

<b>Item No.</b> 5.2	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 22 November 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 JANE SALMON (Seconded by Councillor Adam Hood)**

**Protect Southwark Parks from Anti-Social Behaviour**

1. Council assembly notes:
  - a. Parks are one of Southwark's most vital public assets, improving the mental and physical wellbeing for residents and providing space for communities to exercise, socialise and connect.
  - b. One of Southwark council's most important responsibilities is to maintain our parks for the benefit of our communities. This work is made easier by the countless volunteers and community groups who help maintain Southwark's parks.
  - c. Anti-social behaviour has become an all too prevalent issue in our parks, turning spaces that should be for community benefit to spaces that locals may avoid.
  - d. Anti-social behaviour in our parks is therefore undermining the benefits that parks bring to communities throughout Southwark.
2. Council assembly accepts:
  - a. The council has comprehensively failed to tackle the issue of anti-social behaviour in parks.
  - b. Efforts carried out by the council, along with the police, have actively made some parks worse and undermined efforts by the community to improve them.
    - i. The reactive and inexplicable removal of table tennis tables and benches on Camberwell Green, leading to widespread ridicule of Southwark Council.
    - ii. The careless destruction of decorative flowers and vegetation in Nursery Row Park, which had been grown by the community and paid for by the council through £10,000 of Cleaner, Greener Safer Funding.
  - c. The council has failed to engage properly with community groups and 'friends of...' organisations, who actively take care of our parks, in their efforts to tackle anti-social behaviour.
  - d. The only real solution to tackling disruptive anti-social behaviour in parks is a consistent visible presence from community wardens and police safer neighbourhood teams using the full extent of the powers available to them.

3. Council assembly resolves to:
  - a. Hold regular meetings with community groups and 'friends of...' groups regarding the tackling of anti-social behaviour in parks.
  - b. Guarantee to never making any changes to parks, such as the removal of vegetation, benches or leisure equipment, without meaningful consultation with relevant local community groups and 'friends of...' groups.
  - c. Hire additional Park Liaison Officers to facilitate a visible presence in parks across Southwark in order to deter anti-social behaviour.
  - d. Direct Park Liaison Officers to use all available powers to disperse groups engaging in anti-social behaviour in parks in order to minimise disruption to local communities.

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

**2. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR LAURA JOHNSON (Seconded by Councillor Bethan Roberts)**

**Homelessness & Rough Sleeping**

1. Council Assembly notes:
  - a. 13 years of government cuts by Conservative and Liberal Democrat governments have left local services for single homeless people with a huge funding gap.
  - b. Between 1997 and 2010, the last Labour Government cut rough sleeping in England by three quarters, to the lowest level on record. Since the Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties came to power in 2010 the number of people sleeping rough in England has more than doubled.
  - c. That rough sleeping in London is on the increase, up 12% on the same time last year.
  - d. That according to the latest figures, homelessness is up by 10%, with nearly 105,000 households in temporary accommodation, in England, last March, the highest number ever recorded.
  - e. The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) covers only 2.3% of properties advertised to rent in London. This is making it harder and harder to secure temporary accommodation in the capital.
  - f. That collectively London Councils are spending £52m every month on temporary accommodation.

- g. That these figures are rapidly worsening as a result of Home Office policies relating to the asylum process, and in particular the decision to give successful applicants just 7 days' notice to quit their accommodation following a positive decision.
- h. That Southwark is seeing a dramatic increase in homelessness applications resulting from Home Office cases, with a tenfold increase observed in the last two months.

2. Council Assembly recognises:

- a. That Southwark Council has a goal to support everyone who is on the street to access a home of their own.
- b. That Southwark is also committed to being a 'Borough of Sanctuary' giving a warm welcome to refugees and assisting with resettlement.
- c. That in 2010, homelessness figures were less than half what they are today, and rough sleeping virtually eliminated, thanks to the focused efforts of the last Labour government
- d. That the Council is continuing to invest in homelessness prevention with family mediation, and has set up 'surgeries' to support refugees with their housing options
- e. That the work of public and voluntary sector partners is vital, including Robes, BEAM, the Manna Centre, Southwark Law Centre, and St Mungo's, in our ambition to end homelessness and rough sleeping
- f. That partnership, innovation and advocacy will all be essential this year as we approach the winter months
- g. Southwark has the largest council house-building programme in the country.
- h. We must build affordable homes in order to end homelessness. That is why since 2014 we have built or started building over 3,000 new council homes. It is also the reason the council works 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 at least 3,600 approved social rent homes in Southwark since 2014 – 2015.

3. Council Assembly resolves:

- a. To write to both the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities, and the Home Secretary, requesting urgent action to

deal with the crisis in rough sleeping and temporary accommodation including:

- i. An immediate increase in the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) so that it covers the bottom 30% of rents in the local area
  - ii. Additional financial support through an increase to the Homelessness Prevention Grant, recognising the additional costs that are falling on local authorities
  - iii. An increase in funding for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) to support residents struggling with rents in a cost of living crisis
  - iv. An urgent review of Home Office policies to prevent refugees, including those who have arrived from Afghanistan and Sudan, becoming homeless.
  - v. A Cross-Departmental Strategy to end homelessness and rough sleeping.
  - vi. A long-term commitment to dramatically increase the number of social rent homes being built across the country, with an increase in dedicated grant to support this.
- b. To request publication of a 'winter plan' bringing together borough-wide efforts to prevent rough sleeping over the coming months
  - c. To develop a new Homelessness Strategy for adoption in 2024 which takes account of the rapidly deteriorating context
  - d. Ask the council to explore every lever available to build and deliver social rent homes in Southwark.
  - e. Continue the work to 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
  - f. Calls on the next Government with a plan to end homelessness, get Britain building again and deliver the biggest boost to affordable housing for a generation.

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

### **3. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR MARIA LINFORTH-HALL (Seconded by Councillor Emily Tester)**

#### **Ending Violence Against Women and Girls**

1. Council assembly notes
  - a. Sexual violence, sexual harassment, and domestic abuse remain endemic in modern society, highlighted most recently by the

appalling murders of Sabina Nessa, Sarah Everard, sisters Bibba Henry and Nicole Smallman, and Elianne Andam.

- b. The distressing statistics that show at least 1 in 4 women have been raped or sexually assaulted as an adult, and that the conviction rate of reported rapes is below 1%.
- c. The Casey review that included a sobering quote from an officer that states that 'you might as well say it's legal in London' in relation to low detection rates of rape and serious sexual assault.
- d. The lived experience of survivors of rape, sexual assault, and domestic violence, unknowable to those who have not gone through it.
- e. The recent consultation conducted by the council last year, and the valuable contributions made by councillors, residents, and organisations.
- f. The existing council strategy, which has a time frame of 2019-2024.
- g. The recommendations made by the Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Commission on this subject, and the Cabinet's subsequent response earlier this year.
- h. The launch of the 'Through Her Eyes' campaign earlier this year.
- i. The cross party, cross-borough initiatives such as the Lambeth and Southwark 'safe havens' network, where 39 premises will function as places of safety and support, with staff receiving specialised training.
- j. The intersectional nature of misogynistic hate crime and violence, including the impact of race, sexuality, and gender identity.

## 2. Council assembly believes

- a. That male violence against women and girls is part of a broader culture of misogyny in society.
- b. More focus should be placed on changing men's behaviour than on women taking action to make themselves safer.
- c. That despite positive work by the council and local charities, more can always be done, and the opportunity to reaffirm a commitment to end violence against women and girls should not be passed.

## 3. Council assembly resolves

- a. To encourage all male councillors to take the White Ribbon pledge: to never use, excuse, or remain silent about men's violence against

women.

- b. To ask officers to produce a report for the Licensing Committee to explore safeguarding processes and initiatives such as 'Ask for Angela' in premises, and how they can be made a mandatory aspect of the licensing process.
- c. To call out all forms of sexual objectification and all its negative outcomes, and encourage others to do the same.
- d. To champion the wellbeing of everyone, particularly of women and girls, and encouraging the education of everyone, particularly of men and boys.
- e. To call for a review of street lighting to see where gaps and dark spots may exist across Southwark and for the improvements recommended in the review to be built into the council's capital programme. Good street lighting will not just help people feel safer, but also make a valuable contribution towards improving their safety.
- f. To have a zero-tolerance approach to misogyny and backs calls for crimes shown to be motivated by misogyny to be regarded as hate crimes and ensure this is meaningful in the workplace and in interactions with residents.

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

#### **4. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR RACHEL BENTLEY (Seconded by Councillor Maria Linforth-Hall)**

##### **Towards a greater provision of Public Toilets**

1. Council assembly notes
  - a. That a lack of clean, accessible public toilets traps people at home and prevents them from getting out and about.
  - b. A 2019 report from the Royal Society of Public Health, which found that one in five experience the 'loo leash' – leaving the house much less often than they would like due to a lack of public or available toilets.
  - c. The findings of a 2022 report from Age UK London, revealing that over half [52%] of respondents reduce the amount they drink before going to some places, and for older residents and many with impairments this can lead to dehydration and serious health consequences.

- d. That toilet strategies provide an important framework for local authorities to coordinate the actions needed to improve public toilet provision locally.
- e. That public toilet provision can feature in the plans of many different council departments and strategies can offer a more joined-up approach for auditing and evaluating current provision, listening to residents, and making decisions based on population needs.
- f. The physical and mental health imperative in adequate provision of public toilets for older residents, women, parents with young children, people with certain health conditions, and others.
- g. The ongoing work of the Southwark Health and Social Care Scrutiny Commission, who are looking into these matters and working on recommendations to formally present to Cabinet next year as part of its normal process.
- h. That despite passing a council motion last year on providing sanitary products and bins in all toilets, there are still council owned public toilets, including in the council's own building, that currently do not.
- i. Specific requirements that people with certain disabilities and conditions have, such as high hygiene standards for those undergoing cancer treatment.
- j. The benefits of Changing Places toilets, of which there are already some in the Borough.
- k. That Community Toilet Schemes are valuable additions to the availability of toilets, but should not be a replacement for general supply of toilets in public spaces.
- l. That whilst public toilets can be sites for antisocial behavior, it would be regressive and pessimistic to not supply toilets on that basis, and other options must be explored first.

2. This council resolves

- a. To devise a Public Toilet Strategy, with a named designated officer responsible for its delivery, in order to improve provision of clean, accessible public toilets across the borough.
- b. To conduct meaningful, inclusive, and ongoing community engagement with a diverse group of residents, as part of this Strategy.
- c. To consider a needs assessment based on mapping existing toilets available for public use, identifying gaps by working with communities and other partners to identify solutions.



- d. To display a map of businesses already signed up to the Community Toilet Scheme on the council Website, as well as the existing public toilets map.
- e. To better signpost the locations of existing public toilets across the borough.
- f. To re-start the programme of actively canvassing local businesses to sign up to the Community Toilet Scheme, including the high visibility stickers that our neighbours in Lambeth provide.
- g. To supply sanitary products and bins in all its public toilets, including in male and non-gender specific toilets.
- h. To write to local organisations who supply public toilets, such as train station operators and current Community Toilet Scheme participants, to urge them to provide the same facilities as in (g).

Sources:

- 'London Loos' - Age UK London (2022)
- London Loos in-focus: Local authorities and toilet strategies – Age UK London (2022)
- 'Taking the P\*\*\*' - Royal Society for Public Health (2019)

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

**5. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR VICTOR CHAMBERLAIN (Seconded by Councillor Irina von Wiese)**

**Southwark Stands with the Trans Community**

1. Council assembly notes:
  - a. Southwark is the proud of home of a large, diverse and thriving LGBTQ+ community.
  - b. Results of the 2021 Census show Southwark to have the fourth largest population of LGB+ people and the fifth largest community of people identifying as trans or non-binary in England.
  - c. This year, Southwark held its first 'Pride in Southwark' event to celebrate the LGBTQ+ community. At this event, the leader of the council and leader of the opposition came together to commit to making Southwark a safer, more equal place for everyone in the LGBTQ+ community.
2. Council assembly notes with concern:

- a. Hate crimes against trans people have increased by 186% in the past five years.
- b. In London, we have seen an increase LGBTQ+ hate crimes, including two violent attacks recently in neighbouring Lambeth.
- c. The Home Office has stated that increased discussion of “transgender issues” could be behind the rise in anti-LGBTQ+ hate crimes.
- d. The consistent attacks on the trans community by prominent members of the Conservative Government, Labour and Conservative MPs, and the media have created a regressive culture of fear for the trans community.
- e. The Labour Party’s decision to U-turn on their 2019 manifesto commitment to introduce self-ID is deeply distressing and worrying for people in the LGTBQ+ community and disappointing from a party that claims to stand for equality.

3. Council assembly resolves to:

- a. Call on national government to consider the de-medicalisation of the self-identification process for trans people.
- b. Produce and implement an LGBTQ+ Strategy in Southwark to address inequalities experienced by LGBTQ+ residents in the borough.
- c. Ensure all staff and individuals dealing with the council are offered the opportunity to be addressed using pronouns with which they are comfortable.
- d. Ensure comprehensive provision of publically accessible gender neutral toilets throughout the borough.
- e. Commit to continuing to give access to facilities such as changing rooms, homeless and domestic violence shelters to trans people based on their identified gender, subject to the same rules that govern any other service user.
- f. Assert, unequivocally, that trans men are men, trans women are women and non-binary genders are valid.

**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

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Chidilim Agada, Head of Constitutional Services
<b>Report Author</b>	Virginia Wynn-Jones, Principal Constitutional Officer
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