

SHETLAND

Quality Audit Guidance

2024-25



SHETLAND
ISLANDS COUNCIL

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Quality Audit

From Concept to Final Design

The Shetland Islands Council's Planning Authority has always encouraged early engagement with designers and developers. Early engagement and dialogue at the start of the project design phase, can help ensure positive outcomes throughout the planning process and can aid in the delivery of higher quality and better informed development on the ground.

What is a Quality Audit?

The Quality Audit (QA) process, as devised and introduced by the Scottish Government and further developed by the Shetland Islands Council, is there to help you as designers and agents participate in effective and meaningful stakeholder engagement.

The Quality Audit process can be as formal and as detailed as you require it to be, or as dictated by the varying scales and complexities of your development.

The QA process is led by you - the designer. It is a sequence of checks to inform the design process and to allow you to present your reasoning and design decisions. But importantly, it is also an opportunity for you to receive regular feedback from planners and key stakeholders, during the various stages of the design process. This aids submission of well-informed and higher quality planning applications, and applications for other relevant consents.



Why start a Quality Audit?

The importance of early engagement cannot be overstated – especially in the delivery of medium to large projects. Early engagement can help identify issues that may have design and layout implications for your proposal. Issues that are simpler to address and respond to at the early concept stages, rather than later on at the detailed design stage.

The QA process is an opportunity for you to set a series of minuted meetings, where all relevant stakeholders are present during the various stages of the design process. From concept to final submission.

The minutes of the meeting are an important aspect of the process and should catch and record feedback from all stakeholders around the table. The QA meetings can be a negotiative process, and decisions on aspects of the development's design will be recorded and sent to all participants for final agreement. This helps instil clarity and certainty in the planning process, through collaborative working and meaningful engagement.

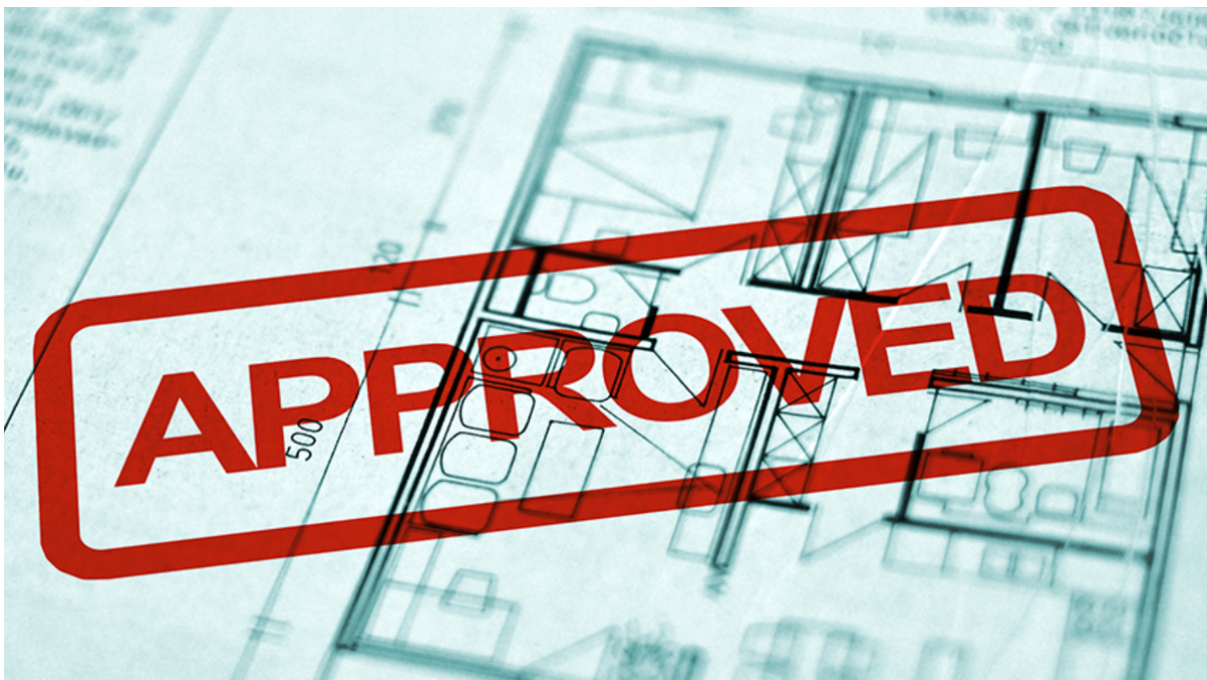


Your planning application

When you submit your planning application, Development Management will consult with statutory and non-statutory stakeholders as part of the planning process and application assessment. If you have followed a QA, then most (or all) consultees will have knowledge and understanding of your project and will have had – at some point – input into its design and layout. So you should not expect any ‘showstoppers’ in terms of consultee responses, or any consultee expecting major redesigns of your proposal.

This helps aid a better transition through the planning application assessment, and will aid other consent applications such as your Roads Construction Consent for example.

The QA process will also help ensure that your development meets the requirements of good Placemaking as set out within the National Planning Framework 4, and that it meets relevant policies contained within the Shetland Local Development Plan.



Who takes part in a Quality Audit?

As many stakeholders as you want or as many as you think would bring value at the various stages of your design process.

In the early stages you may wish to invite a specific number of stakeholders to the initial meetings, and as the design phases progress, some stakeholders may no

longer be required. Then when needed, other expertise-specific stakeholders may be invited for their input.

How do I start a Quality Audit?

It is you who initiates the QA process and it is you who dictates the frequency of design meetings.

You should firstly make contact with the Planning Department on 01595 744 293, for initial discussions regarding your project. That is the chance to discuss whether or not your proposal would benefit from the QA process, and for the Planning Department to advise you on who should attend your QA.

You need to:

- Make contact with the Planning Department who will be happy to speak through the QA process with you, and offer some advice on who needs to be invited to your design meetings;
- Decide on the stakeholders who will attend each meeting and who you should contact (Road Services, SEPA, SSE, NatureScot, HES etc);
- Decide on the frequency of each meeting (this can be agreed on during the first meeting of stakeholders);
- Take minutes of each meeting. This is an important part of the QA process so you have a record of progress and any agreed changes etc. This will also be helpful background information for your planning application;
- Send out minutes to each stakeholder for signing off/agreement;
- Move on to next meeting (frequency of meetings may change depending on where you are at within the design process);
- Final meeting; and
- Submission of your planning application.

The Next Local Development Plan 2

Within the next Local Development Plan 2, it is proposed that it will be policy that all medium to large scale developments must go through the QA process, including developments classed as Major Development under The Town and Country Planning (Hierarchy of Developments) (Scotland) Regulations 2009. However, a QA can be undertaken for all scales of development if it is deemed that engagement with planners and stakeholders would be beneficial.

If you have any questions regarding the Quality Audit process or this guidance, then please feel free to contact the Planning Department on 01595 744 293 or email development.management@shetland.gov.uk or development.plans@shetland.gov.uk.

Further Information:

Potential Stakeholders (this list is not exhaustive, but an indication of who you may engage with during the QA process).

- Shetland Islands Council - Road Services
- Scottish Environmental Protection Agency
- Historic Environment Scotland
- Nature Scot
- Scottish Water
- Scottish and Southern Energy
- Shetland Regional Archaeologist
- Transport Planning
- Colin Smith – Shetland Islands Council – Planning Drainage Engineer
- Liam Drosso – Shetland Islands Council - Outdoor Access Officer
- Shetland Islands Council – Marine Planning Section

Useful Links

[National Planning Framework 4](#)

[Creating Places](#)

[Designing Streets](#)

[Designing Streets Toolkit](#)

[Auditing Quality Using Designing Streets](#)

[Local Development Plan 2014](#)

[Shetland Islands Council Placemaking Guide](#)

[National Roads Development Guide – Variation for Shetland Islands Council Area](#)



Contact
Development Plans
Development Services
8 North Ness Business Park,
Lerwick,
Shetland,
ZE1 0LZ

Email on: development.plans@shetland.gov.uk

Phone on +44 (01595) 744293



SHETLAND Local Development Plan