

**MAYOR OF LONDON**

**LONDON REVIEW  
PANEL**

**PROGRESS REPORT  
SEPTEMBER 2017 - AUGUST 2021**

**GOOD GROWTH BY DESIGN**



**A  
BUILT  
ENVIRONMENT**

**FOR  
ALL  
LONDONERS**



# CONTENTS

<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>P7</b>
<b>2 Panel Data Summary</b>	<b>P8</b>
<b>3 Case Study</b>	<b>P14</b>
<b>4 Conclusions</b>	<b>P26</b>
<b>5 Recommendations</b>	<b>P27</b>
<b>6 About Good Growth by Design</b>	<b>P28</b>



# 1 INTRODUCTION

The London Review Panel was established in September 2017 as part of the [Mayor's Good Growth by Design Programme](#) which sets out a united programme of work to enhance the design of buildings and neighbourhoods for all Londoners. The London Review Panel provides independent expert advice with panellists drawn from the [Mayor's Design Advocates](#), leading designers and professionals who share the Mayor's vision for Good Growth.

The panel has a special focus on place making. Design review takes place from the investment stage, which reduces risks and expense by identifying weaknesses within the proposition at the earliest possible opportunity. The panel supports the Mayor in recognising and supporting high standards of design and ensuring that wider place making benefits happen.

The panel's focus will be advising on projects funded by City Hall. In some circumstances it will also review other projects going through the town planning process; for example, where there are not alternative design review processes in place, where sites fall across borough boundaries, or where sites are of exceptional social or cultural significance to Londoners.

This report captures the activities of the panel from its inception in 2017 to July 2021. This report will also include any recommendations and next steps for the panel.

## 2 PANEL DATA SUMMARY

AUTHORITY DETAILS	
Authority	Greater London Authority
Review Panel Name	London Review Panel
Panel Management (in-house, externally managed, one-off)	In-house
Panel Contact	Matt Ruddy - GLA Regeneration Senior Project Officer
Contact Email Address	Matt.Ruddy@london.gov.uk
Report Produced by	Matt Ruddy - GLA Regeneration Senior Project Officer
Time Period Covered	September 2017 (Commencement of LRP) - August 2021

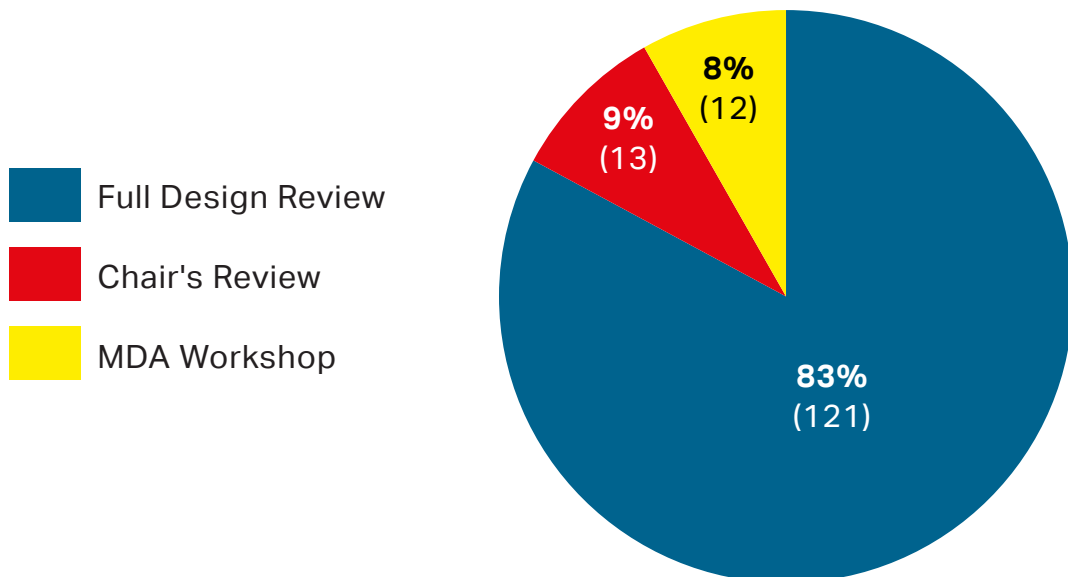
REVIEW TOTALS			
Total Number of Reviews	146		
Types of Review	GLA	TfL*	Total
Full Design Review	49	72	121
Chair's Review	1	12	13
MDA Workshop	11	1	12
	61	85	

\* Includes figures for TfL Property's three-stage design review process.



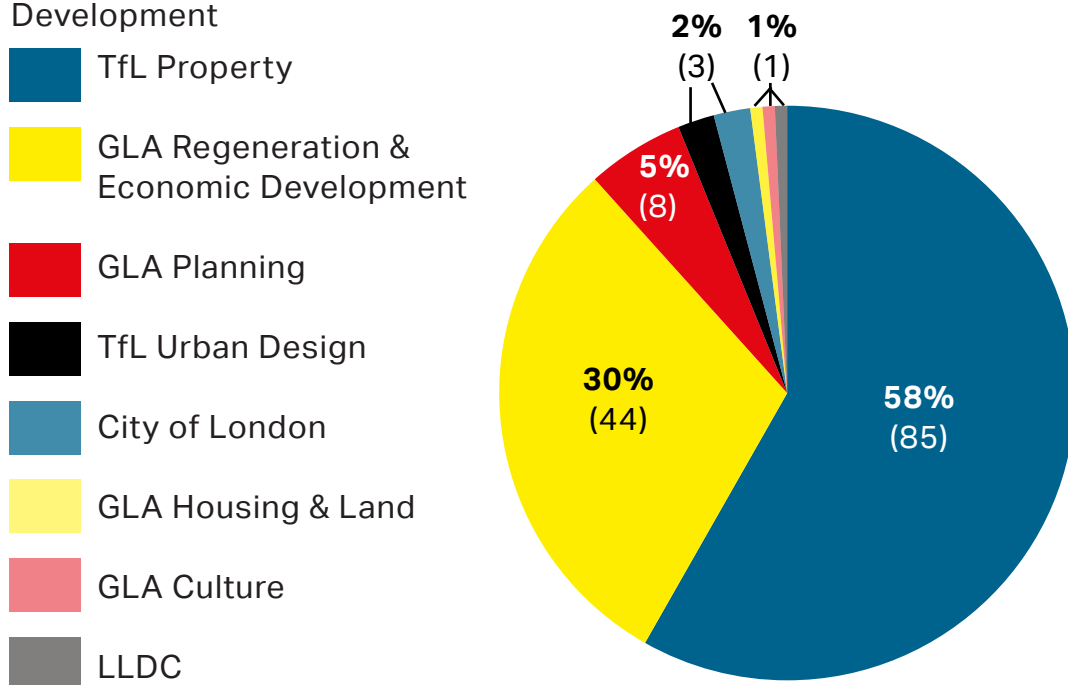
### Number of Reviews Split by Review Type

The majority of London Review Panel sessions have been full design reviews, generally with three to five Mayor's Design Advocates.



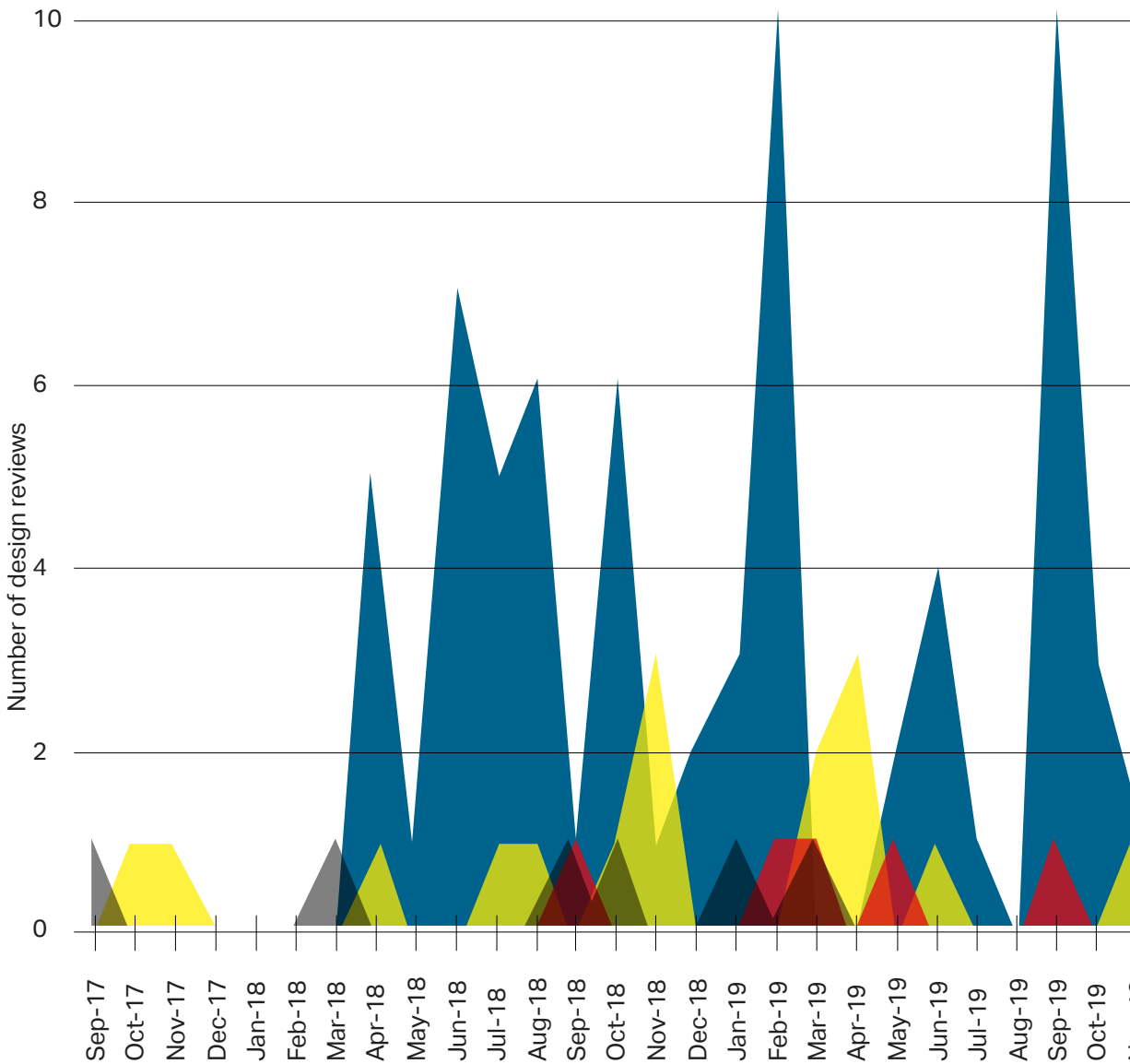
### Number of Reviews Split by GLA/TfL Team or Authority

The majority of London Review Panel sessions have been on TfL Property projects followed by GLA Regeneration & Economic Development

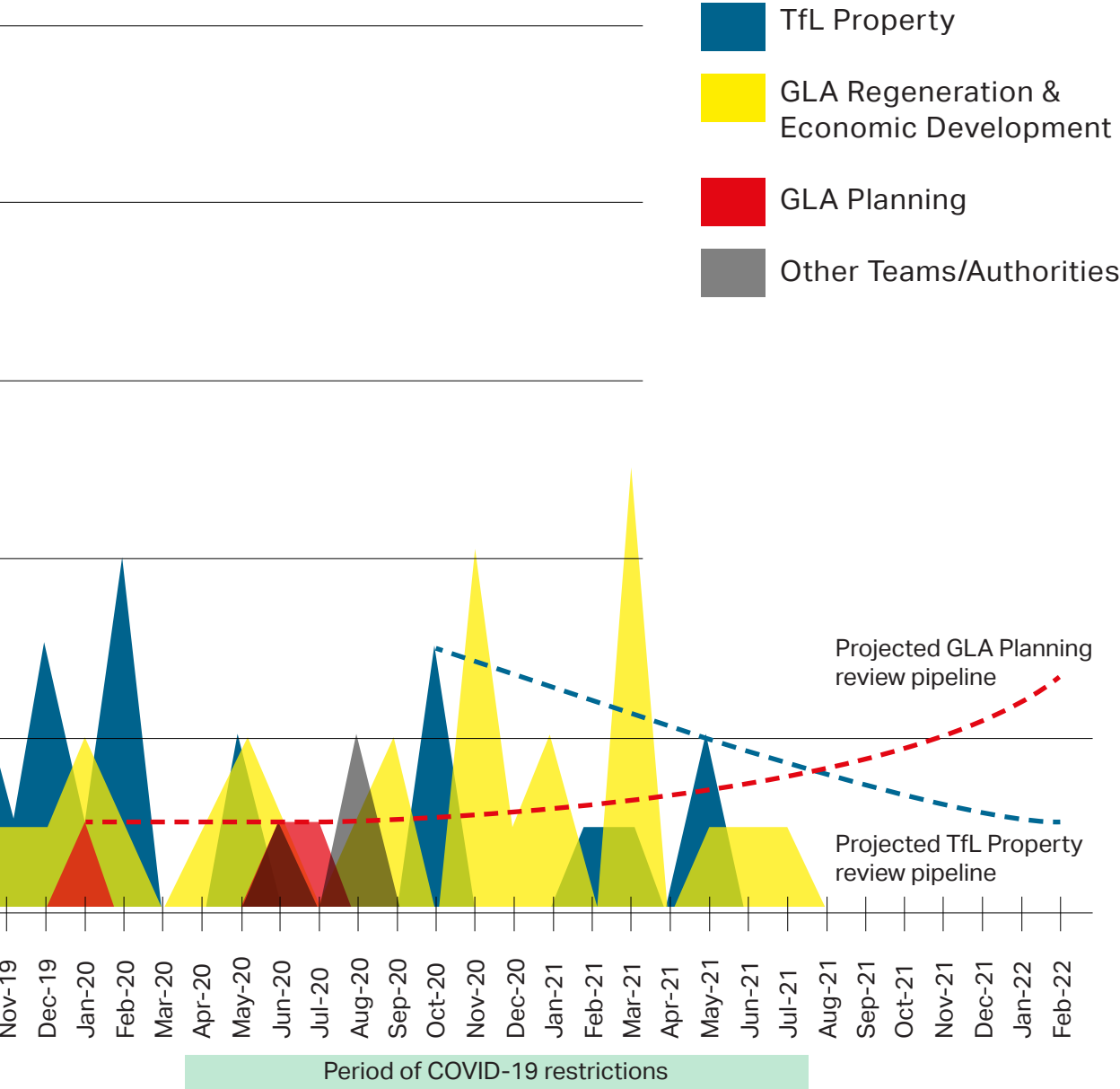


## Number of Reviews by GLA/TfL Team or Authority and Projection

There has been a drop in review activity between the period of March 2020 in part because of the national lockdowns resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Reviews during this period moved to an online format to ensure continuing support to projects, with GLA Regeneration & Economic Development teams bringing significant numbers of reviews to the panel. TfL Property projects have continued since the March 2020 lockdown though at a reduced level than before.

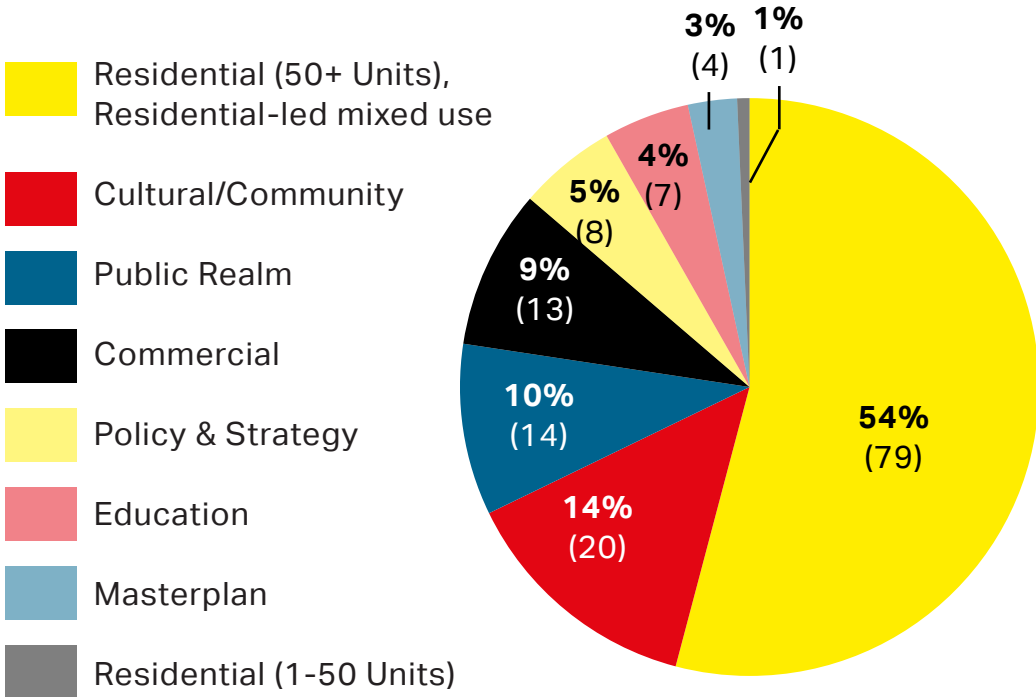


TfL Property have indicated their projects are likely to form a smaller pipeline of the London Review Panel's work in the future. Other teams are expected to expand their use of the LRP to ensure a broader reach across the GLA. Design Review is a clear mayoral commitment (both within the London Plan and mandated through national policy) and the London Review Panel has the potential to increase uptake in relation to Strategic referrals in line with protocols agreed with the GLA Planning team. GLA Regeneration & Economic Development project reviews are anticipated to continue at the current frequency.



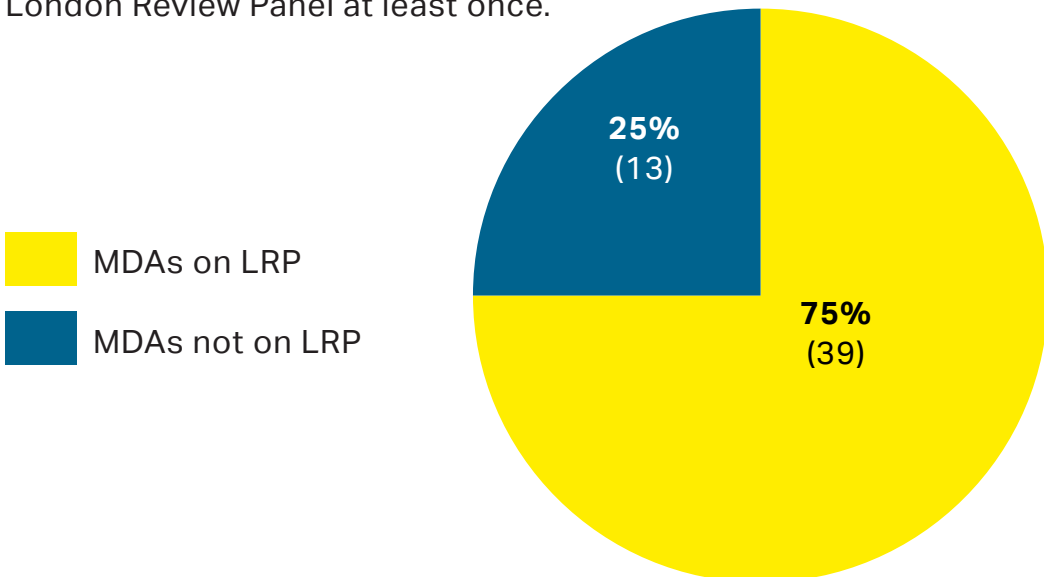
## Number of Reviews Split by Project Type

The majority of London Review Panel sessions have been for residential schemes with 50+ units, coming primarily through the TfL Property 3-stage design review process.



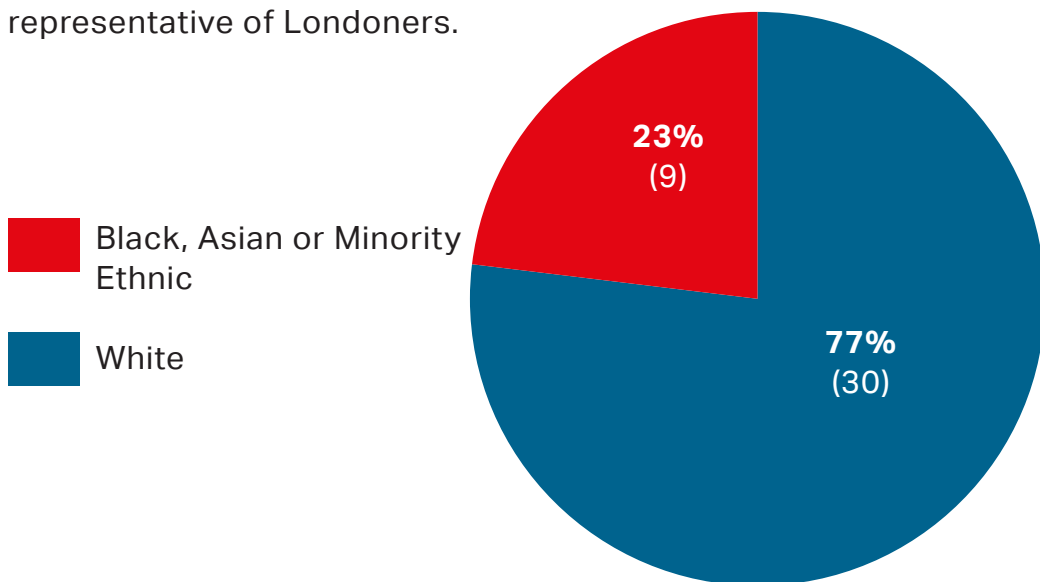
## Number of individuals on the London Review Panel

39/52 Mayor's Design Advocates (MDA) (75%) have been on the London Review Panel at least once.



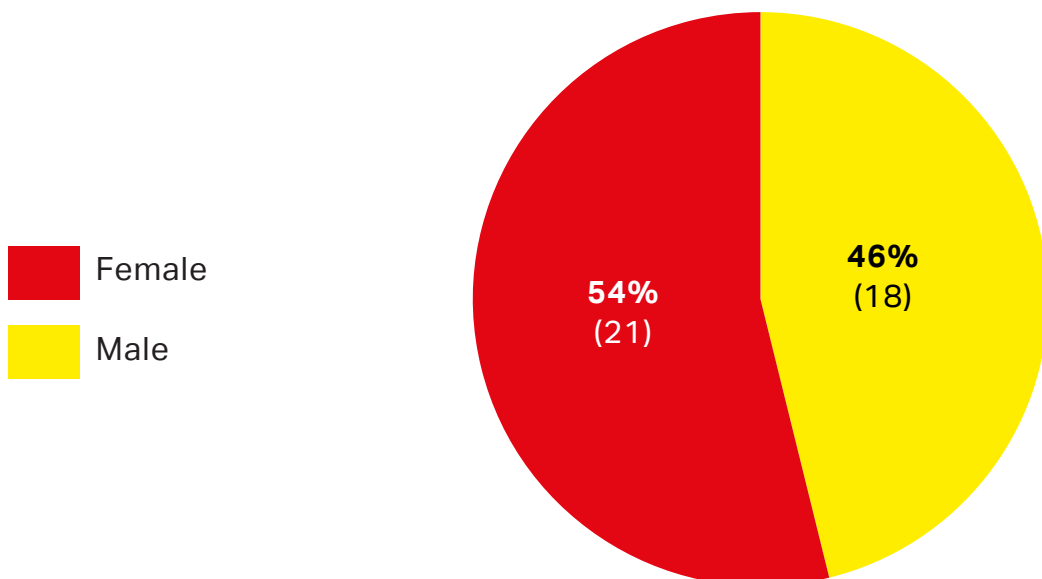
### Diversity of the London Review Panel - Ethnicity

Of the 39 MDAs acting as panellists 77% were White and 23% were Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic. The London Datastore 2019 states London's population is 57% White, 43% Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic. There is much more to do to ensure the panel is representative of Londoners.



### Diversity of the London Review Panel - Gender

Of the 39 individual MDAs who have sat on the London Review Panel 54% were Female and 46% were Male. London Datastore 2019 states London's population is split 50% Male and 50% Female.



### 3

## CASE STUDIES

### London Review Panel supporting authorities where no design review panel operates

<b>Project:</b>	Smithfield Market Buildings and Public Realm
<b>Authority/Team:</b>	City of London
<b>Review Type:</b>	Full Design Review & Follow-Up Review
<b>Date:</b>	23/06/2020 (Smithfield Buildings Full Review) 14/08/2020 (Smithfield Public Realm Full Review) 26/08/2020 (Smithfield Buildings Follow-Up)

#### **Purpose of Review**

Design reviews were established for the regeneration of the Grade II\* listed Smithfield wholesale market complex. The City of London had appointed Studio Egret West to draw up plans and develop concepts to RIBA Stage 2, to transform the 150 year old East and West Market buildings into a mixed-use commercial, creative and cultural quarter. The City of London had appointed Hawkins\ Brown to develop a public realm strategy to integrate the Smithfield Buildings into this emerging cultural quarter.

This project is part of the City of London's larger Market Consolidation Programme which considers the future of Smithfield Meat Market, Billingsgate Fish Market and Spitalfields Fruit and Vegetable Market. The topic of these reviews focused on the emerging options for re-use of the market buildings and the associated physical interventions that support and connect them into the urban fabric.



Studio Egret West post review images from [press release](#)

## **Summary of Recommendations from Panel for Smithfield Buildings Follow Up Review**

The Panel commend the design team on their emerging proposals and strongly support the vision presented. The Panel encourage the design team to embed the idea of meanwhile uses in their presentation and methodology. It is a valuable method and manual for the how this project can proceed. By using meanwhile uses, the design team can test the various types and characters of the spaces proposed and examine what does and does not work. This will include testing the concept, spatial layouts, financial viability, inclusivity, sustainability amongst other objectives stated in their proposals.

The Panel suggest the design team review how their ambitious proposals are presented to accurately reflect their stated aspirations for a gritty, creative and inclusive working environment. The presentation material produced to celebrate the future of these important buildings should be representative of the rich history of the place, its epic scale and the communities who use it. The Panel recommend a wider city mapping, placing the proposals into the context of complimentary uses, connections and streets. The buildings are of the scale of a piece of the city, with vendor lined streets running through them. The design should look to demonstrate how these proposals stitch into the public realm and the city beyond.

## **Feedback from Chris Bonner, Markets Consolidation Programme, Existing Sites Lead for the City of London.**

The London Review Panels for concept designs for Smithfield East and West Market buildings and the associated Rotunda were valuable experiences and it was a great forum. Constructive challenge from the selected Mayor's Design Advocates across multiple sessions provided focus for the evolving designs as well as a new perspective which added greater depth to the concepts. It is a process I would go through again.





Hawkins\Brown post review images from [press release](#)

## **London Review Panel supporting projects that sit across multiple authorities**

<b>Project:</b>	Bishopsgate Goodsyard
<b>Authority/Team:</b>	LB Hackney & LB Tower Hamlets
<b>Review Type:</b>	Full Design Review & Follow-Up Reviews
<b>Date:</b>	13/09/2018 (Full Review) 18/03/2019 (Follow-Up Review) 24/01/2020 (Follow-Up Review)

### **Purpose of Review**

The review of this project was undertaken as the applicant was seeking to amend an application called-in by the previous Mayor in September 2015. A Mayoral Planning Hearing was scheduled for 18 April 2016 and GLA officers published an advisory planning report on 8 April 2016, which recommended refusal based on negative neighbourhood amenity impacts, specifically daylight/sunlight, as result of inappropriate density, height, massing and layout as well as because of the cumulative harm of the proposal to heritage assets. The hearing was deferred at the request of the applicant and the application has remained live. The project was developed following engagement between GLA Officers and the applicant to address the previously highlighted issues. The Mayor of London approved plans in December 2020.

The outline planning application for the comprehensive mixed use redevelopment of the site incorporating approximately 131,000 sq.m. commercial floorspace, 15,000 sq.m. retail space, a hotel, up to 360 residential units, a cultural space and public open space. Buildings ranged in scale from 4 to 26 storeys with the site divided into 10 plots. The site measures 4.4 hectares and straddles the boundary between the London boroughs of Hackney and Tower Hamlets. It is surrounded by a range of neighbourhoods including Shoreditch, Brick Lane and Spitalfields.

The following were the issues that GLA Officer's highlighted for the Panel's discussions:

- Scale and density of proposal
- Townscape impacts
- Heritage impacts

- Quality of the new connections
- Quality of the Public Realm (including proposed Open Space)
- Appropriateness of proposed uses
- Servicing arrangements

The site is within the City Fringe Opportunity Area and the Central Activities Zone, as identified by both the adopted and draft London Plan. In terms of the OAPF, the site is identified as a key site within the inner core area and is the largest brownfield site in the City Fringe, where demand for commercial space is strong and proposals for employment floorspace are encouraged and supported and maximum viable amounts of land and floorspace expected. Both Hackney and Tower Hamlets Councils were at the time engaged in the process of adopting new Local Plans.



Illustrative sketch of project from Stage 2 2019 exhibition boards, see [project website](#)

## **Summary of Recommendations from Panel for Bishopsgate Goodyard Follow Up Review 24/01/2020**

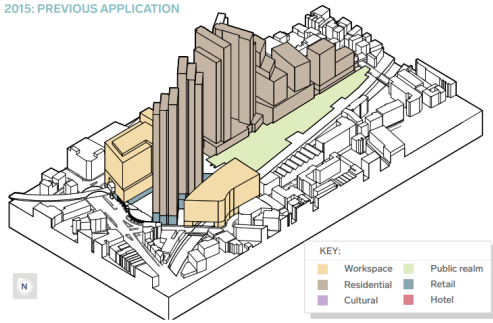
The panel noted that the proposals were continuing to evolve and had great potential to benefit the city, but that some aspects required further development. For example, the design of Building 2 and the proposed wind mitigation fins would benefit from being more clearly integrated with the façade. The panel encouraged further thought about the material palette to ensure it is appropriate for the context. It also questioned the decision to omit detailed landscaping and public realm designs from the application. The quality of the building's setting would be essential to its success, especially at Platform Gardens level. Building 1, although still in outline form, was not yet of the quality required for such a prominent site.

The panel's view was that it was too tall and lacked a distinctive architectural identity. More detailed designs should be developed before outline permission granted, to provide confidence that it would match the quality of Building 2. The Design Guide would play an important role in this process. It would also be essential to ensure there is no structural impact on the listed elements before detailed permission was granted. The footpath width and public realm quality beyond the western boundary required significant improvement as part of the development, and the panel encouraged discussions to ensure this was achieved.

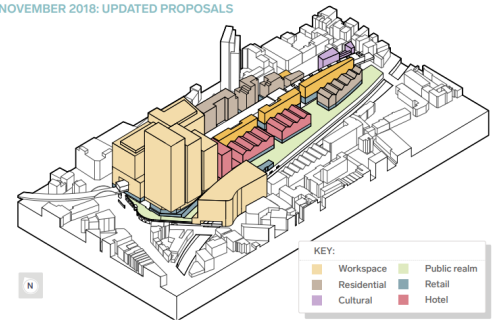
## **Feedback from Nicola Zech-Behrens, developer representative at Bishopsgate Goodyard Regeneration Limited.**

As part of a 2.5 year pre-application process, we had two sessions with the Mayor's Design Advocates at different stages of the design for the project which both the Developer and the Design Team found very constructive and encouraging. Particularly encouraging was for me, as the Developer Representative, to hear positive feedback and get the buy in from the Panel for the strategic approach and concept of the overall masterplan. The Design Team very much welcomed the comments and design direction the Panel gave in relation to the detail and quality of the Design and the future implementation of the scheme. Overall, it was good to get a holistic view from the Panel on the overall scheme summarising the scheme's benefits but also highlighting the opportunities that such a scheme can bring across two Boroughs with completely different objectives and planning policies in place.

2015: PREVIOUS APPLICATION



NOVEMBER 2018: UPDATED PROPOSALS



Design development of project from Stage 2 2019 exhibition boards, see [project website](#)



Illustrative street view of project from Stage 2 2019 exhibition boards, see [project website](#)

## **London Review Panel supporting projects receiving funding from the Mayor of London**

**Project:** Crossing the Line  
**Authority/Team:** LB Southwark / Better Bankside / Blue Bermondsey / Team London Bridge / The Arch Co.  
**Review Type:** Full Design Review  
**Date:** 10/11/2020

### **Purpose of Review**

The client team is a partnership between three business improvement districts; Better Bankside, Team London Bridge and Bermondsey Blue, Southwark Council and The Arch Co. They had appointed various consultants to work on a range of local interventions including movement and landscape strategies, reactivation of arches and a green infrastructure project. The amount of Mayoral funding for this project was £1 million in capital funding.

The aims of the project was to improve economic, social and environmental contributions of the rail viaduct in north Southwark, and to demonstrate the ambition of the wider Low Line strategy to make a positive impact on local communities. The Low Line aims to create a more walkable destination for London, connecting diverse neighbourhoods and communities, and to re-define this unique heritage infrastructure to create new hubs of industry, jobs, creativity and entertainment along its course. The topics for this design review focused on the themes of landscape urbanism and ecology.



Photos of Low Line route and current activity, see [project website](#)

## **Summary of Recommendations from Panel for Crossing the Line Review 10/11/2020**

The panel believed this had the potential to be a great initiative. They were impressed with the ambition of the project shown by consultant and client teams. The project was constructed from many individual pieces and could be difficult to understand without a clear statement of the joint objectives for the client and design teams to refer to. The presentation captured a complex project that has the ingredients to become a transformative project for the wider area. The panel advised that this could only achieve its potential when the full range of expertise assembled in the skilled team is agreed on the key principles in a shared vision.

The MDAs encouraged the team to utilise design in the service of the social, environmental and economic potential it can help unlock. Through this lens, the feedback looked to assist the team in lifting the project from the ordinary to the extraordinary. The panel recommended a more integrated thinking between the teams to better project a powerful, unified approach so that the many incremental and site-specific projects could combine to make this a success. The feedback was structured on the themes of project vision, mixed occupier testbeds, movement strategies, Low Line Common & urban greening and future phases.

### **Feedback from Valerie Beirne, Bankside Urban Forest Manager, Better Bankside.**

We found the London Review Panel incredibly valuable in informing our thinking about the project and its multitude of strands of work. The expertise and objective and insightful input offered was helpful in joining up some of our project threads more coherently.





Photos of proposed arch reuse and existing green spaces, see [project website](#)

## 4 CONCLUSIONS

This is the first report capturing key data and feedback for the London Review Panel since its inception in September 2017. The LRP will follow up this report dated August 2021 with annual reporting from this date. This will allow the LRP to monitor key data, usage and follow up on recommendations.

The total number of reviews undertaken by the London Review Panel to date is 146 which is approximately 3 reviews per month. The number of reviews is anticipated to expand across the various GLA groups, with the target of ensuring all relevant projects are provided with design review. There is an anticipated reduction in the pipeline from TfL Property of projects requiring review in the next year and an anticipated increase in the number of strategic referral projects and OAPF support with the GLA Planning team.

The panel achieves a good gender balance with the panellists. The panel is not representative of diverse London's population and more work needs to be undertaken achieve this.

The number of full design review reports published onto the website is low in relation to the total number of reviews undertaken. This can in part be attributed to many projects being reviewed at a sensitive commercial or planning stage and therefore needing a delayed publication. Smaller workshop reviews are minuted and are not intended for publication as they may be recorded informally, contain several small projects or did not have a chair.

Terms of reference have been developed for the London Review Panel and are available upon request though are currently not available on the London Review Panel website. These will be published in 2021 to ensure the transparency of the panels operations and objectives.

## 5 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Publish an annual report to track London Review Panel usage and ensure recommendations are followed up. All future annual reports to be published on the London Review Panel website. The next report shall capture September 2021 - August 2022.
2. Publish all relevant full design review reports onto the London Review Panel website, targeting 6 months post review date subject to confirmation of project status.
3. Continue to improve the diversity of the London Review Panel in terms of ethnicity and gender to ensure the panel is representative of Londoners.
4. Publish the London Review Panel Terms of Reference on the London Review Panel website. This should highlight the importance of the Design Review Principles and Practice guidance on which it was developed.
5. Website updates to be made to more clearly link to the London Quality Review Charter and the members of the Mayor's Design Advocate cohort who form the panel members.
6. Ensuring our MDA's are fully equipped to review the range of project scales, stages and with insights into the specific requirements for each project.
7. Ensuring design quality is held to account as a priority objective in all reviews and that this is reflected in the agendas and recommendation reports for each review.
8. Evaluating success of the review through case study and client/ design team feedback following publication of review reports onto the website. A survey template has been developed by Public Practice associates which can serve the basis for this feedback.

## ABOUT GOOD GROWTH BY DESIGN

The Mayor's Good Growth by Design programme seeks to enhance the design of the built environment to create a city that works for all Londoners. This means development and growth should benefit everyone who lives here. As such, it should be sensitive to the local context, environmentally sustainable and physically accessible.

The programme calls on all involved in London's growing architectural, design and built environment professions to help realise the Mayor's vision.

Good Growth by Design uses the skills of both the Mayor's Design Advocates and the wider sector. This includes teams here at City Hall, the London Boroughs and other public bodies.

The programme covers six pillars of activity:

### **SETTING STANDARDS**

Using design inquiries to investigate key issues for architecture, urban design and place-shaping, in order to set clear policies and standards in support of the London Plan and other Mayoral strategies and initiatives.

### **APPLYING STANDARDS**

Ensuring effective design review and scrutiny across the GLA and London more widely, including the establishment of the London Review Panel.

### **BUILDING CAPACITY**

Enhancing the GLA Group's and boroughs' ability and resource to shape new development to deliver good growth.

## **SUPPORTING DIVERSITY**

Working towards a more representative sector and supporting the design of a more inclusive built environment.

## **COMMISSIONING QUALITY**

Ensuring excellence in how the Mayor and other public- sector clients appoint and manage architects and other built environment professionals.

## **CHAMPIONING GOOD GROWTH**

Advocating best practice to support success across the sector.

## **THE MAYOR'S DESIGN ADVOCATES**

The Mayor's Design Advocates are 50 built environment professionals. They were chosen for their skill and experience to help the Mayor support London's growth through the Good Growth by Design programme. They are independent and impartial, and provide support, advice, critique and expertise on London's built environment. The group includes practitioners, academics, policy makers and those from community-led schemes. Fifty percent of the advocates are women, and one in four are from a BAME background.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

**Regeneration Team  
Greater London Authority,  
City Hall, The Queen's Walk,  
London SE1 2AA**

**[www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/regeneration/advice-and-guidance/about-good-growth-design](http://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/regeneration/advice-and-guidance/about-good-growth-design)**

**[goodgrowthbydesign@london.gov.uk](mailto:goodgrowthbydesign@london.gov.uk)**

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Public Liaison Unit  
Greater London Authority  
City Hall, London SE1 2AA

Telephone 020 7983 4000  
Minicom 020 7983 4458  
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