



**Author/Lead Officer of Report:** Harshada Deshpande. Service Manager. Urban and Environmental Design

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**Report of:** Executive Director of Place  
**Report to:** *Individual Executive Member Decision*  
**Date of Decision:**  
**Subject:** *Sheffield Design Panel*

Is this a Key Decision? If Yes, reason Key Decision:-	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
- Expenditure and/or savings over £500,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	
- Affects 2 or more Wards	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Which Cabinet Member Portfolio does this relate to? City Futures, Development, Culture and Regeneration		
Which Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee does this relate to? Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee		
Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? 1029		
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-		

**Purpose of Report:**

To set out the proposals for relaunching the Sheffield Design Panel in early 2022 and the associated operating arrangements.

**Recommendations:**

It is recommended that the Executive Member :

- confirms the relaunch of the Sheffield Design Panel with some modest changes in terms of the operational model, including approving a charge to

recover costs, as is standard across the country.

- Gives approval to retain and recruit new Panel members to ensure a pool of 30 and to address shortfalls in certain specialisms while positively targeting to achieve diversity within the Panel membership (Appendix 2)
- Confirms the renaming of the Sustainable Development and Design Panel to Sheffield Design Panel

**Background Papers:**

Lead Officer to complete:-		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.	Finance: <i>Kerry Darlow</i>
		Legal: <i>Vicky Clayton</i>
		Equalities: <i>Annemarie Johnston</i>
<p><i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i></p>		
2	<b>EMT member who approved submission:</b>	<i>Mick Crofts</i>
3	<b>Cabinet Member consulted:</b>	<i>Cllr Mazer Iqbal</i>
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Decision Maker by the EMT member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
	<b>Lead Officer Name:</b> <i>Harshada Deshpande</i>	<b>Job Title:</b> <i>Service Manager</i>  <i>Urban and Environment Design Team</i>
	<b>Date:</b> <i>06 01 2022</i>	

## 1. PROPOSAL

### Current position:

- 1.1 Sheffield City Council has benefitted from the services of a design review panel since 2006. The Panel has been instrumental in delivering a step change in the quality of the city's built environment over the intervening years.
- 1.2 In 2009 the Panel was refreshed and relaunched as the Sustainable Development and Design Panel, with the intention to develop a new focus on sustainable design and to strengthen local Panel member representation. The Sustainable Development and Design Panel last met in 2016.
- 1.3 The Panel have a pool of 30 members with several specialisations, of which 18, including the chair have agreed to continue with the relaunched Panel, see **Appendix 2**. This frees up 12 slots for new member recruitment, to bring the pool back up to the original strength.

### Proposal:

- 1.4 The proposal is to restart the Panel in the new year with new terms of reference and to charge for the service to allow for recovering staff time.
- 1.5 The cost of the Panel has historically been borne by the Council. The Panel had been arranged and serviced in-house, only paying Panel members' travel expenses and providing a modest allowance to the chair.
- 1.6 With ongoing reductions in local authority resources the current operating model has become unsustainable. Moreover, the practice of an applicant paying for a Panel to review their scheme is now widely accepted, offering a solution.

### Need going forward:

- 1.7 The NPPF sets out the government's planning policies and how they should be applied in England. It guides plan-making and is a material consideration for local planning authorities when determining planning applications. Paragraph 133 of the NPPF 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 a Healthy Life. 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.'*

The Sheffield Design Panel will provide independent impartial design advice to inform developers and their design teams on sustainability, design principles and placemaking with the overall aim of improving design quality across the local authority area as advocated in the NPPF.

**Options explored:**

- 1.8 In 2018/19, using the Design Quality Fund (part of the MHCLG Grant), a report was commissioned to specifically look at benchmarking in terms of Panel formats and charges for similar services provided by other Core cities. The remuneration and charging that has been proposed compares with other Core cities e.g., Nottingham. Developers and agents nationally are now used to such charges, and there is no concern that this will raise objections from the developer/ architect community.

**Remit of Sheffield Design Panel:**

- 1.9 Sheffield Design Panel's role will be in an advisory capacity to the City Council having no statutory authority. However, the advice given by the Panel will be a material consideration in the City Council's statutory planning function in determining planning applications and adopting planning policy. The advice will be reported directly to Planning Committee as relevant and made publicly available on the Council web site. It is strongly recommended that schemes are presented to the panel at pre-application stage to benefit from Panel involvement. This can be followed up with a second review/ update to the Panel when the scheme comes in as an application.

In line with current practice, where schemes are at a pre-application stage and subject to commercial confidentiality, information will not be published, without the consent of the applicant.

- 1.10 The Panel will consider and comment on proposals that have a significant impact on or may be considered to establish precedent for the City or have the potential to demonstrate best practice. The additional scrutiny provided by the Panel will be over and above the normal consultation carried out as part of the Planning service function.

The proposed terms of reference including the remuneration and charging for the Sheffield Design Panel are set down within **Appendix 1** attached.

**Administration and format of Sheffield Design Panel**

- 1.11 Sheffield Design Panel will meet every 6 to 8 weeks (or as required) with the agenda agreed by the Chair and Sheffield City Council in advance. To be effective, the Panel meetings usually will consist of no more than 6 members, including the Chair, drawn from a larger multi-disciplinary

Panel Member Pool. Meeting dates and attendance on the Panel will be agreed annually. Occasionally advisors may be co-opted when dealing with specialist issues

1. Urban Design staff in the Planning service will facilitate the Panel, providing direct support to the Chair.

Membership of the Panel will include the following core disciplines:

Sustainability specialists  
Urban Designers/Urbanists  
Architects  
Landscape architects, public realm consultants/Access Advisors  
Conservationists  
Developers

The Panel may also need to draw on the following related fields:

Archaeologists  
Public Art consultants/ consultation experts  
Surveyors/developers/economists  
Transport planning/Highway engineers

## **2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE ?**

- 2.1 The Sheffield Design Panel will assist in the delivery of a number of key ambitions set out in the Council's one year plan, *Our Sheffield 2021-22*. The Panel will support the commitment **to protect and enhance the environment through promoting sustainable development, reducing carbon footprint and protecting Sheffield's unique character.**

## **3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?**

- 3.1 There is no legal requirement to consult on this.

## **4 RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION**

### 4.1 Equality of Opportunity Implications

- 4.1.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken for this proposal. The assessment states that the project will have universal benefits for all groups covered by the EIA with no negative impacts. Tackling climate change and inclusive design benefits all users of the built environment. Diversity.

### 4.1.2 Key outcomes of the EIA as below:

- Take positive action through the recruitment process to improve Panel member diversity.
- Introduce equality monitoring of panel members.
- Identify and provide EDI training to panel members on a regular

basis through the annual review meetings and induction.

#### 4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

- 4.2.1 A proposal has been put forward to secure £4K of seed money, from the DQI Fund, part of the MHCLG (DLUCH) unspent grant monies, for the Panel to allow for staff time to be recovered along with reimbursement for the Panel members.

Detailed cost and income projections can be found in Appendix 1. The Design Panel is intended to be fully funded by fee income and this will be monitored to ensure that costs are being covered in full. Fees will be reviewed annually. Any shortfalls would be unfunded and potentially impact on service budgets.

The council will ensure that it follows its Standing Orders when appointing to the SDP.

#### 4.3 Legal Implications

- 4.3.1 Design reviews at pre-application stage normally remain confidential. However, information held by LPAs is subject to the Freedom of Information Act and Environmental Information Regulations.

#### 4.4 Procurement

- 4.4.1 All public sector procurement is governed by both European Legislation and UK National Law. In addition, all procurement in Sheffield City Council must comply with its own Procurement Policy, and internal regulations known as 'Contracts Standing Orders' (CSOs). Contracts Standing Orders requirements will apply in full to the procurement of services, goods or works utilising grants.

#### 4.5 Alternatives to restarting Sheffield Design Panel are:

- use of an existing panel – such as Design Council CABE's national panel or a regional design review panel
- establishing a joint panel – either adapting an existing panel or working with a neighbouring local planning authority

Having assessed both options against the need, the disadvantages outweigh the advantages, especially in terms of added value.

### **5 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 5.1 Based on the research done to date, and from discussions on the priorities identified, a bespoke Sheffield Design Panel is considered the preferred option. This would enable Sheffield to develop a panel that reflects the specific challenges and characteristics of Sheffield, and the council's ambitions for high quality design.

The intended outcomes of this report are:

- confirmation for the relaunch of the Sheffield Design Panel with modest changes including a charge to recover costs.
- approval to retain and recruit new members to address shortfalls in certain specialisms while taking positive action to improve the diversity of the Panel membership.
- Confirms the renaming of the Sustainable Development and Design Panel to Sheffield Design Panel.