

## Democracy Commission

Monday 14 November 2011

7.00 pm

Ground Floor Meeting Room G01B - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

### Membership

Councillor Abdul Mohamed (Chair)  
Councillor Columba Blango  
Councillor Mark Glover  
Councillor Michael Mitchell  
Councillor Helen Morrissey  
Councillor Paul Noblet  
Councillor Cleo Soanes

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### INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS

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#### Contact:

Tim Murtagh on 020 7525 7187 or email: [tim.murtagh@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:tim.murtagh@southwark.gov.uk)

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Members of the panel are summoned to attend this meeting

**Annie Shepperd**

Chief Executive

Date: 7 November 2011



# Democracy Commission

Monday 14 November 2011

7.00 pm

Ground Floor Meeting Room G01B - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

## Order of Business

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1.	<b>INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME BY THE CHAIR</b>	
2.	<b>APOLOGIES</b>	
3.	<b>ITEMS OF BUSINESS THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT</b>	
	The chair to advise whether they have agreed to any items of urgent business being admitted to the agenda.	
4.	<b>MINUTES</b>	1 - 4
	To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2011.	
5.	<b>UPDATE OF CONSULTATION WITH RESIDENTS ON REVIEW OF COMMUNITY COUNCILS</b>	
	Report to follow	
6.	<b>SHAPING THE RECOMMENDATIONS: SUMMARY OF OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF COMMUNITY COUNCILS</b>	5 - 10
7.	<b>SHOWING FILMS AT COUNCIL ASSEMBLY</b>	11 - 14
8.	<b>PUBLIC COMMENTS</b>	
	Opportunity for residents in attendance to comment on any matters raised during the meeting.	



## DEMOCRACY COMMISSION

MINUTES of the Democracy Commission held on Thursday 22 September 2011 at 7.00 pm at Ground Floor Meeting Room G01B - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

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**PRESENT:** Councillor Abdul Mohamed (Chair)  
Councillor Michael Mitchell  
Councillor Helen Morrissey  
Councillor Cleo Soanes

**OFFICER SUPPORT:** Ian Millichap, Constitutional Manager  
Alexa Coates, Principal Constitutional Officer  
Simon Godfrey, Residential Involvement Senior  
Ebony Riddell Bamber, Community Participation Manager  
Darryl Telles, Neighbourhoods Manager  
Tim Murtagh, Constitutional Officer

### 1. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME BY THE CHAIR

Councillor Abdul Mohamed welcomed councillors, officers and residents to the meeting.

### 2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received by Stephen Douglass.

### 3. ITEMS OF BUSINESS THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

There were none.

### 4. MINUTES

#### RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 August 2011 be agreed as a correct record of the meeting, and signed by the chair.

In response to a query from Councillor Mitchell, Ian Millichap stated that the email to Councillor Mitchell regarding the budget contained the confirmed savings figure of £344,000.

Councillor Mitchell said he would arrange a meeting with Stephen Douglass in early October, to clarify the budget figures that were discussed at the August Democracy Commission meeting.

Councillor Soanes said she would discuss the matter of filming Council Assembly with Ian Millichap. It would be considered at a future Democracy Commission meeting.

## **5. AREA HOUSING FORUMS AND COMMUNITY COUNCILS**

Simon Godfrey introduced the report.

He said that many of the residents who attend area housing forums also go to their local community council meetings. In his view the meetings should continue as separate to avoid overloading them with items. He added that the funding for Tenants and Residents Associations in Southwark came from a levy on the rent which was unusual.

Members noted the report.

## **6. SPONSORSHIP OF COMMUNITY COUNCILS**

Darryl Telles introduced the report.

He highlighted that any sponsorship must not be seen as an inducement. The example of community council planning meetings was discussed and how a neutral observer may perceive sponsorship by a local business being given so as to further their business ends. Perception was important and anything negative could undermine the committees. There was a possibility of exploring volunteering at meetings and perhaps specific match funding to enhance the community council fund.

Members noted the report and asked for the local giving model to be looked at and included as a recommendation in the draft report as an issue requiring exploration.

## **7. CONSULTATION WITH RESIDENTS ON REVIEW OF COMMUNITY COUNCILS**

Ebony Riddell Bamber introduced the report. A short presentation was tabled.

Ebony explained that there had been a disappointing response to the questionnaires with only 21 received. It had been taken again to the September round of community council meetings and any additional questionnaires received would be reported to the next meeting.

The feedback and common themes were summarised in the report. The report was noted.

## **8. AREA COMMITTEES IN OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES**

Ebony Riddell Bamber introduced the report which looked at the area forum models of some inner London and outer London boroughs as well as those in other parts of the UK.

There was no comparable structure in inner London to the Southwark model. The tendency was towards some devolved budget. The broader picture was away from formal decision making and towards engagement meetings between councillors and local people.

Councillor Mitchell said that Southwark was leading the country and others should be encouraged to move in Southwark's direction.

Members noted the report and thanked Ebony for the very informative report.

## **9. ANALYSIS OF RESIDENTS THAT ATTEND COMMUNITY COUNCILS IN DIFFERENT AREAS**

Ebony Riddell Bamber introduced the item and said that few residents attended more than one community council. The exception was Bermondsey and Rotherhithe areas where there were about 20 residents who go to both. There were smaller overlaps of 4 residents between Borough & Bankside and Walworth meetings, and 3 residents between Peckham and Nunhead & Peckham Rye community councils.

Members noted the report.

## **10. FEEDBACK ON DEMOCRACY COMMISSION ITEM AT SEPTEMBER ROUND OF COMMUNITY COUNCILS**

Ebony Riddell Bamber explained that the item had gone to most community councils. Bermondsey had opted not to consider the item, whilst Nunhead and Peckham Rye would discuss it in November.

Residents said that savings should be made on PA equipment, venue costs, reduced publicity and fewer planning meetings.

Members said that discussing meetings was a dry topic for many and that may explain the low number of responses. Engagement and keeping meetings interesting was very important. A Saturday meeting in Walworth was highlighted, where young people were given a free role and had transformed the dynamic of the meeting to positive effect.

Members thanked the officers for the work undertaken in taking this item to community councils.

## **11. SHAPING THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

Ian Millichap introduced this item. In the workplan the next meeting would discuss draft recommendations and the purpose of this item was to seek an initial steer in order to draft a report. A range of topics had been covered during the Democracy Commission meetings

and several areas for savings discussed. Among those were: changes to the planning committees, staffing, fewer meetings, fewer areas, PA, venues, food, school governors, CPZs and publicity.

In some of these areas the commission had come to some consensus. Referring to item 8 on Area Committees in other Local Authorities, Ian Millichap suggested one issue the commission may wish to consider is the balance between community engagement and decision making aspects of community councils. Item 8 demonstrates the various approaches adopted in other authorities.

The chair asked for a summary of the various potential areas for savings and the relevant figures that may be achieved by changing each. The Democracy Commission could then view the bigger picture and decide on recommendations. It may be that members consider the functions needed and then the resources could be allocated for those.

Officers undertook to produce a summary report with various permutations for consideration by members. Stephen Douglass would need to be involved with the report on his return from leave.

Ian Millichap explained that the scheduled October and November meetings would need to be brought forward so that recommendations had the appropriate time to go forward to cabinet. New dates would be circulated.

## **12. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no members of the public present.

## **13. PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM OPTIONS**

This report was considered in closed session, (see separate notes).

The meeting ended at 9.10pm

**CHAIR:**

**DATED:**

<b>Item No.</b> 6.	<b>Classification:</b> Open/Closed	<b>Date:</b> 14 November 2011	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Democracy Commission
<b>Report title:</b>		Shaping the recommendations: Summary of options for the future of community councils	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Strategic Director of Communities Law & Governance	

### RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Democracy Commission considers the options set out in the appendices.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The cabinet in January 2011 initiated the review of community councils and asked the Democracy Commission to identify savings of £344,000 as the community council contribution to council's budget savings. These savings will take effect in 2012/13. The commission is now due to report back to the cabinet in January 2012.
3. The Democracy Commission on 22 September 2011 considered the final evidence submitted to it as part of its review of community councils. There remains some consultation feedback to be received; this is from two community councils meetings and any additional questionnaire responses received by the date of the November meeting (an item is included elsewhere on the agenda). The commission also considered how it wished to consider shaping the recommendations. Having considered possible areas of consensus and those issues requiring further consideration, the commission asked that officers prepare a summary of options based on the evidence submitted to date for the next meeting.

### KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

#### Introduction

4. Appendix A sets out a summary of the options prepared for the commission to consider; the detailed options with costings are set out in the spreadsheets in Appendix B (see the closed agenda). It should be noted that these costings are estimates based on the evidence submitted to date. The summary of options is divided into two sections:
  - General Savings from the constitutional team and neighbourhood team budgets
  - Individual options – the general savings are included in most of the options.

The general savings reflect some of the areas of consensus such as school governor function decision making or specific savings identified by officers during the evidence gathering meetings of the commission.

### **Options**

5. The options in the spreadsheets are based on the following scenarios which are applied in different combinations:
  - Retain eight community councils
  - Retain same level of meetings
  - Reduce the number of meetings to five or four per annum
  - Reduce the number of community council to five
  - Reduce the level of neighbourhood support to community council meetings e.g. workshops, outreach work with sub-groups, special events such as job fairs.

### **Planning models**

6. In addition the various options for the planning function at community councils, considered by the commission on 8 July 2011, have also being applied in the various spreadsheets. The planning options are:
  - Model A – Retain the existing planning function at community councils
  - Model B – Delete the planning function from community councils
  - Model C – Establish one planning sub-committee to consider minor applications
  - Model D – Establish two planning sub-committees.
7. A fuller summary of the planning models is set out in Appendix C.

### **Shaping the recommendations**

8. The commission is now asked to review the options and provide a steer on which option(s) it would like officers to use as a basis for preparing its draft report. This draft report will be circulated in advance of and considered by the final scheduled meeting of the commission on 7 December 2011.
9. This will allow the commission to complete its report for cabinet in January 2012. In January 2011 the cabinet will consider report of the commission including proposals for identifying £344,000 savings.

### **Community impact statement**

10. The community councils are part of the council's programme of community engagement across the borough. The meetings, attended by local people, consider local issues including discussions and consultations on council wide issues and matters that affect the areas. The community councils also take some local decisions.



**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

<b>Background Papers</b>	<b>Held At</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Democracy Commission – Agenda and minutes – 8 August 2011 and 22 September 2011	Communities, Law & Governance, 160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Tim Murtagh 020 7525 7187

**APPENDICES**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Title</b>
Appendix A	Summary of options
Appendix B (see the closed agenda)	Options for community councils
Appendix C	Planning options and potential savings

**AUDIT TRAIL**

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Deborah Collins, Strategic Director of Communities Law & Governance	
<b>Report Author</b>	Stephen Douglass, Head of Community Engagement	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	3 November 2011	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments included</b>
Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	No	No
Finance Director	No	No
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	No	No
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>		4 November 2011

## SUMMARY OF OPTIONS

### GENERAL SAVINGS

- Constitutional
- Neighbourhoods

### OPTIONS:

**OPTION 1** - Retain 8 CC areas and same level of meetings held per annum

**OPTION 2** - Change boundaries to five CCs and retain six meetings per annum

**OPTION 3** - Retain 8 CCs and reduce the number of main meetings to 5 held per annum

**OPTION 4** - Retain 8 CCs and reduce the number of main meetings to 4 held per annum

**OPTION 5** - Retain 8 CC areas and same level of meetings, and reduce neighbourhood support. This option takes none of the general savings except for school governor's function.

**OPTION 6** - Retain 8 CC areas and the same level of meetings and reduce neighbourhood support. This option takes all the general savings.

**OPTION 7** - Change boundaries to five CCs, retain six meetings per annum and reduce neighbourhood support

**OPTION 8** - Change boundaries to five CCs, reduce to five meetings per annum and reduce neighbourhood support

**OPTION 9** - Change boundaries to five CCs, reduce to four meetings per annum and reduce neighbourhood support

**OPTION 10** - Retain 8 CCs, reduce the number of main meetings to 5 held per annum and reduce neighbourhood support

**OPTION 11** - Retain 8 CCs, reduce the number of main meetings to 4 held per annum and reduce neighbourhood support

## PLANNING OPTIONS AND POTENTIAL SAVINGS

Model	Description	Saving	Notes
A	Retain planning at community councils	0	
B	Delete planning from community councils	186,435	The maximum saving would require the majority of decisions currently taken by community councils to be delegated to officers. The savings are based on the percentage reductions from 70 community council meetings to the suggested sub-committee cycles.
C	Sub-committee model 1 (1 sub-committee, minor applications)	120,815	1 strategic planning committee (existing) and 1 sub-committee (minor applications). All committees would be proportional. The sub-committee would consider some of the applications considered by community councils which are referred by members. Meeting frequency 12 monthly meetings of the strategic planning committee 11 monthly sub-committee meetings.
D	Sub-committee model 2 (2 sub-committees)	92,238	2 alternatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1 strategic planning committee (existing) and 2 sub-committees with a fixed membership. It is suggested that the strategic planning committee has a distinct membership. All committees would be proportional. Membership of the sub-committees could be area based e.g. east and west sub-committees. Meeting frequency 12 monthly meetings of the strategic planning committee. 24 sub-committee meetings (12 per subcommittee).</li> <li>- 1 strategic planning committee (existing) and 2 sub-committees with a pooled membership. The chair or vice chair could chair individual meetings depending on availability. Disadvantages: More difficult to organise meetings with pooled membership. Additional administrative costs of organising meetings with a pooled membership. Reduces risk of meetings being inquorate or meetings not going ahead because of prejudicial interests or pre-determination (this currently impacts on community council meetings). Ensuring each sub-committee meetings is proportional and quorate would be difficult and resource intensive. Council could vote for an arrangement whereby the pool was proportionate but the individual membership of each sub-committee was not but this would require a constitutional amendment with no members voting against it. Meeting membership would be based on member availability on a rota basis. This model would possibly require two SRAs to the chairs; members may wish to consider reducing the SRA paid to community council chairs if they no longer consider planning applications. Members may wish to consider if it would be appropriate to paying an attendance allowance in a similar way to licensing sub-committees. Meeting frequency 12 monthly meetings of the strategic planning committee 24 sub-committee meetings (12 per sub-committee).</li> </ul>

**Note:** The table does not factor the level of Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) to be paid to sub-committee chairs. This could significantly reduce the savings proposed from the sub-committee models depending on the level of SRA paid.

### Detailed breakdown of the estimated savings

Savings Models A to D will deliver savings of varying degrees; some will deliver no savings at all. A more detailed breakdown of the estimated savings is set out in the table below:

Potential savings		Model A - Retain planning at community councils	Model B - Delete planning from community councils	Model C - Sub- committee model 1  (11 meetings)	Model D - Sub committee models 2 or 3  (24 meetings)
Security Services (Van hire etc)	£16,610	✘	✓	✓	✓
Hire of rooms/halls	£5,885	✘	✓	✓	✓
Legal Services for planning	£30,200	✘	✓	Partially £25,670	Partially £19,932
Printing and postage	£14,740	✘	✓	Partially £12,300	Partially £9,951
Staffing costs	£48,000	✘	✓	✓	✘
Departmental support costs - planning	£71,000	✘	✓	Partially £60,350	Partially £46,860
<b>Total</b>		<b>£0</b>	<b>£186,435</b>	<b>£120,815</b>	<b>£99,238</b>

#### Notes:

- 1) The maximum saving would require the majority of decisions currently taken by community councils to be delegated to officers. The savings are based on the percentage reductions from 70 community council meetings to the suggested sub-committee cycles.
- 2) Model 1 – 1 strategic planning committee and 1 subcommittee (minor applications)  
Model 2 - 1 strategic planning committee and 2 subcommittees with a fixed membership  
Model 3 - 1 strategic planning committee and 2 subcommittees with a pooled membership

<b>Item No.</b> 7.	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 14 November 2011	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Democracy Commission
<b>Report title:</b>		Showing Films at Council Assembly	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	

### RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Democracy Commission considers the report and survey feedback attached as Appendix A.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The meeting of the Democracy Commission on 22 September 2011 asked officers to look into the issue of showing films at council assembly meetings and report back to the next meeting. Officers have invited responses from a range of local authorities in London and beyond. The responses received to date are set out in Appendix A.
3. Currently the council assembly procedure rules in Southwark make no provision for the showing of films at meetings of the council assembly.

### KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

4. A short survey was circulated to a range of local authorities asking the following questions:
  1. Do you allow the use of films at full council meetings?
  2. If so, do you have any related protocol/guidance on content and author?

The responses received to date are set out in Appendix A.

5. In conclusion, the survey showed a small number of respondents said that occasionally films were shown (5 out of 15 respondents). One respondent stated that films had not been shown for a couple of years. The remaining 10 responses stated that the showing of films was not allowed (4 respondents) or the situation had not arisen (5 respondents) or it would involve the moving of a lot of people (1 respondent). Of the five respondents who stated the situation had not arisen, three respondents replied they probably would allow a film or presentation if it was related to a report or the content was suitable. Overall the majority of respondents had not or would not show a film (10 out of 15 respondents). None of the council's who responded had any guidance or protocol on this issue. Some respondents mentioned concerns at placing an additional burden on the limited time available at meetings.
6. In Southwark there are additional logistical considerations in that the venues used for council assembly do not always have the appropriate facilities to show films. Furthermore, because of the short time available to set up room

arrangements for council assembly it would place an extra constraint on making these preparations if a further task was added into an already congested time slot.

### Resource implications

7. There would be additional cost implications involved in the hiring of external equipment for use at venues or a fee for using facilities at a venue if films were to be shown at council assembly meetings.

### Community impact statement

8. The council assembly is a meeting open to the public and is preceded by an informal session focusing on the theme of the meeting. The members of the public can submit public questions and make deputation requests to enable them to have their say at meetings. However in a busy meeting these parts of the agenda are balance again opportunities for members to ask questions, debate of members' motions and consideration of any reports.

### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Southwark Constitution	On line	Lesley John 020 7525 7228

### APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix A	Survey on Showing films at Council Assembly – Feedback

### AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Stephen Douglass, Head of Community Engagement	
<b>Report Author</b>	Ian Millichap, Constitutional Manager	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	2 November 2011	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments included</b>
Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	No	No
Finance Director	No	No
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	No	No
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>		4 November 2011

## DEMOCRACY COMMISSION

## SURVEY ON SHOWING OF FILMS AT FULL COUNCIL MEETINGS

Local Authority	1. Do you allow the use of films at full council meetings?	2. If so, do you have any related protocol/guidance on content and author?
A	No	N/a
B	No	N/a
C	No	N/a
D	Unlikely as it would involve a lot of moving people around.	-
E	No - never happened in the last 6 years.	-
D	There is nothing prohibiting the use of visual presentations at meetings, but it is not something we usually find necessary.	Any presentations are only allowed at the discretion of the chair of the committee.
E	We do if it is relevant to business on the summons - but it takes the agreement of all the groups and currently, waiving of procedure rules, as there is no provision formally in place.	-
F	We do occasionally allow this - but rarely (as it eats into the time for council business).  As always, it has to be with the agreement of the Mayor first - and as a general rule for no longer than five minutes.	-
G	We have shown the very occasional film, usually when an external speaker (the last one was from Transport for London) has addressed the full council.	No
H	It hasn't arisen. We probably would if they were to expand/illustrate a report, although the layout of the room doesn't lend itself to this.	-
I	We have not shown films or indeed had any visual presentations at full council for a couple of years now.	No
J	No to date – the issue has not arisen.	No
K	The question has not arisen. I can not see anything against it provided that the	N/a

Local Authority	1. Do you allow the use of films at full council meetings?	2. If so, do you have any related protocol/guidance on content and author?
	content is suitable.	
L	We have the equipment to allow films to be shown at council meetings e.g. as part of a presentation but have not used them for that purpose although we often use them for presentations, including photographs.	No
M	We tend to show films etc either before council starts or we adjourn to allow a film to be shown.	-



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Ian Millichap, Constitutional Manager, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor, Hub 4, 160 Tooley Street	1
Ebony Riddell Bamber, Community Engagement, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor, Hub 2, 160 Tooley Street	1
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