

Terms of Reference for the Eynsham Design Review Panel (Sub-Committee to Planning Committee)

1. Authority

The Design Review Panel is appointed by and is solely responsible to Eynsham Parish Council's Planning Committee. The Panel duties are defined and agreed by the Planning Committee who may vote, at any time, to modify the sub-committee's powers. The sub-committee will meet as and when required to deal with planning matters as they occur. **The committee has advisory powers and will make recommendations to the Planning Committee.**

2. Membership

The Committee will consist of no fewer than **three non-members elected Parish Councillors**¹. At its first meeting, it will elect a Chair to preside at its future meetings and will also elect a Vice Chair if it wishes. The sub-committee membership will be elected at each Annual Parish Council Meeting. A quorum at the Committee meetings will consist of no fewer than **three elected non-members**. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Council will not automatically be members of the sub-committee.

Non-members ~~will~~ **may** be co-opted to discharge the functions of the sub-committee.

Meetings will be held at the Village Hall and advance public notice will be provided. The public and press are permitted to attend and the public may participate when permitted by the Chair.

3. Records of Proceedings

Written minutes will be taken to record the Sub-Committee's decisions and will be circulated to all members. The Parish Clerk will be responsible for arranging the recording and distribution of the minutes. The minutes will be published online.

4. Background

S138 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023 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. The primary means of doing so should be through the preparation and use of local design codes, in line with the National Model Design Code.

¹ Standing Orders 4.(d)(viii)

For assessing proposals there is a range of tools including workshops to engage the local community, design advice and review arrangements, and assessment frameworks such as Building for a Healthy Life². 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.'

5. Principles

Design review is³:-

- Independent – It conducted by people who are unconnected with the scheme's promoters and decision makers, and it ensures that conflicts of interest do not arise.
- Expert – It is advice is delivered by suitably trained people who are experienced in design, who know how to criticise constructively and who's standing and expertise is widely acknowledged.
- Multidisciplinary – It combines the different perspectives of architects, urban designers, town planners, landscape architects, engineers and other specialist experts to provide a complete, rounded assessment.
- Accountable – The Review Panel and its advice must be clearly seen to work for the benefit of the public. This should be ingrained within the panel's terms of reference.
- Transparent – The panel's remit, membership and governance processes should always be in the public domain.
- Proportionate – It is undertaken on projects whose significance warrants the investment needed to provide the service.
- Timely – The review takes place as early as possible in the design process, because this can avoid a great deal of wasted time. It also costs less to make changes at an early stage.
- Advisory – A Design Review Panel does not make decisions, but it offers impartial advice for the people who do.
- Objective – It appraises schemes according to reasoned, objective criteria rather than the stylistic tastes of individual panel members.
- Accessible – Its findings and advice are clearly expressed in terms that the Planning Committee members, design teams, decision makers and clients can all understand and make use of.

All EDRP members are required to comply with Eynsham Parish Council's Code of Conduct and complete and Register of Interests form.

6. Panel composition

The Eynsham Design Review Panel (EDRP) members are chosen to provide a broad range of expertise with particular relevance to Eynsham Parish, including:

² Birkbeck D and Kruczkowski S et al (2020) Building for a Healthy Life

³ Adapted from Design Council CABE / Landscape Institute / RTPI / RIBA (2013) *Design Review: Principles and Practice*. Available at:

https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/fileadmin/uploads/dc/Documents/Design%2520Review_Principles%2520and%2520Practice_May2019.pdf (Accessed: 23.01.2024).

- Architecture
- Urban design
- Town planning
- Landscape architecture
- Heritage
- Environmental sustainability
- Biodiversity
- Community engagement
- Public art
- Depth of local knowledge

Many of those appointed to the panel will have expertise and experience in more than one of these areas. The composition of each panel meeting will be chosen as far as possible to suit the scheme(s) being reviewed, and to ensure a representative panel in terms of diversity.

Membership of the EDRP is reviewed regularly (at least once a year), to ensure that it provides all the necessary expertise, experience and diversity to undertake its work effectively. From time to time, it may be of benefit for specialist advice to be provided beyond the panel membership. In such cases, a professional with the relevant expertise may be invited to attend a review meeting, participating in the discussion with the status of an adviser to the panel.

7. Responsibilities

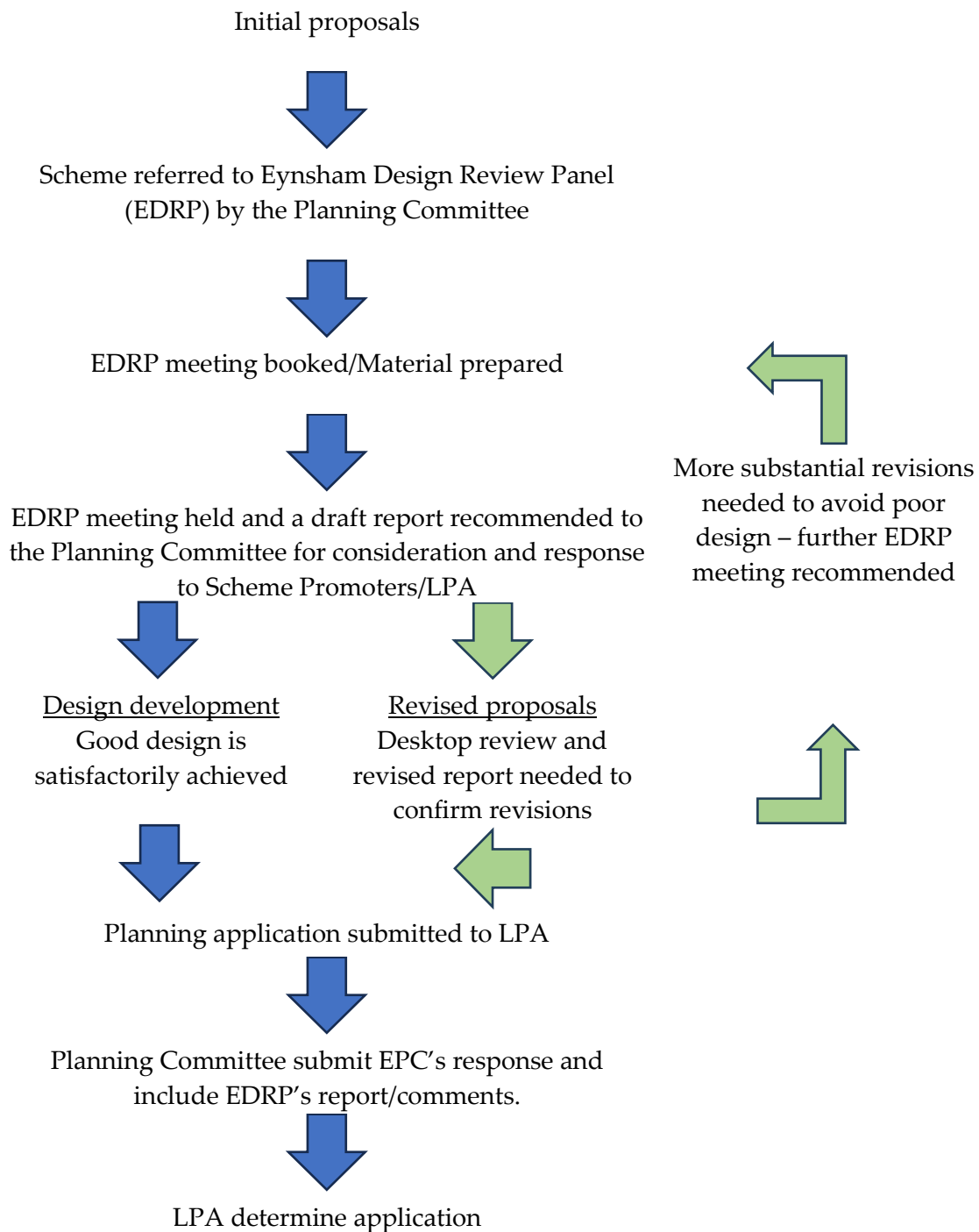
EDRP provides independent, objective, expert advice on development proposals across the Parish. It provides advice to scheme promoters and the planning authority through the Planning Committee, as a 'critical friend' to support the delivery of high quality, beautiful and sustainable development.

The panel considers significant development proposals in the parish of Eynsham as directed by the Planning Committee. Significance may fall into the following categories related to size or use, for example:

- Large buildings or groups of buildings,
- Large public realm proposals,
- Masterplans, design codes or design guidance.

Advice given by the panel before an application is submitted remains confidential, seen only by the applicant, Parish Council and the LPA. This encourages applicants to share proposals openly and honestly with the panel and ensures that they receive the most useful advice. Once an application has been submitted, the panel's reports, including those produced at pre-application stage, are published on the Council's website.

8. Design review process



Panel Reports

Reports will be drafted by the Panel Chair, circulated for amendments and a final agreed version issued by the Planning Committee/Clerk to the Scheme Promoters/LPA within 10 working days where at all possible.

Clear and concise formal resolutions are required at all times to avoid ambiguity in the reports and minutes and to ensure that the intention of the resolution is conveyed to the members for them to vote on.