

REGENERATION AND LEISURE SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

DATE: FRIDAY 13TH MAY 2011

ITEM: LEND LEASE CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS – ELEPHANT & CASTLE

REPORT AUTHOR: ELEPHANT AMENITY NETWORK

Elephant Amenity Network

Local residents and traders have come together under the umbrella of the Elephant Amenity Network (EAN) to produce a Community Charter for the Elephant and Castle development.

The Charter's 1st principle is that Lend Lease and Southwark Council operate an "open master-plan" policy. That is, to enter into a development process that is democratic and actively involves the local community.

Consultation strategy document

It is unclear whether Lend Lease has a consultation strategy document and how the public can influence this. Notwithstanding this, some examples of the content we are looking for in the consultation strategy are:

- Recognition of barriers to involvement and strategy to overcome them
- Means of communication to be fully accessible, including provision of hard copy documents, in large print and on tape, use of community notice boards, jargon glossary, governance and decision making process
- "Visioning" event to involve local people in developing an overall vision at the start of the master-plan process
- Workshops, Planning for Real and other participatory methods of involvement (not just road shows and opinion surveys).
- Community resourcing and support (not necessarily financial, one of the most important things we are seeking is access to

independent technical aid, and could also include access to experts at Lend Lease\their consultants, printing, community newsletter distribution and other ways of encouraging independent community activity

- Up to date list of consultees
- The master-plan consultation should be launched with a public meeting to explain the master-plan, its benefits and how Lend Lease will involve the local population in the process.

We would like Lend Lease to consider including the above points in a full consultation strategy document.

The constraints on the scope of the consultation

Because the detail of the Regeneration Agreement remains classified, the local community is unclear about the parameters of the consultation. The timeline document produced by Lend Lease does not include housing, open space or retail among the topics for master-plan consultation. Our own analysis of the massing based on the building outlines in the Regeneration Agreement implies a huge reduction in the amount of open space.

Therefore, we are asking for identification of the constraints on Lend Lease's ability to respond to consultation by amending the master-plan. Without this idea of scope, the basis for consultation is flawed.

Governance arrangements

The current governance structure is limited to a management board with 2*Lend Lease and 2*Southwark officers on it. We seek clarity about how this decision-making process is accountable to the public.

A previous proposal, discussed at several Walworth Community Council meetings, had been to involve local councillors and community representatives on a Steering Group, so as to ensure participation in the process and with an ability to influence and to feed back information to the public.

The setting up of a Steering Group was reported to Southwark Council's Cabinet on 7 July 2010. Where the Steering Group would sit with regard to the Management Board and the wider consultation

strategy was to be subject to community consultation. It is worth quoting in full the relevant paragraphs from the Cabinet report:-

"28. The management board is separate to and different from the proposed Steering Group. The proposed Steering Group will form an integral aspect of the consultation strategy which is contained within the Master Regeneration Plan. The consultation strategy will be formally developed over the next three months in consultation with members, stakeholders and the wider community.

29. The development of the terms of reference for the Steering Group will be carried out in full consultation with the Community Council as well as the wider community and interested stakeholders as a part of the consultation strategy. However, the aim of setting up the Steering Group will be to put in place an appropriate feedback mechanism to review progress of the project and provide a public forum for discussion and debate in respect of the regeneration and its impact on the wider community. Similarly, a feedback mechanism will be put in place to ensure that the views of the Steering Group are raised and discussed with the management board in order to ensure that the views and opinions of all interested parties are considered throughout the development of the project. These proposals will be worked up over time and are part of the consultation strategy which is contained within the MRP. It is anticipated that a full consultation programme will be agreed three months after the RA is signed as part of the annual business plan."

Despite being part of the regeneration agreement between Lend Lease and the Council, nothing has been done to set up the Steering Group; it has been postponed again and again and in the meantime significant decisions taken with absolutely no public involvement. Now we are told, without any of the consultation promised in the Cabinet report, that the Steering Group is being replaced with a 'regeneration forum', and we do not consider this a good substitute. Forums have no bite, especially forums that are imposed!

The problem with the whole development process to date has been the absence of a mechanism/body that can bite and what that signifies and what it has enabled to happen. Trying to set up governance arrangements that appear accountable and transparent only when the decisions have been taken undermines the legitimacy of the development.

We seek real input into the terms of reference of the "regeneration forum" and into the selection of its Chair and facilitator.

Integration of Lend Lease consultation with Elephant & Castle SPD consultation

The Supplementary Planning Document is there to set the parameters for the master-plan, and the 2 documents will need to be "in line" with each other. There is a requirement for the SPD to look at alternatives which should widen the scope of the master-plan consultation.

We seek information as to how the Lend Lease master-plan consultation integrates with the consultation programme for the E&C SPD.

Localism Bill and collaborative neighbourhood planning

The Localism Bill introduces the concept of Neighbourhood Planning, a bottom up approach to planning the future of an area led by the local community. The purpose is to give local people greater ownership. So, how will the Lend Lease proposals for consultation empower local people to take a pro-active role in shaping the future of the Elephant and Castle? Creative and imaginative ways are required.

The Localism Bill designates a neighbourhood forum, made up of local residents, as the mechanism for local ownership. Again, this is quite different to the forum of all the stakeholders - Council, Universities, Police – that is being proposed.

Despite claims that the Elephant and Castle development has been accompanied by continuous consultation, communication and engagement, over and above the requirements of the statutory planning process, the local community continues to feel excluded from the process.

What is needed is a coherent set of principles for collaborative planning at the Elephant and Castle, so that local residents can work closely with Council and developer on the master-plan and the SPD. We look to the Scrutiny sub-committee to assist in moving this forward and in so doing put down a marker for neighbourhood planning in Southwark.