In this paper we will explore issues related to the environment we live in including: environment and green space, arts and culture, the local economy and employment, housing and homelessness, gentrification and safety. Throughout the acronym H.U.E is used to represent the term ‘Hidden, Unmet and Emerging need’ for issues that are seen to lie beneath the surface of our communities.

The environment (e.g. green spaces, cleanliness)

In our survey to the Voluntary and Community Sector we asked, ‘How are things going in Southwark in terms of: environment (e.g. green spaces, cleanliness)?’

A majority of people surveyed felt that things are ‘about average’ or better in Southwark with regards to the environment (e.g. green spaces, cleanliness); with one quarter (25%) feeling that things are going ‘well’ and just over 1 in 10 people feeling things were going ‘really well’ in this area. And while a majority (70%) also felt that the things had ‘stayed the same’, one quarter (23%) felt that things had ‘improved’ over the last 12 months.

Southwark is one of the greenest boroughs in London with 24.9% green space coverage (compared to an inner London average of 21.7%)\(^2\), and comprises 12% of London’s overall greenspace\(^3\). It has 130 parks and open spaces\(^4\) and as of 2016 boasts 25 Green flag awards for green spaces in the borough\(^5\). Southwark has 516 hectares of natural green space, 5 nature reserves and over 57,000 trees in the public realm\(^6\).

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1. It should be noted here and throughout that when surveyed, people may be thinking of their own local area rather than the whole of Southwark, and that things in some area in Southwark may not conform to this pattern (since some people judge that things are going ‘badly’ or ‘really badly’ with regards to the issue in hand).
3. http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/LeadKeyFigures.do?a=7&b=6275253&c=southwark&d=13&e =8&kg=6337047&ti=1001x1003x1004&m=0&r=1&s=1466242781605&enc=1
6. John Best, Ecology Officer, Meeting of Camberwell Community Council, Wednesday 18 November 2015 7.00 pm (Item 10.) Theme Item - Green Spaces.
Green open spaces are important as they are likely to result in higher ‘neighbourhood satisfaction’ and better health, since ‘the provision of high quality, local and accessible green space helps to address a number of agendas at local authority level including health, crime and safety’, (particularly rising UK obesity levels). This can be particularly important in areas with a diverse ethnic population who are more likely to report bad or very bad health compared to the general population, but who are also likely to be underserved with good quality green space.

Green spaces are under threat from the planning system and the funding crisis, and UK’s leading environmental groups warn there may be ‘little or no money’ left for the upkeep of Britain’s green spaces and parks by 2020 due to funding cuts. Green, open spaces in Southwark clearly need to be preserved in order to maintain good health and wellbeing. Arts, culture, sports and heritage.

In our survey to the sector people were asked, ‘How are things going in Southwark in terms of: arts, culture, sports and heritage (e.g. museums, galleries, exhibitions, sports facilities and cultural events)?’

A majority of people surveyed felt that things are about average or above in Southwark around arts, culture, sports and heritage (e.g. museums, galleries, exhibitions, sports facilities and cultural events). Nearly one third (31%) of respondents feeling that things are going ‘well’ and 1 in 10 people feeling things were going ‘really well’ in this area; and while a majority (56%) also felt that things had ‘stayed the same’, one quarter (27%) felt that things had ‘improved’ over the last 12 months.

**Figure 17: How are things going in Southwark in terms of: Environment (e.g. green spaces, cleanliness)?**

Southwark boasts some of London’s and indeed the world’s most renowned arts and cultural institutions, for example the Tate Modern Art Museum and Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre. It is also home to The Clink Museum, Dulwich Picture Gallery, Bankside Gallery, Borough Market, Southwark Cathedral, Hay’s Galleria, The Golden Hinde, HMS Belfast, Tower Bridge, Nunhead Cemetery, The Fashion and Textile Museum, The South London Gallery and White Cube Bermondsey to name but some.

Arts funding has been squeezed during the global recession, and like green spaces, the arts play an important part in a healthy rounded life. The Local Economy (work, unemployment, salaries, local businesses), when surveyed, nearly half (45%) of local voluntary and community organisations felt that the local economy in Southwark was doing ‘about average’, with one quarter (26%) feeling that things were more negative (doing ‘not so well’ to ‘really badly’), and one fifth (20%) feeling that things were more positive (doing ‘well’ or ‘really well’); but while a majority (63%) also felt that the local economy had ‘stayed the same’, one quarter (23%) felt that things had ‘worsened’ over the last 12 months.

**Figure 19: How are things going in Southwark in terms of: The local economy (e.g. health of local businesses, range of shops and other amenities)?**

**Local businesses**

Southwark has a thriving business sector. It boasts the fifth largest number of large businesses located in London (85) behind Islington (95), Camden (180), Westminster (225) and City of London (380); the fourth largest number of medium businesses (310), behind Camden (585), the City (810) and Westminster (1,165); the fifth largest number of small businesses (1,490); and the twelfth largest number of micro businesses (1,490); and the fifth largest number of small businesses (1,490); and the twelfth largest number of micro businesses (1,490). Much of this is concentrated in the Riverside and London Bridge area, however, meaning that not all of Southwark feels the benefit.

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9. The Urban Green Nation report revealed that in areas where more than 40 per cent of residents are black or minority ethnic, there is 11 times less green space than in areas where residents are largely white. And the spaces they do have are likely to be of a poorer quality (Urban Green Nation: building the evidence base, CARE, 2010 cabeurl.com/cf)
10. The Telegraph: ‘Green spaces under threat from planning system and funding crisis’ Emily Gosden, 01 Sep 2014.
Businesses contribute to Southwark’s community in a number of ways, including providing employment, increasing productivity, paying property tax (business rates), and potentially bringing in further money through retail (both employees spending in the area, and customers buying in the area). In 2014/15 the total business rates collected in Southwark amounted to £203 million.

In the London Bridge BID area alone, over £63 million was collected (over 30% of Southwark’s business rates collected in 0.15 square miles) and this has grown by over 200% in the last 10 years. The total business rates foregone due to charitable relief in 2016/17 in the London Bridge BID area are projected at £1.8 million. In addition, local businesses already commit some spending to Southwark community.

Employment

When surveyed about employment, over half (55%) of local voluntary and community organisations felt that employment in Southwark was doing ‘not so well’ or ‘really badly’, with only 7% feeling that things were more positive (doing ‘well’), and none (0%) felt that things were doing ‘really well’; and while 63% also felt that the employment situation had ‘stayed the same’, one quarter (26%) felt that things had ‘worsened’ over the last 12 months. While the perception among Southwark’s VCS organisations is that the employment situation is poor, across the borough, 80.6% of the population are registered as economically active (compared to a London average of 77.7%); with 74.2% in employment (compared to a London average of 72.9%). The job density in Southwark is relatively high compared to the London average (1.27 vs .96). The disconnect between the perception and the average employment figures is likely to indicate that unemployment is unevenly distributed across the borough, and between different groups of people in Southwark.

Southwark has a higher number of ‘Managers, Directors and Senior Officials’ (12.5% compared to a London average of 11.5% and a Great Britain average of 10.4%) and people in ‘Professional Occupations’ (22.1% compared to a London average of 23.9%)13. And 38.2% of Southwark employees work in ‘Financial and Other Business Services’ (compared to 33% across London). Southwark has the sixth highest number of employees in this sector across London (80,400), ranking just behind Islington (82,300) and Camden (125,500) and the fourth highest percentage of employees behind Islington (39.5%), Tower Hamlets (53.8%) and the City of London (75.6%). In 2014 Southwark had around 62% of residents in higher-skilled occupations, ranking the borough ninth across London. Pay is commensurately good, on average, for those in work in Southwark, although, as noted before, this will not apply to everyone across the borough.

Figures show that in the last decade (2004–2014) the share of individuals in higher-skilled occupations in Southwark increased by around 7–8%, the fifth highest gain across London. This mirrors what is happening across Inner London as a whole, where the proportion of residents working in these occupations has increased substantially between 2004–2014. This may point to an influx of new, more highly-skilled workers attracted to working in Inner London and Southwark.

On the other side of the fence, however, the proportion of lower paid jobs in Southwark has also increased since the year 2000, with this proportion becoming the third highest in Inner London (behind Newham and Haringey). Those who live in the innermost boroughs are more likely to be low-paid than those who work in them.

The VCS organisations consulted as part of this research felt that there are big issues in Southwark around insecure employment, low wages and zero hours contracts, mirroring other London boroughs, particularly for younger people, but also for BME communities.
Unemployment
19.4% of the population in Southwark are economically inactive (compared to a pan-London average of 22.3%)
with 6.9% being unemployed (compared to a London average of 6.1%). Unemployment (8.7%) and out of work benefit claims (11.1%) were both higher in Southwark than the average for London in 2014, though both had fallen faster than the average across London since 2011.

At least 8% of households in Southwark have never worked or are in long-term unemployment (this is the same proportion as London-wide, but higher than the national average of 5%). In 2014, 17.9% of Southwark’s economically inactive residents were unable to work due to long-term illness. The claimant count is highest for those aged 50+ (3.3% compared to 2.2% London-wide and 1.5 G-wide), also higher for those aged 25 to 49 (2% vs 1.7% and 1.9%). There are also higher than London average numbers of people claiming ESA and Incapacity benefit (6% vs 5.2%).

In 2012, Southwark had 7.7% of 16-18 year olds NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) which was significantly higher than the London average of 4.7%, but by 2014 this number had fallen to 2%. There are 11,945 lone parent households with dependent children of which 45% do not work (1.4% of Southwark’s population vs a London average of 1.1%).

Unemployment, especially among long-term, can cause huge issues for health and wellbeing.

H.U.E. NEED: Unemployed 50-something out-of-work benefits in Southwark is higher than the London average (3.2% vs 2.2%). Research shows that age discrimination in the workplace is a big problem, with a ‘huge bias’ against older workers.

Southwark VCS organisations dealing with unemployment report having recently seen more older, single males who have been sanctioned by the system job centre for not looking for work. They often don’t have the literacy skills and IT skills needed to find new employment in a changing work environment.

The proportion of individuals with no qualifications is highest among those aged 50 to retirement age (33.3%). Research shows that whether the crisis is greater in males or females is unknown. Southwark Carers have previously noted an unemployment crisis among women over 50: ‘because they are forced to care for elderly, sick or disabled people in their family’.

Almost one in four women aged between 50-64 care for elderly, sick or disabled people – with some 153,000 women approaching retirement claiming Carers Allowance – compared to just 87,000 men.

This is backed up by research which shows that women who are now reaching their 50s and 60s have been ‘especially disadvantaged in terms of lifetime income and pensions, and face particular workplace barriers’. Women are more likely than their male colleagues to be carers, and are the only sex to have to talk about it more openly. Research which shows that they miss the income, but 38% saying they miss the social interaction of work, and nearly one in five (18%) say they miss the feeling they are doing something useful.

More than one in five say they wish they had worked longer, while 33% of those working aged over 70 said they did so because they enjoyed it. As stated earlier, the impact on health and wellbeing of being inactive can be huge.

Research from 2015 calculated that enabling half the 1.2 million older workers who are currently unemployed or inactive and would like to work to move into employment, could boost the economy by up to £25 billion a year.

On the other hand, men appear to find inactivity when they are still fit and healthy particularly difficult, as they tend to be more defined by their job and society’s (outdated) expectations that they provide for their family. The effects on the over 50s of being retired/out of work include: missing being at work (2.3 million retirees report this), with 27% saying that they miss the income, but 38% saying they miss the social interaction of work, and nearly one in five (18%) say they miss the feeling they are doing something useful.

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If employment rates for older workers do not change, the number of people aged 50 to State Pension age who are not working could increase from 2.9 million to over 5.4 million by 2033. That means an additional 2.5 million people would be economically inactive, many of whom will have relatively low incomes and inadequate pensions, and therefore might want or need to keep working.

A New Vision for Older Workers: ‘Retain, Retrain, Recruit’

In 2012, Southwark had 7.7% of 16-18 year olds NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) which was significantly higher than the London average of 4.7%, but by 2014 this number had fallen to 2%. There are 11,945 lone parent households with dependent children of which 45% do not work (1.4% of Southwark’s population vs a London average of 1.1%).

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A New Vision for Older Workers: ‘Retain, Retrain, Recruit’
Housing & Homelessness

Housing

The housing situation was seen as the area in which Southwark is currently doing the poorest by the local VCS, with half (50%) of respondents deeming things to be going ‘really badly’ in this area and a further 36% deeming things to be going ‘not so well’; while 70% also felt that the housing situation had ‘worsened’ over the last 12 months.

Issues around housing were rated as the number one issue for residents in Southwark by VCS respondents to the online survey in terms of the needs of their service users, the needs of other Southwark residents and the one thing they would fix to make things easier for people in Southwark if they had the power.

Local VCS organisations reported that 70% of drop-ins to the Southwark Wellbeing Hub have issues with housing, and the same is true for most MPs with housing. And the online survey in terms of the needs of their service users, the needs of other Southwark residents and the one thing they would fix to make things easier for people in Southwark if they had the power.

Local charities said: “The council, its private and public sector ‘partners’ and politicians continue to actively destroy communities and people’s lives through ‘regeneration’ projects.”

Sadiq Khan (January 2017) said: “It is unacceptable that so many hard-working Londoners continue to be priced out of their own city – it is bad for Londoners and bad for the future economic success of the capital.”

Council housing is a big issue in Southwark. About half the households in the borough live in a property owned by the council (as either tenants or leaseholders), and the rest of the population live in fairly close proximity to a council housing estate or development. There is more council housing in Southwark than in any other London borough, with around 43.5% of the overall dwelling stock in Southwark being ‘social housing’.

The proportion of homes rented from Local Authority or Housing Association in 2014 was 37.2%, compared with an inner London average of 32.1%. The proportion of homes rented from a private landlord in 2014 was 26.4%, compared to 30.9% in inner London.

Rents are now eating up more than half of earnings in 17 London boroughs (53% in Southwark and Lambeth). For households with income between £20,800 and £28,500 per year, the costs of rent have increased 14% in real terms over the last decade.

Average rents for a two-bedroom property in Southwark represent just under 70% of lower quartile monthly gross earnings. This is the tenth highest ratio across London (Trust for London, 2015).

Average house prices have also increased by 68% in the capital in the same time period, and there are now only three boroughs – Tower Hamlets, Newham and Barking and Dagenham – where home ownership is potentially affordable for two people on that borough’s median income to buy together. The median price for a house in Southwark in 2014 was £420,000, compared to an average for London of £365,000 (and an average for Inner London of £465,000). Southwark has also experienced an increase in house price disparity (between the top and bottom quartile house prices) 2004–2014, and is currently experiencing the tenth largest inequality ratio across London (Trust for London, 2015).

Housing of all types, is becoming more unaffordable in Southwark for the average resident.

Local charities said: “Some areas in the Borough, such as inter war estates are intimidating and require major changes, although this seems to be excluding low income people.”

34. CLG: Average House Prices, Borough.
36. ONS: Housing tenure households, Borough. 2014
37. Source: ONS
41. CLG: Average House Prices, Borough.
Two-thirds of current tenants are not economically active. Many are pensioners and carers. The incomes of council tenants are low, with 70% on incomes below £20,000. The median income is £9,100, far below the borough average and five times less than home owners. With many tenants on low incomes, council (or wider social) housing is the only realistic housing option. Private rents are more than double what council tenants pay, while home ownership is beyond the reach of most tenants.

Southwark has one of the highest overcrowding rates in London (with a population density of 108.2 people per hectare, compared to a London average of 55[43]). In 2011, 15.7% of Southwark households were overcrowded, compared to a London average of 11.6% and an England average of 4.8%[44]. Local VCS representatives in Southwark spoke of families of four in one bedroom flats.

Overcrowding is associated with higher rates of respiratory and infectious diseases, and also has a negative impact on educational attainment, family relationships, and physical, mental and emotional wellbeing[45]. The long-recognised negative impacts of overcrowding upon children include poor physical and mental health, worse educational attainment, and lower overall wellbeing[46]. In terms of what local Southwark residents report to local VCS organisations about the housing situation, there is a lot of worry around:

- Insecurity of tenancy. Residents in social housing are not sure what will happen to their building in the wake of the huge redevelopment projects across the borough and the loss/redevelopment of many long-established housing estates such as Aylesbury and Heygate which resulted in largescale displacement of residents (see section on ‘Gentrification’).
- Difficulties engaging with council housing officers and ‘the system’. Many tenants need help and support to navigate the complex housing system.
- TRAs not being engaged with. The Tenants and Residents Associations across Southwark appear to have very mixed fortunes when it comes to engagement with residents. This has a huge effect on what support can be given, and what collective action might be undertaken. Many residents’ prime concerns are with ‘dog shit and street lights’.

The Trust for London Poverty Profile 2015 shows that Southwark has the seventh highest rate of statutory acceptances as homeless, and the sixth highest number, across London. And while statutory homelessness across London and nationally has decreased, in Southwark it has increased sharply[47].

The number of people accepted as homeless in Southwark has risen from 920 to 1745 in a single year (while the percentage accepted as homeless is below 50% for the first time). In 2014/5 there was a big rise in the number of people who were classed as ‘intentionally homeless’[48]. This may indicate a growth in the number of people becoming homeless (but are classed as ‘intentionally homeless’) due to rent arrears caused by a combination of welfare and housing benefit cuts, low wages, and rising rents.

Figure 27: Overcrowding rate by London Borough

![Overcrowding rate by London Borough](image)

Figure 28: How are things going in Southwark in terms of: Homelessness?

Local charities said: “A lot of people are coming into our offices needing help to find somewhere to sleep as they are either rough sleeping or ‘sofa surfing’. The housing statutory housing department are very unhelpful even though the people are based in Southwark. They give no support in sign posting.”

Figure 29: Homelessness acceptances per 1,000 households in Southwark, 2010/11–2014/15[49]

Figure 29: Homelessness acceptances per 1,000 households in Southwark, 2010/11–2014/15[50]

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46. PHE. A profile of socio-economic determinants of health during the economic downturn. Southwark. 2014.
47. No Child Left Behind. 2016.
49. Meaning that they ‘left accommodation that they could have stayed in’. Reasons for being internationally homeless include: failure to pay rent, ignoring professional advice (e.g. by a housing officer), or turning down a final offer of ‘suitable accommodation’ from the council.
50. DCLG. Local Authority Homelessness Statistics (England).
The term ‘gentrification’ was coined by sociologist Ruth Glass in 1964 to describe the replacement of working or lower class people by middle class individuals in London. Displacement happens when long-time or original neighbourhood residents move from a gentrified area because of higher rents, mortgages, and property taxes. Following the suburbanisation of previous decades, gentrification is seen to mark the most recent major trend in the history of cities in industrialised countries.

Gentrification can happen slowly over time as new people with new ideas move into an area, as happens naturally in most places; but it can also happen very quickly when major new redevelopments are specifically targeted at attracting ‘new kinds’ of individuals into an area (usually those with more disposable income). This latter kind of gentrification can cause shock waves in a community who may find themselves rapidly uprooted, or their neighbourhood changed seemingly overnight. This can cause anxiety, stress, and loss of a feeling of ‘home’ or ‘neighbourhood’. In turn, this can cause frustration and anger at gentrification plans, planners and at new residents.

It is felt by many that it is the latter scenario which is happening currently in Southwark. Many feel that luxury and unaffordable (to local residents) housing is being built in some lower-income neighbourhoods in Southwark which will inevitably lead to displacement of long-term lower-income residents. Not only this, but previously social housing is being redeveloped into these new ‘higher-spec’ homes. It is believed or feared by many local residents that they are at risk of being pushed out or prevented from moving into certain geographic areas because of the prohibitive costs and limited household earnings. It is this geographic component, along with restricted economic opportunities, that makes gentrification-related displacement a problem.

Local charities said: “The number of homeless people is increasing steadily across London but Southwark may end up with more people who become homeless because there is more social deprivation in some areas in the borough.”

Gentrification is a very controversial topic. It polarises debate, with those on one side thinking of it as ‘progressive regeneration’ ultimately beneficial to the area and a panacea for ‘white flight’ and urban decay, and those on the other side thinking of it as ‘social cleansing’, and ‘social apartheid’, leading ultimately to the ruin of the ‘community’ and displacement of long-term residents. It has been referred to as a modern “battleground in urban geography”.

What’s driving urban gentrification in the UK? The Economist suggests that it’s the bounce-back from urban decline, and the reversal of suburbanisation. Most cities in the Western world have become cleaner, less criminal and better managed than they were 30 years ago. Careers are being prioritised over families, while deindustrialisation and the rise of new industries such as finance, technology and business services, which depend on firms, their competitors and their clients being closely packed together, have all led to re-urbanisation. For example, in London, the number of jobs in inner-city Canary Wharf has quadrupled over the past decade while in outer-suburban Reading and Croydon, it has dropped.

The map of London below shows which areas have ‘Moved Upmarket’ and which have ‘Moved Downmarket’ according to estate agents – essentially mapping gentrification.

As old housing stock and available land is used up the only thing left to sell to property developers is previously-protected social housing stock. As The Economist noted in 2013: ‘That, roughly, is what is happening in Elephant and Castle, where the dilapidated 1970s Heygate Estate is being rebuilt as flats to house affluent professionals. Though some of the Heygate’s original residents will eventually be able to move back to some of the new flats, most will probably end up settling further out.’

51. Ibid.
52. Quote from: Daniel Brett: Class War Against London’s Housing Elite. (http://www.classwarparty.org.uk/poor-doors/)
54. Ibid.
58. Ibid
59. Ibid
60. Savills’ Estate Agents, data from ONS.
This has provoked much debate, anger and frustration in Southwark. As The Economist predicted: ‘if the future involves the redevelopment of London’s long-protected social housing, then the politics of gentrification in London could eventually become quite tetchy’62. After ‘Right-to-Buy’, gentrification is seen to be the largest threat to the remaining social housing stock in London.

In the Heygate redevelopment in Elephant and Castle alone, more than 1,200 primarily social-rented homes are being replaced with ‘luxury’ housing, while the regeneration of the Aylesbury estate in Walworth is due to almost double the number of units but is likely to see a fall in the number of social homes available63. Recent analysis of London estate regenerations over the past decade, by the London Assembly, found that the total number of homes on the 50 estates studied almost doubled — from 34,213 to 67,601. Although units built for private sale increased more than tenfold — from 3,186 to 36,163 — the number of social homes fell, from 30,431 to 22,135. Research has shown that over the Heygate’s more than 3,000 original residents, the majority were re-housed mainly in the eastern suburbs of greater London, although some were housed further out as far as Kent64. A number of needs and issues around ‘gentrification’ were identified by local VCS organisations working in this area. Their perceptions were the following:

- **Planning & regeneration.** The ‘unintelligibility’ of the council’s pronouncements on planning and regeneration was felt to lead to people feeling alienated, frustrated, powerless, and unable to make contributions.
- **Luxury homes being built leading to “social apartheid” and a displacement of long-term residents.** Having witnessed what’s happened to Aylesbury and Heygate estates, many council residents have a sense of fear about their own future. Research has now shown that significant displacement of low income renters is a proven outcome of gentrification in the UK65. Southwark VCS representatives spoke of service users being ‘shipped off’, and some being offered homes as far away as Stoke on Trent by the council. This also means an influx of new users with different needs which is hard to deal with for existing services.
- **‘Affordable housing’ replacing ‘social housing’**. Research has found that the bulk of ‘affordable housing’ in new developments in London is ‘part rent/part buy intermediate housing’ that requires on average an income of £33,000 p.a. or is what’s called ‘affordable rent’ which means rents up to 80% of the price of private rented homes in the area66. Over 30% of Southwark households earn less than 60% of national median income after housing costs, while two-thirds of current council tenants are not economically active and 70% have incomes below £20,000. In 2012 the London Tenants Federation exposed what they called London’s ‘affordable housing con’. They found that half of all newly built homes that were supposed to be ‘affordable’ were not affordable for Londoners as a whole, let alone low income, ex-council tenants67.
- **Overcrowding and loss of green spaces.** Some of the new developments are set to contain double the original number of units meaning greater overcrowding for Southwark. Some VCS organisations felt that the major issue in Southwark is the lack of social rent housing and displacement of generations of ‘Southwark’ people away from their family and friends.
- **Isolation.** Tower blocks are seen to increase isolation. Many don’t have communal space, and if they do then it will probably be restricted to residents of a particular floor, or the whole building but not for other people in the community. It was also felt that the new developments can hide already socially isolated people e.g. older people.

Local charities said:

“*The increase in building flats and homes seems focused on actually removing people from the Borough (as in the Aylesbury Estates area) and flooding it with high income residents excluding those on low income or experiencing unemployment.*"

Local charities said:

“The council is locked into toxic relationships with corporate developers to the detriment of local social housing residents.”

Local charities said:

“*They are in the middle of a concrete jungle, and are holding onto the green space ‘like grim death’. If offered to be re-housed in the new-build, most residents find that it’s much smaller than they’re used to.*"

- ‘Poor doors’. The issue of some new housing developments having separate doors for the social housing tenants has been raised by local residents and in the media, and has fuelled the ‘social apartheid’ debate. New London Mayor Sadiq Khan said in 2015 that he would ban so-called “poor doors” if elected Mayor of London. It remains to be seen if he will.

- **Building pollution.** All the building work in an urban setting means lots of dust, dirt and pollution during the redevelopment (which is set to go on for 20 years in some cases). There can be noise pollution 7 days a week, which can be very disruptive for residents.

- **Small traders.** Many small traders are being driven out by redevelopment. The Southwark Association of Street Traders, said that in the past 12 years, the number of stalls in East Street market had been reduced from 850 to 130. This is seen as a particular issue for BME traders whose customers are being displaced and who have fewer options for setting up elsewhere. Small entrepreneurs (particularly from BME communities) face similar difficulties, for example, people who would just put out a chair and cut people’s hair. Pitches are being de-designated and traders moved towards where their business may not thrive.

- **Loss of community and ‘Southwarkness.’** It’s felt that it’s very difficult to retain ‘Southwark’ when so much redevelopment/ regeneration is going on. (See next section).

- **Changing communities and changing needs.** The social setup in Southwark has been seen by some to have changed quite a lot, with new people moving in bringing different needs. Some local residents see new developments as ‘for trendy new people not for local residents’. The redevelopments are seen as insensitive to the existing local community and its needs. For example, the local library at Artworks Elephant has been housed upstairs in a port-a-cabin with no mobility access.

- **Lack of integration of different communities.** For example, the ‘Latin American Quarter’ in Elephant and Castle is seen as another trendy development with no thought for the integration of this community with long-standing local residents. The opening of ‘Latin American’ shops and cafes can be seen as a desire to preserve one culture rather than integrate with another. It’s seen as an issue that people don’t tend to mix in new developments and ‘old locals’ can resent ‘new locals’ coming in.

Local charities said:
“Southwark is losing its ‘Southwarkness’ - new rich people moving in to the area existing with poorer established communities in social housing and poor migrants but no sense of solidarity between these communities.”

• Not all bad. The ‘gentrification’ of Southwark is not seen as a bad thing by all, as it can enhance the local area and provide new amenities, etc, but it remains contentious for many.

H.U.E. NEED: Loss/Lack of Community
Currently (2016) in the last 12 months.

Opinion was very much divided amongst VCS respondents to the online survey, with 36% feeling that things around a sense of community in Southwark are going ‘not so well’ or ‘really badly’, and 31% feeling that things are going ‘well’ or ‘really well’. This may reflect different interpretations of what ‘community’ means to them, or it may reflect different areas within Southwark (see Figure 23 below).

Research has shown that many people’s attitudes towards ‘community’ which usually change very slowly over time, have changed rapidly and generally for the worse in the UK since the economic downturn.

Local charities said:
“Because of the regeneration and communities changing, it all has an opportunity to improve but time will tell that. At the moment we’re in a state of facing the unknown, which is both scary but also exciting and opens possibilities for creativity.”

There is speculation that some of the issues around diversity and loss of feeling of community are around a different kind of ‘diversity’:

The UK has been a diverse nation for decades, but recent years have seen changes to the nature of this diversity, with less immigration from ‘traditional’ sources (i.e. Commonwealth nations) and more from other parts of the world, especially Eastern Europe. Levels of immigration have increased more markedly in recent years, causing more tensions and anti-immigration sentiment.

After peaking at the beginning of the global recession the proportion of people who believe that there is more racial prejudice in Britain now than 5 years ago fell to 2010, but is now on the rise again, experiencing a 45% increase in the most recently available data.

The debate around immigration is very polarised, but overall the balance of opinion is slightly more negative, with studies showing that 42% of people agree that Britain’s culture is undermined by immigration (14% strongly agree), compared to 39% who agree that immigrants improve British society (4% strongly agree). While there is no correlation by number of immigrants, those most likely to agree with the statement are in those areas that have seen the biggest increases in immigration in recent years.

Research has shown that difficult economic conditions (including austerity and higher unemployment)

70. Only 25 respondents filled in this information regarding where they operate, making this only a partial picture.
72. Ibid. (Data Source: British Social Attitudes 2008/Understanding society 2009-2012).
75. Ibid.
Figure 32: How things are going with regard to ‘a sense of community’ in different wards in Southwark

Figure 33: ‘Community cohesion’ in Britain during the global downturn

Figure 34: Proportion of people in the UK who believe there is more racial prejudice in the UK than previously

There is racial segregation happening in Southwark, and a lack of integration of communities. Rather, there is a sense of old communities being broken up to accommodate new ones. In some areas it is enough to see groups of ‘others’ (people who look different, who speak a different language, especially young people) to make people feel uneasy and frightened. Tenants and Residents Associations talk of: “Young people hanging round in groups outside old ladies’ doors, ‘foreign kids who don’t speak our language’. They may just be ‘drinking and smoking’, but it causes fear and other residents feel frightened of going outside. And when there are muggings and other crimes happening locally it naturally gets pinned on ‘those foreigners’, and in turn, ‘local lads’ become territorial and fights break out.

But it’s not just ‘foreigners’ who are changing the community landscape. Southwark has a large population of students who move in and out of different areas; and new, mainly younger, city workers are also moving in. This changes the ‘community’ and the sense of who is a ‘local’. And ‘unbinding’ this all together is a lack of integration.

There are many local Southwark VCS organisations which attempt to support the better integration of different local communities in Southwark. But they face a multitude of issues, outlined above. Some VCS organisations find it ‘really hard to get people to engage’, while others have people ‘knocking on their doors to get in’. Managing this can be difficult in both scenarios.

H.U.E. NEED: Lack of safe / relevant places to go

Linked to the loss/lack of community is the lack of community spaces. Local VCS organisations say that they need more space for community venues but that housing is more of a priority for the council. Some organisations felt that the area needs a variety of different spaces for groups with different needs.

Local charities also spoke of Southwark council selling off many community properties which currently house VCS organisations and services, and organisations having to move (often more than once) to find cheaper premises. This is disruptive for clients and users of the services many of which rely on word-of-mouth recommendations to reach their client base.

The local VCS organisations consulted as part of this research also spoke of the council ‘changing all peppercorn rents overnight to full rates’ as part of austerity measures. They wanted to know if there

77. Ibid.
be any space in the new developments? It was felt that lots of small charity groups wouldn’t know how to go about finding out or negotiating this.

In 2015, in response to a survey by Community Southwark, 42% of organisations said that premises were ‘a significant problem’ or ‘somewhat a problem’.

Local charities said:
“In my opinion there is not enough being done that proactively promotes the value of a strong community, there are not enough avenues for people to buy into the idea of a strong community and not enough support to make it easier for people to do so. This is the bedrock for all evitating many other issues such as crime, homelessness and poverty, in my opinion.”

H.U.E. ISSUE: Transportation
There was felt to be an issue around general transportation links in Southwark and also a need for better transportation for needs groups. Despite having one of the South East’s major train hubs (London Bridge) located in the borough, some areas are much less well served. For example, Bermondsey and Old Southwark, despite their proximity to the Thames, are perceived to have relatively poor commuter links, and Southwark lacks a decent cycle infrastructure.

Poor transportation also adds to social isolation. Groups with particular needs, especially those with mobility issues such as the elderly and disabled, need special transport to access services.

Local charities said:
“A borough wide centre like ours needs a number of neighbourhood hubs. It’s important to get a clear sense of locality and neighbourhood.”

Safety & Community
Nearly half (48%) of respondents felt that issues around safety in Southwark are ‘about average’, with one third (33%) feeling that things are going ‘not so well’ or ‘really badly’; and while a majority (71%) felt that things had ‘stayed the same’, one fifth (21%) felt that things had ‘worsened’ over the last 12 months.

Although a relatively small number (145), Southwark had a higher rate than the England average of young people entering the youth justice system for the first time in 2014 (scoring in the lowest (worst) 25% of local authorities in the country), although the level of NEETs (those Not in Education, Employment or Training) is lower than the England average.

• Burglary decreased by 18.5%
• Robbery decreased by 28.7%

Men, young people and black ethnic groups are disproportionately overrepresented as both victims and offenders. (See section on ‘Dispossessed youth’).

Local charities said:
“Very hard to experience ‘community’ now that the community councils have been squeezed into three, and the agenda becomes fairly complicated.”

Figure 36: How are things going in Southwark in terms of: Safety (e.g. crime levels, feeling safe in your neighbourhood)?