



Report of the Suffolk Design Management Process Workshop 3

## **Workshop 3: Building Blocks**

14th November 2019

## The Report of the Suffolk Design Management Process Workshop 2

<b>Date</b>	14th November 2019
<b>Meeting location</b>	The Mix, 127 Ipswich St, Stowmarket IP14 1BB
<b>Attendees:</b>	Rachel Almond, West Suffolk Council Luke Barber, Suffolk County Council Roz Claxton, Ipswich Borough Council David Collinson, West Suffolk Council James Cutting, Suffolk County Council Colin Dunigan, West Suffolk Council Elizabeth Flood, Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils Steve Merry, Suffolk County Council Penny Mills, West Suffolk Council Sally Minns, Ipswich Borough Council John Pateman-Gee, Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils Anthony Taylor, East Suffolk Council Mike Taylor, Ipswich Borough Council Matt Williams, Suffolk County Council Ben Woolnough, East Suffolk Council
<b>DSE Team:</b>	Chris Lamb, Design South East Kieran Toms, Design South East
<b>Outline of the day:</b>	<p>This was the third of 4 workshops to develop the Suffolk Design Management Process. It built on the outputs developed in workshop 2 and the insight into current issues and potential solutions developed in workshop 1.</p> <p>The idea was to build on the principles and work to date and to begin to ‘fill in the gaps’ regarding key actions at certain milestones. There was also discussion about organisational change that needs to take place to implement the SDMP effectively.</p>
<b>Purpose:</b>	<p>The specific purposes of the day overall were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To get to a more fleshed-out (but not finalised) step by step pre-draft Suffolk Design approach.</li><li>• The identification of key areas of organisational development that need to take place.</li><li>• Resolution of key details and unresolved details.</li><li>• Reflection on Workshop 2 outputs.</li></ul>

## Introduction:



To begin, we discussed the key issues we still wanted to cover, building on the previous workshops' output.

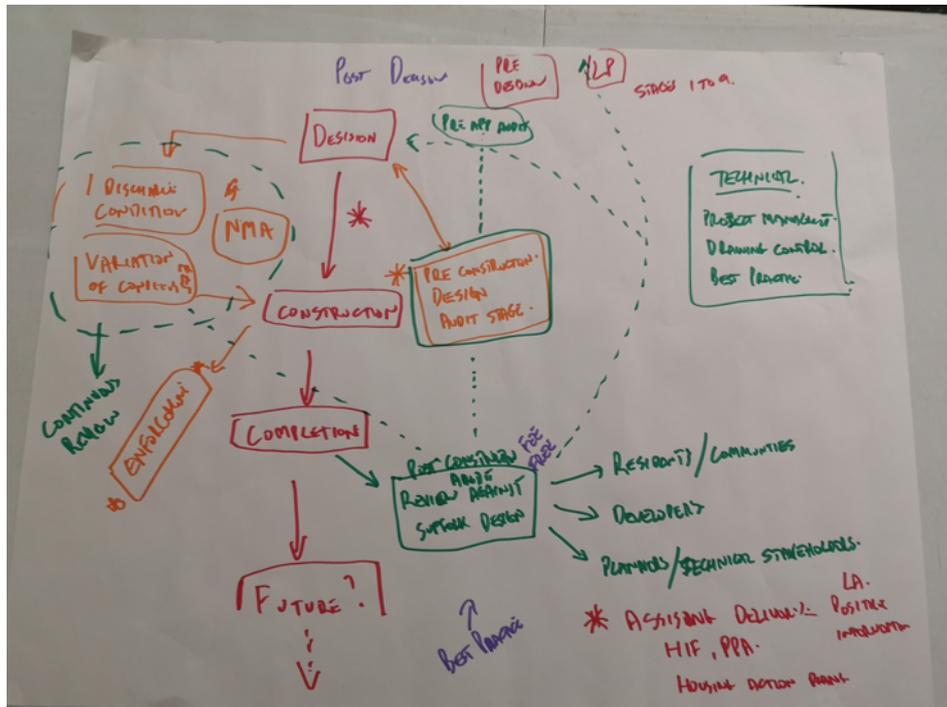
It was decided for the groups to first discuss:

- a. The post decision phases
- b. What a Design Checklist would do and how it would work.

## Session 1: Specific Actions

Attendees split into two groups to discuss these two topics. They developed a series of suggestions for how they could work:

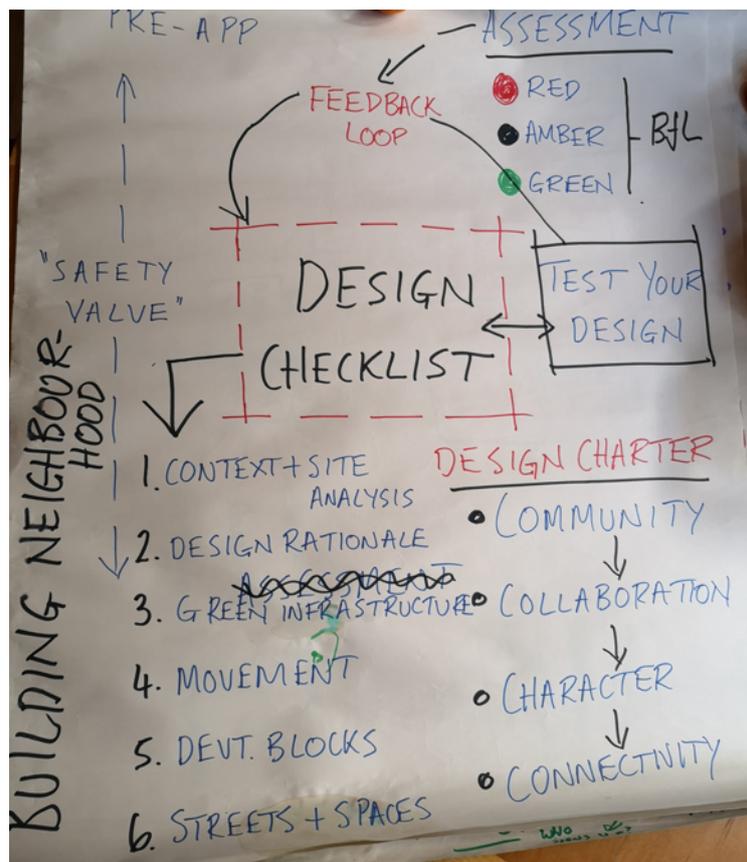
### Post Decision Stages and Actions:



- The Key points made were:
- There will be a decision stage at which the discharging of conditions; variation of conditions and NMAs are continuously reviewed
- A pre-construction design audit stage will draw on the design audit/checklist as developed throughout the entire process
- The construction stage will require assessment as far as possible – there are questions about who will pay for this and the resources available.
- The completion stage will involve a review against Suffolk Design. Those involved at this stage could be:
  - Residents / Communities
  - Developers
  - Planners / technical stakeholders
- A post completion stage: involving reflection / assessment. There could be different types of assessment for different types of scheme - i.e. schemes which have sought to comply with the Suffolk Design process throughout, and those that haven't. The benefit of complying with the Suffolk Design Process would be to have more assistance if they do comply.
- Between decision and construction different teams there are often different teams. There could be a preconstruction design audit stage, to make sure the different parts comply with each other and comply with decision docs.
- Decisions feed back into what we had before, setting a new standard for design in Suffolk

- For each revision number, there should be a clear revision number and a date, and a short, clear passage on what's changed.
- The idea would be to review at each stage in the same way. The clear progression through stages and clear record of what's changed/evolved at each stage means that officers would know what to look out for from the stage before, and would enable a check on whether the scheme is being built as planned.
- This process should build in trust. An increased level of trust means a much more efficient use of resources
- Good dialogue means that together you can find solution
- This process would also help officers to maximise professional pride – and to do this there need to have a follow up element.
- This follow up could tie into some kind of accreditation 'charter mark' type element.

### Design Audit Checklist (DAC)



#### Key points made:

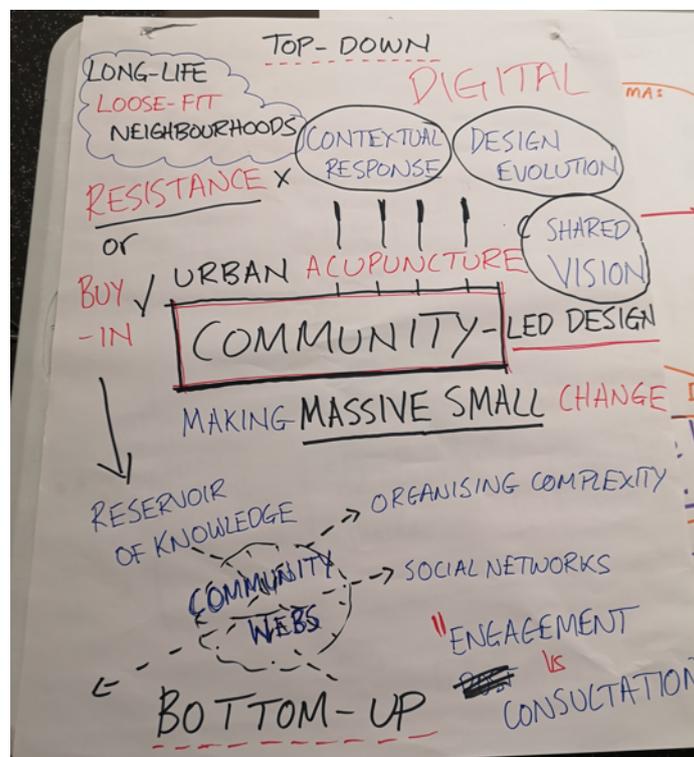
- The Design Audit Checklist Can act as a safety valve.
- It will draw from the Charter (which itself relates to National Design Guidance and Building for Life.)
- It can act as a framework on assessment, continually feeding into the design process

- It would be agreed at the beginning of the process but could be updated and evolved as the application moved forwards.
- Design and Access Statements would be required make reference to checklist – and to specifically respond to each part of the Checklist, in the same order. This would allow for more straightforward and efficient assessment of how the development adheres to the Checklists.
- Evolution should be demonstrated, and should be a key part of the document. It should make the evolution of the proposals clear and explain how the designs have got to where they have: i.e. what design decisions have been made and in response to what constraints and opportunities.
- This is not just paper exercise. The Design Audit Checklist will exist to inform everyone, so that they're aware of what should be part of the development.
- The Design Audit Checklist is partly about is the expectation of quality of information. It doesn't in itself mean that what is being presented is of high quality, but it allows quality to be monitored and managed in a clear and consistent way.
- This should be a useful tool as it would allow planners to focus on design
- The idea would be for the DAC to be fine grained, but flexible, so that principles are added to the framework as time goes on, and detail is added.

## Session 2: Engagement

In this session, one group discussed engagement with the community and the other engagement with key consultees and stakeholders.

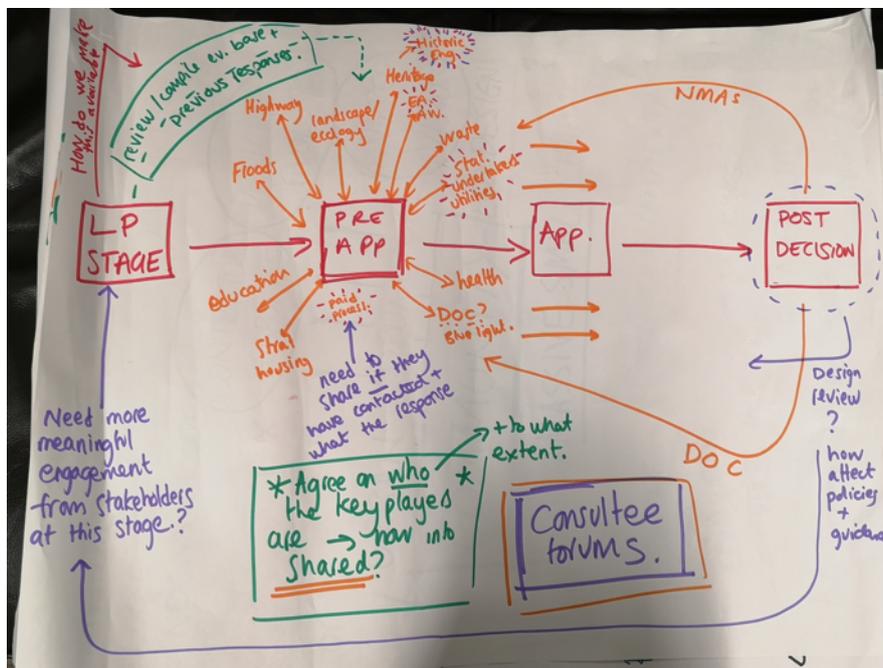
### Community engagement:



Key Points made:

- We should consider a new model for engagement, trying to take the best elements of top down process and make it appropriate to communities.
- We should consider “Long life loose fit” neighbourhoods, with shared vision and a contextual response – create “buy in” rather than resistance. We should aim for Engagement not consultation
- Co-creation – consultation is a stage in the process of engagement.
- Might be larger sites: difference in local sites, difference in way things are organised – different levels of power and interest
- Rural communities are often close knit with strong sense of social cohesion – we should consider this sort of context when engaging.
- Young people are changing the way they are interacting with one another. Consumers are using digital technology. In the future our high streets could look very different. We need to think about the future and how to use digital technology
- Are there surveys of people who will buy homes? Communities of the future? Taylor Wimpey undertake market research, why don't we?
- Parish councils are not always an accurate voice of a community: they can often represent just a certain demographic and can often be polarised
- We have people whose jobs are to engage with communities throughout our councils, but we don't always involve them in the process of new development

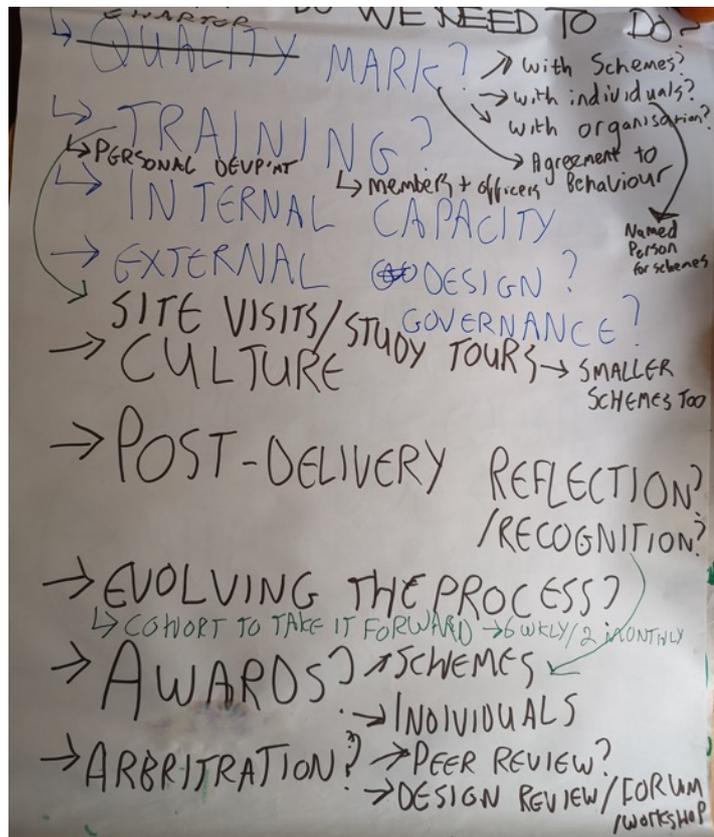
## Stakeholder/Consultee Engagement



- There is a lot of evidence-gathering and interaction at Local Plan stage. We should make sure we review and compile that, even if it's done by other officers, before we engage.
- We should acknowledge key stakeholders at early stage – they probably have their own pre-app processes which they'll need to follow.

- We need to be better at information sharing about consultee interactions
- Consultee forums will help bring together the key people all in one place to make important decisions and help develop key relationships.
- A joint Suffolk Developer forum could bring together key people and help make the right decisions.
- If we've established at early stage what the key issues are and the solutions, there is not much engagement required later on– it just a matter of checking that the applicant has covered what was already agreed upon.
- We need to make sure that at the end of the process we can look back
- Local Plan stage: evidence sits in a general filing system: let's accumulate this in the right way and make it an accessible evidence base.
- We should make sure we include groups that may have specific needs.

### Session 3: Organisational Change



We then discussed organisational change and the things that would need to change more broadly in order to implement the SDMP.

Key points made:

- We need an embedded commitment to quality
- We need dedicated in house support roles
- We need to review the process regularly.
- Training can provide personal development. It can be available to members and officers and even to developers.

- Site visits and study tours to best practice in and outside of Suffolk will help keep quality high for officers and members.
- Standardised documents, such as a Design Audit Checklist, PPA agreements, s106 and Conditions should be agreed and implemented Suffolk-wide.
- We should have a ‘charter mark’ accrediting and acknowledging quality. This could sit with schemes, individuals or organisations. It can be seen as an agreement to a certain type of behaviour and approach. There would need to be a regular way of making sure that those with this charter mark were indeed keeping to the high standards.
- Suffolk Design Awards could recognise quality – the public could vote on some to give them an input
- External Design Review would be a good check that we are delivering quality and would also help with resourcing. Developments of a certain size or type, or in certain sensitive locations, could be required to go to Design Review.

## **Next Steps:**

### **Workshop 4:**

This will be the fourth of 4 workshops to develop the Suffolk Design Management Process (SDMP). We will be presenting the process developed over the past three workshops as a timeline with actions organised into specific phases.

Using the SDMP timeline as a foundation for the session we will build on the outputs developed in previous workshops. This includes the insight into current issues and potential solutions developed in workshop 1, the structuring of the SDMP in workshop 2, the finessing of specific details and discussion of organisational change in workshop 3.

The aim of this workshop is to look at how the SDMP will work ‘in practice,’ and how specifically it will work with applicants. At the end of the workshop we will have refined the SDMP timeline and agreed the core actions within each phase.

This will provide us with final draft version of the SDMP that is ready for ‘soft launch’ at two roundtables, one with senior management teams and one with housebuilders and agents.

### **Purpose of the workshop:**

- Reflection on outputs from workshops to date
- To understand how the SDMP would work ‘in practice,’ and how specifically it would work with applicants.
- Resolution of key details in the SDMP
- To enable development of a final draft version of the SDMP which encapsulates the Suffolk Design approach and that is ready for ‘soft launch’ at roundtables along with the Suffolk Design Charter.



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