The ‘DELIVERING DESIGN QUALITY’ Programme - An Evaluation of its Effectiveness

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TRANSFORM SOUTH YORKSHIRE HMR Pathfinder
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Key Contacts’ Details

Consultant’s Details

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NB. This study was facilitated by –
Peter O’Brien (Planning and Design Advisor)
TRANSFORM SOUTH YORKSHIRE (HMR Pathfinder)
1. Introduction:
The Study – its Scope, Purpose and Nature

1.1 THE STUDY
Transform South Yorkshire (TSY) launched the Delivering Design Quality Programme (DDQ) in 2005. TSY originally proposed to produce a full-blown evaluation, with longitudinal studies, and commissioned a full Specification for such a study in 2006/07. Progress was delayed pending a review of TSY’s budgets during 2006/07. The revised budget did not allow sufficient leeway for a full evaluation. TSY then decided to commission this more limited study, with a heavy emphasis on the stakeholders’ views, early in 2008.

1.2 THE BRIEF
The initial phase of the study involved a briefing meeting, study of the background programming documents, summarising the main facts in respect of the DDQ projects completed and/or commissioned to date, plus reference to DIVA’s separate researches into the scope for rekindling the development industry’s interest in the DDQ approach. The second phase of the study consisted of meeting TSY’s requirements for -
- conducting and analysing telephone interviews with a wide range of stakeholders, identified by TSY
- facilitating a discussion session with the DDQ Steering Group as a body, as well as taking the individual opinions of the four constituent local authority (LA) representatives, more privately; and
- “an element” of independent assessment of what has been delivered by the DDQ Programme – in terms of individual projects and their outcomes – against the specific objectives set for the DDQ programme, as set out in TSY’s Business Plan, taking into account the reduced funding for DDQ.

1.3 The Consultant was further instructed to produce a fairly concise report which would inform the Board’s deliberations on the scope of and future funding for the DDQ Programme from April 2008 onwards.

1.4 It was anticipated that the TSY Board at the end of February 2008 would decide:
(i) whether to continue with DDQ, and the rationale for doing so
(ii) a possible revision of its objectives
(iii) a possible revision of its methods; and
(iv) a potential future budgets for DDQ work.
2. Executive Summary

E1. The Clients were clear about the commission, which was to undertake an evaluation of TSY’s Delivering Design Quality Programme (DDQ) (2005-2008), in order to inform the Board’s discussions on its future. A brief was set by TSY – concentrating on stakeholders’ views, and an element of independent analysis.

E2. This Executive Summary aims to distil the main messages.

E3. Evaluation is essentially about making a judgement of ‘worth’ on how well a programme meets its pre-set aims and objectives, and whether it has been effectively managed. This evaluation is also informed by familiarity with a range of evaluative methods, which may be of some relevance, which are in wide use in the public sector.

E4. The original DDQ budget of c. £4M was much reduced, becoming £691K over three years (2005-2008). The Programme has run actively for closer to 2 than 3 years. There are high-level TSY aims and objectives and five DDQ Objectives to satisfy. A total of 46 No. projects (from TSY records) have been undertaken by the two Panels appointed, a number of which are still in progress.

E5. A total of 41 No. STAKEHOLDERS were interviewed and the vast majority knew, of and supported the DDQ Programme, and could readily list its achievements – although the planners were less clear on that, and would appreciate more active involvement. The INSIDERS were all supportive of the Programme, could point to many achievements, and a majority were sure it represented value for money, and saw scope to do more. The DEVELOPERS contacted mostly knew of and were all supportive of the DDQ concept: and thought that DDQ had a role to play in helping them address various challenges. The ENABLERS’ level of knowledge was uneven. They felt that DDQ Programme Management and DDQ promotion could be improved: they were keen to contribute more, and drew parallels with CABE’s approach to Enabling. The senior governmental partner organisations were very supportive, recognised TSY staff’s commitment, and had suggestions for taking the initiative forward on a stronger footing.

E6. The STEERING GROUP had a positive view of the Programme, overall, and were clear it had achieved quite a lot in the short time it had been active. CABE viewed the DDQ as a unique and successful programme which it championed nationally as best practice. But both CABE and the local authority representatives has some reservations about the programme management and organisation: CABE wanted to see this being better resourced, and was interested in augmenting the Group’s membership to meet the future agenda with more confidence.

E7. The Consultant’s overall evaluation established that good but unspectacular progress was being made against TSY aims and objectives, and the five DDQ Programme Objectives (other than influencing consumers – an element cut from the budget in earlier years). Good progress was being made on Obj.1 ‘influencing housing design quality’; Obj.2 ‘developing stakeholder / influencers’ capacity’; and Obj. 5 ‘promoting Building for Life’. A bit of rebalancing would provide a better fit with the Obj.4 ‘delivering exemplar projects’. Other strands of analysis pointed to a need for more progress on customer and developer engagement, sustainability, systematic analysis and dissemination of lessons learned, closer financial analysis, more joint working with other governmental agencies, and more direct design advice to ensure quality housing schemes and neighbourhoods on the ground.
3. Evaluation – Relevant Methods

3.1 Evaluation is really about making judgements of worth:
- how well the aims and objectives set have been achieved, in terms of outputs and outcomes, and
- how well the programme or project has been run as an initiative.

3.2 A classic full programme evaluation would usually cover the following factors:
- the goals (overall aims / objectives)
- the inputs (planning, communication, resources, task management, quality assurance, and budgeting)
- the outputs (products, documents, etc.)
- the outcomes (changes in attitude and values, changes in practices and organisation, advances in learning and skills, etc.).

3.3 After grasping and examining the genesis and conditions of a particular programme and/or projects which are multi-actor in nature, there is a need for value judgements to be made.

3.4 Complex multi-actor programmes and projects can be evaluated in a logical manner against a framework (a 'logframe') which contains 'indicative criteria' – eg.
- Relevance: (Are they in step with the intended partner's core policies? Do their expected products promise to meet the needs of the intended beneficiaries?)
- Effectiveness: (Has the implementation of the project actually benefited the intended beneficiaries?)
- Efficiency: (Does the output justify the cost? Could alternative means have secured the same benefit at lower cost? Could more benefit have been achieved somehow at the same cost?)
- Impact: (What were the longer-term, direct, indirect and ripple effects of the implementation of the project, both positive and negative?)
- Sustainability and Longevity: (Have the effects been sustained, or are they likely to be sustained?)

3.5 Where a programme is designed to provide education or 'new learning' – then the key question is whether that learning has become an embedded routine for individuals and/or the organisations being educated. Therefore, to the extent that individual projects were discussed as part of this Study, the focus needed to be on:
- Initial Analysis and Project Design
- Project Development
- Project Implementation
- Embedding the Lessons Learned.

3.6 There is also, more pragmatically, a need to be aware of the current popular techniques used by TSY’s Board Members and key partners, in order to evaluate and improve their own programmes and projects - simply because their views will be coloured by familiarity with those methods (eg the Regional Development Agencies’ Project Evaluation framework, and the Local Government ‘Best Value’ review-method).
4. History of TSY’s ‘Delivering Design Quality’ (DDQ) Programme

4.1 THE SOUTH YORKSHIRE CONTEXT. TSY’s initial analysis of the situation in South Yorkshire’s areas of low housing demand pointed to a need to address the poor quality of design evident in older and emerging developments. It was considered that inspirational design and high standards of construction would provide an impetus for people to move into the Pathfinder area. TSY’s Strategic Framework (2008-2018) (subtitled ‘A Sustainable Housing Market Strategy for South Yorkshire’) has since been produced and makes it clear that the “overarching policy driver is the economic development of South Yorkshire, and its contribution to the targets in the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) and the Sheffield City Region Development Plan.”

4.2 TSY AIMS AND DDQ OBJECTIVES - FOR THE HMR. TSY considered that the creation of ‘quality places to live’ was a cornerstone of Government policy targeted at improving housing within the UK. Accordingly, TSY’s overall aim became: “to build and support sustainable communities and successful neighbourhoods where the quality and choice of housing helps to underpin a buoyant economy and an improved quality of life”.

TSY had set itself the following three key objectives for the HMR area:

- "Achieve a radical improvement in the character and diversity of neighbourhoods: helping to secure a more sustainable settlement pattern in the sub-region"
- "Expand the area’s range of housing options: increasing housing choice in order to meet the aspirations of existing, emerging and incoming households"
- "Improve housing quality, ensuring that all tenures capitalise on the opportunities created through innovations in design standards and efficiency."

In 2007, TSY merged with the South Yorkshire Housing and Regeneration Partnership, and TSY’s aim then became the overall ‘vision’ for that Partnership and its Strategy for 2008-2018. But the HMR Programme (and therefore DDQ) is still firmly focussed on the HMR Pathfinder, and its strategic home in the three TSY overarching objectives, noted above.

4.3 DDQ BUSINESS PLAN 2004. Raising design quality was seen as being at the core of TSY’s work from the outset – the TSY Pathfinder Board had acknowledged its importance and it was seen as an essential factor for the overall, long term vision to be achieved. The ‘Delivering Design Quality Business Plan: November 2004’ - produced in collaboration with the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and the House Builders Federation (HBF) - said:

“The rationale for the Delivering Design Quality project is that the market has failed to deliver a level of design quality at a level comparable with, or capable of supporting, the vision for the Pathfinder area.”

The following formal themes were established for implementing the DDQ Programme:
- Theme 1 – Developing Housebuilders’ Technical Capacity
- Theme 2 - TSY Innovation Fund
- Theme 3 - Design Panels
- Theme 4 - Applying Quality Design Standards
- Theme 5 - Raising Consumer Awareness
Theme 6 - TSY Design Awards.

4.4 LAUNCH OF DDQ. The DDQ was launched in 2005. TSY aimed, through the DDQ initiative, to bring together some of the best expertise in the country into:
(a) a Home Builders’ Advisory Panel (HBAP), and
(b) a Local Authorities’ Advisory Panel (LADEP).

Better design quality was considered critical to the new aspirations for the sub-region’s HMR area. Thus:
“Design strategy lies at the heart of the Pathfinder’s strategy to ensure that its communities and neighbourhoods become locations of choice for existing and future households. DDQ will help achieve this.” (cf. TSY’s Delivering Design Quality’ folder, 2005/06).

4.5 DDQ’s THREE CONSTITUENCIES. The DDQ Programme was originally designed to address three constituencies - referred to as ‘The Triangle’ – the ‘developers’, the ‘regulators’ and the ‘consumers’ of housing. Addressing the ‘consumers’ angle was a task soon abandoned by TSY, due to the financial constraints.

4.6 DDQ – THE INITIAL CONCEPT. The DDQ Programme as first conceived and outlined in TSY’s Annual Report, 2006, was set to include:
• supporting developers in improving their layouts and designs
• enabling Council partners to have access to the latest in design thinking
• providing gap funding (within the HMR area) to help cover the extra costs of achieving better designs, so that housebuilders can “build with confidence to the highest quality”
• establishing ‘developer panels’ to enthuse developers about TSY’s design agenda
• ensuring that developers adopt and achieve certain standards of housing quality, namely:
  (i) the Building for Life ‘Silver’ and ‘Gold’ standards; and
  (ii) the Eco-Homes ‘Excellent’ standard
• continuing to collaborate with CABE and CABE Space to ensure best practice including providing workshops, seminars and other training to embed best practice throughout the Pathfinder area; and
• employing research organisations to gauge the progress achieved in truly transforming the markets in the Pathfinder area.

4.7 BUILDING FOR LIFE. The ‘Building for Life’ standard was seen as one which encapsulated best practice in housing design, and one which would drive standards upwards in South Yorkshire, despite it being little known, practised or understood there. TSY’s hope was that all new housing developments in the sub-region would achieve ‘Building for Life’ standards “and for the industry in South Yorkshire to be recognised as market leaders in residential design quality.” (cf. TSY’s Delivering Design Quality’ folder).

4.8 DDQ FUNDING. Originally, in the 2004 DDQ Business Plan, total TSY funding (indicative) for the Delivering Design Quality Programme was set at £4.149 Million (up to the end of March 2006).

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The DDQ Business Plan of 2004 explained the planned approach:

“The success of this working approach in reality depends on close team working between each of the individuals in the Delivering Design Quality team. Effort will also need to focus on how each the themes is presented to housebuilders and other partners as a joined-up package, so that the all stakeholders/partners are clear of the terms of engagement. So, for example, for housebuilder partners, the ‘deal’ will be set out as follows:

TSY will ask the housebuilder/developer to contract based on achieving higher design standards and for collaborating in a participatory masterplanning or coding process, for instance.

TSY will work with officers and elected members to ensure the planning system delivers speed and certainty.

TSY will help fund the gap in the increased costs that higher design standards may imply.

If it would be helpful TSY will provide the builders with designers to help modify and modernise your standard product, and will actively encourage you to reflect on the value of design and how design processes could enhance your business.

TSY will then assist in augmenting the launch / promotion process via our Building for Life / Delivering Design Quality branding strategy.

Through this sustained commitment to partnership working TSY will help to guarantee a successful outcome.”

4.9 DDQ FUNDING REDUCTIONS/REVIEWS.

Budget 1: The original 2004 budget for DDQ (as set out in the Business Plan) – was £4.12M: it included an ‘Innovation Fund’ of £2.6M – essentially gap-funding for developers to cover the extra cost of meeting Building for Life standards. This however was not pursued, and ‘Raising Customer Awareness’ and ‘Design Awards’ were dropped, also, reducing the budget to c.£1.3M.

Budget 2: TSY Annual Report (2006) identified a reduced overall HMR budget for 2005/06 of c.£14.5M overall - provided by a diverse list of funding sources - to support masterplanning, refurbishment/repair (rather than demolition) of homes, and limited
demolition works (largely confined to local authority stock). The spend profile for the DDQ programme was then described as being £870,000 over 3 years.

**Budget 3**: However, after a short internal review in mid-2006 and consideration by the TSY Board, the DDQ budget was set at £125K in 2005/06 (year 1), and £565K to cover 2006/07 and 2007/08, making a total of £691K over the three years (2005-2008). Even so, when referring to the focus on 'Improving Design Quality' / 'Delivering Design Quality', the 2006 TSY Annual Report re-states TSY commitment to DDQ: and its "pursuit of the highest standards of design for all our interventions and projects" and notes that TSY remains "committed to using design excellence as a key tool in making our houses and neighbourhoods attractive to people from all walks of life, and playing a full part in the renaissance of South Yorkshire".

**4.10 DDQ OBJECTIVES**

These remained throughout as:

(i) To influence the quality of design in housing supply by promoting awareness, appreciation of the benefits and value of good design.

(ii) To develop the ability and capacity of stakeholders and influencers to define, facilitate and promote good design in housing, in particular through consultative and statutory processes.

(iii) To influence consumer perceptions of good design in housing, encouraging actual and potential consumers of housing to appreciate and value good design.

(iv) To deliver exemplar projects in the area that act as demonstrators for the project and the Pathfinder, raising its profile both locally and on a wider basis.

(v) To promote Building for Life as the standard for housing design quality for new housing in the Pathfinder area.

**4.11 DDQ INPUTS.** The key inputs have therefore been, in practice:

(i) TSY DDQ Programme funding (for the Enabling Panels and related initiatives), subject to several reductions, outlined above;

(ii) a delivery team of <1 FTE (Peter O’Brien alone, initially) with some support from an administrator (Louise Dawes), a skeleton staffing, recently augmented in May 2007 by a 0.2 FTE architect/consultant (Richard Strittmatter), to strengthen programme management and liaison with client local authorities and the Enablers, on projects;

(iii) assistance and input from a DDQ Steering Group consisting of these three, plus local authority representatives – from Sheffield CC, Rotherham MBC, Doncaster MBC, and Barnsley MBC; and input and guidance from CABE. The Home Builders Federation is also a member of the Steering Group but in practice has been unable to attend since early 2007.

(iv) TSY’s internal quality assurance standards / practices; and

(v) the Enabler Panels. Work commenced in 2005 using a few CABE Enablers as a stop-gap measure, then in April 2005 TSY’s own Enabler Panels (HBAP and LADEP) were appointed and started to be deployed. The Enablers providing advice for TSY are technically highly qualified and highly experienced individuals (architects, urban designers, planners, landscape architects, regeneration specialists, and others).
4.12 SETTING UP THE DDQ ENABLER PANELS

TSY Enablers were originally selected early in 2005 through an open competitive process, and rigorous interviewing, administered by White Young Green, after a national (UK wide) advertisement campaign.

TSY Enabler rates were set at a level to attract highly experienced people, who would not normally take on Enabling work, and it was understood that for most but not all projects, the Enablers would be required to submit a ‘mini-proposal’, plus meticulous monthly accounts and a monthly progress report on live projects, and a final report analysing the project and lessons learned (from a DDQ perspective).

Many of the projects have been single Enabler, very short projects. But in practice, Enablers have either – depending on the nature of the project - been:

(i) selected to work on a particular project because of their specialist skills and experience with the duration and brief set and/or agreed with TSY staff and the client local authority, or

(ii) invited by TSY to work as one large Enabler team (for a couple of complex projects), or

(iii) invited to assemble Enabler teams of 2, or 3 or more Enablers (augmented if absolutely necessary with one or two highly specialist sub-contractors), or

(iv) appointed (exceptionally) on the basis of a negotiation with TSY staff, working to an agreed ceiling lump-sum figure, or

(v) appointed essentially as a consultant rather than as an Enabler, to deal with certain tasks related to the DDQ Programme.

At the moment, DDQ record keeping is perceived by TSY officers to be reasonably up-to-date, with some items of progress-chasing required (eg on a few final reports). Some programme management tasks – TSY staff acknowledge - have still to be addressed fully and systematically (because of lack of resource), for example:

(i) analysis of learning points across all the DDQ Programme projects,

(ii) dissemination of DDQ Programme progress information, and

(iii) analysis of overall learning points for the DDQ Programme.

4.13 DDQ BROAD OUTPUTS TO DATE. The DDQ has been required to proceed with a focus on the work of the two Enabler Panels (HBAP and LADEP), almost entirely.

Progress to date on the (much reduced in terms of funding) DDQ Programme of Projects is summarised below.

TABLE: DDQ PROJECTS BY TYPE, NUMBER AND PROGRESS MADE.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DDQ Projects</th>
<th>‘HBAP’</th>
<th>‘LADEP’</th>
<th>Totals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completed:</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>32     (c.70%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commenced:</td>
<td>1*</td>
<td>13**</td>
<td>14     (c.30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>46     (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(32.6%)</td>
<td>(67.4%)</td>
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[* = 1 No. is ‘well advanced’: ** = 7 No. are ‘well advanced’, and 6 No. ‘less advanced’.]
A. PRODUCTS

The DDQ Programme products consists of 46 No. projects in all, of which 40No. (86.9%) are either completed or substantially completed / well advanced, at the time of writing this report:

- 15 No. (32.6 %) of these were HBAP projects to assist ‘developers’ (private sector developers working and housing associations),
- 31 No. (67.4%) were/are LADEP projects - which are more focussed on assisting the ‘regulators’ (the four local authorities, and TSY).

At the time of writing this report, of the projects not yet completed, 1No. is a HBAP project and the other 13No. are LADEP projects (of which 6No. are not yet sufficiently advanced for all the details to be set out in this report).

It will become clear from reading the list below that the LADEP projects include not only advice to individual local authorities about particular areas, sites, projects, etc. but also significant elements of:

- training / training programmes, some open to all 4 local authorities; and
- sub-regional studies (eg. the current major baseline audit of design matters).

B. DOCUMENTS

1. Project Documents
Enablers have been directed to provide highly concentrated advice in several forms in relation to the projects:

- orally, in person, or by email, phone and letter
- written guidance to enable a project (pointing the direction) without moving into consultancy mode (providing sketch plans, drawings, etc.)
- very occasionally, with TSY’s explicit agreement, production of rudimentary sketch ideas to illustrate advice
- short reports to crystallising their advice (in electronic Microsoft WORD file)
- longer formal reports, bound - where required.

2. Project Learning Documentation
Enablers’ Final Reports, required as part of the administration of contracts by TSY, contain Learning Points from the Project, are another important product.
5. The Delivering Design Quality (DDQ) Projects

5.1 A brief description of each DDQ project completed to date, or in hand, is given below. It is based on basic project information sheets supplied by TSY. That has been supplemented, to the extent that Enablers where available to comment, with their views on the input, output, and outcome sections. It would, no doubt, benefit from further polishing and regular updating if this type of record is considered to be useful.

5.2 The list is set out in research programme style. This would seem appropriate for a Programme which seeks to break new ground - probing current methods of working, looking for lessons to be learned, building skills and encouraging processes.

STRAND A : PROJECTS ADDRESSING DEVELOPERS’ NEEDS

DDQ Home Builders Advisory Panel (HBAP) projects = 15 No. in all. [NB. TSY gave an undertaking of confidentiality to developers, at the outset, so the developers’ names and details of the site are excluded from this list.]

COMPLETED (14 No.):

12.05-04.06
‘Building for Life’ Pre-Assessment of a Proposal for a Site in Mexborough, Doncaster.
(Enabler: A.Ely) Ref. – DDQ/HBAP/TSY2
Input: c.5 days – site visit, study, preliminary assessment against the 20 point Building for Life (‘BfL’) of the developer’s proposals, and liaison with developer and LA.
Output: Preliminary guidance, in relation to the scope for achieving the ‘BfL’ standards - to assist the developer to produce a higher quality scheme.
Impact: Improved proposals, and Insight into better practice? The Enabler chased progress – but the outcome remains unclear.

12.05-05.06
Support for Concept Design at Sites at Canklow, Rotherham.
(Enabler : G. Jones) Ref.- DDQ/HBAP/R1
Input: c. 3 days - Appraisal of several sites in Rotherham, especially one in Canklow, against Building for Life standards.
Output: Report and advice.
Impact: Work on this project was used to illustrate DDQ benefits in the TSY Chair’s presentation to the ‘Design for Homes’ Conference (25 May 2006).

12.05-06.06
Fernbank Development Site, Kimberworth, Rotherham.
(Enabler: E. Walker) Ref. – early project, no reference number.
Input: c. 1day – site visit, study, and preparation of preliminary guidance.
Output: scoping of the design and development issues - in relation to the Building for Life standards – for a small (c.17 unit) housing site. Identifying key features and design challenges, and making suggestions / observations – towards achieving a well-designed housing scheme.
Impact: New appreciation of the scope for a better scheme, but the pre-existing proposals seemed to be fairly fixed, and unlikely to change much.
12.05-05.06
**Appraisal of Development Sites (6 No.) at Wath-upon-Dearne, Rotherham.**
(Enabler: G. Jones) Ref. – DDQ/HBAP/R2

**Input:** c.7 days – site visit, study, and expert planning analysis of the sites under consideration, with particular reference to ‘BfL’ standards. Critique of a revised masterplan, and a round-table discussion.

**Output:** An advisory report – providing guidance to make the most of the main site.

**Impact:** Improved design proposals, insight into better practice.

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2005

**Scoping of a Site at Grimethorpe, Sheffield.**
(Enabler: A. Ely) Ref.- early project, no reference number.

**Input:** c. 1 day – meeting with the developer, site visit, to assess scope for the DDQ approach to be applied to this proposed development.

**Output:** initial advice to TSY on the scope for applying DDQ to this proposal.

**Impact:** a short stage in the process of realising the site’s potential, completed.

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12.05-05.07

**Concept Design Support, Grimethorpe, Sheffield.**
(Enabler: E. Walker) Ref.- DDQ/HBAP/S7

**Input:** Consideration of a proposal for a challenging, narrow site: meeting with the architect, drafting advice / enabling proposals, for parts of the proposed development and against the 20 point Building for Life standard.

**Output:** Detailed analysis and advice to assist the design process.

**Impact:** Improved design proposals, insight into better practice.

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03.06-04.06

**‘Building for Life’ Pre–Assessment of Proposals for a Site at Wincobank, Sheffield.**
(Enabler: A. Beard) Ref. – DDQ/HBAP - early project, no reference number.

**Input:** c. 2days – site visit, study, and assessment of the current proposals for the estate/scheme, and guidance on TSY / Innovation Grant eligibility.

**Output:** Preliminary guidance, under the 20 ‘BfL’ criteria, to assist the developer to achieve a well-designed housing scheme, and gain gap-funding.

**Impact:** a good design proposal, and the prospect of gap-funding.

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03.06-05.06

**‘Building for Life’ Pre–Assessment of proposals for a Site at Burngreave, Sheffield.**
(Enabler: P. Fauset) Ref. – DDQ/HBAP/S - early project, no reference number.

**Input:** c. 3 days – site visit, study, and assessment of the preliminary feasibility schemes produced, against ‘BfL’ criteria.

**Output:** Guidance - set out under the 20 point ‘BfL’ criteria - to assist the developer: and follow-up discussion with the developer on a revised layout.

**Impact:** Improved design proposals for the site: but follow-on complications as SCC’s planners demanded still further extensive changes to the developers’ unit numbers, unit types, and layouts.

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5.06

**HMR Day, Rotherham.**
(Enabler: J. Spencer) Ref. – DDQ/HBAP – early project.

**Input:** c.1day - Invited to represent the Enablers at a Workshop / HMR Day organised in Rotherham

**Output:** Attendance at the event - representing Enablers.
Impact: Contribution to a successful event.

12.06-05.07
Support for Concept Design – for Cleared Sites at Canklow, Rotherham.
(Enabler: G.Jones) Ref. – DDQ/HBAP / R1 (follow-on)
Input: c.7 days – site visit, study, analysis of the sites and related development issues.
Output: An analytical note on the proposed development plans and issues arising.
Impact: Improved design proposals, insight into better practice.

09.06-10.06
‘Building for Life’ Pre–Assessment of Manor, Sheffield.
(Enabler: A. Ely) Ref.- DDQ/HBAP/S4
Input: c.4 days – site visit, study, and expert analysis of plans for the site, and
arranging a productive full day workshop to discuss options with the developers and
the LA, which identified many potential improvements.
Output: Clear guidance, set out under the 20 point ‘BfL’ criteria, to assist the developer,
to achieve a well-designed housing scheme.
Impact: Improved design proposals, and insight into better practice.

11.06-12.06
Concept Design – for Sites in Munsborough, Meadowbank Road, Canklow and
Brampton Bierlow, Rotherham.
(Enabler: M. Rushe) Ref - DDQ/HBAP/R5 [a, b, c, d]
Input: c.0.5 day – a few phone calls and an attempted start on the project which was
supposed to include c. 12 days work (site visits, study of brief and policy context,
assessment of team response, assessment of design team capacity).
Output: The Enabler was unable to proceed because of lack of interest from the
developer: the latter was unsure as to whether or not the Housing Association
concerned intended to proceed with three of the sites under review. So, work on this
DDQ contract was truncated.
Impact: No progress possible.

12.06-04.07
Support for ‘Concept Design’ for a Site in Kimberworth, Rotherham.
(Enabler: E. Walker) Ref. – DDQ/HBAP/R6
Input: c.3 days – site visit, study, and expert analysis of the site, discussion with
developers, report writing.
Output: Site Appraisal and Opportunities Report produced, taking into account ‘BfL’
standards – towards achieving a well-designed housing scheme.
Impact: Improved design proposals, insight into better practice.

01.07-03.07
‘Building for Life’ Pre–Assessment of Artisan’s ‘Foxhill’ scheme, Sheffield.
(Enabler: A. Ely) Ref. – DDQ/HBAP/S5
Input: c.2 days – site visit, study, preliminary BfL assessment, and liaison with
developer and the LA.
Output: Preliminary guidance, under the 20 ‘BfL’ criteria, to assist the developer in
maximising the potential of the site for a new housing scheme of quality.
Impact: Improved design proposals, insight into better practice?
Work on this DDQ project/site development was used to illustrate DDQ benefits in the
TSY Chair’s presentation to the ‘Design for Homes’ Conference (25 May 2006).
STILL IN PROGRESS (1No.):

01.08-04.08
DEVELOPER (RE-)ENGAGEMENT WITH DDQ – STUDY.
(Contractor: DIVA) Ref.- DDQ/HBAP/TSY8
Input: budget allocated, not days, c. £20K
Progress to Date: Website designed and live but not yet public. Newsletter designed and ready to go. HBAP research ongoing, and event planning for early April (the programme is complete for this).
Early feedback - None at this point.

STRAND B - PROJECTS ADDRESSING REGULATORS’ NEEDS
DDQ Local Authority Design Enabling Panel (LADEP) projects = 31No. in all.

COMPLETED (18No.):

03.05-07.07
Development of a Design Awareness Skills Course for TSY, and Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield Councils.
(Enabler: E. Hughes) Ref: - DDQ/DEP/T1 then TSY/DAC/2007
Input: c. 34 days – Three distinct sub-projects: (A) detailed background research and liaison with all 4LAs and 12 Enablers to form a ‘big’ course (12 taught modules, with additional workshops / site visits) tailored for each of the 4 LAs – to be delivered largely by the Enablers), and lined up Institute of Housing Accreditation; (B) post the ‘DDQ Programme Review’ (Summer 2006), producing a new, pared-down specification and contents - for 6 shared events, to be delivered by external specialists – in consultation with the 4LAs; (C) post another mini ‘project review’, commissioned to liaise with Learning and Skills Council to secure £40K grant-aid.
Output: (i) full specification, (ii) full, new specification, (iii) a letter/pitch to ensure 40% grant-aid for TSY towards the cost of delivering the £100K course, from the LSC.
Impact: The course, as finally agreed and being delivered (at affordable cost to TSY), upgrades design awareness among 100 people (DSY100), and is being well received.

01.06
Process Mapping, Design Evaluation Process, for Sheffield CC.
(Enabler: J. Spencer) Ref.- 1st stage of the audit brief – DEP/TSY2
Input: c. 4 days – running a workshop, interviewing various people, working closely with Andy van Vliet (SCC)
Output: a report on the process
Impact: work/findings were well received by the Client, but not clear yet whether it has or has not been embedded in SCC’s practices.

02.06-03.06
Options for Design/Development Procurement, Parsons Close, Sheffield.
(Enabler: A. Beard) Ref. – DDQ/LADEP/S2
Input: c.11 days – site visit, study of background/existing proposals, consideration of a number of options for improving the area and new development options, and facilitating a Workshop: an iterative process, much discussion with the local authority.
Output: a report and recommendations for a more effective procurement process.
Impact: advice given by the Enabler was accepted “almost verbatim”.
02.06-03.06

The 'Page Hall' Project, Sheffield.
(Enabler: M. Rushe) Ref. DDQ/LADEP/S3

Input: c.9 days – (This was in respect of an area where Sheffield CC had had a Masterplan prepared - which local residents did not like. The Enablers' role was to try and list their needs in order to inform a re-tendering of the Masterplanning exercise.)

The Enabler’s work included a site visit, a study of background/existing proposals, expert analysis of plans for an area of 500 terraced houses, advice to SCC and local residents on concept development and preparation of a design brief for the area.

Output: stage workshops (held with residents and officers), a draft and final brief of proposals to improve the neighbourhood, and engagement of the residents.

Impact: An improved approach / refinement of the brief, plus proposals to commission new external Consultants to draw up the detailed proposals for the area.

03.06-04.06

Regeneration Skills Audit – for Sheffield CC's Care & Neighbourhoods Dept.’s 4 No. Area Teams, Sheffield.
(Enabler: E. Hughes) Ref. - DDQ/LADEP/S4

Input: c.12 days – visits to the Area Offices to interview c. 20 staff in 4 Area Team, and SCC key staff in central units, summary and analysis of the notes taken.

Output: a detailed report of findings, and recommendations for training to up-skill the Area Teams in local regeneration best practice, sustainable development and delivering good design. Presentation to a Sheffield City Council Officer Working Party.

Impact: SCC’s training programme was enhanced/prioritised, and desk guidance notes upgraded for all 4 of the SCC ‘Area Teams’ (that produce Development Briefs).

03.06-06.06

The ‘Woodside’ Project, Sheffield - Support for Preparation of a ‘Market Brief’.
(Enabler: A. Ely) Ref. – DDQ/LADEP/ S6

Input: c.10.5 days – site visit, study of background/existing proposals, expert analysis of the plans for a large redevelopment site, preparation of an outline brief, then facilitation of a meeting with residents, working with officers and local residents - exploring options to maximise the potential of the site for a new housing scheme.

Output: A ‘Headline Brief’ - with guidance set out under the 20 point ‘BfL’ criteria - to guide SCC in production of (some time later) a detailed SCC ‘Market Brief’.

Impact: A better brief, and insight into better practice.

04.06-06.06

Project Brief – Penrith East, Sheffield.
(Enabler: J. Burns) Ref. - DDQ/LADEP/S5

Input: c. 6 days - review of progress made in preparing development proposals for the site, Enabler input into (i) the approach to development, (ii) the approach to design, and (iii) cost, impacts on capital receipts/land values over time, wider regeneration impact, and scope for development distinctive to Sheffield/Shirecliffe.

Output: facilitating a workshop with the project team – presentation and review with stakeholders, preparation of a detailed brief, feedback and review after the event.

Impact: effective at earlier stages - in meetings with community representatives, and the selection of bidders.

04.06-06.06

Tender Appraisal and Contract Support, Dalton and East Herringthorpe Masterplan, Rotherham.
(Enabler: M Quayle) Ref.- DDQ/LADEP/R1

Input: c.20 days – site visit, study of background/existing proposals, refinement of the tender, tender appraisal, contract support, outputs appraisal/evaluation, presentations.
Output: advice – including urban design advice/sketches/plans, and presentations. 
Impact: Improved design proposals, insight into better practice.

01.07
Preparing a Brief for a Design Quality Measurement of 4LAs, for TSY.
(Enabler: J. Spencer) Ref.- DDQ/DEP/TSY2
Input: c. 4 days – preparing a detailed brief for the proposed TSY commission.
Output: a brief.
Impact: the brief was used to engage others (a team led by Michael Rushe) and that exercise is almost concluded.

05.06-03.07
Reema Estate, Thurnscoe, Barnsley.
(Enabler: T. Lonsdale) Ref. – DDQ/LADEP/B1
Input: c.7.5 days – helping with drawing up a brief to select a developer, and criteria to assist the process of shortlisting developers - for improvements to a 1960’s estate near open countryside, due for partial redevelopment and upgrade: working with residents, and the LA’s project team, over time, slowly.
Output: small workshop with residents: support for the LA in brief preparation.
Impact: the developers ‘got the message” that design was valued highly.

06.06-07.06
Training Course for 25 No. people – ‘Excellent Client, Excellent Plans and Excellent Projects (Achieving Design Quality)’ – for Sheffield CC.
(Enabler: J. Leach / A. Beard) Ref.- DDQ/LADEP/S6A&B
Input: c.7.5 days – preparing and delivering the course.
Output: a two-day creative training course for SCC’s new Area Neighbourhood Teams, using the Sustainable Communities / ‘Homes for All’ concept, and focussing on the Client’s role in achieving good design and the transformation of neighbourhoods.
Impact: 25No. (mostly) inexperienced people better trained, more and knowledgeable.

06.06-11.07
Brampton Gateways Improvement, Rotherham.
(Enabler: T. Lonsdale) Ref. DDQ/LADEP/R4
Input: c. 4 days – site visit, discussion with key contacts, study of detailed plans for the area and the Masterplan for the area, consideration of the issues, preparing a report with advice on the open space components in relation to the overall improvement scheme for the residential area concerned.
Output: Written report, including advice proffered on what aspects of the proposed environmental works could be improved.
Impact: Slightly improved design proposals, some insight into better practice.

07.06-09.06
(Enabler: M. Quayle) Ref. – DDQ/LADEP/R2
Input: c.9 days – site visit, study of background/existing proposals, expert analysis of existing masterplans/studies, meetings with design team and stakeholders, site visits, design workshop, best practice review/ presentation, advice for the LA’s design team.
Output: detailed advice on the area’s future design, and suggestions for improving the design proposals: plus a design issues matrix, and advice on potential improvements to the public consultation panels/materials – to improve the proposals all round.
Impact: Improved design proposals, and insight into better practice.
10.06-10.07  
**‘Older Persons’ Accommodation - Design Project’, Sheffield.**  
**Input:** c. 9 days – to develop a design checklist for Older Persons’ housing – intended to be a ‘future-proof’ Model for housing 55+ years old in good health.  
**Impact:** Improved design proposals, and insight into better practice.

12.06-1.07  
**Specification for a Fully Independent Review of the DDQ Programme, TSY.**  
(Enabler: E. Hughes) Ref.: SPEC/DDQ/EVAL  
**Input:** c. 2 days – to prepare a full specification and tender documents for a full evaluation of the DDQ programme, over time, by an external consultancy.  
**Output:** a full specification of the study, and invitation to tender / contract documents.  
**Impact:** TSY then decided not to commission a full review, due to funding cut-backs.

01.07-04.07  
**Masterplanning Support - Transformation West Central, Rotherham.**  
(Enabler: J. Burns) Ref.: DDQ/LADEP/R3.  
**Input:** c. 12 days – familiarisation, refinement of the brief for improving 6-7 neighbourhoods, supporting the Council in its work on a new masterplanning process, at two stages - (i) during the procurement process (shortlisting, interviewing, tender appraisal, selection of consultancy teams), and (ii) at key stages in masterplanning (the baseline review stage, emerging options stage, preferred options stage, action plan).  
**Output:** advice as and where needed on process issues.  
**Impact:** was purely on the ‘processes’ (which were much improved).

03.07  
**Design Code Project, Sheffield CC.**  
(Enabler: M. Rushe) Ref. – appointed by SCC, not TSY, no reference number.  
**Input:** c. – days. (An Enabler Proposal was assembled, and accepted, and an Enabler appointment made, but the project was later cancelled, pre-commencement.)  
**Output:** nothing, project cancelled  
**Impact:** none - Sheffield CC decided to move in other directions.

03.07-04.07  
**Space Standards: Review of Draft Policy in Sheffield CC’s ‘Developer Manual’.**  
(Enabler: Y. Shariff) Ref.: DDQ/LADEP/S8  
**Input:** c. 6 days – exploration of the appropriateness / impact of setting internal space standards and layout requirements in residential developments promoted by the City.  
**Output:** Tabulated comparisons of NHF, Housing Corporation, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, ODPM, DLCG, and internal SCC standards, and recommendations.  
**Impact:** Insight into the standards: a few improvements to SCC’s ‘Developer Manual’.

**STILL IN PROGRESS (13No.):**

05.07- 2008  
**The Bellows Road Shopping Centre, Rawmarsh, Rotherham.**  
(Enabler: M. Rushe) Ref. – DDQ/LADEP/R5.  
**Input:** c. 16 days – (in respect of a CPO site, in which TSY plan to invest £5M): assimilation of background, consideration of design requirements and initial brief for a mixed-use redevelopment of the area, discussion with Rotherham officers, a project workshop, invitation to negotiate, briefing meetings with potential partners.
Progress to Date: analysis of work done to date by GVA Grimley, notes on the 2 No. Project Workshops, and production of a Draft Design Brief to assist Rotherham Council (RMBC) in the assessment and identification of a development partner for the redevelopment of the area.

Early feedback: Now down to a final choice by the local authority between two prospective developers.

05.07- Early 2008
'DESIGN QUALITY AUDIT and IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLANS'. (Enabler: M. Rushe, and 2 staff and sub-contractor) Ref.- DDQ/LADEP/TSY5
Input: c. 78 days (May 07 – Jan 08).
Progress to Date: basic researches done, and the 4 Draft LA Action Plans prepared.
Early feedback: Almost complete (at time of writing this report). This will form a benchmark for future DDQ investment.

05.06-03.07
Design Support for East Thurnscoe Development (Phase 1), Barnsley. (Enabler: M. Quayle) Ref. – DDQ/LADEP/B2
Input: c. 30 days – site visit, study of background/existing proposals, and support to the Thurnscoe Tenants Housing Cooperative on project management tasks, in order to secure good design in the improvements to a large housing estate (formerly a National Coal Board estate), worked up in close consultation with local residents.
Progress to date: An ongoing project.

Late 2007 – Early 2008
‘Secured by Design / Building for Life Comparison’ (for TSY and South Yorkshire Police). (Enabler: M. Rushe, and J. Spencer) Ref. – DDQ/DEP/TSY7
Input: c. 44 days
Progress to Date: Active, progress being made, going well at the moment.
Early feedback: Shaping up to be a productive exercise.

09.07- Mid 2008
Delivery of Design Training to 100 delegates ‘DESIGN SOUTH YORKSHIRE 100’ Course. (Enabler: A. Beard and J. Leach leading – with support from other Enablers, and external speakers.) Ref. – DDQ/ DSY100
Input: budget allocated, not days, c.£90k. LSC contribution negotiated.
Progress to Date: the Institute of Housing Accredited course commenced in September 2007 (6 x 2 day bespoke workshops for 100 learners).
Early feedback: Detailed feed back is sought after each module (5No. so far) – the feedback suggests that people are finding it useful and relevant, and learning a lot. There are calls already for it to be run re-run again next year, for another set of people.

12.07-3.08
Review of the DDQ Programme, TSY. (Enabler: E. Hughes) Ref.- DDQ/DEP/TSY9
Input: c.20 days – to conduct an evaluation of the DDQ programme, to a specification set by TSY (POB).
Output: this report, to inform the TSY Board’s decisions on the DDQ Programme.

Feb.2008 – for a 5-6 month project
The ‘Carbon Neutral’ Agenda – Towards More Sustainable Construction (with Good Design), in South Yorkshire.
(Enabler: D. Barrie, with several other Enablers) Ref. – DDQ/TSY6

Proposed at present: c.120 days.

(i) a ‘sustainability audit’ of the 4LAs policies and practice
(ii) detailed supply chain research
(iii) engaging developers – a major ‘awareness raising’ programme, and
(iv) production of a CD-ROM and other materials, to convey ‘best practice’ on
   line advice on the ‘carbon-neutral’ agenda for South Yorkshire audiences.


A Further c.6 No. Projects
All are in the Programme pipeline, but not quite sufficiently advanced as yet to list in
this report.
6. The Stakeholders’ Views

6.1 TSY provided a list of 46 individual STAKEHOLDERS it wanted approached, and TSY wanted certain core questions to be asked of all of these, to be followed by further specific questions, in these groupings:

- INSIDERS (TSY Board Members, TSY staff, LA Chief/Senior Planners, LA HMR Managers)
- DEVELOPERS (including ‘Users’ and ‘Non-Users’ of DDQ)
- ENABLERS; and
- SENIOR GOVERNMENTAL PARTNER ORGANISATIONS.

6.2 All the interviews were held on confidential basis, and on the understanding that comments made in individual interviews would simply by grouped by category.

6.3 This part of the commission proceeded as follows:

(i) of the 46 names provided by TSY, it transpired that 4 were on leave or ill

(ii) of the remaining 42 available for interview, a majority, 37 No. (88%), was contacted in the timescale allowed for collecting comments

(iii) they were asked the questions set by TSY (together with 3 questions of mine directed specifically at the Senior Governmental Partner Organisations, only, focussed on the ‘policy horizon’) 

(iv) all the questions and prompts were agreed with TSY staff beforehand

(v) it took, on average, 4.5 attempts per person before a stakeholder was successfully contacted, i.e. interviewed

(vi) the stakeholders were all interviewed over the phone, for 15-30 minutes each, and the comments recorded in writing and then typed into a full record

(vii) the full record identifies the comments made in greater detail (by category, rather than as individuals), and is held in a separate file, as TSY wanted a concise evaluation report for the Board - and comments in this report are not assigned to any individuals

(viii) the rest of this Section simply summarises those views – firstly, boiling down the stakeholders’ comments to the essential messages only, and secondly, looking at the further views of each grouping; and

(ix) a few interesting quotes have been selected to add interest to each sub-section, but confidentiality has been observed.
A. THE STAKEHOLDERS’ RESPONSES TO CORE QUESTIONS

A. KNOWLEDGE of DDQ ACTIVITIES:

Overall, 89% of those contacted were aware of and had used DDQ, in some way.

A further 3 No. had not used DDQ, but were aware of it: they included 2No. planners, and 1No. developer.

Among the Stakeholders, these were the reactions of the INSIDERS:

TSY Board members felt they had a good knowledge:
• “yes: it is seeking to up the standards and ambition, create a wow–factor, and pursuing the environmental and sustainability agenda”

TSY officers - had a full knowledge of the DDQ activities.

The Heads of Planning knew about the current Baseline Design Audit, and ‘DESIGN SY 100’ training course. On the latter, they reported that various colleagues were engaged with it and feedback had been good. But, they generally felt personally under-informed and relatively uninvolved:
• “good things” are happening, but “(I am) not sure of the overall picture, and how it all fits together”.

HMR managers all felt they had good knowledge of the Programme:
• “(it is about) the importance of good design, what we get for our money, what is realistic: and value for money – grabbing as much quality as possible”.

Among the Stakeholders, DEVELOPERS responses varied: from one with no knowledge to one who had been involved in the launch of the project, and several who had very good awareness of DDQ:
• “yes: TSY gave money for a CABE Enabler for a limited period to critique a design – for a Silver Award – useful, yes: some changes were made to the design, though some suggestions were not taken on board, not built”
• “yes: (DDQ’s role is to) enable transformational change in targeted areas in South Yorkshire – boosting design quality and delivering) good housing – giving (areas) a kick-start”.

Most ENABLERS knew about some aspects of TSY’s work, and a bit about DDQ - the DESIGN SY 100 course, especially, and assessments done against ‘Building for Life’ standards, a few wider projects: but Enablers had received only an initial briefing and one newsletter: not one Enabler felt they had a full knowledge of DDQ:
• “no DDQ forward agenda plan circulated”.

There was much concern among Enablers about the relative lack of briefing on the DDQ Programme’s overall progress:
• “I don’t know much, apart from what I’ve done myself or with others – and a bit we’ve been told by Richard Strittmatter”
• “TSY is less communicative than other clients”
• “I find that I have to piece together the picture from many sources as TSY itself does not communicate progress on it (DDQ) effectively”.

Among the stakeholders, the SENIOR GOVERNMENTAL PARTNER ORGANISATIONS all felt they knew a bit about the DDQ:

- “no (I have not used it): but I am aware of it”
- “only information gathered from DESIGN 100 training days”
- “I know about it at second hand: where it has had an impact on a scheme we’re funding or our RSL partners are working on (eg Canklow): (there is) very positive feedback from the RSLs about the quality of the advice given by the Enabler”.

B. DDQ’s ACHIEVEMENTS:
Overall, 81% of all STAKEHOLDERS contacted felt they knew what TSY was trying to achieve with the DDQ work. But, a bit worryingly, the 19% who did not included 2 No. Heads of Planning, 2 No. Senior Governmental Partner Organisations, and 3 No. Enablers.

With respect to the INSIDERS: 100% understood what DDQ was trying to achieve and referred to many positive attributes of the DDQ Programme.

TSY Board Members said of the DDQ’s achievements:

- “it has put quality high on the agenda, and there is quite a lot to say - including Henley Rise and Norfolk Park – good schemes”
- “it seems to have been fairly successful in getting planning officers aware of design, but the private sector.....”

TSY Officers’ view of DDQ’s main achievements were:

- “I gave a presentation recently to Rotherham’s councillors: they were very direct in supporting what we are setting out to do... they’d taken on the design agenda”
- “tangible success – in the planning pipeline – several hundred new homes which will be built to Building for Life standards”
- “we now have a set of authorities –regional and local – who more fully understand the relationship between housing quality and successful housing-led regeneration...and (there is) a slightly higher skills base within the public sector to deliver that...”
- “the commitment and positive energy from the local authorities in this HMR...for example, on Building for Life frameworks”
- “Enabling – with individual developers: (generating) quite positive feedback from the people involved”
- “the Design South Yorkshire 100 Course”.

The Heads of Planning seemed to be less clear about the DDQ’s Achievements:

- “I can’t pinpoint a document which makes it clear that good design has been achieved and the principles embedded into what we do, and how we do it.”
- “there is an understanding that another body is working with us to change attitudes: (but) elected members and the wider public’s appreciation of TSY in the round, and DDQ, is weak: there are (misconceptions and political rivalries)”.

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HMR managers had a lot to say about DDQ’s achievements: a few comments will demonstrate the breadth:

- “we have had a couple of awards from CABE – we would not have got them without the DDQ projects”
- “the design quality of affordable housing...a tremendous step-up in quality, compared with that of a few years ago”
- the “DESIGN 100 training course....and training in Building for Life processes”
- “the successful projects have been – the potential support for developers of HMR projects, and the training courses: and the less successful – a number of best practice studies”
- “impact on awareness of design quality – for people who don’t come from a design background”.

The DEVELOPERS – all (100%) - felt they knew what DDQ was trying to achieve, and on achievement said:

- “to create a step-change in quality of design, using the best design principles circulating at the moment -BfL, Lifetime Homes, etc. - (we’ve) been involved in Norfolk Park – which highlights elements TSY wants to achieve – a good example of work in South Yorkshire – in terms of houses and, importantly, the public realm”
- “our Henley Rise Eco-housing scheme in Rotherham – is now finished, and we had design support for that, and at Canklow – currently on site and due to be completed soon, and we’ve worked in Sheffield North with a number of Enablers on various sites”.

Of the ENABLERS - 75% of those contacted felt they knew what DDQ was now trying to achieve, and a worrying 25%, not: but all but one (91%) could point to clear achievements made under the DDQ banner. These three achievements were repeatedly mentioned:

(i) progress within the local authorities on using Building for Life to drive up design standards on schemes
(ii) the growing awareness of design across the sub-region
(iii) skills development, especially the ‘DESIGN South Yorkshire 100’ training course.

Comments on what DDQ was trying to achieve included:

- “raising aspirations across the region, and assisting with the delivery of the ‘Sustainable Communities’ agenda”
- “general improvement in the standards of housing – evidenced by Gold and Silver ‘Building for Life’ Awards”.

Positive comments on the actual achievements of DDQ included:

- “(TSY’s DDQ) has built a lot of capacity, through persistent effort it has enthused people; relapse, default ways of working (have been prevented) through enthusiasm...and Enabling work on individual projects raises the bar”
- “it has raised skill levels among the local authorities”
- “(there is) great awareness about the importance of good design within the four local authorities, and spill-over into other organisations - for example, the Police”
- “Enabling has been well received”
• “a number of projects have benefited directly from Enabling support where it is requested, and there is a growing body of training activity”
• “we’ve been really impressed by the level of enthusiasm (among) planners and architects from the four local authorities” for ‘Design South Yorkshire 100’ and other training courses
• “compared with other HMRs – TSY says it believes in good design and has put mechanisms in place to ensure it”.

More sceptical ones were:
• “it’s all a bit piecemeal”
• “it needs to be more catalytic”
• “it has been less successful in relation to the housebuilder side”.

All the Enablers were concerned about the paucity of information offered to them on the Programme’s progress overall and direction, and the minimal involvement of Enablers in that process:
• “one doesn’t hear much about (DDQ) other than in odd emails”
• “not sure what has been achieved – (because of) inadequate communication of information to Enablers”
• “we are a List, not a Panel”.

Among the SENIOR GOVERNMENTAL PARTNER ORGANISATIONS – 75% understood fully, and 25% vaguely, what DDQ was trying to achieve:
• “yes: (we’re) on board: ... I am very aware of the need to transform the housing stock and the need for high quality housing to attract people into the area”
• “we’re looking at housing form - at a strategic level: housing needs to provide the right offer to encourage growth and development”
• “(I do) not fully (know what TSY/DDQ is trying to achieve): I have a ) vague acknowledgement of what it does: it is a platform for all the agencies to interact”.

Comments on DDQ’s actual achievements included:
• CABE said: “firstly,(on) individual projects - many positive stories; second, a complete change of attitude in South Yorkshire from the early days – there is now a much better understanding of design, design strategy, design training, a step change in design culture, (although) rolling it out for the development industry hasn’t been done yet; and the profile (of DDQ) in the HMR sector – TSY has proved that it is ahead of the game on design”
• Others said:
  - “the (DSY100) training days are productive and enlightening”
  - “it has raised the bar in all the authorities in the area – awareness has improved – of the scope for making a real difference”.

C. UNDERSTANDING of, and SUPPORT for DDQ:
Overall, 97% of all the stakeholders supported the DDQ Programme.

Stakeholders who were INSIDERS were 100% supportive of DDQ.

The TSY Board Members were very supportive:
• “yes, yes, yes...”
• “yes: the concept is understood: the Board has had two presentations on it: but we don’t monitor it in terms of spend”
• “very supportive”
but they had looming concerns:
• “there is an issue over the longer term about the sums of money devoted to it – there is a danger of constantly subsidising good design: it should be embedded”
• “we must demonstrate value for money: we must see it as mainstream and not as an add–on: there was anxiety about the cost of the design Quality Audit project: we need to be clear with developer partners and (focus) on their encouragement”.

TSY Officers were supportive, one saying:
• “yes – but it needs review and refocus: although we also need to reach the point where it is embedded – (the) preaching needs to be firmly embedded in the culture of the public and private sectors”.

Heads of Planning understood and were very supportive in principle:
• “most definitely”
• “got to be good if it is anything which is improving the quality of the environment and quality on the ground”
but had a few concerns despite that:
• “TSY has become a body in its own right, independent of the four local authorities: perhaps it needs to engage more with the four authorities: it could introduce itself better to others on what it is and what it does”
• “TSY have never made an offer to make a presentation to (this) planning department - and even those who do work with TSY don’t have a full picture.”
• “a rolling programme is needed”.

HMR managers understood DDQ and were generally very supportive:
• “TSY has a light team and does little hands-on activity, but the strategy is quite forward-looking: despite budget cuts, things have progressed quite well, but some of the areas cut (from the DDQ programme) still need doing to a large extent”
• “I think I do - I’ve struggled with the Design Course: some of the concepts are difficult, but I have grasped a lot of it, and the workshops have been very good”.

TSY can also take heart from the fact that the DEVELOPERS were users and non-users alike) 100% supportive of DDQ and were responding to TSY’s challenge to improve design standards:
• “yes: we look for architects which can deliver that vision – who challenge perceptions about neighbourhoods”
• “we are moving away from the volume approach – x units per site – and maximising land value (in order) to design for wider regeneration”
• “(we’ve) not researched it, but want to reflect the best in design: (and) yes, customers are responsive (to that).”
• “yes: increasing design quality: in Sheffield there is a panel of architects committed to good design - design for saleability as
well as pure design quality – for the public: (but) ‘too contemporary’ housing meets consumer resistance’.

- “very much so: we’ve been heavily involved: (it needs to be) applied evenly across the area – all architects need to play ball: and ... continually promoted so that people are aware”
- “I sympathise to a large extent with the concept” – this, from a developer with no prior knowledge of DDQ.

Of the ENABLERS contacted, 90% were fully supportive of DDQ. Most said, they were “definitely”, “passionately” committed, etc, and the positive comments included:

- “yes, unreservedly - I just wish there was more sense of excitement about it - it deserves to be shouted about”
- “it is potentially a very powerful and cost-effective tool for raising standards: and South Yorkshire desperately needs it”
- DDQ was something “which other Pathfinders could follow”.

But, one Enabler had serious reservations about the huge reliance on Building for Life standards as the vehicle for achieving really high design quality:

- “it is tending to revert to a check-list: simply using ‘Building for Life’ as a checklist is not the way to do it”.

Most Enablers were concerned about the scale of the challenges still to be addressed:

- “yes: (as) the quality of design is not good in the North, especially in regeneration areas, and there is still a view that insistence on good design will scare off developers”
- “yes: it is very much needed: TSY’s DDQ is often fishing in very cold waters: working with and through local authority officers at a fairly junior level who lack basic local regeneration skills, never mind design awareness: it will take several more years of guidance and training to turn it around”.

TSY’s Richard Strittmatter and Louise Dawes were praised for their “supportiveness” in the setting up of projects, by several Enablers. But again, TSY’s level of communication with Enablers and others was an issue:

- “I know what they are trying to achieve, but the programme is not communicated properly to all the Members of the Panels”
- “apart from the initial briefing there has not been much explanation of TSY’s strategy: (it could be) better explained to help us, and their partners”
- “the organisation still seems embryonic and unsure of its own remit”.

The SENIOR GOVERNMENTAL PARTNER ORGANISATIONS were 100% supportive. They generally recognised the importance of good quality in design and signalled strong support for the DDQ concept, the DDQ programme, and the ‘Design SY 100’ course:

- “(DDQ) would be justified if it were just (in terms of) the Enabler Panels, but the training and audit work has been absolutely invaluable”
- “yes: the standard of housing needs to improve: its about raising the bar so that people moving into the area see nice houses - its about image and perception, keeping up with the times – for example in terms of energy efficiency”
- “(DDQ) still stacks up: in moving towards improved design in housing - and the public realm - in South Yorkshire: (after an initial focus on)
masterplanning - many (projects) are moving now towards delivery on the ground: supportive: yes, now more than ever: (DDQ) is vital”
- “the commitment of people in TSY - Peter O'Brien in particular – has been outstanding”
- “I have been to all the (DSY100) training days, so far”.
A few concerns were expressed, though: about whether or not the DDQ Programme was too focussed on cosmetic appearance in development at a cost to ‘designing out crime’, and whether it might be impacting on the delivery of affordable housing, disproportionately.

D. MODIFICATIONS to DDQ, and SUGGESTIONS for FUTURE PROJECTS:

Almost everyone, 97% of the stakeholders contacted, had suggestions to make.

The stakeholders who were INSIDERS all saw a clear role for DDQ and had ideas to offer for developing it into the future:

TSY Board Members suggested:
- "get everyone around the table (including ‘customers’) for a discussion"
- "try harder to get the private sector (to provide) good design"
- "(we need to) see it as a norm, integral and embedded, and we need to work more with the private sector: it’s a bit public sector led...”

TSY Officers suggested:
- "engagement with the private sector"
- "gap-funding: yes, (the private sector) want it: ...just when we feel we know what to do, those who need to deliver are finding it harder to deliver ....”
- “synergy, joining things up: ... for example TSY’s work with BRE on existing stock regeneration to meet the Code for Sustainable Homes targets”
- "mixed-income neighbourhoods...to help build sustainable communities”
- "more linkage of streams of work - is beginning to emerge"
- “project support for public authorities (needs to become) more self-sustaining, taken as read, and the changes in culture and processes embedded over the next three years”.

Heads of Planning want more communication, involvement, and focus:
- “(more focus on) town centres and radial routes”
- “communication: roll out information – to influence progress on the ground”
- “TSY needs to refresh the main contributors” and “involve the planners - have they got the right people there?: not clear to me that TSY is actually involving the planners”.

The HMR Managers want to see continuation of the DDQ Programme:
- “we certainly do not want to take our foot off the pedal: and even if funding decreases, we shouldn’t cut DDQ – the DDQ project needs to there as a ‘critical friend’ as we go forward in South Yorkshire, to ensure that we do not compromise design for ‘the numbers game’ ”
- “there is still a significant amount of work to do, and resourcing needs to be retained ... to follow-up and mainstream the experience gained”
and also more engagement with the developers:
- “to raise the bar of design quality, we need to continue the dialogue with the private sector – examining supply chain, climate change and mixed tenure”
- “involving the house-builders as a movement: ... HBF were helpful at the start, but they have been as absent at the later stages - a big disappointment and a high priority to address in the future”

and more design awareness training:
- “more training, and (to be) more proactive – developing local design guides .... for areas where transformational change is planned”
- “work on local authority processes: skill building has started quite well, some ongoing support is needed ... (to ensure that) what we have started is embedded and internalised”
- “the Design South Yorkshire 100 Course had a good balance of key speakers, visits, etc. - it will be a pity when it ends”.

The DEVELOPERS wanted realism and consistency from the local authorities:
- the most helpful thing for developers would be – “a consistent approach across the authorities”
- “get across to local authorities and the public sector the value and cost of delivering high design standards: it is not compatible with (achieving) high value for the land: this needs addressing at the corporate level, away from short term gain (considerations), as failing communities are a higher cost than reduced land values: representing extremely high benefit to a local authority”
- addressing “planning issues: the actual requirements for high densities which (frustrate plans) for larger family housing...leading to higher unit numbers, more flats, more apartments to achieve x units, for land value reasons”
- “just make sure the Programme is promoted and marketed widely”.

ENABLERS suggested a need to meet the challenges of the future and the policy horizon:
- “more emphasis on fine-scale local regeneration best practice”
- “TSY should become more involved in site disposal”

plus a continued emphasis on training:
- “further training programmes (with practical, real world applications) - on negotiating (for both sides of the industry), producing design guidance, highways design, sustainability, and housing design, the ‘Secured by Design’ and ‘Building for Life’ standards”
- on “Design and Access Statements’ – the procedures are often poorly followed”

also, TSY’s promotion and public relations needed developing a great deal:
- “(it needs) evangelism:.....Peter O’Brien would benefit from a loud-mouth companion”
- “information gleaned (through DDQ projects) should be shared across the region, and Enablers should be informed in order to communicate that information”.

Enablers also saw scope for using the ‘Panel’ more effectively:
- “understanding how each of the initiatives links to an overall strategy, and how (TSY) is delivering that strategy: understanding the direction (better) would be good for the Panels and partners”
- “instead of bidding ad-hoc – I’d like to see a map of the totality (of the DDQ programme)”
• “more engaged with the public, less of an indoors management function for helping local authorities, and more socially and culturally based and directed: if the Panel is to be a catalyst, it needs to fulfil these functions”.

The SENIOR GOVERNMENTAL PARTNER ORGANISATIONS suggested progress towards higher standards:
• “build in a minimum protocol for all new housing”
• “design awareness training for all involved in delivering better neighbourhoods”
• “(using) ‘Building for Life’ and ‘Secured by Design’ criteria”.

E. Further Action / Initiatives / Investment to STRENGTHEN the delivery of design quality in South Yorkshire, more generally:

Among the stakeholders, the INSIDERS had a variety of other views to offer:

TSY Board Members said:
• “TSY is doing a great deal already, and CABE is on-board - (but it could) experiment more with high-density (development, and give) more attention to ‘Lifetime Homes’ and older people’s needs”
• “we could publicise our success a bit more – our public relations are not good: a member of staff is due to be appointed shortly”.

TSY staff said:
• “working with the development industry – it needs to be continually encouraged to raise its standards: work with it as a whole (and don’t rely on a stick approach): stress the benefits of achieving quality standards: they (developers) have become over-reliant on the planning framework”
• “a more proactive statutory planning framework – with clear, unambiguous, strategic planning policies – setting out what is meant by ‘housing quality’, and with criteria which can be benchmarked, and links through to the regulatory framework”
• “lots still to do with the local authorities: despite good progress on skills, especially on leadership - design championing - with local communities and working collaboratively with other local authorities: for example, in ‘Design Panels’ across South Yorkshire”
• “the work with ‘consumers’ was struck out (of the DDQ programme) early on – but some developers tell me that TSY would be well advised to move into educating their clientele - in new HMR areas - in terms of modern design and energy efficiency”.

Heads of Planning said:
• “(get the) private sector fully addressing the environmental design quality of buildings: lots pay lip-service, (some) say they cannot afford to do better, pressure (is needed) to choose between (what they do and the better way), for the money, on housing associations and private sector alike (as agents and architects can be confrontational)”.
• “TSY needs to lead on resourcing and embedding its design work – through a ‘Design Panel’ for South Yorkshire – one overall one for major proposals: TSY must not just leave it to the LAs”
• TSY could/should produce a “Design Guide for South Yorkshire” with good examples” - and run a “South Yorkshire Design Awards scheme – to encourage good practice”.

HMR Managers said:
• there was a need to be “more proactive with developers – and more responsive to planning policy, affordable homes, and (related) design matters”
• “a redoubling of efforts with the private sector (is needed)”
• “there is quite a lot of need to aid developers in selecting (their) design teams “targeting something at small to medium sized developers would be beneficial, but challenging”: and they could be engaged through “DC sections’ contacts – for future reference, and future sites”
• “(It is) best done at sub-regional level, to help strengthen the resolve of the constituent Boroughs”
• address the capacity issues - “skills shortage of urban designers (outwith Sheffield CC) and recruitment of urban designers is difficult” – so there might be scope for “the universities - to provide a flow (of appropriately skilled people)”
• further training for new officers, would be needed : “an ongoing issue”
• and one warned: “we have real problems in achieving (higher design quality); the economic of the housing market have changed: (there are) capital receipts issues, and deliverability issues where capital receipts are less than expected: finances won’t stack up so pressure is on to reduce standards, and give a capital receipt”.

DEVELOPERS wanted understanding, consistency, and financial incentives:
• “when ‘good design’ is applied evenly across the Board – we will see a change”
• “making sure – if the money is there – gap-funding, easily available: as good design does cost (more)”
• “good design is expensive, adding to the capital cost of new homes: there is a real danger that housebuilders will fall between the three stools of improving design quality, increasing the numbers (of homes built) and green homes/eco-homes”
• “aid (for) developers in selecting design teams”
• “(there needs to be) more understanding of the pressures on RSLs and private developers: an understanding of each others’ jobs”
• “incentivisation: discounting - local authority land in recognition of enhanced design; adherence to briefs - local authorities saying what they mean and sticking with it and not being browbeaten by developers; and planners being more open-minded”
• “we have applied for gap-funding – but it is not as easily available for housing associations as the private sector: for housing associations it is complicated (because of concerns about double–accounting), and confusing”.

The ENABLERS wanted to see many things developed further, especially in respect of establishing more exemplars / demonstrator projects, and flexible use of Enablers to assist that:
• “exemplar projects” — equivalents to BedZed (UK), or Hammersby (Denmark) are needed in South Yorkshire - in order to “inspire”, and such exemplars should be directly encouraged by TSY, itself, instead of it trying to do it “indirectly - through third parties”
“more meaningful use of Enablers - to advise on projects where there is real commitment to spend money” – and a concern was expressed that some DDQ projects involving residents were likely to encourage “unrealistic expectations”

“more of a mentoring process – with Enablers embedded for a certain number of hours a year or month within LA and housebuilder teams – and covering a wide range of things ... measuring, assessing, etc.”

“more help, one-to-one, meaning Enablers with local authorities, is needed - on brief development and procurement”

“more emphasis on renovating the older stock in a sensitive but modern manner for the 21st century’s challenges”

“one or two top exemplar schemes in the region to demonstrate conclusively that high design quality can be done and will sell in South Yorkshire”.

More engagement of developers:

“house-builders panels: the biggest constituency to be mentored is the house-builders: they are not really an active partner in DDQ: and the HBF’s response (to DDQ) has been poor”

“aid (for) developers in selecting design teams”

“design quality is a function of mathematics done by developers: so demonstrate to them the value of design: greater design value is a social need, the (DDQ) Programme needs to work efficiently with developers and builders: social entrepreneurship is needed”

“developers have told me – a bit snobbishly - that there are no developers in South Yorkshire, just builders: so there is a marketing need: it is style, and it’s ‘partners’ style - are (all of) ‘us’ involved”.

Plus, more capacity building and effort on PR and communications:

“continuing to build capacity and awareness that what is being built now is not going to meet the required standard – a step change is needed, so capacity at a senior level is needed”

“access to published information and guidance – and (following) best architectural practice – design work to be discussed and reviewed by a Panel: provoking deeper analysis, which can be very fruitful”

“communications: awards, celebrating what’s worked with a celebratory and PR divided, newsletters on what’s afoot, what is coming up, the show so far, and web-based news”

“a pot of money and resources to embed the objectives of the DDQ, and capacity-building resources for our public sector partners”

“where is the public face to business people and ordinary people?; where is the shiny-ness of the organisation?: it feels like an external consultancy to the mechanics of local government – I don’t see it, and I don’t hear about the bigger vision”

“more clarity of understanding among LAs that the DDQ service exists to be taken advantage of – where Enabling has been suggested rather than requested, there is a feeling that the LA do not really value it: they need to harvest it”.

The SENIOR GOVERNMENTAL PARTNER ORGANISATIONS suggestions were:

from RDA (Yorkshire Forward) focussed on design protocols:

“agencies like TSY, the new Homes Agency, housebuilders – (should) sign up to a protocol to get things done: as regime to be signed up to – to raise the bar”
• “(address) the pressures on the planning system – in terms of the type and numbers of houses and density issues, and flooding (last summer’s issues are still in the forefront of people’s minds)”.

from CABE, focussed on improving the use of the Panel, and Enablers:

• “(running) an Enabling service is not just sending experts to work in projects, but has a learning element: it needs co-ordinating by TSY: it needs time and punch: (we have a) real concern that Richard Strittmatters’s part-time job ends in March: in the early days Peter O’Brien was asked to do too much and there was drift: the Enabler Panels need managing in a clearer way: it is difficult to recruit suitable people - we recently advertised and got one application: and dissemination of case study results needs consideration”

• “the Enablers really need to be better used as a network, as a sounding board, and in themed workshops...”

• “it needs managing in a clearer way”

• “in the original Business Plan (2004) there was a reference to the Southey Owleton Project in North Sheffield – predating DDQ, but a HMR funded intervention - involving spatial planning, regeneration, workshops, and projects. Sheffield City Council, with CABE, created a four person Design Panel (Andy Beard, Justine Leach, and two other CABE Enablers): their role was to provide a collective effort, working with communities and increasing their capacities – a good model: look at that, and learning from that...”

from the Housing Corporation, focussed on cost-efficient interventions:

• “cannot think of many things which are not happening already: but, urban design requirements are pushing up the cost of schemes in Sheffield – with supported housing schemes now expected to be landmark buildings – which is difficult to deliver: and Enabler advice is very good, and cost-neutral advice is valuable”

from the Police, on designing out crime:

• “(more focus on) the ACPO’s ‘Secured by Design’ – a level platform is needed: we need to design out crime”.

TSY wanted the various categories of stakeholders quizzed further on certain matters.
B. INSIDERS’ VIEWS – MORE DETAIL

The messages coming out of the responses to the CORE QUESTIONS, to summarise, are that:

- their knowledge of DDQ seemed to be generally high
- most could point to numerous achievements of DDQ – but the planners seemed less clear about its achievements
- they were generally very supportive, but there were some concerns about future focus and funding
- engagement with the private sector, and more promotion of TSY’s DDQ work were urged
- the planners called for more communication, involvement and focus.

The Client wanted the INSIDERS probed further on: (i) their knowledge of DDQ, (ii) whether it represented value for money (VFM), (iii) its degree of influence; and (iv) new ideas / future focus.

(i) On knowledge of the DDQ. The INSIDERS felt they knew:

1. Very little (2 No.) (11%)
2. A fair amount (5 No.) (27.7%)
3. A lot (6 No.) (33.3%)
4. Full knowledge (5 No.) (27.7%)

TSY Board Members felt they knew as much as they needed because:

- “papers and presentations” were received on the DDQ programme’s progress by the Board
- “we have looked as a Board at the (DDQ) Programme – the DDQ is by far our biggest revenue expense”.

TSY Officers - recognised the need for an “improvement” in DDQ communications and information-sharing.

A Planner said:

- “an overview summary - a quarterly update which could go to planning committees and ‘forums’, occasionally - would help, as well as feedback from (other) staff”.

HMR Managers all said they had fairly good knowledge, especially on the training course/s, and the ‘standards’ applied, but more patchy knowledge of the DDQ projects.

(ii) The Client wanted figures on the INSIDERS perception of DDQ’s ‘Value for Money’ (VFM) as a Programme. Of the INSIDERS:

11 No. (61%) - agreed that it gave VFM
6 No. (33.3%) - were unsure
1 No. (5.5%) - said no, it did not.

Positive comments on DDQ’s VFM, included:

- “yes : at a cost of around £0.5M for (DDQ) projects, as compared with the value of 1000 new £100,000 homes - over a year - a £100M investment”
- “given the capital that goes into development, the DDQ programme is very modest, but pays dividends”
“considering design from the outset is worthwhile: over time, the market will respond”
“the evidence goes back to what we have delivered – a pipeline of better housing and raising skill levels in the officer corps, and member engagement”
“yes : although some still has to be demonstrated”
“a lot of learning has come from the (Training) Course events and workshops”.

The unsure people commented:
“too early to say: it has provided, so far, reasonable value for money - we need an assessment: our allocation could be less, (impacting on) revenue spending”
“just about” – the reservation being about the VFM of the broader “research studies – in terms of their long term impact”
“I don’t know enough:... (but)nothing heard by way of criticism”
“that’s the constant challenge – it doesn’t articulate it, it doesn’t have sufficient profile as a Programme, it struggles to show its added value”.

The unconvinced said:
“it is not adding sufficient value to customers – homebuyers and tenants”.

- **“Good VFM” projects** identified were several people said, the training programmes - “excellent value for money...” one said, but others warned that it needed to be repeated:
  - “people leave, new people join, etc. so long term capacity is not ensured, and training courses need to be repeated”.

Other candidates were:
- “the ‘Building for Life’ audit”
- “Enablers” and their work on “developer’s projects”
- “Enablers build confidence with local authority teams and developers – the value will come through over time”
- “the Design Audit, (to) build things into local authority Action Plans, and the Secured by Design study”
- “cross South Yorkshire projects and sub-regional initiatives”.

- **“Less Good VFM” projects** identified were:
  - “the subsidy system to local developers”
  - “(ones where) we are appealing to the good nature of people, with no financial support (to offer), and no policy base to impose a design agenda”
  - “a few research studies where results have not been disseminated because of communications issues”
  - “some enabling – with certain developers which do not seem to be learning from having Enablers’ input”
  - “comparatively, the work done with individual local authorities”
  - “the Enabler programme has had mixed results: partly (it has been about) people, and partly clarity about what the role was: I am not certain that there is a useful function in the sign-posting”
  - “short term consultancy advice is needed - and Enablers should get closer to the issues, options, etc. and include more substance and drawings.”
o ‘Better VFM’ projects, they thought might follow on from:
  * “concentrating on key sites, flagship sites, highly visible sites” – which need funding to produce site specific design guidance (to guide developers)
  * “involving the right partners – the planners, GOYH, and Yorkshire Forward RDA”
  * recognising that the DDQ had to add value to ‘customers’ (home-buyers/tenants)
  * recognising that shared ownership buyers were particularly “cautious and conservative” in their taste in design.

(iii) The Client wanted figures on people’s views of the POSITIVE EFFECT / INFLUENCE of DDQ. One was too new in post to know, but the other INSIDERS said:

1. Not very influential (2No.) (11.76%)
2. Fairly influential (4No.) (23.5%)
3. A lot of influence (8No.) (47%)
4. Very influential (3No.) (17.6%)

So, of those who had a view, almost 65% considered that the DDQ Programme had a lot of influence or was very influential. The TSY Board had a very positive view of DDQ’s influence, and the rest were quite positive, but for the Heads of Planning and one LA Rep on the DDQ Steering Group, who were sceptical.

Examples of good, positive effects and influence, cited, in support of the views on ‘influence’ included:

- “the Panels - they are the most influential element”
- it had “inspired several things” (eg. the setting up of a Barnsley ‘Design Panel’, and training likely to be run shortly in the Council, to upskill both staff and elected members on ‘design matters’)
- “quality development is hugely important for stimulating regeneration and further development – especially if it is of the highest quality and in a run-down area: a quality standard is set, uplifting the whole area, and design quality is critical to achieving that”
- “we are slowly able to evidence refusal of planning permission on design grounds (by LAs) and DDQ has been influential in that”
- “it (DDQ) almost seems more influential outside South Yorkshire than within – for example, from CABE’s reactions – but within South Yorkshire, local politicians and local influences colour people’s views: (DDQ) is not as influential at high levels as we would like – (it is) more influential at the front line, with planners, that at high level, with policymakers”

and the less convinced said:

- “TSY is seen as delivering the HMR renewal programme: (its) individual programme don’t resonate in reality”
- “(it is) more influential with the public sector than with the private sector – partly to do with the communications aspect”.

Comments on the less successful attempts and aspects of DDQ, and areas where more could be done to extend DDQ’s influence, were focussed on the lack of promotion of the initiative:
• “there is a very poor understanding of what has been achieved by DDQ” (due to lack of promotion)
• DDQ communications needed developing as, at the moment, knowledge of DDQ was gleaned from “direct involvement with projects, and word of mouth, and one newsletter”, but TSY was planning (i) “professionally produced news-sheets,...(ii) the website to be updated shortly – (to include) tools and examples - (from the) Design SY 100 Course, ...and (iii) a flyer for developers on development control, design, and access to DDQ support”
• “we have not demonstrated sufficiently well the value it (DDQ) can bring to the private sector”.

Suggestions for improvements, in terms of DDQ’s influence, included:
• “communications with LA planning policy and DC teams”
• working with speculative builders - “exemplar projects are needed, and we could use planning tools to bring them into line and run some workshops for them - like the DESIGN 100 South Yorkshire Course”
• ensuring “enthusiastic involvement” from all the local authorities, equally: as “Sheffield thinks it can do it on its own, Doncaster wants to go alone, Barnsley (often) does not turn up at meetings...”
• “key foundation areas which were cut back still need to be addressed – for example, the ‘consumers’ ”
• “increase people’s understanding of the benefits of sustainable design (for housing)- just like IPODS, hoovers and cars”
• “complex, intricate areas – for example, work on tenancy-blind, mixed-tenure, tenancy-choice neighbourhoods - with interacting things, are being addressed in small steps”.

More influence could be derived from the improved use of the DDQ Panels (LADEP and HBAP), the INSIDERS hinted:
• “sometimes we skim the surface a bit too much – setting too few days (for Enabler projects) and not doing them justice, because of the short time set for them – for example, the project on older people’s housing”
• a large amount of work required “approved Building for Life assessors” – reducing the available pool of Enablers
• there had been some criticisms based on whether the Enabler selected (for a project) was necessarily the leading expert on the Panel/s, or the leading expert in the country
• the Panels may need “refreshing” and/or TSY may need “more flexibility in identifying particular skills for particular tasks”
• TSY “sometimes used the Panels/s in a consultancy role rather than an enabling role”
• there were times when “the local authority expect them (the Enablers) to be consultants, giving the answers, rather than enablers, telling them where to go to get the answers”
• there is “evidence that the Enablers do ring around, talk to each other – and that they put joint proposals together - and that (Enablers) are co-operating and communicating effectively”.

(iv) On the FUTURE FOCUS of the DDQ Programme, the INSIDERS’ suggestions were wide-ranging, embracing:

Working with developers / the private sector:
• “no (need to address new things): we need to deliver what we need to do, better, with a greater emphasis on the private sector.”
• delivering design housing in the context of “conservative customer tastes”, and raising standards, and the renewed pressure to build large numbers of new housing units in the UK
• DDQ should not venture into new fields, other than “supporting the delivery role of developers”.

Design Panels:
• a “Design Panel for each LA”, and/or “one for South Yorkshire”
• “a new South Yorkshire Design Panel” - (now being discussed across the sub-region) would be well placed to review new trends and issues, “with advice from CABE, et cetera” and to see “what can be embedded”.

Modern, carbon–neutral construction, climate change:
• TSY/DDQ should “explore the interface with climate change”
• “two things (should be addressed): the carbon neutral agenda, and the relationship of design quality to renovation and refurbishment”
• “climate change, green roofs”
• “the carbon-neutral agenda”
• “modern methods of construction – environmental and sustainable – and linking to affordability, and broader private sector and planning buy-in”
• “If we are to build more, better, sustainable homes, quickly – we need to look at modular construction, technological innovation, new materials – but not outside the market’s ‘comfort zone’ in terms of what the consumers want.”

Renovating the older stock:
• “we pay for a lot of renovation, but have no ‘quality benchmarks’ to apply to it – some consideration needs to be given to how refurbishment can be done with design quality : the ‘new build’ criteria do not fit well (with renovations)”
• “refurbishment - the next Pathfinder Design Task Group - English Heritage, CABE, HMRs – would be discussing refurbishment”.

Better engagement of the local, and other, authorities:
• “MAAS (Multi-Area Agreements), and housing growth issues”
• “a review of TSY’s even-handedness in approach and resource allocation is needed : as TSY management is perceived to be a bit Sheffield-centric”
• DDQ should concentrate on “the housing agenda – its bread and butter”
• “an astonishing amount of gap-funding was available initially (from TSY) – (which) led to grabbing attempts (by the local authorities)” so there was a perception that a large amount of funding was struck out of the DDQ programme only to lead to “local authorities discounting their land prices and replenishing their coffers with TSY monies”
• “only one of our (elected ) members attended the Training Course: (TSY needs to) educate other (elected members)”.
C. DEVELOPERS’ VIEWS – MORE DETAIL

The messages coming out of the responses to the CORE QUESTIONS, to summarise, are that:

- their knowledge of DDQ was variable: a majority were well aware and supportive: even the one with no prior knowledge was supportive
- all the developers contacted felt they knew what DDQ was trying to achieve, and could name specific schemes in South Yorkshire which expressed the standard DDQ was generally aiming to achieve
- they were fully supportive of DDQ, good architecture and design.

The developers were probed further on their current and potential level of use of the DDQ Programme. A 60% response rate was achieved – half from ‘users’ and half from ‘non-users’ of DDQ. The picture which emerged in the responses was as follows:

**USERS** of DDQ were very positive about it, and said:

(i) on why they used DDQ and what they got out of it:

- “the scheme we were looking at was a Design Panel scheme – the local authority required us to enhance the scheme”
- on another “open market scheme: we wanted to make it attractive”
- “we are completely committed to working across the area and we have a major role to play there in regeneration and renewal: we’ve been active for years; we recognise that design has to be more forward: it sits with our values”
- “(DDQ) helps us with outline designs at different stages to get them up to a good standard: as a critical friend and support – not through (supplying design) drawings, but by pointing out (what needs to be improved)”

(ii) as to whether it was beneficial:

- “yes: it was beneficial, for the scheme itself, and the Enabler enabled us to look again, and meet the client’s requirements, and because it was passed by the assessor, the designer was happy: it validated it”
- “yes: on learning: it helped us on the Building for Life standards and access to CABE reports – and we’ve given careful consideration to (the latter)”

(iii) and on whether they would they use it again:

- “yes” but “we were led to believe that there was a pot of money to help achieve that standards – that money went to the local authority who did not give it to the development company, because they said the land was discounted to cover that: we did not feel the land was discounted – it cost what it was worth”
- “yes: because it worked well for us in the past”
- “good design is never fixed in time: it is 2008/2009, and there are things we have learned, or which the Enablers have learned”

(iv) and asked to suggest other ways in which TSY could provide a good service, they wanted more engagement and more promotion:

- “promotion and marketing”
- “TSY could be more overt – in terms of engagement with developers: opening up one to one dialogue, or as a collection”
• “effective engagement with developers - (who) have to be aware of shareholders and profit: they operate in a competitive environment: they'll be concerned that ‘design’ costs extra, and they'll want that, but the (design) negotiation takes time - which costs them money”
• “Sheffield City Council have a pool of developers on a Developer Panel, willing developers to work with: TSY officers could have had fuller involvement in that and requested developers to attend workshops and discuss schemes: TSY are a little bit too distant”
• “awareness raising with the general public should mean enhanced sales and customer satisfaction”.

NON-USERS, despite lack of involvement to date, were very positive:

(i) on awareness/knowledge of TSY’s DDQ programme and efforts on improving good design, they knew nothing, or a fair amount,

(ii) on their perception of the current quality of their company’s new homes:
• “medium to high (quality)”
• “we are already delivering a high quality product”
• “higher than the usual, overall: we’re trying to measure it against Building for Life – with ‘Silver’ as a minimum we aim to achieve.”
• “we are tarred with the brush of delivering ‘standard house types’, but given the housing figures, the volume required, ‘standard house types’ have to be used”
• “in Conservation Areas, we vary the details” – and “we can vary the details - that is, a different type of the ‘standard house type’, with a different kind of elevation - elsewhere”
• “we try to be distinctive – in terms of windows, brick colours, porches...”

(iii) on the circumstances in which they might want to use a DDQ type of service (eg. using Enablers, to work with them and the LAs on projects to drive up housing design quality):
• they might “where there is a one-off building (to address)” and examples would be “apartment blocks - in the central areas of Sheffield and Rotherham”
• on LAs – “the ones without urban designers are probably easier to deal with”, but discussions are to be expected on “high profile sites”
• “the Enablers’ design review service offers something, but there needs to be an expectation in the public sector that developers working with the public sector will use that service: every extra requirement though involves a cost, affecting land values”

(iv) on other suggestions for improving the quality of new housing in South Yorkshire:
• “it’s a balance: what people want, the economics of it, and what people will pay”
• “I’ve pushed for a more modern development of our range, but it was perceived with some caution, because of the market in South Yorkshire”
• “it’s a very competitive market, now : cost , at the moment, is a final arbitrator - and we are in competition with Persimmons”
• “ensure public management and maintenance: its not just about the houses, the building blocks: you can have a great development but if its not managed it soon leads to a spiral of decline”
• “making sure that houses have the ability to change as people change – working form home or elderly people coming to live there : the Lifetime Homes standard, adaptability”.

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D. ENABLERS’ VIEWS – MORE DETAIL

The messages coming out of the responses to the CORE QUESTIONS, to summarise, are that:

- Enablers’ knowledge of the DDQ programme was patchy and uneven, because of variable patterns of engagement in DDQ projects, and minimal communication from TSY on the overall progress of the DDQ Programme
- A majority felt they knew what DDQ was trying to achieve, but a few were not sure, at this stage, what it was trying to do and where it was going
- Support for DDQ initiative remained strong, with an overwhelming majority able to point to clear achievements made by DDQ
- Much better use of the Enablers Panels is considered possible; and
- An improvement in communications, and promotion of DDQ, is needed.

The Client wanted the Enablers probed further for views on: (i) TSY’s organisation, (ii) the responsiveness of those being helped, and (iii) new angles/new ideas. Of the ENABLERS on the Local Authorities’ Design Enabler Panel (LADEP) and the Home Builder Advisory Panel (HBAP), eleven of the thirteen Enablers were able to respond (two were ill/not contactable); so, a 84.6% response rate was achieved among the Enablers.

(i) On DDQ organisation, and its effectiveness: many Enablers felt that the projects they had worked on had been effective, and wanted to make an active and greater contribution all round:

- “it is a great privilege to work for TSY HMR and to assist the HMR Pathfinder in tackling some deep-seated problems in the sub-region – the Enablers all itch to do more to help drive standards upwards”
- “I am delighted to be getting work from South Yorkshire”
- “I feel that I made a useful contribution”
- “a vigorous programme is needed - raising awareness can not be done in one hit: a programme of regular events, leading up to a major event, could touch a much wider circle and raise understanding and ability to deliver” if directed at the “developer and client ends” and “sustained over a 3-5 year programme”.

However, many felt that they did not have a good feel for the wider DDQ programme or TSY’s work as a totality – because they did not received information on TSY’s wider progress or the progress of the DDQ programme as a whole. Communications issues loomed very large in their responses.

So, comments on the organisational effectiveness of the Enabler Panels tended to cover communications and TSY’s limited use of Enablers’ skills, which contrasted with the experience, some had, of enabling for CABE:

- “CABE are much better – they have Enablers Panel Days fairly regularly, several times a year, and all their Enablers come together once a year in a big jamboree – and there is (an emphasis on) information dissemination, cross-fertilisation, training and organised visits or meetings at particular project sites, and you get a regular newsletter and free copies of research and policy papers...”
- “there was an esprit de corps there originally, but it disappeared quickly: (the Panel) is a framework pool, but we could have been ambassadors”
- “projects are handed out in a silo fashion”
• “(the ‘BfL’ assessments) are quick hits, relatively easy to organise and prepare; but slightly longer projects with clear objectives are more rewarding”
• “it would be good if they could keep us in the loop about progress on projects we have done”
• “I haven’t got a clue what’s going on – I go to the TSY website sometimes, but the website never tells me – the Panels half-exist, they do not fully exist, perhaps a function of lack of money or lack of commitment”.

On general administration, they commented:
• “I have no problem with the way my services have been managed by TSY”
• “they could deploy their resources better, administratively”
• “too few days are allocated for some projects”.
• “with Richard Strittmatter in post, there should be enough resource”
• “there are administrative weaknesses, at present, in terms of analysis of progress and follow through”.

In terms of the DDQ concept, most things were considered to work well, but a few reservations were expressed:
• “the motives are sound, the vision laudable”
• “it was launched with vigour, but has faded a bit: it was an exciting initiative, there seemed much energy and chemistry – (but) not so much of that at the moment”
• designs should “evolve” in response to a site, a situation, a need - and not simply to “meet a check-list”.

There were many suggestions for improving the use of the Enablers as a resource:
• “the talent pool of the Enablers is amazing and very underused”
• “progress achieved on DDQ needs to be packaged, celebrated, and publicised - instead of disappearing into a ‘black hole’ ”
• for a bigger impact – TSY should (i) get all the Enablers together in on-site workshops to work intensively as one talent pool (on a challenging site), in co-operation (not competition), and (ii) that TSY should allocate some money to take their ideas forward
• “(TSY) could do a bit more to build the Enablers as a team”
• “Enabler experience is undervalued and underused”
• “one or two additional dissemination events and a newsletter (would help): it’s a bit low profile across the board.”

Concerns were expressed by several Enablers about the competitive tendering process which the Enablers are often asked to go through, sometimes for quite small projects:
• “they have set us up in competition with each other – whereas CABE just allocate work...”
• “the tendering process is very frustrating and very wasteful of resources and should be rationalised - given that we have already got onto the Panels through a very competitive process”.

Communication with TSY and lack of feedback from client LAs is a very big issue for the Enablers. Many Enablers felt that they were not well informed about what had been achieved by the DDQ programme as a whole over the last few years> [NB. The average is just 3-4 projects done per Enabler, out of a suite of over 40, over the 3 years, 2005-2008.]
They felt at a disadvantage because they had not received regular news from TSY on the overall progress of the Programme, the projects being fashioned, commissioned, on-going or completed, and/or the lessons learned. Comments included:

- “Better communication (is needed) really: if you are not enabling a project you can do for months without any communication at all – that is not using the Panels well”
- “only one Newsletter” has been issued so far
- “one meeting, only” had been held for all the LADEP/HBAP Enablers together (an Induction Meeting in April, 2006)
- Enablers were only rarely invited to attend TSY ‘events’
- Enablers received little or no feed-back once a project was completed: “I don’t hear anything…”; “I don’t know the impact…”; “no information…”
- an “annual ‘get together’ of Enablers” for a joint seminar on what had been “done, achieved, learned (would help)”
- “re-energise: get all the Enablers together to be informed, to share progress and (gain) a sense of achievement”.

(ii) On the **RESPONSIVENESS** of organisations being given advice, the Enablers thought that the organisations were, in general, responsive to advice. Positive comments included:

- “yes, definitely”
- “yes, very responsive: in general the organisations have been very keen to improve and raise the bar”
- “the planners and architects of the four LAs have really come on very well”
- “the final report was well received, but (I am) not sure it is embedded”
- the LA “gained a better understanding of design standards and their application”
- “the Police are responding well…”
- “Sheffield – yes”.

However, there were some concerns also:

- “the clients drift (perhaps because of resource problems): project managers change, and they (LAs) do not move projects on quickly”
- “yes: during the project, plenty of feedback: but once it is done, we don’t know…”
- “individual local authority officers’ attitudes and responsiveness are highly variable - there is a general lack of skill in South Yorkshire in specifying development projects”.

Enablers found a few projects tricky, not technically, but in terms of getting a consistent response to ideas, or correspondence, or sensible variation to a contract to deal with the true expectations and realities:

- “two out of three (projects) were effective, one in three, not: one project failed, because the local authority has shown no appetite for it – so my time into it was pretty much wasted”
- of one project, an Enabler said – it was “a highly political process, with the planners not engaged”
- on another, an Enabler said: “the design advice given was countered by the local planning authority’s advice, the developer wasn’t happy, and the Enabler was seen as just another layer of bureaucracy he could do without: (the project really needed) further meetings with the local planning authorities and the developer’s architect, but they (TSY) felt it would take too much time - (perhaps for) budget reasons”
• “it really needed more Enabler time”

occasionally, elected members’ public statements in meetings with residents appearing to be at variance with their own Council’s policies, and TSY’s approach and the expectations of its partners in new investments: an example given was of Councillors engaged in a TSY Enabled project saying –

♦ “any developer (of this site) will get a warm welcome from me”
♦ “no need to worry about the design of the houses - the elected members will make the decision”.

(iii) On NEW ANGLES / FUTURE FOCUS, the Enablers suggestions were:

(a) to engage wider support, including Yorkshire Forward and housebuilders:

• “(working with) house-builders: TSY should lead the developers they have got (in South Yorkshire) – attract and retain the niche developers who will do something better than the norm - like the developers of the riverside area in Rotherham: and/or, teach larger developers they have, like (a particular development firm) who often don’t use anything resembling a designer – to do it better - by using (TSY’s) subsidy as leverage, to plan improvements”

• “(it needs to) get some of the stakeholder partners (other than the local authorities) engaged properly: get away from them having ‘observer status’ on the Board: make Yorkshire Forward and others full partners: decide whether it is there to consult local authorities or to work with the market: it will require a new focus”

(b) achieving more commitment from the planners:

• “local authorities: must demand proper designs with planning applications”

(one Enabler had seen an application accepted for a 300 house development, with only a basic ‘site plan’, and ‘typical houseplans’, and “no proper elevations” : plans which were “inadequate for a planning application”)

• “the regulatory environment must support the training effort”

• “(training for) elected members”

(c) emulating CABE to a greater extent:

• “CABE’s ‘Design Task Groups’ (is) an arrangement which TSY could do internally (in South Yorkshire) with partner local authorities”

• “maybe we should get together more”

• “CABE know their clients and give support and very clear briefing”

(d) far more effort on promotional activity:

• “I don’t know where it is going to...”

• “it needs to be more business like – shouting about what it does”

(e) the Enabler Panels refocused to include more specialists in the delivery of sustainable local regeneration with good design:

• “the Enablers should be fewer, but with broader skill sets, not just architects and planners but also developers and very brilliant community leaders”.
E. SENIOR GOVERNMENTAL PARTNER ORGANISATIONS’ VIEWS – MORE DETAIL

The Client was keen to test the awareness and interest of a number of senior partners further: CABE, the Housing Corporation, the RDA (Yorkshire Forward), the South Yorkshire Police, plus the Dept of Communities and Local Government (the Unit dealing with HMR and CABE), and English Partnerships. The response rate was 66%.

The messages coming out of the responses to the CORE QUESTIONS, to summarise, are that:

- their knowledge of DDQ is variable: CABE very knowledgeable, but the others a bit sketchy
- a majority understood what DDQ was trying to achieve
- all were supportive of the DDQ initiative, in terms of the broader concept, appreciated TSY’s commitment to it, and the design training initiative - with CABE being very supportive indeed
- they all favoured action to ensure higher standards of design
- their suggestions for the future included a move towards design protocols, better use of the Enablers and the Panels, cost-effective interventions and design advice, and designing out crime.

The partners were probed further for views on the emerging ‘policy horizon’, at the Consultant’s behest.

They were probed for views on: (i) emerging / new policy issues relevant to ‘delivering design quality’, (ii) the best ways of driving housing standards upwards to meet the 21st century’s needs, and (iii) current best practice in improving design and quality of life in run-down housing areas.

(i) On emerging / new policy issues:

- “housing and economic strategy agendas in South Yorkshire need to be fully joined up”
- “the HMR has largely been about housing do far, but it now taking a slight policy re-direction: and has an assured life over the next few years (after some uncertainty): (and it is now) conceived as a broader regeneration and place-making agenda, and that will come through in messages from government and CABE (shortly): TSY / DDQ will have to deliver that, and broader outcomes”
- One saw other emerging issues:
  - “sustainability: TSY are very aware of it – and the Enabler Panels could be supplemented, directed or developed, there”
  - “the RDA taking a role on (regional) planning and oversight of HMR – a new (emphasis) on economic development”
  - “the (housing) growth agenda – including bids from Doncaster for an Eco-town: DDQ – TSY’s unique mechanism, could potentially be an enormous benefit”
- “current market downturn only makes it (DDQ) a more critical project”
- “the nationally introduced Design and Access Statements (are) not being embraced: scant regard is had to them: people are missing a trick: (they) can outline problem issues: if done more meaningfully, and with more emphasis at the development control stage (there would be benefits)”.

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(ii) On driving housing standards upwards to meet the 21st century’s needs:

- “current standards are better, but you cannot stand still – global warming issues, insulation, et cetera…and we need to get people to do more than they need to do as individuals: the energy pressures may incentivise: is incentive and subsidy necessary for insulation and condensing boilers, etc?”
- “Police input is too late: Police need to be in at the pre-planning of areas (because of their) knowledge of crime and crime patterns, and Architectural Liaison Officers should be invited (to the masterplanning stage)”
- “new homes – are a spit in the ocean in relation to climate change, (we need to) accelerate the rate of replacement and new provision: it is difficult to change the existing stock”
- “in South Yorkshire, (tackling) the (low) aspirations in the area – the acceptability of anything, (even if it is) below baseline standards (in new housing): Sheffield are well resourced and keen, yet recent housing there is pretty poor, not good at all: I hope that some shining examples will emerge but they’ll be exceptions rather than the rule: providers of housing – developers, need encouragement”.

(iii) On current best practice in improving run-down housing areas:

- “the most inspiring initiative has been Park Hill Flats’ transformation: very holistic: public realm improvements to improve values to drive regeneration and changing tenure from mono to mixed: but Pathfinder funding has been limited”
- “we tend to point to:
  - Sheffield and South Yorkshire (as an example of good practice) – but the age of schemes is too low to point to many examples
  - the Southey Owerton scheme (pre DDQ) – is one, although it is not yet completed
  - others would be Selwyn Street in Oldham – the first Gold award in the North West, and Dale Mill in Rochdale, and the housing Expo Site in Newcastle – at masterplan stage
  - the Salford Urban Splash scheme is not replicable because of the very large public funding (it received)
  - BedZed is an individual project with sustainable energy technology – which would be less useful for HMR purposes
  - retro-fitting recent housing would be difficult - because of layout, location and lack of nearby facilities
  - if the processes are right, there is a better view to a good product”.
- “to be honest, South Yorkshire Police have not had the resilience in ALOs, but we are getting there, and we would like to be bought in early – for example on schemes with plus 20 houses, and community centres – in certain areas: invite us to everything, and we’ll select what we should get involved in”.
7. The DDQ Steering Group’s Views

7.1 TSY called for:
(i) a facilitated discussion session with the DDQ Steering Group as a body,
(ii) additional and specific questions to be put to the 4No. local authority (LA) representatives on the DDQ Steering Group.

7.2 MEETING WITH THE DDQ STEERING GROUP

A Special Session when the DDQ Steering Group met on 14th February, 2008. That discussion was informed by a short Study Update Note, which was pre-circulated. The Steering Group was informed of progress on the Evaluation, and encouraged to discuss the issues TSY wanted addressing (ie. their knowledge of DDQ, value for money, future focus and levels of support, etc.). However, the Steering Group was intent on covering the wider themes related to DDQ Evaluation.

The discussion skipped along, on many fronts at once: so, the points of view and information noted have been re-assembled here under certain headings.

Overview of the DDQ Programme:
- CABE’s Rep. thought DDQ “extremely positive” and a service comparable with their national one
- CABE thought that South Yorkshire was “ahead of the game” but it needed “more focussed framing of what we do, and measuring of impact”: the original budget had been cut because of such concerns: the (post audit) DDQ “Action Plans will be a strategic plan (for taking DDQ forward)”
- Barnsley’s Rep. thought that the Design South Yorkshire 100 training course had been “very beneficial in opening discussion and building networks”
- Barnsley’s Reps. agreed that DDQ was very beneficial for every individual project it touched, but they had many small projects to contend with, and they lacked the capacity to give them all the same level of design attention: they still needed to tackle “the rest”: but capacity issues prevented it. In Barnsley, the bigger projects were out of site, and the more visible projects were the smaller (“bitty, gritty”) ones: they felt the DDQ Programme was reaching the less visible areas only
- Doncaster’s Rep. thought the DDQ training course was the best thing – there was “a buzz” about it, and “the DDQ stamp gives extra confidence, that a scheme has had the (Enabler) input professionally”
- Rotherham’s Rep wanted the TSY Board to hear about DDQ’s story of successes, and stressed that the DDQ programme had only been active for 2 years, in practice, not 3 years (because of the delayed start, and 2006 review)
- Rotherham’s Rep. was positive, “we have the evidence...” - there was an appreciable “difference between the predicted and the DDQ (improved) schemes”
- Sheffield ‘s Rep. saw DDQ as adding to what the LAs were doing anyway
- Sheffield’s Rep said that the most useful parts of DDQ for Sheffield were the - “design audits”, and other uses of “the Enabling Panel”, especially as it was so difficult for him otherwise to get small amounts of monies for short consultancy studies: but the immediate targets should be measuring the outputs achieved, and working through the new DDQ LA Action Plans
- TSY staff thought the Sheffield Rep.’s approach a bit too process-oriented: processes should be influenced by projects, becoming embedded thereafter.
Shaping the DDQ Programme for the Future:

- TSY had prepared a note for discussion later that afternoon on the future of the DDQ Programme – themes and projects: they needed to “get a feel of the audit” being undertaken and consider its implications for DDQ.
- TSY staff thought that there was scope for more DDQ work around work with the Police, and mixed tenure: there was lots of energy and there were many positive ideas still in the DDQ “tank”; and they were quiet excited about the future of DDQ. The DDQ Action Plans needed to focus on internalising skills and the DDQ approach.

Selection and Geographic Spread and Management of Projects, hitherto:

- The Group seemed entirely comfortable with the current geographical spread of projects, feeling that it was in step with the extent of HMR area within each LA.
- CABE’s Rep. thought the selection of projects relied a lot on the individuals at the Steering Group meetings, but DDQ coverage was concentrating resources in a positive way.
- Barnsley’s Reps. felt that whenever Barnsley wanted DDQ support, it got it.
- Doncaster’s Rep. said Doncaster’s planners were becoming more interested in the challenge, but Doncaster accessed DDQ only “when we have a problem”.
- Rotherham’s Rep felt that Sheffield needed to draw down more support than the others (from DDQ).
- Sheffield’s Rep. thought people sometimes “make up” projects, and wanted more thinking about what was being provided.

On the LA Design Baseline Audit project:

- Barnsley’s Reps. considered auditing to be part of the process of securing quality and capacity, their planners had been very supportive of it and they looked forward to seeing the results of the audit.
- Rotherham’s Rep thought there was some discomfort with the audit project in Rotherham, and a temptation to bury the issues, and the Group needed to ensure that did not happen.
- Rotherham’s Rep thought people could be more forthcoming about projects being engaged with: there were many schemes, but not much explanation: there had been just one special meeting of the DDQ Steering Group with the planners, on the baseline audit project.
- Sheffield’s Rep though the baseline should have been produced 3 years ago.
- TSY staff though that auditing was not monitoring the LAs, but that there were unspoken background issues in play, and the Group “had not had an open and frank discussion about the direction of the audit project or the DDQ programme – which is frustrating”.

Using the Enablers’ to maximum effect:

- There was a discussion on bringing the Enablers together occasionally to discuss progress: CABE’s Rep said: “I’ve lobbied for it: we find it incredibly useful – but budgetting constraints prevent it, perhaps?”
- Barnsley’s Reps. had not had much benefit from the Enablers/Consultancy, and they had capacity issues to deal with – as a great many small schemes came before them.
- Doncaster’s Rep – was happy that there was a bit of flexibility in the use of Enablers (allowing a bit of Consultancy input sometimes) for different projects.
- Rotherham’s Rep said that he was starting to lose the picture of who the Enablers were and their suitability for various tasks.
- TSY staff said that a “dissemination day” was planned – which would provide a platform for the Enablers.
• the Steering Group had discussed varying the use of Enablers (enabling v. consultancy): where an LA asked for some flexibility, TSY granted it.

Engaging with the developers, and the HBF:
• CABE’s Rep thought – the Steering Group needed to pursue alternative ideas and issues – for engaging developers
• Rotherham’s Rep thought it was useful to meet all the key people together on site to discuss a proposed major development
• TSY staff said that the HBF had been supportive of DDQ originally, but there was a lack of capacity to engage – nationally and regionally (one rep. to cover all 3 Northern regions): HBF had not attended any DDQ Steering Group meetings for some time
• TSY staff had tried to build a relationship, but not been down to London to talk to HBF recently: presentations had been made though to HBF members - house-builders / developers, and contact made with individuals: but follow-up had been weak
• TSY staff had got HBF to agree to meeting up with developers, but it “hasn’t happened, despite many promptings”.

The Role and Functioning of the DDQ Steering Group:
• in terms of process, the DDQ Steering Group had a standing item at each meeting – a full list of DDQ Projects in Hand – and they would focus on 3 or 4 ongoing areas
• CABE’s Rep. felt that DDQ had a very strong model (Steering Group /CABE/HBF/LAs), but that clarity was needed on the respective roles of TSY and the DDQ Steering Group
• and, Richard Strittmatter being in post had been a “wonderful addition” – and that post needed to be full-time and permanent
• CABE’s Rep. thought that the Group tended to talk only about the DDQ Programme’s administration, and would like to “see the fuller picture”
• CABE’s Rep. urged a discussion on how projects were selected, and how they could set a strategic direction, the pursuit of best practice, and follow-up
• Barnsley’s Reps. thought that DDQ Projects were not “collectively managed” by the Steering Group, and that the Sheffield Rep. and TSY staff tended to dominate the Group’s discussions, closing others out
• Doncaster’s Rep was content with the linkage between the Board, the Steering Group and the Planners
• Rotherham’s Rep. thought the mechanics were “OK – but the sense of ownership and involvement is not as much as it might be” – and there were pressure on resources (‘the day job’ to be done)
• TSY staff thought the Steering Group members were nervous of voicing an opinion on a project not in their authority
• TSY staff thought that many of the DDQ projects had a sub-regional, strategic theme – but they were not certain that they were playing out the strategic issues which the TSY Board was discussing: the TSY Board does not publish its minutes, even in a synopsis: TSY staff felt a bit at sea, not sure about the organisation’s direction, and what was a strategic issue for TSY ( Rotherham’s Rep. thought that was forgiveable given the “on-off funding issues of the last few years, and the ambivalence of the Board, a while ago”)
• TSY’s Board Members were occasionally involved in DDQ related events (there had been one in York), but did not attend the Steering Group: the four LA Executive Directors responsible for housing matters met at TSY offices once a month.
7.3 DISCUSSION WITH DDQ STEERING GROUP LOCAL AUTHORITY REPRESENTATIVES, AS INDIVIDUALS

7.3.1 The Client was particularly keen that specific questions be put to the 4 No. Local Authority Representatives on the DDQ Steering Group:
1. Does the DDQ on the whole provide ‘Value for Money’?
2. How much does each LA representative know about the DDQ (1-4)?
3. How effective/influential/positive has the programme been (on a scale of 1-4) in their view?

7.3.2 The following picture emerged from this piece of work.

1. On **VFM**, two said yes, definitely, one said yes but was unsure, one had mixed views but was broadly supportive. The individuals’ comments were:
   - “yes: it is expensive, because it is ambitious: (but) some people will always say that they would prefer money to go into front line work”
   - “the expensive elements of it have paid dividends: (DDQ) has turned out to be better VFM because it’s been a bit expensive, than if it had been cheaper”
   - “yes” DDQ gives VFM, the **best examples** being – (i) “highly cost-effective work done by Enablers” – external consultants would cost a hell of a lot more and (ii) “urban design analysis done by the Enablers (eg. the Windhill Estate, in Mexborough)”
   - “yes: ...it is providing economies of scale, one Enabling Panel for 4 authorities is an efficiency ...but it is difficult to know as we have only just produced a baseline audit, and I doubt that award numbers have increased”
   - “some elements are more complicated than the ideal (for example, the current DDQ Evaluation) : I don’t quite understand the level of bureaucracy TSY have: I am not alone in the opinion that the administration (of DDQ) has been grossly over-elaborate”
   - “Enablers” - they improved the “thought processes and design outcomes” in relation to schemes where HMR monies were invested
   - Enablers working with LA Design Panels — to plug “resource gaps” in dealing with RSLs/HAs, thus improving the new housing schemes proposed, represented good VFM
   - lower VFM had been achieved on more complicated audits (eg the LAs’ Design Audit exercise’ – where the results of the self-analysis may be questionable and not sound due to people being reluctant to give their real opinions because of fears about confidentiality, it was suggested)
   - one said, “baseline auditing” was good VFM, but “the monitoring of local authority practices would be counter-productive”.

2. On **KNOWLEDGE OF THE DDQ PROGRAMME**: On a scale of 1-4, they felt they knew it well: one had ‘fair’ knowledge, two knew ‘a lot’, and one had a ‘full knowledge’ of the DDQ Programme.

They felt they were pretty well informed about the DDQ Programme and the DDQ Objectives through being members of the DDQ Steering Group. They all received regular overview reports on all the DDQ projects in hand – lists of projects were given out at DDQ Steering Group meetings, two said; then:
   - one said: “I wouldn’t mind knowing more, without investing more time in knowing more: I’m content for the detail of projects to be dealt with by HMR colleagues: (but) I’d prefer to be kept in the loop (on the) stuff dealt with by development control managers”
• environmental projects had been prominent in the early DDQ projects, one said
• more input was now needed (under the DDQ banner) on ‘Eco-homes, Lifetime Homes, and the ‘Code for Sustainable Homes’ but a number of comments indicted discontent with DDQ Programme management by TSY:
  • “I understand, but don’t always agree, with the mechanisms they (TSY) use: yes, I support the concept, and a significant part of the programme – but not unqualified support for the organisation of the programme”
  • “there is no progress reporting on the projects’ list as a whole: DDQ (Steering Group) meetings are about management of common projects and not individual projects – but I have a full knowledge of projects in (my area)”
  • “their vision is clear – but there is ambiguity about how they are doing it”
  • “more clarity on Peter O’Brien’s role” was required – TSY had “a skeleton staff” and it was difficult at times “to know what’s going on” - the Steering Group met every two months.
  • “the project management skill in TSY staff’s central team is questionable – a central resource needs to provide synergy and momentum”.

3. On the POSITIVE EFFECT / INFLUENCE of the DDQ Programme, they said:

• that the ‘KEY ACHIEVEMENTS’ of DDQ included -
  - the ‘DESIGN 100 South Yorkshire’ Training Course
  - training given to LA (policy) colleagues in the ‘Building for Life’ assessment process and through ‘BfL’ assessments of ‘live’ schemes
  - confidence of young town planners raised through the training provided by TSY/DDQ
• because of the variety of things done (under the DDQ banner) – including enabling, training and assessments – it was sometimes difficult to convey DDQ’s achievements
• the scope for future influence varied from place to place (eg in Doncaster master-planning and associated proposals were already well-advanced)
• DDQ had “complemented CABE’s (national) work”
• the spin-off activities have helped raise the profile of design beyond concerned practitioners into the arena of politics and development........and design has become a priority - not just saying the right things, but doing it”
• “local authorities do not just accept the first thing – application – thrown across the table, now”
• “it has been enabling rather than influential, there has been no significant impact in Sheffield, but a bit of influence in England because CABE promotes it as an innovation - a fleeting kudos, unless we deliver soon”
• one had an “issue with the way the programme is promoted - we’re only looking at marketing now, very late on ”
• “not much on the ground, so far - because of the time taken to establish DDQ and the long timescale in the development process”
• one listed a number of achievements:
- “increasing number of ‘BfL’ accreditations
- raising the profile of design generally
- enabling local authorities to deliver design quality
- encouraging sharing of best practice
- measuring improved design quality using ‘BfL’
- CABE liked the way TSY proposed to deal with various partners including customers
- the baseline audit – direct engagement with local authorities
- the projects – although there was no ‘stand out’ project”.

4. On FUTURE FOCUS:
The LA Representatives on the DDQ Steering Group ideas were:

(i) In respect of interaction with private sector developers:
- a new “South Yorkshire Residential Design Panel – would be potentially useful, raising the profile of BfL, getting developers to sit up, and local authorities to participate if enough resource is put into it”
- developers were very confident that they would get planning permission with their usual style of development
- initially, developers had thought that DDQ involvement would help them to access additional ‘gap-funding’ – but that had not happened – so developers had lost interest in the process
- the Steering Group had been pressing for some time for “a more innovative approach to dealing with developers, and providing them with the resource they wanted rather than that which we think they need”

(ii) in terms of working with and through planners:
- the LA’s town planners were unlikely to be fully aware of DDQ
- TSY needed to approach the 4LAs’ various Departments more directly - rather than simply relying on the 4 Reps (the latter should not be the only conduit)
- cross-boundary, cross-Departmental work remained difficult to deliver in the LAs

(iii) in terms of promotion:
- TSY should promote TSY’s work and the DDQ Programme with more thrust – in an ‘event’ which would involve many Departments in each LA
- Other ideas included promotional activity:
  - “distributing best practice
  - delivering the LA Action Plans (post Audit)
  - sub-regional design guidance
  - updating ‘Better Places to Live’
  - an annual ‘BfL’ sampling of completed schemes”

(iv) in terms of training:
- delivering design quality in South Yorkshire required a focus on “up-skilling all of those involved in regeneration” – as those involved in regeneration in the 4 LAs did not have design skills (and LA training budgets had been cut back) so there was “a lack of understanding of urban design”
- Training needed to continue:
  “I am very pleased with the success of the Design Training programme (DSY100) – it has been well pitched – commanded attention and
attendance - drawn in less experienced development control staff, not all of whom have a design component in their qualifications, and pulled in the people on the development sections in housing and some of our estates staff”

- TSY’s ‘DESIGN 100 South Yorkshire’ course (now running) was “very beneficial” with lots of positive feedback coming from officers, and also local members, with calls already for it to be repeated next year
- training was “successful – but what are the succession plans?”

(v) in terms of using the Panels and Enablers even more effectively:

- “the Enabling Panel – it has been very useful, enabling small pieces of work to be done : within the Enabling Panel control and sharing of information coming out of it, on outcomes and best practice has not been promoted: gathering and promoting good practice has not been carried out by TSY: good practice dissemination could be better”
- “utilising Enablers as fully as possible...” as the evidence was that Enablers “shake the process up a bit and emphasise the quality agenda and persuade RSLs to come on board, and the schemes are radically improved in terms of design quality”
- “we need a flexible response, pitched at the right level, to provide design advice at the right time, particularly for sensitive sites – especially small builders’ schemes in the HMR areas (which are often) developed at short notice –typically with the builder just turning up at development control offices with plans: (requiring) a specialist design resource, but Enablers (we are told) are not available for that purpose, as they are too highly qualified for that kind of thing”

7.4 OTHERS INVITED TO THE DDQ STEERING GROUP

7.4.1 The HBF is invited to every meeting of the DDQ Steering Group. It has been unable to attend for the last 18 months but remains supportive of the DDQ Programme. The HBF is perceived by others to be far too stretched in terms of resource both at the national level and the regional level (as one representative covers all three regions in the North of England) to be able to take an active part in the DDQ Steering Group.

7.4.2 CABE, the UK Government’s advisor on architecture and the built environment, on the other hand, attends every DDQ Steering Group meeting.

7.4.3 Comments from the ‘Others’ included:

- “the Steering Group is invaluable – one of the few fora for practitioners to get together (in South Yorkshire) to discuss projects on the ground – and the four local authorities have coalesced into something quite valuable: they are becoming a network”
- the relationship between TSY and Sheffield City Council is “often problematic” – the perception being that Sheffield CC thinks that its “their thing, really”, while other authorities representatives are inclined to be quiet and in a state of tension between being supportive of DDQ and wondering what they “can get out of it”; and
- there is “reluctance to become creative and forward-looking”.

7.4.3 CABE also tabled a four page analysis, entitled ‘TSY DDQ Initiative: CABE Contribution to Evaluation, February 2008’, setting out its views more formally. The main points were:
CABE regards DDQ “as a success”

CABE promotes DDQ, “nationally, as best practice”

DDQ is an unique programme, and CABE is proud to be involved in it

DDQ has made many positive contributions (prioritising the design agenda; creative use of revenue funding; adding capacity and expertise on design to the LAs; efficient use of a ‘pool’ of design expertise; a forum for cross authority discussion on design; excellent training and capacity building for LA officers and members; a successful Design Quality Audit; and raising the quality of debate on design)

CABE thinks DDQ should be resourced / extended “beyond March 2008”

TSY should afford it a high priority – to champion good design

without it, TSY might not meet its own strategic objectives

DDQ should be extended into the Growth Points, and the Green Corridor

in that context, it might draw in “new funds”

the Panels have been a success – the LADEP is “a key success”

the training programme “extensive, well conceived, and successful”

Building for Life’s application in South Yorkshire has been “the most advanced in the country”

more could be done (on design related planning policy; developing research and case study material; research and development capacity for ‘leading edge’ technology; developing homebuilders technical capacity; establishing a network of design panels and activities)

little activity had been progressed on some fronts (providing an Innovation Fund; raising consumer awareness; community education programmes; neighbourhood and site specific guidance; and rewarding and recognising developers who achieved excellence in design)

CABE had two “issues of concern”.

1. Programme Management – lack of resolution of this led to a lack of momentum (the interim manager should be made permanent and augmented with additional staff resource; but, Enablers had successfully tackled the majority of projects without substantive support from TSY; and, individual steering group members were very committed, and membership consistent)

2. Partners – there was too much dependence on just one representative from each LA; HBF did not attend; and English Partnerships/the Housing Corporation/the new Homes and Community Agency should become involved

CABE’s saw several Future Issues (adaptation – even if on a reduced budget, DDQ needed adequate programme management and a renewed commitment from TSY, and attraction of new funding; scope to leave a positive legacy and need for a good ‘exit strategy’)

CABE’s suggested ideas which the evaluation should explore, including:

- extended learning / resources (sub-regionally) involving Yorkshire Forward
- promoting best practice/ disseminating lessons from the enabling work
- a higher profile for DDQ : DIVA’s ideas, more TSY corporate marketing
- targeting the development sector: advice and support, using Building for Life
- involving local architecture centres – on training and public engagement
- actively involving LA partners in shaping and delivering future work
- better use of LA officer skills, knowledge and expertise
- better utilising the resource within the Enabler Panels

On using the Panels: “if taken together with CABE enablers and regional representatives based in the region, this is a significant network of design experts that TSY could bring together periodically for thematic events, possibly co-funded by CABE and others”.

55
8. The Consultant’s Evaluation

8.1 The Client called for “an element” of independent assessment of the DDQ programme’s effectiveness, and of what has been delivered by the DDQ Programme against the specific objectives set for the DDQ programme, as set out in TSY’s Business Plan, and taking into account the reduced funding for the DDQ programme.

8.2 PROGRESS AGAINST TSY’S HIGH-LEVEL AIM FOR THE HMR

TSY’s AIM: to build and support sustainable communities and successful neighbourhoods where the quality and choice of housing helps to underpin a buoyant economy and an improved quality of life.

In terms of implementation, the DDQ Programme has made a positive contribution and represents a good start made on helping to meet this overall aim for the HMR area, through:

- 46 DDQ projects, of which 40No. are completed or substantially advanced
- detailed Enabler advice on ‘BfL’ provided on c.32 sites in the HMR area
- that Enabler advice delivered direct to c.12 different developers
- a number of local residents’ groups assisted in looking to the future
- a raised awareness of ‘good design’, amongst regulators and developers,
- a pipeline of schemes, soon to emerge, which will meet the CABE ‘Building for Life’ standards
- 125No. people undergoing relevant training in housing design and local regeneration in South Yorkshire (who are not design professionals, but decision-makers)
- the quality and choice of housing is improving, very slowly.

That should, cumulatively, create some momentum. However, the impact on the ground across the HMR area has been limited, to date:

- no schemes have yet been awarded CABE ‘Building for Life’ ‘Gold’ or ‘Silver’ Awards
- house-buyers (‘the customers’) are perceived to be very conservative in their choice of home, in terms of styling, an issue not yet addressed by DDQ, and TSY’s DDQ is not addressing the ‘consumers’ at large
- very few DDQ schemes have addressed the wider public realm which is often a determinant of people’s attitudes to a neighbourhood.

Moreover, the context is shifting:

- costs are rising and house-builders compete for buyers, so price is a factor
- the housing market situation is uncertain: boosted by in-migration, buy-to-let and strong economic performance in recent years, with a degree of impact even upon lower–demand HMR areas; but, down-turning over recent months in the wake of global financial upsets.

Overall, the DDQ Programme is supporting TSY’s Overall Aim for the HMR area in terms of outcome. But, while there is a role for the HMR, there will probably be a need for a DDQ-like initiative, and although it may be too early to say whether DDQ will decisively achieve a strong outcome in terms of the Overall Aim, it looks very promising.
A better outcome rests upon the added impact of projects now in progress, as they are completed and launched within the HMR. For example:

- with respect to ‘sustainable communities’
  - the Action Plans (flowing from the Design Audit) - will effect LA actions
  - the new promotional package for TSY/DDQ – designed by DIVA Creative
- with respect to ‘quality and choice of housing’
  - the Carbon-neutral Agenda contract – which will re-engage developers
  - the impact of the DESIGN SY 100’ training course, on LA practices
- with respect to ‘successful neighbourhoods’
  - the recent closer working with the South Yorkshire Police.

These will add new and strong dimensions to the DDQ Programme’s achievement to date, over the next few months. Sustained skill development will entrench those gains, but, to fully meet the current HMR-wide AIM, there will probably be a need for more focus on wider local regeneration best practice, to achieve faster through-put of schemes, with high design quality.

THE THREE KEY OBJECTIVES FOR THE HMR

1. Achieve a radical improvement in the character and diversity of neighbourhoods: helping to secure a more sustainable settlement pattern in the sub-region.

DDQ interventions have:

- not yet secured a radical improvement – development processes are too long for that to have any chance of being delivered as yet – but evidence of success is sure to mount over the next 2-3 years, so long as the schemes that Enablers, and others receiving DDQ training, are advising upon all come to fruition
- helped to secure better skills in the relevant public sector workforce
- helped, especially where wider area / neighbourhood studies and assistance with masterplanning exercises has been provided by Enablers (for c.9 DDQ / LADEP, or 22.5% of completed or substantially completed DDQ projects done, so far).

2. Expand the area’s range of housing options: increasing housing choice in order to meet the aspirations of existing, emerging and incoming households.

DDQ interventions on this front:

- have concentrated on working with existing residents’ needs and aspirations in respect of c.9 or 10 DDQ projects
- but also meeting the aspirations of the next generation and potential incoming residents on new build schemes, in respect of c.18 DDQ projects
- attempted to encourage public sector, RSL and private developers to try harder to provide a range of quality housing in the area studies.

3. Improve housing quality, ensuring that all tenures capitalise on the opportunities created through innovations in design standards and efficiency.
DDQ interventions on this front:
- have encouraged developers, the LA, and others to go for much higher standards, overall, regardless of tenure
- created a pipeline of schemes which should demonstrate a step up in quality
- have probably, at the very least, slightly improved design quality in a variety of neighbourhoods, in all tenures and income brackets, directly or indirectly
- the Carbon-neutral agenda project, recently commenced, should make more of an impact on achieving this Objective.

But, stakeholders warn:
- that DDQ may be creating a stiffer challenge for RSLs than the private sector
- overlooking the importance of longer-term area maintenance and place-management in ‘place-making’
- the Programme may be a little too focussed on Sheffield.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DDQ Projects</th>
<th>For All 4 LAs - Together</th>
<th>Sheffield</th>
<th>Rotherham</th>
<th>Barnsley</th>
<th>Doncaster</th>
<th>For TSY - Internal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completed HBAP Projects</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed LADEP Projects</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing Projects</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS:</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(41 / 100%)</em></td>
<td><em>(14.6%)</em></td>
<td><em>(39%)</em></td>
<td><em>(29%)</em></td>
<td><em>(4.8%)</em></td>
<td><em>(2.4%)</em></td>
<td><em>(9.7%)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Steering Group thought that this was a reasonably fair split of the DDQ resource in terms of percentages, more or less reflecting the relative size of HMR area in each LA, and the scope for intervention. However, I consider that Barnsley, Doncaster (and to a lesser extent Rotherham) should be drawing down rather more of the DDQ resource, proportionately.

There are issues to address, therefore, in order to generate a better outcome:
- whether there is enough impetus, resource and energy in the DDQ Programme to make a radical improvement right across the HMR
- whether too much hope rests upon making progress in parts of the HMR, rather than the whole.

**DDQ RATIONALE.** The rationale for the Delivering Design Quality project is that the market has failed to deliver a level of design quality at a level comparable with, or capable of supporting, the vision for the Pathfinder area.

Given the background progress in the housing market and DDQ’s progress, does the overall rationale for the DDQ Programme still ‘stack up’?

Almost certainly: not one stakeholder has questioned the fundamental rationale for DDQ. The HMR is still in being and – on the ground – still looks in need of major
transformation. The evidence of progress within the HMR overall on design quality is mixed:

- the developers are convinced that their houses in the HMR provide fairly good to high in quality
- but the private market still seems to be struggling to deliver high design quality
- the recent downturn / volatility in the housing market is unsettling developers
- there has been better progress in public sector led and RSL interventions (eg. Park Hill Flats Refurbishment, Henley Rise Eco-housing, and Norfolk Park) but these cannot be attributed to DDQ as such
- no scheme, as yet, in the Pathfinder has a ‘Building for Life’ ‘Gold’ or ‘Silver’ Awards, but there are some to come soon, probably
- little has changed yet on the ground
- however, (I calculate) DDQ interventions, in the form of Enabler input, have been made in relation to c.32 separate housing sites under the DDQ Programme head specifically over three years (2005-2008)
- the DDQ has made a start on influencing developers and regulators to raise their game, but not yet engineered a profound change
- TSY’s reduced budgets for DDQ and the decision to transfer ‘gap-funding’ away from being a reward for good design, direct to the house-builder, to being a boost to local authorities capital funding, and successive reductions in the DDQ programme funding, have reduced the scope for huge DDQ impact
- even with the much reduced DDQ budget it should be possible, by selecting interventions carefully, to address market failure – so long as exemplar schemes can be produced and heavily promoted; and
- it may be time to bring a few more glamorous developers (like Urban Splash) into the Pathfinder in order to capture and excite others’ imaginations.

But in terms of assessing DDQ’s potential future role:

- the market in the Pathfinder Area is still perceived to be one of relative failure
- and housing standards are set to jump still further – as the green agenda takes off - and the new ‘Code of Sustainable Homes’
- there is a widening realisation that existing properties will need significant upgrade for ‘climate change’ reasons (which could be very visually intrusive if poorly designed) adding to worry about design quality in South Yorkshire.

The broad conclusions are that:

- the fundamental rationale for a DDQ programme remains much the same now as in 2005 – design quality is only just beginning to improve appreciably after 3 years of TSY exhortation and c. 2 years of active DDQ Enabler input
- there is still a long way to go in ‘delivering design quality’ to South Yorkshire
- the way ahead is quickly becoming technically, environmentally, and aesthetically more demanding
- skills issues will loom larger, not smaller, as the implications of these challenges is realised, but could be different / more technical
- for TSY to give up DDQ work would, arguably, be seen as a signal of despair in the face of these growing challenges – and that could delay progress in the addressing housing market challenges and the current market volatility
- other regions and sub-regions in the UK face similar inherited challenges and the same emerging challenges; and
- South Yorkshire needs a full ‘tool-kit’ (including DDQ), which also levers in stronger support and supplementary resource from Senior Governmental Partner Organisations (as well as input from the local authority planners) in
order to succeed in ramping up design quality, and delivering sustainable communities, in competition with other regions.

**DDQ Objective 1:**
To influence the quality of design in housing supply by promoting awareness, appreciation of the benefits and value of good design.

The DDQ Programme’s implementation has made some positive contributions to addressing DDQ Objective 1:

- of the 40 No. DDQ Programme projects completed or substantially completed, I estimate that about 90% make some contribution to meeting this DDQ Objective
- analysis against ‘Building for Life’ and other standards has been helping to refine designs and encourage progress towards more rounded solutions

The greatest impact has probably been made, so far, through:
- the ‘DESIGN South Yorkshire 100’ training course - one of the few DDQ actions which TSY has widely promoted - and other training events.

And:
- there is clearly a strong view emerging among the stakeholders that TSY has scope to do much more by way of promotional work
- TSY needs to challenge the view that quality of design is a subjective matter
- design awareness training helps but it is just the start of the process – and certainly not the complete answer
- it does not change the fact that fully trained design and other professionals still have a big role to play in turning out most (although not all) ‘tip-top’ design.

The broad conclusions to be drawn are that in order to reach a better outcome:
- TSY needs to commence and sustain a stronger promotional approach to DDQ, and sustained investment in training on design awareness and related skills
- TSY could use the Enablers as part of that campaign, cost-effectively, given their familiarity with many relevant projects and schemes.

**DDQ Objective 2:**
To develop the ability and capacity of stakeholders and influencers to define, facilitate and promote good design in housing, in particular through consultative and statutory processes.

In its implementation, the DDQ Programme’s has made positive contributions to addressing this Objective, and would appear to be impacting as follows:

- the DDQ projects have been about 33% directed at the house-builders, and 67% directed towards helping the regulators
- in terms of projects, I estimate that about 90% of the DDQ projects completed or substantially completed have made some contribution to meeting this objective, directly or indirectly
- all the stakeholders can talk fluently about their interest in and commitment to delivering good design, including the developers
- there is less evidence as yet that they deliver it consistently - on the ground.

The broad conclusions to be drawn are that a better outcome rests upon:
- directing more DDQ resource and Enabler time to reinforcing contacts with good developers (nationally) and the current house-builders in South Yorkshire
• getting senior planning officers fully on-board – they are committed to good
design, in principle, but are not as well integrated into the DDQ’s processes as
they would like to be – possibly with implications for DDQ Steering Group
membership
• growing cross-organisational capacity – developing protocols with the new
Homes and Communities Agency, CABE, the RDA, and the LAs.

DDQ Objective 3:
To influence consumer perceptions of good design in housing, encouraging actual
and potential consumers of housing to appreciate and value good design.

The DDQ Programme’s scope for implementation to support this Objective was very
much reduced when it was cut out of the DDQ Programme. Still:
• in terms of projects, I estimate that about 16% of DDQ projects had an element
of direct engagement with the community affected by building proposals
• there is a small indirect impact, working through the suite of Enabled projects,
which involve, I estimate, c.32No. sites, some of which involve an element of
working with residents
• but TSY’s promotional work has been slight, has not reached the ‘consumers’.

The reality, in terms of impact, as seen by the stakeholders, is that:
• communities engaged with by Enablers seem to appreciate being consulted,
but their views sway erratically between the unrealistic and the un-ambitious
• developers see customer taste as being wedded to a 1980s Barratt–style image
rather than something modern and fit for the 21st century
• policy-makers, developers and regulators need to think hard about designing
and renovating properties to modern standards which also appeal to customers.

The broad conclusions to be drawn, in terms of generating better impact and outcome,
are:
• the DDQ Programme has yet to really address consumer perceptions
• it needs to think about marketing the notion of good design to potential
customers of new housing (in all tenures) in a targeted manner, with the active
support and involvement of the developers, regulators, and surveyors for the
duration of the DDQ Programme
• marketing and communication creativity will be key – engaging consumers as
vividly as UK television’s ‘property / make over / lifestyle’ shows.

DDQ Objective 4:
To deliver exemplar projects in the area that act as demonstrators for the project and
the Pathfinder, raising its profile both locally and on a wider basis.

The DDQ Programme’s implementation has generated some positive contributions to
addressing this Objective, as follows:
• of the 30No. ‘demonstrator’ projects TSY itself lists in the TSY Strategy 2008-
2018 (written in mid-2007, and on the TSY website) I guesstimate that c. 8No.
(19 %) may have had some direct Enabler involvement in the period 2005-mid
2007
• exemplar projects are thought to be on the way (in the development pipeline) –
coming out of the BfL assessment process (15 No.) but have yet to arrive on
site as a direct result of DDQ Programme
• the general view of stakeholders is that there are no or precious few exemplar projects in South Yorkshire - but Norfolk Park and Henley Rise are often mentioned by stakeholders as good projects.

The impact is all to come / in the pipeline.

A better outcome in respect of exemplar schemes may be achieved if:
• the demonstrator / exemplar projects emerging soon are heavily promoted: as TSY – despite being the largest Pathfinder in England – still has a relatively low profile, as evidenced by responses to this study by its wider stakeholders
• more Enabler resource, and more concentrated resource (Design Panels of technically highly qualified and experienced Enablers and others) is directed at emerging housing schemes as a matter of priority.

DDQ Objective 5:
To promote Building for Life as the standard for housing design quality for new housing in the Pathfinder area.

The DDQ Programme’s implementation has made a positive contribution to addressing this Objective, as follows:
• in terms of projects, I estimate that c. 38No. (95 %) of the DDQ projects completed or substantially completed to date were in some way or other promoting and/or demonstrating and/or training people in the use of the ‘Building for Life’ standard
• there is widespread awareness among stakeholders of the importance of the CABE’s ‘Building for Life’ standards – so, in this respect, TSY and others' promotional efforts have succeeded.

But, in terms of impact the benefit has yet to be fully seen:
• the number of houses built to ‘Building for Life’ standards so far is nil, although some are in the pipeline
• 50% is anticipated by a certain date – but no one can be sure how near or far TSY is from reaching such a target
• other standards are also seen as being equally important by some stakeholders – including developers, regulators and senior partners
• the other much favoured standards are ‘Lifetime Homes’ (seen as being very relevant to a country with an ageing population), and ‘Secured by Design’
• ‘Code of Sustainable Homes’ standards are mentioned also
• there is widespread recognition of the fact that standards are steadily rising
• global warming, in-migration, resource scarcity, were all mentioned frequently by stakeholders, as new-ish factors affecting housing standards
• Enablers tend to feel that the standards are important, but are not a one and only guarantee of design quality – as design quality springs from analysis, true creativity, and hard nosed experience in delivering projects and not simply through responding to a checklist

The broad conclusions to be drawn are that the outcome on the ground is not yet there, and:
• ‘Building for Life’ is widely recognised by stakeholders as a standard, but not the only one of relevance, and it is not an automatic guarantee of design quality
• more work is needed to empower the stakeholders to use respected standards in an intelligent manner, and to value and use trained designers and technical
experts at an early stage in project development – and TSY could support this with small injections of ‘Consultancy' support (to top up ‘Enabling' support)

• more work is needed to set up a reliable administrative method of recording and measuring progress in achieving ‘Building for Life' standards in houses in the sub-region, against the expectations and any targets being set.

8.5 OTHER TESTS OF DDQ’S ‘WORTH’ REQUIRED BY TSY

TSY – as Client – wanted to know the answers to a few other specific questions.

1. How many of the DDQ projects have been basically about improving the public realm, more than the actual housing design?

One stakeholder only mentioned this as a concern. My best estimate is that c. 3 (c.7%) of the projects are principally concerned with the public realm, beyond and out-with the actual houses. In terms of Enablers days, the percentage is similarly small – remarkably little, in fact.

2. How many of the DDQ projects have been indirect, rather than directly advising on how to achieve good design, good development plans and briefs for particular projects?

My best estimate is that c. 12 projects (29%) – a rather high proportion by number, and a much larger one in terms of spending - have only an indirect effect. Of these, 6 are wider Thematic Studies, 4 are concerned with the planning and delivery of DDQ ‘Training Programmes', and 2 concerned simply with informing TSY’s administration of the DDQ programme (including this study).

3. How many of the projects were successfully completed?

Of the 40No. DDQ projects completed or substantially completed, which have been analysed, 2 only have not been completed, as planned, to the satisfaction of TSY staff.

Reasons for not making progress on these two to a planned conclusion, were:
- after commissioning, it was cancelled, after a change of heart about the way forward by the local authority concerned
- after commencement, it was abandoned because of the developer’s uncertainty about the availability of the sites concerned.

4. Were the commissions undertaken the right ones - in terms of the Focus, Range, Trends, and Balance - relative to the DDQ Objectives?

This is a challenging question as TSY did not undertake a baseline analysis at the outset of the DDQ programme: it is only now being assembled. Having said that, a great many innovative and exploratory programmes are set up tentatively, at first, and then crystallised, later. Clearly, the funding cutbacks have severely limited progress on Objective 3 (consumer perceptions), but left scope for progress on the others.
Focus:

The 41 DDQ Programme projects have addressed the 5 DDQ Objectives, but rather unevenly:

DDQ Objective 1: c.40No.(90%) addressed (in whole or part) raising design awareness

DDQ Objective 2: c.34No.(66%) addressed (in whole or part) the capacity of stakeholders / influencers / statutory processes, etc.

DDQ Objective 3: c.7No.(16%) focussed in whole or part on influencing consumer perceptions

DDQ Objective 4: c.8No.(19%) the minimum, c.23No.(36%) perhaps the maximum possible – contributed directly to delivering exemplar projects

DDQ Objective 5: c. 38No.(86%) involved promoting ‘Building for Life’ as a standard.

On three DDQ Objectives (1, 2 and 5), the DDQ Programme shows a high degree of commitment. Project numbers on consumer engagement (Obj. 3) is inevitably lagging. The low numbers of projects focussing on demonstrator / exemplar projects is more worrying. Also – against TSY’s wider objectives - progress in the more rural areas.

Range:

DDQ projects have:
(i) ranged very widely in type and scope for the LADEP; and
(ii) much less widely for the HBAP – where they have been mostly very intense interjections of advice from very skilled and experienced Enablers to smooth progress towards better design quality on defined sites.

Taking the two Panels together:

(i) Projects commissioned have taken up from a minimum of less than 1 day, to a max of c.120 days of Enablers time (excluding lump-sum projects)
(ii) Most projects (82%) involve 1 Enabler only, and a few (12%) involve two or more
(iii) 2No. projects have a lump-sum, project ceiling (one involving Enablers, one a Consultancy firm), with the rest measured by Enablers Days – which makes comparisons, averaging, and VFM analysis more difficult
(iv) the overall average project length of all those measured in Enablers days is 12.5 days (HBAP ‘BfL’ assessment projects = 2.8 days)(LADEP Projects average = 14.8 days)
(v) the Enablers have all been used to some extent or other, and intuitively speaking there seems to be a reasonable degree of match between their qualifications and experience and the tasks to which they have been assigned or selected
(vi) undoubtedly, though, some fine Enabler skill-sets, experience and passion for good design have been underused.

DDQ has clearly delivered what it says ‘on the tin’. Overall, there has been a strong focus on:
(i) interpreting and using ‘Building for Life’ to add design quality to developers’ proposals for new housing developments (c.32No. sites in all) through the Enablers (mostly under the HBAP); and
(ii) more focus on educating and extending local authority officers’ skills in a wide variety of ways, through Enablers working for the Local Authority Design Enabling Panel (LADEP).

Trends:

Overall, at the outset, in 2005 and 2006, the emphasis of the DDQ programme was very much on providing Enablers advice to housebuilders’ on projects which required some upgrading in terms of design awareness.

The House Builder Advisory Panel projects have been of short duration throughout 2005-2008, averaging 2.8 days in length overall.

At the end of 2006, LADEP projects averaged 9.9 days length. In 2007, they have become larger and more complicated sub-regional studies averaging about 40 days in length (excluding the lump-sum projects), and training programmes – devised from scratch to meet TSY’s specific needs.

Balance:

The DDQ portfolio concentrated on short Building for Life assessments at the start, but now appears to be mostly working on background work – looking at differing ‘design’ standards, older people’s homes, baseline auditing, etc.. Such projects are more expensive, but can build up more general awareness and capacity, policy commitment and networking among local authority managers. However, the risk is that they divert too much resource away from more direct design interventions - which are much needed to demonstrate the HMR’s success in design-quality made real in ‘bricks and mortar’.

TSY has to get the balance of its DDQ programming right, in terms of:
- meeting the Objectives (on paper)
- delivering them (on the ground) soon, as well as later
- keeping the key stakeholders happy
- satisfying ‘evaluative processes’ of all kinds, and
- making the most of its money, in terms of impact on real design build.

What are the basic building blocks for a balanced DDQ Programme, augmented through drawing in funds from CABE, and other sources?

More ‘Building for Life’ assessments of real schemes as they emerge could be a very cost-effective intervention. An initial Enabler ‘Building for Life’ quick assessment study of a few days might cost c.£2K each in Enabler costs. A £100,000 annual DDQ allocation could buy up to 50 ‘Building for Life’ assessments a year, making a very considerable impact on design quality on the ground in the HMR area.

Short order ‘pure consultancy’ follow-on for a small scheme to ensure that the ideas are really reflected in the detail of the site layouts and elevations, etc - might take another site visit, and a few days to draw up and talk though various options – say c.£5K a time. So, a £100,000 annual allocation would buy c.20 pieces of deeper consultancy advice for smaller sites, of the type which Barnsley would appreciate and which would help the rural areas of the HMR.

The ‘DESIGN South Yorkshire 100’ has won much recognition and warm words already. It has the power to enhance design awareness quickly. Another round
focussed on planners, surveyors, elected members, etc. at similar cost (£50-60K net cost, if LSC grant-aid can be accessed once more) might be a good investment in terms of impact and the numbers (another 100 trained in a 6 day course for c.£500-£600/head, net).

Using the Enablers as a ‘sounding board’ just once a year might improve focus, and project specifications and speed progress: cost c.£10K. bring a few together for 2 or 3 ‘Design Panel’ (a few days of concentrated input into improving proposal for a small neighbourhood area) each year might cost c.£10K a go (say £20-30K).

A programme to engage with developers and raise their awareness is now planned (cost unknown), and developer awareness will be addressed in part through the ‘Carbon Neutral’ project.

5. What are the implications of DIVA’s work?

TSY’s concerns about the difficulties they perceive in engaging with developers in South Yorkshire led to DIVA Creative being commissioned recently to work up a campaign for re-engagement with developers and others, through a marketing initiative.

DIVA Creative’s Amanda Pearce was contacted. DIVA Creative’s view is that “hiding their light under a bushel seems to be the TSY style...”, at present.

DIVA is:

- at the beginning stage of the commission
- developing a number of tools to raise awareness of DDQ and how people might take advantage of it
- developing a DDQ brand identity separate from, but alluding to, TSY
- developing a DDQ website
- set to take on the DDQ newsletter task – a branded bulletin – to be signed off shortly
- planning a DDQ flyer to be distributed around planning offices – with testimonial quotes on how useful DDQ is and how valued it is
- set to target developers and home builders by direct mail - and is researching various databases to that end (and not simply relying on the HBF)
- planning a launch – including something to recognise participants in the ‘Design South Yorkshire 100’ course (with certificates, etc.),soon
- intent on getting ‘stuff’ into the media - to get messages (about DDQ) out, as there are a lot of projects 'on line'.

The implications of this work - if it comes to pass - is that:

- the promotion of DDQ will be much more effective and professional
- such a campaign will seem to respond effectively to the various points of concern and suggestions made about the lack of promotion of DDQ by the stakeholders participating in this study
- it should improve communications considerably – a major concern of the Enablers – on the DDQ programme’s progress across the board
- a more professional public relations approach may win more respect from the bigger developers; but
- from the responses given by developers in this study - more action than this will be needed to fully engage them.
6. How effective has the programme been in influencing the ‘developer sector’?

It was clear from the outset of this study that TSY staff were well aware that it would be a challenge to engage the development industry in South Yorkshire in ‘delivering design quality’ as a broad concept.

The initial DDQ Programme (£4M plus) included an award scheme for builders, but the budget cuts led to it being abandoned. Consequently, the DDQ Programme has addressed developers in a far more modest, piecemeal fashion.

The DIVA Creative programme will help, but the messages coming out of stakeholders at present point to a need also to engage in:

- one–to-one discussions with developers – as they want to explain to TSY the difficulties and challenges they face
- a fresh discussion about the role and availability of gap-funding; and
- a discussion on how to change public awareness and consumer choice – towards valuing good modern design.

The RSL and private housing builder/developers’ responses on their engagement with design issues and the DDQ programme suggest that they are:

- very aware of design issues
- either already aware of DDQ, or if not, supportive of it in principle
- using and/or open to using the DDQ Enablers; and
- open to further dialogue with TSY about DDQ.

Local authorities are also ‘developers’ to a considerable extent, as are many ‘other public services’ – all with an impact on the attractiveness of places. And, local authorities management and maintenance of the public realm is critical.

Has TSY reached all these ‘developers’ of places? There is evidence that:

- many housing managers have been engaged with through DDQ
- professionals with little training in design, from a variety of local government departments, are attending the DDQ’s ‘DESIGN South Yorkshire 100’ Course.

TSY initiatives to ‘re-engage developers’ will also need to embrace all these ‘public sector developers’ in order to deliver effective, coherent design in the sub-region.

7. How effective has the programme been in influencing the ‘regulators’?

To many people the term ‘regulators’ simply means ‘town planners’. But there are three types of ‘regulators’ impacting on the design quality of housing in South Yorkshire, directly or indirectly:

- local authority planners, building inspectors and highways officers, and Councillors who sit on Planning Boards
- national, regional, sub-regional and local organisations who take an interest in design matters for a variety of reasons (eg the Police, through their Architectural Liaison Officers)
- national and regional ‘setters of standards’ with strong influence and reserve powers of intervention - the ‘quangos’ and various arms of central government (eg GOYH, the RDA, and CABE).

Has DDQ been influential in getting all of these to ‘sing off the same hymn sheet’ as they address housing issues in South Yorkshire? The evidence from the stakeholder
responses is that:
- the wider set of ‘regulators’ are very well aware of and supportive of DDQ
- local authority regulators have attended ‘DESIGN South Yorkshire 100’
- elected member support varies - so there is work still to do there
- more work needs to be done to engage and satisfy the Police, who are very concerned to limit the scope for criminal behaviour; and
- senior planners are aware and supportive, but would very much welcome more direct involvement and discussion with TSY on design issues.

8. How effective has the programme been in influencing the ‘customers’?

The funding was cut out of the Programme: the impact has accordingly been minimal.

One respondent outlined the complex dilemmas facing those trying to drive up design standards and win customers in the RSL/HA’s housing market, currently:
- “we are applying DDQ and have dramatically improved our schemes”
- “but it is very expensive - an almost ‘zero-carbon house’ costs an extra £20,000: the private sector gain some recognition of that, but that it not available to HAs”
- “the Housing Corporation wants more units for less FSG – good schemes take 25 years to catch up (financially) - but at current FGS levels, they will never break-even, so an extra £45,000/house is needed for it to break-even”
- “(the net effect is that) the housing programme is slowing down...”
- “meanwhile, the latest research suggests that the Regional Spatial Plan housing figures need significant increase...and (over and above that) that migration from Eastern Europe has been underestimated...”
- “so, housebuilders are caught between the three stools of –
  - improving design quality
  - increasing the housing numbers
  - green-homes and the eco-agenda.”
- (and then there is) “market resistance”
- “we sell (outright or in part) about.150 units a year”
- “our perception of what is good housing is not the same as that of the ‘customers’”, and
- “feedback suggests that ‘traditional Barratt-style’ housing is preferred, and good design doesn’t sell (and this leads to) a £140,000 house having to be discounted to £100,000 - to sell”.

Other developers echoed this analysis.

8.6 OTHER TESTS OF ‘WORTH’ WHICH MIGHT BE APPLIED

8.6.1 The DDQ Programme has only been running for 2 years in effect – because of a delayed start in 2005 and a very long pause to review TSY funding and priorities during 2006. So, deeper and more sophisticated analysis would be premature, but I consider that it is worth taking a quick look at how the DDQ Programme might appear if evaluated in more rigorous ways.

As a large, complex (multi-actor) Programme and set of projects – is it relevant, effective, efficiently carried out, having an impact, and likely to be long-lasting in effect?
So far, the DDQ Programme would appear to be:

- **RELEVANT**
  - in step with the guidance and expectations of CABE
  - understood by partners as a concept and on what TSY is doing
  - supported by the housebuilders / developers in the main
  - involving local residents, a bit, and they being appreciative of the effort

- **EFFECTIVE**
  - very likely to benefit the intended beneficiaries as new developments of higher quality comes through the development pipeline

- **EFFICIENT**
  - likely to demonstrate good outputs to cost ratio on training initiatives
  - able to show good outputs to costs ratio on Enabling and Consultancy
  - able to point to influence on proposals for c. 32 sites within the HMR, at a much lower overall cost than appointing Consultants to do ordinary consultancy work on the sites to sketch design stage – although that may also have a role to play
  - in need of more detailed analysis by TSY (internally) into the scope if any for securing the same benefit at lower cost, somehow, by other means, or at lower cost – or not.

- **IMPACTING**
  - capable of ensuring direct, indirect and ripple effects by encouraging the local authorities to apply the same approach across their entire area and not just in the HMR areas of South Yorkshire.

- **SUSTAINABLE**
  - potentially very long term in effect – if the design, environmental sensitivity and lifetime adaptability of houses is improved as planned, and key professionals skills continue to be improved to that end
  - in need of active support from the new Homes and Communities Agency and Yorkshire Forward (as they will take on significant relevant roles in terms of HMR funding and oversight, and regional planning respectively, shortly).

Are the training projects based on good analysis of need, properly developed and implemented as projects, and is the learning likely to become embedded?

So far, there are five training programmes *de facto* involved in the DDQ Programme:

(i) a short training programme for 25No. people (in 2006)
(ii) a regeneration skills review of Sheffield CC’s Neighbourhood Teams (2005)
(iii) the ‘DESIGN South Yorkshire 100’ training course (now ongoing)
(iv) the indirect training provided through working with and taking advice from the Enablers (rolled out during 2005-2008)
(v) the lessons to be learned from the DDQ Programme and Projects as seen by the Enablers (which will need to be periodically distilled and followed up by TSY after studying Enablers’ Final Reports).

These five streams:

- are all ‘responses’ to TSY’s initial analysis which identified skills deficiencies to be addressed in the sub-region when it came to delivering ‘design’ quality
- have added to people’s skills directly or indirectly
- have probably added something to local authority officers and resident groups’ skills and design awareness simply through contact with Enablers (although evidence to that effect may be hard to gather, other than ‘soft’ evidence).
The true test is whether these efforts lead to better practices being adopted and embedded into a local authorities’ or the local communities’ ways of working. Three ways in which TSY could swiftly address the challenge of proof, would be to:

- undertake a swift analysis of Enablers’ Final Reports, and Trainers and Trainees Feed-back Forms as the ‘DESIGN South Yorkshire 100’ course (2007/2008) comes to a close
- ensuring that the conclusions are properly written up and followed up; and
- ensuring that the conclusions are reflected in the emerging LA Design Audit Action Plans, and SY/LA Design Audit Action Plan.
9. SUMMARY ANALYSIS

9.1 This evaluation was a short and limited one, to a prescriptive brief and with many areas of analysis out-of-bounds for the Consultant, including financial analysis, new ideas, and recommendations: but some clear messages emerged.

9.2 The history of TSY’s DDQ Programme is that it was set up in 2005 – with the original budget was heavily reduced from c.£4M down to c.£691K over three years, generating several lulls, limiting TSY’s speed of progress and scope for achievement. Consequently, the Programme has been actively running for closer to 2 years than 3 in terms of activity to date, during 2005-2008.

9.3 The Stakeholders' Views

9.3.1 A total of 41 STAKEHOLDERS were interviewed: almost all were aware of it, and 89% had used it in some way, 81% felt they knew what it was trying to achieve, 97% supported the Programme, and 97% suggested some modifications to it for the future. Most could readily list DDQ’s achievements - although the planners were less clear that the rest on that.

9.3.2 Of the INSIDERS – Over 60% thought they had a lot or full knowledge of the DDQ Programme, and all (100%) understood and were supportive of DDQ and what it was trying to achieve, and saw achievement in the change of attitudes, improvements in the development pipeline, the ‘DESIGN SY 100’ course, training on and use of ‘Building for Life’, awards being sought and won, etc.. The TSY Board members were very supportive. 61% of the ‘Insiders’ were sure DDQ represented good value for money, 64.6% felt it wielded a lot or a very great deal of influence, and many saw scope for it to engage the private sector more - working more closely with developers, establishing Design Panels, encouraging modern, carbon-neutral construction in response to climate change, renovating older housing stock, and better engagement with the local and other authorities and agencies. The planners clearly wanted more active engagement in the DDQ processes, better recording of progress, and development of elected members.

9.3.3 Of the DEVELOPERS – 75% knew about DDQ, all felt they understood what it was trying to achieve and supported DDQ, good architecture and design. They felt their houses were of good quality but they were all trying to improve the quality of the houses still further, in a very competitive market, and they wanted more realism and consistency from local authorities (principally meaning the planners) better public realm management and maintenance, and wanted to build adaptable homes. They warned that consumers views needed to be influenced in favour of good modern design - and wanted consistent treatment by local authorities and incentives to cover the higher costs of providing higher quality design.

9.3.4 Of the ENABLERS – the Enablers' knowledge of the DDQ Programme was quite good, but individual Enablers thought their knowledge was very patchy and uneven, reflecting intermittent employment and very little communication on the progress of the DDQ Programme as a whole from TSY since the Panels were set up in 2005. Those experienced in working for CABE saw major differences in approach. Most Enablers were very enthusiastic about delivering higher quality design, but felt their potential contribution was undervalued and underused, given their combined skills and experience. They urged much better use of the Enabler Panels, and a major improvement in communications and promotion of the DDQ Programme. Yet, they felt they were making a contribution in the projects commissioned, would like to contribute
more, and felt that DDQ Programme management and organisation could be improved. Suggestions for the future included: engaging wider support, including Yorkshire Forward and the private sector; achieving more input and commitment from planners; emulating CABE to a greater extent in the use of Enablers; far more effort on the promotion of DDQ; and the Enabler Panels refocused and re-energised.

9.3.5 Of the SENIOR GOVERNMENTAL PARTNER ORGANISATIONS – all felt they knew about DDQ: 75% understood fully and 25% vaguely what it was trying to achieve: one perceived a complete change of attitude in South Yorkshire, and there was praise for the ‘DESIGN South Yorkshire 100’ training course. They were (100%) supportive of DDQ, felt it was still needed, thought housing needed to improve further and that Enabler work was good, and praised Peter O’Brien’s outstanding commitment. There was a concern that the expectation being placed on RSL’s affordable housing was too high. Yorkshire Forward wanted to see a minimum protocol for new housing in the sub-region; CABE, much improved management and fuller use of the Enabler Panels; the Housing Corporation, a focus on cost-efficient interventions; and the Police, renewed focus on designing out crime.

9.4 The DDQ Steering Group’s Views

As a ‘body’: they knew a lot about the DDQ Programme, the views were very positive, the perception of DDQ was that it was very beneficial all round, with praise for ‘DESIGN SY 100’, and Enablers’ work; they were about to look at the future Programme, and were comfortable with the geographic spread of projects; they were aware of some discomfort with the recent baseline design audit, and wanted to engage more effectively with the Enabler Panels, developers and the HBF. They had a range of views on the functioning of the Steering Group and ways of improving it.

9.5 The Consultant’s Overall Evaluation

The Client had called for an element of independent evaluation by the Consultant.

In addressing TSY’s wider aim/vision, DDQ was making good but unspectacular progress, and faced many uncertainties. Against TSY’s key/strategic objectives, it had made positive contributions, but these were limited at present. The DDQ Projects were concentrated in Sheffield, and to a lesser extent, Rotherham.

No one questioned the fundamental rationale for DDQ and, measured against it, the Programme is making an impact in some ways but not others: design quality is only just beginning to improve appreciably after 3 years of TSY exhortation and c. 2 years of active DDQ Enabler input: there is still a long way to go in delivering design quality to South Yorkshire; the way ahead is quickly becoming technically, environmentally, and aesthetically more demanding; skills issues will loom larger, not smaller, and could become different / more technical.

South Yorkshire needs a full ‘tool-kit’ (including DDQ), which will lever in stronger support and supplementary resource from Senior Governmental Partner Organisations (as well as input from the local authority planners) in order to succeed in ramping up design quality, and delivering sustainable communities, in competition with other regions.

In terms of meeting DDQ’s five objectives: the best progress was being made were commitment was highest, on (1) ‘influencing housing design quality’; (2) ‘developing stakeholder / influencers’ capacity’; and (5) ‘promoting Building for Life’. The commitment to (3) ‘influencing consumer perceptions’, was very low, and little had
been achieved, largely because it had been cut out of the DDQ funding programme: and on (4) ‘delivering exemplar projects’, few had been delivered but many were thought to be in the pipeline.

To make much stronger progress **against the HMR’s Overall Aim and Three Key Objectives**, TSY would need to consider:

- whether there is enough impetus, resource and energy in the DDQ Programme to make a radical improvement right across the HMR
- whether too much hope rests upon making progress in parts of the HMR rather than the whole.

In terms of the **rationale for DDQ**, the need seems to be as strong as ever.

To make much stronger progress **against the five DDQ Objectives**, TSY would need to:

- realise the potential added impact of projects now in progress, as they are completed and launched within the HMR (eg. the work on the Action Plans (flowing from the Design Audit), the new promotional package for TSY/DDQ – designed by DIVA Creative, the Carbon-neutral Agenda contract – which will re-engage developers, the impact of the DESIGN SY 100’ training course, and the recent closer working with the South Yorkshire Police)
- commence and sustain a stronger promotional approach to DDQ, and sustain investment in training on design awareness and related skills
- use the Enablers as part of that campaign, cost-effectively, given their familiarity with many relevant projects and schemes
- direct a larger proportion of DDQ resource and the available Enabler time into reinforcing contacts with good developers (nationally) and the current house-builders in South Yorkshire
- address the fact the senior planning officers are on-board and committed to good design, in principle, but are not as well integrated into the DDQ’s processes as they would like to be – possibly with implications for DDQ Steering Group membership
- grow cross-organisational capacity – developing protocols linking more closely with the new Homes and Communities Agency (EP/HC), CABE, the RDA, TSY and the local authority planners may offer a way ahead
- really address consumer perceptions
- think more about marketing the notion of good design to potential customers of new housing (in all tenures) in a targeted manner, with the active support and involvement of the developers, regulators, and surveyors for the duration of the DDQ Programme
- see marketing and communication creativity as a key – it needs to engage consumers as vividly as UK television’s ‘property / make over / lifestyle’ shows
- ensure TSY’s demonstrator / exemplar projects, emerging soon, are heavily promoted: as TSY – despite being the largest Pathfinder in England – still has a relatively low profile - as evidenced by the wider stakeholders
- use more Enabler resource, and more concentrated resource (Design Panels of technically highly qualified and experienced Enablers, and others) directed at emerging schemes, as a matter of priority
- recognise that ‘Building for Life’ is widely recognised by stakeholders as a standard, but not the only one of relevance (to the Police especially), and nor is it an automatic guarantee of design quality
- empower the stakeholders to use respected standards in an intelligent manner, and to value and use trained designers and technical experts at an early stage
in project development – and TSY could support this with small injections of ‘Consultancy’ support (topping up the ‘Enabling’ support)

• set up a reliable administrative method of recording and measuring progress in achieving ‘Building for Life’ standards in houses in the sub-region, against the expectations and any targets being set.
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