



Good Urban

Time for Design |

What role for neighbourhood planning?

Conversation led by Angela Koch, Convener, Neighbourhood Planners.London, with:

Andy Von Bradksy, Head of Architecture, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Vanessa Celosse, Deptford Neighbourhood Action

Vanessa Gregory, Chair, Look! St Albans

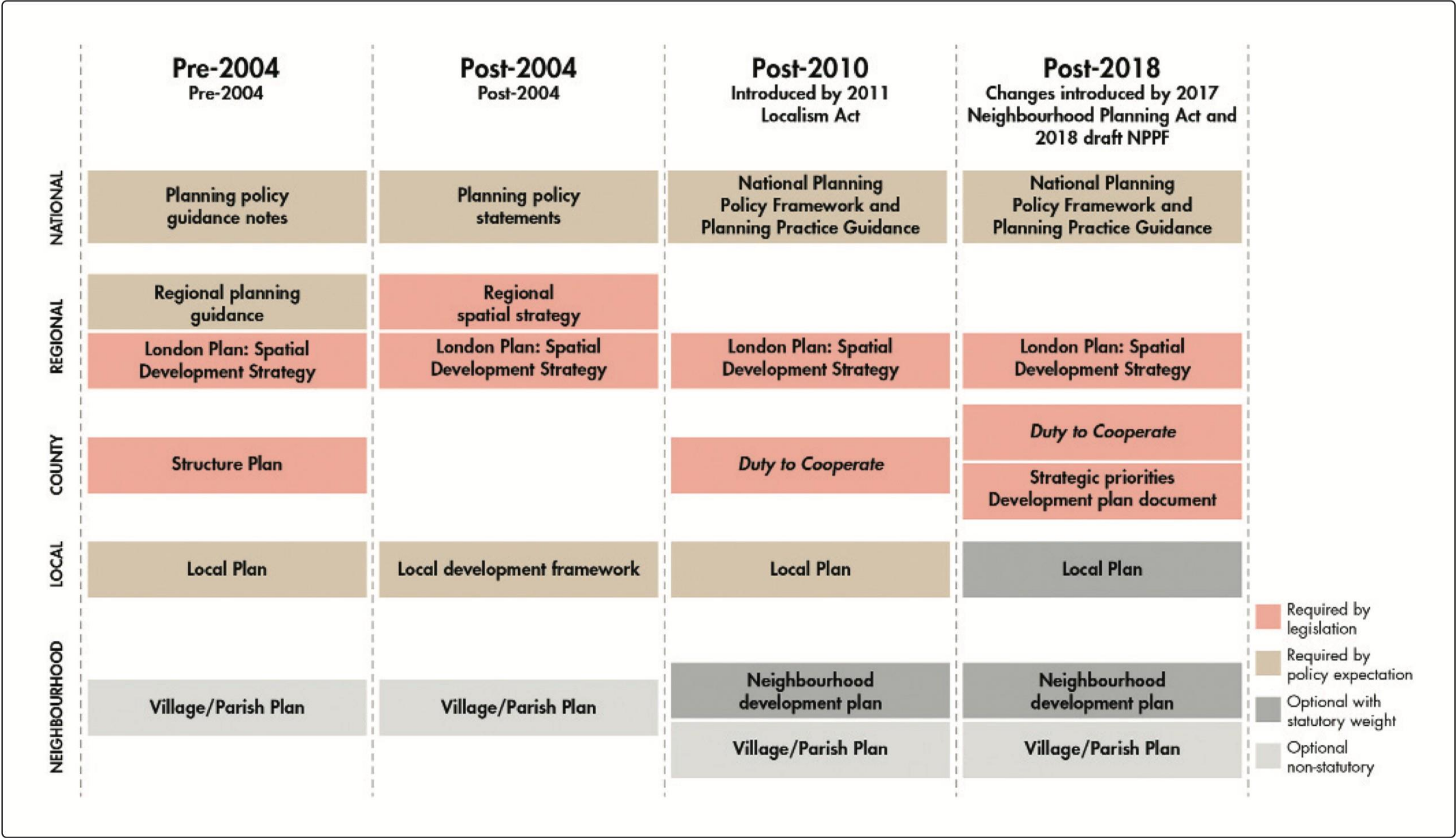
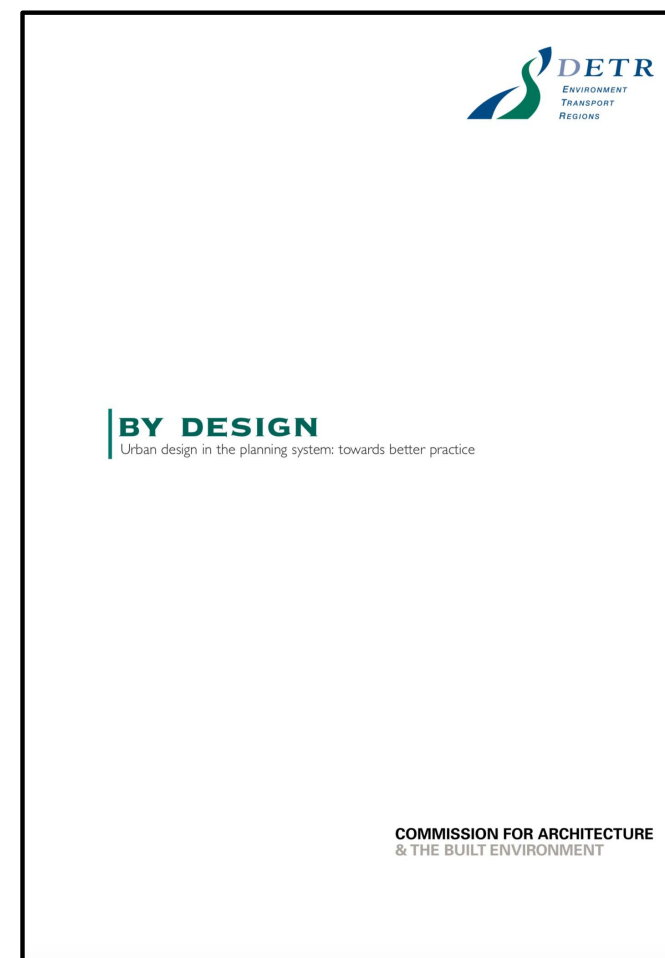


Fig. 2 Development planning frameworks in England over the last 15 years





“The effectiveness of the planning tools in raising standards of urban design will depend on how they are used and the management style and ability of the people who use them.”



What is neighbourhood planning?

Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area.

They are able to **choose where** they want new homes, shops and offices to be built, have their say on what those **new buildings should look like** and what infrastructure **should be provided**, and grant planning permission for the new buildings they want to see go ahead. **Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools** for local people to ensure that they get the right types of development for their community **where the ambition of the neighbourhood is aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area.**

NPPG Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 41-001-20140306

Revision date: 06 03 2014



National Planning Policy Framework

12. Achieving well-designed places (§124 to §127)

124. The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.
125. Plans should, at the most appropriate level, set out a **clear design vision and expectations**, so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable. **Design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics. Neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development.**
- 126. To provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage, plans or supplementary planning documents should use visual tools such as design guides and codes.** These provide a framework for creating distinctive places, with a consistent and high quality standard of design. However their level of detail and degree of prescription should be tailored to the circumstances in each place, and should allow a suitable degree of variety where this would be justified.
127. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:
- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
 - b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
 - c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
 - d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
 - e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
 - f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users⁴⁶; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.



National Planning Policy Framework

12. Achieving well-designed places §128 to §132

128. Design quality should be considered **throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals**. Early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests. Applicants should work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.

129. Local planning authorities should ensure that **they have access to, and make appropriate use of, tools and processes for assessing and improving the design of development**. These include workshops to engage the local community, design advice and review arrangements, and assessment frameworks such as **Building for Life⁴⁷**. These are of most benefit if used as early as possible in the evolution of schemes, and are particularly important for significant projects such as large scale housing and mixed use developments. In assessing applications, local planning authorities should have regard to the outcome from these processes, including any recommendations made by design review panels.

130. Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, **taking into account any local design standards or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents**. Conversely, where the design of a development accords with clear expectations in plan policies, design should not be used by the decision-maker as a valid reason to object to development. Local planning authorities should also seek to ensure that the quality of approved development is not materially diminished between permission and completion, as a result of changes being made to the permitted scheme (for example through changes to approved details such as the materials used).

131. In determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs **which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings**.

132. The quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed. A separate consent process within the planning system controls the display of advertisements, which should be operated in a way which is simple, efficient and effective. Advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.



Design Guide / Style Guide

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RHYTHM
The rhythmic use of architectural elements and detailing is frequently employed to break down scale.

LEVELS
The topography of the Jewellery Quarter can create various changes in level within a development site. New buildings should sit on actual ground level and floorplates should step down the hill. They should accommodate any changes in level and follow the gradient within the development site.

Consider

- How floor to ceiling heights affect proportion.
- How the proposed development responds to the height of the surrounding buildings.
- How the proposed development responds to the rhythm and proportion of the surrounding buildings.

Provide

- A bird's eye perspective showing the height of the proposed development in relation to the adjacent buildings.
- Perspective drawing of the new development within the existing street scene.
- Indication of floor levels of proposed and adjacent buildings on drawings and perspectives.
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The use of rhythmic elements and detailing helps break down the overall scale of this building

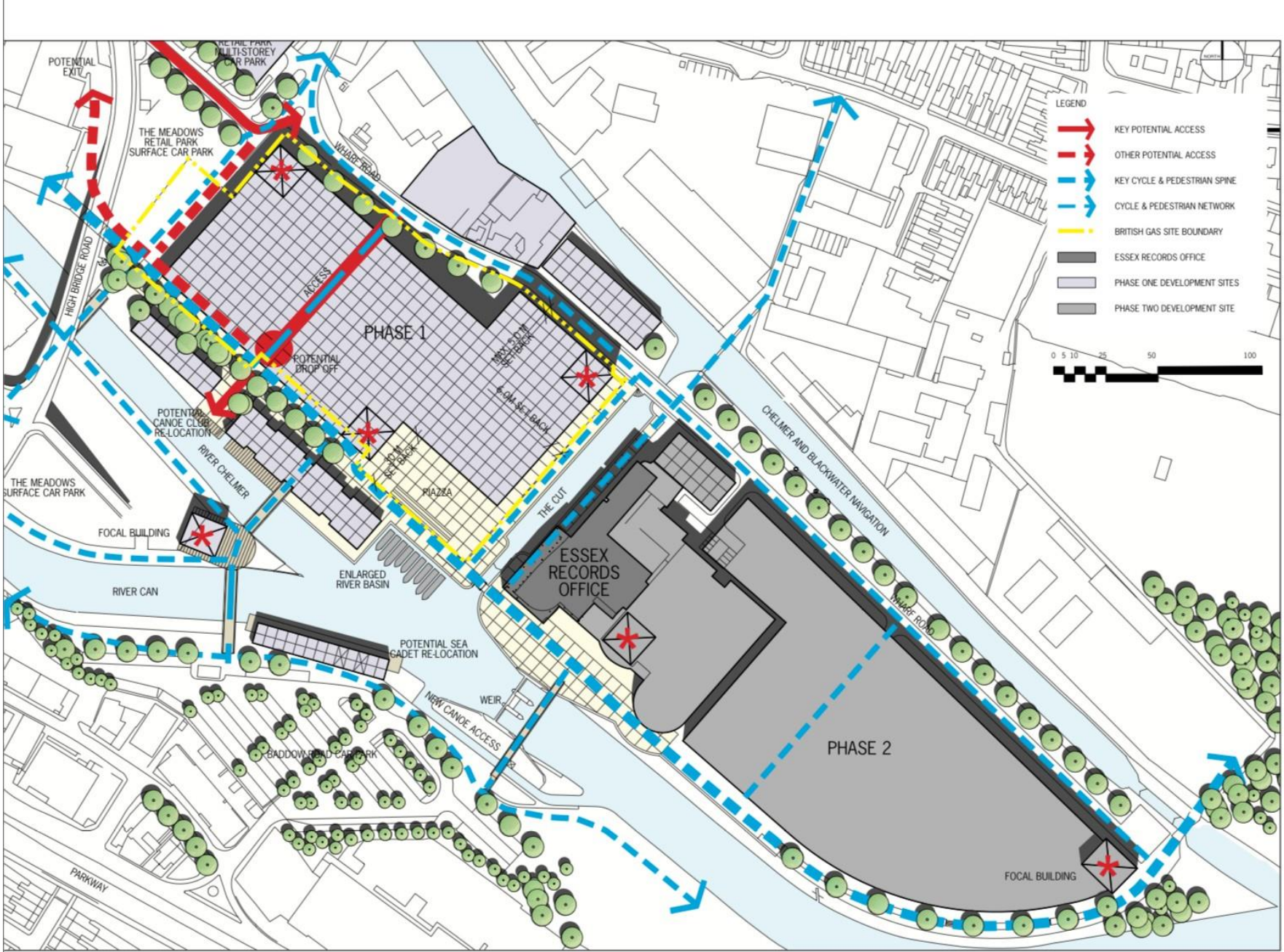
Diminishing proportions reduce the scale of this building

Perspective Drawing

Jewellery Quarter Design Guide



Development Brief | Masterplan

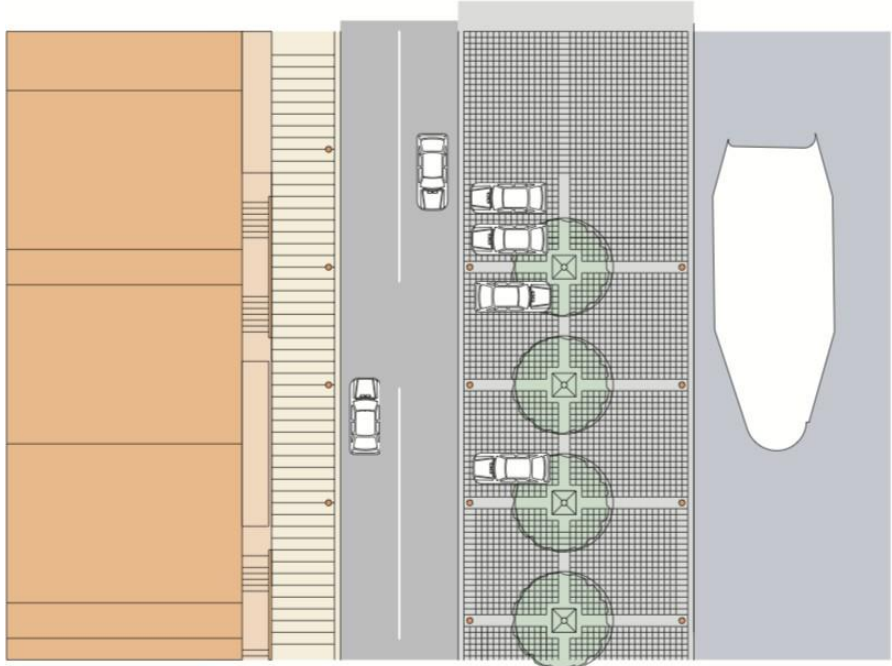
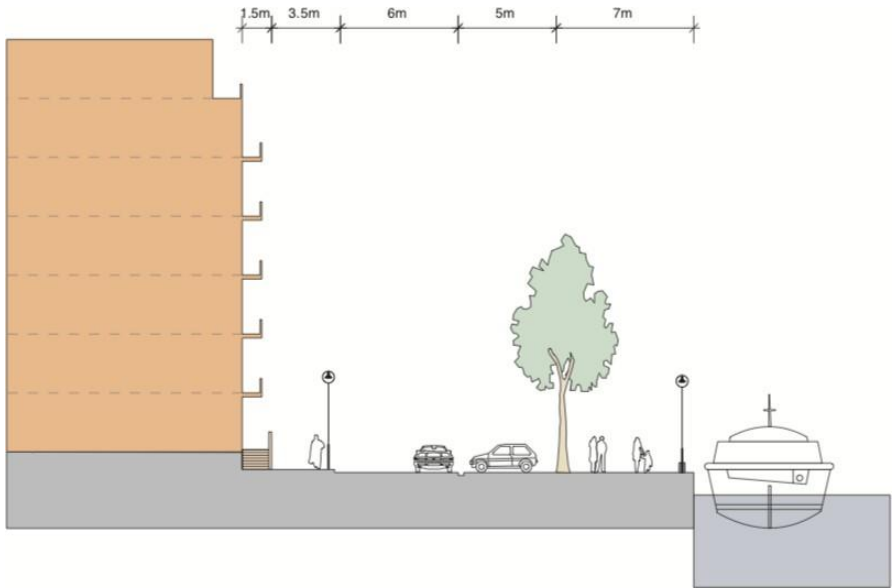


BY DESIGN
Urban design in the planning system: towards better practice

COMMISSION FOR ARCHITECTURE
& THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

THE DRAWINGS IN A BRIEF SHOULD NOT GO BEYOND WHAT IS
NEEDED TO ILLUSTRATE THE PLANNING AND DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Design Guide |
Public Realm Framework |
Design Code



ILLUSTRATIONS ARE OFTEN THE KEY TO AN
EFFECTIVE DESIGN GUIDE



Design Principle|
Design Guide |
Design Brief |
Design Code |
Design Policy



✗



✗



✓



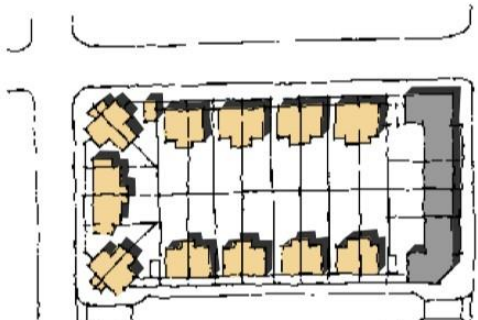
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SKYLINES ARE SENSITIVE TO BEING OBSCURED BY HIGH BUILDINGS IN FRONT OF EXISTING BUILDINGS OR HAVING THEIR SILHOUETTE SPOILED BY HIGH BUILDINGS BEHIND THEM



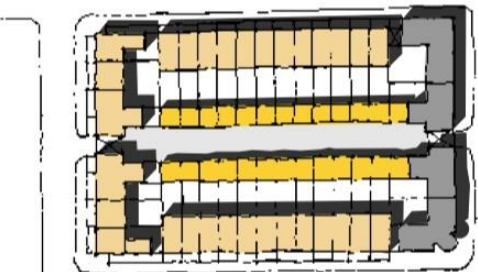
Design Principle|
Design Guide |
Design Brief |
Design Code |
Design Policy



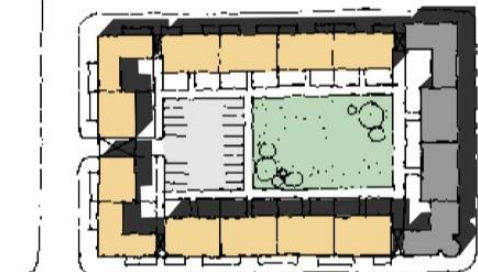
Semidetached Housing



Terrace



Mews Development



Apartment Complex

PERIMETER BLOCKS CAN WORK AT ANY SCALE





Brief|

This guide refers to site-specific briefs as development briefs. Site-specific briefs are also called a variety of other names, including design briefs, planning briefs and development frameworks.

Design guide|

A document providing guidance on how development can be carried out in accordance with the design policies of a local authority or other organisation often with a view to retaining local distinctiveness.

Design principle|

An expression of one of the basic design ideas at the heart of an urban design framework, design guide, development brief or a development.

Design standards|

Specific, usually quantifiable measures of amenity and safety in residential areas.

Development brief |

A document, prepared by a local planning authority, a developer, or jointly, providing guidance on how a site of significant size or sensitivity should be developed. Site-specific briefs are sometimes known as planning briefs, design briefs and development frameworks.





DOCUMENTS AIMED AT SUPPORTING THE DELIVERY OF DESIGN QUALITY

**Key Question: How are 'they' enshrined
in planning policy terms?**

Policy (...in a coloured box in LPlan)
Local or Neighbourhood Dev. Order
Area Action Plans

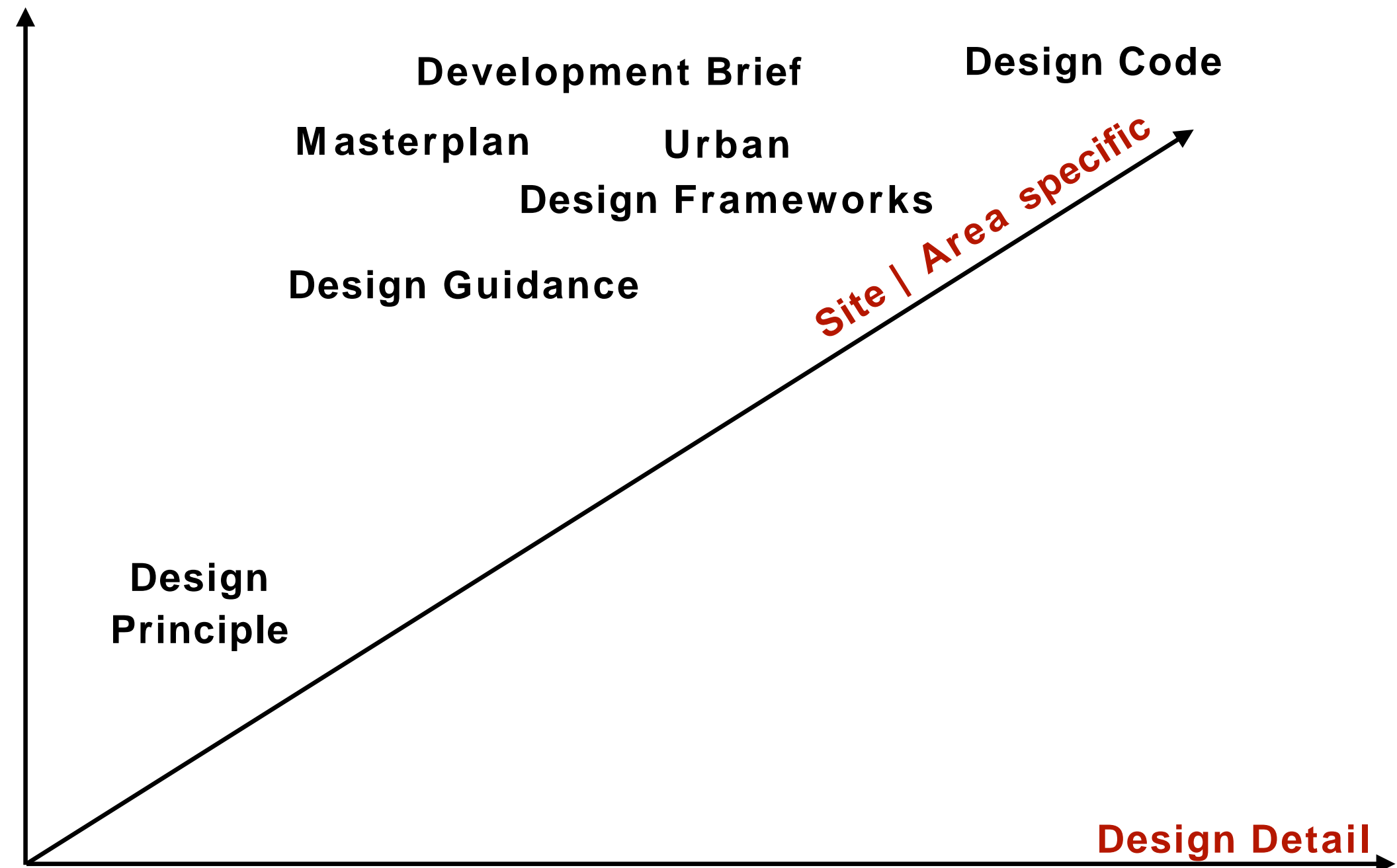


Supplementary Planning Document & Guidance
Other Guidance

NOTE | Design Policy can be

- > Area-specific
- > Site-specific
- > Topic-based

Technical Input (& Cost)





Since 2018 Neighbourhood Planning Funding Programme by Locality

Eligibility for Additional Grant Funding

Are you at least one of the following:

- Allocating sites for housing
- Including **design codes** in your plan
- A designated business neighbourhood plan
- A cluster of three or more parishes writing a single plan
- A Neighbourhood Area with a population of over 25,000

If the answer is yes to any of the above you can apply for an additional **£8,000** grant.

Design Code

A design code provides detailed design guidance for a site or area; they prescribe design requirements (or 'rules') that new development within the specified site or area should follow.

They can include requirements for built form (e.g. setting out a range of building types and how buildings should interact with the street), landscape, open space, and movement (e.g. access and ease of pedestrian movement), etc.

Design codes can vary in their level of requirements and the scale at which they operate, however they will be useful where there is a desire to:

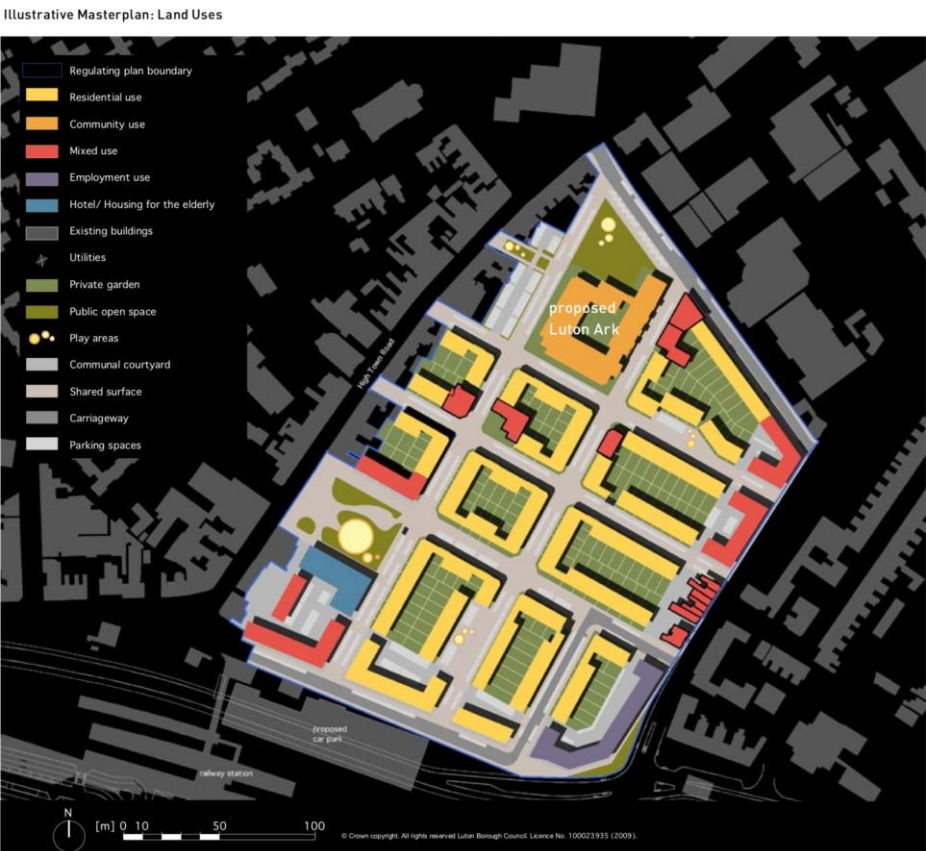
- coordinate design outcomes across large or complex sites to deliver a vision that the local community wants to see;
- ensure consistency across large sites which may be in multiple ownership and/or where development is to be phased and more than one developer and design team is likely to be involved.

Design codes can provide certainty to the community as they give more confidence that new development coming forward will reflect community wants and needs.

Design codes also give more certainty to developers, as they will be able to design a scheme that is reflective of community aspirations, potentially speeding up the planning application process.

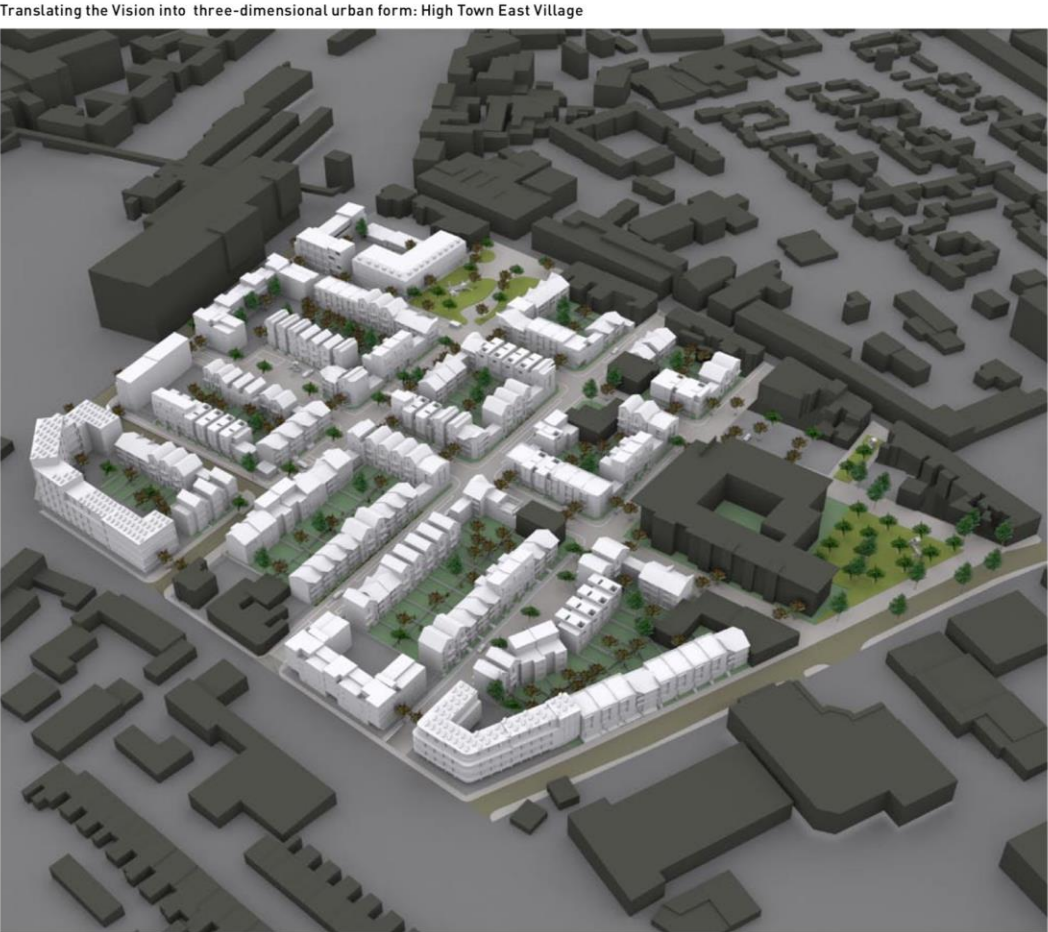
You can find more information on design codes within the Planning Practice Guidance at gov.uk

Source: <https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/advice/#npquestions>



Development quanta, plot ratio and number of plots by development site (estimate) as used for Design Code testing

Reference in plan	Site area sq m	Gross Floor Area sq m	Plot Ratio
1	3351	4958	1.48
2	1664	2837	1.70
3	828	1196	1.44
4	2005	4475	2.23
5	1086	957	0.88
6	1181	2236	1.89
7	970	1976	2.04
8	2732	4247	1.55
9	2104	3008	1.43
10	1282	1842	1.44
11	1653	2246	1.36
12	2328	3610	1.55
13	3107	4636	1.49
14	1470	1705	1.16
15	2220	3365	1.52
16	3064	4568	1.49
17	3717	5737	1.54



Area-wide Design Codes

AW9 Building Block

- The basic block type across the plan area is a perimeter block characterised by:
- Continuous facade allowing a clear distinction between private and public spaces;
 - Compactness of the built-up area.
- The historic street layout and block depth lend themselves to a formal grid structure complemented by two principal approaches to plot division:
- The larger plots (up to 15m width) provide for floor plate configurations for apartment blocks, office and mixed use blocks with common court yard space to the back.
 - The smaller plots (5 to 7.5m width) provide for a number of configurations suitable for houses and fine-grain mixed-use such as living-above-the-shop and live-work.
- The applicant is expected to demonstrate compliance with the above principles, both for block and individual plot development proposals.



Dense mixed use perimeter block at the East Village



Dense residential perimeter block at the East Village



Communal courtyard in compact perimeter block



Mature back gardens in an urban perimeter block



Example of a dense urban perimeter block

The Regulating Plan



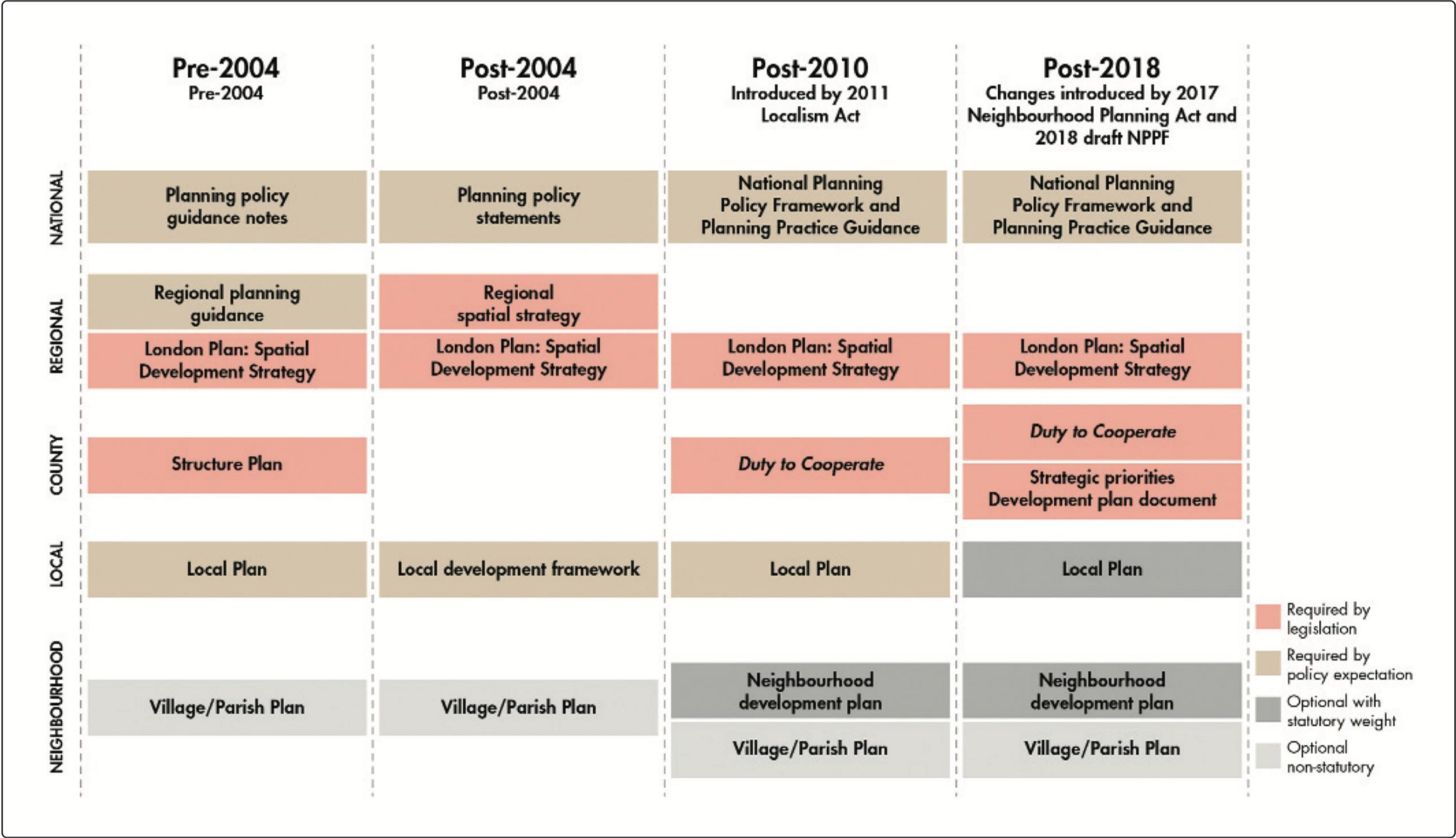


Fig. 2 Development planning frameworks in England over the last 15 years





New London Plan | EIP underway

Consultation draft - Download by chapter

- [Contents, Foreword and Introduction](#)
- [Chapter 1: Planning London's Future \(Good Growth Policies\)](#)
- [Chapter 2: Spatial Development Patterns](#)
- [Chapter 3: Design](#)
- [Chapter 4: Housing](#)
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- [Chapter 12: Monitoring](#)
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CHAPTER 3 DESIGN

Policy D1 London's form and characteristics

Policy D2 Delivering good design

Policy D3 Inclusive design

Policy D4 Housing quality and standards

Policy D5 Accessible housing

Policy D6 Optimising housing density

Policy D7 Public realm

Policy D8 Tall buildings

Policy D9 Basement development

Policy D10 Safety, security and resilience to emergency

Policy D11 Fire safety

Policy D12 Agent of Change

Policy D13 Noise



Chapter 3 Design

Policy D1 London's form and characteristics

A Development Plans, area-based strategies and development proposals should **ensure the design of places** addresses the following **requirements**:

~~A~~ ~~The form and layout of a place should:~~

~~B~~ ~~Development design should:~~

Form and layout

- 1) use land efficiently by optimising density, connectivity and land use patterns
- ~~A2)~~ ~~facilitate an inclusive environment~~
- ~~B1~~ **2)** **respond enhance** local context by delivering buildings and spaces that **positively respond to local distinctiveness through their layout, orientation, are positioned and of a** scale, appearance and shape, **with due regard to that responds successfully to the identity and character of the locality, including to** existing and emerging street hierarchy, building types, forms and proportions
- ~~A8~~ **3)** encourage and facilitate active travel with convenient and inclusive pedestrian and cycling routes, crossing points, cycle parking, and legible entrances to buildings, that are aligned with peoples' movement patterns and desire lines in the area
- ~~A3~~ **4)** be street-based with clearly defined public and private environments
- ~~A10~~ **5)** facilitate efficient servicing and maintenance of buildings and the public realm, as well as deliveries, that minimise negative impacts on the environment, public realm and vulnerable road users.

Experience

- ~~A5~~ **6)** achieve safe and secure **and inclusive** environments
- ~~A6~~ **7)** provide active frontages and positive reciprocal relationships between what happens inside the buildings and outside in the public realm to generate liveliness and interest
- ~~A4~~ **8)** deliver appropriate outlook, privacy and amenity
- ~~A7~~ **9)** provide conveniently located green and open spaces for social interaction, play, relaxation and physical activity
- ~~A9~~ **10)** help prevent or mitigate the impacts of noise and poor air quality
- ~~B6-11)~~ achieve **indoor and outdoor environments that are** comfortable and inviting **for people to use environments both inside and outside buildings.**

**with a good degree of
weight in the planning
policy system**

Made' Neighbourhood Plan with an (urban) design focus?

Impact | Binding

‘Resident ballot’ requirement in Estate Regeneration

Multi-Day Design Charrettes
OPDC Community Review Group
Community Design Review Process



Design Review Process

Project Review Process



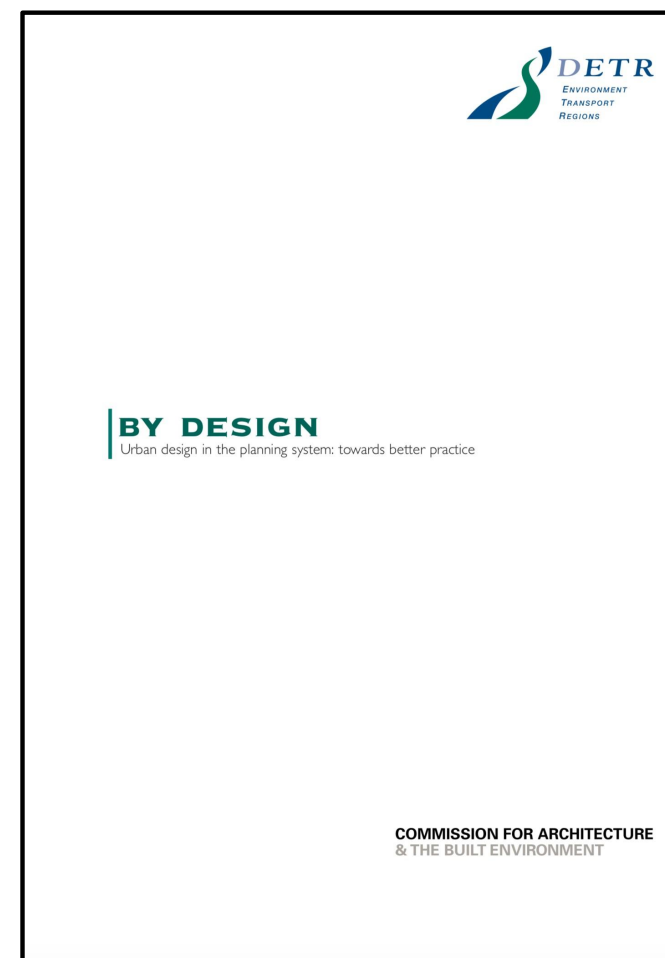
Building for Life 12

Design Workshops

Surveys/Petitions/Campaign

Design Process Tools

**with a degree of weight of
influence given by
landowner, promoter or
funder**



“Good urban design is rarely brought about by a local authority prescribing physical solutions, or by setting rigid or empirical design standards but by approaches which emphasise design objectives or principles.”

“Everyone who makes policy, shapes opinions, sets budgets, selects designers, writes briefs or assesses proposals can play a part in raising standards.”



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My special bugbear when it comes to achieving and delivering better design scrutiny ... through NPlanning....

Local Requirement List

Local planning authorities are required to publish a list of their information requirements for applications which should be proportionate to the nature and scale of development proposals and reviewed every two years.



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