

Appendix1

Suggestions from all groups involved in the review about the future direction of Community Councils in Southwark.

Suggestions have been grouped (loosely), partly to reflect the tensions apparent, also at national level, between the community representation, participation and engagement, and the related rationales of effective council administration and effective capacity building.

Consultation / Council Administration

- Delegation of revenue budgets relating to the environment.
- Delegation of other service related budgets were seen to be too tight, or problematic for other reasons. CC can't be about: consultation on SBC budget, council tax etc, they are not representative enough
- CCs should not be used for borough-wide consultation which will detract from the local agenda.
- Involve head Teachers of local schools – discussion of OFSTED reports at CCs – themed meetings around education issues?
- Use CCs for consulting on all projects affecting a locality
- Create 'mini-councils' – offices of services of the council? – Community Council Offices – changes to SBC structure and staffing – reflecting need for a localised point of contact for public
- Involve community wardens closely
- Increase the scope of what can be discussed housing repairs and Major Works, road repairs, Chairs and Vice Chairs to discuss – (risk of swamping?)
- More delegated powers re mainstream environmental and highway and traffic budgets, duty to review reports on local school issues, input into School Organisation Plan, etc

- Use to work on developing medium to long term strategies - but may lose people who are only interested in locality issues
- Better linking of public intervention items with member decision items
- Potential to look at an area holistically from the lived experience instead of departmental boundaries
- Before start of meeting – reduce officer time at meetings, reduce time in meeting spent on an individuals issues – complaints enquiries
- Involve people electronically – website and chat rooms

Community involvement

- Continued participation dependent on what people get out of it, Can't always be about bins and trees, people will want to move beyond that
- Residents will want greater involvement
- Engaging people in civic renewal (PUB)
- Lack of involvement of young people
- Make appointments to boards of charities to encourage different people to get involved
- Link to Neighbourhood forums (tenants views are to be considered)
- Should CCs be part of a wider more complex approach to engagement – do people want to have to engage – will some people only want to engage periodically and if necessary?
- Are other services and issues too centrally driven from government to be directed locally?
- Links to other community networks

Community Development

- They are for giving real ownership and power to the people

- Potential (beginning to happen) for local residents to discover mutual interests - across adjacent neighbourhoods.
- Work out relationships to other forums and community development work.
- Community group stalls and promotion of community groups eg youth theatre groups, sports groups – help them extend their reach
- Need to link with community development work for electing resident representatives to Southwark Alliance and emerging community structures (emailed info from EM)
- Devolving power to the local community
- Should they be part of a strategy for capacity building?
- Is capacity building and community development a long-term reality?

Partnership working

- Involve the voluntary sector.
- Liaison with London Government

Vision

- Sustainable for now, may risk sliding, need a longer term vision?
- Is a serious sophisticated debate on the way forward needed? Should CCs be made more demanding, could they be made more demanding?
- Have we got a vision of the future for the borough and the Council that CC fit into?

Performance Management

- Will CPA require harder measures of performance?