

Cabinet

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Cabinet held on Tuesday 5 December 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 Natasha Ennin
Councillor Darren Merrill
Councillor James McAsh
Councillor Martin Seaton

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Helen Dennis and Catherine Rose.

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

The chair gave notice of the following late items:

- Item 14: Policy And Resources: Budget Setting 2024-25
- Item 15: Council Tax Base 2024-25.

Reasons 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 closed items for this meeting.

4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

The following members declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of Item 13: Housing Revenue Account – Indicative Rent and Charges report 2024-25 as follows:

- Councillor Evelyn Akoto: leaseholder
- Councillor Natasha Ennin: council tenant
- Councillor Darren Merrill: has a business that rents a garage
- Councillor Martin Seaton: leaseholder.

5. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 October, 2023 be approved as correct record and signed by the chair.

6. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

1. Tristan Honeyborne

Please can Cllr McAsh confirm how much public money was spent pursuing the ‘borough-wide’ CPZ, in including but not limited to the cost of communications, consultations, legal advice, traffic monitoring and external consultants, and provide evidence for the assertion that controlled parking zones are needed in Dulwich Village and Nunhead?”

2. Simone Brown

Will the council now suspend the Trafalgar Extension CPZ, cover the signs, refund permit fees and PCNs, and commit to a comprehensive review similar to those carried out in Nunhead and Queens Road, aligning with the acknowledged ineffectiveness of a one-size-fits-all CPZ approach?”

As the questioners were not in attendance, the leader confirmed that arrangements would be made for responses to be sent after the meeting.

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 requests had been received in line with the council’s constitutional deadline for the receipt of deputation requests).

RESOLVED:

1. That the following deputation requests be heard:
 - AGE UK as part of the London Loos campaign
 - Southwark Refugee Communities forum
 - Support of controlled parking zones (CPZ) in Dulwich from Scoot School run.
2. A spokesperson for each deputation addressed cabinet for five minutes and questions were asked of the deputations for a period of five minutes.

8. SOUTHWARK SCHOOL STANDARDS REPORT 2022-2023

Reema Reed, Headteacher at Hollydale primary school and Joe Bell, Headteacher at St Johns and St Clements CE primary school were in attendance to provide their input to the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Southwark School Standards Report, 2022-2023 be noted.
2. That it be agreed that the 2024-2025 Southwark School Standards Report will include an increased focus on closing the gaps in pupil attainment.

9. SOUTHWARK YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE INSPECTION OUTCOME

RESOLVED:

That the good outcome of His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation's inspection of Southwark Youth Justice Service be noted.

10. SOUTHWARK GREEN FINANCE - COMMUNITY MUNICIPAL INVESTMENT (CMI)

RESOLVED:

1. That the launch of a Community Municipal Investment (CMI) opportunity in the borough, which will support the delivery of projects within the council's climate action plan be approved.
2. That the scale of ambition of the CMI programme, with a target to raise up to £6m of funding by 2030, which would be the largest CMI to date offered by a council in the UK be noted.
3. That the adoption of the Southwark Green Finance Framework (SGFF) for

CMI, which sets out how the key principles of the scheme will operate and the types of projects that will be funded be approved.

4. That the signing of the Green Finance Institute (GFI) Local Climate Bond Pledge be approved.

11. ECONOMIC STRATEGY 2023-30

RESOLVED:

That the Economic Strategy 2023-30 as set out in Appendix 1 of the report be approved.

12. SOUTHWARK LOCAL LIST ADOPTION

RESOLVED:

That the draft Southwark Local List be approved for adoption.

13. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - INDICATIVE RENT AND CHARGES REPORT 2024-25

Having declared a disclosable pecuniary interest, Councillors Evelyn Akoto, Natasha Ennin, Darren Merrill and Martin Seaton withdrew from the meeting while this item was being discussed.

RESOLVED:

1. That a rent increase of 7.7% for all directly and tenant managed (TMO) housing stock within the council's housing revenue account be agreed. This is in accordance with the government's guideline rent formula of CPI+1% (based on the September Consumer Price Index) as set out at paragraphs 12-14 with effect from 1 April 2024.
2. That a rent increase of 7.7% for the council's shared ownership stock as set out at paragraphs 15-16 of the report be agreed with effect from 1 April 2024.
3. That the increases to tenant service charges, comprising estate cleaning, grounds maintenance, communal lighting and door entry maintenance as set out in paragraphs 17-18 of the report be agreed with effect from 1 April 2024.
4. That the increase in sheltered housing service charges as set out in paragraph 19 of the report be agreed with effect from 1 April 2024.
5. That the increase in charges for garages and other non-residential facilities as set out in paragraphs 20-21 be agreed with effect from 1 April 2024.

6. That officers be instructed to undertake a review of garage policy including the concessionary scheme and to bring forward proposals following consultation with residents as set out in paragraph 22 of the report.
7. That the increase in tenant heating charges, including metered charges as set out in paragraphs 23-39 of the report be agreed with effect from 1 April 2024.

14. POLICY AND RESOURCES: BUDGET SETTING 2024-25

It was not possible to circulate the report five clear days in advance of the meeting. The chair agreed to accept the item as urgent because the council were committed to publishing budget proposals at the earliest possible opportunity to ensure that they were available to the public for comments and questions. Presenting the report to cabinet on 5 December 2023 gave the opportunity for debate prior to presentation of budget figures to February cabinet. 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 in January 2024.

RESOLVED:

That the following be noted:

1. The updates from the autumn statement delivered on the 22 November 2023 and the budget challenge process.
2. The updated budget gap for 2024-25 of £6.7m; and for the following 2 years £4.5m and £4.6m respectively.
3. The proposed options to help achieve a balanced 2024-25 budget and indicative savings for 2025-26 and 2026-27 together with departmental narratives (Appendices A to E of the report).
4. Appendix F of the report which details the draft fees and charges schedules.
5. Strategic directors will continue to work with their respective cabinet members to find additional savings option.
6. The intention is to prepare a balanced one year 2024-25 budget, together with indicative savings for the following two years, for recommendation by cabinet, in advance of approval by council assembly in February 2024.
7. Equality impact assessments are ongoing and that a cumulative impact assessment will be presented to cabinet as part of the budget update in February.
8. Officers will undertake further consultation for new budget options where

necessary or appropriate.

9. The appendices A-F will be considered by the overview and scrutiny committee on 22 January 2024, prior to February 2024 cabinet.

That the following be approved:

10. The write-off of one NNDR debt of £292,849.08 which is irrecoverable (Appendix G) of the report.

15. COUNCIL TAX BASE 2024-25

It was not possible to circulate the report five clear days in advance of the meeting. The chair agreed to accept the item as urgent as the council tax base calculation for 2024-25 must be made between 1 December 2023 and 31 January 2024. The figure is used for revenue budget setting purposes and has historically been reported to members at the December cabinet.

RESOLVED:

1. That the council tax base for 2024-25 is set at 112,166 (109,174 in 2023-24) band D equivalent dwellings (Appendix A of the report) be agreed.
2. That the schedule of discounts and exemptions in paragraph 12 of the report be recommended to council assembly, including the premiums applicable for long-term empty dwellings.
3. That the assumed council tax collection level for 2024-25 should remain at 97.20% (2023-24 97.20%) be agreed.
4. That the 2024-25 council tax base for St. Mary Newington parish is set at 12,881 (12,509 in 2023-24) band D equivalent dwellings be agreed.
5. That the proposed continuation of the current council tax section 13A (1)(c) policy¹ covering discretionary relief terms (refer to paragraphs 17 to 18) be agreed:
 - to continue council tax discretionary relief (0% to 100%) for young people leaving care aged 18 to 24 years for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025
 - to continue foster carers' discretionary relief (0% to 100%) for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.
6. That it be agreed to implement a 100% premium on second homes from 1 April 2025 as per the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023.

¹ Southwark council tax section 13A (1)(c) policy

7. That the following be noted concerning the council tax reduction scheme:
 - no changes to the council tax reduction scheme (CTRS) for 2024-25, as set out in paragraphs 19 to 23 of the report
 - any minor and consequential amendments to the CTRS written policy are to remain delegated to the strategic director of finance in consultation with the monitoring officer.
8. That the change in definition of long-term empty properties for the purposes of the 100% premium as set out in paragraph 12 of the report be noted.

16. GATEWAY 0 - STRATEGIC OPTIONS ASSESSMENT DOMESTIC ABUSE AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE SERVICES

RESOLVED:

1. That the strategic options assessment for delivery of the domestic abuse and gender based violence services for Southwark Council be approved and that the next steps set out in the report be noted.
2. That the decision to approve the gateway 1 procurement strategy for the domestic abuse and gender based violence services be delegated to the strategic director for environment, neighbourhoods and growth, in consultation with the cabinet member for community safety.

17. CREATION OF A NEW SENIOR MANAGEMENT POST: ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

RESOLVED:

That the creation of a new senior management post, assistant director of repairs be approved.

MOTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item 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.

18. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the closed section of the meeting held on 17 October 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the chair.

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 13 DECEMBER 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.