

Annual Report
of the
Greater Cambridge Design Review Panel
2022 - 2023

September 2023

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this report

This report has been prepared by the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service (GCSPS) as part of the annual review of the Greater Cambridge Design Review Panel (GCDRP), which was established in January 2022. The Panel supports South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) and Cambridge City Council (CCC) in achieving excellent design in new development. It offers multi-disciplinary advice from leading built and natural environment professionals through a robust design review process consistent with the Cambridge Quality Charter for Growth.

The GCDRP is overseen by an Independent Advisory Group (IAG). The IAG ensure the effectiveness and accountability of the Panel in the public interest and, in consultation with the Joint Director of Planning & Economic Development, make recommendations to adjust working practices in accordance with these terms of reference.

The IAG is jointly chaired by the independent built environment experts Esther Kurland and Robin Nicholson and comprises the Chairs of the GCDRP (Maggie Baddeley and Russell Brown), senior Council officers, the Lead Members and Planning Committee Chairs of both Councils (excluding the Joint Development Control Committee as these developments are reviewed by the Cambridgeshire Quality Panel).

This IAG will meet in September 2023 to review the draft report, assess any issues, advise on improvements and the future direction of the Panel. The final report is a public document, comprising the feedback, finance, and a summary of the impact of the GCDRP through the planning process and as development is constructed. The final report will include the IAG's recommendations for the development of the GCDRP.

1.2 Summary of the Greater Cambridge Design Review Panel

<i>Responsible Authority</i>	Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service (South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council)
<i>Panel charges*</i>	Full Review £4,000 + VAT Subsequent Review £3,500 + VAT Chair's Review £2,000 + VAT *This is the full amount charged to applicants.
<i>Payments to panel members</i>	Panel Chairs £300 per review Panel Members £200 per review All Members receive travel expenses and lunch/ refreshments
<i>Resources</i>	2 x GCDRP Managers (2-3 days per month each) + 1 x GCDRP Support Officer (full time). The current Managers are Principal Urban Design Officers Bonnie Kwok and Joanne Preston. The Support Officer is Katie Roberts, Executive Assistant.
<i>Formed</i>	2022
<i>Terms of reference</i>	Yes – published on the GCSP website
<i>Meeting frequency</i>	2 nd and 4 th Thursday of every month
<i>Meeting format</i>	A first Full Design Review of a scheme takes around 3 – 4 hours: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Site visit, 60 minutes (Panel Manager, Planning Officer, Panel Members and applicant's design team) - Briefing by Planning Officer, 15 minutes (Panel and officers only) - Chair introductions and notice of conflict of interest, 5 minutes - Project team presentation, 30 minutes - Panel questions and clarifications, 10 minutes - Panel discussion and summary from the Chair, 60 minutes
<i>Site visit</i>	Site visit for each in-person full review
<i>Output</i>	Review letter with qualitative recommendations
<i>Timescale for written feedback</i>	Letter within 10 working days of the meeting
<i>User feedback post meeting</i>	User evaluation feedback survey requested from applicant, Panel Members and officers
<i>Active promotion</i>	GCSP website, LinkedIn, SCDC magazine
<i>Type of scheme reviewed</i>	All categories of development as defined in 'referral criteria' in terms of reference due to their size, location or significance
<i>Membership</i>	43 Panel Members (including 2 Chairs and 1 Vice Chair) with expertise across the 4 'C's of the Cambridgeshire Quality Charter for Growth. Members were recruited via online advertisements using a published marking criterion. Chairs and Vice Chairs were additionally interviewed for the role. The term for Panel Members, Chairs and Vice Chairs is 3 years.

Figure 1: Table summarising the operation and governance of the GCDRP

2. Panel Member selection and representation

The Panel is made up of 45 members including 2 Chairs and 1 Vice Chair (ref.2.1), with a balance of skills that address the themes of Community, Character, Connectivity and Climate. The members are diverse and nationally respected professionals from the fields of architecture, urban design, planning, landscape architecture, public realm, sustainability, highway engineers, transport planning, conservation, biodiversity and active travel. Panel members are based in Cambridge and different areas of the UK to ensure that the Panel benefits from local knowledge and best practice approaches from elsewhere. A biography for each Panel member is published on the GCDRP [website](#).

Following their appointment to the Panel, both Chairs and all Panel members were invited to complete an anonymised online equality, diversity and inclusion survey; 38 out of 45 panel members responded. A summary of the responses is included within Appendix E.

A typical review involves 4-5 panel members and the Chair. The Panel Managers and Panel Support Officer select the Panel for each review based on the expertise required and the relevance of the members' professional experience to the schemes being reviewed, and their availability. The procedure around managing potential conflicts of interest is clearly set out within the Terms of Reference and this appears to be working well. Where Panel members have previously reviewed a scheme or site, they are invited to attend subsequent reviews of that project. Appendix B shows the Panel make-up of reviews from 1 January 2022 - 30 June 2023. 96% of Panel members have been deployed in the review period.

2.1 Considerations

- In November 2021 David Prichard resigned as Panel Member and Vice Chair. With the agreement of the Chairs and remaining Vice Chair, the Panel has been operating with one Vice Chair since, and this has not posed a resourcing issue to date.
- In recent months, the number of schemes brought for review has increased and it can prove difficult to find Panel members available to cover 'Climate' due to the unavailability of Panel members and a limited number of Panel members who specialise in this area. This has resulted in the same Panel

members being asked to attend many reviews. In contrast, there is a bigger pool of Panel members offering expertise to represent the ‘Character: architecture and urban design’ and there have been fewer opportunities for some of these Panel members to take part in at least one meeting. Appendix B shows Panel members’ attendance at the GCDRP for 18 months between 01 January 2022- 30 June 2023.

- Advice is sought on how we can reach out to under-represented groups. We are particularly interested in recruiting professionals/experts those who consider themselves to have a disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010. This is particularly important as the Cambridge Disability Panel review functions will be incorporated with the GCDRP (See section 10 of this report for further information). None of the existing GCDRP members, who responded to the survey, considered themselves to have a disability.

3. Number and frequency of Panel meetings

GCDRP meetings are scheduled to take place on the second and fourth Thursday of the month. Between 1 January 2022 – 30 June 2023, 23 full reviews and 4 subsequent reviews have taken place, including one full review which was held exceptionally on a Tuesday to accommodate demand. The total number of reviews for this period is 27.

Year	Period	Number of full reviews	Number of subsequent reviews	Number of Chair’s reviews	Total number of reviews
2022	Q1	3	0	0	3
	Q2	4	2	0	6
	Q3	6	0	0	6
	Q4	1	0	0	1
2023	Q1	3	1	0	4
	Q2	6	1	0	7
<i>Total</i>		23	4	0	27

Figure 2: Table summarising the number of reviews carried out by the GCDRP

3.1 Considerations

- To date, there have not been any requests for Chair’s reviews. This is to be expected at this stage in the Panel’s lifespan as the Chair’s review is reserved for schemes that have already been seen by the Panel at least twice.
- Demand for the GCDRP has noticeably increased in the 2nd and 3rd quarters of 2023 and there are already 4 reviews scheduled to take place

between July and September 2023. Some applicants have commented that they must wait over 1 month for a meeting slot because the Panel is booked up in advance.

- On several occasions, after reserving a meeting slot for an applicant and selecting the appropriate Panel members, the applicant has cancelled the review at late notice. This is a waste of resources for Officers and an inconvenience for Panel members and other applicants who could otherwise have been offered that meeting date.
- Some applicants have requested a longer review and site visit for larger schemes. There are currently no charging criteria or format for an extended review and site visit within the current Terms of Reference.

4. Type of schemes reviewed

Of the 27 reviews of the 23 schemes carried out by the GCDRP between 1 January 2022 - 30 June 2023, all were reviewed at a pre-application stage. All 23 schemes were major applications (over 1000sq or 15 homes). The scheme that did not fall into this category was 'significant' because it proposed a series of public realm furniture interventions in important locations within Cambridge City centre and therefore had a high degree of public impact. Other schemes reviewed by the panel included office, research and development and residential mixed-use development.

Date of Panel	Name of Scheme	Type	Application Status
27/01/22	Bespoke furniture (City Council)	Public realm	Permitted development
10/03/22	Burlington Press (City Council)	Offices	Pre-application
10/03/22 and 14/07/22	Sawston Dales Manor Business Park (SCDC)	Research and Development	Approved
9/06/22	Bee Hive Centre (City Council)	Research and Development	Pre-application
23/06/22 and 11/08/22	Stapleford Retirement Village (SCDC)	Residential	Approved
14/07/22	████████████████████	Residential	Pre-application
25/08/22	Trinity School (SCDC)	Residential	Approved
22/09/22 and 23/03/23	████████████████████ ████████████████████	Offices	Pre-application

Date of Panel	Name of Scheme	Type	Application Status
22/09/22 and 13/04/23	Grafton Centre (City Council)	Research and Development	Pre-application
13/10/22	The Welding Institute (SCDC)	Research and Development	Pre-application
27/10/22	Brookmount Court (City Council)	Research and Development	Pre-application
27/10/22	230 Newmarket Road (City Council)	Office and Retail	Pre-application
16/11/22	Melbourn Science Park (SCDC)	Research and Development	Pre-application
8/12/22	██████████	Residential	Pre-application
23/02/23	School Hill, Histon (SCDC)	Residential	Pre-application
7/03/23	Fanshawe road (City Council)	Residential	Pre-application
9/03/23	The Way, Fowlmere (SCDC)	Offices	Pre-application
27/04/23	East Barnwell CIP (City Council)	Residential mixed use	Pre-application
27/04/23	St John's College (City Council)	Residential - Student Accommodation	Pre-application
11/05/23	Hauxton Waste Water Treatment Plant (SCDC)	Research and Development	Pre-application
25/05/23	Babbage House (City Council)	Office	Pre-application
8/06/23	██████████	Office	Pre-application
8/06/23	Land South of Coldham's Lane, Cherry Hinton (City Council)	Research and Development	Pre-application

Figure 3: List of schemes reviewed by GCDRP from January 2022-June 2023

5. Impact on the planning process

Following each review, applicants are sent a survey about their experience. One question specifically asks the applicant to rate how much they agree with the statement:

'We intend to change the scheme as a result of the Panel's feedback'—strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree. Only 4 survey responses have been received; of these, 3 applicants 'agreed' and 1 answered 'neutral'.

4 schemes that have been reviewed by the Panel have progressed to a planning application submission. Planning permission has been received for 3 schemes and 1 is awaiting a decision.

The GCDRP Terms of Reference require the review letters to be attached to the committee and delegation reports and this has been the case for all schemes that have been taken through the planning process. Once a planning application has been submitted, the reports are also published on the GCDRP website.

The following comments were made by Panel Chair, **Maggie Baddeley**, on the extent to which the Panels' comments were considered in the final applications (and officer's reports/ decisions):

Sawston (a hybrid application)

1. It is key to note that the first Panel could not comment comprehensively on bulk, scale, massing, materiality, roofscape etc. in their review, as a comprehensive Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) had not been undertaken - this was a major constraint on that review session, limiting how the Panel Members could respond to most aspects of the proposal.
2. In the second review, the LVIA had been submitted but was not responded to by the Panel - the panel report refers to the Local Planning Authority Officer needing to look at it in detail - and there were no detailed comments on many aspects of revisions to the buildings and their settings in that second report either.
3. The first Panel's comments regarding there being too many site access points was not responded to in the application in terms of there being fewer accesses, although the application did at least propose segregating the uses for the south and east entrance roads to the site, between vehicle users and pedestrians / cyclists.
4. The landscape officer's comments in the Officer's Report summarise the changes made since an (unspecified) 'July doc.' and these changes do reflect the Panels' comments - although they are not directly referred to - in relation to:
 1. the proposed footprint for development being reduced, allowing an extended landscape setting for the buildings, including designed edges to the north and south of the site;
 2. extended landscape to the main entrance areas to the west and the splitting of access for cycles, pedestrians, goods and cars, allowing the

- removal of most of the northern access road along the Green belt boundary;
3. the stepping back of the upper floors of development along this boundary to reduce Green Belt landscape impacts;
 4. a high standard of outdoor amenity space for workers and visitors and a sense of arrival, character and distinctive placemaking around the development.
5. Many matters that the first Panel commented on are subject to further submissions via discharge of conditions, e.g. regarding planting on the North East boundary, tree etc. species, Biodiversity Net Gain and energy.
 6. Disappointingly, the only direct reference to the proposal having been design reviewed in the Officer's Report is as follows (it might have been appropriate for their comments on the application to explain changes during/ since pre-app?): *'Prior to the submission of the application, the scheme was subject to two pre-applications which included two reviews by the Council's Design Review Panel.'*

Stapleford (a reserved matters approval (RMA) application, following a hybrid appeal permission)

1. The RMA application responded to and reflected many of the two panels' comments. The Officer's Report also includes both of the written panel reports as appendices to that report; likewise in the Officer's Report itself, the Urban Design Officer's comments include reference to the two design review panels and how issues raised had subsequently been dealt with. The Officer's Report also refers explicitly to the design review process (para. 10.23): *'Through the pre-application discussions and design review panel feedback, the layout shown through this reserved matters application is considered to demonstrate a far more cohesive and considered typology approach to the character of the development when compared to the outline indicative masterplan.'*
2. Both reviews identified the essential need for a sustainability and energy strategy document that would also provide a design justification for scheme elements to date, and any further design development. An integrated blue and green infrastructure strategy was seen as being 'absolutely key' to the project's success too - but none was presented. At Committee, officers were satisfied all of these requirements had been met, although matters such as biodiversity, green/ brown roofs and drainage would be dealt with via conditions.
3. Various recommendations were taken on board in the application by the design team that had been made in the first review e.g. about how to try and better address the dominance of the car and extensive parking areas.
4. Both Panels were concerned about the design qualities of the central hub in the scheme and suggested either total redesign, or if a contemporary design were to be retained at the very least, there should be resolution of issues around the roof height and the approved parameter plan's 8m maximum. But no MMA is referred to in the Officer's Report; the panel admittedly was made aware that the applicant wanted to keep to 8m for the

pavilion, despite the constraints this would impose down the line on providing PVs/ a green or brown roof.

5. Extensive issues around health and wellbeing remained in the second review (re. wayfinding, footpaths, the eastern landscape buffer, and shared/ circulation spaces). The application drawings do at least address concerns around pedestrian (and possibly wheelchair/ scooter) routes.
6. The second Panel would have found an insight into the proposed lighting strategy for the site helpful - lighting is now subject to two separate conditions, but disappointingly not in terms of a site-wide strategy as such.

Wider impact of the Panel

Chairs and Panel Members were asked to provide observations on the key challenges that GCSP faces in addressing design quality. The following areas were identified as requiring further attention:

- Sustainability information is lacking or added at the end of documents/ presentations as an afterthought.
- Generally, the community engagement/provision aspect of schemes is poor compared to Chairs' experience in other boroughs e.g. those in London.
- The quality of housing schemes could be improved with a move away from standard house types being used.
- Some developers appear to have little awareness of National Design Guide.

5.1 Considerations

- The applicant survey is issued as an online survey following each review along with the report. Although the survey should take less than 4 minutes to answer, the response rate from applicants is low (4 out of 27 reviews).
- Are there more effective ways to monitor the impact of the Panel?
- How can the Panel be more impactful to improve design quality?

6. Resources required to run each panel

Appendix F illustrates the Panel's fees and expenses from 1 January 2022 - 30 June 2023. In 2022 the Panel generated [REDACTED] after panel member fees and expenses have been accounted, and in the first 6 months of 2023 it has generated [REDACTED]. If the number of reviews continues at the current rate, the Panel is expected to generate [REDACTED] in 2023. This is in line with the best-case scenario testing that was carried out as part of the GCDRP review in 2021.

When Officer time, panel member fees and expenses is considered, the average surplus per review is [REDACTED] which is re-invested into panel development (see section 8). The combined cost to the Councils of operating the Design and Conservation

Panel and the Design Enabling Panel was ██████████ per year between 2017-2019, which was not recovered in full.

6.1 Considerations

- How do Panel member fees compare with other Panels?
- How do the applicant fees compare to other services?

7. Feedback from Applicants, Chairs, Panel Members and Officers

After each review, applicant's, Panel Members and Officers are asked to complete a short online survey to understand more about their experience of using the Panel and where improvement could be made. In addition, more general feedback has been collected from Panel members and those Officers and who have referred development proposals to the GCDRP between January 2022 and June 2023. The survey responses can be found in Appendix C.

7.1 Applicants

6 Applicants responded to a request for feedback on their experience of using the Panel. The following comments and suggestions were made:

- The review provided a helpful and an important "pause, check and reset" during the design process. If there was anything to change this time round, it would have been to have had the facility to receive a recording of the review, as previously in May 2021.
- A key issue is the difference of opinion on fairly major issues between the DRP and the advice from officers during the PPA process.
- the amount of admin required of the applicant team to be disproportionate when considering the fee that is being charged. The venue, lunch, etc all fell on the applicant, which inherently felt wrong. It is important to note that the council usually provide the venue and lunch, however on the occasion of this review, for logistical purposes it was agreed that the applicant team would provide this.
- Our experience was very positive. The informal nature and ability to discuss the proposals on site with members of the Panel was welcomed as it gave an opportunity for a conversation which expanded upon the scheme.
- The opportunity to listen to discussion and get feedback at the meeting after the presentation rather than just in a formal letter was very beneficial.
- The joint site visit and the hybrid nature of the session worked well.
- For DRP, no matter the scale of the project, the presentation and discussion periods appear to be the same length. For larger schemes that is quite a challenge and invariable cannot cover all points sufficient to satisfy all panel

members and their individual interests in the project. It would not need a lot more time, but a discussion should be had with applicants to agree what a sensible presentation and discussion time is.

- Could the main topics for discussion be identified before the session. On larger projects there could readily be 20 people involved in the project team. Within panel discussions sometimes the key person is not in attendance to answer questions, but conversely it does not seem right to have 20 people attending (in person or virtual). The review could certainly make better use of the hybrid option and could be bolstered by agreeing what the key topics are.
- If there are key questions, then these could be raised prior to the session to ensure the presentation includes for those specific points.' 'Could the panel also draw out what is good about a project and not be so focussed on what could be better (in their view). The written comments will be available to the Committee members and for some good schemes that just need refinement one would not always know that from the written record.

7.2 Chairs and Panel Members

There were 42 survey responses from the Chairs and Panel members. The feedback was positive with chairs and panel members answering mostly 'agree' and 'strongly agree' to the following statements:

- The virtual site visit benefited the review session
- The briefing by officers during the design review covered the most relevant topics
- You were fully able to contribute your advice in the meeting
- The comments you made during the Panel meeting were accurately reflected in the Review Letter

There was a mixed response to the statement '*There was a good standard and scope of information presented by applicants during the design review meeting*'. The requirements from applicants are set out in the [Quick Guide for Applicants](#).

In addition to the multiple-choice survey responses, panel members and chairs have suggested the following improvements:

- Flexibility around length of reviews depending on type and scale of proposals
- Tighter agendas to ensure a single review does not run across more than 1 morning or afternoon when panel members are paid to attend for a half a day.
- Preference for in person reviews and site visits
- Require the applicant's sustainability consultant to attend the panel meeting
- Sometimes an unreasonably large amount of information is provided by the applicant in advance of the meeting. Expectations around the amount of

information reviewed by panel members needs to be managed by the chair/managers.

- Planning officers require training around material weight of DRP.

7.3 Officers

In total, ten planning officers responded to the general request for feedback, representing a response rate of 100%. There were 10 responses to the online survey which is sent out following each review.

Positive aspects of the GCDRP

The majority of planning officers have found the advice offered by the GCDRP helpful, resulting in improvements on the overall design quality of the development proposals. The positive aspects of the GCDRP are summarised below:

- The design review service has been effective in the Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) process as it complements other additional pre-application services, such as Design Workshops and Youth Engagement Service.
- Planning officers generally felt welcomed by Panel Members. They felt that the overall design review experience was a positive one and it was also considered a productive exercise where everyone was involved.
- Panel Members can see laterally through the proposals and pin-point key design issues.
- Panel Members recognises planning officers' design concerns regarding layout, massing, scale, height, heritage, parking provision, landscape design, public realm, etc which had helped reinforce the need for significant changes to the development proposals.
- The design review meetings provide the opportunity for planning officers to gain insight on professional views.
- The design review meetings encourage officers and developers' design teams to think creatively and to address design issues early rather than them being overlooked or not addressed adequately at the application stage.
- Panel Members encourage the developers and their design teams to consider sustainability measures, such as incorporating Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDs), achieving 20% Biodiversity Net Gain, etc at an earlier stage in the planning and design process. In some cases, the developers agreed to go beyond policy requirements in terms of sustainability measures.

Aspects of the GCDRP which would benefit from improvements

Planning officers have also identified areas for further improvement to help create a better design review service that meets the expectations of service users. They are as follows:

- When developers or planning agents request for DRP meetings, they should discuss with the relevant planning officer first to ensure that the development

proposals are not premature or are inappropriate, particularly in instances where there are objections to principle of developments.

- For larger sites, more time should be allocated for site visits. The current one-hour timeframe can feel rushed.
- Some presentation materials/packages are overly long and on occasions have taken up significant time in the design review meetings, leaving little time for meaningful discussions.
- The planning officer briefing section was too short and did not allow sufficient time for the planning officer and his/her specialists to answer important questions by the Panel.
- Further training to be provided to planning officers to give them the confidence to interrupt discussions if the Panel starts discussing matters that are outside of the developers' control or matters that are not relevant to the application / are not material planning considerations.
- On some occasions, Panel Members shared their opinions with officers and/or the applicant/agent during site visits which is not encouraged. There is a need to remind Panel Members to hold back comments/opinions until the actual design review meeting.
- Some Panel Members appeared to lack knowledge on local plan policies and neighbourhood plans. It was suggested that Panel Members would benefit from reviewing Local Policies prior to the design review meeting or refer to the case officer where what they suggest may conflict with local plan policies so that advice offered does not conflict with local plan policies.
- There is a need to ensure the Chair is strict with the comment/feedback part of the meeting. There have been occasions where the applicant/planning agent spoke nearly as much as the Panel Members.

Suggested improvements to the GCDRP

There are recommendations made by planning officers which can be considered in the future:

- A guidance document can be produced to help developers' design team to prepare their presentation materials/packages, ensuring that they are not overly long and would provide sufficient information on site context and on design evolution. (Note, this is set out in the Quick Guide for Applicants)
- Provide training to planning officers on how to write a Case Officer Briefing Note and what is the best way to approach the Panel Member briefing session. This is due to some planning officers are unsure about how they should express their opinions given the independent nature of the GCDRP, and not wanting to give the impression of swaying or leading Panel Members down a certain path.
- Provide clarification on who can attend the site visits on behalf of the Local Planning Authority (LPA) apart from the planning officer. This is to ensure

that relevant specialists from the LPA are available to answer any questions by Panel Members during the site visits, and to avoid any miscommunications between developers/planning agents and Panel Members regarding site character/features etc.

- A further part of the meeting is proposed, which focusses on the panel gaining feedback from Planning Officers (closed discussion).

8. Panel development

In recognition of the importance of providing regular design review training for all key stakeholders, Officers have organised a range of training sessions prior to, and following, the inception of the GCDRP to ensure that all those who take part in the design review meetings have a clear understanding of the background, purpose, value and process of the Panel. The design review training sessions were delivered by the GCDRP team and were well attended.

Details of training provided to date:

Date(s)	Attendees	Training content
January 2022	Panel Members	Induction, GCSP Policy Context, Design Review Process
March 2022	Planning Officers	Design Review Process and relevance to their roles
March 2022	SCDC Elected Members	Design Review Process and relevance to their roles
July 2022	CCC Elected Members	Design Review Process and relevance to their roles
March 2023	Planning Officers	Design Review Process and relevance to their roles

Figure 4: List of training events from January 2022-June 2023

Planning officers, specialist officers and Lead Members of planning committee are encouraged to observe the design review meetings from time to time as part of their continuing professional development (CPD). This helps them develop their knowledge of design review and listening to independent panel members evaluating design, develops their design skills to help them in assessing good design.

GCDRP will continue to provide training sessions to key stakeholders on an annual basis, to ensure the most up-to-date information about the Panel is disseminated and knowledge about best practice in design review is shared. This will incorporate feedback from stakeholders collected regularly throughout the design review process.

9. Expanding the DRP service to other Local Planning Authorities

The former design review panel for South Cambridgeshire District Council, the Design Enabling Panel (DEP), provided services to evaluate several National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph 79/80 house proposals for a neighbouring Local Planning Authority and plans are currently underway to extend the GCDRP to extend design review services for a range of development proposals in a neighbouring local planning authority. This expansion plan aims to respond to a market demand for a high-quality design review service, by using the expertise of the GCDRP panel members and administration team to support the delivery of quality outcomes and help offset the costs of delivery to GCSP.

9.1 Considerations

- There is a need to review resources to ensure the efficient and effective operation of our design service both internally and externally. Officers believe the recruitment of additional panel members with expertise in Sustainability is necessary to ensure the long-term success of the GCDRP.

10. Incorporation of the Disability Panel

Alongside the GCDRP, GCSP operate a Disability Panel. Officers are currently undertaking a review of the Disability Panel, which will be incorporated into the GCDRP as a specialist/expert discipline.

The Disability Panel was established in 1999 to review the accessibility of significant planning applications and pre-applications within the Cambridge City Council boundaries. The Panel also reviews the accessibility of schemes that are determined by the Joint Development Control Committee. It is made up of 10-12 members of local people who have different disabilities, who comment on planning applications based on their direct experience. The Panel is free to use by developers. Schemes that are reviewed by the Disability Panel are often also reviewed by the GCDRP and Cambridgeshire Quality Panel.