

## **REPORT TO INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE – 24 AUGUST 2017**

### **ABERDEENSHIRE DESIGN AWARD SCHEME**

#### **1. Recommendations**

**The Committee is recommended to approve:**

- 1.1 The categories of award;**
- 1.2 The retention of the public vote but only for student entries;**
- 1.3 The membership of the judging panel;**
- 1.4 The venue for the next awards ceremony;**
- 1.5 The retention of a guest speaker; and**
- 1.6 The appointment of an event management company.**

#### **2. Background/Discussion**

- 2.1 The biennial Aberdeenshire Design Award Scheme has operated successfully since 1997 as a means of raising the profile of good design, with the most recent award ceremony taking place on 1 September 2016.
- 2.2 The Scheme has been considered a cost effective means of obtaining a benchmark for the quality of recent development, the effectiveness of policies and the development management process. It has also been an excellent means of not only stimulating greater awareness, but promoting excellence and innovation.
- 2.3 The 2016 Awards Scheme was changed to acknowledge 'The Year of Innovation, Architecture & Design'. The previous seven categories were replaced by six conceptual design categories, a masterplanning category, and a built category. Two new awards were also added: public vote and best overall student submission. These changes sought to place greater emphasis on innovative design, facilitate entries from students and emerging designers who had limited or no track record of built achievements, and, stimulate greater awareness of and engagement in design.
- 2.4 The submission process was also altered in response to the category and award changes, with entrants required to submit two A1 display boards incorporating supporting text, instead of forwarding electronic submissions. This change enabled entrants to submit additional images and background information on their project which was considered to be beneficial at the first phase of the selection process. The modification also reduced the workload for the Planning Service but it may have contributed to the reduced number of entries received in 2016.

- 2.5 A Report on the outcome of the 2016 Awards and the feedback received was considered by the six Area Committees in January and February 2017. Their comments were considered in a Report to the Infrastructure Services Committee on 16 March 2017 which sought comments on the future direction of the 2018 Design Awards. A copy of the minute of that meeting is attached at **Appendix 1**. As a result of comments received from the six Area Committees and the Infrastructure Services Committee the following format is proposed for the 2018 Design Awards.

### Categories

- 2.6 The following mix of both conceptual and built categories are suggested to encourage a mix of entries. The categories and criteria for each have been chosen to reflect current topical themes and issues in Planning.

### Conceptual Awards

- Student Award                      Masterplanning – focus on design to meet the changing demographics of Aberdeenshire such as dementia friendly development
- Innovative Solutions to Meeting Housing Needs                      Sheltered/Affordable housing development

### Built Awards

- Conservation and Building Adaptation                      Re-use of existing buildings.
- Communities for the Future                      Residential developments which create communities for people as well as deliver housing.
- Innovative Single House Development                      Individual properties which create;
  - physical value - enhances a setting;
  - functional value - meets and adapts to the long-term needs of all users;
  - viability - provides good value for money;
  - social value - develops a positive sense of identity; and
  - environmental value - efficient and responsible use of resources.
- Business Enterprise                      Community and commercial developments.
- Landscape Design                      Green infrastructure, landscape design and placemaking

Public Vote

Restrict to student entries

Judging Panel

- 2.7 It is suggested that a single Judging Panel should assess all entries and include the Chair & Vice Chair of the Infrastructure Services Committee, plus five external representatives from the Aberdeen Society of Architects, Historic Environment Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage, Planning & Architectural Division (Scottish Government), and the Scott Sutherland School of Architecture. Inclusion of external specialists as judges will allow for greater input in the appraisal of the submissions, particularly the conceptual category.

Venue

- 2.8 A number of alternative locations to Haddo and Woodend Barn have been investigated and the suggested venue is the Garioch Heritage Centre, Inverurie (*to be confirmed*). Consideration has been given to School venues, but issues in relation to gaining access for event set up during school hours' means they are not currently a practical option. Consideration is also being given to the use of a professional event manager to provide fresh input into the Awards. A small number of professional event managers have been approached to gauge interest and to establish costs. One company has expressed an interest in both managing the award process and the ceremony. Details of costs are included at paragraph 4.2. Appointment of a professional company would provide a fresh input into the Awards and greatly reduce the need for input by staff within the Planning & Building Standards Service.

Guest Speaker

- 2.9 The use of a guest speaker is to be retained because of its value in facilitating professional development of Council personnel and stimulating greater interest at the Awards Ceremony.
- 2.10 A provisional programme for the 2018 Awards is attached at **Appendix 2** with the launch on 9 October 2017 and Awards Ceremony taking place on 6 September 2018.
- 2.11 The Head of Finance and the Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this Report. Their comments are incorporated within the Report and they are satisfied that the Report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.

**3 Scheme of Governance**

- 3.1 The Committee is able to consider and take a decision on this item in terms of Section F.1.1.1 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as it relates to the Council's policy issues in relation to Planning and Building Standards.

#### **4. Equalities, Staffing and Financial Implications**

- 4.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required because the recommended actions will not have a differential impact on people with protected characteristics.
- 4.2 The organisation of the Design Awards requires dedicated staff time from both Infrastructure Services and Business Services, with over 700 hours of planners' time spent on the organisation and administration of the 2016 awards. The use of a professional Event Manager would reduce the overall staff time being put into the Awards and reduce the burden on planning staff. The estimated cost of appointing an Event Manager to manage the ceremony would be £4,200 plus VAT, and to manage the Award process an additional £2,700 plus VAT.
- 4.3 A sum of approximately £9,500 will be required for the Design Awards Scheme in each of the financial years 2017/2018 and 2018/2019, totalling £19,000, if an Event Manager is appointed. This sum will be met from the Planning and Building Standards Budget, (Environment page 47, Line 34 other Supplies and Services).
- 4.4 The fee for employing the services of a guest speaker in 2016 was £6429 with 50% of this cost attributed to continuing professional development of sixty Officers. The full cost of a guest speaker for 2018 will be require to be met from Planning & Building Standards Budget training budgets.

**Stephen Archer**

**Director of Infrastructure Services**

Report prepared by: Shaun Norman, Environment Planner

Date: 7 July 2017

**EXTRACT OF MINUTE OF MEETING OF INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES  
WOODHILL HOUSE, ABERDEEN, 16 MARCH, 2017**

**PLANNING AND BUILDING STANDARDS  
5. ABERDEENSHIRE DESIGN AWARD SCHEME**

There had been circulated a report dated 3 February, 2017, by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which provided information and feedback on the Aberdeenshire Design Awards 2016; detailed comments from the area committees on the future direction of the Design Awards; and sought consideration of the format of the 2018 awards including the categories of award, the public vote and student award, the ceremony venue, membership of the judging panel, the guest speaker, and potential sponsorship.

The Head of Service (Planning and Building Standards) advised that an initial steer on the future direction of the awards was sought from Members and a full proposal would be brought back to the Committee in due course.

The Committee **agreed** to provide the following views on the future format of the Aberdeenshire Design Award Scheme:-

**Categories of Award**

- (1) There should be a mix of both conceptual and as built categories. There was support for reinstatement of as built categories. Some Members felt that the conceptual categories should be restricted but others commented on their merit.
- (2) It was suggested that a themed competition would aid comparison of entries.
- (3) It was suggested that there could be categories related to the reuse of old buildings and regeneration of town centres.

**Public Vote and Student Award**

- (4) Some Members felt that the public vote had worked well but there was a need for further consideration of its merit. Some Members suggested that the public vote could be limited to the student award.
- (5) The student award was valuable and should be retained but should only be open to students in Aberdeenshire.

**Venue**

- (6) The idea of moving the awards ceremony around suitable venues in different areas was supported.
- (7) It was suggested that consideration be given to Aberdeenshire Council properties such as schools.
- (8) It was suggested that there was a need for a fresh look at event management at the awards ceremony.

**Membership of Judging Panel**

- (9) Representatives from the Scott Sutherland School of Architecture and the Aberdeen Society of Architects on the judging panel had been useful in 2016. Expert advisors in 2014 had also been helpful.

**Guest Speaker**

- (10) There was support for retaining a guest speaker and the value in terms of continuous professional development for staff and attracting people to the awards ceremony was highlighted.

**Sponsorship**

- (11) Members were wary of seeking private sponsorship and highlighted the need to consider the implications of doing so and the ownership of the awards.

## APPENDIX 2

<b>Provisional Programme for 2018 Awards</b>	
Commencement Date	9 October 2017
Closing date for entries	23 February 2018
First phase of judging process (Conceptual Design)	20 April 2018
First phase of judging process (Built Schemes)	20 April 2018
Final phase of judging process (Conceptual Design)	8 June 2018
Public Vote (Student Submissions)	11 May 2018 – 1 June 2018
Site Visits & Final judging (Built Schemes)	16 & 17 June 2018
Awards Ceremony	6 September 2018