

ANGUS COUNCIL

INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE

2 JUNE 2009

SUBJECT: DESIGN QUALITY IN ANGUS

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

<p>Abstract: This report recommends the formation of a Member / Officer Working Group in order to consider the matter of Design Quality in Angus.</p>
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1 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee –

1. notes the Scottish Government's continued interest in raising design quality in Scotland;
2. agrees to form a Member / Officer Working Group in order for the Group to consider aspects of design quality in Angus and to make recommendations to the Committee as appropriate;
3. considers the composition of Members who would participate on the Working Group.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 On 2 April and 3 April 2009 Members and Officers of the Council attended a Civic Leaders Design Workshop in Perth, hosted by the Scottish Government in partnership with the Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment. The event was also attended by Members and Officers from Fife Council, Dundee City Council and Perth & Kinross Council. Essentially, the purpose of the event was to raise the awareness of the importance of design in the environment and to consider the challenges of sustainable urbanism and place making in Scotland.
- 2.2 In recent years the Scottish Government have published a range of policy papers, design statements and planning advice notes on the subject of design in Scotland. The aim of such policies and advice is to help in improving the quality of design in the built environment in Scotland and to engender a sense of place in Scotland's towns. The Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment established by HRH Prince Charles, Duke of Rothesay, some 10 years ago, focuses on local urbanism, sustainable communities and design in the built environment. Perhaps the highest profile of the work of Prince Charles in relation to sustainable communities and urban design is Poundbury which is an urban extension to Dorchester in Dorset, extending to some 160 hectares and which, according to the Foundation "is recognised worldwide as one of the most advanced solutions to urban settlement in the twenty-first century."

- 2.3 Whilst Poundbury can be seen as a good example of sustainable urban expansion in England, as a solution it may not be immediately transferable to Scotland. However the ideas and concepts behind Poundbury do generate inquiry and debate on the question of urban design, design quality and a sense of place in Scotland.

3 DISCUSSION

- 3.1 The recently adopted Angus Local Plan Review contains numerous references to “sustainable development and sustainable communities.” Appendix 1 of this report includes an extract from the Local Plan which sets out Angus Council’s policy on Design Quality. However, as with all policies the challenge is to translate the policy principles to pragmatic examples in the built environment. Some of the questions around Design Quality are, “Are we creating a sense of place in Angus?” “Are standard house designs eroding the character of the built environment in Angus?” “Are we encouraging high quality design that is sustainable in the long term?” Of course the “we” referred to in the questions does not exclusively relate to Angus Council. The responsibility for design quality extends to all parties engaged with the built environment and in particular the development industry.

- 3.2 In order to move the Design Agenda forward, I would suggest that a Member / Officer Working Group be established with the overall remit of considering and making recommendations on how Design Quality could be improved in Angus. It may be that the Group may wish to concentrate on a particular sector of design, e.g. house design or the Group may wish to broaden its remit. The Group once established may also wish to hear from representatives from the development industry such as architects and housebuilders. I would suggest that the Group should involve a maximum of six Members with support from relevant Officers of the Council. The Group would report back to the Infrastructure Services Committee with recommendations in relation to Design Quality in Angus.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from the recommendations contained in this report.

5 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

6 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The issues dealt with in this report have been the subject of consideration from an equalities perspective (as required by legislation). An [equalities impact assessment](#) is not required.

7 SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT

- 7.1 This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within the Single Outcome Agreement for Angus.

10. We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need

- Good quality housing is available throughout Angus.
- Crisis response for homeless households is provided.

12. We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations

- The importance and benefits to society of the environment is recognised.

15. Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs

- Population changes are identified and planned for.
- Resources are used effectively.
- Services are targeted at those in greatest need.
- There is greater community involvement in the planning and delivery of services.

8 CONSULTATION

8.1 The Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Services, Head of Finance, and Head of Law & Administration were consulted in the preparation of this report.

9 CONCLUSION

9.1 This report recommends a way forward for the Committee in relation to the quality of design in the built environment in Angus.

ERIC S LOWSON
DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

NOTE

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.

P&T/GWC/IAL
1 May 2009

APPENDIX 1

DESIGN QUALITY

1.37 High quality, people-friendly surroundings are important to a successful development. New development should add to or improve the local environment and should consider the potential to use innovative, sustainable and energy efficient solutions. A well-designed development is of benefit to the wider community and also provides opportunities to:

- create a sense of place which recognises local distinctiveness and fits in to the local area;
- create high quality development which adds to or improves the local environment and is flexible and adaptable to changing lifestyles;
- create developments which benefit local biodiversity;
- create energy efficient developments that make good use of land and finite resources.

1.38 Design is a material consideration in determining planning applications. In all development proposals consideration should be given to the distinctive features and character of the local area. This includes taking account of existing patterns of development, building forms and materials, existing features such as hedgerows, trees, treelines and walls and distinctive landscapes and skylines.

1.39 The preparation of a design statement to be submitted alongside a planning application is encouraged, particularly for major developments or those affecting listed buildings or conservation areas. Early contact with Planning and Transport is recommended so that the requirement for a design statement can be determined.

Policy S3 : Design Quality

A high quality of design is encouraged in all development proposals. In considering proposals the following factors will be taken into account:

- site location and how the development fits with the local landscape character and pattern of development;
- proposed site layout and the scale, massing, height, proportions and density of the development including consideration of the relationship with the existing character of the surrounding area and neighbouring buildings;
- use of materials, textures and colours that are sensitive to the surrounding area; and
- the incorporation of key views into and out of the development.

Innovative and experimental designs will be encouraged in appropriate locations.

Designing Places - A policy statement for Scotland – Scottish Executive 2001

This is the first policy statement on designing places in Scotland and marks the Scottish Executive's determination to raise standards of urban and rural development. Good design is an integral part of a confident, competitive and compassionate Scotland.

Good design is a practical means of achieving a wide range of social, economic and environmental goals, making places that will be successful and sustainable.

PAN 68 Design Statements
Design Statements should explain the design principles on which the development is based and illustrate the design solution.

The PAN explains what a design statement is, why it is a useful tool, when it is required and how it should be prepared and presented.

The aim is to see design statements used more effectively in the planning process and to create places of lasting quality.