

## Draft Scrutiny Report: Officers Notes

### Regeneration and Transport Scrutiny Sub – Committee Members:

- Cllr Neil Watson (Chair)
- Cllr Paul Bates (Vice Chair)
- Cllr Billy Kayada
- Cllr Graham Neale
- Cllr Catriona Moore
- Cllr Sarah Welfare
- Cllr David Bradbury

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**Executive Summary:**

The regeneration of Elephant and Castle area is a long standing project that Southwark Council has been developing over the last decade. Undoubtedly, one of the most important elements of this regeneration project is to ensure that both residents, and the broader London community, are engaged and get to have a say in what the regeneration will be like.

Southwark Council have developed differing methods of community engagement, such as the Elephant Board, which over time have been reviewed and altered to meet changing public expectations of engagement. This Sub – Committee recognises the good work and efforts of many Southwark Council staff and community members, who are continually striving to maintain and create effective methods for community engagement on the Elephant and Castle regeneration project.

Through the course of this scrutiny, the Sub – Committee have learnt of the obstacles to community engagement through previous community forums which caused delays to the overall regeneration project. However, once these obstacles were recognised and the new forums for community engagement were created (Elephant Links Diversity Panel and Partnership Board), the project was able to move forward. These new forums were very successful in bringing new community voices to the regeneration project, boosting community interest overall and helping to deliver key project targets. The Sub – Committee recommends that it may be timely to review these forums as evidence suggests that they are not working as effectively as they once did and may require assistance.

Community engagement on any regeneration project is a difficult task. Given the enormity of the regeneration project at Elephant and Castle, it is understandable that problems will occur. What is important is that we learn from these problems and continue to move forward towards regeneration that meets community needs. The Sub – Committee hopes that the recommendations of this report goes some way towards meeting this goal.

## **Background – Purpose of the Review**

The Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee requested that the Regeneration and Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee conduct a scrutiny examining issues surrounding public consultation in relation to the Elephant and Castle regeneration project. At the Regeneration & Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee (RTSSC) meeting of 29<sup>th</sup> September 2003, the members agreed to develop a forward - looking approach to the review and focus upon community engagement and involvement. It was agreed at the meeting that the terms of reference for the scrutiny were to:

- Define Community Engagement/Involvement;
- Establish what mechanisms are effective for engaging with the community;
- Establish what mechanisms for community engagement/involvement are in place as part of the Elephant and Castle project;
- Consider the recommendations of the Peckham Partnership Scrutiny.

## **Approach – Manner in which Scrutiny was conducted**

The RTSSC received evidence at their meetings of:

- 4<sup>th</sup> November 2003
- 19<sup>th</sup> November 2003
- 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2003
- 10<sup>th</sup> December 2003
- 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2004

Copies of the minutes for these meetings are available through Southwark Council web-site ([www.southwark.gov.uk](http://www.southwark.gov.uk))

All meetings, bar the 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2004, were conducted in Southwark Town Hall and were open to the public. Efforts were made to hear evidence from external expert witnesses as well as Southwark Officers involved in the Elephant and Castle Regeneration project and the Peckham Partnership.

The RTSSC recognised the importance of hearing public views on the issues and the 23<sup>rd</sup> February meeting was devoted to this task. The meeting was independently facilitated and outside of the Town Hall, at the London College of Communication, Elephant and Castle, to encourage a diversity of public members to attend. Members of the public contributed to this meeting, the Sub – Committee also heard evidence from members of the Elephant Links Diversity Panel and Southwark Action for Voluntary Organisations (SAVO).

Three written public submissions were received (Appendix 2).

## **Objective of the Report**

This report will provide an overview of the evidence and present the final recommendations of the Regeneration and Transport Scrutiny Sub – Committee which will then be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The RTSSC hope that this report and recommendations will be useful in assisting Southwark officers responsible for developing community engagement exercises in regeneration projects.

## Structure of the Report

The report is structured around the four terms of reference for the Sub – Committee, with each section containing a summary of the issues raised by the evidence and the recommendations.

### 1. Defining Community Engagement/Involvement

#### 1.1 Background

The RTSSC recognised that establishing and defining what is '*community engagement*' is the starting point for any scrutiny on community engagement in regeneration projects. A definition of community engagement is required to underpin the scrutiny. Hence the RTSSC invited evidence from two community engagement experts, Mr Kai Rudat (Office for Public Management) and Mr Mark Patchett (Consultant), as well as Southwark Officers involved in community engagement.

Both experts spoke in general terms about the concept of community engagement, preferring to talk about the factors that make up community engagement rather than giving a precise definition. The RTSSC, through the course of the scrutiny, has discovered that community engagement is a difficult term to define as the term is often used interchangeably with other terms, such as:

- *community involvement,*
- *public participation,*
- *public consultation,*
- *stakeholder consultation,*
- *stakeholder engagement.*

Each of these terms differs slightly in their focus but generally all refer to methods of communicating with general members of the public. For example, *stakeholder consultation* refers to consulting with all partners; the general public, government and industry. *Public consultation* on the other hand refers to consultation only with members of the general public. The reason for the multitude of terms is that there is a wide body of academic and government literature devoted to this topic. Extensive debate on the subject since the 1950's has produced no singular definition but rather has produced a multitude of terms that reflects the trends of the time. The current trend in both academic and government circles is to strive towards stakeholder engagement, where all stakeholders (public, government and business) are given the opportunity to actively contribute and be involved in decision making.

#### 1.2 Evidence

Mr Kai Rudat (Office for Public Management) in his presentation to RTSSC highlighted the need to distinguish between the wider community and those that want to have a closer role in the process. Before beginning any community engagement exercises he highlighted how

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important it was to recognise early in the planning stages that not all members of the public will be interested in the issue, nor want to be consulted. This suggests that a definition of *community engagement* distinguishes between two different sets of public.

Mr Mark Patchett also did not give a specific definition of *community engagement* but stressed that there are different definitions of community engagement depending upon the levels of engagement. For example the level of community engagement could be 'low' whereby the Council issues information or it could be 'high' where it is providing support for independent community interests. (Refer to M. Patchett Presentation, 19<sup>th</sup> November 2003, Slide 5). Mr Patchett commented that any definition of *community engagement* must consider the purpose of engagement, identifying the people to engage and the process of engagement. Mr Patchett stressed that these three factors are important in defining community engagement with regard to regeneration projects and are essential to conduct at the beginning of any regeneration project as well as regularly reviewing them through the project.

Mr Tom Travers (London Development Agency) commented that his definition of community engagement involved asking communities to contribute towards the development of a regeneration program. He highlighted that this definition involves the community recognising that the Council is not just seeking their views but wanting them to contribute to a shared vision.

Mr Paul Evans (Strategic Director Regeneration at Southwark Council) commented that his definition is not a single sentence definition and that the purpose of 'community engagement' is to make sure a wide section of the community are fully and effectively informed of the issue, as well as being aware as to how they could bring their views forward. Mr Evans provided a wide definition of 'community' in terms of Elephant and Castle, of those not only living in the Elephant and Castle area but also those within Southwark and the Greater London area. This is because of the Elephant and Castle regeneration project will affect communities much broader than those living within Elephant and Castle.

The opinion from members of SAVO was that community engagement is about getting people involved, commenting

*"It all about making sure people realise how things will affect them and then they will want to get engaged"*

However for members of the Diversity Panel it was important that community engagement involved the whole community, commenting

*"My thought is that if it is community engagement the whole community, not a part, not sections, should have a complete input into what is going on, with the ability to do so by having complete knowledge of what is going on"*

This would involve empowering the community (through education and support) to have a real dialogue.

Overall it would appear that members of the public would like community engagement to be based on clear language, open, well publicised and across the whole community.

### 1.3 Recommendations

After considering the expert evidence, the RTSSC decided not to produce a single definition of '*community engagement*'. The RTSSC recognises that each regeneration project is unique

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and that community engagement must be tailored for each individual regeneration project. However the RTSSC recommends that community engagement is considered from the outset, and the relevant officers should try to develop their understanding of what community engagement is and ensure that this understanding is shared with community members. Importantly, when the Council is embarking on a major regeneration project the Council needs to treat such a project with the very highest level of engagement. Additionally, the RTSSC would like to see CIDU in partnership with Southwark Alliance, try to develop some principles that could create a Southwark Blueprint for community engagement.

## **2. Establishing what mechanisms are effective for engaging with the community**

### **2.1 Background**

The RTSSC recognise the importance for Southwark Council to capture the lessons learnt from past experiences from engaging with the community on local regeneration projects. Given that community engagement is an essential component of democratic governance there is a wide body of literature entirely devoted to examining best practice in community engagement and effective mechanisms. The RTSSC aimed to hear evidence of best practice by other London Councils.

### **2.2 Evidence**

Mr. Rudat's evidence suggested that Southwark Council need to run two parallel communication processes during regeneration projects, one targeted to the general public that keeps them notified of major developments, and one targeted to those who want to have a closer role in the process. Hence, an early step in the process of community engagement is to identify which members or groups of public are likely to want to have a close role and those who are not.

Mr. Rudat discussed that the most effective mechanisms for engaging with the community around regeneration projects was not to run a traditional communications strategy whereby the Council hold public meetings and take questions from the public. Mr. Rudat stressed that community engagement with regard to regeneration would need to focus on the long term goal of building trust in the community. He highlighted that often Councils 'rush' public participation and that an important element of public participation is allowing enough time for community members to express their opinions. He also mentioned that this includes allowing a chance for community members to express their anger and negative concerns of past regeneration projects before creating a positive constructive dialogue with the Council.

An important element of building an effective mechanism for engagement with the community is to build a sense of ownership in the process and the regeneration project. Mr. Rudat in his presentation to the RTSSC pointed out that rather than traditional approaches to community engagement whereby the Council manage the process, there should be opportunities for the community to also manage the communication process. Examples of this could include a rotating chair for public meetings, which switches between the Council and the Community, an independent chair or the establishment of a separate reference group that oversees the community engagement. However, it is important that the processes and structures for community engagement are well documented and agreed to by both the Council and the public. Mr Rudat stressed the need to establish an agreed process for consultation between the public and the Council. This could be establishing a simple 'good will' document which outlines the principles and 'rules' for the consultation process, signed by all parties, which will hopefully assist in minimising potential procedural disputes. Outlining the agreed process at the beginning of the consultation also minimises the potential for 'backroom deals' to occur.

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Similarly, Mr Patchett's evidence stressed that community engagement on regeneration projects needs to go beyond 'quick fix mechanisms' such as running public meetings and issuing information leaflets towards building long-term strategies. In Mr Patchett's opinion Southwark Council should be aiming towards 2-5 year focussed projects that have full participation with the community. He commented that often it takes at least one year to set the community consultation structures in place.

Also supporting Mr Rudat's evidence, Mr Patchett commented that Southwark needs to try and get away from traditional mechanisms of community engagement when trying to engage with 'hard to reach' communities. He gave the example of work in another Council who used the Youth Parliament as a mechanism to attract youth opinion in regeneration projects.

Mr Patchett was reluctant to cite examples of 'best practice' mechanisms for community engagement in regeneration projects, commenting that because each regeneration project is unique what is 'best practice' for one project would be 'poor practice' for another project. However he identified some of the factors that ensure success in community engagement for regeneration projects. These included community involvement in decision processes and inclusive consultation with 'hard to reach' communities. The factors that were common to unsuccessful projects were public apathy, feelings of alienation and powerlessness. He did suggest that Southwark could improve on its performance in community engagement by integrating the community engagement team across the organisation. His evidence was that he felt that Southwark community engagement was departmentalised and not strategically applied which it needs to be when dealing with regeneration projects.

Ms Stella Clarke from Camden Council gave evidence to the RTSSC about the unique initiatives that Camden Council had done in encouraging best practice in community consultation. In particular the 'Families in Focus' and 'Social Capital' programs were considered to be a successful, innovative programs for London Council. The 'Families in Focus' program, a program that provides service delivery on housing estates, was successful in capturing the opinions of young people. Ms Clarke commented that the key to the success of this program was the recruitment of young people to deliver surveys, rather than Council staff members. The young people then received specific social research skills training from the Thomas Coram Institute to conduct a survey for the program and were encouraged to recruit other young people to the project. This approach ensured a high response rate to the survey and enabled consultation to reach beyond the 'usual suspects' involved in council consultation exercises and reach out to young people and 'other language' communities.

Additionally Ms Clarke commented on Camden's work that tried to measure the levels of social capital in neighbourhood renewal areas. Social Capital is a term that refers to the levels of social networks, trust and neighbourliness, levels of civic engagement and diversity, with social theorists such as Robert Putnam arguing that increased social capital reduces the levels of unemployment, poverty, crime and generally increases community well-being. Camden measured the levels of social capital for neighbourhoods in regeneration project areas through focussed workshops and surveys. Ms Clarke felt that community engagement levels were high in the social capital surveys because of the use of focused workshops that invited target groups from census data profiling on the borough.

Ms Clarke also submitted evidence about the internal structures within Camden Council that aims to encourage best practice in Community Consultation. For example, Camden Council 18 months ago established an internal Consultation Board made up of officers from varying Camden departments, to which Council officers must submit documentation if they are planning to conduct any community consultation. The Board also has a role to capture and share knowledge about community engagement projects, provides specialised community



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consultation training to staff and produces an internal newsletter. Although bureaucratic, Ms Clarke commented that the Board had been effective in shifting away from a departmental approach to community consultation to creating a more strategic approach to community consultation within Camden Council. She commented that this strategic shift in Camden had also been assisted by the development of a Community Engagement portfolio in the Executive.

Ms Nuala Conlan (Community Involvement and Development Unit) answered queries from RTSSC about how CIDU were moving towards best practice in regeneration. She commented that community leadership development programs had been run in the past but were very resource intensive. Ms Conlan suggested that the difficulty is that community empowerment is not a quick process requiring long-term commitment and with long-term resources, the situation is even more difficult with disenfranchised communities such as those in Southwark. Mr Evans (Strategic Direction Regeneration) said that Southwark was looking to access LDA funding to support this type of work, but hoped that the development of Community Councils would help empower communities to become more involved in community consultation exercises on regeneration issues.

Mr Evans and Ms Conlan both commented that often in programs of 'community development', where community leaders and community groups are charged with building skills in the community or encouraging engagement, there are problems because these groups or leaders claim that they are conducting 'community development' when in fact they are not. Ms Conlan commented that often community leaders think that they know the opinion of the community without actively doing and getting feedback on their views. Mr. Evans commented that it needs to be recognised that encouraging community development is a specialist skills that not everyone is equipped to do.

With regards to measuring and benchmarking the work of Southwark Council in community engagement, Ms Conlan commented that it is a difficult task to do because of the varied parameters in each project making them difficult to compare. The Audit Commission are currently trying to develop a set of National Indicators and involve Southwark in a trial of the indicators, however Southwark need to consider the resources available to contribute to the project.

As with Mark Patchett, Tom Travers (LDA) in his evidence to the RTSSC commented that there is no 'one size fits all methodology' for ensuring best practice in community engagement in regeneration projects, because each regeneration project is different. However he did provide to the RTSSC a number of guiding principles that he felt were important to creating effective community engagement. As with Mr Rudat and Mr Patchett one of these principles included recognising what level of community engagement was required. Other principles were:

- Maintaining openness in interactions with the public and having ongoing dialogue
- Build professional relationships with community activists. This relationship must be based on the activists agreeing to the shared vision of regeneration.
- Developing a shared vision for the regeneration project between the Council and the public. Developing strong leadership to continue the vision
- Having effective resources and time to invest in community engagement.

Mr Travers argued that instead of only engaging with the community through community forums on regeneration projects, alternative methods exist. These could include community workshops, community ballots and standing conferences.

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Mr Travers explained that through the development of the Diversity Panel the Elephant and Castle regeneration project was doing a very good job at engaging with the community and is even cited as an example of best practice by the LDA. However he commented that the Diversity Panel was only able to change through the development of a terms of reference for the Diversity Panel which created a shared vision and leadership for the regeneration of Elephant and Castle.

Mr Russell Profit in his presentation to the RTSSC was also reluctant to cite one example of mechanism of good practice, believing that each regeneration project is unique. His suggestion was that within Southwark, Community Councils may be able to make a difference to community engagement on regeneration issues if they are given clear terms of reference for decision making.

Members of the public felt that any successful community engagement needed to be jargon free, comprehensive across all the community (including BME groups, children and young people, voluntary and community groups and public service providers) and provide training for community members to understand complex issues. A build up of trust must be established before compromises or shared visions can be possible. Members of the public commented

*“This is where the Council falls down a lot, I think, they don’t give us accurate information, or enough information, too much jargon and people don’t understand it. Sometimes I wonder if it’s deliberate, and the Council don’t want us to understand!”.*

Additionally the members of the public felt that Southwark needed to be more creative and look at other methods of engagement, beyond meetings and forums. Any engagement must be proactive – the Council should not expect people to come to them. A comment from one member of the public was

*“They need to look at what else is available. Southwark doesn’t look further than meetings, forums, a fancy website”.*

## 2.3 Recommendations

Practical Recommendations:

Southwark Council needs to make much more effort to ensure that local people are able to attend meetings and participate fully by:

- Holding smaller group meetings to encourage a diversity of people to participate;
- Ensure that the role of and remit of what the community is being asked to decide is clear from the start of the consultation process;
- Ensure that presentations and information are clear and accurate and do not contain jargon;
- Ensuring that attention is paid the practicalities of holding meetings, such as holding the meeting at convenient times and places, an appropriate venue in the appropriate languages of the community and providing incentives for the public to attend such as food.
- That more creativity is given to community engagement, such as using theatre, involving local schools.

Strategic Recommendations:

- That the Council should incorporate responsibility for overseeing community engagement at a senior level;
- That the Council strategically streamlines the many different units within the Council;
- 
- That the level of assistance for community activists is established prior to beginning any community engagement exercise;
- That the Council look to attract specific external funding opportunities to develop community engagement and capacity building skills within the community, especially amongst 'hard to reach' community groups.
- That the London Borough of Southwark conduct two parallel communication processes during regeneration processes, one targeted to the general public that keeps them notified of major developments and one targeted to those who want to have a closer role in the process.
- That further research is conducted to assess the best way to conduct hard to reach communities, in particular youth groups.

Youth Recommendations:

- The RTSSC encourage the development of youth oriented social research training programs and the establishment of youth oriented conferences which can provide a forum for youth opinion on regeneration projects.
- That more community capacity building is done to engage young people;
- That the Council conducts further research of its own, and looks to best practice, in alternative mechanisms for engagement of youth.

### **3. Establishing what mechanisms for community/engagement/involvement are in place as part of the Elephant and Castle Project**

#### **3.1 Background**

The Elephant and Castle Regeneration project is one of the most ambitious and ongoing regeneration projects within London. The RTSSC recognise the importance of this project and the need to ensure that the current mechanisms for community engagement are effective. Hence the RTSSC scrutinised what mechanisms for community engagement in the past were in place and the changes that have been made. In order to achieve this RTSSC invited evidence from Regeneration Officers and Community Involvement Development Unit (CIDU), the Elephant Links Diversity Panel, the chair of the Elephant Links Board, SAVO and members of the public involved in the project.

#### **3.2 Evidence**

Regeneration Officers Mr Martin Smith and Mr Russell Profitt provided insights as to how the mechanisms for community engagement had changed significantly during the Elephant and Castle regeneration project. Mr Smith's evidence looked at some of the reasons why the community engagement failed under the existing mechanisms of the Elephant and Castle project. He highlighted how the initial Elephant Links Board structure was allowed a small group of community activists to become powerful enough to derail the community engagement and delay the delivery of the Elephant and Castle project. Mr Smith commented that because the Board structure lacked checks and balances the community activists were

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able to negatively influence the Board. Mr Smith commented that Southwark Council now recognises what mechanisms and structures are effective for community engagement for the Elephant and Castle regeneration project and has put in place a much more appropriate structure which is allowing for more representative and effective community engagement.

Mr Profitt's evidence highlighted how Southwark Council had implemented the recommendations of the Best Practice Review of Community Development and Involvement.

Mr Patchett's evidence on the current arrangements and structure of the Elephant Links Board was an essential part of making sure that panel members did not hijack the agenda of the Board. Also key was having an independent chair that oversees the Panel. He also commented on the importance of Panel members declaring any conflicting interests and dispensations they have with regard to the regeneration project and being held to account to this declaration of interests. It is also important that Panel members should be made to sign a declaration that they will act in the best interests of the Panel. Mr Patchett commented that generally the structure of such things as community panels should be that members could be forced to resign if they don't comply with the best interests of the panel or are found to have conflicting interests.

Mr Patchett's evidence suggested that previous arrangements between the Elephant Links Board and the Diversity Panel were unsatisfactory but that the current arrangements are much improved, with the community through the Diversity Panel engaging directly with the Board. He commented that within the current arrangements there was room for improvement, particularly in the area of community capacity building and building confidence in the Diversity Panel.

Mr Travers (LDA) in his evidence to the RTSSC commented on what he saw were the weaknesses of the Elephant and Castle regeneration project. He commented that the community expectations, in terms of the outcomes and deliverables of the project, were too high. He also commented that Southwark Council were over relying upon one method of community engagement, the use of community forums. He argued that for the complexities of the Elephant and Castle regeneration project, community forums were too simplistic and that other more sophisticated methods were available.

Mr Travers gave specific evidence on the on Diversity Panel. He commented that the development of the Elephant Links Diversity Panel, which created shared vision and leadership for regeneration at Elephant and Castle, had dramatically improved community engagement. The development of terms of reference for the Diversity Panel had also resulted in clearer expectations about what the Diversity Panel could and could not deliver, as well as a better relationship between the Board and the Diversity Panel. He reflected on when he first became involved in the project he was surprised at the depth and strength of the anger from dissenting voices that made the project untenable.

Mr Evans gave evidence to the RTSSC about the communication arrangements at the Elephant and Castle regeneration project. Communication for the project is resourced by the regeneration department communication team, a lead officer for the Elephant and Castle for communications and the added resources of Market Link who do surveys. He commented that the communications team do receive many requests for information on the regeneration project. The communications team is assisted by a Regeneration department community development officer and Elephant and Castle community development officer.

Evidence regarding funding arrangements for Elephant and Castle were presented by Mr. Evans to the RTSSC. He commented that the nature of funding for regeneration work is that it is short term, complex and often unsustainable. However, managers of regeneration

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projects are used to the ad hoc nature of funding and do not expect to have single strand funding. Single Regeneration Budget funding for the Elephant and Castle project had included funding for physical regeneration such as transport infrastructure improvements, but these could not be delivered within the timeframe of the Strategic Regeneration Budget project. However he expects that LDA will look favourably on Elephant and Castle for future funding.

Members of the public, including those involved with the Diversity Panel, felt that in principle the Diversity Panel was an acceptable way of engaging the community but that the Diversity Panel was not performing to expectations, possibly because expectations for what the Diversity Panel could achieve were too high. The numbers of people attending the meetings have dwindled which is affecting the flow of information to the broader community. Additionally there were concerns about the ability of the Diversity Panel to affect decision-making and have any power. Members of the public commented

*“Diversity Panel – the principle is good, but something is going wrong with the implementation of it”*

*“I don’t think the Partnership Board is working properly either...– we just feel that we have no power at all now. I don’t blame the Council in a way because of what happened in the past...”*

Members of the public were, however, pleased with the role of the independent chair commenting that chair had been able to provide training for complex issues.

### 3.3 Recommendations

The RTSSC note the long history of community engagement mechanisms for the Elephant and Castle Regeneration Project. The Sub – Committee recognise that a large number of improvements have been made to these mechanisms to better the quality of community engagement, however currently the Diversity Panel is not up to strength. The Sub – Committee recognises and thanks Mr. Mark Patchett for his hard work in chairing the Diversity Panel. The Sub – Committee list the following improvements that could be made:

Diversity Panel:

- There needs to be a review of the Diversity Panel to assess how to best ensure it remains a successful forum for the Elephant and Castle regeneration project. This review should specifically examine opportunities for the Diversity Panel to attract and maintain membership.
- The Diversity Panel should possibly become the core body for identifying and involving community involvement in physical regeneration processes to enthuse attendees;
- Membership of the Panel should be widened so as to foster genuine consultation, feeding into the SRB programme in its final stages and then beyond as the SRB scheme concludes;
- Specific attention should be given to attracting and retaining Hard To Reach groups onto the Diversity Panel;
- Outreach work should commence on existing and potential Diversity Panel members to ascertain why turn-out is so low. Strategies should be adopted to address these issues;

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- Diversity Panel members should be able to access greater training and capacity building to enable them to take key decisions – fostering a sense of worth in the body itself, rather than risking the belief becoming widespread that the Diversity Panel is a ‘talking shop’.

### General:

- That prior to any community engagement exercise the Council is clear what people’s role is in consultation and if they are aware of what decisions they are being asked to make;
- That adequate resources need to be afforded to consultation exercises, as they are resource and time intensive.
- That an internal audit is undertaken of management level staff in the Regeneration Department and Southwark departments that conduct community consultation, to ascertain the efficacy and adherence to the requirement that these officers are aware of other community engagement work within Southwark and other Local Councils.
- That an internal audit is undertaken to ascertain CIDU’s success in transferring knowledge of community involvement across other Southwark Departments, and whether further action needs to be taken to guarantee that this action is effective.
- That the Best Value Review of Community Consultation is forwarded to the RTSSC when completed

## **4. Considering the recommendations of the Peckham Partnership Scrutiny.**

### **4.1 Background**

The RTSSC felt that it was important for Southwark Council to ‘capture’ knowledge learnt in other regeneration projects. Hence the objective of this scrutiny was to examine the recommendations of the Peckham Partnership Scrutiny, a comprehensive scrutiny conducted on the Peckham Partnership regeneration project. The RTSSC wanted to examine how the lessons from Peckham could be integrated into the Elephant and Castle regeneration project and ‘captured’ across Southwark Council for any future Southwark regeneration projects.

### **4.2 Evidence**

The RTSSC heard evidence from Mr Russell Profit, Mr Martin Smith on this topic.

Mr Russell Profit’s evidence largely came from the recommendations of the Best Practice Review in Community Engagement. Mr Martin Smith had then looked at the key recommendations of this Best Practice Review as they related to the Elephant and Castle Project.

Mr Smith gave evidence that the lessons of Peckham do not specifically relate to Elephant and Castle because they are distinctly different regeneration projects. Mr Profit’s evidence was that Peckham was a distinctly physical regeneration project which in its later stages tried to include the social regeneration aspects, whereas Elephant and Castle from the outset included both physical and social aspects of regeneration.

Mr Paul Evans commented that the lessons from the Peckham Partnership have been filtered into the Elephant and Castle regeneration project. In particular, Peckham had taught

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Southwark the importance of producing a single, clear message for regeneration for the community. Another lesson from Peckham that had been transferred to Elephant and Castle was to use the established methods for community engagement and only search for new mechanisms when the existing methods are not effective. For example the Elephant Links Diversity Panel is looking at establishing new channels of community engagement after the existing methods failed.

Mr Evans also provided evidence to the RTSSC on the Best Practice Review of Community engagement, commenting that the Regeneration Department were implementing the recommendations of the Review. He commented that with regards to sharing knowledge about community engagement across the organisation it was important that the knowledge was shared across project boundaries not thematically. There is a staff requirement that management officers involved in community engagement exercises also have knowledge about other community engagement work happening in other Councils as well as other Southwark Departments.

Mr Robert Bollen (Corporate Strategy) gave evidence to the RTSSC which highlighted how CIDU was sharing its knowledge on community engagement across Southwark Departments. His example demonstrated where CIDU expertise was utilised for a project on Community Councils and on community led research with non- English speaking community groups.

### 4.3 Recommendations

- The Sub – Committee note the recommendations of the Peckham Partnership Study; however recognize that each regeneration project is unique and the recommendations from the Peckham Partnership Study cannot be transferred to the Elephant and Castle regeneration project.
- The Sub – Committee note that there is scope for continuous monitoring and evaluation of regeneration projects through the use of new indicators that are being developed by the Audit Commission.

**Appendix 1: Evidence from Members of the Public and Community Groups March 2004**



Any replication, press release or any other type of publication of any findings from this study will require the prior written approval of the Corporate Consultation Unit (CCU), London Borough of Southwark.

Such approval will only be refused on the grounds of inaccuracy or misrepresentation.

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## Executive Summary

This report summarises the findings of a meeting of the Regeneration and Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee in public to gather evidence from key public stakeholders involved in community engagement on the Elephant and Castle regeneration project. Six members of the public and community groups took part, giving a cross-section of opinion. The views presented in this report are those of the participants.

In taking evidence, three broad areas were covered:

- Who should be involved in community engagement
- What community engagement should mean
- What mechanisms should be used for community engagement

A summary of the key findings is set out below.

### Who should be involved in community engagement

Community engagement should primarily be undertaken with those who live and work on the local area (either defined as Southwark or the SRB<sup>1</sup> area). While all of London stands to benefit by the regeneration of the Elephant and Castle, it is local residents on whom it will impact most. There is concern that a balance of influence is upheld between the interests of local business and local residents. The comprehensive definition of the community is businesses, all residents or tenants (including BME<sup>2</sup> groups, children and young people), public service providers, and voluntary and community groups.

Community engagement should not be just with activists but should be across all communities. Some ethnic minority communities should be handled separately (e.g. with translators to hand) rather than expecting an 'umbrella group' to represent them adequately.

Some expect important decisions to be based on the views of entire communities, and not just small sub samples that choose to respond. The onus is on the Council to be proactive and go out to seek views, within existing community groups, rather than be content to hear from those that come to them with their views.

### What community engagement should mean

Community engagement should be the process for all parties to develop ideas and make decisions, and not just mean receiving information from the Council. For communities to take part in this process, they need to have support and training so that they can understand the complex issues and language that is often used. All information should be made available, and be accurate. There is currently a distrust of the Council with respect to this and this may be linked to the relationship with the former Elephant Links Community Forum.

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<sup>1</sup> SRB: Single Regeneration Budget

<sup>2</sup> BME groups: Black and Minority Ethnic groups

Witnesses are sceptical that a single shared vision of regeneration in the area is possible. Stakeholders have very different agendas. In order for any compromise to be worked out, there will need to be trust developed between the Council and communities.

To help achieve this, they feel the Council needs to prove, to the satisfaction of the residents and stakeholders, that it does listen and take account of residents' views when it makes decisions. Feedback is key to explaining the reasons why resident/stakeholder views are taken on board or not.

### **What mechanisms should be used for community engagement**

More creative approaches are required to publicise consultation. These approaches need to reach out to communities, some of whom may be suffering from consultation fatigue, or who are disillusioned about the whole regeneration programme.

Community engagement mechanisms need to be a combination of methods, from effectively publicising and communicating information to the whole local population, through to neutral opinion seeking through social research (MORI) and joint idea development and decision making through representative bodies such as the Diversity Panel and Elephant Links Forum. Avenues need to be kept open to ensure people are informed about what is happening and also can participate when they want to.

There is debate over whether the formal consultation mechanisms like the Diversity Panel or the Elephant Links Forum are currently effective in engaging and representing the views of all residents/stakeholders. Some believe the principle of the Diversity Panel was sound, but it has been weakened since its inception by walkouts and a steep decline in numbers attending. Others think that it should include more than just recognised community organisations. Currently it is mostly only the representatives of the Tenants and Residents Associations who attend.

Witnesses express dissatisfaction that the Diversity Panel lacks the power that the Elephant Links Community Forum had, but think the Forum process had been "high-jacked". They are not able to provide any solutions for a way to prevent this. They talk about the view that certain people should be barred from participating, but acknowledge in a democracy this not possible.

Some feel that no matter how many community groups there are, all should be consulted. Just consulting with a few groups may make life easier for the Council, but is not reaching out to everyone in the community. The Council should ensure that it reaches out to include both representative organisations and to the individuals themselves. Innovative approaches are needed here.

## **1. Introduction**

This report summarises the findings of a meeting of the Regeneration and Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee in public to gather evidence from key public stakeholders involved in community engagement on the Elephant and Castle regeneration project.

The Corporate Consultation Unit has a responsibility for undertaking consultation in Southwark and in this special instance was invited to lead focus groups as a means of gathering opinions. The results are presented in five sections including this introduction. The second section briefly outlines the purpose of the scrutiny Sub-Committee meeting and the methodology employed to gather views. Sections 3 to 5 provide detail on the specific concerns and ideas raised by participants. The executive summary at the beginning provides a summary of key findings and themes that emerged.

## **2. Purpose and Methodology**

### **2.1 Purpose**

#### **Background**

The Regeneration and Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee met in public on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2004 to gather evidence from key public stakeholders involved in community engagement on the Elephant and Castle regeneration project.

This meeting was not a public meeting, but was a scrutiny Sub-Committee meeting being held in public to hear evidence from key public stakeholders regarding community engagement surrounding the Elephant and Castle regeneration project. For this reason the meeting did not have any special advertising, but was advertised in the normal manner as for any other Southwark scrutiny meeting.

The sub-committee commissioned the Council's Corporate Consultation Unit (CCU) to conduct this workshop for them with the invited guests. The CCU is the Council's in-house market and social research department and takes an approach to workshops/focus groups similar to that of MORI.

A topic guide was developed and the invitees were guided through a conversation about the future of community engagement. Each of the three break-out groups were taken through the same areas and the CCU then analysed the results to see where the groups agreed and disagreed with each other. This report presents an overall view of what community engagement means to these invitees.

The role of Councillors was to act as observers during the workshop - to listen to the concerns and ideas being expressed by the invitees. At the beginning of the evening the Councillors were invited to sit in on the discussion of one of the breakout groups. The Councillors remained with one group during the breakout sessions so as not to disturb group dynamics.

### **2.2 Core Questions**

Specifically the meeting was designed to hear participants' views of:

- What Community Engagement means to them
- Whether Southwark is doing a good job on engaging with the community/voluntary sector on the Elephant and Castle regeneration project
- What other mechanisms Southwark could use to engage with the community/voluntary sector

### **2.3 Methodology**

31 individuals received a written invitation to present evidence to the Sub – Committee. This covered a random selection of 22 members of the Elephant Links Diversity Panel, representatives from Southwark Action for Voluntary Organisations (SAVO) and members of the public.

The six witnesses who attended and presented their evidence were:

- Helen O'Brian – Diversity Panel
- Norma Litton – Diversity Panel
- Doreen Gee – Diversity Panel/Key member of the public
- Reverend Neil McKinnon – Key member of the public
- Councillor Aubyn Graham - SAVO
- John Barkus - SAVO

These six witnesses provide a range of perspectives on the Elephant and Castle regeneration project. The views expressed are however personal ones, and do not necessarily represent those of the Diversity Panel or SAVO as a whole.

### **Format of the evening**

The workshop took place at 7pm on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2004 at the London College of Communication, Elephant and Castle. There were eight witnesses who came. After an introductory explanation of the purpose of the evening, two witnesses chose to leave, and the remaining six were split into three mini-groups.

Evidence was taken in the format of mini-group discussions, moderated by the Consultation Unit researchers. These focused on their views towards community engagement and what were effective ways of achieving this. The three groups and observing Councillors were brought together to present the findings in a plenary session around an hour later.

## **2.4 Interpretation of the Findings**

This report consists of findings from a qualitative consultation. The purpose of qualitative consultation is to gain personal, in-depth views into particular issues, as opposed to quantitative research such as opinion surveys which provides a quick overview. It should be remembered that these are the opinions and perceptions of participants. These findings provide readers with an understanding of the issues from the participants' perspective, but are not statistically reliable.



## Summary of Attitudes towards the Elephant and Castle regeneration project

### 3.1 Attitudes towards The Elephant and Castle regeneration project

At the start of the discussion, witnesses were asked to summarise their views towards the Elephant and Castle regeneration process to date, and how they'd like to feel in the future.

To date, all witnesses express varying degrees of disappointment and dissatisfaction with the consultation process. One word descriptions include:

**Scoda (the car)**  
**Convolutated**  
**Planners not skilled at engaging with people**  
**Highjacked (by certain residents)**  
**Disastrous**  
**Stop and Start**  
**Depression**  
**Confusion**

One witness says that a lot of consultation has occurred yet some communities (e.g. the large BME resident and business community in the Elephant and Castle area) have not been included enough.

*“You are talking about people’s homes and businesses and livings and they have not been consulted.”*

It is difficult for witnesses to be optimistic about the future, although they would like to be. Descriptions include:

*Not very optimistic*  
*Bleak*

The descriptions for how the future should be have a common theme. Communication should be clear, well planned, and open across the whole community:

**Involved**  
**Utopia**  
**Real Consultation**  
**Open Channels**  
**Capacity Building (safe for people to learn/express)**  
**Open meetings**  
**Optimistic**  
**Clarity**  
**Security [for residents]**  
**People to go out and engage with the BME communities**  
**Well planned – stop the last minute rush**  
**Well publicised in all languages to all people**  
**Bodies on the ground**

**Lose all the spin**

To expand these points, the SAVO witnesses criticise the consultation methods used:

*“People need to be specifically employed to go out and work with BME communities.” [with regards to consultation]*

*“Current consultation is not working mainly because there is no support structure for community groups. Southwark has good support for voluntary groups but not for community activists [i.e. people active in the community, such as teachers.] Where do they go to get involved?”*

*“Leaflets through the door are not adequate. Too much spin, glossy adverts to try and engage people, which lead to the same people turning out all the time.”*

**3.2 Overview**

Witnesses express disillusion with the Elephant and Castle regeneration consultation process to date, and some, at this point, are not very optimistic. They all agree in wanting changes in the consultation process in the future. Such future engagement needs to be

- based on clear language
- open
- well publicised
- across the whole community

## Perceptions of Community Engagement

Participants were then taken through a discussion to explore their understanding of what constitutes community engagement, and the best ways to achieve this. To help do this, they were given verbal outline summaries of some of the evidence presented by the expert witnesses to the Regeneration and Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee, for comparison. The approach taken can be seen in the Topic Guide in Appendix A (page 26).

### 4.1 Spontaneous definitions of Community Engagement

Before looking at Community Engagement in detail, spontaneous views were sought on what this concept meant to them. The SAVO representatives believe that community engagement is about getting people involved:

*“It’s all about making sure people realise how things will affect them and then they will want to get engaged.”*

They also see the process as

*“...all about the way residents and businesses, community and voluntary groups and the larger public engage with each other.”*

In contrast, the Diversity Panel members are more focussed on the relationship between the community and the Council, and the community’s ability to influence decisions. Their definition of Community Engagement is:

*“Involving the community in every aspect of the regeneration, which means not just having meetings and listening to the community and not taking any real notice of what they say. The community must have real power, we must be equal partners with the Council and developer.”*

*“My thought is that if it is community engagement the whole community, not a part, not sections, should have a complete input into what is going on, with the ability to do so by having complete knowledge of what is going on.”*

For Community Engagement, the Diversity Panel members emphasize that the whole community (not just representatives) should take part. They feel that everyone must have accurate and timely information.

#### 4.2 Understanding of the term ‘Community’ for the Elephant and Castle regeneration project

Expert witnesses<sup>3</sup> who have appeared before this Scrutiny Sub-Committee have discussed how the definition of ‘Community’ can be quite narrow (just those who are wanting to take part in the process) through to very wide (e.g. all of Greater London residents). Witnesses were asked for their opinions.

All of these witnesses recognise that the London-wide community will be affected by the changes at Elephant and Castle and debate how far they should be consulted. The end decision is to restrict engagement, or most stages of it, to those most affected (i.e. the local community.)

It is pointed out that there are several local communities that could suffer (e.g. the Heygate estate, at least during the development) while there is a larger group (i.e. London-wide) that will be winners once the area is regenerated. Some perceive that local residents may be less articulate than a London-wide community – so there is need to ensure their voice is heard.

Nearly all then agree that the ‘local’ community must include both residents and local businesses. Businesses bring in revenue and if they leave, that revenue goes with them. There is some concern about how to balance these two groups:

*“The main constituent is the residents as there is such a high proportion in the area.”*

but

*“Would the businesses have too much influence?”*

Geographic definitions of ‘local’ differed slightly: it could be the whole of Southwark (including those who travel into Southwark to work), or it could be just the SRB area (again, residents and workers).

Finally, it should not just include the activists among the community:

*“You tend to have the same people turn up at meetings all the time, giving their own opinion which tends to be the same.”*

The comprehensive definition of the community given by these participants includes businesses, all residents or tenants (including BME groups, children, young people), public service providers, and voluntary and community groups.

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<sup>3</sup> The Regeneration and Transport Scrutiny Sub Committee invited various Local Authority Officers and several experts in the field of community engagement, to present evidence on how to define community involvement, and what mechanisms are effective for achieving this.

#### 4.3 Desired 'Engagement' for the Elephant and Castle regeneration project

Witnesses were asked what sort of involvement they would want with the Elephant and Castle regeneration project. Some witnesses express a level of weariness and cynicism. The whole process has taken too long, and everyone just wants to see it done. Future engagement needs to address methods of reaching and informing the whole community, and empowering them (through education and support) to have a real dialogue.

All want to see engagement mean more than simply receiving newsletters and information about the how the scheme is progressing. The ideal is for the community to be involved as deeply as their abilities and interest allow. Some participants believe that prioritising options or making decisions requires everyone in the community to take part, and not just a sub – sample of people. It also requires having the proper, full information, and having power. There is some scepticism based on past experience:

*"The Community should have some real power and not be treated like children by the Council, not the paternalistic attitude that the Council knows best, you know. We must have some real power. We did before on the old Board but on the present Board we haven't got any power."*

There is still a yearning for the utopia of complete community involvement:

*"There are meetings held, exhibitions shown and whatever, but you don't have a very good turnout and from a small turnout they are still making decisions and coming to conclusions and to me at the end of the day, if there are 100 people and only 20 are being interviewed, those 20 can't represent the other 80...For me, to be true community involvement, everyone must know, be invited, and take part in whatever way."*

Some see the previous engagement method of the Elephant Links Community Forum as approaching that utopia, and feel it can be achieved again provided there are vetting controls:

*"As a concept of people being fully involved or representative, people being fully involved in making decision about the future of their local community was as good as it can get."*

The process adopted was felt by participants to be a long and at times painful one. One problem is seen by some to be that even where great efforts had been made to agree a common agenda for the benefit of the community, it was still difficult to make sure that everyone stuck to that agenda. There are feelings that some people seemed to aim to use the process for purposes other than those agreed. It is felt that it would be useful to try and avoid this in the future by taking whatever steps are possible to make sure that those appointed (in that case to the Community Forum) do "buy in" to the agreed agenda.

The benefit of the Elephant Links Community Forum was that:

*"Everybody came together to start with, really looking at each other in distrust, to be honest. A bit wary, sort of 'you don't really understand us and don't really want to know about us', basically (one set of people to another). But after a couple of*

*meetings we all started to understand where each other were coming from, how we could help each other.”*

Finally, witnesses believe that any engagement requires adequate understanding of the subject matter. Jargon, or lack of truth, is an problem that several mention. Communities feel handicapped by either the complexity of issues, or being left in the dark:

*“They need to understand what we are talking about – they need to be empowered.”*

*“This is where the Council falls down a lot, I think, they don’t give us accurate information, or enough information, too much jargon and people don’t understand it. Sometimes I wonder if it’s deliberate, and the Council don’t want us to understand!”*

*“To make an informed decision, you need to be informed, obviously.”*

Some feel that local community groups representing residents should be able to hire professionals to advise them in the same way that the Council does.

#### **4.4 The principles underpinning any successful type of engagement process**

Witnesses were asked to comment on principles underpinning any successful type of engagement process. These principles were ones that expert witnesses who had previously testified before the Committee outlined as core principles of good Community Engagement.

##### Principle 1: Council should maintain openness in interactions with the public, have on-going dialogue

SAVO members comment that the dialogue must be about agreed or definitive outcomes, and that respect for both parties is needed.

Although some of the Diversity Panel witnesses agree with this statement, it is viewed as an example of jargon in itself. It needed to be explained to these participants by the group facilitator first.

*“People who are not so ‘with it’ don’t understand it; it’s jargon - it needs to be street language.”*

Principle 2: Develop a shared vision between Council and public and develop strong leadership to pursue it

Both SAVO and some Diversity Panel members query whether there needs to be a shared vision.

*“Maybe two different ideas could be allowed, otherwise it will end up being a Council vision.”*

*“But I don’t see how we can have a shared vision as the Council have their agenda and we have our agenda, and theirs is as the accountable body (thinking about finance); we’re thinking about our housing, because we’re going to lose our homes on the Heygate and move somewhere else.”*

SAVO members do however agree that a commitment to deliver is needed to get any results. Diversity Panel members meanwhile query the precise identity of the ‘strong leadership’:

*“Which strong leadership!? In the Council or amongst us? The Council does all the leading, period.”*

However, it is agreed that the Council can take the lead if their consultation has been correct “and we’ve had a full part in it.”

Principle 3: Build professional relationship with community activists based on agreeing to a shared vision of regeneration

Witnesses agree with this, but insist that the vision is truly a shared one:

*“One point I think is critical. Council MUST take onboard the views of residents, traders . . . the views of the people who are going to be affected. They MUST take those on board and they must NOT say ‘oh yes we hear what you say and forget all about it.’”*

*“The Council must be listening to it. They must take it seriously.”*

*“We can all compromise, but in the past it was just us that was compromising.”*

When asked how they will know the Council is taking it seriously, they respond:

*“Tell us why something is impossible. Tells us why it is impossible. If the Council tells us why and is honest about telling us why and we believe you then we can work with you to do something else. But when you have one side that is intransigent whether the Council or Community – you are not going to get anywhere. There has to be a build up of trust.”*

The reference to ‘professional’ raises a discussion again about equipping all sides of consultation with the right skills for an equal dialogue:

*“What is professional? I was thinking that we did ask for a lot of training – I don’t know much about planning and architects and master plans, we’re just ordinary people...Training puts us more on a par with the Council then to discuss things because we had knowledge, and were trained to a certain extent.”*

#### 4.5 Effective mechanisms for Community Engagement

SAVO members suggest the need to be creative and look at other methods of engagement, beyond meetings and forums. Art and drama can be used to engage the community. The Neighbourhood Initiative Forum is cited as an example of good practice. Tower Hamlets is also mentioned for using good and worthwhile engagement techniques. Focus groups should be held within the communities, to enable people to feel comfortable. Any engagement must be proactive – the Council should not expect people to come to them. There is a need to go where the people are (e.g. hold festivals, liaise with community and church leaders), otherwise people who are not already involved in the wider community will be missed.

*“They need to look at what else is available. Southwark don’t look further than meetings, forums, a fancy website.”*

*“Older people in their flats who don’t see anyone from one week to another – are they being reached? I don’t think so. Do they really understand the fundamental differences this is going to make to their home life?”*

Diversity Panel members come armed with a list of practical suggestions for effective consultation.

- Hold smaller group meetings (e.g. ‘block’ meetings on Heygate Estate):

*“Very often they’re large meetings and some people haven’t got the confidence to speak at large meetings, so they should have a lot more smaller group meetings.”*

- Translations need to be provided:

*“There are a lot of people in the Elephant area where English is a second language.”*

- If 3D models or maps are provided, these need to be adapted to meet the needs of ordinary residents so that they can understand them:

*“We had an exhibition with a model at the Heygate with a map on the wall but no street names on the model, so you couldn’t identify where you were. We had to request even to have Heygate Street and Walworth Road marked on it.”*

- Hold events and don’t simply rely on written publicity, which fail to attract attention:

*“It doesn’t all have to be written stuff. A while ago we had a film about some company that did events: a publicity stunt of someone hanging from a building wrapped like an Egyptian mummy, and crowds of people gathered to look at him!”*



## Officers Notes – Not for Public Distribution

- Use audio instead of written publicity. It is more likely to be heard, even if the listener is not consciously listening, and is retained better than a poster or written material:

*“When the Council want to publicise something they use TV or radio, it’s heard or seen by thousands, but when they want a decision-making process and need to bring people in to take part, you don’t get that sort of response.”*

- The Council should be more proactive, and go out to people:

*“The exhibition on the Heygate was not very well attended at all – about a quarter came. The Council are always there waiting for you to go to them, instead of them going out – they need to be more proactive.”*

- The Council should conduct door-to-door surveys and ballots.
- Lay on a Mobile bus for elderly- even though it's not a new idea, it works:

*“There are people with young children or the elderly who can’t get out on the estate...it would help having a bus go round and stop at one place at the estate for half an hour, people come downstairs and have a look at a film strip or something, like a mobile library.”*

People won’t go to meetings *“because they’re afraid to go out or have kids to look after.”*

- Make the language simple:

*“No jargon – plain English please – street language.”*

- Stalls in the Shopping Centre work well.
- Last but most importantly, for one of the participant groups, provide food!

#### 4.6 How to bring in people who are not involved in the consultation process

Witnesses were asked about the people who don't come forward, and whether their views are brought in through the Diversity Panel, SAVO, or other means. Diversity Panel members believe that the Diversity Panel could work, but that it needs to get more members. SAVO, on the other hand:

*"haven't been involved in the Elephant and Castle – you hear their name every now and then, but I've not seen them doing anything."*

Some witnesses discuss the Elephant Links Community Forum, and differ over whether this was effective or not. One participant feels it was, as:

*"We (the Community Forum) were a mixed group and we were reporting back to the groups that we came from and the people there would be reporting back to theirs...What we had was a build up of trust with that group."*

Another disagrees:

*"I don't think it did work and I'm not aware of a system that could work. . . If you look at the numbers who actual attend tenants' meetings compared with those that actually live on the estate, you are talking about a tiny number."*

This witness offers alternatives, but is still sceptical:

*"Focus groups and regular releases of 'Elephant News' are two ways that occur to me. But even with that you will have someone living on the Heygate estate that when the bulldozers come will say, 'development, what development?'"*

Hard-to-reach groups need to be tackled separately:

*"We should engage with them. They are going to need to know what is going on. If necessary have interpreters and meetings for that community only."*

It is felt that there are many different communities and there may need to be different ways of communicating with them. A one-hit approach with one umbrella group trying to represent everybody was felt to be singularly unsuccessful and open to huge misuse and manipulation.

As well as forums, going to an organisation like MORI helps to provide an overall picture of the views of residents. Using MORI, additionally, *"is objective."* Possibly an independent third party should commission MORI to reach the hard-to-reach groups or establish what all parts of the community think about something.

#### 4.7 Overview

Community Engagement needs to be:

## Officers Notes – Not for Public Distribution

- Comprehensive across all the community (including BME groups, children and young people, voluntary and community groups and public service providers)
- Primarily local
- Among both businesses and residents

It should be the process for all parties to develop ideas and make decisions, and not just mean receiving information from the Council. However, to do this there must be:

- Support and training for the community to understand the issues and jargon
- Clarity and openness of information
- A build up of trust before compromises or shared visions can be possible

More creative approaches are required to publicise consultation and to reach out to communities.

## Views of the Diversity Panel and other consultation mechanisms

### 5.1 Views of the Diversity Panel as a mechanism for engaging the community

The Diversity Panel is accepted as being one way of engaging the community. Members of the Panel report that there was interest at the start, electing representatives to the Elephant Links Board, but once that had been done interest faded away, combined with some walking out when they weren't elected. There is disappointment expressed with the way the Diversity Panel has turned out:

*“Diversity Panel – the principle is good, but something is going wrong with the implementation of it.”*

*“Not living up to its expectations is it?”*

First there is the decline in numbers attending, from around 40 originally to now about eight, according to several participants.

*“We’re not getting the people there we hoped we would. With the Community Forum only those people who were interested . . . became a smaller and smaller group and I think the same sort of thing is happening with the Diversity Panel.”*

*“I’m not sure if the Diversity Panel works or not. I mean, what are we supposed to be doing? There was a big group at first, 30 or 40 people who did the election of the community reps. Now they’ve all faded away – at a usual meeting there are about eight people aren’t there?”*

*“There were lots of disruptions, and because certain people weren’t able to have their own way they walked out... They come basically to hear their opinion and their opinion is right and it stands, and you shouldn’t argue, and if you argue they get upset and they walk [out], but also they disrupt the whole meeting first... Over a period of weeks they disappeared. Then you had people who were elderly and got ill and couldn’t come out anymore, or the ones who do not come out in the winter months because it is just too dark and they are elderly and afraid to go out.”*

A few notes of optimism about the size of the turnout are heard:

*“Lighter nights in the summer months, you have more turnout.”*

*“We had a lot at the Christmas thing because there was food on!”*

There is also disappointment with the lack of power of the Diversity Panel on the Partnership Board:

*“With all the good will in the world, what has replaced the Partnership Board, and the Diversity Panel which has replaced the Community Forum, is very much a neutered version of what existed, at least potentially, before.”*

*“I don’t think the Partnership Board is working properly either...There were certain people who brought about the collapse of it, they didn’t want it to work really...Now the Council have gone completely the other way and taken power away from the community. Alright we have five reps, but that is five out of about twenty – we just feel that we have no power at all now. I don’t blame the Council in a way because of what happened in the past...”*

SAVO members distrust having just a few groups to consult:

*“It is just making life easier for some.”*

They believe that no matter how many community groups there are, all should be consulted. A current weakness is that black groups are often excluded as they do not understand the system, and one participant believes there is no support structure for certain groups of these people. Innovative approaches are needed here.

## **5.2 Views of the Diversity Panel’s composition**

The SAVO representatives were not familiar with the Diversity Panel. On hearing about its composition, they say its membership should be widened to be all-inclusive. It should include those groups who are not formally organised.

Witnesses report that at one Diversity Panel meeting about six of the eight people attending were from Heygate, and the other two were from Rockingham. The Diversity Panel is therefore currently lacking attendance from members other than from the Tenants’ Associations:

*“I don’t think it represents enough groups – they were there at the beginning, but now it is just Heygate.”*

## **5.3 How feedback is achieved**

Diversity Panel members go back and report to their respective committees, and they agree that this is one way of engaging the community. However, one representative is critical:

*“I always talk to the committee on Heygate, and people always stop and ask me what is happening, but I wouldn’t call that a very wide dispersal, you’ve got to have other methods of dispersing information.”*

## **5.4 Views of the independent chair**

Diversity Panel members report back very positively about the independent Chair. An example of his usefulness is cited: outside visitors come to speak to the Panel in complex jargon. At a particular meeting, there were no questions asked afterwards, because no-one had understood the presentation:

*“and that puts people off.. you might as well sit at home and watch the telly!”*

*“We made it quite clear last time, we need it simplified.”*

The Chair has recognised this problem and he has organised for training on and off-site. He has also filled the requirement for a regular and consistent Chair person. Some participants think that he should be able to give the casting vote in the event of a tie.

## **5.5 How communities should be consulted**

Diversity Panel members want to be involved in developing ideas and feeding these back to the Council. SAVO members also think the priority in consultation is seeking views from communities rather than simply informing them. However, they point out that people can start to suffer from consultation fatigue, so care needs to be taken in the format of the consultation. They suggest clear messages and publicity, with sweeteners to attract people to be involved. The Voluntary sector particularly are very busy with little spare time and money.

Some Diversity Panel members advocate an increased use of the shopping centre for the open days, to get people to participate. Whatever the mechanisms used, avenues need to be kept open to ensure people are informed about what is happening and also can participate when they want to.

## **5.6 Hopes for future**

Some practical lessons have been learnt, and three are mentioned here. It is suggested that certain people should be barred from becoming involved, although it is recognised that this would not be possible. Secondly, the late delivery of papers means that people are not ready for meetings. More time needs to be allocated to planning consultation. Thirdly:

*“I think one of the things we have learnt, is not to let any one group have an overall majority of any kind or veto of any kind. And have an independent chair with an extra vote if necessary (a Casting vote)*

Diversity Panel members representing the Tenants and Residents Associations are not optimistic about the housing aspect of the regeneration project. They are very displeased with the latest television coverage, which they view as misleading. It quoted strong support for the plan among residents, when this, they claim, was based on only a minority of residents completing the survey.

*“One thing I’d like the Council to be is honest.”*

*“Disgraceful.”*

This is the latest example of a consultation process being perceived as flawed because it failed to reach the entire Elephant and Castle community. These participants find it frustrating that the results are then being used as part of the decision – making process.

There is a sense of pessimism. Participants feel this has affected the consultation mechanisms and led to an apathetic response and turnout in the Diversity Panel and other meetings:

*“People are just so fed up with it all - oh it’s not going to happen.”*

*“People are scared that they will lose their homes or be put in a small corner.”*

*“We don’t know where we stand anymore.”*

## **5.7 Overview**

The principle of the Diversity Panel is acceptable as a method of engaging the community. The independent Chair position is working well. The concept of feeding information from the Partnership Board through the Diversity Panel to those they represent is understood.

However, the Diversity Panel is not performing to expectation. Numbers attending have dwindled, so the flow of information through to others in the community is not happening comprehensively. SAVO members had not even heard of it.

There is disappointment at the small voice the Diversity Panel has on the Partnership Board. Ideally, members of the Diversity Panel wish to be involved in developing ideas and feeding these back to the Council. However, they need support if they are to do this, both in terms of numbers attending meetings and more training.

**APPENDIX A**

***The Discussion Topic Guide***

**ELEPHANT AND CASTLE REGENERATION SCRUTINY**

**REGENERATION AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING IN PUBLIC**

23 February 2004

**BREAK OUT SESSION TOPIC GUIDE v6**

Total Time: 50 minutes

1. General & Intro. (3 mins 7.20 – 7.23pm)

Purpose of this evening: is to focus on community engagement and involvement in the regeneration of the Elephant and Castle, and discuss your views on what community engagement means, and what are your opinions of various ways of being involved. We wish to get your comments on various ideas put forward by others working in this field, and while you need to draw on your previous experience, the focus of this evening is to look for the best ways of going forward.

- Introduce self and role: facilitate, direct discussion
- Group etiquette: provide range of views; talk one at a time; respect opinions; not to make unnecessary personal references
- Permission to use tape recorder

2. Warm up (5- 10 mins – 1 minute per person 7.23 – 7.33pm max)

Participants to introduce themselves -

1. Who they are, who they represent

2. ONE word description of how they feel towards:

- a. the regeneration consultation process to date
- b. the future of the regeneration project.
- c. how do they want to feel



3. Community Engagement – what is this (10 minutes 7.33 – 7.43 pm)

3.1 What Community Engagement in the regeneration project should be: spontaneous definitions across the group – JOT DOWN ON FLIP CHART

3.2 Exploring first community, who should be involved in the Elephant and Castle regeneration project– what is your understanding of ‘community’?

PROBE FOR (a) the widest definition, (b) the narrowest, (c) what is acceptable?

e.g

not just E&C residents but also Southwark and Greater London residents (**wide**)

everyone in Southwark including hard to reach groups i.e. really everyone (**middle**)

just those who are wanting a part of the process (**narrow**)

3.3 Exploring now ‘engagement’ – what sort of involvement do you want with the regeneration of the Elephant and Castle project?  
PROMPT –AS BELOW. [SORT INTO LIGHT TO HEAVY LEVELS OF INVOLVEMENT]

**\*IF MENTION HELPING PRIORITISE OPTIONS - What does that mean to you?**

receiving newsletters and information about how the scheme is progressing (**light**)

involvement in seeking opinions of communities  
  
being involved in feeding back comments  
  
**(moderate)**

developing ideas and plans for regeneration (**heavier**)

\* helping to prioritise options (**heavy**)

4. What ways are effective in ‘engaging with the community’ (5 minutes 7.43 – 7.48 pm)
- 4.1 It has been suggested that any successful type of engagement process should follow the following principles: SHOW ON FLIPCHART/SHOW CARD Is anything missing from this?

<i>Council should maintain openness in interactions with the public, have on-going dialogue</i>
<i>Develop a shared vision between Council and public and develop strong leadership to pursue it</i>
<i>Build professional relationship with community activists based on agreeing to a shared vision of regeneration</i>

- 4.2 What about people who don't come forward? How do we bring in views of the community – is it through SAVO or the Diversity Panel or other means?

4.3	<i>OPTIONAL –ONLY IF TIME</i>
<p>It has been suggested that trust needs to be built between the Council and the community. What are three things that could help in this?</p> <p>It has been proposed that there is a need to agree and document processes for community engagement at the start, so that this framework is kept. E.g. developing a terms of reference for what everyone's role should be e.g. the role of the community panel and Council. What do you feel about this?</p>	

**5A. Section for Diversity Panel group only (12 mins 7.48 – 8.00 pm)**

- How do you view the Diversity Panel as a concept for ‘engaging the community’? PROBES – in what ways is it working as an effective consultation mechanism for the Elephant and Castle regeneration? IF NOT WORKING WELL; Why not? How can it be improved to do this?
- What does the Diversity Panel bring to the consultation that other methods don’t?
- Views on the composition of the Diversity Panel – is it inclusive? IF NOT -Who is missing? How can you bring them in?
- Each of you represents different groups. Is that the cut off for engagement? Or do you then engage with your members and in turn get them to reach out to other groups? What are the challenges and difficulties in this?
- In what ways should the Diversity Panel be consulted? LIST - SORT AGAIN IN LOW – HIGH LEVEL CONSULTATION

receiving newsletters and information about how the scheme is progressing  
**(light)**

involvement in seeking opinions of communities  
  
being involved in feeding back comments  
  
**(moderate)**

developing ideas and plans for regeneration  
**(heavier)**

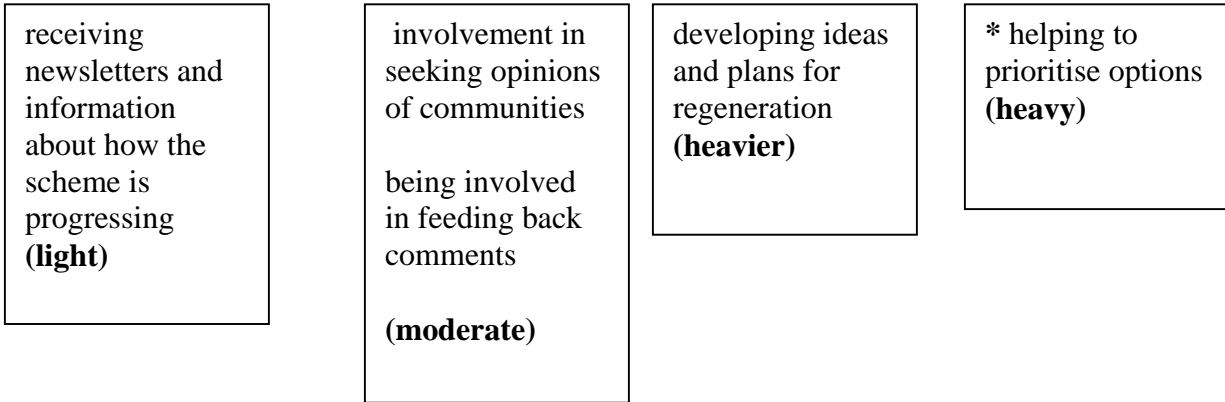
\* helping to prioritise options  
**(heavy)**

- What are your views about it needing to have an independent Chair. Why is this?
- What are your hopes for the future?

6. Drawing together (5 mins 8.00 – 8.05 pm)  
Summarise views of community engagement –
1. WHO IS COMMUNITY - who should be ‘engaged’ in the regeneration
  2. ENGAGEMENT METHODS - views of benefits and drawbacks of Diversity Panel
  3. DEGREE OF ENGAGEMENT - what is desirable, what is acceptable

**5B. SAVO [Southwark Action for Voluntary Organisations] (12 mins 7.48 – 8.00 pm)**

- Do you feed into the Diversity Panel? IF YES – how? IF NO – should you? How should voluntary groups be represented?
- In what ways should SAVO members be consulted? LIST - SORT AGAIN IN LOW – HIGH CONSULTATION LEVEL



- What does, or could, SAVO bring to the consultation that other organisations don't?
- Is the Diversity Panel inclusive enough?
- What do you feel the Diversity Panel has achieved? Has this been an improvement on the engagement process?
- Have you been involved in other regeneration projects? IF YES – Which ones? What were the positive things that came out of this? Is there anything in the Elephant and Castle regeneration that is being done better or worse than these other projects?
- What are your hopes for the future?

**6. Drawing together (5 mins 8.00 – 8.05 pm)**

- Summarise views of community engagement –
1. WHO IS COMMUNITY - who should be 'engaged' in the regeneration
  2. ENGAGEMENT METHODS - views of benefits and drawbacks of Diversity Panel
  3. DEGREE OF ENGAGEMENT - what is desirable, what is acceptable

**5C. Members of the Public (12 mins 7.48 – 8.00 pm) only**

- How do you view the Diversity Panel as a concept for ‘engaging the community’? PROBES – in what ways is it working as an effective consultation mechanism for the Elephant and Castle regeneration? IF NOT WORKING WELL; Why not? How can it be improved to do this?
- What does the Diversity Panel bring to the consultation that other methods don’t?
- Views on the composition of the Diversity Panel – is it inclusive? IF NOT -Who is missing? How can you bring them in?
- Each of the members of the Diversity Panel represents different groups. Is that the cut off for engagement? Or should they then engage with their members and in turn get them to reach out to other groups? What are the challenges and difficulties in this?
- In what ways should the Diversity Panel be consulted? LIST - SORT AGAIN IN LOW – HIGH LEVEL CONSULTATION

receiving newsletters and information about how the scheme is progressing  
**(light)**

involvement in seeking opinions of communities  
  
being involved in feeding back comments  
  
**(moderate)**

developing ideas and plans for regeneration  
**(heavier)**

\* helping to prioritise options  
**(heavy)**

- What are your views about it needing to have an independent Chair. Why is this?
- What are your hopes for the future?

**6. Drawing together (5 mins 8.00 – 8.05 pm)**

Summarise views of community engagement –

1. WHO IS COMMUNITY - who should be ‘engaged’ in the regeneration
2. ENGAGEMENT METHODS - views of benefits and drawbacks of Diversity Panel
3. DEGREE OF ENGAGEMENT - what is desirable, what is acceptable

**APPENDIX B**

*The invitation letter, preparatory questions and explanation of scrutiny*

Dear Mr. xxxxx,

**REGENERATION AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY SUB - COMMITTEE MEETING**

As you may be aware, the Regeneration and Transport Scrutiny Sub – Committee is conducting a scrutiny examining community engagement in regeneration projects, with particular focus on the Elephant and Castle regeneration project. The Sub – Committee has already heard evidence from a range of people involved with the Elephant and Castle regeneration, as well as experts in community engagement, and would now like to hear from you.

The Sub – Committee invites you to come and participate in their upcoming meeting. The details are:

Date: Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2004

Time: 7pm

Venue: London College of Communication, Elephant and Castle.  
(Formally London College of Printing)

The meeting will include focus group discussions as well as an open meeting. The focus groups will try and answer questions which are included with this letter. The session will start promptly at 7pm so it is important you are there by 7pm and are able to stay for the evening's discussions. Also included with this letter is some general information about scrutiny and the scrutiny process.

I would be grateful if you can confirm if you will attend the meeting by contacting Stephanie Dunstan by Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> February, either by email [Stephanie.Dunstan@Southwark.gov.uk](mailto:Stephanie.Dunstan@Southwark.gov.uk) or phone : 020 7525 4393.

If you require any further information please don't hesitate to contact Ms. Dunstan on the above details.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Neil Watson  
Chair Regeneration and Transport Scrutiny Sub – Committee

## **SOUTHWARK SCRUTINY: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS**

### **Questions for Diversity Panel Members:**

- What does 'Community engagement' mean to you?
- Do you feel that Southwark is doing a good job on engaging with the community on the Elephant and Castle regeneration project?
- Do you think that the Diversity Panel is a good mechanism for engaging with the community on the Elephant and Castle regeneration project?
- What other mechanisms could Southwark use to engage with the Community on regeneration projects?

### **Questions for SAVO:**

- What voluntary groups do you represent? How do you then engage with the community and reach out to other voluntary groups?
- What does 'Community engagement' mean to you?
- Do you think that Southwark is doing a good job on engaging with the voluntary sector on the Elephant and Castle regeneration project?
- What other mechanisms could Southwark use to engage with the Voluntary sector on regeneration projects?

### **Questions for Members of the Public:**

- What does 'Community Engagement' mean to you?
- Do you feel that Southwark is doing a good job at engaging with the general public on the Elephant and Castle regeneration project?
- What other mechanisms could Southwark use to engage with the general public on regeneration projects?

## **SOUTHWARK SCRUTINY FACT SHEET**

### **What is ‘scrutiny’?**

A scrutiny is an in-depth, critical examination of a particular subject.

Southwark Council has established six scrutiny Sub – Committees which critically examine the policies and decisions made by Southwark Council. The scrutiny committees hold the executive to account by looking at their decisions, checking the evidence on which they are made and making sure they reflect local people’s concerns.

The six Southwark Scrutiny Sub – Committees are divided into the following subject areas, with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee coordinating, managing and approving the annual scrutiny work programmes.

- Regeneration and Transport Scrutiny Sub – Committee
- Finance and Economic Development Scrutiny Sub – Committee
- Housing Scrutiny Sub – Committee
- Education Scrutiny Sub – Committee
- Environment and Community Support Scrutiny Sub – Committee
- Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub – Committee

### **How is a scrutiny carried out?**

1. A small number of Council members form a Scrutiny Sub – Committee to look in depth at a particular issue.
2. The Sub – Committee gather evidence on the issue from experts, community groups and the public. Evidence is collected in writing, by e-mail and at special meetings held in the public.
3. After hearing the evidence the Sub – Committee will then produce a report with recommendations for the Southwark Executive or other relevant body. The Executive then considers the report and makes a decision. All papers are public documents unless they contain commercially sensitive information.

### **What is tonight’s meeting about?**

Tonight’s meeting is part of the Regeneration and Transport Sub – Committee’s scrutiny of community engagement on regeneration projects, in particular the Elephant and Castle regeneration project. The Sub – Committee has heard from a range of experts on community engagement and now want to hear evidence from members of the public and community groups involved in the Elephant and Castle regeneration project.



The objective of tonight's meeting is to:

- Hear evidence from members of the Elephant Links Diversity Panel about how they feel community engagement is working through the establishment of the Diversity Panel.
- Hear evidence from voluntary organisations about how Southwark Council engages with them on the Elephant and Castle regeneration project and how this could be improved for future regeneration projects.
- Hear evidence from community members about how Southwark Council can in the future engage with them on regeneration projects.

The purpose of the meeting is to hear constructive, forward - looking evidence that can assist the Sub – Committee make recommendations to the Executive.

### **What will happen tonight?**

In order to make the most of the time available an independent facilitator will chair the meeting and invite guests to break into groups and answer questions the Sub – Committee have developed. Following this a spokesperson from each group will present their answers to the Sub – Committee as well as answer any questions the Sub – Committee may have. There will be time for additional discussion and questions.

### **What happens after tonight?**

The Sub – Committee will use the evidence collected at tonight's meeting and decide whether they need to hear from anyone else or if they have enough information to make recommendations to the Executive.

If you would like to receive a copy of the final Scrutiny report and recommendations please leave your contact details with Scrutiny Project Manager: Stephanie Dunstan ([Stephanie.Dunstan@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:Stephanie.Dunstan@southwark.gov.uk) or phone: 020 75254393)

## Appendix 2: Public Submissions

### Submission 1: Mr. Richard Lee

#### ***ELEPHANT AND CASTLE REGENERATION SCRUTINY***

Written evidence from Richard Lee – Elephant and Castle resident.

#### **Regeneration and Transport sub-committee 26th April 2004.**

I am pleased to be able to make a submission on the Elephant and Castle project. This will be based around the terms of reference. If possible, I would still be interested to give a presentation.

#### **1. Define Community Engagement/ Involvement**

Community involvement can be defined as having 4 themes: -

- **Influence** – ensuring that community involvement leads to real influence over regeneration strategy and activity
- **Inclusivity** – valuing diversity and addressing inequality, to ensure inclusive and equal involvement
- **Communication** – providing clear information and implementing transparent and accessible policies and procedures
- **Capacity** – developing the skills, knowledge and organisational capacity of the community partner

#### 2. Establish what mechanisms are effective for engaging with the Community

The key for successful community involvement is that it is tailored to the local community and built from the bottom up. This means listening to resident's visions and working with them to turn these visions into detailed proposals and projects. This philosophy must underpin the strategies and mechanisms that follow.

There needs to be a community involvement strategy within which clear objectives and action plans are developed. Benchmarks should be used as a means of measuring the effectiveness of community involvement. This approach has been adopted by **Yorkshire Forward**, the Regional Development Agency for Yorkshire and the Humber. Some examples of their Benchmarks and key considerations are as follows:

#### **Benchmark A**

**The community is recognised and valued as an equal partner at all stages of the process**

Consideration

How are community members made to feel valued as equal partners?

### **Benchmark B**

#### **All community members have the opportunity to participate**

##### Consideration

What are the range of opportunities through which community members can influence decisions?  
How are you supporting community networks / structures through which all communities can contribute to decision making?

### **Benchmark C**

#### **Equal opportunities policies are in place and implemented**

##### Consideration

What support and training is offered to the development of equal opportunities policies and anti-discriminatory practice? How are you monitoring and reviewing practice in relation to equal opportunities?

### **Benchmark D**

#### **Communities are resourced to participate**

##### Consideration

What resources are provided for the development of community led networks and community groups? What strategy is in place to support community led sustainability?

Following on from the final benchmark above, the second mechanism that is required is a Community Development Trust or similar model for community led sustainability. **Paddington Development Trust** is a company run and managed by the local community. It has brought about much greater public participation in the regeneration of the area, holding a wide range of community conferences, events and activities. It has acquired community assets, including refurbished offices and workshop space, and supports a number of social enterprises, which bring funding back into the community.

Community Development Trusts often receive funding from s106 agreements (developer) and a commitment to such a trust would provide a valuable community benefit from the disposal of the Heygate estate.

The third mechanism is for the community to be supported by a genuinely independent network, able to provide workshop style training and dedicated support for existing and new local community groups. This function is best performed by external organisations that are committed to personal and community transformation (- rather than by agencies in the borough who will bring their own baggage to the process!).

Two examples are **Spirit Matters** and **Seeds for Change**. Spirit Matters (London based) believe that it is essential to infuse decision making processes with “emotional intelligence”, co-operation and a sense of belonging. They aim to rekindle creative political participation in actively shaping our society. Seeds for Change (head office in Lancaster, but operate nationally) are a network particularly interested in consensus decision making, conflict resolution and setting up and running community resource centres.

## Officers Notes – Not for Public Distribution

### 3. Evaluation of mechanisms for community involvement currently in place

It is difficult to establish what mechanisms exist at present, as since the closure of the Elephant Links Community Forum in June 2002 and the infrastructure that it developed, there has been a low priority given to community involvement. To the best of my knowledge there is

- No community involvement strategy
- No equal opportunities policy and strategy
- No funding of community groups to enable them to act as partners in the regeneration process
- No role for community groups in the masterplan (development framework)

Of the mechanisms that are in place:-

**The Diversity Panel is clearly struggling.** It was launched in February 2003 at a Community Conference attended by over 50 local residents. A lot of the good ideas from this event have not been put into practice and there is a perception by those who no longer attend that there is undue council officer influence and that the Chair whilst professionally very competent is neither independent nor community minded (partly because he is managed by the Council, partly because of his other contracts). Scrutiny has taken evidence from those few who attend the Diversity Panel, but it would be more to the point to hear from those who no longer attend who are the many!

**The community are not engaging with the Partnership Board.** The community representatives attend sporadically and there is a high drop out rate. Of 7 community representatives only 2 were present at the last Board meeting. My perception is that this is due to the failings of the Diversity Panel, which after all is the conduit for achieving community representation on the Board. The decline in attendance at the Diversity Panel has left a narrow group from which to select Board representatives in the first place, whilst the infrequency of Diversity Panel meetings (quarterly) means there is no system in place to support the representatives. Similarly there is no support system for the youth and BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) representatives.

**The legacy project for the SRB (56 Southwark Bridge Road) has no community ownership.** It is perceived as an agency building remote from the Elephant and Castle community and superimposed on what was a local community resource (Borough Community Centre).

**Young people haven't been engaged** despite a range of SRB funded youth projects and a youth inclusion office on the Heygate estate. The feedback I've received is that of too much control by officers over the activities that can be pursued. These have been leisure based, avoiding issues of citizenship and social and cultural change.

## 4. Recommendations

I haven't mentioned the previous community involvement mechanisms, but I do feel that the scrutiny report would benefit from some evaluation of the Residents Regeneration Group, Southwark Community Development Trust and the Black and Minority Ethnic sub-group. Yes, there were problems but some aspects worked well and I hope we can all agree that there was a much higher level of community involvement at that time.

## Officers Notes – Not for Public Distribution

It's probably inappropriate for me to make recommendations, though I would be only too pleased to help develop a way forward in discussion with your committee if you would find this useful.

**Submission 2: Ms. Janet Yatak**

Firstly, may I say that I welcome the findings of the committee, and at last it will be acknowledged that the community involvement at the elephant, needs much improvement, I do feel however that in light of the criticisms about it, the relevant officers need to be held responsible and brought to account, this would then renew trust that seems to have broken down, and mechanisms in place for the future.

About the 23rd Feb meeting, whilst I am pleased to see that the witnesses who were invited and are highly active in the process (diversity panel and board) are very critical of the community involvement, which speaks volumes, I am disappointed however to see that out of these 6 witness, 3 are from the same estate (heygate) 3 are white and all over 50, 2 from SAVO the same organisation one of which is local councillor, one could question if this was a random selection, I would have hoped scrutiny could have had a much more wider, diverse mixed range of views, I would have also hoped that the local BME groups could have been contacted separately to give evidence of how they are being involved, any particular reason why this was not done?

Next it seems very clear that there are strong criticisms of the diversity panel, I am surprised that the committee did not request to see minutes of the DP, I have seen the last 4 meetings and only 6 or 7 people attended, which is not even quorate at times, at all meetings always Heygate dominated, and there seems to have been no dialogue around the issue of falling membership, neither officers or the chair have been concerned with declining numbers and surely therefore the chair must take responsibility for that, and he along with officers must be criticised for allowing the situation to go on for so long, and I am sure you can now understand why the community have a lack of confidence in those officers, and to regain that confidence I would like to see some recommendations in place about this.

I am also concerned that there is no recommendations around the SRB partnership board, which is also criticised by the witnesses, and as I mentioned in my previous letter to you, members of the public are not allowed to speak at these meetings not even at the discretion of the chair, and I would hope that the committee could make some recommendations to rectify this, more community involvement in the SRB board.

My last comment is that you invited several experts and several council officers etc, but only a group of 4 residents, as the members of SAVO, are not residents and are experts, and out of these 4 residents 3 of them come from the Heygate, this is rather disappointing, that the very issue that scrutiny are looking into, i.e. community involvement, exclude the community from taking part into that scrutiny, and rely on the evidence of council officers who surely are not going to be critical of themselves or colleagues, and therefore cannot be objective enough, but I suppose as you have completed this process, I am not sure what can be done about it now.

I hope my comments can be incorporated in your final report and recommendations, and I apologise for the lateness as I only received them on Monday 19th April.

I look forward to hearing from you

Janet Yatak

**Submission 3: Mr. Munu**









## **Appendix 3: Diversity Panel Terms of Reference**

## Appendix 4: Action Plan for Recommendations from Scrutiny Report Peckham Partnership.

### ACTION PLAN FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

(UPDATED Summary of recommendations with proposed actions/timescales- OCTOBER 2003)

NB – **Bold text in Action or Comments columns indicate new comments to Action Plan.**  
*Text in Italics are comments from Director of Housing.*

#### Summary of original Scrutiny report Recommendations

	Scrutiny Recommendations	Action	Comments	Responsibility
1.a	<b>We recommend that the Council should make the attainment of <i>sustainable</i> employment for local people a key aim of future regeneration schemes. The Council should ensure that every effort is made to ensure that local people benefit from the employment opportunities that will arise in the up-coming Elephant Links and Aylesbury projects.</b>	<i>For wider consideration across all regeneration schemes.</i>  Being implemented	Council wide implications	Director of Regeneration

	Scrutiny Recommendations	Action	Comments	Responsibility
4.	We recommend that the Government should review the approach to sustainability in regeneration and that it should produce best practice guidelines which will outline the environmental sustainability measures that must be included in the building elements of regeneration schemes that are being funded with the use of Government grants.	For National Government	<p><b>See Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy for relevant floor targets.</b></p> <p><i>The Director of Housing points out that</i></p> <p><i>“ The Housing Corporation have introduced a criteria for funding that as of Apr 2003 all schemes need to achieve a good eco home rating.</i></p> <p><i>From Apr 2005 all schemes need to achieve a very good eco home rating.</i></p> <p><i>Linden Grove has just been awarded a good eco home rating.</i></p> <p><i>We are incorporating these requirements in our Housing Design and Specification Guide.”</i></p>	Director of Regeneration /Director of Housing
5.	We recommend that the Council should ensure that future regeneration programmes in the borough explicitly recognise the needs of those with special housing requirements at an early stage in order that these needs can be catered for in a timely and appropriate manner.	<b>Being implemented</b>	This is agreed and forms part of the planning for future regeneration	Director of Regeneration
10.	We recommend that the Council should seek to ensure that the police are involved as automatic partners in the borough’s regeneration projects.	Agreed. Being implemented		Director of Regeneration
28.	We recommend that the Council should ensure that young people are fully consulted on proposals for their involvement in future regeneration schemes.	Agreed <b>Being implemented</b>	Youth Forums for Peckham and for Nunhead formed. These have been involved in consultations on matters identified.	Director of Regeneration

	Scrutiny Recommendations	Action	Comments	Responsibility
30.	We recommend that the Peckham Partnership and its successor body and the bodies overseeing regeneration elsewhere in the borough, review their procedures in order to ensure that any ambiguity in accountability is clarified and that every effort is made to ensure that residents are made aware of the mechanisms by which they can gain access to decision makers.	Agreed <b>Being implemented</b>	Newsletters are published regularly giving details of progress on local matters and personal contacts.	Director of Regeneration
35.	We further recommend that other regeneration schemes in the borough are developed in a way which is sensitive to the needs of their surrounding areas and seeks to ensure that the regeneration has a positive impact on these neighbouring areas.	Agreed.		Director of Regeneration
37.	We recommend that the Council should learn from the Peckham experience and should ensure that in future regeneration projects the process of developing a forward strategy is an integral part of the project at all stages in order that it can guarantee the sustainability of the regeneration.	Agreed <b>Being implemented</b>		Director of Regeneration

## **Appendix 5: Members of the Public Invited to Attend Scrutiny Meeting held in Public**

African Womens Support Group
Rockingham Community Association
South London Mission
Lighthouse Supplementary School
Blackfriars Settlement
Southwark Irish Pensioners Project
Rockingham Somali Support Group
Great Lakes African Women's Network
Bankside Open Spaces Trust
Southwark Arts Forum
Southbank University
Heygate TRA
Lawson TRA
Chair of Diversity Panel
Elibanki Centre
Child and Sound
St. Jude's Community Centre
Peabody Estate
Green Lanes Network
The Spreading Vine