

Item No. 9.	Classification: Open	Date: 20 November 2012	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Regeneration Risk Registers and Archive Records of Housing Estates (Report of Overview & Scrutiny Committee)	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Overview & Scrutiny Committee	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Cabinet considers the recommendations of Overview & Scrutiny Committee in respect of risk registers and archive records of housing estates and responds to the committee by February 2013.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. At its meeting on 15 October 2012, Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered reports on the management of risk in major regeneration projects and major works on the Four Squares Estate.

Management of Risk in Major Regeneration Projects

3. The committee received a deputation from the Elephant Amenity Network, focussing on the Elephant & Castle and a briefing from officers on management of risk. A general concern amongst members of the committee was that members of the public should be able to view and understand the council's risk registers in respect of major regeneration projects. This would demonstrate how seriously the council was taking possible risks and the steps it was taking to mitigate them.
4. The Elephant Amenity Network raised concerns that the local plan would not be compliant with the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which emphasised, "the need for careful attention to viability to ensure that development plans are deliverable (paragraph 173) and...that the Council show that necessary infrastructure can be brought forward in timely fashion to serve the proposed allocations" (NPPF website). The Elephant Amenity Network queried compliance as a result of the £101m funding gap in respect of the transport infrastructure. The Elephant Amenity Network was also concerned that bringing the regeneration plans into line with paragraph 173 of the NPPF would mean that the public benefits of the regeneration, such as sustainability, would be dropped and the commercial side of the scheme favoured. Ensuring viability might incur a disproportionate amount of the borough's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) being spent on the Elephant regeneration.
5. The committee also considered whether the systems at Planning Committee were sufficiently flexible and responsive to the needs of large and complicated regeneration schemes and was interested to find out about the use of affordable housing review mechanisms.

Major Works on the Four Squares Estate

6. The committee also received a briefing from the strategic director of housing and community services in respect of major works on the Four Squares Estate. Members asked whether the council had clear and accessible records as to which other estates in Southwark had been built by Wates in the 1970s. The strategic director explained that many records had been archived. Members felt that the quality of archives generally might be in question.
7. Members of the committee also noted that a full-scale structural survey of the estate had not been carried out prior to the letting of the major works contract and that subsequently the civil engineering firm Arup had been asked to undertake a survey to look at the possible causes of ground movements. The committee was keen to receive a report back on the result of the Arup survey and at the same time raised questions about whether Arup being the original structural engineer for the estate introduced a conflict of interest.

DECISIONS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Management of Risk in Major Regeneration Projects

Recommendations to Cabinet:

- that Cabinet explore ways in which regeneration risk registers can be placed online in a form digestible to the public
- that Cabinet be invited to review relevant risk logs in the light of paragraph 173 of the National Planning Framework

Recommendations to Cabinet Member:

- that the Leader be asked to look into creating more responsive and flexible systems at Planning Committee in order to process applications which relate to large and complicated regeneration schemes such as the Heygate, perhaps using Camden Council's approach to King's Cross as a model

Recommendations to Officers:

- that planning officers be asked to provide a briefing note on the use of affordable housing review mechanisms, including within phased developments, and whether the council's current approach has been successful in clawing back additional affordable units from developers

Major Works on the Four Squares Estate

Recommendation to Cabinet:

- that Cabinet be asked to assess the quality of archives in respect of construction of housing estates and consider whether additional investment is merited

Recommendations to Cabinet Member:

- that the cabinet member for housing be asked to consider the undertaking of more full structural surveys before any major works contract is let

Recommendations to Officers:

- that officers report back to the November meeting of Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the results of the Arup survey
- as part of the report back, that officers confirm the Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services' understanding in respect of Arup being the original structural engineer for the estate

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Agenda, Overview & Scrutiny Committee 15 October 2012	Scrutiny Team 160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Peter Roberts 020 7525 4350

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Shelley Burke, Head of Overview & Scrutiny	
Report Author	Peter Roberts, Scrutiny Project Manager	
Version	Final	
Dated	7 November 2012	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Director of Legal Services	N/a	N/a
Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services	N/a	N/a
Chief Officers	N/a	N/a
Cabinet Member	N/a	N/a
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	7 November 2012	