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Consulting the Commission through the Design Review Service

August 2017

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Table of contents

1	Introduction
2	About the Design Review Service
2.1	Overview
2.2	Why consult the Commission?
2.3	Which projects benefit from the Design Review Service?
2.4	When is the best time to consult the Commission? Early and ongoing engagement
2.5	Who can register a project for Design Review?
2.6	The Design Review Panel
3	The design approach we advocate
4	The Design Review Process
4.1	The Design Review Process – before the meeting
4.1.1	Registering a project: the important first step
4.1.2	Cancellation policy
4.1.3	Submitting pre-review information
4.1.4	The role of the Lead Panellist
4.1.5	Site visit
4.2	The Design Review Process – on the day
4.2.1	How will the meeting be structured?
4.2.2	Who should attend?
4.2.3	Project presentation and what to bring on the day
4.2.4	Discussion
4.3	The Design Review Process – after the meeting
4.3.1	Written Comment
4.3.2	Additional information
4.3.3	Confidentiality and publicity
4.3.4	Documentation
5	Welsh Government ‘call in’ procedures and Planning Inquiries of the Planning Inspectorate of England and Wales
6	Conflicts of interest
7	Complaints Procedure
8	Contact information

Introduction

Our vision is for a Wales that is simply a better place.

We promote good design for the built environment, across sectors, by connecting the design disciplines.

We support local planning authorities, developers and clients to capture the value of high quality design for better outcomes and better return on investment.

We nurture design talent for a skilled workforce necessary for growth and innovation.

By promoting good design and communicating its benefits, we add value and help to support well-being and enhanced quality of life for people throughout Wales.

One of the ways we promote good design is through our national Design Review Service which provides early, strategic opportunities for clients, designers, developers, local planning authorities and others, to seek an independent view and draw on the Commission's multi-disciplinary expertise, to add value and improve design quality on development proposals throughout Wales. You can find out more about our other activities on our website: www.dcfw.org

This document provides you with the information you need if you are considering using the Design Review Service or preparing for a Design Review meeting.

We are happy to help with any questions or provide further information, so please contact us at connect@dcfw.org or telephone us on +44 (0) 29 2045 1964.

2

About the Design Review Service

2.1

Overview

The Design Review Service provides for a flexible, constructive and strategic engagement process that is recognised as robust and authoritative.

Projects are presented to the Design Commission for Wales' (DCFW) multi-disciplinary panel of experts and, through constructive discussion, the Commission helps developers, design teams and local planning authorities deliver the best design quality and value.

Since 2004 we have reviewed over 500 projects of varying type and scale throughout Wales, ranging from single dwellings in National Parks to large energy infrastructure projects.

Early consultation with the Commission is recommended in national planning policy and associated practice guides and we recommend multiple reviews for complex or significant projects.

The Commission is a non-statutory consultee. However, its comments represent material considerations in a local planning authority's determination of planning applications. DCFW's comment is recognised as authoritative by the Planning Inspectorate.

Design Review meetings take place at DCFW's office in Cardiff or other locations around Wales. For very large or significant schemes, we may include a site visit as part of the meeting.



Design Review discussions in progress

Why consult the Commission?

DCFW's aim is to improve the overall design quality of development in Wales, because we know that good design:

- Maximises efficiency and value for money
- Focuses on users, maximising ease of use, accessibility, inclusiveness and public value
- Uses resources and energy efficiently, contributing to carbon reduction
- Has been shown to significantly improve patient recovery times in healthcare
- Has been shown to reduce the public health problems linked to poor housing
- Reduces maintenance, costly refurbishments and running costs
- Makes products, places and buildings more attractive
- Adds value and enhances public good

The expertise contributed through the Design Review Service is a constructive part of the design process.

Through the Design Review Service we:

- **capture early opportunities to add value by optimising design quality**
- **provide independent, professional comment**
- **offer a breadth of expertise which may not be available to the project team, the local planning authority or stakeholders, which may highlight opportunities that have not previously been identified**
- **support and encourage the delivery of genuinely sustainable places, buildings and infrastructure which enhance well-being and quality of life**
- **assist local planning authorities, public bodies and other agencies to support aspiration and ambition for design quality, to strengthen their own design guidance, and review procurement approaches and development practices**
- **help define a reasoned basis for design and procurement decisions**
- **share knowledge of previous and current development projects in Wales that can assist coordination and collaboration**
- **create an opportunity to take a step back and a fresh look at the design process to enhance clarity in the design story**

“Our interaction with DCFW was creative and collaborative at all stages of the process. The conversation at the review meeting was very interesting and led to changes being made to the design which the scheme has benefited from. We enjoyed the dialogue and thought it was a good example of how DCFW can help.”
Alun Jones - Dow Jones Architects for Maggie's South East Wales

Which projects can benefit from the Design Review Service?

The Commission reviews schemes which:

- Are significant because of their size, complexity or public impact
- Are significant because of their site and/or context
- Exemplify persistent design problems facing developers, local planning authorities or community and neighbourhood groups

We consider projects of varying type and scale throughout Wales including:

- Strategic sites, masterplans and urban design frameworks
- Village, town and city centre regeneration
- Public realm and landscape projects
- Heritage, conservation and cultural projects
- Individual buildings
- Residential and mixed use developments
- Healthcare, schools, and public service buildings
- Transport and energy infrastructure projects

The significance or impact of a project can belie its scale. Smaller projects are equally important to us where there is potential for significant impact.

Local authorities may use the service to workshop and test masterplan proposals and/or strategic development opportunities.

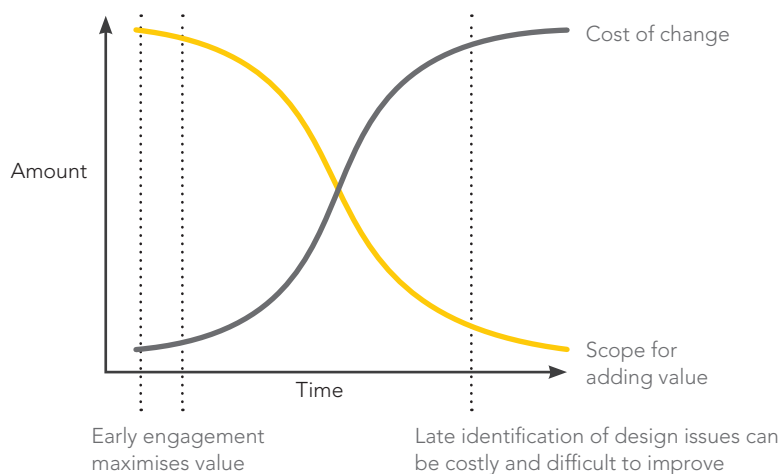


Design review discussions in progress



When is the best time to consult the Commission? Early and ongoing engagement

Cost/value graph shows how engagement at an early stage in the design process can add value, whereas late identification of design issues can be costly and cause delays



Early engagement is essential to maximise the benefits of Design Review.

When proposals are at a formative stage the expertise available through the Commission can be most effective as a constructive part of the design process. The early stages of design development and decision making offer the greatest opportunities for securing good quality, adding value and avoiding the costs of re-working or making changes later. Typically, this will be early in the pre-application stage, during RIBA Stage 2 Concept Design, once strategic design approaches have been defined.

Early consultation with the Commission is recommended in *Planning Policy Wales, Technical Advice Note 12: Design, (TAN 12)*, and practice guidance on *Realising the Potential of Pre-application Discussions and Planning for Sustainable Buildings*. You can find links to these documents on page 23 of this publication.

'The Design Commission for Wales provides a free Design Review Service, which allows early consultation with its independent expert panel. The Commission also publishes case studies and produces good practice guides on design related issues, which may be useful for pre-application discussions.'

p. 13, Practice Guide: Realising the potential of pre-application discussions, published by the Welsh Government in May 2012

Please note, however, that Design review should not be seen as a substitute for pre-application consultation with the local planning authority or community.

For strategic sites, complex or larger scale projects, Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs), transport or other infrastructure we recommend an initial scoping meeting to establish the nature and needs of the project, the timescale within which you are working and how the Commission can best assist.

The Commission welcomes longer term engagement and may review a project several times through its design and development process. Teams are welcome to return when it is clear that additional reviews would be helpful.

The Design Review Service is flexible and, whilst a minimum number of meetings each month are planned in advance, we regularly supplement these to accommodate projects in a timely manner and to allow for longer term engagement.

In the first instance, we strongly recommend that you telephone or email us so that we can register your project and discuss what form of engagement will work best for your scheme.

2.5 **Who can register a project for Design Review?**

The service is available for developers, clients, designers, planning authorities, stakeholders and other public bodies, community groups or members of the public who wish to seek an independent expert view and to draw upon the expertise of the Commission. Any of the above may register a project for Design Review.

If you are involved in a project which you think would benefit from the Design Review Service, please contact us to discuss your project and register for a review meeting.

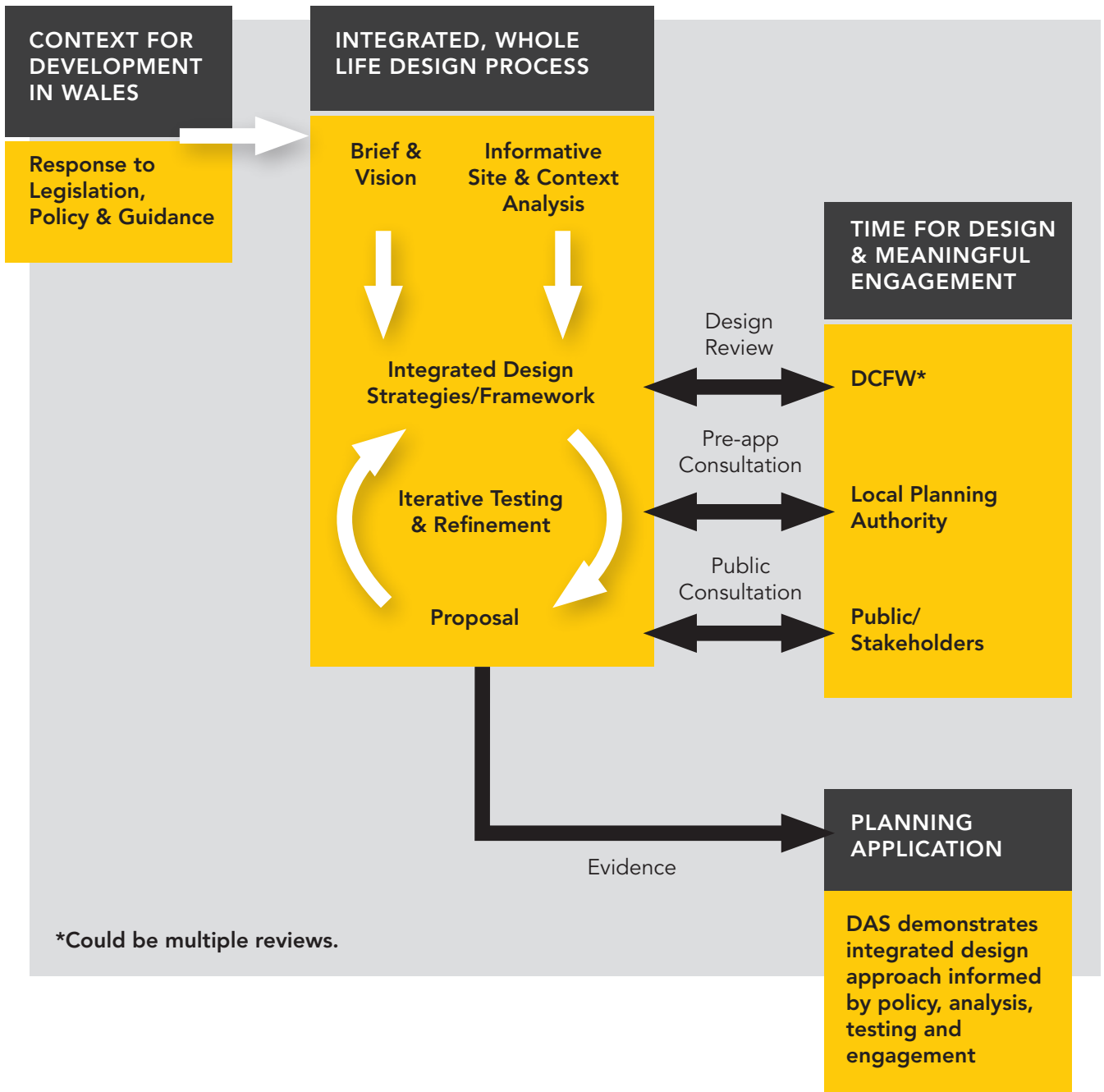
2.6 **The Design Review Panel**

The Design Review Service draws on a panel of over 30 practising professionals, each with their own specialist expertise. The multi-disciplinary profile of this team means that a range of experience is available, including architecture, urban design, commercial property development, landscape, transport, civil and structural engineering, planning and environmental design.

A list of panel members is published on our website at www.dcfw.org

The Design Review Panel members are appointed through competitive application and interview. Reappointments are subject to individual biennial reviews to maintain the quality of the service and ensure a balance of relevant expertise. Panellists are unpaid and collectively represent significant private sector support for DCFW's work.

As current practitioners, members of the Design Review Panel are constantly updating their knowledge and expertise. DCFW also provides training and development to continually improve the review process and to ensure that we are well informed of design innovation, developments in planning and sustainable practice, changes to regulation and policy, new guidance, and other relevant issues.



3.1

Response to legislation, policy and guidance

DCFW's approach to evaluating design quality is informed by relevant legislation, national and local planning policy, guidance and standards. These set the context for development in Wales and encourage good design practice. At Design Review we look for evidence that proposals are being designed in response to the following:

Legislation, Policy & Guidance	Design Response
Planning (Wales) Act 2015	Planning context and process
Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015	<p>Responds to Seven Well-being Goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A prosperous Wales – A resilient Wales – A healthier Wales – A more equal Wales – A Wales of cohesive communities – A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language – A globally responsible Wales <p>Upholds the Five Ways of Working:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Long term – Prevention – Integration – collaborations – Involvement
Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 and Design Guidance	Better opportunities for cycling and walking for everyday journeys
Equality Act 2010	Promote equal opportunities for all
Planning Policy Wales	<p>Land use planning</p> <p>Sustainability through good design and planning</p>
Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12: Design	Sustainability through good design – Objectives of good design
TAN 18: Transport	Efficient, sustainable, healthy transport systems
Practice Guide: realising the potential of pre-application discussions	Informed by discussion with local planning authority
Site and Context Analysis Guide: Capturing the value of a site	Application of early, informative analysis of site and guidance
Practice Guidance: Planning for Sustainable Buildings	Integrated approach to sustainable design and planning
Inclusive Design in the Built Environment	Design for all
Building for Life 12 (Wales)	Urban design quality in residential development
Manual for Streets Volumes I & II	People orientated streets

3.2

Integrated, whole-life design

The Commission advocates an integrated approach to design rather than separate consideration of different issues. To achieve this, different expertise need to be brought together as an integrated design team from the outset, including architects, landscape architects, urban designers, environmental designers, engineers and cost consultants.

Good design is not only about how something looks, but also how well it performs and positively contributes to its context. The design of landscape and public realm is equally as important as the design of buildings, and the relationship between the two is crucial. Environmental design and engineering cannot be effectively added to a project at a later stage of the design process.

We advocate maximising the 'whole life' value of a development by promoting sustainable design that:

- Reinforces social cohesion and a sense of community
- Contributes to economic prosperity
- Minimises negative environmental impact
- Contributes to health and well-being
- Enhances public value.

3.3

Time for design and meaningful engagement

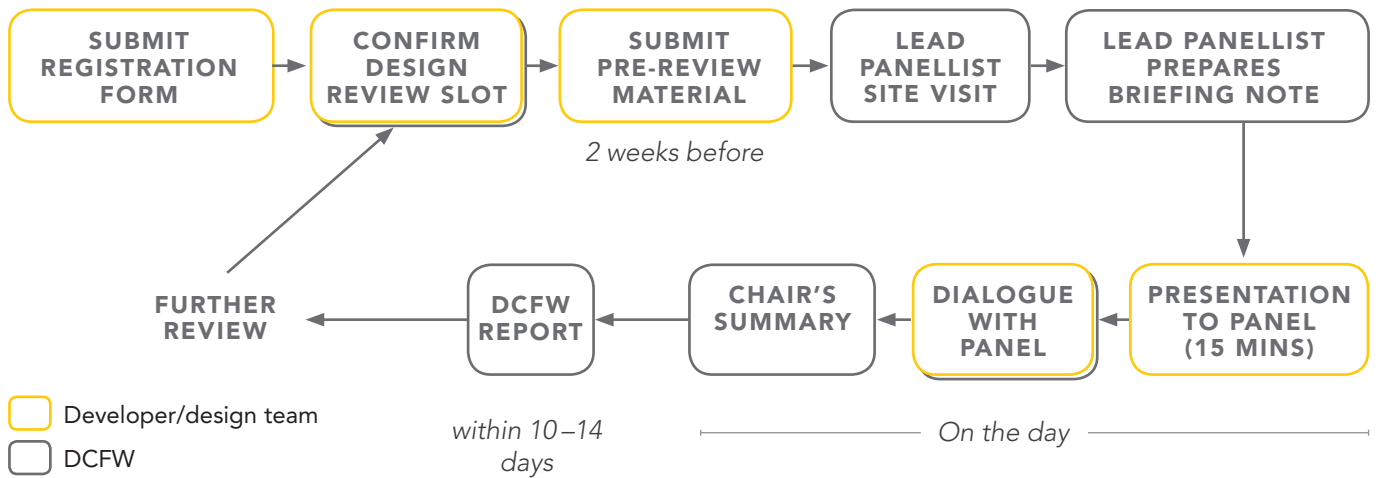
To achieve best quality and value, sufficient time is required for design and meaningful engagement.

From experience, the Commission knows that investing in the early design stages and allowing time for an iterative process of analysis and testing leads to better design and helps minimise risks and cost later in the project.

The Planning (Wales) Act 2015 introduced a statutory period of Public Consultation prior to the submission of a planning application. Public consultation and engagement with other stakeholders is only meaningful if it informs the design process. This requires time to analyse feedback and incorporate changes before a planning application is made. The Commission will expect this to be fully programmed.

4

The Design Review Process



4.1

The Design Review Process – before the meeting

4.1.1

Registering a project: the important first step

The first step in the process is to register your scheme with us so that we have basic information about the proposal and understand its nature, planning status and timescales. Please call or email us to obtain a registration document at the earliest opportunity. Email connect@dcfw.org or Telephone +44 (0) 29 2045 1964.

Once a completed registration document is received we will contact you about your project and programme to discuss how much time and how many meetings you may need and when they should take place.

We cannot make any arrangements until the scheme is registered. Completing and returning your registration is the first step required.

4.1.2

Cancellation policy

DCFw's preparation for consultation through the Design Review Service is intensive and requires significant administration resources and agreeing the diary commitments of many professionals.

For this reason, once you have confirmed, we operate a cut-off date for cancellation which falls **two weeks** before the review. We will advise you of the cut-off date when we confirm arrangements with you. We will aim to re-arrange meetings only if we are informed of changes or cancellation before the cut-off date.

Cancellation on or after the cut-off date, will attract a **£350 administration charge**.

4.1.3

Submitting pre-review information

You will need to submit a package of pre-review material to DCFW two weeks in advance of the date of the meeting. We will confirm the date by which this information is needed when we confirm your meeting date and time. **We will need three hard copies and one electronic copy of the pre-review information.**

The purpose of submitting pre-review material is to enable the DCFW team to understand the context and proposals. This understanding is useful for our site visit and aids a constructive, in-depth discussion at the review meeting.

The material and information you provide will reflect the stage of development of your project. We understand that designs remain fluid and are likely to change. The material should be concise but clearly communicate the fundamentals of the project and the approach being taken. The level and type of information will depend on the scale and nature of the scheme, but as a guide should include:

- An outline of the project vision, objectives and brief.
- A location plan and existing site layout (this helps facilitate a site visit)
- Relevant analysis of site and context, showing how this has informed the design approach
- Strategy drawings to show your approach to:
 - access and movement
 - environmental design for comfort and sustainability
 - layout, density and orientation
 - landscape design
 - form and massing etc.
- Plans, sections and elevations for the proposal showing **context**. All plan drawings should clearly indicate a north point.
- A clear, concise draft Design and Access Statement (DAS), which may include the information above. This should be visually rich and explain the design approach through diagrams and drawings rather than text. Please refer to *Design and Access Statements in Wales*, published by Welsh Government

If the scheme has been reviewed before, please provide information to update the Commission on key changes and design process steps since the previous review.

4.1.4

The role of the Lead Panellist

We will identify a Design Review panellist to lead the review of your project. They will make a site visit and study the material you send prior to the meeting, identifying key design issues where quality can be improved and value added. They will lead the discussion around these key points at the Design Review meeting.

4.1.5

Site visit

To enable the lead panellist's site visit, contact details and information regarding limitations or special access arrangements related to the site must be provided in your registration document.

If you arrange to meet a member of the DCFW team on site, discussion must be restricted to clarifying the pre-review material and NOT pre-empting the review meeting or making a promotional case for the scheme.

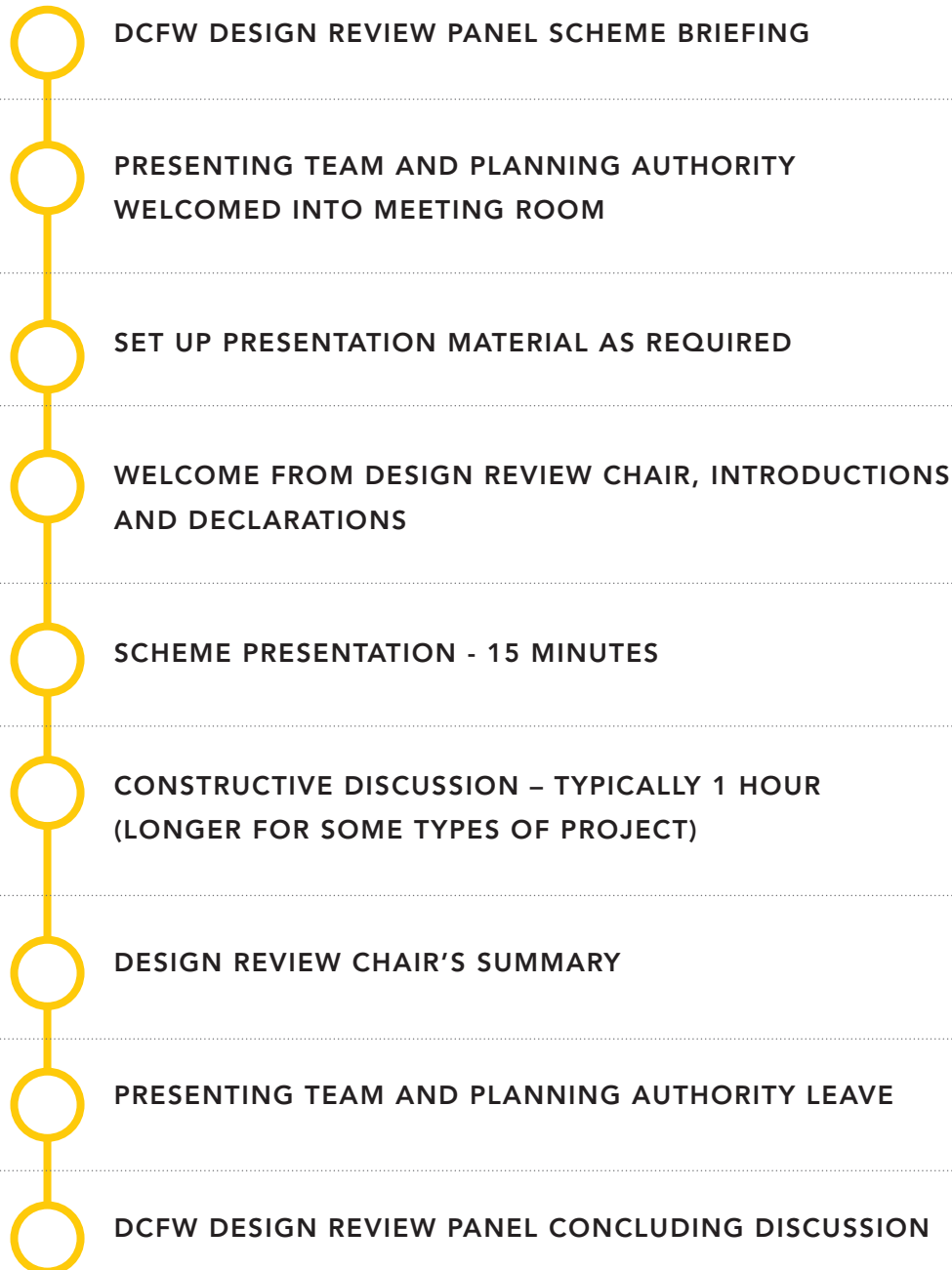
4.2

The Design Review Process – on the day

4.2.1

How will the meeting be structured?

The diagram shows how a typical Design Review meeting is structured:



Very large or complex schemes may be given more time, and this will have been discussed when you registered the project. You will be advised in advance of the timings for your meeting.

4.2.2

Who should attend?

It is most beneficial if the meeting is attended by:

- client/developer
- key members of the design team
- planning consultant
- local planning authority
- other significant stakeholders

You should aim to bring up to 6 people

DCFW will, where appropriate, invite a representative of the local planning authority to attend the meeting and provide a written Planning Context Briefing in advance, in order that we are aware of their views and any concerns.

It is usual that approximately five representatives of DCFW's Design Review panel will be present, including at least one of our Design Advisors from the staff team, as well as our Chief Executive. One of DCFW's co-chairs will chair the meeting.

Occasionally, observers may be present to observe the process. DCFW has robust protocols for observers that apply for all projects, especially where teams have requested confidential consultation.

4.2.3

Presenting your scheme and what to bring on the day

Following a welcome from the Chair and introductions, you will need to clearly and succinctly communicate your current development proposals and the process you took to get there. You will usually be allocated **15 minutes** to do this. It is important to keep to time, as the value of the meeting is in the discussion with the expert panel.

We recognise that a significant amount of progress may be made between the submission of pre-review material and the meeting itself, so you should aim to bring DCFW up to date, identifying areas that have changed or progressed.

Why is it like that?

Make sure you tell us what has informed the design decisions you have made.

What process have you been through to get to where you are now?

Your presentation should cover:

- A **succinct** outline of the project vision, objectives and brief
- A concise overview of the procurement and planning context, including key dates
- How the project fits into any wider regeneration strategy and/or strategic vision or masterplan
- Relevant analysis of the site and context, showing how this has informed the design approach

-
- Demonstration of your strategic approach to:
 - access and movement, including Active Travel
 - environmental design for comfort and sustainability
 - inclusive design
 - layout, density and orientation
 - landscape design
 - form and massing etc.
 - An overview of the design proposal, including public realm/landscape design. Make sure all drawings show context and a north point is clearly indicated on plans
 - The detail of the scheme as appropriate for the current design stage
 - Planned next steps

If the scheme has been reviewed before, please explain key changes and design process steps taken since the previous review. You do not need to repeat all the background information in detail again.

Some common myths, which are actually myths!

- **DCFW is only interested in appearance and style**
- **We will only discuss buildings and structures, not the spaces around them**
- **DCFW does not care about costs, viability or buildability**
- **We are not interested in heritage and the value of the historic built environment**
- **Our comment will be the subjective opinions of the panel on the day**
- **DCFW is not concerned with efficiency, building performance and long term issues**

You are welcome to use boards or sheets (DCFW will provide easels) and/or a PowerPoint or PDF presentation. Make sure you will be able to realistically get through all your slides in the allotted **15 minutes**.

Our PC/laptop and projection equipment will be made ready. You can bring your presentation on a USB or send it to us electronically so that it can be pre-loaded. This can be sent by email (up to 9mb), Dropbox or other commonly used file sharing programmes.

Physical models are welcomed and are particularly useful in conveying scale, massing and local impact. They need not be complex and we welcome working models. We cannot store these, so please bring them with you on the day.

Please note: We have ground floor access steps, an alternative accessible entrance, a Grade II listed elevator and standard width doors to our office.

Animations or 'fly-throughs' should not be relied upon as the main material for the meeting and the design team should check that they are compatible with the computer equipment at DCFW in advance.

Following the presentation, the local planning authority, if present, will be invited to comment.

4.2.5

Discussion

The Design Review meeting is structured in a way which promotes dialogue between DCFW and the project team, allowing a constructive yet frank exchange based on mutual knowledge of development, planning, design methods, commercial viability and procurement practices. The discussion is necessarily rigorous and, in the time available, our questions and evaluation are likely to be direct, robust and incisive, whilst being constructive and courteous.

The discussion is likely to focus on 3-5 key issues which the panel has agreed have the best scope to improve design quality and value. Themes which are commonly discussed include:

- Vision and aims
- Communication of design process
- Response to site and context analysis
- Environmental strategy (energy and services, sustainability, comfort and well-being)
- Inclusive design strategy
- Landscape strategy
- Heritage strategy
- Value, budget, cost/m², viability
- Public realm
- Connectivity and Active Travel
- Orientation, layout and density
- Form, scale and massing
- Construction and materials
- Façade design
- Maintaining design quality through planning
- Maintaining design quality through procurement

In closing, the Chair will summarise the key points of the discussion.

“DCFW’s Design Review process was helpful in resolving some of the masterplanning issues faced by Tidal Lagoon Swansea Bay, and securing a better design outcome overall. We found the DCFW team to be friendly, knowledgeable and supportive.”

Alex Herbert - Tidal Lagoon Power Swansea Bay

Panel members, design teams and developers in dialogue at a review meeting



4.3

The Design Review Process – after the meeting

4.3.1

Written Comment

DCFW's comments are distilled in a written report which will be issued to those who attended the meeting within 10-14 working days. The report will constitute our official comment and will place emphasis on the areas which are most important in the evolution of the scheme to achieve the best quality and value.

The report should not be treated as a set of meeting minutes. It will be as brief as possible, using clear language and emphasising key, material issues arising from the discussion. It will be set out in such a manner as to be useful for all parties, including the wider public and other stakeholders, local planning authorities and the Planning Inspectorate. DCFW offers follow-up engagement should further interpretation, clarification or review be required.

4.3.2

Additional information

The comment of the Commission constitutes its independent, expert view at the time it was consulted and based on the material made available.

The Commission does not offer an analysis of whether a proposal should be granted planning permission. This is a matter which is properly the remit of local planning authorities. However, we may ask questions or express a view upon such matters, including the planning context, relation to national and local planning policy and guidance, and the quality of the application. These comments are recognised as material considerations in the planning process.

Design Review reports may form part of the evidential documentation in the event of a planning appeal. If for any reason DCFW does not wish to be further involved in a project on which it has been consulted, it will say so in writing. In such cases, there is no need for DCFW to be consulted formally again as part of the planning process. **In all other cases DCFW should be notified when a planning application is submitted.**

4.3.3

Confidentiality and publicity

In most cases Design Review consultations and the resulting written comment is immediately made public via the Commission's website, social media, press releases and other platforms. The Commission comments in this way for the purposes of public record and in the public interest.

DCFW recognises that the early, informative stages of design, when Design Review can be of most value can often be well in advance of detailed planning discussions, public consultation and planning submissions. Therefore, at times, we offer projects which are not yet in the public domain a confidential meeting, until such time as it becomes public. We will do this on a case by case basis and in order to protect the interests of the design team and allow them to explore different ideas and approaches with us at an early stage. In all cases, however, DCFW will make its views known to the local authority and, where appropriate, to other public bodies.

In cases where the applicant or others publicise or promote the project through artist impressions, other images or verbal comment, or by quoting the comments of the Commission, before a planning application is submitted, DCFW will also make its views public. This includes the period of statutory public consultation.

When a planning application has been submitted, DCFW will make its views on the scheme available to the public. This includes schemes that have been considered in confidence by the Commission prior to a planning application being submitted, but which subsequently become public. In this case, the Design Review report will be made public with the provision that it applies to the scheme at the time it was reviewed. If a scheme has changed significantly, the team should inform DCFW of the nature of the changes or return for further consultation.

4.3.4

Documentation

DCFW will store and may make copies of material submitted pre-review and presented at the Design Review meeting.

DCFW will, from time to time, photograph Design Review Service meetings and workshops in progress, to provide visual material for publication in its literature, case studies and/or for advocacy, educational, dissemination or other purposes.

In the event that materials and images are not already in the public domain, DCFW will seek permission of the relevant parties prior to the publication of any images and will explain its reasons for usage. DCFW will not publish any material prior to the project entering the public domain without consent.

DCFW observes copyright law as it applies in England and Wales and does not exploit images gathered in this way for commercial gain.

DCFW periodically publishes overviews and lessons from the Design Review Service. This often requires the use of images from material submitted for review meetings. Such material will only be published with the permission of the owners and written consent will be obtained beforehand. The Design Review publications can be downloaded from our website: <http://dcfw.org/?category=publications>

Many DCFW publications and much of its archive are also held in the National Library of Wales.

Welsh Government 'call-in' procedures and Planning Inquiries of the Planning Inspectorate of England & Wales

Whatever DCFW's position on relevant applications, local authorities should notify DCFW if those applications are subject to a 'call-in' procedure by the Welsh Government, or are the subject of a Planning Appeal, as DCFW may wish to draw attention to particular issues that might be considered or provide evidence at an inquiry.

DCFW's comments represent 'material considerations' in the planning process. The written reports are recognised as authoritative by the Planning Inspectorate and may be referred to or included in evidence submitted at an inquiry. In certain circumstances the Commission will be represented and/or give evidence at an appeal hearing in its capacity as an independent expert body. The Commission will not appear on behalf of an appellant or local planning authority.

It should be noted that reports are comments on schemes as presented at the time of the review. Proposals may change significantly between the review date and planning submission and determination.

Conflicts of interest

DCFW is fortunate to benefit from the expertise of practitioners from the wide range of built environment and property professions. It is recognised that securing such expertise may present potential conflicts of interest and/or perceptions of such conflicts.

As a national body in receipt of public funding via the Welsh Government, DCFW takes its responsibilities toward public probity very seriously and ensures that any conflicts are identified, declared and recorded at an early stage, and that appropriate action is taken to address them.

The Chair, Commissioners, staff and Design Review Panel are required to declare any personal or business interests that may conflict with their responsibilities.

DCFW maintains a Register of Interests appropriate to the Commission's activities, which lists direct and indirect interests which members of the public might reasonably think could influence their judgment.

Commissioners and Design Review panel members update their register annually and as changes occur. DCFW's register of interests is available to the public.

In addition to the public record of interests, Commissioners and Design Review panel members must ensure that:

- Open declarations of any conflict of interest arising in the time between annual declarations, are recorded in DCFW's register. This means they must be declared immediately they arise
- Invitations or intentions to join other organisations in whatever capacity are declared as soon as they occur
- Declarations must be made regarding any direct or indirect relationship with any company, individual, agent or other party involved in presenting a project to the Commission. Knowledge of or involvement in the same project, or one on the same site for an alternative client, must also be declared. Such declarations are recorded in the Design Review report. If a conflict of interest is deemed to exist, then the panel member must withdraw from the meeting
- Information gained by DCFW team members and the panel, in the course of their service, should not be used for personal or political purposes, to gain financial or non-financial benefits, nor should panel members, staff or Commissioners seek to use the opportunity of service to promote the private interests of connected persons, firms, business or other organisations

Complaints Procedure

Our aim is always to ensure that we provide a helpful, courteous and efficient service. However we accept that occasionally problems may occur. We actively encourage feedback on our performance, and encourage service users, partners and colleagues to share their views with us. For specific business areas we provide formal channels for feedback and we encourage their use.

In the interests of maintaining our high standards we ask that you tell us if you are not satisfied with any aspect of our service or have suggestions as to how we could improve. Your comments are always welcomed.

DCFW's complaints procedure aims to:

- Deal with issues promptly, courteously and efficiently
- Offer clear explanations and take the required corrective action, where appropriate
- Take every complaint seriously and use the experience to improve our service
- Ensure our complaints procedure is clear and simple to use
- Treat all complaints with the strictest confidence, fairness and objectivity

How to make a complaint

If your complaint is a general/non-specific matter, please contact the Resources and Finance Manager (details below).

If your complaint relates to a specific area of DCFW's remit or service, and you know the contact details of the staff member responsible, please contact them initially giving details of the issue. In the first instance DCFW will endeavour to address the matter with you directly and provide the relevant assurances, as complaints can often be resolved quickly and without the need for formal communication. However, if you are not satisfied or feel this is not appropriate and you would prefer to direct your complaint to another person in the organisation, please write to the Chief Executive, detailing your complaint and/or the reason for your dissatisfaction.

DCFW aims to be open and accessible and we are content to receive complaints initially by telephone. However, please note that we will need to receive details of complaints requiring further investigation in writing (by post or email) and you may need to provide your postal address to enable us to respond to your complaint. When making a complaint please provide as much information as possible about the reason for the complaint, any individuals involved and a clear statement as to how or why our service did not meet your expectations.

DCFW will not respond to complaints that are made anonymously

Procedure following receipt of a complaint

When DCFW receives a written complaint we will acknowledge receipt in writing within 5 working days. If possible and appropriate, complaints made by telephone will be addressed immediately and, if requested, a written acknowledgement will follow within 5 working days. If the complaint cannot be resolved by the person it was initially directed to, it will be passed to a more senior member of staff for their attention.

It is DCFW's intention to reply in full, to the majority of complaints within 10 working days, however if a full response cannot be given within that time (such as when dealing with a complex matter or one involving a third party), we aim to respond within 20 working days. If we are not able to meet the 10 working day target we will keep you informed of appropriate timescales and progress.

If you are unhappy with our response, you can write to DCFW's Chief Executive who has direct responsibility for all complaints and who will investigate the matter further and, if necessary, consult DCFW's Chair and Commissioners to revisit the matter again in an attempt to resolve it.

If the complaint results from an issue covered under the Freedom of Information Act please refer to DCFW's Freedom of Information Publication Scheme, detailing how to make a complaint.

For further information about the Design Review Service please contact us:

Comisiwn Dylunio Cymru / Design Commission for Wales
4th Floor, Cambrian Buildings
Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff, CF10 5FL

+44 (0) 29 2045 1964
connect@dcfw.org
www.dcfw.org

Appendices

References and Resources

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 7, July 2014)
<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/planning/policy/ppw/?lang=en>

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12: Design (2014)
<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/planning/policy/tans/tan12/?lang=en>

Practice Guidance: Planning for Sustainable Buildings
<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/planning/policy/guidanceandleaflets/practice-guidance-planning-for-sustainable-buildings/?lang=en>

Practice Guide: realising the potential of pre-application discussions
<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/planning/policy/guidanceandleaflets/preappguide/?lang=en>

Design and Access Statements in Wales, published by Welsh Government
<http://gov.wales/topics/planning/policy/guidanceandleaflets/design-and-access-statements-in-wales/?skip=1&lang=en>

Site and Context Analysis Guide: Capturing the value of a site
<http://gov.wales/topics/planning/policy/guidanceandleaflets/site-and-context-analysis-guide/?lang=en>



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