

**METHODOLOGY**

**1 Summary**

Between 27 January and 7 April 2003, over the course of six meetings, the Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee considered the Council's Draft Unitary Development Plan [UDP]. During deliberations a number of key issues arose:

- The appropriateness of the number of new homes allocated to be built in the borough;
- The densities recommended for new residential developments in the different parts of the borough;
- The ability of the UDP to deliver living, sustainable communities;
- Types of design to needed to deliver the density of housing set out in the UDP;
- The opinion of the Chair of the Council's Planning Committee in respect of delivering the UDP;
- How the Council's work with Forum for the Future and the use of sustainability criteria had affected the drafting of the UDP and the potential impact of this work in respect of encouraging more sustainable development in the borough;
- Comments and feedback from other scrutiny Sub-Committees on those sections of the UDP within their terms of reference;
- The need for Southwark's UDP to be in "general conformity" with the Mayor of London's Plan.

Having carried out the inquiry the Sub-Committee defined the following key factors that influenced the final scrutiny recommendations set out later in this report:

- The potential difficulty in delivering the number of new homes outlined in the UDP through the Council's planning system, particularly with the creation of Community Councils;
- The difficulty the Council faces delivering the high density developments implicit in the draft UDP and the London Plan;
- The importance of good design and building standards to the successful development of high density housing developments;
- That the Council looks at encouraging house builders to look at alternative ways of building homes, such as pre-construction as used in Europe;
- The need for the UDP to aim to deliver more sustainable communities in Southwark;
- The need to take a broad view of what can be delivered through Section 106 funding – acknowledging that if developers are compelled to set aside significant resources for affordable housing, funding resources available for other activities may be limited accordingly;
- The need to ensure that the Council's planning and development control framework reflects and complements the Council's broader strategies and policies;
- The difficulty in balancing the environment, health, social and economic pressures on development within the UDP;
- The need to create living, sustainable communities where people can live, work and spend their recreation time; and
- The need for the UDP when adopted to be "in general compliance" with the

## **2 Background**

As a planning authority the Council is required by Section 12 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to prepare a Unitary Development Plan for its geographical area of authority. Section 21 of the Act enables an authority to amend or replace its existing UDP, subject to complying with certain procedures. The procedures for preparing a replacement UDP are detailed in PPG12: Development Plans (1999) and the Development Plan Regulations. Appendix 1 to that document outlines the processes whereby Southwark may agree its new UDP in line with *Local Plans and Unitary Development Plans – A Guide to Procedures’ – DETR 1999*.

The first draft for deposit of Southwark's new UDP – also known as 'The Southwark Plan (2002)' – was agreed by full Council Assembly on 30 October 2002. As part of the continuing consultation process for the UDP, the relevant aspects of the UDP and accompanying SPGs were referred to scrutiny for consideration. The UDP first draft for deposit can be found at Appendix A to this report.

Accordingly, Overview & Scrutiny Committee met on 9 December 2002 and asked Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee, in line with that Sub-Committee's terms of reference, to lead scrutiny of the UDP and report back with any recommendations and comments from other scrutiny Sub-Committees by the end of the 2002-03 Municipal Year. Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee were asked to pay particular regard to:

1. Assessing the appropriateness of the Opportunity Areas and Action Areas identified within the UDP document;
2. Assessing the proposed housing densities for areas within the borough; and
3. Understanding sustainability appraisals

## **3 The Project Brief for Scrutiny of the UDP**

On 27 January 2003 Members received a context setting presentation by the Acting Head of Planning Policy and as a result defined the key areas of focus [the Project Brief] for the inquiry as part of the review of the Council's Draft Unitary Development Plan as follows, i.e.:

- i. Assessment of appropriateness of housing densities;
- ii. The Sustainability Criteria and the ability of the plan to deliver sustainable development;
- iii. The appropriateness of Opportunity Area and Action Areas; and
- iv. The uses of Section 106 funding.

## **4 The Process for Scrutinising the UDP**

Following the meeting on 27 January the Sub-Committee met on six further occasions to consider the UDP. A list of evidence received by the Sub-Committee and witnesses called is attached at Appendix C. In addition to expert witnesses invited to feed into the inquiry,

Simon Bevan, Southwark's Acting Head of Planning Policy attended all formal scrutiny meetings held between 27 January and 2 April 2003.

**APPENDIX C**

**INFORMATION AND EVIDENCE RECEIVED**

<b>Meeting Date:</b>	<b>Information and Evidence Received:</b>
<b>27<sup>th</sup> January 2003</b>	<b>SESSION ONE</b>
	<i>Presentation and consideration of UDP and agreement of areas of focus for scrutiny.</i>
	<u>Documents Received:</u>
	The Southwark Plan – November 2002 [First Draft for Deposit Unitary Development Plan]
	Presentation – The Southwark Plan [background]
	<u>Witness:</u>
	Simon Bevan (Acting Planning Policy Manager, Southwark Council)
<b>18<sup>th</sup> February 2003</b>	<b>SESSION TWO</b>
	<i>Interview with Chair of Planning to examine whether housing densities and sustainability criteria in the plan are deliverable through the Council's planning system. Officer information in respect of appropriateness of Action Areas and Opportunity Areas.</i>
	<u>Witness:</u>
	Councillor David Hubber, Chair of Planning Committee
	<u>Documents Received:</u>
	Outline programme for scrutiny of UDP.
<b>11<sup>th</sup> March 2003</b>	<b>SESSION THREE</b>
	<i>Continuation of scrutiny.</i>
	<u>Documents:</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examples of agreed Southwark developments indicating a range of densities across urban, sub-urban and central zones.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summary of key issues from ODPM circular 06/1998 on Planning and Affordable housing.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report: Capital Gains- Making High Density Housing Work in London [London Housing Federation]</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report: Behind the London Plan – The response of the London Assembly to the Mayor's draft London Plan [London Assembly Planning &amp; Spatial Development Committee, November 2002]</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Article: Space Invading [The Guardian, 31<sup>st</sup> July 2002]</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extract from Greater London Authority Act 1999 [Chapter 29, Part 8, paras 334 – 350]</li> </ul>

<b>Meeting Date:</b>	<b>Information and Evidence Received:</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> April 2003</b>	<b>SESSION FOUR</b>
	<i>Expert witness session.</i>
	<u>Witnesses:</u>
	1. Zoe Hassall, Senior Strategic Adviser, Local & Regional Programme – Forum for the Future
	2. Mike Donnelly, Chief Executive, Habinteg Housing Association
	3. David Gregory, Peabody Trust – Keep London Working
	4. Simon Bevan, Southwark Acting Planning Policy Manager
	5. Julie Tallentire, Southwark Planning Policy & Research Unit
	<u>Documents:</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officer background report (see Agenda pages 590-592)</li> <li>• Report “Lifetime Homes: Living Well Together – Achieving Sustainable, Flexible Homes within High Density Neighbourhoods” [2002, Habinteg Housing Association Ltd./GML Architects]</li> <li>• Officer presentation: Sustainability Appraisal Special Planning Guidance</li> <li>• Presentation: Forum for the Future – Sustainability Appraisal: Setting the Context</li> </ul>
<b>7<sup>th</sup> April 2003</b>	<b>SESSION FIVE</b>
	<i>To review evidence received to date, receive additional information and to draft recommendations for the final report.</i>
	<u>Documents:</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft final scrutiny report.</li> <li>• Report: Review of UDP and Supplementary Planning Guidance “Green and Clean” Section [Environment &amp; Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee]</li> <li>• Report: Review of UDP Supplementary Planning Guidance [Community Support &amp; Safety Scrutiny Sub-Committee]</li> <li>• Information relating to deputation request made by Nunhead Action Group to Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2002.</li> </ul>
<b>15<sup>th</sup> May 2003</b>	<b>SESSION SIX</b>
	<i>To agree the final scrutiny report for transmission to the Executive.</i>