

Item No. 3.2	Classification: Open	Date: 23 November 2022	Meeting Name: Council Assembly
Report title:		Motion on the Theme: Good quality housing is a human right: the plan for Southwark	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Proper Constitutional Officer	

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The theme for this meeting is Good quality housing is a human right: the plan for Southwark

The relevant cabinet member shall submit a motion on the theme. All other political groups on the council are allowed to submit one amendment to the motion. The cabinet member's motion and the amendments do not need to be seconded. The cabinet member will present the motion to the meeting, followed by the lead opposition spokesperson's response and moving of their amendment, if any. Following this, the subject matter of the theme will be open to debate. Amendment(s) from other opposition groups on the council can be moved during this part of the meeting.

Motion from Councillor Darren Merrill, Cabinet Member for Council Homes and Homelessness, and Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle, Cabinet Member for Community Safety

Good quality housing is a human right: the plan for Southwark

1. Council assembly notes:
 - a. The government's rash economic experiments in recent months, followed up by multiple U-turns have created a confidence crisis and worsened the current economic situation.
 - b. The country faces a cost of living crisis with food bills rising, fuel bills rising wages stagnating, this has created a huge fall in the standard of living.
 - c. The disastrous mini-budget in September mortgage spiked the interest rates, making it harder for people to pay their own mortgage and raised the barrier even higher for first time buyers.
 - d. Private rental costs in London are up a staggering 14% on last year.

- e. Those in private rented accommodation now spend on average 52% of their median monthly income on housing costs.
- f. 1/3 of our residents live in privately rented homes; that is why Southwark Council introduced the Gold Standard Charter (GSC) which is a voluntary scheme that rewards landlords and managing agents who provide a professional level of service and good practice to their tenants in the private rented sector.
- g. Council housing is the way to tackle the housing crisis and that good quality homes change people's lives. That is why, since 2014, Southwark has completed or started on site building of 2,561 new council homes and approved 1,000 more. This is a huge achievement in delivering affordable homes for our residents and Southwark stands out as one of the most prolific council house builders in the last 5 years.
- h. Since 2014-15, the council has been proactive in working with external partners to ensure that social rent homes are delivered as part of every major schemes. This has led, directly, to a net increase of 3,618 approved social rent homes in Southwark.

2. Council assembly believes:

- a. Good quality housing is a human right.
- b. Private rented homes have their place but we believe that social rented homes are the best way to create long term secure housing for residents and good quality social housing can set the standard of housing across both the public and private sector.
- c. Resident involvement is vital to brings residents, leaseholders together to find a way forward in these challenging times.
- d. The rental market is not working; we need a rental system that works for Southwark. Until we have enough affordable homes, we need to control rent levels. Families are being priced out of Southwark and London.

3. Council assembly resolves:

- a. To call for increased regulation in the private rented sector to protect renters and would lobby a future Labour government to introduce these.
- b. Join voices with the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, in calling on the government to grant City Hall powers to set fair limits on private

sector rents rises, a move that City Hall have shown would save families an average of £2,988 during the next two years.

- c. Build 500 homes for keyworkers at rents that nurses and teachers from our local hospitals and schools and other key workers can afford.
- d. Build new council homes for older people, designed so residents can live independently for longer.
- e. Use our planning powers to robustly require new social rent homes in private developments alongside other types of genuinely affordable homes.
- f. Back local people to build genuinely affordable homes, supporting them to establish Community Land Trusts, housing co-operatives and partnerships with faith groups that deliver homes that stay affordable forever.
- g. Launch a Good Lettings Agency that makes it easy for landlords who have empty homes to let them at affordable rents to essential workers, homeless families and refugees
- h. Guarantee support to everyone who is on the street in Southwark to access a home of their own and campaign for the government action needed to end rough sleeping for good.
- i. Roll out more protections and support for private renters, extending the council's licensing scheme so landlords have to meet higher standards
- j. Fund free advice services so support is there if your landlord is acting unfairly.
- k. Improve services for council tenants and leaseholders. Strengthening our Great Estates Guarantee and ensuring repairs to council homes are done right first time.
- l. Take a zero tolerance approach to rogue landlords and empty homes, using all the powers available to the council to tackle the worst offenders and campaigning for the resources and powers to bring more long-term empty homes back into use.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Cabinet members Motion	Constitutional Team 160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Constitutional Team Constitutional.Team@southwark.gov.uk

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Chidilim Agada, Head of Constitutional Services
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