

Item No. 8.	Classification: Open	Date: 1 December 2010	Meeting Name: Council Assembly
Report title:		Motions	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In accordance with council assembly procedure rule 1.12 (9), the member moving the motion may make a speech directed to the matter under discussion. This may not exceed five minutes without the consent of the Mayor.

The seconder 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 open up to debate on the issue and any amendments on the motion will be dealt with.

At the end of the debate the mover of the motion may exercise 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 members 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 2.9 (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. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR ANOOD AL-SAMERAI (Seconded by Councillor Linda Manchester)

Please note that, in accordance with council assembly procedure rule 2.9 (6), council assembly shall consider this motion.

Housing solutions for Southwark

1. Council assembly regrets that too many families have been forced into often poor quality private rented accommodation by the failure over the past 25 years to build sufficient affordable social housing.
2. Council assembly notes the ever increasing and unsustainable housing benefit bill and welcomes the government's plans to tackle this.
3. Council assembly notes that plans to reform housing benefit were also in the Labour manifesto and regrets the emotive and hysterical language which is currently being used to scare tenants.
4. Council assembly notes the concern of many residents about the proposed changes to social housing tenures and to some of the proposed changes to housing benefit.
5. Council assembly expresses particular concern that new tenants will not be offered traditional secure tenancies which provide stability, support family networks and can improve social cohesion.
6. Council assembly fully supports the rights of secure tenants to live in their council home for as long as they wish, but believes the council should look at new ways of tackling under-occupancy of homes to make better use of existing council stock.
7. Council assembly believes that government's aims to tackle high rents charged by private landlords through a reduction in the local housing allowance may harm families rather than unscrupulous landlords.
8. Council assembly calls on the cabinet to investigate whether rent capping in the private rented sector could be a positive way of achieving the government's aim of reducing the overall housing benefit bill.
9. Whilst council assembly supports the principle that people should work if they are able, members are concerned that in light of the current economic climate the government should rethink plans to reduce by 10% housing benefit for those claiming jobseekers allowance for more than 12 months.
10. Council assembly calls on the cabinet to write to government to:
 - oppose the changes to secure tenancies
 - oppose plans to measure local housing allowance at the 30th percentile rather than the median
 - oppose plans to remove 10% of housing benefit from those who have been claiming jobseekers allowance for more than 12 months given the current state of the employment market
 - support a housing benefit solution for London, as suggested by Simon Hughes MP, which understands the particular needs and market in London
 - investigate the possibility of land value taxation or introducing rent control in some parts of the private rented sector

- fulfil promises of allowing local authorities to make their own decisions about new housing and rents for new and existing tenancies
- co-ordinate a cross party response to the government's housing consultation.

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

2. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR MICHAEL MITCHELL (Seconded by Councillor Lewis Robinson)

Please note that, in accordance with council assembly procedure rule 2.9 (6), council assembly shall consider this motion.

Southwark Life

Council assembly calls on the cabinet to reduce the frequency of publication of Southwark Life from monthly to, at most, quarterly and to ensure the commensurate reduction in the overall cost of the publication.

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

3. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR ADELE MORRIS (Seconded by Councillor Graham Neale)

Please note that, in accordance with council assembly procedure rule 2.9 (6), council assembly shall consider this motion.

Committing to localism

1. Council welcomes the Localism bill and agrees that more powers and decisions should be passed to local authorities and local residents.
2. notes the success of community councils in Southwark and the enthusiasm of our communities to engage in local decision making.
3. Council welcomes the removal of central government targets and ring fencing of budgets.
4. Council urges the cabinet to take initiative and leadership in ensuring that Southwark residents benefit from the new legislation, in particular:
 - Allowing local people to instigate local referendums
 - Devolving decisions on housing and planning to local people
 - Allowing councillors to vote on salary packages of senior council officers
 - Investigating how powers of general competence can be used in Southwark
 - Showing the context of spending in the publication of items over £500
 - Giving more powers to community councils and allowing communities to set their agendas for community council.

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	Town Hall Peckham Road London SE5 8UB	Constitutional Team 020 7525 7228

Lead Officer	Ian Millichap, Constitutional Manager
Report Author	Sean Usher, Constitutional Officer
Version	Final
Dated	12 November 2010