

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL TERMS OF REFERENCE

Purpose

The aim of the Urban Vision Design Review Panel is to provide expert impartial advice and guidance on significant development proposals to local authorities and other key partners in the North Staffordshire sub-region in order to help achieve high design quality.

Panel Membership

Each Panel meeting will comprise a group of recognised experts in the field of built environment design, invited from a pool of around 20 persons appointed following consultations with CABE, AWM and other partners. Generally, but not exclusively, Panel members will be drawn from outside the North Staffordshire city region.

Urban Vision will ask prospective Panel members to submit a CV indicating their experience and other relevant information prior to appointment.

Panel Attendance

Invitations will be extended to official local authority Design Champions and Historic Environment Champions, the relevant planning officers, and other regeneration partners, as appropriate.

Panel Meetings

The Panel met 8 times during its first year of operation at approximately 6-week intervals, commencing in October 2004. From September 2005 the Panel has met monthly. Generally meetings are held on the third Thursday of each calendar month, but this should be confirmed in advance from the Diary of Panel meetings available on Urban Vision's web site.

Each Panel meeting will last approximately half a day. In general the Panel will be made up of 4 to 6 representatives of a range of built environment design professionals in architecture, planning, urban design, the arts, landscape design, environmental sustainability, surveying and other relevant disciplines.

At each meeting the Panel will review up to 4 significant development proposals nominated by local authority partners in the North Staffordshire sub-region. The proposals may be in the form of statutory planning applications or (preferably) pre-application schemes subject to the agreement of the potential applicant, developer or local authority. In the case of planning applications it will be the responsibility of the relevant local authority partners to provide sufficient documentation in the form of plans, drawings and written statements, to enable the Panel to arrive at a fully informed view of the proposal concerned. Where proposals are considered at the pre-application stage it will be the responsibility of the developer or architect concerned to provide the required documentation.

Urban Vision will distribute summary information of each scheme to Panel members one week before the date of the relevant Panel meeting.

The Panel may also request proposals for review, or by agreement advise on briefs for master plans, the development of sites, built environment design strategies and policies, or other topics as appropriate.

Illustrative criteria for selecting proposals for design review are set out in Appendix A.

Conduct of Panel Meetings

Meetings will be chaired by the Design Review Panel Chairperson, or Deputy Chairperson, appointed by Urban Vision in consultation when appropriate with CABE, AWM and relevant local authority partners.

Prior to considering each proposal the Panel will conduct a site visit, preferably accompanied by a representative of the developer or scheme proponent. Only in exceptional circumstances will the Panel comment on a development proposal without having first seen the site.

Each scheme should be presented by a representative of the developer, or the client body, for the proposal. Normally this will be the architect, although in appropriate circumstances it may be the developer or a representative of the local authority concerned.

The proponents of each development scheme considered will be invited to submit illustrative material which will be displayed at the Panel meeting to allow Panel members to familiarise themselves with the schemes under consideration. The period of time available for presentation is generally 10-12 minutes. PowerPoint presentations will not be allowed. Short computer visualisations of designed proposals may be allowed, providing these are no more than a maximum of 5 minutes.

The presentation of the proposal to the Panel should include illustrative material which must be sufficiently clear and visible to enable the Panel to understand the proposal properly and in the necessary level of detail; 3-D illustrations are particularly welcome.

Panel members may then ask questions to clarify any issues. The scheme presenter(s), and the local authority case officers involved, will then withdraw and the Panel will continue *in camera* to discuss and analyse the proposal. The Chairperson will conclude the discussion with a verbal summary of the design advice to be offered.

Panel members who are, or have been, personally or professionally involved with a particular proposal under discussion, or who may otherwise be considered to have a conflict of interest, are requested to notify Urban Vision in advance in respect of the particular case concerned. The composition of Panel meetings will then be arranged to avoid any conflict.

Where a conflict of interests arises at the Panel meeting, any Panel members who have declared an interest in a particular item will leave the meeting when it is being considered, and will not take part in the Panel's discussions on the proposal concerned.

Information provided to the Panel

For each proposal considered by the Panel the *developer* should provide a brief design statement setting out

- The purpose of the proposal
- An urban design analysis of the site and its environs
- The principles underlying the architectural design
- How the proposal satisfies the key objectives of urban design identified by CABE
- The implications of the development for urban sustainability
- Details of proposed materials.

This information should be provided in addition to the material described under Panel Meetings above.

In addition the *local planning authority* should provide a statement of how well the proposal satisfies the relevant planning and regeneration policy context.

Feedback from Panel Meetings

Following the Panel meeting within five working days for statutory applications, and within ten working days for pre-application proposals, Urban Vision will provide the relevant local authority and other partners as appropriate, with a concise written Design Review Report, commenting on the architectural

and urban design qualities and implications of each proposal, and recommending actions or options for improving the design of the proposal.

The aim of the Design Review Report is to assist and encourage the potential developer or applicant to achieve and maintain high quality design when the proposal is built. In the case of formal planning applications the contents of the Design Review Report will be conveyed to the relevant Development Control Committee through the planning case officer's report on the proposal. Local authority planning and development control committees will regard the Panel's comments as a material consideration in the exercise of their statutory planning powers.

Publicity

in the case of proposals which are within the statutory planning system, either as planning applications or Development Plan Documents, Urban Vision will publish relevant reports on its web site. In other cases including preliminary schemes, Urban Vision will not publish the associated review reports on its website without the express agreement of the developer or scheme proponent.

When Design Review reports are public documents these may be circulated to Members of Parliament, Design and Historic Environment Champions, and elected representatives, as appropriate.

Appendix A
Indicative Criteria for Development Proposals considered by the Design Review Panel

- Development of 0.5 hectares or greater in area
- Development involving 10 or more houses
- Development of 1,000 square metres floorspace or greater
- Development significantly affecting the City Centre or a Town Centre
- Development in a historically or environmentally sensitive area
- Development with special architectural or environmental qualities.

Terms of Reference updated May 2006
