



AGENDA

LOCAL PLAN PANEL MEETING

Date: Wednesday, 25 April 2018

Time: 7.00 pm

Venue: Council Chamber - Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 3HT

Membership:

Councillors Mike Baldock, Monique Bonney, Andy Booth, Richard Darby, James Hunt, Gerry Lewin (Chairman), Peter Marchington, Bryan Mulhern (Vice-Chairman) and David Simmons.

Quorum = 3

Pages

Recording Notice

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If you have any queries regarding this please contact Democratic Services.

1. Fire Evacuation Procedure

The Chairman will advise the meeting of the evacuation procedures to follow in the event of an emergency. This is particularly important for visitors and members of the public who will be unfamiliar with the building and procedures.

The Chairman will inform the meeting whether there is a planned evacuation drill due to take place, what the alarm sounds like (i.e. ringing bells), where the closest emergency exit route is, and where the second closest emergency exit route is, in the event that the closest exit or route is blocked.

The Chairman will inform the meeting that:

(a) in the event of the alarm sounding, everybody must leave the building via the nearest safe available exit and gather at the Assembly points at the far side of the Car Park. Nobody must leave the assembly point until everybody can be accounted for and nobody must return to the building until the Chairman has informed them that it is safe to do so; and

(b) the lifts must not be used in the event of an evacuation.

Any officers present at the meeting will aid with the evacuation.

It is important that the Chairman is informed of any person attending who is disabled or unable to use the stairs, so that suitable arrangements may be made in the event of an emergency.

2. Apologies for Absence and Confirmation of Substitutes

3. Minutes

To approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 28 March 2018 (Minute Nos. 587 - 594) as a correct record.

4. Declarations of Interest

Councillors should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves or their spouse, civil partner or person with whom they are living with as a spouse or civil partner. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

The Chairman will ask Members if they have any interests to declare in respect of items on this agenda, under the following headings:

(a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) under the Localism Act 2011. The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared. After declaring a DPI, the Member must leave the meeting and not take part in the discussion or vote. This applies even if there is provision for public speaking.

(b) Disclosable Non Pecuniary (DNPI) under the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council in May 2012. The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared. After declaring a DNPI interest, the Member may stay, speak and vote on the matter.

(c) Where it is possible that a fair-minded and informed observer, having considered the facts would conclude that there was a real possibility that the Member might be predetermined or biased the Member should declare their predetermination or bias and then leave the room while that item is considered.

Advice to Members: If any Councillor has any doubt about the existence or nature of any DPI or DNPI which he/she may have in any item on this agenda, he/she should seek advice from the Monitoring Officer, the Head of Legal or from other Solicitors in Legal Services as early as possible, and in advance of the Meeting.

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|----|--------------------------------|---------|
| 5. | Building For Life 12 | 1 – 28 |
| 6. | Swale Brownfield Land Register | 29 - 36 |

Issued on Monday 16 April 2018

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Chief Executive, Swale Borough Council,
Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT

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Local Plan Panel Meeting	
Meeting Date	25 April 2018
Report Title	Building for Life 12
Cabinet Member	Cllr Gerry Lewin, Cabinet Member for Planning
SMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Regeneration Director
Head of Service	James Freeman, Head of Planning
Lead Officer	James Freeman, Head of Planning
Key Decision	No
Classification	Open
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is recommended that ‘Building For Life 12’ be adopted as a technical document for assessing major planning applications for development consisting of more than twenty dwellings. 2. That the use of ‘Building for Life 12’ as an assessment tool be trialled for twelve months and reviewed.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 ‘Building for Life 12’ (BfL12) is a useful tool for planning officers to initially assess the acceptability of developments in a practical and meaningful way, without significant costs in terms of time, resources, or training. Whilst it is a nationally recognised document, very few Councils to date have formally adopted for development management purposes.
- 1.2 This report recommends the use of ‘BfL12’ in the short term as a technical document to assess planning applications against. This should be for an initial trial period of 12 months, on applications of more than 10 housing units (those categorised as a ‘major’ planning application), after which its effectiveness can be reviewed.

2 Background

- 2.1 Building for Life is a tool for assessing the design quality of homes and neighbourhoods developed by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (now a part of the Design Council). Originally launched in 2001 it has been through several reviews, most recently through a redesign in 2012 which reflected the National Planning Policy Framework’s (NPPF) commitment to build more, better, homes. The new draft NPPF includes reference to Building for Life 12 (see paragraph 128 (on Page 38)) as “an appropriate tool for assessing and improving the design of development”.

- 2.2 'BfL12' is the 2012 redesign of the document, which sets out a range of 12 key criteria under which new developments can be clearly and methodically assessed. Each headline criterion features a number of sub-criteria designed to guide you through the thought process of thoroughly considering all aspects of a scheme.
- 2.3 The headline criteria under which developments are assessed include (amongst others):
- Does the scheme integrate into its surroundings by reinforcing existing connections and creating new ones, while also respecting existing buildings and land uses around the development site?
 - Does the development provide (or is it close to) community facilities, such as shops, schools, workplaces, parks, play areas, pubs or cafes?
 - Does the scheme have good access to public transport to help reduce car dependency?
 - Does the development have a mix of housing types and tenures that suit local requirements?
 - Does the scheme create a place with a locally inspired or otherwise distinctive character?
 - Does the scheme take advantage of existing topography, landscape features (including water courses), trees and plants, wildlife habitats, existing buildings, site orientation and microclimate? And
 - Is the development designed to make it easy to find your way around?
- 2.4 Consideration of the 12 criteria is based on a traffic light system, and the document recommends that proposed new developments aim to secure as many greens as possible, minimise the number of ambers and avoid reds.
- 2.5 In simple terms: the more 'greens' that are achieved the better a development will be. A red light gives warning that a particular aspect of a proposed development needs to be reconsidered, while an amber indicates that there *might* be scope for improvement. Criteria can be waived when justified, for example where local circumstances preclude normal best practice due to land ownerships. For this reason BfL12 advises against setting minimum scoring requirements, but instead advises minimising reds and ambers and maximising greens.
- 2.6 The application of the criteria provide the opportunity to add more specificity to the vaguely worded requirements set out within the National Planning Policy Framework and provides more detail in the application of the Adopted Local Plan design based policies.
- 2.7 Planning officers routinely assess applications using similar criteria as a matter of course. However some elements of the BfL12 criteria are outside of planning officer training and fall within the realms of architecture, urban design, or ecology. The way the document is set out draws such matters to the attention of officers and developers, and once identified they can be swiftly resolved. In this respect BfL12 is a powerful tool. BfL12 can also be easily used by non-planning

professionals, and is a useful way to convey the acceptability, or reasons otherwise, to Councillors and the general public.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 At present no Kent authorities have adopted 'BfL12', and few use it routinely. Ashford Borough Council refers to it within the supporting text of their Local Plan (rather than in specific policy wording), but have not formally adopted it. Their officers consider it to be useful.
- 3.2 It is considered that the Council should make reference to 'BfL12' as a technical document and formally applied to the assessment of those schemes comprising of more than 10 dwellings in accordance with being defined as a 'major' planning application and where most design benefit would be derived from its use.. This should be trialled over a 12 month period after which its effectiveness can be reviewed via the Planning Committee and reported back to the Local Plan Panel.
- 3.3 The 'BfL12' assessment would be used to inform pre-application discussions and form part of the Officers report on the application either for delegation or Planning Committee determination and used for planning appeal purposes if required.
- 3.4 If the above was agreed, it is intended that the 'BfL12' requirements would be published on the Council's web site and an introductory letter sent out to the main developers and housebuilders introducing our requirement to assess schemes against BfL12. Officers would then be able to routinely use 'BfL12' to assess proposals in the knowledge that they have the Council's backing in the event that a scheme is considered to be unacceptable.

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 The Council could decide not to adopt the 'BfL12' standards and the service would continue through a less formal structured approach to handling design quality issues for major schemes.
- 4.2 Members may wish to review of the trial period or the limit of scale of planning application which would require its use. However, the proposal for a 12 month trial period and applying only to 'major' applications would appear to be proportionate and easily understood by developers.
- 4.3 The Council could decide to progress the adoption of BfL12 through a formal Supplementary Planning Document. However, this would require a formal consultation process on what is a nationally recognised design standard and would require at least 12 to 18 months before formal adoption. At this juncture, it is considered there is limited benefit on taking this more formal approach and to trial the use of BfL12 as a technical assessment tool to establish effectiveness in the first instance. Should its use as a technical document be challenged by developers, then the Council could consider taking a more formal approach.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

5.1 Discussions have taken place with the Cabinet Member for Planning and the Planning Committee Chair. Both support the approach proposed.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Supports 'A Council to be proud of' and 'A Borough to be proud of'
Financial, Resource and Property	None identified at this stage. Any training requirements for officers shall be met from within existing training budgets
Legal and Statutory	None identified at this stage.
Crime and Disorder	The 'BfL12' assessment supports proposals which are considered 'secure by design'.
Environmental Sustainability	'BfL12' assessment looks to ensure sustainable communities are designed and created.
Health and Wellbeing	The health and well being of new communities are central to the BfL12 approach of integrating new communities with existing established communities.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified at this stage.
Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage.
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this stage.

7 Appendices

7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I: 'Building for Life 12 – The sign of a good place to live', Design Council, CABE, Design for Life, Home Builders federation, 2012.

8 Background Papers

None

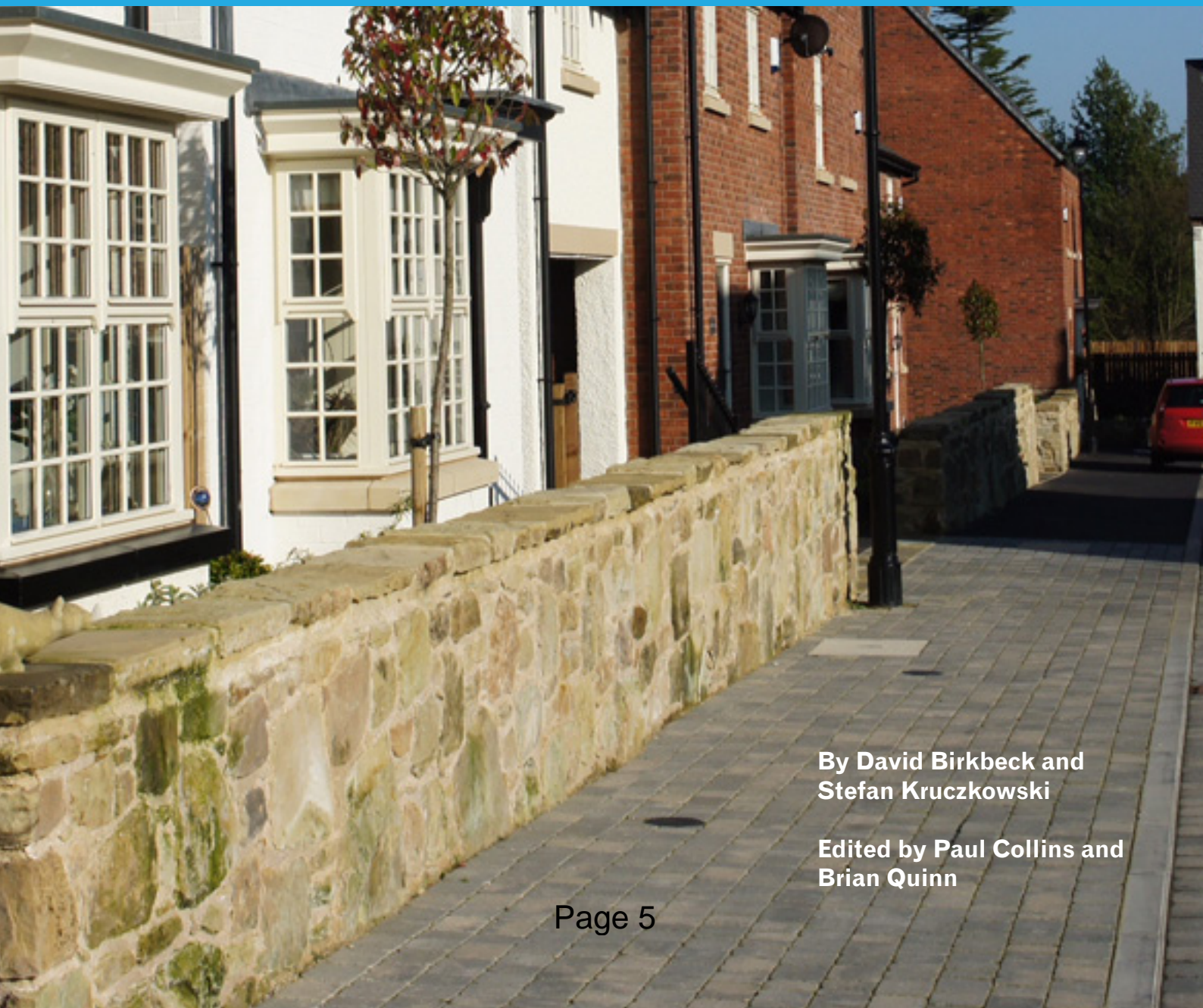
BUILDING FOR LIFE 12



• BUILT FOR LIFE •

The sign of a good place to live

www.builtforlifehomes.org



By David Birkbeck and Stefan Kruczkowski

Edited by Paul Collins and Brian Quinn

In originally producing the 1st edition of Building for Life 12 in 2012, The Partnership thanks **Pam Alexander** of Design Council for chairing their discussions, **North West Leicestershire District Council** for their assistance in developing and testing Building for Life 12 and a wide range of contributors and consultees including: **Steve Bambrick** (North West Leicestershire District Council), **Matt Bell** (Berkeley Group), **Lord Carlile of Berriview QC** (Design for Homes), **Neil Deely** (Metropolitan Workshop Architects) **Ben Derbyshire** (HTA Architects), the **Design Network**, **Chris Elston** (North West Leicestershire District Council), **Christine Fisher** (North West Leicestershire District Council), **Garry Hall** (Urban Forward Limited), **Sue Haslett** (North West Leicestershire District Council), **Esther Kurland** (Urban Design London), **Nigel Longstaff** (Barratt Developments), **James Mattley** (North West Leicestershire District Council), **Kevin McGeough** (Homes and Communities Agency), **Sue McGlynn** (Sue McGlynn Urban Design Limited), **Bob Meanwell** (David Wilson Homes), **Lubaina Mirza** (Design For Homes), **Richard Mullane** (Design for Homes), **Ian Nelson** (North West Leicestershire District Council), **Afrieen Patel** (South Cambridgeshire District Council), **Tim Peach** (Redrow Homes), **Glenn Richardson** (Cambridge City Council), **Nick Rogers** (Taylor Wimpey), **Judith Salomon** (St. George), **Bridget Sawyers** (Bridget Sawyers Limited), **David Singleton** (DSA Environment and Design), **John Slaughter** (Home Builders Federation), **Julie Tanner** (OPUN), **David Tittle** (MADE), **Nigel Turpin** (Nottingham City Council), **Andrew Whitaker** (Home Builders Federation), **James Wilson** (Davidsons Homes), **Sarah Worrall** (North West Leicestershire District Council), **Bob White** (Urban Design Consultant), **Louise Wyman** (Homes and Communities Agency), **Dale Wright** (Barratt Developments) and **Liz Wrigley** (Core Connections).

We also wish to thank all those who offered their time to respond to the online surveys, your views and opinions were invaluable in helping to shape Building for Life 12. The authors, editors and Building for Life Partnership apologise to those we have not been thanked by name, your support is greatly appreciated.

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First edition published in 2012 by the Building for Life Partnership (Cabe at Design Council, Design for Homes and Home Builders Federation) with the assistance of Nottingham Trent University.

First edition was edited by **Brian Quinn** of Cabe at the Design Council and **Paul Collins** of Nottingham Trent University.

This (Third) edition edited by **Garry Hall** of Urban Forward, **Brian Quinn** of Cabe at the Design Council, and **Paul Collins** of Nottingham Trent University.



Building for Life 12 is a government-endorsed industry standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods. Local communities, local authorities and developers are encouraged to use it to guide discussions about creating good places to live.

Building for Life 12 (BfL12) is led by three partners: **Cabe at the Design Council**, **Design for Homes** and the **Home Builders Federation**, supported by **Nottingham Trent University**.

It was redesigned in 2012 to reflect the National Planning Policy Framework's commitment not only to build more homes, but better homes, such as can be achieved when local communities participate in the place-making process and help identify how development can be shaped to accommodate both new and existing communities.

The questions are therefore designed to help structure discussions between local communities, local planning authorities, developers and other stakeholders*.

BfL12 is also designed to help local planning authorities assess the quality of proposed and completed developments; it can be used for site-specific briefs and can also help to structure design codes and local design policies.

Based on BfL12's 'traffic light' system, developments that achieve 9 'greens' are eligible for **'Built for Life™'** accreditation. **'Built for Life™'** accreditation is a quality mark available immediately after planning approval, offering developers the opportunity to promote the quality of their developments during sales and marketing activity. It will also help those seeking a home to find a place to live which has been designed to have the best possible chance of becoming a popular and desirable neighbourhood.

Built for Life™ quality mark is the sign of a good (or better) place to live but the ambition of the Built for Life partnership is to encourage hundreds of developments built across the country to use this standard for their design. Some of these will be good enough to achieve 12 greens or the Built for Life 'Outstanding' and these will form the basis for an awards programme honouring the 'best of the best'.

In April 2014, **builtforlifelifehomes.org** was launched to help homebuyers find their ideal place to live and to showcase developments that have achieved **Built For Life™**.

* According to the Farrell Review (2014), a government-commissioned inquiry into design quality by an independent panel of notable experts, BfL12 can help in creating a "collective vision shaped in collaboration with local communities, neighbourhood forums and PLACE Review Panels." www.farrellreview.co.uk
Accessed 31.3.2014





• BUILT FOR LIFE •

Securing Built for Life™ Accreditation

Simple, transparent, efficient

The **Building for Life** campaign is about guiding the better planning of new development through urban design that is safe and provides everything that should be expected of a new community.

Urban design is about the spaces between and around new homes that can sometimes be overlooked by focusing on the building and its interior, but which are vital to the quality of a place, its attractiveness, functionality and feelings of safety.

The **Built for Life™** criteria represent a Q&A checklist for the quality of placemaking and, when done well, are a clear indicator of a development's potential to grow into a popular new address.

The spaces around new homes and other buildings, often known as the public realm, have to be designed intelligently, treated with the same attention as the homes and made safe and attractive.

We believe most of the 12 urban design criteria we promote with **Building for Life** should be readily achievable. Developers which achieve at least 9 of them are eligible for our special **Built for Life™**

quality mark that indicates the scheme has been assessed as achieving these placemaking essentials. Here's a quick introduction to some of the themes we believe are fundamental to successful new development:

The development should have obvious character, based either on contemporary architecture or local traditions in building materials and landscaping (Q5).

Car parking should be adequate and located where it is accessible and likely to be well used (Q10).

Footways and paths should always be located in places where homes overlook them so no-one feels at risk when using them, especially after dark (Q1, Q7, Q8).

Bus stops and car parking should not be placed remotely where a lack of overlooking might make crime easier to get away with. Closer bus stops also encourage shifts to more sustainable forms of transport (Q1, Q3, Q10).



Clean, contemporary architecture combined with convenient parking and a pedestrian-friendly street helped Manor Kingsway, Derby win one of our first Built for Life™ 'outstanding' awards.

Properties should have clear indications of what is privately owned space and what is shared public realm so passers-by respect the boundaries and residents feel their personal space is protected (Q7, Q11).

Homes should have appropriate external storage, in particular for bins and bicycles, so that neither are left in the open (Q12).

Schemes that address the above themes and more achieve the **Built for Life™** quality mark. New developments that achieve 9 from the 12 Building for Life questions are eligible to display the **Built for Life™** quality mark, helping homebuyers choose with confidence.

A development achieving 'green' on all 12 of the **Building for Life** questions will be eligible to be awarded **Built for Life™ 'Outstanding'**, and the best new housing across the country will be recognised at events organised by the Building for Life Partnership.



The Built for Life™ quality mark helps developers showcase their best new housing developments whilst helping homebuyers choose the best places to live.

Built for Life™ accreditations are awarded through an independent assessment process, guaranteeing impartiality and helping to ensure developments in all parts of the country are judged by the same high quality standards.

Assessments are undertaken by **Built for Life™ Forums** of experts local to the scheme, helping to make each assessment sensitive to its context, history and future need.



How to use BfL12

BfL12 comprises of 12 easy to understand questions that are designed to be used as a way of structuring discussions about a proposed development. There are four questions in each of the three chapters:

- **Integrating into the neighbourhood**
- **Creating a place**
- **Street and home**

Based on a simple 'traffic light' system

(red, amber and green) we recommend that proposed new developments aim to:

- Secure as many 'greens' as possible,
- Minimise the number of 'ambers' and;
- Avoid 'reds'.

The more 'greens' that are achieved, the better a development will be.

A red light gives warning that a particular aspect of a proposed development needs to be reconsidered.

A proposed development might not achieve 12 'greens' for a variety of reasons⁴. What is important is to always avoid 'reds' and challenge 'ambers' - can they be raised to a 'green'? Local circumstances such as the need for housing for local people in rural locations (for example, rural exception

sites) may justify waiving the requirement for 'greens' against the relevant questions. Third party land ownership issues may prevent ideal connectivity from being achieved, however all developments should seek to 'future proof' connections to allow the opportunity to provide these links at some point in the future. Waivers should be supported by the local planning authority and highlighted early in the design process. We would not recommend that any scheme is permitted a waiver against any questions within the 'Creating a place' and 'Street and home' chapters.

For these reasons, whilst we encourage local authorities to adopt BfL12, we recommend that they avoid explicitly setting a requirement for all proposed developments to achieve 12 'greens'. Instead, we recommend that local policies require all proposed developments to use BfL12 as a design tool throughout the planning process with schemes performing 'positively' against it.

We also recommend that local authorities consider expecting developments to demonstrate they are targeting BfL12 where applications for outline planning permission is granted. A useful way to express this expectation is through either a condition or 'note to applicant'.



Homes facing the street, with public and private spaces clearly defined by a retained and sensitively restored stone wall

(DeLacy Court, Castle Donnington)

Simpler, easier and better

Each headline question is followed by a series of additional questions that we suggest are useful to ask at the start of the design process. We've also provided five recommendations for how you might respond with the aim of offering a range of responses.

Recommendations are designed to stimulate discussion with local communities, the project team, the local authority and other stakeholders to help you find the right solution locally.

Integrating into the neighbourhood

1 Connections

Does the scheme integrate into its surroundings by reinforcing existing connections and creating new ones, while also respecting existing buildings and land uses around the development site?

2 Facilities and services

Does the development provide (or is it close to) community facilities, such as shops, schools, workplaces, parks, play areas, pubs or cafes?

3 Public transport

Does the scheme have good access to public transport to help reduce car dependency?

4 Meeting local housing requirements

Does the development have a mix of housing types and tenures that suit local requirements?

Creating a place

5 Character

Does the scheme create a place with a locally inspired or otherwise distinctive character?

6 Working with the site and its context

Does the scheme take advantage of existing topography, landscape features (including water courses), wildlife habitats, existing buildings, site orientation and microclimates?

We've travelled the country visiting hundreds of residential developments. During these visits, we found common problems. Our avoidance tips help you avoid these pitfalls. We also discovered many well-designed developments, their qualities have been captured in our recommendations.

Finally, we've added endnotes providing further detail, clarity and where appropriate, references that you may find useful.

7 Creating well defined streets and spaces

Are buildings designed and positioned with landscaping to define and enhance streets and spaces and are buildings designed to turn street corners well?

8 Easy to find your way around

Is the scheme designed to make it easy to find your way around?

Street & home

9 Streets for all

Are streets designed in a way that encourage low vehicle speeds and allow them to function as social spaces?

10 Car parking

Is resident and visitor parking sufficient and well integrated so that it does not dominate the street?

11 Public and private spaces

Will public and private spaces be clearly defined and designed to be attractive, well managed and safe?

12 External storage and amenity space

Is there adequate external storage space for bins and recycling as well as vehicles and cycles?

1 Connections

Does the scheme integrate into its surroundings by reinforcing existing connections and creating new ones, while also respecting existing buildings and land uses around the development site?

1a Where should vehicles come in and out of the development?

1b Should there be pedestrian and cycle only routes into and through the development? If so, where should they go?

1c Where should new streets be placed, could they be used to cross the development site and help create linkages across the scheme and into the existing neighbourhood and surrounding places?

1d How should the new development relate to existing development? What should happen at the edges of the development site?

We recommend

Thinking about where connections can and should be made; and about how best the new development can integrate into the existing neighbourhood rather than creating an inward looking cul-de-sac development.

Remembering that people who live within a new development and people who live nearby may want to walk through the development to get somewhere else, so carefully consider how a development can contribute towards creating a more walkable neighbourhood.

Thinking carefully before blocking or redirecting existing routes, particularly where these are well used.

Creating connections that are attractive, well lit, direct, easy to navigate, well overlooked and safe.

Ensuring that all streets and pedestrian/cycle only routes pass in front of people's homes, rather than to the rear of them.

We recommend that you avoid

Not considering how the layout of a development could be designed to improve connectivity across the wider neighbourhood.

Not considering where future connections might need to be made - or could be provided - in the future.



A choice of safe, direct and attractive routes can encourage walking and cycling, particularly for shorter journeys

2 Facilities and services

Does the development provide (or is it close to) community facilities, such as shops, schools, workplaces, parks, play areas, pubs or cafes?

2a Are there enough facilities and services in the local area to support the development? If not, what is needed?

Where new facilities are proposed:

2b Are these facilities what the area needs?

2c Are these new facilities located in the right place? If not, where should they go?

2d Does the layout encourage walking, cycling or using public transport to reach them?

We recommend

Planning development so that everyday facilities and services are located within a short walk of people's homes. The layout of a development and the quality of connections it provides can make a significant impact on walking distances and people's travel choices.

Providing access to facilities through the provision of safe, convenient and direct paths or cycle routes. Consider whether there are any barriers to pedestrian/cycle access (for example, busy roads with a lack of crossing points) and how these barriers can be removed or lessened.

Locating new facilities⁵ (if provided) where the greatest number of existing and new residents can access them easily, recognising that this may be at the edge of a new development or on a through route; but consider whether existing facilities can be enhanced before proposing new ones.

Where new local centres⁶ are provided, design these as vibrant places with smaller shops combined with residential accommodation above (rather than a single storey, single use supermarket building). Work to integrate these facilities into the fabric of the wider development to avoid creating an isolated retail park type environment dominated by car parking and highways infrastructure.

Creating new places within a development where people can meet each other such as public spaces, community buildings, cafes and restaurants. Aim to get these delivered as early as possible. Think carefully about how spaces could be used and design them with flexibility



A mix of uses including homes, shops and other facilities in Lawley, Telford

in mind, considering where more active spaces should be located so as to avoid creating potential conflict between users and adjacent residents.

We recommend that you avoid

Locating play areas directly in front of people's homes where they may become a source of tension due to potential for noise and nuisance. Carefully consider the distance between play equipment and homes in addition to the type of play equipment selected and the target age group.

Creating the potential for future conflict if residential uses and commercial premises are not combined thoughtfully.

3 Public transport

Does the scheme have good access to public transport to help reduce car dependency?

3a What can the development do to encourage more people (both existing and new residents) to use public transport more often?

3b Where should new public transport stops be located?

We recommend

Maximising the number of homes on sites that are close to good, high frequency public transport routes, but ensure that this does not compromise the wider design qualities of the scheme and its relationship with its surroundings. 'Hail and ride' schemes agreed with public transport providers can help reduce the distance people need to walk between their home and public transport.

Carefully considering the layout and orientation of routes to provide as many people as possible with the quickest, safest, attractive and most convenient possible routes between homes and public transport.

Considering how the layout of the development can maximise the number of homes within a short walk from their nearest bus, tram or train stop where new public transport routes are planned to pass through the development. Locate public transport stops in well used places, ensuring that they are accessible for all, well overlooked and lit.

Considering how the development can contribute towards encouraging more sustainable travel choices, for example by establishing a residents car club, providing electric car charging points, creating live/work units or homes that include space for a home office.

Exploring opportunities to reduce car miles⁵ through supporting new or existing park and ride schemes or supporting the concept of transit orientated developments (where higher density and/or mixed use development is centred on train or tram stations).

We recommend that you avoid

Thinking about development sites in isolation from their surroundings. For example, bus only routes (or bus plugs) can be used to connect a new development to an existing development and create a more viable bus service without creating a 'rat run' for cars.

People will use buses if bus stops are close to their homes



4 Meeting local housing requirements

Does the development have a mix of housing types and tenures that suit local requirements?

4a What types of homes, tenure and price range are needed in the area (for example, starter homes, family homes or homes for those downsizing)?

4b Is there a need for different types of home ownership (such as part buy and part rent) or rented properties to help people on lower incomes?

4c Are the different types and tenures spatially integrated to create a cohesive community?

We recommend

Demonstrating how the scheme's housing mix is justified with regard to planning policy, the local context and viability.

Aiming for a housing mix that will create a broad-based community.

Considering how to incorporate a range of property sizes and types⁶, avoiding creating too many larger or too many smaller homes from being grouped together.

Providing starter homes and homes for the elderly or downsizing households. People who are retired can help enliven a place during the working day. Providing for downsizing households can also help to rebalance

the housing market and may help reduce the need for affordable housing contributions over time.

Designing homes and streets to be tenure-blind, so that it is not easy to differentiate between homes that are private and those that are shared ownership or rented.

We recommend that you avoid

Developments that create homes for one market segment unless the development is very small.

Using exterior features that enable people to easily identify market sale from rented/shared ownership homes, such as the treatment of garages or entrances.

Reducing the level of parking provision for rented/shared ownership homes.



A mix of homes can help to provide a more balanced community

5 Character

Does the scheme create a place with a locally inspired or otherwise distinctive character?

5a How can the development be designed to have a local or distinctive identity?

5b Are there any distinctive characteristics within the area, such as building shapes, styles, colours and materials or the character of streets and spaces that the development should draw inspiration from?

We recommend

Identifying whether there are any architectural, landscape or other features, such as special materials that give a place a distinctive sense of character as a starting point for design. It may be possible to adapt elevations of standard house types to complement local character.



Architecture and green space works together to generate character in Bristol

Distinctiveness can also be delivered through new designs that respond to local characteristics in a contemporary way⁷.

Exploring what could be done to start to give a place a locally inspired identity if an area lacks a distinctive character or where there is no overarching character.

Landscaping traditions are often fundamental to character

, especially boundary treatments. Introducing building styles, details and landscaping features that can be easily expressed to someone visiting the development for the first time. Where an area has a strong and positive local identity, consider using this as a cue to reinforce the place's overall character⁸.

Varying the density, built form and appearance or style of development to help create areas with different character within larger developments. Using a range of features⁹ will help to create town and cityscape elements that can give a place a sense of identity and will help people find their way around. Subtle detailing can help reinforce the character of areas and in doing so, provide a level of richness and delight.

Working with the local planning and highway authority to investigate whether local or otherwise different materials can be used in place of standard highways surface materials and traffic furniture. Be creative and adventurous by exploring the potential to innovate - develop new ideas and build with new materials.

We recommend that you avoid

Using the lack of local character as a justification for further nondescript or placeless development.

Ignoring local traditions or character without robust justification.

Too many identical or similar house types (where there is no benefit to the overall architectural integrity of the scheme from repetition).

6 Working with the site and its context

Does the scheme take advantage of existing topography, landscape features (including water courses), trees and plants, wildlife habitats, existing buildings, site orientation and microclimate?

6a Are there any views into or from the site that need to be carefully considered?

features, such as streams that need to be carefully designed into the development?

6b Are there any existing trees, hedgerows or other

6c Should the development keep any existing building(s) on the site? If so, how could they be used?

We recommend

Being a considerate neighbour. Have regard to the height, layout, building line and form of existing development at the boundaries of the development site. Frame views of existing landmarks and create new ones by exploiting features such as existing mature trees to create memorable spaces. Orientate homes so that as many residents as possible can see these features from within their homes¹⁰. Carefully consider views into the development and how best these can be designed.

Assessing the potential of any older buildings or structures for conversion. Retained buildings can become instant focal points within a development. Where possible, avoid transporting building waste and spoil off site by exploring opportunities to recycling building materials within the development¹¹.

Working with contours of the land rather than against them, exploring how built form and detailed housing design can creatively respond to the topographical character; thinking carefully about the roofscape. Explore how a holistic approach can be taken to the design of sustainable urban drainage by exploiting the topography and geology¹².

Exploring opportunities to protect, enhance and create wildlife habitats. Be creative in landscape design by creating wildflower meadows rather than closely mown grassland and, where provided, creating rich habitats within balancing lagoons, rainwater gardens, rills and swales.

Considering the potential to benefit from solar gain through building orientation and design where this can be achieved without compromising good urban design or creating issues associated with over heating¹³. Finally have regard to any local micro-climate and its impact.

We recommend that you avoid

Leaving an assessment of whether there are any views into and from the site that merit a design response until late in the design process.

Transporting uncontaminated spoil away from the site that could be used for landscaping or adding level changes where appropriate.

Not carefully considering opportunities for rainwater attenuation both on plot and off

Not carefully thinking about what balancing lagoons will look like and how people could enjoy them as attractive features within an open space network. Careful thought in the design process can eliminate the need for fenced off lagoons that are both unsightly and unwelcoming.



Existing mature trees on this site in Exeter add character and quality

7 Creating well defined streets and spaces

Are buildings designed and positioned with landscaping to define and enhance streets and spaces and are buildings designed to turn street corners well?

7a Are buildings and landscaping schemes used to create enclosed streets and spaces?

7c Do all fronts of buildings, including front doors and habitable rooms, face the street?

7b Do buildings turn corners well?

We recommend

Creating streets that are principally defined by the position of buildings rather than the route of the carriageway.

Designing building that turn corners well, so that both elevations seen from the street have windows to them, rather than offering blank walls to the street¹⁴. Consider using windows that wrap around corners to maximise surveillance and bring generous amounts of natural light into people's homes.

Using a pattern of road types to create a hierarchy of streets and consider their enclosure, keeping to the well proportioned height to width ratios relative to the type of street¹⁵.

	Minimum	Maximum
Minor streets, e.g mews	1: 1.15	1:1
Typical streets	1:3	1:1.5
Squares	1:6	1:4

Source: Manual for Streets (2007) p.54

Respecting basic urban design principles when designing layouts. For example, forming strong perimeter blocks¹⁶.

Orientating front doors to face the street rather than being tucked around the back or sides of buildings.

We recommend that you avoid

Streets that lack successful spatial enclosure by exceeding recommended height to width ratios.

Over reliance on in front of plot parking that tends to create over wide streets dominated by parked cars and driveways unless there is sufficient space to use strong and extensive landscaping to compensate the lack of built form enclosure.

Homes that back on to the street or offer a blank elevation to the street.

Locating garages and/or driveways (or service areas and substations) on street corners or other prominent locations, such as the 'end point' of a view up or down a street.



Think carefully about what you will see at the end of the street

8 Easy to find your way around

Is the development designed to make it easy to find your way around?

8a Will the development be easy to find your way around? If not, what could be done to make it easier to find your way around?

8b Are there any obvious landmarks?

8c Are the routes between places clear and direct?

We recommend

Making it easy for people to create a mental map of the place by incorporating features that people will notice and remember. Create a network of well defined streets and spaces with clear routes, local landmarks and marker features. For larger developments it may be necessary to create distinct character areas. Marker features, such as corner buildings¹⁷ and public spaces combined with smaller scale details such as colour, variety and materials will further enhance legibility*.

Providing views through to existing or new landmarks and local destinations, such as parks, woodlands or tall structures help people understand where they are in relation to other places and find their way around.

Making it easy for all people to get around including those with visual or mobility impairments.

Identifying and considering important viewpoints within a development, such as views towards the end of a street. Anticipate other, more subtle viewpoints, for example a turn or curve in the street and how best these can be best addressed.

Creating a logical hierarchy of streets. A tree lined avenue through a development can be an easy and effective way to help people find their way around.

We recommend that you avoid

Creating a concept plan for a scheme that does not include careful consideration as to how people will create a mental map of the place.

Layouts that separate homes and facilities from the car, unless the scheme incorporates secure underground car parking.

Creating overly long cul-de-sac developments, rather than a connected network of streets and spaces.

Blocking views to landmarks or notable landscape features.

Terminating views down streets with garages, the rear or side of buildings, parking spaces, boundary fences or walls.



Marker buildings and spaces can help people create a 'mental map' of a place
(Manor Kingsway, Derby)

***Legible features include:** distinct character areas (for larger developments), framing views of existing or proposed new landmarks (and/or landscape features) both on- and off- the development site, a well-defined street hierarchy (for example, tree lined avenues can help establish the character of a principle street within a hierarchy) and creating new marker buildings and spaces.

9 Streets for all

Are streets designed in a way that encourage low vehicle speeds and allow them to function as social spaces?

9a Are streets pedestrian friendly and are they designed to encourage cars to drive slower and more carefully?

9b Are streets designed in a way that they can be used as social spaces, such as places for children to play safely or for neighbours to converse?

We recommend

Creating streets for people where vehicle speeds are designed not to exceed 20 mph¹⁸. Work with the Highways Authority to create developments where buildings and detailed street design is used to tame vehicle speeds. Sharp or blind corners force drivers to slow when driving around them while buildings that are closer together also make drivers proceed more cautiously¹⁹. 20mph zones are becoming increasingly popular with local communities and are a cost effective way of changing driver behaviour in residential areas.

Thinking about how streets can be designed as social and play spaces, where the pedestrians and cyclists come first, rather than simply as routes for cars and vehicles to pass through²⁰.

Using the best quality hard landscaping scheme that is viable without cluttering the streets and public spaces.

Designing homes that offer good natural surveillance opportunities; carefully considering the impact of internal arrangement on the safety and vitality of the street²¹. Consider maximising the amount of glazing to ground floor, street facing rooms to enhance surveillance opportunities creating a stronger relationship between the home and the street.²²

Creating homes that offer something to the street²³, thinking carefully about detail, craftsmanship and build quality. Afford particular attention to the space between the pavement and front doors²⁴. A thoughtful and well designed entrance area and front door scheme will enhance the kerb appeal of homes whilst also contributing towards creating a visually interesting street. Carefully

consider changes in level, the interface between different materials, quality finishing and the discreet placement of utility boxes.

We recommend that you avoid

20mph speed limits enforced with excessive signage or expensive compliance systems or features.

Designing a scheme that allows drivers to cross pedestrian footpaths at speed to access their driveways. Consider how hard and soft landscaping can be used to make drivers approach their street and home more cautiously and responsibly.

Minimise steps and level changes to make them as easy as possible for pushchairs and wheelchairs.

A pavement that has lots of variation in levels and dropped kerbs to enable cars to cross it can encourage unofficial parking up on the kerb and may make movement less easy for those pushing a pushchair, in a wheelchair or walking with a stick or walking frame.



At Fairfield Park in Bedfordshire, vertical calming and 'pinch points' remind drivers they are in a 20mph zone

10 Car parking

Is resident and visitor parking sufficient and well integrated so that it does not dominate the street?

10a Is there enough parking for residents and visitors?

10b Is parking positioned close to people's homes?

10c Are any parking courtyards small in size (generally no more than five properties should use a parking

courtyard) and are they well overlooked by neighbouring properties?

10d Are garages well positioned so that they do not dominate the street scene?

We recommend

Anticipating car parking demand taking into account the location, availability and frequency of public transport together with local car ownership trends. Provide sufficient parking space for visitors.

Designing streets to accommodate on street parking but allow for plenty of trees and planting to balance the visual impact of parked cars and reinforce the spatial enclosure of the street. On street parking has the potential to be both space efficient and can also help to create a vibrant street, where neighbours have more opportunity to see and meet other people.



Parking near front doors and softened with landscaping help this parking in Oxford integrate well with the street

Prevent anti-social parking. Very regular and formal parking treatments have the potential to reduce anti-social parking. People are less prone to parking in places where they should not be parking, where street design clearly defines other uses, such as pavements or landscape features.

Making sure people can see their car from their home or can park it somewhere they know it will be safe. Where possible avoid rear parking courts²⁵.

Using a range of parking solutions appropriate to the context and the types of housing proposed. Where parking is positioned to the front of the property, ensure that at least an equal amount of the frontage is allocated to an enclosed, landscaped front garden as it is for parking to reduce vehicle domination. Where rows of narrow terraces are proposed, consider positioning parking within the street scene, for example a central reservation of herringbone parking²⁶. For higher density schemes, underground parking with a landscaped deck above can work well.

We recommend that you avoid

Relying on a single parking treatment. A combination of car parking treatments nearly always creates more capacity, visual interest and a more successful place.

Large rear parking courts. When parking courts are less private, they offer greater opportunity for thieves, vandals and those who should not be parking there.

Parking that is not well overlooked.

Using white lining to mark out and number spaces. These are not only costly, but unsightly. It can be cheaper and more aesthetically pleasing to use small metal plates to number spaces, and a few well placed block markers to define spaces.

Not providing a clear and direct route between front doors and on-street parking or not balancing the amount of parking in front of plots with soft relief.

11 Public & private spaces

Will public and private spaces be clearly defined and designed to have appropriate access and be able to be well managed and safe in use?

11a What types of open space should be provided within this development?

developer contribute towards an existing facility in the area that could be made better?

11b Is there a need for play facilities for children and teenagers? If so, is this the right place or should the

11c How will they be looked after?

We recommend

Clearly defining private and public spaces with clear vertical markers, such as railings, walling or robust planting. Where there is a modest building set back (less than 1m), a simple change in surface materials may suffice. Select species that will form a strong and effective boundary, such as hedge forming shrubs rather than low growing specimens or exotic or ornamental plants. Ensure sufficient budget provision is allocated to ensure a high quality boundary scheme is delivered.

Creating spaces that are well overlooked by neighbouring properties. Check that there is plenty of opportunity for residents to see streets and spaces from within their homes. Provide opportunities for direct and oblique views up and down the street, considering the use of bay, oriel and corner windows where appropriate. Designing balconies can further increase opportunities for natural surveillance.

Thinking about what types of spaces are created and where they should be located. Consider how spaces can be designed to be multi-functional, serving as wide an age group as possible and how they could contribute towards enhancing biodiversity²⁷. Think about where people might want to walk and what routes they might want to take and plan paths accordingly providing lighting if required. Consider the sun path and shadowing throughout the day and which areas will be in light rather than shade. Areas more likely to benefit from sunshine are often the most popular places for people to gather.

Exploring whether local communities would wish to see new facilities created or existing ones upgraded. Think how play can be approached in a holistic manner, for example by distributing play equipment or playable spaces and features across an entire open space.

Providing a management and maintenance plan to include a sustainable way to fund public or shared communal open spaces.

We recommend that you avoid

Informal or left over grassed areas that offer no public or private use or value and do little or nothing to support biodiversity.

Avoid creating small fenced play areas set within a larger area of open space where the main expense is the cost of fencing.

Landscaping that is cheap, of poor quality, poorly located and inappropriate for its location. Low growing shrubs rarely survive well in places where people are likely to accidentally walk over them (such as besides parking bays).



Sometimes recreation space can double up as a formal landscaping feature

(Gun Wharf, Plymouth)

12 External storage and amenity space

Is there adequate external storage space for bins and recycling, as well as vehicles and cycles?

12a Is storage for bins and recycling items fully integrated, so that these items are less likely to be left on the street?

12b Is access to cycle and other vehicle storage convenient and secure?

We recommend

Providing convenient, dedicated bin and recycling storage where bins and crates can be stored out of sight. Check with the local authority to determine exactly what space is required and minimise the distance between storage areas and collection points. Where terraced housing is proposed, consider providing integral stores to the front of the property (such as within an enclosed section of a recessed porch) or by providing secure ginnels between properties that provide direct access to the rear of properties²⁸.

Designing garages and parking spaces that are large enough to fit a modern family sized car and allow the driver to get out of the car easily. Where local authorities have requirements for garage sizes, parking spaces and circulation space design these into your scheme from the outset. If garages do not meet local requirements, do not count these as a parking space.

Considering whether garages should be counted as a parking space. If garages are to be counted as a parking space, ensure that sufficient alternative storage space is provided for items commonly stored in garages. Consider extending the length of the garage to accommodate storage needs or allowing occupants to use the roof space for extra storage²⁹.

Anticipating the realistic external storage requirements of individual households. Residents will usually need a secure place to store cycles and garden equipment. A storage room could be designed to the rear of the property (either attached or detached from the home), reviving the idea of a traditional outhouse. More creative solutions may be needed to satisfy the cycle storage requirements of higher density apartment accommodation.

Thinking carefully about the size and shape of outside amenity space. It is a good idea to ensure that rear gardens are at least equal to the ground floor footprint of the dwelling. Triangular shaped gardens rarely offer a practical, usable space³⁰. Allow residents the opportunity to access their garden without having to walk through their home.



Poorly integrated bin storage erode the quality of this street in Oxford

We recommend that you avoid

Bin and recycling stores that detract from the quality of the street scene.

Locating bin and recycling stores in places that are inconvenient for residents, or they might find it easier to leave their bin and containers on the street.

Designing garages that are impractical or uncomfortable to use.

Cycle storage that is not secure or is difficult to access.

Using Building For Life 12 in more urban locations

Supplementary design prompts were introduced in November 2014 in response to feedback from users about the need to better address design issues in more urban locations.

Building for Life 12's core focus is on street and urban issues in schemes of between about 25-50 homes to the hectare, such as those typical of more suburban or rural locations. This supplement deals with issues found where apartment blocks of three or more storeys create new developments with few, if any, new streets and where key design issues are how blocks respond to their locality, existing streets and movement.

Six of the twelve questions now have an alternative prompt to suit urban situations. Whilst the ethos of each question remains the same the emphasis and considerations reflect better the challenges and considerations associated with more urban locations and higher density developments. We recommend that design teams agree with the local authority which version of the questions are most appropriate to any proposed development.



1 Connections and scale

Does the scheme respond to the scale of its surroundings, respect existing view corridors (or create new ones), and reinforce existing connections and make new ones where feasible?

Design rationale:

To emphasise visual connectivity whilst ensuring that where possible, the opportunity is taken to make physical connects that are going to be well-used and of benefit to residents and the wider community.

8 Easy to find your way in and around

Is the scheme designed to make it easy to understand the

links between where people live and how you access the building, as well as how you move through it?

Design rationale:

To emphasise the importance of creating a well defined entrance(s) to a development. Is it easy to find the front door?

9 Active Streets

Does the development engage with the street so passers-by will understand the movement between the building and the street, and is there an obvious visual link between inside and outside?

Design rationale:

To emphasise the importance of creating active edges to a development at street level, carefully consider how the building relates to the street, how vehicle and servicing is designed and to avoid dead elevations.

10 Cycle and car parking

Will the development be likely to support and encourage cycling by providing cycle storage which people can use with confidence? Where parking is provided, is this easy to use? Are accesses to car parking designed not to impact on those not in cars? Are entrances to car parks over-engineered, visually obtrusive or obstructive to pedestrians and cyclists?

Design rationale:

To emphasise the modal emphasis on bikes in more urban development where people are more likely to live close enough to work and leisure to cycle. Seeks to also promote well-designed entrances to parking areas whether at grade or underground.



Design rationale:

To emphasise the importance of designing such spaces to be functional, attractive and well used.



12 Private amenity and storage

Are outdoor spaces, such as terraces and balconies, large enough for two or more people to sit? Is there opportunity for personalisation of these spaces? Is waste storage well integrated into the design of the development so residents and service vehicle access it easily whilst not having an adverse impact on amenity for residents.

Design rationale:

To focus on practical balcony sizes and well designed communal waste facilities that are well resolved in relation to building entrances and screened from publicly accessible routes.

11 Shared spaces

Is the purpose and use of shared space clear and it is designed to be safe and easily managed? Where semi-private or private spaces are created, are these clearly demarcated from the public realm?

Notes

1 Department for Communities and Local Government (2011) 'Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England', HMSO

Further supported by the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) and the Localism Act and Planning Practice Guidance.

2 To find out more about obtaining Built for Life quality mark please visit www.builtforlifehomes.org. Building for Life training and support (including facilitation of community workshops using BfL12) is available locally through the Design Network www.designnetwork.org.uk

3 Visit www.builtforlifehomes.org for further information.

4 For example, local concerns relating to crime and anti-social behaviour or cost prohibitive ransom strips may prevent the best connections being provided between a new development and its surroundings.

5 For strategic developments, such as sustainable urban extensions.

6 On larger developments.

7 A simple test is to ask how the architecture whether traditional or modern acknowledges and enhances its context. But there is no benefit in recycling tradition if treatments are not locally authentic.

8 However, this does not require pastiche. The aim is to exploit qualities in the character of local stock and link to them, not replicate them, but at the same time recognising that in some circumstances there is a need for a step change in approach to overall design ethos and approach.

9 Such as landscaping, tree lined streets, parks, greens, crescents, circuses, squares and a clear hierarchy of streets such as principal avenues, lanes, mews and courtyards, as well as colour, landscaping and detailing.

10 Consider using windows where appropriate to frame views from within the home.

11 Weathered materials can help add instant character whether within retained structures or reused as to create boundary walls, plinths or surface treatments.

12 For example by using permeable paving and creating a network of rills, swales, rain gardens and green roofs where suitable.

13 East-facing bedrooms are very popular for morning sun, while west-facing or south-facing patio gardens and living rooms boost their appeal in spring and autumn. In higher density schemes endeavour to have at least one principal room being able to receive sunlight through some of the day.

14 These windows need to serve habitable rooms where occupants tend to spend a lot of their day rather than bathrooms, hallways, stairwells and cloakrooms.

15 These may need to be varied within medium to higher density schemes.

16 Where buildings create the outside edge of the block and interlocked back gardens and/or shared amenity spaces create the middle.

17 Perhaps incorporating commercial premises where viable or designing flexible units that could be easily remodelled to accommodate commercial premises in the future.

18 By restricting forward visibility, using vertical features such as raised plateaus and/or designating Home Zones. Carefully consider the impact

of features such as over engineered corner radii on vehicle speeds and pedestrian safety and comfort. See www.20splentyforus.org.uk.

20 Shared surfaces may be appropriate in low traffic areas though carefully consider how shared environments can still be navigable by those with visual impairments.

21 First floor living rooms can be very effective for this purpose, even more so with bay or corner windows and balconies. The key attribute is that windows that face the street should be from habitable rooms where occupants are likely to spend a lot of their day.

22 Whilst also maximising the amount of natural light penetrating internal spaces.

23 Such as colour, detail, craftsmanship or other form of artistic expression and creativity.

24 Or shared access for apartment accommodation.

25 If rear parking courtyards are used, keep them small, so that residents know who else should be using it. Make sure at least one property is located at the entrance to the parking courtyard to provide a sense of ownership and security. Avoid multiple access points. Allow sufficient budget for boundary walls, surface treatments, soft landscaping and lighting to avoid creating an air of neglect and isolation. Contact the local Police Architectural Liaison Officer to determine whether local crime trends justify securing the courtyard with electric gates.

26 To avoid a car dominated environment, break up parking with a tree or other landscaping every four bays or so but ensure that the landscaping still allows space for people to get into and out of their cars, without having to step onto landscaped areas.

27 Discussions with local police officers and local community groups can be a useful source of information on what works well and what does not in a particular area and can help guard against creating potential sources of conflict.

28 If storage is provided within the rear garden, think about how bins and containers can be discreetly stored out of sight.

29 Non solid garage doors can dissuade residents from using these spaces as storage areas, but this will only be effective where sufficient alternative storage space is provided and where Permitted Development Rights are removed and enforced.

30 Where balconies are provided, design these generously so that they are large enough for a small table and at least two chairs.

References:

Department for Communities and Local Government (2012)

National Planning Policy Framework, HMSO

Department for Communities and Local Government and

Department of Transport (2007) Manual for Streets, HMSO

The Institution of Highways and Transportation (2000) Guidelines for Providing for Journeys on Foot, London. www.ciht.org.uk

By using Building for Life 12 as a tool throughout the design process, you can demonstrate compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance

Building For Life 12 Question	Links with the National Planning Policy Framework (2012)	Links with Planning Practice Policy Guidance (2014)*
Integrating into the neighbourhood		
1. Connections	9, 41, 61, 75	006, 008, 012, 015, 022
2. Facilities and services	38, 58, 70, 73	006, 014, 015, 017
3. Public transport	9, 17, 35	012, 014, 022
4. Meeting local housing requirements	9, 47, 50	014, 015, 017
Creating a place		
5. Character	17, 56, 58, 60, 64	006, 007, 015, 020, 023
6. Working with the site and its context	9, 10, 17, 31, 51, 58, 59, 118	002, 007, 012, 020, 023
7. Creating well defined streets and spaces	58	008, 012, 021, 023
8. Easy to find your way around	58	022
Street and home		
9. Streets for all	35, 58, 69	006, 008, 012, 022, 042
10. Car parking	39, 58	010, 040
11. Public and private space	57, 58, 69	006, 007, 009, 010, 015, 016, 018
12. External storage and amenity	58	040

Generally:

NPPF: 63, 56 – 58, 63, 64

PPG*: 001, 004, 005, 029, 031 – 038

(BfL12 is designed to be used to support consultation and community participation. It can also be used to guide masterplans, design codes, frame pre-application discussions and Design Reviews, structure Design and Access Statements, support local decision making and if necessary justify conditions relating to detailed aspects of design, such as materials).

*paragraph references within 'Design' guidance category.

Credit: Kruczkowski, S

Suggested acceptable walking distances

These suggested acceptable walking distances can help you with questions in the 'Integrating into the neighbourhood'

	Town centres (m)	Commuting / School / Sight-seeing (m)	Elsewhere (m)
Desirable	200	500	400
Acceptable	400	1000	800
Preferred maximum	800	2000	1200

Source: The Institution of Highways and Transportation (2000) Guidelines for Providing for Journeys on Foot, London (p.49)

Credit: Birkbeck, D., Collins, P.,Kruczkowski, S, and Quinn, B.

Building for Life is the industry standard, endorsed by government for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods. It can help local communities, local authorities and developers work together to create good places to live, work and play.

'Homes that sell for the highest amount and quicker than others have great kerb appeal. Built for Life schemes have this special kerb appeal. The streets and homes are better arranged - they are better designed places and will sell better in the future on the second hand market.'

Mike Fallowell FRICS, Co-founder, Newton Fallowell.

'Built for Life accreditation gives the consumer confidence in the quality of developments and the consideration that has gone into all aspects of the build.'

Nick Boles MP, former Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Planning.

'This government recognises that what we build is just as important as how many homes we build.'

HM Government (2011), Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England, HMSO, London.



Local Plan Panel	Agenda Item:
Meeting Date	25 April 2018
Report Title	Brownfield Land Register for Swale
Cabinet Member	Cllr Gerry Lewin, Cabinet Member for Planning
SMT Lead	Emma Wiggins
Head of Service	James Freeman
Lead Officer	Gill Harris
Key Decision	No
Classification	Open
Forward Plan	Reference number:
Recommendations	1. That the Panel notes that a Brownfield Land Register for Swale is expected to be published on the Council's website, either by the date of the meeting or shortly thereafter, in accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 The report outlines the process which has resulted in the imminent publication of a Brownfield Land Register on the Council's website and a summary of its results. Members are recommended to note the contents of the Register.

2 Background

- 2.1 The provisions of The Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017 require Local Planning Authorities to compile, publish and maintain a Brownfield Land Register on their websites. The register can be in 2 parts (if warranted), as set out below.

Part 1 of the Register

- 2.2 Part 1 of the register should include previously developed land which meets the following criteria:
- The land should have an area of at least 0.25 hectares

- The land should be suitable for residential development
 - The land should be available for residential development
 - Residential development of the land is achievable
- 2.3 As per page 55 of the NPPF (2012), the definition of previously development land is: *“Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill purposes where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures; land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time.”*
- 2.4 Officers have used a similar methodology to the Council’s Strategic Land Availability Assessments to assess whether sites are suitable for residential development or not.
- 2.5 Fifteen sites are to be entered onto Part 1 of the Register which could potentially deliver a minimum of 1590 dwellings. The sites total some 38 hectares. They are generally located in Faversham, Queenborough & Rushenden and Sittingbourne, with a few in the surrounding villages. Please see appendix I for the detailed site list.

Part 2 of the Register

- 2.6 Part 2 of the Register should include any sites from Part 1 which the Council has decided to take forwards and grant permission in principle for, following a period of publicity and consultation. Entering sites onto Part 2 of the register is not mandatory and may not be appropriate.
- 2.7 No sites are to be entered onto Part 2 of the Register. Five of the sites form part of the Queenborough & Rushenden Masterplan and two form part of the Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan. A further three have applications currently pending consideration and four have extant planning permissions. The final site is an adopted Local Plan allocation. As such, no sites are to be taken forward for Part 2 of the Register because the planning policy context is already in place (which has itself been tested through statutory processes) to guide their development or they have already achieved permission. Consequently permission in principle could undermine the policy context and therefore would be inappropriate and not necessary in those cases where permission has been achieved or is under negotiation.

- 2.8 Research has indicated that this is a route which many local planning authorities have taken with their brownfield registers, as there are no sites which could benefit from that process.
- 2.9 The sites on the Register will make a valuable contribution to the Council's housing land supply and many contribute towards the expected 5 year housing land supply. Every reasonable planning measure to prioritise suitable brownfield sites for housing development has therefore been taken. It is not unreasonable to expect suitable windfall brownfield sites to come forward in future and these can be picked up in future updates of the Brownfield Register. However, brownfield sites are a dwindling resource and are not sufficient in themselves to meet the objectively assessed housing need for Swale.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 The Brownfield Land Register is to be published on the Council's website (either by the date of this meeting or shortly thereafter) using the template and format recommended by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government. It will be reviewed annually in line with the Regulations, with sites being taken from the Development Management and Strategic Land Availability Assessment processes. There will also be text on the website which invites people to submit sites for consideration throughout the year. Members are invited to note this and the ongoing process for future reviews.

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 The Panel could disagree with the imminent publication of the Register; however this would contravene the Regulations referenced at the beginning of the report.
- 4.2 As per paragraph 2.7 above, no sites are to be taken forwards to Part 2 of the Register. However, should appropriate sites come forwards in the future; this process could be undertaken in an annual update.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 Sites were taken from:
- The 2014/15 SHLAA (and addendum)
 - The call for sites carried out in August/September 2017
 - Extant planning permissions
- 5.2 Future sites will be taken from the processes outlined in paragraph 3.1 above, as well as the existing entries being reviewed.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
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Corporate Plan	Supports all Council's corporate priorities.
Financial, Resource and Property	Government grants have been made available to support the extra burden of publishing and maintaining the Register.
Legal and Statutory	Meets the requirements set out within The Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017.
Crime and Disorder	None identified at this stage.
Sustainability	Suitability methodology carried out in line with the NPPFs aims to achieve sustainable development.
Health and Wellbeing	None identified at this stage.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified at this stage.
Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage.

7 Appendices

Appendix I: Simplified version of the Swale Part 1 Brownfield Register showing all site entries.

The Brownfield Land Register will be located here:
<https://www.swale.gov.uk/planning-policy/>

8 Background Papers

The Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017.

SiteNameAddress	Hectares	PlanningStatus	PermissionDate	MinNetDwellings	DevelopmentDescription	SiteInformation	Notes
Swan Quay, Belvedere Road, Faversham	0.3	not permitted	N/A	10		The site comprises four buildings formerly used by the Frank and Whitorne Joinery Company and is adjacent to Faversham creek.	The site forms part of the Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan and its inclusion for a Permission in Principle could undermine this process.
The Foundry, Rushenden Road, Queenborough	0.37	not permitted	N/A	37		The site comprises a former foundry and is open, flat and adjacent to Queenborough Creek.	The site forms part of the Queenborough & Rushenden Masterplan and its inclusion for a Permission in Principle could undermine this process.
Former Nicholls Transport site, Lydbrook Close, Sittingbourne	1.7	pending decision	N/A	70	Outline (All Matters Reserved) for up to 70 residential units and detailed approval for associated land raising and improvement of A2/Lydbrook Close junction.	The site comprises the former Nicholls Transport depot which has now been vacant for a number of years and is surrounded by dwellings close to the A2.	The site has an application currently pending consideration.
152 Staplehurst Road, Sittingbourne	1.8	not permitted	N/A	75		The site comprises a flat piece of land within a predominantly residential area, with some commercial/industrial use too. It is adjacent to the railway line to the north.	The site is allocated within the adopted Local Plan.
West Street, Queenborough	1.45	not permitted	N/A	80		The site comprises land including business offices, dockyard buildings and wharfs adjacent to Queenborough Creek.	The site forms part of the Queenborough & Rushenden Masterplan and its inclusion for a Permission in Principle could undermine this process.
Faversham Industrial Estate, Graveney Road, Faversham	2.9	permitted	20/12/2017	105	Development of the site to provide 105 residential units, comprising 72 houses and 33 flats, and associated, parking, landscaping and open space.	The site comprises a former industrial site which had a number of warehouse/office buildings. The site is bounded by Graveney Road, the wider countryside and a railway line.	The site was recently granted planning permission and works are expected to commence imminently.

Land West of Rushenden Road, Queenborough	13.31	not permitted		379		The site is mostly vacant but with some industrial units and buildings still in use. It is surrounded by Rushenden Road to the east and Queenborough Creek to the west.	The site forms part of the Queenborough & Rushenden Masterplan and its inclusion for a Permission in Principle could undermine this process.
Bell Centre, Bell Road, Sittingbourne	0.9	pending decision	N/A	120	Proposed mixed use development comprising 165 no. residential apartments, medical centre and pharmacy across three blocks with associated parking and landscaping, refurbishment of existing Bell House with retention of offices and an additional storey.	The site comprises the former Bell Shopping Centre which was demolished a number of years ago. The land has been vacant since and fronts Bell Road close to Sittingbourne town centre.	The site has an application currently pending consideration.
Provender Mill, New Creek Road, Faversham	0.95	not permitted	N/A	10		The site sits between Faversham Creek and New Creek Road and contains a number of designated heritage assets.	The site forms part of the Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan and its inclusion for a Permission in Principle could undermine this process.
Land South of Queenborough Creek, Queenborough	7	not permitted	N/A	380		The site lies to the south of Queenborough Creek and falls partly within the Queenborough Conservation Area, with a number of designated heritage assets close by.	The site forms part of the Queenborough & Rushenden Masterplan and its inclusion for a Permission in Principle could undermine this process.
Former McDonald's Mailing Centre, Staplehurst Road, Sittingbourne	1.5	pending decision	N/A	60	Outline application for demolition of existing warehouse and office building and erection of 52 new dwellings with matters of access and scale to be considered as this stage.	The site comprises a number of commercial premises and is generally flat with a change in level to Staplehurst Road to the east.	The site has an application currently pending consideration.

Former Istil Mill Site, Rushenden Road, Queenborough	4	not permitted	N/A	240		The site is a former steel rolling mill site and most of the associated structures have been demolished with hardstanding and vegetation remaining. Access is taken from Thomsett Way to the South.	The site forms part of the Queenborough & Rushenden Masterplan and its inclusion for a Permission in Principle could undermine this process. An application is expected soon following an EIA Screening Opinion.
High Oak Hill, Iwade Road, Newington	0.5	permitted	11/09/2017	6	Demolition of existing buildings and erection of 6 detached, two storey dwellings with associated access, parking and landscaped areas.	The site comprises a number of mobile buildings, a small workshop, a large workshop and a yard area. The land is set back from the main road and surrounded by agricultural land.	The site was recently granted planning permission and works are expected to commence imminently.
Land at Kent Terrace, Canterbury Lane, Upchurch	0.5	permitted	25/04/2016	13	Redevelopment of existing landscape contractor's yard and land surrounding Kent Terrace to provide 13 dwelling houses and an extension to the existing terrace with associated car parking and landscaping. In addition, a ground floor rear extension to Number 15 Kent Terrace.	The site comprises a landscape and horticultural contractor's yard which includes the access onto Canterbury Lane and follows down to the front of the terraced properties on Kent Terrace.	The site was granted planning permission in 2016.
Moons of Selling, Grove Road, Selling	1	permitted	7/12/15	5	Demolition of existing commercial buildings, removal of the existing hard surface areas and the erection of 5 no dwellings with amenity space, paddocks, parking, access and landscaping as amended by drawings received 1st June 2015.	The site comprises a number of buildings formerly used for commercial purposes. It is set back from Grove Road and generally well screened.	The site was granted planning permission in 2015.

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