



# Guidance for Running a Group Discussion

November 2017

Southwark is changing. We want to hear what local people think of this change.

The council has launched a major new borough-wide consultation called the Southwark Conversation.

As community leaders you have a vital role to play. This document explains how you can get involved.

# Southwark Conversation

## What is the Southwark Conversation?

Southwark, like the rest of London, is changing. At the same time, there is much across every part of Southwark that we want to hold on to and cherish.

The next few years will see new developments and buildings, new businesses and technology, and an ever-changing skyline across London and Southwark. Southwark's population will also continue to change as more people choose to make the capital and our borough their home.

Thinking about that change, on 19 September the council's cabinet agreed a draft social regeneration policy framework that is about ensuring the places where people live now and in the future, create new opportunities, promote wellbeing and reduce inequalities so people have better lives, in stronger communities, and achieve their potential. The cabinet paper is available at this link:

<http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=302&MId=5751&Ver=4>

In agreeing the draft framework, the cabinet also agreed that it be further shaped and used as part of the evidence for a wider conversation with residents, partners and stakeholders. This forms the basis for what is called the Southwark Conversation. This briefing hopefully provides a bit more detail for how the Conversation will work, what's planned and importantly the contribution that you as community leaders can make.

The conversation will hear directly from residents, including harder to reach groups, about how they feel about the future, what the council is doing well and whether there are things that the council should be doing differently. It will draw on events in the council calendar, use of surveys, and other community conversations. It will also draw from everyday conversations in the places where people and communities come together. As the conversation progresses the social regeneration policy framework will be shaped and updated to reflect what is said, heard and learned. A report back on progress will be presented to Cabinet early in 2018.

## What is the role of community groups in the conversation?

As community leaders and community groups you have a critical role in working with residents, communities and businesses to provide a wide range of services and

support to individuals but also in representing the voice of the people that you represent and bringing people together to participate in all aspects of decision making, the shaping of services and in shaping the borough in which we live and work.

This guidance is intended to help community groups to explore the issues around the Southwark Conversation and respond to the public consultation. You and the groups that you represent may wish to respond as individuals by completing and returning one of the questionnaires but you may also wish to hold a group discussion and this guidance has been designed to help with this.

The guidance includes:

- Information on the background to the Conversation
- Copies of the questionnaire for individuals
- A template for recording your group's views

The person leading your discussion should go through this guidance prior to the discussion to familiarise themselves with the materials to be covered and how you can respond. Some of you will be very familiar with facilitating these kinds of discussions, others less-so. The guidance gives some basic tips and hints on how to run a group discussion for those that are less familiar with running this kind of activity.

## Checklist for Planning and Running Your Meeting

- Identify a suitable time and location for your meeting and issue invitations to members of your group.
- Consider asking people to RSVP or book a place so that you know how many people to expect.
- Identify a member of your group to lead the meeting. There is no need for this to be an experienced facilitator or have any particular knowledge of the topic but it is helpful if they are used to speaking in public and running meetings.
- Before the meeting this person should spend some time reading this guidance.
- If your group is smaller set up your meeting room so that they can all sit round one table, for larger meetings you may want more than one person to facilitate smaller discussions of about 6-10 people around each table.

Suggested points to include in your introduction are:

- That this is one of a series of meetings taking place across Southwark as part of Southwark Council's consultation on how residents feel about change in Southwark, what the council is doing well and whether there are things that the council should be doing differently.
- That the materials you are using have been designed by a professional facilitator on behalf of the council to assist groups to take part in this conversation about the future of Southwark.
- That you intend to use the information gathered at this meeting to submit a response to the consultation on the group's behalf.

After your introduction use the notes above to set out what the conversation is about and confirm that the purpose of the meeting is to gather people's views and opinions.

When the meeting starts talk people through the background to what the conversation is set out in the first section of this guidance note above.

## Tips for Leading the Meeting

It is a good idea for facilitators not to express a personal view or participate in the discussion as this may make some feel they are trying to influence their opinions.

Agreeing some ground rules for the discussion and setting these out to participants at the beginning can be a good way to set the tone for the meeting and assure all participants that you are interested in hearing their opinions. Some examples you may want to consider are:

- We want everyone to have the chance to be heard
- Respect other opinions
- We may not agree with each other but we can agree to work together
- Sticking to time limits will be important

Some meeting leaders will write these ground rules on a flipchart so all participants can see them.

## The Southwark Conversation activity

With the introductions done you can now start working on the groups responses to each of these questions

- How do people feel about change in the borough, what is positive about the changes that have happened and what is less positive?
- How can people be encouraged to get more involved in contributing to life in Southwark for example through volunteering or in giving us their views?
- What can the council do to improve people's experience of living in Southwark?

- What would help people to lead a healthier life in Southwark for example through access to healthy activities, better use of parks etc..
- What support do young people need to succeed in life?
- What makes a place a good neighbourhood to live in?
- How could local people be more actively involved in the changes in their communities?

It is important that responses are recorded on the form provided, you may want to ask people to prioritise the suggestions that your group have made on each question so that we have a sense of which people think are more important but we will consider all responses that are submitted.

Individuals can complete the surveys in their own right and return these to the council in addition to your group activity.

## Submitting your Response to the Consultation?

Once your response is written up on the template in this pack please return it to:

Sean Backhurst  
Southwark Council  
PO Box 64529  
London  
SE1P 5LX

It can also be submitted by email to:

sean.backhurst@southwark.gov.uk

If you want to submit your response in an alternative format please send it to Sean Backhurst at the address above:

Please ensure your response is submitted by 24 December 2017.

## How the wider Southwark Conversation works?

Between now and Christmas, a series of Conversation activities will take place throughout the borough. Some of these will be building on what we had planned anyway as part of the usual council calendar of engagement. Some will be more specifically designed such as special conversation events in town centres throughout the borough. As you'd expect, we want to give residents a range of ways to get involved in the conversation. This includes:

### 1. Consultation Hub

The main site for people to share their views with the council. Responses are garnered using an online survey, available at [southwark.gov.uk/talksouthwark](https://southwark.gov.uk/talksouthwark)

### 2. Launch interview with media partner

Southwark News is the media partner with the council, launching with an interview with the Leader that took place on 19th October and then carrying articles and advertisements during the Conversation.

### 3. Key events

The annual question time event for the public to question the Leader, with Councillors Anderson and Situ joining the Leader on 8th November at InSpire in Walworth.

### 4. Social Media Campaign

The council will promote the conversation through social media using short videos about what Southwark means to people and encouraging them to link to the Consultation Hub.

### 5. Engagement and community activities

A programme of activities in key public areas around the borough for Councillors to engage with the public. These include parent sessions at libraries, TRA meetings and so on. The focus will be on harder to reach groups and those that don't always directly engage with the council through these means.

### 6. Engagement with other key partners and networks

For example, health, education, business, care, at routinely scheduled meetings, events that partners are leading and other arenas where the council plays an important community leadership role.

The aim is to stimulate discussion around the key questions set out in our survey on the Hub, which are:

1. On a scale of one to five, how positive/happy do you feel about change in Southwark?
2. What are some of the ways you are personally involved in contributing to life in Southwark?
3. What can the council do to improve your experience of living in Southwark?
4. What would help you and your family to lead a healthier life in Southwark?
5. Thinking of young people and future generations, what support do you think they will need to succeed in life?
6. In general, what do you think makes a place a 'good neighbourhood to live in'?
7. Do you think you have personally benefitted from changes in your area?
8. How do you think local people could become more actively involved in the changes that are happening in their communities?

The following materials will be available at each event:

- A feedback form/survey for residents to leave responses to the key questions
- Postcards with a link to the online version of the survey.
- Material setting out some key facts about the borough, drawn from previous engagement.
- Feedback forms for residents to raise any general issues that they want to make us aware of.

## What will happen after the Southwark Conversation ends?

We hope to publish initial findings in the New Year.

## Appendices

- Promotional flyer
- Copy of the questionnaire
- Template for recording group views

# Southwark Conversation

let's talk...

 @lb\_southwark

 facebook.com/southwarkcouncil

 @southwarkcouncil

**Fairer future**   
Delivering our promises

*Southwark*  
Council  
southwark.gov.uk

# Let's talk about... improving lives in Southwark

Southwark is changing. The council wants this change to work for everyone – to help you and your families enjoy life, be healthy and do well in Southwark.

We want to hear from you about how the changes are affecting you, how you feel about the future, and whether there's anything you think we can do differently.

Join the Southwark Conversation

[southwark.gov.uk/talksouthwark](https://southwark.gov.uk/talksouthwark)  
Tel: 020 7525 3326



#TalkSouthwark



# Southwark Conversation

Let's talk...

**Southwark is changing. The council wants this change to work for everyone – to help you and your families enjoy life, be healthy and do well in Southwark.**

We have been bold in our plans to encourage home building and, with rapidly reducing budgets, finding ways to make sure private developers help pay for the thousands of new council homes we are building, the new leisure centres and libraries we have opened, and new cultural and open spaces.

We are also helping residents to take advantage of the opportunities around them, and have helped 5,000 people into work, as well as creating nearly 2,000 apprenticeships for local people.

We're also ensuring that as our population grows, we have the new schools, health services and transport improvements that our residents need.

But we don't want to make assumptions – we want to build on previous consultations to make sure we're getting it right for you and for future generations.

We want to hear direct from our residents about how the changes are affecting you, how you feel about the future, and whether there's anything you think we can do differently.

We will report back initial results by February 2018.

Please take a few moments to complete this quick survey. Your opinion and thoughts are very important to us.

**Join the Southwark Conversation**

#TalkSouthwark

Fill out the survey online:  
[southwark.gov.uk/talksouthwark](http://southwark.gov.uk/talksouthwark)  
or call 020 7525 3326

 @lb\_southwark  facebook.com/southwarkcouncil  @southwarkcouncil

**Fairer future** ✓  
Delivering our promises

**Southwark**  
Council  
[southwark.gov.uk](http://southwark.gov.uk)

Please take a few moments to complete this quick survey. If you prefer to complete this online, go to: [southwark.gov.uk/talksouthwark](https://southwark.gov.uk/talksouthwark).

**1. On a scale of one to five, how positive/happy do you feel about change in Southwark?**

5 is very positive, 1 is not positive at all

- 5 – Very positive
- 4 – Somewhat positive
- 3 – Mixed
- 2 – Not positive
- 1 – Not positive at all
- Undecided

Please tell us why

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**2. What are some of the ways you are personally involved in contributing to life in Southwark?**

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**3. What can the council do to improve your experience of living in Southwark?**

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**4. What would help you and your family to lead a healthier life in Southwark?**

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**5. Thinking of young people and future generations, what support do you think they will need to succeed in life?**

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**6. In general, what do you think makes a place a 'good neighbourhood to live in?'**

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**7. Do you think you have personally benefitted from changes in your area?**

- Yes  No  
 Partly  Undecided

Please tell us why

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**8. How do you think local people could become more actively involved in the changes that are happening in their communities?**

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**About you**  
 To help us make sure we are reaching all of our communities, please complete the equalities information below.\* Completing this section is optional.

**Why do we ask for this information?**  
 It is important to us that we speak to as many people as we can that reflect the diverse communities in Southwark. This will ensure that everyone's needs are addressed through the plans we develop as a result of this survey.

**9. Age**

- Under 16  16 – 17  18 – 24  
 25 – 34  35 – 44  45 – 54  
 55 – 64  65 – 74  75 – 84  
 85 – 94  95+

**10. Disability and health**

Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?

- Yes, limited a little  Yes, limited a lot  No, not limited

**Please tick the box or boxes below that best describe the nature of your impairment(s):**

- Hearing / Vision (e.g. deaf, partially deaf or hard of hearing; blind or partial sight)  
 Physical / Mobility (e.g. wheelchair user, arthritis, multiple sclerosis etc.)  
 Mental health (lasting more than a year. e.g. severe depression, schizophrenia etc.)  
 Learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia etc.)  
 Memory problems (e.g. alzheimer's etc.)

If you wish to specify your impairment, please do so here:  
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**11. Ethnicity**

What do you consider to be your ethnicity?

- White British  English  
 Scottish  Welsh  
 Northern Irish  Irish  
 Gypsy, Roma or Irish Traveller  Other European  
 Other White  Black British  
 Caribbean  Nigerian  
 Ghanaian  Sierra Leonean  
 Somali  Other African  
 Other Black  Asian British  
 Indian  Bengali  
 Chinese  Pakistani  
 Vietnamese  Filipino  
 White and Black Caribbean  Any other Asian  
 White and Black African  White and Asian  
 Other mixed background  Arab  
 Latin American  Any other ethnicity

Please specify further if you wish:

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**12. Religion or belief**

- Christian  Sikh  Hindu  
 Muslim  Jewish  Buddhist  
 No religion  Other

If you selected Other, please specify if you wish:  
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**13. Sex**

- Female
- Male

**14. Gender reassignment**

Is your gender identity the same as the gender you were assigned at birth?

- Yes
- No

**15. Sexual orientation**

- Hetrosexual/straight
- Lesbian/Gay woman
- Gay man
- Bisexual

If you prefer to use your own term, please specify if you wish:

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**16. Household income**

- under £20,000
- £20,000 to £30,000
- £30,001 to £40,000
- £40,001 to £50,000
- £50,001 to £60,000
- £60,001 to £70,000
- over £70,000

**17. Please let us know which part of Southwark you live in**

- Bermondsey and Rotherhithe
- Borough, Bankside and Walworth
- Camberwell
- Dulwich
- Peckham and Nunhead

**18. What is your relationship to Southwark?**

Please tick as many as apply.

- I live in the borough
- I work in the borough
- I visit the borough

**19. How long have you been in Southwark?**

- Less than a year
- 1 – 5 years
- 5 – 10 years
- 10 – 20 years
- 20 years or more

**20. What is your housing situation?**

- I own my home outright
- I am buying my home with the help of a mortgage
- Shared ownership
- I rent from the council
- I rent from a private landlord
- I live with family/friends/rent free

**21. What is the highest level of education you have completed?**

- Secondary school
- College/further education
- Graduate level
- Postgraduate level

**Please tick this box if you would like to receive updates on the Southwark Conversation**

Email address: .....



\*By sending us your form you give us permission to include your response in our results. All personal information is treated sensitively in accordance with data protection principles.

## Template for recording group views

Submitted by (Name, organisation & contact details)


Name of event

Date of event

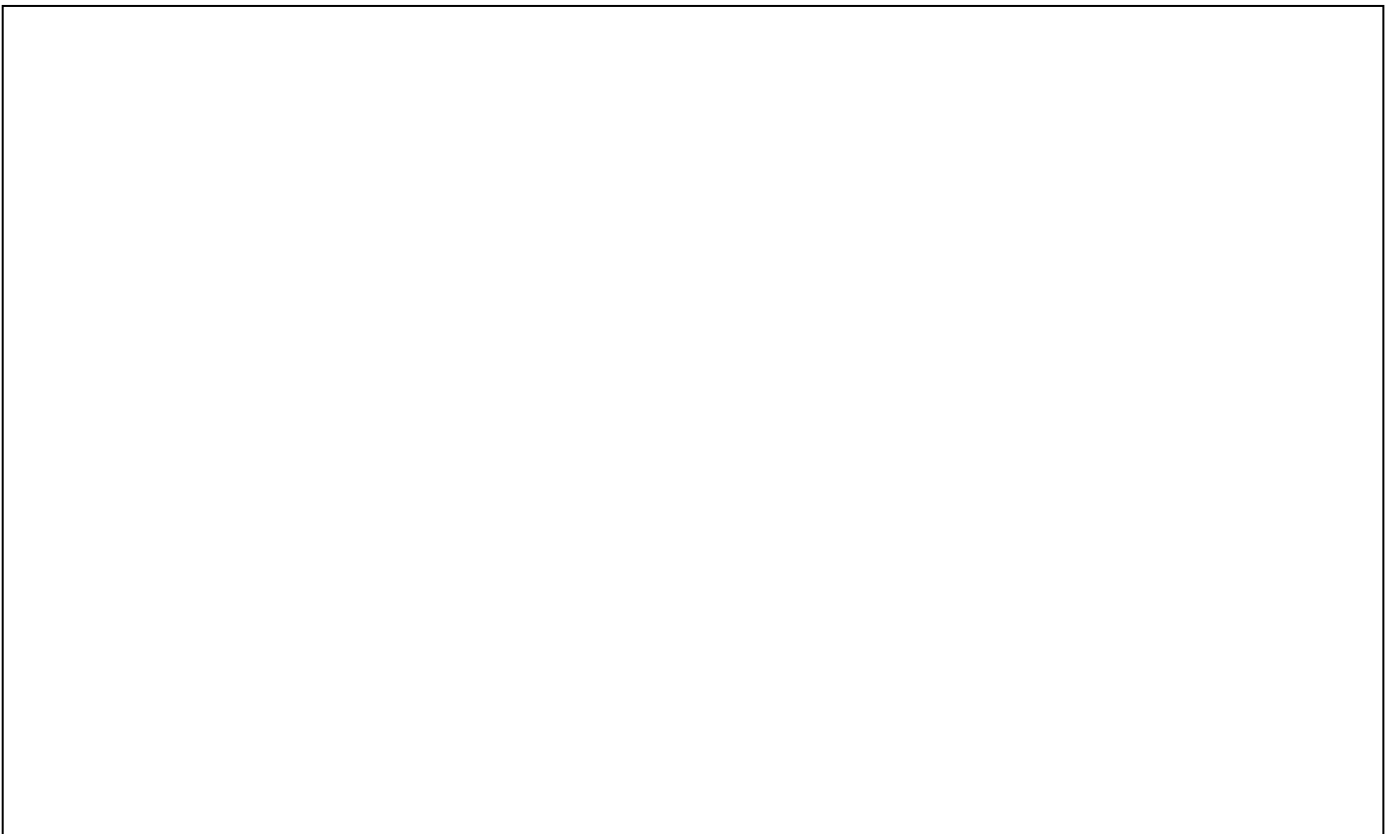
Number of attendees (approx.)

Any other comments

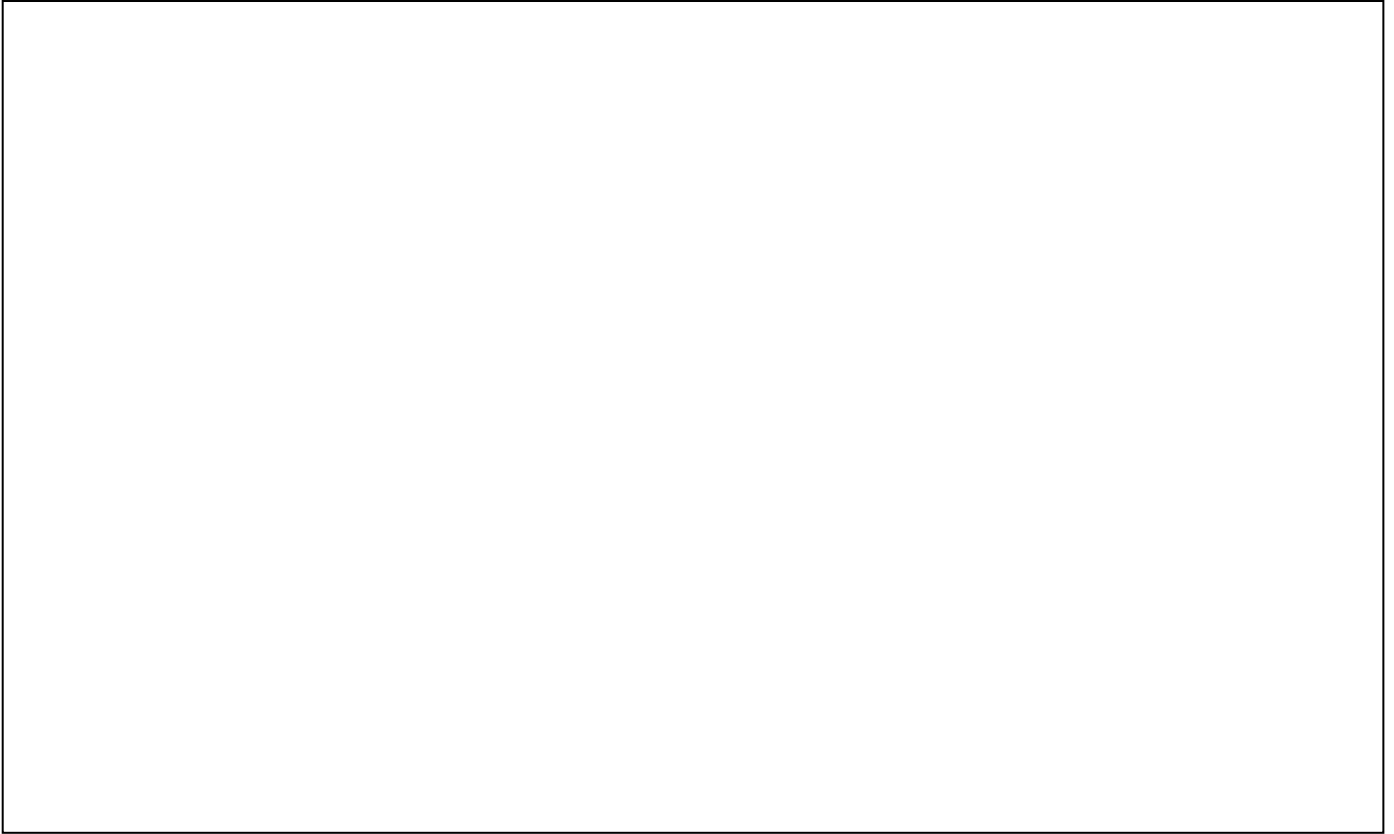
How do people feel about change in the borough, what is positive about the changes that have happened and what is less positive?



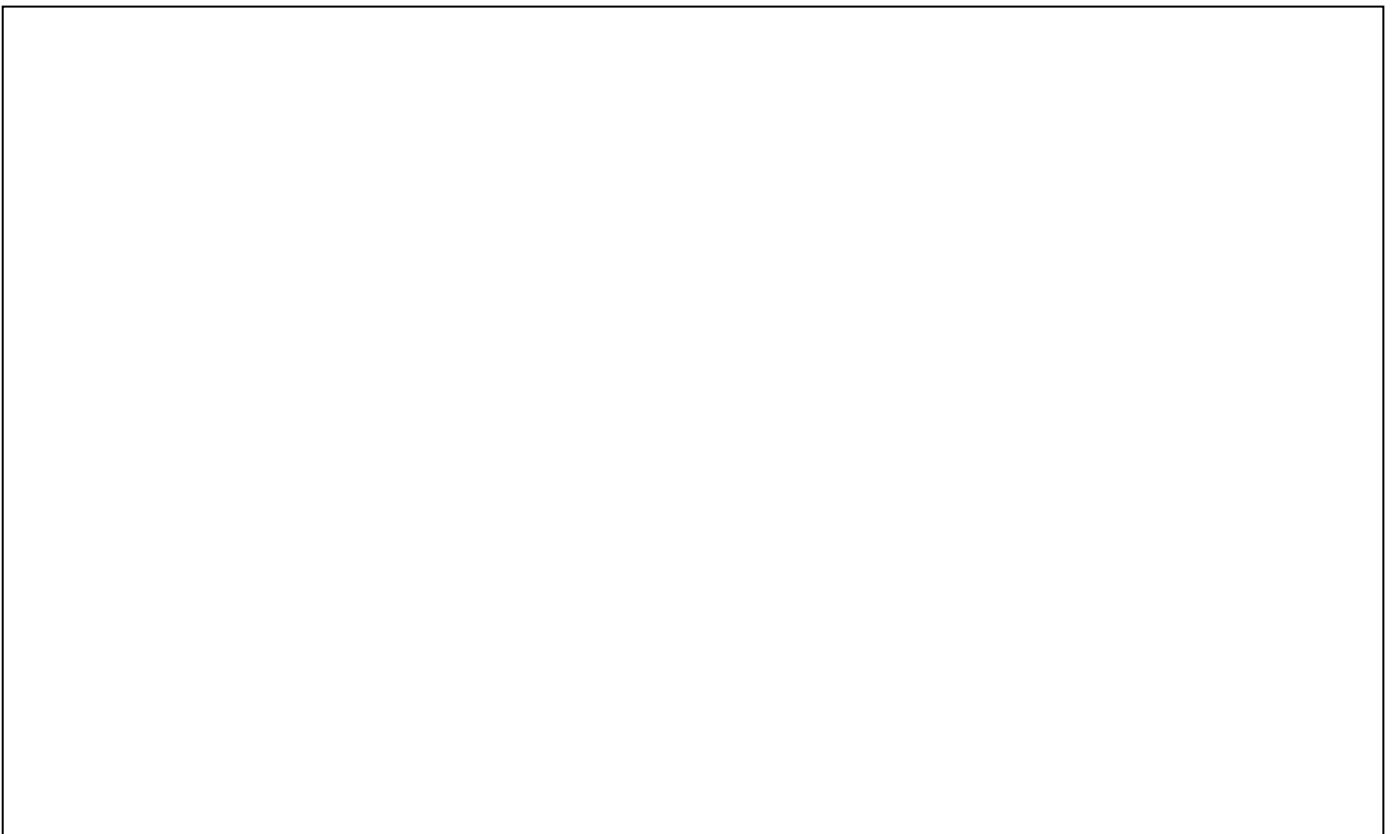
How can people be encouraged to get more involved in contributing to life in Southwark for example through volunteering or in giving us their views?



What can the council do to improve people's experience of living in Southwark?



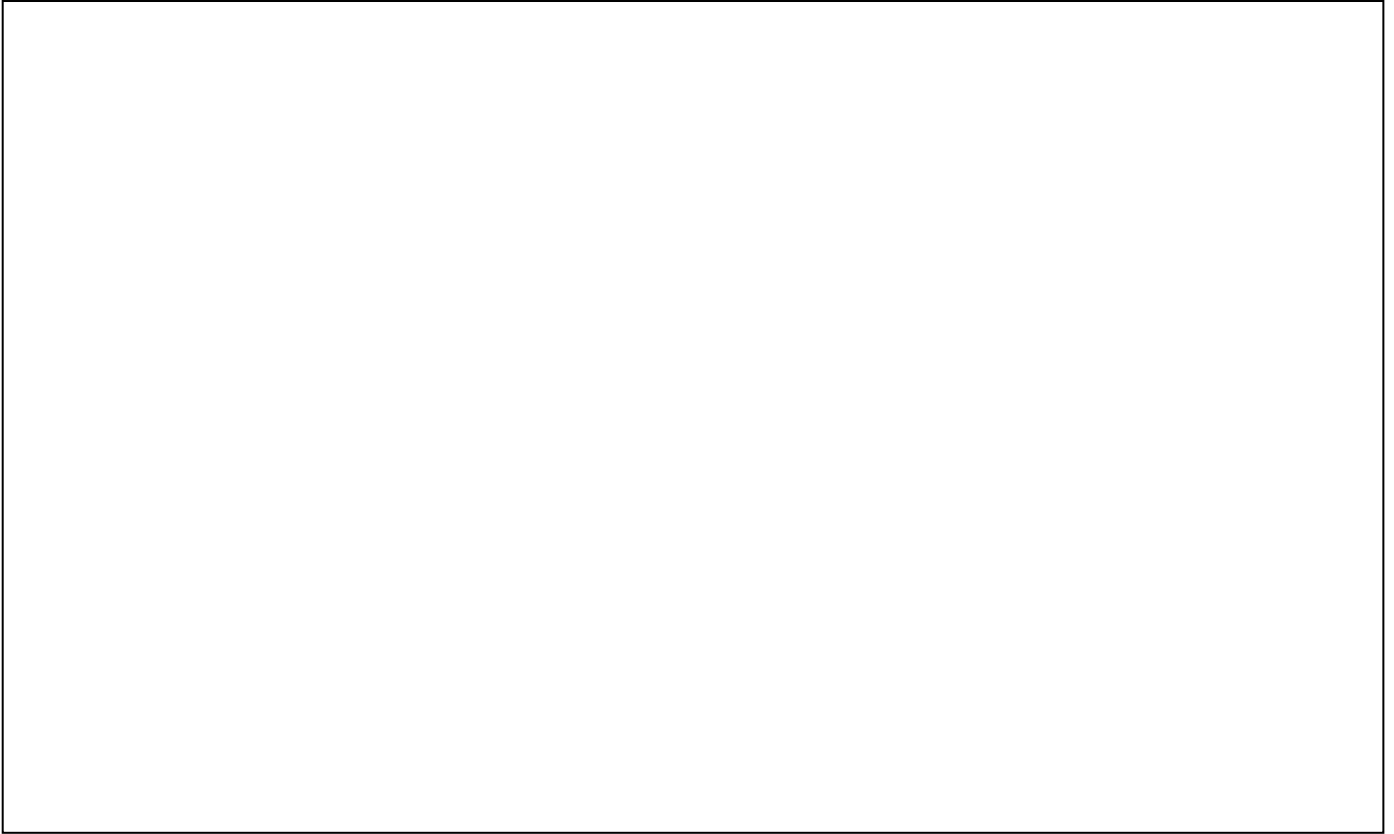
What would help people to lead a healthier life in Southwark for example through access to healthy activities, better use of parks etc.



What support do young people need to succeed in life?

What makes a place a good neighbourhood to live in?

How could local people be more actively involved in the changes in their communities?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for participants to write their answers to the question above. It occupies the majority of the page's vertical space.