

Clive Betts MP
Communities and Local Government Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

28 November 2016

Dear Mr Betts,

I am writing in regard to the inquiry that your committee is currently undertaking on Public Parks. Specifically, I am writing to clarify the status of the historic programme "CABE Space" which has been referenced in recent evidence hearings.

CABE Space was set up as a specialist programme in 2003 by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE). Its aim was to spread best practice about the design and management of public space, including parks. All the material that was generated as part of CABE Space can still be accessed online, here: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110118095356/http://www.cabe.org.uk/about/cabe-space>

As you know, CABE was a government-funded agency, supported by DCLG. In 2011, CABE was merged with Design Council, and ceased to be a non-departmental public body. We are now a self-sustaining charity, working across the built environment, public and private sectors. As part of this merger, some programmes were closed or changed, including CABE Space.

Today, Design Council's work extends across the design and development of the built environment, including public parks. Much of our work includes providing direct advice and support to local authorities, developers and architects. Whether it is an individual scheme or at a more strategic level, this advice covers the entirety of the built environment.

We also manage a number of national strategic programmes. An example of this is our work around Inclusive Environments, which aims to encourage the creation of places that meet the needs of the diversity of people who want to use them (see: <http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/inclusive-environments>). This work includes parks, as part of the broader built environment.

Our work in the Olympic Park typifies the impact of what we do. Through our Design Review panels, we reviewed the structures that became the Olympic Park we know today. Our work directly ensured that it was of the highest standards (in terms of

sustainability, accessibility, health impacts, etc.). And, since 2012, we have been ensuring that this best practice is shared with policymakers and others.

We are very pleased that the excellent work done under the banner of CABE Space is still being used. Parks are an essential part of social infrastructure, and all the evidence suggests that access to green space is a major determinant of health and wellbeing outcomes. Through our work, we ensure that this is understood by local authorities, developers and others on the ground. The development of well-designed places is at the core of this work and we are fully committed to it. We would be more than happy to speak with you and the committee about our work in the future.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Clare Devine".

Clare Devine

Executive Director, Architecture, Built Environment and Design