

Supplementary Planning Guidance:

Planning for Community Safety



Strategic Planning and Housing
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This note is one of a series of Supplementary Planning Guidance notes amplifying the Denbighshire Local Development Plan 2006 – 2021 (LDP) in a clear and concise format with the aim of improving the design and quality of new development. These notes are intended to offer detailed guidance to assist members of the public, Members of the Council, potential developers and Officers in the submission of and, consequently, in determination of planning applications.

2. Document Status and Stages in Preparation

- 2.1 The Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance notes (SPGs) are not part of the adopted local development plan. The Welsh Government (WG) has confirmed that following public consultation and subsequent Local Planning Authority (LPA) approval, SPGs can be treated as a material planning consideration when LPAs, Planning Inspectors and the Welsh Government determine planning applications and appeals. This SPG document was formally adopted by Denbighshire County Council's Planning Committee on 15th March 2017.

3. Planning Policy

- 3.1 This SPG supports LDP policy RD 1 ('Sustainable development and good standard design'). This policy applies to all development proposals and states that development must '*Take account of personal and community safety and security in the design and layout of development and public/private spaces and has regard to implications for crime and disorder*'.
- 3.2 Planning Policy Wales (PPW) states that '*Crime prevention and fear of crime are social considerations to which regard must be given by LPAs in the preparation of development plans. They should be reflected in any SPG and may be material considerations in the determination of planning applications. The aim should be to produce safe environments through good design*'.
- 3.3 This is further supported by Technical Advice Note 12: Design (2016) which identifies community safety as one of the five aspects of good design.

Figure 1: The 5 objectives of good design (TAN 12 'Design', Welsh Government)



4. Planning for Community Safety

- 4.1 TAN 12 sets out the objectives of planning for community safety as (i) ensuring attractive, safe public spaces and (ii) providing security through natural surveillance.
- 4.2 Although crime can never be completely eliminated, considering community safety at the design stage of development can significantly reduce the risks, and fear, of crime. Good design and attractive places can encourage a sense of 'ownership' amongst the local community, which contributes to well-being and quality of life. On-going maintenance of public spaces is also important in fostering a sense of community pride and reducing the risks of crime.
- 4.3 Planning for community safety is not about simply incorporating 'target hardening' measures (e.g. external shutters) in developments but instead utilising the design and layout to make crime harder to commit, easier to detect and increases the involvement of the local community in preventing crime.
- 4.4 Community Safety Partnerships were created in 1998 to develop and implement strategies and action plans to reduce crime and disorder. The Conwy and Denbighshire Community Safety Partnership Action

Plan identifies priority areas, including reducing crime and disorder, and outcomes to improve 'designing out crime' and reduce opportunistic burglaries.

5. Design Principles

5.1 The principles of planning for community safety should be considered as part of the design stage and should be applied to all development types (e.g. residential, commercial, retail, community facilities etc.).

5.2 The design principles set out in this SPG are based on the UK-wide police initiative 'Secured by Design'. This project aims to improve community safety through good design and has published detailed design guidance for those involved in the design process. This guidance is available via the 'Secured by Design' website (www.securedbydesign.com).

5.3 Creating and maintaining a high-quality environment is an important feature of good design and in planning for community safety. Buildings, public spaces, footpaths, landscaping and street furniture should be designed to last with minimal maintenance. Maintenance requirements should be considered at the design stage and provision for any future maintenance should also be established at an early stage.

5.4 Within sensitive locations, such as Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and areas designated for their landscape or heritage value, careful consideration must be given to balancing community safety objectives with the need to conserve and enhance character and appearance.

5.5 Layout & orientation of buildings

The layout and orientation of buildings can make a significant contribution to increased natural surveillance. Wherever possible, buildings should have clear views of neighbouring properties, public spaces, footpaths and play areas. With regard to residential development, careful consideration should be given to allowing unobstructed views without compromising the need for privacy. Blank frontages/gable ends facing onto public areas should be avoided. Including a mix of property types/uses can also contribute to increased occupation during different times of the day, for example providing residential units on upper floors within town centres.

Figure 2: Examples of crime prevention design ('Secured by Design')



The corner plot white dwelling in this illustration is orientated and overlooks the highway and public realm from both elevations. This approach avoids blank wall elevations facing onto the public realm which offers no natural surveillance and can attract vandalism.

This example shows an open space which benefits from natural surveillance provided by the orientation and overlooking from surrounding dwellings.



5.6 Layout of roads, cycleways & footpaths

Well-used routes promote natural surveillance and can offer a heightened sense of safety. Vehicle and pedestrian routes should be clear, convenient and well-lit to ensure they are well-used. Public footpaths should avoid providing unobserved access to the rear of dwellings and other private spaces.

- 5.7 Well-designed streets encourage people to use them and make going outside a pleasurable and safe experience. In residential areas, the design of street layouts should encourage lower traffic speeds conducive to a safer environment for pedestrians and cyclists. Street design should be inclusive, providing safe routes for all people regardless of age or ability, and particular consideration should be given to the need for safe walking routes to schools and other local facilities. Applicants should refer to Welsh Government TAN 12 'Design', 'Manual for Streets' (Department for Transport, 2007) and 'Manual for Streets 2' (Chartered Institution of Highways &

Transportation, 2010) for guidance on best practice with regard to layout and design.

5.8 Communal areas

Public areas and play spaces should be located to allow supervision from surrounding buildings, with safe routes for those using these areas.

5.9 Boundaries

Boundaries between private and public areas should be clearly defined to show the areas of ownership and control by occupiers. Boundaries may be defined through various treatments, including fencing, planting, surface treatments etc and creating a 'fortress mentality' should be avoided. The front boundaries of properties should be open to view and robust boundary treatments used for the side and rear.

5.10 Landscaping & planting

Landscaping and planting can contribute to a high quality and attractive environment but should not impede natural surveillance and should avoid the creation of potential hiding places. Certain plant species can act as a deterrent for unauthorised entry and enhance boundary security, for example thorny shrubs. Preference should be given to incorporating landscaping features and plant species/varieties which are beneficial to native wildlife.

5.11 Parking

Vehicle parking should be open and well-lit, with communal parking ideally located in small groups close to buildings and, in residential developments, within view of active rooms (i.e. kitchens, living rooms). Public parking, for example within town centres, should incorporate clear signage for access/exits and traffic flow, surveillance measures and be well-lit. On-going maintenance of parking areas is also important in reducing the fear of crime and deterring graffiti, criminal damage etc.

5.12 Unsuitable or inadequate parking provision can pose a risk to pedestrian and road user safety, where it results in excessive on-street or unauthorised parking. This can also cause difficulties for access, and response times, for emergency vehicles. In residential developments, curtilage parking and garages should be provided as

the most secure parking option wherever possible, preferably located alongside the dwelling. Development proposals should take account of the design requirements set out in 'Manual for Streets' (Department for Transport, 2007), and detailed guidance on parking provision set out in the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance 'Parking Requirements in New Developments' (2014).

5.13 External lighting

Lighting requires careful coordination to ensure it is adequate for visibility, particularly in vulnerable areas, but without creating nuisance or light pollution. Excessive or intermittent lighting can negatively affect local residents, wildlife and the extent of 'dark skies' in the county.

5.14 Climbing aids

Features such as boundary walls, bin/fuel stores, street furniture, flat roofs, balconies etc. can create the potential for gaining access to upper floors of properties and should be designed or located to ensure such opportunities are minimised.

5.15 Signage

Roads and buildings should be clearly named and/or numbered to identify ownership, define public and private spaces, and to provide assistance to occupiers and emergency services.

6. Planning Applications

- 6.1 Planning for community safety is part of good design and should be addressed at the early design stages of any proposal, and as part of pre-application discussions with the Development Management team. Proposals should respond to local circumstances by taking account of existing crime, anti-social behaviour, fear of crime and any other issues which may be affecting the safety and security of communities and property.
- 6.2 It is a statutory requirement for certain planning applications and listed building consent applications to be accompanied by a Design & Access Statement (DAS). Where a DAS is required, this provides a useful tool to communicate how the objectives of good design

(including community safety) have informed the development proposal.

- 6.3 The North Wales Police ‘Designing out Crime’ Officer provides a valuable service to local authorities, architects and developers in advising on community safety and detailed design matters. The Council will consult with the Designing out Crime Officer on full and reserved matters planning applications for major developments, and where crime and anti-social behaviour may be an issue by virtue of the location or use proposed.

7. Other Matters

7.1 *Planning Obligations*

All development proposals should have regard to the principles contained within this SPG. In instances where concerns regarding a proposal cannot be overcome by through the use of conditions, the Council may require planning obligations. The Council has recently consulted on SPG on planning obligations, which contains additional guidance on measures that may be required to improve community safety (section 17).

7.2 *Building Regulations*

Welsh Government introduced mandatory standards, through Building Regulations, relating to residential security (‘Part Q’) in January 2017. This focusses on target hardening of windows and doors in new dwellings.

7.3 *Counter terrorism*

Some public areas can be a target for terrorist activity and large publically-accessible developments, or those adjoining such developments, should consider how protective security measures can be incorporated into the proposal design. Any measures incorporated should be proportionate to the risk and should not compromise the principles of ‘good design’. Further guidance on this has been published as part of the UK Government’s ‘Crowded Places’ agenda.

7.4 *Denbighshire initiatives*

The Council and it’s partners are currently engaged in various projects which aim to improve the appearance of public spaces, and will have a

positive impact on community safety. Work is underway to tackle the appearance of identified 'eyesore' sites in the county, as well as initiatives to improve the public realm and built environment in West Rhyl.

8. Contacts

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