

RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – SCRUTINY REVIEW OF REGENERATION IN THE BOROUGH OF SOUTHWARK

FOREWORD - COUNCILLOR JAMES MCASH, CABINET MEMBER FOR THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

On behalf of the cabinet, I welcome the report from the overview and scrutiny committee on regeneration in Southwark. Our response to each recommendation is set out in Appendix 1. I am pleased to say that we either have adopted or are currently working on the majority of these. I want to highlight three responses in particular, which demonstrate our on-going commitment to residents being empowered to shape development in the borough and to benefit from private investment secured through the planning process. The scrutiny report has recommended that the council should produce a Community Consultation Framework similar to the Lambeth Council model. As our response notes we are in the process of introducing a Development Consultation Charter, which requires developers to provide evidence, throughout the planning application process, that demonstrates how they have consulted with local stakeholders. This evidence is listed as a validation requirement for any major applications and council-owned schemes. I am confident that this document will go beyond the requirements of other local authorities and set a new benchmark for engagement by developers with our residents.

The scrutiny report also recommends that the council should continue to develop town centre-based regeneration plans for the main centres of Bermondsey, Borough, Camberwell, Dulwich, Peckham, Rotherhithe and Walworth and that these are regularly reviewed and recalibrated. This administration recognises the crucial role our town centres play in the lives of our residents and it is essential that they continue to provide a range of accessible services and activities. I am delighted to say that the council's delivery plan will include a commitment to produce plans for them, with our first priority being Peckham Town Centre. The scrutiny report also recommends that we review affordable housing policy with a view to increasing its proportion in regeneration schemes to 50%. Increasing the provision of affordable homes remains a core commitment for this administration. Policy SP1 of the Southwark Plan has a strategic target of 50% affordable homes, which is consistent with the London Plan. Through the Southwark Plan, we will continue to deliver more homes than almost all local authorities in the country.