



Local Development Framework
Supplementary Planning Document
New Residential Development
Adopted June 2011



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1 Introduction

1.0.1 One of the Government's key objectives is that design is important in the delivery of sustainable development and that development should be appropriate to its context and improve the character and quality of an area (PPS1). PPS1 also states that "*Design which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area should not be accepted*". The quality of design of new developments also affects their success and can have an important role in improving the built environment and ensuring development has due regard to existing areas.

1.0.2 The aim of this Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is to set out the expectations of the Council in relation to new residential development. This guidance provides information for all those involved in the development process about what should be considered when designing housing schemes that are to be submitted for planning approval.

1.0.3 This SPD does not have the same status as the development plan, but it is an important material consideration in planning decisions. This SPD forms part of the St.Helens Local Development Framework that will eventually supersede the Unitary Development Plan (UDP).

1.0.4 The key objectives of this SPD are:

- To provide clear and consistent guidance on new housing developments
- To assist in the determination of planning applications for new housing developments.
- To provide guidance on good design principles to allow high quality housing that is well designed and built to a high standard.
- To ensure developments are sympathetic and appropriate to their context.
- To improve the quality of the built environment in the Borough.
- To ensure developments create an environment that it is safe for all users and in which people are encouraged to walk, cycle, use public transport and feel safe doing so.

2 Policy Context

2.1 National Policy

2.1.1 Good design ensures attractive usable, durable and adaptable places and is a key element in achieving sustainable development. Good design is indivisible from good planning. Government guidance contained in Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1) Delivering Sustainable Development (2005) recognises the importance of well-designed and good quality developments. It sets out national planning policies on the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system. Paragraph 33 of PPS 1 states that “Good design ensures attractive usable, durable and adaptable places and is a key element in achieving sustainable development. Good design is indivisible from good planning”.

2.1.2 Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) Housing (2010), sets out the Government’s objectives to increase the choice of high quality houses (both affordable and market housing), widen the opportunity for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive, mixed communities. In 2010, PPS3 has been amended so that the definition of brownfield land / previously developed land now excludes private residential gardens. The revision states, "There is no presumption that land that is previously-developed is necessarily suitable for housing development nor that the whole of the curtilage should be developed". There is no longer a national minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare.

2.1.3 By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System – Towards Better Practice (2000) was a companion document for Planning Policy Guidance 1 – General Policy and Principles (now superseded and referred to in PPS1). It outlines the Government’s commitment to design. The purpose of the guide is to inform on the value of good design and it contains a seven-point plan on the objectives of good design.

2.1.4 Better Places to Live – By Design (2001) is a companion guide to PPS 3. The guide should be read in conjunction with PPS 3, as it does not set policy. It however draws together the principles of good urban design as they relate to the residential environment.

2.1.5 Building for Life (2008) is the national standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods. It promotes design excellence and celebrates best practice in the house building industry. The 20 Building for Life criteria embody a vision of functional, attractive and sustainable housing. New housing developments are scored against the criteria to assess the quality of their design.

2.2 Regional Policy

2.2.1 This SPD will take into account the North West Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), which provides a framework for the physical development of the region. It constitutes part of the Development Plan for the Borough.

2.2.2 The RSS details relevant policy to be considered within this SPD. Notably with regards to:

- DP1 Spatial Principles
- DP2 Promote Sustainable Communities

2.3 Local Policy

2.3.1 For the purpose of this SPD, policies referred to will be from the saved version of the St.Helens Unitary Development Plan (UDP, 1998), until the Core Strategy of the Local Development Framework is adopted.

Unitary Development Plan

2.3.2 St.Helens Unitary Development Plan (UDP) contains a number of primary strategic aims that are relevant to the SPD. These include:

- To secure urban regeneration.
- To balance the needs of new development and protection of the environment.
- To improve the quality of the environment to make St Helens a more attractive and safer place in which to live, work, play, invest and visit.
- To take account of the need of all sectors of the community in the provision of housing, employment, transport, recreation facilities and infrastructure.
- To conserve resources and work towards the principles of sustainable development.

2.3.3 In addition UDP Policy GEN 1 (Primacy of the Development Plan), expects that policies and proposals maintain and enhance the character and appearance of St.Helens through appropriate design.

2.3.4 UDP Policy GEN 2 (Good Environments) encourages the establishment of pleasant and safe conditions, the safeguarding of existing good environments and consider the uniqueness of each proposal.

2.3.5 UDP Policy GEN 4 (Security and Crime Prevention) ensures that new built development considers natural surveillance and that layouts consider the impact on crime.

2.3.6 UDP Policy GEN 5 (Design and Layout of New Housing) expects that new housing development prioritises pedestrian, cyclists and buses and off-street parking whilst ensuring that the scale and design is appropriate for the area.

2.3.7 UDP Policy GEN 6 (Incidental Open Space Provision) sets out the amount of open space that is required for new development whether on site or close by.

2.3.8 UDP Policy GEN 9 (Parking and Servicing) requires development to make suitable in curtilage provision for car parking based on public transport access.

2.3.9 UDP Policy GEN 14 (Backland and Tandem Development) sets out all the criteria which backland and tandem development should comply with.

2.3.10 The Design Guidance SPD (Adopted October 2007) is the overarching design document for the Borough. It provides detailed advice on the design and layout of new developments as well as outlining the process that needs to be followed to achieve these objectives.

2.3.11 The Design and Crime SPD (Adopted October 2009) provides guidance on the design principles the Council wishes to see demonstrated in new developments for the prevention of crime.

2.3.12 The Trees and Development SPD (Adopted June 2008) provides guidance for new development to help retain good quality trees and secure new tree planting.

2.3.13 The Residential Character Areas SPD (Adopted June 2010) sets out the design expectations of the Council in relation to development in areas of special residential character.

2.3.14 The Ensuring a Choice for Travel SPD (Adopted June 2010) provides consistent guidance to developers on access and transport requirements for new development.

2.3.15 The Affordable Housing SPD (Adopted January 2010) sets out the expectations of the Council in relation to affordable housing provision on development sites, to ensure that prospective developers are aware of the requirements that need to be met when submitting a planning application for residential development.

2.3.16 The Householder Development SPD (adopted June 2011) provides guidance on new householder developments.

2.3.17 The Biodiversity SPD (adopted June 2011) provides clear and consistent guidance on the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in new development.

2.3.18 The Landscape Character Assessment for St.Helens (2006) provides a comprehensive character assessment of the Borough. It recognises the importance of maintaining and enhancing different areas, giving advice on both positive and negative features as well as recommendations for protection and enhancement of the landscape. It assesses the contribution of trees and woodland to the landscape and identifies opportunities for enhancing, restoration and the creation of new landscapes through tree and woodland planting. The document is used to inform planning and development proposals.

2.3.19 The content of this SPD needs to be considered alongside any others adopted by the Council.

The Core Strategy

2.3.20 When the Core Strategy is adopted, this will replace part of the UDP within the Borough as the Development Plan. At this point any further reference for the SPD will be made to the Core Strategy upon adoption.

2.3.21 The applicable policies in the submission version of the Core Strategy are as follows:

- Policy CP1 'Ensuring Quality Development in St.Helens'
- Policy CP2 'Creating an Accessible St.Helens'
- Policy CH1 'Meeting St.Helens' Housing Requirements'
- Policy CH2 'Meeting St.Helens' Housing Needs'

2.4 Links to Other Guidelines

2.4.1 This SPD takes into account the requirements of the Human Rights Act (1998), in that all design principles will comply with the Articles of the Convention and Protocols of this Act, unless there is unlawful justification not to.

2.4.2 The guidelines set out in The Disability Discrimination Acts (1995 and 2005) provides advice on the need to ensure access for disabled people in all development proposals. The Merseyside Code of Practice on Access and Mobility is an advisory document that offers guidance on best practice in designing environments not only to meet the needs of disabled people but also those who may otherwise be restricted by the design of buildings, structures, highways or transportation. The principles in this SPD will comply with these requirements.

2.4.3 For information on resources and further reading see pages 30 and 31.

3 Key Residential Development Design Objectives

3.1 Building for Life

3.1.1 Building for Life (BfL) is a method for measuring the design quality of residential developments. It sets the national standard for residential design with its Silver Standard being awarded to schemes, which score 14/20 or 15/20 against its criteria and Gold Standard, which score 16/20, or above. The scheme was developed by The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and the Home Builders Federation. It involves assessing the quality of schemes by asking 20 questions, which cover four subject areas:

- Environment & Community.
- Character.
- Streets, Parking & Pedestrianisation.
- Design & Construction.

3.1.2 This SPD complements Building for Life and the intention is that the quality of design will meet the BfL design standards. At the start of each chapter, the BfL criteria, which relates to the contents of the chapter is outlined. The 20 questions to be used for assessing the quality of schemes and the Council's Building for Life Procedure Guide is located in appendix 1

3.1.3 A Development Team Approach (DTA) is offered to development professionals to guide them through the development regulatory regimes. This aims to provide a co-ordinated response to pre planning application enquiries.

3.1.4 At pre planning application stage, an Initial Building for Life Appraisal will be undertaken on all major applications (10 dwellings or above) and an Initial Building for Life Appraisal Report will be issued to identify key issues. On receipt of a planning application, a detailed appraisal will be undertaken and a report issued outlining concerns. Developers are advised to use the BfL model in compiling Design and Access Statements in order to ensure they contain sufficient information to allow a full appraisal of the proposals.

3.1.5 Policy CP1 in the submission version of the Core Strategy will require proposals to achieve at least a rating of good on the BfL criteria. This equates to a score of 14/20 or above.

3.2 Lifetime Homes

3.2.1 The Lifetime Homes group was originally formed because of concerns about how inaccessible and inconvenient many homes were for large sections of the population. The principles of Lifetime Homes have supported the growing demand for choice, flexibility and independence among disabled people of all ages, as well as promoting high quality and thoughtful housing design for the general population.

3.2.2 Lifetime Homes incorporates 16 Design Criteria to ensure homes are more flexible and inclusive to support the changing needs of individuals and families at different stages of life. They can be universally applied to new homes at minimal cost. Each design feature adds to the comfort

and convenience of the home and supports the changing needs of individuals and families at different stages of life. The criteria is good practice and should be taken into account when designing new residential developments. The 16 Design Criteria is located in appendix 2.

Code for Sustainable Homes

3.2.3 The Code for Sustainable Homes is an environmental assessment method for rating and certifying the performance of new homes. It is a national standard for use in the design and construction of new homes with a view to encouraging continuous improvement in sustainable home building.

3.2.4 The Code for Sustainable Homes covers nine categories of sustainable design:

- Energy and CO2 Emissions
- Water
- Materials
- Surface Water Run-off
- Waste
- Pollution
- Health and Well-being
- Management
- Ecology

3.2.5 Each issue is a source of environmental impact, which can be assessed against a performance target and awarded one or more credits. Performance targets are more demanding than the minimum standard needed to satisfy Building Regulations or other legislation. They represent good or best practice, are technically feasible, and can be delivered by the building industry.

3.2.6 Policy CP1 in the submission version of the Core Strategy will require proposals to achieve at least the level of Code for Sustainable Homes required by Building Regulations for residential development.

4 Context and Character

4.1 Building for Life

Building For Life - Relevant Questions – 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15.

4.1.1 Building For Life – advises that the design of individual homes and entire neighbourhoods should be specific to their context, which is based on an understanding of the local area. Developers are advised to refer to the Councils Supplementary Planning Document – Residential Character Areas 2010. Good design should offer solutions to live more efficiently, make the best use of land, provide value and create successful places to live. New residential development should reinforce local distinctiveness and recognise the individual character of the existing area.

4.1.2 Development should respond to the existing characteristics and local vernacular in the area such as listed buildings, conservation areas, protected trees, local landmarks and natural environments to contribute towards the neighbourhood's sense of identity. New development does not need to replicate the surrounding architecture but can instead respond to the scale, materials or aspects of the site. Landscaping can also contribute to a sense of place.

4.1.3 Successful neighbourhoods should be easy to understand for residents and visitors. There should be a clear hierarchy of streets, landmarks and focal points, which should help orientation and navigation. Successful layouts should be characterised by interconnected well-defined routes. Successful neighbourhoods are easy to navigate, feel safe and encourage walking or cycling.

4.2 The Site and Surroundings

4.2.1 New development should contribute positively to the character of its context. Unsympathetic development undermines the character of the entire street. Site context relates to plot sizes, urban grain, building lines, spacing and site layout. The Councils Supplementary Planning Document – Design Guidance 2007 offers specific advice on requirements for site assessments. The Design and Access Statement should be used by developers to demonstrate their design principles. There must be clear links between the site appraisal and the design proposals.

4.2.2 New development, regardless of its scale, should ensure it has a strong and memorable character. This is more than just building places that are pleasing to the eye but about making places that work and where people want to live. This is achieved by ensuring that the design is based on an analysis of the site and its surroundings including links to existing facilities and movement networks.

4.2.3 New developments need to be related to the general pattern of building heights in the area, though this need not preclude a degree of variety. Consideration must be given to the creation of (or preservation) of distinctive skylines. A building should only stand out from the background of buildings if it contributes positively to views and vistas as a landmark.

4.2.4 Views and vistas can be used to create and assist with legibility. They should focus on important routes, memorable buildings and landscape features. Bespoke design or street furniture can also contribute to distinctiveness and character.

4.2.5 Roads should be designed to fit into the townscape and ensure a high quality environment for all users, rather than the buildings designed to fit in and around the roads. Good safe access for pedestrians, cyclist and public transport is essential. Streets should be designed as public spaces, taking into account engineering considerations, but being based on their function than purely the level of traffic.

4.2.6 Roads should be constructed to adoptable standards, which are contained in the St.Helens Street Design Guide – Highways for Adoption.

4.2.7 The extent of private ownership needs to be clearly demarcated, through the use of walls, fences, railings, gates, trees and hedges. Detailed design should be used to indicate whether spaces are public or private.

4.3 Character/Local Distinctiveness

4.3.1 The positive features, which exist in an area, contribute to its special character and sense of identity. These features can include listed buildings, conservation areas, protected trees and architectural style and detailing. Development that responds sensitively to its setting can create a sense of place.

4.3.2 The layout of arrangement of the development blocks, streets, buildings, open space and landscape that make up the development area. A good design will look at the inter-relationship of all these elements, rather than each particular characteristic in isolation, and will make a 'place' that is distinctive, has its own character and is easily identifiable.

4.3.3 At street corners there is a need for special design consideration. Standard off-the-shelf layouts are insufficient. Corner sites are visually prominent; they have dual frontages, where both will need to be addressed with equal importance. Their landmark potential should be recognised and exploited for the benefit of the local area.

4.3.4 Local building forms and details contribute to local distinctiveness. This need not restrict the scope of the designer. Standard solutions are rarely acceptable. Local building forms include distinct housing types, boundary treatments, building lines, roof slopes, window types and gardens. Responding to building forms should only be at the appropriate scale, and inflating traditional forms should be avoided.

4.3.5 Consideration needs to be given to the scale, texture and colour of building materials. Every element of the street scene contributes to the identity of a place, including lighting, railings, paving and street furniture. They should be approached in a comprehensive manner from the start of the design process and not in a piecemeal way. Developers are advised to refer to Supplementary Planning Document – Residential Character Areas to inform design within key areas of the Borough.

5 Accessibility and Parking

5.1 Building for Life

Building for Life - Relevant Questions – 4,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,18.

5.1.1 The Building for Life standard states that streets and parking facilities should be designed to improve the usability and feel of an area but not to dominate it.

5.2 Access (including garaging and parking)

5.2.1 Where possible sustainable travel alternatives such as walking, cycling and public transport are encouraged to help reduce the need to travel by private cars. However it is acknowledged that there will be a need to accommodate a level of private car ownership in residential development. To help support sustainable travel good access for pedestrians and cyclist, and to public transport, must be incorporated into the design of all housing developments. Further guidance on this is provided within the 'Ensuring a Choice of Travel' SPD.

5.2.2 Car parking should be integrated into the overall layout and design of new housing development making sure that the fronts of properties are not dominated by cars, and that there is a good relationship between houses and the street. Car parking needs to be usable, safe and secure. In order to accommodate the future rise of electric vehicles all residential garages need to have the provision of an electric supply to them.

5.2.3 Courtyard shared parking should be provided within small intimate spaces rather than large uniform parking areas. Good surveillance and easy access to dwellings are the most important design criteria. The installation of electric car charging points should be considered within shared parking areas. At the least adequate provision must be made to enable the installation of electric car charge points in future shared parking areas if and when required.

5.2.4 On-plot parking should be generally accessed from the front with garaging and parking spaces located to the side or rear of a dwelling. This maintains good surveillance from properties and avoids the dominance of vehicles in the street frontage.

5.2.5 The level of parking (including cycle parking) required will depend on the following:

- The type of development (Houses, Flats, Sheltered Accommodation).
- The location of the development (Town Centre or elsewhere).

5.2.6 Appendix 3 contains parking requirements for residential developments. Further advice on the size and design of parking spaces and areas can be found in the Supplementary Planning Document 'Ensuring a Choice of Travel'.

5.3 Access Routes

5.3.1 Streets and footpaths should be connected to existing routes and neighbourhoods. A well-designed development should be easy to get to and move through, making the most of existing or proposed facilities in the area. This needs roads, footpaths and public spaces, which link into well-used routes. Developments should be planned in a way that makes sure buildings overlook all public spaces, roads and footpaths to increase surveillance.

5.3.2 Further advice on street design principles is available in St.Helens Street Design Guide – Highways for Adoption.

5.3.3 Pedestrians and cyclists need routes that are safe, direct, accessible and free from barriers. Places with low speed limits are safer and can be achieved through the careful treatment of surfaces, junctions and crossings. In a low-speed and low-traffic environment the use of shared surface environments for all road users can be considered.

5.4 General Accessibility

5.4.1 Access into a dwelling is a planning consideration and the Lifetime Homes Design Criteria, which is a Key Residential Development Design Objective, provides clear advice on design factors, which improve general accessibility.

5.4.2 The Lifetime Homes Design Criteria can be viewed in Appendix 2.

5.5 Service Access

5.5.1 Consideration needs to be given to the long-term operation of the finished development and how user friendly it will be. The need to safely accommodate the manoeuvring and turning requirements of larger vehicles, including refuse collection, deliveries and emergency vehicles, should be taken into account at an early stage. Advice on servicing requirements is contained in St.Helens Street Design Guide – Highways for Adoption.

6 Layout

6.1 Building for Life

Building for Life - Relevant Questions – 2,3,9,10,11,13,15,16.

6.1.1 The Building for Life standard states that the building layout should be the priority in any new housing development. Buildings of the appropriate size, proportion, shape and layout will help create well-defined streets and spaces, which are attractive, user-friendly, and improve residents' quality of life.

6.2 Separation for Light, Privacy and Flexible Living.

6.2.1 The following guidelines are the minimum distance that should be left between buildings. They are intended to prevent an unacceptable amount of overlooking, overshadowing, disturbance and loss of outlook and to provide minimum levels of residential amenity. Residential amenity includes issues such as privacy, garden space, outlook, light, and disturbance.

6.2.2 The guidelines should be followed, but it is important to consider the design of the development, and its relationship to the character of the surrounding area. If the proposed development does not exactly meet the recommended distances, it may be acceptable if the design and access statement demonstrates that the development is high quality suitable for its location whilst not having a significantly detrimental impact on residential amenity.

6.3 Recommended Separation Distances

From	To	Minimum Distance
First floor habitable room window (see definition below)	A blank wall or a non-habitable room window (see definition below)	12.5m
First floor habitable room window (see definition below)	Another habitable room window (see definition below)	23m – Private Garden Side 18m – Public Street Side.

6.3.1 A **habitable room** window is a main window to a room that people are in for long periods such as living rooms and bedrooms.

6.3.2 A **non-habitable room** window is a window to a landing, hallway, bathroom or other room that people do not normally occupy for long periods and where obscure glass may be used.

6.3.3 These distances relate to dormer bungalows and standard two storey buildings on a level site. If the ground levels vary, or the proposal will have more than two storeys, the recommended separation distances will increase as follows.

6.3.4 The distance from a habitable room window located above first floor level to another habitable room window facing should be increased by 5 metres:

- For each extra storey with overlooking main windows;
Or
- For every 3 metre change in ground levels.

6.4 Garden and Amenity Areas

6.4.1 The minimum rear garden depth for houses will generally be 10m unless the particular merits of the case, in terms of the character of the setting, can be proved to warrant a reduction in this requirement. The Residential Character SPD provides detailed information on context and special character. This is to ensure a good level of amenity space as well as sufficient separation for light, privacy and flexible living. The minimum rear garden depth should be increased in the case of developments, which have habitable room windows located above first floor level and will be judged on a case-by-case basis.

6.4.2 Gardens for blocks of flats should normally provide at least 20m² for each flat in the block. Bin stores and clothes-drying areas should not be included in this space. Strips of land to the side and front required for streetscene and amenity reasons will not be counted as part of the garden area.

6.5 Landscaping and Trees

6.5.1 The design of hard and soft landscape areas must be considered at an early stage and form an integral part of any development. Landscape planting can soften the appearance of structures and hard surfaces and create a sense of place. Street trees can make a particularly important contribution.

6.5.2 The lack of a detailed landscaping scheme can undermine the quality of a development so it is expected that such a scheme will be submitted as part of any full planning application.

6.5.3 Existing open spaces, vegetation, (e.g. trees and hedgerows) and other topographical features should be protected and retained and used to inform the landscaping scheme where appropriate. Landscape Character Assessments and Residential Character Areas should be used to determine the species and type of landscaping most appropriate for the site, to remain in keeping with the surrounding landscape character of the area. Native species of local provenance should be used in the design where feasible. These can also have a positive impact on local biodiversity of the site.

6.5.4 Boundary treatments must respect and respond to the character of the surrounding area in terms of their height, type and materials used. Where the boundary of a dwelling is adjacent to a highway or public space, hard boundary treatments should not normally exceed 1m in height or should be of high quality.

6.5.5 Permeable surfaces should be used where possible and opportunities should be taken to replace impermeable surfaces with permeable ones to reduce rates of surface water run-off.

6.5.6 Development should be designed to ensure trees flourish and mature. All design elements (including buildings, roads, services, above and below security equipment, changes in levels and construction of hard landscape) should be arranged to ensure a good spatial relationship between development and trees to be retained, as well as those to be planted.

6.5.7 Further information with regard to landscaping, boundary treatments and trees can be found in the Biodiversity SPD, Trees and Development SPD and the Design and Crime SPD.

6.6 Maintenance of Communal Areas / Public Realm.

6.6.1 A key issue of the design, implementation and management of communal areas / public realm is that they will evolve over time. Materials will be subject to wear and tear through their everyday use, plants establish and grow, and wildlife will colonise the site. The design should therefore be robust to minimise future management and proposals will be required to demonstrate how the different elements will be maintained and allowed to develop.

6.6.2 A detailed management plan and maintenance programme for the communal areas / public realm must be submitted as part of all detailed planning applications and detail management responsibilities, in relation to flat developments in particular and should be secured by either a S106 agreement or condition.

6.7 Public Open Space

6.7.1 New and existing public open spaces should help to shape the layout of the site and form an integral part of it. Dwellings should relate well to open space in terms of their frontage and scale, and provide an outlook for as many dwellings as possible.

6.7.2 The design of all outdoor spaces should take into account the following:

- Orientation to achieve maximum sunlight;
- Planting location and type for durability, ease of maintenance, and aesthetic quality;
- Amenity of nearby dwellings, e.g. privacy, noise;
- Biodiversity;
- Measures to control access where appropriate;
- Safety, e.g. natural surveillance, lighting and any hazardous features;
- Potential for Sustainable Drainage Systems.

6.7.3 The above will assist in improving Green Infrastructure in St Helens. Further advice on open space provision is contained in the Design Guidance SPD.

6.7.4 The provision of open space for new housing developments must be on-site in the first instance on sites of 40 dwellings or more in accordance with Policy GEN 6 of the St Helens Unitary Development Plan. Only in exceptional circumstances, where this would be impractical through reasons of size of site configuration, would off-site provision in the immediate locality be considered.

Biodiversity

6.7.5 New residential development sites should be suitably buffered from sites that are important for wildlife, such as Local Nature Reserves and River Corridors. Further information with regard to Biodiversity can be found in the Biodiversity SPD.

6.8 Housing Mix

6.8.1 New residential developments are required to provide more variety in the mix of property sizes, types, tenures and affordability in new developments, in accordance with the needs of the area. These needs are outlined in the Housing Market & Needs Assessment (2006) and the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2011), which was prepared in partnership with Halton and Warrington Borough Councils. Details on the requirement for affordable housing are contained in the Affordable Housing SPD.

6.8.2 The provision of a mix of housing creates balanced and successful residential environments by:

- Creating a better balance of demand for local services;
- Allowing people to upsize and downsize without leaving the community;
- Creating visual diversity of building forms and scales; and
- Improve natural surveillance (a variety of tenures increases the likelihood of some residents being at home during the daytime).

6.8.3 Affordable units should be 'pepper potted' throughout the site rather than being concentrated in a particular part of the site. The affordable housing units should integrate fully with the general market housing on a site in terms of style and quality and should be in keeping with the character of the area. This should therefore include a consistency of style, detailing and building materials. The Council will not normally accept affordable housing, which, either by its design or siting, is clearly distinct from the general market housing.

6.9 Community Safety and Crime Prevention

6.9.1 It is important that applicants demonstrate how public safety and security have been considered in the design of new residential developments. The design principles that the Council wishes to see demonstrated in developments for the prevention of crime are contained in the Design and Crime Supplementary Planning Document.

6.10 Waste Storage

6.10.1 Provision should be made for external storage of waste. Storage areas should be naturally ventilated, secure and easily accessible by residents and for waste collection vehicles.

6.10.2 Waste collection vehicles are required to get within 25 metres of any storage point. Storage on the frontage will therefore often be required, either within the footprint of the dwelling or in the front garden. Bin storage to the front of dwellings needs to be designed as to ensure that it is not to the detriment of residential amenity or the quality of the public realm given the importance of attractive frontages.

6.10.3 For flats, communal bin storage located within the envelope of the building should be used for flats. Internal access should be provided for residents and external access for refuse collectors. Freestanding bin stores will not normally be acceptable because of their detrimental impact upon the public realm.

7 Energy and Environment

7.1 Building for Life

Building For Life - Relevant Questions - 4, 5, 18, 19, 20.

7.1.1 Building For Life criteria clearly recognises the potential good design has in contributing to the Government's ambitions to mitigate the impacts of development on climate change. The location of new developments in relation to key services such as schools, leisure uses, shops, health centres and community facilities will contribute to the scheme's overall sustainability. Developments, which are well serviced by public transport networks, will also benefit from increased sustainability by reducing the number of car journeys.

7.1.2 There are a number of techniques which house builders can employ to reduce the environmental impact of a scheme, these include renewable energy sources, promoting recycling, using sustainable urban drainage systems, modern construction methods, reducing construction waste, the use of previously developed land and increasing biodiversity.

7.2 Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency

7.2.1 The design of buildings can have a direct effect on their energy consumption. The aim should be to design buildings, which stay cool in the summer and warm in the winter. The energy of the sun can be harnessed via solar gain to contribute towards heating and light a building and a good ventilation system can in turn contribute towards cooling a building. There are a number of ways to reduce energy demand, which include **renewable energy installations, passive solar gain/design, taking account of the microclimate, insulation and SuDS**. The Council welcomes application where these techniques are considered and utilised in order to maximise energy efficiency.

7.2.2 The Council encourages the use of **renewable energy installations**, such as solar water heating, wind turbines, photovoltaic and biomass heating, in the design of new residential housing. Permission will be granted for the development of renewable energy installations where there is no unacceptable impact on the character of the area, which would not outweigh their community/environmental benefits.

7.2.3 The orientation of a building has a significant impact on the amount of **passive solar gain** available. The use of space and glazed areas within a building can also contribute to energy efficiency. **Passive solar design** allows for better daylight, improves solar gains and provides natural ventilation.

7.2.4 The local **microclimate** can help to shelter buildings from inclement weather and help reduce loss of heat from the building envelope. Long uninterrupted road passages should be avoided. Shelter from cold and prevailing winds can be provided by vegetation. Buildings can also be arranged in an irregular pattern to avoid channelling the wind.

7.2.5 In order to maximise energy efficiency and reduce heat loss from the building envelope high levels of **insulation** can be applied to the roof, walls and floors. Insulation can also be improved through the joints of units to increase thermal massing. Heat loss from window can be reduced by the use of gas-filled glazing, however the use of such units may not be appropriate in the historic environment such as listed buildings and conservation areas.

7.2.6 The use of alternative fuels vehicles for future users of the development should be considered. With the predicted rise in the use of electric vehicles in the future provision should be made for the installation of electric charging points. It is recommended that charging points be installed for all properties. However, at the very least electric power supply to all garages and shared parking areas needs to be provided to accommodate any future need for charging points to be installed.

7.2.7 It is widely recognised that **Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS)** are an important contributor to effective water management. Whilst primarily serving to manage flood risk, SUDS use a wide range of techniques to manage the quantity of surface water run-off from development as close to the source as possible and can help reduce pollution and maintain water resources. Furthermore, well-designed SUDS can contribute to quality neighbourhoods, providing opportunities for wildlife to thrive, and enhancing the leisure, play and educational offer within our public open spaces. All development should include appropriate sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) for the disposal of surface water, in order to avoid any increase in flood risk or adverse impact on water quality.

7.2.8 The **Code for Sustainable Homes** was introduced by the Government in April 2007 and replaces BREEAM's (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method). This method measures the sustainability of homes across various categories - water efficiency, surface water management, site waste management, household waste management, and the use of materials. However there are now minimum standards that must be met in the areas of water, energy, materials and surface water management. The Council welcomes applications, which aim to achieve a code above the statutory building control minima.

8 Different Development Types

8.1 Backland Development

Building for Life – Relevant Questions - 6, 7, 8, 9, 10,12, 14, 17.

8.1.1 Backland Development is defined as development, which is located to the rear of an existing property and is usually land that has previously been used as garden. Backland Development normally applies to small scale housing of one or two plots. These sites tend to be land locked and as such not visible from public vantage points. However not all backland sites are enclosed and occasionally will have a highway frontage.

8.1.2 In consideration of applications for backland development, the issues to consider are whether the form and location of the proposed development would have an adverse effect upon the character, form or appearance of the area, whether the plot, having regard to the nature, and location of surrounding development, is of adequate size to ensure reasonable standards of privacy and amenity to proposed and existing neighbours and whether the proposed development access would have an adverse effect upon the existing access/turning/parking facilities currently enjoyed by existing neighbouring properties. The Council will normally only grant planning permission for development schemes, which involve backland or rear garden sites where all relevant issues have been considered and resolved. Developers are advised to refer to the Councils Supplementary Planning Document – Residential Character Areas 2010.

- Any proposed development on backland sites should have regard to the character of the surrounding area in terms of layout, scale and form of housing. Regard should also be given to the loss of any landscaping and habitats, which make a positive contribution to the character and ecology of the area. Further information with regard to landscaping, boundary treatments and trees can be found in the Biodiversity SPD, Trees and Development SPD and the Design and Crime SPD.
- Design should be informed by the immediately surrounding buildings and the scale and massing of new dwellings should reflect and respond to those around them. Consideration should be given to the height of a building as well as its massing.
- New buildings should reflect and enhance the local style and identity of the local area. Materials used for roofing and walls should match or respond to adjacent dwellings, as should materials and colours for doors and window frames.
- Sufficient garden depth and area should be retained by existing dwellings commensurate with their size.
- Developments shall conform to the Councils current standards for lighting and privacy contained in section 6 of this document.
- Consideration must be given to screening the boundaries of a new development for privacy reasons and to reduce noise and disturbance. Brick walls have better noise attenuation qualities than fences or hedges and will be most appropriate where possible sources of noise would be close to an existing house or the garden area immediately outside it.

- Each backland plot should have its own access for motor vehicles. The size of the proposed development will determine the access arrangements, which will have to be provided. In some circumstances this may be in the form of a private drive, which will depend upon the number of new properties, which will be built. Where appropriate, turning heads to enable the manoeuvring of vehicles on the site will be necessary.
- Whilst an access may be acceptable on the grounds of flow, safety and other traffic criteria it may be refused on grounds of adverse impact on the neighbouring property, e.g. too close, too noisy through serving a number of houses. To prevent disturbance to properties at the front of backland sites, we recommend the following minimum distances between access roads and the existing properties.
- Developments should ensure safe vehicular and pedestrian access to the site, which should make adequate provision for normal servicing requirements, such as refuse collections, deliveries, etc.

Distances between access road and properties

Access road next to	Site with 5 homes or less	Site with 6 or more homes
A habitable room window (eg bedroom)	4 metres	6 metres
A non-habitable room window (eg bathroom)	3 metres	4 metres

8.2 Tandem Development

8.2.1 Tandem Development usually refers to development on land directly behind an existing building and again is usually land that has been previously been used as gardens, or is partially enclosed by gardens. Tandem development results in one or more dwellings being served by a single driveway.

8.2.2 Such proposals frequently cause problems such as overlooking, overshadowing of neighbouring gardens, noise (including from car movements), loss of amenity and adverse impact on local character. As this type of development will essentially result in a dwelling within the rear garden of an existing dwelling will often result in a site, which is cramped and overdeveloped. The development will also result in a poor outlook for the occupants of the new dwelling.

8.2.3 The Council will normally resist such proposals and will only allow such developments in exceptional circumstances, where all issues relating to backland development are considered and satisfactorily addressed.

8.3 Infill Development

8.3.1 Infill Development usually occurs where there is development on sites located between existing property frontages, the Council will only grant planning permission for infill developments where there is no adverse impact upon the street scene, the character of the surrounding area and the amenity for existing neighbouring properties.

- The detailed design, materials and proportions of the neighbouring properties should be carefully considered when the elevational details of the new buildings are considered. The resulting plot sizes and frontages should be sympathetic to the character of the area as well as being satisfactorily related to each other and the street scene.
- The building alignment, design and massing of the proposed buildings should be determined by the existing neighbouring properties. The height and scale of the neighbouring properties must be respected, and any transition in levels must be achieved within the development site itself, thus only in wider sites will higher buildings be considered.
- In considering the height of buildings the eaves height will be a critical measure when judging a proposed new development in relation to its neighbours. This should be illustrated by street scene plans, which should accompany any application for planning permission.
- Boundary treatments along the frontage should closely match that prevailing in the street scene, particularly where there are continuous hedges. Open frontages will not be permitted in streets where enclosed front boundaries prevail and vice versa.
- Developments shall conform to the Council's current standards for lighting and privacy contained in chapter 6 of this document.
- Developments shall conform to the Council's current standards for parking provision contained in Supplementary Planning Document, Ensuring a Choice of Travel.
- Developers are advised to refer to the Council's Supplementary Planning Document – Design Guidance 2007.

8.4 Conversion of existing buildings into apartments

8.4.1 Conversion of existing buildings into apartments can contribute to the improvement and maintenance of larger dwellings in the older housing stock. However, they can also raise privacy issues, parking problems, character of an area and can have an adverse effect on residential amenity and character of an area.

- Developments should not have a detrimental impact upon the character of an area; any conversions involving external alterations should respect the form, scale and materials of the original dwelling and the visual character of the area in which it is located.
- In the case of statutory and locally listed buildings, extra care must be taken to ensure any addition or alterations are in keeping with its special character. Developers are advised to refer to the Council's Supplementary Planning Document – St. Helens Local List.
- Some listed and locally important buildings may be suitable for conversion, however in some cases internal alteration will adversely affect its special historic and architectural interest, in these cases conversions will not be permitted.
- Development for the conversion of properties within designated Conversation Areas should preserve and enhance the area's special architectural and historical characteristics.

- Where appropriate the provision of adequate noise attenuation measures to reduce the transmission of sound between floors, ceilings and adjoining rooms and dwellings should be included in the design of conversion schemes.
- Developments will be expected to provide amenity space for occupants. The Council will require applicants to illustrate landscaping proposals, including future management regimes, which should reflect and enhance the general landscape character of the property and locality. Developers are advised to refer to Supplementary Planning Document – Trees and Development 2008, which provides information about the standards and level of information required by the Council in relation to tree protection and landscaping new developments.
- Any proposals to convert existing buildings should be accompanied by a management plan which details how the property will be maintained (which should include amenity spaces, landscaping, external appearance of the building etc) to ensure that the conversion does not result in any detrimental impact upon the character of the area.
- Developments shall conform to the Council's current standards for parking provision contained in Supplementary Planning Document, Ensuring a Choice of Travel. However any conversion should ensure that parking does not dominate, and no more than 1/3 of the front curtilage should be allocated for on site parking
- Landscaping must respect the character of the area and residential amenity for neighbouring residents whilst providing amenity space consistent with requirements for new-build flat developments. Developers are advised to refer to Supplementary Planning Document – Trees and Development 2008, which provides information about the standards and level of information required by the Council in relation to tree protection and landscaping new developments.
- The conversion of existing buildings into apartments may have implications for legally protected species such as bats. The Council will exercise their duty to protect such species and where appropriate may require an ecological appraisal to be submitted as part of any planning application. If mitigation measures are required, appropriate conditions will be attached to planning permissions. Failure to provide adequate supporting information or surveys may result in the refusal of a planning application.

Bibliography

St Helens Unitary Development Plan Policy GEN 5 – Design and Layout of New Housing.

In the case of estate developments, the Council will expect developers to make best use of existing site characteristics (climatic and otherwise), and should

- i. provide for pedestrian priority;
- ii. limit traffic speeds;
- iii. accommodate cyclists and buses;
- iv. wherever appropriate in relation to site conditions, meet the access requirements of disabled people;
- v. recognise the contribution of good layout design to domestic security;
- vi. ensure the overall scale and design of proposals are appropriate to the character of the area;
- vii. ensure separation for light and privacy;
- viii. make appropriate off-street provision for garaging and parking of cars;
- ix. make provision for incidental open space (see Policy GEN 6)

Appendix 1: Building for Life Criteria

Environment and Community

1. Does the development provide for (or is close to) community facilities such as a school, parks, play areas, shops, pubs, or cafes?
2. Is there an accommodation mix that reflects the needs and aspiration of the local community?
3. Is there a tenure mix that reflects the needs of the local community?
4. Does the development have easy access to public transport?
5. Does the development have any features that reduce its environmental impact?

Character

6. Is the design specific to the scheme?
7. Does the scheme exploit existing buildings, landscape, or topography?
8. Does the scheme feel like a place with a distinctive character?
9. Do the buildings and layout make it easy to find your way around?
10. Are streets defined by a well-structured building layout?

Streets, Parking and Pedestrianisation

11. Does the building layout take priority over the streets and car-parking so that highways do not dominate?
12. Is the car parking well integrated and situated so that it supports the street scene?
13. Are the streets pedestrian, cycle and vehicle friendly?
14. Does the scheme integrate with existing streets, paths and surrounding development?
15. Are public spaces and pedestrian routes overlooked and do they feel safe?

Design and Construction

16. Is public space well designed and does it have suitable management arrangements in place?
17. Do buildings exhibit architectural quality?
18. Do internal spaces and layout allow for adaptation, conversion, or extension?
19. Has the scheme made use of advances in construction or technology that enhance its performance, quality and attractiveness?
20. Do buildings or spaces outperform statutory minima, such as Building Regulations?

Further information on Building for Life is available at <http://www.buildingforlife.org/>

Appendix 2: Lifetime Homes Standards

The 16 Lifetime Homes Standards are as follows:

- Where a dwelling has car parking within its individual plot or provided by communal or shared bays, at least one parking space length should be capable of enlargement to achieve a minimum width of 3300mm;
- The distance from the car parking space to the dwelling entrance (or relevant block entrance or lift core) should be kept to a minimum and be level or gently sloping;
- The approach to all entrances should preferably be level or gently sloping;
- All entrances should be illuminated and have level thresholds and the main entrance should be covered;
- Communal stairs should provide easy access and where a lift is provided to homes, they should be wheelchair accessible;
- Movement in hallways and through doorways should be as convenient to the widest range of people, including those using mobility aids or wheelchairs, and those moving furniture or other objects;
- There should be space for turning a wheelchair in dining areas and living rooms and basic circulation space for wheelchair users elsewhere.
- A living room / living space should be provided on the entrance level of every dwelling
- In dwellings with two or more storeys, with no permanent bedroom on the entrance level, there should be space on the entrance level that could be used as a convenient temporary bed-space.
- Where an accessible bathroom is not provided on the entrance level of a dwelling, the entrance level should have an accessible WC compartment, with potential for a shower to be installed.
- Walls in all bathrooms and WC compartments should be capable of firm fixing and support for adaptations such as grab rails.
- The design should incorporate provision for a future stair lift, and a suitably identified space for a through floor lift from ground floor to first floor.
- Structure above a main bedroom and bathroom ceilings should be capable of supporting ceiling hoists and the design should provide a reasonable route between the main bedroom and the bathroom.
- An accessible bathroom, providing ease of access should be provided in every dwelling on the same storey as a main bedroom.
- Windows in the principal living space (typically the living room) should allow people to see out when seated. In addition, at least one opening light in each habitable room should be approachable and usable by a wide range of people – including those with restricted movement and reach
- Service controls should be within a height band of 450mm to 1200mm from the floor and at least 300mm away from any internal room corner.

Further information on Lifetime Homes is available at www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/

Appendix 3: Parking requirements for new housing developments.

	Town Centre	Elsewhere
Houses	<p>2 car parking spaces per dwelling (garages do not count as a space unless 5.5m x 2.6m – internal – this will count as ½ a parking space)</p> <p>1 cycle parking space per dwelling (allocated)</p> <p>plus 1 communal cycle parking space per dwelling</p>	<p>2 spaces per dwelling (garages do not count as a space unless 5.5m x 2.6m – internal – this will count as ½ a parking space)</p> <p>1 cycle parking space per dwelling (allocated)</p> <p>plus 1 communal cycle parking space per dwelling</p>
Flats	<p>Average of 1.25 car parking spaces per dwelling.</p> <p>1 secure space for every 1 flat, plus 1 visitor cycle stand per 10 units</p>	<p>1.5 car parking spaces per dwelling.</p> <p>1 secure space for every 1 flat, plus 1 visitor cycle stand per 10 units</p>
Sheltered Housing	<p>1 car parking space per unit.</p> <p>1 secure covered staff space and locker per 5 staff members present at the busiest time, plus 1 visitor cycle stand per 20 residents</p>	<p>1 car parking space per unit.</p> <p>1 secure covered staff space and locker per 5 staff members present at the busiest time, plus 1 visitor cycle stand per 20 residents</p>

The following basic dimensions apply to the standards:

One car garage	<p>Minimum 5.5m x 2.6m (internal)</p> <p>Preferred 6.0m x 3.0m (internal)</p>
Two car garage	Minimum 5.5m x 5m (internal)
Domestic single drive	<p>5.0m x 3.0m (widening to 3.3m for pedestrian access)</p> <p>5.5m x 3.0m when in front of a garage</p>
Domestic double drive	5.0m x 6.0m

	5.5m x 6.0m when in front of a garage
Standard car parking space	4.8m x 2.4m
In-line (kerbside) space	6m x 1.8m (2.4m when against a wall)
Disabled parking space	4.8m x 3.6m (includes 1.2m transfer zone which can be shared where more than one bay is provided)
Disabled space	6.6m x 2.7m

Resources and Further Reading

St.Helens

Relevant policies - St.Helens Unitary Development Plan (adopted 1998)

GEN 1 - Primacy of the Development Plan

GEN 2 - Good Environments

GEN 4 - Security and Crime Prevention

GEN 5- Design and Layout of New Housing

GEN 6 - Incidental Open Space Provision

GEN 9 – Parking and Servicing

GEN 14 – Backland and Tandem Development

St.Helens emerging Local Development Framework (LDF) Policy CP 1 – Ensuring Quality Development in St.Helens

Supplementary Planning Documents

St.Helens Design Guidance SPD (2007)

Trees and Developments SPD (2008)

Street Design Guide: Highways for Adoption (2009)

Design and Crime SPD (2009)

Residential Character Areas SPD (2010)

Ensuring Choices of Travel SPD (2010)

Affordable Housing SPD (2010)

Draft Householder Development SPD (To be adopted 2011)

Draft Biodiversity SPD (To be adopted 2011)

The Landscape Character Assessment for St Helens (2006)

St Helens Street Design Guide – Highways for Adoption

Regional Policy

North West Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) (2008)

National Policy

Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1) Delivering Sustainable Development (ODPM, 2005)

Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) Housing (DCLG, 2010)

By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System (DTLR, 2001)

Better Places to Live: A Companion Guide to PPG3 (DTLR and CABE, 2001)

Good Practice Guidance

Building for Life

Lifetime Homes

Code for Sustainable Homes

Urban Design Compendium (English Partnerships, 2007)

Car Parking – What Works Where (English Partnerships, 2008)

Manual for Streets (DfT, 2007)

Manual for Streets 2 – Wider Application of the Principles (DfT, 2010)

Police Guidance

Secured By Design www.securedbydesign.com

Websites

www.sthelens.gov.uk

www.communities.gov.uk

www.cabe.org.uk

www.buildingforlife.org

www.lifetimehomes.org.uk

www.dft.gov.uk

Further Information

St.Helens Council

For advice on development and pre-application discussions please email

planning@sthelens.gov.uk or contact the following:

Development Control East

(settlements of Sutton, Bold, Marshalls Cross, Billinge, Seneley Green, Garswood, Haydock, Newton-le-Willows, Parr, Sutton Manor, Broad Oak and Clock Face).

General enquiries: (01744) 676218

Development Control West

(settlements of Rainhill, Rainford, Moss Bank, Eccleston, Blackbrook, Windle, Haresfinch, Pocket Nook, Grange Park, Thatto Heath and Dentons Green).

General enquiries: (01744) 676217

Design and Conservation Team

Design and Conservation Officer: (01744) 676185

Highways

Transport Planning Team: (01744) 676187/671615

Trees and Woodlands

Trees and Woodlands Officer: (01744) 676221

Biodiversity

Countryside Development Officer: (01744) 676191

Building Control

General enquiries: 01744 676240

Adoption Statement

In accordance with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004, St.Helens Council hereby gives notice that the New Residential Development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was adopted on 22nd June 2011.

The New Residential Development SPD will provide guidance against which planning applications will be assessed in relation to the provision of new residential developments.

Copies of the adopted New Residential Development SPD (June 2011) and a summary of the representations received are available for inspection at Planning Reception, Town Hall, Victoria Square, St.Helens and all local libraries in the Borough during normal opening hours. The adopted New Residential Development SPD (June 2011) and a summary of the representations can also be viewed and downloaded from the Council's website at ldf.sthelens.gov.uk or obtained by contacting the Planning Policy Team on 01744 676190.

Any person with sufficient interest in the decision to adopt the New Residential Development SPD may make an application to the High Court for permission to apply for judicial review of the decision to adopt the document. Any such application must be made promptly and in any event not later than 3 months after the day on which the New Residential Development SPD was adopted.



St.Helens Council offers a translation and interpretation service covering foreign languages, British Sign Language, Braille and audio tape.

For a translation of any St.Helens Council publication, please provide your name and address and the name of the language you require to the Contact Centre, quoting the title and/or reference number of the document.

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