

Local Authority Urban Design Forum

MEETING 2: CO-CHAIRLED BY JENNIFER HORN (EAST DUNBARTONSHIRE) + FRANCIS NEWTON (CITY OF EDINBURGH)

13 November 2013 | Lighthouse, Glasgow



INTRODUCTION

The LAUDF is a network for local authority practitioners with an involvement in urban design to share ideas on current issues, learn from each other's experience and build up resources that everyone can benefit from.

This newsletter covers the second meeting of the Forum, which was well attended by over 40 professionals from 28 local authorities or public bodies. Participants came from a range of professional backgrounds including development planning/management, urban design, architecture, transport, economic development and town centre management.

DESIGN QUALITY THROUGH PLANNING GUIDANCE | SHARING EXPERIENCES

The key workshop item was programmed by the steering group following feedback from the first forum meeting suggesting an appetite to focus on a single design related subject in depth.

Presentations from forum participants experiences helped set the scene. Efforts were made to represent a balance of rural and urban experiences and to offer reflections on different approaches.

Michael Harvey (Orkney Islands Council) presented on Orkney's service-wide placemaking strategy - based on delivering principles established in their Urban Design Frameworks and development briefs.

David Givan (City of Edinburgh Council) focussed on Edinburgh's experiences of preparing and consulting on city-wide urban design guidance, as well as learning around its early implementation.

FACILITATED WORKSHOP

The following workshop, facilitated by steering group members, saw participants work in groups to draw out key issues from their experiences of preparing or working with planning guidance to influence good design. Each group discussed three questions:

- What is the approach in your Local Authority to design guidance?
- What are you trying to achieve with the guidance? / What is the guidance trying to achieve?
- What would you do differently in the future and what will you do next?

Rich discussions in the smaller groupwork sessions fed into a final plenary, where 10 emerging points were drawn out:

1. Leadership is critical to start the change process. Without it the process can fail.
2. If you can answer the question 'do you know what you want to do', you have the basis of a vision
3. Establish joint ownership by encouraging everyone to think
4. A multi- disciplinary approach is essential
5. Benchmark by reviewing what works elsewhere
6. Align economic and land use intentions to focus on delivery
7. Potential in connecting spatial planning with physical projects
8. Consolidate guidance and policies to focus on what matters
9. Be clear on your user and focus on building skills and confidence in decision making.
10. Consider consistency of approach with nearby authorities to support the market.



A PLACEMAKING STANDARD FOR SCOTLAND

Sandy Robinson (Scottish Government) briefed the group on the Government's commitment through **Creating Places** to develop a Place Standard.

The intention behind the proposed guidance would be to create a national benchmark for design quality for use by planning authorities and the development industry. The aim of the policy would be to:

- Improve the quality and consistency of design proposals within planning applications
- Assist planning authorities in the assessment of design quality and provide a framework for consistency
- Provide certainty to applicants on design requirements
- Provide a tool to measure the quality of existing places

It was anticipated that a Place Standard would be similar in format to the **Building for Life** criteria that have been used successfully in England and Wales, although it was important for the document to be appropriate for Scotland and aligned with the existing policy framework.

The project is being taken forward in partnership between Scottish Government, Architecture + Design Scotland and NHS Health Scotland and the partners are keen to involve LAUDF members in the development of the document.

The project team have planned a workshop day to develop ideas on the place standard in late January. Please contact Kathleen Marshall (kathleen.marshall@scotland.gsi.gov.uk) if you would like to be kept informed of the meeting date and location - likely to be Edinburgh or Glasgow - and information will be passed on when available. If you are not available for a full day workshop but still keen to be involved, please contact Kathleen to discuss other ways of contributing to the project.

DESIGNING STREETS

Stuart Watson (Scottish Government) presented findings of research on the **Implementation of Designing Streets Policy**. The group were briefed on actions being taken by government to address the research findings - including government's intention to seek collaborations with authorities looking to review or update their guidance influencing streets or roads.

AND FINALLY...

- Thanks to all the speakers, contributors and participants who helped make the second meeting a success. A questionnaire will be circulated to gather feedback.
- Your ideas on future themes are welcomed. A number of offers / suggestions have been received but the steering group would be pleased to investigate other proposals
- Forum members are encouraged to register with the online **knowledge hub** site for the LAUDF. Participant presentations will be made available through the site and the steering group will seek to encourage debate and exchange of information.
- The steering group has an open membership and would be pleased to hear from anyone interested in helping influence the future direction of the forum.
- Participants are advised that A+DS's next Design Skills Symposium is planned for March in Glasgow - looking at transferable lessons from preparations for the 2014 Commonwealth Games. Details to follow.
- The next meeting of the LAUDF is proposed for May 2014. Please do encourage colleagues to attend future events, particularly where their area of work relates to a particular topic. The LAUDF is intended for not only urban design specialists, but to all staff working in public agencies who work on issues relating to urban design.