

## High quality design

### **POLICY CS1 - HIGH QUALITY DESIGN**

Development will only be permitted where the highest possible standards of design and site planning are achieved. Information submitted with an application should be proportionate to the scale, significance and impact of the proposal.

Development proposals will be required to demonstrate that:

1. Siting, form, scale, height, massing, detailing, colour and materials, are informed by, respect and enhance the character, distinctiveness and amenity of both the site and its context; and
2. density and overall layout is well integrated with existing adjacent development and connected to the wider network of foot, cycle and public transport links; and
3. existing features of landscape, nature conservation, heritage or amenity value and public rights of way, are safeguarded and enhanced through incorporation into development; and
4. if the proposed scheme is of a sufficient scale or significance, explain how the development contributes towards the vision and strategic objectives of the locality and (as appropriate) how account has been taken of:
  - community consultation
  - Green Infrastructure objectives
  - the South Gloucestershire Landscape Character Assessment (2005)
  - the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan
  - endorsed parish plans, town centre strategies and village design statements
  - adopted Conservation Area Appraisals, Management Plans, and
  - other design guidance and/or Area Action Plans that may be adopted as SPD from time to time;

and in order to assist in meeting climate change and health and well-being objectives, proposals will be required in particular to:

5. enhance existing or develop new public realm (and associated management & maintenance regimes) that enables people to gain access safely and conveniently, particularly to serve the needs of:
  - pedestrians and cyclists
  - children, the disabled and older people, and
  - with regard to residential and mixed use schemes, provide opportunities for social interaction and play; and

6. ensure soft landscape proposals form an integral part of the design for the site and seek to make a net contribution to tree cover in the locality (particularly in urban areas), and prioritise biodiversity objectives and local food cultivation where possible; and
7. where the scale, location and/or significance of the development proposal warrants it, embed public art within the public realm or in a location where it can be viewed from public areas; and
8. ensure the design, orientation and location of buildings, roof pitches, windows, habitable rooms, lighting and soft landscaping help to achieve energy conservation, the protection of environmental resources and assist the appropriate siting of renewable and/or low carbon energy installations and infrastructure. Schemes that can demonstrate that they will outperform statutory minima, such as the building regulations, in terms of sustainable construction, at the time of construction commencement, will be considered a primary indicator of good design. All new developments will be required to meet the building regulations current at the time of full planning or reserved matters approval. Until the 'Zero Carbon' building regulations are implemented major residential (10 or more dwellings) and mixed-use schemes will be encouraged to achieve full compliance with each Code level (currently level 3) or above, and/or Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) 'very good' or other equivalent standard; and
9. take account of personal safety, security and crime prevention; and
10. ensure sufficient space provision is designed in for the sorting and storage of recyclable waste materials in a convenient location, the composting of household waste (where practicable), and the collection of these and other waste materials and, in larger development schemes, for recycling on site; and
11. take account of the South Gloucestershire Strategic Flood Risk Assessments and provide, where appropriate, measures to manage flood risk and prepare surface water management plans.

At the detailed planning application stage, residential development of more than 10 dwellings, will be expected to demonstrate how Building for Life (BFL12) criteria (or any nationally recognised methodology that may supercede Building for Life) will be achieved.

5.3 'Urban design' is about how a place functions as much as how a place looks. High quality urban design therefore cannot be delivered through a single policy. It is the sum of all the Core Strategy policies, visions and area objectives, and supporting local strategies and guidance that will ultimately contribute to the 'quality of place'. These include the:

- Sustainable Communities Strategy
- South Gloucestershire Climate Change Strategy
- Parish plans

- Neighbourhood Plans
- Village design statements
- Conservation area SPDs
- Local List of Buildings SPD
- Biodiversity and the Planning Process SPD
- Art & Design in the Public Realm Advice Note
- South Gloucestershire Landscape Character Assessment
- Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan
- South Gloucestershire Council Play Policy & Strategy

- 5.4 The policy sets out criteria for the assessment of high quality design in new development. In particular, through Design & Access Statements, development proposals should demonstrate a clear understanding of both the site and locality's historic, archaeological, ecological and landscape context in drawing up development proposals. The policy also sets out key design priorities and a standard against the established national assessment methodology, 'Building for Life' (BfL12), that residential development proposals will be expected to achieve.
- 5.5 Information required from applicants should be proportionate to the scale, significance and impact of a proposal. For example, householder applications for residential extensions will not be expected to submit information with regard criteria 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 11.

### Visions, strategic objectives and other design guidance

- 5.6 A wide range of guidance is available to promote high quality design and distinctiveness and how it should be taken into account in assessing planning applications. For example, a major development, particularly on the edge of an existing urban area should state how it has taken account of the South Gloucestershire Landscape Character Assessment. Similarly, smaller developments in a conservation area, the Cotswold AONB, or those settlements that benefit from parish plans and village design statements, should state how they have taken account of appropriate conservation area guidance, the AONB Management Plan and parish plan objectives, respectively.

### Design priorities

- 5.7 Criteria 5 - 11 of the policy identify seven key components of design that the Council is committed to achieving, with particular emphasis on the Sustainable Community Strategy objectives to promote community health and well-being and climate change adaptation and mitigation measures. Specifically:

#### **(5) Promote shared accessible public realm & play opportunities**

- 5.8 Improving accessibility, particularly for walking and cycling and opportunities for play across the public realm, particularly through the provision of highway schemes that utilise homezone and shared space principles. The Council's Play Policy and Strategy recognises that the public realm should enable & encourage informal play opportunities,

as well as formal equipped play to take place, and recognises that children and young people have a right to be seen, heard and provided for. It will therefore be expected that this ethos with regard to play should be applied to development proposals. The Council will also seek to establish satisfactory management and maintenance regimes in perpetuity for all public areas of new development.

#### **(6) The role of landscape**

- 5.9 Soft landscape schemes should promote biodiversity and food cultivation as opposed to pure visual amenity and traditional recreational objectives. Net increases to tree cover are also required to help mitigate climate change, cool urban areas during the summer and improve air quality.

#### **(7) Public art**

- 5.10 Public Art should be viewed as an opportunity to enhance legibility, character, distinctiveness and civic pride. It should respond to the distinctive assets of the location and can form part of the landscape design, public realm and play opportunities. It can also be temporary or permanent and should seek to intrigue and delight, be robust and require minimal maintenance. The scale and location of the art should be appropriate to the site and its surrounds. The provision of public art will be a key indicator of good design (BfL criteria) and should be seen as an opportunity to involve the local community in support of Sustainable Community Strategy objectives.

#### **(8) Sustainable construction**

- 5.11 Good design is a core principle of sustainable development. Good design minimises the amount of energy and natural resources consumed during the lifetime of the development. It can also provide buildings with features such as generous space standards, good natural light and sound insulation, which can greatly improve the quality of life for people that live and work in them. Consideration should also be given to how buildings are laid out and orientated to enhance energy efficiency and the potential for the addition of renewable energy technologies (such as solar panels) and district heating networks, if not from the outset, then in the future. Major residential and mixed-use schemes that meet Code for Sustainable Homes level 3 (level 4 from 2013) or above, and/or BREEAM 'very good' or other equivalent standard, (to be secured via planning condition or planning agreement), will assist in demonstrating compliance with criteria (8) of this policy, and other policy objectives and requirements of the Local Plan as well as the BfL criteria. The Council will review its approach to sustainable construction through the Policies, Sites and Places DPD in order to ensure the highest possible standards are being applied and there is no undue burden on delivery of housing.

#### **(9) Tackling crime & the fear of crime**

- 5.12 Design of new development should assist to prevent and tackle crime and the fear of crime.

**(10) Waste reduction**

- 5.13 New development will be required to design-in sufficient space in a convenient location, (e.g. at the front of residential dwellings) for the sorting and storage of recycled materials. This will support objectives to reduce the amount of waste that goes to landfill.

**(11) Flood risk and management**

- 5.14 The Level 1 and Level 2 South Gloucestershire Strategic Flood Risk Assessments appraise the risk of flooding, including the effects of climate change, and should be used to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding and to direct development away from areas at highest risk. Where new development is exceptionally necessary, proposals will need to ensure that risk is managed and reduced through location, layout and design and through sustainable methods of dealing with surface water (also see Policy CS9 – Managing the Environment Heritage). Guidance on matters to be assessed in Flood Risk Assessments is included in the Level 2 South Gloucestershire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

**Delivery**

- 5.15 The policy will be delivered through the development management process, including the use of Concept Statements, in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement, and Design & Access Statements. The Council will also work with stakeholders as appropriate in the preparation of area design frameworks, masterplans, design codes, site specific briefs and design guidance.
- 5.16 The Council will expect new residential development of more than 10 dwellings to carry out BfL12 assessment (or any nationally recognised methodology that may supersede BfL). The Council encourages Design & Access Statements to set out how the development performs against the BfL criteria. Where a BfL green light is not achieved the Design & Access Statement should set out reasons why. Public consultation, visioning and concept statement planning exercises will be used to inform priorities to be achieved on a site-by-site basis as appropriate, particularly where 12 BfL green lights may not be achievable. Careful consideration will be given to refusing schemes that do not demonstrate at the planning application stage why the development cannot achieve BfL green lights. On small sites of less than 10 dwellings where BfL criteria are not always applicable, a similar 'small-sites' scoring methodology will be developed as part of reviewing the South Gloucestershire Design Checklist SPD. Major developments will also be encouraged to submit schemes for Design Panel review.
- 5.17 New housing built today will be around for many years to come. The Council is therefore committed to promoting the highest possible sustainable construction standards. Hanham Hall in South Gloucestershire is proposed as one of the first Zero Carbon developments in the country. The Council is therefore, aware of the technical and financial viability issues with regard to promoting high sustainability standards. But, it believes these issues will diminish over time allowing Local Authorities greater flexibility to seek higher standards, whilst not undermining delivery of new homes. The Council will therefore review the standards it applies through Local Plan documentation such

as the Policies, Sites and Places DPD and the South Gloucestershire Design Checklist SPD (August 2007) that will continue to be relevant until it is reviewed. It will also expect developers of major (multi-phased) new neighbourhoods to ensure Zero Carbon standards are achieved on phases developed post 2016. To assist with these objectives, the Council is committed to a holistic approach to improving the sustainability of new and existing communities. Via its wider corporate activities, Policies, Sites and Places DPD and review of the Design Checklist SPD or other such SPD, the Council will progress an Allowable Solutions Policy and Community Energy Fund or other equivalent mechanism that may be proposed, that will assist developers to meet and go beyond their Zero Carbon obligations.

- 5.18 Further detailed policies and guidance on urban design principles will be set out in the Policies, Sites and Places DPD and a reviewed South Gloucestershire Design Checklist with regard to the sub-division of dwellings and building on gardens.