

**LINK Southwark Public Meeting  
Thursday, 20<sup>th</sup> August 2009  
Ability Media Centre**

**1.1 Attendance**

**Steering Group Members Present:** Felicia Boshorin (FB), Ivy Douglas (ID), Fay Hall, Stan Hardy (SH), Jason Harris (JH), Dolly Mace (DM), Martin Saunders MS), Barry Silverman (BS), Bibisaffina Zafar (BZ)

**Registered Members in attendance:** Mike Colvin (MC), Kenneth Hoole (KHo), Martin Neusum (MN), Lolade Osinowo (LO), Gill Portwine (GP), Inez Taylor (IT), Natasha Plaister (NP)

**Public Participants:** Martin Dadswell (MD), Katerina Dean (KD), Sam Gallop (SG), Robert Hall (RH), Hyacinth Patten (HP), Councillor Jonathan Mitchell (JM)

**In Attendance (LINK Host):** Shahanara Khatun (SK) and Jessica Spyropoulos (JS) [*Minute Takers*], Kris Hall (KH), Alvin Kinch (AK),

**1.2 Welcome**

Barry Silverman (Chair) began the meeting by welcoming all present. He pointed out that amongst those present were David Dean, Non-executive Director Guy's & St Thomas' Foundation Trust Hospital, Jessica Bush, Patient Experience Lead, King's College Hospital. Ish Lennox of South London & Maudsley would be arriving shortly. Apologies were made on behalf of Clare Gilhooly CEO of Cambridge House.

The Chair gave an introductory presentation (attached) on the purpose of the public meeting which included the importance of Governance to

LINK Southwark and that without it none of the Statutory 221 activities could be delivered. Governance is not cast in stone and can be changed in the future taking account of experience. The important issue was that LINK Southwark becomes engaged in its real purpose; S221 activities as defined in Statute, without delay.

The Chair introduced Alvin Kinch (AK) LINK Team Leader who delivered a general presentation on the LINK and about its work so far. (Presentation attached).

The Chair referred to the presentation just given with regard to the numbers of Registered Members being 235. He said that as the population of Southwark is approximately two hundred and sixty nine thousand people it might be thought that either the LINK is not doing a good job or the people of Southwark don't know about the LINK. However, as the situation is similar all over England where the highest number does not exceed 500 members LINK Southwark is not that different from most other LINKs. There is still a great deal of work that needs to be done and emphasised the message Barak Obama used in his presidential campaign which said "YES WE CAN" and asked everyone to spread this message.

KH then delivered a presentation on the Governance and its supporting procedures highlighting the main points of these documents (presentation attached).

A question was asked by a member of the public as to the number of vacancies there are in the Steering Group.

The Chair stated that there are currently 10 -7 individual and 3 organisation, and explained that these positions can be filled by election by

<p>anybody who is a Registered Member, subject to Governance criteria of there being not more than 2 Members from any one community area.</p> <p>The Chair expanded on the ‘Authorisation Procedure’ by saying that as the LINK is a Statutory Public Body, it was not open for a Registered Member attending a meeting of another organisation to present their view as that of the LINK by virtue of their Membership.</p> <p>The Authorisation Procedure is defined in the statute and that there will need to be a system for the appointment of Authorised Representatives. KH said that the present proposal may require change in the future but we will not know unless it is tested in practice.</p>	
<p><b>2. Debate</b></p> <p><b><u>Michael English (ME) LINK Member</u></b> welcomed everyone on behalf of the National Association of LINK Members (NALM). He maintained that it is important that London is represented properly. He thanked Alvin and her staff and said that they have been very kind and helpful. However he stated that he finds it a little dispiriting, if you live outside the Borough, that you can’t become a Registered Member. He gave the example that, if you live in Southwark and you go to St Thomas’s Hospital and they say “we can’t treat you because you’re from Southwark, then it doesn’t make any sense”.</p> <p>The Chair commented that ME comes from Lambeth and he receives material as though he lives in Southwark but could not vote. The fact of the matter is that there is no hard line taken regarding the circulation of LINK papers and attendance at meetings.</p> <p><b><u>Mike Colvin (MC) LINK Member</u></b> said that he does not wish to offend anyone but that he was unhappy about some aspects of the Governance;</p>	<p>1<sup>st</sup> Proposed amendment: Chair’s</p>

it was inappropriate that whoever drafted the Governance has gone against the legislation. People should not hold office of Chair in perpetuity as written in the Governance Document Section 6:1 point three. *MC proposed a first amendment.*

MC believes that all Registered Members should elect the chair and that it is a good idea if the chairs position is rotated regularly to show diversity.

*MC proposed a second amendment*

The Chair expressed surprise at the first proposal because he believed the Governance already states that Elections should follow each AGM of the LINK. He reminded everyone of the stated purpose of this meeting-which was to debate only the Draft presented by the Steering Group- He suggested that the immediate task is to get some governance in place so as to allow the real work of the LINK to begin. The Steering Group will consider proposals from Registered Members for amendment and in due course present a coherent package of proposed amendments to them..

MC then replied “I think what you just said goes against the purpose of this Public Meeting”. MC then requested for Registered Members to take a vote.

KH said that the Steering Group did discuss those issues and that in this public meeting there were not enough people to carry out this type of vote as there was only have around 20 present out of some 235 including organisations.

The Chair then said that this meeting was called by the Steering Group to discuss the pros and cons of the Steering Group proposals rather than to receive detailed amendments by the Registered Members. The Steering Group did consider what MC had said but has made a

position to come up for election every year

2<sup>nd</sup> Proposed amendments: Section 6.1 should be changed to “elected by Registered Members” and that the words “elect by Steering Group” should be deleted

- Chair to be elected by Registered Members and not the Steering Group

decision within its powers conferred by the Terms of Reference prepared by representative Members which it had adopted at its first meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2009..

Gill Portwine (GP) LINK Member then said she seconded the motion proposed by MC. GP read a quote from page 10 of the NCI Governance Guide 12 starting with the sentence “LINK should consider ways to renew and refresh the people who take decisions about LINKs ....” GP said that what you are saying is that you can submit an overall Governance document you have devised, which, if accepted meant that then the LINK is controlled by the Steering Group and not the people of Southwark.

The Chair again said that, from his understanding of the proposed Governance, The Chair is elected for one year starting from the date the Governance is declared but could seek re-election without restriction on the number of occasions. A system of democracy is in operation: The Registered Members elect the Steering Group and the Governance gives the Steering Group powers to act for the Members.

GP then replied by asking for clarification whether the proposals put forward were being accepted and was reminded that acceptance was according to the outcome of the ballot supervised by the Electoral Reform Service.

Councillor Jonathan Mitchell (Liberal Democrat Member for East Dulwich Ward) then said that the meeting should be taking amendments. Any secret decisions made before this meeting should be squashed. He also stated that there are more of the public present, than Steering Group Members and there should be a right to change the documents.

KH commented that the Steering Group has

submitted the Governance and that now Registered Members have the right to vote on it.

Stan Hardy (SH), Steering Group Member then commented “May I remind you that the Sovereign Authority is the Registered Members and not the Steering Group.

SH then questioned the contents of the ballot pack.

KH replied the ballot form is asking Registered Memebers to say “Yes” or “No” to the Governance Proposals. There will also be a letter encouraging people to vote and people will be directed to the LINK website to access the documents.

SH said that, as only the Governance documents will be on the website there will be no opportunity for amendments. He called for an Independent Inquiry about the set-up of the Steering Group. He stated that objections to the Governance should also go in that ballot envelope so that Registered Members were made aware of them. He also stated that as people maybe on holiday and that Bank Holiday is coming up, this minimised opportunity for voting which he said was undemocratic.

KH commented that he was not sure as to how it was possible for all Registered Member’s views will be put into the envelope with the ballot papers. The Steering Group wants to make the voice of Southwark heard and wants to take into account what people of Southwark are saying, and will do so in the evolving process of improving Governance.

Kenneth Hoole (KHo) LINK Member said that he fully supports MC’s view. He stated that this meeting is pointless and misleading. He maintained that the problem starts with this

document called “Introducing the Governance for LINK Southwark”. He stated that he would like someone to put into his hand the Instrument of Proposed Governance, as this was not it. He stated that the first part is irrelevant and complained that the remainder included an inadequate, version of his own draft.

KHo then stated that he had provided a copy of his own draft for consideration as long ago as July 2008. Title; Instrument of Governance. He said he had tried four times but has not been allowed to present it to the Steering Group of the substantive LINK.

He raised the question:- Has the Steering Group been value for money?

Kris Hall (KH) said that one of the things that has slowed down the formation of the LINK had been the almost endless attention to the detail of Governance rather than getting on with the S221 activities that were the essential purpose of the LINK. That’s why there was urgency in getting the Governance document to the vote. The Steering Group have debated all the issues that had been mentioned, and nobody is saying that this document was perfect but the Statute demands that LINK Southwark has its Governance in place before it is allowed to make a start.

KH then stated that he had been asked by the Steering Group and not the Chair to draw together this document and he maintained that, as time goes on, Governance will evolve which was why we should not go on debating the detail.

Ivy Douglas (ID), Steering Group Member, said she had seen the KHo version of the Governance and did not like it. She stated that she did not totally disagree with the amendments proposed by MC and that she believes that there is some merit to them.

GP then said that she has another small amendment that she would like the Steering Group to consider. She maintained that it is important to put down Procedures and not just Principles. This would make the Steering Group more efficient and will not allow people coming to Steering Group meetings being patronised. There needs to be a Procedure for citizens rather than citizens listening to the Steering Group for 2/3 hours every month.

The Chair replied saying that the Steering Group does consider proposals and have considered proposals from GP. Registered Members have the right to attend Steering Group meetings and time had been given at meetings for this purpose. In addition, any Registered Member could write to the Host asking for any concern to be addressed.

Philip Bowlder (Cambridge House Volunteer) said stated that he would like to know if the LINK can deal with individual cases as he knows a woman who has had an operation on her hand which went wrong.

The Chair replied that the LINK is not permitted, by statute, to investigate individual cases but could refer anyone to the appropriate Complaints Procedure or enquire whether there was any generality about the complaint which would be within its remit.

KHo then spoke and stated that paragraph 1.4 of the Governance Document is contradictory of other things said and suggested the following changes:

The LINK Steering Group should submit a work plan to Registered Members for approval or otherwise the power of the LINK lies with the Steering Group and not the Registered Members.

The Chair then replied that the Interim LINK

3<sup>rd</sup> Proposed amendment:

The LINK to publish a full Procedure to enable people of Southwark to address their concerns to the Steering Group

<p>(SLIC) had been a separate legal entity but his draft had been considered by both KH and the Steering Group Governance Working Party.</p> <p>GP then said that the proposers of the amendments were just asking that the amendments be considered.</p> <p>BS said that this was the intention but the Steering Group considers time to be imperative so that S221 activities can begin.</p> <p>Dolly Mace (DM) then asked about the length of time it would take to ask the public for amendments and how long it would take to put them in the documents.</p> <p>GP suggested that if anyone wants to make amendments they should be submitted in writing.</p> <p>The Chair agreed that to be a good idea.</p>	<p>Action: Registered Members who wish to submit amendments should write to the Host including the intended effect of that amendment</p>
<p><b>2 Closure</b></p> <p>BS thanked everyone for attending the Public Meeting and for the way they had conducted themselves.</p>	

Chair's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Chair's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date signed: \_\_\_\_\_