

ARCHITECTURE CENTRES' COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INFORMATION

The centres

The architecture and built environment centres all undertake some form of community engagement support services. This document provides a snapshot of this work.

The support is provided via a combination of in-house skills and the specific skills of their existing pools of enablers, most of whom have been openly procured. Some centres are in the process of refreshing their panels to ensure that they have the most relevant skills to address the needs of their clients.

The centres include :

- Yorkshire & Humber: Beam (www.beam.uk.net)
- Yorkshire & Humber: Arc (www.arc-online.co.uk)
- West Midlands: MADE (www.made.org.uk)
- West Midlands: UVNS (www.uvns.org)
- London: Open-City (www.open-city.org.uk)
- London: Fundamental Architectural Inclusion (www.fundamental.uk.net)
- London: The Building Exploratory (www.buildingexploratory.org.uk)
- North East: Northern Architecture (www.northernarchitecture.com)
- South West: ACD&C (acdandc.org.uk)
- South West: The Architecture Centre, Bristol (www.architecturecentre.co.uk)
- East Midlands: Opun (www.opun.org.uk)
- East: Shape East (www.shape-east.org.uk)
- SE/EM/East: TransForm Places (www.transformplaces.com)
- South East: Kent Architecture Centre (www.architecturecentre.org)
- North West: Places Matter! (www.placesmatter.co.uk)

Range of experience

The delivery organisations outlined are local, independent, experienced organisations with local knowledge of their areas and communities and their sensitivities in addition to the other support structures and initiatives. The organisations are light on their feet and able to adapt, tailor and innovate to meet the communities involvement needs – they are able to 'do things differently'.

They have extensive experience and expertise in developing and delivering training and workshops in a variety of forms. They are well connected throughout their regions at a variety of levels; understand how places work and what makes for a successful neighbourhood. They provide bespoke sessions making the most of toolkits, exercises and materials which they have developed over the recent years. They also have established relationships with their local authorities with whom liaison will be vital in the delivery of the support programme.

All of the organisations have been delivering the core areas of advice as part of the services that they offer. Most have experience of managing a design review / an enabler network providing a full range of professional support to both local authorities and community groups addressing a broad spectrum of design, planning and development issues. This is combined with firsthand experience at all stages of

projects from planning policy through to urban and architectural design, development control, regeneration and construction.

Staff teams also include specialists in community engagement, public realm, urban design and architecture, in addition to public realm and art.

All organisations benefit from established relationships with and access to relevant specialist advisers, from transport planners, landscape architects, conservation experts, engineers and planners to community engagement experts, housing specialists, urban designers and development infrastructure.

Advice and assistance offered

1. Organising a community-based group:

All the delivery organisations have the appropriate skills to undertake this but it is not a core activity for some.

- Working with groups to develop their expertise specifically in order that they are able to comment meaningfully on development plans
- Experience of nurturing new groups and developing their skills and voice
- Ability, due to the organisations' independence and neutrality to bring groups together in the community that are representative and help them to become effective participants
- Developing Community Stakeholder Groups

2. Effective community engagement:

All the delivery organisations have expertise in this area and offer a range of approaches and activities, in a range of community settings and covering the key neighbourhood based activities. They have particular experience of working with young people and older people, including NEETs, marginalised and deprived communities. Many of the activities are dynamic, creative and aim to engage everyone effectively and accessibly with the skills, confidence and broad knowledge to play an active role in their communities.

Design sessions for communities based in their locations, involving practical plan making and walk based sessions to help translate best practice into the realities of a neighbourhood. Site visits are vital tools. This can help with establishing priorities as well as recognising the different factors that can influence decision making. In addition the organisations provide a bridge in terms of skills and experience between community groups and the various bodies and organisations that impact on their neighbourhoods. Examples of recent activity include:

- Facilitating the engagement of groups in commenting on Development Plans, Central Area Action Plans and Area Action Plans; including the 2012 Olympics and Legacy plans
- Delivery of community engagement programmes around the transformation of public spaces, including work with NDCs planning whole estate regeneration
- Developing and delivering effective community engagement and training for residents' forums, youth forums and young people in addition to resident and community groups, civic societies and civic interest groups

- Developing and delivering training on reading drawings and plans, the planning system and design exemplars in local neighbourhoods
- Facilitating community workshops for specific developments from community centres, and potential community assets to urban extensions and public spaces
- Delivering intergenerational community workshops to enable a community to map their use of public space, community space and routes through their neighbourhoods, to share needs and aspirations across generations
- Engagement event for residents and stakeholders to review options for a community led resource as part of an asset transfer

3. Developing or providing input into proposals for local development documents:

The delivery organisations have and can access specific specialist planning knowledge. They have experience in supporting the creation and review of local plans, designs and proposals; supplementary planning guidance, development plans and advisory documents. They do this in a variety of ways from short advice sessions, surgeries, workshops and ongoing enabling support for projects. Recent activities include:

- Enabling and client support for rural masterplanning
- Delivering visioning workshops to determine the quality of places to inform the development of towns and villages
- Supporting CABI in assisting in the creation of local guides that relate the Building for Life (BfL) design principles and criteria specifically to affordable housing on sensitive rural sites illustrated by local examples for use in assisting with the preparation of Parish Plans and Village Design Statements
- Facilitating workshops for local authority officers to review a proposed urban extension in light of the abolition of the RSS in parallel to review of a draft residential design guide
- Working with older people to inform guidance for an RSL on creating age-friendly neighbourhoods

4. Developing or providing input into proposals for the development of any area, such as proposals leading to planning applications or local development orders:

The delivery organisations provide input primarily through design advice, design review and supporting the rationale based on community involvement.

- Provision of independent design guidance to residents on housing procurement panel
- Supporting CABI with enabling assistance to undertake townscape and landscape analysis to inform Parish Plans
- Delivering workshops to engage with specific issues to inform masterplans and Local Development Frameworks, including design; transport; public realm and urban design; access and movement; masterplanning; historic character; and sustainability
- Developing and delivering community consultation workshops to inform local plans

5. Accessing specialist advice if required:

This is available from all the organisations who have established panels and local networks of specialist advisors / associates / enablers in addition to specialist in-house staff. The organisations offer wide training programmes to suit both community and professional needs which involve national and international specialist.

- One organisation has been commissioned to run the 2011 Professional Development Programme for a major RSL, with entry, intermediate and advanced sessions. Training modules include Excellence in Design (Urban Design Principles using Building for Life), Balancing the Design/Cost Equation (Principles of Place-making and addressing challenges of large/high density projects) and Getting Sustainability in the DNA of a Scheme.
- Many of the organisations run networks of BfL assessors, train assessors and / or have staff who are qualified assessors.
- They deliver training on Manual for Streets, Design Quality Indicators, Spaceshaper/Spaceshaper 9-14 and other national guidance at a local level

6. Finding potential sources of additional funding:

There is a well established programme in some delivery organisations which will inform the online information and signposting where there is less local expertise available. Support available also includes assistance in bid writing.