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**Executive**

18 November 2008

Report of Democratic Services Manager

## **Barbican Scrutiny Ad-hoc Scrutiny Committee – Final Report**

### **Summary**

1. This report presents the final report for the Barbican Ad-hoc Scrutiny Review and asks Members to approve the recommendations previously agreed by Scrutiny Management Committee.

### **Background**

2. In coming to a decision to carry out a review of this topic, the Scrutiny Management Committee recognised certain key objectives and the following remit was agreed:

#### **Remit**

‘To investigate the arrangements surrounding the sale of the Barbican site, with the purpose of learning some key lessons for the future, in the event of developments of a similar nature or scope being proposed.

- To understand why the contract in relation to the sale of the Barbican site was not signed, sealed and delivered until after May 2003.
  - To understand the public consultation process which took place and the resulting decisions.
  - To assess whether decisions taken in relation to the sale resulted in a loss of capital to the Council.
  - To understand the changes in land values with a view to establishing whether best value was actually achieved in this case.’
3. The final report from this review was presented to Scrutiny Management Committee on 15 September 2008. They questioned whether the Ad-hoc Scrutiny Committee had fully considered if the findings from the second consultation process had been taken fully into account at the time it was carried out. They also felt that inappropriate language had been used in the final report when referring to pressure groups and would have preferred the use of the words “working with” rather than “dealing with” in finding (v). With that in mind, the Chair on behalf of the Barbican Ad-hoc Scrutiny Committee agreed that the wording of that finding should be revised accordingly.

## Consultation

4. As part of their review, the Barbican Ad-hoc Scrutiny Committee carried out a number of consultation sessions, as detailed in their final report attached at Annex A.

## Options

3. Having regard to the aim and objectives of the remit for the review and having considered the information provided in the final report and, the options available to the Executive are:
  - i. to approve the recommendations arising from the ad-hoc scrutiny review in full;
  - ii. to amend the second recommendation in line with the wording suggested by the Head of Audit & Risk Management – see paragraphs 6-7 below, and approve the revised recommendations;
  - iii. to reject the recommendations and outline alternative proposals, where applicable.

## Analysis

4. The final report attached at Annex A provides a full analysis of all of the information gathered and the arising issues.

## Summary of Recommendations Arising From Review

5. The final report of the Barbican Ad-hoc Scrutiny Committee recommends that the Executive:
  - Commission an officer report which sets out a corporate approach for the Council when working with pressure groups
  - Ensure all future projects have a robust system of risk management which is regularly reviewed and updated throughout the period of each project

Reason: To ensure that any future projects are managed effectively and take into account lessons learnt from this review.

6. As part of the lead up to this report being presented to the Executive, it was considered by the Quality Control Group (QCG) to check in regard to Legal, Governance and Finance issues. The new Head of Audit & Risk Management felt that the wording of the second recommendation arising from this review needed strengthening and suggested the following change:

'Ensure all future projects have a ~~robust~~ formal documented system of risk management which details key actions and controls, is regularly reviewed and

updated throughout the period of each project, and is reported to a senior level project board where appropriate.'

7. Unfortunately, as the Chair of the Barbican Ad-hoc Scrutiny Committee is currently on leave, it has not been possible to present this alternative wording for her consideration prior to this meeting, and therefore this suggested change has not yet been endorsed on behalf of the Ah-hoc Scrutiny Committee. The Chair has been asked to attend this meeting to present the final report, and at that time will be able to clarify the position on this suggested change.

## **Corporate Priorities**

6. It was recognised that this review would support the following direction statements as set out in the Council's Corporate Strategy:
  - We will listen to communities and ensure that people have a greater say in deciding local priorities
  - Our ambition is to be clear about what we will do to meet the needs of our communities, and then deliver the best quality services that we can afford
7. The review also provided an opportunity for the Council to consider the procedures followed and the decisions taken at the time of the sale of the Barbican, in order to identify ways of improving what we do, in line with our Corporate Values.

## **Implications**

8. There are no known legal, Financial, Equalities, HR, or other implications associated with the recommendation below or the recommendations within the final report at Annex A.

## **Risk Management**

29. There are no known risks associated with Recommendation (a). Recommendation (b) recognises that there is a risk to the Council if risk assessments are not regularly reviewed and updated during the period of a project. If a decision is taken not to approve Recommendation (b), then the levels of risk associated with projects will remain unknown.

## **Recommendations**

9. Members are asked to note the contents of the attached final report and approve the recommendations arising from the review as detailed in paragraphs 5 above.

Reason: To enable the Executive to introduce appropriate changes to working practices and/or Council policy and procedures.

**Contact Details**

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Dawn Steel  
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**Report Approved**



**Date** 7 November 2008

**Wards Affected:**

**All**



**For further information please contact the author of the report**

**Background Papers:** None

**Annexes:**

**Annex A** - Final Report for Barbican Ad-hoc Scrutiny Review