

# THE MAYOR'S GREAT SPACES



MAYOR OF LONDON



## **THE MAYOR'S GREAT SPACES**

Public space is the glue that holds a city together.

The Mayor's Great Spaces initiative is a unique chance to reveal and delight in London's diverse places. London's boroughs are given the opportunity to improve the quality of their public spaces, supported by the resources of the London Development Agency and working in collaboration with Design for London; strengthening design and process advice, making contributions to funding, recognising success and helping with publicity.

The quality of public space is often a key factor in people's decisions to live, visit and invest in an area. It is central to a good quality of life for all Londoners and enriches the experience of its visitors. I am inviting local authorities across the capital to come forward with their project ideas.

This new initiative will transform neglected spaces, change difficult to access green places into bio-diverse, popular recreation sites, and declining high streets into vibrant hubs for London's communities. I want to see imaginative schemes for local streets and squares, for historic landmarks and parks, and tangled road networks. High quality public space can improve safety, benefit the local economy, encourage future growth and opportunities, and create a sense of wellbeing and pride within the local neighbourhood.

I have asked Design for London to lead this initiative to ensure excellence of design. I have established a Mayor's Great Spaces Panel which includes a broad range of individuals, all of whom have significant expertise.

I am committed to enabling more Londoners to enjoy public space. Through this programme of support and the associated awards scheme, I will support and celebrate the good work of London's boroughs and their partners' efforts to improve public space across the city. I would like to encourage London's boroughs and communities to take part.



**Boris Johnson** *Mayor of London*

## **HOW DOES THE MAYOR'S GREAT SPACES INITIATIVE WORK?**

Projects selected to be part of the initiative can benefit from contributions to funding, design and procurement advice, as well as public recognition as an exemplar public space in London.

Each selected project will be announced as a candidate to be one of the Mayor's Great Spaces, and will then be reviewed and monitored as part of the support programme. Projects will be assessed on completion and if judged to be a success, celebrated with the 'Mayor's Great Spaces' award. Projects can apply to be part of the programme whilst in the development stage or upon completion.

## **HOW CAN YOUR PROJECT JOIN THE INITIATIVE?**

Potential candidate projects will be assessed based on how well they meet the aims and criteria as detailed in Choosing The Projects. The Mayor's Great Spaces Panel will recommend projects to become candidates on the Mayor's Great Spaces initiative. Projects will also benefit from the expert guidance and advice of Design for London, and members of the Panel, at key stages of their development.

Upon successful completion projects will be reviewed by the Mayor's Great Spaces Panel and if appropriate recommended to the Mayor for an award. Projects which were not candidates participating in the support programme, but were completed independently, may also be nominated for an award. The Panel will recommend such projects to the Mayor, if it is agreed that they have achieved excellence in design and otherwise met the criteria. With the Mayor's approval these projects will be awarded a 'Mayor's Great Spaces' award.

## **WHO CAN APPLY?**

London boroughs are invited to put forward project ideas. These can be small-scale projects, or something larger, even borough wide and cross borough schemes. Projects should be of a type that can be developed in partnership with local people and businesses, or be brought forward by local partners and supported by the borough. Local participation in the design of public space is important as it provides expert knowledge and an understanding of the use and requirements of the space, as well as a sense of ownership and pride.

## WHAT ARE YOU APPLYING FOR?

### 1 Design Advice

Candidate projects will benefit from advice and support in refining the scope of the project, developing the brief, procuring a professional team, and reviewing and steering the work of design consultants. Design for London will support projects from initial inception or acceptance onto the programme, through each stage of development to delivery. Candidates will also receive the benefit of guidance from the Mayor's Great Spaces Panel and Panel members.

### 2 Feasibility Funding

A contribution to initial feasibility studies and design work is available for candidate projects. Projects seeking this support will be selected on the basis of how well they meet the Strategic Aims, Performance Criteria and Delivery Expectations, as set out in 'Choosing the Projects'.

The Mayor's Great Spaces initiative does not provide capital funding, but support and advice will be given in preparing funding bids where appropriate, and the focus on design quality and the extra publicity are sure to help.

### 3 Awards

The 'Mayor's Great Spaces' awards will be announced annually. Projects across London will be considered and the Mayor's Great Spaces Panel, supported by Design for London, will make recommendations to the Mayor.

All public space projects across London have an opportunity to be given a Mayor's Great Spaces award, whether or not they have been candidates participating in the support initiative. To be considered for an award projects must be successfully completed. Projects will be assessed against the same range of strategic aims, performance criteria, and delivery expectations set out in 'Choosing the Projects'.



### Mayor's Great Spaces Panel

The Mayor's Great Spaces Panel consists of a group of highly experienced professionals and representatives from a range of organisations and interest groups.

#### Sir Simon Milton (Chair)

Deputy Mayor for Policy & Planning, GLA

#### Richard Rogers (Vice Chair)

Chairman, Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners

#### Peter Bishop

Group Director, Design, Development & Environment, LDA

#### Mark Brearley

Head of Design for London, LDA

#### Michelle Dix

Managing Director, Group Planning, TfL

#### David Lunts

Regional Director for London, HCA

#### Sarah Gaventa

Director, CABE Space

#### Sarah Ichioka

Director, Architecture Foundation

#### Caroline Khoo

Stephen Lawrence Trust Ambassador

#### Professor Peter Barker OBE

## CHOOSING THE PROJECTS

The Mayor's Great Spaces initiative aims to celebrate and support the good work being done across London to improve public places. It will embrace projects at any stage of their development including projects that are already part of other public space initiatives. Support will be tailored to the needs of each project.

Projects seeking to participate in the initiative will be assessed against the following set of strategic aims, performance criteria and delivery expectations.

### Strategic Aims

The project should demonstrate an ambition to achieve one or more of the following:

- Re-connect severed neighbourhoods
- Contribute to revitalising and strengthening town centres and high streets
- Enhance the quality of life
- Encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport
- Transform neglected riverside places into welcoming spaces
- Improve London's transport corridors and busiest points
- Improve the quality of green spaces and access to them, and enhance their bio-diversity
- Remove barriers and create spaces that are accessible for everyone
- Reduce the impacts of climate change and enhance sustainability

### Performance Criteria

The space created by the project should be:

- Flexible, providing the potential for a variety of activities and events
- Comfortable, encouraging all types of use
- Accessible, catering to all users
- Safe at most times of the day, night and year
- A sustainable and durable space
- Beautiful and well-designed, rich in texture and well executed
- Integrated with its surroundings and respecting the characteristics of its locality

### Delivery Expectations

The project (and project partners) should have in place, or be able to put in place:

- A commitment to high quality inclusive design
- A well scoped proposal that understands the context and potential of the site
- An open, competitive and inclusive approach to procurement
- A robust funding strategy
- A good delivery strategy with political support
- A credible management and maintenance plan
- A strong working relationship between the local authority and the community
- A commitment to working collaboratively to ensure the strategic aims, performance criteria and delivery expectations are met

## HOW TO BENEFIT YOUR PROJECT

The Mayor's Great Spaces initiative supports public spaces that are exemplary and ingenious, and those which strike a balance between innovation and subtlety. Unused existing spaces can often be enhanced and made useful again by re-interpretation, or through simple alterations. In other cases, bold transformative solutions may be appropriate.

A good public space can be a place which allows people to move easily, to take pleasure in being there; and which encourages activities as diverse as playing table tennis, holding a car boot sale or a market, staging a local celebration, or a children's game of chase. A good public space will provide links to a wider area, making neighbourhoods better connected.

### Public Squares and Spaces

Public spaces can be un-inviting or difficult to use. Well-designed spaces are animated by a range of activities including playing, relaxing, meeting, going for a stroll or simply passing through. Designing spaces to encourage a range of activities makes them more usable and user friendly. It also provides a benefit to the local community.

Can you discover or re-interpret a space by activating frontages with uses such as shops or cafés, by providing well-placed lighting and furniture, by creating play space? Can you use good quality materials, that are sustainable and in keeping with the design or unique character of the area?

### Streets

Streets should be welcoming, safe, accessible and easy to move around for all users. They should be places where children can play safely and where older people feel welcome. Can your borough enhance its existing streetscape by removing clutter and barriers, improve the pavements through levelling, undoing one way systems? Can you use good quality materials for streets, provide well-designed lighting or street furniture, placed in a well thought out way, and enhance the streetscape by planting more trees?

### Green Spaces

Successful parks and open spaces are those that are well used, much loved, and bring lasting benefits to the community; including a reduced fear and incidence of crime, rising land values, and healthy living. Is there the potential in your borough to provide better spaces for recreation and relaxation, improve accessibility and routes to and from green space? Can you make better connections with transport, cater for a wide variety of activities, Remove unnecessary barriers? Ensure ongoing maintenance, or get community involvement in the upkeep?

### Links and Local Networks

Local routes can be difficult and confusing to navigate. Good links and local networks are essential to the life of a community, providing connections with public spaces, squares, green spaces – from small parks to larger recreational areas, to bus and rail stations, to residential areas and town centres. How can your borough improve the every day places that people move through, from small lanes to a whole network of streets? By making them feel safer, easier and more enjoyable to use, the experience of users can be enhanced and further use encouraged. Has your borough looked at ways to; clear routes, improve security at all times of the night and day, make routes accessible to all, improve design, layout, and links with the wider area?

## **KEY DATES:**

### **31ST JULY 2009**

Submissions to be returned

### **AUTUMN 2009**

Candidate projects on the initiative

### **SPRING 2010**

First announcement of Mayor's Great Spaces awards

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