

Item No. 10.	Classification: Open	Date: December 6 2006	Meeting Name: Council assembly
Report title:		Motions	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Chief Executive (Acting Borough Solicitor)	

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In accordance with council assembly procedure rule 3.10, the member moving the motion may make a speech directed to the matter under discussion. (This may not exceed five minutes without the consent of the Mayor).

The seconder will then be asked by the Mayor to second the motion. (This may not exceed three minutes without the consent of the Mayor).

The meeting will then open up to debate on the issue and any amendments on the motion will be dealt with.

At the end of the debate the mover of the motion may exercise a right of reply. If an amendment is carried, the mover of the amendment shall hold the right of reply to any subsequent amendments and, if no further amendments are carried, at the conclusion of the debate on the substantive motion.

The Mayor will then ask members to vote on the motion (and any amendments).

IMPLICATIONS OF THE CONSTITUTION

The constitution allocates responsibility for particular functions to council assembly, including approving the budget and policy framework, and to the council as a whole, for developing and implementing the budget and policy framework and overseeing the running of council services on a day-to-day basis. Therefore, matters reserved to council assembly (i.e. housing, social services, regeneration, environment, education etc.) cannot be decided upon by council assembly without prior reference to the council. While it would be in order for council assembly to discuss an issue, consideration of any of the following should be referred to the council:

- To change or develop a new or existing policy
- To instruct officers to implement new procedures
- To allocate resources

(NOTE: In accordance with council assembly procedure rule 3.10 (5) & (6) (prioritisation and rotation by the political groups) the order in which motions appear in the agenda may not necessarily be the order in which they are considered at the meeting).

1. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR TIM McNALLY (seconded by Councillor Nick Stanton)

Please note that, in accordance with council assembly procedure rule 3.10(3), council assembly shall consider this motion.

Council Housing Arrangements

Council notes the improvements made in the housing service since 2002 including:

- (a) Better cleaning and grounds maintenance on estates;
- (b) The welcome introduction of Southwark Homesearch to make the housing allocation process fairer and more transparent;
- (c) Strengthening the tenancy agreement to increase the council's powers to tackle nuisance neighbours;
- (d) Ensuring that leaseholders are charged in a more transparent way;
- (e) Reducing rent arrears by over £10 million and sorting out the housing benefit system.

Council deplores the fact that:

- (a) The government's decent homes policy is a constraint on improving safety and security on housing estates and other improvements desired by residents;
- (b) Government policy is heavily weighted in favour of councils transferring their landlord function to registered social landlords (RSLs) or arms length management organisations (ALMOs);
- (c) The new Labour administration in Lambeth is seeking to impose an ALMO on tenants contrary to their manifesto promises and at great expense to the taxpayer.

Council welcomes:

- (a) Southwark council's commitment not to impose a stock transfer or ALMO on tenants;
- (b) The attention being given by the executive to the award of new repair and maintenance contracts to improve the service given under the administration before 2002;
- (c) The establishment of an independent Citizens Advice Bureau advice service for leaseholders and the new leaseholders' handbook;
- (d) Changes in the management structure of the housing service to create a more customer-focussed culture and looks forward to the ratification of these changes by the executive at the appropriate time.

Comments of the Strategic Director Environment & Leisure

The transfer of the housing management and home ownership services to environment and leisure department creates the opportunity to utilise the management strengths of the staff from both services to move the services forward with particular emphasis directed towards putting the customer first.

The expertise in place within the environment and leisure department, with a recent successful record of change management, will be used to undertake a review of the way that housing services are delivered. The views of housing users, particularly those of the recognised consultation forums of tenant and resident associations, area forums, tenant council and leaseholders council, will be obtained together with those of members and staff to ensure that changes will reflect experiences and aspirations.

Changes to service delivery will commence early in 2007 with clear performance targets put in place so that progress can be measured over the coming months. Feedback from housing users will be built into the process so that both perceptions of service as well as tangible assessments can be used to monitor the progress that is being made.

Note: If the motion is agreed, any proposals will be submitted to the executive for consideration.

2. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR ANDREW PAKES (seconded by Councillor Alison McGovern)

Please note that, in accordance with council assembly procedure rule 3.10(3), council assembly shall consider this motion.

Southwark Building Services

Council assembly notes the report to the special executive on October 5, which proposed to give all three contracts for housing building repairs in Southwark to two private companies.

Council assembly notes that the decision on this report was suddenly deferred at the special executive called specifically to discuss it on the grounds of insufficient information being available about one of these companies.

Council assembly notes the proud history of Southwark direct building services in training and recruiting local young people. Council assembly further notes that the proposed new contracts impose no enforceable obligation on the contractors to provide a similar benefit to Southwark residents.

Council assembly believes that the impact of the collapse of the previous private contractors, Botes, has never been publicly outlined, nor have any public lessons been learned. Council assembly further notes that after the collapse of Botes the in-house Southwark building services were able to take on many of their unfulfilled tasks.

Council assembly believes that to award the contracts to the recommended contractors would mean the abolition of Southwark direct building services.

Council assembly believes that since the aborted special executive there has been no indication of when these decisions might be taken, or indeed if any of the legitimate concerns raised by the staff unions, tenant and resident's associations (TRAs) and members had been listened to. There has been little or no communication on this issue at all.

Council assembly believes that without an existing in-house service the risks associated with another contractor collapsing would be disastrous. Council assembly urges the council to take full account of the very real benefits of maintaining an in-house service as this process now moves forward.

Council assembly also calls upon the executive to ensure that there are real and enforceable targets for apprenticeships and local recruitment for all the contractors concerned.

Council assembly believes that residents and the council would be best served if the services of Southwark building services are retained.

Council assembly condemns the executive member for housing for creating months of uncertainty through his mismanagement of this bidding process and for the lack of communication and clarity he has demonstrated with members, staff or tenant's and resident's representatives.

Comments of the Strategic Director of Environment & Leisure

To follow.

Note: If the motion is agreed, any proposals will be submitted to the executive for consideration.

3. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR TOBY ECKERSLEY (seconded by Councillor Caroline Pidgeon)

Please note that, in accordance with council assembly procedure rule 3.10(3), council assembly shall consider this motion.

Mayoral Powers

Council assembly welcomes the debate on the proposals for changes to the GLA's powers. However, this council strongly believes that in most cases, the borough is the most effective level to deliver for the people of Southwark:

1. Council assembly firmly believes in the fundamental principle of subsidiarity and sees the current review and consultation as a chance to redress the balance of power in favour of the community in line with the new Department of Communities and Local Government white paper. There is a wide scope for further devolution of power from Government Office of London, Whitehall and the various quangos to more relevant bodies rather than from the boroughs up to the Mayor. Indeed, the Greater London Assembly's principles behind their response to the original Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) consultation state that the Greater London Assembly believes in "devolution of powers from central government not extraction of powers from local government...The Assembly does not support the extraction of powers from Local Authorities upwards".
2. Council assembly notes that a recent GfK NOP survey found that only 27% of Londoners supported the proposals to give the Mayor further powers over planning and that 75% believed that their local council should be responsible for planning in their area. Council is concerned over the proposals to give the Mayor a greater say in the planning process, including the ability to approve applications in line with the strategic direction. This would go against the wishes of the residents of the London Borough of Southwark and takes the decision making process further away from the community.
3. Council assembly is also concerned by the proposals over housing policy which will concentrate more power and turn housing policy towards the focus of the Mayor, rather than in the best interests of the borough's residents. The responsibilities of the London Housing Board would pass to the Mayor and any funding would be linked to his strategic priorities. This will remove local housing strategies from the funding process in favour of the strategic development areas such as The Thames Gateway and Ashford which do not address the needs of the people of the London Borough of Southwark, as well as Londoners, where they actually want the affordable housing.

Council assembly calls on the executive to use all available power and influence to lobby relevant parties to stop the contentious extension of powers and engage with all the interested groups, to find a way of working together and creating a system that is in the best interests of the residents of the London Borough of Southwark.

Comments of the Interim Chief Executive

1. Throughout the debate on Greater London Authority powers (GLA) powers the council has argued strongly that decision-making should take place as close as possible to the communities that are affected. The council's response to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) initial consultation on GLA powers was influential in the decision not to regionalise waste.
2. However, the council is concerned at the decision of the DCLG to increase the powers of the Mayor in relation to planning, a decision which was not supported by its own consultation exercise. The council has continued to argue its case with central government on the basis that the final proposals do not provide any evidence that these changes will lead to improvements in delivery and quality of planning decisions. Southwark is delivering the sustainable communities agenda. We are meeting the London Plan targets and will soon be delivering the revised target in the further revisions to the London Plan published in September 2006 of over 1600 new dwellings a year. More efficient use of land is being achieved with local support because we are able to bring decision making closer to the communities that it affects. The communities that feel the impact of developments also have a say in how section 106 will be used to mitigate those impacts.
3. The council has also argued that London boroughs need to have greater (not less) control over housing investment to meet their statutory duties.
4. The council will continue to lobby central government directly and through representative bodies in order to ensure that local communities can influence effectively decisions that affect their lives.

Note: If the motion is agreed, any proposals will be submitted to the executive for consideration.

4. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR JENNY JONES (seconded by Councillor Peter John)

Please note that, in accordance with council assembly procedure rule 3.10(3), council assembly shall consider this motion.

Business Opportunities for Former Council Officers and Executive Members

That council assembly believes that senior officers and executive members ought to have the freedom to take up business opportunities after serving the council, when it does not undermine the public interest or integrity of the council, or give cause for any suspicion of impropriety.

In particular, public confidence in the workings of the council require:

- that any suspicion that advice or decisions might be influenced by the hope or expectation of future employment with a particular firm or organisation be avoided

- that there is no risk that a particular firm might gain an improper advantage over its competitors by employing someone who has had, in the course of their official duties, access to information or individuals which may affect that firm or its competitors

Council assembly requests officers to draft rules covering the appointments of senior officers and executive members which address the above concerns. These draft rules should then be placed before the appropriate decision making bodies. The executive to consider applying this to all future senior officer appointments. The standards committee and council assembly to consider applying the rules to future executive members.

Comments of the Chief Executive

To follow.

Note: If the motion is agreed, any proposals will be submitted to the executive and standards committee for consideration.

5. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR JONATHAN MITCHELL (seconded by Councillor Lewis Robinson)

Please note that, in accordance with council assembly procedure rule 3.10(3), council assembly shall consider this motion.

Police Stations Under Threat

That this council believes that publicly accessible and visible police stations perform a critical role in tackling crime and fear of crime, particularly in providing public reassurance and enabling the reporting of crime.

That this council notes comments from the borough commander that:

“Metropolitan police service building stock is out of date and not fit for purpose. The vision is to build patrol sites and custody centres across London. However, these need to be financed and the only realistic way of doing so is to sell some existing premises”.

Council further notes reports that East Dulwich, Camberwell and Rotherhithe police stations are three stations likely to be threatened.

Council believes that 'safer neighbourhood bases' should be used to supplement existing police station provision - not as a second rate substitute for existing police stations.

Council reaffirms its commitment to a working Police Station in East Dulwich, Camberwell and Rotherhithe, preferably open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Council asks the officers to work with the police and other enforcement officers to explore ways of making East Dulwich, Camberwell and Rotherhithe Police Stations more viable by using them in a number of both practical and imaginative ways:

1. to use them as bases, not just for the local dedicated police teams, but also for the council-run community wardens scheme, the enforcement officers, the crime prevention teams and others;

2. for use by the public to report crime or other useful information so that officers can respond more effectively within the community they serve.

Council asks the leader and executive member for community safety to write to the borough commander and commissioner, setting out council's view and asking them to reconsider any plans to close East Dulwich, Camberwell and Rotherhithe police stations.

Comments of the Strategic Director Environment & Leisure

To follow.

Note: If the motion is agreed, any proposals will be submitted to the executive for consideration.

6. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR KIRSTY McNEILL (seconded by Councillor Martin Seaton)

Please note that, in accordance with council assembly procedure rule 3.10(3), council assembly shall consider this motion.

Newington Reference Library

Council assembly notes plans to shut Newington reference library as part of its libraries modernisation plan.

Council assembly believes the Disability Discrimination Act is an excellent piece of legislation and compliance with it should be a top priority for Southwark. Council further believes that the whole community should be involved in open discussions, with full access to all relevant information, about how compliance with the legislation will impact on council services.

Council assembly believes that the Newington reference library provides an incredibly popular local service, providing newspapers, magazines, computers, internet access, books and experienced reference staff in a serious and studious environment.

Council assembly notes the very popular community campaign to save and make accessible the Newington reference library and congratulates its organisers on their vigorous engagement with local decision making.

Council assembly notes the very high number of signatures on the community petition to save the library and make it accessible, and the unanimous opposition to the closure plans from tenant and resident's associations (TRAs) represented in the East Walworth area housing forum.

Council assembly notes that on two occasions the Walworth community council has expressed its strong opposition to the proposed closure and its firm desire to see the council explore, in full, every possible option for rendering the library accessible without significant loss of service.

Council assembly believes that consultation on these proposals has been consistently poor, including:

- that the initial consultation consisted of a users survey on one day in the school and university vacations, thereby excluding the large number of people who use the library to help with their formal education
- that the plans for use of the downstairs space, and tours of that space, were only made available to the public after strong representations by Labour councillors and demands from the community council
- that the members of the community who went on subsequent tours were not offered the chance to fill in talkback forms
- that Walworth community council's 'Take Note' claimed that TRAs had been written to about the plans, but that a straw poll taken at the next Community Council indicated that not a single TRA present had been consulted.

Council assembly therefore requests that the executive agree a libraries modernisation plan which secures a future for Newington reference library in which the service can be maintained in full and made accessible to all. Council assembly further requests that the Campaign to Save Newington Library and other interested parties be given full access to information on all the options considered and rejected by the executive member.

Comments of the Strategic Director of Environment & Leisure

To follow.

Note: If the motion is agreed, any proposals will be submitted to the executive for consideration.

7. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR DANNY McCARTHY (seconded by Councillor Paul Bates)

Please note that, in accordance with council assembly procedure rule 3.10(3), council assembly shall consider this motion.

Roll of Honour

That following repeated requests to have a roll of honour of past councillors, council agrees to have a roll of honour in the council chamber and, when necessary, the committee rooms.

Council therefore calls upon the chief executive to have plans drawn up for consideration by the executive, and further calls upon the chief executive to obtain three competitive quotes to enable the executive to ensure value for money when awarding a contract.

Comments of the Head of Democratic Services

To follow.

Note: If the motion is agreed, any proposals will be submitted to the executive for consideration.

8. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR IAN WINGFIELD (seconded by Councillor John Friary)

Please note that, in accordance with council assembly procedure rule 3.10(3), council assembly shall consider this motion.

Violent Crime Strategy

Council notes the research carried out by Victim Support London that states Southwark has the highest level of gun crime in London and the annual performance report of the Safer Southwark partnership which ranks Southwark second worst amongst comparable boroughs in London for violent crime.

Council notes the recent serious violent events in East Walworth and Camberwell Green and notes that these two Southwark wards are ranked in the worst five in London for such crime.

Council welcomes the delivery of neighbourhood policing teams and the work that the police, police community safety officers (PCSOs) and others do in tackling crime in Southwark.

Council notes the contribution of lawful and well-managed bars and clubs to the life and economy of Southwark.

Council notes the lack of a published violent crime strategy, despite the need for this being identified in the 2002-2005 and 2005-2008 crime and drugs strategies for Southwark.

Council believes it is time that this issue was taken seriously and therefore council assembly calls upon the Safer Southwark Partnership to make publishing this strategy a priority.

Council believes practical measures are needed to deal with violent crime in Southwark. Council assembly calls upon the executive member for community safety to develop an action plan to target crime hot spots areas in Southwark with extra council and police resources including better street lighting, more PCSOs, safer by design programmes for all Decent Homes works and improved and extended CCTV coverage.

Council assembly also calls for stricter control on nightclub, planning and licensing applications and firmer action on badly managed clubs and pubs. Council assembly supports residents who exercise their power to call for the review of licenses under the new licensing act, and welcomes their having the power to do so.

Council supports efforts to lobby government, the Metropolitan Police Authority and other local agencies to target resources in Southwark's crime hot spots.

Council calls for a report on these practical measures to be brought to the executive within three months.

Comments of the Strategic Director of Environment & Leisure

To follow.

Note: If the motion is agreed, any proposals will be submitted to the executive for consideration.

9. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR AUBYN GRAHAM (seconded by Councillor Lorraine Lauder)

Please note that, in accordance with council assembly procedure rule 3.10(3), council assembly shall consider this motion.

Older People's Manifesto

Council assembly welcomes the valuable contributions being made by Southwark Pensioner's Forum in engaging older people and improving services provided by Southwark council and other health care providers in the area. Council assembly congratulates the forum on the publication of the Manifesto for Older People.

Council assembly calls up on the executive member for health and adult care to give her commitment to incorporate the Forum's manifesto recommendations into the council's policies and asks that officers bring back a report to council assembly as quickly as possible on how these will be implemented.

Comments of the Strategic Director Health & Community

1. The council welcomes the role of the Southwark Pensioners' Forum in providing a valued contribution to policy formulation in Southwark. The pensioners' manifesto recommendations are wide ranging and crosscutting, reflecting the forum's ability to drive service improvement across the council.
2. This ability to drive service improvement, along with the council's commitment to improving life chances for older people in Southwark, is demonstrated by the recent launch of the Southwark's older people plan, *Independence and wellbeing for life*, which commits the council to an action plan to improve the quality of life for older people. This Southwark Alliance plan was developed in partnership with the council, older people themselves and the agencies that provide older people with services. This included working closely with the Southwark Pensioners' Forum to address the key issues that are outlined in the pensioners' manifesto.
3. To take forward this action, there will be an *Independence and wellbeing for life* working group, which will include representatives from each council service department, statutory agencies such as the Primary care trust (PCT), the Pensioners Forum and the voluntary and community sector. This group will be functional by the end of the year.
4. In respect to the report to council assembly on how the manifesto recommendations will be implemented, the leader has written to the forum's chair setting out how this will be taken forward and outlining the wide range of support services that the council is already delivering for older people in Southwark, many of which are delivered in partnership with our vibrant voluntary and community sector. This response can be made available to council assembly.
5. To date, a number of council officers have been invited to address the forum to provide a response to the manifesto recommendations. The council welcomes the forum to continue this practice, as the council is committed to consulting with service users to enhance our ability to make Southwark a place for all people.

Note: If the motion is agreed, any proposals will be submitted to the executive for consideration.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Member Motions	Town Hall Peckham Road London SE5 8UB	Constitutional Team 020 7525 7228

Lead Officer	Ian Millichap, Constitutional Team Manager
Report Author	Cameron MacLean, Constitutional Officer
Version	Final
Dated	24/11/2006