

Meeting Name:	Council Assembly
Date:	17 July 2024
Report title:	Members' Motions
Ward(s) or groups affected:	All
Classification:	Open
Reason for lateness (if applicable):	N/A
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, council assembly without prior reference to the cabinet cannot decide upon any matters that are reserved to the cabinet (i.e. housing, social services, regeneration, environment, education etc.) 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.

¹ Council assembly procedure rule 1.14 (9)

Note: In accordance with council assembly procedure rule 2.10 (8) & (9) (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. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR VICTOR CHAMBERLAIN (Seconded by Councillor Irina von Wiese)

Declaring a Housing Emergency

1. Council Assembly notes:
 - a. The housing crisis continues apace, with Trust for London's analysis of poverty levels in London showing that the poorest are being increasingly priced out of London.
 - b. That whilst all parties acknowledge the scale of housing issues here in Southwark, and the housing crisis, there is a need for focused urgency in the same manner that led to the Climate Emergency being declared.
 - c. That whilst Councils like Chelmsford, Edinburgh, and Crawley have all declared Housing Emergencies, no London Borough has yet made the same declaration despite our housing crises being acutely worse.
 - d. Lack of funding and other challenges have resulted in the low number of council home starts and approvals in the last year: 26 and 16 respectively.
 - e. That despite Labour's boasting, it is clear that we are still not building enough homes. Labour have let council home starts grind to a halt in Southwark and across London, and the Mayor of London was recently admonished for using misleading statistics in relation to his own record.
 - f. The knock-on effect this is having on our population and schools, with four primary schools closing in 2 years, the number of primary school places the lowest since 2014, and the biggest year-on-year drop in school places since 2014.
 - g. That the crisis recently drew national attention, with the News Agents podcast branding Peckham as "ground zero" for the crisis of children in temporary accommodation. Indeed, 53% of households in Southwark in temporary accommodation have children.
 - h. That many of the issues the council are directly responsible for in its own council stock (such as damp and mould, structural issues, and overcrowding) exist in Housing Association homes,

but there exist fewer formal mechanisms to enforce and scrutinise standards.

- i. That following the general election, Labour now hold every lever of power, and therefore have the responsibility and means to solve the housing emergency and coordinate action across the housing sector.
- j. That the housing emergency is fundamentally rooted in a problem of insufficient supply of good quality and genuinely affordable homes to meet increasing demand – and the route out lies through dramatic increase of supply of all tenures, but especially social housing.

2. Council Assembly resolves:

- a. To declare a Housing Emergency, the first London local authority to do so.
- b. That the declaration of the state of emergency in housing should act as a rallying point to demand affordable, secure, and decent housing for everyone.
- c. That the declaring of a Housing Emergency should lead to cross-council focus on the issue across all policy, in the same way that the Climate Emergency is.
- d. To lobby central government to empower councils like ours to regain our place as major house builder and change housing revenue account (HRA) borrowing rules to make it easier for councils to build.
- e. To write to Government asking for urgent action to tackle rising temporary accommodation need that is increasingly out of borough, placing huge strain on residents, council resources, and impacting on people's wellbeing and livelihoods.
- f. To volunteer to the Community Land Auction Trial to explore and demonstrate its capabilities in an inner city context. This would raise vital revenue to support new social homes and local services, and boost supply of all tenures.
- g. To explore use of Community Development Orders and Local Development Orders to boost housebuilding by and for the community.
- h. To amend the local plan to streamline and encourage gentle density, from small changes like mansards to more radical interventions, all whilst maintaining or raising the minimum

social housing requirements, and ensuring full local buy-in.

- i. To lobby government for more planning officers to set up a dedicated delivery and implementation team to make sure existing planning consents can be implemented as quickly as possible.
- j. To call on the government to amend legislation to allow the Council to alter leasehold contracts to secure cheaper and better deals for leaseholders
- k. To implement a Social Housing Improvement Plan in partnership with Housing Associations, holding them to the same standards and accountability that the council is. The Council should look to councils like Richmond who have already implemented these strategies.
- l. To ensure that this improvement plan should focus on holding Housing Associations (HAs) to account, and work to ensure that the same high standards and scrutiny that apply to council housing is equally applied to HA accommodation. This should be done through an enhanced version of the existing scrutiny function, either by requiring HAs to come to overview and scrutiny committee (OSC), or creating a new scrutiny commission to focus exclusively on HAs. This should investigate and hold HAs to account on their work with the police, health services and other key stakeholders to deliver quality housing for residents.
- m. To adopt a strict policy to remove HAs from Southwark's approved HA list where repeated issues around safety and repairs have been neglected.
- n. To commit to take advantage of any right to buy reforms at the earliest opportunity, to ensure that we maximize the retention of council owned stock, and maximum value is obtained and retained to reinvest in housing should right to buy continue.

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

2. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR CATHERINE ROSE (Seconded by Councillor Jason Ochere)

Debate Not Hate

1. Southwark council notes that:
 - a. The intimidation and abuse of councillors, in person or otherwise, undermines democracy; preventing elected

members from representing the communities they serve, deterring individuals from standing for election, and undermining public life in democratic processes.

- b. This council notes that increasing levels of toxicity in public and political discourse is having a detrimental impact on local democracy and that prevention, support and responses to abuse and intimidation of local politicians must improve to ensure councillors feel safe and able to continue representing their residents.
2. Southwark council therefore commits to:
 - a. Challenging the normalisation of abuse against councillors and officers and uphold exemplary standards of public and political debate in all it does.
 - b. Signing up to the LGA's Debate Not Hate campaign. The campaign aims to raise public awareness of the role of councillors in local communities, encourage healthy debate and improve the response to and support those in public life facing abuse and intimidation.
 3. Southwark council further commits to:
 - a. Writing to the local Members of Parliament to ask them to support the campaign.
 - b. Write to the Government to ask them to work with the LGA to develop and implement a plan to address abuse and intimidation of all politicians including councillors.
 - c. Ensuring the council has a clear reporting mechanism, which councillors can use to monitor and record incidents of harassment and abuse of councillors and officers.
 - d. Regularly review the support available to councillors in relation to abuse and intimidation and councillor safety.
 - e. Work with the local police to ensure there is a clear and joined-up mechanism for reporting threats and other concerns about the safety of councillors and their families and discuss the need to take a preventative approach that accounts for the specific risks that councillors face, as they do with other high-risk individuals, like MPs
 - f. Take a zero-tolerance approach to abuse of councillors and officers.

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 Jane Salmon)

Ending the Lower Road Chaos

1. Council assembly notes
 - a. That improving active travel infrastructure in Southwark is welcome, with segregated cycle lanes being a key part of promoting safe cycling in our borough, helping to reduce our emissions, encourage a healthy and active population, and improve air quality.
 - b. That despite best intentions, the implementation of CS4 has been plagued with issues, with residents of Surrey Quays and Rotherhithe facing delays, poor communication and consultation, and traffic chaos along Lower Road, Redriff Road and Ann Moss Way.
 - c. That residents and Liberal Democrat Councillors made repeated warnings to Transport for London (TfL) and the council. They warned that the plans, including the removal of the bus lane, would lead to gridlock, especially with the Canada Water redevelopment happening at the same time.
 - d. Despite these warnings, TfL's "temporary fix" has led to the traffic chaos seen every day.
 - e. The modelling conducted in advance of the scheme that allegedly showed that the implementation of the cycleway would not significantly disrupt traffic flow has been shown to be self-evidently insufficient.
 - f. That any monitoring currently in place is wholly inadequate and is not providing the council or TfL with the information it needs to fix this problem.
2. Council assembly resolves to:
 - a. Apologise to residents for the traffic chaos caused by the works on Lower Road.
 - b. Adjust parking arrangements on Lower Road to open a second lane of traffic.

- c. Reverse or close the flow of Cope Street, which is exacerbating the issue.
- d. Redesign the cycleway at the Ann Moss Way junction to improve safety.
- e. Improve modelling processes, taking on board lessons learned from the Lower Road debacle to ensure that this does not happen again.
- f. Improve and have meaningful consultation and engagement with residents prior to the implementation of future schemes.
- g. Commit the Cabinet Member for Clean Air, Streets, and Waste to providing an update to council members on the improvements to be made to ongoing processes.

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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