

Item No. 5.2	Classification: Open	Date: 26 March 2014	Meeting Name: Council Assembly
Report title:		Motions	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
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 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.

¹ Council assembly procedure rule 1.14 (9)

1. **MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR ANOOD AL-SAMERAI** (Seconded by Councillor Paul Noblet)

Local Decision Making

1. Council assembly believes that decisions are best made by the people closest to them and supports devolving decisions from central government to local government, as well as within local government to community councils, wards and neighbourhoods.
2. Council assembly therefore:
 - i. Welcomes efforts by government to introduce localism through such powers as neighbourhood plans, community right to bid and community right to challenge.
 - ii. Believes the council still has an important role to play in promoting the devolution of powers to local communities, and supporting ward councillors with local issues where appropriate.
 - iii. Calls on cabinet to review what further decisions and funding could be passed from the centre of Southwark Council to community councils and ward councillors.

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

2. **MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR CLEO SOANES** (Seconded by Councillor Gavin Edwards)

Free School Meals

1. Council assembly notes the recent London Assembly Labour report on food poverty in London, which shows that more people than ever in the capital are relying on food banks - the use of foodbanks in London has gone up by 400% in the last two years. Council assembly condemns the shameful rise in the numbers of families being forced to rely on emergency handouts from foodbanks, as Tory/Liberal Democrat welfare reforms push more families into poverty, and supports the report's call for free school meals for all children in London to combat the growing food poverty crisis.
2. Council assembly is concerned at reports that the national plan to give free school meals to the youngest primary school children across the country is "in chaos" and that young children are unlikely to get a hot, nutritious meal as promised by the government. Council assembly notes the concerns of primary schools about how the policy will be implemented, given that the Liberal Democrat Leader has failed to take into account the cost of upgrading school kitchen facilities in the plans for the national scheme.
3. Council assembly notes that a former Liberal Democrat Minister has described the policy as being dreamt up "on the back of a fag packet". Council assembly believes that the utterly shambolic implementation of free school meals by Liberal Democrats in government shows that free hot healthy school meals are not safe in the hands of the Liberal Democrats.

4. Council assembly urges the cabinet to call on government to put forward a fully costed, implementable plan for the roll out of free school meals nationally; to provide reassurance to schools that they will be given the necessary support to upgrade kitchen facilities in order to meet the demand of the new policy; and to follow Southwark's lead by extending free school meals to the youngest children.

Council assembly also calls on the cabinet to provide reassurance that regardless of the outcome of the national scheme, this council will continue to provide free, hot healthy school meals for every primary school child in the borough.

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

3. **MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR GRAHAM NEALE** (Seconded by Councillor James Barber)

Meat Free Mondays

1. Council assembly notes the benefits to personal health and the environment of lowering the consumption of meat.
2. Council assembly therefore calls on cabinet to promote meat free options in schools and council buildings every Monday, and also promote the benefits of reducing meat consumption to council staff.

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

4. **MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR NEIL COYLE** (Seconded by Councillor Rebecca Lury)

Regulation of Payday Lenders

Council Assembly:

1. Notes that payday lenders are trapping millions of people in spirals of debt.
2. Believes that the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA)'s new proposals for regulating payday lenders are a step in the right direction, but do not go far enough.
3. Considers the FCA's proposals:
 - i. Would not prevent payday lenders from drip feeding new loans to people who already have payday debts and are struggling to pay them back
 - ii. Would not prevent people from being hit with escalating penalty fees
 - iii. Would not stop payday lenders from raiding people's bank accounts without telling them.
4. Welcomes the steps that this administration has taken to stop the spread of payday lenders in Southwark, including:

- i. Refusing to let council buildings to pay day lenders
 - ii. Using Article 4 planning directions on change of use to protect high streets
 - iii. Reducing the exposure of residents to payday lenders by getting agreement from two of the council's billboard advertising contractors not to display payday loan adverts
 - iv. Lobbying the government for the power to levy payday lenders in Southwark.
5. Welcomes that some of Britain's biggest debt, consumer and anti-poverty organisations – including Which, Citizens Advice, StepChange Debt Charity, Church Action on Poverty and the Centre for Responsible Credit – and MPs from every party represented at Westminster have come together to support the Charter to Stop the Payday Loan Rip-Off.
6. Council assembly supports the Charter to Stop the Payday Loan Rip-Off which calls on the FCA to introduce tougher regulation of payday lenders. Council assembly calls on the cabinet to:
- i. Encourage residents of Southwark to support the Charter by signing the online petition at <http://www.change.org/paydayloancharter>
 - ii. Promote and support the development of local credit unions and more affordable lending
 - iii. Work with partners on campaigns against increasing levels of personal debt
 - iv. Send a copy of this motion to Martin Wheatley, Chief Executive of the Financial Conduct Authority, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

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

5. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR HELEN HAYES (Seconded by Councillor Nick Dolezal)

Fixed Odds Betting Terminals

1. Council assembly notes:
- i. The prevalence of Fixed Odds Betting Terminals (FOBTs) in betting shops, often referred to in the media as “the crack cocaine of gambling”.
 - ii. That, unlike fruit machines in pubs, bingo halls and amusement arcades where cash stakes are limited to £2, gamblers can bet with cash or via a debit card up to £100 every 20 seconds on FOBTs, more than four times as fast as the rate of play in casinos.
 - iii. That in 2012, over £1.5 billion was lost on FOBTs across the UK. More profit was made from FOBTs than from the National Lottery, when according to the most recent British Gambling Prevalence

Survey, 56% of the population play the Lottery, but just 4% play FOBTs.

- iv. Empirical evidence that suggests FOBTs are the most addictive form of gambling.
 - v. Research carried out by Geofutures, which found there to be four times as many betting shops in areas of high unemployment than in areas of low unemployment.
 - vi. Research carried out by 2CV in Newham, which found that the average bet per spin on FOBTs is £17, and the average amount of cash inserted into the machine is £55 per session, with one in five putting in over £100 a time.
 - vii. Nationally, more than 80% of turnover in betting shops and more than half of profits are derived from FOBTs. Less than 20% of stakes in betting shops are over the counter.
 - viii. A recent economic analysis undertaken by Landman Economics, commissioned by the Campaign for Fairer Gambling, which assessed the impact of FOBTs on local economies and across the wider economy. The report concluded that every £1 billion spent on FOBTs produces a net reduction of 13,000 jobs, compared to if spent in the wider consumer economy. The projected doubling of revenue from FOBTs by 2023 could cost a further 23,000 jobs across the economy.
 - ix. The position in the Republic of Ireland where the government has introduced legislation to outlaw FOBTs in betting shops.
2. Council assembly notes with concern the prevalence of high-speed, high-stakes gambling machines in the most deprived areas of the country. In the 55 most deprived boroughs of the country £13 billion was gambled and £470 million lost to fixed-odds betting terminals last year, in 2,691 betting shops – double the amount staked in the richest areas. Council assembly is concerned that it appears bookmakers are targeting the poorest areas with the highest unemployment and lowest income level. In Southwark, £523 million was gambled and £18.6m lost at fixed odds betting terminals in 81 shops last year.
 3. Council assembly notes that the gambling industry has recently been announced a new code of conduct, introducing optional time and money limits for gamblers and mandatory alerts to betting shop staff, but believes that this voluntary code does not go far enough to protect people from the risks of these high-stakes betting machines.
 4. Council assembly is concerned that the government has not addressed the issues caused by fixed-odds betting terminals (FOTBs) and has resisted calls to reduce stakes on FOBT, claiming that “it is currently not clear how great an impact a reduction would have on gambling related harm”.
 5. Council assembly applauds the work of Labour MPs in calling for local authorities to be given new powers to restrict the growth of fixed-odds betting terminals (FOTBs) and is disappointed that this motion was rejected

by Tory and Liberal Democrat MPs, who failed to support the proposals despite the Liberal Democrats' previous support for "Stop FOBT" campaigns.

6. Council assembly believes that the increase in FOBTs is causing significant problems and believes that the government should either use the existing legislative framework, or introduce legislation to outlaw B2 casino games in betting shops. At the very least, local authorities should be given the powers to protect the local amenity and wellbeing of communities by (1) stopping the proliferation of betting shops and (2) reducing the maximum stakes and slowing down the speed of play.
7. Council assembly therefore calls on the cabinet to:
 - a) Write to the Secretary of state for Culture, Media and Sport to outline the terms of this motion and demand urgent action against FOBTs by the government
 - b) Explore the use of the Sustainable Communities Act as a means to reduce the maximum stake on Fixed Odds Betting Terminals to £2 per spin.

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

6. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR DAN GARFILED (Seconded by Councillor Cleo Soanes)

Peckham and Nunhead Community Council

Council Assembly recommends that Councillor Althea Smith be removed as the Vice Chair of Peckham and Nunhead Community Council with immediate effect.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Member Motions	Constitutional Team 160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Andrew Weir 020 7525 7222

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Ian Millichap, Constitutional Manager
Report Author	Lesley John, Constitutional Officer
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Dated	10 March 2014