

Item No. 15.	Classification: Open	Date: 11 December 2018	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Southwark Great Estates Programme – Paper 1 Agreeing the Vision and Approach	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Cabinet Member:		Councillor Leo Pollak, Social Regeneration, Great Estates and New Council Homes	

FOREWORD - COUNCILLOR LEO POLLAK, CABINET MEMBER FOR SOCIAL REGENERATION, GREAT ESTATES AND NEW COUNCIL HOMES

Southwark's new "Great Estates" programme signals a new way of thinking about, talking about and making decisions about our council estates.

Years of welfare cuts, meddling in council rent-setting and borrowing caps constraining investment in council housing have all contributed to often skewered perceptions of inner city estates as a mixed legacy of the post-war settlement, the so-called 'wobbly pillar' of the welfare state. In a context where a took a human tragedy on the scale of Grenfell tower fire to prompt the Government to start thinking positively about the role of social housing in society and of 'overcoming stigma', the time is ripe for a new narrative around our council estates that sets the bar much higher.

At the heart of the Great Estates programme is a clear statement of intent about this council's approach - to celebrate our estates, to affirm them as integral to our long-term vision of the borough, and to begin a long-term process of upholding Southwark estates as properly privileged parts of the city.

To this end, the report states in unambiguous terms our first and last instinct - to *expand and enrich* our council estates. *Expand* the number of council homes on appropriate estate sites in a way that raises the living conditions of residents in new and existing homes. *Enrich* our estates, by working with residents to identify new ways of improving the look feel and lived experience of our estates.

It also restates in one place the terms and circumstances of any redevelopment proposal, with the onus on keeping communities together and in growing the stock of council homes (in line with our generational commitment to building 11,000 council homes) to meet the acute need in our borough.

This follows a context that has changed from 15, 10, even 5 years ago. The financial environment for building new council housing has improved following the Mayor of London's mandate to tackle the housing crisis since 2016 and the Government's long-awaited u-turn on HRA borrowing; our programmed investment since 2010 through our Warm dry safe and Quality homes improvement programmes have seen Decent homes standards jump from barely 50% to over 98% of our stock (and with it resident's satisfaction with their housing and perceptions of their estates); and the council has from a standing start in 2013 grown in confidence as a house-builder.

We also set out the timetable for two following reports due next year. One detailing the approach for developing resident-centred Estate Improvement Plans - wide-ranging wish lists within a transparent time and cost envelope towards improving the communal living environment. Pilots will include estates with new homes development, estates that are adjacent to large-scale private development and blocks and blocks with negative associations associated with gang violence and anti-social behaviour.

The following report will detail our Great Estates Guarantee to ensure all our estates are properly 'safe, clean and cared for'. This will take its cue from a self-contained consultation with residents on how to ensure our day-to-day repairs management and maintenance standards are meeting this basic expectation. We hope that these initiatives will provide a springboard for deepening our long collaboration with tenants and leaseholders.

We are also developing a Great Estates Guide, detailing the wealth of inspiring initiatives our residents and housing officers have worked on across the borough and beyond - from gardening and food-growing initiatives, to lighting painting and cleanliness strategies, to urban farms and public art, and much else. This will serve to not only highlight the art of the possible, but to help us better realise the variety of ad hoc funding and partnership opportunities that help make our estates properly great places to belong and call home.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Cabinet agree the vision and approach for the Great Estates Programme as set out in Appendix 1, including the principal approach to 'expand and enrich' our council estates, while restating the terms and circumstances for any redevelopment proposal.
2. That Cabinet gives approval to undertake consultation with residents to inform the development of the resident-centred estate improvement plans process and the Great Estate guarantee and commitments.
3. That Cabinet agrees to start the process of drawing up terms of reference and establishing a Great Estates programme advisory group, made up of local residents and key stakeholders who have knowledge of estate management and regeneration.
4. That Cabinet agrees to instruct officers to produce further Cabinet reports in 2019 to feedback the results of the consultation; develop and launch the Great Estates guide detailing case studies and opportunities from across the borough of initiatives that improve the shared living environment of Southwark estates and bring estate communities together; agree the estate improvement plan process and pilot schemes; and a further report detailing the Great Estate guarantee and commitments.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

5. The council's Warm Dry Safe and Quality Homes Improvement programmes have seen the Decent Homes standards rise from a little over 50% in 2010 to over 98.5% of our council stock in 2018. This has created a new set of perceptions and starting points for how we think about and make decisions about the long-term future of our council estates.

6. Following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower in June 2017, the Government has consulted on a new social housing green paper. This green paper included a section on tackling stigma around social housing. However in our consultation response we stated that we felt this did not go far enough. Our estates should be celebrated, places where residents want to live and are proud to call home.
7. The Council Plan 2018 -2022 includes commitments to launch a 'Great Estates guarantee so that every estate is clean, safe and cared for' and to 'give residents the tools to garden and improve their estate'. Council officers and Members have been holding regular meetings to firm up the proposals for the Great Estates programme.
8. In developing proposals for the emerging Great Estates programme the council has drawn extensively from the feedback from the Southwark Conversation that was completed in early 2018 which provided an excellent starting point for this project.
9. The Great Estates programme will work with residents to identify new ways of improving the look, feel and lived experience of our estates, caring for the physical fabric of our estates with a view to upholding Southwark Council estates as properly privileged parts of the city and great places to live.
10. There is already a lot of great work already underway and/or recently completed on our estates. Council officers have been compiling a list of case studies from around the borough of initiatives that raise the shared living environment of our estates and bring communities together, covering areas such as gardening and food-growing projects, cultural events, new signage and wayfinding, lighting strategies, painting initiatives and so on. There are many excellent examples of how residents and staff have come together to make improvements to their estates. And there are plenty of examples of great estates to draw upon.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

11. This Cabinet paper seeks agreements from Cabinet to agree the vision and approach for the Great Estates programme. This is included in full in appendix 1. In summary, we want to expand and enrich our estates, and make every estate a great estate.
12. Our vision is to:
 - Celebrate our council estates – We will celebrate our estates and be ambitious about their future. We will always be honest about the challenges, and challenge ourselves to make Southwark estates the best they can be.
 - Encourage integration – Our estates are part of the bedrock of Southwark. Mixed communities playing their part in the borough's economy and life are integral to the future of the borough. We want to expand and enrich our estates, with redevelopment always a last resort.
 - Respect where we live – Working with residents every estate should be clean, safe and cared for. Communities should have ownership over their estate and a shared stake in its future. High standards of repair and maintenance will mean Southwark's estates are great places to live.

13. The Great Estates programme will make clear that our first instinct will always be to expand and enrich our existing estates. We will:
- Expand the numbers of council homes through our new homes programme identifying suitable infill plots to rehouse local people on our housing register.
 - Enrich the shared living environment of our estates, working closely with residents to engender a sense of pride of place through day-to-day repairs and maintenance decision as well through more wide-ranging estate improvement plans.

Consultation

14. In developing the Great Estates Programme the council is not starting from a blank canvass. There is already a wealth of information contained in previous council consultations such as the work of the Independent Housing Commission and the subsequent community conversation, and the more recent Southwark Conversation in early 2018.
15. The council is wary of consultation fatigue but also strongly believes residents need to be at the heart of agreeing the Great Estates guarantee. Therefore this paper seeks approval from Cabinet to undertake a self-contained conversation with residents to inform the development of the Great Estate guarantee and commitments, and to also comment on the estate improvement plan process. This engagement will aim to establish what residents feel are they key ingredients required on their estates to raise standards and make estates feel clean, safe and cared for. It will also gather suggestions for case studies for the Great Estates guide.
16. Cabinet is also requested to give approval to start the process of setting up a Great Estates advisory group, made up of local residents and key stakeholders who have knowledge of estate management and regeneration. This group would have advisory powers only. If agreed by Cabinet, officers will draw up a terms of reference for the group to be agreed in the next Cabinet Paper.

Next steps

17. Cabinet is also asked to agree to instruct officers to develop further Cabinet Reports in 2019 to feedback the results of the consultation and to agree the Great Estates Improvement Plan process and the Great Estate Guarantee and Commitments as set out in Appendix 1.

Policy implications

18. There are no policy implications at this time. There may be policy implications as the Great Estates Guarantee and commitments are developed, these will be detailed in subsequent Cabinet reports.

Community impact statement

19. There are no community impact implications at this time.

Resource implications

20. There will be some resource implications for running a self-contained resident engagement on the Great Estates guarantee. This will be minimised by use of online consultation methods and utilising existing resident engagement structures. This will be met within existing budgets.

Legal implications

21. There are no legal implications at this time.

Financial implications

22. There are no financial implications at this time.

Consultation

23. The development of a Great Estates Guarantee was included in the Southwark Local Plan 2018 to 2022, following a manifesto commitment.
24. This paper seeks agreement from Cabinet for consultation on the Great Estates Guarantee and Commitments as set out in paragraph 14.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Director of Law and Democracy

25. The report recommends that cabinet give approval to undertake consultation. To meet legal requirements consultation must; be undertaken when proposals are still at a formative stage; include sufficient reasons for the proposals to allow interested parties the opportunity to consider the proposal and formulate a response; allow adequate time for interested parties to consider proposals and formulate their response and the outcome of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account when the ultimate decision is taken. The report confirms that the results of consultation will be set out in a further report for cabinet to consider.
26. The public sector Equality Duty, in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, requires the council to consider all individuals when carrying out their functions. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different people when carrying out council functions. Officers will need to actively consider the duty during the consultation process and when formulating recommendations to cabinet for final decision making; members must have due regard to the duty when the matter is referred back to cabinet following consultation.
27. The report recommends the establishment of a Programme Advisory Group. Council decisions may only be taken by members or officers in accordance with the law and the provisions of the council's constitution therefore, as noted in the report, the Advisory Group will only be able to act in an advisory capacity.
28. As the project develops any legal and governance issues arising should be identified and addressed in consultation with the Director of Law and Democracy and her staff.

Strategic Director of Finance and Governance - FC18/026/SR

29. The Strategic Director of Finance and Governance notes that any initial expenditure will be met from existing resources. As the project takes shape, then officers will report back on any consequent remodelling of the financial support necessary.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
The Council Plan 2018-2022	Chief Executives Office 160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Stephen Gaskell 0207 525 500
Link: http://www.southwark.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/fairer-future/council-plan		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Great Estates Vision and Approach

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Leo Pollak, Social Regeneration, Great Estates and New Council Homes	
Lead Officer	Paul Langford, Director of Resident Services	
Report Author	Robert Weallans, Housing Strategy Manager	
Version	Final	
Dated	13 November 2018	
Key Decision?	Yes	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Law and Democracy	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team		30 November 2018