

The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames **Design Review Guide**



d:se





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Information
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Children's
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Museum



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This document is for all those on the 'applicant' side of the development and planning process; landowners, developers, consultants, architects and other designers. It explains how design review works and how to get the most from it.

Design review is a simple process that has been around for nearly 100 years. Designs for new developments are presented to a mixed panel of experts, who discuss the project and give feedback on how it could be improved. The recommendations are incorporated into a report for the applicant and the local authority.

Design review is referred to in paragraph 129 of the 2018 National Planning Policy Framework. This says that local authorities should use tools such as design review and that they should give weight to the findings of design review panels. Where a planning application goes to appeal and there are design issues involved, the inspector may well refer to the findings of the design review.

1. The value of design review

The aim of design review is to improve design quality in the built environment. Its role is to review development proposals and provide feedback to developers, clients and local authorities. Design review is a very valuable opportunity to get additional expert help with your project. You will be presenting to a panel with at least 50 years combined experience in all aspects of design and built environment. We want to work with you to make your project as good as it possibly can be, for the benefit of you, your clients, the future users of the project and the public at large. Design review is not a test; we aim to have a constructive conversation about the project, the result of which is better design. The overwhelming majority of people who present to design review find it a positive and immensely useful experience.

Speed Tapping into high level expertise at the right time can help unlock potential issues before they occur. This can help save time, overcome unnecessary conflict and build confidence around a proposed project or development. It helps to progress a site through the planning process. An endorsement from design review or evidence that a promoter has responded to the Panel's suggestions adds weight to decision making.

Quality For many local authorities design review has become an integral part of the development control process. Design review can ensure design quality, raising the quality of life for local people. Design review can identify ways to make a project function better and be more user-friendly.

Consensus The process facilitates collaboration to achieve consensus around design objectives, and offers ways of engaging with interested parties such as highways departments, politicians and communities. Design review can help build consensus when projects span planning authority boundaries or have multiple statutory consultees.

Value Design review offers a fresh perspective, providing solutions to seemingly intractable design issues. Design review can help to address the viability question, and in some cases projects can be simplified through efficient design solutions identified by design review. Advice from the Design Review Panel can unlock higher sale or rental values

2. The Panel

Claire Bennie - Chair

Claire is Director of Municipal, a new consultancy which helps visionary people put thought, care, ambition and quality back into housing. Claire spent 11 years at London housing association Peabody, latterly as Development Director, leading an award-winning programme of 5000 new build homes. Claire pioneered smarter procurement at Peabody to achieve high quality built results as well as nurturing SMEs. Claire previously worked as an architect at Proctor and Matthews Architects on several housing schemes, including a phase of Greenwich Millennium Village.



Steven Bee

Steven is a professional planner and corporate director with a specialism in heritage. He is Principal of Urban Counsel, a company offering advice and guidance to those engaged in planning and undertaking development. His previous positions include Director of Planning and Development at English Heritage. Steven is Chairman of the Academy of Urbanism, member of the Executive Committee of the Historic Towns Forum and member of the New London Architecture Sounding Board.



Harriet Bourne

Harriet Bourne studied landscape architecture and worked in urban design and landscape architecture practices before setting up BBUK. Since the inception of the practice Harriet has run projects ranging in size from large scale urban design, landscape strategy and masterplanning projects through to detailed design and implementation of a range of schemes both in the United Kingdom and abroad.



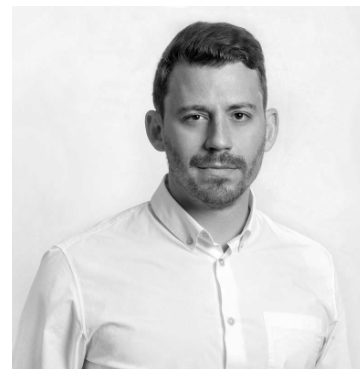
Jane Briginshaw

Jane is a public policy leader and advisor to local authorities, specialising in sustainability policy training, development and regulation in government departments and agencies, championing quality and sustainability in housing, schools and planning. Major pieces of work include five years advising government ministers on Building Schools for the Future for the Department for Children, Schools and Families and five years leading design and sustainability strategy and research for the government housing and land agency the Homes and Communities Agency.



Kyle Buchanan

Kyle Buchanan is an architect and founding director of Archio Ltd, nominated for BD Young Architect of the Year 2016. Kyle studied at the University of Cambridge and the Bartlett (University College London). His work has been shortlisted for the RIBA Silver medal and exhibited at the Royal Academy. He is currently working on one of London's first Community Land Trust Housing schemes in Lewisham. Kyle is an RIBA Conservation Registrant and ran an MArch design studio at the Bartlett for six years.



Tony Burton

Tony founded Civic Voice – the national charity for the civic movement – in 2010 and has over twenty five years' experience on the Boards of national charities, including as Director of Strategy & External Affairs at National Trust, Director of Policy & Communications at Design Council and Deputy Director at the Campaign to Protect Rural England. Tony works free-range on a wide range of community and environmental projects, including providing support for community groups on neighbourhood planning and advising HS2 Ltd on design.



Oliver Davey

Oli is a traffic engineer with experience of planning, designing and justifying improvements to a number urban streets and spaces. He is a Civil Engineer (BEng) with a Masters in Transportation Planning and Engineering (MSc) and 12 years' experience developing streetscape designs and strategies as well as contributing to masterplans. He co-founded Urban Movement, a practice bringing together Landscape Architecture, Urban Designer and Traffic Engineering to develop public realm strategies and streetscape improvements.



Simon Henley

Simon is a principal of leading London based architects Henley Halebrown, responsible for projects including Copper Lane Co-housing and the Chadwick Hall of residence for the University of Roehampton. He combines practice with teaching, writing and research, with titles including The Architecture of Parking (Thames & Hudson 2008), and Redefining Brutalism (RIBA Publications, 2017). He teaches MArch Unit 2 at the Kingston School of Art.



Dieter Kleiner

Dieter is an architect and founding director of RCKa. As Design Director, Dieter has pursued the practice's interest in community-led, inclusive architecture, urban design and placemaking. He was responsible for the recently completed RIBA National & Civic Trust award-winning TNG Youth and Community Centre for Lewisham Council, and currently heads up an £8m community development for Camden Council; requiring of him both exceptional design and stakeholder management skills.



Amy Koerbel

Amy is a structural engineer and Associate Director at AECOM. She brings a highly creative and collaborative approach to projects paired with 20 years of technical design experience. Amy has led a variety of large-scale high profile projects, including the recent Serpentine Pavilion schemes.



Alan Shingler

Alan is a Partner at Sheppard Robson Architects, leading sustainable design and the practice's residential portfolio. He sits on the British Property Federation Sustainability Committee, was an RIBA National Councillor and chaired the RIBA Sustainable Futures Group for 6 years. Alan led sustainable design for Siemens Headquarters at Masdar City, Abu Dhabi, a LEED Platinum building and was appointed to undertake a Peer Review on the US Embassy for London on behalf of the US State Department in Washington.



Chris Schulte

Chris is an architect with experience in urbanism, public realm design, arts and infrastructure projects. As Projects Director at Publica he led urban design and public realm projects for clients in the public and private sector. Previously, at Allies and Morrison, Chris acted as design team leader for the legacy masterplan of London's 2012 Olympic Park. At Dixon Jones Architects, he led a multi-disciplinary team that transformed London's Exhibition Road from a cluttered and car-dominated route into a new shared social space.



Penny Wagner

Penny is a Chartered Landscape Architect with a love of plants and a passion for promoting biodiversity in a range of applications. Her expertise encompasses landscape planning including LVIA's and master plan design through to full design implementation, habitat creation and detailed planting design. Penny runs her own Landscape Design Consultancy from South Worcestershire and teaches at degree level at Pershore College



Sarah Wigglesworth

Sarah Wigglesworth Architects was founded in 1994, with her work acknowledged as a pioneering influence in British Architecture. Specialising in exploring ecological solutions, her practice has designed buildings for the educational, community, masterplanning, cultural and housing sectors. This has included work on the Mini-Holland scheme in Kingston. Between 1997 and 2016 Sarah was Professor of Architecture at the University of Sheffield where she headed a research project designing exemplary neighbourhoods and housing for older people.



Andrej Znak

Andrej is a Civil Engineer and Transport and Highways professional with over 35 years of wide-ranging design experience. During a career that has taken in the public, private and voluntary sectors in the UK and overseas, he has spent 12 years as a Senior Manager with Transport for London working across the design, management and delivery of a range of public infrastructure and urban realm projects. He is currently part of Urban Movements and Spaces, a young consultancy that specialises in sustainable transport and public infrastructure projects in London.



Before your review



3. When to come to design review

It is best to bring your project to design review as early as possible. That way you can derive maximum benefit from the advice on offer before your designs become too advanced. Obviously some designing needs to have happened before we can review it, but design teams have sometimes come to us to discuss a brief and some very early concept sketches (RIBA stage 1) and gained a lot from the process. For these very early reviews the discussion focusses on establishing design principles and objectives and exploring a range of design options.

Most design teams come to us when the first draft of their proposals have been complete (RIBA stage 2) but before they have done so much detailed work that it is difficult to make changes.

Many projects come to us once public consultation and discussions with key statutory consultees have been completed. This is not ideal as aspects of the design can become fixed as a result of these consultations. We suggest it is best to come for your first design review before, or around the same time as these early discussions.

This is not to say that design review is not useful at a later stage – shortly before or after a planning submission. If you retain an open mind about making revisions to your application to address the Panel's comments, design review can still improve the project and help it through planning.

You should not feel that you need to make extensive preparations for a design review or that you need to postpone a design review because you are not ready. We want to see your work in progress and you can certainly carry on working while waiting for the design review meeting.

4. Key steps in the process

Initial enquiry	At least 1 month before	Telephone or email our office to get booked into the system and discuss possible dates. We will send you a Project Submission Form and a Contract.
Confirm review	At least 3 weeks before	Return the Submission Form and Contract and we can confirm your design review date.
Book venue	As soon as possible	We need you to locate and book a venue for the review (this could be a site office, a local village hall, or the local authority's offices).
Submit plans	At least 7 days before	Submit the documents to Design South East
Pay the invoice*	Before the review	*For reviews of single private houses we require that the invoice is paid before the review goes ahead.
Design Review	On the day	Make sure you bring all the technology you need to make your presentation and provide additional copies of key documents for the Panel.
Report	Within 10 working days	You will receive our report. Consider carefully how you will respond to its recommendations. Consider whether you will need a second review.

5. Booking

Booking a review

It is best to email info@designsoutheast.org or telephone our office on 01634 401166 to discuss dates for a review. We operate a system whereby a number of Panel meetings are scheduled in advance and if you can slot into one of these dates it will make all our lives easier.

However, if those dates do not suit you or are already booked up we can be flexible and arrange additional Panel meetings. After this initial discussion we will send you a Project Submission Form and Contract. Return these as soon as possible to confirm the review date.

Booking a venue

The review needs to take place at a venue no more than 30 minutes from the site (preferably less). We need you to locate and book the venue. The Design South East team can help you with this if you are having problems.

We need a room, preferably laid out 'board room' style, which can accommodate at least twelve people. Site offices, village halls or meeting rooms at the local authority offices are often used for design reviews. It is your responsibility to organise any technology you need for your presentation.



6. Costs

Design review costs are typically met by the project promoter.
Our charges are as follows (plus VAT):

Review type	Service provided	Threshold	Workshop	Review	Follow-up review
			Early, when options are being considered and design principles not fully formed	Later, typically during pre-application discussions, once clear design proposals have been developed	Where previous reviews have provided advice and recommendations, these are to verify the direction of travel and provide advice on any further issues and matters of detail
Type A	Panel of 6 (Chair plus 5) 3.5 – 5 hours allowed for review, including site visit, travel between site and venue, presentations and discussions	Schemes with over 50 housing units or 10,000 square metres of floor space.	£5,650	£5,650	£2,550
Type B	Panel of 5 (Chair plus 4) 2.5 to 3.5 hours allowed for review	Schemes with between 10 and 50 housing units or more than 2,000 square metres of floor space	£4,150	£4,150	£2,100

Normally fees will be invoiced from Design South East but in some areas we have arrangements where the local authority invoices and we recoup our fees from them. For reviews of single private houses, we require the fee to be paid in advance of the review.

7. Documents to submit

At least seven days before the design review we need you to send us the documents related to your proposal. These and any additional documents should be submitted by email or some other system such as Dropbox or WeSendit.

We want you to come to design review as early as possible in the design process. So the list below is a guide and we would rather you come to design review than wait until everything was ready.

- The story of how the chosen design was arrived at; what options were rejected.
- Contextual analysis showing the site in relation to adjoining properties and its wider context.
- Aerial photographs of the site and its surroundings.
- Illustrations of the historical development of the urban form over time, listed buildings and conservation area boundaries.
- Site plans clearly showing land ownership. Indicate specific areas that are to be built on, buildings for demolition, retention and/or refurbishment.
- Landscape analysis and details of the landscape design approach.
- Plans, sections and elevations of proposed buildings. Street sections and sections through buildings which also show the wider topography.
- Photomontages and visualisations demonstrating the development in its context.
- Detailed drawings communicating the architectural approach and materials.

3-D illustrations are particularly welcome to demonstrate a variety of user experiences, such as pedestrian or vehicle approaches, sense of arrival, internal and external orientation etc.

We send this information out to the Panel members attending the design review session at least one week before the meeting takes place. You can still continue to work on your designs and present additional or more detailed information at the Panel meeting.



On
the day

8. The meeting

There are four parts to the design review session:

1 Site visit

The Panel will go out on site with the design team/client and a local authority representative. The objective is to get a thorough feel for the site and the opportunities and challenges it presents. We would suggest that the group of people accompanying the Panel on site should not be too large (four at most). We will want to walk round within the site but also view the site from outside of its boundary and get a feel for the wider context. On very large sites we may need you to provide a minibus to enable this.

2 Local authority briefing

Once we return to the venue the Chair will ask the local authority to explain the planning context to the project and what they are looking for from the review. This should take no more than 10 minutes.

It is important that this briefing comes from the local authority as we need to hear directly from them about the policy considerations and local sensitivities. It underlines the impartiality of design review.



3 Presentation

You now have up to 30 minutes to present your project. A good way to break this up is to begin with the client explaining their vision, objectives, or brief for no more than 10 minutes and then the architect to present the project for no more than 20.

Do not waste time establishing your credentials as a developer or architect by talking about your portfolio or how many awards you have won. We are reviewing the current project. We are not interested in what you have done in the past unless you want to tell us about the lessons you have learnt that are relevant to this project.

Remember the Panel will have had an opportunity to view the documents you presented so it is not necessary to discuss every detail of the project. It is best to concentrate on the story of how you have arrived at those particular designs, how you are responding to the brief and the context and what you are trying to achieve.

4 Questions, discussion and feedback

The Chair will begin by inviting Panel members to ask questions to clarify any issues with the project presenter(s). They will then give you their feedback on the designs. At the end of the design review process, the Chair will conclude the discussion with a verbal summary of the advice offered.

9. Who should attend

At each Panel meeting, there will be at least five panel members including the Chair and a Panel manager from Design South East who will take notes and draft the report.

As a minimum, the architect/lead designer and client should attend. Other members of the project team such as planning consultants and other design or technical consultants, may also attend. If there is a landscape architect on the team it is very helpful for them to attend.

We will encourage relevant local authority officers to attend the meeting; these may include planning, conservation and highways officers. If there has been involvement from another part of the council please let us know. If there is involvement from another agency, such as Historic England or the county highways team, we will invite them to design review. If they cannot attend we may ask for their views in advance.

We also encourage a range of people to come and observe design review. This might include additional local authority officers, students, other professionals, elected members, etc. In all cases observers agree to maintain the confidentiality of design review.

Sometimes we get requests to conduct a design review without the local authority present. On other occasions local authority officers are unable to be present because a formal pre-application process has not begun and it is their policy not to invest staff time at such an early stage. We will always insist that the local authority is invited and we will always send the design review report to the local authority. We do not undertake private design reviews. This is because design review has to be seen to be independent and neutral in the planning process. Without this independence its findings will not carry weight at planning.

10. Presentation methods

There are different ways to approach presenting to the Panel. Design South East does not insist that you use one method or another.

1 Paper plans and drawings

It is perfectly acceptable to conduct a design review by tabling a set of plans, drawings and visualisations. Please bring these along at sufficient scale that they can be easily viewed around the table.

2 PowerPoint

You might choose to use a PowerPoint presentation to outline the project and how you have arrived at the current design. It is up to you to ensure that you have the appropriate technology to make your presentation.

3 Display boards

You may prefer to use display boards. This may be helpful if you have already produced boards for a client meeting or public consultation. We suggest you use six A1 boards, and certainly no more than ten.

4 Models

Models are one of the best ways of communicating the concept and design of a project and their use is encouraged wherever possible. Even rough cardboard models can be useful.

A close-up photograph of a person's hands and arms. The person is wearing a bright yellow long-sleeved sweater. Their right hand, adorned with a silver ring, holds a yellow pen and is in the process of writing on a newspaper. The left arm, also in the yellow sweater, is visible. On the table in front of them are two white ceramic coffee cups on saucers. Several other pens in various colors (pink, blue, green) are scattered on the newspaper. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the table and possibly other people.

11. Following your review

The report

After the design review session, a written report will be issued summarising the views of the Panel. As a guide we aim to email out the report within 10 working days. If you need the report earlier, to meet a planning or funding deadline, we will do our best to oblige, but please give us advanced notice.

This report will be a concise written summary and may also include suggestions and recommendations. The aim of the design review report is to assist and encourage developers/advisors in achieving better quality development proposals. In the case of current planning applications, the contents of the design review report will become a public document and are expected to be considered as a material planning consideration.

We are happy to amend the report if we make a factual error. However, we cannot change the advice or opinions contained in the report.

Responding to the review

Please consider each point made in the design review report. It may be helpful to annotate in your final design and access statement how you have responded to each point. This will demonstrate your commitment to design quality by showing you have positively engaged with design review.

Remember that the National Planning Policy Framework gives the opinions of design review panels weight in planning decisions. Where design review opinion differs from that of statutory consultees it is important to remember that in most cases the advice of statutory consultees is not mandatory.

More than one review?

Larger, more complex or sensitive projects may benefit from more than one design review, for example a first review at the concept stage and another when more detailed designs have been developed. When a project is reviewed more than once we will try to ensure that the same panel members are involved, or at least that a majority of the Panel are the same. This removes the need for a full site visit.

For private houses hoping to gain planning permission via paragraph 79 of the NPPF we often have a number of reviews until the Panel are satisfied that the 'test' under paragraph 79 has been passed. Where we undertake multiple reviews the latter ones may be conducted with a smaller panel, perhaps just the chair and one panel member. In these cases the fee will be reduced.

Design workshops

For larger complex sites which are being considered at an early stage we often undertake design workshops in partnership with the landowners and the local authority. These still make use of our expert Panel but in a more 'hands-on' role. Such workshops are useful to develop design principles and objectives for the site, establish a broad framework for the lay-out and strategies for dealing with key opportunities and constraints. A design review might follow a workshop once early designs have emerged.



The fine print

Design South East is the region's leading source of built environment support and one of the most experienced design review providers in the UK. Local authorities, the development sector and communities trust us to provide impartial and constructive design advice and assistance. We are independent and offer an unrivalled quality of service to support design quality and help transform places of all shapes and sizes. In offering design review, we pledge that:

- we will deal with your enquiry efficiently and flexibly to ensure we do not delay the development of your project.
- we will ensure that there is a suitable panel for your project. Our panels always consist of experts with a range of skills including architecture, urban design, landscape architecture, engineering. When you book a review, even in one of our pre-arranged review meetings, we carefully consider the composition of the panel to ensure it has the right range of expertise for your project.
- we will draw up an agenda for the design review allowing sufficient time for the site visit, travel between site and venue, presentation and discussion.
- our Chairs will ensure that the design review meeting is conducted in a polite and constructive manner and is as helpful as it can be to all parties.
- we will maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality, depending on the stage your project has reached.
- we will ensure that our panel members do not have conflicts of interest.
- we will produce reports which are succinct and useful, explaining clearly what you need to do to improve the design of your project. Reports will be issued within 10 working days of the review meeting, unless agreed otherwise.
- we will seek your feedback on the design review process within three months of the meeting.
- we will deal with any comments and complaints through a professional complaints procedure and act quickly to address any issues identified.

Confidentiality

All information submitted to Design South East for design review will be treated as confidential.

If a planning application has not yet been submitted our report will be confidential and only released to the parties attending the review meeting and the local authority. Once a planning application is submitted the local authority may choose to make the review report public with the other planning documents. Even if they do not do this they may be subject to a Freedom of Information request.

If the project is being reviewed after a planning application has been submitted our report will become one of the planning documents and will be publicly accessible.

If you have a particularly sensitive project and there is a need for additional measures to ensure confidentiality, please discuss those with our Head of Design Advice.

Conflicts and declarations of interest

Design South East has a conflicts of interest policy which includes a protocol for design review panel members. Panel members are excluded from reviewing projects where they may be exposed to conflicts of interest.

Sometimes there are indirect connections between panel members and parties to the project which are not sufficiently strong to constitute a conflict of interest. Declarations of interest are made where no conflict of interest arises but clarity and openness in the process requires this information to be declared for the avoidance of any doubt or misconceptions.

If you believe there is a conflict of interest which we have not been made aware of please ask to speak in private to a member of the Design South East team at the earliest opportunity

How we deal with complaints

Design South East is committed to delivering an efficient, high quality service. We aim to provide prompt, courteous, helpful and informative advice in response to all who approach us. We are always keen to hear the views of our customers and partners about our performance.

As with all organisations, from time to time things can go wrong, and we may not provide the standard of service that we have set ourselves. We are keen to hear about such instances, so that we can learn from our mistakes and get it right next time.

We aim to handle complaints quickly, fairly and helpfully. When dealing with complaints Design South East endeavours to:

- ensure that making a complaint is as easy as possible
- treat a complaint seriously whether it is made by telephone, letter or e-mail
- deal with it promptly, politely and, where appropriate, informally
- include in our response an apology where we have got things wrong, an explanation of the position, or information on any actions taken, etc
- learn from complaints and use them to improve our service

We will do our best to:

- treat complaints thoroughly, fairly and politely, and investigate them sensitively;
- respond promptly. Your complaint will be acknowledged within 5 days and a response given within 18 working days from the date of receipt. If it is not possible to give you a full reply within this time - for instance because a detailed investigation is required - we will give you an interim response
- tell you what is being done to deal with your complaint, when you can expect the full reply and from whom.

DSE EXPERT PANEL TERMS OF REFERENCE

Introduction

These Terms of Reference explain the background to the DSE Expert Panel and how it operates and set out how we expect panel members to conduct themselves. This document is applicable from 1st October 2017.

In this document reference to 'Panel' (with a capital 'P') is used to signify the large pool of experts that DSE engages to support its work whereas 'panel' (with a lower-case 'p') signifies the small group of Panel members attending a design review meeting.

About the DSE Expert Panel

1. Background

The DSE Expert Panel has evolved from the South East Design Review Panel originally established by SEEDA and Kent Architecture Centre (now DSE) in 2002. At that time there was a national hierarchy of design review with CABE reviewing schemes of national significance and regional panels reviewing those of regional significance. With the demise of CABE as a Government body after 2010 that hierarchy disappeared and DSE now reviews schemes of all sizes. The work of DSE has also expanded to include design advice, assessments, training, workshops and charrettes. Panel members play a role in all of this work and Panel expertise is a key part of the DSE offer.

DSE is now one of the leading providers of design review and other design advice services in the UK. DSE has the potential to operate anywhere in England, or beyond, but we generally do not operate in areas where there is a regional or local panel providing a comparable quality of service. This means that our current principle area of operation is the South East, East of England and London.

2. Objective

The objective of the Panel is to support DSE to raise the quality of development in the built environment. This objective is principally achieved through design review but Panel members also assist DSE with design advice for local authorities, training, design workshops and charrettes.

As an independent charity DSE operates in the public interest. However, we believe that our objectives are most easily achieved if all parties to the development process can achieve their own particular objectives. If the advice we provide is perceived to be helpful to all parties, it is more likely to be followed. We therefore above all promote a constructive and collaborative approach to discussions about the future of buildings, spaces and places.

3. Panel Members

The DSE Panel of experts includes distinguished and innovative built environment practitioners. All have a commitment to improving the quality of buildings and public spaces in our cities, towns and villages.

Panel members are appointed for three years and may be reappointed at the end of that period. The Panel has a Chair, Co-Chairs and Deputy-Chairs. These members provide the chairs for panel meetings.

4. **Role of Design Review**

DSE's design review service provides timely, expert and independent design advice to local authorities, developers and design teams through a discursive process of critical appraisal of development proposals. DSE design panels review a wide range of development proposals, from large town centre sites and urban extensions to sensitive rural development. Design review panels consider schemes following procedures and guidelines which have been developed by DSE. While the design review panels are purely advisory, the National Planning Policy Framework states:

'Local planning authorities should ensure that they have access to, and make appropriate use of, tools and processes for assessing and improving the design of development. These include workshops to engage the local community, design advice and review arrangements, and assessment frameworks such as Building for Life⁴⁷. These are of most benefit if used as early as possible in the evolution of schemes, and are particularly important for significant projects such as large scale housing and mixed use developments. In assessing applications, local planning authorities should have regard to the outcome from these processes, including any recommendations made by design review panels'

This means that any comments from a panel will be given due weight by planning officers and planning committees and may be referred to by planning inspectors at appeal.

5. **Scheduling of Design Review Meetings**

DSE will manage the operation of design review. At each design review meeting the panel will generally be composed of a chair and four other members. This number of panel members may be increased for very significant and complex schemes or reduced for follow-up reviews. DSE will select appropriate and available members with relevant skills to sit on each design review panel. The panel chair is drawn from a group of experienced Panel members who have been selected to perform this role.

DSE will establish a schedule of design review meetings and allocate Panel members to those meetings according to their availability and to achieve an appropriate mix of expertise. Some of these meetings may be designated for a particular type of scheme (for example paragraph 79 houses or volume housing schemes). If no schemes come forward for these dates they will be cancelled and panel members will be informed that they are not required with a minimum of seven days' notice. In addition there may be a need to arrange a design review meeting outside the schedule of meetings. In these cases a call will be issued to Panel members for the date in question and a panel will be selected according to availability and expertise.

In some cases, where a particular mix of skills is needed to review a particular scheme, the membership of a scheduled panel may be changed. DSE will attempt to do this at no less than seven days' notice.

Each panel will be attended by a panel manager drawn from the DSE staff team. The operation of panels is covered by the Administration Procedures document.

6. **Organisation of Design Review Meetings**

For each proposal considered by a panel, briefing information will be sent to the panel in advance of the meeting. The information generally includes a copy of the form submitted by the organisation requesting the review (normally the applicant), a selection of plans, sections and

elevations and location plan. Additional briefings may be produced by DSE staff or the local authority if necessary. Panel members are expected to familiarise themselves with this material in advance of the panel meeting.

Most design review meetings will follow the following format:

- A visit to the site of the proposed development (DSE design reviews will always include a site visit unless the scheme has already been reviewed by the panel)
- A briefing from the local authority on the planning background
- A presentation from the team proposing the development (normally the architect, but sometimes also the client, planning consultants, landscape architects). DSE does not specify what form that presentations should take.
- Questions for clarification from the panel
- Comments from the panel
- A summary by the chair of the panel's advice

Occasionally this format may change to meet the needs of a particular scheme or when undertaking follow-up reviews. DSE is committed to allowing sufficient time in its reviews for proposed developments to be fully considered by the panel.

7. Feedback from Design Review

Following the panel meeting, the panel manager will prepare a draft report commenting on the design qualities and implications of the proposal, and recommending opportunities to improve its design quality. This draft report will be circulated to the chair and panel members for comments and a final version agreed with the chair. Members of the panel should respond quickly so that the final report can be agreed within the deadline. The report should reflect the content of the meeting and not contain matters that were not covered in the meeting. However, where the panel makes comments of a general nature the panel manager may support these with specific examples or provide details of how recommendations might be implemented. When the draft is circulated, the panel members have an opportunity to say if they consider anything added by the panel manager is inappropriate.

Once agreed the report will be circulated to all attendees. We aim to do this within 10 working days of the meeting. The aim of the report is to assist and encourage the potential to achieve high quality design.

At the pre-application stage the Panel's advice is generally considered to be offered in confidence and as such will not be made public. When we review a scheme, which is the subject of a submitted planning application, the contents of the report is considered as a comment on the planning application. As such it will be available to the public and the planning committee and will be regarded as a material consideration.

8. Other Design Advice Services

Panel members may be called upon to support DSE by participating in:

- direct advice to local authorities (for example at design surgeries where a number of smaller schemes are considered)
- training events for local authorities and other clients
- design workshops and charrettes

The role of panel members in such meetings is to provide expert advice and creative thinking.

9. **Schemes Submitted to Design Review by Panel Members**

Panel members are encouraged to submit, or encourage their clients to submit, schemes in which they are involved. They may attend meetings as part of a team presenting a project, however they should not join in any other part of the same meeting in their capacity as a Panel member. Panel members' interests will be documented in the letter and recorded.

Code of Conduct

10. **General principles**

Panel members are expected to carry out their role in a polite and courteous fashion at all times and in a way that reflects DSE's constructive and collaborative approach. Panel members are expected to act in the public interest and adhere to the seven Nolan Principles of Public Life.

Selflessness

Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

Integrity

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reason for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

11. **Conflicts and Declarations of Interest**

It is important that members of the Panel avoid any conflict of interest that might arise from schemes they consider. Details of the projects to be reviewed will be provided up to a week prior to meetings and panel members will be expected at this stage to declare any direct or indirect interests in the project.

Panel members should not participate in reviews or provide advice where they have an interest. Conflicts of interest will be recorded on the Register of Conflicts and on the relevant design review report. Examples of conflict of interest may include:

- being personally or professionally involved with the proposal under review
- having a strong association with one or more of the firms submitting the proposal
- being involved with a property or proposal which will be strongly affected by the proposal under review
- having objected or otherwise commented on the proposal in a public forum

The above is not an exhaustive list and potential conflicts will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the DSE team. Where the conflict is not strong the panel manager may consult with the proposing team and local authority to establish whether they are content to proceed with the panel member in question.

In some cases, panel members may have a connection with the scheme presented or firms presenting which is not considered strong enough to create a conflict. Such a connection and the decision that it did not constitute a conflict will be noted in the report.

12. Confidentiality

Panel members are required to maintain strict confidentiality regarding:

- any information supplied regarding schemes considered at design review or for design advice,
- discussions that may take place, formal or informal at design review or advice meetings,
- the contents of the panel report (unless for a submitted planning application),
- any other information, discussions or reports in respect of any other DSE activity where it is stated or implied that confidentiality is required.

Confidentiality must be respected before and after reviews and other events have taken place. If in doubt about any issues of confidentiality please refer to the DSE Head of Design Advice or the relevant panel manager.

13. Promotion of Panel Members own Business

While it is accepted that in undertaking work for DSE, Panel members are enhancing their reputations and public profiles, they should not use such participation to directly promote their own business interests. Approaches should not be made to people attending design reviews, surgeries, training events, workshops or charrettes, before, during or immediately after such meetings to canvass for work.

From time-to-time clients, local authorities and others attending DSE reviews, advice and training events may approach Panel members independently to seek to engage them. Such approaches should be notified to DSE. Generally, DSE will not object to panel members taking on such work. However, Panel members should not take on work which would normally be undertaken by DSE itself or when taking on such work would damage the reputation of DSE. Rather, panel members should encourage further engagement with DSE (for example suggesting follow-up activity and promoting the uptake of design review).

14. Responses and attendance

Panel members are required to respond promptly to correspondence from DSE and to punctually attend all reviews and other meetings they have been scheduled for. At least 7 days' notice should be given if panel members need to withdraw from any review or other event.

15. Breach of Code of Conduct

A breach of this Code of Conduct will be followed by a verbal warning from the Chair of the Panel on behalf of DSE. Ongoing failure to comply with the Code of Conduct will be followed by a written warning from the Chair. Any such breaches will be reported to DSE Board.

If a Panel member still fails to comply with the Code of Conduct and cannot offer a satisfactory explanation for his/her behaviour a motion will be put to the DSE Board to suspend the person from future participation. Reinstatement will be dependent on a commitment being given in writing to the Chair and DSE that such behaviour will not reoccur.

Any Panel member should alert the Chair and DSE if they become aware of a breach of the Code of Conduct by raising the issue with them either at the time or immediately after the incident.

