

Item No. 5.2	Classification: Open	Date: 23 November 2022	Meeting Name: Council Assembly
Report title:		Members' Motions	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Proper Constitutional Officer	

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The councillor introducing or “moving” the motion may make a speech directed to the matter under discussion. This may not exceed five minutes¹. A second councillor 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 debate the issue and any amendments on the motion will be dealt with. At the end of the debate the mover of the motion may make a concluding speech, known as 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 councillors 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 allocates to the cabinet responsibility for developing and implementing the budget and policy framework and overseeing the running of council services on a day-to-day basis. Therefore, any matters that are reserved to the cabinet (i.e. housing, social services, regeneration, environment, education etc.) cannot be decided upon by council assembly without prior reference to the cabinet. While it would be in order for council assembly to discuss an issue, consideration of any of the following should be referred to the cabinet:

- 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 2.10 (7) & (8) (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 Council assembly procedure rule 1.14 (9)

1. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR JOHN BATTESON (Seconded by Councillor Esme Hicks)

Council funding crisis: We need a general election now

1. Council assembly notes:
 - a. Local councils and public services have faced 12 years of damaging cuts imposed by the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Governments since 2010.
 - b. £142 million has already been cut from Southwark's government grant funding since 2010. This represents 63% of our central funding, which must be made up from other sources.
 - c. During that time we have taken incredibly difficult decisions to ensure we can deliver our core services to our residents.
 - d. While global factors have contributed to the inflation crisis, the Conservative government's decision, particularly the fallout from the chaotic 'mini budget', have hugely damaged the economic stability in the United Kingdom.
 - e. Paul Sculley MP's comments at the Conservative party conference suggesting there 'there was still fat to trim' regarding council budgets is disgraceful, and show how detached the Conservative Party are from the realities of delivering public services.
 - f. The new Chancellor (Jeremy Hunt at the time of writing) was a high profile cabinet member in the Conservative/Liberal Democrat government responsible for the destructive austerity programme that hugely damaged the nation's public services.
 - g. Councillor Kieron Williams wrote to the Chancellor on 21 October 2022 outlining extreme concerns over the impact of further cuts to local government funding.
2. Council assembly believes:
 - a. Ordinary working people must not be made to pay for the failed economic game playing of the chaotic Conservative Party, who are now onto their third Prime Minister in a matter of months.
 - b. The current economic crisis cannot be solved by a return to even harsher austerity measures that we saw introduced by the Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition governments since 2010.

- c. Further reduction in local government funding will mean that we simply cannot deliver vital services; there is nothing left to cut.
- d. Rishi Sunak has no mandate and no idea what working people need. We need a general election now so the public get a say on the future of Britain – and the chance for a fresh start with a competent and responsible Labour government in touch with the needs of working people.

3. Council assembly resolves to:

- a. Renew calls on the new Prime Minister and Chancellor to not make working people pay for the mistakes made by the government. The funding gap must be filled by progressive means.
- b. Make every effort to protect our residents and work to deliver vital services even in the face of the public spending cuts the Chancellor announced on Monday 17 November 2022.
- c. Continue to call for an immediate general election so that the country can decide its priorities.

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

2. **MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID WATSON (Seconded by Councillor Nick Johnson)**

Councils for Proportional Representation

1. Council assembly notes that:

- a. First Past the Post (FPTP) originated when land-owning aristocrats dominated parliament and voting was restricted to property-owning men.
- b. In Europe, only the UK and authoritarian Belarus still use archaic single-round FPTP for general elections. Meanwhile, internationally, Proportional Representation (PR) is used to elect parliaments in more than 80 countries. Those countries tend to be more equal, freer and greener.
- c. PR ensures all votes count, have equal value, and those seats won match votes cast.

- d. Under PR, MPs and Parliaments better reflect the age, gender and protected characteristics of local communities and the nation.
- e. MPs better reflecting their communities leads to improved decision-making, wider participation and increased levels of ownership of decisions taken.
- f. PR would also end minority rule. In 2019, 43.6% of the vote produced a government with 56.2% of the seats and 100% of the power. PR also prevents 'wrong winner' elections such as occurred in 1951 and February 1974.
- g. PR is already used to elect the parliaments and assemblies of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. So why not Westminster?

2. Council therefore resolves to:

- a. Write to H.M. Government calling for a change in our outdated electoral laws to enable Proportional Representation to be used for general elections.

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

3. **MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR JASON OCHERE (Seconded by Councillor Chloe Tomlinson)**

Free school meals for all primary school children

1. Council assembly notes:

- a. Currently 3.9 million children in the UK – or 8 pupils in every class of 30 – are growing up trapped in poverty.
- b. Southwark Labour committed to providing Free Healthy School Meals (FHSMs) to all primary school children in Southwark in 2010 with the policy being successfully rolled out from 2011. The Labour administration have maintained this policy over the last decade and the policy was recommitted to in the 2022 Southwark Labour manifesto.
- c. In July 2019, Southwark Labour introduced Free Healthy Nursery Meals (FHNMs) for school nursery classes and maintained nursery schools. Evidence shows that the best time for setting healthy behaviours is during the early years, and we rightly recognised that FHNMs, just like FHSMs, could address food insecurity and reduce costs for parents and carers.

- d. These policies have been warmly welcomed by families the length of Southwark even before the current cost of living crisis.
- e. We know that as the cost of living crisis spirals and more and more families reliant on food banks, FHSMs will become an even more highly valuable form of support.
- f. Without urgent and immediate action, an additional 1.3 million adults and 500,000 children will be pushed into poverty next year.
- g. Over eight in ten of respondents to a recent National Education Union survey told us that their students demonstrated fatigue (87%) and an inability to concentrate (81%) as a result of poverty. Almost three-quarters said their students were unable to complete homework and more than half said students had experienced hunger (57%) or ill health (55%).
- h. By age 11, only around three quarters of children from the poorest fifth of families reach the government's expected level at Key Stage 2, compared to 97% of children from the richest fifth.
- i. In April 2022, 7.3 million adults lived in households that said they had gone without food or could not physically get it in the past month, which includes 2.6 million children.
- j. 800,000 pupils who are living in poverty are not receiving Free School Meals.
- k. Last year saw the largest increase in obesity rates in both reception-aged and year 6 schoolchildren in a decade. Obesity rates amongst reception-aged and year 6 children rose by 4.5% to 14.4% and 25.5% respectively.
- l. Rolling out Free School Meals to all children in primary school nationally would represent an £850 million investment in our children's futures.

2. Council assembly commits to:

- a. Continue to invest the quality of our Free School Meals so that every parent knows that their child will be able to enjoy a healthy meal every day they are at school.
- b. Extend holiday meals for children on Free School Meals up until Easter 2023, in order to provide relief for families facing the worst cost of living crisis in a generation.
- c. Write to all Southwark secondary schools, highlighting the research undertaken by the Child Poverty Action Group 'Cost of the School

Day' project and ask them whether their students eligible for Free School Meals can use their allowance at any time throughout the school day, and whether any unspent money is rolled over so that students can use this credit on the following or any subsequent day.

- d. Work with other councils across the country to lobby the government to bring in free healthy, school meals for every primary school child, as part of the current national campaign run by the National Education Union.

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

4. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR VICTOR CHAMBERLAIN (Seconded by Councillor Adam Hood)

Hot Meals for Every Household

1. Council assembly notes that:
 - a. The cost of living emergency is going to leave thousands in our borough struggling to afford to feed themselves and their families this winter.
 - b. In October, the Food Foundation released data showing that [one in four household with children \(25.8%\) have experienced food insecurity in the past month affecting an estimated 4 million children in the UK.](#)
 - c. The rising costs of energy and food will force families to choose between heating and eating.
 - d. 91% of food banks across the country have seen an increase in demand since July this year while the cost of a single food parcel has gone up by as much as £19. Food banks or community kitchens will need more support if they are to continue providing food for vulnerable people.
 - e. With a government in perpetual crisis, the council must step in wherever it can to provide hot, healthy meals for residents with radical and innovative policies.
2. Council assembly welcomes that:
 - a. Southwark has shown a commendable commitment to tackling food poverty.
 - b. During covid, the council distributed over £500,000 in emergency funding to organisations providing food to vulnerable people.

- c. In March 2022, our council unanimously committed to support the right to food campaign.
- d. Southwark offers universal free school meals for all primary school age children.
- e. In July, the council, following a campaign from the Liberal Democrat opposition, extended free school meals over the school holidays.

3. Council assembly further notes that:

- a. There is no reason we should not afford children aged 11-16, and their families, the same support we provide to primary school aged children.
- b. Southwark had a meals on wheels service which provided hot meals to vulnerable residents, but it was ended in 2015.
- c. Charities providing food for vulnerable people throughout the borough will see their costs rise. The council must take the same approach it did during covid, providing emergency financial support to ensure residents can still access these vital services.
- d. The council must, where possible, find policies that simultaneously save residents money on their energy bills and help them feed themselves and their families;
 - i. Slow cookers allow people to cook healthy meals whilst costing an average of £300 less per year than an electric oven.
 - ii. Many other councils have distributed slow cookers to vulnerable residents during covid and during the current cost of living crisis to help households cook healthy meals and save costs.

4. Council assembly resolves to:

- a. Expand universal free school meals to all secondary school pupils in Southwark.
- b. Work in partnership with Southwark schools to guarantee that free school meals will be extended over every school holiday.
- c. Identify and provide emergency funding to any organisation providing food to vulnerable people in Southwark.
- d. Restore the meals on wheels service for vulnerable residents in the borough.

- e. Work with local charities to purchase and distribute slow cookers to vulnerable residents in Southwark.

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

5. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR JOSEPH VAMBE (Seconded by Councillor Cassandra Brown)

Care leaver as a protected characteristic

1. Council assembly notes:
 - a. Care experienced people face significant barriers that impact them throughout their lives;
 - b. Despite the resilience of many care experienced people, society too often does not take their needs into account;
 - c. Care experienced people often face discrimination and stigma across housing, health, education, relationships, employment and in the criminal justice system;
 - d. Care experienced people often face a postcode lottery of support;
 - e. As corporate parents, councillors have a collective responsibility for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for the children who are looked after by us as an authority;
 - f. All corporate parents should commit to acting as mentors, hearing the voices of looked after children and young people, and considering their needs in any aspect of council work;
 - g. Councillors should be champions of our looked after children and challenge the negative attitudes and prejudice that exists in all aspects of society;
 - h. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires public bodies, such as councils, to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation of people with protected characteristics;
 - i. In March 2021 the Independent Review into Children's Social Care began its work.
2. Council assembly believes that:

- a. Care experienced people are an oppressed group who face discrimination;
 - b. Councils have a duty to put the needs of oppressed people at the heart of decision-making through co-production and collaboration;
 - c. Services and policies should be assessed through Equality Impact Assessments to determine the impact of changes on people with care experience.
3. Council assembly resolves:
- a. To formally support the Show Us You Care Too campaign which calls for care experience to be made a protected characteristic as part of the Independent Review into Children’s Social Care;
 - b. For the council to proactively seek out and listen to the voices of care experienced people when developing new policies based on their views;
 - c. To continue to build on the existing ring-fenced apprenticeship opportunities for care experienced people by committing to an agreed number of apprenticeships places each year delivered through the council’s levy funding;
 - d. To take an intersectional approach and commit to tackling the systemic discrimination and disproportionality faced by specific groups of care experienced people.

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

6. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR RACHEL BENTLEY (Seconded by Councillor Graham Neale)

Free Period Products in Southwark Council Buildings

1. Council Assembly notes that:
 - a. In June 2022, a Plan International UK survey found that nearly one in four girls in London were unable to afford period products since the start of the year, which was higher than the national rate.
 - b. The charity found that girls across the country were cutting down on food and school spending in order to afford period products.
 - c. Scotland was the first country in the world to make period products free for all.

- d. Surrey County and Oxford City Council have both set up or agreed to schemes to provide free period products.
2. Council Assembly believes that:
- a. No-one should experience period poverty.
3. Council Assembly resolves to:
- a. Provide free period products in all of the council's public toilets and buildings including the town hall, libraries and community centres. This would include all female, male, disabled and gender-neutral toilets.
 - b. Where possible, provide sustainable period products for free.
 - c. Ensure there are sanitary waste bins in all of the council's toilets.
 - d. Regularly communicate to residents that free period products are available in council property.
 - e. Monitor whether state-maintained schools and education institutions in Southwark participate in the UK government's period product scheme.
 - f. Call for the UK government to make period products free and available to all who need them.

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

7. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR SAM FOSTER (Seconded by Councillor Laura Johnson)

Supporting insourcing of cleaning staff at our anchor institutions including University of the Arts London (UAL)

1. Council assembly notes:
- a. One of our Council Delivery Plan commitments is to “Deliver a major public awareness campaign to make sure Southwark residents know their rights at work and the benefits of trade union membership”
 - b. Many universities and public sector employers are now insourcing cleaners and other auxiliary staff. Keeping staff in-house is shown to be more cost-effective, representing better value for tax-payer money and providing better forms of employment to workers.

- c. UAL is a valuable part of our community. Ranked as second in the world for art and design, the University provides world-class creative education and enriches students, residents, visitors, businesses, and local stakeholders with public exhibitions and local partnerships.
- d. UAL currently outsources its cleaning contract and the UAL cleaning staff are currently engaged in an ongoing industrial dispute with UAL about this, including a pending strike ballot for an all-out strike.
- e. Some of the benefits of a directly employed workforce include:
 - Sick pay and pension
 - Trade Union recognition
 - Protection against dismissal, harassment and unsafe working conditions.
 - Equalities relating to race, sex and nationality.

2. Council assembly believes:

- a. Insourcing can help create more careers and jobs within Southwark's big employers for local residents, including in our council, NHS, big businesses and universities
- b. The benefits of insourcing include commitments to the wellbeing and prosperity of all of an organisations staff, including the eradication of discrimination and inequality among the workforce.
- c. Many universities and public sector employers are now insourcing cleaners and other auxiliary staff. Keeping staff in-house is shown to be more cost-effective, representing better value for tax-payer money and providing better forms of employment to workers engaged in notoriously unregulated sectors such as commercial facilities management.
- d. Insourcing should always be the first consideration when procuring services and services should always be insourced where it is possible to do so.

3. Council assembly resolves:

- a. To encourage the President and Vice-Chancellor of UAL to directly employ cleaners currently outsourced on the same terms and conditions as other staff
- b. To support the aims of UAL: End Outsourcing and the unions representing outsourced cleaners
- c. To support and campaign for an end to outsourcing of staff at anchor institutions and public bodies within the borough

- d. To ask the Council's Cabinet to continue the successful work the council has been taking forward to bring council services back in house, publicly reporting progress every year.

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

8. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR BETHAN ROBERTS (Seconded by Councillor Jane Salmon)

The Home Office and the unacceptable backlog of visa cases

1. Council assembly notes:
 - a. The unacceptable backlog of Home Office visa cases where people living in this country are kept in a state of limbo for years at a time, unable to work and move on with their lives.
 - b. For example, the case of a Rotherhithe resident who is being threatened with deportation after more than eleven years in London, and being hailed locally as a 'lockdown hero' for his extensive work ensuring vulnerable people had access to food during the pandemic.
 - c. The dreadful No Recourse to Public Funds policy, which prevents those affected by the policy from working or claiming support as needed, often leading to poverty and destitution
 - d. The maladministration of the Home Office under Suella Braverman, and her predecessor Priti Patel, which continues to cause misery to thousands of people under the government's inhumane hostile environment policy.
2. Council assembly resolves:
 - a. To call on the government to resolve the unacceptable backlog of visa cases, including that of local residents.
 - b. To call on the government to immediately end the dreadful No Resource to Public Funds policy, so that those affected by this policy in Southwark and across the country are able to work and claim support as required.
 - c. To oppose the hostile environment policies and to campaign for a general election now, so that the Home Office can be brought under control of a new government with human rights and humane policies at its core.

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

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Member Motions	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
Report Author	Virginia Wynn-Jones, Principal Constitutional Officer
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