

Scrutiny Review of Regeneration in the borough of Southwark

Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – March 2022

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Executive summary

This section summarises the committee's review of regeneration in Southwark, including recommendations of the committee.

The aim of the scrutiny review was to draw upon past community and developer experience to identify lessons to be learnt and gain a better understanding of issues/areas where the council might want to consider making changes with a view to improving the experience of regeneration for residents and stakeholders in the borough.

The review was undertaken between October 2020 and March 2022 and involved primarily evidence gathering sessions from those directly involved with the delivery of regeneration and recipients of previous regeneration schemes. Various community representatives and developers actively involved with the delivery of regeneration in the borough were approached to give evidence. The views of the then cabinet member responsible for regeneration, and chair of planning committee and associated officers was also obtained.

The themes/areas raised by the community presentations and developers were found to be around:

Co-ordination of support for businesses, Town Centre planning, employment and training opportunities locally, design of streets and their use, active participation of community and businesses in regeneration, consultation, need for transparency of the planning process and regeneration to the general public, a feeling that current residents not getting the benefit regeneration is supposed to bring, loss of social rented housing, displacement of independent traders, affordable housing and affordability of new homes, land values, viability of developments, demolition led-regeneration vs re-use, impact of regeneration construction on climate, need for increased pace of planning process, need for additional staff/dedicated resources for regeneration schemes, changed landscape in light of covid and need for more flexibility and less policy rigidity on planning consents to make schemes viable in a challenging environment, cost of the planning process.

Summary of recommendations

The proposed recommendations from the committee to cabinet are primarily based on the evidence received from the community representations and developers who took part in the scrutiny review.

The overview and scrutiny committee's recommendations are framed around the council reviewing its consultation procedures for major regeneration projects, the continued development of town centre based regeneration plans for the main town centres, strategically – the annual publication of income levels of the borough's population to obtain clear understanding around affordability of housing in the borough, a review of the affordable housing policy with a view to increase the level of affordable housing in regeneration schemes, embody core principals of recycling and reuse in regeneration plans, make clear the financial cost/benefit analysis of

regeneration schemes, evaluation of the opportunity area policies with comparison of Private sector developments vs local authority driven projects, guarantee displaced secure tenants the offer of secure tenancies on return to the locality, and leaseholders given options reflecting a fair market price pre-regeneration.

In addition the committee is recommending that for any future council estate regeneration, that the cabinet state that the first preferred option in all circumstances be to deliver such a programme as local authority homes, thus increasing social rented housing.

In relation to transport related aspects of regeneration, the improvement of the council's strategy for the implementation of better sustainable networks, and the promotion of healthy streets through more localised street space schemes.

The Committee's full recommendations are set out in Part 4 of this report.

Part 1: Introduction and background

Listed within the overview and scrutiny committee's terms of reference is the scrutiny of matters in respect of regeneration.

In October 2020 we commenced a scrutiny review exercise on the general approach of regeneration in the borough, with a view to getting a clearer understanding of resident and developer experience of regeneration, and hearing their suggestions on how the process in Southwark can be improved. Many of the views were expressed at a local area level, but we have sought to generalise them as issues that may apply to any area in the borough.

The local picture

1. There are a number of major regeneration schemes currently being undertaken in the borough, including, Canada Water, Elephant and Castle, Old Kent Road, along with a number of smaller regeneration initiatives, some of which are still in development.
2. The council has a dedicated web page 'Regeneration that works for all' which sets the background to the council's approach to regeneration and provides information where available, on the various Social Regeneration Charters which set out the specific opportunities and challenges, vision and priorities for social regeneration in a given area. The areas covered (or to be covered) are:

Canada Water / Old Kent Road / St Thomas Street / Borough and Bankside / Walworth / Bermondsey and The Blue / Camberwell / Peckham and Nunhead / Dulwich / Elephant and Castle.

<https://www.southwark.gov.uk/regeneration/regeneration-that-works-for-all>

3. The council adopted the Southwark Plan 2022 in February 2022. This is the council's statutory planning document. The Plan provides an overarching strategy for managing growth and development across the borough for the next 15 years. It sets out how the council will deliver further regeneration and wider improvements to the borough covering the period up to 2036.
4. The Plan has been the subject of extensive consultation and the findings of our scrutiny review exercise may well have already been factored into the final version of the Southwark Plan, and officer considerations when progressing regeneration. Through consideration of this report, it is hoped that the cabinet will be able to confirm that the issues/concerns raised in the scrutiny review have already been or are to be addressed.

Part 2: What we did

5. We held a series of listening exercises to hear the views and experience of various stakeholders and interest groups in the borough in respect of regeneration.

- [October 2020](#) meeting – The Committee received presentations from former Councillor Johnson Situ, the then cabinet member for climate emergency, planning and transport on the council's approach to regeneration, achievements and challenges and Councillor Martin Seaton, Chair of the Planning Committee who gave an overview of the planning process.
- [November 2020](#) and [February 2021](#) meetings – Heard from representatives of the Walworth Society, Living Bankside, 35% Campaign, SE5 Forum and Peckham Vision in connection with the community experience of regeneration in the borough based on past and current experience and their thoughts on how regeneration should be shaped for the future.
- [March 2021](#) meeting – Received presentations from some key developers involved with regeneration in the borough, British Land, Lendlease, Notting Hill Genesis and a Network Rail representative (covering Denmark Hill and Peckham Rye Station upgrades).
- [July 2021](#) meeting – Received presentations from Transport for London on transport infrastructure in relation to regeneration and the Head of Regeneration (Old Kent Road) on the Old Kent Road opportunity area.

Part 3: What we heard

Cabinet member for climate emergency, planning and transport / Chair of the Planning Committee

6. Our scrutiny review started with a presentation from former Councillor Johnson Situ, the then cabinet member for climate emergency, planning and transport. He gave the committee a brief overview of the council's reasons for undertaking regeneration, highlighting access to best quality standard of housing that is affordable and secure, opportunities for jobs, creation of good quality open spaces, access to good quality education in premises with good quality facilities, good quality libraries, and the key role planning and regeneration played in addressing health inequalities within society.
7. Former Councillor Situ also highlighted the need for affordable housing, workspaces to support SMEs and small businesses, open spaces in key opportunity areas, energy and carbon off-setting, the importance of developing strong relationships with the community, and engaging with communities at the earliest opportunity.
8. In respect of lessons learnt from previous regeneration activity, we heard about the need for winning the trust of communities, being transparent about viability assessments and the work the council does, and also being explicit about concerns with the policies the national government are putting forward.

9. We also heard about the challenges that will be faced over the next few years due to planning white paper that will make it more difficult to deliver genuine affordable housing, respond to the climate emergency, and for local communities to have their voice heard at planning meetings. Former Councillor Situ also highlighted the threat to delivering aims in respect of new jobs, affordable homes, investment in schools and public open spaces due to a system based on planning gain and a downturn in the economy.
10. We received an overview from Councillor Martin Seaton, Chair of the Planning Committee on the planning process. He explained that a key challenge for the Planning Committee was where to make compromises in order to deliver on the core policy area of affordable homes which have private amenity space and broadly fall in line with climate change policies. We were also informed of the council's new consultation policy which had made it easier to involve local people in the planning process and for them to understand the policies and potential implications of those policies.

Community Representations

11. In hearing from the local community representatives, a number of key themes came through around consultation, engagement, and a want for collaboration and active involving of local communities (including businesses) at an early stage around regeneration proposals, and the planning process. The issue of the loss of social housing in regeneration and the lack of affordability of 'Affordable Housing' was also raised. Also the need for support for local businesses impacted by regeneration.
12. Summarised below are the key points made by the community participants. The full detail of the different community presentations are attached at Appendix 2.

Walworth Society

- Key local low-cost food retail outlets under threat from the New Southwark Plan designations.
- Need for strong business voice and the co-ordination of support for the businesses (cited in the context of Walworth Road).
- Vital that a town centre plan for the future direction and day-to-day management is developed and delivered (cited in the context of Walworth Road).
- The need to ensure that regeneration improves employment and training opportunities locally, both as part of the regeneration schemes through creating employment, and also through opportunities to improve skills locally through mentoring and skills development.
- Streets and their purpose are changing with the response to the pandemic and the declaration of a Climate Emergency. Community seeking active

conversation about the design of the streets, and how they need to evolve especially in relation to car parking and landscaping before these are set in stone (cited in the context of First development site at Aylesbury Estate).

- Need for local groups to be able to participate actively with officers and councillors in developing a vision for, and contributing to the development and improvement of the area.

Suggestion/Requests

- a) Area plans and their development should be articulated and discussed widely,
- b) this should include the management and evolution of the area itself as a local town centre and,
- c) Transparency and communication of the allocation of S106 and CIL funds, and that these are clearly applied for the long-term benefits of communities across the local area, and in line with identified local needs.

Living Bankside

- Need for making the process for planning and regeneration much more transparent, accountable, and representative of the needs of Southwark residents.
- Acknowledgement of council officers and councillors having great relationships with local community, and in many areas works to the benefit of local residents, however sometimes it can feel that policy or the way that council officers or councillors are taking a direction doesn't necessarily meet with local need.
- Quality and depth of consultation with the community significant issue – need to look more at specific needs and what local residents want.
- Consultation missing protected characteristics – voices of people from BME, LGBT, or women, or on lower incomes are not necessarily always heard or their needs are not necessarily incorporated within wider plans or specific development proposals that come in an area. This may impact on sense of belonging and pride of place, and a lot of people feel that because they're not able to influence and impact change in their neighbourhood, feel the place is becoming something not for them.
- Detail in planning applications and the borough plan is most of the time missing, and only after planning permission has been granted are the details discussed and the original intention of what was to be achieved in terms of both by the council and by local residents isn't always met. Need for better mechanisms to be in place to achieve that detail.

- Things are being proposed or suggested in an area which are not necessarily wanted, better communication needed at early stages and detailed communication before planning proposals come forward.

35% Campaign

- Local residents and businesses not necessarily getting the benefits that a regeneration is supposed to bring.
- New homes promised to residents did not materialise.
- Leaseholders on estates receiving far too little compensation for the loss of their homes and many having to leave the borough to buy new homes as a result.
- Net loss of social rented housing.
- Displacement of independent traders mostly from BAME backgrounds, some have been relocated, but many have been given nowhere to go (Elephant and Castle).
- New homes being provided by regeneration are way beyond the means of those in the most acute housing need. Lack of social rent properties.
- Affordable homes, not the equivalent or proper replacement for the council and social rented housing lost.
- Not enough consideration is given to the resources of all kinds that the public sector puts into private developments, as well as the increases in land value that derive from planning approvals. Need for better accounting of this, with a view to establishing whether the borough is getting a good return for the money it is putting into regeneration.
- Concerned about the number of consented, but non-viable developments, in the Old Kent Rd Opportunity Area, amounting to about 5,000 consented homes, particularly in the light of doubt and delays to the Bakerloo Line Extension (BLE). These developments all include 35% affordable housing, but depend to a large degree on the BLE for the uplift in land values that will make them viable and deliverable.
- Concerned about how Southwark is monitoring the delivery of affordable housing in private developments and whether this is being done accurately.
- While Build to Rent (BtR) fulfils a market demand, it does not necessarily meet Southwark's housing need, as well as more established tenures. It

also provides less social rented housing than build to sell free-market housing (NSP Policy P4).

Suggestions

In the case of estate regeneration - examine the pressure decanting council estates puts on Southwark's housing waiting list. There used to be regular reports on this at around the time of the Heygate decant, but this no longer seems to be done, or at least we can find no reports that are publicly available.

Look at the use of Home Search for decanting tenants – while this allows secure tenants some limited choice of a replacement home, it is also stressful, tightly timetabled and requires almost immediate decisions from tenants who are not moving on their own volition.

Look at the practice of ending secure tenancies on estates once they are marked for demolition. While this minimises Southwark's rehousing obligations it can leave some long-term, but non-secure tenants, with no right to a newly built home. It also makes an estate a more transitory place to live and makes for less stable communities.

Look at the level of leaseholder compensation. While the options for leaseholders may have been incrementally improved over time, the fundamental problem of inadequate compensation in relation to the cost of new free market homes remains unresolved and from the leaseholders' point of view is iniquitous. The committee may also wish to look at the take up of the various leaseholder rehousing options and whether these options are presented to leaseholders in a fair way and, in particular, whether leaseholders are being deterred from taking up the equity loan option.

Look at Elephant Park. When completed, this will be 2,700 units, which is over 200 more units than was originally consented. The amount of affordable housing has been increased proportionately, but there has been no reassessment of the viability of the scheme and whether it could support a greater proportion of affordable housing.

Consider the extent of overseas sales; a substantial proportion of an earlier phase of Elephant Park was sold in Hong Kong and Singapore (South Gardens).

SE5 forum

- No engagement policy for community groups or a protocol for community involvement, so engagement is fractured or non-existent (Lambeth Forum Network cited as a comparison).

- No plans or protocol to inform local residents or other interested groups about significant work in local area. Need for agreed protocol for community engagement at the very beginning of any project, large or small, including when it alters course.
- No consultation mechanism at which Camberwell and its town centre, the historic nature and specific identity of the area is regularly considered and reviewed, or which enables the local community to contribute to the area vision due to the community council being replaced with a Multi Ward forum which splits Camberwell between Walworth and Champion Hill wards.

Suggestions/Requests

Designing out crime - consulting local police and safer neighbourhood team ward panels before making planning decisions.

Including businesses in the process of developing policy.

Taking action to find uses for long term empty spaces.

Incorporating the Camberwell identity when considering planning applications in the Town Centre.

Imposition of a condition on property developers at the planning stage that if the new retail spaces below modern developments are not rented within 2 years, they automatically become potential 'meanwhile' spaces that can be used for community uses at costs well below market value, or better as a gift to the community.

As the A202 is the main artery from Dover to the West End we would look for evidence that Southwark and TfL are enforcing restrictions on HGV's effectively through using cameras and new technology such as the scheme adopted by Islington Council.

Would like to see:

- A commitment to implement the many proposals by community groups.
- An effective mechanism to work with local groups on projects that they have suggested.

Peckham Vision

- Much community experience of 'regeneration' is that it is demolition-led with ineffective community engagement.
- Through a community-led approach seeing the facts on the ground about the existing buildings, their uses and their self regeneration potential for

the area, the community campaigns in each case succeeded in reversing proposed demolition of existing buildings.

- All development in the name of 'regeneration' must start with an audit of the facts on the ground before any redevelopment plans are ever begun, and verified with the local stakeholders.
- Carbon emissions from demolition and new construction are a significant contributor to the climate emergency. A reorientation away from demolition-led regeneration and a preference for re-use is essential for consistency with the climate emergency policies.
- The new Development Charter now requires a 'fact-based audit' of existing assets and uses for any planning application for redevelopment, but there is no guidance for its production or its role in the planning process. It needs to be used as a strong benchmark to ensure that the regeneration provides significant net benefits for the existing community. We would like to ask for your support for the collaborative creation of Council guidance in a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on how the fact based audit should be produced and its role in the planning process.

Suggestions/Requests

Affordable housing still unaffordable - the Council should bring together and publicise annually:

- the income levels of the population in the borough
- the range of sale prices and rent levels across the borough and
- A simple table showing the discrepancy between these.

The council should join with community groups and others to inform, educate and engage the public (organisations and residents) about the inadequacies of the demolition-led redevelopment approach, and the search for alternative solutions.

Across the borough local people voluntarily take up local issues as they arise, and develop links with each other and form important local networks. In many cases they have a longevity and continuity of local knowledge which can be very valuable for planning and regeneration. Need to develop ways to enable this to be accessible to policy makers. Key issue here is the working relationship between these local ward activists and their ward councillors.

Developers/Transport providers

13. In March and July 2021, we received presentations from some key developers involved with regeneration in the borough. British Land provided us with a presentation in connection with regeneration taking place in the Canada Water area, Lendlease provided us with a presentation on regeneration taking place at Elephant Park, Notting Hill Genesis provided a presentation on regeneration

being undertaken on and around the Aylesbury Estate, the Head of Regeneration (Old Kent Road) provided us with a presentation on the Old Kent Road opportunity area. We also heard from transport providers Network Rail (covering Denmark Hill and Peckham Rye Station upgrades) and Transport for London, in connection with role of transport infrastructure in regeneration.

14. We found the presentations and ensuing discussions very informative. Areas covered in our discussion were around:

- Efforts being made to reduce/eliminate the negative impacts of development on the climate and natural environment.
- Developers' general assessment of the central London housing market over the next 3 – 5 years in terms of prices for houses, offices and land, and how the Covid Pandemic and Brexit have altered their development plans, and impact of likely deterioration in house prices on genuinely affordable houses being built.
- Build quality and residual issues.
- Affordability of space rented out to businesses in railway station arches.
- How developers course correct for issues that arise during 10 -15 yearlong programmes (examples – cladding and changing environmental requirements).
- Embedding community ownership in large developments.
- How master plans can adapt to future transport investment or lack thereof, and how they will deal with thousands of new residents moving into Southwark.
- Engagement with local communities for successful regeneration.
- Feedback from developers working with Southwark as a local authority – taking into account the different stakeholders (cabinet members, planning officers, ward councillors etc.), and comparison with other local authorities.
- Delivery of housing and affordable housing in Old Kent Road opportunity area.
- Deliverability of Bakerloo Line Extension and whether there was a Plan B.

15. In receiving feedback from developers on working with Southwark, the following was highlighted as positives:

- The provision of local intelligence being vital to successfully managing and progressing projects.
- The council's ability to identify sources of funding to assist with moving projects forward (restoration of grade II listed Peckham Rye station façade was given as an example).
- The securing and partnering of local contributions from a variety of sources, including local authorities, to help persuade the government to release the majority of funding for projects (rail schemes cited as the example).
- The pace and delivery of schemes across the borough and helpfulness in unblocking issues where they arise.

16. We also received feedback from developers on areas where the council could possibly improve:

- A need to energise and increase the pace of the planning process (in some cases).
- A need to increase the number of planning lawyers and highways staff as these areas could become quite stretched due to volume of work.
- For major schemes, the setting up of a dedicated taskforce for a project where a number of officers from each department (e.g. transport, highways, legal, environment, planning teams) are tasked and dedicated for a certain period of the week to progress a particular project – increasing the speed of delivery.
- Changed landscape in light of Covid – Need for less policy rigidity and more flexibility over the next couple of years when officers negotiate deals and planning consent, due to viability now being extremely challenging (leisure, retail and office markets given as examples).
- Reviewing the cost of conducting planning in Southwark.

Part 4: Recommendations

In considering the evidence presented and following discussion, the overview and scrutiny committee recommend the following:

1. The Council should review its consultation procedures for major regeneration projects. The review should take on board the following aspects:
 - (i) Ensure before embarking on any regeneration exercise an audit of the current situation in a given locality as contained in the Council's Development Charter of the provision services, amenities, housing, transport, businesses, schools, GP surgeries, etc. This audit should be compiled and agreed with local community groups, tenants and residents associations, businesses and potential developers, and then incorporated into a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).
 - (ii) Specifically the Council should be mindful and include at all times, the given needs of a locality, particularly in terms of the 9 protected characteristics in reducing inequalities and meeting housing need, and the impact a given scheme would have on the local residents sense of belonging and pride of place in an area.
 - (iii) Evolve a Community Consultation Framework similar to the Lambeth Council model and incorporating the Council's own initiatives such as the Local Development Study in Camberwell, to enable local residents, tenants and residents associations, businesses and community groups to comment on identifying concerns with a masterplan in terms of design, content or omission.

- (iv) Creating on-going consultative forums through the life of a regeneration project and the passed programming of works such as the Community Review Panel model on the Old Kent Road regeneration scheme.

Reasons:

Walworth Society

- *“Need for strong business voice and the co-ordination of support for the businesses.”*
- *“Need for local groups to be able to participate actively with officers and councillors in developing a vision for, and contributing to the development and improvement of the area.”*

Living Bankside

- *“Consultation missing protected characteristics – voices of people from BME, LGBT, or women, or on lower incomes are not necessarily always heard or their needs are not necessarily incorporated within wider plans or specific development proposals that come in an area. This may impact on sense of belonging and pride of place, and a lot of people feel that because they’re not able to influence and impact change in their neighbourhood, feel the place is becoming something not for them.”*
- *“Things are being proposed or suggested in an area which are not necessarily wanted, better communication needed at early stages and detailed communication before planning proposals come forward.”*

35% Campaign

- *“Displacement of independent traders mostly from BAME backgrounds, some have been relocated, but many have been given nowhere to go.”*

SE5 Forum

- *“No engagement policy for community groups or a protocol for community involvement, so engagement is fractured or non-existent (Lambeth Forum Network cited as a comparison).”*
- *“No plans or protocol to inform local residents or other interested groups about significant work in local area. Need for agreed protocol for community engagement at the very beginning of any project, large or small, including when it alters course.”*

Peckham Vision

- *“Much community experience of ‘regeneration’ is that it is demolition-led with ineffective community engagement.”*

- *“Through a community-led approach seeing the facts on the ground about the existing buildings, their uses and their self regeneration potential for the area, the community campaigns in each case succeeded in reversing proposed demolition of existing buildings.”*
- *“All development in the name of ‘regeneration’ must start with an audit of the facts on the ground before any redevelopment plans are ever begun, and verified with the local stakeholders.”*
- *“The new Development Charter now requires a ‘fact-based audit’ of existing assets and uses for any planning application for redevelopment. But there is no guidance for its production or its role in the planning process. It needs to be used as a strong benchmark to ensure that the regeneration provides significant net benefits for the existing community. We would like to ask for your support for the collaborative creation of Council guidance in a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on how the fact based audit should be produced and its role in the planning process.”*

Developers

- *“The provision of local intelligence being vital to successfully managing and progressing projects.”*
2. The Council should continue to develop town centre based regeneration plans for the main centres of Bermondsey, Borough, Camberwell, Dulwich, Peckham, Rotherhithe and Walworth that are regularly reviewed and recalibrated.

Reasons:

Walworth Society

- *“Vital that a town centre plan for the future direction and day-to-day management is developed and delivered.”*

SE5 Forum

- *“No consultation mechanism at which Camberwell and its town centre, the historic nature and specific identity of the area is regularly considered and reviewed, or which enables the local community to contribute to the area vision due to the community council being replaced with a Multi Ward forum which splits Camberwell between Walworth and Champion Hill wards.”*
3. In the implementation of regeneration schemes the Council should seek to adopt the following measures as good practice:
- (i) Be transparent and clear as to the objectives of the project in terms of the potential in realising residents and businesses aspirations for the locality and the Council’s own preferred outcomes.

- (ii) To promote the benefits of regeneration to a locality with the aim of evolving more integrated and sustainable communities in terms of good quality housing, job creation, apprenticeships, boosting the local economy, provision and improvement of local amenities (such as open spaces, green parks and trees, GP surgeries, schools, libraries, etc.), creating more socially diverse communities, improved educational attainment and facilities, increased community safety.
- (iii) Ensure that the liaison and communication with developers is maintained at all times and that the resultant planning applications are dealt with in an energised and timely manner.
- (iv) That the allocation of Section 106/CiL funds be transparent and linked to the long-term benefits of communities and meeting their needs across the locality.
- (v) The Council should provide a dedicated team linking all relevant services for each major regeneration scheme to ensure smooth progress and increased speed of delivery, together with more planning lawyers and highways staff to cover increased volumes of work.

Reasons:

Walworth Society

- *“The need to ensure that regeneration improves employment and training opportunities locally, both as part of the regeneration schemes through creating employment, and also through opportunities to improve skills locally through mentoring and skills development.”*
- *“There is transparency and communication of the allocation of S106 and CIL funds and that these are clearly applied for the long-term benefits of communities across the local area and in line with identified local needs.”*

Living Bankside

- *“Need for making the process for planning and regeneration much more transparent, accountable, and representative of the needs of Southwark residents.”*
- *“Acknowledgement of council officers and councillors having great relationships with local community, and in many areas works to the benefit of local residents, however sometimes it can feel that policy or the way that council officers or councillors are taking a direction, doesn't necessarily meet with local need.”*
- *“Detail in planning applications, and the borough plan, is most of the time missing and only after planning permission has been granted are the details discussed and the original intention of what was to be achieved in terms of*

both by the council and by local residents isn't always met. Need for better mechanisms to be in place to achieve that detail.”

35% Campaign

- *“Local residents and businesses not necessarily getting the benefits that a regeneration is supposed to bring.”*
- *“Across the borough local people voluntarily take up local issues as they arise, and develop links with each other and form important local networks. In many cases they have a longevity and continuity of local knowledge which can be very valuable for planning and regeneration. Need to develop ways to enable this to be accessible to policy makers. Key issue here is the working relationship between these local ward activists and their ward councillors.”*

Developers

- *“The pace and delivery of schemes across the borough and helpfulness in unblocking issues where they arise.”*
- *“A need to energise and increase the pace of the planning process (in some cases).”*
- *“A need to increase the number of planning lawyers and highways staff as these areas could become quite stretched due to volume of work.”*
- *“For major schemes, the setting up of a dedicated taskforce for a project where a number of officers from each department (e.g. transport, highways, legal, environment, planning teams) are tasked and dedicated for a certain period of the week to progress a particular project – increasing the speed of delivery.”*

4. Strategically the Council should seek to establish the following:

- (i) Publish annually income levels across the borough’s population, the sales and rent levels across the borough and the discrepancy between them.
- (ii) A review of the affordable housing policy with a view to increasing the level of affordable housing in regeneration schemes to 50% (whilst retaining the social housing element of the council’s affordable housing policy).
- (iii) Embody the core principles of recycling and reuse in all regeneration plans in line with meeting the Council’s own objectives concerning climate change and sustainability. This investigation should focus on how to long-term fix many housing disrepair issues in existing stock in order to make conditions more suitable for tenants to stay in their properties.
- (iv) Spell out the financial cost/benefit analysis of any given regeneration scheme, not only concerning the loss of homes/businesses and number of

replacement homes/businesses, but also that the viability tests reflect the true increase in land value over time.

- (v) Undertake a cost benefit analysis that evaluates the opportunity area policies, and looks specifically at the comparison between large private sector opportunity projects being delivered, and longer term slower, but local authority driven projects being delivered. This piece of work be brought back through the scrutiny function once it is completed.
- (vi) Guarantee that displaced secure tenants are offered secure tenancies on return to the locality, and that leaseholders are given options reflecting a fair market price pre-regeneration.

Reasons:

35% Campaign

- *“Leaseholders on estates receiving far too little compensation for the loss of their homes and many having to leave the borough to buy new homes as a result.”*
- *“New homes being provided by regeneration are way beyond the means of those in the most acute housing need. Lack of social rent properties.”*
- *“Not enough consideration is given to the resources of all kinds that the public sector puts into private developments, as well as the increases in land value that derive from planning approvals. Need for better accounting of this, with a view to establishing whether the borough is getting a good return for the money it is putting into regeneration.”*
- *“In the case of estate regeneration - examine the pressure decanting council estates puts on Southwark’s housing waiting list. There used to be regular reports on this at around the time of the Heygate decant, but this no longer seems to be done, or at least we can find no reports that are publicly available.”*
- *“Look at the practice of ending secure tenancies on estates, once they are marked for demolition. While this minimises Southwark’s rehousing obligations it can leave some long-term, but non-secure tenants, with no right to a newly built home. It also makes an estate a more transitory place to live and makes for less stable communities.”*
- *“Look at the level of leaseholder compensation. While the options for leaseholders may have been incrementally improved over time, the fundamental problem of inadequate compensation in relation to the cost of new free market homes remains unresolved and from the leaseholders’ point of view is iniquitous. The committee may also wish to look at the take up of the various leaseholder rehousing options and whether these options are presented to leaseholders in a fair way and, in particular, whether leaseholders are being deterred from taking up the equity loan option.”*

- *“Look at Elephant Park. When completed, this will be 2,700 units, which is over 200 more units than was originally consented. The amount of affordable housing has been increased proportionately, but there has been no reassessment of the viability of the scheme and whether it could support a greater proportion of affordable housing.”*

Peckham Vision

- *“Carbon emissions from demolition and new construction are a significant contributor to the climate emergency. A reorientation away from demolition-led regeneration and a preference for re-use is essential for consistency with the climate emergency policies.”*
- *“Affordable housing still unaffordable - the Council should bring together and publicise annually:*
 - *the income levels of the population in the borough*
 - *the range of sale prices and rent levels across the borough and*
 - *A simple table showing the discrepancy between these.”*

Overview and scrutiny committee

- *In respect of 4(v) the council does not appear to have undertaken a cost benefit analysis of these policies. Southwark is a limited geographical space and only has so many plots of land that has potential to be developed. One of the routes that the council has gone down to tackle the housing crisis at speed is to set up opportunity areas for private sector development. One of the outcomes of that is that private sector development delivers less social homes because the funding model isn't there for high levels or 100% social homes building programmes.*
 - *What we want the council to understand is what has happened with these opportunity areas:*
 - *how many social homes will be delivered across all the different opportunity areas that exist, have been delivered or will be delivered;*
 - *what could have happened if the council had had a programme of buying that land and developing capital housing plots over a longer period of time.*
5. That the cabinet consider stating that in the instance of any council estate regeneration in the future, that the first preferred option in all circumstances be to deliver such a programme as local authority homes. If the council wishes to propose a partnership agreement with private or third sector organisations in future, then the cabinet must lay forth in a report why an in-house/council controlled regeneration is not possible, and any such report must be considered through the council's overview and scrutiny functions.

Reasons:

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- *Much of the community evidence highlighted the difficulties of delivering regeneration schemes through partnership agreements. This is something the council has already learned from the taking of actions over the last 10 years, entering into regeneration partnership agreements out of necessity. Now that the council's financing arrangements have been changed, it is no longer pursuing that route, and this is reflected in the Borough Plan. This recommendation seeks to make clear in the council's decision making processes the priority that regeneration of any estates that do need programmes, is always delivered in house as the first option. **Note:** 'In house' in this context is meant as not being delivered in partnership with private or third sector organisations.*

35% Campaign

- *Net loss of social rented housing.*
- *New homes being provided by regeneration are way beyond the means of those in the most acute housing need. Lack of social rent properties.*
- *Affordable homes, not the equivalent or proper replacement for the council, and social rented housing lost.*

6. Specifically for transport related aspects of regeneration the Council should:

- (i) Develop and improve its strategy for the implementation of better sustainable networks whether large or small as a catalyst for regeneration in the borough.
- (ii) Seek to promote and introduce healthy streets through more localised street space schemes providing feeder links to create more of a community way in or out routes.

Reasons:

Walworth Society

- *"Streets and their purpose are changing with the response to the pandemic and the declaration of a Climate Emergency. Community seeking active conversation about the design of the streets, and how they need to evolve especially in relation to car parking and landscaping before these are set in stone."*

35% Campaign

- *“Concerned about the number of consented, but non-viable developments, in the Old Kent Rd Opportunity Area, amounting to about 5,000 consented homes, particularly in the light of doubt and delays to the Bakerloo Line Extension (BLE). These developments all include 35% affordable housing, but depend to a large degree on the BLE for the uplift in land values that will make them viable and deliverable.”*

Transport Providers

- *“New rail links can make parts of London viable places to attract major investments in new homes and create jobs. These high volume services provide the capacity to support major growth sustainably. The significant change in transport connectivity and perceived permanence of these investments increases developer confidence and lowers their risk.”*
- *“Ensuring safe and accessible walking and cycling facilities and delivering Healthy Streets to make the area accessible all for those who travel through, live, and spend time there.”*
- *“The [Bakerloo Line] extension would benefit existing and new communities & businesses by: • Offering a new direct, high frequency link into central London • Providing capacity for at least 60,000 extra journeys in both the morning and evening peak periods • Relieving congestion on roads, reducing CO2 emissions and air pollution • Significantly reducing journey times along the extension to central London • Providing an Underground train every two to three minutes between Lewisham and central London • Increasing the attractiveness and viability of developments, delivering new homes and jobs in south east London.”*
- *“Healthy Streets scheme proposed along the A2 Corridor, from East Street (north) to Ilderton Road (south) • To support the growth and provide pedestrian, cycle and public transport improvements along Old Kent Road • TfL is working with LB Southwark and GLA colleagues on the proposals and other measures to complement the improvements.”*

Acknowledgements

The Chair would like to thank all those individuals and organisations that attended sessions of the Committee to be interviewed and/or submitted evidence, and for their constructive comments and recommendations. In addition, the Chair would like to thank all those Councillors and Officers who participated in the Committee sessions and/or assisted in the drafting of the report.

Cllr Ian Wingfield

Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Appendix 1: List of invitees / contributors

Committee members

Councillor Ian Wingfield (Chair)
Councillor Victor Chamberlain (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Humaira Ali
Councillor Peter Babudu
Councillor Jack Buck
Councillor Gavin Edwards
Councillor Sarah King
Councillor Margy Newens
Councillor Victoria Olisa
Councillor Anood Al-Samerai
Councillor Maria Linforth-Hall
Councillor Leanne Werner
Martin Brecknell (Co-opted Member)
Marcin Jagodzinski (Co-opted Member)

Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle (Reserve Member)
Councillor Richard Livingstone (Reserve Member)
Councillor Sunny Lambe (Reserve Member)
Councillor Jason Ochere (2020/21 municipal year)
Councillor Jane Salmon (2020/21 municipal year)

Other Council contributors

Councillor Johnson Situ, former cabinet member for Climate Emergency, Planning and Transport
Councillor Martin Seaton, Chair of the Planning Committee
Colin Wilson, Head of Regeneration (Old Kent Road)
Everton Roberts, Head of Scrutiny

Other contributors

Jeremy Leach, Walworth Society
Amir Eden, Living Bankside
Jerry Flynn, 35% campaign
Barbara Pattinson, SE5 Forum
Eileen Conn, Peckham Vision

Emma Cariaga, British Land
Miles Price, British Land
Kristy Lansdown, Lendlease
Kelly Harris, Notting Hill Genesis
Andrew Wood, Network Rail

Invited organisation that were unable to attend (or declined invitation)

Dulwich Society
Rotherhithe and Bermondsey Local History Society
Citizens UK
The Arch Company
Grosvenor - Developer
Berkeley Group - Developer

Appendix 2: Community Presentations

Walworth Society – Jeremy Leach

Southwark Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Regeneration in the borough (Past and Present) Submission from the Walworth Society – 9th November 2020

1. The characteristics of Walworth are that it is not an affluent area and retains some pockets of deprivation that were first identified in the Booth mapping of the late 19th Century. It is extremely diverse and benefits from a wide range of different communities and many people live in the large number of Southwark Council estates to the east and west of the Walworth Road. Car ownership levels are low. There are significant issues with public health most notably childhood obesity and people living with multiple long-term conditions.

The Walworth Road is the most walked to high street of any town centre in Southwark. If well-designed around people on foot, the Walworth Road is perfectly placed to benefit from the move to more locally centred living which may be one of the outcomes of the pandemic.

2. There has been a great deal of change across Walworth in the past few years with the redevelopment of the Heygate Estate and the redevelopment of Manor Place Depot. Ongoing is the redevelopment of the Aylesbury Estate, the continuing redevelopment at the E&C, and regeneration of the neighbouring Old Kent Road and the delivery of a large number of new Council homes across a number of sites.

3. The area has a strong sense of community with many active groups. There are also encouraging signs of partnerships initiated and facilitated by Southwark Council which major local developers working with community groups in the newly formed Walworth Group. Many of elements of the original aims of the Walworth Neighbourhood plan of an improved public realm, good walking and cycling links, increased greening, conservation of heritage and nurturing of local businesses are being delivered as part of other projects.

There are a large number of significant initiatives going on at present inc. the new Library and Heritage Centre and the Walworth Town Hall redevelopment which is about to go to planning committee in early December, the Walworth Heritage Action Zone flowing from the Walworth Road Conservation Area, the Walworth Low Emission Neighbourhood and Walworth Healthy Streets and delivery of new Council homes.

4. In our view, the priorities that touch on regeneration require a focus on the Walworth Road as a core local high street. The Walworth Rd has played a key role for local people during the pandemic. There are signs of the pressure it is under with the imminent closure of a number of shops such as Peacocks and Argos. The local low-cost food retail outlets are key and a number of them are under threat from the New Southwark Plan designations. These include Oli Stores - the 24/7 Turkish Stores, Iceland in NSP81 and Morrison's in NSP80. It would be extremely damaging if they were allowed to close for any period of time during redevelopment and, to avoid this,

the Walworth Society has proposed intensification of the uses of these sites rather than their wholesale redevelopment. The Walworth Road continues to lack a strong business voice with no body to co-ordinate support for the businesses and the strategy for East St remains unclear. It is vital that a town centre plan for the future direction and day-to-day management of the Walworth Rd is developed and delivered. Opportunities are being missed in the regeneration to enable sustainable freight and cargo and a sustainable freight hub should be required as part of the Morrison's site development.

5. There is a need to ensure that regeneration improves employment and training opportunities locally both as part of the regeneration schemes through creating employment and also through opportunities to improve skills locally through mentoring and skills development in both the E&C and OKR regenerations. A perfect example of this might be a) the businesses that work in the redeveloped Town Hall supporting local start-ups and businesses and the Higher Education Institutions in and around the E&C developing local training and upskilling programmes.

6. The key public realm infrastructure task in the medium term is design of the Walworth Road at its northern and southern ends where it remains a wide, fast and intimidating road that is out of place with the requirements of a pedestrian and cycle friendly high street. It is important that the northern end becomes a positive link between Walworth and the new Elephant and Castle Town Centre and that the public realm is improved to match the improvements that are occurring and are planned throughout the length of the road between Manor Place and Heygate Street. There has been large investment in the new library and heritage centre, Walworth Square and in due course the Walworth Town Hall but the four-lane road remains a barrier to people choosing to walk to the Elephant and Castle and it is not an attractive environment for these new and improved amenities and the thousands of new residents. In the south, the Walworth Road is wide from Liverpool Grove to John Ruskin St and remains a barrier to the economic success of the businesses in this section and is a poor environment for the thousands of existing and new residents on the redeveloped Aylesbury Estate who will seek to access public transport and this part of the Walworth Road.

While the quality of the built environment appears quite strong in the redevelopments that Southwark is guiding for example in Manor Place Depot, the First Development Site at the Aylesbury and the Council Homes, the public realm and streets are less so. The Manor Place Depot site is a very hard urban landscape for example. The ideas of streets and their purpose is changing with the response to the pandemic and the declaration of a Climate Emergency by Southwark Council. We would like to see an active conversation occurring about the design of the streets in the First Development Site at the Aylesbury and how they need to evolve especially in relation to car parking and landscaping before these are set in stone and cannot respond to these new and emerging perspectives.

7. We are keen to take part in further conversations on this issue and hope that this input is not just seen as a one-off. One of the issues that local groups face and hopefully the Walworth Group can start to address is the ability to participate actively with officers and Councillors in developing a vision for and contributing to the development and improvement of the Walworth area.

Regeneration has too often been something that is done to people and struggles to respond to the strong communities that are already here and their local knowledge (including the work that was done towards a Neighbourhood Plan). The development of the Walworth Group is encouraging BUT we would like to see this developed further and a) a plan for Walworth and its development is articulated and discussed widely, b) that this includes the management and evolution of the Walworth Road itself as our local town centre and c) that there is transparency and communication of the allocation of S106 and CIL funds and that these are clearly applied for the long-term benefits of communities across Walworth in line with identified local needs.

The Walworth Society – 9th November 2020

Living Bankside – Amir Eden

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 9 November 2020

Scrutiny Review - Regeneration

Meeting transcript - (prepared as spokesperson did not submit presentation notes)

Amir Eden, Living Bankside

Good evening and thanks for the invitation also. So my name is Amir, I'm the Executive Chair of Living Bankside which is a charitable community organisation which represents and provides services to people living between London Eye and City Hall and down to about Ministry of Sound, so sort of the SE1 area and we've existed since 1995, so sort of the beginning of a lot of regeneration coming to Southwark and taking hold of Bankside and moving towards Bermondsey, and further down. I'm also a foster carer for Southwark, and a lawyer by trade.

In terms of regeneration, I just wanted to say first, I echo a lot of the things that have already been said, and they are very much similar issues that we have within the area that we serve. And just to add to those things, one of the things I wanted to mention first is, we submitted a paper in 2018 to cabinet which looks at a lot of the recommendations around making the process for planning and regeneration much more transparent, accountable, and representative of the needs of Southwark residents. And to add to that, the things I'd like to add is whilst lots of council officers and councillors have great relationships with the local community, in many areas it works to the benefit of local residents, sometimes it can feel that policy or the way that council officers or councillors are taking a direction, it doesn't necessarily meet with local need. So I think one of the things that has been a major issue, and I'm sure lots of people, and especially the people on the committee have heard, is consultation, and not the quantity of it, but more so the quality and the depth of consultation, and moving beyond a tick box exercise and looking more at specific needs, what kind of things do local residents want? Are they looking for a large supermarket do they want certain recreational activities, what kind of things do they want, and a lot of the time that is missed. And going back to the discussion that was had before this item around inequalities, a lot of the time, consultation misses protected characteristics, so people, perhaps that are BME, LGBT, or women, or on lower incomes, we find that those voices are not necessarily always heard or their needs are not necessarily incorporated within wider plans, but more importantly specific development proposals that come in an area. The other things that we find is that because of that, there is an impact on sense of belonging and pride of place, and a lot of people feel that because they're not able to influence and impact change in their neighbourhood that they feel the place is becoming something not for them, and perhaps for tourists or whatever else. In Borough and Bankside, we have very much a mixed community, you know,

we have lots and lots of businesses and we also have a large residential community made up of people that are freeholders, leaseholders, but also council tenants and Housing Association tenants, and whilst their needs are diverse and the area is diverse, in that we also see tourist attractions and tourists visiting, residents of the borough don't always feel that they're getting a say and they're getting their needs addressed because of this diverse and mixed neighbourhood. In terms of achievements and regeneration as a whole, our assessment is that whilst an overview of achievements have been achieved, so you could say schools have been built or perhaps facilities have been built or are going to be built, what we find is the detail in planning applications, the detail in the borough plan, is most of the time missing and it's always at a later stage after planning permission has been granted that the details are being discussed, and the original intention of what was to be achieved in terms of both by the council and by local residents isn't always met, and I think to be able to achieve the things that have been discussed by the previous speaker and what residents want, there needs to be better mechanisms in place to achieve that detail. Sometimes what we find is, which what I call is Whitehall thinking is, things are proposed or suggested in an area which are not necessarily wanted, for example, in Borough and Bankside, we always hear that officers have suggested that music venues are part of the development, and that isn't always something that the developer or local residents need or in fact local employees, and so I think there needs to be better communication at early stages and detailed communication before planning proposals are coming forward. I think that's most of what I want to say, the other bits have been mentioned by the previous speaker and no doubt whether the following speakers but also within our paper that we submitted in 2018 to cabinet.

35% Campaign – Jerry Flynn

O&S Committee

9 Nov 2020

Committee request - the committee will be particularly interested in hearing your views, based on past/current experience and how you think future regeneration projects should be shaped, along with any points around lessons to be learnt for the future? The chair intends to plan for 5 – 10 minutes presentation per invited community spokesperson, followed by questions.

Thank you chair for asking me to speak.

My experience of regeneration comes for living with my family on the Heygate estate and campaign work with the Elephant Amenity Network and the 35% Campaign.

Our campaign work largely consists of challenging Southwark, private developers and housing associations in their conduct of the borough's regenerations, taking account, in particular of the impact they have on local people. This has led us to participate in the many consultations, planning and policy making processes that regeneration involves, as well as various tribunals, inquiries and in the case of the Elephant and Castle shopping centre, mounting a legal challenge to the planning permission for the centre's redevelopment.

Overall, I would say that the experience of those most immediately affected by regenerations, those who live and work on regeneration sites, is not a happy one. They have lost their homes or workplaces, with all the upheaval and in some cases, trauma, that goes with that, without necessarily getting the benefits that a regeneration is supposed to bring, in the way of new homes or new work places. I would say that this is the story of the Heygate, the shopping centre, the Aylesbury and other regenerations, to a greater or lesser extent.

As far as the Heygate is concerned, the new homes that were promised the residents did not materialise and leaseholders on the estate received far too little compensation for the loss of their homes and many had to leave the borough to buy new homes as a result. The leaseholders on the Aylesbury will be in a similar position regarding compensation, and while the secure tenants there look as if they have more chance of getting new homes in the regeneration, both schemes will result in a net loss of social rented housing.

The committee will know that the Elephant and Castle shopping centre has just closed and this has displaced all the independent traders, who are nearly all from BAME backgrounds. Around 45 of these have been relocated, but many more have been given nowhere to go; Southwark and Delancey dispute the exact figures of those not relocated, but there is no doubt that the centre as a social hub for the various ethnic groups, and particularly the Latin American community, has disappeared.

We must also note the loss of the shopping centre's bingo hall. It was the second largest in the country and used by many older black and ethnic minority people. It provided the opportunity for companionship and had great social value, which is now

all entirely lost. It will not be replicated in the new development because it simply does not fit the profile for the new clientele Delancey is seeking to attract.

There are ongoing discussions with Southwark about establishing a small market for displaced traders, and we very much hope that this comes to fruition. Maintaining the Elephant as a social hub for the Latin and other ethnic minority communities should be a priority of the Elephant's regeneration.

Turning back to housing - most of the new homes being provided by the Elephant's regeneration are way beyond the means of those in the most acute housing need. While Elephant Park and the shopping centre redevelopment together will provide around 3,700 new homes, only 216 of these will be social rent. By way of comparison the Heygate had 1,200 council homes.

Around 700 'affordable homes' are also being built, other than social rent, but we would strongly argue that while these cost less to either rent or buy than free market homes, they are not the equivalent or a proper replacement for the council and social rented housing we have lost.

Generally speaking, we are not convinced by the rationale for regeneration. We do not believe that the best option for improved social housing is demolishing entire council estates or that private developers will somehow and almost inevitably create prosperity in a given area, if they are allowed to build what they want.

The Elephant shows the reality of regenerations - that the people who are already there are displaced and it is others coming to the area who benefit.

We think that a fundamental flaw in regeneration in Southwark and London is to treat development sites as blank sheets of paper, without due regard for the people living and working there already.

We also believe that not enough consideration is given to the resources of all kinds that the public sector puts into private developments, as well as the increases in land value that derive from planning approvals. There needs to be a better accounting of this, with a view to establishing whether the borough is getting a good return for the money it is putting into these regenerations.

Leaving this aside we can make some suggestions that the committee might like to pursue in its further examination of regenerations.

In the case of estate regeneration, the committee may wish to examine the pressure decanting council estates puts on Southwark's housing waiting list. There used to be

regular reports on this at around the time of the Heygate decant, but this no longer seems to be done, or at least we can find no reports that are publicly available.

You may also wish to look at the use of Home Search for decanting tenants – while this allows secure tenants some limited choice of a replacement home, it is also stressful, tightly timetabled and requires almost immediate decisions from tenants who are, after all, not moving of their own volition.

You may wish to look at the practice of ending secure tenancies on estates, once they are marked for demolition. While this minimises Southwark's rehousing obligations it can leave some long-term, but non-secure tenants, with no right to a newly built home. It also makes an estate a more transitory place to live and makes for less stable communities.

Another serious issue is the level of leaseholder compensation. While the options for leaseholders may have been incrementally improved over time, the fundamental problem of inadequate compensation in relation to the cost of new free market homes remains unresolved and from the leaseholders' point of view is iniquitous. The committee may also wish to look at the take up of the various leaseholder rehousing options and whether these options are presented to leaseholders in a fair way and, in particular, whether leaseholders are being deterred from taking up the equity loan option.

The committee may also wish to look at Elephant Park. When completed, this will be 2,700 units, which is over 200 more units than was originally consented. The amount of affordable housing has been increased proportionately, but there has been no reassessment of the viability of the scheme and whether it could support a greater proportion of affordable housing.

Developer Lendlease have also announced that 900 free-market units on Elephant Park will now be BtR, not for sale. This is allowed under the terms of the planning permission, but is nonetheless not what was presented to the planning committee for approval. While BtR fulfils a market demand, it does not necessarily meet Southwark's housing need, as well as more established tenures. It also provides less social rented housing than build to sell free-market housing (NSP Policy P4).

The conversion of the free-market units to BtR also raise a question as to how Southwark's share of any profit overage will be calculated and realised.

The committee may also wish to consider the extent of overseas sales; a substantial proportion of an earlier phase of Elephant Park was sold in Hong Kong and Singapore (South Gardens).

The committee may wish to examine the progress of the Aylesbury estate regeneration. The development is at least two years behind hand and the committee will be aware that Southwark has taken over the First Development Site from Notting Hill Genesis. We believe this raises a question about whether NHG are willing and able to deliver the remainder of the regeneration.

We are also concerned about the number of consented, but non-viable developments, in the Old Kent Rd Opportunity Area, amounting to about 5,000 consented homes,

particularly in the light of doubt and delays to the BLE. These developments all include 35% affordable housing, but depend to a large degree on the BLE for the uplift in land values that will make them viable and deliverable.

We also have more general concerns about the credibility and utility of viability assessments. We suspect that they do not reflect the true profitability of major schemes and that the schemes are therefore not delivering the maximum reasonable amount of affordable housing, particularly in the absence of late stage reviews.

In a similar vein we are concerned about how Southwark is monitoring the delivery of affordable housing in private developments and whether this is being done accurately. It is now 4 years since the Local Government Ombudsman ruled that Southwark did not have a proper system of monitoring affordable housing delivery and while much work appears to have been done by Southwark in digital public services and towards establishing an effective system of monitoring, it is not clear whether this system has been launched and is actually being used.

Jerry Flynn

35% Campaign

SE5 FORUM

FOR

CAMBERWELL

Regeneration in the Borough (Past and Present) - Evidence to the Southwark Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee

9th November 2020

Community Engagement

I would like to start by saying I would not be here today were it not for Lambeth. Lambeth is a Co-operative Council that regularly and effectively engages with and financially and professionally supports local democracy through a network of local forums – Lambeth Forum Network. Southwark does not have a policy for community groups or a protocol for community involvement so engagement is fractured at best and non-existent at worst. A recent example is that after the excellent work done by Magda Bartosch on the Camberwell Good Growth Project she contacted us to let us know that she would be focused on Camberwell Station Road and suggested that if we wanted to know about the much wider Camberwell Good Growth work we could contact the officer responsible. The implication here is that there were no Southwark plans or protocol to inform SE5 Forum and presumably other interested groups about this significant work in Camberwell. This does not exhibit a readiness to seek and value grassroots input – there should be an agreed protocol for community engagement at the very beginning of any project large or small – never mind when it alters course. It could be argued that armed with contact details we could take the initiative here and approach the new officer but the principle of encouraging community involvement is not served. A protocol should be put in place.

To Make Matters Worse

We think that Camberwell has more than its fair share of complex issues and, sadly, Southwark has recently added to them. The NSP refers to Camberwell throughout but it fails to note that it has dissolved the Camberwell community council and the Multi Ward replacement splits Camberwell between Walworth and Champion Hill. This means that there is no consultation mechanism at which Camberwell and its town centre, the historic nature and specific identity of the area is regularly considered and reviewed, or which enables the local community to contribute to the area vision. We are not aware of any Camberwell councillor raising any objections to this sorry state of affairs. Let it be noted that we have somewhat overcome the negative impact of Camberwell's already being split between two local authorities due to the not inconsiderable support from Lambeth.

Uniqueness

Camberwell should be recognised and promoted by Southwark for the centre of excellence it is. SE5 Forum promotes Camberwell as a positive visitor and worker destination. We have a plethora of world class institutions - the South London Gallery (Joint Winner of Art Fund Museum of the Year 2020), Camberwell College of Arts, King's College Hospital, the Maudsley Hospital and the University of London Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience. We think Camberwell punches above its weight and Southwark should celebrate this.

What is missing is a Village Hall.

Recent Regeneration Efforts That Have Served Camberwell well

The community led regeneration of the Leisure Centre is a valuable community resource Camberwell Green has been greatly improved but there are still issues with maintenance. The Valmar Trading Estate should contribute positively to Camberwell life.

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I will list a few examples of Potential Regeneration Projects

Camberwell town centre is where joined up thinking is needed most

- The police station and the considerable land it stands on presents a once in a lifetime opportunity to make the centre of Camberwell a world class community resource – don't let it default to dense housing with the usual minimal social provision.
- The ambitious Camberwell Lanes project contains many design issues that work against a sustainable development that we can be proud of for decades to come – this is worrying
- *The former Science and Technology Centre in Wilson Road should provide another opportunity for a community resource – what is happening there?*
- *The Camberwell Bunker site is an exciting initiative that Southwark is supporting.*
- *SE5 Forum is campaigning hard for Camberwell Station to re-open – Southwark business cards should reflect this.*
- *The Magistrates Court and environs should present some sort of gain – woefully little information about this is available.*
- Eyesores such as the old library site and the post office are a blight on the community – why has this been allowed to go on for so long?

Part of the process should be:

- Designing out crime - consulting local police and safer neighbourhood team ward panels before making planning decisions.
- Including businesses in the process of developing policy.
- Taking action to find uses for long term empty spaces
- Incorporating the Camberwell identity when considering planning applications in the Town Centre
- Imposition of a condition on property developers at the planning stage that if the new retail spaces below modern developments are not rented within 2 years, they automatically become potential 'meanwhile' spaces that can be

used for community uses at costs well below market value or - better - as a gift to the community. 2 years is a long time.

- As the A202 is the main artery from Dover to the West End we would look for evidence that Southwark and TfL are enforcing restrictions on HGV's effectively through using cameras and new technology such as the scheme adopted by Islington Council.

Past Regeneration Efforts That Do Not Serve Camberwell well

- Decades ago, Camberwell people were stunned by the banal design and low budget finishes of the Butterfly Walk shopping centre which definitely did not enhance the surrounding conservation areas. There are fears that this may happen again with the Camberwell Lanes initiative.
- In the town centre we have had to endure seemingly endless redesigns and road works with the most recent outcome being a minimally improved pedestrian experience with TfL announcing they delivered a 'cycle safety scheme'. Southwark is responsible for some of the roads here and should be working hard with TfL to deliver the ambitious scheme we were promised with the inclusion of social distancing improvements.
- Of course there have been improvements over the years but there is a history of **lost potential iconic** community assets – most notably for me are the Odeon Cinema (Lambeth side) and the Grand Surrey Canal – happily people are more aware of the danger of losing local heritage and beauty.

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What We Would Like to See

- A commitment to implement the many proposals by community groups
- An effective mechanism to work with local groups on projects that they have suggested such as:
 - Green walks linking Camberwell Green and Burgess Park, Brunswick Park
 - Noticeboards on the Green
 - Paving stones showing the art walks, green walks and black history walk developed by the local community so that they can be accessed by all
 - Distinctive Buildings -using the widely consulted identity and branding work carried out by the local community and incorporating the logos and palette in buildings and streetscape
 - Traffic Pollution mitigated somewhat by introducing carbon capturing features.
 - Space for street trees + plentiful seating and useful street furniture such as litter bins and post boxes
 - Southwark funding the promotion of Camberwell's High Street.

Barbara Pattinson
Chair
SE5 Forum for Camberwell



Working for a Better Camberwell

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Peckham Vision – Eileen Conn

Southwark Overview & Scrutiny Committee Tuesday 9th February 2021

My name is Eileen Conn. I live in Peckham. I have for many years coordinated the local action group Peckham Vision, where our focus is on town centre operations as well as planning, and the Southwark Planning Network (SPN), which links active people and groups across the borough to share information and give each other mutual support.

I am also an active member of Just Space which is a London networking group in relation to the London Plan. My contribution this evening comes from this grassroots experience.

I want to thank you for inviting us and other community groups to come and speak with you in this important scrutiny of regeneration in the borough.

I am going to cover three points this evening:

- First, the need to reorient regeneration from demolition-led redevelopment to reuse-led regeneration.
- Second, the need to break out of the straitjacket stopping us from building housing that people in the borough need.
- Third, the need to transform the relationship between the Council and community groups in relation to regeneration and redevelopment.

These are huge topics so this can be only a whistle stop tour but I would like to leave you with some useful points. I will be glad to follow up details as necessary afterwards.

1. REGENERATION, LED BY RE-USE

Much community experience of ‘regeneration’ is that it is demolition-led with ineffective community engagement, as with the Council plans for three large sites in the heart of Peckham town centre. The Peckham Multi Storey, Peckham Rye Station and Copeland Park sites all contained old buildings full of small enterprises. But the plans in each case one after the other over 15 years called for complete demolition and redevelopment for ‘regeneration’.

The community had to campaign long and hard against these destructive policies. As a result, through a community-led approach seeing the facts on the ground about the existing buildings, their uses and their self regeneration potential for the area, the community campaigns in each case succeeded in reversing them. It is a prime example of the potential for self regeneration without demolition and redevelopment, with beneficial effects beyond the individual sites concerned.

The lesson from this is that all development in the name of ‘regeneration’ must start with an audit of the facts on the ground before any redevelopment plans are ever begun, verified with the local stakeholders. Last year I wrote an essay on this as *inside-out development* at the

request of the Grosvenor Estate for their website, as a good example for their new Community Charter. The link is in the footnotes at the end.

I know from grassroots experiences across London that this demolition-led redevelopment approach to regeneration is the norm in the industry. For example in the Old Kent Road Opportunity Area, the drive has been to encourage the assembly of land irrespective of its current uses and occupiers, to enable major redevelopment.

In addition, carbon emissions from demolition and new construction are a significant contributor to the climate emergency. A reorientation away from demolition-led regeneration and a preference for re-use is essential for consistency with the climate emergency policies.

The new Development Charter now requires a 'fact-based audit' of existing assets and uses for any planning application for redevelopment. But there is no guidance for its production or its role in the planning process. It needs to be used as a strong benchmark to ensure that the regeneration provides significant net benefits for the existing community. We would like to ask for your support for the collaborative creation of Council guidance in a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on how the fact based audit should be produced and its role in the planning process.

2. BUILDING HOUSING THAT PEOPLE IN THE BOROUGH NEED

There is a calamitous crisis in housing in London. But this is a crisis of a particular kind, that is the lack of housing that most people can afford. To address this, planning policy has been for many years that new developments should provide a **minimum** of 35% 'affordable' housing. But this is failing to meet the need for housing, and the deficit gets worse. Some of the problems are:

- 35% seems usually to become a maximum, and even some of that can be unaffordable as 'affordability' can mean up to 80% of market rent. In new developments in London that is outside the means of most people.
- This means that a minimum of 65% of new developments given permission are **officially 'unaffordable'**.
- The figures showed a few years ago (2014) that only 5% of households in Southwark earned more than £46,000 a year. And yet to buy or rent at market levels needed in many cases well over that eg at around £100k and more a year income.
- Taking inflation into account, this still means that probably over 90% of local households can't buy or rent new housing. So it isn't meeting the housing need. So who is it for?
- The fact that 65% housing, given planning permission, is being **officially classed as 'unaffordable'**, shows something is seriously wrong and unsustainable.
- There is a very welcome move to increase the 35% minimum to 50%. But as the housing crisis is because the vast majority can't pay market rates for sale or rent, it is still unsustainable and unviable to give permission for 50% housing that is officially unaffordable. The upper limit on unaffordable new housing should be more like only 10-20%.

We all know that this is not easily within the powers of local councils to change overnight. But there are two actions I would ask the Committee to consider which may help move out of the straitjacket of current thinking. These are that the Council should:

- Bring together and publicise annually
 - the income levels of the population in the borough
 - the range of sale prices and rent levels across the borough and
 - a simple table showing the discrepancy between these.
- join with community groups and others to inform, educate and engage the public – organisations and residents - about the inadequacies of the demolition-led redevelopment approach, and the search for alternative solutions.

COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY WORKING TOGETHER FOR REGENERATION

Across the borough local people voluntarily take up local issues as they arise, and develop links with each other and form important local networks. In many cases they have a longevity and continuity of local knowledge which can be very valuable for planning and regeneration. We need to develop ways to enable this to be accessible to policy makers. One of the keys here is the working relationship between these local ward activists and their ward councillors.

I was interested to hear at the Committee's previous meeting with community representatives, Cllr Buck's comment about ward councillors and community groups working together at ward level before redevelopment plans get initiated. I strongly support this. We could think of it as the local ward network bringing together all those who take an interest in planning and regeneration and related matters. It could be a constructive way for local people to develop an organised way to work with each other and their ward councillors on any matters the Council formally wanted to consult the neighbourhood about.

I would be very glad to explain ways we could do this, and exchange thoughts with any councillors on this committee who are interested.

SUMMARY

My comments have suggested some thoughts for your consideration covering:

1. Collaborative creation of a Council SPD on the production and role of 'fact based audits' before regeneration.
2. Annual publication of borough figures for income levels, housing sale prices and rent levels, and the discrepancy between these.
3. Collaboration to inform, educate and engage the public about the inadequacies of the demolition-led redevelopment approach, and the search for alternatives.
4. Exploring my ideas about ward councillors and community groups working together at ward level on planning and regeneration.

Thank you

Eileen Conn MA (Oxon) MBE
9 February 2021

Peckham Vision co-ordinator and SPN co-ordination
<https://www.peckhamvision.org>
https://www.peckhamvision.org/wiki/Southwark_Planning_Network
@peckhamvision - twitter, Facebook & Instagram
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Woman of Influence for 2020 - The Planner

- * Southwark News - <https://bit.ly/2zUoHtD>
- * essay on *Inside out Development* - <https://bit.ly/30EQ7Ph>

about Peckham Vision -

- * <https://www.copelandpark.com/blog/2020/01/15/peckham-vision-and-a-history-of-copeland-park/>

* Peckham Vision studio in the Bussey Building and shop in Holdrons Arcade will reopen when it is Covid-safe to do so.

Peckham Vision relies on voluntary contributions for its work as a local citizens action group. Our information is created by volunteers and made freely available for the community. But if you benefit from our work, we hope you will donate to our funds. You can do this through the home page of our website, or email us for bank details.
