

Cabinet

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Cabinet held on Tuesday 17 January 2023 at 11.00 am at the Council Offices, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT: Councillor Kieron Williams (Chair)
Councillor Jasmine Ali
Councillor Evelyn Akoto
Councillor Stephanie Cryan
Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle MBE
Councillor James McAsh
Councillor Darren Merrill
Councillor Catherine Rose
Councillor Martin Seaton

1. APOLOGIES

All members were present.

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

The chair gave notice of the following late items:

Item 8: Policy and Resources Strategy 2023-24 to 2025-26 – Update
Item 9: Policy and Resources Strategy: Revenue Monitoring report, including Treasury Management 2022-23
Item 10: Policy and Resources – Capital Programme Update 2022-23
Item 11: Approval of the Housing Revenue Account Budget 2023-24 and Rent Setting.

Reason for urgency and lateness will be specified in the relevant minutes.

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

No representations were received.

4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There were none.

5. MINUTES

The leader requested an update be provided to cabinet members in respect of the deputation presented to cabinet 6 December 2022 about the movement of large lorries and impact on residents in Astbury Road, Colls Road, Dayton Grove, York Grove, Regal Row and section of Queens Road, SE15.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the chair.

6. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

Barry Duckett

“Why is the council considering a rent increase when the Canada Estate major works programme, a ten month contract, is still running 26 months late? There has been no consultation with residents, officers have refused to meet us, and this looks like a waste of the housing revenue account (HRA).”

Response by Councillor Darren Merrill, Cabinet Member for Council Homes and Homelessness

The original contract period for the Canada Estate major works programme was 14 months. This has now been extended to 33 months.

There are many reasons for this, which include:

- Review of, and changes to, designs such as:
 - The inclusion of new pigeon netting following extended consultation with the resident project group (RPG).
 - Wider consultation on windows following concerns from the tenants and residents association (TRA) with proposed designs.
 - Wider consultation on the low-rise blocks on insulation and pointing as TRA not happy with advice by three separate consultants.

- Review of flooring tiles within high-rise blocks - The RPG shared concerns with specification to refurbish tiles, which were considered not at the end of their useful life, and so will remain in situ.
- Fire doors - Renewal of front entrance doors (FEDs) in response to new building safety regulation. i.e. Front doors must now be certificated and where they are not then new doors must be installed, which can take up to 12 weeks.
- New windows to low-rise blocks – The RPG requested wider consultation with proposal on new windows in the low-rise block which resulted in delays.
- New legislation – Building and fire regulations now require a broader more intrusive surveys by qualified fire engineers to understand the structure and fabric of our buildings to mitigate fire risks.
- The impact of the COVID 19 – The pandemic meant that works had to be suspended, due to government guidelines and repeated lockdowns. The pandemic also caused delays through supply chain issues for materials and inflated costs.

The council have undertaken wide ranging forms of consultation on this scheme as requested from the Resident Project Group (RPG) – often beyond the level of consultation we would normally apply to schemes that have been successfully delivered.

The RPG Chair continues to be included in monthly project meetings and in additional briefings about the scheme, either in-person or online. We have engaged in this way to ensure residents are clear on the status of the project. This has been as a direct result of the level of requests made by the TRA.

Officers and members including the day-to-day operational team are actively engaged in the consultation process at Canada Estate. This includes regular site visits by the project manager and also attendance of the strategic director, director of asset management, assistant director of building safety, often including councillors and lead members.

Our consultation process has included:

- Section 20, Notice of Intention and Notice of Proposal
- Resident Consultation meetings
- Resident Project Group meetings
- Tenant and Resident Association meetings and AGMs
- Newsletters
- Special briefings on design changes to RPG.

The major works team are committed to the continued high levels of consultation to engage as promised under the guidance of Putting Residents First and beyond.

If there is any concern on our level of engagement, please do raise it with the cabinet member for council homes and homelessness.

7. DEPUTATION REQUESTS

The report had not been circulated five clear days in advance of the meeting. The chair agreed to accept this item as urgent (the request had been received in line with the council's constitutional deadline for the receipt of deputation requests).

RESOLVED:

1. That the deputation request from tenant representatives on item 11, approval of the housing revenue account budget 2023 and rent setting be heard.
2. A spokesperson for the deputation addressed cabinet for five minutes and questions were asked of the deputation for a period of five minutes.

8. POLICY AND RESOURCES STRATEGY 2023-24 TO 2025-26 UPDATE

The report had not been circulated five clear days in advance of the meeting. The chair agreed to accept this item as urgent as the council were committed to publishing budget proposals at the earliest possible opportunity to ensure they were available to the public for comments and questions. Presenting the report to cabinet on 17 January 2023 gave the opportunity for debate prior to presentation of budget figures to cabinet on 6 February 2023. Under the council's constitution, there is a requirement for the overview and scrutiny committee to review and challenge budget proposals and this is due to take place on 23 January 2023.

RESOLVED:

1. That the outcome of the policy statement published on the 12 December 2022 (paragraphs 18-23 of the report) be noted.
2. That the outcome of the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement published on the 20 December 2022 be noted (paragraphs 24-29 of the report).
3. That it be noted, as reported to cabinet on 6 December 2022, the intention remains to prepare a balanced one year 2022-23 budget for approval by cabinet in advance of council assembly in February 2023.
4. That the revised budget gap of £1.44m, down from £6m in December, be noted.

5. That it be noted that the budget proposals for 2022-23 contained within the report include:
 - Un-ringfenced settlement funding assessment grant of £162.4m, an increase of £8.7m on 2022-23
 - Un-ringfenced other grant income of £6.2m, a decrease of £8.3m on 2022-23
 - An increase of £12.5m in ring fenced grants to £78.7m
 - Estimated retained business rates growth of £47m, an increase of £21m from 2022-23, due to business rate revaluation and updating for high levels of inflation
 - Estimated council tax revenues of £137.8m, including a council tax increase of 4.99% (2% adult social care precept and 2.99% general increase)
 - Pay provision and contractual inflation of £34.3m, for the 2-year period 2022-23 and 2023-24.
6. That it be noted that the Greater London Authority (GLA) is expected to increase its council tax precept by 7.1% following publication of the Mayor's draft budget in late December.
7. That it be noted that the GLA council tax precept is due to be set on 23 February 2023, one day after council assembly sets the budget for Southwark, therefore a council tax setting committee will need to be convened.
8. That the current budget options proposed to help achieve a balanced 2023-2024 budget (Appendices B to E of the report) be noted including:
 - Efficiency savings of £12.0m
 - Net income increase of £2.5m
 - Savings impacting on services of £2.3m
 - Commitments and growth of £9.0m.
9. That it be noted that in order to ensure that the base budget is on a secure financial footing a number of commitments are proposed for 2023-24.
10. That the proposed fees and charges schedules as set out in Appendix F of the report be approved.
11. That the departmental narratives and the ongoing equality analyses of the budget proposals (Appendix A of the report) be noted.
12. That officers be instructed to undertake further consultation for new budget options where necessary or appropriate; and
13. That it be noted this report and accompanying schedules will be considered

by overview and scrutiny committee on 23 January 2023 and that any recommendations arising will be considered for inclusion in the final report to cabinet on 6 February 2023 for recommendation to council assembly on 22 February 2023.

NOTE: In accordance with overview and scrutiny procedure rule 16.2 (a) (budget and policy framework) these decisions are not subject to call-in.

9. POLICY AND RESOURCES STRATEGY: REVENUE MONITORING REPORT, INCLUDING TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2022-23

The report had not been circulated five clear days in advance of the meeting. The chair agreed to accept this item as urgent as presenting the report to cabinet on 17 January 2023 gave the opportunity for debate on the forecast outturn for 2022-23 prior to presentation of the draft budget for 2023-24, which is also on this agenda.

RESOLVED:

That the following be noted:

1. The adverse variance forecast for the general fund in 2022-23.
2. That the forecast has worsened since the month 4 monitor was published in September 2022.
3. That no additional COVID-19 funding has been made available to councils in 2022-23 and that all ongoing expenditure has been included within the forecast.
4. The key adverse variations and budget pressures:
 - (i) The dedicated schools grant (DSG) is forecasting an in-year pressure of £3m, in addition to the £21.7m accumulated deficit brought forward
 - (ii) The continuing budget pressures within children's social care
 - (iii) The emerging budget pressures in adult social care, mitigated by the use of resilience reserves
 - (iv) The continuing budget pressures on temporary accommodation
 - (v) Pay and contractual inflation across all services.
5. The ongoing inclement macro-economic environment, with inflation running at 10.7% in November and interest rates at their highest since 2008.
6. The final pay settlement was agreed in October, with an average impact

across the organisation of 5.95% (the fixed sum award means the actual % varies by grade and spinal point).

7. That the un-budgeted element of the pay settlement has an adverse impact on the budget forecast of approximately £6.1m.
8. The housing revenue account forecast for 2022-23 (Table 2, paragraphs 68-77 of the report).
9. Treasury management activity undertaken in 2022-23 (paragraphs 81-88 of the report).

That the following be approved:

10. The interdepartmental budget movements that exceed £250k, as shown in Appendix A of the report (noting those under this threshold).

10. POLICY AND RESOURCES - CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE 2022-23 - MONTH 8

The report had not been circulated five clear days in advance of the meeting. The chair agreed to accept this item as urgent as presenting the report to cabinet on 17 January 2023 gave the opportunity for debate on the forecast outturn for 2022-23 prior consideration of the full capital programme refresh scheduled for council assembly in spring 2023.

RESOLVED:

1. That the virements and variations to the general fund and housing investment capital programme as detailed in Appendix C of the report and the new capital bids contained within the report and summarised in Appendix E of the report be approved.
2. That the significant funding requirement of £284m which needs to be identified for the general fund programme to be fully delivered over the remaining term of the programme, as detailed in Appendix A of the report be noted.
3. That the £2.7bn housing investment programme to be fully delivered over the remaining term of the programme, as detailed in Appendix B of the report be noted.
4. That the significant contribution the capital programme is making towards the objectives of the council's climate change strategy (see paragraphs. 17-18, 80-82, 89-91, 149 of the report) be noted.
5. That it be noted that future reports on asset management and the new homes

programme will be received.

11. APPROVAL OF THE HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET 2023-24 AND RENT SETTING

The report had not been circulated five clear days in advance of the meeting. The chair agreed to accept this item as urgent as it was critical that decisions were made in good time to ensure the 28-day statutory notification period could be complied with (and avoid losses in the event of not doing so), such that the changes to rents and charges can be implemented and become effective from 3 April 2023.

Appendix F setting out resident engagement was circulated.

RESOLVED:

1. That a capped rent increase of 7% for all directly and tenant managed (TMO) housing stock within the housing revenue account (excluding supported accommodation) be agreed. This is the maximum permitted under the government's temporary rent cap for 2023-24, as set out at paragraphs 16-17 of the report, with effect from 3 April 2023.
2. That supported accommodation rents by consumer price index (CPI) +1% (11.1%) be increased, in line with the government's prescribed rent formula and in accordance with the specific exclusion granted in the autumn statement, as set out at paragraph 18 of the report with effect from 3 April 2023.
3. That the rent increase be capped for the council's shared ownership properties at 7% in line with the council's other housing stock, as set out at paragraph 19 of the report with effect from 3 April 2023.
4. That tenant service charges, comprising estate cleaning, grounds maintenance, communal lighting and door entry maintenance as set out in paragraphs 36-37 of the report be agreed with effect from 3 April 2023.
5. That the increase to sheltered housing service charges as set out in paragraphs 38-39 of the report be increased with effect from 3 April 2023.
6. That the increases in charges for garages and other non-residential facilities as set out in paragraphs 40-41 of the report with effect from 3 April 2023 be agreed.
7. That the increases to district heating (fuel) charges, including metered (fuel) charges as set out in paragraphs 42-60 of the report with effect from 3 April 2023 be agreed.

8. That officers be instructed to undertake more frequent review of district heating (fuel) charges in light of the exceptional rise in energy costs and realign them as necessary, to ensure the ring-fenced district heating account remains in balance over the medium-term.
 9. That in relation to recommendation 8 above, that subject to proper notice being given and the correct procedure being followed, the price charged to tenants for fuel should move up or down in line with the actual cost incurred by the council be agreed. Furthermore, that consultation be carried out on varying the provisions of the tenancy agreement accordingly to exempt the requirement to consult on district heating (fuel) charges, as set out at paragraphs 49-50 of the report.
 10. That it be agreed to match fund the government's allowance for discretionary housing payments (DHP), on a one-off basis for 2023-24, as set out in paragraph 72 of the report.
 11. That the budget proposals for 2023-24 as set out in Appendices C to E of the report be agreed.
 12. That commitment to ensure that where savings proposals are primarily based on efficiencies and where staffing reductions form part of any savings proposal that due consultation and process is followed with trade unions be reaffirmed.
 13. That a report be received in early 2023 providing an update on involving residents in engagement.
- 12. GATEWAY 1 - PROCUREMENT STRATEGY APPROVAL - SOUTHWARK WORKS EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT COMMISSIONING FRAMEWORK**

RESOLVED:

1. That the procurement strategy outlined in the report for the Southwark Works Employment Support Commissioning Framework for four years commencing on 1 July 2023, for a maximum total value of £9.26m be approved, which will be split between:
 - a. An estimated maximum annual spend of £1.815m by Southwark Council
 - b. A total additional spend of £2m to accommodate possible future external funding sources.
2. That it be noted that the tenders for the initial call-off contracts will be invited from suppliers at the same time as inviting applications to the framework. The call off contracts will be for a period of two years with an option to extend by a further period of two years.

3. That authority be delegated to the chief executive (or relevant senior officer with responsibility for the service) to approve the gateway 2 report for the establishment of the framework and the award of individual call off contracts for the reasons set out in paragraph 21 of the report and in accordance with contract standing orders.

13. GATEWAY 1 - PROCUREMENT STRATEGY APPROVAL - VOIDS AND TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION VOIDS WORKS FOR CONTRACTS A, B C & D

RESOLVED:

1. That the procurement strategy outlined in the report to undertake a restricted tender procedure for four voids and temporary accommodation voids contracts be approved:
 - Contract A - Bermondsey, Rotherhithe and Borough and Bankside at an estimated annual cost of £2.95m
 - Contract B - Peckham and Nunhead at an estimated annual cost of £2.95m
 - Contract C - Camberwell and Dulwich at an estimated annual cost of £2.95m and
 - Contract D - Walworth and temporary accommodation out of Southwark at an estimated annual cost of £2.95m.

for a period of three years from September 2023 (£35.4m) with the option to extend up to a further two years (in increments at the council's sole discretion subject to performance) making an estimated total contract value of £59m.

2. That it be noted that asset management is required to prepare and present a detailed in-house strategy for the future services in the spring of 2023.
3. That it be noted that the procurement strategy in the report will result in bidders being required to bid as backup to each other on their tendered rates to ensure an efficient service delivery.
4. That it be noted that as the repairs improvement plan progresses and is embedded in a dedicated in-house voids team will be set up to deliver high quality voids by Southwark repairs consisting of operatives and managers within three years as further detailed in paragraph 16 of the report.
5. That authority be delegated to the strategic director of housing and modernisation to approve the gateway 2 report for four voids and temporary accommodation voids works contracts for the reasons outlined in paragraph 43 of the report.

14. TUSTIN ESTATE - APPROPRIATION OF LAND FOR PLANNING PURPOSES

RESOLVED:

1. That the land shown outlined on the plan at Appendix A of the report known as Phase 1 of the Tustin Estate that is currently held for housing purposes, be confirmed as no longer required for those purposes and appropriation of the land to planning purposes to facilitate the carrying out of the development proposals for the area in accordance with section 226 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 122(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 be approved.
2. That following completion of the appropriation at paragraph 1 of the report the land shown outlined on the plan at Appendix A be confirmed as no longer required for planning purposes, and the appropriation of the land to housing purposes in accordance with section 9 of the Housing Act 1985 and section 122(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 be approved.

15. GATEWAY 3 - VARIATION DECISION - CONTRACT FOR THE SUPPLY OF AGENCY WORKERS

RESOLVED:

1. That the extension of the council's contract with Comensura for a period of up to nine months starting on 1 April 2023 at an estimated maximum value of £28.4m and including a three month break clause be approved.
2. That it be noted that this extension is required to provide time for a new procurement exercise to be undertaken.
3. That it be noted that the large majority of contract spend is passed to agencies providing temporary workers and the fee payable to Comensura is less than 1% of the total contract value.

16. GATEWAY 1 - PROCUREMENT STRATEGY APPROVAL - CONTRACT FOR THE SUPPLY OF AGENCY WORKERS

RESOLVED:

1. That the proposal to let a new contract for the supply of agency workers via Lot 1 of the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) framework Managed Services for Temporary Agency Resources (MSTAR3) for a period of three years with the option to extend for up to two years in one year increments, making a total estimated maximum contract value of £190.5m inclusive of the extensions be approved.

2. That it be noted that the large majority of contract spend will be passed to agencies providing temporary workers and the fee payable to the successful supplier is expected to be 1% or less of the total contract value.
3. That authority be delegated to the chief executive to approve the contract award to the successful supplier in consultation with the cabinet member for communities, equalities and finance

17. AUTHORISATION OF DEBT WRITE-OFFS OVER £50,000 FOR NATIONAL NON DOMESTIC RATES - REVENUES AND BENEFITS SERVICE

RESOLVED:

That the write off of the debts of £215,875.78 for two debts which are irrecoverable be approved.

18. MOTIONS REFERRED FROM COUNCIL ASSEMBLY - 23 NOVEMBER 2022

RESOLVED:

Good quality housing is a human right: the plan for Southwark

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

1. Council assembly notes:
 - a. The government's rash economic experiments in recent months, followed up by multiple U-turns have created a confidence crisis and worsened the current economic situation.
 - b. The country faces a cost of living crisis with food bills rising, fuel bills rising wages stagnating, this has created a huge fall in the standard of living.
 - c. The disastrous mini-budget in September mortgage spiked the interest rates, making it harder for people to pay their own mortgage and raised the barrier even higher for first time buyers.
 - d. Private rental costs in London are up a staggering 14% on last year.
 - e. Those in private rented accommodation now spend on average 52% of their median monthly income on housing costs.
 - f. 1/3 of our residents live in privately rented homes; that is why Southwark Council introduced the Gold Standard Charter (GSC) which

is a voluntary scheme that rewards landlords and managing agents who provide a professional level of service and good practice to their tenants in the private rented sector.

- g. Council housing is the way to tackle the housing crisis and that good quality homes change people's lives. That is why, since 2014, Southwark has completed or started on site building of 2,561 new council homes and approved 1,000 more. This is a huge achievement in delivering affordable homes for our residents and Southwark stands out as one of the most prolific council house builders in the last 5 years.
 - h. Since 2014-15, the council has been proactive in working with external partners to ensure that social rent homes are delivered as part of every major schemes. This has led, directly, to a net increase of 3,618 approved social rent homes in Southwark.
2. Council assembly believes:
- a. Good quality housing is a human right.
 - b. Private rented homes have their place but we believe that social rented homes are the best way to create long term secure housing for residents and good quality social housing can set the standard of housing across both the public and private sector.
 - c. Resident involvement is vital to brings residents, leaseholders together to find a way forward in these challenging times.
 - d. The rental market is not working; we need a rental system that works for Southwark. Until we have enough affordable homes, we need to control rent levels. Families are being priced out of Southwark and London.
3. Council assembly resolves:
- a. To call for increased regulation in the private rented sector to protect renters and would lobby a future Labour government to introduce these.
 - b. Join voices with the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, in calling on the government to grant City Hall powers to set fair limits on private sector rents rises, a move that City Hall have shown would save families an average of £2,988 during the next two years.
 - c. Build 500 homes for keyworkers at rents that nurses and teachers from our local hospitals and schools and other key workers can afford.
 - d. Build new council homes for older people, designed so residents can live independently for longer.

- e. Use our planning powers to robustly require new social rent homes in private developments alongside other types of genuinely affordable homes.
- f. Back local people to build genuinely affordable homes, supporting them to establish Community Land Trusts, housing co-operatives and partnerships with faith groups that deliver homes that stay affordable forever.
- g. Launch a Good Lettings Agency that makes it easy for landlords who have empty homes to let them at affordable rents to essential workers, homeless families and refugees
- h. Guarantee support to everyone who is on the street in Southwark to access a home of their own and campaign for the government action needed to end rough sleeping for good.
- i. Roll out more protections and support for private renters, extending the council's licensing scheme so landlords have to meet higher standards
- j. Fund free advice services so support is there if your landlord is acting unfairly.
- k. Improve services for council tenants and leaseholders. Strengthening our Great Estates Guarantee and ensuring repairs to council homes are done right first time.
- l. Take a zero tolerance approach to rogue landlords and empty homes, using all the powers available to the council to tackle the worst offenders and campaigning for the resources and powers to bring more long-term empty homes back into use.

Council funding crisis: We need a general election now

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

1. Council assembly notes:
 - a. Local councils and public services have faced 12 years of damaging cuts imposed by the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Governments since 2010.
 - b. £142 million has already been cut from Southwark's government grant funding since 2010. This represents 63% of our central funding, which must be made up from other sources.
 - c. During that time we have taken incredibly difficult decisions to ensure

we can deliver our core services to our residents.

- d. While global factors have contributed to the inflation crisis, the Conservative government's decision, particularly the fallout from the chaotic 'mini budget', have hugely damaged the economic stability in the United Kingdom.
 - e. Paul Sculley MP's comments at the Conservative party conference suggesting there 'there was still fat to trim' regarding council budgets is disgraceful, and show how detached the Conservative Party are from the realities of delivering public services.
 - f. The new Chancellor (Jeremy Hunt at the time of writing) was a high profile cabinet member in the Conservative/Liberal Democrat government responsible for the destructive austerity programme that hugely damaged the nation's public services.
 - g. Councillor Kieron Williams wrote to the Chancellor on 21 October 2022 outlining extreme concerns over the impact of further cuts to local government funding.
2. Council assembly believes:
- a. Ordinary working people must not be made to pay for the failed economic game playing of the chaotic Conservative Party, who are now onto their third Prime Minister in a matter of months.
 - b. The current economic crisis cannot be solved by a return to even harsher austerity measures that we saw introduced by the Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition governments since 2010.
 - c. Further reduction in local government funding will mean that we simply cannot deliver vital services; there is nothing left to cut.
 - d. Rishi Sunak has no mandate and no idea what working people need. We need a general election now so the public get a say on the future of Britain – and the chance for a fresh start with a competent and responsible Labour government in touch with the needs of working people.
3. Council assembly resolves to:
- a. Renew calls on the new Prime Minister and Chancellor to not make working people pay for the mistakes made by the government. The funding gap must be filled by progressive means.
 - b. Make every effort to protect our residents and work to deliver vital services even in the face of the public spending cuts the Chancellor

announced on Monday 17 November 2022.

- c. Continue to call for an immediate general election so that the country can decide its priorities.

Councils for Fair Democracy

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

1. Council assembly notes that:
 - a. Many people feel excluded from our Parliamentary democracy.
 - b. The 2022 Elections Act will raise significant barriers to political participation, due to the introduction of the need for 'Voter ID'. Many residents may not have a drivers licence or passport, the most commons forms of the ID required. This change to the law will disenfranchise many of our communities.
 - c. The removal of a permanent postal votes, will raise further barriers to political participation.
 - d. MPs and Parliaments should reflect the age, gender and protected characteristics of local communities and the nation.
 - e. MPs should reflect their communities, leading to improved decision making, wider participation and increased levels of ownership of decisions taken.
 - f. Good Government should open up pathways to democracy, not close them down
 - g. The most recent Labour Government introduced the Devolution Act, which created regional and national assemblies to devolve powers to a more local level.
2. Council therefore resolves to:
 - a. Campaign for a Labour Government that will defend democracy, including scrapping the new voter ID legislation, as this recent change in the law represents the biggest threat to democracy in the UK right now.
 - b. Campaign for a Labour Government that will explore progressive constitution reform; such as lowering the Voting age to 16, political literacy education, and potential changes to the electoral system.
 - c. Campaign for a Labour Government that will explore reforms for the

House of Lords, including abolition of the Lords and the introductions of an elected second chamber.

Free school meals for all primary school children

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

1. Council assembly notes:
 - a. Currently 3.9 million children in the UK – or 8 pupils in every class of 30 – are growing up trapped in poverty.
 - b. Southwark Labour committed to providing Free Healthy School Meals (FHSMs) to all primary school children in Southwark in 2010 with the policy being successfully rolled out from 2011. The Labour administration have maintained this policy over the last decade and the policy was recommitted to in the 2022 Southwark Labour manifesto.
 - c. In July 2019, Southwark Labour introduced Free Healthy Nursery Meals (FHNMs) for school nursery classes and maintained nursery schools. Evidence shows that the best time for setting healthy behaviours is during the early years, and we rightly recognised that FHNMs, just like FHSMs, could address food insecurity and reduce costs for parents and carers.
 - d. These policies have been warmly welcomed by families the length of Southwark even before the current cost of living crisis.
 - e. We know that as the cost of living crisis spirals and more and more families reliant on food banks, FHSMs will become an even more highly valuable form of support.
 - f. Without urgent and immediate action, an additional 1.3 million adults and 500,000 children will be pushed into poverty next year.
 - g. Over eight in ten of respondents to a recent National Education Union survey told us that their students demonstrated fatigue (87%) and an inability to concentrate (81%) as a result of poverty. Almost three-quarters said their students were unable to complete homework and more than half said students had experienced hunger (57%) or ill health (55%).
 - h. By age 11, only around three quarters of children from the poorest fifth of families reach the government's expected level at Key Stage 2, compared to 97% of children from the richest fifth.
 - i. In April 2022, 7.3 million adults lived in households that said they had

gone without food or could not physically get it in the past month, which includes 2.6 million children.

- j. 800,000 pupils who are living in poverty are not receiving Free School Meals.
 - k. Last year saw the largest increase in obesity rates in both reception-aged and year 6 schoolchildren in a decade. Obesity rates amongst reception-aged and year 6 children rose by 4.5% to 14.4% and 25.5% respectively.
 - l. Rolling out Free School Meals to all children in primary school nationally would represent an £850 million investment in our children's futures.
2. Council assembly commits to:
- a. Continue to invest the quality of our Free School Meals so that every parent knows that their child will be able to enjoy a healthy meal every day they are at school.
 - b. Extend holiday meals for children on Free School Meals up until Easter 2023, in order to provide relief for families facing the worst cost of living crisis in a generation.
 - c. Write to all Southwark secondary schools, highlighting the research undertaken by the Child Poverty Action Group 'Cost of the School Day' project and ask them whether their students eligible for Free School Meals can use their allowance at any time throughout the school day, and whether any unspent money is rolled over so that students can use this credit on the following or any subsequent day.
 - d. Work with other councils across the country to lobby the government to bring in free healthy, school meals for every primary school child, as part of the current national campaign run by the National Education Union.

Tackling food poverty

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

- 1. Council assembly notes that:
 - a. The cost of living emergency is going to leave thousands in our borough struggling to afford to feed themselves and their families this winter.
 - b. In October, the Food Foundation released data showing that one in four household with children (25.8%) have experienced food insecurity in the

past month affecting an estimated 4 million children in the UK.

- c. The rising costs of energy and food will force families to choose between heating and eating.
 - d. 91% of food banks across the country have seen an increase in demand since July this year while the cost of a single food parcel has gone up by as much as £19. Food banks or community kitchens will need more support if they are to continue providing food for vulnerable people.
 - e. With a government in perpetual crisis, the council must continue to provide support for residents who are struggling financially, with radical and innovative policies like the council's Cost of Living Fund and Southwark Emergency Support Scheme (SESS).
 - f. Southwark Cost of Living Fund provides low-income residents with extra income support to pay for food, energy, or other essentials in the context of the Cost of Living crisis. Some vulnerable households in need of support are identified and given support from the fund automatically, others may be referred to the fund by community partners, and from January any resident will be able to apply for help from the fund.
2. Council assembly welcomes that:
- a. Southwark has shown a commendable commitment to tackling food poverty.
 - b. During covid, the council distributed over £500,000 in emergency funding to organisations providing food to vulnerable people.
 - c. In March 2022, our council unanimously committed to support the right to food campaign.
 - d. Southwark offers universal free school meals for all primary school age children.
 - e. In July, the council, extended free school meals over the school holidays.
3. Council assembly further notes that:
- a. The council continue at pace, the work across departments, with schools, and other London local authorities to ensure children aged 11 - 16 do not go hungry.
 - b. Southwark had a meals on wheels service which provided hot meals to vulnerable residents, but it was ended in 2015 after 5 years of cuts of

local government grant funding by the Conservative and Lib Dem Government’.

- c. Charities providing food for vulnerable people throughout the borough will see their costs rise. The council is applying the same principals it did when supporting residents during the Covid pandemic. Providing emergency financial support and advice to ensure residents can still access these vital services.
 - d. The council must, where possible, find policies that simultaneously save residents money on their energy bills and help them feed themselves and their families;
 - i. Slow cookers allow people to cook healthy meals whilst costing an average of £300 less per year than an electric oven.
 - ii. Many other councils have distributed slow cookers to vulnerable residents during covid and during the current cost of living crisis to help households cook healthy meals and save costs.
4. Council assembly resolves to:
- a. Continue to invest in quality of our Free School Meals, for all nursery and primary school children, so that every parent knows that their child will be able to enjoy a healthy meal every day they are at school.
 - b. Extend holiday meals for children on Free School Meals up until Easter 2023, in order to provide relief for families facing the worst cost of living crisis in a generation.
 - c. Write to all Southwark secondary schools, highlighting the research undertaken by the Child Poverty Action Group ‘Cost of the School 6 Day’ project, and follow up the school survey, ask them whether their students eligible for Free School Meals can use their allowance at any time throughout the school day, and whether any unspent money is rolled over so that students can use this credit on the following or any subsequent day.
 - d. Work with other councils across the country to lobby the government to bring in free healthy, school meals for every primary school child, as part of the current national campaign run by the National Education Union.
 - e. Ensure housing staff and landlords are aware of when and where they can direct people for emergency financial support, for white goods or for affordable cooking appliances (such as electric hotplates, slow cookers, rice cookers and microwaves), via charities such as ‘Glasspool’, and other national funds, including specific funding for working professionals, that are included in Southwark's cost of living support booklet.

- f. Continue to champion the work of the Southwark Community Support Alliance, who organise foodbanks, shopping help and can link residents to help and support in the community.
- g. Provide support via Southwark Emergency Support Scheme (SESS) that help Southwark residents facing a crisis, emergency or disaster and need help. The scheme provides food vouchers, or help with bills.
- h. Support residents to access Community fridges, Pantry schemes and Age UKs Shopping help for the over 50s.

Care leaver as a protected characteristic

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

1. Council assembly notes:
 - a. Care experienced people face significant barriers that impact them throughout their lives;
 - b. Despite the resilience of many care experienced people, society too often does not take their needs into account;
 - c. Care experienced people often face discrimination and stigma across housing, health, education, relationships, employment and in the criminal justice system;
 - d. Care experienced people often face a postcode lottery of support;
 - e. As corporate parents, councillors have a collective responsibility for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for the children who are looked after by us as an authority;
 - f. All corporate parents should commit to acting as mentors, hearing the voices of looked after children and young people, and considering their needs in any aspect of council work;
 - g. Councillors should be champions of our looked after children and challenge the negative attitudes and prejudice that exists in all aspects of society;
 - h. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires public bodies, such as councils, to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation of people with protected characteristics;
 - i. In March 2021 the Independent Review into Children's Social Care

began its work.

2. Council assembly believes that:
 - a. Care experienced people are an oppressed group who face discrimination;
 - b. Councils have a duty to put the needs of oppressed people at the heart of decision-making through co-production and collaboration;
 - c. Services and policies should be assessed through Equality Impact Assessments to determine the impact of changes on people with care experience.
3. Council assembly resolves:
 - a. To formally support the Show Us You Care Too campaign which calls for care experience to be made a protected characteristic as part of the Independent Review into Children's Social Care;
 - b. For the council to proactively seek out and listen to the voices of care experienced people when developing new policies based on their views;
 - c. To continue to build on the existing ring-fenced apprenticeship opportunities for care experienced people by committing to an agreed number of apprenticeships places each year delivered through the council's levy funding;
 - d. To take an intersectional approach and commit to tackling the systemic discrimination and disproportionality faced by specific groups of care experienced people.

Free period products in Southwark Council buildings

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

1. Council Assembly notes that:
 - a. In June 2022, a Plan International UK survey found that nearly one in four girls in London were unable to afford period products since the start of the year, which was higher than the national rate.
 - b. The charity found that girls across the country were cutting down on food and school spending in order to afford period products.
 - c. Scotland was the first country in the world to make period products free for all.

- d. Surrey County and Oxford City Council have both set up or agreed to schemes to provide free period products.
2. Council Assembly believes that:
 - a. No one should experience period poverty.
3. Council Assembly resolves to:
 - a. Explore the cost and practicalities of providing free period products in all of the council's public toilets and buildings including the town hall, libraries and community centres that do not already have these available. This would include all female, male, disabled and gender-neutral toilets.
 - b. Where possible, provide sustainable period products for free.
 - c. Ensure there are sanitary waste bins in all of the council's toilets.
 - d. Contact state-maintained schools and education institutions in Southwark asking them to participate in the UK government's period product scheme.
 - e. Call for the UK government to make period products free and available to all who need them.

Supporting insourcing of cleaning staff at our anchor institutions including University of the Arts London (UAL)

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

1. Council assembly notes:
 - a. One of our Council Delivery Plan commitments is to “Deliver a major public awareness campaign to make sure Southwark residents know their rights at work and the benefits of trade union membership”
 - b. Many universities and public sector employers are now insourcing cleaners and other auxiliary staff. Keeping staff in-house is shown to be more cost-effective, representing better value for tax-payer money and providing better forms of employment to workers.
 - c. UAL is a valuable part of our community. Ranked as second in the world for art and design, the University provides world-class creative education and enriches students, residents, visitors, businesses, and local stakeholders with public exhibitions and local partnerships.

- d. UAL currently outsources its cleaning contract and the UAL cleaning staff are currently engaged in an ongoing industrial dispute with UAL about this, including a pending strike ballot for an all-out strike.
 - e. Some of the benefits of a directly employed workforce include:
 - Sick pay and pension
 - Trade Union recognition
 - Protection against dismissal, harassment and unsafe working conditions.
 - Equalities relating to race, sex and nationality.
2. Council assembly believes:
- a. Insourcing can help create more careers and jobs within Southwark's big employers for local residents, including in our council, NHS, big businesses and universities
 - b. The benefits of insourcing include commitments to the wellbeing and prosperity of all of an organisations staff, including the eradication of discrimination and inequality among the workforce.
 - c. Many universities and public sector employers are now insourcing cleaners and other auxiliary staff. Keeping staff in-house is shown to be more cost-effective, representing better value for tax-payer money and providing better forms of employment to workers engaged in notoriously unregulated sectors such as commercial facilities management.
 - d. Insourcing should always be the first consideration when procuring services and services should always be insourced where it is possible to do so.
3. Council assembly resolves:
- a. To encourage the President and Vice-Chancellor of UAL to directly employ cleaners currently outsourced on the same terms and conditions as other staff
 - b. To support the aims of UAL: End Outsourcing and the unions representing outsourced cleaners
 - c. To support and campaign for an end to outsourcing of staff at anchor institutions and public bodies within the borough
 - d. To ask the Council's Cabinet to continue the successful work the council has been taking forward to bring council services back in house, publicly reporting progress every year.

The Home Office and the unacceptable backlog of visa cases

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

1. Council assembly notes:
 - a. The unacceptable backlog of Home Office visa cases where people living in this country are kept in a state of limbo for years at a time, unable to work and move on with their lives.
 - b. For example, the case of a Rotherhithe resident who is being threatened with deportation after more than eleven years in London, and being hailed locally as a 'lockdown hero' for his extensive work ensuring vulnerable people had access to food during the pandemic.
 - c. The dreadful No Recourse to Public Funds policy, which prevents those affected by the policy from working or claiming support as needed, often leading to poverty and destitution.
 - d. The maladministration of the Home Office under Suella Braverman, and her predecessor Priti Patel, which continues to cause misery to thousands of people under the government's inhumane hostile environment policy.
2. Council assembly resolves:
 - a. To call on the government to resolve the unacceptable backlog of visa cases, including that of local residents.
 - b. To call on the government to immediately end the dreadful No Resource to Public Funds policy, so that those affected by this policy in Southwark and across the country are able to work and claim support as required.
 - c. To oppose the hostile environment policies and to campaign for a general election now, so that the Home Office can be brought under control of a new government with human rights and humane policies at its core.

19. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES 2022-23 - VARIOUS

RESOLVED:

That the appointments to the following outside bodies for 2022-23 be agreed:

- WeAreWaterloo Business Improvement District (BID) outside body (one member vacancy plus a staff representative as detailed in paragraph 9 of

this report) – Councillor Victor Chamberlain

- Potters Field Park Management Trust (one vacancy) – deferred to 6 February cabinet
- Kings College Hospital NHS (Council of Governors) (one vacancy) - Councillor Renata Hamvas.

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

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

20. TUSTIN ESTATE - APPROPRIATION OF LAND FOR PLANNING PURPOSES

The cabinet considered the closed information relating to this item. Please see item 14 for the decision.

The meeting ended at 1.00pm.

CHAIR:

DATED:

DEADLINE FOR NOTIFICATION OF CALL-IN UNDER SECTION 17 OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES IS MIDNIGHT, WEDNESDAY 25 JANUARY 2023.

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