

# Supplementary Planning Guidance LDP6

## Building Better Places to Live

(Revision Number 3)  
Adopted January 2017





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# summary



The main purpose of this Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) is to improve the standard of design in residential development, regardless of its size and location. This SPG has been revised in accordance with the Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan, Adopted 2010, and acts to serve as guidance for landowners, developers and Planning Officers. The original guidance was produced as an all-Wales guide by the Planning Officers Society for Wales (POSW), in conjunction with Welsh Government (WG), under the title “A Model Design Guide for Wales: Residential Development”.

Minor alterations have been made to the guide in response to updates in legislation, which are not regarded as material changes. Therefore, it was not deemed necessary for this revision to undergo further public consultation. Procedures concerning internal consultation have been adhered to, however, and the guide has been approved as SPG (within the context of the LDP) by Council.

This guide will be a major consideration both in the Development Management process and the determination of planning applications for housing development, and for the production of site-specific guidance in the form of development briefs and masterplans.



# 1.0

## introduction

- 1.1 The quality of the places we live in has an impact on all aspects of life. How well they are designed will influence how safe we feel, how easy it is to walk round, whether we have shops, community facilities and schools nearby and whether our children have safe places to play. It will also affect whether there is good access to public transport and a good choice of homes in which to live. It is essential that the places we create embody the principles of good urban design.
- 1.2 Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC) is committed to achieving good design, as is the Welsh Government (WG). Good design is a key aim of the Planning System. Planning Policy Wales (PPW), Edition 9, 2016, requires that Local Development Plans (LDPs) provide clear policies setting out a local authorities design expectations. Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12: Design, 2016 gives advice to local planning authorities on how design may be facilitated within the planning system.
- 1.3 This document has been designed to meet the requirements of Planning Policy Wales (PPW) and convey the design implications of TAN 12 to anyone proposing new residential development. It is a requirement of PPW and TAN 12 that a 'design and access statement' accompanies major applications for planning permission for residential development. This document provides guidance on the issues a design and access statement for new residential development should address.
- 1.4 Local authorities are also required to have due regard to crime and disorder prevention in the exercise of their functions under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and to consider the issue of accessibility for all including the needs of those with visual and hearing impairments and those with limited mobility, at an early stage in the design process. This document addresses these issues and aims to promote safe inclusive environments through good design.
- 1.5 Design is only one consideration when making a decision to approve or refuse an application for planning permission. In addition to addressing the requirements of this guide, development proposals will need to demonstrate compliance with the LDP as well as other material considerations, and in some cases be accompanied by a formal Environmental Impact Statement.

# 2.0

## local development plan (LDP) & supplementary planning guidance (SPG)



- 2.1 The Local Development Plan (LDP) provides the development strategy and policy framework for the development and conservation needs of the County Borough for the fifteen-year period from 2006 to 2021. The LDP will be used by the Council to guide and manage development, providing the basis by which planning applications will be determined consistently and appropriately.
- 2.2 The LDP process identifies the broad development principles, such as the type and scale of development, their uses and interrelationships. It also includes site-specific allocations and the infrastructure required to support the development. However, further detail such as the layout of uses and detailed design requirements need to be covered within Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG). This SPG deals specifically with residential development and provides prospective developers with guidance on designing appropriate, well thought out and sustainable communities.
- 2.3 The guidance should be read in conjunction with all other relevant guidance.

# 3.0

## planning policy context

3.1 Planning Policy Wales (WG 2016) states that:

***“Good design is also inclusive design. The principles of inclusive design are that it places` people at the heart of the design process, acknowledges diversity and difference, offers choice where a single design solution cannot accommodate all users, provides for flexibility in use, and provides buildings and environments that are convenient and enjoyable to use for everyone. Good design should also promote the efficient use of resources, including land...[and] should ensure that development contributes to tackling the causes of climate change (by reducing greenhouse gas emissions) and to effective adaptation to the consequences of climate change. An integrated and flexible approach to design, including location, density, layout and built form, will be an appropriate way of contributing to climate responsive development’. (PPW 2016 para 4.11.4-6)***

3.2 These principles are followed through in TAN 12 which requires new residential development to:

- Create places with the needs of people in mind, which are distinctive and respect local character;
- Promote layouts and design features which encourage community safety & accessibility;
- Focus on the quality of the places and living environments for pedestrians rather than the movement and parking of vehicles;
- Promote environmental sustainability features, such as energy efficiency, in new housing and make clear specific commitments to carbon reductions and/or sustainable building standards;
- Secure the most efficient use of land including appropriate densities; and
- Consider and balance potential conflicts between these criteria.

3.3 TAN 12 spells out the objectives of good design and encourages a design process that seeks to address these aims from the outset of a project. The objectives of good design are based on an understanding of what makes existing places attractive and sustainable places in which to live.

- 3.4 This guide restates the objectives of good design set out in PPW and TAN 12 and provides some simple guidance on how each objective can be addressed in new development to achieve high quality, safe and inclusive residential development.
- 3.5 Anyone proposing a residential development will be expected to work with the local planning authority and stakeholders to develop a design that addresses each relevant objective. They should describe how their design achieves each objective in a 'design statement' to be submitted with the planning application. Design appraisal by the local planning authority may involve assessing how well each objective has been met before making a decision whether to support a proposal on design grounds.
- 3.6 *Policy SP6* entitled *Place Making* contained within the LDP provides the Council's local design policy, which indicates that: *'Development proposals should contribute to creating sustainable places by having full regard to the context of the local, national, historic and built environment and its special features through:*
- a) An appropriate mix of uses that reflect the role and function of settlements;*
  - b) A high standard of design that reinforces attractive qualities of local distinctiveness;*
  - c) Design in accordance with best practice in terms of designing out crime;*
  - d) A location and layout that reflects sustainable transport and accessibility principles, and provides full, easy and safe access for all;*
  - e) The incorporation of resource efficiency and passive solar gain through layout, materials, construction techniques, water conservation, and where appropriate the use of sustainable drainage systems;*
  - f) The efficient use of land, including higher densities where development is close to key transport nodes;*
  - g) The incorporation and enhancement of existing natural heritage features;*
  - h) The incorporation of mitigation measures that improve and maintain air quality.*
- 3.7 Please also refer to:
- Manual for Streets 2 (Department for Transport, 2010)
- 3.8 Consequently, when considering the design of new development, regard needs to be given to National Planning Policy and Guidance, Policy SP6 of the LDP together with all other relevant policies contained within the development plan, as well as the objectives and aspirations highlighted within this SPG and various other related documents.



# 4.0

## the design process

4.1 This guide sets out a number of objectives towards good design and encourages a design process that seeks to address these aims from the outset of a project. The objectives of good design are based on an understanding of what makes existing places attractive and sustainable places in which to live. These objectives are:

- Observance of the Natural Heritage;
- Compactness of the site;
- Accessibility and legibility;
- Ease of movement;
- Character and context;
- Continuity and enclosure;
- Public Realm;
- Variety and diversity;
- Adaptability;
- Resource Efficiency

These objectives are discussed in further detail within chapter 6.0.

4.2 There are certain key processes that need to occur before a development proposal can be considered, as well as various stages and consultations that potential developments need to go through.

4.3 An effective design process consists of:

- Effective consultation and engagement throughout the project;
- An inception phase;
- Policy review context and site appraisal;
- Visioning;
- Design development and refinement.

These processes are expanded on in Figure 1 overleaf.

4.4 The essence of 'Good Design' is also enshrined within principles of 'urban design'. In order for this guide to be easily accessible to all, a glossary of terms is attached within Appendix 1.

4.5 **Chapter 5.0 sets out a checklist summarising the requirements set out in this SPG.**

It is important to note that whilst the Local Authority would encourage all of these objectives to be met, it is also aware that some developments will not be able to meet all of them.

# 5.0

## checklist

Objective	Criteria	Achieved?
<b>1 Natural Heritage</b>	Is the area prone to flooding – if so, does it meet the requirements of TAN 15 on Development and Flood Risk	
	Does the development take into account the natural setting of the area? Such as is it development in an SLA, VILL, SINC, SAC, SSSI, LNR	
	Has the design utilised features to promote biodiversity, such as by using native trees, green corridors or developing the ecological value of Sustainable Urban Drainage features,	
	Has any loss of biodiversity been compensated for either on site, or off site?	
	Does it include a management plan stating who will look after the site once it is developed?	
<b>2. Compactness</b>	Do the densities vary across the site and seek to create a hierarchy of streets and a pattern of development within the site- which is reflective of the wider area - such as higher densities nearer local amenities and on main roads, to help visualise mainstreets more prominently?	
	Has the design of the scheme incorporated Open Space effectively and to the standards required in the LDP?	
	Have parking standards been applied coherently?	
	Has the development had regard to natural vegetation requirements – such as the need to allow tree roots, and tree canopies to expand?	
<b>3. Accessibility and ease of movement</b>	Has consideration been given to pedestrians, cyclists, and other road users?	
	Has consideration been given to the relationship of the site with existing communities and are the access routes well integrated into the surrounding area?	
	Is access to public transport highlighted?	
	Is the development permeable? – can people move easily with-in the development and between the development and the wide area?	

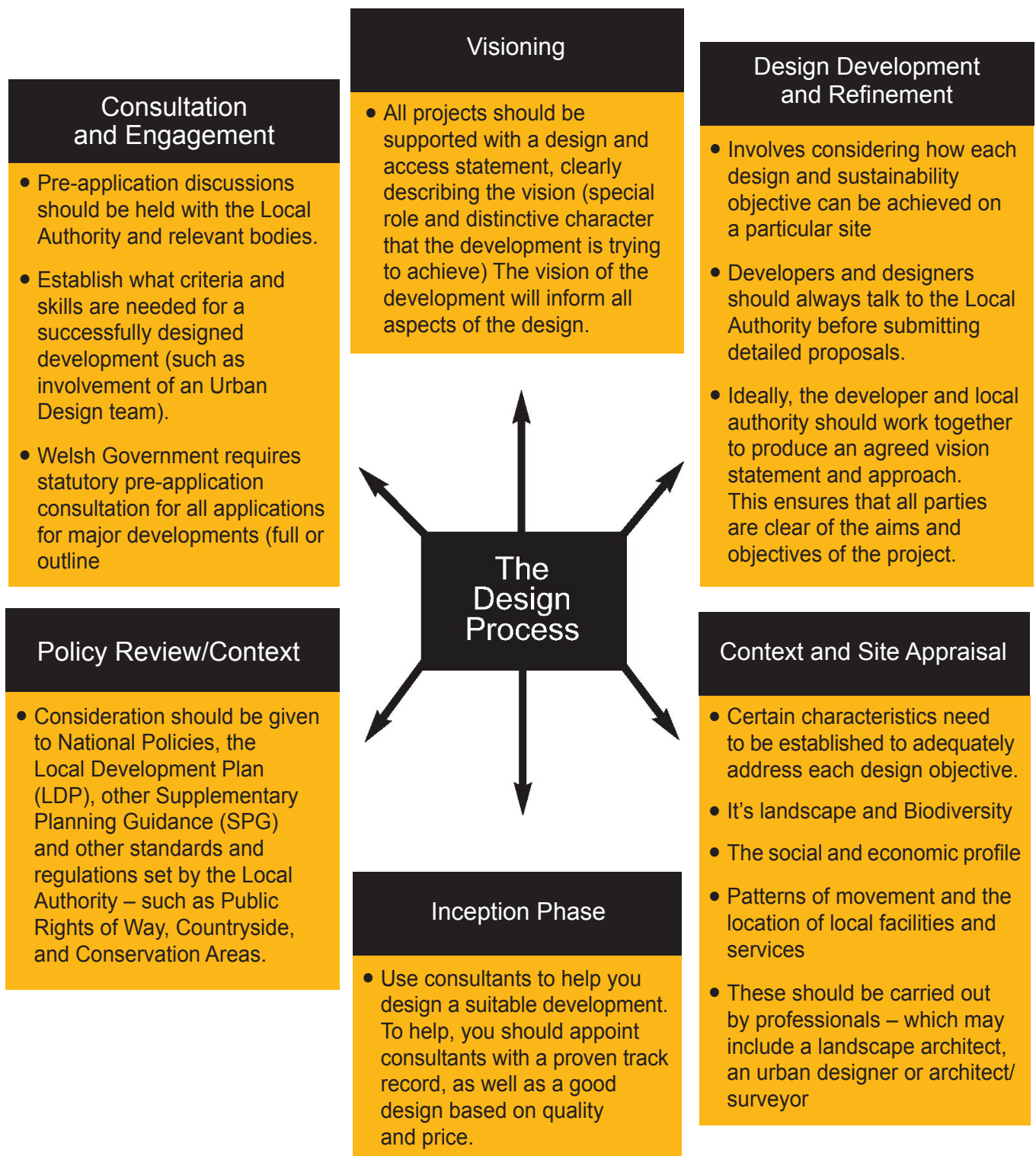
Objective	Criteria	Achieved?
<b>4. Legibility</b>	Has the development had regard to different street widths and building heights and used these to help guide residents around primary, secondary and tertiary streets?	
	Does the development fit into the existing pattern of the landscape so it appears continuous and integrated with the surrounding area?	
	Has the development had careful regard to the location of land-marks, vistas, focal points, and memorable spaces?	
<b>5. Character and Context</b>	Has a character appraisal been carried out? Has it taken account of the local context of the area?	
	Has the 'vision' had regard to this character appraisal?	
	Has this 'vision' informed the public realm and plot characteristics?	
	Does the development contribute towards the sustainable future of the site? Such as, has the land been developed wisely and has it been developed to the best practicable manner for future growth?	
	Is the development scheme locally distinctive and reflective of the character of the local area?	
	Has the development used plant material that is capable of contributing to biodiversity and which is likely to grow and thrive locally?	
	Will the development use local skills and workmanship where possible?	
<b>6. Continuity and Enclosure</b>	Does the block layout allow for properties to overlook the street scene and allow for a clear distinction between public and private area? To best achieve this, have parameter blocks been utilised where appropriate?	
	Has hard and soft landscaping been used where necessary to provide continuity and enclosure of streets and spaces?	
	Has parking been located to avoid the disruption of street frontage? For example, using on street parking, courtyard parking or provision of parking at the side of the house rather than on-plot parking. Does parking adhere to Manual for Streets?	
	Has the development placed the main pedestrian/cycle routes within the most overlooked areas to create a safe public realm?	
	Has the development clearly indicated public and private spaces?	

Objective	Criteria	Achieved?
<b>7. Public Realm</b>	Has the development considered public realm from the onset?	
	If private drives are incorporated within the development, have they been used appropriately?	
	Has public realm been integrated with that of the built form?	
	Has well designed street furniture been included? If so, has it been placed wisely to minimise clutter?	
	Has the development considered the scale and form of key streets and their relationship with public spaces?	
	Has the development minimised 'landscape' areas that serve no useful purpose as part of the public realm.	
<b>8. Variety and Diversity</b>	Have other uses been considered? This may make the development more sustainable in reducing the need to travel by car and provide additional facilities that the area is lacking?	
	Has the development allowed for a mixture of tenures?	
<b>9. Adaptability</b>	Have the buildings been designed to be flexible and adaptable? For example, residential units with higher ceilings at ground level can allow for the conversion of these floors into retail at a later date.	
	Has open space been designed to be flexible and capable of being used for a variety of uses?	
<b>10. Resource Efficiency</b>	Has the reuse of buildings been considered where feasible?	
	Have environmental initiatives been considered?	
	Has the landscape been designed for biodiversity to thrive in the microclimate?	



# 6.0

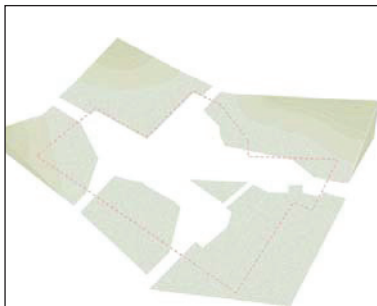
## objectives of good design



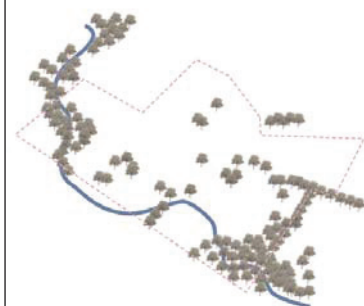
**figure 1: the design process**

# objective 1

## natural heritage



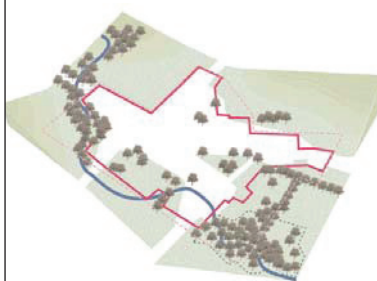
topography



woodland & water courses



ecological importance



potential development area

ABOVE: SIMPLIFIED PROCESS OF CONSIDERING NATURAL HERITAGE RESOURCE AND DEFINING DEVELOPABLE AREA

Developments should be designed to integrate with, protect and enhance the landscape and biodiversity values of the site. The landscape is one of the most important resources of Caerphilly County Borough Council and needs to be protected and enhanced. This does not mean that there should be no change but requires high quality design solutions that complement or contribute to the landscape character. Biodiversity is one of the building blocks of all life and needs to be preserved and enhanced wherever possible.

### How can good design incorporate the natural heritage?

- Show consideration to the geological and ecological constraints of the site;
- Biodiversity initiatives should be incorporated into the development – for example, using native trees, green corridors or developing the ecological value of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) features;
- Ensure that features with established ecological or landscape value are protected throughout the site clearance and construction process;
- Compensate for any loss of biodiversity elsewhere on site or off site if necessary;
- Put in place mechanisms for positive and sustainable management and aftercare of landscape and ecological resources.

### Further guidance on how this can be achieved?

Landscape and ecological resources are often seen as a constraint to development. Often the reverse could be true. The sensitive incorporation of natural heritage can in fact help to give a site a distinct identity and possibly even a marketing advantage. The value of trees and other elements of natural heritage cannot be overstated. As well as giving a development a sense of instant maturity, a growing body of evidence points to health and well-being benefits. The key to addressing natural heritage is to ensure that it forms a positive part of the vision for the site's development and is not simply a hindrance to a standard layout.



# objective 2

## compactness

FLATS DEVELOPMENT IN TENBY. THE DENSITY OF THE SCHEME FITS WITH THE TOWN SCAPE WHILST AT THE SAME TIME PROVIDING A DENSITY OF USE THAT SUPPORTS THE FUNCTIONS OF THE TOWN CENTRE

Development should use land efficiently and where appropriate provide a density of use/population that supports public transport and commercial/community services.

Compact development forms minimise land take and encourages densities sufficient to support local services and amenities. This in turn enhances the sense of community and reduces the need to travel. This is not to suggest that compactness should be as high as possible everywhere. It will vary according to context and in some locations a low-density solution may be most appropriate.



### How can compactness be achieved in good design?

- Consider the density of the surrounding area, and the facilities that are close to the proposed site. For example – it is near a train or bus station? If so, then densities could be higher to help create more sustainable forms of development;
- Where ecological and landscape resources are to be protected, design-in natural heritage as part of green space but discuss with the planning authority where it is appropriate to maintain overall site density by creating higher densities in certain areas;
- Consider using higher densities in prominent areas to help define streets – such as using higher densities on main roads and accessible areas, or around the concentration of services and facilities;
- Open space should be incorporated into a scheme from the beginning - so that it is well integrated with the development. This will also mean that the Open Space is a feature of the development and not an after thought, and ensure that its inclusion will not detract from the density of the development around concentrations of services/facilities;
- Parking provision should comply with local standards and guidance;
- Ensure that the compact development form allows for adequate green space, allowing tree roots and canopies to spread.



AXONOMETRIC AND PLAN  
ILLUSTRATING POSSIBLE GRADATION  
IN DENSITY FROM CENTRE TO EDGE OF  
DEVELOPMENT

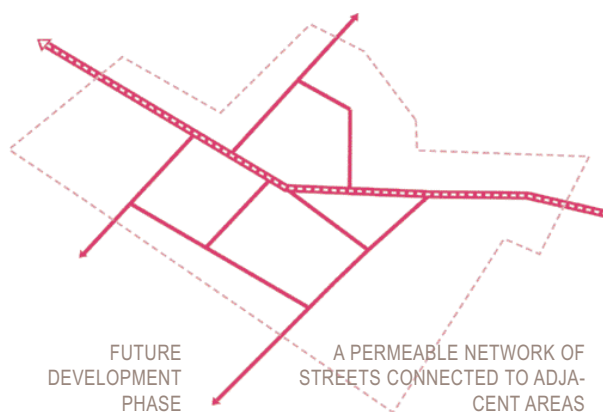


# objective 3 | accessibility and ease of movement

A good movement network allows people to move around freely and easily, through a variety of transport modes. New development should be accessible to all and should be successfully integrated into the existing surrounding area. It is vital that the pattern of accessibility and ease of movement is designed hand in hand with measures to reduce crime and create safe and secure streets, spaces and buildings.

## How should accessibility be utilised for good design?

- Ensure a collaborative approach to the accessibility of the new site which considers the very different needs of pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles;
- Designing 'access for all' including the needs of those with visual and hearing impairments and those with limited mobility;
- Design to connect with adjacent streets and communities;
- Ensure safe and efficient access for all modes of transport, emergency services and other service vehicles but wherever possible give priority to pedestrian and cyclist movement;
- Ensure good access for/to public transport where available;
- Ensure that routes within the site also allow for future stages of development;
- Distinguish between primary routes, secondary routes and tertiary routes by varying street cross-section and design. This can help to reinforce a hierarchy of streets and spaces that make the development easier to understand (see legibility below). It can also be important in defining areas that are public and those that are solely for residents, helping to discourage crime;
- Establish a layout that is "permeable" - easy to move around in- and inter connected within the site, but avoid the creation of any 'short-cuts' or routes that will be underused or not overlooked;
- Design for low vehicle speeds to ensure that streets and spaces are comfortable for pedestrians and cyclists to use. This can be done for example by minimising straight stretches of road with extended forward visibility.





# objective 4

## legibility

“Legibility of streets”, means creating development layouts that are easy to understand and to find your way around. The structure of key streets and spaces forms the main image of a place and makes it easy for people to orientate themselves and find their way around. It helps create the identity of a place and the perception of it by others.

**For each street and space in the hierarchy within a development the developer/ designer should be able to describe:**

**firstly,**  
its desired character and role within the structure of the development

**secondly,**  
its accessibility and traffic function;

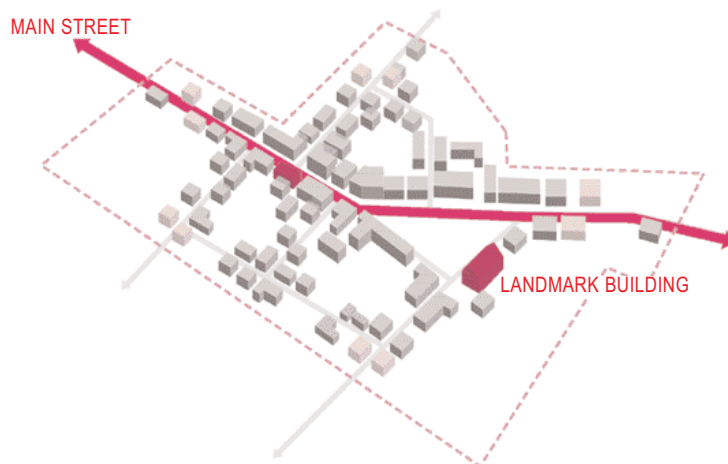
**thirdly,**  
its design characteristics.

### How should legibility be utilised for good design?

- Ensure that the width of the road is suitable for the function of the road – for example, a main carriageway, and the public realm around this should be different to that of a quiet residential road. This can be achieved through a variance in building heights, scale and form. Through using this mechanism, you are able to create a hierarchy of streets, allowing people to find their way around developments;
- Tie the development into the existing pattern of landscape, streets and roads so that it is contiguous with the existing urban or rural fabric. In particular integrate with the main uninterrupted linear features, such as existing landscape elements, streets, footpaths and cycleways. This helps to reinforce the pattern and legibility of the site context;
- Consider carefully the location and design of landscape and buildings to create memorable spaces, landmarks, vistas and focal points;
- Link to existing landmarks and views as orientating features;
- Ensure that it would be easy for a resident of the proposed development to direct someone to where they live with reference to the key streets, spaces and landmarks.

Within an overall well connected and permeable urban structure there should be opportunities for the full range of streets including cul-de-sacs. However a monoculture of street types should normally be avoided.

LEGIBILITY: THE MAIN STREET CREATES THE SPINE OF THE DEVELOPMENT.  
LANDMARK BUILDINGS DEFINE THE ENTRANCE TO THE DEVELOPMENT



# accessibility and legibility

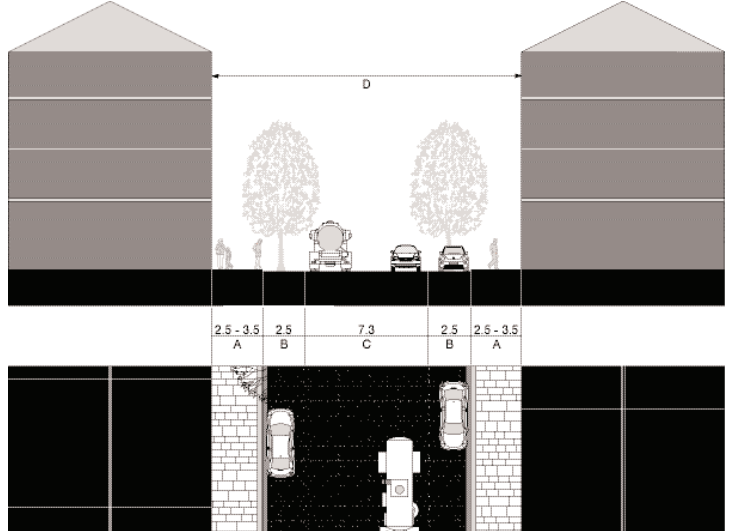
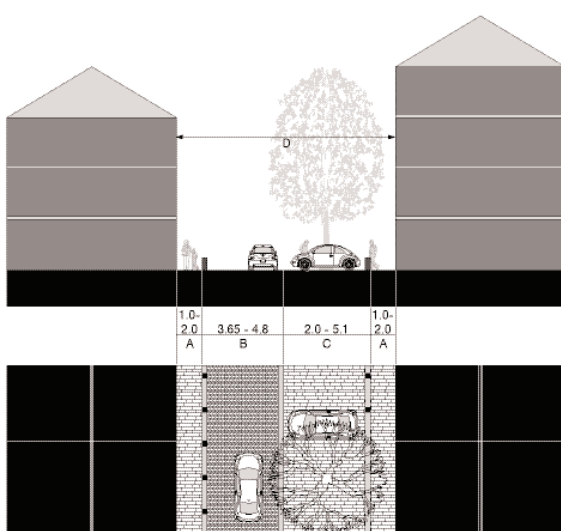


ACCESSIBILITY: PERMEABLE GRID PATTERN OF STREET



CULDE SAC - CIRCUITOUS ROUTES BETWEEN A AND B - POOR PEMEABILITY

BELOW: SUB DIVISION PATTERN CARDIFF - WITHIN THE GRID LAYOUT THERE IS A CLEAR HIERARCHY OF MOVEMENT WHICH IS SUPPORTED BY THE SCALE OF THE BUILT FORM. THE MAIN STREETS INTEGRATE WITH THE REST OF THE CITY, A PRINCIPLE WHICH CAN BE APPLIED TO A SITE OF ANY SIZE. HOWEVER ACCESSIBILITY AND LEGIBILITY IS JUST ONE ELEMENT OF URBAN FORM. USE, TENURE AND MANAGEMENT WILL ALSO INFLUENCE THE SUCCESS OF A PLACE



ABOVE: STREETS CAN BE GIVEN DIFFERENT CROSS SECTIONS TO EXPRESS THEIR RELATIVE IMPORTANCE IN TERMS OF BOTH MOVEMENT AND URBAN STRUCTURE STRENGTHENING LEGIBILITY

# objective 5

## character and context

Development should respond to the character and local distinctiveness of site.

The character and context of any development is created by the form of the development, the landscape, culture and biodiversity – all of which are locally distinctive. These elements have often built up over a considerable time and help create a ‘sense of place’. The character and context of a site should influence design positively so that development does not simply replace what was there but reflects and responds to changes in local circumstances. If the context to a development has been compromised by an earlier stage of development it should not be seen as a reason to perpetuate what has been done before.

Opportunities should be sought to deliver high quality sustainable development that reflects the technologies and aesthetics of the 21st century and creates a strong **sense of place**.

### How does the Character and Context influence good design?

- Ensure that the ‘vision’ for the site has taken into account an appraisal of character and context of the area. The vision should describe what sort of place the development will become and how it will relate to the surrounding physical, historical and cultural context;
- Follow through the vision for the site to detailed design issues such as public realm, plot characteristics, building thresholds etc.;
- Protect or enhance site elements that contribute towards the sustainable future of the site;
- Identify the pattern of streets and spaces in the best and most successful parts of nearby settlements and where possible design the proposed development to echo some of these characteristics;
- Investigate plot width, depth and building height in good examples of locally distinctive development and see whether it is appropriate to adopt a similar pattern of built form;
- Where possible adopt any locally distinctive, consistent and positive treatment of the area between the back of footpath and front of house (such as small front gardens);
- Design to encourage the development of character and visual richness;
- Use plant material that contributes to biodiversity and grows and thrives locally;
- Use local skills and expertise wherever possible - skilled local workmanship can result in development that is in keeping with local character.

LEFT TO RIGHT: BURRY PORT: GWALIA/PCKO ARCHITECTS |  
RAISADALE ROAD: LOYN & CO  
PRIVATE HOUSE: DAVID THOMAS

Good design needs to take into account the historical and physical context of the site. Old maps can be a great source of information and inspiration and often show how traditional forms of development addressed local conditions.





## Further guidance on Character and Context

Often there is a perception that innovative 'contemporary' design conflicts with established patterns of settlement and traditional styles of architecture. In reality architectural styles and traditions have evolved numerous times in the past in response to changing social and economic conditions. There is no reason why design which uses modern materials and responds to contemporary aesthetics should not fit in with context as well as more traditional forms of development.

When the merits of 'contemporary' versus 'traditional' architecture are considered the debate often revolves around the style of the building itself. Often some of the most important design issues related to character and context are totally overlooked. These can be simple issues like building setback, plot width, building height or verticality. If these are responded to appropriately then architecture using modern materials and construction methods, with styling that reflects aesthetics of the 21st century, can be entirely in-keeping with character and context.

## Further guidance on Visual Richness

Visual richness does not imply fussy, complicated or expensive design. In fact many of our best settlements and built form models such as the Victorian terrace are very simple. The richness comes from the simple elegance of some of the basic architectural details (such as sash windows), scale and proportion and also from the tone and quality of materials. Public realm is also important with the natural weathering of good quality natural materials adding to richness over time. However richness also comes from knowing where to do something special. Added building height on corners, well thought out articulation where buildings turn corners and well-detailed facades at the ends of vistas are just a few simple examples where the richness of a scheme can be enhanced. This guide encourages richness of detail in all residential schemes.



LEFT TO RIGHT:

1. VISUAL RICHNESS IN A MODEST TERRACE WITH PERSONALISED FRONT GARDENS.
2. SUBTLE USE OF COLOUR AND JUXTAPOSITION WITH MODERN MATERIALS IN CARDIFF.
3. TIMBER SLATE AND STEEL IN A NEW DEVELOPMENT, BURRYPORT.



# character and context



ABOVE:

A TRADITIONAL APPROACH TO CHARACTER AND CONTEXT. TOP RIGHT: AT THE CRICKHOWELL TELEVILLAGE THE DESIGNERS HAVE RESPONDED STRONGLY TO THE FEEL OF THE EXISTING SETTLEMENT IMMEDIATELY ABOVE. TOP LEFT: TRADITIONAL MATERIALS AND, IN PLACES, FRONTAGE TREATMENTS HAVE BEEN MAINTAINED AND RESPECTED.



PLAS GWENFREWI: A SUCCESSFUL AND SENSITIVE CONTEMPORARY RESPONSE TO A HISTORIC BUILDING



# objective 6

## continuity and enclosure

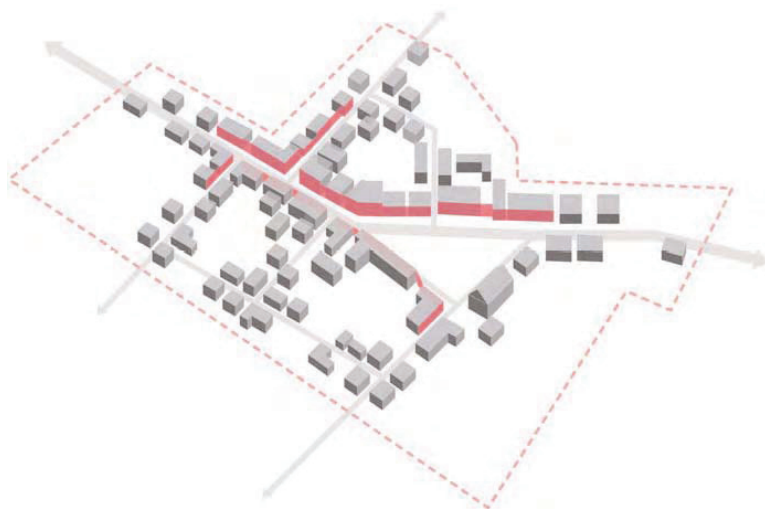
Streets and spaces should be overlooked with continuous street frontage. This creates spaces that are overlooked and are therefore safer and pleasant to use. They maximise opportunities for social interaction and create a stronger sense of place and a more recognisable identity.

Tree and hedge planting, walls and fences can be utilised to create continuity and enclosure and can serve to clearly demarcate public and private space. It is important that spaces within new development aren't merely land that is left over but that it has been designed into the development.

### How does continuity and enclosure influence good design?

- Ensure the block structure/layout allows for overlooking, enclosure of streets and spaces and a clear distinction between public and private areas. In practice perimeter blocks are the best way to achieve this;
- In the absence of building frontages, hard and soft landscape elements should be used where necessary to provide continuity and enclosure of streets and spaces;
- Parking should be located to avoid disruption to the continuity of street frontage. This will mean avoiding on-plot parking to the front of house and considering on-street parking, courtyard parking or provision of parking at the side of house. However always ensure good overlooking and surveillance of parking areas by the car owners;
- Ensure adequate building height in relation to street width to create a sense of enclosure;
- Correlate the main pedestrian/cycle routes with the most overlooked areas to create a safe public realm;
- Ensure active frontages and entrances are located to contribute to the vitality of streets/spaces;
- Clearly demarcate public and private space and avoid left over space.

CONTINUITY OF STREET FRONTAGE CREATED THROUGH TERRACED FORMS ALONG MAIN STREET. ELSEWHERE BUILDINGS TO FRONT PLOT MAINTAIN CONTINUITY





# continuity and enclosure



EXAMPLES ABOVE: SIMPLE APPROACHES TO CONTINUITY OF FRONTAGE AND ENCLOSURE OF STREETS AND SPACES. BUILDINGS ADDRESS THE STREET CREATING A SAFE AND OVERLOOKED PUBLIC REALM.



CONTEMPORARY URBAN INFILL MAINTAINS THE CONTINUITY OF BUILDING LINE AND ENCLOSURE OF THE STREET. ALTHOUGH ARCHITECTURALLY DISTINCTIVE IT FITS INTO THE HISTORIC STREET: PHOTO BY MIKE BIDDULPH

GOOD OVERLOOKING OF GREENSPACE - ESSENTIAL TO ENSURE SAFE AND CARED FOR PUBLIC REALM



# objective 7

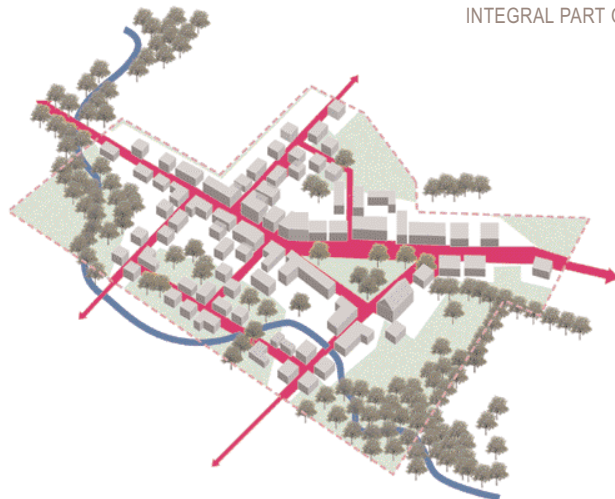
## public realm

Public realm is the space that is accessible physically, visually and culturally to the public. In residential developments it includes the streets, green spaces, squares and playgrounds. The public realm is where chance meetings between neighbours happen, or community events occur. It is vital not just to the physical quality of a development but how pleasant and sociable a development is to live in.

### How can the public realm be implemented within good design?

- Ensure that the public realm is an integral part of the development, and should not be seen as an add-on. This means agreeing how much public open space is required with the planning authority and designing it in as a positive part of the urban form, often in conjunction with measures to protect and manage natural heritage on the site;
- Ensure that the public realm is clearly separate from private space;
- Avoid shared private drives in which the responsibility to care for and maintain public realm is not absolutely clear;
- Integrate the public realm design with that of the built form – for example create higher density areas with taller houses around a focal square or centre which could serve as a focus for the community;
- Use a limited palette of simple, robust hard wearing and preferably natural materials for hard landscape areas, ensuring that they have been agreed with the planning authority and where appropriate the highway authority;
- Create simple, well enclosed spaces with simple, well designed and robust street furniture located to minimise visual clutter, physical obstruction and avoid anti-social behaviour;
- Carefully consider the scale and form of key streets and spaces - visit other spaces of a similar size to ensure that it is appropriate to the type of use planned;
- Minimise 'landscape' areas that serve no useful function as part of the public realm. Instead optimise the impact of street trees and private realm landscape as a means to green the development.

PUBLIC REALM DESIGNED AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE SCHEME



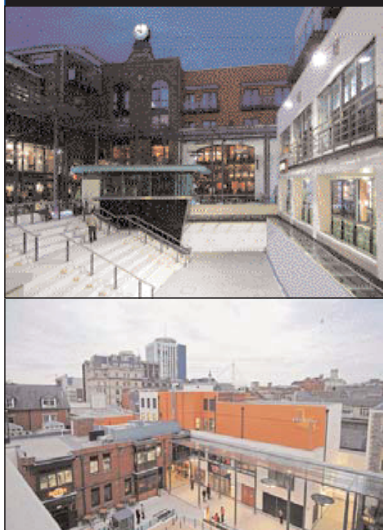


# objective 8 | variety and diversity

Wherever possible, there should be a mix of uses, and variety and choice in types of properties and places.

Although this guide is intended principally for applicants for residential development, there is increasingly a need to mix uses in order to build sustainable communities. Whilst this is particularly the case for larger developments, even small developments may be able to offer opportunities to contribute to local sustainability through the provision of facilities such as shops, offices or workspaces.

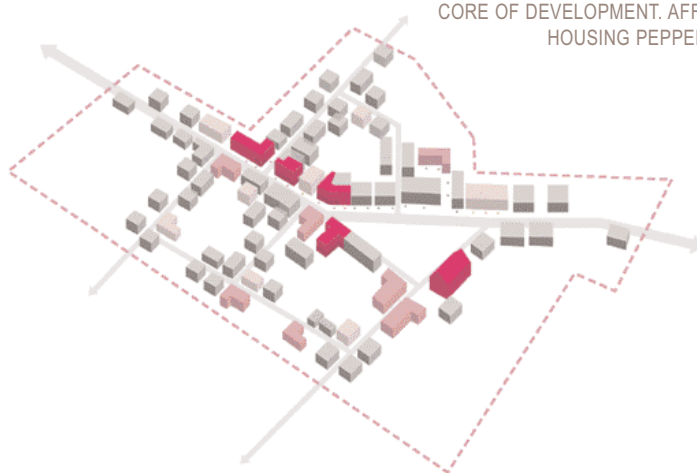
BELOW:  
BRAINS BREWERY CARDIFF.  
A SUCCESSFUL INNER CITY MIXED USE  
DEVELOPMENT WITH RESIDENTIAL,  
LEISURE AND RETAIL USES



## How can variety and diversity help implement good design?

- Consider whether there are opportunities to provide other uses, in addition to residential, that will make the development more self-contained, reducing the need for car use; and/or provide facilities and services that will make the local area more sustainable;
- Where other uses are appropriate, consider greater numbers of smaller uses in preference to one larger site user. For example, a range of businesses and smaller shops will help to animate public streets and spaces more successfully than a single large supermarket;
- Mix uses vertically as well as horizontally. For example consider residential or above ground floor office use or the provision of live-work units;
- Allow for future changes in the use of ground floor units in key locations such as next to public spaces and on street corners. This may involve allowing greater floor to ceiling heights and flexible spaces within the ground floor of such buildings;
- Avoid any ground floor uses that do not provide an active frontage such as large buildings without door or window openings at ground floor level;
- Provide a mix of tenures and property types within sufficiently large development to encourage the development of a diverse community with living opportunities for all members of society. Pepper-pot the 'affordable' housing to meet the requirements of the registered social landlord. Normally this means in clusters;
- Where possible retain old buildings to add interest and diversity to the development.

NON RESIDENTIAL USES INTEGRATED AT  
CORE OF DEVELOPMENT. AFFORDABLE  
HOUSING PEPPER-POTTED



# objective 9

## adaptability

Buildings and spaces should be designed so that they are flexible and adaptable and can be used for a variety of uses over time.

Successful buildings change use several times over their lifetime and flexibility is vital to long-term sustainability and longevity.

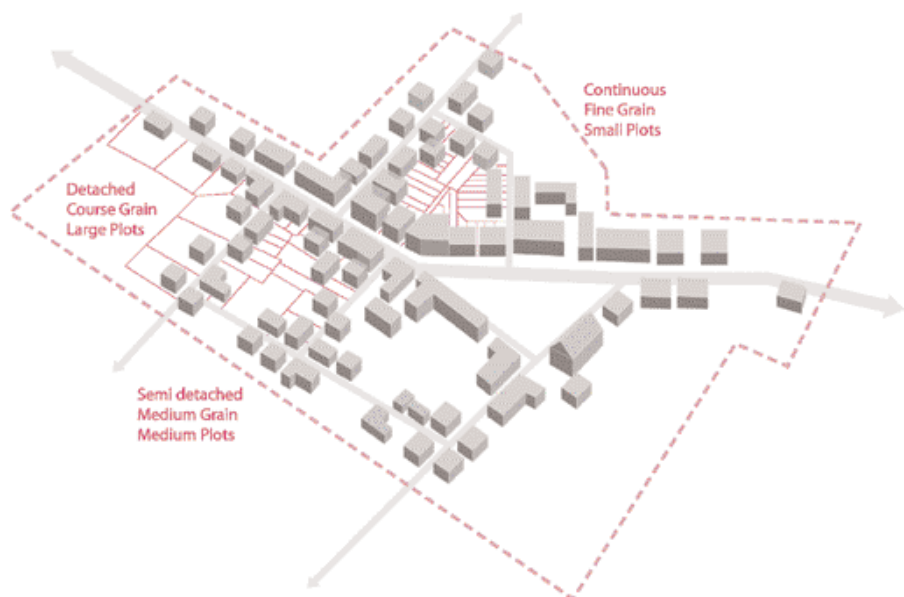
PLAS GWENFREWI:  
BUILDINGS CAN CHANGE USE SEVERAL  
TIMES OVER THEIR LIFETIME AND  
SHOULD BE DESIGNED TO BE FLEXIBLE  
AND ADAPTABLE AS THIS OLD CHAPEL  
HAS PROVED TO BE.



### How can adaptability be incorporated to enhance good design?

- Create a street layout or block structure that integrates with the surrounding urban or rural fabric and which allows maximum flexibility for redevelopment in the future. On sites where the topography allows, a well-connected and permeable grid may be the best way of achieving this. Look at the best parts of existing settlements in the area and consider how and why they have stood the test of time;
- Design streets and spaces to be robust, simple and clutter free, allowing for a variety of possible uses;
- Design buildings to be flexible and adaptable. In practice this means providing the room for expansion together with building forms that are capable of conversion and expansion such as framed construction. Residential units designed with higher ceilings at ground floor level would allow conversion to retail at a later date, for example. This concept can also be applied to internal spaces which should be capable of being adapted to meet the requirements of different users in the future;
- Planned open space should be designed to be flexible and capable of being used for a variety of uses over its lifetime;
- Wherever possible, design for longevity.

AN ADAPTABLE BLOCK STRUCTURE  
CAPABLE OF ACCOMMODATING A RANGE  
OF DEVELOPMENT SCENARIOS



# objective 10 | resource efficiency

Buildings and landscape should minimise resource use in their construction, operation and maintenance.

Buildings have an inherent environmental impact and contribute to CO2 emissions. The initial design of a building can have a huge impact on energy usage over its lifetime. However, energy use can also be minimised by making the best use of buildings and materials already on site, working with the topography to create suitable micro-climates, and using tree planting and shelterbelts to improve microclimate.

BELOW: SUSTAINABLE FEATURES WERE BUILT INTO THE SWANSEA FOYER BY GWALIA / PCKO ARCHITECTS FROM THE OUTSET



## How can resource efficiency be utilised to help enhance good design?

- Follow the guidance contained in Planning Policy Wales, Edition 9, 2016;
- Always consider the re-use of existing buildings on the site where feasible and recycle existing materials gained from demolition and site clearance;
- 'Passive design' can be an effective way to deliver energy efficiency. This involves considering the orientation of buildings to create the correct balance of shade and solar gain, optimal levels of insulation, compact building forms, use of natural ventilation and window size etc. to achieve appropriate thermal mass and air tightness;
- As far as practical use materials that are durable, sustainably produced and have low embodied energy both in terms of their production and transportation to site. This would favour the use of locally sourced materials. However it may equally mean using extremely 'low energy' materials made elsewhere or provided to the site as pre-fabricated elements. Encourage the use of reused/recycled materials and components;
- Design in sustainable drainage systems from the outset of the project and not as an afterthought. Soak-aways, balancing ponds, reed beds and other sustainable drainage elements should always be integrated as a positive part of the layout where possible;
- On large sites consider low-carbon heating systems and renewable energy installations (TAN 8 Planning for Renewable Energy) such as solar water heating and use of bio fuels. Also on large sites consider the use of combined heat power (CHP) as a possible source of heating and power. These need to be designed-in as part of the infrastructure right from the outset of projects;
- Design buildings and external spaces to provide space for effective recycling and composting facilities;
- Conserve and protect existing site topsoil where possible and reuse in landscape schemes to minimise the need to import additional topsoil or soil ameliorants;
- Design landscape to thrive in local microclimatic and soil conditions. This normally requires some use of native locally occurring species or species well adapted to local conditions.

# appendix 1

## glossary of terms

### Adaptability:

The capacity of a building or space to be changed, responding to changing social, technological and economic conditions.

### Active Frontage:

The ground floor front of a building or development block, where development addresses a street or area of public space. An active frontage faces the street, creating a perception of activity and safety through entrance cores, shop windows, cafes, restaurants and public buildings.

### Amenity:

Elements which contribute to the overall character of an area, for example open land, trees, historic buildings and the interrelationship between all elements in the environment.

### Biodiversity:

The measure of amount and variety of different species of plant, animals and other life forms that are present in a defined area.

### Cultural Offer:

To invest in opportunities for cultural organisations, activities and facilities. Increasing participation and engagement in cultural activities.

### Density:

This refers to the intensity of development in a given location. Built density can be expressed in terms of plot ratio (for commercial developments), number of units or habitable rooms per hectare (for residential developments).

### Enclosure:

Enclosure refers to the physical containment of a street or public space. Enclosure varies according to the width of street or open space to the height of enclosing walls or buildings.

### Landmark:

A structure, building or part of a building, which serves a point of reference within an urban environment.

### Layout:

The way in which development blocks/buildings, streets and open spaces are arranged in relation to each other.

### Legibility:

The degree to which a place can be understood easily, navigated and remembered.

### Listed building:

A building on a statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historical interest.

### Masterplan:

A framework for physical development of large areas of urban land. A masterplan indicates the layout, land use and phasing of development. It commonly also illustrates the relationship between built development, streets and public spaces.

### Mixed Use:

Two or more different uses in a single building or block.

### Natural Surveillance:

The passive overlooking of public areas, including streets and public spaces, to improve real and perceived safety.



**Pattern:**

The urban form or layout of built form, public spaces and streets within an urban environment.

**Pedestrian Priority:**

Streets where pedestrians have priority over cars.

**Permeability:**

The degree to which an area can be traversed by vehicles and pedestrians.

**Perimeter Blocks:**

A development block, with continuous development enclosing an internal area of open space.

**Planning Obligations:**

Under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act, a 'Planning Obligation' can be entered into regarding the use or development of land. Obligations can be used to ensure the environment is safe guarded and that the costs of infrastructure associated with a particular development are met by the developer and land-owner.

**Public Art:**

Physical works of art visible to the general public, whether part of a building or free standing.

**Public Realm:**

Areas accessible to all, whether in public or private ownership. This includes urban streets, squares and parks.

**Sense of place:**

Often used in relation to those characteristics that make a place special or unique, as well as to those that foster a sense of authentic human attachment and belonging

**Streetscape/Street Scene:**

The visual elements, which make up a street, including buildings, street enclosure, public realm and street furniture.

**Sustainable Design:**

To reduce the negative environmental impact of development through skillful and sensitive design.

**Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)**

Sometimes referred to as Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems. The SuDS approach to surface water drainage provides an alternative to conventional piped drainage. It mimics natural drainage, and typically uses combinations of installations such as permeable paving soakaways, green roofs, swales and ponds and can be used effectively in both rural and urban areas to support new development.

This approach can slow down the flow of water contributing to a reduction in flood risk and protecting water quality. Reduced runoff to sewers provides additional capacity without expensive engineering work whilst more natural systems improve water quality and the environment.

**Urban Blocks:**

These are the areas between the streets in the street grid. An urban block will normally be occupied by a number of individual buildings.

**Urban Fabric:**

A general term referring to all of the buildings in a town or urban area, and the extent to which they relate to the public realm.

**Vision:**

Is the long term view describing how it is hoped the area will develop over time.

**Wayfinding:**

How people orientate themselves within urban areas and navigate from one place to another, often using prominent buildings, landmarks or directional signage as visual signposts.