

TEN URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES

for use by Leeds City Council in its day to day development activities

"Good design provides the background to everybody's lives and can help bring communities together. It develops a sense of local pride and creates lasting confidence" (Vision 2 – high quality design is a cross-cutting issue, and thriving places is one of the eight strategic themes)

These principles respond directly to Vision 2, LCC mission statement, core values and the themes in the Council Plan (creating better neighbourhoods and confident communities, making the most of people, competing in a global economy, integrated transport, and, looking after the environment).

All these principles should be used together to support and steer the work of all LCC Departments and be part of our commissioning, design, procurement, negotiation and other processes. These should also be advocated beyond the work of the Council – for use by our partners and all those influencing urban design quality throughout Leeds (including investors, developers, designers etc.)

For further information contact – Leeds City Council Development Department, Leonardo Building, 2 Rossington Street, Leeds LS2 8HD
tel: 0113 247 8000 – email: urbandesign@leeds.gov.uk – website: www.leeds.gov.uk



investing – working – involving – regenerating – delivering – creating – improving – connecting – managing – reviewing



INVESTING effectively –

Recognise that good design is good business (1)

Good design provides longer lasting, sustainable solutions for us and future generations to use and enjoy. It increases value (economic, social and environmental).

Checklist: life cycle costing, 'robust design' assessments (long-life/flexible for change), market considerations (short-medium-long term), delivery mechanisms (funding sources and processes), 'sustainable accounting', economic/social/environmental aspects together, CABE (value of good urban design)...



WORKING together –

Get the team right (2)

Good design requires many skills and built environment disciplines, including architects, urban designers, landscape architects, engineers (highways, civil, structural, services), town planners, developers, heritage consultants, access consultants, ecologists, surveyors, public art consultants, manufacturers, project managers and others. Good inter-disciplinary working is fundamental to successful design and procurement.

Checklist: identify broad range of team members (do not be too narrowly focused), identify team leader, encourage creative working, initiate a series of design workshops at the outset (including designers, planners and client)...



INVOLVING the community –

Make places for (and by) people (3)

Good design processes include participation by the community to provide places and buildings which are better tailored to need, engender a sense of ownership and reduce crime. Design processes must cater for all including people of different age, gender, ethnic background and disabled people. This should create and retain people-friendly places that are well-used and well-loved.

Checklist: identify stakeholders, consider appropriate participatory approach...



REGENERATING throughout Leeds –

Close the gap and move forward (4)

Good design of existing and new places is a fundamental need for sustainable regeneration of areas and communities – creating places to live, work, shop, play, rest, worship, care etc. Mixing uses, tenures, densities, forms to create lively, attractive places for all people. Quality design should improve and renew our neighbourhoods/villages/towns/city centre.

Checklist: opportunities for real contribution for renewal of community, mixed use, activity, new valued spaces, design strategies/frameworks/action plans, themes of Renaissance Leeds/Vision 2/Neighbourhoods for Living, City Centre Urban Design Strategy...



DELIVERING sustainable environmental solutions – Provide for future generations (5)

Good design is sensitive to the impact on the Earth's resources and the needs of future generations. Solutions should minimise energy use, waste production, and pollution (in construction and throughout the life of the development). Solutions should enhance and protect the natural environment/biodiversity and realise good opportunities for sustainable energy production. Local resources (materials and skills) should be encouraged.

Checklist: consider sustainability at inception stage, do sustainable appraisals at key stages of the project, climate/micro-climate considerations (inc. orientation, construction and natural energy production), energy/waste/drainage strategies, travel plans (encouraging use of more sustainable transport - walking, cycling, public transport etc)...



CREATING excellent new places – Take a visionary approach (6)

Good design looks forward to improve our quality of life, taking all opportunities for excellent new buildings, streets, spaces and landscape. Good design is a catalyst: initiating positive change in attitude, perception and use of a place. New places should be attractive, vibrant (appropriate to time of day) and safe.

Checklist: take a broad view, 'blue sky' thinking with practical considerations too, ODPM/CABE good practice guidance, research international best practice, 'secured by design' principles, Renaissance Leeds/Neighbourhoods for Living/City Centre Urban Design Strategy/Unitary Development Plan themes, principles and policies...



IMPROVING existing identity – Analyse and enhance the character (7)

Good design responds to the distinctive qualities of existing places – the forms, movement patterns, spaces and uses provide a strong basis for design responses.

Checklist: thorough audit/analysis/aspirations (iterative process – see NFL, CCUDS etc), consider context at different scale (region-town-neighbourhood-street), themes (form-movement-space-use), issues/checklists/principles of NFL, CCUDS, Renaissance Leeds, town centre strategies, heritage designations/appraisals (listed buildings, conservation areas etc.), village/neighbourhood design statements etc...



CONNECTING places – Create visual and physical links (8)

Good design responds creatively to movement to and through a place – streets, buildings, landscape, boundaries, walls etc. – drawing people through, providing continuity, linkages, cohesive places, legible places and joining communities.

Checklist: look beyond the project/site, respond to adjoining places/neighbourhoods, opportunities to connect, sustainable transport links (pedestrian, cyclist, public transport then the private car), serial vision/sequential views studies, landscape character analysis/concept...



MANAGING the investment – Look after the place (9)

Good design must be sustained by management and maintenance of the place in a comprehensive way. Flexibility and robustness of design is an essential ingredient at the outset (see principle 1).

Checklist: be equipped to provide/ensure management - budget, resources, personnel...



REVIEWING our work – Improve continuously (10)

Good design and poor design have an impact – this must be audited and monitored to inform us to ensure continuous improvement and more effective work

Checklist: audit trail, spot checks – across a range of work...



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