WARRINGTON
Borough Council

The Warrington Design Guide SPD

Draft for external consultation
December 2023

Document Status

This is a draft document for consultation. When it is adopted, it will become a material consideration in the determining of any development proposals where design issues are a consideration. Any proposals for development will need to take into consideration the guidance set out in this Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), wherever relevant, within the context of the policies that are identified in the Local Plan.

How to comment

The Warrington Design Guide SPD and supporting documentation can be viewed on the Council's website at **https://www.warrington.gov.uk/supplementary-planning-documents**.

The documents can also be viewed at the Council's 1 Time Square office or at any of the borough's libraries.

The eight week consultation period where representations will be accepted by the Council, will commence on Wednesday 13 December and end on Wednesday 7 February at 5pm.

The Council's preferred method of receiving representations is by e-mail and representations should be sent to localplan@warrington.gov.uk
The Council will also accept written representations, and these should be sent in writing to:

Planning Policy & Programmes Team
Growth Directorate
East Annexe
Town Hall
Sankey Street
Warrington
WA1 1UA

Further details on how to respond to the consultation are contained in the accompanying Consultation Statement and Guidance Note which is available on the Council's website.

Should you require further information, then please contact the Planning Policy and Programmes Team by e-mail at localplan@warrington.gov.uk or by telephoning 01925 442826.

What is the purpose of this document?

The Design Guide has been used to clarify the Council's design ambitions for Warrington. This document is our way of communicating what we expect and how it can be achieved through designing quality places.

Why do we need this document?

The Design Guide is needed to reflect changing policy context at a local and national level. This includes referencing the Government's vision for building beautiful places, including the National Design Guide and changes to the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Warrington Design Guide is intended to be read in conjunction with wider national design guidance, offering Warrington-specific guidance to Warrington-specific constraints and opportunities. More details of additional guidance can be found on page 14.

The Design Guide will also supplement the adopted Local Plan, with placemaking guidance supported by the latest Local Planning Policy.
The Design Guide is also a means of updating and superseding outdated existing guidance, such as the Design and Construction SPD adopted in October 2010 and amended February 2016.

The document will be superseded with the exception of the following sections. These sections will still be active guidance pending the development of the Borough Wide Design Code, more details of which can be found on page 14.

- Section 6.0 – Design in the Historic Environment Information regarding designing in conservation areas is contained within the Warrington Design Guide, as general notes on design quality and contextual response. This is supported by the information contained within the House Extensions SPD, Section 2.4.1.
- Section 7.0 – Shopfronts The existing guidance is predominantly technical in nature so is proposed to be included in the Borough Wide Design Code.
- 10.5 – 10.27 – Protection of Trees on Development Sites The existing guidance is predominantly technical in nature so is proposed to be included in the Borough Wide Design Code.

Who is this document for?

This Design Guide SPD is aimed at anyone who is involved in new development, including:

- Private home owners, professional design teams, developers, applicants and agents.
- Planning officers during the pre-application and planning application phase, ensuring consistency in advice and in decision making.
- Councillors to inform their decision making, ensuring consistency and reducing the need for planning appeals.
- It is also an important document for communities and provides a framework that will assist in understanding and providing comments on planning applications.

01 /
The Ambition for Warrington

What is the ambition?

The ambition sets out an aspirational vision for Warrington as the borough develops.

How was the ambition developed?

Initially, a baseline study of the borough has been undertaken to understand key constraints and opportunities that Warrington faces.

The need to address wider ongoing crises and the current social context have also been considered, including the climate emergency crisis, biodiversity crisis, public health inequality and living and working in the post-pandemic world.

The ambition has been informed by the key principles from the existing suite of vision documents, including the Local Plan, Local Transport Plan, Corporate Strategy, Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Warrington Means Business.

In addition, the ambition has been informed by consultation responses to Warrington's Local Plan and by engaging with relevant Council and partner services.

The resulting ambition sets a bold direction for sustainable placemaking in Warrington.

Where does the ambition apply?

The ambition operates at different scales of development, from borough-wide to site specific scale.

At a borough wide scale, strategic principles are identified. Zooming in to the local scale, the ambition references Warrington's four key character areas – the Town Centre, inner Warrington, suburban Warrington and rural Warrington, and how each of the constraints, opportunities and ambition principles will influence their future.

At a site scale, it is important that individual developments, regardless of scale or location, are aware of and contribute towards achieving the wider ambition for Warrington.

The Design Guide is intended to ensure all new development contributes towards achieving this vision.

Developing the ambition

Where are we now?

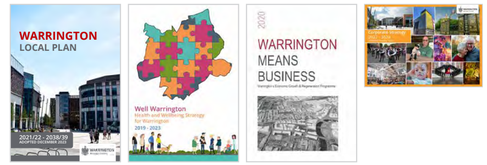
Constraints and opportunities in the borough

Crises and social context

01.1 / Baseline Study

Where do we want to be?

Existing guidance



01.2 / The Ambition for Warrington

Baseline Study

This study looks at the key constraints and opportunities that Warrington is facing now, and will be facing in the future.

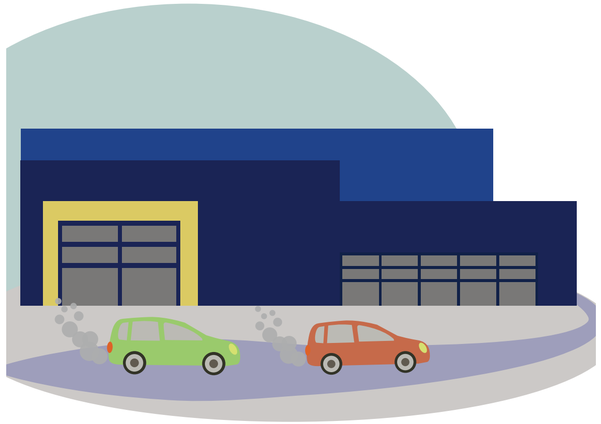
All the constraints and opportunities are summarised below. They are complex and multifaceted, but all can be addressed, at least in part, through positive placemaking and good design.

1. Out of Town Centres
2. Warrington's road network
3. Employment developments
4. Warrington's Local Plan
5. Warrington's natural assets
6. Social context and crises

More detail of the constraints and opportunities is on the next page.

Overview of principles

Some challenges are place based, such as out of town retail centres competing with Warrington's Town Centre whilst others are wider societal concerns such as public health inequality or the need to address the climate emergency.
The study has indicated that many of the current constraints also present opportunities for sustainable development.

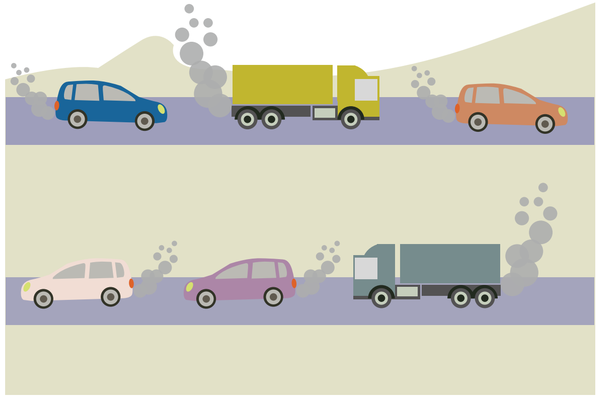


Out of Town Centres

Warrington has several out of Town Centres, with a range of retail and leisure offerings. The popularity of these areas has a detrimental effect on the Town Centre, providing direct competition for viability and footfall. These centres are also heavily reliant on the car, due to good road connections and extensive car parking. The convenience and vehicular accessibility of this design approach can have a negative impact on air quality, active travel and the move towards net zero carbon.

Places also often struggle to provide positive placemaking and can be homogeneous in their design, offering little contribution towards the borough's distinct character.

Moving forward, the popularity of these areas is a key consideration, and means to improve connectivity, placemaking and design quality of new and existing locations must be addressed.



Warrington's road network

The economic success and growth of the borough is intrinsically linked to Warrington's strong road network, with three major motorways and a network of interconnecting A-roads.

Whilst beneficial to the growth of Warrington as a place to live and work, the road network presents challenges to air quality and the need to address the climate emergency. The network also acts as physical barriers to development, often compromising positive placemaking. The quality of the road network also encourages the use of private cars as often the quickest and most convenient means of travel in the borough.

Moving forwards, spaces should be designed to address this balance, promoting public and active travel via new and existing networks. Placemaking and people should be the primary considerations for new developments, rather than cars and road.

Employment developments

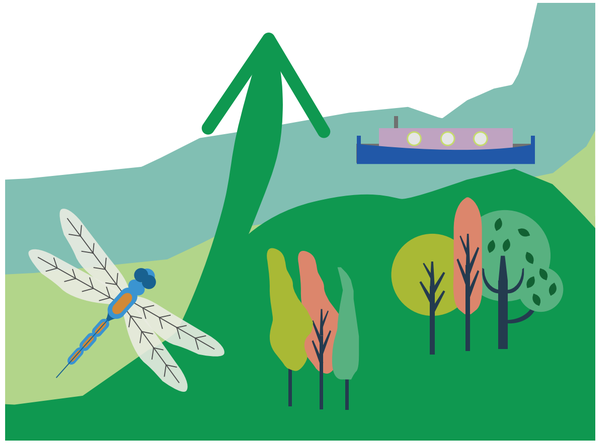
Building on the benefits of Warrington's road network, the borough is a key location for employment developments of all scales, including logistics, industrial and scientific / technology sectors.

These developments present an opportunity for sustainable growth, and are intrinsic to the character of the borough, particularly with long established areas such as Birchwood Park. Employment uses can also present challenges to placemaking, particularly around the scale of proposals, the need to balance placemaking and design quality with operational efficiency, and often their relationship with nearby residential communities.

Warrington's Local Plan

The Local Plan will facilitate Warrington's growth, providing much needed residential and employment development. This presents a clear opportunity for exemplar, sustainable development for a thriving borough.

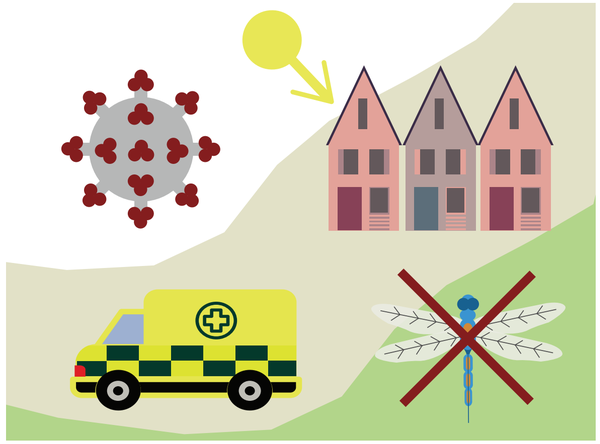
Key considerations include balancing exceptional design quality with viable, deliverable schemes, and sensitively weaving new and existing communities. Homes and workplaces must be designed to improve people's lives, considering challenges such as the ageing population and addressing public health inequality. Designs must also reflect Warrington, enhancing the distinct character identity of the borough.



Warrington's natural assets

From the River Mersey and Manchester Ship Canal to Sankey Valley Park and Paddington Meadows, Warrington has a wealth of natural assets providing unique habitats, biodiversity and opportunities for people to connect with nature.

Sustainable development is essential to preserve and enhance our existing assets, and the growth of the borough presents opportunities to improve our connections and relationships to these spaces. Proposals can play a key role in unlocking the potential of our green and blue infrastructure, through considered design and improved connectivity.



Social context and crises

The impact of several wider issues of a national and global scale must also be considered.

Warrington has declared a climate emergency, and has outlined a bold climate emergency strategy, clearly defining how people and development must take action. The borough also faces public health inequality, with life expectancies below the national average in many areas. Nationally, we are facing a biodiversity crisis as we lose habitats and wildlife. Developments must also consider the challenges and opportunities of a post-pandemic world, and the associated shifts in living and working.

Warrington is experiencing the direct consequences of these crises, and the borough's growth has a key role in addressing these issues.

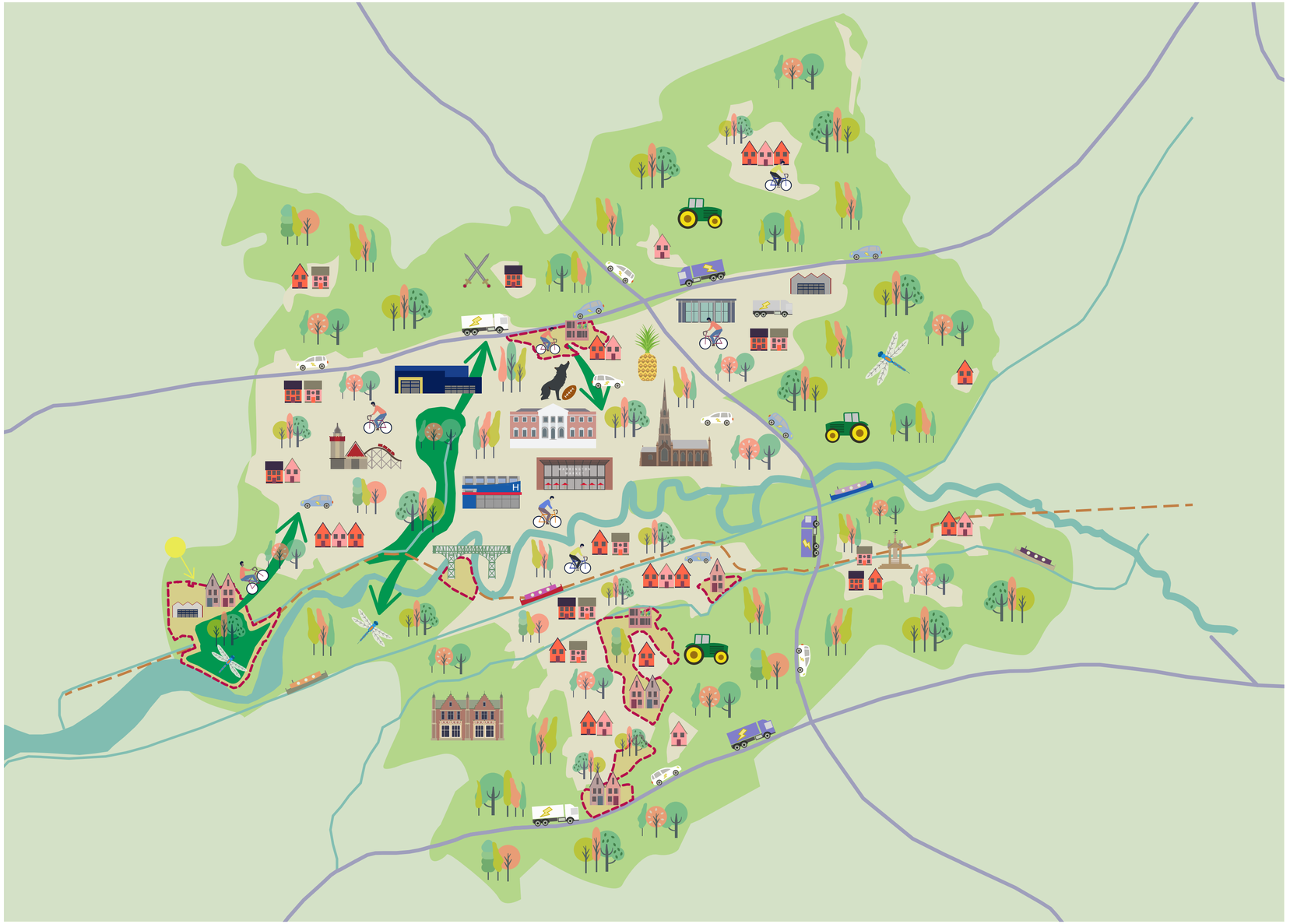
The Ambition

The ambition sets out an aspirational vision for Warrington as the borough develops.

It is essential that the unique character of the borough and its rich variety of places is preserved and enhanced, whilst also allowing for Warrington's sustainable growth.

Building on the constraints and opportunities from the baseline study, the key principles of the ambition are listed below, and explained in more detail on the following pages.

1. Design quality + innovation
2. Leading with landscape
3. Healthy, happy places
4. Climate resilience
5. Leading with identity
6. Inclusive, community led development
7. Connecting Warrington



Design quality + innovation

Developments in Warrington must be of exemplar design quality. Good design is the guiding principle, and facilitates many of the other principles within The Ambition.

Quality must be sought from the outset, intrinsic to the design development process, and maintained during the construction and lifecycle of our new places. The Design Guide iterates the need for quality at all scales, from strategic site considerations to quality details and tactile materials, and everything in between. Quality is also expected on all sites and across all development sectors. Innovation should go hand in hand with design quality, as the borough welcomes new ways of designing, building and occupying our spaces, particularly in facing issues such as the climate emergency.

Leading with landscape

Greening is essential to development of all scales, and is a guiding principle to facilitating many of the other principles within The Ambition.

Developments must maximise all opportunities for green space, from pocket parks to rain gardens and playing pitches to green roofs. The holistic benefits of greening must be understood, and the potential for urban cooling, sustainable drainage, biodiversity and mental wellbeing (amongst others) must be realised. Working with connectivity, people must be able to access nature, and have nature integrated into their spaces, from workplaces and homes, to streets and public spaces.

New requirements for Biodiversity Net Gain and Sustainable Urban Drainage must be woven into new developments, and considering habitats, drainage and greening as one must become the norm.

Healthy, happy places

Places have a crucial impact on health and wellbeing. Considered, holistic design can improve health and wellbeing, whilst poor design can have detrimental effects. Whilst the borough still faces public health inequality in many areas, the Local Plan notes that Warrington's life expectancy is improving, a trend which must be continued as the borough develops.

Designs must consider how they can deliver healthy and happy places, from their contribution to streetscapes, facilitation of active travel, provision of green space and well-ventilated, daylit internal spaces. These are some of the countless considerations which we expect new developments to incorporate for a healthy, happy borough.

Climate resilience

Warrington has declared a climate emergency; our Climate Emergency Action Plan (2023) aims for the borough as a whole to be net zero by 2041. Warrington's development must be sustainable.

To achieve this goal, considerations for climate resilience must be ingrained in developments from the outset, throughout delivery and into occupation. We must be ambitious with our approaches to new spaces, driving and delivering the net zero ambition. Our buildings must respond to extreme weather and reduce their reliance on fossil fuels. Our streets and green spaces must address wider issues of sustainable drainage, air quality and begin a reduced reliance on the car.

The Design Guide is ambitious in its approach to climate resilience, and calls for every development to play its part in responding to the climate emergency.

Leading with identity

Warrington is a distinct and characterful place. New developments must understand Warrington at a borough and local scale, and enhance the distinct identity of Warrington.

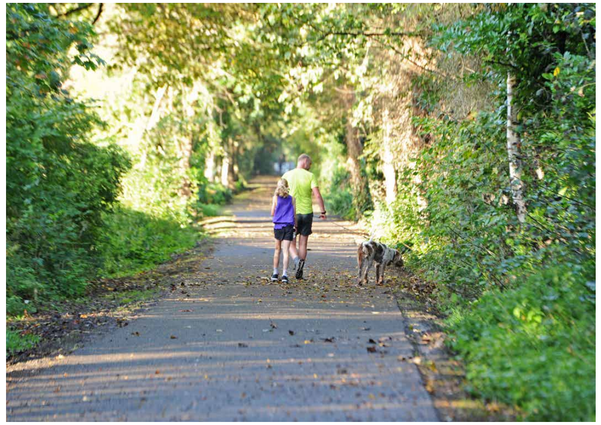
Development must begin with an understanding of the existing context, including our rich built form, heritage and wider social and economic ecosystems. This context must form the basis for visioning new developments, understanding what is already here, and how it can be celebrated. Proposals must be specific, and reference the distinct character of Warrington's places. Successful contextual responses will instil civic pride, and further enhance the identity of the borough.

Our developments must create positive first impressions, and positively enhance their context. Streets should become places for public life, and are fundamental to Warrington as a place.

Inclusive, community led development

Communities must be at the heart of new development. Proposals must engage with people from the initial stages of development to understand and respond to people's collective needs. As the borough grows, emerging communities must be supported, allowing new places to flourish into thriving hubs of activity and life. Emerging communities should be woven in to neighbouring established communities, through positive connections, design language and shared amenities. New communities can often bring green space, shops and other new places to benefit the wider locality.

Inclusivity is a foundation of positive communities, ensuring people are heard and represented in our places. Spaces should be safe, accessible and welcoming to allow our existing and emerging communities to thrive.



Connecting Warrington

Enhancing the connectivity of the borough is a fundamental means of improving active travel, reducing reliance on cars, and unlocking the potential of Warrington's existing natural and urban assets.

Proposals must understand the networks they can plug in to, and seek to leave areas with more positive, accessible and useful access networks through and beyond their site boundary. Existing assets, from waterways, green spaces, community hubs and public transport hubs should be understood and joined up. Active travel must be prioritised, with designs delivering spaces which offer easy and attractive cycling, walking and wheeling.

How will we achieve The Ambition?

New developments of all scales and typologies across the borough have a role to play in achieving The Ambition for Warrington. This Design Guide translates The Ambition into principles and guidance for all new development in the borough. The design principles form Warrington Borough Council's advice for meeting the requirements of the Local Plan and the NPPF.

How to use the Warrington Design Guide

Generally, the principles are supported by illustrative diagrams which show one way of bringing the principles together in a successful scheme.

Applicants are expected to demonstrate how they have complied with the guidance, or clearly identify and justify how any departure from the guidance meets or exceeds the principles of the guidance, the Local Plan and the NPPF.

The document is broken down into five sections, with additional appendices.

01 / The Ambition for Warrington
02 / Warrington's places
03 / Site strategy
04 / Streets, landscape and open space
05 / Buildings, communities and places

Developing the ambition

01.2 / The Ambition for Warrington

Borough-wide goals

3.0 - 5.0 / Design Guide Principles

Specific to your development

3.0 - 5.0 / Indicative drawings

Illustrating how the principles could be applied

Relationship to other Guidance

This SPD should be read alongside other relevant guidance, as outlined below.

National Guidance

The Warrington Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been prepared in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

This SPD should be read alongside the *NPPF 2021*; the *Design: Process and Tools National Planning Practice Guidance*; the *National Design Guide 2021*, the *National Model Design Code 2021*;

In accordance with Paragraph 128 of the NPPF, Local Planning authorities are expected to prepare design guides or codes, consistent with the principles of the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code. The National Design Guide outlines the 10 characteristics of good places that contribute to good design.

In addition to the Warrington Design Guide, it is anticipated that a Borough Wide Design Code will be developed in accordance with national requirements. This is explained in more detail later in this section.

National guidance documents

The 10 characteristics of a well-designed places, from the National Design Guide

The Local Plan

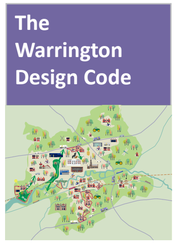
The updated Warrington Local Plan has been adopted. It forms the key development plan for the borough.

The Local Plan seeks to ensure that Warrington can meet its development needs in the most sustainable manner and in doing so seeks to deliver high standards of design and construction.

The Warrington Design Guide will supplement the Local Plan by providing additional guidance to help ensure that forthcoming developments are planned in a coherent way and will deliver a high-quality built environment and public realm.

This Design Guide provides guidance on how a high standard of design can be met and supplements the following Local Plan (2021/22-2038/39) policies covering high quality design, promoting sustainable travel options, open space requirements and measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

- INF1 (Sustainable Travel and Transport);
- INF3 (Utilities, Telecommunications and Broadband);
- INF4 (Community Facilities);
- DC1 (Warrington's Places)
- DC5 (Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation Provision)
- DC6 (Quality of Place)
- ENV2 (Flood Risk and Water Management)
- ENV7 (Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Development)
- ENV8 (Environmental and Amenity Protection)
- DEV2 (Meeting Warrington's Housing Needs)
- GB1 (Warrington's Green Belt)
- TC1 (Town Centre and Surrounding Area)



Borough Wide Design Code

In addition to the Warrington Design Guide, it is anticipated that a Borough Wide Design Code will be developed in accordance with national requirements.

This document will contain predominantly technical information, and support the design-based information within this Design Guide.

When adopted, both documents will work in tandem to guide development across the borough.

Until this time, Warrington's technical design guidance can be found in other specialist SPDs and Design Guidance Notes (DGNs) , available on the Council's website.

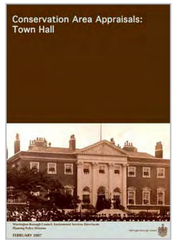
Site Specific Design Codes and Masterplans

A site specific Design Code sets out the detailed design rules for a specific site and informs how it will be brought forward. This is different to the Borough Wide Design Code, which will contain the technical requirements for development across the borough.

The Design Guide must be read alongside any approved Design Codes or Masterplans for the area.

Policy DC6 indicates that the Council expects masterplans, development frameworks and design codes to be produced for large developments, in particular for the proposed urban extensions, to ensure that a holistic approach is taken to the design and layout of new or existing areas and that these design codes/masterplans may be adopted as supplementary planning documents.

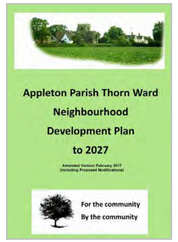
There are a number of large allocation sites in the adopted Local Plan that will be required to provide Design Codes as part of their Development Frameworks. Further information on Design Codes is provided in Appendix 4.



Heritage and Conservation Guidance

Conservation Area Appraisals consider which features make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of the conservation area and help to identify opportunities for preservation and enhancement or the need for planning protection. The council is currently in the process of re-appraising its 16 Conservation Areas.

The Local List identifies many buildings of community interest, whether inside or outside a conservation area as locally listed. These frequently include local landmarks and buildings that would fail to meet the criteria for statutory listing, but nevertheless make an important contribution locally to Warrington's character and built environment. The most recently published local list can be found in Appendix 5 of the Local Plan (2021/22-2038/39).



Other Local Design Guidance

Neighbourhood Plans (when made) form part of the development plan and may contain design policies which would need to be considered as part of the determination of a planning application.

There is currently only one Neighbourhood Plan in Warrington (The Appleton Parish Thorn Ward Neighbourhood Development Plan). This Plan includes specific design policies, which should be taken into consideration when designing development in the area. There are also the following emerging Neighbourhood Plans which should be taken into account upon adoption:

- Lymm
- Grappenhall & Thelwall
- Stretton

In addition, there are a some of settlements that have a village design statement, which in some cases may be a number of years old but will include useful guidance and information on how the settlement has changed and can be considered when designing schemes.

02 /
Warrington's Places

Overview

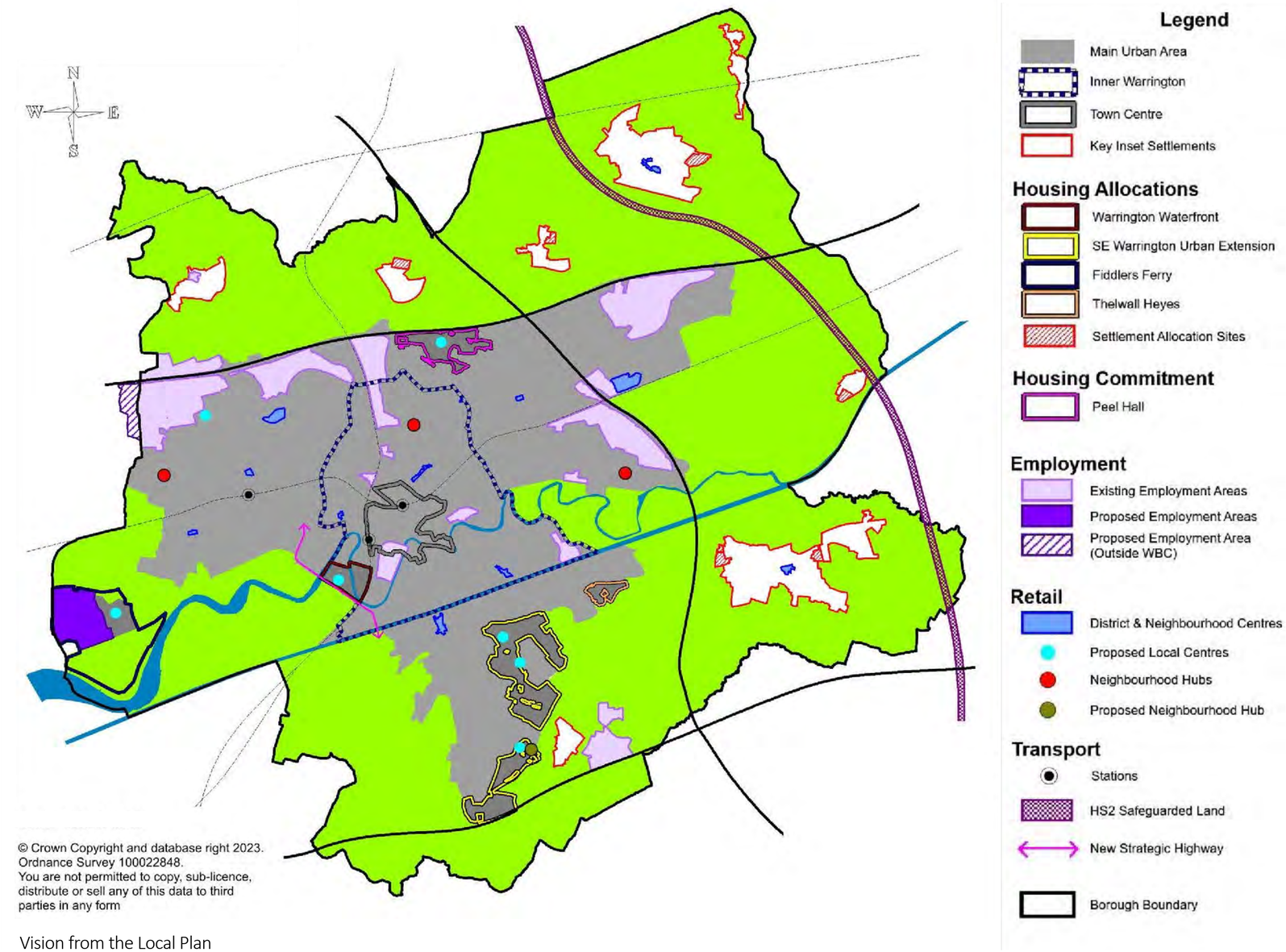
Warrington is comprised of a rich variety of places with different characters, spaces and uses.

This section outlines the four key character areas within the borough, as identified within the Local Plan.

- Town Centre
- Inner Warrington
- Suburban Warrington
- Countryside and settlements

The introductory analysis within this section is intended to give an idea of the prevailing context and should support, rather than replace, the need for applicants to undertake thorough contextual analysis of their site and surroundings.

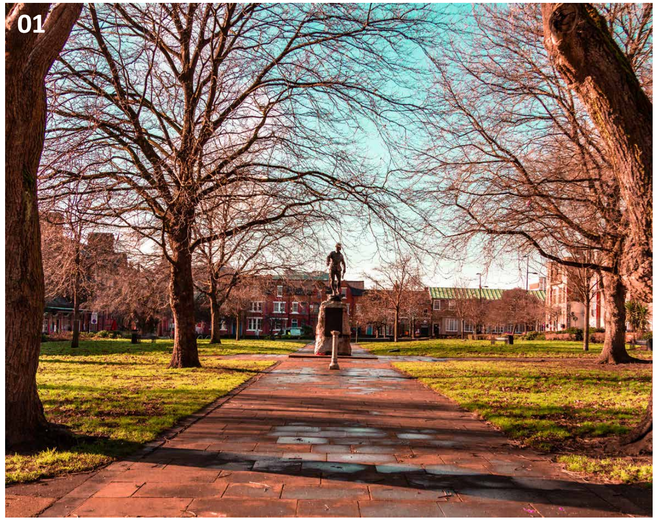
See Policy DC1 in the Local Plan 2021/22-2038/39 for information regarding the strategies for each of the following character areas, see Policy TC1 more specifically for objectives relating to Warrington's Town Centre.

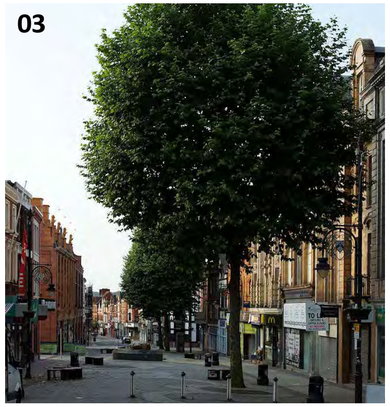


Vision from the Local Plan

Town Centre - Current Condition

- Warrington's Town Centre is a vibrant mix of places, containing the town's commercial, cultural, leisure and retail centres .
- The area extends to the Halliwell Jones Stadium and industrial area within the Stadium Quarter to the north, and Priory Street within the Southern Gateway to the south.
- The western edge is bounded by the Westcoast railway line, whilst the eastern area encompasses Riverside Retail Park and fronts terraced housing around Howley Lane.
- The area is very well connected both locally and nationally, with the bus station and both Warrington Bank Quay and Warrington Central Railway stations.
- A large part of the Town Centre is pedestrianised with high quality public realm, including the recently completed Time Square development, and the historic Palmyra Square and Bank Park.
- The Town Centre is varied in character, scale and architectural language, with an abundance of historic buildings around Buttermarket Street, Palmyra Square and Bridge Street, parts of which all fall into Conservation Areas.
- Emerging developments include higher density residential schemes fronting Mersey Street, and the Cockhedge mixed use development which will provide high quality public and private spaces, characterising the next chapter of the Town Centre's growth.





Key | Town Centre

1. Queen's Gardens, Palmyra Square
2. Warrington Central Station
3. Bridge Street
4. Warrington Market

Town Centre - The Ambition

- Existing detailed design guidance for the Town Centre is contained within the Town Centre SPD and must be read in conjunction with the wider design principles of the Warrington Design Guide.
- Residential developments must deliver sustainable, high-quality Town Centre living.
- Whilst developments may be higher density, amenity space and greening is essential and must be integrated into developments.
- Proposals must respond to and, where possible, enhance the existing strong active travel and public transport networks serving the Town Centre.
- All developments must respond to the prevailing urban grain, scale and character, particularly in historically sensitive areas.
- As schemes with increased height and densities emerge, developments must consider the wider impact on the townscape and seek to mediate the relationship with the lower rise historic core of the Town Centre.

Key | Town Centre

1. Higher density living in the Town Centre
2. Community events, reinforcing the town identity
3. Successful urban public realm
4. Enhancing our historic assets

Inner Warrington - Current Condition

- Inner Warrington mediates between the high-density Town Centre and the lower density suburbs.
- To the north, retail and industrial developments line the A49 corridor, whilst the south sees predominantly residential with some commercial developments up to the bank of the Manchester Ship Canal, which forms the boundary for Inner Warrington.
- Residential developments are the predominant typology to the east, with a mixture of Victorian terraces and some newer developments.
- The western boundary is the Sankey Canal, with further residential units stretching between Sankey Valley Park and the Town Centre boundary, as well as industrial and increasingly commercial development around Warrington Bank Quay station.
- Generally, the area is characterised by low rise, but relatively high-density residential areas, principally from the Victorian period that were developed before the town's expansion into the suburban Warrington. The area also has some retail and industrial clusters.
- Residential development is typically lower than the Town Centre, usually 2-3 storeys in height with increasing numbers of newer 4-5 storey apartment building.
- Industrial units are large in footprint but generally remain low rise, except for the Bank Quay Gateway area which sees some buildings of a more significant scale.
- The varied typologies, boundaries and natural assets give Inner Warrington a multitude of distinctive character areas.

Key | Inner Warrington

1. Typical residential development
2. Waterfronts and green space are accessible from inner Warrington
3. The Manchester Ship Canal

Inner Warrington - The Ambition

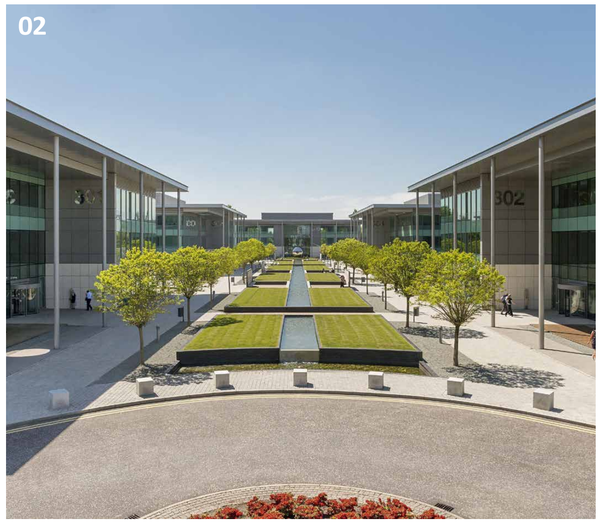
- Understanding and responding to the varied character areas is crucial, from Sankey Valley Park to the Ship Canal. This provides an opportunity for unique places and must be explored.
- Industrial and residential areas often sit side by side in Inner Warrington, a condition which is likely to be faced by new developments in this area. Mediating between the scale, operation and character of these two uses is crucial to successful place making.
- The prevailing scale is relatively low across industrial and residential development. However, areas of older industrial uses such as those around Bank Quay Gateway and along the banks of the Manchester Ship Canal are likely to be redeveloped for residential led, mixed use development at a higher density. New proposals must understand and respond to this, providing higher densities in these areas.
- Most of the areas within suburban Warrington form part of the ***Central Six Masterplan.***
- The ***Central Six Masterplan*** seeks to deliver community led regeneration and better connect better connect areas of Inner Warrington to each other and the Town Centre, promoting active travel and reducing reliance on the car. Applications in these areas must respond to the proposals and facilitate the Central Six vision.

Key | Inner Warrington

1. Warrington Central 6 Regeneration Masterplan
2. Encouraging active travel
3. Community spaces within inner Warrington

Suburban Warrington - Current Condition

- Suburban Warrington has typically lower density, predominantly residential areas with associated amenity clusters such as neighbourhood and local centres, pubs and churches.
- To the north and west, Poplars and Hulme and Omega present higher density suburbs, characterised by ongoing residential and workplace developments. The M62 largely forms the northern boundary of this area.
- South of the Manchester Ship Canal, the suburbs have lower densities, comprising largely of Victorian villas and distinct local centres in areas such as Grappenhall and Stockton Heath. Further south there is more recent New Town led suburban development in Appleton and Pewterspear extending southward to Stretton.
- To the west, Chapelford and Great Sankey have distinctive, medium-density residential areas, in addition to the proposed residential and employment areas on the former Fiddlers Ferry Power Station site; whilst the east sees the new town developments at Birchwood and Risley, including the major employment centre at Birchwood Technology Park.

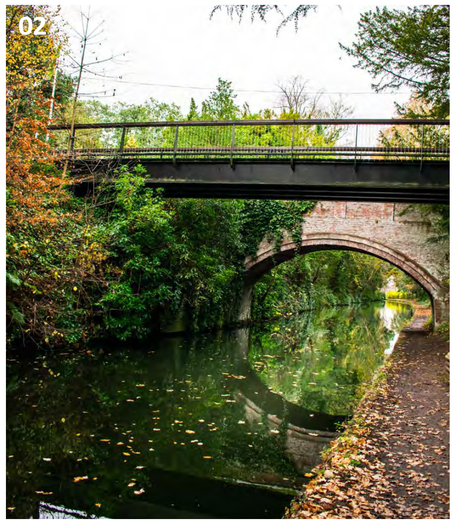


Key | Suburban Warrington

1. Typical residential cul-de-sac development
2. Birchwood Technology Park
3. Suburban apartment buildings

Suburban Warrington - The Ambition

- Suburban Warrington often have a distinct character, style and urban grain, which varies from place to place. Developments must understand and respond to this context.
- Several district and local centres also contain conservation areas – see the conservation area appraisals for further information.
- There are a variety of interfaces and boundary conditions to consider, such as to the higher density Inner Warrington, parks and public open space and, in some instances, the Green Belt. Proposals must recognise and respond to their site-specific conditions.
- This area includes the allocation for the South East Warrington Urban Extension, a predominantly residential development with associated social infrastructure and green space. Developments in the locality should be aware of this emerging key proposal.

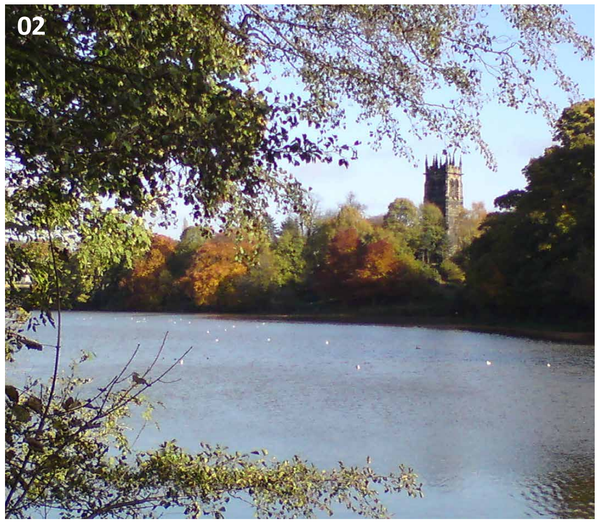


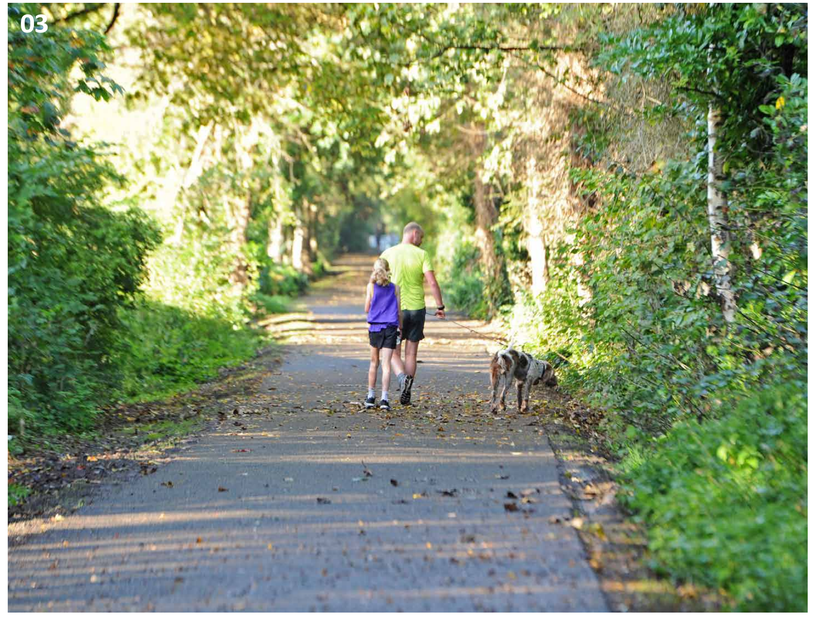
Key | Suburban Warrington

1. Enabling public transport networks to better connect our suburbs
2. Enhancing our existing natural assets
3. Integrating quality green space

Countryside and Settlements - Current Condition

- All of Warrington's rural areas/countryside are designated as Green Belt.
- The area surrounds the main urban area, and externally bounds Warrington's adjacent local authorities of Halton, Cheshire West and Chester, Cheshire East and the four metropolitan boroughs of St Helens, Wigan, Salford and Trafford.
- The countryside includes several settlements. The larger settlements are inset from the Green Belt and development in these will need to conform to general design principles. The smaller settlements are "washed over" and will need to conform to the general deign considerations for development in the countryside outlined below and in addition the principles relating to development in the Green Belt that is outlined in *Section 05.3.5.*
- Inset settlements are surrounded by Green Belt, and comprise of Appleton Thorn, Burtonwood, Croft, Culcheth, Glazebury, Hollins Green, Lymm, Oughtrington and Winwick.
- Each settlement has a distinct character and urban grain, with varying amenity offerings.
- The settlements are generally low density
- In addition, there is the occasional industrial area such as Appleton Thorn/Barleycastle Industrial Estates and Taylor Business Park in Croft.



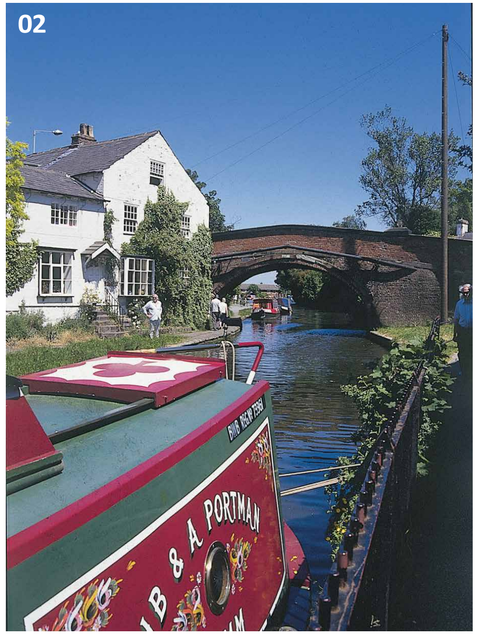


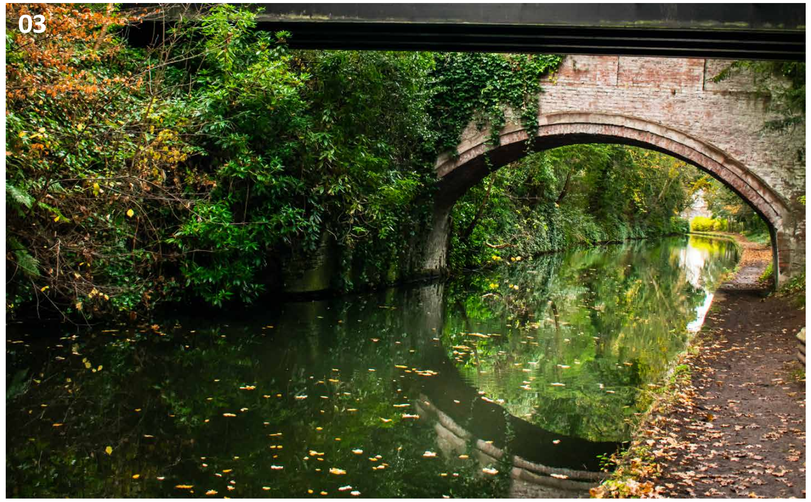
Key | Countryside and settlements

1. A busy street within a countryside settlement
2. Existing natural and heritage assets
3. Enhancing routes such as the Trans Pennine Trail

Countryside and Settlements - The Ambition

- Some proposals may border or be located within the Green Belt, so must ensure that they address the associated constraints and opportunities.
- The rural character and uniqueness of the individual settlements must be responded to.
- The scale and mass of any building or extension must be reflective of the prevailing character in the immediate area.
- Some settlements have their own local design guidance such as the Appleton Thorn Neighbourhood Plan, Croft Parish Plan and the emerging Lymm Neighbourhood Plan. These documents have been created by and for the local population, so provide thorough contextual analysis of the place and character, which is invaluable information for designs coming forward.
- Gates, gateposts and fencing in rural areas should reflect the character of the area and not attempt to introduce suburban characteristics into these areas.
- Sites in the countryside and to a lesser extent the settlements often contain habitats for wildlife such as great crested newts, barn owls, bats and breeding birds. A survey for protected species must be carried out and supported by adequate measures to mitigate the impact on any protected species which are present.
- In addition, developments in the Green Belt must review and respond to the specific Green Belt design guidance within this document, and the Council's House Extensions SPD.





Key | Countryside and settlements

1. Responding to our distinctive waterfront setting
2. Retaining and enhancing our existing assets
3. Enhancing our existing natural assets

03 /
Site Strategy

Introduction

This chapter explains the process of information gathering and analysis, which is applicable for all planning proposals regardless of the type, or scale of development.

The extent and breadth of analysis should be appropriate to the size and location of the site with the aim of understanding and responding positively to the site's constraints, characteristics and the surrounding context to create a distinctive place rooted in the local environment.

This guidance is around the process and considerations, not specific outcomes- applicants must find specific outcomes for their site, using the process outlined on the following pages.

A site under development in Warrington

What is here now?

The site baseline analysis is used to inform a site ambition and should form an understanding of what is here now, taking into account borough wide constraints and opportunities, as well as the ambition – how does this relate to this site?

Recognising existing local design guidance

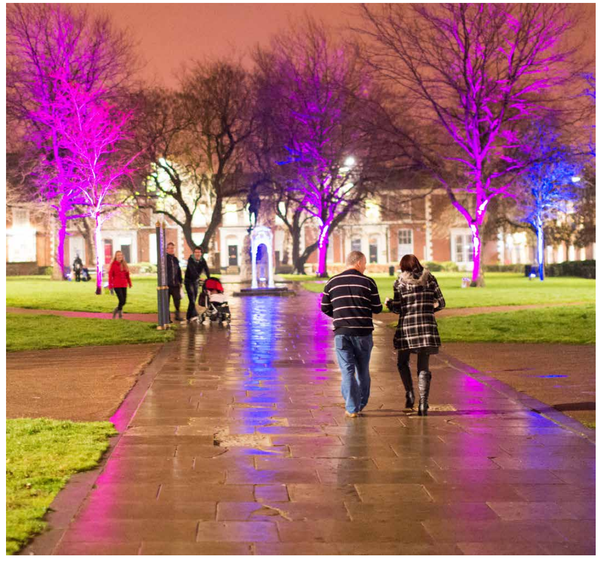
- Section 2.0 Warrington's Places contains initial character appraisals for the borough, which contain specific, wider area considerations and ambitions and should be used as a starting point for site analysis.
- Ascertain whether the site is within an area covered by a conservation area, neighbourhood plan or other local design guidance.
- Warrington has 16 conservation areas, proposals within these areas will be required to demonstrate their understanding and contextual response to the site's heritage, as well as exceptional design quality – see conservation area appraisals for more information.
- Consider how the proposals will relate to any protected sites or designated landscapes.
- The Interactive Map can be used to search for and view information relating to heritage designations, the natural environment, highways etc.
- Review the website for local design guidance / masterplans / SPDs.

Wider Context

- Understand the context – historic, social, built form, landscape, environmental – wind, rain, sun, air quality.
- Consider site features, urban grain, street networks, buildings, landscape, watercourses – understand what makes up the site and locality.
- Developments with no immediate contextual built form must reference the prevailing character of the wider locality, to create a contextual and distinctive place.
- Developments shouldn't reference generic or forgettable developments nearby to justify more of the same.

Record and Analyse

- Conduct a site analysis – ensure there is cohesion between the analysis and design proposals.
- Record and analyse common patterns, site specific constraints and opportunities.
- Scale and scope of analysis must be appropriate to the site – larger sites and more sensitive sites are expected to undertake thorough, wide reaching analysis, whilst smaller sites may keep analysis within the boundaries of the immediate area.
- The undertaking of this process should be demonstrated through a design and access statement.



Understanding the character of the place is essential

How do we respond to the baseline and what do we want the site to be?

- Analysis and client brief should inform a vision for the site – what do we want it to be?
- It is essential that the vision encompasses the ambition for Warrington.
- The vision should set out aspirations for the site, taking into account the existing character and providing a vision for how the site will be developed.
- Note that some considerations span multiple principles- there is crossover for example between Healthy, Happy Places and Climate Resilience. Headings are for guidance, but applicants must recognise that good site ambitions take a holistic approach.
- A suggested approach for how to achieve this is below.
- These headings should be taken and expanded to form site-specific guidance.

Design quality

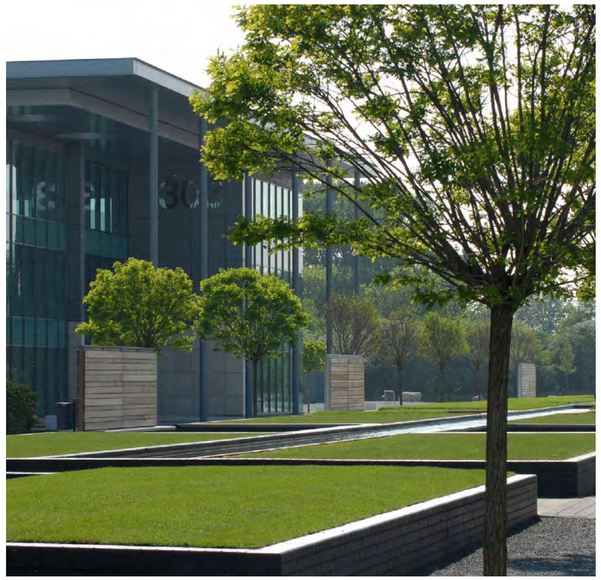
- Assess whether the site benefits from views that should be retained – consider whether these could be used to structure the site layout.
- Consider the topography of the site. Avoid excessive cut and fill exercises which are typically carbon intensive – work with the existing topography of the site.
- Reduce the impact of pylons and overhead lines in line with the National Grid 'design guidelines for development near high voltage overhead lines' document.
- Consider engaging with the Places Matter independent design review panel to maximise design quality.

Leading with landscape

- Enhance and optimise existing natural assets – features such as open space, mature trees or water courses should be used as anchor features.
- Identify potential and existing habitat areas and seek to integrate and enhance them through the design process.
- Ensure that green infrastructure is multi-functional, providing benefits for both people and nature. This includes designated walking trails and cycle paths, recreational and sports facilities and food growing areas.
- Green spaces should be consolidated wherever possible to avoid disjointed or unusable spaces.

Healthy, happy places

- Use design solutions that reduce the opportunity for antisocial behaviour and crime – creating clearly defined boundaries between private and public space, encouraging active frontages overlooking public space.
- Consider site layouts that create buffer areas for protection against noise and air pollution.
- Consider the orientation of buildings to benefit from natural lighting, solar gain and passive ventilation; and to reduce the impact of prevailing winds.
- Make use of tree planting/landscaping to create shade from sunlight, shelter from prevailing winds and to enhance biodiversity.
- Biodiversity must be considered from the outset; good design can provide many opportunities to ensure that new development can capitalise on opportunities to enhance biodiversity.
- Consider orientation for passive ventilation for cooling and infection resilience.
- Integrate landscaping and SuDs, to maximise the holistic benefits including cooling, mental wellbeing and mitigating runoff.
- Consider both small and site-wide energy infrastructure- District heating, smarter power distribution, and renewable energy
- Utilise green roofs and living walls to provide habitats, particularly in sites with limited outdoor space.



Leading with landscape to provide quality public spaces

Climate resilience

- It is essential that proposals address the climate and ecological emergencies from the outset to ensure development is compatible with the need to minimise carbon emissions in line with net zero targets; are resilient to current and expected impacts from the changing climate and helps nature recover. Considered understanding and response to the site context and conditions at a strategic level is the first step in achieving genuinely sustainable development.
- Ensure that development is sufficiently set back from existing site drainage features, such as watercourses and ponds. Site levels should be used to ensure overland water flows are safely conveyed past the development area.
- The Council expects SuDs to be used on all sites at all scales, based on the principles outlined below, in the SuDs Design and Technical Guidance and the latest information from CIRIA.

Leading with identity

- Identify characteristics that support the local distinctiveness of the area and reinforce these throughout the scheme, drawing inspiration from local architectural / landscape character.
- Assess the existing pattern of streets and blocks. Ensure that design is appropriate to the existing urban grain to sensitively transition between existing and new developments ensuring that massing, heights, typologies and tenures sit comfortably together whether adopting a traditional or contemporary design approach.
- Innovative and contemporary design can also sit comfortably with older buildings – new buildings can be sensitive to their surroundings without imitating existing buildings.
- Consider the appropriate parameters for scale and height, should these reflect that of the surrounding area or is it justifiable to deviate from this?
- Consider whether building heights are appropriate in relation to street widths to ensure adequate daylighting is possible.
- Acknowledge existing building lines to preserve and enhance the character of the site.
- Ensure densities are appropriate for the location of the site – higher densities are more often appropriate in developments closer to the Town Centre, lower densities should be used on the edge of settlements.
- Designs which are a pastiche of existing buildings, or do not reference the existing character of the area will not be supported.

Warrington has a distinct and varied identity

Connecting Warrington

- Ensure spaces respond to existing and proposed routes and networks, including cycle lanes, walking trails and public transport.
- Consider the location of the site- will new active travel/(cycle lanes and walking trails)/public transport routes be required?
- Facilitate active travel and social connectivity by clustering amenities- encourage links to shops, health services, schools, parks and leisure, community and cultural facilities.
- Increase densities and uses in response to good public transport infrastructure, to facilitate low carbon travel – consider whether development provides an opportunity to extend or improve existing active travel network, including cycle lanes and walking trails, or to create new routes.
- Provide well-defined streets and spaces that create a clear and legible hierarchy – recognising the need to prioritise active travel and promote access to public transport.
- Promote integrated design of parking, cycle storage, utilities, bin storage, trees, seating, shared or segregated foot/cycle paths to create good legibility throughout the site.
- Logical, linear layouts should be explored in the first instance, ensuring streets are navigable and legible whilst also encouraging safe traffic speeds.
- Avoid dead-ends and cul-de-sacs without through routes for pedestrian, cycling and wheeling.

Inclusive, community led development

- Local communities play a vital role in achieving well designed places – early engagement with The Council and the local community is essential.
- Co-development with local communities can enhance ownership, civic pride and support for future maintenance.
- The development of mixed use schemes can create inclusive, connected communities and can foster greater social cohesion.

Ensuring new places are connected and accessible

Introduction

SuDs present an opportunity to connect people to water as well as providing a more sustainable approach to water management. SuDs must be considered at the outset, and integrated into design proposals.

Integrating SuDs

Principles of Water Management

- Rainfall should be captured and allowed to evaporate or soakaway where it falls- the remainder should be released into the nearest water course, at the same rate and volume as before development or lower.
- Piped water management solutions will be resisted where a SuDs solution is practical- the only exception is where SuDs are demonstrated to be impractical or present an unacceptable pollution risk.
- Existing watercourses should be restored wherever possible to enhance the existing condition of the site.

Designing SuDs

- Water must be treated as a design opportunity and must be integrated into design from the outset. Early understanding of the topography and opportunities for SuDs to work is essential to ensuring the successful implementation of SuDs.
- SuDs can be implemented on projects of all scales, ranging from rain garden planting and green roofs on extension or retrofit projects, smaller swales on minor residential developments to strategic attenuation ponds and soakaway systems on larger development sites
- Natural SuDs which are integrated into landscaping are preferred, utilising natural slopes to signify water instead of relying on visible concrete infrastructure
- Spaces around SuDs features such as attenuation ponds, swales and rain gardens should be seen as an opportunity to encourage interaction with the water, with seating, paths and shelter, subject to safety and easement access requirements.

Technical Standards, Adoption and Maintenance

- The Council expects SuDs to be used on all sites, based on the technical guidance and principles outlined in the Council 's ***SuDs Design and Technical Guidance*** and the latest information from CIRIA.
- Applicants must be mindful that regulations and processes for the creation of SuDs are changing, through the implementation of ***Schedule 3 to the Flood and Water Management Act 2010,***
- Implementation is anticipated in 2024, and will set out a framework for the roll-out of drainage systems, a sustainable drainage system approving body, and national standards on design, construction, operation, and maintenance.
- In conjunction, technical standards will be outlined within the upcoming Warrington Design Code.
- Until updated national and local technical guidance is available, applications will be assessed against the latest guidance from CIRIA.

Small scale SuDs such as rain gardens can be a means of mitigating runoff and improving the quality of the street scene

04 /
Streets, landscape and open space

Introduction

This section explores how our streets, landscape and open space should be designed to achieve The Ambition.

The design of our streets, landscape and open space has a direct influence on the constraints and opportunities identified in the baseline in **Section 01** such as our reliance on the road network, and the public health emergency and climate crises. Well designed streets, landscape and open spaces can improve health and happiness, give places a sense of identity and integrate climate resilience within our new places.

Strategic considerations have been outlined in **Section 3.0 Site Strategy** , which sets out requirements such as wider connectivity and integrated SuDs. This chapter focusses on the next level of detail to understand the principles and components of successful streets, landscapes and open space.

Approach

The guidance is split into two parts. Guidance on streets is first, followed by guidance on landscape and open space.

Both parts follow the same structure, as illustrated in the flowchart to the right. These are principles and components.

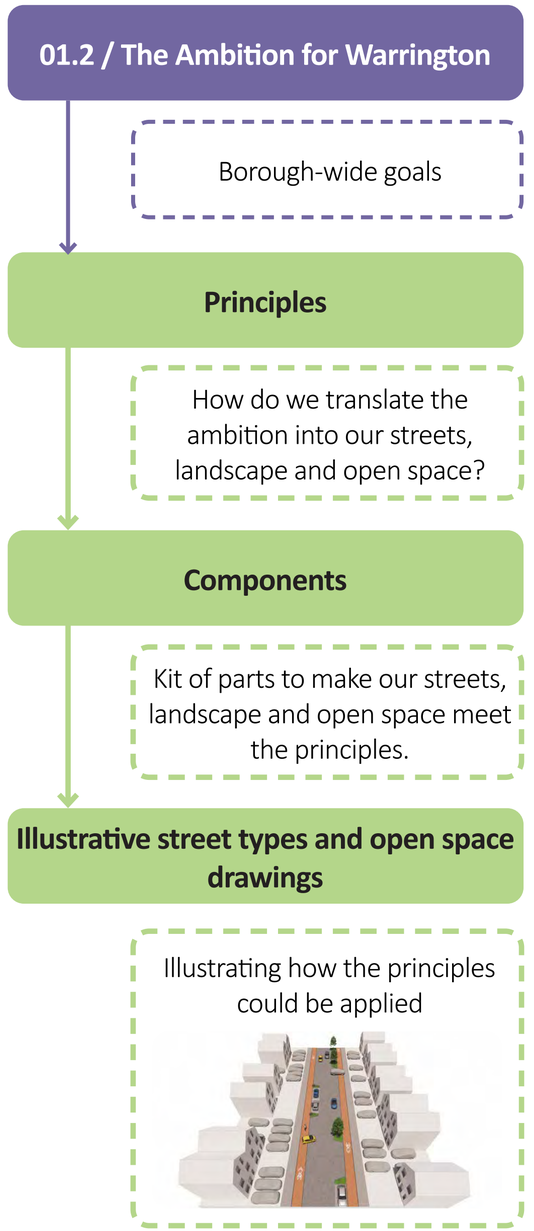
Principles allows streets to contribute towards The Ambition. They outline successful approaches and are not prescriptive – leaving space for innovation and creativity.

Components are parts that make up successful streets, landscape and open space.

- These are not exhaustive but provide a useful reference “kit of parts” for applicants to understand how the principles can be implemented.
- Components can be improved, swapped and replaced to suit the site, character of a place, and latest approaches.
- The way components are used, interface each other and are maintained is a key consideration.

The principles and components are combined in **illustrative diagrams,** which show successful approaches for streets, landscape and open space.

These diagrams are indicative, leaving space for alternative, innovative approaches. Alternative approaches are welcomed, providing they can demonstrate that they have met or exceeded the principles.



Overview

In designing streets, landscape and open space, applicant must be aware of the local and national technical guidance, as well as adoption and maintenance processes.

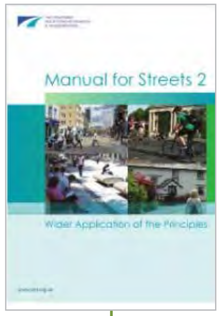
- Specific and technical information, such as widths, species, material specifications are to be confirmed within the Design Code.
- Current technical guidance and adoption standards can be found in the Council 's *Transport Design Guide, Transport Design Guidance Notes, Manual for Streets*, and through discussions with the Council's Environment Services and Transport departments.
- The Council's adoption standards are likely to change with emerging national guidance
- Regulations and processes for the creation of SuDs are changing, through the implementation of *Schedule 3 to the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.*
- Implementation of *Schedule 3* is anticipated in 2024 and will set out a framework for the rollout of drainage systems, a sustainable drainage system approving body, and national standards on design, construction, operation, and maintenance.
- Until then, applications will be assessed against the latest guidance from CIRIA.
- *Manual for Streets 3* is expected in 2024 and may change technical standards and adoption for streets.

Considerations for Applicants

The long term maintenance of streets and open spaces is critical to successful placemaking. Applicants must review the latest technical standards and adoption guidance to inform the design of streets and open spaces.

- The Council will require commuted sums for adopted areas as stated in the *Planning Obligations SPD*.
- Unadopted areas must be robust and maintainable, with consideration given to avoiding reliance on excessive service charges.
- Applicants must balance differing technical requirements of different components.
- Interfaces between adopted and unadopted spaces needs to be navigated and managed from the outset.
- Key considerations have been highlighted on the illustrative street types to make applicants aware of the balance / considerations to be addressed.

Current guidance



Anticipated guidance

The Warrington Design Code

Manual for Streets 3

Expected 2024

Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act

Expected 2024

Principles - Overview

This section outlines the principles for streets, ensuring that these spaces contribute towards the Ambition for Warrington.

Streets should enable movement for everyone, prioritising and enabling active travel

Streets should be designed with an outside in approach, ensuring pedestrian and cycle needs are met first in line with the user hierarchy.

Good examples will enable safe and continuous movement for everyone, prioritising and enabling active travel.

Bad examples will prioritise vehicular movement and create barriers to walking, wheeling and cycling.

Streets should maximise the shared benefits of landscaping

Streets should utilise planting, street trees and SuDs to maximise the shared benefits of greening, including habitat creation, wellbeing, water management and the enhancement of local character.

Good examples will preserve and enhance the green character of the site, integrating high quality planting into streets, improving the character, sustainable drainage and biodiversity of the streetscape.

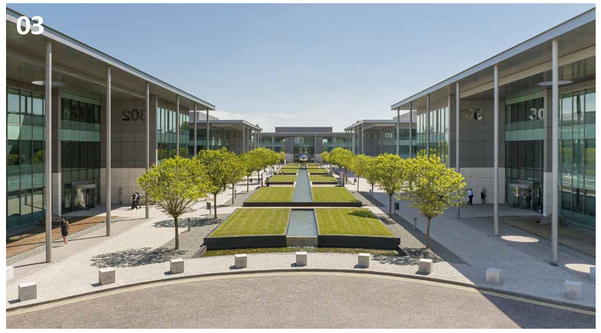
Bad examples will include insufficiently sized or disconnected areas of landscape, creating patch habitats and confusion over ownership.

Streets should contribute towards a sense of place

Streets should be seen as an opportunity to reinforce the distinct positive character of a place. Streets should include spaces to safely sit, stop and play and provide valuable opportunities for social interaction.

Good examples will use materiality and planting to create distinctive places and reinforce the hierarchy of street types.

Bad examples will use generic materials, planting and street designs which do not enhance the unique character of a place.



Key | Principles

1. Active travel streets
2. Street trees and green verges
3. A distinct sense of place

Components - Overview

Components are the parts that make up successful streets. These are not exhaustive but provide a useful reference “kit of parts” for applicants to understand how the principles can be implemented.

Landscaping

- SuDs, street trees and grass verges should be incorporated, providing shared benefits including improvements to biodiversity, mental wellbeing, water quality and amenity space as well as providing a more sustainable approach to water management.
- The inclusion of street trees must be considered from the outset, with provisions to ensure that street trees can thrive – current technical guidance can be found in the ***Warrington Borough Council Tree Policy*** and will be integrated into the upcoming Design Code.
- Landscaping should be protected to avoid damage from cars, cycle and pedestrians – consider the design of kerbs and buffers to protect landscaped spaces.

Movement

Footways & Cycle ways

- Footpath and cycle lanes should be continuous and clearly designated by design and/or signage.

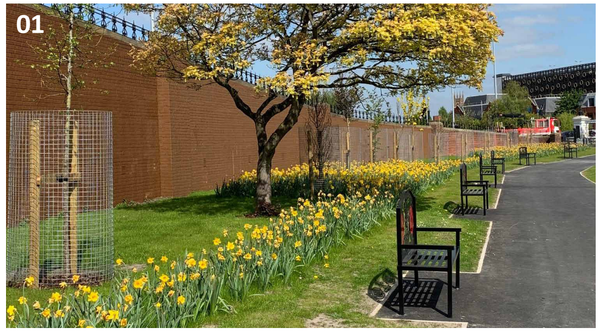
Carriageway

- The highway layout and design within the development should foster safer vehicle user behaviours including safer traffic speeds utilizing considered and innovative traffic calming strategies.
- Good examples will allow safe, continuous accessible and segregated movement where necessary.
- Junction tables, speed humps and rumble strips should be avoided in favour of passive speed reduction measures such as carriageway narrowing.

Materials

- The Councils adoption standards outline the acceptable palette of materials, which consider maintenance and robustness
- The use of permeable paving should be avoided on public highway- the adoption and maintenance of any permeable surfaces must be agreed with the Council.

- Good examples will be innovative, using materials to define the user hierarchy and character of place.
- Materials which are generic, hard to maintain or unadoptable should be avoided.



Key | Components

1. Positive landscaping
2. Integrated cycle and pedestrian route
3. High quality materials

Overview

The illustrative street type diagrams outline how four different street types may be developed to encompass the design principles and components above to achieve The Ambition for Warrington. Roads, pavements, cyclists, SuDs and verges are accommodated differently depending on the nature of the street.

These diagrams are indicative, leaving space for alternative, innovative approaches. Alternative approaches are welcomed, providing they can demonstrate that they have met or exceeded the principles.

The aspiration is to move away from street being principally for the movement of cars, and towards streets as valuable public spaces which contribute the character and sense of place. Applicants can contribute towards this vision through meeting or exceeding the following principles.

04.2.3.1 / Connector Street
Page 39

04.2.3.2 / Residential Street
Page 40

04.2.3.6 / Shared Surface
Page 41

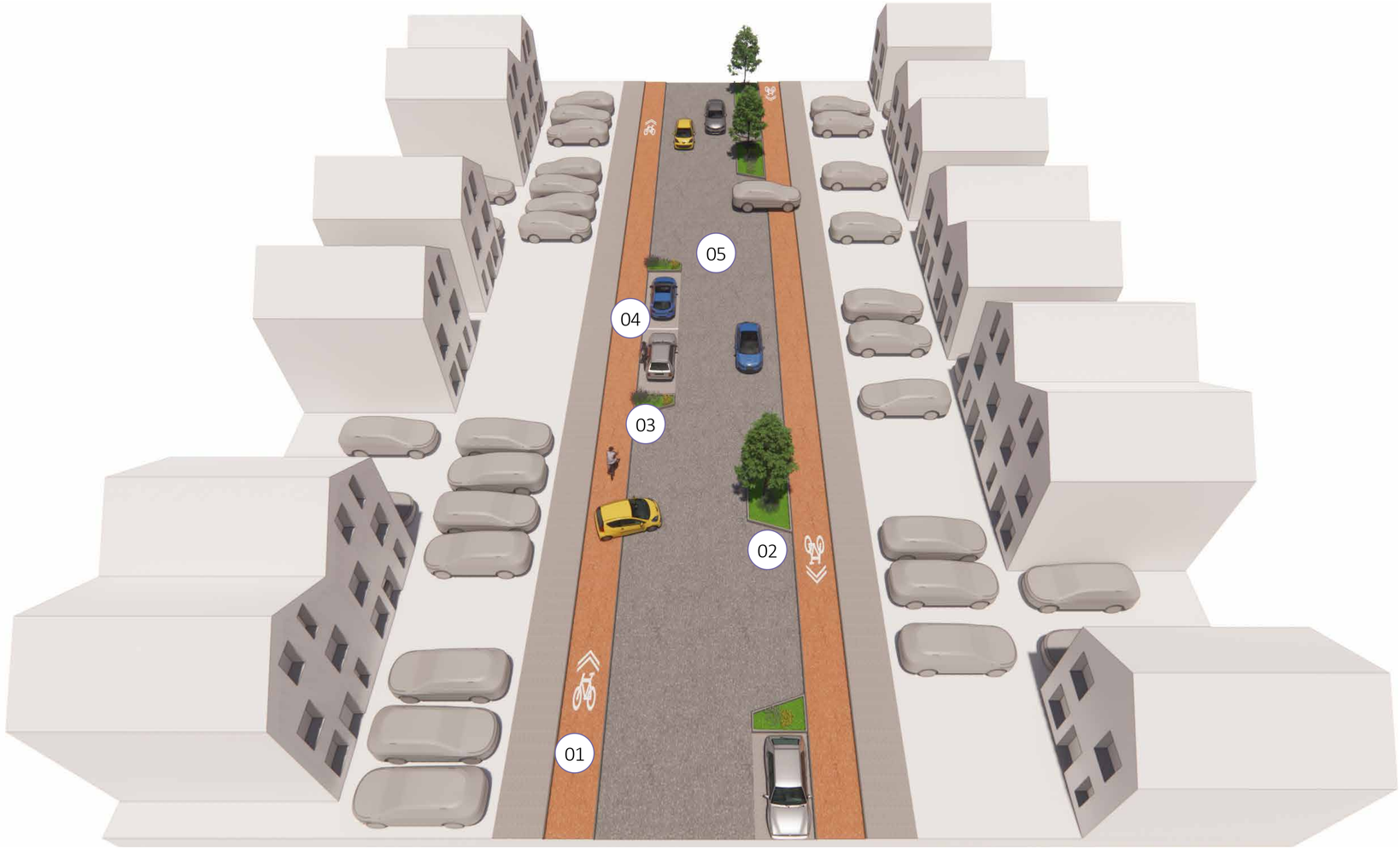
04.2.3.4 / Private Drive
Page 42

Overview

- Main streets, typically in residential areas, with a separate footpath and cycle lane designated by design and/or signage.
- Planted verges are welcomed, and should be used to enhance the character of a place, mental wellbeing, positive streetscape, biodiversity and SuDs benefits
- The adoption, technical design and long term maintenance of streets and open spaces is critical to successful placemaking. See section ***04.1.2 Approach and technical guidance*** for more details.

Design principles

1. Continuous , segregated cycle path- vehicular crossings of a segregated cycle path should be limited as far as possible in the way the design of parking areas is considered.
2. Street planting to delay runoff, calm traffic and improve the street scene. Species must be tolerant to a street environment, and applicants must determine a robust maintenance strategy.
3. Planting could be part of a SuDs network – see technical, adoption and maintenance guidance in section ***04.1.2 Approach and technical guidance*** for more details.
4. Informal visitor parking, unallocated.
5. Carriageway materials – typically constructed to an adoptable standard unless an alternative unadopted approach is being pursued, subject to agreement with the Council.



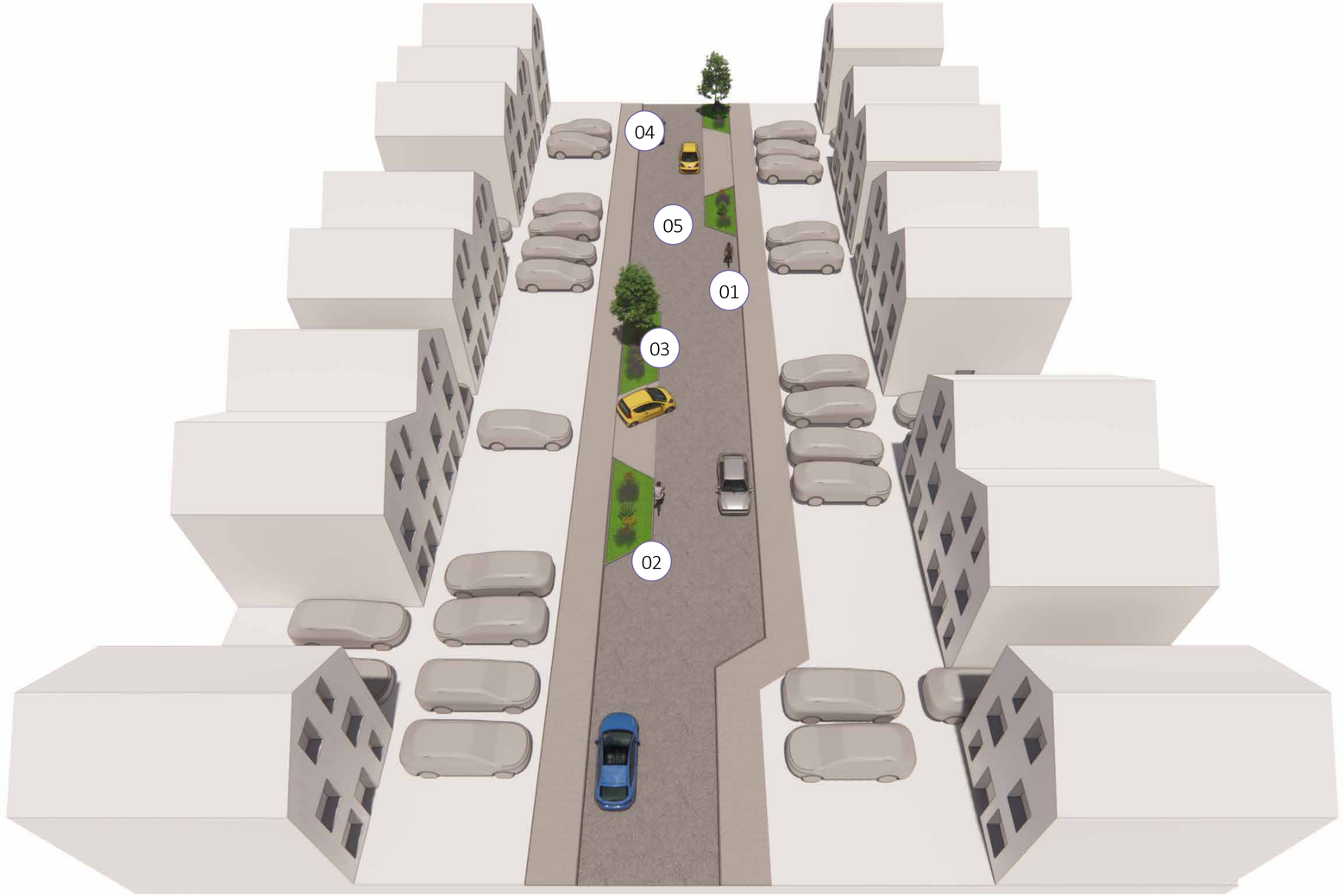
Connector street- illustrative street type drawing

Overview

- General streets in residential areas, carrying a wide range of movement types.
- Cyclists are usually accommodated on the road – although shared foot/cycle paths may be considered.
- Planted verges are welcomed, and should be used to enhance the character of a place, mental wellbeing, positive streetscape, biodiversity and SuDs benefits.
- The adoption, technical design and long term maintenance of streets and open spaces is critical to successful placemaking. See section ***04.1.2 Approach and technical guidance*** for more details.

Design principles

1. Informal cycling on street
2. Street planting to delay runoff, calm traffic and improve the street scene. Species must be tolerant to a street environment, and applicants must determine a robust maintenance strategy.
3. Planting could be part of a SuDs network – see technical, adoption and maintenance guidance in section ***04.1.2 Approach and technical guidance*** for further information.
4. Informal on street visitor parking, unallocated
5. Carriageway materials – typically constructed to an adoptable standard.



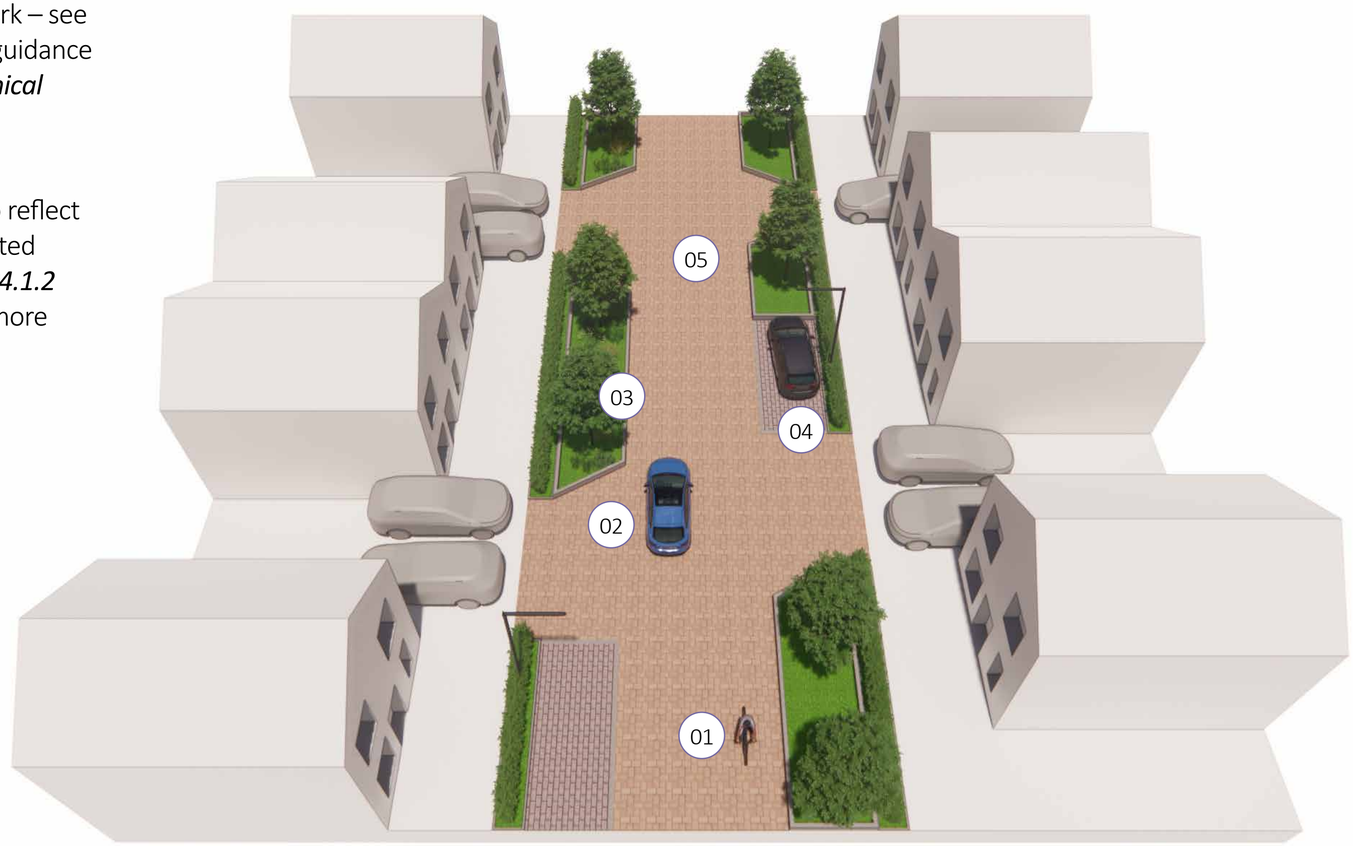
Residential street- illustrative street type drawing

Overview

- Shared surfaces ensure that access and speed is limited to enable the road to be shared by all users.
- Shared surfaces must account for parking needs (visitors and deliveries) street user needs, maintenance and access.
- A maximum of 20 dwellings can be accessed from a shared surface
- Shared surfaces must not be used as through routes for private motor vehicles and must include turning heads
- Block paving or alternative materials (approved by the Council) should be used to highlight the change in hierarchy and use. Signage can be used to signal the change, however preference will be given to design changes in the material and character of the street.
- Shared surfaces must have verges to accommodate utilities corridors and future highways improvements.
- The adoption, technical design and long term maintenance of streets and open spaces is critical to successful placemaking. See section ***04.1.2 Approach and technical guidance*** for more details.

Design principles

1. Informal cycling on street
2. Street planting to delay runoff, calm traffic and improve the street scene. Species must be tolerant to a street environment, and applicants must determine a robust maintenance strategy.
3. Planting could be part of a SuDs network – see technical, adoption and maintenance guidance see section ***04.1.2 Approach and technical guidance*** for more details.
4. Informal visitor parking, unallocated
5. Carriageway materials must be used to reflect a change in character and can be adopted or privately maintained – see section ***04.1.2 Approach and technical guidance*** for more details.



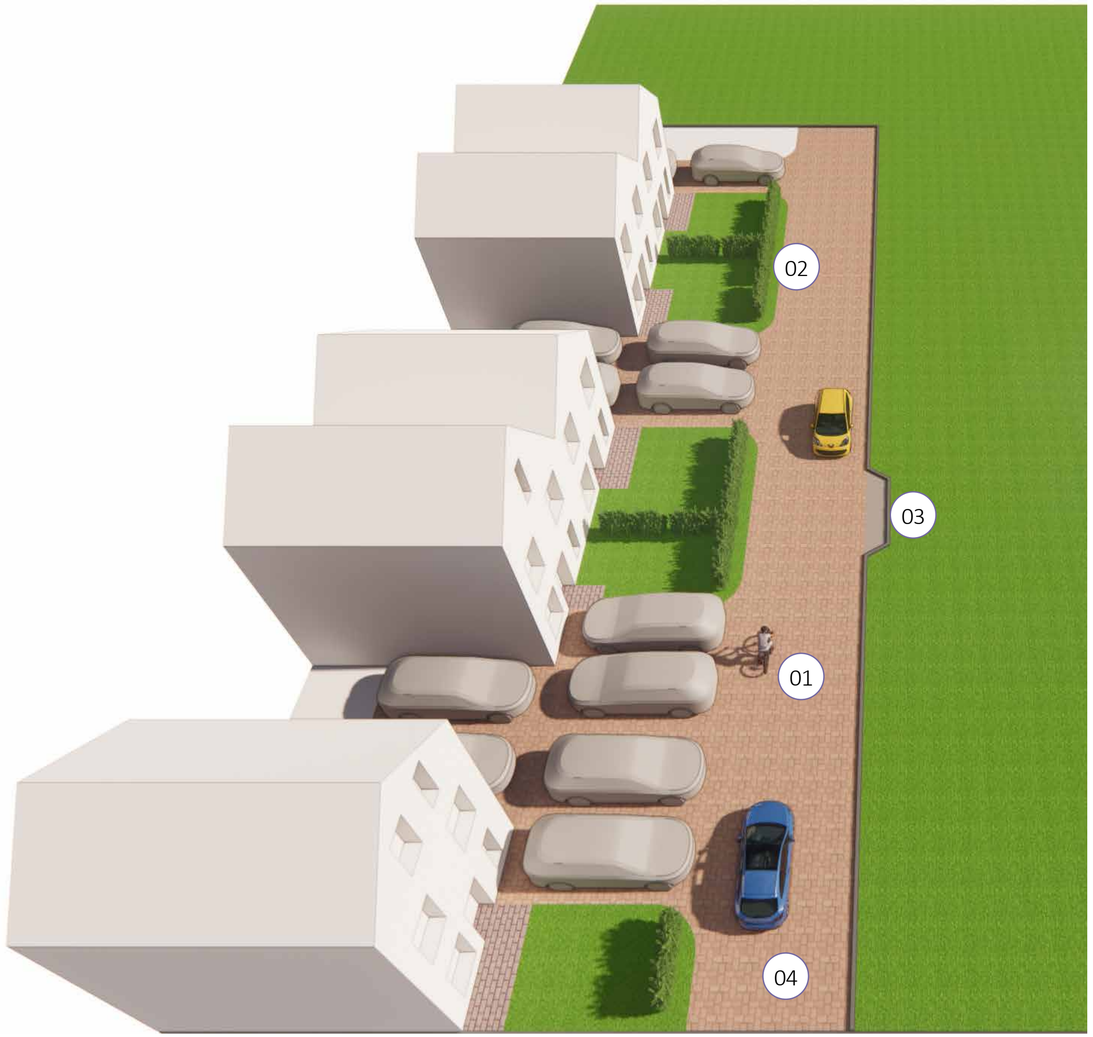
Shared surface - illustrative street type drawing

Overview

- Private drives can serve up to 5 dwellings
- In busier areas, private drives may be required to run adjacent to residential roads. In these instances, the street scene must be considered in terms of the width of the street and the extents of hard surfacing. Landscaping and boundaries are essential to softening the street scene.
- Opportunities to incorporate planting and SuDs must be explored.
- The adoption, technical design and long term maintenance of streets and open spaces is critical to successful placemaking. See section ***04.1.2 Approach and technical guidance*** for more details.

Design principles

1. Informal cycling on street
2. Informal visitor parking on street, unallocated
3. Refuse storage area – consider the location, away from primary vistas and entrances.
4. Carriageway materials must be used to reflect a change in character and can be adopted or privately maintained – see section ***04.1.2 Approach and technical guidance*** for more details.



Private drive- illustrative street type drawing

Principles - Overview

This section outlines the principles for landscape and open space, ensuring that these spaces contribute towards the Ambition for Warrington.

Safe + Accessible

- Proposals must consider all users and ensure that the needs of people of different ages and abilities are met.
- Spaces must be designed to be safe and inclusive, with integrated lighting, passive and active surveillance.
- Spaces should be attractive to a wide range of people and avoid the over dominance of any specific groups.
- Benches should be provided frequently to provide places to rest and should be designed to resist criminal and anti-social behaviour.
- Signage and wayfinding should be clear and consider the needs of people with visual impairments.
- Early consultation with the local police crime prevention unit is essential to designing safe spaces.

Multifunctional

- Landscape and public realm can address several key opportunities and holistic benefits, including considerations for the climate emergency, mental wellbeing, sensory spaces, active travel, accessibility, biodiversity, social interaction, connectivity and visual amenity.
- Proposals must seek to maximise these benefits through considered multi-functional design.
- Spaces must include sustainable urban drainage (SuDs) systems, such as swales, rain garden planting and attenuation ponds (see ***section 4.2.2*** for more details).
- Places should offer a variety of activities, including places to sit, play, walk, meet, chat and dwell. For larger spaces, consider places for events and gatherings.
- Planting should improve visual amenity and present an opportunity for people to interact with nature daily.
- Spaces must improve biodiversity, through planting for pollinators, improving ecological value and improving connections to existing habitats and where appropriate, including small scale ecological contributions and habitats, such as planting to encourage flying insects, bat boxes, bird bricks and bat friendly lighting.
- Green space should be functional, with some unobstructed green space to encourage play.
- Green spaces should be consolidated where possible to maximise functionality and shared holistic benefits.
- Consider how outdoor spaces can be used in adverse weather, such as extreme heat, cold or rain – consider shelter and shade to maximise functionality all year round.

Landscaping at Time Square includes seating, planting, feature lighting and hard surfaces large enough to host events.

Specific

- Landscape and public realm must be locally sensitive, reinforcing the positive unique character and sense of place.
- The character of open spaces should be identified, for example wildflower meadows, parks, allotments- generic terms such as public open space should be avoided.
- Further information on types and amounts of space can be found in the Council's open space standards and *Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment*.
- Designs should consider and respond to the area's heritage and existing local character in partnership with the local community.
- Spaces should be located in response to site specific opportunities and constraints – noise, overlooking, air quality, vistas and connections should all be considered.
- Materials, planting, street furniture can make a unique, attractive, distinctive place.
- Existing quality landscape features should be continued, to ensure a coherent public realm – consider the continuity of materials, street furniture and landscaping.

Resilient and maintainable

- Landscaping must utilise resilient species, such as native species, natural planting, salt and drought-resistant planting and low management planting to minimise maintenance demands.
- Artificial plants and grass should not be used.
- Consider stewardship and maintenance from the outset. How will green spaces be looked after over their lifetime?
- Co-production with local communities will enhance ownership and civic pride and support for future maintenance.
- Landscape management plans will be required for all developments, detailing the strategy for future maintenance. This is important for both adopted and unadopted areas.
- The Council will seek commuted sums for maintenance if it is to adopt areas of open space as confirmed in the *Planning Obligations SPD*.
- Surfacing materials must be maintainable, and adhere to the Council 's standards in adopted areas.
- Unadopted areas should consider the ease of maintenance, repair and replacement when selecting materials.
- Street furniture should be robust whilst reflecting and enhancing the character of the area.
- Planting should be rooted and planted clear of the highway boundary to prevent encroachment.

Key | Components

1. A mix of hard and soft landscaping with distinct materials and planting to give a sense of identity
2. Maintenance and stewardship is a key consideration for landscape and open space

Components - Overview

Components are the parts that make up successful landscape and open space. These are not exhaustive but provide a useful reference "kit of parts" for applicants to understand how the principles can be implemented.

SuDs

- SuDs will be expected on all sites, and can include swales, rain gardens, planting, soft landscaping.
- Preference is given to natural design techniques which integrate SuDs into the landscape such as gentle slopes to signify the presence of water, rather than relying on visible concrete infrastructure.
- SuDs should be seen as an opportunity to connect people to water and enhance the overall development, through maximising the shared holistic benefits of SuDs systems. Larger features such as attenuation ponds should be seen as assets, with planting, routes, seating and frontages around the periphery to ensure they can be used as amenity space.
- Planting of all scales should increase biodiversity and visual amenity. See technical, adoption and maintenance guidance in section *04.1.2 Approach and technical guidance* for applicant considerations.

Soft landscape, planting, trees

- Spaces must improve biodiversity, through planting for pollinators, improving ecological value and improving connection to existing habitats.
- Landscape and planting should address opportunities to benefit mental wellbeing, accessibility and connectivity whilst providing places for social interaction, sensory spaces and visual amenity.
- Spaces must enhance local character and provide opportunities for social interaction, accessibility and connectivity. Designs must consider planting for sensory spaces and improved residential amenity.
- Proposals must seek to maximise these benefits through considered multi-functional design
- See technical, adoption and maintenance guidance in section *04.1.2 Approach and technical guidance* for applicant considerations.

01

02

Key | Components

1. Small scale landscaping adds character to streetscapes and provide sustainable urban drainage
2. Characterful planting giving a distinct identity to an industrial development
3. Diverse planting including low level shrubs and trees, coupled with quality materials to give a distinct sense of place

03

Furniture and Art

- Materials, planting, street furniture and types of spaces can all contribute to creating a unique, attractive, distinctive place.
- Public art should be considered to further enhance the sense of place.
  - Proposals must be site specific and responsive to the context and should seek to be co-developed with the local community.
  - Early engagement with the Council, community groups and artists is essential.
- Street furniture should be robust whilst reflecting and enhancing the character of the area.

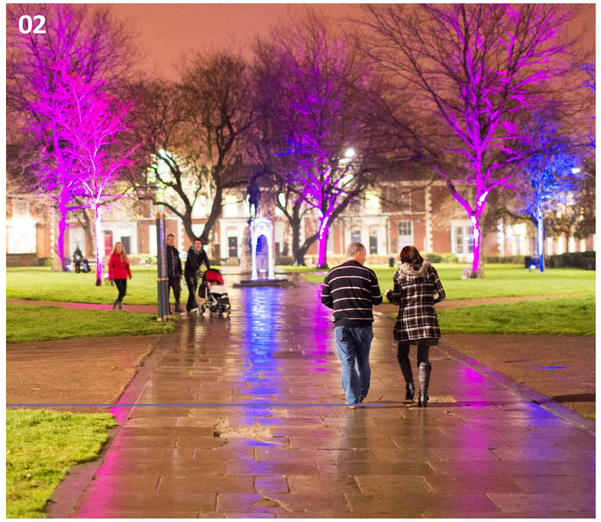
Routes

- Pathways should be accessible and should provide frequent rest stops with sufficient shading.
- Cuttings and informal routes are welcomed, but must consider accessibility, maintenance and safety.
- Consider desire paths, and the simplest routes between buildings and places. These should be facilitated through design.

Play

- Play spaces must be varied and used to develop the unique character of a place.
- Surveillance, proximity and accessibility are crucial to the success of a play space.
- Play spaces must be varied and encourage flexible and imaginative play – consider the balance of formal play, sports and incidental play.
- Spaces should cater for different ages and abilities and encourage learning and exploring.
- Spaces should be located away from constraints such as noise or poor air quality.
- Boundaries and buffer zones should be seen as opportunities to increase landscaping and planting, enhancing the setting of the play space.

- For good practice principles and examples, see *Playlink design principles* and guidance from *Play England (linked in Appendix A.5).*
- Further details are contained in *Planning Obligations SPD Appendix 1 Design Guidance Notes for Children's Equipped Play Areas.*



Key | Components

1. A varied play space using colourful play equipment and surfacing.
2. Well-lit, inviting and accessible routes through a green space

Overview

The principles and components have been brought together in the illustrative open space diagram, which shows one way in which an open space can reflect the Ambition for Warrington.

Other approaches are welcomed provided they can demonstrate that the principles in ***Section 04.3.1*** have been met. Larger areas of open space would need to consider sports playing pitch provision as set out in the open space standards within the Local Plan and the Planning Obligations SPD.

Illustrative Open Space

1. Multifunctional space, including raised planters play spaces, open space, seating and water
2. Biodiversity and identity is enhanced through varied planting
3. Rain garden planting and attenuation ponds contribute to a sustainable urban drainage system
4. Attenuation ponds can be a positive feature, with routes and paths to allow them to integrate into the landscape, provided that safety considerations are addressed
5. Furniture and public art enhances the unique character of the place
6. Shelter provides shelter from the sun, wind or rain
7. Routes are level, welcoming and wide to comfortably accommodate all users

Indicative illustration showing how the principles can be achieved

05 /
Buildings, communities and places

Introduction

This section outlines how The Ambition can be realised through our buildings, communities, and places. The guidance uses principles to outline expectations for all buildings, and then gives additional information for specific typologies which are typical in Warrington.

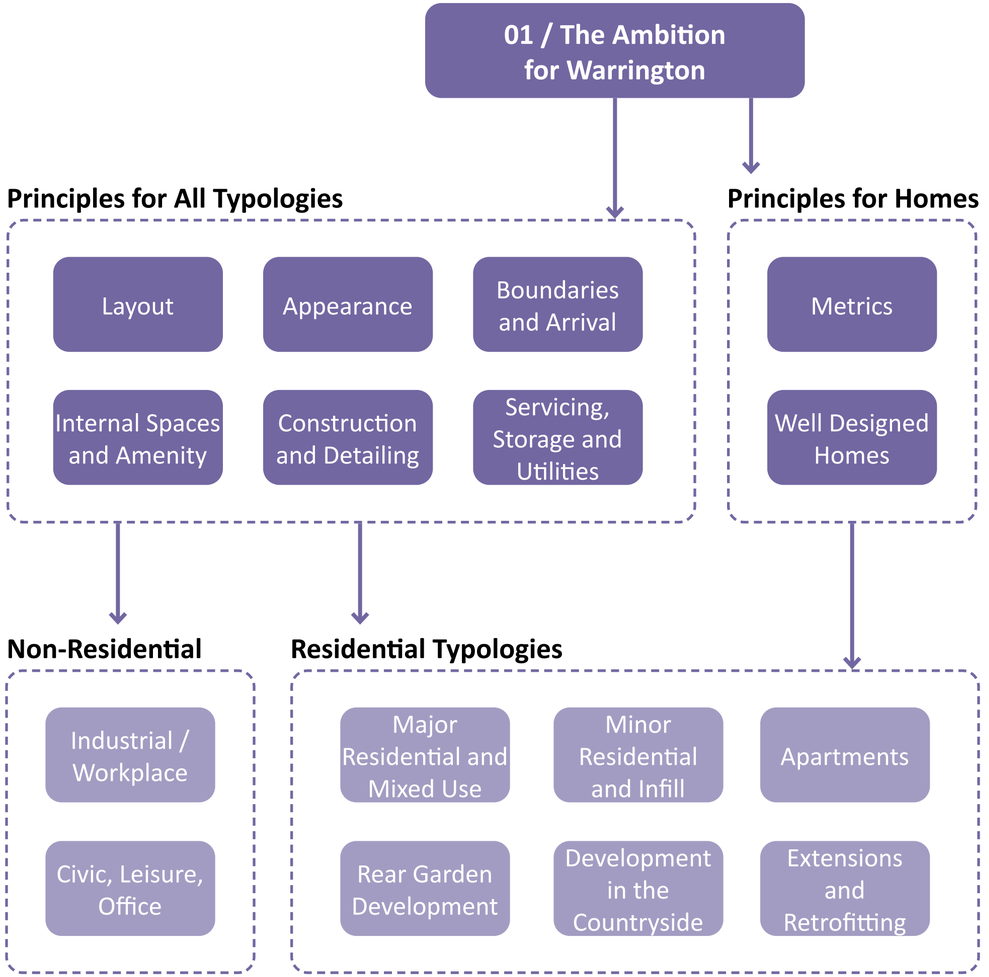
Principles for all typologies reflect good practice to guide developments regardless of their typology, scale or location in the borough these are:

- Layout
- Appearance
- Boundaries and Arrival
- Inside the building
- Construction and detailing
- Servicing and Utilities

Specific typologies are then explored in more detail in the subsequent pages. This includes specific additional guidance which expands on the principles and explains the expectations for different types of development. This guidance is supplemented by illustrative typology drawings, explaining how the principles can be brought together for high-quality buildings, communities and places.

- Major Residential and Mixed Use
- Minor Residential and infill
- Apartments
- Rear garden developments
- Extensions and retrofit
- Developing in the countryside
- Workplace

The typologies are not exhaustive, and it is recognised that additional typologies may come forward. In the absence of relevant typology specific guidance, the principles for all typologies should be adopted as a starting point.



Layout

The layout concerns how buildings are positioned on a site, and how the space in between buildings is used. Proposals should consider the principles below:

Orientation

- Positioning buildings to maximise solar gain, improve natural lighting and benefit from natural ventilation.
- Consider the building line – a consistent building line improves legibility to the street. Occasional variations can add character but should be considered and deliberate to enhance the street scene or mark key gateways or nodes in the site.

Access

- Consider where the “front” of the building is in relation to the prevailing character of the area, and how the site is accessed. Buildings should be orientated to screen car parking and servicing.

Greening

- How can the footprint of the building be scaled and located to maximise opportunities for greening? Consider how boundary treatments, planting, amenity space and SuDs have been integrated into the space.

Grouping

- Consider how the building relates to its neighbours, both within and beyond the site boundary. Address the space between buildings, in terms of function, scale, access to daylight and connectivity.
- Key buildings may be appropriate at key junctions, corners or transitions in character areas. These may feature different materiality, scale, form or roofscapes whilst maintaining a contextually appropriate response.
- Facilitate the principles of 20-minute neighbourhoods to ensure accessibility, and proximity to amenities without over reliance on the car.

01

Key | Layout

1. Integrating landscaping, water features and routes within an employment site
2. Considering green space and overlooking in a residential development

02

Appearance

The aspects of a building or place which determines the visual impression the building or place makes, including the external built form of the development, its architecture, materials, decoration, lighting, colour and texture.

Form, scale, mass and height

- Buildings must relate to their prevailing context, in terms of form, scale, mass and height. Buildings which are significantly taller than the prevailing context should be avoided.
- The scale of buildings be considerate of overshadowing and must avoid being overbearing on the street scene.
- Higher density residential buildings should be located in and around the Town Centre and other sustainable locations as defined by Policy DEV1 of the adopted Local Plan.
- Tall buildings should refer to ***Historic England Advice Note 4*** for guidance on tall building design.
- The form of surrounding existing or historic buildings may be a useful reference for new buildings, for example in areas with a distinct, historic industrial or residential character.
- Applicants should however be mindful that new developments shouldn't reference generic or forgettable developments nearby to justify more of the same.
- Changes in height and form between neighbouring buildings and new proposals must be sympathetically managed, with stepping in height to mediate change and retain the character of the street scene.
- Massing should reference the prevailing urban grain and character of surrounding developments. Larger forms must consider how to reduce their perceived mass, through elevational design and changes in height.
- All development should take account of overlooking/privacy issues in respect of both existing and proposed neighbouring properties, as detailed in ***5.2.2 Principles for All Homes***.

Elevational design

- Elevations should be designed using detailing, order, and materiality to add interest. The language of an elevation should be consistent, and reflective of the prevailing character of the area.
- Developments should present façade design analysis, outlining how the local context has informed the design of the proposal.
- Successful facade designs balance composition, scale and depth with materiality.
- Contemporary design approaches are most successful when referencing the existing local character and use of materials.
- Long extents of flat elevations should be avoided. Instead, variations in window reveals, openings, balconies, and projections in the mass should be explored to add variety and break up the visual dominance of the building.
- For major developments, 1:20 bay studies should be presented with the application to demonstrate how the materials are appropriate, detailed to shed water away to stop staining, are efficient, maintainable, and adapted to the building's orientation.
- Where brickwork is proposed, a full brick reveal is the preferred window detail – in the absence of this, it should be demonstrated how depth and variety will be achieved in an alternative way.
- Nature recovery should be integrated into façade designs wherever possible, with the inclusion of elements such as swift bricks and bat boxes.

Appearance (continued)

The aspects of a building or place which determines the visual impression the building or place makes, including the external built form of the development, its architecture, materials, decoration, lighting, colour and texture.

Activating the streetscape

- Avoid blank elevations fronting the street.
- For residential developments, dual aspect homes should be provided on street corners with front doors and habitable rooms facing the streets.
- Other types of development should place main entrances and active spaces at the ground floor, such as receptions, workspaces or shops.
- If a service function must be located on a primary elevation, the design of the façade must be exceptional to avoid extents of unattractive or blank streetscape.

Materials

- Prioritise materials with low embodied carbon.
- Local materials should be considered to both reflect the local character and minimise carbon emissions associated with transporting materials to site.
- Materials which improve biodiversity, such as green roofs and walls, should be considered, particularly in urban areas.
- Materials should be robust to suit the building's setting, for example ground floors are more suited to materials like brickwork rather than lightweight panelling.
- A truthful and honest approach to materiality is usually more successful, for example heavier elements such as stone or brick meeting the ground. This can be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- Render is not a preferred material due to issues with staining from rainwater and pollution.
- Render may be considered on a case-by-case basis only when it is the most contextually appropriate material, and a sufficient approach to detailing and maintenance can be demonstrated.
- Designs must consider indoor air quality, and the mitigation of off-gassing and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) after construction work.
- Both material choice and the provision of adequate ventilation is essential to addressing indoor air quality.

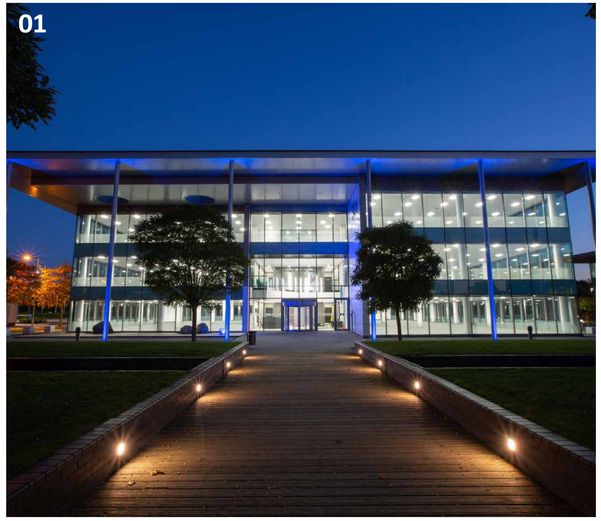
Key | Appearance

1. A contemporary brick apartment building which uses stepping to address mass and scale
2. Contemporary elevational materials referencing Warrington's historic wire industry
3. A variety of office and leisure buildings, with extensive overlooking and ground floor activation

Boundaries and arrival

Boundary treatments can contribute towards successful streetscapes and provide clear thresholds between public and private spaces.

- Boundaries can consist of walls and fences, railings and planting. The choice of materials should be reflective of the local character.
- Continuity with existing boundary treatments can help to seamlessly integrate old and new development and can also be used to define character areas within a development.
- Planting can be a successful means of improving the streets scene whilst provide an aspect of privacy and security.
- Planting proposals should be mindful of visibility splays from vehicular entrances (More information is available within the Transport Design Guide).
- Front doors should be inviting, covered and safe. Additional guidance is provided in the *Secured by Design Homes Guide (2023).*
- Designs should emphasise the entrances and consider using tactile materials and design elements which give a sense of the human scale.



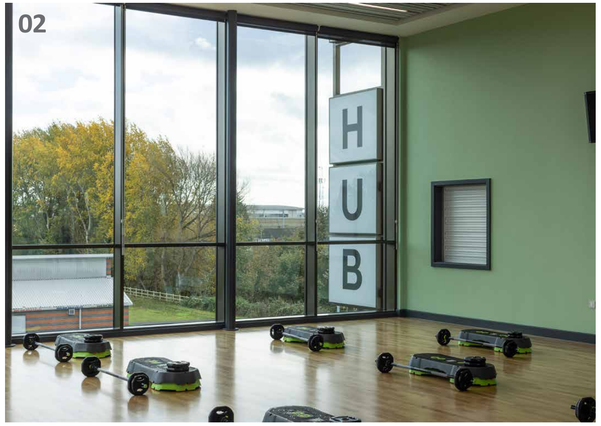
Key | Boundaries and arrival

1. A clearly defined entrance route with quality boundary treatments and landscaping
2. An inviting, covered building entrance

Internal spaces and amenity

Spaces within buildings of any function should provide healthy, happy internal environments.

- Internal layouts must be developed to maximise opportunities for daylighting, to reduce reliance on electric lighting.
- Developments must consider accessibility, both generally and for specific users with protected characteristics.
- External amenity spaces must consider air quality, noise and overlooking.



Key | Internal spaces and amenity

1. A library with high ceilings, and generous glazing to maximise natural light
2. An exercise space which maximises overlooking of existing green space

Construction and detailing

Considering how the building is built and detailed, for robust, beautiful and climate resilient development.

Lifecycle and longevity

- Developments must consider the lifecycle of the building and the reduction of carbon from cradle to grave.
- All buildings should demonstrate a fabric first approach, achieving the best performance from the building fabric, from the outset, for the life of the building.
- Buildings should be designed with deconstruction in mind, reducing waste and incorporating components which can be reused.
- The lifespan and maintenance of materials must be considered to ensure they remain functional and beautiful for the lifecycle of the building.
- Considerations and provisions must be made for the maintenance and replacement of materials during the building's lifecycle.

Modern methods of construction (MMC)

- The Council is fully supportive of innovative approaches to delivery, such as modern methods of construction (MMC).
- This broad term refers to a range of innovative technologies aimed at improving the delivery and construction process, removing waste, and increasing value.
- Examples can include off-site manufacture, prefabrication, and modular construction.
- MMC should be used to create buildings of equal design quality to traditionally constructed buildings.
- Where MMC doesn't allow for traditional materials to be used, materials must be considered for their durability and visual appropriateness with the surrounding context.

01

Key | Construction and detailing

1. A residential site under construction
2. Exposed steel structure within Warrington Market

02

Servicing, Storage and Utilities

Principles for how to integrate practicalities such as plant, utilities and service access into designs.

Low and zero carbon technology

- Developments must work to address the Climate Emergency through their building services strategy.
- Further information is available within the *Warrington Climate Emergency Strategy (2022)*.
- Technologies such as zero carbon heating and non-fossil fuel-based systems for heating, cooking and hot water should be prioritised.
- Externally, microgeneration using solar panels, wind turbines or heat pumps should be considered and integrated into designs from the outset. Consideration should be given to the use of other solar products, such as in-roof panels or solar tiles/slates in sensitive locations.
- Biomass based systems are unlikely to be appropriate due to air quality impacts. Ground Source Heat Pumps and Air Source Heat Pumps are preferred – see the *Environmental Protection SPD* for more information.
- Developments must ensure that users are fully aware of how to operate any low and zero carbon technology, through detailed handover information and training where necessary.
- The installation of solar panels is permitted development in many instances.

Integrating plant and utility boxes

- Externally mounted utilities must be kept to a minimum and in unobtrusive locations.
- Utilities such as post boxes, meter boxes, flues, dry riser panels and access controls must be considered from the outset and integrated into the design to reduce their visual prominence.
- External plant equipment such as air conditioning units and air source heat pumps should be located to mitigate visual impact to frontages, the roofscape and the street scene where possible. Screening of equipment may be required and should be discussed on a case by case basis.

Substations

- Substations and other large-scale plant buildings must be integrated into designs from the outset.
- Siting and screening to reduce visual prominence is essential.

Service access

- Details on access and vehicular movements is provided within *DGN1: Parking & Servicing* and *Standards for Parking in New Development (2015).*
- Main entrances and goods entrances should be separate, and clearly designed to distinguish between the two functions.

01

02

Key | Servicing, storage and utilities

1. Solar panels on a home
2. Considered and concealed rooftop plant avoids impacting the town's historic roofscapes

Principles for homes

These principles should be applied to all types of residential development, to ensure spaces are correctly sized, address privacy and have sufficient amenity space.

Well Designed Homes

- All homes should make provision for home working in either private desk spaces or shared home working lounges.
- Differences in tenure, such as affordable housing, should not be recognisable through architecture, landscaping, or other design features.
- Private amenity space such as gardens and balconies are essential for mental wellbeing.
- The back of pavement and front of home relationship must be considered to ensure privacy, accessibility, and a positive streetscape. The relationship between amenity spaces, access and car parking is essential to a successful streetscape. Further information is available in the ***Homes England Building for Healthy Life Guidance*** and ***Appendix A-1, Residential Car Parking Guidance***.

Homes for All

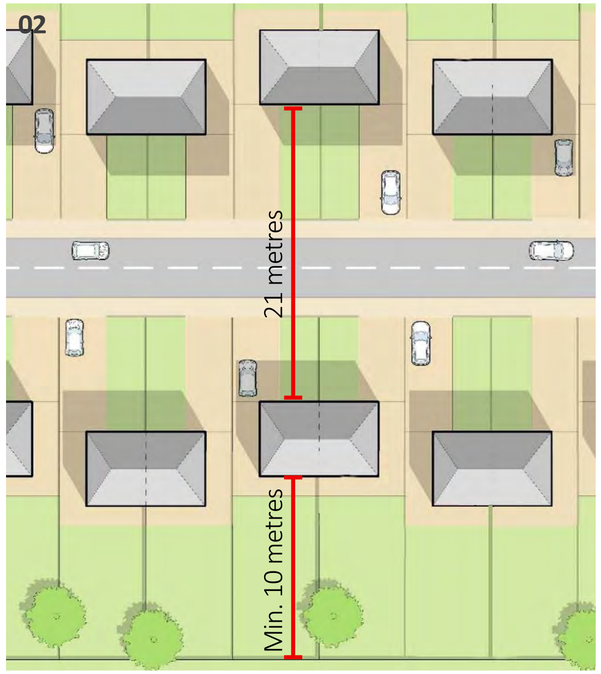
- All homes must address Warrington's diverse population. Policy DEV2 of the adopted Local Plan outlines the requirements regarding accessible homes, affordable homes and homes for older people. Regard should also be had to the ***HAPPI principles*** and ***Lifetime Homes Standards***.
- To ensure liveability, all places to live must meet or exceed ***Nationally Described Space Standards***.

Overlooking distances:

- There should be 21m to neighbour's main facing habitable room windows. These distances should be increased where there are significant differences in site levels or where development is adjacent to properties of different heights. Changes in site levels will be assessed on a case by case basis taking in to account the characteristics of the site.
- An additional 3m separation distance would normally be required for each additional floor/ storey between properties.
- In denser Town Centre schemes, there may be flexibility in overlooking distance if the design is right and in conversion schemes.
- Any reduction must demonstrate how privacy, loss of amenity and access to daylight have been considered.

Garden depths

- A minimum depth of 10m from rear elevation of any proposed extension/dwelling to rear garden boundary.



Key | Principles for homes

1. Building for a Healthy Life and the Nationally Described Space Standards
2. Overlooking distances and minimum garden depths

The typologies section is a non-exhaustive list of common typologies that are emerging across the borough. All typologies should use the preceding general principles as a starting point, and then the typology-specific guidance for more detail about what the proposal should address.

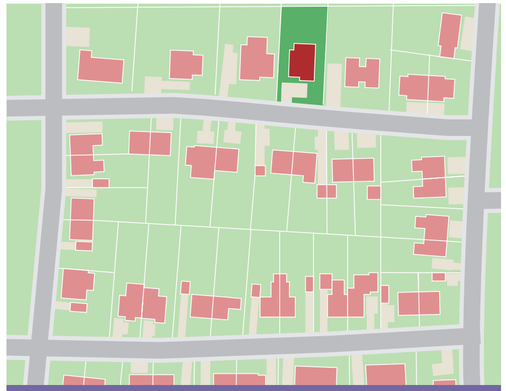
Developments which do not explicitly fall into one of the typology descriptions should respond to the preceding general principles in the first instance. If proposals are similar in form or function to one or more of the typologies, applicants may also find some of the typology guidance a useful reference point.

05.3.1 / Major residential and mixed use
Developments of 10 or more homes
Page 58

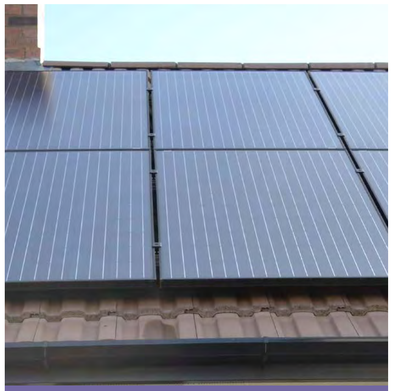
05.3.3 / Apartments
Higher density developments containing multiple dwellings within the same building
Page 60

05.3.5 / Developments in the Countryside
Proposals located within Warrington's countryside and settlements
Page 64

05.3.2 / Minor Residential and Infill
Developments of less than 10 homes, including individual dwellings
Page 59



05.3.4 / Rear Garden Development
Suburban development on existing residential land, typically in rear gardens
Page 62



05.3.6 / Extensions and Retrofit
Extending and adapting our existing buildings
Page 66

05.4.1 / Workplace
Employment uses including industrial and warehouses
Page 67

Major residential and mixed use

Definition

Developments of 10 or more homes, sometimes incorporating leisure, retail and/or employment uses. Typically found in inner Warrington, suburban areas of Warrington and the larger settlements in the countryside.

Key considerations

Development sites of this scale sometimes lack immediate built form to reference, so may need to look at the prevailing character of the wider locality or establish a distinctive character of their own. Sites may be expected to produce a site specific Design Code, particularly if a site is of a significant scale – see ***Appendix A-4*** for further information.

Design Principles

1. Plugging in to existing transport networks.
2. Centrally located landscape and play space, integrating rain garden planting.
3. SuDs integrated into the streetscape.
4. Clear, legible street hierarchy and pedestrian permeability.
5. Large scale SuDs features are integrated into the landscape. Paths and planting make the ponds valuable green amenity space.
6. Homes are contextually responsive but contemporary, giving the site a distinct identity.
7. Working with existing natural features such as mature trees.
8. Mixed approach to car parking, for a positive streetscape – See ***appendix A-1*** for more details.
9. Minimum garden depths and overlooking distances are achieved – see ***05.2.2 Metrics*** for more details.

Indicative illustration showing how the principles can be achieved

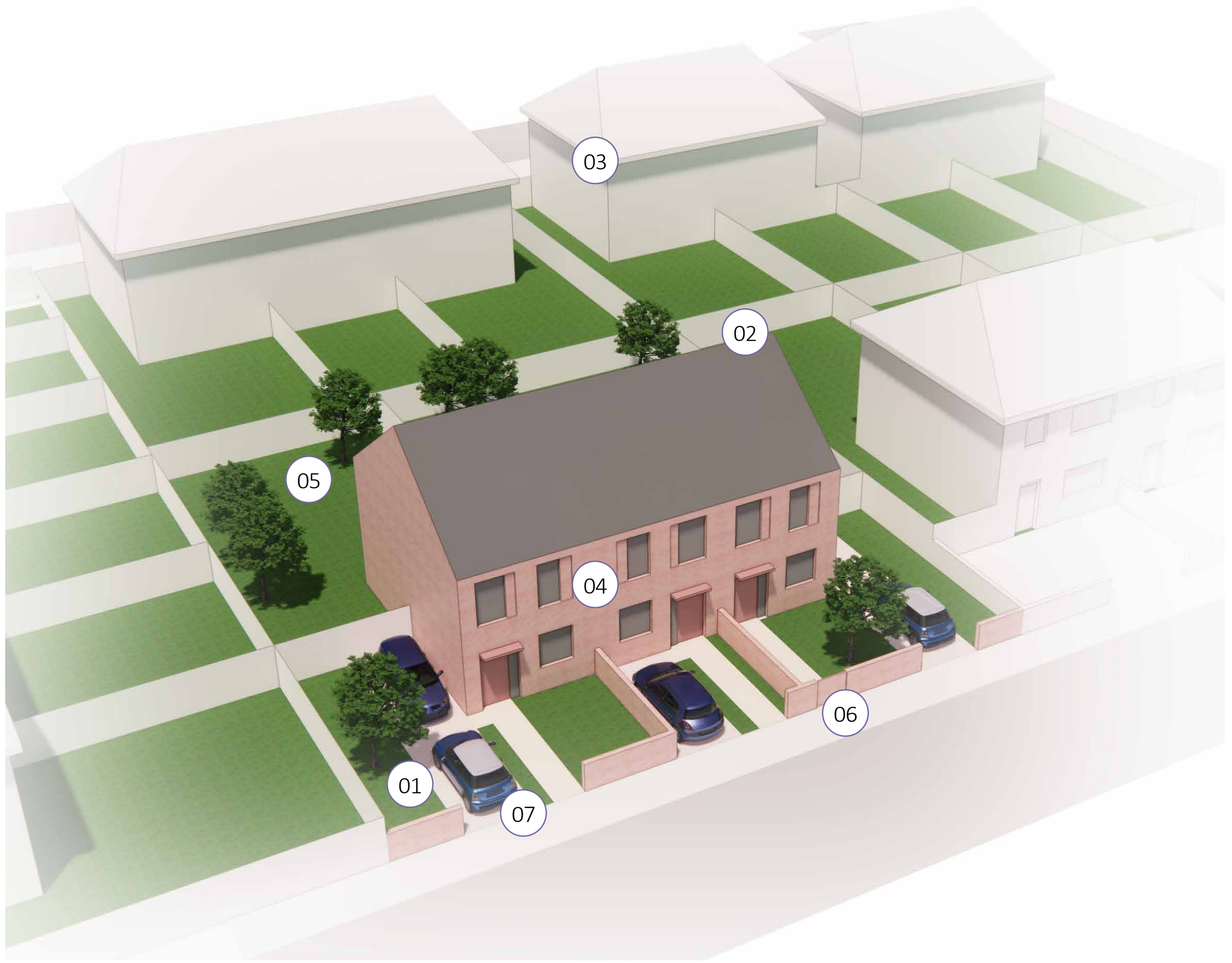
Minor residential and infill

Definition

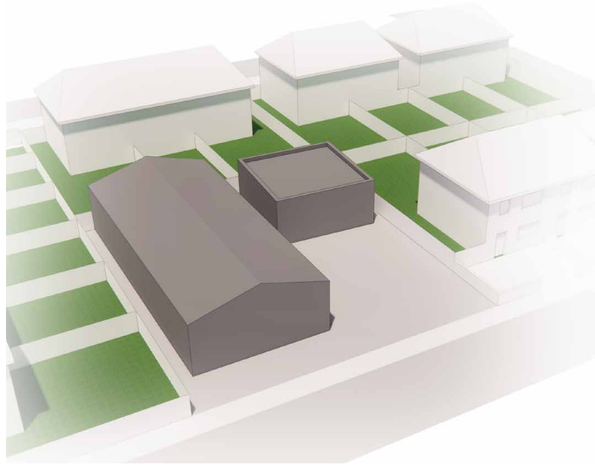
Developments of less than 10 homes, including individual dwellings. Infill sites are typically vacant or underutilised land, usually surrounded by existing residential development. Minor residential and infill sites are found across the borough.

Design Principles

1. Small scale SuDs such as rain gardens should be incorporated on even small scale sites.
2. Proposals maintain the existing building line and roof line.
3. The existing urban grain and built form is reflected in the new proposals.
4. The façade design and materiality references the prevailing residential character in a contemporary way.
5. Minimum garden depths and overlooking distances are achieved – see ***05.2.2 Metrics*** for more details.
6. The scale, type and materiality of existing boundary treatments is maintained.
7. Car parking location and screening is considered to avoid negatively impacting the street scene – See ***appendix A-1*** for more details.



Indicative illustration showing how the principles can be achieved



A typical infill site before redevelopment, showing a typology and built form which is not reflective of the prevailing residential character.

Apartments

Definition

Higher density developments containing multiple dwellings within the same building. Typically found in Town Centre, inner Warrington and suburban areas, although may also be appropriate on countryside development sites as part of a larger residential scheme.

Key Considerations

- Mass and scale vary depending on the area and existing context, with taller schemes expected in the Town Centre. The scale and mass must be justified through a detailed contextual analysis. Additional guidance is provided for the Town Centre in the ***Town Centre SPD***.
- Apartments must reflect the prevailing materiality of the surrounding buildings but must not become a pastiche – traditional domestic scale features such as traditional pitched roofs, dormers and entrance canopies do not always successfully translate to larger apartment buildings.
- Apartment buildings should consider shared places to work, socialise and exercise, to improve mental wellbeing and facilitate social interaction for residents.
- Internal shared space could include gyms, workspaces or lounge facilities, whilst external space could utilise areas of flat roof.
- Green spaces can also contribute to biodiversity and rainwater attenuation through considered landscape design.

Private amenity space is essential for mental wellbeing. The following minimum size of external private amenity space will be required:

- 1 bedroom: 5sqm minimum private external amenity size
- 2 bedrooms: 7sqm minimum private external amenity size
- 3 or more bedrooms: 9sqm minimum private external amenity size
- Where the above figures are not achievable, developments must demonstrate how the amenity provision has been provided across the wider scheme or local area .

Key | Apartments

1. A contemporary brick apartment building which uses stepping to address mass and scales
2. An exercise space is an example of valuable shared amenity

Key Considerations

1. A contemporary form which responds to the local scale.
2. A contemporary approach to the proportion, scale and order of the façade is welcomed, whilst still being reflective of the existing context.
3. Alternative uses such as amenity of commercial space at the ground floor, with generous glazing to activate the street.
4. Ground floor apartments and individual front doors can offer activation to the street but must be mindful of resident's privacy and security, particularly in busier, urban areas.
5. Practical uses at ground floor such as refuse stores, cycle stores and car park entrances are acceptable but must be considered and integrated into the design. Large expanses of blank façade must be avoided.
6. Clear, secure and welcoming communal entrance.
7. Entrances must consider deliveries, with regards to safe places for drivers to stop, clearly located entrances and consideration for receiving and storing parcels in larger developments.
8. Communal corridors should be naturally lit wherever possible.
9. Rooftop plant and photovoltaics are concealed by the parapet.

Indicative illustration showing how the principles can be achieved

Rear garden developments

Definition

Suburban development on existing residential land, typically in rear gardens. Developments in existing rear gardens can be a successful means of providing more homes in suburban areas in some circumstances.

Rear garden developments can alter the prevailing urban grain so must be sensitively designed to a scale and form which minimises visual impact and is in keeping with the prevailing character of the area. The onus will be on an applicant to demonstrate that the subdivision of a plot does not lead to over-development of the site having regard to the surrounding character of the area, and addresses the following key considerations:

- Privacy and amenity
- Access
- Urban grain and character
- Boundary treatments
- Street scene

The plan diagrams in this section outline typical approaches for rear garden development. Some locations are unacceptable, whilst others may support development, provided the proposal is of sufficient design quality and addresses the key considerations. Every site will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

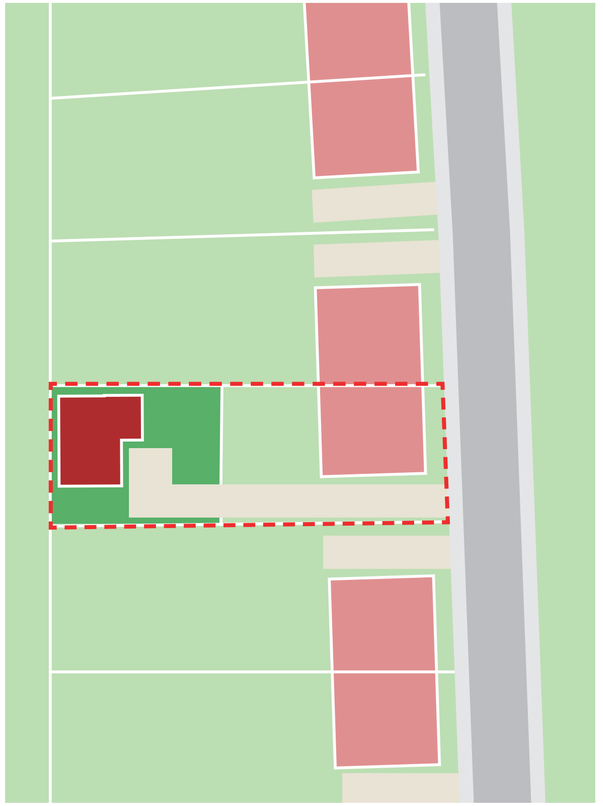
Key Considerations

Privacy and amenity

Development should not adversely impact the amenity of neighbouring properties, through overlooking of existing neighbouring gardens; providing an oppressive outlook or causing a noise nuisance due to the location of drive ways and parking. See ***05.2.2 Metrics*** for more details regarding minimum garden depths and overlooking distances.

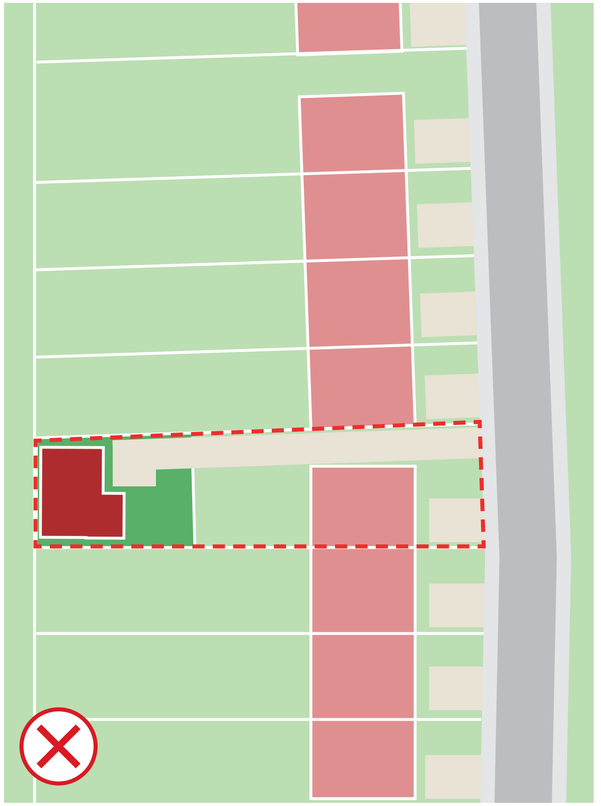
Access

Rear garden access must not impede on neighbours. Access tracks are likely to be incongruous with the existing character of an area, so must be sensitively designed with consideration given to screening, the road frontage and car parking. Tracks must also be considered for their impact on outdoor amenity spaces, particularly where cars are proposed to be brought in close proximity to existing neighbouring rear gardens.



Accessing rear garden development

The existing driveway to the side of the property has been extended to access the new proposal. If the boundary treatments and neighbouring privacy is well considered, this may be an acceptable approach. The new access could be designed to avoid impeding on neighbouring amenity, and there is sufficient offset between the track and neighbouring properties.



Unacceptable access

Access in this configuration would be unacceptable. The prevailing approach to access is for frontage parking, with no vehicular movements to the side of properties.

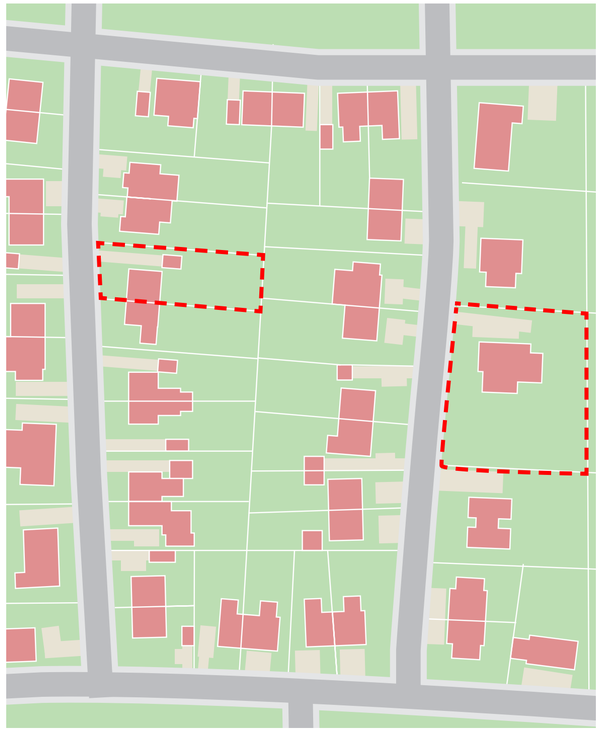
A new access track would run in very close proximity to neighbouring properties, and would not be reflective of the character of the area.

Key Considerations (continued)

Urban grain and character
Proposals must demonstrate that a new development is reflective of the prevailing urban grain. Development which is out of keeping with the existing building line, scale of dwellings or block patterns are less likely to be acceptable.

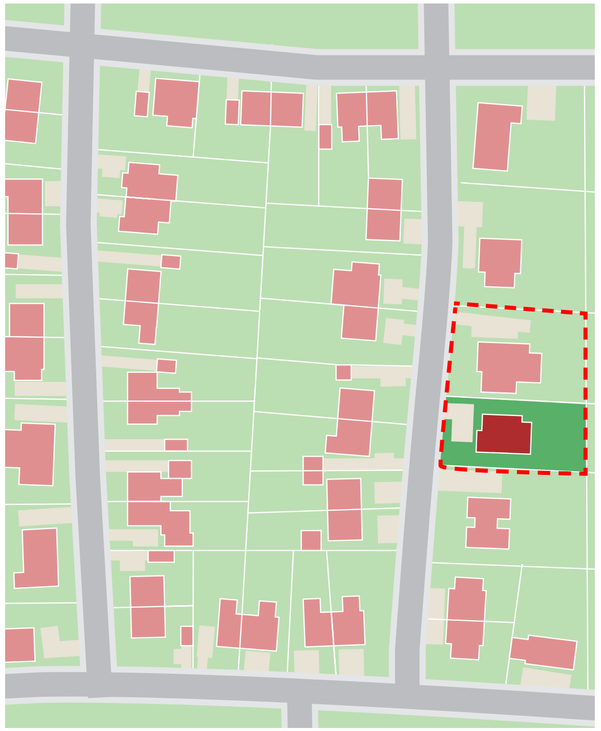
Boundary treatments
Designs should provide a buffer between existing and proposed development. Boundary treatment and side garden spaces should be used to provide residents with privacy.

Street scene
In conjunction with access considerations, applicants must consider how new buildings interact with the street scene. Frontage onto the street, including windows and main entrances is preferred for a legible, active street scene.



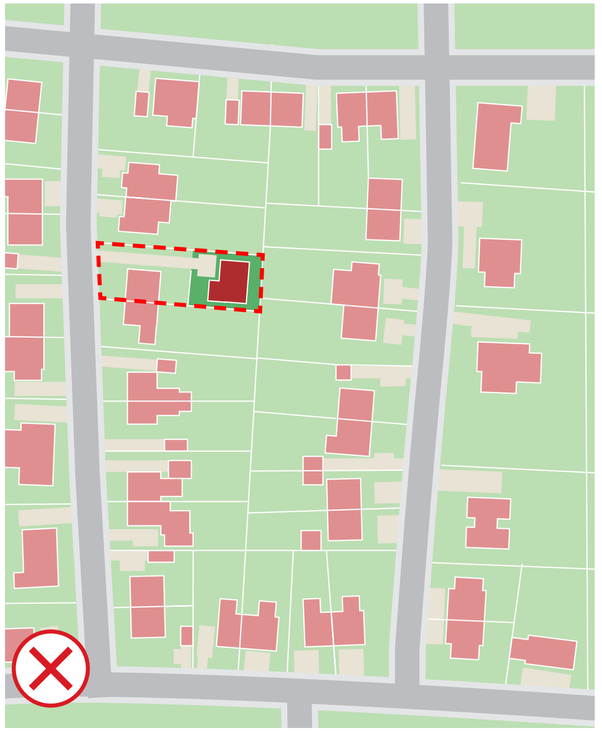
Existing Site
This shows larger houses and plots than the previous example. There is a clear building line, and some outbuildings, although none of these are located at the rear of existing gardens. Some plots have large side gardens which create gaps in the street frontage.

There are two indicative development sites.



Development Option - Infill
Infilling an existing side garden to "repair" the street frontage may be an acceptable approach, subject to a high quality design.

The plot indicated is capable of a development which is in keeping with the scale and character of the area. The urban grain is not disrupted.



Development Option - Not Acceptable
A development in the rear gardens as illustrated would not be acceptable as it is at odds with the prevailing character and urban grain of the area.

The access may be acceptable, however the wider key considerations are not met. The building has no street frontage and the scale of the new building is not in keeping with the prevailing scale of the area.

Developing in the countryside

Warrington's countryside and settlements form a distinctly rural character which is varied across the borough. In addition to the general approach to the site and development proposals, countryside developments must consider the following process, design principles and metrics.

Process

- Countryside developments must be of an exceptional design quality, and reflect their context in order to preserve the rural character of the locality
- *Adapting Traditional Farm Buildings* from Historic England contains a detailed analysis process, which should be undertaken for all forms of rural development.
- The *Farmstead Assessment Framework* within the Historic England document sets out a clear method for understanding a rural site, and how to respond to it, including historic evolution, character, capacity for change and appropriate form and level of change – be that adaptation, extension or new development
- Applicants should ensure that this analysis process is reflected in the application, through the analysis work, design development and proposal.

Design principles

Following the analysis process, a clear prevailing character for the site should have been established. This can then inform a sympathetic and appropriate design proposal, with the following considerations:

Materials
Materials in all developments must be of a high quality and responsive to the prevailing context. Brick is usually the prevailing material. Other typical rural materials such as timber and metal cladding may be appropriate, depending on the site, and provided they can be used in a considered, contemporary, and well detailed manner.

Boundaries
Analyse the prevailing character and type of boundaries, such as fences, walls or hedging. Ensure new proposals weave into the existing and preserving the street scene and rural edges.

Grouping and site strategy
This must be derived from site analysis, and is typically most successful when reflective of the current grain of the site and locality.

Outbuildings, mass and development area
Consider the farmstead or historic grain of the site. Building lines, scale and mass should inform where outbuildings are and aren't appropriate. It must be demonstrated that there is not a material harm to the openness of the Green Belt.
Proposals which do not reflect the prevailing rural character are not acceptable. Poorly considered materials, scale, mass and form can all contribute to an unacceptable approach.

Warrington's countryside and settlements have a varied and distinct rural character

Metrics

- All of Warrington's countryside lies within the designated/broad extent of the Green Belt.
- Warrington's Green Belt prevents urban sprawl and defines the edges of Warrington's urban area (including the inset settlements). Policy GB1 of the adopted Local Plan and the Policies Map show the extent of Warrington's Green Belt
- Minor development in the countryside can be acceptable, including new development, extensions and retrofitting.
- *Paragraphs 149 and 150 of the NPPF* define in broad terms what is considered to be "appropriate" development in the Green Belt and hence Warrington's countryside.
- Sites with any element of replacement, extension or rebuilding of an existing building must be accompanied by a calculation and drawings outlining the existing and proposed volume of development.
- Guidance regarding floodlighting is contained within the *Environmental Protection SPD*.

Replacement Buildings

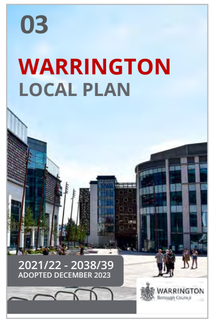
- The total volume of any replacement building should not be more than 10% larger than the building it replaces.
- Replacement buildings should be on or close to the footprint of the one it replaces unless an alternative location can be justified and demonstrated to have no adverse impact on openness of the Green Belt. An example may be for greater environmental or road safety benefits.

Conversion + Re-Use

- Appropriateness for Conversion- Buildings must be permanent and substantial to be suitable for conversion. This can be demonstrated by way of a structural survey undertaken by a qualified surveyor/structural engineer.
- No more than 30% of the building should require rebuilding (excluding the roof).

Extensions

- Extensions to any existing building should not exceed a 33% increase to the volume of the original building to prevent disproportionate additions.
- The meaning of original building is defined in the *NPPF Glossary.*
- Extensions must be reflective of the original buildings architectural style, form and materials.
- Contemporary approaches maybe acceptable but must be of exceptional quality, demonstrate that they reflect the principles of the locality and consider their relationship with the existing building. A clear distinction or joining element may be successful to mediate between original and contemporary elements.
- Extensions to dwellings should accord with the guidance in the *Council's House Extensions SPD (2021)*.



Key | Additional Guidance

1. House Extensions SPD
2. Environmental Protection SPD
3. Warrington Local Plan
4. National Planning Policy Framework

Extensions and retrofitting

Definition

Extending and adapting our existing buildings to improve their energy performance and suit new uses.

Extensions

- Any extensions or alterations should ensure that the integrity and significance of the space/layout of the principal structure(s) is maintained. The Council will expect the overall scale and character of any extension to relate to the original building/ group of buildings; be sub-ordinate in scale; with complementary design features and materials.
- Extensions to dwellings should accord with the guidance in the *Council's House Extensions SPD (2021).*

Retrofitting

- A *Climate Emergency Retrofit Guide* which focuses on domestic retrofitting has been published by the Low Energy Transformation Initiative (LETI).
- Whilst focussed on homes, the principles here can be applied to the retrofitting of all types of building.
- Whilst supported in the face of the Climate Emergency, retrofitting can impact a building's appearance, and may require planning consent.
- Works to listed buildings are likely to require both listed building consent and planning permission. All proposals should be led by informed and appropriate heritage-led research.
- External works visible from the front of the property in a conservation area are likely to need planning permission.
- Some areas have an Article 4 direction applied which removes certain types of permitted development. Retrofitting or alterations in these areas will likely require planning permission. The interactive map outlines where these areas are located within the borough.
- Heritage Statements must be supplied for all works with the potential to impact heritage assets as required by *paragraph 194 of the NPPF.*
- External re-cladding or window replacement should consider the existing materiality. Contemporary approaches are acceptable if supported by a detailed contextual analysis.
- Flat roofed areas should be repurposed as valuable amenity space wherever possible.

Key | Extension and retrofitting

1. House Extensions SPD
2. LETI Climate Emergency Retrofit Guide
3. A contemporary extension to an existing historic building, which is sympathetic to the original building's scale and proportions
4. Photovoltaic panels retrofitted to a house

Workplace

Definition

Employment uses including industrial and warehouses

Site strategy

- In addition to the guidance in ***3.1 Planning the Site***, industrial and commercial developments should incorporate the following guidance:
- The design of new developments should prioritise walking and cycling to work, through clear routes that do not bring cyclists and pedestrians into conflict with cars or heavy goods vehicles and by improving connectivity to existing infrastructure.
- Pedestrian and cycle routes should be landscaped to make walking and cycling feel safe and attractive.
- Public transport use should be promoted by well-designed links to existing bus stops and train stations or the provisions of new bus stops on site.
- Air quality and population health can be improved through reducing car usage, lorry traffic, and designing routes and service yards which minimise congestion and idling for heavy goods vehicles.
- Commercial and industrial schemes must explore opportunities for site wide infrastructure and shared benefits, including on site power generation, low carbon district heating, recycling, and recovery facilities, EV charging and alternative fuelling stations and logistics hubs.
- The configuration and layout of industrial and commercial sites should be carefully considered to block noise from residential areas.

Entrances and arrival

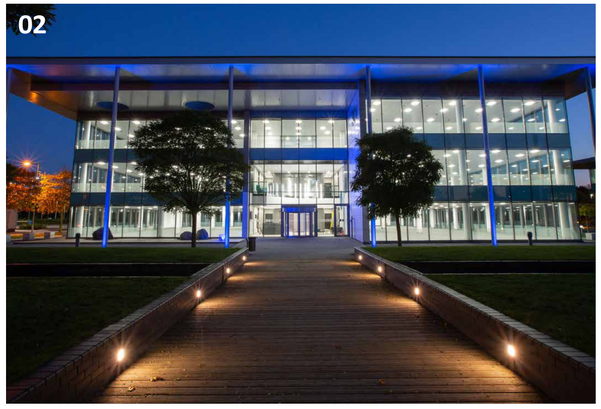
- Site and building entrances should be logically located, and clear for visitors.
- Pedestrian entrances should reflect the human scale, through their materiality and design.
- Cycle parking, EV parking and car sharing parking spaces must be located closest to the entrance to encourage lower carbon means of transport. Cycle parking facilities should be secure. They should also be covered where practical.

External Plant and roof guarding

- Solar photovoltaic panels must be considered for new developments – building orientation should be considered to maximise opportunities on suitable roofs. The potential for solar canopies over parking areas should also be explored.
- Low carbon heating should be considered.
- All plant equipment must be integrated into the design from the outset.
- Visible plant should be screened to reduce visual impact.
- Natural screening using planting, living walls and materials such as timber is the preferred approach for ground level plant.
- Rooftop plant should be screened to mitigate visual impact.
- Rooftop guarding should be considered and integrated into the design from the outset to avoid retrofitted guarding which can have a negative visual impact.

01

02



Key | Workplace

1. Site strategy must consider how pedestrian permeability and nature can be integrated alongside functional and technical requirements.
2. A clearly defined entrance route with quality boundary treatments and landscaping

Form and Elevational Design

- Industrial and commercial buildings often need specific spatial or technical requirements. However, their scale can have a considerable impact on the landscape and townscape.
- In some instances, a varied roofscape may be appropriate to soften the mass. This could reference a specific use or reflect the existing or historic context of the site.
- The choice and arrangement of elevational materials can work to further reduce the visual impact of projects, and better integrate buildings into their context.
- Large expanses of blank, single material elevations must be avoided.
- Elevations should show clear consideration of proportion and order.
- Material choices should show a clear rationale and contextual analysis.
- Natural tones and gradients can often work well to mitigate the visual impact against the skyline or landscape in longer range views.
- Bolder colours on large scale developments are likely to be more impactful and therefore unacceptable.
- Active frontages must be included wherever possible, and particularly in areas fronting key routes.
- Glazing areas of workspace or industrial buildings can add interest to elevations and mitigate expanses of blank elevation.
- Signage, colour coding and visual cues should be integrated into the design of buildings, rather than relying on free standing signage.

Integrating Nature

- Proposals must work with and enhance existing natural assets, including mature trees, landscape features and water courses.
- SuDs systems of all scales must be incorporated into the development to mitigate the impacts of large areas of hard surfacing.
- Swales, green roofs, living walls and rain gardens are expected in larger scale developments. More detail can be found in *3.0 Site Strategy*.
- Planting and green spaces should be incorporated to provide outdoor shade and cooling.

01

02

Key | Workplace

1. Integrating water, greenery and quality public realm
2. A safe and welcoming pedestrian environment

A /

Appendices

Overview

This section focusses on how to approach car parking, with details of how cars should be accommodated on residential and non-residential sites.

Parking Provision

- *DGN1: Parking & Servicing and Standards for Parking in New Development (2015)* contains technical information regarding parking provision and dimensions for spaces.
- This SPD provides supplementary guidance on the design of parking, to ensure the standards are developed into considered, high quality places.
- Additional guidance in respect of parking provision in Town Centre developments is provided in the ***Town Centre SPD***. The approach to parking in the central zone of the Town Centre is for car-free (zero parking) proposals in both residential and non-residential development (Principle TS4).

Future Trends

- The current parking standards are reflective of current trends in car ownership across the borough.
- In the future, it is anticipated that car ownership will reduce.
- Considerations should be made now for the future adaptability of car parking spaces, such as how a private driveway may suit conversion to amenity space, or on street parking can revert to valuable public realm.
- Electric vehicle charging must be incorporated into designs from the outset with integrated equipment that is convenient for user.

01

Key | Car Parking

1. Illustrative car parking layout which integrates landscaping
2. Additional guidance documents, DGN1: Parking & Servicing and Standards for Parking in New Development (2015) and the Town Centre SPD.

02


DGN1: Parking & Servicing

02

Provision:

- Assessment of residential parking provision will be based on a review of individual clusters of dwellings (typically 5/6) to determine whether the parking situation in the immediate vicinity is fit for purpose.
- This will account for visitor parking, on street parking and off street parking, taking into account densities and road widths.
- In some instances, a relaxation in parking numbers may be permitted, on a site-by-site basis, and provided that the parking situation is deemed fit for purpose by the Council.

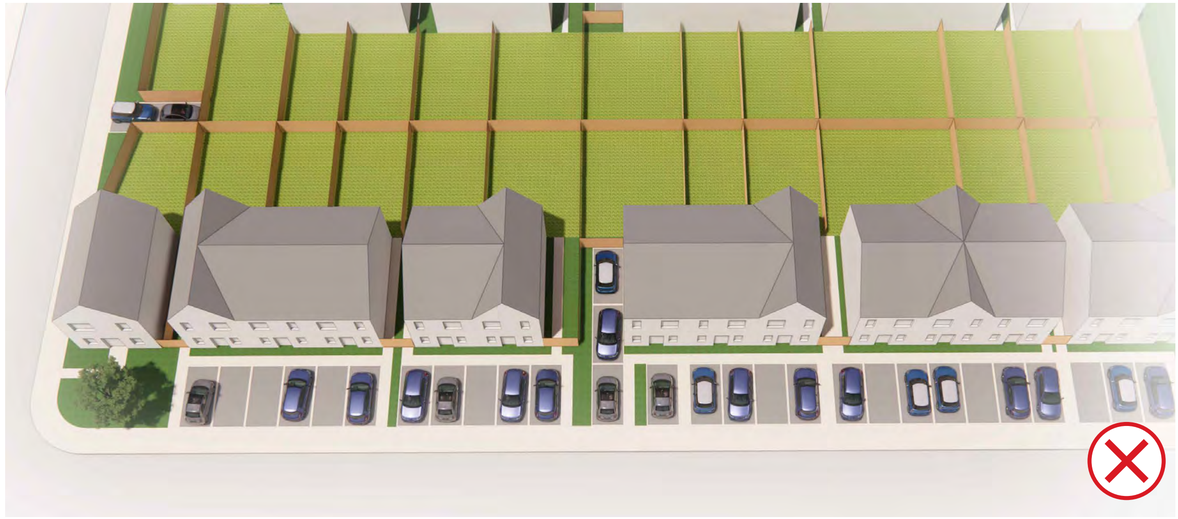
General Principles

- The approach to car parking must be varied to avoid the dominance of vehicles in the street scene, avoiding excessive frontage parking.
- Car parking must not compromise how the new development responds to the prevailing building line and street scene.
- Landscaping and boundary treatments should be utilised to soften, screen and break up extensive runs of parking. Landscaping should be a minimum of 1.5m wide to enable planting to establish and be maintained.
- Protect verges with buffering and protective boundary treatments to prevent informal parking across verges and footways.
- Minimise hard landscaping, providing adequate space for parking and manoeuvring only.

Poor residential parking

Relying on excessive frontage parking which is detrimental to the street scene

Poor residential parking street view

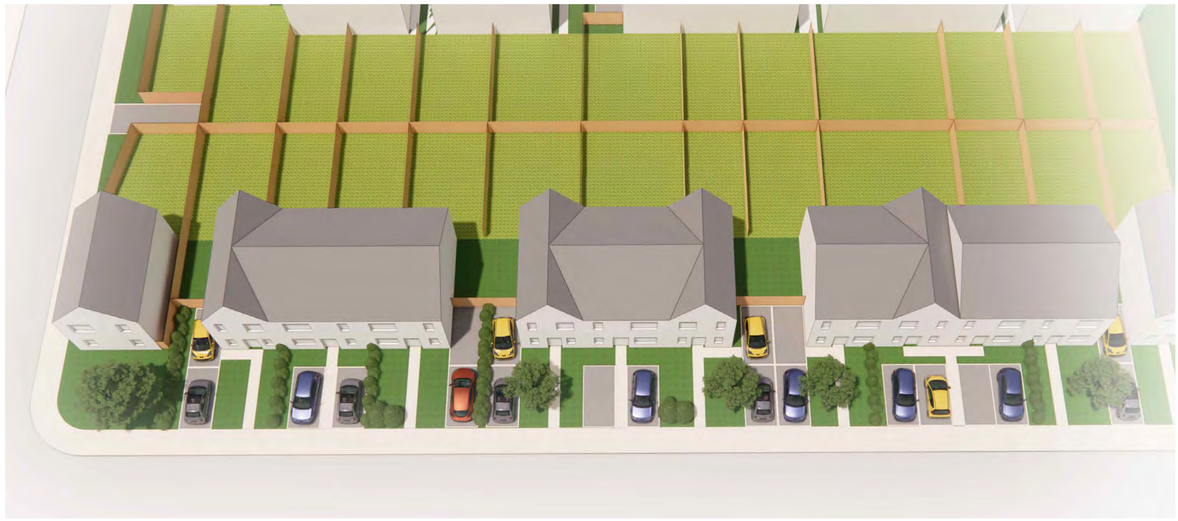


Poor residential parking street overview

Considered residential parking

Utilising varied parking approaches and greening for a positive street scene.

Considered residential parking street



Considered residential parking street

Mixed Parking

This arrangement is the preferred approach for homes requiring 3+ parking spaces.

- This sees a double tandem arrangement with an additional adjacent space.
- This allows some cars to be concealed behind the building line.
- Considerations must be made to avoid the frontage element dominating the street scene, through landscape buffering and boundary treatments.
- Driveways must be suitably sized to allow for pedestrians, pushchairs, wheelchairs, mobility scooters and bins to move between parked cars.

Frontage Parking

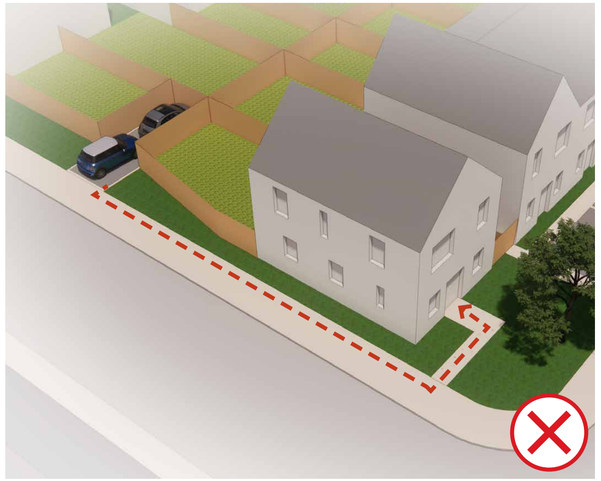
- This approach allows a higher density of development but can dominate the street scene.
- A landscape buffer, minimum 1.5m wide, must be employed every five spaces to avoid dominating the street scene.
- Landscape buffers must also be used to minimise extensive dropped kerbs as these can present accessibility issues for pushchairs, mobility scooters and wheelchair users.
- Driveways must be suitably sized to allow for pedestrians, pushchairs, wheelchairs, mobility scooters and bins to move between parked cars.

Double Tandem Parking

- This approach removes some of the car parking from the street scene but can be less convenient for users as cars may need to be swapped.
- Tandem parking can be employed as part of a mixed approach to car parking.
- Driveway length should support two cars only, avoiding encouraging overhanging of the footway.
- Driveways must be of a sufficient width to accommodate the movement of pushchairs, wheelchairs, mobility scooters and bins from a rear garden where required.
- Tandem parking is not suitable for busier routes, where swapping cars is inconvenient and unsafe.

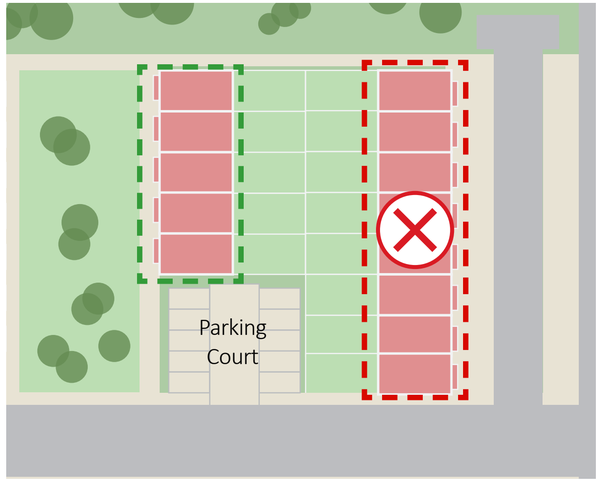
Triple Tandem Parking

- Triple tandem car parking is not acceptable.
- Manoeuvring two cars in order to access the rearmost vehicle is inconvenient for residents.
- As a result, this arrangement encourages informal on street parking as this is more convenient than using the third space.



Rear Parking

- Rear parking may be employed if frontage access cannot be achieved.
- Spaces must be well designed to encourage use and avoid informal or antisocial parking closer to front doors.
- Spaces must be well lit and overlooked.
- Consideration must be made to include a convenient access to the property, typically a back door or garden gates.
- The illustrated example above outlines where rear parking is not acceptable. The parking is too remote from the front door to the property, and there is no secondary access provided. This is inconvenient for occupants and often leads to antisocial parking.



Parking Courts

- The location of parking courts is essential to encouraging their uptake.
- Parking courts are acceptable for properties which cannot facilitate informal street parking, close to front door- the properties highlighted in green above.
- Parking courts are not acceptable in locations where informal street parking would allow residents to park closer to their front doors, as this will discourage uptake of parking courts, such as the properties highlighted in red above.
- Parking courts must be designed to be safe, green and convenient, adhering to the principles in section *A.1.2.1 - Non-Residential Typologies.*

Garages

- Garages are rarely used for the storage of vehicles and as such are unlikely to be counted towards parking provision in future iterations of the *DGN1: Parking & Servicing and Standards for Parking in New Development.*
- Where garages are intended to be included as parking spaces, permitted development rights may be removed to ensure that they remain available as car parking spaces during the lifetime of the development.
- Garages must not dominate the street scene and must not be located on prominent junctions, arrival spaces or entrances to sites.

Unallocated Car Parking

- Parking for visitors, drop-offs, deliveries and tradespeople must be distributed across the site, in response to localised densities and front doors.
- Fewer, centralised unallocated parking areas encourage informal and antisocial parking on sites so will not be supported.
- Unallocated parking on the street should be based on the following minimum road widths:
  - » 7.3m for parking on both sides.
  - » 5.5m for parking on one side only
  - » Streets less than 5.5m must use localised widening or lay-bys
- Lay-bys must be integrated into the streetscape using landscaping and trees to soften the street scene, with a landscape buffer every three parallel car parking spaces.

General Principles

- Car parking should be located to the side or rear of buildings, and away from primary frontages to allow buildings to front the street.
- Frontage or on-street parking should not be a more convenient option than a parking court – the street design, site entrance and existing road network must be assessed to avoid parking courts becoming an inferior option.
- Consider passive surveillance and lighting for security.

Illustrative example

1. Priority should be given to locating accessible parking bays close to building entrances.
2. Pedestrian and cycle routes must not be impeded by car parking. Routes should be clear and direct, and designed so that parked cars cannot overhang footways.
3. Boundary treatments must be considered to mitigate the visual impact of car parking. Established landscaping is the preferred approach.
4. Landscaping must be used to soften car parks, and break up long runs of spaces. Tree planting and landscaping can also contribute towards improving biodiversity and providing sustainable drainage, so must be integrated into designs.

Illustrative drawing of a car park incorporating design principles

Overview

Secure, welcoming cycle storage and supporting facilities are essential to enabling active travel, for healthier, happier and climate resilient places.

Cycle Parking Provision

- *DGN1: Parking & Servicing* and *Standards for Parking in New Development (2015)* contain technical information regarding cycle parking provision, design considerations and dimensions for spaces.
- In addition to the existing guidance, cycle parking must consider the following.

Location

- Internal storage is preferred for all buildings, for security and to avoid impacting the street scene.
- For residential developments, garages count towards cycle parking provision. Developments without garages must provide alternative, secure cycle storage.
- Cycle parking should be as easily accessible as car parking.
- Cycle parking should be closer to the main entrance than car parking where possible to encourage use.

External Shelters

- Shelters must be integrated into the landscape and architectural design of the wider proposal, with robust, high-quality and contextual materials.
- Shelters present an opportunity for green roofs to mitigate runoff and provide localised habitats for wildlife.
- Shelters should be secure and overlooked.

Internal Storage

- Stores should be well-lit, and easily accessible from main entrances.
- Considerations must be made for the storage and charging of electric bicycles.

Non-residential Buildings

- Dedicated individual lockers should be provided for staff.
- Shower, drying rooms and changing facilities should be provided to encourage users to cycle.
- Visitor cycle storage should be provide separately and in an obvious, overlooked location near to the building's main entrance supported by clear signage.

Cycling in the Town Centre

Overview

This page includes general advice for all typologies, whilst specific residential and non-residential guidance is available on the next page.

Applicable to all typologies

- The Council's refuse storage guidance should be reviewed in addition to statutory requirements such as Building Regulations and the Environmental Act.
- Early engagement with Warrington's Waste Services Team is essential to determine the quantity and scope of refuse storage required.

Current Technical Guidance

- The latest technical guidance is contained within *DGN 1 – Parking and Servicing.*
- Applicants should be aware that the upcoming Borough Wide Design Code may supersede the information in *DGN 1 – Parking and Servicing*. Applicants are advised to check the Council's website, or with officers for the latest technical information.
- The current guidance outlines how waste collection should be provided on site, and consider separation at source, storage and access for collection vehicles and personnel.
- All developments must meet the refuse standards and minimum dragging distances outlined in *DGN 1 – Parking and Servicing.*

01

Key | Refuse guidance

1. Residential waste collection
2. Additional guidance documents, DGN1: Parking & Servicing and the Environmental Protection SPD

02


DGN1: Parking & Servicing

Contents

02


Environmental Protection

Supplementary Planning Document

June 2023 (V4)

Considerations for residential sites

- Residential amenity must be considered with regard to refuse storage locations, with regards to odour, noise and traffic – see the ***Environmental Protection SPD*** for further details.
- Operatives should not normally be required to carry bagged refuse more than 10 metres from the presentation point to the collection vehicle.
- Future changes in waste streams, handling and storage may require revisions to the guidance. In all instances contact waste services and engage with them from the outset.

Charging Policy

- All containers for waste and recycling are subject to a charge to cover their provision and delivery. Further information is available from the Waste Services Team.
- Developers, private landlords, HMO landlords or housing associations are responsible for providing containers (rather than tenants).

Major residential, minor residential and infill

- In residential developments, developers are responsible for ensuring all dwellings have the correct number of refuse storage containers before the homes are occupied.
- Where refuse storage is proposed in rear gardens, houses must have a clear route to bring the waste containers to the street for collection. Driveways must be sized to accommodate waste container movements around parked cars – minimum widths for driveways can be found in document ***DGN1: Parking & Servicing.***
- For mid-terrace properties, a covered external through route is preferred over an alleyway around a neighbouring garden, due to issues with spatial inefficiency, privacy and antisocial behaviour.
- Under normal circumstances the minimum waste container provision will be 2 x 240 litres [1 residual and 1 recycling wheeled bin]. Properties with gardens are also provided with an additional 240 litre wheeled bin for recycling of green garden waste.
- Developers will be expected to meet the Council's minimum waste container provision, which can be found in document ***DGN1: Parking & Servicing.***
- Collection operatives should not be required to pull/push waste containers more than 15 metres from the presentation point to the collection vehicle, for bagged refuse this distance should be no more than 10 metres.

Apartments and other places

- Communal and centralised refuse storage should be internal.
- Internal refuse stores should be located away from main entrances.
- Where waste containers are stored internally, a designated collection point must be identified on the site plan, which is level and appropriately sized to contain waste containers awaiting collection.
- If unavoidable, external refuse stores must be integrated into the landscape and architectural design of the wider proposal, with robust, high-quality and contextual materials.
- External refuse stores must not be located on primary approaches and should not be visible from the street.
- External stores also present an opportunity for green roofs to mitigate runoff and provide localised habitats for wildlife.
- In the case of apartments and multi-occupancy developments a ratio of six residential units would require a non-recyclable refuse container capacity of 1100 litres and the same for recyclable materials.
- Collection operatives should not be required to pull/push a bulky waste container more than 5 metres from the agreed waste collection point to the collection vehicle. Any paths should be free from obstructions.

Changes of use, extension and adaptation

- Where a building is erected, rebuilt, altered, adapted or undergoes a change of use which renders the waste storage accommodation, and access to it, insufficient or unsuitable, then revised waste storage facilities must be approved by the Council.

Other developments

- Where special wastes are involved separate storage facilities must be provided to isolate such waste from wastes to be collected by the Council.
- Premises visited by large numbers of the public, especially retail developments, will be expected to provide community recycling facilities (for example glass, plastic or paper banks) and other waste collection facilities for re-usable items in suitable locations.
- In a mixed development such as a commercial/leisure/residential scheme there should be a strict separation of waste to ensure that commercial waste does not enter the domestic waste stream. Additional advice can be given by the Council on this matter.
- In developments where other types of waste are likely to be produced, for instance healthcare waste, it is imperative that waste is segregated and no cross contamination can occur.

Overview

- Design codes and development frameworks are principally for developing new places in Warrington, mostly concerning developments with a scale significant enough to become distinct places with their own identity.
- Developments of this scale must have special considerations to preserve placemaking and present a fantastic opportunity to develop new communities, and new places in the borough.

Purpose

- Design codes and development frameworks are expected to be submitted with some large-scale developments and/or outline planning applications to give Warrington Borough Council comfort that an aspirational vision and quality design will be upheld during the detailed design phase.
- This section is intended to be referenced by design teams as they develop design codes. This can include architects, engineers, specialist consultants and any other stakeholders within the design process. The document will also be used by Case Officers to review and appraise design codes as part of the planning process.
- It will set the baseline for how design codes across the borough should be approached, and the key principles they should address.
- The approach and process (see *section A.4.2)* offer guidance on how to develop a design code or development framework.
- The Warrington Design Guide SPD contains borough-wide design guidance, which can inform and influence site specific design codes and development frameworks.
- Site specific design codes and development frameworks are expected to contain an additional level of contextual analysis and detailed design guidance which is specific to the given site and locality, over and above existing guidance within the Warrington Design Guide SPD.

Defining a design code

- A design code is a set of robust, concise and illustrated design requirements, providing specific and detailed design parameters, to ensure a consistent baseline of quality is implemented across an area of development. This allows Warrington Borough Council to have assurance that design quality will be upheld whilst also allowing the flexibility for innovation to flourish through the detailed design process.

Defining a development Framework

- The design elements of a development framework should primarily focus on setting the outline parameters, spatial information and vision for a site at a local area or settlement level. Information is expected to be less detailed than a design code but should be initiated via the approach outlined below and should ensure that the key principles for the site are identified and enabled through the framework guidance. As the project develops, a design code may also be required to ensure that the principles are carried through to the development.
- It should be noted that development frameworks cover broader issues including the phasing and delivery of infrastructure.

Brief

A good design code or development framework will:

- Allow diverse, innovative, and creative design to flourish, whilst setting a baseline to ensure a consistent high standard of design across the development.
- Ensure that developments demonstrate a holistic approach to the climate emergency.
- Reference current local and national planning policy documents and best practice guidance.

A good design code or development framework won't:

- Replace the role of a skilled design team and Local Planning Authority.
- Constrain the viability or design quality of developments.
- Encourage homogeneous design.
- Conflict wider strategic plans, local or national planning policy documents.

Approach and Principles

- The process for developing a design code or development framework has been separated into approach and principles.
- The approach identifies the processes for creating a successful design code, which includes ways for working through the process, and how to communicate the guidance. The principles are shared with *The Ambition for Warrington* (see *Section 01*), and should be used as a basis for developing site specific visioning and guidance. These principles are expected to underpin all design code and development framework guidance.

Approach

- The approach identifies the processes for creating a successful design code
- The design code must be written following the guidance of the *National Model Design Code*, and reference the *National Design Guide.*
- In addition to this, the approach should be aspirational, holistic, collaborative, illustrated, specific and multi-scaled.
- The approach should be reviewed regularly through the drafting and development of the design code to ensure that the processes below are being followed.
- The approach should underpin all decision making, workshops and code writing.

Aspirational

- Define a clear, aspirational, and site-specific vision which has been informed by the evidence base.
- Ensure aspirations for the site are captivating, and reference the uniqueness of the site.
- Be aspirational in all aspects of the development, from design quality to addressing the climate emergency – see Principles for further information regarding the vision.

Holistic

- Consider how the site will function as a whole.
- Consider the longevity of the development, and how an aspirational vision can be upheld across years of development, with changing project teams.
- Ingrain considerations for the climate emergency throughout the guidance. Principles must be holistic, rather than bolted on to guidance.

Collaborative

- Undertake extensive engagement with stakeholders and the wider community, encouraging input rather than just informing people of proposals.
- Facilitate collaboration across the project team, to overcome conflicts and develop aspirational design outcomes.

Illustrated

- Include precedent images or case studies to communicate the intent for quality and character of the building, landscape, street and masterplan design.
- Be clear about what is successful and why, to enable design quality and aspirations to be communicated and upheld.
- Illustrate key principles and reduce reliance on text – consider drawing street types, built and landscaped character areas to clearly communicate the vision.

Specific

- Guidance must engage with the uniqueness and locality of the place and set out the character of the borough, reflecting the context, history, and culture of Warrington.
- Guidance must identify and engage with site specific constraints and opportunities, such as site heritage, existing natural assets, movement network and communities.
- Guidance must be specific enough to uphold the vision and design quality, whilst allowing for creativity and flexibility as the site develops – consider a comply or justify approach.
- Guidance should work to a hierarchy of must, should, and aspirational principles.

Multi-Scaled

- Whilst the initial analysis is undertaken at a locality / site-wide scale, guidance must mediate between scales of development to uphold design quality and the vision for the site.
- Consider how to employ guidance on a strategic scale, detail scale and everything in between.
- A clear stance on when to apply guidance across the levels of detail is crucial to the design code's success.
- Amongst other things, the climate emergency must be addressed at all scales, providing a multi-faceted, holistic approach to sustainable development.

Additional Documentation / Guidance

Design and Access Statement

- The existing work can and should be used as the basis for the Design Code, a separate document which will be used to safeguard the quality of reserved matters applications.

National Model Design Code

- Explains the process and key headings / content for a Design Code.

Principles

- In accordance with the Approach and the processes within the National Model Design Code, design codes must set out the key principles and vision for development across the site.
- This section supplements this process by outlining the principles which are valuable to development in Warrington, which are shared with the ***Ambition for Warrington*** (see ***Section 01***). The information below summarises the principles and includes recommendations for how the principles can be translated into design codes and development frameworks.
- Proposals must demonstrate how each of the principles will be reflected in future developments on the site.
- In addition, design codes must address the 10 Principles for a Well-Designed Place as outlined in the ***National Design Guide.***

Places for health and wellbeing

- Places have a crucial impact on health and wellbeing. Considered, holistic design can improve health and wellbeing, whilst poor design can have detrimental effects. Whilst the borough still faces public health inequality in many areas, the Local Plan notes that Warrington's life expectancy is improving, a trend which must be continued as the borough develops.
- Design codes and development frameworks present an opportunity for site wide health and wellbeing considerations, such as greening, active travel routes and access to outdoor amenity space. Guidance should outline the quality and function of these spaces. Considerations for buildings could include health and wellbeing accreditation, such as WELL or FITWEL, and setting the parameters to ensure that internal spaces to live, work and spend time are well lit and ventilated.

Design quality + innovation

- Developments in Warrington must be of exemplar design quality. Good design is the guiding principle, and facilitates many of the other principles within The Ambition.
- Design codes and development frameworks must consider how quality can be integrated into developments, including considerations such as materials, detailing and the composition of façades. Innovative designs are welcomed, but design codes and development frameworks must ensure that the quality and consistent language of a site is preserved as developments come forward.

Inclusive, community led development

- Communities must be at the heart of new development. Proposals must engage with people from the initial stages of development to understand and respond to people's collective needs. As the borough grows, emerging communities must be supported, allowing new places to flourish into thriving hubs of activity and life.
- Design codes and development frameworks should see the vision as an opportunity for community involvement, to understand the existing condition and ambitions for the locality, from the people who live and work there. Considerations must be given to how new proposals weave in to existing communities, through connections, design language and scale. Design codes and development frameworks must consider accessibility and safety to ensure developments are inclusive.

Climate resilience

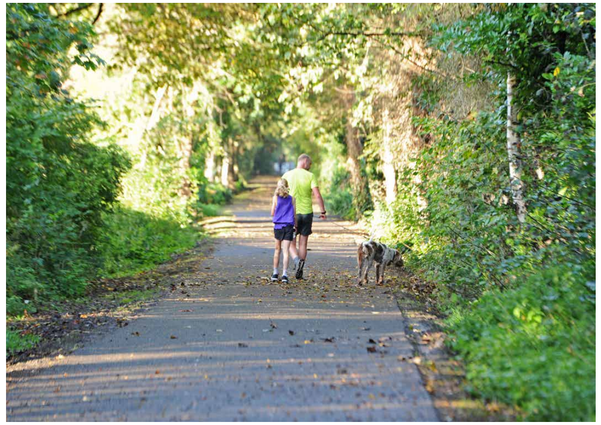
- Warrington has declared a climate emergency; our Climate Emergency Action Plan (2023) aims for the borough as a whole to be net zero by 2041. Warrington's development must be sustainable. To achieve this goal, considerations for climate resilience must be ingrained in developments from the outset, throughout delivery and into occupation. We must be ambitious with our approaches to new spaces, driving and delivering the net zero ambition.
- Design codes and development frameworks have the ability to specify that developments meet aspirational climate resilience targets, and outline how they can be achieved, from fabric first design to renewable energy usage. As with the design guide, design codes and frameworks should ingrain climate resilient design principles, making them integrated throughout the guidance.

Leading with identity

- Warrington is a distinct and characterful place. New developments must understand Warrington at a borough and local scale, and enhance the distinct identity of Warrington.
- The design guide or development framework must begin with an understanding of the existing context, including our rich built form, heritage and wider social and economic ecosystems. This context must form the basis for the vision, understanding what is already here, and how it can be celebrated. Guidance must then balance the need for coherent, contextual design, with the need for diversity and local distinctiveness.

Connecting Warrington

- Enhancing the connectivity of the borough is a fundamental means of improving active travel, reducing reliance on cars, and unlocking the potential of Warrington's existing natural and urban assets.
- At a strategic level, design codes and development frameworks have the opportunity to prioritise active travel, and reduce our reliance on vehicular movements. It is essential to understand and respond to existing networks, better linking up the borough and connecting our built spaces and natural assets. Within the site, street hierarchies have a crucial role to play in defining the character of a space, and moving towards streets as valuable areas of public space.



Leading with landscape

- Greening is essential to development of all scales, and is a guiding principle to facilitating many of the other principles within The Ambition.
- A green agenda must permeate all levels of design code or development framework guidance. Strategically, green spaces must be considered, including places to play, SuDs and opportunities to green our streets. The design of buildings must integrate aspects such as small scale SuDs, green roofs and landscaping, to improve biodiversity, urban cooling and mental wellbeing.

2.0 Warrington's Places

- Evidence base- Heritage and built environment | warrington.gov.uk | Conservation area appraisals for sites across the borough.
- Warrington Borough Council Climate Emergency Action Plan 2023
- Warrington Central 6 Regeneration Masterplan

3.0 Site Strategy

- Historic England advice note 4- tall buildings

SuDs

- Warrington Borough Council Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) Design and Technical Guidance
- CIRIA- The SuDs Manual (C753F)
- Latest guidance following the implementation of Schedule 3 to The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 (upcoming)

Further information can be found at EA Northwest byelaws are available at:

- North West region flood defence and land drainage byelaws
- Flood risk activities: environmental permits - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

4.0 Streets, Landscape and Open Space

- Fitwel — Assembly: Civic Design Guidelines | Guidance for integrating active design into civic spaces
- Streets for a Healthy Life- GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) | Homes England Guidance on placemaking and wellbeing in street design
- Playlink Design Principles
- Design for Play available at Play England
- Sport England Active Design Guide (upcoming)
- Manual for Streets 3 (upcoming)

5.0 Buildings, Communities and Places All typologies

- Home | LETI | The LETI Embodied Carbon One Pager and the LETI Climate Emergency Design Guide
- UKGBC Renewable Energy Procurement & Carbon Offsetting Guidance for Net Zero Carbon Buildings
- Making Space for Waste: designing waste management in new developments | ADEPT (adeptnet.org.uk) – Designing Waste Management best practice

Principles for homes

- HAPPI- Design- Topics- Resources - Design principles for an ageing population
- Secured by Design - Homes 2023

Developing in the countryside

- Historic England Farmstead Assessment Framework
- Historic England Adapting Traditional Farm Buildings

Extensions and retrofitting

- LETI Climate Emergency Retrofit Guide

Workplace

- WELL- International WELL Building Institute | IWBI (wellcertified.com)

Active frontages – ground floors with windows and doors onto the street, where there is an active visual engagement between those on the street and those on the ground floors of buildings.

Active travel – making journeys in physically active ways- like walking, wheeling and cycling.

Amenity space – indoor or outdoor space that is communal and available for use by the community for recreational or social activities.

Blank frontages – a wall which has few or no windows or doors, and has no decoration or visual interest.

BNG – biodiversity net gain is a way of creating and improving natural habitats. BNG makes sure development has a measurably positive impact ('net gain') on biodiversity, compared to what was there before development.

Climate resilience – the ability to anticipate, prepare for, and respond to hazardous events, trends, or disturbances related to climate.

Conservation area appraisals – defines what is important about the character and appearance of a conservation area and identifies its special characteristics.

Defensible space – an environment where the physical characteristics create recognisably private space, and as such promote a sense of ownership and responsibility by the people who live and work in them.

Green Belt – areas around certain towns, cities and large built-up areas. The primary purpose of the Green Belt is to mitigate unsustainable urban sprawl.

Outside in approach – ensuring that pedestrians, cyclists and other active travel users are prioritised in the design of our streets and spaces, rather than leading with vehicular design.

Street scene – a view of the built environment from the perspective of the street user, incorporating urban, highway and landscape design

SuDs – sustainable urban drainage systems encompassing a range of techniques for holistically managing water runoff

Urban grain – the complexity and coarseness of an urban area. Fine grained areas have a large number of different buildings and closely spaces streets. Coarse grained areas have large blocks and buildings with little architectural variety.

WARRINGTON
Borough Council