



# OLD KENT ROAD COMMUNITY REVIEW PANEL

Handbook 2025

FRAME PROJECTS

In partnership with  
Southwark Council

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

In 2020 Southwark Council recruited a Community Review Panel to comment on plans for future development along the Old Kent Road.

A 20-year programme of regeneration is underway along the full two miles of the Old Kent Road. Southwark Council's plans will change the street from an arterial road to a destination in its own right – a place for people to live, work and stay. The vision is based around a proposed extension to the Bakerloo Line, with stations on Old Kent Road, alongside new homes, jobs, schools, parks and community facilities. The plans will play a major part in tackling the Borough's housing crisis, delivering 20,000 new homes, 7,000 of which will be affordable including 5,000 at social rent. Regeneration will also double the 9,000 jobs already located along the Old Kent Road.

Southwark Council intends to support and develop the existing residential and business communities, and deliver this growth in a way that benefits the 35,000 people who already live along the Old Kent Road and in its surrounding neighbourhoods. To achieve this, it is essential that the views of people living, working and studying in the Old Kent Road area are heard, and local people have a voice in decision making.

The Community Review Panel is one of the ways through which the Council plans to better understand the needs of the local community. The panel provides independent advice on planning work along the Old Kent Road, discussing issues including housing, transport, public and green spaces, and the environment. This is intended to help ensure that new developments are of the highest possible design quality, and meet the needs of people living and working in the area, now and in the future.

If you would like a summary of this Handbook in your language, please contact Frame Projects.



Community Review Panel meeting © Frame Projects



## 2. OLD KENT ROAD

The history of Old Kent Road stretches back more than 2,000 years. It's one of Britain's oldest roads and its origins can be traced back to an ancient route once used by the Celts. Since Roman times, the road has been the primary route between London and the Kent coast. In the medieval era the road was famous as being a major part of the pilgrimage route to Canterbury. It was later immortalised by Geoffrey Chaucer in his collection of pilgrim stories, *The Canterbury Tales*.

For most of its existence, Old Kent Road had been a rural thoroughfare which led in and out of London but wasn't considered part of the metropolis. During this time, the only significant development had been a handful of coaching inns, catering to the needs of travellers. In the early 19th century, all this began to change: first with the building of the Grand Surrey Canal; then the establishment of the gasworks and later with the arrival of the railways.

Victorian Londoners knew Old Kent Road as a place of industry; associated with the docks, the railway and the South Metropolitan Gasworks. In the late Victorian years, the street would secure its place in Cockney folklore with the 1890's Music Hall song "Knocked 'em in the Old Kent Road" and in the 20th century it became better known still as the starting point for a million rounds of the board game, Monopoly.

After the war, town planners set out to separate housing from industry. Many of the damaged streets and old buildings were replaced either with new council housing estates such as the Tustin (built on the site of terraced housing in the late 1960s) or with new industrial developments; particularly storage and distribution centres.

Post-war planning also saw the creation of the Bricklayers Arms junction and flyover and Burgess Park. By the 1970s the railway had gone into decline and the railway land was redeveloped.

By this time, the canal was also redundant and it was eventually filled-in. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, more housing and factories made way for retail warehouses as well as for the new Brimington Park. The Mandela Way Industrial Estate, which opened in 1984, provided wide, single-storey sheds for modern industry. In the 1990s, functional out-of-town retail warehouse units (with large areas for parking) were built for Tesco and other stores in the Southernwood Retail Park.

Now, 35,000 people live along the three mile length of Old Kent Road and its local neighbourhoods. More than 700 businesses are based in the area and 9,000 people work there.

Regeneration plans present a unique chance to tackle Southwark's housing crisis – 20,000 high quality, new homes will be built to suit people from all walks of life. 35 per cent of all the new housing will be affordable – around 7,000 new affordable homes including 5,000 at social rent.

The Bakerloo line extension from Elephant and Castle to Lewisham is fundamental to Southwark Council's plans. Extending the tube line and building three new stations along Old Kent Road would provide a big boost to the local economy, create new jobs and enable many more new homes to be built and at a faster rate.

### 3. PANEL COMPOSITION

The Old Kent Road Community Review Panel brings together 'local experts', local people from a non-design background with a passion for and knowledge of the Old Kent Road area. It is made up of a chair, and around 14 members drawn from across the community who:

- bring a strong understanding of the area, the way it works, its history, its inhabitants, and local needs
- can provide constructive advice from a community perspective on proposals for development and change, as well as the needs of existing residential and business communities
- will make confident contributions in meetings
- will collaborate and respect the contribution of others in panel discussions

The panel is currently chaired by Gurmeet Sian, an architect and community engagement consultant. His role is reviewed annually by the group members, and if they deem it necessary a new chair will be appointed.



Ghost House, Fraher & Findlay © Adam Scott





The Rye Apartments, Tikari Works © Jack Hobhouse

## 4. ROLE OF THE PANEL

The Old Kent Road Community Review Panel provides local views and recommendations to Southwark Council at key stages of the planning process.

The panel plays an advisory role in the planning process. It is for the Southwark officers and elected councillors to decide what weight to place on the panel's comments and recommendations – balanced with other planning considerations. Applicants should consult planning officers following a review to agree how to respond to the panel's advice.

If any comments made by the Community Review Panel require clarification, it is the responsibility of the presenting team, whether project promoters or Southwark officers, to draw this to the attention of the panel chair (if during the meeting) or the panel manager at Frame Projects (if the report of the meeting requires clarification).

## 5. PANEL REMIT

The Old Kent Road Community Review Panel has been established to support Southwark Council in achieving high quality placemaking that reflects the priorities of local people.

The panel performs a public role and the Handbook is therefore published on the Southwark Council's website, including the names of the panel's members. However, the individuals in the panel do not perform a representative role, on behalf of a community group, for example. They are not required to have professional planning skills or experience. They are appointed so that they can contribute their own personal experience of living or working in the Old Kent Road area and the surrounding neighbourhoods.

The Community Review Panel will provide independent advice to the planning authority as a 'critical friend' to support the delivery of high-quality development in Old Kent Road. The Community Review Panel will review and comment on development proposals and strategic documents across the Old Kent Road area – both those where Southwark is the client or landowner, and also those brought forward by third party developers, where Southwark is the planning authority but not the client or landowner.

Southwark is likely to refer schemes to the Community Review Panel at an early design stage to ensure that local priorities and concerns can inform the design process.

Advice is likely to be most effective before a scheme becomes too fixed. Early engagement with the Community Review Panel will help test and understand the appropriateness of the proposals to the area and the needs of its communities.

The panel considers significant development proposals in the Old Kent Road area. Significance is not necessarily only related to scale but may also fall into the following categories:

### **Significance related to size or use, for example:**

- large buildings or groups of buildings
- infrastructure projects such as bridges or transport hubs
- large public realm proposals
- masterplans, design codes or design guidance

### **Significance related to site, for example:**

- proposals affecting sensitive views
- developments with a major impact on their context
- schemes involving significant public investment

### **Significant social infrastructure, for example:**

- schools or other education buildings
- parks and open spaces
- streets, cycle and footpaths
- public buildings, for example libraries

As with normal pre-application procedure, review advice given before an application is submitted remains confidential, seen only by the applicant, the planning authority and any other stakeholder bodies that the council has involved in the project. This encourages applicants to share proposals openly and honestly with the Community Review Panel – and ensures that they receive the most useful advice.



231 Old Kent Road opening © Southwark Council

## 6. INDEPENDENCE & PROBITY

The Old Kent Road Community Review Panel is facilitated on behalf of Southwark Council by Frame Projects, an external consultancy. The Council has appointed Frame Projects to manage the panel, to maintain its independence. This means that review meetings are arranged and managed by Frame Projects staff and the panel is chaired, and the discussion managed, by Gurmeet Sian, an architect specialising in community engagement, who is employed on a consultancy basis by Frame Projects. All reports and formal recommendations are written by the Community Review Panel manager, and issued with the approval of the chair, with no prior approval from Southwark Council.

The process for managing the Community Review Panel, the appointment of panel members, including selection of the chair, and the administration of meetings, are agreed in partnership with the Council.

Community Review Panel members are required to keep confidential all information acquired in the course of their role in the panel, with the exception of reports that are in the public domain.

Further details are provided in the confidentiality procedure included in Section 17.

## 7. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

As a public authority, Southwark Council is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act). All requests made to the Council for information, with regard to the Community Review Panel, will be handled according to the provisions of the Act. Legal advice may be required on a case by case basis to establish whether any exemptions apply under the Act.



AMP Studios © Southwark Council



## 8. TYPES OF MEETINGS

### COMMUNITY REVIEWS

A Community Review Panel meeting will be held for major development proposals, masterplans, significant planning policy or guidance documents. Review meetings will take place from outline design stage onwards, so that the panel can provide advice to the scheme promoter and to Southwark Council.

All members of the Community Review Panel including the chair, will be invited to attend. Southwark officers and appropriate stakeholders may also be invited to attend and asked to give their views after the scheme has been presented.

Community Review Panel meetings will usually take place at a stage when a client and design team have decided their preferred option for development of a site, and have sufficient drawings, models, etc. for a comprehensive discussion. There will often be a second pre-application review, to provide an opportunity for the panel to comment on more detailed design matters before a planning submission.

The scheme will be presented by a member of the design team, normally the lead architect, following a brief introduction by the client. Presentations may be made with drawings or PowerPoint and models as appropriate.

A typical Community Review Panel meeting will last 120 minutes: 5 minutes of introductions; 10 minutes briefing by planning officers; 30 minutes presentation by the design team; 5 minutes break; 60 minutes discussion; 10 minutes summing up by the chair. Large projects may be split into smaller elements for the purposes of review, to ensure each element receives a fair share of discussion time, e.g. schemes with several development plots.

### ANNUAL MEETINGS

To support the Community Review Panel's role in the planning process, annual meetings will be arranged to provide an opportunity for reflection amongst the group on emerging themes and issues. This will also provide an opportunity for the Council to provide feedback on the impact of the panel's advice on schemes reviewed. Annual meetings will be facilitated by the Community Development Panel chair, and all panel members will be invited to attend.

### DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS

Training will be provided to equip panel members with the skills required to understand and constructively input to the review meetings. Development sessions may take a variety of formats, beginning with a panel induction meeting, and with potential to provide training on other areas such as: sustainable design, landscape design or more practical issues including how to read and interrogate architectural drawings. Topics will be identified with input from the panel members.

## 9. SITE VISITS

Old Kent Road Community Review Panel members are drawn from the local area, and so we anticipate that they will be familiar with the locations where development is proposed. Formal site visits will therefore not be arranged in advance of reviews, but the aim will be to circulate agendas a week in advance of each meeting, to allow panel members to visit the sites independently if they wish to do so.

## 10. EXPENSES

Community Review Panel members are entitled to claim reasonable expenses for travel to review meetings, and for other costs incurred in order to attend meetings. Frame Projects will provide an expense form which should be completed and sent to the Community Review Panel co-ordinator, with receipts or other evidence of expenditure, before the date of the next panel meeting.



231 Old Kent Road opening © Southwark Council

# 11. MEETING DATES

One Community Review Panel meeting is provisionally scheduled every month. These may be used to review development proposals, or for an annual meeting or development session. Meetings may also be required to provide advice on non-application matters such as planning policy development.

The panel will meet between 18.30 and 20.30 on a Monday evening. The following dates are currently set for Old Kent Road Community Review Panel meetings in 2025:

- 20 January
- 17 February
- 17 March
- 14 April
- 19 May
- 16 June
- 21 July
- 15 September
- 20 October
- 17 November
- 15 December



Peckham Place, Jestico + Whiles © Jack Hobhouse





London Square, AHMM © Tim Soar

## 12. BRIEFING & TRAINING

All Community Review Panel members are required to attend an induction meeting before taking part in review meetings. This includes briefings on the context in which development is taking place, and on the schemes likely to be reviewed. It also includes briefing on the panel's role, how it will be governed, and on practical arrangements.

Development sessions will be arranged for the panel on request, after discussion with members. This will be provided by professionals, who can also be called on by the Community Review Panel to provide additional briefing at review sessions, to ensure that the panel has all the information it requires.

The induction meeting and annual meetings provide opportunities to discuss the wider needs of panel members, including training needs, to ensure that they can fulfil their roles effectively.

## 13. REVIEW AGENDAS

Agendas will be issued to panel members in advance of each meeting. The agenda and its contents are confidential and should only be read by members of the panel.

For Community Review Panel meetings, a detailed agenda will be provided that includes notes on the planning context, details of the project to be considered, the applicant and consultant team, and those presenting the project, as appropriate.

A scheme description provided by those presenting to the panel will set out factual information about the project. Key plans and images will also be provided to help to give a sense of the scope and nature of the project under review.

Where a project returns for a second or subsequent review, the report of the previous review will be provided with the agenda.



Ormside Street © Southwark Council





Rich Industrial Estate © London Square Developments Ltd

## 14. REVIEW REPORTS

During a Community Review Panel meeting the panel's manager at Frame Projects will take notes of the discussion to form the basis of a report. Reports will be drafted, approved by the panel chair and issued within 10 working days. The report summarises the comments and advice provided by the Community Review Panel and clearly sets out specific recommendations.

At pre-application stage, reports will provide clear advice on the appropriateness of the proposals to the area, and the needs of its communities. This may assist Council officers in negotiating improvements.

The Community Review Panel has an advisory role in Southwark Council's planning process, and the project team should consult planning officers following a review to agree how to respond to points raised in the report.

The report at this stage is not normally made public and is shared only with Southwark Council, the applicant and design team, and any other stakeholders present at the meeting.

Once planning applications are submitted, the report may provide guidance to Southwark officers in reviewing the planning application with regard to community views.

If the proposal is reviewed at an application stage the report will be a public document kept within the proposal's case file and published on Southwark Council's website. Where the final review of a scheme takes place at a pre-application stage, the report of this meeting may also be made public once an application is submitted.



## 15. REVIEW CHARGES

Applicants are referred to the Community Review Panel by Southwark Council as an external service. They pay fees to Frame Projects for delivering this service.

The current charge for an Old Kent Road Community Review Panel meeting is:

- Community Review Panel meeting                      £3,825 + VAT

The cost of venue hire, if required, would be in addition to the charges above.

Payment should be made by the applicant in advance of the review, and the review may be cancelled if payment is not received five days in advance of the meeting. Full details of payment will be provided when an invitation to present to the panel is confirmed.

Where a scheduled review is subsequently cancelled or postponed by the applicant, an administrative charge will be applied:

- 50% of full cost : less than two weeks before the review
- £800 + VAT : between two and four weeks before the review

## 16. PANEL MEMBERSHIP

### Chair, Gurmeet Sian

Gurmeet is an architect and director of Office Sian Architecture + Design. Most of his commissions have been for clients from the community and charity sectors. He has also been involved in community education projects throughout his career, in particular in partnership with the Victoria and Albert Museum, Open House and the ICA. He runs architecture workshops for SPID Youth Theatre in Kensal House, and has organised building visits for Open City, in London.

### Community Review Panel members

Shelene Byer  
Simon Donovan  
Margaret Higgins  
Rebecca Lefort  
Mike Levitt  
Aaron Mo  
Saidat Oketunde  
Victoria Oluwabless  
Sarah Osei  
Daniel Quinn  
Sydney Simms  
Madison Westwood

## 17. CONFIDENTIALITY

The Old Kent Road Community Review Panel provides a forum for advice and guidance to be provided at an early stage in projects, before proposals are public, and when advice can have the most impact. Confidentiality is therefore important.

1. Panel meetings are only to be attended by the panel's members, Southwark officers, and officers from stakeholder organisations involved in the project, as well as the applicant and their design team. If anyone else attends, it must be approved by the Community Review Panel manager at Frame Projects.
2. Members of the Old Kent Road Community Review Panel will keep confidential all information provided to them as part to their role on the panel, and shall not use that information for their own benefit, nor disclose it to any third party (with the exception of reports that are in the public domain – see points 5 and 6).
3. The Old Kent Road Community Review Panel's advice is provided in the form of a report written by Frame Projects, containing key points from the panel's discussion. If any applicant, architect or agent approaches a panel member for advice on a project subject to review (before, during or after), they should decline to comment and refer the inquiry to the panel manager at Frame Projects.
4. Following the meeting, the Community Review Panel manager writes a draft report, circulates it to the chair for comments and then makes any amendments. The panel manager will then distribute it to all those included on the meeting agenda.
5. If the proposal is at a pre-application stage, the report will not be made public and will only be shared with Southwark Council, the applicant and design team, and any other stakeholder bodies present at the meeting.
6. If the proposal is reviewed at an application stage the report will be a public document kept within the proposal's case file and published on Southwark Council's website. Where the final review of a scheme takes place at a pre-application stage, the report of this meeting may also be made public once an application is submitted.
7. If a panel member wishes to share a final report with anyone, they must seek approval from the Community Review Panel manager, who will confirm whether or not the report is public.

## 18. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Following the selection of Community Review Panel members, each potential panel member will be asked to fill out a Declaration of Interest form. The form will identify if there are any conflicts which may preclude an individual's participation in the Community Review Panel.

An individual may be conflicted from becoming a panel member if they have a financial, commercial or professional interest in participating in the Old Kent Road Community Development Panel.

Once the panel is fully established, to ensure the integrity and impartiality of advice is given by the Old Kent Road Community Review Panel, potential conflicts of interest will be checked before each panel meeting. The following process will apply.

1. All panel members are required to declare any conflicts of interest.
2. Panel members are notified of the scheme coming before the panel at least a week in advance. At this time panel members should check the meeting information provided and declare any possible interest in a project to Frame Projects.
3. The Community Review Panel manager at Frame Projects in collaboration with the panel chair and Southwark officers, will determine if the conflict of interest is of a personal or prejudicial nature – that is, whether it will prevent the panel member from giving impartial advice.
4. In general, a panel member should not attend a review meeting if they have:
  - a financial, commercial or professional interest in a project that will be reviewed, its client and / or its site;
  - a financial, commercial or professional interest in a site that is adjacent to the project (not including a panel member's own home) that will be reviewed or upon which the project being reviewed will have a material impact;
  - a personal relationship with an individual or group involved in the project, or a related project, where that relationship prevents the panel member from being objective.
5. If it is deemed that a conflict of interest is of a prejudicial nature, the panel member should not take part in reviews for the proposal. They should also not take part in private discussions of the project and should not be in the room during the discussions of the project.
6. If it is deemed that a conflict of interest is personal, but not prejudicial, the panel member may be allowed to participate in the review. In this situation, the interest will be noted at the beginning of the review, discussed with the presenting teams and formally recorded in the review report.
7. Councillors and Council employees are not eligible to be panel members.



## 19. KEY REFERENCES

### Southwark Council

#### Old Kent Road Area Action Plan (2020)

[oldkentroad.org.uk/documents#~:text=Download%20the%20Old%20Kent%20Road%20Area%20Action%20Plan%20\(Dec%202020\)](http://oldkentroad.org.uk/documents#~:text=Download%20the%20Old%20Kent%20Road%20Area%20Action%20Plan%20(Dec%202020))

#### Old Kent Road Social Regeneration Charter (2019)

[www.oldkentroad.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/OKRSRC.pdf](http://www.oldkentroad.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/OKRSRC.pdf)

#### Southwark Plan 2022

[www.southwark.gov.uk/planning-environment-and-building-control/planning/planning-policy-and-guidance/southwark-plan-2022](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/planning-environment-and-building-control/planning/planning-policy-and-guidance/southwark-plan-2022)

#### Old Kent Road Planning Applications Map

[www.oldkentroad.org.uk/map](http://www.oldkentroad.org.uk/map)

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2)

### London Plan

[www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/the\\_london\\_plan\\_2021.pdf](http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/the_london_plan_2021.pdf)



Southwark Park Pavilion, Bell Phillips Architects © Kilian O'Sullivan