



# Design



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# Design

## Policy D1 - Design

This preferred policy sets out the Council's proposed approach to ensuring the design of new development is high quality and distinctive whilst reflecting local character and surroundings. Design is fundamental to the creation of high quality, healthy and sustainable communities and developments with a clear sense of place.

The preferred policy reads

### Policy D1 - Design

1. High quality design of both buildings and landscaping is a priority in all development proposals. Support will be given for proposals/developments that
  - a. provide a visually attractive, functional, distinctive, accessible and low maintenance development for its lifetime
  - b. establish and/or maintain a strong and distinctive sense of place through the arrangements of streets, open spaces, landscaping, building types, materials and sizes and avoid unwelcoming monotonous featureless developments
  - c. respect and enhance the local context and its special qualities, including its design features, materials, landscape, social activities, historic environment and nationally and locally recognised designations
  - d. create safe living and inclusive environments, reducing opportunities for crime and the fear of crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour
  - e. optimise the potential of the site to accommodate an appropriate scale and mix of development
  - f. adopt sustainable construction and design principles
  - g. facilitate access through sustainable forms of transport
  - h. secure improvements to public spaces and incorporate public art, where appropriate
  - i. are designed to be adaptable to the populations need over the long term, e.g. Lifetime Homes, Building for Life Standards
  - j. promote health and wellbeing through design.
2. Development proposals of poor design which fail to take the opportunity available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions will be refused.
3. Development providing outstanding or innovative design solutions which provide high levels of sustainability or help to raise the standard of design within an area will be supported subject to their compatibility with the form, layout and character of their surroundings.



4. Where relevant, development proposals should reflect the design principles outlined in any national and local supplementary and/or adopted design guides, development briefs and SPDs, or any successor documents.
5. Development proposals should be supported by a Design Statement and, where appropriate, seek to engage with the local community. Proposals should also make appropriate use of design tools, reviews and assessment frameworks as early as possible in the evolution of a scheme.

## Justification

High quality design is a key element in creating sustainable development. In accordance with the Strategic and Local Objectives, the Plan will promote high quality design, both in terms of built development, including the standard of architecture, and in securing the best environment through landscape design. It is an aspiration of the Council to raise the standard of design in all proposals. Design should ensure places are safe and accessible for people to live, work and visit. Creative and innovative high quality design will be encouraged, provided that it embodies the principles of the preferred policy. The Plan will encourage proposals that are designed to assist vitality and create a definable 'sense of place' in communities and neighbourhoods.

Supported by a strong commitment to apply the policies that protect historic and environmental assets, the Plan will seek to ensure that development in the Plan Area enhances and protects its local distinctiveness, visual quality and quality of life. Development should be inspired by and contribute to the overall local distinctiveness of the area. All new buildings and spaces must enhance and respect their surroundings and contribute towards the local identity. Developments also should be of the appropriate scale, density, massing, height and materials for their location as well as provide suitable access and landscaping, and conform to the design principles set out within the preferred policy.

Public art also helps make a significant contribution in enhancing local character and identity and will be encouraged where appropriate.

The design of buildings and spaces can make a major contribution towards reducing the scope of crime and create safe, reassuring living environments. Open amenity spaces used for walking, sport and children's play must be designed to be as safe as possible and perceived to be safe.

Development proposals should consider prevailing national and local design guidance. This includes, where relevant, the NPPF, National Design Guidance, Neighbourhood Plans, Supplementary Planning Documents, Village Design Statements and Conservation Area Appraisals. The Supplementary Planning Documents, which will include design guides and briefs for more specific proposals such as householder extensions, will give greater detailed guidance for more specific proposals.

Proposals should submit a Design Statement with this demonstrating how the proposal's design has evolved and how it positively responds to the context of its surroundings. This process should include where relevant, particularly in relation to major developments, engagement with the local community such as Parish and Town Councils and the use of Design tools, reviews and assessment frameworks such as Building for Life Standards.



The preferred policy provides a checklist for new proposals to assist in securing the high quality design of developments. The design approaches to form, function, materials, security and sustainable construction are all elements which can contribute to high quality design results, enhancing not only the visual appearance of proposals but also how they interact with existing development, surrounding landscapes and operate in their particular use or function. This policy seeks to encourage developers to balance these needs in a well-considered and clearly design-led proposal.

This policy aligns closely with the Sustainable Development policies SD1 (Sustainable Development), SD2 (Amenity), SD3 (Access), SD4 (Use of Resources) and SD5 (Communications) as well as the Climate Change policy CC2 (Sustainable Design), with the intention that these are referred to collectively when considering future development proposals and applications.

## What you have told us?

### National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF identifies good design as a key aspect of sustainable development, and that the creation of 'high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve' (paragraph 124). Plans should clearly set out a design vision and outline expectations 'so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable' (paragraph 125). To ensure design expectations are clear from an early stage, NPPF suggests that visual tools such as design guides and codes are created to provide 'a framework for creating distinctive places, with a consistent and high quality standard of design' (paragraph 126). The level of detail within these guides, however, should be reflective of the circumstances within each individual area and should allow some degree of variety where it would be justified.

Paragraph 127 outlines that 'planning policies and decisions should ensure developments

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities)
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit; optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks
- e) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and wellbeing, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.'

The NPPF further states that 'design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals, with early discussions between the applicants, local planning authority and local community being important in clarifying expectations and reconciling any potential local and commercial interests by taking into account the views of those affected in the local community' (paragraph 128).



As outlined in paragraph 130, permissions 'should be refused for developments of poor design that fail to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents. Conversely, where the design of a development accords with clear expectations in plan policies, design should not be used by the decision-maker as a valid reason to object to development. Local planning authorities should also seek to ensure that the quality of approved development is not materially diminished between permission and completion, as a result of changes being made to the permitted scheme'.

Paragraph 131 states that great weight should be given to 'outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings'.

### **National Design Guide (October 2019) and draft National Model Design Code (2021)**

In October 2019 the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) published a National Design Guide which sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and highlights examples of good design in practice. Furthermore, MHCLG have recently consulted on a draft National Model Design Code which elaborates on the principles as set out in the National Design Guide and gives further detailed guidance on the production of design codes, guides and policies to promote successful design.

## **Issues and Options Consultation**

No representations were made which specifically relate to the preferred policy.

## **Alternatives Considered**

### **No Design policy**

An alternative option would be to have no Local Plan policy on Design. This is not considered an appropriate option as the preferred policy ensures the design of new development is of a high quality and distinctive whilst reflecting local character and surroundings. The inclusion of this robust policy ensures consistency with national policy and so, for these reasons, this option has been discounted.



### **QUESTIONS**

**Do you agree to preferred policy D1 - Design?**

**If not, do you agree with the general approach to policy D1 but have any suggested changes?**

**Please provide any further comments.**