Sustainable Developments

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

Adopted 22nd April 2003

Cheltenham Borough Council

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This guidance relates to policy CP 1, in the Cheltenham Borough Local Plan Second Review Revised Deposit Draft (2004).

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 This supplementary planning guidance is designed to encourage more sustainable developments in Cheltenham, by providing advice on healthy and highly efficient buildings, the use of appropriate materials and methods, which have a reduced impact on the environment.

2.2 Application of the principles set out in this guidance means considering environmental impacts during the whole lifecycle of a building, from site identification through the construction process, to the building's normal operating conditions, and then to the end of its proposed lifespan. All developments should encourage long periods of use.

2.3 This guidance sets out how development may be implemented in a sustainable way and is intended for use by builders, developers and site designers. It covers new buildings and landscaping, as well as changes of use and alterations to existing buildings and land. Further supplementary planning guidance – *Sustainable Buildings* deals with the construction process and design of buildings.

3 POLICY CONTEXT

Cheltenham Borough Local Plan

3.1 Policy CP 1, Cheltenham Borough Local Plan Second Review Revised Deposit Draft states:

"Development will be permitted only where it takes adequate account of the principles of sustainable development. In particular, development should:

(a) conserve or enhance natural resources and environmental assets; and

(b) give priority to the use of previously developed land; and

(c) make the most efficient and effective use of land".

3.2 Other local plan policies will be relevant, see Cheltenham Borough Local Plan Second Review (draft 2004).

Waste Local Plan

3.3 Policy 35 of the Revised Deposit Gloucestershire Waste Local Plan, requires information on waste generated by developments to be prepared as part of planning applications. The Borough Council will request developers to submit a waste minimisation strategy where appropriate.

4 WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

4.1 In minimising adverse environmental impacts, both global and local environmental issues should be considered:

- **Global issues** include reducing fossil fuel consumption and the release of greenhouse gases, maintaining natural species and using eco-friendly materials.

- **Local issues** include the use of greenfield land, conserving wildlife habitats, and the recycling of construction waste.

5 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

5.1 By using previously developed land, and encouraging a mix of uses, developments can make effective use of land within urban areas. This then minimises the need to develop greenfield sites.

5.2 To be sustainable, developments in Cheltenham should:

- foster urban regeneration by using derelict or underused land and avoiding open space and playing fields;
- sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of existing centres;
- integrate well with their surroundings, improving the street scene or appearance of an area;
- conserve both cultural heritage and natural resources, especially biodiversity;
- include high standards of landscaping;
- reflect the need for traffic generating developments to be in or close to the town centre or other key transport modes;
- ensure accessibility for all modes of transport with good links to the existing network, especially bus, pedestrian and cycle routes; and
- be well located in relation to existing facilities and aim to improve cultural, leisure or health facilities in the area.

5.3 Where necessary, site investigations should be carried out. This is to ensure that any contaminated land can be improved in situ to make the site suitable for its intended use and to protect the ground and surface water quality.

Site layout

5.4 Careful site layout can significantly reduce the environmental impact of development proposals.

Maximising energy from the sun

5.5 The potential to maximise energy from the sun in development schemes will be directly influenced by the site layout:

- Make maximum use of south facing slopes.
- Minimise overshadowing from trees, other buildings, walls and fences, particularly on north facing slopes.
- Orientate dwellings to face within 30° of due south.
- Locate car parking areas and garages to the north of buildings.

5.6 For detailed guidance on building techniques that enhance solar gain see supplementary planning guidance – *Sustainable Buildings*.

Minimising heat loss

5.7 Buildings need shelter particularly from prevailing winds, to minimise heat loss. Shelter can be achieved by:

- grouping buildings to avoid long passages between them;
- joining buildings, particularly housing, to create shelter and reduce external walls;
- using densely planted shelterbelts avoiding overshadowing;
- avoiding development in frost pockets or on exposed hillcrests;
- designing large buildings to avoid increasing air speed and turbulence.

Renewable Energy

5.8 The scope for new developments to use energy from renewable sources should also be considered.

Biodiversity

5.9 New developments should ensure that there is no significant negative impact on Cheltenham's wildlife and related habitat. Developers will be encouraged to carry out surveys to identify the ecological impacts of development proposals. Detailed drawings and schedules identifying the treatment for all existing and proposed landscape features such as hedges, shrubs and trees, may also be required, see supplementary planning guidance – *Amenity Space in Residential Development*.

Protecting and enhancing existing wildlife resources

5.10 Developments should:

- safeguard designated nature conservation sites or legally protected species such as birds, badgers and bats;
- enhance resources for wildlife through retaining, creating and managing habitats and enhancing links between them;
- incorporate habitat types into site landscaping;
- avoid culverting watercourses and maximise opportunities to re-open them, or to re-establish natural watercourses for wildlife;
- ensure that long term management costs of nature conservation resources on the site are incorporated at the design stages;
- avoid using peat based composts

Trees

5.11 The role of trees in creating an attractive environment should be recognised as they:

- enhance the local microclimate, providing shade, shelter and reduced surface water run-off;
- can enclose urban space and improve the street scene;
- provide movement, contrast, colour and seasonal interest;
- give a sense of maturity and character to new developments.
- enclose and enhance public recreational and amenity space.
- promote biodiversity through planting native species

Movement and transport

5.12 Site layouts should discourage car use and encourage walking, cycling and public transport.

Walking

5.13 To encourage walking, layouts should:

- provide good direct pedestrian access throughout the site, following desire lines;
- provide clear signposting and lighting for security;
- avoid steep gradients and ensure accessibility for disabled people;
- link routes to local facilities, public transport services, open spaces and footpaths;
- design for slow traffic speeds to improve safety and reduce noise;
- provide convenient pedestrian crossing points for busy roads;
- use planting as shelter, whilst ensuring safety for all users;

- provide wayside seating in suitable locations;
- ensure visual interest through appropriate ground floor uses that provide a lively, secure and varied streetscape.

Public transport

5.14 To encourage public transport the development should:

- contribute towards improving public transport facilities, where additional demand will be generated by the development;
- accommodate buses and service vehicles travelling at average speeds of 20 miles per hour or less, particularly at junctions and pedestrian and cycle crossings;
- provide 10 miles per hour zones in streets where children will play, using traffic calming measures to restrict vehicle speeds.

Cycling

5.15 To encourage cycling, layouts should:

- provide direct, safe and attractive cycle routes - only segregated from general traffic where cyclist safety is at risk, and avoiding conflict with pedestrians;
- ensure that routes are as continuous as possible, linking into the wider cycle network and improving links between housing and leisure, retail, employment, education facilities (which may require the developer to provide some off-site works);
- provide prominent, secure, and convenient all-weather cycle parking facilities close to building entrances or inside buildings.

Infrastructure

5.16 Service infrastructure for the site should:

- provide maximum flexibility for the future and minimise the impact on existing vegetation and habitats, taking care not to locate trenches too close to trees;
- take account of any off-site impacts of services, such as drainage;
- use permeable surfaces for parking to reduce rainwater run-off, and soakaways for roof water where ground conditions permit, consider the use of landscape flood attenuation measures such as ponds, see supplementary planning guidance –*Sustainable Drainage Systems*.

Meeting needs locally

5.17 By providing gardens that are capable of growing foods, with space to compost and recycle waste, occupiers will be able to live more sustainably. By using local labour and materials during construction the local economy is enhanced, see supplementary planning guidance – *Planning Obligations: Skills Analysis*.

6 SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

Pre-application discussion

6.1 The Borough Council strongly encourages pre-application discussions to assist developers in planning building projects as sustainably as possible.

7 FURTHER INFORMATION

Guidance

Building Research Establishment
Garston, Watford,
WD2 7JR
01923 664258

Gloucestershire Energy Efficiency Advice Centre
0800 512012

The Environment Trust
4 Pinchin Street, London,
E1 15A
020 72644660

Severn Wye Energy Agency
01594 545360

The Arboricultural Association
Ampfield House, Romsey,
Hants
SO51 9PA
01794 368717

English Nature
Northminster House, Peterborough,
PE1 1UA
01733 455000

Royal Society for Nature Conservation
The Green, Witham Park,
Waterside South,
Lincoln,
LN5 7JR
01522 544400

Gloucestershire Biodiversity Partnership
c/o Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust
Dulverton Building, Robinswood Hill Country Park,Reservoir Road,
Gloucester, GL4 6SX
01452 383333

Future Foundations Sustainable Construction Charter
C/o Sustainability South West
4th Floor, 100 Temple Street
Bristol, BS1 6AE

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust
Dulverton Building, Robinswood Hill Country Park,
Reservoir Road,
Gloucester,
GL4 6SX
01452 383333

Useful Websites

- www.cheltenham.gov.uk
- www.bre.co.uk
- www.swea.co.uk
- www.english-nature.org.uk
- www.wildlifetrust.org.uk
- www.futurefoundations.co.uk

8 CONTACTS

8.1 The following officers of the Borough Council will be able to offer further advice on the issues set out in this guidance:

Development Control Duty Officer
01242 775090
Sustainability Manager
01242 264166
Environmental Protection Manager
01242 774997
Strategic Land Use Officer
01242 264382
Assistant Director Green Environment
01242 774640
Building Control Duty Officer
01242 775136