

# GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

## REQUEST FOR DIRECTOR DECISION – DD2047

### Title: Commissioning Fund – study for the North Acton Opportunity Area

#### Executive Summary:

MD1469 gave approval in the High Street Fund programme in May 2015 for a £400,000 'Commissioning Fund' to develop a pipeline of projects in areas of Greater London where there is strong growth potential. A further £80,000 was allocated towards the 'Commissioning Fund' from the London Regeneration Fund by MD1561.

This decision concerns an Economic and Public Realm Strategy in North Acton, LB Ealing.

#### Decision:

The Executive Director approves;

- Expenditure of up to £50,000 to OPDC towards the costs for the delivery of a North Acton Economic and Public Realm Strategy
- Delivery of the strategy by integrating it into a joint commission with Old Oak Park Royal Development Corporation (OPDC) for a masterplan for Victoria Road and Old Oak Lane.

#### AUTHORISING DIRECTOR

I have reviewed the request and am satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

It has my approval.

**Name:** Fiona Fletcher-Smith

**Position:** Executive Director Development  
Enterprise and Environment

**Signature:**



**Date:**

20.10.2016

## **PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE**

### **Decision required – supporting report**

#### **1. Introduction and background**

- 1.1 Approval was obtained in MD1469 for a £400,000 'Commissioning Fund' to develop a pipeline of projects in areas of Greater London where there is strong growth potential.
- 1.2 An additional £80,000 from the London Regeneration Fund was allocated to the 'Commissioning Fund' in November 2015 through MD1561.
- 1.3 The project brought forward in this decision is the North Acton Economic and Public Realm Strategy (£50,000)

#### **2. Objectives and expected outcomes**

##### **2.1 Commissioning Fund**

- 2.1.1 The Commissioning Fund was set up to support the "development of high street regeneration projects in areas of London where future investment could unlock the most growth potential but where bids are not currently forthcoming".
- 2.1.2 Prior to presenting projects for the Commissioning Fund, the GLA's Regeneration team has consulted with London Boroughs to develop a series of project proposals..
- 2.1.3 Projects which have been committed to funding include; Erith (LB Bexley), Anerley (LB Bromley), Feltham (LB Hounslow), Uxbridge (LB Hillingdon), Tolworth (Kingston), South Bank Centre (Lambeth) and Charlton Riverside (Greenwich). Currently £320,000 has been allocated against a total budget of £480,000.
- 2.1.4 The type of support that is proposed to be provided through the Commissioning Fund varies depending on the degree to which development work has been developed by the London Borough, local business or community organisation, from town centre strategies to more focussed place specific development projects aimed at addressing the threats and opportunities outlined above.

##### **2.2 North Acton Area, LB Ealing**

- 2.2.1 The area to the south of the North Acton tube station has been identified through the Park Royal Opportunity Area Planning Framework and is identified in the Park Royal Southern Gateway in the Ealing Local Plan (OISI) as a development site. The site extends to just under 10 hectares and is partially captured by the OPDC boundary. Development to date has to an extent been piecemeal and not in a coherent manner but has already delivered significant levels of:
  - student accommodation (a total of just under 1,300 bedrooms have already been developed by the University of the Arts, Imperial College and a private developer – with a further 402 planned in the near future);
  - residential development for sale and rent; and
  - some mixed-use and commercial use has been established at ground floor providing very limited local amenities for the growing population – many of the ground floor units provided by schemes remain vacant.

2.2.2 There remain significant levels of development yet to be progressed, with:

- an outline planning permission granted for six residential blocks, which will peak at 33 storeys and further pre-application discussion could see heights rise to 40 storeys (currently the highest building is 18 storeys; and
- significant historic density commercial and industrial premises that are also subject to development plans.

2.2.3 The area as a whole remains in transition and suffers from:

- a lack of coherence and quality in terms of public realm and buildings,
- vacant ground floor units,
- limited amenities; and
- lack of connectivity between the existing community in North Acton and the area within the OPDC boundary.

2.2.4 The scope of the study to be undertaken by a consultant has been developed in collaboration with LB Ealing and OPDC is planned to include:

- Production of plans

In order to best manage the potential for collaboration across stakeholders in North Acton the first priority will be to update a complete picture of all recent and proposed development and infrastructure projects (this work has been started by Ealing) showing:

- land ownership;
- development proposals;
- phasing; and
- active and dead frontages.

- Production of an economic strategy

The new developments that have been built currently suffer from low occupancy levels at ground floor. Redevelopment schemes that are being considered, or brought forward, risk losing existing workplaces and jobs. To help address these issues the following tasks are required:

- produce a comprehensive survey of all employment activity in the area;
- identify which businesses can be supported to remain in the area through the provision of suitable temporary and long-term space and which can be supported to relocate out of the area;
- recommend how these short and long-term space requirements can be delivered, including what specific planning policy or S106 requirements can be used to achieve the required space at the appropriate rent levels – also in line with emerging the OPDC Community Infrastructure Levy framework; and
- identify the scale (and form) of commercial and community uses would improve the area for local residents, and how space for such uses can be provided, including what specific planning policy or S106 requirements can be used to achieve the required space at the appropriate rent levels.

- Production of a public realm strategy

An array of surfaces, landscaping, street furniture and boundary treatments are adding to the confused and mismatched pedestrian environment. To avoid further exacerbating this problem and to tackle the worst of the current problems:

- build on previous design and survey work to identify key areas and focal points for intervention within existing built areas as well as within emerging developments. Establish a hierarchy of public realm interventions required to improve the coherence and functioning of these spaces. Strategic partnership engagement and intervention will be required to agree and fund key retro-work / upgrade;
- develop an agreed palette of public realm materials and standard detailing; and
- provide an overall strategy, specific planning policy language and visual examples to achieve active ground floors on all developments adjacent to the public realm.

- 2.2.5 In parallel to this commission, OPDC are looking to undertake a masterplan for Victoria Road and Old Oak Lane (adjacent to, but excluding North Acton). This commission seeks to address a public realm strategy, short and long term strategies for existing and future non-residential units, for guidance for future developments along the corridor and the impact of High Speed 2 construction works in the area.
- 2.2.6 The area the North Acton Economic and Public Realm Strategy defines, is currently not included in the OPDC study area because:
- The area is not totally captured by the OPDC boundary
  - The impact of High Speed 2 construction works has less of an obvious impact in this area
  - The character of this area differs from the rest of Victoria Road/ Old Oak Lane area due to the severance from existing railway infrastructure
  - A significant extra level of engagement would be required to incorporate the existing North Acton community
  - A significant extra level of co-ordination and input would be required from the consultants by incorporating the A40 into the study area
- 2.2.7 Taking this into consideration, two options have been explored for the delivery of the North Acton Economic and Public Realm Strategy:
- An independent commission lead by LB Ealing's Regeneration Team, running in parallel with OPDC's commission
  - A joint commission with aligned briefs and a joint client body (GLA, LB Ealing and OPDC) led by OPDC given their higher budget allocation to the strategy
- 2.2.8 Through discussions with LB Ealing and OPDC it has been agreed that given the adjacencies of the areas, similar timescales and similar outputs required from the briefs, a joint commission would be the most efficient delivery of the North Acton Economic and Public Realm Strategy. This would include the scope as set out in 2.2.4. It would enable:
- An efficient delivery of the commission with regards to timescales and governance. The GLA would commission OPDC to undertake this joint report, and OPDC will procure and commission a 3<sup>rd</sup> party to do this. The GLA, OPDC and LBE would act as a joint client group to the consultants, signing off deliverables at various stages of the report
  - Areas and communities outside the OPDC boundary to be considered as part of a wider strategy
  - Public realm co-ordination between recently built and forthcoming developments in North Acton and the wider area
  - A coherent strategy for non-residential use in the wider area, particularly tackling vacancy in North Acton
  - A co-ordinated approach to transport and connectivity by incorporating the A-40 into the study area
  - LB Ealing and the GLA Regeneration Team to have a wider influence and impact outside the North Acton boundary

- The North Acton Public Realm and Economic Strategy to have a greater influence on the next version of the draft OPDC Local Plan (winter 2016)
- Delivery of the joint strategy by December 2016 to enable input into the aforementioned draft OPDC Local Plan
- Procurement and commissioning will be undertaken through Transport for London Procurement, managed by OPDC officers. Tender returns will be assessed by LB Ealing, OPDC and GLA Regeneration.

### **3. Equality comments**

- 3.1 Through their existing public sector duties and via the requirements which will be set out in the funding agreement, the OPDC must ensure that they give due regard to the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty: eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out this project.
- 3.2 The following issues have been considered specifically:
- Public realm proposals: All public realm proposals will be assessed in terms of accessibility to ensure we minimise disadvantages suffered by people who share a protected characteristic: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership status.
  - Documents and publications: all documents produced will comply with Mayor of London branding guidelines, it being based on guidance from the Royal National Institute of Blind People. Where possible accessible formats will be available.
  - Events: all events will be open to all and, where possible, we will encourage people who share a protected characteristic to participate in any activity in which their participation is disproportionately low.

### **4. Other considerations**

- 4.1 Key risks and issues:
- Key risks and their control measures will be reported to Budget and Performance Review as part of the regular updates and performance management.
- 4.2 Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities:
- The North Acton Study will be in line with the Old Oak and Park Royal Opportunity Area Planning Framework and LB Ealing's adopted Local Plan. It will also influence the emerging Local Plan for OPDC.
  - The Commissioning Fund has been developed to support London Plan policies with regard to Town Centres, Retail, Lifetime neighbourhoods, public realm and urban design. It also supports the ambition set out in *Action for High Streets* to make high streets better places to live in, work in, and do business in.
- 4.3 Impact assessments and consultations:
- As part of the tender process for consultants and contractors on the project, tenderers will be asked to provide details of their equality policy and environmental impact policy.

## **5. Financial comments**

- 5.1 The GLA's cost of £50,000 for this project will be funded from the High Street 'Commissioning Fund' as approved by MD1469 and MD1561. Any changes to this proposal, including budgetary implications will be subject to further approval via the Authority's decision-making process. All appropriate budget adjustments will be made.

## **6. Legal comments**

6.1 The GLA's principal purposes, under section 30 and 34 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999, are to do such things which are facilitative of, conducive or incidental to the promotion of economic development and wealth creation, promoting social development, and promoting the improvement of the environment, all in Greater London. The GLA has power to do anything which it considers will further any one or more of its principal purposes.

6.2 Sections 1 to 4 of this report indicates:

- that the decision requested falls within the GLA's statutory powers to do things considered to further, or which are facilitative of, conducive or incidental to the discharge of, its general functions; and
- that due regard has been had to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people (further details on equalities are set out in section 3 above) and to the duty under section 149 of the 2010 Act to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation as well as to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not<sup>1</sup>.

6.3 Section 121 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 provides that the GLA may, pay a grant towards meeting revenue expenditure incurred or to be incurred by OPDC for the purposes of, or in connection with, the discharge of its functions. The grant must not be subject to any limitation in respect of expenditure to which it will be applied.

## **7. Planned delivery approach and next steps**

7.1 The North Acton project is to be delivered and administered by OPDC. It will be a direct consultant commission by the OPDC with a joint client group that includes:

- Ealing Council Regeneration Team
- GLA Regeneration Team
- OPDC

7.2 This consultant commission will be procured in line with GLA procurement procedures.

7.3 The project will be delivered by December 2016.

## **Appendices and supporting papers:**

None

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<sup>1</sup> The protected characteristics and groups are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation and marriage/ civil partnership status.

**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 GLA 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:

**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:**

Pooja Agrawal has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms that:

✓

**Assistant Director/Head of Service:**

Fiona Fletcher-Smith has reviewed the documentation and is satisfied for it to be referred to the Sponsoring Director for approval.

✓

**Financial and Legal advice:**

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

✓

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:**

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

**Signature**

*M. J. Allge*

**Date**

*18.10.16*

