

Item No. 24.	Classification: Open	Date: 13 June 2023	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Motions Referred from Council Assembly	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Council Assembly	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the cabinet considers the motions set out in the appendices attached to the report.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. Council assembly at its meeting on 22 March 2023 agreed several motions and these stand referred to the cabinet for consideration.
3. The cabinet is requested to consider the motions referred to it. Any proposals in a motion are treated as a recommendation only. When considering a motion, cabinet can decide to:
 - Note the motion; *or*
 - Agree the motion in its entirety, *or*
 - Amend the motion; *or*
 - Reject the motion.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

4. In accordance with council assembly procedure rule 2.10.6, the attached motions were referred to the cabinet.
5. The constitution allocates responsibility for particular functions to council assembly, including approving the budget and policy framework, and to the cabinet for developing and implementing the budget and policy framework and overseeing the running of council services on a day-to-day basis.
6. Any key issues, such as policy, community impact or funding implications are included in the advice from the relevant chief officer.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Council agenda	Report on the council's website	Virginia Wynn-Jones Constitutional Team 020 7525 7055
Link: Agenda for Council Assembly on Wednesday 22 March 2023, 7.00 pm - Southwark Council		

APPENDICES

Number	Title
Appendix 1	Safer Southwark Communities
Appendix 2	Tackling Second Homes with Council Tax Premiums
Appendix 3	This Council commits to being a Diverse Council
Appendix 4	One year on, Southwark stands with Ukraine
Appendix 5	RSPCA: Pets as Prizes
Appendix 6	Southwark green finance

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Chidilim Agada, Head of Constitutional and Member Services	
Report Author	Virginia Wynn-Jones, Principal Constitutional Officer	
Version	Final	
Dated	15 May 2023	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments sought	Comments included
Strategic Director of Finance	No	No
Assistant Chief Executive – Governance and Assurance	No	No
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	15 May 2023	

Safer Southwark Communities

1. This council notes:
 - a. That Southwark Council thanks Baroness Casey for her independent review into the standards of behaviour and internal culture of the Metropolitan Police Service ('the Met').
 - b. Southwark residents and all Londoners expect and deserve a police service they can trust, not fear, which responds to the needs of the communities it serves and is accountable to the community for the decisions it makes. The fundamental principle of policing by consent requires the Met to both earn and maintain this public trust in everything it does.
 - c. We are therefore appalled by the findings of the review, including the finding of institutional racism, sexism, misogyny and homophobia in the Met and the failure to implement much needed operational, cultural and systemic change, despite numerous opportunities to do so over several decades.
 - d. Our community have been let down by a longstanding failure within the Met to fully accept that policing can also attract predators and bullies. The Met needs to be alive to this very serious risk. It needs to keep them out when they try to get in, to root them out where they exist, and to guard against the corrosive effects that their actions have on trust, confidence and the fundamental Peelian principles of policing by consent.
 - e. We are deeply concerned that our residents' trust and confidence in the Met has fallen even more than in other areas of London. Trust and confidence in the Met fell by 10% in Southwark in the last year alone. Less than half of Southwark residents feel the Met is doing a "good job". Our borough had the lowest number of residents in London who felt well informed about the activity of their local police. People from Black and mixed ethnic groups have the lowest trust and confidence in the Met of all racial groups.
 - f. We welcome the fact that the new Met Commissioner has committed to major reform of the Met and to rebuild Londoners' confidence in their Police Service.
 - g. However to rebuild trust and confidence in the police the Metropolitan Police Service must go further and must follow the full recommendations of the Casey report and work with our communities and the council in a genuine and meaningful way to deliver them.

- h. Southwark Council has written to Sir Mark Rowley, to seek a joint meeting with our basic command unit (BCU) partners, Lambeth Council, to discuss how these vital changes can best be taken forward in our two boroughs.
- i. The failures highlighted in the Casey review are overwhelmingly due to a longstanding failure of culture within the force. However, the review also highlights that government cuts to funding for the Met have exacerbated some problems, putting children and women in particular at greater risk and leading to a situation where London no longer has a functioning neighbourhood policing service.

2. This council resolves to:

- a. Send a joint letter from all Southwark councillors calling on the Met to fully implement the recommendations Baroness Casey has set out in her report
- b. Ask the Leader and Cabinet to:
 - i. Consistently and constructively challenge the Met to work with our community and especially women, Black, Asian, minority ethnic, young people and LGBTQ+ residents to restore trust and confidence in policing
 - ii. Maintain and strengthen the work of the Youth Independent Advisory Group – young people who train Met officers on the fair and respectful use of stop and search – and the work of our pilot Police Encounter Panels, who review body worn video footage.
 - iii. Build on the work of the Youth Independent Advisory Group, to create the opportunity for other groups to review and challenge policing practices constructively including work with our women and our Black, Asian, minority ethnic and LGBTQ+ communities.
 - iv. Write to the Home Secretary asking her to urgently take action to amend the law so that failing police officers can be dismissed where needed.
 - v. Work with colleagues in London Councils, as well as with our local London Assembly Member, Marina Ahmad, to challenge and support the Met to deliver these vital reforms.
- c. Request that the council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny commission consider how they can proactively work with our community to hold the Met to account for their progress against Baroness Casey's recommendations, and use the full powers of Southwark's Overview and Scrutiny function to summon relevant senior members of the

Metropolitan Police Service to give regular updates on progress made in relation to implementing the recommendations of Baroness Casey's report.

- d. Campaign with other local authorities and the Greater London Authority (GLA) to fully reverse the government's damaging police cuts.

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. This is a national issue, and we as a council are determined to tackle it. Figures compiled by London Councils suggest there are currently 166,000 homeless Londoners living in temporary accommodation within the capital. Out of these, 81,000 are children, meaning one in every 23 children in London is homeless.
 - 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, London 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. In response, Cabinet approved the Southwark Empty Homes Action Plan in October 2021 to bring empty homes back into use and increase the supply of homes for homeless households in Southwark.
 - e. Our two best means to tackle the housing crisis are through our own council home delivery programme and through the planning process. Since 2010, Southwark has delivered, or started on site, 3,020 new council homes. Through the planning process, we demand at least 25% social housing in all new developments, as part of our overall commitment to 35% affordable housing, and this target has been exceeded in every quarter this year.
 - f. Southwark has one of the most clear and direct requirements for private developers, to ensure they build social rent homes, and since 2010 this had led directly to 5,024 new social rent homes being delivered or under construction in Southwark.
 - g. Investment properties contribute the housing crisis. The council welcome the work already done to encourage developers to market new homes locally first, and the work to encourage developers in signing up to the Mayor of London's initiative to offer Londoners 'first dibs' on new homes in the capital.
 - h. These are important steps, and more robust legislation is needed from central government to make it easier for local authorities to ensure that house builders market locally first.

- i. However, local authorities like Southwark cannot tackle the housing crisis alone. We need action from central government. Instead, the housing crisis has been made worse by 12 years of government failure. Notably, in 2010 the Liberal Democrat and Conservative coalition slashed funding for subsidised housing by 60%.
- j. By contrast, the Labour Party has committed to building a “new generation of council housing.” Under a Labour government, the country would deliver more than 400,000 social homes, by building and bringing homes back into the ownership of local councils and communities.

2. Council assembly further notes that:

- a. The council currently applies the maximum allowable premium on council tax for empty homes.
- b. Thanks to lobbying from the Labour Party and local government, councils will be granted additional powers by central government to tackle second homes.
- c. Clauses 73 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill will allow councils to charge an additional 100% council tax premium on second homes.
- d. These additional powers will discourage purchase of second homes and bring in additional revenue for the council.
- e. Southwark must ensure residents now that it will use these new powers to the full effect as soon as they are implementable.
- f. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill does not go far enough in granting new powers to local authorities. The council has been lobbying for additional powers to tackle empty homes and to simplify the existing powers to make them easier and cheaper to use, such as empty dwelling management orders (EDMO) and compulsory purchase orders (CPO).
- g. Thanks to lobbying and campaigning from the Labour Party, there has been some movement from the government on this issue, with potential changes to the application of council tax premiums to empty but substantially furnished properties, and potentially reducing the vacant period to one year from two before a premium can be applied. The council will continue to push for these new powers as the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill progresses.
- h. Further powers are needed to tackle this issue. The government must introduce:

- i. Simpler, swifter and more cost effective enforcement powers, such as simplifying EDMO and CPO procedures and allowing for community impact and housing need to be accepted reasons to seek enforcement actions.
 - ii. New planning powers to allow local authorities to revert property to local authority's affordable housing supply where it remains empty following completion. Current planning powers do not allow for planning consent to require homes to be occupied. If new powers are introduced the council would quickly implement these new powers.
 - iii. Greater flexibility over council tax premiums on empty homes – government should allow unlimited council tax premiums on empty homes and greater flexibility to enable local authorities to charge the premium on homes empty for less than 2 years. We will also seek further flexibilities to charge premiums on second homes and other furnished empty properties.
 - iv. Increased resources for grants and loans
- i. The current council tax receipt revenue is all allocated into the general fund, and is assigned to spending that was agreed by the Labour group and the Liberal Democrat group of councillors at last month's budget and council tax setting Council Assembly.

3. Council assembly resolves to:

- a. Continue to charge the highest possible rates of council tax on empty homes and second homes, and continue to lobby for the inclusions of clause 73 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill.
- b. Carefully consider how best to use any additional revenue from the premium to improve the lives of Southwark residents and to tackle the housing crisis.
- c. Lobby central government to introduce further legislation allowing councils to impose higher council tax premiums on empty and second homes.
- d. Support the election of a Labour Government at the earliest opportunity that would tackle the housing crisis through an expansion of council houses, and has committed to building a "new generation of council housing" and tackle the housing crisis.

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.

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 nearly 500 refugees since the invasion began
 - c. Southwark council provides tailored support to refugee's living in Southwark; providing regular welfare checks for guests, help with school places for children, registering with GPs, advice and support as needed on employment, benefits, access to housing in the PRS, opening bank account, referrals to other agencies for support where that is required including health and mental health.
 - d. Southwark Council also support refugee families with any other integration support that is needed, deal with any safeguarding issues that arise, arrange emergency financial support prior to people accessing benefits or employment, deliver support in finding new hosts or moves into other forms of accommodation where relationships with the original host do not work out. Alongside this, every individual or family has a named caseworker.
 - e. The Council is fully supporting host families in Southwark, ensuring quality accommodation and supporting families to make any changes needed, making thank you payments to hosts of £350 per month, and offering advice and support as required to hosts through the named caseworkers.

3. Council assembly further notes that:
 - a. Southwark council fully supports and carefully observes the economic sanctions brought against the Russian federation following its brutal invasion of Ukraine.

4. Council assembly resolves to:
 - a. Continue to support and carefully observe the economic sanctions brought against the Russian federation following its brutal invasion of Ukraine.
 2. Unilaterally condemn, on behalf of all elected members of Southwark Council, the cruel, criminal and unprovoked aggression of Vladimir Putin and Russia against Ukraine.

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.
 - a. Write to the UK Government, urging an outright ban on the giving of live animals as prizes on both public and private land.

Southwark green finance

1. Council assembly notes that:
 - a. The commitment to 'launch Southwark Green Finance, to create new ways for local people and businesses to invest in making our borough net zero and expanding community energy' was a key commitment in the recent Southwark Labour manifesto. Southwark Green Finance can be a vital part in tackling the climate emergency.
 - b. The council's delivery plan sets out a timeline to scope out this project and consider different options, including climate bonds.
 - c. The Environment and Community Engagement Scrutiny Commission is also considering climate finance this year and will issue recommendations to the council in coming months, based on evidence and testimonials from leading experts.
 - d. 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.
 - e. 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.
 - f. 'Southwark Green Finance' can further engage residents in Southwark's approach to tackling the climate emergency.
 - g. Schemes like 'Southwark Green Finance' will allow 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.
 - h. Investors can choose to give back the interest on their investments to fund smaller, non-income generating projects such as wildflower meadows.
 - i. Our climate change agenda across the whole council is hugely ambitious and we are spending many millions of pounds across every part of the council to tackle the climate emergency. Climate action bonds may play a role in raising the capital for the project, but it is worth noting that a 1 million pound fund would represent a relatively small part of the funding needed to tackle climate change.
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 Labour Council Lewisham has just launched a Climate Action Bond, aiming to raise £1m for local climate initiatives.
- c. Labour-run councils 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 Green Finance' in the next financial year, as a means to use community investment to tackle climate change.
- b. Determine which projects would bring the most benefit to each local community and reduce the most carbon emissions, ensuring decision making is both guided by science and informed by resident consultation via multi-ward forums, Southwark 2030 events and events such as the recent Southwark Climate Day.
- c. Reinvest any returned interest in socially and environmentally positive schemes around Southwark.
- d. Support the election of a Labour Government, at the earliest opportunity that would make Britain a clean energy superpower to create jobs, cut bills and boost energy security with zero-carbon electricity by 2030, accelerating to net zero.