

<b>Item No.</b> 5.2	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 22 March 2023	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Council Assembly
<b>Report title:</b>		Members' Motions	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		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 minutes<sup>1</sup>. 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.

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<sup>1</sup> Council assembly procedure rule 1.14 (9)

**1. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR VICTOR CHAMBERLAIN (Seconded by Councillor Emily Tester)**

**Tackling Second Homes with Council Tax Premiums**

1. Council assembly notes that:
  - a. The UK is in the midst of a housing crisis.
  - b. As of 1 February 2023, Southwark had 17,509 residents on the housing waiting list.
  - c. While thousands in our borough wait years for decent accommodation, those with means continue to buy up properties, reducing the housing supply even further and exacerbating housing inequality.
  - d. To the detriment of ordinary residents, Southwark has become fertile ground for the development of ‘investment properties’ – destined to be second homes for, or left empty by, the lucky few who can afford them.
  - e. British Land is advertising ‘The Founding’ in Canada Water as “the next big thing for investors eyeing residential property in London” at expos in China and Singapore. This is a flagrant insult to the thousands in our Borough who cannot find a decent home.
  - f. Central government and local authorities must do what they can to discourage the ownership of second homes and, in turn, the cynical prioritisation of ‘investment properties’ over affordable homes by developers.
2. Council assembly further notes that:
  - a. Councils will be granted additional powers by central government to tackle second homes.
  - b. Clauses 73 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill will allow councils to charge an additional 100% council tax premium on second homes.
  - c. These additional powers will discourage purchase of second homes and bring in additional revenue for the council.
  - d. Southwark must ensure residents now that it will use these new powers to the full effect as soon as they are implementable.
3. Council assembly resolves to:

- a. Implement the full council tax premium for second homes (as outlined in clause 73 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill) as soon as it is legally permitted.
- b. Use any additional revenue from the premium to improve customer services for residents in council properties who are facing a crisis of disrepair.
- c. Lobby central government to introduce further legislation allowing councils to impose higher council tax premiums on empty and second homes.

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

**2. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR STEPHANIE CRYAN (Seconded by Councillor Natasha Ennin)**

**This Council commits to being a Diverse Council**

1. Council Assembly notes:
  - a. Councillors represent their community and it is important that they reflect the diversity within their communities, particularly those with protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation).
  - b. Diversity in representation makes for good decision making.
  - c. The work of Baroness Debbie Wilcox of Newport and the Co-operative Party in developing a Declaration for councils aimed at increasing diversity in local government.
  - d. The council has already adopted a parental leave policy setting out members' entitlement to maternity, paternity, shared parental and adoption leave and relevant allowances.
2. This Council resolves to:
  - a. Provide a clear public commitment to improving diversity in democracy by signing up to the Co-operative Party's Diverse Councils Declaration.
  - b. Demonstrate an open and welcoming culture to all, promoting the highest standards of behaviour and conduct.
  - c. Set out a local Diverse Council Action Plan ahead of the next local elections. Including:

- i. Encourage each political group to appoint Diversity Ambassadors to work with each other and local party associations to encourage recruitment of candidates from under-represented groups.
  - ii. Encourage and enable people from under-represented groups to stand for office through the provision of activities such as mentoring and shadowing programmes and information and learning events for people interested in standing as official candidates.
  - iii. Proactive engagement and involvement with local community groups and partner organisations supporting and representing under-represented groups
  - iv. Encourage each political group to ensure that all members and candidates complete a candidates' and councillors' survey distributed at election time.
  - v. Encourage each political group to set ambitious targets for candidates from under-represented groups at the next local elections.
- d. Work towards the standards for member support and development as set out in the LGA Councillor Development Charter and/or Charter Plus.
- e. Demonstrate a commitment to a duty of care for councillors by:
- i. providing access to counselling services for all councillors having regard for the safety and wellbeing of councillors whenever they are performing their role as councillors.
  - ii. taking a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment of members including through social networks.
- f. Provide flexibility in council business by:
- i. regularly reviewing and staggering meeting times
  - ii. encouraging and supporting remote attendance at meetings, where physical attendance is not a legal requirement
  - iii. agreeing recess periods to support councillors with caring or work commitments.
- g. Encourage all members take up the allowances and salaries to which they are entitled, particularly any reimbursement for costs of

care, so that all members receive fair remuneration for their work and that the role of member is not limited to those who can afford it.

- h. Ensure that councillors from under-represented groups are represented whenever possible in high profile, high influence roles.

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

### **3. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR ADAM HOOD (Seconded by Councillor Irina von Wiese)**

#### **One year on, Southwark stands with Ukraine**

1. Council assembly notes that:
  - a. On 24 February 2022, Vladimir Putin commenced his illegal invasion of the sovereign state of Ukraine.
  - b. Within this unprecedented humanitarian crisis, over 8,000 people have died and more than 8,000,000 have been forced to flee their country as refugees.
  - c. The whole United Kingdom, from local authorities to central government, must continue to stand in unwavering support of Ukraine and in explicit condemnation of Vladimir Putin's illegal invasion.
2. Council assembly welcomes that:
  - a. One year ago, a cross-party motion expressed Southwark's support for Ukraine in the face of Russian aggression.
  - b. Southwark is a borough of sanctuary for refugees and has welcomed over 450 refugees since the invasion began.
3. Council assembly further notes that:
  - a. Southwark's public support for Ukraine is undermined by its continued use of Veolia as its main waste contract partner.
  - b. Veolia has continued to operate in Russia while receiving over £100m in British taxpayer money through government, NHS and local government contracts.
  - c. The Ukrainian Foreign Ministry named Veolia as one of the 50 international companies that are still operating in Russia and funding Russian war crimes.
4. Council assembly resolves to:

- a. Inform Veolia that, if it does not immediately cease all operations in Russia, Southwark Council may begin the process of finding a new waste management partner for the borough.
- b. Unilaterally condemn, on behalf of all elected members of Southwark Council, the cruel, criminal and unprovoked aggression of Vladimir Putin and Russia against Ukraine.

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

**4. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR ANDY SIMMONS (Seconded by Councillor Portia Mwangangye)**

**RSPCA: Pets as Prizes**

1. This Council:
  - a. Is concerned about the number of cases reported to the RSPCA each year, regarding pets given as prizes via fairgrounds, social media and other channels in England - and notes the issue predominantly concerns goldfish.
  - b. Is concerned for the welfare of those animals that are being given as prizes.
  - c. Recognises that many cases of pets being given as prizes may go unreported each year.
  - d. Supports a move to ban the giving of live animals as prizes, in any form, in Southwark.
2. The Council agrees to:
  - a. Ban outright the giving of live animals as prizes, in any form, on Southwark land.
  - b. Write to the UK Government, urging an outright ban on the giving of live animals as prizes on both public and private land.

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

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

**Local Climate Action Bonds for Southwark**

1. Council assembly notes that:

- a. Southwark Council must prioritise tackling the climate emergency, dedicating sufficient funding and investment in positive policies that reduce emissions, improve air quality and promote biodiversity protection in Southwark and across the globe.
- b. The Southwark Citizen's Jury on Climate showed us all the pivotal role the local community can and must take in the council's climate strategy.
- c. Launching a 'Local Climate Action Bond' scheme can further democratise Southwark's approach to tackling the climate emergency.
- d. A Local Climate Action Bond is a type of Community Municipal Investment that allows residents, from Southwark or elsewhere, to invest their money in specific income generating projects that benefit the local community and have a positive climate impact.
- e. Investors can choose to give back the interest on their investments to fund smaller, non-income generating projects such as wildflower meadows.

2. Council assembly further notes that:

- a. The UK's first Community Municipal Investment in West Berkshire raised £1m which was used in part to fund solar panel installation on public buildings.
- b. Neighbouring Lewisham has just launched its own Climate Action Bond, aiming to raise £1m for local climate initiatives.
- c. Islington, Camden and local authorities around the UK have funded similar projects through launching Community Municipal Investment using the 'Abundance Investment' platform.

3. Council assembly resolves to:

- a. Launch Southwark's own Local Climate Action Bond through the Abundance Investment platform or a similar platform.
- b. Using multi-ward forums, consult with residents to determine which projects would bring the most benefit to each local community.
- c. Reinvest any returned interest in socially and environmentally positive schemes around Southwark.

**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 <a href="mailto:Constitutional.Team@southwark.gov.uk">Constitutional.Team@southwark.gov.uk</a>

## AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Chidilim Agada, Head of Constitutional Services
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