



Item 11

Report to the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire Joint Committee

Date: **14 September 2010**

Report of: **Paul Ramshaw, Head of Regeneration and Planning Policy, Eastleigh Borough Council, and Simon Eden, Lead Chief Executive, Quality Place Delivery Panel**

Subject: **Design in the Built Environment: Quality Place Design Charter**

SUMMARY

The Coalition government has made clear its continued commitment to strengthening local and community engagement. Housing and Planning Minister Grant Shapps has emphasised the importance of showing that “existing residents will gain” from housing growth where it occurs. A commitment to high quality design in the built environment is one of the ways of helping to ensure development makes a positive contribution.

On 23 March 2010 the Joint Committee approved the work programme of the Quality Places Delivery Panel (QPDP) in relation to design in the built environment (March 23 Item 12). One agreed recommendation was that the Joint Committee *‘agree to officers developing a “Quality Place Design Charter” committing member authorities to the principles of good design’*.

A draft Charter has now been produced and agreed by the officer steering group. This report seeks endorsement of the Charter (Appendix A), in order that the final document can be formally signed by Leaders of Member Authorities and launched at the Solent Design Awards event on 27 October 2010.

RECOMMENDATION

That the PUSH Joint Committee endorse and take ownership of the attached Quality Places Charter in order that it can be signed by all members of PUSH and formally launched at the Solent Design Awards event on Wednesday 27 October.

INTRODUCTION

1. The Minister of State for Housing and Planning, Grant Shapps, emphasised, in his letter to the Leaders of Housing Growth in Local Authorities in July 2010, the continued importance of community engagement and also stressed the need for authorities to be able to demonstrate the benefits of development that might occur to existing residents. The PUSH Quality Place Delivery Panel is working to ensure benefits of development flow to existing, as well as new, residents in the form of enhanced quality of life. One vital element of this work is quality of Design in the Built environment. The collective commitment to high standards of design should bring tangible benefits to existing residents as well as people using newly built property.
2. The report of the Quality Places Delivery Panel to PUSH Joint Committee (23 March 2010) outlined the work of the Panel on improving standards of design in the built environment and recommended that the Joint Committee note and endorse this work. It also recommended that the Joint Committee *'agree to officers developing a "Quality Place Design Charter" committing member authorities to the principles of good design'*. It was anticipated this would be a public statement of commitment signed by Leaders of PUSH authorities.
3. This charter has now been produced by a group made up of design practitioners from all eleven PUSH authorities. This has been done in consultation with Members and senior officers from each authority.
4. A peripatetic tour of all eleven member authorities was undertaken earlier this year by Paul Ramshaw (Head of Regeneration & Planning Policy at Eastleigh Borough Council) who is leading this work stream, and Paul Grover (Chief Executive of the Solent Centre for Architecture & Design), who have been engaged to deliver key elements of this work. This series of visits was designed to ensure comprehensive understanding of, and engagement with, this work. The content and approval process for the Quality Places Charter was discussed. Each authority is currently engaged in endorsing the Charter through their decision making processes.
5. Most elements of the design work programme (such as the Assessment Tool and the Design Guidance) are intended to be produced as open source templates that individual authorities can adopt as they see fit. However, the Quality Places Charter is intended as a shared statement of principles and intent. As such it should have endorsement and ownership from all South Hampshire authorities.

Quality Places Charter

6. The Quality Places Charter is intended to be a simple commitment to the value of good design practice, and a statement of intent from PUSH authorities that we will do all we can to ensure a consistently high level of development quality.
7. The Charter rehearses the proven social, economic and environmental benefits of good design practice. It sets out the contribution that investment in high quality, well designed buildings and spaces makes towards the broader PUSH objectives.

8. The intention is that all eleven authorities will sign a copy of the Charter, which will be formally launched at the inaugural Solent Design Awards event on 27 October (see below). Facsimiles of the Charter will be made available to authorities for their individual use/display.

Resource Implications:

9. There are no direct resource consequences arising from signing the Charter, which is a commitment to adopting good practice. Costs may arise indirectly as our Councils consider the skills we have within planning teams to drive good design, and the PUSH work on sharing design skills and resources seeks to address this. Good design is proven to have lifetime benefits; for example through saved energy and management costs, as well as through the social benefits it can lead to.

Other Work on Design

10. Nominations are now being sought for the inaugural Solent Design Awards. These awards aim to promote and reward good practice in design in the built environment. Nominations have been sought from across the PUSH area. Shortlisted schemes will be placed on the Solent Design Awards page on the Solent Centre website. Members of the community will then be encouraged to vote for their favoured scheme to be given a Community Award. Local media are actively supporting this selection process. PUSH is funding the administration of this award scheme. Negotiations are currently under way with commercial sponsors to support the awards ceremony and dinner.
11. The Quality Places work programme also includes other activity on design:
 - i) evaluation of the most effective use of resources across PUSH;
 - ii) analysis of design quality across the PUSH sub-region;
 - iii) production of an Assessment Tool and Design Guidance ;
 - iv) evaluation of current processes relating to design;
 - v) a programme of design training;
 - vi) evaluation of the current system of design review.

RECOMMENDATION

12. That the PUSH Joint Committee endorse and take ownership of the attached Quality Places Charter in order that it can be signed by all members of PUSH and formally launched at the Solent Design Awards event on Wednesday 27 October.

Appendix A - [Quality Places Charter](#)

Background Papers: None

Reference Papers: None

Enquiries:

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