

Local Authority Urban Design Forum

MEETING 3: CO-CHAIRLED BY LESLEY WELLS (NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL) + RUTH SMITH (FALKIRK COUNCIL)

15 May 2014 | 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 third meeting of the Forum, which was well attended by over 40 professionals from 26 local authorities or public bodies. Participants came from a range of professional backgrounds including development planning/management, urban design, architecture, landscape architecture, heritage management, economic development and regeneration.

The agenda for the meeting was developed by the steering group following feedback that forum members were keen to look at the issue of design in the development planning process.

DESIGN IN THE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING PROCESS | 1

An initial workshop session, facilitated by forum members, encouraged debate about how different places in Scotland are approaching the development planning process. Participants shared their experiences of what had been working well, what could be working better and began draw out learning about key opportunities for design influence and input in the process.

Some key issues highlighted by discussions included the need for clear articulation of the importance of design issues to the wider community, the role of graphics and visioning in that, the need to focus on the pre-MIR stage where opportunities to influence are strongest, the role for a local plan to drive the delivery of better quality outcomes, the potential for action plans as delivery plans and the importance of monitoring of outcomes.

A summary of key discussion points is being developed by the steering group and will be shared through the LAUDF knowledge hub site shortly.

DESIGN IN THE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING PROCESS | 2

A second workshop sought to enable forum members to share learning from their own experiences.

A world cafe session was programmed to enable a broad spectrum of debate to take place around the role urban design has to play in the development planning process, with the intention of drawing out learning to help inform preparations of the next generation of development plans.

Forum members had the opportunity to participate in 3 of the 6 following discussions:

- Charrettes and the development planning process – Highland's experience (Una Lee, Highland Council)
- CharrettePlus: Charrettes and the community planning process (David Wood, Planning Aid Scotland)
- Engaging communities through design – the Neilston experience (Danny McKendry, East Renfrewshire Council)
- Graphic approaches: Visioning and storyboarding techniques (Eric Dawson, A+DS)
- Graphic techniques for local development plans (Matthew Spurway, Renfrewshire Council)
- Measuring the quality of outcomes: Edinburgh's Quality Indicators Project (Julie Dewar and David Givan, City of Edinburgh Council)

Resource sheets summarising key project information and discussion points are available through knowledge hub.

In a typical 'world cafe', a 5 min presentation from a subject or project 'expert' is followed by 15 mins of questions, discussion and debate from a small discussion group. In this instance, participants recorded key questions, thoughts and discussion points on the table. After 20 mins, participants moved to another table. The presenter stayed put and the process repeated.



DESIGNING STREETS TOOLBOX

Stuart Watson (Architecture and Place Division, Scottish Government) presented on the [Designing Streets Toolbox](#), which has been developed to address issues raised by recent research into the implementation of the designing streets policy.

The toolbox encourages an integrated approach from the professions involved in the application of designing streets policy.

Six tools cover the following areas - SCOTS guidance, a policy template for local authorities, a framework for aligning consents, a template for auditing the quality of proposals, a technique to assess alignment with designing streets and a materials resource base.

The government are open to refining the tools over time. Elements of the toolbox are currently being tested with local authorities including Falkirk Council.

PLANNING AID SCOTLAND

David Wood of Planning Aid Scotland (PAS) gave an introduction to the organisation and its operations as well as a helpful summary of Scotland's development planning process. PAS's role in helping people to understand the planning system, and enabling them to negotiate their own way through it was outlined.

Recent examples were given of PAS involvement in assisting authorities to engage communities in the development planning process. This included input to the Main Issues Report (MIR) and pre-MIR stages with East Lothian and Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park as well as TAYPlan's Strategic Development Plan.

The importance of meaningful innovative consultation was highlighted as well as the benefits of focussing on engaging people early in the process. David also emphasised the benefits of involving a neutral third party such as PAS in consultation processes to help facilitate discussions and create a welcoming and impartial space for communities to debate big issues.

More information on related PAS projects and initiatives such as IMBY, YEP!, Young Placemakers, SPEED and CharrettePlus can be found [here](#).

Newsletter produced by A+DS on behalf of LAUDF steering group. If you would like to know more about the items in this newsletter or about getting involved with the Local Authority Urban Design Forum, please contact kate.givan@ads.org.uk

A+DS | DESIGN FORUM & AITE

Steve Malone (Architecture and Design Scotland) briefed forum members on A+DS's [Design Forum](#) service which provides dedicated expert panel advice on how nationally and locally significant development projects might best achieve the Scottish Government's aspirations for quality of place. The benefits of early project engagement were emphasised. A recent memo of understanding seeking to establish a clear working relationship between Design Forum and local authorities on the referral of locally significant projects was highlighted. Forum members were also introduced to A+DS's [Aite](#) web resource which shares evidence and research on well designed, sustainable places.

The memo of understanding is available to forum members via the LAUDF [knowledge hub](#) site and more information on A+DS's Design Forum service is available [here](#). Please contact design_forum@ads.org.uk if you have any enquiries.

AND FINALLY...

- Thanks to all the speakers, world cafe contributors and participants who helped make the third meeting of the forum a success.
- A questionnaire has been circulated to gather feedback and seek input on future meeting themes.
- The steering group works with feedback from the group to develop future agendas and would be pleased to hear from anyone interested in helping influence the future direction of the forum. The group meets on a quarterly basis. Please contact kate.givan@ads.org.uk for more information.
- Forum members are encouraged to register with the online [knowledge hub](#) site for the LAUDF. Presentations and related resources will be made available through the site. It's your site - please use it to contact forum members, start discussions or post information about events that may be of interest to members in between meetings.
- The LAUDF is intended not only for urban design specialists, but for all local authority or public agency staff working on issues relating to urban design. Please do encourage colleagues to attend future events, particularly where their area of work relates to a particular topic.
- The next full meeting of the LAUDF is proposed for November 2014.