

Overview of NZ Urban Design Protocol

Urban design involves the design of cities, towns, their buildings and spaces and how people use them. It is concerned with the environmental, economic, social and cultural effects of design as well as the physical appearance of buildings and spaces.

The Urban Design Protocol proposes a range of strategies and initiatives for delivering on key urban design qualities.

A partnership approach is encouraged between central government, local government, property developers and professionals working in the area of urban development. A commitment is given by central government to improve the delivery of urban design across the country and draws on the commitment of signatories to implement urban design initiatives, with the assistance of central government.

Seven key design qualities are identified that together create quality urban design:

- **Context:** seeing buildings, places and spaces as part of whole towns and cities
- **Character:** reflecting and enhancing the distinctive character, heritage and identity of our urban environment
- **Choice:** ensuring diversity and choice for people
- **Connections:** enhancing how different networks link together for people
- **Creativity:** encouraging innovative and imaginative solutions
- **Custodianship:** ensuring design is environmentally sustainable, safe and healthy
- **Collaboration:** communicating and sharing knowledge across sectors, professions and with communities.

To deliver on these qualities, the protocol outlines the contribution different groups can make. The role of central government and local government is outlined as:

Central government

- Lead at a national level
- Demonstrate quality urban design through its own development and activities
- Co-ordinate policies and actions across whole of government
- Develop appropriate legislation and policy guidance
- Set appropriate national standards and policy statements
- Promote national awareness of urban design

- Support local government
- Co-ordinate urban design research
- Work with education institutes to improve urban design education

Local government

- Lead at a regional/local level
- Demonstrate quality urban design through its own development and activities
- Develop appropriate statutory policies, rules and guidance
- Manage statutory decision-making processes to ensure quality urban design outcomes
- Promote regional/local awareness of urban design
- Share research and ‘best practice’
- Integrate urban management
- Work collaboratively with the private sector.