

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: September 29 2009	Meeting Name: Executive
Report title:		Motions Referred from Council Assembly	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the executive considers the motions set out in the appendices attached to the report.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. Council assembly at its meeting on Wednesday, July 8 2009 agreed a number of motions and these stand referred to the executive for consideration.
3. The executive 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 executive will be reported back to the next meeting of council assembly. When considering a motion, executive 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 2.9(6), the attached motions were referred to the executive. The executive 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 executive 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 2.9 (6).	Town Hall, Peckham Road, London SE5 8UB	Lesley John Constitutional Team 020 7525 7228

LIST OF APPENDICES

Number	Title
Appendix 1	Fire at Lakanal House
Appendix 2	Regeneration of the Elephant & Castle
Appendix 3	Primary school places in Dulwich
Appendix 4	One hour bus ticket proposal

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Ian Millichap, Constitutional Team Manager	
Report Author	Lesley John, Constitutional Officer	
Version	Final	
Dated	21.09.09	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / EXECUTIVE MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Chief Officer	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Support Services		September 21 2009

Fire at Lakanal House

At council assembly on Wednesday July 8 2009 a late motion on the fire at Lakanal House was proposed by Councillor Ian Wingfield and seconded by Councillor Alison McGovern. The motion was agreed and stands referred to the executive as a recommendation.

Recommendation

1. That council assembly notes, with deep sadness, the awful events at Lakanal House in Camberwell on July 3, which led to the death of 6 people and a number of injuries.
2. That council assembly expresses sympathy and condolences to the families and friends of those who lost their lives. Council assembly shares the deep sense of loss, bereavement and disbelief that is felt by the whole community as a result of these terrible events.
3. That council assembly also extends its sympathies to the numerous residents of Lakanal House who have been made homeless as a result of the fire. Council assembly calls upon the executive to work with maximum speed and commitment to ensure that these residents are satisfactorily and comfortably housed in the shortest possible time.
4. That council assembly pays tribute to the bravery demonstrated by the emergency services on July 3, whose work undoubtedly saved many lives. Council assembly also expresses its gratitude and sincere thanks to the professionalism and dedication shown by Southwark council officers across many departments who, since Friday, have worked tirelessly to assist those affected by this tragedy.
5. That council assembly believes that there may be serious lessons to be learnt from these tragic events, which will be relevant to similar buildings in Southwark and those owned by other local authorities and housing bodies across the country. In that event, council assembly therefore believes it is imperative that a full and independent public inquiry be held at the earliest possible opportunity once the local investigations are complete.
6. That council assembly notes and welcomes the decision by the Secretary of State to instruct Sir Ken Knight the government's chief fire and rescue advisor to report back to him on the various investigations into the fire and seeks assurances that this information will be shared with Southwark and other housing authorities urgently.

Comments of the Strategic Director of Environment and Housing

Immediately following the incident Councillor Nick Stanton issued a statement to the media sharing the Council's deep sadness with the victims and their families and all of the displaced residents of Lakanal.

A helpline has been set up where Lakanal residents can call for up to date information. Other residents can call our 24-hour telephone support line on 08000 217817. The Lakanal resource centre operated from 3 July – 28 August. This provided a place for residents to come and receive advice on accommodation, receive counselling and support. The resource centre also had a crèche available onsite. Now, an appointments only caseworker service is running from Central House, Town Hall with each Lakanal household still having their own dedicated case worker to ensure their needs are being met, including emotional support.

Lakanal residents in emergency accommodation can access help to transport children to school in the borough as the new term starts. In immediate response to the fire, the TRA, with the help of other Council tenants, set up a drop in centre at Bells Gardens where people could come for a meal, pick up donated items, and for community support. As Lakanal residents began moving out of temporary accommodation into more permanent homes, the need for this has lessened. As such, the Bells Gardens centre closed Friday 28 August 2009. We are very grateful to the community for their invaluable assistance to the residents of Lakanal during the immediate period following the fire. A Book of Condolence is open in Southwark Town Hall.

It has been agreed that we need possession of Lakanal for sometime in order to assess what needs to be done. A decision on whether to refurbish or demolish the block has not been made, despite being repeatedly discussed in the media. As a consequence of not knowing the final solution for Lakanal, residents of Lakanal are being re-housed. So far 175 offers of permanent accommodation have been made and there have been seventy five acceptances as of 18 September 2009. A number of other Council tenants are close to accepting offers.

All households have had at least two offers of accommodation and a third and final offer is about to be made. Lakanal residents have been offered a two year period at Band One. This means that they are very likely to find a property they like.

Due to the council's need to retain the building, and residents having to move elsewhere, secure Council tenants are entitled to a statutory homeloss payment of £4,700 to help alleviate the costs and hassle of moving. There have been fifty four home loss payments made so far. Rent arrears are being collected from homeloss payments where no payment plans are in place and being honoured. So far, over £11,000 in arrears have been collected. As well as homeloss, a £1,400 start up pack of new furniture, and a home disturbance payment to help them make a fresh start. We are also offering other support in kind, such as a removals service.

Southwark is undertaking a borough wide safety drive to inform and advise tenants on fire safety matters. In order to reassure those with concerns we have undertaken comprehensive intrusive inspections of all blocks that share similar design characteristics to Lakanal to identify any precautionary improvements that could be made to existing fire safety measures.

Fire safety measures identified are being implemented in a programme of works. These precautionary improvements are typically around signage, fire breaks, bin chutes and fire doors.

The police continue with their investigation into the spread of the fire and the handling of the events of the night, we are cooperating fully with all aspects of the investigation and are as anxious as everyone else to understand how this tragic blaze occurred. Furthermore, we support the calls for a public inquiry into the incident.

The Council welcomed the publication of Sir Ken Knight's report into issues emerging from the Camberwell fire (6 August 2009) as it raised some very interesting and pertinent points in relation to the building design as well as appropriateness of current national guidance, training and procedures.

REGENERATION OF THE ELEPHANT & CASTLE

At council assembly on Wednesday July 8 2009 a motion on the regeneration of the Elephant & Castle was moved by Councillor Chris Page and seconded by Councillor Peter John. The motion was subsequently amended and the amended motion stands referred to the executive as a recommendation.

Recommendation

1. That council assembly notes that residents in Southwark have waited too long for the regeneration of the Elephant & Castle which extends beyond the 'footprint' of the Heygate Estate and shopping centre, and which was first promised by the Labour administration in the late 1990s.
2. That council assembly notes that the current recession has had a major impact on private sector led developments but supports the continued efforts of the executives and chief officers to secure the best possible deal for local residents.
3. That council assembly further notes that the executive and council officers are bound by EU procurement rules which do not allow the council to vary significantly from the original 'best and final offer' accepted in July 2007, and that achieving the best value for money for Southwark's taxpayers should be paramount.
4. That council assembly believes that the regeneration of the Elephant & Castle has to put the needs of residents first, and ensure local residents who want to can move back to the area.
5. That council assembly regrets that the recent government announcements on social housing could well result in the loss of funding for bringing existing homes in Southwark up to the 'decent' standard' and will do little to reduce the massive number of Southwark residents on the housing waiting list.
6. That council assembly notes that some developments, including at Steedman Street and Wansey Street, have already been completed and have provided both new private and affordable units.
7. That council assembly recognises the successful completion of St Mary's Churchyard, the securing of money to improve the southern roundabout, the progress being made at Strata Tower which will provide 90 shared-equity units, and the advanced negotiations with the Homes and Community Agency to help kickstart developments at the Oakmayne Plaza and London Park Hotel sites which will provide a new home for the Southwark Playhouse and new units for small independent traders.
8. That council assembly further notes the successful negotiations with the Homes and Communities Agency which have led to an increase of 200 social rented homes above the levels granted at the six Elephant and Castle housing sites.
9. That council assembly further notes and laments the failure of the former London Mayor, Ken Livingstone to include improvements to the transport infrastructure into Transport for London's funding plans.

10. That council assembly looks forward to welcoming former US President Bill Clinton who plans to visit the Elephant and Castle to see the innovative work being undertaken to reduce carbon emissions by creating the Multi Utility Service Company (MUSCO).
11. That council assembly further notes that the previous Labour administration decided to demolish the Heygate in 1998 but then ten years later called for the council to stop the process of decanting tenants and leaseholders.
12. That it be noted that had councils like Southwark been allowed to invest in building new homes by the Labour government, then it would have been possible to have developed all the planned "early sites" at the Elephant and Castle by now.
13. That council assembly calls on the executive to move forward the regeneration vision for Elephant and Castle by using all the tools and options at its disposals.

Comments of the Deputy Chief Executive

The Executive are committed to the regeneration of the Elephant and Castle which will dramatically improve the quality of the physical environment, creating the conditions necessary to stimulate investment, re-invigorate the local economy and promote sustainable long-term regeneration. The future regeneration project was considered further at the 21 July 2009 Executive meeting at which a programme towards agreement with the selected master development partner Lend Lease was considered. In order to successfully support this programme, additional project management arrangements have been put in place in order to achieve agreement.

Primary school places in Dulwich

At council assembly on Wednesday July 8 2009 a motion on primary school places in Dulwich was proposed by Councillor Toby Eckersley and seconded by Councillor James Barber. The motion was agreed and stands referred to the executive as a recommendation

Recommendation

1. That council assembly notes:
 - i) That Village Ward councillors had identified the need for increased primary school provision in North Dulwich, previously recognised in the corporate plan.
 - ii) The recent complaints amongst parents in Dulwich about the perceived lack of places available for children, and about how their cases were handled by education service.
2. That council assembly requests:
 - i) The executive to request a report from education officers which clarifies the number of children in Dulwich who have not received a primary school place offer within one mile of their residence, maps their location, and considers whether pressure on primary school places will increase in the Dulwich area over the next five years.
 - ii) To identify best practice in communication with parents and providing advice at what is a difficult time for many parents who do not receive an offer for which they have indicated a preference.
 - iii) If continued pressure on primary school places in the Dulwich area, or parts of it, is predicted to present to the executive options that may be available to expand existing provision and costs associated with these options.

Comments of the Strategic Director of Children's Services

Councillors will be pleased to know that of the 2370 on-time resident applicants for a place in a Southwark school (304 in Dulwich taken for these purposes as Village, College and East Dulwich wards), 90% (90%) received a place within one mile of their given home address. This excludes data relating to late applicants of which 556 (45) were received, an unprecedented number and one which placed considerable stress on the system. 80% of the late applicants to Dulwich schools were still found a place at a school within a mile of their home address.

In total we had 2926 applicants resident in Southwark getting a place at a primary school. 90% received a place within one mile of their home address (89% in Dulwich). The Dulwich figures are further distorted by the fact that the Church schools in the area will take significant numbers of children from more than one mile away as a result of parents opting for a Church education. As of January 2009, projections showed sufficient reception places in the Dulwich area.

The unprecedented pressures this year are thought to result from a number of factors:

- There is a clear decline in migration from the borough as more families opt to raise their children in Southwark as suggested by the GLA roll projections for the borough received in May and June 2009;
- the outstanding results of Southwark's schools reported this summer, with our primary schools now top of the benchmark group of similar boroughs and within 1% of the unverified national percentage; and,
- a decline in demand for places in the private sector reported nationally.

For the coming admissions year a number of changes in our processes have been made including increasing the number of staff available to support parents through the applications process and to make sure high quality information is communicated to parents in a timely manner. However, we are also conscious that the very large number of late applications, as well as the very high number of applications received for a small number of schools, many from families living well outside the notional catchment area, suggests we need to improve the understanding in the community of the admissions process.

A full review of places is presently underway following the release of the latest pupil planning data by the GLA this June. This indicates significant upward pressure on places across the borough, but particularly so in the East Dulwich and Village Wards. This demand would appear to peak in 2015 and then decline back to levels approaching those predicted for next year and for which we have sufficient capacity within the existing system.

A paper will be brought to Executive in November that details issues relating to the pressures on places across the borough in the light of the demographic changes being experienced in Southwark. This paper will also give details of the options available to the Executive for meeting these challenges.

NB These figures were based on data as of 14th September 2009. A further 24 late applications have been received since that point: all have been placed in one of their preferred choices.

One hour bus ticket proposal

At council assembly on Wednesday July 8 2009 a motion on a one hour bus ticket proposal was proposed by Councillor Caroline Pidgeon and seconded by Councillor Kyriacou. The motion was subsequently amended and the amended motion stands referred to the executive as a recommendation.

Recommendation

1. That this council believes in affordable public transport and in the need to ensure that passengers who use "Pay As You Go" Oystercards have a fair deal.
2. That council notes that in other European capital cities bus passengers have the benefit of a time-limited bus ticket which enables them to use two or three buses within a set time without having to pay again.
3. That council notes that almost a million car journeys every day in London are less than one mile in length, and supports effective ways of encouraging modal shift to public transport.
4. That council views with concern at this time of economic recession that even short journeys in London may involve using two or three buses and can cost up to £3.00 if more than one bus is needed.
5. That council notes that the average bus journey length is 3.54 km (2.2 miles, 9 stops), and that Transport for London estimate that 16% of bus journeys on Oyster 'Pay As You Go' involve using a second bus within 60 minutes of the first.
6. That council commends the proposal for a One Hour Bus Ticket to be available on "Pay As You Go" Oystercard, enabling passengers to use more than one bus during a 60-minute period without paying more than £1.00.
7. That council calls on the leader of the council and the lead executive member for transport to write to the Mayor of London promoting the One Hour Bus Ticket proposal; and to ask the Mayor of London to request that Transport for London investigates the practicalities of implementing such a scheme.
8. That council assembly also notes the extremely low take-up of the income support and job seeker allowance half price fares scheme in Southwark. It notes that take-up for those on job seekers allowance is 3.14% in Southwark and for income support is 2.02%.
9. That council assembly calls on the executive to explore ways to promote this scheme more widely, for instance by including an article in Southwark Life, Southwark Housing News and other council publications and ensuring information is available in One Stop Shops, housing offices, libraries and leisure centres.

Comments of the Strategic Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods

The council supports a more flexible approach to ticketing particularly for use of the borough's bus network. Southwark has a high reliance on bus services with a number of popular journeys requiring changing between services placing a financial burden on those making these journeys.

The current ticketing operation disadvantages those making these complex short journeys and the introduction of a one hour bus ticket is supported.