

Estimated savings from reduced meetings

In 2011/12 6 main meetings have been scheduled per community council as that is the normal cycle for council meetings, the allocation of dates necessarily includes a deviation from the 6 week cycle to allow for school holidays, party conferences and other committed dates.

The table below sets out the estimated meeting savings if the number of main meetings is reduced. The current meeting level is included in the table and shows the savings proposed from the regulation of the meeting cycle to the normal 6 week cycle in 2011/12. No budget reduction has been made as a result of the change in 2011/12; any money saved this year will be available to support other initiatives on improving engagement in community councils for the current year. This sum is available to contribute to the overall saving sought by the commission.

The figures relate to savings from meeting costs only.

Number of main meetings per community council	Total main meetings supported	Level of meeting reduction	Estimated meeting cost saving
6	48	-	£23,234
5	40	28%	£46,468
4	32	42%	£69,703

Comments

- Reducing the frequency of meetings would potentially allow a large saving without reducing boundaries, although not to the same level. By way of comparison it is estimated £66,834* of main meeting costs could be saved by reducing from 8 to 5 community council areas
- Executive functions carried out by community councils such as Community Council Fund and traffic management decisions could probably all be taken with a quarterly meeting cycle.
- The effectiveness of some functions may need to be considered in a reduced meeting cycle, for example Cleaner, Greener, Safer.
- Agendas will need to be well managed and some portion of the meetings could be dedicated to particular local issues to ensure the meetings are responsive to local needs
- If a reduced number of meetings were recommended the impact on decisions taken by community councils would need to be considered to ensure time sensitive decisions can be taken in a revised community council model
- There would be some impact on public questions particularly the timescales of written responses at the next meeting. A solution could be to explore action tracking on the website to compensate for this
- SRA chairs are currently paid £8,357. The level may need to be re-considered as a result of any changes to the level of meetings
- The link to community councils and council assembly themes may change

*Note

This is a revised figure from the figure quoted in the boundaries paper considered by the Commission on 26 May 2011 which contained a typographical error. It should

have stated that if the number of Community Council areas were to be reduced to 5 the saving to main meetings would be £66,834 not £96,663 as previously stated. This would make a total meeting cost saving of £121,756 not £152,005 as stated in the report.