

Enhanced Design and Access Statement template

Introduction

This Enhanced *Design and Access Statement* template sets out a precise series of expectations that we believe are necessary in creating high-quality places that are easy for everyone to use. It also shows how the process of making a planning application encourages everyone to think about how inclusive, practical and attractive a place will be once it is built and the positive impact the development will have on the health and wellbeing of those who live there.

This Enhanced Design and Access Statement will apply to:

Developments of 50+ dwellings and/or more than 10,000sq.m. non-residential floorspace – DAS including identification of health inequalities to be addressed for Ward and an assessment against Building for a Healthy Life

This reflects both the policy position set out in our Joint Local Plan and emerging Wellbeing and Health Supplementary Planning Document

Before you start the process

Before you get started, there are a number of issues that we expect you to consider further.

The first is our *Healthy Planning Themes* summary (summarised at Appendix 1) which has been co-designed with Suffolk's Public Health Team to help developers to gain a better understanding of the importance we place on health and wellbeing and how we expect these principals to apply to development proposals within the districts. We encourage you to read and consider these themes within your submission.

The second is our decision to incorporate the 12 concepts of *Building for a Healthy Life* Design Code into this template. The guidance identifies twelve considerations grouped into the following three headings:

- Integrated Neighbourhoods
- Distinctive Places
- Streets for All

The figure below is taken from page 7 of *Building for a Healthy Life*, and sets out the relationship between this design code, the National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

and the National Design Guide¹ which is aimed at everyone involved in planning and design and sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and demonstrates what good design means in practice.

Integrated Neighbourhoods	NPPF – relevant paragraphs	National Design Guide	B&MSDCs Joint Local Plan Policies
Natural connections	91a; 102c and e; 104d; 127b; 127f	B3; M1; M2; N1; R3	LP24, LP28
Walking, cycling and public transport	20c; 91a; 91c; 127e	B1; B3; M1; R3	LP24, LP29
Facilities and services	102; 103	B1; B3; N1; P3; U1; U3	LP24
Homes for everyone	60-62	B1; B2; U2; U3	LP24
BHL 2 Distinctive Places			
Making the most of what's there	122d; 127c; 127d; 153b; 184	C1; C2; I1; B2; R3	LP24
A memorable character	122d; 127c; 127d	C2; I1; I3; B3	LP24
Well defined streets and spaces	91a	B2; M2; N2; N3; P1; P2; H2; L3	LP24
Easy to find your way around	91b; 127b	I1; M1; M2; U1	LP24
BHL 3 Streets for All			
Healthy streets	91b; 102c and e; 110a-d	M1; M2; N3; P1; P2; P3; H1; H2	LP29
Cycle and car parking	101e; 127f; 105d	B2; M1; M3	LP29
Green and blue infrastructure	20d; 91b; 91c; 127f; 155; 170d; 174	C1; B3; M1; N1; N2; N3; P1; P3; H1; R3; L1	LP24, LP28
Back of pavement, front of home	127a-b; d; f	M3; H3; L3	LP24

¹ *National Design Guide; Planning practice guidance for beautiful, enduring and successful places;*(Jan 2021)

Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities(Department for Housing, Local Government and Communities at time of publication)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/962113/National_design_guide.pdf

Generally	7; 8; 124; 125; 126; 127;130	15; 16; 17; 20-29; 31- 32	-
Using the tool as a discussion tool	39; 40-42; 125; 128;129		-

BHL is foremost a design process structure, not a scoring system. However, the guidance does list and illustrate examples of good practice highlighted by a green light and poor practice is highlighted with a red light. We will be following these principals when we screen your design statement. We do not view the work as a cold “tick box” exercise but an opportunity to have a detailed discussion about issues we believe need to be addressed and which will make the development much more acceptable in terms of community and people’s wellbeing

The final aspect we expect you to consider are whether there are any wellbeing and health inequalities in the Ward (or the place) where the development is being proposed. It is important to have regard to this information, we know the 194 wards across our district are not all the same so we expect the submission to highlight specific rather than general statements in this regard.

We encourage you to consider the following sources of information:

Ward profiles in development with Public Health (where available)

[Place-based needs assessments - Healthy Suffolk](#)

[Suffolk Observatory – Welcome to the Suffolk Observatory](#)

Completing the template

We encourage you to use the headings contained within this template to write your design and access statement. A summary of what we expect to be addressed against each of the headings are summarised below:

The process

Does the statement show that the applicant has assessed the site’s full context, including physical, social and economic characteristics and relevant planning policies?

Has the applicant demonstrated how they have taken account of the results of any community involvement?

Integrated Neighbourhoods

1 Natural connections

- Have you created a place that is well integrated into the site and their wider natural and built surroundings?

- Have you avoided creating isolated and disconnected places that are not easy places to move through and around?
- Have you identified the places, facilities and services you need to connect to?

2. Walking, cycling and public transport

- Is the development designed so people can get around easily on foot or bicycle if the right infrastructure is in place, helping to improve public health and air quality whilst also reducing local congestion and carbon emissions
- If there is an existing protected cycle network, that can connect to the development?
- Does the development exploit existing (or planned) public transport hubs?
- Does the development help make walking feel like an instinctive choice for everyone undertaking short journeys (such as the school run or older generations accessing local facilities and services)?

3. Facilities and services

- Does the development offer social, leisure and recreational opportunities a short walk or cycle from their homes?
- Is there the opportunity to locate any new facilities in the best location for those walking, cycling and using public transport?
- Is it possible to improve existing facilities will add more value to the local community than adding new ones?
- Can Sustainable drainage schemes be incorporated that contribute towards an attractive and accessible network of streets and public spaces?

4. Homes for everyone

- Does the development provide a mix of homes that meet the needs of the community, for instance first time buyer homes, family homes, homes for those downsizing and supported living?
- Does it offer people access to at least some private outdoor space. This is particularly important for people's mental health and wellbeing?

Distinctive Places

5. Making the most of what's already there

- Have you explored conceptual ideas before settling on an agreed way forward and producing a site layout? For instance, if there are existing site features explore how these might be best integrated into a place.
- Have you Identified any visual connections into, out, through and beyond the site?
- Have you worked with the contours of the land?
- Do you understand how water flows across and pools on the site and explored how water can be used to enhance biodiversity, create character and improve people's sense of wellbeing?
- Have you considered opportunities for natural lighting, cooling and ventilation?

6. Memorable character

- Have you created a place with a locally inspired or otherwise distinctive character?
- Do you understand where the positive local character comes from: streets, blocks and plots (urban grain), green and blue infrastructure, land uses, building form, massing and materials often underpin the essence of the distinctive character of settlements rather than architectural style and details.
- Are you proposing to use a local materials palette (where appropriate) as these can be a particularly effective way to connect a development to a place?

7. Well defined streets and places

- What will you actually see and experience walking along the street?
- Are the public fronts and private backs of the homes clearly defined?

8. Is it easy to find your way around?

- Do the streets within the development that connect with one another?
- Are the streets that are as straight and as direct as possible?
- Do the street types, buildings, spaces, non-residential uses, landscape, water and other features to help people create a 'mental map' of a place?

Streets for All

9. Healthy streets

- Have you developed low-speed streets and neighbourhoods with pedestrian and cycle priority?
- Is there the right balance between movement and place functions?
- Does the development encourage walking, cycling, outdoor play and streets where it is safe for younger children to cycle (or scooter) to school can create opportunities for social interaction and street life bringing wider social benefits?
- Are the streets that are easy to cross; providing priority for pedestrians and cyclists across junctions and accesses?
- Are streets well overlooked with front doors facing streets and public spaces?

10. Cycle and car parking

- Will the development provide secure cycle storage close to people's front doors so that cycles are as convenient to choose as a car for short trips.
- How have you integrated car parking into the street environment.
- Have you anticipated realistic levels of car parking demand and given thought about the availability and frequency of public transport?
- Have you planned creative solutions for attractive, convenient and safe cycle parking or higher density developments?
- Will you design generous landscaping to settle frontage car parking into the street.

11. Green and blue infrastructure

- Have you created a strong landscape strategy that has impact from 'day one'?
- Will the development create a network of different types of spaces.
- Are there opportunities to weave opportunities for habitat creation throughout the development. Plan these as movement corridors to support biodiversity.
- Will there be opportunities to create food growing opportunities such as allotments and orchards on larger developments?
- Are the public open spaces well overlooked with strong levels of natural surveillance?