COUNCIL ASSEMBLY

(ANNUAL MEETING)

WEDNESDAY 22 MAY 2013

QUESTIONS ON REPORTS

ITEM 3.2 - ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMITTEES, COMMUNITY COUNCILS, PANELS AND RELATED MATTERS - 2013/14

1. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR ROSIE SHIMELL

What work has the council done to measure satisfaction levels with the current community council system?

RESPONSE

At each community council meeting, those attending are encouraged to complete an evaluation form which asks them how satisfied they are and elicits suggestions for improvement. After the meeting, this is collated and fed back to the chair and vice chair. In addition to this an annual review is produced and in order to assist in this process, officers are currently undertaking a questionnaire to all attendees and the results of this will be presented to the chairs and vice chairs of community councils meeting scheduled for 3 July 2013.

This feedback is used to make improvements to meetings. Examples of changes implemented from residents' feedback have been to hold meeting on Saturdays and rotating venues on a regular basis. All community council areas have developed forward plans to deliver more themed meetings and are taking residents views into account when setting agendas.

2. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR PODDY CLARK

Please list the attendance for each community council area for each meeting in the last two years?

RESPONSE

Attendance details for the last two years is set out in the following two tables:

Table 1: Data for 2011-2012 year (x 8 community councils)

Community Council	Meeting Date	Headcount
Bermondsey	24 January 2011	73
Bermondsey	9 March 2011	53
Bermondsey	3 May 2011	68
Bermondsey	9 June 2011	54
Bermondsey	13 September 2011	54
Bermondsey	10 November 2011	104
Rotherhithe	20 January 2011	31
Rotherhithe	3 March 2011	48
Rotherhithe	27 April 2011	56

Community Council	Meeting Date	Headcount
Rotherhithe	15 June 2011	42
Rotherhithe	14 September 2011	70
Rotherhithe	2 November 2011	55
Borough and Bankside	03 February 2013	41
Borough and Bankside	09 March 2013	54
Borough and Bankside	03 May 2013	49
Borough and Bankside	15 June 2013	38
Borough and Bankside	13 September 2013	23
Borough and Bankside	07 November 2013	55
Walworth	24 January 2013	75
Walworth	01 March 2013	58
Walworth	03 May 2013	97
Walworth	02 July 2013	150
Walworth	14 September 2013	54
Walworth	02 November 2013	93
Camberwell	02 February 2011	38
Camberwell	20 April 2011	40
Camberwell	22 June 2011	98
Camberwell	22 September 2011	41
Camberwell	31 October 2011	86
Dulwich	24 January 2011	40
Dulwich	08 March 2011	41
Dulwich	28 April 2011	52
Dulwich	08 June 2011	44
Dulwich	15 September 2011	79
Dulwich	07 November 2011	163
Nunhead and Peckham Rye	20 January 2011	30
Nunhead and Peckham Rye	03 March 2011	71
Nunhead and Peckham Rye	11 May 2011	30
Nunhead and Peckham Rye	22 June 2011	103
Nunhead and Peckham Rye	19 September 2011	73
Nunhead and Peckham Rye	10 November 2011	47
Nunhead and Peckham Rye	12 January 2012	44
Peckham	05 February 2011	104
Peckham	02 March 2011	34
Peckham	12 May 2011	150+
Peckham	12 July 2011	63
Peckham	21 September 2011	46
Peckham	31 October 2011	63
Peckham	10 January 2012	67

Table 2: Data for 2012-2013 meeting cycle (x5 meetings)

Community council	Meeting Date	Headcount
Bermondsey and Rotherhithe	12 July 2012	80
Bermondsey and Rotherhithe	10 October 2012	90
Bermondsey and Rotherhithe	30 January 2013	86
Bermondsey and Rotherhithe	12 March 2013	76
Bermondsey and Rotherhithe	29 April 2013	71
Camberwell	20 June 2012	85
Camberwell	24 September 2012	65

Community council	Meeting Date	Headcount
Camberwell	21 November 2012	78
Camberwell	13 February 2013	84
Camberwell	17 April 2013	69
Dulwich	26 June 2012	42
Dulwich	18 September 2012	82
Dulwich	27 November 2012	73
Dulwich	30 January 2013	51
Dulwich	22 April 2013	53
Peckham & Nunhead	20 June 2012	50
Peckham & Nunhead	24 September 2013	110
Peckham & Nunhead	21 November 2013	110
Peckham & Nunhead	02 March 2013	95
Peckham & Nunhead	17 April 2013	90
Walworth, Borough & Bankside	02-Jul-12	107
Walworth, Borough & Bankside	10 January 2012	94
Walworth, Borough & Bankside	08/12/2012	71
Walworth, Borough & Bankside	26 February 2013	135
Walworth, Borough & Bankside	22 April 2013	86

The democracy commission meeting held in September 2011 received a report on attendance at community councils. This showed areas of overlap of attendance between Bermondsey and Rotherhithe (20 people on average) and to a lesser extent between Peckham and Nunhead and Peckham Rye (three people on average). If these are taken into account the numbers attending have remained constant after the change.

3. **QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR JAMES BARBER**

Will the leader consider returning to eight community council areas and allowing chairs to manage the existing budget more efficiently?

RESPONSE

The cost of returning to eight community councils with their previous functions will cost £344,000 per year. At a time when we have to make savings due to massive cuts from the Tory/Liberal Democrat government, I cannot support the Liberal Democrats' call to hike spending on community councils to over £1.3 million per year.

As Councillor Barber knows, we consulted extensively on this when making this budget decision and people told us that all areas including the budget for meetings like community councils had to take their fair share of the reductions necessary to meet these cuts. The 25% saving we made was in line with other budgets. Despite this we have been able to devolve more funding than ever before to community councils to give local people more say on local spending. This includes the new cleaner greener safer revenue fund that the current administration introduced. Any further devolution of the existing community council budgets for local management would be minimal, for example negotiating room hire costs for meetings, and so I would not accept that this will make budget management more efficient.

4.   QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR ADELE MORRIS

What percentage of planning applications has been decided by planning sub-committees in 2012/13? How does this compare to the percentage decided by community councils in 2011/12?

RESPONSE

In 2012/13 1.92% of planning applications were decided by planning sub-committee, with 1.35% decided by planning committee.

In 2011/12 5.56% of planning applications were decided by community councils, with 2.64% decided by planning committee.

The principle reason for this change is the change in the delegation authority to officers which changed at the same time as the change from community councils to planning sub-committees.