

Southwark Liberal Democrat Group

Southwark Council
Liberal Democrat Group Room
160 Tooley Street
London SE1P 5LX

Cllr Sarah King and Althea Loderick
Leader of the Council and Chief Executive
Southwark Council
160 Tooley Street
SE1P 5LX

30 October 2025

Dear Sarah and Althea,

Southwark is in the news for all the wrong reasons this morning. You will no doubt have seen the reports that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Rt Hon Rachel Reeves MP, has been letting out a Southwark property without the required licence under the borough's selective licensing scheme.

As you will agree, any licensing scheme is only effective if the council enforces it properly and ensures all landlords comply. The fact the Chancellor, a senior government minister who has herself advocated such schemes in her Leeds constituency, has failed to do so is a serious oversight and to many Southwark residents will appear hypocritical.

This matter raises two grave concerns. First that the Chancellor, as custodian of the nation's finances, has disregarded the regulations in place in Southwark. Second, that the council has failed to identify and act upon this breach undermining confidence in its ability to protect private renters and uphold the standards the scheme is designed to deliver.

We therefore urge you as Leader and Chief Executive to take urgent and all appropriate action to resolve this case. Southwark Council must demonstrate that it is serious about enforcing the rules it has put in place and that no landlord however senior or powerful is above them. The Council should also:

- Establish whether the property met all licensing requirements during the period of the unlicensed let
- Pursue any further enforcement action that may be warranted including prosecution
- Ensure Rachel Reeves is added to the rogue landlords register if found at fault
- Assist Rachel's Reeves' tenants to recover any rent they are owed for this breach.

The Council has already been criticised by the Government's own regulator for "serious failings" as a social landlord. It is essential that the same cannot be said of its approach to private landlords. If public trust in this administration's commitment to decent housing across both the social and private sectors is to be restored, then this case must be treated with the utmost seriousness and urgency and using the full extent of the Council's powers.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Victor Chamberlain
Leader of the Opposition
Southwark Liberal Democrat Group
Borough and Bankside Ward