



**THE PLACE ALLIANCE**  
Annual Review  
2014-2015



# HIGHLIGHTS

Place Alliance is a movement for place quality. It is founded on the idea that through collaboration and better communication we can establish a culture whereby the quality of place becomes an everyday national and local priority. Place Alliance is open to all and brings together organisations and individuals who share the belief that the quality of our built environment has a profound influence on people's lives.

## **BIG MEET 3**

104 Attendees  
81 Organisations  
Ed Vaizey MP

## **WORKING GROUPS**

8 Groups  
40 Meetings  
2 Manifestos

## **SUPPORTERS**

13 Universities  
60+ Organisations

## **OUTREACH**

Mapping Exercise  
Evidence for the House of Lords  
Open Source Place Resource  
Design Skills Survey

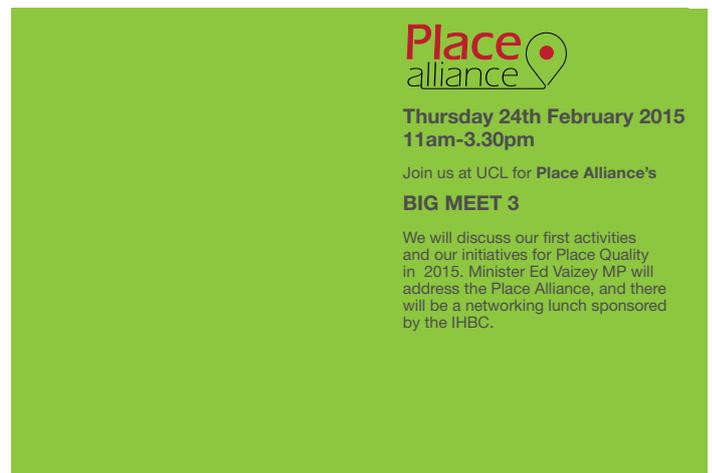
## OUR FIRST YEAR

It was agreed to establish Place Alliance at BigMeet2 in October 2014, and Big Meet3 in February 2015 represented the first formal call for 'supporters'. BigMeet4 therefore marks the end of its first year of operations, a period during which Place Alliance has covered a lot of ground with minimal resources.

**BigMeet3** itself was well attended with 104 people coming from as far as Scotland and Cornwall. They represented **81 different organisations**, and the minister of state for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), **Ed Vaizey MP**, opened proceedings with a short address urging organisations to get involved.

First results of the mapping exercise were reported, as well as the progress of work towards the common goal of improving place quality and the Farrell Review.

The whole Big Meet discussed the national survey or '**mapping exercise**', put forward future trajectories for Place Alliance work, and participated in the first of the nationwide **TalkPlace!** exercises.



## WORKING GROUPS & OTHER ACTIVITIES

In the light of BM3, **eight groups** or networks have been established. These are open to all and define their own agenda. Some are taking forward post-Farrell Review activities and others reflect issues raised in the Big Meets:

This has met three times in the last year and advises the Place Alliance Management Team on the direction and approach of the Alliance's work. It has about 28 members.

The Core Supporters Group

A comparatively new group chaired by Robert Powell, it has produced a draft "New Manifesto for the Public Arts" which was launched on 16th October, with the aim of starting a national debate on the arts and place. About 40 people attended the launch event in Wakefield.

Artists and place-making

A group led by Councillor Sue Vincent in the process of producing a primer to support local government in their vital role in place. Its particular emphasis is on councillor training and it hopes to work with supporters around the country to agree a common training programme to raise awareness of design and place quality locally.

Design Literate Leadership

A group chaired by Debbie Sorkin looking at the links between good design and good places and people's health and well-being. A draft Healthy Places Manifesto has been produced and is now out for consultation.

Healthy Places Group

The latest group to be established, chaired by Steven Bee which has met once so far. This group is using the discussion at Big Meet 4 to define an agenda for its future work – please join it!

Housing Group

## WORKING GROUPS & OTHER ACTIVITIES

This group is chaired by Ben van Bruggen and has met twice. It shares expertise, skills and resources to review and help improve the quality of place across the country. It intends to host a national design review conference (perhaps at a future Big Meet) in order to bring together the increasingly disparate range of design / place review providers.

Place/Design Review

This group currently includes members from 13 universities. It represents an embryonic network of national Place Alliance hosts in order to spread key messages around the country. It is preparing a grant application to explore the role of universities themselves in driving place quality through teaching, thought leadership, campus and city estates projects, as well through cross-disciplinary working and public outreach

University Network:

This is chaired by Carolyn Butterworth, University of Sheffield. It has met three times including in Sheffield and at New London Architecture. It provides a network to bring together the diverse urban room initiatives that are starting to emerge. As well as sharing practice and offering support, it promotes the value of Urban Rooms to others.

Urban Rooms Network:

In addition to its working groups, in its first year Place Alliance has worked on a programme that includes:

- Establishing a **Place Alliance website** (<https://www.bartlett.ucl.ac.uk/placealliance>)
- A **national survey** to map the 'place sector' and its resources
- Developing and trialling a tool to promote dialogue about place, "**TalkPlace!**" – this is being developed further by supporters at The Glass-House Community Led Design
- Drafting and agreeing a new vision for place quality, **Place Matters**
- Exploring the viability of an **Open Source Place Resource** website, based on the Trip Advisor model – this is being launched at Big Meet 4
- **Engaging with government**, in particular with DCLG and DCMS
- A **survey of design skills in local authorities** – this is being refined and extended before it is published
- A twice yearly programme of **Big Meets**.

## OUTREACH

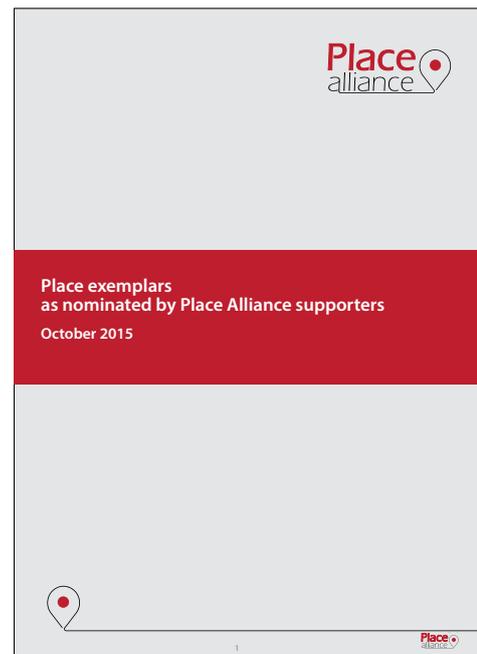
Since February outreach work has been carried out, and meetings have been held with organisations including the British Academy, Commonplace, The Design Council, Heritage Alliance, Heritage Lottery Fund, the John Muir Trust, Landscape Institute, Royal Institute of British Architects, Royal Town Planning Institute, Design Council CABE, and many more, most of whom are now formally supporters of the Alliance.

Following the May general election letters were sent to new Ministers - Greg Clark, Brandon Lewis, Nick Boles and Ed Vaizey. Other introductory letters were sent to Baroness Whittaker, Sir Bob Kerslake, Paul Morrell, Jane Duncan, and Helen Hayes MP.

The Alliance hosted meetings for the Glass-House Community Led Design's "To a more ambitious place" series, the Transnational Dialogues on "Urban Design and Artistic Interventions across Brazil, China and Europe" in June, and in July the Heritage Alliance Debate on "Heritage and Government - towards a coherent policy".

We have also met with John Worthington of the Independent Transport Commission to discuss place quality in light of high speed rail, and now continue the exchange through a 'HSR Cities Forum' with the Centre for Cities, RSA, Academy of Urbanism and the Urban Land Institute.

Most recently we contributed to the House of Lords Select Committee on National Policy for the Built Environment, defining the agenda through an initial presentation to the Members before the formal hearings began. On the strength of that Professor Matthew Carmona was appointed Specialist Advisor to the Committee. We have recently submitted evidence including a document of Exemplars of local work provided by Place Alliance supporters.







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