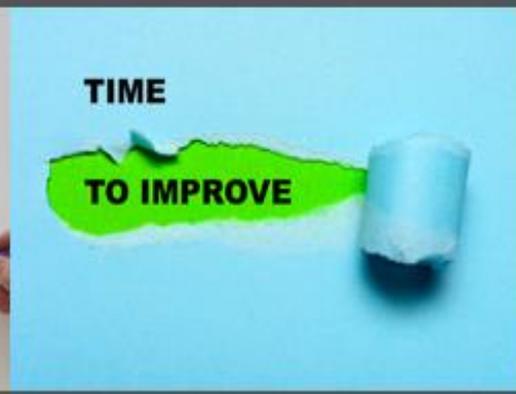**Everyone understands it** — **It delivers visible results** — **It can be improved**

Courtesy: Laura Alvarez, Nottingham City Council

Introduction to Design Codes

07/09/2021

- **Design Codes are rules or "guard rails" to improve coordination, respect existing character, empower communities and provide greater certainty.** However, they should be seen as part of a wider eco system of tools, alongside design policy, guidance and design review.

- **Guidance is often used for strategic approaches with coding rules operating at detailed level.** However, guidance and codes can overlap in the "middle ground" between the two.

- **The shift happening in planning is to place increasing emphasis on rules and less emphasis on guidance, bringing certainty, consultation and decision making up towards earlier stages of planning.** The benefits are to improve both processes and outcomes, with the key outcome of high quality places.

- **There are three stages to develop coding – analysis, vision and coding stages.** The analysis stage can draw in previously gathered information on the area, and should be supplemented by characterisation studies where needed, including historical, physical and social aspects of the area to give a full understanding of the narrative and guide the vision for the place. This informs what could happen next and the type of development which will be appropriate, whether that is to conserve, enhance or transform the area.

- **When making coding rules you will be acting as a designer, so ensure you use skilled designers to understand the implications for development and the community.** Choose the key things to code for to get the result you want. To develop your design code, you have to understand what problem you need to resolve – ask what could happen if we don't have the code? Look at issues which commonly come up in applications. And ask the community for their input at each stage, creating consensus and ownership of the end result.

- **You need a code that everyone can understand, this is fundamental for success.** If the process of developing a code has been pursued well this will help ensure the resulting code is accepted and supported across the community. However, sensitivity is needed in applying a code – a traffic light system may work better than rigid compliance and exceptions may be needed for exemplary design which provides better outcomes.

Urban Design London

Courtesy: Laura Alvarez, Nottingham City Council

Speakers:

Joanne Preston, Associate, Cambridge Planning & Public Practice

Rory Stracey, (position), Trowers & Hamlin LLP

Vicky Payne, Planner & Urban Designer, Urbed

Jane Manning, Director, Allies & Morrison

Laura Alvarez, Senior Principal Urban Design & Conservation Officer, Nottingham City Council

Louisa Facchino Stack, Urban Design Project Officer, LB Hounslow

Attendees: 86

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