

Item No. 3.2	Classification: Open	Date: 25 November 2020	Meeting Name: Council Assembly
Report title:		Motion on the Theme: Resilient Southwark: responding to the ongoing pandemic	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Proper Constitutional Officer	

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The theme for this meeting is Resilient Southwark: responding to the ongoing pandemic.

The relevant cabinet member shall submit a motion on the theme. All other political groups on the council are allowed to submit one amendment to the motion. The cabinet member's motion and the amendments do not need to be seconded. The cabinet member will present the motion to the meeting, followed by the lead opposition spokesperson's response and moving of their amendment, if any. Following this, the subject matter of the theme will be open to debate. Amendment(s) from other opposition groups on the council can be moved during this part of the meeting.

Motion from Councillor Kieron Williams, Leader of the Council

1. Council assembly notes that:
 - a. Covid-19 continues to have a significant and negative impact on the borough and our residents; particularly for the most vulnerable (such as those over the age of 80) and black, Asian and minority ethnic communities.
 - b. we are currently in the second wave of the virus and back in national lockdown, and the number of deaths due to Covid-19 are increasing exponentially each week.
2. Council Assembly further notes:
 - a. After an initial period where Southwark Council responded quickly and effectively to the first wave in partnership with the borough's voluntary and community sectors, the council is now working to build Covid-19 resilience into its long term plans, prevent the further spread of the virus, and protect residents from an even deadlier third or fourth wave.
 - b. The Council Plan refresh makes it clear that Covid-19 response and resilience is a central part of the council's fabric.
 - c. As of 4 November 2020, Southwark Council has taken the following steps towards Covid-19 recovery:
 - Financially supported over 5,000 families with the Southwark Emergency Support Scheme.

- Rehoused 763 residents who were formerly sleeping rough, following the success of the initial 'Everyone In' movement.
 - Created an Economic Renewal Plan to ensure that businesses, high streets and town centres are able to recover from the pandemic, which includes measures such as distributing millions of pounds of grants, changing public spaces to enable social distancing (in over 100 locations), and providing marshals to reopen high streets safely.
- d. In order to prevent the spread of Covid-19 and in the absence of a well-managed government system, Southwark Council has stepped up to provide a local Test and Trace programme, increasing the overall follow up contact rate from 60% to over 85% since this began – amongst the highest follow-up rates for the 32 London boroughs.
3. Council assembly further notes the government's incompetence and failure to:
- control the virus and bring down infection rates with an effective Test and Trace system; instead rolling out a system which does not meet its own self-set targets, loses crucial data and rakes in profits for private companies.
 - provide sufficient financial support to individuals throughout the pandemic; by switching and doubling back on furlough policy last minute, excluding thousands of new starters from eligibility criteria, and disregarding those who are self-employed or freelance.
 - work with capable and local authorities as partners and involve them in planning and delivery; instead leaving them in the dark and facing huge funding gaps.
4. Council assembly puts on record its thanks to:
- all council staff, the NHS, community groups, other partners and residents for their incredible resilience and support throughout the pandemic.
5. Council assembly calls on cabinet to:
- a. Continue to work with partners to protect and support residents during this second wave and second national lockdown.
- b. Lobby the government to:
- properly fund the NHS and local authority Public Health teams - not failing corporations - to run a fully functioning test, trace, isolate and support system which will guarantee everyone in our community (including those in care homes) are able to access a test and receive the results quickly. This should incorporate full sick pay for those testing positive, allowing them to self-isolate, and hotels for vulnerable people to self-isolate when someone in their household has tested positive.
 - give financial security and peace of mind to those who have lost their jobs by extending the furlough scheme until the end of the year, and launch an emergency support package for the

hardest hit sectors, including culture, leisure, arts, and hospitality.

- avoid a ‘poverty pandemic’ by raising the Local Housing Allowance to cover the cost of renting a basic private rented home and suspending the benefits cap, and increase Universal Credit and other legacy benefit payments by £20 per week to alleviate fuel poverty this winter.
- reinstate the ‘Everyone In’ rough sleeping policy until at least the end of March 2021, including suspending the no recourse to public funds (NRPF) rules which trap people on the streets.
- deliver a full support package for schools; to include funding which covers the cost of staying open safely, cover for teachers who are self-isolating, and distribution of enough laptops so that all children who are self-isolating can study from home.
- provide proper financial support for local authorities and help cover the ‘coronavirus deficit’ that has emerged through increased expenditure and loss of revenue for councils – a forecast £11m this financial year for Southwark alone.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Cabinet members motion	Constitutional Team 160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Andrew Weir 020 7525 7222

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Chidilim Agada, Head of Constitutional Services
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