

CABE

LIGHT TOUCH REVIEW

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Light Touch Review took place between May and July 2008. The review was undertaken by The University of the West of England (UWE) and was a joint exercise between DCMS, CLG and CABE. The reviewers were asked to consider four areas:

- *Alignment;*
- *Capability and impact;*
- *Focus, effectiveness and efficiency; and*
- *Departmental and other key relationships.*

The review was conceived as an objective exercise that focused on CABE's stated aims and seeks to provide constructive recommendations for the future direction of CABE.

The review was based upon analysis of existing documents and interviews with over 70 people: a selection of commissioners, staff, members of the CABE "family" and others with an interest in CABE's work. In parallel with the interviews, the reviewers observed a number of CABE activities including design review, regional work, one off events and commission meetings.

The clear message of the review is that CABE has made, and continues to make, a real difference to the quality of places and buildings in England and has the potential to be even more effective. CABE has a well thought-out set of priorities that it keeps under constant review to ensure that they are well aligned with developing government priorities. It operates effectively in a complex and constantly changing environment in partnership with many disparate bodies seeking to influence the quality of architecture and place-making across the public and private sector. It is both the government's critical friend in the contested field of design of the built environment and a delivery agency working with large departments and agencies across the country on specific policy goals. The government's commitment to the devolution of decision making to regional structures and local authorities offers both an opportunity and a challenge to CABE in developing a truly national reach.

We have made five recommendations designed to assist CABE and its sponsor departments to adjust the focus of their activities as CABE continues to evolve. These are prioritised as follows, the first three being strategic and the following two seeking to address particular issues:

RECOMMENDATION 1

THAT CABE DEVELOPS A STRATEGY TO MORE EFFECTIVELY INFLUENCE DESIGN OUTCOMES IN ALL PARTS OF ENGLAND IN RESPONSE TO THE GOVERNMENT'S AGENDA FOR THE DEVOLUTION OF DECISION-MAKING

This recommendation came from a clear need for CABE to eliminate the distinction between national and regional activities in the delivery of its services while retaining and enhancing strong strategic links with central government. The result will be a more consistent and effective delivery of CABE's remit across the whole of England.

RECOMMENDATION 2

THAT THE SPONSOR DEPARTMENTS WORK WITH CABE TO DEVELOP APPROPRIATE WAYS FOR CABE TO MORE ACTIVELY AND METHODICALLY ENGAGE IN THE PLANNING SYSTEM THROUGH THE NEW REGIONAL STRUCTURE

This recommendation emerged from a need for CABE to develop its existing planning expertise, giving explicit recognition to the importance of planning and to promote design values more effectively, including strategies to both limit and adapt to climate change. The outcome will be a more effective planning system that contributes directly to better designed buildings and places.

RECOMMENDATION 3

THAT CABE WORKS WITH GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS (INCLUDING BOTH SPONSOR DEPARTMENTS) IN A MORE FOCUSED AND STRATEGIC WAY

This recommendation comes from a need for CABE-DCMS-CLG to encourage all government departments to take full advantage of CABE's knowledge and skills in all policy matters that have an impact on the built environment. This will result in a targeted drive at particular government departments that would benefit from understanding the importance of design at the earliest and most strategic stages of policy development.

RECOMMENDATION 4

THAT CABE UNDERTAKES A REVIEW OF ITS LEARNING AND DISSEMINATION STRATEGY, TO MAKE SURE THAT IT UTILISES ITS EXPERIENCE OF THE LAST 9 YEARS TO DRIVE THE DESIGN QUALITY AGENDA FORWARD

CABE publishes some excellent material that communicates the design quality message. We recommend that it prioritises a review of the types of material it publishes so that it can use its extensive knowledge and experience more productively. This will result in a strategy that clearly identifies target audiences and

their needs, supports the broad cultural advocacy role of CAFE, contributes to meeting specific government policy goals and fully exploits the potential of CAFE's own activities.

RECOMMENDATION 5

THAT CAFE MAKES MORE EXPLICIT HOW IT ASSESSES THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ITS ACTIVITIES

This recommendation should build on existing work to develop a more coherent evidence-based strategy to evaluate the effectiveness of all aspects of CAFE's work. This will result in a more robust basis for judging the overall performance of CAFE in the future that is clear, allows for effective planning of work and allows sponsor departments to monitor progress.

1 BRIEF

1.1 This light touch review is a joint exercise between DCMS, CLG and CAGE. Its outcomes will be jointly owned and any response will be agreed between the three commissioning parties. It is envisaged that the review will be the start of a process that will take CAGE through its business planning processes and the continued improvement of its programmes, systems and management. The aims of the review, agreed between DCMS, CAGE and CLG are as follows.

1. **Alignment:** To ensure that CAGE's activities and strategy align appropriately with the objectives, policy and delivery priorities of DCMS and CLG, and to consider how these fit with its other activities, including those in support of other government priorities.
2. **Capability and impact:** To review the impact that CAGE has had, considering what is measurable and what further / different mechanisms should be put in place to capture CAGE's effectiveness. To consider how organisational, governance, resourcing or performance improvements could be made to improve capability, efficiency and impact. To consider how CAGE should effectively engage at the newly empowered regional and local level.
3. **Focus, effectiveness and efficiency:** To consider how CAGE's programmes and varied methods of working have developed and their comparable effectiveness and efficiency (based on impact, risk and resources) with a view to CAGE considering how to balance and prioritise activity going forward and assist with the achievement of value for money. In line with the 3% Value for Money Savings that all government sponsored bodies will be expected to generate over the next spending period, to review the costs of provision and consider whether there are areas where such savings might be possible.
4. **Departmental and other key relationships:** To review CAGE's relationship with DCMS and CLG and identify where all parties can improve their joint working; informed by Departmental Capability Reviews. Within the context of CAGE's statutory status as an independent NDPB, the review will consider the differing roles that CAGE fulfils between DCMS and CLG, for example CAGE as the "critical friend" to government versus CAGE as part of "the delivery machine" and its relationship to other existing and new NDPBs.

1.2 The review was conceived as an objective exercise that focused on stated aims and sought to provide constructive recommendations for the future direction of CAGE.

2 METHOD

2.1 The reviewers used a number of methods to examine and analyse existing data and to gather opinions about the impact and effectiveness of CAFE and how this might be improved in the future. The first task was to identify relevant documents to establish a basis for understanding how CAFE perceives its relations with sponsor departments, stakeholder bodies and the public including: legislation, departmental policy statements, public service agreements, corporate plans and targets, public statements, press reports and publications as well as a selection of operational documents (on design review, board and committee meeting minutes for example).

2.2 The examination of these documents informed the next stage of the work, the interviews with the Commissioners, a selection of staff, members of the CAFE "family", the groups and individuals who support CAFE's programmes through advising on projects, working on advisory committees and representing CAFE at events and meetings and others with an interest in CAFE's work. Interviews provided an opportunity to pursue questions identified during the review of documents in order to gain a greater understanding of how CAFE operates as well as illuminating behaviours, beliefs and attitudes to its work. All interviews were confidential. Consequently there are no comments attributed to specific individuals or organisations. This approach was crucial in seeking honest and open discussions of CAFE's existing and future work.

2.3 In parallel with the interviews, the reviewers observed a number of CAFE activities including design review, regional work, individual events and commission meetings. This was a useful way to gain an understanding of the organisation in action. The review team also held two focus groups with sets of Commissioners. These groups allowed for the involvement of a relatively large number of people to give honest opinions within a clear framework. These focus groups were successful in that there was a significant degree of interaction and corroboration of key points but some issues were raised on which there was little consensus.

2.4 In carrying out this review we have interviewed over 70 people and attended a number of CAFE events, meetings and reviews (see appendix 1).

3 OVERVIEW

3.1 In our judgement CUBE is an effective organisation. There is clear evidence that the Commission is widely respected, influential, and rigorous in its activities and that it has an enthusiastic, committed and well qualified staff team dedicated to delivering a clear message on the nature and importance of good design in the built environment to both public and private sectors. This conclusion is based on evidence from a range of people within the CUBE family, sponsoring departments and bodies affected by CUBE's work. While some expressed reservations about strategic direction or operational focus, all emphasised their positive experiences of working with CUBE and the competence and commitment of individuals in the organisation. We believe that CUBE can build on this strong position to become even more influential in the future and this review seeks to outline how this might be achieved.

3.2 A concern raised at the outset and confirmed in interviews was a tension between CUBE's statutory role as the government's adviser on design in the built environment and its complementary but contrasting role as an agency responsible, in partnership with others, for implementing specific government policies. This is often characterised as a conflict between advocacy and delivery. It became clear early in the review that a number of the key stakeholders including some interviewees in sponsoring departments saw this as problematic. We would argue to the contrary: that the tension between the two quite different conceptions of the role of CUBE is creative. The direct experience of close involvement with programme delivery (for example in providing urban design training, organising enabling in the school building programme or carrying out design review) complements the broad view of the Commissioners and senior staff who take a lead in providing policy advice to ministers and adds weight to the value of that advice.

3.3 Managing the balance between policy and delivery and handling the evolution from a small, high impact new player on the national stage to a larger and necessarily more complex body that needs to make an impact throughout England are the key challenges presented by the growth of CUBE. It has to meet high expectations aroused by its success in establishing mechanisms that have demonstrable effect on raising aspirations and design standards. We are clear that the sponsoring departments should continue to support CUBE in its complex and challenging role and work with staff at all levels to overcome operational difficulties

that are likely continually to arise. There is an important role for the Commissioners to understand and mediate these tensions.

3.4 The strongly interdisciplinary character of CABA, evident in the profile of the Commissioners and the staff, is a significant strength of the organisation. Collaboration between people with disparate intellectual and professional perspectives in a stimulating, co-operative and action-oriented setting is a hugely positive contribution to the promotion of understanding of key issues in the built environment and raising design aspirations. We therefore, at the outset of this review, want to emphasise the important contribution that CABA makes to the evolution of thought on the built environment.

3.5 Independence of mind based on the specialist knowledge and broad experience of the 16 Commissioners and an expert staff team is fundamental to CABA in its strategic role as an adviser to government. It is inevitable given the contested nature of evidence in the fields of architecture, urban design, planning and sustainable development, that consensus within the organisation is not always possible. It is equally clear that governments need consistent, well-supported, expert advice in order to build effective, credible and deliverable policies. This represents a challenge for the Commissioners, the CEO and his staff. It is especially challenging in situations when government chooses to implement policies that are not in full accord with advice given or have taken policy initiatives without seeking the views of their own expert advisers.

3.6 CABA's business is advice. This is the case whether it is working at a strategic level with ministers, facilitating the provision of a regional enabling service or contributing to the school curriculum. The difficulties of measuring the effectiveness of advice have been a recurring theme of the review. We accept that there are no perfect ways of measuring design quality itself, still less the effectiveness of advice on how to achieve design quality. We are, however, confident that there are well established means of usefully assessing many aspects of both -- and there is clear evidence that CABA is working with energy and good judgement to develop and apply better methods of assessing performance.

4 CONTEXT

4.1 CABE's central purpose is the promotion of high standards of design in the built environment. The word "design" in this context refers to the physical arrangement of places and buildings. Good places and buildings are those that meet the needs and aspirations of all those who use or visit them. They are created by the co-operative action of many individuals from the disciplines of architecture, planning, urban design, landscape design and engineering. Judgements about design quality are complex. They involve consideration of the designer's response to user needs, relationship to setting, scale, materials, environmental impact, architectural composition and visual characteristics. Aesthetic matters are important in the evaluation of design but it is important to emphasise that design quality is not primarily a matter of appearance.

4.2 There is broad agreement that good architecture and well-designed places are important to the life of the nation. The government is committed to promoting the value of good design in both the public and private sector. Policies that promote good design in the built environment include: the appointment of ministerial and design champions in key departments; ministerial statements confirming the importance of design quality in housing schools, commercial buildings and the health service; the well established principle that design is a material consideration in granting planning approval and determining appeals --- and the establishment and support of CABE.

4.3 Originally established in 1999, CABE was made a statutory public body by the Clean Neighbourhood and Environments Act 2005 that states its overall function as:

the promotion of education and high standards in, and understanding and appreciation of architecture, and the design, management and maintenance of the built environment

This role has been described as that of the government's "critical friend" in relation to the design of the built environment. This may be thought of as the cultural aspect of the Commission's work including, advocacy, design review and educational activities.

4.4 In addition CABI is responsible for the delivery of specific programmes aimed at meeting the government's policy priorities. This work is funded through service level agreements (SLAs) with CLG and other departments. Indeed, the relationship between CABI and both CLG and DCMS is crucial to the future of the organisation and our recommendations are designed to enhance those relationships so that CABI's core activities can have the maximum impact through its contribution to CLG and DCMS objectives in relation to PSAs (Public Service Agreements) and DSOs (Department Strategic Objectives).

4.5 CABI is concerned with the quality of buildings – architecture - and the spaces between them – the public realm. Design quality in architecture is most usually defined in terms of the three principles set out by the Roman architect Vitruvius that are usually translated as firmness (*firmitatis*), commodity (*utilitas*) and delight (*venustitas*). These words have been reinterpreted in various ways to accord with changing cultural perceptions. Modern definitions explicitly include concepts of sustainability as well as functionality, robustness, and sometimes even beauty. The quality of the public realm is conceived in relation to human scale and social interaction and is discussed in terms of permeability, legibility, spatial continuity, diversity of use and sustainability. The social, economic and cultural value of design in the public realm and the buildings that frame it, is something that we, in the UK, are rediscovering, after a period in which design quality was considered to be an essentially subjective matter that could be safely left to market forces. This change is reflected in recent and emerging government guidance¹. During its short life CABI has made a significant contribution to the theory and practice of the rational assessment of design quality through its design review process².

4.6 Raising design quality is seen to be a legitimate public policy goal for a number of reasons. The proposition that good architecture and attractive towns and cities are important in themselves is not contentious. Buildings and places are part of the cultural life of the nation just as strong musical, literary and fine art cultures are, although it is not easy to measure the social and economic benefits of any of these cultural "goods".

¹ As described by *Physical Capital: How Great Places Boost Public Value* CABI 2005

² *Design Review: How CABI Evaluates Quality in Architecture and Urban Design* CABI 2006

4.7 It is widely recognised that good design has economic value³ 4. Well-designed schools, hospitals and offices have a measurable economic benefit by promoting effective learning, rapid recovery and staff retention. The Treasury Green Book makes it clear that design quality should be taken into account in government decisions on capital spending:

Design quality is an important element of all public sector building projects and should be assessed during appraisal. Limiting property valuation to traditional methods without consideration of the costs and benefits of design investment can distort the decision making process. Good design will not always result in the lowest initial capital cost. However, over the period of the contract a higher initial investment can, when expressed as a discount value, result in the lower whole life cost.

Where good design has a direct economic impact, such as staff retention or patient recovery times, it may be possible to calculate the costs and benefits directly. However, it is often difficult, if not impossible, to calculate the monetary value of many of the benefits of good design, such as civic pride, educational achievement or user experience. In such instances, it may be necessary to use contingent valuation or a similar technique. For smaller projects, where contingent valuation may prove too complicated, research studies can help with comparisons and benchmarking to ensure good design is accounted for.⁵

4.8 It is equally important to recognise that there is an economic cost to bad design. There are many examples: inefficiently planned towns result in excessive travel, uncomfortable offices lead to staff absences, poorly ventilated schools inhibit concentration, poor housing layouts encourage crime.⁶ It is crucial that CABI communicates these messages in all its work, particularly at a time when economic conditions are more difficult and there is consequent pressure to reduce capital expenditure.

³ *The Value of Good Design: How Buildings and Spaces Create Economic and Social Value* CABI 2002

⁴ *The Young Foundation/UCL Mapping the Value of the Built Environment* 2006

⁵ *HM Treasury The Green Book: Appraisal and valuation in central government (Annex 2 valuing non-market inputs)* 2004

⁶ *The Cost of Bad Design* CABI 2006

4.9 Buildings and cities designed in accordance with now well-established principles of sustainable development limit environmental damage and promote social inclusion. Fine buildings and beautiful cities attract tourists who generate economic activity. The design professions – part of a broadly defined set of creative industries – are in themselves an important component of a successful economy. Good places and buildings do not happen by accident. They are only created when the client or promoter wants quality and can recognise it; an appropriately skilled design team is in place and has sufficient time and resource to exercise their expertise; and the procurement regime properly values design. The overarching logic model that describes the mission and purpose of CABE can be summarised as follows:

- The government accepts the core assumption that design quality (however that is defined and measured) is important to the cultural, economic and social health of the nation;
- Raising design standards is a legitimate goal of public policy and expenditure; and,
- A number of mechanisms are available that have the potential to raise design standards including – advice to project sponsors on procurement methods, training of clients and other participants in the development process, the planning system (through planning policy at national, regional and local level and development control), advice on the design of specific projects at various stages in the development process, enhanced education of built environment professionals, campaigns to raise public awareness of design and promoting the value of the built environment as an educational resource at all levels.

4.10 Many of these activities fall within the remit of CABE which is charged with spreading the message that through changes in the behaviour of participants in the development process (clients, design professionals, planners, financiers and contractors) the aspiration for, and achievement of, the best in design can become firmly embedded in the nation's culture. CABE also has an important role in influencing national, regional and local policy, raising public awareness of design and influencing educators.

4.11 CABE can only meet its goals if it works in partnership with other bodies. Apart from the two sponsoring departments, CABE has ongoing relationships with other government departments (Home Office, DCSF etc), the NHS and many other public bodies including English Heritage and Natural England. There are also key

relationships with professional bodies including RIBA, RTPI and the Landscape Institute. The context in which CABI operates is not fixed. Government priorities change over time and administrative and delivery structures are adapted accordingly. Recent realignment of central government policy on devolution in England and the creation of the new Homes and Communities Agency pose new challenges and offer significant opportunities to CABI.

4.12 It is important to emphasise that the real benefits of good design are only fully appreciated in the long term -- so the work of CABI over the next few years in pressing the message home that the right design decisions must be taken in the earliest stages of capital projects at all scales is crucial. This will be especially true if economic conditions become more difficult⁷.

⁷ *Buildings and Spaces: Why Good Design Matters* CABI 2006

5 ALIGNMENT

5.1 The reviewers were asked to assess whether "...CABE's activities and strategy align appropriately with the objectives, policy and delivery priorities of DCMS and CLG, and to consider how these fit with its other activities, including those in support of other government priorities'.

5.2 The evidence of CABE's activity profile (including advocacy work within and outside government, enabling, research, design review and specific projects identified in service level agreements) together with the testimony of a range of individuals within CABE and its sponsoring departments and stakeholders representing other organisations, confirms that CABE is strategically well aligned with the priorities of both DCMS and CLG. We did not find evidence of activities that were not relevant to the stated aims of departments or CABE's statutory remit "the promotion of education and high standards in and understanding and appreciation of, architecture, and the design, management and maintenance of the built environment".

5.3 The diverse activities of CABE cannot be neatly assigned to each of its core roles – advocacy and delivery. Some tasks are very clearly in the former category, for example advice to ministers on the cultural and economic importance of environmental design or developing educational materials for primary schools. Others, like the work in the West Midlands to pilot *Buildings for Life* as a tool for raising quality through the planning system, or the implementation of the *Sea Change* regeneration programme are clearly part of the delivery mode of operation.

5.4 Design review and enabling can be seen as contributing to both strands of CABE's remit. Design review is, on one level, a matter of delivery in that it is focused on the improvement of individual projects, but it is also part of the broader cultural role of developing widely shared and openly debated critical understanding of architectural and urban design values. It has untapped potential as a tool to raise awareness and design judgement among practising planners and councillors through published analysis of the outcomes of design review and the direct observation of design review sessions.

5.5 In a context of limited resources it is necessary to concentrate effort on areas of greatest need *and* where the effect is likely to be most significant. Within the broad

statutory remit, CABE defines its aims and priorities on the basis of its own assessment of the design challenges facing the nation and the contribution that it can make to the achievement of specific policy goals set out from time to time by government

5.6 DCMS has defined four broad strategic objectives:

1. Opportunity *To encourage more widespread enjoyment of culture, media and sport. To widen opportunities for everyone to engage, ensuring children and young people in particular have the chance to take part in activities that contribute to their development, health and well-being.*

2. Excellence *To support talent and excellence in culture, media and sport. To create the conditions for excellence to flourish amongst top artists and sports stars. To champion the provision of top-class facilities and services.*

3. Economic Impact *To maximise the economic impact of the department's sectors, including architecture. To raise productivity.*

4. Olympics *To deliver a successful Olympic Games and Paralympic Games with a sustainable legacy, and get more children and young people participating in sport.*

5.7 The equivalent CLG strategic objectives are:

1. Local Government and Empowerment *To support local government that empowers individuals and communities and delivers high quality services efficiently.*

2. Housing *To improve the supply, environmental performance and quality of housing that is more responsive to the needs of individuals, communities and the economy*

3. Economic Performance and Regeneration *To build prosperous communities by improving the economic performance of cities, sub-regions and local areas, promoting regeneration and tackling deprivation*

4. Cohesive, Active and Resilient to Extremism *To develop communities that are cohesive, active and resilient to extremism*

5. Planning *To provide a more efficient, effective and transparent planning system that supports and facilitates sustainable development, including the Government's objectives in relation to housing growth, infrastructure delivery, economic development and climate change*

5.8 These broad objectives are interpreted in more detail in 30 PSAs that constitute the policy context within which CABE is defining its priorities in its three-year corporate strategy documents. These priorities are mapped against the policy objectives in departmental funding agreements and service level agreements. It is clear that this mapping is the product of detailed reflection and negotiation and it is beyond the scope of this review to assess whether the fine detail is, in every case, appropriate. However, we consider that the major priority areas (discussed below) align clearly with overall government objectives and are confident that the approach to matching CABE's particular actions to departmental objectives is rigorous. The following examples serve to illustrate how CABE works to further government policy goals.

5.9 CABE's current published statement of its aims and priorities identifies six priority areas ⁸.

- Homes and Neighbourhoods
- Parks and Public Spaces
- Schools
- Healthcare
- Climate Change and Sustainability
- Culture Change

It is clear to the reviewers that these matters fall firmly within CABE's remit to promote, in various ways, the value of good design and are consistent with the specific policy goals of sponsor departments

5.10 Well designed buildings and places can contribute in many ways to the well-being of the community. For example, the government's goal to "improve the supply, environmental performance and quality of housing that is more responsive to the needs of individuals, communities and the economy" has clear design

⁸ CABE Corporate Strategy 2006/7 2008/9

implications. CABE has developed strategies that specifically support this goal including, for example, the Building for Life standard now being implemented as a key tool in the planning system to radically improve housing quality. Less obviously, the overarching goal “to support local government that empowers individuals and communities and delivers high quality services efficiently”⁹ also has design implications to which CABE contributes through its support to professionals to improve skills in applying the latest thinking in sustainable design and place-making, as well as its enabling services which help people at all levels to get the best out of new development.

5.11 The first four priority areas defined in the current corporate strategy -- homes and neighbourhoods, parks and public space, schools and healthcare -- relate directly to key sectors where very significant investment is planned in the next few years.

5.12 The government has identified the need to complete substantially more new homes, including affordable homes, over the next decade (PSA 20). CLG is leading on the implementation of these policy goals and CABE has (and should maintain) a strong participatory role in delivery. We believe that CABE has a crucial role in assisting in the delivery of good quality homes, particularly through the statutory planning system where it can positively influence a culture change in the way design is dealt with.

5.13 CABE's work in assessing the quality of new housing¹⁰ clearly demonstrates this is a field where existing standards fall well short of what is desirable and possible. There is potential to raise standards significantly without incurring additional development cost. Defining the appropriate character and quality of those homes and the relation they have to employment, schools and services is critical – especially given the pressing concerns of climate change. CABE clearly has an important role, working in parallel with the planning system to positively influence outcomes. It already has appropriate tools (for example Building for Life) and the experience to make an impact at the early stages of development -- site selection, master planning and scheme design. Effective intervention in this area has the potential to improve the quality of life for large numbers of people.

⁹ CLG Strategic Objectives

¹⁰ Housing audit: assessing the design quality of new housing in the East Midlands, West Midlands and the South West (including national summary) CABE 2007

5.14 The second matter prioritised in the strategy is parks and public spaces. We agree that this is an appropriate focus and are clear that it aligns with CABE's broad "cultural " remit – particular the statutory function to promote "education and high standards in, and understanding and appreciation of ... the design, management and maintenance of the built environment"¹¹. There is wide acknowledgement¹² of a history of underinvestment in the public realm – both in the connective tissue of towns and cities (streets, squares and other open space etc) and public parks and other green spaces – and the urgent need to develop awareness and appropriate skills in the agencies responsible for these spaces as well as the developers and others whose work affects them. This priority is also in direct alignment with the policy goals of CLG (which funds CABE Space), specifically DSO3 ("To build prosperous communities by improving the economic performance of cities, sub-regions and local areas, promoting regeneration and tackling deprivation") and DSO4 ("To develop communities that are cohesive, active and resilient to extremism"). The location, quality and accessibility of public space of all kinds has a clear impact upon economic performance and quality of life and contributes to cohesive community life.

5.15 Similarly, in our judgement, it is right to give priority to involvement in the ambitious school building and improvement programme (BSF – Building Schools for the Future) partly because of the large numbers of people whose lives will be affected by these buildings, but also the positive effect that exposure to a well designed school can have on an individual's understanding of and aspiration for quality in design. The relationship with Partnerships for Schools (PfS) provides enabling, design review, training and design guidance for both client groups and delivery teams. These activities are aligned directly with government priorities as expressed in PSAs 2, 10, 11 12).

5.16 The fourth priority area identified is healthcare, where there is also a substantial building programme under way (including hospitals and primary care facilities). CABE has made a significant contribution to raising design standards in the latest generation of healthcare buildings through its publications and campaigns. Given the progress achieved in embedding design values in the healthcare building

¹¹ *Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005* Section 88 1b

¹² *Public Park Assessment: a survey of local authority parks focussing on historic parks* Urban Parks Forum 2001; *Green Spaces, Better Places : Final Report of the Urban Green Spaces Task Force* DETR 2002

programme, especially through enabling and design review and the pressure on resources, it might be advisable to give this area a lower priority in the next period. While this may be regrettable, we believe it is appropriate -- giving a matter lower priority does not mean it is being ignored. We would expect significant healthcare projects to continue to be considered in design review and supported by the enabling programme and that CABE would maintain the availability of its healthcare publications and research.

5.17 While the first four of the strategic objectives (discussed above) make direct connection with policy goals identified by sponsoring and other departments, the remaining two -- climate change and sustainability and culture change -- are more generally stated but nevertheless align well with government priorities. The latter is in effect a restatement of the core cultural purpose of CABE -- to increase public knowledge of design and raise aspirations to achieve quality in all aspects of the built environment -- but the former is more significant in the development of CABE's role in delivering emerging policy priorities

5.18 It is entirely appropriate and consistent with government policy that CABE should give priority in its work to climate change and sustainability, especially given the trenchant view expressed in the Stern Review "the evidence gathered ... leads to a simple conclusion: the benefits of strong, early action (in combating climate change) considerably outweigh the costs"¹³.

5.19 Given the importance of the design of built environment in both limiting emissions of carbon dioxide and mitigating the effects of climate change and the urgent need to implement low carbon strategies in all sectors, we believe that CABE has not yet adequately embedded these considerations in all its work. We would argue that the priority should be the dissemination (in partnership with the agencies and bodies with which CABE has good relationships and real influence) of the substantial body of existing knowledge in the field and providing focused assistance to project promoters, developers, design teams, planning authorities and other agencies on how to bring best practice in sustainable design into the mainstream.

5.20 In recent years CABE has rightly begun to pay greater attention to the environmental impacts of design, noting in 2004 that it "is ideally positioned to

¹³ Nicholas Stern *The economics of climate change* 2006

promote the need for sustainable cities, neighbourhoods, buildings and spaces"¹⁴. The recent Climate Change Festival in Birmingham and the innovative Sustainable Cities initiative¹⁵ signal CABE's recognition of the importance of the role of design in meeting environmental challenges. So far these activities have had limited impact, but the plans for future work learning from the feedback on the climate change festival and hothouse models and the on-going policy work on eco-towns and other growth points, are encouraging. The insights contained in CABE's broad ranging 2007 paper on sustainable design¹⁶ have the potential to make a much greater impact across the range of its programmes. It includes eight clear action points that deserve to have prominence in the revised corporate strategy and should inform all activities including design review, enabling and policy advice to government.

5.21 The next three years will be a critical period during which many major projects will be in their conceptual stages. It is essential that strategies to address climate change are incorporated at the outset if there is to be any reasonable prospect of meeting ambitious government targets for carbon emission.

5.22 Inevitably, departmental priorities change over time – often over quite a short time. Such changes give rise to tensions as departmental officials seek the assistance of CABE in responding to ministerial initiatives or evolving policies and CABE seeks to manage its resources in order to balance these changing demands with its established workload. The need for flexibility of response was mentioned by participants on both sides of this debate.

5.23 CABE has effectively demonstrated its ability and willingness to respond to changing circumstances and policy initiatives. Two specific challenges have been: the London 2012 Olympic Games and the development in the Thames Gateway. These are clearly projects that are essential for CABE to influence, given the national and international impact the Olympic games and its legacy will have and the scale and speed of the proposed development of land flanking the Thames estuary. In both cases CABE has responded quickly and effectively, ensuring that design quality is a prime consideration at all stages in the delivery of these hugely significant projects.

¹⁴ *Environmental sustainability and the built environment* CABE 2004

¹⁵ sustainablecities.org.uk

¹⁶ *Sustainable design, climate change and the built environment* CABE 2007

5.24 As discussed above, CABE maps its activities against the cross-government PSA set. This demonstrates the broad range of the organisation's impact on many of the thirty goals. It is important to emphasise the key point that design quality has a general impact on economic welfare contributing indirectly but significantly to the overall productivity of the UK (PSA1). Design quality also impacts upon educational achievement (PSA 10 and 11), health and wellbeing (PSA 18) and housing and community issues (PSA20 and 21). We consider that there is scope for more effective contribution by CABE to the achievement of improved economic performance of all English regions (PSA7) and to combating climate change and its effects (PSA27).

6 CAPABILITY AND IMPACT

6.1 The second task of the reviewers was to consider “the impact that CAFE has had, considering what is measurable and what further / different mechanisms should be put in place to capture CAFE’s effectiveness. To consider how organisational, governance, resourcing or performance improvements could be made to improve capability, efficiency and impact. To consider how CAFE should effectively engage at the newly empowered regional and local level”.

6.2 As was recognised in the brief and the initial discussions of this review, measuring the impact of any advisory body is difficult. The particular remit of CAFE (like that of other cultural bodies) presents especially challenging problems. Not only is there an element of judgement in the assessment of design quality but also architectural and urban design projects commonly span many years from conception to completion. We sought the views of many of the interviewees on two key questions – is CAFE effective? and how should its impact be measured? There was almost universal consensus on the first question that CAFE did have a positive impact. Equally, all recognised the difficulties of devising robust ways of measuring the effectiveness of such a body.

6.3 There are many things which CAFE does that can be simply measured, such as the number of events organised, the number and type of people attending events, the number of books published, sold or distributed, the number of enablers in place, the number of local authorities with design champions, the number of design reviews broken down by building type, location and value. Clearly this kind of information is easy to gather and provides useful insights, especially when mapped against other data in a GIS (geographical information systems) environment. To be of value in judging impact of specific activities such information must be matched with data that gives a measure of improvements in quality of buildings and places.

6.4 Assessing quality is a matter of judgement rather than measurement. There are well-established principles of architectural composition (discussed in terms of order, symmetry, massing, typology etc), urban design (permeability, mixed use, active frontage etc) and sustainable design (shallow plan, orientation etc). It is almost always possible in the discussion of alternative proposals to reach a measure of agreement about whether one design is “better” than another, or to identify ways in which a particular design might be improved. However, it is difficult to conceive of a

simple (or even complex) scale that would map variance in quality between schemes or across time that would make it possible to conclude with certainty that (for example) design review had made a measurable difference in quality of a project.

6.5 It is the clear conclusion of the reviewers that CABE is having a positive effect on design quality. In our judgement, the concerted activity of the dedicated team has resulted in improvements in the design of many individual projects (through enabling and design review) and has moved design higher up the public policy agenda and created greater public awareness of design issues.

6.6 So how can the reviewers (and so many others) be confident that CABE is having a positive impact? Our experience of both education and practice convinces us that focused discussion of design in the context of a developing project results in improvements in both the quality of project outcome and the sharpening of design skills. Indeed, the whole of design education is based on the premise that iteration and critique are effective in raising standards. Our experience suggests that CABE's effort, both direct and indirect, to encourage reflection by designers and developers and the engagement of a wide range of those affected by development at the early stages of the development process, will result in a higher quality environment. This is confirmed by the testimony of a wide range of individuals in the fields of architecture, planning and development who report on the basis of their own observation, the effect that CABE has had on both individual projects and processes and procedures.

6.7 CABE is fully aware of the need systematically to measure the effectiveness of its work. It is at the forefront of the development and application of useful tools to assist those undertaking the challenging task of rationally assessing design quality in the context of the complex processes of building procurement and the planning system. These tools include the extensive quality audits in housing, schools, Surestart and the LIFT, which are built on explicit principles for evaluating quality that underpin design review and the Building for Life programmes. The work already completed and recorded in these areas provides benchmarks for tracking future progress.

6.8 Evidence of the effectiveness of enabling and design review is recorded in CABE's case studies. For example, CABE contributed to the success of the new Lincoln museum. An enabler was appointed at the outset to advise on the selection of a design team. CABE was represented on the Urban Panel that reviewed urban

design initiatives in the city, including the museum project while two design reviews in 2001 contributed to the development of the design. In another example, Nottingham City Council benefited from enabling advice and support when running a high profile design competition for the Market Square, a key city centre public space. The competition resulted in high-quality professional entries and also raised public awareness for the redevelopment project. An elegant scheme was chosen and the square reopened in 2007. The square has recently won the RIBA CABE Public Space Award. Through its enabling service, CABE played a key role in the development of the acclaimed Manchester Civil Justice Centre where an innovative process was adopted putting design quality at the centre of the procurement process from the outset. The building has been shortlisted for the RIBA Stirling Prize 2008.

6.9 The good take-up of programmes targeted at developers and planners – for example Building for Life that provides a mechanism to help designers and planners to negotiate better quality housing development, demonstrates that the work of CABE is perceived to have real value. Likewise, CABE Space's work with local authorities and the landscape industry to improve public parks and other open spaces, the initiatives targeted at the school building programme, work with the Home Office on police stations, and many other areas of activity were frequently cited as influential in changing behaviour and raising standards. The success of design review is testament to the value placed upon the benefits it offers to both the development industry and planning authorities, while the wide adoption of enabling services demonstrates that it is seen to be of significant benefit to bodies embarking upon the often confusing and stressful process of building procurement. The establishment of bodies similar to CABE by the devolved administrations in Wales, Scotland and more recently Northern Ireland ¹⁷ confirms the value of the CABE approach to raising standards in design.

6.10 In our judgement there is no doubt that significant long-term benefits to both the economy and the cultural welfare of the nation are to be gained from the relatively small public expenditure devoted to CABE. CABE activities (including enabling, design review, working to include robust design policies in local development frameworks and the various educational and training initiatives) focus on giving more careful consideration to capital investment decisions at the design

¹⁷ Design Commission for Wales (2002), Architecture & Design Scotland (2005) and Architecture and Built Environment Ministerial Advisory Group (September 2007 following the restoration of devolved institutions in Northern Ireland earlier that year).

stage – before very large sums are spent on actual construction that will be with us for decades.

6.11 CABE is responding positively to the need of sponsor departments and other bodies for more reliable measures of performance. During the review period CABE was implementing a programme to develop a robust method of assessing performance based on the concept of the logic model. This is a positive development and has the potential to underpin recommendation 5 which suggests that CABE should give priority to making more explicit the basis on which it assesses design quality and measures performance. This should include the development of an evidence-based strategy to measure the effectiveness for all aspects of its work using wherever possible economic indicators or other robust numerical indicators (although, as noted above, we remain sceptical that such measures will be truly robust as they must at some point make assumptions about things which we believe are essentially not possible to measure with a high degree of certainty). Where this is impossible and judgements about effectiveness must be made on the basis of the testimony of those involved or affected by CABE's work the methods and protocols for gathering and reporting this evidence should be explicit. The strategy should give priority to the gathering of baseline data to allow for annual comparison.

6.12 The brief requires that the review consider how CABE should work effectively with newly empowered organisations at regional and local level. CABE has set up methods of working nationally within the confines of its limited resources. The strategy is based on networks of locally based professionals to provide advice, intelligence and advocacy on a part-time consultancy basis. CABE's regional representatives are professionals in built environment-related disciplines in both public and private sectors that broker relationships, support partnerships and collaborative work with other agencies. Regional programmes work closely with partner organisations including the regional development agencies, Government Offices for the regions, local authorities, regional centres of excellence for regeneration, regional assemblies and urban regeneration companies as well as the regional offices of the professional institutions. Since 2001 CABE has supported architecture and built environment centres (ABECs) in several locations and in many cases was partly responsible for establishing them. In the current year CABE funds 21 centres through its regional funding programme, the recent efficiency review highlighted the efficiency of these ways of working.¹⁸

¹⁸ CABE Review of Efficiency Planning Adsum Consulting June 2008

6.13 In addition CABE has funded eight regional pilot programmes¹⁹ to trial different approaches to working at regional and sub-regional level, including dedicated offices and staff or partnerships in target areas. CABE's design review and enabling services work closely with the regional pilot programmes.

6.14 CABE's impact in the regions is inevitably variable. This is partly due to the differential take-up by potential partners in each region and variations in the patterns of development across the country; and partly the consequence of resource limitations. Where the RDA and other bodies active in a region have joined in partnership with CABE the results have been impressive. Design South West, a strategic alliance of all the key organisations and agencies in the region that is focused on influencing the quality of the built environment, is jointly funded by Creating Excellence (the regional centre for sustainable communities) and CABE. This initiative extends the work pioneered in the earlier project in Devon and Cornwall. The head of Design South West has worked in the region in various roles for many years, has built up strong relationships with key partners across the region and is well placed to provide advice and training on the benefits of good design to various groups including elected members, community groups, design practitioners and regeneration agencies. In the West Midlands – a more compact and urbanised region than the South West – excellent partnerships have been built with the key agencies -- Advantage West Midlands the RDA), MADE (the regional architecture centre) and RegenWM which is working to improve regeneration skills and encourage the pursuit of excellence in order to secure a sustainable future the region. Two design review services operate in the region -- one managed by MADE from its Birmingham premises and the other by Urban Vision North Staffordshire. The successful pilot project in the region to train planning officers and developers in the use of Building for Life as a design and assessment tool in the development control process is a model that could be applied nationwide.

6.15 In this context the often-made distinction between CABE's national and regional activities is perhaps inevitable and is sometimes useful but it can be unhelpful in strategic terms. CABE is a national body that is responsible for delivering its remit across the whole of England and working in partnership with bodies with

¹⁹ Oxfordshire, Devon and Cornwall, East Midlands, East of England, East Lancashire, Liverpool, London and Tees Valley.

similar roles in the devolved administrations. CABI managers understand that its message needs to be communicated and its services delivered effectively throughout the country. The recently announced changes to the arrangements for the devolution of policy and decision-making in England and the creation of the Homes and Communities Agency offer real opportunities for CABI to enhance its effectiveness throughout the country.

6.16 Much of this work is appropriately and efficiently carried out centrally and there are many sound reasons to concentrate a significant part, perhaps the great majority, of CABI's work in central London. However it is also the case that a very significant part of CABI's role involves working in partnership with others to change behaviour at many locations across the country.

6.17 It is clear from our interviews that many do not think this is yet working fully effectively. Facilitating the inclusion of sound design policies in regional spatial strategies and local development documents, establishing and delivering effective enabling programmes and co-ordinating robust design review process across the country demands engagement of CABI staff in all parts of England with the Government Offices and the Regional Development Agencies.

6.18 There was general agreement among those consulted that while an effective CABI presence in all parts of England is essential if its goals are to be met, the establishment of regional offices is neither desirable nor affordable within current funding parameters. However many saw the need for a more clearly defined, purposeful and consistent approach to the delivery of its key messages in all parts of England.

6.19 Design review was often cited as an example of the absence of a truly national approach. CABI is rightly credited with creating an effective system of design review that is well supported by the professions and has gained wide if not universal respect (judging from the responses gathered in the stakeholder reviews²⁰). Most of those consulted regarded the growth in demand for design review especially at regional and local level as an entirely positive development and considered any emerging difficulties to arise from CABI's success in creating an effective approach to project review. The three fundamental concerns were:

²⁰ CABI Stakeholder Review OPM 2006

- lack of clarity about the criteria used to determine whether a project should be reviewed by the national panel or a regional panel
- the authority of regional panels compared with the national panel in relation to the planning process, particularly in appeals against decisions based on design quality
- the quality and consistency of the large number of local panels that have no direct relationship with CABE.

6.20 Many of our interviewees found it difficult to articulate the distinction between a project that was of national rather than regional importance. One thoughtful response suggested that it was a matter of authority and supported the retention of a national panel to consider projects that were likely to set a precedent.

6.21 As is noted in CLG advice to local planning authorities on refereeing schemes for design review “significance is difficult to define precisely because it is not necessarily related to the size of a project, its location or type”²¹. There are differing views about the choices that are made by CABE on what it should consider in design review. One interviewee with substantial experience expressed the view that the process could be more effective if less time was devoted to considering high profile schemes designed by architects of widely acknowledged ability and more effort devoted to those that would have an equally significant impact on their settings and where there was greater potential for substantial improvement. Others were adamant that it was essential that schemes with a high public visibility be selected for review. These are difficult questions of day-to-day judgement by the managers of design review. The effectiveness of CABE in this area could be enhanced if it had the power to require projects that met specifically defined criteria of significance to be submitted for review. We welcome the commitment to consider significant developments across the country but are not convinced that the distinction between national and regional design review is still justified.

6.22 Design review in the UK is an evolving phenomenon and we consider that the direction of evolution should be towards being a truly national service that makes the best use of *all* the talent and experience available. This could be based on the existing model of national and regional panels – in which case there is a need to resolve the difficulties identified above. But we advocate that it be reconfigured as a national design review service delivered at a number of centres across England in

²¹ CLG letter to Chief Planning Officers 2006

partnership with RDAs or other appropriate bodies. This latter approach would remove the distinction between national and regional panels but it does present a challenge in ensuring that the disproportionate concentration of expertise and experience in London is effectively used to inform and support design review across the country. All panels would have the same status in terms of authority and precedent setting.

7 FOCUS, EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY

7.1 The third task was to analyse the focus and effectiveness of CABA's work given that the organisation has experienced rapid growth over its short life. Appendix 2 outlines a timeline for CABA's growth. This shows the growth of CABA and its various functions since inception in 1999. In essence as the body has become more established, the number of staff has risen and the range and breadth of activities grown in response to an increase in the demands made upon it. The core message during CABA's growth is that CABA has been able to become involved in a wide range of activities in pursuit of its core functions and delivery of government objectives.

7.2 The reviewers are satisfied that CABA is effective in that it has a positive and influential role in the promotion of design quality. It is well-known and respected and actively involved with a wide range of partners. However the reviewers have concluded that CABA could be more focused in its future work, thereby utilising its limited resources more appropriately and effectively.

7.3 In our judgement there is no real evidence of inefficiency in CABA apart from some reflections from external parties around the issue of duplication amongst organisations in this sector -- a matter that is much wider than the role of CABA alone and which relates to the large number of agencies and organisations with overlapping roles concerned with the enhancement and protection of the built environment. Indeed many interviewees expressed frustration that CABA could be much more pro-active in working in partnership with other organisations. We believe that CABA has a key role in forming partnerships with other organisations such as the emerging working relationship with the nascent Homes and Communities Agency. Furthermore, we would endorse the message from the CABA Efficiency Review that CABA should deliver its design quality narrative more robustly to sponsoring departments²².

7.4 We believe that CABA's role is crucial in driving the design agenda forward and the evidence is that, when able to, CABA plays a transformative role in the way in which people think about design. As such we believe that CABA adds unique value to the way in which we understand design, therefore it should be able to use its

²² CABA: *Review of Efficiency Planning*. Adsum Consulting Ltd. June 2008

extensive knowledge and experience to either assist other bodies in promoting their message or facilitate their ability to do that work.

7.5 This is not to say that CABE should be responsible for promoting the agendas of other organisations; rather it is the role of CLG and DCMS to assist in clarifying the role of each of these organisations and how they fit into the overall strategy for the achievement of higher environmental quality. We would expect the sponsoring departments to work cooperatively with CABE to define and articulate how it is different and complementary to other organisations and agencies.

7.6 In particular we are concerned that CABE's function might overlap with the new Homes and Communities Agency²³ (HCA). CABE's role should be to support the agency in the delivery of its function, likewise the HCA should use CABE to its full advantage in delivering its objectives. Similarly CABE's work could be used in a much more transformative way to assist organisations such as ABECs, RTPI, RIBA and LPAs to deliver particular programmes. At the heart of this is the need to use its work more effectively to disseminate the good design message. Evidence that CABE is already undertaking this role in some areas can be found in the Thames Gateway regeneration where their work is having a significant impact in embedding a culture of good design within planning.

7.7 The review brief indicated that we should examine the ways in which CABE is and could be involved with other departments. We found compelling evidence that CABE has been particularly effective in its work on the Home Office procurement process -- in the police station construction programme for example. Not only has CABE convinced the HO that better design can both save money and lead to a better product that is much appreciated by users, but it also facilitated the setting up of an in-house design review process that was and is effective in improving the design quality of new police stations across the country. Initial input by CABE empowered officers in the HO to lead a cultural change in the organisation that now sees design quality as central to its building programme. HO staff have been helped to develop their own expertise and have published both design guidance and material showing the improvement in their product²⁴. We believe this is exactly the type of work that CABE excels in and which could be used more effectively in promoting its message.

²³ The remit of the HCA was set out in the Housing and Regeneration Bill 2008. A design remit was added to the function of the HCA by amendment

²⁴ Home Office (2005) Design Quality for Police Buildings. HO: London and Home Office (2008) Police Buildings: Design Policy. HO: London

7.8 A number of interviewees raised the question of the flexibility of CABA to respond to government initiatives that may arise at short notice and can have a significant impact upon agreed work programmes. We believe that it is inappropriate for CABA to be required to undertake, at short notice, work that has not been agreed in advance with the relevant departments without adjustment to existing targets and/or the provision of additional short-term funding. The *Review of Efficiency Planning* raises the question of the balance between core funding and SLA funding and suggests that greater flexibility might be possible if some or all the monies CABA received were consolidated into core funding. This might be possible if our recommendations 3 and 5 were implemented and resulted in a higher level of confidence between CABA and its sponsors.

7.9 One of the recurring themes in the interviews was discussion of the contrasting professional and intellectual cultures of architecture, urban design and planning in this country, which often appear to be separate, exclusive and conflicting rather than cooperative or symbiotic. These differences have deep roots in the academic traditions and learning approaches of the professions and in their institutional structures -- and contrast with those of some continental European counterparts. We certainly heard differing views from individuals within the organisation -- on the one hand some regretted that CABA was neglecting architectural values by retreating from its "core business" of design review -- while others welcomed a much greater engagement with spatial planning policy and sustainable development.

7.10 It was clearly the view of some interviewees that there is a perception that CABA perpetuates these professional divisions, unintentionally perhaps, but with a significant impact upon the way in which good design messages are heard by planners and others working in development and regeneration. Whilst we recognise that CABA in many ways challenges these boundaries we think there is potential for it to positively influence the way in which it is perceived.

7.11 While we recognise that CABA has come a long way in involving itself in planning work²⁵, on balance we consider CABA should more actively engage with the planning profession, emphasising the importance of visioning spatial futures as well as working to embed clearly articulated design policies in emerging regional and local policy frameworks. CABA is currently investigating the concept of strategic

²⁵ CABA's Engagement with the Planning System. CABA note to reviewers, June 2008.

urban design as a potential contribution to creative spatial planning at a sub-regional scale. CABI defines strategic urban design as an approach that provides a framework for understanding all the key spatial considerations that influence the shape of the urban environment at a functional economic scale. The reviewers note that CABI has commissioned further work on this topic to report in 2009. The outcome of this work will be crucial to CABI's future involvement in the planning realm. We believe, however, that CABI can be far more influential and transformative in planning than it is at present. We are convinced that this can be done without prejudicing CABI's excellent record in encouraging and promoting quality in architecture.

7.12 Another aspect of the organisation's capability is its access to the relevant skills for delivering agreed targets. Some interviewees questioned whether CABI's staff profile was appropriate to meet its goals – especially in the area of planning policy development, analytical research capacity and knowledge of government organisation and decision-making. We are convinced that CABI staff team includes a good breadth of skills and is also able to gather further relevant expertise in the various built environment disciplines (through Commissioners, design review and enabling panels, etc). This review does not have the scope or capacity to investigate qualifications and experience of staff but we do consider, however, that there are undoubtedly very strong perceptions about skills in CABI that should be addressed. For some reason CABI is not necessarily seen externally as a body with a rich mix of skills that it can bring to the table. Furthermore, we are sure that CABI can demonstrate how its skills could fit with future government priorities and emerging agendas (such as the changes in the planning system). We therefore support CABI's skills audit and suggest that it demonstrates more clearly to sponsor bodies how the skills profile of its staff resource might match with emerging agendas.

7.13 Certainly if we conceive of a better built environment which relates to both a greater focus on spatial planning and improving townscapes, CABI has a critically important and challenging role in breaking down professional silos. CABI has done excellent work in the form of training: for example for PINS, pilots reviewing LDFs across some of the country, and supporting sub-regional planning strategies (such as the BOB-MK work in the south east) amongst other things. This was universally seen to be beneficial and we suggest that this type of work becomes a much more important part of CABI's function.

7.14 A number of interviewees indicated that the culture of CABE was such that some planners in local planning authorities often understand the value of good design in development projects, thanks to CABE's design review advice, but can be alienated by the types of advice they are given, or indeed do not feel supported in spreading that message in their authorities to other officers and members. In other words the 'culture of planning in local authorities excludes a proper debate around design'²⁶. Planners talked of the need for CABE to be able to speak in the language that they understand and to facilitate deeper understanding rather than apparently dictating a particular position. Again we envision CABE having a much more proactive role in seeking to change the culture of planning to see good design as an integral part of the planning process, rather than something that is dealt with only by architects or designers.

7.15 A particular aspect of communication noted by more than one interviewee (and is referred to in the 2006 Stakeholder Review²⁷) is the apparent ambiguity of some design review reports. While we recognise that the evaluation of design is inherently discursive we agree with the view that design review reports are most helpful to planning authorities in reaching decisions when their recommendations are clearly linked to approved planning policies to ensure that they carry appropriate weight at appeal. Equally a number of people expressed the view that while it was inappropriate and impractical for CABE to have the status of a statutory consultee, a well-defined power of call-in would greatly enhance its influence (as noted above). We believe that, taken together with a reconfiguration of design review on a national basis, these changes would enhance the focus and effectiveness of design review.

7.16 CABE can and should be at the forefront of a revolution in the way we envision the built environment. It should be a translator of the messages of good design for the other built environment professions. In this sense we envisage CABE as an agent of transformation. Again, in many ways CABE does this but these messages could be far more clearly communicated so that, rather than CABE being seen as an organisation that primarily focuses on good design in architecture, it is seen as the catalyst of good design at all scales. There is a significant lack of skills in these disciplines country-wide especially in envisioning futures in which issues of townscape and place are fully understood and in developing appropriate vehicles and policies to deliver them. CABE is well placed to facilitate progress in this field.

²⁹ Interview with former commissioner

²⁷ *CABE Stakeholder Review OPM 2006*

7.17 Too often the quality of emerging townscapes in this country is poor, with the skills of local planning authorities being particularly lacking. CABE has a key role in up-skilling these authorities through its work in the regions (as outlined previously). CABE has been instrumental in getting the design message embedded into national planning guidance. In particular, CABE has been closely involved in drafting and consulting on PPS1 and PPS3. Both these planning policy statements recognise the importance of good design in the planning system. CABE has produced a range of planning focused literature including: Design at a Glance (a quick reference to national design policy), Design and Access Statements (how to write, read and use them), Design at Appeal (advice on dealing with design issues within planning appeals), Making Design Policy Work (how to deliver good design through local development frameworks), Protecting Design Quality in Planning, Guidance on Tall Buildings (joint with English Heritage) and Councillors Guide to Urban Design²⁸. As such CABE has been influential in changing the focus and tone of national guidance in relation to design. We believe that CABE should build on this excellent work, with a focused strategy for the future to embed this policy approach clearing the implementation strategies of local planning authorities. We have a number of suggestions for CABE to review:

- continued and further dissemination through publications which are written for a particular planning audience; publication of more articles of relevance to the professions that matter in planning (in Planning magazine, Estates Gazette for example); publication of material from the excellent pilot projects being undertaken across the country;
- facilitating particular training activities for planners, engineers and others in the built environment (such as the successful PINS training with UWE);
- full engagement in the new regional agenda through the Single Spatial Strategies from inception and strategic work with new regional bodies such as 4NW;
- housing delivery issues which should have a regional focus, for example HMR related issues in the NW for example, eco-towns and urban extensions in the East of England;

²⁸ CABE's *Engagement with the Planning System*. CABE note to reviewers, June 2008.

- monitoring and review of CABA's interventions in the planning process, in particular the reinforcement of CABA's key principles in those documents which it has published; for example local planning authorities might be approached about implementing the tall building guidance more appropriately (published with English Heritage) where this is particularly important;
- explicit involvement in the LDF process in a coordinated manner. CLG has a crucial role in facilitating CABA's involvement. This will be different in each of the regions and will depend upon the particular needs in each region; CLG through the regional Government Offices should provide CABA with guidance in how it might best target its expertise in each region; and
- using the various CABA work elements as training opportunities (design review, enabling, pilots).

7.18 We believe that the structure of the organisation may not be appropriate to meet these challenges, with emphasis too strongly placed on elements of work such as enabling and design review while there is a greater opportunity to realign the organisation to deliver more strategic outcomes. We therefore suggest that CABA, DCMS and CLG review the structure of CABA to more appropriately reflect a need for the organisation to engage with planning.

7.19 Furthermore, some concern was expressed that there can often be more than one person in CABA working on a particular subject area or geographical area, and that those people do not necessarily know that there are others working on closely-related projects. This is frustrating for external partners as was illustrated in evidence from a number of interviewees. As such it may be that the management of information internally needs some attention. CABA has indicated that this is in place but we would recommend an agreed system for resolving who is involved and what has been undertaken in specific geographical regions so that staff can check easily for related work when they are advising external stakeholders.

7.20 Implementing each of the recommendations which stem from this chapter will more closely align CABA's activities with those of the government departments. Recommendation 2 suggests that CABA should more explicitly and comprehensively engage with the planning system. It also suggests that CABA ensure that the skills

profile of its staff resource matches with the evolving pattern of tasks defined in the corporate strategy. Finally, Recommendation 4 suggests that CABE should undertake a review of its learning and dissemination strategy. Each of these recommendations will seek to deliver against key government PSAs. In particular PSA 20 (increase long term housing supply), 21 (build more cohesive, empowered and active communities), 23 (make communities safer) and 27 (lead global effort to avoid dangerous climate change) will be addressed through the implementation of these recommendations.

8 DEPARTMENTAL & OTHER KEY RELATIONSHIPS

8.1 CABE's strategic relationships were one of the recurring topics in many of the interviews undertaken and literature reviewed²⁹. While CABE has a high profile in architectural and urban design circles across the country we believe that its influence can be enhanced.

8.2 Firstly, the relationship between CABE and the two sponsoring departments is an area in which we were asked to make specific recommendations. It appears that the organisations work well at the operational level, with the officers directly involved relating and communicating well together. There was a feeling however, supported by a number of interviews, that this work needs to be better supported at a senior level.

8.3 Several interviewees said that there was a lack of regular communication at senior level in order to maintain focus on core activities and direction. Indeed some of the interviewees from the sponsoring departments were aware that this strategic level of communication has existed in the past but had fallen by the wayside.

8.4 In particular we recommend quarterly, high level strategic meetings each designed to achieve the following:

- continued alignment of CABE's activities in relation to CLG and DCMS priorities;
- agree priorities for CABE to advise both government departments;
- outlining where potential conflicts and tensions are emerging;
- areas where there can be greater synergy in working between the organisations; and,
- facilitate discussion of emerging policy areas that might need CABE's advice or involvement.

8.5 The review team recognises that the types of strategic cooperation which CABE has with DCMS and CLG will be different given the disparity in the size of the various departments. That being said strategic guidance from both organisations is crucial, in our opinion, to the continued and future working of CABE.

²⁹CABE's relationship with Government departments. Note provided by CABE, July 2008.

8.6 The reviewers also have a strong feeling that CABA is under-exploited by CLG in particular and CLG 'don't do enough to challenge CABA'³⁰. We see CABA as both outward and inward facing agency that advises both sponsoring departments and the external world on matters related to design and the built environment: eco-towns, housing market renewal, housing provisions, urban extensions, LDF quality, Single Regional Strategies amongst other things. However we recognise that CLG is a huge body that could take up all of CABA's capacity in fulfilling this role. We envisage a key role for the strategic high-level meetings in indicating what the design priorities of CLG should be and how CABA can provide appropriate advice and evidence of relevant practice. In this way CABA can positively influence how CLG both conceives of particular policies and operationalises them.

8.7 Interviewees also considered that the relationship with DCMS was positive but that the organisations should have regular high level meetings with senior staff in order for a clear link to be made between the objectives of the department and CABA. Again, we envisage a CABA which can continue to positively influence the way the department conceives and delivers specific projects. CABA's contribution to the development of the building programme for the Olympics is a positive manifestation of how this is done at present.

8.8 There was also a suggestion from interviewees that CABA could engage more positively with other government departments, which we would endorse. CABA has relationships with all of the key departments yet its impact is variable, partly because of the culture of those departments. Positive messages from the government departments that we spoke to (Home Office, DCSF as discussed above) were heard but we are aware that this relationship is not of a similar quality in other government departments and within departments. While we recognise that CABA does engage with all government departments to the best of its ability in a range of ways³¹, there is obviously further work to be done to improve the understanding of good design in some key areas. We suggest that CABA should focus on "opening more doors" with government (with the clear support and assistance of DCMS and CLG) based on its ability to assist in improving the output of departments and potentially to make longer term cost savings. We would recommend that CABA-DCMS-CLG prioritise where CABA's influence might be most needed in other government departments and agree a strategy for engaging them over the next 3 year corporate strategy. One

³⁰ Interview with senior CLG staff member

³¹ CABA's relationship with Government departments. Note provided by CABA, July 2008

particular area of work where we envisage some positive contribution, as does CABE itself, is with the Department of Transport, especially given recent announcements on the possibility of significant investment in rail infrastructure, light rail schemes and congestion charging. The potential impacts of these areas of investment on the quality of the built environment could be significant and CABE should be enabled to positively influence these agendas.

8.9 The creation of strategic working groups between CABE-DCMS-CLG will have a positive impact on the delivery of government PSAs in general. Furthermore, the focused use of CABE's expertise in design issues towards specific government departments such as the Department of Transport will directly address PSA5 (deliver reliable and efficient transport networks), PSA6 (deliver the conditions for business success in the UK) and PSA27 (lead the global effort to avoid dangerous climate change) amongst others. Therefore Recommendation 3 is that CABE works with government departments (including both sponsor departments) in a more focused and strategic way.

9 CONCLUSIONS

9.1 We would like to reiterate that we think CABE does an excellent job of spreading the message of good design.

9.2 Within this context our recommendations for action by the sponsoring departments and CABE itself are designed to enhance CABE's effectiveness and influence for the future, building on the excellent work that it undertakes at present. We believe that CABE is a force for good and that it can use its expertise, knowledge and respect to push the quality design agenda into those areas where there has historically been resistance to hearing, understanding and applying the message.

9.3 At the core of our recommendations is a call for CABE, with the assistance of both DCMS and CLG, to continue to break down the silo mentality of the various built environment disciplines. We suggest that CABE has a key role in this and should continue to proactively involve itself in work where this agenda can be promoted, as well as using its experience of particular pilot projects to teach, train and facilitate deep understanding of the issues and potential solutions.

9.4 There is a real and urgent opportunity to re-imagine the role of CABE as a national body that reaches the whole of England in partnership with the bodies delivering the devolution agenda. In particular there is an opportunity for CABE to engage more explicitly and methodically with the planning system to seek to embed the culture of quality design within all layers of planning work.

9.5 In addition we make recommendations that will enhance the strategic relationships that CABE has and might have in the future. It is essential that CABE continues to promote itself and the quality design agenda in a focused, agreed way with the assistance of the sponsoring departments.

9.6 In this way we believe that CABE can build on its fundamental strengths in order to drive the quality design agenda forward in the future.

10 RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1

That CABE develops a strategy to more effectively influence design outcomes in all parts of England in response to the government's agenda for the devolution of decision-making.

Action

CABE, in close co-operation with sponsor departments, should develop a strategy to eliminate the distinction between national and regional activities in the delivery of its services, while retaining and enhancing strong strategic links with central government. This should include the further development of flexible ways of working that respond to the diverse patterns of activity in the regions to ensure that CABE is effectively represented at staff and Commissioner level throughout England. Appoint or relocate CABE members of staff to work in partner agencies to coordinate CABE's role in each of the regions. In parallel implement the proposal of the *Review of Efficiency Planning* to move to an organisation structure based more firmly on the expertise of the directorates and a delivery pattern based on cross -directorate teams.

Outcome

A more consistent and effective delivery of CABE's remit across the whole of England, delivering fuller ownership of the design quality agenda at regional and local level, empowering RDAs and Government Offices, amongst others, to deliver consistent and robust design review and enabling services throughout the country and ensuring that the excellent skills at CABE's disposal benefit the whole of England.

Relevant PSAs

Sustainable growth & prosperity: **1 2 6 7**

Fairness and opportunity for all: **8 10 11 12 13 14**

Stronger communities and a better quality of life: **18 20 21 23**

A more secure, fair and environmentally sustainable world: **27 28**

RECOMMENDATION 2

That the sponsor departments work with CABE to develop appropriate ways for CABE to more actively and methodically engage in the planning system through the new regional structure

Action

Develop the existing planning expertise of the organisation, giving explicit recognition to the importance of planning, to more effectively promote design values including strategies to both limit and adapt to climate change. An enhanced planning team should work through emerging regional structures (recommendation 1) to engage with local authorities, the HCA and other agencies with priorities for each region being set in conjunction with DCMS, CLG, Government Offices and RDAs.

Implicit within this is that skills need to be improved across the spectrum in the planning professions. CABE can promote its wide skill base to attract opportunities for changing and improving skills in design in planning authorities in particular. A greater emphasis on planning and liaison with other government departments, organisations and stakeholders and reconsideration of CABE's approach to delivering its message across the whole country (as recommended above) as well as addressing climate change, is likely to require a more explicit alignment of CABE's staff profile with key priorities. A skills strategy should be jointly developed with sponsor departments and other partners as appropriate in relation to an evolving corporate plan and service level agreements.

Outcome

A more effective planning system that contributes directly to transformation of the culture of planning across the country leading to better designed buildings and places which contribute the achievement of policy outcomes.

Relevant PSAs

Sustainable growth & prosperity: **1 2 6 7**

Fairness and opportunity for all: **8 10 11 12 13 14**

Stronger communities and a better quality of life: **18 20 21 23**

A more secure, fair and environmentally sustainable world: **27 28**

RECOMMENDATION 3

That CABE works with government departments (including both sponsor departments) in a more focused and strategic way

Action

Sponsor departments work with CABE, building on the many examples of past and present success, to encourage all government departments to take full advantage of CABE's knowledge and skills in all policy matters that have an impact on the built environment, and support CABE in presenting itself as the key advisor on design. This effort needs to be guided by regular strategic meetings between senior staff at CABE, CLG, DCMS and carried through by a flexible team of staff responding to particular requests while also seeking out new opportunities. The effectiveness of this proposal will be enhanced by implementing the organisational changes recommended in the *Review of Efficiency Planning* aimed at improving communication between directorates. Initially more resources should be devoted to relationships with the Department of Transport. In addition DCMS and CLG should prioritise a clarification of the role of each of the organisations which are sponsored as NDPBs working in design and the built environment. Clarification should be provided around the roles of each of these organisations and how they all contribute to the goal of higher design quality. We would expect DCMS and CLG to assist CABE in defining and articulating how it is different, distinct and complementary to other organisations and agencies, including the HCA.

CABE should continue to work with DCMS and CLG to implement the need to make 3% savings over the coming 3 financial years. Not only should the parties review what activities are central to CABE's future in the drafting of the new Corporate Strategy (and therefore what activities might be peripheral to those core activities), they should discuss involvement in revenue generating activities as suggested in the *Review of Efficiency Planning*.

Outcome

Productive relationships that give CABE the opportunity to make the case for the importance of design at the earliest and most strategic stages of policy development, with the potential outcome that design considerations are built into policy thinking at all levels of action as part of the culture change to which the

government is committed. A clear understanding of the complementary roles of all agencies involved in design issues for key stakeholders.

Relevant PSAs

Sustainable growth & prosperity: **1 2 6 7**

Fairness and opportunity for all: 8 **10 11** 12 13 14

Stronger communities and a better quality of life: 18 **20 21 23**

A more secure, fair and environmentally sustainable world: **27 28**

RECOMMENDATION 4

That CABE undertakes a review of its learning and dissemination strategy, to make sure that it utilises its experience of the last 9 years to drive the design quality agenda forward

Action

Carry out a review of its publications (papers, pamphlets, web presence etc) as part of an overall strategy of spreading design awareness based on its extensive work over the last 9 years. The review should consider what information held by CABE can be utilised most effectively in a dissemination strategy. Are there key design review notes that could be practically published to drive an improvement in the design quality of schemes for example? Is there experience from the review of LDFs that could be published to assist LPAs in their function? The media, content, language and style of all materials must continue to be appropriate to the full range of target audiences and all published materials should have a clear focus and intended outcome.

Outcome

A focused learning and dissemination strategy that clearly identifies target audiences and their needs, supports the broad cultural advocacy role of CABE, contributes to meeting specific government policy goals and fully exploits the potential of CABE's own activities – including the experience of design review, enabling and other activities.

Relevant PSAs

This recommendation does not directly focus on specific policy outcomes - it is a matter of improving the effectiveness of communication.

RECOMMENDATION 5

That CABE makes more explicit how it assesses the effectiveness of its activities

Action

At the heart of CABE's mission is the promotion of the social and economic value of good design in the built environment. It has brought together extensive evidence of how good design benefits society and has clearly set out the dimensions of design quality in *Design Review* and other publications. CABE needs to build on this existing work to develop a coherent evidence-based strategy to measure the effectiveness of all aspects of its work. Where possible (and we recognise that the scope for this is seriously limited) it should be based on economic or other robust numerical indicators. Where this is impossible and judgements about effectiveness must be made on the basis of the testimony of those involved or affected by CABE's work, the methods and protocols for gathering and reporting this evidence should be explicit. The strategy should give priority to building on existing baseline data to allow for annual comparison.

Outcome

A clear basis for judging the overall performance of CABE in the future that allows for effective planning of work and allows sponsor departments to monitor progress.

Relevant PSAs

This recommendation does not directly focus on specific policy outcomes - it focuses on clarifying and communicating the impact of design on the economic success and social cohesion of the nation.

APPENDIX 1

Representatives from the following organisations were interviewed:

ADVANTAGE WEST MIDLANDS

AIMS

ALEXI MARMOT ASSOCIATES

ARCHITECTURE CENTRE DEVON AND CORNWALL

ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN SCOTLAND

BRISTOL ARCHITECTURE CENTRE

CABE

CLG

CREATING EXCELLENCE SOUTH WEST REGENERATION CENTRE

DCMS

DCFW

DCSF

DEFRA

DEGW

ENGLISH HERITAGE

ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

HOMES AND COMMUNITIES AGENCY

HOUSING CORPORATION

LIVERPOOL CITY COUNCIL

HOME OFFICE

MADE

PLANNING INSPECTORATE

RIBA

RICS

RTPI

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

URBAN DESIGN LONDON

UWE

APPENDIX 2

Summary of CABE's history, growth, and key events since 1999

Year	Key events	Commissioners, staff & resources	Key outputs	Key publications	Examples of notable projects
1999/00	CABE set up by government on 1 st September 1999	Stuart Lipton appointed as Chairman 7 Commissioners 5 staff Core funding: £0.51m	Design review committee (3 members)	<i>Towards an urban renaissance</i> published by DETR	
2000/01	First full year of operation Enabling programme set up	Jon Rouse appointed as Chief Executive 13 commissioners 11 staff Core funding: £1.53m Service Level Agreements with DTLR, Arts Council and Lord Chancellor's department	65 schemes reviewed by design review and informal advice on a further 65 schemes Design review committee expanded to 18 members Enabling panel established: 11 members Regional committee established: 9 members	<i>Urban White paper</i> published by DETR <i>Better Public Buildings</i> published by the Government <i>By Design</i> published by DETR/CABE <i>Value of Urban Design</i>	World squares masterplan for Trafalgar Square reviewed Selfridges store, Birmingham reviewed London Bridge Tower reviewed Enabling provided strategic advice to government's sure start and court building programme
2001/02		14 commissioners 16 staff Core funding: £1.53m	87 schemes reviewed by design review committee and informal advice on a further 200 projects Design review committee expanded to 24 members Enabling panel expanded to 100 experts	<i>Design review – guidance on how CABE evaluates quality in architecture and urban design</i> <i>Building in Context</i> published by CABE/English Heritage	Draft criteria for evaluating proposals for tall buildings (joint with EH) Building for life campaign launched (targeted at volume housebuilders) Prime Minister's Better Public Building Award launched: Winner Tate Modern
2002/03	Government publishes	14 commissioners	97 schemes reviewed	<i>The value of good design</i>	Prime minister's

Year	Key events	Commissioners, staff & resources	Key outputs	Key publications	Examples of notable projects
	<p>Sustainable Communities Plan</p> <p>Government publishes <i>Living Places: cleaner, safer, greener</i></p> <p>First year of CABE's regional funding programme £1m</p>	<p>32 staff</p> <p>Core funding: £3.55m</p> <p>Service Level Agreements with NHS estates for acute hospital and primary care trusts</p>	<p>through design review committee and informal advice on further 300 projects</p> <p>CABE Enablers advised on over 100 publicly funded projects</p>	<p>First issue of <i>Design reviewed</i></p> <p><i>Guidance on Tall Buildings</i> (joint with English Heritage) published</p>	<p>better public building initiative – nine new departmental action plans published</p> <p>CABE Library of case studies launched on the website</p> <p>Streets of Shame campaign</p>
2003/04	<p>CABE Space set up (May 2003)</p> <p>CABE Education formally launched (Oct 2003)</p> <p>Healthy hospital campaign</p>	<p>16 commissioners</p> <p>65 staff</p> <p>Core funding: £10.88m (DCMS & ODPM)</p> <p>Core funding secured from ODPM (previously just DCMS)</p>	<p>102 schemes assessed by design review committee and informal advice on further 370 projects</p> <p>Enabling panel expanded to 167 experts</p>	<p><i>Creating excellent buildings</i></p> <p><i>Creating successful masterplans: a guide for clients</i> (March 2004)</p> <p><i>Guidance on tall buildings</i> (with English Heritage)</p> <p><i>Protecting design quality in planning</i></p> <p><i>Manifesto for better public space</i></p>	<p>CABE Enabling established links with nine pathfinders in Housing Market Renewal areas and ran first of 4 Housing Quality Forums</p> <p>Building Futures launched, with RIBA</p> <p>Better public buildings campaign</p>
2004/05	<p>DCMS funding: £4m</p> <p>ODPM funding: £8m</p> <p>New corporate strategy 'Transforming neighbourhoods'</p>	<p>16 commissioners</p> <p>John Sorrell appointed as Chairman</p> <p>Richard Simmons appointed as Chief Executive</p> <p>80 staff in November 2004</p>	<p>30 members design review committee</p> <p>Enabling panel 168 members</p> <p>First Urban Design Summer School</p>	<p><i>Design review-ed masterplans</i></p> <p><i>Design review-ed urban housing</i></p> <p><i>Design review-ed town centre retail</i></p> <p><i>Creating successful neighbourhoods: lessons and actions for housing market renewal</i></p> <p><i>Planning policy statement 1 (PPS1)</i> published by government puts design at centre of planning policy</p>	<p>Urban design summer school established</p> <p>Housing audit</p> <p>Sustainable communities summit (co-sponsored by CABE)</p> <p>Design East Lancashire set up</p>
2005/06	<p>CABE becomes statutory body</p>	<p>16 commissioners</p>	<p>Design review committee has</p>	<p><i>Delivering great places to live</i></p>	<p>Key staff seconded to</p>

Year	Key events	Commissioners, staff & resources	Key outputs	Key publications	Examples of notable projects
	(Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005)	100 staff in January 2006 Core funding: £11.11m	33 members 319 schemes seen Enabling panel 170 members CABE Space enabling panel 79 enablers 22 Regional representatives	(Building for Life) <i>Start with the Park</i> (CABE Space) <i>Making Places</i> careers leaflet <i>Manual for Streets</i> (with DoT)	the Olympic Delivery Authority to advise on design Partnership with PROJECT makes £220,000 available for artists' regeneration projects CABE Housing Audit of new housing in the north of England New web-site launched, making downloads easier
2006/07	Guidance to help architects and clients prepare design and access statements attract over 80,000 downloads from the web-site Olympic Design Review Panel established Schools design panel established	16 commissioners 102 staff Core funding: £10.72m	Design review committee of 40 people saw 401 schemes 3800 training session were delivered 275 enablers on the panel 23 regional representatives	<i>New things happen: a guide to the future</i> <i>Thames Gateway</i> <i>Housing audit: assessing the design quality of new housing in the East Midlands, West Midlands and the South West (also includes national summary)</i> <i>The Cost of Bad Design</i>	Launch of Spaceshaper 1.4 million web visitors £13.5 billion of public expenditure spent more wisely because of CABE advice
2007/08	Climate Change festival	16 commissioners 120 staff Core funding: £11.59m £4 690 000 from DCMS £6 900 000 from CLG with additional from SLAs	Olympic Design Review panel continues to comment on Olympic plans	<i>Civilised streets</i>	First climate change festival in Birmingham – 181 events, 30,000 pupils, 420 city professionals engaged in Hothouses <i>How places work</i> completed its 2 year programme.

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