

# Housing Design Guide

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This document has been prepared by multidisciplinary design practice Hamson Barron Smith on behalf of, and in close collaboration with, Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils and is designed to work alongside existing council policies.

This document is due for review 2024





## "Places affect us all - they are where we live, work and spend our leisure time.

Well-designed places influence the quality of our experience as we spend time in them and move around them.

We enjoy them, as occupants or users but also as passers-by and visitors. **They can lift our spirits by making us feel at home, giving us a buzz of excitement or creating a sense of delight.**

They have been shown to affect our health and well-being, our feelings of safety, security, inclusion and belonging, and our sense of community cohesion."

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## Introduction

Our Councils are committed to delivering a housing pipeline to benefit the residents of Babergh and Mid Suffolk. We recognise the important role that the Council play in defining emerging housing quality, design and sustainability to provide a positive legacy for the places in which we reach, together with the environment and standard of living for residents.

This Housing Design Guide sets out a clear and ambitious design framework which captures characteristics in design that we will aim to adopt generally in our projects, and further aspirational objectives that we hope to incorporate where suitable, viable and beneficial.

This Housing Design Guide reflects the high-level design outcomes we aspire to and shall be used to redefine the Councils developments in the future. The Guide is to be read in conjunction with the Technical Specification.

The Housing Design Guide and Technical Specification respond to industry movement in design standards, residents expectations and the recently declared Climate Emergency.

This Design Guide is established around four key design topics, referencing the National Design Guide Characteristics:

- Context and Identity
- Movement, Nature and Public Spaces
- Homes and Buildings (Including the Build Form and Uses)
- Towards Zero Carbon (Resources and Lifespan)



## Introduction

### Context and Identity

Context and Identity looks at how our work can enhance the existing surroundings with attractive and distinctive developments. This relates to the holistic design character of the development. It explores aspirational objectives and common themes that we will actively look to incorporate.

### Movement, Nature and Public Spaces

Movement, nature and public spaces covers specific principles relating to these topics. It looks at ways we can enhance accessibility and ease of movement around our developments. The ways in which we can both enhance and optimise the role of nature in our built environment. And the ways we will champion a safe, social and inclusive public realm.

### Homes and Buildings (Including the Build Form and Uses)

Homes and Buildings looks at principles we will incorporate to develop a coherent pattern of development, which is both mixed and integrated. It sets goals to ensure our buildings will be functional, healthy and sustainable.

### Towards Zero Carbon (Resources and Lifespan)

In 2019 all Suffolk Local Authority members declared a 'climate emergency'. As part of this, the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership, SCCP, will work together with partners across the county and region towards the aspiration of making the county of Suffolk carbon neutral by 2030. This section sets positive and ambitious goals for meeting this pledge, delivering efficient and resilient developments made to last.





## All Developments

Innovation is encouraged across all scales of development, with Design teams encouraged to meet as many 'we aspire to' statements as practical in addition to all of the 'mandatory' statements. With additional requirements for major developments as outlined below.

The approach taken will vary dependent on the nature, scale, location and context of each proposal. The 'we aspire to' statements are included to inspire innovation and the pursuit of higher standards by providing examples of how the councils development objectives can be addressed. These approaches are all underpinned by industry best practice.

## Major Developments

### Classification

Major developments are defined as ten or more dwellings or a site area of 0.5 hectares or more.

### Additional Requirements

At least **one** 'we aspire to' statement must be met under each of the following topic headings:

- Movement, Nature and Public Spaces
- Homes and Buildings (including Built Form and Uses)

And at least **two** 'we aspire to' statements must be met under:

- Towards Zero Carbon (Resources and Lifespan)

Design teams will be expected to outline their approach to meeting the selected aspirational goals and how these will be monitored to ensure success and to inform future council projects and iterations of the Design Guide.





## Context and Identity

### We will...

- Consider not just the past but also the future ways we will live and interact within our communities for the 21st Century.
- Design our new homes so they are visually attractive and delight their occupants and other users.
- Create neighbourhoods that have a positive influence to their surrounding context.
- Design our new homes to enhance and compliment the surrounding context.
- Develop neighbourhoods through public engagement that provides a cohesive environment (extending beyond the built form) that everyone can identify with.
- Design homes that create character and identity in form and build.



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## Movement, Nature and Public Spaces

### We will...

- Promote walking and cycling that connects to local community facilities.
- Design public spaces that feel safe, secure and attractive for all to use and enjoy.
- Detail all external fixings and street furniture to be robust and hard-wearing to minimise ongoing maintenance and repairs.
- Incorporate home zones within our neighbourhoods to promote fully inclusive environments that are focused on the pedestrian and the aging populations.
- Integrate and enhance existing natural environments to enrich the sense of place to the local community.
- Provide a calculated net gain for biodiversity on all our developments

### We aspire to...

- Provide a range of good quality outdoor spaces that will encourage a wide variety of activities, well-being and interaction, social and civic inclusion.
- Use permeable surfaces and sustainable urban drainage to reduce and manage water run-off. Create green corridors throughout new neighbourhoods to encourage areas of play, food production and recreation.
- Prioritise areas of nature within new developments to address climate change mitigation and resilience.
- Provide external areas that range from public parks to shared spaces and private gardens.
- Provide opportunities for food growing on all our developments







## Homes and Buildings (Including the Built Form and Uses)

### We will...

- Take account of the demographic profile and specific needs of our occupants.
- Design our homes to respond to the ageing population and ensure high levels of accessibility and adaptability are incorporated throughout all new developments.
- Provide housing to good design quality with high levels of naturally daylight that connects with its private external environment, to promote health and well-being to its occupants.
- Design our homes to be practical and last for generations with a minimum design life of 60 years.
- We will promote recycling through well designed and integrated storage areas which facilitate ease of use and collection.
- Design a variety of housing types that are tenure blind and socially inclusive, affordable housing will not be visually distinguishable from market housing in terms of build quality, materials, details or levels of amenity space or privacy.
- Provide homes and developments where people feel safe and secure.

### We aspire to...

- Create areas of new sustainable development that are accessible to local public transport, services and facilities.
- Design comfortable housing that exceeds the minimum National Space Standards.
- Provide dedicated Working From Home, WFH, space in all of our new homes.
- Develop neighbourhoods that bring wider benefits to the community.







## Towards Zero Carbon (Resources and Lifespan)

### We will...

- Adopt a fabric first approach for all new buildings to reduce the need for energy consumption reducing fuel poverty, make best use of the efficient renewable energy creating homes that are 'zero-carbon ready'.
- Select building materials considering their carbon footprint, whole life cost and ease of repair and maintenance.
- Provide sustainable features that are utilised and can be operated with ease by the occupants.
- Continue to monitor a selection of completed houses to ensure the specific levels that they were designed to perform at are being achieved.
- Work with the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership, SCCP, and our partners across the county and region towards the aspiration of making the county of Suffolk carbon neutral by 2030.
- Reduce water use within homes through carefully specified fittings and water butts.
- Create a legacy of buildings where communities establish a sense of ownership and belonging.
- Plan for long term stewardship by all stakeholders for buildings that can adapt to the changing needs of the occupants and evolving technologies.
- Use Space Heating Demand as the primary metric to drive improvements in energy efficiency.
- Install the most appropriate renewable energy resources and consider renewable energy supplies.





**We will...**

- Meet the requirements of the Building Regulations Part L 2022, developments must achieve a reasonable reduction in carbon emissions of at least 31% measured against the 2016 amendments to Building Regulations Part L
- Provide an electrical car charging point to all new in-curtilage car parking areas.
- Out of curtilage parking will include the installation of infrastructure for EV charging

**We aspire to...**

- Meet Zero Carbon targets in all our future new homes.
- Reduce water use within homes through grey water recycling.
- Meet the Passivhaus Standard or equivalent.
- Provide all our new homes with filtered fresh air with heat recovery (MVHR)