

Item No. 5.2	Classification: Open	Date: 21 January 2015	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.

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 ADELE MORRIS (Seconded by Councillor Ben Johnson)

Tackling empty homes in Southwark

1. Council assembly:
 - 1) Notes the projected rise in the borough's population within the next twenty years and the need to ensure sufficient housing as part of the borough's housing strategy and the new Southwark Plan.
2. Council assembly also:
 - 1) Agrees that minimising the number of empty homes in the borough will also be a key way of ensuring the maximum number of homes for Southwark residents.
 - 2) Notes recent trends in similar inner London boroughs for up to one third of new developments to be left empty as 'buy to leave' investment opportunities.
 - 3) Welcomes the new powers given to local authorities by the government to charge additional council tax for second and long-term empty homes.
3. Council assembly therefore calls on the cabinet to:
 - 1) Identify ways the council's planning powers could be used to ensure future new homes in Southwark do not stay empty for more than three months.
 - 2) Increase the number of existing empty homes in the borough that are charged council tax.
 - 3) Support calls for the qualifying period for charging the empty home premium to be reduced from two years to one and for the amount to be increased from 150% to 200% council tax.
 - 4) Enforce existing planning policies, such as car parking restrictions, density levels and building heights, to ensure that new housing meets the needs of existing residents and not properties that only investors can afford.

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

2. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR REBECCA LURY (Seconded by Councillor Kieron Williams)

Local government devolution

1. Council assembly believes that local government has significant potential to shape outcomes for residents and to positively change the lives of people in our borough. Therefore, council assembly believes that local

government is best placed to deliver services to residents to meet local need.

2. Local government has proved itself as the most efficient part of government. Local authorities are continuing to delivering services, balance budgets and grow local economies while at the same time making huge savings, following government cuts of up to 30% of councils' budgets.
3. The devolution of public health to local authorities has been a welcome first step towards delivering better health outcomes and a more joined up approach to health and social care. Council assembly notes the efforts of this administration to put public health in Southwark at the front and centre of the council's priorities in every area, including transport, housing, leisure and environment.
4. Council assembly believes giving local government greater control over health and welfare spending has the potential to tackle health inequalities locally, to deliver better services and to save taxpayers money.
5. Council assembly calls on cabinet to work with other London boroughs and the Mayor of London to lobby government to be less centralist and to introduce greater devolution to local authorities in London. Council assembly further calls on cabinet to write to the Secretary of State for Health and the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to call for the devolution of greater health and welfare powers to local government, in order to improve service delivery and local accountability.

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	Andrew Weir 020 7525 7222

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Ian Millichap, Constitutional Manager
Report Author	Andrew Weir, Constitutional Officer
Version	Final
Dated	5 January 2015