

### **Governance Review Consultation Responses Full Council 17 January 2011**

The overall message from those responding to the consultation exercise is that reforming of the Council's current governance arrangements is welcomed.

99 survey responses from individuals and groups were received with a further 14 attendees at a consultation meeting on 21 December 2011. The results of the consultation questionnaire highlight that:

**68%** of respondents agreed that the council's decision-making processes could be streamlined to be more effective.

**77%** of respondents answered that they would support a proposal for 3 out of five council meetings to include a 'Haringey Debate'

**69%** of respondents supported the proposal to change the council's committee structure to include Overview & Scrutiny, Corporate, Regulatory Committees and remove others.

#### **Summary of consultation responses**

The questionnaire asked respondents to what extent they feel that full council meetings currently provide opportunities for councillors to debate the political issues that matter most to the people of Haringey. **33%** of respondents **agreed** with this statement, with **25% disagreeing**, with the remainder neither agreeing or disagreeing.

#### **Devolved decision-making**

Question 2 led to **83.7%** of respondents agreeing that some decision-making should be devolved to a more local level. Question 5 asked respondents which areas new, localised Area Committees should consider. The response is set out below:

82% Environment and appearance of local streets

68% Community Safety

62% Parks

61% Planning matters

53% Local housing matters

52% Local Highway and Transport Improvements

51% Consultation

46% Area Based working

40% Considering local by-laws

Those attending the consultation evening made the following comments:

- The current geography of area assemblies is too large and should be revisited.
- The powers of area assemblies and any new committees need to be clearly set out so that people can understand the exact function that they play. In particular the purpose of Making a Difference grants.
- Some found it frustrating to attend an area assembly and to be provided with a response from Councillors saying that their hands are tied and couldn't do anything.

### **Streamlined processes**

There was strong support for the streamlining of the council's decision-making processes, with **68%** of respondents **agreeing** that this could be achieved. **69%** **agreed** with the proposals to change the committee structure to achieve these aims. Of the potential benefits of a reduction in the number of council and committee meetings, respondents considered the following the following would result:

62% Remove duplication  
57% Reduced costs  
46% Simplify accountability  
38% Streamline reporting  
36% Effective governance

Those attending the consultation evening made the following comments:

- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee should mirror the parliamentary committee system.
- Consideration should be given to the name of the proposed corporate committee. Possibly incorporating communities into the title.
- The proposals for area committees would provide greater opportunities for councillors to be active in their areas and be seen by the public.
- Some who had attended full Council highlighted that the nature of the debates tended to be more about political point scoring rather than focusing on the issues that matter to local people.

### **General comments**

The comments below reflect those made via the questionnaire and also the consultation meeting:

- There were a broad range of suggestions on how governance arrangements could be improved in Haringey. A selection of these are outlined below:
- Meetings during the day time regularly as well as at night
- Devolve as much central control as possible to local stakeholder groups and the voluntary sector
- I don't know enough about how it currently works to comment effectively.
- Simpler way of de-selection.
- Elected councillors to govern for good of whole borough rather than local loud voices making decisions.
- Much more use of the internet for reporting issues and inviting comment.
- The problem for Highgate residents is that Highgate is on the far edge of Haringey borough. Too far from the town hall, people do not want to turn out to meetings in Wood Green which is too far.
- The local councillors should have the duty to turn up to the Area Assemblies.
- If there is a reduction of meetings those held need to have enough time for business on the agenda.
- I think committees should be renamed to make it clearer to residents which committees cover which subject/area.
- Area Committees will cost a lot of money to set up and even more to support.
- All committee chairs not from majority party.
- All councillors to fill in daily activity sheets.
- Leader and Chief Executive to attend each AA once a year.
- Elect Council by STV rather than FPTP, this will help overcome current East-West Polarisation (NB: The council does not have the power to amend its electoral system)
- Area Based multi-agency working should continue where appropriate.

- Clear membership of committees containing non-elected officials must be easily available to the general public along with information on how they are appointed.
- Saving costs should not mean that minorities or those with disabilities, including learning disabilities, lose access.
- The mechanism for choosing the themes for the proposed Haringey debates should involve local people. Should consider issues which affect significant number of people in the borough and a system needs to be developed to identify these.
- Consultations should be standardised to 12 weeks to allow for residents associations to consider responses.