



Governance meeting of the Old Kent Road Community Development Panel

Meeting note

16 May 2022 18.30 – 20.30

Via Zoom

Old Kent Road Community Development Panel attendees

Gurmeet Sian (chair)
Lucy Atkinson
Shelene Byer
James Glancy
Aaron Mo
Victoria Oluwables
Peter Warren
Madison Westwood

Attendees

Southwark Council

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| Liz Awoyemi | Southwark Council |
| Alicia Chaumard | Southwark Council |
| Tim Cutts | Southwark Council |
| Colin Wilson | Southwark Council |

Frame Projects

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| Tom Bolton | Frame Projects |
| Abigail Joseph | Frame Projects |

Apologies

Tyreece Asamoah
Hugh Balfour
Hazel Flynn
Saidat Oketunde

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Review of the Community Development Panel 2021-22

Tim Cutts explained that Community Development Panel's work is greatly appreciated by Southwark councillors, who receive updates on the panel's work during their regular meetings with the Old Kent Road team. The panel has also built up a good reputation with developers, who have given positive feedback on their experiences of engaging with panel members at review meeting. They value the input they receive from the panel, and see it as a key part of their local engagement strategies.

Tim, Alicia Chaumard and Liz Awoyemi provided an update on the progression of local planning policy since last year's governance meeting. The Southwark Plan has now been adopted – formally agreed by the Southwark Council – which means that the strategic direction of the site policies in the Old Kent Road Area Action Plan (AAP) has been agreed, including the numbers of homes and jobs it aims to create.

Because the Bakerloo Line is unlikely to be funded until the late 2030s at the earliest, Southwark is focusing on Phase 1 of the Area Action Plan, including working on Healthy High Streets projects with Transport for London, and delivering a new railway station at Surrey Canal Road. Phase 2 will be recast, and is likely to place more emphasis on industrial rather than residential development.

Council priorities remain to build affordable housing, including 11,000 new council homes; to tackle the climate emergency (with developments required to deliver 100 per cent zero carbon on site, rather than through offsite payments); and emphasis on parks and open spaces; to address councillor concern over the quality of accommodation and amenity in high density developments; community engagement; equality; working with Transport for London on street quality; and enhance bus services, including a potential 'Bakerloo' shuttle bus service along the Old Kent Road.

Officers presented a list of the 19 schemes that have received planning approval since September 2015. Within the Old Kent Road Opportunity Area, a total of 9,497 new homes are approved, or subject to live planning applications. Of those that are either under construction or complete – 2,291 homes – 44.5 per cent are classified affordable under Southwark Council's own definitions, which include social and intermediate rent properties. The panel has reviewed the majority of large schemes submitted for planning since it began work, in August 2020. The exceptions are:

- No. 81 Old Kent Road (behind Lidl), for which an application was submitted in 2019. Little has happened since then because the site is safeguarded or a future potential Bakerloo Line station site.
- the Tustin and Ledbury Estates redevelopments, involving rebuilding low rise elements on each estate. These have not been brought to the panel because both were subject to intensive review from each estate's own panels, and were approved through estate ballots.

Southwark officers mentioned examples of schemes where the panel's comments have made a difference. These include the Jewson site, where the panel negative comments helped officers see the proposals differently, and press for changes. They



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also include apparently minor details on schemes, such as the value of openable windows, which can be overlooked but are important to quality of life.

Updates were provided on six schemes reviewed during 2021-22: Folgate Estates, 16-28 Penarth Street, Hatcham Road Design Code, 77-81 Ilderton Road, the Jewson site and Southwark's Statement of Community Involvement. While construction costs are increasing, and there may be a slowdown in applications over the next 12-18 months, officers are confident that this will be temporary and that schemes with planning permission will be built.

Southwark officers discussed schemes and policies expected to come forward for review over the next few months, including the draft Old Kent Road AAP, Bramcote Park (where Assemble has been appointed), and greening on the Rotherhithe New Road and Murdock Street.

The full presentation is circulated alongside this meeting note.

Group discussion

A group discussion was held to allow everyone at the meeting to identify what they thought had gone well, and less well, during the past year.

Aspects identified as have gone well included:

- panel members working well together.
- everyone contributing to discussions.
- the developing experience of panel members.
- good quality questions.
- return to in-person meetings, which improves the quality of conversation.
- discussion on policy documents, as well as planning proposals.
- value added by Gurmeet Sian as chair.
- learning from group membership, including changing the way members see and think about the places where they live.

Areas identified as having gone less well included:

- not meeting every month.
- limited briefing on progress with schemes the group has already reviewed.
- developer presentations can be long.
- the need to be involved earlier in the design process to maximise influence.
- lack of absolute housing numbers in some presentations, sometimes masked by the use of percentages.
- it can feel as though schemes are 'a done deal', with all the important decisions already made.



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Review meetings and practicalities

Suggestions to improve the way the panel works included:

Meetings

- if there are no large schemes available to review, the panel could consider smaller schemes instead.
- the panel is interested in reviewing a wider range of proposals and schemes, for example for parks or transport scheme, or on social housing policy.
- it could also be involved in conversations about how to spend Section 106 money, or other community funding.
- shorter meetings could be considered for smaller schemes – e.g. 75 mins.
- more complex schemes could also be split over two, shorter sessions.
- local people could be invited as observers if schemes concern them directly.
- presentations could be kept to a standard length if a third party, for example Frame Projects, read out material on the applicant's behalf
- however, this could undermine the quality of information presented, and add extra cost and complications to holding meetings.

Communication

- a spreadsheet could be regularly circulated to show progress with schemes the panel has seen.
- it would be helpful to know more specifically about how the panel's views have influence and changed proposals.
- the idea of documenting the way the panel works was raised, to help communicate the model more widely to other areas and local authorities.
- panel's reports could be made available for more people to see. The material the panel sees is usually confidential until a planning application is made, so can't be published until then. When an application does go in, reports are published on the Southwark planning portal with application documents. Other options can be considered, however, for publishing reports.

Membership

- the panel would benefit from more young people as members.
- more members with no voice elsewhere would also benefit the group.
- panel membership could be widened, and more people invited to join.
- on the other hand, the current size of the group was felt to be about right, with more people potentially making it unwieldy, and fewer being less representative of the area.
- the question was raised of who the panel is accountable to. Members are recruited solely for their own expertise in how the area works and what it's like to live there. There is no expectation that panellists will represent anyone else, as they are not elected, so they are not accountable as representatives.
- the panel also raised the possibility that the value of the time they contribute to the group could be recognised by creating wider community benefit, for example through credit that community organisations could use.



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Other activities

- the panel would like further development sessions, including looking at the tools available to planners and the issues they consider.
- the panel suggests a joint site visit – walking around key sites with council officers, to discuss them and develop shared knowledge.
- the panel could meet other community review panels to learn from them.

Southwark policy

- the panel is interested to know how social and affordable housing numbers are maintained overall, and to be reassured that they not reduced through estate redevelopment.
- a panel member raised a question about the potential savings to tenants from district heating schemes explaining that, in their experience, although the cost of gas is cheaper daily standing charges are higher, which cancels out savings. Southwark officers offered to investigate further to provide an answer.

Chairing

- Gurmeet Sian left the room while group members discussed whether they wished him to continue as Chair of the CRP for a further year. There was unanimous appreciation for his work, and agreement that the group would like him to continue in his role. The panel gave positive feedback on his chairing of the group, highlighting his fair and accurate summaries of comments that value everyone's opinions, calm manner, impartiality, focus on making sure everyone can contribute, and success in creating a safe space for discussion.

Actions for Community Development Panel members

- All group members to respond to the email from Frame Projects to formally confirm whether they would like to continue their group membership for a further year from July 2022 to July 2023. Frame will provide new contracts.

Action for Southwark Council

- Southwark to provide an answer to the question of how savings from district heating systems are passed on to tenants.

Action for Group Chair

- Gurmeet to complete and return new contract as chair, until July 2023.

Actions for Frame Projects

- Frame to confirm with group members whether they wish to continue for a further year from July 2022; and formalise continuing membership with everyone who wants to remain on the group.



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- Frame to formalise Gurmeet Sian's continuing role as chair by providing him with a new contract until July 2023.
- Frame to arrange a training and development session for the panel during 2022, to provide more insight into the way urban design and planning decisions are made.
- Frame to hold a progress meeting with Southwark officers to discuss other suggestions made at the governance meeting, including a panel tour of the Old Kent Road; how to best update the panel on scheme progress; meeting timing; meeting formats; panel membership; publishing reports; communicating panel activities; relationship with other community panels; recognising the value of the time donated by panel members.

