

Council Assembly

Annual and Mayor Making

Thursday 28 May 2026

7.00 pm

Council Offices, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

Councillors are summoned to attend a meeting of the Council to consider the business contained herein

Althea Loderick
Chief Executive

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Access to information

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Contact

Virginia Wynn-Jones, Andrew Weir on 020 7525 7055 or 020 7525 7222 or email: virginia.wynn-jones@southwark.gov.uk; andrew.weir@southwark.gov.uk; constitutional.team@southwark.gov.uk

Date: 19 May 2026



PRINTED ON
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Council Assembly

Annual and Mayor Making

Thursday 28 May 2026
7.00 pm
Council Offices, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

Order of Business

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1.	ELECTION OF THE MAYOR OF SOUTHWARK	
	PART A - OPEN BUSINESS	
2.	PRELIMINARY BUSINESS	
	2.1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
	To receive any apologies for absence.	
	2.2. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR, MEMBERS OF THE CABINET OR CHIEF EXECUTIVE	
	To receive any announcements from the Mayor, members of the cabinet or the chief executive.	
	2.3. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE MAYOR DEEMS URGENT	
	In special circumstances an item of business may be added to an agenda within seven working days of the meeting.	
	2.4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS	
	Members to declare any interests and dispensations in respect of any item of business to be considered at this meeting.	
	2.5. MINUTES	1 - 21
	To approve as a correct record the open minutes of the ordinary and extraordinary council assembly meetings held on 18 March 2026.	

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3. REPORT(S) FOR DECISION

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3.5. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2025-26 50 - 72

3.6. APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM MONITORING OFFICER

To follow if there is a recommended candidate for Council Assembly to consider.

4. AMENDMENTS

Any member of the council may submit an amendment to a report or motion on the agenda. The amendments will be circulated to all members in a supplemental agenda.

ANY OPEN ITEMS IDENTIFIED AS URGENT AT THE START OF THE MEETING

EXCLUSION MOTION (IF NECESSARY)

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

“That under the access to information procedure rules of the Southwark constitution, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in section(s) 1 – 7 of paragraph 10.4 of the procedure rules.”

PART B – CLOSED BUSINESS

ANY CLOSED ITEMS IDENTIFIED AS URGENT AT THE START OF THE MEETING

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5. APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM MONITORING OFFICER

To follow if there is a recommended candidate for Council Assembly to consider.

Date: 15 May 2026



Council Assembly (Ordinary meeting)

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

PRESENT:

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

Councillor Evelyn Akoto
Councillor Jasmine Ali
Councillor Naima Ali
Councillor John Batteson
Councillor Rachel Bentley
Councillor Cassandra Brown
Councillor Maggie Browning
Councillor Victor Chamberlain
Councillor Sunil Chopra
Councillor Stephanie Cryan
Councillor Ellie Cumbo
Councillor Sam Dalton
Councillor Mohamed Deen
Councillor Helen Dennis
Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle MBE
Councillor Gavin Edwards
Councillor Sabina Emmanuel
Councillor Natasha Ennin
Councillor Sam Foster
Councillor Renata Hamvas
Councillor Barrie Hargrove
Councillor Ketzia Harper
Councillor Jon Hartley
Councillor Youcef Hassaine
Councillor Adam Hood
Councillor Laura Johnson
Councillor Nick Johnson

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

1. PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

1.1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

At this point, the programme motion was agreed:

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

Time	Business
19:00 – 19:10	1. Preliminary business and announcements
19:10 – 19:15	2.2 Public questions One public question
19:15 – 20:15 (15 minutes – 5 minutes' speech) (7 minutes) (5 minutes) (30 minutes) (3 minutes)	Themed debate 3.1 Community Evidence - Spring Community Hub - Active Communities Network 3.2 Motion on the Theme - Councillor Sarah King - Councillor David Watson, opposition spokesperson - Themed debate open to all other councillors - Cabinet member's right of reply to the debate

20:15 – 20:40 (4 minutes' speech and a question to cabinet member)	4. Deputations • Sonay Ozkutayli and St Saviours Residents • Southwark and Peckham Citizens • King's Maternity Voices Partnership • Latin Elephant
20:40 – 20:45	Recess
20:45 – 21:20 (5 minutes) (15 minutes) (15 minutes)	5.1 Members' Question Time • Late question • Members' questions to the leader • Members' questions to the cabinet
21:20 – 22:00	5.2 Motions
	Motion 1 – Tackling antisocial behaviour on Southwark's estates
	Motion 2 – Liberal Democrats will Fix Southwark
	Motion 3 – Protecting the Freedom Pass for Older Londoners
	Motion 4 – Southwark has no confidence in Sir Keir Starmer
22:00*	6. Reports
	6.1 – Proportionality and Allocation of Seats on Committees March 2026
	6.2 – Licensing Act 2003: Review of Statement of Licensing Policy 2026 to 2031
	6.3 – Pay Policy Statement 2026/27
	6.4 – Member Allowances Scheme 2026-2027
	6.5 – Calendar of meetings 2026-27
	6.6 – Special Urgency and Urgent Implementation Decisions – Annual Report 2026
	6.7 – Re-appointment of independent persons

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

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

That the meeting be conducted as follows:

Item 3 - Themed debate

Community Evidence Submissions

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

- Spring Community Hub
- Active Communities Network

Format

A five minute presentation from the groups.

3.1 Motion on the theme

Themed debate

To run as listed in the timings above.

To have a single debate.

Item 4 Deputation requests:

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

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

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

Item 5.2 General motions:

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

1.4 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

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

There were no other declarations.

1.5 MINUTES

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

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

No petitions were received for this meeting.

2.2 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

3. THEMED DEBATE**3.1 COMMUNITY EVIDENCE**

The meeting agreed to receive submissions from the following:

Spring Community Hub

The representative spoke to the meeting for five minutes.

Active Communities Network

The representative spoke to the meeting for five minutes.

3.2 MOTION ON THE THEME

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

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

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

Amendment A was put to the vote and declared to be Lost.

The motion was put to the vote and declared to be Carried.

A borough where everyone can succeed

1. Council Assembly celebrates:

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

2. Council Assembly thanks:

- a. The vast network of voluntary and community organisations that help make our borough succeed, including but not limited to:
 - i) Community Southwark – who bring our VCS partners together with help and guidance for charities and community groups.
 - ii) Spring – the organisation behind Spring Community Hub and The Blue Youth Centre that provide so much for residents in need.

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

3. Council Assembly welcomes this Labour administration’s:

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

expanding access to our brilliant leisure centres.

- vi) Investing £28.5 million in 2024/25 in more than 400 local organisations that deliver vital services and support, making the council the borough's largest investor in the voluntary and community sector.

b. Work to tackle the housing crisis, including:

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

c. Work to keep our communities safe, including:

- i) Setting up the Women's Safety Alliance, our groundbreaking service to help women experiencing domestic abuse and sexual violence, providing safe and accessible spaces at the point of crisis and subsequent integrated support.
- ii) Investing £5 million in rolling out new and improved CCTV and an antisocial behaviour taskforce.
- iii) Introducing nighttime uniformed wardens to patrol hotspot areas and make our town centres and estates safer, extending the work of our community wardens.

- iv) Ramping up fly-tipping enforcement, with new £1,000 fines, to clean up our streets and hold perpetrators to account.
- d. Investment in public spaces and services, leading the way when it comes to:
- i) Protecting and improving our council-owned libraries and opening two libraries including Una Marson in Faraday.
 - ii) Bringing our leisure centres back in house so they are owned by our residents, upgrading our leisure centres, opening a brand new leisure centre at Canada Water in Rotherhithe, and new open water swimming in Greenland Dock.
 - iii) Investing £18 million our parks, making them some of the best in London and retaining all 30 of our Green Flag awards.
 - iv) Planting nearly 40,000 trees in the last 5 years – including planting the 100,000th tree on council land in St George's.
 - v) Investing in new playgrounds, with almost £18 million invested in revamping playgrounds including Ellen Brown Adventure Playground, Frederick's Playground, Peckham Rye Adventure Playground and many more, and a further £7.1 million of investment to upgrade 15 parks over the next three years.
 - vi) Creating cleaner, greener, safer streets that prioritise pedestrians, with over 100 crossings installed since 2022, including Evelina Road in Nunhead & Queen's Road and Lordship Lane in Dulwich Wood.
 - vii) The Southwark Pioneers Fund, which has provided £2.6m to help new and established local businesses to expand and thrive, including over 900 local entrepreneurs and businesses since launching in 2022 with two-thirds being female-led.
 - viii) Making affordable and more sustainable travel more accessible: installing over 2.5km of segregated cycle lanes, hundreds more cycle hangars, 1,000 new EV charging points, and investing £10 million with TfL to improve bus journeys.
 - ix) Clearing up and deterring graffiti in our town centres, by rolling out 'graffiti blitz' teams in problem areas, such as Camberwell Church Street, and expanding to known hotspots such as Rye Lane.
- e. Investment in families:
- i) Expanding free healthy school meals into secondary schools, providing free school meals in the holidays and rolling out new breakfast clubs, as no child can learn while they're hungry.
 - ii) Working with our teachers, school governors, parents and communities to improve our schools so now 99% of Southwark schools are rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted.

- iii) Investing in Children & Family Hubs, so every family is within 15 minutes of the support they need.
- iv) Opening a brand-new nursing home at Camberwell in May 2022, with state of the art facilities and high-quality care.
- v) With the award-winning Appleby Blue almshouse in Bermondsey, with 57 of the best affordable homes for older people in the country.
- vi) Rolling out the Residential Care Charter, which has resulted in better quality of care for residential care homes in the borough, and improved working conditions for staff.
- vii) Making our streets safer for children, rolling out 32 school streets across the borough to keep kids safe outside schools.

f. Commitment to defending our communities:

- i) Achieving Borough of Sanctuary status, rubber-stamping our commitment to welcoming refugees, asylum seekers and migrants.
- ii) Establishing Southwark Stands Together to combat racism, discrimination and inequality in our borough, and ensuring that our services and public spaces reflect and respect the diversity that makes Southwark great.
- iii) Becoming an Age Friendly Borough, bringing to life our commitment to older residents by embedding age-friendly principles into planning, housing, public realm, health and community services, so that people can age well, stay connected and live independently for longer.
- iv) Becoming the first council to incorporate the UN Genocide Convention into the council's investments framework, divesting pension funds away from companies linked to the occupation of Palestine and other conflicts.

4. Council Assembly believes:

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

- f. That their plans to block the building of new homes would cut income from taxes on developers, leading to less investment in our local communities.
 - g. The Liberal Democrats' plans to tackle crime with 'Community Safety Gazebos' and Greens' plans to decriminalise drug abuse on our streets and estates are not serious and will reverse progress made by this Labour administration on tackling crime and antisocial behaviour.
5. Council Assembly resolves to:
- a. Call upon cabinet to bring forward a substantial policy programme including a refreshed Borough Plan for the next four years that will include Southwark Labour's plan to create a borough where everyone can succeed:
 - i) Building genuinely affordable homes
 - with 1,500 new social rent homes, one third of which will be council-owned.
 - ii) Keeping neighbourhoods safe
 - by doubling the number of community wardens, meaning tougher enforcement on streets and estates, night and day.
 - iii) A new youth guarantee
 - with opportunities for all young people leaving school while helping residents find a good, well-paid job.
 - iv) A free culture pass
 - breaking down barriers so everyone can enjoy our amazing, diverse nightlife, art, theatre and all the borough has to offer.
 - v) A council you can trust
 - to cherish the things you love most about Southwark, like our parks and libraries, to take your issues seriously and to get it right first time, whether it's housing repairs or fly-tipping.

4. DEPUTATIONS

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

Sonay Ozkutayli and St Saviours Residents

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

Southwark and Peckham Citizens

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

King's Maternity Voices Partnership

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

Latin Elephant

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

5. ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS

5.1 MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME

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

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

5.2 MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion 1: Tackling antisocial behaviour on Southwark's estates

This motion was considered after the guillotine had fallen.

There was one amendment to the motion.

Amendment B was put to the vote and declared to be lost.

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

Note: This motion will be referred as a recommendation to the cabinet for consideration.

1. Council Assembly welcomes:

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

2. Council Assembly notes with concern:

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

3. Council Assembly welcomes:

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

4. Council Assembly also welcomes:

- a. The council's increased enforcement measures on fly-tipping, including:
 - i. Targeted action across the borough to clean up hotspot areas, introduce preventative "design-out" measures, and deliver tougher enforcement.
 - ii. Working with businesses to ensure streets are free of waste.
 - iii. Organising visible daily patrols of hotspot areas, with additional environmental enforcement officers and graffiti removal operatives.

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

5. Council Assembly resolves to ask that:

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

Motion 2: Liberal Democrats will Fix Southwark

This motion was considered after the guillotine had fallen.

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

Motion 3: Protecting the Freedom Pass for Older Londoners

This motion was considered after the guillotine had fallen.

There was one amendment to the motion.

Amendment C was put to the vote and declared to be lost.

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

Note: This motion will be referred as a recommendation to the cabinet for consideration.

1. Council Assembly notes:

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

2. Council Assembly also notes:

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

3. Council Assembly notes with concern:

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

4. Council Assembly welcomes:

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

5. Council Assembly resolves to ask that:

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

Motion 4: Southwark has no confidence in Sir Keir Starmer

This motion was considered after the guillotine had fallen.

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

6. REPORTS FOR DECISION

6.1 PROPORTIONALITY AND ALLOCATION OF SEATS ON COMMITTEES MARCH 2026

The recommendations were put to the vote and declared Carried.

RESOLVED:

That council assembly:

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

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

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

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

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

RESOLVED:

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

6.3 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2026/27

The recommendations were put to the vote and declared Carried.

RESOLVED:

That Council Assembly:

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

6.4 MEMBER ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2026-2027

There was one amendment to the report. Amendment D was moved by Councillor Graham Neale, and seconded by Councillor Emily Tester.

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

The recommendations were put to the vote and declared Carried.

RESOLVED:

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

6.5 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2026-27

The recommendations were put to the vote and declared Carried.

RESOLVED:

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

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

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

6.6 SPECIAL URGENCY AND URGENT IMPLEMENTATION DECISIONS - ANNUAL REPORT 2026

The recommendations were put to the vote and declared Carried.

RESOLVED:

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

6.7 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS

The recommendations were put to the vote and declared Carried.

RESOLVED:

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

7. AMENDMENTS

The amendments were listed in supplemental agenda no. 1.

8. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS (CLOSED REPORT)

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

The meeting closed at 10.30 pm.

CHAIR:

DATED:



Council Assembly (Extraordinary meeting)

MINUTES of the Council Assembly (Extraordinary meeting) held on Wednesday 18 March 2026 at 9.00 pm at Council Offices, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT:

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

Councillor Evelyn Akoto
Councillor Jasmine Ali
Councillor Naima Ali
Councillor John Batteson
Councillor Rachel Bentley
Councillor Cassandra Brown
Councillor Victor Chamberlain
Councillor Sunil Chopra
Councillor Stephanie Cryan
Councillor Ellie Cumbo
Councillor Sam Dalton
Councillor Mohamed Deen
Councillor Helen Dennis
Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle MBE
Councillor Gavin Edwards
Councillor Sabina Emmanuel
Councillor Natasha Ennin
Councillor Sam Foster
Councillor Renata Hamvas
Councillor Barrie Hargrove
Councillor Jon Hartley
Councillor Youcef Hassaine
Councillor Adam Hood
Councillor Laura Johnson

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

1. PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

1.1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Maggie Browning, Esme Dobson, Ketzia Harper, Esme Hicks, Emily Hickson, James McAsh, Hamish McCallum, Darren Merrill, Victoria Mills, Jason Ochere, Catherine Rose, Martin Seaton, and Kieron Williams.

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

There were none.

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

There were none.

1.4 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There were none.

2. REPORT FOR DECISION

2.1 FREEDOMS OF THE BOROUGH NOMINATIONS 2026

RESOLVED:

That council assembly considered and agreed the nominations for the awards of Freedom of the Borough as set out in the closed report.

3. CLOSED REPORTS

4. FREEDOMS OF THE BOROUGH NOMINATIONS 2026 - CLOSED

The decision for this item is set out in item 2.1.

The meeting closed at 10.35 pm.

CHAIR:

DATED:

Meeting Name:	Council Assembly (Annual Meeting)
Date:	28 May 2026
Report title:	Election of Leader and Executive Functions – 2026-27
Ward(s) or groups affected:	All
Classification:	Open
Reason for lateness (if applicable):	Not Applicable
From:	Proper Constitutional Officer

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That council assembly consider the following executive issues for the coming municipal year 2026-27:
 - Elect a leader of the council
 - Notes the appointment by the leader of cabinet members
 - Notes the appointment of any deputy cabinet members
 - Notes the establishment and appointment of any cabinet committees
 - Notes the leader's report on the delegation of executive functions to the full cabinet, cabinet committees, individual cabinet members, chief officers and community councils
 - Notes that as a consequence the proper constitutional officer will update Part 3 of the constitution in accordance with the leader's report on the delegation of executive functions.

Election of leader of the council

2. That council assembly elect a leader of the council.
3. That council assembly notes that the leader's term of office shall commence from 28 May 2026, and end at the start of the first annual meeting of the council following the next ordinary election¹, unless otherwise specified by a resolution of council assembly (see paragraphs 14 - 17).

Appointment of the cabinet

4. That the leader reports to council assembly on the appointment of members of the cabinet and determination of their executive functions.

Note: 1. The leader will report on appointments to the cabinet and on individual portfolios.

¹ Article 6.3 of the Constitution

2. The leader can appoint between two and nine members to form a cabinet.
3. The leader must appoint a deputy leader.

Appointment of deputy cabinet members

5. That the leader reports to council assembly on the appointment of deputy cabinet members and determination of their duties and responsibilities.

Note: The leader will report on any changes to deputy cabinet members and on individual responsibility for specific tasks designated by the leader, following consultation with the monitoring officer.

Establishment and appointment of cabinet committees

6. That the leader reports on the establishment of any cabinet committees.

Note:

1. The leader to establish any cabinet committees, set terms of reference and nominate cabinet members to serve on the committees, including appointing a chair and vice-chair.
2. There are three cabinet committees: Cabinet (Livesey Trust) Committee, Better Placed Joint Committee and Joint IT Committee (Brent, Lewisham and Southwark).

Delegation of executive functions

7. The leader will report on the delegation of executive functions between full cabinet, individual decision makers, chief officers and community councils (see paragraphs 18 - 21)
8. That council assembly notes the leader's report on any changes to the delegation of executive functions to the full cabinet, cabinet committees, individual cabinet members, chief officers and community councils.
9. That council assembly notes that as a consequence of recommendation 6 the proper constitutional officer will update Part 3 of the constitution in accordance with the leader's report on the delegation of executive functions.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

10. The constitution is updated as and when changes are required. The recommendations in this report are based on the current constitution.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Leader and cabinet

11. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 required the council to make changes to its governance and decision-making arrangements. At an extraordinary meeting of council assembly on 4

November 2009 the council agreed that the current executive leader and cabinet model be adopted. The new arrangements commenced immediately after the elections in May 2010.

12. Under the executive “leader and cabinet” model there is a leader of the council and a cabinet of at least two but no more than nine other councillors. The leader is responsible for all executive functions, and decides which of these functions are going to be delegated to other cabinet members, local committees or council officers. The cabinet is appointed by the leader.
13. On 9 July 2025, council assembly appointed Councillor Sarah King as leader of the council and her term of office commenced from that date and shall end at the start of the first annual meeting of the council following the next ordinary election², which is on 28 May 2026.

Election of leader of the council

14. The Local Government Act 2000 provisions on executive arrangements were updated by the Localism Act 2011 and the new provision for electing a leader and agreeing the term of office is less prescriptive. It states that a council operating leader and cabinet executive arrangements must make provision for the election of a leader, but it may make provision with respect to their term of office. So, the council no longer has to make provision for a four year term, or indeed any defined term. Under the new provisions, the constitution will retain the clause that allows for the leader to be removed by a resolution of the council assembly.
15. The new provisions apply at this annual meeting (constitutional). The meeting will appoint a leader of the council and at the same time have the opportunity of setting a different term of office and/or end point of the leader’s term of office; otherwise the status quo would prevail. Currently the constitution states that the leader is appointed for four years and the term ends at the annual meeting following borough-wide elections, at which the new leader is to be appointed.
16. In a report to the constitutional steering panel (CSP) on 5 March 2014, it was reported that in officers’ view the current term of office arrangements in the constitution should be maintained. There is some merit in maintaining stable leadership and stability to the council’s constitutional and executive arrangements over the four year period between elections. This enhances transparency and accountability for executive decision making. It should be noted by way of balance, the constitution includes a number of measures to hold the executive to account including scrutiny committees, call-in of executive decisions, urgent implementation procedures requiring involvement of the chair of the overview and scrutiny committee and a means of removing the leader from office if a resolution is approved by council assembly.
17. Some of the alternatives reported to CSP for the annual meeting (constitutional) included reducing the length of the term, appointing the

² Article 6.3 of the Constitution

leader annually or changing the end point of the leader's term of office to the fourth day after the next borough wide elections.

Report of the leader of the council and delegation of executive functions

18. Each year the elected leader must appoint their cabinet. In accordance with the constitution this can consist of a minimum of two and up to a maximum of nine nominated members, whose portfolios are determined and allocated by the leader. The leader must appoint a deputy leader.
19. The leader will be invited to report on the delegation of executive functions, appoint a deputy leader and appoint other cabinet members and determine their portfolios.
20. The leader will report on any further delegations including:
 - The extent of any authority delegated to cabinet members individually, including details of the limitation on their authority
 - The terms of reference and membership of any cabinet committees
 - The nature and extent of any delegation of executive functions to community councils, any other authority or joint arrangement
 - The nature and extent of any delegation to officers with details of any limitation on that delegation.
21. The leader may also decide to delegate executive functions to the health and wellbeing board. During the year the leader may vary the executive scheme of delegation by giving notice to the monitoring officer. A variation may be permanent or relate to a particular decision.

Deputy cabinet members

22. The leader will also report on the appointment of any deputy cabinet members and determine their roles. Deputy cabinet members may hold responsibility for specific tasks designated by the leader, in consultation with the monitoring officer. Deputy cabinet members cannot take part in any formal decision making.
23. Whilst a deputy cabinet member may be a member of a committee, scrutiny committee or scrutiny sub-committee, he or she will not be permitted to take decisions or scrutinise any of their own deputy cabinet member tasks or duties. Deputy cabinet members shall not be the chair or vice-chair of a committee or sub-committee which takes decisions or scrutinises matters relating to their tasks or duties. The chairs of the licensing and planning committees shall not be deputies.
24. The duties and responsibilities of deputy cabinet members will be:
 - To assist cabinet members with specific aspects of their portfolio
 - To contribute to the process of setting policy direction, development and review by assisting cabinet members to develop specific aspects of their individual portfolio

- To represent the relevant cabinet member at non-decision making meetings
- To assist cabinet members in the drafting and preparation of reports, responses to questions and other work related to the cabinet deputy's duties
- To promote the core values, corporate priorities and objectives of the council.

Role of council assembly

25. Following receipt of the leader's report, council assembly will note as a consequence that the proper constitutional officer will update Part 3 of the constitution in accordance with the leader's report on the delegation of executive functions.

Appointments to panels, boards and forums

26. The cabinet will consider appointments to panels, boards and forums where the function falls within the responsibility of the executive (e.g. housing, education, social services, regeneration, etc).

Policy framework implications

27. This report is not considered to have direct policy implications.

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

28. There are no specific impacts on the community from this process.

Climate change implications

29. There are no direct climate change implications arising from this report.

Legal implications

30. There are no specific legal implications.

Financial implications

31. There are no direct resource implications in the context of this report.

Consultation

32. Consultation is being undertaken with the Mayor, Group whips and finance officers.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Council Assembly May 2021 - Appointment of Executive Functions 2021-22 report.	160 Tooley Street, London, SE1 2TZ	Virginia Wynn-Jones 020 7525 7055
The Council's Constitutional		

APPENDICES

Appendix	Title
None	

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Chidilim Agada, Head of Constitutional Services		
Report Author	Virginia Wynn-Jones, Principal Constitutional Officer		
Version	Final		
Dated	15 May 2026		
Key Decision?	No		
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER			
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included	
Assistant Chief Executive – Governance and Assurance	Yes	Yes (included in body of report)	
Strategic Director of Resources	No	No	
Cabinet Member	No	No	
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team		15 May 2026	

Meeting Name:	Council Assembly (Annual Meeting)
Date:	28 May 2026
Report title:	Proportionality and Establishment of Committees, Panels and Related Matters 2026-27
Ward(s) or groups affected:	All
Classification:	Open
Reason for lateness (if applicable):	Not Applicable
From:	Proper Constitutional Officer

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That council assembly notes the appointment of political group leaders, deputies and whips (information to be circulated separately).
2. That council assembly notes the political balance of the council as follows:

Table 1a) Political balance after the elections on 7 May 2026

Group	Members	%
Labour	29	46.03
Green	22	34.92
Liberal Democrat	12	19.05
Total	63	100.00

Table 1b) Political balance before the elections on 7 May 2026

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

3. That council assembly notes that for the purpose of calculating the allocation of seats on committees, only political groups with greater than one member are considered.
4. That council assembly notes changes to proportionality and agrees the change to the allocation of seats on committees following the local election on 7 May 2026. The new allocation is set out at paragraph 5, in Tables 2, 3 and 4.

5. That council assembly establishes the following committees for the coming municipal year 2026-27.

Table 2: Ordinary Committees - Total number of seats 42

Note: The political balance rules require that the political groups represented on council have proportionate representation on council committees. A political group must comprise at least two members. Councils can allocate seats on committees to members not aligned to a group but are under no statutory obligation to do so.

Labour with 29 members will have 19.33/42 seats, Greens with 22 members will have 14.67/42 seats, and Liberal Democrat with 12 members will have 8/42 seats.

The below tables are based on the committees as agreed by council assembly (and the council as licensing authority, for the licensing committee) on 17 May 2025.

Committee	Total	Lab	Green	Lib Dem
Committee 1 Appointments Committee	7	3	3	1
Committee 2 Planning Committee (Major Applications) A	7	4	2	1
Committee 3 Planning Committee (Major Applications) B	7	3	3	1
Planning Committee (Smaller Applications)	7	3	3	1
Committee 4 Audit, Governance and Standards Committee	7	3	2	2
Committee 5 Corporate Parenting Committee	7	3	2	2
Total	42	19	15	8

Table 3: Other committees - Total number of seats 26

Labour Group with 29 members will have 11.97/26 seats, Greens with 22 members will have 9.08/26 seats, and Liberal Democrats with 12 members will have 4.95/26 seats.

Committee	Total	Lab	Green	Lib Dem
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	11	5	4	2
Licensing Committee	15	7	5	3
Total	26	12	9	5

Table 5: Neighborhood areas

1.	Borough and London Bridge
2.	Bermondsey
3.	Rotherhithe
4.	Walworth
5.	Old Kent Road
6.	Camberwell
7.	Peckham
8.	Nunhead and Peckham Rye
9.	East Dulwich
10.	Dulwich

Note: The composition of neighborhood areas is set out in Article 8 of the constitution (see paragraph 43 of this report).

Health and wellbeing board

6. That the health and wellbeing board be established as a committee of the council under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 with the membership set out in paragraph 41 of the report.
7. That it be noted that the leader of the council nominates the local authority membership. In accordance with committee procedure rules, the leader chairs the board unless he or she nominates another member to chair the board. The cabinet member for health and wellbeing has been appointed the chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board from 2022-2026.

Appointment of chairs and vice chairs

8. That council assembly considers whether it wishes to appoint chairs and vice chairs for the following committees:

Committees

- Appointments committee
- Planning Committee (Major Applications) A
- Planning Committee (Major Applications) B
- Planning Committee (Smaller Applications)
- Audit, governance and standards committee
- Corporate parenting committee [see note 1 below]
- Overview and scrutiny committee
- Licensing committee

Notes:

- a. In 2025-26, the cabinet member responsible for children's services chaired the corporate parenting committee. Council assembly is asked to formally approve this appointment in 2026-27.

- b. All outstanding appointments will be referred to the first meeting of the respective committee in the 2026-27 municipal year.

Appointment of neighbourhood champions

9. That council assembly appoint neighbourhood champions for the following neighbourhood areas:

Neighbourhood areas

- North-west
- North-east
- West-central
- East-central
- South

Establishment of the council's panels

10. That council assembly establishes the following council panels (see paragraph 53):

Table 5: Panels - Total number of seats 13

Panel	Total	Lab	Green	Lib Dem
Council assembly business panel	5	2	2	1
Constitutional steering panel	5	2	2	1
Pensions advisory panel	3	1	1	1
Total	13	5	5	3

Note: This table is based on the panels established in 2025-26.

Appointments of chair to constitutional steering panel and voluntary bodies appointments panel

11. That council assembly appoints a chair to constitutional steering panel [see note 1 below] and that council assembly note the chair of council assembly business panel [see note 2 below].

Notes:

1. The group whip of the majority group chaired the constitutional steering panel in 2025-26. Council assembly is asked to formally approve this appointment in 2026-27.
2. That it be noted that the Mayor chairs the council assembly business panel.

Urgency committee

12. That the role of the urgency committee between a municipal election and the annual meeting of council assembly, as agreed by council assembly on 26 March 2014, be noted as set out in paragraphs 56 and 57.

Appointments to Local Government Association (LGA) General Assembly

13. That council assembly appoints up to three representatives and allocates the seven votes to representatives to attend the LGA General Assembly (see paragraphs 59 and 60).

Other appointments to joint committees/outside bodies

14. That council assembly notes the cabinet and other committees will make appointments to all other outside committees and bodies for the municipal year 2026-27 as required by part 3Q of the constitution.

Date of council assembly

15. That council assembly agree to change the date of council assembly in July from 8 July 2026 to 15 July 2026 (see paragraph 56).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

16. The constitution is updated as and when changes are required. The recommendations in this report are based on the current constitution and previous decisions of the council.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Proportionality – the legal position

17. The size and composition of the council's regulatory and other committees are established in accordance with the number of seats each political group has on the council as a whole – this is known as "proportionality".
18. The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 covers the allocation of seats to political groups. It makes no provision for single independent councillors so they do not form part of the proportionality considerations. The political balance rules require the council to ensure that the political groups represented on council have proportionate representation on the committees of the council. Political groups have to constitute two or more members and be actively constituted as a group in accordance with the above regulations.
19. Seats on committees and sub-committees must be allocated in accordance with the four principles of proportionality contained in sections 15, 16 and 17 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. There is a duty to give effect to the following principles, as far as is reasonably practicable:

- (i) That not all the seats on a committee or sub-committee are allocated to the same political group
- (ii) That the majority group must have the majority of seats on each committee or sub-committee
- (iii) Subject to (i) and (ii) above, it must be ensured that the proportion of each political group's seats of the total number of seats on "ordinary committees" reflects, as closely as possible, their proportion of seats on full council.

Notes:

- 1. The ordinary committees are: appointments; planning; audit, governance and standards; corporate parenting (see also paragraphs 20 to 23).
- 2. The licensing committee is appointed under the Licensing Act 2003, the overview and scrutiny committee is appointed under section 9F of the Local Government Act 2000 and the health and wellbeing board is appointed under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and is to be treated as if appointed under section 102 of the Local Government Act 1972 (subject to modifications of the effect of section 102 made by the Secretary of State). None of the aforementioned committees is treated as an ordinary committee.
- (iv) Subject to (i) to (iii) above, the proportion of each political group's seats on each committee and sub-committee/commission reflects as closely as possible their proportion of seats on full council.

Note: This rule applies to all committees, sub-committees/commissions and joint committees, except for the licensing committee.

- 20. Council assembly can agree an allocation that is disproportionate, provided no member votes against this.

Appointments to seats

- 21. Section 16(1) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 provides that it is the duty of an authority or committee to exercise its power to make appointments in such a way as to give effect "to such wishes about who is to be appointed to the seats on that body which are allocated to a particular political group as are expressed by that group".

Ordinary committees

- 22. The regulatory and other committees are the "ordinary committees" of the council. In 2025-26 the annual meeting established the following:
 - Appointments committee
 - Planning Committee (Major Applications) A

- Planning Committee (Major Applications) B
- Planning Committee (Smaller Applications)
- Audit, governance and standards committee
- Corporate parenting committee.

23. The proportionality is based on the total number of seats compared to the overall allocation of seats each political group has on the council. As the Labour Group has an overall majority on the council, it has been allocated a majority on each committee.
24. Council assembly is exercising a matter reserved to it in Part 3A(4) of the constitution to establish committees. It is for council assembly to agree the committees it wishes to establish, to set the total number of seats and allocate them to the committees numbered 1 to 4 in the Table 2 in paragraph 4 above.

Appointments committee

25. The appointments committee determines appointments to posts of chief officers, chief finance officer and monitoring officer and also acts as a panel for the purpose of advising council assembly on matters relating to the dismissal of the head of paid service, the chief finance officer or the monitoring officer as prescribed by the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001 (as amended).
26. At least one member of the cabinet shall serve on the appointments committee.

Audit, governance and standards committee

27. The audit, governance and standards committee provides independent assurance of the adequacy of the council's governance arrangements, independent scrutiny of the council's financial and non-financial performance, has oversight of the financial reporting process of the council and ensures that its members and co-opted members maintain high standards of conduct and requires such authorities to adopt a code of conduct for their members.
28. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA's) guidance (Audit Committees Practical Guidance for Local Authorities, 2005) states that although audit committees are not mandatory, "Audit committees are an essential element of good governance". It goes on to say, "Good corporate governance requires independent, effective assurance about the adequacy of financial management and reporting. These functions are best delivered by an audit committee, independent from the executive and scrutiny functions."
29. No more than one member of the cabinet may be a member of the audit, governance and standards committee and no cabinet member may chair the committee. The chair may be a deputy cabinet member, as this role does not include the exercise of any delegated powers.

30. No more than one member of the overview and scrutiny committee may be a member of the audit, governance and standards committee and no member of the overview and scrutiny committee may chair the committee.

Overview and scrutiny committee

31. The overview and scrutiny committee (OSC) is the coordinating scrutiny body and appoints a number of scrutiny commissions. They review and scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the council's functions.
32. OSC co-ordinates councillor calls for action and scrutiny of health, crime and disorder, considers requests for scrutiny reviews and approves scrutiny work programmes.
33. The committee can also appoint joint committees with other local authorities.
34. The overview and scrutiny committee is not an ordinary committee, but it is one to which the proportionality requirements apply. Scrutiny commissions will be established by the overview and scrutiny committee at its first meeting and it will consider the allocation of places on the commissions including members who are not part of any political group.
35. Council assembly can agree an allocation that is disproportionate, provided no member votes against this.
36. The overview and scrutiny procedure rules provide that the overview and scrutiny committee will consist of the chair, vice chair and the chairs of the scrutiny commissions provided that the proportionality rules are not compromised. Each political group is permitted to nominate members who are not cabinet members should it be necessary to maintain proportionality and/or if there are fewer chairs of scrutiny commissions than places on the overview and scrutiny committee.
37. The overview and scrutiny committee and any commission which scrutinises the council's education functions will contain in its membership four voting education representatives in addition to its councillor members, comprising one Church of England, one Roman Catholic Church and two parent governor representatives.
38. No member of the cabinet shall serve on any scrutiny committee.

Health and wellbeing board

39. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 enables the local authority to arrange for any of its functions to be exercised by the board should it so wish. The health and wellbeing board was first constituted by council assembly on 27 March 2013. The board will not have the power to perform any of the functions given to the health overview and scrutiny committee, and it will itself be subject to overview and scrutiny as a committee of the council. Members of the scrutiny committee who are members of the health and wellbeing board should not be

involved in the scrutiny process if the health and wellbeing board undertakes executive functions, which is then subject to scrutiny, as this may create a conflict of interests. The proportionality requirements do not apply to the health and wellbeing board.

40. It will be for the leader of the council under the ‘strong leader’ model to decide whether any executive functions should be delegated to the board. Until such a decision is taken, the board will operate in accordance with the council’s existing decision-making framework and normal council budget setting processes.
41. The health and wellbeing board must include six statutory members which are:
- At least one councillor, who will be (or be nominated by) the leader
 - The director of adult social services of the local authority
 - The director of children’s services of the local authority
 - The director of public health of the local authority
 - A representative of local healthwatch
 - A representative of the Integrated Care Board.

Note: The health and wellbeing board general membership is reviewed periodically. This is to ensure that the right partners are represented on the board. Any proposed change to the membership will be put forward to the health and wellbeing board for agreement.

42. All members of the health and wellbeing board are subject to Southwark’s Code of Conduct for elected members when acting as a member of the board and will be subject to declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests. Consequently, it is recommended that substitutes should not be permitted at meetings of the committee.

Neighbourhood areas

43. The boundaries of the neighbourhood areas reflect the borough’s communities as far as possible. It will be for the leader of the council under the ‘strong leader’ model to decide whether any executive functions should be delegated to the neighbourhood areas.

Table 7: Neighbourhood areas divided by geographical areas

Neighbourhood	Electoral wards
Borough and London Bridge	Borough & Bankside, London Bridge & West Bermondsey, St George’s and Chaucer
Bermondsey	North Bermondsey and South Bermondsey
Rotherhithe	Rotherhithe and Surrey Docks
Walworth	North Walworth, Faraday and Newington
Old Kent Road	Old Kent Road
Camberwell	Camberwell Green and St Giles
Peckham	Peckham and Rye Lane
Nunhead and Peckham Rye	Nunhead, Queens Road and Peckham Rye

Neighbourhood	Electoral wards
East Dulwich	Goose Green, Champion Hill and Dulwich Hill
Dulwich	Dulwich Village and Dulwich Wood

Table 8: The table below sets out which of the areas will be represented by each neighbourhoods champion:

Neighbourhoods champion	Neighbourhoods
Neighbourhoods champion North-west	Borough & London Bridge
Neighbourhoods champion North-east	Bermondsey and Rotherhithe
Neighbourhoods champion West-central	Camberwell and Walworth
Neighbourhoods champion East-central	Old Kent Road, Peckham, Nunhead & Peckham Rye
Neighbourhoods champion South	Dulwich and East Dulwich

Licensing committee

44. Section 6 of the Licensing Act 2003 requires that each licensing authority must establish a licensing committee of at least 10, but no more than 15 members of the authority. The power to establish the committee rests with council assembly. Council agreed in December 2004 that the licensing committee should comprise 15 members in order to achieve maximum flexibility and provide a sufficient pool of members to ensure quorate sub-committees.
45. There is no requirement in the Licensing Act 2003 that the licensing committee should be proportionate. Council assembly agreed in December 2004 to establish the current committee on a proportionate basis.
46. The Licensing Act 2003 makes no provision to appoint reserve members.
47. In accordance with the constitution, a licensing sub-committee with delegated authority will be established to hear licence applications including Licensing Act 2003, Gambling Act 2005, street trading and other licensing responsibilities granted by statute. The sub-committee will include members of the licensing committee with a quorum of three members and a reserve. Sub-committees shall be summoned as required to deal with any business and the membership will be based on the allocation process agreed by the licensing committee on 6 December 2007.

Appointment of chairs and vice chairs

48. Chairs and vice chairs may be appointed directly by council assembly or the appointments may be delegated to the first meeting of the relevant committee.
49. In the case of the corporate parenting committee, it is proposed that the cabinet member with responsibility for children's services be appointed chair. This is in line with the decision of the annual meeting last year.
50. The leader of the council or his/her nominee, in accordance with committee procedure rule 8.13, chairs the health and wellbeing board.

Reserve members

51. Council assembly, committee, and overview and scrutiny procedure rules make provision for the appointment of reserve members to council committees and to scrutiny committees. There is no provision for reserves on the licensing committee and the health and wellbeing board.
52. Each political group can appoint reserve members. The number of reserve members a group can appoint is, with the exception of the overview and scrutiny committee, planning committees and audit, governance and standards committee, one less than the number of places the group holds on the committee or sub-committee. If a political group holds only one place on a committee or sub-committee, that group may appoint one reserve member (council assembly procedure rule 4.5(2)).
53. On the overview and scrutiny committee, planning committees and the audit, governance and standards committee, the number of reserve members that each political group can nominate is equal to the number of places each group holds on the committee.

Establishment of the council's panels

54. Council assembly will consider the establishment and composition of the following council panels. Panels are not required to be proportionate. This is a matter of local choice for the local authority.
 - **Council assembly business panel** – The Mayor chairs the panel, which consists of two representatives from the Labour group (one of whom is the whip), two from the Green group (one of whom is the whip), and the Liberal Democrat whip. The panel acts as an advisory panel to the Mayor on council assembly matters, including the setting of themes for debate.
 - **Constitutional steering panel** – The panel is responsible for reviewing and recommending amendments to the constitution. It is also responsible for making recommendations to council assembly for the award of the Honorary Freedom of the Borough and Honorary Aldermen and to recommend changes to the members' allowances scheme. In 2025-26, the chief whip of the majority group chaired the panel.

In 2025-26, council assembly established a panel with a membership comprising the group whip and two other members from the majority group and the whips of the other political groups represented on the council. In accordance with current practice, groups can nominate a reserve to attend in the absence of a representative.

- **Pensions advisory panel** – The panel has a composition of three members, officers, independent advisors and a trade union representative.

The purpose of the panel is to advise the chief finance officer when performing functions relating to the council's pension scheme.

Council assembly dates

55. A calendar of council assembly meetings for the 2026-27 municipal year was agreed at council assembly on 18 March 2026. This meeting agreed the council assembly dates, in accordance with the relevant statutory provision.
56. Following the publication of the dates for the Local Government Association conference, held this year on 7-9 July 2026, it is proposed that the scheduled council assembly on 8 July 2026 be moved by one week to 15 July 2026.

Urgency committee

57. On 26 March 2014, council assembly established the urgency committee, together with planning and licensing (urgency) sub-committees, to function during the interim period between a municipal election and the annual meeting of council assembly. The urgency committees will exercise the non-executive functions of the council, other than those reserved by law to council assembly for decision, in cases where in the opinion of the chief executive it was necessary to act urgently. The urgency committees have normally only met to consider issues that are time sensitive and cannot wait for the annual meeting to establish the decision-making arrangements. The leader shall exercise any urgent executive matters.
58. Council assembly on 26 March 2014 agreed that the urgency arrangements should be as follows:
 - Urgency committee - The urgency committee will deal with non-executive functions only that are not reserved by law to council assembly and are not planning or licensing applications. The urgency committee arrangements comprise the leaders of the two largest political groups following the borough-wide elections.
 - Executive arrangements – Executive decisions will be exercised by the leader or their nominee, a relevant cabinet member (if the leader is personally re-elected). If the leader (or relevant cabinet member) is required to take an executive decision, because the normal scrutiny arrangements would not have been established by the annual meeting, executive decisions would be treated in a similar way to urgent implementation decisions or an urgent decision outside the budget and policy framework. If the leader is not re-elected, the urgency committee shall exercise the executive functions.
 - Planning and licensing – Separate arrangements exist for a planning (urgency) sub-committee and a licensing (urgency) sub-committee. Each licensing (urgency) sub-committee convened to hear an urgent application would comprise of three licensing members who will be selected using the current procedure from the pool of re-elected councillors who previously

served on the licensing committee. The arrangements are set out in more detail in Part 3N of the council's constitution.

Appointments to Local Government Association (LGA) General Assembly

59. The Local Government Association informed the council in 2017 that it was entitled to seven votes and advised that votes can be allocated amongst the representatives as the local authority sees fit. The LGA encourages local authorities with three or four representatives to allocate at least one position and vote to a minority group representative. Council assembly can agree any combination of representatives and votes:
60. For 2025-26, council assembly appointed three representatives and allocated seven votes:

Representative	No. of votes	Group
Councillor Sarah King (Leader)	3	Labour
Councillor Jasmine Ali	3	Labour
Councillor Victor Chamberlain	1	Liberal Democrat

Establishment of sub-committees and overview and scrutiny commissions

61. Overview and scrutiny commissions will be established at a special meeting that immediately follows the conclusion of this annual meeting, and sub-committees of the audit, governance and standards committee will be established at the first meeting of the relevant parent committee. The division of seats will be included in the reports to the relevant committees.

The below tables are based on the commissions and sub-committees as agreed by the parent committees in May 2025. Labour Group with 29 members will have 16.11/35 seats, Greens with 22 members will have 12.22/35 seats, and Liberal Democrats with 12 members will have 6.67/35 seats allocated across both scrutiny commissions and audit, governance and standards sub-committees.

Scrutiny Commissions	Total	Lab	Green	Lib Dem
Scrutiny Commission 1 (Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission)	7	4	2	1
Scrutiny Commission 2 (Housing Scrutiny Commission)	7	3	3	1
Scrutiny Commission 3 (Environment, Community Safety and Engagement Scrutiny Commission)	7	3	3	1
Scrutiny Commission 4 (Health and Social Care Scrutiny Commission)	7	3	2	2
Sub-total	28	13	10	5

Audit, governance and standards sub-committees	Total	Lab	Green	Lib Dem
Audit, governance and standards (civic awards) sub-committee	4	2	1	1
Audit, governance and standards (standards) sub-committee	3	1	1	1
Sub-total	7	3	2	2

GRAND TOTAL	35	16	12	7
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Policy framework implications

62. This report is not considered to have direct policy implications.

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

63. This report is not considered to have direct community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts.

Climate change implications

64. There are no direct climate change implications arising from this report.

Legal implications

65. There are no specific legal implications.

Financial implications

66. There are no direct resource implications in the context of this report. The member expenditure budget makes provision for the special responsibility allowances for members. There are no additional costs arising from this report.

Consultation

67. There are no specific consultation requirements arising from this report.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Appointment of Leader and Executive Functions Report - Council Assembly 22 May 2024.	Southwark Council Constitutional team 160 Tooley Street, London, SE1 2QH	Constitutional.team@southwark.gov.uk
Establishment of committees and other constitutional issues 2024-2025 Report - Council Assembly 22 May 2024.		

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Agenda and minutes for the following meetings: - Licensing Committee - 6 December 2007 - Council Assembly 2004 to 2024		

APPENDICES

Appendix	Title
Appendix 1	Political Group Leaders, Deputies and Whips (to be circulated separately)
Appendix 2	Nominations for Chairs and Vice Chairs (to be circulated separately)

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Chidilim Agada, Head of Constitutional Services		
Report Author	Chidilim Agada, Head of Constitutional Services		
Version	Final		
Dated	19 May 2026		
Key Decision?	No		
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER			
Officer Title		Comments Sought	Comments Included
Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance		Yes	Yes (included in body of report)
Strategic Director, Resources		No	No
Cabinet Member		No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team			19 May 2026

Meeting Name:	Council Assembly (Annual Meeting)
Date:	28 May 2026
Report title:	Nominations to London Councils Committees, Greater London Employment Forum, Borough Lead members, London Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Common Investment Vehicle (CIV) Ltd and London Councils Limited 2026-27
Ward(s) or groups affected:	All
Classification:	Open
Reason for lateness (if applicable):	Not Applicable
From:	Proper Constitutional Officer

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That council assembly consider and agree nominations to the London Councils committees, the Greater London Employment Forum, London Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Common Investment Vehicle (CIV) Ltd and London Councils Limited, details listed in Appendix 1 of the report.
2. That council assembly nominate borough lead members/relevant portfolio holders for the areas listed in paragraph 9 of the report.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. The council nominates representatives to serve on the London Councils committees on an annual basis. The nomination of representatives to the London Councils committees and forums fall within the terms of reference of the cabinet. Council assembly is being asked to agree the nominations for 2026-27 in order to appoint members prior to the London Councils Annual General Meeting (AGM).

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Joint committees

4. The Local Government Act 2000 and regulations enable local authorities to make use of joint arrangements with other authorities. Under these arrangements, a "joint committee" can be established in agreement with other local authorities to promote the economic, social or environmental well being of the area.

5. In this report the council is invited to make nominations to the following joint committees:
 - London Councils Leaders' Committee (s101 Joint Committee)
 - London Councils Transport and Environment Committee (Associated Joint Committee)
 - London Councils Grants Committee (Associated Joint Committee)
6. The council is also invited to make nominations to the London Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Common Investment Vehicle (CIV) Ltd.
7. Council assembly may only nominate cabinet members as representatives or deputies to the joint committees. The nominations need not reflect the political composition of the local authority as a whole. This is set out in Article 9 on joint arrangements in the council's constitution. London Councils advise that the deputies should have some knowledge of the policy area concerned, can be kept informed of the member body's activities and be able to act as substitute if the principal nominee is unable to attend a meeting.

Greater London Employment Forum

8. The Greater London Employment Forum acts as the regional employer for London for those staff employed under the National Joint Council for Local Government Services. The representative is usually the lead cabinet member for human resources issues.

Borough lead members

9. The London Councils Executives who lead on particular policy areas need to consult and liaise with relevant borough lead members on matters of major importance and are seeking to identify borough lead member / relevant portfolio holders (by way of nominations) for the following areas:
 - Children and Young People / Safeguarding and Schools
 - Skills and Employment
 - Housing and Regeneration
 - Health, Social Care and Adult Services
 - Arts/Culture, Tourism, Port and Leisure
 - Crime and Public Protection
 - Economic Development / Business
 - Planning / Infrastructure / Development

London Councils Limited

10. The council is required to appoint a representative to the company, London Councils Limited. The London Councils advise that the borough's

representative on the Leaders' Committee is normally appointed unless a council specifically indicates otherwise.

11. All formal London Councils committee and forum meetings are held during the day on weekdays.

Policy framework implications

12. This report is not considered to have direct policy implications.

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

13. The council is being invited to nominate to the London Councils committees, the Greater London Employment Forum and the London Councils Limited company. The nominations process has no direct impact on the community.

Climate change implications

14. There are no direct climate change implications arising from this report.

Legal implications

15. There are no specific legal implications.

Financial implications

16. There are no direct resource implications in the context of this report.

Consultation

17. Consultation is being undertaken with the Mayor, Group whips and finance officers.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Correspondence from London Councils	160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Chidilim Agada constitutional.team@southwark.gov.uk

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Nominations to London Councils Committees, Greater London Employment Forum, London Councils Limited Company, London Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Common Investment Vehicle (CIV) Ltd (to follow)

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Chidilim Agada, Head of Constitutional Services		
Report Author	Chidilim Agada, Head of Constitutional Services		
Version	Final		
Dated	17 April 2026		
Key Decision?	No		
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES			
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included	
Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance	Yes	Yes (included in body of report)	
Strategic Director, Resources	No	No	
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team		11 May 2026	

Meeting Name:	Council Assembly (Annual Meeting)
Date:	28 May 2026
Report title:	Appointment of Political Officers
Ward(s) or groups affected:	All
Classification:	Open
Reason for lateness (if applicable):	Not Applicable
From:	Proper Constitutional Officer

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That council assembly notes that the posts of political officers (assistants) be established under the terms of the Local Government Act 1989 with effect from this Annual Council until the next Annual Council meeting following the next local elections in May 2030 and are allocated to the Labour Group, Green Group and Liberal Democrat Group.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 governs the appointment of political officers (assistants) to provide assistance to political groups represented on the Council. Political Groups which have at least 10% of the total number of seats on the Council qualify for a political assistant.
3. For Southwark, this will be $(63 \times 10\% = 6.3 \text{ rounded down to } 6)$ to qualify for a political officer.
4. Following the local elections on 7 May 2026, the Labour Group has 29 members, the Green Group has 22 members, and the Liberal Democrat Group has 12. Therefore, they meet the qualifying criteria for the allocation of a political officer.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

5. The statutory framework for the decisions required is set out in the report.
6. The role is 'politically restricted', in essence this means that political assistants are not allowed to voice their political opinion in public, nor publicly canvas for a particular party, (although they are allowed to convey their political opinion and advice to the political group). Politically restricted employees are also disqualified from standing for or holding elected office.
7. The appointment of a political assistant is a fixed term post and must terminate at or before the annual meeting of the Council after each election

year, so long as the relevant group remains entitled to the services of a political assistant. This does not prevent the post holder being appointed for a further term.

8. Where an appointment is made under the Act, then the existence of the post is subject to review from time to time. This is to ensure that the political groups continue to qualify for the allocation of a political assistant.

Policy framework implications

12. This report is not considered to have direct policy implications.

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

13. There are no specific impacts on the community from this process.

Climate change implications

14. There are no direct climate change implications arising from this report.

Legal implication

15. Under Section 9 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, local councils can appoint assistants to aid political groups. Sections 9(6) and (7) of the Act provide that each of the three largest political groups on a relevant authority is entitled to have one political assistant, provided that they have at least 10% of the members of the authority.
16. The exception is where only one political group accounts for at least 10% of the membership, in which case the next biggest group also qualifies.
17. The appointment of political assistants must be conducted in accordance with the Council's procedures and statutory requirements including the Officer Employment Procedure Rules.

Financial implications

18. The maximum level of remuneration is determined by the Local Government (Assistants for Political Groups) (Remuneration) (England) Order 2021 which provides that the specified maximum amount is equivalent to Spinal Point 38 of the NJC scheme for local government.

Consultation

19. None in the context of this report.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None.		

APPENDICES

Appendix	Title
None.	

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Chidilim Agada, Head of Constitutional Services		
Report Author	Chidilim Agada, Head of Constitutional Services		
Version	Final		
Dated	11 May 2026		
Key Decision?	No		
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER			
Officer Title		Comments Sought	Comments Included
Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance		Yes	Yes (included in body of report)
Strategic Director, Resources		No	No
Cabinet Member		No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team			11 May 2026

Meeting Name:	Council Assembly
Date:	28 May 2026
Report title:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2025-26
Ward(s) or groups affected:	All
Classification:	Open
Reason for lateness (if applicable):	N/a
From:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council Assembly note the scrutiny activity for the 2025-26 municipal year as detailed in paragraphs 9 - 58 of the report.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The council's scrutiny function provides a critical challenge to delivery of public services in Southwark through power to make inquiry into matters of local concern. The scrutiny function is undertaken by the council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its commissions and can take a number of forms including:
 - Reviews into individual topics
 - 'Call in' – scrutiny of executive decisions taken before they are implemented
 - Call to account of officers on receipt of a petition of 500 or more signatures from the public
 - Interviews with individual cabinet members and senior officers.
3. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its commissions have specific functions in respect of policy development and review, health and wellbeing, scrutiny of decisions and performance of the council in relation to policy objectives. The committee and its commissions may make recommendations to the cabinet and/or council assembly arising from the outcome of a scrutiny process.
4. The scrutiny function is significant and wide ranging – detail of its specific functions and terms of reference are set out in Appendix 1 of the report.
5. Section 2, Article 5 of the Council Constitution requires the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to report annually to Council Assembly on the workings of the overall scrutiny function. The committee may make recommendations for

future work programmes and amend working methods if appropriate. Section 6.1(h) of the overview and scrutiny committee procedure rules (terms of reference) require overview and scrutiny committee to report annually to all councillors on the previous year's scrutiny activity. This report sets out the activity of the committee and its commissions for the 2025/26 year.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

6. Scrutiny plays a vital role in Southwark's democratic framework. It provides independent challenge, supports better decision-making, and helps ensure that the Council and its partners remain accountable to residents. This report sets out how scrutiny has carried out that role during the past year, through the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its four scrutiny commissions.
7. During 2025-26, scrutiny focused on issues of direct importance to residents, including housing quality and safety, education and SEND provision, health prevention and safeguarding, community safety, play spaces, and the Council's overall performance and budget amongst other issues. Across these areas, councillors examined evidence, questioned cabinet members and senior officers, and made recommendations aimed at improving outcomes and transparency.
8. The council has sought to strengthen how scrutiny operates. This includes adopting a Cabinet Scrutiny Protocol, improving early engagement with decision-makers, developing clearer work-planning tools, and creating new ways for residents to access information about scrutiny activity. These improvements will help to ensure that scrutiny is effective, focused and constructive.

Activity of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its commissions

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Membership: Councillors Ian Wingfield (Chair), Irina von Wiese (Vice-Chair), Suzanne Abachor, Cassandra Brown, Victor Chamberlain, Esme Hicks, Laura Johnson, Richard Leeming, Jason Ochere, Bethan Roberts, Martin Seaton

Co-opted Members: Martin Brecknell, Allie Kallon, Mannah Kargbo, Claire Williams

(Reserves: Councillors Rachel Bentley, Sunil Chopra, Sabina Emmanuel, Barrie Hargrove, Jon Hartley, Richard Livingstone, Hamish McCallum, Margy Newens, Catherine Rose, Michael Situ, Cleo Soanes)

In year changes:

Off – Councillor Michael Situ – reserve member, September 2025

On - Councillor Sam Foster – voting member, March 2026

Off - Councillor Laura Johnson – voting member, March 2026

On – Councillor James McAsh – reserve member, March 2026

9. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee established four scrutiny commissions for the 2025/26 municipal year:
- Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission
 - Environment, Community Safety and Engagement Scrutiny Commission
 - Health and Social Care Scrutiny Commission
 - Housing Scrutiny Commission

Focus for the year

10. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee's priorities for the year were budget scrutiny, cost of living, the council's delivery plan performance, Southwark 2030 goals and the Council's Transformation agenda.
11. In undertaking scrutiny, the committee received evidence from cabinet members, senior officers and external partners.

What the Committee examined

12. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee scrutinised several issues throughout the year including:
- **Southwark Community Safety Partnership**, receiving information on the annual strategic assessment 2024-25, and the new community safety plan 2025-2030 draft priorities
 - **Chilton Grove Estate - infill and major works**, following concerns raised by residents and councillors on the delivery of the major works project and impact on residents
 - **Cost of Living – Southwark 2030 goals**, receiving updates on the various initiatives to support residents, including help with bills, the food programme, London Living Wage, and employment opportunities
 - **Annual Workforce**, in connection with the workforce profile for the 2024-25 year
 - **Regeneration - Old Kent Road**, reviewing progress in the transformation of the Old Kent Road opportunity area
 - **Rail infrastructure** - community infrastructure levy (CIL) investment at train/tube stations to support accessibility, capacity and town centre regeneration
 - **Council Delivery Plan Performance** receiving information on performance and progress at Q2 2025-26
 - **Refugees / Borough of Sanctuary**, discussing the setting up of a task and finish group for 2026/27, to look at the council's partnership work around Refugees / Borough of Sanctuary and identifying areas for improvement

- **Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy**, reviewing progress on delivering the levy allocations over the previous eighteen months
- **Budget Scrutiny**, receiving information relating to the council's financial position and undertaking the annual budget scrutiny during January 2026, receiving evidence from several cabinet members and senior officers on the proposed council budget for 2026-27.

Call-ins

13. The committee considered one call-in during the 2025-26 year. This was in relation to the provision of a **new care home at Asylum Road, SE15**, which involved the disposal of the site by way of a long-leasehold interest with a selected partner to deliver and operate the new care home.

Scrutiny recommendations

The committee made a number of recommendations to cabinet following examination of matters in respect of:

- Southwark Community Safety Partnership - [Report](#)
- Chilton Grove Estate – infill and major works - [Report](#)
- Asylum Road Care Home – Disposal of site by way of long-leasehold interest - [Report](#)
- Annual budget scrutiny - [recommendations](#)

Cabinet responses

14. The committee received and noted the cabinet response to the following scrutiny report:
 - Scrutiny of Consort Estate Major Works

Cabinet member interviews

15. The committee held interviews with the **Leader of the Council and Chief Executive** in respect of delivery against the Council Plan 2022-2026.
16. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee met nine times – its first meeting of the new municipal year held in May 2025.

[Link to agenda and minutes](#) (Overview and Scrutiny Committee)

Scrutiny Commissions

Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission

Membership: Councillors Cassandra Brown (Chair), Rachel Bentley (Vice-Chair), Mohamed Deen, Jon Hartley, Margy Newens, Youcef Hassaine, Irina von Wiese

Co-opted Members: Martin Brecknell, Alie Kallon, Mannah Kargbo, Claire Williams

(Reserves: Councillors Maggie Browning, Victor Chamberlain, Sam Foster, Adam Hood, Sunny Lambe, Jason Ochere, Joseph Vambe)

Focus for the year

17. During 2025-26, the Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission focused on issues affecting children, young people and residents' access to employment and economic opportunity.

What the commission examined

18. The commission examined a broad range of education and local economy topics including:
 - **Pupil place planning**, with a specific focus on falling school rolls across Southwark and London and implications for school sustainability, pupils and parental choice
 - **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) home to school transport provider**, with a focus on child safety, child welfare, complaints and working with the council
 - **Youth Services**, covering investment through the positive futures for young people fund, provision of youth centres and adventure playgrounds, youth programmes, Southwark Youth Parliament and Young advisors, engagement with young people, support to parents
 - **Southwark Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP)**, receiving the 2024-25 annual report on safeguarding, and partnership arrangements
 - **East Street Market**, examining trader concerns, anti-social behaviour, the quality of the public environment, and investment
 - **Commercial Property Portfolio**, focusing on management of commercial leases, challenges of small businesses, rent, repairs and marketing
 - **The new Connect to Work programme**, in respect of the programme's role in supporting Southwark residents with long-term health and disability barriers into good quality sustainable employment

Scrutiny recommendations

19. The commission made recommendations to cabinet on the various topics covered by the commission throughout the 2025-26 year.

A summary of the commission's key recommendations is detailed below:

- **Pupil Place Planning**

- recommending the delivery of an improved, data-driven pupil place planning model
- implementing a consistent borough-wide framework for managing school closures

- **Youth Services**

- strengthening youth services through increasing awareness of youth clubs, expanding SEND inclusive spaces and staff training, and ensuring funding supports youth-led engagement

- **Southwark Safeguarding Children Partnership**

- recommending that the partnership improve monitoring and escalation of safeguarding risks linked to damp, mould, overcrowding and poor housing, and establishing shared protocols across the partnership

- **SEND home to school transport**

- enhancing the safety, reliability and oversight of SEND home to school transport by embedding complaints KPI, expanding AI enabled CCTV for safeguarding and incident investigation

- **East Street Market**

- implementing a targeted infrastructure and safety improvement programme for East Street Market, and applying learnings to other markets across the borough

- **Commercial Property Management**

- improving commercial property management by establishing a single repairs and communications system for commercial property that is separate to tenant and resident repairs, reducing overdue repairs and improving business navigation of council processes

- **Connect to Work**

- expanding the Connect to Work programme's integrated employment and health model, including targeted promotion, and ensuring the new Peckham Hub operates as a single front door service to increase sustainable employment for priority groups
- recommending the promotion of the pilot affordable workspace hub in Peckham, as well as signposting to affordable workspace opportunities
- developing clear milestones and shared expectations for organisations offering work experience, with particular focus on increasing and sustaining opportunities for young people with

SEND

Cabinet responses

20. The commission also received and noted the cabinet responses to the scrutiny commission recommendations for 2024-25 which covered Education and Health Care Plans, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities provisions and Inclusions in Schools.

Cabinet member interviews

21. During the year the commission held interviews with the following cabinet members on the various aspects of their portfolios:
- **Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Refugees**, interview covering capacity in Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision, the Annual Standards report around performance of schools and exam outcomes, Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) (including delays and assessment processes) , school exclusions reduction (including link between SEND and exclusions) , Keeping Education Strong strategy, the monitoring of demographic trends in relation to housing building and any future recovery in birth rates (pupil place planning), children's social care and corporate parenting (including Care leavers' employability pathway).
 - **Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency, Jobs and Business**, interview covering issues relating to local economy and routes into employment, business development and Town Centre Action Plans, Living Wage, Commercial Property, support into employment for young people with SEND.
22. The commission met five times – its first meeting held in July 2025.
23. [Link to agenda and minutes](#) – (Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission)

Environment, Community Safety and Engagement Scrutiny Commission

Membership: Councillors Esme Hicks (Chair), Graham Neale (Vice-Chair), Maggie Browning, Sabina Emmanuel, Hamish McCallum, David Parton, Leo Pollok

Co-opted Members: None

(Reserves: Councillors Rachel Bentley, Sunil Chopra, Esme Dobson, Youcef Hassaine, Adam Hood, Darren Merrill, Reginald Popoola)

In year changes

Off - Councillor Hamish McCallum – voting member, March 2026

On - Councillor James McAsh – voting member, March 2026

Off – Councillor Adam Hood - reserve member, March 2026

Focus for the year

24. The primary focus for 2025-26 was **Play Spaces**, with the commission seeking to ensure Southwark has sufficient good quality and accessible play spaces for all children and young people.

What the commission examined

25. As part of its review, the commission took evidence from a wide range of internal and external contributors to understand both strategic and operational issues affecting play provision. This included scrutiny of:
- The council's playgrounds programme and approach to maintenance and investment
 - The accessibility and inclusiveness of play spaces, particularly for teenage girls, young women and gender-diverse young people
 - The role of regeneration and capital investment in delivering new or improved play facilities
 - The relationship between play spaces, community safety, and perceptions of safety in public places
26. The commission heard directly from senior council officers responsible for parks, leisure and public realm, the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Parks and Young People, as well as from external organisations Make Space for Girls, a charity which campaigns to make spaces in the public realm work better for teenage girls, young women and gender diverse young people, London Play, a charity which advocated for children's right to play, and information from Play England in respect of their 'It All Starts with Play! 2025 – 2035 strategy' and the Raising The nation Play Commission 'Everything to Play For'.
27. The commission also examined how play spaces are considered within wider strategies, including:
- Open space and regeneration planning
 - Community safety activity, including work with girls and young women
 - Housing-led environments where play provision may sit across different council departments

Scrutiny recommendations

28. Whilst acknowledging the important steps Southwark has taken to improve its play offer, including a borough-wide audit of play spaces, new capital investment, and the establishment of a cross-departmental Play Working Group, the commission concluded that Southwark now needs to move forward with a clear borough-wide Play Strategy that embeds equity, inclusion, safety,

participation, and long-term maintenance, and integrates play across parks, estates, streets and the wider public realm.

29. The commission has produced a [draft scrutiny report](#) setting out its findings and recommendations to the cabinet.
30. Alongside the main review, the commission also considered matters relating to:

- **The draft Customer Experience Plan 2025 – 2030** (pre-decision scrutiny), developed to deliver on improved customer experience for those interacting with the council and its services.

The commission heard from the Cabinet Member for Equalities, Democracy and Finance, the Director of Customer and Exchequer, and other officers in respect of the draft plan.

The commission made recommendations to cabinet around:

- resident communication and progress updates
- revisiting the categorisation of members' enquiries
- introducing a target focused on reducing the number of complaints
- ensuring resident communication of plan being in Plain English
- **Streets for People – Zoning Consultation**, briefing from the Head of Controlled Parking, Environment, Sustainability and Leisure on the key outcomes from the borough-wide consultation which highlighted the key priorities from residents, the delivery approach, zone prioritisation criteria, the programme stages and alignment with other programmes.

The commission explored cross-borough working, the consultation process, traffic displacement concerns, integration and collaboration. Key take aways for the commission were ensuring engagement is diverse and inclusive, and strengthening collaboration with neighbouring boroughs.

- **Independent Community Safety Review**, receiving a report on findings of the review and the development of the emerging service model for community safety and phased delivery plan, hearing from the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Neighbourhoods, and the Director of Stronger Neighbourhoods.

The presentation of the report and discussion covered:

- engagement and crime reporting, particularly in respect of women and girls
- work to improve safety in parks and play spaces
- hotspot areas
- alcohol, drugs, and anti-social behavior and the reporting of it
- police presence and feedback from ward meeting engagement
- environmental safety measures on estates

- understanding perpetrators and root causes
 - designing for safety and teenage spaces
 - **Community safety report on robbery**, this covered measures being taken to tackle phone snatching, particularly by individuals using electric bikes
 - **Police Oversight Board annual report 2025**, presented by independent members
 - **Annual interview with the police borough commander**, Police Chief Superintendent Emma Bond, BCU Commander, Central South.
31. The commission also heard from a Young Advisor about young people's experiences when outside in public spaces, and their need for better access to resources and opportunities.

Cabinet responses

32. Throughout the year the commission received and noted cabinet responses to the following scrutiny review reports:
- Biodiversity scrutiny review
 - Exploring the Physical and Mental Health and Wellbeing Impacts of Active Travel and Access to Nature scrutiny review

Cabinet member interviews

33. The commission held interviews with the following cabinet members on the various aspects of their portfolios:
- **Cabinet Member for Leisure, Parks & Young People**, interview covering:
 - equity of Investment – ensuring estates receive equivalent investment to traditional parks
 - exploring sustainable approaches to maintain investment
 - co-design examples (Goose Green cited as example of successful engagement and delivery model)
 - gendered approach - Geraldine Mary Harmsworth Park targeting young girls, and a commitment to applying this approach across playgrounds
 - engagement with school children and local residents in design processes
 - play working group
 - collaboration with developers to secure investment in play
 - community safety initiatives in Burgess Park
 - use of deprivation indices and youth input to prioritise interventions, learning from innovative play space models.
 - **Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency, Jobs and Transport**, interview covering

- winter schedule – particularly around hazardous ice
- leaf collection
- gritting of cycle ways and footpaths
- Peckham gyratory consultation

- **Deputy Cabinet Member for Cleaner Borough**, interview covering

- waste management programme
- bulky waste collection, charges and fly tipping
- 'fix my street' service, quality of responses and case closures, improvements to service

34. The commission met five times – its first meeting held in July 2025.

[Link to agenda and minutes](#) (Environment, Community Safety and Engagement Scrutiny Commission)

Health and Social Care Scrutiny Commission

Membership: Councillors Suzanne Abachor (Chair), Maria Linforth-Hall (Vice-Chair), Naima Ali, Esme Dobson, Sandra Rhule, Nick Johnson, Charlie Smith

Co-opted Members: None

(Reserves: Councillors Victor Chamberlain, Dora Dixon-Fyle MBE, Sam Foster, Emily Hickson, Leo Pollak, Joseph Vambe, David Watson)

Focus for the year

35. During 2025-26, the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Commission focused on issues affecting residents' health outcomes, safety and access to services. The commission's work concentrated on preventative health, safeguarding adults at risk, and the performance of health and care services operating within and beyond the borough.

The commission's main areas of scrutiny during the year were:

- **Cancer Prevention and Early Diagnosis**, continuation of a scrutiny review initiated in the previous municipal year
- **Adult Safeguarding**, including hoarding and the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements

What the commission examined

36. As part of the cancer prevention review, the commission heard from the South East London Cancer Alliance and council public health officers on screening, early diagnosis pathways and preventative approaches.
37. Adult Safeguarding – the commission received a presentation on Hoarding, considered councillor case work, and interviewed the Independent Chair of the

Southwark Safeguarding Adults Board and received the 2024-25 annual report.

Scrutiny recommendations

38. In respect of cancer prevention and early diagnosis, the commission has made a number of recommendations to cabinet around:
- community engagement and co-design
 - reducing barriers to access
 - data quality, intelligence and system capability
 - primary and secondary care capacity
 - blood cancer – early diagnosis
 - cancer prevention - developing a cause-based, cancer specific workstream

The commission has produced a report for cabinet consideration ([draft version](#)).

Other areas of scrutiny

In addition to its primary reviews, the commission also scrutinised a range of other health and social care matters, including:

- **The new Asylum Road Care Home**, including a presentation on Nursing Care Home Space Standards by a senior architect and lecturer in Design for Ageing and Dementia
- **Blue Badge Scheme**, update from council officers in the Parking Services division.
- **Healthwatch Southwark's Annual report 2024-25** and priorities for 2025-26.
- **Menopause Services**, receiving a presentation from a consultant gynaecologist, King's College Hospital, and local clinical lead GP from Blackfriars Medical Practice covering the local practice
- **Update on 'Access to Toilets'** from the Director of Leisure, and Head of Parks and Leisure following a previous scrutiny review
- **King's College Hospital Foundation Trust new Five-Year Strategy 2026 to 2031**, hearing from representatives of the King's College Hospital Foundation Trust
- **GP Access**, through a presentation from the Director of Partnership Delivery and Sustainability, and Director of Primary and Community Care, South East London NHS on engagement with local practices to improve access to timely appointments, with a focus on ensuring people who are not digital natives or have communication difficulties having alternative and easily accessible methods to book appointments

- **The Care Quality Commission (CQC) local authority assessment** of Southwark Adult Social Care, considering the findings of the assessment

Cabinet responses

39. The commission received and noted the cabinet response to the following scrutiny report:
- Nursing Care Home Delivery scrutiny review

Cabinet member interviews

40. The commission held an interview with the **Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing** on various aspects of her portfolio. Interview covering:
- approach to prevention, including community support
 - continuity of support around FGM work
 - annual report on care homes
 - quality of care
 - ownership of responsibility for actions arising from CQC care home reports
41. The commission met six times – its first meeting held in July 2025.

[Link to agenda and minutes](#) (Health and Social Care Scrutiny Commission)

Housing Scrutiny Commission

Membership: Councillors Jason Ochere (Chair), Emily Tester (Vice-Chair), Barrie Hargrove, Ketzia Harper, Richard Livingstone, Catherine Rose, Jane Salmon

Co-opted Members (non-voting) Bassey Bassey, Cris Claridge, Ina Negoita

(Reserves: Councillors Sunil Chopra, Ellie Cumbo, Adam Hood, Laura Johnson, Hamish McCallum, Bethan Roberts, Kath Whittam)

In year changes

Off – Cris Claridge – Co-opted Member – October 2025
 On – Althea Smith – Co-opted Member – October 2025
 Off – Bassey Bassey – Co-opted Member – February 2026
 On – Andrew Eke – Co-opted Member – February 2026
 Off – Althea Smith – Co-opted Member – February 2026
 On – Brendan O'Brien – Co-opted Member – February 2026
 Off – Jane Salmon – Voting Member – March 2026
 On – James McAsh – Voting Member – March 2026
 Off – Hamish McCallum – Reserve Member – March 2026
 On – Sam Foster – Reserve Member – March 2026

Focus for the year

42. During 2025-26, the Housing Scrutiny Commission focused on issues directly affecting the quality, safety and management of homes in Southwark. Its work centred on how effectively the Council and partner landlords are delivering safe, well-maintained housing, communicating with residents, and responding to long-standing issues arising from major works programmes.
43. The commission's work reflected ongoing resident concerns following previous scrutiny reviews and was aligned with the council's objectives around housing standards, resident engagement and building safety.
44. The commission heard evidence from a wide range of contributors, including cabinet members, senior council officers from the departments of Housing, and Planning and Growth, senior representatives of the Council's partner developers and nine housing associations operating within the borough.

What the commission examined

45. The commission undertook detailed scrutiny across a broad range of housing-related topics, including:
 - Implementation of the **Good Landlord Plan**, with regular progress updates from senior housing officers and cabinet members
 - **Fire safety and post-Grenfell compliance**, including future investment and assurance arrangements
 - **Major works programmes**, follow-up scrutiny of the Canada Estate, Fair Street / Devon Mansions and Kirby Estate reviews
 - **District heating**, focusing on implementation of previous scrutiny recommendations and service reliability
 - **Housing delivery**, examining challenges and constraints affecting new supply and regeneration
 - **Draft revised Resident Engagement Strategy** (pre-decision scrutiny), hearing from the Cabinet Member for Council Homes and the Director of Landlord Services
 - **Social landlord performance**, including repairs, damp and mould, service charges, anti-social behaviour, compliance with Awaab's Law

Scrutiny recommendations

46. The commission made a number of recommendations to cabinet at the beginning of the municipal year relating to reports on major works outcomes ([report to cabinet](#) – see item 20).
47. As a result of the rest of the year's scrutiny activity, the commission has made a number of recommendations to the cabinet summarised below:

- **Council's working relationship with housing associations**
 - the development and sharing of strategic and operational links with social landlords
 - compilation of housing association contacts for use by ward councillors
 - the promotion of closer working and knowledge sharing with Resident Services Officers and housing associations
- **Major Works review**
 - the seeking of legal advice on clawing back costs for work lacking proof of completion
- **Revised Resident Engagement Strategy**
 - providing a more resident-centric illustration of engagement in the next revising of the strategy
- **The Council's use of void properties awaiting demolition**
 - exploring the mechanisms available to enable properties earmarked for demolition to be let as permanent tenancies when there are substantial delays

Cabinet responses

48. Throughout the year the commission received and noted cabinet responses to the following scrutiny reports:
- Scrutiny Review of Tenant Structures (Draft Resident Involvement Strategy) Interim Report
 - Outcome of the review of the Canada Estate 2017-18, Fair Street/Devon Mansions 2018-19, and Kirby Estate 2018-19 Major Works Projects

Cabinet member interviews

49. The commission held an interview with the **Cabinet Member for Council Homes** on various aspects of her portfolio. Interview covering:
- The Good Landlord Plan
 - Fair / Street, Devon Mansions, Canada and Kirby Estates Major works
 - Voids
 - Downsizing
 - Bringing private homes into council use
 - Temporary accommodation
50. The commission met five times – its first meeting held in July 2025.

[Link to agenda and minutes](#) (Housing Scrutiny Commission)

Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees (JHOSC)

51. There is provision in the constitution for the council to form a joint health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) with other local authorities to consider a consultation on a proposal for substantial development of or variation to the health service affecting each council's area.

No JHOSCs were established in 2025-26 under this provision.

South East London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC)

52. Southwark is part of the 'South East London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee', which consists of councillor representatives from Bexley, Bromley, Lambeth, Lewisham, Royal Borough of Greenwich and Southwark. The JHOSC role is to carry out overview and scrutiny in relation to planning, provision and operation of health services that cross local authority boundaries in the South East London Integrated Care System footprint.
53. The JHOSC is currently administered by Lambeth Council. The JHOSC has not met formally during the 2025-26 municipal year.

Southwark Scrutiny Improvement Review

54. The overview and scrutiny committee adopted a [Cabinet Scrutiny Protocol](#) following consultation with the councils Chief Officer Team and cabinet members which strengthened collaborative relationships between scrutiny, cabinet and senior officers. The protocol makes clear the expectations and behaviours for both cabinet members / senior leadership and the scrutiny function in the interests of improving the outcome of scrutiny and developing closer working.
55. Several formal meetings between scrutiny chairs and cabinet members were arranged at the beginning of the municipal year and were seen to be beneficial in supporting the scrutiny process where these meetings took place. Equally follow-up meetings were sought to be arranged towards the end of the municipal year. Where these meetings took place, it was reported that the scrutiny chair / cabinet member exchanges were productive. This process however did not take place for all the commissions, or with all cabinet members - further work in this area will take place in the next municipal year with the recognition that one approach may not necessarily be the best fit for all circumstances and that earlier and clearer engagement with scrutiny chairs and cabinet members may improve the intended outcomes around strengthening collaborative relationships.
56. Website pages dedicated to scrutiny work have been created and hosted on the council's engagement platform 'Engage'. These pages will provide the scrutiny function with a platform to better engage with residents and communities in the borough around scrutiny activity. The website pages are live, and promotion will be undertaken in the coming months.

57. Through the Cabinet Scrutiny Protocol, it is expected that scrutiny will have greater involvement in pre-decision scrutiny and policy development and activity of scrutiny being aligned with the council's key priorities. Further work on aligning scrutiny with the council's key priorities will be undertaken in the 2026-27 year and will be communicated through the overview and scrutiny committee's work programme.
58. A suite of templates has been created to better support the work programming process, scoping of individual reviews, meeting planning and outcomes, and tracking progress of the implementation of agreed scrutiny recommendations.

Scrutiny activity for 2026-27

59. It will be for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to agree the 2026-27 work programme for the committee and commissions, which may factor in previous scrutiny committee/commission work.

Resource implications

Support to the scrutiny function

60. The scrutiny function is supported by the scrutiny team, which will sit under the Resources Directorate. Responsibility for this service sits with the Assistant Director for Local Democracy, Elections and Registration. The team consists of the Head of Scrutiny, and three full-time scrutiny officers.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Overview and Scrutiny Committee Agenda and Minutes	Southwark Council Website	Amit Alva 020 7525 0496
Browse meetings - Overview & Scrutiny Committee - Southwark Council		
Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission Agenda and Minutes	Southwark Council Website	Amit Alva 020 7525 0496
Browse meetings - Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission - Southwark Council		
Environment, Community Safety and Engagement Scrutiny Commission Agenda and Minutes	Southwark Council Website	Julie Timbrell 020 7525 0514
Browse meetings - Environment, Community Safety and Engagement Scrutiny Commission - Southwark Council		

Health and Social Care Scrutiny Commission Agenda and Minutes	Southwark Council Website	Julie Timbrell 020 7525 0514
Browse meetings - Health and Social Care Scrutiny Commission - Southwark Council		
Housing Scrutiny Commission Agenda and Minutes	Southwark Council Website	Adam Wood 020 7525 0265
Browse meetings - Housing Scrutiny Commission - Southwark Council		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Scrutiny Functions and Terms of Reference (Extract from the council constitution)

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Vishal Seegoolam, Assistant Director for Local Democracy, Elections and Registration		
Report Author	Everton Roberts, Head of Scrutiny		
Version	Final		
Dated	18 May 2026		
Key Decision?	No		
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER			
Officer Title		Comments Sought	Comments Included
Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance		No	No
Strategic Director, Resources		No	No
Cabinet Member		No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team			18 May 2026

APPENDIX 1

SCRUTINY FUNCTIONS AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

(Relevant extracts from the council constitution)

Part 2 - Articles

Article 5 – Overview and scrutiny committee and commissions

- 5.1 The council will appoint an overview and scrutiny committee to discharge the functions conferred by section 9A of the Local Government Act 2000. The overview and scrutiny committee will appoint commissions and determine their terms of reference.

The overview and scrutiny committee will also discharge those functions of the council relating to the scrutiny of the health service contained in the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013, except where a function is reserved to the council.

Where an NHS body or health service provider consults the council and another authority or authorities about a proposal for a substantial development of or variation to the health service affecting each council's area, the overview and scrutiny committee will appoint a joint overview and scrutiny committee with the other authority or authorities for the purposes of that consultation.

- 5.2 Within their terms of reference, the overview and scrutiny committee and its commissions will:

- a) review and/or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the council's functions
- b) make reports and/or recommendations to council assembly and/or the cabinet in connection with the discharge of any functions
- c) consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants.

- 5.3 For the purpose of this constitution, scrutiny commissions are considered as sub-committees

5.4 Specific functions

1. Policy development and review

Overview and scrutiny committee and its commissions may:

- a) assist council assembly and the cabinet in the development of its budget and policy framework by in-depth analysis of policy issues
- b) conduct research, community and other consultation in the analysis of policy issues and possible options
- c) consider and implement mechanisms to encourage and enhance community participation in the development of policy options

- d) question members of the cabinet and chief officers about their views on issues and proposals affecting the area
- e) 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.

2. **Health and wellbeing**

Overview and scrutiny committee and its commissions must acknowledge, and respond to, a referral of a matter for review and scrutiny received from a local Healthwatch organisation.

Overview and scrutiny committee and its commissions may:

- a) review and scrutinise the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board
- b) review and scrutinise any matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of the health service in its area (but in doing so it must invite comments from interested parties and consider information provided by a Local Healthwatch organisation or contractor)
- c) make reports and recommendations to a NHS body or health service provider and the council on any matter it has scrutinised
- d) consider consultations from a NHS body or health service provider and to make comments
- e) question members or employees of a NHS body or health service provider.

3. **Scrutiny**

Overview and scrutiny committee and its commissions may:

- a) review and scrutinise the decisions made by and performance of the cabinet and council officers both in relation to individual decisions and over time
- b) review and scrutinise the performance of the council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas
- c) consider referrals from members on any of the functions of the committee
- d) question members of the cabinet and chief officers and relevant partner authorities about their decisions and performance, whether generally in comparison with local area agreements, service plans and targets over a period of time, or in relation to particular decisions, initiatives or projects
- e) make recommendations to the cabinet and/or council assembly arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process or refer entire reports

produced as the result of the scrutiny process to be debated and noted at council assembly

- f) give notice of its recommendations to the cabinet and/or council assembly and publish recommendations
- g) give notice of its recommendations to the relevant partner authority
- h) review and scrutinise the performance of other public bodies in the area and invite reports from them by requesting them to address the overview and scrutiny committee/sub-committee and local people about their activities and performance
- i) question and gather evidence from any person (with their consent).

4. Crime and disorder

Overview and scrutiny committee and its commissions may:

- a) act as the crime and disorder committee within the meaning of section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006
- b) review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge by the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions
- c) make reports or recommendations to the local authority with respect to the discharge of those functions
- d) make recommendations to the cabinet and/or council assembly with respect to any matter which is a local crime and disorder matter in relation to a member of the authority
- e) consider any crime and disorder matters referred by any member of the council.

5. Annual report

The overview and scrutiny committee will report annually to council assembly on the workings of the overall scrutiny function, and may make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rules

5. General terms of reference of all scrutiny committees/commissions

5.1 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.

5.2 The overview and scrutiny committee, or one of its commissions shall be responsible for scrutinising the crime and disorder function.

6. Terms of reference of the overview and scrutiny committee

6.1 The terms of reference of the overview and scrutiny committee will be:

- a) to appoint commissions , agreeing the size, composition and terms of reference and to appoint chairs and vice chairs
- b) to agree the annual work programme for OSC and the commissions
- c) to consider requests from the cabinet and/or council assembly for scrutiny reviews

- d) to exercise the right to call-in for reconsideration of executive decisions made but not yet implemented
- e) to arrange for relevant functions in respect of health scrutiny to be exercised by an overview and scrutiny committee of another local authority where the council considers that another local authority would be better placed to undertake those relevant functions, and that local authority agrees to exercise those functions
- f) if appropriate, to appoint a joint overview and scrutiny committee with two or more local authorities and arrange for the relevant functions of those authorities to be exercised by the joint committee
- g) to periodically review overview and scrutiny procedures to ensure that the function is operating effectively
- h) to report annually to all councillors on the previous year's scrutiny activity
- i) to scrutinise matters in respect of:
 - the council's policy and budget framework
 - regeneration
 - human resources and the council's role as an employer and corporate practice generally
 - customer access issues, including digital strategy, information technology and communications
 - the council's equalities and diversity programmes.

Terms of reference of a joint overview and scrutiny committee appointed to consider proposals relating to the health service

- 7.1 Where the council is required to form a joint overview and scrutiny committee with another authority or authorities to consider a consultation on a proposal for substantial development of or variation to the health service affecting each council's area, it will be for each appointing authority to adopt terms of reference and procedure rules as they consider appropriate.
- 7.2 The joint overview and scrutiny committee may:
 - only consider the relevant matter
 - make comments on the proposal
 - require relevant information or require an employee or member of a NHS body or health service provider to attend and answer questions.
- 7.3 When establishing a joint overview and scrutiny committee, the appointing local authorities will determine whether the power of referral to the Secretary of State in relation to a relevant proposal should be made by the Joint Committee or by the local authorities themselves. If the power is retained by the local authorities it may then be delegated to the overview and scrutiny committee or one of its commissions.
- 7.4 The joint overview and scrutiny committee will meet for such a period as is necessary to consider the consultation and make reports and recommendations.

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**COUNCIL ASSEMBLY AGENDA DISTRIBUTION LIST (OPEN) (FULL LIST)
MUNICIPAL YEAR 2026/27**

NOTE: Original held by Constitutional Team; all amendments/queries to
Virginia Wynn-Jones Tel: 020 7525 7055

ONE COPY TO ALL UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED	Copies	To	Copies
Councillors (1 each) Councillor Jasmine Ali Councillor Hellen Benavides Councillor George Grime Councillor Renata Hamvas Councillor Sarah King Councillor Sunny Lambe Councillor Kath Whittam Electronic Versions (No hard copy) All other councillors	7	Press Southwark News South London Press Group Offices Arthur Holmes, Labour Group Office Oliver Bradfield, Liberal Democrat Group Office Officers Althea Loderick Clive Palfreyman Doreen Forrester-Brown Rhona Cadenhead Chidilim Agada Aled Richards David Quirke-Thornton Hakeem Osinaike Darren Summers Vishal Seegoolam Constitutional Team (Copies to Virginia Wynn-Jones, 2nd Floor, Hub 2, Tooley Street) Total: Last updated: May 2026	by email by email by email by email by email by email 1 by email by email by email by email by email by email 12 20