

**Equality Analysis of 2012/13 Council budget
Communities, Law & Governance**

1. Departmental information and audit trail

Council department	Communities, Law & Governance
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Consultation with other officers / departments	Democracy commission review has included consultation with other departments including environment & leisure (public realm), deputy chief executive's (planning), housing (resident involvement) and children's services (school governors)

2. Vision / aims and objectives

Departmental vision statement	The vision for communities, law & governance is to ensure that the council's services are accessible, accountable, lawful and efficient and engage and empower local people
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3. 2012/13 budget proposals

Budget "headlines"	<p>The total proposed savings amounting to £1.084m for the department is made up as follows:</p> <p>Reductions in electoral registration canvassing costs (£30,000)</p> <p>Review of structure of scrutiny committees to reduce administrative and other costs (£65,000)</p> <p>Community councils - Savings delivered as part of the democracy commission process (£344,000)</p> <p>Fundamental review of team structures within legal services to deliver £400,000 savings</p> <p>Review of voluntary sector grants programme in the context of reductions in government funding including the consequential loss of a commissioning post (£245,000)</p>
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4. Service users	
Service users	Our high volume customers are primarily internal service users including client departments of legal services and the council's members. Our 'front line' services include those provided by election and registration services (including births, deaths and marriages, citizenship and local land charges) as well as very focussed community engagement support to some residents. Indirectly, through grant funding to the voluntary and community sector, we provide some services to different equality groups. Overall our services are generically delivered and accessible to all sectors of the community e.g. elections, access to community councils or community legal services
5. Process	
Outline of process followed	Budget proposals have been considered at divisional level and where our services have a community focus we have acknowledged the inherent and well-understood equality issues. Useful experience has been gained from the previous years' budget process. Because the efficiency and service reduction proposals will result in post deletions full assessments of the impact on staffing will be undertaken as part of the reviews. Where possible vacant posts will be targeted and redeployment options considered.

6. Equality issues identified				
Budget proposal	Type of saving	Equality impacts^{1, 2}	Evidence gathered	Mitigation / further action
Reductions in electoral registration canvassing costs (£30,000)	Efficiency	Small reduction in door to door canvassing may result in some residents who do not post back their canvass forms not being registered	Identification of areas with low response to registration. Matching of council records to confirm residence undertaken in pilot for individual electoral registration with some success	Increased use of data matching will reduce the need for personal canvassing by confirming residents already on the register where possible
Review of structure of scrutiny committees to reduce administrative and other costs (£65,000)	Service reorganisation	No service impact identified, one post will be lost.	With regard to staffing impacts baseline data has been analysed and ongoing analysis will take place as consultation and implementation proceeds.	Compliance with HR procedures and processes
Community Councils - Savings delivered as part of the Democracy Commission process (£344,000)	Service reorganisation	The changes will have no identified impact and are unlikely to affect any particular group disproportionately... Consultation has taken place with residents and with other departments has taken place and continues on the implementation planning. Staffing impacts on the Neighbourhoods Team with a restructure planned to reduce posts.	Democracy Commission consultation. Analysis of community council attendance. With regard to staffing impacts baseline data has been analysed and ongoing analysis will take place as consultation and implementation proceeds	Democracy commission made recommendations on various ways to improve engagement of a more representative cross-section of people in their areas that are currently being considered including: Flexibility on meeting timings, varied venues and changes to the structure of meetings. Proposal to introduce

¹ Against the “protected characteristics” in Equality Act 2010. These being race, gender, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation, age, human rights, gender re-assignment, and pregnancy and maternity.

² Under the General Duty Southwark Council must in the exercise of its functions have due regard for the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act ;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

6. Equality issues identified				
Budget proposal	Type of saving	Equality impacts^{1, 2}	Evidence gathered	Mitigation / further action
		In addition to the staffing impacts these will reduce the available resources for outreach to the local community to encourage attendance at community councils		a cgs revenue fund will give people more say over allocation of council funds at a local level. Compliance with HR procedures and processes
Fundamental review of team structures within Legal Services to achieve savings of £400,000	Service reorganisation	The reorganisation is driven by client demand and should not impact adversely on the services offered. There will be staffing impacts, with a number of posts being lost and significant restructuring at senior levels.	Baseline data has been analysed to profile the service and identify particular groups that may be adversely affected i.e. about half the staff are of BME origin and three quarters are women.	Compliance with HR procedures and processes
Review of voluntary sector grants programme in the context of reductions in government funding (£245,000)	Reduction in grant funding	The purpose of the corporate community support voluntary sector funding programme is to assist the council in meeting its statutory and policy objectives for eliminating discrimination, promoting equality and good community relations, and for tackling poverty and social exclusion. The loss of a post removes a vacant post and will have no differential impact on any specific group	Full consultation process has taken place with the voluntary sector to elicit their views and explore ways in which the community support programme could be re-configured. The voluntary sector was also invited to input to the revised commissioning plan for the programme with representatives from Southwark Voice from each of the funding priority areas i.e. Communities of Interest; Area based resources and Capacity Building. Both VCS intelligence and contributions have been	Consultation responses have informed the commissioning plan for the programme. Year two of the transition fund will provide some mitigation to those groups losing funding

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Budget proposal	Type of saving	Equality impacts^{1, 2}	Evidence gathered	Mitigation / further action
			<p>incorporated into the revised version.</p> <p>In the next stage of analysis currently funded groups are submitting information based on the equalities strands to inform the application and assessment process as it proceeds. EqlAs were carried out in 2005 and 2009 which give a baseline for analysis. More detailed analysis as implementation commences includes analysis of the beneficiaries of current funded groups against the equality strands to see whether any proposed reductions unfairly impact on any particular community/communities.</p>	