

Item No. 5.	Classification: Open	Date: 7 December 2011	Meeting Name: Democracy Commission
Report title:		Shaping the recommendations: Consideration of proposals and report	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Democracy Commission considers the proposals set out in the appendices.
2. That the Democracy Commission considers the officer draft report set out in the Appendix C.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. 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.
4. The Democracy Commission on 22 September 2011 considered the final evidence submitted to it as part of its review of community councils. 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 14 November meeting.
5. The meeting on the 14 November considered a summary of the options prepared for the commission to consider; detailing options with costing. It was reported that these costings are estimates based on the evidence submitted to date. The summary of options was 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 reflected some of the areas of consensus in areas such as decision making or specific savings identified by officers during the evidence gathering meetings of the commission.

Options

6. The options in the various spreadsheets were based on the following scenarios 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

7. In addition the various options for the planning function at community councils, considered by the commission on 8 July 2011, were also 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.
8. A separate report on planning issues will be circulated prior to the meeting.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Introduction

9. At the last meeting all political groups were invited to submit proposals for consideration at the December meeting. Two submissions have been received and these are set out in the appendices from the Labour Group and Conservative Group.

Shaping the recommendations

10. In considering its proposals the commission is also invited to review the officer draft report (see Appendix C). This draft report has been prepared based on evidence received to date, the views of the commission and discussions at the meeting on 14 November 2011.
11. This report revisits the key evidence presented to the commission over the past few months under the various thematic headings contained in the work plan. In order to facilitate the process of setting the recommendations, each section contains headings summarising:
 - Areas of consensus
 - Relevant input from the resident consultations in relation to each theme
 - Some draft recommendations and points for the commission to consider.

Areas for decision making

12. The following table sets out a matrix of the key areas for recommendation that the commission may wish to consider and a suggested order in which to take these. The decisions and options are based on the evidence submitted to date and the budget summary papers considered at the 14 November meeting.

Table 3: Summary of key issues for consideration

Issue	Savings	Issues to be considered
A	General Savings from the Constitutional Team and Neighbourhood Team	There are two figures based on whether or not the commission wishes to include school governor function in total with a saving of £10,895.
B	Boundaries and number of areas	<p>1. To decide to have a structure based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eight areas • Seven areas • Six areas • Five areas <p>1. If the number of areas is reduced, commission to consider new boundaries based on ward boundaries.</p>
C	Planning	<p>Four options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model A – Status quo – retain at community councils • Model B – Delete the function • Model C – One planning sub-committee • Model D – Two planning sub-committees. <p>If Model C or D selected further issues on the subject of sub-committee membership.</p>
D	Fewer main meetings	<p>To decide on the frequency of main meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six main meetings per annum • Five main meetings per annum • Four main meetings per annum.
E	Other issues	<p>Theses include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sponsorship • PA System

13. The commission is now asked to consider the submissions and provide a final steer on the option(s) and how this should be used as a basis for preparing its report.
14. 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

15. 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

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
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

No.	Title
Appendix A	Submission from Councillor Michael Mitchell (See closed agenda)
Appendix B	Submission from Labour Group (See closed agenda)
Appendix C	Officer Draft Report for the Commission
Appendix D	Planning Report (to follow)

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Deborah Collins, Strategic Director of Communities Law & Governance	
Report Author	Stephen Douglass, Head of Community Engagement	
Version	Final	
Dated	1 December 2011	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	No	No
Finance Director	No	No
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	2 December 2011	