



**Old Kent Road Community Review Panel**

**Notes of Community Review Panel Annual Meeting**

Monday 24 April 2023

231 Old Kent Road, London SE1 5LU

**Old Kent Road Community Review Panel attendees**

Hugh Balfour  
Shelene Byer  
Hazel Flynn  
Mike Levitt  
Victoria Oluwables  
Peter Warren  
Madison Westwood

Tim Cutts	Senior Regeneration Manager, Old Kent Road
Tom Bolton	Associate, Frame Projects
Hanako Littlewood	Associate, Frame Projects

**Apologies / report copied to**

Gurmeet Sian (chair)	Old Kent Road Community Review Panel
Tyreece Asamoah	Old Kent Road Community Review Panel
Julia Feeney	Old Kent Road Community Review Panel
James Glancy	Old Kent Road Community Review Panel
Aaron Mo	Old Kent Road Community Review Panel
Saidat Oketunde	Old Kent Road Community Review Panel
Sydney Simms	Old Kent Road Community Review Panel
Lauretta Doku	Engagement Team Leader, Old Kent Road
Colin Wilson	Head of Regeneration, Old Kent Road

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## Review of the Community Development Panel 2021-22

Tim Cutts gave a presentation updating the panel on progress with 30 separate development sites within the Old Kent Road Opportunity Area which are either recently completed or under construction. Overall, 712 new homes have been completed and 1,795 are on site: a total of 3,307 homes. Of these, 1,647 homes (49.8%) are classified as affordable housing; 851 homes of these are for social rent (26%). A further 800 homes are in the pipeline, but yet to start on site.

In addition to the information in Tim's slides, a few specific points were made:

- at 62 Hatcham Road & 134-140 Ilderton Road, and at 18-19 Crimscott Street, intermediate homes have been converted to social rent.
- Berkeley paused construction at Malt Street in May 2023, but now plan to be back on site later this year.
- at both 49-53 Glengall Road and 313-349 Ilderton Road the taller elements of the scheme have now topped out.
- the Carpetright, 651-657 Old Kent Road and 634-636 Old Kent Road sites will all be delivering only student housing.
- the housing totals for Phase 1 of the Ledbury and the Tustin Estate projects do not include reprovided homes for existing residents.
- the former Gas Works site, reviewed by the panel in September 2022, as the applicant is currently unable to deliver 35% affordable housing.

Tim also mentioned three non-residential schemes under construction: the Muslim Association of Nigeria mosque building, the Bottling Factory workspace building, and the Livesey Exchange managed by Pempeople, which will include various types of social infrastructure space.

Tim confirmed that the panel continues to see all significant development proposals in the Opportunity Area. The only exception mentioned is 8-24 Sylvan Grove, where a planning application was submitted against the advice of officers and their request to go to CRP ignored. The material the panel sees is usually the same as that presented to the council at pre-planning meetings. He emphasised that the Community Review Panel is greatly valued by Southwark Council. There is an expectation that applicants will take their schemes to CRP. Officers often learn from the panel's comments, and its views have influence with the Planning Committee. Reports are always forwarded to councillors, who set store by what the panel says.

Often, the panel's opinions are backed up by other voices. For example, the panel felt that the main elevation of the 6-12 Verney Road logistics scheme was lacked variety and was too dominant. Its comments were supported by Southwark's professional panel, and the designs were changed as a result. The panel has influence in that developers will almost always try to amend their proposals if they think it will help to achieve planning consent.

A live of map of developments on the Old Kent Road is online at <https://oldkentroad.org.uk/map>. Tim's presentation is also circulated with these notes.



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Tim's presentation also included a list of schemes the panel is expected to review during 2023/24:

- Devonshire Place (confirmed for 22 May 2023)
- 257 Old Kent Road
- 789 Old Kent Road
- Malt Street
- Old Kent Road rail bridge
- Old Kent Road Area Action Plan revised draft
- Mandela Way design code
- Sandgate Street/Verney Road design code
- Wevco Wharf
- TfL Healthy Streets proposal
- Under the Bridge project artwork

There was a discussion about the area district heat network, which Tim explains delivers a 91% cut in carbon emissions compared to gas-fired systems. The downside of district heating is the current lack of choice over supplier and price. However, these systems will be regulated by 2025 and customer service and choice are expected to catch up with the rest of the market.

Separately, Southwark Young Advisers are now managing 231 Old Kent Road, but this will not affect access to the venue for panel meetings.

## 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.

Positive points included:

- The group has learned and gained experience over time.
- It is good that the group has reviewed more schemes this year.
- Group members feel confident saying exactly what they think about schemes.
- Members enjoy meetings and look forward to attending.
- Meetings are positive and interesting.
- The group provides a better way to engage with developers than standard forms of local consultation
- Members find the reports of review meetings helpful.

Areas for improvement included:

- The panel does not always feel up to date with the Area Action Plan, which is the key context for its activities. It is important that it hears about important changes – for example, the Bakerloo Line extension being put on hold, or the switch to student housing on some schemes – and understands why they have happened.
- The panel sometimes has the impression that the important decisions have already been made before a scheme comes to review, and that are ticking



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boxes. Does it have the power to prevent larger schemes, in particular, from going to planning if it does not support them?

- Schemes are seen in isolation from their context to some extent, in particular without the infrastructure that relates to them. A map showing the overall picture on public resources, such as where new primary schools are being built or what the Healthy Streets programme is delivering would be helpful.
- Panel members also emphasised their interest in delivering community benefit as well as improving design quality. Beyond housing, the area also needs culture, leisure and entertainment, culture come in. However, this vision is not always shared by developers and, as a result, the panel's input can feel surface level at times.
- The panel also raised the question of whether, ultimately, they are helping to make the Old Kent Road less unequal.
- A list showing how the panel has influenced the schemes it has reviewed would be a good way to demonstrate influence.

## **Review meetings and practicalities**

### Reports

- The panel asked whether a report summary could be included in the body of emails, for those who do not have time to open and read the report of each review.

### Rewards

- The panel discussed the possibility of rewarding members for their participation. It was agreed a form of recognition that provides wider community benefit be appropriate. Options range from local vouchers to recognition in the form of a donation to a local organisation, or symbol such as a plaque. Southwark Council will consider the options and make suggestions. Panel members are also invited to contribute any ideas.

### Contract renewal

- Hugh Balfour and Peter Warren expressed their intention of stepping down from the panel when their contracts expire in July.
- Other panel members are asked to confirm whether they would like to continue as panel members for a further year. Frame and Southwark encourage existing members, whose contributions are much appreciated, to remain on the panel if at all possible.
- Frame Projects and Southwark Council will carry out a recruitment exercise to boost panel numbers during the summer.

### Chairing

- Feedback on Gurmeet Sian's role as Chair of the CRP was collected from the group by email in advance of the meeting. Everyone was appreciative of his work, and the group agreed that they would like him to continue in his role.



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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 panel 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 2023 to July 2024. Frame will provide new contracts.
- Panel members to send any further thoughts on forms of reward.

## **Action for Group Chair**

- Gurmeet to complete and return new contract as chair, until July 2024.

## **Action for Southwark Council**

- Southwark to continue to ask developers to bring schemes to the CRP as early as possible.
- Southwark to consider how the panel can be provided with updates on schemes that have been influenced by its comments.
- Southwark to annotate the Area Action Plan diagram to include social infrastructure.
- Southwark to consider options for recognising the panel's work in ways that provide community benefit.

## **Actions for Frame Projects**

- Frame to include report summaries in the body of a separate email to panel members when issuing review reports
- Frame to run a recruitment exercise to appoint new panel members to replace those that are stepping down in July.

