

Sustainable development principles

Policy DM1

High quality design

Designs of new development must be of high quality, based upon and demonstrating the following principles:

- a) **Clear understanding of the characteristics of the site, its wider context and the surrounding area;**
- b) **Efficient and effective use of the site, having regard to criterion (a);**
- c) **Positive contribution to local character including any heritage or biodiversity assets and the setting of heritage assets;**
- d) **Creation of safe and accessible places that also encourage and enable sustainable modes of travel such as walking and cycling;**
- e) **Visually attractive places that are well integrated with surrounding buildings, streets and landscapes, and do not have an unacceptably adverse effect on the privacy and amenity of the proposed or neighbouring properties and uses, taking account of:**
 - i) **Architecture**
 - ii) **Siting, layout, scale and massing**
 - iii) **Orientation and fenestration**
 - iv) **Materials, landscaping and green infrastructure**
- f) **Appropriate drainage including sustainable drainage systems (SUDS), including arrangements for future maintenance, and connection of foul drainage to a mains sewer where available;**
- g) **Adequate levels of daylight, sunlight and privacy to private amenity spaces and principal windows;**
- h) **Suitably sized rooms and overall floorspace which allows for adequate storage and movement within the building together as set out in the Nationally Described Space Standard with external spaces for recycling, refuse and cycle storage; and**
- i) **On sites of 10 houses or more the provision of 20% of dwellings built to Level 2 of Building Regulations Part M 'access to and use of dwellings'.**

4.1 National policy recognises that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and ensures that new development contributes positively to making places better for people. Policies S1 and S9 set out the Council's strategic objectives for locally distinctive, high quality development, including design which reinforces the character and legibility of the built environment and creates attractive places. Policy DM1 builds on this by setting out detailed criteria to guide high quality design on individual development sites.

4.2 The Mid Devon Town and Village Character Assessment identifies and evaluates the settlement character of the district, including patterns and similarities, distribution of land use, materials and key features of interest. The Devon and Mid Devon Landscape Character Assessments provide the equivalent information pertaining to landscape in the district. While the level of information expected to accompany a planning application will vary depending on the development being proposed, applications for new buildings within or adjacent to towns and villages should demonstrate an understanding of the surrounding built environment. Where available, Conservation Area Appraisals will also provide an essential source of information for proposals within conservation areas. In addition to an understanding of local character and heritage, development proposals must respect the needs of neighbouring residents and the community, through the design of safe, accessible and attractive places that preserve general quality of life.

4.3 In creating visually attractive places that incorporate landscaping and green infrastructure, applicants are advised to consult Biodiversity by Design, published by the Town and Country Planning Association for examples of how green infrastructure has been used to enhance the quality of development.

4.4 Designs should maximise opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes for the movement of goods or people. National policy states that developments should be located and designed where practical to accommodate the efficient delivery of goods and supplies; prioritise pedestrian and cycle movements; have access to public transport; deliver safe and secure layouts that minimise conflicts between cars and pedestrians/cyclists; incorporate facilities for plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles; and consider the needs of people with disabilities by all modes of transport. Walking and cycling routes should be high quality, attractive and direct.

4.5 Development proposals must also accord with sustainable waste management principles, the requirements for which are set out in Policy W4 'Waste Prevention' within the Devon Waste Plan. The Devon County Council Waste Management and Infrastructure SPD should also be a material consideration. Development proposals should demonstrate compliance with this policy as part of the Design and Access Statement, where applicable. This is an essential step in the district's transition to more sustainable resource management, with the long-term aim of zero-waste or resource-neutral construction.

4.5a Soft landscaped SuDs are best placed to provide water quantity, water quality, public amenity and biodiversity benefits. When considering SuDs there is a preference for 'soft' landscaped solutions which should be sought in the first instance where possible and appropriate. Robust evidence should be provided where no soft landscaped solutions are used.

4.5b National policy states that planning should always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings. This is particularly important for the design of the homes that people live in and the spaces that surround those homes. The aim in Mid Devon is to deliver high quality buildings and spaces that meet the needs of users, taking account of an aging population whilst ensuring compatibility with surrounding development and uses. Though compliance is delivered through building regulations, criterion i) will be implemented through a condition attached to the planning permission.

Policy DM2

Renewable and low carbon energy

The benefits of renewable and low carbon energy development will be weighed against its impact. Proposals will be permitted where they do not have significant adverse impacts on the character, amenity and visual quality of the area, including cumulative impacts of such developments within the parish or adjoining parishes. Proposals must demonstrate that impacts are or can be made acceptable in relation to:

- a) Landscape character and the character and setting of heritage assets;**
- b) Environmental amenity of nearby properties and the wider locality;**
- c) Quality and productivity of the best and most versatile agricultural land (grades 1, 2 and 3a); and**
- d) Biodiversity (avoiding habitat fragmentation).**

4.6 Policy DM2 seeks to maximise renewable and low carbon energy while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily, including cumulative impacts. Examples of development considered under this policy include hydropower, solar installations, and energy systems associated with other development such as combined heat and power (CHP) or district heating. Any wind turbine proposals will be considered in the context of national policy which requires planning applications for such development to only be granted if the development site is in an area identified as suitable for wind energy development in Local or Neighbourhood Plans. Following consideration of the evidence commissioned, the Council has concluded that it does not propose to identify such areas at a district level. This does not preclude suitable areas for wind energy development to come forward in Neighbourhood Plans.