

## Labour Group Submission

### 1. School Governor Appointments

As discussed by Commission members these decisions tend to be made in a closed session at the end of a Community Council meeting. They are not engaging to local residents which is a key role of Community Councils. The evidence the Commission has heard suggests that residents are more concerned about how they can influence decisions than about where the decisions are taken. In future it is proposed these decisions are not taken at Community Councils.

**Saving: £10,895**

### 2. General Savings

The consultation demonstrates that overall residents understand the need to make savings, but have varying views about how this could be done. Out of the potential options the consultation appears to show most people were willing to accept savings around venue and equipment hire.

**Saving: £70,632**

### 3. Planning Options

The evidence presented to the Democracy Commission suggests the following disadvantages to retaining planning decision making at Community Council level:

- Members are often faced with the decision as to whether to sit on the committee and take a decision or withdraw from a decision in order to represent the views of constituents, this can limit the ability of members to get involved in local campaigns on planning applications.
- Scheduling community council planning meetings causes extra pressure on the council calendar due to the need to schedule meetings on a 4 week cycle.
- A significant number of applications which are considered by community council planning meetings are 'out of date'; that is they are considered by community councils after the application expiry date and can be challenged for non-determination. Between June 2010 and May 2011 approximately 76% of applications were considered after the application expiry date.

However members expressed their support for retaining some planning function at member level which would mean there was still a degree of accountability. It is therefore proposed to adopt the adoption of 2 planning sub-committees for minor applications. In working up the detail of this proposal Officers will need to be mindful of the need to maintain the ability of local people to influence decision making.

**Saving: £92,238**

#### **4. Boundaries and frequency of Meetings**

We have heard evidence that the Community Councils are a valued means of engaging with local residents. However given the context of the significant reductions in the council's budget the current cost of over £1million in operating the Community Councils is not sustainable. We have heard some evidence of crossovers in attendance between Bermondsey and Rotherhithe in particular and to a lesser extent Peckham & Nunhead & Peckham Rye.

We therefore propose that to make the level of saving required that in future there be 5 Community Council that meet on 5 occasions per year. The boundaries of these should be as follows:

- Merge Bermondsey & Rotherhithe Community Councils
- Merge Peckham and Nunhead & Peckham Rye Community Councils
- Retain the current boundaries of Dulwich Community Council
- Retain the current boundaries of Camberwell Community Council
- Merge Borough & Bankside and Walworth Community Councils

**Saving: £85,405**

Reducing the boundaries should reduce the impact of the consequent reductions in the Neighbourhoods Team by retaining dedicated support to each Community Council that is not sustainable with 8 Community Council boundaries.

**Saving: £85,000**

**Total Saving: £344,170**