre-construction New Homes sites to reduce the borrowing requirement and revenue financing impact.

58. Phase 2 (covering ten years plus), seeks to reset revenue and capital programme budgets, reserves and borrowing over the longer-term to a more sustainable level by:

- Setting realistic and affordable asset management capital programme budgets and restoring the revenue contribution to a level to ensure it is self-financing and avoids further borrowing.
- Repaying temporary borrowing taken during Phase 1 for the asset management capital programme.
- Limiting any further borrowing for New Homes until macro-economic factors or government policy initiatives and associated funding allows.
- Increase reserves to a more prudent level (c.£50m target).

### **HRA Budget Forecast 2025-26**

59. The HRA forecast for 2025-26 shows a deficit of £7.3m at period 6, a reduction of £2.8m over period 4 which is encouraging. More robust controls, monitoring and review of spending across the piece, along with the delivery of some modest savings against the targets set have contributed to a gradual improvement in the financial outlook. However, the underlying financial position remains challenging and there are a number of risks which could impact the final outturn. Repairs and Maintenance in particular remains the area of greatest spending pressure due to the scale, age and condition of the housing stock, compounded by new regulatory burdens and high construction industry costs. Currently, the risk of not fully achieving the level of savings required to meet the cash limit remains high, requiring further mitigating measures to balance the HRA for 2025-26.

### **HRA Budget Planning 2026-27**

60. The principles of the Recovery Plan remain critical to securing the long-term viability of the HRA and will again underpin budget planning for 2026-27. The HRA is entirely reliant on its income streams (rents, service charges, garages and commercial property, etc.) which determines the overall resource envelope available for the provision of services. In line with the approach

adopted in previous years, service cash limits and directorate-led savings plans will be formulated and agreed, mindful of the Council's statutory duties versus non-statutory provision. Within the financial constraints that prevail, resources will again be targeted towards front-line provision and detailed baseline budget plans developed over the coming weeks. This process will be guided by strong governance and transparent decision-making and will be incorporated in subsequent MTFS reports to Cabinet.

## **Consultation**

61. Business rate payers will be consulted on the budget proposals through the council newsletter and invited to comment.

## **Policy framework implications**

62. This is in the main body of the report.

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

63. The council works in accordance with the single public sector equality duty contained within section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. This means the council must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups.
64. Transparency and fairness form part of the seven budget principles and are an underlying principle in the Borough Plan. As with the budget for 2023-24 and for previous years, where potential impacts have been identified, each department will undertake equality analysis/screening on its budget proposals ahead of the final decisions being taken. Where screenings identify potential impacts, more detailed analysis is being carried out.
65. Undertaking equality analysis helps the council to understand the potential effects that the budget proposals may have on different groups. The analysis also considers if there may be any unintended consequences and how any of these issues can be mitigated. Analysis is also undertaken to consider any crosscutting and organisation-wide and socio-economic impacts.
66. For many services, the budget proposals will include efficiencies that have staffing implications. As specific proposals are brought forward, and at each stage of implementation thereafter, the different impacts on different categories of staff will be assessed in accordance with the council's reorganisation, redeployment and redundancy procedures.
67. Equality analysis will continue through the cycle of planning and implementation of these budget proposals. In line with our Public Sector Equality Duty, any changes to services arising from these proposals will be implemented in such a way to not impact disproportionately on any specific section or group in our community. Where necessary, consultation will be undertaken alongside mitigating actions where necessary. In line with the process across the council, information on the equality analysis will be shared with the relevant cabinet members so it can be considered when decisions are

taken. The equality analyses will be collated across the council to look for any cumulative impacts.

### **Climate change implications**

68. There are no direct climate change implications arising directly from this report, which provides an update on the budget setting process for 2026-27. The individual proposals contained within this report and its appendices will be subject to appropriate processes to assess and mitigate risks and to maximise potential benefits.

### **SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS**

#### **Assistant Chief Executive (Governance and Assurance) (CM 28.11.25)**

69. The council has a legal obligation to set a balanced budget on an annual basis as prescribed in the Local Government and Finance Act 1992 and associated Regulations. The issues contained in this report will assist in the future discharge of that obligation.
70. Council assembly is responsible for agreeing the council budget in accordance with Part 3A of the council's constitution. Cabinet responsibilities under Part 3B of the constitution include agreeing a draft budget for council assembly. This report sets out the progress that has been made in relation to making that recommendation, which will be made at a future cabinet meeting.
71. The report includes reference to the proposed fees and charges that will be recommended or agreed at a future cabinet meeting. These are agreed on an annual basis and are included in the cabinet's reserved activities in Part 3C of the constitution. Fees and charges are set on the basis of a range of statutory duties and powers including the Local Government Act 2003 and the Localism Act 2011. Ordinarily, these will be set on a cost recovery basis.
72. There is reference in the report to the statutory requirement (under section 65 Local Government Finance Act 1992) to consult representatives of non-domestic ratepayers in relation to the council's proposals for expenditure in the forthcoming financial year. The results of such consultation will need to be conscientiously taken into account by the cabinet and council assembly in finalising the budget proposals.
73. The council is required under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination harassment and victimisation
  - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not
  - Foster good relations between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not.
74. Equality analysis is the mechanism by which the council considers these effects. The report sets out how it is proposed equality analysis will be undertaken in relation to the budget proposals so that the implications can be considered when the budget recommendations are made.



75. It is essential that cabinet give due regard to the council's duty under the Equality Act 2010 and the implications for protected groups in the context of that duty in relation to this decision and future decisions on the budget proposals.

### REASONS FOR LATENESS

76. This report provides an update on the council's budget-setting process. The timing of this update has been delayed, allowing for consideration of the Autumn Statement, published on 26 November 2025.

### REASONS FOR URGENCY

77. We are responding to immediate circumstances and wish to bring this matter to your attention for any comments ahead of the budget report in February 2026.

### APPENDICES

No:	Title
Appendix A	Proposed General fund Savings – 2026-27
Appendix B	Draft Fees & Charges - 2026-27

### AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet member	Councillor Stephanie Cryan Cabinet Member for Equalities, Democracy & Finance		
Lead officer	Clive Palfreyman – Strategic Director of Resources		
Report author	Timothy Jones – Director of Corporate Finance		
Version	Final		
Dated	28 November 2025		
Key Decision?	Yes		
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER			
		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			28 November 2025

# Cost of Living Southwark 2030

Overview & Scrutiny Committee  
Wed 11<sup>th</sup> December 2025

# Summary

1. Background
2. Council Cost of Living Response 2022 – 2025
  - Help with Bills (Cost of Living Fund)
  - Right to Food Borough
  - More Better Jobs
3. Cost of Living Support / Together Through Winter 2025/26
4. Looking Ahead – pivoting from emergency support to preventative support

# Background

- The Cost-of-Living Crisis that emerged in 2022 was a consequence of huge increases in global energy prices due to a combination of the war in Ukraine, disruption to global supply chains as the world economy reopened after COVID, and higher inflation globally.
- In the summer after the local elections in 2022, a Council Cabinet report set out details of its response to the emerging crisis – a local response to a global emergency. Mainly based on a new Cost-of-Living Profile by the Council's Public Health team, the response also reflected specific election manifesto commitments by the party of the incoming Council administration. Those included the creation of a new *Cost of Living Fund*, a new *Southwark Energy Savers* service and declaring Southwark a *Right to Food borough*; all to be delivered as part of its wider Plan for the Economy
- With domestic energy bills set to quadruple by winter 2022/23, absent state intervention, the Council's response focused on helping those identified in the Cost-of-Living Profile as those most vulnerable to the impacts of the crisis – low-income households - to pay for essential bills, especially energy bills, and maintain a decent standard of living.

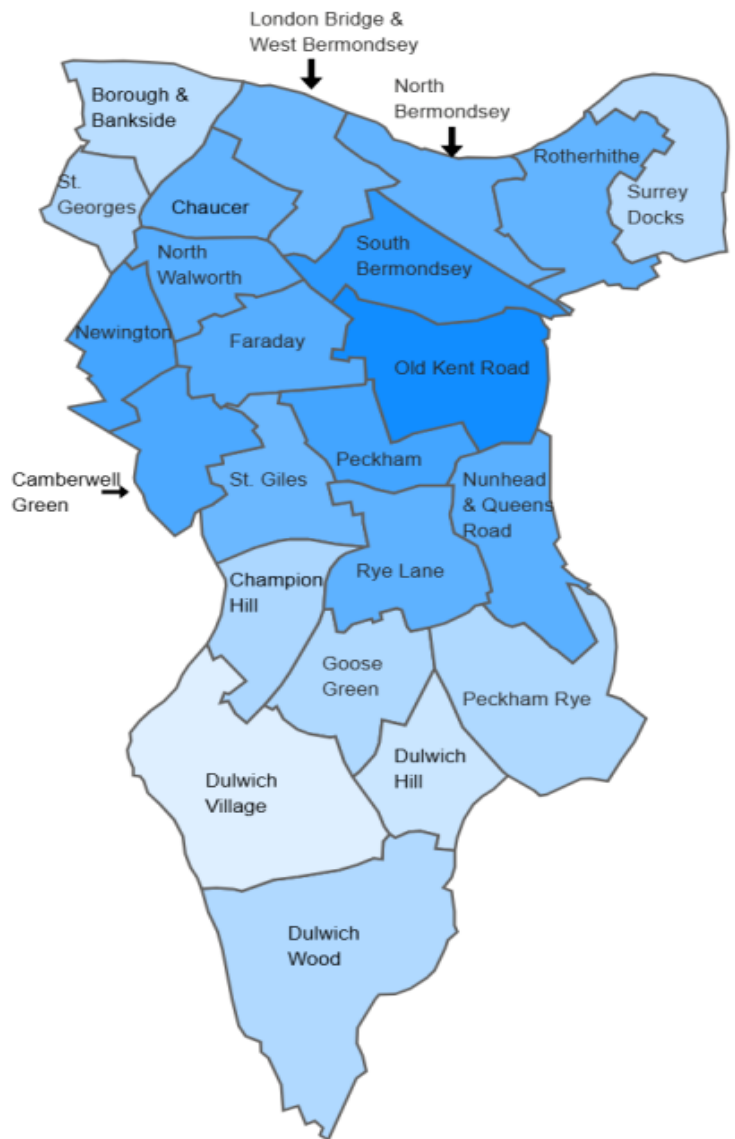
# Help with Bills (Direct Help)

- The depth and duration of the crisis, especially in Southwark's most deprived neighbourhoods, meant that the Council's cost-of-living crisis response would be even bigger and longer-lasting than anticipated in 2022
- Energy bills would remain historically high, higher inflation was eroding the already limited purchasing power of low-income households, and it was the cost of essentials such as food and energy on which low-income households spent more of their earnings, pensions or benefits that were rising fastest
- The Cost-of-Living Fund would be expanded and extended until 2024, with a priority to get help to pay bills to those needing it quickly, so they could maintain a decent standard of living.
- The Council distributed tens of millions of pounds from the Fund over the period, mostly in 2022-23, as extra help with council tax, energy, and food bills. Following a Southwark Cost-of-Living Summit in summer 2022, support from the fund would be distributed in collaboration with our voluntary community and faith sector partners and Southwark schools, including a Community Referral Pathway.
- Funded by pooling Government grants topped up from a new reserve, the Council took a "cash first" approach to the distribution of cost-of-living support. Most support was delivered via the Post Office Payout system, where vouchers could be redeemed for cash at any post office counter.

# 3. Help with Bills (Direct Help)

The map shows the distribution of Council cost-of-living support in the first half of this year, by ward. Most support went to households living in the wards with the most deprived neighbourhoods (darker blue).

Overall, we estimate that about three-quarters of Council Cost of Living support went to households in the bottom 20% of the income distribution. Most of the rest went to low to middle-income households, and virtually none to higher-income households.



Ward	Cashed
Old Kent Road	£203,503
South Bermondsey	£177,991
Newington	£156,409
Peckham	£153,814
Camberwell Green	£142,186
Faraday	£138,430
Nunhead and Queens Road	£137,561
North Bermondsey	£134,463
North Walworth	£132,698
Rotherhithe	£130,828
Chaucer	£128,336
Rye Lane	£124,217
St. Giles	£118,405
London Bridge & West Bermondsey	£117,746
St. Georges	£65,251
Champion Hill	£64,009
Dulwich Wood	£61,692
Peckham Rye	£61,257
Goose Green	£57,863
Borough & Bankside	£51,416
Surrey Docks	£50,255
Dulwich Hill	£38,947
Dulwich Village	£20,086
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2,855,847</b>

## 2. Help with Bills (Indirect Help)

### Southwark Energy Savers (November 2022 – March 2026)

- Southwark Energy Savers (SES) is a joint initiative between the Council and Southwark Citizens Advice. First launched in Autumn 2022, the new service would offer dedicated help to the rapidly increasing number of residents needing advice due to energy bill debt or other disputes with their energy supplier. The service is offered in person, by phone and online
- By September 2025, the service had helped 1,258 residents – mostly in person, including at *Cost-of-Living Roadshows*. Three-quarters of all cases handled by SES advisors are related to energy bills or meters.
- While available to anyone living, working or studying in Southwark, the service has, as intended, mainly helped the low-income residents most vulnerable to the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis.
- More than 80% of SES users are of black, Asian or other minority ethnicity, and three-quarters report a disability or long-term health condition. Many users are very vulnerable with complex needs
- Not all SES cases result in a financial outcome, but the total financial gain for SES users by September 2026 was just under £1.7m – or about £1,350 on average per user.

# Help with Bills (Indirect Help)

- **Pension Credit** is a national welfare benefit that guarantees a minimum income for older people (currently 66 or older) and a safeguard against poverty, but it's widely underclaimed.
- In an Age Friendly borough, the Cost-of-Living Crisis gave renewed urgency to boosting Pension Credit take-up among Southwark's older low-income residents, unlocking other support, social tariffs and discounts, and ensuring that more of our older people enjoy a retirement with a decent quality of life.
- In 2022, a new winter take-up campaign for Pension Credit was launched as a collaboration between the Council and its VCS (COPSINS) partners. The campaign would be renewed and refreshed in each subsequent winter
- From a high base, the latest official data indicates that between May 2022 and February 2025, Southwark's Pension Credit caseload increased by 9.2%, compared with 8.5% in London and 8.2% in inner London. Almost one in three Southwark pension-age residents got Pension Credit last winter – the highest of all the south London boroughs and the fifth highest in Great Britain. Almost 800 pension-age Southwark households newly claimed Pension Credit last winter, putting more than £2m, or more than £3000 each on average, into the pockets of those households this year, and every year for so long as they claim it.



# A Right To Food Borough

In 2022, the Council declared Southwark a Right to Food Borough, committing to work with local businesses, community groups, and schools to ensure that everyone in Southwark has access to healthy, affordable food within a short walking distance of their home. Realisation of the commitment had two broad forms. First, support for families with children through school meals, building on the Council's long-standing commitment to a universal maintained nursery and primary school lunch offer. Second, supporting resident food security to include children not at school and vulnerable households without children in community settings.

- In September 2023, the Council introduced Free Healthy Secondary School Meals for children from families in receipt of Universal Credit. By spring 2025, more than 1200 pupils were eligible
- In December 2023, the Council introduced free nursery breakfasts in maintained settings.
- From October 2024, the Council introduced 'auto-enrolment' to free school meals (957 pupils were newly enrolled for free meals by this year, delivering an additional £979,000 Pupil Premium Funding for schools)
- The Council also established a dedicated school meals improvement programme (focusing on quality, value, improving the experience, and increasing take-up)

# A Right To Food Borough

- Southwark Food and Fun Programme helps to reduce holiday hunger and social isolation in the school holidays; 3,192 children attended a club this summer, gaining access to healthy food and enriching activities
- Rose Vouchers supported 724 families and 1,447 unique children in 2024-25, helping low-income families to afford more fresh fruit and vegetables each week.
- Ongoing promotion of the national Healthy Start scheme to eligible low-income families – pregnant women and infants (0-4) - to encourage uptake and access to healthy food and nutrients essential to healthy child development. Vouchers are received by more than 2,000 expectant mothers and infants in Southwark, and are worth about £300 per year per person
- Supporting resident food security in community settings alongside Southwark Food Action Alliance (SFAA) food partnership members (including food banks, but with an increasing emphasis on community meals, social supermarkets, pantries, and community fridges).
- Encouraging local convenience stores in more deprived neighbourhoods to stock healthier and fresher food, through the Good Food Retail project.

# More Better Jobs (London Living Wage)

Building on Southwark's status as London's first Living Wage (LLW) Borough, the Council's newly created Living Wage Unit worked closely with universities, property developers, Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), charities, and other businesses of various sizes to make Southwark a fairer and better place to work and live

## London Living Wage accreditations

- Since 2022, the number of LLW-accredited employers based in Southwark has increased from 248 to 444
- Over 7,000 employees have benefited from a pay rise as a result.

## Campaigns and advocacy

- The Council's efforts were recognised at this year's Living Wage Champions Awards 2025 – winning in two categories, Advocate of the Year and Industry Champion (Southwark Council)



# More Better Jobs (Skills and Opportunity)

The Council offers services to support young adults who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) or at high risk of becoming NEET. The Council also offers a wide range of initiatives to help secure the best start to working lives for Southwark's young people.

## Internships

- Since 2022, our programmes have supported 241 Southwark sixth formers, undergraduates and recent graduates into paid internships.

## Apprenticeships

- Since 2022, our programmes have led to 1,911 new apprenticeships created for Southwark residents and employers.
- **Care leavers Youth Guarantee Trailblazer**
- £380k has been secured via the DWP's Youth Guarantee Trailblazer to develop an **employability pathway for care-experienced young people**. Up to 10 young people per month are benefiting from structured work experience placements within the Council, including employability skills workshops, financial support and mock interviews.

# Cost of Living Support – Winter 2025/26

- This year marked a shift in the Council's approach to cost-of-living support. It would gradually move away from short-term emergency help with bills, towards building or rebuilding longer-term financial and community resilience, doing so in ways that could help to limit the impacts of another potential future global health or economic crisis.
- Based on the Southwark 2030 principles and anticipating guidance from a newly elected UK Government, the Council would start to pivot toward what it termed a more *preventative* approach, rebranding the *Cost-of-Living Fund* as the *Better Living Fund*
- The impacts of the cost-of-living crisis are still with us, inflation remains high, food and energy are much more expensive, and many residents still identify the cost of living as the thing that worries them most. This winter, the Council will continue to provide direct and indirect help with bills for low-income households and support for those facing a crisis and in urgent need of help to pay for essentials

# Cost of Living Support – Winter 2025/26

## **Direct Help with Bills this winter**

- more than £1.1m in holiday free school meal support to be distributed to about twelve thousand low-income families with children attending a Southwark state primary school, secondary school or nursery, at Christmas 2025, and during the Autumn 2025 and Winter 2026 half-term holidays
- £160k to be distributed to hundreds of vulnerable residents moving to Universal Credit this winter to help them cope during the five-week wait for a first payment
- £55k in extra help for the most vulnerable households struggling to pay their council tax
- £250K for vulnerable low-income households facing a crisis or needing help to live independently

## **Indirect Help with Bills this winter**

- A renewed Pension Credit take-up campaign will take place this winter
- Southwark Energy Savers' service is available for those struggling with energy bills or needing energy advice – including at Cost-of-Living Roadshows in more deprived neighbourhoods.

# Cost of Living Support – Winter 2025/26

## Preventative Support this winter

- £80k to **prevent food insecurity** among vulnerable residents this winter in collaboration with VCS members and supporters of Southwark Food Action Alliance (SFAA), including support for Warm Spaces
- £80k to fund a new **Positive Opportunities Fund** providing vital support for families at risk this winter
- £80k to provide tailored **support for those at risk of homelessness** this winter
- All these new forms of preventative support will be delivered between October 2025 and March 2026. Outcomes from support will be carefully evaluated in the spring of next year



# Benefit Take-Up, Social Tariffs & Wider Support

Looking ahead, the Council will continue to lead efforts to boost or rebuild vulnerable households' financial resilience as we emerge from the peak of the cost-of-living crisis. The Council will work with local, regional, and national partners to promote and facilitate the enrolment of more Southwark households for social tariffs, welfare benefits, other forms of discounts or subsidies, and debt relief schemes – including those listed below.

- Water Bills (Thames Water Social Tariffs)
- Energy Bills (expanded Warm Home Discount Scheme)
- Energy Bills (OFGEM Debt Relief Scheme)
- Water Bills (Thames Water Debt Relief Scheme)
- Healthy Start Vouchers
- Pension Credit (and Winter Fuel Payments)





# Southwark Council & Thames Water Bill Support

- This year, the Council collaborated with Thames Water by safely and securely sharing data to identify residents with low incomes and outstanding water bill debts who are eligible for a social tariff, and who would otherwise have missed out on this support. A social tariff can reduce a water bill by 50%, but the take-up of tariffs is low because many eligible households are unaware of them and don't apply
- This winter, Southwark residents identified as eligible from data-matching have been auto-enrolled for one or both social tariffs available (**Water Help** offers a 50% discount on bills for low-income households; **Water Sure** caps the bills of low-income families that *must* consume more water than average, for example, due to medical reasons). Details are set out in the table below.

45

Total discount value for enrolled households

Category	Number of households	Total discount value (annual)	Average discount (annual)
WaterHelp	2,728	£1,043,414	£382
WaterSure	13	£8,158	£628
All Eligible	2,741	£1,051,572	£384

# Cost of Living Support Outlook 2026 - 2030

- The UK Government announced a new **Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF)** at this summer's Comprehensive Spending Review. The "ring-fenced" CRF will total £2.52 billion to be allocated to all upper-tier English local authorities as part of a multi-year settlement to be announced in December, covering the period from April 2026 to March 2029. Though the Government will not publish detailed guidance for Councils on the use of the new fund until January, it has stated the following
- *The CRF will provide a safety net for those on low incomes who encounter a financial shock, whilst also investing in local financial resilience to enable communities to better deal with crises in the long-term, reducing dependence and repeat need. The fund has 3 main outcomes:*
  1. *Provision of effective crisis support*
  2. *Improving individuals' and local communities' financial resilience*
  3. *Bolstering community-level support*
- The Council will set out plans for the use of its allocation in the new year, when more details are known

<b>Meeting name:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
<b>Date:</b>	11 December 2025
<b>Report title:</b>	Annual Workforce Report 2024-25
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>	N/A
<b>Classification:</b>	Open
<b>Reason for lateness (if applicable):</b>	N/A
<b>From:</b>	Director of People and Organisational Development

## RECOMMENDATIONS

That Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

1. Notes the annual workforce profile for 2024-25

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The council is committed to the publication of an annual workforce profile. This is considered good practice since it:
  - promotes transparency and accountability
  - encourages improvement, particularly through benchmarking the council's position against London-wide trends
  - demonstrates commitment to understanding and developing our workforce, which is one of – if not the most – important resources available to the council
3. The HR service has been undergoing a significant transformation. During this time, the annual workforce profile has not been routinely presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, although key data has continued to be published on the open data pages of the council's website. This item marks the reintroduction of annual reporting to Overview and Scrutiny.

## KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

4. The annual workforce profile for 2024-25 is attached at **Appendix 1**. The profile includes data and analysis against 16 key metrics that provide insight into:
  - the size and diversity of the council's workforce
  - sickness absence
  - turnover
  - the use of agency workers

5. These metrics are commonly reported by most, if not all, London boroughs, and benchmarking data is available via the HR Metrics Service provided by London Councils.
6. In future years, the range of data included in the profile will be expanded. Further information is provided below at paragraphs 9 to 10.

#### Key actions

7. Commentary in the workforce profile refers to a number of actions that are underway, or will be initiated, to address the council's position against some metrics. These actions will be incorporated into the HR service plan or associated programme and project plans as appropriate, rather than a dedicated workforce profile plan. However, for the purposes of transparency, the identified actions are recorded in the table below.

Metric	Action	New or underway?
Percentage of top 5% of earners who are female	HR to lead the development of an action plan to increase the representation of women in senior roles	New
Percentage of employees who are disabled	HR to run a campaign to encourage more employees to declare their disability status	New
Percentage of top 5% of earners who are disabled	HR to lead the development of an action plan to increase the representation of disabled employees in senior roles	New
Sickness absence	HR to deliver a project to review and improve the council's approach to managing sickness absence	Underway
Percentage of leavers with less than one year of service	HR to introduce an exit interview process to better understand why employees leave the council	New
Percentage of the workforce who are agency workers	HR to lead the development of an action plan to reduce the use of agency workers	New

8. An update on progress against each of these actions will be appended to next year's workforce profile to promote visibility and accountability.

#### Developing the range of data in the workforce profile

9. The workforce profile for 24-25 is focused on key metrics that provide an overview of the council's workforce, with a particular focus on those metrics where the council can readily access benchmarking data that enables comparison to London-wide trends. In future years, the profile will be developed further to include insight into metrics such as:

- the use of work experience, internships and apprenticeships
  - recruitment, including the council's success rate when advertising a vacancy and the total time to hire
  - formal HR processes, such as grievances and disciplinaries
10. The development of the workforce profile will be enabled, in part, by delivery of the Southwark 360 programme, which includes the introduction of a new HR system and a comprehensive redesign of many HR processes. This work will significantly enhance the council's ability to generate and analyse data about the council's workforce, resulting in improvements to both the annual workforce profile and also the real-time workforce data available to leaders, managers and colleagues in the HR service.

## Consultation

11. The workforce profile for 24-25 will be shared with trade union representatives and staff networks, who will be asked for their ideas about how the profile can be developed and improved in future years.

## APPENDICES

No.	Title
1.	Annual workforce profile for 2024-25

## AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Ben Plant, Director of People and Organisational Development	
Report Author	Ben Plant, Director of People and Organisational Development	
Version	Final	
Dated	3 December 2025	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Assistant Chief Executive – Governance and Assurance	N/A	N/A
Strategic Director of Resources	N/A	N/A
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team		3 December 2025

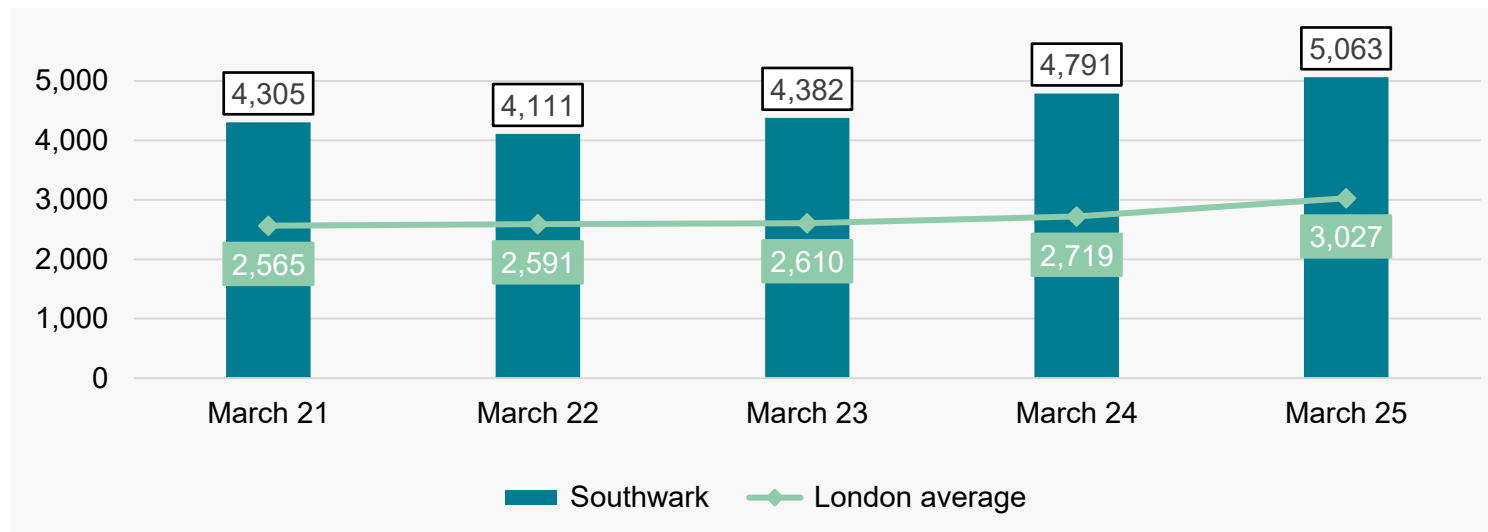
# Annual Workforce Profile

2024/25

## 1 Size of workforce: headcount

This is a count of the number of individuals directly employed by the council on 31 March every year. It includes all full-time and part-time employees but excludes casual workers and agency workers.

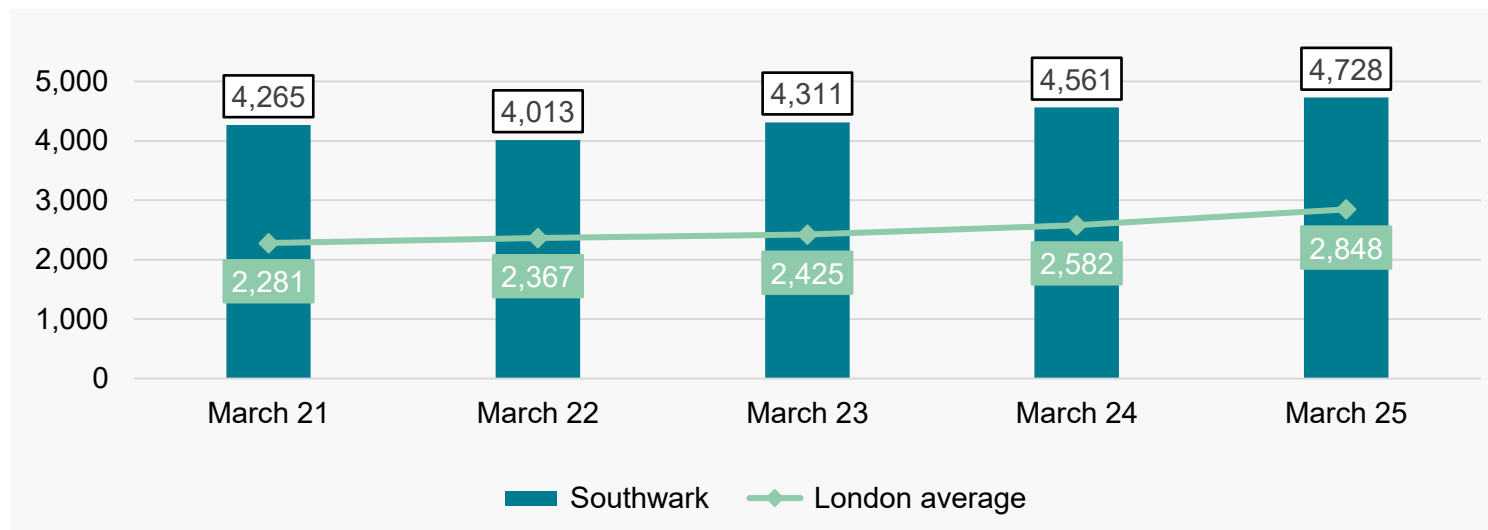
Southwark's headcount is the highest of all the London boroughs, in part reflecting the council's commitment to in-house service delivery. In June 2023, over 400 employees transferred into the council as part of the insourcing of leisure centres.



## 2 Size of workforce: full-time equivalent (FTE)

This is a count of the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) individuals directly employed by the council on 31 March every year. FTE converts the total number of hours worked by employees into an equivalent number of full-time roles. Casual workers and agency workers are excluded from the calculation.

When measured by FTE, Southwark's workforce is the second largest in London.

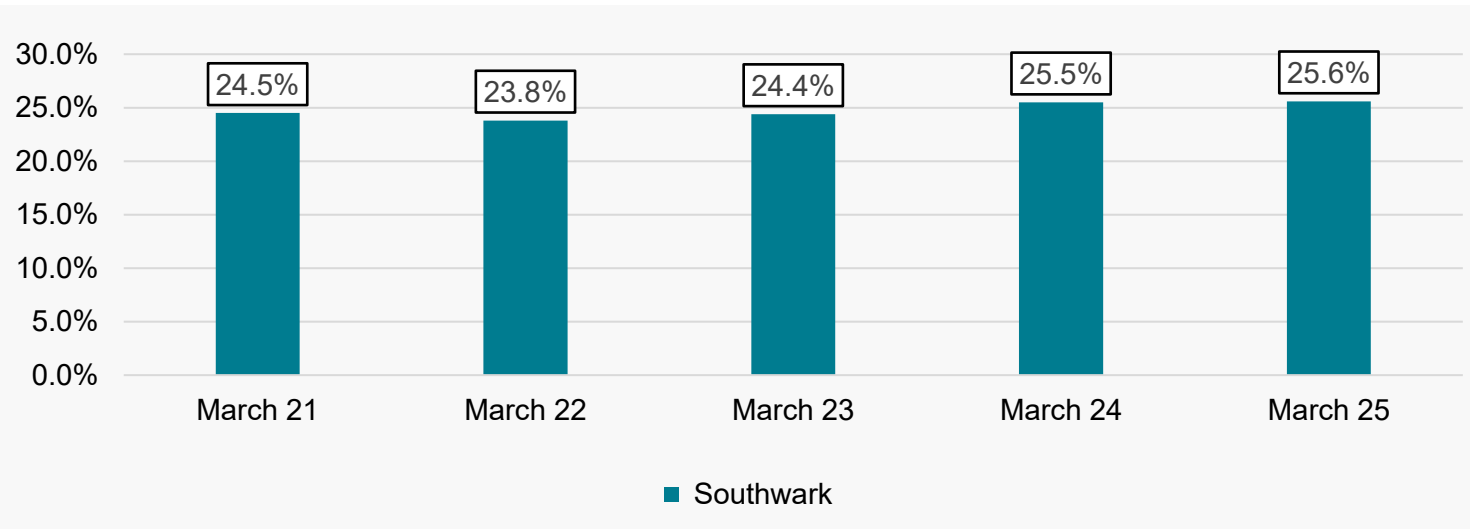


### 3 Percentage of employees who are Southwark residents

The percentage of employees who are Southwark residents has remained broadly stable over the last five years. In London, the labour market is regional, rather than council-specific, as many people can easily travel to other London boroughs.

The council will continue to promote employment opportunities to Southwark residents by:

- supporting Southwark Works, the council's employment service
- advertising internships and apprenticeships locally

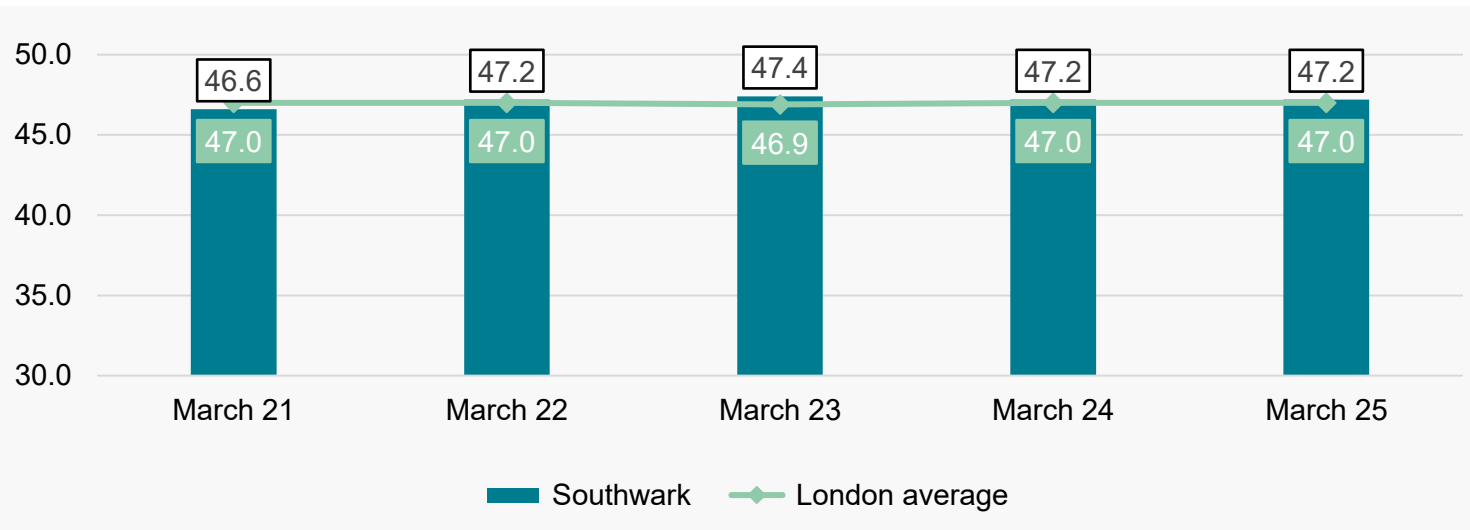


### 4 Average age of the workforce

The average age of the workforce is broadly in line with the London average.

Most, if not all, councils report an ageing workforce. This reflects low turnover among long-serving staff, the specialist skills and qualifications required for some roles, and increasing competition for talent.

The HR service has established a dedicated apprenticeships and early careers team, which is focused on growing the number of younger people who join the council.

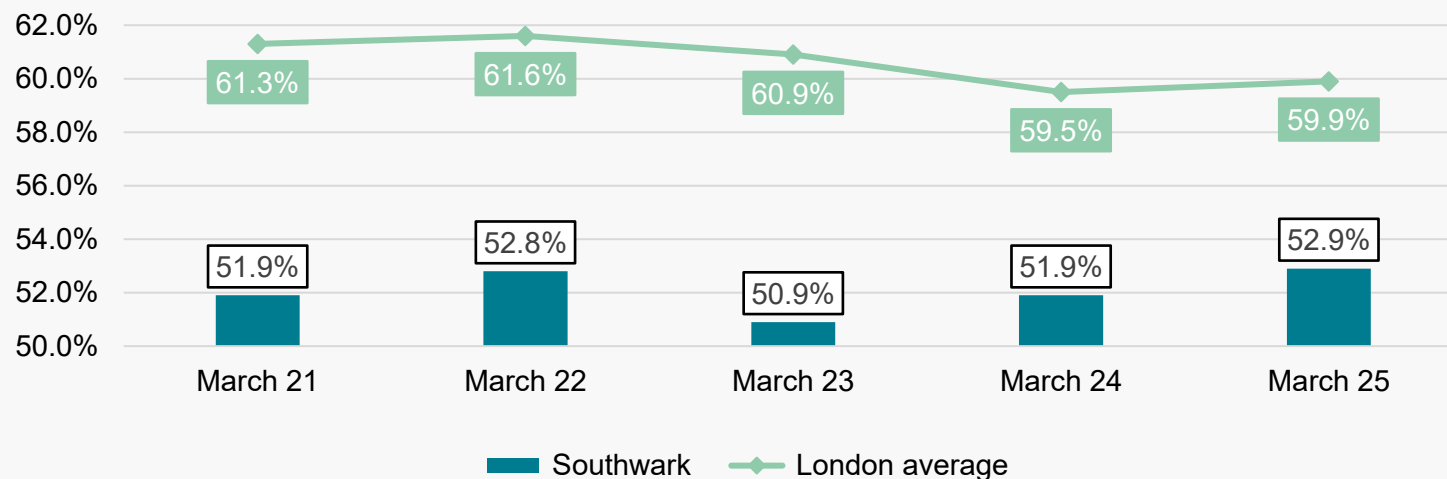




## 5 Percentage of employees who are female

Southwark has a lower proportion of women in its workforce than any other London council. This is largely due to decisions about in-house and outsourced service delivery. In Southwark, male-dominated services such as responsive repairs and grounds maintenance – which many councils have outsourced – continue to be provided in-house.

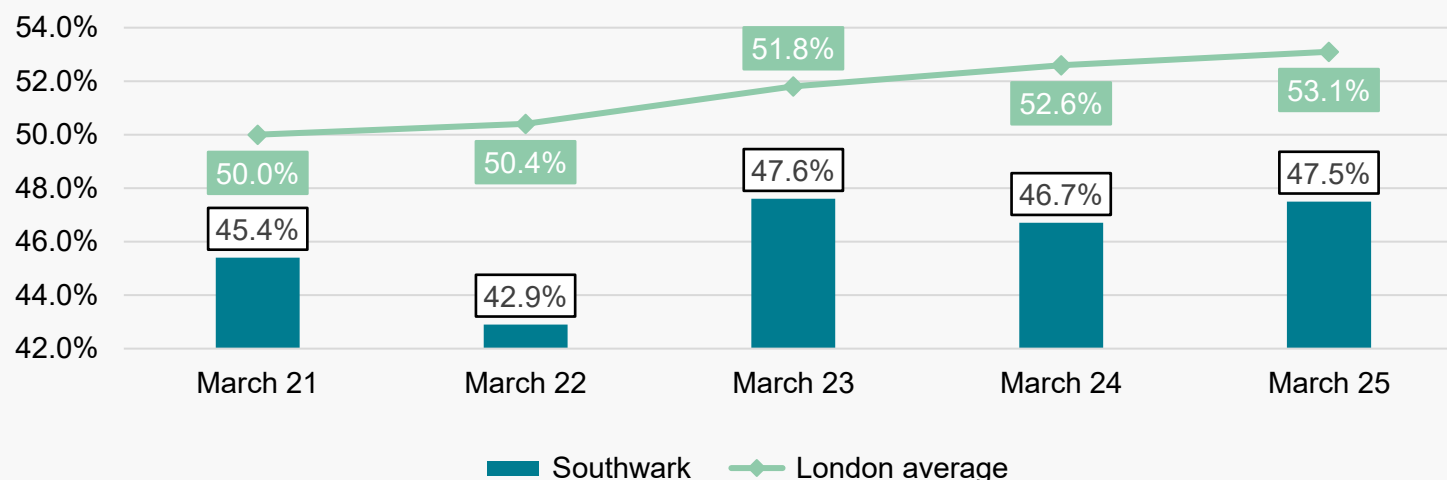
As a result, although women make up more than half of all employees, the gender profile of the workforce is more male than the London average.



## 6 Percentage of top 5% of earners who are female

In common with the position across London, women are under-represented in the top 5% of earners compared to their representation in the workforce as a whole.

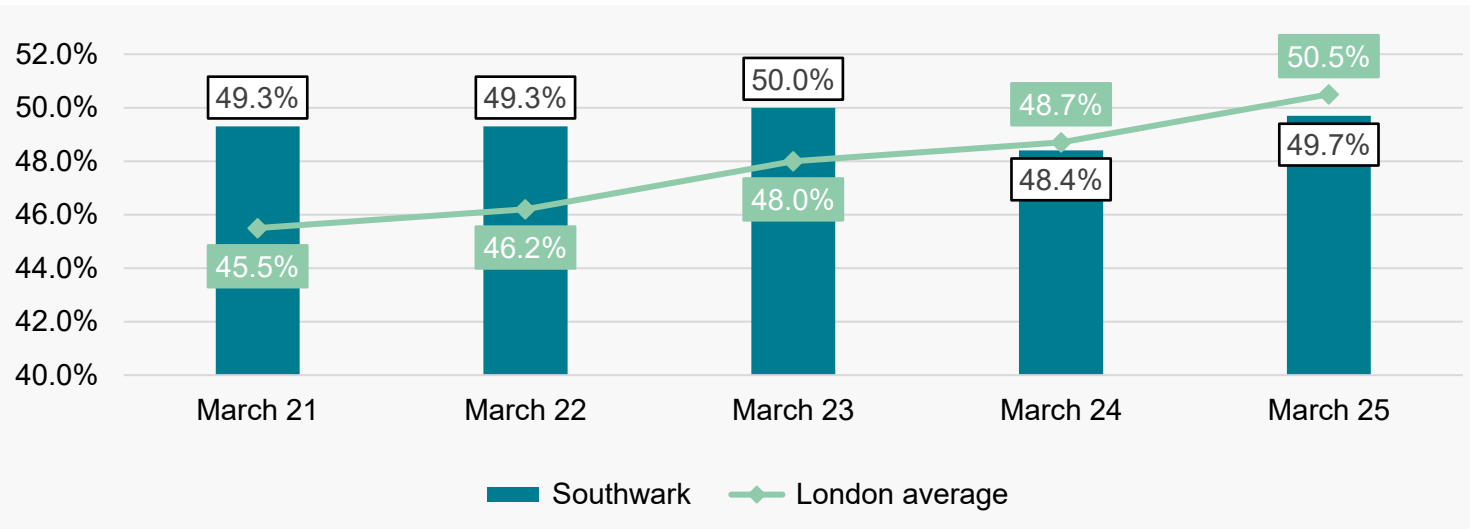
There are well-known societal and structural barriers that can impact on women's career progression, including historic under-representation and reduced options for flexible working in senior roles. The HR team will lead the development of an action plan to increase the representation of women in senior roles.



## 7 Percentage of employees who are ethnically diverse

The ethnic profile of the workforce is broadly reflective of Southwark's community: nearly 50% of employees are ethnically diverse compared to 48.5% of Southwark residents.

In 23/24, the proportion of ethnically diverse employees reduced following the transfer of 400 employees into the council as part of the insourcing of leisure centres. Initially, the council did not hold ethnicity data for any of these employees. This is being addressed through ongoing data collection.

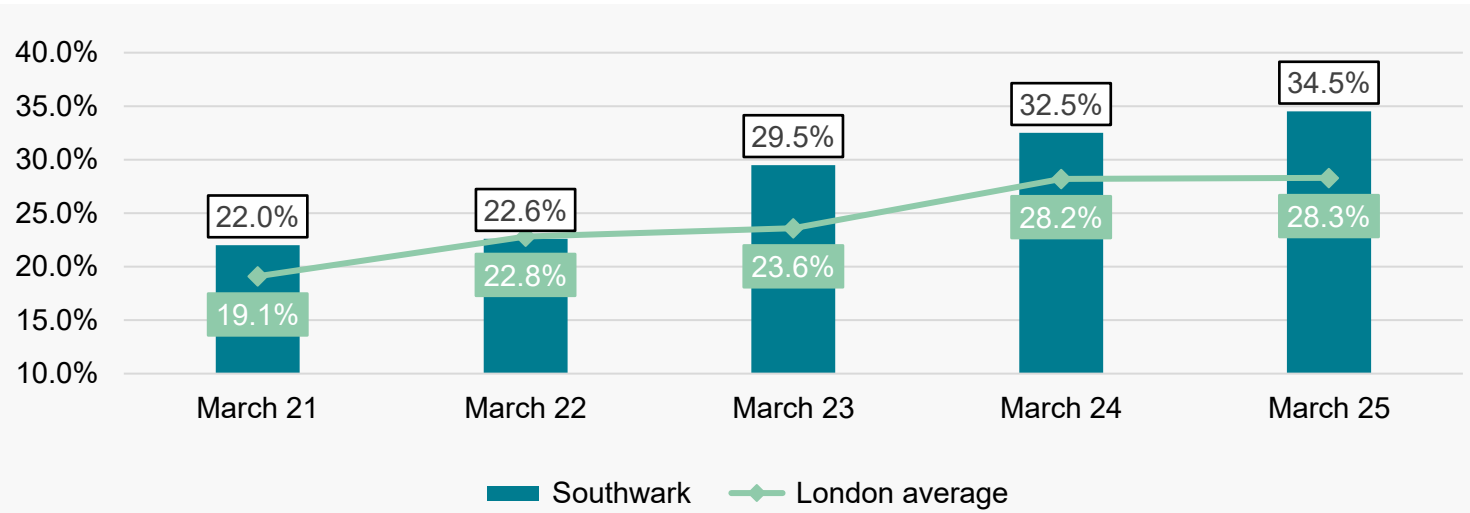


## 8 Percentage of top 5% of earners who are ethnically diverse

Over the last four years, the representation of ethnically diverse employees in the top 5% of earners has increased by over twelve percentage points. This reflects the council's focus on improving ethnic diversity in senior leadership roles as part of Southwark Stands Together.

Further improvement will be delivered through:

- targeted action planning with service departments
- continued tracking and reporting on progress

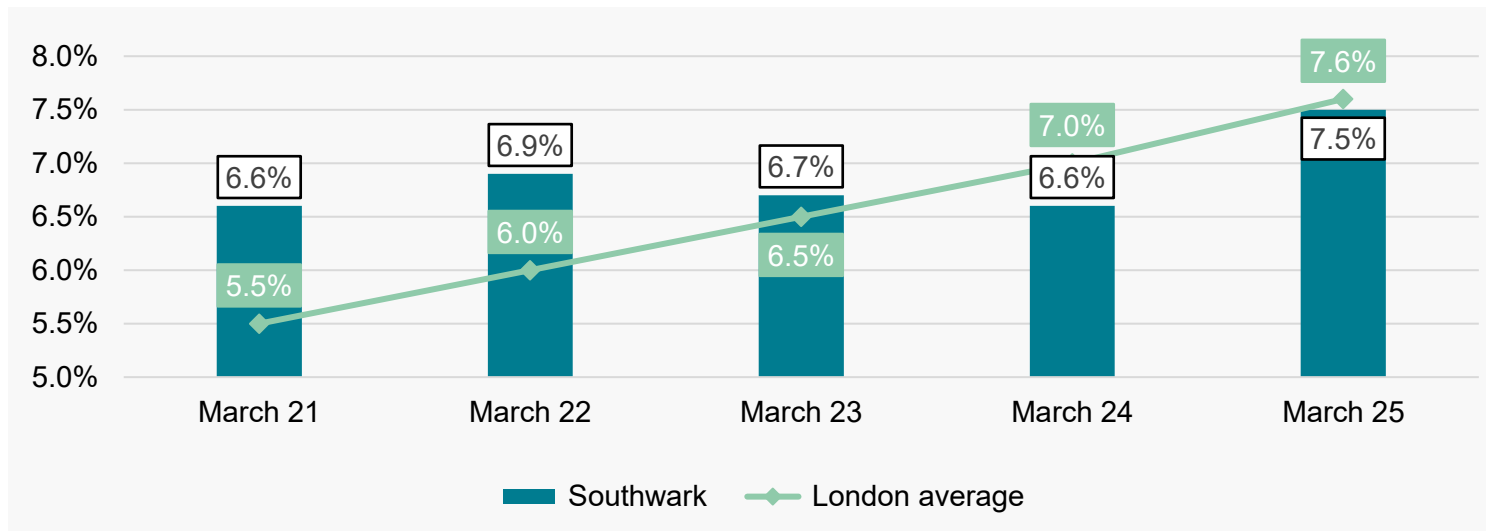


## 9 Percentage of employees who are disabled

The proportion of employees who are disabled is broadly in line with the London average. However, only 52% of employees have recorded their disability status in the council's HR system.

The HR team will run a campaign to encourage more employees to declare their disability status, including:

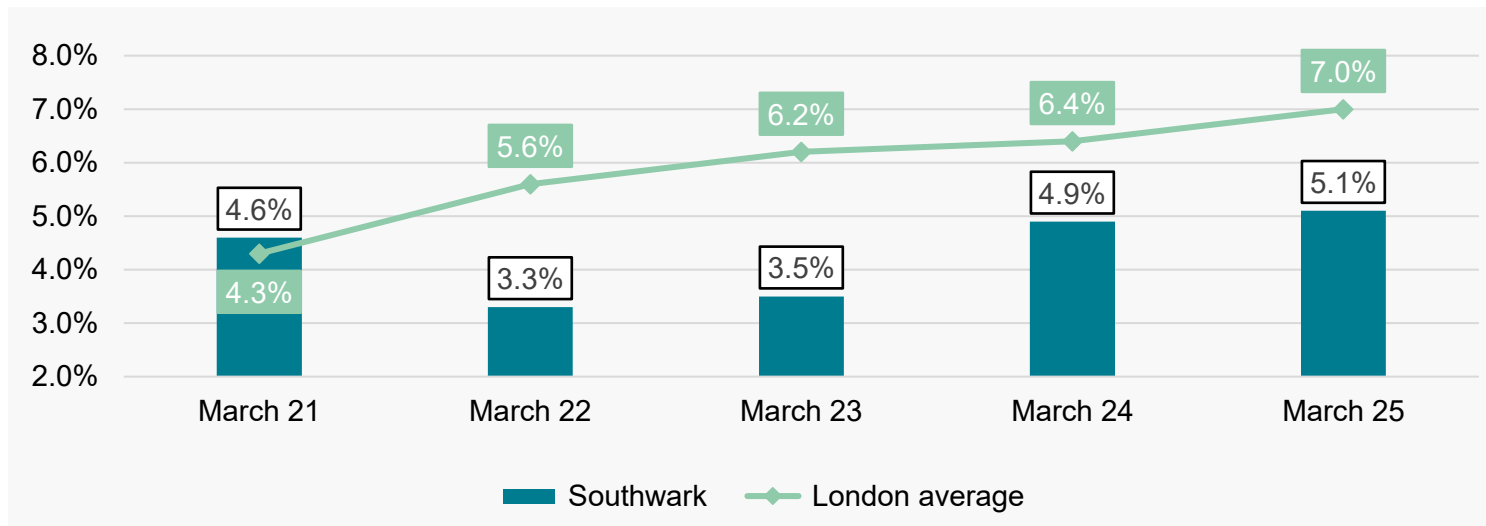
- targeted communications
- collaboration with trade unions and staff networks to promote the value of recording this data



## 10 Percentage of top 5% of earners who are disabled

In line with the trend across London, disabled employees are under-represented in the top 5% of earners compared to their representation in the workforce as a whole. This position may change as more employees record their disability status in the council's HR system.

The HR team will lead the development of an action plan to increase the representation of disabled employees in senior roles.

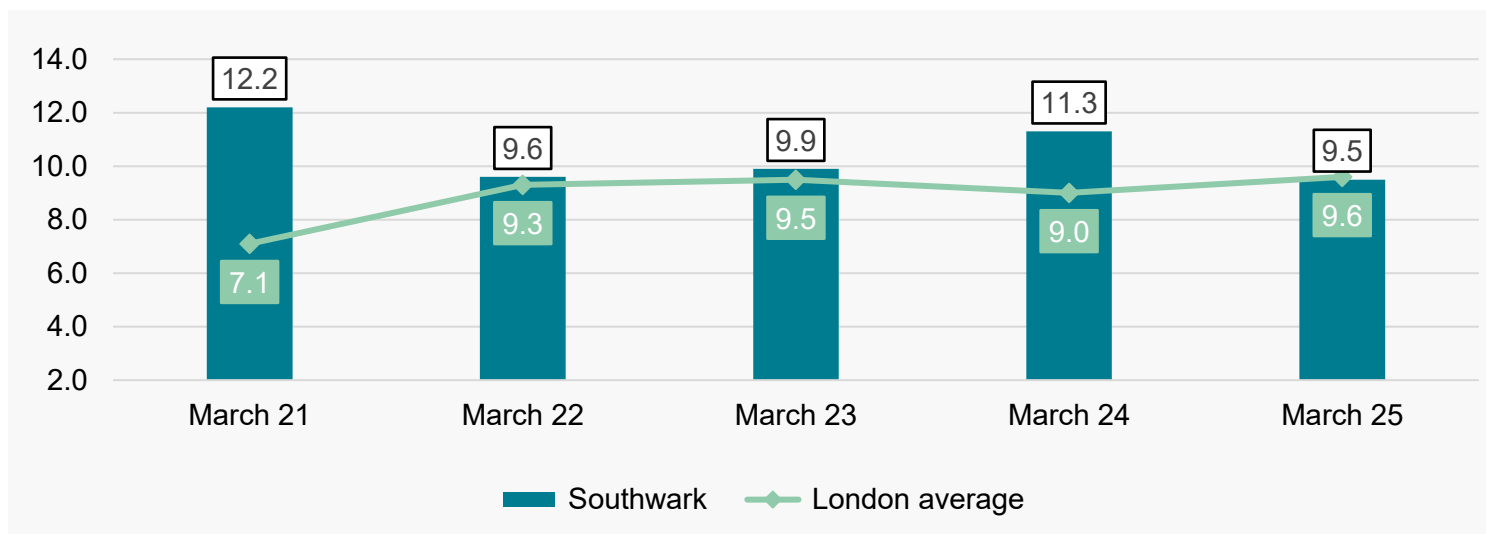


## 11 Sickness absence: average number of days lost per employee in the previous year

The average number of days lost to sickness absence is broadly in line with the London average and shows a clear improvement from the peak recorded in 23/24.

The HR team has initiated a project to review and improve the council's approach to managing sickness absence. Key areas of focus include:

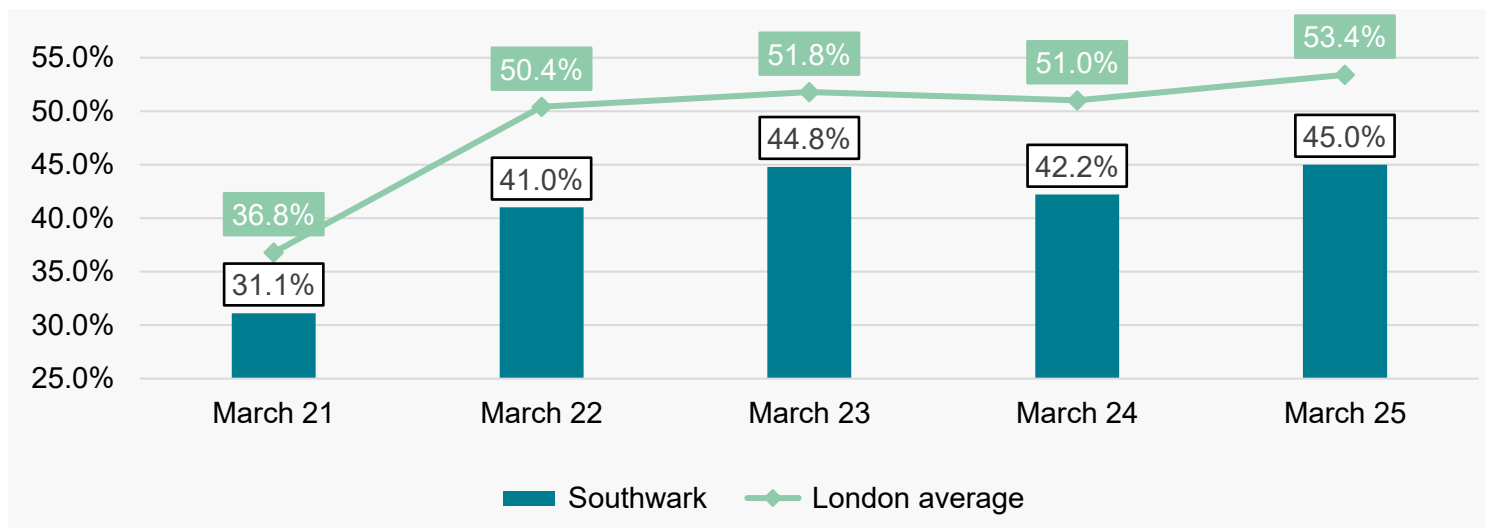
- training for managers
- support for employees, including the use of occupational health and reasonable adjustments
- data quality and trend analysis



## 12 Sickness absence: percentage of employees who had sickness in the previous year

The percentage of employees with sickness absence is lower than the London average; however, the average number of days lost per employee is consistent with the London trend. Taken together, this suggests that Southwark may have a higher rate of long-term sickness absence than the norm.

The sickness absence project initiated by the HR team has a specific focus on long-term sickness absence, including analysis of its causes and any underlying patterns or trends.

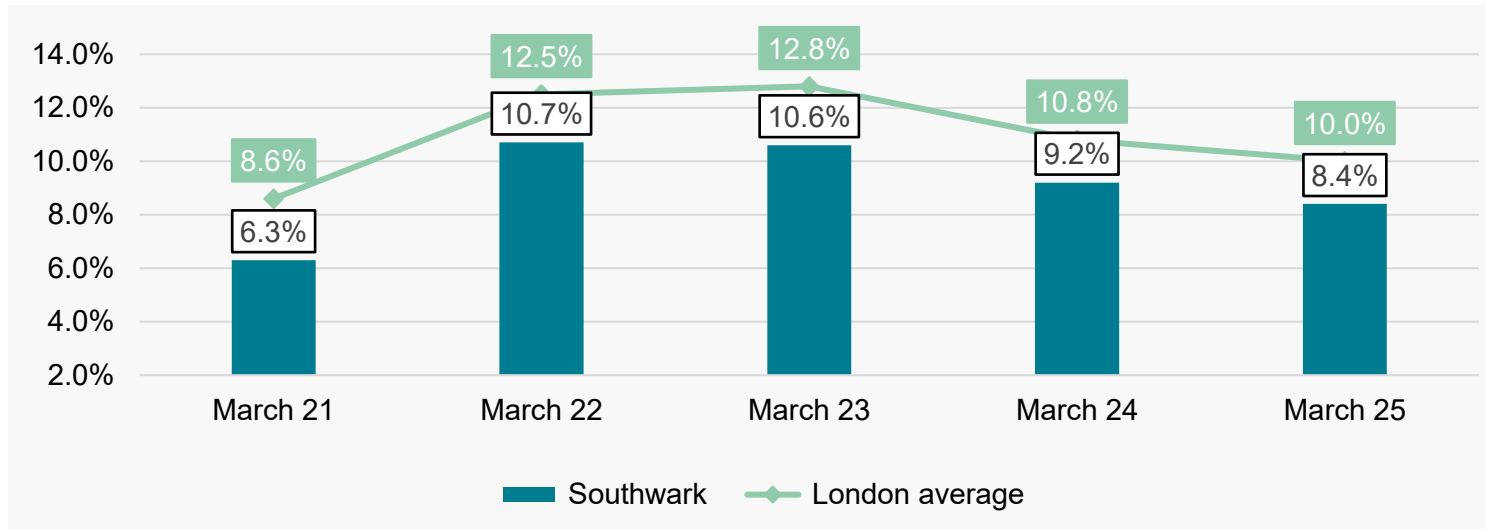


## 13 Turnover: percentage of employees who left during the previous year

The turnover rate at Southwark is one of the lowest in London: only Camden and Islington councils have a lower turnover.

High turnover can disrupt service delivery, reduce institutional knowledge, and increase spend on recruitment and training.

Conversely, employers with low turnover can regard it as a concern. Long-tenured staff may resist change, while new employees can bring fresh perspectives and challenge established ways of working.

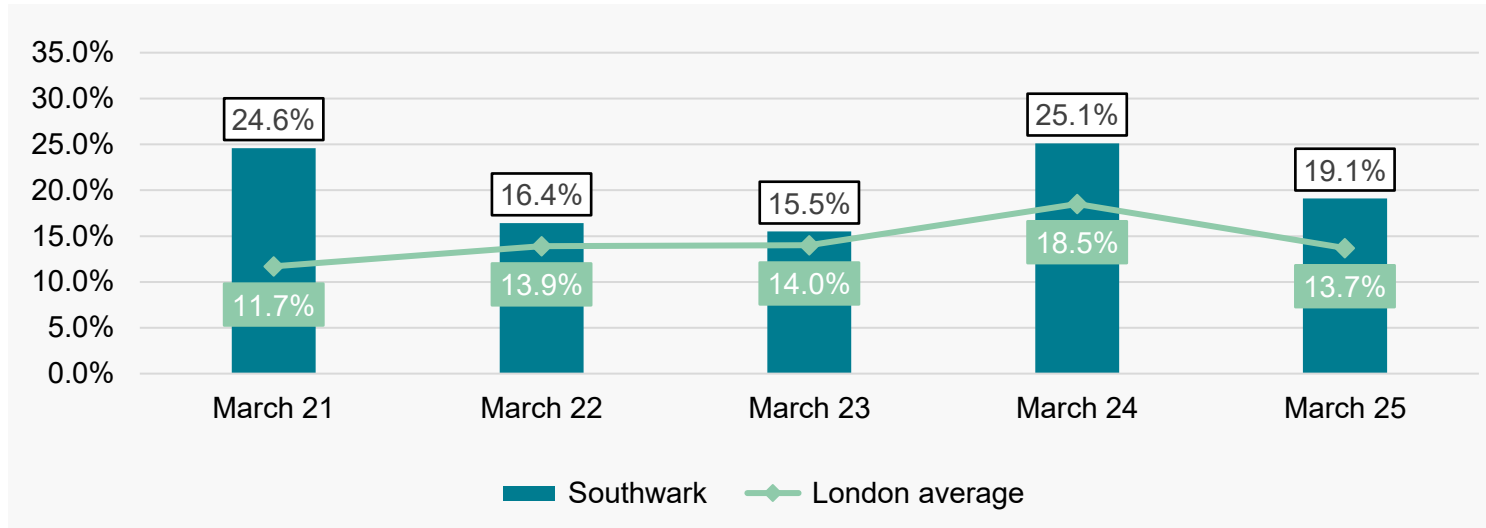


## 14 Turnover: percentage of leavers in the previous year with less than one year of service

A high percentage of early leavers may suggest that new employees are not well-matched to their employer, which in turn may highlight issues with recruitment processes.

At Southwark, while turnover is low, the rate of early leavers is consistently above the London average. However, the reasons for this are not well-understood.

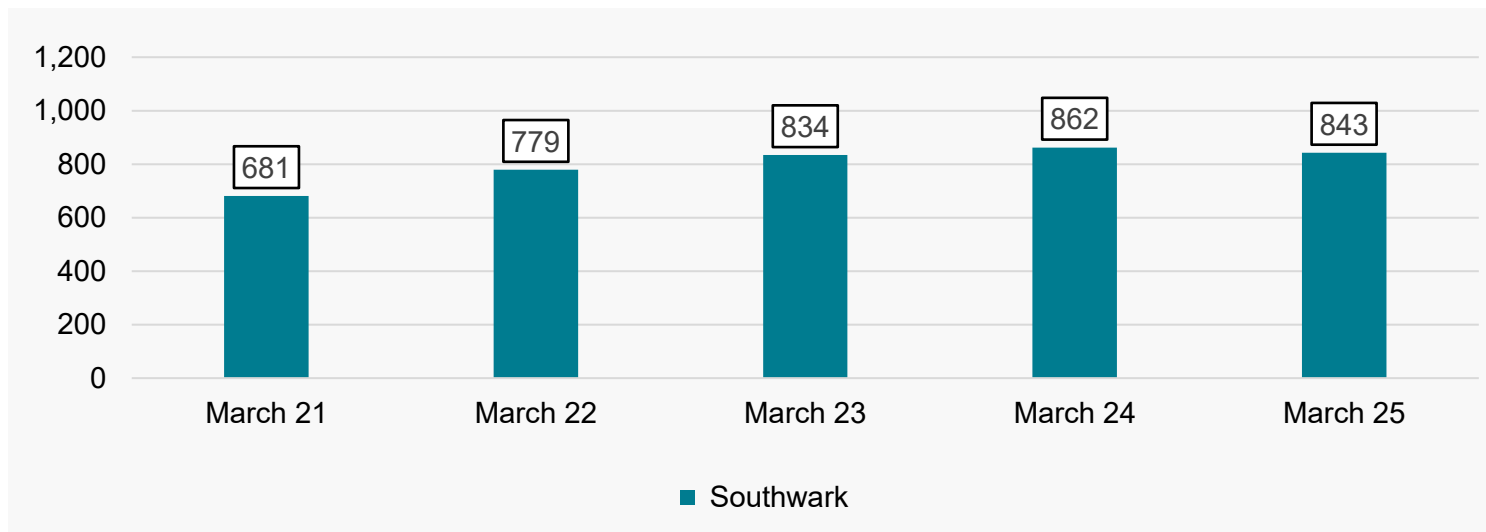
The HR team will introduce an exit interview process to better understand why employees leave and identify opportunities for improvement.



## 15 Agency workers: headcount

This is a count of the number of agency workers engaged by the council on 31 March every year. Agency workers are used to cover short-term vacancies or specialist roles that are difficult to fill on a permanent basis.

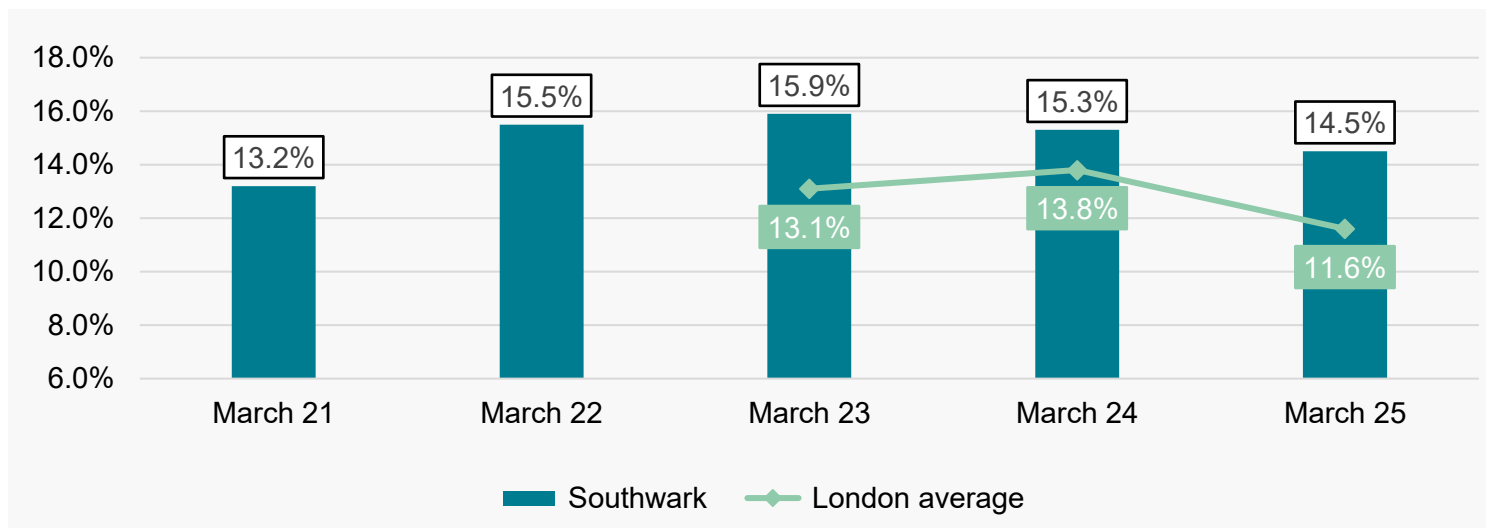
Most agency workers are engaged through the council's contract with Matrix, who manage a supply chain of agencies on the council's behalf. Matrix are responsible for sourcing suitable candidates and negotiating agency rates.



## 16 Percentage of the workforce who are agency workers

The percentage of the workforce who are agency workers, while declining, is higher than the London average. This indicates there is scope to further reduce the use of agency workers.

In April 2024, the council established an in-house recruitment team as part of a wider transformation of the HR service. This team will lead the development of an action plan to reduce the use of agency workers through increased permanent recruitment and regular scrutiny of all roles filled by agency workers.



<b>Meeting Name:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
<b>Date:</b>	11 December 2025
<b>Report title:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Commission Work Programmes 2025/26
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>	N/a
<b>Classification:</b>	Open
<b>Reason for lateness (if applicable):</b>	N/a
<b>From:</b>	Head of Scrutiny

## RECOMMENDATION

1. That the committee consider and agree annual work programmes for overview and scrutiny committee and its commissions for the 2025/26 municipal year.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. Paragraph 6 of the overview and scrutiny procedure rules states that terms of reference of the overview and scrutiny committee will be:
  - a) to appoint commissions, agreeing the size, composition and terms of reference and to appoint chairs and vice chairs
  - b) to agree the annual work programme for OSC and the commissions
  - c) to consider requests from the cabinet and/or council assembly for scrutiny reviews
  - d) to exercise the right to call-in for reconsideration of executive decisions made but not yet implemented
  - e) to arrange for relevant functions in respect of health scrutiny to be exercised by an overview and scrutiny committee of another local authority where the council considers that another local authority would be better placed to undertake those relevant functions, and that local authority agrees to exercise those functions
  - f) if appropriate, to appoint a joint overview and scrutiny committee with two or more local authorities and arrange for the relevant functions of those authorities to be exercised by the joint committee
  - g) to periodically review overview and scrutiny procedures to ensure that the function is operating effectively
  - h) to report annually to all councillors on the previous year's scrutiny activity
  - i) to scrutinise matters in respect of:
    - the council's policy and budget framework
    - regeneration
    - human resources and the council's role as an employer and corporate

practice generally

- customer access issues, including digital strategy, information technology and communications
- the council's equalities and diversity programmes.

3. The general terms of reference of the scrutiny commissions are set out in the council's constitution (overview and scrutiny procedure rules - paragraph 5). The constitution states that:

Within their terms of reference, all scrutiny committees/commissions will:

- a) review and scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the council's functions
- b) review and scrutinise the decisions made by and performance of the cabinet and council officers both in relation to individual decisions and over time in areas covered by its terms of reference
- c) review and scrutinise the performance of the council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas
- d) question members of the cabinet and officers about their decisions and performance, whether generally in comparison with service plans and targets over a period of time, or in relation to particular decisions, initiatives or projects and about their views on issues and proposals affecting the area
- e) assist council assembly and the cabinet in the development of its budget and policy framework by in-depth analysis of policy issues
- f) make reports and recommendations to the cabinet and or council assembly arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process
- g) consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants
- h) liaise with other external organisations operating in the area, whether national, regional or local, to ensure that the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working
- i) review and scrutinise the performance of other public bodies in the area and invite reports from them by requesting them to address the scrutiny committee and local people about their activities and performance
- j) conduct research and consultation on the analysis of policy issues and possible options
- k) question and gather evidence from any other person (with their consent)
- l) consider and implement mechanisms to encourage and enhance community participation in the scrutiny process and in the development of policy options



m) conclude inquiries promptly and normally within six months.

## KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

4. In accordance with the provision set out in 2(a) above, the overview and scrutiny committee established four commissions for the 2025-26 municipal year at its meeting held on 17 May 2025.
  - Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission
  - Environment, Community Safety and Engagement Scrutiny Commission
  - Housing Scrutiny Commission
  - Health and Social Care Scrutiny Commission
5. In accordance with the provision set out in 2(b) above, overview and scrutiny committee is being recommended to agree scrutiny work programmes for the 2025-26 municipal year.
6. In considering the work programmes the overview and scrutiny committee is recommended to focus on key issues where scrutiny can make a significant impact for local people, and issues aligned to the council's strategic priorities.
7. Attached as an appendix are the proposed remits of overview and scrutiny committee and its commissions based on the cabinet portfolio responsibilities set out in the council constitution and the Southwark 2030 Goals. The document is for reference purposes only and serves to highlight the cabinet member portfolio responsibilities and Southwark 2030 Goals covered by the overview and scrutiny committee and the scrutiny commissions with a view to assist in directing potential issues for consideration to the correct committee/commission undertaking actions referred to in paragraph 3 above.
8. The work programmes are a standing item on the overview and scrutiny committee and commission agendas and enables the committee/commissions to consider, monitor and plan issues for consideration at each meeting.

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Council Constitution  • Section 3.3 - Cabinet Portfolios • Section 9 - Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules • Southwark 2030 Strategy	Southwark Council Website	Everton Roberts 020 7525 7221
Link: <a href="#">Council Constitution</a> <a href="#">Southwark 2030 Strategy</a>		

## APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Work Programme 2025-26

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Everton Roberts, Head of Scrutiny		
<b>Report Author</b>	Amit Alva, Scrutiny Officer		
<b>Version</b>	Final		
<b>Dated</b>	3 December 2025		
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No		
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>			
<b>Officer Title</b>		<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments Included</b>
Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance		No	No
Strategic Director, Finance		No	No
<b>Cabinet Member</b>		No	No
<b>Date final report sent to Scrutiny Team</b>			3 December 2025

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme – 2025-26

Meeting	Agenda items	Comment
<b>23 June 2025</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Commission Work Programme 2025-26</li> </ul>	Lead officer – Vishal Seegoolam (Everton Roberts)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scrutiny Improvement Review Implementation - Update June 2025</li> </ul>	Lead officer – Vishal Seegoolam (Everton Roberts)
<b>8 October 2025</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal Review of the Chilton Grove Estate Rooftop Homes and 2018-19 QHIP Major Works Project</li> </ul>	Lead member – Cllr Situ Lead officer – Hakeem Osinaike
	Southwark Community Safety - Strategic Assessment and Draft Community Safety Plan	Lead member – Cllr Enin Lead officer – Stephen Douglas (Caroline Thwaites)
<b>11 December 2025</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget introduction and scene setting - training, fair funding consultation, current financial strategy</li> </ul>	Lead member – Cllr Cryan Lead officer – Clive Palfreyman (Tim Jones)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cost of Living - Southwark 2030 goals including economies</li> </ul>	Lead member – Cllr Cryan Lead officer – Dominic Cain
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual Workforce report</li> </ul>	Lead member – Cllr Cryan Lead officer – Doreen Forrester Brown (Ben Plant)

Meeting	Agenda items	Comment
<b>7 January 2026</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council Delivery Plan Performance</li> </ul>	Lead member – Cllr Cryan Lead officer – Rhona Cadenhead
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget Local Government settlement (TBC)</li> </ul>	Lead member – Cllr Cryan Lead officer – Clive Palfreyman (Tim Jones)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regeneration Old Kent Road (TBC)</li> </ul>	Lead member - Cllr Dennis Lead officer - Clive Palfreyman (Stephen Platts) Tim Cutts, Neil Kirby & Colin Wilson
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rail Infrastructure - CIL investment at train/tube stations</li> </ul>	Lead member – Cllr Dennis Lead officer – Clive Palfreyman (Stephen Platts) Neil Kirby
<b>19 January 2026</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual budget Scrutiny (daytime meeting) (TBC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 2026-2027 agreed budget savings</li> <li>➤ In-year budget delivery</li> <li>➤ Transformation delivery</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Lead member – Cllr Cryan, Cllr Ali and Cllr Dennis Lead officer – Clive Palfreyman (Tim Jones)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget Scrutiny – Formulation of OSC recommendations to cabinet (daytime meeting) (TBC)</li> </ul>	Lead member – Cllr Wingfield
<b>20 January 2026</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Southwark 2030 Goal – Well Run Council (TBC)</li> </ul>	Lead member – Cllr Cryan Lead officer – Rhona Cadenhead
<b>12 February 2026</b>	TBC	

Meeting	Agenda items	Comment
16 March 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Council's Transformation Agenda (TBC)</li> </ul>	Lead member – Cllr Cryan Lead officer – Rhona Cadenhead
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leader of the Council Interview</li> </ul>	Lead Member- Cllr King
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy Framework (NCIL) (Pre-scrutiny) (TBC)</li> </ul>	Lead member – Cllr Dennis Lead officer – Clive Palfreyman (Stephne Platts)

#### Agenda items to be scheduled

Meeting (tbc)	Agenda items	Comment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refugees / Borough of Sanctuary (Task and Finish Group)</li> </ul>	Lead Member – To be appointed 2 meetings preferred.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth services and Play Investment (TBC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Youth Provision</li> <li>➤ Investment in Youth Services</li> <li>➤ National gov investment in Southwark youth services (the youth transformation programme)</li> <li>➤ Investment we have made for young people in our open spaces, playgrounds, and our sports facilities.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Lead Member – Cllr Mwangangye Lead Officer – Toni Ainge
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cabinet Member Interviews</li> </ul>	To be determined (as and when appropriate).

	<p>Cllr Sarah King, Leader of the Council</p> <p>Cllr Jasmine Ali, Children, Education &amp; Refugees</p> <p>Cllr Evelyn Akoto, Health &amp; Wellbeing</p> <p>Cllr John Batteson, Climate Emergency, Jobs &amp; Business</p> <p>Cllr Stephanie Cryan, Equalities, Democracy &amp; Finance</p> <p>Helen Dennis, New Homes &amp; Sustainable Development</p> <p>Cllr Natasha Ennin, Community Safety &amp; Neighbourhoods</p> <p>Cllr Michael Situ, Council Homes</p> <p>Cllr James McAsh, Clean Air, Streets &amp; Waste</p> <p>Cllr Portia Mwangangye, Leisure, Parks &amp; Young People</p> <p>Cllr Sam Dalton, Supported Housing</p> <p>Cllr Margy Newens, Cleaner Southwark</p> <p>Cllr Bethan Roberts, Landlord Services</p>	
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	Cllr Joseph Vambe, Neighbourhoods	
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**Agenda item to be scheduled in the next council year 2026-2027**

Meeting (tbc)	Agenda items	Comment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Southwark Equality Framework (pre-decision scrutiny)</li> </ul>	Lead member – Cllr Cryan Lead officer – Ben Plant (Evereth Willis)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cemeteries and crematorium services</li> </ul>	Lead member – Cllr Mwangangye Lead officer – Toni Ainge/ Aled Richards
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of social purpose of land framework</li> </ul>	Lead member - Cllr Helen Dennis Lead Officer - Clive Palfreyman (Stephen Platts)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Canada Water</li> </ul>	Lead member – Cllr Dennis Lead officer – Clive Palfreyman (Stephen Platts)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council Homes Investment Strategy</li> </ul>	Lead member – Cllr Situ Lead officer – Paul Wood

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## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MUNICIPAL YEAR 24/25

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