

## **CAFE CONVERSATION**

### **What should the assembly debate and decide?**

Around 12 people participated in this cafe conversation. They introduced themselves as Southwark residents from Bermondsey, Dulwich, Bankside and Camberwell areas. A lively discussion was held; majority of the participant contributed the following points;

1. The assembly should discuss:
  - the reports from Scrutiny Committees
  - proposals and issues from the community councils – but how do you decide the ‘threshold’?
2. Focus on issues which the council can do something about or which affect the residents of Southwark
3. Assembly needs to discuss issues which are relevant to the public in Southwark, e.g. Regeneration, Housing, Youth and Older peoples issues and not ‘wastes its time’ on ‘political point scoring’
4. Needs to be a mature honest debate about the issues of resource allocation, especially in a period of budget reduction – more facts and figures.

At some point during the conversation, a couple of people felt that the topic is rather daft as the elected councillors actually only have the decision making powers and topics of debate cannot necessarily be influenced by the public. An Alternative topic was offered and agreed.

### **What decisions could be devolved from the assembly?**

Participants’ suggestions were:

- Cleaner, greener, safer budgets
- Local planning decisions
- S106 spend

### **General comments;**

- Make better use of the Community Councils – eight forums are better than one.
- People / residents want to be consulted before decisions are made, and the key to that knows in advance what’s coming up for decision.
- Need to publicise Community Councils better to attract new attendees – not the internet/email, other ways are needed.