

Item No. 13.	Classification: Open	Date: 15 May 2012	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Motions Referred from Council Assembly	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Strategic Director of Law, Communities & Governance	

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 Wednesday 28 March 2012 agreed a number of 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. The final decisions of the cabinet will be reported back to the next meeting of council assembly. 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. The cabinet will report on the outcome of its deliberations upon the motions to a subsequent meeting of council assembly.
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
Motions submitted in accordance with council assembly procedure rule 2.10 (6).	160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Lesley John Constitutional Team 020 7525 7228

LIST OF APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Motion on the theme – Older People
Appendix 2	Universal Credit
Appendix 3	Post Offices for Southwark
Appendix 4	South London Line Replacement
Appendix 5	Gay marriage

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Ian Millichap, Constitutional Manager		
Report Author	Lesley John, Constitutional Officer		
Version	Final		
Dated	4 May 2012		
Key Decision?	No		
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER			
Officer Title		Comments Sought	Comments included
Acting Chief Executive		Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Health and Community Services		Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Communities, Law and Governance		No	No
Cabinet Member		Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team			4 May 2012

MOTION ON THEMED DEBATE - OLDER PEOPLE

At council assembly on Wednesday 28 March 2012 a motion on the theme 'older people' was moved by Councillor Michael Situ and seconded by Councillor Kevin Ahern. The motion was agreed and stands referred to the cabinet as a recommendation.

Recommendation

- (1) That council assembly acknowledges that:
 - 10 million people in the UK are over the age of 65 and this will rise to 15.5 million by 2035
 - 3 million are over the age of 80 and this is set to double in 20 years time.
- (2) That council assembly welcomes and celebrates the fact that we are all living longer and pays tribute to the amazing contribution older people make to Southwark's diverse communities, economy and society as a whole.
- (3) That council assembly calls on members to recognise this contribution and discuss how more can be made of the opportunities that longer lives bring with particular focus on:
 - How the council can recognise the role that people in later life often play in their communities, through volunteering, caring and by playing an active role in neighbourhood life
 - How people in Southwark can take advantage of the wide variety of sporting, educational and social activities available as they get older
 - How the council can promote the greater role that more active grandparents play in their families' lives
 - How the council can work with the NHS and other partners to give older people more choice in the services they receive, enabling them to live healthy lives and stay in their own homes and communities for longer.
- (4) That council assembly also recognises the council's important role in caring for older people who require care and support.
- (5) That council assembly notes that £1.3 billion has already been cut from local council budgets for older people's social care and believes the council should strive to create an adult care system that helps older people to find the support they need, enabling them to live healthy, independent lives in their own communities and homes, rather than retaining a long-term dependency on council services, whilst also protecting our most vulnerable older residents.
- (6) That council assembly also recognises that many of the groups in Southwark that provide services to older people have lost their funding through government cuts and so welcomes the council's "innovation fund" which is enabling local organisations to become more self-sustaining going forward.

Comments of the Strategic Director of Health & Community Services

1. A number of initiatives have been developed in line with this motion, including:
 - “My Support Choices” has been launched, providing an online guide that enables people to easily explore the options available for obtaining support from a range of providers
 - 1,383 older people benefitted from some form of a personal budget during 2012/13
 - 1 local organisation have benefitted from the Innovation Fund to develop new models of support.
2. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for older people is at a draft stage and will shortly be published. It will inform the development of the Health and Well-Being Strategy with respect to older people. Key themes emerging include levels of deprivation, housing issues, projected growth in the population of older people, especially those aged over 90, and the need for improvements in prevention and managing long term health conditions.

UNIVERSAL CREDIT

At council assembly on Wednesday 28 March 2012 a motion on universal credit was moved by Councillor Richard Livingstone and seconded by Councillor Chris Brown. The motion was subsequently amended and the amended motions stands referred to the cabinet as a recommendation.

Recommendation

- (1) That council assembly notes that, starting in October 2013, universal credit will begin to replace income support, job seekers allowance, employment and support allowance, housing benefit, working tax credit, child tax credit and support for mortgage interest.
- (2) That council assembly recognises that universal credit is a household benefit and that the income from universal credit will therefore be critical to the household incomes of thousands of its residents who are both in and out of work.
- (3) That council assembly therefore believes that the quality of the universal credit 'service' will be important to the lives of its citizens and that the planned reliance on a web based delivery model backed up by remote call centres without the inclusion of a local, easily accessible, face to face service element puts the successful introduction of universal credit at significant risk.
- (4) That council assembly therefore calls on the cabinet:
 - 1) To approach Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and raise its concerns.
 - 2) To develop jointly with DWP local arrangements for the delivery of universal credit and to report back on progress to the cabinet member for finance, resources and community safety, specifically addressing the resources required and responses to the following basic questions:
 - How will someone apply locally?
 - Where will they apply locally?
 - Where will they take required documents locally?
 - Where will the local 'universal credit' office be and what office accommodation will be required?
 - How will the skills and experience of existing benefits staff be utilised and how many staff will be needed?
 - How does an individual citizen get face to face advice and help if they have a problem?
 - 3) To support the Local Government Association in pressing for universal credit to be administered by local authorities.

Comments of the Acting Chief Executive

1. The council is actively engaged in working towards influencing government strategy on models of delivery for Universal Credit. As a pilot authority for demonstrating 'direct payment' to claimants the authority will be at the forefront of understanding the potential impact on the community. Southwark revenues & benefits service has seconded a manager (at no cost to the council) to the Universal Credit programme who works to raise the profile of local governments' role in the future development of the operational model.
2. Whilst Universal Credit is a large-scale change the council is actively looking at the proposed additional changes including the replacement of the Council Tax Benefit Scheme & localisation of the Social Fund both of which have shorter term implications for both the community & the council.
3. The Local Government Association (LGA) in partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) issued a prospectus for Universal Credit pilots on the 26 April. The council is currently reviewing the information to see if it would be in the council's interest to put in an application. Pilots are expected to be picked in the summer and operational from September 2012.

POST OFFICES FOR SOUTHWARK

At council assembly on Wednesday 28 March 2012 a motion on post offices for Southwark was moved by Councillor Catherine Bowman and seconded by Councillor Anood Al-Samerai. The motion was subsequently amended and the amended motion stands referred to the cabinet as a recommendation.

Recommendation

- (1) That council assembly notes the importance of local post office branches in Southwark for local people, small businesses and the community as a whole.
- (2) That council assembly regrets the closure of post offices in Southwark in 2002 and 2008. It notes that Essex Council acted to save the post offices in Essex that were under threat in 2008. It further notes that Labour in Southwark campaigned for the Liberal Democrat/Tory council in Southwark to take similar action at the time, but that it chose not to.
- (3) That council assembly notes that 48% of the £1.34 billion of 'new money' announced by the government for investment in the post office to aid the privatisation of Royal Mail is existing subsidy and that the four year package of funding is £360m less than the last Labour government's funding package of £1.7bn in 2006.
- (4) That council assembly notes that under the government's network transformation plans thousands of post offices will be closed and replaced with counters in shops, off licences and petrol stations – known as 'Post Office Locals'. Locals will not provide:
 - international parcels and parcels weighing over 5kg and 6kg respectively
 - Parcel Force Express Services parcels
 - manual cash deposits and withdrawals
 - change giving service to small businesses
 - post office financial services and insurance products
 - manual bill payment services
 - passport, car tax and DVLA services
 - on-demand foreign currency
 - payment by cheque.
- (5) That council assembly notes the widespread concern about the effects of network transformation has led to 75 MPs, including five Liberal Democrats, to call for a moratorium on the plans, and the Business, Innovation and Skills select committee will be holding an inquiry in May.
- (6) That council assembly notes the comments of the cabinet member for finance, resources and community safety in 5 January's Southwark News, welcoming the Southwark Liberal Democrats' "Damascene conversion" and committing the council to working "with the post office to look into whether it is possible to combine post office services with other facilities".
- (7) That council assembly calls on the cabinet to follow through with this commitment and report back on progress in not more than six months.

- (8) That council assembly notes the previous Liberal Democrat and Tory administration's decision to relocate Bermondsey One Stop Shop and welcomes the decision to locate alternative facilities at 11 Market Place in The Blue.
- (9) That council assembly condemns Southwark Liberal Democrats' proposal to delay the introduction of these facilities at The Blue which could potentially result in a period where those services would be unavailable in the north-east of the borough.

Comments of the Acting Chief Executive / Strategic Director of Housing Services

- 1. There are 21 post offices in Southwark, 5 of which are known as Crown Post Offices (the traditional larger dedicated post offices). The Post Office have made a commitment to maintain the size of the network, so if a Post Office closes down the expectation is that a new Post Office will be opened in the vicinity.
- 2. Further, the Post Office is in talks with the central government about delivering "government on the high street". With the advent of universal credit later this year, the Post Office hopes to deliver customer services for universal credit customers who need it.
- 3. The Post Office are currently undertaking pilot work with some councils (such as Westminster) where they believe they can deliver services which fall in the category of paying bills, check and verify, apply for licences, and other similar transactions, predominantly on a cost per transaction basis. Within Southwark, tenants with a LBS swipe card are currently able to pay their rent at a Post Office and Southwark's forthcoming Customer Access Strategy will further outline 'working with others' to improve service delivery and where the business case makes sense to do so. Any proposals will, of course, be subject to procurement processes.
- 4. With regards Bermondsey One Stop Shop (BOSS), 17 Spa Road has been disposed of for development to facilitate the further regeneration of that area and provide for a capital receipt, in line with the decisions taken by the previous executive. The council now needs to provide vacant possession of the site by the end of the year. As noted in the motion, alternative premises to replace BOSS have been identified at 11 Market Place in The Blue. If approved, and subject to any planning constraints, this will provide excellent modern facilities for local people at a central Bermondsey location. The site is well served by local buses in a pedestrian area easily accessible by all residents. The new facility will open towards the end of 2012 to enable services at 17 Spa Road to transfer directly across without a break in the provision of service in Bermondsey.

SOUTH LONDON LINE REPLACEMENT

At council assembly on Wednesday 28 March 2012 a motion on the South London line replacement was moved by Councillor Renata Hamvas and seconded by Councillor Mark Glover. The motion was agreed and stands referred to the cabinet as a recommendation.

Recommendation

- (1) That council assembly notes that the South London Line is a well-used regular train service linking Victoria and London Bridge. Thousands of Southwark residents use it on a daily basis, as it serves Denmark Hill, Peckham Rye, Queens Road, Peckham Station, South Bermondsey and London Bridge from early morning until late evening seven days a week.
- (2) That council assembly regrets that this service is due to be cancelled later this year when the East London Line spur from Surrey Quays to Clapham Junction is opened. There will be a reduced service from Peckham Rye, Queens Road and South Bermondsey to London Bridge. As a consequence of the cancellation of the South London Line, Southwark residents will no longer have a train connection to Victoria in the evenings and early mornings and half the current service at other times.
- (3) That council assembly notes that the service that will remain if no replacement is offered is the Victoria to Dartford service that starts at rush hour and finishes in the early evening. The Victoria to Dartford service is already unfit for purpose. Southwark residents are walking to New Cross to get southbound trains in the morning as the service starts too late. Also, residents cannot access by train, a key connection with the Docklands Light Railway/train hub at Lewisham outside Monday to Saturday peak hours. For two years, the First Capital Connect service has been diverted to Victoria in the evenings. The level of use of this service and the soon to be axed South London Line has shown there is great demand for an evening service to Victoria from the Southwark stations.
- (4) That council assembly believes the new East London Line is a welcome addition to transport links for Southwark residents. It is however, very much a supplement rather than a substitute to existing routes, as Clapham Junction is geographically a very different destination to Victoria. It is understood that due to routing challenges, with the increased line use that changes to the current service may be necessary. However, suitable substitutes need to be in place.
- (5) That council assembly supports the proposal for the Victoria to Dartford service to become a full, early morning until midnight seven-day a week service (two trains per hour in each direction), complementing a full First Capital Connect Sevenoaks to Bedford service via Blackfriars. Additional service would be provided during peak hours (similar to the current Victoria to Dartford service) with two trains per hour between Victoria and Bellingham. This would result in maintenance of the current train frequency at Denmark Hill and Peckham Rye to and from Victoria and an increase of two trains per hour at Nunhead. Two trains per hour would still be lost from Queen's Road Station; however, Nunhead Station is 10 minutes walk from Queen's Road.

Comments of the Cabinet Member for Transport, Environment and Recycling

1. While we are wholeheartedly in support of the introduction of the East London Line Extension 2, we feel the loss of the South London Line will leave a severe gap in transport for many of our train travelling public. We have extensively lobbied and will continue to lobby as we believe that Network Rail and the Government should mitigate this loss of service.

GAY MARRIAGE

At council assembly on Wednesday 28 March 2012 a motion on gay marriage was moved by Councillor David Noakes and seconded by Councillor Abdul Mohamed. The motion was agreed and stands referred to the cabinet as a recommendation.

Recommendation

- (1) That this council acknowledges the role of individual parliamentarians, of all parties and no parties, and successive governments since the early 1990's to introduce legislation to provide equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in the UK.
- (2) That this council notes and welcomed the introduction of civil partnerships for same-sex couples by the last government.
- (3) That this council supports the current government's proposals to consult on how to enable same-sex couples to have a civil marriage and the subsequent introduction of legislation in this parliament to make this a reality.

Comments of the Acting Chief Executive

1. In October 2010 the majority of the new Equality Act came into force. This consolidates the numerous acts and regulations that form the basis of anti-discrimination law, all in one Act. The Act introduces nine protected characteristics – including marriage and civil partnership.
2. The Council's Approach to Equality, which was agreed by cabinet in December 2011, confirms the council's commitment to place equality at the heart of the fairer future vision as set out in the council plan. This includes a commitment to promoting people's rights and responsibilities and to protecting the rights of those who live in Southwark by ensuring that abuse; mistreatment or discrimination is identified and dealt with.