

## Leading in Design

*Supplementary Planning Document*

*Approved by Cabinet following Public Consultation*



# CHARNWOOD – LEADING IN DESIGN

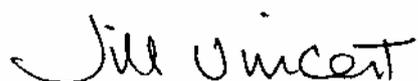
Contents	Page
<b>Foreword</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1 The Purpose of the Guide	5
1.2 The Policy Background	7
1.3 The Approach	8
1.4 The Influence of the Guide	10
1.5 A Commitment to Good Design	10
1.6 Checklist 1 – Information Requirements for Planning Applications and Design Statements	12
Box 1 Good design principles and objectives for urban design and open space	15
Box 2 The value of good urban design	16
<b>2. Places for People</b>	<b>17</b>
2.1 Mix Uses	17
2.2 Mix House Types	18
2.3 Sub-divide Development Sites	19
2.4 Build to Higher Densities	19
2.5 Create a Hierarchy of Spaces	20
2.6 Checklist 2 – Achieving Quality, High Density, Mixed Use Developments	21
<b>3. Accessible Places</b>	<b>22</b>
3.1 Create Walkable Developments with Real Transport Choice	22
3.2 Provide Convenient Routes	23
3.3 Create Connections	24
3.4 Design for Everyone	24
3.5 Design Streets not Roads	25
3.6 Discourage Traffic Speeds	25
3.7 Avoid Parking Dominated Developments	26
3.8 Consider the Parking Needs of All	27
3.9 Checklist 3 – Achieving Accessibility	28
<b>4. Safe Places</b>	<b>30</b>
4.1 Clearly Define the Public and Private Realm	30
4.2 Build Active Fronts and Private Backs	31
4.3 Achieve Security Through Good Design	33
4.4 Create Attractive Streets and Spaces	33
4.5 Prepare Landscape Management Plans	35
4.6 Provide Well-Defined Routes, Spaces and Entrances	35
4.7 Promote a Sense of Ownership	35

4.8	Consider the Need for Privacy	36
4.9	Checklist 4 – Achieving Safe and Attractive Streets and Public Spaces	37
<b>5.</b>	<b>Sustainable Places</b>	<b>39</b>
5.1	Make Use of Existing Assets	39
5.2	Maximise Energy Efficiency	40
5.3	Use Sustainable Materials	42
5.4	Encourage Renewable Energy Production	42
5.5	Include Sustainable Drainage Systems	43
5.6	Integrate Waste Management and Recycling Facilities	44
5.7	Undertake a BREEAM Assessment	44
5.8	Checklist 5 – Achieving Sustainable Development	46
<b>6.</b>	<b>Distinctive Places</b>	<b>48</b>
6.1	Understand the Context	49
6.2	Prepare a Design Statement	49
6.3	Respond to the Context	50
6.4	Consider the Detail	50
6.5	Encourage Nature in Detail	51
6.6	Consider Public Art	51
6.7	Checklist 6 – Appraising Design Quality	53
<b>Appendices</b>		
Appendix 1	Making Better Planning Applications	55
Appendix 2	The Four Stages of Processing a Planning Application	55
Appendix 3	A Matrix of Relevant Policies	56
Appendix 4	Space Standards for Residential Development	61
Appendix 5	The Twelve Essentials of a Vibrant & Sustainable Community	63
Appendix 6	Glossary	66
Appendix 7	References, Further Reading, Useful Contacts & Sustainability Links	76

## FOREWORD

Charnwood is an attractive and vibrant Borough with an impressive and diverse legacy of architecture, settlements and landscapes. The Borough Council is concerned to protect, improve and add to this proud heritage. “Charnwood – Leading in Design” has been prepared to encourage, promote and inspire higher design standards in new development throughout Charnwood.

Good design can make a difference in shaping our built environment, and the sustainability of development and our quality of life can be enhanced by more careful thought about the places we create. All new developments provide opportunities to create surroundings that future generations will cherish – the listed buildings and conservation areas of the future.



Councillor Jill Vincent  
Design Champion  
Charnwood Borough Council

If you would like to have the contents of any part of this document explained to you in your language or to obtain copies in braille, on audio tape or large print, please contact the Conservation and Design Team on 01509 634769 or email [built.heritage@charnwood.gov.uk](mailto:built.heritage@charnwood.gov.uk)

# I. INTRODUCTION

Charnwood, with its valued and diverse legacy of architecture, settlements, communities and landscapes, is an attractive place to live and work. The Borough Council seeks to enhance the character and appearance of Charnwood by ensuring high quality new development through good design. High quality design ensures useable, durable and adaptable places and is a crucial element in achieving sustainable development.

CHARNWOOD – LEADING IN DESIGN explains the importance that the Borough Council places on good design and its aims are to encourage developments which:

- Are appropriate to their context in respect of scale and compatibility with their surroundings;
- Secure positive improvements to the landscape, streetscape or place where they are located;
- Create safe environments where crime and disorder or fear of crime do not undermine quality of life;
- Encourage strong and positive relations between people from different backgrounds within neighbourhoods;
- Make efficient and prudent use of natural resources;
- Address the needs of all in society.

The principles established in this document can be applied to achieve good design in individual buildings, groups of buildings, spaces and landscapes, in rural and urban locations throughout Charnwood.

The guidance will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and is concerned with getting the planning process, as well as the quality of development on the ground, right. In order to give the best possible chance of gaining planning permission and the speediest route through the process, it is essential that proposals be presented fully, clearly and accurately. Failure to do so will result in schemes being delayed to await further information or being refused, which could cost time and money.

**Ill-conceived and prepared designs that fail to meet the Council's design objectives and which do not contribute positively to making places better for people will not be accepted, and such proposals will be refused when the subject of a planning application.**

## I.1 The Purpose of the Guide

CHARNWOOD – LEADING IN DESIGN is intended to be a working document that will be used to encourage, promote and inspire higher design standards in development throughout Charnwood. The guidance is aimed at everyone involved in development in

Charnwood from developers and their professional advisors, Councillors and Council officers to members of the public and other interest groups.

The Government has placed increasing emphasis on design and quality in its urban regeneration and development thinking. Government guidance recognises that good design should be the aim of everyone involved in the development process and should be encouraged everywhere. The approach taken in Charnwood – Leading in Design builds on this guidance and supports the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) advice that good urban design is not an abstract ideal but a matter of creating the right conditions to make places work.

Key messages from Government and CABE guidance include:

- The planning system has a central role in achieving good design.
- Good design is not just about the improvement of the appearance of our towns, villages, buildings and public spaces. It is as much about improving people's quality of life and enhancing equality of opportunity, economic vitality and the efficient use of resources. We cannot afford not to invest in good design.
- Good design need not cost more, particularly when measured across the lifetime of the building or place.
- Good design flows from the employment of skilled designers to provide the best solution for each particular context and to take a holistic approach to development considering design at an early stage.
- The starting point of good design is client commitment. Enlightened clients draw the best out of architects and designers.
- No two places are identical and there is no such thing as a blueprint for good design. Good design always arises from a thorough and caring understanding of place and context.

The guidance in Charnwood – Leading in Design aims to be objective, dealing with key design issues and principles rather than personal taste and using illustrations, from the local area wherever possible. No attempt is made to analyse the underlying character of Charnwood but the guide recognises the great importance of site and setting analysis, as well as the value of design statements, to the process of achieving good design.

Although the guidance concentrates on qualitative rather than simply quantitative issues of design, Appendix 4 sets out revised space standards for new residential development to provide some useful guidelines in the design process. These standards will replace those in the Council's adopted SPG on 'House Extensions' and 'Backland and Tandem Development'. The two existing documents will be reviewed and the updated versions will be adopted as SPD.

## 1.2 The Policy Background

Design is recognised as a contributor to sustainable development, the core principle underpinning planning. The Government is committed to creating sustainable communities. In particular, planning through high quality design can contribute to this by providing a high quality safe local environment and a sense of place and space. The design of areas of new development and individual buildings is about architecture, functionality and the impact upon the overall character, quality and sustainability of an area including resource efficiency.

National Planning Policy is set out in Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs), which are currently being replaced by succinct Planning Policy Statements (PPSs). PPS1 '*Creating Sustainable Communities*' sets out overarching Government policy on this issue and makes clear what constitutes good design, the main concerns being:

- The way places work as well as how they look;
- The connections between people and places – especially jobs and key services that people need to access, movement and urban form and the natural environments;
- Ways of ensuring successful, safe and inclusive villages, towns and cities.

Other PPGs/PPSs set out design policy on specific topic based issues. Good practice is also set out in '*By Design - Urban Design in the Planning System: Towards Better Practice*' (DETR CABE, 2000). This influential document reinforces the call in the Urban Task Force's report '*Towards an Urban Renaissance*' (1999) for earlier, greater and better-informed attention to urban design

Regional Planning Guidance for the East Midlands (RPG8), which takes account of the national policy context, is being reviewed and it is expected that the revised version will be published in 2005. The key policies relating to design are the locational and sustainability policies (Policies 1 and 2) and a design policy promoting better design for all types of development (Policy 3).

Local Policy is set out in the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan 1996-2016 and the Borough of Charnwood Local Plan 1991-2006. These documents build upon national and regional policy documents and incorporate specific issues relevant to Leicestershire and Charnwood. The relevant policies are summarised in the Matrix of Relevant Policies at Appendix 3.

The key design policy of the Charnwood Local Plan is EV/1, which states that:

*The Borough Council will seek to ensure a high standard of design in all new developments. Planning permission will be granted for new development which:*

- i) *respects and enhances the local environment including the scale, location, character, form and function of existing settlements and the open and undeveloped nature of the countryside;*

- ii) *is of a design, layout, scale and mass compatible with the locality and any neighbouring buildings and spaces;*
- iii) *utilises materials appropriate to the locality;*
- iv) *provides positive and attractive built frontages to existing or proposed public spaces including roads, footpaths, waterways and areas of public open space;*
- v) *safeguards important viewpoints, landmarks and skylines;*
- vi) *uses the landform and existing features in and around the site, such as woodlands, trees, hedges, ponds, important buildings and structures imaginatively as the focus around which the new development is designed;*
- vii) *safeguards the amenities of adjoining properties, particularly the privacy and light enjoyed by adjoining residential areas;*
- viii) *meets the needs of all groups, including the disabled; and*
- ix) *minimises the opportunity for crime to create a safe and secure environment.*

Leicestershire County Council's 'Highways, Transportation and Development' ([www.leics.gov.uk/htd](http://www.leics.gov.uk/htd)) guides the provision of highways and transportation infrastructure for new developments in Charnwood. The document, which was prepared in 2004, has been influenced by recent Government guidance and shares many of the aims and objectives of Charnwood – Leading in Design, including recognition that developments should better reflect local character and need.

The guidance also identifies two key issues when preparing development proposals:

- Highways and transportation matters cannot be considered separately from other aspects of a development's layout. A co-ordinated design approach is vital.
- Early joint discussions are needed between the developer, the highway authority and the planning authority.

### **1.3 The Approach**

Charnwood - Leading in Design develops the design policies set out in the Local Plan and will contribute to the development of more effective approaches to securing good design in the emerging Local Development Framework. The guide is also intended to support the implementation of the Charnwood Community Strategy by providing a set of principles that will inform the physical development implicit in the initiatives and actions of all partners in the local strategic partnership.

The guide identifies **five main principles**, which have been informed by the objectives of urban design set out in the CABE and DETR publication 'By Design - urban design in the planning system, towards better practice' (2000). Under each principle a wide range of design issues are considered, which are relevant to all forms of development but have particular meaning for housing.

1. **Places for People** – Successful developments address wider issues than simply building houses. They contribute to the creation of distinctive places that provide a choice of housing and complementary facilities and activities nearby. Good design promotes diversity and choice through a mix of compatible developments and uses that work together to create viable places that respond to local needs.
2. **Accessible Places** – Successful developments are easy to get to and move through, with short, direct public routes overlooked by frontages. People are put before traffic and land uses and transport are integrated. Good design promotes places that have a clear image, are easy to understand, and provide recognisable routes, intersections and landmarks to help people find their way around.
3. **Safe Places** – Successful developments are safe and attractive with a clear division between public and private space. Good design promotes the continuity of street frontages and the enclosure of space by development which clearly defines public and private areas, public spaces and routes that are attractive, safe, uncluttered and work effectively for all in society.
4. **Sustainable Places** – Successful developments provide appropriate infrastructure to meet social and economic needs and are able to adapt to improve their long-term viability. They are built to minimise the impact on the environment. Good design promotes, protects and enhances biodiversity and the natural environment. It promotes development that can respond easily to changing social, technological and economic conditions. It also incorporates resource efficiency and renewable energy measures to take into account the long-term impact of a development.
5. **Distinctive Places** – Successful developments respond to their context and build on the features that make an area special. Good design promotes character in townscape and landscape by responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development, landscape and culture, and addresses sustainability and high quality in the detailed design of buildings.

The document is divided into five sections based on these main principles. Each section begins with a general introduction outlining the main issues. This is followed by the design principles, comprising emboldened key design guidance statements and supporting text. At the end of each section there is a checklist, which summarises the main issues. The twelve factors from the five sections that are considered essential to the creation of a vibrant and sustainable community are then summarised in Appendix 5, which has also been set out in the form of a checklist for applicants.

## **1.4 The Influence of the Guide**

All development proposals will be judged on their own merits. Proposals that follow the spirit of the guidance, however, will be more likely to be received positively than poor quality proposals that ignore the issues and requirements. When submitting an application for planning permission architects, designers and developers should be able to demonstrate to the Council that the objectives of the guide have been considered and fulfilled. If they do this, determination of the application should be speedier by avoiding need for modifications. If they fail to do this, however, their designs will be unacceptable and will be refused planning permission.

To enable the proper assessment of proposals, it is important that adequate plans, drawings and supporting information is submitted as part of any planning application. This information will be required from applicants for the benefit of planners, councillors, residents and amenity groups and others, Checklist I sets out the Council's information requirements for full (as opposed to outline) applications and Appendix I - 'Making Better Planning Applications' - encourages well prepared and presented submissions. Appendix I was produced by the English Historic Towns Forum (EHTF) and will be adopted by the Council as good practice. This guidance should be followed to give planning applications the best chance of success.

The importance of Design Statements to the planning process and to the achievement of quality developments is stressed in Checklist I and Appendix I. Design Statements, which include site and setting analysis, must accompany all planning applications for major developments and sensitive proposals, including proposals that affect conservation areas or listed buildings. The Checklist explains further when and where a Design Statement is required and what it should include.

## **1.5 A Commitment to Good Design**

In addition to the preparation of a programme of design related SPD, such as Charnwood – Leading in Design, other ways in which the Council is demonstrating its commitment to the achievement of good design include:

- The designation of member and officer Champions for Design and Heritage.
- The review of design policies through the Local Development Framework.
- The provision of in-house specialist advice, from the Conservation & Design and the Landscape, Trees & Biodiversity Sections, to support the Development Control and Planning Policy Services.
- The encouragement of pre-application dialogue with applicants, developers and their agents, particularly for significant proposals.
- The preparation of planning and design briefs for major or sensitive sites.
- The preparation of an urban design framework and masterplan for Loughborough Town Centre.

- Development team and partnership approaches to major/sensitive development projects (e.g. Hallam Fields Birstall, Loughborough Wharf).
- Support for local communities in the preparation and adoption of village design statements.
- The organisation of the biennial Charnwood Design Awards Scheme.
- The Council's adoption of a Percent for Art policy.
- The achievement of environmental improvement and public art initiatives led/supported by the Council.
- Design training for members and officers.
- The preparation of a Green Space Strategy.

## **1.6 CHECKLIST I**

### **INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS FOR PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND DESIGN STATEMENTS**

#### **FULL PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

##### **Location plan**

- Scale 1:1250 preferably, and no smaller than 1:2500. Metric scales only.
- North point, date and number on plans.
- Outline the application property (in red), and indicate any adjoining property owned or controlled by the applicant (in blue).
- Show the application property in relation to all adjoining properties and the immediate surrounding area, including roads.
- Show vehicular access to a highway if the site does not adjoin a highway.

##### **Details of existing site layout**

- Scale, typically 1:200.
- North point, date and number on plans.
- Show whole site, including all buildings, gardens, open spaces and car parking.
- Include topographical/tree survey.
- Ecological survey, where appropriate.

##### **Details of proposed site layout**

- Scale, typically 1:200.
- North point, date and number on plans.
- Show the siting of any new building or extension, vehicular/pedestrian access, changes in levels, and landscape proposals (including any trees to be removed, new planting, new or altered boundary walls and fences, and hard-surfaced open spaces).
- Show how the proposals relate to adjacent buildings.

##### **Floor plans**

- Scale 1:50 or 1:100.
- In the case of an extension, show the floor layout of the existing building to indicate the relationship between the two, clearly indicating what is new work.
- Show floor plans in the context of any adjacent buildings.
- In the case of minor applications it may be appropriate to combine the layout and floor plan (unless any demolition is involved).
- Include a roof plan where necessary to show a complex roof or alterations to one.

##### **Elevations**

- Scale 1:50 or 1:100 (consistent with floor plans).
- Show every elevation of a new building or extension (including adjacent existing elevations to the proposed extension).
- For an extension or alteration, clearly distinguish existing and proposed elevations.

- Include details of materials & external appearance.
- Show elevations in the context of adjacent buildings.

### **Cross sections**

- Scale 1:50 or 1:100 (consistent with floor plans).
- Provide these to illustrate the treatment of changes in levels within the site and in relation to adjacent sites.

### **Other supporting material**

- For example, retail, environmental or transport assessments.
- In the case of large scale or complex development proposals, models and computer-based representations are particularly useful.
- For larger or more complex proposals or proposals on sensitive sites, perspectives and/or axonometric drawings may be required.
- A three-dimensional master plan may also be required, particularly for large-scale developments.

## **DESIGN STATEMENTS**

A Design Statement is required for:

- **All major developments** (i.e. any proposals relating to the erection of 10 dwellings or more; the erection of buildings with a floorspace of 1000sq metres or more; and, in other cases, where the site area is 0.5 hectares or more).
- **Sensitive development** (e.g. proposals for new development affecting conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological sites, registered parks and gardens).

A Design Statement is concerned with making the most of a site's potential and must include a **site and setting analysis**. It should be clear and concise and the level of detail should reflect the complexity of the proposed development. Design Statements submitted with planning applications should:

- Explain the design principles and design concept.
- Explain how the development will meet the Council's design policies, including Village Design Statements, Landscape Character Statements, Conservation Area Character Statements, Design Guides and Planning Briefs.
- Explain how the design principles and policies have been achieved (or why they have not been achieved).
- Explain how the design responds to the site and its wider setting (through a full context appraisal for major applications).
- Indicate 'net site density' (the method of calculation to be that recommended in Appendix C to PPG3: Housing),

The written design statement should be illustrated by:

- Plans and elevations.
- Photographs of the site and its surroundings.
- Other illustrations (e.g. perspectives or computer visualisations, axonometric, street elevation and detailed drawings).

**The Checklist at Appendix 5 - 'The Twelve Essentials of a Vibrant and Sustainable Community'- will be used by the Council to help assess planning applications.**

**More information about Design Statements and Site and Setting Analysis is set out in Appendix I 'Making Better Planning Applications'.**

## **BOX I**

### **GOOD DESIGN PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES FOR URBAN DESIGN AND OPEN SPACE**

#### **CHARACTER – A place with its own identity.**

To promote character in townscape and landscape by responding to, and reinforcing, locally distinctive patterns of development, landscape and culture.

#### **CONTINUITY AND ENCLOSURE – A place where public and private spaces are clearly distinguished.**

To promote the continuity of street frontages and the enclosure of space by development which clearly defines public and private areas.

#### **QUALITY OF THE PUBLIC REALM – A place with attractive and successful outdoor areas valued by people who use them.**

To promote public spaces and routes that are attractive, safe, uncluttered and work effectively for all in society, including disabled and elderly people.

#### **EASE OF MOVEMENT – A place that is easy to get to and move through.**

To promote accessibility and local permeability by making places that connect with each other and are easy to move through, putting people before traffic and integrating land uses and transport.

#### **LEGIBILITY – A place that has a clear image and is easy to understand.**

To promote legibility through development that provides recognisable, routes intersections and landmarks to help people find their way around.

#### **ADAPTABILITY – A place that can change easily.**

To promote adaptability through development that can respond to changing social, technological and economic conditions.

#### **DIVERSITY – A place with variety and choice.**

To promote diversity and choice through a mix of compatible developments and uses that work together to create viable places that respond to local needs.

#### **SECURITY - A place where the users feel and are as safe as possible.**

#### **SERVICES - An appropriate and high quality services infrastructure.**

Source: *'By Design – urban design in the planning system: towards better practice'*, CABE, DETR (2000) and *'Design Review'*, CABE (2002).

## BOX 2

### THE VALUE OF GOOD URBAN DESIGN

#### Good design adds economic value by:

- Producing high returns on investments (good rental returns and enhanced capital values);
- Making new places more attractive than the local competition at little cost;
- Responding to occupier demand;
- Reducing management, maintenance, energy and security costs;
- Contributing to more contented and productive workforce;
- Supporting the 'life-giving' mixed-use elements in developments;
- Creating an urban regeneration and place-making market dividend;
- Differentiating places and raising their prestige;
- Opening up investment opportunities, raising confidence in development opportunities and attracting grant monies;
- Providing opportunities for wealth generation by inhabitants; and
- Reducing the cost to the public purse of rectifying urban design mistakes.

#### And good design adds social and environmental value by:

- Creating well connected, inclusive and accessible new places;
- Delivering mixed-use environments with a broad range of facilities and amenities for all;
- Delivering development sensitive to context;
- Enhancing the sense of safety and security within and beyond developments;
- Returning inaccessible or run down areas and amenities to beneficial public use;
- Boosting civic pride and enhancing civic image;
- Creating more energy efficient and less polluting development; and
- Revitalising urban heritage.

Source: Bartlett School of Planning, 'Value of Urban Design' (CABE & DTLR, London 2002).

## 2. PLACES FOR PEOPLE

Places that are well used and liked by people will probably have attractive buildings, spaces and townscape but their success will be due to much more than their visual appeal. People make places and successful places are likely to be safe, comfortable, varied, attractive and distinctive, offering diversity and choice. Good urban design should respond to local needs and character and consider a mix of compatible developments and uses that will work together to foster a viable, sustainable and socially cohesive place.

In the case of residential developments, estates that have few facilities and a limited choice of built form and tenure are socially divisive and can encourage a reliance on the car, putting many people at a disadvantage. Government guidance recognises the significant role of local planning authorities in helping to create mixed and inclusive communities, which offer a choice of housing and lifestyle. A good mix of housing type and sizes, affordability and accessibility is important in creating the basis for a balanced community.

Good urban design, which offers a variety and choice of housing, and complementary facilities and activities nearby, creates 'walkable neighbourhoods'. Such neighbourhoods are also best suited to achieving higher densities of development, with densities increasing towards town or village centres, local centres and along public transport corridors (see 'Accessible Places').

Government guidance requests that residential densities should not fall below 30 - 50 dwellings per hectare net in order to make an efficient use of land. Whilst this is a useful guide, the issue of density is complicated and there are many factors to consider. These include the form and scale of development, the context and local character, its proximity and accessibility to centres, and even the measure of density (see Glossary). In all situations good principles of design and layout, which make the most economical use of land, will be strongly encouraged.

As a guide, the emerging Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan (1996 to 2016) proposes that housing developments on sites of 0.3 hectares or more should attain the following minimum net densities (Housing Policy 5):

- 50 dwellings per hectare within and adjoining the centre of Loughborough.
- 40 dwellings per hectare within other town centres, local centres and other locations well served by public transport and accessible to services and facilities.
- 30 dwellings per hectare in other locations.

### 2.1 Mix uses

**It is important that people have easy access to facilities such as shops, leisure, natural green spaces and work opportunities. A compatible mix of uses should be considered particularly where development is proposed close to town and larger village centres, main movement routes and important corners. In some**

**circumstances the provision of ‘live/work’ units will be appropriate. Other less accessible areas may have less potential for a mix of uses. The provision and nature of the mix will therefore depend on the context as well as the scale of the development, market demand and relevant planning policies.**

A good mix of uses means there is:

- The opportunity to walk, cycle or use public transport rather than drive.
- A mix of people, including those who work in or visit the area, who can support a good range of facilities.
- Surveillance of the area, with people present day and night.
- A reduction in market risk as mixed areas can often adapt more easily to future trends.
- The opportunity to address shortfalls in current provision of uses and facilities.

Mixed use involves a mix of complementary uses within a building, a street, a site or area. Uses can be mixed horizontally (i.e. side by side and usually in different buildings) or vertically (i.e. on different floors of the same building). Locating mixed use in the proper context will better ensure its long-term success. Consider the ‘structure and grain’ of the area, including the mix of uses at block, plot and building level, and plan and think in 3D, not 2D, for land uses. As a rule two mixed uses that are diverse perform better ‘back to back’ than ‘face to face’.

As a rule single storey non-residential buildings should be avoided, particularly in town and village centres and other urban situations. The scope to provide other uses above, such as flats, should be examined. Housing above other uses can increase densities, provide activity and surveillance throughout the day and night and improve the efficient use of land. Housing can become valuable above uses such as shops where it would not be viable at ground level. A ‘fine grain’ of uses can offer an area more diversity of design and visual character than a large and infrequent pattern of uses.

Management agreements, which set out responsibilities and maintenance schedules, will be beneficial in ensuring the long-term success of mixed developments.

## **2.2 Mix house types**

**A mix of housing size, type and affordability should be considered in larger proposals for residential development (i.e. 25 dwellings or more). The design approach must be consistent, however, with the positive aspects of local character and there should be a similar high quality throughout the development.**

An appropriate mix of dwelling type, size and affordability, of consistent quality, offers the opportunity to build communities which avoid social exclusion and stigma, making places

more physically and economically accessible and cohesive. A varied townscape can make places more interesting and memorable. A range of dwelling types can provide for the diverse cultural, social and physical needs of people as well as better allowing an area to adapt to social and economic changes over time. A mix of house type and tenure can ensure the presence of people at different times of the day making places more secure. Affordable Housing SPD is in the course of preparation by the Council.

### **2.3 Sub-divide development sites**

**When developing larger sites consideration should be given to sub-dividing the site into narrower plots developed and/or designed individually, particularly where this is a positive local characteristic.**

Development is likely to relate better to its surroundings if larger sites are sub-divided to reflect the grain of the local area. Narrow plots can add a greater variety of uses and entrances encouraging more activity and diversity. They can also offer more design variety and relate better to many areas such as in the centres of traditional villages where this is a feature. Small plots can help to avoid blank walls when development steps up or down a slope, creating more active and interesting frontages.

### **2.4 Build to higher densities**

**In all developments the Council will encourage the efficient use of land. Town and village centres and other areas that are or can, with improvement, be well served by public transport are particularly well placed to accommodate a higher density of development.**

Compact places can make it easier for people to walk and cycle to facilities, to use public transport and not have to rely on the car. More people living and working locally helps to support improved local facilities and services such as shops and public transport. More local facilities can reduce the need to travel and offer an increased local choice to the less mobile. Furthermore, compact places make environmental initiatives like recycling, and combined heat and power schemes more viable, and reduce the amount of greenfield land required for housing.

Density is a complex subject but the key is to create good places and provide the best design solution for the site, bearing in mind the character of the area, with the density figure used as a check. The targets for higher residential densities indicated in the introduction to Section 2 still allow a variety of different approaches to suit the context. For instance, even in an established suburban area of low-density housing, it is possible to achieve sensitive new development at a higher density by a small number of buildings made up of flats. High quality developments can also be provided at densities that greatly exceed the recommended figure such as recent apartment developments within Loughborough town centre.

Proposals to achieve higher densities must be balanced by contextual issues and involve innovative design if harm to those characteristics that make an area special is to be avoided. Merely raising the density of suburban forms and layouts by squeezing standard house types closer together and reducing space standards is unlikely to provide a quality living environment. The same density can be provided in a wide variety of forms, some will be more appropriate than others depending on the context. Regardless of density, the form and layout, the use of innovative high-density dwelling types will be encouraged.

## **2.5 Create a hierarchy of spaces**

**On larger sites there will often be a need for high quality new focal spaces such as squares, parks, doorstep greens and natural green spaces to complement any new development (see ‘Safe Places’). Such spaces should fit within a hierarchy of functional spaces that provide for all ages, are accessible to all, serve a local need and are well overlooked by building fronts. A management and maintenance agreement will usually be required.**

Focal spaces can enhance the character and the quality of the environment, can help to encourage integration and can become a valuable recreational facility. It is important, however, to base the provision, siting and design of such spaces on a clear understanding of their need and function. Furthermore it is important that focal spaces are considered within the context of the hierarchy of spaces for the development. Public art can contribute to the creation of successful public spaces (see 6.6 Consider public art)

The provision of natural green spaces, rich in flora and fauna, can deliver a range of important social benefits, improving the quality of life for urban citizens and making higher density housing more attractive and liveable.

Meeting a quantitative standard for open space provision does not guarantee a quality result. In some cases it may be more beneficial to improve a nearby existing facility or provide a smaller space of an exceptional quality and usefulness. Occasionally a larger space than the standard may be beneficial. Creative solutions may also be appropriate such as ‘Home Zone’ initiatives where the streets are designed as amenity spaces.

Management agreements, which clearly establish maintenance responsibilities, are essential to safeguard the conservation, recreation or community use of green spaces provided or created in new development (see 4.5 Prepare management agreements).

## 2.6 CHECKLIST 2

### **ACHIEVING QUALITY, HIGH DENSITY, MIXED USE DEVELOPMENTS** **KEY DESIGN PRINCIPLES**

- **Respect site & setting** – design from a basis of understanding based on analysis of both natural & human factors, including geomorphology, ecology, microclimate and the form of the existing settlement. Don't import standard solutions and pattern-book layouts.
- **Create a bold urban design framework** - this is essential to guide development. It needs to be based on the key urban design principles of permeability, legibility, vitality, variety and identity.
- **Consider permeability** – this involves moving from the “enclave” approach of isolated developments with a tree-like road structure to more integrated settlements based on a connected network of streets offering a choice of routes.
- **Consider legibility** – the street pattern should be based on a clear hierarchy of routes signalled through the width and alignment of streets. This should be reinforced by the enclosure of space at key junctions and the provision of memorable buildings to form landmarks.
- **Consider vitality** – buildings should front onto all public space to achieve informal surveillance and maximise the opportunities for informal contact between people.
- **Mix uses and affordability** – look for genuine interactions, not a token ‘mix’, to guarantee variety in the development. Affordable housing should be dispersed throughout a development & designed so that it is indistinguishable from the rest of the scheme.
- **Create identity** – respect context and character to achieve local distinctiveness and design harmony. Avoid pastiche but understand and interpret local vernacular styles, conditions and skills. Refer to Village Design Statement, Landscape Character Statement or Conservation Area Character Statements, if available.
- **Create enclosure** – the street layout should be designed to create attractive urban spaces and not be dominated by the space requirements of the motor vehicle.
- **Create a real public realm** – there must be a hierarchy of spaces; buildings must relate to them; otherwise we just get SLOAP (‘Space Left Over After Planning’).
- **Plan at a ‘People’ scale** – make walking and cycling safe and easy – keep the scale and ‘grain’ quite small; link up easier routes in existing places; improve the balance between pedestrians and car.
- **Use land efficiently** – look for intensity; relate development logically to transport & community services.
- **Build durably & to high quality** – adaptable flexible models and built to last.
- **Respect the environment** – all developments have some impact, minimise it to maximise sustainability.
- **Consider implementation** – a robust approach to Section 106 Agreements (see Glossary) is essential, including clarity in responsibilities for open spaces, public art etc.

### 3. ACCESSIBLE PLACES

Communities rely on movement as their lifeblood both within their world and in linking them to the wider world. The quality of our towns and villages depends on how well their connections work - footpaths, streets, public transport routes, roads, and services and utilities. The measure of the success of these connections is not just their functional performance but also how they contribute to the quality and character of the settlement.

The layout of new development can have a significant influence on people's transport choices. It is no use having local facilities and a good bus route if you cannot get there easily, particularly on foot. The rigidity and standardisation of many recent housing layouts has contributed to the dominance of motor vehicles. Layouts have been based on the geometry of vehicle movement, with the result that residents find it easier to use their car than any other form of travel. It is important to avoid such poorly integrated and car dominated developments in the future.

Well-designed housing layouts exhibit careful consideration of local movement networks in order to provide safe, connected, convenient, comfortable and legible links by all means of transport. Successful developments are easy to get to and to move through, with short, direct public routes overlooked by frontages. People are put before traffic, and land uses and transport are integrated. Good design promotes places that have a clear image, are easy to understand, and provide convenient, recognisable routes, intersections and landmarks to help people find their way around.

Travel plans are very useful for new developments that are likely to be significant travel generators. A green travel plan is a set of measures, initiatives, and targets that can help reduce the impact of transport, in particular traffic, on the environment whilst bringing healthy lifestyle and other benefits to an organisation.

#### 3.1 Create 'walkable' developments with real transport choices

**Developments should be designed to give people the maximum choice in how to make their journeys with the presumption in favour of walking, cycling and public transport. In general terms the closer homes are to facilities and services the less the need to travel and the closer together these are the more likely people are to walk and cycle.**

Walking is more than just a mode of transport:

- It boosts healthy lifestyles and promotes well-being.
- It encourages community cohesion and supports inclusive mobility.
- It helps to increase personal safety and reduce street crime.
- It supports the regeneration of local economies.

There are no agreed figures on acceptable walking distances to facilities but people are assumed to walk at 4.8 km/h and to be prepared to walk for 10 minutes or 0.8 km. Where distances exceed 1.6 km only a small number of people will walk. Government research suggests the following walking distances to facilities to be desirable:

- Less than 250 m (equivalent to 2-3 minutes walking time) – a post box, convenience shop/newsagent.
- Less than 300m (equivalent 4 minutes walking time) – access to natural green space.
- Less than 400 m (equivalent to 5 minutes walking time) – a bus stop, a local centre including local shops and a post office.
- Less than 600 m (equivalent to 7-8 minutes walking time) – a nursery school, primary school.
- Less than 800 m (equivalent to 10 minutes walking time) - a train station, health centre.

For people with less mobility these distances need to be reduced. As a guide maximum distances to a public transport facility would need to be reduced to:

- 150 m without a rest for people who use wheelchair and for people who are visually impaired,
- 100 m for people whose mobility is impaired but who do not use a walking aid, and
- 50 m for people whose mobility is impaired but who use a walking aid.

### **3.2 Provide convenient routes**

**A fundamental principle of this guide is the importance of creating well-integrated, linked up places. Public routes should be connected, short, direct, well lit, overlooked by frontages and related to desire lines. Easy and safe access for pedestrians and cyclists, well linked to public transport routes, should be inherent in developments. Apart from routes through parks, waterside corridors and pedestrianised streets, isolated pedestrian routes should be avoided.**

Within developments, routes should not be segregated. Isolated pedestrian routes can feel intimidating. Shared routes that are pedestrian dominated or in most cases not car dominated should be the aim. Links to public transport facilities need careful consideration. More people will use public transport if it is easily accessible. The relationship between uses and routes within developments is important as, for example, commercial developments are more likely to flourish if they are located on main movement routes.

Connected streets will encourage more activity, which helps people feel safe and secure whilst avoiding over concentrations of traffic and congestion. Well designed and ample connections to facilities like shops, leisure amenities and parks will make routes between places shorter and will encourage more people to walk and cycle. Streets that are linked

make it easier for people to find their way around and allow them a greater choice of routes and variety of experiences. Furthermore, linked streets can avoid wasted space, such as large turning circles for refuse vehicles, and allow more flexibility for change in the future.

### **3.3 Create connections**

**Proposals should consider a far wider area than the site itself, particularly on larger developments. Developments should not only be linked up within the site (where the scale of development allows it), but should integrate with existing routes to connect to the wider area, in particular towards main streets and public facilities (see also ‘distinctive places’).**

It is useful to establish first a site’s broad setting in terms of its relationship to a town or village centre. Then examine the area within 10 minutes (about 800m) walking distance of the site to help identify the range of existing or planned facilities that residents may access comfortably on foot, as well as opportunities to reach more distant facilities by public transport.

This analysis of the broad context to the development site can inform the wider movement patterns, indicating which links would be beneficial to open up (e.g. a route to improve access to local facilities, public transport or greenways linking wildlife habitats) and which may be problematic (e.g. a route that could encourage ‘rat running’). It may also inform the potential for new commercial uses and facilities to be introduced, the size of development blocks, density and car parking provision.

The successful integration of the development with its wider context will provide more convenient, attractive and legible routes, it will encourage people to walk and cycle and it will promote the use of public transport.

Culs-de-sac can have benefits but only where the entrance is linked to an overall network of adequately supervised streets. Short culs-de-sac accessed from a network of linked streets can add variety, encourage children’s play and sometimes make more efficient use of land. A network of linked streets provides frequent points of access into and through the development, allows clear views and easy orientation, helps traffic dispersal and, in the long term, provides scope for adaptation and change. The rear of a cul-de-sac should not connect to an unsupervised pedestrian network as this can provide an access and exit point for criminals and those intent upon anti-social behaviour.

### **3.4 Design for everyone**

**Development should provide for the needs of everyone. This includes dealing with approach and access to buildings, adequate and convenient parking for people with restricted mobility, the provision of resting points with seats and benches, and the use of colour and tactile materials to assist blind and partially sighted people.**

Designing for people with disabilities makes access easier for everyone and encourages more people to use public buildings and spaces. Everyone's choice of how to move around is maximised by creating routes all of which are felt to be safe. The Council is in the course of preparing a guide on access for people with disabilities entitled 'Making it Easy'. It is intended that this guide will provide a good practice checklist and that it will be adopted as SPD. Particular care is needed when designing for access to avoid detrimental impacts on townscape and the historic environment. An integrated, flexible and pragmatic approach to design will normally ensure that suitable access arrangements can be achieved without compromising townscape or the historic and cultural environment.

### **3.5 Design streets not roads**

**Streets are more than routes and should do more than just accommodate traffic. They should offer a safe and comfortable space for everyone who uses them. A range of street types from boulevards to 'home zones' can be designed to provide an attractive environment as well as to meet the practical requirements of any situation.**

Streets are the living rooms of the community and as with living rooms not all streets are the same. For example residential streets, which provide links between communities, will have a very different character to town centre streets, which provide links between communities and businesses. Streets should be designed to suit the activities that will be carried out on them and with regard for their historic character and significance. Designing streets to make walking and cycling a safe and pleasant experience can do much to encourage people to use cars less often as well as provide popular places to live, work, shop or visit.

### **3.6 Discourage traffic speeds**

**Streets should be designed to discourage speeding traffic. Local residential streets should where possible, be designed for a 20mph (or less) speed limit (without significantly impeding emergency vehicles or cyclists). Particular encouragement will be given to the creation of sub 10mph 'Home Zones' on minor streets. The ratio of building height to street width, street trees, building placement, road alignment, smaller corner radii, surface textures and physical traffic calming measures are all ways to reduce vehicle speeds.**

Designing streets for low vehicle speeds is self enforcing and can reduce the severity and number of accidents so that streets become attractive and useful amenity space. The layout of buildings and spaces should be designed to help control the flow and density of traffic. This should be informed by analysis of the local context, and on that basis an appropriate network of spaces – such as streets, squares and courtyards – should be designed.

Signs and add-on traffic calming features should only be relied on as additional measures to control traffic. The use of 'vertical' calming measures (i.e. bumps, humps and raised

platforms) on bus routes should be avoided. Measures to discourage traffic speeds should not impede or make unsafe routes for cyclists.

### **3.7 Avoid parking dominated developments**

**The type and level of vehicle parking will be judged on the merits of each situation and in the context of maximum standards. Parking should be located carefully behind, under, above or to the side of buildings so that it does not dominate developments. Parking should however be located where it can be supervised.**

The Council's adopted parking standards are set out in Appendix I of the Borough of Charnwood Local Plan, 2004. These standards are used as the starting point in assessing the level of parking provision and represent the maximum requirements for off-street parking. Notwithstanding these standards, the Council acknowledges the advice in PPG 3 'Housing' and PPG 13 'Transport' and, therefore, significantly lower levels of parking than the norm should be allowed for developments:

- In locations where services are readily accessible by walking, cycling or public transport;
- Which provide housing where the demand for parking is likely to be less than for family housing;
- Involving conversions where off-street parking is less likely to be successfully designed into the scheme.

The type and level of parking provision can allow higher densities where this is appropriate with more amenity space and more active frontages and streets. Over provision of car parking can encourage car use and spoil the quality of a place. High parking provision is not appropriate where alternative means of transport are readily available. In situations where higher density development is proposed and realistic travel choices are available, it may be appropriate to consider initiatives such as selling parking separately from the dwelling, car free tenures, car sharing schemes and even the provision of local pool cars.

On-street parking can be convenient, well overlooked from surrounding houses and extremely efficient both in terms of the amount of space required for parking and in providing for variations in car ownership between households. On-street parking can also have a traffic-calming effect, helps separate pedestrians from other traffic and provides the opportunity to include boundary treatment landscaping for dwellings. In new development on-street parking can be incorporated into the overall width of the street, separate from the carriageway and demarcated by paving, trees and planting.

Such arrangements need careful consideration to avoid making residential roads unsuitable for bus services and unattractive to cyclists. Furthermore, the parking of vehicles within the

carriageway in a manner that might result in safety issues, traffic management problems, including possible obstruction to emergency vehicles or inconvenience to pedestrians, must be discouraged.

Locating garages or carports alongside houses, set back from the building line, can mitigate the detrimental visual impact of curtilage parking. Alternatively, in some locations the garage can be concealed as part of a boundary wall.

Whilst basement or rear courtyard parking can avoid dominating the frontage with parked cars, it needs to be secure, well designed and properly managed. The design of rear, courtyard parking for family housing needs particularly careful consideration. Without good surveillance and management rear courtyard parking can allow unauthorised access to the rear of properties and can reduce back garden sizes and impact on amenity.

Basement and underground parking is a very useful option in infill developments. It can make efficient use of the site and preserve street frontages. As with courtyard parking, however, much depends on the location and design of entrances. Car parking structures have a rigid geometry based on dimensions of a parking bay but this should not be allowed to dictate the shape of the building above.

### **3.8 Consider the parking needs of all**

**Whatever format of parking is chosen, special consideration must be given to needs of those with limited mobility.**

The private car is the only means of travel for many disabled people and others with limited mobility. It is very important therefore that, apart from the number of spaces to be provided for people with limited mobility, consideration is given to the provision of larger bays that are located close to entrances and clearly signposted. It is also important to avoid clutter, confusion and the obstruction of routes from carelessly sited and designed street furniture, signage and landscape features.

**Secure cycle parking should be incorporated in a convenient location within developments.**

The Council's adopted cycle parking standards are set out in Appendix I of the Borough of Charnwood Local Plan, 2004. These standards are required for new development proposals, in addition to the vehicle parking standards. The provision of secure and covered cycle parking can encourage people to cycle rather than drive.

### 3.9 CHECKLIST 3

#### **ACHIEVING ACCESSIBILITY**

- Does the proposal accommodate good quality access by all modes?  
An assessment is needed starting with pedestrian access - including people with disabilities, then cycle routes and cycle parking, then bus and rail services and facilities, then traffic management measures and lastly access by car, including the level of car parking.  
Pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users should have access as good as, if not better than, by car.
  
- Is it possible to make some trade off between car parking provision and highway infrastructure and improvements to access by non-car modes?
  
- Is the car parking provision proposed consistent with the application of maximum standards?  
Could the level of car parking be less than the maximum standard in line with established policy guidance?  
Has an acceptable level of parking for specific users such as cyclists, people with disabilities, and parents with young children been included? Has any need for lorry and/or coach parking been considered?
  
- Could the proposed development provide improvements to accessibility?  
Examples might include:
  - Measures for safer walking:
    - Wider pavements or pedestrian surfaces.
    - Improved lighting dedicated to pedestrian movement (this should be in addition to any lighting designed to illuminate the carriageway).
    - Pedestrian friendly road crossings.
    - Traffic calming measures to reduce vehicle speeds.
    - Pedestrian priority measures restricting or prohibiting vehicular traffic.
    - Occasional seating for rest stops.
    - The provision of missing links in right of way networks.
  
  - Measures for safer cycling:
    - New cycle routes and better links to existing cycle routes.
    - Convenient, safe and secure parking, preferably under cover and close to the entrances of buildings.

- Showering and changing facilities (in larger developments).
    - Cycle priority measures such as advanced stop lines, cycle bypasses, cycle gaps and contraflow cycle lanes.
    - Traffic calming measures that aid safe cycling.
    - Reallocation of road space for cycle routes.
  - Measures for shared use of space by pedestrians and cyclists where alternative segregated options are impractical.
  - Measures to make public transport more attractive:
    - Priority measures for buses.
    - Bus routes through developments with bus stops at least as near to building entrances as car parking areas.
    - Traffic management measures that do not impede bus travel.
    - Better interchange between all modes at rail stations and main travel destinations.
    - Safe and protected places to wait for buses and trains.
    - Quality bus shelters and kerbs designed with access for low floor buses at key bus stops.
    - Quality information about services including 'Real time' information.
    - Bus stops located to access footpaths and cycle routes by the shortest distance.
    - Subsidies to increase the frequency of existing services or to create new services.
    - Contribution to park and ride facilities.
  - Traffic management measures:
    - Residents parking schemes or controls to help avoid on-street parking problems where on-site parking options are restricted.
    - Well designed pedestrian priority schemes.
    - Designing development layouts that encourage low vehicle speeds such as 20mph zones or 'Home Zones'.
    - Designation of less busy roads as quiet lanes more attractive for walking and cycling.
  - Provision for mopeds and motorcycles, especially in locations where public transport is limited and walking is not a realistic option.
- Will a Green Travel Plan accompany the proposal?

## 4. SAFE PLACES

Our public realm, made up of streets and public spaces, is the 'glue' that bonds places together. The condition of the public realm has a major impact on the quality of people's lives. As well as being able to move around easily, people should feel the place is safe and attractive. Streets and public spaces should be designed to encourage as many people as possible to use them, which will help to foster social connection and a sense of community.

People living in these areas need to feel their homes are private and secure whilst having convenient access to facilities. Residents are likely to feel safer when they are able to see the street and the activities in it. Passive and natural surveillance can strengthen the resident's governance of the public realm and provide quick response to incidents.

Good design in new development and co-ordinated improvements to public spaces can have a positive impact on vandalism, crime and significant benefits for economic regeneration. Crime pattern analysis can be used to inform the layout and design of new development in an area and can contribute to crime reduction objectives.

In certain situations such as town centres, there is a need to ensure a good mix of uses that will be attractive to a wide range of groups. This will help to avoid places becoming empty at certain times of the day or certain groups feeling marginalized and unsafe. The evening economy is important here and diversification is key to ensuring that the 'drinking culture', and the potential for anti-social behaviour associated with it, does not dominate.

### 4.1 Clearly define the public and private realm

**A clear definition of the public and private realm is important. Building fronts should overlook public space, including streets, parks and canals. As a rule the space in front of developments should be defined by low front boundary walls/railings/hedging rather than left as open frontages. The exact boundary treatment will often be set by the context and the nature of the development in question. Backs should be private and face other backs within a development block, allowing secure spaces such as courtyards or gardens to be formed. Backing onto public space should be avoided.**

As well as encouraging natural surveillance, development that faces public space improves the visual character of the street or space. Low front walls or railings provide definition to the public realm as well as a defensible space. In certain situations this may be inappropriate, for example in some traditional village centres and late Victorian suburbs where buildings are set immediately at the back of pavements.

Backs facing backs within a development block increases security and privacy and can provide a quiet amenity space. High fences and walls at the rear of development backing onto public space can reduce natural surveillance, compromise security, be visually disruptive and fail to create a sense of place.

**New development should reinforce and define streets and spaces and follow a coherent building line. The particular approach adopted will usually be informed by the context. However, it may be appropriate to make some allowance for the treatment of corners, to provide relief in massing and to accommodate entrance features.**

Buildings directly facing public space, with a coherent building line increase legibility and overlooking of the street, and provide a sense of enclosure.

**The same principles of defining public and private space equally apply to backland development. Whilst backland development within an established area may often be acceptable, fronts should not face backs. Such proposals should also consider whether a new link would be possible/desirable rather than a cul-de-sac. Additionally, the effect on the existing street frontage and neighbouring buildings, local character, existing trees/landscaping, satisfactory access and the amenity of neighbouring occupants are important.**

Backland development can be a useful form of infill housing such as bringing derelict land into use. However, a high standard of design and innovation is required to overcome any constraints. This should be informed by the space standards set out in Appendix 4 and the more detailed guidance set out in the Council's draft SPD on 'Backland and Tandem Development'.

## **4.2 Build active fronts and private backs**

**Frontages should be as 'active' as possible particularly at ground floor. Windows to active rooms, such as living room and kitchen windows, should face public space. Deadening features, such as bathrooms, bin stores, garages and blank walls, should not dominate street or other public space frontages.**

Rooms such as living rooms and kitchens provide the most potential surveillance of public space. Bathrooms, bin stores and garages provide no surveillance and lessen the character and appearance of the street where they dominate.

**The main access to buildings should be from the public realm with well-defined entrances at frequent intervals. Entrances are the transition between public and private space and should be designed to be obvious and accessible. In flat developments the number of front doors onto the street should be maximised. Ground floor flats should generally have their own entrances from the street, separated from the entrances to the accommodation above.**

More entrance points can encourage greater life and activity onto the street. This can make places feel more safe, secure and foster social connection. Ground floor flats with separate entrances maximise activity onto the street and minimise the number of units accessed from

a common stair, giving people more control. Separate entrances for the ground floor also offer more flexibility, for example for future conversion to other uses such as shops or the creation of live/work units.

**Where there is a slope, buildings should sit on 'real ground'. Where it is desirable to go across, rather than along, ground contours the development should step down the slope. Large monolithic 'slabs' are not acceptable.**

Stepping down the hill is visually desirable and it allows accessible ground floor entrances. Furthermore it allows windows to be well related to the street and avoids the deadening effect of blank walls at ground level.

**Corners should be built positively to enhance legibility and visual surveillance of streets or public space. Blank gable ends and large areas of unrelieved wall should be avoided. In the case of residential development, significant overlooking at the rear should be designed out and garden sizes for corner turning houses will be judged flexibly with proper justification.**

Corners are prominent and important features that help to orientate people and enhance the identity of a place. Badly designed corners are particularly noticeable and detract from the townscape. Blank gables and unrelieved walls can deaden the street and reduce surveillance as well as compromising security and rear privacy.

In residential development, the avoidance of overlooking of neighbouring rear gardens on corner plots can be difficult but can be solved through careful design. Adequate garden sizes may also be difficult to achieve. However, the benefit of avoiding blank gable ends by turning the corner with a building frontage as well as increased security and privacy to the rear can often compensate for this.

**Adequate privacy on the private side of the development (i.e. the rear) will have to be demonstrated. On the public side of the development (i.e. the front) privacy is not so critical and therefore front-to-front distances will be judged flexibly.**

It is important for residents to enjoy rear privacy to safeguard their amenity and allow their private space to be useable. Distance separation (particularly for family houses with gardens), screening, window size and style, orientation and location of rooms and circulation space are some of the factors to consider. Guidance on space standards in residential development is set out in Appendix 4.

Depending on the context, streets should provide a sense of enclosure and/or follow the existing building line. Streets that offer a sense of containment can also appear more intimate and friendly and can reduce vehicle speeds.

**Features such as bay windows, balconies and roof terraces should be encouraged as long as they relate to the context and do not significantly**

**compromise the privacy of neighbouring occupants, for example by allowing direct overlooking of neighbouring back gardens.**

As well as increasing amenity, these features can add liveliness, interest and local identity to the street. They can also offer the benefit of more natural surveillance.

### **4.3 Achieve security through good design**

**Security should be achieved through a coherent approach to the design of the development rather than by adopting add on measures that overtly create an impression of fortification. Gated developments should normally be avoided.**

Physical security should not be at the expense of a good quality environment. Positive features that make places safer include integrated through roads with front elevations on both sides, more passers-by on the street, more visible neighbours on the street, good visual relations to the public realm rather than seclusion, more linear integrated spaces and visual continuity between spaces. Mixed-use developments can help to increase surveillance and vitality and thereby help to reduce crime and incivilities.

Carefully designed opportunities for biodiversity can prevent criminal activities taking place in semi-natural spaces: for instance, the creation of areas of flower rich grassland rather than planting tall, evergreen shrubberies can prevent the development of hiding places.

The overtly fortress like appearance of gated developments can raise the fear of crime and prevent the achievement of natural surveillance. Gates also effectively privatise areas of the town or village and reduce permeability. Gated developments should not be confused with gates that merely prevent access to the rear of properties, including rear parking courts.

**Convenient access to the rear of properties should be incorporated without compromising security. This can be achieved through secure gated accesses. In the case of unbroken terraced housing, gated passageways between dwellings should be used. Access through the dwelling may be a solution provided it is properly designed to accommodate this, for example where the layout provides for a straight passage via a hallway and kitchen/utility room.**

Secure rear access allows occupants to more easily use the space at the rear for example removing garden rubbish, storage of refuse, repair and maintenance to the rear of the property, storing cycles and building garden sheds, extensions etc.

### **4.4 Create attractive streets and spaces**

**New streets and public spaces should be designed to be safe, attractive and useable by many people with different needs. General aspects to consider include: local character, existing landscape and wildlife features, the size and type of space, location and prominence, connections to the wider area**

**(including the countryside), circulation patterns and desire lines, variety of uses surrounding the space, ratio of building height to width, design of surrounding buildings and microclimate. Public space that is poorly located, low quality and of a form and layout that limits its usefulness will not be acceptable.**

Good public space enhances a development's image, provides a valuable amenity and improves the setting of surrounding buildings as well as the character of the wider settlement. No-one benefits from left over space that serves little purpose. Public space should be designed as an integral and complementary part of any development. The location and quality of public space is more important than the quantity.

The creation of a quality public realm requires careful design and thought about the best use of space, with particular consideration being given to the needs of young people, elderly people and people with disabilities. More detailed design considerations include: boundaries and transitions, reduction of street clutter, amount and type of seating, lighting, choice of materials, colours, planting, level changes, information and signage and public art (see 6.6 Consider public art).

Natural green spaces and greenways, providing access to the countryside, enhance the areas in which people live. They provide aesthetic, recreational and health benefits, including access to walking, cycling and horse riding and opportunities for relaxation, delight and spiritual refreshment. Some evidence of these factors influencing housing demand is emerging. Most people value everyday nature rather than nature that is rare or hard to see, and contact with it can take place anywhere and at any time, for instance at home and on the way to work or school.

**Boundary treatments should enhance public space. Low quality treatments that have a short life, such as palisade or close board fences, are seldom appropriate for boundaries to public spaces.**

Good quality boundary treatments contribute to the visual character of an area, provide a good transition between public and private areas and offer security, permanency and a defensible space.

**Streets and public space should be well lit, avoiding dark corners, with the lighting designed to be appropriate to the context. Lighting schemes for developments and individual buildings require careful consideration at the design stage.**

People use public space at all times and so should feel safe at all times. Careful consideration at the design stage of exterior lighting can enhance the character of the building, development, townscape or space. It is important that lighting schemes are designed to avoid 'light pollution' and ensure that installations and structures are appropriate in appearance to the location. More detailed guidance can be found in the Council's adopted '*SPG: Planning and Lighting Proposals*' (2002).

#### **4.5 Prepare landscape management plans**

**The long-term success of any public space will depend on the adequacy of the management and maintenance arrangements. These arrangements need to be considered at the outset, alongside the design of the development. Landscape management agreements will be required for shared areas that will not be adopted by the Borough Council or Parish/Town Council.**

Management and maintenance principles embrace how a place looks and how it functions. A landscape management plan should clearly set out long-term design objectives, management responsibilities and maintenance schedules. It will help ensure the future of a shared space(s) by maintaining appearance and discouraging vandalism and crime. Landscape management agreements can also avoid future disputes over responsibility.

#### **4.6 Provide well-defined routes, spaces and entrances**

**Crime is lower in places with well-defined spaces and entrances, and clear, direct routes that take people straight to where they want to go. These routes should be shared, bringing cars, cyclists and pedestrians together. Unnecessary routes such as segregated footpaths, particularly ones that allow rear access to dwellings, should be avoided.**

Layouts can have an important bearing on crime. Buildings are most vulnerable if they have several sides exposed to the public realm. People are more vulnerable where criminals can operate undetected. Traditional block structures that provide private, defensible space in the middle can be successful in crime-fighting terms.

Designers need to make it as easy as possible to see from one place to another. Public spaces and thoroughfares should be bright and uncluttered. They should be overlooked by surrounding buildings and neighbouring uses.

#### **4.7 Promote a sense of ownership**

**Places that promote a sense of ownership, respect, territorial responsibility and community are likely to see lower levels of criminal activity.**

A place is safer if it feels to potential offenders that it is under the supervision or ownership of residents and other users. There are several ways of creating this effect including reducing the amount of anonymous public space, passive surveillance and clearly separating public and private space through buffer zones.

The distinction between public and private space can be achieved through physical barriers or psychological ones such as changes in paving, colour, planting or signage. It is also useful

to promote ownership by engendering a sense of identity. Involving local people in the planning process or through the use of good design can do this.

#### **4.8 Consider the need for privacy**

**Privacy is an important design objective in ensuring that residents feel at ease with their home. The space standards set out in Appendix 4 provide guidance. However, these standards need to be applied flexibly in relation to the specific context and in recognition that the objective of privacy can be better secured through careful design rather than by physical separation alone.**

It is important not to frustrate the creation of attractive residential environments by denying the ability to provide privacy through careful design. Design can help create privacy in a number of ways:

- Street design can influence the relationship between facing dwellings. A varied building line can create oblique views, allowing the fronts of dwellings to be brought closer together than when facing views are direct.
- Rooms needing less privacy, such as living rooms and kitchens, can face the street, with bedrooms and bathrooms located towards more private parts of the home.
- Windows can be designed in relation to the function of the room: generous for living rooms overlooking the street or garden, frosted windows for bathrooms, and smaller windows for bedrooms. Bay windows provide oblique views down a street.
- The careful orientation of primary and secondary windows can enable dwellings to be drawn closer together while still providing surveillance of the public realm.
- Screening and planting can limit overlooking between facing rear windows and protect private garden areas.

## 4.9 CHECKLIST 4

### **ACHIEVING SAFE & ATTRACTIVE STREETS & PUBLIC PLACES** **KEY DESIGN PRINCIPLES**

- **Understand the place:**
  - How do people currently find their way?
  - Where do they arrive & where are their key destinations?
  - What are the existing major routes?
  - What are the existing landmarks (e.g. buildings, details, structures & spaces)?
  - What was the historic pattern of spaces & routes?
  
- **Plan, link & regenerate public spaces:**
  - How does the proposal create/contribute to a logical, legible & cohesive hierarchy of spaces & routes?
  - How does the proposal take opportunities to recapture the public domain?
  - How have the different uses/purposes/generators/attractors that new spaces & routes will serve been considered?
  - How does the proposal equitably redistribute space, give priority to the largest volume of people & take into account flows & demands over different times of the day?
  - Explain any opportunities for additional outdoor activity to maximise the beneficial use of public spaces?
  - Explain any opportunities to recreate historic linkages and spaces, to connect to the countryside and to enhance the quality of the street scene?
  - Are there any opportunities for additional natural green spaces to maximise the local biodiversity resource and people's access to nature?
  
- **Establish convenient, safe, legible, & attractive links for pedestrians & vehicles:**
  - How does the proposal ensure access for all?
  - How is priority given to pedestrian safety, health, convenience & amenity?
  - How are any current conflict points or corridors eradicated?
  - What consideration has been given to orientation, way finding & information?
  
- **Design quality public spaces:**
  - How does the proposal secure high quality in design, detailing and materials?
  - How does the design respond to/enhance local image & identity?
  - How does the design respond to sensory issues?

- Explain any innovative approaches that have been embraced?
- How have opportunities to vary the use at different times of the day, different days of the week & during different seasons been considered?
- How have immediate & long-term management & maintenance issues been considered?
- How can the stewardship of the local community be encouraged?

## 5. SUSTAINABLE PLACES

Creating sustainable communities means taking account of social, economic and environmental issues. The social and economic issues in design are covered elsewhere in this guide. This chapter will focus upon the benefits of sustainable construction.

The location, form and layout of places can reduce car use, resource consumption and emissions as well as creating successful places where people want to live, work and visit. The natural environment must also be considered, as sensitive incorporation of natural features is important to protect or enhance biodiversity and greenspaces. The creation of greener buildings through higher standards in energy and water efficiency, better use of building materials and reducing waste, is a key element in the sustainable communities plan.

A principal goal for the Government's energy policy is the cutting of carbon dioxide emissions, which are the main contributor to global warming. Around 50% of the carbon dioxide emissions in the UK result from constructing, maintaining and occupying buildings, and homes account for approximately half of that amount. This highlights the need to apply the highest environmental standards to new and existing building stock to tackle climate change as well as create 'places where people want to live'.

Charnwood Borough Council has produced its own 'Climate Change Strategy' setting out how it will reduce its own carbon emissions and how it will encourage others to take similar positive steps. This guide is an integral part of that strategy. The Council will encourage all development proposals to take into account the sustainable construction and design practices set out in this section.

### 5.1 Make use of existing assets

**The opportunity to re-use good quality existing buildings should always be examined before demolition or replacement is considered. The aim of conserving fuel and power is supported in schemes to re-use existing buildings provided that it does not compromise the special interest, character and appearance of historic buildings.**

Many older buildings can be significant to the community and have historic and townscape importance. Their retention and adaptation to new uses avoids the loss of local character and, when integrated with new development, can offer more variety, choice and interest to an area. The recycling of buildings and materials avoids the energy and resource depletion associated with providing a new building. This can equally apply to topsoil, which can be retained on site to create landscape rather than removed for landfill. In the case of historic buildings the detailed proposals need to achieve the right balance between reducing energy use and greenhouse gas emissions, and conserving the national and local built heritage. Further advice on this matter is provided by English Heritage (see appendix 7).

**Features of wildlife and ecological value, such as existing key habitats, important species, buffer areas, wildlife corridors (greenways) and other landscape features of major importance should be retained and sensitively incorporated into developments. Site and setting analysis should be used to identify such features. Major developments and other proposals, where it is appropriate, should enhance the ecological quality and functioning of the site and surrounding ecological network by restoring and connecting existing wildlife habitats and creating new ones.**

Existing key habitats, important species, buffer areas, wildlife corridors (greenways) and other landscape features of major importance for wildlife, provide a valuable biodiversity resource and contribute to the special character of a place. Well-conceived schemes to provide soft landscaping and increase biodiversity add to the attractiveness, green credential and sustainability of development. Soft landscaping and green spaces can also assist sustainable drainage by reducing water run-off from landscaped areas.

## **5.2 Maximise energy efficiency**

**Energy efficiency should be maximised in developments by following the energy hierarchy, which is to:**

- Reduce the need for energy;
- Use energy more efficiently;
- Supply energy from renewable sources; and
- Use fossil fuels in a cleaner way.

**The energy hierarchy can be incorporated into the design process through:**

- Location and transport accessibility;
- Siting, layout, building design and material choice;
- Topography and landform;
- Microclimate;
- Biodiversity and landscaping; and
- Water resources.

**Location and transport accessibility** - The location of development has a significant impact on its energy consumption. Locating new development close to jobs, shops and services or along public transport routes as well as re-using sites and buildings will ensure a sustainable approach to site selection.

**Siting, layout, building design and materials choice** - The position and layout of buildings on a site has a direct impact on the potential for energy efficiency. In particular, the maximisation of passive solar gain is a design consideration that has been used throughout the ages. There are a number of issues to consider including:

- Building orientation;
- Layout of rooms and sizes of windows;

- 'A' rated appliances and efficient condensing boilers;
- Housing density;
- Existing landscape and topography to use fully daylight and solar energy;
- Avoiding unnecessary overshadowing;
- Maximising use of south facing slopes;
- Use of solar energy generation technologies (e.g. photovoltaic cells);
- Opportunities for re-use of buildings

Materials are also relevant to energy efficiency. The selection of materials should take into account the quality, durability, appropriateness to the context and also the amount of embodied energy within that material. Ideally materials used should have a low embodied energy, be sourced locally, be naturally occurring and/or be by products of another local activity. They can also be materials that are produced through the use of renewable resources and environmentally benign processes.

The structure and layout of buildings should provide for long term flexibility and sustainability by offering the ability for enlargement and adaptation. This includes the need to take account of the needs of an aging population. Sustainable design should also include consideration of good noise insulation. This is a particularly important consideration in making high density, mixed use development attractive and sustainable for residents.

**Topography and Landform** - The landform can offer different opportunities for shelter and access to sunlight. For example gentle southern facing slopes offer opportunities to maximise solar gain.

**Microclimate** - Sheltering a property effectively from wind can reduce heat loss and minimise the effects of harsh conditions such as driving rain, which can lead to damp penetration. The relationship to other buildings can also have a significant impact on the microclimate of a development by creating a solid windbreak that can act as a shelter, although care must be taken to reduce the potential for wind channelling and localised wind currents.

**Biodiversity and Landscaping** - Existing ecological features (e.g. hedgerows, woods and copses) can act as windbreaks, and as wildlife habitats. Bats and other animals use these features as navigation aids to feeding sites. Conversions of existing buildings must be sensitive to the needs of protected species such as bats. Other possible issues are soil quality, issues of contamination and pollution. Landscaping, in terms of trees, vegetation and earth works, can be used as effective wind breaks to shelter buildings from prevailing winds. However, care should be taken to ensure that no detrimental overshadowing is caused.

**Water Resources** - Water conservation and demand management can reduce water use in a property. The use of spray taps, low flush cisterns, water efficient appliances and avoiding the use of power showers can drastically reduce water use. Sustainable drainage considerations are important to ensure that wastewater is limited and that risk of ground water pollution and flooding is reduced. The recycling of rainwater and greywater, and the

collection of water from baths, showers and washbasins for re-use in toilet flushing, can reduce flooding and save on water use.

### **5.3 Use sustainable materials**

**Sustainable design should seek to minimise or eliminate adverse impacts through care in the choice of materials and how they are used.**

Good practice includes:

- Use of locally-sourced materials where possible to minimise transportation impacts;
- Protect and re-use the soil resources locally;
- Maximise use of recycled and salvaged construction materials;
- Re-use and incorporate existing buildings to high design and energy-efficiency standards;
- Select materials which have low levels of energy in manufacture (low 'embodied energy') and low levels of environmental impact;
- Select timber verifiably sourced from forests that are managed sustainably, taking particular care to avoid uncertified products from tropical forests and elsewhere. The Forest Steward Council (FSC) certification scheme is highly recommended as a guarantee of timber and timber products from sustainable sources;
- Consider using natural materials such as earth, thatch, timber, straw, etc.;
- Design buildings with sufficient flexibility and durability for a long lifetime – 'long life, loose fit' – to avoid unnecessary demolition and redundancy. The structure and layout of properties should offer the ability to enlarge and adapt;
- Use materials capable of being salvaged and recycled when the building is eventually redeveloped.

### **5.4 Encourage renewable energy production**

**All proposals for development, new build or conversion of uses that consume energy will be encouraged to include on site renewable energy facilities and/or energy saving technologies. All major development proposals will be encouraged to incorporate renewable energy production, providing for at least 10% of the predicted energy requirements.**

The development of renewable energy resources is vital to facilitating the delivery of the Government's commitments on both climate change and renewable energy. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment. This includes energy from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, the sun and biomass.

An increasing amount of renewable energy options are available providing varying scales of application, from residential through to commercial and community-sized applications. Some options are not practical to apply within urban environments. However, this does not imply that these options are discounted but is why the list below does not extensively list all renewable energy options that are available. In considering the potential in Charnwood and

its environmental constraints, the following renewable energy facilities and/or energy saving technologies are considered appropriate:

- Passive Solar Design
- Photovoltaic Cells
- Solar Water Heating
- Wind Generation
- Incineration/ Combined Heat and Power Plants
- Heat pumps for heating and cooling
- Biomass such as wood chips and wood pellets

It should be noted that Combined Heat and Power is not a renewable energy source but has been included in this section to demonstrate an alternative technology that has low energy consumption and reduced carbon emissions. It can include an element of renewable energy if it chooses a renewable energy power source.

**The incorporation of passive solar design, which harnesses the sun's energy directly to heat, light and ventilate a building, will be encouraged in new development. Making use of the sun's (free) energy reduces the building's energy consumption and thereby reduces carbon dioxide emissions.**

Features to consider in passive solar design include building situation and site layout, built form, landscaping, conservatories, window design, internal layout and opaque elements. A number of rules should be applied to any design to maximise the potential of solar gain:

- The building should be elongated along the east-west axis within 30° of due south;
- The building's south face should receive sunlight between the hours of 9.00am and 3.00pm during the heating season;
- Interior spaces that require the most light and heat should be located on the southern side. Spaces that require less light and heat should be located on the northern side;
- Large areas of glazing should be located on the southern side, with reduced areas of glazing located on the northern side;
- An open floor plan optimises passive solar energy use;
- Use shading to prevent summer sun entering the interior.

## **5.5 Include sustainable drainage systems**

**The use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) will be encouraged. SUDS aim to limit the waste of water, reduce water pollution and flood risk relative to conventional drainage systems.**

SUDS are promoted in Regional Guidance and by the Environment Agency. They involve techniques to control surface water run-off as close to its origin as possible, before it enters a watercourse. With careful design, they can contribute to the design of open space. Traditional piped drainage systems are replaced by engineering solutions that mimic natural drainage processes. For example:

- Control of rainwater at source (e.g. through green roofs, rainwater re-use and permeable pavements).
- Infiltration trenches and filter drains.
- Swales and basins, installed as part of a drainage network connecting to a pond or wetland, prior to discharge to a natural watercourse.
- Ponds and wetlands, designed to accommodate considerable variations in water levels during storms, thereby enhancing flood-storage capacity.

## **5.6 Integrate waste management and recycling facilities**

**Developments should be designed to encourage greater recycling capacity. Residential developments should support the Leicestershire Household Waste Management Strategy and Borough Council initiatives to improve its recycling collection service and recycling centres.**

Waste management is becoming an increasing concern as sites for the disposal of residual waste run out. Commercial waste accounts for about 80% of waste that arises. In addition there is a need to conserve energy and raw materials as well as a number of other benefits that flow from good waste management. The design of new development can help encourage greater recycling capacity by providing:

- Adequate space within residential developments for storing recycling materials at home, especially where separate bins or containers are proposed for storing recyclables before collection.
- Appropriate access for recycling and residual waste containers for both the householder and the waste/recycling collection contractor.
- Safe, well designed and managed recycling “bring centres” within the development, which are accessible to users and to collection vehicles.
- Adequate space within residential developments for composting facilities, to allow for composting at home or for collection.

## **5.7 Undertake a BREEAM Assessment**

**The Borough Council will expect a BREEAM Assessment to be undertaken for the detailed development proposals on sites allocated through the Local Development Framework (LDF) process. For major development the Council will encourage the submission of a BREEAM Assessment with the planning**

**application to maximise proposals chances of achieving a high rating for environmental performance.**

The Building Research Establishment (BRE) has introduced the Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM), which is a means of reviewing and improving the environmental performance of buildings. Schemes are available for office buildings, industrial units, supermarkets and homes. The homes version of BREEAM is called EcoHomes. BREEAM assesses the performance of buildings in the following areas:

- **Management** - overall management policy, commissioning site management and procedural issues;
- **Energy use** - operational energy and carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>);
- **Health and well-being** - indoor and external issues affecting health and well-being;
- **Pollution** - air and water pollution issues;
- **Transport** - transport-related CO<sub>2</sub> and location-related factors;
- **Land use** - greenfield and brownfield sites;
- **Ecology** - ecological value conservation and enhancement of the site;
- **Materials** - environmental implication of building materials, including life-cycle impacts; and
- **Water** - consumption and water efficiency.

BREEAM awards the following standards based on the building's performance; PASS, GOOD, VERY GOOD or EXCELLENT.

## 5.8 CHECKLIST 5

### ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**Does the development proposal for new build, conversion or renovation:**

#### **1. Location**

- Make use of previously developed land?
- Comply with the sequential approach to identify a site in a priority location?

#### **2. Energy Efficiency, Solar Gain and Sources of Heating**

- Maximise the potential for solar gain through its consideration of:
  - Orientation;
  - Overshadowing (landscape, topography and adjacent buildings);
  - Internal layout;
  - Use of windows, etc.?
- Maximise the potential for sheltering through consideration of landscape, topography and microclimate?
- Use renewable sources of energy on site? For example:
  - Solar water heating;
  - Photovoltaic panels;
  - Wind generation;
  - Heat pumps for heating and cooling;
  - Combined heat and power;
  - Biomass.
- Omit central heating in the building by increasing insulation and providing renewable sources - photovoltaic panels, geothermal heat pumps etc.?
- Use electricity on a green tariff from a company generating renewable energy?
- Achieve standards for energy efficiency and/or sustainable construction techniques - BREEAM, EcoHomes, SAP Ratings, Zero CO<sub>2</sub> and Zero Heating?

#### **3. Water Resources and Sustainable Drainage**

- Minimise the demand for water and increase re-use of wastewater (by incorporating low water use devices such as low flush cisterns, spray taps and incorporating greywater recycling and rainwater collection)?
- Reduce the risk of groundwater pollution and flooding through the use of sustainable drainage systems?

#### **4. Biodiversity**

- Assess the site/buildings and surroundings for trees, wildlife habitats, wildlife corridors and legally protected species?
- Make provision to protect and enhance any identified trees, wildlife habitats and wildlife corridors on or around the site?
- Incorporate new habitats for wildlife and green corridors through sensitively designed landscape and planting schemes?
- Make provision for the long-term nature conservation management of any identified trees, wildlife habitats, buffer areas, wildlife corridors (greenways) and other landscape features of major importance for wildlife on or around the site?
- Contribute to the Charnwood Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)?

#### **5. Waste Recycling**

- Incorporate space for occupants to accommodate wheeled bins to sort and store waste at source?
- Incorporate recycling facilities that can be used by the wider community?

#### **6. Materials**

- Re-use building structures or materials in construction directly from the site or elsewhere?
- Use recyclable, biodegradable and non-polluting (e.g. not using CFCs in their manufacture or their production) materials in construction?
- Use timber from a sustainable source in construction?
- Use materials obtained from local sources (e.g. within 30 miles)?
- Make use of the waste materials in a specific project elsewhere in the Borough?

#### **7. Adaptability**

- Make special provision to support working from home - study, workshop space, cabling for office Internet use?
- Incorporate a design enabling the building to be easily adapted to changing needs at minimal cost - key structure and space for expansion, separate access ways to upper floors, fire and sound proofing to good standards?

#### **8. About Your Company**

- Does your company have an Environmental Policy?
- Does your company have an Equal Opportunity Policy?

## 6. DISTINCTIVE PLACES

Successful places are often memorable and distinctive and the quality of their buildings, spaces and uses combine to make them places where people like to live, work and visit. The local distinctiveness of an area is a combination of all the factors that make a particular landscape, village or town different from the next. Local distinctiveness is about how people relate to places and what makes places special. The natural environment, landscape quality and historic character of Charnwood are precious assets that should be preserved and enhanced for the benefit of current and future generations.

Historically there were three major influences on the form and character of the built environment:

- Topography for the location of buildings and settlements.
- Geology for building materials and influence on landform.
- Climate for influence on the use of materials and detail of buildings.

Geology has the greatest apparent influence since it determines the topography and the natural building materials of a district. Charnwood's diverse geology has created a similarly diverse landscape, ranging from the Charnwood Forest, the Soar and Wreake Valleys to the Wolds. The geology has also provided a rich and varied legacy of building materials, with the local granite and slate being particularly distinctive. In the past builders used the materials that were at hand. The expense of transporting materials for long distances could only be considered for the most important buildings. This created a harmony between buildings and their immediate surroundings, as well as towns and villages of distinctive and interesting character.

However, local character and distinctiveness is about far more than materials. A hierarchy of factors combine to make the built environment of a particular place distinctive. First comes the shape and pattern of the town, village or area as it is seen in the wider landscape. Buildings, spaces and planting, hard and soft surfaces create this shape, and topography and natural forms influence the layout. The detailed form is determined by the height and massing of the buildings, by roof pitches, storey heights and the profiles of buildings. Finally comes the range of materials and details, their colours, textures and richness that contribute to the character of the place, and its buildings and spaces.

It has become more and more important to value features that make a place special because everyday they are being destroyed and replaced by mass-produced, standardised products. Too many developments in recent decades have given scant, if any, regard to local distinctiveness. Throughout the country there are countless examples of anonymous developments of all types where the road pattern, dictated by the geometry of vehicles, has been the biggest design influence. This is particularly the case with residential development where standard house types have often been made to fit around uniform road layouts. This has undermined local character and has eroded the legibility of places, making it difficult for

people to distinguish one place from another or to find their way around a place once within it.

## **6.1 Understand the context**

**Where development is considered appropriate, the positive and negative characteristics of the site and the local context must be analysed to determine the special qualities. An understanding of the opportunities and constraints presented by the site and its surroundings is as essential to the design for a small infill site as it is for a large development. In situations where Village Design Statements or Conservation Area Character Statements have been prepared the Council will expect these documents to be used to inform the design of development.**

Good design always arises from a thorough and caring understanding of place and context. General features to consider include existing routes (around and within the site), uses, utilities (including pylons and overhead lines) nodal points, landmarks edges/barriers, topography, existing trees and natural/ecological features, historic buildings and archaeological features, views (from, into and through the site), street patterns and widths (including historic street patterns), building heights (including floor to ceiling heights), scale, massing and building type. More detailed design elements include vertical/horizontal rhythm, relationship of solid to opening, skyline, materials, corner treatment, colour, windows, doors, wall/ground level details, landscaping, boundary treatment and public art.

## **6.2 Prepare a design statement**

**The extent of the site and setting analysis will depend on the nature and scale of the development. Design statements should include reference to this analysis. A design statement must accompany all planning applications for major developments and sensitive proposals; such as sites within conservation areas and affecting listed buildings, where particular care and thoroughness in terms of context and design is required.**

A careful, integrated and informative analysis of the local character will guide the best design response to the context, resulting in a more successful and appropriate development. Proposals should, therefore, demonstrate how the local context and the legibility of the development have been considered.

Designers should acknowledge the importance of local identity by analysing and responding to the opportunities and constraints presented by the site and its setting. The importance of design statements, including site and setting analysis, to the achievement of successful developments is emphasised in other sections of the guidance (see Introduction, 1.6 Information for planning applications and design statements, and Appendix I Making better planning applications).

### **6.3 Respond to the context**

**The design should reinforce and evolve characteristics that contribute to the quality and distinctiveness of the place. Care should be taken not to detract from positive townscape and landscape features. This includes sympathetic consideration of neighbouring buildings, natural features and uses (e.g. to avoid significant overshadowing, removal of important trees, loss of important buildings etc.). Local characteristics considered poor in terms of urban design and which undermine the overall character of an area, should not be used as a precedent (e.g. buildings that back onto the public realm or over-scaled buildings).**

Being sensitive to the context will ensure that the unique identity of a place is not harmed as well as avoiding any potential adverse impact on neighbouring buildings, landscape and uses. In certain circumstances character may conflict with the other principles and in such cases solutions will be judged on their own merits. Good planning and design reasons may on occasions justify a development that departs significantly from its context for particularly high quality, innovative proposals. It may also be the case that there is little of positive significance to build on, presenting the opportunity to create a new place with its own distinctive character.

In residential development, responding to context does not necessarily mean that standard house types should not be used. However, it does require types that can be adapted more easily to suit the particular situation. It would also be beneficial for developers to have a greater range of types available to take account of more situations, for example corner houses, wide frontage houses and three storey houses.

No attempt is made in this guide to prescribe solutions for every detailed aspect of building in relation to local character. The aim is to encourage developments that build on local character rather than necessarily copying it. High quality urban design and architectural solutions that evolve from the local context and combine tradition and modernity harmoniously should be the aim.

### **6.4 Consider the detail**

**The quality of any development can be spoilt by poor attention to detail, including poor selection and use of materials. The individual elements of which buildings of any kind are composed have a key role in determining their quality and the contribution they make to local distinctiveness.**

To contribute successfully to the whole all the elements of a building need to be well designed in their own right and arranged in a coherent and legible way that is consistent with the overall design approach. Buildings should be healthy, give delight and inspiration and be simple to manage (see also 'Sustainable Places'). High quality environments are a

consequence of the careful consideration of the detailed design of the buildings and the spaces, and the relationship between them.

The quality of design has little to do with architectural styles or, necessarily, with tradition. Traditional materials can be used in a totally modern way. Conversely new materials and cutting edge technologies can be deployed to create comfortable human scale architecture and, where appropriate, reflect traditional styles.

The utility elements in any development require careful and detailed design attention including: bin storage, cycle storage, external lighting, meter boxes, service entries, inspection boxes, means of enclosure and gates, space for drying clothes. A simple test is that if these integral elements of an overall scheme are hardly noticeable then the design is successful.

### **6.5 Encourage nature in the detail**

**Buildings and private spaces have the potential to create a fine grain of habitats for wildlife. The detailed design of buildings and spaces should seek to encourage colonisation by nature.**

Within the built environment there are considerable opportunities for the creation of new wildlife habitats. Private gardens can support a wide variety of wildlife and even high density urban forms create the potential for habitats on walls, balconies, roofs, terraces and decks. For instance climbing plants can be encouraged to colonise walls, creating habitats for birds, insects and small mammals. Such initiatives can enhance the visual appearance of buildings and the benefits to occupiers can include cooling, insulation, rainwater management and reduced microclimate effects. It is important that plants are selected to survive the unique microclimate conditions of each location. Specific design solutions are required for each habitat initiative (e.g. supports for climbing plants, nesting sites for birds and bats, and green roofs) to achieve the best results.

### **6.6 Consider public art**

**Public art can contribute to the quality of development and the creation of successful places. It can help to foster a sense of place, a sense of belonging, reinforce local identity and culture, and add to an area's attractiveness. The Council is committed to working with the best of local, regional and national artists and to encourage, through example, investment in this area by partners and developers. Public art will be encouraged as an integral part of the design within all major development proposals in the Borough. These may include new housing, retail, industrial and public service projects as well as refurbishment and reclamation proposals.**

Public art is not a new concept. Traditionally it has been seen in the forms of commemorative and civic statues, plaques, monuments and sculptures. More recently the

definition of public art has widened and can be: permanent or temporary; functional or decorative; commemorative or iconic; and thought provoking and imaginative. The inclusion of public art should be seen as part and parcel of good design, not as a substitute.

Public art may be sited in many locations. It can take many forms and use all mediums from stone and bronze to film and digital images. In all cases, it must be readily visible and accessible to members of the public. Public art is normally located on the development site, or in its immediate vicinity. It will usually relate to the social, historic or cultural context of that site and/or the intended purpose and/or user. In exceptional cases, it may be sited elsewhere in the Borough, away from the development site.

In major residential developments an integrated approach to public art from the early design stages can create a visual identity and, through the engagement of new residents, help to create a new community. The Council's adopted SPG '*Public Art – Making Places Distinctive*' provides more detailed guidance about the provision of public art, including the need for agreements to ensure long-term maintenance.

## 6.7 CHECKLIST 6

### **APPRAISING DESIGN QUALITY**

#### **Relationship to site:**

- How does the proposal relate to its specific site?
- Is there a positive and imaginative response to any problems and constraints?
- Have the physical aspects of the site been considered such as any changes in level within or beyond it?
- Are access arrangements convenient and existing routes respected?
- Can the amount of accommodation required be fitted on the site in an elegant way?

#### **Relationship to setting:**

- Is a **village design statement** or **conservation area character statement** in place for the location and, if so, how has the document been used to inform the design of the development?
- How does the proposal relate to its wider setting?
- Are the street pattern and grain of the surroundings respected?
- Are there changes in height between the existing and new development and if so how are they managed?
- Will the result enhance or damage the quality of the townscape?

#### **Density:**

- How is the density of the proposal related to that of existing and neighbouring uses?
- If there are differences, are they acceptable?

#### **Close views:**

- Has the impact of the building in close views been assessed?
- Is it either weak or over-powering?
- Does it respect the scale and rhythm of its neighbours?

#### **Materials:**

- What materials are used (i.e. for walls, roofs, windows, rainwater goods etc.)?
- How do they relate to those of the surrounding buildings?
- Is the quality as high?
- Are there interesting comparisons or contrasts in the use of materials?
- How will the colours work together?

#### **The architecture:**

- Is the architecture of the building suitable for the uses it will contain?
- Is it trying to be too grand or pretending to be more modest than it really is?
- How does the architecture present itself to the viewer?
- Is there a strong composition in the pattern of solid to opening in the façade?
- Does the detailing of the materials show signs of careful thought or originality in the way the building is put together?

### **The public realm:**

- What contribution, if any, does the proposal make to the public realm?
- If new open space is created, is it clear that it will provide a positive benefit and have a genuine use?

### **The wider setting**

- In the wider setting, has the impact of the building in views and vistas been considered?
- Does it make a positive or negative impact?
- Does it form a harmonious group or composition with existing buildings or features in the landscape?
- Does it distract the eye from the focus of the view and if so does it provide something better to look at?

Source: English Heritage/CABE, '*Building in Context*' (2001)

## **APPENDIX I**

### **MAKING BETTER PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

#### **Acknowledgement**

This document was produced by the EHTF Built Environment Working Group and can be viewed on the EHTF website: [www.ehtf.org.uk/publications.asp](http://www.ehtf.org.uk/publications.asp)

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **THE FOUR STAGES OF PROCESSING A PLANNING APPLICATION**

## APPENDIX 3

### A MATRIX OF RELEVANT POLICIES

	1 Places For People	2 Accessible Places	3 Safe Places	4 Sustainable Places	5 Distinctive Places
<b>REGIONAL PLANNING GUIDANCE FOR THE EAST MIDLANDS (RPG 8)</b>					
Policy 1 - Locational Priorities for Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Policy 2 - Sustainability Criteria	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Policy 11 - Development and Climate Change		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Policy 24 - Design and Housing Layouts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Policy 35 - Cultural Assets and their Settings			<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Policy 46 - Water Use and Development				<input type="checkbox"/>	
Policy 55 - Waste Recycling and Reduction				<input type="checkbox"/>	
Policy 57 - Energy Efficiency and Renewables				<input type="checkbox"/>	
Policy 59 - Improving Accessibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Policy 60 - Reducing the Impact of Traffic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Policy 61 - Car Parking		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Policy 66 - Non Motorised Transport		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>DRAFT REVISED REGIONAL PLANNING GUIDANCE FOR THE EAST MIDLANDS (DRAFT REVISED RPG8)</b>					
Policy 1 - Locational Priorities for Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Policy 2 - Sustainability Criteria	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Policy 3 - Promoting Better Design	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	<b>1</b> <b>Places For People</b>	<b>2</b> <b>Accessible Places</b>	<b>3</b> <b>Safe Places</b>	<b>4</b> <b>Sustainable Places</b>	<b>5</b> <b>Distinctive Places</b>
Policy 20 - A Regional Target for Re-using Previously Developed Land and Buildings for Housing				<input type="checkbox"/>	
Policy 28 - Priorities for Enhancing the Region's Biodiversity				<input type="checkbox"/>	
Policy 29 - A Regional Target for Increasing Woodland Cover				<input type="checkbox"/>	
Policy 31 - Regional Priorities for the Historic Environment			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Policy 33 - A Regional Approach to the Water Environment				<input type="checkbox"/>	
Policy 36 - A Regional Approach to Managing Flood Risk				<input type="checkbox"/>	
Policy 38 - Regional Priorities for Waste Management				<input type="checkbox"/>	
Policy 39 - Regional Priorities for Energy Reduction and Efficiency				<input type="checkbox"/>	
Policy 41 - A Regional Traffic Growth Reduction Target	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Policy 44 - Regional Car Parking Standards		<input type="checkbox"/>			
<b>LEICESTERSHIRE, LEICESTER &amp; RUTLAND STRUCTURE PLAN - adopted March 2005</b>					
Strategy Policy 2A - A Sequential Approach towards the Location of Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Strategy Policy 2B - Suitability of Land for Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Strategy Policy 9 - Mixed Use Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	<b>1</b> <b>Places For People</b>	<b>2</b> <b>Accessible Places</b>	<b>3</b> <b>Safe Places</b>	<b>4</b> <b>Sustainable Places</b>	<b>5</b> <b>Distinctive Places</b>
Strategy Policy 10 - Good Design		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strategy Policy 13 - National Forest				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strategy Policy 14 - Charnwood Forest				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environment Policy 1 - Historic Environment				<input type="checkbox"/>	
Environment Policy 2 - The Natural Environment in Urban Areas			<input type="checkbox"/>		
Environment Policy 3 - Biodiversity Enhancement				<input type="checkbox"/>	
Resource Management 2 - Energy Efficiency				<input type="checkbox"/>	
Resource Management Policy 4 - The Water Environment				<input type="checkbox"/>	
Access and Transport Policy 1 - Development and the Transport System	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Access and Transport Policy 2 - Walking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Access and Transport Policy 3 - Cycling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Access and Transport Policy 4 – Buses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Access and Transport Policy 7 - Parking Provision in New Development		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Housing Policy 5 - Design and Density	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employment Policy 2- Strategic Employment Sites	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Employment Policy 4 - Science and Technology Parks	<input type="checkbox"/>				

	<b>1</b> <b>Places For People</b>	<b>2</b> <b>Accessible Places</b>	<b>3</b> <b>Safe Places</b>	<b>4</b> <b>Sustainable Places</b>	<b>5</b> <b>Distinctive Places</b>
Leisure Policy I - Leisure Provision and New Development	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<b>BOROUGH OF CHARNWOOD LOCAL PLAN – adopted January 2004</b>					
Policy ST/1 - Overall Strategy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Policy EV/1 - Design		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Policy EV/5 - The Setting of Listed Buildings			<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Policy EV/8 - Buildings of Local or Architectural Interest			<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Policy EV/10 - Development in Conservation Areas			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Policy EV/16 - Access for People with Disabilities		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Policy EV/17 - Safety in New Development		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Policy EV/18 - Open Spaces of Special Character		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Policy EV/20 - Landscaping in New Development		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Policy EV/25 - Development and Features of Nature Conservation Interest			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Policy EV/30 - Surface Water Run-off				<input type="checkbox"/>	
Policy EV/43 - Percent for Art			<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Policy H/7 - Access Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>	
Policy H/16 - Design and Layout of New Housing Developments		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Policy E/1 - Planning Criteria for Employment Developments	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Policy E/7 - Control of Employment Uses in Primarily Employment Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>				

	<b>1</b> <b>Places For People</b>	<b>2</b> <b>Accessible Places</b>	<b>3</b> <b>Safe Places</b>	<b>4</b> <b>Sustainable Places</b>	<b>5</b> <b>Distinctive Places</b>
Policy CT/20 - Development Located in the National Forest				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Policy TR/5 - Transport Standards for New Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Policy TR/6 - Traffic Generation from New Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Policy TR/13 - Access for Cyclists and Pedestrians	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Policy TR/18 - Parking Provision on New Development		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Policy RT/3 - Play Spaces in New Development	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		
Policy RT/4 - Youth/Adult Play in New Development	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		
Policy RT/5 - Amenity Open Space in New Development	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Policy RT/11 - Natural Green Space	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Policy RT/12 - Structural Open Space Provision in New Development	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## APPENDIX 4

### SPACE STANDARDS FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

The main focus should always be on addressing the principles described in the preceding chapters. Careful design rather than a blanket application of numerical standards can often address concerns such as privacy and amenity. The objective behind the standards is what is important rather than the standards themselves. The Borough Council does, however, reserve the right to apply numerical standards if it is not possible or considered appropriate to tackle amenity and other concerns purely by design. This will often be where their application is considered necessary to protect the amenity of existing residents from the effects of new developments.

Even if concerns can be designed out, standards can be a useful starting point in the design process by providing a rough rule of thumb. For example 21m between rear building faces allows for a reasonable garden length of 10.5m as well as some degree of privacy without significant screening. Similarly 1.8m high screening between rear gardens will ensure that most people cannot overlook neighbouring gardens from ground level.

The following space standards will apply with some more frequently employed than others depending on individual circumstances, including quality of design and the context. However, proposals that only accord with these standards without addressing the main issues and principles set out in the guidance will not be acceptable.

- Separation distance, to protect privacy, between rear building elevations containing main habitable room windows (see footnote for definition):
  - 21m for 2-storey dwellings;
  - 27.5m where main habitable room windows above ground floor level would overlook existing conventional dwellings; and
  - 27.5m for 3-storey dwellings and above.

The separation distance should be increased by 1m for every 0.4m difference in floor levels between dwellings.

Single storey back-to-back development is not so critical in terms of overlooking and will be judged on its merits but with regard to the above guidance where differences in ground levels make it applicable.

- Where elevations containing main ground floor habitable room windows would face windowless flank walls, over-dominance will be avoided by:
  - 9.5m minimum distance between the two elevations where the flank wall is single-storey;
  - 12.5m for 2-storey flank walls; and
  - 15.5m for 3-storey flank walls.

Single-storey flank walls can be sited closer where a hipped-roof form is proposed.

Where there is a difference in ground levels, the separation distance should be adjusted by 1 metre for every 1 metre level variation.

Where the facing windows are secondary windows or serve non-main habitable rooms, these guidelines will not apply and proposals will be considered on their merits.

The Building Research Establishment's guidelines for establishing loss of light – the 45-degree rule – shall be applied, including in relation to existing properties. The rule is explained in the Council's 'House Extensions' Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Note: Main habitable rooms are rooms that are primarily occupied during the day (i.e. lounges, dining rooms and kitchens).

## **APPENDIX 5**

### **THE TWELVE ESSENTIALS OF A VIBRANT AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY**

Planning and good design cannot by itself create the ideal community, but they can ensure that everything is in place to give the best chance of success. The list below shows the factors to consider.

#### **Does the proposal:**

##### **1. Ecological Assets**

###### **Include special measures to conserve and enhance biodiversity?**

Including:

- Retaining and incorporating existing habitats, important species, buffer areas, wildlife corridors (greenways) and landscape features of major importance for wildlife.
- Enhancing the ecological quality and functioning of the site and surrounding ecological network.
- Creating new habitats, buffer areas and landscape features for wildlife.
- Restoring and possibly linking and connecting existing habitats and landscape features that could potentially be of major importance for wildlife.
- Compensating for features lost to development by encouraging nature to colonise buildings and private spaces.
- Managing existing, restored and newly created habitats and features of major importance for wildlife.

##### **2. Density and Urban Design**

**Achieve densities that:**

- **Make efficient use of land & support walking, cycling & public transport?**
- **Support a choice of housing & diversity of uses?**
- **Support non-residential uses?**

Higher densities may also allow more land to be allocated to public greenspace.

##### **3. Urban Infill**

**Make the best use of areas that are already served by infrastructure, as opposed to projects on previously unserviced land?**

##### **4. Town/Village Centre**

**Involve the creation of compact, mixed-use developments serving town, village or neighbourhood centres?**

Such centres provide people with a place to gather, shop and recreate, thus strengthening the sense of community and serving as transit destination.

##### **5. Local Economy**

**Encourage, in larger projects, the development of a local economy that improves the balance of land uses and reduces the need for residents to drive?**

Including:

- Allocating land for commercial or industrial uses and for live/work units.
- Support the Council's economic development strategy.
- A successful economic sector.

**6. Transportation**

**Encourage alternatives to the motorcar as a means of transportation?**

Including:

- Designing the project for the use of walking, bicycles and public transport.
- Narrower, interconnecting streets with sidewalks and pedestrian cut-throughs.
- The use of traffic calming techniques.
- Reducing the need for motorised transport though increased mixed use.

**7. Affordable and Flexible Housing**

**Include elements of affordable and flexible housing?**

Including:

- Adaptable houses able to respond to different modes of occupation (long life loose-fit).
- Setting aside units for affordable housing programmes.
- Blending the affordable units in with the community as a whole.

**8. Places for People**

**Provide for liveable communities?**

These relate to the way new and existing buildings effects the character and quality of an area so that they create well-proportioned buildings and attractive urban spaces. It also refers to facilities and services that meet residents' basic needs and build community cohesion, including:

- Children's playgrounds and open space beyond the minimum requirement.
- Community allotment gardens.
- Space for a community hall, places of worship, sports pitches or other leisure facilities.
- The creation of a safe and secure environment.

**9. Minimise the Use of Natural Resources**

**Minimise the use of natural resources through:**

**Sewage and Storm water:** Alternative approaches to treatment of sewage and storm water, such as advanced sewage treatment systems, natural swales, in place of storm drains, and increased surface permeability.

- **Water:** This refers to aspects of the development focused on the efficient use and re-use of water including water conservation devices and water re-use technology.
- **Energy:** This refers to energy efficiency and the generation of alternative energy such as energy efficient construction, passive or active solar design, district heating and cooling systems (cogeneration).

## **10. Wastes and Recycling**

### **Encourage the reduction, re-use and recycling of waste in a community?**

Including:

- Residential waste recycling systems: individual household and community schemes.
- A high level of construction wastes recycling.
- The use of environmentally sound, local building materials.

## **11. A Feeling of Stewardship**

### **Encourage a sense of responsibility from residents and workers?**

So that people play their part in the upkeep of the area and are willing to intervene and report crime and other antisocial behaviour. Furthermore, public involvement in the design and planning of their communities should be well informed, continuous and efficient.

## **12. A Sense of Place**

### **Contribute to a sense of place and respond to local character/distinctiveness?**

Including:

- A design statement, which includes site, setting and context analysis, to inform the scheme's design.
- The use of local guidance, such as a village design statement or conservation area character statement, to influence the design.
- Public art as an integral part of the scheme's design.

## APPENDIX 6

### GLOSSARY

**Accessibility** - The ease with which a building, place or facility can be reached by people and /or goods and services. Accessibility can be shown on a plan or described in terms of pedestrian and vehicle movements, walking distance from public transport, travel time or population distribution.

**Access statement** - A statement prepared by an applicant indicating their approach to **inclusive design**.

**Adaptability** - The capacity of a building or space to respond to changing social, technological, economic and market conditions.

**Amenity** - Something that contributes to an area's environmental, social, economic or cultural needs.

**Appearance: details** - The craftsmanship, building techniques, decoration, styles and lighting of a building or structure. This includes all building elements such as openings and bays; entrances and colonnades; balconies and roofscape; and the rhythm of the facade.

**Appearance: materials** - The texture, colour, pattern and durability of materials, and how they are used. The richness of a building lies in its use of materials, which contribute to the attractiveness of its appearance and the character of the area.

**Area appraisal** - An assessment of an area's land uses, built and natural environment, and social and physical characteristics.

**Authenticity** - The quality of a place where things are what they seem: where buildings that look old are old, and where the social and cultural values that the place seems to reflect did actually shape it.

**Axonometric projection** - A drawing showing a building(s) in three dimensions with vertical and horizontals to scale. See also '**isometric projection**'.

**Backland development** - The development of sites at the back of existing development, such as back gardens.

**Barrier** - An obstacle to movement.

**Biodiversity** – The variety of life around us, embracing all species, communities, habitats and ecosystems associated with terrestrial and water environments that constitute the biological diversity of the planet.

**Biomass** - The biodegradable fraction of products, waste and residues from agriculture (including plant and animal substances), forestry and related industries, as well as the biodegradable fraction of industrial and municipal waste).

**Block** - The area bounded by a set of streets and undivided by any other significant streets.

**Brief** - This guide refers to site-specific briefs as '**development briefs**'. Site-specific briefs are also called a variety of other names, including '**design briefs**', '**planning briefs**' and '**development frameworks**'. See also '**concept statements**'.

**Building element** - A feature (such as a door, window or cornice) that contributes to the overall design of a building.

**Building line** - The line formed by the frontages of buildings along a street. The building line can be shown on a plan or section.

**Built environment** - The entire ensemble of buildings, neighbourhoods and settlements with their infrastructure.

**Built form** - Buildings and structures.

**Bulk** - The combined effect of the arrangement, volume and shape of a building or group of buildings. Also called '**massing**'.

**Character appraisal** - Techniques (particularly as developed by English Heritage) for assessing the qualities of conservation areas. A '**conservation area character appraisal**' is a published document defining the special architectural or historic interest that warranted the area being designated.

**Character area** - An area with a distinct character, identified as such so that it can be protected or enhanced by planning policy. The degree of protection is less strong than a conservation area.

**Character assessment** - An area appraisal emphasising historical and cultural associations.

**Concept statement** – A simple, clear expression of the kind of place that new development should create. It is less detailed than a development brief and can normally be fitted on to 2 sides of A4 paper. It should comprise a brief explanation of how development on a particular site should contribute to the local planning authority's vision and explain how the policies and objectives of the local plan or the local development framework document should apply in order to deliver the best possible economic, social and environmental benefits.

**Conservation area** - An area designated by a local authority under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as possessing special architectural or historical

interest. The council will seek to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of such areas.

**Context** - The setting of a site or area, including factors such as traffic, activities and land uses as well as landscape and built form.

**Context appraisal** - A detailed analysis of the features of a site or area (including land uses, built and natural environment, and social and physical characteristics) which serves as the basis for an urban design framework, development brief, design guide, or other policy or guidance. Also known as a '**site appraisal**' or '**character appraisal**'.

**Defensible space** - Public and private space that is 'defensible' in the sense that it is surveyed, demarcated or maintained by somebody. An important concept in securing public safety in urban areas, defensible space is also dependant upon the existence of escape routes and the level of anonymity that can be anticipated by the users of the space.

**Density** - The mass or floorspace of a building or buildings in relation to an area of land. Density can be expressed in terms of plot ratio (for commercial development); homes or habitable rooms per hectare (for residential development); site coverage plus the number of floors or a maximum building height; space standards; or a combination of these.

**Density and mix** - The amount of development on a given piece of land and the range of uses. Density influences the intensity of development, and in combination with the mix of uses can affect a place's vitality and viability.

**Design and build** - An arrangement whereby a single contractor designs and builds a development, rather than a contractor building it to the design of an independent architect. Design and build generally produces buildings that are relatively cheap and easy to build, using the methods with which the builder is most familiar. Standards of design are often low.

**Design audit** - An independent assessment of a design, carried out for a local authority by consultants, another local authority or some other agency.

**Design champion** - A person responsible for ensuring that a particular organisation - a local authority, regional development agency, health authority or government department, for example - promotes high standards of design throughout its work.

**Design code** - A document (usually with detailed drawings or diagrams) setting out with some precision the design and planning principles that will apply to development in a particular area. A design code may be included as part of an '**urban design framework**', a '**development/design brief**' or a '**masterplan**' where a degree of detail and prescription is appropriate.

**Design guidance** - A generic term for documents providing guidance on how development can be carried out in accordance with the planning and design policies of a local authority or other organisation.

**Design guide** - Design guidance on a specific topic such as shopfronts or house extensions, or relating to all kinds of development in a specific area.

**Design quality indicators** – A method of assessing the quality of buildings in terms of ‘built quality’, ‘functionality’ & ‘impact’. It was developed by the Construction Industry Council & launched in 2003 (see [www.dqi.org.uk](http://www.dqi.org.uk)).

**Design statement** - (a) A pre-application design statement is made by a developer to indicate the design principles on which a development proposal in progress is based. It enables the local authority to give an initial response to the main issues raised by the proposal. (b) A planning application design statement sets out the design principles that the planning applicant has adopted in relation to the site and its wider context, as required by PPG1. See also ‘**village design statements**’ and ‘**placechecks**’.

**Desire line** - An imaginary line linking facilities or places which people would find convenient to travel between easily.

**Development appraisal** – A structured assessment of the characteristics of a site & an explanation of how they have been taken into account in drawing up development principles.

**Development brief** - A document, prepared by a local planning authority, a developer, or jointly, which provides guidance on how a site of significant size or sensitivity should be developed. Site-specific briefs are sometimes known as ‘**planning briefs**’, ‘**design briefs**’ and ‘**development frameworks**’. See also ‘**concept statement**’.

**Doorstep Greens** – Small greenspaces near to where people live; designed by the community for the community, they generate local ownership and management.

**Elevation** - The external face of a building, or the drawing of any one external face of a building facade.

**Embodied energy** – The amount of energy that is used in the extraction, manufacture, transportation and on site assembly of a building material.

**Enclosure** - The use of buildings to create a sense of defined space.

**Enquiry by design** – A form of urban design & planning workshop in which stakeholders in a proposed development (including local authorities, developers, landowners, voluntary groups etc.) collaborate in producing a ‘**masterplan**’.

**Façade** - The exterior face or front of a building.

**Feasibility** - The viability of development in relation to economic and market conditions.

**Fenestration** - The arrangement of windows on a facade.

**Form** - The layout (structure and urban grain), density, scale (height and massing), appearance (materials and detail) and landscape of development.

**Grain** - The pattern of the arrangement and size of buildings and their plots in a settlement; and the degree to which an area's pattern of street-blocks and street junctions is relatively small and frequent, or large and infrequent. Also referred to as '**urban grain**'.

**Green travel plan** -

**Greenways** – Off-road routes that can be shared by riders, walkers and cyclists. Essential to any quality town or urban environment as a means of linking with the countryside.

**Height** - See '**scale: height**'.

**Home zone** – Residential area with traffic calming features used to create a safer environment and improve the quality of life for local residents by putting the needs of children and other pedestrians using the area first. The features are design to limit vehicle speeds to 10mph max.

**Inclusive design** – It aims to remove barriers that create undue effort, separation or special treatment and enables everyone to participate equally in mainstream activities independently with choice and dignity.

**Indicative sketch** - A drawing of building forms and spaces intended to convey the basic elements of a possible design.

**Isometric projection** - A system of drawing projections similar to '**axonometric**' but in which the plan is distorted to produce an illusion of perspective.

**Landmark** - A building or structure that stands out from its background by virtue of height, size or some other aspect of design.

**Landscape** - The character and appearance of land, including its shape, form, ecology, natural features, colour and elements, and the way these components combine. This includes all open spaces, including its planting, boundaries and treatment. Landscape character can be expressed through landscape appraisal, and maps or plans. In towns '**townscape**' describes the same concept.

**Landscape character assessment** - A detailed recording of the features, elements and characteristics that make up a particular landscape and contribute to 'a sense of place'; informs planning decisions and policy for an area.

**Landscape management plan** - A plan setting out the long-term design objectives, management responsibilities and maintenance schedules for landscape areas, normally excluding domestic gardens. It can become a '**landscape management agreement**' (i.e. where a shared public spaces will not be adopted by the Borough Council or Parish/Town Council and will remain the responsibility of another party).

**Layout** - The basic plan on which all other aspects of the form and uses of a development depend. Also the way buildings, routes and open spaces are placed in relation to each other.

**Layout: urban structure** - The framework or hierarchy of routes and spaces that connect locally and more widely, and the way developments, routes and open spaces relate to one other.

**Layout: urban grain** - The pattern of the arrangement of street blocks, plots and their buildings in a settlement, which may be small and frequent (fine grain), or large and infrequent (course grain).

**Legibility** - The degree to which a place can be easily understood and traversed.

**Listed building** - A building included on the statutory *List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest*. Once added to the list, law protects the building, and its demolition, alteration or extension without prior listed building consent from the local planning authority is a criminal offence. In the legislation the term 'building' is defined quite broadly and can include structures such as walls, bridges and monuments.

**Live edge** - Provided by a building or other feature whose use is directly accessible from the street or space that it faces; the opposite effect to a blank wall.

**Local distinctiveness** - The features of a place and its communities that contribute to its special character and sense of place.

**Major development** – For the purpose of this guidance, major development will normally be taken as: the erection of 10 or more dwellings; the erection of buildings with a floorspace of 1000square metres or more; &, in other cases, where the site area is 0.5 hectare or more.

**Massing** - The combined effect of the height, bulk and silhouette of a building or group of buildings.

**Masterplan** - See '**urban design framework**'.

**Mixed-use** - A mix of uses within a building, on a site or within a particular area. 'Horizontal' mixed uses are side by side, usually in different buildings. 'Vertical' mixed uses are on different floors of the same building.

**Modal split** - How the total number of journeys in an area or to a destination is split between different means of transport, such as train, bus, car, walking and cycling.

**Movement** - People and vehicles going to and passing through buildings, places and spaces. The **movement network** can be shown on plans, by space syntax analysis, by highway designations, by figure and ground diagrams, through data on origins and destinations or pedestrian flows, by desire lines, by details of public transport services, by walk bands or by details of cycle routes.

**Natural surveillance** - The discouragement to wrongdoing by the presence of passers-by or the ability of people to be seen out of surrounding windows. Also known as **passive surveillance** (or supervision).

**Node** - A place where activity and routes are concentrated. Often used as a synonym for junction.

**Performance criterion** (pl. criteria) - A means of assessing the extent to which a development achieves a particular functional requirement (e.g. maintaining privacy). This contrasts with a standard, which specifies how a development is to be designed (e.g. by setting out minimum distances between buildings).

**Permeability** - The degree to which an area has a variety of pleasant, convenient and safe routes through it.

**Permitted development** – Small scale, often domestic development, which does not require formal planning permission provided it complies with criteria set out in Government legislation.

**Perspective** - Illustration showing the view from a particular point, as the human eye would see it.

**Placecheck** - A type of urban design audit advocated by the Urban Design Alliance. A local collaborative alliance or partnership uses checklists to investigate the connections in the built environment, in its movement network and among the people who shape it.

**Planning brief** - See 'development brief'.

**Planning obligation** – Benefit for the community at large secured by a local planning authority through a '**Section 106 Agreement**'.

**Plot ratio** - A measurement of density generally expressed as gross floor area divided by the net site area.

**Public art** - Permanent or temporary physical works of art visible to the general public, whether part of the building or free-standing; can include sculpture, lighting effects, street furniture, paving, railings and signs. See the Council's adopted SPG for the provision of public art '*Public Art – Making Places Distinctive*'.

**Public realm** (or '**domain**') - The parts of a village, town or city (whether publicly or privately owned) that are available, without charge, for everyone to use or see, including streets, squares and parks.

**Quality of life assessment** – Captures the community's views about what matters to them and why (see [www.qualityoflifecapital.org.uk](http://www.qualityoflifecapital.org.uk)).

**Rhythm** – The grouping/repetition of '**building elements**' to create emphasis, interval, accent, and/or direction, etc.

**Scale** - The impression of a building when seen in relation to its surroundings, or the size of parts of a building or its details, particularly as experienced in relation to the size of a person. Sometimes it is the total dimensions of a building that give it its sense of scale; at other times it is the size of the elements and the way they are combined.

**Scale: height** - Scale is the size of a building in relation to its surroundings, or the size of parts of a building or its details, particularly in relation to the size of a person. Height determines the impact of development on views, vistas and skylines. Height can be expressed in terms of the number of floors; height of parapet or ridge; overall height; any of these in combination; ratio of building height to street or space width; height relative to particular landmarks or background buildings; or strategic views.

**Scale: massing** - The combined effect of the arrangement, volume and shape of a building or group of buildings in relation to other buildings and spaces.

**Section** - Diagram showing a slice through a building or site.

**Section 106 agreement** – An agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, entered into by a person with an interest in a piece of land, either with the local planning authority or unilaterally, normally before the grant of planning permission. The agreement may restrict the development or use of the land in a specific way; require specific operations or activities to be carried out in, on, under or over the land; require the land to be used in a specific way; or provide for a specific payment to the local authority or other public body to secure benefits to the community. Government policy (Circular 1/97) requires that such planning obligations must be necessary, relevant to planning, directly related to the proposed development, fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development, and reasonable in all other respects.

**Settlement pattern** - The distinctive way that the roads, paths and buildings are laid out in a particular area.

**Sight line** - The line of sight from a travelling vehicle or person. Sight lines will help to determine how fast vehicles are likely to move and how safe other road users are likely to be.

**Standard assessment procedure (SAP)** - The Government's recommended system for energy rating dwellings. SAP is based on the annual energy costs for, & the annual CO2 emissions associated with, space & water heating.

**Sustainable development** - Defined in PPG1 as 'Development which meets present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to achieve their own needs and aspirations' (Brundtland Commission, 1987). The UK's strategy for sustainable development 'A better quality of life' (1999) highlights the need for environmental improvement, social justice and economic success to go hand-in-hand.

**Topography** - A description or representation of artificial or natural features on or of the ground.

**Townscape** – The visual coherence and organisation of the jumble of buildings, streets and spaces that comprise the urban environment.

**Urban design** - The art of making places. Urban design involves the design of buildings, groups of buildings, spaces and landscapes, in villages, towns and cities, and the establishment of frameworks and processes that facilitate successful development.

**Urban design framework** - A document that informs the preparation of development plan policies, or sets out in detail how they are to be implemented in a particular area where there is a need to control, guide and promote change. Also called '**urban design strategies**', '**area development frameworks**', '**spatial masterplans**', and '**planning and urban design frameworks**'.

**Urban grain** – See '**grain**'.

**Vernacular** - The way ordinary buildings were built in a particular place or period, making use of local styles, techniques and materials and responding to local economic and social conditions.

**Village appraisal** - A study identifying a local community's needs and priorities.

**Village design statement** - An advisory document, usually produced by a village community, suggesting how development might be carried out in harmony with the village and its setting. A village design statement can be given weight by being approved as supplementary planning guidance.

**Vision statement** – A simple statement of main objectives, needed for early consensus to be able to start the feasibility and budget checks and as a constant reference point throughout the project.

**Visual clutter** - The uncoordinated arrangement of street furniture, signs and other features.

## APPENDIX 7

### REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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## **USEFUL CONTACTS**

**Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO Cpi Ltd)** – [www.securedbydesign.com](http://www.securedbydesign.com)

**Building Research Establishment (BRE)** - [www.bre.co.uk](http://www.bre.co.uk)

**Building Regulations (DETR)** - [www.safety.odpm.gov.uk/bregs](http://www.safety.odpm.gov.uk/bregs)

**Campaign for Dark Skies** - [www.dark-skies.freeserve.co.uk](http://www.dark-skies.freeserve.co.uk)

**Campaign to Protect Rural England** - [www.cpre.org.uk](http://www.cpre.org.uk)

**Charnwood Borough Council** - [www.charnwood.gov.uk](http://www.charnwood.gov.uk)

**Civic Trust** - [www.civictrust.org.uk](http://www.civictrust.org.uk)

**Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE)** - [www.cabe.org.uk](http://www.cabe.org.uk)

**Countryside Agency** – [www.countryside.gov.uk/positiveplanning](http://www.countryside.gov.uk/positiveplanning)

**Department of Transport, Local Government & the Regions (DTLR)** - [www.dtlr.gov.uk](http://www.dtlr.gov.uk)

**Design Quality Indicators (DQI)** - [www.dqi.org.uk](http://www.dqi.org.uk)

**English Heritage (EH)** - [www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)

**English Historic Towns Forum (EHTF)** – [www.ehtf.org.uk](http://www.ehtf.org.uk)

**English Nature** – [www.english-nature.org.uk](http://www.english-nature.org.uk)

**Environment Agency** – [www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)

**Home Zones** - [www.homezones.org](http://www.homezones.org)

**Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC)** - [www.ihbc.org.uk](http://www.ihbc.org.uk)

**Institution of Highways & Transportation (IHT)** - [www.iht.org](http://www.iht.org)

**Joseph Rowntree Foundation** – [www.jrf.org.uk](http://www.jrf.org.uk)

**Landscape Institute (LI)** - [www.li.org.uk](http://www.li.org.uk)

**Leicestershire County Council** – [www.leics.gov.uk](http://www.leics.gov.uk)

**Living Streets** - [www.livingstreets.org.uk](http://www.livingstreets.org.uk)

**National Grid** – [www.nationalgrid.com/uk](http://www.nationalgrid.com/uk)

**Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)** - [www.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.odpm.gov.uk)

**Resource for Urban Design Information (RUDI)** - [www.rudi.net](http://www.rudi.net)

**Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)** - [www.architecture.com](http://www.architecture.com)

**Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)** - [www.rics.org.uk](http://www.rics.org.uk)

**Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI)** - [www.rtpi.org.uk](http://www.rtpi.org.uk)

**Sustrans** - [www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)

**Town & Country Planning Association (TCPA)** - [www.tcpa.org.uk](http://www.tcpa.org.uk)

**Transport 2000** – [www.transport2000.org.uk](http://www.transport2000.org.uk)

**Urban Design Alliance (UDAL)** - [www.udal.org.uk](http://www.udal.org.uk)

**Urban Design Group (UDG)** - [www.udg.org.uk](http://www.udg.org.uk)

## **SUSTAINABILITY LINKS**

**Association for Environment Conscious Building** - The UK's leading independent environmental building trade organisation: [www.aecb.net](http://www.aecb.net)

**'Building a Better Quality of Life'** – Lays out the Governments strategy for a more sustainable construction industry. Available at [www.dti.gov.uk/construction/sustain](http://www.dti.gov.uk/construction/sustain)

**Building Research Establishment (BRE)** - Guidance on SUDS: [www.bre.co.uk](http://www.bre.co.uk)

**BREEAM** - A system for assessing and certifying the environmental performance of buildings that can be applied to new & existing buildings. More information is available at [www.breem.org](http://www.breem.org), [www.ceequal.com](http://www.ceequal.com) & [www.bre.co.uk/sustainable](http://www.bre.co.uk/sustainable)

**Clear Skies** - Comprehensive A – Z of renewable energy including information on East Midlands approved installers & 'clear skies grants': <http://www.clear-skies.org>

**Community Renewables Initiative (CRI)** - Designed to help communities in the East Midlands & not for profit organisations devise & implement renewable energy schemes:

<http://www.em-cri.com>

**Considerate Constructors Scheme** – A voluntary code of practise administered by the Construction Confederation which seeks to minimise the noise, dirt & inconveniences that construction sometimes causes the neighbourhood & eradicates offensive behaviour & language from construction sites. More information is available at [www.ccscheme.org.uk](http://www.ccscheme.org.uk)

**Construction Industry Research and Information Association (CIRIA)** - Guidance on SUDS: [www.ciria.org.uk/suds](http://www.ciria.org.uk/suds)

**Ecoconstruction** – Guidance on choosing & specifying materials [www.ecoconstruction.org](http://www.ecoconstruction.org)

**Energy Saving Trust** - For information on grants & renewable energy contact the Trust via their website <http://www.est.org.uk>

**The Environment Agency** - Guidance on sustainable drainage systems (SUDS). Information also available on Flood Zone maps: [www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)

**The Green Register** - Brings all disciplines of construction professionals in the industry together, & provides a link to clients: [www.greenregister.org](http://www.greenregister.org)

**Quality of Life Assessment** – Sustainable development methodology being developed by the Countryside Agency, English Heritage, English Nature and the Environment Agency: [www.qualityoflifecapital.org.uk](http://www.qualityoflifecapital.org.uk).

**Solar Trade Association** - Promotes widespread use of solar energy technology & encourages excellence within the UK solar energy industry  
<http://www.solartradeassociation.org.uk>

**Sustainable Construction – Practical Guidance for Planners and Developers** – Explains to those involved in the planning process the relevance of sustainable construction and gives pragmatic, practical information on measures they should consider:  
[www.sustainable-construction.org.uk](http://www.sustainable-construction.org.uk)