ST ALBANS STRATEGIC SITES DESIGN GUIDANCE: MASTERPLAN TOOLKIT

St Albans
City & District Council

This document was published in July 2023.

It is a part of the suite of documents known as the Strategic Sites Design Guidance, that the Council has developed to introduce a step change in the quality of developments within the District that the Draft Local Plan requires.

The Design Guidance applies to planning applications and sites within the District, which are identified as Broad Locations and Large sites (100+ homes) or 10,000m^2 and more of commercial uses.

The Strategic Sites Design Guidance compromise of the following documents:

• **01. Strategic Sites Design Principles**
  This provides guidance on the design principles that developments are required to meet for Strategic sites.

• **02. Strategic Sites Design Toolkit**
  This provides guidance on the design process for Strategic Sites.

• **03. Strategic Sites Masterplanning Toolkit**
  This provides guidance on the planning process for Strategic Sites.

• **04. Strategic Sites Employment Uses Design Toolkit**
  This provides guidance on the design principles for developments with substantial employment uses of 10,000m^2 or above.

Version	Date	Commentary
1.0	03 March 2020	Original version developed collaboratively by St Albans City & District Council, Dacorum Borough Council, HertsIQ, Proctor & Matthews Architects and David Lock Associates.
2.0	12 July 2023	This version has been updated by St Albans City and District Council to include changes which reflect the Local Plan process and policy context including updates to the NPPF (July 2021) and the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code

Extracts of this document can be obtained in alternative formats on request in braille, large print, on audio tape, by email or in different languages by contacting the Council on 01727 866100.

Contents

1.1. Setting the Scene for Masterplanning in the District

1.1.1. The new Draft St Albans City and District Local Plan (LP), which covers the period to 2041, sets out requirements for new housing and commercial development sites in the City and the District over the plan period. It also clearly sets out the importance of delivery of the right infrastructure at the right time. The LP includes detailed development management policies for the purpose of decision taking and to inform the technical planning matters (such as flood risk, highways and biodiversity) that should underpin the development of Masterplans for the Strategic Sites.

1.1.2. Strategic-scale sites are defined as 100+ homes or 10,000m^2 of commercial floorspace (retail, leisure and industrial), and reflect the Broad Locations and Large Sites identified in the Draft Local Plan. The Council expects proposals of this scale conform to the Strategic Sites Design Toolkit. The principles may also be applicable to smaller-scale development.

1.1.3. The Draft Local Plan up to 2041 (LP) sets out that the vision for the District is of:

"'A thriving, inclusive and sustainable community which is a great place to live and work and has a vibrant economy.'"

A truly sustainable district needs to be sustainable across environmental, social and economic spheres.

1.1.4. Place shaping is a core value of the LP and takes place in the context of local, sub-regional and regional priorities, in addition to the Government's national policy objectives set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Masterplanning is at the heart of place shaping and the Council's requirement is that a Masterplan for each strategic site is developed by the Applicant(s) with appropriate input from the Council, Hertfordshire County Council, other stakeholders, local residents and businesses.

1.1.5. This approach, based on Local Plan requirements and informed by Masterplanning best practice, will facilitate a comprehensive approach to delivery that will enable the implementation of well-planned communities that benefit existing and future residents, stakeholders and businesses alike. This responds directly to the requirements of NPPF Paragraph 73 which deals with planning for larger scale development, and in particular sub paragraph C which requires strategic policy-making authorities to:

"*Set clear expectations for the quality of the places to be created and how this can be maintained (such as by following Garden City principles); and ensure that appropriate tools such as masterplans and design guides or codes are used to secure a variety of well-designed and beautiful homes to meet the needs of different groups in the community*"

1.1.6. All Broad Locations and Large sites must meet the policies set out in the Draft Local Plan and as shown on the Policies Map and site allocations in Appendix 1. Draft Local Plan Policies 'LG1 Broad Locations' and 'LG4 Large, Medium and Small sites' sets out that proposals must: '*Demonstrate a coordinated, Masterplanned approach to development with appropriate input from the Council, local communities, landowners and other stakeholders.*'

1.1.7. Additionally, Local Plan Policy LG1 and LG4 requires 'excellence in design, energy efficiency and water management' across all Broad Locations and Large sites as well as maintenance strategies that ensure sustainable management of community facilities, open spaces and parklands.

1.1.8. The Masterplanning approach will require design and technical consideration of key opportunities and constraints for each of the Broad Locations and Large sites, the development of a Masterplan framework that is informed by community, stakeholder and Member engagement. This approach will facilitate the creation of attractive neighbourhoods and a timely delivery of infrastructure.

1.1.9. This toolkit is prepared to set out the Council's aspirations for this planning process. It clarifies the Council's requirements for developing a Masterplan and strategic sites should have Masterplans agreed with the Council before developing detailed designs. This toolkit suggests a route towards a Planning Application and Delivery. This approach is general and the Council recognises that tailored or bespoke arrangements may be appropriate for individual sites, where justified.

1.1.10. This toolkit is prepared to guide the planning process of Strategic Sites in particular, however, the principles set out here are of equal relevance to other large scale developments of residential and non-residential uses.

1.1.11. This is a live document and will be renewed periodically.

1.1.12. Masterplanning will be developed by the Applicant(s) with appropriate input from the Council, Hertfordshire County Council, other stakeholders, local residents and businesses.

1.1.13. The Council will seek a single coordinated Masterplan to be prepared for each strategic site.

1.2. Masterplanning Process

MASTERPLAN	PLANNING APPLICATION(S)	DELIVERY

AIM

Framework for an exceptional-quality sustainable development that is supported by the Council and the community, with the right infrastructure delivered at the right time.

AIM

Planning Application(s) for coherent and consistently exceptional-quality sustainable development.

AIM

Coordinated and timely delivery of new homes, employment areas, community facilities and a wide range of physical and environmental infrastructure.

DESIRED OUTCOME

A concise Masterplan document prepared by the Applicant with appropriate input from the Council, Hertfordshire County Council, key stakeholders and the community.

DESIRED OUTCOME

A comprehensive Planning Permission with meaningful controls to secure exceptional quality throughout and beyond project completion.

DESIRED OUTCOME

Exemplar developments and cohesive neighbourhoods forming an integral part their local area and environment.

1.3. Strategic Policy Context

1.3.1.   The St Albans City & District Local Plan up to 2041 is the Council's emerging Local Plan and sets out the spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy over the plan period.

1.3.2.   The Draft St Albans City and District Local Plan up to 2041 allocates sites for development to meet the housing and employment need within the District. In Chapter 3 it identifies a number of Broad Locations (each delivering more than 250 homes), and defines Large Sites as delivering 100-250 homes. These sites are shown on the Local Plan's Policies Map.

1.3.3.   Chapter 4 (Housing) and Chapter 5 (Economy and Employment) of the emerging Local Plan sets out the Council's housing and economic development strategy within which the Broad Locations and Large Sites for growth and the requirements for these new communities are identified.

1.3.4.   Applicant(s) should demonstrate through the Masterplan process how the development responds to the key criteria outlined in the relevant emerging Local Plan policy as well as other local and national policies of relevance.

1.3.5.   The Strategic sites vary widely in terms of geographical size, site constraints and their anticipated role and function within the District and in relation to adjoining and nearby settlements. Furthermore, the supporting social, environmental and economic infrastructure required to support each development will need to be given careful consideration.

1.3.6.   Early stakeholder engagement is essential to addressing these matters to ensure that the resulting Masterplan can provide high quality and sustainable development. The Council will be unable to support proposed Masterplans where insufficient consideration has been given to the strategic site policies and statutory consultees have not been engaged during the process.

1.3.7.   The Council will set out a bespoke process for sites within the boundary of Hemel Garden Communities. This will recognise the award of the garden town status and the transformational role of those sites in Hemel Hempstead and their location spanning two Local Planning Authorities (Dacorum Borough Council).

1.4. Local Plan and Decision Taking

1.4.1. In addition to the Broad Location and Large sites policies, the emerging Local Plan contains development management policies that should be considered when shaping each Masterplan area.

1.4.2. In particular, consideration should be given to the policy chapters listed in this section, however, this is not an exhaustive list.

1.4.3. The Masterplan for each Strategic site will be expected to demonstrate compliance with relevant national and local planning policies and any other material planning considerations.

Draft Local Plan Chapters

Chapter 1 - A Spatial Strategy for St Albans City and District

Chapter 2 – Climate Emergency

Chapter 10 – Natural Environment and Biodiversity

Chapter 12 - High Quality Design

1.5. Community Engagement

1.5.1. Paragraph 39 of the NPPF 2021 advises that:

"Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community."

1.5.2. The Council has prepared a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which identifies the range of techniques applicants may use to consult residents, third parties and other stakeholders during the planning process. Applicants should undertake pre-application consultation that accords with the principles of the SCI.

1.5.3. Public consultation should take place at appropriate intervals during the development of the Masterplan and should demonstrate the evolution of the scheme and how comments and representations received during the public consultation have shaped the Masterplan.

1.5.4. The Council has prepared in this section a list of sample participatory and consultation techniques that may be appropriate for strategic-scale projects. This list is not exhaustive and other methods should be considered in developing the engagement strategy. Methods that increase awareness of the development are of particular importance and may include a social media campaign, a dedicated website and newsletters as well as pop-up events mentioned opposite.

Public exhibition

Public exhibitions should occur at key stages of the design process. Proposals should be displayed in locations with high footfall to give as many people as possible a chance to get involved and feedback on what is shown. Client and design teams should be present at these events to explain the design and listen to feedback.

Carlisle City Council set up their exhibitions for St Cuthbert's Garden Village at a local shopping centre and a racecourse, with nearly 1'000 people attending.

Public forum

A planning forum enables local resident groups and other stakeholders to discuss proposals directly with the applicant and to make meaningful suggestions about how schemes could be improved.

Soundings prepared three Theme Exchange workshops with the local community for The Bishopsgate Goodsyard regeneration proposal, with topics including New Design Approach, Public Spaces, Culture & Creativity.

Pop-up events

Pop-up events may include public exhibitions on the project but may also be small-scale events held in neighbourhoods adjacent to the proposal or in town centre. They increase awareness of the project within the community. By changing locations and timing they help consult with hard-to-reach groups.

Make:Good fitted out an engagement van for the Romford Town Centre Masterplan. The van would pop up in various places across Romford throughout the engagement process.

Community design reviews

A community design review is a model based on professional Design Review Panels. It should be independently chaired and the make-up of the panel should be representative of the community affected by the project.

Imagine Places organised a community review panel for the St Albans City Centre Opportunity Site development.

Stakeholder Steering Group

A stakeholder steering group comprises local community representatives. It may prove very beneficial to the design process through providing in-depth knowledge of the local area and community needs as well as helping to raise awareness of the project from the very start of the process. Steering group meetings would normally be programmed throughout the duration of the project.

Milton Keynes Council utilised a 12-person community steering group in regeneration scoping for Fullers Slade Regeneration. The steering group developed key resident charter principles.

1.6. Masterplanning Outputs

1.6.1. A Masterplan document should be produced and provided to the Council during pre-application discussions and in an Outline application. Each Masterplan document should provide a concise summary of the masterplan framework and site-specific design principles developed throughout the Masterplanning process.

1.6.2. Table 1 sets out a suggested draft contents list of a Masterplan document that has been prepared as a guide. Flexibility will exist in the format to ensure that it reflects the location, scale and complexity of the proposals.

1.6.3. In addition to providing a Masterplan document the Council may seek supplementary documents providing evidence of design and technical work underpinning the framework. The key documents are listed in Table 2, however, the Council may encourage the completion of statutory surveys within the Masterplanning stage, if required as evidence to support the Masterplanning approach.

1.6.4. Masterplans should be agreed with the Council before developing detailed designs.

Table 1 provides general content of a Masterplan document. Not all elements will be relevant to all Masterplans.

Length of individual sections may vary to reflect the context of each Masterplan.

Table 1 Indicative Draft Masterplan Contents - Volume 1

1 Relevant local and national planning policies — **1 page**

2 Site context with description of site and surrounding area — **4 pages**

Location plan and site photos

Strengths, Opportunities, Constraints and Structuring Elements Plan

3 Vision — **2 pages**

What makes this place special?

How does it benefit existing communities?

4 Community Engagement — **2 pages**

How does it respond to the community feedback?

5 Green Space, Open Space and Play Space Framework — **2 pages**

Framework diagram to include key green connections within and beyond the site, ecological corridors and strategy, main green spaces and play spaces, preserved and protected existing trees & landscape, biodiversity, edible landscape strategy and SUDS strategy

Quantum of publicly accessible open space

Drainage and biodiversity strategies

6 Movement and Transport Framework — **2 pages**

Framework diagram to include main vehicular, cycling, walking routes, public transport routes within and beyond the site, and strategy to comply with HCC LTP4 principles

Travel plan principles – commitment to transport improvements such as to cycle networks or public transport contributions

7 Land Use Framework — **2 pages**

Framework diagram to include locations of residential uses by density, commercial and community uses by type and any activity hubs

Quantum of accommodation by use/use class

Residential indicative mix and tenure

Residential space standards

8 Urban Design Framework — **1 pages**

Framework diagram to include areas of spatial intensity, key frontages and wayfinding nodes, site-wide views, building heights

9 Illustrative Masterplan — **3 pages**

Illustrative Masterplan

Character areas diagrams
(including minimum two street-level views)

10 What type of homes? — **2 pages**

Minimum two typical housing typologies (plans + axonometric drawing)

Residential cycle parking design principles

Residential car parking design principles

11 Phasing — **1 page**

Phasing strategy including completion dates per phase and triggers for infrastructure incl. transport improvements, school delivery etc.

Meanwhile use strategy incl. life in Phase 1

12 Place Stewardship — **1 page**

Estate Management including commitment to management organisation model,

Approach to endowment model (physical/ financial) and service charge.

13 Environmental Sustainability — **2 pages**

Energy, water and waste strategy

Digital connectivity

Flood risk mitigation

Air and noise pollution mitigation

Table 2 Draft Masterplan - Volume 2

Viability assessment, if required

Section 106 Head of Terms

Compliance with the Strategic Sites Design Principles

2.1. Securing High Design Quality

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

2.1.1.   The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) places strong emphasis on high quality design and well-planned places, in particular in Section 12. The Council has developed a number of policies and methods to respond to it. Paragraph 126 of the NPPF advises that:

"The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process"

Draft SADC Local Plan

2.1.2.   The SADC Draft Local Plan Chapter 12 (High Quality Design) outlines the Council's design principles which should be given particular consideration in the formulation of Masterplanning proposals.

2.1.3.   In addition, Chapter 2 (Climate Emergency) advises that environmental issues have been fully considered in the location, site layout, general design, building design and construction and future use of the development.

Strategic Sites Design Guidance

2.1.4.   This toolkit forms part of the suite of documents that the council and consultants have developed to form the Strategic Sites Design Guidance (SSDG). The purpose of this guidance is to provide certainty amongst applicants and the wider public about the standard of design expected on Strategic sites projects

In addition to this toolkit the SSDG comprises three additional documents.

- Strategic Sites Design Principles provides a clear set of principles that Applicant(s) should demonstrate compliance with on projects within the strategic site Locations.

 - Strategic Sites Design Toolkit provides guidance on the approach to design process that Applicant(s) will be expected to follow.

- Strategic Sites Employment Uses Design Toolkit provides guidance on the route toward achieving a high-quality employment environment.

2.1.5.   The SSDG provides non-site specific guidance on how applications must follow best practice in urban and architectural design, reflect the focus on design quality set out in the NPPF and deliver the step change in design quality sought by Government. Specific emphasis is placed on how contemporary development should respond to the rich variety of landscapes across the district, the historic patterns of towns and villages, local building forms, materials and craft.

Design Review Panel

2.1.6.   An independent St Albans Design Review Panel has been set up by Design:South East. The number of Design Review Panels (DRP) will depend on the scale and complexity of the project and should be agreed with the Council, normally in a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA).

2.1.7.   Design Reviews are seen by the Council as an effective mechanism to respond to the requirements of paragraph 133 of the NPPF.

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3.1. Parameter Plans at Outline Planning Stage

Parameter Plans

3.1.1.   This section is provided to give guidance on the level of detail that the Council seeks in a strategic-scale Outline Planning Application. The content of application documents should be agreed through the pre-application process and reflect the scale, type and complexity of proposed development. It is important to note that the information and advice received at pre-application stage is without prejudice to the formal determination of any Planning Application(s) or discharge of conditions.

3.1.2.   The Council will require a set of plans to establish development parameters. The set proposed in Table 3 specifies what is likely to be appropriate for large scale developments. The exact set of plans and level of detail should be agreed with the Council through the pre-application process. Not all plans will be required for all Strategic sites.

3.1.3.   The Parameter Plans should allow sufficient flexibility to safeguard the principles of the outline framework but allow the exact geometry of the plan to adapt to designs proposed in Reserved Matters Applications. To secure this most plans are likely to determine limits of deviation from the framework plan geometry.

Further Reading

Good practice Parameter Plans include:

Clay Farm, 2009, Cambridge

Legacy Communities Scheme, 2011, LLDC, London

Table 3 Sample Parameter Plans List

1 Land Use

Land uses (including any flexible allocations)

Permitted range of ground floor uses

2 Building Heights

Max/min storey heights for residential buildings

Max/min height above AOD for non-residential and mixed-use buildings

3 Levels

Existing Site Levels

Proposed Site Levels within an agreed range

4 Access and Movement

Primary and secondary street alignment

Site access (vehicular/cycle/pedestrian)

Public Rights of Way (including any proposed diversions)

Strategic and Designated Cycle Lanes

Bus Stops and locations of other sustainable transport facilities on site

Proposed pedestrian routes

5 Open Space Infrastructure

Play Spaces

Civic Spaces

Park and Gardens

Natural and semi-natural landscapes

Green Corridors

Acoustic Buffer Zones

Allotments

Strategic SUDS locations

Biodiversity enhancement areas

Retained and protected existing Landscape (trees, hedgerows etc)

6 Urban Design

Site-Wide Protected Views

Key Buildings and Frontages

Primary Street Frontages

Secondary Street Frontages

Development Plots as defined by street hierarchy (including subdivision)

3.2. Design and Access Statement at Outline Planning Stage

Design and Access Statement

3.2.1.   This section is provided to give guidance on the level of detail that the Council seeks in a strategic-scale Outline Planning Application. The content of application documents should be agreed through the pre-application process and reflect the scale, type and complexity of proposed development. It is important to note that the information and advice contained within this section is without prejudice to the formal determination of any planning application(s) or discharge of conditions.

3.2.2.   The role of a Design and Access Statement (DAS) is to explain the context of the proposal, the process that led to its development and the proposal itself. It is an important tool that allows officers to assess the appropriateness of the proposal and to set out aspirations for the development. In an Outline Planning Application it also gives an opportunity to set out how Parameter Plans should be used.

3.2.3.   The Council does not have a prescribed format it requires DAS to be in for strategic-scale sites and it will seek to agree the contents of a DAS through the pre-application process. It should be a concise document without unnecessary repetitions or onerous descriptions. To guide this process the Council prepared a list of topics that would normally be sought to be covered in strategic-scale Outline Planning Applications (Table 4).

3.2.4.   The Strategic Sites Design Guidance will provide detailed information on required outputs and supplementary information that the Council expects as part of the design process. These need to be incorporated into the Design and Access Statement.

Table 4 Sample Design and Access Statement Contents List

Introduction

Summary of application and description of development

Role of the DAS

Structure and Content

Contextual Appraisal

Relevant planning policy

Relevant national and local policy and guidance

Relationship with the approved Masterplan

Wider context – observation and evaluation

Topography & Geology

Water and Green Infrastructure & Natural Habitats

Historic Legacy

Visual Exposure, Enclosure and Shelter

Environmental Exposure, Enclosure and Shelter

Connectivity and Places & Facilities to connect to

Land Use, Urban Grain and Unique Features

Application site – observation and evaluation

Features as above

Design

Design Evolution

Evidence of options appraisal

Recommendations of Design Reviews and their application

Recommendations of Community Engagement and their application

Recommendations of Stakeholder Engagement and their application

Vision - What makes this place special?

Wider context influence

Economic influence

Benefits to existing community

Benefits to new residents

Spatial character

Masterplan Framework

Movement and Transport Framework

Open Space and Play Space Framework

Land Use Framework

Urban Design Framework

Response to topography

Development

Amount

Scale

Layout

Appearance

Design (continued)

Character areas

Key Design Principles

Masterplan Strategies

Car parking strategy

Cycle parking strategy

Sustainability strategy

Energy strategy

Water and drainage strategy

Crime prevention strategy

Utility strategy

Phasing strategy

Meanwhile Use strategy (where appropriate)

Management and Place Stewardship strategy

Parameter Testing

Key design principles plot testing

Evidence of testing and results

Parameter plans

Evidence of testing and appraisal of results

Guidance to reading and interpreting the plans

3.3. Design Code

Design Code

3.3.1. This section is provided to give guidance on the level of detail that the Council will seek as part of the approval processes for strategic-scale Planning Applications. The content of application documents should be agreed through the pre-application process and reflect the scale, type and complexity of proposed development. It is important to note that the information and advice contained within this section is without prejudice to the formal determination of any planning application(s) or discharge of conditions.

3.3.2. A Design Code is a design guidance document usually used within the context of a planning application, which can ensure consistency and quality across a development that may be delivered in multiple phases and/or by multiple parties.

3.3.3. The National Model Design Code forms part of the government's planning practice guidance and expands on the 10 characteristics of good design set out in the National Design Guide, which reflects the government's priorities and provides a common overarching framework for design.

3.3.4. The three-stage process sought is:

1 Outline Planning Application, to include parameter plans, development specification, Design and Access Statement (see section 3.4) and a phasing strategy;

2 Design Code required by condition of an Outline Planning Permission to be submitted and approved prior to the approval of reserved matters;

3 Submission of Reserved Matters Application(s).

OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION

DESIGN CODE

RESERVED MATTERS APPLICATION
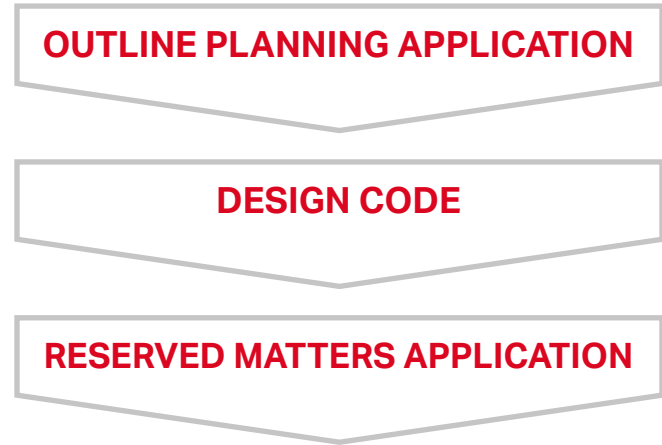
Further Reading

Further detail on purpose and format of Design Codes:

MHCLG (2021) National Design Guide

MHCLG (2021) National Model Design Code: Part 1 The Coding Process

MHCLG (2021) National Model Design Code: Part 2 Guidance Notes

CABE (2003) Building Sustainable Communities: The Use of Urban Design Codes

DCLG (2006) Preparing Design Codes – A Practice Manual

Amending and reviewing a Design Code

3.3.10. It is acknowledged that some of the planning applications sought will be for developments that will take a considerable period of time to complete. The Design Code should provide sufficient flexibility to adapt to the changing market and social needs. It is nevertheless likely that changes will be required for, and not limited to, the following reasons[1]:

- Outstanding innovative design.
- Demonstrated changes to the local market.
- Changes to the policy framework (for example, national policy).
- Technical improvements.
- Experience in use (for example where known problems exist).
- Unforeseen factors which the Design Code could not have addressed.

3.3.11. Either the Council or the Applicant(s) will be able to request a review of the design code after two years from commencement of the first Reserved Matters Permission. This is a process that Cambridge City Council has used on their major applications including Clay Farm and Trumpington Meadows.

3.3.12. The Council may seek an independent opinion of a Design Review Panel to assess whether changes to a Design Code may cause harm to development quality secured via the original Planning Permission.

_____

1 Reasons for change are from: "Preparing Design Codes – A Practice Manual", DCLG, 2006:106)

Content of a Design Code

3.3.5. A Design Code should be based on the parameter plans and provide rules on how the parameter plans are to be interpreted as well as provide further detail as required. It should include a set of mandatory components as well as discretionary components that the detailed design can deviate from. The majority of principles set out in a Design Code should be mandatory. Any deviation to the discretionary components should be agreed through the Reserved Matters pre-application process and outlined in the Design and Access Statement.

3.3.6. The principles set out in the Code should be sacrosanct but flexibility should be provided to ensure that a Design Code does not prejudice innovative architectural solutions that may be proposed at the Reserved Matters Application stage. The Design Code should be clear and succinct, and avoid unnecessary repetition.

3.3.7. It is expected that a Design Code is tested and an illustrative scheme adhering to the Design Code for a part or parts of the application site is provided upon submission of the Design Code. The level of detail for illustrative testing should be agreed through the pre-application process. The testing should be seen as a quality benchmark for the reserved matters applications as well as an opportunity to test the level of flexibility that may be required within the Design Code to ensure that future detailed design is not unnecessarily constrained.

3.3.8. Table 5 on the following pages sets out the Council's general aspiration for the content of Design Codes. These are meant as generic guidance. Full set of requirements and the level of detail should be agreed through the planning process to address each project's specificities.

3.3.9. Dependent on the size of the application site a Design Code may be specific to character areas or phases. In such instances location-specific chapters should follow general guidance for the whole application site. For very large phased developments the Council may recommend that Design Codes for each phase/character area are each prepared and approved separately prior to the first Reserved Matters Applications for each phase/character area.

Further Reading

Good practice Design Codes include:

Clay Farm, Design Code, 2011, Cambridge

Willoughby Lane, Design Code, Meridian Water, 2016, LB Enfield, London

Chobham Manor, Design Code, Legacy Communities Scheme, 2011, LLDC, London

Table 5 Sample Design Code Principles

Street typologies

Provide typical section and plan, including key dimensions compliant with the Herts Manual for Streets, type of car parking, street calming measures, tree coverage and species, lighting strategy, underground utility/service trenches, material palette.

Dependent on the scale of development some principles may be relegated to detailed area-specific Design Codes.

Example: streets to achieve X% tree canopy cover at 30 years after planting.

Land Uses

Specify land use principles appropriate for defined locations.

Example: residential ground floors along primary roads to be able to accommodate non-residential uses.

Development edges

Specify permitted treatment of development edges.

Example: no dwellings to back onto the boundary between the development and the green belt.

Views and view corridors

Set out key views that should be retained or established.

Example: visual connection with an ancient woodland from X location to be retained.

Minimum floor-to-ceiling heights

Minimum space standards

Publicly accessible open space

Specify area and character of each public space, including planting principles, play provision and SUDS provision, if applicable. Material palette is likely to be required.

Example: trees planted in public areas to be a minimum size of Xcm girth or equivalent evergreen/multistem.

Play space

Provide locations for and character of local and neighbourhood play areas.

Example: play spaces to be naturalistic in style and with an emphasis on natural play.

SUDS

Specify SUDS typologies and their visual treatment, with particular focus on visual treatment of strategic SUDS.

Example: strategic SUDS to be incorporated into planted wetlands.

Car parking

Include car parking ratio proposed (incl. accessible parking, electric charging points etc.) as well as location and layout strategy, with particular focus on limiting car parking impact on public realm and architectural character.

Example: no parking courts to the rear of dwellings to be provided.

Cycle parking

Include cycle parking ratio proposed as well as type of rack and spacing for visitor parking.

Example: a pair of Sheffield stands to be located every X metres on tertiary streets.

Waste strategy

Include permitted locations for waste storage for houses and apartment buildings.

Example: bin storage locations to be enclosed and located to the front of a dwelling.

Sustainability

Specify how the design maximises resource efficiency and climate change adaptation through passive means such as landscaping, orientation, building efficiency (wall-to-floor ratio), extent of glazing and external building features.

Example: dwellings to be predominantly orientated to East and West.

Urban grain

Include ways of mitigating transitions in scale across development plots and specify general scale and character of development, including roofscape.

Example: Frontage along X street to mimic roofline of adjacent existing properties.

Building typologies

Specify module width, number of storeys, type of car, cycle, waste storage, boundary treatment.

Example: Typology X to include garage and vehicular access from the rear.

Building Frontages

Specify the relationship of building lines to the street, including permitted setbacks from the development plot, with appropriate tolerances. Set out required level of activity and passive surveillance.

Example: At least one ground floor habitable room to be provided on the front of dwelling houses

Ancillary infrastructure

Specify approach to incorporation of ancillary infrastructure such as substations, meter boxes, vents and flues.

Example: Meter boxes not to be located on front elevations, unless incorporated into recessed entrance areas.

Boundary treatment

Specify the size and treatment of landscaped privacy strips in front of buildings and garden fences.

Example: a planting strip 0.X metres wide to be provided in front of boundary walls in tertiary streets.

Private outdoor amenity space

Define outdoor amenity space minimum areas where the application seeks to deviate from minimum distances set in the Draft Local Plan

Example: in dwellings with no garden a balcony minimum X metres deep to be provided.

Privacy

Define minimum distances if the application seeks to deviate from minimum distances set in the Draft Local Plan

Example: distance between rear windows to be reduced to X metres for Typology X.

Building materiality

Set out range of permitted materials for elevational and boundary treatment.

Example: all elevations to be predominantly clad in brick, using natural/earth tones.

3.4. Place Stewardship

3.4.1.   The Council considers the management of assets generated by the development process as key to fostering attractive and sustainable neighbourhoods. In the interest of ensuring pro-active management of these assets the applicant will need to demonstrate that appropriate Place Stewardship model has been considered. The Council is likely to seek not-for-profit community management models that include meaningful resident representation.

3.4.2.   The Local Plan requires that a Community Management Organisation is established for some Strategic sites, with sufficient assets to provide sustainable management of community facilities, open spaces and parklands. The Council will strongly encourage that similar management approach is utilised on other strategic-scale projects.

3.4.3.   Funding structure of any management organisation set up for the development will be paramount and the Council will seek sufficient long-term funding to be secured through s106 agreement. In some instances it may be appropriate that a management organisation is endowed with commercial properties or other income-generating assets. The level of resident service charge will need to be established and fully justified, and a maximum service charge cap increase should be defined, e.g. limited to the rate of inflation.

3.4.4.   Management structure of a management organisation will need to balance the applicant's interests with those of other stakeholders, including residents. The Council will expect that a management organisation will have an equal balance of representation between the Applicant(s) and other parties during the period of buildout and that a clear handover process will be agreed for the post-completion period.

3.4.5.   In the interest of reassuring the Council that sufficient funding is in place to ensure long-term management of a development the Applicant(s) may be required to submit a 25-year business plan to demonstrate a management organisation's viability and that a sufficient scale of resources is provided to safeguard community assets in perpetuity.

3.4.6.   Principles of Place Stewardship should be provided that specify as a minimum:

- The extent of assets to be managed by a management organisation in the period of buildout and upon project completion.

- Funding model including any endowments and grants by Applicant(s), and the extent to which the management organisation is to be funded by resident service charge.

- Management model to specify the structure of a management organisation's team and balance of representation between the Applicant(s) and other stakeholders during the period of buildout.

- A programme for the preparation and approval of estate management plans.

Further Reading

Further detail about Place Stewardship can be found in:

TCPA (2017) Case Study 1: Ashford Borough Council, Chilmington Green - establishing a community management organisation. In: Building Homes Together.

TCPA (2017) Long-Term Stewardship

TCPA (2014) Built Today, Treasured Tomorrow - A Good Practice Guide to Long-Term Stewardship

3.5. Infrastructure Delivery and Viability

3.5.1. The Council is in the process of updating its Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and Infrastructure Delivery Schedule that shall be regularly updated to reflect changing needs within the area. These documents identify the infrastructure needs of the District in relation to anticipated future growth.

3.5.2. Infrastructure delivery and the viability of the Broad Locations and other large scale major sites will form an integral part of the Masterplanning process. The Applicant(s) should formulate an infrastructure delivery framework and demonstrate the viability for each of the Strategic sites. This will identify those key elements of infrastructure that will need to be delivered as part of the development and be supported by a viability appraisal.

3.5.3. The consideration of infrastructure delivery will be 'front loaded' in accordance with the NPPF and therefore feed into every stage of the Masterplanning process.

3.5.4. As set out in the LP, the scale of some of the Strategic sites presents a unique opportunity to deliver innovative infrastructure solutions. For example, the Council encourages the creation of community trusts to deliver the long term management and maintenance of public open space and other community based facilities.