Overview & Scrutiny Committee

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on Monday 5 October 2026 at 6.30 pm at Ground Floor Meeting Room G01A - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT:	Councillor Richard Macmillan (Chair) Councillor Victoria Mills (Vice-Chair) Councillor Evelyn Akoto Councillor Ryan Cox Councillor Stephanie Cryan Councillor Callum Fowler Councillor Sarah King Councillor Graham Neale Councillor Rachael Penny Councillor Dean Peters Councillor Bill Williams
OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT:	Councillor Adam Hood Councillor Kath Whittam Councillor Reginald Popoola
OFFICER SUPPORT:	Amit Alva, Scrutiny Officer Everton Roberts, Head of Scrutiny

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Clare Williams, co-opted member representative for the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Southwark, and Martin Brecknell, Church of England Diocese of Southwark representative.

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

The Chair informed the committee that Supplemental Agenda no.1 contained the report on the Lower Road Project.

The Chair also informed the committee that a late item of business relating to the scrutiny call-in of the executive decision of 15 September 2026 concerning the Housing Allocations Scheme Review had been circulated in Supplemental Agenda no.2.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no disclosures of interests or dispensations.

4. MINUTES

The committee approved the minutes of the meetings held on 28 May 2026 and 22 June 2026 as correct records.

The Chair varied the order of business to take agenda item 7 first.

5. LOWER ROAD PROJECT

The committee considered a report on the Lower Road Project.

The committee first heard from ward councillors representing Rotherhithe and Surrey Docks wards. Councillors Adam Hood, Stephanie Cryan, Kath Whittam

The councillors highlighted concerns regarding:

- Long-standing congestion issues.
- Delays to implementation of wider improvements.
- Changes made to the original scheme design.
- Traffic flow and junction capacity.
- Bus journey times and accessibility.
- Consultation and engagement with ward councillors, residents and local businesses.
- Delivery of Phase Two of the project.

The committee then heard from officers Michael Benn, Director of Highways and Parking, Polyvios, Polyviou, Head of Highways and Sustainable Transport Policy and Clement, Agyei-Frempong, Principal Project Manager- Environment, Sustainability & Leisure

The committee was informed that:

- The scheme formed part of Cycleway 4 linking London Bridge and Greenwich.
- Cycling movements on Lower Road had increased significantly since implementation.
- Traffic volumes had reduced while heavy goods vehicle movements and collisions had also reduced.
- Congestion and bus journey time issues remained significant concerns.
- Officers were committed to developing Phase Two improvements alongside Transport for London.
- Additional measures were being introduced to improve co-ordination of roadworks and network management.

The committee then asked questions on the following themes:

- Consultation and engagement with ward councillors.
- Lessons learned from the scheme.
- Funding for Phase Two.
- Success criteria and project outcomes.
- Bus journey times and congestion.
- Equality impacts, particularly on older residents relying on public transport.
- Relationship with Transport for London.
- Future governance and reporting arrangements.

Officers advised that funding for Phase Two had not yet been secured and that discussions with Transport for London and other potential funding sources were ongoing. Officers also committed to improving engagement with ward councillors and providing regular project updates.

RESOLVED:

That the Executive be recommended to**:**

1. Develop a funded delivery plan for Phase Two of the Lower Road Project.
2. Carry out a review of the Equalities Impact Assessment, particularly in relation to older residents and public transport users.

3. Undertake regular formal engagement and progress updates with relevant ward councillors.

4. Introduce provision of an audit trail setting out key design and implementation changes, including reasons for those changes.

5. Monitor the impact of safety and junction improvements on traffic conditions and bus journey times.

6. WORK PROGRAMME 2026-27

The committee considered the proposed work programme for 2026-27.

The committee heard from officers regarding the work programme development process and future arrangements for scoping scrutiny reviews. The committee discussed:

- Capacity of scrutiny commissions to undertake reviews.
- Prioritisation of topics.
- Opportunities for obtaining evidence through briefings, visits and informal engagement.
- The timing of future scrutiny work.

The committee also discussed the timing of scrutiny of the Borough Action Plan and expressed that pre-decision scrutiny should take place before consideration by Council Assembly. Members requested that a draft version of the Borough Plan be brought to the 4 November 2026 meeting of the committee.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and scrutiny commission work programme for 2026-27 as detailed below be approved.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Borough Action Plan

- Pre-scrutiny of the Council Delivery Plan and council priorities

Council finance and budget related issues

- Medium-Term Financial Strategy, budget gaps and financial risks
- Annual Budget Scrutiny
- Housing Revenue Account Recovery Plan
- Review of Procurement and Contract Management

- Financial pressures relating to Temporary Accommodation, SEND and Adult Social Care
- SEND Safety Valve Agreement

Engagement with residents

- Community Councils and their future development

Education and Local Economy

Education workstream

- Government SEND Reform and Support for Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
- Annual Review of the Southwark Safeguarding Children Partnership
- Ofsted follow up - progress on areas identified for improvement

Local Economy workstream

Employment and Skills

- Employment Opportunities for Young People, including work experience, apprenticeships and internships for young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and those with SEND
- Involving the Youth Parliament with regards to the borough priorities
- Review of the Southwark Works Initiative, including support for people facing barriers to employment and young people

Business engagement and support

- Thriving High Streets
- Supporting Businesses in Southwark
- East Street Market – Update
- Elephant and Castle Town Centre Development, including support for independent businesses and community benefit
- Tackling long-term vacant commercial units and exploring measures used elsewhere to bring premises back into use

Environment Scrutiny Commission

Waste, cleaner neighbourhoods and a circular Southwark

- Pre-scrutiny Veolia / Waste contract and future arrangements
- Waste Management – the effectiveness of Southwark's approach to street cleansing, waste management, fly-tipping and environmental enforcement

Balcony and plug in Solar

- Solar on council Buildings and Community Energy

Transport Safety and Infrastructure

- Transport Safety and Infrastructure, with a focus on accident investigation of cycle death and serious incidents
- Fairness and consistency in Southwark's Resident Parking Permit Charging Model

Keeping Southwark Cool - Heat Resilience, Cool spaces and Places

- Preparedness for Extreme Heat

Food Security

- Food Security and a Resilient, Sustainable Food System

Housing Scrutiny Commission

Good Landlord Plan

- One-year review of the Housing Regulator report and progress
- Good Landlord Plan - Staff Resources
- Resident Engagement and Governance

Repairs, maintenance and major works

- Repairs, Damp and Mould Review
- One-year Review of Plentific
- Major Works – Update
- Flowcrete

Housing Allocations

- Allocations Policy
- Empty Properties

Health, Adult Social Care and Community Safety

Health, Adult Social Care workstream

Mental Health

- Transition arrangements between CAMHS/Adolescent mental health Services and adult services

Integrated Care

- Neighbourhood Health Service – integrated neighbourhood teams

Sexual and reproductive health

- LSLBB Sexual and Reproductive Health and HIV Strategy 2025 – 2030
- Women's Reproductive Health Services

Community Safety workstream

- Complex Needs and Street based anti-social behaviour
- Community Safety Partnership – overview of strategy and scrutiny of annual plan
- Two wheeled enabled phone theft and robberies

2. That officers work with scrutiny chairs and vice-chairs to refine and scope the work programme.

3. That a draft version of the Borough Plan should be presented to OSC on **4 November 2026**, to allow adequate pre-decision scrutiny before consideration by Council Assembly.

7. SCRUTINY CALL-IN : HOUSING ALLOCATION SCHEME REVIEW

The committee considered the scrutiny call-in of the executive decision of 15 September 2026 concerning the Housing Allocations Scheme Review.

The committee first heard from Councillor Stephanie Cryan, who outlined the

grounds for the call-in. The concerns raised included:

- Consultation on increasing the age at which same-sex siblings are expected to share a bedroom from 16 to 21.
- The response rate to the consultation.
- Potential impacts on residents with disabilities, particularly those with learning disabilities.
- The Equalities Impact Assessment.
- Digital exclusion and the accessibility of the proposed choice-based lettings arrangements.
- Clarification regarding bidding arrangements for residents in Band D.

The committee then heard from Councillor Reginald Popoola, Executive Member for Council Homes, supported by officers from Housing Needs and Housing Solutions; Hakeem Osinaike, Strategic Director of Housing, Daniel Ferlance, Assistant Director for Housing Needs, Ricky Bellot, Housing Choice and Supply Manager and Candida Thompson, Director of Housing Needs and Support.

The committee was informed that:

- The current allocations scheme dated from 2014 and required updating due to legislative, regulatory and policy changes.
- The Regulator of Social Housing had identified the absence of an updated allocations policy as a concern.
- The consultation received over 1,000 responses and was undertaken over a 12-week period.
- Extensive engagement had been undertaken with residents, forums and organisations.
- The revised scheme retained priority provisions for residents with disabilities and learning disabilities.
- New measures had been introduced to support digitally excluded residents, including auto-bidding and expanded in-person support services.
- The new scheme would be reviewed after twelve months to assess impacts and outcomes.

The committee then asked questions on the following themes:

- Same-sex siblings and bedroom entitlement.
- Equality impacts on Black and minority ethnic communities.
- Numbers of households affected by the revised bedroom standards.
- Urgency of policy implementation.
- Digital exclusion and support arrangements.
- Consultation timescales and engagement.
- Review arrangements and monitoring of outcomes.

The committee heard that 128 households would have their banding reduced as a result of the revised bedroom standard and that the majority affected required four-

bedroom or larger homes. Officers advised that only a very limited number of such properties became available annually and that the revised arrangements should make better use of the council's housing stock.

The committee heard that the allocations scheme would be formally reviewed after twelve months and that a progress report would also be provided to the committee. Officers advised that operational monitoring would take place throughout implementation and that adjustments could be considered if adverse impacts were identified.

Officers agreed to provide members with the data and modelling information used during development of the allocations scheme, including information relating to affected households and bedroom entitlement modelling.

The committee discussed the options available following consideration of the call-in. Members expressed differing views on whether the decision should be referred back to the executive or implemented with further scrutiny and reporting arrangements.

The Committee decided to 'Not refer the matter back to the Executive but to undertake a subsequent scrutiny review.'

RESOLVED:

That the matter not be referred back to the Executive for reconsideration, but a subsequent review be undertaken. The Subsequent Review to be an Early Implementation Report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Housing Allocations Scheme Review at six months.

Meeting ended at 9:15 pm

CHAIR:

DATED: