

Barbican Ad-Hoc Scrutiny Committee

21 November 2007

Scoping report

Purpose of Report

1. This review will investigate the arrangements surrounding the sale of the Barbican site. The purpose of this will be to learn some key lessons for the future in the event of developments of a similar nature or scope being proposed.

Background

2. At Scrutiny Management Committee (SMC) on 23 July 2007 members were asked to consider a proposed new Scrutiny topic which had been registered by Cllr Joe Watt. The original topic registration form can be seen at Annex A. The Scrutiny Officer had prepared a feasibility report on this proposal in which it was recommended that this topic should not become the focus for a review. This report this can be seen at Annex B.
3. At this meeting members agreed that the scale of the topic as proposed was too wide ranging for review. They requested that Cllr Watt attend the next meeting of SMC to discuss the possibility of a review tailored to learn key lessons and achieve improvements in handling future developments of a similar scale and nature.
4. Cllr Watt attended the meeting of SMC held on 17 September 2007 and agreed that his topic submission be revised as mentioned above. This will not include any review of swimming provision as this work is being undertaken by a commissioned review which will be reported to the Executive.
5. Members agreed to carry out the revised review proposed by Cllr Watt with the following objectives:
 - a. To understand why the contract in relation to the sale of the Barbican site was not signed, sealed and delivered until May 2003.
 - b. To understand the public consultation process which took place and the resulting decisions.
 - c. To understand the changes in land values with a view to establishing whether best value was actually achieved in this case.

- d. To assess whether decisions taken in relation to the sale resulted in a loss of capital to the Council.
6. SMC members have been consulted to ask if they agree that the wording of a) above should be changed (because the sale was not completed until 2007) to “To understand why the contract in relation to the sale of the Barbican site was not signed, sealed and delivered until after May 2003”.

Consultation

7. This review should be carried out in consultation with the Property Services team, the Assistant Director for Lifelong Learning and Leisure and any other colleagues or relevant parties who members consider to have information relevant to this review.

Timetable For Review

8. Members will need to research the following:
- a. The decision to sell the Barbican site and the consultation which took place. This will require liaison with the Assistant Director for Lifelong Learning and Leisure.
 - b. Whether the timing of these decisions affected the value of the site and the capital received by the council from the sale. This will require liaison with the Head of Property Services.
9. The timetable for this review could be:

21 November 2007	This meeting
November/December 2007	Informal discussions between members and relevant officers or other individuals or organisations
January 2008	Interim report to formal meeting with input from Property Services and Leisure Services
January/February 2008	Discussions re possible recommendations to Executive
February 2008	Formal meeting to agree draft final report.

Options

10. Members may agree the above timetable for work with any additions or alterations which they think are appropriate.

Implications

11. Financial, Human Resources, Equalities, Legal and other implications will be considered relating to the recommendations which will be contained in the final report of this sub-committee. There will be some financial implications in carrying out the work of the scrutiny review, but this cannot be quantified at the present time until Members' intentions in relation to research or consultative work are known.

Corporate Priorities

12. This review is relevant to the Corporate Value of encouraging Improvement in everything we do.

Risk Management

13. A risk might be the failure to include relevant information because appropriate consultees were not included in the initial research. The only other possible risk would be the failure of members to keep to the agreed timetable and focus of this review which could adversely affect the opportunity to make recommendations to the Executive.

Recommendations

14. It is recommended that members consider the timetable of work as proposed in 9 above and agree:
 - (a) the proposed timetable and officer involvement
 - (b) any additional tasks, events, consultations or information which might be required

Reason: To ensure compliance with scrutiny procedures, protocols and workplans.

Contact Details

Author:
Barbara Boyce
Scrutiny Officer.

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:
Colin Langley
Acting Head of Democratic and Legal Services

**Scoping Report
Approved**

Date 12/11/07

Specialist Implications Officer(s) *None*

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: None

Annexes

Annex A - Topic registration form

Annex B - Feasibility report