

Response to draft PPS1

Press statement from the RIBA, CABE, Urban Design Group, RTPI, UDAL, TCPA

We share a common wish to see the planning system helping to deliver quality, well designed development to create successful sustainable communities.

We believe, as Lord Rooker said in the House of Lords on 25th March, that "without proper attention to design, we will not deliver sustainable development". We welcome his confirmation of the importance of design, but believe that draft PPS1 does not sufficiently illustrate this commitment. We therefore make the following recommendations to help strengthen the draft's approach to design.

- There should be no artificial divide between planning, design and architecture. They are intertwined in terms of both process and outcome and we cannot realistically achieve quality in one without quality in the other. This should be unequivocally stated in the PPS.
- Whilst synergy between design and planning is the ultimate goal, this should not dilute the message that design is vital to sustainable development. This should be clearly stated in the PPS.
- A much clearer structure for the section included in the body of the PPS and the annex should be established. In particular the relationship and separate function of the two should be made apparent.
- The relationship between good design and other objectives set out in the PPS should be better expressed. Although the link between sustainability and design is made, good design is also vital to and dependant on effective community involvement and a spatial planning approach. Links between high quality design and other objectives should be clearly stated.
- The apparent shift in policy emphasis from "no acceptance of poor design" to "only accept good design" is an admirable and important message. It sets a requirement to refuse mediocre designs that do not positively improve a place. Poor designs are too often permitted at present and clear policy on this issue will be of benefit. Unfortunately however, this admirable key message is hidden. Reformatting and rewording could make this clear commitment to good design a primary focus within the PPS.
- Considering the importance now rightly being placed on good design it would be very useful to clearly spell out the fundamental planning objectives that require good design for them to be achieved. Some of these objectives, such as "creating safe environments where crime and disorder or fear of crime does not undermine quality of life or community cohesion (par 1.27)", are already mentioned, but they are scattered and the relationship between them is not clear. Other vital objectives like maximising the potential of a site to accommodate development are not mentioned. It is suggested that a list of key objectives should be given within the annex.
- The PPS can establish a practical link between planning objectives and the good design toolkit set out in By Design. The design objectives set out in By Design should also be clearly referred to complimenting a concise set of planning objectives in the

PPS.

- The PPS should dispel the myth still held by many that design is in principle about what places look like. Good design relies on making sure things work well, look good and are sustainable, adaptable and responsive to context. This needs both good architecture and good urban design.
 - The use and purpose of design and access statements should be clearly set out and signposts given to further guidance on their scope and content. The list of issues to be covered should be given within the annex.
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Notes to editors

We make this joint statement to emphasise our shared commitment to high quality design, notwithstanding individual responses that we shall be making to the consultation.

last updated: 6 May 2004