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## **Policy 2: Promoting good design**

All development will be designed to the highest possible standards, creating a strong sense of place.

In particular development proposals will respect local distinctiveness including as appropriate:

- the historic hierarchy of the city, towns and villages, maintaining important strategic gaps
- the landscape setting of settlements including the urban/rural transition and the treatment of 'gateways'
- the landscape character and historic environment, taking account of conservation area appraisals and including the wider countryside and the Broads area
- townscape, including the city and the varied character of our market towns and villages
- provision of landscaping and public art
- the need to ensure cycling and walking friendly neighbourhoods by applying highway design principles that do not prioritise the movement function of streets at the expense of quality of place
- the need to increase the use of public transport, including through 'public transport oriented design' for larger development
- designing out crime
- the use of sustainable and traditional materials
- the need to design development to avoid harmful impacts on key environmental assets and, in particular SACs, SPAs and Ramsar sites

This will be achieved by ensuring that:

- major development areas providing over 500 dwellings or 50,000m<sup>2</sup> of non-residential floorspace, and areas of particular complexity will be masterplanned using an inclusive, recognised process demonstrating how the whole scheme will be provided and ensuring that it is well related to adjacent development and infrastructure
- all residential development of 10 units or more will be evaluated against the Building for Life criteria published by CABE (or any successor to this standard), achieving at least 14 points (silver standard)
- Design and Access Statements for non residential development will show how the development will meet similar high standards

*Contributes to spatial planning objectives 8, 9, 10 and 11*

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5.10 Good design can make the difference between a high quality and successful development and a mediocre or unsuccessful one. Development at any scale and location should make a positive contribution to providing better places for people. The quality of the local environment plays a crucial role in the economic success of the area. Research undertaken by the Work Foundation found that only a limited number of city regions, such as Norwich, have the prerequisites to promote the knowledge economy. These include a high quality environment. The research concludes that cities like Norwich should build on their strengths and promote local distinctiveness through high quality design. This promotes knowledge economies both tangibly, through physical improvements, and intangibly, by developing a reputation as a good place to do business. With the scale of development

required, it is particularly important that the highest possible standards are achieved. The East of England Plan places particular emphasis on the importance of the historic environment of Norwich, and values the market towns and villages.

5.11 The Norwich area is of unusual landscape complexity where five distinct countryside character areas converge. A number of areas are of special historic and cultural significance. The urban edge is particularly sensitive and extensions to urban areas, whether of Norwich or the market towns, should take account of the need to enhance its character, appearance, recreational potential and biodiversity value. The 'gateways' are places where landscape and townscape changes, such as where the countryside and urban area meet, or main entrances into the city centre and town centres, for example, and on the River Yare where the Broads landscape and the Norwich built up area meet at Whitlingham and Trowse. Developers will therefore have to take account of local evidence in preparing their Design and Access Statements, including Landscape Character Assessments and Conservation Area Appraisals as appropriate.

5.12 Masterplanning for large-scale developments and areas of particular complexity (for example within the city centre) must embrace the principles of urban design, and must also examine carefully how development, including infrastructure, can be progressed logically and implementation in full can be ensured. Further guidance on the inclusion of public art will be developed through masterplans and local development documents.

5.13 To ensure the required high standards are achieved, residential development will apply the Building for Life model of residential design excellence, produced by CABI and the Home Builders Federation. At least a 'silver standard' will be expected. Though achieving the highest level is not a policy requirement, it is anticipated that over time an increasing proportion of development will achieve the 'gold standard'. Many of the principles set out in Building for Life are applicable to non-residential development, and a similar approach will be adopted when assessing development proposals. National standards, if defined, will be adopted for this assessment.

## **References**

### *05 Area-wide policies, Policy 2*

- Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS 5) Planning for the Historic Environment
- Broadland Landscape Character Assessment
- South Norfolk Conservation Area Appraisals
- Norwich City Centre Conservation Area Appraisals
- Design and Access Statements: How to write and use them
- Creating successful masterplans
- Building for Life
- Ideopolis: Knowledge City Regions (2006)
- Manual for Streets
- Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1): Delivering Sustainable Development
- East of England Plan
- Historic Characterisation and Sensitivity Assessment (Norfolk County Council 2009)