

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document sets out guidance for developers and designers of new residential areas.

In summary, this document sets out the following key changes in approach:

When considering a residential development, the developer will now be required to take on board the six Core Principles set out in the Guide. These are: Placemaking, Design for Movement, Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, Flood Risk Assessment and Flood Management, Integrated Landscape and Open Space, and Integrated Parking Strategy.

The developer must then carry out appraisals of the site and its context, and form a conceptual strategy which can then be developed into a detailed design. Both the urban design and street layout will need to be considered as part of this. The design of a new development therefore will be informed by the local characteristics, topography and setting, and this should result in a development which has a distinctive identity.

The process should involve discussions with both the planning and roads authority at key points, starting before the detailed design is reached. A design audit which confirms how this process has been followed, and how this has influenced the resulting design, should be submitted with any application for planning permission. Once a developer has followed this process, an application for Roads Construction Consent could be submitted at the same time as the planning application. This would reduce consideration times for the two processes. If these detailed pre-application appraisals and discussions do not take place, the potential for reducing timescales will not be as great. The Council undertakes to provide resources for these pre-application discussions.

As Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) need to be provided for new housing developments, it is important that a drainage strategy is worked out for the whole development at an early stage, and should form part of the conceptual layout. The surface water drainage requirements can have a significant effect on the layout of the site.

The design and layout of new residential areas should create a network of streets, places and paths which will encourage walking and cycling. The network should be clear, easy to navigate and allow cyclists and pedestrians to feel safe.

New streets should provide an attractive environment for pedestrians by slowing vehicle traffic, normally to a maximum of 20 mph. This should be achieved, where possible, by a combination of urban form, junction and carriageway design, rather than vertical traffic calming measures.

Good public transport opportunities should be available at the initial phase of any new residential development, either by linking to existing networks or providing new routes. Pedestrian and cycle routes should be linked to public transport provision, and proposed bus routes and bus stops should be marked on the plans submitted for planning permission.

The width of the street is important. If streets are too wide this does not create a positive sense of place and community. Streets now often have to accommodate

swales and other sustainable urban drainage features as well as pedestrian footways, the carriageway and street trees. Private parking in front gardens also makes streets wider, and means that cars become over-dominant in the street. Front gardens should be reduced to discourage front garden parking. Parking spaces and garages should be located to the side of dwellings or in rear gardens or parking courts.

In order to maintain an appropriate street width, carriageways can be reduced in width, except where they are identified as a public transport route. Where streets are narrower they should widen out in appropriate places to provide visitor parking in parallel bays. The design should make it clear to drivers which areas are suitable for on-street parking.

Street trees are encouraged as part of the public street to enhance biodiversity and link habitats. They can also help to provide a human scale to the proportions of the street. Street trees can also have a traffic calming effect. Street trees planted in the verge of streets will be considered as part of the adopted street.

Open space should be provided within new residential developments and linked to existing open spaces. The use of a properly integrated green infrastructure is encouraged. It should be clear from an early stage in discussions who would be responsible for the maintenance of open spaces including both hard landscaping such as public realm areas, and green space or parkland. In smaller developments, designers should consider areas of “playable” space which provides opportunities for children’s play in landscaped spaces without traditional play equipment.

Shared surfaces, where the carriageway is shared by vehicles and pedestrians, should only be considered where the volume of traffic is low and consists mainly of residents of that street. Vehicle speeds in shared surface roads should not exceed 10 mph and the road layout and design should encourage this. Street materials, if they are not asphalt, should be discussed at an early stage.

The guidance in the document has taken into account the needs of people using the street who have visual impairment or restrictions on mobility.

