

COUNCIL ASSEMBLY

WEDNESDAY 21 FEBRUARY 2024

AMENDMENTS

ITEM 2.1: POLICY AND RESOURCES STRATEGY 2024-25 - REVENUE BUDGET (see pages 26-203 of the agenda and page 1 of supplemental agenda no.1)

AMENDMENT A – Helping women feel safe in Southwark

Moved: Councillor Ellie Cumbo

Seconded: Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle

To insert after paragraph 2 and renumber all subsequent points accordingly

Helping women feel safe in Southwark

3. Council assembly notes that:
 - a. This administration has committed to improving public spaces where women have told us they feel unsafe.
 - b. That following a borough-wide consultation, the following five areas were identified by women in Southwark as priority areas for improvement:
 - Burgess Park
 - Canada Water
 - Elephant and Castle
 - Rye Lane
 - Tooley Street
 - c. That an environmental visual audit was carried out in each of these five areas in conjunction with the Metropolitan Police Service which highlighted public realm works required to improve the safety of these areas.
4. Council assembly further notes:
 - a. We are committed to ending misogyny and harassment of, and violence against, women. Working with women and men to find solutions to these deep rooted issues, we will challenge ourselves, our partners and men, to take action as allies, so women can live free from violence, abuse and fear.
 - b. Southwark Council has invested in CCTV, increasing the operator capacity by 20%.

- c. The council is investing in better and more reliable lighting on our streets; over 7,000 lamppost columns have been upgraded to LED lighting.
 - d. The council is working with the community to identify areas that will benefit from enhanced lighting.
 - e. We are committed to establish a ground-breaking Women's Safety Centre so that women experiencing violence and abuse can access the support they need in one place.
 - f. Southwark has established a network of safe havens at businesses in known harassment hotspots where women and other vulnerable people can access safety and support when in need at night time. Staff in these businesses have received training to administer support.
5. Council assembly resolves to:
- a. Allocate £250,000 from the Southwark 2030 Reserve Fund to ensure that the recommendations from the environmental visual audits are delivered and to make the borough safer for women and other vulnerable people.

Southwark Pride Fund

6. Council assembly notes:
- a. The council is committed to celebrating the diversity and heritage of our borough, including the contributions of the LGBTQ+ community who have helped shape Southwark's history and continue to shape our Borough.
 - b. Southwark is the proud home of a large, diverse and thriving LGBTQ+ community.
 - c. Results of the 2021 Census show Southwark to have one of the largest populations of LGBTQ+ people in England.
 - d. Southwark Council is proud to have worked with our LGBTQ+ community and the Mayor of London to open an LGBTQ+ centre in our borough to serve our whole city. The centre provides a safe, inclusive, intergenerational and intersectional space run by the community for the community. Our Council Delivery Plan commits to a permanent LGBTQ+ cultural space. Work is now underway to provide this permanent LGBTQ+ cultural space in Blackfriars in partnership with the LGBTQ+ community.
 - e. Last year, Southwark held its first 'Pride in Southwark' event to celebrate the LGBTQ+ community. At this event, the leader of the

council committed to making Southwark a safer, more equal place for everyone in the LGBTQ+ community.

7. Council assembly resolves to:
 - a. Announce a new Southwark Pride Fund to celebrate and commemorate Pride month. The £30,000 fund will be used to help our community and local Voluntary Sector Organisations celebrate and commemorate the contributions of our LGBTQ+ communities in Southwark.
 - b. This will be an annual fund and will form part of the Council's Grants Programme. We will fund this from the Southwark 2030 Reserve Fund for 2024/25 with a growth item to be added to the baseline budget in 2025/26.

Chief Finance Officer assurance on robustness of budget estimates.

The statutory section 151 officer has confirmed that these proposals are lawful and implementable and overall do not impact on the total budget requirement for 2024-25. He confirms that, subject to the agreement to this amendment by Council Assembly, plans will be put in place to implement these proposals as early as practicable in 2024-25.

AMENDMENT B – Putting Southwark’s People First

Moved: Councillor Rachel Bentley

Seconded: Councillor David Watson

1. Council assembly notes that:
 - a. Southwark Council faces unprecedented financial pressure in setting the 2024/25 budget due to years of regressive austerity, inept mismanagement of the economy and lack of funding from the Conservative government.
 - b. The Conservative government’s cost of living crisis continues to have a profound effect on the most vulnerable in Southwark.
 - c. The Conservative government has left local government finances on the brink of crisis, with an alarming number of local authorities declaring bankruptcy and far too many more on the edge.
 - d. Brutal Conservative cuts to local government funding have exacerbated the ongoing social care crisis, piling pressure onto the NHS and leaving the most vulnerable without access to the services they need.
 - e. Despite the financial constraints the council faces, the budget must be used to provide as much support as possible to those who are struggling and the residents who rely on vital council services. Residents should be protected from shouldering the burden.
 - f. With council services struggling under financial strain, the voluntary sector and community organisations across Southwark have stepped up to provide life-changing support to struggling residents and fill the gaps left by the council.
2. Council assembly further notes that:
 - a. The cabinet member for communities, democracy and finance has claimed that the budget protects vital key services despite containing a £6.5m reduction in spending on Adult Social Care and Children's Services.
 - b. Social care in the UK is in crisis, and it is paramount that the council does not make that crisis worse by making cuts that would negatively affect vulnerable groups who rely on these key services.
 - c. Southwark’s own Equality Impact and Needs Assessments identified just 5 out of the 27 medium and high impact areas were assessed as having a positive impact, with the rest either negative, neutral, or requiring further assessment.

- d. In response to the Southwark's proposals, the Equalities and Human Rights Panel (EHRP) has raised very serious concerns about many of the planned cuts to social care and their potential impact on vulnerable groups.
 - e. Line 101 proposes a huge £2m cut to the already struggling adult social care services. The EHRP analysis of this budget line argues that the demographics of service users "suggests that this will have an impact in the protected characteristics of age, disability and race". Southwark Council must heed the warnings from the EHRP and reverse this cut.
 - f. To protect funding for our key services, the council must be more ambitious in its income generation and more diligent in reducing waste in order to provide further support for residents and avoid making cuts to services that many people rely on.
 - g. To support the voluntary sector as they fill gaps left by under-funded council services, some boroughs have established 'voluntary funds' which accept donations from residents and distribute those to organisations and charities that make a difference to the lives of vulnerable people. The 'Richmond upon Thames Voluntary Fund' has raised over £175,000 over the past two years.
3. Council assembly therefore resolves to:
- a. To extend support to those in receipt of council tax reductions to provide increased respite from the continued cost of living crisis. This will be achieved through a one-off fund worth £2.75m which will provide all working age residents in receipt of council tax reductions a further reduction of £150, enough to protect them from the 4.99% rise in council tax and provide additional financial support.
 - b. Reverse the planned £2m reduction in spending on Adult Social Care that poses serious consequences for those who rely on these services.
 - c. To create a 'Southwark Voluntary Fund'. The fund would accept donations from residents and then distribute those to selected local charities and charities who apply to be beneficiaries. The council will invest £5,000 to establish and promote the new scheme with a view of raising at least £75,000 to support the voluntary sector.
 - d. To fund these with ambitious income generating policies:
 - i. Fully utilising the council's vast commercial estate, which currently includes many high value lots that have been left empty for years.

- ii. Taking full advantage of the millions of tourists who visit Southwark every year by introducing a pilot voluntary tourist contribution scheme which would see an additional £1 per night charge added to hotel rooms in Southwark in order to generate revenue that can be invested back in the community. Southwark can utilise the strong relationships with established Business Improvement Districts to implement the pilot scheme. Manchester City Council is expecting to make £3m from 73 participating accommodation establishments in the first year of their City Visitor Charge scheme alone.
 - iii. Increasing our filming permit fees to match the demand from film and TV to use Southwark's iconic landmarks in their productions.
 - iv. Increasing admin fees for planning applications and CIL to make sure residents get the best deal from developers building in their communities.
- e. To further offset costs by making common-sense cuts to wasteful council spending:
- i. Slash spending on needless and often wasteful catering.
 - ii. Reduce Southwark's bloated cabinet, currently at the legal maximum, to four members reflecting the key service areas of the council:
 - Housing
 - Environment and Leisure
 - Health and Social Care
 - Finance and Governance
 - iii. Delete the vague Deputy Cabinet posts with no clear mandate currently costing the council over £29,000 per year.
 - iv. Scrap the SRAs for Multi-ward area Community Champions who are currently paid £6,495 a year to chair two meetings.
 - v. Reducing the Mayor's budget, which currently sees over £100,000 spent on chauffeurs and events, to £30,000 per year. Any expenditure above that budget must be covered by Mayoral fundraising, not the residents' tax money.
 - vi. Cutting down needless, expensive and politically motivated communications like Southwark Life and Labour's seemingly endless self-congratulatory public affairs exercises.

<p>Insert the following budget line into Appendix B (Efficiencies and Improved Use of Resources):</p>	<p>Remove the following budget line into Appendix B (Efficiencies and Improved Use of Resources):</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cease production of Southwark Life magazine - £114k ● Reduce the forecast spend on photocopying, printing, stationary and postage by 50% - £300k ● Review Southwark's communications expenditure with view to reducing amount spent on non-essential communications from cabinet office or councillors - £260k ● Reduce the council catering and refreshments budget by 50% - £100k ● Streamline cabinet to four members - £160k ● Scrap all four deputy cabinet positions - £29k ● Scrap SRAs for 'Multi-ward area champion' - £38k ● Find efficiencies and alternatives in order to reduce the projected 2023/24 spend on leased commercial vehicles by 10% - £150k ● Review use of agency staff and consultants with a view to reducing overall spend on external staff - £420k ● Reduce mayoral budget to £30k per year, with any expenditure over that budget covered - £100k 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Line 102: Efficiencies through promoting greater independence for clients linked to ongoing recovery post discharge through early and regular reviews and interventions such as bed-based reablement, support from occupational therapists, aids and adaptations as well as greater use of universal services and the transitioning of clients into more independent accommodation - £2m
<p>Insert the following budget line into Appendix C (Income Generation):</p>	<p>Insert the following budget line into Appendix E (Commitments):</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introducing a pilot voluntary 'Tourist Tax' scheme within which tourists are encouraged to pay a small additional charge when paying for a hotel room in Southwark - £200k ● Increase filming permit fees by 25% - £100k ● Increase admin fees for planning applications and CIL by TBC - £250k ● Review council's commercial estate with a view to streamlining renting and generating income from commercial units - £1m ● Utilise full NNDR surplus reimbursement - £970k ● Release 10% of the £3m Southwark 2030 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Creation of a one-off financial relief fund which will provide an additional £150 council tax reduction for all working-age recipients of council tax reductions - £2.75m ● Administrative costs of launching and promoting a new 'Southwark Voluntary Fund' - £5k

reserve - £300k • Accelerate utilisation of space in Tooley Street Office to generate rental income - £250k	
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Explanatory summary table:

Savings	£000	Commitments	£000
Abolish Southwark Life photocopying	114	Care	2000
communications	300	Tax reduction	2750
catering	260	Voluntary Fund	5
cabinet	100		
Cabinet SRA	160		
multi ward SRA	29		
Southwark 2030 release	38		
leased vehicles	300		
Mayoral agency	150		
	100		
	420		
Income generation			
Tooley Street	250		
Tourist tax	200		
Filming fees	100		
admin fees planning	250		
Commercial assets	1000		
NNDR	970		
TOTAL	4755		4755

Chief Finance Officer assurance on robustness of budget estimates

The statutory section 151 officer has confirmed that these proposals are lawful and implementable and overall do not impact on the total budget requirement for 2024-25. He confirms that, subject to the agreement to this amendment by Council Assembly, plans will be put in place to implement these proposals as early as practicable in 2024-25.

AMENDMENT C – A Better Service for Residents

Moved: Councillor Victor Chamberlain

Seconded: Councillor Emily Tester

1. Council assembly notes that:
 - a. That service for residents in Southwark is not good enough, across every council department, but especially and most notably within housing.
 - b. The recent intervention from the Secretary of State that condemned the many recent ruling of the Housing Ombudsman, including findings of “severe maladministration”.
 - c. Residents have had to come to overview and scrutiny committee (OSC) to get answers to a system of chronic overspend, poor customer service, and so on.
 - d. The LGA Corporate Challenge, which found that communication with residents was “mixed and sometimes inconsistent”.
 - e. The trend towards centralisation and digitalisation of frontline council staff.
 - f. The model operated under previous administrations of satellite council offices, whereby residents were able to access council services in a manner convenient and accessible to them.
 - g. The council’s own Equalities Impact Needs Assessment report for budget line 316 regarding libraries notes a potential negative impact on marginalised groups, should opening times of libraries be reduced.
 - h. Council facilities have been providing some respite and warm hubs during the current cost of living crisis.
 - i. The discussion and recommendation from OSC to review line 316 and library services as a whole to better serve communities
 - j. The projected overspend in the housing revenue account (HRA), driven by, amongst other things, overspend in repairs despite the repairs improvement plan not yet materially impacting on finances, and the poor repairs service that residents are experiencing.
2. Council assembly recognises:
 - a. That in many instances of poor service and overspend, early and better quality communication between residents and the council would have resolved issues much sooner.

- b. That, in the particular cases of the recent Devon Mansions, Kirby Estate, and Canada Estate scandals, residents were pointing out issues months, if not years before the council took action, and felt “ignored”.
 - c. That community and resident focussed solutions offer a cost-effective way to drastically improve service for residents.
 - d. That being able to talk to someone “face to face” is often the best way for residents to feel listened to and valued and to ensure everyone is included.
 - e. That, despite all of the above, the council’s approach has been instead to offer the creation of another strategic director, costing £148,000 at a time of intense budget pressures.
 - f. At no point in Southwark 2030, the peer review report, or day to day conversations with residents, has anyone suggested that a senior communications director would be needed or wanted.
 - g. Day-to-day communications between residents and frontline services can and should be improved without more corporate management bloat.
 - h. That there is an opportunity in Southwark to invest in the skills of the workforce and local young people, especially through increasing the number of apprentices that Southwark takes on.
 - i. Evidence submitted by the St Giles Trust to the Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission on 5 December 2023 that urged the council to build on its existing work on youth employment, by providing more opportunities within the council itself.
3. Council assembly therefore resolves to:
- a. To pilot a return to a system of “one stop shop” satellite offices, where residents are able to talk to council officers about whatever issue they require, face to face, and get advice and support.
 - b. To utilise existing council offices, housing offices, libraries, leisure centres and other council buildings to provide this service in all communities across the borough.
 - c. To reverse the decision to reduce library service, and instead provide a more comprehensive offer of council services, along the lines of “Community Hubs” in boroughs such as Tower Hamlets and Westminster.
 - d. Where this would require maintaining or extending opening hours of libraries, to fund this by opening limited space for appropriate

commercial activity, such as coffee shops as is successfully working at John Harvard Library.

- e. Reallocate existing staff to one stop shops, and the creation of additional and bespoke frontline staff to deliver this service, where required.
- f. To delete the as-yet-unfilled post of Strategic Director of Communications, releasing corporate capacity building reserves and existing staffing resource to contribute to cost of above.
- g. To draw £1 million from the Southwark 2030 reserves to create a one-off resident service development fund, to be used to facilitate the creation of the “one stop shop” pilot, including adaptations, signage, staff time, and so on. Minor ongoing costs thereafter to be drawn from income and savings generated from this amendment.
- h. To review Southwark’s apprenticeship training provision and current obligations on developers, with the view to increase the number of apprentices entering Southwark Council’s repairs labour stream, thereby creating a new generation of skilled tradespeople to deliver a better service for residents.
- i. To do this by allowing and actively encouraging contractors to fulfil social value obligations under the Fairer Future Procurement Framework surrounding apprenticeships by making a payment in lieu of directly training apprentices.
- j. That money to then be ringfenced to directly employ apprentices within the council’s repairs workforce. Any minor adverse costs to revenue budget to be drawn from income generated in this amendment.

Delete from Appendix B (efficiencies and savings)	Insert into Appendix B (efficiencies and savings)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Line 316 - £50k 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deletion of Strategic Director of Communications post - £148,000
Insert into Appendix C (income generation)	Insert into Appendix E (commitments)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leasing space within libraries to commercial operators - £140k * • Utilise a portion of the Southwark 2030 Reserves - £1000k 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of “resident service development fund” - £1 million to be used for initial start-up costs and any material amendments to spaces to facilitate commercial activity • Any ongoing running costs of both the “one stop shop” scheme and apprentice policy change - £238k

* Small café space identified on Rightmove = £2170 pcm – times 7 libraries = ~£182,000 a year, but revised down due to only partial in-year income.

Explanatory Note: Running cost, detail in table above

Cost	Cost £000	Income/Savings	Income/ Savings £000
Libraries line 316 deletion	£50	Deletion of comms post	£148
Service development fund – one off	£1000	Leasing space in libraries*	£140
Minimal ongoing costs – one stop shop and apprentices	£238	Southwark 2030 Reserves	£1000
Total ongoing	£288	Total ongoing	£288
Total one off	£1000	Total one off	£1000

Chief Finance Officer assurance on robustness of budget estimates

The statutory section 151 officer has confirmed that these proposals are lawful and implementable and overall do not impact on the total budget requirement for 2024-25. He confirms that, subject to the agreement to this amendment by Council Assembly, plans will be put in place to implement these proposals as early as practicable in 2024-25.

AMENDMENT D – A Greener Southwark

Moved: Councillor Irina von Wiese

Seconded: Councillor Graham Neale

1. Council assembly notes:
 - a. That Southwark Council unanimously declared a climate emergency in 2019, with an aim to be net zero by 2030.
 - b. That to meet this goal, substantial investment will need to be made in every part of the borough, both within and outside of the council's control.
 - c. That a recent report revealed Southwark consumed one of the highest amounts of energy of any council in the country, largely due to its large and ageing housing stock¹.
 - d. That across all tenures, 42% of homes in Southwark have an EPC below C, and one in five social homes in Southwark still just have single glazing².
 - e. That within the Housing Revenue Account, a substantial amount of financial pressure comes from the district heating network, costs of which are then shouldered by both leaseholders and tenants.
 - f. Reports that residents in council owned properties are forced to leave windows open with heating on due to malfunctioning heating systems.
 - g. Retrofitting homes is one of the best ways to meet energy reduction targets, whilst also reducing costs for residents during a cost of living crisis.
 - h. That the GLA Warmer Homes grant has now closed for applications
 - i. Southwark's existing Green Buildings Fund
 - j. That Keir Starmer, leader of the Labour Party, has, after months of dithering, 'stood down' a commitment of £28 billion to spend on green policies.
 - k. Abandoning this totemic pledge represents a loss of funding which further increases the financial pressure on local authorities to support vital sustainability policies.
2. Council assembly further notes:

¹ Box power [report](#)

² EPC data from DLUHC EPC [open data](#).

- a. That for private renters, they are trapped by being unable to undertake retrofit work themselves, and there is no incentive for landlords to undergo expensive retrofit work as there is no direct financial benefit from energy savings, especially if grants do not cover the full cost.
 - b. That so far the Green Buildings Fund has only been used in a limited way, and substantial funds remain unallocated in the Climate Emergency capital line.
 - c. That despite declaring a climate emergency, Southwark declined to take up the Government's social housing decarbonisation grant.
3. Council assembly therefore resolves:
- a. To release £13.3 million from the climate emergency capital fund, to form a retrofitting grant, based on the grant from the GLA aimed at low income, non-HRA households – which could help to transform thousands of the most energy inefficient homes into warmer, greener, and cheaper places to live³.
 - b. To create a new Climate Emergency Community Fund within the capital refresh worth further £5 million, to allow communities to decide and spend on capital projects which will have a positive impact on tackling the climate emergency and which recognises the scale of the challenge and money necessary to move towards a net zero goal.
 - c. To fund this with reallocating the following capital and reserve pots to this fund:
 - i. Closure of Stoney St to vehicular traffic - £900k
 - ii. Technology and Digital Service - reduce total by £1.55 million
 - iii. Corporate Facilities Management – reduce total by £1.55 million
 - iv. Cyclist Safety Reserve £1 million
 - d. To ringfence £1 million within this fund for community directed cycling and pedestrian projects, utilising money unspent by the council for years.
 - e. To divert a greater portion of S.106 monies towards the Green Buildings Fund at the soonest opportunity, and accelerate the implementation of the programme to retrofit council properties, including everything from simply fitting thermostats to upgrading heating systems – which in turn will reduce pressure on the HRA.

³ Based on the [English Housing Survey report](#), average cost of upgrading a home ranges from just £1175 for a purpose built high rise flat, to £9000 for a terraced house. Given Southwark's unique accommodation characteristics, around 60% of homes below EPC C are flats, so >£10 million would be enough to retrofit thousands of homes, assuming that the average cost would be <£5000

- f. To call on the government to implement a robust national retrofitting strategy, which should further empower local authorities to upgrade their own stock, as well as homes owned and rented privately or through housing associations.
- g. To express regret at not taking up the decarbonisation grant from central government
- h. To commit to applying for every opportunity going forward that would decarbonise homes and buildings in Southwark
- i. To release the unallocated local CIL funding and ensure local communities can allocate this in this financial year. Projects which will have a positive climate impact should be prioritised.

Chief Finance Officer assurance on robustness of budget estimates

The statutory section 151 officer has confirmed that these proposals are lawful and implementable and overall do not impact on the total budget requirement for 2024-25. He confirms that, subject to the agreement to this amendment by Council Assembly, plans will be put in place to implement these proposals as early as practicable in 2024-25.