



# Design Panel

## Terms of Reference

### 1. Introduction

The Design Panel exists to review and raise the standard of design within the parish and to provide the Council with independent, informed advice on planning applications and development proposals that affect the local built and natural environment.

The Design Panel is appointed by Eynsham Parish Council and will report to the Planning Committee or Full Council. The panel's duties are defined and agreed by resolution, by Full Council who may vote, at any time, to modify them following recommendations from the Planning Committee.

The panel will comply with the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and policies.

### 2. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

*Section 138 of the NPPF<sup>1</sup> 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 National Model Design Code is the primary basis for the preparation and use of local design codes. 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 Life<sup>2</sup>. 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.*

### 3. Scope of work

The panel is an advisory body only. It has no statutory decision-making powers and does not replace or replicate the functions of EPC's Planning Committee.

- a) Evaluate the design quality of planning or pre-planning applications referred to it, having regard to national, local, and neighbourhood planning policy. Priority will be given for developments of 5 or more dwellings, allocated sites and applications in sensitive locations.
- b) Provide well-reasoned design advice to assist the Parish Council in formulating its responses to the Local Planning Authority (LPA).
- c) Promote and champion design excellence, place-making, and the principles of sustainable development across the parish.
- d) Support the implementation of Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan, Character Assessments and its Design Guidance adopted by EPC.
- e) Any other matter referred to it by resolution of the Planning Committee or Full Council.

The Panel will not consider matters of planning law, planning conditions, financial viability, or highway engineering, which fall outside its design remit.

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<sup>1</sup> NPPF available from [National Planning Policy Framework](#)

<sup>2</sup> Birkbeck D and Kruczkowski S et al (2020) Building for a Healthy Life.

## 4. Membership

The Design Panel shall comprise of:

- A minimum of three and a maximum of seven members<sup>3</sup>, at least three of whom shall be independent from EPC
- At least three members with relevant professional expertise or experience, which may include architecture, urban design, landscape architecture, historic environment, civil engineering, planning or a related discipline.
- One member of the planning committee appointed as a liaison This could include a co-optee.

Membership will be reviewed by the Planning Committee and appointed, by resolution of Full Council at the time of creation and annually at subsequent annual meetings of the parish council, or unless elected or non-members resign. The Council may appoint co-opted specialist advisers for specific projects.

Non-members are expected to adhere to all council policies and procedures including EPC's Standing Orders and Code of Conduct and shall preserve the confidentiality of discussions held at meetings.

Non-members are not obligated to respond to requests.

## 5. Meetings & Communication

It is not envisaged that the panel will meet in person, unless deemed necessary.

The panel will be called to action when the Planning Committee or Full Council deem it appropriate to consult panel members to collect their views on upcoming planning applications.

Communication will be via email or phone and in line with council policies, procedures and current legislation.

Responses will be collected and collated by a nominated member of the panel, or the Clerk, who will prepare a draft response for the Planning Committee or Full Council.

## 6. Budget Responsibilities

The Design Panel have no budget responsibilities –Any expenditure shall be requested in line with council policies and procedures, from the Planning, Finance Committee or Full Council.

## 7. Delegated authority

In line with the council's scheme of delegation and Financial Regulations, the Clerk/Deputy Clerk/RFO shall liaise with the Chair/Vice Chair.

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<sup>3</sup> (Local Government Act 1972 s.102(3))