

Subject: Motions

Report to: London Assembly (Plenary)

Report of: Executive Director of Secretariat

Date: 2 November 2016

This report will be considered in public

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Assembly is asked to consider the motions set out which have been submitted by Assembly Members.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **That the Assembly considers the motions submitted by Assembly Members as set out below.**

3. Issues for Consideration

- 3.1 The following motion has been proposed in the name of **Caroline Russell AM** and will be seconded by Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM:

“The Assembly notes that whilst same-sex couples are able to form a civil partnership, different-sex couples cannot.

The Assembly acknowledges that approximately one in five households in London consist of a cohabiting different-sex couple.

The Assembly believes that the current legal situation which prevents different-sex couples from forming a civil partnership is unfair and prevents these couples from being able to get legal recognition for their relationship in a way that matches their values.

The Assembly recognises that City Hall has often been at the forefront of efforts to extend rights and liberties: in 2000 it introduced the first ever registration scheme for same-sex couples.

The Assembly calls on the Mayor to support the equal civil partnerships campaign and urges him to make representations to the government for a change in the law if the Court of Appeal rejects Rebecca Steinfeld and Charles Keidan’s appeal against the High Court’s decision to reject their application to form a civil partnership.”

- 3.2 The following motion has been proposed in the name of **Sian Berry AM** and will be seconded by Tom Copley AM:

“London has over two million citizens in private rented accommodation. Shelter estimates private renting will grow to 41 per cent of all households by 2025 – becoming bigger than the owner occupied sector in London for the first time since the mid-1960s.¹

However, conditions in these homes are not provided at a consistently high standard by landlords, and those moving home are required to pay considerable fees and do not always get a high standard of service from letting agents.

Current regulation of the sector, including licensing of landlords in certain areas and enforcement of letting agent and landlord conduct, is the responsibility of borough councils who do not have the resources to ensure a consistent level of quality and service to renters.

Extensive devolved powers have been given to the Welsh and Scottish Governments to improve standards within the private rented sector, with benefits for landlords in terms of training, as well as for renters in – for example – not being required to cover letting agent fees in Scotland. London would benefit from being able to apply consistent standards such as these at a strategic London level.

This Assembly notes the Mayor’s current efforts to seek greater devolved powers from Government to improve the private rented sector in London. We believe, however, that these current negotiations may not go far enough in securing the powers London needs to resolve the problems in the private rented sector.

This Assembly therefore resolves to ask the Mayor to continue to press the Government for the devolution of more powers over the private sector in London, and to ask his team to meet with their counterparts in Wales and Scotland to learn about the benefits of new powers there as they come into force.”

- 3.3 The following motion has been proposed in the name of **Steve O’Connell AM** and will be seconded by Leonie Cooper AM:

“The Assembly notes that the Dangerous Dogs Act (1991) is 25 years old this year. It is noted that the Metropolitan Police will destroy around 300 dogs that have been seized by its officers this year. The Status Dog Unit, a special team of police officers only dealing with dangerous dogs, has seen a 7% increase in seizures in 2016.

The Act’s aim, to use Breed Specific Legislation (BSL) (as applied through s1) to prohibit certain types of dog has not reduced dog bite incidents or the number of prohibited types of dog. The Assembly accepts that BSL has not had a positive impact on improving human safety or protecting dog welfare.

¹ Shelter’s estimate was given in evidence to the Housing Committee:
<https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Rent%20Reforms%20-%20Making%20the%20Private%20Rented%20Sector%20Fit%20for%20Purpose%20Final.pdf>

The Assembly notes that other authorities have started to review and overturn BSL such as the Netherlands, Italy, Lower Saxony and Victoria, Australia and have identified other ways of reducing dog bite incidents.

The Assembly calls on the Mayor to write to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs asking for a formal review of the legislation as proposed by the RSPCA and for London bodies such as the Metropolitan Police, Battersea Dogs & Cats Home, the stray dog services of the London Boroughs and relevant non-governmental organisations to be part of this review.”

- 3.4 The following motion has been proposed in the name of **Fiona Twycross AM** and will be seconded by Andrew Dismore AM:

“This Assembly is deeply concerned by the low-pay and unethical practices that characterise large parts of London’s hospitality sector, with research undertaken by Unite the Union showing that 63 per cent of workers in hotels and restaurants are paid less than the London Living Wage.²

The hospitality and tourism industry is an essential component of London’s economy. More than 30m UK and international tourists visited London in 2015, contributing £15bn to the U.K economy.³ This Assembly notes that staff turnover costs hospitality employers in London £274 million annually. This situation is likely to be exacerbated by the consequences of Brexit, with one in eight employees in London coming from the European Economic Area (EEA), a third of which make up a third of employees in London’s accommodation and food services.⁴

This Assembly believes that hotel chains operating in the capital have a social and moral responsibility to treat their workers ethically. That means paying staff a wage they can live on; providing safe, secure work and guaranteed hours every week; and offering training, development, and career opportunities. Ethical treatment of staff leads to greater productivity, staff retention and a more positive image to promote, which translates in to significant savings for business.

This Assembly calls on the Mayor to encourage the hospitality industry to improve conditions and promote best practice similar to conditions in New York where room attendants receive a pay of at least £16 per hour.⁵ The Assembly also calls on the Mayor to undertake an evidence-led review of the financial benefits to the hospitality sector of paying the London Living Wage and pursuing employment practices that encourage workers to remain within the industry.”

- 3.5 The following motion has been proposed in the name of **Fiona Twycross AM** and will be seconded by Leonie Cooper AM:

“This Assembly is deeply concerned about Newsquest South London’s plans to significantly reduce its workforce, and at a time when resources for news provision across the capital are already considerably stretched.

² London’s Poverty Profile, [Low paid jobs by industry](#), date accessed 13.10.2016

³ London and Partners, [Leisure Tourism](#)

⁴ The Social Market Foundation, (May 2016), [Working Together? The impact of the EU referendum on UK employers](#), Pg. 5

⁵ The Guardian, (20.09.2015), Life as a hotel chambermaid: ‘If I didn’t finish in time, I had to work unpaid until I did’, date accessed 13.10.2016

The newsroom restructure will result in just 12 reporters covering news, sport and leisure across 11 newspapers and eight websites under a single content editor. Seven reporters have resigned over the plans and others face redundancy.

In addition to the reduction of the number of newsroom staff, the working conditions of those that remain with Newsquest will be severely compromised. This includes the following newspapers: The Croydon Guardian, Sutton Guardian, Epsom Guardian, Wimbledon Guardian, Wandsworth Guardian, Balham and Tooting Guardian, Mitcham and Morden Guardian, Kingston Guardian, Surrey Comet, Elmbridge Comet, the Richmond & Twickenham Times and The News Shopper – for Lewisham, Greenwich, Bexley and Bromley.

This Assembly believes that newsroom staff across the city provide an essential service informing the public and raising their awareness of key issues in their local areas. They serve as a valuable means of engaging individuals with the democratic process, informing Londoners of the work we do here at the London Assembly. To lose or greatly compromise the ability of newsroom staff to continue to serve the public in this way would be regrettable. London needs quality local newspapers to ensure democratic scrutiny, accountability, and to encourage an informed and active citizenship – these proposals do not provide that.

This Assembly calls on the Mayor to continue to engage with the NUJ and Newsquest in this dispute to find a solution that maintains the quality of the South London Press publications, and commit to look at ways in which local newspaper provision can be supported in London.”

- 3.6 The following motion has been proposed in the name of **Tom Copley AM** and will be seconded by Jennette Arnold OBE AM:

“This Assembly is concerned about the Government’s proposals to remove the 50 per cent cap on religiously selective admissions for all religious free schools and the impact this would have on diversity within London’s schools.

Since 2007, a 50 per cent cap on religiously selective admissions has been in place for new academies and free schools which select by religion. The Government’s proposals intend to remove the 50 per cent rule and in its place, introduce measures that are less likely to increase diversity in faith schools.

The Government's own data show that religious schools which are 100% selective by faith are less diverse in terms of both race and social class than religious schools where the 50% cap is in place.

This Assembly believes that it is important for schools to serve the local communities in which they are located. The Mayor has released a statement in which he said selection leads to segregation and appointed a Deputy Mayor for Social Integration to help ensure Londoners from different faiths, ethnicities, backgrounds and social classes are better integrated in a city that is the most diverse in the country.

This Assembly calls on the Mayor to make representations to the Government to keep the 50% cap in place.

This Assembly asks for the Deputy Mayor for Social Integration to examine the effects of the Government’s proposals on diversity in London and to look at ways in which we can ensure that

London's schools are fully inclusive and to lobby the Government on their proposals."

List of appendices to this report: None.

| |
|---|
| Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 |
| List of Background Papers: None. |
| Contact Officer: Vishal Seegoolam, Principal Committee Manager Telephone: 020 7983 4425 Email: vishal.seegoolam@london.gov.uk |