

DIRECTOR DECISION – DD134

Title: Continuing OPDC's Community Review Group

Executive Summary:

Director's Decision 067 approved expenditure to set-up and run, as a one-year pilot, a Community Review Group (CRG). The pilot having been a success, OPDC is seeking to put the Group on a permanent footing. This decision form therefore seeks approval of funding to run a recruitment exercise to replace outgoing CRG members.

The CRG has established itself as an integral part of OPDC's Design Review process and sits alongside the Place Review Panel. Since its establishment, it has reviewed several OPDC-led and private-led schemes and made valuable contributions to ensuring development and regeneration in Old Oak and Park Royal is of the highest possible quality.

Decision:

The Directors approve:

- expenditure of £11,300 in 2020/21 to run an exercise to recruit new Community Review Group members. This amount includes £3,000 towards social media advertising costs for the recruitment of new members, from the Communications & Engagement budget. The remaining amount will be funded from the unspent budget from the pilot phase (DD067).

AUTHORISING DIRECTOR

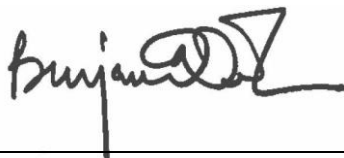
I have reviewed the request and am satisfied it is correct and consistent with the OPDC business plan and priorities.

It has my approval.

Name: Ben O'Neill

Position: Development Director

Signature:



Date: 15/10/2020

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1 Introduction and background

- 1.1 OPDC's Community Review Group (CRG) was set up in 2018 as a one-year pilot-project to give feedback on planning applications and public realm projects. Due to a lack of schemes coming in for review, the pilot-run was extended by a year to ensure the group has sufficient opportunities to demonstrate its effectiveness. The Group is managed independently by Frame Projects, on behalf of OPDC. Group members are recruited from people living, working or regularly spending time in the OPDC area.
- 1.2 The Group is currently made up of 12 members who do not represent existing organisations or community groups. Rather, each member represents themselves. The Group is carefully selected to reflect the diversity of the wider area.
- 1.3 In January 2020 the Group members, Frame Projects and OPDC representatives from the Design Team, the Planning Directorate and the Communications & Engagement Directorate evaluated the Group's 18-month pilot-run and concluded that the Group has been successful in delivering on OPDC's plan to ensuring that new development is of the highest quality and in empowering local people to have a say about the urban design process. The review concluded that the Group should continue its work beyond the initial pilot-phase.
- 1.4 Approval is being sought to spend £11,300 on the recruitment new Group members. This includes £8,300 for the professional services of Frame Projects of unspent budget set aside for the pilot-phase previously approved in DD067. The remaining £3,000 will be spent from the Communications & Engagement budget on social media advertising to ensure the recruitment reaches hard to reach demographics in the wider area.

2 Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1 In response to the decision to continue the CRG beyond its initial pilot-run, it has been decided that current members will resign in order to make room for new members and voices from the community. OPDC has therefore asked Frame Projects to recruit new members to the Group to replace vacant positions from outgoing members, and expand Group membership to 15.
- 2.2 The recruitment of new members is intended to fill positions left by outgoing members, and increase group membership to 15. This will allow the group to include people that will help it to better represent the diversity of the wider area.
- 2.3 Frame Projects will produce recruitment material and manage the selection and the new members' induction process. Since reviews are paid for by the applicants, no further costs will incur on OPDC for the management of the CRG by Frame Projects.
- 2.4 OPDC will support the recruitment process with a dedicated communication strategy, including a paid social media campaign of the recruitment advertisement. The advertising run will be managed by Wavemaker working under contract for the GLA. OPDC has access to their services as part of shared services agreement.

3 Equality comments

- 3.1 The recruitment process has been carefully drawn up to ensure access to the application procedure and to ensure that group membership is inclusive. Interested individuals will be asked for their motivation to join the group, and to complete a diversity monitoring form. The latter will be used to ensure the final group makeup reflects the diversity of the population of the wider area in

terms of gender, sexual orientation, age groups, disability and ethnic and cultural background. For that purpose, OPDC's Engagement Team have created a diversity baseline drawing on statistics compiled by OPDC, GLA, the Boroughs and the Office for National Statistics.

- 3.2 The recruitment of new members will focus on ensuring the group's diversity better reflects the diversity of the population of the wider area. There is a particular intention to focus on young people (18-24), parents of young children, blue collar workers, and boaters.
- 3.3 Due to the ongoing Covid-19 crisis it is expected that CRG meetings will continue to be held online for the foreseeable future. New members will require internet access to join the panel. Therefore, the recruitment will be advertised solely online, through OPDC's website and newsletter. In addition, OPDC will run targeted advertising through social media.
- 3.4 By advertising the recruitment process on social media, OPDC wants to ensure it reaches as many people as possible within the catchment area, and to hard to reach individuals whom OPDC would not be able to reach through its traditional communication channels.

4 Other considerations

- 4.1 The CRG was the first of its kind. Since its establishment, several other planning authorities have set up their own version of the CRG, including LB Southwark, LB Redbridge and Dacorum District Council. Several other local authorities are considering following suit, including LB Epping and LB Tower Hamlets.
- 4.2 Group members are not paid, but do receive training in topics they request as a group. So far, training has been provided in Urban Design principles and Planning principles.
- 4.3 The Group's governance has been successful in addressing the risks outlined in DD067, and will continue to do so:
 - a. Reluctance of developers to request review sessions, in particular for smaller schemes: CRG review fees are kept considerably lower than Place Review Panel fees. During the 18-month pilot, no applicant has refused to go through Community Review.
 - b. Inability to reach consensus between CRG members on recommendations: the Group is facilitated by an external Chair, Tony Burton, who has been appointed by Frame Projects. The position of Chair was initially intended to be handed over to Group members. But during the governance meeting in January 2020 the Group members unanimously decided to continue with the same external Chair.
 - c. Risk of personal interests of CRG members interfering in the review process: Group members have to declare any conflicts of interests ahead of each meeting. So far, this has only occurred once, and the Group has acted in a professional and responsible manner.
 - d. Risk that OPDC is unable to attract a diverse range of community members to sit on the CRG: OPDC is building on the success of attracting a diverse range of community members with an updated diversity baseline and targeted social media advertising to target harder to reach applicants.

5 Financial comments

- 5.1 Expenditure of up to £11,300 will be funded from the 2020/21 budgets as follows:

- £8,300 professional fees for Frame Projects to produce recruitment material, application forms, and manage the selection and induction process of new members.
- £3,000 for advertising the recruitment on social media, sourced from OPDC's Comms & Engagement budget, WBS code PA.0100.002.02 (Comms-Marketing Comms Services).

5.2 It is advisable that approval is sought in advance for the ongoing costs of the CRG and that procurement rules are adhered to secure value for money. Whether a direct contract is awarded or a new procurement exercise is required, early engagement with Procurement is recommended to mitigate any potential delays. Further expenditure is subject to the corporation's decision-making process.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

OPDC and Frame Projects are working towards the following timescales.

<u>Milestone</u>	<u>Indicative timing</u>
<i>Recruitment advertised</i>	<i>21 Sept – 18 Oct</i>
<i>Paid Social Media campaign</i>	<i>w/c 28 Sept – 18 Oct</i>
<i>Recruitment interviews</i>	<i>27 Oct</i>
<i>New members confirmed</i>	<i>30 Oct</i>
<i>New members' inception</i>	<i>2 Nov</i>

Appendices and supporting papers:

- DD067

Public access to information

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act) and will be made available on the OPDC website within one working day of approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision (for example, to complete a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary.

Note: This form (Part 1) will either be published within one working day after approval or on the defer date.

Part 1 Deferral:

Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? NO

If YES, for what reason:

Until what date: (a date is required if deferring)

Part 2 Confidentiality: Only the facts or advice considered to be exempt from disclosure under the FOI Act should be in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a part 2 form –/NO

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:

Drafting officer
to confirm the
following (✓)

Drafting officer:

Jan. Ackenhausen has drafted this report in accordance with OPDC procedures and confirms that:

✓

Finance advice:

The Finance team have commented on this proposal, and this decision reflects their comments

✓

Legal advice:

The Legal team have commented on this proposal, and this decision reflects their comments.

N/A

S106:

Click and insert name has provided information on the S106 that this proposed expenditure relates to.

N/A

Click and insert name can confirm that s106 decision form has been appended to this DD.

N/A

CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER:

I confirm that financial and legal implications have been appropriately considered in the preparation of this report.

Signature



Date 15/10/20

