

UDL Board Meeting - 22 May 2006 (Board Paper & Minutes)

Board Paper – 22.05.06

Agenda:

1. UDL Skills Development Programme
2. Urban Design Officers Network
3. Design Champions
4. Staffing
5. Budget
6. UDL Constitution

Paper 1: UDL Skills Development Programme

Briefing Paper and ideas for tender specifications

Background

The aim of this project is to develop and then aid delivery of appropriate training and skills development for public sector employees in London. The level of training/awareness-raising to differ depending on the role of the person

UDL has done research on the design training needs of both TfL and Borough staff over the last couple of years. This included creating a list of key desirable staff competences to inform training.

Keith Mattacks has been employed by UDL to manage this project since February 2006. Keith is an experienced learning and development specialist with a successful track record in applying his skills and knowledge to the business needs of organisations. At the last board meeting it was agreed that he would continue in the role, working 2 days a week, until the end of June.

Work since the beginning of April 2006

1. Work has focused on gaining a better understanding of who needs what training in the Boroughs and TfL, and some of the existing mechanisms available to deliver these needs. This has helped us to start to identify the 'gaps' that our program can help to fill. The Spearmint Proposal summarises this work.
2. To help us begin to understand the variety of needs within TfL Keith has been scoping job types and main duties. He has also been looking at PC densities and investigating the best way of delivering E-learning packages. We are also arranging to host an existing 1 day training program developed by IHT and CABE specifically for transport engineers on 3rd July 2006. TfL will pay for this event, and it will be offered to a cross section of staff so that we can see how well it fits their immediate needs.
3. Work looking at existing provision has also shown that an e-learning package is being developed to introduce Councillors and other non design professionals to the principles and importance of good design. This is being developed by IdEA and CABE. We are in discussion with the developers as to how this could be expanded to cover London specific issues.
4. I have had meetings with potential delivery partners, from English Heritage and RIBA to the GLA and sub regional strategic partnerships. There seems to be interest in a potential borough training program with some organisations happy to consider accrediting suitable courses, and others to maybe help fund the delivery of specific events. I will take these issues forward once we have an agreed draft tender specification.

5. Keith Mattacks has been drawing together a draft Spearmint Gateway 0 proposal as attached for consideration of the Board. This is needed to agree TfL funding for the program.
6. The skills development program is a long term project, which will take some months to develop before it can start to have an impact. So to help deliver some skills training in the short term we are doing the following:
 - Lunchtime lectures at various Boroughs on Design and Access statements, so far, 12 Boroughs have requested this.
 - Ad Hoc CPD talks for other providers, TRPI, RIBA, GLA, Access association and Planning Aid events have been accepted so far.
 - Offer of 'masterclass' speakers for sub regional groups. (Please see separate paper on the sub-regional officer network.)
 - Two weekly information emails to all members. It would be better if this could be done through a blog or chat room, but at the moment we do not have the capability. This is also in the draft work program as part of Website development.

Developing a model

7. We have been discussing ideas on training methods and delivery with TfL, boroughs and potential suppliers. TfL in particular would like to see 2 strands of delivery; basic awareness-raising delivered through e-learning and/or face to face seminars; followed by help with live projects which may be called Design Aid for Projects (DAP). For TfL staff the awareness raising sessions built into their new induction and Star training programs which will cover both staff competences and technical requirements. These programs comprise of regularly delivered modules, 2 of which could cover urban design principles and TfL's own guidelines and policies. Delivery of UD modules could start in September. Delivery of DAP will be more complicated. A tender brief for this is being developed.
8. The 2 strand approach of awareness training followed by DAP could also work well within the Boroughs. The idea of cementing theory learnt in the seminar room by helping people apply it within their work should be an effective way of improving urban design skills. It should also help improve individual projects, and, if cross disciplinary or even organisation project teams are "helped," it could also improve working practices and networking.
9. The concept of DAP has been successfully used by CABE for some years now. They call it enabling, where a registered "enabler" is paid a daily rate by CABE to be involved in projects with the aim of improving the design quality of the scheme. However CABE has not used enabling as part of a systematic training package, and they have done very little enabling in London.
10. Draft tender specifications are being drawn up for program development and initial delivery of the following training elements:
 - An introductory e-learning package.
 - Urban design modules for TfL's induction and Star programs.
 - Delivery of DAP for TfL staff.
 - A suit of events for Borough officers and Councillors to be delivered on a sub regional basis.
 - Delivery of DAP for Borough project teams.
11. Previous work focused on key competences built environment staff need. These are important indicators, but I suggest that they would not make very 'saleable' training subjects. For example people might not see the benefit of sessions on better project management or negotiation skills specifically for urban design reasons and these issues might sit more comfortably within

employers' general staff development programmes. However they are underlining objectives that may need to be delivered 'silently' beneath more easily recognised subjects like design to reduce crime, design so everyone can use a place, sustainable design to reduce energy consumption etc. To help achieve this we have drawn up a table showing how the competences and design issues may work together. This is also attached.

Paying for it

12. Predicted costs are shown in the Spearmint proposal attached. UDL's budget is limited, and, as it stands, should be able to pay for program development but not all of delivery. As such tender briefs will call for quotes for both elements in some cases.
13. Developing the e-learning package is particularly costly as set out in the Spearmint proposal. However IdEA and CABE are working on a similar package at the moment and we may be able to cut costs significantly if we use, or add to this. If this proves impractical I suggest we think seriously about the benefits of an e-learning program, particularly considering TfLs commitment to their induction and Star projects. It is their intention that existing employees will be sent on induction sessions when places are available. They are planning to tie career progression to attendance which should also aid take up. English Heritage has an e-learning package called HELM. They are unconvinced of its effectiveness at the moment. Taking all this into account I suggest that if we can not piggy back on the IdEA/CABE package, we drop e-learning from our program for the first year.
14. Some organisations have expressed an initial interest in sponsoring training events. For example the GLA may help deliver an event around planning appeals, the Academy of Urbanism may have money available, English Heritage has grants (although small) which may help pay for sessions on historic conservation. I have not yet approached either the DCLoG or the Academy for Sustainable Skills. Sponsorship may mean some compromise on the subjects we can offer. It may also make getting tenders agreed difficult. An alternative could be to ask for funding direct from Boroughs for events, or chase Borough subscriptions. However I am concerned that Borough training budgets might be very tight, and we may end up with a situation where some Boroughs subsidise others.

Staff

15. Managing the tender and program development process should be possible within existing staff resources. I would like to set up a small steering group to help here. However existing UDL staff will not be able to manage the delivery of the project or negotiate delivery funding. For both TfL and Boroughs most management time will be needed for DAP, but the co-ordination and delivery of seminar events in the Boroughs will also require significant time. As such I suggest that a fixed term employee is needed to manage the program. Funding of this post is included in the Spearmint proposal.
16. Negotiating delivery funding is in many ways a separate job from co-ordinating suppliers and organising delivery. At the moment the Director's post is only filled 4 days a week. I suggest that UDL employ a business manager 2 days a week with the specific job of organising external funding for the training program and other UDL projects. The cost of this post is included in the draft budget. They should also help manage the masterplan help program.
17. Please see separate paper on staffing.

Actions

1. That the Board approve, or suggest changes to, the Spearmint proposal attached.

2. If the Board is generally happy with this board paper, that they agree in principle the proposals and arguments it includes as a way forward.

Paper 2: Urban Design Officers Network

Background

UDL originally ran pan London meetings for Borough officers. However these were seen by some as too large for good networking and it was decided to move to sub regional meetings in 2005.

Each of the 5 sub regions has a designated co-ordinator. The program of meetings varies across the regions. The East meet every 6 weeks, but the north have met only once. Attendance at the meetings seems patchy, and locations and chairs rotate across the boroughs. In some cases only one officer comes from a Borough, in others 2 or 3.

Some groups have set a year's dates in advance, but others have no timetable for meetings. Some regions wanted to organise specific large events, for example seminars on crime prevention through design. Street scene workshops took place in the East and South regions in 2005. Other events are yet to be organised. Many regions seem to work well with the area strategic partnership. For example the North London Strategic Partnership is running an event on town centres which UDL members can attend.

Those attending meetings seem to value the opportunity to meet others doing similar jobs and find out about specific projects. The success of meetings depends a lot on who turns up, what information they bring with them and what that day's chair wants to achieve.

A Way Forward?

I have met with most sub regional co-ordinator. There was also a meeting of all co-ordinators on 11 May where a future program was discussed. The main concerns of members expressed so far are:

- Lack of information and co-ordination from UDL centre and across regions
- Lack of links between champions and officers
- Lack of time for members to organise events
- Lack of direction or purpose for meetings (to be updated after 11 May meeting)

As such I would like to suggest that each region sets out a year's program of dates, locations and where possible subjects for meetings. These might be once every 6 weeks, or they might be once every 6 months – whatever members in that area want. If the groups wish to cover specific issues, or want to get anyone in particular along to present to the group or join in the discussion, I will do my best to help arrange this. Possible subjects already suggested include;

- Design to reduce crime
- Design of high density housing (and Building for life criteria)
- The role of Design Champions
- How to tackle design at planning appeals
- The design review process and setting up design panels.

It may be that more than one group would be interested in these subjects. If this is the case, perhaps joint meetings could be arranged in some cases, or invites sent to those interested outside the sub- region. In some cases perhaps design champions could also be invited.

I have called meetings where we try and bring in others to help cover a specific issue 'masterclasses'. This is not to suggest that the groups can not cover the issue adequately themselves, it is just to offer some catalyst to the sharing of members' own experiences and ideas.

I suggest that the sub regional co-ordinators put together a program for their area; we can then look at how best to link any similar requirements between areas.

Action

- That the board agree that sub regional co-ordinators should suggest programs for their area and that the Director works with the sub regional co-ordinators to help ensure those programs can go ahead.
- That the board support agreed programs and where appropriate help to ensure their respective organisations provide appropriate resources or people to help deliver the program.

Paper 3: Design Champions

Background

Following the Council elections on May 4th, we now have 17 Champions left from UDL's original list of 1 for each Borough. (Table showing champions attached)

A way forward?

Many champions make invaluable contributions to improving design quality in their borough. However we don't really have any evidence of how effective champions are overall, or what they are all doing. As such I suggest a draft letter which asks champions and leaders to agree what champions will work to achieve. It may be best if urban design officers can input to this letter, tailoring the rough list of actions I have suggested to specific issues in that authority. The sub regional representatives have agreed to this approach and have suggested that the letter should be attached to an email or memo sent by officers to their leader. It would also be beneficial if ALG and CABE logos could go on the letters.

Below is a draft letter to send to Leaders asking if they will appoint, or confirm their champion.

As champions are mainly unpaid Councillors taking forward an agenda in their own time it is hard to try to suggest some kind of check on what they are doing, but I suggest that the long term standing of champions could benefit if they were willing to put down on paper a commitment. I would very much welcome thoughts on this.

Once we have names of new champions we can consider a networking event for them. We will also work closely with London Open House who will arrange a training event for new councillors. We will have a presence at the forthcoming ALG new councillor event. It would be useful to liaise with London Open House about this.

It would also be useful to open both the broader urban design Skills Borough training and in some classes urban designers masterclasses to councillors.

Action

That the board suggests changes to / approves the draft letter.

- That Board members authorise use of their organisations' logos on the letter.

Draft letter

Dear

Your Design Champion

Congratulations on your recent election results, I wish you every success throughout your new term in office.

As I am sure you are aware well designed places matter to people. You will find some information on the value of good design on the back of this letter. Please have a look; some of the facts might surprise you.

Although the value of good design is becoming widely understood, achieving quality can be difficult. This is where design champions come in. They need to be someone with clout, who can make a difference and ensure every part of your Council works towards improving the quality of your Borough. They also need to take the job seriously, and help deliver some key. Ideally they should be members of your Cabinet with a relevant portfolio such as the environment or development.

Urban Design London can help your design champion be as effective as possible. We are a network organisation supported by the Association of London Government, Transport for London and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment. We can offer design champions networking opportunities, help and information, but to do this we need to know who they are.

So could you please let us know who your design champion is, whether continuing in that role, or newly appointed. We suggest, to help us all really appreciate their value, that appointed champions set out in a letter what they will work to achieve.

To help, here are a few suggestions of things a design champions can and should do:

- Take responsibility for ensuring all parts of the Council is achieving good design. Sometimes this might mean pushing for new working practices or solutions.
- Making sure the Council's policies call for and ensure good design. This might mean inputting to the Cooperate Strategy, Community Strategy, Local Development Strategy and other relevant documents.
- Liaising regularly with the Councils Urban Design team or officer (to be named)
- Ensuring all members of Planning Committees receive urban design training.

Yours.....

Why design matters - the evidence

Homes

- Nearly 3 in 4 members of the public believe that well-designed houses will increase in value more quickly than average. (CABE/MORI, 2002)
- Properties adjacent to good-quality parks have a 5-7% premium compared to identical properties outside the vicinity of the park. (CABE Space, 2005)

Crime prevention

- Birmingham's street markets saw a 70% drop in theft from shopping bags by redesigning lighting and footpaths. (Regeneration & Renewal, 2002)
- A survey of 27 redesigned housing estates in West Yorkshire saw an average drop in crime of 65% since the redesign. (Home Office, 2000)

Community

- In the year after its redesign, Peckham Library saw annual visits increase from 171,000 to 500,000, and book loans rise from 80,000 to 317,000.
- Accessibility problems created by bad design prevent more than 40% of disabled and deaf Londoners from visiting a tourist attraction or going shopping. (GLA, 2005)

Economy

- Local businesses in Coventry saw a 25% increase in visitors on Saturdays after the council built a new civic square. (ATCM, 1997)
- Birmingham has risen from thirteenth to third in a poll of best places to shop since the arrival of its new Bullring centre and flagship Selfridges store. (Experian, 2004)

Education

- A 2000 study by PWC found that capital investment in school buildings had a strong influence on pupil motivation and effective learning time
- Pupils' test scores in well-designed buildings have been found to be up to 11% higher than those in poorly designed buildings. (CABE, 2002)

Environment

- Neighbourhoods that integrate parking and transportation and encourage walking and cycling can consume 43% less fuel, according to the New Zealand Ministry for the Environment.
- Buildings are responsible for 45% of all the UK's carbon emissions: the design of energy efficient public buildings, such as Brighton's new Jubilee Library, is central to our efforts to meet Kyoto commitments.

Health

- When new health facilities are compared with older ones, patients are discharged up to 21% earlier from newer wards. (Sheffield University, 1999)
- Over 90% of nurses believe that a well-designed hospital is significantly linked to patient recovery rates (ICM/CABE, 2004)

Paper 4: Staffing

Background

UDL at the moment consist of a Directors post (filled 4 days a week) and a full time administrator. UDL

has also been employing a project manager working on the skills program 2 days a week. This contract runs to the end of June.

UDL benefits from the time and work of Borough officers and its Board members, who all contribute greatly. However if UDL is to develop and deliver a long term, useful program, it will require more staff resources.

A way forward

1. It is suggested that a Business Manger be employed 2 days a week. The main purpose of this post would be to secure external funding for UDLs work program. As such they would have to liaise with partner organisations and develop delivery programs which they would have to get agreed by funders. A key part of the job would be to liaise with the Skills program manager to link funding for delivery of that program.

The post holder would also be expected to assist in the delivery of masterclass events if outside speakers of funding for these was appropriate.

2. It is suggested that a Skills Program Manger be employed. The main purpose of this post would be to oversee he development and delivery of the skills program. They would have to liaise with TfL staff, boroughs and training providers to set dates, venues and timetables for events and where appropriate project help. They would also be responsible for ensuring delegates knew of events and meetings. They would have to collect information on the success of training events and project help. The cost of a Program Manager is based on the costing TfL has used for its STAR project.

Due to UDLs budget situation I suggest both these jobs are advertised as fixed term contracts up until the end of March 2007.

Actions

- That the board approves the appointment of both a program manager and business manger posts and authorises the Director to work up job specifications for approval.
- That the board ask TfL to help with this recruitment.

Paper 5: Budget

I have not included a best or worse case budget, but attached is a draft budget which shows the actual amount of money received or to be received by UDL this year. It also shows the costs of the skills development program as described in the Spearmint proposal. Other costs in the draft budget relate to work detailed in the draft work program below, or the staffing suggestions set out in paper 4 above.

Actions

- That the board approve the draft budget and work program.

Draft Work Program, 10 May 2006

Project	Action	Priority	Time table
Development of Urban Design Skills Program	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To achieve agreement to Spearmint proposal 2. To draft and get agreement for tender specifications 3. To send out tender specifications to potential suppliers 4. To assess tenders and appoint suppliers for the various program parts. 	High	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mid May 2. Mid May 3. Last week in May 4. End of May 5. End of July
Delivery of Urban Design Skills Program	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To deliver IHT taster session to cross section of TfL staff. 2. To have available modules to add to TfL's STAR and induction programs 3. To arrange management of project learning for TfL staff 4. To liaise with Boroughs and start to deliver training suit for built environment professionals in 1 sub region. 5. To arrange ongoing delivery of project 	High	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Early July 2. September 2006 3. October 2006 4. October 2006 5. From October 2006 onwards
Masterclasses for urban designers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To agree a timetable of masterclasses with UDL Borough members 2. To help arrange speakers as needed. 	High	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mid June 2006 2. As agreed in timetable
Design Champions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Request authorities to appoint or reappoint champions 2. Request that champions set out their own targets and objectives 3. Work with London Open House and LGA to support champions 4. Look to arrange champions' network event. 5. Provide ongoing support to individual champions as requested. 	High	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. May/June 2006 2. May/June 2006 3. June 2006 onwards (including planned ALG event) 4. October 2006 5. Ongoing
Appoint new staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Draft job specs and get agreed 2. Advertise/interview and appoint 	High	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. End of May 2006 2. July 2006
Paper for Tessa Jowell	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Follow up last years meeting and paper already sent to TJ on the importance of good design and he role of design champions. To focus on planning appeals as an issue. 2. To offer further advice/meeting if of use. 	Medium	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare paper by end of July 2006 2. To be set
Web site	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure the new UDL web site as hosted by RUDI goes live. 2. Develop a chat room/blog within the web site. (Use to develop UDL fortnightly email newsletter.) 3. Ensure the web site is kept up to date 	Medium	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mid June 2006 2. Email newsletter started early May, to be linked to blog when available. 3. Ongoing

Design and access Statement talks	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To deliver lunch time lectures to Boroughs that want it. 2. To provide copies of generic PowerPoint and guidance document as requested. 	Medium	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 4 dates set for May/June, others to be set. 2. PowerPoint sent to eastern boroughs in May.
Partnership working	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ongoing meetings with variety of organisations to promote joint work and raise awareness of UDL. 	Medium	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Much of this work done during April. More to follow as appropriate.
Finalise UDLs constitution	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree letter between CABE and ALG/TFL 2. Investigate opportunities for LDA to join Board 3. Keep up to speed on development of Design for London 	Medium	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. End of May 2006 2. Ongoing 3. Ongoing
Talks and UDL profile	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To represent UDL at relevant events as appropriate 2. To write articles on UDLs activities as appropriate 	Medium/low	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 3 such events scheduled before end of May 2006. Others to follow as appropriate. 2. As opportunities arise
Update UDL documents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Refresh documents, charter etc. 	Low	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To be set
Set budget and work program for 2006/7		Low	