

**Local Government Boundary Commission for
England**

Southwark Electoral Review

**Submission from
Southwark Council
July 2015**

Recommendation

The council recommends that Southwark should retain 63 councillors. The council considers that this is the minimum number required to ensure effective governance. We considered an increase to 66 and a decrease to 60 members. A greater number of members would increase their resilience and representativeness and lead to a more manageable workload. In reviewing our nearest neighbours, it should be noted that to increase the number of members to more than 66 would make Southwark an outlier. Decreasing to 60 would negatively impact on governance and our representational roles. While we are conscious of an increasing population and the benefits of at least 66 members, we do not believe that, at a time when the numbers of officers are being reduced and budgets are being cut, we can justify an increase. The council currently demonstrates that it can operate adequately with 63 members, and believes it can continue to do so.

- All councillors serve on at least one committee, with 60 out of 63 serving on at least two and more than half serving on three or more.
- Just over half (28 out of 52 non-executive) of members sit on at least one scrutiny committee. Southwark currently has the right number of members to ensure effective scrutiny.
- Southwark has a very diverse population and wants a council which reflects that diversity. Southwark has the highest proportion of residents in the country who were born in Africa and where 3 in 4 reception age children are from a black and minority ethnic group. Over 120 languages are spoken in Southwark, with 11 per cent of households having no member of the household who has English as a first language. The council currently has a diverse group of councillors representing Southwark. The role and support for members enable people from a variety of backgrounds to perform the role. Reduction in councillor numbers, even a small reduction, would make this harder to achieve and deter members with childcare commitments or full time work.
- Southwark is the largest local authority landlord in London with nearly a third (31.2%) of homes rented from the council. This generates a high volume of casework for members, which will be considerably more than other similar boroughs.
- The borough is changing with an overall increase in population including through major regeneration projects. The Aylesbury Estate and the Elephant and Castle are amongst the largest housing developments in the UK. We expect the population to grow to over 350,000 by 2021 and for over 20,000 people to be living in new housing.
- Members in 2002 represented an average of 3,886 people. In 2015, this rose to 4,800 and if we retain 63 councillors this will rise to 5,567 by 2021. We consider

5,000 to be the optimal number of residents per councillor which would mean the council needs at least 71 councillors.

- The council can carry out its functions effectively with 63 members and ensure adequate representation, good governance and scrutiny. Members do have a high workload and the multiple pressures mean that members have to work hard to ensure that their various responsibilities are met.
- Due to reductions in budgets, the council is asking more from its members and providing less support. This has increased the workload of members. Southwark has considered reducing the number of members to 60 but is concerned that a reduction in the number of members would further increase the workload of councillors to a point at which it would deter potential good quality candidates, with other commitments, from standing.

Introduction

Southwark welcomes the review of electoral boundaries and the opportunity to submit representations to the Commission.

The council's cabinet set up a cross-party working group, made up of councillors from the three political parties represented in the borough to consider the question of council size and to lead the work that the council has done to assess the optimal number of councillors which Southwark needs for the future.

The working group was comprised of the following members:

Cllr Richard Livingstone (Chair)	(Labour Cabinet Member)
Cllr Anood Al-Samerai	(Liberal Democrats Group Leader)
Cllr Fiona Colley	(Labour Cabinet Member)
Cllr Michael Mitchell	(Conservative Group Leader)
Cllr David Noakes	(Liberal Democrats Deputy Group Leader)
Cllr Cleo Soanes	(Labour Councillor)

This report is the output from the work of the group. It has subsequently been taken to a meeting of the full council so that all councillors had an opportunity to debate and consider before it was adopted as Southwark's submission to the Commission.

1. Southwark Profile

- 1.1. Southwark is a central London borough which is home to over 300,000 people. Southwark has the 9th highest population density in England and Wales at 9,988 residents per square kilometre.
- 1.2. Southwark is made up of a number of historic and distinct communities with the areas of Borough, Bermondsey and Rotherhithe along the Thames in the north. The communities of Walworth, Peckham, Nunhead and Camberwell are in the centre of the borough, with East Dulwich and Dulwich in the south.
- 1.3. Southwark is a borough of huge diversity with areas of high wealth living alongside some of the poorest communities.
- 1.4. Southwark is the largest local authority landlord in London with a third (31.2%) of homes rented from the council. A third are privately owned (31.4%) and a third are privately rented or another social rent (24.9% and 12.5%).
- 1.5. Southwark is a borough which celebrates its enormous ethnic diversity, welcoming people from around the world who choose to make their home in London. Southwark has the highest proportion of residents in the country who were born in Africa (12.9 per cent). Southwark has a large Afro-Caribbean population (26.9%) and just under one in ten people are Asian (9.4%). We have recently seen significant growth in smaller minority communities such as our Latin America community. 75 % of reception-age children are from black and minority ethnic (BME) groups.
- 1.6. Over 120 languages are spoken in Southwark, with 11 % of households having no member of the household who has English as a first language.
- 1.7. Southwark has a proportionally youthful population with 58 % aged 35 or under. This also contributes to some areas having an increasingly transient population with young people often struggling to meet the cost of housing if they choose to start families.

2. Southwark's Priorities

- 2.1. Southwark is an ambitious council and expects a lot from its officers and members. The council's Fairer Future commitments set out the councils' promises and commitments which reflect the needs of our residents. The building of 11,000 new council homes, free swim and gym use for our residents and guaranteed education, employment or training for every school leaver reflects our continued commitment to equality and fairness valuing all residents in the borough.

- 2.2. This year, Southwark faces the third highest cut of spending power per household in the country. Members and officers need to work hard to make decisions about how to spend the council's budget, whilst remaining ambitious for the borough and our residents. The council is committed to creating a borough where everyone has opportunity to reach their own potential. We are realistic about the challenges ahead and will continue to do more with less, and look for innovative ways of investing in the things that matter most to our residents. We will carry on delivering free healthy school meals for every primary school child, we will finish our warm dry and safe programme for the borough's council homes and we will keep working to create jobs in apprenticeships that provide local residents with the better opportunities of learning, living and working in Southwark.
- 2.3. Over the next three years, we are increasing our efforts to make the borough healthier with investment in cycling, parks and leisure and free fruit every day for primary school children. We are rolling out our ethical care charter and improving the quality of homecare so that older people can lead independent lives for longer. We are also delivering on our commitment to make Southwark an age friendly borough, so that whatever your age you can get the best from living in the borough.
- 2.4. The council can only make all of this a success with the work, help and support of people and other organisations in the borough. We have an active local community who use their time and talents to make the borough what it is. Councillors are crucial in this mix, bringing together groups and working with them to enhance and improve the life of the borough for all our residents.
- 2.5. The council's priorities reflect the borough that we are and the challenges that we face. They are:
 - 2.5.1. Quality affordable housing – Southwark is the largest local authority landlord in London, and is continuing to build more homes of every kind including 11,000 new council homes. Much of our housing stock has been historically neglected so the council is renewing it making every home warm dry and safe, before ensuring every home has a quality kitchen and bathroom.
 - 2.5.2. Ensuring the best start in life – Southwark has one of the highest numbers of looked after children in London and a high number of children who are classed as vulnerable. Many parents in Southwark are struggling with the cost of childcare. As a council we want to support parents, carers and young people so that they have the choices to be in control of their lives and future.
 - 2.5.3. Building a strong local economy – we want to ensure that more people find work and get the training they need to achieve their

aspirations. We want to help ensure more people are financially independent and that people have the skills and knowledge to make use of the opportunities that Southwark has to offer.

2.5.4. Healthy and active lives – Southwark wants to reduce health inequalities in a borough where we have some of the highest HIV infection rates, childhood obesity and teenage pregnancy rates. Southwark is investing in breaking down the barriers to people being fit and healthy and leading full and active lives.

2.5.5. A cleaner, greener and safer borough – Southwark has already doubled recycling in four years, and now aims to divert over 95% of waste from landfill. We are leading the way nationally on improving women’s safety and taking action on domestic violence.

2.5.6. Revitalised neighbourhoods – Southwark is proud of its heritage and excited about its future. We are delivering some of the most exciting and ambitious regeneration programmes anywhere in Europe. Our residents are at the heart of our ambition and our aim is for our regeneration to deliver not just new homes, but also better infrastructure and jobs.

3. Changes in Southwark since 2002-2021

3.1. The last boundary review was carried out ahead of the 2002 local government elections. Since then, Southwark has undergone a number of changes which affect local government and the work of councillors.

3.2. The population of Southwark continues to grow. The GLA population growth forecasts set out below show that from a 2002 population of 256,926, Southwark will have reached a population of 337,231 by 2021.

3.3.

Year	Population
2002	256,926
2011	289,361
2012	294,149
2013	299,081
2014	301,116
2015	304,626
2016	310,554
2017	316,521
2018	322,391
2019	328,107
2020	333,734
2021	337,231

- 3.4. The council believes that the GLA's population growth forecast represents an undercount. The council has recently revised its residential development trajectory which forecasts an additional 5,206 homes over the period. These have not been accounted for in the GLA's population growth forecast. With each home yielding an average of 2.6 people, that represents an additional 13,535 people by 2021 so an overall population of 350,766.
- 3.5. The number of people in employment has increased from 130,500 to 160,100 between 2004 and 2013, whilst the number of people who are unemployed remains the same at 14,000 over this period.
- 3.6. The council has changed how it has operated since the last boundary review. We now operate under the Strong Leader model as set out in this paper and have introduced scrutiny committees which have changed the way that Southwark is governed and the role of members.
- 3.7. There have been other changes in the borough which have affected the work that the council does. Large scale regeneration has helped attract new business, and in the last 15 years, the borough has begun to realise its potential as an inner London borough. In the north of the borough, along the river and around London Bridge, we now house a number of major international companies such as News UK. Iconic buildings like the Shard have helped transform this area of London and brought investment into an area which for too long was not feeling the benefits of being at the heart of London.
- 3.8. Our town centres have been transformed again attracting more and more businesses. Areas like Peckham and Camberwell are busy and growing and the council is working hard with the community to support local entrepreneurs and start up businesses.
- 3.9. The presence of two universities in the borough: London South Bank University and the University of the Arts London, attract more young people to the borough. The strong arts focus in our universities, together with the London College of Communications and Camberwell Arts College, help attract not just the arts to the borough but also means we act as a hub for people in the arts starting their careers.
- 3.10. While the Government has cut and continues to cut funding for local authorities, Southwark has been particularly hard hit. Southwark has seen some of the largest reductions in funding each year since 2010 and in the most recent settlement received the third highest reduction in the country. This has a huge impact on the council's ability to deliver services and puts a greater pressure on councillors to do more with less. The Government has said it will continue to make cuts for the rest of this Parliament up until 2020

so by 2021 Southwark could be operating with as little as half the grant it had five years ago but being expected to deliver more.

- 3.11. The council expects changes to continue over the next five years. Southwark's council house building programme is the biggest in the country, and sits alongside some of the biggest regeneration projects in the country. Southwark is a borough which is being transformed and looking forward, this change will continue.
- 3.12. Southwark has grown in importance within London and we expect this to continue as new businesses and regeneration continue to drive change in the borough.
- 3.13. The cost of living continues to rise and the cost of housing does too. House prices in Southwark have been amongst the highest in the country. The cost of housing and the cost of living puts a real strain on many residents in the borough. Our young population includes many who want to buy their first home, yet struggle to afford it. Our challenge is to help people stay in the borough and ensure that there is adequate housing of all types to maintain the diversity of the borough and the mix of people who want to make this their home.

4. Section 1 - Governance and Decision Making

- 4.1. Southwark is made up of 21 wards, with 63 councillors leading the council. Each of these councillors sits on the council assembly, which is the 'sovereign body' of the council. The assembly is chaired by the Mayor of Southwark.
- 4.2. Council assembly elects a leader to serve a four year term. The Leader appoints a cabinet of up to ten members (including the Leader) which has executive responsibility for decision making.
- 4.3. Council assembly establishes and then agrees the size and composition of the council's committees.
- 4.4. The political balance of the council is currently 48 Labour, 13 Liberal Democrats and 2 Conservatives. Due to the proportionality rules, the council has increased the size of some committees to ensure that every party gets at least one committee place, in addition to community council places, so that all parties have a role in the governance and decision making process.
- 4.5. All councillors serve on at least one committee, 60 out of 63 members serve on two and over half (33) serve on two or more.
- 4.6. The appendix sets out the full details about where decisions are taken and how they are delegated.

5. Leadership

5.1. The Leader

- 5.1.1. The Leader operates under a "Strong Leader" model.
- 5.1.2. The Leader agrees the forward plan and can specify that a decision is to be taken by a particular decision maker. The Leader can vary this in line with the council's constitution.
- 5.1.3. The Leader can give authority to delegate to a cabinet member or chief officer individually, including details of the limitation on their authority.
- 5.1.4. The Leader can remove or replace members of the cabinet or make changes to portfolios.
- 5.1.5. In practice most decisions are delegated by the Leader to the Cabinet or to individual cabinet members.
- 5.1.6. The Leader is a full time role.

5.2. Cabinet

5.2.1. There are currently 10 members of the cabinet; this is the Leader and nine cabinet members. There are four non-executive deputy cabinet members. The current cabinet portfolios are:

- Business, Employment and Culture
- Finance, Modernisation and Performance
- Adult Care and Financial Inclusion
- Public Health, Parks and Leisure
- Regeneration and New Homes
- Children and Schools
- Housing
- Environment and Public Realm
- Communities and Safety

5.2.2. The cabinet meets monthly to make executive decisions. The council's constitution sets out matters reserved to cabinet which include decisions on large contracts, recommendations to council assembly on the council's budget and policy framework, decisions of strategic management, approval of new fees and charges, various financial decisions in relation to disposal of assets, debt write offs and acquisition of land or property. It also includes issues such as school admissions and adoption of supplementary planning documents.

5.2.3. Individual cabinet members are responsible for reports which come to the cabinet and play an active role in the formulation of reports before the cabinet.

5.2.4. Other than matters reserved for cabinet, the Leader delegates most decision making to cabinet members under the council's Individual Decision Making process (IDM).

5.2.5. IDMs include proposing allocations of budgets within the overall budget framework, agreeing performance standards and policy changes, agreeing consultation arrangements and approving responses to consultations from government or other bodies.

5.2.6. Reports and policies are formulated between officers and cabinet members. Cabinet members have regular one to ones with their chief officer to provide political leadership to the various decisions that are being taken across the council.

5.2.7. The council has up to four deputy cabinet members. They do not have an executive function, but carry out work for the Leader on areas of

particular importance to the administration. For example the establishment and delivery of a Women's Safety Charter.

5.2.8. Cabinet members are expected to work an average of 38 hours per week on executive matters; some of this work will naturally be in the evenings and at weekends and much of it will be undertaken out of the office. Cabinet members have 30 days of leave per year. They are expected to keep a record of their leave taken.

5.3. **Council Assembly**

5.3.1. Council assembly is made up of all 63 councillors. It is chaired by the Mayor. These meetings are held six times a year which includes an annual meeting and mayor making, as well as a budget setting meeting.

5.3.2. The council holds a Leader's Public Question time in place of a seventh meeting which the council previously held.

5.3.3. Meetings are held in the evening and are open to the public. Meetings include public deputations, questions from the public and members to the Cabinet, motions from members and themed debates. Council assembly considers reports on matters reserved to council assembly (as set out above).

5.3.4. Council assembly establishes the various committees of the council and the composition of these.

5.3.5. Council assembly considers the borough's constitution and can make changes to it.

5.4. **Non-Executive Councillors**

5.4.1. There are 52 non-executive councillors (excluding Leader, Cabinet and Mayor). They all attend council assembly and in addition sit on the various committees of the council.

5.4.2. The council's constitution sets out details of the role of a councillor. (See appendix)

5.4.3. The opposition have a shadow cabinet that help scrutinise the administration. In addition each party has a whip who liaise to agree business and manage work between the groups. This includes agreeing business for council assembly and constitutional changes.

5.5. **Outside Bodies**

5.5.1. The council's annual meeting appoints members to outside bodies. In addition to those listed below, some members serve on panels by virtue of their executive function such as the Leader sitting on the London Enterprise Panel (LEP). This is not a Southwark Council nomination. (A list can be found in the appendix)

6. **Regulatory**

6.1. Planning Committees

6.1.1. The council has one planning committee and two planning sub-committees.

6.1.2. The planning committee's powers are set out in section 3F of the council's constitution. Primarily its work involves considering and determining all strategic and major planning applications.

6.1.3. It also considers the expenditure of s106 monies, and makes recommendations on local development framework in respect of significant planning matters. It comments on consultations proposing changes to strategic planning.

6.1.4. The Planning Committee establishes two sub-committees to also consider applications.

6.1.5. In the last two years the council has determined 11,218 planning decisions, of which 194 (just under 2%) were made by members.

6.1.6. The committee meets around 12-14 times a year and the sub-committees meet 6-7 times each per year. These are often particularly demanding meetings for members, regularly lasting beyond midnight.

6.1.7. There is significant public involvement at each meeting. Members also are expected to do work in preparation for the meeting.

6.1.8. Southwark has a number of major areas of regeneration and development including the Elephant and Castle and the Aylesbury Estate. These areas attract a high level of public involvement and engagement and the time of members.

6.1.9. There are currently eight members of the Planning Committee and seven members of each of the two sub-committees.

6.1.10. Committee Membership across the ordinary committees of the council is proportionate to the make up of the party groups. It is decided annually at council assembly and is only changed if the makeup of the council changes during the year.

6.1.11. Meetings of the committees have always been quorate.

6.2. Licensing Committees

6.2.1. The council has a Licensing Committee and Licensing Sub Committee.

6.2.2. The Licensing Committee's powers are set out in section 3G of the council's constitution. The committee considers and determines applications, revocation of licenses and polices in relation to licensing and registration.

6.2.3. The full committee meets around four times a year. The sub committee meets around 50 times a year.

6.2.4. The Licensing Committee has 15 members. A sub committee can be convened with any three members of the main committee.

6.2.5. There is significant public involvement at each meeting, and work for Members to do in preparation for the meeting.

6.2.6. Southwark has a number of areas with a busy and growing night time economy generating a high number of licensing applications. In the last year Southwark had 2,224 licensing applications of which 78 were determined by councillors (3.5%) over 58 meetings.

6.2.7. Licensing meetings happen in the daytime so that licensees can attend, but this puts a pressure on members, as it limits these meetings to those who can take time off in the day. As the appendix shows licensing meetings last around 3½ hours and take place about once a week.

6.2.8. Meetings are always quorate.

6.3. Other Committees of the Council and Panels

6.3.1. In addition to the regulatory committees of the council, Southwark also has a number of other committees and panels which play an important role in decision making and governance. These are:

- Joint Partnership Panel (2 Cllrs)
- Leaseholder Arbitration Panel (Pool of Cllrs)
- Southwark Safeguarding Adults Board (1 Cllr)

- Southwark Safeguarding Children’s Board (1 Cllr)
- Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (4 Cllrs)
- Tenancy Agreement Arbitration Panel (Pool of Cllrs)
- Southwark Tenant Management Organisation Committee (5 Cllrs)
- Pensions Advisory Panel (3 Cllrs)
- Appointments Committee (7 Cllrs)
- Health and Wellbeing Board (3 Cllrs)
- Corporate Parenting Committee (7 Cllrs)
- Audit and Governance Committee (6 Cllrs)
- Standards Committee (7 Cllrs)
- Constitutional Steering Panel (5 Cllrs)
- Council Assembly Business Panel (4 Cllrs)
- Member Support and Development Steering Group (5 Cllrs)

6.3.2. Southwark takes its role as a corporate parent very seriously. Southwark has one the highest number of looked after children in London. Councillors play an important role through Corporate Parenting Panel, Health and Children Services Scrutiny Committee, and in challenge to Cabinet in holding the council to account. Following the failures in Rotherham recently, Southwark wants to take every step to ensure that there is a culture where councillors can challenge practice to ensure those failures do not occur in Southwark. It is essential that there are members dedicated to this work.

7. Community Councils

- 7.1. The council devolves some decisions to the community level through community councils. Community councils were introduced in 2003 after the last boundary review. The five community councils are based on council ward boundaries. Each has elected councillors as voting members. One ward sits across two community councils so their members sit on two community councils. There were previously eight community councils, but following reductions in budgets this has been rationalised to five. This has increased the size of community councils for members to manage and these changes increase the work of each community council.
- 7.2. The five community councils in Southwark are based on boundaries that reflect Southwark’s neighbourhoods. They are an important part of the council's decision making process. They make decisions on issues such as traffic management, community safety and environmental improvements.
- 7.3. The community councils also manage funds and allocate money for local projects and activities through a ‘Cleaner, Greener, Safer’ fund. Community councils also manage the devolved highways budget and the neighbourhood fund. Across Southwark over £3.2million is devolved to ward councillors at the community council level.

- 7.4. The community councils hold public meetings, at least five times a year, where local people can meet with each other and with the ward councillors, to discuss key issues of concern, and help influence decisions on matters of local interest. The community council also plays a central role in managing community consultations.
- 7.5. Community councils also provide a forum for consultation with local people, giving residents an opportunity to influence how council and other services are delivered. The meetings are usually themed around a particular topic, such as transport, development, environment, or employment. and there are presentations from council officers, special interest groups and local initiatives with some relevance to the theme.
- 7.6. As well as attending, the public can bring a deputation, ask questions and take part in discussions. There are also community slots in the agenda to enable the public to speak with councillors about community activity.

8. Demands on Time

- 8.1. The role of councillors is set out in Article 2 of the constitution. Councillors will:
 - represent their communities and bring their views into the council's decision making process, i.e. become the advocate of and for their communities;
 - deal with individual casework and act as an advocate for constituents in resolving particular concerns or grievances;
 - balance different interests identified within the ward or electoral division and represent the ward or electoral division as a whole;
 - maintain the highest standards of conduct and ethics;
 - contribute to the good governance of the area and actively encourage community participation and citizen involvement in decision making functions;
 - sit on council assembly.
- 8.2. There is training available for members which is managed within each group. In addition the Council provides initial induction training to all members following an election, both new and returning.
 - 8.2.1. The training took place over two months and included introductions to how the council operates, powers and decision making, code of

conduct, planning, licensing and local government finance. There is training on safeguarding, and the benefits system.

- 8.2.2. There is additional more detailed training for members of particular committees and regulatory committees.
- 8.2.3. The council provides various skills based training sessions on matters such as how to chair meetings effectively, effective scrutiny questioning and managing casework.
- 8.2.4. The council ensures that all members have equalities training.
- 8.3. Southwark replaces around half of its councillors at each election.
 - 2014 – 29 re-elected, 34 new councillors,
 - 2010 – 32 re-elected, 31 new councillors,
 - 2006 – 33 re-elected, 30 new councillors,
 - There are some slight anomalies where for example eight councillors in the last three terms have left the council and returned after a period.
- 8.4. Elections in Southwark are competitive with the three main parties fielding three candidates in every ward. In addition smaller parties and independents stood in almost all wards at the last few elections. This suggests to the Council that there is no concern in attracting candidates to stand for election.
- 8.5. Councillors work hard to meet their commitments. The council has not had an instance when it has been unable to discharge its duties due to a lack of councillors.
- 8.6. Councillors have been surveyed as part of the electoral review process to better understand the demands on their time, how they communicate with residents, their local leadership role and the impact of past and future changes.
- 8.7. The average councillor is attending around 19 meetings per month, taking up an average of 42 hours. This includes borough wide meetings, ward level and community meetings. Councillors in Southwark attend a large number of tenant and resident association (TRA) meetings (average of three per member per month) reflecting Southwark's role as a major social landlord.
- 8.8. Members who have been councillors for some time observed that the absolute volume of correspondence had increased, with constituents demanding more and a more immediate response from their elected members. This is expected to increase as new forms of communication like

Twitter become more prevalent and where instant responses requires members to spend more time communicating than previously. 86% of councillors use Twitter.

- 8.9. Members were asked about the time commitment of being a councillor. Around two fifths expected it to be a lesser time commitment. Members who felt this were surprised by the volume and complexity of casework and the level of need of residents through social and electronic media.
- 8.10. Currently there are 335 places that need to be filled by members across committees, bodies and panels and positions within the council. With 63 members this averages at just over 5 per member. A reduction in the number of members to 60 would increase this and make it harder to fill posts – especially outside bodies.

9. Policy Changes

- 9.1. Changes in legislation do affect the work load of sub-committees; one example is that licensing sub-committees have become significantly more frequent since changes to the licensing legislation. Southwark has a large number of licensed premises which puts a high demand on member's time.
- 9.2. The council has taken over responsibility for public health. This means that the council has had to put in place the relevant governance structures and needs councillors to have a role in this. The Health and Wellbeing Board has three councillors on it, and the Healthy Communities Scrutiny Sub-Committee has taken on additional responsibilities in scrutinising health decisions.
- 9.3. The Conservative Party have made a number of commitments ahead of the General Election which are now likely to become government policy. Some of these will impact on Southwark and the need for members. This includes:
 - Further devolution of powers over economic development, transport and social care to large cities;
 - Further control over skills, spending and planning given to the Mayor of London;
 - The government appears to be looking at more pro-devolution policies which may impact on the work that councils do, and also the need for Members to scrutinise decisions made in relation to these powers;
 - Government plans to make continued changes to welfare, and further reductions in council budgets. This is likely to increase the caseload of councillors – particularly in areas with a high level of social housing.

10. Section 1 - Summary and Conclusion of Governance

- 10.1. The council's 'Strong Leader' model means that executive power rests with the cabinet and Leader.**
- 10.2. The community system means that all members have responsibility for some local level decisions.**
- 10.3. Every councillor sits on at least one committee of the council, 60 out of 63 sit on at least two and over half (33) sit on at least three.**
- 10.4. Southwark has a high number of planning and licensing decisions due to its central London location and ambitious building and regeneration projects. There were 58 licencing meetings in the last year.**
- 10.5. The council is aware of future changes in neighbourhood planning which will increase the demand on members.**
- 10.6. All councillors have some decision making responsibility due to their role as members of the community council. There are no councillors who are not engaged in some part of the council's governance process. Council meetings are well attended, and members are actively engaged, suggesting that they are attending willingly and have about the right number to attend.**
- 10.7. An effective opposition is important in any council, a smaller opposition often has more difficulty in having an impact in holding the administration to account. A reduction in the overall size of the council would make this more challenging.**
- 10.8. 63 councillors provide the council with enough members to fulfil its governance function. With almost all councillors serving on at least two committees and over half serving on three or more, the council would struggle to meet its governance standards with fewer members. Even a reduction to 60 would limit the availability of members. An increase in councillors to 66 would mean that members could sit on fewer committees and so dedicate more time to those that they do.**

11. Section 2 - Scrutiny Functions

- 11.1. The council has an Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) which appoints three sub-committees.
- OSC – 11 members
 - Education and Children’s Services Sub Committee – 7 members
 - Healthy Communities Sub Committee – 7 members
 - Housing and Community Safety Sub Committee – 6 members
 - In addition to councillors, there are also co-opted members on some of these committees.
- 11.2. Membership is on a cross-party basis and under current arrangements the three sub committees are chaired by Labour councillors with the Vice Chairs being drawn from the main opposition party.
- 11.3. Each scrutiny committee conducts two-three reviews a year as well as holding a formal session to hold cabinet members to account and dealing with topical items where there is capacity. Each scrutiny committee’s workload is regularly reassessed and the committees have usually been able to cover their agreed priority topics.
- 11.4. There is also a longer OSC session each year dedicated to budget scrutiny. In addition to the role of OSC, the council’s audit and governance committee also has a role in scrutinising the council’s budget.
- 11.5. The sub-committee that covers health could have a larger workload than the other sub-committees due to its statutory functions, and responsibility for the wider health environment outside of the council including hospitals and the CCG. This has previously led to the need for very careful agenda planning to ensure that all required papers are considered at the committee alongside any enquiries that the committee would like to carry out on its own initiative.
- 11.6. The cabinet is split with different members having responsibility for the Health and Wellbeing Board, public health and adult social care. This impacts on the business that the committee can conduct, due to the need for three cabinet interviews to ensure that all areas covered by the committee can be discussed.
- 11.7. It is welcomed that our communities and stakeholders actively want to contribute to the work of the scrutiny committees, this leads to large numbers of witnesses at the meetings which can sometimes also make agenda planning difficult, and to address all issues there needs to be careful time management.

- 11.8. The committees develop work programmes at the start of the year and keep them under review. Work is timetabled with flexibility to allow for changing priorities.
- 11.9. In most cases, the committee chairs will hold discussions with members to develop proposals for the main inquiries that should be undertaken, and chairs work alongside officers to ensure that any urgent business or emerging priorities can be factored into agenda planning.
- 11.10. Reviews tend to be scheduled to allow for the reports to be brought back to the main OSC and then onto cabinet within a council year, although this is not always possible when priorities are changed.
- 11.11. There are periodic reviews of the health committee agenda throughout the year to ensure that agendas are not too long, and that any changes are reflected and taken into account.
- 11.12. The bulk of our scrutiny work is carried out in formal meetings. We are aware that many of our councillors have work/life balance challenges so we do not require activity between formal meetings. However, it is helpful for them to take part in site visits and to read research reports and follow up correspondence. Chairs play an active role in developing and managing the work programmes and require regular contact with council officers and other stakeholders. Chairs of committees sometimes draft scrutiny reports themselves which is clearly a time consuming activity. However, this is not a requirement.
- 11.13. In some cases, the chair of the committee will draft the report in conjunction with officers who can provide further information if required, or check within the council for clarification on any issues arising.
- 11.14. In the case of the health committee, there are regular meetings with the CCG and public health, and members of the committee are regularly invited to attend stakeholder meetings at the hospitals that fall within Southwark.
- 11.15. The health committee needs strengthening due to its increased work load on public health. Since the last boundary review the committee has gained additional powers such as referral of decisions to the Secretary of State.
- 11.16. The council has had to reduce the officer support for scrutiny committees due to funding cuts. This means that members are expected to do considerably more of the work themselves.
- 11.17. The council has also reduced the number of committees due to funding and a lack of officer support being available. Members have expressed a desire to do more scrutiny and have fuller work plans.

- 11.18. Scrutiny members are expected to lead the work of their committees. The Education and Children's Sub Committee for example wanted to test out and strengthen the committee's findings on three topics that they had worked on during the year. Members organised a policy seminar with a range of stakeholders from the children's workforce, community groups and partner agencies. They invited the key note speakers and invested a lot of time in building up support and attendance. This is in addition to the work in the committee and in preparing research and reports.
- 11.19. Scrutiny Chairs have also led in data gathering. For example in an Overview and Scrutiny Inquiry into the council's procurement systems, the Chair of OSC conducted 45 minute interviews with a series of officers who work at various levels in the organisation to explore the details of how the council procures and improvements that could be made.
- 11.20. Scrutiny members in the Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Sub Committee have been out on a series of visits to the services which they scrutinise. Members have been involved in late night noise patrols, a day working with the community wardens, a day with a plumber, spending time in the call centre listening to calls and working with the repairs service on how residents' repairs are managed.
- 11.21. With additional powers coming to the council, particularly around health, there will be an increased scrutiny workload. 63 members enables the council to meet these challenges and future challenges. A reduction to 60 members would enable the council to continue to deliver scrutiny, but it would impact on the ability of the council in the future to increase the reach of its scrutiny and meet new scrutiny challenges.

12. Section 2 - Summary and Conclusion of Scrutiny

- 12.1. 28 members out of 52 non-executive members are on a scrutiny committee.**
- 12.2. Members receive clerking support and some policy support, but increasingly have to lead the work and drafting of reports themselves.**
- 12.3. The current schedule is very full including cabinet member interviews for every cabinet and deputy cabinet member, and a full day of budget scrutiny.**
- 12.4. With additional powers coming to the council, particularly around health, there will be an increased scrutiny workload. There is the right number of members to meet this demand at present, but we remain ambitious for the future and so need available councillors to increase, but the council will need to resource scrutiny further if it is to support this. If not, members will be expected to do more of the work themselves, with limited officer support.**

12.5. The council is ambitious for scrutiny now and in the future and would like to do more. A reduction in members to 60 would inhibit the council's ability to deliver effective scrutiny now but also limit our ability in the future.

13. Section 3 - Representational Role of Councillors

- 13.1. All councillors do casework differently. The council's iCasework system records casework from members. Officers across the council should record casework on this and so we can draw down information about the type and quantity of casework which exists. Officers estimate that about 20% of casework is not logged in this way.
- 13.2. Analysis of iCasework shows that there are on average 650 cases logged per month by councillors.
- 13.3. Most casework is housing related – the top five issues for members enquiries are: housing list issues; wet trade issues like damp; carpentry and plumbing issues like new doors, bathroom and kitchen fixtures; and engineering issues such as problems with heating, estate lighting and door entries.
- 13.4. Of the 20% that is not logged on iCasework, this is often when members resolve things informally at a local level by calling a housing officer or speaking with a relevant officer to resolve a case.
- 13.5. The role of officers is set out in the council's constitution. Their job is to give full and impartial advice to councillors to enable councillors to carry out their duties. There is no general administrative support for members to discharge their duties, although there is support for members performing certain roles. For example, if they are part of the controlling administration they will have access to (but not exclusive use of) a PA and a portfolio assistant. If they are a committee members they will have access to an officer from members services, a constitutional officer who attends all committee meetings and access to and use of IT.
- 13.6. All councillors have access to a blackberry, council phone line and email. This way of working means that the public often have high expectations of a councillor's response time and accessibility.
- 13.7. The council operates a members' enquiry service which manages members' queries and casework. The council does not offer any general administrative support for members in their ward or casework. Members are expected to manage their own casework.
- 13.8. Most members hold regular surgeries however each councillor organises these differently.
- 13.9. Some councillors' blog and tweet, this is not hosted by the council but is part of the councillors fulfilling their role in communicating with local residents.

- 13.10. Since the last review, the council has changed substantially. Prior to 2002, like most councils, members operated in a committee system which had a different set of governance arrangements in place to those currently. Although the statutory functions of the council operation remain in place, the nature and focus of overall council activity has significantly altered to reflect the changing nature of the borough and issues facing it.
- 13.11. Members work with people across the borough. The council has various mechanisms in place to assist with groups such as young people and other minority groups.
- 13.11.1. Youth Community Councils and Speakerbox that represents Children Looked After are currently in place. Officers are midway through a piece of targeted work with young people in the borough which includes research about what stops them being engaged. We have also done specific events for young people as part of wider consultations that at times involve councillors such as the ones on the new council homes.
- 13.11.2. Southwark has a very well established formal architecture of engagement with communities of interest across the borough. These include forums established around faith, ethnicity, disability, and the LGBT community. These groups have a very active engagement with ward councillors and cabinet members. Southwark has a very diverse population with a mixture of well-established communities alongside more recently arrived groups. Officers and councillors have worked hard to bring people from different communities and faiths together.
- 13.11.3. Ward councillors play an active role in encouraging residents to get involved in local activities and groups and to create understanding and tolerance. The result is that residents in Southwark are active and participate in their neighbourhoods and the work of the council.
- 13.11.4. Partners have worked well together to empower communities and bring local people together to reduce tension. Southwark is a place where communities generally get on well together. Over three-quarters of residents feel that people from different backgrounds get on well together.
- 13.12. Southwark does not have parish councils.
- 13.13. Southwark has a large number of active Tenant and Residents Associations, partly reflecting the high volume of social housing. Councillors are expected to engage with TRAs in their ward.

- 13.14. The council currently has five community councils which meet at least five times per year. This is set out in section 1.
- 13.15. The two main groups have a political assistant. They provide limited support with press and group administration. They rarely provide any support for individual members with casework or their ward representational role.
- 13.16. Members play a front line role in public consultations. The council holds “Community Conversations” on issues such as the budget process. Ward councillors usually attend these public events to talk with the community about decisions and priorities for the council.
- 13.17. Almost all members attend events in their community where they often play a local leadership role such as fairs and fetes, openings, estate and TRA events, charity events and arts and cultural events. Members report attending around 60 such events on average through the year.
- 13.18. How members interact with their constituents is changing. Members now spend on average just two hours a month in ward surgeries, with some members not doing ward surgeries at all. Similarly members spend relatively little time corresponding through letter, but there is a much larger use of email (95%), social media (70%) and phone calls (92%). This puts a high pressure on members to respond quickly and to carry out dialogue on line. Modern forms of communication mean that members are spending a lot more time engaging with residents.
- 13.19. Members spend around 75% of their time dealing with complex or long term cases on behalf of constituents. Only around 23% is straightforward one-off cases. The majority of casework relates to housing.
- 13.20. At the last review, Southwark had a population of 244,866, (3,886 people per councillor). The population in 2021 will be 350,766. Members are working very hard to meet demands, and currently represent approximately 4,800 people per councillor. If we reduced the number of members to 60, this would mean by 2021 each councillor was representing 5,846 residents – an increase of 50% since the last review. To keep the number below 5,000 we would need 71 councillors.
- 13.21. Southwark is a diverse borough and it is important that that diversity is reflected on the council. The council has a diversity in age, gender and ethnicity. The council has a mix of councillors including those working full time, part time, with caring responsibilities, and retired.
- 13.22. Currently, 30% of councillors are from a black or minority ethnic background, 43% are women, 57% are men. Southwark has a relatively young council with 14% under 30 and 38% under 40. Approximately 13% are over 60. A little under a third (28%) have caring responsibilities for children and the council

has a mix of people working full time, part time and retired with around 57% working full time.

- 13.23. It is important to Southwark that that diversity is maintained. We are concerned that any decrease in the number of councillors will put greater pressure on the reduced number of councillors. This will mean that the council may struggle to attract those who work full time or who have childcare or other caring responsibilities. Already many members report challenges with evening meeting where childcare is an issue, or daytime meetings when there is full time work. Having 63 councillors means there is enough members to cover both types of meetings and enables a breadth of individuals to be members for Southwark.
- 13.24. Southwark has a very active voluntary and community sector putting a lot of demands on members to engage with and be part of these communities. Three member wards ensure that this work can be split effectively and also in wards where one member has additional responsibility (such as being a member of the cabinet) ward colleagues can cover work to ensure that residents still have good access to councillors.
- 13.25. Southwark has a high turnover of population so members have the challenge of working with a lot of people who have only been resident a short time, alongside its older more established communities. Southwark has a mix of residents: those who are very able to access the council and its services, as well as those who have barriers to access and who councillors have to work harder with to ensure that the council is serving them. This means that members need to be constantly adapting to meet the changing needs of the areas that they represent.

14. Section 3 - Summary and Conclusion Representational Role of Councillors

- 14.1. Councillors have high demands on their time. The make up of Southwark means there are a range of challenges in the borough which councillors are involved in resolving. High social housing and high deprivation means councillors have a large casework load.**
- 14.2. Members have little support for their representational role as ward members. They are expected to be self reliant.**
- 14.3. Southwark's population increasingly use e-communication and social media to communicate with their elected members. This is increasing the demands on members and also the expectation of a quick response to enquiries.**
- 14.4. Southwark is a very diverse borough and requires a council that is led by people who represent a range of backgrounds. We are concerned that a reduction in members would increase the workload to make it harder for**

those with childcare and other caring responsibilities or who work full time to do the role. We are concerned that this will limit the council's ability to attract quality members and candidates.

- 14.5. The council expects its members to play an active part in community conversations and community councils.
- 14.6. Councillors have to balance the time they spend in the town hall against the time they spend in the community. With a decrease in support and an increase in workload, this is a challenge for members.
- 14.7. An increase in number to 66 or even 71 would enable councillors to better fulfil the different aspects of their role as set out in sections 1, 2 and 3. However, the council has learnt to operate with 63 councillors and believes it can continue to do so. The council would not support an increase even though much of the evidence suggests that more members are needed. Maintaining 63 is essential to ensure that the council can effectively govern, scrutinise and have members who are effective representatives. This many members also enables people from a range of backgrounds to put themselves forward for election. It is essential to Southwark that this is maintained.

15. Section 4 – The Future

- 15.1. The council does not have plans to further devolve matters to members. The council will of course respond to any changes in policy from central government and welcomes the possibility of greater devolution to a local level. The council would then need to make any necessary changes to governance structures including the role of members to meet this.
- 15.2. There is every indication to believe that the initial steps towards devolution for London are underway. Jules Pipe, Labour Chair of London Councils and the London Mayor are preparing the ground for what has been 'London Settlement' consisting of shared governance and certain levels of fiscal devolution.
- 15.3. In 2013 the London Finance Commission proposed devolving council tax, business rates and capital gains and stamp duty, this was endorsed by the Mayor of London. This move, recently trialled by Greater Manchester, Peterborough and Cambridgeshire will allow the city to retain 100% of business rates and radically alter the traditional relationship with Whitehall. Under the new proposal monies will go via the Mayor to one of four or five groups of London boroughs.
- 15.4. Any fiscal changes would not be wholesale as only 12- 13 % would be apportioned to local councils. Changes in fiscal devolution are still some way off.
- 15.5. Southwark is anticipating changes to population. The population is forecast to increase in central London in the coming few years. Southwark is then forecasting additional growth due to the major regeneration schemes in the borough that are underway and planned for the future. This is set out in paragraph 3 onwards.
- 15.6. We expect to see a further enhancement in the use of social media in the future as well as further changes to rules on the recording of meetings and use of social media within meetings. Southwark is currently trialling the broadcast of OSC meetings and has introduced the use of Twitter into the Leader's Public Question Time. We would anticipate that members will become even more self-reliant to perform their representative/leadership role as they will often be interacting with the public in new and additional ways during meetings.
- 15.7. In both planning and licensing, we forecast that the work of the council will increase as we continue to deliver regeneration and new building. In addition, our town centres are becoming ever more popular with new licensed establishments opening. As areas like Peckham, Walworth and the Old Kent Road change over the coming five years the work of licensing will increase.

16. Localism Act

- 16.1. The Localism Act 2011 has already had a significant impact on Southwark but this will increase in the future as the changes in it begin to be delivered.
- 16.2. **Planning Decisions:** In Southwark, the impact of the Localism Act (2011) has not been significant in terms of planning decisions. The Localism Act introduced an overarching 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' which is intended to incentivise development. However, Southwark has an up to date development plan which is in conformity with the sustainability criteria outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework. As such, the presumption has not been found to be a material planning consideration which outweighs the borough's adopted planning policy.
- 16.3. **Neighbourhood Planning:** The Localism Act (2011) introduced new opportunities for communities to more directly participate in shaping the development of their area through Neighbourhood Planning. Representative groups of residents and/or businesses have the opportunity to establish a Neighbourhood Forum which will then produce the Neighbourhood Plan within boundaries agreed by the council. Neighbourhood plans are being taken forward in six areas in Southwark: Bankside, Bermondsey, Waterloo and South Bank, Rotherhithe and Surrey Docks and Elephant and Walworth, and Crystal Palace (which includes areas within Southwark, Lewisham, Lambeth, Bromley and Croydon). Each area is at a different stage of development and no neighbourhood forums have produced an initial draft Neighbourhood Plan.
- 16.4. **Neighbourhood Development Orders:** The Localism Act also introduced Neighbourhood Development Orders which enable neighbourhood forums to prepare broad parameters of acceptable development similar to an outline planning permission. No neighbourhood groups in Southwark have expressed an interest in preparing a Neighbourhood Development Order.
- 16.5. **Assets of Community Value:** The Localism Act introduced the designation Asset of Community Value (ACV) which allows local groups to nominate buildings or areas. In Southwark there are six ACVs, two of which are pubs.
- 16.6. **Neighbourhood Development:** From April the council adopted the community infrastructure levy (CIL) to replace Section 106 as the primary mechanism of collecting contributions towards infrastructure from development. The council will be required to spend a proportion of CIL revenues in the locality of the development which paid the contribution in consultation with the local community, especially involving Neighbourhood Forums in the decision making process where these exist.

17. Health and Social Care

- 17.1. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 started the formal transition of public health responsibilities to local authorities with the abolition on Primary Care Trusts. In Southwark public health is overseen by a combination of a Health and Wellbeing Board, Director of Public Health and the cabinet member. The cabinet member provides political leadership and direction for this new council function. The Secretary of State has the power to prescribe aspects of how the council carries out its function.
- 17.2. Health inequality remains an important issue in Southwark. The council is still in the early stages of its public health work following the transfer of public health responsibilities. Looking forward, we expect this to increase and also change how the council works as public health embeds across council services changing the way we both monitor and deliver services, to start to drive improvements in public health.

18. Finance and Welfare

- 18.1. The council has had to deliver over £110m worth of savings over the last four years across its operation. This is as a direct result of reductions in funding from government grant over that time period. The majority of the savings have been delivered through improved ways of working, although service reductions have also had to take place given the unprecedented reduction in funding.
- 18.2. The council is predicting similar savings over the next four years. This means that there will be less that the council is able to deliver and the need to do more with what resources are left will increase. The role of members in governing this, and in ensuring that every decision is effectively scrutinised will become even more important as the council makes decisions on efficiencies and delivering value for money.
- 18.3. As already set out, Southwark has many areas of deprivation where residents may largely rely on welfare and other state support. Government changes to this will impact on many Southwark residents which will increase the pressure on the council to continue to deliver for local people and support those in need who are impacted by welfare reform.

19. Section 4 – Summary and Conclusion, The Future

- 19.1. **Southwark is at the forefront of lobbying for devolution. When this happens, we want to be at the forefront of delivering in that new devolved settlement. This will mean major change for Southwark and is in addition to major changes already announced. We anticipate there being an impact from the localism act and changes with public health. We also anticipate there being more work in areas like licensing and planning.**

- 19.2. We expect population growth due to general growth across central London, and also additional growth in Southwark due to the major regeneration schemes. By 2021, the population will be over 350,000 including around 20,000 in new developments.**
- 19.3. Southwark anticipates greater devolution in the future which will mean greater responsibility in decision making, and also a need for more scrutiny of decision making.**
- 19.4. There are changes in the size of population will mean that each member is representing more people. There will also be declining budgets to local authorities meaning fewer resources to support councillors and expecting more work from councillors.**

Summary

20. In calculating the number of members the council needs for effective governance as set out in section 1, the council needs at least the following:

Mayor	1
Leader	1
Cabinet	9
Licensing	15
Planning	22
Community Council Chairs	5
Total	53

21. In addition to the number of members above, the council also needs an effective Overview and Scrutiny Process as set out in section 2. The council needs the following:

Total for Governance	53
Overview and Scrutiny	11
Total	64

- 21.1. The roles set out above are essential for governance and scrutiny. In addition we have members for a range of other functions such as scrutiny sub committees, outside bodies and other committees of the council. These are detailed in the report and as previously stated, every councillor sits on at least one committee of the council, 60 out of 63 sit on at least two and over half (33) sit on at least three.

22. Members in 2002 represented an average of 3,886 people. In 2015, this rose to 4,800 and if we retain 63 councillors this will rise to 5,567 by 2021. We consider 5,000 to be the optimal number of residents per councillor which would mean the council needs at least 71 councillors.

23. Section 1 - Summary and Conclusion of Governance

- 23.1. The council's 'Strong Leader' model means that executive power rests with the cabinet and Leader.

- 23.2. The community council system means that all members have responsibility for some local level decisions.

- 23.3. Every councillor sits on at least one committee of the council, 60 out of 63 sit on at least two and over half (33) sit on at least three.

- 23.4. Southwark has a high number of planning and licensing decisions due to its central London location and ambitious building and regeneration projects. There were 58 licencing meetings in the last year.
- 23.5. The council is aware of future changes in neighbourhood planning which will increase the demand on members.
- 23.6. All councillors have some decision making responsibility due to their role as members of the community council. There are no councillors who are not engaged in some part of the council's governance process. Council meetings are well attended, and members are actively engaged, suggesting that they are attending willingly and have about the right number to attend.
- 23.7. An effective opposition is important in any council, a smaller opposition often has more difficulty in having an impact in holding the administration to account. A reduction in the overall size of the council would make this more challenging.
- 23.8. 63 councillors provides the council with enough members to fulfil its governance function. With almost all councillors serving on at least two committees and over half serving on three or more, the council would struggle to meet its governance standards with fewer members. Even a reduction to 60 would limit the availability of members. An increase in councillors to 66 would mean that members could sit on fewer committees and so dedicate more time to those that they do.
24. Section 2 - Summary and Conclusion of Scrutiny
- 24.1. 28 members out of 52 non-executive members are on a scrutiny committee.
- 24.2. Members receive clerking support and some policy support, but increasingly have to lead the work and drafting of reports themselves.
- 24.3. The current schedule is very full including cabinet member interviews for every cabinet and deputy cabinet member, and a full day of budget scrutiny.
- 24.4. With additional powers coming to the council, particularly around health, there will be an increased scrutiny workload. There is the right number of members to meet this demand at present, but we remain ambitious for the future and so need available councillors to increase, but the council will need to resource scrutiny further if it is to support this. If not, members will be expected to do more of the work themselves, with limited officer support.
- 24.5. The council is ambitious for scrutiny now and in the future and would like to do more. A reduction in members to 60 would inhibit the council's ability to deliver effective scrutiny now but also limit our ability in the future.

25. Section 3 - Summary and Conclusion Representational Role of Councillors
- 25.1. Councillors have high demands on their time. The make up of Southwark means there are a range of challenges in the borough which councillors are involved in resolving. High social housing and high deprivation means councillors have a large casework load.
- 25.2. Members have little support for their representational role as ward members. They are expected to be self reliant.
- 25.3. Southwark's population increasingly use e-communication and social media to communicate with their elected members. This is increasing the demands on members and also the expectation of a quick response to enquiries.
- 25.4. Southwark is a very diverse borough and requires a council that is led by people who represent a range of backgrounds. We are concerned that a reduction in members would increase the workload to make it harder for those with childcare and other caring responsibilities or who work full time to do the role. We are concerned that this will limit the council's ability to attract quality members and candidates.
- 25.5. The council expects its members to play an active part in community conversations and community councils.
- 25.6. Councillors have to balance the time they spend in the town hall against the time they spend in the community. With a decrease in support and an increase in workload, this is a challenge for members.
- 25.7. An increase in number to 66 or even 71 would enable councillors to better fulfil the different aspects of their role as set out in sections 1, 2 and 3. However, the council has learnt to operate with 63 councillors and believes it can continue to do so. The council would not support an increase even though much of the evidence suggests that more members are needed. Maintaining 63 is essential to ensure that the council can effectively govern, scrutinise have members who are effective representatives. This many members also enables people from a range of backgrounds to put themselves forward for election. It is essential to Southwark that this is maintained.
26. Section 4 – Summary and Conclusion, The Future
- 26.1. Southwark is at the forefront of lobbying for devolution. When this happens, we want to be at the forefront of delivering in that new devolved settlement. This will mean major change for Southwark and is in addition to major changes already announced. We anticipate there being an impact from the localism act and changes with public health. We also anticipate there being more work in areas like licensing and planning.

- 26.2. We expect population growth due to general growth across central London, and also additional growth in Southwark due to the major regeneration schemes. By 2021, the population will be over 350,000 including around 20,000 in new developments.
- 26.3. Southwark anticipates greater devolution in the future which will mean greater responsibility in decision making, and also a need for more scrutiny of decision making.
- 26.4. There are changes in the size of population will mean that each member is representing more people. There will also be declining budgets to local authorities meaning fewer resources to support councillors and expecting more work from councillors.

Conclusion and Recommendation

27. Conclusion

- 27.1. Southwark is a well run and effective council, with good engagement by members who play a full and active role as local representatives. We have strong governance and scrutiny and members are central to delivering this good governance.
- 27.2. Our approach has therefore been to start with the existing number of members, and to consider in each area whether an increase in members would be advantageous. We also considered whether we had more members than we needed and so should decrease the number of members.
- 27.3. The summaries of each section are set out above which lead us to conclude that Southwark should increase the number of councillors. Within the nearest neighbour model, we could only increase by three members and remain inline with our neighbours. We have therefore considered increasing to 66.
- 27.4. The evidence in this report shows that we should increase the number of members. Through the report we have also considered making a small reduction to 60 members to test whether Southwark could sustain a smaller number of members.
- 27.5. We have rejected the idea of a reduction to 60 members as with the increases in population and changes in the borough in the coming few years, it would have a detrimental impact on the representational role of members. We consider that it would limit the opportunity to develop scrutiny.
- 27.6. Southwark is unique in regards to the scale of regeneration it has, alongside its role as the largest local authority landlord in London. A reduction in members would reduce councillors ability to adequately represent these dynamic and changing communities, and the council's ability to manage its already very busy planning and licensing processes. We already need to go further in ensuring diversity amongst councillors, any reduction will make this harder.
- 27.7. To ensure a ration of around 5,000 people per councillor, we would need 71 members. However, on other factors around governance we did not see evidence to suggest an increase was necessary although there is little capacity if the demands of these roles increase. While members are already working hard to deliver in their roles, the council has shown it can work with 63 members.
- 27.8. An increase to 66 within the nearest neighbour model has an impact on the representation ratio. It would give members more opportunity to work on

scrutiny. Currently over half the non-executive members work on scrutiny. Most of those who do not are involved in planning and licensing. With both planning and licensing increasing there is limited capacity to enhance scrutiny. With reducing support from officers on scrutiny, members will need to do more and for scrutiny to be effective, more members will need to take an active role. An increase to 66 would provide that capacity.

- 27.9. **Having considered the evidence, we strongly reject the argument for any reduction in councillors and instead believe the council should increase in size to 66. However, we do not believe that this can be justified whilst cuts are being made and will continue to be made to Southwark. The council has shown that it can work and work well with 63 members. We are therefore recommending that the council retains 63 members.**

Appendix 1 – Council Constitution: Delegation of Decisions

COUNCIL ASSEMBLY

Role and functions

Council assembly is responsible for setting up the decision making structure of the council including its committees. It does this annually. Council assembly takes a number of decisions including agreeing the annual budget, setting the council tax, agreeing policy framework strategies and plans. It makes decisions on local legislation and bylaws. The meeting also appoints to outside bodies unless the appointment is an executive function or has been delegated by council assembly.

The council assembly will question the cabinet. The meeting will receive reports from the cabinet, overview and scrutiny committee and officers. It will also debate matters of local importance and consider members' motions.

Matters reserved for decision

The following matters are reserved to the council assembly for decision:

1. Electing the Mayor.
2. Adopting the local authority's code of conduct.
3. Electing the leader.
4. Establishing committees and community councils.
5. Agreeing and amending terms of reference for committees and community councils except for executive functions.
6. Deciding the composition of committees and sub-committees.
7. Agreeing the budget and determining the level of local taxation. The budget includes the allocation of financial resources to different services and projects, proposed contingency funds including reserves and balances, the council tax base, setting the council tax and decisions relating to the control of the council's borrowing requirement, the treasury management strategy and the setting of virement limits.
8. Agree the capital strategy and programme at least once every four years and as necessary in the event of a significant change in circumstances, and the approval of virements over £10,000,000 between capital projects or programme headings as set out in the overall programme.

9. Agreeing the constitution, subject to the provisions in Article 1.05 on changing the constitution.
10. Agreeing the policy framework comprising the following plans and strategies:
 - Children and young persons' plan
 - Corporate plan
 - Development plan documents (which form part of the development plan framework)
 - Policy on the community councils
 - Sustainable community strategy
 - Treasury management strategy (including prudential borrowing arrangements)
 - Youth justice plan.
11. Agreeing the following policies:
 - Licensing statement
 - Gambling statement.
12. Agreeing any application to the Secretary of State in respect of any housing land transfer. Housing land transfer means the approval or adoption of applications to the Secretary of State (whether in draft form or not) for approval of a programme of disposal of 500 or more properties to a person under the Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993 or to dispose of land used for residential purposes where approval is required under sections 32 or 43 of the Housing Act 1985.
13. Taking decisions in respect of functions which are the responsibility of the cabinet which are not in accordance with the policy framework or budget agreed by the council assembly.
14. Subject to the urgency procedure contained in the access to information procedure rules in part 4 of this constitution, making decisions about any matter on the discharge of an executive function which is covered by the policy framework or the budget where the decision maker is minded to make it in a manner which would be contrary to the policy framework or contrary to/or not wholly in accordance with the budget.
15. All local choice functions set out in part 3 of this constitution which the council assembly decides should be undertaken by itself rather than the cabinet.
16. Taking decisions in respect of functions which are not the responsibility of the cabinet and which have not been delegated by council assembly to committees, community councils, sub-committees or officers.
17. Making or confirming the appointment of the head of paid service.

18. Making, amending, revoking, re-enacting or adopting bylaws and promoting or opposing the making of local legislation or personal bills.
19. Determining the scheme and amounts of members' allowances.
20. Appointing representatives to outside bodies unless the appointment is an executive function or has been delegated by the council assembly.
21. Changing the name of the area, conferring the title of Honorary Alderman or Freedom of the Borough.
22. All other matters which, by law, must be reserved to council assembly.

PART 3B: CABINET ROLE AND FUNCTIONS

The cabinet has responsibility for the following areas. The issues listed are the "executive functions" of the council.

Local leadership

1. To provide community leadership in the borough.
2. To lead the community planning process and the search for best value, with input and advice from overview and scrutiny committees/sub-committees, community councils and any other bodies or persons as appropriate.
3. To take in-year decisions on resources and priorities, together with other stakeholders and partners in the local community, to deliver and implement the budget and policy framework as agreed by council.
4. To ensure consultation on the development of the council's policy framework, other key strategic documents and key decisions.
5. To be the focus for forming partnerships with other local public, private, voluntary and community sector organisations to address local needs.
6. To oversee and take responsibility for effective joint work with partner agencies.

Policy

1. To draft the budget and policy framework for approval by council assembly.
2. To have responsibility for drafting the sustainable community strategy and recommending it to council assembly.

3. To formulate the council's overall policy objectives and priorities, recommending them to council assembly for approval where appropriate.
4. To determine the council's strategy and programme in relation to the policy and budget framework set by the council.
5. To determine the authority's strategy and programme in relation to the social, environmental and economic needs of the area.
6. To exercise the council's functions in relation to community engagement and the local strategic partnership, including the formulation of council strategies for communication, consultation, capacity building and active citizenship, and their coordination and implementation with particular reference to the provisions of relevant legislation.
7. To promote human rights, equality of opportunity and the interests and particular needs of all those who experience discrimination or disadvantage by virtue of their race, gender, disability, sexuality, or age.
8. To monitor the implementation and coordination of the statutory functions and obligations of the council with respect to equality of opportunity and non-discrimination, including its function as an employer.
9. To oversee and promote initiatives on best value across the council.
10. To set the strategic direction for the council's democratic renewal initiatives.
11. To consider and promote strategic and council wide initiatives to improve the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the council's services to the public.

Financial management and resources

12. To have responsibility for the strategic management of the council's resources, financial, land, property and staffing, and to take decisions on such matters in the context of the budget and policy framework agreed by council.
13. To have responsibility for the council's revenue and capital budgets, including the housing revenue account, ensuring effective financial control and the achievement of value for money, within the provisions of financial standing orders.
14. To have responsibility for the operation of the council's risk management function.
15. To have responsibility for audit issues.

16. To have overall responsibility for acquisitions and disposal of any interest in land, buildings or the real and leasehold property of the council and to have responsibility for land and property used for operational purposes.

General

17. To oversee the authority's services.
18. To have responsibility for all staffing and human resource matters including the number and type of staff, equalities issues and health and safety, subject to the authority's personnel policies and procedures except for staff appointments and dismissals.
19. To have responsibility for all equalities and diversity matters concerning both employment policy and practices and service delivery and the active promotion of the council's equalities policies.
20. To have responsibility for the council's role as corporate parent.
21. To affiliate to and appoint representatives to outside bodies where such appointments are a function of the cabinet.
22. To delegate to appropriate committees of the cabinet and to chief officers and to receive regular information reports from them with particular reference to value for money; service implementation and development; client/customer service and performance; and the performance and achievement of equalities objectives.
23. To agree the reduction or cessation of any service.
24. To agree the authority's response to consultation papers.
25. To consult with scrutiny and take into account the final reports of scrutiny inquiries.
26. To consider whether the council should give evidence before a Royal Commission, government committee or similar body.
27. To be responsible for all cabinet matters even if not expressly set out in this part of the constitution.

Plans and strategies to be approved by the cabinet

- Asset management plan
- Employment strategy
- Enterprise strategy
- Food law enforcement plan
- Green travel plan

- Housing investment programme
- Housing renewal policy
- Housing strategy
- Local area agreement (LAA)
- Medium term resources strategy (including the housing revenue account)
- Renewal areas strategies
- Road safety plan
- Schemes for financing schools
- Special education needs action plan
- Statement of community involvement
- Supplementary planning documents
- Waste strategy
- Youth strategy.

Note: This list is not exhaustive.

The cabinet makes decisions in the following circumstances:

1. Matters reserved to the cabinet are as set out in Part 3C.
2. Matters reserved to individual cabinet members are as set out in Part 3D, except where, in any particular case, the leader, deputy leader and/or the chief executive directs that the decision should be reserved to the cabinet; or the individual member refers the decision to the cabinet.
3. Matters reserved to cabinet committee(s) are as set out in Part 3E.

PART 3C: FULL CABINET – MATTERS RESERVED FOR COLLECTIVE DECISION MAKING

1. All matters reserved to the cabinet by council assembly for decision.
2. Decisions on matters reserved to the cabinet in accordance with the provisions of contract standing orders in part 4 of the constitution.
3. Approval for recommendation to council assembly of those proposals and plans contained in the council's budget and policy framework.
4. Decisions regarding the strategic management of the council including decisions on major reorganisations and major reallocations of functions between departments or chief officers.
5. Approval to the creation of posts at grade 17 and above.
6. Approval of major terms and conditions of employment outside the national and provincial schemes.

7. Decisions regarding the strategic aspects of the regulation and control of the council's finances.
8. Approval of new fees and charges and agreement of charging levels in line with the medium term resources strategy.
9. Approval of virements over £1,000,000 and up to £10,000,000 between capital projects or programme headings as set out in the overall programme approved by council assembly.
10. Approval of policy and procedures governing the council's relationship with the voluntary sector.
11. Approving write-offs of debt of a value of over £50,000.
12. Amendments to the council's equal opportunities policy.
13. Agreement to the disposal of leasehold and freehold interests in land and property where the market value is more than £750,000 excluding Right to Buy and Leasehold Reform Act cases.
14. All disposals at less than best consideration where the market value is more than £250,000 or where ministerial consent is required, unless the disposal is required by statute.
15. Acquisition of land and property, outside any scheme already agreed by members, where the market value is more than £100,000.
16. The acquisition of land and property which involves the use of compulsory purchase orders.

Education issues

17. Approval of school admissions policies where the council is the admissions authority.
18. Approval of the co-ordinated admissions process for primary and secondary schools in Southwark.
19. All school organisation final decisions on statutory proposals e.g. whether to close a school.

Planning issues

20. To adopt preferred options of development plan documents.

21. To adopt supplementary planning documents taking account of comments from the planning committee.

Notes

- a) All matters not reserved as above or to individuals or to cabinet committees (see 3D and 3E) are delegated to the appropriate chief officer and heads of service. All delegated matters can always be decided by the parent body. See also Part 3P: Matters delegated to officers.
- b) Cabinet committees have the power within the role and functions delegated to them to decide all matters reserved to cabinet.

PART 3D: INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBERS – MATTERS RESERVED FOR DECISION

Introduction

There are occasions when matters affect more than one portfolio; on such occasions the decision will be referred to a meeting of the full cabinet.

In discharging any functions that have been delegated, a cabinet member must act lawfully. This means that the cabinet member must act within the scope of the authority that is delegated to him or her in accordance with any limits within the delegation, this constitution, council policies, procedure rules and the members' code of conduct.

Budget

1. Proposing revenue and capital budget allocations to the cabinet, in relation to their areas of responsibility.
2. Agreement of significant programmes in relation to these objectives.
3. Agreement of changes to existing fees and charges, in relation to their areas of responsibility and in line with the medium term resources strategy, other than any set by council assembly as part of the budget process.
4. Approving the submission of bids for additional resources from government and other agencies, in relation to their areas of responsibility, where member level agreement is required by the external agency.
5. Matters reserved to individuals above specific financial thresholds:
 - Approving write offs of debt for their portfolio area of a value of £5,000 – £50,000.
 - Approving grants to voluntary organisations over £2,500.

Service planning and delivery

6. Agreement of statutory and other strategies, in relation to their areas of responsibility, except where they relate to crosscutting issues.
7. Agreement to significant policy issues, in relation to their areas of responsibility.
8. Agreement of performance standards and key policy objectives, in relation to their areas of responsibility.
9. Agreement to policy and performance priorities for the short and medium term in relation to their areas of responsibility and taking into account the needs of the council as a whole.
10. Agreement of service plans, in relation to their areas of responsibility.
11. To consider any inspection report by an external agency and:
 - agree the action plan, including recommendations for no action, where there are no significant policy implications
 - make recommendations to the cabinet, including recommendations for no action, where there are significant policy implications.
12. Agree reports when there are any significant changes associated with the delivery of an agreed plan.
13. Sign off any plan or strategy or programme when completed or take decisions where no further significant cabinet approval is required.
14. Monitor the effectiveness and appropriateness of the plan or strategy or programme within the portfolio holders responsibility and agree any necessary changes.

Tenders and contracts

15. Decisions on matters reserved to individual cabinet members in accordance with the provisions of contract standing orders in part 4 of the constitution.

Partnerships and consultation

16. To approve responses to consultation documents from government, Greater London Authority, Local Government Association, London Councils and other bodies relating to significant changes affecting their portfolio area, which would not require changes to the budget and policy framework.

17. Agreeing broad consultation arrangements, in relation to their areas of responsibility.
18. To promote effective partnerships, between the council and other agencies and bodies affecting the community, in relation to their areas of responsibility.
19. To deal with petitions in their portfolio area in accordance with council procedure.
20. To agree the following school organisation decisions:
 - Agreement to carry out the initial consultation where the council is proposing to make a statutory change to a school
 - Following the outcome of the initial consultation process, to agree to publish the statutory notice
 - Approval of the co-ordinated admissions process for primary schools in Southwark if there are no changes from the previous year.
21. To agree draft local development framework documents for consultation, such as supplementary planning documents.

Transport issues

22. To decide to implement a new controlled parking zone (CPZ).
23. To determine objections to traffic orders that are of a strategic nature.
24. To decide to make strategic changes to an existing CPZ (i.e. changing the hours/days of operation).

Appendix 2 – Council Appointments to outside bodies

The Council appoints members to the following bodies:

- London Councils Leaders' Committee (1 councillor and 2 deputies)
- London Councils Transport & Environment Committee (1 councillor and 4 deputies)
- London Councils Grants Committee (1 councillor and 4 deputies)
- London Councils Pensions CIV Sectoral Joint Committee (1 councillor and 1 deputy)
- Greater London Employment Forum (1 councillor and 1 deputy)
- Age UK London (1 councillor)
- Better Bankside Board (1 councillor)
- Blue Bermondsey Board (Business Improvement District) (1 councillor) (as of 2014/15)
- Canada Water Consultative Forum (4 councillors)
- Central London Forward (1 councillor)
- Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (1 councillor)
- Creation Trust (3 councillors)
- Cross River Board (1 councillor)
- Crystal Palace Community Development Trust (1 councillor)
- Greater London Enterprise Limited (1 councillor)
- Groundwork London, Local Authority Strategic Input (1 councillor)
- Guys and St. Thomas NHS Foundation (1 councillor)
- Kings College Hospital NHS Foundation (1 councillor)
- Lambeth and Southwark Housing Association Limited (1 councillor)
- London Road Safety Council (LRSC) (2 councillors)
- London Youth Games Limited (1 councillor and 1 deputy)
- Millwall For All (1 councillor) (as of 2014/15)
- North Southwark Environment Trust (1 councillor)
- Potters Fields Park Management Trust (1 councillor)
- South Bank Partnership (4 councillors)
- South Bank and Bankside Cultural Quarter Directors Board (1 councillor)
- South Bermondsey Big Local Partnership Steering Group (2 councillors)
- South London Gallery Trustee Limited (3 councillors)
- South London and Maudsely (SLaM) NHS Trust Members Council (1 councillor)
- Southwark and Lambeth Archaeological Excavation Committee (SLAEC) (1 councillor and 1 deputy)
- Southwark Cathedral Education Centre (1 councillor)
- Safer Neighbourhood Board (1 councillor)
- Waterloo Quarter Business Alliance – Southwark (Business Improvement District) (1 councillor)

Appendix 3 – Meeting Attendance over 2 year.

The table below sets out the number of meeting over two year, the average time each meeting lasted and the average number of councillors who attended the meeting.

	Meetings	Av. Time	Av. Cllrs
Council Assembly	15	2 40	60
Cabinet	19	1 48	9
Bermondsey & Rotherhithe Community Council	10	2 24	14
Camberwell Community Council	10	2 10	8
Borough, Bankside and Walworth Community Council	11	2 31	13
Peckham and Nunhead Community Council	11	2 19	12
Dulwich Community Council	10	2 46	8
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	22	2 43	10
Education & Children's Services Scrutiny Sub Committee	14	2 00	6
Housing and Community Safety (1yr figures)	7	2 33	7
Healthy Community Scrutiny Sub-Committee	12	2 45	6
Planning committee	26	2 31	7
Planning Sub Committee A	12	2 11	6
Planning Sub Committee B	10	3 27	6
Licensing committee	5	1 16	11
Licensing sub-committee	99	3 29	3
Joint Partnership Panel	6	1 24	2
Health and Wellbeing Board	8	2 30	3
Corporate Parenting	7	2 08	5
Audit & Governance	8	1 49	5
Standards	4	1 24	7