

**REMIT, FUNCTIONS, ROLES AND PROCEDURES****Remit and function**

The Inverness Design Review Panel aims to raise the quality of the built environment in the Inverness area by providing timely, well-reasoned, constructive design advice that can be used by design teams, planners and/or developers in the run-up to submission of a planning application.

The Panel seeks to meet and advise design teams and developers at a suitably early stage of the design process. In advance of each meeting, The Highland Council will issue Panel members with an information pack on each design proposal under review to promote full understanding of relevant design issues.

The design review process consists of:

- a short presentation from the Council's Development Management Officer setting out the planning context for the proposal under review (5 minutes);
- a short presentation from the design team outlining the proposal under review (10 minutes);
- a facilitated panel discussion providing constructive advice that should enable the designer team, developer and planners make positive progress in developing the proposal;
- preparation of a confidential written Panel Report that summarises the panel's views and identifies key design priorities;
- circulation of the Panel Report to the development team;
- publication of the Panel Report in the public record of planning applications if an application is lodged.

**Membership**

Panel membership is made up of representatives from organisations that have an interest in improving the quality of buildings and places for the benefit of the public, including:

- Inverness Civic Trust
- Inverness City Heritage Trust
- Inverness Architects' Association (up to two representatives)
- Inverness College UHI
- High Life Highland
- Royal Town Planning Institute
- Landscape Institute Scotland
- Police Scotland
- Historic Scotland

Member organisations are encouraged to establish a small pool of staff / members and ensure representatives can attend meetings, as required, on a voluntary basis. Ideally, organisations will review panel representation every two years.

From time to time where specialist expertise would benefit the design review process but is not available locally, Council officials may seek approval from the Panel to employ an external consultant to participate in panel activity.

**Panel chair**

The Panel is chaired by a staff member from The Highland Council's Development and Infrastructure Service, who facilitates but does not take part in Panel discussions. The Chair seeks consensus, as necessary, on issues arising and ensures that the resulting report reflects the independent view of the Design Review Panel.

**Meetings**

Six panel meetings take place per year, with one additional meeting, as necessary, to review the Panel's effectiveness and make changes. Meetings are timetabled every autumn to take place the following

year. The panel discusses up to three development proposals at each meeting. Typically one hour and 15 minutes is allocated to each review but this allowance may vary depending on the scale and complexity of the proposal under consideration.

### **Role of Panel Members**

Panel members shall:

- have a track record and expertise in at least one relevant professional field;
- attend design review meetings as agreed and required by the Panel;
- appraise visual and written information provided by design teams in advance of the Panel meetings to reach a considered view on proposals put forward;
- provide design advice that draws on their professional competence and/or experience, on the understanding that this will not prejudice their organisation forming a differing view about development proposals at a later stage;
- provide advice that is constructive, well-reasoned and objective that is focused on enabling designers, planners and developers to make positive progress in developing proposals;
- provide rationale for advice given and reach consensus on key priorities to be incorporated into the Panel Report;
- ensure they are available to comment on or approve the Panel Report and allow it to be viewed by the public once a planning application has been made;
- take part in an annual review of the operation and effectiveness of the Panel;
- provide representation, if requested, at Architecture + Design Scotland's annual event for Local Urban Design Panels;
- adhere to the Principles of Conduct for Panel members, which must be agreed to in writing prior to participation;
- keep their respective organisations informed of Panel activity while observing the requirement for confidentiality set out in the Principles of Conduct.

### **Role of the Council**

The Highland Council's Development and Infrastructure Service facilitates the design review process and fulfils the role of secretariat to the Panel.

Panel meetings are attended by the following officials:

- Head of Planning and Building Standards (or a substitute when necessary and agreed with the Panel) who chairs the meeting;
- Urban Designer, who records Panel feedback on the development proposal and provides a verbal summary at the end of each review;
- Development Management officer(s) from the Inverness Area Planning and Building Standards team, who brief the panel on planning issues relating to the development site. From time to time, for CPD purposes, other planning officers may be present as observers.

Planning officials also:

- identify major and locally significant developments in the Inverness area and recommend that developers put forward proposals for design review;
- liaise with design teams and developers to ensure relevant information is supplied in advance of the meeting;
- prepare briefing papers setting out the planning context for proposals under review that highlight relevant issues or policies, particularly where proposals may be contrary to policy. (This briefing is for the purpose of informing the Panel and should not be construed as detailed planning guidance or assessment of the proposal);
- arrange Panel meetings and circulate meeting papers by email one week in advance;
- provide a concise presentation (maximum 5 minutes) on relevant planning issues for each proposal under review;
- facilitate Panel discussions, seeking consensus as necessary on issues arising;

- provide a verbal summary that reflects the independent view of the Panel at the end of each review;
- prepare and issue a draft report to Panel members within three working days of each Panel meeting to ensure agreement can be reached on a final report within two weeks;
- secure feedback and amend the draft report to reflect Panel members' comments, ensuring only issues raised at the panel meeting are included in the report;
- on behalf of the Panel, issue the Panel Report to design teams, developers and planners;
- encourage design teams to consider, reflect and take into account the Panel's advice when developing their designs;
- ensure that Panel Reports are included in the public record of planning applications if/when an application is lodged;
- identify how the Panel's comments have been addressed in relevant planning application reports.

### **Panel Report**

The Panel Report is deemed to be the view of the Panel and is not attributable to any one individual or member organisation. Nor does it prejudice any organisation represented on the Panel from forming a differing view about development proposals at a later stage.

### **Procedure for presentations to the Inverness Design Review Panel**

To ensure that Panel members have a full understanding of the design issues raised by their proposals, architects, consultant planners and developers are expected to observe the follow procedure:

#### Eight days in advance of the meeting date

- Confirm the names of those attending the design review on behalf of the development team.
- Provide relevant visual and written information to the Council in electronic format only (pdf) for circulation to the Panel. As a minimum this should describe the design concept, context, plans, sections and elevations. Typically it could include information on:
  - wider site environment and contextual issues such as where development is located, and how it is arranged, relates to and integrated into the urban setting;
  - the rationale for the proposed layout, scale, density, massing and connections;
  - how new buildings and infrastructure relate to one another and the public realm; how these help to create an active, successful environment;
  - elevations and sections showing the relationship between the proposal and its context;
  - 3D representations of eye-level views;
  - materials and construction methods;
  - how active travel, public transport and parking will be addressed;
  - project information including names of clients, consultants, key players and consultees, estimated project cost and procurement method, and size of site.

**Presenters should note that the Council cannot accept emails greater than 10MB in size and should allow for delivery of CD copies of the information if it is not possible to email it.**

#### At the Design Review:

- Provide a concise 10-minute presentation using PowerPoint that sets out the rationale for the design including its concept and development in an appropriate timescale.
- Remain for the duration of the Panel's discussion to hear the views expressed.
- Ensure that clients/developers are encouraged to attend and contribute to the review.

#### Following the Design Review:

- Consider, reflect and take into account the advice provided in the development of the design.
- Provide a statement with the planning application on how the advice provided by the Panel has been addressed.