



**COUNCIL ASSEMBLY
EXTRAORDINARY MEETING**

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 6 2006

SUPPLEMENTAL AGENDA No. 1

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Item No. 2.	Classification: Open	Date: December 6 2006	Meeting Name: Council Assembly (Extraordinary)
Report title:		Member Motions	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Chief Executive (Acting Borough Solicitor)	

1. **MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR PETER JOHN** (seconded by Councillor Andrew Pakes)

Please note that in accordance with Council Assembly Procedure Rule 3.10 (3), this motion shall be considered by Council Assembly.

Council assembly notes the announcement on October 30 this year by the executive member for housing that;

“Housing management and home ownership services will be managed by the strategic director of environment and leisure”

And that;

“Community housing services will be managed by the strategic director of health and community services”

Council assembly also notes that on November 9 the chief executive announced that “the housing department's finance team ... will be moving to the financial management services (FMS) department, under the leadership of the finance director, who will take on responsibility for the housing revenue account (HRA).”

Council assembly believes that these decisions, and the subsequent departure of the two most senior managers, constitute the effective dismantling of the housing department.

Council assembly notes that this decision was not taken in consultation with any Southwark tenants and leaseholder representatives, staff trade union representatives, opposition councillors, overview and scrutiny committee members or wider public.

Council notes that the executive did not meet to discuss and ratify these changes. Council further notes that no meeting of the executive has yet taken place to discuss or ratify these proposals.

Council assembly notes the unpublished report produced by PriceWaterhousecoopers into housing management services in Southwark.

Council notes comments reputedly made by senior officers of the council to trade union representatives that the new arrangements are interim

measures but that they 'will be permanent and there is no intention to recruit a new strategic director of housing'.

Council assembly notes section 42 of the member-officer protocol.

Council notes the anger expressed by the dozens of tenants and residents representatives who met on Monday November 13 to discuss their treatment in this matter in the first and only meeting arranged with them in which they were invited to give their views on the matter to councillors.

Council further notes the refusal of the executive member for housing to attend this meeting, and the absence of the leader of the council.

Council assembly believes that it is wholly unacceptable that such an important decision to radically reform housing management services should have been taken without prior consultation. Council assembly believes it is the job of the executive member responsible to ensure that the public are consulted on changes of this magnitude.

Council assembly believes that throughout this process there has been no leadership at member level. This represents a dereliction of duty and mismanagement on a huge scale. The responsibility for this must ultimately lie with the executive member responsible for housing.

Council assembly resolves therefore to censure the executive member for housing management.

Comments of the chief executive

It is regrettable that when the announcement was made on October 30, following the retirement of two members of staff, it was not immediately apparent to everyone that the council had a responsibility to put management arrangements in place that secured staff supervision and service delivery.

On November 27 2006, the chief executive issued a consultation document on strategic management arrangements within the council, including proposals to:

- Change the structure of the corporate management team to build capacity and rationalise service delivery
- Establish a major projects board to oversee large-scale regeneration projects
- Extend the current arrangements for housing repairs and maintenance

The consultation document has been sent directly to elected members, trade union, tenant and leaseholder representatives and other key stakeholders and will be presented to the executive on December 12 2006. Consultation will continue until December 22 2006. The chief executive will collate and analyse the feedback and prepare a report for a special meeting of the executive on January 16 with proposals for final arrangements.

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	Lesley John, Constitutional Officer
Version	Final report
Dated	4.6.06