

County Durham Plan

County Durham Building for Life Supplementary Planning Document

2019 (Adopted Version)



Altogether better



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■	Region	
1	Introduction	2
2	Connections	8
3	Facilities and Services	10
4	Public Transport	12
5	Meeting local housing requirements	14
6	Character	16
7	Working with the site and its context	18
8	Creating well defined streets and spaces	20
9	Easy to find your way around	22
10	Streets for all	24
11	Car Parking	26
12	Public and private spaces	28
13	External storage and amenity space	30
14	Appendix	32
	14.1 Existing Local Plan Policies	32
	14.2 Assessment criteria for Full Applications	33
	14.3 Assessment criteria for Reserved Matters Applications	41
	14.4 Assessment criteria for Outline Application and Pre-Applications	49

Introduction

Background

1.1 Improving the quality of design and promoting a good quality environment are core planning principles. Better design supports our aims to improve economic prosperity and enhance the environment. The National Planning Policy Framework recognises the importance of good design to securing sustainable development, which is indivisible from good planning and contributes to making places better for people.



1.2 To achieve high quality housing developments, we have adopted an in-house review process to assess schemes against the Building for Life 12 (BfL 12) Standards. Our specialist teams - including highways, landscape, ecology and design - sit on the review panel. The outcomes of the review sessions are particularly useful for negotiating improvements with developers. This is beneficial for all and adds value, for both developers and the communities they are helping to shape throughout County Durham.

1.3 This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) formalises the review process and establishes the guidelines and standards for its operation. It is linked to the Sustainable Design Policy (30) in the County Durham Plan. The SPD will form part of the County Plan when it is adopted. In advance of the finalisation of the County Durham Plan existing policies in former district local plans provide the policy background, alongside national planning objectives. Appendix (1) lists these existing policies. The SPD should be read alongside other key design guidance, including for example Manual for Streets, Urban Design Compendium, By Design, Secured by Design, Streets for All, Neighbourhoods for Life, and, Active Design.

Stages of preparation

1.4 This SPD has been prepared in accordance with planning regulations⁽ⁱ⁾, which require documents to be progressed through two rounds of consultation. The first of these consultations took place between 22 June and 3 August 2018, while a second draft of the SPD was consulted upon from 25 January to 8 March 2019.

1.5 For both rounds of consultation copies of the SPD were made available at all libraries and customer access points throughout at the County, as well at the main council buildings. The SPD was also published on the council's website. A separate Consultation Statement has been prepared setting out the comments and changes made to the document. The SPD was adopted 27 June 2019.

i Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

Purpose of this document

1.6 This SPD sets down guidance on the application of the BfL standards to ensure well-designed development proposals. The standards provide a framework for assessing the quality of housing proposals. Reviewing a scheme against BfL provides focus and structure to discussions between local communities, the local planning authority, the developer, and, other stakeholders. This ensures a consistent approach to BfL to enhance design quality across the County.

1.7 This document contains information on:

- How the review process works
- Who is involved
- Outcomes and expected standards
- Interpretation of the BfL standards

How the review process works and who is involved

1.8 Review sessions occur fortnightly to ensure they do not delay determination of applications. The sessions include a presentation by the officer leading on the application. Sessions include all major residential (or residential-led) schemes of 50+ units (or 1.5ha+). Minor schemes in particularly sensitive locations may also be selected for review, however this is at the discretion of the Development Management Team Leader.

1.9 Typically the following specialist teams from the council participate:

- Archaeology
- Assets and Property Management
- Design and Conservation
- Development Management
- Drainage and Coastal Protection
- Ecology
- Highways
- Landscape
- Public Health
- Public Rights of Way
- Spatial Policy
- Sustainable Travel and Accessibility
- Sustainability and Climate Change
- Technical Services

1.10 Third party organisations may attend (for example, the Police Architectural Liaison Officer) at the discretion of the chair of the review group. In order to ensure the process runs efficiently and to maintain an objective discussion, applicants are not invited to attend review sessions. However, review outcomes are thoroughly discussed with applicants, including through meetings with specialist teams as necessary.

Applicants

1.11 Applicants should use the BfL 12 standards from the outset to inform the design process. Applicants are required to submit their own BfL appraisal, which may form part of the Design and Access Statement. These appraisals will help to inform the process and will be circulated to the team in advance of the review meeting.

1.12 Where an applicant's appraisal differs from the councils, this will be explored and highlighted in our response.

BfL Report

1.13 The council prepare a BfL Report following the design review session. This summarises the key issues and opportunities for improvement. The report also provides a traffic light indicator to show how well the scheme has performed against each standard. This is shared and discussed with the applicant. The next steps will depend upon the application route however a scheme will only be supported where identified improvements are addressed to the satisfaction of the council.

1.14 The council promote a pre-application service so that key issues and opportunities can be considered in advance of a formal application. Applicants are encouraged to opt for this service and this will usually include a BfL review. Developments should demonstrate they are targeting BfL12 where applications for outline planning permission is granted. The council will apply an informative to ensure this. A shortened review template is in place for pre-application schemes, focusing on six key questions.

1.15 Proposals at the formal application stage are reviewed against the full BfL 12 standards, while a specific template is used for schemes at the reserved matters stage. (Current versions of the review templates are appended to this document and may be subject to update - please see Appendices (2-4)). If there are outstanding concerns following the review process these will be relayed to the applicant in good time so that applicants have ample opportunity to respond. This ensures sufficient opportunity to secure the best design outcome. The findings from the review sessions are reported to committee and are material to the determination of a proposal in accordance with Policy 30 in the County Durham Plan.

Outcomes and expected standards

1.16 The BfL standards are grouped under 12 topic areas (see below). Proposals should demonstrate that they perform 'positively' against all 12 standards aiming to achieve at least nine 'greens'.

1.17 BfL is based on a traffic light system and schemes should secure as many 'greens' as possible, whilst minimising the number of 'ambers' and avoiding 'reds'. A red light gives warning that a particular aspect of a development needs to be reconsidered. Applicants at the pre-application stage should address any 'reds' before progressing to formal planning. Where schemes score 'reds' at the formal planning stage the council will provide advice on amending the proposal. If an applicant cannot demonstrate that they have done enough to address improvements in line with review findings then the scheme will be refused planning permission unless there are significant overriding reasons.

1.18 A scheme might not achieve 12 'greens' for a variety of reasons, however wherever possible developers should take measures that allow schemes to improve in the future. This may, for example, involve 'future proofing' connections that are currently unavailable, perhaps due to land ownership issues, thereby preserving the chance to provide links in the future should the opportunity arrive.

1.19 Schemes should perform well in respect of the 'Creating a Place' and 'Street and Home' chapters particularly. These standards (5-12) are both more directly connected to the inherent design quality of the development and directly within the power of the applicant to influence.

Accreditation

1.20 Nationally the [Design Council](#) operate the 'Built for Life' accreditation scheme, which is a quality mark available following planning approval. Accreditation gives developers the opportunity to promote the quality of their development through sales and marketing activity. Where resources permit the council will support applications for accreditation.

The BfL 12 Standards

1.21 The standards are grouped under the following three themes:

Integrating into the Neighbourhood (1-4)

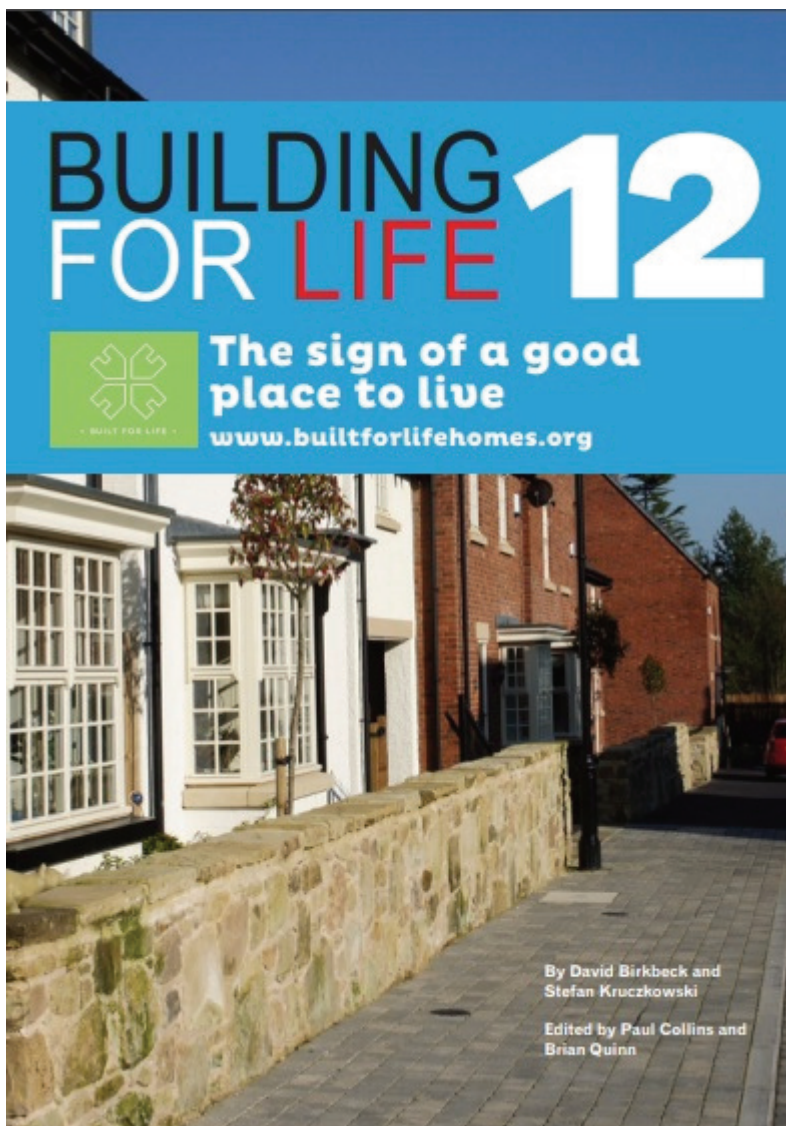
This section covers the site context in terms of connections, access and provision of facilities and services. Development should support public transport and help to meet local housing needs.

Creating a Place (5-8)

New development should respond to, and create, local character and distinctiveness. Sites are assessed against how well they work with the site and its context and create well-defined streets and spaces. Housing schemes should be easy to find your way around.

Street and Home (9-12)

This section sets standards for creating streets that cater for all and successfully integrate car parking. Public and private spaces should be clearly defined and adequate provision should be made for external storage and amenity space.



Connections

Does the scheme integrate into its surroundings by reinforcing existing connections and creating new ones, while also respecting existing buildings and land uses around the development site?

1a. Where should vehicles come in and out of the development?

1b. Should there be pedestrian and cycle only routes into and through the development? If so, where should they go?

1c. Where should new streets be placed, could they be used to cross the development site and help create linkages across the scheme and into the existing neighbourhood and surrounding places?

1d. How should the new development relate to existing development? What should happen at the edges of the development site

Building for Life says:

2.1 Thinking about where connections can and should be made; and about how best the new development can integrate into the existing neighbourhood rather than creating an inward looking cul-de-sac development.

2.2 Remembering that people who live within a new development and people who live nearby may want to walk through the development to get somewhere else, so carefully consider how a development can contribute towards creating a more walkable neighbourhood.

2.3 Thinking carefully before blocking or redirecting existing routes, particularly where these are well used.

2.4 Creating connections that are attractive, well lit, direct, easy to navigate, well overlooked and safe.

2.5 Ensuring that all streets and pedestrian/cycle only routes pass in front of people's homes, rather than to the rear of them.



Local considerations:

2.6 The layout of a scheme should start with an assessment of existing connections and opportunities to link the development into its surroundings. For example, County Durham features an expansive network of cycle paths and public rights of way, including the coast-to-coast national cycling route, which passes through the north of the county along disused railway lines. Opportunities to utilise and enhance such resources exist throughout County Durham.

2.7 While it is important to ensure inter-connected streets, occasionally cul-de-sacs may be acceptable for example for topographic reasons or where it would improve the overall layout of a scheme.

2.8 Where development adjoins non-residential development, for example industrial premises, adequate buffering will be required to ensure amenity and operational flexibility for both existing and future occupiers.

Facilities and Services

Does the development provide (or is it close to) community facilities, such as shops, schools, workplaces, parks, play areas, pubs or cafes?

2a. Are there enough facilities and services in the local area to support the development? If not, what is needed?

Where new facilities are proposed:

2b. Are these facilities what the area needs?

2c. Are these new facilities located in the right place? If not, where should they go?

2d. Does the layout encourage walking, cycling or using public transport to reach them?

Building for Life says:

3.1 Planning development so that everyday facilities and services are located within a short walk of people's homes. The layout of a development and the quality of connections it provides can make a significant impact on walking distances and people's travel choices.

3.2 Providing access to facilities through the provision of safe, convenient and direct paths or cycle routes. Consider whether there are any barriers to pedestrian/ cycle access (for example, busy roads with a lack of crossing points) and how these barriers can be removed or lessened.

3.3 Locating new facilities (if provided) where the greatest number of existing and new residents can access them easily, recognising that this may be at the edge of a new development or on a through route; but consider whether existing facilities can be enhanced before proposing new ones.

3.4 Where new local centres are provided, design these as vibrant places with smaller shops combined with residential accommodation above (rather than a single storey, single use supermarket building). Work to integrate these facilities into the fabric of the wider development to avoid creating an isolated retail park type environment dominated by car parking and highways infrastructure.

3.5 Creating new places within a development where people can meet each other such as public spaces, community buildings, cafes and restaurants. Aim to get these delivered as early as possible. Think carefully about how spaces could be used and design them with flexibility in mind, considering where more active spaces should be located so as to avoid creating potential conflict between users and adjacent residents.

**Local considerations:**

3.6 Additional considerations including opportunities to improve accessibility to local facilities. Where new development is proposed consideration should be given to provision of new paths, or upgrading existing paths (for example through widening or lighting).

3.7 Where required, consideration should be given to providing new facilities and services on site, for example in instances where existing facilities are beyond accepted walking distances. Such facilities should be located to aid provision for existing residential areas where possible.

Public Transport

Does the scheme have good access to public transport to help reduce car dependency?

3a. What can the development do to encourage more people (both existing and new residents) to use public transport more often?

3b. Where should new public transport stops be located?

Building for Life says:

4.1 Maximising the number of homes on sites that are close to good, high frequency public transport routes, but ensure that this does not compromise the wider design qualities of the scheme and its relationship with its surroundings.

4.2 Carefully considering the layout and orientation of routes to provide as many people as possible with the quickest, safest, attractive and most convenient possible routes between homes and public transport.

4.3 Considering how the layout of the development can maximise the number of homes within a short walk from their nearest bus, tram or train stop where new public transport routes are planned to pass through the development. Locate public transport stops in well used places, ensuring that they are accessible for all, well overlooked and lit.

4.4 Considering how the development can contribute towards encouraging more sustainable travel choices, for example by establishing a residents car club, providing electric car charging points, creating live/work units or homes that include space for a home office.

4.5 Exploring opportunities to reduce car miles through supporting new or existing park and ride schemes or supporting the concept of transit orientated developments (where higher density and/or mixed use development is centred on train stations).



Local considerations:

- 4.6** The dispersed settlement pattern, and largely rural character, of the county raises significant challenges to bus providers given the viability of many routes.
- 4.7** The council recommends developers discuss their proposals with providers to maximise opportunities for supporting bus services and access to them. New development should aim to provide direct links to bus stops, and consider relocating stops where this would ensure better access for existing and new residents.
- 4.8** For larger schemes, or where a more efficient route can be created, bus penetration into new sites should be supported where appropriate.

Meeting local housing requirements

Does the development have a mix of housing types and tenures that suit local requirements?

- 4a. What types of homes, tenure and price range are needed in the area (for example, starter homes, family homes or homes for those downsizing)?
- 4b. Is there a need for different types of home ownership (such as part buy and part rent) or rented properties to help people on lower incomes?
- 4c. Are the different types and tenures spatially integrated to create a cohesive community?

Building for Life says:

- 5.1 Demonstrating how the scheme's housing mix is justified** with regard to planning policy, the local context and viability.
- 5.2 Aiming for a housing mix** that will create a broad-based community.
- 5.3 Considering how to incorporate a range of property sizes and types**, avoiding creating too many larger or too many smaller homes from being grouped together.
- 5.4 Providing starter homes and homes for the elderly or downsizing households.** People who are retired can help enliven a place during the working day. Providing for downsizing households can also help to re-balance the housing market.
- 5.5 Designing homes and streets to be tenure-blind**, so that it is not easy to differentiate between homes that are private and those that are shared ownership or rented.

**Local considerations:**

5.6 The council's [Strategic Housing Market Assessment](#) (SHMA) identifies requirements for the type and mix of housing across the county. The SHMA also supports the need to provide affordable homes as part of all major new developments. The need for affordable housing varies across the county, depending upon viability and local need.

5.7 Evidence demonstrates a further need for housing which is suited to the needs of the elderly and for those who require more accessible accommodation.

5.8 Ensuring the right homes are provided in the right locations will help address wider issues including health promotion and social cohesion.

Character

Does the scheme create a place with a locally inspired or otherwise distinctive character?

5a How can the development be designed to have a local or distinctive identity?

5b Are there any distinctive characteristics within the area, such as building shapes, styles, colours and materials or the character of streets and spaces that the development should draw inspiration from?

Building for Life says:

6.1 Identifying whether there are any architectural, landscape or other features, such as special materials that give a place a distinctive sense of character as a starting point for design. It may be possible to adapt elevations of standard house types to complement local character. Distinctiveness can also be delivered through new designs that respond to local characteristics in a contemporary way.

6.2 Exploring what could be done to start to give a place a locally inspired identity if an area lacks a distinctive character or where there is no overarching character.

6.3 Landscaping traditions are often fundamental to character, especially boundary treatments. Introducing building styles, details and landscaping features that can be easily expressed to someone visiting the development for the first time. Where an area has a strong and positive local identity, consider using this as a cue to reinforce the place's overall character.

6.4 Varying the density, built form and appearance or style of development to help create areas with different character within larger developments. Using a range of features will help to create town and cityscape elements that can give a place a sense of identity and will help people find their way around. Subtle detailing can help reinforce the character of areas and in doing so, provide a level of richness and delight.

6.5 Working with the local planning and highway authority to investigate whether local or otherwise different materials can be used in place of standard highways surface materials and traffic furniture. Be creative and adventurous by exploring the potential to innovate - develop new ideas and build with new materials.



Local considerations:

6.6 County Durham features a rich texture and variety of house types and styles. This is largely a product of the historic function and role in shaping how settlements have developed over time, from those linked to industry to settlements more reflective of an agricultural role. A diverse layering of heritage and architectural styles is particularly evident in Durham City, for example. This presents opportunities and influences for new development, and where appropriate, proposals should understand the significance and context of heritage assets and the historic character of the area within or near the development. This could benefit development, its design and distinctiveness, while helping to avoid damage to heritage assets and historic areas.

6.7 Materials and building methods demonstrate the variety found within the county. They help to link certain areas and characters. Development should respond to the local context and vernacular, where appropriate. However, a thorough approach to the design process will indicate how this will work across the scheme, and whether a more contemporary design aesthetics would be more appropriate.

Working with the site and its context

Does the scheme take advantage of existing topography, landscape features (including watercourses), trees and plants, wildlife habitats, heritage assets, existing buildings, site orientation and microclimate?

- 6a Are there any views into or from the site that need to be carefully considered?
- 6b Are there any existing trees, hedgerows or other features, such as streams that need to be carefully designed into the development?
- 6c Should the development keep any existing building(s) on the site? If so, how could they be used?
- 6d Are there any historic buildings/structures and/or archaeological remains that should be retained?

Building for Life says:

7.1 Being a considerate neighbour. Have regard to the height, layout, building line and form of existing development at the boundaries of the development site. Frame views of existing landmarks and create new ones by exploiting features such as existing mature trees to create memorable spaces. Orientate homes so that as many residents as possible can see these features from within their homes. Carefully consider views into the development and how best these can be designed.

7.2 Assessing the potential of any older buildings or structures for conversion. Retained buildings can become instant focal points within a development. Where possible, avoid transporting building waste and spoil off site by exploring opportunities to recycling building materials within the development.

7.3 Working with contours of the land rather than against them, exploring how built form and detailed housing design can creatively respond to the topographical character; thinking carefully about the roofscape. Explore how a holistic approach can be taken to the design of sustainable urban drainage by exploiting the topography and geology.

7.4 Exploring opportunities to protect, enhance and create wildlife habitats. Be creative in landscape design by creating wildflower meadows rather than closely mown grassland and, where provided, creating rich habitats within balancing lagoons, rainwater gardens, rills and swales.

7.5 Considering the potential to benefit from solar gain through building orientation and design where this can be achieved without compromising good urban design or creating issues associated with overheating. Finally have regard to any local micro-climate and its impact.

Local considerations:

7.6 Development should make the most of the site, including through key views into and out of a site. Topography can also present unique opportunities, for example with respect to historical significance including the stepping roofscapes found in many settlements

7.7 All site constraints should be considered at the outset to enable a thorough understanding of opportunities and challenges. Tree Assessments, for example, provide a useful starting point for many schemes. Trees provide an attractive setting for schemes in addition to multiple additional benefits, such as aiding orientation and helping with biodiversity conservation and enhancement.

7.8 Sustainable drainage techniques are frequently required on major schemes. Attenuation ponds need to be planned alongside the open space provision for the site to ensure a cohesive and efficient site layout. Providing several smaller attenuation ponds often aids this, as large ponds are harder to integrate.

7.9 Investigations to test for the presence of archaeological remains within a site should be carried out at the earliest opportunity. If present their nature and significance should be evaluated along with the impact of the proposed development and all associated works upon them so that an appropriate mitigation strategy can be formulated pre-determination. Preservation in situ may be required, otherwise a programme of excavation, analysis, reporting and possibly publication will be required.

7.10 Schemes should make the most of opportunities to embed sustainability into new development from the outset. Energy minimisation and solar optimisation will be key elements within the overall design and layout of developments.

Creating well-defined streets and spaces

Are buildings designed and positioned with landscaping to define and enhance streets and spaces and are buildings designed to turn street corners well?

- 7a Are buildings and landscaping schemes used to create enclosed streets and spaces?
- 7b Do buildings turn corners well?
- 7c Do all fronts of buildings, including front doors and habitable rooms, face the street?

Building for Life says:

8.1 Creating streets that are principally defined by the position of buildings rather than the route of the carriageway.

8.2 Designing building that turn corners well, so that both elevations seen from the street have windows to them, rather than offering blank walls to the street. Consider using windows that wrap around corners to maximise surveillance and bring generous amounts of natural light into people's homes.

8.3 Respecting basic urban design principles when designing layouts. For example, forming strong perimeter blocks.

8.4 Orientating front doors to face the street rather than being tucked around the back or sides of buildings.

8.5 Using a pattern of road types to create a hierarchy of streets and consider their enclosure, keeping to well-proportioned height to width ratios relative to the type of street.

**Local considerations:**

- 8.6** Spaces should be clear and easy to negotiate. Material palettes should generally aim for a clean and clear appearance to aid legibility for users.
- 8.7** A creative approach to orientation and alignment will help create attractive, safe and memorable places. Focal points such as ‘village greens’ and key buildings support this, as demonstrated across many of the counties settlements.
- 8.8** Window openings are also important considerations and should facilitate passive surveillance throughout the site. Prominent, blank gable-ends should be avoided. This should be considered alongside the landscaping and parking design to avoid excessive areas that are not overlooked.

Easy to find your way around

Is the development designed to make it easy to find your way around?

8a Will the development be easy to find your way around? If not, what could be done to make it easier to find your way around?

8b Are there any obvious landmarks?

8c Are the routes between places clear and direct?

Building for Life says:

9.1 Making it easy for people to create a mental map of the place by incorporating features that people will notice and remember. Create a network of well-defined streets and spaces with clear routes, local landmarks and marker features. For larger developments it may be necessary to create distinct character areas. Marker features, such as corner buildings and public spaces combined with smaller scale details such as colour, variety and materials will further enhance legibility.

9.2 Providing views through to existing or new landmarks and local destinations, such as parks, woodlands or tall structures help people understand where they are in relation to other places and find their way around.

9.3 Making it easy for all people to get around including those with visual or mobility impairments.

9.4 Identifying and considering important viewpoints within a development, such as views towards the end of a street. Anticipate other, more subtle viewpoints, for example a turn or curve in the street and how best these can be best addressed.

9.5 Creating a logical hierarchy of streets. A tree lined avenue through a development can be an easy and effective way to help people find their way around.



Local considerations:

9.6 Development should respond to topography and any key landmarks. Within large development sites consideration should be given to creating character areas, planned in conjunction with formal open spaces and public artworks where they are provided. Layering up character, interest and structure creates definition and makes it easier to find your way around.

9.7 Streets that terminate with inactive spaces (such the rear or side of buildings, parking spaces or boundary fences or walls) have a detrimental impact, on both the quality of the streetscene and navigation, and should therefore be avoided.

Streets for all

Are streets designed in a way that encourage low vehicle speeds and allow them to function as social spaces?

9a Are streets pedestrian friendly and are they designed to encourage cars to drive slower and more carefully?

9b Are streets designed in a way that they can be used as social spaces, such as places for children to play safely or for neighbours to converse?

Building for Life says:

10.1 Creating streets for people where vehicle speeds are designed not to exceed 20mph.

Work with the highways team to create developments where buildings and detailed street design is used to tame vehicle speeds. Sharp or blind corners force drivers to slow when driving around them while buildings that are closer together also make drivers proceed more cautiously. 20mph zones are becoming increasingly popular with local communities and are a cost effective way of changing driver behaviour in residential areas.

10.2 Thinking about how streets can be designed as social and play spaces, where the pedestrians and cyclists come first, rather than simply as routes for cars and vehicles to pass through.

10.3 Using the best quality hard landscaping scheme that is viable without cluttering the streets and public spaces.

10.4 Designing homes that offer good natural surveillance opportunities; carefully considering the impact of internal arrangement on the safety and vitality of the street. Consider maximising the amount of glazing to ground floor, street facing rooms to enhance surveillance opportunities creating a stronger relationship between the home and the street.

10.5 Creating homes that offer something to the street, thinking carefully about detail, craftsmanship and build quality. Afford particular attention to the space between the pavement and front doors.

10.6 A thoughtful and **well-designed entrance area and front door scheme** will enhance the kerb appeal of homes whilst also contributing towards creating a visually interesting street. Carefully consider changes in level, the interface between different materials, quality finishing and the discreet placement of utility boxes.

**Local considerations:**

10.7 The needs of pedestrians should be prioritised when designing layouts and considering gradients within sloping sites. Streets designed as shared spaces provide multiple benefits, including helping to calm vehicle speeds and provide for more active streets that tend to be safer for all.

10.8 All new residential schemes in the county feature a 20 mph speed limit. Layouts that avoid long straight roads also help to limit vehicle speeds. Where traffic calming measures are required these can be subtle and include landscape features such as planters and flower bunds, and street trees where appropriate.

Car parking

Is resident and visitor parking sufficient and well integrated so that it does not dominate the street?

10a Is there enough parking for residents and visitors?

10b Is parking positioned close to people's homes?

10c Are any parking courtyards small in size (generally no more than five properties should use a parking courtyard) and are they well overlooked by neighbouring properties?

10d Are garages well positioned so that they do not dominate the street scene?

Building for Life says:

11.1 Anticipating car parking demand taking into account the location, availability and frequency of public transport together with local car ownership trends. Provide sufficient parking space for visitors.

11.2 Designing streets to accommodate on street parking but allow for plenty of trees and planting to balance the visual impact of parked cars and reinforce the spatial enclosure of the street. On street parking has the potential to be both space efficient and can also help to create a vibrant street, where neighbours have more opportunity to see and meet other people.

11.3 Prevent anti-social parking. Very regular and formal parking treatments have the potential to reduce anti-social parking. People are less prone to parking in places where they should not be parking, where street design clearly defines other uses, such as pavements or landscape features.

11.4 Making sure people can see their car from their home or can park it somewhere they know it will be safe. Where possible avoid rear parking courts.

11.5 Using a range of parking solutions appropriate to the context and the types of housing proposed. Where parking is positioned to the front of the property, ensure that at least an equal amount of the frontage is allocated to an enclosed, landscaped front garden as it is for parking to reduce vehicle domination. Where rows of narrow terraces are proposed, consider positioning parking within the street scene, for example a central reservation of herringbone parking. For higher density schemes, underground parking with a landscaped deck above can work well.



Local considerations:

11.6 The council's [Parking and Accessibility Standards](#) set down requirements based on house size and number of units (please note these standards are currently under review). Neighbourhood Plans may include additional local requirements, which the council will be able to advise upon further.

11.7 Car ownership levels vary quite markedly across the county. Certain areas, including rural settlements, can suffer from over domination by parked cars. Ensuring adequate and well-designed parking provision is therefore a key component of designing spaces for all.

Public and private spaces

Will public and private spaces be clearly defined and designed to have appropriate access and be able to be well managed and safe in use?

11a What types of open space should be provided within this development?

11b Is there a need for play facilities for children and teenagers? If so, is this the right place or should the developer contribute towards an existing facility in the area that could be made better?

11c How will they be looked after?

Building for Life says:

12.1 Clearly defining private and public spaces with clear vertical markers, such as railings, walling or robust planting. Where there is a modest building set back (less than 1m), a simple change in surface materials may suffice. Select species that will form a strong and effective boundary, such as hedge forming shrubs rather than low growing specimens or exotic or ornamental plants. Ensure sufficient budget provision is allocated to ensure a high quality boundary scheme is delivered.

12.2 Creating spaces that are well overlooked by neighbouring properties. Check that there is plenty of opportunity for residents to see streets and spaces from within their homes. Provide opportunities for direct and oblique views up and down the street, considering the use of bay and corner windows where appropriate. Designing balconies can further increase opportunities for natural surveillance.

12.3 Thinking about what types of spaces are created and where they should be located. Consider how spaces can be designed to be multi-functional, serving as wide an age group as possible and how they could contribute towards enhancing biodiversity. Think about where people might want to walk and what routes they might want to take and plan paths accordingly providing lighting if required. Consider the sun path and shadowing throughout the day and which areas will be in light rather than shade. Areas more likely to benefit from sunshine are often the most popular places for people to gather.

12.4 Exploring whether local communities would wish to see new facilities created or existing ones upgraded. Think how play can be approached in a holistic manner, for example by distributing play equipment or playable spaces and features across an entire open space.

12.5 Providing a management and maintenance plan to include a sustainable way to fund public or shared communal open spaces.



Local considerations:

12.6 Access to open space can provide multiple benefits, including to health and wellbeing. National guidance emphasises the importance of ensuring adequate access to open space within residential developments.

12.7 Settlements such as Peterlee and Newton Aycliffe new towns were designed around abundant swathes of open green spaces which create distinctive local character.

12.8 The council's [Open Space Needs Assessment](#) establishes open provision and demand. The assessment also advises on the level of open space that should be provided on site as well as any financial contributions needed to support existing spaces and facilities.

External storage and amenity space

Is there adequate external storage space for bins and recycling, as well as vehicles and cycles?

12a Is storage for bins and recycling items fully integrated, so that these items are less likely to be left on the street?

12b Is access to cycle and other vehicle storage convenient and secure?

Building for Life says:

13.1 Providing convenient, dedicated bin and recycling storage where bins and crates can be stored out of sight. Check with the local authority to determine exactly what space is required and minimise the distance between storage areas and collection points. Where terraced housing is proposed, consider providing integral stores to the front of the property (such as within an enclosed section of a recessed porch) or by providing secure ginnels between properties that provide direct access to the rear of properties.

13.2 Designing garages and parking spaces that are large enough to fit a modern family sized car and allow the driver to get out of the car easily. Where local authorities have requirements for garage sizes, parking spaces and circulation space design these into your scheme from the outset. If garages do not meet local requirements, do not count these as a parking space.

13.3 Considering whether garages should be counted as a parking space. If garages are to be counted as a parking space, ensure that sufficient alternative storage space is provided for items commonly stored in garages. Consider extending the length of the garage to accommodate storage needs or allowing occupants to use the roof space for extra storage

13.4 Anticipating the realistic external storage requirements of individual households. Residents will usually need a secure place to store cycles and garden equipment. A storage room could be designed to the rear of the property (either attached or detached from the home), reviving the idea of a traditional outhouse. More creative solutions may be needed to satisfy the cycle storage requirements of higher density apartment accommodation.

13.5 Thinking carefully about the size and shape of outside amenity space. It is a good idea to ensure that rear gardens are at least equal to the ground floor footprint of the dwelling. Triangular shaped gardens rarely offer a practical, usable space. Allow residents the opportunity to access their garden without having to walk through their home.



Local considerations:

13.6 The county is currently consulting on updated standards for garage spaces and cycle storage. The council's [Parking and Accessibility Standards](#) set down requirements based on house size and number of units. Neighbourhood Plans may include additional local requirements, which the council will be able to advise upon.

14.1 Existing Local Plan Policies

14.1 While the SPD will form part of the County Plan when it is adopted, in advance of this existing policies in former district local plans provide the policy background for now. The table below identifies the key existing design policies within former district local plans.

Table 1

Local Plan	Saved Policy
Chester-le-Street	HP9 - Residential Design Criteria - General T15 - Access And Safety Considerations In Design
City of Durham	Q1 - General Principles – Designing for People Q2 - General Principles – Designing for Accessibility Q8 - Layout and Design – Residential Development
Derwentside	GDP1 - General Development Principles
Easington	1 - General Principle of Development 35 - Design and Layout of Development 36 - Design for Access and the Means of Travel
Sedgefield	D1 - General Principles for the Layout and Design of New Developments D2 - Design for People D3 - Design for Access D5 - Layout of New Housing Development
Teesdale	GD1 - General Development Criteria H12 - Design
Wear Valley	GD1 - General Development Criteria H24 - Residential Design Criteria

14.2 Assessment criteria for Full Applications

Picture 1

<h1>Internal Design Review</h1>	<p>January 2019</p>	
<p>Internal design review based on “Building for Life” criteria</p>		<h2>Scoring Mechanism and Comments</h2>
		<p>Full or Hybrid Applications</p>

Internal Design Review

Planning Application reference No.	Date of Internal Design review	Developer/Agent:
Scoring Mechanism		
<p>The Building for Life standards provide a framework for assessing the design quality of housing proposals. They comprise 12 key criteria which help to focus discussions around development proposals. Scoring is based on a traffic light system and schemes should secure as many "greens" as possible, minimise the number of "ambers" and avoid "reds". The more "greens" achieved the better the development will be, "ambers" are usually concerns that can be raised to "green" with revisions, whereas a "red" gives a warning that a particular aspect needs strong reconsideration.</p> <p>The 12 urban design criteria within Building for Life should be readily achievable and schemes which achieve a minimum of 9 Greens will be eligible for Building for Life accreditation.</p> <p>By using Bfl 12 as a tool throughout the design process, developers can demonstrate compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance.</p>		

SCORING MECHANISM OVERVIEW

Level Attained	Description
RED	The scheme is unacceptable and needs to be reconsidered as it fails to respond positively to the criteria.
AMBER	The scheme does not fully satisfy the criteria - a green may be achieved with design amendments.
GREEN	The scheme responds positively to the question and is acceptable.
UNKNOWN	Insufficient information to assess the scheme (further information may be required prior to determination depending on application stage).

1. CONNECTIONS

Question

Does the scheme integrate into the surroundings by reinforcing existing connections and creating new ones, while also respecting existing buildings and land uses around the development site?

Issues to consider

- Are connections with adjacent roads maximised?
- Does the road layout provide for connections with future development?
- Are foot/cycle paths integrated with roads?
- Do foot/cycle paths avoid creating unobserved accesses to dwellings?
- Are foot/cycle paths attractive and well-lit?
- Do foot/cycle paths have informal surveillance?
- Do foot/cycle paths follow desire routes (i.e. go where people are likely to want to go)?
- Do new streets create a legible layout and optimise links across the development?
- Do pedestrian and cycle routes connect up to existing PROWs, footpaths and the road network?
- Is there interconnectivity between the new development and adjacent residential areas?
- Does the layout and boundary treatment avoid inward-looking development with boundary fences fronting the adjacent neighbourhood?

Q1 Score (tick box)	Comments/notes
RED	
AMBER	
GREEN	
UNKNOWN	

2. FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Question
Does the development provide (or is it close to) community services, such as shops, schools, work places, parks, play areas, pubs, cafes, etc.?

Issues to consider

- Are there enough facilities and services within the local area to support the development?
- Are there safe, convenient and direct routes to the existing facilities and services within the area?
- Have severance impacts been avoided?
- Is there an opportunity to enhance and improve access to existing facilities and services?
- Are new facilities proposed as part of the development? If so are these needed within the area?
- If proposed are new facilities located in the right place?
- If proposed are new facilities well integrated into the immediate and wider surroundings?

Q2 Score (tick box)	Comments/notes
RED	
AMBER	
GREEN	
UNKNOWN	

3. PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Question
Does the scheme have good access to existing public transport links to help reduce car dependency?

Issues to consider

- Does the development encourage the use of public transport?
- Does the layout maximise connections to existing public transport services?
- Are there bus stops within 400 metres of the site?
- Are pathways from dwellings to bus stops direct, safe, attractive and legible?
- Does the scheme consider using bus-only routes?
- Does the scheme consider other means of limiting the need to travel by private car - this can include support for new or existing park and ride schemes, car clubs, electric car charging points, live/work units?
- Are local public transport stops in well used places? If so are they accessible for all, overlooked and well lit?

Q3 Score (tick box)	Comments/notes
RED	
AMBER	
GREEN	
UNKNOWN	

4. MEETING LOCAL HOUSING REQUIREMENTS

Question
Does the development have a good mixture of housing types and tenures that suite local requirements?

Issues to consider

- What are the recommendations of the SHMA and Housing Strategy for the local area? Does the development deliver according to these?
- Has a housing mixture that creates a broad choice been successfully achieved?
- Does the development avoid creating homes for one market only (may be permissible if small scale)?
- Are affordable dwellings and specialist housing provided?
- Is the affordable housing and specialist housing provision dispersed throughout the scheme?
- Are affordable and specialist dwellings devoid of markers of their status? Considered garage/entrance treatments, size, build quality, design, parking provision, etc.

Q4 Score (tick box)	Comments/notes
RED	
AMBER	
GREEN	
UNKNOWN	

5. CHARACTER

Question
Does the scheme create a place with locally inspired or otherwise distinctive character?

Issues to consider

- Does the development present standard or distinctive house types?
- Can standard house types be adapted using elements of the local vernacular for example materials, detailing, window shapes, roof details, door patterns etc.?
- Would contemporary architecture which responds to local characteristics be appropriate?
- If the area lacks discernible character what character should be created in the new development?
- Is the site large enough to accommodate individual character areas with distinct densities, built form and styles? If so should these be distributed and how should they differ?
- Are non-standard highway layouts and materials achievable and appropriate (or necessary)?
- Are there any documents available which describe the local character that can be used to help inform design decisions?
- Are there any existing historic, architectural or landscape features contained within the site or immediately adjacent that may be affected?
- Are these appropriate to contribute to the design process?
- Are there any dominant landscape traditional, for example boundary treatments, planting patterns that could be incorporated or reflected?

Q5 Score (tick box)	Comments/notes
RED	
AMBER	
GREEN	
UNKNOWN	

6. WORKING WITH THE SITE AND ITS CONTEXT

Question

Does the scheme take advantage of existing topography, landscape features (including water courses), wildlife habitats, existing buildings, site orientation and microclimates?

Issues to consider

- Is the development considered a considerate neighbour?
- Does the scheme have regard to height, layout, building line, and form of existing development?
- Does the development maintain views of existing landmarks and/or create new ones?
- Does the scheme respond to and make best use of the local topography?
- Have existing trees, hedgerows and other natural features been conserved and carefully designed into the development?
- Should the development retain any existing buildings on the site? If so how could these be reused?
- Does the scheme benefit from solar gain through building orientation and design?

Q6 Score (tick box)	Comments/notes
RED	
AMBER	
GREEN	
UNKNOWN	

Internal Design Review

7. CREATING WELL DEFINED STREETS AND SPACES

Question

Does the scheme include buildings which are designed and positioned with landscaping to define and enhance the streets and spaces and are buildings designed to turn corners well?

Issues to consider

- Are streets principally defined by the provision of buildings rather than the route of the highway (for example, perimeter blocks)?
- Are height-to-width ratios proportionate to the type of street?
- Do road types create a hierarchy of well defined streets?
- Are garages, driveways, service areas or sub substations, out of view away from street corners or prominent locations?
- Are corner turners and/or landmark and gateway buildings included?
- Do buildings and landscaping create enclosed streets and spaces?
- Is 'in-front of plot parking' used appropriately to avoid car dominated streets?
- Are blank elevations, or buildings which 'back onto the street' avoided?

Q7 Score (tick box)	Comments/notes
RED	
AMBER	
GREEN	
UNKNOWN	

Internal Design Review

8.WAYFINDING
Question
Is the development designed to make it easy to find your way around?

Issues to consider

- Will the development be easy to find your way around? If not what could be done to make it easier?
- Are obvious landmarks provided (including views to them)?
- Are the routes between places clear, convenient and direct?
- Does the development create a scheme with a logical layout and a hierarchy of streets?
- Are legible features included such as distinct character areas (for larger schemes), tree-lined avenues, marker buildings and spaces?
- Does the scheme identify and consider important viewpoints within and through the development?

Q8 Score (tick box)	Comments/notes
RED	
AMBER	
GREEN	
UNKNOWN	

Internal Design Review

9.STREETS FOR ALL
Question
Are streets designed in a way that encourages low vehicle speeds allowing them to safely function as social spaces?

Issues to consider

- Has the detailed street design and location of buildings been used to reduce vehicle speeds? Measures can include sharp or blind corners, using the built form to calm traffic, diversity of streetscape, and, hard and soft landscaping.
- Do buildings provide informal surveillance?
- Does the scheme avoid visual clutter in the streets and public spaces?
- Does the hard landscaping respond to the location of the site and its surroundings?
- Do buildings contribute to the street frontage (in terms of definition, streetscape, build quality)?
- Does the scheme consider the interface between differing materials and finishing's?
- Does the scheme address topography and minimise steps and level changes?
- Does the development prioritise the needs of pedestrians and cyclists ahead of cars?
- Do the spaces in front of buildings help create a visually interesting street?

Q9 Score (tick box)	Comments/notes
RED	
AMBER	
GREEN	
UNKNOWN	

Internal Design Review

10. CAR PARKING

Question

Is resident and visitor parking sufficient and well integrated without dominating streets?

Issues to consider

- Does the scheme comply with DCC (or neighbourhood plan) parking requirements?
- Are there grounds for varying levels of parking away from DCC standards, on the basis of public transport, proximity to services and local car ownership etc.?
- Does the scheme ensure people can see their vehicles from their homes?
- Does the scheme provide a clear and direct route between a dwelling and on-street parking?
- Are garages convenient, well related to dwellings and appropriate in size and design?
Are parking courtyards small in size (generally no more than five properties should use a parking court) and are they well overlooked by neighbouring properties?
- Are landscaped features used to reduce the visual impact of parked cars and reinforce spatial enclosure of the street?
- Does the scheme try to discourage parking on kerbs and pavements?
- Does the scheme clearly and attractively define parking spaces and separate them visually from other spaces?
- Does the developer use a range of parking solutions appropriate to the context and housing types proposed?
- Does the scheme avoid allowing parking to dominate the streets, for example avoiding too much in-plot parking and large parking areas? With regards to larger scheme have non-standard parking solutions been considered such as underground parking?

Q10 Score (tick box)	Comments/notes
RED	
AMBER	
GREEN	
UNKNOWN	

11. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPACES

Question

Will public and private spaces be clearly defined and designed to have appropriate access? Will they be able to be well managed and safe to use?

Issues to consider

- What does the OSNA say about the quantity and quality of open spaces within the settlement? Is additional space required?
- Is there an adequate amount of play equipment in the settlement in accordance with Sport and Leisure recommendations?
- Is there a need for play facilities within the development? Or should the developer contribute towards improving existing facilities?
- Have appropriate long-term maintenance arrangements of open/play space provision been identified?
- Is the landscaping scheme distinctive and responsive to its immediate environment and surroundings?
- Does the scheme consider the sun-path and shadowing throughout the day and other climate factors?
- Does the scheme provide a clear hierarchy of spaces, with well-designed interfaces between public/semi-public and private spaces?
- Are private and public spaces clearly defined by visual markers such as railings, walling, robust planting or surface materials?
- Does the development provide active spaces where people can meet? Does the location of these consider noise and disturbance of adjacent residents? Do open spaces benefit from informal surveillance?
- Are spaces multifunctional, cater for all age groups and those with disabilities?
- Do the spaces take opportunities to enhance, create and interact wildlife habitats?
- Does the scheme include sustainable drainage systems (SUDS)? Are SUDS, public open spaces and wildlife habitat well integrated and attractive?

Q11 Score (tick box)	Comments/notes
RED	
AMBER	
GREEN	
UNKNOWN	

12.EXTERNAL STORAGE AND AMENITY SPACE	
Question	
Is there adequate external storage space for bins and recycling as well as vehicles and cycles?	
Issues to consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is storage space fully integrated, so that items such as bins are less likely to be left on the street? Does the space for bin storage meet DCC standards? Is the location for bin storage convenient? Is it close to dwellings and collections points? Are secure cycle storage facilities provided? Are there storage facilities for garden equipment? Are the facilities provided easily accessible? Do bin and recycling stores ensure that they do not detract from the quality of the streetscene?
Q12 Score (tick box)	Comments/notes
RED	
AMBER	
GREEN	
UNKNOWN	

Internal Design Review

SCORE SUMMARY

Question	Score	RED	AMBER	GREEN	UNKNOWN
Q1 Connections					
Q2 Facilities and Services					
Q3 Public Transport					
Q4 Meeting Local Housing Requirements					
Q5 Character					
Q6 Working with the site and its context					
Q7 Creating well defined streets and spaces					
Q8 Wayfinding					
Q9 Streets for all					
Q10 Car parking					
Q11 Public and private spaces					
Q12 External storage and amenity space					
Total					

Internal Design Review

14.3 Assessment criteria for Reserved Matters Applications

Picture 2

Internal Design Review

January 2019

Durham County Council

Internal design review based on "Building for Life" criteria

Scoring Mechanism and Comments

Reserved Matters Applications

Internal Design Review

Planning Application reference No.	Date of Internal Design review	Proposal Description:
Scoring Mechanism		
<p>The Building for Life standards provide a framework for assessing the design quality of housing proposals. They comprise 12 key criteria which help to focus discussions around development proposals. Scoring is based on a traffic light system and schemes should secure as many "greens" as possible, minimise the number of "ambers" and avoid "reds". The more "greens" achieved the better the development will be, "ambers" are usually concerns that can be raised to "green" with revisions, whereas a "red" gives a warning that a particular aspect needs strong reconsideration.</p> <p>The 12 urban design criteria within Building for Life should be readily achievable and schemes which achieve a minimum of 9 Greens will be eligible for Building for Life accreditation. By using Bfl 12 as a tool throughout the design process, developers can demonstrate compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance.</p> <p>This reserved matters assessment comprises of a revised version of the Bfl12 criteria, given that outline consent has been granted.</p>		

SCORING MECHANISM OVERVIEW

Level Attained	Description
RED	The scheme is unacceptable and needs to be reconsidered as it fails to respond positively to the criteria.
AMBER	The scheme does not fully satisfy the criteria – a green may be achieved with design amendments.
GREEN	The scheme responds positively to the question and is acceptable.
UNKNOWN	Insufficient information to assess the scheme (further information may be required prior to determination depending on application stage).

1. CONNECTIONS

Question

Are access arrangements, and any improvements to connectivity, in accordance with the details considered at the outline stage and do they remain acceptable? If not what changes or improvements are required ?

Issues to consider

- Does the scheme successfully reinforce existing connections and create new ones?
- Are connections to roads maximised?
- Does the development connect to existing PROW's, pedestrian and cycle routes and any walkways?
- Do new streets create a legible layout and create appropriate links across the development?
- Is there interconnectivity between the development and adjacent residential areas?

Q1 Score (tick box)	Comments/notes
RED	
AMBER	
GREEN	
UNKNOWN	

2. FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Question
Does the development deliver any expected community facilities, such as shops, schools, workplaces, parks, play areas, pubs, cafes envisaged at outline stage or does it deliver on expected links to those which exist?

Issues to consider

- If included in the scheme, are community facilities in the right place and appropriately integrated into the layout?
- Are direct and logical pedestrian routes provided to these facilities?
- Are safe, convenient and direct routes provided to the local facilities and services outside of the development?
- Does the detailed layout encourage walking, cycling or using public transport to reach facilities and services?

Q2 Score (tick box)	Comments/notes
RED	
AMBER	
GREEN	
UNKNOWN	

Internal Design Review

3. PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Question
Does the scheme provide access to public transport as expected at the outline stage? Have physical or service improvements been delivered?

Issues to consider

- Does the detailed design deliver expected pedestrian routes to local bus stops?
- Are footpaths from the dwellings to bus stops shown to be direct, safe, convenient and legible?
- Can the development do anything more to help encourage residents to use public transport?
- Overall are there any other improvements that can be made to limit the need to travel by private car?

Q3 Score (tick box)	Comments/notes
RED	
AMBER	
GREEN	
UNKNOWN	

Internal Design Review

4. MEETING LOCAL HOUSING REQUIREMENTS

Question
Does the development have a mix of house types and tenures that suite local requirements and are these well integrated to help create a cohesive community?

Issues to consider

- What types of homes and tenures are needed in the area and does the development deliver these?
- Does the development avoid creating homes for one market only (may be permissible if small scale)?
- Does the mix include the required level and split of affordable housing and specialist housing?
- Is the affordable or specialist housing well integrated?
- Are affordable and specialist dwellings devoid of markers of their status? Considered entrance garage/entrance treatments, size, build quality, design, parking provision, etc.

Q4 Score (tick box)	Comments/notes
RED	
AMBER	
GREEN	
UNKNOWN	

Internal Design Review

5. CHARACTER

Question
Does the scheme create a place with locally inspired or otherwise distinctive character?

Issues to consider

- Has the development been designed to have a local or distinctive identity?
- Does the development draw on any distinctive characteristics within the area such as building shapes, styles colours, materials or the character of streets and spaces?
- If the area has no discernible character does the scheme create its own character and sense of place?
- Are there any improvements that can be made to deliver/reinforce character?
- Are house types of a good design quality and of a suitable mix?

Q5 Score (tick box)	Comments/notes
RED	
AMBER	
GREEN	
UNKNOWN	

Internal Design Review

6. WORKING WITH THE SITE AND ITS CONTEXT

Question

Does the scheme take advantage of existing topography, landscape features (including water courses), trees and plants, wildlife habitats, existing buildings, site orientation and microclimate?

Issues to consider

- Have views into or from the site been carefully considered and appropriately addressed?
- Have key views been maximised and new views created?
- Have the existing trees, hedgerows or other natural features, such as streams, been carefully designed into the development?
- Are there any improvements that can be made to protect important existing site features?
- Does the scheme benefit from solar gain through building orientation and design?

Q6 Score (tick box)	Comments/notes
RED	
AMBER	
GREEN	
UNKNOWN	

Internal Design Review

7. CREATING WELL DEFINED STREETS AND SPACES

Question

Does the scheme include buildings which are designed and positioned with landscaping to define and enhance the streets and spaces and are buildings designed to turn corners well?

Issues to consider

- Do buildings and landscaping create enclosed streets and spaces?
- Do buildings turn corners well?
- Are streets principally defined by the provision of buildings rather than the route of the highway?
- Do all fronts of buildings, including front doors and habitable rooms, face the street where appropriate?
- Are height-to-width ratios proportionate to the street types?
- Are garages, sub-stations and service areas out of view and away from street corners or prominent locations such as end-points or are they in views up and down streets?

Q7 Score (tick box)	Comments/notes
RED	
AMBER	
GREEN	
UNKNOWN	

Internal Design Review

8. WAYFINDING

Question

Is the development designed to make it easy to find your way around?

Issues to consider

- Is the development easy to navigate? If not, what could be done to make it easier to find your way round?
- Does the layout present a simple network of well-defined streets and spaces?
- Are there any obvious landmarks to ease wayfinding?
- Are the routes between places clear and direct?
- Does the scheme identify and consider important viewpoints within the development?

Q8 Score (tick box)		Comments/notes
RED	<input type="checkbox"/>	
AMBER	<input type="checkbox"/>	
GREEN	<input type="checkbox"/>	
UNKNOWN	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Internal Design Review

9. STREETS FOR ALL

Question

Are streets designed in a way that encourages low vehicle speeds allowing them to safely function as social spaces?

Issues to consider

- Has the detailed street design and location of buildings been used to reduce vehicle speeds? Measures can include sharp or blind corners, using the built form to calm traffic, diversity of streetscape, and, hard and soft landscaping.
- Are streets designed in a way that they can be used as social spaces, such as places for children to play safely or for neighbours to converse?
- Do buildings provide informal surveillance?
- Does the scheme address topography and minimise steps and level changes?
- Do buildings contribute to the street frontage (in terms of definition, streetscape, build quality)?

Q9 Score (tick box)		Comments/notes
RED	<input type="checkbox"/>	
AMBER	<input type="checkbox"/>	
GREEN	<input type="checkbox"/>	
UNKNOWN	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Internal Design Review

10. CAR PARKING

Question

Is resident and visitor parking sufficient and well integrated without dominating the street?

Issues to consider

- Does the scheme comply with DCC (or neighbourhood plan) parking requirements?
- Is parking positioned close to people's homes?
- Are any parking courtyards small in size (generally no more than 5 properties should use a parking court) and are they well overlooked by neighbouring properties?
- Are garages well positioned so that they do not dominate the streetscene?
- Is there a range of parking solutions appropriate to the context and house types provided?
- Has landscaping been used to reduce the visual impact of parked cars?

Q10 Score (tick box)		Comments/notes
RED	<input type="checkbox"/>	
AMBER	<input type="checkbox"/>	
GREEN	<input type="checkbox"/>	
UNKNOWN	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Internal Design Review

11. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPACES

Question

Will public and private spaces be clearly defined and designed to have appropriate access? Will they be able to be well managed and safe to use?

Issues to consider

- What types of open space are provided within the development? Is this well-integrated?
- What maintenance regime is in place?
- Is security in the forms of passive overlooking and safe routes well considered?
- What improvements are included for public and private open space provision?
- Is the landscaping scheme responsive to the environment?
- Does the scheme take opportunities to protect, enhance and create wildlife habitats?
- Does the scheme include sustainable drainage systems (SUDS)?

Q11 Score (tick box)		Comments/notes
RED	<input type="checkbox"/>	
AMBER	<input type="checkbox"/>	
GREEN	<input type="checkbox"/>	
UNKNOWN	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Internal Design Review

12. EXTERNAL STORAGE AND AMENITY SPACE	
Question	
Is there adequate external storage space for bins, recycling, as well as vehicles and cycles?	
Issues to consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there adequate space in-plot for storage purposes? Is storage for bins and recycling items integrated, so that they are less likely to be left on the street? Is access to cycle and other vehicle storage convenient and secure?
Q12 Score (tick box)	Comments/notes
RED	
AMBER	
GREEN	
UNKNOWN	

Internal Design Review

SCORE SUMMARY

Question	Score	RED	AMBER	GREEN	UNKNOWN
Q1 Connections					
Q2 Facilities and Services					
Q3 Public Transport					
Q4 Meeting Local Housing Requirements					
Q5 Character					
Q6 Working with the site and its context					
Q7 Creating well defined streets and spaces					
Q8 Wayfinding					
Q9 Streets for all					
Q10 Car parking					
Q11 Public and private spaces					
Q12 External storage and amenity space					
Total					

Internal Design Review

14.4 Assessment criteria for Outline Application and Pre-Applications

Picture 3

The image shows the cover page of a document titled "Internal Design Review". The page has a light blue header and a vertical blue bar on the right side. The main content is white. On the left, the text "Internal Design Review" is written in a large, black, sans-serif font. To its right, separated by a vertical line, is the date "January 2019". Further right is the Durham County Council logo, which consists of a blue oval with the text "Durham County Council" and a crest. Below the logo, the text "Scoring Mechanism and Comments" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font. Underneath this, a black rectangular box contains the text "Outline and Pre-Applications" in white. The vertical blue bar on the right side of the page contains the text "Internal Design Review" written vertically.

Planning Application reference No.	Date of Internal Design review	Proposal Description:
Scoring Mechanism		
<p>The Building for Life standards provide a framework for assessing the design quality of housing proposals. They comprise 12 key criteria which help to focus discussions around development proposals. The scoring is based on a traffic light system and schemes should secure as many "greens" as possible, minimise the number of "ambers" and avoid "reds". The more "greens" achieved the better the development will be, "ambers" are usually concerns that can be raised to "green" with revisions, whereas a "red" gives a warning that a particular aspect needs strong reconsideration.</p> <p>By using the Bfl tool throughout the design process, developers can demonstrate compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance.</p> <p>This assessment has been adapted from the Bfl 12 criteria to provide a more concise appraisal, in light of the reduced level of information normally available at the outline and pre-application stages.</p>		

SCORING MECHANISM OVERVIEW

Level Attained	Description
RED	The scheme is unacceptable and needs to be reconsidered as it fails to respond positively to the criteria.
AMBER	The scheme does not fully satisfy the criteria – a green may be achieved with design amendments.
GREEN	The scheme responds positively to the question and is acceptable.
UNKNOWN	Insufficient information to assess the scheme (further information may be required prior to determination depending on application stage).

1. PRINCIPLE		
Question		
Is the site considered to be acceptable in principle for the use or proposed use?		
Issues to consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any national or local designations which may restrict development? Is the proposed use compatible with existing uses in the surrounding area? Is the site considered to be within a sustainable location? Does the site have any significant constraints? Is there an opportunity to recycle a derelict, neglected or underused site? 	
	Q1 Score (tick box)	Comments/notes
	RED	
	AMBER	
	GREEN	
UNKNOWN		

2. CONNECTIONS

Question

Would the development be suitably connected to its surroundings?

Issues to consider

- Can the scheme integrate into its surroundings by reinforcing existing connections and creating new ones, while also respecting existing surrounding buildings and land uses?
- Does the submitted information suggest that connections to existing roads would be maximised?
- Are there any local cycle paths, walkways, public rights of way etc. that the development can link too?
- Is there an opportunity for interconnectivity with adjacent residential areas?
- Would any off site works be required which may impact on any designated or sensitive landscape or building/structure? (specifically highway improvements, junction and sightline improvements which may require structures to be moved or vegetation to be lost)

Q2 Score (tick box)	Comments/notes
RED	
AMBER	
GREEN	
UNKNOWN	

Internal Design Review

3. FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Question

Does the site have good access to existing facilities and services?

Issues to consider

- Does the development suggest (or it is close to) existing community facilities such as shops, schools, workplaces, parks, play areas, pubs and cafes etc.?
- Will local facilities and services be easily accessible?
- If the proposal includes facilities or services within the development are they in the right place? (this may be defined by necessary access to the highway network, passive surveillance requirements, appropriate location of open space and links to green infrastructure, etc.)

Q3 Score (tick box)	Comments/notes
RED	
AMBER	
GREEN	
UNKNOWN	

Internal Design Review

4. PUBLIC TRANSPORT	
Question	
Does site have good access to existing public transport links to help reduce car dependency?	
Issues to consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the site close to existing public transport services? Are there bus stops within 400 metres of the site? Are there opportunities to encourage the use of public transport, for example providing direct connections? Are regular bus services available? If the scheme does not have good access can this readily and practically be addressed?
Q4 Score (tick box)	Comments/notes
RED	
AMBER	
GREEN	
UNKNOWN	

Internal Design Review

5. CHARACTER	
Question	
Does the scheme create a place with locally inspired or otherwise distinctive character?	
Issues to consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If an indicative layout is provided in sufficient detail does it suggest that development will create a place with a locally inspired or otherwise distinctive character? Does the scheme suggest it will take advantage of existing topography, landscape features (including water courses), wildlife habitats, existing building, site orientation and microclimates? Does the site contain any heritage assets (designated or non-designated) or does it present opportunities to advance the understanding of such issues perhaps through archaeological DBA or site investigations? Would the principle of development result in demonstrable harm to the setting of any heritage asset, any landscape designation or habitat?
Q5 Score (tick box)	Comments/notes
RED	
AMBER	
GREEN	
UNKNOWN	

Internal Design Review

6. CREATING WELL DEFINED STREETS AND SPACES

Question

Does the submitted information suggest appropriate consideration has been given to the creation of well defined streets and spaces which are usable for all?

Issues to consider

- Does the submitted information provide comfort that a scheme where buildings are designed and positioned with landscaping to help define and enhance the streets and spaces can be delivered at the reserved matters stage?
- Does the submitted information demonstrate that the scheme would respond to the local topography and have regard for existing landscape features?
- Does the submitted information suggest the development has regard for the local built form in relation to layout, building lines, grain, etc.?
- Does the submitted information suggest 'streets for all' principles would be incorporated?

Q6 Score (tick box)	Comments/notes
RED	
AMBER	
GREEN	
UNKNOWN	

Internal Design Review

SUMMARY QUESTION

Are there any items that need to be provided/delivered that are fundamental to the acceptability of the scheme? Are there any features that need to be retained etc.?

Key issues to be secured at this stage by condition so as to guide subsequent reserved matters - including appropriate density, housing mix, public open space, mitigation measures, highways improvements, linkages, etc.

SCORE SUMMARY

Question	Score	RED	AMBER	GREEN	UNKNOWN
Q1 Principle					
Q2 Connections					
Q3 Facilities and Services					
Q4 Public Transport					
Q5 Character					
Q6 Creating well defined streets and spaces					
Total					

Internal Design Review



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