THE DESIGN DEFICIT

Design skills and design governance approaches in English local authorities

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

This report summarises the findings of a short survey of urban design skills and approaches within England's local planning authorities, and how they have changed over time. A response rate of 71% was achieved.

Reviewing the evidence, it is possible to conclude that whilst urban design and related skills in local authorities have stabilised, they remain at a low ebb and far below where they need to be in order to address the ambitious national agenda on raising the design quality of new development. Signs of the growing use of design review and design codes are positive, but recruitment of design officers into local government remains challenging, proactive community engagement in design is minimal, and design related training remains basic.

At the current rate of change it will take until 2077 to have at least one urban design officer in every local planning authority in England. THIS IS THE CRITICAL PUBLIC SECTOR *DESIGN DEFICIT*.

The Survey and was organised according to the following five themes which also structure the discussion of survey results in the fourth section of this report:

IN-HOUSE CAPACITY
(see 4.1)

CHANGE OVER TIME & RECRUITMENT
(see 4.2)

DESIGN REVIEW & DESIGN CODES
(see 4.3)

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN DESIGN
(see 4.4)

DESIGN GUIDANCE, TRAINING & CHAMPIONS
(see 4.5)

1. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the responses of 235 local authorities across England, the research concluded:

1 – IN-HOUSE CAPACITY HAS STABILISED BUT REMAINS VERY LOW

o Nationally, the numbers of urban designers and architects in local planning authorities has stabilised, although availability of the landscape expertise has declined:
  - two fifths of local planning authorities still have no access to urban design advice,
  - almost two thirds no landscape advice
  - three quarters no architectural advice

o Sharing of posts, use of temporary staff and coverage by non-specialists hides the true extent of the deficit

o There is a significant increase in the use of external consultants and agency staff to try to fill the gaps, with two fifths of local authorities attempting this. The figure rises to 60% in relation to the production of proactive design guidance and frameworks, and 70% for design codes

o Design review is often seen as a means of filling the design skills gaps, rather than a means to challenge and supplement in-house design capacity

2 - FUNDING AND RECRUITMENT CHALLENGES LIMIT AMBITIONS

o There are now, on average, 1.7 design experts per local planning authority across England, an increase from 1.6 in 2017, or some 30 designers across the country

o Over half of that growth has happened in the relatively few authorities that have larger design teams with only 10 local authorities now having design expertise when previously they did not

o Whilst a minority of local authorities have made a strategic investment in a place quality team, many authorities who feel the acute need for design input into their decision-making are unable to secure it because of funding difficulties

o Authorities overwhelmingly describe recruitment of urban design staff as 'challenging', notably regarding their ability to complete with the private sector

o Whilst the employment of temporary staff can help to smooth bumps in workload, on the whole authorities would prefer to build their own capacity, continuity of knowledge and experience in-house

3 – THE USE OF DESIGN REVIEW AND DESIGN CODES IS VERY VARIABLE BUT RISING

o The use of design review continues to rise and national coverage to improve, although still:
  - less than a quarter of authorities use a panel regularly (monthly or quarterly)
  - two fifths using panels only very rarely or not at all

o A lack of awareness still persists about the value of design review to improve design outcomes and of its potential to be cost neutral to local authorities

o A decline in the number of internally managed panels has occurred in favour of third-party panels (managed externally to local authorities) which now account for which now account for around two thirds of design review

o The use of design codes also continues to rise with three quarters of local authorities having some experience of their use

o Most local authorities who use them either require or encourage developers to produce codes, with only 14% produced in-house

o In the future:
  - a third of authorities plan to produce design codes in-house
  - 7% aim to commission consultants to do the work
  - a third don't know how they will produce (or fund the production of) codes, particularly if they need to cover whole authorities

o Over half of authorities anticipate producing codes for key sites or areas of change and only 30% for their entire authority.

4 – PROACTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ON DESIGN IS RARE

o Authorities report being too stretched in delivering their minimum statutory duties to take on community engagement themselves

o Beyond statutory consultation, around two thirds of authorities use or require the conduct of local consultation events on major development proposals as standard

o More proactive hands-on means of engaging communities in the design process, as opposed to simply commenting on designs already proposed, take place in a fifth of authorities, whilst only one in ten maintain a community panel

o Typically authorities look to developers to conduct local consultation events and any hands-on engagement on design

o The use of social media outreach (used in a quarter of authorities) and online local consultation has grown during the pandemic. Beyond this, there is little evidence of technological approaches being used to encourage a more fundamental engagement of communities with design

5 – DESIGN GUIDANCE IS VALUED BUT DESIGN TRAINING LANGUISHES

o Nationally produced guidance on design plays an important role in guiding local decision-making and is used by the vast majority of authorities. Its importance has now been re-established following the cull of such materials in 2012

o Almost three quarters of local planning authorities use local design guidance of various types to guide their design decision-making, sometimes shared across authorities

o The majority of non-design officers in planning authorities have access to some form of ongoing design training. With budget cuts eating into training budgets, this is typically focussed on raising awareness about design rather than on developing design skills

o Councillors receive some informal, basic design training in just over half of local authorities

o Few councils have a designated design or place champion to promote design quality across the authority at large.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

FOR CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

1. Establish a new dedicated (and generous) funding stream for raising design skills in local planning authorities. Receipt of this funding should be tied to local authorities submitting a plan for resourcing in-house design expertise over the long-term.
2. Consider funding a market supplement for design staff in local planning authorities as a means to incentivise authorities to make such appointments and to aid recruitment
3. Amend national planning policy to make early and independent design review mandatory for all major developments
4. Ensure the revised Manual for Streets is in a form that can be directly adopted by local authorities and used by staff who lack design training.
5. Commission research examining the operation, scope, timing, funding and benefits of design review across England leading to national guidance on the subject
6. As part of the Government's levelling up agenda, consider a light touch fund for the preparation of design codes (beyond the current pilot programme) and the conduct of design review in those parts of the country where these practices are least well developed.

FOR THE OFFICE FOR PLACE

1. Establish an enabling function that will reach out to local planning authorities and assist them in the production and / or commissioning of design codes in-house
2. Establish a national charette programme through which effective but efficient methods for engaging communities in design are developed and promoted
3. Any design training programmes supported by the Office for Place should be hands-on and focussed on raising in-house design skills rather than just design awareness across local government, including in planning and highways authorities
4. A programme of design awareness training amongst local councillors should be an early priority
5. A programme of executive level training for chief officers, chief executives and leaders of councils should be devised focussed on culture change and local leadership relating to place quality
6. Commit to surveying local government on a regular cycle (perhaps every three years) to monitor progress on filling the design skills gap in local authorities.

FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1. All local authorities should invest in in-house design expertise appropriate to the size of their planning team with a remit to prepare or commission design frameworks, codes and guidance, conduct or commission design review and community engagement, offer advice to planning staff on all major developments, implement government guidance on design, and generally raise and support local design quality ambitions

2. A ratio of design specialist staff to other professional planning staff of 1:10 is a reasonable aspiration to work to

3. To retain staff and build a stronger culture of design quality, bring proactive design thinking into the mainstream of planning decision-making from strategic thinking, to regeneration, to development delivery

4. Consider establishing local community panels to engage citizens in an ongoing conversation about design quality

5. Consider appointing a political design champion in order to advocate for design quality across local government organisations; within planning but also in relation to housing, regeneration, land and property development, high streets and street design and management.

2. INTRODUCTION

In 2017 the Place Alliance and Urban Design Group conducted a survey of urban design skills in local authorities across England, the first such survey since 2003. It concluded that:

> "Urban design skills and capacity within local planning authorities are woefully low and declining … Critical gaps now exist within local planning authorities, including the ability to produce proactive design guidance in-house with a focus on positively shaping the future of places."[1]

The *Housing Design Audit for England*[2] that followed three years later concluded that the design of new housing developments in England remained overwhelmingly 'mediocre' or 'poor', with three quarters of the 142 schemes surveyed falling into those categories. The two are strongly related.

This new report looks again at the question of urban design skills in local authorities, the lack of which numerous reports over many years, including that of the Building Better Building Beautiful Commission[3] have highlighted as a key barrier to raising the general standard of our built environment across the country. It comes at a time when the Government has placed the achievement of better quality design at the centre of its aspirations for a reformed planning process. In particular, new policy and guidance from government is challenging local authorities and developers to strive to deliver "high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places"[4] while the preparation of design codes are being advocated to achieve this[5].

The question is, are local authorities in a position to deliver on these aspirations?

The research reported here is based on a national survey of local authorities. The report follows the structure of the survey with sections covering in-house urban design capacity, how that has changed over time, the use of design review and design codes, community engagement in design, and the availability of guidance, training and champions of design. First, the methodology of the survey is briefly outlined.

3. METHODOLOGY

To get as accurate a picture as possible of the design skills and practices within local government, a Freedom of Information request was sent to local authorities in England. The process involved:

o   **Desktop analysis** to gather contact details from the Freedom of Information directory[6] and crosscheck it against the official Government's list of councils in England by type[7].

o   **Online Survey** set up on SurveyMonkey with 19 largely multiple choice questions designed for speedy completion by local authorities and in order to encourage a higher response rate (see Appendix A). Most questions also offered the chance to add personal comments.

o   **Freedom of Information request** emailed on the 1st February 2021 to 322 local authorities in England covering all unitary authorities, district councils, London Boroughs and the City of London. The numbers varied slightly from the 2017 survey due to a limited number of council reorganisations (amalgamations) that have happened since then (see Appendix C).

o   **Reminders** were sent after both the 20 and 40 day Freedom of Information deadlines had passed with the survey closing on the 30th April. Covid-19 measures resulted in a considerable number of local authorities asking to extend the statutory 20 working days for an FOI response to 40 days.

235 local authorities responded to the survey representing a response rate of 71% and comparing favourably to the 201 responses from 374 authorities recorded in 2017 (see Appendix B).

The Survey was sent under Freedom of Information provisions to 322 local planning authorities across England.

71%

54%

2021

2017

Survey Response Rate
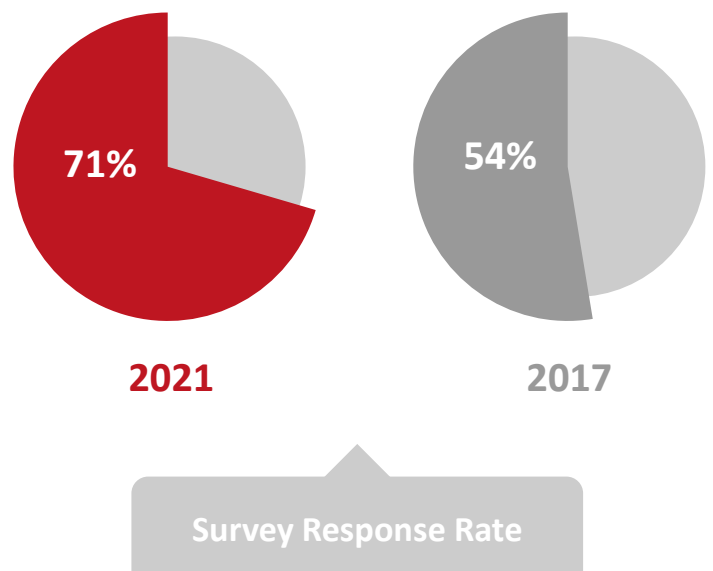
4. SURVEY RESULTS

Findings are grouped according to the four main themes covered by the survey.

4.1 In-House Capacity

The first survey question asked what in-house urban design skills are available within local planning authorities and specifically how many qualified urban designers, landscape architects and architects are employed (Fig. 1). Comparing to the 2017 survey, slightly more authorities had access to urban designers (up 4%) and architects (up 13%) but fewer had access to dedicated landscape expertise (down 8%). Within these numbers, a small minority have been setting up dedicated design quality teams, perhaps reflecting the increased emphasis on design nationally. As one respondent commented – "in last 6 months we have moved back to setting up a dedicated Placemaking team consisting of two urban design officers and taking them off standard planning casework".

More worryingly, 41% had no access to specific urban design advice (equivalent to 133 local authorities across England), 61% no access to landscape advice and 76% no architectural advice. The following comment sums up the experience of many – "An Urban Design officer was employed, but when they left the authority, their post was deleted as part of savings".

Echoing the 2017 survey, comments accompanying the data also revealed that the headline figures are likely to significantly overestimate the actual numbers of qualified design professionals working for local authorities. As one officer commented – "There has been no actual reduction in number of staff but that resource is now shared across two councils, not one". As well as sharing posts between neighbouring local authorities (in 10% of cases), a range of professionals with non-design backgrounds – planners, arboriculturalists, and particularly conservation officers – seem to be covering the

Fig 1. What in-house Urban Design skills do you currently have? Specify number of qualified:
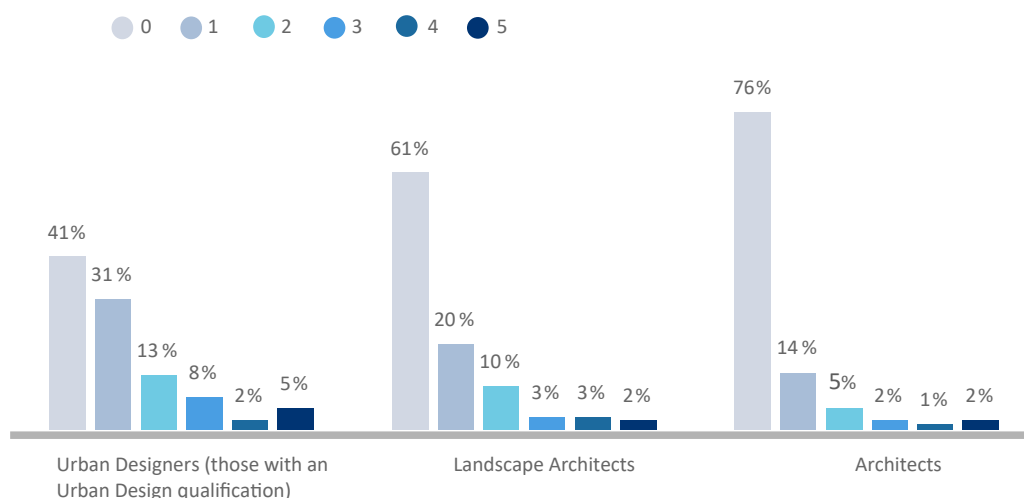
roles of urban designers. Conservation officers, in particular, continue to provide a wide range of design advice and expertise extending well beyond their heritage remit.

Again, whilst capacity exists on paper, it may not always do in reality. A second question unpacked this further, with local authorities asked how they covered urban design matters when they didn't have dedicated urban design staff (Fig. 2). In such situations local authorities often employed a number of strategies to cover these issues. Half left design matters to planning staff and almost half deployed their conservation staff to cover the gap, raising the prospect that heritage concerns were also being neglected.

Reflecting the challenges, the 2021 survey showed a significant increase in the use of external consultants and agency staff to cover design issues, up by 9% and 5% respectively, with 40% of local authorities now filling design skills gaps through such means. Similar numbers are using design review to do the same

– to compensate for the lack of expertise in-house – rather than to challenge and supplement existing expertise (see 3.3). A fifth (up 4%) are turning to their highways colleagues for design advise despite the *Housing Design Audit for England*[8] revealing highway design to be the most relentlessly sub-standard of the 17 design considerations audited in 2019.

Local planning authorities were asked how they dealt with the range of design tasks that they were expected to perform. Fig. 3 shows that internal staff within local planning authorities are fully engaged with the design aspects of the range of tasks, from planning applications (major and minor), to landscape and public realm projects, to the preparation of design guidance and frameworks. However, a noticeable increased reliance on both external consultants and developers had crept into the figures since 2017.

The use of external consultants to fill gaps is now standard practice in many local authorities,

Fig 2. If you don't have any in-house Urban Design skills, how do you cover these skills requirements?

| Category	Value
Planning Officers	50%
Conservation officer	49%
Highway or Traffic engineer	20%
External consultants	32%
Agency staff	8%
Shared resources with another Local Authority	10%
Design review panel	38%
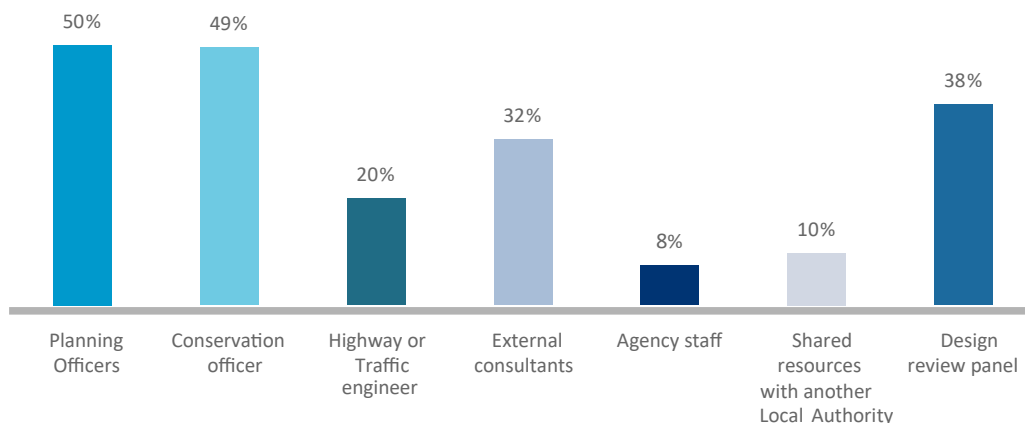
particularly with regard to the more design focussed roles of dealing with public realm and highways schemes (both up over 10% since 2017) and the preparation of design guidance and frameworks (up over 20%). In relation to this latter task, that arguably should be a core activity of any proactive local planning authority, around 60% of local authorities are having to rely on external consultants or developers (almost 70% for design codes). As the planning system moves to become more front-loaded with regard to the production of design codes and guidance up-front, this is likely to prove increasingly untenable and expensive for those that developers are not directly funding. As one respondent commented – "the local knowledge of in-house staff is invaluable and it is much more cost effective than using consultants".

Sharing resources with adjoining local authorities and the use of temporary staff is also, to a lesser degree, on the rise, particularly for major planning applications.

Fig 3. How does your department deal with design issues relating to:
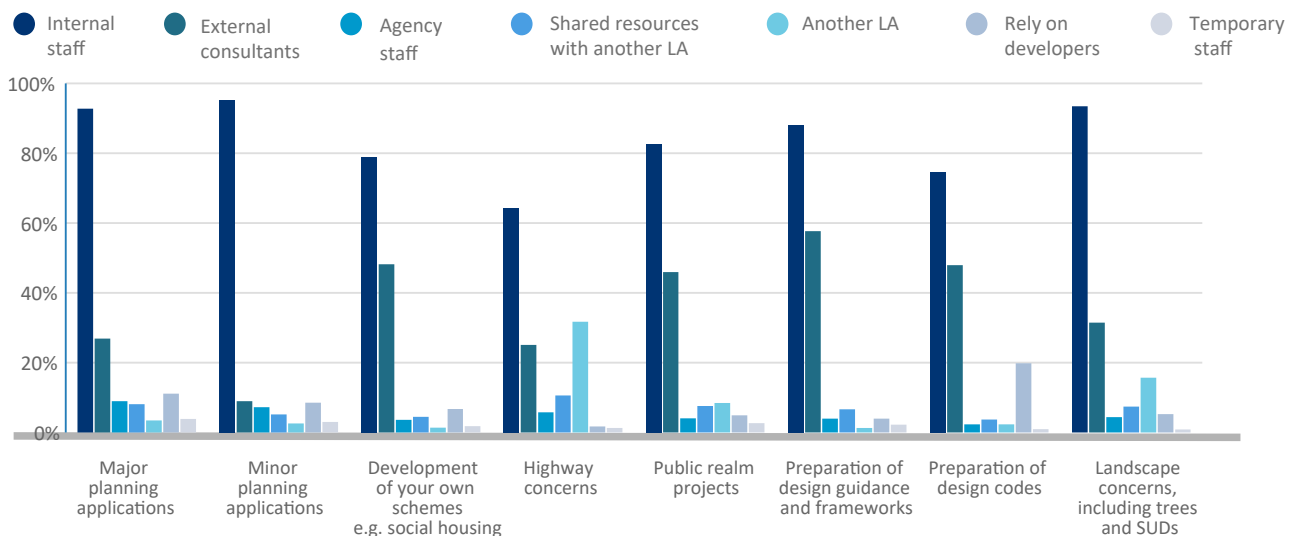
4.2 Change over time and Recruitment

Local authorities were asked about the change they had experienced over the previous five years. Positively, the results showed a reverse of the situation recorded in 2017 where the five years up to then had been marked by a decline in numbers. Whilst, in the latest survey, the position was mixed, overall there had been a slight increase in capacity across the sector, although over half of authorities recorded no change, many from a very low base (Fig. 4)[9].

If the data is corrected for the differential response rates and sample sizes, then there are now, on average, 1.7 design experts per local planning authority, an increase from 1.6 in 2017. That is some 30 designers across the country or 0.09 per authority. Over half of that growth has happened in the relatively few authorities that have larger teams with a decline in the number of authorities with just

one design expert and around 10 local authorities that now have in-house design expertise when previously they did not (see Fig. 1). At the current rate of change to have at least one urban designer in each of the 133 authorities without any access to such advice will take 56 years.

In comments accompanying this question, the diversity of situations became apparent, from: i) local authorities that have decided to make a strategic investment in setting up a place quality team in order to more confidently and proactively engage in design – "cuts saw the loss of the Council's Landscape Team, however, two of these were redeployed and now have roles within our more recently formed multi-disciplinary team"; to ii) many local authorities who feel the acute need for further urban design expertise but whose funding situation leaves no prospect of hiring more or replacing those they have been lost – "We have had 2.2 FTE vacant posts, and are currently under a recruitment freeze following a

Fig 4. What has been the change in your in-house design capacity in the last five years?

	100%	75%	50%	25%		25%	50%	75%	100%
	5%	1%	3%	6%	55 %	6%	2%	1%	10%
	Reduction				No change				Increase
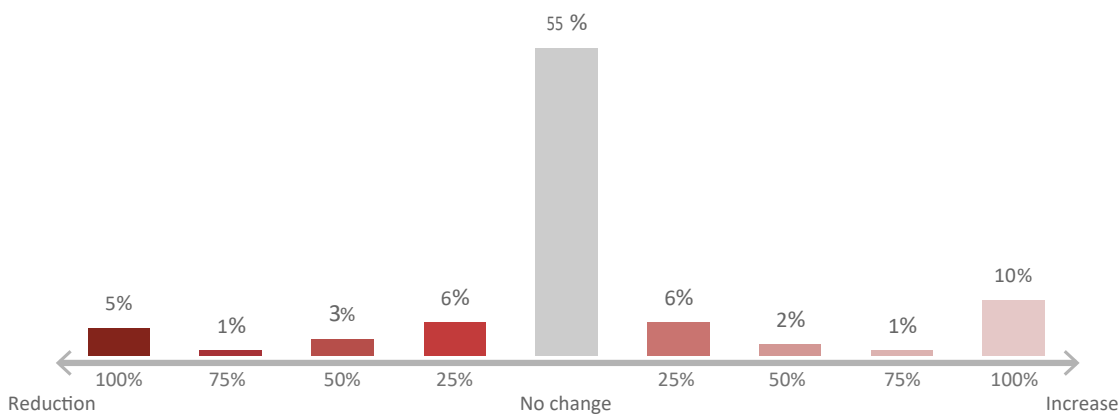
merger". Even in this situation there was a noticeable desire amongst authorities to highlight the skills and experience of mainstream planning staff.

When asked about their experiences of recruiting in the urban design field, an overwhelming majority who had had experience of trying to recruit urban designers described the situation as 'challenging', whilst others were evenly distributed between 'easy' and 'impossible' (Fig. 5). Many had not attempted to recruit design staff recently and so were unable to comment.

When asked why recruitment was challenging, the overwhelming answer focused on budgetary constraints making it very difficult to appoint specialist staff who were not absolutely necessary to deliver the minimum statutory obligations of authorities. For those who had recently attempted to recruit, a widespread perception existed that:

i) there was a lack of available suitably qualified staff, particularly those with experience; ii) it was very difficult to complete with the salaries paid in the private sector; iii) design staff were particularly difficult to attract to the public sector – "it is very difficult to recruit staff as there are very few urban designers available and we struggle to compete with private sector salaries"; and iv) these staff simply didn't want to work in some parts of the country where design standards were perceived to be low.

A follow-up question asked about the value of temporary schemes to bolster internal design resources over the short-term (Fig. 6). The majority of those who had an opinion felt that they would rather not rely on temporary placements given the expense of doing so and the importance of building long-term in-house skills and a culture and capacity to properly address design. As one respondent commented – "Continuity of knowledge is hugely

Fig 5. How easy do you find it to recruit and retain design specialist staff?
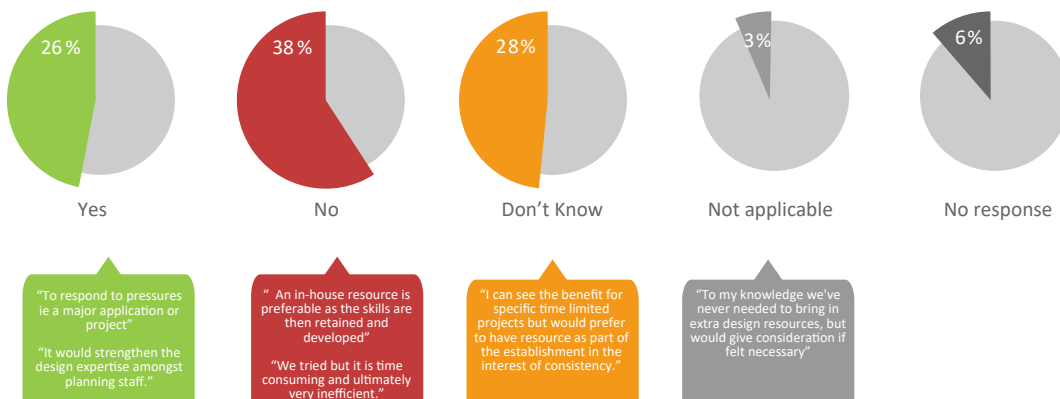

Easy	Challenging	Impossible	Not applicable	No response
14%	55%	14%	9%	8%

"We had an excellent response to the job advert in terms of the overall level of interest and the number of suitably qualified individuals."

"Lack of availability of suitable staff and competition with better pay in the private sector."

"Not many design professionals were interested in a public role."

"Extremely challenging recruitment with most graduates going to work in the private sector."

"Budgets, budgets, budgets and budgets!."

"We don't have any design specialist staff."

" Have not sought to recruit, get advice by other methods."

"Budgetary constraints."

valuable for local authorities but undervalued as it is not on a spreadsheet". Another commented – "Good design is achieved through continuity and tenacity of negotiation from conception to implementation. Permanent staff are best".

A minority felt that they would welcome increased capacity from wherever they could get it. Others felt it was quick and easy to use consultants or agency staff, particularly when dealing with peaks and troughs in workflow caused by a major application or project, and that more formal secondments and placements carried a heavy administrative burden. A small number of responses mentioned using Public Practice[10] in order to help recruit, generally with a positive experience in terms of what Associates were able to achieve, although not always over the cost and whether Associates stayed on after the placement concluded.

Fig 6. Do you favour the use of temporary placement/ secondment/ enabling/ schemes to bolster your internal design resources?

| 26 % | 38 % | 28% | 3% | 6% |
| Yes | No | Don't Know | Not applicable | No response |

"To respond to pressures ie a major application or project"

"It would strengthen the design expertise amongst planning staff."

" An in-house resource is preferable as the skills are then retained and developed"

"We tried but it is time consuming and ultimately very inefficient."

"I can see the benefit for specific time limited projects but would prefer to have resource as part of the establishment in the interest of consistency."

"To my knowledge we've never needed to bring in extra design resources, but would give consideration if felt necessary"

4.3 Design Review and Design Codes

The next section of the survey focussed on the two urban design governance tools that *A Housing Design Audit for England*[11] revealed were the most effective (by some margin) at delivering better urban design quality, namely the use of design codes and design review. Design codes are also now being promoted by central government following the launch of the *National Model Design Code*[12]. The last national survey on their use was in 2013[13].

In 2017 64% of authorities that responded to the survey were using a design review panel to help assess the quality of planning applications. In 2021 this has risen to 75% of respondents (Fig. 7). However, just like the earlier survey, the headline figures mask large differences in actual use. When asked how frequently local authorities used a design review panel, just over 22% of authorities used a panel regularly (up 3%), meaning monthly or quarterly. A further 38% (up 1%) used a panel occasionally when needed, and the remaining authorities used design review only very rarely or not at all (Fig. 8).

For these final groups, comments revealed that authorities were either: i) concerned about the cost of taking schemes to review – "We did use one once but it was very expensive and don't have a published fee for re-charging applicants for this service"; ii) don't have the staff resource to establish a panel, despite seeing their value; or iii) feel that recommendations of panels are resisted by developers – "we tend to find there is limited value in doing this for volume housebuilder schemes". The responses revealed a lack of knowledge about how design review is typically funded today (on a pay-for-use model) and of the potential to make such panels – either external or in-house – pay for themselves[14].

Fig 7. Does your Local Authority make use of a Design Review Panel of any kind in assessing the design quality of planning applications?
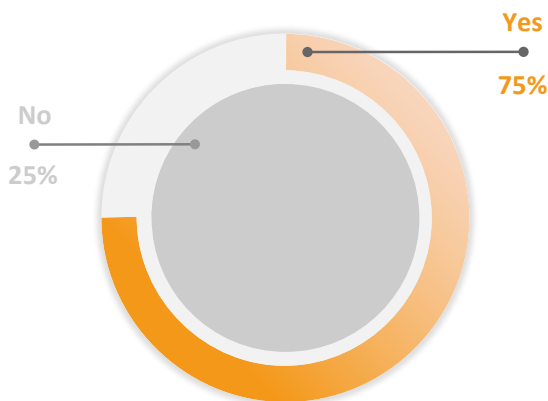
Fig 8. Estimate how often your Local Authority makes use of a Design Review Panel
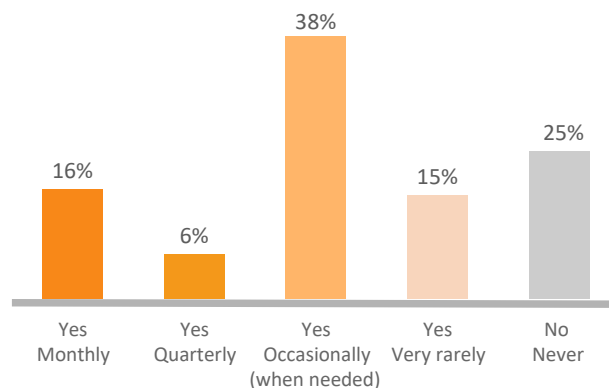
When asked about who manages their design review panels a significant change was obvious from 2017. Less than one fifth use an internally managed panel (almost half as many as in 2017), and 7% use another public-sector panel (for example managed by another local authority, down from 12%).These loses have been in favour of third-party panels or the use of such panels in combination, together amounting to around two thirds of panel use (47%, up from 39%) (Fig. 9). Among the third-party panels, the most frequently mentioned were:

1. Design South East
2. Creating Excellence (south west)
3. Places Matter! (north west)
4. Design Council
5. Design Midlands
6. Design North East
7. Frame Projects (London)
8. Integreat Plus (Yorkshire)

Mapping coverage shows a more comprehensive national picture of authorities using design review panels, although only in London and parts of the South East is there a concentration of regular design

review (shaded green in Fig. 10). Elsewhere practice is typically more intermittent (shaded orange), with notable absences through large parts of East Anglia, the North West, swathes of the South and South West and across the West Midlands (shaded red).

Turning to the use of design codes, in 2013, a national survey suggested that around 45% of local planning authorities had either had design codes submitted to them, produced them themselves, or actively encouraged their use in policy[15]. In 2021 this figure has risen to 75%, with only a quarter of authorities having no experience of using them or encouraging their use, although the proportion of major developments actually guided by codes is likely to be far smaller. Data from *A Housing Design Audit for England* suggested around a quarter of large housing developments nationally are subject to design codes[16].

Fig 9. Who manages the design review service that you use?

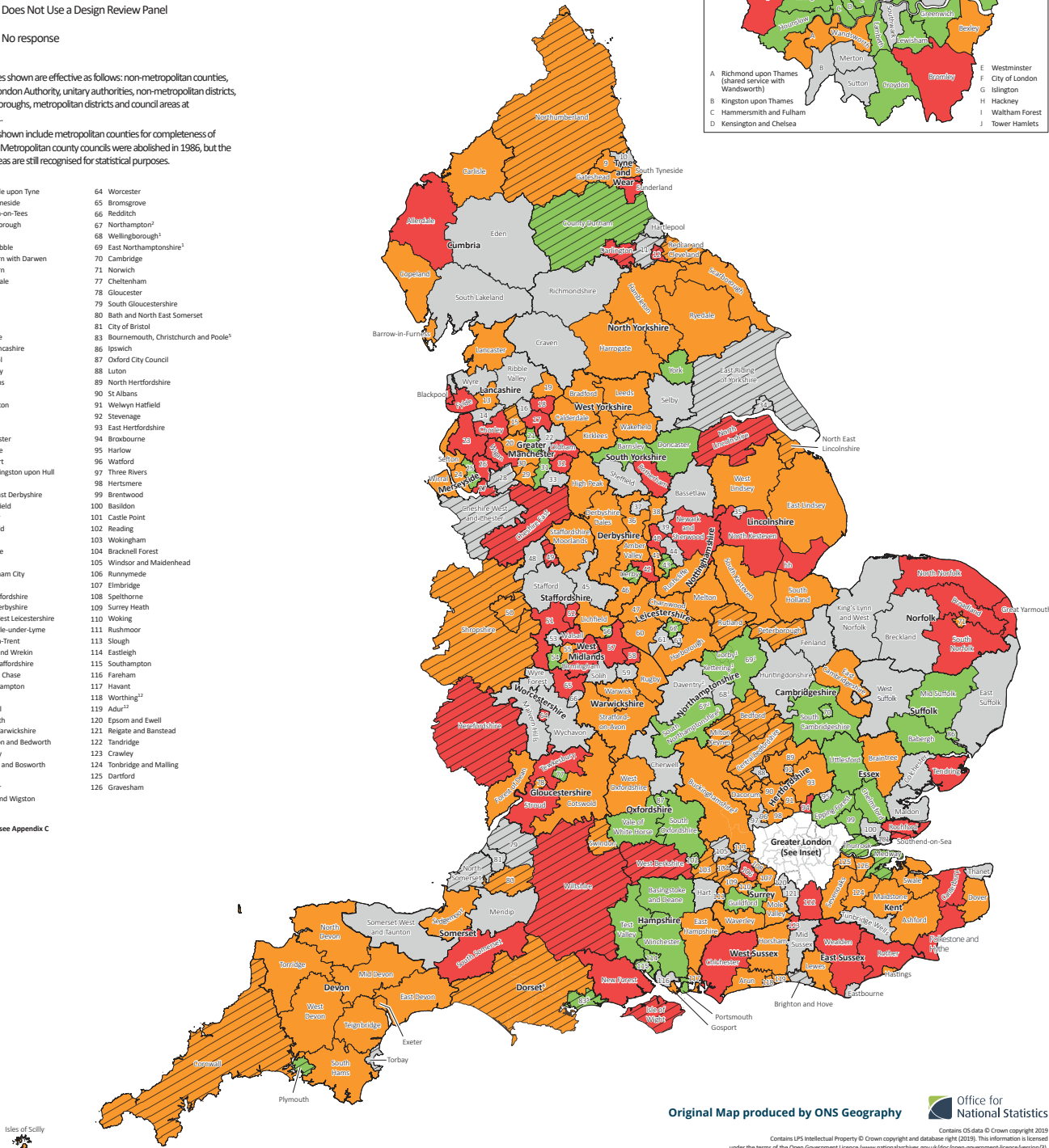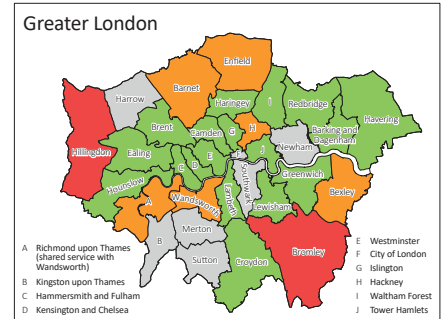|	
41% A third-party panel	**26%** None (we do not use Design Review)
	19% Your own in-house panel
	7% Another public sector panel
	6% More than one panel
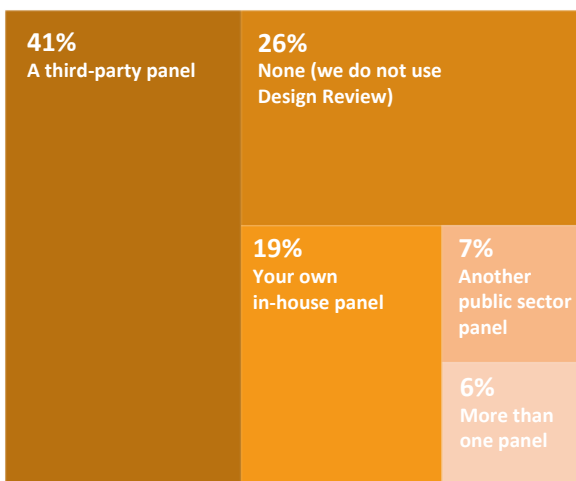
Fig 10. Use of design codes across England

Counties (see note below), unitary authorities, or council areas (county names only shown in bold text)

Unitary authorities

Uses a Design Review Panel monthly or quarterly

Uses a Design Review Panel occasionally or rarely

Does Not Use a Design Review Panel

No response

Boundaries shown are effective as follows: non-metropolitan counties, Greater London Authority, unitary authorities, non-metropolitan districts, London boroughs, metropolitan districts and council areas at April 2021.

Counties shown include metropolitan counties for completeness of coverage. Metropolitan county councils were abolished in 1986, but the county areas are still recognised for statistical purposes.

9	Newcastle upon Tyne	64	Worcester
10	North Tyneside	65	Bromsgrove
11	Stockton-on-Tees	66	Redditch
12	Middlesbrough	67	Northampton[2]
13	Preston	68	Wellingborough[1]
14	South Ribble	69	East Northamptonshire[1]
15	Blackburn with Darwen	70	Cambridge
16	Hyndburn	71	Norwich
17	Rossendale	77	Cheltenham
18	Burnley	78	Gloucester
19	Pendle	79	South Gloucestershire
20	Bolton	80	Bath and North East Somerset
21	Bury	81	City of Bristol
22	Rochdale	83	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole[5]
23	West Lancashire	86	Ipswich
24	Liverpool	87	Oxford City Council
25	Knowsley	88	Luton
26	St. Helens	89	North Hertfordshire
27	Halton	90	St Albans
28	Warrington	91	Welwyn Hatfield
29	Trafford	92	Stevenage
30	Salford	93	East Hertfordshire
31	Manchester	94	Broxbourne
32	Tameside	95	Harlow
33	Stockport	96	Watford
34	City of Kingston upon Hull	97	Three Rivers
35	Lincoln	98	Hertsmere
36	North East Derbyshire	99	Brentwood
37	Chesterfield	100	Basildon
38	Bolsover	101	Castle Point
39	Mansfield	102	Reading
40	Ashfield	103	Wokingham
41	Broxtowe	104	Bracknell Forest
42	Erewash	105	Windsor and Maidenhead
43	Nottingham City	106	Runnymede
44	Gedling	107	Elmbridge
45	East Staffordshire	108	Spelthorne
46	South Derbyshire	109	Surrey Heath
47	North West Leicestershire	110	Woking
48	Newcastle-under-Lyme	111	Rushmoor
49	Stoke-on-Trent	113	Slough
50	Telford and Wrekin	114	Eastleigh
51	South Staffordshire	115	Southampton
52	Cannock Chase	116	Fareham
53	Wolverhampton	117	Havant
54	Dudley	118	Worthing[12]
55	Sandwell	119	Adur[12]
56	Tamworth	120	Epsom and Ewell
57	North Warwickshire	121	Reigate and Banstead
58	Nuneaton and Bedworth	122	Tandridge
59	Coventry	123	Crawley
60	Hinckley and Bosworth	124	Tonbridge and Malling
61	Blaby	125	Dartford
62	Leicester	126	Gravesham
63	Oadby and Wigston		

* For notes see Appendix C

Greater London

A	Richmond upon Thames (shared service with Wandsworth)	E	Westminster
B	Kingston upon Thames	F	City of London
C	Hammersmith and Fulham	G	Islington
D	Kensington and Chelsea	H	Hackney
		I	Waltham Forest
		J	Tower Hamlets

Original Map produced by ONS Geography

Office for National Statistics

Breaking the 75% down, only 14% of design codes are produced in-house by local authorities themselves, with most authorities either requiring (two fifths of those who use codes) or encouraging (one fifth) developers to produce them (Fig. 11). Mapping their use across the country (Fig. 12) shows a widespread distribution in practices, with concentrations of non-use south of London, and in parts of the East Midlands.

With new national policy emerging that prioritises the use of design codes, a speculative question was asked about how authorities would respond to that guidance (Fig. 13). The results demonstrated a strong desire that codes should be produced in-house in the future given the place-based knowledge held within local authorities and a mistrust of codes produced by developers – "We will aim to produce in-house but may need external assistance where necessary. Developer produced design codes have been less effective from our experience, but this may be the only option if resources are limited".

Almost 30% either plan to produce codes in-house, or in-house with some external assistance, with a further 7% planning to commission consultants to do the work. Only 13% felt the role would fall exclusively to developers. This would mark a significant transition from current practice, although around a third of responding authorities had not yet decided how they would produce design codes, in part because they felt that the national position on this was still unclear.

Fig 11. Does your authority uses design codes?
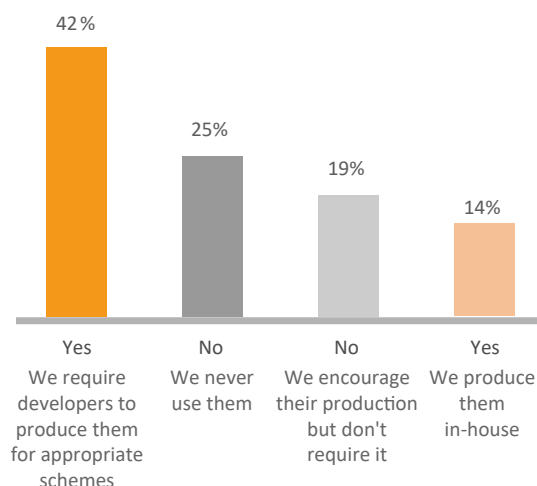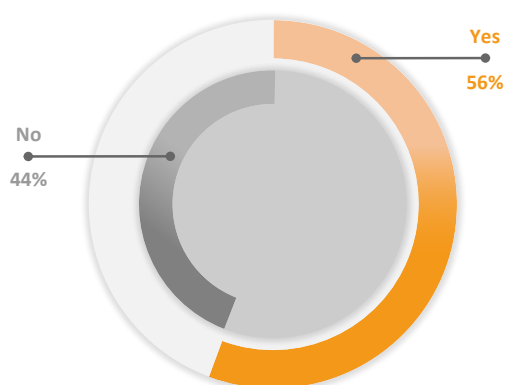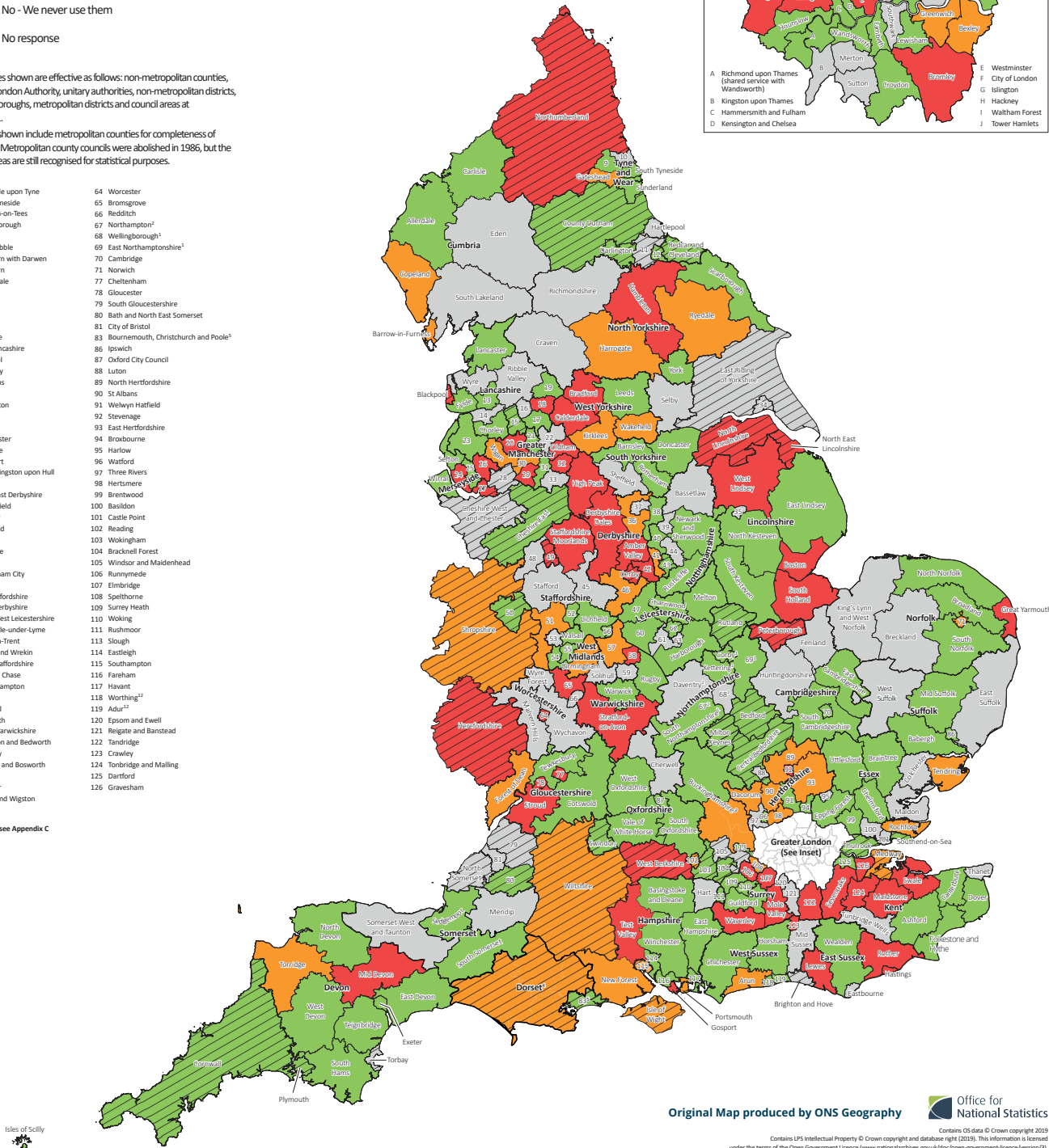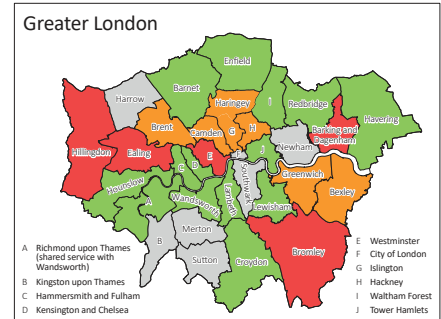
Fig 12. Use of Design Codes across England

Counties (see note below), unitary authorities, or council areas (county names only shown in bold text)

Unitary authorities

Yes - We produce them in-house or we require developers to produce them for appropriate schemes

No - We encourage their production but don't require it

No - We never use them

No response

Boundaries shown are effective as follows: non-metropolitan counties, Greater London Authority, unitary authorities, non-metropolitan districts, London boroughs, metropolitan districts and council areas at April 2021.

Counties shown include metropolitan counties for completeness of coverage. Metropolitan county councils were abolished in 1986, but the county areas are still recognised for statistical purposes.

9 Newcastle upon Tyne	64 Worcester
10 North Tyneside	65 Bromsgrove
11 Stockton-on-Tees	66 Redditch
12 Middlesbrough	67 Northampton[2]
13 Preston	68 Wellingborough[1]
14 South Ribble	69 East Northamptonshire[1]
15 Blackburn with Darwen	70 Cambridge
16 Hyndburn	71 Norwich
17 Rossendale	77 Cheltenham
18 Burnley	78 Gloucester
19 Pendle	79 South Gloucestershire
20 Bolton	80 Bath and North East Somerset
21 Bury	81 City of Bristol
22 Rochdale	83 Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole[5]
23 West Lancashire	86 Ipswich
24 Liverpool	87 Oxford City Council
25 Knowsley	88 Luton
26 St. Helens	89 North Hertfordshire
27 Halton	90 St Albans
28 Warrington	91 Welwyn Hatfield
29 Trafford	92 Stevenage
30 Salford	93 East Hertfordshire
31 Manchester	94 Broxbourne
32 Tameside	95 Harlow
33 Stockport	96 Watford
34 City of Kingston upon Hull	97 Three Rivers
35 Lincoln	98 Hertsmere
36 North East Derbyshire	99 Brentwood
37 Chesterfield	100 Basildon
38 Bolsover	101 Castle Point
39 Mansfield	102 Reading
40 Ashfield	103 Wokingham
41 Broxtowe	104 Bracknell Forest
42 Erewash	105 Windsor and Maidenhead
43 Nottingham City	106 Runnymede
44 Gedling	107 Elmbridge
45 East Staffordshire	108 Spelthorne
46 South Derbyshire	109 Surrey Heath
47 North West Leicestershire	110 Woking
48 Newcastle-under-Lyme	111 Rushmoor
49 Stoke-on-Trent	113 Slough
50 Telford and Wrekin	114 Eastleigh
51 South Staffordshire	115 Southampton
52 Cannock Chase	116 Fareham
53 Wolverhampton	117 Havant
54 Dudley	118 Worthing[12]
55 Sandwell	119 Adur[12]
56 Tamworth	120 Epsom and Ewell
57 North Warwickshire	121 Reigate and Banstead
58 Nuneaton and Bedworth	122 Tandridge
59 Coventry	123 Crawley
60 Hinckley and Bosworth	124 Tonbridge and Malling
61 Blaby	125 Dartford
62 Leicester	126 Gravesham
63 Oadby and Wigston	

* For notes see Appendix C

Comments revealed a widespread concern over the lack of resources to do this work, even if codes are externally produced – "We will likely hire consultants, but it will need additional in-house resource (which we don't have) to manage and ensure they are fit for purpose". With this in mind, some questioned the wisdom of attempting to cover whole local authorities with coding – "we do not completely agree that blanket design codes are the right approach when there are great variations in the physical, socio-economic and cultural landscape of a place with varied history and heritage" – particularly given the resource implications of such work.

A final question on design codes explored this issue further by asking at what scale authorities planned to develop and use design codes (Fig. 14). Whilst national policy is agnostic on this issue, the *National Model Design Code* advocates a methodology for an authority-wide approach to design code coverage, although also suggests that coverage might be limited to selected areas or only to development sites. 30% of the authorities responding to the survey anticipate producing codes on an authority-wide

basis, whilst over half anticipate preparing them on a more limited basis reflecting those parts of their district where development is likely to occur and key development sites.

Fig 14. At what scale will you use design codes?
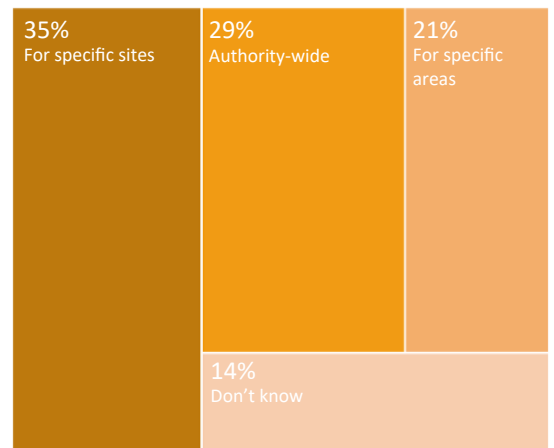
35%
For specific sites

29%
Authority-wide

21%
For specific areas

14%
Don't know

Fig 13. How will you respond to the new national requirement to produce design codes?

32% — Don't know yet
17% — In-house
13% — Developers
13% — Mix in-house with externally produced
12% — In-house with some external input
7% — Consultants
6% — No response
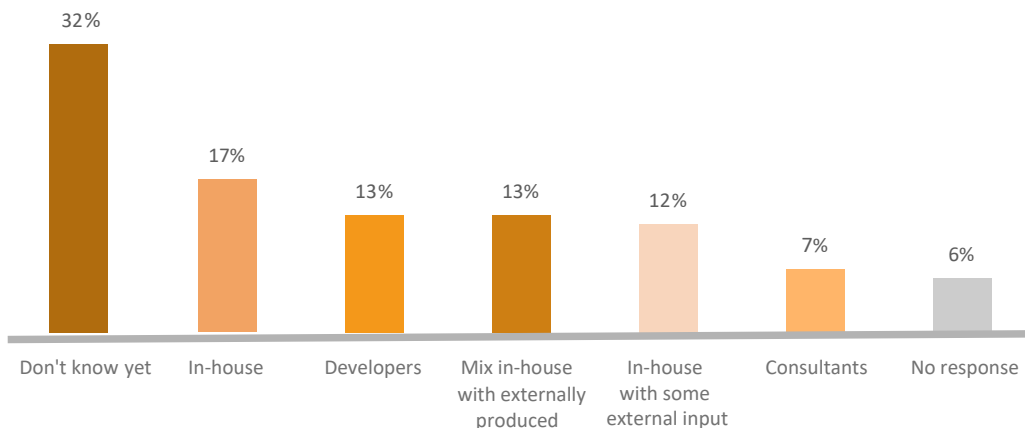
4.4 Community Engagement in Design

Reflecting the strong emphasis on community engagement in design in both the report of the Building Better Building Beautiful Commission[17] and in the 2020 Planning White Paper[18], a section was included in the survey focussing on practices of engaging communities around design. First local authorities were asked, in relation to new major developments, how they engaged communities on design issues (Fig. 15).

Local authorities, as standard, conducted a statutory consultation on developments and around two thirds of authorities extended this with local consultation events in which projects were displayed and feedback from the public was garnered and assessed. Around a quarter of authorities now supplement such efforts with social media campaigns designed to

elicit views from groups that do not ordinarily respond to more conventional consultation. A smaller number used opinion polling to the same effect.

More proactive means of engaging communities in the design process, as opposed to simply commenting on designs already proposed, were less frequent. Hands on charettes and the like were utilised in less than a fifth of authorities, whilst a tenth maintained a community panel to ensure ongoing engagement with community representatives. There was little evidence of the use of 'Proptech'[19] to engage communities, although one authority reported – "We have recently procured a Digital 3D Model for major settlements of the Borough and are planning to extend coverage to the rest of the Borough over the next few years. We intend to use the model to allow immersive engagement with local communities".

Fig 15. How does your local authority engage communities on the design of major new developments?
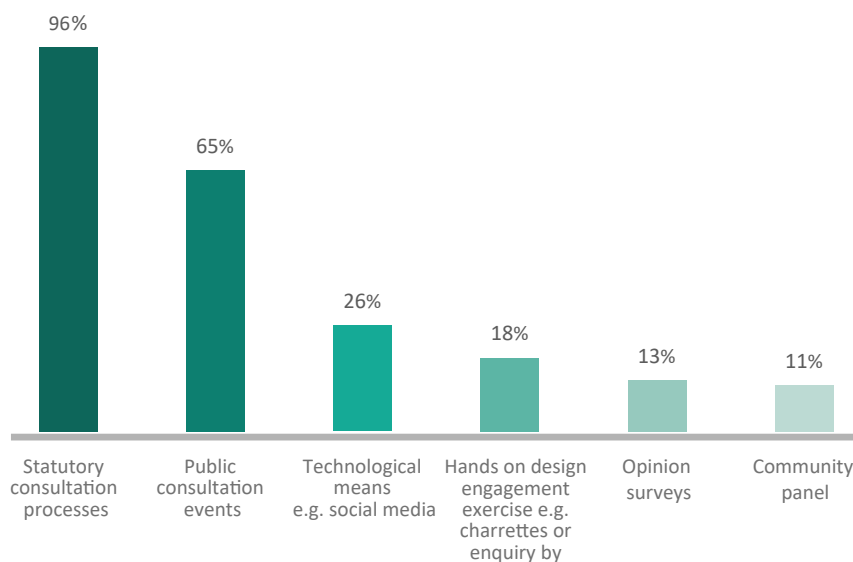
Typically local authorities look to developers to engage communities in their schemes and set out in their Statements of Community Involvement what they expect and when. As one commented – "We expect applicants of major schemes to do their own engagement, but we do not generally get involved in order to maintain impartiality". This results in public consultation events that developers run, interpret and use to justify their schemes and in connection with which "Some developers are very proactive, whilst others are not".

The reason for this detachment was explained in a follow-up question focussed on what limits more fundamental engagement with communities on design (Fig. 16). Overwhelmingly authorities reported that they were too stretched delivering their minimum statutory duties to take on community engagement beyond that associated with the local

plan – "It is a struggle just to keep on top of caseload and policy / guidance changes. We don't have the extensive resources required to do this ourselves". All were clear that "more engagement with the public will require more resources".

Others pointed to the lack of interest within communities themselves about new development, unless it was something they wished to stop – "Generally local communities are anti-development so they use events to simply object to development". Positively, however, whilst the Covid-19 pandemic limited some forms of engagement, it has encouraged the investigation of new technology to better facilitate online consultation. This was reported to be both cost effective and successful at engaging people.

Fig 16. What are the limitations you face in doing more to engage communities on design?

79%	
31%	
19%	
6%	5%
Lack of resources	Unwillingness of developers or landowners	Lack of knowhow	None	No response
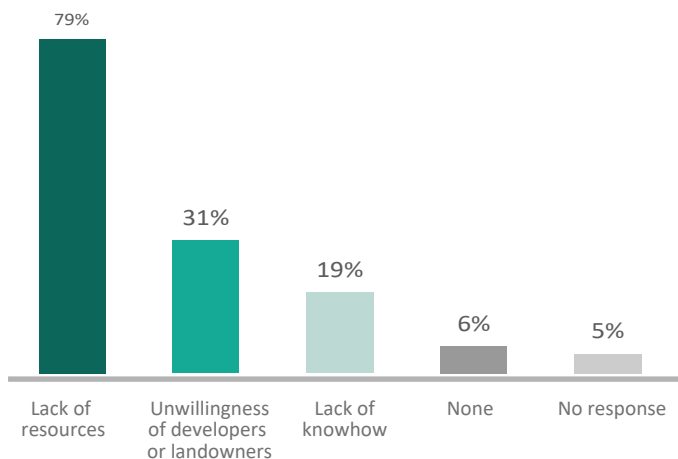
4.5 Design Guidance and Training

In the final section of the survey, respondents were asked about three factors that inform local approaches to design quality: the use of design guidance, the availability of design training and the appointment of design champions. Authorities were first asked about the design guidance they found helpful to assist them in making planning decisions, beyond policy in their local plans (Fig. 17).

The survey pre-dated the publication of the National Model Design Code, but other national guidance is clearly very important in guiding local decision-making, notably the National Planning Practice Guidance, Manual for Streets and National Design Guide which are used by the large majority of authorities. Almost three quarters of local planning authorities also have local design guidance of various types that they use to guide design decision-making, sometimes shared across authorities, for example the use of county design guides.

Building for Life in its various guises is also well used, in almost 60% of authorities, but other more historic guidance is now declining in importance. In this area the results show a resurgence in the use of national guidance since the 2017 survey, reflecting the resurgence of interest within Government in producing such materials following Lord Taylor's cull of 2012.

The penultimate question focussed on the design training received by non-design specialist planners and councillors (Fig. 18). Results on these measures were virtually identical to those recorded in 2017 with almost three quarters of non-design officers receiving some form of design training as part of their work (a quarter receiving none). Typically this takes the form of in-house training (often by design officers where they are in post) and CPDs delivered by one or more external providers. The RTPI, Urban Design London, Design South East and the Kent Design Initiative were the most commonly mentioned.

Fig 17. Other than policies in your local plan, what other design guidance does your authority regularly use?
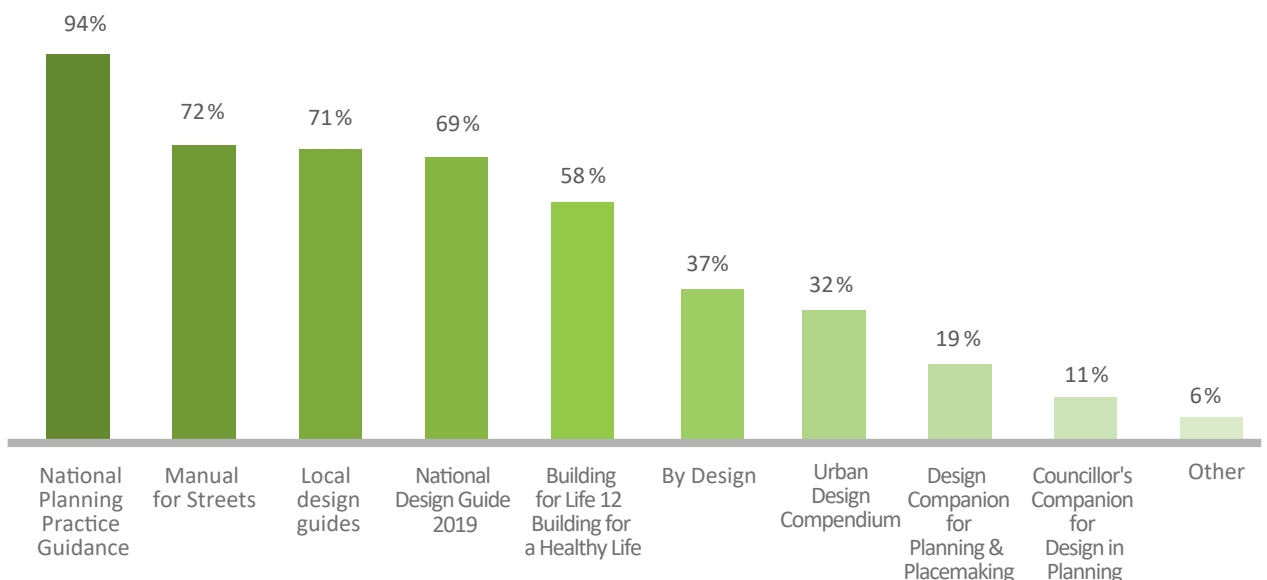
Usually these are short (one day or less) one-off courses designed to enhance awareness of design issues, sometimes organised between groups of neighbouring authorities. There were very few mentions of more in-depth training designed to raise design skills levels, although some commented on the value of visits to completed schemes in order to evaluate what had and had not worked. Some councils mentioned that their budget for training had been removed and now could only access free events or activities. Attending design reviews were regarded as valuable training opportunities.

Councillors received some design training in just over half of local authorities. This was mostly informal and in-house, although specific courses for councillors run by Urban Design London, Design South East, the Kent Design Initiative and the Planning Advisory Service were mentioned several times. Elsewhere, design was treated as just one of a number of subjects that members needed to know about and was dealt with in induction courses and occasional member updates.

The final question focussed on whether authorities had a designated design or place champion in order to help drive design quality up the agenda across the council (Fig. 19). Most councils do not have such a position and of the 16% that did, around half are officers and the rest elected Councillors. Elsewhere, the overall championing of high quality design and placemaking was simply seen as the responsibility of the placemaking or larger planning team.

Fig 19. Do you have a Local Authority Design / Place Champion?

74%   16%

No   Yes
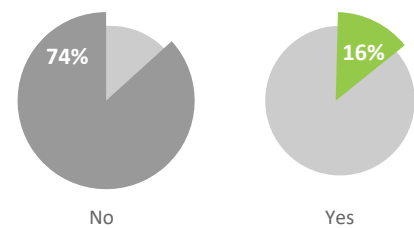
Fig 18. Do your non-specialist planning officers and councillors receive any design training?

Yes
74%

No
25%

Officers

Yes
52%

No
48%

Councillors
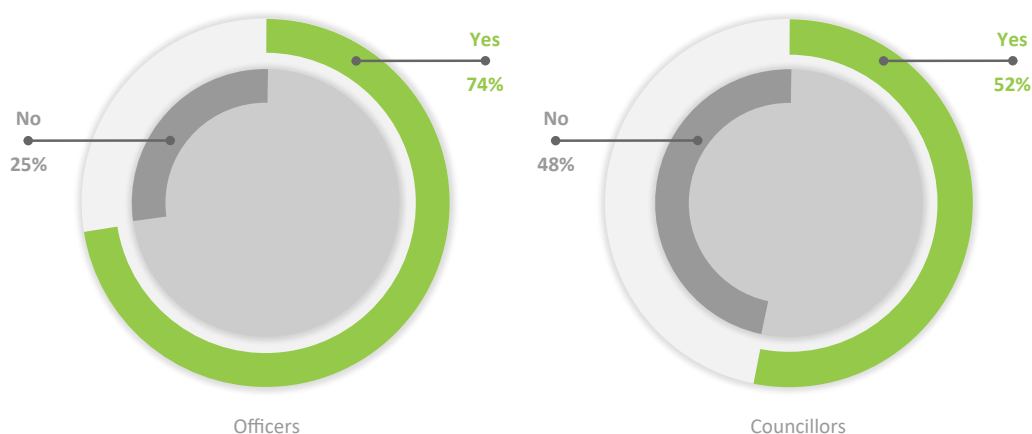
Endnotes

1 Design Skills in English Local Authorities https://bit.ly/PA_SkillsReport2017

2 A Housing Design Audit for England, 2019, http://bit.ly/PA-Research_HousingAudit2020

3 Living with Beauty, 2020, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/861832/Living_with_beauty_BBBBC_report.pdf

4 National Planning Policy Framework, Draft Text for Consultation, 2020, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/961769/Draft_NPPF_for_consultation.pdf

5 National Model Design Code, 2021, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/957205/National_Model_Design_Code.pdf

6 https://www.foi.directory/foi-directory-foi-emails/

7 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/791684/List_of_councils_in_England_2019.pdf

8 A Housing Design Audit for England, 2019, http://bit.ly/PA-Research_HousingAudit2020

9 It is important to note that often the capacity being reduced/increased was small, perhaps just one post, so a 100% reduction or increase may will typically represent a single post.

10 https://www.publicpractice.org.uk

11 A Housing Design Audit for England, 2019, http://bit.ly/PA-Research_HousingAudit2020

12 National Model Design Code, 2021, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/at

13 Design Coding, Diffusion of Practice in England - https://www.udg.org.uk/publications/othermanuals/design-coding

14 See Reviewing Design Review in London, 2018, http://bit.ly/PA_ReviewingDesignReview2018

15 Design Coding, Diffusion of Practice in England - https://www.udg.org.uk/publications/othermanuals/design-coding

16 A Housing Design Audit for England, 2019, http://bit.ly/PA-Research_HousingAudit2020

17 Living with Beauty, 2020, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/861832/Living_with_beauty_BBBBC_report.pdf

18 Planning for the Future, 2020, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/958420/MHCLG-Planning-Consultation.pdf

19 Property technology

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Survey

DESIGN SKILLS AND RESOURCES IN LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITIES - 2021

With changes to national policy ushering in a more design-led planning system, this Freedom of Information request aims to understand the capacity within local planning authorities in England to address these concerns.

The data will be used to update the national picture since the last analysis was conducted in 2017 and will be made publicly available, including to Government.

Thank you for taking the time to respond. We understand that surveys can be an imposition on valuable time, but robust data on this crucial subject is otherwise impossible to gauge.

If you would like to receive a summary of the results, please provide a suitable e-mail address in the box below.

PRIVACY NOTE: Your e-mail address will only be used for this purpose and will not be shared with any third parties. The data gathered will be aggregated and individual responses will remain confidential.

1. Contact email:

[   ]

* 2. The following information will only be used to better analyse the results. Please indicate:

Your Region

[   ]

Your Local Authority

[   ]

Your Department

[   ]

Your Role

[   ]

* 3. What in-house Urban Design skills do you currently have? Please specify the number of:

	0	1	2	3	4	5+
Those with an Urban Design qualification	○	○	○	○	○	○
Landscape Architect(s)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Architect(s)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○	○	○	○

Other (please specify)

[   ]

4. If you don't have any in-house Urban Design skills, how do you cover these skills requirements? Please select as many as apply.

☐ Non-specialist planning staff

☐ Conservation officer

☐ Highway or Traffic engineer

☐ External consultants

☐ Agency staff

☐ Shared resources with another Local Authority

☐ Design review panel

☐ Other (please specify)

[   ]

* 5. What has been the change in your in-house design capacity in the last 5 years (since January 2016)? Please select one.

100% reduction	75% reduction	50% reduction	25% reduction	0 – No change	25% increase	50 % increase	75% increase	100% increase	N/A
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Comments

[   ]

* 6. How do you deal with design issues relating to (please select as many as apply):

	Internal staff	External consultants	Agency staff	Shared resources with another Local Authority	Another Local Authority	Rely on developers	Temporary staff	Other (if possible specify below)
Major planning applications	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Minor planning applications	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Development of your own schemes e.g. social housing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Highway concerns	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Public realm projects	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Preparation of design guidance and frameworks	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Preparation of Design Codes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Landscape Concerns, including trees and SUDs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

If you have selected "Other" please specify:

[   ]

* 7. How easy do you find it to recruit and retain design specialist staff? Please select one

○ Easy

○ Challenging

○ Impossible

○ Not applicable

○ Not response

What are the challenges (if any) you face?

[   ]

* 8. Do you favour the use of temporary placement/ secondment/ enabling/ schemes to bolster your internal design resources?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Don't Know

○ Not applicable

○ No response

Please explain why

[   ]

* 9. Does your Local Authority make use of a Design Review panel of any kind in assessing the design quality of planning applications?

○ Yes

○ No

* 10. How often does your Local Authority make use of a Design Review Panel? Please select one.

○ Yes - Monthly

○ Yes - Quarterly

○ Yes - Occasionally (when needed)

○ Yes - Very rarely

○ No - Never

* 11. Who manages the design review service that you use? Please select as many as apply:

☐ Your own in-house panel

☐ Another public sector panel (please specify below)

☐ A third party panel (please specify)

☐ You use more than one panel (please specify below)

☐ None (we do not use Design Review)

☐ Other (please specify)

[   ]

* 12. Does your authority uses design codes? Please select one.

○ Yes - We produce them in-house

○ Yes - We require developers to produce them for appropriate schemes

○ No - We encourage their production but don't require it

○ No - We never use them

* 13. How will you respond to the new national requirement to produce design codes? Please select one.

○ We will produce them in-house

○ We will hire external consultants to produce them

○ We will require developers to produce them for appropriate schemes

○ No response

○ Other (please specify)

[   ]

* 14. At what scale will you use design codes? Please select one.

○ Authority-wide

○ For specific areas

○ For specific sites

○ Don't know

* 15. How does your local authority engage communities on the design of major new developments? Please select as many as apply.

☐ Statutory consultation processes

☐ Public consultation events

☐ Opinion surveys

☐ Technological means e.g. social media

☐ Hands on design engagement exercise e.g. charrettes or enquiry by design

☐ Community panel

☐ Other (please specify)

[   ]

* 16. What are the limitations you face in doing more to engage communities on design? Please select as many as apply.

☐ None

☐ Lack of resources

☐ Lack of knowhow

☐ Unwillingness of developers or landowners

☐ No response

☐ Other (please specify)

[   ]

* 17. Other than policies in your local plan, what other design guidance does your authority regularly use? Please select as many as apply.

☐ National Planning Practice Guidance

☐ National design guide 2019

☐ Building for Life 12 / Building for a Healthy Life

☐ Councillor's Companion for Design in Planning

☐ Design Companion for Planning & Placemaking

☐ Urban Design Compendium

☐ By Design

☐ Manual for Streets

☐ Local design guides

☐ Other (please specify)

[   ]

* 18. Do your non-design officers and councillors receive any design training?

	Yes	No
a) Officers	○	○

If you answered yes, can you please specify what is the nature of this training?

[   ]

| b) Councillors | ○ | ○ |

If you answered yes, can you please specify what is the nature of this training?

[   ]

* 19. Do you have a Local Authority Design / Place Champion?

○ No

○ Yes. Please explain the nature of this appointment in the text box below

[   ]

APPENDIX B

List of local authorities that responded (in alphabetical order, by department)

No.	Local Authority	Department
1	Adur District Council[12]	Development Management
2	Allerdale Borough Council	Planning
3	Amber Valley Borough Council	Development Management
4	Arun District Council	Planning
5	Ashfield District Council	Planning
6	Ashford Borough Council	Placemaking Team, Spatial Planning Team, Planning & Development Unit
7	Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils	Planning
8	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council	Regeneration And Culture
9	Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council	Development Services
10	Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council	Planning Sustainability And Infrastructure
11	Bath & North East Somerset Council	Development
12	Bedford Borough Council	Planning
13	Birmingham Metropolitan City Council	Planning
14	Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council	Growth & Development
15	Blackpool Council	Planning
16	Bolsover District Council	Planning & Development
17	Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council	Place Directorate
18	Boston Borough Council	Planning
19	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Borough Council	Planning
20	Bracknell Forest Council	Place, Planning And Regeneration
21	Bradford Metropolitan Council	Place
22	Braintree District Council	Development Management
23	Brentwood Borough Council	Planning - Development Management
24	Broadland District Council	Planning
25	Bromsgrove District Council[11]	Development Management
26	Broxbourne Council	Planning
27	Broxtowe Borough Council	Planning & Economic Development
28	Buckinghamshire Council[3]	
29	Burnley Borough Council	Housing And Development Control
30	Bury Metropolitan Borough Council	Development Management
31	Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council	Planning
32	Cambridge City Council[10]	Built And Natural Environment Manager
33	Cannock Chase District Council	Planning
34	Canterbury City Council	Foi
35	Carlisle City Council	Economic Development
36	Central Bedfordshire Council	Place And Communities
37	Charnwood Borough Council	Planning And Regeneration
38	Chelmsford Borough Council	Sustainable Communities
39	Cheltenham Borough Council	Planning

40	Cheshire East	Planning
41	Chichester District Council	Planning Policy
42	Chorley Borough Council	Spatial Planning
43	City of York	Design, Conservation & Sustainable Development
44	Copeland Borough Council	Planning
45	Corby Borough Council[1]	Planning
46	Cornwall Council	Planning Strategy
47	Cotswold District Council	Development Management
48	Crawley Borough Council	Audit And Risk
49	Dacorum Borough Council	Development Control
50	Darlington Borough Council	Projects And Design Services
51	Dartford Borough Council	Planning Services
52	Derby City Council	Planning & Transportation
53	Derbyshire Dales	Development Control
54	Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council	Planning
55	Dorset Council[4]	Planning
56	Dover District Council	Planning Regeneration And Development
57	Dudley Metropolitan Borough	Planning
58	Durham County Council	Design And Conservation
59	East Cambridgeshire	Planning
60	East Devon	Planning Strategy And Development Management
61	East Hampshire District Council	Planning Policy
62	East Hertfordshire	
63	East Lindsey District Council	
64	East Northamptonshire Council[1]	Planning Services
65	Eastleigh Borough Council	Housing And Planning
66	Elmbridge Borough Council	Planning
67	Epping Forest District Council	Planning
68	Erewash Borough	Planning
69	Exeter City	City Development
70	Fareham Borough Council	Planning And Regeneration
71	Folkestone and Hythe District Council	Development Management
72	Forest of Dean District Council	Planning
73	Fylde Borough Council	Planning
74	Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council	Development, Transport And Public Protection
75	Gloucester City Council	Place
76	Gosport Borough Council	Planning
77	Gravesham Borough Council	Planning
78	Great Yarmouth Borough Council	Planning (Development Management)
79	Guildford Borough Council	Planning Policy/Development Management
80	Halton Borough Council	Development Services

81	Hambleton District Council	Planning
82	Harborough District Council	Strategic And Local Planning / Development Management
83	Harrogate Borough Council	
84	Hastings Borough Council	Planning And Transport
85	Havant District Council	Planning Services
86	Herefordshire Council	Planning
87	Hertsmere Borough Council	Planning
88	High Peak Borough Council	Development
89	Hinckley & Bosworth District Council	Planning
90	Horsham District Council	Development
91	Ipswich Borough Council	Planning & Development
92	Isle of Scilly	Planning
93	Isle of Wight Council	Planning Services
94	Kettering Borough Council[1]	Development Services
95	Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council	Planning And Development
96	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough	Planning
97	Lancaster City Council	Economic Growth And Regeneration
98	Leeds Metropolitan City Council	Strategic Planning
99	Leicester City Council	Planning
100	Lewes District Council	Planning
101	Lichfield District Council	Development Management
102	Liverpool Metropolitan City Council	Planning And Regeneration
103	London Borough of Barking & Dagenham	Design Team
104	London Borough of Barnet	Major Developments
105	London Borough of Bexley	Strategic Planning And Growth
106	London Borough of Brent	Planning And Development Services
107	London Borough of Bromley	Planning Strategy
108	London Borough of Camden	Economy, Regeneration And Investment
109	London Borough of Croydon	Placemaking Team In The Spatial Planning Service (In The Place Department)
110	London Borough of Ealing	Planning
111	London Borough of Enfield	
112	London Borough - Royal Borough of Greenwich	Planning
113	London Borough of Hackney	Planning Service
114	London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham	
115	London Borough of Haringey	Planning
116	London Borough of Havering	Planning
117	London Borough of Hillingdon	Planning
118	London Borough of Hounslow	Housing, Planning And Communities
119	London Borough of Islington	Development Management
120	London - Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea	Information Management Team
121	London Borough of Lambeth	

122	London Borough of Lewisham	Planning
123	London Borough of Redbridge	Planning Policy
124	London Borough of Richmond upon Thames / London Borough of Wandsworth	Planning And Transport
125	London Borough of Tower Hamlets	Planning & Building Control
126	London Borough of Waltham Forest	Economic Regeneration And Planning
127	London Borough of Westminster	Place Shaping And Town Planning
128	Maidstone Borough Council	Planning
129	Manchester Metropolitan City Council	Planning, Building Control And Licensing
130	Medway Council	Planning Service
131	Melton Borough Council	Planning Development Management
132	Mid Devon District Council	Planning
133	Middlesbrough Borough Council	
134	Milton Keynes Council	Regeneration
135	Mole Valley Council	Placemaking
136	New Forest District Council	Freedom Of Information
137	Newark and Sherwood District Council	Planning
138	Newcastle upon Tyne City Metropolitan Council	Planning - Urban Design and Conservation
139	North Devon District Council	Strategic Development And Planning
140	North East Derbyshire District Council	Planning
141	North East Lincolnshire Council	Planning
142	North Hertfordshire District Council	Planning
143	North Kesteven District Council	Development, Economy & Cultural Services
144	North Lincolnshire Council	Development Management
145	North Norfolk District Council	Conservation, Design & Landscape
146	North Warwickshire Borough Council	Development Control
147	North West Leicestershire District Council	Planning
148	Northampton Borough Council	Planning
149	Northumberland County Council	Foi/Planning
150	Norwich City Council	Planning
151	Nottingham City Council	Heritage And Urban Design
152	Nuneaton & Bedworth	Planning
153	Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council	Planning And Infrastructure
154	Oxford City Council	Planning Services
155	Pendle Borough Council	Planning
156	Peterborough City Council	Development And Construction
157	Plymouth City Council	Strategic Planning And Infrastructure
158	Portsmouth City Council	Planning
159	Preston City Council	Planning / City Development
160	Reading Borough Council	Planning
161	Redcar and Cleveland	Regulatory Services

162	Rochford District Council	Planning
163	Rossendale Borough Council	Planning And Building Control
164	Rother District Council	Development Management
165	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Planning
166	Rugby Borough Council	Development & Enforcement
167	Runnymede Borough Council	Development Management And Building Control
168	Rushcliffe Borough Council	Planning And Growth
169	Rushmoor Borough Council	Planning
170	Rutland County Council	Development Management
171	Ryedale District Council	Planning
172	Salford Metropolitan City Council	Planning
173	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council	Regeneration & Growth
174	Scarborough Borough Council	Planning
175	Sedgemoor District Council	Planning
176	Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council	Planning Services
177	Sevenoaks District Council	Strategic Planning
178	Shropshire Council	Planning Services
179	Slough Borough Council	Planning & Transport
180	South Derbyshire District Council	
181	South Hams District Council	Development Management
182	South Holland District Council	Planning & Building Control
183	South Kesteven District Council	Planning Policy
184	South Norfolk District Council	Planning
185	South Northamptonshire District Council[2]	Planning
186	South Oxfordshire District Council	Planning
187	South Somerset District Council	Service Delivery
188	South Staffordshire District Council	Planning
189	South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council	Regeneration And Environment (Incl. Planning)
190	Southampton City Council	Planning And Economic Development
191	Southend-on-Sea Council	Planning And Building Control
192	Spelthorne Borough Council	Planning
193	St Albans City & District Council	Pbc
194	St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council	Development & Building Control
195	Staffordshire Moorlands District Council	Development
196	Stevenage Borough Council	Development Management
197	Stevenage Borough Council	Planning & Regulation
198	Stoke-on-Trent City Council	Planning Services
199	Stratford-on-Avon District Council	Planning
200	Stroud District Council	Planning - Development Management
201	Sunderland City Council	Economic Regeneration
202	Surrey Heath Borough Council	Development Management (Regulatory)

203	Swale Borough Council	Planning Services
204	Swindon Borough Council	Strategic Development
205	Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council	Development Management
206	Tandridge District Council	Planning
207	Teignbridge District Council	Development Management
208	Telford & Wrekin Council	Prosperity & Investment
209	Tendring District Council	Development Management
210	Test Valley Borough Council	Planning And Building Service
211	Tewkesbury Borough Council	Planning
212	Thurrock Council	Strategic Services
213	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	Development Management
214	Torridge District Council	Planning
215	Trafford Metropolitan Council	Planning And Development
216	Uttlesford District Council	Planning
217	Vale of White Horse District Council	Planning
218	Wakefield City Metropolitan District Council	Planning Services - Development Management
219	Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council	Planning And Building Control
220	Warwick District Council	Development Services
221	Watford Borough Council	Planning And Development
222	Waverley Borough Council	Planning And Economic Development Service
223	Wealden District Council	Planning
224	Welwyn Hatfield Council	
225	West Berkshire Council	Planning Service
226	West Lancashire District Council	Development, Heritage And Environment
227	West Lindsey District Council	Development Management
228	West Oxfordshire District Council	Development Management
229	Wigan Metropolitan Borough	Growth And Housing
230	Wiltshire Council	Spatial Planning
231	Winchester City Council	Planning
232	Wirral Metropolitan Borough	Planning
233	Woking Borough Council	Development Management And Enforcement
234	Wokingham Council	
235	Worcester City Council	Planning Policy

APPENDIX C

FIG. 10, FIG. 12 and Appendix B notes: local authority reorganisation updates from 2016

1 North Northamptonshire Unitary Council was established on 1 April 2021 following the merger of the four existing non-metropolitan districts of Corby, East Northamptonshire (69), Kettering, and Wellingborough (68), it absorbed the functions of these districts, plus those of the abolished Northamptonshire County Council

2 West Northamptonshire Unitary Council was established on 1 April 2021 following the merger of Daventry District Council, Northampton District Council (67) and South Northamptonshire District Council

3 Buckinghamshire Unitary Council was established on 1 April 2020 following the merger of Buckinghamshire County Council and Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe District Councils.

4 Dorset Unitary Council was established on 1st April 2019 following the merger of East Dorset, North Dorset, Purbeck, West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland District Councils and Dorset County Council.

5 Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Unitary Council (83) was established on 1st April 2019 following a merger of Bornmouth, Christchurch and pool Councils.

6 East Suffolk District Council was established on 1 April 2019 following the merger of the existing Suffolk Coastal and Waveney districts.

7 West Suffolk District Council was established on 1 April 2019 following the merger of St Edmundsbury Borough Council and Forest Heath District Council.

8 Somerset West and Taunton District Council was established on 1 April 2019 following the merger of the Taunton Deane and West Somerset councils.

9 Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils had been pursuing work towards uniting into a single authority since 2018, The final merger of two Suffolk councils has been taken off the table until at least 2023. Nevertheless they now share many resources including planning. They have responded as one authority.

10 Greater Cambridge Shared Planning providing services for: South Cambridgeshire DC, Cambridge City Council and Huntingdonshire DC

11 Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils ICT Shared Service

12 Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council, in West Sussex, England, operate under a joint management structure

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