


Cabinet	 TOWER HAMLETS
11 September 2024	
Report of: Paul Patterson, Interim Corporate Director, Place	Classification: Unrestricted
Adoption of Spitalfields and Banglatown SPD	

Lead Member	Kabir Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding
Originating Officer(s)	Marissa Ryan-Hernandez, Strategic Planning Manager Marc Acton Fillion, Senior Plan-making Officer
Wards affected	Spitalfields & Banglatown;
Key Decision?	No
Reason for Key Decision	This report has been reviewed as not meeting the Key Decision
Forward Plan Notice Published	15/07/2024
Exempt information	N/A
Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome	All Priorities

Executive Summary

Spitalfields and Banglatown offers a major opportunity for the development of new homes and other uses to best respond to the needs of the local community and support local businesses. Its unique combination of activities attracts visitors from across London and around the world.

There are however underpinning issues experienced by residents and long-standing businesses, who face challenges of a lack of affordable housing, increasing commercial rents, and changes in the types of visitors to the area, and this can present an anxiety about the future of the neighbourhood. Residents have questions and concerns about affordability, as well as whether the community they rely on, can remain in the area.

The Spitalfields and Banglatown Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) will ensure that new development meets the needs of the local community, including by supporting the development of new affordable housing as well as improvements to the public realm and green spaces. It highlights locations in the area where residential development can support the core objectives of the Council, which are to

provide housing and community services and infrastructure, specifically, delivering affordable homes, boosting culture, business, jobs and leisure and working towards a clean and green future.

The SPD will be a material planning consideration for the determining of applications within the defined area. It will provide certainty for landowners and developers, as well as Registered Affordable Housing Providers, public sector organisations and the local community regarding what type of development is likely to be acceptable.

This report recommends the adoption of the Spitalfields and Banglatown SPD, which has been developed through extensive engagement with stakeholders (May-June 2023 and November-December 2023) and has been subject to a 6-week formal consultation (9 May to 21 June 2024).

This report sets out the role the SPD will play in decision making, the impetus for the SPD as well as how it has been developed, including the consultation that has informed its drafting and.

Recommendations:

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Adopt the Spitalfields and Banglatown SPD (appended at Appendix 1).

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 The adoption of the Spitalfields and Banglatown Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) will ensure that the future growth of the area can be appropriately managed and will meet the needs of the local community, in particular, affordable housing provision. This coordinated approach should maximise the benefits of growth by delivering new affordable housing, opportunities for local business to start-up and grow, public realm enhancements and community infrastructure through various mechanisms, including the Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 contributions that will arise from new developments.
- 1.2 Spitalfields and Banglatown is already experiencing high levels of development, with numerous proposals in the planning pipeline. This SPD will set out an ambitious vision to attract the right kind of development, ensuring that it delivers key community priorities, including affordable housing. It will provide a robust framework to assist the Council's current and future negotiations with landowners, developers, registered affordable housing providers and other key stakeholders.
- 1.3 SPDs are necessary to build upon and provide more detailed advice or guidance on policies set out in an adopted local plan.
- 1.4 Once adopted, this document will assist the Council by,

- providing guidance for officers in the assessment of development applications within the designated masterplan area, including how to balance material planning considerations in the decision making process;
- providing certainty for landowners, developers, registered affordable housing providers, the local community and others regarding the types of development that are likely to be acceptable; and
- becoming a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 An alternative option would be to not adopt the SPD. It would leave the Spitalfields and Banglatown area without area specific guidance needed to support the development of housing and other uses. Planning officers would then need to rely on the adopted and emerging Local Plan (which is yet to be examined) which may not provide the detailed guidance for development to fully reflect the Council's ambitions.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At Full Council on 5 October 2022, a motion was passed, committing to developing a masterplan for the area that would serve the community and support the development of new affordable housing and public realm improvements.
- 3.2 As part of the motion, the Council resolved:
- To continue to proactively seek opportunities to maximise social and affordable house building, to help ease the pressures of the housing market on those with low and medium incomes.
 - To begin this process by producing and implementing a developmental Masterplan for the Spitalfields and Banglatown area, wherein the maximisation of social and affordable housing will be a priority.
 - To follow this model to ensure that local communities around Tower Hamlets are included in these developments, and are able to remain in their areas, regardless of any external pressures resultant from housing crises, prospective or realised.
 - That Officers should begin the development of a Masterplan for the Spitalfields and Banglatown area in cooperation and conjunction with the Council's Executive.
- 3.3 The motion responded to the Spitalfields and Banglatown area experiencing significant change in recent years, including increased pressure for new development, such as that related to the Truman Brewery Estate, and an active community who have concerns about changes in the area, including those issues raised by the Spitalfields Neighbourhood Forum.
- 3.4 The Mayor for Tower Hamlets considers Spitalfields and Banglatown and its surroundings as a development and growth opportunity which can make a significant contribution to overarching priorities for the borough including the delivery of more affordable family homes.

4. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 4.1 This section provides an overview of the role of an SPD and provides detail regarding the Spitalfields and Banglatown SPD.

Statutory requirements and process

- 4.2 The SPD has been prepared in accordance with Regulations 11 to 16 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 4.3 Engagement has been undertaken in line with Council's Statement of Community involvement, Council's Consultation Handbook and supported by our Communications team.
- 4.4 Alongside external stakeholders, the preparation of the SPD has called on the engagement and expertise of Council colleagues.
- 4.5 At key milestones, the SPD has been reported to the Mayor and Lead Member, as well as at relevant boards and senior management meetings.

Key principles

- 4.6 The focus of the SPD is on seven key principles initially set out by the Mayor and refined through engagement with the local community:
- 1) Prioritise the development of social and affordable housing, to ensure residents from the area can afford to stay in the area. This should be achieved creatively – exploring height and density, and a diverse mixture of unit sizes, including ample family-sized properties - to reduce the economic and social impact of overcrowding. and in conjunction with the views of residents, businesses and other key stakeholders.
 - 2) Ensure that affordable and council-run community services – including cultural, sporting, artistic and educational provisions – are embedded in the plan.
 - 3) Promote local businesses and explore ways in which these businesses can support the residents and development of the area, and vice-versa.
 - 4) Retain, promote and enhance the historical and cultural identity of the area.
 - 5) Develop green spaces to prevent over-concretisation and provide the environmental and health benefits of open spaces, tree-growth and horticultural diversity.
 - 6) Be culturally sensitive to the diverse needs of residents in the area, regardless of race, belief, or background.
 - 7) Provide a forum for all stakeholders in the area – including residents, businesses, faith groups, cultural organisations and charities – to have their say on the development and implementation of the plan.

Scope and content

- 4.7 The SPD has been developed to provide further guidance on development and identify appropriate sites within the Spitalfields and Banglatown area as well as support the development of new housing.
- 4.8 The SPD includes an assessment of the local context, including identifying existing public realm, key routes in and around the area, the commercial function of Brick Lane, the history of the area, and its cultural importance.
- 4.9 The SPD identifies 8 development sites in the area and presents indicative development plans for each of them. All but one of the sites is presented with a residential led indicative plan. The Hanbury Street Infill Site has been identified for the creation of a new green space in recognition of the relative lack of green space in the local area.
- 4.10 While recognising that the detailed design of developments on these sites will need to be assessed through the planning application process, the SPD shows that relatively high levels of density can be achieved, and that this area will play an important role in meeting the borough's need for housing.
- 4.11 The SPD includes the following sections:
- 1) Introduction (including the purpose and role of the SPD and process of developing it)
 - 2) Context (including historic context, green spaces, play and recreation spaces and other infrastructure)
 - 3) The Masterplan (including the vision, character and identity, inclusion, and building heights and massing)
 - 4) Development Sites Design Guidance
 - 5) Delivery of the Vision (including funding and monitoring)

Engagement and consultation

- 4.12 The Draft SPD document was developed through a series of workshops (24 May, 1 June, 29 November, 30 November 2023) with local stakeholders, where key development sites and opportunities to enhance the public realm were identified.
- 4.13 The SPD was subject to a six week (9 May to 21 June 2024) formal consultation period in accordance with regulations. A total of 14 responses were received via email. The key points raised include:
- Support for the provision of new housing in the area
 - Support for provision of space in new development to house Banglatown Cash and Carry
 - Support for the provision of a green space on Hanbury Street

- Development proposals adjacent to data centres should ensure that any air quality impacts from diesel generators are sufficiently mitigated
- Proposed heights on Fleet Street Hill should recognise that the site is not in a tall building zone and sits within LVMF views 25A.1 and 9A.1
- More emphasis should be placed on preserving the significance of heritage assets and the historic environment
- Desire from developers for the SPD to better reflect their aspirations for their sites
- The use of Allen Gardens for a 9-a-side football pitch – Sport England suggest space for other sports such as Kabaddi or cricket would be more culturally appropriate; local residents object to the potential loss of useable green space in a high-density area
- Development in the area should be car-free and deliveries and servicing should be managed sensitively

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Officers have used the Council's Equality Impact Assessment Screening tool to consider impacts on people with the protected characteristics outlined in the Equalities Act 2010 (Appendix 2). It is considered that the guidance in the SPDs do not have any adverse effects on people who share the protected characteristics and no further action is required at this stage.

6. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:

- Best Value Implications,
- Consultations,
- Environmental (including air quality),
- Risk Management,
- Crime Reduction,
- Safeguarding.

- 6.2 Best Value Implications: The SPD will provide greater certainty for the community, council officers and developers in terms of the type of development that will be acceptable, speeding up decision-making and the implementation development that will deliver affordable housing. Improvements to public realm and local green spaces will support positive outcomes in terms of public health and well-being. The changes proposed in the SPD will also attract more communities, visitors and activity into the area, which will support local businesses.

- 6.3 Consultations: The Council engaged and worked with relevant stakeholders where appropriate, in line with the Council's Statement of Community involvement and Consultation Handbook, and in conformity with the statutory requirements as detailed in the relevant legislation.
- 6.4 Environmental: Given that the SPD does not introduce any new policies, and the policies that the guidance is based on have been subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment as part of the local plan process, the SPD does not give rise to any significant environmental impacts.
- 6.5 Other implications: adopting the SPDs does not have any discernible risk management, crime reduction, or safeguarding statutory implications.

7. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The cost of producing the Spitalfields and Banglatown SPD has been funded by one off budget growth.

8. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 8.1 Paragraph 3.1 of the Report sets out the background to this paper and records the Council's vision from its meeting on 5 October 2022 to produce and implement a Masterplan for the Spitalfields and Banglatown area. The draft SPD at Appendix 1 is the culmination of the work undertaken by the Council to realise that vision.
 - 8.2 Paragraph 4 of the Report details succinctly and accurately the legal steps that are required to adopt a SPD. These steps have been followed by the Council.
 - 8.3 Extensive consultation has also been undertaken, in line with not only the statutory requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning)(England) Regulations 2012 but also with the Council's own commitment to consultation detailed in its Statement of Community Involvement.
 - 8.4 Equality duties are outlined within paragraph 5 and Appendix 2. This duty is on-going. The extent of the general duty placed upon all public bodies is outlined in Appendix 2 and the Council's screening assessment of the potential impact of the SPD (if adopted) upon those with protected characteristics is detailed.
 - 8.5 The report additionally details at paragraph 2 the alternative options and potential risks of not adopting the SPD, namely that it would leave the area without specific guidance needed to support the planning process, as recognised by full Council when this work stream was set in motion.
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Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- None

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Spitalfields and Banglatown SPD
- Appendix 2 Equalities and Impact Assessment Screening Report
- Appendix 3: Consultation and Engagement Report

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

- NONE

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