



STAFF REPORT

TO: Environment & Planning Committee

FROM: Rose Biss, Policy Planner

REFERENCE: L328

SUBJECT: **URBAN DESIGN ACTION PLAN - REPORT EP08/11/17** - Report prepared for meeting of 20 November 2008

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To provide the Council with information to enable it to proceed with an urban design action plan.

2. BACKGROUND

In April 2008 the Council became a signatory to the Urban Design Protocol, a nationwide initiative between the private sector, professional bodies, central and local government agencies to promote and encourage quality urban design in New Zealand. An urban design champion for Tasman was also appointed then. Mayor Kempthorne has accepted this important role.

As a signatory to the Urban Design Protocol the Council has made a commitment to employ quality design in its projects and provide leadership within its sector as well as to prepare an urban design action plan. The action plan is reviewed after two years.

3. AIM OF URBAN DESIGN ACTION PLAN

The aim of the urban design action plan is to improve awareness of and implement sound urban design throughout the district. A quality built environment will complement the unique natural environment of our district.

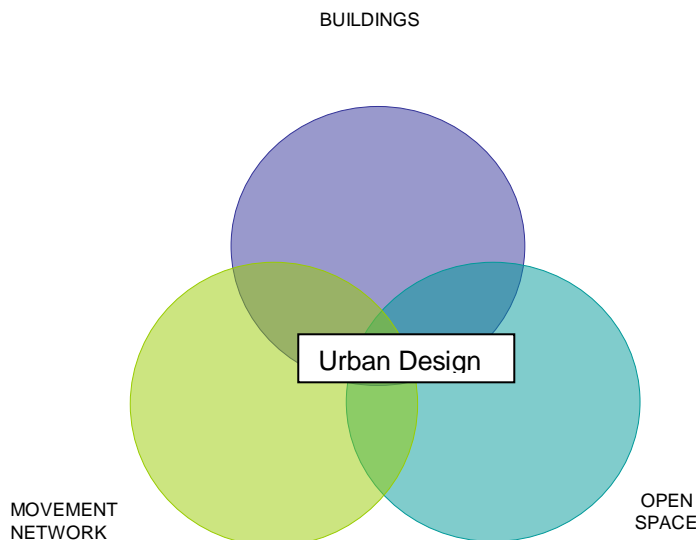


Sundial Square Richmond

Photo: Steve Forbes MWH

4. WHAT IS URBAN DESIGN?

Urban design is the art of creating places that are functional, attractive and people focussed. It involves the design of buildings, places, spaces and movement networks (roads, cycleways, footpaths, and walkways) that make up our towns and settlements.



Greater economic vitality and more efficient use of resources are likely to result from projects which incorporate good quality urban design. It is not only about keeping up appearances but also about being environmentally, economically and socially sound in the use of resources.

5. COUNCIL ACTION PLAN

Council's urban design champion and senior staff have met and considered possible actions for the Council to include in its action plan. These are discussed under the headings below:

- Strategy and Policy Initiatives
- Decision making
- Delivery of Capital Works
- Promotion and Awareness
- Building Capacity within and outside Council

Strategy and Policy Initiatives

The Council has in place design objectives, policies and rules in the Tasman Resource Management Plan. Some of these have remained unchanged since the Plan was notified in 1996. However there has been one recent addition. Urban objective 6.1.2 and Policy 6.1.3.1 were added as part of Variation 50 (see Attachment 1) in 2006. The Council is already considering a range of projects with urban design benefits and will be including some of these in its next Long Term Council Community Plan.

Some of the Council's existing design guides need improvement.

Stormwater design can have a major influence on the form of the district's urban areas – particularly if low intensity design systems are adopted. However it is critical that these are carefully designed with appropriate materials and plantings. Most of the major open swale stormwater design projects rely on a high degree of cooperative interaction between the planning, reserves and engineering sections of Council to be successful.

Decision Making

Urban design decision making is complex. Many New Zealand councils have adopted the use of an advisory design panel as a preapplication step towards achieving better design outcomes. Some guidance notes on existing design panels in other districts and urban areas and possible terms of reference are included in Attachment 2.

Nelson design professionals support establishing a Nelson Tasman urban design panel. They have suggested a joint panel that would serve both Tasman District and Nelson City because of the small professional designer base we have to draw on in the Nelson region. Typically the role of the panel is to provide independent and professional urban design advice and evaluation on key developments including Council capital projects and private development proposals.

Most councils provide some remuneration for their design panels. The Council's share of budget for a combined panel with Nelson City Council is likely to be \$2,700 per annum.

Delivery of Capital Works

From time to time the Council develops significant capital projects, for example the ASB Aquatic Centre, Sundial Square, Mapua Waterfront Park. The new LTCCP will include several streetscaping projects. These provide an opportunity for Council to exercise its role as a leader in good urban design. Project briefs need to address urban design matters and successful tenderers should all be experienced in implementation.

Quality urban design should continue to provide for expressions of creativity in Tasman's urban centres. Consider the creative seating and paving in the Motueka townscaping and artwork incorporated in Council office building projects. There will be further opportunities to incorporate local art works into civic design projects such as service centre and library upgrades. These types of projects also assist in implementing the Nelson Tasman Regional Arts Strategy as well as offering design leadership opportunities.

Promotion and Awareness

There are many other opportunities for the Council to promote quality urban design. The Environmental Awards could be used to reward and showcase examples of best practice urban design in the district. Newsline as well as other media such as the Council's website could be used more to promote urban design.

The Council can organise and co-sponsor public lectures and workshops on urban design topics. It is likely this would be done in conjunction with other bodies such as the NZ Institute of Architects and Nelson City Council.

5.5 Building Capacity Within and Outside Council

The Council has already provided/ supported some urban design training for staff and councillors. It is recommended that this is an ongoing programme to ensure new staff and councillors joining the Council also receive training.

Those staff who have received training will be expected to share their knowledge where appropriate.

6. BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

Most of the activities required to implement the urban design action plan will be accommodated out of existing budgets. However the urban design panel will require extra funding of the order of \$2,700 per annum if the joint panel option is adopted.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Council:

1. Assign high, medium and low priority tasks for the draft urban design action plan (Attachment 3).
2. Receive this report as the urban design action plan and agree to forward a copy to the Ministry for the Environment as amended.
3. Agree in principle to the terms of reference for urban design panel.

Rose Biss
Policy Planner

Not yet operative as at 1 November 2008		
6.1.2	Objective	[6.1A.0 Proposed] C5 3/06
Urban buildings, places, spaces and networks that together, by design, sustain towns as successful places to live, work and play.		

Not yet operative as at 1 November 2008		
6.1.3	Policies	[Unnumbered Proposed]
<i>Refer to Rule sections 16.3, 16.4.</i>		
6.1.3.1 [6.1A.1 Proposed]	To encourage subdivision and development to incorporate sustainable urban design principles by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) encouraging a sense of place and identity; (b) working with the natural characteristics of sites; (c) creating opportunities to enhance natural values; (d) providing a high degree of connectivity within road networks; (e) providing for safe walking and cycling; (f) designing local roads to ensure a safe low traffic speed environment on local streets and accessways; (g) creating a streetscape which enhances perceptions of safety; (h) managing stormwater run-off on site where possible, and ensuring off-site stormwater run-off does not increase flood risk nor adversely affect water quality in waterways and the coastal marine area for aquatic ecosystems and recreation; and (i) locating and designing development to address cross-boundary effects between land uses. 	C5 3/06
6.1.3.2 [6.1A.2 Proposed]	To integrate the management of stormwater run-off with the maintenance and enhancement of natural waterways, vegetation and wetlands, and co-locate provision of passive recreational opportunities, and pedestrian and cycle access.	C5 3/06
6.1.3.3 [6.1A.3 Proposed]	To ensure the establishment of riparian planting along urban waterways to maintain and enhance water quality and natural habitats, improve indigenous biodiversity of the catchment, and reduce stream bank erosion while providing access for channel maintenance.	C5 3/06

URBAN DESIGN PANEL

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Purpose of the Urban Design Panel

The purpose of the Urban Design Panel would be to:

- Give independent and professional urban design advice to help evaluate the merits of development proposals and make recommendations about how they might be improved within their context
- Consider both private developments being submitted to Council and major capital projects being proposed by the Council
- Promote high quality urban design and support the delivery of the Council's urban design objectives
- Have an advisory role only. It does *not* have statutory decision making powers.

2. Panel Membership

The panel will have three professional members drawn from a pool nominated by the following – New Zealand Institute of Architects, New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, the New Zealand Planning Institute. Nominations will be sought from these bodies every two years.

A chairperson (for each two year period) will be nominated by the Council's Urban Design Champion.

The Urban Design Champion will be an ex officio member of the panel.

Some examples from other areas are given below:

Christchurch City

- *12 panellists drawn from NZIA, NZILA, NZPI NZPC*
- *Quorum of four required*
- *Council appoints convenor*
- *Panellists appointed for trial period of 18 months*

Hastings District

- *Panel comprises three members (quorum is two) drawn from architects, landscape architects, artists, heritage advisors and tangata whenua representatives*

(Note: italicised comments will not be included in the final document)

Queenstown Lakes District

- *Pool of 11 professionals from urban design, architecture, planning and landscape architecture. Also includes 2 community reps.*
- *Two councillors appoint the panel.*

3. Remuneration

Panellists are paid \$150 honorarium for meetings with applicants. Site visits and research time will not be reimbursed.

Christchurch City

- *Panel members receive \$150 per hour of meeting – other costs not reimbursed.*

Hastings

- *No remuneration (panel only meets once or twice a year)*

Queenstown Lakes

- *Panel members receive \$150 honorarium per meeting of up to 2.5hrs; \$75 per hour thereafter.*

Hamilton City

- *Panel members receive \$65 per hour (chairperson \$85)*

4. Cost to Applicants

There will be no cost to applicants if panel advice is sought at the pre-application stage. If resource consent has been made charges to applicants will be on an “at cost” basis.

Christchurch City

- *Has an 18 month free trial period*

Auckland City

- *Panel is a free service at the pre-application stage. If resource consents lodged is on an at cost basis*

Queenstown

- *Panel is a free service at the pre-application stage. \$500 fee if at resource consent or working drawing stage*

5. Criteria for Referral

It is proposed that the following projects are referred to the panel:

- Any building that is controlled, discretionary or non complying in the commercial, mixed business or central business zone or any building with a value of \$2 million or greater in these zones
- Comprehensive residential developments
- Council capital projects with a value of \$2 million or greater

Examples from other areas:

Christchurch City

- *All proposals that require a resource consent in the CBD or shopping mall zones – triggers within these are then*
- *Residential development of five units or more*
- *Commercial development of three units or more*
- *Any building with gross floor area of 1500 m² or more*
- *Any building adjoining a conservation or open space zone*
- *Any building adjoining any item on the list of protected buildings*

Auckland City

- *Development of 20 or more residential units in any zone*
- *Any development adj to or within the surrounds of a scheduled building*
- *Integrated housing or planned unit developments of 10 or more units*
- *Any significant new building or alteration in Business 3 zone*
- *Medium and major Council projects, including streetscape upgrades and community facilities*
- *Any significant new building or alteration in Res1,2 and 3 zones*
- *All new buildings and significant alterations within the CBD*

Queenstown Lakes

- *Discretionary and non complying development in design centres*
- *Discretionary and non complying high density and comprehensive residential developments*
- *Urban subdivisions which have the potential to significantly affect the quality of the urban amenity*
- *All Council major urban projects*

Hastings District

- *Developments in areas subject to design controls and requiring a resource consent*

6. Conflict of Interest and other Administrative Matters

Panel members need to declare conflicts of interest.

Meetings are not advertised or open to the public.

Agendas and administration are the responsibility of the Council.

Draft Tasman District Council Urban Design Action Plan

	Timeframe	Who will take responsibility	Priority
1. STRATEGY AND POLICY INITIATIVES			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review design objectives, policies and rules in TRMP. 	2009	Policy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to produce and improve design guidelines for building and subdivision in key areas. 	Ongoing	Policy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include reference to urban design in the sustainability section of LTCCP 	LTCCP2009	Strategic Manager	Policy
2. DECISION MAKING			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enable design review of resource consents through design panel preferably at preapplication stage. 	March 2009	Design panel (with assistance from Consents); Urban Design Champion	
3. DELIVERY OF CAPITAL WORKS			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure project briefs for Council construction projects consider urban design issues and impacts. 	Ongoing	Engineering; Community Services; Property Manager	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue streetscaping plan programme for town centres and other areas. 	Ongoing	Engineering; Community Services; Policy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure service providers have sound design capabilities. 	Ongoing	Council project managers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council leads by example by incorporating good urban design in its capital projects. 	Ongoing		
4. PROMOTION AND AWARENESS			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appoint Urban Design Champion. 	April 2008	Full Council	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council has an assigned staff member responsible for implementing urban design action plan. 	Nov 2008	Policy Planner	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicise urban design initiatives on Council website and other media eg Gateway projects. 	Ongoing	Policy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create an urban design category in Council's Environment Awards. 	2009	Environmental Education Officer; Policy	
5. BUILDING CAPACITY WITHIN AND OUTSIDE COUNCIL			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure training on urban design for councillors and staff. 	Ongoing	Human Resources; Policy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster sound working relationships on design matters across Council teams 	Ongoing	CEO	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster relationships with other design professionals across the region. 	Ongoing	E&P Manager	