

Design Review and Enabling Service:

This North East review panel was funded by One North East and delivered through IGNITE (the Regional Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Communities). Through the creation of the panel, a mechanism within the region has been established to help achieve a step-change in the quality of developments alongside increasing design awareness. Whilst the Panel was only fully operational for two years (2009-2011) it played a key role in One North East's wider strategy to raise standards in how place making in the North East Region is planned, shaped and managed.

The Panel provided expertise from a range of fields including: architecture, regeneration, planning, landscape architecture, urban design and public art. English Heritage, as a statutory body, is advised of the schemes under review and is invited to attend or submit written comments. [Contract Notice link \[2a - Published Contract Notice\]](#) and [tender specification \[2b - Tender Specification Final\]](#)

Since it was formed in June 2009, the Panel has reviewed over 60 schemes with a combined value of approximately **£1.2bn** worth of development covering most of the region and a wide variety of scheme types. The size of schemes reviewed by the Panel ranged from a single rural dwelling to large city centre mixed use development proposals. The Panel has also reviewed a number of draft LDF documents.

It was a requirement that all physical development / regeneration schemes seeking funding, approved or managed by One North East must have been through the design review process. This unfortunately did not extend to all ERDF funding physical activity; however it was the Agency's intention to get this service embedded in the ERDF Operating Manual and approval process.

In terms of strategic added value, the real 'value' of design review is the ability to raise the aspirations and the profile of design, thereby improving design quality across the region. The wide range of skills and expertise of the panel allows this to take place. Indeed feedback⁹ from scheme presenters indicated that 97% of them considered the review process usefully furthered their design. They cited the impartial review and 'peer challenge' aspects of the process as useful and healthy. Around 80% of the respondents changed an aspect of their design with more thought being given to the sustainability and energy strategy underpinning projects.

Where schemes have progressed to planning application stage, in certain instances the Agency's statutory planning responses have highlighted the Design Review process and encouraged Local Planning Authorities to consider the Panel's recommendations.

Forward Plan is attached at [\[2c - Forward Plan Issue_HM\]](#)