

Subject: An Investigation into the Management of Publicly Accessible Space in London

Report to: Planning and Housing Committee

Report of: Executive Director of Secretariat

Date: 23 November 2010

This report will be considered in public

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out background material for the Committee's meeting with guests about the management of publicly accessible space in London.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **That the Committee notes this report as background to discussing with invited experts the different approaches for managing publicly accessible space in London to ensure access to public space is as unrestricted and unambiguous as possible.**

3. Background

- 3.1 At its meeting on 13 October 2010 the Committee agreed to carry out an investigation into the different approaches for managing publicly accessible space and specifically to review the Mayor's role in influencing the quality and accessibility of London's public spaces through planning policy and other measures.
- 3.2 A report setting out in detail the aims, relevant issues for investigation, methodology of the review and timetable can be found here:
<http://www.london.gov.uk/moderngov/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=788>
- 3.3 The investigation will review ways for the Mayor and boroughs to use planning policy and other guidance to test how the Mayor's commitment to that there is access to public space is "as unrestricted and unambiguous as possible"¹.

4. Issues for Consideration

- 4.1 For the purpose of this review "public space" (also called "the public realm") considers all spaces including streets, squares and parks that everyone can use and access in principle, regardless of who owns or manages the space.

¹ *Mayor of London (2009): Manifesto for Public Space - London's Great Outdoors*

- 4.2 There are numerous models of public space management and many large scale redevelopment schemes include elements of public spaces that display different ownership and levels of management and control of public space. Details of the various models of public space management and examples of these in practice are set out in the report referenced in paragraph 2.2 above.
- 4.3 A complex picture emerges from recent work and projects showing that public space management practices are changing. A number of local authorities are beginning to establish new partnerships with potential for better public space management.
- 4.4 The largest regeneration projects and their associated planning proposals in London are required to be referred to the Mayor for comment or even to take over the decision making powers. These are also the ones with the biggest requirement for public space to be accessed and used by a number of existing and new local communities as well as workers, visitors and tourists.

Main areas for discussion

- 4.5 Following the agreed terms of reference the Committee may wish to consider that the main areas for discussion at this meeting might cover:
- What are the key characteristics of successful and accessible public space?
 - What models are there of managing public space in London?
 - What benefits and disadvantages are there to the different ways of managing public space?
 - What lessons can be learned from recent London examples of master planning? What are the necessary skills for planners?
 - When and how can local communities be involved in the decision making to ensure the design of public space is not an afterthought?
 - How are the Mayor's policies having an impact on London's public realm?

Invited guests

Peter Bishop, Group Director of Design, Development and Environment, London Development Agency

- 4.6 Over the past 20 years Peter Bishop has been a Planning director in four different Central London Boroughs and has worked in major projects including Canary Wharf, the development of the BBC's campus at White City and the Kings Cross developments, one of the largest and most complex sites in London. He was appointed as the first Director of Design for London in 2006 and in 2008 as Group Director of the London Development Agency, responsible for design, land development and its environmental, housing and public space programmes.

Robert Evans, Executive Director, Argent Group plc

- 4.7 Argent are a UK property developer with a focus on city centre regeneration and the integration and enhancement of the public realm. Major projects include Brindleyplace in Birmingham and King's Cross Central in London where, by 2011, Argent will part own, manage or be developing over 10 million square feet of development. At King's Cross, Argent aim to address a fragmented and disconnected public realm that created a feeling of exclusion and provide a public realm with high quality and genuinely public new streets and open spaces.

Prof Matthew Carmona, Head of the Bartlett School of Planning University College London

- 4.8 Matthew Carmona is a Professor of Planning and Urban Design at UCL. He has previously lectured at the University of Nottingham and before that worked as a researcher and as an architect. His research has focused on the policy context for delivering better quality built and natural environments and recent projects and publications include 'Capital Spaces, Global Place, Contested Space, The case of the New London Squares' (2010), 'Public Space, The Management Dimension' (2008) and 'Public Places Urban Spaces, The Dimensions of Urban Design' (2010).

John East, Director of Development Services, London Borough of Newham

- 4.9 Newham's regeneration activity forms part of a much wider project: the Thames Gateway, Europe's biggest regeneration project. Key projects underway include Stratford City, delivering a new metropolitan centre for East London, and the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games, providing homes, jobs and sporting and cultural facilities. There are also emerging plans for two significant and high profile public realm improvement schemes in Newham.

Eric Reynolds, Director, Urban Space Management

- 4.10 Eric Reynolds has been involved in numerous urban regeneration schemes since the early 1970's. In 1974 with two partners he started Camden Lock, now one of London's top tourist attractions. He has repeated this success at many other locations, notably Spitalfields Market in the City of London. He acts as a regeneration advisor across the country, is former Chairman of the London Safer Cities Initiative, and is a Director and Member of many other voluntary bodies.

Strategy Implications

- 4.11 The proposed review relates to the Mayor's Spatial Development Strategy – The London Plan which is currently being examined in public before its final adoption in 2011.
- 4.12 The review would also be useful background evidence to any future revisions of the Mayors 2009 Open Space Strategies Best Practice Guidance.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 The Committee has the power to do what is recommended in the report.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Financial implications for individual programme of work in 2010/11 will be dealt with separately in reports to the Committee as and when the Committee is required to make relevant decisions.

List of appendices to this report:

None

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of Background Papers:

Matthew Carmona, Claudio de Magalhães, Leo Hammond: Public space: The management dimension (2008)

Anna Minton: What kind of world are we building? The privatisation of public space (2006)

Joseph Rowntree Foundation: Social interactions in urban public places (2007)

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