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Identifying the right mix of knowledge, skills and creativity

A good design team should provide innovative and practical support to help deliver the project. The team should represent a mix of technical knowledge, skills and creativity tailored to meet the project brief.

The team's skills and expertise should correspond to the scope of works (e.g. sports field, skate park), as well as the physical context of the work (e.g. urban centre, wahi tapu site). Also consider the level of engagement that will need to be undertaken, as the members of the design team may be required to lead public workshops, attend Environment Court hearings, etc.

The design team may include one or more of the following specialists:

- Project Manager – management of all aspects of the design, consenting and implementation processes, and ensures that budgets, timeframes and scope deliverables are met
- Design lead – leads the design team and usually has training in urban design or landscape architecture
- Landscape Architect – masterplanning, concept through to detailed design, landscape and visual assessment
- Urban Designer - site analysis including social, economic, built environment, transport and environmental factors, masterplanning
- Architect – building or structure design, from concept through to detail
- Ecologist – ecological assessment, restoration and monitoring programmes
- Planner – land use planning and consents, coastal permits, discharge consents
- Transport Planner/Engineer – walking and cycle design, public transport, vehicle circulation and parking
- Heritage Advisor – heritage research and advice on heritage conservation, restoration and interpretation
- Engineer – geotech, civil, structural and stormwater engineering, low impact design, testing, surveying
- Signage or Communications Advisor – branding, way-finding strategy, research and signage development
- Lighting designer/engineer – lighting analysis, design and electrical commissioning
- Arts advisor – arts strategies, consultation and procurement advice
- Disability advisor – disability review, compliance review
- CPTED and IPTED advisor – crime and injury prevention design advice
- Quantity Surveyor – cost estimation and value management
- Children and Young People Advisor – inclusive design for children and youth
- Senior Persons Advisor – inclusive design for older people
- Play Specialist – playground supply, audit and compliance
- Engagement Advisor - organises and coordinates all community and stakeholder engagement
- Cultural Advisor - can provide protocol advice and liaison with iwi

Establish the project team and roles

Once a governing body, such as a particular Local Board, has established a budget and created a project, the responsibility for making it happen will be delegated to a project sponsor. The project sponsor is responsible for helping the governing body to make decisions about the project and for managing the budget. A project team will be formed to help the project sponsor make informed decisions during the design and implementation processes.

The project team will typically represent a range of council interests and areas of expertise relevant to the project and will usually include: council officers, and members of the design team (usually the project sponsor, project manager and design lead). The officers involved in the project team vary, depending on the nature of the project, but can include the parks advisor, heritage advisor and sports turf advisor, amongst others.

The governing body or the local board may also appoint a representative to work alongside the project team. The project team needs to be set up in a way to involve the representative in a meaningful and useful way. Having a member of the governing body or local board on the project team allows a high level of ownership of the project by the project governors.

In some cases, it may be beneficial to form a steering group for the project, which can oversee critical milestones, sign off key decisions, and review escalated issues that cannot be resolved by the project team.

It is important to establish how input from the project team can be successfully captured and incorporated into the design and delivery process.

This can be achieved in a number of ways, by:

- ensuring roles and responsibilities are clearly defined early on
- agreeing terms and principles for ongoing participation, collaboration and action
- encouraging team members' participation
- helping to keep the project on track by managing the budget, monitoring time and quality
- signing off key stages of the project promptly
- gaining consensus through collaboration and sticking by group decisions
- holding essential meetings only, that are efficiently chaired, minuted and circulated
- avoiding the use of jargon
- being generous with praise
- criticising constructively, in private
- always keeping the big picture in view