

Design review

2 complementary services

1. Design support to local authorities provided by the Place Services team at Essex County Council- a continuation of the specialist urban design advice including development management, development briefs, design workshops and other forms of support including training and facilitation
2. Design panel review for schemes of public significance, which is carried out through an independent panel of experts with a wide range of skills

About design review

- An evaluation process early in the planning process, which can be repeated at key milestones
- Delivered through a 4-5 person panel followed up by a written report
- Focussed on improving the quality of the built environment
- Numerous local to national design review panels

Regional Design Panel

- The highest quality of multi-disciplinary panel
- A service managed by the Architecture Centre teams
- Delivered locally in partnership with Local Planning Authorities to review:
 - New settlements, urban extensions, urban regeneration, schools, houses and housing, public space
 - Policies, local and neighbourhood plans

Our design review service

- Expert
 - Expert design assessment from highest quality of panel membership, expertly managed and reported
 - Based on the 10 principles of design review
 - 10 years of experience
- Independent
 - Independent of any organisation and of decision makers
 - Able to mediate and broker
- Advisory
 - Complements skills
 - No impact on local planning authority capacity

Constructive dialogue



Informed assessment



Part of the planning process



Facilitating progress



An expert Panel

- International skills made available locally
- 50 of the UKs most prominent practitioners across all built environment areas
- Urban design, development economics, urbanism, planning, sustainable development and, yes, architecture
- Bob Allies is the Chair of the Panel

With skilled management

- A small team
- Highly experienced management of the service based on 10 years of experience
- Strengthening Shape East
- A tested and refined design review management process
- Agile and flexible, able to set a meeting up in 2-3 weeks

Design review in Essex

Not a one size fits all approach

- Single design reviews
- Continuous design review – project specific design dialogue, structured design review from the brief to the application
- Design review panels for major developments – partnership between Local Authority & private sector lasting the lifespan of the development
- All in partnership with a Local Planning Authority

Value of design review to you

- 87% of people recognise that design quality improves quality of life & design review raises design quality
- Access to advice from the UK's best practitioners
- No impact on capacity
- Expert, independent service welcomed by applicants
- The cost of design review?

A new financial model

- Fee charged to promoter at pre-application stage
- First organisation in the UK to introduce charges
- Charging is not a barrier to design review
 - Significant impact on the quality of the product & therefore value
 - Deployed early design review can add value and save time in the planning system by getting the DNA right before spending time and money in the planning system

Costs

- Costs are proportionate to the scheme size and time required
- A review costs £3,600 for a single half-day review to £7,500 for a full-day of up to 4 reviews
- Transparent fees, all recharged to the applicant
- 90% of applicants are willing to pay for design review

Design review and the NPPF

Paragraph 62 of the NPPF states that ‘Local planning authorities should have **local design review arrangements** in place to provide assessment and support to ensure high standards of design. They should also when appropriate refer major projects for a national design review. In general **early** engagement on design produces the greatest benefits. In assessing applications local planning authorities should have **regard** to the recommendations from the design review panel’. National Planning Policy Framework DCLG

A new model of regional review

- We have two ways to help LPAs respond to implement local design review arrangements
- Both provide the highest quality, local independent design advice at no cost to the local authority
- Both are based on local authority partnerships through which the local authority guides applicants to pre-application design review
- A memorandum:
 - Clarifies the commitment of the LPA to design review
 - Ensures that Officers and Members use the Panel
 - Clarifies what will and will not be reviewed

Local design review arrangements

- Option 1 – an agreement to design review through the regional design panel
- Option 2 – an agreement to design review through regional design panel and the development of new sub-panel of regional design panel
- Both cost neutral to a local authority
- Both a credible solution to the NPPF

Regional panel 'branch'

- Provides the benefits of the regional & the attributes of a local panel – a continuous and specific service
- A fully managed service for the local authority
- A new openly recruited panel of 6-8 people and a Chair
- Complement by members of the regional panel
- A fully tested model – **it works**

How it works

- A simple agreement or Memorandum of Understanding
- Management of the service remains with the same team that has successfully managed design review for 10 years
- The service is financed through pre-application charges
- No requirement for a local authority budget once operating

Implementing a panel

- Meeting with key Officers, discussions and proposition
 - Presentation to Members
 - Appointment and MOU
 - Panel specification and recruitment
 - Induction and first meeting of Officers, Members & Panel
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Thanks

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