

Meeting Name:	Cabinet
Date:	16 September 2024
Report title:	Motions Referred from Council Assembly
Cabinet Member:	Not applicable
Ward(s) or groups affected:	All
Classification:	Open
Reason for lateness (if applicable):	Not applicable
From:	Proper Constitutional Officer

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the cabinet considers the motions set out in the appendices attached to the report.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. Council assembly at its meeting on 17 July 2024 agreed several motions and these stand referred to the cabinet for consideration.
3. The cabinet is requested to consider the motions referred to it. Any proposals in a motion are treated as a recommendation only. When considering a motion, cabinet can decide to:
 - Note the motion; *or*
 - Agree the motion in its entirety, *or*
 - Amend the motion; *or*
 - Reject the motion.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

4. In accordance with council assembly procedure rule 2.10.6, the attached motions were referred to the cabinet.
5. The constitution allocates responsibility for particular functions to council assembly, including approving the budget and policy framework, and to the cabinet for developing and implementing the budget and policy framework and overseeing the running of council services on a day-to-day basis.
6. Any key issues, such as policy, community impact or funding implications are included in the advice from the relevant chief officer.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Council agenda	Report on the council's website	Virginia Wynn-Jones Constitutional Team 020 7525 7055
Link: Agenda for Council Assembly on Wednesday 17 July 2024, 7.00 pm - Southwark Council		

APPENDICES

Number	Title
Appendix 1	Renewing our borough: a strategy for building the homes and infrastructure we need
Appendix 2	Declaring a Housing Emergency
Appendix 3	Debate not Hate
Appendix 4	Ending the Lower Road chaos

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Chidilim Agada, Head of Constitutional and Member Services	
Report Author	Virginia Wynn-Jones, Principal Constitutional Officer	
Version	Final	
Dated	27 August 2024	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments sought	Comments included
Strategic Director of Resources	No	No
Assistant Chief Executive – Governance and Assurance	No	No
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	27 August 2024	

Renewing our borough: a strategy for building the homes and infrastructure we need

1. Council Assembly believes that:
 - a. Everyone should be able to afford somewhere they can call home. And that delivering new, high quality social rent, including council homes, and other genuinely affordable homes, should be central to this Council's ambitions and plans;
 - b. That transport and community infrastructure is essential in order to support existing and new residents in our borough, and to help us achieve wider priorities such as tackling the climate emergency, reducing inequality, and creating decent jobs;
 - c. The Council should use every tool available in order to secure delivery of new homes and the infrastructure that residents need;
 - d. The Council will need to work with a wide range of partners in different ways, from voluntary and community groups, public organisations, and developers, in order to further increase the social and affordable housebuilding and infrastructure we need in Southwark.

2. Council Assembly notes that:
 - a. Under Conservative and Liberal Democrat governments we have had 14 years of under-investment in housing and infrastructure, and policies such as the Benefit Cap which have driven an increase in homelessness and numbers on the council's housing waiting list;
 - b. That under the Conservatives, the UK has experienced the lowest levels of investment of any G7 country;
 - c. Building genuinely affordable homes was hugely impacted by the Coalition's decision in 2010 to reduce the affordable housing grant by 60%;
 - d. Housebuilding has completely collapsed across London as a result of Conservative economic mismanagement, with a 90% fall in affordable housing starts in 23/24;
 - e. The Conservative government turned its back on London, failing to back the Bakerloo Line Extension, and failing to invest properly in the nation's capital despite some of the highest levels of deprivation;
 - f. The Labour Party has a plan to get Britain building again with 1.5 million new homes and will build more high-quality, well-designed,

and sustainable homes along with the infrastructure our communities need.

3. Council Assembly also notes:

- a. That the Labour administration has a plan for delivering genuinely affordable new homes in Southwark. That in 2023-24, 550 social rent homes were completed in Southwark, the highest number in London, and that last year we granted planning permission for a further 794 social rent homes in Southwark;
- b. That the Old Kent Road opportunity area in particular is delivering new homes at a pace, achieving over 50% affordable homes on sites which are completed or on site to date;
- c. That Southwark is building more council homes than any other council in the country, with 3,000 new council homes either completed or currently on site;
- d. That our Estate Renewal programmes on the Aylesbury, Tustin and Ledbury Estates are driven by the need for good quality homes for our residents which are sustainable and fit for the future. And that the First Development Site on the Aylesbury Estate is delivering 581 new council homes for local residents;
- e. That whilst the economic recession has affected our ability to deliver new council homes over the last year, the Labour administration has a viable plan to start bringing forward new homes on additional sites, whilst prioritising investment from our Housing Revenue Account (HRA) into existing stock;
- f. That the Labour administration also has plans to bring forward Keyworker Homes, dedicated homes for older residents, a new nursing home, to expand Housing First, and to facilitate the delivery of Community Land Trusts in Southwark.

4. In addition, Council Assembly notes:

- a. That this Labour administration is among other things delivering:
 - i. Over £70m of investment via Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (SCIL) into the Elephant & Castle tube upgrade;
 - ii. Additional investment via SCIL into wider station improvements, including at Elephant & Castle Overground Station and Peckham Rye;
 - iii. Significant investment into preparatory work for the Bakerloo Line Extension, and spearheading the Back the Bakerloo campaign with other London Councils;

- iv. Investment in improvements to our streets including more cycle storage and new pedestrian crossings via our Streets for People strategy;
 - v. A new leisure centre at Canada Water, whilst also opening up Greenland Dock for supervised swimming this summer;
 - vi. New libraries across Southwark including the new Una Marson library on the Aylesbury Estate;
 - vii. Plans for new integrated Health Hubs across the borough including on the Aylesbury, at Canada Water and at Elephant & Castle;
 - viii. A refurbished Walworth Town Hall, following the devastating fire in 2013 with new workspace and community space;
 - ix. Plans for a new LGBTQ+ Cultural Centre as part of the Native Land development at Bankside;
 - x. Innovative community partnership projects with groups like Livesey Exchange and Kingswood Arts;
 - xi. A new home for our Southwark Young Advisers coming soon at 231 Old Kent Road;
 - xii. A new home for the Southwark Pensioners' Centre, supported through SCIL;
 - xiii. The extension of SELCHP to reduce our carbon emissions and connect more homes and organisations to this low-carbon source of heating and hot water;
 - xiv. Improved, and new, parks through development, such as the Bramcote Park project and 12 acres of new open space at Canada Water.
- b. That this Labour administration set up the Southwark Land Commission, the first of its kind in London, to look at how we could free up more public land for public good.
 - c. That through development in Southwark, we have not only secured tens of millions of pounds in investment through Community Infrastructure Levy but have also benefited from additional council tax and business rates receipts which support our General Fund and keep our frontline services going.

5. Council Assembly therefore resolves to support the council in:

- a. Bringing forward the next phase of its New Homes Programme, including the delivery of new council homes, keyworker homes, a new nursing home, and backing local people to build genuinely affordable homes via a Community Land Trust pilot scheme;
- b. Continuing to maximise the delivery of social rent homes through development in accordance with planning policy and always pushing developers to go further;
- c. Responding to what residents say they need and setting out further plans for capital investment in the borough; and to support its bids to other funders such as TfL and the department for transport (DfT);
- d. Campaigning for the Bakerloo Line Extension, and in discussions with the Mayor of London about implementing the 'Bakerloop' bus;
- e. Responding to the Southwark Land Commission including through the establishment of a Southwark Land Partnership, development of 'affordable workspace hubs', and identification of 'pilot sites' to test new models of community participation;
- f. Setting out the process this autumn for a further round of local CIL allocations, whilst preparing the way for a new framework designed to maximise impact and reduce inequality;
- g. Working with the new government to ensure that policies are fit for purpose and that the sustainable Future of Council Housing is especially high on its agenda.

Declaring a Housing Emergency

1. Council Assembly notes:
 - a. Everyone should have a home they can afford, where they feel comfortable and safe. This is an essential foundation for a good life. Yet across our country we face a housing emergency, with over a quarter of a million people homeless, and one and a half million more living in overcrowded homes. In London alone, 1 in 23 children are living in temporary accommodation, more than one in every classroom.
 - b. This national emergency is one of the greatest challenges for our community. In Southwark, there are now 3,920 households in our borough living in temporary accommodation, many more living in overcrowded homes and over 17,000 households on our council housing waiting list. This emergency is not new and has been clear to the people of Southwark for well over a decade.
2. Council Assembly further notes:
 - a. This crisis is not inevitable. The last Labour government halved homelessness (reducing the number of households living in temporary accommodation from 101,300 to 50,400) and reduced rough sleeping by two thirds, whilst also doubling the proportion of social homes that met the decent homes standard.
 - b. In contrast, under the last fourteen years of Conservative and Liberal Democrat governments, street homelessness has risen by 169% and the number of households living in temporary accommodation is up 260%. With policies imposed by the Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties in government deepening the crisis including their Bedroom Tax; changing the national definition of an affordable home to include homes at rents that are unaffordable to people on even average incomes; reducing the Affordable Housing Grant by 60 per cent in 2010; increasing the Right to Buy Discount so thousands more council homes have been lost; capping benefits for housing costs at rates below the cost of even the cheapest private rented homes in our borough; and rolling out Help to Buy which has pushed house prices up even higher and benefited big developers most. Furthermore, in 2022 under Liz Truss the Conservative Party's mini budget crashed the economy, sending mortgages and private rents spiralling, and causing house building across our country to grind to a halt.
3. Council Assembly further notes:

- a. That for over a decade our borough has been leading the way in tackling the housing emergency, and that this has been the first priority of the council since 2010.
- b. Southwark Council is the largest builder of new council homes in the country with over 3,000 built or on site being built which is more than at any time since the 1970s. Southwark has:
 - i. secured more social rent homes than any other borough through the planning system since 2016.
 - ii. led the way in tackling rough sleeping, with over 130 people supported into long term homes.
 - iii. been a national trailblazer for homelessness prevention.
 - iv. some of the most robust affordable housing planning policies in the country, with over a third of homes given planning permission since 2020 being affordable ones and over a quarter being social rent.
- c. And Southwark is delivering the equivalent of a new town on the Old Kent Road, with half the homes given planning consent being affordable ones.

4. Council Assembly further notes and welcomes:

- a. The publication of the interim report produced by England's 20 largest council landlords focused on five solutions for the new Government to secure the future of England's council housing.
- b. Led by Southwark Council, the cross-party group of council landlords warns that England's council housing system is broken and its future in danger. The interim report finds that the current financial model and erratic national policy changes under recent Conservative and Liberal Democrat governments have squeezed councils' budgets and sent costs soaring.
- c. That unless action is taken nationally, council landlords across the country will struggle to maintain their existing homes to the standards that our residents deserve let alone build the new council homes our communities need.
- d. The recommendations in the report include urgent action to restore lost income and unlock the capacity of councils to work with the Labour Government to deliver its commitments for new council homes across the country.
- e. The five solutions set out detailed and practical recommendations to the new government:
 - A new fair and sustainable HRA model – including an urgent £644 million one-off rescue injection, and long-term, certain rent and debt agreements

- Reforms to unsustainable Right to Buy policies
- Removing red tape on existing funding
- A new, long-term Green & Decent Homes Programme
- Urgent action to restart stalled building projects, avoiding the loss of construction sector capacity and a market downturn.

5. Council Assembly also welcomes:

- a. A new Labour Government which, unlike governments over the last fourteen years, has put tackling the housing crisis centre stage, including commitments to deliver 1.5 million new homes, deliver the biggest increase in social and affordable housing in a generation, review the use of low quality Green Belt, strengthen planning obligations to ensure new developments provide more affordable homes, prioritise the building of new social rented homes and review the increased right-to-buy discounts and increase protections on newly-built social housing
- b. That within a week of the general election, the Labour Government has already taken action including announcing the restoration of mandatory housing targets, the reform of the National Planning Policy Framework and established a new taskforce to accelerate stalled housing sites, all to deliver much needed new homes.

6. Council Assembly resolves:

- a. To support the new Labour Government in its ambitious plans to deliver much needed new homes, whilst always ensuring these are truly affordable for our residents.
- b. To work with the Government's newly established taskforce and the Mayor of London to unlock and increase the pace of delivery of new council, social rent and intermediate homes across the borough.
- c. To ask Cabinet to bring forward and agree plans to:
 - i. Deliver the next phase of new council homes in Southwark, going beyond the 3,000 already completed or on site
 - ii. Deliver affordable key worker homes for nurses, social workers, teachers and other essential workers in our borough
 - iii. Establish community land trusts in Southwark, providing affordable homes to buy in perpetuity for people on lower incomes
 - iv. Continue to deliver more homes through the planning system, including more social rent and affordable homes
 - v. Invest over £200 million over the next two years in improving the quality of council homes in our borough
 - vi. Continue to improve the council's repairs service, building on the progress over the last few years, working with the council's resident led repairs improvement board

- vii. Upgrade the councils heat networks so they are more reliable, affordable and sustainable, including expanding SELCHP to serve more council estates
 - viii. Reduce rough sleeping in our borough
 - ix. Further enhance the council's already strong affordable housing policies with thorough new Supplementary Planning guidance on affordable housing
 - x. Work with partners in the borough including TfL, the NHS and faith organisations to identify land partnerships that can deliver more affordable homes
 - xi. Enhance support for council tenants wishing to down size and free up a large home for a family in need.
 - xii. Continue to extend the licencing of private rented homes in Southwark and take robust action against rogue landlords.
- d. To continue to work in collaboration and on a cross party basis with the largest council landlords in England to make the case to Government for the reforms which will make our council homes safe, healthy, modern and sustainable and allow Southwark Council to deliver the thousands more council homes our borough needs.

Debate not Hate

1. Southwark council notes that:
 - a. The intimidation and abuse of councillors, in person or otherwise, undermines democracy; preventing elected members from representing the communities they serve, deterring individuals from standing for election, and undermining public life in democratic processes.
 - b. This council notes that increasing levels of toxicity in public and political discourse is having a detrimental impact on local democracy and that prevention, support and responses to abuse and intimidation of local politicians must improve to ensure councillors feel safe and able to continue representing their residents.
2. Southwark council therefore commits to:
 - a. Challenging the normalisation of abuse against councillors and officers and uphold exemplary standards of public and political debate in all it does.
 - b. Signing up to the LGA's Debate Not Hate campaign. The campaign aims to raise public awareness of the role of councillors in local communities, encourage healthy debate and improve the response to and support those in public life facing abuse and intimidation.
3. Southwark council further commits to:
 - a. Writing to the local Members of Parliament to ask them to support the campaign.
 - b. Write to the Government to ask them to work with the LGA to develop and implement a plan to address abuse and intimidation of all politicians including councillors.
 - c. Ensuring the council has a clear reporting mechanism, which councillors can use to monitor and record incidents of harassment and abuse of councillors and officers.
 - d. Regularly review the support available to councillors in relation to abuse and intimidation and councillor safety.
 - e. Work with the local police to ensure there is a clear and joined-up mechanism for reporting threats and other concerns about the safety of councillors and their families and discuss the need to take a preventative approach that accounts for the specific

risks that councillors face, as they do with other high-risk individuals, like MPs

- f. Take a zero-tolerance approach to abuse of councillors and officers.

Ending the Lower Road chaos

1. Council Assembly notes:
 - a. That improving active travel infrastructure in Southwark is essential for combatting the climate emergency and increasing healthy transport options, with segregated cycle lanes being a key part of promoting safe cycling in our borough, helping to reduce our emissions, encourage a healthy and active population, and improve air quality
 - b. That Rotherhithe has the most constrained road network in the borough: boxed in by the river and with lots of traffic going through to use the tunnel
 - c. There is a huge amount of development ongoing in the Rotherhithe area which is adding stress to the road network: the Canada water master plan, the re-provision of the bus station, and works on the Blackwall tunnel
 - d. When the Lower Road cycle lane opened, residents, businesses, the local Labour MP and the Rotherhithe Labour councillors raised a number of issues, including regarding safety
 - e. That a public meeting was convened where the council and Transport for London listened to these concerns, and put forward a number of mitigating measures including re-marking all parking and loading restriction road markings, amending the phasing of the traffic lights to give as much “green time” to Lower Road southbound traffic as feasible, and painting the cycle track blue to provide a visual cue to all road users to improve safety
 - f. That the council has further committed to a subsequent meeting in the autumn to assess the impact of these measures and to consider further ones as necessary.
2. Council Assembly resolves that:
 - a. The Cabinet Member for Clean Air, Streets and Waste should continue to work closely with local Labour councillors in Rotherhithe, the local Labour Member of Parliament, local residents, businesses, alongside council officers and representatives from TfL to monitor the situation and find further solutions as necessary
 - b. The Cabinet Member for Clean Air, Streets and Waste should restate the invitation for local Liberal Democrat councillors to put forward their ideas to this collaborative process.