APPENDIX A

Halton Borough Council

Design of Residential Development Supplementary Planning Document

May 2012

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Foreword

Good design is crucial in Halton, not only to sustain and create new areas where people live but to support places suffering from economic and social decline. Good design in residential development will help bring about a high quality built and natural environment which is attractive, easy to use, distinctive, safe and sustainable for Halton's residents and for those who wish to invest in or visit the Borough in the future.

The Design of Residential Development Supplementary Planning Document provides guidance for all those involved in building new homes in Halton. The many and varied aspects of design are brought together to help guide and ensure a quality of residential environment for the Borough.

Contents

1. Purpose of the Supplementary Planning Document

1.1 The purpose of the Design of Residential Development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is to provide additional practical guidance and support for those involved in the planning and design of residential development within Halton. It will also be used by the Council in its assessment of applications for planning permission for schemes of residential development or mixed use schemes containing a residential element.

1.2 Specifically this SPD will help to: -

a) Design residential, including mixed use, developments that understand and embrace the principles of good urban design;

b) Ensure residential development responds positively to the character and identity of Halton's surroundings;

c) Guide the layout and structure of residential development which is well connected, safeguards residential amenity and which creates safer places to live;

d) Secure sustainable, adaptable and accessible residential design which fully considers the environment and distinctive landscape features in which it is sited; and,

e) Create attractive, durable and well serviced residential developments

1.3 By stating this purpose, Halton Borough Council will seek to encourage residential schemes that are appropriate to their context and take full advantage of the opportunities for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions. The Local Planning Authority will seek to improve any development proposal that does not provide for, or meet the principles encouraged and required by this SPD, the Local Development Framework (LDF) and the saved policies of the Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP).

2. Policy Framework

2.1 The Design of Residential Development SPD draws on and is consistent, where appropriate, with policy and guidance from the national to the local level.

National Context

2.2 National planning policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework[1] which was published in March 2012. This single document replaces the previous Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) and Guidance (PPGs). The NPPF includes the core planning principle that planning should "always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings". In addition to this, section 7 of the NPPF entitled "Requiring good design" recognises that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. This section specifically states that local plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area, and as such this SPD is responding to this requirement.

2.3 Additionally, there is a range of other national guidance which is relevant to the design of residential development and includes:

- By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System: Towards a Better Practice (DETR and CABE, 2000)
- Urban Design Compendium (Llewelyn-Davies, English Partnerships and Housing Corporation, 2000)
- Urban Design Compendium 2 (Rodger Evans Associates, English Partnerships and Housing Corporation, 2007)
- Code for Sustainable Homes: Technical Guide – 2010 (CLG, 2010)
- Lifetime Homes (www.lifetimehomes.org.uk)
- Safer Places: The Planning System and Crime Prevention (CLG, 2004)
- Secured by Design (www.securedbydesign.com)
- Manual for Streets (DfT and CLG, 2007)
- Manual for Streets 2: Wider Application of the Principles (DfT, 2010)

2.4 Some of these documents are discussed in more detail throughout the SPD as appropriate.

Regional Context

2.5 The regional context has evolved during the production of this SPD with the Government's intention to abolish Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs)[2]. This includes the North West of England RSS[3]. However, following the case brought forward by Cala Homes in the High Court against the Government's intentions, conformity must be demonstrated with the RSS until it is revoked through the provisions set out in the Localism Act[4]. The most applicable policy contained within the RSS relating to the design of residential development is DP7: Promote Environmental Quality, which makes reference to the North West Design Guide[5] and other best practice guidance.

[1] CLG (2012) National Planning Policy Framework
[2] Letter from Steve Quartermain, Chief Planner at CLG (2010) Revocation of Regional Strategies
[3] GONW (2008) North West of England Plan – Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021
[4] HM Government (2011) Localism Act
[5] North West Regional Assembly (2006) North West Best Practice Design Guide

2.6 At a sub-regional level, the Liverpool City Region Ecological Framework sets out a strategic overview of the network of ecological resources, responsibilities and opportunities across the City Region. This will be an important resource for developers when assessing the ecological value of their site and its context within a wider network of ecological resources.

Local Context

2.7 Halton Borough Council's Local Development Framework (LDF) will eventually replace the Council's current statutory development plan, the Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP) which was adopted in 2005. Halton's LDF consists of Local Plans/Development Plan Documents (DPDs) which set policy and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) which provide additional guidance to higher level policy documents, supported by a number of process documents, including the Statement of Community Involvement and the Authority's Monitoring Report. The Core Strategy is the central document within the LDF and sets out the overarching strategy for the Borough and through this, the strategy for the delivery of affordable housing across the Borough.

2.8 Policy CS18: High Quality Design, of the Core Strategy[6] expects all development proposals, including residential development to:

- provide attractive and well designed residential, commercial and industrial developments appropriate to their setting;
- enhance and reinforce positive elements of an area's character contributing to a 'sense of place', including the incorporation of public art where appropriate;
- respect and respond positively to their setting, including important views and vistas, landmark buildings, features and focal points that have been identified in a proper context appraisal;
- be flexible and adaptable to respond to future social, technological, economic and health needs of the Borough;
- promote safe and secure environments through the inclusion of measures to address crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour;
- create public spaces which are attractive, promote active lifestyles and work effectively for all members of society;
- incorporate appropriate landscape schemes into development designs, integrating local habitats and biodiversity;
- provide safe, secure and accessible routes for all members of society, with particular emphasis on walking, cycling and public transport;
- be well integrated and connected with existing development; and,
- be designed sustainably with future management and maintenance in mind.

The Design of Residential Development SPD provides additional guidance to these overarching Core Strategy principles.

2.9 The LDF, and as such this SPD, also has a close relationship to Halton's Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)[7] which outlines the long-term vision to achieve sustainable improvement in Halton. One of the SCS's priorities concerns the environment and regeneration in Halton. The SPD also has close ties with Halton's Housing Strategy which aims to ensure that Halton offers a broad range of good quality housing which meets the needs of existing and future communities.

[6] HBC (2011) Halton Core Strategy: Revised Proposed Submission Document
[7] HBC (2011) Halton Sustainable Community Strategy

2.10 At the local level, site specific design codes can be used to guide the design of residential development. Design codes provide instruction on how design principles or guidance included within this SPD or other applicable LDF documents can be delivered at a neighbourhood scale. Design Codes have been produced for the Sandymoor area of Runcorn and proposals for that area should have regard to both pieces of guidance. These design codes would need to be in conformity with the Design of Residential Development SPD but will relate to localised issues, challenges and opportunities where specific guidance may be necessary. This will be important to ensure that the local character and context of an area is reinforced.

3. How to Use This Document

3.1 This Design of Residential Development SPD should be used by all developers, designers and architects involved in the design and delivery of new residential development, or alterations to existing buildings where the end use is residential. Halton Borough Council Planning Officers will use this guidance as a planning tool for the assessment of development proposals and in raising the quality of the built environment across Halton.

The Design Process

3.2 Any residential development scheme should be underpinned by a robust analytical and contextual base. This requires a thorough understanding of a site and its surroundings together with an appreciation of all relevant design issues. The design of residential development schemes should show how development would respond to the site and its context and the relevant design issues and considerations outlined in this SPD.

3.3 At the outset of a development the following pointers should be used as a guide to the design process:

- Explore the policy framework
- Explore the existing area-based policies and guidance
- Explore best practice guidance and examples

3.4 The Design of Residential Development SPD has been developed to support this design process and sets out the overarching principles of high quality design followed by detailed guidance in relation to delivering high quality residential development. This is set out under the following headings:

- The Principles of Urban Design
- Understanding the Site
- Generating the Layout
- Sustainable Environments
- Detailing the Place
- Other Considerations

3.5 Developers, designers and architects will be expected to demonstrate how the key design principles and design guidance included within this SPD have been taken into consideration in the design of residential schemes through the Design and Access Statement.

3.6 During the design process it is anticipated that conflicts are likely to arise between design principles and related guidance. It is recommended that in such cases early communication with Halton Borough Council is established. In all cases the Council will welcome innovative and creative solutions to design and development issues, however, the emphasis of responsibility to demonstrate the benefits of the scheme and why it should be approved lies with the applicant and not the Local Planning Authority to demonstrate otherwise. The requirement for design consideration, reinforced through national to local policy, means that the Council can refuse planning permission on design grounds.

3.7 For further information on making a planning application, including submitting a Design and Access Statement, please refer to Appendix A on ‘Submitting a Planning Application’ and the

Council's website for 'Validation Check Lists' which outlines what is required upon submission of a planning application and accompanying documentation.

4. The Principles of Urban Design

In order to achieve the standard of residential development required in Halton, applicants should recognise the key principles which form the basis of urban design.

4.1 The overriding objective of this SPD is to deliver sustainable residential development. Sustainability lies at the heart of good urban design and is integral to, and underpins all, of the design principles set out in this SPD. 'Sustainable Development' is defined as "development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". This objective of creating high quality sustainable places has been central to the vision and ideas set out in the UK Sustainable Development Strategy[8] and the guidance provided in National Planning Policy Framework[9]. Through the National Planning Policy Framework the Government is also committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable development with the presumption in favour of sustainable development forming the basis of every plan and planning decision.

4.2 With sustainable development as the central objective, the guidance document 'By Design'[10] aims to promote higher standards in urban design across the UK. It provides guidance and good practice to Local Authorities, Developers and Clients in relation to urban design.

4.3 'By Design' highlights that successful streets, spaces, villages, towns and cities have characteristics in common. These factors have been analysed to produce a series of overarching principles of good urban design to help determine what should be sought to create a successful and sustainable place. These urban design principles and their relationship to the design of residential developments are discussed in more detail over the following paragraphs:

Character

A place with its own identity

4.4 Residential development should begin with an understanding of the area's existing character. This should include responding to the existing layout of buildings, streets and spaces to ensure development enhances the existing area, local identity is reinforced and a 'sense of place' is created or enhanced. This may be achieved through ensuring that adjacent buildings relate positively to one another, streets are connected and spaces complement one another.

Continuity and Enclosure

A place where public and private spaces are clearly distinguished

4.5 Public and private spaces should be clearly distinguished. Residential development should be designed to ensure that public spaces such as streets, footpaths and open spaces are attractive and lively thus creating an active frontage. Private spaces, such as front or rear gardens, should be enclosed so that a clear distinction between public and private space remains.

Quality of the Public Realm

A place with attractive and successful outdoor areas

4.6 Public outdoor space includes any part of a development that is available for use by everyone, such as streets, parks or squares. A high quality public realm can encourage a sense of

[8] HM Gov (2005) Securing the Future: Delivering UK Sustainable Development Strategy
[9] CLG (2012) National Planning Policy Framework
[10] DETR and CABE (2000) By Design - Urban Design in the Planning System: Towards Better Practice

community ownership and respect. Opportunities for interaction with public space should be maximised in residential development. Consideration should also be given to hard and soft landscaping, management and maintenance.

Ease of Movement

A place that is easy to get to and move through

4.7 A well-designed urban structure has a network of connected spaces and routes, for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles. Residential development should be readily permeable with connected layouts allowing safe and direct routes for these users.

Legibility

A place that has a clear image and is easy to understand

4.8 Residential development needs to be designed so that users can understand and identify key routes, access points, differences between public and private spaces and feel safe and secure at all times. As such, residential development should be designed so as to enhance existing views and vistas, and create new ones and define landmarks which can help people to find their way around.

Adaptability

A place that can change easily

4.9 Developments that endure have layouts and design which have the potential to allow future changes and expansion to take place. Residential development needs to be flexible enough to respond to future changes in use, lifestyle, demography and climate. This means designing for energy and resource efficiency, creating flexibility in the use of property, public spaces and service infrastructure and introducing new approaches to transportation, traffic management and parking.

Diversity

A place with variety and choice

4.10 Within residential development schemes, diversity of layout, building form and tenure can contribute to making a successful living environment and ensure a mixed and sustainable community. Residential development should therefore provide opportunities for variety and choice within the local context.

4.11 The following sections of this Design of Residential Development SPD take into consideration these overarching principles of urban design and provide guidance for developers, designers and architects in order to contribute towards securing sustainable, high quality and well designed residential developments across Halton.

5. Understanding the Site

This section sets out how to begin the design process with a full analysis of the character of the site and the context in which it is set.



Character and Context

5.1 The distinctive character and context of a development's surroundings has a fundamental impact on quality of life and therefore identifying, protecting and enhancing those elements that contribute to a site's character and context is a key aspect of ensuring sustainable residential developments. The Council is keen to ensure that residential development respects and enhances the positive features of Halton's character and local context whilst addressing negative features.

Policy 1) Character and Context:
To ensure places have their own character and relate well to their context, applications for residential development should include analysis of:

a) The character and nature of the surrounding environment and streetscape
b) Existing and historic uses of the site and land uses
c) The location, status (i.e. listing) of existing buildings within and surrounding the site
d) The size, shape, orientation, topography of the site
e) Local building forms and patterns of development including scale, massing and height
f) Accessibility of the site including existing roads, footpaths, cycle ways, public transport routes
g) Important view corridors and views into and from the site
h) Ecology, planting and landscape features within and adjoining the site
i) Relevant microclimate considerations including prevailing wind direction, solar path and potential shadowing
j) Location and routes of relevant utilities and services
k) The general economic, social and environmental characteristics of an area

5.2 The physical character of an area can be described as the overall impact of discrete features which come together to make a place feel, look and function. This can also be described as an area's 'sense of place'. A careful analysis of the local character, will inform the best response to the local context, reinforcing and adding to the private aspects of the built environment. This is particularly important in Halton which has a varied and interesting character and sense of place from the urban areas, green spaces, topography and waterfront environments. In terms of residential development the Borough shows much variation in character from Victorian terraces as a legacy of the Borough's chemical industry, post war residential development, the Runcorn New Town housing estates of the 1960s and 70s, and more recent housing developments, for instance, in Upton Rocks and Sandymoor.

5.3 Ensuring that a full analysis of a site's character and context is taken into consideration will ensure that development respects the positive features of Halton's environments, creating and reinforcing local distinctiveness and a sense of place. Undertaking a character and context appraisal is therefore essential to informing any potential development ideas. Applicants or their agents will need to demonstrate and justify how the development proposal contributes to and improves the character of the site and the wider area.

5.4 The size of the scheme will determine how extensive the analysis of the surrounding area should be. For example, in a scheme of one dwelling (either replacement or infill), the applicant may only need to assess the neighbouring plots and that part of the street where the proposed development would be located. Whereas for a major development, the applicant will need to assess the wider locality, including street networks and the surrounding natural and built environment.

5.5 It will be important for proposals for residential development to respond to the distinctive local building forms and patterns of development and to respect the scale, massing and height of the surrounding physical context. Residential development should therefore respond to the existing layout of buildings, streets and spaces to ensure that adjacent buildings relate to one another, streets are connected and spaces complement each other. Existing buildings and structures of local distinctiveness, historic or townscape merit should be integrated into new development to maintain the continuity of the built fabric and retain local character.

5.6 Respecting local character, however, does not necessarily mean replicating it. The Council supports the use of innovative design, which enhances the overall quality of the area. Where innovative and contemporary design has been integrated into the urban grain they can make a positive contribution to the locality. Although care should be taken when incorporating contemporary design into the existing urban fabric, new and old buildings can co-exist without negatively influencing the character of the area. Innovative design can be successful when integrated into conservation areas or as an extension to historical buildings and therefore does not need to be confined to areas of the Borough outside of these designations.

5.7 In certain circumstances it may be argued that specific sites or areas have poor or no distinctive character. In these instances development should aim to create a new locally distinctive character through contemporary design solutions, varying materials, interesting buildings and spaces, and public realm features. However, it will also be important to take account of the wider character and context of the area and the assets of the Borough as a whole.

5.8 Further information regarding the Borough's local economic, social and environmental conditions which can inform local character and context is available in Halton's State of the Borough Report[11] which is produced annually. This report summarises the key messages and sustainability issues relating to a number of themes including health, local economy and employment, housing, physical environment, climatic factors and flooding, and cultural heritage and landscape.

5.9 The analysis of a residential development's character and context should be fully demonstrated in the applicant's Design and Access Statement. Further information and guidance relating to Design and Access Statements is included in Appendix A.

[11] HBC State of the Borough Report: An Economic, Social and Environmental Audit of Halton (available at: www.halton.gov.uk)

6. Generating the Layout

This section sets out the Council's requirements with regard to the creation of high quality and sustainable layouts for residential development.



Connectivity and Movement

6.1 The structure of a site and its relationship to surrounding areas is fundamental to the layout and design of all development. The objective should be to ensure that residential development is well connected to surrounding streets, in order to:

- Provide for the optimum variety of journeys;
- Promote more sustainable forms of movement;
- Provide access to local services and public transport; and
- To ensure maximum safety and security of uses.

Policy 2) Connectivity and Movement
To ensure good connections within the site and to the surrounding area, residential development is required to:

a) Connect new and existing routes to create a network of well-connected streets which improve movement patterns in the area and allow future linkages to adjoining sites
b) Consider the wider highway network of the area
c) Provide a hierarchy of routes and spaces suited to the development to enable residents and visitors to have ease and choice of movement
d) Ensure new design and layout is orientated around the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and connectivity to the public transport network
e) Plan development to maximise connections to existing or proposed local services and facilities, and public transport
f) Avoid the creation of isolated routes with poor surveillance which could become unsafe and encourage anti-social behaviour
g) Design roads to reduce traffic speeds along residential streets and create a pedestrian friendly environment

6.2 Creating attractive and viable residential areas is as much about the connections between the buildings as the buildings themselves. Successful residential areas which provide a high degree of both external connectivity and internal 'permeability' (easy to move through in all directions) allow people to go about their daily lives with ease.

6.3 The access to, and circulation through, a development should integrate with and improve the existing movement pattern of the wider area. A network of well-connected streets should be provided that offers a choice of routes with easy access to local amenities, open spaces, the public transport network and established routes. To achieve this, connections should, as far as practicable, follow pedestrian desire lines and the most direct route, give flexibility in the choices of routes, be well lit and take advantage of natural surveillance from overlooking buildings and public spaces to promote community safety. This is set out diagrammatically in Figure 1. With small sites it may not be possible to create many new connections to the surroundings. In these cases it will be important to take advantage of any boundaries of the site that are adjacent to surrounding streets.

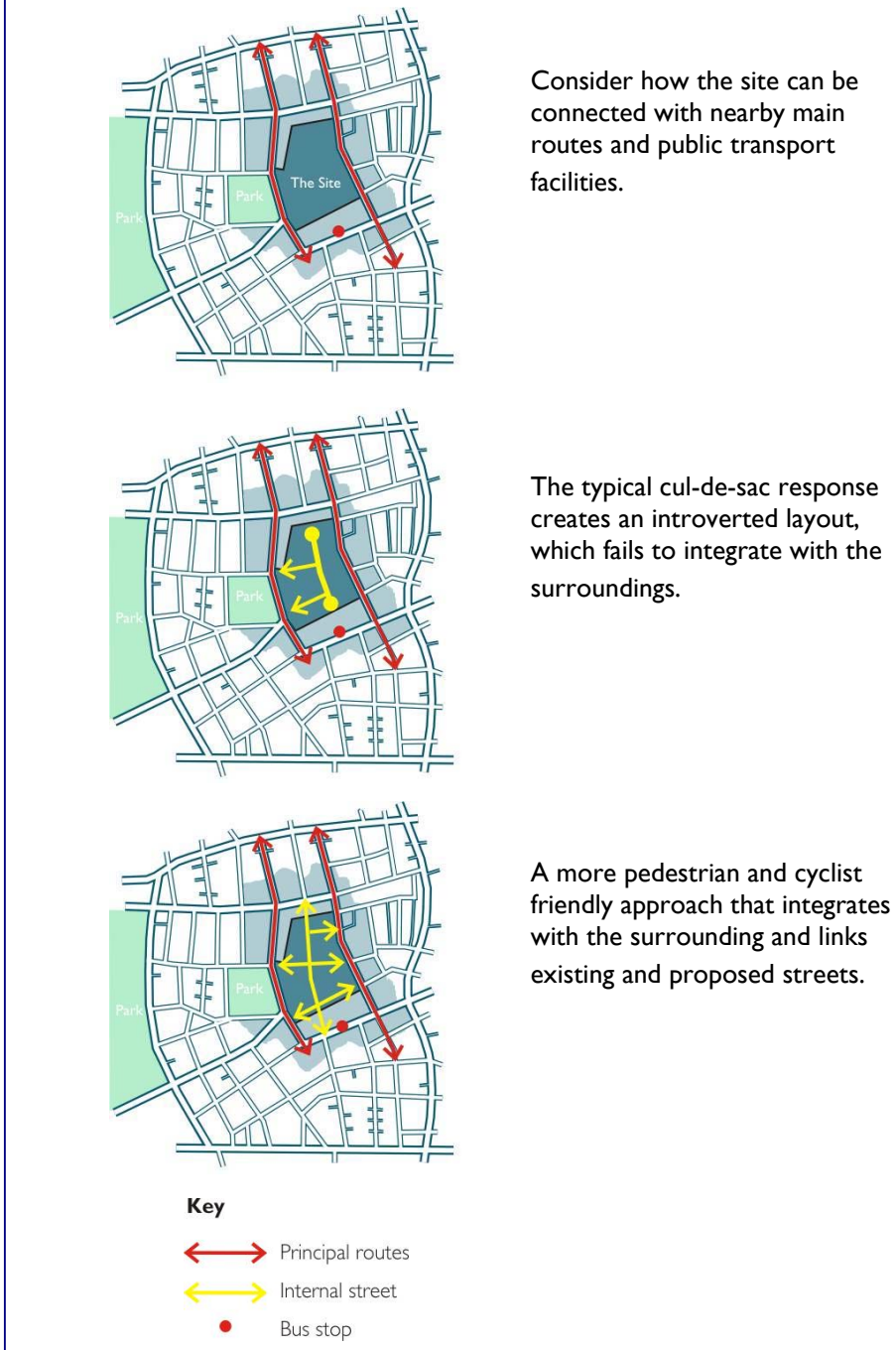


Figure 1: Achieving Connectivity and Movement in Residential Development - Source: Urban Design Compendium (Llewelyn-Davies, English Partnerships and Housing Corporation, 2000)

6.4 Well designed streets with safe, direct, convenient and clear pedestrian and cycle routes maximise the transport choices of residents and can influence people to use more sustainable modes of transport. Residential layouts designed solely to meet the requirements of vehicular traffic are not acceptable. New routes and connections should provide integrated routes for pedestrian, cyclists and vehicular traffic. Speed reducing features for vehicles should be an intrinsic part of any layout and should be achieved through specific design features in the urban form and carriageway alignment.

6.5 Further detailed guidance on how to achieve well connected places is provided through the Manual for Streets[12]. This document should be used alongside this SPD to assist in achieving the most appropriate design solution for a residential scheme. The Manual for Streets reiterates that design should promote the most sustainable forms of transport to help reduce car dependency and to satisfy the needs of pedestrians and cyclists. The Council promotes Manual for Streets principles in new development, but recognises that a more sympathetic approach must be used where new development is integrated with existing development where such principles may not be appropriate. Additionally the Council's forthcoming Transport and Accessibility SPD will also provide further detail and guidance on such matters.

6.6 For significant residential or mixed-use developments, early consultation with Halton Borough Council's Highway Development team is encouraged to ensure that new roads are designed to the Council's standards (please refer to Appendix C for contact details). A Transport Assessment or Transport Statement may also be required to ensure that the impact of transport generated by residential development is mitigated.

[12] DfT and CLG (2007) Manual for Streets

Structure and Layout

6.7 Structure and layout refers to how buildings and public and private spaces are arranged on a site and how they relate to the buildings and space around the site. The structure and layout of residential streets, buildings and public spaces can have an important influence on a place and user activity. In general a structure and layout that provides active, clear and well over-looked routes and differentiates between public and private spaces will contribute to safer neighbourhoods and more attractive places to live.

Policy 3) Structure and Layout
To deliver a structure and layout which promotes a sense of place and user activity, residential development is required to:

a) Arrange buildings, where appropriate, in perimeter block form
b) Ensure new block layouts respond to the size and structure of buildings and the surrounding area
c) Arrange fronts and backs of dwellings appropriately to maximise active frontages
d) Ensure that entrances are positioned to maximise interaction in public areas
e) Avoid blank walls in frontages
f) Promote the continuity of street frontages and the enclosure of space by development which clearly defines private and public areas
g) Ensure spaces at the front of the dwelling are properly defined, usable and attractive
h) Provide direct links and routes which are overlooked by properties
i) Ensure residents and visitors can easily find their way around the development through the layout of buildings, spaces, routes and landmark features

6.8 Residential development should relate to the surrounding structure and layout, and avoid the creation of undefined leftover space that contributes nothing to the urban environment. The relationship between buildings on a street, are key to this. Residential developments which follow a continuous building line around a street block (perimeter block structure) and contain the private space within gardens, backyards or courtyards are often more successful (Figure 2).

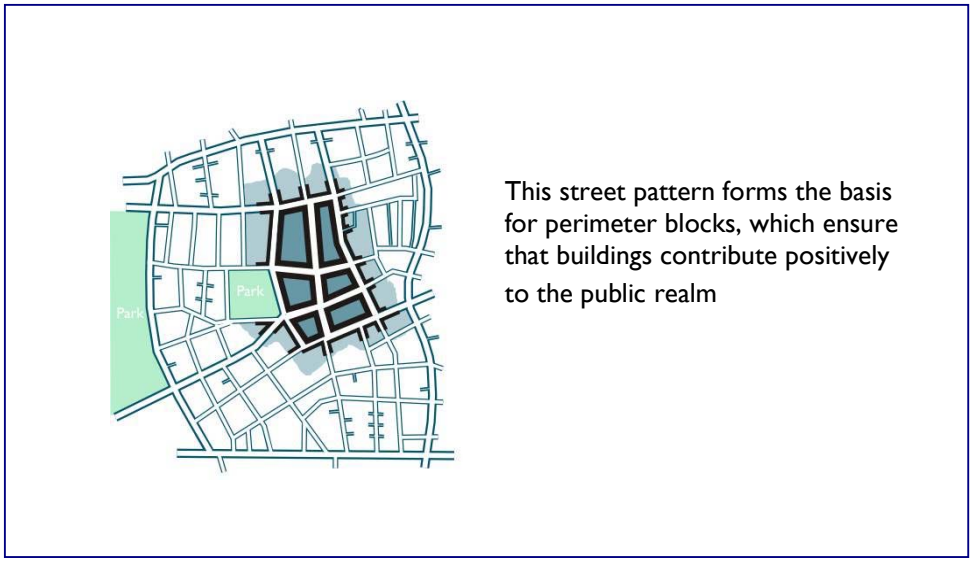


Figure 2: Achieving Perimeter Blocks in Residential Development - Source: Urban Design Compendium (Llewelyn-Davies, English Partnerships and Housing Corporation, 2000)

6.9 Key frontages should define prominent edges to important streets and spaces and enhance legibility within a neighbourhood. Development should promote the continuity of street frontages and the enclosure of space by creating a built form that clearly defines private and public areas. Active frontages, characterised by frequent doors and windows, help to avoid blank walls facing the public realm and provide natural surveillance. Primary access to dwellings should be from the street wherever possible.

6.10 Creating high quality public and private spaces requires developing places that suit the needs and activities of people. Each space should have a clear definition and purpose. Public areas should be attractive, safe and comfortable, which are easily accessible and provide a range of facilities for the local community. Particular attention will need to be paid to the treatment of the buildings lining open spaces and other public spaces to ensure that these prominent areas have a building frontage which helps to create distinctive quality and character, and can reduce the fear of crime through natural surveillance.

6.11 Structure and layout can also contribute to a legible environment by providing streets with clear sight lines to important buildings, spaces and points of activity; this can be highlighted through architectural or landscape features.

Outdoor Spaces

6.12 The provision and treatment of outdoor space, whether public or private, is vital in achieving a successful and attractive environment and quality of life and is as much a part of the design as buildings and roads. It is essential therefore for all residential development to provide private outdoor amenity space. The type and level of provision will vary depending on the characteristics of the development, the site and its context. It is also vitally important that a clear distinction is made between private and public areas through the use of appropriate boundary treatments and landscaping to ensure the security of private areas and highlight public areas.

Policy 4) Outdoor Spaces
To achieve successful and attractive outdoor spaces, residential development is required to:

a) Ensure appropriate private outdoor space is provided for all new dwellings including flats / apartments
b) Design all outdoor spaces to be safe and secure
c) Ensure that private communal outdoor space is clearly defined and is easily accessible and legible to all occupants
d) Clearly define public and private spaces through the use of railings, hedges and other appropriate boundary treatments
e) Design and integrate boundary treatments so as not to compromise long-term management and maintenance

Private Outdoor Space

6.13 The provision of private outdoor space must be seen as an integral part of any development. New housing must provide private outdoor space appropriate to the scale and function of the dwelling and the character of the development. The majority of that space should normally be located to the rear of the dwelling, be of a useable shape (long thin gardens or acute angles should be avoided) and should be designed to provide a reasonable degree of privacy and not be significantly overlooked. Applicants will be required to demonstrate that the quality and usability of private outdoor space has been fully considered in the design of residential development.

6.14 In calculating the required size of usable private outdoor space for houses the following minimum standards should be used as a guide:

- Houses having 1-2 bedrooms shall have a minimum private outdoor space of 50sqm per unit
- Houses having 3 bedrooms shall have a minimum private outdoor space of 70sqm per unit
- Houses having 4 or more bedrooms shall have a minimum private outdoor space of 90sqm per unit

6.15 The calculation of the number of bedrooms will include any room allocated as, for example, a study or store but capable of being used as a bedroom. Please note that the standards given relate to private rear garden areas. Front gardens, driveways, garages, parking and servicing, and bin and cycle stores will not be considered to be part of this amenity area.

6.16 In calculating the required size of usable private outdoor space for flats/ apartments, applicants are required to ensure that this is appropriate to the size of the development scheme. As a guide, 50sqm per residential unit should be used.

6.17 The private outdoor space for flats/ apartments will be expected to be met through communal spaces for residents, private sitting outdoor space for ground floor flats and balconies or roof gardens for upper floor flats. Communal outdoor space should be designed to be private, attractive, functional and safe. Its quality and management should encourage a sense of ownership for residents. Private communal outdoor space may also be appropriate on some large housing schemes, in addition to the individual dwelling private outdoor space, where the Local Planning Authority are in agreement regarding the appropriateness, the wider character and the quality of the development.

6.18 These standards for private outdoor space provision should relate to the character of the scheme being designed and to the area in which it is to be located. It should be acknowledged that these standards or particular site constraints should not inhibit residential developments providing innovative solutions to outdoor space requirements. Where the guidelines for outdoor space are not met, it is the responsibility of the applicant to demonstrate why smaller outdoor spaces or communal areas are acceptable and show how the overall residential scheme contributes to the objectives of this SPD and the wider Halton LDF.

Public Green Space

6.19 The provision of outdoor space as part of the wider green infrastructure network should also be considered as an integral part of the design of a residential layout. Green infrastructure is the network of multifunctional green space and other environmental features, both new and existing, both rural and urban, including both private outdoor space and public open space. Provision of outdoor space within residential developments can also provide a significant opportunity to deliver biodiversity enhancement such as tree planting, hedgerows, wildlife meadows and ponds.

6.20 Residential development can place an increased pressure on existing green infrastructure, and in particular public open space, both within the Borough and in the locality of the development. In larger residential development schemes the Council may require additional provision of public open space in accordance with the guidance set out through Halton's LDF, particularly where there are identified deficiencies in provision. It may be necessary for developer contributions to be negotiated to secure this provision together with its future management and maintenance. Applicants will therefore need to have regard to the draft Open Space SPD and the forthcoming Developer Contributions SPD.

6.21 It is also important when considering outdoor spaces that most residential environments will comprise a mix of private outdoor spaces and public open spaces. These spaces should have a clearly defined boundary in order to provide clear ownership and responsibility and increase privacy and security to the home. Consideration should therefore be given to boundary treatments such as landscaping, walling or fencing, or the positioning of dwellings and garages (ensuring that these do not obstruct sight lines). The management of public open space will also be important to ensure future maintenance and the applicant is required to consider this at the outset.

Privacy, Outlook, Daylight and Sunlight

6.22 Privacy and outlook within the home and adequate levels of daylight and sunlight are important to enable residents to feel comfortable in their home and enjoy satisfactory levels of amenity[13]. Residential development should ensure that areas intended to be private, whether internal or external, are not compromised and that the form and siting of development does not compromise levels of daylight and sunlight.

Policy 5) Privacy, Outlook, Sunlight and Daylight
To maintain and achieve adequate levels of privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, residential development is required to:

a) Ensure that new and existing residential development achieve and maintain the expected levels of privacy and outlook (Figure 3)
b) Consider the position and orientation of habitable rooms and the location of their doors and windows to maintain privacy and minimise overlooking (Figure 4)
c) Orientate habitable rooms to maximise their outlook and view, and provide a positive relationship to the street
d) Consider the orientation and design of buildings to maximise sufficient daylight and sunlight (Figure 5)

6.23 Good standards of amenity will be required for the design of all residential development. As such residential development will be required to satisfy minimum standards for separation between properties set out in Figure 3 from the centre of the habitable room[14] window to the centre of habitable room window. This will ensure that all dwellings within and adjoining new developments achieve a reasonable degree of privacy and outlook, and enjoyment of daylight and sunlight. Whilst it is not possible to provide standards relating to all potential relationships between dwellings, the distances within these diagrams are intended to provide a basis for the minimum distances and principles which should be employed.

[13] Amenity is defined as a positive element or elements that contribute to the overall character or enjoyment of an area.
[14] Habitable rooms are defined as any room used or intended to be used for sleeping, cooking, living or eating purposes. Enclosed spaces such as bath or toilet facilities, service rooms, corridors, laundries, hallways, utility rooms or similar spaces are excluded from this definition.

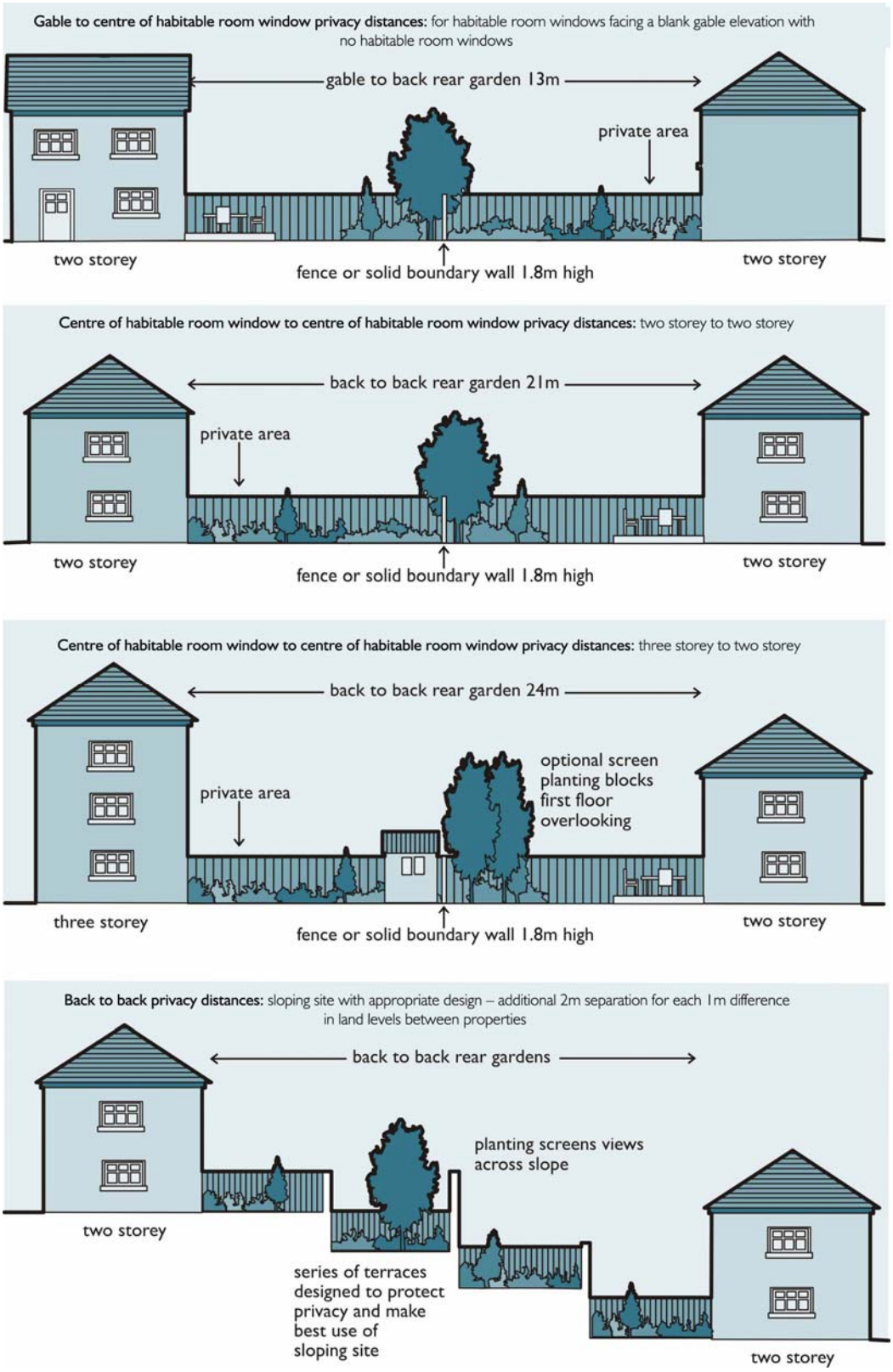


Figure 3: Privacy Distances for Residential Development

6.24 The application of minimum distances between habitable rooms has not always adequately addressed privacy and made it difficult to achieve other design principles. It is acknowledged that privacy can be achieved in many different ways and the use of alternative techniques and innovative solutions for achieving privacy can lead to substantial improvements in the form and layout of development. If adequate separation distances are not met, it is the responsibility of the applicant to demonstrate through the development application how they have achieved privacy and outlook for existing and new residents.

6.25 In any case where it may be accepted that the development does not satisfy the minimum separation distances, the Council will utilise the 25° assessment (Figure 4) to ensure suitable daylight is maintained to any habitable rooms within developments. This approach applies where any potentially affected habitable room window will, as a result of the development, directly face another building, wall or other structure. It is considered that suitable daylight is achieved where a clear unobstructed view above a line of 25° from the horizontal is maintained from the centre of the lowest level habitable room window as indicated in the diagram below.

6.26 The impact of the height, scale and massing of a development should be considered in specific relation to an individual site and its surroundings. These privacy standards will be enforced more stringently to protect the amenity and outlook of existing neighbours adjoining development sites. A much greater degree of flexibility will be allowed within new developments where the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that separation distances can be justified through quality urban design and an innovative approach.

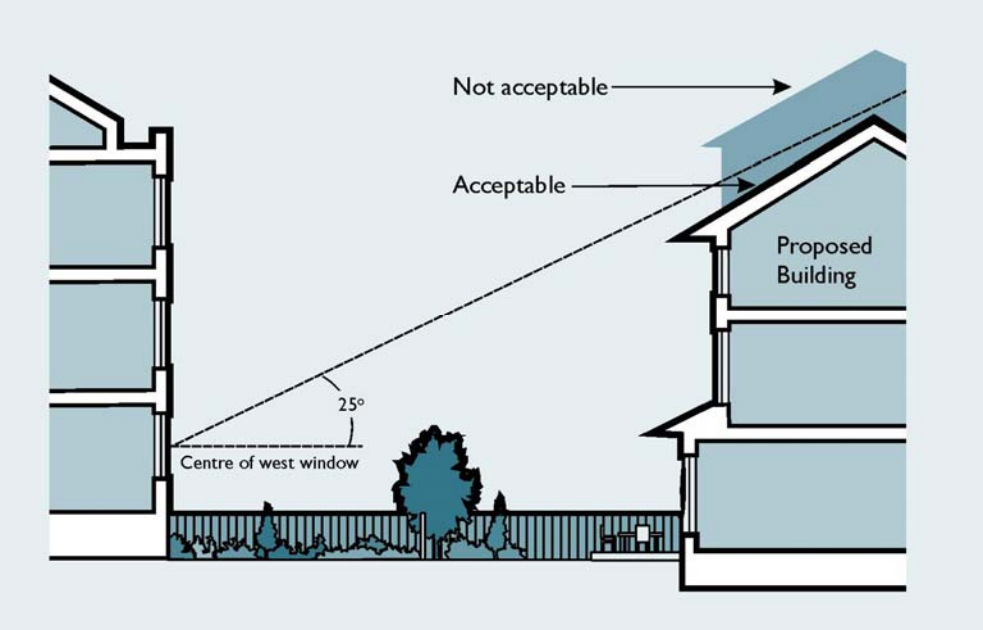


Figure 4: 25° assessment

6.27 Providing good daylight and sunlight to the home not only contributes to a more pleasant living environment, but also has the potential to reduce energy requirements within the home in relation to lighting and heating (Passive Solar Design). Residential development should, therefore, be sited and designed to maximise daylight and sunlight as far as possible. Careful

orientation and design of buildings can ensure daylight and sunlight levels are maximised, without compromising levels of privacy of adjoining properties and reducing their daylight and sunlight levels. Dwellings should be orientated so that the elevation with the most glazing faces within 30° of due south to take advantage of sun exposure and absorption of heat by the building (Figure 5). North facing single aspect units should be avoided.

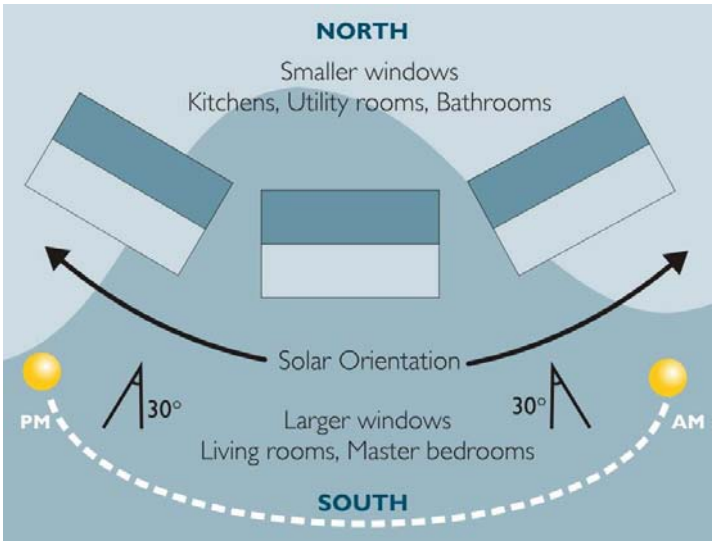


Figure 5: Orientation of Buildings to Maximise Solar Orientation

6.28 It should be noted that Permitted Development rights (for loft conversions, extensions and window replacements etc) may be removed by Condition by the Local Planning Authority in any development where it is apparent that such rights may compromise the privacy, outlook, daylight or sunlight of neighbouring properties.

Safer Places

6.29 All residential development must contribute towards creating places that feel safe, secure and welcoming for everyone. Safety and security stem from good site planning and the layout of buildings and spaces. High quality residential layouts should provide good natural surveillance to create safe and usable spaces. This will contribute to reducing the potential for crime, the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour.

Policy 6) Safer Places
To deliver a safer place to live, residential development is required to:

a) Mix housing types to help create the opportunity for a cluster of homes to be occupied at different times during the day, encouraging community interaction and surveillance of the area by residents
b) Provide access and position habitable rooms to front onto the street to create a safe and active environment
c) Avoid building on the back of properties such as rear boundary walls, service yards and garage courts
d) Avoid segregating pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles unless it is shown that segregation is needed for road safety reasons
e) Provide good lighting outside dwellings and in car parks to ensure confidence or use at night time
f) Provide clear, highly visible routes and signage
g) Design streets for community safety by following the principles and guidance provided by the national 'Safer Places' document and the 'Secured by Design' initiative

6.30 It is important to ensure that a safe living environment is considered as an integral part of the initial design of any residential development and not as an afterthought. This will be the responsibility of the applicant to demonstrate and not for the Local Planning Authority to demonstrate otherwise. By doing so, safety issues can be resolved/ reduced at an early stage, for instance, by designing out isolated spaces, unobserved alleyways, illegible routes and inappropriate housing layouts that cannot be easily reversed once implemented.

6.31 Windows, doors and balconies should be designed to front onto the street and public spaces at regular intervals. This will create active frontages and allow the opportunity for communities to police their own environment. The principle access to houses should be from overlooked and safe areas and not hidden within dark alleyways and courtyards. Buildings should therefore be positioned and oriented to contribute to a feeling of a safe and secure environment maximising the scope for natural surveillance.

6.32 In order to contribute to a safer residential environment, integrated roadways should be promoted which will accommodate pedestrians and cyclists alongside vehicular routes as the presence of people on the street should heighten the level of natural surveillance. Examples from some of Runcorn New Town's residential estates where vehicular and pedestrians/ cyclists have been segregated have resulted in a range of personal safety issues, this should be avoided. However in contrast, integrated roadways can present issues to road safety and therefore segregation may remain a viable option where the safety of road users is an issue.

Consideration should also be given to added measures such as lighting (which should be energy efficient), boundary treatments and other security features as required.

6.33 Further guidance regarding designing safer places is provided in the national 'Safer Places'[15] document which focuses on seven attributes of sustainable community design that are particularly relevant to crime prevention and should be considered throughout all new development. These are:

- **Access and Movement:** places with well defined routes, spaces and entrances that provide for convenient movement without compromising security
- **Structure:** places that are structured so that different uses do not cause conflict
- **Surveillance:** places where all publicly accessible spaces are overlooked
- **Ownership:** places that promote a sense of ownership, respect, territorial responsibility and community
- **Physical protection:** places that include necessary, well designed security features
- **Activity:** places where the level of human activity is appropriate to the location and creates a reduced risk of crime and a sense of safety at all times
- **Management and maintenance:** places that are designed with management and maintenance in mind, to discourage crime in the present and the future

6.34 The police initiative 'Secured by Design'[16] should also be referred to for residential development. This focuses on crime prevention at the design, layout and construction stages of homes (and commercial premises) and promotes the use of security standards for a wide range of applications and products.

6.35 A Crime Impact Assessment (CIS) can also be submitted, where appropriate, for major residential planning applications (200 dwellings / 4 hectares or more). The CIS process involves identifying, predicting, evaluating and mitigating the crime and disorder effects of a development proposal early in the design process. A CIS will include all the requirements for Secured by Design accreditation, should the applicant wish to apply for the award.

6.36 Additionally, the Council's Designing for Community Safety SPD[17] provides further guidance for designing a safer place to live.

[15] CLG (2004) Safer Places: The Planning System and Crime Prevention
[16] Secured by Design Initiative accessed at: www.securedbydesign.com
[17] HBC (2005) Designing for Community Safety

7. Sustainable Environments

This section sets out the principles for the achievement of sustainable residential building design which is fit for purpose and respects and enhances the environment in which it is set.



Sustainable Design

7.1 High quality sustainable design is integral to the pursuit of sustainable development. Sustainability should be designed into any residential development proposal at the earliest opportunity. All residential development will be required to demonstrate that it is sustainable and will mitigate and manage the risks of climate change through contributing to reductions in carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions and ensuring development is adaptable to a changing climate.

Policy 7) Sustainable Design
To demonstrate sustainability, residential development should:

a) Aim to meet the standards of the Code for Sustainable Homes in line with current Building Regulations and policies within the wider Halton LDF
b) Reduce the need for energy by making the best use of solar energy, passive heating and cooling, natural light and natural ventilation
c) Use energy more efficiently by utilising measures such as enhanced insulation to improve thermal efficiency
d) Utilise energy from renewable and low carbon sources through incorporating technologies that obtain energy from flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – such as from the wind (wind turbines), the fall of water (hydro), from the sun (photovoltaics) and from biomass
e) Use remaining fossil and other fuels cleanly and efficiently where opportunities exist through Combined Heat and Power (CHP) and District Heating systems or equivalent
f) Use sustainable building methods and materials and where appropriate recycle construction waste
g) Incorporate water conservation measures and surface water management into development design
h) Ensure the risks of a changing climate and changing climatic events are incorporated into development design and include flood risk mitigation measures

7.2 Residential development needs to be designed to maximise the potential for residents to live in a sustainable way. In particular, homes should have low energy use designed into the structure of the building and have the potential to generate energy, either as an individual building or as part of a larger community. By doing so, residential development provides an opportunity to contribute to a reduction in CO_2, is able to manage the risks of a changing climate, in addition to reducing energy bills and contributing to energy security.

7.3 The Code for Sustainable Homes sets standards for energy and resource efficiency that can be applied to all homes. The Code is intended as a single national standard to guide the industry in the design and construction of sustainable homes. It is a means of driving continuous improvement, greater innovation and exemplary achievements in sustainable home building. The Code is made up of nine key areas which contribute towards an overall code Level of 1 to 6. The nine key areas are as follows:

- Energy and CO_2
- Water
- Materials
- Surface Water

- Waste
- Pollution
- Health and Well-Being
- Management
- Ecology

7.4 Halton Borough Council encourages developers to show how appropriate design solutions have been incorporated to ensure that development meets the necessary level of Code for Sustainable Homes as set out through the Halton Core Strategy, the wider LDF or in line with national guidance/ standards. It should be acknowledged that the step by step tightening of Part L of the Building Regulations[18] will require that certain levels of the Code in the energy and CO_2 area will need to be achieved in line with national targets and commitments.

7.5 The Council will also seek all new residential developments to address the causes of climate change by reducing predicted CO_2 emissions through a combination of built-in energy efficiency measures and the supply of energy from decentralised renewable and low carbon sources. As a first priority residential developments should incorporate energy efficient measures in the initial design and construction of a building. New residential development must show how the design maximises energy efficiency in terms of layout, orientation and sustainable use of resources in accordance with other sections of this SPD and the wider LDF. Energy efficiency measures can significantly reduce the amount of energy consumed and the running costs of a building. It should also be acknowledged that by reducing the energy demand of a dwelling through energy efficiency measures, the total amount of energy needed to be provided through sustainable energy technologies will be reduced. Energy efficiency measures should also be utilised for street lighting and it is recommended that applicants discuss street lighting with the Highways Authority at the design stage.

7.6 Once energy efficiency measures have been incorporated into the design of residential development the remaining energy requirements of the development should be met through renewable and/ or low carbon energy sources. The location and scale of a development will influence the success of renewable and low carbon energy solutions as different technologies are better suited to certain situations and conditions. It is important that developers and designers have regard to the scale of development and the opportunities and constraints that different residential sites offer in order to deliver renewable and low-carbon energy solutions. Renewable energy technologies should also be carefully integrated with the character of the area so as not to reduce the amenity of neighbours. A summary of potential renewable and low carbon energy technologies for residential development is included in Table 1.

[18] CLG (2010) Circular 06/2010: New Approved Documents for F, J and L Guidance Documents

Table 1: Renewable Energy Technologies

Renewable Energy Technology	
Solar Thermal (Solar Water Heating)	Solar water heating systems use heat from the sun to warm domestic hot water. There are two main types of collector, flat plate or evacuated tube.
Photovoltaics (PVs)	Solar electricity systems capture the sun's energy using photovoltaic (PV) cells which convert the sunlight into electricity.
Wind Turbines	Wind turbines work by converting the energy of wind into electricity to drive a generator. For these to be effective, the location of the turbine is important.
Ground Source Heating/ Cooling	Ground source heating/ cooling works by extracting solar thermal heat from the ground. This is usually used to heat the home and water.
Biomass	Biomass technology uses organic materials to generate heat. The most common forms of biomass technology are biomass boilers.
Low Carbon Energy Technology	
Combined Heat and Power	Combined Heat and Power (CHP) uses the heat generated from traditional fossil fuel boilers to increase efficiency. There are various sizes of CHP systems ranging from single homes to neighbourhoods to towns. Large scale mixed use developments would benefit most from CHP using district heating schemes.
District Heating	A District Heating scheme comprises a network of insulated pipes used to deliver heat, in the form of hot water or steam, from the point of generation to an end user.

7.7 For larger scale residential developments the deployment of distributed energy technologies and systems may be suitable for instance Combined Heat and Power Systems (CHP), district heating schemes and smaller scale wind farms. For small scale residential developments the use of building integrated technologies should be considered including photovoltaics, wind turbines and ground source heat pumps.

7.8 Developers, designers and architects should also provide evidence of sustainable construction including the selection of building materials to improve the sustainability of the development. Using sustainably sourced and recycled materials can make a major contribution to sustainable development by slowing the demand for non-renewable resources, using less energy in producing and transporting goods and reducing environmental impacts. Any waste created during the construction process needs to be dealt with appropriately on site and where possible materials should be re-used.

7.9 The Council will expect residential development to incorporate a range of water conservation measures designed to reduce mains water usage and conserve water in changing climatic conditions. Rainwater harvesting methods will be supported where collecting and reusing water is feasible, this may include water butts, storage tanks and retention ponds. The phasing of development should also take into account water/wastewater capacities and existing consents to carefully manage the available supply. Surface water run-off should also be managed on site and not transferred to another location. Developments must drain on a separate sewerage system, with only foul drainage connected into the foul sewerage network as connecting surface water to the public sewerage system is not a sustainable solution. Surface water flooding is caused when local drainage is unable to cope with peak rainfall events. Increased areas of hard standing created through new development prevents surface run off from

draining away. The need to control this run-off is important in order to reduce the risk of flooding. For all development, surface water run-off should be minimised and on brownfield sites run-off should be less than the original discharge where possible. Where this cannot be achieved, evidence will be required to demonstrate that full consideration has been given to the potential for the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). SuDS are a range of approaches to surface water drainage management. They are an alternative to traditional drainage systems and attempt to reduce the total amount, flow and rate of surface water run-off. SuDS include pervious pavements, infiltration trenches and filter drains, and green roofs. In designing such systems, detailed consideration must be given to long-term maintenance and/ or adoption. Any discharge into the public sewerage system must be via approved SuDs and will require an approved discharge rate.

7.10 As a consequence of climate change, flood events are expected to occur with increasing frequency and magnitude. Flood risk should therefore be appropriately mitigated to reflect the guidance on flooding in the National Planning Policy Framework[19] and in the associated Technical Guidance[20], based on the scale and type of development and the flood zone it is located in. The overriding principle advocated in the NPPF is that development should be located in areas with the lowest possible risk of flooding and this is implemented through the sequential test which should be undertaken for any proposals on sites known to be at risk from flooding. The sequential test requires a demonstration that there are no reasonably available development sites in areas with a lower probability of flooding when compared to the development site in question. Any development within Flood Zones 2 and 3 and proposals for development of any site exceeding 1 Ha within Flood Zone 1 will require a detailed Flood Risk Assessment in accordance with the NPPF. Although flooding cannot be wholly prevented, measures such as SuDS can contribute to reducing the impact of flood events in addition to adapted building design. Particular regard to the management of surface water should also be had to the Borough's Critical Drainage Areas where there are known to be local flooding problems. These areas are particularly sensitive to an increase in the rate and/or volume of surface water runoff from new development.

7.11 Applicants should ensure that their Design and Access statement explains how a development meets the sustainability standards of this SPD and the wider Halton LDF. Developer Contributions may be required for major residential developments to ensure that the agreed measures are implemented in the final scheme. Where sustainability standards are not met, the onus is on the applicant to demonstrate the reasoning behind this. Justification should be provided in the context of the overall development and in comparison with other design solutions.

[19] CLG (2012) National Planning Policy Framework, Section 10: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
[20] CLG (2012) Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework

Adaptability and Accessibility

7.12 Residential development should be designed and constructed to be adaptable and accessible in the long term. Ensuring adaptable and accessible design for residential development is important to ensure that the needs of the community are met, especially in regard to disability, both physical and sensory and the needs of an ageing population. Residential developments should therefore be designed and constructed to be resilient and adaptable in the long term providing greater flexibility that can meet the changing needs of residents over a lifetime and ensure development remains accessible and inclusive to all.

Policy 8) Adaptable and Accessible Design
To deliver adaptable and accessible design, residential development should:

a) Design dwellings to be capable of being adapted to meet the changing accommodation and mobility needs of households as these change over time
b) Demonstrate through the proposal's Design and Access Statement how the Lifetime Homes criteria have been taken into account
c) Ensure dwellings are appropriately accessible for all, including people with disabilities, those with pushchairs and the elderly
d) Consider links and routes to local amenities to ensure these are accessible
e) For developments of 10 or more dwellings ensure 10% meet wheelchair housing standards

7.13 The design of residential development should ensure that homes can be altered to meet the changing demands of the occupant and society. As the population ages, the number of people with disabilities and support needs is likely to increase causing an additional requirement for specialist housing adaptations and support. Every opportunity must be taken to ensure that an adaptable and accessible environment is created which integrates the principles of inclusive design. In particular residential developments should be easily used, safe and well designed regardless of age, gender or disability. Initial design and choices of construction will have an important bearing on ensuring a home is adaptable and accessible. Rooms should be configured so that internal uses and circulation can be changed easily and additional living space created or adapted to meet the needs of a changing household. Residential development proposals should also demonstrate how space can be used in a variety of ways.

7.14 There are numerous pieces of legislation and guidance relating to adaptable and accessible homes which should be taken into consideration in the design of residential development. This includes Part M of the Building Regulations[21] which sets minimum standards to enable people to access and use buildings with ease. BS8300 Code of Practice for the Design of Buildings and Approaches to Meet the Needs of Disabled People[22] provides best practice guidance to the design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people. This document covers domestic and non-domestic buildings and goes beyond the minimum requirements of the Building Regulations. The Equality Act[23] gives disabled people particular rights in the areas of education, employment, access to goods, facilities and services and buying or renting land or

[21] CLG (2004) Approved Document M – Access to and Use of Buildings
[22] BSI (2009) BS8300 – Design of Buildings and their Approaches to Meet the Needs of Disabled People – Code of Practice
[23] HM Gov (2010) The Equalities Act

property. The Act makes it unlawful for employers and service providers to treat people less favourably on the grounds of their disability. In addition, current standards for residential development are also set out through the "Lifetime Homes" standard.

7.15 The Lifetime Homes standard[24] is intended to give the widest range of people, including those with physical and/ or sensory impairments, older people and children, convenient and independent access into and around their homes. To achieve the Lifetime Homes standard, residential developments are scored against a set of 16 criteria (Appendix B) which aim to remove the barriers to accessibility often present in dwellings, and ensure flexibility and adaptability within the design and structure of a home to meet a diverse range of needs over time. Some of the Lifetime Home criteria are not relevant under planning legislation as they impact on the interior design of homes; however, they may be required under Part M of the Building Regulations.

7.16 Halton Borough Council will encourage the Lifetime Homes standard to be applied to all residential developments. The Design and Access Statement for development should demonstrate how each of the Lifetime Homes criteria will be met and where an element cannot be met, provide a full justification as to why. It should be acknowledged that the Lifetime Homes Standard is mandatory for the Code for Sustainable Homes Level 6. Additionally, as Lifetime Homes is an element of Code for Sustainable Homes, points gained towards this will naturally count towards the code rating.

7.17 Although the Lifetimes Homes standard will assist accessibility for wheelchair users, it will not necessarily provide full wheelchair access throughout the home. Recent studies have illustrated that Halton has a need for specialist wheelchair accessible housing[25]. To ensure residential developments demonstrate the principles of inclusive design and meet the needs of wheelchair users, Halton Borough Council will aim to ensure a range of wheelchair accessible housing options exist. Wheelchair accessible homes are those that are constructed to a higher specification of accessibility so that they are suitable for immediate or future occupation by a wheelchair user (with or without adaptation to meet a user's specific needs). In developments comprising 10 or more dwellings, 10% should meet wheelchair housing standards or be easily adaptable for residents who are wheelchair users. Wheelchair accessible homes are required for sale on the open market, as well as through affordable housing schemes.

7.18 Development proposals will be expected to explain how the principles of inclusive design, the Lifetime Homes standard and the specific needs of disabled people, have been integrated into the proposed development and how inclusion will be managed and maintained. This will be most appropriate within the applicant's Design and Access Statement (Appendix A).

[24] Further information relating to the Lifetime Homes criteria is available at: www.lifetimehomes.org.uk
[25] GL Hearn and Justin Gardner Consulting (2011) Halton and Mid-Mersey Strategic Housing Market Assessment

Respecting the Environment

7.19 Residential development in Halton needs to respond to, and respect, the Borough's natural and historic environment. These environments are rich in heritage assets, landscape value and biodiversity which combine to create unique and distinctive character.

Policy 9) Respecting the Environment
To conserve and enhance the Borough's natural and heritage assets, residential development is required to:

a) Ensure that key landscape features are protected, and that development is best sited to take advantage of and maintain these features and character
b) Protect and enhance designated sites, habitats, species and wildlife corridors particularly where opportunities are available to integrate them into the wider green infrastructure network
c) Enhance the value of Halton's natural assets including restoring or adding to natural habitats and other landscape features, and the creation of habitats where appropriate
d) Incorporate mitigation measures, where appropriate, into the development design to ensure the protection and conservation of natural assets
e) Conserve, enhance and have special regard to the setting of the Borough's heritage assets, including Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments and Conservation Areas

7.20 It is critical that new development responds to and respects the natural environment in which it is sited. This will include taking into consideration landscape features that are characteristic of the area, as well as ensuring that biodiversity and the quality of the natural environment is conserved and where possible enhanced.

7.21 The physical landscape of the area and its features should be assessed for the design of residential development in order to ensure the preservation of local landscape distinctiveness. The Halton Landscape Character Assessment[26] (or as superseded) should be used to inform development design and to aid Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments where necessary (see section 9). The current Halton Landscape Character Assessment identifies distinctive special features and characteristics of the landscape and has divided the Borough into broad landscape character types and more detailed landscape character areas.

7.22 Residential development design will also be required to incorporate the positive management of identified sites or habitats, as well as their conservation and enhancement. This will include internationally, nationally or locally designated sites, and species identified in Halton's Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)[27]. It must be recognised, however, that important habitats and protected or notable species are not confined to designated sites, but can be found on almost any site. Detailed surveys of the site of any proposed residential development should be carried out at an early stage to establish existing habitats and the presence of protected species. Where existing habitats or protected species are identified they should be protected and

[26] TEP (2009) Halton Landscape Character Assessment
[27] HBC (2003) Halton Biodiversity Action Plan

schemes should be designed to avoid any adverse impact on them. Where habitat loss is unavoidable, mitigation measures or the provision of compensatory habitat will be required.

7.23 Residential development, however, can provide opportunities to create and enhance biodiversity through, for example by planting with native species, providing bird or bat nesting boxes and ensuring new habitats connect to those already existing. Building in biodiversity in new development will contribute to a net biodiversity gain of the Borough's green infrastructure network and its range of habitats ensuring their protection, restoration, management and enhancement as well as creating appropriate access.

7.24 Development should also respect the existing heritage assets in an area and ensure opportunities for their conservation and enhancement are taken. Halton has a number of heritage assets which have significance for their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest. There are 126 Listed Buildings, two of which are Grade I listed, 17 are Grade II* listed and the remaining 107 are Grade II listed. There are also seven Scheduled Monuments.

7.25 Within the Borough there are also areas of special architectural or historic interest that have been designated as Conservation Areas. Within these areas there is a statutory duty to pay 'special attention' to the desirability of preserving or enhancing its character or appearance. There are presently 10 Conservation Areas in Halton, which contain a combined total of 568 properties

7.26 Other locally important buildings and features should also, where appropriate, be considered by the design of residential development and will be important in informing a wider character and context appraisal of a site.

8. Detailing the Place

This section sets out the design principles for detailing the environment in which residential development is set. This includes consideration of the public realm, building materials and features, servicing and waste, and parking.



Public Realm

8.1 Public realm refers to all the outdoor areas in a development which are accessible to the general public. It includes streets, open spaces, recreational areas, paths and walkways. These will contain a range of features including street furniture, signage and public art. All of these elements must be integrated if an attractive public realm is to be created.

Policy 10) Public Realm
To achieve an attractive and functional public realm, residential development should:

a) Design the public realm in an integrated manner to ensure the space is fit for purpose
b) Ensure that the public realm is accessible to all users
c) Avoid leaving left over space and street clutter
d) Consider future management and maintenance
e) Use public art to contribute to the quality of the development

8.2 The character of the public realm should form part of an integrated design approach to residential development. Consideration should be given to issues such as the development's relationship to surrounding buildings and private outdoor space, the need to ensure appropriate access for all, how to ensure active and safe environments and other important details. The excessive or insensitive use of traffic signs, street furniture, road markings, planting and inappropriate lighting should also be avoided. Instead these should be selected and designed into the development from the outset, in an integrated manner which allows an accessible and inclusive public realm serving the needs of the whole community.

8.3 Care needs to be taken so that any such features within the public realm are suited to their setting and will remain so into the future. Management is therefore an integral part of designing the public realm and must be considered by the applicant at an early stage in the design process so that new development achieves long term design objectives and can be maintained to a high standard. This may be achieved for instance by keeping landscape design simple and utilising high quality, durable materials.

8.4 The Council will also encourage the provision of public art where appropriate within the design of residential development. Public art works can be used to reinforce the local identity of a place and create a legible layout. To be successful, public art should be incorporated at the earliest stage in the design and not once the scheme is complete. Local history and character should inform the choice of public art, where appropriate. Public art should not be limited to traditional forms, it can also be incorporated into functional objects to provide a theme for an area or can be combined with making provisions for play. Signage, lighting schemes and architectural detailing should all be considered to integrate public art within an area, adding to and shaping the character and 'sense of place'.

Building Materials and Features

8.5 The use of high quality materials and appropriate building features are important in the design of residential development to articulate the form of the building and to raise the character and quality of a development.

Policy 11) Building Materials and Features
To ensure the use of appropriate building materials and features, residential development is required to:

a) Use architectural details from the local area, such as gable ends, porches, mouldings, coursing, surfacing and other architectural details for use in the design palette
b) Provide visual interest in building design even when viewed from a variety of distances
c) Ensure that the building materials used, including highway materials, are appropriate to the local setting, durable and of a high quality
d) Wherever possible use sustainable, recycled and locally sourced materials
e) Reflect positive aspects of local styles and features yet seek to create a development which is distinctive in its own right

8.6 The choice of materials used within buildings can have a significant impact on the character and robustness of a development. Poor quality materials that add little to the character and quality of the development and which can be difficult to maintain will not be accepted. The choice of materials can be used to give buildings their own identity, accentuate detail and contribute to the feel and sense of place of an area. Innovative use of high quality materials, whether traditional or contemporary, can make a significant impact on the success of a development and help to create a varied and interesting environment which is sustainable in the long term. The texture, colour, pattern and durability of materials chosen for residential development will contribute to the quality of its appearance individually, along with the character of its wider setting. Alongside the quality and appearance of the building materials, the sustainability of materials should be considered in accordance with Policy 7: Sustainable Design. Use of durable and high quality materials, including highway materials, is fundamental to creating robust and sustainable residential development.

8.7 The features and details of an individual dwelling or larger development can also enhance or detract from its character and success. A suitable mix of detailing for roofs, windows and entrances etc. will impact positively on the quality of the development, adding to the architectural strength and character of the development. It is not always necessary, however, to replicate existing building styles and where appropriate, modern building styles and forms will be encouraged.

Servicing and Waste

8.8 Careful consideration needs to be given to access for waste collection, disposal and recycling. As part of residential development it is vital that waste collection and storage facilities and the opportunities for residents to separate out their waste are properly considered and are integral to the development design.

Policy 12) Servicing and Waste
To promote waste recycling and to ensure access for waste collection and servicing, residential development is required to:

a) Provide a designated area for the storage of bins for waste and recyclables in all dwellings or communal waste storage in flats/ apartments
b) Ensure waste storage areas are screened and are located and designed to avoid noise, visual intrusion, odour or loss of privacy
c) Allow sufficient space for occupants to segregate their waste into refuse and recyclables
d) Make adequate provision for servicing, circulation and access to and through the site to accommodate service vehicles

8.9 All new residential schemes should include a designated area within the curtilage of each property for the required storage of bins for waste and recyclables which is readily accessible. These should be sited behind the building line and/ or include an appropriate bin store or screen. As there is an inherent contradiction in creating attractive frontages and providing storage for waste, very careful attention must be paid to the design of bin storage at the front of dwellings to ensure that they are not detrimental to residential amenity or to the quality of the public realm. Waste storage areas must also be located and designed in a manner that avoids noise, visual intrusion, odour or loss of privacy resulting from waste collection.

8.10 Halton Borough Council has rolled out multi materials collections for recyclable items to all suitable residential properties, in addition to residual waste collections (i.e. mixed household waste not destined for recycling). The normal service for all new properties will therefore consist of a three-bin collection system for those properties with gardens, and a two-bin collection service for those without gardens. The standard bin used by the Council is the 240 litre wheeled bin (Figure 6). In flats/ apartment developments, if individual storage points are not provided, communal storage areas will normally be serviced by the use of 1100 litre Euro bins (Figure 6). All site plans submitted, as part of a planning application, should clearly identify the location of designated waste storage areas within the boundary of each property or scheme.

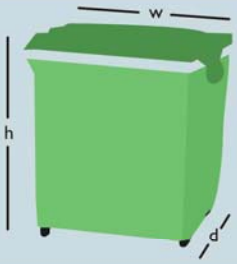
Container	Dimensions		Floorspace required	
1100L Eurobin	Width	1250mm	1450 x 1180mm	
	Depth	980mm		
	Height	1470mm		
	Height (with open lid)	2370mm		
240L wheeled bin	Width	580mm	780mm x 940mm	
	Depth	740mm		
	Height	1100mm		
	Height (with open lid)	1750mm		

Figure 6: Dimensions of Waste Storage Bins

8.11 Waste storage areas should also be sited within a development so as to allow residents and collection vehicles to safely access the facilities. Collection points should not obstruct users of any highway or inconvenience access to properties. Waste collection vehicles are required to be able to get within 25 metres of any storage point and the gradient between the two should not exceed 1:12. All properties should have rear or side access allowing removal of wheeled bins from the property frontage after collections have taken place. There should be a maximum of three steps for waste containers up to 240 litres, and none when larger containers are used. The Council also requires that waste storage bins are provided at the developers cost, prior to occupation.

8.12 Residential developments will also be required to provide sufficient room for the manoeuvre of service vehicles, including refuse collection vehicles and emergency service vehicles. With regard to fire and rescue service vehicle access to properties, more detailed information is provided in Approved Document B of the Building Regulations[28].

8.13 It should be acknowledged that the services and standards detailed may be subject to change and early consultation with the Council's Waste and Recycling Services is advised on detailed proposals prior to submission for planning approval. Guidance within Part H6 of the Building Regulations[29] gives further advice on design of waste storage areas and collection points. Servicing requirements will also be set out in further detail in the Council's forthcoming Transport and Accessibility SPD.

[28] CLG (2006) Approved Document B – Fire Safety
[29] CLG (2006) Approved Document H – Drainage and Waste Disposal

Parking

8.14 Access to parking is an integral part of any development. Providing creative, well designed, safe and accessible means of parking within a residential development is important to its overall quality and the long term success of the street and local environment. There is no single solution to providing parking and good parking design is often about achieving the right balance between different solutions.

Policy 13) Parking
In order to provide access to suitable parking facilities, residential development is required to:

a) Integrate a mix of parking layouts into a scheme from the outset that reflect the nature and location of a development
b) Design parking to minimise any negative effect on the quality of the public realm and dominance of the streetscape, particularly in high-density developments
c) Recognise and provide for the needs of disabled people through incorporating appropriate disabled parking into the development
d) Provide parking spaces and cycle facilities that are overlooked, safe, secure and accessible
e) Explore innovative solutions to reduce and integrate parking within a development such as home zones, cycle initiatives and travel plans

8.15 The design of residential development should utilise creative and innovative street and parking solutions for vehicles and cycles. Parking should be provided on-street or on-plot accessed from the front of the curtilage and be designed as an integral part of the public realm.

8.16 On-street parking is characteristic of linked dwellings, terraces and higher density arrangements. On-street parking can induce a lower vehicle speed environment, but the layout should be specifically designed to incorporate it. Developers should provide variable width carriageways to accommodate on-street parking. Such spaces should be broken up through landscape detail including tree planting to provide a more pedestrian friendly environment and variety through the street. On-street parking should not be to the detriment of access by public and community transport and service vehicles.

8.17 On-plot parking is generally located to the side or front of a dwelling, within a garage or parking bay. Although this requires more space due to the need for driveways, this type of parking maintains good surveillance from properties and avoids the dominance of vehicles along the street frontage. Where there are proposals to create parking areas or driveways within an existing front garden, permeable and porous surfacing or the use of soakaways are favoured as these allow rainwater to drain naturally. Planning permission is required if householders wish to pave their front garden with hardstanding. The guidance on the permeable surfacing of front gardens document provides further advice on creating permeable driveways.[30]

8.18 Shared communal parking may also be satisfactorily incorporated within the public realm but only if carefully designed as an integral feature. Such parking should be properly overlooked by,

[30] CLG and Environment Agency (2008) Guidance on the permeable surfacing of front gardens

and be easily accessible from, surrounding residential properties. It should also be small scale to avoid large expanses of car parking and should be broken up with landscaping and clear pedestrian routes. Rear courtyards or rear garaging should be used as a last resort in support of frontage. In such cases, entrances should be between buildings or through feature archways which respect the street frontage to avoid excessively wide openings which can break and damage the continuity of the street.

8.19 Parking facilities should be created as attractive, functional spaces to avoid the street scene becoming dominated by the view of cars. The use of lighting, trees, planting and street furniture can help to integrate parking into the overall scheme and wider landscape and can create low key and attractive parking areas.

8.20 Attention needs to be paid to the needs of those people with disabilities or other restricted mobility, especially in getting in and out of parked cars and approaching the front door of a house. Parking bays should therefore be of the appropriate width and located as close to the building as possible with level access. Adequate provision should also be made throughout the scheme for visitor parking.

8.21 With regard to cycle facilities within residential development schemes, consideration should be given from the outset to the suitable provision for cycle parking. Cycle parking should be secure, covered, easy to use and, where appropriate, located adjacent to the cycle and pedestrian network. New flatted/ apartment developments should provide some space either inside the building in a cycle store or provide a separate, secure and accessible cycle shed within the overall development.

8.22 Innovative and less conventional solutions that address the needs of residents and bring wider benefits to the development will be actively encouraged including home zones, cycle initiatives and travel plans. There are many ways of incorporating these within a development and there is no one right solution. In any case it will be the responsibility of the applicant to demonstrate that the proposed solution is appropriate to the development. Additionally, developers should plan for the future installation of electric car charging points, particularly for all on-street parking. As a minimum, ducting, allowances for base units along footpaths, and potential for easy connection to the electricity network, should be provided to allow for future installation of charging apparatus.

8.23 The Council's Transport and Accessibility SPD will set vehicle and cycle parking standards which will need to be met by all residential development in addition to this guidance.

9. Other Considerations

Residential development will need to be supplemented by technical studies or site investigations in addition to the guidance set out in this SPD. This will be dependent on the scale of the development scheme and site constraints.

Contaminated Land

9.1 There are significant challenges in bringing contaminated land back into use and the Borough's industrial past has left a legacy of sites with significant contamination which will require remediation before being suitable for residential development. In such locations appropriate ground investigations will often be required to inform the design of the development. Where contamination has been proven to exist and prior to any remediation action being undertaken, a remediation strategy should be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. This strategy should also include provisions for post-remediation validation of the site, and a completion statement issued on completion of the remediation programme. The treatment required will depend on the use and location of the site and the Council will encourage the use of the most sustainable techniques and options available.

9.2 Advice on contamination is given in 'Guidance for the Safe Development of Housing on Land Affected by Contamination'[31] and 'Model Procedures for the Management of Contaminated Land'[32]. The Council's Contaminated Land Strategy[33] also contains relevant information on how the Council have dealt with contaminated land historically and how it intends to deal with the issue over the coming years. The strategy indentifies new technologies, funding opportunities, remediation and after uses, and current environmental regulations to deal with contamination across the Borough.

Ecology

9.3 Applicants should consider existing nature conservation designations, priority areas for biodiversity, protected species and specific habitats at the earliest opportunity. If nature conservation interests are likely to be present, an ecological survey must be carried out. The outcome of an ecological survey should be used to influence the design of residential development in order to conserve, enhance and create opportunities for biodiversity.

9.4 Ecological surveys must be planned well in advance, as they have to be undertaken at appropriate times of year for the species concerned and multiple site visits may be required over a season to provide meaningful results. Such survey work should include the existence of Japanese Knotweed and other non-native invasive species. Ecological mitigation work can also take a considerable time to implement and certain stages will often have to be completed before development can commence.

9.5 For larger development proposals or those in close proximity to the Mersey Estuary Special Protection Area / Ramsar, the Council (as the Competent Authority) may need to undertake a

[31] NHBC, Environment Agency and Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (2008) Guidance for the Safe Development of Housing on Land Affected by Contamination
[32] Environment Agency (2004) Model Procedures for the Management of Contaminated Land'
[33] HBC (2008) Contaminated Land Strategy 2008-2013

Habitat Regulations Assessment to assess the potential for significant effects on such Natura 2000 sites. The developer is required to provide sufficient information to enable the Council to complete this assessment. Further advice should be sought from the Council's planning officers.

Environmental Impact

9.6 Residential development proposals will, in certain cases, need to be accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The purpose of an EIA is to ensure that the environmental effects of a proposal are fully understood and have been taken into account before a decision is made. The findings of the EIA are reported in an Environmental Statement which is submitted with the planning application. The circumstances in which an EIA must be undertaken are set out in Government regulations[34].

Flood Risk

9.7 It is important to ensure that development design takes flood risk into account at all stages in the planning process. Guidance is provided in Halton's LDF policies and in the National Planning Policy Framework and the associated Technical Guidance. In accordance with this advice, a sequential test should be undertaken in the first instance to ensure that where the development site falls within an area of flood risk that there are no reasonably available sites in areas with a lower probability of flooding which could be developed for the proposed use. A site specific Flood Risk Assessment is required to support a planning application for sites larger than 1ha in Flood Zone 1, and all proposals for new development in Flood Zones 2 and 3. Applicants should refer to the Halton Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) in the preparation of their site specific Flood Risk Assessments.

9.8 A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) Level 1[35] has been undertaken for Halton and provides a detailed assessment of the extent and nature of the risk of flooding in the Borough and the implications for future development. A Level 2 SFRA[36] has also been undertaken and builds upon the technical information and methods used in the Level 1 assessment. The Level 2 SFRA focuses on three primary watercourses and development areas in Halton: Ditton Brook; Bowers Brook; and, Keckwick Brook. As part of the Level 2 assessment a full list of sites across Halton is provided which have the greatest risk of flooding. This includes Critical Drainage Areas as defined by the Environment Agency which are particularly sensitive to increases in the rate and/or volume of surface water runoff. Specific drainage requirements are required in these areas. An outline mitigation strategy has also been developed as part of the report which includes a number of intervention strategies such as site layout and design, local flood storage, raised defences, developer contributions and flood defences.

Landscape Character

9.9 A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment can help to demonstrate the possible effect of medium and larger scale developments on the character and appearance of the landscape or townscape. The assessment combines the magnitude of change on a development site with the sensitivity of the landscape to the proposed development, which provides a measure of the

[34] CLG (1999) Circular 02/99: Environmental Impact Assessment
[35] HBC (2007) Halton Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
[36] JBA (2011) Halton Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

significance of the effect. The acceptability of a proposed development is determined by the extent to which the long-term landscape and visual effects are significant.

9.10 The Halton Landscape Character Assessment[37] can be used to inform a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment as it identifies, describes and maps areas classified according to various landscape character types. The forces of change in each landscape character type are then assessed, together with an evaluation of the capacity to accommodate change without altering its intrinsic character. It is considered, through the assessment, that all landscapes within Halton have the potential to accommodate some form of change, provided it is in keeping with each area's characteristics.

9.11 A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment will only be required for major schemes which are likely to have a significant visual impact within the landscape. The assessment will be required for all applications where an Environmental Impact Assessment is required.

Transport

9.12 Residential developments with significant transport implications should include a Transport Assessment as part of the planning application. A Transport Assessment considers the impact of the development on roads in the surrounding area and explains how these impacts will be dealt with. The assessment should also consider how the development is likely to improve, provide and promote travel by public transport, walking and cycling. Residential developments should ultimately contribute to more direct and safe routes that fit in with the surrounding transport network.

9.13 A Transport Assessment may indicate some reliance on the successful implementation of a Travel Plan to contribute to the mitigation of unacceptable transport impacts which would arise from the development. A Travel Plan is an agreed set of measures that reduce reliance on the car and as a result reduce the impact of travel and transport on the environment.

Trees

9.14 Established trees are generally of great value to the environment and are usually held in high regard by the majority of nearby residents. In determining residential planning applications, the Council will seek to retain trees wherever this is appropriate for the environmental value and in the interests of public amenity. The Council also has Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) to protect particular trees or woodlands if their removal would cause significant impact to the environment or public amenity.

9.15 Where there are trees on a potential development site, pre-application consultation with the Council is advisable at an early stage of the planning process. An essential first stage of planning a residential development should be to carry out a thorough survey of existing trees. Such a survey should plot all trees accurately and record details of species, size, approximate age and physical condition. Where trees are a critical issue, developers are advised to engage a specialist consultant to prepare a detailed report about the arboricultural implications of the development. The presence of a TPO should also be identified through such a survey. Consent will be required for any works to trees covered by a TPO.

[37] TEP (2009) Halton Landscape Character Assessment

9.16 British Standard 5837 'Trees in Relation to Construction'[38] should be regarded as an essential reference for all those concerned with the development of sites involving trees. It gives valuable guidance, following a logical sequence from the initial survey through the design stage to the protection of retained trees from site works. Halton Borough Council will expect all development proposals where trees are present to adopt these principles when submitting applications for planning permission.

[38] BSI (2005) British Standard 5837: Trees in Relation to Construction. Recommendations

Appendices

Appendix A: Submitting a Planning Application

a) Halton Borough Council encourages applicants of residential development to undertake pre-application discussion, especially for sites which pose significant conflicting issues. At the pre-application stage potential applicants should provide or should have given consideration to the following;

- A site location plan
- Indicative scheme layout/ possible number and types of dwellings/ access
- Potential solutions to waste and recycling facilities/ storage, onsite open space, landscaping, parking, adjoining land uses or developments
- Character survey for local area
- Brief site appraisal including topography, ecology, trees, etc.

b) When submitting the planning application the following will be required:

- The completed planning application forms
- A 1:1250 scale location plan showing the location of the application site (outlined in red) in relation to neighbouring properties and the local road network
- Plans and elevation drawings showing details of the layout of the site at a larger scale i.e. 1:500 / 1:100 / 1:500
- A Design and Access Statement (see sub-heading below)
- A signed certificate of ownership
- The appropriate fee

Further information regarding the requirements for planning applications is available in the Council's Validation Checklist Requirements document[39].

Design and Access Statements

c) All applicants for new residential schemes will need to demonstrate that the scheme is robust and sufficiently detailed in terms of the key design principles/ policies outlined in this guide. This will be done through the preparation of a Design and Access Statement that will be submitted alongside the planning application.

d) The Design and Access Statement should demonstrate how the proposed scheme has taken account of the local character and context and how it will contribute to the area. The main issues influencing the design should be explained in a clear, structured and visual way. This will aid understanding of what is trying to be achieved, the constraints on the development and how the design has been applied to the individual context of the site. It should also include details of any existing landscape features, including trees, and those worthy of retention which should be designed into the scheme as an integral feature.

e) In summary a Design and Access Statement should include (this list is not exhaustive):

- A full site analysis of existing features and designations
- The relationship of the site to its surroundings
- An accurate site survey including landscape features and site levels

[39] HBC, Validation Checklist Requirements: Advice for Officers and Applicants (available at: http://www3.halton.gov.uk/lgnl/pages/86821/86836/89285/validationchecklistsadvice.pdf)

- Existing accesses for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles
- Opportunities for maximising energy efficiency and addressing water and drainage issues
- How the scheme meets the Lifetime Homes criteria
- Any known natural and heritage assets

f) Additional guidance regarding Design and Access Statements is available from CABE (Design Council)[40].

Other Considerations

g) Depending upon the scale of the development scheme and the site constraints, further technical studies or site investigations may be required including:

- Land Contamination Assessment
- Ecological Survey
- Environmental Impact Assessment
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
- Transport Assessment
- Arboricultural Survey

Further information can be found in Section 9 of this SPD.

Applications for Householder Extensions

h) Halton Borough Council has produced a House Extensions SPD[41] which provides guidance for anyone intending to extend or alter their house, erect a garage or other outbuilding. The purpose of which is to ensure that all developments are of exemplary design quality and preserve the essential character of the surrounding area.

[40] CABE (Design Council) (2007) Design and Access Statements: How to write, read and use them
[41] HBC (2007) House Extensions

Appendix B: Lifetime Homes Design Criteria

"The Lifetime Homes Standard seeks to enable 'general needs' housing to provide, either from the outset or through simple and cost effective adaptation, design solutions that meet the existing and changing needs of diverse households. This offers the occupants more choice over where they live and which visitors they can accommodate for any given time scale. It is therefore an expression of Inclusive Design"

(Lifetime Homes – www.lifetimehomes.org.uk)

The 16 Lifetime Homes design criteria are set out below. Further information regarding the specifications for each criterion can be found on the Lifetime Homes Website[42].

1) Parking (width or widening capability)

Principle: Provide, or enable by cost effective adaptation, parking that makes getting into and out of the vehicle as convenient as possible for the widest range of people (including those with reduced mobility and/or those with children).

Criterion:

a) Non-communal parking

Where a dwelling has car parking within its individual plot (or title) boundary, at least one parking space length should be capable of enlargement to achieve a minimum width of 3300mm.

b) Communal or shared parking

Where parking is provided by communal or shared bays, spaces with a width of 3300mm, in accordance with the specification below, should be provided.

2) Approach to dwelling from parking (distance, gradients and widths)

Principle: Enable convenient movement between the vehicle and dwelling for the widest range of people, including those with reduced mobility and/or those carrying children or shopping.

Criterion: The distance from the car parking space of Criterion 1 to the dwelling entrance (or relevant block entrance or lift core), should be kept to a minimum and be level or gently sloping. The distance from visitors parking to relevant entrances should be as short as practicable and be level or gently sloping.

3) Approach to all entrances

Principle: Enable, as far as practicable, convenient movement along other approach routes to dwellings (in addition to the principal approach from a vehicle required by Criterion 2) for the widest range of people.

Criterion: The approach to all entrances should preferably be level or gently sloping.

4) Entrances

Principle: Enable ease of use of all entrances for the widest range of people.

Criterion:

All entrances should:

[42] Further information relating to the Lifetime Homes criteria is available at: www.lifetimehomes.org.uk

a) Be illuminated
b) Have level access over the threshold; and
c) Have effective clear opening widths and nibs
In addition, main entrances should also:
d) Have adequate weather protection
e) Have a level external landing

4) Approach to all entrances

Principle: Enable access to dwellings above the entrance level to as many people as possible.

Criterion: The approach to all entrances should preferably be level or gently sloping.

5) Communal stairs and lifts

Principle: Enable access to dwellings above the entrance level to as many people as possible.

Criterion:
a) Communal stairs
Principal access stairs should provide easy access, regardless of whether or not a lift is provided.
b) Communal lifts
Where a dwelling is reached by a lift, it should be fully accessible

6) Internal doorways and hallways

Principle: Enable convenient movement in hallways and through doorways.

Criterion: Movement in hallways and through doorways should be as convenient to the widest range of people, including those using mobility aids or wheelchairs, and those moving furniture or other objects. As a general principle, narrower hallways and landings will need wider doorways in their side walls.

7) Circulation space

Principle: Enable convenient movement in rooms for as many people as possible.

Criterion: There should be space for turning a wheelchair in dining areas and living rooms and basic circulation space for wheelchair uses elsewhere.

8) Entrance level living space

Principle: Provide accessible socialising space for visitors less able to use stairs.

Criterion: A living room / living space should be provided on the entrance level of every dwelling.

9) Potential for entrance level bed-space

Principle: Provide space for a member of the household to sleep on the entrance level if they are temporarily unable to use stairs (e.g. after a hip operation).

Criterion: In dwellings with two or more storeys, with no permanent bedroom on the entrance level, there should by space on the entrance level that could be used as a convenient temporary bed-space.

10) Entrance level WC and shower drainage

Principle: Provide an accessible WC and potential showering facilities for:
i) any member of the household using the temporary entrance level bed space of Criterion 9; and,
ii) visitors unable to use stairs.

Criterion: Where an accessible bathroom, in accordance with Criterion 14, is not provided on the entrance level of a dwelling, the entrance level should have an accessible WC compartment, with potential for a shower to be installed.

11) WC and bathroom walls

Principle: Ensure future provision of grab rails is possible, to assist with independent use of WC and bathroom facilities.

Criterion: Walls in all bathrooms and WC compartments should be capable of firm fixing and support for adaptations such as grab rails.

12) Stairs and potential through-floor lift in dwelling

Principle: Enable access to storeys above the entrance level for the widest range of households.

Criterion:
The design within a dwelling of two or more storeys should incorporate both:
a) Potential for stair lift installation; and,
b) A suitable identified space for a through-the-floor lift from the entrance level to a storey containing a main bedroom and a bathroom satisfying Criterion 14.

13) Potential for fitting of hoists and bedroom / bathroom

Principle: Assist with independent living by enabling convenient movement between bedroom and bathroom facilities for a wide range of people.

Criterion: Structure above a main bedroom and bathroom ceilings should be capable of supporting ceiling hoists and the design should provide a reasonable route between this bedroom and the bathroom.

14) Bathrooms

Principle: Provide an accessible bathroom that has ease of access to its facilities from the outset and potential for simple adaptation to provide for different needs in the future.

Criterion: An accessible bathroom, providing ease, should be provided in every dwelling on the same storey as a main bedroom.

15) Glazing and window handle heights

Principle: Enable people to have a reasonable line of sight from a seated position in the living room and to use at least one window for ventilation in each room.

Criterion: Windows in the principal living space (typically the living room), should allow people to see out when seated. In addition, at least one opening light in each habitable room should be approachable and usable by a wide range of people – including those with restricted movement and reach.

16) Location of Service Controls

Principle: Locate regularly used service controls, or those needed in an emergency, so that they are usable by a wide range of household members - including those with restricted movement and limited reach.

Criterion: Location of service controls Service controls should be within a height band of 450mm to1200mm from the floor and at least 300mm away from any internal room corner.

Appendix C: Contact Information

For more information relating to this SPD or for any other LDF document, including the saved policies of the UDP please contact:

Places, Economy and Transport
Policy, Strategy and Development Services Division
Halton Borough Council
Municipal Building
Kingsway
Widnes
WA8 7QF
Tel: 0151 511 7660
Email: forward.planning@halton.gov.uk

For advice relating to submitting a planning application and for pre-application discussion please contact:

Development Control
Policy, Strategy and Development Services Division
Halton Borough Council
Municipal Building
Kingsway
Widnes
WA8 7QF
Tel: 0151 511 7606
Email: dev.control@halton.gov.uk

If further highways or transport information is required, please contact:

Highway Development
Halton Borough Council
Rutland House
Halton Lea
Runcorn
WA7 2GW
Tel: 0151 511 7572
Email: transport.policy@halton.gov.uk

If further information is required regarding the collection and disposal of household waste, please contact:

Waste and Environmental Improvement Services
Community and Environment
Halton Borough Council
Rutland House
Halton Lea
Runcorn
WA7 2GW
Tel: 0151 471 7379
Email: waste.management@halton.gov.uk

If further information is required regarding accessible and adaptable housing, please contact:

Halton Accessible Homes Service:
Halton Borough Council

Runcorn Town Hall
Heath Road
Runcorn
Cheshire
WA7 5TD
Tel: 01928 704 469
Email: accessiblehomes@halton.gov.uk