



# Newham Design Panel

Annual Report

March 2020 – February 2021

Review Panel name	Newham Design Panel
Panel management (in-house, externally managed, one-off)	In-house
Contact name for panel	Ben Hull, Strategic Design Manager, London Borough of Newham
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Report produced by	Local Authority Officer (Ben Hull)

REVIEW TOTALS	
Reviews and follow up reviews	Number
Total number of reviews	33
Number of follow up / second reviews	14
Number of site visits	1
Type of Review	Number
Formal Review (4 panel members)	27
Chair's Workshop (1-2 panel members)	6
Departments that attended review sessions in any capacity	Number
Planning	33
Regeneration	1
Housing	3
Highways	1
Education	3

PROPOSALS	
Applicant type	Number
Private Developer	25
Local Authority	8
Joint Venture	0

Type of Proposal being reviewed	Number
Masterplan (mixed use)	6
Policy or strategic document	0
Residential (1-50 units)	1
Residential (50+ units)	17
Commercial	4
Community	1
Education	3
Public Realm	1
Stage of proposal	Number
Pre-application	29
Planning Application	3
Other	1

PANEL COMPOSITION	
Total panel members	Number
No. of different panel members used this year	20
Diversity of panel used this year	Per cent
Male / Female %	60/40
Black, Asian and ethnically diverse %	0
Expertise areas of panel used this year	Number of individuals at all sessions
Urban Design	4
Architecture	9
Landscape	3
Planning	1
Transport	0
Sustainability	2

Heritage/ Conservation	0
Development Delivery	1
Social Infrastructure	0

FEEDBACK	
Feedback collection process	<p>Surveys carried out after the design review process. Surveys are sent out to members of applicant teams approximately 6-12 months after the most recent design review panel meeting. Only 6 survey responses were received. Although a low number this is consistent with other years where feedback has been sought from applicants.</p> <p>Surveys have also been sent to Planning Officers and Panel Members. 4 responses were received from Planning Officers and 10 responses were received from Panel Members</p>
Applicants	Percentage
% agree that information/guidance provided prior to the review was sent out promptly	100
% agree that information/guidance provided prior to the review was useful	100
% agree that communication with the Council prior to the review was good	100
% that fully understood what was required of them during the review	100
% agree that the remote (MS Teams/Zoom) format was suitable for design review	50
% agree that the format of the review was good	100

% agree that the panel and their role was properly introduced	100
% agree that the time allocated to the presentation of the scheme was adequate	100
% agree that the time allocated to the discussion of the scheme was adequate	100
% agree that the Panel understood the scheme and issues fully	83
% agree that the Panel had a high level of relevant experience	100
% agree that the Panel were objective in their observations	100
% agree that the observations and discussions were relevant	100
% agree that the Panel report was useful	100
% agree that the Panel report was an accurate record of comments	100
% agree that the Panel report was received within sufficient time after the meeting	83
% agree that the Panel was useful in taking the scheme forward	100
% agree that the Panel is good value for money	50
% would speak highly of the Panel if asked	83

<p>% advocate the Panel to others without being asked</p>	<p>100</p>
<p>% would use the Panel for another future scheme</p>	<p>100</p>
<p>Specific comments / feedback:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would be helpful for the Council to provide information about wall space/pin up capacity (for in person reviews).</li> <li>• The Newham DRP compares favourably to other, Local Authority, panels.</li> <li>• It was very useful having the Chair of the Design Panel speak at Planning Committee. This is this first time this has happened and the only borough I know that does this. It helped validate our design approach to the planning committee.</li> <li>• Is sending the design information prior to the DRP useful to panel members? I would prefer to present the scheme to them afresh.</li> <li>• The meeting should be carried out in person rather than over Zoom. The site visit followed by pin-up at Dockside is a more effective means of carrying out a design review.</li> <li>• Newham DRP is a really well structured and high quality review.</li> <li>• It is incredibly helpful for the panel to recommend that the architect is retained by the 'developer' as part of a design &amp; build contract in order to deliver the project (if the panel believes that the scheme is of high quality and that the architect is doing a good job of course). This goes a long way.</li> <li>• Written support for specific high quality materials is also very useful to ensuring that the specification of a building doesn't get watered down at a later date. The fact that we can refer to a strong recommendation on the DRP letter, or alternatively a strong caution against, is really important.</li> <li>• Helpful when chairs give 5 min warnings [of the end of presentation time].</li> <li>• [The remote format provides] obvious efficiencies, but hampers free flowing discussion.</li> <li>• Site visits essential for most if not all schemes that are of sufficient scale to go to DRP.</li> <li>• DRP members perhaps a little eager to invoke the Mayor and their understanding of her priorities/opinions (e.g. over tenure mix, split of cores etc).</li> <li>• We struggled with the Panel's focus on the wider estate regeneration and the difficulty they had in appreciating the limits of the project, both in terms of approvals as to what we can do and what we can afford.</li> <li>• As the scheme developed the feedback became more precise. This was useful as it left the team with little ambiguity about the council's stance and allowed them to focus their efforts in the correct places.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having a strong DRP panel was useful on the design development process. It allowed for a robust discussion on design and ultimately to an improved development.</li> <li>• The experience and strength of the panel was a useful part of the design process. All members came from direct positions but meaningfully contributed to the process. As chair Toby Johnson was excellent and mediated through the complex discussion from a position of experience and confidence.</li> <li>• Newham's design review panel is towards the upper end of panels in our view. We believe that a strong chair with many years of relevant experience is key to this. It is also helped by panels members who have strong opinions and are clear when describing them.</li> </ul>
Planning Officers	Percentage
% found the comments made by the panel easy to understand	100
% felt the remote (Zoom/MS Teams) format was suitable for design review	33
% found review session and report helpful	100
% incorporated panel's comments into a delegated planning report or reported to Committee	100
% felt that Planning Committee gave weight to design review report during decision-making	100
% felt the comments made by the panel were relevant to my assessment of the scheme	100
Topics / themes raised during design reviews that authority could benefit from further CPD / learning on	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public realm considerations often get swallowed up by s278 agreements – I think we need training on the scope of what can be achieved by s278 and what we need to achieve in planning – how much detail do we need in head of terms.</li> <li>• Helpful for new planners to attend DRP and understand what is raised by DRP Members.</li> <li>• It would be helpful for Officers to attend relevant training on design codes, etc., or unique circumstances brought up by schemes. We could do more of a, what worked well on schemes and what didn't? This would be looking at built out schemes,</li> </ul>

	<p>preferably a range of schemes. This could be both on site and via presentation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feasibility to install green / brown roofs on buildings and design guidance for green roofs;</li> <li>• Design guidance of hard landscape that would assist SUDs;</li> <li>• For issues such as materiality it would be good to have some more visits arranged to approved and built out development in/out the borough to see exactly what we are approving looks like in practice.</li> </ul>
Specific comments / feedback to be raised/ actioned:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maybe some subheadings/signposts during the review and in the report to better navigate the comments.</li> <li>• Case for in person – feel the architects spot more on the in person DRP meetings and may work off each other better. However note the practical reasons for why we have [been having] them online.</li> <li>• The notes are really helpful and the final ones (sometimes the initial too to show progress) are always incorporated into the SDC reports.</li> <li>• Overall the comments are relevant, but views may be raised that are beyond the scope of the planning application or contrary to policy. As long as the panel are sufficiently briefed (before/afterwards) then it doesn't impact the developers view. Example: asking why something can't be taller when in policy terms the site isn't allocated for taller buildings. I think it would be helpful, if not already done, to brief DRP members on key issues beforehand for contentious schemes. Applicants see the view of the DRP members as representing the view of the LPA.</li> <li>• I think the site visits were helpful so would be good to get back to these when we can.</li> </ul>
Panel members	Percentage
% agreed they were notified of the need to attend sufficiently in advance of the review meeting	100
% agreed that pre-meeting information from applicant was sent out promptly	100
% agreed that the pre-meeting information is useful	70
% agreed that they were adequately briefed by	90



Planning Officers prior to the review	
% agreed that the remote (MS Teams/Zoom) format was suitable for design review	90
% agreed that the format of the review was good	100
% agreed that site visits are beneficial to a review session	80
% agreed that the time allocated to the discussion of the scheme was adequate	90
% agreed they were given adequate opportunity to ask questions/make comments	100
% agreed that the information presented by the applicants was sufficient to understand the scheme	80
% agreed that they would find feedback on design review useful	80
Any topics/themes consistently raised during design review meetings that the Planning Authority should aim to address	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zoom is much easier and more flexible, but nothing beats a site visit. A possible hybrid solution might be that individuals make independent site visits prior to a Zoom meeting.</li> <li>• The most usual default is a lack of context in the presentation. All plans, sections, elevations and 3D imagery should show the surroundings of the proposal in as much detail as the proposal itself.</li> <li>• Presentations often neglect narratives around how public realm will be used by all types of people, and is often presented as fairly abstract plans.</li> <li>• There is a general lack of wider urban design thinking [in presentations] about how schemes fit into and will augment the local/wider environment and economy of the locale and within London.</li> <li>• A clearer explanation of the economic/social/environmental drivers of a scheme to provide some context for panel members would be helpful.</li> </ul>

- Generally fairly undeveloped broader urban design context because there aren't enough resources for more development frameworks to guide development across the borough, so schemes tend to arrive without this guidance.
- More evidence of consultation/participation outcomes and how this is reflected in designs would be welcomed
- More use should be made of DRP members' skills to look at areas within the borough that need improvement to identify where urban design and design coding might be needed to guide future development, especially where there is development pressure - to 'get in front' of the market and make the most of rising interest in the borough. This kind of 'design by research' can help reduce what the market sees as 'planning risk' and encourage more of the desired kind of investment in places. Newham can be more of a catalyst in guiding investment, development and better design.
- There is also clearly pressure, from within the panel, particularly from new members, for a more local involvement. And maybe the focus on pure 'design', obviously essential, is too dominant and could be more holistic with more input from other disciplines and more local involvement.
- It would be beneficial to have proactive engagement by Newham's Regeneration team on their aspirations from development. It can seem as if the DRP members are infusing their own expectations of this.
- How proposed developments would work in practice is a recurrent theme, especially in regards to housing. It might be helpful to have a Council perspective on operational sites at the DRP, in respect of refuse operations, etc.
- It would be good to understand the LPA's attitude to segregated entrances, or "poor doors". This has come up in at least one review of a scheme for Newham itself, where the architect proposed such an arrangement which was resisted by the design review panel and subsequently changed. It would be useful to understand officers' thoughts on this topic.
- Information provided on site context and landscape is often poor or missing.
- Public realm and landscape design is often placed into left over space rather than being provided as space that is needed for sitting and pedestrian and cycle movement for example. There is often a rough public realm/ landscape layout or design but very rarely all the back up information required to review whether that design is grounded in its locality so very hard to judge its appropriateness or how it integrates. On some sites for example, design and development should be very much dictated by location eg sites in the flood plain that need to demonstrate flood mitigation and regeneration of the ecology of the flood plain so it is difficult to judge these sites without this information.
- Development quantum always dictate built volume rather than the urban realm requirements dictating the space for development and this needs to change. Microclimate issues such as overshadowing of public space or wind and mitigation is not often studied and often solutions put forward for providing

trees at ground level for mitigation which is inappropriate as this should also be tackled through façade manipulation.

- Urban greening factor, open space requirements and play requirements as well as shadow diagrams showing the impact of development on open space should always be presented at an initial review so these studies can contribute to a view on whether the site is being overdeveloped.
- Information on public transport, cycle access, 15 minute neighbourhoods should be used to back up reduced car usage and the appropriateness of the site for intended uses. Sustainability strategies related to recycling, reuse and local materials should also be discussed at initial reviews.
- The comments made about the quality of the built outcome needs to be strengthened. Although it is understandable that enforcement is a challenge to resources, the quality of the built outcome really needs to be kept under scrutiny; and perhaps the planning conditions could more directly include some of the key issues set out in design reviews relating to design in any planning permission.
- If it is felt that the architects are good, then it would be beneficial if the review panel could make it clear that the architects should be retained to deliver the project post planning.
- There appears to be some tension between the Borough's desire to deliver appropriate and well-designed housing, including family homes, with the London wide housing targets set by the GLA. The problem is that housing targets are set in economic and broad development policies and are not derived from spatial propositions or intelligent analysis of context and forward planning through design.
- The aspirations for development capacity on publicly owned land seem to be more ambitious than on land in private ownership, which is a worrying indicator that quality will be low. The capacity for density is dependent on many factors outside the application sites (schools provision open space, facilities etc) but there does not seem to be a reliable analysis of appropriate density for large scale sites that is based on good urban design thinking, which also represents what Newham believes to be appropriate for the Borough.
- It would be hugely beneficial for design review if public land could be progressed more co-operatively between authorities based on shared aspirations and quality objectives and not 'unit' delivery. Design review itself can help improve quality but it does not set the brief or establish the aspiration for sites. The Borough needs, therefore, to be less reactive on major sites and more demonstrative in setting out what it would like to achieve through forward design and planning and not just a narrative of good intentions.
- It would help to review previous schemes from the past decade (or more) to build a better understanding of the relationship between density, tenure mix and housing typologies and how these factors contribute to successful schemes.
- The challenge of private ground floor amenity space (to ground floor flats) which is solely on eg a public road.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refuse, bins and bikes – the land take-up of these is ever increasing – and is frequently fighting with active frontages. In the light of this, have we got the overall strategies/thinking right?</li> <li>• The challenge of achieving dual aspect – what is and what really isn't acceptable?</li> <li>• The acceptability of tall buildings!</li> <li>• Approach to climate change</li> </ul>
<p>Are there improvements that could be made to the Newham Design Panel review process?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do the panel always see the notes of the outcome/summary? It would be beneficial to.</li> <li>• I chair design review in other regions and uphold the process adopted by Newham as the most robust and effective. We aim to replicate the Newham approach as far as possible. My only suggestion would be to build in more evidence gathering of the effectiveness of reviews and the quality of built outcomes in order that policy objectives can be based on evidence and example.</li> <li>• Another DRP on which I served for many years convened a discussion about the proposals by panel members after the applicants' presentation/s and prior to our comments to them. This offers scope to be more deliberative, and for the panel to be consensual in their feedback. Worth considering.</li> <li>• What works particularly well with Newham DRP is the open discussion, with applicants in the room. It would be good to see more involvement, when appropriate, from local councillors/community representatives, so that the workings of the DRP are communicated more widely and understood.</li> <li>• Although it can be interesting to see a site – and good to know the area – I am not sure all site visits before reviews are the best use of time. Depends on the scheme and site really.</li> <li>• Must admit I have always found the question bit of the agenda difficult. This is with every review, everywhere. Panel members don't tend to always ask questions – but pose views as questions. Or they ask loads of questions on info they don't really need to comment on what we are being asked to focus on.</li> <li>• Whilst remote meetings are suitable, in-person combined with site visits are better. Going forwards, perhaps first time a site is being reviewed it should be in-person and could revert to remote thereafter.</li> </ul>

<p>Issues Arising and Actions</p>
<p><b>NEW DRP CHAIR</b></p> <p>During the year, the DRP Chair Neil Deely, notified the Council of his intention to stand down after 9 years. Given the importance of the role to the ongoing success of the panel it was decided that the new Chair should be appointed from the existing pool of panel members to provide continuity and ensure the new Chair had a good</p>

knowledge of the borough, its issues and opportunities and the way in which the panel operates. Following an invitation for expressions of interest, Toby Johnson was appointed to the role for an initial period of two years. Toby was previously a vice-Chair and is an architect and director at Haworth Tompkins Architects.

A transition period has taken place whereby any new schemes coming forward for review have been chaired by Toby Johnson. Where schemes have initially been reviewed with Neil Deely as chair this has been followed through to subsequent reviews and Chair's workshops for consistency and continuity.

Expressions of interest were also sought for 3 vice-chair roles to provide cover if necessary should the usual chair be unavailable/conflicted. Teresa Borsuk, Gerard Maccreeanor and Robert Sakula have been appointed as vice-chairs.

## SITE VISITS

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, all design reviews have taken place online since March 2020. This has meant that only 1 site visit prior to a review took place in the period March 2020 – February 2021. For the most part, virtual site visits using Google Earth and Street View have been sufficient to provide panel members with an understanding of a site and its context. However, for particularly large or complex sites or where there are substantial changes in level or other constraints that can't be appreciated on screen, it is considered that a site visit is beneficial. This is borne out by feedback from panel members with suggestions that first reviews for large or complex schemes should involve a site visit beforehand. At the time of writing (November 2021) restrictions on meeting up have eased and it is planned to revert to carrying out more site visits at forthcoming reviews, where it is considered that this would be beneficial to the review.

## ONLINE REVIEWS

Prior to March 2020 all design review meetings at Newham took place in person, usually at Newham Dockside, with the applicant's presentation material pinned to a magnetic wall. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic all design reviews since then have taken place online using Zoom or MS Teams. Generally this has been working well. It has the benefit of being more convenient for attendees and means it is easier to convene a panel at short notice or use different panel members to review different schemes on the same day.

Feedback from panel members about the remote format has been overwhelmingly positive, although it has been noted that, for larger or more complex schemes in particular, in-person reviews provide more opportunity for interaction, to discuss complex issues and presenting using drawings and models format of DRPs allows the DRP to look at different aspects of the scheme together (at the same time) or re-assess elements, rather than be controlled by the presenter's order / pace and focus of a PowerPoint presentation on Zoom/MS Teams.

Feedback from officers and applicants about the remote format has been less positive. 30% of officers felt the remote format was suitable for design review. The figure from applicants was 50%.

Going forward, and in response to feedback received, it is proposed to introduce a hybrid system for reviews where most first reviews will take place in person with a site visit beforehand and presentations made using physical models and pin-ups. Follow up reviews and Chairs workshops will take place online to benefit from greater flexibility and convenience and once panel members already have a good understanding of the site and scheme from the initial review and site visit.

In order to manage this hybrid system effectively, it may be necessary to have two days per month set aside for design review – one for site visits and in-person reviews and one for remote reviews.

## PANEL COMPOSITION

New recruitment to the panel took place in February 2019. This established a pool of 22 panel members of which 50% were male and 50% were female. Of panel members used at reviews between March 2020 and February 2021 60% were male and 40% were female.

0 Black, Asian and ethnically diverse panel members were used during the period from March 2020 and February 2021.

While the recruitment in 2019 helped address a gender imbalance in the panel membership, the diversity of the panel needs to be improved, particularly in regards to Black, Asian and ethnically diverse panel members. Further recruitment to the panel took place in September 2021 which specifically sought to address the lack of Black, Asian and ethnically diverse panel members. 15% of panel members are now from a Black, Asian and ethnically diverse background. However, improving the diversity of the panel will be an ongoing process and the aim is to progressively improve representation over the next few recruitment cycles.

Some individuals have been on the panel since its inception in 2007. While the continuity and consistency of panel members is considered to be one of the strengths of the panel, asking some of the longest standing panel members to step down during the next planned round of recruitment in 2023, would open up opportunities for new panel members and potentially enable the diversity of the panel to be improved. However it is considered very important to maintain the right balance between new and more experienced panel members.

## APPLICANT FEEDBACK

As part of the annual review a feedback survey was sent to all applicants who presented to the Panel (including architect, planning agents and clients). Feedback

surveys were also sent out to panel members and planning officers in the major developments team.

The responses received were overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the process, from the engagement with the Council beforehand, the review itself and the written feedback afterwards. The responses are summarised in the tables above.

However, only 50% of the respondents agreed that the Panel is good value for money. This can be explained, at least partially, by the fact that the majority of the respondents were architects who would not be responsible for paying for the service. There were a high proportion of 'don't know' answers to this question. The cost of presenting to the DRP is comparable with other local Panels in London.

## APPLICANT FEEDBACK

Detailed feedback from applicants and action proposed (where applicable):

- Would be helpful for the Council to provide information about wall space/pin up capacity (for in person reviews).

*Action: This will be provided in the guidance note to applicants.*

- Is sending the design information prior to the DRP useful to panel members? I would prefer to present the scheme to them afresh.

*Action: pre-meeting information will continue to be sent to panel members. Based on feedback, most find this useful.*

- The meeting should be carried out in person rather than over Zoom. The site visit followed by pin-up at Dockside is a more effective means of carrying out a design review.

*Action: There are benefits to carrying out reviews in-person as well as remotely using Zoom/MS Teams. Going forward a hybrid model is likely to be used whereby first reviews take place in person (including site visit). Where follow up reviews or Chair's workshops are required these could take place remotely.*

- [The remote format provides] obvious efficiencies, but hampers free flowing discussion. Site visits essential for most if not all schemes that are of sufficient scale to go to DRP.

*Action: See above.*

- DRP members perhaps a little eager to invoke the Mayor and their understanding of her priorities/opinions (e.g. over tenure mix, split of cores etc).

*Action: None. DRP members have attended briefing sessions with the Mayor in her role as Lead Member for Regeneration and Planning. While the DRP*

*members are there to provide independent advice, where their views align with those of the Mayor, it is not unreasonable to comment as such.*

- We struggled with the Panel's focus on the wider estate regeneration and the difficulty they had in appreciating the limits of the project, both in terms of approvals as to what we can do and what we can afford.

*Action: None. The panel were briefed by planning officers in relation to this particular scheme (as with all others). It is the role of the DRP to try to pinpoint the crux of the issue, whether this is related to the brief, the detailed design or anything else. In this case there were also clear planning policies requiring the applicants to consider their land ownership more holistically.*

- Although it can be interesting to see a site – and good to know the area – I am not sure all site visits before reviews are the best use of time. Depends on the scheme and site really.

*Action: Generally site visits and in-person reviews will be carried out for first reviews. This is particularly true for large or complex schemes. However, the need for a site visit for each review will be considered on a case by case basis. For some smaller schemes, it may be a better use of time not to carry out a site visit if the site and its constraints/opportunities can be understood using Google Earth/Street View.*

## PLANNING OFFICER FEEDBACK

Topics / themes raised during design reviews that authority could benefit from further CPD / learning on:

- Officers have requested further training on securing public realm improvements through section 278, Green and Brown roofs, hard landscape materials that can contribute to SUDS.
- More learning visits should be carried out to completed schemes to see what works well and what doesn't.
- New planners should be invited to attend DRP.

*Action: Further training to be arranged for planning officers by the Design and Heritage team on the topics raised above, including site visits. New planners are already welcome to attend DRP but this could be made more explicit. Reminders will be sent out to team leaders encouraging any new members of staff to attend the DRP.*

Specific officer comments / feedback to be raised/ actioned:



- Maybe some subheadings/signposts during the review and in the report to better navigate the comments.

*Action: None. The DRP report is also divided into sections with topic subheadings.*

- Case for in person reviews– feel the architects spot more on the in-person DRP meetings and may work off each other better. However note the practical reasons for why we have [been having] them online.

*Action: See above.*

- Overall the comments are relevant, but views may be raised that are beyond the scope of the planning application or contrary to policy. As long as the panel are sufficiently briefed (before/afterwards) then it doesn't impact the developers view. Example: asking why something can't be taller when in policy terms the site isn't allocated for taller buildings. I think it would be helpful, if not already done, to brief DRP members on key issues beforehand for contentious schemes. Applicants see the view of the DRP members as representing the view of the LPA.

*Action: The panel are already briefed beforehand on any relevany policy considerations relating to a site. However if comments are still made that directly conflict with planning policy, this will be discussed with the chair during the drafting of the report and potentially omitted from the final report if appropriate.*

- I think the site visits were helpful so would be good to get back to these when we can.

*Action: See above. It is proposed to revert to site visits/in-person reviews for most first reviews.*

## PANEL MEMBER FEEDBACK

Any topics/themes consistently raised during design review meetings that the Planning Authority should aim to address/feedback to be raised/actioned:

- Presentations often lack context, landscape proposal or neglect narratives around how public realm will be used and there is a general lack of wider urban design thinking about how schemes fit into and will augment the local/wider environment and economy of the locale and within London.

*Action: The guidance provided to applicants will be augmented to stress the importance of the above information.*

- Generally fairly undeveloped broader urban design context because there aren't enough resources for more development frameworks to guide development across the borough, so schemes tend to arrive without this guidance.

*Action: The Council's planning policy team is developing a Characterisation Study of the borough which will provide site specific guidance for important sites.*

- More use should be made of DRP members' skills to look at areas within the borough that need improvement to identify where urban design and design coding might be needed to guide future development.

*Action: DRP to be used in Local Plan refresh work, including reviewing the emerging borough Characterisation Study and guidance.*

- There is also clearly pressure, from within the panel, particularly from new members, for a more local involvement.

*Action: Panel members, particularly those with local knowledge/experience, to be invited to take part in local plan design policy workshops.*

- Would be beneficial to have proactive engagement by Newham's Regeneration team on their aspirations from development. It can seem as if the DRP members are infusing their own expectations of this. How proposed developments would work in practice is a recurrent theme, especially in regards to housing. It might be helpful to have a Council perspective on operational sites at the DRP, in respect of refuse operations, etc.

*Action: Where appropriate, representatives from other Council departments will be invited to DRP meetings to provide input/respond to queries etc.*

- It would be good to understand the LPA's attitude to segregated entrances, or "poor doors". This has come up in at least one review of a scheme for Newham's itself, where the architect proposed such an arrangement which was resisted by the design review panel and subsequently changed. It would be useful to understand officers' thoughts on this topic.

*Action: Where separate entrances are proposed, DRP members will be briefed on the LPA's position: namely that, separate entrances by tenure are accepted in principle (this is usually preferred by RSL's to ensure service charges remain affordable) but there should be no discernible difference in quality (in terms of location, access, legibility, proportion, detailing, materiality etc.) or access to communal amenities.*

- Public realm and landscape design is often placed into left over space rather than being provided as space that is needed for sitting and pedestrian and cycle movement for example. There is often a rough public realm/ landscape layout or design but very rarely all the back up information required to review whether that design is grounded in its locality so very hard to judge its appropriateness

or how it integrates. On some sites for example, design and development should be very much dictated by location eg sites in the flood plain that need to demonstrate flood mitigation and regeneration of the ecology of the flood plain so it is difficult to judge these sites without this information.

*Action: The guidance provided to applicants will be augmented to stress the importance of the above information.*

- Development quantum always dictate built volume rather than the urban realm requirements dictating the space for development and this needs to change. Microclimate issues such as overshadowing of public space or wind and mitigation is not often studied and often solutions put forward for providing trees at ground level for mitigation which is inappropriate as this should also be tackled through façade manipulation.

*Action: Newham has some of the highest housing targets in London and is under significant pressure to deliver this. The DRP plays/will continue to play a crucial role in challenging excessive development quantum where this is considered to be having a detrimental impact on the public realm or any other aspect of the scheme's design.*

- Urban greening factor, open space requirements and play requirements as well as shadow diagrams showing the impact of development on open space should always be presented at an initial review so these studies can contribute to a view on whether the site is being overdeveloped.

*Action: The guidance provided to applicants will be augmented to stress the importance of providing the above information.*

- Information on public transport, cycle access, 15 minute neighbourhoods should be used to back up reduced car usage and the appropriateness of the site for intended uses. Sustainability strategies related to recycling, reuse and local materials should also be discussed at initial reviews.

*Action: The guidance provided to applicants will be augmented to stress the importance of providing the above information.*

- The comments made about the quality of the built outcome needs to be strengthened. Although it is understandable that enforcement is a challenge to resources, the quality of the built outcome really needs to be kept under scrutiny; and perhaps the planning conditions could more directly include some of the key issues set out in design reviews relating to design in any planning permission.

*Action: Where appropriate comments about the quality of construction/materials/details can be emphasised during the drafting of the report. The Council carries out some informal monitoring of large schemes during construction (by the Design and Heritage Team) and takes enforcement action where expedient.*

- It would help to review previous schemes from the past decade (or more) to build a better understanding of the relationship between density, tenure mix and housing typologies and how these factors contribute to successful schemes.

*Action: Subject to resources, it is proposed to carry out some post completion/occupancy reviews of schemes to understand the lessons that can be learnt and applied to future reviews.*

- Do the panel always see the notes of the outcome/summary? It would be beneficial to.

*Action: Panel reports will be sent out to all panel members who reviewed the scheme.*

- Another DRP on which I served for many years convened a discussion about the proposals by panel members after the applicants' presentation/s and prior to our comments to them. This offers scope to be more deliberative, and for the panel to be consensual in their feedback. Worth considering.

*Action: For transparency, it is considered preferable for all panel members to express their views directly to/in front of the applicants as per the current format. Any lack of consensus in panel members views can be dealt with by the Chair in the summary and/or the DRP note. This enables a range of views to be heard and considered.*

- It would be good to see more involvement, when appropriate, from local councillors/community representatives, so that the workings of the DRP are communicated more widely and understood.

*Action: Members of the Strategic Development Committee have been invited to attend DRP as observers in the past, although take up has been limited. Reminders will be sent out to Members that the DRP is open for Members to attend in an observational capacity. For some schemes community representatives have also been invited to attend DRP. E.g. The Custom House masterplan is being co-designed by the local community and residents involved in the co-design were invited to attend the review of that scheme by the DRP. Further consideration will be given as to how, where appropriate, local Councillors/representatives can be more involved in the DRP.*

- Although it can be interesting to see a site – and good to know the area – I am not sure all site visits before reviews are the best use of time. Depends on the scheme and site really.

*Action: It is the intention is to introduce a hybrid system of site visits and in-person reviews for first reviews, with follow up reviews carried out online. However, it is recognised that reviews of some smaller schemes could happen entirely online, including a virtual site visit where the site and its constraints/opportunities can be adequately understood from Google*

*Earth/Street View. This will be considered where it would be a better use of time and resources.*

- I have always found the question bit of the agenda difficult. This is with every review, everywhere. Panel members don't tend to always ask questions – but pose views as questions. Or they ask loads of questions on info they don't really need to comment on what we are being asked to focus on.

*Action: None. Structuring the review into questions and comments by the Chairs summary is considered to be useful. It helps applicants understand the questions are to be responded to by them to clarify any aspects of the presentation, whereas the comments are the panel's views on the scheme and do not require a response. It is also very helpful for the panel co-ordinator taking notes in that it is only the comments and summary that need to be recorded for the final report.*