

OPDC
OLD OAK AND
PARK ROYAL
DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION

MAYOR OF LONDON



OPDC COMMUNITY REVIEW GROUP

Handbook 2025

FRAME PROJECTS

In partnership with
Old Oak and Park Royal
Development Corporation

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Cover image: view of Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation © Frame Projects



1. INTRODUCTION

OPDC is one of two Mayoral Development Corporations (MDC) in London – the other being the London Legacy Development Corporation in Stratford, east London. As an MDC, OPDC is a statutory agency, with planning powers, across its 650-hectare boundary, and is tasked with driving forward regeneration for the area, which includes sites in the three boroughs of Brent, Ealing and Hammersmith & Fulham.

Over the next 30 years, OPDC will bring forward plans to ensure that both current and future residents and businesses benefit from the significant investment in the area by the Elizabeth Line and High Speed 2 (HS2).

We want community engagement to be at the heart of our plans and are committed to listening to a diverse range of local voices to help shape development. Central to this approach is our Community Review Group (CRG).

The group is the first of its kind in the UK, and plays an active role in ensuring that new developments serve the needs of the community. It was created by OPDC to empower local people by giving them a say in shaping one of the largest Opportunity Areas in London.

It is made up entirely of people who live or work in the area, of different ages and backgrounds, to reflect the diverse community in Old Oak and Park Royal.

In return for local knowledge, members gain skills, learn more about their neighbourhood and influence major regeneration by feeding into decisions made by OPDC's Planning Committee and Board.



Victoria Road and North Acton © Mattr Media Ltd





View of existing industrial and rail infrastructure at Old Oak © Mattr Media

2. OLD OAK AND PARK ROYAL

The OPDC area includes 650 hectares of land including the Old Oak Common Station site, the Park Royal industrial area to the west and Wormwood Scrubs open space. Much of Old Oak consists of brownfield sites, while Park Royal is the largest Strategic Industrial Location area in London.

Old Oak will become a canal-side district with new and affordable homes, and a new commercial and retail centre focused around the station. Park Royal will be intensified, enhancing its role as London's industrial centre, with new and affordable workspace that promote local business and innovation, creating new, skilled job opportunities for the community. A new neighbourhood centre is proposed for central Park Royal, underpinned by the existing healthcare and retail uses, which will include the delivery of some additional homes. Transport improvements will make the area one of the best connected in the country. As well as the new Old Oak Common HS2 Station also serving the Elizabeth Line, improvements are planned for the existing stations at North Acton and Willesden Junction.

The OPDC area includes neighbourhoods in the London boroughs of Brent, Ealing and Hammersmith and Fulham. OPDC is the Local Planning Authority for its area, although it delegates some applications to Brent and Ealing.



3. GROUP COMPOSITION

The OPDC Community Review Group (CRG) brings together local people of all ages from a diverse range of non-planning backgrounds, with a passion for and knowledge of the Old Oak and Park Royal area. Members of the CRG must either live or work in the OPDC area or its immediate surroundings. CRG members have been appointed to:

- bring a strong understanding of the Old Oak and Park Royal area, the way it works, its history and its community and businesses
- provide constructive advice, from a community perspective, on proposals for development, policy and planning applications
- advise on the needs of existing and new residential and business communities

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



View of Mitre Bridge and the Grand Union Canal © Matr Media Ltd.



4. ROLE OF THE GROUP

The CRG provides local views and recommendations to OPDC at key stages of the planning process.

The CRG's role is advisory and it is for OPDC to decide what weight to give to the group'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 CRG require clarification, it is the responsibility of the presenting team, whether applicants or OPDC officers, to draw this to the attention of the group chair (if during the meeting) or the group manager at Frame Projects (if the report of the meeting requires clarification).



Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation consultation event © OPDC

5. GROUP REMIT

The CRG has been established to support OPDC in achieving high quality placemaking that reflects the priorities of local people. It performs a public role and the Handbook for the group is published on the OPDC website, including the names of the group's members.

However, CRG members are not required to have professional built environment skills or experience. They are appointed so that they can contribute their own personal experience of living or working in the OPDC area and the surrounding neighbourhoods.

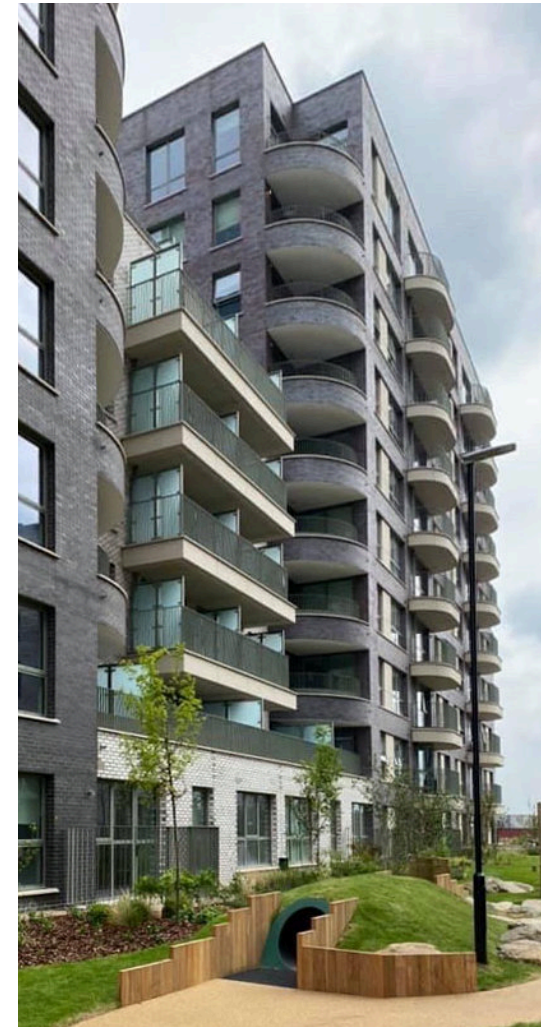
The CRG works in parallel with the OPDC Place Review Group (PRG), an appointed design review panel made up of built environment professionals. Both the CRG and the PRG provide independent advice to the planning authority as a 'critical friend' to support the delivery of high quality development at Old Oak and Park Royal. The CRG reviews and comments on development proposals, planning applications and strategic documents across the Old Oak and Park Royal area – both those where OPDC is the developer or landowner, and also those brought forward by third party developers where OPDC is the planning authority, but not the applicant or landowner.

OPDC endeavours to refer schemes to the CRG 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 CRG will help test and understand the appropriateness of the proposals to the area and how development can meet the needs of its communities.

The group considers the most significant development proposals in the OPDC area including major residential, commercial or industrial intensification projects and/or those that provide major community facilities, employment opportunities, social infrastructure or transport infrastructure.

Given the number of CRG meetings each year is limited, it is not possible for the group to consider all development proposals in the OPDC area.

As with normal pre-application procedures, advice given by the group before an application is submitted remains confidential, seen only by the applicant and the planning authority. This encourages applicants to share their proposals with the CRG in a full and open manner – and ensures that they receive the most useful advice. Once an application has been submitted, the CRG's comments are made available to the public on OPDC's Planning Register.



Regency Heights © OPDC





The old Torpedo Factory, a local heritage asset © OPDC by Mattr Media Ltd

6. INDEPENDENCE & PROBITY

The OPDC CRG is facilitated on behalf of OPDC by Frame Projects, an external consultancy. OPDC has appointed Frame Projects to manage the group, and to maintain its independence. This means that review meetings are arranged and managed by Frame Projects staff, and the group is chaired by Tony Burton, who mediates and manages the discussion. Tony is employed on a consultancy basis by Frame Projects. All reports and formal recommendations are written by Frame Projects, and issued with the approval of the chair, with no prior approval from OPDC.

The processes for managing the CRG the appointment of group members, including selection of the chair, and the administration of meetings are agreed in partnership with OPDC. CRG members are required to keep confidential all information acquired in the course of their role in the group, with the exception of reports that are in the public domain. Further details are provided in the confidentiality procedure included in Section 16.

7. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

As a public authority, OPDC is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act). All requests made to OPDC for information with regard to the CRG 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.

8. TYPES OF MEETINGS

COMMUNITY REVIEWS

A Community Review Group 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 OPDC.

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

CRG 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 group 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 CRG meeting will last 120 minutes: 5 minutes of introductions; 10 minutes briefing by planning officers; 30 minutes presentation by the design team; 65 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 CRG'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 OPDC to provide feedback on the impact of the group's advice on schemes reviewed. Annual meetings will be facilitated by the CRG chair, and all group members will be invited to attend.

DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS

Training will be provided to equip the CRG 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. EXPENSES

CRG members are entitled to claim reasonable expenses for travel to review meetings and site visits, 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 CRG manager with receipts or other evidence of expenditure, before the date of the next group meeting.



Old Oak Commons © Maccreeanor Lavington

10. MEETING DATES

One CRG 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 group meets between 18.30 and 20.30 on a Monday evening. The following dates are currently set for OPDC CRG meetings in 2025:

- 13 January
- 10 February
- 10 March
- 14 April
- 19 May
- 9 June
- 7 July
- 8 September
- 13 October
- 10 November
- 8 December



Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation consultation event © OPDC

11. BRIEFING AND TRAINING

All CRG 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 group's role, how it will be governed, and on practical arrangements.

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

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



12. REVIEW AGENDAS

Agendas will be issued to group members in advance of each meeting, typically with two weekends between the date of issue and the meeting. This is to ensure group members have the opportunity to read the agenda and supporting information, which they are asked to do in advance of each review, and to visit the site if they are able to do so. The agenda, and its contents, are confidential and should only be read by members of the group.

For CRG 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 project description provided by those presenting the project 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.



One Portal Way © Pilbrow & Partners





View of existing industrial and rail infrastructure at Old Oak © Mattr Media Ltd

13. REVIEW REPORTS

During a CRG meeting the group's manager, Frame Projects, will take notes of the discussion to form the basis of a report. Reports will be drafted, approved by the group chair and issued within 10 working days. The report summarises the comments and advice provided by the CRG 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 OPDC officers in negotiating improvements.

The CRG has an advisory role in OPDC's planning process. 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 OPDC, the applicant and design team, and any other stakeholders that OPDC has involved in the project.

Once planning applications are submitted, the report may provide guidance to OPDC 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 OPDC's Planning Register. 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.



14. REVIEW CHARGES

Applicants are referred to the CRG by OPDC as an external service. They pay fees to Frame Projects for delivering this service.

The current charge for an OPDC CRG meeting is:

- Community Review Group meeting £4,500 + VAT

The meeting charge includes a contribution to a pool which is used to fund development and training sessions for panel members, and future panel recruitment.

The cost of venue hire, if required, would be in addition to the charge 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 group 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

15. GROUP MEMBERSHIP

Chair, Tony Burton

Tony works on a wide variety of community, environmental and planning projects. He has over 25 years' experience on the boards of major charities, and an extensive track record of working with local communities and volunteers seeking to influence their neighbourhood.

Community Review Group members

Ewa Ćwirko-Godycka
Bashir Hasan
Ned Ingham
Iashia John
Rein Leitmaa
Sebastiano Oddi
Nick Prentice
Yolanda da Souza
Pati Starzykowski
Michael Woods
Alan Woolford



16. CONFIDENTIALITY

The OPDC Community Review Group (CRG) 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 very important.

1. CRG meetings are only to be attended by the group's members, OPDC 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 CRG manager, Frame Projects.
2. Members of the OPDC CRG will keep confidential all information provided to them as part of their role on the CRG, 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 CRG's advice is provided in the form of a report written by Frame Projects, containing key points from the group'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 group's manager, Frame Projects.
4. Following the meeting, the CRG manager writes a draft report, circulates it to the chair for comments and then makes any amendments. Frame Projects 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 OPDC, the applicant and design team, and any other stakeholder bodies that OPDC has involved in the project.
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 OPDC's Planning Register. 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 group member wishes to share a final report with anyone, they must seek approval from the CRG manager, who will confirm whether or not the report is public.



17. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Following the selection of CRG members, each potential group 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 CRG.

An individual may be conflicted from becoming a group member if they have a financial, commercial or professional interest in participating in OPDC's CRG.

Once the group is fully established, to ensure the integrity and impartiality of advice given by the OPDC CRG, potential conflicts of interest will be checked before each group meeting. The following process will apply:

1. All group members are required to declare any conflicts of interest.
2. Group members are notified of the scheme coming before the panel at least a week in advance. At this time group members should check the meeting information provided and declare any possible interest in a project to Frame Projects.
3. The CRG manager, in collaboration with the group chair and OPDC officers, will determine if the conflict of interest is of a personal or prejudicial nature – that is, whether it will prevent the group member from giving impartial advice.
4. In general, a group 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 group 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 group 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 discussion of the project.
6. If it is deemed that a conflict of interest is personal, but not prejudicial, the group 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 group members.



18. KEY REFERENCES

Relevant Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation documents

Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation Statement of Community Involvement

www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/opdc-statementofcommunityinvolvement-042017.pdf

OPDC's Community Engagement Strategy, 2021

www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/community_engagement_strategy_2021.pdf

Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation Draft Local Plan

www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/opdc-40a_opdc_post_submission_modified_draft_local_plan_may_2021_0.pdf

Other relevant documents

Mayor of London's London Plan

www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning/london-plan/new-london-plan/london-plan-2021

Mayor of London's Good Growth by Design programme

www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/regeneration/advice-and-guidance/about-good-growth-design

Mayor of London's Social Integration Strategy

www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/communities/all-us-mayors-strategy-social-integration

National Planning Policy Framework

www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2

These documents are also available at:

www.london.gov.uk/opdc

Relevant Greater London Authority documents

Greater London Authority Good Growth by Design

www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/good_growth_web.pdf

