

Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission

Monday 6 October 2025

7.00 pm

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

Membership

Councillor Cassandra Brown (Chair)
Councillor Rachel Bentley (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Irina Von Wiese
Councillor Mohamed Deen
Councillor Margy Newens
Councillor Jon Hartley
Councillor Youcef Hassaine
Martin Brecknell (Co-opted Member)
Alie Kallon (Co-opted Member)
Mannah Kargbo (Co-opted Member)

Reserves

Councillor Joseph Vambe
Councillor Maggie Browning
Councillor Sunny Lambe
Councillor Jason Ochere
Councillor Sam Foster
Councillor Victor Chamberlain
Councillor Adam Hood

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Access to information

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Contact

Amit Alva on email: amit.alva@southwark.gov.uk

Members of the committee are summoned to attend this meeting

Althea Loderick

Chief Executive

Date: 28 September 2025



Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission

Monday 6 October 2025
7.00 pm
Ground Floor Meeting Room G02A - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

Order of Business

Item No.	Title	Page No.
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PART A OPEN BUSINESS

1. APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

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

In special circumstances, an item of business may be added to an agenda within five clear working days of the meeting.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS.

Members to declare any interests and dispensations in respect of any item of business to be considered at this meeting.

4. MINUTES

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2025. *(To follow)*

Item No.	Title	Page No.
5.	COMMERCIAL PROPERTY PORTFOLIO	1 - 8
	<p>To receive a report from Councillor John Batteson, Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency, Jobs and Business and Mark Grant, Assistant Director of Property on Commercial Property Portfolio.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of commercial leases including rent, repairs and marketing • Increased revenue targets. Letting Southwark properties, Debt Recovery Plans 	
6.	YOUTH SERVICES AND POSITIVE FUTURES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE FUND	
	<p>To receive a report from Councillor Portia Mwangangye, Cabinet Member for Leisure, Parks and Young People and Toni Ainge, Director of Leisure and Eva Gomez, Head of Culture on Youth Services and Positive Futures for Young People Fund. (<i>To follow</i>)</p>	
7.	CABINET RESPONSE TO EDUCATION AND LOCAL ECONOMY SCRUTINY REVIEWS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 2024-2025	9 - 39
	<p>To note the Cabinet Response to Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Reviews and Recommendations 2024-2025.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP), Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Provisions and inclusions in schools • Review of the Draft Town Centre Action Plan, Youth Employment support and East Street Traders 	
8.	WORK PROGRAMME 2025-26	40 - 47
	<p>To consider the work programme for the 2025-26 year.</p> <p>DISCUSSION OF ANY OTHER OPEN ITEMS AS NOTIFIED AT THE START OF THE MEETING.</p>	

Date: 28 September 2025

Meeting Name:	Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission
Date:	6 October 2025
Report title:	Commercial Property Portfolio: Management of commercial leases, revenue targets, lettings policy and debt recovery plans
Ward(s) or groups affected:	All
Classification:	Open
Reason for lateness (if applicable):	N/A
From:	Mark Grant – Assistant Director of Property

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. The council owns a valuable commercial property estate comprising retail, workshop, light industrial and office units, mostly held freehold. Much of the holdings comprise retail units situated on Southwark housing estates, together with industrial estates purchased in the 1980s and the more recently acquired investment holdings in the London Bridge area.
2. Southwark's commercial estate consists of 1,104 leased interests, including:
 - 48 retail parades such as East Street, The Blue (Southwark Park Road), Jamaica Road, Walworth Road and Camberwell Road.
 - 450 lock-up shops (primarily shops under social rented homes, this includes new retail spaces being delivered through the new homes construction programme)
 - 58 office units (including London Bridge & Courage Yard assets along Holyrood Street, Shand Street, Copper Row and Lafone Street, which are the prime investments in an established commercial district)
 - 120 workshops and light industrial units. (such as Tower Workshops, a multistorey industrial estate close to Tower Bridge, Pullens yards in Kennington and Astbury Road. There are also large retail warehouses let to Curry's and B and M on Old Kent Road)
 - VCS properties with varied lease terms and discounted rents such as Sojourner centre.
 - 70 Telecom Aerials (mostly located on the roofs of HRA blocks)
 - Miscellaneous assets (advertising sites, pubs, nurseries, surgeries, parking, restaurants, land, etc.)

RENTAL INCOME

3. Annual income from the commercial estate is projected at £25.5M pa for 2025–2026, up from £18M pa pre-Covid.

4. The split is around 60% General Fund (comprising 287 leased interests), and 40% HRA (comprising 817 leased interests).
5. A further increase to £27Mpa by 2028–2029 is projected as a result of rent increases and additional sites and properties coming into the commercial portfolio.

ESTATE/LEASE MANAGEMENT

6. All commercial property assets, except the London Bridge portfolio, are managed by the council's Property Team, mostly made up of Chartered Surveyors. The London Bridge/Courage Yard portfolio is managed by external Chartered Surveyors overseen by our in-house team.

Lease management is actively focused on:

- Maximising rental income by promptly letting vacant units and negotiating lease renewals and rent reviews. Rent reviews and lease renewals are dealt with promptly to ensure increased revenues are realised at the earliest opportunity
- Restructuring leases to reduce arrears and provide income over longer durations
- Balancing rent increases with tenant sustainability to avoid voids
- Ensuring units are fully compliant in terms of statutory requirements. (e.g. Energy performance, fire safety)
- Vacant units let at best consideration by marketing through external agents to ensure wide exposure to potential applicants. Tenant selection is based on best bids subject to due diligence checks and acceptable uses.
- Lease assignments (where tenants request to sell their leases) are dealt with in a timely manner and thorough due diligence is carried out on potential new tenants to avoid against future arrears problems.
- Dealing with structural and external repairs and ensuring tenants comply with their contractual obligations to repair. Statutory compliance checks are carried out regularly to ensure the estate is safe and compliant and to avoid statutory fines for non-compliance.
- Self-contained properties requiring significant repair or with inherent management issues are, on occasion, subject to disposal to produce a capital receipt and reduce ongoing liabilities.
- Support council priorities like climate action, health equity, and economic renewal and London Living Wage.
- Use commercial assets to support community and financial resilience.
- Managing asset performance to identify underutilised properties for re-letting or disposal
- Site visits to inspect properties and engage tenants to ensure consistent rent

CPI and RPI Linked Rent Reviews

7. The council is required by law to achieve best consideration in its property dealings. Therefore, our default position is to let properties at open market rents, which over the long-term results in better growth compared to index

linked rent settlements.

8. In some instances, however, obtaining open market comparable evidence is difficult due to an isolated location or unusual property type, so in these cases the council might agree rent reviews based on RPI or CPI increases rather than open market value.

Income Generated from Commercial Property

9. Although Southwark Council funds its services primarily through retained business rates, council tax, and government grants, the £25.5M income from the Commercial Portfolio, along with other revenue from fees and charges, is used to help finance the cost of delivering its services.
10. The income collected for the HRA contributes to the management and maintenance of council housing and temporary accommodation, and the General Fund income helps fund Children and Adults Social Care, Parks & Recreation and other regeneration and community initiatives.
11. In view of the vital role the commercial estate plays in helping to fund frontline Council services, it is essential that we seek property deals at full open market rates to maximise income.

Affordable Workspace, VCS and Wider Community Benefits

12. A separate policy in relation to the provision of Affordable workspace has now been delivered, which will create more opportunities for local businesses, creatives and community organizations to thrive by securing genuinely affordable spaces.
13. At the same time, we are developing a new, dedicated policy offer to provide better and more sustained support for our voluntary and community sector (VCS), aiming to provide a more strategic and stable foundation for our community partners.
14. Southwark's estate plays a vital role in supporting social good by providing space for charities and voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations to thrive.
15. One example is our long-standing VCS tenant, Elimhouse Community Association, a charity who have for over 40 years provided day centre facilities, advice, support, community care and activities for Southwark's elderly Caribbean community.
16. Through our commercial portfolio and in line with The Southwark 2030 strategy, we can help support local businesses to create fair employment for their workers and better economic opportunities for the wider community.
17. Also as part of the borough's wider strategy to tackle violence against women and girls (VAWG), the team played a key role in identifying a suitable site for the Women's Safety Centre, ensuring it was accessible, safe, and well-connected to the community, supporting the fit-out process, helping transform the space into a welcoming, functional hub for support services,

workshops, and community engagement.

RENT ARREARS

Debt Recovery

18. Debt stood at £14.7M as of March 2025, up from £6M pre-Covid.

19. Reasons for this rise are as follows:

- Covid pandemic, additional economic challenges, the cost-of-living crisis, geopolitical issues, increased running costs through higher utility bills and staff related costs have meant more tenants have struggled to maintain payments Bailiff enforcement action was suspended between 2020 to 2024
- Increased billing in 2024 and 2025 for backdated landlord and tenant events such as lease renewals and rent reviews which were previously not completed having been suspended during the Covid Pandemic
- No substantial write-offs were carried out until recently, as all avenues for debt recovery were pursued before any such action could be taken
- Increased level of debt under agreed re-payment plans, still shows as debt
- A significant debt of in excess of £2m relates to just one case. The council are proceeding with advanced litigation on this case, and insurers have been notified of a potential loss of rent claim depending on the outcome

Debt Action Plan

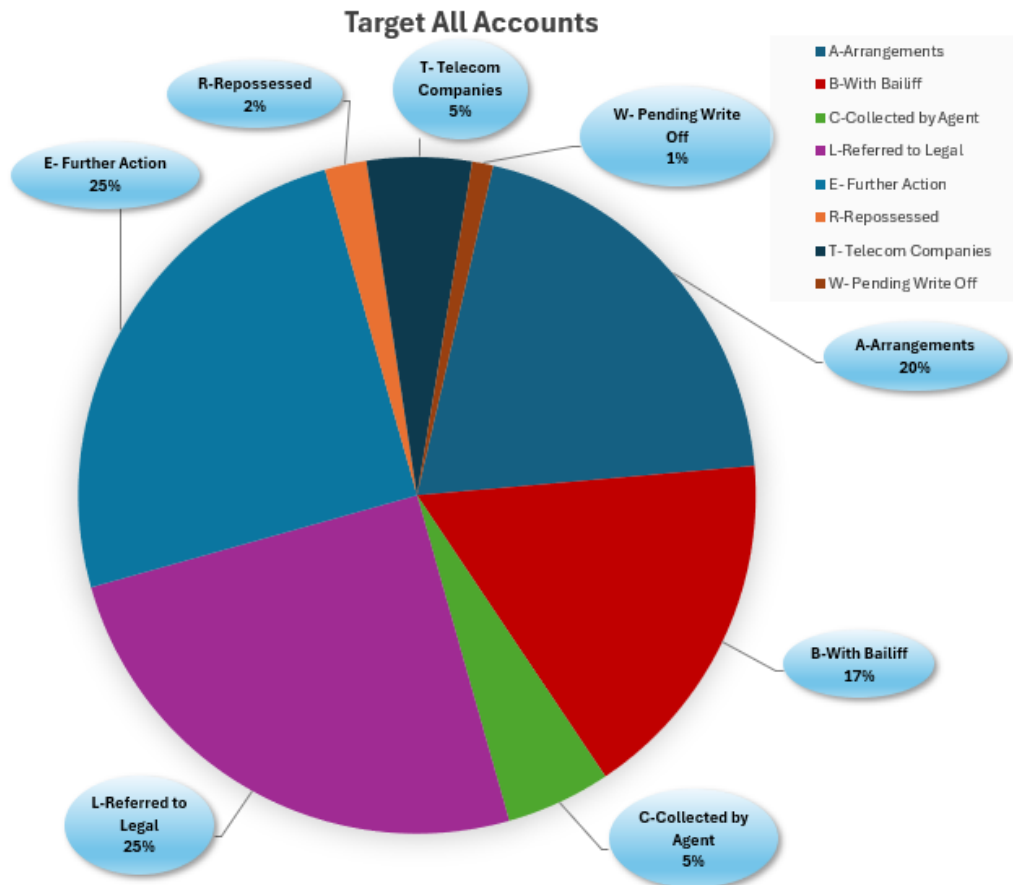
20. Earlier this year, a Debt Action Plan was agreed and signed off by the Strategic Director of Resources. The plan includes:

- Billing collection rate target: 95% for 2025–2026
- Historic debt reduction target: £3.7M (from £14.7M to £11M by March 2026)
- Year-on-year debt reduction: £1.5M annually until 2029
- Lease renewals expected to reduce debt by £1.2M annually

Debt Profile Targets (by March 2026):

	% Split	Description
Referred to Legal	25%	Legal pursuit of debt
Further Action	25%	Lease renewals, payment tracing
With Bailiff	17%	CRAR enforcement
Arrangements	5%	Monitored payment plans
Collected by Agent	5%	External Management
Telecoms	5%	
Reposessed	2%	

	% Split	Description
Pending write off	1%	



Key Actions:

- Increase payment plans from £1.4M to £2.5M
- Direct debit implementation by December 2025
- Bailiff action for arrears over 30 days
- Legal action for high-value cases
- Suspense account management to reduce unallocated payments
- Timely write off of unrecoverable debt
- Additional staffing to support debt recovery
- Focused debt collection targeting bailiff action on specific parades
- Tenant engagement to ensure consistent rent payments and occupancy

LETTINGS

23. We generally use third party commercial agents to market and let our vacant properties. This has proved a success as agents are able to reach a wider market of potential tenants and are more suitably resourced to carry out viewings than an in-house lettings surveyor.

24. Additionally, their marketing reach is much more sophisticated than in-house resources such as the Southwark Website. The use of agents also ensures a more transparent letting process.

Voids

25. Void rates throughout the commercial estate are currently running at under 3%. Of the 650 commercial units owned by the council, only 17 are currently vacant (2.6%), and of these, 8 are under offer. (reducing the void rate on completion to 1.4%). A number of these voids are also undergoing refurbishment to meet the required EPC rating to be able to be let.
26. The commercial portfolio is not a balanced fund in traditional investment management terms. It is of a very mixed nature, being made up of secondary and tertiary retail and smaller office and industrial units across the borough. It also contains high quality stock in respect of a small number of prime office, retail and retail warehouse units in established commercial districts.
27. As such benchmarking is difficult, especially in the current challenging marketplace, however a 7% void rate could be considered as reasonable given the portfolio.
28. Statistical data issued by Cushman Wakefield, a leading independent firm of surveyors, in 2024, reported London void rates as 7.2% in the West End, rising to 9.8% in the City and further to 14.8% in the East of London. The commercial portfolio therefore at current void rates reflects favorably.

Tenant Selection

29. The 2021 Asset Management Plan (AMP) sets out our tenant selection strategy throughout the estate. In summary, when selecting new tenants, our priority is the maximisation of income, however, consideration is also given to the following:
 - Tenant mix
 - Vibrant and sustainable offers supporting independent trades
 - Protection of neighbourhood character
 - Regeneration aspirations
 - Local services to communities
30. Consequently, the criteria usually applied in deciding to grant tenancies are:
 - Rental bid/premium offered/outcome of due diligence
 - Tenant's business strategy
 - Local impacts
 - Agreement to the LLW
 - Employment opportunities and wider economic development
 - Social Value where appropriate and applicable
31. The objective is successful parades meeting local needs with local traders as well as maximising the investment value of the parade.

Uses the Council Won't Accept

32. It was agreed in the 2021 AMP that some uses would be excluded entirely when considering new lettings:

- Payday loan shops and associated financial services (excluding not for profit co-operatives whose purpose is to provide affordable financial services for members of the local community)
- Betting & gambling shops
- Amusement arcades
- Outlets selling foods high in salt, sugar and fat (HSSF)

33. And on a discretionary basis:

Pawnbrokers where pawnbroking is the primary or constitutes a substantial part of the business conducted from the premises (excluding jeweler's businesses where pawnbroking is conducted ancillary to the main use)

34. The schedule of prohibited uses in the AMP is kept under review by the Director of Planning & Growth and may be altered from time to time.

REPAIRS

35. Most of our leases require the tenant themselves to carry out repairs and maintenance to the internal parts of their properties, whilst the landlord has responsibility for the structure and external parts. For the most part, landlord's repairs are turned around quickly via reactive contractors on our approved list.

36. However, problems do occur in cases where there is reliance on Housing Repairs due to dealing with leaks from council flats above commercial properties.

Leaks from flats above

37. Significant resources are spent dealing with leaks into commercial properties from upper floor Council flats and Housing communal walkways.

38. These leaks require interaction with our Housing colleagues as we have no authority to directly send contractors into the flats. The leaks can take days and sometimes weeks to resolve, often resulting in compensation claims from our tenants and rent-free periods granted.

39. This is a key area where improvement is required, and better more reactive solutions can be instigated.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Title of document(s) (Insert hyperlink here)	Title of department/unit Address	Name Phone number

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Insert title of document

AUDIT TRAIL

This section must be included in all reports.

Lead Officer		
Report Author	Mark Grant – Assistant Director of Property	
Version	Final	
Dated	26 September 2025	
Key Decision?	N/A	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance	Yes/No	Yes/No
Strategic Director, Finance	Yes	Yes
List other officers here		
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	26 September 2025	

Meeting Name:	Cabinet
Date:	16 September 2025
Report title:	Response to Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission Recommendations: Review of Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP), Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provisions and Inclusions in Schools.
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Jasmine Ali, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Refugees
Ward(s) or groups affected:	All
Classification:	Open
Reason for lateness (if applicable):	N/a

FOREWORD - COUNCILLOR ALI, DEPUTY LEADER & CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND REFUGEES.

I welcome this timely and important report from the Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission on Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision, and inclusion in our schools. Supporting children with special educational needs and disabilities remains one of our highest priorities in Southwark. With around 10,000 children and young people identified as having SEND, the Council is committed to ensuring they and their families receive the best possible services and support. Our ambition is clear: to deliver excellent educational outcomes and inclusive opportunities for every child.

I would like to thank the Scrutiny Commission for their thorough review and constructive recommendations, which have already helped us improve the way we work. In particular, I want to recognise Cllr Cass Brown for her dedication in observing the EHCP process and providing valuable insight into the lived experiences of our families.

Our education services and health partners have carefully considered each of the 16 recommendations from the review. I am pleased to confirm that:

- 7 recommendations have been fully accepted
- 2 recommendations have been partially accepted
- 7 recommendations have not been accepted

Where we have been unable to accept certain proposals, this has been due to resource constraints or because alternative approaches are already being implemented to achieve the same aims.

The full details of each recommendation, along with our formal response, are set out in the following report. I am confident that the actions we are taking will strengthen our SEND services and help us deliver on our commitment to make Southwark an

inclusive borough where every child can thrive.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the cabinet approves the responses to the Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission recommendations on the review of Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP), Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provisions and Inclusions in Schools.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

2. This report sets out responses to the recommendations set out in the Report of the Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission: Review of Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP), Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provisions and Inclusions in School.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

3. None – the council's constitution requires that a response to scrutiny recommendations is made to cabinet within two months.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

4. The Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission report – Report of the Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission: Review of Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP), Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provisions and Inclusions in Schools, was received by Cabinet on 17 June 2025. Sixteen recommendations were made. This report sets out a response to each recommendation.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION 1 TO CABINET	
1.	That the Cabinet allocates capital funding to in-borough SEND provision within the council year 2025-26, to avoid hundreds of children leaving the borough to achieve appropriate support and education. Therefore, increasing the SEND provisions in schools within the borough so that children with the highest needs such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) can be educated locally. It is well documented and noted by the Education & Local Economy Scrutiny Commission that out-of-borough placements are more costly for local authorities in the long term and place added burden on parents and carers.
RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION 1	
1.	<p>The council receives dedicated funding from the government in the form of the High Needs Provision Capital Allocation (HNPCA). The funding is for investment in increasing provision for children with education, health and care plans or with special educational needs more broadly, across the 0-25 age range.</p> <p>At the time of writing the Children & Adults Department has sufficient capital funds within its allocation to deliver its agreed projects for</p>

	<p>expansion of SEND provision in the borough.</p> <p>If further capital funding is required outside the HNPCA to develop provision, this will be considered using the established capital bid process and submitted for a decision to the Cabinet.</p> <p>The Cabinet will review any future funding needs should a relevant scheme be brought forward in the year.</p>
RECOMMENDATION 1: ACCEPTED	

COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION 2 TO CABINET	
2.	<p>That the Cabinet commission officers to produce and develop a training program by working with schools (SENCOs'), and Health departments on Autism and ADHD for training parents and carers who need help with managing the needs of their SEND children. This is to be included as a part of the overall SEND strategy and implemented within the upcoming council year.</p>
RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION 2	
2.	<p>The council's Education Psychology and Autism Support Teams deliver training to parents in understanding and managing the needs and behaviour of their children.</p> <p>In addition, joint work across services to develop the SEND Children & Family Hub at the recently closed Ann Bernadt Nursery school is intended to increase the availability of appropriate spaces in the borough for parents of children with Autism and ADHD. This centre will offer support and training to parents to manage the needs of their children. A key aspect of these developments is to better link the support and parental training offer from existing council services with the wider offer from key partners such as health services.</p> <p>The exact design of the training and support offer will be iteratively developed in partnership with parents and carers, and partnership services and will include the development of peer-to-peer training and support.</p> <p>This recommendation is accepted and is within existing planned activity.</p>
RECOMMENDATION 2: ACCEPTED	

COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION 3 TO CABINET	
3.	<p>That the Cabinet devises a plan to further promote and encourage the health service and schools to work in closer partnership to tackle the challenges faced in supporting children with SEND. This covers mainly areas of early diagnosis, the type of SEND support needed and length and frequency of SEND sessions during the school year. Better governance and accountability is also required of health organisations involved in this landscape – to support the aforementioned plan, and officers devise an improved service level agreement between Southwark Council and their organisations, to meet and manage expectations around communication.</p>

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION 3	
3.	<p>In the last year the council and its partners have re-established the SEND & Alternative Provision Strategic Partnership Board. The Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Refugees is a member of this Board. It brings together parent and carer representatives with council, health, school and other key stakeholders to improve joint work across the SEND system.</p> <p>Revisions to the Health & Wellbeing Strategy Action Plan and Partnership Southwark Health & Care Plan, published recently, have recognised the need for a greater focus on system wide SEND improvement. These revised plans, together with the Partnership Board, are ensuring greater scrutiny and accountability for all services in delivering improvements for children with SEND and their families.</p> <p>In May 2025 the CQC and Ofsted undertook a joint thematic visit in Southwark which received feedback from parents and schools that, whilst challenges still remain, the coordination of partnership working and communication across the system has significantly improved in the last 12 – 18 months.</p> <p>The thematic review visit did highlight some areas that are already known and under discussion with partnership leaders. Specifically in relation to a more coordinated partnership offer to schools to address gaps in support provided, and improve the timeliness of communications between agencies.</p> <p>These actions already form key workstreams in the partnership's improvement programme.</p> <p>This recommendation is partially accepted as it is not proposed to develop a standalone plan, or service level agreement. However, existing activity will continue to be monitored to ensure it is delivering against the broader intention within this recommendation.</p>
RECOMMENDATION 3: PARTIALLY ACCEPTED	

COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION 4 TO CABINET	
4.	<p>That the Cabinet lobby the health service and the central government in extending SEND services such as at Sunshine House, from a one-time diagnosis to a more comprehensive, on-going and lifelong service.</p>
RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION 4	
4.	<p>Sunshine House is the base of operations for a range of community health services, including occupational therapy, community pediatricians, health visiting, speech and language therapy, and child and adolescent mental health services. All of the above provide ongoing support to children.</p> <p>Many of the same services provide continuing support for adults with learning disabilities over the age of 25.</p> <p>This recommendation is not accepted as services are already in place.</p>

RECOMMENDATION 4: NOT ACCEPTED**COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION 5 TO CABINET**

5. That the Cabinet investigates the reasons behind the slow appeals process of EHCPs' and makes changes to expedite the process. Furthermore, ensure with immediate effect that the parents are privy of the school responses and details of declined placement offers. The council should also seek further clarifications from the school when the reasons given for declining are arbitrary.

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION 5

5. Delays in the SEND appeals and tribunals processes are a nationally recognised issue due to a significant backlog in requests and capacity issues nationally.

The council's SEND services already share correspondence from schools with parents. However, in some instances these may not be shared immediately if there is ongoing dialogue between the service and the decision on the school is being challenged by the local authority. Once all final information and the position is understood these are shared with parents.

Under the SEND Code of Practice it would be illegal for a provider to decline a place for arbitrary reasons, and this would be challenged by the local authority in all instances. Schools can only decline a placement if they are unable to meet a child's needs or if their arrangements are not suitable to providing proper care for a child with SEND. This could include not being able to manage certain physical disabilities due to the access issues within any particular setting.

This recommendation is not accepted as the issues with the national appeals process are already well known and activity to ensure compliance and challenge in line with the SEND Code of Practice are already embedded within service delivery.

RECOMMENDATION 5: NOT ACCEPTED**COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION 6 TO CABINET**

6. That the Cabinet, through Southwark Information Advice and Support (SIAS) offer for SEND, ensures that parents and carers receive one-to-one support from officers in filling the long and complex EHCP forms to decrease delays in getting help. Especially, but not limited to parents from different cultures and spoken languages, ensuring that the information filled in on SEND forms is current and relevant. Furthermore, the council lobby the government to reduce the length and complexity of the EHCP forms.

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION 6

6. Where necessary SIAS already provides advice and support to parents, including those from diverse backgrounds, to complete EHCP forms. Within capacity restrictions this can also include one-to-one support on a case-by-case basis. There is insufficient capacity within the team to provide one-to-one support to all families. The majority of requests are submitted by schools and these should be completed in

	<p>partnership with parents.</p> <p>SEND Teams and SIAS already provide guidance to schools on completing applications for EHCPs and how they should do so in collaboration with parents.</p> <p>EHCP request forms are devised locally following relevant guidelines. These have been recently reviewed in partnership with parents, and Southwark Independent Voice, our Parent Carer Forum.</p> <p>Southwark SEND leaders are represented on the Association of Directors of Children's Services SEND Steering Group which provides a collective voice in discussion with government on reforms.</p> <p>This recommendation is not accepted, as proportionate support is already offered.</p>
RECOMMENDATION 6: NOT ACCEPTED	

COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION 7 TO CABINET	
7.	<p>That the Cabinet reassesses and lobbies the government in making changes to 20-week deadlines for EHCP, this currently leads to children not receiving the much-needed therapy for speech and language during the waiting period, thus leaving the child 1-2 years behind on learning needs. There is also some miscommunication between schools and parents on the need for a Health Service (medical) SEND diagnosis before applying for an EHCP, which is incorrect. The council should urgently communicate and clarify the proper requirements for an EHCP application to schools.</p>
RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION 7	
7.	<p>It is recognised that there is misunderstanding in the local system about requirements for diagnosis prior to applying for an EHCP. Revised guidance for schools and partners has been developed and distributed, and there are plans in place to continue to promote the guidance to remove any confusion in the system</p> <p>This recommendation is accepted and is already in progress.</p>
RECOMMENDATION 7: ACCEPTED	

COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION 8 TO CABINET	
8.	<p>That the Cabinet allocates funding imminently for schools to be able to undertake EHCP needs assessments within the schools with SEND children. Furthermore, the council also ensures the need for accurate representation of the length and number of sessions, term time periods of coverage in SEND, also ensuring annual review of EHCP plans, wherein provisions can be readdressed and increased if needed.</p>
RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION 8	
8.	<p>EHC needs assessments are undertaken by the local authority, with input from relevant professionals working with children. EHC needs assessments are not undertaken by schools, as such no specific funding will be provided.</p>

	<p>EHCP templates have recently been reviewed to make the expectations on provision for children clearer and more easily understood.</p> <p>Timeliness of Annual Reviews is a cross agency performance indicator and remains a key priority for the SEND Services, schools training and health services.</p> <p>This recommendation is not accepted as it does not align with statutory roles and responsibilities, and activity in response has already been delivered. Furthermore it is noted that there is an anticipated government Schools White Paper in autumn 2025 that will set out proposals for reform of the SEND system which may well recommend changes to the way the current system operates.</p>
RECOMMENDATION 8: NOT ACCEPTED	

COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION 9 TO CABINET	
9.	That the Cabinet devise processes to ensure that nurseries with SEND children are providing details of their SEND provisions to primary schools, to avoid the child being put on a reduced timetable by schools thus reducing the likelihood of a 20 week wait for an EHCP which in some cases can take up to 18 months in schools.
RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION 9	
9.	<p>The council is not in the position to compel private providers to provide information on those who attend settings. The council works in partnership with the early years sector to improve joint working on key areas including transition into primary school.</p> <p>This recommendation is not accepted as it is outside of the council's authority to deliver.</p>
RECOMMENDATION 9: NOT ACCEPTED	

COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION 10 TO CABINET	
10	That the Cabinet allocates funding on an urgent basis to pre-school and nurseries through SEND Inclusion Funding for Early Years Help for 3–4-year-olds including funding for more Occupational Therapists (OT) to be appointed in the borough.
RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION 10	
10	<p>The Early Years Inclusion Fund (formerly SEND Inclusion Fund) is available to all early years settings in the Borough. In the last 12-months the EYIF budget was doubled to £1.25m.</p> <p>Funding can be used to commission occupational therapy if that is required to meet the relevant child's needs.</p> <p>This recommendation is not accepted as funding is already provided and has been recently increased.</p>
RECOMMENDATION 10: NOT ACCEPTED	

COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION 11 TO CABINET
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11	That the Council urgently revises its communication processes for disseminating SEND information from Early Years Intervention (SEND Inclusion Funding) on children with SEND to support mainstream schools in applying for an EHCP. Furthermore, the Cabinet allocates funding for training of Teaching Assistants to support SEND children in mainstream schools and fill the current gap of up to £20k a year in mainstream schools SEND funding.
RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION 11	
11	<p>Where an early years setting has been in receipt of Early Years Inclusion Funding those settings are expected to share details on the support provided to schools as part of the transition from nursery provision to primary school. Where funding has been provided for a child, the incoming primary school will be notified. The council will continue to work with all early years settings to promote understanding of this for more effective communication.</p> <p>The council's work to review the funding arrangements for SEND children takes into consideration the total cost of providing support for children and seeks to address any gaps in funding provided. This work is being completed in partnership with schools.</p> <p>This recommendation is partially accepted as work is in progress collaboratively with schools to apply a new an agreed model of funding for schools, and is due for implementation in September 2026. The funding for this is through the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant for which decision making forum for this is the Southwark Schools Forum which has representation from all schools.</p>
RECOMMENDATION 11: PARTIALLY ACCEPTED	

COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION 12 TO CABINET	
12	That the Cabinet clarifies the process for providing EHCP funding either directly to nurseries and schools or indirectly commissioned through Occupational Therapists to avoid any contention between parents, nurseries, academies, schools and OT that might cause delays in children receiving SEND support. Furthermore, that the Cabinet streamlines the process for providing EHCP funding throughout the borough and that the process for EHCP funding and SEND provision is clearly reflected on the Southwark Council website.
RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION 12	
12	<p>Considerable work has been undertaken over the last 12-months on the arrangements for EHCP funding, in partnership with schools. This work will implement a new Banding system for pupil funding with a schedule to be fully implemented by September 2026, following a testing period in the next academic year.</p> <p>This will include providing clear guidance on the council website.</p> <p>This recommendation is accepted. This is work currently underway but not yet completed.</p>
RECOMMENDATION 12: ACCEPTED	

COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION 13 TO CABINET

- 13 That the Cabinet allocates appropriate SEND funding to mainstream schools, especially the schools that struggle to provide taught SEND classes, working with SENCos'. Furthermore, the Cabinet also allocates funding for specialist settings in schools considering the needs of SEND children to access therapy rooms, sensory rooms, messy playrooms and outdoor play areas.

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION 13

- 13 In line with recommendation 12, the council has been working closely with all schools to co-design a new more needs-led arrangement for providing high needs funding to schools.

As a part of the programme to invest in the rights spaces for pupils with SEND the council has allocated a proportion of the High Needs Provision Capital Allocation to be available to all schools via an expression of interest. This funding allows schools to bid for additional capital money to adapt settings and create SEND spaces such as therapy and sensory rooms.

This recommendation is accepted and is work already in delivery.

RECOMMENDATION 13: ACCEPTED**COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION 14 TO CABINET**

- 14 That the Cabinet ensures that during appeals on EHCP decisions, Southwark council's legal team ensures that the legal counsel and solicitors advocating for the council are understanding and compassionate rather than hostile and adversarial, assessing the child's needs objectively. It is important for the local authority to build trust with families in need of SEND support. The commission understands that the legal and solicitor team are due to initiate the transition to come in-house within Southwark Council by February 2025, however the commission asks that this transition be completed within the first quarter of the 2025-26 council year, July 2025, if not completed already.

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION 14

- 14 The council has recently established a Mediation and Tribunal Team embedded within the SEND service, reducing the need for outside counsel. In some small instances it may remain necessary for outside counsel to be commissioned. Where this occurs any providers will be expected to adhere to Southwark's child and family centred principles and relationship-based approach to practice.

This recommendation is accepted. Noting that this work has been completed.

RECOMMENDATION 14: ACCEPTED**COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION 15 TO CABINET**

- 15 That the Cabinet commission officers work with schools to develop and carry out awareness campaigns to protect school children and improve

	inclusion numbers. This is mainly in areas - use of fireworks and possession of zombie knives. Furthermore, the Cabinet asks officers to research and explore the impact of on-screen time on children's learning and development and its correlation with SEND.
RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION 15	
15	The council delivers local campaigns and work with police on the annual Operation Sceptre response to knife crime, which includes delivery to schools. Locally schools can access the 'Playing Safe' programme for Year 6 children or the Trauma informed weapons awareness programme (TIWAP) delivered by the Youth Justice Service. Schools have a duty to deliver Relationships and Sex Education work with a curriculum which includes safety issues, including exploitation and weapons, and online/social media safety. Southwark schools have recently amended their behaviour policies to reduce the use of mobile phones in school time. Officers can include research into the impact of screen time on children in our continuing improvement work.
RECOMMENDATION 15: ACCEPTED	

COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION 16 TO CABINET	
16	That the Cabinet commission works with schools to formulate a set of recommendations and/or guidance for schools to consider when developing absence strategies and handling persistent absences, especially for newly appointed head teachers and newly formed schools.
RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION 16	
16	The council's Education Inclusion Team provides guidance through the Education Inclusion Handbook and a weekly consultation offer on how to respond to attendance and implement the 3-stage approach (Education Inclusion Handbook - Southwark Council). Termly 'Keeping Children in Education' forums facilitate the sharing of good practice between schools and promote the Working Together to Improve School Attendance duties. FEH attend new heads meetings termly. Schools use of data from the DfE View Your Education Data platform is encouraged. New functionality of the individual reports can now be used by schools to target particular cohorts and impact on overall attendance as well as PA. Duties to ensure schools have a plan to improve attendance for all severely absent pupils is implemented through targeting support meetings and team around the school meetings. Southwark has a secondary school headteacher within the London Regional Improvement in Standards and Excellence (RISE) team to disseminate best practice, though no Southwark schools have been identified as needing RISE support.
RECOMMENDATION 16: NOT ACCEPTED	

Policy framework implications

- There are no policy framework implications from the recommendations or proposed responses set out above.

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

Community impact statement

18. The responses to the recommendations set out above will support positive impacts in the community where relevant.

Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement

19. There are no specific equalities implications from the recommendations or proposed responses set out above.

Health impact statement

20. There are no specific health implications from the recommendations or proposed responses set out above.

Climate change implications

21. There are no specific climate change implications from the recommendations or proposed responses set out above.

Resource implications

22. There are no specific resource implications from the recommendations or proposed responses set out above.

Legal/Financial implications

23. There are no specific legal or financial implications from the recommendations or proposed responses set out above.

Consultation

24. No consultation is necessary in proposing responses to the recommendations made.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Assistant Chief Executive (Governance and Assurance) (SB040925)

25. This report seeks approval of the responses to the Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission recommendations on the review of Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP), Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provisions and Inclusions in Schools, in line with the requirement in the council Constitution that such response is made to cabinet within two months of the recommendations.
26. The recommendation of this report is consistent with the council's statutory duty (under section 44 of the Children and Families Act 2014) to review its maintained Education and Health Care Plans at least every 12 months. Schools and their governing bodies have a legal duty to review their provisions for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, both

under the 2014 Act and the Equality Act 2010. This duty requires them to use their best endeavours to meet the particular educational needs of those children, ensure inclusion and access to activities for disabled pupils, and make reasonable adjustments to remove disadvantages for disabled individuals. Regular review and consultation are also required as part of a continuous improvement process.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Report of the Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission: Review of Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP), Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provisions and Inclusions in Schools	Constitutional Office 160 Tooley Street	Paula Thornton 0207 525 4395

APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Jasmine Ali, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Refugees		
Lead Officer	David Quirke-Thornton, Strategic Director Children and Adults' Services		
Report Author	Michael Crowe, Assistant Director for Transformation and Operations		
Version	Final		
Dated	4 September 2025		
Key Decision?	No		
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER			
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included	
Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance	Yes	Yes	
Strategic Director, Resources	No	No	
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes	
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team		4 September 2025	

Meeting Name:	Cabinet
Date:	16 September 2025
Report title:	Response to the Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission: Review of the Draft Town Centre Action Plan, Youth Employment support and East Street Traders
Cabinet Member:	Councillor John Batteson, Climate Emergency, Jobs and Business
Ward(s) or groups affected:	All
Classification:	Open
Reason for lateness (if applicable):	N/a

FOREWORD - COUNCILLOR JOHN BATTESON, CABINET MEMBER FOR CLIMATE EMERGENCY, JOBS AND BUSINESS

I welcome the recommendations made by the Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission relating to town centres, youth employment support and East Street Market.

Town centres across the borough are vital to our local communities and play a central role in shaping how people feel about where they live. They are also home to a diverse and thriving business community, yet we recognise the significant challenges they have faced in recent years. We have committed to deliver improvements to major town centres in Southwark and presenting the draft Town Centre Action Plans (TCAPs) to the Commission last September was a valuable step in shaping the final versions, which were approved by Cabinet in March 2025. Robust monitoring and reporting structures have now been established for Town Centre Leads, ensuring a coordinated, council-wide approach to supporting cleaner, safer and more vibrant town centres across the borough.

The TCAPs are grounded in existing council commitments and include actions with secured budgets for delivery. Improvements such as upgraded street lighting and CCTV to address crime and antisocial behaviour have already been implemented and plans are underway to install Wi-Fi infrastructure in areas including East Street. We will continue to engage with local communities, including residents and businesses, to identify priorities for each town centre and explore opportunities to secure funding for their delivery.

The Commission has rightly highlighted the additional barriers faced by care leavers and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) when transitioning from education into employment. Significant work is already underway across the council to address these challenges. The Education Business Alliance (EBA) team supports schools and colleges in building connections with local

businesses, while the council's SEND Improvement Programme includes a dedicated workstream focused on enhancing employment pathways for young people with SEND.

We acknowledge the need to expand this support further through strengthened collaboration with partners and local employers. The council's Connect to Work programme, funded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), will launch in October 2025 and provide tailored support for individuals facing complex barriers to employment. Additionally, we are implementing a new initiative under the Central London Youth Trailblazer scheme, also funded by DWP, to increase employment opportunities for care-experienced young people. This programme will create new pathways into employment within the council and include targeted communications and support around external job opportunities. The approach has been co-produced with Speakerbox and will be overseen by the Corporate Parenting Committee.

East Street is a vibrant and bustling market where traders have been operating for well over a century. We recognise its unique character and importance to the local community. The market traders have set up a new organisation, East Street Market Traders Association (ESMTA), and the council will maintain regular engagement with them to ensure traders are informed and involved in future improvements. The council's Markets and Street Trading Manager will continue to serve as the single point of contact for traders. Proposed enhancements to the market, such as the installation of solar panels and the creation of a market entrepreneur hub, will undergo feasibility assessments to determine their viability before ward Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding allocations are confirmed.

I am proud of the progress already being made to revitalise our town centres and expand opportunities for young people. I look forward to continued delivery in these areas over the coming year as we work towards a local economy in Southwark that everyone can benefit from.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation for the Cabinet

1. That the cabinet approves the responses to the Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission recommendations on the review of the draft Town Centre Action Plans, Youth Employment support and East Street Traders.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

2. This report sets out responses to the recommendations set out in the Report of the Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission: Review of the Draft Town Centre Action Plan, Youth Employment support and East Street Traders.
3. The commission's recommendations impact various departments of the council. As such, Parking Services & Network Management, Children & Adults Services, Local Economy and Sustainable Growth have contributed to the response set out in this report.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

4. None - The council's constitution requires that a response to scrutiny recommendations is made to cabinet within two months.

POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

Key Activity	Target completion date
Town Centre Action Plan (TCAP) updates agreed with delivery leads	30 September 2025
Connect to Work programme launch	1 October 2025
Updated TCAPs published	31 October 2025
Review and consultation of changes to parking restrictions	Spring 2026
East Street pedestrian crossing improvements	Autumn 2026

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

5. **The Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission report – Review of the Draft Town Centre Action Plan, Youth Employment support and East Street Traders**, was received by Cabinet on 17 June 2025 (agenda item # 24). Seven recommendations were made. This report sets out a response to each recommendation.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION 1 TO CABINET	
1.	That the Cabinet asks officers to devise a robust reporting structure for Town Centre Leads and provide details on how they would fit into and complement existing services provided by the council.
RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION 1	
1.	<p>Reporting Structure</p> <p>In line with the recommendation from the Scrutiny Commission, the council has developed a governance and reporting structure for Town Centre Leads, which aims to ensure a council-wide joined-up approach to supporting thriving town centres across the borough. The sections below outline the governance structure and includes details of how progress is reported and managed.</p> <p>Reporting Structure Overview:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lead Member Briefings 2. Quarterly Senior Officer Group oversight 3. Quarterly Town Centres Programme Manager meeting with service level leads.

4. Regular Town Centre Lead meetings with programme or project leads across the council and updates of internal Town Centre Action Plans (TCAPs).

Lead Member Briefings

The cabinet lead with responsibility for town centres (Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency, Jobs and Business) receives quarterly and as required updates at LMBs on progress with town centre action plans. Key related Council Plan deliverables (e.g. Thriving High Streets Fund) are reported through the council's quarterly corporate performance process.

Senior Officers Group

A Senior Officers Group meets quarterly to oversee the Town Centres Programme. The group is comprised of the following:

- Assistant Director of Economy
- Town Centres Principal Strategy Officer
- Director of Planning and Growth
- Director of Environment
- Director of Leisure
- Director of Stronger Neighbourhoods
- Director of Communications, Engagement and Change

Senior officers provide updates from each service area and make connections between departments at a strategic level. The Town Centre Programme Manager disseminates actions to the Town Centre Leads who manage tasks and monitor progress using the processes set out below.

Town Centre Programme Manager

The Town Centres Programme Manager meets quarterly with service delivery leads from across the council to share information on upcoming opportunities such as new projects, consultations, and community events. Necessary updates are disseminated to the Town Centre Leads.

Town Centre Leads

Internal versions of the TCAPs are used to collate detailed updates on town centre actions from across the council. The internal TCAPs include details of key officers and other critical information such as timelines, next steps and any issues which could affect the delivery of town centre services and projects. Many actions sit with other teams, so it is essential that the Town Centres Team receive timely and accurate updates to maintain oversight and support delivery. Whilst each service takes responsibility for delivery and monitoring progress, the internal TCAPs allow the town centre leads to stay abreast of progress. This enables coordination across council departments and helps to ensure a joined-up approach.

Town centre leads also collect feedback from the community through multiple channels, including an online form on the TCAP web page, local events, and direct conversations. Responses are stored in a monitored database. Town centre leads are responsible for sharing feedback with relevant departments using the information sharing processes outlined above. Town Centre Leads meet regularly with colleagues responsible for delivering local services to pass on this feedback, provide responses to residents, and identify ways to address the issues raised.

	RECOMMENDATION 1: ACCEPTED
	COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION 2 TO CABINET
2.	That the Cabinet in its consideration of Town Centre Action Plans include additional street lighting, CCTV, Wi-Fi, benches and toilets, to build the infrastructure for increasing footfall and safety.
	RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION 2
2.	<p>The draft versions of the TCAPs that were reviewed by the Scrutiny Commission in September 2024 did not fully consider the infrastructure issues highlighted in this recommendation. The updated TCAPs approved by Cabinet on 11th March 2025 include more up-to-date information on street lighting, CCTV and Wi-Fi, they do not include benches or toilets in the current iterations. They can be found here: Town Centre Action Plans.</p> <p>The town centres programme does not come with dedicated funding to deliver specific additional infrastructure improvements above and beyond what is already planned. However, the town centres team works with service leads to identify opportunities for infrastructure improvements and funding opportunities in response to community feedback. Where improvements are identified and can be delivered, the TCAPs will reflect this.</p> <p>The following sections detail which recommended infrastructure improvements are covered within the existing TCAPs and the plans to incorporate additional improvements in future TCAP iterations.</p> <p>Street Lighting and CCTV</p> <p>Environmental Visual Audits (EVAs) have taken place in three town centres identified as crime and ASB hotspots that are covered by TCAPs (Canada Water, Elephant & Castle and Peckham). This included working with partner organisations such as the police to review street lighting and CCTV assessments to tackle crime and antisocial behaviour (ASB).</p> <p>Broken street lighting was identified and fixed, with a regular maintenance schedule agreed. CCTV cameras found to be outdated have been flagged for upgrade by 2026.</p> <p>The Council's five-year programme of upgrading street lighting across Southwark to LEDs was completed in July 2025. In addition to long-term environmental and cost saving benefits, LEDs are brighter and produce a type of light that enhances visibility. This aims to help prevent and deter crime and help residents feel safer in our town centres.</p> <p>Details of actions from the EVAs to improve town centre infrastructure are included in the Peckham, Elephant & Castle and Walworth and Canada Water TCAPs and will be updated to reflect new programmes of improvements.</p> <p>The LED programme was not included in the current iteration of the TCAPs. Where relevant updates are identified in relation to lighting, these will be included as appropriate in future iterations of the TCAPs</p> <p>Safety Initiatives</p>

The TCAPs outline Community Safety initiatives, including partnerships with Southwark Young Advisors and commitments like the Women's Night Safety Charter.

In partnership with the Safer Business Network, the council delivered VAWG awareness workshops and information to around identifying counterfeit notes and ASB prevention were delivered to local business networks. TCAPs provide contact information and encourage residents and businesses to report crime and ASB as well as issues such as broken lighting or pavement defects.

These initiatives are captured in current TCAPs, and future updates will reflect ongoing safety work. We aim to include the right level of detail to ensure relevance for the public.

Wi-Fi

The Elephant & Castle and Walworth TCAP highlights Wi-Fi installation planned for delivery along East Street Market. There are currently no further plans to install Wi-Fi in other town centres.

Benches

Public seating is recognised as essential for inclusive access to town centres. The initial Streets for People consultation received requests for additional seating across Southwark's town centres and high streets. Due to engagement and consultation timescales, there are no schemes due to implementation before June 2026.

Where relevant updates are identified in relation to seating, these will be included as appropriate in the TCAPs.

Toilets

Currently, TCAPs do not mention toilets in town centres. It is recognised that many people plan trips to our high streets around toilet availability. This includes those with medical conditions, disabilities, older residents, and families with young children.

The next iteration of the TCAPs will include reference to Community Toilets. This will include work to encourage businesses to make their toilets available to all regardless of being a paying customer and that businesses register with toiletmap.org.uk. This is a mapping website that enables residents to better plan their trips to town centres. This also includes details of the public toilets available across Southwark.

East Street Market public toilets have been approved for upgrade works, scheduled for completion in 2026. These works have been prioritised for funding by ward councillors through Neighbourhood CIL. This project will be added to the next iteration of the Elephant & Castle and Walworth TCAP.

RECOMMENDATION 2: PARTIALLY ACCEPTED

COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION 3 TO CABINET

3.	That the Cabinet in its consideration of Town Centre Action Plans includes consideration of transport links including active travel and public transport, as well as consideration of parking for deliveries, businesses and customers.
RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION 3	
3.	<p>As set out in the response to recommendation 2, TCAPs have developed significantly since the draft versions were reviewed by the Scrutiny Commission in September 2024, and they now include the suggestions made by the Commission.</p> <p>TCAPs are updated every 6 months, and the next iteration will include up-to-date information on active travel, transport projects, parking, and loading. For example, Town Centre Leads will review the inclusion of the council's cycling initiatives, such as the four e-cargo bikes for hire located in specific town centres.</p> <p>Active Travel and Public Transport Improvements The published versions of the TCAPs include details of Streets for People initiatives which deliver the council's aims to promote active travel and improvements to public transport, such as addressing congestion on Lower Road and working with TfL to review bus journey times through the Peckham Rye Gyratory scheme.</p> <p>The Rye Lane Street Plan Phase 1 is included as an action in the Peckham TCAP with details of the consultation. Town Centre Leads regularly meet with officers working on active travel and transport improvements and share any relevant feedback gathered through engagement with the TCAPs.</p> <p>Parking and Loading for Businesses and Residents It is recognised that parking and loading in town centres are issues regularly raised by businesses and residents, such as the current plans for a review around East Street. Town Centre Leads work closely with colleagues in Parking and Highways and are exploring the expansion of bookable loading bays in other town centres following a successful pilot in Walworth.</p>
RECOMMENDATION 3: ACCEPTED	

COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION 4 TO CABINET	
4.	<p>That the Cabinet explores the ways in which the council could work with the Youth Parliament and organisations such as schools, colleges and youth centres to advertise and promote new job opportunities and employers coming to the Borough for young people</p> <p>The commission recognises that young people with SEND leaving education face a lot of challenges in the jobs sector, the commission also feels that more could be done to match the skillsets of youth with SEND to job opportunities. The council in working with businesses and partner organisations explore options on how to support employers in hiring young people with SEND. The commission notes that this recommendation would involve cross-departmental working such as education support and training for SEND in schools.</p>

	RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION 4
4.	<p>The council's Children's Services department houses the Education Business Alliance (EBA) Team which supports schools and colleges to make connections with local business. The EBA has an established reputation for building partnership connections across local private sector organisations and the family of schools. This function helps deliver work experience opportunities and creates connections between business and schools to support curriculum delivery and pastoral support.</p> <p>It is recognised that there is an opportunity to enhance and better coordinate the work of the EBA. Proposals have recently been developed to deepen the connectivity between the EBA and wider council teams and functions to further cement these relationships and expand the linked support offered from local business into schools, this will include the promotion of job opportunities and pathways into employment.</p> <p>Under the Council's existing SEND Improvement Programme a dedicated workstream is focused on improvement pathways into adulthood for young people with SEND. This includes work to support and develop new employment opportunities for these young people, and a cross departmental approach to stimulating opportunities within and outside the council through a new SEND Employment Forum, as well as working with education providers to improve employment readiness for young people with SEND</p> <p>Supporting the SEND Improvement Programme, the Southwark Skills Partnership is committed to improving access to good careers advice by developing a more joined-up approach to delivery within our schools and colleges. Work is underway through the partnership to establish a pan-borough network of careers leads as well as to improve the availability of careers information and resources across key council platforms, with a focus on young residents at greatest risk of becoming NEET including young people with SEND.</p> <p>Work experience, training and employment opportunities for young people in Southwark are also promoted via the Southwark OneHub. Launched in 2022, the OneHub is a digital hub for young people and families to help navigate the activities and youth services available in their local area. Jobs, training and careers opportunities are kept regularly updated at Jobs, training and career opportunities OneHub Southwark.</p> <p>The council's post-16 service creates a weekly opportunities bulletin that includes the latest events, jobs, training and apprenticeship opportunities both locally and beyond. This is then shared via the youth opportunities newsletter and the OneHub platform.</p> <p>OneHub was re-launched in May 2025 following a redesign process to ensure the OneHub is interactive, engaging and remains a hub for information sharing, which includes job and training opportunities. Young people, including those from the Youth Parliament, contributed to the redesign process and will continue to be engaged to ensure the changes reflect the needs of the user group.</p>

RECOMMENDATION 4: ACCEPTED

COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION 5 TO CABINET

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| 5. | <p>That the Cabinet lobby local businesses and partner organisations to increase the recruitment of young people with SEND who possess the desired skill sets, thus ensuring that recruitments practices have an inclusive approach. The commission also asks that the council explore options on how to support employers with hiring and sustaining the employment of young people with SEND who have recently completed their education.</p> |
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The commission understands that children in foster care also face a lot of challenges in the job sectors due to previous unstable family situations and circumstances. The Corporate Parenting Committee and the Speakerbox initiative within the council working together could help match care-leavers with local employers based on their interests, education and skillsets.

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION 5

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| 5. | <p>The council is working to increase the availability of supported pathways into employment for children with SEND, including within the council itself. This also includes working to support employers to sustain the employment of young people with SEND.</p> |
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Whilst plans are in place and some early activity is being carried out, there is significant space for increasing this offer locally through more joint work with partners and local employers.

Additional resources will be made available through the council's delivery of the DWP Connect to Work programme commencing in October 2025 and running until March 2030. This programme will support up to 2,000 residents facing complex barriers to employment, adding to the existing capacity of programmes such as Southwark Works. The support model for people with SEND is based on the Supported Employment Quality Framework (SEQF), a tested model that includes extensive employer engagement and support to adapt roles and recruitment practices so that they are more accessible. It also includes support for employers and residents to help sustain employment for people with long-term health conditions and disabilities. Young people with SEND who are of working age and who want to find employment will be eligible for support under the programme

The council's senior leadership and leadership network have very recently agreed a new programme to support care leavers into employment within the council, including mentoring, work experience and job opportunities. The programme is being enhanced by additional funding from the DWP Youth Guarantee Trailblazer, which Southwark is delivering as part of a central London network of local authorities trialling new approaches to supporting care leavers into good quality employment.

RECOMMENDATION 5: ACCEPTED	

COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION 6 TO CABINET	
6.	That the Cabinet works closely with Speakerbox and the Corporate Parenting Committee to support the career aspirations of care-leavers with local employers, wherein due consideration is given to previous circumstances, interests, education and skillsets.
RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION 6	
6.	<p>The council has developed a pathway to employment for care leavers and is in the process of implementing this approach within the council. This includes a training offer for managers about how to support and understand the circumstances for care leavers. The pathway will be aligned with the central London Youth Guarantee Trailblazer funded by DWP developing new offers for care experienced young people.</p> <p>Agreed actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The implementation of an employability pathway for care experienced young people within the council, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Skills workshops and career conversations ○ Work experience ○ Supported internships ○ Ring-fenced apprenticeships ○ Ring-fenced entry level positions • The design and implementation of a training module 'supporting care experienced young people' for managers and teams, building locally on the Care Leaver Covenant 'Inclusive Employment Toolkit'. • To set minimum expectations on council departments for engagement in the above plans. • That each department will appoint a care experienced young person's champion who will support implementation and delivery in each department, and act in a convening role with peers in other departments. • To implement revised approaches to entry level job criteria, and recruitment procedures. Including targeted communications with care experienced young people on job opportunities. • To receive twice yearly reporting at the corporate management team and the Corporate Parenting Committee on the implementation and delivery of the pathway.

This approach has been co-produced with Speakerbox and will be overseen by the Corporate Parenting Committee. Subsequent to successful implementation within the council itself, the approach will be explored with local employers and partner organisations.

RECOMMENDATION 6: ACCEPTED

COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION 7 TO CABINET

7. That the Cabinet provides improved support to small local businesses and markets like the East Street Market Traders:
- Effective marketing management with points of contact (council staff) and governance by traders in the community
 - Single appointed Manager to provide leadership across shops, traders, waste management, the streetscape etc.
 - Address communication issues between market management and traders.
 - Establish a joint communications protocol to restore trust, clarify roles and support transparent collaboration.
 - Ensure better financial oversight and value for money around market spending (product costs).
 - Murals, market branding and mystery shopping as a means of surveying customer satisfaction levels
 - Address Health and Safety issues (safer pedestrian crossing within East Street market (at Brandon Street/Portland place crossroads), street resurfacing and removing trip hazards and wastewater accumulation. In addition, provide public toilets to increase market facilities for traders and customers
 - Impact assessment of recent parking changes on the East Street market and other markets across the borough and explore options for more business-friendly parking arrangements (e.g. 2 hours for cars, and more secure bicycle parking) to increase footfall.
 - Solar panel rollout for traders and shopfronts including for refrigeration, to reduce emissions and energy costs. In addition, provide more infrastructure for waste, such as waste compactors and more food recycle bins.
 - Support East Street market and other markets with digitisation to attract a more diverse customer demographic
 - Mobile payment devices
 - Development of a market app to promote products and online shopping by linking in with delivery partners
 - Establish a market entrepreneur hub at Portland place, repurposing storage units into affordable workspaces, retail incubation areas and digital access points. Like the business hub in Poplar developed in

	<p>partnership with University of Arts, London (UAL) which included enterprise development, creative production and training. Furthermore, adopt best practices from Poplar Hub and East Street Traders to other markets and commercial centres such as the Blue Marketplace.</p>
RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION 7	
7.	<p>Effective marketing management with points of contact</p> <p>The council's Markets and Street Trading Manager is the single point of contact for the management of markets and street trading across the borough including the management of East Street Market. This post is responsible for liaising with all key services including waste and cleaning, property services, regulatory services, and highways to ensure the management of safe, accessible and thriving markets and street trading services.</p> <p>The market traders have set-up a new organisation, East Street Market Traders Association (ESMTA), that represents the majority of market traders and their associated interests, which sits separate to the shops on East Street itself.</p> <p>The Council's Markets and Street Trading team have held a positive meeting with ESMTA and will continue to meet frequently with a view to working collaboratively to deliver further shared improvements to the market.</p> <p>The Markets and Street Trading Manager is accountable for the markets and street trading budget which has financial oversight through the Council's corporate financial processes and policies.</p> <p>A brand has been developed for East Street Market by East Street Community CIC and is being implemented through the purchase of branded gazebos, painted light columns, and banners. Customer feedback will be communicated to the markets and street trading service through ESTMA.</p> <p>Health and Safety issues</p> <p>Work has commenced developing schemes at key junctions with East Street including Brandon and Portland Street. Subject to consultation, it is anticipated that these changes will be implemented in early 2026. An options appraisal is being undertaken about the public toilets to understand the scale of work required and the associated costs. There is currently no funding to deliver these improvements.</p> <p>Impact assessment of recent parking changes</p> <p>The council will undertake a localised review of parking restrictions and carry out a consultation near to where changes are needed. Following an informal consultation to understand the needs of the area, a decision will be taken by the council through Southwark's decision-making process, and design amendments will be made based on the needs of the area. Following this a second, statutory consultation will be undertaken proposing the changes highlighted in the informal consultation. A further decision will need to be taken if any objections are received during the statutory consultation. It is good practice to assume that this further decision will be required when programming these changes.</p>

Timescales for the above, from preparing the consultation material to the final implementation of the amendments (assuming changes are needed) will take between 9 to 12 months, possibly longer should there be significant challenge to the proposals.

Solar panel rollout for traders and shopfronts

The council's adopted Climate Change Action Plan sets out a corporate action to support community energy projects within the borough. Specifically, action point N.2.i requires the council to 'Support community energy projects where a demonstrable carbon saving can be made'. Therefore, the council supports exploring the option of a solar PV array in the East Street area, subject to feasibility, which will help to reduce emissions and energy costs for the local community.

Waste and cleaning colleagues have confirmed the current provision of food recycling bins and waste compactors is sufficient to deliver an effective waste and cleaning service. The current focus is on enforcement with regard to littering and fly tipping which has been enhanced through increased enforcement resources.

Support East Street market and other markets with digitisation

Wi-Fi has been installed on East Street. Once the internet connection has been implemented, this will provide the option for those traders who currently do not use mobile payment devices to do so. Development of a market app to promote products and online shopping was suggested, but the development and marketing of such a system in competition with well established brands already open to traders such as Amazon, Shopify or Ebay is seen as too difficult to progress.

Establish a market entrepreneur hub at Portland Place

A market entrepreneur hub at Portland St is being considered for North Walworth Capital Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which is currently going through the decision-making process. If this project receives funding, there will need to be a procurement for both the construction and management of the space. In addition, a business plan would also need to be developed to demonstrate viability.

Cabinet partially accepts this recommendation, subject to formal processes and budgetary considerations.

RECOMMENDATION 7: PARTIALLY ACCEPTED

Policy framework implications

6. The Council Delivery Plan 2025-26 has the following related commitments and milestones:
 - Deliver free support for people who face the most barriers to get a job, including young people, people with disabilities, people with long term health conditions, and parents and carers returning to work.
 - Create 250 paid internships for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds over the lifetime of the administration.

- Complete the delivery of 2,000 apprenticeships for local people.
 - Help more residents access jobs within the council and with Southwark's big employers.
 - Complete our work to double the number of Southwark employers who pay at least the London Living Wage to all their staff.
 - Provide free, accessible English, maths and digital skills courses which meet the needs of local people.
 - Provide localised support to Southwark residents who want to start businesses, cooperatives and social enterprises, with a focus on entrepreneurs who are underrepresented in business, including women, Black, Asian, minority ethnic, and disabled people.
 - Deliver a programme of major town centre improvements, including new town centres at Canada Water and Elephant and Castle, a new arts centre in The Blue, improvements to East Street Market and major upgrades to Peckham Library square and Station squares.
 - Support business on our high streets, including through our Thriving High Street Fund.
 - Work with Southwark's diverse communities to ensure they have vibrant community and cultural spaces run by and for the communities they serve, including a new LGBTQ+ cultural space, Latin American cultural space, modern Black African and Caribbean elders centre and Southwark Pensioners Centre.
7. The Southwark Economic Strategy 2023-2030 sets out how we will work with partners to achieve a fairer, greener and more resilient Southwark economy that benefits everyone.
8. The strategy sets out our vision for Southwark's economy:
- A high growth, low emission economy
 - An economy with opportunity for all
 - An economy of good work.
9. The Economic Strategy includes the following related ambitions:
- Put local communities and businesses at the heart of town centre improvements by co-creating individual town centre action plans
 - Promote safer high streets and encourage businesses to sign up to good practice such as the Women's Night Safety Charter
 - Encourage businesses to switch to zero-pollution delivery vehicles, especially in town centres with poor air quality
 - More opportunities for local people to secure good jobs and apprenticeships with leading employers and fewer barriers for the most disadvantaged.
 - Southwark's largest employers invest in local services and talent, creating social value across all of our communities.
 - Young people have every opportunity to build a successful career, whatever their background.
 - Reduced ethnicity, gender and disability pay gaps, with equal participation and progression in the workforce and an end to discrimination in the workplace.

- A secure and thriving foundational economy of essential goods and services that residents and businesses rely on every day.
- More businesses and jobs in Southwark's town centres, supporting healthy neighbourhood-based economies.

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

Community impact statement

10. The actions set out in this report are anticipated to deliver positive impact through increased economic inclusion across Southwark's communities.

Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement

11. The Scrutiny Commission's recommendations 1 to 7 are acknowledged as providing a valuable foundation for advancing inclusive, equitable outcomes through the Town Centre Action Plans, employment support for younger residents with SEND and infrastructure support for East Street Market. The council remains committed to embedding equalities and tackling socio-economic disadvantage through joined-up town centre governance, inclusive infrastructure development, and accessible employment pathways.
12. Recommendations 1 to 3 highlight the importance of a joined-up approach to the delivery of town centre services and interventions. The council's appointment of Town Centre Leads, and the formation of a cross-departmental Senior Officer Group ensures strategic oversight, stronger accountability, and improved service accessibility for residents and businesses. Community engagement is embedded throughout the process to ensure that the voices of all groups, including those who are often underrepresented, are heard and acted upon. Feedback from residents is used to shape services that are responsive to local needs and designed to tackle inequalities across town centres.
13. These measures are designed to benefit residents with protected characteristics and those experiencing digital or social exclusion. Engagement through the TCAPs seeks to ensure town centre interventions are co-developed with local communities to ensure relevance and impact. These interventions include public realm improvements that enhance access to amenities through improved lighting, CCTV, public toilets, and accessible seating. By creating safer, more welcoming space for all residents, particularly those with mobility challenges or other accessibility needs, the Town Centres team contributes towards the goals of Southwark 2030.
14. Recommendations 4 to 6 recognise the structural barriers faced by young people, particularly those with SEND or care experience, in accessing skills and employment. The council is working in partnership with schools, the Youth Parliament and employers to promote opportunities and highlight inclusive pathways via OneHub and the Education Business Alliance. Planned delivery of the DWP Connect to Work programme will provide tailored support for young people with disabilities and health conditions, while the Youth Guarantee for care-experienced young people will ensure co-designed access to progression pathways.

15. Recommendation 7 recognises the role of local markets, such as East Street, in supporting inclusive local economies. In response, the council's Markets and Street Trading Manager is working in partnership with the East Street Market Traders Association to improve operations, safety and visibility. Planned improvements, such as free Wi-Fi, branded public realm upgrades and ongoing consultation on parking and climate resilience, respond to the needs of low-income and ethnically diverse communities, while supporting accessible trading environments.
16. These recommendations reinforce the council's approach to embedding equalities within support for youth employment and the revitalisation of our town centres and markets.

Health impact statement

17. There are no direct health impacts arising from this report.

Climate change implications

18. Recommendations 1 to 3, highlight how the Town Centres team use TCAPs, underpinned by strong reporting structures and ongoing resident feedback to guide improvements in the public realm to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change and promote active travel. By using local insights to steer changes that enhance accessibility and reduce car dependency, the council is embedding climate resilience and supporting wider efforts to cut emissions.
19. Under recommendation 7, the council supports exploring the option of a solar PV array in the East Street area, subject to feasibility, which will help to reduce emissions and energy costs for the local community.

Resource implications

20. There are no additional resource implications arising from this report.

Note: Financial implications (and when to seek supplementary advice)

21. All existing activities, except where explicitly stated, are currently funded. Where improvements to East Street currently do not have a budget, they will be subject to the consultations and decision-making processes as set out above.
22. Should the implementation of any activities or recommendations outlined in this report require additional funds, these will be subject to further decision reports setting out the cost and funding mechanisms.

Consultation

23. The TCAPs have been informed by engagement with residents and businesses such as through town centre walkabouts, resident groups and business forums. The feedback received has driven the priorities for each action plan.

24. The TCAPs have also been informed by engagement with key delivery teams including:
- Sustainable Growth, Planning and Conservation
 - Community Safety and Protection
 - Waste and Cleansing
 - Transport and Highways
 - Regulatory Services and Enforcement
 - Parking and Network Management
 - Traded Services
 - Public Health
 - Culture
25. The published TCAPs reflect community members' feedback and provide a platform for further engagement. Business networks and other stakeholders will be invited to participate in the ongoing development of action plans. Community engagement will be continuous throughout the town centres programme and the TCAPs will be updated every six months to reflect progress and respond to stakeholder priorities.
26. Where the TCAPs highlight issues or propose improvements which could be taken forward as a distinct project, further consultation will be undertaken as appropriate.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance (CM 26.08.25)

27. This report seeks Cabinet's approval of the council's response to the 7 recommendations put forward by the Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission's Review of the Draft Town Centre Action Plan, Youth Employment support and East Street Traders.
28. The council has the authority to carry out the accepted or partially accepted recommendations in accordance with the powers of general competence in section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.
29. The council has the general duty to prevent or delay needs arising under section 2 of the Care Act 2014. In performance of this duty the Cabinet will need to have regard to: the importance of identifying services, facilities and resources already available in the authority's area and the extent to which the authority could involve or make use of them in performing that duty; the importance of identifying adults in the authority's area with needs for care and support which are not being met (by the authority or otherwise); the importance of identifying carers in the authority's area with needs for support which are not being met (by the authority or otherwise).
30. The cabinet will need to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and to foster good relations between people with protected characteristics and others in accordance with the public sector equality duty in section 149 Equality Act 2010. Reference is made to this in the "Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts" section above.

31. This report is being considered by Cabinet in line with the requirement contained in paragraph 15.3 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules contained within the council Constitution.

Strategic Director, Resources (CF25 – 108)

32. This report seeks cabinet to approve responses to the Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission recommendations on the review of the draft Town Centre Action Plans, Youth Employment support and East Street Traders.
33. The strategic director of resources notes that there are no direct financial implications arising from this report.
34. It is similarly noted that any future possible works will be subject to normal council evaluation and decision-making processes and having regards for current approved budgets.
35. Staffing and any other costs associated with this recommendation are to be contained within existing departmental revenue budgets.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
<p>Report of the Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission: Review of the Draft Town Centre Action Plan, Youth Employment support and East Street Traders</p> <p>https://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s127350/Report%20Education%20scrutiny%20review%20Town%20Centre%20Action%20Plan.pdf</p>	Southwark Council Website	<p>Amit Alva</p> <p>Amit.alva@southwark.gov.uk</p>

APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor John Batteson, Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency, Jobs and Business		
Lead Officer	Danny Edwards, Assistant Director of Economy		
Report Author	Tom Rogers, Senior Strategy Officer		
Version	Final		
Dated	4 September 2025		
Key Decision?	No		
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER			
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included	
Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance	Yes	Yes	
Strategic Director, Resources	Yes	Yes	
Director of Planning and Growth	Yes	Yes	
Director, Children and Families	Yes	Yes	
Assistant Director of Economy	Yes	Yes	
Assistant Director of Children’s Services	Yes	Yes	
Assistant Director for SEND	Yes	Yes	
Assistant Director of Sustainable Growth	Yes	Yes	
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes	
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team		4 September 2025	

Meeting Name:	Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission
Date:	6 October 2025
Report title:	Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission Work Programme 2025-26
Ward(s) or groups affected:	N/a
Classification:	Open
Reason for lateness (if applicable):	N/a
From:	Scrutiny Officer

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the education and local economy scrutiny commission note the work programme as at 6 October 2025 attached as Appendix 1.
2. That the education and local economy scrutiny commission consider the addition of new items or allocation of previously identified items to specific meeting dates of the commission.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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
4. The work programme document lists those items which have been or are to be considered in line with the commission's terms of reference.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

5. Set out in Appendix 1 (Work Programme) are the issues the education and local economy scrutiny commission is due to consider in 2025-26.

6. The work programme is a standing item on the education and local economy scrutiny commission agenda and enables the commission to consider, monitor and plan issues for consideration at each meeting.
7. The commission has within in its remit the cabinet portfolio elements listed below:

Children, Education & Refugees (Councillor Jasmine Ali, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member)

- **Early years and childcare** – including children and family centres, early years education, childminders and nurseries
- **Schools** – including school standards, inclusion, places and admissions; special education needs; free healthy school and nursery meals and fruit; healthy schools and Southwark's Let's Go Zero schools network
- **Further, higher and adult education** – including English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), adult literacy and numeracy; and scholarships
- **Children's social care** – including children in care and care leavers, fostering and adoption, support for children with disabilities and their families; and child safeguarding
- **Family support** – including parenting programmes, the council's sure-start for teenagers service and support for families who are providing unpaid care for a child with a disability or health condition, including respite care
- **Youth offending services.**

Cabinet Member for Jobs, Skills & Business (Councillor John Batteson)

- **Increasing employment** - support to find a job or start a new carer; careers advice and work experience; paid internships; supporting young people and care leavers' into employment, education and training; relationship with Jobcentre Plus; supporting businesses to engage with schools and colleges (including the Education Business Alliance)
- **Vocational Skills** - including apprenticeships, vocational training and skills centres
- **Businesses support** - for local businesses, cooperatives, social enterprises and entrepreneurs; increasing procurement from local businesses; and relationships with local business groups and Business Improvement Districts.
- **High streets** – including town centre action plans, Thriving Highstreets Fund, markets
- **Commercial property** – management, leasing and rent setting of the council's retail and commercial units, office accommodation and related property

- **Industrial strategy** - growing industries that generate good jobs and wider value for our community, including green industries, life sciences and creative and cultural industries
- **Living Wage** - promoting the London Living Wage employers
- **Workers' rights** - promoting good employment practices and equality and diversity at work and trade union membership.

Deputy Cabinet Member for Young People (Councillor Portia Mwangangye)

- Increasing the voice and influence of young people
- Southwark Youth Parliament
- The council's in-house and commissioned youth services
- Positive Futures Fund
- Southwark Young Advisors.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission agenda and minutes	Southwark Council Website	Amit Alva Amit.alva@southwark.gov.uk
Link: https://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=550&Year=0		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Work Programme 2025-26

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Amit Alva, Scrutiny Officer		
Report Author	Amit Alva, Scrutiny Officer		
Version	Final		
Dated	6 October 2025		
Key Decision?	No		
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER			
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included	

Director of Law and Governance	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	No	No
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Scrutiny Team		6 October 2025

Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission Work Programme – 2025/26

Meeting	Agenda items	Comment
7 July 2025	Pupil Place Planning in Primary Schools and its impact on Secondary School admissions under the Keeping Education Strong (KES) Strategy.	To get an update from the officers on Pupil Place Planning in primary schools and also review the Pupil Place Planning Annexe 2024-25 - Submitted to Cabinet in February 2025 (Appendix 6)
	Traders from East Street Market	To hear the traders' views on any improvements that have been made and/or in progress and any areas of concern/issues that the council could help with.

6 October 2025	<p>Commercial Property Portfolio</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of commercial leases including rent, repairs and marketing • Increased revenue targets. Letting Southwark properties, Debt Recovery Plans 	To receive a report from Councillor John Batteson, Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency, Jobs and Business and Mark Grant, Assistant Director of Property on Commercial Property Portfolio.
	<p>Youth Services and Positive Futures for Young People Fund</p>	To receive a report from Councillor Portia Mwangangye, Cabinet Member for Leisure, Parks and Young People and Toni Ainge, Director of Leisure and Eva Gomez, Head of Culture on Youth Services and Positive Futures for Young People Fund.
Upcoming Meetings	Agenda items yet to be scheduled	Comment
3 December 2025 2 February 2026 4 March 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Offer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ SEND- Post 16 Offers (jobs) ➤ Care leavers – Job opportunities ➤ Engagement with representatives of schools ➤ Youth Offending Services ➤ Work Experience and employment opportunities ➤ Southwark works and youth employment - employer engagement functions, Good People Partnership ➤ Apprenticeships 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping Education Strong (KES) strategy update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Falling schools rolls and schools closures ➤ Secondary school pupil numbers • Skills Delivery Plan runs from 2023-25 under Economic Strategy 	
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Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2025-26

AGENDA DISTRIBUTION LIST (OPEN)

NOTE: Original held by Scrutiny Team; all amendments/queries to Amit Alva Tel: 020 7525 0496

Name	No of copies	Name	No of copies
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Members:		Euan Cadzow-Webb - Liberal Democrat Group Office	
Councillor Cassandra Brown (Chair)		Sarauniya Shehu- Cabinet Office Manager	
Councillor Rachel Bentley (Vice-Chair)		Liam Reid- Cabinet Advisor	
Councillor Mohamed Deen			
Councillor Irina Von Wiese			
Councillor Margy Newens			
Councillor Youcef Hassaine			
Councillor Jon Hartley			
Education Representatives			
Martin Brecknell			
Alie Kallon			
Mannah Kargbo			
Reserves Members			
Councillor Joseph Vambe			
Councillor Maggie Browning			
Councillor Sunny Lambe			
Councillor Jason Ochere			
Councillor Sam Foster			
Councillor Victor Chamberlain			
Councillor Adam Hood			
		Dated: September 2025	