

Design Network!

DEDICATED TO MAKING BETTER PLACES



The Design Network is a national body made up of eight independent not-for-profit organisations. Together we can provide the highest level of built environment design expertise anywhere in England. Our work is valued by developers, local authorities and other public bodies, designers, consultants and communities.

Well designed towns, cities, villages and neighbourhoods do not just look good, they improve quality of life and are the key to achieving a range of policy objectives: economic growth, greater entrepreneurship, healthy lifestyles, sustainability, social cohesion, crime reduction and public safety. Well-designed developments are more acceptable to local people.



QUALITY OF PLACE MATTERS!

THE DESIGN NETWORK LEADS THE WAY IN PROVIDING:

Design Review

A tried and tested method of improving the quality of new developments by inviting a panel of experts to give feedback on design proposals at an early stage. Design Network members are the leading providers of local design review across England.

Building for Life 12

Design Network members have led the roll-out of this industry standard, supported by Government, for ensuring quality in new housing developments. We have provided training, support to design teams and validation of BfL12 assessments.

Design Workshops

Design workshops help local authorities, landowners, developers and architects to discuss and agree a framework and design objectives for a site as soon as development is proposed. By bringing in Design Network expertise at an early stage issues are resolved and the planning process speeded up.

Skills and knowledge

The design network provides a wide range of training events to give councillors and local authority officers, design professionals and developers the skills and knowledge they need to create excellent places. We offer our own training events and programmes as well as providing in-house training.

www.designnetwork.org.uk

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises the importance of good design in the built environment. It states that good planning and good design are indivisible and that "Permission should be refused for development of poor design." However the presumption in favour of sustainable development has made local authorities nervous about insisting on high standards of design.

WHAT THE NEXT GOVERNMENT SHOULD DO

A GOVERNMENT ELECTED IN 2015 COULD TAKE SOME SIMPLE COST-NEUTRAL MEASURES TO PROMOTE GOOD DESIGN IN NEW DEVELOPMENTS:

Help promote high quality growth by clarifying planning policy on design quality

The requirements to have local design review arrangements, to give weight to their findings and to consult with communities on large schemes need to be implemented consistently across the country. This would provide certainty to developers. Design training should be compulsory for councillors sitting on planning committees.

Speed up delivery by incentivising developers to work with communities and design experts

National planning policy should insist that developers that work with local communities and use design review get on a smooth path to planning approval. Those that do not should be sent back to square one.

Any Government support for new development should include independent design support

The Farrell Review* calls for a Chief Architect and a Place Leadership Council to get quality of place on the agenda. We also need resources in the localities where developments are being planned. Where Government schemes promote growth they should include independent design support. For example just 0.1% of the Regional Growth Fund would provide a comprehensive service of local expertise for developers and planners.

* In 2013 architect Terry Farrell was asked to undertake a review of Architecture and the Built Environment. Farrell made over 60 recommendations which challenge government departments, institutions, agencies and the professions, to work together to improve the everyday built environment. The Design Network is working with others to develop the Farrell proposals.

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