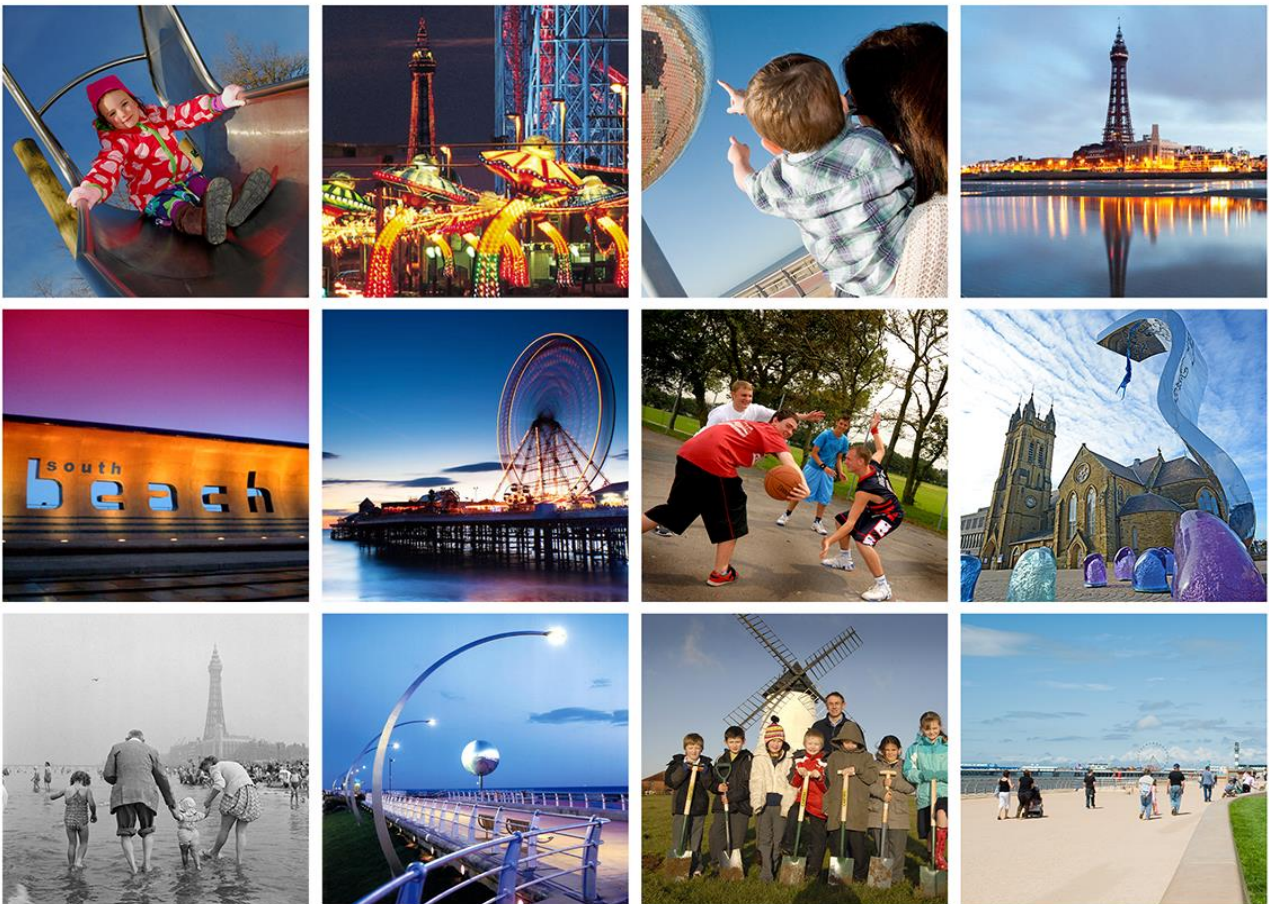


Blackpool Design Guide

Advice Note

May 2023

Blackpool Council



Contents

1. Introduction	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<i>Who is this guidance note for?</i>	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<i>Using Design and Access Statements to secure good design</i>	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2. National Policy	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<i>National Planning Policy Framework</i>	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<i>National Design Guide</i>	4
<i>National Model Design Code:</i>	5
<i>Manual for Streets</i>	6
3. Local Policies	6
4. The planning application process:	6
<i>Prior to submission of an application</i>	7
<i>Submission of an Application/preparation of a Design and Access Statement</i>	8
<i>Deciding a Planning Application</i>	9
5. Further information	9
Appendix 1: Questions to be addressed to secure a high standard of design and their related policies	10

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The aim of this guidance note is to raise design standards in Blackpool, by ensuring compliance with national policy and refusing development that is not well designed. The note provides a summary of national planning policy and guidance; as well as local planning policy to set out how design can be taken into account in the development management process.

Who is this guidance note for?

- 1.2 This guidance note is for all applicants submitting development proposals that include an element of new-build or external alteration to an existing property. This note aims to guide applicants through existing national and local policies to ensure well designed development is delivered

Use of Design and Access Statements to secure good design

- 1.3 It is expected that where schemes require a Design and Access Statement, in line with the national validation requirements, that the statement will set out the narrative of how the proposal delivers good design. To help guide applicants through this process, a list of questions is set out in paragraph 4.4. Further information is provided on the related Local Plan policies and sections of the National Design Guide for each of these questions, in Appendix 1. Smaller scale development does not require a Design and Access Statement, however the Council still expect to see high quality design in these proposals, and the questions can support this.

2.0 National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.1 Paragraph 134 of NPPF was updated in July 2021, it reads:

Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes. Conversely, significant weight should be given to:

a) development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes; and/or

b) 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.”

- 2.2 This paragraph has since been used by Inspectors in dismissing appeals for applications where design formed part of the refusal. Therefore the NPPF along with the National Design Guide are material considerations of notable weight in the determination of planning applications. Whilst

paragraph 128 of NPPF states that “all local planning authorities should prepare design guides or codes consistent with the principles set out in the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code, and which reflect local character and design preferences”, the absence of a design guide or code does not mean that design is given less weight in the decision making process.

National Planning Practice Guidance

- 2.3 The PPG contains a section concerning making decisions about design. The PPG identifies pre-application discussion as an opportunity for a prospective applicant and the Local Planning Authority to discuss the intended approach given to a site and how to apply design policies. The guidance states that addressing design early in the process is more efficient than trying to implement revisions at a later stage.
- 2.4 PPG includes guidance of how to consider design in outline applications. This states design is often considered at outline stage to assist community engagement, inform an Environmental Impact Assessment or Design and Access Statement, and provide a framework for the preparation and submission of reserved matters applications. It may be appropriate for a Design Code or parameter plans to be submitted with outline applications to guide the preparation and submission of reserved matters. Such codes can include information on the proposed land use, building heights, areas of potential built development, structure of landscape and green infrastructure, access and movement and other key structuring and place-making components, to inform the detailed design in the reserved matters application.
- 2.5 PPG states that Design and Access Statements should set out the narrative for the design approach and design rationale for the scheme and demonstrate how the proposal has considered local character and will achieve high quality design.
- 2.6 The guidance states that Local Planning Authorities can consider using planning conditions to ensure that design principles are respected in detailed design. Design elements that are fundamental to the acceptability of a scheme should be agreed early to ensure that they are incorporated as effectively as possible. The use of pre-application advice is encouraged to establish design requirements. It is important to ensure that the quality of an approved development does not materially diminish between the grant of permission and construction such as, for example, when materials or details of landscaping are agreed through condition.

National Design Guide

- 2.7 Paragraph 11 of the Guide states who the guide is for including: planning officers who assess the quality of planning applications, councillors who make planning decisions, applicants who prepare applications and people in the local community.
- 2.8 The guide introduces ten characteristics of a well-designed place and paragraph 14 of the Guide sets out how the relative priority of different characteristics can be determined at an early stage.



- 2.9 Paragraph 16 of the guide talks about where there is a clearly expressed ‘story’ for the design concept, how this influences the components of design and addresses the ten characteristics. This ‘story’ should be set out in a Design and Access Statement, reflecting advice in PPG.
- 2.10 The guide sets out the components of good design, taking into account the context of the site including buildings, landscaping and infrastructure. The components of design are outlined in the plan and should form the basis of a good design which achieves the ten characteristics of a well-designed place. The components are:
- Layout: including how routes and blocks are arranged, the structure / grain and distribution of different uses.
 - Form: The size and shape of buildings, their height, bulk, massing, building lines and relationship to plot boundaries
 - Scale: The height, width and length of individual buildings and enclosure formed around the space by height of and distance between buildings.
 - Appearance: Including the architecture, materials, decoration, lighting, colour and texture of buildings
 - Landscape: Including the landform, drainage, hard landscaping, street furniture, play equipment and planting within a site and its relationship to wider environment
 - Materials: Including for buildings and landscape, how they relate to the surrounds, their suitability for the type of development.
 - Detailing: These include deliberate part of the appearance of a building including windows, doors and their surrounds; but can also include lighting, ventilation and rainwater goods.
- 2.11 The text relating to each of the ten characteristics provides guidance on achieving these characteristics of good design, which can be cross-referenced with the components of design. Against each characteristic there is also a list of ‘looking forward’ questions which seeks to address climate change.

National Model Design Code

- 2.12 The code is in two parts: Part 1 - the coding process and Part 2 - guidance notes. The purpose of the code is to provide guidance on the production of design codes and to promote successful design, expanding on the National Design Guide. Paragraph 8 states that this sets out design considerations that will be expected to be taken into account when determining planning applications.
- 2.13 Paragraph 11 states the Code sets a baseline standard of quality and practice, which local planning authorities are expected to take into account when determining planning applications including:
- Designing new development to enhance health and wellbeing
 - How landscape, green infrastructure and biodiversity are approached
 - The environmental performance of the place and buildings
 - The layout of development including infrastructure and street pattern
 - The factors to consider when determining whether facades of buildings are of sufficiently high quality
 - How developments take account of local vernacular, character, heritage, architecture and materials
- 2.14 Section 3 includes guidance for different issues to be addressed in different areas (in a design code) and on an area wide basis. Part 2 of the Design Code – guidance note provides more detailed

guidance. Part 2 is particularly useful in expanding on the guidance set out in the National Design Guide.

Manual for Streets

- 2.15 Manual for Streets is referred to the National Design Guide, this provides design guidelines for local roads and streets. Manual for Streets is [currently being revised](#), with a replacement to be produced in 2023 to replace both Manual for Streets (2007) and Manual for Streets 2 (2010). This is to take account of wider changes in design policy and guidance. This sets out the design approach for streets, including considering the design process, design principles and detailed design issues.
- 2.16 Para 3.2.1 recommends joint working between local planning and highway authorities, and others responsible for service delivery to ensure that they do not give contradictory advice. Table 3.1 sets out the design approach making a differentiation between large developments, small developments and changes to existing streets; these have links to the guidance set out in the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code.
- 2.17 The document provides detailed guidance on street users' needs; street geometry; parking; traffic signs and markings; street furniture and street lighting; and materials, adoption and maintenance. The latter part includes planting and drainage.

3.0 Local Policies

- 3.1 One of the key objectives of the Core Strategy is to create well-designed places for people to enjoy with high quality buildings, streets and spaces, whilst conserving and enhancing Blackpool's rich heritage and natural environment. This is supported by several policies. CS7: Quality of Design is the core design policy but several other policies have links to improving design and cover issues that should be addressed in Design and Access Statements, giving consideration to the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code:

Core Strategy Policy:
CS5: Connectivity
CS6: Green Infrastructure
CS7: Quality of Design
CS8: Heritage
CS9: Water Management
CS10: Sustainable Design and Renewable and Low Carbon Energy
CS12: Sustainable Neighbourhoods
CS13: Housing Mix, Density and Standards
CS17: Blackpool Town Centre
CS22: Key Resort Gateways

- 3.2 Part 2 of the Local Plan contains detailed Development Management Policies, which should also be read in conjunction with national guidance in order to make decisions on design; with Design and Access Statements articulating how these have been taken into account.

Development Management Policy:
DM1: Design Requirements for New Build Housing Developments
DM3: Supported Accommodation and Housing for Older People
DM4: Student Accommodation
DM17: Design Principles
DM19: Strategic Views
DM20: Extensions and Alterations
DM21: Landscaping
DM22: Shopfronts
DM23: Security Shutters
DM25: Public Art
DM26: Listed Buildings
DM27: Conservation Areas
DM28: Non-Designated Heritage Assets
DM31: Surface Water Management
DM35: Biodiversity
DM36: Controlling Pollution and Contamination
DM41: Transport Requirements for New Development

- 3.3 There are Supplementary Planning Documents which contain further guidance on design: Greening Blackpool, New Homes from Old Places, Signage and Extending Your Home.

4.0 The Planning Application process

Prior to the submission of an application

- 4.1 National planning policy, national planning and design guidance and local planning policies set out clear expectations on what is required for the design of development, with national policy being clear that development that is not well design should be refused. There are clear expectations on The National Design Guide (para 14) gives advice on the early stage of the design process.
- 4.2 Planning Practice Guidance sets out the value of pre-application engagement and the importance of resolving issues early on in the process. The Council has a [pre-application advice service](#) for both small scale development and major applications. Applicants are strongly advised to seek pre-application advice in order to understand the Council's expectations on design; and to discuss the best way for developments to achieve these. The Council's website sets out the information that is required at the pre-application stage.
- 4.3 For non-residential developments with over 1,000 square metres floorspace; a [BREEAM](#) pre-assessment report should be compiled to ensure that the proposal will achieve at least BREEAM 'very good' standard. Agreeing details on the design of the building at an early stage will ensure that the standard is met and help ensure that more energy efficient buildings are delivered in accordance with Local Plan Policy CS10.

Submission of an application / preparation of a Design and Access Statement

- 4.4 A set of questions has been prepared to provide a prompt to applicants to set out how the proposal achieves high quality design. The questions are based around the themes of character and context, movement, amenity, public spaces and green infrastructure. It would be useful if a submitted application includes answers to the below questions, which can be addressed in the Design and Access Statement where one is required. The questions are set out below:

Questions to be addressed to secure a high standard of design:
How does the proposal enhance the character and appearance of the local area by having regard to the design components set out in Policy DM17 and the National Design Guide?
How does the proposal strengthen the existing townscape character?
How does the proposal make the most efficient use of land and why is the density proposed appropriate?
What contribution does the proposal make to helping create an attractive gateway to the resort and town centre?
Where affordable housing has been provided on site, how has this been designed to ensure that it is not distinguishable from market housing?
How does the proposal maintain or enhance the residential character of the neighbourhood / street?
How have views identified in Policy DM19 informed the design of the proposal?
How does the proposal enhance walking and cycling connection; including access to public transport?
Where car parking is provided, is it well integrated into the site; and does it avoid dominating the frontage of the development?
How has the proposal maximised accessibility to different groups?
How does the development support the amenity of its occupiers and the occupiers of neighbouring buildings by dealing with visual intrusion, overlooking, shading, noise and light pollution?
Does the development incorporated adequate amenity space and is sufficient floorspace provided to support residential amenity and meet NDSS as set out in DM1?
What steps have been taken to reduce energy demand for the end-user?
How does the development support the provision of safe public and private spaces?
How does the proposal enhance the quality of buildings, streets and spaces within the town centre?
How has utilities and servicing infrastructure being sensitively incorporated into the development?
How has the proposal sought to incorporate public art into the public realm?
How does the proposal create new green infrastructure and help connect to other areas of green infrastructure?
How has the proposal sought to deliver a net gain in biodiversity?
How has the proposal sought to include street trees?
How has the development sought to minimise surface water run-off?

- 4.5 A more detailed version of the questions is set out in a separate table (in appendix 1) which links to the relevant Local Plan policies and National Design Guide, to demonstrate the policy basis of these questions but to also allow the applicant and case officer to seek further detail.
- 4.6 In accordance with national policy, a Heritage Statement is required on all applications affecting Listed Buildings, buildings in Conservation Areas, Locally Listed Buildings (non-designated heritage assets), registered historic parks and gardens, or affecting known archaeological sites. A Heritage

Statement is also required for applications affecting the setting of any of the above. Further guidance is available on the Council's website. There may be scope for a joint Heritage and Design & Access Statement to consider design issues affecting a site.

Deciding a planning application

- 4.7 These questions would form the basis of how the case officer decides whether the policy has met national and local planning policies to achieve well designed development. Ultimately if it is not clear that the application is delivering high quality design, it will be refused.

5.0 Further information

Pre-application advice

The Council offers a pre-application advice service. Applicant's wishing to develop serviced holiday accommodation may wish to take advantage of this service to establish the likelihood of planning permission being granted for their proposal and to understand any specific requirements that may be necessary.

Details of this service can be found [here](#) or at: <https://www.blackpool.gov.uk/Residents/Planning-environment-and-community/Planning/Planning-applications/Pre-application.aspx>

Public consultation

As this document is intended as an advice note to provide clarification and information on the Council's approach to design, no public consultation has been undertaken on its content.

Sustainability appraisal

The Blackpool Local Plan, Parts 1 and 2, have both been subject to a sustainability appraisal. As such, there is no need for this advice note to be subject to a separate sustainability appraisal.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

Given the purpose, content and scope of this advice note, it is not considered to trigger a requirement for a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).

Useful numbers

Development Management (Planning) – 01253 476193

Appendix 1: Questions to be addressed to secure a high standard of design and their related policies

Questions to be addressed to secure a high standard of design	Relevant Local Plan Policies	Relevant National Design Guide heading
How does the proposal enhance the character and appearance of the local area by having regard to the design components set out in Policy DM17 and the National Design Guide?	CS7, CS12, DM1, DM5, DM17, DM19, DM22, DM25	C1, C2, I1, I2, I3, B1, B2
How does the proposal strengthen the existing townscape character?	CS7, CS12, DM1, DM17, DM19	C1, C2, I1, I2, I3, B1, B2
How does the proposal make the most efficient use of land and why is the density proposed appropriate?	CS7, CS13, DM1, DM17	B1, B2
What contribution does the proposal make to helping create an attract gateway to the resort and town centre?	CS7, CS17, CS22, DM10, DM17, DM19, DM22	C1, C2, I1, I2, I3, B1, B2, B3
Where affordable housing has been provided on site, how has this been designed to ensure that it is not distinguishable from market housing?	CS14, DM1	U2, U3
How does the proposal maintain or enhance the residential character of the neighbourhood / street?	CS7, CS12, DM1, DM3, DM4, DM5, DM17	C1, C2, I1
How have views identified in Policy DM19 informed the design of the proposal?	CS7, DM17, DM19, DM26, DM27, DM28	C2. I1
How does the proposal enhance walking and cycling connection; including access to public transport?	CS5, CS6, CS7, CS12, DM41	M1, M2, M3
Where car parking is provided, is it well integrated into the site; and does it avoid dominating the frontage of the development?	CS6, CS7, CS12, DM1, DM17, DM21 DM41	M1, M2, M3, H2
How has the proposal maximised accessibility to different groups?	CS7, DM1, DM3	M3, H1, L2
How does the development support the amenity of its occupiers and the occupiers of neighbouring buildings by dealing with visual intrusion, overlooking, shading, noise and light pollution?	CS7, DM1, DM17, DM36	H1
How has the development incorporated adequate amenity space and is sufficient floorspace provided to support residential amenity and meet NDSS as set out in DM1?	CS7, CS12, CS13, DM1	H1, H2
What steps have been taken to reduce energy demand for the end-user?	CS10, DM1	R1, R2, R3
How does the development support the provision of safe public and private spaces?	CS7, DM17, DM21	P1, P2, P3
How does the proposal enhance the quality of buildings, streets and spaces within the town centre?	CS7, CS17, DM17, DM19, DM22	P1, P2, U1
How has utilities and servicing infrastructure being sensitively incorporated into the development?	CS7, DM1	M3, H3, L2
How has the proposal sought to incorporate public art into the public realm?	CS7, DM17, DM25	P1, P2

How does the proposal create new green infrastructure and help connect to other areas of green infrastructure?	CS6, CS7, DM21, GBSPD (Greening Blackpool SPD)	N1, N2, N3
How has the proposal sought to deliver a net gain in biodiversity?	CS6, DM21, DM35, GBSPD	N3
How has the proposal sought to include street trees?	CS6, DM21, DM35, GBSPD	N1, P1
How has the development sought to minimise surface water run-off?	CS6, CS9, DM1, DM21, DM31, GBSPD	N2